

# *Master's Thesis:*

Exploring Microsoft's Online Organisational  
Communication Strategy & Employer Branding  
Efforts through Employee-Oriented Content and Job  
Seekers' Expectations on LinkedIn

10<sup>th</sup> Semester

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# Abstract

In recent years, the widespread use of the internet & social media made organisations worldwide rethink their entire mechanism and implement communication strategies & employer branding aspects to their online representation on social media. The internet and social media itself have become the most frequently used sources for job seekers nowadays (Backhaus, 2004; Soulez & Guillot-Soulez, 2011). In this paper, Microsoft's online organisational communication strategy as well as employer branding efforts are explored through employee-oriented content and job seekers' expectations when it comes to the professional social media platform LinkedIn. Thus, the main ambition of the research was to reveal all fundamental aspects in order to understand what is online organisation communication strategy of Microsoft & how it is shaped as well as what employer branding efforts are communicated through Microsoft's employee-oriented content on LinkedIn. The secondary aim of the research was to additionally reveal Microsoft's communicated brand identity on LinkedIn in the hand with job seekers' expectations when it comes to future employer content on the professional social media platform – LinkedIn.

In this research, content analysis of multimodal evidence has been chosen as the first primary method to analyse Microsoft's employee-oriented content on LinkedIn and reveal what is communicated brand identity, employer branding efforts, and lastly online organisation strategy of the organisation such as Microsoft. Secondly, descriptive statistical analysis has been chosen as the second primary method of analysing data; in this paper, descriptive statistical analysis helped researchers to analyse quantitative survey devoted to job seekers. Through the survey, it was revealed what are job seekers' expectations when it comes to future employer content on LinkedIn – and all found information was consequently analysed through mentioned descriptive statistical analysis in order to understand what are the most frequent responses as well as what are the main job seekers expectations.

In addition, the exploratory case study in the hand with chosen methods helped uncover what is Microsoft's online organisational communication strategy & how it is shaped as well as what are the primary employer branding efforts that are promoted through Microsoft's employee-oriented content on LinkedIn. Besides, the mentioned research design as well as methods also assisted in revealing what is Microsoft's communicated brand identity but most importantly what are job seekers' expectations when it comes to future employer content on the professional social media platform LinkedIn. Lastly, in the paper, all mentioned findings were revised as well as reflected upon based on the chosen theoretical background of the research.

# Introduction

Through recent years, it became evident that the Internet is among the most frequently used sources for today's job seekers (Backhaus, 2004; Soulez & Guillot-Soulez, 2011). People use the Internet to evaluate organisations before they even apply for a job as well as they frequently research if their personality and background are suitable and adequate fits for the companies. Today, the entire social media sphere plays a crucial role in the hiring process when it comes to branding the company to all potential employees (Sivertzen et al., 2013). If a closer look is taken at social media; it is fundamentally visible how the entire SOME sphere transformed the world of online organisational communication offering countless potential for employer branding as well as talent acquisition processes (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Thus, social media became not only a powerful tool when it comes to employer branding but it also created the opportunity to shape organisational identity for potential employees online (Mishra & Mishra, 2014). Platforms such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and even Instagram became the solution for crafting the organisation's identity to potential candidates which enhanced the entire brand's perception level (Chen et al., 2015).

If a closer look is taken in today's digital times, it can be stated that online organisational communication has become a fundamental aspect of the entire organisational identity, its interactions & connectivity. Thus, online organisational communication represents a lot of opportunities for the workplace to connect, learn, or even communicate in the digital landscape (Guffey & Loewy, 2018). When it comes to online organisational communication, it can be also stated that social media started to allow organisations to publicly showcase and cultivate a sense of community in the digital landscape (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). All traditional media like newspaper articles, or radio announcements were replaced by online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, or LinkedIn because of the fact that they showcase higher satisfaction & trust levels or even commitment to the brands themselves. Besides, the entire advantage of the internet significantly shifts the communication level of organisations when it comes to presenting themselves and engaging with the potential audience online (Seltzer & Mitrook, 2007; Xifra & Huertas, 2008).

While it is clear that social media are commonly used as a communication technique by organisations, when it comes to professional social media, it can be stated that the mentioned term refers to the social media platforms that are designed for working purposes such as social

networking in professional settings where people can discuss, follow, produce or even share content which is related to organisational or working settings. The mentioned outcomes are primarily achieved by using social media platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn or even by using internal organisational SOME platforms such as Meta's and MS Team's Workplace (Oksen et al., 2022).

Within the lens of professional social media platforms; LinkedIn hugely stands out as the most famous platform when it comes to employer branding and its efforts. According to Lee & Jo (2020), LinkedIn has the power to shape the overall reputation of the organisations as well as attract potential talents. By using LinkedIn and its professional features, many organisations are accessing the ability to showcase their identity when it comes to culture & values as well as career opportunities which are directed to the audience of jobseekers (Damaraju & Bharadwaj, 2018). The mentioned platform, LinkedIn, is also offering various insights into analytics that assist companies in measuring the effectiveness of initiatives related to branding. Besides, it also helps to optimise data when it comes to decision-making processes in talent acquisition (Tribunella et al., 2017). Currently, the well-known LinkedIn has over 1 billion active users while also over 67 million organisations from more than 200 countries worldwide (LinkedIn, 2024; LinkedIn, 2020).

When it comes to research conducted by Lee & Jo (2020), it is known that LinkedIn also has a fundamental power to shape organisational reputation connected with attracting new talents. As it was previously mentioned, organisations can use multiple features to craft compelling & suitable narratives that align with their organisational values (Damaraju & Bharadwaj, 2018). Thus, this all can be communicated consistently through various employee-oriented content which produces engagement and connectivity with dozens of potential job seekers. Besides, it helps to foster valuable connections and potentially lead to positive recruitment outcomes (Tribunella et al., 2017). Lastly, according to Kaizin (2023), a strong brand image on LinkedIn can help organisations achieve outstanding advantages also when it comes to their other social media profiles since it enables businesses to be seen and acknowledged. However, LinkedIn still remains a leading professional SOME platform for organisations and job seekers. Consequently, this research is focused on one of professional social media platforms - LinkedIn.

As a result of constant development, the entire recruiting process of well-qualified employees has become increasingly challenging due to aspects such as the transition to a knowledge-based

economy and the ageing of the population (Ployhart et al., 2017). Organisations ensure diverse actions to find the most suitable candidates and attract talents that support businesses to improve competitive advantage (Kuchеров & Zavyalova, 2012). Therefore, maintaining a positive employer brand has become critical, leading organisations to vigorously look for versatile techniques that can aid in attracting and retaining current and potential employees (Guthridge et al., 2008).

Initially, when it comes to the employer brand, it can be stated that it is portrayed as *“the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company”* (Ambler & Barrow, 1996, p. 17). The scholars propose that an employer brand like a consumer brand holds a certain image in the minds of the employees, which consequently can form close relations between the brand and its employees (Fernandez-Lores et al., 2016). Lloyd (2008) adds that employer branding is the whole of the company's efforts that the organisation takes to build an image of an attractive employer to work with, including current and potential employees. Even though branding is a marketing concept, employer branding can be characterised as the practice of combining marketing with human resources management, by doing that organisations strengthen their efforts to construct a stronger brand with a higher competitive advantage, and as a result, it enables brands to attract, engage, and retain qualified employees (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). The concept of reputation is also interconnected with employer branding (Sivertzen et al., 2013; Vercic & Coric, 2018), as it is one of the factors that potential candidates consider before applying for a certain job at a certain organisation (Soeling et al., 2022). The brand must be able not only to differentiate, create dedication, and satisfy candidates but also to build an emotional connection (Davies, 2008).

Furthermore, Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) distinguish between internal and external employer branding. In the lens of internal employer branding; it is about targeting current employees of the organisation, while external employer branding is focused on potential employees. In terms of external employer branding, an organisation aims to create favourable employer brand associations among potential candidates to become the brand as well as the employer of their choice (Backhaus, 2016). Brand associations can be related to emotional responses toward information communicated by an organisation (Aaker, 1991). In relation to this research, the main focus of this paper is on external employer branding.



However, employer branding is also strongly associated with terms like organisational identity, employer image, etcetera. When it comes to organisational identity, it contains the remarkable characteristics, values, and beliefs that not only represent a brand but also differentiate it from other businesses (Hatch & Schultz, 2003). Thus, organisational identity demonstrates the nature of an organisation, its culture, behaviour, and relations with stakeholders (Albert & Whetten, 1985). In terms of employer branding, organisational identity plays a key role in creating a certain perception of the employer which directly affects how potential and current employees imagine a brand (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). A strong employer image allows organisations to attract qualified employees, increase employee engagement, and improve overall organisational success (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). While negative employer image may prevent job seekers from applying and restrain current employee confidence and retention (Collins & Stevens, 2002).

When it comes to one among the biggest international organisations itself, Microsoft is the most influential organisation in the technology industry with the number #1 software product in the world. According to the list of the most “treasure-worth” organisations, Microsoft as a corporation was ranked 14<sup>th</sup> place in the rubric called Fortune 500 - which means 14<sup>th</sup> place among the largest US organisations ranked by their total revenue. If a closer look is taken at the history of Microsoft, it is known that the corporation was founded in the '70s specifically in 1975 (Fortune, 2019).

The organisation itself is highly focused on empowering every individual as well as every organisation in the world to make them achieve the best results. Based on Microsoft's vision, its goal is to create opportunities for growth and impact as many individuals, organisations, and countries as possible (Microsoft, 2023). Moreover, in the matter of Microsoft's culture, it is known that their overall culture is deeply rooted in the praising growth mindset. By this, they mean that all employees and partners of Microsoft are on a common journey towards learning, growing but most importantly operating as one whole – as one organisation.

When it comes to the importance of the company's human resources, Microsoft invented an internal listening system for employees which is focused on collecting feedback to satisfy employee needs throughout the entire globe (Microsoft, 2023). Moreover, the corporation's employees actively take part in the questionnaire called “Employee Signals” which is focused

on topics such as growth, thriving, well-being, inclusion, organisation culture as well as learning & development. The entire purpose behind this idea is to collect valuable insights and support all actual as well as future employees. Another of Microsoft's most core values could be defined by the concept of diversity in hand with inclusion since they thrive in an inclusive & supportive working environment where actual and potential employees' needs are considered.

According to Microsoft's annual report (2023), LinkedIn is the organisation's main tool of connection with the world of professionals. They use this platform when it comes to hiring, marketing themselves, selling as well as learning since they use all talent, marketing, premium but also sales solutions that LinkedIn as a professional platform offers. Microsoft proved itself as a technology-leading giant that is not only focusing on bringing innovative solutions to individuals and organisations but also as a corporation that cares about its actual & potential employees. Thus, based on that and the facts mentioned above, Microsoft is the organisation that is going to represent one of the main cores of this research.

## 1. Problem Formulation

In relation to the mentioned aspects above, there is a lack of research that draws an understanding of how online organisational communication & employer branding are connected/influenced not only by the organisational identity that the brand communicates but also by the platform and job seekers' expectations. To conduct this research the chosen organisation is Microsoft which is considered as the largest company in the technology industry (Forbes India, 2024).

Accordingly, recent studies reveal that personal expectations are directly connected to preferences of the environmental and social responsibility of organisations (Evans & Davis, 2011; Mueller et al., 2012). Therefore, this research aims to delve deep into the online organisational communication of Microsoft and its employer branding on the professional social media platform - LinkedIn. Through a comprehensive qualitative content analysis, this research seeks to uncover how this tech giant communicates its identity which forms a brand image as an attractive employer. Besides, the second focus area of this research aims to identify

what are the expectations of job seekers who are also LinkedIn users, when it comes to the content shared by organisations on the professional social media platform LinkedIn.

By shedding light on Microsoft's identity as well as job seekers' expectations this research will potentially contribute to the field of organisational communication on the professional SOME platform LinkedIn, employer branding, brand identity as well as potential candidates' preferences of what they expect to see on the professional SOME platform LinkedIn.

Moreover, the study potentially has some practical implications not only for organisations that place a focus on enhancing their employer branding methods in terms of recruitment management but also potentially for marketing professionals when it comes to professional social media - LinkedIn. As a result, this thesis seeks to form a deeper understanding of online communication that can be shaped by various factors such as employer branding aspects, and even the expectations of the target audience - job seekers.

**Thus, the main problem of this thesis is constructed as follows:**

- What is the online organisational communication strategy and employer branding efforts specifically in employee-oriented content of tech giant Microsoft on the professional social media platform LinkedIn?

**Furthermore, additional questions have been created that aim to guide the analysis and to answer the main problem formulation:**

- How is Microsoft's brand identity communicated through employee-oriented content on the professional social media platform LinkedIn when it comes to attracting potential employees?
- What are the expectations of jobseekers when it comes to content shared by organisations on professional social media platform LinkedIn?

## 2. Theoretical Chapter

In this research, the theoretical chapter will provide a presentation of the chosen theories in terms of treating the problem formulation. In addition, this chapter will be vastly focused on notions of organisational identity, employer branding, job seekers' practices when it comes to professional settings, social media, and online organisational communication. Consequently, the four selected theories and one research will help the researchers to critically reflect on the problem formulation of this research as well as all chosen theories will help to contribute to the examination of problem formulation. Thus, the theoretical background of the research is going to be built around:

1. **Corporate Identity Model also called Model AC2ID Test by John M.T. Balmer (2001)** to reveal the communicated brand/corporate identity of Microsoft on professional social media LinkedIn.
2. **Employer Branding Theory by Kristin Backhaus & Surinder Tikoo (2004)** with the aim of discovering what are employer branding efforts of Microsoft in their employee-oriented content.
3. **Uses and Gratifications Theory by Elihu Katz & Jay Blumler (1974)** will serve as a tool for communicating what are the expectations of job seekers when it comes to LinkedIn and content produced by future employers.
4. *Research: Predictors of job seekers' self-disclosure on social media* by **Miriam & Asma El Ouardi, Jesse Segers & Ivana Pais (2015)** which will help researchers to acquire an understanding of general jobseekers practices in professional interaction.
5. **Open Systems Theory of Org. Communication by Daniel Katz & Robert Khan (1966 & 1978)** will be used as a very last theory to reveal what is the online organisational communication strategy of Microsoft and based on what factors it is shaped.

## *Corporate Identity Model by John M.T. Balmer (2001)*

According to Dr. Balmer, the Corporate Identity Model, also called Model AC2ID Test, is a framework that serves to examine overall multi-dimensional identity when it comes to organisations (Balmer & Soenen, 1999). The mentioned Corporate Identity Model consists of five different identities which are:

1. **Actual identity:** This type of identity is highly associated with various aspects when it comes to physical as well as non-physical aspects. The mentioned aspects tend to usually be acknowledged & identified by internal stakeholders (Murwani & Melati, 2018). According to Dr. Balmer, the actual identity of the corporation is mostly about ownership, leadership style, all business activities & markets as well as organisational structure. Besides, it also includes an understanding of the offered products & services quality, business performance, and lastly, it also refers to management and employees overall values (Balmer, 2001).
2. **Communicated Identity:** When it comes to communicated identity, it can be stated that this identity is largely connected with types of communication (Murwani & Melati, 2018). Based on Dr. Balmer, communicated identity is characterised by *corporate controllable communication* such as online representation, advertising, or public relations. However, this identity could be also characterised by *corporate non-controllable communication* such as organisational behaviour, employee discourse, overall performance as well as comments related to the organisation's name (Balmer, 2001).
3. **Conceived Identity:** Conceived Identity can be referred to the external stakeholders perceptions on the entire organisational identity connected with its communication efforts (Murwani & Melati, 2018). Thus, this type of identity is highly connected with concepts such as reputation, image as well as branding; whereas perceptions are based on different individuals, groups, or networks (Balmer, 2001).
4. **Ideal Identity:** This type of identity is based on the expectations of various external stakeholders (Murwani & Melati, 2018). According to Dr. Balmer, the ideal identity is

defined by strategic planners but also by other people's opinions on the positioning of the organisation & its market (Balmer, 2001).

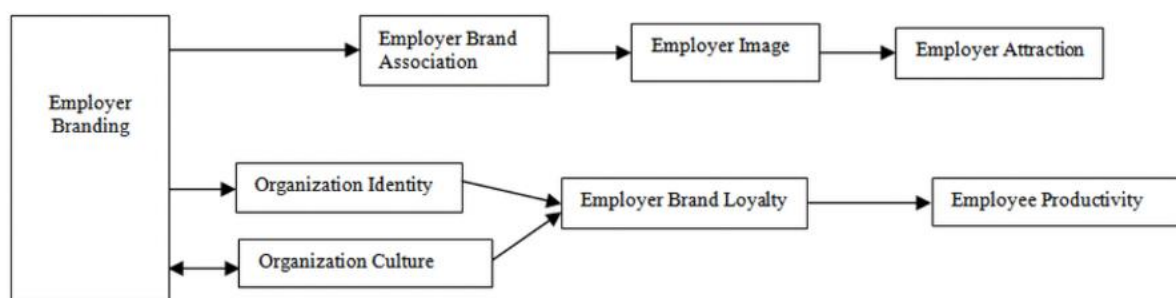
5. **Desired identity:** And lastly, desired identity is an identity that is connected with the mission, vision as well as future planning developed by the organisation (Murwani & Melati, 2018). This specific identity refers to the vision of where the organisation wants to be in the future, likewise, it is the vision of the leaders when (Balmer, 2001).

In this master's thesis, Corporate Identity Theory also called Model AC2ID Test by Dr. Balmer has been selected as a theoretical foundation for revealing Microsoft's corporate/brand identity. However, as it is known, the mentioned theory focuses on examining the five various identities from which four of those are not relevant to the research, and therefore the framework will consist of analysing and discussing only one aspect of the model that is directly related to the problem formulation - **COMMUNICATED IDENTITY**.

Thus, in this research, the communicated identity will indicate Microsoft's online communication when it comes to their corporate/brand identity on the professional social media platform - LinkedIn. Specifically, it will include Microsoft's communicated identity through employee-oriented content since one of the aims of the research is to reveal the organisational identity when it comes to attracting job seekers & potential talents. The researchers aim to examine the organisational representation when it comes to its values, culture, vision, etcetera. Based on revealing those, the understanding of communicated corporate/brand identity through employee-oriented content on LinkedIn when it comes to attracting potential employees will arise. Lastly, it is crucial to mention that there is a very vast connection between communicated identity and employer branding efforts. Thus, after revealing the communicated identity of Microsoft, the researchers will examine employer branding efforts since it will strengthen the research with a more specific and in-depth understanding of who Microsoft is and what are their efforts when it comes to communicating with potential job seekers.

## *Employer Branding Theory by Backhaus & Tikoo (2004)*

When it comes to Employer Branding Theory & its conceptual framework, two main concepts describe the theory itself - marketing as well as human resources. According to Backhaus & Tikoo, the mentioned theory creates two main assets which are brand associations in hand with brand loyalty. In terms of employer brand associations, it can be stated that it hugely shapes the overall image of the employer, while nextly, affecting the attractiveness level of the company and its presentation to potential employees. Moreover, employer branding as a concept has also a vast impact on organisational identity & culture that contributes to loyalty itself. Thus, the mentioned loyalty is a potential contribution when it comes to increasing employee productivity (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).



*Figure 1: Employer Branding Theory Framework by Kristin Backhaus & Surinder Tikoo (2004, p. 505)*

**Employer Brand Association:** This concept is highly connected with thoughts that the brand itself evokes in consumer's minds (Aaker, 1991). The entire association can be verbalised as well as focused on more sensorial aspects such as feelings, emotional responses, memories, etcetera (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). When it comes to employer branding associations, this aspect of the theory is going to be focused on revealing what emotional aspects Microsoft is communicating in its content on LinkedIn.

**Employer Image:** The overall employer image is vastly defined by how consumers think about the brand itself, fully based on the information they have. Besides, the whole perception concept is connected with the product's features as well as non-product features (brand's values) and both practical & emotional benefits that the brand offers (Keller, 1993). Thus, it can be stated that the employer image in this theory means the overall impression that the organisation creates in the consumers' minds (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Based on the

mentioned, the employer image aspect will serve as an instrument in discovering what are the key features of Microsoft's brand (in other words values) connected with both practical & emotional benefits that the organisation offers.

**Employer Attraction:** According to Backhaus & Tikoo, symbolism represents a very important role in attracting potential employees (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Therefore, employee attraction is connected with more symbolic meanings such as feelings or even ideas that resonate with the target audience (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998).

This part of the theory & framework itself is focused on symbols that the organisation is communicating; symbols that could potentially resonate with job seekers, with the aim of developing strong brand attraction (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003). As mentioned, the employer attraction element is vastly focused on symbolism; therefore, this aspect will aim to reveal what are the main symbols that Microsoft is presenting and communicating to its target audience to build a strong brand attraction.

*HOWEVER*; it is crucial to mention that there is a visible connection between the first three aspects of the model since employer associations, to some extent, affect the image of the employer. Whereas, employer image creates a relationship when it comes to associations as well as an attraction that supports the process of organisation & person fit.

The following three elements of employer branding are more connected with operation when it comes to effectiveness as well as it is highly connected with more pragmatic characteristics of the employer itself. According to Backhaus & Tikoo, the second part of the employer branding model is more focused on messages, signals as well as intentions of the organisation which can be additionally interpreted as promises by potential employers (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

**Organisational Culture/Identity:** This part of the employer branding theory is focused on messages that the organisation conveys to its potential employees; since presenting organisational culture & identity is crucial when it comes to job seekers and making their choice. According to Cable & Judge, the organisation's culture & identity highly affect the job seekers' decision-making as well as their post-entry working performance (Cable & Judge, 1996). Besides, the entire identity & culture topics can be understood as images as well as topics that the organisation is showcasing to its potential employees to be attractive and unique. Thus, in this part of the framework researchers will aim to reveal topics of the employer's key branding messages when it comes to crucial information about the culture & identity of



Microsoft. Besides, the secondary aim is to reveal how Microsoft is showcasing to its potential employees its attractiveness level.

**Employer Brand Loyalty:** When it comes to employer brand loyalty, it can be stated that it represents attachments that consumers tend to have to a specific brand (Aaker, 1991). Thus, the specific elements of employer loyalty are mostly focused on the exchange relationship that establishes a trust level between the brand and its consumers (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Moreover, brand loyalty also has two dimensions that it's crucial to mention; *behavioural* (willingness to purchase as well as repurchase) & *attitudinal* (commitment level towards the specific brand) (Chaudhri & Holbrook, 2001).

When it comes to a bit different angle, brand loyalty can be also described from a behavioural approach which is connected with organisational culture as well as from an attitudinal approach which tends to be related to organisational identity. Therefore brand loyalty is very connected with organisational commitments and promises; whereas these specific commitments are defined by the company's identification & involvement including acceptance of their values, goals as well as the desire to work (Crewson, 1997). According to employer branding itself, organisational commitment means that employees need to feel attached to the organisation as well as its presented employer brand - when it is like this it can be evaluated that the loyalty level is potentially high (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Therefore, this element of the theory is going to serve as an instrument in revealing what are the primary organisational promises as well as commitments of Microsoft. The researchers will take a closer look at Microsoft's identification & involvement including the promotion of their values, goals as well as a desire to work.

**Employer Productivity:** The employer productivity within this model refers to internal marketing efforts that are designed to create desired work conditions & support quality of life in the job. When employees are satisfied the entire performance level tends to be higher; according to Heskett employee satisfaction is directly linked to consumer perceptions which tend to bring results when it comes to profit itself (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004); (Heskett et al., 1997) Lastly, the employer productivity aspect is going to be used to communicate the main marketing efforts that Microsoft is promoting as well as all efforts that are designed to create desired work conditions and support quality of life in the job.

IN THIS PART OF THE THEORY, it is crucial to highlight that culture & identity connected with messages that an organisation conveys have a big impact on productivity from employees

as well as loyalty from consumers. Thus, overall key brand messages are very important when it comes to the organisation as a brand. The content of every brand should contain accurate and sufficient information since it is the key to improving the entire perception of the organisation, loyalty within the brand as well as productivity of employees.

To sum the entire theory up, it can be stated that employer branding represents an organisation's efforts when it comes to marketing its employment value proposition with the goal of enhancing recruitment & retention while increasing human capital's value. Secondly, employer branding design is also hugely focused on providing information to its current as well as potential employees in order to self-access the organisation from the inside. Therefore, the entire employer branding is vastly connected with having a proper brand identity that is conveyed to the target audience as an entire image. This type of image shows organisational efforts as well as it communicates what are their desired behaviours as well as work norms. Besides, the theory aims to create an understanding of what are the organisation's needs when it comes to current & potential employees.

As it is known based on the mentioned, the employer branding theory in this case provides an understanding of linkages which is to some extent beneficial for research to understand all employer branding efforts more deeply. The entire theory needs a minimal foundation of data to understand the organisation's aim when it comes to keeping satisfied current employees in hand and attracting potential ones. Thus, this theory will be used to understand what the brand is communicating and where its strategy is rooted since this is the primary key when it comes to understanding the employer branding efforts of Microsoft. Through using this theory, the researchers will acquire an understanding of the primary elements that are used in the external marketing efforts of the organisation. Considering all, this research will be primarily focused on the following parts of the framework:

When it comes to the first part of the model, the key ambition here is focused on *employee attraction* to understand what types of symbols the organisation is communicating in order to be attractive to current & potential employees. However in this research, the most crucial focus lies in the second part of the model; therefore, the research here will be deeply focused on the *organisational culture/identity* part which is going to be represented by Corporate Identity Theory also called Model AC2ID Test by Dr. Balmer as stated previously. In this step, the aim is to reveal if the organisation has clearly recognized values when it comes to its culture and overall identity. When the understanding is acquired, the linkages in the second part of the

framework will be more easily revealed which will bring specific meaning to the research. However, it is crucial to state that understanding linkages is not the aim of the research; the goal is to reveal the employer branding efforts of Microsoft as an organisation.

### *Uses and Gratifications Theory by Katz & Blumler (1974)*

Uses and Gratifications Theory by Elihu Katz & Jay Blumler (1974) will be used for very specific purposes; the general theory will be formulated to more specific survey that will entirely target LinkedIn professional context as well as this specific social media genre. According to Katz, the Uses and Gratification Theory is a foundation that explains the reasoning & meaning behind why individuals seek out media to fulfil their specific needs. In other words, this theory seeks to describe what users expect when it comes to media in order to fulfil their needs (Katz, 1974; Menon, 2022). In regards to UGT<sup>1</sup>, the theory clearly showcases how media in hand with social media are vastly available to many audiences & consumers nowadays. In recent years, users usually expect that social media will satisfy their needs, both social as well as psychological (e.g. gaining knowledge, relaxing, building relationships as well as differentiate among others) (Menon & Meghana, 2021).

According to Gallego, Bueno & Noyes; Uses and Gratifications Theory & its newest updated version is currently defined by seven specific pillars; **1. Convenience, 2. Entertainment, 3. Socialising, 4. Status Seeking, 5. Information Seeking, 6. Sharing experiences & 7. Continuance Intention.** Thus, based on the newly mentioned, those seven aspects are key characteristics when it comes to users' expectations within the media landscape (Gallego et al., 2016).

**Convenience:** In this theory, convenience is vastly connected with factors that make life & work easier but also simpler (Park & Han, 2013). Thus the potential expectations here could be related to minimising limitations & efforts while making communication easier with family, friends, colleagues, partners etcetera (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). Based on the mentioned, this element of the theory will serve as an instrument to reveal the main expectation of jobseekers when it comes to future employers and its communication of factors that make work easier as well as simpler.

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<sup>1</sup> Uses and Gratifications Theory

**Entertainment:** Based on the statement of Malik, Dhir & Nieminen; the entertainment factors refer to needs & expectations that are connected with enjoyment, fun as well as relaxation but also with general social interaction in order to satisfy users' emotional needs when it comes to socialisation (Malik et al., 2016). Therefore, the entertainment aspect of Uses & Gratification Theory will be focused on job seekers' expectations and needs when it comes to LinkedIn's content related to entertainment, enjoyment, fun activities but also relaxation aspects communicated by future employers.

**Socialising:** When it comes to socialising, this specific aspect refers to expectations of how social media could possibly help to maintain relationships (with family, friends, colleagues, etc.) as well as to fulfil emotional satisfaction (Apaolaza et al., 2014). According to Wei, Lin, Lu & Cuang; expectations when it comes to social & collaboration roles represent a crucial aspect in the willingness of individuals "to stick" with social network platforms (Wei et al., 2015). As stated, socialising refers to expectations of how social media could possibly help to maintain relationships (with family, friends, colleagues, etc.) as well as to fulfil emotional satisfaction. Therefore, this theory's element will be hugely focused on revealing job seekers' expectations when it comes to content on the social media platform LinkedIn and content produced by future employers related to relationships or family, colleagues, or friends gatherings in general.

**Status Seeking:** This specific aspect of the theory is showcased as a big motivation when it comes to using social media (Li et al., 2015). Many of the users use social media platforms to build their online identity as well as to promote their self-image. Therefore, the expectations of users within Uses & Gratifications Theory are grounded in fulfilling and elevating their "online visibility" (Pentina et al., 2014). In this case, status-seeking is going to serve as an instrument in revealing job seekers' expectations when it comes to communication of status, achievement, or power elements on LinkedIn by future employers.

**Information Seeking:** According to the research of (Pentina et al., 2014), it is proven that users are majorly positively affected by overall information sharing on social media. Another proven fact is that social media users tend to interact highly with diverse informational content within various perspectives. Besides, individuals also tend to look for information when it comes to making new relationships (Ostander, 2008). Therefore, the information seeking aspect of this theory refers to users' expectations when it comes to gaining knowledge & getting more information. Therefore, the information-seeking aspect of Uses & Gratification Theory

will help researchers to reveal all expectations of job seekers when it comes to informational content on LinkedIn. Moreover, the aim will be focused on what kind of information the job seekers seek to find, consume, and interact with, if so.

**Sharing Experiences:** This element of the Uses & Gratifications Theory is vastly connected with *status seeking* as well as *information seeking*. Therefore, the sharing experiences aspect of the theory refers to users' patterns when it comes to sharing news themselves as well as expectations of sharing news by others (Lee & Ma, 2012). The last element of the theory (sharing experiences) related to the social media genre will serve as an instrument in revealing what are the expectations of job seekers when it comes to content on LinkedIn related to experiences shared by future employers.

**Continuance Intention:** And very last, continuance intention represents expectations & needs fulfillment when it comes to the future. Therefore, this aspect of the theory refers to future behaviour based on how users are satisfied with the media itself. In other words, this last element of the theory is focused on users' expectations not currently but in the future (Gallego et al., 2016).

Lastly, it is crucial to mention that Uses & Gratifications Theory was built with the use of several communication theories as well as researches conducted by numerous theorists. Based on the mentioned, the usage of this theory brings enormous value to the research since it offers a deep understanding of users' expectations, needs, consumption patterns, and even the impact of social media or specific platforms can be potentially viewed (Baran & Davis, 2011). Moreover, even though the original and very first mention of this theory is from 1974; Uses & Gratifications Theory is still a very relevant subject since it is used by professionals and researchers until this day. Since 1974, the research and foundation on this specific topic have been extended and strengthened. Nevertheless, the current theory is still based on the first analysis of Katz since the media developed over time but its purpose stayed the same (Ruggiero, 2000). In this research, the Uses & Gratification theory will be the main instrument in communicating what are job seekers' expectations when it comes to the professional social media platform LinkedIn. Besides, the research focus will be entirely focused on the first six elements of the theory which are convenience, entertainment, socialising, status seeking, information seeking, and sharing experiences. The seventh and last element of the theory, continuance intention, is not relevant to the research since it examines and refers to the future while research examines current expectations of job seekers from LinkedIn as a platform.

## *Predictors of job seekers' self-disclosure on social media by Miriam & Asma El Ouiridi, Jesse Segers & Ivana Pais (2015)*

### **Jobseekers practices in professional interaction**

According to research conducted by El Ouiridis, Segers & Pais (2015), job seekers and their practices are primarily driven as well as motivated by a strong desire to convey a proper professional image by using a computer-mediated type on various communication channels that assists job seekers in optimising their self-representation. On the mentioned mediums; job seekers' practices are vastly connected with the social exchange processes by which job seekers use professional social media as a main search instrument to engage within career-oriented presentations with the aim of getting career/job opportunities. Moreover, based on the research results, job seekers tend to apply various strategies when it comes to their self-presentation; a positive strategy that is focused on revealing desirable social aspects of job seekers and a more honest strategy that tends to slightly include negative elements about many jobseekers.

When the light is focused on job seekers' interaction with recruits; it was found that many job seekers tend to maintain a relationship with at least one of the recruiters as potential employers (this also influences their career-oriented presentation & practices on social media) (El Ouiridi, et al., 2015). Based on the mentioned, it is indicated that job seekers seem to understand the entire implication of social media & its professional settings since most of the job seekers tend to share career-oriented details about themselves. The aim of this act is vastly supported by the job seekers' practices that they tend to get out as much as possible from social media in the process of job hunting.

As mentioned, there are various factors behind job seekers' practices when it comes to social media and its professional interaction. In this paper, the research by El Ouiridis, Segers & Pais (2015) will be used in order to generally communicate what are job seekers' practices when it comes to professional interaction on the social media platform LinkedIn.

## *Open Systems Theory of Org. Communication by Katz & Khan (1966 & 1978)*

According to Katz & Khan (1966), the theoretical perspective behind Open Systems Theory is that organisations tend to be influenced by the external environment. In other words, the

organisation is an open system built on inputs that are perceived as a source of the coming energy that reactivates the overall output of the system.

Within this theory, the company is acknowledged as a transformation of numerous inputs from the environment into goods, services, and values that the organisation eventually returns to the environment (Katz & Khan, 1978). Therefore, it can be concluded that the organisation itself is a specific social system that highly depends on the environment and its inputs.

*Moreover, the framework of this theory consists of four following elements:*

**Input:** This part of the theory includes resources & factors that tend to be taken as well as received from the external side of the environment (Katz & Khan, 1966; 1978). Thus, energetic inputs (in different words external influences) include aspects like current & potential employees, raw materials, current organisational trends, capital, and many more. However, the inputs section also involves intangible external inputs, e.g. recognition, expectations, satisfaction, status as well as personal rewards.

**Throughput:** Throughput refers to the process of converting the inputs within the entire organisational system (Katz & Khan, 1966; 1978). Therefore, the throughput aspect also tends to be called the “transformation process” which usually uses the mentioned inputs to create outcomes - which tend to be transformed into products, services, or the image of an organisation itself.

**Output:** When it comes to output, this is the outcome and the final message based on the inputs that are exported further to the environment (Katz & Khan, 1966; 1978). In other words, energetic outputs are generally the products, services, or messages that are distributed to consumers as well as customers.

**Feedback:** Lastly, the feedback is described as a process where outputs then to be recycled and moved back into the company (Katz & Khan, 1966; 1978). Therefore, outputs usually tend to receive feedback that is “recycled” and used as an external input once again.

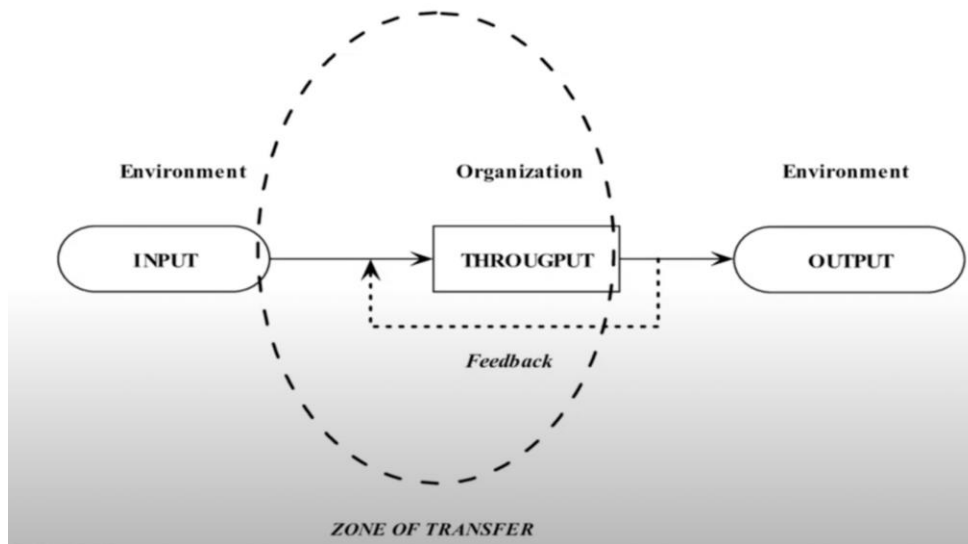


Figure 2: Framework of the Open Systems Theory of Organisational Communication by Katz & Khan, (1966 & 1978, p. 76)

This research will be entirely focused on only two following elements of the theory; *Input* & *Output*. According to Katz & Khan, external inputs are also vastly associated with employees (in this case potential employees) and their expectations as well as satisfaction level (Katz & Khan, 1966; 1978). Therefore, the INPUT element of the theory will be used to communicate external inputs that possibly influence the output of the organisation which is in this case Microsoft. In regards to inputs, the main ambition is to reveal external inputs of potential employees/job seekers. More specifically, the primary aim is to discuss intangible external inputs such as expectations of potential employees/job seekers when it comes to LinkedIn and future employers within the mentioned professional social media.

When it comes to the OUTPUT section, this element refers to the final message that is distributed to the environment based on certain inputs (Katz & Khan, 1966; 1978). Based on the mentioned, this element of the theory will serve as an instrument to communicate and reveal if the expectations of potential employees/job seekers are implemented in the output strategy of Microsoft. In this case, the output strategy of Microsoft is going to represent their online organisational communication within their employer branding efforts on LinkedIn.

Within this act, the researchers aim to showcase the understanding of what is the online communication strategy of Microsoft when it comes to their employer branding efforts. Moreover, researchers aim to reveal if the online organisational strategy is based on inputs from potential employees/job seekers within the LinkedIn platform or if the strategy is



grounded in something else. Lastly, it is crucial to mention that the THROUGHPUT as well as FEEDBACK elements of the theory are not relevant to the research since the aim is not to reveal the application of inputs; the research is focused entirely on understanding where online organisational communication is grounded.

### 3. Methodology

The methodology chapter will provide a presentation of the chosen approach in terms of philosophy of science, research design, the methods of data collection, as well as data analysis and ethical considerations. Consequently, the intent of this chapter is to ascribe and argue for the selected methodological choices.

#### *I. Philosophy of Science*

The research will adopt a Social Constructivist philosophy of science. The term Social Constructivism speaks about observation as an actively engaging process that happens within social interactions and posits that knowledge constructed through social interactions is shaped by culture and context (Derry, 1999; McMahon, 1997). As of Grint (1995), we can only understand the existence of something through discourse.

Accordingly, by employing a Social Constructivist approach, this research perceives social interactions as the foundation of reality (Detel, 2015). Hence, in terms of the researcher philosophy of science - Social Constructivism, a relativist approach has been chosen as a research ontology. The Relativist approach refers to the process of meaning making through discourse, which is highly important in terms of understanding social word and that the world can be perceived differently by each individual (Levers, 2013). Thus, in the case of studying phenomena such as online communication on professional social media platform, relativist ontology is chosen to guide this research since the findings will reflect how social reality is constructed by the researchers themselves. Meaning that the understanding of the gathered knowledge will strongly depend on the researcher's beliefs, values, experiences, personal and professional knowledge in terms of the aspects such as online organisational communication, employer branding, employer image, identity and more.

It is equally important to introduce the reader to research epistemology. Epistemology is concerned with how knowledge is viewed as well as how it originates (Blackburn, 2016). Thus as mentioned before, this research aims to explore Microsoft's online communication and the meanings of online language used on professional social media platform LinkedIn. Besides, this thesis is going to reveal how Microsoft is constructing its brand identity to online target audience - job seekers. Hence, as it prompts, the knowledge of this research is perceived as subjective as it depends on an individual's experiences, values, beliefs and much more. Accordingly, this thesis will not provide an ultimate truth or sort of answer which will form a single reality, as the understanding of the researchers is rather subjective than objective. Researchers strongly believe that culture, context and personal values play a significant role in shaping reality and therefore do not aim to argue that certain propositions formed by researchers shall be perceived as an ultimate truth.

In regards to Social Constructivism as well as relativist ontology, and subjectivist epistemology, researchers will seek to reveal how Microsoft is shaping social reality and especially its brand identity through online communication. The findings will be based on the complexity of job seekers' points of view as well as researchers' who will aim to make sense of organisations' identity representation on professional SOME platform LinkedIn. It is important to state that a researcher's point of view will at some extent influence how the data collection is conducted, how the data analysis is performed, and even how it is discussed in the final state of the thesis. However, having in mind those potential influences, researchers will ensure to provide the most subjective understanding of Microsoft's brand identity & online communication based on the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data sources of first-hand insights provided by jobseekers that are also LinkedIn users.

## *II. Exploratory Case Study Research Design*

According to scholars (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Rowley, 2002; Yin, 2009), the research design is a concept that links the aim of the research and the methods of collecting and analysing data, to derive implications from the studied knowledge. Toshkov (2016) adds that research design helps to ensure that the findings of the studies are as valid and explored as possible. However, it is important to mention that the chosen research design seeks to analyse

certain research issues which have not been deeply explored yet. Nevertheless, research design is interconnected with researchers' approach to the philosophy of science and therefore sets a certain attitude to the whole research (Creswell, 2009).

In terms of this research, exploratory case study design has been chosen to conduct this Master's Thesis. As of McGivern (2006), exploratory research is well suited for researchers who aim to identify and clarify already existing issues as well as to develop certain propositions. According to Blaikie (2009), exploratory research can be also employed when the researchers know a little about the topic and want to investigate it further - those two aspects form the main reason why researchers decided to employ exploratory research design to conduct the analysis.

The exploratory research is also well known for its flexibility (Aaker et. al. 2007) which suits this research well in case the researchers would need to set a new direction. Nevertheless, exploratory studies are valuable in finding out what is happening in terms of chosen phenomena as well as to seek new knowledge or to even assess certain phenomena in a new light (Yin, 1994). Hence, the researchers aim to explore and reveal as deep insights to problem formulation as possible, as a result exploratory research design suits this Master's Thesis the most in accordance with the research aims.

Nevertheless, to provide comprehensive understanding of chosen phenomena, the authors of this research decided to gather the study based on a specific case as social media genre - LinkedIn. Yin (2014) argues that case studies are beneficial when raising questions like "how," "why," "what," and "who". If the exploratory case study is chosen, the questions are usually "how" and "what." Exploratory case studies are appropriate when investigators strive to acquire comprehensive and in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon. Thus, the researchers aim to explore the social phenomenon that has not been explored deeply yet. In addition, the researchers get a lot of flexibility and it is possible to adapt to changes as the research moves forward, as mentioned earlier. In addition, the chosen research design helps researchers to understand quite early if the chosen topic is worth investing in and pursuing further. Besides, it is low-cost research and it does not require lots of financial resources as it is highly important for researchers as students.

However, the choice of exploratory case study research design has been made not only due to its flexibility and lots of advantages but also due to the main research goal which seeks to get a deep and comprehensive understanding of “What is the online organisational communication strategy and employer branding efforts specifically in employee-oriented content of tech giant Microsoft on the professional social media platform LinkedIn?”. To be able to answer the main research problem, the researchers will employ exploratory research design to gain insights in terms of “What are the expectations of jobseekers when it comes to content shared by organisations on professional social media platform LinkedIn?”. In other words, what do they want or do not want to see on potential employers’ LinkedIn profile. In addition, the researchers will explore “How is Microsoft’s brand identity communicated through employee-oriented content on the professional social media platform LinkedIn when it comes to attracting potential employees?”. The authors of this study strongly believe that this research will provide valuable findings into organisational communication on professional social media platform LinkedIn, employer branding efforts, job seekers expectations, alike talent attraction, as those are trending HR and Marketing related subjects in today's business society.

### *III. Mixed Methods Research*

Aside from quantitative and qualitative research methods, there is a third one called mixed methods (Strijker et al., 2020). Considering that all research methods have certain limitations, scholars felt that presumptions associated with one method could diminish the biases of other methods. As an alternative, the qualitative and quantitative methods could be used together to strengthen the whole research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007); & to ensure the validity, reliability & generalisability of this research. As of Bigler et al., (2019), when approaching a research problem from a broader perspective, the use of mixed methods is nearly unavoidable, and this is the result of the reality which is too complex to be approached from a single perspective. Mixed methods research is broadly used nowadays (Strijker et al., 2020).

In regards to qualitative research, the mentioned aims to understand the complexity of meanings and beliefs that characterise the subjective identities of the individuals in their relationship with the society (Rodrigues, 2016). Qualitative research strongly concerns how as well as why social actors try to interpret the perception of the world with how they try to

understand why something is happening in the society (Creswell, 2009). It is well known that qualitative data involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data to understand the experiences of people. Besides, one of the key aspects of qualitative research is the ability to study social phenomena. In addition, qualitative type of analysis seeks to interpret and describe instead of measure, as this method is seen as immeasurable. Lastly, qualitative data tends to be more open-ended, while quantitative data usually involves more closed-ended responses such as in quantitative surveys (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

As mentioned, quantitative research aims to test theories by examining the relations among variables. And as the opposite to qualitative research, these variables can be measured, so that numerical data can be analysed using statistical procedures (Creswell, 2008). The researchers who engage in quantitative methods of research have certain assumptions about testing theories in a deductive manner, trying to be protective in terms of biases and seeking to generalise the findings (Creswell, 2009).

Accordingly, mixed methods research has been chosen as it allows researchers to combine both qualitative and quantitative data which means that mixed methods helps to see the social phenomena from different angles as well as allows to reveal deeper and more expanded findings. This research will involve beginning with a qualitative content analysis of first-hand data specifically from user-generated sources on Instagram and following up with a quantitative job seekers' survey and descriptive statistical analysis with a large sample so that the researchers can generalise results to a bigger population.

#### *IV. Data Collection Methods*

The data collection is a crucial step in the research process. In regards to this research, the data collection process is going to be divided into two parts according to additional problem statements.

Thus, in order to answer the first additional research problem “How is Microsoft’s brand identity communicated through employee-oriented content on the professional social media platform LinkedIn when it comes to attracting potential employees?”, the research will aim to collect qualitative data that will be gathered from user-generated sources online, specifically

from the chosen organisations' Microsoft' LinkedIn profile. According to scholars, user-generated data is the content that has been voluntarily shared and it is useful and valuable for other media users (Kruum et al., 2008).

Therefore, the choice to collect user-generated data is entirely represented by the mentioned research question. Hence, the data is going to be collected from Microsoft's social media profile on LinkedIn and specifically from employee-oriented posts that are related to potential employee attraction as well as creation of attractive brand image towards target audience - job seekers. It is also important to mention user-generated data will include Microsoft posts that represent visual as well as textual content, but strictly not the comment section or even re-shared posts. The reason for focusing on Microsofts' posts only is due to the research aim to explore the brand identity & branding efforts of Microsoft and how it is communicated on social media by the organisation itself. The selection of the posts is based on the date, which means that the content chosen for the analysis are not older than from March-April, 2024. In total, 20 posts were chosen - 18 visual posts with descriptions and 2 videos. Lastly, the type of posts is based on the research aim to focus on only employee-oriented content. The main vision behind the choice of employee-oriented content is that the research is highly focused on the nature of employee branding & online organisational communication when it comes to attracting job seekers; therefore, in this case, the employee-oriented content is the most relevant and can help researchers to find the most reliable & valid findings. Based on the mentioned, the chosen posts are related to aspects such as organisational culture, organisational values, employee engagement, talent attraction, leadership, employee development and other relevant terms. The mentioned data collection gathered through survey can be found in the appendix 2.

In relation to researchers point of view in terms of social constructivism, social media posts as user-generated data has been chosen as those are constructed by organisations through social practices as well as cultures, values, rituals, diverse identities, language and even more. Therefore, by collecting the user-generated data from online database such as LinkedIn, the researchers aim to explore not only Microsoft's brand identity, but also to answer the main problem formulation: "What is the online organisational communication strategy and employer branding efforts specifically in employee-oriented content of tech giant Microsoft on the professional social media platform LinkedIn?".

Moving further, to answer the second additional problem formulation “What are the expectations of job seekers when it comes to content shared by organisations on professional social media platform LinkedIn?” the authors of this study decided to employ a quantitative survey and collect first-hand data from a specific target audience - individuals that are both job seekers and LinkedIn users.

According to Babbie (1990), survey is a quantitative instrument that aims to collect numerical data and describe its trends, attitudes, or even opinions of a chosen group of individuals by studying a sample of that group. Moreover, the quantitative survey can be also described as a method when the analyst defines predetermined questions to a group of research participants. However, one of the many advantages that method suggests, the quantitative survey represents an intent of generalising data from a sample to a population (Blackstone, 2012), as it is relevant for this particular study & its validity.

Hereinafter, the chosen quantitative online survey method for data collection is also perceived as an effective method which allows to collect large amounts of data in a relatively short period of time. Nevertheless, data collection through online survey is highly beneficial since it is a comfortable method for research participants as they can answer predetermined questions within a few minutes, from any location. Lastly, the survey method for data collection is considered a reliable technique to collect primary data, as according to Blackstone (2012), surveys include standardised questions, phrased in the same way and are shared with research participants which helps to ensure the validity and reliability of the data.

Thus, the primary aim of researchers is to collect first-hand data using quantitative survey method from as many job seekers that are using LinkedIn as possible during a 10 day period starting from 1st April, 2024 and until 10th April, 2024. The timeframe for data collection is based on the limited time to complete the research and submit the Master’s Thesis by the end of May, 2024. In terms of research participants, the authors of the thesis will ensure that the responses will include only individuals who are both jobseekers and LinkedIn users. To explain, the survey will begin with the question: “Are you a jobseeker & LinkedIn user?” (see appendix 2, p.2) and the research participants will be able to choose between “Yes” or “No” answers. Hence, the participants will be allowed to continue with the rest of the survey only if the answer will be “Yes” which will ensure the research validity & reliability. It is also important to state that the survey is going to be completely anonymous and any personal data

will not be stored. Accordingly, the introduction to the survey includes all the relevant details, so the research participants are informed about the reason for collecting those responses and the anonymity of the results. When it comes to survey distribution, the authors of the study are going to share the survey on various groups on social media such as “LinkedIn For Jobs; LinkedIn Job Posting Work; LinkedIn For Job Search; LinkedIn Jobs” and other relevant groups. This way the researchers aim to ensure that it will be possible to share the survey among the target group and that those individuals will become research participants.

By going deeper into the structure of the quantitative survey that consists of 16 questions, the mentioned will begin with 4 general questions as (see appendix 2): “Are you a jobseeker & LinkedIn user?”; “How would you describe your jobseeker status?”; “Do you as a jobseeker use LinkedIn mostly to..?”; “How often do you use LinkedIn to research a certain organisation?”. The reason for having those questions is to learn more about the target audience. Thus, in terms of the status, researchers aim to identify if participants are: “Actively looking for a job; casually looking for a job few times a week”; “Reaching out to only personal network for new opportunities”; “Open to talk to a recruiter, but not searching or applying themselves or even if they are completely satisfied with their jobs, but might be open for other opportunities”. While in terms of the usage of LinkedIn, the authors are keen on defining if jobseekers are using LinkedIn because they seek “To facilitate direct exchanges such as liking, commenting, sending messages, and otherwise engaging with other LinkedIn users” or oppositely - “To monitor and observe others’ content without direct engagement like scrolling, reading, gathering information, but not liking, commenting or even interacting with others”. Nevertheless, it is equally important for the research to define how often survey participants are researching organisations that might be their future employers. Consequently, all general questions that were presented will help the researchers to get to know survey participants better and to potentially provide much more comprehensive insights to the research problems.

Further, the survey will continue with six sections according to the Uses and Gratifications Theory by Elihu Katz & Jay Blumler (1974): 1. Convenience, 2. Entertainment, 3. Socialising, 4. Status Seeking, 5. Information Seeking, 6. Sharing experiences. Each section will include two multiple-choice questions that were developed based on the theory mentioned above. In addition, the sections will include “Highly important”; “Not important at all” types of questions. As described, the survey will consist of predefined closed-ended questions, however to ensure the quality of the responses, there will be a possibility for respondents to include their



own response that has not been mentioned by selecting an answer - “other”. Nevertheless, giving an option to include respondents' own response might be a challenge to the research as it requires higher involvement of the target audience. As a result, the researchers might not receive as many additional insights as expected. However, it is worth taking a risk and including diverse choices of responses in order to ensure as deep insights that are relevant to research problems as possible, as the survey includes only two questions per section and the reason for this is to ensure the large quantity of research participants which will assist in quality of data analysis and further discussion. It is highly important not to lose the interest of the research participants with the large number of questions.

Consequently, a triangulation of primary and secondary data will enable researchers to conduct thorough analysis and reveal versatile findings to the research problems. Nevertheless, a triangulation of the findings will assist to develop a reliable, valid as well as generalisable discussion to a population.

## *V. Ethical Considerations*

In regards to the research, there is one ethical consideration that it is essential to deliberate over. When it comes to collecting data from job seekers, researchers developed a survey in order to gather first-hand information. However, there was an ethical consideration that researchers needed to deal with since by survey they could reveal sensitive personal information such as names, surnames, and even email addresses. Considering the mentioned, researchers developed an anonymised survey that will not collect and store any personal data. Therefore, the survey as a data collection method is entirely anonymous, thus, all participants have to open the link only and they will be directly moved to the survey without the need to share email addresses, names, or even surnames.

## *VI. Data Analysis Methods*

### **Content Analysis of Textual & Visual Evidence - multimodal approach to content analysis**

The second part of first-hand data analysis from user-generated sources online, specifically LinkedIn, begins with qualitative content analysis. Content analysis can be characterised as the “technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages” (Holsti, 1969, p. 14). Gheyle & Jacobs (2017) debate that images, text, symbols, as well as, audio, can be analysed using content analysis too. According to Parveen & Showkat (2017), qualitative content analysis allows researchers to describe accumulated data in depth and to indicate the meaning of messages. In terms of this study, content analysis allows researchers to make an assertive study in social science which presents validity as well as reliability of the data (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). Moreover, it is also crucial to mention that content analysis can be used in two manners - deductive or inductive. The inductive manner tends to be applied when there are no existing findings about the specific phenomena, while the deductive manner used if the analysis’s structure is created based on certain existing knowledge as well as the research’s goal to validate theory (Kyngas & Vanhanen, 1999). Thus, qualitative content analysis will be used in deductive manner as there will be predefined categories (brand identity, employer branding efforts and online organisational communication) in order to ensure much deeper insights in relation to those predefined aspects, instead of looking into the entirety. The other reason refers to the large theoretical section and the variety of the aspects that shall be analysed further in the process which can result in lack of deep insights and researchers as well as readers can lose themselves in the process of the thesis.

Accordingly, the reason for choosing qualitative content analysis with deductive approach is primarily due to the fact that content analysis is a very systematic and objective approach. Thus, content analysis will assist researchers in systematically analysing gathered qualitative data from Microsoft's LinkedIn profile and its employee-oriented content. The reason behind employee-oriented content is due to the research aim which is to increase understanding and create overall meanings of Microsoft's brand identity and its employer branding efforts as well as an online organisational communication strategy when it comes to targeting job seekers.

Moreover, the researchers will focus on both, textual & visual evidence, to acquire as much specified information about brand identity, employer branding efforts as well as online organisational communication strategy as possible.

When referring to Krippendorff (2019), six major steps exist that need to be followed while conducting content analysis. Thus, the research is going to follow the mentioned six steps by Krippendorff while conducting an analysis of written text as well as visual elements. When it comes to textual evidence, the researchers are going to examine various written posts & text samples to reveal Microsoft's brand identity, its employer branding efforts as well as an online organisational communication strategy on the professional social media platform LinkedIn. While in the visual evidence, the researchers are going to specifically focus on visual content only, in the form of video or image including possible descriptions within since it is part of the visual posts also. Based on the mentioned, the primary ambition of content analysis, including textual & visual evidence, is to the fullest extent to collect descriptive characteristics by using a manual approach.

To conduct content analysis and to be able to answer problem formulation - six steps by Krippendorff (2019) will be taken. However, those steps are extended by two introductory steps in order to understand the content on an even broader scale.

### **Introductory step 1:** Selection of the content

The first introductory step is content, medium, criteria, and parameter selection. In terms of content selection, the main objective of this phase is to deeply understand the selected employee-oriented content which will be further analysed. Thus, the chosen content of this research as specifically, qualitative content analysis is Microsoft's posts shared on LinkedIn that include both visual and written forms of content.

**Medium:** Regarding medium selection as already mentioned, the chosen medium of qualitative content analysis is the professional social media platform - LinkedIn. The reason behind the chosen platform is that LinkedIn is the most used and popular professional social media network which unites more than 1 billion users and also over 67 million organisations worldwide (LinkedIn, 2024; LinkedIn, 2020).

**Criteria:** The chosen criteria of the analysis are focused on the most recent as well as the latest published employee-oriented content on Microsoft's and its LinkedIn profile - both visual & written evidence. In total amount, **20** posts will be analysed in order to find the main themes

that the organisation is communicating. The main reason for the selection of this specific criteria is highly based on the content relevance regarding the research aim and developed categories as well as based on the time relevance since the aim is to analyse the most recent content which will support the reliability and validity of the analysed data.

**Parameters:** The following parameters for the content analysis are listed down below.

*Date range:* **March - April 2024**

*The number of photography evidence:* **20 photographs**

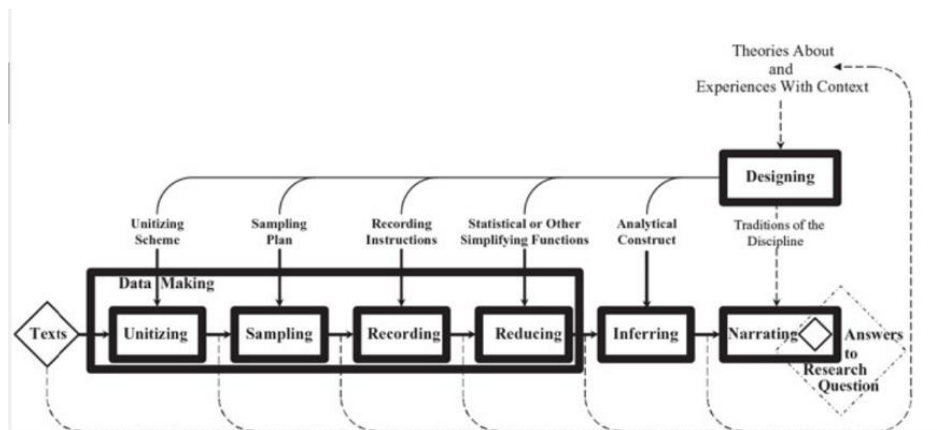
*The number of video evidence:* **2 videos**

*The number of written evidence:* **18 posts' descriptions**

### **Introductory step 2:** Study of the content

The second introductory step of content analysis is deep observation and analysis of chosen employee-oriented posts shared on Microsoft's profile on LinkedIn. Accordingly, the researchers aim to explore and deepen the understanding of Microsoft's brand identity, its employer branding efforts as well as overall online organisational communication tactics based on its visual & textual content. The researchers plan to deeply describe all visual posts while attaching them so the visuals would be still seen. However, when it comes to textual content, all is already described and therefore, the researchers will study the content without making more descriptions and instead focus on looking for the main themes within the text (while textual posts will be attached).

After two introductory steps, six steps by Krippendorff (2019) will be applied and followed. However, it is essential to state that all six elements are not necessarily always linearly followed. The primary reason is that the process occasionally includes loops which refer to the steps repetition until the desired quality is accomplished.



common in the scientific field to do this step by using software, however, in this case, it will be done by the project's researchers since they have limited resources and availability to use software (Krippendorff, 2019).

**Step 6:** Reducing gathered data (Definition of categories)

The fourth step of content analysis, of both visual & textual evidence, will serve as an instrument to manage a vast volume of data. Thus, this specific step will reveal categories that will help to reduce the amount of data into more efficient units which will help to highlight the entire focus point of the research (Krippendorff, 2019). In this case, the mentioned efficient units in other words categories are - brand identity, employer branding efforts as well as online organisational communication strategy of Microsoft. The stated categories are wisely chosen and vastly supported by the research goal, approach as well as used theoretical framework.

**Step 7:** Inferring the context (Codes categorization)

Within this specific step, the researchers must exceed their view outside of all gathered data and focus on the main context of it. Thus, the literature should be revised into a specific subject since it will increase the warrant of evidence for the research (Krippendorff, 2019).

Based on the mentioned, all codes that serve as labels will be assigned into categories; brand identity, employer branding efforts as well and online organisational communication strategy. The mentioned categories were clearly defined at the beginning of the content analysis, thus, the analysis follows an approach that is deductive since the theory is a starting point.

**Step 8:** Narrating specific answer to the problem formulation (Conclusion of results)

The last step of the content analysis is very significant; since it summarises all that was found and makes the entire content analysis highly comprehensive. Therefore, this process of narrating will serve as a representation of the findings to the audience (Krippendorff, 2019).

In conclusion, within this research, the primary purpose of content analysis is to reveal what is Microsoft's communicated brand/corporate identity, what are their employer branding efforts as well as what is the online organisational communication strategy of Microsoft as a tech-leading giant. Through the process of content analysis, the latest posts (not older than one

month) will be analysed. The reason behind the choice is to work with the posts that are the most relevant in order to make this research legitimate as well as relevant. Therefore, 20 chosen LinkedIn posts were chosen from the period of March to April 2024. The analysis will be more focused on employee-oriented posts, however, it can occur that fewer slightly different posts will also be included in order to increase the overall understanding of Microsoft on a larger scale. Consequently, 20 posts will be analysed - 18 visual posts with written descriptions and 2 videos. To add, only Microsoft's shared posts will be analysed, and reshared posts won't be included since the aim of the analysis is to work with content directly published on professional social media platform LinkedIn. However, when it comes to the mentioned step-by-step approach, this approach is going to serve as a guide for content analysis that uses and includes two types of evidence; textual and visual evidence. Thus, in this research, the content analysis will also serve as an instrument to reveal "hidden messages" behind Microsoft's employee-oriented content which will be the step towards understanding what is Microsoft's communicated brand identity, employer branding efforts, and online organisational communication strategy.

## **Descriptive Statistical Analysis**

The first part of descriptive statistical data analysis starts with first-hand data gathered from jobseekers by using a quantitative survey. According to Kaur et al., (2018), descriptive statistical analysis is going to be used to summarise data in an organised manner. While as of Hayes (2024), descriptive statistical analysis is a technique that entitles researchers to define attributes of a data set as well as to measure the tendency of the findings. Hence, the method of descriptive statistical analysis suits this part of research best as the key objective of the quantitative research is to gather a large quantity of data via the survey and to define what are the expectations of jobseekers when it comes to the professional social media platform LinkedIn and potential employers. Besides, the descriptive statistical analysis will be conducted deductively as the survey has been developed according to the Uses and Gratifications Theory by Elihu Katz & Jay Blumler (1974). It means that researchers will incorporate deductive reasoning which aims to develop a certain proposition.

Consequently, the exact steps of descriptive statistical analysis that were developed by the researchers are described as follows in order to answer the research aims:

**Step 1:** Critical description of the responses

When it comes to the very first step of descriptive statistical analysis, the main ambition through this certain step is to develop an extensive understanding of the responses in a numerical manner which will be eventually used in further steps.

**Step 2:** Defining the target audience

As a part of the second step of the analysis, the target audience will be also described according to the highest response rate in relation to general questions of the survey defined in step 1.

**Step 3:** Defining & Understanding the most frequent survey responses

The third step of descriptive statistical analysis will be focused on defining three of the most frequent responses to each question of the survey as well as revealing the most relevant responses. The initial goal of the third stage is not only to develop an understanding of the most common answers but also to eliminate the answers with the lowest response rates of each question.

**Step 4:** The most frequent expectations according to the response rate of jobseekers when it comes to communication used by organisations on LinkedIn  
Accordingly, the last step will seek to summarise the responses even more and to ensure as deep understanding of jobseekers' highest expectations as possible. A total number of responses will be revealed and the first half of these will be marked in green as the most expected aspects when it comes to communication of organisations on LinkedIn - to provide as focused insights as possible.



## *VII. Validity and Reliability*

Firstly, to ensure overall research validity & reliability the researchers will employ the mixed methods to conduct this study & provide as comprehensive insights as possible. Thus, this study will conduct the most recent qualitative & quantitative first-hand data collection that will allow the researchers to answer all research aims based on the complex perceptions of the chosen research phenomena. Nevertheless, to ensure reliability of qualitative data gathered from professional social media site LinkedIn, the posts selection criteria as mentioned earlier in the data collection chapter, is based on the date (the most recent posts, not older than 1 month) & employee-oriented content. Besides, multimodal content analysis will be used as a qualitative data analysis method with a highly consistent coding scheme defined earlier in the data analysis section. When it comes to reliability of the qualitative analysis, the coding procedures will be performed by both researchers to ensure reliable findings & its discussion.

It is also crucial to state how the researchers are going to ensure validity of the quantitative data collection and descriptive statistical analysis. As quantitative part of this research utilises measurable data & statistical analysis, the quality of it will be ensured by seeking to define the highest response rates which will define & answer one of the additional problem formulations that aim to uncover what are the highest expectations of jobseekers when it comes to content shared by organisations on social media site LinkedIn. Nevertheless, the researchers aim to collect an appropriately large sample size - at least 50 responses in a 10 day period, so that results can be generalised to a bigger population. Lastly, due to the numerical nature of quantitative data employed for this research, personal bias of the researchers will be reduced to a relatively great extent to ensure as high reliability of this research as possible.

To summarise, it can be stated that chosen methodologies of this research are based on the aim to provide generalizable findings, meaning that the researchers seeks to explore the chosen problem area, answer problem formulations and to discuss the findings in the sense that those could be broadly applicable to diverse types of people within the area of this project.

## 4. Analysis Chapter

### *I. Content Analysis - multimodal approach*

Within this research, the primary purpose of content analysis is to reveal what is Microsoft's communicated brand/corporate identity, what are their employer branding efforts as well as what is the online organisational communication strategy of Microsoft as a tech-leading giant. Besides the researchers aim to answer problem formulation and its second sub-question; **“What is the online organisational communication strategy when it comes to employer branding efforts specifically in employee-oriented content of tech giant Microsoft on the professional social media platform LinkedIn?”** as well as *“How is Microsoft's brand identity communicated through employee-oriented content on the professional social media platform LinkedIn when it comes to attracting potential employees?”*

Through the process of content analysis, the latest posts (not older than one month) will be analysed. The reason behind the choice is to work with the posts that are the most relevant in order to make this research legitimate as well as relevant. Therefore, 20 chosen LinkedIn posts were chosen from the period of March to April 2024. The analysis will be more focused on employee-oriented posts, however, it can occur that fewer slightly different posts will also be included in order to increase the overall understanding of Microsoft on a larger scale. Consequently, 20 posts will be analysed - 18 visual posts with written descriptions and 2 videos. To add, only Microsoft's shared posts will be analysed, and reshared posts won't be included since the aim of the analysis is to work with content directly published on professional social media platform LinkedIn.

Through the analysis, the researchers are going to study the content to understand its meaning, and based on the gathered information they will aim to utilise data and divide text into themes. Further, all themes will be grouped to find the number of repeating themes which will serve as a step to avoid unnecessary repetition. Thirdly, all founded themes will be coded in order to label them and lastly, all labelled themes will be placed into relevant categories at the very end of the analysis.

## A) Study of the content

When it comes to the appendix, it can be stated that it serves as an additional document that is communicating & showcasing how we approached the study of the content. Through the study of the content, we followed the design of the content analysis and by doing so we started familiarising ourselves with data, we studied the entire content and made a written deep description of what the posts are about when it comes to its visuals as well as written text (see Appendix 1). As an example, the one post is going to be attached to showcase to readers how we have done it; we looked at the data & content itself, described it, and created our own narrative that we will work with further.



Figure 4: Screenshot of the 9th Microsoft's post shared on LinkedIn (see appendix 1, p.2)

Post no 9. The screenshot of the Microsoft post (see figure 4) shared on LinkedIn includes the following text: “Erin Jagelski, a Senior Director of Sales at Microsoft Advertising, shares her story of how she joined us after having her first child, and how she found her community and passion in the maternity program, a grassroots initiative that helps women and caregivers transition back to work. Flexibility matters, join us: <https://msft.it/6049ck4oP>. #MicrosoftLife #MicrosoftCareers #InclusionIsInnovation #WomensHistoryMonth”. In addition, the image showcases a young and happy woman in a sunny background of a potential workplace that has a “mission to revolutionise parental support in the workplace”.

Hence, the post highlights the maternity program provided by Microsoft which shows organisational support towards working parents, caregivers and women. By sharing Erin’s story Microsoft shows its organisational values such as fostering a sense of community including diverse people, the importance of personal life, thus work-life balance, overall employee well-being, and a supportive work environment.

Furthermore, the mentioned text highlights perks and benefits for working parents, so this can be seen as an advantage for job seekers who are looking for an organisation that offers competitive benefits packages.

Also, the focus on women’s experiences through the #WomensHistoryMonth hashtag suggests a commitment to diversity and inclusion initiatives, thus this can be appealing to job seekers from diverse backgrounds. It is important to highlight that mentioned persona - Erin Jagelski is a Senior Director and that might imply opportunities for career growth at Microsoft, especially for women.

## **B) Dividing text into themes**

Once we familiarise ourselves with the data and content; we move to the next step which is entirely connected with finding the main themes that the data and content itself are communicating. It is already known that while collecting data 20 posts of Microsoft were deeply studied and described. Therefore, all gathered information will be in this step of content analysis further used and applied. The main aim of this step is to create & develop the main themes of focus in Microsoft’s employee-oriented content on the professional social media platform LinkedIn.

Additionally, in this research, all main tables are going to serve as instruments in communicating the main action of the current step. There is a vast connection between all the

tables since they represent step-by-step flow when it comes to content analysis. Above each main table, there is also going to be a table called “*example table*” that is going to show the readers how the researchers found the main themes, and also it is going to clearly display the multimodality factor of the data.

The very first “example table” is going to serve as an instrument in showcasing how the researchers were looking for the main themes within the data. Besides, the multimodality factor will be showcased since each post was in the form of visuals + small description. The example table is going to consist of one post that is going to serve as a presentation for the readers to understand how the rest of the posts were processed.

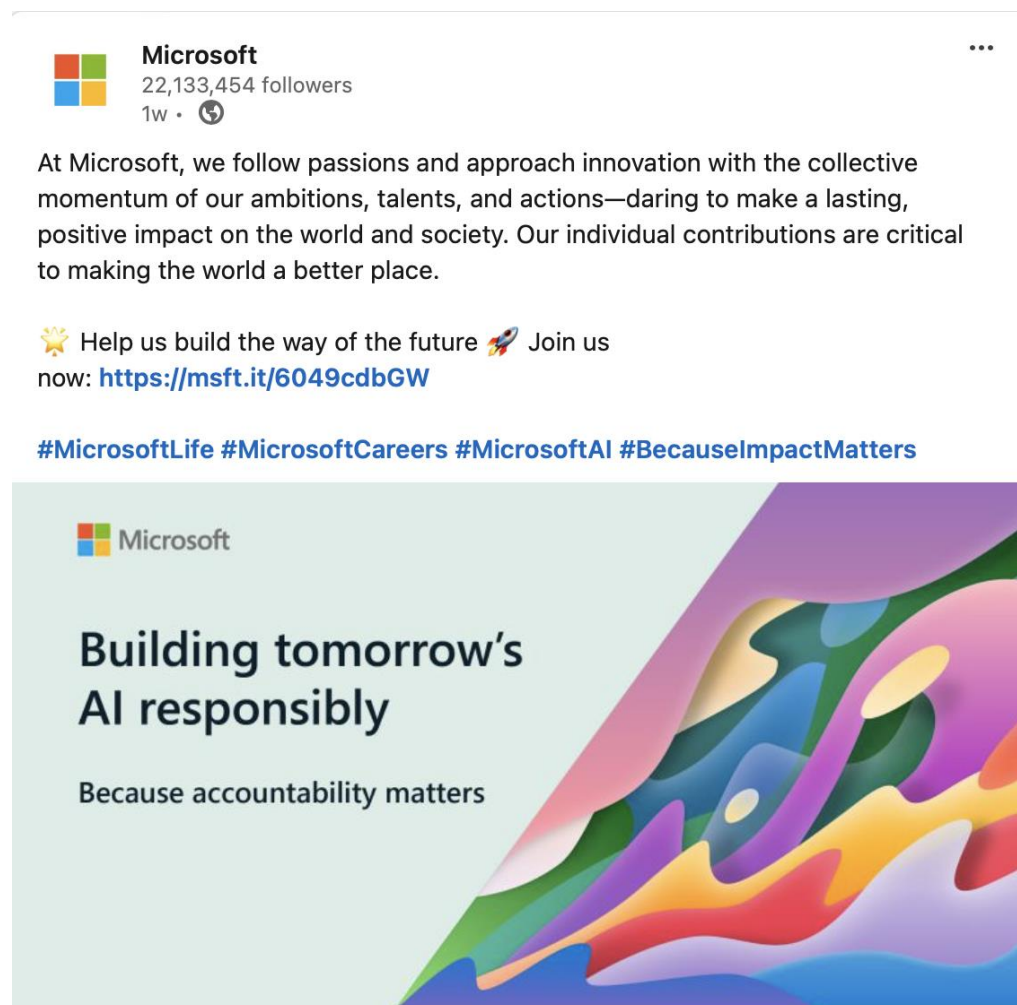


Figure 5: Screenshot of the 18th Microsoft's post shared on LinkedIn (see appendix I, p.36)

**Table 1: Example of looking for the main themes within the data (see appendix 1, p. 36)**

POST 18 - itself	Found themes
<p><b>WRITTEN TEXT:</b>  Post no 18 (see figure 5) The screenshot of the Microsoft post shared on LinkedIn includes the following description: “At Microsoft, we follow <b>passions</b> and <b>approach innovation</b> with the <b>collective momentum</b> of our ambitions, talents, and actions - daring to make a <b>lasting, positive impact</b> on the world and <b>society</b>. Our individual contributions are critical to making <b>the world a better place</b>. Help us <b>build the way of the future</b>. Join us now: link. <b>#Microsoftlife</b> <b>#MicrosoftCareers</b> <b>#MicrosoftAI</b><b>#BecauseImpactMatters</b>”.</p> <p><b>THE PICTURE:</b>  The picture says: “Building tomorrow’s <b>AI responsibility</b>. <b>Because accountability matters</b>”.</p> <p><b>REFLECTION/STUDY OF THE POST:</b>  The post positions Microsoft as a company that is at the forefront of <b>AI development and its commitment to society</b>. Thus, Microsoft showcases its <b>social responsibility</b> and <b>ethical values</b> that are potentially expressed through hashtag and phrases such as <b>#BecauseImpactMatters</b>”; “Building tomorrow’s <b>AI responsibility</b>; <b>Because accountability matters</b>”.</p> <p>Once again, it can be implied that Microsoft’s culture is strongly focused on <b>social responsibility</b>, <b>employee well-being</b> and providing <b>a career that has a positively impactful purpose</b>. Thus, this might be appealing to job seekers that are searching for <b>making an impact and improving the future of our society</b>.</p>	<p><b>THEMES WITHIN WRITTEN TEXT:</b>  <b>“Passion”</b>  <b>“Innovative approach”</b>  <b>“Collective momentum”</b>  <b>“Making world better place”</b>  <b>“AI commitment to society”</b>  <b>“#BecauseImpactMatters”</b>  <b>#MicrosoftLife</b>  <b>#MicrosoftCareers</b>  <b>#MicrosoftAI</b>  <b>“Lasting &amp; positive impact”</b>  <b>“Positively impactful purpose &amp; future”</b>  <b>“Because accountability matters”</b></p> <p><b>THEMES WITHIN PICUTRE:</b>  <b>“AI responsibility”</b></p> <p><b>THEMES BASED ON THE REFLECTION/STUDY OF THE POST:</b>  <b>“AI commitment to society”</b>  <b>“AI development as focus”</b>  <b>“Social responsibility”</b>  <b>“Ethical values”</b>  <b>“#BecauseImpactMatters”</b>  <b>“AI responsibility”</b>  <b>“Employee well-being”</b>  <b>“Positively impactful purpose &amp; future”</b>  <b>“Because accountability matters”</b></p>

*Table 1: example of looking for the main themes within the data (see appendix 1, p. 36)*

To make sure all data are represented clearly and in a not complicated manner; the following table consists of found themes entirely. What you can see in the table below is a list of the themes that each post (*20 posts in total*) is communicating. As already mentioned, the approach visualised in the “example table” was followed.

**Table 2: Microsoft’s main themes of focus (*LinkedIn posts*)**

<b>Post 1</b>	“Welcoming organisational environment” “Being proud of the workspace” “Office in the international city” “Global organisation” “Modern and futuristic office” “Cosy atmosphere in the office” “Inviting & collaborative work environment” “Comfortable & innovative workplace” “Team-work associations” “Creatively-oriented culture”
<b>Post 2</b>	“Expand your knowledge and skills with monthly Tech-In” “AI & other Microsoft tools” “Fuel life-long learning” “Orientation towards learning and development opportunities” “Strong orientation towards diversity of its audience” “Well-established tech organisation” “Strong focus on innovation & development” “Commitment to educate people” “Commitment to ensure contacts growth of its employees and audience”
<b>Post 3</b>	“Celebration of International Women’s Day 🌸” “Diverse workforce” “Innovative company” Business success & fairness” “Event focused on importance of diversity & equality”



	<p>“Successful mentoring programme with young women”</p> <p>“Supporting women in their dreams”</p> <p>“Commitment to diversity”</p> <p>“Commitment to equality”</p> <p>“Commitment to inclusion”</p> <p>“Investment in giving back to the community through education, supportive mentorship, and development opportunities oriented towards women”</p> <p>“Supportive and progressive organisational culture”</p> <p>“Innovative culture”</p> <p>“Employee and community development”</p>
<b>Post 4</b>	<p>“Celebration of Neurodiversity Week”</p> <p>“Importance of neurodiversity in the workplace”</p> <p>“Together, we build a more inclusive future for all”</p> <p>“#InclusionIsInnovation”</p> <p>“Diversity of people”</p> <p>“Inclusive working environment”</p> <p>“Unique perspectives”</p> <p>“Innovative approach towards continued development”</p> <p>“Personal story of Microsoft employee Thiago”</p> <p>“Touch of personality in the message”</p> <p>“Real people with health issues are not obstacles”</p>
<b>Post 5</b>	<p>“Celebration of Women’s History Month”</p> <p>“Sharing glimpse into the life of Melissa Curry, a Technical Program Manager at Microsoft”</p> <p>“Story sharing Melissa’s personal journey, family legacy, educational achievement, and advocacy work”</p> <p>“Personal story of Microsoft’s employee Melissa Curry and her achievements”</p> <p>“Tribe’s oral history of Melissa”</p> <p>“Story of perseverance, community”</p> <p>“Honouring Melissa’s contribution”</p> <p>“Woman in technical role”</p>



	<p>“Women who pave the way for progress and equality”</p> <p>“Opportunities for future generations”</p> <p>“#WomenHistoryMonth”</p> <p>“#MicrosoftCareers”</p> <p>“#InclusionIsInnovation”</p> <p>“Commitment to recognizing and celebrating its employees”</p> <p>“Microsoft recognizes social biases”</p> <p>“Strong equality among employees”</p> <p>“Role model for potential female employees”</p> <p>“Work-life balance at Microsoft”</p>
<b>Post 6</b>	<p>“Personal story of Eva as an inspiring example”</p> <p>“Commitment to diversity &amp; inclusion”</p> <p>“Celebration of unique talents of everyone from all backgrounds”</p> <p>“#CyberSecurity”</p> <p>“Employee drive for improvement”</p> <p>“Employee commitment”</p> <p>“Employee resilient leadership”</p> <p>“#WomenInTech”</p> <p>“ #WomeninCybersecurity”</p> <p>“#MicrosoftLife”</p> <p>“ #MicrosoftCareer”</p> <p>“Microsoft encourages authenticity”</p> <p>“Happy employee of Microsoft”</p> <p>“Focused on employee recognition”</p> <p>“Empowerment towards success”</p> <p>“Organization that prioritises its employees’ authentic selves”</p> <p>“Support towards overcoming challenges”</p> <p>“Company that helps people develop and grow”</p> <p>“Storytelling strategy”</p> <p>“Commitment to employee empowerment”</p>
<b>Post 7</b>	<p>“Inclusive environment”</p>

	<p>“Gender equality”</p> <p>“Cultivative workplace where all individual can thrive”</p> <p>“Celebration of women around the world”</p> <p>“Inclusion is made real”</p> <p>“Mauricio Goetz (Microsoft male employee) shows support towards woman”</p> <p>“Strong employee advocacy”</p> <p>“ #InclusionIsInnovation”</p> <p>“#WomensHistoryMonth”</p> <p>“ #MicrosoftLife”</p> <p>“Commitment to raising awareness of social issues”</p> <p>“Diversity &amp; equality at workplace”</p> <p>“Commitment to contribution of employees &amp; their voices”</p>
<b>Post 8</b>	<p>“#BecauseImpactMatters”</p> <p>“#MicrosoftLife”</p> <p>“#MicrosoftCareers”</p> <p>“Employee’s serves with smile &amp; proudness”</p> <p>“Targeting job seekers”</p> <p>“Variety of job opportunities at Microsoft”</p> <p>“Meaningful job with a purpose”</p> <p>“Purpose of helping clients, contribution to colleagues”</p> <p>“Positive impact towards a better future”</p> <p>“Uses employer branding tactics to attract potential job seekers”</p> <p>“Demonstrating the importance of Microsoft’s data centre operations”</p> <p>“Potential opportunity for impactful work”</p> <p>“Career development opportunities &amp; stability”</p>
<b>Post 9</b>	<p>“Story of Senior Director of Sales at Microsoft - Erin Jagelski”</p> <p>“Community &amp; passion in maternity program”</p> <p>“Commitment to help women &amp; caregivers transit back to work”</p> <p>“#InclusionIsInnovation”</p> <p>“#WomensHistoryMonth”</p> <p>“Mission to revolutionise parental support in the workplace”</p> <p>“Organisational support towards working parents, caregivers &amp; women”</p>

	<p>“Fostering sense of community”</p> <p>“Diverse people”</p> <p>“The importance of personal life”</p> <p>“The importance of work-life balance”</p> <p>“The importance of overall employee well-being”</p> <p>“Supportive working environment”</p> <p>“Competitive benefits packages”</p> <p>“Inclusion initiatives”</p>
<b>Post 10</b>	<p>“Sparkling ideas”</p> <p>“Nurturing talents”</p> <p>“Support towards today’s customers”</p> <p>“Designing new tomorrow”</p> <p>“Welcoming environment”</p> <p>“Diverse people from different backgrounds”</p> <p>“Not general job ad (creates a feel of what culture Microsoft builds) - welcoming, open for innovations, ideas, and diverse teams”</p>
<b>Post 11</b>	<p>“Meet us - recruitment event in Lyngby”</p> <p>“Diverse teams”</p> <p>“Proactive approach to attract new talents”</p> <p>“Inviting atmosphere”</p> <p>“Casual, fun and friendly brand image</p> <p>“Informal work environment”</p>
<b>Post 12</b>	<p>“Stories of our employees”</p> <p>“Commitment to listening and learning from the world around us”</p> <p>“Human characteristics of employees - passion and empathy”</p> <p>“#BecausePurposeMatters”</p> <p>“Positive and lasting impact”</p> <p>“Customer orientation”</p> <p>“Talent attraction”</p> <p>“Diversity of employees”</p>
<b>Post 13</b>	<p>“GenAI”</p>

	<p>“Exclusive online event”</p> <p>“Advertisement for a digital event - Microsoft Future of Work Summit”</p> <p>“Diversity &amp; Inclusion”</p> <p>“Company with continuous learning &amp; development for its employees”</p> <p>“Invitation to event - sales &amp; marketing strategy”</p> <p>“Strategy to educate about the problem, offer certain solutions, and promote products to help solve particular issue”</p> <p>“AI” “Digitalisation” “Future Organization”</p> <p>“Challenging &amp; innovative workplace”</p>
<b>Post 14</b>	<p>“Flexible &amp; valuable work”</p> <p>“High quality of employees' personal life”</p> <p>“Strong community bonds” “Friendliness” “Informal work relationships”</p> <p>“Personal story of Microsoft’s employee Ulas Utebay”</p> <p>“Memories with loved ones”</p> <p>“Emotional branding efforts by sharing personal stories”</p> <p>“Company that cares about employees”</p> <p>“Employees are real people with hobbies and interests”</p> <p>“Work-life balance”</p> <p>“Strong employee stability &amp; retention”</p> <p>“Autonomous &amp; flexible organisation”</p> <p>“Freedom at work”</p> <p>“Remote work opportunities”</p> <p>“High trust towards employees”</p>
<b>Post 15</b>	<p>“Sharing knowledge”</p> <p>“Commitment to inspiring”</p> <p>“Celebration of the success of the first-ever Microsoft Ignite event”</p> <p>“Networking community of professionals”</p> <p>“Gratitude expression towards events participants”</p> <p>“Generous intention to share knowledge”</p> <p>“Commitment to innovation”</p> <p>“Commitment to bringing people together”</p> <p>“Commitment to giving back to the community”</p>

	<p>“Networking opportunities for potential employees”</p> <p>“Teamwork &amp; collaboration orientation”</p> <p>“Diverse groups of people”</p>
<b>Post 16</b>	<p>“Cybersecurity” “Global defences”</p> <p>“Role leader in the field of cybersecurity”</p> <p>“Microsoft’s global impact on Generative AI that creates advantage”</p> <p>“Cutting-edge technologies”</p> <p>“Solving global challenges”</p> <p>“Proactive approach to solving cybersecurity problems”</p> <p>“Impactful solutions to challenging issues”</p> <p>“Innovative organisational culture”</p> <p>“Culture focused on tech expertise”</p> <p>“Strategic initiatives”</p> <p>“Robust, smart &amp; proactive future”</p> <p>“#CyberResilience”</p>
<b>Post 17</b>	<p>“Learning culture”</p> <p>“Competitive advantage”</p> <p>“Organisational learning”</p> <p>“Strategy for commercial success”</p> <p>“Promotion of blog post about organisational learning”</p> <p>“Satisfied employee”</p> <p>“Flexible working environment”</p> <p>“Remote working opportunities”</p> <p>“Career growth”</p> <p>“Commitment to employees’ learning &amp; growing”</p> <p>“Learning &amp; development opportunities”</p> <p>“Culture of continuous development”</p> <p>“Growth mindset”</p>
<b>Post 18</b>	<p>“Passion”</p> <p>“Innovative approach”</p> <p>“Collective momentum”</p>

	<p>“AI development as focus”</p> <p>“AI commitment to society”</p> <p>“AI responsibility”</p> <p>“Social responsibility”</p> <p>“Ethical values - #BecauseImpactMatters”</p> <p>“Employee well-being”</p> <p>“Positively impactful purpose &amp; future”</p> <p>“Lasting &amp; positive impact”</p>
<b>Post 19</b>	<p>“Passion &amp; innovation”</p> <p>“Mission-critical services”</p> <p>“Follow your passion strategy”</p> <p>“Common goals”</p> <p>“Team video”</p> <p>“#BecauseImpactMatters”</p> <p>“#MicrosoftLife” “#MicrosoftCareer”</p> <p>“Microsoft training”</p> <p>“Woman in datacenter”</p> <p>“Love working here”</p> <p>“Diversity of employees”</p> <p>“Different cultural &amp; ethical background”</p> <p>“Common purpose”</p> <p>“Men employees”</p> <p>“Exclusive culture”</p> <p>“Inclusive culture for everyone”</p> <p>“Acceptance”</p> <p>“Great pleasure working at Microsoft”</p> <p>“Diverse races”</p> <p>“Diverse religions”</p> <p>“Diverse age groups”</p>
<b>Post 20</b>	<p>“Work-life balance”</p> <p>“Remote work”</p> <p>“Be part of the team - apply”</p>

	"#MicrosoftLife"
	"#MicrosoftCareers"
	"Flexible work"
	"Modern lives"
	"Family orientation"
	"Celebrations of milestones with family"
	"Data centres connect people"
	"Socialising in extraordinary ways"
	"Real benefits of flexible work"
	"Stay connected with family and friends"
	"Social life"
	"Dad playing with child"
	"Friends socialising"
	"Working from home"
	"All possibilities are possible"
	"Advantages of flexibility"
	"It's not just about work, it's about family too"
	"Diverse faces"
	"Employee well-being"
	Employee flexibility"
	"Impactful employees"
	"Social interactions"
	"Proudness towards employees"
	"Positive impact on society"

*Table 2: Microsoft's main themes of focus (LinkedIn posts)*

Through this step, we have identified a vast number of themes. The mentioned, move us further in the content analysis into the step where we will group themes based on their similar meaning. The mentioned strategy will allow us to make sure that there is no high and unnecessary repetition of data. Besides, it will allow us to further narrow down all the findings and make it more specific which will only support the credibility of the research. Additionally, grouping of themes with the same meaning is needed since further researchers will be able to label the mentioned themes which will bring them closer to resolving specific problem formulation.

To conclude, through this step of multimodal content analysis of Microsoft’s employee-oriented content, a vast number of relevant themes were revealed. The entire text was utilised and divided into clear themes to understand what is the main focus of Microsoft’s representation on the professional social media platform LinkedIn. The analysis will further continue with a sub-chapter focused on grouping themes together and creating codes.

### C) Grouping themes & Creating codes

In the previous step, the main themes were found within the studied data; which in this case is Microsoft’s 20 posts related to employee-oriented aspects. The mentioned, allow researchers to further continue; and thus, this step of content analysis will help researchers to group all found themes by their meanings. The themes are going to be grouped with the aim to avoid unnecessary repetition and make sure that the interpretation of data will be as specific as possible. However, it is crucial to mention that themes won’t be quantified, instead (as mentioned), they will be grouped by their meanings to reveal what themes are repeating the most in Microsoft’s employee-oriented content. Consequently, all groups of themes with similar meanings are going to be labelled by codes to be able to narrow down all the findings as well as to develop the most specific interpretation.

The following “example table” is going to showcase to the readers the multimodality of the found-grouped themes within the study of the data document which represents a deep study of the content. The primary ambition of the table is very easy, and it is to showcase the multimodality of the data entirely.

**Table 3: Example of Multimodality of the grouped themes within Microsoft’s content & final codes**

Posts consisting of themes related to <i>INNOVATION</i> & its multimodality	Grouped “ <i>INNOVATIVE</i> ” themes and its final code
<p><b><i>THE PICTURE (post 1, see appendix 1, p.2):</i></b></p> <p>In addition to a short title, this post includes four pictures showcasing the physical premises of Microsoft organisation. The premises display modern and futuristic</p>	<p><b><i>GROUPED THEMES:</i></b></p> <p>“Comfortable &amp; innovative workplace”</p> <p>“Strong focus on innovation</p>



office space with large windows and cosy lightning. Employer branding efforts and its attractiveness, these pictures portray an inviting, collaborative work environment that is brimming with **innovation**, potentially resonating with those individuals who are seeking for an inspiring, comfortable, and **innovative workplace**. Besides, the pictures also create certain associations with teamwork & creativity-oriented culture, potentially enchanting jobseekers who strongly value those aspects of organisational culture.

***REFLECTION/STUDY OF THE POST (post 2, see appendix 1, p.4):***

Microsoft can be described as a well-established tech organisation with a strong focus on **innovation** and development, thus the rubric as the Monthly Tech-In shows organisational commitment to educate people and to ensure constant growth not only oriented to its employees but also to its online audience.

***THE WRITTEN TEXT (post 3, see appendix 1, p.7):***

Post no 3. The image is a screenshot of a post shared by Microsoft on LinkedIn. The original caption is in Danish, but LinkedIn translates it in English as follows: "Today we celebrated International Women's Day 🙌. Studies show that companies with a diverse workforce are not only more **innovative**, but also create better financial results. This is not just about business success, but also about fairness. As part of our celebration of the day, we held an event where we marked the importance of diversity and equality together with a panel of *Mette Louise Kaagaard, Charlotte Mark, Jannik Bausager,*

& development"

"Innovative company"

"Innovative culture"

"Innovative approach towards continued development"

"Challenging & innovative workplace"

"Commitment to innovation"

"Innovative organisational culture"

"Innovative approach"

"Passion & innovation"

***FINAL CODE:***

**Commitment to innovation**

**Innovative organisational culture**

*Alexander Nordqvist, Peter Østergaard, and Camilla Hillerup....*

**WRITTEN TEXT (post 4, see appendix 1, p.9):**

Post no 4. The following screenshot of Microsoft's post includes a paragraph of text: “Celebrating Neurodiversity Week. Thiago struggled to keep his ADHD and anxiety a secret until working through a mental health crisis led him to realise that his difference brought a unique perspective to his work. In today’s world, embracing diversity is not just a moral imperative but a competitive advantage. Let’s celebrate and spread awareness about the importance of neurodiversity in the workplace. Together, we can build a more inclusive future for all. Join us: “link”. #Neurodiveristy #MicrosoftLife #MicrosoftCareers #InclusionIsInnovation”.

**REFLECTION/STUDY OF THE POST (post 4, see appendix 1, p.9):**

Accordingly, the presented description together with the image which represents the colourful background and diversity of people leverages employer branding efforts by promoting the importance of neurodiversity & overall diversity in the workplace. The text also indicates that neurodiversity is not just some necessity, but rather a privilege. Thus, this certain message might resonate with jobseekers who appreciate an inclusive working environment and unique perspectives. Besides, hashtags such as #InclusionIsInnovation implies that Microsoft and its employees perceive inclusion not as a necessary step or trend, but as an innovative approach toward continued development.

***WRITTEN TEXT (post 5, see appendix 1, p.11):***

Post no 5. The following screenshot of the Microsoft post includes the text as follows: “In celebration of Women’s History Month, we’re excited to share a glimpse into the life and heritage of Melissa Curry, a Technical Program Manager for Azure Core at Microsoft. In this inspiring video, Melissa takes us through a personal journey, showcasing treasured items that hold deep sentimental value and symbolise her rich family legacy, educational achievements, and advocacy work. From a book documenting her tribe’s oral history to heartfelt notes of gratitude, each item tells a story of perseverance, community, and the pursuit of opportunities for future generations. Join us in honouring Melissa’s contributions and read more stories from women who pave the way for progress and equality. #WomensHistoryMonth #MicrosoftCareers #InclusionIsInnovation #Microsoft”.

***WRITTEN TEXT (post 8, see appendix 1, p.17):***

Post no 8. The screenshot of the Microsoft post shared on LinkedIn includes the following description: “Are you passionate about innovation and making a difference? Do you have experience working within mission-critical services such as manufacturing /assembly /infrastructure? As a Critical Environmental Electrical Technician at Microsoft, you can follow your passions and work towards a common goal with others worldwide. Apply today: link. #BecauseImpactMatters #MicrosoftLife #MicrosoftCareers”.

***WRITTEN TEXT (post 9, see appendix 1, p.18):***

Post no 9. The screenshot of the Microsoft post shared on LinkedIn includes the following text: “Erin Jagelski, a Senior Director of Sales at Microsoft Advertising, shares her story of how she joined us after having her first child, and how she found her community and passion in the maternity program, a grassroots initiative that helps women and caregivers transition back to work. Flexibility matters, join us: <https://msft.it/6049ck4oP>. #MicrosoftLife #MicrosoftCareers #InclusionIsInnovation #WomensHistoryMonth”. In addition, the image showcases a young and happy woman in a sunny background of a potential workplace that has a “mission to revolutionise parental support in the workplace”.

***THE PICTURE (post 10, see appendix 1, p.21):***

The post does not look like a general job advertisement but rather creates a feeling of what kind of culture Microsoft builds - welcoming, open for innovations, ideas, and diverse teams.

***REFLECTION/STUDY OF THE POST (post 13, see appendix 1, p.26):***

However, it is also important to notice that inviting to events about industry trends is one of the sales and marketing strategies where companies educate about the problem, offer certain solutions, and promote their products to help them solve that particular issue. Nevertheless, the intent behind the post and event shows Microsoft’s knowledge and interests in aspects such as AI, Digitalisation, and Future Organisations. This might

be attractive to future employees who are searching for a challenging and innovative workplace.

***THE PICTURE (post 15, see appendix 1, p.30):***

The image shows Microsoft employees, guests, and industry professionals celebrating the success of the first-ever Microsoft Ignite event in Denmark. The people in this picture look like they are communicating, networking, and enjoying the event. The overall text expresses gratitude to event participants who all contributed to making the first-ever event unforgettable. This post highlights Microsoft's generous intention to share knowledge and the latest advancements in the tech industry. This means that Microsoft can be perceived as an organisation that focuses on innovation and bringing people together as well as giving back to the community.

***WRITTEN TEXT (post 19, see appendix 1, p.37):***

The Microsoft post shared on LinkedIn includes the following description: "At Microsoft, we follow passions and approach innovation with the collective momentum of our ambitions, talents, and actions - daring to make a lasting, positive impact on the world and society.

***WRITTEN TEXT (post 19, see appendix 1, p.37):***

Post no 19. The screenshot of the Microsoft post shared on LinkedIn includes the following description "Are you passionate about innovation and making a difference? Do you have experience working within mission-critical services such as manufacturing/assembly/infrastructure?

Table 3: Example of Multimodality of the grouped themes within Microsoft's content & final codes

Consequently, the current main table (see table 4) is going to clearly & vastly showcase groups of themes with the same meaning, and additionally labels (codes) will be assigned to the mentioned groups of themes to ensure a specific interpretation of findings. Within this table, all themes with 99% the same meaning will be grouped together only and labels are going to exactly represent all the themes together in a simplified way in order to make findings specific.

**Table 4: Microsoft's main groups of communicated themes + it's codes (labels)**

<b>Themes grouped by their meaning</b>	<b>Codes (labelled themes)</b>
"Welcoming organisational environment" "Welcoming environment" "Not general job ad (creates a feel of what culture Microsoft builds) - welcoming, open for innovations, ideas, and diverse teams" "Inviting atmosphere"	Welcoming organisational environment
"High trust towards employees"	Trust towards employees
"Being proud of the workspace"	Pride towards workspace
"Proudness towards employees" "Impactful employees"	Pride towards employees
"Office in the international city" "Modern and futuristic office" "Modern lives"	Modern organisation
"Global organisation"	Global organisation
"Inviting & collaborative work environment" "Team-work associations" "Teamwork & collaboration orientation" "Common goals" "Team video" "Common purpose"	Teamwork & Collaboration

<p>“The importance of overall employee well-being”</p> <p>“Employee well-being”</p> <p>“Employee well-being”</p>	Commitment to well-being
<p>“Family orientation”</p> <p>“Celebrations of milestones with family”</p> <p>“Stay connected with family and friends”</p> <p>“Dad playing with child”</p> <p>“It’s not just about work, it’s about family too”</p>	Family-oriented environment
<p>“Friends socialising”</p> <p>“Social life”</p> <p>“Social interactions”</p>	Socialising
<p>“Flexible &amp; valuable work”</p> <p>“Autonomous &amp; flexible organisation”</p> <p>“Flexible working environment”</p> <p>“Flexible work”</p> <p>“Real benefits of flexible work”</p> <p>“Advantages of flexibility”</p> <p>Employee flexibility”</p>	Flexible working environment
<p>“Comfortable &amp; innovative workplace”</p> <p>“Strong focus on innovation &amp; development”</p> <p>“Innovative company”</p> <p>“Innovative culture”</p> <p>“Innovative approach towards continued development”</p> <p>“Challenging &amp; innovative workplace”</p> <p>“Commitment to innovation”</p> <p>“Innovative organisational culture”</p> <p>“Innovative approach”</p> <p>“Passion &amp; innovation”</p>	<p>Commitment to innovation</p> <p>Innovative organisational culture</p>
<p>“Follow your passion strategy”</p>	Passion

<p>“Passion &amp; innovation”</p> <p>“Passion”</p>	
<p>“Creatively-oriented culture”</p>	<p>Creative-orientation</p>
<p>“Expand your knowledge and skills with monthly Tech-In”</p> <p>“Celebration of International Women’s Day 🍷”</p> <p>“Event focused on importance of diversity &amp; equality”</p> <p>“Celebration of Neurodiversity Week”</p> <p>“Celebration of Women’s History Month”</p> <p>“Celebration of Women’s History Month”</p> <p>“#WomenHistoryMonth”</p> <p>“Celebration of unique talents of everyone from all backgrounds”</p> <p>“Celebration of women around the world”</p> <p>“#WomensHistoryMonth”</p> <p>“Meet us - recruitment event in Lyngby”</p> <p>“Exclusive online event”</p> <p>“Advertisement for a digital event - Microsoft Future of Work Summit”</p> <p>“Celebration of the success of the first-ever Microsoft Ignite event”</p>	<p>Celebrations and events for employees &amp; communities</p>
<p>“Fuel life-long learning”</p> <p>“Orientation towards learning and development opportunities”</p> <p>“Commitment to educate people”</p> <p>“Commitment to ensure continuous growth of its employees and audience”</p> <p>“Investment in giving back to the community through education, supportive mentorship, and development opportunities oriented towards women”</p> <p>“Innovative approach towards continued development”</p> <p>“Company that helps people develop and grow”</p> <p>“Commitment to listening and learning from the world around us”</p>	<p>Commitment to learning, growth development</p> <p>Commitment to educating others</p>



<p>“Company with continuous learning &amp; development for its employees”</p> <p>“Sharing knowledge”</p> <p>“Generous intention to share knowledge”</p> <p>“Learning culture”</p> <p>“Organisational learning”</p> <p>“Commitment to employees’ learning &amp; growing”</p> <p>“Learning &amp; development opportunities”</p> <p>“Culture of continuous development”</p> <p>“Growth mindset”</p> <p>“Microsoft training”</p>	
<p>“AI &amp; other Microsoft tools”</p> <p>“Well-established tech organisation”</p> <p>“GenAI”</p> <p>“AI” “Digitalisation” “Future Organization”</p> <p>“Microsoft’s global impact on Generative AI that creates advantage”</p> <p>“Culture focused on tech expertise”</p> <p>“Cutting-edge technologies”</p> <p>“Robust, smart &amp; proactive future”</p> <p>“AI development as focus”</p> <p>“AI commitment to society”</p> <p>“AI responsibility”</p>	<p>Organisation of the future - AI, Digitalisation &amp; Tech</p>
<p>“Strong orientation towards diversity of its audience”</p> <p>“Diverse workforce”</p> <p>“Commitment to diversity”</p> <p>“Diversity of people”</p> <p>“Commitment to diversity &amp; inclusion”</p> <p>“Diversity &amp; equality at workplace”</p> <p>“Diverse people from different backgrounds”</p>	<p>Commitment to diversity</p>

<p>“Not general job ad (creates a feel of what culture Microsoft builds) - welcoming, open for innovations, ideas, and diverse teams”</p> <p>“Diverse teams”</p> <p>“Diversity of employees”</p> <p>“Diversity &amp; Inclusion”</p> <p>“Diverse groups of people”</p> <p>“Diversity of employees”</p> <p>“Different cultural &amp; ethical background”</p> <p>“Diverse races”</p> <p>“Diverse religions”</p> <p>“Diverse age groups”</p> <p>“Diverse faces”</p>	
<p>Business success &amp; fairness”</p> <p>“Empowerment towards success”</p>	Success
<p>“Successful mentoring programme with young women”</p> <p>“Supporting women in their dreams”</p> <p>“Woman in technical role”</p> <p>“Women who pave the way for progress and equality”</p> <p>“Role model for potential female employees”</p> <p>“#WomenInTech”</p> <p>“ #WomeninCybersecurity”</p> <p>“#WomensHistoryMonth”</p> <p>“Organisational support towards working parents, caregivers &amp; women”</p> <p>“Woman in datacenter”</p>	Woman as a role model
<p>“Community &amp; passion in maternity program”</p> <p>“Commitment to help women &amp; caregivers transit back to work”</p> <p>“Mission to revolutionise parental support in the workplace”</p> <p>“Organisational support towards working parents, caregivers &amp; women”</p>	Maternity program - parental support

<p>“Commitment to equality”</p> <p>“Strong equality among employees”</p> <p>“Gender equality”</p> <p>“Cultivative workplace where all individual can thrive”</p> <p>“Diversity &amp; equality at workplace”</p> <p>“Diverse people”</p>	<p>Commitment to equality</p>
<p>“Commitment to inclusion”</p> <p>“Together, we build a more inclusive future for all”</p> <p>“#InclusionIsInnovation”</p> <p>“Inclusive working environment”</p> <p>“#InclusionIsInnovation”</p> <p>“Commitment to diversity &amp; inclusion”</p> <p>“Inclusive environment”</p> <p>“Inclusion is made real”</p> <p>“ #InclusionIsInnovation”</p> <p>“Inclusion initiatives”</p> <p>“Not general job ad (creates a feel of what culture Microsoft builds) - welcoming, open for innovations, ideas, and diverse teams”</p> <p>“Diversity &amp; Inclusion”</p> <p>“Exclusive culture”</p> <p>“Inclusive culture for everyone”</p> <p>“Acceptance”</p>	<p>Commitment to inclusion</p>
<p>“Supportive and progressive organisational culture”</p> <p>“Supportive working environment”</p>	<p>Supportive organisational culture</p>
<p>“Employee and community development”</p> <p>“Story of perseverance, community”</p> <p>“Community &amp; passion in maternity program”</p> <p>“Fostering sense of community”</p> <p>“Strong community bonds”</p> <p>““Friendliness” “Informal work relationships”</p>	<p>Community as a value</p>

<p>“Networking community of professionals”</p> <p>“Commitment to bringing people together”</p> <p>“Commitment to giving back to the community”</p> <p>“Collective momentum”</p> <p>“Data centres connect people”</p>	
<p>“Commitment to recognizing and celebrating its employees”</p> <p>“Company that cares about employees”</p> <p>“Employee drive for improvement”</p> <p>“Employee commitment”</p> <p>“Employee resilient leadership”</p> <p>“Human characteristics of employees - passion and empathy”</p>	Recognition of employees
<p>“Personal story of Microsoft employee Thiago”</p> <p>“Touch of personality in the message”</p> <p>“Real people with health issues are not obstacles”</p> <p>“Sharing glimpse into the life of Melissa Curry, a Technical Program Manager at Microsoft”</p> <p>“Story sharing Melissa’s personal journey, family legacy, educational achievement, and advocacy work”</p> <p>“Personal story of Microsoft’s employee Melissa Curry and her achievements”</p> <p>“Tribe’s oral history of Melissa”</p> <p>“Honouring Melissa’s contribution”</p> <p>“Commitment to recognizing and celebrating its employees”</p> <p>“Personal story of Eva as an inspiring example”</p> <p>“Happy employee of Microsoft”</p> <p>“Mauricio Goez (Microsoft male employee) shows support towards woman”</p> <p>“Employee’s serves with smile &amp; proudness”</p> <p>“Story of Senior Director of Sales at Microsoft - Erin Jagelski”</p> <p>“Stories of our employees”</p> <p>“Personal story of Microsoft’s employee Ulas Utebay”</p> <p>“Employees are real people with hobbies and interests”</p>	Personal stories of Microsoft’s employees

“Satisfied employee”	
“Opportunities for future generations” “Career development opportunities & stability” “Potential opportunity for impactful work”	Opportunities for the future
“#MicrosoftCareers” “#MicrosoftCareer” “#MicrosoftCareers”	Career in Microsoft
“#MicrosoftLife” “#MicrosoftLife” “#MicrosoftLife”	Life in Microsoft
“Work-life balance at Microsoft” “The importance of personal life” “The importance of work-life balance” “High quality of employees' personal life” “Work-life balance” “Work-life balance”	Work-life balance
“Microsoft encourages authenticity” “Organization that prioritises its employees’ authentic selves”	Authenticity
“#BecauseImpactMatters” “Positive impact towards a better future” “#BecausePurposeMatters” “Positive and lasting impact” “Ethical values - #BecauseImpactMatters” “Positively impactful purpose & future” “Lasting & positive impact” “#BecauseImpactMatters” “Positive impact on society”	Making positive impact
“Targeting job seekers” “Variety of job opportunities at Microsoft”	Opportunities for job seekers

<p>“Meaningful job with a purpose”</p> <p>“Potential opportunity for impactful work”</p> <p>“Talent attraction”</p>	
<p>“Storytelling strategy”</p> <p>“Invitation to the event - sales &amp; marketing strategy”</p> <p>“Strategy to educate about the problem, offer certain solutions, and promote products to help solve the particular issue”</p> <p>“Emotional branding efforts by sharing personal stories”</p> <p>“Promotion of blog post about organisational learning”</p> <p>“Strategy for commercial success”</p>	<p><b>Online strategic aspects:</b></p> <p>Storytelling</p> <p>Event invitations</p> <p>Problem - solution - product offer as a strategy</p> <p>Emotional branding (personal stories)</p> <p>Blog posts (organisational learning)</p> <p>Commercial success stories</p>
<p>“Uses employer branding tactics to attract potential job seekers”</p> <p>“Proactive approach to attract new talents”</p> <p>“Networking opportunities for potential employees”</p> <p>“Be part of the team - apply”</p>	<p>Employer branding tactics: attracting job seekers</p>
<p>“Commitment to employee empowerment”</p> <p>“Commitment to the contribution of employees &amp; their voices”</p> <p>“Focused on employee recognition”</p> <p>“Support towards overcoming challenges”</p> <p>“Nurturing talents”</p>	<p>Commitment to employee empowerment &amp; recognition</p>
<p>“Strong employee advocacy”</p>	<p>Employee advocacy</p>
<p>“Commitment to raising awareness of social issues”</p>	<p>Raising awareness of social issues</p>
<p>“Casual, fun and friendly brand image”</p> <p>“Informal work environment”</p>	<p>Informal &amp; Close organisational culture</p>

“Strong employee stability & retention”	Employee stability & retention
“Freedom at work” “Remote work opportunities” “Remote working opportunities” “Remote work” “Working from home”	Freedom at work Remote working opportunities
“Commitment to inspiring”	Commitment to inspiring others
“Cybersecurity” “Global defences” “Role leader in the field of cybersecurity” “Proactive approach to solving cybersecurity problems” “#CyberResilience”	Cyber Security
“Impactful solutions to challenging issues” “Solving global challenges”	Solutions to challenges

*Table 4: Microsoft’s main groups of communicated themes + it’s codes (labels)*

Based on the current step, we were able to group all themes with the same meaning together which allowed us to label all mentioned groups and create codes. The grouping & labelling of themes were essential since they brought researchers closer to answering our problem formulation & second sub-question that sound; **“What is the online organisational communication strategy when it comes to employer branding efforts specifically in employee-oriented content of tech giant Microsoft on the professional social media platform LinkedIn?”** as well as **“How is Microsoft’s brand identity communicated through employee-oriented content on the professional social media platform LinkedIn when it comes to attracting potential employees?”** Besides the labelling & grouping themes, also helped researchers move further in the analysis which means to assign all the codes to predetermined categories. To conclude, through this specific step of multimodal content analysis, all founded themes were grouped by their meanings and consequently labeled by codes to ensure clear & easy interpretation. Based on the process, researchers revealed the main

groups of themes that Microsoft is communicating and eventually labelled them to make the findings clear.

Based on the analysis, the primary codes that Microsoft is communicating through its employee-oriented content are; *Welcoming organisational environment, Trust towards employees, Pride towards workspace, Price towards employees, Modern organisation, Global organisation, Teamwork & Collaboration, Commitment to well-being, Family-oriented environment, Socializing, Flexible working environment, Commitment to innovation, Innovative organisational culture, Passion, Creative-orientation, Celebrations and Events for employees and communities, Commitment to learning-growth-development, Commitment to educating others, Organisation of the future - AI & Digitalisation & Tech, Commitment to diversity, Success, Woman as a role model, Maternity program - parental support, Commitment to equality, Commitment to inclusion, Supportive organisational culture, Community as a value, Recognition of employees, Personal stories of Microsoft's employees, Opportunities for the future, Career in Microsoft, Life in Microsoft, Work-life balance, Authenticity, Making positive impact, Opportunities for job seekers, Employer branding tactics: attracting job seekers, Commitment to employee empowerment & recognition, Employee advocacy, Raising awareness of social issues, Informal & Close organisational culture, Employee stability & retention, Freedom at work, Remote working opportunities, Commitment to inspiring others, Cyber Security, Solutions to challenges* and last but not least *Online strategical aspects; Storytelling, Event invitations, Problem - solution - product offer as a strategy , Emotional branding (personal stories), Blog posts (organisational learning) and Commercial success stories.*

#### **D) Codes categorization & Definition of categories**

Once all themes were grouped by their meaning and received relevant labels (codes), we will move to the step of assigning codes into predetermined categories. The main ambition here is to have a clear understanding of what *communicated brand identity, employer branding efforts as well and online organisational communication strategy* in order to answer our problem formulation & its second sub-question that sound; **“What is the online organisational communication strategy and employer branding efforts specifically in employee-oriented content of tech giant Microsoft on the professional social media platform LinkedIn?”** as well as **“How is Microsoft’s brand identity communicated through employee-oriented**



*content on the professional social media platform LinkedIn when it comes to attracting potential employees?”*

To conclude, through this step of the content analysis, all codes will be placed into relevant categories. In this research, the categories are already predetermined since the aim of the research & analysis itself was very clear & specific; and it is to find what's communicated brand identity, employer branding efforts as well as online organisational communication strategy of Microsoft. Thus, defined categories are the following: ***communicated brand identity, employer branding efforts as well and online organisational communication strategy.***

Consequently, all codes that were found in the previous chapter are going to be placed into relevant (and predetermined) categories with the primary aim of understanding what's the communicated identity, employer branding efforts as well as online organisational strategy of Microsoft. However, it is crucial to mention that the predetermined categories have a slightly broader meaning, therefore, some codes (labels) may be placed in more than one category. Additionally, an explanation of the categories will be introduced to the readers to understand what is each category about and what are the potential codes that researchers are going to look for in order to acquire an understanding of Microsoft's *communicated brand identity, employer branding efforts as well and online organisational communication strategy.*

- **Communicated brand identity:** This type of identity is characterised by online representation, advertising, public relations but also by organisational behaviour, employee discourse as well as performance organisation (Balmer, 2001). Thus, in the communicated identity category, the researchers are going to look for the main codes that are connected with how Microsoft is representing itself to the audience including behaviour & employee discourse/characteristics.
- **Employer branding efforts:** According to (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004), employer branding is the instrument of how the organisation represents itself as an employer. In other words, it's the image that the organisation is projecting in order to attract or retain talents. Thus, in this category, the researchers' goal is to focus on codes that are highly connected with Microsoft's values, reputation, and even work culture.
- **Online organisational communication strategy:** This type of strategy is rooted in how the organisation communicates with its target audience through its externally based communication campaigns (Ruler & Kover, 2019). Therefore, when it comes to this

specific category, the researchers are going to look for codes that have roots in strategic manners but mainly communicate aspects of external campaigns.

In the following “example table”, the researchers are going to present the exact strategy based on what codes were assigned to predetermined categories which are - *communicated brand identity, employer branding efforts as well as an online organisational communication strategy*. In the beginning, we characterised each predetermined category; based on the definition and what the category is about - all codes that are connected with the meaning of a specific category are going to be subsequently placed there in order to increase the understanding of what each category is about.

**Table 5: Example of the process of assigning codes to predetermined categories**

Found codes	Predetermined categories
<p>“Welcoming organisational environment”</p> <p>“Supportive organisational culture”</p> <p>“Family oriented”</p> <p>“Modern organisation”</p> <p>“Global organisation”</p> <p>“Celebration &amp; Events for employees and communities”</p> <p>“Trust towards employees”</p> <p>“Flexible working environment”</p> <p>“Growth, Development &amp; Learning”</p> <p>“Commitment to diversity”</p> <p>“Teamwork &amp; Collaboration”</p> <p>“Commitment to innovation”</p> <p>“Innovative organisational culture”</p>	<p><b>Communicated Brand Identity:</b> (based on the theoretical background, we look here for themes related to <i>online representation, behaviour, employee discourse, etc.</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Welcoming organisational environment (<i>online representation/behaviour</i>)</li> <li>● Modern organisation (<i>online representation</i>)</li> <li>● Global organisation (<i>online representation</i>)</li> <li>● Trust towards employees (<i>employee discourse</i>)</li> <li>● Pride towards employees (<i>employee discourse</i>)</li> <li>● Teamwork &amp; Collaboration (<i>online representation</i>)</li> <li>● Family-oriented (<i>behaviour</i>)</li> <li>● Celebrations and Events for employees and communities (<i>employee discourse</i>)</li> </ul> <p><b>Employer Branding Efforts:</b> (based on the theoretical background, we look here for themes related to <i>Microsoft’s values, reputation, working culture, etc.</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commitment to innovation (<i>value</i>)</li> <li>● Innovative organisational culture (<i>working culture</i>)</li> <li>● Commitment to educating others (<i>value</i>)</li> <li>● Flexible working environment (<i>working culture</i>)</li> <li>● Community as a value (<i>value</i>)</li> <li>● Commitment to diversity (<i>value</i>)</li> <li>● Supportive organisational culture (<i>working culture</i>)</li> </ul>

<p>“Commitment to educating others”</p> <p>“Women as a role model”</p> <p>“Community as a value”</p> <p>“Making a positive impact”</p> <p>“Raising awareness of social issues”</p> <p>“Storytelling”</p> <p>“Problem &amp; Solution tactics”</p> <p>“Emotional branding”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Making a positive impact (<i>reputation</i>)</li> <li>● Raising awareness of social issues (<i>values/reputation</i>)</li> </ul> <p><b>Online Organisational Communication:</b> (based on the theoretical background, we look here for themes related to <i>strategic manners, external campaigns’ aspects, etc.</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Storytelling (<i>strategic manner</i>)</li> <li>● Problem &amp; Solution tactics (<i>strategic manner</i>)</li> <li>● Emotional branding (<i>strategic manner</i>)</li> <li>● Women as a role model (<i>external campaign</i>)</li> <li>● Celebration &amp; Events (<i>external campaign</i>)</li> <li>● Growth, Development &amp; Learning (<i>external campaign</i>)</li> </ul>
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Table 5: Example of the process of assigning codes to predetermined categories

**NOTE:** table & process is not entirely finished (table serves just as an example of how we approached assigning codes to relevant predetermined categories).

What you can see in the “main table” (see table 6) below are predetermined categories and codes within. In this table, all codes were placed into relevant categories with one aim only - to understand what communicated brand identity, employer branding efforts, and online organisation communication strategy of Microsoft is.

**Table 6: Introduction of categories & categorization of codes**

Predetermined categories	Codes
<p><b>Communicated brand identity</b> ( <i>online representation, behaviour, employee discourse, etc.</i>)</p>	<p>Welcoming organisational environment</p> <p>Trust towards employees</p> <p>Pride towards workspace &amp; employees</p> <p>Modern organisation</p> <p>Global organisation</p> <p>Team &amp; Collaboration</p> <p>Family-oriented</p> <p>Flexible working environment</p> <p>Commitment to innovation</p> <p>Celebrations &amp; Events for employees and communities</p> <p>Commitment to learning, growth &amp; development</p> <p>Organisation of the future - AI, Digitalisation &amp; Tech</p> <p>Commitment to diversity, equality &amp; inclusion</p> <p>Recognition of employees</p>

	<p>Work-life balance &amp; Freedom</p> <p>Raising awareness of social issues</p> <p>Commitment to inspiring others</p>
<p><b>Employer branding efforts</b></p> <p><i>(Microsoft's values, reputation, working culture, etc.)</i></p>	<p>Trust towards employees</p> <p>Pride towards employees</p> <p>Teamwork &amp; Collaboration</p> <p>Commitment to well-being</p> <p>Family-oriented</p> <p>Socialising</p> <p>Flexible work</p> <p>Commitment to innovation</p> <p>Innovative organisational culture</p> <p>Celebrations &amp; Events for employees and communities</p> <p>Commitment to learning, growth &amp; development</p> <p>Commitment to educating others</p> <p>Commitment to diversity, equality &amp; inclusion</p> <p>Supportive organisational culture</p> <p>Community as a value</p> <p>Personal stories of Microsoft's employees</p> <p>Opportunities for the future</p> <p>Career &amp; Life in Microsoft</p> <p>Work-life balance</p> <p>Making positive impact</p> <p>Opportunities for job seekers</p> <p>Commitment to employee empowerment</p> <p>Informal organisation culture</p> <p>Employee stability &amp; retention</p> <p>Freedom at work &amp; Remote working opportunities</p> <p>Commitment to inspiring others</p> <p>Solving challenges culture</p>
<p><b>Online organisational communication strategy</b></p> <p><i>(strategic manners, external campaigns' aspects, etc.)</i></p>	<p><i>Strategical manners:</i></p> <p>Attracting job seekers</p> <p>Storytelling</p> <p>Emotional branding (sharing personal stories)</p> <p>Blog posts (organisational learning)</p> <p>Commercial success stories</p> <p><i>Main aspects of campaigns &amp; online communication:</i></p> <p>Women as a role model</p> <p>Remote-work opportunities</p> <p>Work-life balance</p> <p>Teamwork &amp; Collaboration</p> <p>Well-being</p> <p>Socialising</p> <p>Celebration &amp; Events</p> <p>Growth, Development &amp; Learning</p>

	Equality, Inclusion as well as Diversity Community  Career & Life in Microsoft campaigns Making positive impact campaigns
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*Table 6: Introduction of categories & categorization of codes*

Through this step, the researchers introduced categories for the content analysis which were predetermined based on the theoretical foundation which allowed researchers to move further in the analysis and write a narrative of identity construction. To conclude, very lastly, through this chapter of analysis, all codes were placed into relevant & predetermined categories which were based on the theoretical background of the research. Thus, analysis categories are as follows; ***communicated brand identity, employer branding efforts as well as an online organisational communication strategy.***

## **E) Narrative of Identity Construction**

Through multi-modal content analysis, the researchers decided to analyse twenty visual posts with written descriptions as well as two videos that are majorly focused on employee orientation. Once the most recent and relevant posts for analysis were chosen, researchers mainly focused on studying as well as analysing the posts. Through this step, researchers familiarised themselves with data and studied the entire content – both visual & written elements. When the researchers became familiarised with data & the chosen employee-oriented content of Microsoft, they started to focus on finding the main themes within the studied data. Thus, through this step the main themes of focus in Microsoft’s employee-oriented content on professional social media platform LinkedIn were revealed. This step allowed researchers to find dozens of themes that Microsoft is communicating, therefore, it was essential to group all the themes by the same meaning to avoid repetition. Afterward, all groups of themes were labelled by codes to narrow down the research’s findings and develop the most specific interpretation. Lastly, all found codes were assigned to relevant predetermined categories that sound as follows; communicated brand identity, employer branding efforts as well as online organisational communication strategy.

Consequently, the whole mentioned process when it comes to proceeding with content analysis allowed researchers to narrow down all collected data and move them closer to answering the problem formulation; **“What is the online organisational communication strategy and employer branding efforts specifically in employee-oriented content of tech giant Microsoft on the professional social media platform LinkedIn?”**

In doing so, thanks to the multimodal content analysis, the researchers drafted to this part of the question which allows them to answer our problem formulation; **“What is the online organisational communication strategy and employer branding efforts specifically in employee-oriented content of tech giant Microsoft on the professional social media platform LinkedIn?”** Based on the analysis, the online organisation communication strategy when in Microsoft’s employee-oriented content is represented by the following;

- **By strategic matters** such as *attracting job seekers, storytelling, emotional branding via sharing personal stories, blog posts focused on organisational learning as well as commercial success stories.*
- **By main aspects of campaigns & online communication** such as *women as role models, remote-work opportunities, work-life balance, teamwork & collaboration, well-being, socialising, celebration & events, growth & development & learning, equality, inclusion, diversity, and community.*

Thus, thanks to the multimodal content analysis, the narrative of online organisational communication strategy is that the entire strategy is shaped by very strategic manners and focuses vastly on attracting job seekers and making the brand itself appealing to potential talents as well as professionals. By doing so Microsoft is using in its storytelling techniques in the hand with emotional branding that is vastly contented with sharing personal stories as well as blog posts focused on organisational learning & commercial success with stories behind it. In addition, the entire online organisational strategy could be also represented by the main aspects of focus when it comes to their campaigns and online communication. Based on what was found, Microsoft is putting forward aspects such as women leadership, remote-work opportunities, work-life balance, teamwork & collaboration, well-being, socialising, celebration & events, growth & development & learning, equality, inclusion, diversity, and community which is also vastly shaping its online communication focus.

Secondly, while cycling back again to the problem formulation, the multimodal content analysis also allowed the researchers to further explore another part of the problem formulation which is: **“What is the online organisational communication strategy and employer branding efforts specifically in employee-oriented content of tech giant Microsoft on the professional social media platform LinkedIn?”** Based on the findings, it can be presented that employee branding efforts are hugely connected with elements such as *trust towards employees, pride towards employees, teamwork & collaboration, commitment to well-being, family-oriented, socialising, flexible work, commitment to innovation, innovative organisational culture, celebrations & Events for employees and communities, commitment to learning, growth & development, commitment to educating others, commitment to diversity, equality & inclusion, supportive organisational culture, community as a value, personal stories of Microsoft’s employees, opportunities for the future, career & Life in Microsoft, work-life balance, making a positive impact, opportunities for job seekers, commitment to employee empowerment, informal organisation culture, employee stability & retention, freedom at work & remote working opportunities, commitment to inspiring others as well as solving challenges culture.*

Thus, the entire narrative of Microsoft’s employer branding efforts is constructed by the facts that an organisation is highly branding itself to current & potential employees as an innovative but also collaborative organisation that is committed to learning, growing, developing as well as celebrating its employees. Besides, the organisation brands its working environment as supportive, flexible, inspiring, and highly connected with work-life balance in the hand with freedom at work. Other main signs of their employer branding are that they trust their employees while creating opportunities for job seekers as well as creating a positive impact. Lastly, their employer branding efforts are also vastly connected with numerous commitments; mainly they are committed to well-being, diversity, equality, including, and last but not least employee empowerment.

Lastly in this chapter, we are cycling back to our second additional question in the problem formulation which sounds as follows; **How is Microsoft’s brand identity communicated**

**through employee-oriented content on the professional social media platform LinkedIn when it comes to attracting potential employees?** According to content analysis and its findings Microsoft's communicated brand identity on the professional social media platform LinkedIn when it comes to attracting potential employees is connected with elements such as *a welcoming organisational environment, trust towards employees, pride towards workspace & employees, modern organisation, global organisation, team & collaboration, family-oriented, flexible working environment, commitment to innovation, celebrations & Events for employees and communities, commitment to learning, growth & development, organisation of the future - AI, digitalisation & tech, commitment to diversity, equality & inclusion, recognition of employees, work-life balance & freedom, raising awareness of social issues as well as a commitment to inspiring others.*

Consequently, the narrative of the communicated brand identity is that Microsoft is a modern & global organisation with a highly welcoming, family-oriented, flexible, collaborative, inspiring, and innovative working environment. Besides, Microsoft communicates itself as an organisation that is proud of its employees and most importantly trusts its employees as well. Therefore, it can be stated that its communicated identity is vastly employee-focused, and recognizing its employees in the hand with celebrations & events for its employees only supports the mentioned. Moreover, their communicated identity is also vastly connected with numerous commitments such as commitment to learning, growth & development as well as commitment to diversity, equality, and last but not least inclusion. Lastly, the narrative or the communicated brand identity of Microsoft is also shaped by how they raise awareness of social issues as well as how they focus on AI, digitalisation & tech.

### **Part-Conclusion to Multimodal Content Analysis**

Through Multimodal Content Analysis, the last relevant 20 posts (see appendix 1) of Microsoft's employee-oriented content were deeply studied as well as analysed. Consequently, based on the gathered knowledge of what the entire content is about; the researchers looked and found the main themes that Microsoft as an organisation is communicating through its employee-oriented content. Nextly, all themes were grouped by their meanings and labelled by codes to ensure easy & clear representation as well as understanding. Moreover, all codes were



assigned to relevant (predetermined) categories which helped to reveal what is communicated brand/corporate identity, employer branding efforts as well as online organisational communication strategy of Microsoft. And lastly, a narrative of identity construction was written to clearly understand what was found, to present all the findings in a coherent way to the reader as well as answer the problem formulation & its second sub-question that sound; **“What is the online organisational communication strategy and employer branding efforts specifically in employee-oriented content of tech giant Microsoft on the professional social media platform LinkedIn?”** as well as *“How is Microsoft’s brand identity communicated through employee-oriented content on the professional social media platform LinkedIn when it comes to attracting potential employees?”*

## *II. Descriptive Statistical Analysis*

The descriptive statistical analysis is going to be used in analysing survey responses quantitatively in an organised manner (Kaur et al., 2018). Thus, the researchers of this study are going to analyse quantitative data using a Hayes (2024) methodological approach to descriptive statistical analysis. As a scholar (Hayes, 2024) descriptive statistical analysis will serve as a quantitative technique that allows the researchers to define attributes of collected data and also to measure the frequency of the findings. The analysis aims to reveal what are the expectations of jobseekers when it comes to the professional social media platform LinkedIn as well as potential future employers communication. Accordingly, an online survey was created and shared in various online groups, particularly on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn in order to acquire quality as well as quantity of responses from the target audience - job seekers who are using LinkedIn. In terms of the time consumed for creating and distributing an online survey to various SOME platforms to collect the data needed for statistical analysis, 10 days were dedicated (1st - 10th April, 2024) and thus the researchers received 72 respondents in total. However, 55 respondents were eligible to answer the online survey, meaning they were both LinkedIn users and jobseekers.

Further in this chapter, the survey responses will be deeply observed and described in order to define the most frequent aspects related to job seekers expectations in terms of communication

used on LinkedIn by organisations. Consequently, the researchers will firstly critically describe the survey questions in terms of received number of responses. As a part of the second stage of the analysis, the target audience of the survey will be defined and described as of the highest response rate of each “general question”. Further, in terms of the questions related to 6 sections of The Uses and Gratification theory, the most frequent - particularly 3 responses of each question will be presented in order to statistically represent the highest expectations of job seekers related to each question. In terms of the last stage, the most frequent responses will be statistically described in a numerical order - as of what do job seekers expect the most and the least in terms of communication used by organisations on LinkedIn and thus that will help the researchers to answer one of the research problems. Survey responses together with visualised graphs can be found in appendix 2.

## **A) Critical description of the responses**

### **General questions**

**Question 1:** In terms of the first question which belongs to the section of the general questions that helps the researchers to get to know the target audience is formulated as follows: **“Are you a job seeker & LinkedIn user?”** 55 of total respondents answered - “Yes” (76,4%), while “No” - 17 respondents (23,6%). Hence, according to the criteria of the survey, out of the total 72 responses, only 55 were eligible to continue and answer the rest of the survey.

**Question 2:** The second question of the survey was formulated as **“How would you describe your jobseeker status?”** (see figure 6). The largest part of the audience which is 24 respondents (43,6%) is casually looking for a job a few times a week. Besides, 9 out of 55 respondents (16,4%) are completely satisfied with their jobs but might be open for other opportunities. Solely 8 people (14,5%) are reaching out to only personal networks for new opportunities as well and they are open to talking to a recruiter, but not searching or applying themselves. Lastly, only 6 out of 55 (10,9%) respondents are actively looking for a job almost every day.

### How would you describe your jobseeker status?

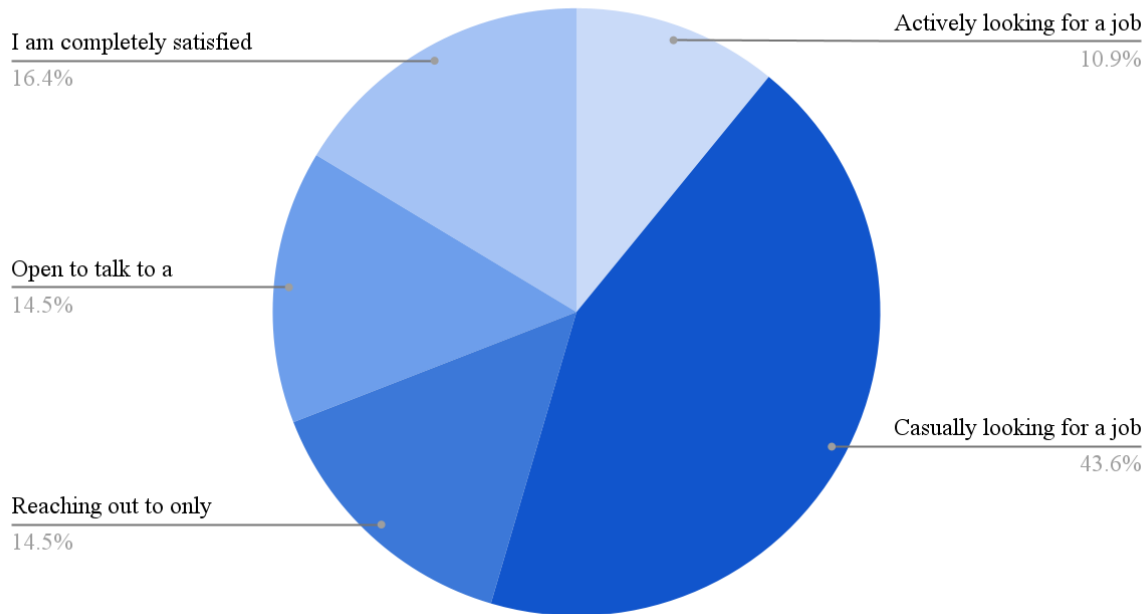


Figure 6: Survey Question no. 2 (see appendix 2, p. 2)

**Question 3:** The main point of the third general question was to define how the target audience is using LinkedIn: **“Do you as a jobseeker use LinkedIn mostly to:”**. The biggest part of the 40 respondents use LinkedIn to monitor and observe others’ content without direct engagement (e.g. scrolling, reading, gathering information, but not liking, commenting or even interacting with others) which composes 72,7% of the whole target group. While only 15 out of 55 (27,3%) respondents use LinkedIn to facilitate direct exchanges (e.g. liking, commenting, sending messages, and otherwise engaging with LinkedIn users).

**Question 4:** The last question that belongs to the section of general questions is **“How often do you use LinkedIn to research a certain organisation?”** (see figure 7). As visualised in the graph below, the most considerable target audience of 19 (34,54%) respondents uses LinkedIn often. The second largest group of 18 (32,72%) respondents uses LinkedIn only sometimes. The smaller number of participants, to be precise - 7 out of 55 (12,72%) respondents are using LinkedIn to research organisations very often as well as rarely. Interestingly, 3 out of 55 (5,45%) respondents never use LinkedIn to research organisations or do it very rarely - only 1 (1,81%) respondent.

#### How often do you use LinkedIn to research a certain organisation?

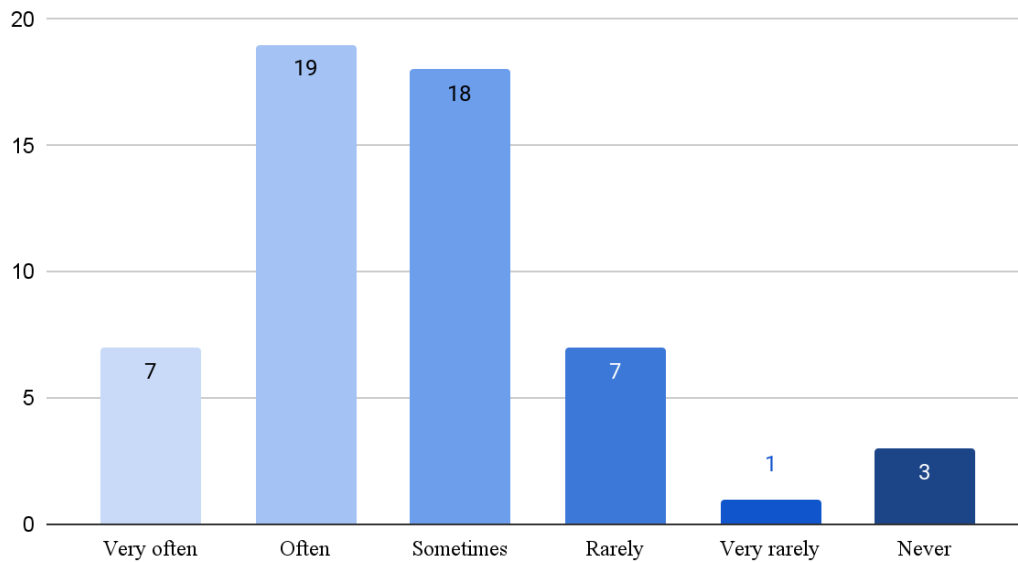


Figure 7: Survey Question no. 4 (see appendix 2, p. 3)

#### Theory-oriented questions

The second part consists of 6 sections adopted from the Uses and Gratifications Theory by Elihu Katz & Jay Blumler (Convenience, Entertainment, Socialising, Status Seeking, Information Seeking, and Sharing experiences) with 2 theory-oriented questions in each section.

##### Convenience

**Question 5:** Accordingly, the fifth question of the survey that belongs to the section “Convenience” is formulated as: **“Do you expect that an organisation will use LinkedIn to communicate about its work model?”**. The majority of 41 (46,1%) respondents stated that yes, hybrid work opportunity is the most expected in terms of communication about the work model. The second frequent statement - yes, fully remote work opportunity that was chosen by as many as 24 out of 55 (27,0%) respondents. Further, the statement - yes, a fully on-site work opportunity was chosen by 18 out of 55 (20,2%) respondents. A minority of 5 out of 55 (5,6%) respondents do not expect to find information related to the organisation's work model. Lastly, only 1 respondent provided his/her response “Yes I do [expect an organisation to communicate on LinkedIn about work-model] regardless of the model”, which corresponds to (1,1%) of the total number of respondents.

## Convenience

**Question 6:** The sixth question was formulated and aimed to define “**What aspects of work-life balance would you expect to see as LinkedIn content from a specific organisation?**” (see figure 8). Accordingly, the most frequently chosen statement was - accessibility to personal development content (e.g. trainings/courses/talent management programs) which was chosen by 34 (31,8%) respondents. Furthermore, the second most frequent answer - time management content (e.g. flexible work hours) which corresponds to 27 out of 55 (25,2%) survey participants. The third most expected aspect of work-life balance is considered as employee encouragement content (e.g. possibility to book time on the work calendar for meditation, therapy, and exercise; provide employee benefits related to mental and physical health) which was stated by 25 out of 55 (23,4%) survey respondents. As of the number of responses, not as important as the above-stated aspects are flexible vacation (e.g. possibility to choose vacation according to a flexible system/not during a certain time of the year; the choice to work or not on e.g. Christmas and other cultural holidays) - 20 out of 55 (18,7%) respondents. Lastly, in terms of a response option called “other” - 1 (0,9%) of the respondents believe that it is also expected to see content related to “Accommodations for neurodiverse people. As “not all disabilities are visible” is being heard all over the world, but very few do anything about it”.

### What aspects of work-life balance would you expect to see as LinkedIn content from a specific organisation?

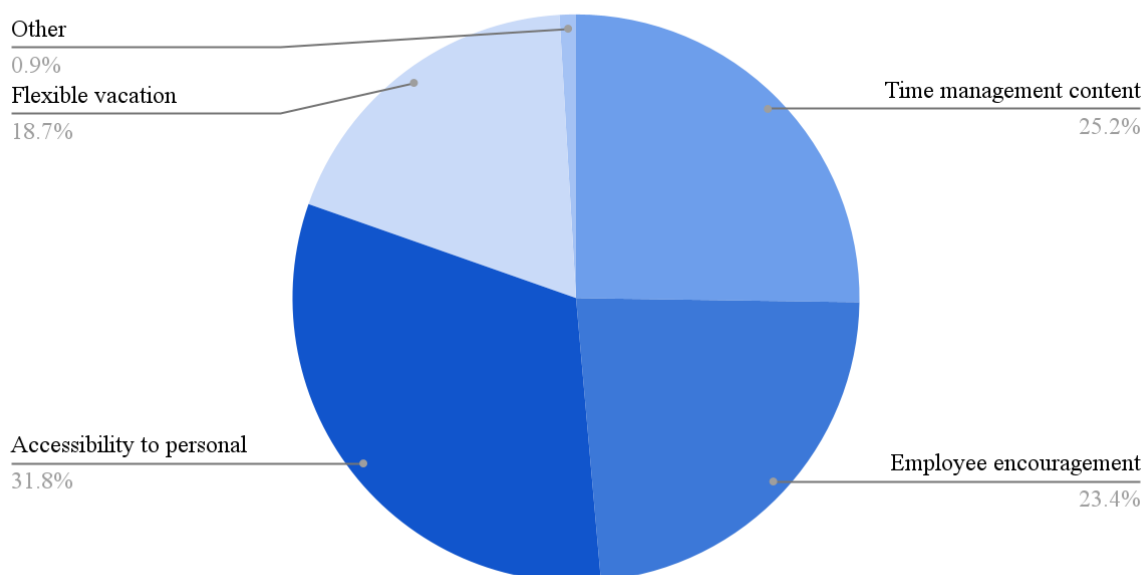


Figure 8: Survey Question no. 6 (see appendix 2, p. 5)

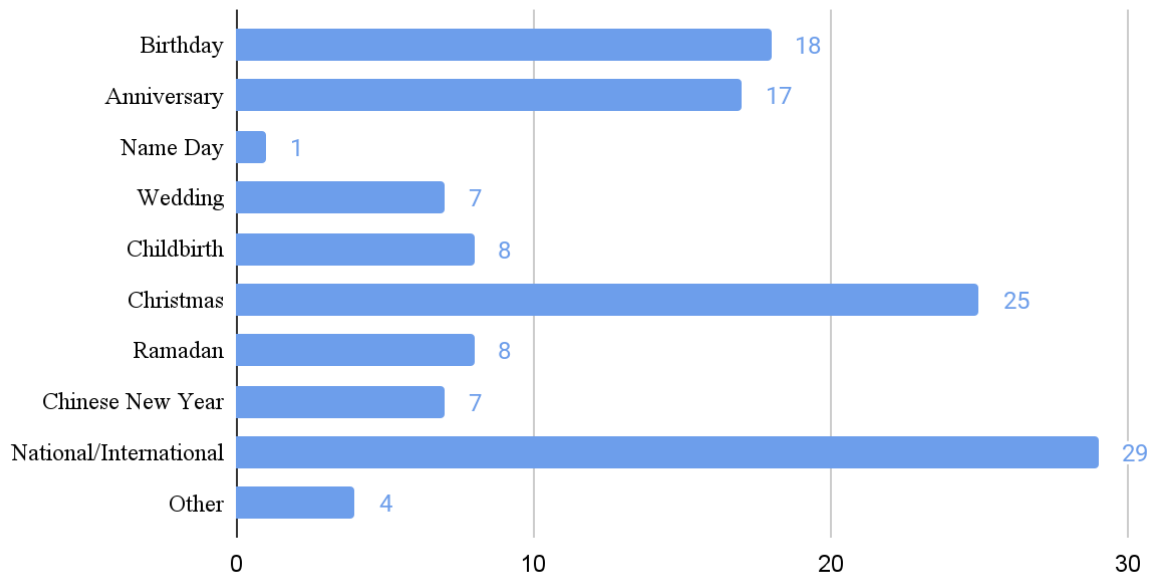
## Entertainment

**Question 7:** In regards to the second section of the survey called “Entertainment”, the seventh survey question aimed to identify **“What aspects of work-life balance do you expect to see in LinkedIn content from a specific organisation?”**. As of 41 (40,6%) respondents, employee recognition content (e.g. celebration and recognition of employee achievements) would be the most expected. The second most frequently mentioned and expected aspect by 32 (31,7%) survey participants was the company's achievements and its celebration (e.g. participation in local/international events, competitions, prizes, achievements). Further, less popular answer was share-meal/food initiatives (e.g. employees bring their food to work & share with others) - were expected by 15 (14,9%) respondents. The minority of 12 (11,9%) survey participants would expect fun-breaks (e.g. during/after work activities) as well as only 1 respondent (1%) stated that “none of the above” would be expected in terms of work-life balance communicative initiatives on LinkedIn.

## Entertainment

**Question 8:** The eighth question refers to **“Which of the following employees' special occasions and cultural events do you expect an organisation to communicate about on LinkedIn?”** (see figure 9). The most frequently chosen answers were - National/International days by 29 (23,4%) respondents; Christmas - 25 (20,2%); Birthday - 18 (14,5%); Anniversary - 17 (13,7%). The minority of survey participants chose aspects such as: Childbirth chosen by 8 (6,5%) respondents; Ramadan - 8 (6,5%); Wedding - 7 (5,6%); Chinese New Year - 7 (5,6%); Name Day by only 1 (0,8%) respondent. In terms of “Other” type of responses 4 answers were submitted which corresponds to 3.2% of total responses. Accordingly, 2 respondents stated that none of the provided options are expected - “I wouldn't say any of these; None of the above; Honestly this one I don't care about so much I guess?”. Besides, 1 person believes that it is important as well as expected from the employer to communicate about “Work-related achievements/work anniversary or messages about welcoming the employee to the company/when they leave the company” - in fact, this specific response could be referred to the statement “Anniversary”.

**Which of the following employees' special occasions and cultural events do you expect an organisation to communicate about on LinkedIn?**



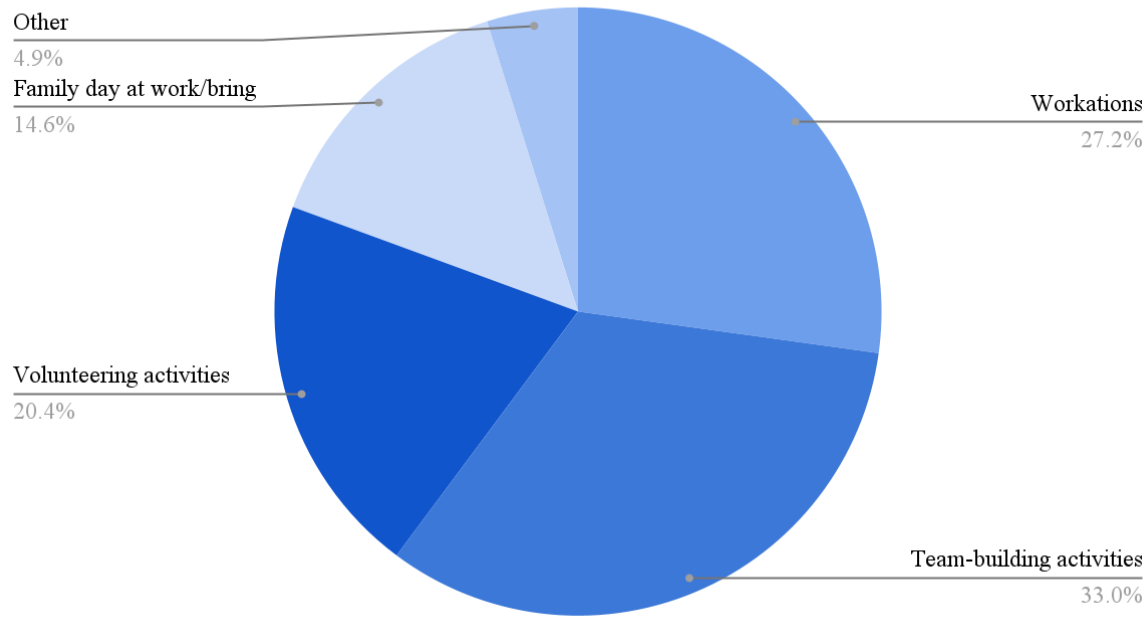
*Figure 9: Survey Question no. 8 (see appendix 2, p. 7)*

## **Socialising**

**Question 9:** The ninth question/statement related to the “Socialising” section is formulated as follows: **“I expect my potential employer to communicate on LinkedIn about”** (see figure 10). The majority of job seekers, 34 (33,0%) respondents stated that it is expected from the future employer to communicate about team-building activities inside and outside of work. The second most frequent answer is, therefore, workations (work & travel activities) corresponding to 28 out of 55 (27,2%) respondents. As of 21 (20,4%) survey participants, volunteering activities outside of the workplace are also strongly expected when it comes to organisational communication on LinkedIn. While the least expected from the provided statements would be family day at work/bring your pet to work day - 15 (14,6%) of respondents. When it comes to respondents’ answers (“other”) which make up 4,9% of total answers, 5 different statements were received. 1 person does not expect any of the provided aspects - “none”; the other expects an organisation to communicate about “achievements and motivation”; the third one about “meet-ups with other companies”. Nevertheless, the fourth respondent stated “I expect them to post about the company, the daily run of the company, any relevant information, innovation, achievements, news from the company and market that is relevant etc.”. And the very last one - “No socialising for me please, leave me the heck alone:))) especially do not expect

volunteering after working hours. Yuck. This is why it is important for me to see or not see it hahaha so I know the company is not gonna demand my entire life even after am done working”.

### **I expect my potential employer to communicate on LinkedIn about:**



*Figure 10: Survey Question no. 9 (see appendix 2, p. 8)*

### **Socialising**

**Question 10:** The tenth question of the survey refers to “**How important is it for you as a job seeker to see the content of organisations that communicate about socialisation specifically on LinkedIn?**”. For most of the respondents - 28 out of 55 (50,9%) participants, it is somewhat important. For 11 (20%) respondents it is rather highly Important. 10 out of 55 (18,2%) jobseekers feel neutral. While the minority of total respondents believe that it is somewhat not important - 4 (7,3%) respondents; or not important at all - 2 (3,6%) out of total 55 respondents of the survey.

### **Status-seeking**

**Question 11:** The eleventh question of the section called “Status-seeking” is formulated as follows: “**What type of professional accomplishment on the social media platform LinkedIn would impress you the most when it comes to a potential employer?**”. The



responses revealed that the majority of 39 out of 55 (35,8%) jobseekers expect collaborative success stories (team achievements, team contribution & collaborative accomplishments). Considering the second most frequent statement, jobseekers would be mostly impressed by innovation-driven leads (showcasing innovative projects, problem-solving related skills as well as creativity) - 28 out of 55 (25,7%) respondents. Leadership-oriented content creation (sharing industry insights, content that showcases expertise for the field) would be expected by 24 (22,0%) respondents which makes this particular aspect and the third most frequent response. The minority of 18 (16,5%) respondents chose achievement-oriented communication (specific accomplishments when it comes to increased sales, revenue growth, etc.).

### **Status-seeking**

**Question 12:** The twelfth question of the survey is formulated as: **“When you evaluate potential employers on LinkedIn, what kind of status-focused elements do you expect to observe on the mentioned professional social media platform as a job seeker?”** (see figure 11). The majority of respondents would expect the most - ambition (e.g. bold initiatives, ambitious plans, proactive approach, pursuing opportunities for development. etc.) as the status-focused element, as of 34 out of 55 (26,2%) jobseekers. As of 29 (22,3%) respondents, the second most expected status-focused element is social responsibility (e.g. commitment to social responsibility, ethical practices, sustainability, etc.). The target audience of 27 (20,8%) respondents believe that market reputation (e.g. reviews & ratings sharing, won awards, media coverage, trustworthiness, etc.) is relatively expected. Considering the fourth most frequent aspect, the drive for success (e.g. successful launches & deals, expansion of brands, being innovative, achieving desired goals, etc.) would be expected by 25 (19,2%) jobseekers. The minority of respondents chose the element of industry influence (e.g. leadership articles, strong reputation, ability to shape trends within the industry, etc.) as the least expected from all provided statements which are 14 out of a total 55 (10,8%) respondents. Lastly, 1 respondent (0,8%) believes that “all of the above are relevant”.

**When you evaluate potential employers on LinkedIn, what kind of status-focused elements do you expect to observe on the mentioned professional social media**

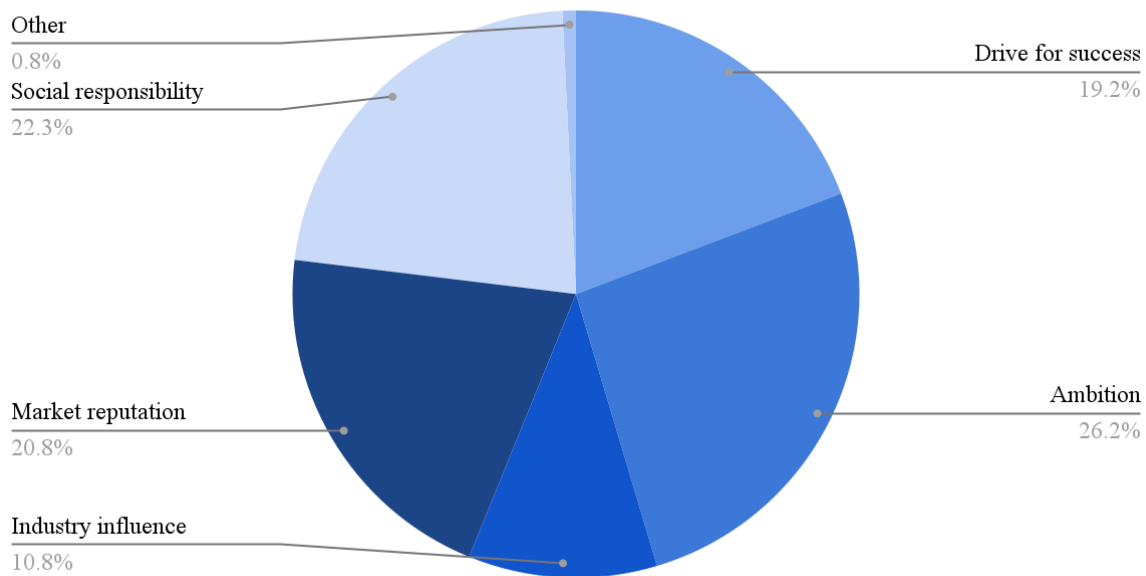


Figure 11: Survey Question no. 12 (see appendix 2, p. 11)

### Information-seeking

**Question 13:** In terms of “Information seeking”, the thirteenth question aims to reveal: **“What is your expectation when it comes to general information sharing on social media platform LinkedIn from potential employers?”**. As of 36 out of 55 respondents that make the biggest response rate (30,8%) growth opportunities including job openings are considered as the most expected when it comes to information sharing on LinkedIn. Furthermore, general information about the organisation including background, culture & values is expected by 29 (24,8%) respondents of the target group. Besides, the third most expected aspect is overall organisational achievements, milestones as well as general industry impact, thus which was chosen by 26 out of 55 (22,2%) respondents. The fourth most expected aspect in terms of online organisational communication would be employee recognition in the hand with achievements of employees as of 25 (21,4%) respondents. “Other” types of responses included 1 (0,9%) respondent and thus he/she would expect “Brand-activism. I expect my future employer to be activist and proactive on social and environmental issues”.

## Information-seeking

**Question 14:** The fifth section called information-seeking aims to define: “**When it comes to LinkedIn as a platform, what kind of knowledge do you majorly seek to enhance your overall job search as well as career development?**” (see figure 12). The majority, 33 out of 55 (28,7%) job seekers are looking for various job updates or available positions that may also include hiring trends. According to responses received, 28 (24,3%) jobseekers are also seeking specific industry insights as well as trends that may be relevant to their expertise. Relatively a wide group of 21 (18,3%) survey participants might seek career mentorship & advice for skilled professionals in their area of expertise. Besides, 20 (17,4%) respondents would expect to consume knowledge related to development such as tutorials, webinars & online advice. Last but not least, the minority of jobseekers would seek educational content related to valuable information that helps to educate - 13 out of 55 (11,3%) total respondents.

### What kind of knowledge do you majorly seek to enhance your overall job search as well as career development?

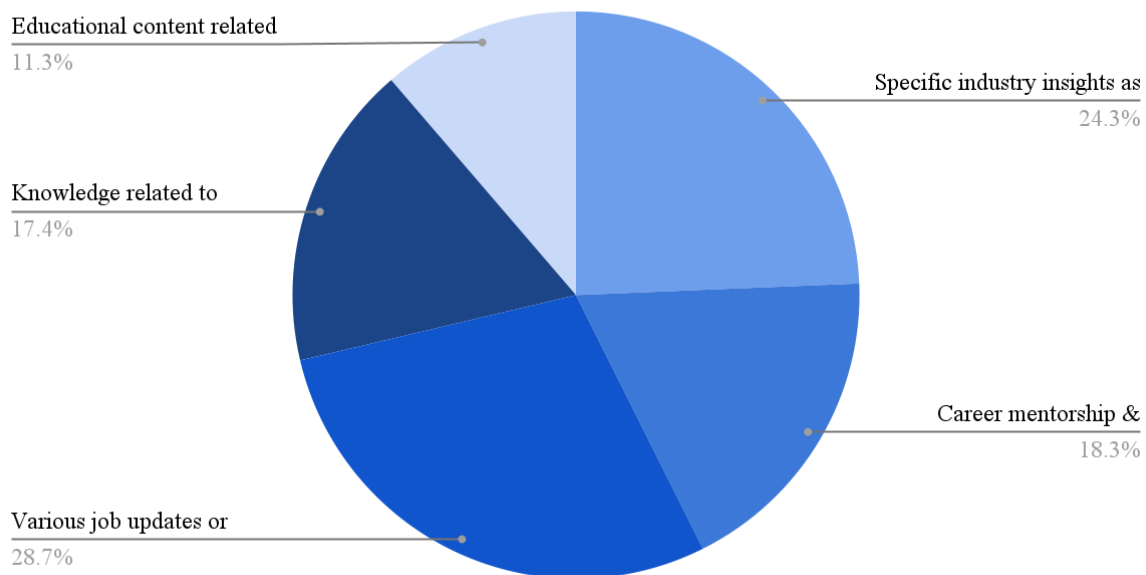


Figure 12: Survey Question no. 14 (see appendix 2, p. 13)

## Sharing-experiences

**Question 15:** According to The Uses and Gratification Theory, the last 2 questions of the survey refer to the section “Sharing-experiences”. Thus, the fifteenth question of the survey seeks to define “**What kind of experiences do you expect to be shared on the social media platform LinkedIn from potential employers?**”. The most frequent response chosen by 29

(28,4%) respondents was experiences related to the working environment and overall organisational culture (aspects related to the company's values as well as work style). Besides, 25 out of 55 (24,5%) jobseekers might expect experiences related to organisational commitment when it comes to diversity, inclusion & equality (aspects related to inclusion within the company). Thirdly, events and various social gatherings within the organisation (aspects fostering a sense of community), as well as stories & experiences related to employees and their highlighting of career growth (aspects related to overall employee testimonials), are expected by 24 (23,5%) respondents when it comes to organisational experiences.

### **Sharing-experiences**

**Question 16:** The main ambition of the last survey question was to identify: **“As a job seeker, you perceive overall experience sharing on the social media platform LinkedIn as a source of...”** (see figure 13). The majority of respondents that correspond to 32 out of 55 (23,9%) job seekers perceive it as a source of motivation (to hear about successful & motivational stories, quotes, and other inspirational content). While 26 (19,4%) respondents see it as a source of education (to learn through informative posts & articles, tutorials, courses, etc.). Nevertheless, 22 out of 55 (16,4%) job seekers perceive it as creativity (to acquire more creative endeavours by seeing art, photography, etc.) as well as 21 (15,7%) respondents see it as a source of entrepreneurship (to get valuable business tips, and advice and hear stories shared by inspiring business people or employees). Furthermore, empowerment (to feel a sense of belonging or sense of community) is perceived by 17 (12,7%), while Health & Wellness (to improve overall well-being and hear more about mental health, mindfulness, fitness, etc.) by 14 (10,4%) respondents. It is also important to state 2 (1,5%) “Other” responses - thus, 1 person perceives it as a source of “scratching the ego, in the meaning of what they achieved”. Last but not least, the other person stated, “None of it, I see it as a platform for job searching”.

**As a job seeker, you perceive overall experience sharing on the social media platform LinkedIn as a source of...?**

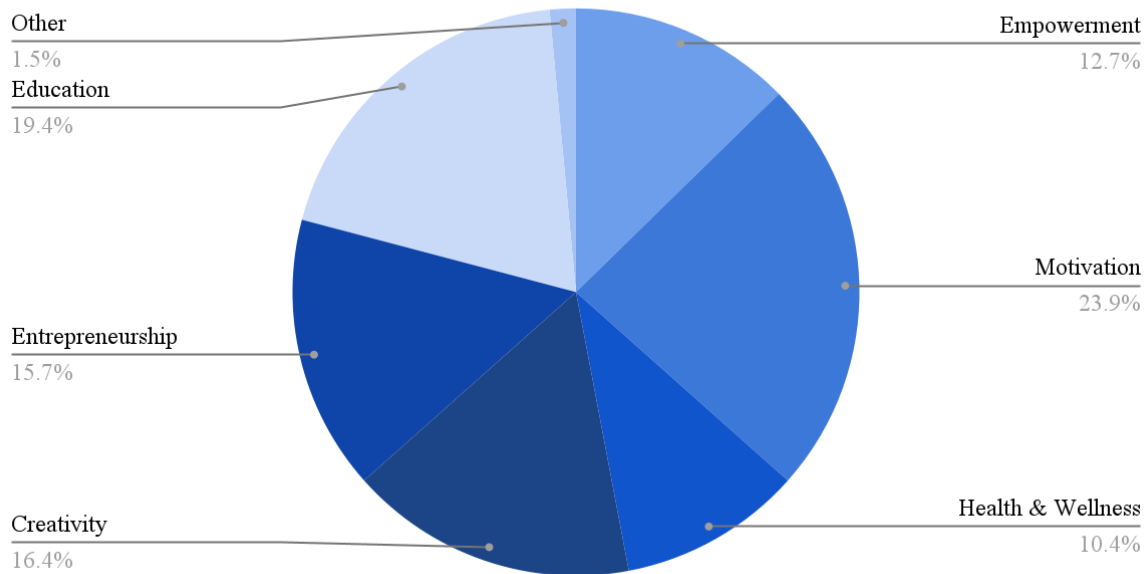


Figure 13: Survey Question no. 16 (see appendix 2, p. 15)

## B) Defining the target audience

In this stage, the general questions with the highest responses will be statistically represented in order to define the target audience of this survey. The findings of the target audience will be primarily used in the discussion chapter of this research.

**Table 7: Visualising the largest response response rates that defines the target audience of the survey**

Section	Question	Response	The Largest Response Rate
General questions	Q1: "Are you a job seeker & LinkedIn user?"	Yes	76,4%

<b>General questions</b>	Q2: “How would you describe your jobseeker status”?	Casually looking for a job a few times a week	43,6%
<b>General questions</b>	Q3: “Do you as a jobseeker use LinkedIn mostly to:”	Monitor and observe others’ content without direct engagement (e.g. scrolling, reading, gathering information, but not liking, commenting or even interacting with others)	72,7%
<b>General questions</b>	Q4: “How often do you use LinkedIn to research a certain organisation?”	Often	34,54%

*Table 7: Visualising the largest response response rates that defines the target audience of the survey*

Throughout this stage of the statistical analysis that aims to summarise the responses statistically and describe the target audience, it was found that 76,4% of all 100% (55 out of 72) of respondents are job seekers as well as LinkedIn users who were eligible to answer the rest of the survey and provide quality responses - thus, 55 respondents who were able to continue with the survey correspondents to 100% of total respondents. In terms of jobseeker status, 43,6% (34 out of 55) survey respondents were eligible to continue with the rest of the survey casually looking for a job a few times a week. When it comes to the way respondents of the survey are using LinkedIn, the highest percentage was observed from 72,7% of individuals that are using LinkedIn to monitor and observe others’ content without direct engagement (e.g. scrolling, reading, gathering information, but not liking, commenting or even interacting with others). Last but not least, when it comes to the usage of LinkedIn to research a certain organisation, 34,54% of the audience often researches organisations specifically on the professional social media platform LinkedIn.

To summarise and shortly describe the biggest part of the audience of this survey, the individuals are job seekers and LinkedIn users who are casually looking for a job a few times

a week as well as who tend to research potential future organisations/employers often specifically on platforms such as LinkedIn. Besides, they are mostly using LinkedIn to monitor and observe others' content without direct engagement in general.

### **C) Defining & Understanding the most frequent survey responses**

The third stage of the descriptive statistical analysis will be focused on defining three of the most frequent responses to each question of the survey. The main goal of the third stage is to develop an understanding of the most common answers as well as to eliminate the answers with the lowest response rates. The entire stage will serve the researchers in finding out what are the expectations of job seekers when it comes to communication used by organisations on LinkedIn.

**Table 8: Defining three of the most frequent responses according to the highest response rates**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Response Rate/Percentage</b>
<b>Convenience</b>	Q5: "Do you expect that an organisation will use LinkedIn to communicate about its work-model?"	Yes, hybrid work opportunity	<b>46,1%</b>
		Yes, fully remote work opportunity	<b>27,0%</b>
		Yes, a fully on-site work opportunity	<b>20,2%</b>
	Q6: "What aspects of work-life balance	Accessibility to personal development content (e.g. trainings/courses/talent management programs)	<b>31,8%</b>
			<b>25,2%</b>

<b>Convenience</b>	would you expect to see as LinkedIn content from a specific organisation?"	<p>Time management content (e.g. flexible work hours)</p> <p>Employee encouragement content (e.g. possibility to book time on work calendar for meditation, therapy, exercise; provide employee benefits related to mental and physical health)</p>	<b>23,4%</b>
<b>Entertainment</b>	Q7: "What aspects of work-life balance do you expect to see in LinkedIn content from a specific organisation?"	<p>Employee recognition content (e.g. celebration and recognition of employee achievements)</p> <p>The company's achievements and its celebration (e.g. participation in local/international events, competitions, prizes, achievements)</p> <p>Share-meal/food initiatives (e.g. employees bring their food to work &amp; share with others)</p>	<p><b>40,6%</b></p> <p><b>31,7%</b></p> <p><b>14,9%</b></p>



<b>Entertainment</b>	Q8: “Which of the following employees' special occasions and cultural events do you expect an organisation to communicate about on LinkedIn?”	National/International days	<b>23,4%</b>
		Christmas	<b>20,2%</b>
		Birthdays	<b>14,5%</b>
<b>Socialising</b>	Q9: “I expect my potential employer to communicate on LinkedIn about:”	Team-building activities inside and outside of work	<b>33,0%</b>
		Workations (work & travel activities)	<b>27,2%</b>
		Volunteering activities outside of the workplace	<b>20,4%</b>
<b>Socialising</b>	Q10: “How important is it for you as a job seeker to see content of organisations that speak about socialisation specifically on LinkedIn?”	Somewhat important	<b>50,9%</b>
		Highly Important	<b>20%</b>
		Neutral	<b>18,2%</b>
<b>Status-seeking</b>	Q11: “What type of professional accomplishment on the	Collaborative success stories (team achievements, team contribution & collaborative accomplishments)	<b>35,8%</b>
		Innovation-driven leads (showcasing	<b>25,7%</b>

	social media platform LinkedIn would impress you the most when it comes to a potential employer?"	innovative projects, problem-solving related skills as well as creativity)  Leadership-oriented content creation (sharing industry insights, content that showcases expertise for the field)	<b>22,0%</b>
<b>Status-seeking</b>	Q12: "When you evaluate potential employers on LinkedIn, what kind of status-focused elements do you expect to observe on the mentioned professional social media platform as a job seeker?"	Ambition (e.g. bold initiatives, ambitious plans, proactive approach, pursuing opportunities for development. etc.)	<b>26,2%</b>
		Social responsibility (e.g. commitment to social responsibility, ethical practices, sustainability, etc.)	<b>22,3%</b>
		Market reputation (e.g. reviews & ratings sharing, won awards, media coverage, trustworthiness, etc.)	<b>20,8%</b>
	Q13: "What is your expectation when it	Growth opportunities including job openings  General information about the organisation	<b>30,8%</b>

<b>Information-seeking</b>	comes to general information sharing on social media platform LinkedIn from potential employers?"	including background, culture & values  Overall organisational achievements, milestones as well as general industry impact	<b>24,8%</b>  <b>22,2%</b>
	Q14: "When it comes to LinkedIn as a platform, what kind of knowledge do you majorly seek to enhance your overall job search as well as career development?"	Various job updates or available positions that may also include hiring trends  Specific industry insights as well as trends that may be relevant to their expertise  Career mentorship & advice for skilled professionals in their area of expertise	<b>28,7%</b>  <b>24,3%</b>  <b>18,3%</b>
		Experiences related to the working environment and overall organisational culture (aspects related to the company's values as well as work style)  Experiences related to organisational	<b>28,4%</b>  <b>24,5%</b>

<b>Sharing-experiences</b>	Q15: “What kind of experiences do you expect to be shared on the social media platform LinkedIn from potential employers?”	<p>commitment when it comes to diversity, inclusion &amp; equality (aspects related to inclusion within the company)</p> <p>Events and various social gatherings within the organisation (aspects fostering a sense of community), as well as stories &amp; experiences related to employees and their highlighting of career growth (aspects related to overall employee testimonials)</p>	<b>23,5%</b>
<b>Sharing-experiences</b>	Q16: “As a job seeker, you perceive overall experience sharing on the social media platform LinkedIn as a source of...?”	<p>Motivation (to hear about successful &amp; motivational stories, quotes, and other inspirational content).</p> <p>Education (to learn through informative posts &amp; articles, tutorials, courses, etc.).</p> <p>Creativity (to acquire more creative endeavours by seeing art, photography, etc.)</p>	<p><b>23,9%</b></p> <p><b>19,4%</b></p> <p><b>16,4%</b></p>

Table 8: Defining three of the most frequent responses according to the highest response rates

In terms of the third stage called “Defining & Understanding the most frequent survey responses”, the three most frequent responses of each question were statistically described and visualised in table number 8. Accordingly, the fourth stage will serve as a precise statistical overview of all most frequent responses according to the highest response rate, meaning from the highest percentage to the lowest of all previously defined aspects in the stage number 2. Overall further stage will aim to reveal the exact expectations of jobseekers in a numerical order - what do job seekers expect the most and the least in terms of communication used by organisations/potential employers on LinkedIn.

#### **D) The most frequent expectations according to the response rate of jobseekers when it comes to communication used by organisations on LinkedIn**

As mentioned, the overall most frequent responses according to the statistics presented in table number 8 will be summarised in order to reveal the expectations of jobseekers - what do job seekers expect the most in terms of communication used by organisations on LinkedIn. Accordingly, to summarise the responses even more and to ensure the better understanding of jobseekers’ highest expectations, a total of 34 responses will be revealed and the first half of these (17) will be marked in green as the most expected aspects when it comes to communication through LinkedIn.

**Table 9: The final most expected aspects of job seekers from the highest to the lowest response rates**

Section	Question	Response	Response Rate
<b>Socialising</b>	Q10: “How important is it for you as a job seeker to see content of organisations that speak about socialisation specifically on LinkedIn?”	Somewhat important	50,9%

<b>Convenience</b>	Q5: “Do you expect that an organisation will use LinkedIn to communicate about its work-model?”	Yes, hybrid work opportunity	<b>46.1%</b>
<b>Entertainment</b>	Q7: “What aspects of work-life balance do you expect to see in LinkedIn content from a specific organisation?”	Employee recognition content (e.g. celebration and recognition of employee achievements)	<b>40,6%</b>
<b>Status-seeking</b>	Q11: “What type of professional accomplishment on the social media platform LinkedIn would impress you the most when it comes to a potential employer?”	Collaborative success stories (team achievements, team contribution & collaborative accomplishments)	<b>35,8%</b>
<b>Socialising</b>	Q9: “I expect my potential employer to communicate on LinkedIn about:”	Team-building activities inside and outside of work	<b>33,0%</b>
<b>Convenience</b>	Q6: “What aspects of work-life balance would you expect to see as LinkedIn content from a specific organisation?”	Accessibility to personal development content (e.g. trainings/courses/talent management programs)	<b>31,8%</b>
<b>Entertainment</b>	Q7: “What aspects of work-life balance do	The company's achievements and its	<b>31,7%</b>

	you expect to see in LinkedIn content from a specific organisation?”	celebration (e.g. participation in local/international events, competitions, prizes, achievements)	
<b>Information-seeking</b>	Q13: “What is your expectation when it comes to general information sharing on social media platform LinkedIn from potential employers?”	Growth opportunities including job openings	<b>30,8%</b>
<b>Information-seeking</b>	Q14: “When it comes to LinkedIn as a platform, what kind of knowledge do you majorly seek to enhance your overall job search as well as career development?”	Various job updates or available positions that may also include hiring trends	<b>28,7%</b>
<b>Sharing-experiences</b>	Q15: “What kind of experiences do you expect to be shared on the social media platform LinkedIn from potential employers?”	Experiences related to the working environment and overall organisational culture (aspects related to the company’s values as well as work style)	<b>28,4%</b>
<b>Socialising</b>	Q9: “I expect my potential employer to communicate on LinkedIn about:”	Workations (work & travel activities)	<b>27,2%</b>

<b>Convenience</b>	Q5: “Do you expect that an organisation will use LinkedIn to communicate about its work-model?”	Yes, fully remote work opportunity	<b>27,0%</b>
<b>Status-seeking</b>	Q12: “When you evaluate potential employers on LinkedIn, what kind of status-focused elements do you expect to observe on the mentioned professional social media platform as a job seeker?”	Ambition (e.g. bold initiatives, ambitious plans, proactive approach, pursuing opportunities for development. etc.)	<b>26,2%</b>
<b>Status-seeking</b>	Q11: “What type of professional accomplishment on the social media platform LinkedIn would impress you the most when it comes to a potential employer?”	Innovation-driven leads (showcasing innovative projects, problem-solving related skills as well as creativity)	<b>25,7%</b>
<b>Convenience</b>	Q6: “What aspects of work-life balance would you expect to see as LinkedIn content from a specific organisation?”	Time management content (e.g. flexible work hours)	<b>25,2%</b>
<b>Information-seeking</b>	Q13: “What is your expectation when it comes to general information sharing on	General information about the organisation including background, culture & values	<b>24,8%</b>



	social media platform LinkedIn from potential employers?"		
<b>Sharing-experiences</b>	Q15: "What kind of experiences do you expect to be shared on the social media platform LinkedIn from potential employers?"	Experiences related to organisational commitment when it comes to diversity, inclusion & equality (aspects related to inclusion within the company)	<b>24,5%</b>
<b>Information-seeking</b>	Q14: "When it comes to LinkedIn as a platform, what kind of knowledge do you majorly seek to enhance your overall job search as well as career development?"	Specific industry insights as well as trends that may be relevant to their expertise.	<b>24,3%</b>
<b>Sharing-experiences</b>	Q16: "As a job seeker, you perceive overall experience sharing on the social media platform LinkedIn as a source of...?"	Motivation (to hear about successful & motivational stories, quotes, and other inspirational content).	<b>23,9%</b>
<b>Sharing-experiences</b>	Q15: "What kind of experiences do you expect to be shared on the social media platform LinkedIn	Events and various social gatherings within the organisation (aspects fostering a sense of community), as well	<b>23,5%</b>



<b>Information-seeking</b>	Q13: “What is your expectation when it comes to general information sharing on social media platform LinkedIn from potential employers?”	Overall organisational achievements, milestones as well as general industry impact	<b>22,2%</b>
<b>Status-seeking</b>	Q11: “What type of professional accomplishment on the social media platform LinkedIn would impress you the most when it comes to a potential employer?”	Leadership-oriented content creation (sharing industry insights, content that showcases expertise for the field)	<b>22,0%</b>
<b>Status-seeking</b>	Q12: “When you evaluate potential employers on LinkedIn, what kind of status-focused elements do you expect to observe on the mentioned professional social media platform as a job seeker?”	Market reputation (e.g. reviews & ratings sharing, won awards, media coverage, trustworthiness, etc.)	<b>20,8%</b>
<b>Socialising</b>	Q9: “I expect my potential employer to communicate on LinkedIn about:”	Volunteering activities outside of the workplace	<b>20,4%</b>
<b>Convenience</b>	Q5: “Do you expect that an organisation will use LinkedIn to	Yes, a fully on-site work opportunity	

<b>Entertainment</b>	<p>communicate about its work-model?”</p> <p>Q8: “Which of the following employees' special occasions and cultural events do you expect an organisation to communicate about on LinkedIn?”</p>	Christmas	<b>20,2%</b>
<b>Socialising</b>	Q10: “How important is it for you as a job seeker to see content of organisations that speak about socialisation specifically on LinkedIn?”	Highly Important	<b>20%</b>
<b>Sharing-experiences</b>	Q16: “As a job seeker, you perceive overall experience sharing on the social media platform LinkedIn as a source of...?”	Education (to learn through informative posts & articles, tutorials, courses, etc.).	<b>19,4%</b>
<b>Information-seeking</b>	Q14: “When it comes to LinkedIn as a platform, what kind of knowledge do you majorly seek to enhance your overall job search as well as career development?”	Career mentorship & advice for skilled professionals in their area of expertise	<b>18,3%</b>

<b>Socialising</b>	Q10: “How important is it for you as a job seeker to see content of organisations that speak about socialisation specifically on LinkedIn?”	Neutral	<b>18,2%</b>
<b>Sharing-experiences</b>	Q16: “As a job seeker, you perceive overall experience sharing on the social media platform LinkedIn as a source of...?”	Creativity (to acquire more creative endeavours by seeing art, photography, etc.)	<b>16,4%</b>
<b>Entertainment</b>	Q7: “What aspects of work-life balance do you expect to see in LinkedIn content from a specific organisation?”	Share-meal/food initiatives (e.g. employees bring their food to work & share with others)	<b>14,9%</b>
<b>Entertainment</b>	Q8: “Which of the following employees' special occasions and cultural events do you expect an organisation to communicate about on LinkedIn?”	Birthdays	<b>14,5%</b>

*Table 9: The final most expected aspects of job seekers from the highest to the lowest response rates*

In order to summarise the large number of the most frequent responses even more and to reveal the answers to one of the problem formulations: “What are the expectations of jobseekers when it comes to the content shared by organisations on professional social media platform LinkedIn?” 17 the most important out of 34 (divided into two equal parts) responses were defined as to be perceived as the biggest expectations of jobseekers when it comes to

communication used by potential employers/organisations on professional social media site - LinkedIn (see table 9). The reason for choosing the first 17 responses is due to the aim to provide as precise and as focused discussion as possible in regards to the main research problem of “What is the online organisational communication strategy and employer branding efforts specifically in employee-oriented content of tech giant Microsoft on the professional social media platform LinkedIn?”.

Consequently, in the last stage of the descriptive statistical analysis the researchers explored and statistically described the most frequent expectations of jobseekers & LinkedIn users alike managed to answer the research problem in regards to “What are the expectations of jobseekers when it comes to the content shared by organisations on professional social media platform LinkedIn?”.

- Socialising: Accordingly, it is **somewhat important** for job seekers & LinkedIn users of this survey to see content of organisations that **communicate about socialisation specifically on LinkedIn (50,9% of respondents)**
- Convenience: Organisations’ communication in terms of **hybrid work model (46.1% of respondents)**
- Entertainment: **Employee recognition content** (e.g. celebration and recognition of employee achievements) **(40,6% of respondents)**
- Status-seeking: Organisational communication in terms of professional accomplishment on LinkedIn - **Collaborative success stories** (team achievements, team contribution & collaborative accomplishments) **(35,8% of respondents)**
- Socialising: General Communication on LinkedIn related to **team-building activities inside and outside of work (33,0% of respondents)**
- Convenience: Work-life balance oriented content related to **accessibility to personal development content** (e.g. trainings/courses/talent management programs) **(31,8% of respondents)**
- Entertainment: In addition, **the company's achievements and its celebration** (e.g. participation in local/international events, competitions, prizes, achievements) **(31,7% of respondents)**
- Information-seeking: In terms of general information sharing on LinkedIn from potential employers - **growth opportunities including job openings (30,8% of respondents)**

- Information-seeking: In terms of knowledge seeking to enhance job search/career development - **various job updates or available positions that may also include hiring trends (28,7% of respondents)**
- Sharing-experiences: LinkedIn content **related to experiences of the working environment and overall organisational culture (aspects related to the company's values as well as work style) (28,4% of respondents)**
- Socialising: Organisational Communication about **workations (work & travel activities) (27,2% of respondents)**
- Convenience: Work-model Communication about **fully remote work opportunity (27,0% of respondents)**
- Status-seeking: In terms of the elements of communication related to organisational status - **Ambition (e.g. bold initiatives, ambitious plans, proactive approach, pursuing opportunities for development. etc.) (26,2% of respondents)**
- Status-seeking: Communication about **innovation-driven leads** (showcasing innovative projects, problem-solving related skills as well as creativity) as a type of professional accomplishments **(25,7% of respondents)**
- Convenience: Work-life balance oriented content - **time management content (e.g. flexible work hours) (25,2% of respondents)**
- Information-seeking: In terms of general information sharing on social media platform LinkedIn - **organisations background, culture & values (24,8% of respondents)**
- Sharing-experiences: Experiences related to **organisational commitment when it comes to diversity, inclusion & equality** (aspects related to inclusion within the company) are the most expected to be shared from organisational' perspective **(24,5% of respondents)**

### **Part-conclusion of the descriptive statistical analysis**

In relation to problem formulation of this research the descriptive statistical analysis assisted in answering one of the research aims to explore “What are the expectations of jobseekers when it comes to the content shared by organisations on professional social media platform LinkedIn?”. Thus, throughout this descriptive statistical analysis, 16 questions were statistically observed, described, and visualised which assisted the researchers in revealing the exact statistics of each question and its responses. Furthermore, the descriptions of each question assisted in defining the three most common responses of each question and thus in the

later stage it was possible to organise all the most frequent responses according to the highest response rate/percentage. Accordingly, throughout the final step, a total of 34 most common responses were described and visualised in the table. However, to reveal a better understanding of the most frequent responses aka jobseekers expectations, the first half of total 34 responses were marked in green to highlight the highest expectations of job seekers that corresponded to 17 aspects out of 34. As a result, a total of 17 most frequent responses were identified to reveal the biggest job seekers' expectations in terms of organisations' communication on LinkedIn.

## 5. Discussion

This research's initial aim was to explore the online organisational communication strategy of tech giant Microsoft on LinkedIn. Consequently, within the chosen exploratory case study research design, the researchers were able to firstly employ multimodal content analysis to explore and define "How is Microsoft's brand identity communicated through employee-oriented content on the professional social media platform LinkedIn when it comes to attracting potential employees?". Moving further, the researchers also concentrated on exploring the expectations of organisations' target group so called job seekers on professional social media platform LinkedIn, using descriptive statistical analysis to reveal "What are the expectations of jobseekers when it comes to content shared by organisations on professional social media platform LinkedIn?". Consequently, the findings of both multimodal content analysis as well as descriptive statistical analysis assisted in revealing the answer to the main problem of this study which aimed to explore "What is the online organisational communication strategy and employer branding efforts specifically in employee-oriented content of tech giant Microsoft on the professional social media platform LinkedIn?".

Accordingly in this discussion, the Corporate Identity Model also called Model AC2ID Test by John M.T. Balmer (2001) will be used in order to discuss and critically reflect on Microsoft's communicated identity as well as Employer Branding Theory by Kristin Backhaus & Surinder Tikoo (2004) to discuss employer branding efforts of Microsoft. The Uses and Gratifications Theory by Elihu Katz & Jay Blumler (1974) is going to serve as a framework in order to communicate what job seekers' expectations are as well as research related to "Predictors of job seekers' self-disclosure on social media" by Miriam & Asma El Ouiridi, Jesse Segers &



Ivana Pais (2015) will be used as a base to reflect on job seekers' expectations in the professional settings. Lastly, the Open Systems Theory of Org. Communication by Daniel Katz & Robert Khan (1966 & 1978) is going to be used as a theoretical foundation to finally discuss what the online organisational communication strategy of Microsoft is and how it is shaped in relation to job seekers expectations as an input from an external environment.

### *I. Corporate Identity Model by John M.T. Balmer (2001)*

The outcomes of multimodal content analysis suit as an input to develop a coherent discussion in regards to the Model AC2ID Test (Balmer, 2001). According to John M.T. Balmer, his Corporate Identity Model is a comprehensive foundation for understanding the multifaceted identity of organisations. In particular, the model's understanding of communicated identity is connected with insights into an organisational strategy which tends to be used as an instrument to shape overall external perception through various communication channels that are controlled (Balmer, 2001). When it comes to Microsoft and its online presence on the professional social media platform LinkedIn; this theoretical framework is going to help the researchers to analyse and critically discuss the communicated identity that Microsoft is showing to its target audience through its LinkedIn content and initially answer one of the research problems: "How is Microsoft's brand identity communicated through employee-oriented content on the professional social media platform LinkedIn when it comes to attracting potential employees?".

The overall findings of the research reveal what is Microsoft's communicated identity on LinkedIn; moreover, it was also found that communicated identity is represented by several dimensions that are highly consistent with the theoretical foundation of Corporate Identity Model. First and foremost, Microsoft put enormous effort into projecting "a welcoming organisational environment" that fosters *inclusivity* as well as a *high sense of belonging* in the collective of employees & potential recruits. The mentioned is in vast alignment with the flow of communicated identity since Corporate Identity Theory by Balmer states that external perceptions of an organisation should be in a clear line with organisational values and its culture (Balmer, 2001).

Moreover, it was found that “trust” is a very core pillar of Microsoft and its communicated identity. Microsoft focuses on transparent ways of communication that are highly connected with *ethical practices*; as mentioned, the company itself seeks to present its image as highly reliable & reputable as well as to *cultivate trust* among its employees & potential recruits. Consequently, the mentioned finding is highly connected with what the Corporate Identity Model is defining since the theory emphasises trust as an essential component that is a part of communicated identity. (Balmer, 2001).

In addition, Microsoft as an organisation actively communicates *pride in its workplace* as well as *pride in its employees*; moreover, *a celebration of achievements* is a highly communicated aspect of its identity in the hand with showcasing *positive culture & workplace*. When it comes to the Corporate Identity Model, this aspect of communicated identity itself highlights the commitment to showcasing a favourable image that is in alignment with organisational core values & aspirations (Balmer, 2001).

Furthermore, communication of themes such as *innovation*, *diversity* as well as *social responsibility* vastly underscore forward thinking of Microsoft’s strategic communication. In regards to Corporate Identity Model by Balmer (2001), Microsoft’s messaging is in alignment with its concept which states that “the identity should be conceptualised by strategic planners.” Thus, it can be discussed that Microsoft strategically projects an external vision of the future; as mentioned, the organisation positions itself as a company that is progressive and socially conscious which is also creating progressive external perceptions.

Consequently, it should be once more mentioned that the Corporate Identity Model is vastly emphasising on the role of communicated identity regarding shaping external perceptions (Balmer, 2001). When it comes to Microsoft, its communication is highly connected with “collaboration” and “flexibility” aspects which shows the organisation in the light capable of adapting. Thus, by conveying *collaboration & flexibility*, Microsoft as an organisation highlights its commitment when it comes to *inclusive organisational culture* as a major element envisioned by strategic planners.

In conclusion, it can be stated that Microsoft’s communicated identity on the professional social media platform LinkedIn is partially underpinned by the theoretical foundation of Balmer’s Corporate Identity Model. Thus, by the strategic analysis of Microsoft’s

communication on LinkedIn, the research gained vastly valuable insights such as how the company positions itself to its target audience and communicates its brand/corporate identity in regards to attracting & engaging job seekers as well as its employees.

## *II. Employer Branding Theory by Backhaus & Tikoo (2004)*

To develop a much deeper understanding of Microsoft's brand identity in relation to earlier mentioned research problem "How is Microsoft's brand identity communicated through employee-oriented content on the professional social media platform LinkedIn when it comes to attracting potential employees?", the researchers are going to communicate the results of the multimodal content analysis further in relation to Employer Branding Theory (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

When it comes to the mentioned theory, it can be stated that this specific theory is the combination of human resources & marketing-related concepts. The theory itself serves as an instrument in understanding how nowadays organisations establish their overall reputation, identity as well as attractiveness as employers. According to Backhaus & Tikoo, this theory is core in the development of brand associations in the hand with loyalty. Moreover, the theory's assets have not only the vast power to shape an employer's image; it also consists of significant influence when it comes to potential employers and their appeal. Consequently, Employer Branding Theory has an even wider reach into a notion of organisation identity/culture which fosters a high sense of employee loyalty. Based on what Backhaus & Tikoo stated, the mentioned loyalty reveals itself as a crucial factor in enhancing the productivity of employees (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

However, within the research's context, the researchers explore the multifaceted dimension of employer branding itself. Thus, this discussion will partially reveal how Microsoft's initiatives are in alignment with the theoretical framework as well as how Microsoft contributes to its reputation as an employer. By examination of the key findings in the shadow of Employer Branding Theory, the clarification of the existing relationship between branding initiatives, employee presentation as well as organisational outcomes will be revealed.

- a) ***Brand association & Trust towards employees:*** A significant element of employer brand associations can be observed in Microsoft's dedication to trust towards employees. According to Backhaus & Tikoo, the brand association comprises both sensorial as well as verbal aspects in the hand with emotional responses (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Thus, by fostering trust toward employees, Microsoft as an organisation establishes highly positive & emotional bonds with employees as well as its target audience which strengthens its brand associations as adequately reliable and credible.
  
- b) ***Employer image & Pride towards employees:*** As it was observed, the overall pride towards employees highly contributes to Microsoft's employer image. Based on the statement by Backhaus & Tikoo, it is highlighted that the employer image is shaped by the overall representation of organisational/brand values as well as its benefits (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Microsoft emphasises on fostering & promoting pride toward employees which potentially contributes to a favourable employer image and positions Microsoft as a supportive & empowering organisation.
  
- c) ***Employer attraction & Teamwork and collaboration:*** According to Backhaus & Tikoo, symbolism is a very important element when it comes to attracting potential talents (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Moreover, based on the Elliott & Wattanasuwan hypothesis, attraction is highly connected with general symbolic meanings that resonate with collaboration & teamwork topics as such (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998). Therefore, Microsoft's communication of collaboration in the hand with teamwork may draw individuals seeking a collaborative working environment, which also partially enhances the attraction of the employer.
  
- d) ***Employer loyalty & Commitment to well-being:*** As described by Hunt & Morgan, it can be stated that commitment to well-being potentially contributes to Microsoft's brand loyalty since it creates a trust-focused exchange (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). When it comes to Chaudhri & Holbrook's statement, the attention is drawn into behavioural as well as attitudinal aspects of brand loyalty (Chaudhri & Holbrook, 2001). In Microsoft's case, its commitment to well-being strengthens both – behavioural loyalty which can be represented by willingness to stay as well as by attitudinal loyalty in the form of emotional attachment.

- e) ***Employer productivity & Commitment to innovation:*** In relation to innovation, it can be stated that it is a very significant driving force of employer productivity since it promotes continual improvement as well as adaptability. According to research by Heskett, there is an enormous link between organisational performance and employee satisfaction which partially supports Microsoft's initiatives since they promote innovation as an instrument to enhance productivity through promoting employee satisfaction which drives the target audience's perceptions (Heskett et al., 1997). Mentioned in the hand with other facets of Microsoft's branding enhances the general employer productivity.
- f) ***Employer productivity & Flexible work and work-life balance:*** Microsoft in its content highly focuses on work-life balance in the hand with a flexible work schedule (the mentioned based on its characteristics highly contributes to employer productivity). Based on Backhaus & Tikoo's statements, internal as well as external marketing initiatives are vastly important in creating desired & ideal working conditions or enhancing the quality of employees' lives (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). When it comes to Microsoft, by dedicating to work-life balance connected with prioritising flexibility; it can be stated that Microsoft increases its employee satisfaction which additionally boosts the overall productivity. The mentioned is also in alignment with Heskett's theory that employee satisfaction is correlated with the organisational performance itself (Heskett et al., 1997).
- g) ***Employer attraction & Commitment to equality, inclusion, and diversity:*** In relation to commitment to equality, inclusion as well as diversity, it can be stated that it perfectly aligns with the claim of Backhaus & Tikoo which says that symbolism represents a major factor in attracting new hires (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Thus, through promoting inclusion & diversity, Microsoft as an organisation attracts individuals who respect companies that uphold equality and diversity which cultivates a strong employer brand image.
- h) ***Employer loyalty & Opportunities for learning, growing, and continuous development:*** Microsoft's high dedication towards employee development shows an enormous commitment to the growth of its employees which highly contributes to

brand loyalty. According to Crewson and his statement on organisational perspective, it is indicated that employees who have a strong attachment towards the organisations will likely exhibit a strong sense of loyalty (Crewson, 1997). In Microsoft's sphere, its commitment and primary focus on learning, growing, and developing fosters a high sense of employee commitment which potentially strengthens the overall employer brand loyalty.

- i) ***Employee productivity & Stability and retention for employees:*** Based on Heskett's research & its highlights, it is known that employee satisfaction is one of the driving forces when it comes to successful organisational performance. Besides, the research suggests that efforts when it comes to retaining employees are favourably impacting organisational productivity as well as profitability (Heskett et al., 1997). In Microsoft's case, they hugely emphasise on employee retention in the hand with stability which may contribute to overall employee productivity by lowering turnover costs and preserving a stable & steady workforce.
- j) ***Employee productivity & remote working opportunities and freedom at work:*** Microsoft as an organisation is partially promoting freedom at work in the hand with remote working opportunities which vastly enhance employer productivity by giving employees vast opportunities connected with flexibility as well as autonomy. According to Backhaus & Tikoo, internal marketing & its overall efforts have a big effect on the organisation and establishing a sense of desired work in the hand with desired conditions (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Thus, it can be stated that Microsoft is increasing employee satisfaction & engagement by offering remote working opportunities or freedom at work which ultimately increases productivity.

To summarise, Microsoft's branding efforts involve a wide range of components, including teamwork, innovation, well-being, pride, trust, learning, freedom as well as stability. The mentioned efforts are closely connected with employer branding as a theoretical framework that contributes to a favourable employer image, fostering a sense of brand loyalty, helping to attract potential employees as well as enhancing productivity. By utilising the mentioned components effectively, Microsoft as an organisation positions itself as a very strong employer which also cultivates an outstanding employer identity as a brand/organisation.

### *III. Uses and Gratifications Theory by Katz & Blumler (1974)*

As presented in the introductory part of the discussion chapter, an additional focus area was involved in order to deeply explore & answer the main research problem “What is the online organisational communication strategy and employer branding efforts specifically in employee-oriented content of tech giant Microsoft on the professional social media platform LinkedIn?”. Consequently, to explore this specific problem area from different angles, the expectations of the target audience - job seekers were statistically analysed using descriptive statistical analysis. Besides, to develop much more comprehensive insights & discussion towards the online organisational communication strategy of the chosen case company - Microsoft. Accordingly, the Uses and Gratification theory (Katz & Blumler, 1974) is going to serve as a central axis of the discussion which aims to provide the answer to the research problem described as follows: “What are the expectations of jobseekers when it comes to content shared by organisations on professional social media platform LinkedIn?”.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory by Elihu Katz and Jay Blumler (1974) refers to the expectations that individuals have toward media to fulfil their specific needs (Katz, 1974; Menon, 2022). Thus, the researchers will discuss job seekers’ expectations in terms of the content shared by organisations on LinkedIn and specifically concerning the first six pillars of the Uses and Gratifications Theory - convenience, socialising, status-seeking, information-seeking, entertainment, and sharing experiences (Katz & Blumler, 1974).

**Primary expectations - convenience pillar**

Accordingly, the research found that the majority of job seekers expect organisations to communicate specifically on LinkedIn in relation to hybrid work opportunities as well as share information about accessibility to personal development, fully remote work opportunities, and flexible time management type of content. Consequently, the mentioned aspects are strongly interconnected to the **convenience pillar of Uses and Gratification theory** by Elihu Katz and Jay Blumler (1974) which refers to factors that individuals seek from social media to ensure their life and work balance is easier & simpler, and manageable (Park & Han, 2013). Thus, the findings can be interpreted as emphasising the highest expectations of job seekers towards professional communication on LinkedIn about work-life balance, high-level flexibility & autonomy at the future organisation that aims to ensure an easier manageable personal & professional life.

### **Secondary expectations - socialising, status & information-seeking pillars**

Nevertheless, it was defined that half of job seekers expect socialising-oriented content specifically on LinkedIn. In addition, communication about team-building activities as well as workations. The mentioned findings correlate with the **Uses and Gratification theory and specifically the socialising pillar**, as according to scholars (Apaolaza et al., 2014), socialising refers to the expectations of how social media helps to retain relationships as well as to fulfil emotional satisfaction. In regards to this research, the mentioned can be interpreted as job seekers carrying strong expectations from the potential employers towards communication about socialising-oriented topics that encourage the development of social connections and foster a sense of community & belonging to it. Consequently, all of these mentioned aspects highly correspond to the socialising pillar of the Uses and Gratification theory (Katz & Blumler 1974).

When it comes to the expectations towards organisational communication on LinkedIn, job seekers alike desire content related to collaborative success stories of team achievements, ambitious future plans of organisations, and innovation-driven leads, for instance, innovative projects. Therefore, according to Katz and Blumler's (1974) Uses and Gratification theory, the findings can be linked to **the status-seeking pillar**, which mainly focuses on executing and boosting “online visibility” on social media (Pentina et al., 2014). Consequently, it can be further interpreted that the status-seeking type of content shared on LinkedIn by organisations not only strives to boost organisations’ status and online image but also cooperates in enhancing jobseekers’ professional identity in their future careers, alike reputation as well as helps to align themselves with reputable organisations which fosters a sense of belonging in the long run.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that LinkedIn is a professional social media site that gives access to various kinds of information about organisations - such as insights into organisational culture, values, current job openings, and even industry trends. Thus, it was found that jobseekers of this research desire to obtain information-oriented content specifically on the professional media site LinkedIn. The mentioned information-oriented content was specifically oriented to growth opportunities, job updates, or available positions that may also include hiring trends & organisations culture. Consequently, those certain desires are well aligned with the Uses and Gratification theory and its pillar called **information-seeking**. Information-seeking can be described in the sense that individuals tend to search for information through social media before opting-in to a new relationship (Ostander, 2008) and it was discovered to



be a merely positive outcome for users of social media (Pentina et al., 2014). Thus, in regards to this research, it can be discussed that job seekers tend to research organisations on the professional networking site LinkedIn, before starting work relations, and therefore it has a more positive outcome for the job seekers due to a broader overview of organisational culture and more. Accordingly, jobseekers may find a better alignment with their personal values, and needs of certain organisational cultures and industries when foremost researching organisations in regards to growth opportunities, available positions, hiring trends & organisations culture.

### **Tertiary expectations - entertainment & sharing-experiences pillars**

In terms of entertainment-oriented content shared on LinkedIn, it has been found that this specific entertainment might not be one of the primary expectations for job seekers in terms of potential employers' content shared on LinkedIn, however, it still is among the highest expectations of job seekers, especially when it comes to employee recognition content and organisational achievements & its celebration. These findings can be related to a positive & engaging impression of organisational culture and that organisation is not only about work but also about other aspects such as celebrating the achievements of people behind the brand. Thus, the findings highly correlate with **the pillar of entertainment** that refers to social media users' expectations that are primarily focused on enjoyment but also on social interaction that desires to satisfy the emotional needs of individuals (Malik et al., 2016).

Last but not least, it was identified that job seekers expect content that reflects real-life experiences of the work environment. Therefore, content shared on LinkedIn by organisations related to experiences of the working environment and overall organisational culture as well as to organisational commitment when it comes to diversity, inclusion & equality strongly corresponds to the **sharing-experiences pillar** of the Uses and Gratification theory (Katz & Blumler 1974), where individuals tend to use social media to share their own experiences as well as they expect it from other social media users (Lee & Ma, 2012). It can be discussed that content which focuses on the organisation's culture and its commitments enables job seekers to acquire a greater awareness of the company's morals and ethics and to find better alignment with their own. Besides, organisations may boost their brand image as well as credibility among potential candidates through the presentation of actual stories and real-life experiences.

To summarise the discussion of the research findings, the expectations of job seekers on LinkedIn are well aligned with the six pillars of the Uses and Gratifications Theory that reflect their primary expectations related to the convenience pillar, secondary expectations in terms of

socialising, status-seeking, and information-seeking, and tertiary desires related to entertainment & sharing experiences on LinkedIn. Accordingly, organisations may consider these aspects from the target audience's point of view when developing organisational communication & branding strategies on professional social media platforms such as LinkedIn. Job seekers' expectations serve as valuable input from an external environment towards more effective talent attraction and pursuit of an appealing brand image on LinkedIn.

#### *IV. Predictors of job seekers' self-disclosure on social media by Miriam & Asma El Ouiridi, Jesse Segers & Ivana Pais (2015)*

To acquire a more in-depth comprehension of job seekers' expectations and to provide a valuable discussion of the descriptive statistical analysis findings in relation to earlier mentioned problem of this study "What are the expectations of jobseekers when it comes to content shared by organisations on professional social media platform LinkedIn?", the researchers seek to reflect on "Predictors of job seekers' self-disclosure on social media" by Miriam & Asma El Ouiridi, Jesse Segers & Ivana Pais (2015). By exploring job seekers' professional interaction approaches, it is possible to gain a completely diverse understanding of the motivations in which individuals use social media to enhance their self-representation and how it is connected with their expectations when it comes to future employers' communicative practices on professional social media - LinkedIn.

According to the mentioned research (El Ouiridi et al., 2015), job seekers are primarily motivated by a strong desire to convey a proper professional image on social media. In regards to this study, the findings show that job seekers place an overall high importance on organisational communication on LinkedIn which generally shapes job seekers' perceptions of potential employers and creates a certain professional brand image in their thoughts. Moreover, job seekers' expectations regarding organisational status e.g. team achievements, ambitious plans & innovative approach towards new projects shape their need for this kind of professional image of themselves, especially online. Besides, it can be argued that job seekers' expectations towards organisations with this certain professional status directly correlate with job seekers' personal desire to convey a proper professional image as derived in the study of Miriam & Asma El Ouiridi, Jesse Segers & Ivana Pais (2015).

Furthermore, it was discovered that job seekers actively seek out career-oriented details on platforms like LinkedIn to enhance their job search efforts and gain insights into potential

employers. To be precise, it was found that individuals who identify themselves as both jobseekers & LinkedIn users are casually searching for a job a few times a week, which can be referred to as moderate/relatively active jobseekers. Besides, it was also identified that a much bigger number of job seekers use LinkedIn to monitor and observe others' content without direct engagement (e.g. scrolling, reading, gathering information, but not liking, commenting or even interacting with others). Nevertheless, job seekers tend to research organisations on LinkedIn quite often. Consequently, the mentioned research that studied job seekers' predictors (El Ouiridi et al., 2015) found that job seekers' practices are highly interconnected with the social exchange processes aka job seekers use professional social media channels to engage within career-oriented presentations to get career/job opportunities. Thus, the findings of this research vastly correlate with the mentioned study that emphasised the significance of job seekers' practices in using social media specifically for job search processes. This proactive behaviour is identified in this particular study, wherein job seekers express a strong desire for the content that facilitates their career development, and provides valuable information about job opportunities, organisational culture, and professional growth prospects.

The diversity of expectations identified in this research show that these are ranging from expectations of general and professional knowledge about organisation to expectations of organisational aspects, personal development opportunities, industry news and more to employee recognition initiatives, a celebration of professional accomplishments, work-life balance initiatives, as well as organisational commitments towards diversity, inclusion, and equality. Consequently, the findings are in line with the outcomes of the study by El Ouiridi and other scholars (2015), that job seekers may use a diversity of strategies in their online representation to showcase themselves in a favourable light while also providing a realistic portrayal of their skills and experiences, thus as identified in this master's thesis, the diversity of expectations of job seekers may be directly connected to their portrayed & desired image on social media.

To conclude, the predictors of job seekers' self-disclosure on social media provide a more expansive theoretical lens for understanding the expectations identified in this study regarding organisational communication on LinkedIn. By aligning these expectations with job seekers' predictors employed on social media, it can be discussed that job seekers' morals and desires are shaping their self-representation on professional social media. Similarly, self-representation on professional social media like LinkedIn favourably influences job seekers' perceptions

towards potential employers and thus it determines certain standards and expectations of what they want to see in terms of organisational communication on professional social media site LinkedIn.

## *V. Open Systems Theory of Org. Communication by Katz & Khan (1966 & 1978)*

The findings will be further discussed in regards to the Open Systems Theory of Org. Communication by Daniel Katz & Robert Khan (Katz & Khan, 1966; 1978) and its perspective which argues that organisations tend to be influenced by the external environment which is considered as input and thus affects the overall output that can be considered as products, services, or even communication. The primary objective of this discussion part is to clarify what is perceived as an input that comes from an external environment & which is presented in a way of job seekers' expectations; alike what serves as an output element of the mentioned theory - what the chosen case company - Microsoft - is communicating through LinkedIn content when it comes to online organisational communication. Lastly, the main problem formulation will be discussed in regards to the Open Systems Theory (1966; 1978) in order to reveal "What is the online organisational communication strategy and employer branding efforts specifically in employee-oriented content of tech giant Microsoft on the professional social media platform LinkedIn?" and how well an output (online organisational communication) is aligned with the input (job seekers' expectations) from the external environment.

According to Katz and Kahn's Open Systems Theory (1966; 1978), organisations are perceived as complex systems that collaborate and produce according to the needs & expectations of the external environment. Therefore, intangible external inputs such as expectations shape organisational strategies when it comes to outputs such as online organisational communication. Concerning this exploratory case study, job seekers' expectations represent an input element of the Open Systems theory (Katz & Kahn, 1966; 1978).

Therefore, the mentioned input elements from the external environment that potentially influence organisational behaviours like online communication, are job seekers' expectations outlined in the survey. Accordingly, the inputs are communicated as follows:

- **Socialisation-oriented content (50,9%):** the very first and the biggest external input comes from the desire towards organisations when it comes to communication of socialisation-related aspects on LinkedIn and thus that reflects the external demand for the connection-building type of content as well as community-building within the organisation.
- **Hybrid work model-oriented communication (46,1%):** input that reflects frequent demand for hybrid work models corresponds to continued change for organisational policies that need to be aligned with the innovative and growing mindset of society.
- **Employee recognition (40,6%):** such an input indicates the desire from the external environment for recognition, acknowledgment and appreciation of work efforts.
- **Collaborative success stories (35,8%):** input that refers to professional accomplishments and collaborative success serves as high interest from an external environment for organisations to showcase & recognise employee achievements as individuals as well as teamwork.
- **Team-building activities (33,0%):** such an interest in team-building activities reflect external environment demands; organisational communication focused on teamwork, ways to foster collaboration, and improve problem-solving skills as a team.
- **Accessibility to personal development (31,8%):** it represents an input that refers to external expectations for organisations to concentrate on employee growth-oriented communicative practices.
- **Company's achievements & its celebrations (31,7%):** such input from the external environment showcases an interest in communication regarding the celebration of employee & company achievements that also reflect the organisational culture and its focus on participation in community activities.
- **Growth opportunities and job openings (30,8%) & job search & updates (28,7%):** serve as input towards the desire for career growth, recognition, and the possibility of growing professional status in the industry. The job search aspect is also considered as valuable input towards organisations' communicative practices when it comes to content on LinkedIn.

- **Fun experiences and Organisational culture (28,4%):** input from the external environment refers to a combination of showcasing organisational values, preferred work style, and behaviour. Besides, the overall organisational ability to involve joyful experiences in working life.
- **Workstations & Remote-work opportunities & Time Management (27,2% & 27,0% & 25,2%):** all of these inputs from the external environment define the necessity for higher autonomy, flexibility, and innovation in work arrangements when it comes to organisational communication on professional social media such as LinkedIn.
- **Organisational ambitions and Innovative leads (26,2% & 25,7%):** external expectations towards organisational communication can be discussed as an input that refers to the forward-thinking, creativity, and innovation-driven mindset of organisations.
- **Organisational background including its values (24,8%):** such input can be also interpreted as the desire of external forces to see and reflect on organisational ethics, brand identity, and values when it comes to organisational communication on professional social media such as LinkedIn.
- **Diversity, Equality, Inclusion (24,5%):** last but not least, a relatively strong desire comes from an external environment that is viewed as input to online organisational communication - a commitment to social responsibility through communicative practices about Diversity, Inclusion, and Equality on professional media LinkedIn.

To sum up the discussion of the first element named input, it can be noted that a variety of desires as well as expectations that come from the external environment, in this case, job seekers' expectations, serve as external inputs that influence Microsoft's online organisational communication used on LinkedIn. Consequently, the overall communication techniques employed on LinkedIn may be linked with the employer brand image and branding efforts used on the professional social media site LinkedIn. Accordingly, the output element will be discussed as follows.

According to Open Systems Theory developed by (Katz & Khan, 1978), output within the context of organisational communication is represented as an outcome of organisational procedures as well as processes that have been influenced by inputs from the external

environment. The mentioned outputs can be tangible but also intangible forms of outcomes, results, messages, products, or even services distributed to various stakeholders such as following; clients, customers, or in this case job seekers. Consequently, outputs can be seen as a reflection of the organisational response to the received inputs from the external environment which shapes specific organisational tactics & strategies as well as overall branding initiatives.

Based on the analysis, it was revealed that the online organisational communication of Microsoft is vastly identified as multifaceted which is strategically aligned with the external environment's inputs obtained from the job seekers & their expectations. Thus, outputs result in various components used to aim, attract, engage & retain talents while cultivating a positive employer brand image on the professional social media platform LinkedIn. The major characteristics of Microsoft output consist of the following:

- **Attracting Job-seekers:** When it comes to Microsoft's communication efforts, it can be stated that they direct themselves towards presenting themselves as a favourably attractive employer utilising storytelling as well as emotional branding through various personal stories & narratives which tend to highlight commercial & organisational success stories of Microsoft to the majority of potential candidates.
- **Storytelling & Emotional Branding:** Microsoft targets to engage job seekers or even potential employees by sharing personal stories about the organisation or employees as well as by publishing blog posts focused on learning by hand with success & achievement stories. Thus, it can be stated that Microsoft is employing various storytelling techniques to develop an emotional connection with its target audience.
- **Themes of Campaigns:** Microsoft's online communication as well as campaigns vastly focus on themes such as following – women as role models, work & life balance, remote-work opportunities, collaboration, teamwork, socialising, events & celebrations for employees as well as communities, well-being, learning in the hand with development & growth, community involvement but also diversity, equality & inclusion.

As previously stated, outputs that were identified closely align with the external environment's inputs obtained through job seekers' expectations. Therefore, Microsoft & its communication strategies precisely reflect a response to the expectations in hand with desires expressed by the

job seekers which in this case represents the external environment. By addressing and responding to all inputs, Microsoft seeks to efficiently engage & communicate with job seekers and even potential candidates to prospectively foster a favourable employer brand image that is in alignment with organisational values as well as expectations of Microsoft's audience.

**Microsoft and its Online Organisational Communication:** The overall efficiency of Microsoft and its online organisational communication could be possibly evaluated based on how they align its output (LinkedIn communication) with the external environment's inputs which are in this case job seekers' expectations. According to Katz & Khan (1978), when organisational communication strategies are in alignment with external inputs – organisations & their content will more likely resonate with target audiences which helps to attract talents or even maintain a favourable organisational reputation in the specific industry. Consequently, if there is a visible disconnection between the external environment's inputs and organisational outputs – that might result in partially ineffective communication which tends to lead to missing opportunities when it comes to talent acquisition or even a negative image & entire perception of the employer and its brand.

In conclusion, when it comes to Microsoft & its online organisational communication, it can be stated that it demonstrates a favourable strategic alignment, and Microsoft as an organisation is highly implementing inputs from the external environment (job seekers' expectations) in their output strategy which in this case is online organisational communication on LinkedIn. Thus, through comprehension and further adaptation to the mentioned external environment's inputs – Microsoft enhances & effectively communicates its entire employer brand image in the hand with values as well as numerous opportunities in order to interact with potential candidates and job seekers on LinkedIn. The mentioned vastly corresponds with the Open Systems Theory by Katz & Khan, and therefore, it can be concluded that Microsoft is by its strategy enormously enhancing its capacity in order to attract & retain top talents in a very competitive tech industry.



## *VI. The researchers' contribution to the literature*

In terms of exploring Microsoft's organisational communication strategy on LinkedIn, the researchers discovered significant agreements and observations alignment with the theories discussed including the Corporate Identity Model (Balmer, 2001), Employer Branding Theory (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004), Uses & Gratification theory (Katz & Blumler, 1974), "Predictors of job seekers' self-disclosure on social media" (El Ouiridi, et al., 2015) and Open Systems Theory of Organisational Communication (Katz & Khan, 1966 & 1978). It was explored that the mentioned theoretical lens of this research positively assisted in revealing the findings and providing rational discussion that could be generalised to a wider population.

However, the researchers also observed new findings specifically in relation to the **Corporate Identity Model by John Balmer (2001)** which was not previously (based on the theory itself) connected with the elements of communicated corporate brand identity. The researchers discovered several aspects related to communicated brand identity: family orientation, raising awareness of social issues & presenting its commitment to learning, growth, and development opportunities. Nevertheless, an expedient focus was found on Artificial Intelligence, digitalisation, and technology. When it comes to new discoveries in relation to employer **Employer Branding Theory by Backhaus & Tikoo (2004)**; the new findings were found such as socialisation, family-orientation, celebrations & events for employees, informal organisational culture, personal stories of employees, so called employee advocacy and also career & life. However, these findings were not included in the discussion, because they are not aligned with the mentioned theory. Moreover, these are very new findings and they may contribute to the literature and theory itself. Thus, this way the researchers contribute to the theory with the aim to improve it.

## *VII. Summary of the research findings discussed*

**The corporate Identity Model also called Model AC2ID Test by John M.T. Balmer (2001)** suits as a thorough basis for understanding the complex identity of organisations, taking a look into an organisational strategy that can be used as a tool to shape overall external perceptions throughout various communication channels. In this research, the mentioned theory assists in

critically discussing the communicated identity of Microsoft on the professional social media site LinkedIn and initially reveals an answer to one of the research problems: “How is Microsoft’s brand identity communicated through employee-oriented content on the professional social media platform LinkedIn when it comes to attracting potential employees?”. It was found that **the main dimensions of Microsoft’s communicated identity are: inclusivity and belonging, trust and reliability, pride and achievements, positive culture & workplace, innovation, diversity and social responsibility, collaboration, and flexibility.** The findings suggest that Microsoft strategically uses LinkedIn to shape external perceptions, aligning with Balmer’s emphasis on the role of communicated identity in shaping how organisations may be perceived by the external environment.

When it comes to **Employer Branding Theory by Kristin Backhaus & Surinder Tikoo (2004)**, the mentioned theory contributed in diving deeper into employer branding efforts of Microsoft. The discussion chapter elaborates on the findings of multimodal content analysis in the context of Employer Branding Theory (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004) with the aim to understand and partially answer the main problem formulation “What is the online organisational communication strategy and employer branding efforts specifically in employee-oriented content of tech giant Microsoft on the professional social media platform LinkedIn?”. Consequently, **key insights of Microsoft’s branding efforts include: Brand associations and trust towards employees, employer image and pride towards employees, employer attraction & teamwork and collaboration, commitment to well-being and loyalty, productivity and innovation, flexibility/work-life balance, commitment to equality, inclusion and diversity agenda, learning and development opportunities, retention and stability, remote work opportunities.** To summarise, the key aspects that shape Microsoft's branding efforts are well aligned with Employer Branding Theory by Balmer (2001), contributing to desirable employer image, loyalty to the brand, employee attraction & retention. These employer branding efforts position Microsoft as an employer with a strong & distinctive identity as well as brand reputation.

The following part of the discussion reveals “What are the expectations of jobseekers when it comes to content shared by organisations on professional social media platform LinkedIn?” through the lens of **the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz & Blumler, 1974)**. The theory highlights individuals’ expectations from the media to fulfil their specific needs, which in this research involves understanding job seekers’ expectations towards potential employer content

on LinkedIn. Accordingly, key findings reveal primary, secondary and tertiary expectations of job seekers that are considered as the highest expectations among all in relation to LinkedIn content. Thus, **primary expectations of job seekers** are mostly focused on the convenience pillar: **hybrid work opportunities, accessibility to personal development, remote work opportunities, and flexible time management**. When it comes to **secondary expectations of job seekers**, these are referred to socialising, status & information-seeking pillars. Socialising pillar refers to expectations for **socialising-oriented content, team-building activities, workations**. Besides, in relation to the status-seeking pillar, job seekers expect content related to **collaborative success stories of team achievements, ambitious future plans of organisations, and innovation-driven leads, for instance, innovative projects**. Last but not least, the information-seeking pillar aligns with expectations oriented to **growth opportunities, job updates, or available positions that may also include hiring trends & organisational culture**. Tertiary expectations in relation to the theory refers to entertainment & sharing-experiences pillars. Accordingly, it was found that expectations towards **employee recognition content and organisational achievements & its celebration** are well aligned with the entertainment pillar of the theory as it aims for enjoyment but also social interactions that desire to satisfy the emotional needs of individuals. Nevertheless, the very last pillar of expectations is the sharing-experiences pillar related to the job seekers **expectations for experiences of the working environment, overall organisational culture, organisational commitment when it comes to diversity, inclusion & equality**. The Uses and Gratifications Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding job seekers' preferences so called expectations in consuming organisational content oriented towards employees on professional social media platform like LinkedIn. The findings highlight that job seekers' expectations can be used as insightful inputs to develop effective organisation communication and branding strategies that most likely enhance talent attraction & positive employer image.

To delve even deeper into “What are the expectations of job seekers when it comes to the content shared by organisations on professional social media platform LinkedIn?”, the following discussion part explores job seekers' practices & motivations in a professional setting such as LinkedIn through the lens of **the study by Miriam & Asma El Ouiridi, Jesse Segers & Ivana Pais (2015)** that highlights “**Predictors of job seekers' self-disclosure on social media**”. Key findings of this study suggest **job seekers show high importance & expectations to overall organisational communication on platforms like LinkedIn** as it

potentially shapes their perception of organisations and also contributes to job seekers' branding as an employee of a certain organisation boosting the desired professional image. The research also found that **job seekers actively seek out career-oriented information on professional social media site LinkedIn to improve their job search and gain insights into future employers.** In addition, **job seekers place a strong focus on organisational communication on LinkedIn that highlights career development aspects, job opportunities, organisational culture, and professional growth prospects.** In conclusion, the discussion underlines the importance of job seekers' motivations and behaviour in an online sphere and its consequences on professional interactions. It suggests that job seekers' personal morals, ethics, and preferences affect how they desire to portray themselves on professional social media like LinkedIn, and potentially impact their perceptions towards future employers alike, shaping job seekers' expectations for organisational communication & online content on LinkedIn.

The final discussion part examines the application of **the Open Systems Theory of Organisational Communication by Daniel Katz & Robert Khan (1966 & 1978)** within the context of Microsoft's online communication strategy on LinkedIn & answers the main problem formulation of this research "What is the online organisational communication strategy and employer branding efforts specifically in employee-oriented content of tech giant Microsoft on the professional social media platform LinkedIn?". The mentioned theory notes that organisations are typically influenced by the external environment so called inputs, such as job seekers' expectations that shape organisational strategies aka outputs that could include organisational communication in an online sphere. Accordingly, earlier discussed job seekers' expectations serve as **external inputs**, and these range from **socialisation-oriented content, hybrid work models, employee recognition, and collaborative success stories to diversity, equality, and inclusion-oriented content.** Each job seeker's expectation functions as input from the external environment influencing how Microsoft communicates its branding efforts and overall brand image on professional media LinkedIn. **The output element** discusses how Microsoft reacts to these external inputs concerning its output such as online organisational communication produced on LinkedIn. Microsoft's outputs aim to attract and engage job seekers by strategically aligning with their expectations. The major aspects of **Microsoft's output include: job-seekers' attraction through storytelling, emotional branding, and thematic campaigns focused on women's leadership, work-life balance, collaboration, socialising, and community involvement.** Consequently, the research asserts that **Microsoft's**

**output, meaning organisational communication on LinkedIn, is strategically aligned with external inputs - job seekers' expectations that demonstrate effectiveness in attracting and retaining employees within the competitive tech industry.** To conclude, the discussion highlights how Microsoft employs job seekers' expectations as valuable inputs to strategically align its organisational communication on LinkedIn, which also positively influences employer brand image.

### *VIII. Achievements, Challenges & Research Limitations*

Throughout this Master's Thesis, the researchers have achieved a much deeper understanding of social phenomena such as online organisational communication, specifically on the professional social media platform LinkedIn. However, the multifaceted problem area demanded exploration of not only the internal aspects of Microsoft but also the examination of an external environment involving job seekers who are also LinkedIn users. Nevertheless, the researchers successfully achieved all research aims defined in the problem formulation guided by the strategically chosen methods and theoretical frameworks. The complexity of the research involving two different data collection and analysis methods alike five theories indeed presented challenges in achieving a logical interpretation of the findings and its discussion in the context of online organisational communication, employer branding, and corporate brand identity. It is crucial to mention that one of the research's limitations is the limited number of pages allowed in the project. In addition, a limited sample size of the survey due to the number of responses received from research participants. Overall, it would have been better for the research validity and reliability to collect a few hundred responses from the research participants - job seekers, in order to generalise research findings even more. However, it was not possible to collect more than this research involved due to the limited time given for the thesis writing.

### *IX. Recommendations for further scientific research*

The findings of this research show the significant importance of strategic alignment between the expectations of the target audience - job seekers & success of organisational communication

strategy that positively shapes & impacts corporate brand image & its overall branding on professional social media LinkedIn. Thus, for more reasonable validation of this research and its findings, an additional social media platform may be explored & compared with the current findings in order to define how Microsoft's online organisational communication & its content differs on non-professional social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, or TikTok. In addition, how the jobseekers' expectations change in the case of totally different social media platforms & organisations' content.

## Conclusion

*Through recent years, it became evident that the Internet is among the most frequently used sources for today's job seekers (Backhaus, 2004; Soulez & Guillot-Soulez, 2011). People use the Internet to evaluate organisations before they even apply for a job as well as they frequently research if their personality and background are suitable and adequate fits for the companies. Today, the entire social media sphere plays a crucial role in the hiring process when it comes to branding the company to all potential employees (Sivertzen et al., 2013). However, there is a lack of research that draws an understanding of how online organisational communication & employer branding are connected/influenced not only by the organisational identity that the brand communicates but also by the platform and job seekers' expectations. To conduct this research and increase a lack of understanding, the chosen organisation was Microsoft which is considered as the largest company in the technology industry (Forbes India, 2024). Based on the mentioned, the main problem of the thesis was constructed and researchers chose the main direction of the thesis as follows; **“What is the online organisational communication strategy and employer branding efforts specifically in employee-oriented content of tech giant Microsoft on the professional social media platform LinkedIn?”**. Furthermore, two additional questions were created that aimed to guide the analysis and help to answer the main problem formulation; *“What are the expectations of jobseekers when it comes to content shared by organisations on professional social media platform LinkedIn?”* as well as *“How is Microsoft's brand identity communicated through employee-oriented content on the professional social media platform LinkedIn when it comes to attracting potential employees?”**

To continue, when it comes to the philosophy of science the chosen research paradigm became Social Constructivism. The primary reason was that the paradigm aligns with the overall nature of the thesis & its research which was to explore how Microsoft builds its brand/corporate identity through its online communication and employer branding on LinkedIn. Thus, in this research, social constructivism was the most suitable choice since it focuses on social interaction as well as overall knowledge shaped by context & culture. In the lens of research design, an exploratory case study was chosen as a research design in order to clarify all existing issues and explore phenomena that have not been entirely investigated yet. Exploratory case study design is vastly flexible which allowed the researchers to use various new directions while revealing deep insights when it comes to the chosen topic which is online organisational communication strategy in hand with employer branding. Thirdly, the mixed methods approach was chosen with one single aim; to overcome limitations that are associated with individual quantitative or qualitative methods. The researchers chose to combine both approaches to develop a comprehensive understanding of the research & its problem. Furthermore, the quantitative survey as well as qualitative analysis of Microsoft's user-generated content on the professional social media platform LinkedIn were chosen as data collection methods. In this case, the mentioned survey aimed to gather specific numerical data when it comes to job seekers' expectations and their LinkedIn usage patterns. In regards to qualitative data, those were collected from Microsoft's LinkedIn page & its employee-oriented content in order to reveal what is brand identity, employer branding efforts and online organisational communication strategy of Microsoft.

Regarding research & its analysis; firstly, content analysis has been chosen in order to analyse textual in hand with visual evidence from user-generated sources in a systematic and objective manner. Thus, Microsoft's employee-oriented content has been analysed in order to uncover what is communicated brand/corporate identity, employer branding efforts as well as the online organisational strategy of Microsoft. Through the analysis (multimodal content analysis), researchers analysed in total of 18 visual posts including written descriptions in the hand with two videos which were mainly focused on employee-related factors. At first, the content analysis revealed several main themes when it comes to Microsoft and its employee-oriented

content. The mentioned themes were nextly grouped by their meanings and labelled by codes. Furthermore, all codes were assigned to predetermined categories such as; communicated brand identity, employer branding efforts as well and online organisational communication strategy. In regards to online organisational communication strategy, it was found that Microsoft is strategically focusing on attracting an audience by storytelling, emotional branding as well as various social media campaigns that tend to address topics like remote work, diversity, or even women as role models. Very similarly, when it comes to Microsoft's employer branding efforts they emphasise on trust in employees to innovation, well-being as well as supportive work culture. Lastly, it was found that Microsoft's brand identity is highlighted as welcoming, innovative, and flexible. The mentioned identity shows that Microsoft is proud of its workplace and is committed to inclusion, diversity, and even social issues. Overall, the organisation presents itself as modern & global, highly focused on employee empowerment in the hand with social responsibility.

Secondly, descriptive statistical analysis was chosen in order to interpret as well as summarize gathered data from a quantitative survey devoted to job seekers. This method allowed to organise and analyse data sets by providing vast insights into job seekers' expectations when it comes to content produced by future employers on LinkedIn. Therefore, it can be stated that descriptive statistical analysis revealed in total 17 highest expectations when it comes to future employers' content on professional social media LinkedIn. The mentioned expectations sound as follows; content related to socialisation, communication of hybrid work & fully remote work, employee-recognition posts, content related to collaborative success stories as well as accomplishments, content related to team building activities, work-life balance communication, presentation of companies achievements in the hand with celebrations, information sharing consisting job openings as well as growth opportunities, knowledge enhancement content, communication of aspects related to organisational culture, content related to workations, ambitions, initiatives, work-life balance and last but not least informational related to organisational background, its culture or values in the hand with organisational commitment when it comes to inclusion, equality and diversity.

Lastly in the thesis, the discussion of findings while using theoretical backgrounds was developed. When it comes to discussion, researchers used the Corporate Identity Model also



called Model AC2ID Test by John M.T. Balmer (2001) to reveal the communicated corporate identity of Microsoft on professional social media LinkedIn. Secondly, Employer Branding Theory by Kristin Backhaus & Surinder Tikoo (2004) was employed with the aim of discovering employer branding efforts of Microsoft in their employee-oriented content. Thirdly, the Uses and Gratifications Theory by Elihu Katz & Jay Blumler (1974) served as a tool for communicating what are the expectations of job seekers when it comes to LinkedIn and content produced by future employers. As next, Predictors of job seekers' self-disclosure on social media by Miriam & Asma El Ouiridi, Jesse Segers & Ivana Pais (2015) helped researchers to acquire an understanding of general jobseekers practices in professional interaction. And lastly, the Open Systems Theory of Org. Communication by Daniel Katz & Robert Khan (1966 & 1978) was used as a very last theory to reveal what is online organisational communication of Microsoft and based on what factors it is shaped. At the end of the discussion researchers successfully summarised all the findings and answered the problem formulation of the thesis (see page 129).

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