Small post, big decision: effects of content focus, media richness and tone of voice on

employer brand attractiveness on social media

Master thesis

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Abstract

Background: social media is currently one of the most used tools for job-search. Companies can leverage this easy access to potential applicants on websites like LinkedIn to create a desired employer brand. Aim: the current study aims at investigating how modalities of social media posts such as content focus, the richness of media, and tone of voice influence the creation of warmth and competence personality traits perception and, subsequently, the attractiveness of a company as an employer. Method: an online questionnaire with 2 x 2 x 2 between respondent experimental design was distributed among 187 participants via convenience sampling method. Results: the employee focus of the content and human tone of voice were shown to be predictors of the perception of warmth. Conversely, richer form of media was found to have a negative influence on competence and warmth. Finally, personality traits proved to be strong predictors of employer brand attractiveness. Relevance: the research gives guidance on the creation of social media for the purposes of employer branding. Specifically, to attract candidates it is recommended to emphasize warmth metrics in social media posts by showing photos of smiling employees and using a human tone of voice; and provide relevant information about the company's history, achievements, and products to foster the perception of competence.

Key words: employer brand attractiveness, personality trait, e-recruitment, social media

Introduction

Recruiters rely on a wide number of platforms for attracting applicants, including career pages, recruitment websites, word-of-mouth, and increasingly more often – social media. With social websites becoming an effective platform for company branding (Gao & Feng, 2016), their role in recruitment is also rising, with 66% of recruiters posting a job opening on social media (Thakkar, 2022). The users follow along, with 86% reporting using social media for job search, and 73% of millennials finding employment (Thakkar, 2022). Another trend in the job global market is the talent shortage expected to exacerbate by 2030 (Korn Ferry, 2018), which calls for differentiation and powerful talent acquisition strategies. In the environment of competence, the attraction of talent through social media can be conceptualized through employer brand (EB) construction. The employer brand is closely connected to the consumer brand (Bellou et al., 2015; Rampl & Kenning, 2014) and is defined as the set of benefits an employer brings to the candidate (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). The go-to place for advertising the employer is LinkedIn, recognized as the main website for professional networking (Madia, 2011). LinkedIn allows for a wide variety of content forms, and thus HRs are faced with the challenge of content choice. The majority of the research on the theme of employer branding on social media takes an overarching approach, investigating the role of social media presence in attracting applicants (e.g. Grzesiuk & Wawer, 2018; Sivertzen et al., 2013; Tanwar & Kumar, 2019). The scarce detailed research has found the positive influence of firm-generated and employee-generated content on employer brand perception (e.g. Joglekar & Tan, 2022; Kissel & Büttgen, 2015), and a positive effect of social presence and informativeness on organizational attractiveness (Carpentier et al., 2019). The current research, similarly, aims at diving deeper and investigating specific content modalities in the context of employer branding.

The content on LinkedIn can take many forms and therefore it is vital to gain a better understanding of how these forms influence the perception of the company, as candidates tend to

search for information about the company online before making a job choice (Tanwar & Kumar, 2019).

First, companies must choose the subjects of their posts. External communication of the company can

provide information about the organization, or about the job a candidate will perform once hired (Allen

et al., 2007). Therefore, HR has to make a choice between two modalities, while making sure the

candidates' expectations for the information are met. Next, the choice of the format is complicated by

the wide range of options: LinkedIn allows to post photos, plain text, blog posts, third-party content,

videos, standardized announcements, etc. With photos and videos being one of the most popular and

engaging forms of content on the website (Sonson, 2021), the current research takes these two

modalities into account. Finally, the tone of the company, and the way the company communicates also

have a drastic influence on the outcomes of the recruitment process. For example, a recruiter's behavior

and communication style can shape the candidates' perceptions of the future employer (Rynes, 1989).

The versatility of social media allows to mix and match these modalities of content, and the current

research aims at investigating how diverse combinations of content modes influence the perception of

the employer brand for candidates.

The judgment about an employer created through social media is conceptualized through the

perception of warmth and competence of the company, which candidates can infer from the social

media post characteristics. The attribution of these personality traits builds on the signaling theory

(Turban, 2001).

Hence, the research question is:

How do content focus, media richness, and tone of voice of a social media post influence the

perception of the company as an attractive employer?

To our knowledge, this is the first study to examine the influence of content focus, media

richness, and tone of voice in the employer branding context. The study adds to the currently limited

research on the influence of specific forms of social media use in the talent acquisition process, as well

as the connection between social media use and personality traits perception. The results of the research can serve as guidance for social media content strategy construction for practitioners in HR and marketing fields.

Literature review

Employer branding and attractiveness

The concept of employer brand (EB) has roots both in corporate and consumer branding, projecting similar patterns to the relationship between a company and current or future employees (Moroko & Uncles, 2008). For example, Lievens and Slaughter (2016) propose the understanding of the external EB as an organizational image. Bellou et al. (2015) note that EB is comparable to a consumer brand in a way that candidates see "corporate brands as possessing traits equivalent to those that characterize product brands" (p. 1201) and make their job choice relying on the idea of an optimal employer. Within the recruitment literature, the EB is defined as "the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company" (Ambler & Barrow, 1996, p.187), thus emphasizing the value EB brings to (prospective) employees (Bellou et al., 2015).

Employer branding has been shown to be a powerful tool in talent acquisition and is defined as the process of creating the differentiating identity of the organization as an employer with the aim of attracting candidates and engaging current employees in the culture of the company (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Therefore, this process can be divided into branding oriented toward current employees, and branding having a more external focus on attracting future workers (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Current research focuses on the external dimension of employer branding. As found by Lievens and Slaughter (2016), the external employer image, created in the minds of candidates, brings such benefits as a larger and higher-quality pool of applicants, stronger emotional connections with the EB, and easier job decisions.

EB is closely related to EB attractiveness (Berthon et al., 2005). The concept of EB attractiveness can be defined as "the general attractiveness of and interest in an organization as a potential employer, applicant's preferences regarding employers, and probability of application" (Cober et al., 2004, p.624). It represents one of the variables predicting outcomes of the recruitment process, along with job pursuit intentions, job-organization attraction, acceptance intention, and job choice (Chapman et al., 2005). The concept of EB attractiveness entails the attitude towards the company, and its appeal to the prospective employee, and thus serves as an outcome of the employer branding activities. Prospective employees compare their needs, values, and personality to the EB (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004), and in case of compatibility of the requirements and perceived EB characteristics, the organization is seen as attractive (Schneider, 1987). Fulmer et al. (2003) also note the influence of the attractiveness of the company as the workplace on financial organization performance and superior employee attitudes. Thus, the improvement of the EB attractiveness metric proves useful for both pre-hire and post-hire outcomes for the company. One of the established and widely used today ways of improving attractiveness is the use of social media channels, such as LinkedIn (Carpentier et al., 2017).

LinkedIn for recruitment and employer branding

With the rise of competition for talent, each company must utilize all possible resources to stand out and attract candidates. The research on social media use for recruitment and employer branding has shown the effectiveness of this tool for talent acquisition (e.g Nokolaou, 2014). The use of social media for recruitment enables HR specialists to access a wide database of possible candidates, actively reach out to them (Doherty, 2010) and advertise open positions even if users are not actively researching career possibilities. The functionalities of multiple websites, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, allow for recruitment activities and employer branding, but LinkedIn is seen as the biggest career-oriented website (Zide et al., 2014).

LinkedIn has established itself as the biggest social media platform for professional connections (Zide et al., 2014), with more than 850 million users and more than 58 million companies registered (LinkedIn, n.d.). LinkedIn is also one of the main recruitment platforms in the Netherlands, with more than 9 million people in the country using the website (LinkedIn, n.d.), constituting more than 50% of the 17 million population (CBS, n.d).

LinkedIn benefits both individual users and companies: users create the "connections" that represent their network in the professional field, thus establishing themselves by being affiliated with certain companies or individuals; HR specialists get access to a wide pull of candidates for conducting research, screening, and employee attraction activities (Nikolaou, 2014). Users can purposefully add their professional experience information to appear on possible job searches, thus simplifying the connection between the company and the candidate (Zide et al., 2014). Furthermore, LinkedIn profiles are created in a standardized way, therefore shortening the time needed to review one candidate from minutes to seconds (Doherty, 2010). Additionally, social media profiles have an advantage over traditional CVs due to accounts being more up-to-date and showcasing multiple dimensions of an individual life, both career-wise and private (Doherty, 2010).

Similarly, companies also create profiles to advertise themselves and target prospective employees. The spread of awareness about the company and active search for interested candidates through LinkedIn is powered through mechanisms of advertisement. Since individuals fill out their accounts documenting their professional experience and qualifications (Papacharissi, 2009), companies can use this information for targeting the individuals possessing the desired skillset with information about the positions. Alternatively, candidates can come by a page of the company accidentally or find it through search engines. It has been found that individuals "google" each other before engaging in a professional relationship (Zide et al., 2014). In a similar fashion, as stated by Kissel and Büttgen (2015), candidates research information about a potential employer company and this way shape their attitude

toward the firm. Thus, LinkedIn's functionality allows for its use as a platform for employer branding activities of the organization (Carpentier et al., 2019). The information displayed on the page becomes a basis for judgment about the company, creating a coherent image of the company similar to an individual's personality.

Organizational personality traits

Individuals may see business entities as having personalities (Slaughter et al., 2004). The judgment about these personalities is created through the perception and processing of available signals (Connelly et al., 2011; Turban, 2001). The inferences about the personality of a company as an employer influence the attraction and willingness to work at the organization (Slaughter et al., 2004). Dimensions of the brand personality traits of a company vary in research (see Aaker, 1997; Kausel & Slaughter, 2011; Slaughter et al., 2004). Lievens and Slaughter (2016) name warmth and competence as two "fundamental dimensions underlying inferences in human interactions" (p.412). These two traits allow individuals to differentiate between in-group and out-group members (Fiske et al., 2002), and thus serve as fundamental criteria of social judgment (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). As shown by Davies et al. (2017), these traits are also applicable in the recruitment context. The perception of the trait "warmth" arises when another party is seen as having good intentions (Carpentier et al., 2019), and embodying traits of kindness, caring, and friendliness (Kim & Ball, 2021) and agreeableness (Davies et al., 2018). In the recruitment process, a company can be perceived as warm if it communicates in a friendly way and provides personal treatment (Carpentier et al., 2019). Competence, on the other hand, is more related to reliability, responsibility, and efficiency (Aaker, 1997), and shows the ability to act on and fulfill goals (Carpentier et al., 2019). Hence, the perception of competence will be created if the company presents itself as an intelligent and reliable employer able to provide expected benefits.

To create these perceptions of specific personality traits, the company can employ multiple content forms and modalities available on social media.

Social media post communication characteristics

The social media content of a company can reflect organizational information (e.g. work environment), or provide the users with job information (e.g. job characteristics) (Allen et al., 2007). Both types of information have been shown to strongly correlate with attitudes toward an organization (Allen et al., 2007), and therefore can be used to signal desired characteristics of the company (Carpentier et al., 2019).

The work environment has been shown to play a crucial part in the well-being of employees (Knudsen et al, 2011). A significant part of the work environment is created through the social element of everyday personal interactions, thus emphasizing the role of employees in the construction of a healthy workplace (Knudsen et al, 2011). Therefore, showing the employees and giving a glimpse into their everyday professional lives and activities can serve as a source of the judgment of the work environment. Furthermore, including human beings in social media content allows the creation of a sense of "being with another" or social presence (Biocca et al., 2003). As found by Carpentier et al., (2019), social presence is related to the perception of warmth. Focusing the viewers' attention on employees thus should signal more social presence in the post and allow for attribution of the warmth judgment of the company by means of personality trait assignment. Additionally, active participation of employees in content creation can serve as employee advocacy, rise job attraction (Joglekar & Tan, 2022; Walker et al., 2009), and signal a trustworthy environment within the company in which employees are willing to participate in marketing activities. In line with Carpentier et al. (2019), we hypothesize that:

H1. The perception of warmth is higher when a post has a focus on employees as compared to a focus on the project.

Another modality tested in the current research is project-centered content. Posts about job characteristics and expected projects provide valuable job information for prospective employees, giving

candidates a basis for their job choice (Chapman et al., 2005). The informative value of the content

displayed on social media has been shown to positively influence the perceived competence of the

organization (Carpentier et al., 2019), and therefore we hypothesize that:

H2. The perception of competence is higher when a post has a focus on the project as compared

to a focus on employees.

The second characteristic of social media posts included in the research is media richness. The

choice of the format of a post may be guided by the media richness theory, explaining the message-

richness fit of communication events (Daft & Lengel, 1986 as cited in Allen et al., 2004). Media richness

serves to lower message ambiguity by providing the possibilities of facilitating feedback, communicating

different cues, allowing for more personalized messages, and using natural language (Schmitz & Fulk,

1991). According to Allen et al. (2004), the perception of the important features and effectiveness of

communication information depends on the message form. Thus, when considering the forms of posts

on LinkedIn, video represents the richest medium, by providing several verbal and non-verbal cues

(Moran et al., 2020); followed by photos, which do not allow for natural language or multiple cues; and

text, considered the leanest form of communication in this list (Moran et al., 2020). In the recruitment

context, the richness of the message is important to ensure the reduction of ambiguity and correct

communication of vital information, such as the values of the company, perks, and corporate culture

(Fraska & Edwards, 2017). It has been found that the perception of a message as rich enhances the

candidate's initial beliefs about the company (Cable et al., 2006).

As found by Kahai and Cooper (2003), richer media forms enhance perceptions of socio-

emotional communication defined as a form of communication aimed at creating and sustaining social

and emotional connection (Hiltza et al., 1986, as cited in Kahai & Cooper, 2003).

In the study by Allen et al. (2004), video medium was ranked highest in social presence, even

compared to face-to-face communication. Therefore, when using a media post focused on a project, the

richness of media will add to the emotional component of the message, and the sense of the presence

of another individual. This way, it is possible to create the perception of the warmth personality trait

(Allen et al., 2004), thus compensating for the lack of social presence in absence of an individual in the

frame. For example, Vazquez et al. (2017), state that the negative effects of a lack of emotional

connection in the interaction between a computer (social media page in our case) and an individual can

be alleviated using a rich medium. Thus, we hypothesize:

H3. A richer form of media creates a higher perception of warmth compared to a leaner form.

H4. A richer form of media has no effect on the perception of competence compared to a leaner

form.

H5. Project-focused post in a richer format has a higher perception of warmth compared to a

leaner format.

H6. Employee-focused post in a richer format has a higher perception of warmth compared to a

leaner format.

Finally, the choice of communication style can shape the perception of the employer. When a

company is actively present on social media, it can be personified and seen as a human being engaging

in contact with other individual users (Barcelos et al., 2018). The company can construct this persona by

using a specific tone of voice. Two types of voice have emerged in the literature: the conversational

human voice and a corporate voice (Park & Cameron, 2013). The human voice is defined as a more

engaging and natural style of communication (Kelleher, 2009), creating the perception of a person,

rather than an organization communicating online (Park & Lee, 2013). Conversely, the corporate style is

more distant and official (Barcelos et al., 2018) and clearly establishes the communicator as a formal

entity. The concept of the tone of voice spreads beyond word choice and entails how it represents the

personality of the message sender, for example with a visual depiction of the speaker (Park & Lee,

2013). Thus, the concept of the tone of the voice is tightly connected to the notion of social presence,

and the more the voice has natural cues of a human being, the higher the perception of the presence of another (Park & Cameron, 2014). The use of the conversational human voice has been shown to increase trust, satisfaction, commitment, and control mutuality in consumer relations (Kelleher, 2009). These positive attitudes are also relevant for the recruitment context, where the employer seeks to establish a personal connection with the candidate.

The corporate voice, on the other hand, can signal more competence of a brand. As shown by Barcelos et al., (2018), corporate voice is characterized by more distant and non-personalized communication. The formal, distant communication style of a company can be associated with the style of scholars or highly skilled professionals (Leung et al., 2022), thus signaling the level of expertise. For recruitment, a more formal tone of the company displayed in posts or webpages can signal the corporate internal culture, which, in association with, for example, researchers (who use a formal tone and specific vocabulary for their work) will be perceived as more competent. Therefore, a company can utilize the power of tone of voice to signal distinct personality traits to the candidates. Hence, we hypothesize:

H7. The perception of warmth is higher when a post has a human tone of voice as compared to a corporate tone.

H8. The perception of competence is higher when a post has a corporate tone of voice as compared to a human tone.

A certain tone of voice may be more applicable in certain situations. According to the cognitive consistency theory, individuals prefer coherent information and are ready to adapt their attitudes and behaviors to achieve consistency (Prince, 2020). In a similar style, consumers prefer more personal and informal addresses from warmer brands, and more formal when facing a competent brand, thus creating a continuity of the linguistic forms and personality dimensions of a company (Leung et al., 2022).

Therefore, when the tone of voice is human, the viewer expects to see supporting human cues, and a human tone of voice should only be used if at least one other variable signals social presence (focus on employees or a richer medium). Conversely, a candidate's perception of competence can be enhanced using corporate voice when the initial post is focused on the projects. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H9. Human voice creates a higher perception of warmth only when paired with other human presence cues (either employee focus or rich medium or both).

H10. Corporate voice only paired with project focus creates a higher perception of competence.

Employer brand personality traits

In the context of employment assessment, a prospective employee perceiving the company activities in the recruitment stage as warm and competent can anticipate the projection of these traits on the future working environment (Rynes, 1989). As shown by Carpentier et al. (2019) the perceived personality traits of warmth and competence derived from characteristics of the social media content are translated into EB attractiveness. In line with this finding, we hypothesize that:

H11. EB attractiveness is predicted by warmth and competence, with both being significant predictors.

The conceptual model of the research can be observed in figure 1.

Based on the hypothesized effects of post characteristics on personality traits and the expected effect of warmth and competence for the prediction of EB attraction, several mediation effects are expected.

Specifically, building on the hypothesized positive effect of employee and project focus on warmth and competence respectively, the mediation effects of the personality traits perceptions on the relation between focus and EB attractiveness are expected:

Figure 1

Conceptual model
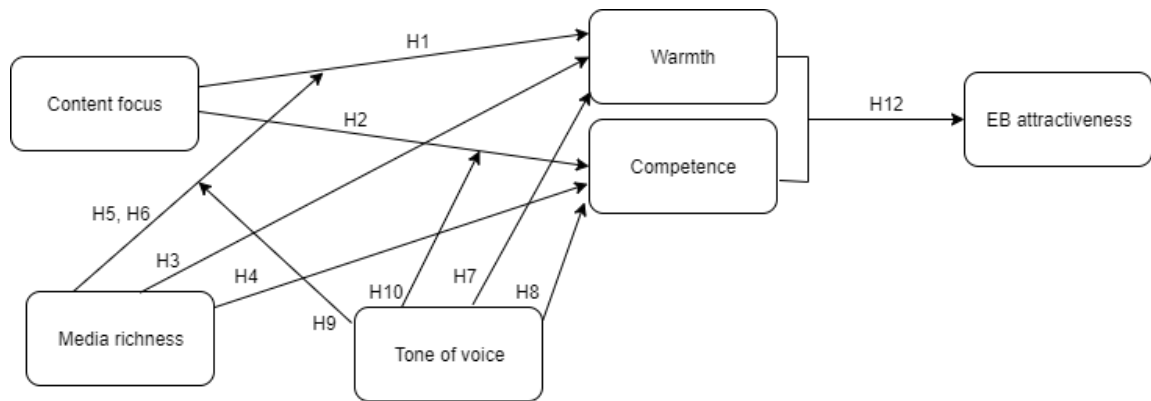
H12. The positive effect of the project focus on EB attractiveness is mediated by competence.

H13. The positive effect of employee focus on EB attractiveness is mediated by warmth.

Rooting in the social presence and media richness concepts, the warmth is hypothesized to have a mediating effect on the relation between the richness of post and EB attractiveness.

H14. The positive effect of rich media on EB attractiveness is mediated by warmth.

Finally, the influence of tone of voice on EB attraction is hypothesized to be mediated by warmth (for the human conversational tone) and competence (for the corporate tone).

H15. The positive effect of corporate tone on EB attractiveness is mediated by competence.

H16. The positive effect of human tone on EB attractiveness is mediated by warmth.

Method

Research design

Procedure

The research was conducted in a form of an online experiment. The survey was created and executed using the Qualtrics system, as it complies with the University of Twente Ethics Committee regulations and allows for easy data processing for analysis. Furthermore, the anonymity of responses is

ensured, and the system has elaborate distribution capabilities via social websites and anonymous links. The questionnaire presented an incentive in the form of a chance to participate in a draw for a gift card.

Participants were presented with a questionnaire consisting of multiple blocks. The first block included information about the survey and contact information of the researcher and an active consent button. Subsequently, personal questions, concerning demographic variables such as age, gender, career/education focus, and higher completed level of education were introduced.

Next, the 2 × 2 × 2 between-subject-design block presented 8 scenarios, with each candidate only seeing one randomly assigned scenario, but ensuring equal distribution of the three variables (employee-focus vs. project focus × lean medium vs. rich medium × corporate tone of voice vs. human tone of voice). The breakdown of the experimental condition characteristics can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1

Breakdown of characteristics of experimental conditions

Photo				Video		
	Project focus	Employee focus			Project focus	Employee focus
Corporate tone of voice	Condition #1	Condition #2		Corporate tone of voice	Condition #5	Condition #6
Human tone of voice	Condition #3	Condition #4		Human tone of voice	Condition #7	Condition #8

After reviewing the experiment section, participants were asked to answer questions pertaining to the assessment of the EB as warm and competent. The final block included questions about EB attractiveness.

The questionnaire was concluded by debriefing, presenting the contact information of the researcher, and asking participants if they were willing to participate in the draw, from where they were redirected to the draw page. Additionally, participants could choose to continue the completion of the survey within seven days from the moment of starting it, thus allowing for lower dropout rates.

LinkedIn post manipulation

Pre-test

Two rounds of pre-test with 10 participants were conducted to ensure the validity of the manipulations. As a result of the first round, unclarity in the distinction between the human and corporate tone of voice was revealed, which lead to the addition of more conversational wording and emoticons to the human voice conditions. The second round of pre-test showed improved results of the manipulation clarity. The results of the manipulation check, presented consequently, confirm the effectiveness of the pre-test changes. The final experiment materials can be observed in Appendix A.

Richness manipulation

Two sets of photos and videos were made based on real-life examples of online posts by companies. The experimental material represented a section of LinkedIn feed with either photo of video post. In the top part of a post, the company's name and logo were displayed. Under the post engagement metrics were shown, all set to the same number of 50 likes and 9 shares, which may signal a moderate social involvement of the online community.

Focus of the post manipulation

The post focusing on the project showed the employee facing the screen with a programme opened, and not looking into the camera. For the employee-oriented condition, the employee was looking into the camera and smiling, as this facial expression serves as a social cue and helps to establish social contact (Kraut, 1979). For the videos, the employee remained in the same position, while the camera slightly moves. The examples of two post focuses can be seen in figures 2 and 3.

The text accompanying the post was also manipulated to signal the focus and to make the experimental condition more realistic. The employee-focused post included a brief introduction of the employee in the frame, using his name to signal a higher level of personalization of the post. The project-focused post showed information about the product.
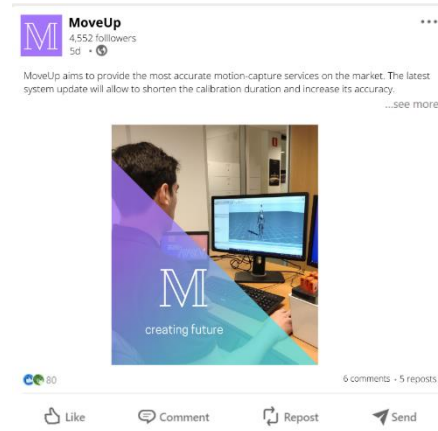
Figure 2

Experiment material for the photo format ×

employee focus × human voice condition

Figure 3

Experiment material for the photo format ×

project focus × corporate voice condition

Tone of voice manipulations

The wording of tone of voice manipulation was based on the research by Barcelos et al., (2018),

Gretry et al. (2017), and Steinmann et al., (2015), who name personal approach, friendliness, and use of

emoticons as facets of the human voice and more distant address and contained vocabulary as

characteristics of the corporate voice. Thus, the testing materials for human tone of voice included

emoticons and informal wording, such as in figure 2, and corporate voice posts had a more factual

information and reserved sentences, as can be seen in figure 3.

For the video medium, the same text accompanying the photo was presented in a voiceover,

thus allowing for natural language cues (Moran et al., 2020). Additionally, soft neutral music was used to

simulate real-life examples of videos posted by corporate accounts on LinkedIn. To ensure realism, a

short text was added to the post.

Measures

Instruments for the EB attractiveness were adopted from Highhouse et al. (2003), and contain

five items, an example being "this company is attractive to me as a place for employment". The

construct was measured on a 5-point Likert scale from "fully disagree" to "fully agree" and received

(α=0.86) Cronbach alpha coefficient after the deletion of the second reverse statement, used by Highhouse et al. (2003).

Measurements for the personality trait of warmth were adopted from Carpentier et al. (2019)., containing 6 items, such as "cheerful". The participants were asked to indicate to what extent they perceive the company as possessing each of these personality traits on a 5-point Likert scale from "fully disagree" to "fully agree". Based on the results of factor analysis two items were excluded from the construct. First, the statement "having integrity" was identified by the participants as a measure of competence, conflicting with the conceptualization by Carpentier et al. (2019). Thus, to avoid the possible conflicting understanding of the concept by the respondents, the item was excluded. Next, the "transparency" item received a factor score below 0.5, leading to its elimination. The Cronbach alpha upon the deletion of two items came to (α=0.85).

The items for the competence personality trait measurement were adapted from Carpentier et al., (2019), and similarly contained 6 items, example being "capable". Participants had to indicate if they agree with the characteristic on a 5-point Likert scale from "fully disagree" to "fully agree". The factor analysis showed the integrity of all six items, and the Cronbach alpha received a coefficient of (α=0.87).

Demographic variables

In order to ensure that samples assigned to different experimental conditions possess similar characteristics, the following demographic variables were tracked.

Gender. Davies et al., (2018), found a difference in the perception of the "competence" traits between females and males. Dennis et al. (1999) showed that women experience a bigger effect in the case of withdrawing non-verbal cues from the message. Thus, by controlling for gender it is possible to observe how changes in the richness of the media influence the perception of personality traits.

Age. As found by Davies et al. (2018) bigger age is positively correlated with the perception of warmth. Tracking this demographic ensures that the deviating perception of personality traits is attributed to the manipulation, and not to the age group.

Educational/professional focus. Individuals affiliated with different professional areas may differ significantly in their perceptions of the world. Van Der Molen et al. (2007) showed that engineers tend to be rather conscientious and mildly extraverted, which is consequentially associated with a lower level of perceived negativity and deception (Jonason & Sherman, 2020). Therefore, the competence of a post would be evaluated higher by IT and engineering specialists compared to other social groups. Regarding warmth, introverted individuals perceive more social interaction than their counterparts (Emerson et al., 2016), and thus will likely evaluate the warmness of the post higher than other people. Therefore, the educational background of the participants may serve to interpret the results.

Level of education. Since the testing materials simulate a post by a high-tech company, the expected level of education to fill out most vacancies must be sufficient. Therefore, this metric is tracked to ensure the sample represents the intended audience of such a post.

Sample

The questionnaire was distributed by means of word of mouth, posting in known to the researcher WhatsApp and Facebook groups, and by leaving flyers with the QR code of the survey on the territory of the University of Twente. Thus, the sampling procedure was conducted in a snowballing fashion, posing issues for the generalizability of results. The target audience of the questionnaire was European young professionals, potentially looking for a job. The desired sample size was 180 participants, thus allocating roughly 22 participants to each study condition.

As a result of the survey, 256 responses were received, out of which 187 met the inclusion criteria of a 100% completion rate of the questionnaire and the age range from 18 to 35. Responses not consistent with these criteria were not used in the analysis to ensure the reliability and validity of the

research. The demographic characteristics of the whole sample can be observed in Table 2. Gender

distribution is slightly dominated by males, that constitute 52% of participants, against 44% being

female. Additionally, 4% of respondents either indicating the non-binary choice or not providing the

information. The mean age of the sample is 25 years old. Finally, the majority of respondents have

indicated to be students or alumni of Academic Universities of STEM professional areas.

Table 2

Demographic information of experimental participants

Demographics	Characteristics	N	Percentage
Professional focus			
	STEM	108	57.7
	Business, management, administration	47	24.9
	Arts and humanities	26	13.8
	Medicine	6	3.7
Level of education			
	High school	23	12.3
	College/MBO	23	12.3
	HBO	24	12.8
	WO	116	61.9

For separate experimental conditions, the distribution of demographic characteristics varies

significantly, which can be observed in Appendix C. While mean age remained in the range of 24-26

years, gender distribution in conditions showed significant variance, with 65% being male in the

condition of photo format × employee focus × human voice. The STEM professional focus for photo

format × project focus × human voice case came to 72.7%, thus deviating by 15% from the distribution

for the whole sample. Finally, only 36% of respondents in the condition of photo format × employee

focus × corporate voice indicated Research University (WO) as their current level of education, while

other conditions contained at least 60% of participants with this level.

Results

Manipulation check

To ensure the participants noted the differences between conditions of social media posts,

three questions were presented. The participants were asked to indicate the focus of the posts on a

two-extreme continuum of "project" and "employee" and indicate the communication style on the

continuum of "formal" – "informal/personal". Both measurements contained 5 points. The results of the

independent sample t-test and correlation confirmed that the manipulations were effective. Participants

reported significant differences between the project focus (M = 2.5, SD = 1.4) and employee focus (M =

4.2, SD = 1.1), t(185) = -9.16, p = 0.002. For the manipulation of the tone of voice, participants similarly

indicated a distinction between corporate voice (M = 2.9, SD = 1.4) and human voice (M = 3.6, SD =

1.1), t(187) = -3.64, p = 0.001. Finally, the question "did the post you saw contain video content?" with

the answer options "yes" and "no". The test of the media richness has shown a significant correlation

between the assigned condition and the participants' response, r(187) =-.67, p < .001. The results

demonstrated that the manipulations were perceived as expected and the conditions were clearly

distinguishable from each other.

To additionally ensure that participants observed the assigned LinkedIn post conditions, the

timer was set on the experimental page. For the photo format, 95% of respondents spent more than 5

seconds on the page with the post. Previous studies on the human brain have shown that individuals can

process an image in 0.15 seconds (Thorpe et al., 1996). The 5-second threshold additionally takes into

consideration the time needed to read the text in the post. Similarly, for the rich media format, 81% of

respondents clicked to the next page of the survey after the time duration necessary to watch the full

video.

Main effects

To test the main and interaction effects, the analysis using a multivariate general linear model was performed. Table 3 shows the significant main effects of richness on warmth ($F(2,180) = 4.54$, p = .034), competence ($F(2, 180) = 5.99$, p = .015), and the effect of tone of voice on warmth ($F(2,180) = 6.33$, p = .013). Additionally, the effect of focus on warmth ($F(2, 180) = 3.72$, p = .055) is included in current research as significant. Historically, the choice of using the 0.05 level of statistical significance, as Cowels and Davies (1982) state, can be seen as arbitrary and preferential. Selvin notes that the level of significance is sensitive to the sample size (as cited in Cowger, 1984), and Shaver (1993) emphasizes the connection between a simple random sample and the level of statistical significance. Current research does not represent the simple random sample due to the snowballing and convenience sampling methods used and is not representative of the intended population (European job-seekers), and thus accepts the effect of focus on warmth as a significant one.

Table 3

Test of between subject effects

Source	Condition	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Focus	Warmth	2.17	3.71	0.055
	Competence	0.22	0.46	0.500
Richness	Warmth	2.64	4.54	0.034
	Competence	2.86	5.99	0.015
Tone of voice	Warmth	3.69	6.33	0.013
	Competence	0.01	0.01	0.930
Focus * Richness	Warmth	1.57	2.70	0.102
	Competence	1.52	3.19	0.076
Focus * Tone of voice	Warmth	0.22	0.38	0.540
	Competence	0.09	0.18	0.671
Richness * Tone of voice	Warmth	0.79	1.36	0.246
	Competence	0.92	1.93	0.166
Focus * Richness * Tone of voice	Warmth	0.19	0.33	0.569
	Competence	0.02	0.03	0.857

Consequently, the estimated marginal means of the effects that were found to be significant in the multivariate general linear model are presented in detailed tables.

Table 4

Effect of focus on warmth

Dependent Variable	Condition	Mean	Std. Error
Warmth	Project	3.5	0.080
	Employee	3.7	0.077

In support of the first hypothesis, the perception of warmth was higher when the focus of the post was on employees (M = 3.7, SE = .08) compared to project focus (M = 3.5, SE = .08), which can be seen in Table 4. The effect of the project focus on competence perception expected in the second hypothesis was not supported, showing a high (p = .500) significance level.

Table 5

Effect of richness on warmth and competence

Dependent Variable	Condition	Mean	Std. Error
Warmth	Photo	3.7	0.077
	Video	3.5	0.080
Competence	Photo	3.4	0.070
	Video	3.2	0.073

Table 6

Effects of tone of voice on warmth

Dependent Variable	Condition	Mean	Std. Error
Warmth	Corporate voice	3.4	0.078
	Human voice	3.7	0.080

Table 5 shows the effect of media richness on the perceptions of warmth and competence. Contrary to the expectations, photo format (M = 3.7, SE = .07) enticed a higher perception of warmth than video (M = 3.5. SE = .08). For competence, while no effect was expected, the photo was shown to

be perceived as more competent (*M* = 3.4, *SE* = .07), than the video (*M* = 3.2, *SE* = .07). The results

indicate the presence of a mechanism underlying the effect of media format on warmth and

competence conflicting with the media richness theory.

The influence of tone of voice on warmth shown in Table 6 is in line with the expected effect

direction, with the human voice being perceived as warmer (*M* = 3.7, SE = .08) than the corporate voice

(*M*=3.4, *SE* = .08). Nevertheless, the ninth hypothesis, which stated that human tone of voice paired with

another social presence cue would entice a higher perception of warmth was not supported. These

results may stem from the rejection of the assumption of media richness having a positive influence on

the perception of warmth in hypotheses three and four.

Regression analysis predicting EB attractiveness

Table 7 demonstrates that warmth and competence accounted for 42% of prediction for the EB

attractiveness, thus supporting twelfth hypotheses. Out of the two, competence has twice the effect, (β

= .51, p < .001) against (β = .27, p < .001) for warmth, as can be seen in Table 8.

Table 7

Regression model statistics

Model statistics	Adj. R2	F-value	Sig.
Model Warmth + Competence	0.41	66.32	.000

Note. Dependent variable: Attractiveness

Table 8

Regression analysis

Variable	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Warmth	0.27	4.05	0.000
Competence	0.51	6.95	0.000

Note. Dependent variable: Attractiveness

Mediation check

The mediation analysis was performed on the effect of independent variables of social media post modalities on attractiveness. As a result, four mediation relationships were discovered. The visual representation of the mediation effect can be seen in figures 3-6.

First, analysis was performed to assess the mediating role of warmth on the relationship between richness and EB attractiveness. The results revealed a significant indirect effect of richness on attractiveness (β = -.13, p < 0.05). The total effect of richness on attractiveness is significant (β = -.25, p = .02), but with the inclusion of the mediator, the effect of richness on attractiveness becomes insignificant (β = -.13, p = .221) thus making this relationship a full mediation. This result is in conflict with the expected positive effect of hypothesis 15.

Second, the influence of competence on the effect of richness on attractiveness was found, despite not being expected at the stage of hypotheses development. The results of the mediation analysis show that there was a significant total effect between richness and attractiveness (β = -.25, p = .026). The indirect effect has also been shown to be significant (β =-.19, p < .05), but the direct effect of the dependent variable on the independent becomes insignificant with the introduction of the mediator (β = -.05, p = .565), thus making this relationship full mediation as well.

Next, a mediation analysis was conducted to examine the mediating effect of warmth on the tone of voice and attractiveness. The total effect of the model was found to be insignificant (β = 0.25, p = .826), which does not impede the establishment of indirect effect (Hayes, 2009), which was found to be significant (β = .13, p < .05). The direct effect was found to also be insignificant (β = -.11, p = .271), thus confirming full mediation of warmth of the relationship between tone of voice and attractiveness. This result supports the hypothesis 17.
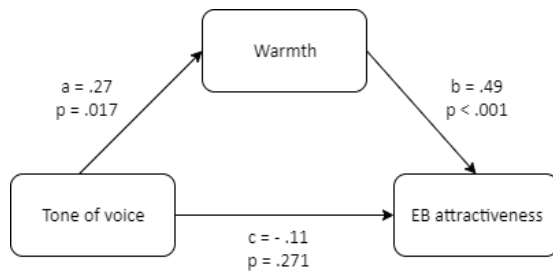
Figure 3

Mediation model of media richness, warmth, and EB attractiveness
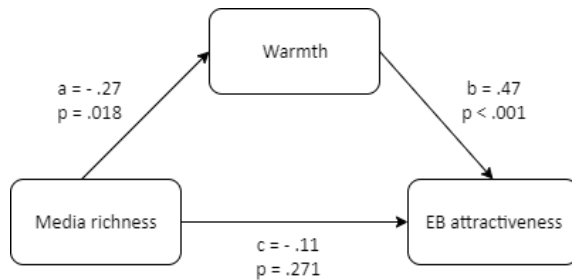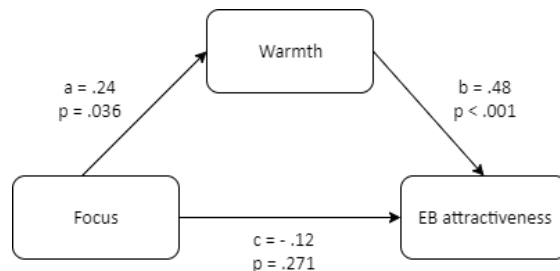

Figure 4

Mediation model of media richness, competence, and EB attractiveness
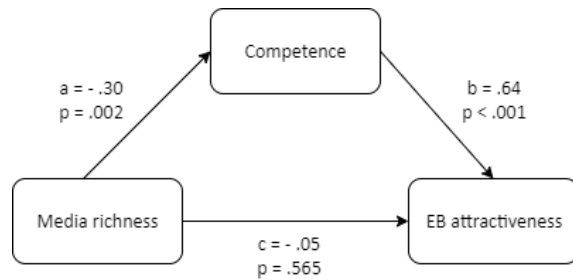
Figure 5

Mediation model of tone of voice, warmth, and EB attractiveness

Figure 6

Mediation model of focus, warmth, and EB attractiveness

Finally, a mediation analysis of warmth on the influence of focus on attractiveness was done. Likewise in the previous analysis, the total effect was found to be insignificant ($\beta = .10$, $p = .354$), as well as the direct effect ($\beta = -.01$, $p = -.206$). The indirect effect is statistically significant ($\beta = .12$, $p < .05$), thus making this relationship full mediation in support of hypothesis 14.

Table 9 summarizes the results of the hypotheses testing. Five out of sixteen hypotheses were supported by data, confirming the positive influence of employee focus and human tone of voice on the perception of warmth, and the model of warmth and competence as predictors of the EB attractiveness.

Table 9

Overview of the hypotheses

№	Hypotheses	Rejected or supported
1	The perception of warmth is higher when a post has a focus on employees as compared to a focus on the project	Supported
2	The perception of competence is higher when a post has a focus on the project as compared to a focus on employees	Rejected
3	A richer form of media creates a higher perception of warmth compared to a leaner form	Rejected
4	A richer form of media has no effect on the perception of competence compared to a leaner form	Rejected
5	Project-focused post in a richer format has a higher perception of warmth compared to a leaner format	Rejected
6	Employee-focused post in a richer format has a higher perception of warmth compared to a leaner format	Rejected
7	The perception of warmth is higher when a post has a human tone of voice as compared to a corporate tone	Supported
8	The perception of competence is higher when a post has a corporate tone of voice as compared to a human tone	Rejected
9	Human voice creates a higher perception of warmth only when paired with other human presence cues (either employee focus or rich medium or both)	Rejected
10	Corporate voice only paired with project focus creates a higher perception of competence	Not conclusive
11	EB attractiveness is predicted by warmth and competence, with both being significant predictors	Supported
12	The positive effect of project focus on EB attractiveness is mediated by competence	Rejected
13	The positive effect of employee focus on EB attractiveness is mediated by warmth	Supported
14	The positive effect of rich media on EB attractiveness is mediated by warmth	Rejected
15	The positive effect of corporate tone on EB attractiveness is mediated by competence	Rejected
16	The positive effect of human tone on EB attractiveness is mediated by warmth	Supported

Discussion

The aim of the research was to investigate how modalities of social media posts influence the

attractiveness of an employer for prospective candidates. While only five out of sixteen hypotheses

were supported, the research yields valuable findings for the academic literature on recruitment and insights for practitioners.

The first confirmed main effect is the positive influence of focus on employees on the perception of warmth. These results are corroborated by Bicocca et al. (2003) and Carpentier et al (2019), who note that the active presence of humans in the frame signals social presence, and consequently, warmth. In the research, while both conditions included a person in the frame, the focus on employees was created by asking the employee to face the camera and smile, building on the findings of Kraut (1979), who showed that facial expressions allow for the establishment of social contact and serves as a social cue. Therefore, the results of the research confirm the positive effect of a smiling human face on social presence perception, although more detailed research into the exact mechanisms of facial expressions or forms of presence in the frame is needed.

Conversely, the hypothesis about the positive effect of focus on the project on competence perception was not supported. The lack of the effect can be rooted in the multidimensionality of competence characteristics. As found by Carpentier et al. (2019) the construction of the perception of competence requires high informativeness. The project of the company shown in current research accounts only for a fraction of relevant information that a company can exhibit to be assessed as capable of executing its intentions, and thus, competent. For example, such factors as company size, history, previous projects, and financial matters such as salary level and annual growth figures can show the company as reliable, responsible, and efficient, that in turn, translates into the perception of competence (Aaker, 1997).

The lack of the demonstrated perception of competence does not allow testing the tenth hypothesis, stating that a corporate tone of voice would entice a higher perception of competence when paired with another characteristic signaling the same personality trait. Since in the current research, the

perception of competence was not created, the tenth hypothesis lacks one of the two basic components necessary to test it.

While employee focus was shown to be a predictor of warmth perception, the similar expected effect of a richer form of media was not supported. These outcomes are in conflict with the media richness theory literature, stating that richer medium presents additional cues of social presence (Kahai & Cooper, 2003), and thus, raises warmth. Therefore, other underlying mechanisms not connected to the richness create a negative perception of the video in the recruitment context. The participation of employees in the creation of social media for the company is often seen as employee advocacy (Jogleklar & Tan, 2022), and allows for the construction of an online community and favorable employer brand via more personal connections with the audience (Jogleklar & Tan, 2022; Huotari et al., 2015). Nevertheless, such participation is approved and supported by the company only as long as it benefits the corporate image (Rangarajan et al., 2017), and is subjected to scrutiny and control to ensure coherent messaging (Huotari et al., 2015). Such control triggers questions about the intention behind employee inclusion: to give voice to the employees or solely construct the preferable image for the brand. Simultaneously, the video format can be linked to privacy threats (Boyle et al., 2009) and intrusion concerns (Stewart & Littau, 2016) thus making the use of videos featuring employees an invasive practice. In the rise of the quiet quitting movement (Formica & Sfodera, 2022), the use of invasive media formats for the benefit of the company may be seen as manipulative, and therefore, conflicts with the concept of a warm company as one displaying good intentions (Carpentier et al., 2019).

Alternatively, the multitude of cues presented to the viewer may interfere with the perception of the video as warm and competent. As found by Graber (1990) (as cited in Gotfredson, 1994) visual information is absorbed more quickly than auditory information. In the present research, videos contained visuals with rather static images and mostly provided auditory information in the form of

voiceover and music. Thus, if the social presence cues and factual information that contribute to the

perception of warmth and competence in the richer medium were mostly present in the form of

auditory stimulation, they may have been missed by the participants. Hassebrook and Grem (1999) in

their experiment using video and photo formats to present information about jobs and education

courses, found that photo format enticed higher recall. Thus, the use of more visually engaging videos

may have yielded different results.

Despite the low stimulation derived from auditory information, the main effect of tone of voice

as an instrument for fostering the perception of human contact was confirmed (Park & Lee, 2013). While

the tone of voice manipulation heavily relied on the audio, text was also used to signal the intended

communication style, with the inclusion of emoticons in the condition of the human voice. Being a visual

form of information, the text with emoticons allowed for the positive effect of tone of voice on the

perception of warmth. Nevertheless, the hypothesis about the positive interaction effect of tone of

voice on warmth when paired with other human presence cues (focus on employees and/or video

format) was not supported. Since media richness was not linked to the perception of warmth in the

current study, the lack of interaction effect of tone of voice and media richness is expected. On the

other hand, the lack of interaction effect of human tone of voice with the focus on employees, which

was confirmed to have a positive effect on the perception of warmth, is surprising and signals a

presence of an additional underlying variable influencing the perception. A possible explanation may lie

in the exaggerated informality of the post combining the two characteristics. As stated in the cognitive

congruency theory, people expect to see consistent information (Prince, 2020). It is likely that in the

context of a corporate account on a professionally oriented website, very personal communication can

be seen as inappropriate, thus creating not a perception of warmth, but cognitive dissonance.

Regarding the influence of personality traits on EB attractiveness, the model proposed by

Carpentier et al. (2019) was supported by the research, confirming the strong combined influence of

both warmth and competence on the attractiveness of EB. Out of the two investigated variables, competence has been shown to be a stronger predictor of EB attractiveness, as corroborated by Carpentier et al. (2019). The results show the similarity to purchasing context, where the attitudes and willingness to engage with a brand are higher when the brand is perceived as a competent one (Aaker et al., 2010). Although the presence of both competence and warmth is beneficial for a brand, competence is an element predicting the "global endpoints" (Aaker et al., 2010, p.233), such as the willingness to apply or make a job choice.

Alternatively, the difference in the effect size might be attributed to the respondents' personalities, specifically social identity concerns (Zhu et al., 2021). The choice of the company in this case serves as a way of self-expression and feeling approved by society. The higher attraction for competent companies signals a higher level of social adjustment (Highhouse et al., 2007) when individuals seek to signal prestige by identifying with a renowned employer company. Since the majority of respondents' professional focus was on STEM, their foreseen career goals are connected with working with sophisticated technology, typical for competent companies, rather than being seen as friendly and wholesome, typical for the professions in humanities.

Finally, mediation analysis confirms the main effects results. Specifically, the analysis showed support for the expected positive effect of conversational tone of voice and employee focus on warmth, and subsequently, EB attractiveness, as confirmed by the current research and corroborated by Park & Lee (2013), and Carpentier et al. (2019) respectively. Similarly, as previously discovered, a richer form of media has a negative effect on attractiveness, with full mediation of warmth. The final observed effect showed the previously discussed negative relation between media richness and EB attractiveness fully mediated by competence, which can be attributed to the multitude of cues in a video format and the advantage of photo over video for information recall found by Hassebrook and Grem (1999). Therefore, the discovered mediation relationships are in line with previous findings of the research.

Limitations and future research directions

  The research has several limitations. First, the sample of the current research was collected by a snowballing method, thus violating the simple random sample condition for generalizable research. The distribution of demographic characteristics in the sample, therefore, does not represent the intended population of European job seekers and is heavily influenced by the context of response collection, conducted majorly at the University of Twente and across the researcher's network.

  An adjacent limitation of the research pertains to the distribution of demographic characteristics for each experimental condition. With some conditions displaying significantly different percentages of respondents in terms of gender, professional focus, and level of education, the results of the research may be affected.

  Subsequently, the diversity of the sample as a whole in terms of educational background and level may have caused indefinite results. The testing materials showcased a type of work more expected by individuals affiliated with STEM areas, while only 57% of participants identified it as their professional focus. The perceptions of warmth and competence may vary across different professional focuses, and subsequently, influence the results of the research. For example, Van Der Molen et al. (2007) showed that engineers tend to be rather conscientious and mildly extraverted. Similarly, Alexander and Pieterse (2010) write that ICT professionals have a higher level of conscientiousness and lower agreeableness metrics. These specific personal characteristics of the (prospective) employees condition how they react to the stimuli from a social media post. As found by Jonason and Sherman (2020), higher levels of conscientiousness are associated with a lower level of perceived negativity and deception, thus the competence of a post would be evaluated higher by IT and engineering specialists compared to other social groups. Regarding warmth, introverted individuals perceive more social interaction than their counterparts (Emerson et al., 2016), and thus will likely evaluate the warmth of the post higher than other people. The specificity of the demographic group thus makes the research specific to a limited

professional sphere and may yield different results when applied to other occupations. Therefore, the lack of homogeneity in the sample does not allow to place the results of the research as showcasing the attitudes of either STEM or other professionals.

Finally, the survey format may have influenced the participants' perceptions. The testing materials included social media posts and were intended to mimic the experience of seeing it on social media. The Qualtrics system, nevertheless, did not allow for the invisible embedding of the testing materials on the page and might have interfered with the perception of the post as a realistic one. Additionally, the experience of encountering such a post did not simulate the natural environment of social media, which may have an additional effect depending on the surrounding posts on the feed. Thus, the results may differ substantially from the real-life experience of using social media.

The impossibility of simulation of the complete experience of social media use is also related to the limited forms of social media posts used in the research. While the research tested only photos and video accompanied by text, LinkedIn provides a wide range of post modalities, including polls, standardized announcements, animations, etc. The influence of these other forms of content could be a subject of further research.

Similarly, the choice of only using LinkedIn as the experimental context calls for additional research on other popular social media websites. For example, Facebook has been shown to be an alternative job searching and recruitment environment (Myers et al., 2021), and recently TikTok job advertisements became possible (Husna et al., 2021). The main content formats on these platforms imply different expectations users hold in regard to the content, and therefore, the context of each website has to be investigated separately.

Another promising line of future research is uncovering the demands for the information users have for the social media account of a prospective employer. With social media gaining a prominent position in the recruitment process, it is vital to know what exactly candidates would like to see on the

LinkedIn of the company, compared to, for example, the company website. Additionally, research into

what types of information on social media signal competence to the candidates is required. This line of

research could also revisit the hypothesized interaction effects for richness and tone of voice with the

perception of competence, thus allowing to establish the definitive conclusions.

Finally, employee engagement in corporate social media production should be investigated from

the perspective of modern social media users, who encounter content about quiet quitting or anti-work

movements on a daily basis (O'Connor, 2022). With these trends being popular on TikTok, the attitude

towards different forms of employer branding could change across demographics. Further research,

then, should analyze the interplay of these signals coming from popular culture and corporate-

generated content, and find a balance between promoting employment without triggering a negative

response.

Practical Implications

The results of the research suggest guidelines for the creation of social media content for

employer branding. First, the value proposition of the company as an employer should be constructed

with consideration of the personal characteristics of the intended candidates. For a high-tech company,

the main focus of employer branding should emphasize the logical thinking, sophistication, and highly

regarded position of the firm, combined with the signaling of warmth and trustworthiness. Companies

displaying both characteristics of warmth and competence attract people who see the job both as a

"calling", and as a career (Kervyn et al., 2022), and experience higher commitment to the organization

(Kim et al., 2016). The warmth perception can be fostered through the inclusion of people in the frame,

preferably with smiling facial expressions (Kraut, 1979) or using a conversational tone of voice. Pairing

the two signals of warmth should be carefully considered to not create an overly casual feeling, which

could conflict with the expectation of the workplace as a formal space. show the competence

dimension, on the other hand, the company must include a wide range of useful information in social

media posts, allowing for the creation of a comprehensive image of the company as reliable and prominent. This can be achieved, for example, by including information about financial matters of the company, past achievements, and recognition from the market.

Regarding the format of social media, the research has shown that video has no advantages over a photo in terms of competence or warmth perception, and therefore, the use of a less time-consuming and equipment-demanding form of photo may be preferable. Nonetheless, if choosing to use video format, it is recommended to create highly stimulating visuals (with active movement or frame changes) clearly signaling warmth (by demonstrating lively facial expressions) and/or competence (by displaying factual information). Including employees in the corporate content should also be done with caution, considering the possible negative response from the public.

Conclusions

The research aimed to investigate how different modalities of social media posts influence the employer brand. The importance of thoughtful use of different forms of content is apparent, giving credibility and emphasizing the need for further developments both in research and practice in the theme of the e-recruitment process. Furthermore, the research confirmed the applicability of warmth and competence as strong predictors of employer brand attractiveness. The mechanisms contributing to the creation of the two concepts were not as definite, confirming the positive effect of focus on employees and human voice on warmth and calling for a reevaluation of the influence of the video format on social media employer branding.

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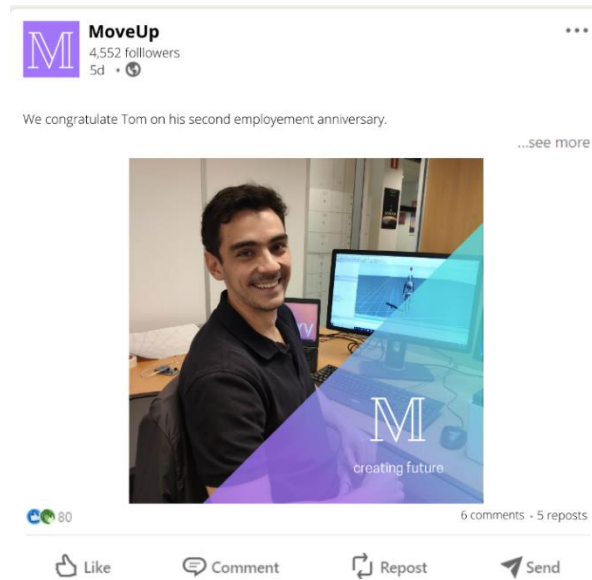
Appendix A

Experiment materials

Figure A1

Experiment material for the photo format × employee focus × human voice condition
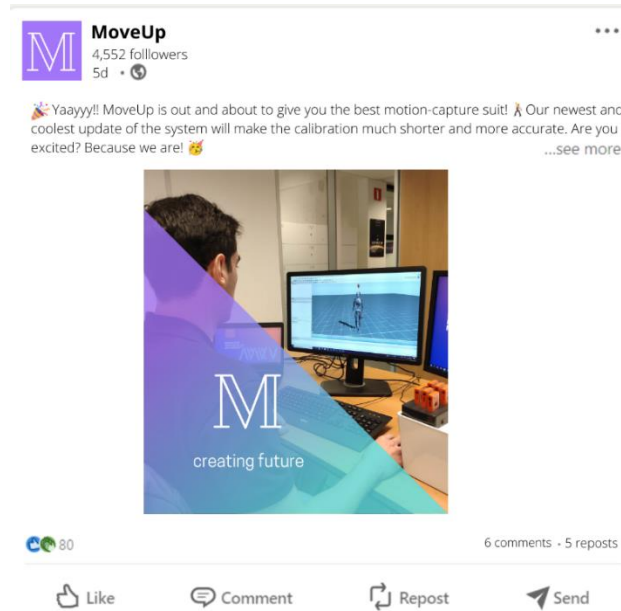

Figure A2

Experiment material for the photo format × employee focus × corporate voice condition

Figure A3

Experiment material for the photo format × project focus × human voice condition

Figure A4

Experiment material for the photo format × project focus × corporate voice condition
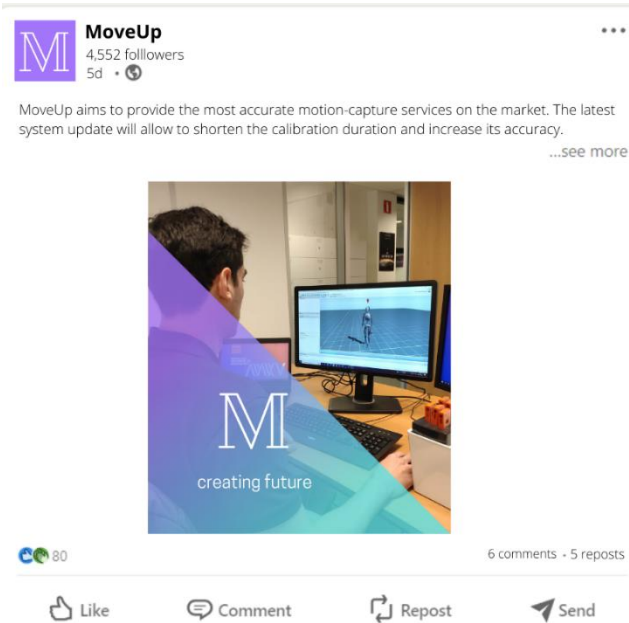
Figure A5

Screenshot of the experiment material for the video format × employee focus × human voice
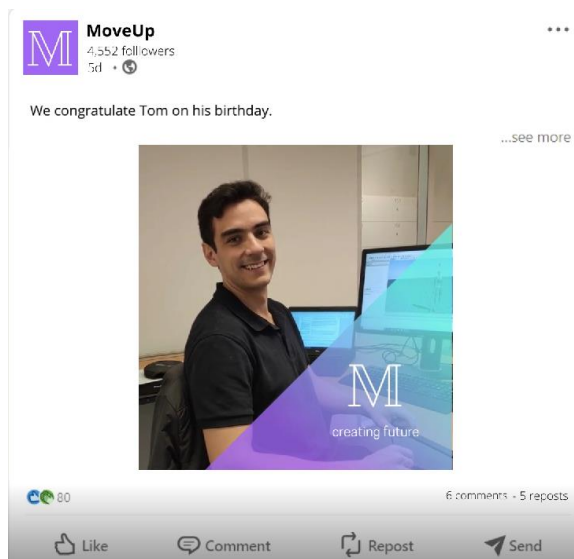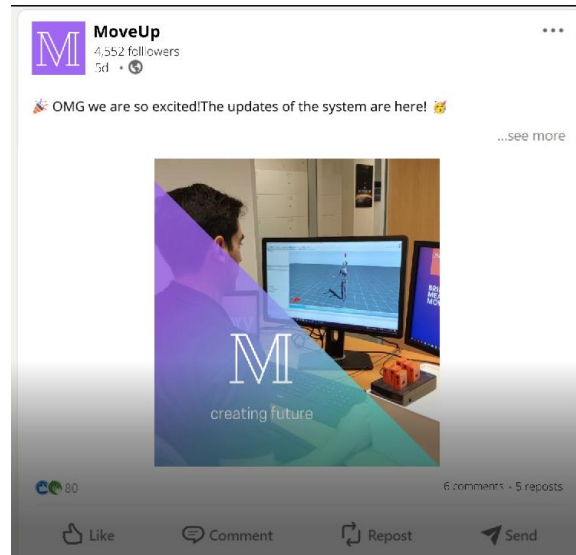
condition

Figure A6

Screenshot of the experiment material for the video format × employee focus × corporate voice
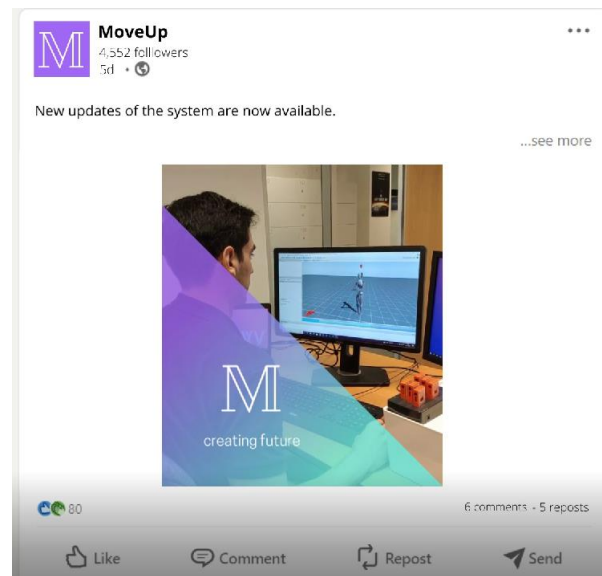
condition

Figure A7

Screenshot of the experiment material for the video format × project focus × corporate voice

condition

Figure A8

Screenshot of the experiment material for the video format × project focus × corporate voice

condition

Appendix B

Measures

EB attractiveness was adapted from Highhouse et al. (2003) and measured on a 5-point Likert scale from "fully disagree" to "fully agree":

1. For me, MoveUp would be a good place to work.

2. I would not be interested in MoveUp except as a last resort (excluded).

3. MoveUp is attractive to me as a place for employment.

4. I am interested in learning more about MoveUp.

5. A job at MoveUp is very appealing to me

Personality traits measures were adapted from Carpentier et al. (2019) and measured on a 5-point Likert scale from "fully disagree" to "fully agree":

Warmth:

Cheerful, sincere, warm, transparent (excluded), sociable, has integrity (excluded).

Competence:

Successful, highly regarded, capable, prominent, professional, renowned.

Appendix C

Sample demographic characteristics per experimental condition

Table C1

Mean age of participants per experimental condition

Experimental condition	N	Mean age of respondents
Photo format × employee focus × human voice	26	26
Photo format × employee focus × corporate voice	26	25.6
Photo format × project focus × human voice	24	26.5
Photo format × project focus × corporate voice	22	24.23
Video format × employee focus × corporate voice	24	24.14
Video format × employee focus × human voice	23	24.15
Video format × project focus × corporate voice	23	25.78
Video format × project focus × human voice	19	24.71

Table C2

Demographic characteristics of experimental condition of photo format × employee focus ×

human voice

Characteristics	N	Percentage
Gender		
Male	17	65
Female	34	35
Professional focus		
STEM	13	50.0
Business, management, administration	6	23.1
Arts and humanities	4	15.4
Medicine	3	11.5
Level of education		
High school	1	3.8
College/MBO	4	15.4
HBO	5	19.2
WO	16	61.5

Table C3

Demographic characteristics of experimental condition of photo format × employee focus × corporate voice

Characteristics	N	Percentage
Gender		
Male	11	45
Female	12	50
Non-binary/prefer not to say	1	5
Professional focus		
STEM	11	45.8
Business, management, administration	9	37.5
Arts and humanities	4	16.7
Medicine	0	0.0
Level of education		
High school	4	16.7
College/MBO	4	16.7
HBO	7	29.2
WO	9	37.5

Table C4

Demographic characteristics of experimental condition of photo format × project focus × human voice

Variable	Characteristics	N	Percentage
Gender			
	Male	14	63.6
	Female	7	31.8
	Non-binary / prefer not to say	1	4.5
Professional focus			
	STEM	16	72.7
	Business, management, administration	3	13.6
	Arts and humanities	3	13.6
	Medicine	0	0.0
Level of education			
	High school	2	9.1
	College/MBO	3	13.6
	HBO	2	9.1
	WO	15	68.2

Table C5

Demographic characteristics of experimental condition of photo format × project focus ×

corporate voice

Variable	Characteristics	N	Percentage
Gender			
	Male	12	46
	Female	13	50
	Non-binary / prefer not to say	1	4
Professional focus			
	STEM	16	61.5
	Business, management, administration	6	23.1
	Arts and humanities	4	15.4
	Medicine	0	0.0
Level of education			
	High school	3	11.5
	College/MBO	2	7.7
	HBO	4	15.4
	WO	17	65.4

Table C6

Demographic characteristics of experimental condition of video format × employee focus ×

corporate voice

Variable	Characteristics	N	Percentage
Gender			
	Male	10	41.7
	Female	13	54.2
	Non-binary/prefer not to say	1	4.2
Professional focus			
	STEM	11	45.8
	Business, management, administration	10	41.7
	Arts and humanities	2	8.3
	Medicine	1	4.2
Level of education			
	High school	3	12.5
	College/MBO	1	4.2
	HBO	2	8.3
	WO	18	75.0

Table C7

Demographic characteristics of experimental condition of video format × employee focus ×

human voice

Variable	Characteristics	N	Percentage
Gender			
	Male	14	63.6
	Female	8	36.4
	Non-binary/prefer not to say	0	0
Professional focus			
	STEM	15	65.2
	Business, management, administration	6	26.1
	Arts and humanities	1	4.3
	Medicine	1	4.3
Level of education			
	High school	5	22.7
	College/MBO	3	13.6
	HBO	0	0.0
	WO	14	63.6

Table C8

Demographic characteristics of experimental condition of video format × project focus ×

human voice

Variable	Characteristics	N	Percentage
Gender			
	Male	9	47.4
	Female	9	47.4
	Non-binary/prefer not to say	1	5.3
Professional focus			
	STEM	12	63.2
	Business, management, administration	4	21.1
	Arts and humanities	3	15.8
	Medicine	0	0.0
Level of education			
	High school	2	10.5
	College/MBO	3	15.8
	HBO	2	10.5
	WO	12	63.2

Table C9

Demographic characteristics of experimental condition of video format × project focus ×

corporate voice

Characteristics	N	Percentage
Gender		
Male	11	47.8
Female	12	52.2
Non-binary/prefer not to say	0	0
Professional focus		
STEM	14	60.9
Business, management, administration	3	13.0
Arts and humanities	5	21.7
Medicine	1	4.3
Level of education		
High school	3	13.0
College/MBO	3	13.0
HBO	2	8.7
WO	15	65.2