AALBORG UNIVERSITET

Legitimising the Use of Personality Assessment Tools in Recruitment

A Comparative Study of Content Marketing on LinkedIn

Master's Thesis

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to investigate how B2B companies selling personality assessment tools legitimise the use of such tools in recruitment. Literature about the validity of personality assessments is reviewed in order to clarify the problems that other researchers have identified in relation to the subject. This resulted in an understanding that scholars disagree whether personality assessments can be used as predictors of job performance, and whether applicant faking has an impact on the validity of the assessment results. Then, literature on B2B marketing is reviewed in order to gain an understanding of the recent developments within the field as well as to identify areas in which research is lacking. In order to investigate how B2B companies selling personality assessment tools legitimise such tools, data is collected from the LinkedIn profiles of The Predictive Index and Criteria Corp. The data collected for this research is exclusively qualitative. The overall data set consists of six LinkedIn articles from each company. In order to determine how legitimacy is created for personality assessment tools, Theo van Leeuwen's legitimations as well as the Toulmin's model is used to analyse the data. This is done by first identifying the different legitimations in the data before analysing the argumentative structure which is connected to the use of the legitimations. Based on the findings, it is evident that both companies mainly create legitimacy for the use of personality assessment tools in recruitment by using the legitimation called rationalisation. Through rationalisation, both companies portray how their products can make the recruitment process easier for their customers. Additionally, I found that the companies mostly differentiate themselves from the other company by using different kinds of legitimation. More specifically, The Predictive Index use mythopoesis, which Criteria Corp do not, and Criteria Corp use multiple kinds of rationalisation, whereas The Predictive Index only uses one. Furthermore, it is evident that the arguments presented by the companies are somewhat superficial. This is mainly due to the fact that in most cases the arguments only consist of the least required elements of the Toulmin Model for the arguments to be considered valid i.e. claim, grounds and warrant. Based on the findings, the impact of the companies' approach to legitimation and the structure of their arguments is discussed. Based on the discussion, I found that the seemingly superficial arguments and the fact that the companies do not present a moral basis for the existence of their products do not impact their overall trustworthiness. This is mainly due to the companies' display of expertise and the display of the usefulness of their products.

It is concluded that The Predictive Index and Criteria Corp create legitimacy for the use of personality assessment in recruitment by legitimising their own products and that this is mainly done through rationalisation.

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1. Introduction

Hiring new personnel has always been a process that requires recruiters to make decisions based on limited knowledge, and it still is to this day. As such, recruiters have developed methods which allow them to make more educated decisions on whether to hire a specific candidate or not. The most common methods are work experience, interviews and collection of references. However, it has also become more natural to assess the candidates' personality as part of the recruitment process. The purpose of these tests is to determine how the candidates' personality aligns with the kind of tasks that constitute that specific position. Yet, researchers cannot agree on the validity of these kinds of tests, as it is debatable whether the personality traits that are featured in the personality tests are actually predictors of job performance (Hogan and Holland, 2003; Morgeson et al., 2007; Ones et al., 2007; Salgado and de Fruyt, 2005; Tett and Christiansen, 2007).

Despite the discussions pertaining to the personality tests' ability to predict job performance, the use of personality tests and other digital HR-tools has skyrocketed in the last decade or two. As of 2019, the global market of personality assessment reached $2.3 billion in revenue with the number expected to rise to $6.5 billion in 2027 (Esbin 2021). As the use of digital HR-tools has become more popular, the number of different suppliers has increased as well. With multiple test providers to choose from, the test providers have to differentiate themselves from their competitors in the market in order to secure customers. However, despite the increase in the use of personality assessment tools in HR-related activities and the increasing number of test providers, the long-standing debate about the validity of such tools persists (Forbes 2019). This means that in addition to differentiating themselves from their competitors, marketers also have to deal with how potential customers value the legitimacy of their products. This is due to the fact that the test providers will naturally be pro-personality assessment, which is not necessarily the case for their potential customers. As a result of this, the test providers will have to convince their potential customers that their products are legitimate, i.e. that there is an authoritative, moral or rational basis for the existence of their products (van Leeuwen 2007), despite the ongoing debate regarding whether personality traits can be predictors of job performance.

One way to convince your potential customers that your products are legitimate is through your marketing initiatives. As a result of the rise in use of social media, creating free digital content such as blogs, articles and videos that creates value for potential customers has become a popular way to create and maintain relationships with customers. As such, social media allows the test providers to post content through which they can provide their potential customers with new or confirmatory perspectives on the validity and usefulness of personality assessment in recruitment. In order to investigate how the test providers present such perspectives, I have formulated the following research question:

How do The Predictive Index and Criteria Corp create legitimacy for the use of personality assessment tools in recruitment through their content marketing?

This research question contains some elements that need to be elaborated before moving on to the philosophical and theoretical perspectives of this research. First, the main focus of this research is to investigate how The Predictive Index and Criteria Corp create legitimacy for their products and services through the language used in the articles posted on their LinkedIn profiles. This means that the research will primarily focus on the linguistic and rhetorical perspectives of the marketing material rather than analysing the strategic elements of the marketing itself, such as posting frequency and promotional tactics. Second, although it is not the main focus, remarks about how the perspectives on the legitimacy of personality assessment in recruitment provided by the companies will affect how they differentiate themselves from their competitors will be made. This is due to the fact that the strategic aspects of marketing cannot be neglected completely. Thus, this research will investigate the following: 1) How the construction of language creates legitimacy for the use of personality assessment in recruitment, 2) How this affects differentiation of the involved companies and 3) How the findings affect the overall discussion regarding whether personality assessment should be used in recruitment or not. This is especially interesting as the findings of this research might provide new perspectives on the debate of the relevancy of using personality assessments in recruitment.

In order to answer the research question, I will provide a description of the philosophical perspectives of this research in order to depict how the world and its creation is understood, and how this understanding affects the outcome of the research. Then, I will review relevant literature pertaining to the validity of personality assessments in order to understand the perspectives of both sides of the discussion. Afterwards, I will account for the theoretical and methodological approach to provide the reader with an understanding of which theories will be drawn upon as well as how data has been collected and how it will be analysed. Then, I will conduct the actual analysis of the collected data and present the most relevant findings. Afterwards, I will discuss the findings and how they provide insight into the overall discussion regarding whether personality assessment has a place within recruitment or not.

2. Philosophy of Science

In the following chapter, I will account for the philosophy of science adopted in this paper, i.e. social constructivism. This will be done by first accounting for the ontological perspectives of social constructivism in order to provide an understanding of how the world is perceived, before accounting for the epistemological perspectives of social constructivism in order to provide an understanding of how knowledge about the world is created. Last, the possibilities and limitations of adopting social constructivism as the philosophy of science will be discussed.

2.1 Ontology

The ontological perspectives of every philosophy of science pertains to the way in which the world is perceived and how things exist. For social constructivists, reality and everything within it is a social construction, meaning that meaning is given to the world through social interactions (Holm 2018, 142). In most social interactions, the understanding of the world is constituted by the language which the participants use to communicate with each other. Given that the participants engage in interactions through the use of language, language constitutes our understanding of the world and its parts.

Based on the understanding that the world is constituted by language, American social constructivist Kenneth Gergen presents four assumptions that, according to him, are the essence of social constructivism: (1) There is not necessarily a connection between the world and our notions of the world, (2) Our description of the world originates from the social relations that we partake in, (3) Through our understanding of the world, we form our own future, and (4) Reflexions about our understanding of the world is important for our future wellbeing (Holm 2018, 144). Of these four assumptions, assumption (1) will be used to further describe the ontology of social constructivism, as it pertains to our understanding of the world, and assumption (2) will be used to account for the epistemology of social constructivism, as it pertains to how our understanding of the world is created. With regard to assumptions (3) and (4), these will not be used to describe the overall ontological and epistemological perspectives, as they are understood as in-depth versions of assumptions (1) and (2).

In terms of assumption (1), this assumption relates to how the use of language is constituting the world. However, as language is viewed as metaphoric in social constructivism, language does not reflect the world itself. This is due to the fact that we, through the use of language, give meaning to the world, and thus, language cannot give meaning to the world on its own, as we give meaning to the words as we use them (Holm 2018, 145). This phenomenon can be described through the process of identification. In order to identify that a given test is a personality test, we must first be able to identify both what a test is and what personality is. Our understanding of these terms is constituted by the use of language in the social interactions we have engaged in through time. It is only because we have engaged in these social interactions that we have an understanding that a test is a line of questions ending with a result that might determine outcomes in the future, or that personality is a combination of behavioural patterns in a person. Thus, our understanding of the world is constituted by the language we use when engaging in social interactions.

2.2 Epistemology

Moving on to the epistemology of social constructivism, Gergen's second assumption stated that our understanding of the world originates from the social relations we partake in (Holm 2018, 144). This assumption is based on the fact that depending on which social interactions we engage in, we will develop different understandings of the world. Like assumption (1), this assumption is also focused on the use of language, as language is constituting of our understanding of the world. The fact that our understanding of the world is dependent on the social interactions we partake in throughout our lives is the reason why everybody has a different understanding of the world, as there are no two people who have been part of all the same social interactions.

However, given the fact that our understanding of the world is constituted by the social interactions we partake in throughout our lives, there is a possibility that our understanding of the world will change over time, as we engage in more social interactions. The reason for this is that within every social interaction there is a chance that the language we are exposed to alters our own understanding of the world. This further means that our understanding of the world is under constant development.

Part of understanding the world is understanding what truth is and how it is obtained. In social constructivism, it is impossible to obtain the objective truth as every person on earth has engaged in different social interactions, meaning that we have different understandings of what is true and what is not. However, this does not mean that truth does not exist within social constructivism, just that it is not objective. On the other hand, truth within social constructivism is subjective. This means that every person will have their own perception of what is true, which has been constituted by the social interactions they have already been part of and which will continue to be constituted by social interactions in the future.

2.3 Possibilities and Limitations

Now that the ontological and epistemological perspectives of social constructivism have been accounted for, I will now move on to discussing the possibilities and limitations of social constructivism and how this will affect my research.

By taking a social constructivist stand, I will be able to investigate how the test providers see the world through the language used to market their products. By using language to describe their products, the test providers communicate their truth about the products ability to help practitioners select the right candidates for open positions. As these products are marketed on social media using content marketing, the test provider and the buyer or practitioner engage in an online interaction through the content produced by the test providers. In this case, content can be either linguistic or visual, however both are interpretations of language and thus meaning. The reason why this scenario is a social interaction is that as the buyer engages with the content produced by test providers, their perception of the specific product or personality assessment tools in general is challenged. Thus, the buyer's perception of the truth about the product or personality assessment tools in general is altered in a way that might lead to further interaction and sales.

However, as truth is subjective in social constructivism, I will not be able to provide the truth about how my results will affect the overall understanding of the validity of personality assessment tools etc. I will only be able to provide new perspectives on the subject, which in turn might lead to a change in understanding of the truth in other people. Further, as I am researching how the test providers create legitimacy for their products and services, I will not be able to draw conclusions pertaining to how the practitioners interpret the usefulness of such tools.

With regard to the available research methods, most quantitative research methods will not be appropriate to include in this research, as statistical data does not reflect social interaction in ways that are possible to investigate through language. On the other hand, qualitative research methods are appropriate in this research, as social constructivism allows me to investigate how social interactions have consequences pertaining to our understanding of reality. Therefore, this research will focus on qualitative research methods and qualitative data.

Last, it is important to note that the personality tests in question are created with a positivist understanding of the world as specific answers to the questions belong in specific categories. That being said, the fact that there is a discussion pertaining to the relevance of using personality assessment in recruitment indicates that people have different understandings of the phenomenon, which can be perceived through content marketing in this case. Thus, although the tests themselves are of positivist nature, the discussions regarding their relevance can be investigated from a social constructivist perspective.

3. Literature Review

In the following chapter, I will review the existing research conducted on the topics of personality assessment in recruitment and B2B marketing. This is done in order to explore areas in which this research can contribute with new perspectives and knowledge. The reason for reviewing literature on these two topics is that within the marketing situation which is the overall focus of this research, the personality assessment tools are the products being marketed in a B2B context. The chapter will be split into three parts in which each of the focuses of this literature review are presented before concluding on how this research adds to the existing knowledge within the fields of personality assessment tools and B2B marketing.

The first part of the literature review will focus on the different attitudes towards the validity of personality assessment in relation to predicting job performance, as well as the validity of personality assessment in relation to faking. The reason for conducting literature reviews on these specific subjects is that within the field of personality assessment these two subjects are prevalent in multiple papers. In papers by Morgeson et al. (2007), Ones et al. (2007), Salgado and de Fruyt (2005), and Tett and Christiansen (2007), the validity of personality assessment in relation to predicting job performance is the main focus, while focusing on validity of personality assessment in relation to faking is an additional argument to the overall validity of using personality assessment in personnel selection. Papers reviewed for this part of the chapter are chosen based on their overall contents, meaning that all found texts are pertaining to the subject of personality assessment in personnel selection and its implications. Further, the reviewed papers are published in journals and handbooks within relevant areas such as psychology and personnel selection. With regard to the structure of the first part of the literature review, validity in relation to job performance will be reviewed before validity in relation to faking due to the understanding that validity in relation to job performance has a greater impact on the overall validity of using personality assessment in personnel selection than validity in relation to faking does.

The second part of the literature review will focus on the recent developments within B2B marketing as well as the areas in which research has yet to be conducted. Papers reviewed for this part of the chapter are published in journals within relevant areas such as marketing, industrial marketing management, and business and industrial marketing. For this part of the literature review, developments within the understanding of different roles in B2B and digital developments will be reviewed first in order to establish the overall state of B2B research, before discussing areas which are labelled as relevant areas for future research by the authors of the reviewed literature.

3.1 Personality Assessment in Recruitment Based on Validity in Relation to Predicting Job Performance

Throughout time, the research conducted pertaining to the validity of personality assessment in relation to predicting job performance has drawn various conclusions and thus opened up for discussions among researchers. One of the first papers to provide an understanding of the validity of personality assessment was Guion and Gottier (1965), who conducted a literature review on existing literature pertaining to whether personality assessment should be used as a tool for personnel selection. Guion and Gottier concluded that there was no evidence that personality assessment tools such as generalised personality tests should be recommended as valuable tools for personnel selection (Guion and Gottier 1965, 159). Although Guion and Gottier's research were conducted by reviewing literature from the early 1950's to the early 1960's, and although their conclusions are of very little value today due to the developments within the field of research as well as the quality of the tests, their conclusions were not challenged until the early 1990's. This means that the understanding that personality assessment tools should not be used in relation to personnel selection was prevailing amongst researchers up until then (Morgeson et al. 2007, 684).

The first papers to challenge the conclusions drawn by Guion and Gottier (1965) where Barrick and Mount (1991) and Tett, Jackson and Rothstein (1991). Both of these research papers are inspired by the rise in popularity of the Five Factor Model (FFM), also known as the Big Five. The FFM splits personality into the five categories *Extraversion*, *Neuroticism, Agreeableness*, *Conscientiousness* and *Openness to Experience*. In their research, Barrick and Mount (1991) conducted a meta-analysis to investigate the validity of the Big Five for five occupational groups in order to determine the relation between some of the personality dimensions and job performance (Barrick and Mount 1991, 5). Based on their results, Barrick and Mount (1991) concluded that Conscientiousness showed consistent relations with all job performance criteria for all occupational groups, and that Extraversion was a valid predictor for two occupations involving social interaction, managers and sales (Barrick and Mount 1991, 1). Further, they concluded that both Openness to Experience and Extraversion were valid predictors for training proficiency criterion (Barrick and 1991, 1), meaning that in some cases there are benefits to incorporating personality assessment as a part of the personnel selection.

Similar to Barrick and Mount (1991), Tett, Jackson and Rothstein (1991) concluded that personality assessment has a place in personnel selection. Further, the findings of their research led to optimism that with the full potential of personality assessment in personnel selection could be realised in the future, when further research could provide a standard practice for which specific personality traits were relevant in relation to determining job performance for specific positions (Tett, Jackson and Rothstein 1991). With the research by Barrick and Mount (1991) and Tett, Jackson and Rothstein (1991) as well as the rising popularity of the Big Five, the overall understanding of the relevance of personality testing in personnel selection seems to move away from the negative perspectives provided by Guion and Gottier (1965) towards more positive understandings.

The understanding that the FFM was an acceptable indicator for job performance was further manifested by Salgado and de Fruyt (2005) who, based on a review of the literature on the FFM and the relation between personality and personnel selection, concluded that the empirical data had demonstrated that the personality variables had a strong impact on job performance (Salgado and de Fruyt 2005, 192). As part of their research, Salgado and de Fruyt (2005) confirmed the conclusions drawn by Hogan and Holland (2003), who argued that especially emotional stability (Neuroticism) and Conscientiousness were valid predictors of job performance (Salgado and de Fruyt 2005, 178).

This perspective was, however, challenged by Morgeson et al. (2007), who argued that there were multiple issues related to the use of personality assessment in personnel selection, including the fact that the validity for predicting job performance is very low. This conclusion was drawn based on a panel discussion between five prior editors of *Personnel Psychology* and the *Journal of Applied Psychology.* To support the results of the panel discussion, the researchers also conducted a meta-analysis of the validity of personality tests and cognitive ability tests. In the research, Morgeson et al. (2007) draw eight overall conclusions of which three conclusions are relevant for this part of the literature review and two other conclusions which will be elaborated further in Section 3.2. In short, the conclusions are: d) Personality tests have a low validity for predicting job performance, e) Due to this low validity, many published self-report personality tests (tests where test takers assess their own personality) should not be used for personnel selection. However, when used in combination with a cognitive ability test, the overall validity of the tests is increased, and h) Future research should focus on finding alternatives to self-report personality assessments. Thus, Morgeson et al. (2007) argued that personality tests are not a valid predictor of job performance and that these should therefore not be used in relation to personnel selection, just like Guion and Gottier had concluded in 1965.

Shortly after the publication by Morgeson et al. (2007), Tett and Christiansen (2007) and Ones et al. (2007) published responses to the research conducted by Morgeson et al. (2007) arguing that the conclusions drawn in the paper were incorrect. In their research, Tett and Christiansen (2007) conducted a meta-analysis with the purpose of proving that the validity of personality tests is higher than stated in the research by Morgeson et al. (2007). More specifically, Tett and Christiansen (2007) argue that the validity of personality tests is greatly underestimated by the calculations done in the research by Morgeson et al. (2007) as the potential validity of the test, when combined with job-relevant traits such as the Big Five, has the potential to be even higher. Based on their conclusions, Tett and Christiansen (2007) encourage the continued use of personality assessment tools in personnel selection (Tett and Christiansen 2007, 979).

Similar to Tett and Christiansen, Ones et al. (2007) concluded the following: "The accumulated evidence supports the use of self-report personality scales in organizational decision making, including personnel selection" (1010).

However, as it was pointed out by Morgeson et al. (2007), the validity in relation to predicting job performance is not the only possible downside to the use of personality assessment tools in recruitment. Large parts of Morgeson et al. (2007)'s arguments are related to the fact that self-report tests are subject to being faked by applicants, which could further lower the validity of personality tests in general (Morgeson et al. 2007, 720). This will be elaborated further in the following section.

3.2 Personality Assessment in Recruitment Based on Validity in Relation to Faking

As mentioned above, Morgeson et al. (2007) have identified faking as another implication of the use of personality assessment tools in recruitment. These implications are rooted in the fact that as applicants take self-report tests, they will report on their own personality. Morgeson et al. (2007) argue that with self-report tests, applicants will in some cases be able to identify which answers are related to specific outcomes, which makes it beneficial for the candidate to choose an answer that is not necessarily in line with their actual personality in order to appear as a better match for the position. It is further argued that the only thing stopping the applicants from faking their answers is their conscience and perception of honesty (Morgeson et al. 2007, 685). Based on their research, Morgeson et al. (2007) provide two relevant conclusions in relation to faking: a) Faking on self-report personality tests should be expected, and it probably cannot be avoided, although there is some disagreement among the authors on the extent to which faking is problematic, b) Faking or the ability to fake may not always be bad. In fact, it may be job-related or at least socially adaptive in some situations (Morgeson et al 2007, 720).

The claims stated in conclusion a) are partly challenged by Griffith, Chmielowski, and Yoshita (2007), a research on the frequency of applicant faking behaviour. The purpose of this research was to determine if applicants could fake self-report tests, if they did indeed fake the tests and determining the impact of faking. Similar to Morgeson et al (2007), it was concluded that applicants did fake their responses in some instances. However, contrary to the conclusions drawn by Morgeson et al. (2007), Griffith, Chmielowski, and Yoshita (2007) argue that faking behaviour does have an impact on the ranking order of candidates. Griffith, Chmielowski, and Yoshita (2007) found that when the selection ratio was 50 percent, 31 percent of the test takers would not have been in the hiring range, had they answered the questions honestly. Further, when lowering the selection ratio, the percentage of selected applicants who had faked their tests rose to upwards of 66 percent, indicating that within this research applicant faking had significant influence on the ranking of the candidates (Griffith, Chmielowski, and Yoshita 2007, 350). This conclusion is supported by Tett and Christiansen (2007), who argue that prior research indicates that applicant faking not only has an influence on research specific situations, but also that the validity of personality tests does suffer in real selection situations when applicants fake (Tett and Christiansen 2007, 988). This understanding is further supported by (Tett and Simonet 2021).

Contrary to conclusion b) in Morgeson et al. (2007), Tett and Christiansen (2007) argue that there is no clear evidence that applicants faking answers on personality tests have any positively valued job-related characteristics, and that Morgeson et al. (2007) lacks rational grounding in coming to this conclusion (Tett and Christiansen 2007, 988).

Summary

To summarise the literature review on the validity of personality assessment in recruitment, there are varying understandings regarding the trustworthiness of the tests. The main concern found in the research relates to the seemingly low validity of personality as a predictor for job performance. This view, however, is challenged by the understanding that especially two of the Big Five personality traits (Conscientiousness and Neuroticism) are valid predictors of job performance. Putting the findings of this literature review into perspective to the rising size of the personality test market (Esbin

2021), it seems that the demand for personality tests is rising and thus that practitioners see great value in incorporating personality tests as part of their recruitment process. Although it has become apparent that some applicants fake their answers, this does not seem to affect the practitioner's understanding of the value of personality assessment tools given the recent developments on the market of such tools. However, this study will not attempt to determine how the practitioners perceive the usability of personality tests, as this does not fall within the boundaries of the research question.

Further, the findings in this literature review are a result of the ways in which the prior research has been conducted. Almost all of the above conclusions are drawn based on quantitative research methods, meaning that in terms of drawing conclusions on the overall validity of personality tests as a predictor for job performance, very little qualitative research has been conducted. This further indicates that these papers are focusing more on determining the mathematical or statistical validity of personality assessment rather than consulting practitioners for their insights regarding the value of personality assessment in recruitment. Furthermore, as the reviewed literature focuses on the quantitative aspects of validity, the research field leaves a gap for qualitative understandings of personality assessment in recruitment to be explored.

Another point that needs to be made pertains to the fact that most of the research conducted on the validity of personality assessment tools is based on the FFM's understanding of personality. This however, is not the case for many of the personality tests on the market, as these are also based on understandings of personality like the *16 Personality Factor (16pf)*, *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)* and *DISC* etc., leaving another gap in the research to be explored. This gap however will not be the focus of this research, as this research focuses on personality assessment tools in general rather than specific understandings of personality.

3.3 Digital B2B Marketing

Moving on to the second part of the literature review, this section will provide a short description of the recent developments within B2B marketing before providing insight into how prior research conducted on B2B marketing has provided areas in which further research is needed.

Developments Within B2B Marketing

According to Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995) and Wilke and Moore (2003), the field of B2B marketing has developed from focusing on the transactional and economic relationship between the different parties of the sales process to focusing on the relational aspects of the sales process. Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995) and Wilke and Moore (2003) have different interpretations on the process of B2B becoming relational as opposed to transactional, nevertheless both papers seem to agree that before the 1980's, the relationship between parties was merely transactional, whereas after the 1980's, the relationship is more personal. These understandings are supported by Hadjikhani and LaPlaca (2013), who concluded that the developments within B2B and B2B marketing has been in an evolutionary process, which will continue in the future. This point is further elaborated by Cartwright, Liu, and Raddats (2021) who present the idea that social media could serve as a facilitator for these B2B relationships to be created and maintained, simultaneously acknowledging the findings by the Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995) and Wilke and Moore (2003) in relation to how the B2B field has developed from transactional to relational.

Although considerate development within the roles B2B marketing has taken place, the field of research in general is very underdeveloped when compared to its counterpart B2C marketing. This is especially relevant within the field of digital marketing. In their review of literature in the two fields, Hofacker et al. (2020) concluded that the study of digital marketing in a B2B context has been given much less attention by researchers than the same area in a B2C context has (Hofacker et al. 2020). In the same paper, it is further argued that digital marketing within B2B is a promising field, which should be explored further. Similar conclusions are drawn in research by Cartwright, Liu, and Raddats (2021), Cortez and Johnston (2017), and Lilien, Petersen, and Wuyts (2022).

Future Development Within the Field of Digital B2B Marketing

As mentioned above, multiple studies propose areas of digital B2B marketing in which further research should be conducted. In the following section, I will account for these areas and how these are relevant in relation to this research.

Based on a panel discussion, Cortez and Johnston (2017) propose six main B2B marketing research streams that academia may follow to resolve real problems that B2B marketers will face in the future: *innovation*, *customer journey and relationship value*, *data analytics*, *harnessing technology*, *marketing-finance interface and revenue growth*, and *industry context or ecosystem* (Cortez and Johnston 2017, 95). In relation to this research, especially harnessing technology is relevant, as this area pertains to complications that B2B marketer will encounter when digitalising their businesses. This could for example be when marketing their digital platforms or engaging with potential customers through social media.

Similar conclusions were drawn by Hofacker et al. (2020), who argued that digital media, such as social media, could be a crucial enabler for B2B branding. The researchers further argue that digitalisation has transformed the way that B2B companies can distinguish themselves from their competitors and the way they B2B branding is managed. However, very little is known about the B2B part of branding, which is why Hofacker et al. (2020) refers to this part of digital marketing as a focus for researcher to explore in the future. Regarding this specific research, Hofacker et al.'s (2020) understanding that social media can be an important part of digital B2B marketing will be the main take away, as this research focuses on content marketing and the products rather than the brand of the chosen companies. However, Hofacker et al.'s (2020) understanding that companies can use social media to differentiate themselves from competitors will be included.

The understanding that social media has the potential of being of great value to B2B marketers is equally encouraged in the research by Cartwright, Liu, and Raddats (2021). In addition to the understanding of using social media in B2B context, the researchers added that engagement and interaction between salespeople and customers via social media platforms may lead to increased interorganisational trust and commitment (Cartwright, Liu, and Raddats 2021, 41), which further underlines the potential value of B2B organisations utilising social media. This claim is however challenged by Brosan (2012), who argues that although marketers believe social media to be beneficial in achieving sales objectives, the buyers use social media less than the marketers realise. In addition to this, Brosan (2012) claims that buyers instead rely on supplier websites and email marketing (Brosan 20212, 156). Yet, the publication date of this paper and the recent developments within social media use must be considered, when determining the contemporary relevance of the arguments presented in the paper. Due to the rather new publication date of the research by Cartwright, Liu, and Raddats (2021), their conclusions would seem more relevant to the contemporary state of social media.

Based on their literature review, Cartwright, Liu, and Raddats (2021) argue that there are multiple gaps in the research conducted regarding digital B2B marketing on social media. One of their main arguments pertains to how the reviewed literature tends to overgeneralise social media platforms, and thus, the research fails to acknowledge the different dynamics, interaction tools and strategic uses of different platforms (Cartwright, Liu, and Raddats 2021, 45). Moreover, the researchers found that there is a lack of qualitative research in the reviewed literature, as only 28 percent of the reviewed literature utilised exclusively qualitative research methods (Cartwright, Liu, and Raddats 2021, 39). Lastly, Cartwright, Liu, and Raddats (2021) concluded that there was a gap in the research pertaining to sales and the value of content creation on social media. In order to avoid the overgeneralisation of the strategic uses and communicative purposes mentioned by Cartwright, Liu, and Raddats (2021), this research will specifically focus on one social media platform, i.e. LinkedIn, as this platform is seen as the most prominent social media platform for professional and business use (LinkedIn 2022). This will be further elaborated in Section 5.1. Of the research reviewed by Cartwright, Liu, and Raddats (2021) only 2.9% of the research was conducted specifically on LinkedIn, leaving another gap to be explored further. In relation to the other gaps found in the existing research, this research will add to the qualitative research and touch upon the creation of content on social media.

Before concluding on this literature review, I found it fitting to review the existing research on LinkedIn, specifically the research referred to by Cartwright, Liu, and Raddats (2021). The first paper, Quinton and Wilson (2016), investigates the transactional vs. relational approaches to B2B in the wine industry, concluding that with regard to information sharing, both approaches are used. This study is the only research adopting exclusively qualitative research methods.

The second paper, Buratti, Parola, and Satta (2018), is a quantitative study on the adoption of different social media. Buratti, Parola, and Satta (2018) concluded that of the 60 analysed organisations, 93.3% used LinkedIn.

The third paper, Martins et al. (2016), is a mixed methods study on how firms determine which social media platforms to use, presenting a model of the determination process in firms.

The fourth paper, Michaelidou, Siamagka, and Christodoulides (2011), is a mixed methods study regarding usage and barriers of social media marketing. From their research, Michaelidou, Siamagka, and Christodoulides (2011) concluded that over a quarter of the analysed organisation use social media to achieve brand objectives. However, it is also concluded that there is a lack in the use of metrics to analyse the effectiveness of social media efforts.

The last paper, Wang et al. (2016), is a quantitative study pertaining to the role of social identity in co-creation activities within online communities. It is concluded that social motivation factors significantly affect co-creation practices in online communities (Wang et al. 2016).

Summary

Based on the reviewed literature, it is obvious that the field of B2B marketing is underdeveloped when compared to B2C marketing. That being said, the reviewed literature agrees that B2B marketing is a promising area of research, which should be explored further. Moreover, the reviewed literature agrees that especially the digital aspects of B2B marketing have a relevance within future research. Further, the research indicates that social media is promising for businesses to use as a marketing tool. However, for now, very little research has been conducted in that area. When reviewing the literature on digital B2B marketing, it became clear that there is a lack of qualitative studies. This is also the case in relation to the research focusing solely on LinkedIn, as only one of the five reviewed studies were exclusively qualitative. Lastly, all of the reviewed literature seems to agree that in terms of B2B marketing in general, the roles of the involved parties are more relational in character than they were in the past.

3.4 Limiting the Gaps

In the following section, I will account for how this research will add to the existing knowledge in both of the fields which have been explored in this literature review. This will be done by putting this research into perspective to the gaps in prior research which have been exposed above. The gaps that this research will limit are pertaining to B2B in general, the relational aspect of B2B marketing, the use of digital platforms and social media in a B2B context, the lack of qualitative studies and the validity of personality assessment tools.

In relation to B2B in general and the relational aspects of B2B marketing, this research will limit the gaps by conducting research within the field of B2B marketing rather than B2C marketing. As this field is underdeveloped, this research will add to the knowledge of this research area by coming to new conclusions within the field. As mentioned in Section 3.3, the roles within the B2B setting have become more relational. A field which will be further investigated by researching relations on social media.

With regard to the digital platforms and social media, this research will limit the gap in existing research by adding to the knowledge within these fields. This will be done by conducting research focusing on the marketing of HR-platforms and other digital personality assessment tools. As such, new knowledge on the implementations of digital aspects of B2B marketing will be generated. In relation to social media, it has become clear that very little research has been conducted on B2B marketing on such platforms. Moreover, the field of marketing personality assessment tools on social media in a B2B context is a field that needs further attention as well. This research will add to the existing knowledge pertaining to B2B marketing on social media and the marketing of personality assessment tools in a B2B context by investigating how legitimacy for such tools is created through content marketing on LinkedIn.

Moving on to the perspective of qualitative and quantitative research methods, this research will limit the gaps in qualitive research within the field of personality assessment tools and B2B marketing. In both cases, prior research has predominantly been conducted using quantitative research methods, meaning that knowledge generated through qualitative research methods is limited. By utilising qualitative research methods, this research will attempt to limit the knowledge gap within these fields. This is especially relevant with regard to the validity of personality assessment tools in recruitment, as this field is dominated by quantitative research.

4. Theoretical Approach

Now that the existing literature on the relevant subjects have been accounted for, I will move on to presenting the theoretical approach adopted in this research, as well as accounting for its relevance. This will be done by presenting the specific theories that I intend to include in the research, presenting how the different theories complement each other and the overall theme, as well as how the selected theories aid my research in limiting the existing gaps in prior research.

As described in Chapter 2, the language that we use when we partake in social interaction is what constitutes and challenges our understanding of the world. Thus, the appropriate theoretical perspective for this research lies within linguistic theories. For this specific research, I have chosen to work with theory on legitimation. However, before accounting for these theoretical perspectives, I will introduce content marketing in order to establish the purpose of this marketing form.

4.1 Content Marketing

Content marketing is a digital marketing form, which revolves around the creation and distribution of content, mostly on social media. The Content Marketing Institute defines content marketing as:

"Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience — and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action" (Content Marketing Institute 2012).

From this definition, we can derive certain things about the purpose and usefulness of content marketing. First, the most essential thing with content marketing is the creation and distribution of content. In most cases, 'content' contains written, visual and audio elements as the content posted on social media can take different forms depending on what is allowed by the social media platforms.

Second, the definition indicates that content marketing is a pull strategy, meaning that it is intended to inspire the audience to enter the company's website or another intended landing page in order for the audience to learn more about the company's products and services rather than pushing a specific product or service directly to the audience. According to Du Plessis (2017), content marketing is used as an alternative to 'connecting with the users and building relationships with customers instead of simply informing about new products and promotions', which emphasises that content marketing is a pull strategy. Further, the fact that content marketing is used as an alternative to building relationships explains why it has a place within B2B marketing. By providing the audience with valuable information, the companies are engaged in the relational dimension of B2B marketing rather than the transactional dimension.

Third, the definition states that retention of the defined audience also plays a big part of content marketing. The intention is that the consistent production and distribution of valuable content keeps the audience interested in the company and its products and services. For example, by consistently providing content on how any recruiter could improve the recruitment process in their own organisation, the hope is that recruiters will return to the company's page with the hopes of finding other valuable information, which will increase the company's chances of converting the recruiter's interest in the content into sales of their actual products and services.

As the companies manage the contents of the content they produce and distribute, they can also tailor their marketing efforts to align with the desired market position. As such, conducting content marketing will aid companies in positioning themselves in a specific part of the market (Square 2021). Moreover, through the production and distribution of content companies are able to differentiate themselves from their competitors by producing content that add more value or adds value within areas that specific customers are requesting.

To put the above into perspective to social constructivism and language, the company provides content, which is a representation of the company's understanding of the world, to their audience. By engaging with the content, the audience is then subject to a possible change in their perception of the world, as the language used to create the content has provided them with new perspectives on a certain topic. In the following, I will account for the theoretical perspectives I will be interpreting the constructions of the world provided by the companies through.

4.2 Legitimation

In the following section, I will account for how theories regarding legitimation are related to content marketing as well as how this will aid me in answering the research question.

Given that there are different understandings of the ability of personality assessment tools to predict job performance and the consequences of faking, the marketers of such tools will have to legitimise the usability of their products and services. By creating and distributing content regarding the usefulness of their products and services, the test providers can present their understandings in a way which is tangible and easy to access by the audience, and thus legitimise the use of their products and services. Essentially, the purpose of legitimation is to answer the question of why this or why that. In this case 'why use personality assessment in recruitment?'.

4.2.1 Theo van Leeuwen's Legitimations

Legitimation is understood as linguistic attempts to establish and cultivate legitimacy within a given subject (van Leeuwen 2007). Theo van Leeuwen has categorised these legitimations into four major forms of legitimation, which can be used separately or in combination. These are: *Authorisation, Moral evaluation, Rationalisation* and *Mythopoesis.* Common for all of the forms of legitimation is that they are realised by linguistic resources and configurations of linguistic resources (van Leeuwen 2007, 92). In relation to this research, the different ways of creating legitimation will be used in an effort to determine how The Predictive Index and Criteria Corp establish legitimacy for their products and services and thus, personality assessment in recruitment.

Authorisation

Authorisation is the first form of legitimations and is characterised by the answer 'because I say so' or 'because so-and-so says so' to the 'why'-question. In terms of the first answer, the 'I' is someone in whom some kind of authority is vested, whereas in the second answer, the authority is vested in the 'so-and-so'. This can be things such as laws and legislations. Depending on the situation, the authority is vested in different people or things, which is why there are different kinds of authorisation (van Leeuwen 2007, 94).

The first kind of authorisation is *personal authority.* In personal authority, legitimate authority is vested in a person due to their status or role in a specific situation, for example a boss has personal authority over employees just like parents have authority over their children (van Leeuwen 2007, 94).

The second kind of authorisation is *expert authority*. In expert authority, the legitimacy is related to the expertise of a person rather than their status. This expertise can be implicitly understood or explicitly stated. This expertise however is only granted within specific areas, meaning that dentists giving financial advice will not be regarded as experts within the field, as they operate outside of their perceived field of expertise (van Leeuwen 2007, 94).

The third kind of authorisation is *role model authority.* The idea with role model authority is that we as people follow the example of role models and opinion leaders. The fact that this role model adopts a certain behaviour or is of a certain belief is enough for the role model's followers to legitimise a certain behaviour or belief (van Leeuwen 2007, 94). These role models can be people like celebrities or similar people who are generally looked up to.

Moving on to the fourth kind of authorisation, *impersonal authority,* this kind of authority is not vested in a specific person. Rather, it is vested in laws, rules and regulations. Thus, the answer to the 'why'-question is 'because the law says so'. Impersonal authority can be stated both implicitly and explicitly. In cases where impersonal authority is explicitly stated, words such as 'law', 'rule' or 'policy' are mentioned. In cases where impersonal authority is implicitly stated, words such as 'mandatory' or 'obligatory' are mentioned, as this kind of words indicate that laws or rules makes something mandatory and/or obligatory (van Leeuwen 2007, 96).

Next, the fifth kind of authorisation is *the authority of tradition*. In this kind of authorisation, authority is vested in the fact that this is what we have always done. In theory, this argument should be enough to not be challenged (Van Leeuwen 2007, 96). However, it is important to note that for this kind of authority what is the custom depends on the social interactions that people have partaken in during their lives. As such, people will have different interpretations of the meaning of 'what we normally do'.

The last kind of authorisation is *the authority of conformity.* The main argument within this kind of authorisation is 'because that is what everybody else does' or similar statements. Thus, a specific action or belief is legitimised through the fact that if everybody else does it, it must be okay to act in a certain way or to be of a specific belief (Van Leeuwen 2007, 97).

Moral Evaluation

Moral evaluation legitimation is based on our moral values. These moral values can be expressed through the use of adjectives such as 'good' and 'bad', but they can also be expressed through specific discourses of moral value. However, the discourses are not always explicitly stated. Rather, the discourses surrounding moral evaluation are implicitly expressed through indications of things being 'healthy' and 'normal'. These adjectives trigger a moral concept, meaning that the adjectives are used as a legitimisation and justification of corresponding though or action (van Leeuwen 2007, 97).

The first kind of moral evaluation is *evaluation,* which is strongly related to evaluative adjectives. These adjectives are intended to describe an attitude towards feelings that the receiver might have, for example expressing that it is okay to feel a certain way about something (van Leeuwen 2007, 97).

The second kind of moral evaluation is *abstraction*, which is the act of abstracting a specific action in order to 'moralise' it, so that you create a distance between the moral value and the discourse it is linked to (van Leeuwen 2007, 97). For example, by describing the use of personality assessment tool in recruiting as a way for recruiters to get to know the applicant before meeting with them, the use of personality assessment tools is placed within a context of connection and relationship development rather than the negative connotations that might follow the use of such tools.

The last kind of moral evaluation is *analogies.* Analogies are manifested through comparisons made in order to establish legitimisation or de-establish legitimisation. Depending on whether the sender of the message seeks to establish or de/establish legitimisation, they will compare the subject to something positive or negative (van Leeuwen 2007, 100).

Rationalisation

In short, rationalisation legitimates actions by use of logic. This logic is either shown through reference to goals, uses and effects, or the natural order of things. In terms of *instrumental rationalisation*, this kind of rationalisation focuses on the how purpose is constructed. Purpose can be constructed through either *goal-orientation, means-orientation* or *effect orientation.* In goal-orientation, purposes are created through conscious or unconscious motives, aims or goals, which can be expressed through the use of a purpose clause using 'in order to' or similar indicators. In means-orientation, purpose is created through performing a specific action in order to achieve a specific outcome, which can be expressed through clauses like ‘by means of’ or ‘by doing this, I will achieve that’. Last, in effect orientation, purpose is emphasised by focusing on the outcome of an action, meaning that purpose is seen as the result of the result of an action. This can be expressed through result-clauses containing wording like ‘so that’ or ‘that way’ (van Leeuwen 2007, 101-103).

With regard to theoretical rationalisation, this kind of rationalisation revolves around the natural order of things, and the explicit presentations of such orders. The first kind of theoretical rationalisation is *definition,* in which two activities are linked by either attributive words like ‘is’ and ‘constitutes’ or significative words like ‘means’ or ‘symbolises’. (van Leeuwen 2007, 104).

The second kind of theoretical rationalisation is *explanation*. In explanation, the focus is on what is natural for the actor performing an action to do in a certain situation. Thus, the answer to the ‘why’ is ‘because doing it this way is natural to the actor’ (van Leeuwen 2007, 104).

The last form of theoretical rationalisation presented by Van Leeuwen is *predictions*, in which a prediction about an outcome of a situation is made (van Leeuwen 2007, 104). Predictions are subject to individual interpretations as different experiences will change the way in which people predict the outcomes of the same situation.

Mythopoesis

Mythopoesis pertains to how legitimation is created through storytelling. In general, mythopoesis creates legitimation through either *moral tales* or *cautionary tales.* In moral tales, the protagonist is rewarded for engaging in social practices in the correct way or restoring the correct order of things. On the other hand, in cautionary tales, the protagonist ends up in unpleasant situations due to not conforming to the norms of social practices (van Leeuwen 2007, 106).

Summary

By including the theoretical perspectives by Theo van Leeuwen, I will be able to gain insight into how The Predictive Index and Criteria Corp create legitimacy for their products and services, and thus the use of personality assessment tools in recruitment. Furthermore, by investigating the linguistic creation of legitimacy, I will limit the knowledge gaps in the prior research, as this approach allows for qualitative understanding and creation of the world.

5. Methodology

In the following chapter, I will account for the methods used in this research. This will be done by first presenting the method of data collection, as well as describing the collected data, before presenting the method of data analysis.

5.1 Method of Data Collection

In the following sections, I will account for the methods used to collect the data for this research and present the data that has been collected. First, I will account for the approach to data collection on social media as well as the criteria that providers of the data and the data itself must meet to in order to be considered eligible for selection. Second, I will present the data that has been collected using the described methods of data collection. This section will also include an evaluation of how the collected data will aid me in answering the research question.

Approach to Data Collection

When collecting data from social media, there are a number of questions researchers need to address before actually collecting the data. These questions are related to single-platform vs. multi-platform, criteria for data collection and the amount of data collected (Mayr and Weller 2017, 7). In terms of the question of collecting data on one single platform or to collect data on multiple platforms, researchers are in most cases guided by their research question. As this research aims to investigate how B2B companies create legitimacy for the use of personality assessment tools in recruitment through content marketing specifically on LinkedIn, the obvious social media platform to collect data from is LinkedIn. Furthermore, as the comparative parts of this study investigate the differences in legitimation on LinkedIn, it is only relevant to collect data from this platform. Had the study however been a comparative study of one company across different social media platforms, the data would have been gathered from multiple platforms. The reason for choosing LinkedIn as the preferred social media is that the platform is the leading social media with regard to business and business relations (LinkedIn 2022). As such, LinkedIn is perceived as the best platform for B2B marketers to reach potential customers. This is due to the purpose with which users access the platform. Contrary to users of other social media platforms, LinkedIn users access the platform with the purpose of nurturing professional connections and thus develop as professionals.

With regard to the type of data that can be gathered on LinkedIn, data on this platform can consist of everything from text and articles to pictures and video. This means that LinkedIn can be an appropriate source for data collection for both qualitative and quantitative research. For this research, LinkedIn is specifically beneficial as the possibilities for qualitative data collection and the purpose of the platform allows me to gather relevant data pertaining to the research question. However, in some cases, data is hidden behind a paywall making it less accessible to the general user. In such instances, the researcher will have to determine whether to access the data by paying for an upgraded profile or find data elsewhere.

Another benefit of collecting data on LinkedIn is that the character limit on posts is up to 3000 characters depending on the type of profile (Johnson 2022). Thus, the companies are able to provide a substantial description of the contents of their content marketing, allowing users to get an idea of what kind of content they are about to engage with.

Criteria for Selecting Companies

Now that it has been established why data will be gathered from LinkedIn rather than other social media platforms, I will move to on the criteria for selecting the data, which have been set in accordance with the approach to data collection on social media by Mayr and Weller (2017). Mayr and Weller (2017) argue that when collecting data on social media, you either collect data based on user accounts, keywords or metadata (timeframe, language and format etc.) or a combination of these. For this research, I will collect data using a combination of all three. First, I will find relevant user profiles by first determining whether the profile belongs to a company that provides products and services related to personality assessment. This is done by looking for keywords such as 'personality assessment tools', 'pre-employment testing software' and 'personality test' in the description of the company profile.

When it has been determined that a given company fits these criteria, I use metadata-specific criteria to determine whether the company is eligible for selection. These criteria are language and format. With regard to language, the companies' posts and attached content must be written in English. By setting this criterion, I automatically exclude non-international and non-English speaking organisations, which is important as this research revolves around English-speaking organisations. With regard to format, the company profiles must display that the company engages in content marketing that includes articles, as these are the desired form of data. The reason for articles being the desired form of data is that articles contain large amounts of linguistic data while automatically pulling readers into the posting company's website, meaning that it is easy for the readers to access other pieces of content or valuable information and thus, articles also fulfil the purpose of content marketing.

Additionally, a keyword-specific criterion was set in order to ensure that the articles were of relevance to the research. This criterion states that the company page must show a substantial amount of such articles relating to the use of personality assessment in order to be considered eligible for selection. After applying the criteria to relevant company profiles, the following two companies were considered the only companies eligible for selection: The Predictive Index (PI) and Criteria Corp (CC). Other relevant companies were mainly excluded due to lack of posts on the companies' LinkedIn-profiles. Of the companies with an adequate amount of posted content, companies that were not selected were excluded due to lack of articles pertaining to relevant subjects.

PI is an American-based company specialising in pre-employment testing software. The company was founded in 1955, and their behavioural assessment has been through nearly 500 validation studies since then. PI's products include employment hiring tools such as behavioural assessment and cognitive assessment, team dynamics tools, management development tools and employee engagement surveys all in one platform (The Predictive Index 2023).

CC is also an American-based company specialised in pre-employment testing software. The company was founded in 2006 and has since then delivered more than 40 million tests. Their products include different kinds of assessments such as personality, cognitive and emotional etc. (Criteria Corp 2023).

To compare the two companies, they are both providers of pre-employment testing software. In most cases they provide the same kind of assessments (behavioural, cognitive). However, both companies provide tests that the other organisation does not. For example, PI provides a team performance assessment that allows users to create stronger teams based on the personality of the members of the team. Furthermore, CC provides an emotional intelligence assessment that measures emotional perception and understanding. Another similarity between the companies is that you are provided with a platform to keep track of your candidates and employees when buying a test from these companies.

Criteria for Selecting Pieces of Content Marketing

Now that the two companies have been found, I will move on to accounting for the criteria that an article must live up to in order to be considered eligible for selection. Again, this process is dictated by Mayr and Weller's (2017) principles of collecting data on social media.

However, before moving into Mayr and Weller's principles, one superior criterion is set. The most important criterion for the articles is that it is part of a LinkedIn-post by PI or CC or that the articles can be found through links in other articles. This means that the LinkedIn-posts are seen as a gateway to access the articles produced by the companies and thus, the following criteria are set for the individual articles rather than the individual posts.

In relation to the criteria for selecting an article, keyword- and metadata-specific criteria are set. The metadata-specific criteria are divided into 'format' and 'time'. With regard to format, pieces of content marketing will only be considered eligible for selection if they are presented as articles. Additionally, the articles must be written by the companies themselves and be posted on the companies' websites. This criterion is set in order ensure that all selected pieces of data are the same kind of content marketing, and to ensure that the texts are produced by the companies. The reason for choosing articles rather than videos and other forms of content marketing is that articles allow for exclusively linguistic analysis, which is not the case with other kinds of content marketing. This is relevant as the theories and methods adopted in this research rely on the analysis of linguistic data.

The criterion related to time is set in order to ensure that all of the chosen data is from the same time period. I have set this criterion as this research investigates the current state of content marketing on LinkedIn rather than how the approach to content marketing on LinkedIn has changed over time. For this research, the timeframe is one year from the day of data collection (March 31, 2023). The reason for choosing one year as opposed to a shorter amount of time is that although the companies post content marketing frequently, only a limited number of posts fit all the set criteria, meaning that if the timeframe was shortened, inadequate amounts of data would have been collected. The reason for not extending the timeframe to two years is that adequate amounts of data was found within the set timeframe.

Moving on to keywords, the criteria for selecting an article are similar to the keywords pertaining to the criteria for selecting a company. As such, the articles must revolve around topics like 'personality assessment tools', 'personality test' and similar terms or the usability of the companies' products.

This criterion is set in order to ensure that the found data fits within the scope of the research. As such, articles that fit the metadata-specific criteria will not be selected, unless they pertain to the listed topics.

Presentation of Collected Data

Now that the criteria for data selection have been accounted for, I will move on the presenting the data that has been collected. I will present the data collected from PI's account first and then move on to presenting the data collected from CC's profile afterwards.

From PI's profile, the following six articles have been collected: "The surprising link between talent optimization and 2023's Big Game" (Silbert 2023) (Text A), "How to predict job success" (Mulvey 2018) (Text B), "The secrets to building a winning talent strategy" (McCann 2022) (Text C), "3 powerful reasons to collect and apply behavioral data" (Silbert 2022b) (Text D), "Behavioral data: What it is and what it means for a remote workforce" (Silbert 2022a) (Text E) and "Six steps to mitigate risk when hiring" (The Predictive Index 2021) (Text F). These articles have been compiled in Appendix A.

Text A is an article about the two teams in the Super Bowl final, as both of these teams use PI's tools, and how PI help create winning teams. Text B is an article in which PI present four ways companies can predict the success of candidates, one of which is behavioural assessment. Text C is an article about how PI's tools can help organisations create a better talent strategy. Text D is an article about the benefits of collecting behavioural data about candidates and employees. Text E is an article about behavioural data, how to use it, and how it can improve a remote workforce. Lastly, text F is an article about six ways in which organisations can mitigate risks during the hiring process.

From CC's profile, the following six articles have been collected: "How Criteria's Director of Customer Success Identifies Top Candidates" (Fox 2023) (Text G), "How Criteria's VP of Sales Uses Assessments to Find and Develop Talent" (Walsh 2023) (Text H), "The Connection Between Personality Assessments and Retention Rates" (Kellogg 2023) (Text I), "The Value of Post-Hire Assessments" (Kellogg 2022b) (Text J), "How Assessments Help - Even When You're Not Hiring" (Kellogg 2022a) (Text K) and "Gallagher Bassett Optimizes Hiring with Assessments" (Criteria Corp 2023a) (Text L). These articles have been compiled in Appendix B.

Text G and Text H are both articles about how managers at CC use the company's products in their daily operations. Text I is an article about how using personality assessment in the hiring process can positively impact retention rates. Text J and Text K are articles about how continuing to assess the personality of employees after they have been hired can improve team coherence and professional development. Lastly, Text L is an article about a case study on how Gallagher Bassett (A client of CC) use CC's products to optimize their hiring process.

In terms of the combined value of the data set, the collected data provides different perspectives on how the two companies create legitimacy for the use of personality assessment in recruitment through content marketing. Furthermore, by selecting data from two different companies, the data allows me to conduct a comparative analysis of the different approaches to the creation of legitimacy through content marketing. However, it is important to note that the approaches to legitimation found in the collected data are not necessarily the only approaches adopted by PI and CC. This does not mean that the findings of the analysis are not representative of the approaches adopted by the companies, just that they are only representative within the scope of the collected data.

Given that I have collected textual data, this research will focus on the qualitative aspects of data analysis. As I seek to investigate the underlying legitimations of the use of personality assessment in recruitment, this kind of data is beneficial to me. Furthermore, the qualitative approach allows me to further discuss the legitimations found in the analysis. However, one of the disadvantages of using qualitative data is that there is a risk that I have unknowingly been biased in selecting data that is tailored to answer the research question in a specific way, and thus not selecting other relevant pieces of data. Although this is a possibility, this does not make my findings less representative as the findings are still representative within the selected data.

Data for Analysis

Although the collected data is collected based on certain criteria, not all parts of the articles are relevant for the analysis. This is due to the fact that some parts of the collected articles are related to other subjects than those investigated in this research. In order to ensure that only data within the boundaries of the research question is being analysed, further criteria are set for identifying relevant sections of the collected articles. In order to be considered eligible for analysis, sections must pertain to subjects such as the legitimacy of personality assessment, the usability of personality assessment, or the legitimacy or usability of the products and services provided by PI and CC. Thus, I will only be analysing the sections of the collected articles that are relevant in relation to answering the research question. This means that sections pertaining to subjects such as the introductions to talent strategy, retention in general and descriptions of the 2023 Super Bowl will not be included in the analysis.

5.2 Method of Data Analysis

In the following section, I will account for the methods of data analysis and the appropriateness for such methods in this research. The method of data analysis is a mix of rhetorical devices that in combination will aid me in analysing how PI and CC use language to construct arguments pertaining to the legitimacy and usability of their products and services. The rhetorical devices that will be included as the method of data analysis are the Toulmin Model and the forms of appeal. However, before accounting for the rhetorical devices, I will provide an explanation of why this kind of method has been selected as the preferred method.

The reason for selecting a rhetorical approach to data analysis is based on Perloff's definition of rhetoric: "Rhetoric refers to the use of argumentation, language, and public address to influence audiences" (Perloff 2017). As such, rhetoric can be used as tools to investigate how PI and CC use language and argumentation to create legitimacy for their products and services, and thus, how they attempt to influence their potential customers. Furthermore, by using rhetorical tools to analyse the data, I will be able to connect my theoretical approach and my methodological approach as the rhetorical methods will allow me to uncover how the legitimations are supported by arguments. Thus, I will be able to uncover how PI and CC use language and argumentation to influence other people's understanding of the validity and usability of personality assessment in recruitment, and thus how they perceive this part of the world. This is further relevant in relation to the kind of data I have collected as content marketing in this case is represented by articles that are written with the intent to influence the readers' understanding of the world.

The Toulmin Model

As it has been established that the use of language constitutes our understanding of the world, I found it appropriate to use a model that allows me to analyse how PI and CC use language to create the arguments that are connected to the use of legitimation. Therefore, the overall approach to data analysis in this research is inspired by the Toulmin Model. This is due to the fact that this model contains elements that provides a context in which I can analyse how the use of language is used to create arguments pertaining to the legitimacy of personality assessment tools in recruitment. Toulmin's model describes the structure of a well-composed argument and the elements that such an argument contains (Toulmin 2003, 88). Within the model, up to six elements work together in order to provide the best possible structure for a valid argument. These are: *Claim, Grounds, Warrant, Backing, Rebuttal and Qualifier* (Toulmin 2003, 89-100). I will now move on to describing the individual elements and their individual and combined relevance for this research.

The claim of an argument is the main point that you want the receiver to believe. Toulmin argues that the claim can also be referred to as the conclusion as the claim serves as the overall conclusion of a given argument (2003, 90). For example, a claim could be "Personality assessment in recruitment is useful". However, in this example, the claim is merely a postulate as there are no supportive elements to give the claim further validity. This means that by analysing just the claims by themselves, I will only be able to say something about the ways in which the language is used to create claims for or against the use of personality assessment in recruitment, which is not the focus of this research. Thus, for analytical purposes claims are understood as enablers for the elements of the Toulmin Model that allow me to analyse how legitimacy is created, and thus how the companies support their claims regarding their products and services. These are mainly the grounds, warrant and to some extent the qualifier and the rebuttal, all of which will be described in the following sections.

Toulmin defines grounds as 'the element used to establish the claim and thus make it justifiable' (2003, 90). This means that grounds are the facts that support the claim and thus, grounds serve as foundation that the claim is based on. To continue in the track of the last example, the grounds to the claim that personality assessment in recruitment is useful could be "Personality assessment provides valuable knowledge about the candidates". This way, analysing the grounds upon which the companies base their claims allows me to gain insight into how legitimacy is created.

Toulmin defines warrant as 'general, hypothetical statements which act as bridges between the grounds and the claim' (2003, 91). Implicitly or explicitly stated, these statements connect the grounds to the claim by providing context to how the grounds are relevant to the claim, and thus, the warrant is the element that legitimises the grounds (Toulmin 2003, 91). In relation to the examples above, a warrant that ties the grounds to the claim could be “It is beneficial to have extensive knowledge about the candidates before hiring one specific candidate”. This is further applicable to this research as the legitimation of a subject or claim is not legitimate without a connection between the two. Specifically, warrants will be analysed with the purpose of identifying how the implicit or explicit bridges further legitimate PI and CC’s arguments and thus their legitimations of their products and services.

Furthermore, as the legitimations presented in Section 4.2 are linguistic attempts to establish legitimacy for subject, the theory adopted in this research has more or less the same purpose as the grounds and warrant in the Toulmin Model. Establishing legitimacy for the argument. Thus, the different legitimation strategies will mainly be implemented in the analysis of these elements. However, this does not mean that the legitimation strategies will not be implemented in the analysis of other elements. In relation to the examples above, the grounds “Personality assessment provides valuable knowledge about the candidates” and the warrant “It is beneficial to have extensive knowledge about the candidates before hiring one specific candidate” also serves as an example of a means-oriented rationalisation, when relating it to the legitimation strategies. This is due to the fact that the purpose of the personality assessment rationalises its usefulness.

Toulmin defines backing as ‘arguments that support the warrant’ (2003, 96). This means that just like grounds act as support for the claim, backing acts as support for the warrant. For example, a backing to the warrant in the example above could be “We can make more informed decisions about who is the better candidate, when we have extensive knowledge of the candidates”. Due to the fact that backings serve as support for the warrants, backings will be analysed with the purpose of identifying how language is used to support the bridge between grounds and claims. By doing so, I am able to obtain deeper knowledge of the overall construction of legitimation for the companies’ products and services.

Moving on to rebuttal, Toulmin defines this element as ‘an indicator of circumstances in which the general authority of the warrant would have to be set aside’ (2003, 94). In short, this means that the rebuttal is used to describe situations in which the argument is invalid. This element could be especially relevant in relation to faking as situations of faking can be used as a circumstance in which the argument that personality assessment is useful in recruitment is invalid. Thus, rebuttals will be analysed with the purpose of identifying ways in which PI and CC present circumstances in which their own argument are invalid.

Moving on to the last element of the Toulmin Model, Toulmin defines qualifiers as ‘indicators of the strength conferred by the warrant’ (2003, 94). These indicators are often words that in some way indicate certainty such as ‘always’, ‘definitely’, ‘surely’, ‘likely’ and ‘usually’ etc. To put this into the examples above, the word ‘usually’ is added the warrant: “It is usually beneficial to have extensive knowledge about the candidates before hiring one specific candidate”. Now, the warrant indicates that it might not always be beneficial to have extensive knowledge about the candidates you intend to hire. As this element is used as a certainty indicator of the warrant and thus the legitimation attempts, qualifiers will be analysed to gain insight into the certainty with which the legitimations are presented. In relation to the legitimation strategies, qualifiers can help establish or de-establish legitimacy of an argument depending on the used qualifier. For example, the qualifier ‘unlikely’ could de-establish the legitimacy of an argument presented by the companies.

When providing examples of the different elements of the argumentation, examples will be presented thus:

Claim: The main claim of the argument
Grounds: The evidence that supports the claim.
Warrant: The bridge that connects the evidence to the claim.
Backing: The support for the warrant.
Qualifier: The expressions that indicate the degree of certainty.
Rebuttal: The circumstances in which the claim is invalid.

Example:
Claim: Personality assessment in recruitment is useful.
Grounds: Personality assessment provides valuable knowledge about the candidates.
Warrant: It is usually beneficial to have extensive knowledge about the candidates before hiring one specific candidate.
Backing: We can make more informed decisions about who is the better candidate, when we have extensive knowledge of the candidates.
Qualifier: Usually

Rebuttal: Unless the candidates are faking the answers on their tests.

This way, I intend to provide the reader with an overview of the overall argument before analysing the individual elements. Elements that do not appear in the data will be excluded from the structure above when presented as part of the analysis in order to avoid confusion. Thus, in some of the examples that will be provided in the analysis, some of the elements from the Toulmin Model will be missing. This is due to the fact that these elements have not been identified in the specific argument.

Forms of Appeal

Now that the overall method of data analysis has been accounted for, I will move on to presenting the additional analytical devices that will be added to the model. In this research, I have chosen to include the forms of appeal in the analysis. The three forms of appeal that I will include are: *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos.*

Ethos is the appeal pertaining to the origin and authority of the sender of a given message (Perloff 2017, 55). The authority of the sender can be both implicit and explicit. An example of authority could be experts in personality and practitioners with many years of experience with using personality assessment tools in recruitment.

Logos is the appeal pertaining to the logic of a message (Perloff 2017, 55). Here, arguments are presented in a clear and structured way with the purpose of getting the receiver to acknowledge the logic of the argument. An example of logos could be that it is logical that there is a greater chance of hiring the right candidate, the more you know about all of the possible candidates.

Pathos is the emotional appeal of a message (Perloff 2017, 55). The emotional appeal is related to emotional state of the receiver. Thus, arguments pertaining to this form of appeal can be found in statements such as: ‘It is annoying to be part of dysfunctional teams’ and ‘It can be stressing to find the right candidate, but we can help you’.

The forms of appeal become especially relevant when put into perspective to the grounds and warrant in the Toulmin model. This is due to the fact that as these elements serves as the evidence of an argument and its connection to the claim. The forms of appeal can thus be used to further analyse the evidence and the connection to the claim in order to determine whether the argument appeals to authority, logic or emotions. This is relevant as the forms of appeal will allow me to analyse how the grounds is set up to support the overall argument. Thus, by analysing the grounds further than just acknowledging its existence, I will be able to conduct a more thorough analysis of how the companies create legitimacy for the products and services.

Structure of Analysis

Now that I have presented the method of analysis in full, I will move on to giving a brief description of my approach to analysing the data in order for the reader to gain an understanding of the structure of the following chapter. The overall structure for the analysis is to identify legitimations in the selected data in order to determine how the argumentation surrounding the legitimations is constructed. This will be done by reading through the data and identifying indicators of the legitimation strategies before analysing the attached argument or lack thereof. The reason for taking this approach is that the main aim of the research is to investigate how the companies create legitimacy for their products and services, which is why this approach is preferred opposed to analysing every argument found in the data.

In order to identify the legitimations, I have set the following indicators for the respective legitimations based on the characteristics of the respective legitimations described in Section 4.2: Authorisation will be identified through indicators of people or objects in whom authority is vested. This can be through expertise, law or other related traits that such people or objects might possess.

Moral evaluation will be identified through indicators such as adjectives indicating moral values such as ‘good’ and ‘bad’ or other indicators of moral evaluation such as abstraction of actions or the use of analogies.

Rationalisation will be identified through expressions of goals, uses and effects, or the natural order of things. As such, indicators of rationalisation indicate purpose and explanation of objects or specific actions.

Mythopoesis will be identified through elements of storytelling such as the antagonist of the story as well as the plot of the story.

As this study is comparing the legitimation strategies used by two companies, the comparative aspect will be included thus:

Step 1: I will analyse Authorisation identified in the data collected from PI's profile.
Step 2: I will analyse Authorisation identified in the data collected from CC's profile.
Step 3: I will compare the findings from the Step 1 and 2.

This approach will be repeated for moral evaluation, rationalisation and mythopoesis. When all legitimations and argumentation structures have been analysed and compared, I will compare the overall findings and conclude on the analysis.

6. Analysis

In the following chapter, I will conduct an analysis of the selected data from PI and CC. In the analysis, I seek to investigate how the two companies create legitimacy for the use of their products and services and thus personality assessment in recruitment in general. This will be done by identifying legitimations and analysing the attached argumentation. As the purpose of analysing the legitimation strategies is to investigate how the companies create legitimation for the use of their products and services, the 'why'-questions that the legitimations seek to answer in this research is: "Why should the reader of the articles use personality assessment tools as part of their recruitment strategy?" and "Why should the reader use this specific company's products?".

The order in which the use of legitimations will be analysed is inspired by the order in which the legitimations are presented in Chapter 4. Thus, authorisation will be analysed first, then moral evaluation, then rationalisation and last, mythopoesis. As it was impossible to include all examples of every legitimation, the coded data can be found in Appendices A1 and B1.

6.1 Authorisation

As described in Section 4.2, authorisation relates to the answer 'because so-and-so says so' to the 'why'-question. Thus, in this section of the analysis, I have identified sections of the selected articles in which the two companies directly or indirectly answer the 'why' with an answer like 'because someone or something says so'.

6.1.1 The Predictive Index

In the selected data collected from PI's profile, I have found two instances of authorisation. The first instance is found in Text A:

> "At The Predictive Index, we're celebrating the journey that brought these two powerhouses together. After all, both the Eagles and the Chiefs happen to be PI clients—and subscribers to the discipline of talent optimization." (App A, 1, l. 22-24).

In this paragraph, the answer to the 'why' is: "Because both teams in the Super Bowl use our products". Thus, PI legitimise the use of their products and services by referring to the expert authority of the Eagles and the Chiefs. As the two large and successful sports organisations use PI's products, the legitimacy of the products is strengthened. Although the Eagles and the Chiefs are not experts within the field of personality assessment, the fact that PI's products have helped the teams become experts within their own field increases PI's trustworthiness. This way, PI's ethos aids them in legitimising the use of their assessment tools.

However, when putting the quote into the Toulmin Model, the argumentation is not as straight forward as the use of the authorisation legitimation. This is mainly due to the fact that the basis on which the authorisation is created is not the same as the claim. When putting the quote into the Toulmin Model it looks thus:

> **Claim:** We're celebrating the journey that brought these two powerhouses together.
> **Grounds:** Both the Eagles and the Chiefs happen to be PI clients—and subscribers to the discipline of talent optimization.
> **Warrant:** We support all of our clients.

This way, the overall argument is that PI celebrates both organisations rather than legitimising their products directly. However, if we change the claim to relating to the overall 'why'-question, the argumentation looks thus:

> **Claim:** PI's products are used by successful organisations.
> **Grounds:** Both the Eagles and the Chiefs use PI's products.
> **Warrant:** As the Eagles and the Chiefs competed in last year's Super Bowl, they must be successful.

As the argument draws on the success of the Eagles and the Chiefs, PI borrow ethos from the two teams in order to make their argument more credible. Thus, the fact that PI mentions that the Eagles and the Chiefs are clients of the company, PI legitimises the use of their product through authorisation, although the initial argumentation suggests otherwise.

The second instance of authorisation is found in Text B: "For example, knowing people's behavioral drives can inform management strategies. The 2021 People Management Report found that managers who use behavioral assessments with their teams are better connected with their direct reports. (App A, 4, l. 1-3).

In this example, PI refers to impersonal authority by indicating that the People Management Report supports the use of behavioural assessment. In this case, authority is vested in the People Management Report, which means that PI refer to the authority of the report in order to legitimise the use of their assessment tools. When putting the argument into the Toulmin Model, it looks thus:

> **Claim:** Managers who use behavioral assessments with their teams are better connected with their direct reports.
> **Grounds:** The People Management Report says so.
> **Warrant:** A report in which almost 2000 employees have been interviewed paints a realistic picture of the situation.

From an argumentative perspective, this claim is supported well by a relevant report, meaning that the argument itself seems to be well constructed. This is further supported by the way in which PI borrow ethos from a report that based on the title is very relevant as the grounds of the argument. Thus, by borrowing ethos from the People Management Report, PI are successful in providing an argument for the authorisation displayed in the quote. As a result, PI are successful in establishing legitimacy for their products, as they argue that their products are a valuable tool for managers.

6.1.2 Criteria Corp

Moving on to the use of authorisation in the data from CC, examples of authorisation are found in Texts G, H, I and L. In Text G and H, authorisation is used in two ways. As both texts are part of the blog series "How Criteria uses Criteria", which is a series of articles in which prominent figures at CC talk about how they use the company's products in their own day to day operations, these texts implicitly draw on authorisation, more specifically the personal authority of the prominent figures. In this case, the there is no explicit argument for 'why'. However, as these texts draw on the ethos of people in important positions within the company, the overall messages of the articles will be perceived as more trustworthy.

The second way in which authorisation is used can be found in Text G: "These are key traits for me because the data shows that people who are very motivated towards hitting goals tend to be top performers in this role." (App B, 1, l. 34-36). In this quote, the authority is vested in the words ‘data shows’, which indicates that the data is what says so in relation to the ‘why’. This means that this is an example of impersonal authority, as the authority is vested in data rather than a person. In relation to the Toulmin Model, the argument for this specific use of authorisation looks thus:

> **Claim:** People who are very motivated towards hitting goals tend to be top performers in this role.
> **Grounds:** The data says so.

In the argumentation above, the warrant is implicit. This means that the readers are expected to make the connected between the claim and the grounds themselves. An example of a fitting warrant could be that as the data says that people in this specific role possess these attributes, this is indeed the case. However, as we are not told what kind of data the grounds are built upon, it is difficult to determine the actual warrant. This means that the argument is not necessarily valid as we cannot explicitly see the connection between claim and the grounds. Furthermore, as we do not know what kind of data the grounds are built upon, the ethos of the data is also difficult to determine. However, it is important to remember that this argument is presented by an authoritative person, which in theory should make the data trustworthy. From the perspective of the readers, however, this does not necessarily change the validity of the overall argument. Thus, the success of this attempt to establish legitimacy through authorisation depends on whether the reader can make the connection between the claim and the grounds. If this connection is not made, the readers might not accept the argument as an answer to the ‘why’, meaning that legitimacy might not be established.

The reason why the argumentation in this example is lacking some components is due to the fact that this attempt to establish legitimacy through authorisation is actually the grounds in an attempt to establish legitimacy through rationalisation. This will be analysed further in Section 6.3. However, if the reader is not able to determine this, the example above will look like an incomplete argument.

In text I, authorisation is also used as the grounds in an attempt to establish legitimacy through Rationalisation: “Research supports the idea that it is possible to improve your retention rate from the jump by improving your hiring process. How? By including personality assessments as a part of your hiring process.” (App B, 7, l. 15-17). In this example, the authorisation is vested in the fact the answer to the ‘why’ is that research says so. Thus, this is also an example of impersonal authority. As this use of authorisation is part of a larger argument pertaining to rationalisation, the analysis of the argument will be shown in Section 6.3.2.

In text L, authorisation is used in an attempt to establish legitimacy for CC's products and services thus: "Gallagher Bassett not only found that the assessments helped to predict job performance, but that it also led to improved efficiency for the talent acquisition team along with greater insights for hiring managers." (App B, 13, l. 25-27). In this quote, authority is vested in Gallagher Bassett as they are the ones who 'say so'. This way CC refers to the expert authority that Gallagher Bassets has obtained by using the assessments. In relation to the Toulmin Model, the argument looks thus:

> **Claim:** The assessments helped to predict job performance and led to improved efficiency for the talent acquisition team along with greater insights for hiring managers.
> **Grounds:** Gallagher Bassett says so.
> **Warrant:** Gallagher Basset has used CC's products for every role in the company.

In the example above, the warrant is implicit. However, given that the article provides the basis for Gallagher Bassett's authority, it is easy to see the connection between the grounds and the claim. By establishing Gallagher Bassett's authority, the ethos of the company is established as well, giving the argument another layer of trustworthiness. This way, CC are successful in this attempt to establish legitimacy for their products and services. As a result of this, CC answers the 'why' with the answer: 'Other companies have had great success using our products'.

6.1.3 Comparing the Companies' use of Authorisation

When investigating both companies' attempts to establish legitimacy through authorisation, it becomes clear that they do it in similar ways. Both companies attempt to establish legitimacy through personal and impersonal authority. However, there are different results in terms of the outcome of the attempts. Although both companies find success in establishing legitimacy through personal authority, PI is more successful in establishing legitimacy by referral to impersonal authority. This is partly due to the fact that CC's arguments pertaining to this subject are part of arguments pertaining to other legitimation strategies. However, it is also due to the fact that PI succeed in establishing ethos for the data that is referred to, whereas CC do not. Furthermore, it must be noted that none of the arguments pertaining to authorisation include backings, qualifiers or rebuttals. Especially the absence of rebuttals is interesting. This is due to the fact that without including rebuttals, it seems like the companies think that their products are always useful, which might not be the case. Thus, by excluding rebuttals it seems like the companies lack the ability to reflect on their own products, which in some cases could affect whether the attempts to establish legitimacy through authorisation succeed or not.

6.2 Moral Evaluation

As described in Section 4.2, moral evaluation pertains to our moral values and how these are presented. As such, legitimacy is established on the basis that taking a specific action is the morally right thing to do in a certain situation or that feeling a certain way is justifiable. However, I found no examples of ways in which the companies legitimise their products on the basis that using their products are the morally right thing to do. Thus, the examples in the following are only pertaining to justifying feelings. This means that in terms of the 'why'-questions presented in Section 6, examples pertaining to moral evaluation will answer this question with answers like 'It is okay to feel like hiring new employees is difficult' or by indicating that this is the case.

6.2.1 The Predictive Index

In the data from PI, moral evaluation is found in Text B and E. In text B, PI attempt to create legitimacy for their products through analogy, which is represented by the following comparison: "Hiring new employees can sometimes feel like a high-stakes game of chance. (…). Here are a few of the data points we recommend collecting during the hiring process." (App A, 3, l. 3-8). By comparing the hiring process to a high-stakes game of chance, PI acknowledge the feeling that hiring new employees can be difficult, which is what makes it a moral evaluation. This allows PI to present ways in which their products can help ease the process. Later in the text, behavioural assessment is recommended as a data point that the readers should be collecting during the hiring process. However, as the recommendation of behavioural assessment pertains to the rationalisation legitimation, it will be analysed in Section 6.3.1. Thus, in this example, the use of analogy serves as an enabler for an attempt to establish legitimacy through rationalisation. For this reason, there is not an argument connected to the comparison as the main argument regarding the use of personality assessment as part of the hiring process is found in that specific example of rationalisation. In relation to the forms of appeal, PI appeals to pathos and ethos in this example. PI appeal to pathos as they express an understanding of an emotional state the reader might relate to or have at the time of reading. Furthermore, the fact that they are aware that these feelings are often related to this kind of process is an indirect appeal to logos. The reason for this is that this statement indicates that PI have expertise within this field. This way, the readers will find PI to be more relatable and thus trustworthy, meaning that the readers will be more susceptible to PI's attempt to create legitimacy for their products through rationalisation.

In text E, PI attempt to establish legitimacy for their products through an analogy:

> "Behavior is a phenomenon everyone knows but perhaps doesn't always understand. If you had a rowdy classmate or a quirky uncle growing up, you might be nodding your head in agreement. Why people act the way they do can be a bit of a mystery. So, it can feel like a superpower when you finally crack someone's personality for the first time." (App A, 13, l. 2-5).

In this example, PI compare the ability to understand a person's behaviour to a power of an extraordinary level. As a superpower is generally perceived as very positive attribute to possess, most people will see it as a compliment if they are told that they have superpowers. This means that by describing the ability to understand other people's behaviour as a superpower, PI legitimise such abilities, making it attractive to possess the ability to understand other people's behaviour. Thus, the answer to the why is 'Using our products make you feel like you have superpowers'.

When looking at this example in relation to the Toulmin Model, it looks thus:

> **Claim:** It can feel like a superpower when you finally crack someone's personality for the first time.
>
> **Grounds:** Behaviour is a phenomenon everyone knows but perhaps doesn't always understand.

In this argument, the warrant is implicit. However, the fact that the warrant is implicit does not make the argument less valid. This is due to the fact that it is easy to connect the grounds to the claim. One example of a warrant could be "Because it is difficult to understand other people's behaviour, it is even more satisfying when you finally do it". By structuring the argument this way, the argument draws on two of forms of appeal. First, the argument draws on pathos due to its acknowledgement of the feeling of ecstasy the reader might feel when cracking someone's behaviour for the first time. Second, the argument draws on logos as it seems logical that as something is difficult to do, it is even more satisfying to do it. As such, this argument legitimises the use of PI's products as it acknowledges the feelings connected to finding the right candidate, which could lead reader to think: 'I want to feel like I have superpowers'. This feeling of wanting superpowers is what makes the reader continue to read the article, where other legitimation strategies are then used in attempts to legitimise the products further. Thus, this use of analogy enables the attempts to legitimatise PI's products later in the text.

6.2.2 Criteria Corp

In the data from CC, moral evaluation is only found in text H. In text H, moral evaluation is represented by an analogy: "Of course – hiring can feel like just the first of many hurdles. How do you tackle getting each new hire integrated within their new team?" (App B, 5, l. 3-4). In the quote, the hiring process and steps of the onboarding process are compared to hurdles that need to be overcome. As such, CC validates feelings that the reader might have, making this example a moral evaluation. Furthermore, CC present an argument that every step of the process can feel like a hurdle. If we just look at the cited quote, the argumentation looks as such:

> **Claim:** Hiring can feel like just the first of many hurdles.

As shown in the analysis of the argument, the claim is just a postulate on its own. There are two reasons for this. First, the claim is part of a question asked by the person interviewing Adam Walsh, VP of Sales at CC, meaning that the grounds will likely be explained in the following paragraphs. As this statement is part of the question being asked, it opens op for the possibility that the person being interviewed will either legitimise or de-legitimise the statement with the following answer. However, in this case, the following paragraphs are used to answer the actual question. This is due to the fact that the grounds for the claim have been established in prior paragraphs. In prior paragraphs, Walsh has expressed that recruitment is only the first step in the process, which provides the context for the grounds. As such, the argument actually looks more like this:

> **Claim:** Hiring can feel like just the first of many hurdles.
> **Grounds:** "Recruitment is only the first step in the process." (App B, 4, l. 40).

> **Warrant:** "Once we are successful in hiring the right people for our organization, we have to make sure we coach them, develop them, and make them feel included within our organization." (App B, 4, l. 40-42).

Thus, by including the answer to the previous question, the argument is now valid, as the interviewer and the interviewee have established the reason why hiring can feel like the first of many hurdles or steps in the process. In this example, the warrant could be understood as an individual claim. However, as warrant provides the premise for the further steps that need to be completed in after the hiring process, it is used as a warrant rather than a claim in this argument. As a result of constructing the argument in this way, CC appeal to both pathos and logos. They appeal to pathos as they acknowledge that the process from writing the job post to having a new fully operational employee can be a long and tough process with a lot of steps, or as they called them in the example 'hurdles'. Simultaneously, CC appeal to logos due to how they make it seem logical that hiring a new employee is not the final step of the overall process. This makes it easier for the reader to relate to the company.

By being relatable, CC manage to indirectly legitimise their products. This is due to the fact that as they have now appealed to a certain feeling in the reader, it makes sense for them to provide the reader with ways in which this process can eased. Thus, this use of analogy serves as an enabler for other legitimations to directly legitimise CC's products, which will be elaborated in Section 6.3.2.

6.2.3 Comparing the Companies' use of Moral Evaluation

Now that both companies' attempts to establish legitimacy for their products through moral evaluation have been analysed, I will compare the approaches of the companies. I found that both companies are successful in using analogies to legitimise feelings the readers might have. This means that the companies do not directly legitimise their products. Rather, they use moral evaluation as an enabler for other legitimations that directly attempt to legitimise the companies' products by acknowledging difficulties in the hiring process which their products can then solve. In terms of the argumentation, both companies present valid arguments in relation to the use of moral evaluation mainly containing claims, grounds and warrants. However, they do it in different ways. Where PI present an argument consisting of claim, grounds and an indirect warrant in the same paragraph, CC presents an argument where the grounds and warrant to the claim is to be found in prior sections of the article. Just like it was the case with authorisation, the companies do not include backing, qualifier or rebuttal. In this case, it does not lower the overall validity of the arguments, but it does leave room for discussion regarding the simplicity of the arguments.

That being said, it is interesting that none of the companies have used evaluations to construct a moral basis for the use of their products aside from acknowledging the readers feelings towards the difficulty of the hiring process. For example, the companies could have argued that their products are the most ethical in terms of data collection and data storage, which would indicate that their products are the better option in relation to the readers moral compass. As the companies do not do as in the example, some might think that these products are too good to be true. This will be further elaborated in Section 7.1.

6.3 Rationalisation

As described in Section 4.2, rationalisation legitimises action by use of logic. This means that in this legitimation, the answer to the 'why' is answered with reference to goals, uses and effects, or the natural order of things. Rationalisation is by far the most common legitimation in the data from both companies. This is somewhat to be expected as rationalisation allows the companies to express the purpose of their products and thus create a rationale for their usefulness. As I have found many examples of rationalisation, the following sections will include uses of rationalisation that are connected to other legitimations, uses of rationalisation that represent the general use of this legitimation and uses of rationalisation that are different from the general use of this legitimation. For all identified examples of the legitimations see Appendices A1 and B1.

6.3.1 The Predictive Index

In the data from PI, rationalisation has been found in every text. In the following, I will present a thorough analysis of the uses of rationalisation that are enabled by the comparisons in Section 6.2.1, followed by examples of the general use of rationalisation and examples of rationalisation that is different from the general use.

Connections to Other Legitimations

In text B, we find the two attempts to establish legitimacy through rationalisation that have been enabled by the attempt to establish legitimacy through a comparison described in Section 6.2.1. As it has been established that the comparison "Hiring new employees can sometimes feel like a high-stakes game of chance" (App A, 3, l. 1) successfully legitimises the existence of the following two attempts to establish legitimacy for PI's products, these attempts have greater potential to be successful. The first attempt to establish legitimacy through rationalisation is an example of instrumental rationalisation as it pertains to the purpose and usefulness of the products:

"Behavioral assessments—such as the PI Behavioral Assessment™—help you identify what drives employees at work. The results of these assessments can help you determine if a candidate is the right behavioral match for a role, or if they'll struggle to adjust and succeed." (App A, 3, l. 28-30).

This is an attempt to establish legitimacy for the products using the means-oriented instrumental rationalisation due to its structure of: By doing X, you achieve Y. In this case: 'By using PI Behavioural Assessment, you will be able to identify what drives your employees at work'. Thus, PI attempts to legitimise the usefulness of their product. With regard to the argumentation in this example, the argument looks thus:

Claim: Behavioural assessment helps identify what drives people at work and helps you determine if a candidate is the right behavioural match for a role.
Grounds: PI's Behavioural Assessment analyses the candidate's behaviour and motivational drivers.

In the argumentation above, the warrant is implicit. However, if it was written into the argument it could look like this: 'When you know the behavioural profile and motivational drivers, you can determine if they will be a good fit for a particular role'. However, as the warrant is implicit, it is up to the reader to make the connection between the grounds and the claim which is not necessarily easy, if the reader does not know a lot about behavioural assessment. If the reader is able to connect the grounds to the claim, PI have additionally been successful in appealing to logos. This is due to the fact that the subject of the argument pertains to data analysis and that the connection between the grounds and claim seems logical.

Given that this argument is legitimised by the comparison earlier in the text, this argument serves as a solution to the feelings that hiring new employees is a game of chance. This is due to the fact that PI's products will transition the decision from being based on chance to be based on data, which makes the decision process easier and more precise. As a result, PI are successful in creating legitimacy for their product in this example as they provide their products as a solution to a problem that the reader might have. This is also the case although every reader might not see the connection between the grounds and the claim. Thus, the answer to the 'why' is 'Because our products can make your hiring process easier'.

The second attempt to establish legitimacy through rationalisation that is supported by the comparison described in Section 6.2.1 is also an example of instrumental rationalisation:

"Although personality and behavioral assessments aren't quite as predictive of job performance as cognitive assessments, they can help predict other important behaviorally driven measures that affect culture, engagement, morale, and productivity at a company." (App A, 3, l. 36-38).

This is an attempt to establish legitimacy for the products using instrumental rationalisation due to its structure of: By doing X, you achieve Y. In this case: 'By using behavioural assessment, you can predict important behaviourally driven measures'. Thus, PI attempt to legitimise the usefulness of their products with this rationalisation. In terms of the argumentation in this example, it looks thus:

> **Claim:** Behavioural assessments can predict important measures that affect culture, engagement, morale and productivity at a company.
> **Grounds:** Behavioural assessments assess behavioural patterns.
> **Warrant:** Implicit.
> **Rebuttal:** Although personality and behavioral assessments aren't quite as predictive of job performance as cognitive assessments.

In this example, the warrant is implicit. However, if you know the basics of personality assessment, which most of the readers might, the warrant could be understood as "By assessing behavioural patterns, behavioural assessments can predict important behavioural measures". Thus, the connection between the grounds and the claim is made, making the argument valid. Additionally, this argument contains a rebuttal. In this case, the rebuttal is used to express that although other kinds of assessments would be a better tool for some purposes, behavioural assessments still have a place within other areas.

Just like the first example of rationalisation in text B, this attempt to create legitimacy for PI's products functions as a solution to the problem that was established in the comparison earlier in the text. This way, PI adds further legitimacy to their argument by drawing on two legitimation strategies rather than one. This means that by arguing that their products can predict important measures that affect culture, engagement, morale and productivity at a company, their products function as a solution to the readers' problem. This means that the answer to the 'why' is the same as in the example above – 'Because our products can make your hiring process easier'.

General Use of Rationalisation

Now that the uses of rationalisation that are connected to other legitimations have been analysed, I will move on the analysing examples of the general use of rationalisation. In the data from PI, the most used kind of rationalisation is means-orientated, instrumental rationalisation, meaning that PI attempts to establish legitimacy for their products by describing the purpose and usefulness of the products.

The examples that this part of the analysis is based on can be found in Text D and Text F. The example from Text D states:

"**Behavioral data helps you hire with certainty**. Use data to pinpoint which personality types are most likely to excel in a given role, and screen for applicants who exhibit those behavioral tendencies. Hire candidates not solely based on their resume, but on the day-to-day traits that'll help them succeed." (App A, 11, l. 4-7).

In this example, the use of means-oriented rationalisation is manifested in the in the structure of the rationalisation: 'By doing X, you are able to achieve Y'. In this case: 'By using behavioural data, you can hire with certainty'. Thus, PI present a rationale for the use of their products, which in theory should make them more attractive to the reader. However, this is only successful if the reader accepts the validity of the attached argument. In the perspective of the Toulmin Model, the argumentation in the example looks thus:

Claim: Behavioural data helps you hire with certainty.

Grounds: You can use data to pinpoint which personality types are most likely to excel in a given role, and screen for applicants who exhibit those behavioural tendencies.

Warrant: Implicit.

Backing: Hire candidates not solely based on their resume, but on the day-to-day traits that'll help them succeed.

In this example, the argument consists of the most important elements of the Toulmin model claim, grounds and warrant. In this case, the warrant is implicit, but it is understood as: 'When you can match personality types that are known to excel in a position with the candidates' personality types, you can hire with greater certainty'. To support the argumentation, PI have included a backing in this argument, which further underlines the importance of personality assessment. Furthermore, as there is a logical connection between the different elements in this argument, PI draw on logos, which further strengthens their attempt to establish legitimacy for their products. As a result of this, PI creates a valid argument, which validates the attempt to create legitimacy for their products. Thus, through the argumentation, PI have established that behavioural data, and thus their products, does indeed help users hire with certainty. This means that the answer to the 'why' is 'Because our products help you hire with certainty'.

Moving on to the example from Text F, this example is also an example of means-oriented, instrumental rationalisation:

"By providing behavioral and cognitive assessments, you'll gather a wealth of informative people data. Use this data to your advantage. Using PI's Match Score technology, you can sort through candidates and stack rank them based on how well their behavioral and cognitive results match the Job Target. This allows you to pinpoint your most promising candidates—and that's before they even take a step into the interview room." (App A, 18, l. 19-23)

In this example, the legitimation follows the structure: By doing X, you are able to achieve Y. In this case, it translates to: 'By using PI's Match Score technology, you can pinpoint the most promising candidates.'. Thus, PI attempt to create legitimacy for their product by portraying how the products can be used to make better informed decisions regarding potential candidates. However, this attempt to create legitimacy will only be valid, if the attached argument is valid as well. In relation to the Toulmin Model, the argumentation looks thus:

> **Claim:** Using behavioural and cognitive assessments allows you to pinpoint promising candidates.
> **Grounds:** Behavioural and cognitive assessments gather a wealth of people data.
> **Warrant:** Implicit.
> **Backing:** Using PI's Match Score technology, you can sort through candidates and stack rank them based on how well their behavioral and cognitive results match the Job Target.

In this example, the argumentation consists of the main elements of the Toulmin Model – claim, grounds and warrant. As in the example from Text D, the warrant is implicit. For this example, the warrant is understood as 'Because you gather people data, you can pinpoint promising candidates.'. This is supported by a backing that further explains how the data from candidates can be compared in order to pinpoint promising candidates. By providing further understandings of the usability of the products and the logical connection between the elements of the argument, PI appeal to logos. Thus, by composing a strong and logical argument, PI are successful in their attempt to establish legitimacy for their product. As a result of this, the answer to the 'why' is 'Because our products help you pinpoint promising candidates'.

Overall, this is the outcome of most of the attempts to establish legitimacy through means-oriented, instrumental rationalisation. In some cases, the arguments only consist of claim, grounds and warrant, but the overall results are the same. Thus, by using this kind of rationalisation, PI are successful in establishing legitimacy for their products as they provide logical arguments pertaining to the purpose and usefulness of their products.

Other Attempts to Create Legitimacy through Rationalisation

Now that the general use of rationalisation has been analysed, I will move on to an example of how rationalisation is used in a different way. In this example, rationalisation is used in attempt to establish legitimacy for all of PI's tests:

"When it comes down to it, there's no one predictor that can tell you who would be the best hire. As predictive as cognitive and behavioral assessments are, they don't paint the whole picture of who someone is—and neither does a resume or an interview. Instead, focus on combining as many of these elements as you can. Other, more job-specific measures—such as skills assessments and culture interviews—can help as well. The more measures you use in the hiring process, the better your odds are of predicting performance and making your next great hire." (App A, 5, l. 25-30).

The interesting thing about this example is that in their attempt to establish legitimacy for their products, PI somewhat de-legitimise their individual tests by saying that the tests do not paint the whole picture of the candidate. This statement is opposite of what has been the recurring use of rationalisation in the data from PI's profile. Throughout the data, rationalisation has been used to present the purpose and usefulness of PI's tests, but this example indicates that their tests might not be as accurate as the general use of rationalisation has indicated. However, there is a possibility that this is intentional. This is due to the fact that simultaneously with PI potentially de-legitimising their own products, they also de-legitimise the individual practices that are adopted in the readers' organisations. Now that PI have established that no practice can give complete insight into a candidate, they attempt to legitimise the combined value and usefulness of their products and practices adopted in the readers' organisations. By saying "Instead, focus on combining as many of these elements as you can.", PI open up for the idea that readers should not just purchase one of PI's products, as the readers will gain better insight into their candidates if they purchase multiple assessments. Thus, by somewhat de-legitimising their individual products, PI attempt to establish legitimacy for all of their products, when they are used collectively. In terms of the Toulmin Model, it looks thus:

Claim: You should combine as many of the elements as possible.
Grounds: Individually, personality assessment, cognitive assessment, interviews and resumes do not paint the whole picture of a candidate.
Warrant: Implicit.
Backing: The more measures you use in the hiring process, the better your odds are of predicting performance and making your next great hire.

In this example, the argumentation contains the most important elements, including an implicit warrant. The warrant, in this case, is understood as ‘Using more of the elements should paint a more realistic picture of the candidate.’. Furthermore, PI have added a backing to the warrant which supports the understanding that it is beneficial to include multiple assessments and other recruitment tools. However, it is only necessary for PI to add this backing as the grounds for the arguments states that PI’s products cannot paint the whole picture of a candidate. Thus, the backing of this argument is what legitimises the combined use of the products. This means that although PI have composed an argument in which they acknowledge the short comings of their own products, they are successful in legitimising their use anyway. To elaborate, this kind of argument has two potential outcomes. Either the readers are scared away from PI’s products as PI have acknowledge that their products cannot give a complete analysis of a candidate, or the readers are inclined to purchase multiple of PI’s products as they are aware that the products give greater insight into a candidate when combined. In this case, the answer to the ‘why’ is ‘Because when our products are combined with other tools, they improve the odds of making a great hire.’.

6.3.2 Criteria Corp

In the data from CC, rationalisation has been found in every text. In the following I will present a thorough analysis of the attempts to create legitimacy through rationalisations that is enabled by or related to uses of other legitimations. These two instances are found in text H and I. As the attempt to create legitimacy in Text H is also an example of the general use of rationalisation, this example will serve as a reflection of how rationalisation is generally used in the data from CC’s profile. After analysing the instances from text H and I as well as the general use of rationalisation, I will move on to examples of other ways in which CC attempts to create legitimacy through rationalisation in the data.

Connections to Other Legitimations and General Use of Rationalisation

In Text G, the first of three attempts at creation legitimacy through rationalisation which is connected to other legitimations is found:

> “These are key traits for me because the data shows that people who are very motivated towards hitting goals tend to be top performers in this role. This allows me to identify candidates that will hit their quotas, retain their customers, and be really focused on their goals” (App B, 1, l. 36-37).

In this example, the rationalisation is means-oriented, as it has the structure 'By doing X, you can achieve Y': 'By using the key traits, you can identify which candidates will succeed in a specific position.' In relation to the Toulmin Model, it looks thus:

> **Claim:** By using the key traits, you can identify which candidates will succeed in a specific position.
> **Grounds:** Data says so.
> **Warrant:** Implicit.

In the argument, the authorisation mentioned in Section 6.1 is used as the grounds for the claim. However, the warrant is implicit, which means that the readers must make the connection between the grounds and the claim themselves. If they are not able to do so, the attempt to create legitimacy will fail.

In Text I, the second attempts at creating legitimacy through rationalisation which is connected to other legitimations is found. In this case, we see a combination of authorisation and rationalisation: "Research supports the idea that it is possible to improve your retention rate from the jump by improving your hiring process. How? By including personality assessments as a part of your hiring process." (App B, 7, l. 15-17). In this example, the rationalisation is means-oriented, as it has the structure 'By doing X, you can achieve Y': 'By implementing personality assessment, you can improve your retention rate.'. This way, CC legitimise the use of their products by portraying their purpose and usefulness. In terms of the argumentation, it looks thus:

> **Claim:** By including personality assessments as a part of your hiring process, you can improve your retention rate.
> **Grounds:** Research says so.
> **Warrant:** Implicit.

In this argument, the use of rationalisation serves as the claim, whereas the use of authorisation serves as the grounds. With regard to the remaining elements of the Toulmin Model, the warrant is implicit, and the rest of the elements are not present. The fact that the warrant in this argument is implicit could potentially lead to some problems regarding the validity of this specific argument. This is due to the fact that it is not specified what kind of research the readers are expected to trust as the basis of the claim. As a result of this, the readers are not able to determine the ethos of said research. Normally, when referring to data or research, it is beneficial to the sender to establish the ethos of documents that are referred to. However, as this is not the case, it is up to the readers to determine whether they trust the ethos of the research and thus the validity of the overall argument. If the readers do not trust the ethos of the research, CC will not be successful in their attempt to establish legitimacy for their products. This is due to the fact that as the grounds of the argument are disregarded, the claim is merely a postulate on its own. Hence, there is a chance that potential customers will chose to not buy CC's products as they have failed their attempt to legitimise their usefulness. Regardless of the successfulness of the argument, CC's answer to the 'why' is 'Because our products can improve your retention rate'.

In text H, we find an attempt to establish legitimacy through rationalisation which has been enabled by the attempt to establish legitimacy through the analogy described in Section 6.2.2. As it has been established that the comparison "Hiring can feel like just the first of many hurdles." (App B, 5, l. 3) successfully legitimises the existence of the following two attempts to establish legitimacy for CC's products, these attempts have greater potential to be successful. The first attempt to establish legitimacy through rationalisation is an example of instrumental rationalisation as it pertains to the purpose and usefulness of the products:

> "I can click on any member of the team and access the Manager Guide for that individual. This is great for existing managers, as well as a great onboarding resource for new managers to best coach and develop their team to achieve the results needed in their current role. We can even use these manager guides to help identify and prepare employees for their next potential role within the organization. (…)." (App B, 5, l. 16-25).

This quote is an example of how CC attempt to establish legitimacy for their products through a means-oriented, instrumental rationalisation. This is due to the quotes structure of 'By doing X, you achieve Y'. In this case 'By using the Manager Guide, you are able to lead your team in a better way'. This way, the Manager Guide also serves as a solution to the 'hurdles' that enable this attempt at legitimation. By describing the benefits of using the Manager Guide, CC provide a way in which readers can overcome these hurdles with less struggle. Given that the reader relates to how steps of the hiring process are compared to hurdles, the reader might be more inclined to find the solutions provided by CC more attractive. One way to further legitimise their products is if the attached argumentation is valid. In terms of the argumentation in this attempt to create legitimacy, it looks thus:

> **Claim:** The Manager Guide is a great resource for new and existing managers.
> **Grounds:** You can use the Manager Guide to gain knowledge about your employees which allows you to coach and develop them in the best possible way.
> **Warrant:** Implicit.
> **Backing:** We can even use these manager guides to help identify and prepare employees for their next potential role within the organization.

In this example, the argument contains all of the elements of the Toulmin Model that are needed in order for an argument to be valid. However, as the warrant is implicit, the readers must make the connection between the grounds and the claim themselves. This is the case for most of the attempts to establish legitimacy through means-oriented, instrumental rationalisation. That being said, in most cases, the warrant is easily identified. In this case it could be 'When the tool you are using makes it easier to manage your team, it is a great resource'. Additionally, this argument is supported by a backing, which is used to further describe benefits of the Manager Guide. This backing portrays how CC's products can be used to overcome future hurdles related to internal hiring. Thus, by providing a solution to both current and future obstacles, CC are successful in their attempt to establish legitimacy for their products. This is also the case when looking at the overall use of means-oriented, instrumental rationalisation. For this example, CC's answer to the 'why' is 'Because our products make it easier to overcome hurdles related to internal and external recruitment processes'.

Other Attempts to Create Legitimacy through Rationalisation

Moving on to other ways in which CC attempt to create legitimacy for their products through rationalisation, these attempts are found in Texts H, I and J. The attempts are examples of goal-oriented, instrumental rationalisations and a theoretical rationalisation manifested by explanation. In case of the two goal-oriented, instrumental rationalisations, the first example is related to one of CC's goals in relation the use of their products in general, and the second is related to the goal of using a specific feature in one of CC's products. As CC attempt to establish legitimacy for their products by portraying the goals of the products in both examples, I will only analyse one of the examples in depth. The example is from Text J:

> "Managers can use information gathered from assessments like Criteria's Workplace Insights Report to get an idea of each employee's preferred communication methods, thinking style, key personality traits, strong suits, and areas for improvement. The goal is to accelerate the depth and pace of rapport building within workplace relationships." (App B, 9, l. 37-40).

In this example, CC attempt to establish legitimacy for their products by making the goal of using the Workplace Insight Report obvious. By describing the specific purpose of this feature, CC are not only able to describe what their products can do and how they do it, they are also able to introduce the reader to the purpose of using this specific product. By doing so, CC indicate to the readers how their products can solve problems in the readers' organisations. In order to convince the readers that their products are in fact useful, the readers must be able to follow the argumentation, which looks thus:

> **Claim:** Criteria's Workplace Insights Report is a useful tool
> **Grounds:** Managers can use information gathered from assessments like Criteria's Workplace Insights Report to get an idea of each employee's preferred communication methods, thinking style, key personality traits, strong suits, and areas for improvement.
> **Warrant:** Implicit.
> **Backing:** The goal is to accelerate the depth and pace of rapport building within workplace relationships.

In this argument, the rationalisation is used as a backing to the warrant. However, as the warrant is implicit, the reader must make the connection between the claim and the grounds themselves. In this case, the warrant is understood as "It is useful to have such information about your employees". To back this, CC add that the purpose of combining all this information is to improve the way reports within workplace relationships are built. Indirectly, CC indicate that by using this tool, it will be easier for the managers to manage their teams. As there is a clear connection between the claim and the grounds, CC are successful in appealing to logos and in presenting a valid argument. This means that CC are successful in establishing legitimacy for their products. This is also the case for the other example of goal-oriented, instrumental rationalisation. For both cases of goal-oriented rationalisations, CC's answer to the 'why' is 'Because our products will help managers manage their teams'.

Moving on to the last example of other ways in which CC attempt to establish legitimacy for their products through rationalisation, this example is found in Text I. In the following example, CC attempt to legitimise their products through theoretical rationalisation, which is represented by an explanation:

> "Let's illustrate this idea: someone who is extroverted, highly achievement-motivated, and self-confident is more likely to be comfortable (and successful) as a salesperson compared to someone who is introverted, highly accommodating, and relaxed. That's not to say that the second person couldn't succeed as a salesperson, but rather that the traits that tend to align with success in a sales role (tenacious pursuit of goals, comfortable doing cold-calls, etc) may grind against their natural preferences." (App B, 7, l. 37-42).

By describing that people naturally have different attributes, and that different attributes fit different roles, CC creates a rationale for the use of their products. This is due to fact that CC's products can help the practitioners identify these attributes and thus appoint the best possible candidate for a specific role. In terms of the argumentation for this rationalisation, the claim, grounds and warrant can be found in the paragraphs above the example in the article:

> **Claim:** Personality Predicts Performance (App B, 7, l. 18)
> **Grounds:** "These five traits (…) directly inform a person's workplace motivations, preferred interaction style, competencies, and tendencies." (App B, 7, l. 32-34).
> **Warrant:** "By understanding where a candidate falls on the scales of these five key traits, you can gain insight into whether or not the role they've applied for resonates with their core personality." (App B, 7, l. 34-36).
> **Backing:** The above example of theoretical rationalisation (App B, 7, l. 37-42).

In this argument, the use of theoretical rationalisation functions as the backing to the warrant. By being able to thoroughly express the logic behind how different personality traits influence the roles that are natural for a person to thrive in, CC are successful in creating legitimacy for their product. At the same time, CC create legitimacy for the use of personality assessment in recruitment generally as their argument pertains to how personality traits are predictors of job performance. As such, CC's answer to the 'why' is 'You should use behavioural assessment in recruitment because personality traits are predictors of job performance'.

6.3.3 Comparing the Companies' use of Rationalisation

Now that the different ways in which both companies attempt to create legitimacy for their products through rationalisation have been analysed, I will move on to compare the two approaches in terms of similarities and differences.

Similar for both companies is that the most frequent way in which they rationalise the use of their products is through means-oriented, instrumental rationalisation. In most cases, both companies are successful in their attempts at doing so, meaning that both companies present the purpose and usefulness of their products in a logical way. In terms of the argumentation attached to the attempts at creating legitimacy through means-oriented rationalisation, both companies are fairly consistent with the structure of their arguments. Most of the arguments contain connected claims, grounds, warrants meaning that from an argumentative point of view, both companies provide valid arguments which further supports their attempts to create legitimacy through means-oriented rationalisations. Due to the fact that both companies are successful in their attempts to create legitimacy for their products, readers of both companies' articles will gain greater insight into the purpose and usefulness of personality assessment in recruitment. Furthermore, if readers are generally opposed to the idea of using personality assessment in recruitment, there is a good chance that their understanding of the world will be challenged, as both companies' arguments are valid and logical.

Another similarity between the two companies is that both companies use rationalisation in combination with other legitimations. Of the other legitimations, PI connect rationalisation with moral evaluation by using a comparison as an enabler for creating legitimacy for their products through rationalisation. Similarly, CC also use moral evaluation in the form of comparison to enable an attempt to create legitimacy for their products through rationalisation. In both cases, the companies are successful in their attempts, and as they are successful in combining two legitimations into one argument, their arguments pertaining to these two attempts at creating legitimacy for their products are very strong. However, CC also connects authorisation and rationalisation. These attempt is not necessarily successful as the successfulness of the rationalisation is dependent on whether the readers accept the ethos of the data and research that the grounds is based on.

In terms of the differences in the approach to creating legitimacy for their products through rationalisation, the most obvious difference between PI and CC is the use of different kinds of rationalisation. Where PI mainly focuses on means-oriented rationalisation, CC attempt to establish legitimacy for their products using different approaches to rationalisation, here among theoretical rationalisation. By attempting to create legitimacy for their products by explaining the premise on which their assessments are built, CC differentiate themselves from PI. This means that by explaining how the products work and then putting it into a context that the readers relate to, CC become more trustworthy and thus increase their chances of converting readers into potential customers. This does not mean that PI do not make themselves trustworthy by rationalising the use of their products. Rather, it means that CC do it in other ways than PI, which could make CC stand out for potential customers.

Overall, the companies are able to confirm pro-personality assessment readers' understanding of the world while challenging anti-personality assessment readers' understanding of the world in most cases as a result of their rationalisations.

6.4 Mythopoesis

As described in Section 4.2, mythopoesis legitimises actions through storytelling. This means that in this legitimation, the answer to the 'why' is not a direct answer. Rather, the moral of the story is what legitimises a certain action. In the data, attempts to establish legitimacy through mythopoesis have only been identified in the data from PI. For this reason, the analytical structure of this legitimation will be different from analytical structure of the prior legitimations as I am only able to present examples from one of the companies.

6.4.1 The Predictive Index

In the data from PI, mythopoesis has been identified in Text D, E and F. In Text D and F, the attempts to legitimate the use of PI's products through mythopoesis are identified as cautionary tales as the protagonist ends up in an unpleasant situation. The following example is from Text D:

"Picture a hiring manager's worst nightmare. You scour scores of resumes, screen some promising applicants, and invite the finalists to a superday. One candidate quickly stands apart from the rest—they have charisma, confidence, and years of experience.

You deliberate with your team, come to a consensus, and extend an offer. **They're the perfect hire.**

Until suddenly they're not.

What went wrong? The candidate checked all the boxes on paper. You'd naturally assume those credentials would translate to on-the-job performance.

But here's the reality: Trusting what's "on paper" is risky. Candidates are so much more than their bullet points on a resume, or where they went to school. Over-index on these factors, and you open yourself up to potential mis-hires." (App A, 10, l. 27-11, l. 3).

In this story, the protagonist is a hiring manager or recruiter in any given company. As they choose to trust what is "on paper" without conducting further analysis of the candidate, the hiring manager ends up in a situation where the candidate is not a good fit for the position or the company in general. In this case, the moral of the story is that if the hiring manager had not blindly trusted what was "on paper" and instead had used PI's products to support or deny their first impressions of the candidate, the company could have avoided a mis hire. Thus, PI legitimise the use of their products by presenting the products as a solution to a situation that all recruiters and hiring managers wish to avoid. As part of the story, PI composes an argument to support the moral of the story, which can be seen here:

Claim: Personality assessment cuts down mis-hires.
Grounds: Personality assessments provide insight into other aspects of a candidate than what can be found "on paper".
Warrant: If you over-index on the factors that are "on paper", you open yourself up to potential mis-hires.
Backing: Candidates are so much more than their bullet points on a resume, or where they went to school.

In this argument, the moral of the story is represented through the whole argument as all elements of the argument reflect the overall understanding that by using PI's products, the mis-hire could have been avoided. Moreover, as the connection between the elements of the Toulmin Model is clear, the overall argument is valid. For this reason, the argumentation in the story supports the moral of the story, making it even stronger, meaning that the answer to the 'why' in this case is 'Because our products cuts down on mis-hires'. As such, potential customers will see PI's products as a way to avoid or at least limit the number of mis-hires in their own company.

Moving on to the attempt to create legitimacy through mythopoesis in Text E, this attempt is different from the attempts in Text D and F as it includes both cautionary and moral elements. Due to the length of the story, I will summarise the cautionary and moral elements that can be found in the story (App A, 13, l. 14-33). The story revolves around how behavioural data makes us aware of our own and our co-workers' natural behaviour. The cautionary elements relate to how lack of emotional intelligence can lead to disengagement, whereas the moral elements relate to the benefits that follow emotional intelligence. In the story, the readers observe the protagonist going through the cautionary tale before going through the moral tale. By doing so, PI are able to paint one picture that the reader will want to avoid and one picture that can serve as the goal for the reader to achieve in their own company. This way, PI indirectly create legitimacy for their products as their products are what enable the moral elements of the story, meaning that without PI's products, the cautionary tale is more likely to unfold in the reader's own workplace. By creating legitimacy for their products, PI create legitimacy for personality assessments to solve similar problems, meaning that PI legitimise the use of personality assessment in general. In terms of the argumentation in the story, it looks thus:

> **Claim:** PI's behavioural assessments can create more emotionally intelligent teams and make sure that all team members know how to interact with each other.
> **Grounds:** PI's assessment provide data on how members of a team like to engage in interactions.
> **Warrant:** By understanding how your natural behaviors impact others, you can tailor the way you approach team interactions—and support people even on their worst days. (App A, 13, l. 29-30).

In the argument above, it is evident how the warrant provides a context in which the grounds and the claim are connected. As such, PI have constructed a valid argument which supports the overall moral of the story. By writing out the warrant instead of leaving it implicit, PI make sure that the readers understand how their products can ensure that the readers do not end up in the same situation as the protagonist in the cautionary part of the story. Thus, the answer to the 'why' is 'Because our product will help your organisations become more emotionally aware'.

Overall, as PI are successful in their attempts to legitimate their products through mythopoesis, they differentiate themselves from CC as CC does not attempt to establish legitimacy through this legitimation. By providing very specific situations in which PI's products are useful, the readers might find PI's products more tangible. This is due to the fact that some of the readers might have experienced some of the things from the storytelling in their own workplace.

6.5 Summary of Analysis

In the following section, I will provide a short summary of the findings from the analysis. Overall, both companies mainly attempt to create legitimacy for their products through means-oriented rationalisation. Through valid arguments and logical rationalisations, both companies are successful in almost all of their attempts at legitimising their products with this approach.

In terms of authorisation, both companies are successful in creating legitimacy through personal authorisation. However, in relation to impersonal authorisation, PI are more successful than CC as they are able to provide more specific grounds for their claims in their argumentation. In their attempt to establish legitimacy through impersonal authorisation, CC refer to undisclosed 'data' as the grounds supporting the claim that their tools have a place in recruitment, whereas PI refer to a specific report.

In terms of moral evaluation, both companies are successful in legitimising the readers' feeling regarding the recruitment process, which enables PI and CC to present their products as a solution to the readers' feelings. Similar for both companies is that this is done through the use of analogies. Generally, the companies have similar approaches to this legitimation.

In terms of rationalisation, the greatest difference between the ways in which the companies attempt to create legitimacy for their products is the different kinds of rationalisation used. I found that PI mainly use means-oriented rationalisation, whereas CC use both means-oriented rationalisation, goal-oriented rationalisation and theoretical rationalisation. As a result of this, CC differentiate themselves from PI. This is due to the fact that by showing that they can rationalise the use of their products in different ways, CC may seem more relatable and trustworthy. Furthermore, within rationalisation, I have found that some of the arguments could potentially de-legitimise the use of the companies' products due to the way in which certain arguments are composed.

In terms of mythopoesis, I found that this legitimation is only used by PI. In two of the three instances of mythopoesis, the tales were of the cautionary kind, meaning that the stories depict the protagonist in an unpleasant situation. By doing so, PI legitimise the use of their products as they could help the reader avoid ending up in the same situation as the protagonist. In the last attempt to establish legitimacy through mythopoesis, PI are successful in writing a story that reflects both the cautionary and the moral sides of the same story, making the use of their products even more tangible. By creating legitimacy through mythopoesis, PI differentiate themselves from CC as the moral of the cautionary tales legitimises the use of their products, which is an approach that is not seen in the data from CC.

Overall, most of the found attempts at creating legitimacy for the two companies' products are successful meaning that readers that are pro-personality assessment will be confirmed in their understanding of the world, whereas readers that are anti-personality assessment will have their understanding of the world challenged.

7. Discussion

In the following chapter, I will discuss the findings from the analysis, the theoretical implications in this research and how the findings in the analysis affect the practical implementation of PI and CC's products. As such, I will start by discussing the findings pertaining to authorisation, moral evaluation and rationalisation. The reason for discussing the findings of these legitimations specifically is that the way in which they are used has the potential to lower the companies' credibility and thus their ability to sell their products. Next, I will discuss how the theory used in this research could be adjusted in future research on similar subjects. The reason for discussing this subject is that additions to van Leeuwen's legitimations could benefit marketing focused research. Last, I will discuss how this research adds to the understanding of the validity of personality assessment in relation to recruitment.

7.1 Discussing Relevant Findings

As mentioned above, this section will discuss how the findings from the analysis affect the validity of the companies' arguments. This will be done by looking at examples pertaining to authorisation, moral evaluation and rationalisation that could potentially lower the successfulness of the companies attempts at creating legitimacy for their products and thus, personality assessment in recruitment.

Authorisation

In relation to authorisation, I will focus on the examples provided in Section 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 regarding impersonal authorisation. Within these examples, I found that when both companies refer to impersonal authority, it is difficult to determine what the authority is actually vested in. This is due to the fact that CC just refer to 'data' and 'research' without disclosing what kind of data and research they are dealing with. As a result of this, there is a risk that readers will not accept this data or research as valid grounds for their arguments. If this is the case, the attempts at creating legitimacy for their products will be unsuccessful, meaning that CC's own trustworthiness will be damaged as they are not able to produce a valid argument pertaining to why their products have a place within recruitment. On the other hand, there is a chance that CC's existing ethos and expertise in the field is enough to make the readers believe in the undisclosed data and research.

In the data from PI, I found that they refer to a specific report, which initially is more trustworthy than the data and research in the example from CC. However, upon further inspection, the report that PI refer to reflects their own research, meaning that it is not a scientific report. Thus, there is a risk that the report that PI refer to is biased in proving that the products and services provided by the company are indeed useful tools in a recruitment setting. Just like it was the case with CC, there is a risk that readers notice this, which could potentially lower their trustworthiness.

The fact that both companies vest authority in questionable research could be an indicator that the articles' marketing purpose is more important than being transparent. One could think that the reason why authority is vested in the questionable research is that there is no relevant research that supports the companies' claims. Therefore, the companies have chosen to invent research that fits the narrative they are trying to construct. By doing so, the companies' use of impersonal authorisation and the structure of their arguments make it seem like their products are indeed very useful. However, when looking at the research that the authority is vested in, readers might become unsure of the validity of the argument and thus the products. This makes it seem like it is more important to PI and CC that their products seem useful to potential buyers than being fully transparent. In general, it adds trustworthiness of the products if a report or research supports the use of said products. However, as both of the companies are engaged in B2B rather than B2C marketing, potential customers are often more difficult to convince to purchase your products. This is due to the fact that more people are involved in the decision-making process and that purchases are often more expensive (James 2011). As such, potential buyers will presumably do their research before committing to a product or service. In this case, there is a risk that the lack of transparency will hurt PI and CC more than admitting to the potential shortcomings of their products as potential B2B customers want to know as much as possible about the product or service they are about to purchase. Both the positives and the potential negatives. As such, by creating reports themselves and by referring to 'research' and 'data', PI and CC could come across as less trustworthy, which could potentially have a negative influence on the sale of their products.

Another possible reason why PI and CC refer to questionable research is that some of the existing data on the subject of personality assessment does not support the use of personality assessment in recruitment. Obviously, referring to such research would not benefit either of the companies. However, by addressing that they are aware that such research exists, they would come across as transparent and trustworthy, which in return would strengthen the arguments in favour of using personality assessment in recruitment. By doing so, PI and CC would also attempt to break with the understanding that personality assessment does not have a place within recruitment, which would act as an attempt to legitimise personality assessment tools in general. Hence, in relation to impersonal authority, the fact that PI and CC refer to questionable data makes them seem less transparent and less trustworthy. On the other hand, there is a chance that PI and CC's expertise in the field of personality assessment is enough for them to still seem trustworthy.

Moral Evaluation

Moving on to moral evaluation, this section will discuss the absence of evaluations in the data from both companies. As mentioned in section 6.2.3, none of the companies have used the moral evaluation called *evaluations* to create a moral basis for their products. To summarise, evaluations pertain to our understanding of what is good and bad or whether a specific action is the morally correct action in a certain situation. As such, evaluations would allow PI and CC to express the moral basis of their products. However, as none of the companies use this legitimation, the readers might think that there is no moral basis for the use of the companies' products, which could have a negative impact on the companies' ability to sell their products. This is due to the fact that without informing the customers about the moral basis of their products, PI and CC's products could come across as amoral. On the other hand, there is a chance that this legitimation is not found in the data for strategic reasons. As the products are sold to practitioners that use the tools in their daily operations, there is a chance that PI and CC have actively chosen to focus on legitimising their products through rationalisation. This is mostly done by informing the potential users how their products work and how the products can help the practitioners in their daily operations. In other words, the companies have made it a marketing strategy to exclude the moral aspects of the products.

However, this does not necessarily mean that they had to exclude the moral perspectives altogether. Instead, PI and CC could have focused on the fact that some candidates might be cheating on their test, which, from a moral perspective, could be seen as the wrong thing to do depending on the situation. By doing so, the companies would be able to discuss the ramifications of faking. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Griffith, Chmielowski, and Yoshita (2007) argue that candidates do fake the answers on their personality assessments in some cases, and that faking has the potential to negatively impact the selection of candidates. As such, PI and CC could legitimise their products by acknowledging that some candidates do the wrong thing by cheating on their personality assessment. Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 3, Morgeson et al. (2007) argue that faking is one of the factors that lower the validity of personality assessment. As such, this seems like a subject that would be beneficial for the companies to mention. Yet, there is a chance that the companies are aware of the implications of faking but choose not to mention them. From the perspective of the PI and CC it could seem like a great flaw in their products, which could make them less attractive to potential customers, which is why they have chosen not to address the subject. However, if this is the case, there is a risk that PI and CC come across as being dishonest. In order to avoid this, PI and CC could include faking as part of their argumentation.

In relation to the argumentation pertaining to moral evaluation, faking could be included in the argument as a rebuttal. This way PI and CC could acknowledge that some people are not truthful when they take the assessment, but that their products still provide a realistic picture of the candidate. By doing so, the companies seem transparent but also professional. This is due to the fact that they show their expertise within the field of personality assessment and not just within the scope of their own products. Thus, the companies will seem more trustworthy, which would positively impact their ability to sell their products.

Given that the subject of argumentation was introduced in the paragraph above, I will use this next paragraph to discuss the general structure of the PI and CC's argumentation. In both data sets, the arguments consist of claim, grounds and warrants, most of which are implicit. In a limited number of cases, the companies add a backing to support the warrant, however, this is generally not the case. As a result, the arguments presented by the companies can come across as being superficial. This is mainly due to the lack of backings, rebuttals and qualifiers. By structuring their arguments this way, PI and CC construct the arguments with just enough elements for the arguments to be considered valid. The reason for this could be that the purpose of the texts is to draw people into the companies' websites where the readers can learn more about the PI and CC's products. On the other hand, there is a risk that readers are not intrigued enough to do more than just read the articles due to the structure of the arguments.

Of course, the success of the arguments depends on what kind of reader is reading the article, and what stage of the purchasing process the reader is in. As the articles are posted to LinkedIn, we can assume that most readers are interested in the contents of the articles due to their professional background. However, some readers might be reading the articles in order to gain knowledge without being interested in buying the products. For this reader, it may not be as important that the arguments only include the most important elements. For other readers such as readers in charge of the HR-systems in any given organisation, it can be crucial that the argumentation is logical and thorough. If the argumentation is not thorough enough, this kind of reader might not click around the website after reading the articles, which is the overall purpose of the content marketing that is posted by PI and CC. However, if the readers are in the initial stages of looking for new personality assessment tools on behalf of their organisation, it could be beneficial to keep the argumentation to what is needed and nothing more. This is due to the fact that at this stage, the most important thing is to draw readers into your website, where they can learn even more about your products (Albrecht, Hoffman, and Green 2022). In this case, PI and CC seem more trustworthy as they provide valid arguments that help create interest for the products, which simultaneously strengthens their ethos.

On the other hand, if the reader is in the decision-making stage it would be more beneficial to create thorough arguments containing as many elements from the Toulmin Model as possible. This is due to the fact that the more thorough the arguments are, the more trustworthy the companies will seem. Ethos is especially important in this case, as we are dealing with B2B sales. Being able to establish your ethos is important due to the amount of people involved in the decision-making process and the amount of money that are involved (James 2011). Thus, by creating more thorough arguments, PI and CC would give themselves a better opportunity to sell their products, but as they mainly compose arguments consisting of claims, grounds and implicit warrants, PI and CC might come across as superficial, which could lower their ethos in a B2B perspective.

That being said, there is a chance that PI and CC have not thought about this as their truth is that personality assessment tools are very relevant in recruitment. The two companies have a very clear understanding of how their products can help practitioners in their daily operations. For this reason, they may not have thought that it was necessary to convince their readers that their products have a legitimate place in recruitment. For readers who are familiar with this, and share the views of PI and CC, the lack of argumentation might not be as big an issue. However, the companies must be aware that although many people share their opinions on the subject, some people are still opposed to the idea of personality assessment in recruitment. This means that PI and CC might be biased towards certain readers. Yet, this makes sense in some way, as PI and CC will have a greater chance to sell their products to like-minded people. On the other hand, their somewhat superficial arguments make it seem like they have neglected the fact that opinions can be challenged.

In summary, the lack of evaluations and thorough arguments make PI and CC's seem superficial and somewhat untrustworthy. However, there is a chance that this is an active choice from the companies as more transparency regarding their products would require the companies to address potential flaws in the products.

Rationalisation

Moving on to the last points from the analysis, I will discuss the example from Text B in which PI argue that their products do not paint the whole picture of the candidate, which is why practitioners should use as many analytical tools as possible (App A, 5, l. 25-30). As mentioned in Section 6.3.1, this could be interpreted as PI actually de-legitimising their own products. If this is the case, PI have admitted that their products are not as legitimate as they have tried to establish them as throughout the data. As such, PI puts themselves in a situation where they on one hand say that their products can help managers manage their teams better and make the hiring process easier for the recruiters, but on the other hand they argue that their products cannot paint the full picture of the candidate. As a result of this, readers and potential customers could be left in confusion regarding the actual legitimacy of PI's products. For readers who are actively looking for new HR-tools, this statement could be the reason why they choose to buy products from another company. However, as PI underline the shortcomings of the practices that are generally used in recruitment processes, they establish a rationale for using as many tools as possible in the recruitment process. This way, PI seem more transparent, which could be beneficial in B2B sales. Furthermore, PI establish their ethos by expressing their expertise within the field of recruitment, which makes them more trustworthy. Additionally, it must be noted that there is a great chance that the potential buyers reading the articles are aware of the complexity of personality. Given that personality is very personal and complex, it is difficult to predict personality with a hundred percent success rate. As such, there is a chance that the potential customers understand and accept that the complexity of personality makes it hard for the assessments to be correct one hundred percent of the time. Given that this is the case, PI improve their ethos and trustworthiness by addressing the shortcomings of their products.

However, by admitting that their products do have shortcomings and thus cannot paint the whole picture of the candidate, they add to the discussions regarding the validity of personality assessment in recruitment which was mentioned in the Literature Review. This is due to the fact that by de-establishing the legitimacy of their products, PI de-establish the legitimacy of personality assessment in general. Although both sides of the discussion agree that personality assessment has potential flaws, the way that PI expressed the shortcomings of their products, they made it seem like their products could never paint the whole picture of the candidate. As such, PI indirectly argue that personality assessment cannot be used as a predictor for job performance. As a result, some readers will see this attempt at creating legitimacy for all of their products as a de-legitimation of personality assessment tools in recruitment generally.

On the other hand, there is a chance that PI intentionally de-legitimise their individual products in order to make it even more attractive to buy all of their products. This is due to the fact that for every additional product the customers buy, their recruiters will have more information to work with, which will enhance the probability of selecting the correct candidate. As such, de-legitimising the individual products could be a sales technique with the purpose of making the products more attractive as a bundle.

In addition to the above discussion, it must be noted that examples of potential de-legitimation are only found in one of the texts from PI, and that PI use all other rationalisations to assure readers that their products can be of great use in the recruitment process. Given that this is the case, there is a chance that the amount of positive uses of rationalisation outweigh this one example of potential de-legitimation. This is due to the fact that readers potentially only read one or two articles about the subject before deciding whether PI's products could be a useful addition to their organisation's recruitment process. This means that there is a chance that the readers or potential customers do not read the specific article in which the potential de-legitimation occurs. Additionally, there are three successful attempts at creating legitimacy for PI's products in Text B, two of which are enabled by another legitimation meaning that these attempts are even more powerful than they would have been on their own. As a result of this, readers might disregard the potential de-legitimation of the products although they only read this specific article.

When looking at the potential de-legitimation from the perspective of the readers and their situations, I do not deem this to be of great negative impact to the overall message that PI are trying to send. Especially when looking at the argumentation that is connected to this attempt at creating legitimacy through rationalisation. In Section 6.3.1, it becomes clear that this specific argument is well composed as it contains a claim, grounds, a warrant and a backing. As PI are successful in creating legitimacy for their products' combined value, I do not find the potential de-legitimation as problematic as it would have been the case if PI had not been able to provide a valid argument.

7.2 Theoretical Implications

Now that the data analytical elements have been discussed, I will move on to discussing the theoretical implications of this research. This will be done by evaluating the theoretical approach before providing ways in which this approach could be adjusted.

After having used the theoretical approach to analyse and discuss the findings of the research, it has become clear that there are certain areas in which the approach is lacking depth. The most prominent area is the missing perspective to marketing and B2B sales. Although the van Leeuwen's legitimations were useful in determining the ways in which PI and CC establish legitimacy for their products, it was evident that some legitimations were more relevant than others. This was especially the case for moral evaluation which is one of the least used legitimations in the data from PI and CC. However, the fact that moral evaluation is not identified as much in this research does not mean that moral evaluation should be excluded from marketing research altogether. Rather, the low amount of moral evaluation indicates that the products that have been the focus of this research do not necessarily need to be legitimised through this kind of legitimation. Had the research however been focused around environmentally friendly products, one could imagine that legitimising the products through moral evaluation would be beneficial. However, given that the relevance of moral evaluation is product dependent, additions to the adopted theoretical approach could be made in order to avoid such problems in future research.

For this research, it could be relevant to add certain marketing focused strategies to van Leeuwen's legitimations. As mentioned in the Literature Review, Hofacker et al. (2020) argue that digital branding is an area in which future B2B research should focus. This understanding could be implemented in future research by adding brand legitimacy to van Leeuwen's legitimations. According to Dimov (2021), brand legitimacy is a way in which companies legitimise their brand by living up to the promises that they make as a way to establish trust. Additionally, brands can be de-legitimised by overpromising or committing to initiatives outside of their capabilities. Brand legitimacy could be identified as inconsistencies found either in different texts or inconsistencies between texts and promises made on the companies' websites. By adopting this approach in this research, I would have been able to investigate how the perception of the companies' brands affects the impact of the original legitimations.

Another way in which adjustments to van Leeuwen's legitimations could have been made is by implementing the legitimacy gap. According to Sethi (1979), the legitimacy gap is what happens when a company does not live up to the expectations that the public or the company's customers have. As such, a gap is created between the perception of what an organisation does, and what is expected of it. In case a company does not live up to the expectations, they will be perceived as less trustworthy. However, implementing the legitimacy gap also comes with some downsides. One of the most obvious limitations of the legitimacy gap is that it is almost impossible to know the expectations of the companies' customers other than they expect the companies to follow the rules and regulations. In order to unveil the remaining expectations, researchers have to conduct investigations of the customer's actual expectations for the companies or rely on their own expectations to a specific kind of company. An example of this could be: I expect that PI and CC's tests are built based on actual research on personality. If this is not the case, I would perceive the companies as less trustworthy. This is due to the fact that if the tests are not built based on research, there is no guarantee that the tests actually assess the correct personality measures.

Had I entered into this discussion in this research I would have found that CC's assessments are built on the Five Factor Model (FFM) (App B, 7, l. 26-8, l. 6), whereas it is difficult to determine which personality measures PI's tests are based on, other than the fact that they are based on what PI call Independence, Extroversion, Patience and Formality. However, it is impossible to know what lies behind these measures. In order to legitimise the basis of the tests, PI have created a behavioural target for every possible role. This way, the candidates' test results can be compared to the behavioural target for any given position in order to find the compatibility of the candidate and the role. However, as it is unknown what research the measures are based on, some would question the legitimacy of PI and their products due to the gap between what is expected of them and how they are perceived. Thus, implementing the legitimacy gap would allow future research to focus on multiple sources of data in order to provide a greater picture of what influences the perception of a brand. In this case, the identified legitimacy gap in the research on which PI's tests are based upon could have a negative impact on the perception of PI's overall legitimacy. However, the perception of PI's overall legitimacy could also be positively impacted by the positive reviews, the large number of customers worldwide and their many years of experience in the field. Especially the positive reviews and number of customers indicate that practitioners all around the world find PI's tools useful, which means that although their tests are not based on the FFM, PI's tests still aid practitioners in hiring new employees.

As this research has focused on the perspectives of PI and CC, future research could instead focus on the reviews of personality assessment tools in order to provide a greater understanding of practitioners' perspective of this subject, while simultaneously adding to the field of qualitative research within personality assessment.

7.3 Using Personality Assessment in Recruitment

Now that the findings and theoretical implications have been discussed, I will move on to discussing how the findings and prior discussions in this research adds to the discussion regarding the use of personality assessment in recruitment. Based on the findings from the analysis, it is evident that the way that PI and CC use rationalisation to express the usefulness of their products indicate that both companies are convinced that personality assessment has a place in recruitment. This makes sense as the companies have devoted their entire businesses to selling personality assessment tools. However, it cannot be denied that both companies are biased when they express the usability of their products. This is due to the fact that the companies' survival is dependent on the understanding that personality assessment improves the recruitment process. As such, it makes sense that they support that side of the discussion.

That being said, some of the arguments found in the data could indicate that the companies somewhat accept some of the arguments from the anti-personality assessment scholars. One example of this could be when PI potentially de-legitimise their products by stating that potential customers should use as many assessments as possible as one assessment does not paint the whole picture of a candidate (App A, 5, l. 25-30). This statement supports one of the conclusions drawn by Morgeson et al. (2007), who argue that in order to get a valid result, personality assessment tools must be used in combination with other assessments (721). In this case, one could argue that PI and Morgeson et al. (2007) agree that personality assessments are only valid when combined with other assessments. However, the different approaches to the question regarding validity is what differentiates PI from Morgson et al. (2007). This is due to the fact that Morgeson et al. (2007) are only focused on the mathematical validity of personality assessment, whereas PI are interested in the practical usefulness of their assessments. As such, PI's argument pertains to ways in which potential customers will gain as much insight into the candidates, and thus hire the best candidate, rather than determining the actual validity of the test. This means that although PI somewhat agree with arguments presented by the anti-personality assessment scholars, this does not change the fact they support the use of personality assessments in recruitment.

Another way in which it becomes evident that the companies add to the understanding that personality is a valid predictor of job performance can be found in the way that CC's tests are built. CC's tests are based on the FFM, which is the model of personality traits that Tett, Jackson and Rothstein (1991) and Barrick and Mount (1991) have found to predict job performance. Thus, by basing their tests on the FFM and due to the successful attempts at creating legitimacy for their products, CC indicate that these specific personality traits are indeed predictors of job performance.

In terms of faking, this does not seem to be as great an issue as Griffith, Chmielowski, and Yoshita (2007) argue that it is. This is due to the fact that neither PI or CC mention the existence of faking. This could indicate that Morgeson et al. (2007) were correct in their conclusion that faking does not have that much influence on the validity of personality assessments. If this is the case, the fact that neither of the companies mention faking could be another way of expressing that personality assessment does have a place within recruitment. This is due to the fact that not acknowledging faking, which can be seen as one of the greatest flaws in personality assessment, supports the belief that personality assessment can be useful in recruitment as there are seemingly no downsides except that the assessments do not paint the whole picture of a candidate.

7.4 Summary of Discussion

From the discussion, it can be concluded that the fact that PI and CC refer to questionable data makes them seem less transparent and less trustworthy. However, they could seem more transparent by acknowledging that there are other understandings of the usefulness of personality assessment than their own.

Furthermore, it can be concluded that although PI and CC have neglected describing the moral aspects of their products, this does not necessarily lower their trustworthiness as they legitimise their products through other legitimations. Yet, PI and CC could have used evaluations to express an understanding that users of the tests might be amoral when taking the test by providing misleading answers. Faking could furthermore have been included through rebuttals, which would have made the companies' arguments stronger and made them seem more transparent. All in all, not using evaluations can make PI and CC seem somewhat untrustworthy and superficial.

In relation to rationalisation, it can be concluded that it is up to the reader to determine whether PI de-legitimises their products by admitting that they do not paint the whole picture of a candidate.

However, as the argument is well composed, there is a great chance that the readers will find PI to be transparent rather than de-legitimising their products.

In terms of the theoretical limitations of this research, I can conclude that van Leeuwen's legitimations lack a marketing related focus, which leaves room for adoption of additional theories such as brand legitimacy and the legitimacy gap. Including such theories would have allowed for discussions regarding the basis upon which the tests are built.

Moving on to how this research adds to the discussions pertaining to whether personality assessments have a place in recruitment, I found that both companies support the use of personality assessment, which is obvious given that this is the basis of both companies' survival. Furthermore, I found that CC supports the understanding that the personality traits from the FFM are predictive of job performance. Thus, the findings of this research support the use of personality assessment tools in recruitment overall, although some parts of the articles could suggest otherwise.

8. Conclusion

In the following chapter, I will conclude on the findings and the impact that they have on the outcome of this research. I will start by concluding on the findings and the results of the discussion before directly concluding on the research question.

Based on the findings of the analysis, it can be concluded that all of van Leeuwen's legitimations were identified in the data. The most prominent legitimation used by both PI and CC is rationalisation, which is mainly used to express the ways in which the companies' products can make the recruitment process easier for the recruiters. This is mostly done through means-oriented rationalisation, where the companies express the purpose of their products through statements such as 'By using our products, you can hire with certainty' and 'Our products make it easier to overcome hurdles in the hiring process'.

In terms of the similarities between PI and CC's approach to the legitimation of their products, it can be concluded that both companies use the legitimation moral evaluation as an enabler for other legitimations. This is done by acknowledging that readers might feel that recruitment is difficult, which enables the companies to use rationalisation to legitimise their products as a solution to the readers' feelings. Additionally, it can be concluded that neither of the companies use moral evaluation to establish moral legitimacy for their products, which could make the products seem amoral. Yet, although the moral aspects of the products are not mentioned, the companies' trustworthiness is not damaged due to their success in legitimising their products through other legitimations. However, addressing the moral implications that surround faking would have been an obvious way in which PI and CC could indicate that not all test takers are truthful when taking a personality test.

Another similarity between the companies is that they mainly construct arguments containing of claims, grounds and warrants, meaning that in some cases, their arguments seem superficial. I have concluded that especially incorporating faking as a rebuttal could have strengthened the argumentation from both PI and CC although it entails that the companies would admit that their products have shortcomings. This is mainly due to the fact that it would make the companies seem more transparent and thus more trustworthy.

Furthermore, in terms of referring to impersonal authority, both companies show similar tendencies as they refer to questionable data. The difference here is that PI refer to research that they have conducted themselves, whereas CC refer to undisclosed data. I concluded that it is up to the reader to determine whether this approach harms the trustworthiness of the companies as both companies have great expertise within the field, which could balance out the negative impacts of referring to questionable data.

Moving on to differences in the ways that PI and CC create legitimacy for their products, I can conclude that PI differentiate themselves from CC by referring to more specific data when attempting to establish legitimacy for their products through impersonal authority, although the data is constructed by PI themselves. As such, PI seem more trustworthy than CC given that there is a chance that the readers do not investigate the origin of the report that PI refer to.

Furthermore, PI differentiate themselves from CC by legitimising their products through mythopoesis. As a result of this, PI's products seem more tangible than CC's products as PI have presented a narrative in which the products are used to solve problems that recruiters face on a daily basis.

In terms of how CC differentiate themselves from PI, it can be concluded that CC mainly differentiates themselves by using multiple kinds of rationalisation, which can make CC's products seem more useful than PI's products as CC successfully demonstrates the usefulness of their products in different ways than PI.

In terms of how the understandings portrayed in this research add to the discussion regarding whether personality assessment tools should be used in recruitment, I can conclude that both companies support the use of personality assessment tools in recruitment. This makes sense given that the companies are dependent on this understanding as they would not survive if other understandings were dominating. It was further concluded that the qualitative findings of this research support the quantitative understanding that the personality traits on which the Five Factor Model is built upon does indeed predict job performance, which ultimately underlines that the findings in this research supports the use of personality assessment in recruitment.

To conclude on the research question, PI and CC mainly create legitimacy for the use of personality assessment in recruitment by rationalising the purpose and usefulness of the personality assessment tools sold by the companies.

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