

**To identify the impact of Glassdoor and other review websites and its
influence on fresh employees' recruitment in the IT industry**

Guaranteed Grades - Projectsdeal.co.uk

Acknowledgements

Guaranteed Grades - Projectsdeal.co.uk

Abstract

Online job reviews have evolved as the major employer information source for candidates seeking to apply for a job at a particular company. As a result, online review sites such as Glassdoor.com, Indeed, Vault.com and many more have a prominent source to obtain employee reviews and ratings as a voice of the existing or ex-employees which may appear to be a significant help for the prospective job applicants to make an informed decision about the company. This particular research study aims to identify the impact of Glassdoor and other review websites and their influence on fresh employees' recruitment in the IT industry. However, the research problem identifies the need to evaluate the credibility of the review sources and to what extent the online reviews/ratings impact the overall recruitment process. The data collection techniques involve the mixed method tool that includes both the quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection i.e. survey and direct interviews. The survey will involve 50 prospective job applicants and 2 recruiters/HR managers from Microsoft in the UK. The findings reveal that even though these online review sites provide easy access to employee reviews, however, the influence of these sites depends on the credibility and authenticity of sources of review. It has been observed that the widespread anonymous employee review on online review sites tends to have a major impact on employer branding, for example, even a negative review can have a damaging impact on the company's reputation even if the review is based on the falsified stance of an employee. Hence, the credibility of the source plays a key role that needs to be evaluated before concluding.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	2
Abstract.....	3
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	6
1.1 Research Rationale.....	6
1.2 Research Aim:.....	6
1.3. Research Questions:.....	7
1.4 Research Problem	7
1.5 Research Structure	8
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	10
2.0 Literature Review 2.1 Prospective worker's expectations.....	10
2.2 Word of mouth.....	11
2.3 Informal networks.....	12
2.4 Employee attitude and Online reviews.....	13
2.5 Credibility of employee review websites.....	14
2.5.1 Credibility of Online employer reviews.....	14
2.5.2 Realistic information.....	15
2.5.3 Media credibility on Employer reviews.....	16
2.6 Conceptual framework.....	17
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS	18
3.0 Research Methods	18
3.1 Introduction.....	18
3.1 Re-state the research questions	18
3.2 Primary Data collection - Qualitative and Quantitative.....	18
3.3 Research Philosophy	19
3.4 Research Approaches.....	20

3.5 Data collection: Primary Qualitative (2 interviews) and Primary quantitative (2 surveys)	21
3.6 Inclusion criteria and Sampling strategy	22
3.7 Sample size	22
3.8 Ethical issues.....	22
3.9 Limitations	23
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS.....	24
4.0 Results/Analysis.....	24
4.1 Quantitative findings – results	24
Survey 1:.....	24
Results.....	25
Survey 2:.....	27
Results.....	28
4.2 Qualitative – Analysis.....	29
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....	33
5.0 Discussion.....	33
Online reviews such as Glassdoor, Indeed and Vault, and others must have a robust assessment tool to internally validate the credibility and authenticity of the reviews made by anonymous users before posting them into the social platform. Reference List	36

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Conceptual framework	17
Figure 2: Survey 1.....	25
Figure 3: Survey 2.....	28

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Rationale

Glassdoor is one such online review website that has a large amount of data associated with any organization that ranges from employee reviews to job listings. A large number of job candidates seek Glassdoor reviews to develop better insight into the work culture of a company and salary range. Glassdoor enables to post reviews anonymously from both former and current employees; hence it ensures their participation with honesty (Das Swain et al 2020). It is quite evident that more positive feedbacks and reviews from the employees invite more applications from prospective employees. Candidates who are well-informed about a company are more likely to submit relevant applications and well integrate within a company. After the launch of the Glassdoor website and its evaluation for the last five years in the field of employment, the trend of employee application and employer recruitment using such online reviews has picked up tremendously (Dube and Zhu, 2021). Consequently, this study will focus on evaluating how both organizations and employees preferably seek information from online reviews and to what extent it influences their decision-making in the recruitment of fresh employees. Moreover, this research will attempt to find the strong links between online reviews, the attractiveness of employees and employer branding.

1.2 Research Aim:

This research aims at identifying the impact of Glassdoor and other review websites and their influence on fresh employees' recruitment in the IT industry.

1.3. Research Questions:

- What are the sentiment and relative influence associated with online reviews on job applications?
- How do online reviews influence the recruitment of fresh employees in the IT industry?
- How to evaluate the credibility and authenticity of online review sources?

1.4 Research Problem

Despite the increasing popularity of employee reviews and ratings on online review sites, however, this particular subject field has received negligible attention in the research study. For example, the renowned online review site Glassdoor received nearly 35 million reviews on approximately 70,000 companies back in 2017. This online review not only has a significant influence on employer branding, but it also has a strong impact on the recruitment process of the employers, which has not been given focus in the previous research studies. While specific research studies have been conducted on the potential of social media networks and discussion forums as a robust review exchange platform, however, there are negligible efforts given to deriving insights on the efficacy of the word-of-mouth potential and reviews obtained from the informal networks that can have an equally strong impact on the job applicants. In addition, there tends to remain a need to conduct comprehensive research for investigating the consequences of different review characteristics i.e. positive, neutral and negative reviews on the intention of the job seekers and its influence on the overall experience of recruitment. These determinants and key research areas do have essential outcomes because the attraction and retention of talented candidates may determine the future competitiveness of the companies. However, the superfluous nature of online reviews has significantly decreased employee loyalty to drastic

levels without even having adequate knowledge of the credibility and authenticity of the reviews and their respective sources.

1.5 Research Structure

A research study is segregated into five major chapters in an attempt to conduct the research in a standardized manner. The following sections will discuss these five chapters in brief –

Chapter One – The first chapter of the dissertation introduces the topic and related aims, objectives, research problem and research rationale while presenting adequate background to it. This is a formative chapter that develops a basic understanding of the procedures of research to be followed in sequence.

Chapter Two – The literature review underpins the theoretical concepts, frameworks and models from the existing research studies. This section will entail a significant part of the critical evaluation of the facts to identify the research gap and set the stage for primary research in the upcoming sections.

Chapter Three – The methodology section deals with the instruments or tools to be applied in this research study. This section precisely presents a discussion of the research approach, methods, and designs, along with the data collection tools to derive the primary findings and proceed with the analytical approach for data synthesis.

Chapter Four – This chapter emphasizes obtaining the data findings and results based on which the conclusion will be reached to address the objectives.

Chapter Five – The last chapter of the dissertation is meant for deriving the outcomes on critical analysis of the findings and results followed by a comprehensive discussion on the theoretical and practical implications of the findings.

Guaranteed Grades - Projectsdeal.co.uk

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Literature Review 2.1 Prospective worker's expectations

The prospective workers expect to have a clear insight into the job attributes and employer details to make informed decisions about their job application. The initial contact with the on-site representatives of the company is found to be relevant for the formal and initial impression of a good fit (Dabirian, Paschen and Kietzmann, 2019). Besides the on-site representations of the employer, acquaintances, friends and family members working within the organization can have a significant influence on their expectations of becoming a good fit for the prospective company. As critics, Dabirian, Kietzmann, and Diba, (2017) state that the current employees provide a better and more insightful picture of the employer attributes and organizational prospects, hence such information helps the prospective workers to gain self-awareness and judge whether they fit the job or organization.

According to Piercy and Carr (2020), organizations/employers are mostly reluctant in providing negative information about a company or job. Consequently, the realistic information hypothesis proposes that persons who are recruited from diverse sources provide more accurate information about the employer and the job entailed (Carr and Piercy, 2021). Hence, prospective workers expect the inclusion of both positive and negative aspects of the job are likely to enhance their trustworthiness towards the employers or companies. On the contrary, prospective workers expect realistic information in the review sites that will include information that is negative yet it is common to several jobs are likely to increase their attractiveness towards the employer rather than having overly positive information which is majorly fabricated.

The prospective workers also focussed on the realistic job previews that are largely grounded on job performance, satisfaction and turnover ratio. Realistic previews increase the attractiveness of organizations as the prospective workers can derive both positive and negative information from them (Kollitz, Ruhle and Wilhelmy, 2022). This is mainly because the prospective employees can make use of realistic reviews about the employer and job perspectives which will help them in making accurate and realistic perceptions on whether they have congruence between the job requirements and their attributes to perfectly align with it. Moreover, the worker's expectations mainly emphasize having a better fit between the skills, abilities and knowledge with the employer's job requirements to join their preferable organization.

2.2 Word of mouth

Electronic word of mouth is majorly counted based on comments, likes, reviews, ratings, testimonials, images, tweets, and blog posts. According to Evertz, Kollitz and Süß (2021), e-WOM has a higher credibility in comparison to any traditional media in the digital platform. The majority of customers refer to online reviews before making informed decisions. The reviews tend to spread more rapidly which can have a significant impact on the intentions of prospective employees. Negative reviews or negative e-word of mouth are more prevalent in the renowned websites of Glassdoor, Google, Facebook and Indeed where every user gets the opportunity to leave a positive as well as negative review on their current and past employers. According to the study by Zhang, Shum and Belarmino (2022), if a company is well-known in the employer market, it will suffer less from negative word of mouth. Negative word of mouth can be worst for a potential employer as it enables the job applicants to evaluate these negative reviews for their direct experience, consensus and verification. In criticism, studies by Carpentier and Van Hoye (2021) have stated that job applicants are less likely to pay attention to negative reviews if

they have any prior knowledge about the company. In that case, they can take accountability to consider whether the company they are applying to is a potential employer based on their prior knowledge beyond and above the negative reviews.

The consensus suggests that job applicants tend to seek more than one opinion before they decide on whether they will apply for a prospective employer (Dabirian, 2021). However, job applicants tend to verify whether the negative word of mouth is accurate and credible. It has been observed that present-day employees are more likely to evaluate the credibility and accuracy of information before ruling out the employer.

2.3 Informal networks

The informal networks for getting company reviews are mainly the corporate website, social media, and blogs are the major networks to learn about a company. The search for general news coverage and industry-specific publications to get recent updates about the company and its competitors. The potential form of informal networks is reliable friends, colleagues and acquaintances (Marinescu et al 2021). On getting formal reviews from the websites such as Glassdoor, the employees mainly discuss with their informal network to get insight details on the company, its opportunities and its culture. Seeking out the existing employees of a prospective company or reading the employee bios on the "About Us" page of the company and reaching out to their social media profile to know about the company leadership, their work culture, posts they share, organizational events they participated in can help the prospective employees to gain insight about the organization, work culture, workforce enthusiasm, etc (Clark and Roberts, 2010). In addition, there are multiple informal media sources such as business journals, trade publications, local and national news, and forums that can provide better reviews about the company.

2.4 Employee attitude and Online reviews

With the advancement in technology and constant connection with the digital world, the employee experience can have a significant influence on the employer's brand image. The prospective workers make use of the reviews to make informed decisions about the company they choose to apply to (Cloos, 2021). Hence, online reviews are used as the benchmark for gauging the various workplace factors and checking whether it matches the expectations of the prospective candidates. Hence, it can be observed that online reviews of employers have a significant influence on job seekers which leads them to have a more positive and negative opinion of the employer.

For the theoretical underpinnings, the two kinds of employee attitudes are (1) pride to be a part of the company and (2) employees give more importance to the outsider's opinion of the company. The employees who were exposed to the negative, positive and neutral reviews of their hypothetical employers tend to get affected by the two kinds of attitudes. The study by Vatsa (2016) dictates that positive employer reviews motivate employees to feel they are proud to be a part of the company, and this would expect outsiders to view the company in a more positive light. In contrast, employees who have seen negative reviews tend to significantly feel less pride as a result of which the outsiders would view the company in a negative light (Lievens and Slaughter, 2016). This has clear indications that online employer reviews will not only influence the employee's opinion but also affect the expectations of how outsiders or other people view the company. The latter is essential because employees are more concerned about the opinion of other employees' reviews who are affiliated with the same organization.

2.5 Credibility of employee review websites

2.5.1 Credibility of Online employer reviews

The Company based sources of review such as advertisements are a part of the employer's recruitment strategies and hiring talent which are directly controlled by the employer to propagate/communicate a positive message to the potential applicants. Conversely, the company's independent sources such as word of mouth can be only influenced indirectly by the recruitment activities; hence, it can be both positive and negative reviews and employer information publicly available (Thomas, Wirtz and Weyerer, 2019). In comparison to the review sources which are company dependent, the independent sources of information/review are perceived to be more credible as it does not have the explicit goal or purpose to sell the organization.

Guaranteed Grades - Projectsdeal.co.uk

The job application or prospective employees can get information from the sources like recruiters, advertisements, and publicity through the word of mouth (Mackiewicz, Yeats and Thornton, 2016). Thus, recruitment advertisements represent the most typical and common examples of a company/employer which is dependent on recruitment sources. Such examples can be the company corporate websites, recruitment brochures, etc (Chakraborty and Bhat, 2018). Conversely, the typical example of an independent source of review is word of mouth, interpersonal communication, conversation with friends and colleagues and advice taken from independent experts. Generally, the word of mouth typically takes place through face-to-face interactions that can also be attained through the mediums of telephonic conversation and video-conferencing. The significance of digital/electronic word of mouth is prominent owing to the emergence of increasing websites such as chat rooms.

2.5.2 Realistic information

The information received by a job applicant about the organization or employer can emerge from varieties of sources that include the interviewers, existing employees of the company, family, friends and acquaintances who are directly associated with the company (Román, Riquelme and Iacobucci, 2023). However, the information received from them is mainly influenced by their experience with the organization which can often be biased and unfair. According to Henshell (2015), the credibility of sources mainly has two dimensions i.e. expertise and reliability. Expertise implies the extent to which a speaker is perceived to be capable of making the correct/accurate assumptions whereas reliability/trustworthiness refers to the extent to which an audience can perceive the assertions made by the communicator as valid.

The credibility of review sources is critically significant in persuasive communication, behavioural complications and changes in attitude (Jin Ma and Lee, 2014). Alternatively, Chakraborty and Bhat (2018) opined that credibility is a significant intervening variable between recruitment activities and outcomes. The expert job incumbents are perceived to have more experience in their organizations as they work closely in the real ground. For trustworthiness, receiving information which is significantly distinctive from what was expected from the source is perceived to be highly credible. Consequently, Glassdoor, LinkedIn or indeed reviews are often influenced by employers in an attempt to portray an overly positive picture of the organizational attributes and job prospects. Hence, such sources are highly unlikely to be reliable in the real context. As a critic, Mackiewicz, Yeats and Thornton (2016) argue that the communicators who convey information that tends to distract from their position are rated more reliable and credible than the communicators who cite information that will conform to their position in the organization.

2.5.3 Media credibility on Employer reviews

Regarding media credibility, Román, Riquelme, and Iacobucci, (2023) have focussed on the three chief recruitment media such as company webpages, electronic bulletin boards, and career fairs. On the contrary, Jin Ma and Lee, (2014) opined that prospective employees or job seekers would perceive electronic bulletin boards as highly credible than any company website or review sites because the electronic bulletin boards are typically not the self-presentation of the company's best attributes to attract the candidates. Rather, this information is posted by a third party that is generally not sanitized, hence it is perceived to be more credible by the job applicants (Kollitz, Ruhle and Wilhelmy, 2022). Conversely, both the career fairs, company websites, and online review sites that have been explicitly created by the employer to market themselves to the prospective employees/job applicants are only an attempt to convey their positional information. However, the findings by Piercy and Carr (2020) suggest that career fairs, web pages and online review sites are found to be more credible than electronic bulletin boards owing to their popularity. Hence, the lack of familiarity with any potential review medium can have a perceived effect on its credibility.

2.6 Conceptual framework

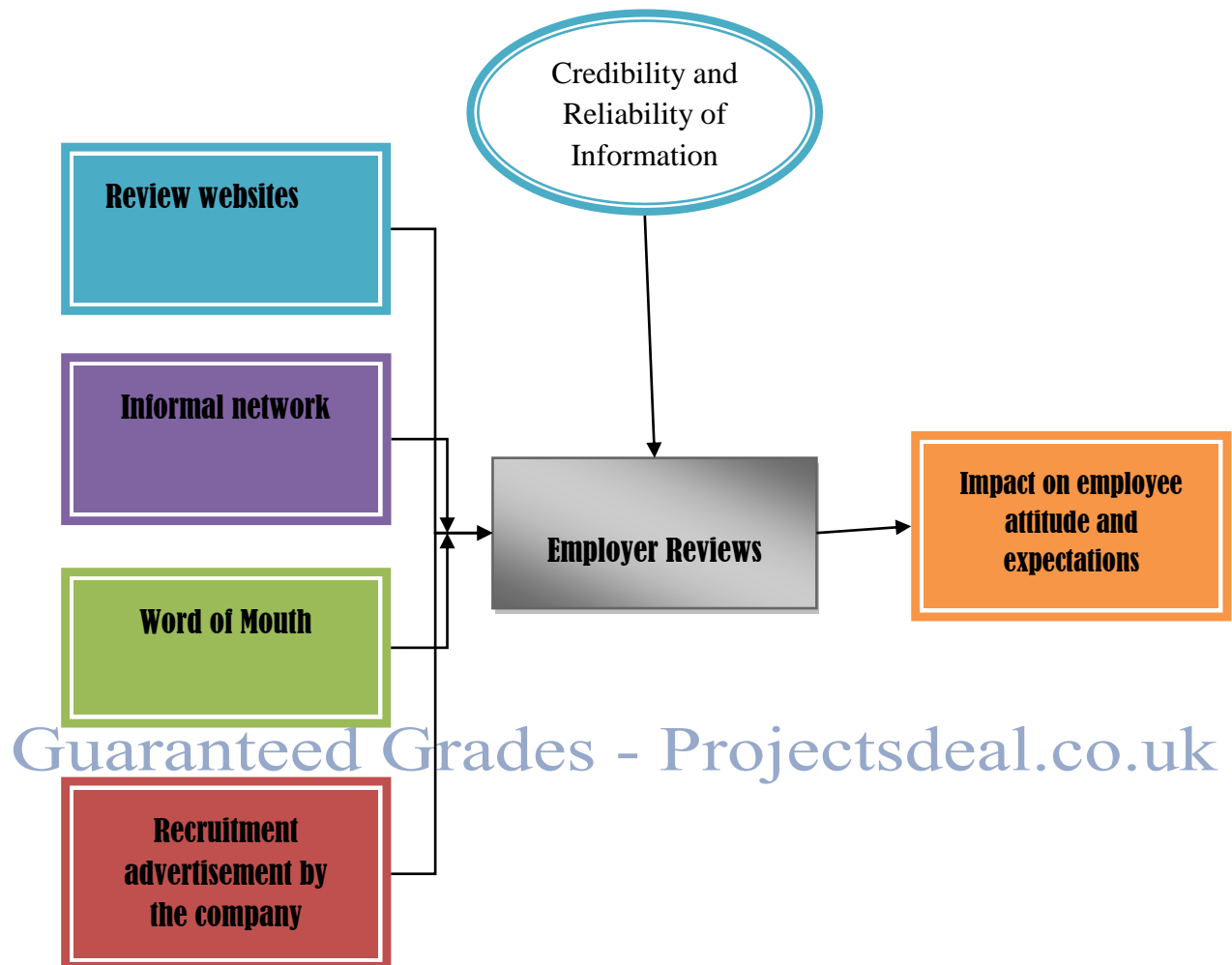


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

(Ref: Author's Creation)

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

3.0 Research Methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter of the methodology discusses the key methods, tools and techniques that are employed to conduct a thorough investigation on the chosen topic. Hence, this portion of the study will encompass the research approaches, research methods, research techniques, data collection methods, ethical considerations and limitations to have a comprehensive idea about the research methodology.

3.1 Re-state the research questions

This research study emphasizes exploring the motivations and experiences of the participants involved in the qualitative and quantitative data collection referring to the following research questions-

- What are the sentiment and relative influence associated with online reviews on job applications?
- How do online reviews influence the recruitment of fresh employees in the IT industry?
- How to evaluate the credibility and authenticity of online review sources?

3.2 Primary Data collection - Qualitative and Quantitative

This particular study employs both qualitative and quantitative data collection to derive raw data from the research participants. Qualitative data is useful for recording narrative responses that provide a detailed understanding of the motivations and opinions of the participants, whereas quantitative data implies statistical data collection from a larger sample size. Almalki (2016)

opines that qualitative data helps in the implication of theoretical concepts in real-life situations thus enabling a better understanding of the topic and issues under investigation. This study has employed a mixed method approach in which the job applications are considered for quantitative data collection whereas the Recruiters of prospective organizations are considered for the qualitative data collection.

The primary data collection procedure will follow the appropriate integration of research methods, research philosophies and approaches which is the key to conducting the overall process of data collection in a standardized manner (McGrath, Palmgren and Liljedahl, 2019). The following sections will discuss the relevant approaches, philosophies and methods applied in relevance to the mixed method approach of data collection.

3.3 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy is a phenomenon to derive realities for the research problem. The two main research philosophies positivity and interpretivism can be applied in academic research studies. The positivist philosophy focuses on deriving reality in an objective manner which will essentially eliminate the personal opinion of the researcher and obtain the facts which are independent of the researcher's interpretations (Saunders, Lewis and Adrian Thornhill, 2015). Alternatively, interpretive philosophy is mainly focused on the assumption that reality is subjective and constructed socially.

While this research employs a mixed method approach, the qualitative data will be evaluated by the interpretative philosophy which will help in deriving the facts and reality based on the individual experience, motivation and reasoning of the participants shaped by their social and historical perspectives. The interpretive philosophy does not focus on the quantification of

primary data to comprehend the interactions (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020). Alternatively, the quantitative data thus obtained will be evaluated using the positivism philosophy that only adheres to the factual knowledge derived through the observation and quantification of the data (responses).

3.4 Research Approaches

The two chief approaches that are applied in the Academic research study are inductive and deductive. Deductive reasoning is a top-down approach whereas inductive reasoning is a bottom-up approach. Inductive reasoning will move from specific to the generalized research study whereas deductive reasoning will focus on making inferences by moving from more generalized premises to specific conclusions. The deductive approach is significantly applicable to the hypothesis creation by using theoretical knowledge which is further tested to derive the empirical pieces of evidence (McGrath, Palmgren and Liljedahl, 2019). In this particular research, inductive reasoning is crucial to shift the focus from a specific observation of Glassdoor and other review websites to the broader generalization of how it impacts or influences the recruitment of fresh employees in the IT industry. The inductive approach is appropriately fitting the qualitative study as it emphasizes evaluating the motivation, experiences and behaviour of the participants in areas that remain unexplored and seek the contribution of new theories (Armat et al 2018). Conversely, the quantitative data is better evaluated by using deductive reasoning to the numerical data numbers to either prove or disprove the hypothesis derived from the literature review.

3.5 Data collection: Primary Qualitative (2 interviews) and Primary quantitative (2 surveys)

The qualitative data will be collected using semi-structured interviews which are characterised by a series of questions designed on the pre-defined topics (Abulela and Harwell, 2020). The semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to obtain the personal and social experiences of the participants and the degree of freedom to ask probing questions in response to the participant's reply, which is not possible in the case of focus group observations or group interviews. In addition, the interviews are best suited due to their simple and time-efficient approach.

There will be 2 direct interviews with the Human resource managers (recruiters) of Microsoft Company and they will be held via video conferences based on the feasibility and given schedule.

Alternatively, the quantitative data collection by employing the survey technique where each participant will be shared with a survey questionnaire that comprises a list of questions centred on the topic or issue under investigation (Nayak and Narayan, 2019). The responses will be obtained in quantitative data forms to understand the experiences, opinions and attitudes of the participants towards the agenda. The use of a survey questionnaire is effective owing to its usefulness, flexibility and responses that can be collected from a large sample size.

There will be two specific survey questions designed which will be conducted with the job applications (Story and Tait, 2019). The survey questionnaire will be directly sent to the participants via email and they can complete the questionnaire and send it back through the same mail chain.

3.6 Inclusion criteria and Sampling strategy

The selection of survey participants (i.e. the 50 prospective employees) is done from a mass population based on the principle of simple random probability sampling or randomization i.e. it is more of a random selection devoid of any specific selection criteria so that each member of the population have the equal chance of getting selected for the survey process. Alternatively, the selection of recruiters for the interview process is based on the non-probability sampling technique. In this case, the inclusion criteria for the selection of 2 Human resource managers are made based on the following criteria:

- The recruiters who are actively involved in the review sites such as Glassdoor
- Recruiters who are responsible for screening the applications of fresh applicants.
- Minimum 5 years of experience as the HR recruiter,
- Experience working in Microsoft for a minimum of 3-7 years

3.7 Sample size

The sample size selected for the qualitative interview will be 2 recruiters (Microsoft in the UK). Conversely, the sample size for the quantitative interview will be 50 prospective employees and job applicants combined.

3.8 Ethical issues

The ethical concerns emphasize ensuring that the participation of human respondents in research must adhere to certain protocols or codes of conduct. This will be done by sending an email to each of the participants via email which will be read by them and sent back with their consent to proceed with the data collection process (Perera and Emmerich, 2018). Hence, it is the sole duty

of the researcher to ensure the participants are cordially informed about the purpose, objectives, and duration of the interview. The researcher must ensure the participants can freely take part in the data collection process voluntarily based on informed consent. The participants can withdraw their participation from the interview or survey at any point in time according to their will (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020). The privacy of the participants is ensured by concealing their identity and anonymity to prevent them from any kind of mental and physical harassment. Finally, the researcher has to complete the Ethics checklist of the University before commencing the research process.

Regarding the secondary data collection in the context of the literature review, the researcher makes appropriate declarations about the secondary sources by citing the original authors of the texts (McGrath, Palmgren and Liljedahl, 2019). On the contrary, the researcher ensures that there is no fabrication or false information written in the content and avoids the issues of plagiarism.

3.9 Limitations

This research may entail the following limitations that can have a significant influence on the results. They are-

- Reliability issues – the participants involved in the interview process are more likely to provide biased responses towards their organization, hence the reliability issues are pertinent for this research.

Time limitation – Owing to the cross-sectional nature of the study, this research has to be completed within a short and stipulated time frame. Consequently, many deep details of the chosen issue remain unanalysed due to the cross-sectional nature of the study which has incurred a significantly limitation.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Results/Analysis

4.1 Quantitative findings – results

Survey 1:

Do you agree that online reviews or Glassdoor reviews impact your application decision to a particular company?

Options	No of respondents	Total respondents	Response %
Strongly Agree	17	50	34%
Agree	12	50	24%
Neutral	11	50	22%
Disagree	7	50	14%
Strongly Disagree	3	50	0.6%

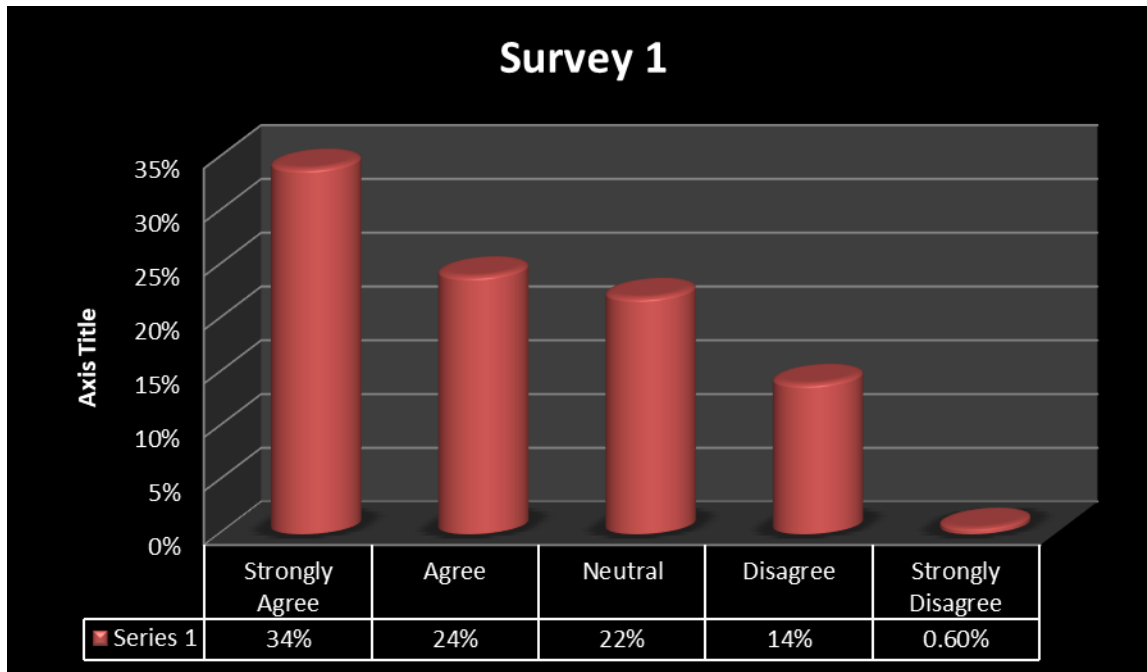


Figure 2: Survey 1

Guaranteed Grades - Projectsdeal.co.uk Results

From the statistical findings depicted above, the participants have made clear indications that they are more interested to apply for a job if they find positive reviews and they are more likely to recommend the company as a good employer to apply for. Alternatively, the participants who can observe negative reviews were found less interested and less willing to recommend the company to their peer groups. The participants also informed that positive employer reviews make them proud to be a part of the company. In contrast, it can be stated that different employees belonging to different positions can have varied opinions about a particular organizational culture. Moreover, their respective opinions/reviews are most likely to be influenced by their personal experience in their respective positions. This can potentially imply that certain perspectives of the online reviews made by the employees are not indicative of the

overall culture and sentiment of a company. Hence, even genuine employee reviews on online review sites (such as Glassdoor) can often be overestimated.

Even though it can be observed that the impact of online reviews may not have a uniform level of influence on employee job decisions, however, the responses and findings significantly underpin that the majority of job seekers rely on these review sites at the time of evaluating the potential of a company. Evidence suggests that majority of the job seekers primarily make use of review sites, whereas negative reviews can discourage them from applying to a prospective company. A company profile can have a large number of positive, negative and neutral reviews; hence the audiences/job applicants may not be able to derive the overall company image from the context of deviating reviews (Dube and Zhu, 2021). Thus, the discrepancy in information within the online review sites is high which may not help the candidates to draw a coherent picture of the company and correctly identify the causes and potential reasons behind the negative reviews. As a result, the discrepant and deviated reviews simply leave the review reader (i.e. the job applicants) with a cognitive dissonance particularly if the overall review ratings are neither positive nor negative against a company. Conversely, it can be anticipated that the higher level of discrepancy for text sentiments and numeric assessment (for the reviews which are found in the non-extreme range) can have a significant influence on the job seeker's influence that can eventually affect the candidates' perception of the company's trustworthiness. In contrast, it can also be stated that in online reviews in virtual environments where the information about a reviewer (i.e. the employees) is scarce or limited, then the average opinion of the job applicants mostly relies on casual inferences about the company that may not have a significant influence on the trustworthiness of the company.

Survey 2:

Do you agree that online/Glassdoor reviews are authentic and credible?

Options	No of respondents	Total respondents	Response %
Strongly Agree	12	50	24%
Agree	7	50	14%
Neutral	17	50	34%
Disagree	10	50	20%
Strongly Disagree	4	50	0.8%

Guaranteed Grades - Projectsdeal.co.uk

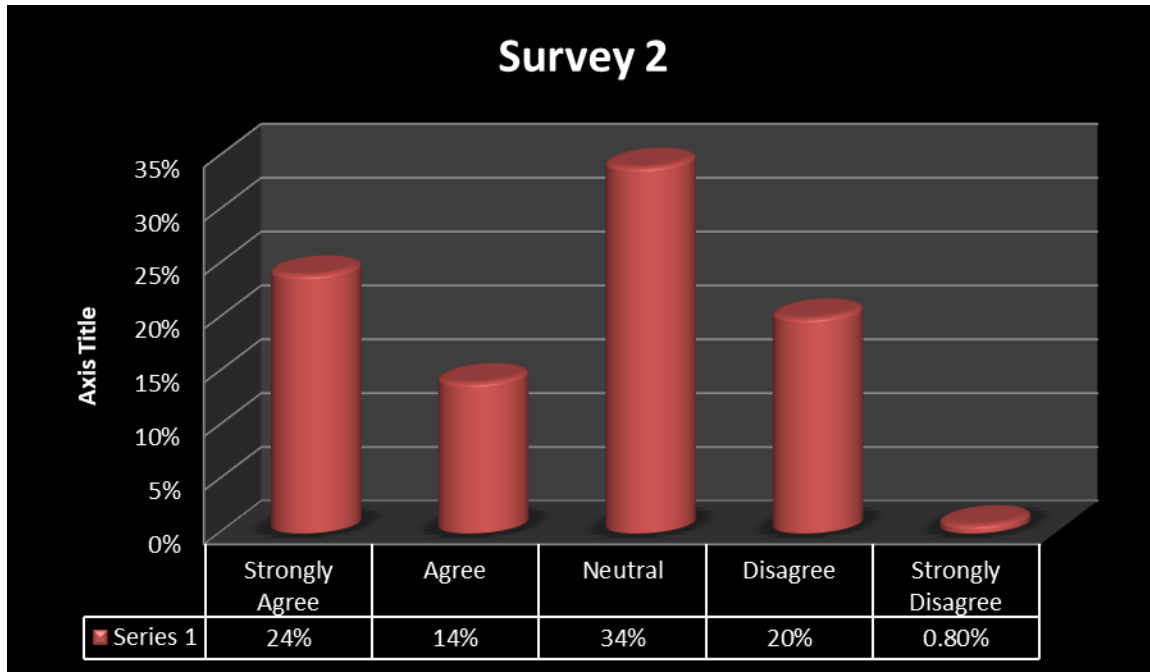


Figure 3: Survey 2

Guaranteed Grades - Projectsdeal.co.uk Results

The participants informed that they receive information about a job or an organization from a variety of sources that includes online Glassdoor reviews, social media, friends and acquaintances who are not directly associated with the prospective company the applicant intends to apply for. The participants evaluate the credibility of a review for the expertise of the incumbents and years of experience working in the company of the reviewers. Moreover, sources are found to be more trustable if they provide a mix of unfavourable information rather than sharing only overly positive information. There have been significant pieces of evidence in which the reviews provided by current or existing employees are predicted to be more credible based on their trustworthiness and expertise. A job seeker is more likely to trust a source of review if he is perceived to be knowledgeable about his job profile. Alternatively, word of mouth

and employee testimonials on the company's independent sources can modify and improve the image perceptions of an organization. In the context of the credibility of the online reviews, the participants are unlikely to follow the company website as one of the prominent review sources because the information gathered from the corporate webpage is mainly positive as their main goal is to promote the organization and attract a talented workforce. In contrast, Dube and Zhu, (2021) opine that employees have the propensity to share their experiences about their ex and current employers on various online forums such as vault.com, glassdoor.com which are mainly operated by third parties, hence the reviews by current employees on this site is made available raw without manipulation of the review data. In the context of Glassdoor reviews, this particular review site can provide a more standardized distribution of the reviews owing to its content-based independent source reviews (Piercy and Carr, 2020). The content on these sites gets locked after a specific period. Hence, for the users to access more pages on this site, they have to contribute a review that eventually facilitates a normalized distribution of reviews. After the review gets submitted, it is passed through the Glassdoor verification check to assess its accuracy before it is added to the website which makes it more credible and authentic than any other review sources.

4.2 Qualitative – Analysis

Theme 1: Impact of Online reviews on the Recruitment process of Microsoft

Glassdoor review platforms have significantly reduced the labour market asymmetry by allowing employees to make anonymous reviews on the salary and organizational culture. The managers have stated that "positive reviews by the existing or ex-employees of the organization can be used as the valuable recruitment tool in an attempt to attract the high-skilled candidates. The managers have asserted that even though the review sites have not led to any direct change in the

recruitment process within the company, however, there is close and continuous monitoring of the reviews in an attempt to make the overall journey of the existing and new employees smooth. The employee and candidate generate reviews are a credible source for employers to attain real-time insights about their experience from any voluntary source. The company is focused on considering employee/candidate reviews as a continuous improvement tool to attract talented workforces. The HR managers stated examples such as " if we notice a trend of "work-life balance" as a pro, we would produce creative business shots/stories to highlight the way our organizations contribute to this theme". Alternatively, "if we notice a trend of "no motivation" as a con, we would take strategic measures to improve the employee motivation". Moreover, to improve the recruitment process, online reviews can be deployed as a powerful sentiment analysis to listen, reach and influence job applicants, which will ultimately turn employee reviews into a competitive edge.

Guaranteed Grades - Projectsdeal.co.uk

The respondents have opined that Microsoft as the recruiter subscribes to the premium paid services of Glassdoor to monitor, read and respond to employee reviews, promote their employer branding and also ensure compensation for the negative reviews using positive evaluations, obliging the third parties or employees directly. Hence, this implies that having a well-managed and positive presence of an employer on a review platform such as Glassdoor can improve the employer branding, and enhances the interest of job seekers in the organizations. Also, the simple presence of an employer on Glassdoor increases the visibility of a company to potential applicants which can further improve the overall recruitment efficiency of the organization. As one of the leading companies, the respondents have pointed out that the company is worried about the negative review bias in which some of the employee reviews can be based only on misconceptions, few negative reviews and employee prejudices (Sainju, Hartwell and Edwards,

2021). Even though Glassdoor holds the potential to boost the recruitment market, however, there are better alternatives that can provide even more opportunities in the recruitment process of the company. For example, LinkedIn has been observed as the most crucial recruitment platform having adequate transparency and potential networks that can also be utilised as an employer branding strategy.

Theme 2: Potential mediums of Online job reviews utilised by the job applicants and patterns of review evaluation by the candidates

Social media tools are largely employed to share online reviews such as Facebook, discussion forums, and LinkedIn platforms. The majority of the organizations on Facebook have their career pages and anonymous confession pages for the company. The information and reviews available on these pages tend to have a potential influence on the participant's decision to apply to the prospective company. LinkedIn enables applicants to have multiple networks and gain substantial information about the job and organizations alike with valuable employee testimonials. Indeed is referred to as one of the largest job portals that attract more than 250 million monthly visitors on this site. Indeed offers a vast platform to its users to share reviews and ratings under the "Company review" sector (Feng, 2023). These company reviews are linked to the employee profiles so that any user seeking a particular company or job can have a direct link to the employees and check what they have said about their previous experience. Such an approach enhances the credibility of online reviews owing to the identity-based reviews provided to the employees.

It has been observed that the majority of prospective job applicants tend to make a comparative evaluation across different sources of reviews to understand which of the available sources can

provide the best returns in the context of more realistic information and credible information. Online platforms such as LinkedIn or Glassdoor online review sites are widely used by job seekers before making an application for a job. These web platforms show prominent reviews and ratings about the job position and employers consciously seek the pros and cons of the company. Hence, such reviews and ratings have a strong influence on the decision-making process of job applications. There are contrasting views presented by the respondents stating that the users do not believe everything they read on the site reviews, rather they are more likely to seek information that supports their thought process. The more data points the candidates get to back their individual opinion, the more certain their decision becomes. Conversely, cognitive dissonance probably makes a person less certain about their choice (Madding et al 2020). For example, a bad review may not completely change the mind of a job applicant; however, they might need to seek additional reviews or credible insights before they are convinced to a certain point. Consequently, the majority of the candidates appear at the first interview while shaping an initial impression about the company based on online reviews (Román, Riquelme and Iacobucci, 2023). However, during interactions with the recruiters, the candidates accumulate data and facts to confirm or disprove the claims made in the reviews. Hence, the real-time situations during the recruitment process are the actual ground where it will either change their initial opinion or strongly cement it into certainty. Hence, recruiters need to create a favourable interview experience that will typically address the natural concerns of the job candidates and allow them to shape their mindset through real experiences.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.0 Discussion

Online review sites such as Glassdoor reviews are referred to as third-party sites, hence there is negligible or no probability of providing only positive information about a prospective job or a company. In comparison to online review sites, corporate websites of companies share information/reviews that are mostly sanitized or even fabricated because it is under the control of the organization. It has been observed that the reviews and information shared on social media sites are less controlled by the companies; hence it is perceived as a more credible source of review than the websites or forums that are controlled by the organizations. Consequently, the reviews or employee testimonials which are displayed on social media sites are perceived to be more highly credible than the employee testimonials which are available on any company-dependent sources. In correspondence, Thomas, Wirtz and Weyerer (2019) suggested that company reviews which are available on independent websites are not the self-presentation of all the positive attributes held by the company while curtailing its negative attributes to attract the talented pool of employees. Hence, the company-specific reviews are shared by third-party online platforms such as Glassdoor.com, and Vault.com share is non-sanitized; hence these independent review sites are given high priority by prospective job applicants in making informed decisions.

The overall impact of genuine online review sites tends to have a significant influence on their job application to prospective companies. According to Kollitz, Ruhle and Wilhelmy (2022), Glassdoor estimates the company ratings by using its proprietary rating algorithms with significant emphasis on recent reviews. Generally more recent the review is, the heavier its weightage will be towards the creation of an overall rating. According to the study by Zhang,

Shum and Belarmino (2022), the Glassdoor review intelligence is launched to expand the reach of Glassdoor's simple review tools that enable employers to unlock the potential insights from the employee reviews and critically understand the "why" behind their respective ratings. In contrast, Chakraborty and Bhat (2018) pointed out the significant criticism against the Glassdoor website in terms of the reliability of the reviews. It has been argued that the sole intention of some employees is to damage the reputation of the company and potentially harm their image in the industry. Also, there can be situations where the employer is not responsible, yet the dissatisfied employees can provide false reviews thereby misusing the Glassdoor platform. This often leads to a situation where the organization may run the risk of creating unrealistic expectations that might disappoint the candidates down the line. The research study by Cloos (2021) highlighted that unrealistic expectations set during the recruitment phase may create critical challenges due to the existence of a positive correlation between the unmet expectations of the employees and their intentions to leave the organization. The Glassdoor review sites suffer the challenge of “polarity of reviews” in which the incentivized reviews are obtained owing to its “give-to-get” model (Sainju, Hartwell and Edwards, 2021). A more strict approach to the registration process of users on these online review sites is crucial to increase the authenticity and trustworthiness of the company reviews.

The online review sites could be utilised as an effective tool for the recruitment process in companies by identifying the key factors which are most influential for the candidates on their overall job satisfaction. The employee reviews provide critical managerial insights and areas of improvement for the HR managers, whereas the recruiters prioritize these factors based on the relative importance of each factor in their recruitment process (Piercy and Carr, 2020). Glassdoor or other online review sites are considered the KPI (Key Performance Indicators) of an

organization that can be utilised to improve employer branding and employee retention at the same time. Job applicants or upcoming employees heavily rely on online reviews owing to their easy access and genuine rating protocols that help them in making informed decisions about selecting the right company for long-term stability. Alternatively, the employers find the opportunity to improve their work culture, decrease the turnover ratio and make the organization a favourable workplace for its employees by evaluating the online reviews and ratings given by the existing and ex-employees of the company. In criticism, Feng (2023) argues that online employer reviews often suffer from selection bias as employees having extreme opinions are high proactive to share online reviews than employees with moderate opinions, which in turn results in extreme ratings. Extreme ratings or reviews are less preferred by the employees/job applicants as they perceive voluntary employee reviews with a more moderate opinion are reliable rather than the likely bias prevalent in the extreme reviews. On the contrary, there are critical claims that a user who is actively posting a review for or against a company must be recognized when revealing facts, circumstances or data instead of providing anonymous reviews. In support Zhang, Shum and Belarmino (2022) claim that the identity or identification of the reviewer will not aid in tracing the users/reviewer in situations of carelessly giving damaging reviews over a company, but it would also enhance the authenticity and credibility of the review sites. Anonymous reviews by the employees may guarantee the freedom of expression and credibility of the facts only if it is shared by real people in good faith and with intellectual honesty. Reports by Mackiewicz, Yeats and Thornton (2016) have revealed several cases in the last few years wherein online review websites such as Glassdoor and others have barely honest facts, rather most of the reviews are distorted and defamatory expressed out of anger and grievances of the employees. Online review sites are often utilised in retaliation by dissatisfied

employees who are either incompetent or unlikely to continue with the organization, hence they turn up to these online review sites to blatantly post false information instead of identifying their shortcomings. Such falsified information is not only damaging to the company's reputation and brand image but also limits the rewarding future of a potential candidate in a prospective company.

The following set of recommendations can be effectively applied in the areas of improvement –

- The employers must be focussed on monitoring the reviews, improve their response activities and rely on the reviews with facts and data which will help the company to recruit talented candidates and maintain a strong brand image in the competitive labour market

Online reviews such as Glassdoor, Indeed and Vault, and others must have a robust assessment tool to internally validate the credibility and authenticity of the reviews made by anonymous users before posting them into the social platform.

Reference List

Abulela, M.A. and Harwell, M.M., 2020. Data Analysis: Strengthening Inferences in Quantitative Education Studies Conducted by Novice Researchers. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, 20(1), pp.59-78.

Alharahsheh, H.H. and Pius, A., 2020. A review of key paradigms: Positivism VS interpretivism. *Global Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(3), pp.39-43.

Almalki, S., 2016. Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Data in Mixed Methods Research-- Challenges and Benefits. *Journal of education and learning*, 5(3), pp.288-296.

Armat, M.R., Assarroudi, A., Rad, M., Sharifi, H. and Heydari, A., 2018. Inductive and deductive: Ambiguous labels in qualitative content analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(1), pp.219-221.

Carpentier, M. and Van Hoye, G., 2021. Managing organizational attractiveness after a negative employer review: Company response strategies and review consensus. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 30(2), pp.274-291.

Carr, C.T. and Piercy, C.W., 2021. Linguistic cues to misrepresentation in online employer reviews. *Communication Reports*, 34(3), pp.179-191.

Chakraborty, U. and Bhat, S., 2018. The effects of credible online reviews on brand equity dimensions and its consequence on consumer behavior. *Journal of promotion management*, 24(1), pp.57-82.

Clark, L.A. and Roberts, S.J., 2010. Employer's use of social networking sites: A socially irresponsible practice. *Journal of business ethics*, 95, pp.507-525.

Cloos, J., 2021. Employer Review Platforms—Do the Rating Environment and Platform Design affect the Informativeness of Reviews? Theory, Evidence, and Suggestions. *mrev management revue*, 32(3), pp.152-181.

Dabirian, A., 2021. Employer Branding: Psychological Contract Between Employer and Employees in the IT Industry. *IT professional*, 23(5), pp.12-16.

Dabirian, A., Kietzmann, J. and Diba, H., 2017. A great place to work!? Understanding crowdsourced employer branding. *Business horizons*, 60(2), pp.197-205.

Dabirian, A., Paschen, J. and Kietzmann, J., 2019. Employer branding: Understanding employer attractiveness of IT companies. *IT professional*, 21(1), pp.82-89.

Dube, S. and Zhu, C., 2021. The disciplinary effect of social media: Evidence from firms' responses to Glassdoor reviews. *Journal of Accounting Research*, 59(5), pp.1783-1825.

Evertz, L., Kollitz, R. and Süß, S., 2021. Electronic word-of-mouth via employer review sites—the effects on organizational attraction. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 32(16), pp.3428-3457.

Feng, S., 2023. Job satisfaction, management sentiment, and financial performance: Text analysis with job reviews from indeed. com. *International Journal of Information Management Data Insights*, 3(1), p.100155.

Henshell, J., 2015. The Credibility of Online Reviews. *Journal of Information Ethics*, 24(1), p.82.

Jin Ma, Y. and Lee, H.H., 2014. Consumer responses toward online review manipulation. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 8(3), pp.224-244.

Kollitz, R., Ruhle, S. and Wilhelmy, A., 2022. How to deal with negative online employer reviews: An application of image repair theory. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 30(4), pp.526-544.

Lievens, F. and Slaughter, J.E., 2016. Employer image and employer branding: What we know and what we need to know. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 3, pp.407-440.

Mackiewicz, J., Yeats, D. and Thornton, T., 2016. The impact of review environment on review credibility. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 59(2), pp.71-88.

Madding, C., Ansari, A., Ballenger, C. and Thota, A., 2020. Topic Modeling to Understand Technology Talent. *SMU Data Science Review*, 3(2), p.16.

Marinescu, I., Chamberlain, A., Smart, M. and Klein, N., 2021. Incentives can reduce bias in online employer reviews. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, 27(2), p.393.

McGrath, C., Palmgren, P.J. and Liljedahl, M., 2019. Twelve tips for conducting qualitative research interviews. *Medical teacher*, 41(9), pp.1002-1006.

Nayak, M.S.D.P. and Narayan, K.A., 2019. Strengths and weaknesses of online surveys. *technology*, 6, p.7.

Perera, K. and Emmerich, N., 2018. *The Ethical Concerns of Writing in Social Science Research*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Piercy, C.W. and Carr, C.T., 2020. Employer reviews may say as much about the employee as they do the employer: Online disclosures, organizational attachments, and unethical behavior. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 48(5), pp.577-597.

Piercy, C.W. and Carr, C.T., 2020. Employer reviews may say as much about the employee as they do the employer: Online disclosures, organizational attachments, and unethical behavior. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 48(5), pp.577-597.

Román, S., Riquelme, I.P. and Iacobucci, D., 2023. Fake or credible? Antecedents and consequences of perceived credibility in exaggerated online reviews. *Journal of Business Research*, 156, p.113466.

Sainju, B., Hartwell, C. and Edwards, J., 2021. Job satisfaction and employee turnover determinants in Fortune 50 companies: Insights from employee reviews from Indeed.com. *Decision Support Systems*, 148, p.113582.

Story, D.A. and Tait, A.R., 2019. Survey research. *Anesthesiology*, 130(2), pp.192-202.

Thomas, M.J., Wirtz, B.W. and Weyerer, J.C., 2019. DETERMINANTS OF ONLINE REVIEW CREDIBILITY AND ITS IMPACT ON CONSUMERS'PURCHASE INTENTION. *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, 20(1), pp.1-20.

Vatsa, M., 2016. Leveraging Employer Branding for Organizational Success. *Review of Management*, 6.

Zhang, Y., Shum, C. and Belarmino, A., 2022. “Best Employers”: The Impacts of Employee Reviews and Employer Awards on Job Seekers’ Application Intentions. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, p.19389655221130741.

Guaranteed Grades - [Projectsdeal.co.uk](https://www.projectsdeal.co.uk)