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Use of gender empowerment messaging in employer branding
strategies across different industries

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Elizaveta Matveeva

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Rationale

In today's world companies tend to address their corporate image and reputation, striving to attract talented employees and create compelling workplace benefits (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). One of the key instruments in this process is employer branding that facilitates organizations to stand out from the competition and communicate their core values to potential employees. Today, there is growing attention to corporate reputation and the attractiveness of an organization to potential employees, and employees are getting increasingly aware of not only the importance of economic and career benefits, but also such significant factors as social responsibility, including the promotion of inclusion and equality. As a result of this recognition, there has been a shift towards employer branding strategies that are more focused on intangible values, such as gender equality and support for women in the workplace.

Previously, employer branding primarily focused on communicating the tangible benefits of working for a company, such as salary, benefits, and career opportunities (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). However, with the change of societal attitudes and increasing attention to social responsibility issues, organizations have recognized the need to integrate inclusivity and support for underrepresented groups, such as women, into their branding strategy (Lundkvist, 2015). This reflects broader societal changes toward gender equality that have not only impacted consumer marketing but have also spilled over into corporate communications. Thus, messages aimed at supporting women center around promoting gender equality, challenging gender stereotypes, and endorsing initiatives that encourage female employees to grow professionally in the workplace (Powell, 2014). Employer branding that includes such messages in its communications agenda is aimed not only to attract talents, but also to demonstrate the company's commitment to social responsibility, equality and inclusivity values. These communication initiatives become an integral part of strategies aimed to build the company's

image as this organisation is a place where gender equality is an essential part of the corporate culture and not just a marketing tagline (Becker-Herby, 2016).

In the context of increasing competition among companies in attracting highly qualified female personnel, gender inclusive branding becomes particularly significant. Nowadays labor market participation of highly qualified women in such industries as technology, finance and healthcare that were historically men dominated demonstrates increased engagement (Prescott & Bogg, 2011; Barbulescu & Bidwell, 2013). However, despite the current progress, there is still an existing gender imbalance in these sectors of the labour market, particularly in leadership positions. According to the study (Ng & Burke, 2005), women are more likely to choose employers that demonstrate a commitment to diversity management practices, inclusive recruitment and career development opportunities for women, which makes gender-oriented branding an important tool for attracting female talents. Thus, female job-seekers might tend not to choose the company that does not demonstrate inclusivity or does not provide the support for women in their career growth .

As a result, brands that can communicate their commitment to inclusion to potential employees have a better chance of attracting a broad range of talented women, including those who may overlook certain industries or companies that are perceived as non-inclusive. Including female representation in these areas has also been shown to positively impact productivity and innovation within a company (Dezsö & Ross, 2012).

Currently, the spreading of social media, particularly LinkedIn, has become an important factor that transforms existing approaches to employer branding and visibility-enhancing initiatives, aimed to engage diverse cohorts of skilled job seekers. LinkedIn, being the leading online professional network with 1 billion users all over the world (LinkedIn, n.d.), gives organisations the unique opportunity to communicate with different audiences and allows them to demonstrate their dedication to the principles of inclusion and equality in corporate culture. Through textual, video, and visual content, organizations are able to advocate their attempts to promote gender equality, creating the space for active interaction and cooperation with the professional community (Sivertzen et al., 2013).

In addition, social media, by providing an interactive communication environment, facilitates better interaction between employees and potential candidates with content, which contributes to the formation of a sense of community and transparency. By creating a two-way channel of communication between the organization and candidates and employees, it strengthens the company's reputation as a socially responsible employer. In this context, employer branding that includes gender-inclusive practices on the LinkedIn platform helps attract talented women and also to build long-term loyalty among employees, as they perceive the company as an organization that aligns with their personal values of inclusivity and equality.

1.2 Research Problem and Research Gap

Employer branding has become an important talent acquisition tool in recent years. It is used as a strategic tool to promote a company's culture, values, and working conditions to attract potential employees in a highly competitive labor market (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). However, despite the growing importance of employer branding, there is a significant research gap regarding gender-specific employer branding and its impact across industries. In particular, there is a lack of research that examines in detail how companies use gender-specific messages in their branding campaigns and how these messages vary across industries.

The topic of gender equality is becoming an important aspect of corporate communications and employee engagement strategies, especially in the context of diversity, equality, and inclusion initiatives. Today, researchers actively study the concept of "femvertising," which includes advertising campaigns that emphasize support for women's emancipation and combat traditional gender stereotypes (Drake, 2017). However, such studies mostly focus on consumer advertising campaigns within the framework of femvertising, and very little attention is paid to integrating this approach into an employer branding strategy and considering it from a corporate communications perspective. As companies strive to position themselves as inclusive employers, the importance of gender-specific messages in employer branding increases in order to attract diverse talent, especially women.

Research on gender-specific employer branding is still relatively underdeveloped, especially given industry differences. Although industries such as technology, finance, and consulting are characterized by significant gender imbalances, there is little research examining how these industries use gender-specific branding to address these issues and attract a broader range of talent. For example, the finance and technology sectors have historically been male-dominated, and recruiting women into these fields remains a challenge. Thus, employer branding strategies in these industries should emphasize gender inclusivity and highlight opportunities for women to advance (Barbulescu & Bidwell, 2013). However, the literature has under-examined how industry characteristics influence employers' strategies for communicating gender-specific messages, so this research gap highlights the need for a deeper understanding of how employer branding strategies are developed and gender-specific messages are tailored to the needs of different industries. Moreover, the convergence of the concepts of femadvertising and employer branding is of particular theoretical significance and is important to highlight as an important aspect. Although these two concepts have been studied separately in the context of marketing and human resource management, a more comprehensive understanding of how gender-specific messages can be incorporated into employee engagement strategies is needed. Employer branding as a tool for attracting talent has traditionally focused on tangible aspects such as salary, benefits, and career opportunities (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). However, in the context of the growing importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace, employers must move beyond competitive salaries and benefits and focus on creating an environment in which, along with economic benefits, core values such as gender equality, social responsibility, and diversity also play an important role as a value orientation and an important component of corporate culture. Within this approach, employer branding can incorporate elements of feminism, such as promoting gender equality initiatives, showcasing female leaders, and highlighting gender-neutral policies. Integrating feminism into employer branding strategies can help organizations position themselves as inclusive employers by creating a work culture that promotes women's advancement. Despite growing recognition of the importance of gender inclusivity in the workplace, the academic literature has yet to offer a comprehensive conceptual

model for integrating gender-specific messages into employer branding strategies across industries. The problem is the lack of research examining how organizations across sectors use gender-specific messages and how these messages vary across industries. The intersection of employer branding and feminism remains underexplored, particularly in the context of how gender-specific messages can be strategically embedded into recruitment processes to attract and retain talented women.

This highlighted gap is seen as a significant opportunity for further research. Investigating how gender-oriented communication units are used by companies within the process of conducting employer branding activities and understanding industry specific features of these strategies will offer enhanced insights into the role of gender inclusivity in attraction of diverse talents. Moreover, an integrated approach to employer branding and femvertising can provide the understanding of how the organisations can create strategies for capturing the interest of potential employees, that will resonate with women and contribute to strengthening of gender equality in the workplace.

1.3 Research Objectives and Research Questions

In the modern competitive environment for highly qualified employees, companies tend to apply employer branding as a strategic tool for attracting talent. Today the social agenda has a strong influence on how companies create their communications strategies, so the inclusion of values of gender equality and support for women in corporate communications is becoming increasingly important. This is driven not only by growing expectations of job-seekers, but also by the common tendency of social responsibility within the field of business. In this context social media, particularly LinkedIn, acquire distinct relevance as platforms that enable organizations to promote their corporate culture, demonstrate their commitment to social responsibility and engage with potential employees. The primary objective of this study is to analyse how companies from different industries incorporate gender-related messaging into their employer branding practices on LinkedIn. This study aims to identify the key topics and

strategies employed by companies to promote gender inclusivity and support for women. By analyzing the content of such messages, it is possible to determine which communication elements are used by companies in forming a positive employer image and striving to adhere to ideas of social responsibility.

Moreover, this research focuses on the study of the frequency and significance of such messages depending on the industry of the companies. This is attributed to the fact that despite growing attention to gender equality issues, the extent to which it is integrated into employer branding can vary across different sectors of business. Thus, in technology or finance, where there has historically been a gender imbalance, strategies may differ from those used in sectors with a more gender-balanced structure. Identifying these differences will provide a deeper understanding of how widely the concept of gender equality is embedded in employer branding across industries.

To achieve the stated objectives, the following research questions will be addressed in this study:

- How do companies in different industries (tech, healthcare, finance) use gender empowerment messaging within their LinkedIn employer branding to enhance their Employee Value Proposition (EVP)?
- What key themes or messaging strategies related to gender empowerment are most prominent in employer branding across different industries on LinkedIn?
- How does the frequency of gender empowerment messaging on LinkedIn vary across industries, and in which sectors is this messaging most prominent in relation to attracting female talent?

Thus, this study not only fills the existing gap in the academic literature on employer branding with a focus on gender equality, but also provides an opportunity to assess the extent to which it is prevalent in corporate communication. The findings may be useful for both the academic community and HR and marketing professionals seeking to build a more inclusive corporate culture.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into 6 main chapters, each of them is aimed to solve the key objectives set in the study. In this section the structure of the thesis and a brief overview of the content of each chapter and their connection to the research questions are outlined in detail.

The first chapter of the thesis is the introduction to the topic of the study which provides the necessary context for grasping the relevance of the topic being examined. Section 1.1 "Background and Rationale" explores the importance of gender equality messages in employer branding strategies, the role of gender-inclusive branding in attracting female talent and the growing importance of social media such as LinkedIn as a tool for promoting corporate values. The second section 1.2 "Research Problem and Research Gap" focuses on the gaps in existing research, focused on gender-focused employer branding across industries, as well as the limited understanding of variations in gender equality messaging across industries. This section highlights the need to integrate the concepts of employer branding and femvertising, particularly in the context of recruitment strategies. Section 1.3 "Research Objectives and Research Questions" sets out the main aims and objectives of the study and specifies the objective of analyzing the use of gender equality messages in employer branding on LinkedIn by companies from different industries. It also identifies key research questions of how companies in different industries use gender topics in their communication strategies to enhance Employee Value Proposition (EVP) and the frequency of such messages.

The second chapter, "Literature Review", examines the key theories and concepts related to employer branding and gender inclusion. Section 2.1 "Social Exchange Theory (SET) as a Framework" examines social exchange theory as a theoretical basis for understanding the process of attracting women through gender-inclusive branding. It also examines the perception of the rewards of inclusive practices in branding and how this affects the evaluation of EVP. Section 2.2 "Employer Branding and the Employee Value Proposition (EVP)" presents the theoretical basis for the concept of employer branding and explains the importance of EVP in

the context of attracting various groups of candidates, including women. The role of gender-inclusive elements in EVP is also discussed. Section 2.3 "Femvertising and Gender Empowerment in Branding" analyzes the concept of femvertising and its impact on employer branding. The impact of femvertising as a subcategory of gender branding on employer attractiveness to women is described. Section 2.4, "Gender Diversity and Talent Attraction in Different Industries," explores the specifics of gender diversity in different industries such as technology, finance, and healthcare, and how branding helps address gender equality issues in these sectors.

The third chapter of the paper is devoted to the research methodology. In the section 3.1 "Research Design", the rationale behind the choice of research design based on a qualitative content analysis of employer branding messages on LinkedIn is presented. The choice of LinkedIn as the main data source is justified, citing studies confirming the importance of this platform for employer branding. Section 3.2 "Data Collection" describes in detail the criteria for selecting companies and industries for analysis, as well as the methods for data collection. Section 3.3 "Data Analysis" presents a data analysis scheme using thematic content analysis. Subsection 3.4 "Reliability and Validity" discusses measures to ensure the reliability and validity of the study, including data triangulation through multiple coding iterations and ensuring consistency of thematic categorization.

Chapter 4, 'Results and Analysis', presents a description and interpretation of the findings from the study. Section 4.1, "Overview of Gender Empowerment Messaging Trends", provides an overview of key trends in the use of gender inclusivity messages and analyzes the frequency and prevalence of such messages across industries. Section 4.2, "Key Themes and Messaging Strategies", provides a thematic analysis of employer branding strategies and themes. Section 4.3, "Industry-Specific Patterns in Gender Branding", analyzes how approaches to gender equality branding vary across industries. Differences in emphasis on leadership opportunities, work and personal life, and other elements of corporate culture are discussed.

The fifth chapter, "Discussion," provides an interpretation of the findings. Section 5.1, "Interpretation of Findings," analyzes the findings and their implications for employer branding

strategies. Section 5.2, "Contributions to Employer Branding Theory," discusses the contribution of the work to employer branding theory and the extension of the concept of femvertising as a tool for attracting female talent. Section 5.3, "Practical Implications for Organizations," offers practical recommendations for companies seeking to improve their branding strategies with a focus on gender inclusivity. Section 5.4, "Limitations and Future Research Directions," discusses the limitations of the study, such as the limited sample and industry focus, and suggests directions for further research. The final section, "Conclusion," summarizes the key findings and draws a conclusion.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social Exchange Theory (SET) as a Framework

This study applies Social Exchange Theory (SET), originally developed by sociologist George Homans (1958), as a framework to analyze the content of employer branding messages, specifically those related to gender empowerment. SET, which posits that relationships are evaluated through a cost-benefit lens, suggests that individuals assess interactions based on perceived rewards and costs (Homans, 1958).

Applied to employer branding, potential employees evaluate the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) the unique set of benefits an organization offers in exchange for their labor - through this cost-benefit lens (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). The rewards in this exchange include not only financial incentives like salary but also psychological and social benefits such as career advancement opportunities, work-life balance, inclusion, and gender equality (Edwards, 2010). By understanding the perceived costs of gender bias, lack of professional development, or inadequate work-life integration, SET helps explain why women may seek employers who offer more comprehensive and inclusive value propositions (Ng & Burke, 2005).

Social Exchange Theory (SET) is conceptualized as a key foundation for the analysis of social interactions in the workplace, particularly in the context of gender-inclusive employer branding. Based on the main assumptions of SET, social interaction is formed through the subjective cost-benefit analysis, which means that employees are inclined to replicate actions that have previously resulted in rewards (Homans, 1958). Interaction between the workers and the company are built on trust and perceived expectation of mutual exchange: gestures of goodwill from the company's side must be rewarded with the reciprocal actions from employees (Blau, 1964). In this context gender-inclusive initiatives applied in employer branding strategies can be seen as the elements of social exchange that form the sense of equity, trust and commitment to the company in workers.

SET is widely used in organizational studies, in particular in researching on such aspects as organisational support, trust and engagement of employees. For instance, meta-analysis test

of social exchange and affect-based perspectives, spanning 25 years of empirical research, proved that SET variables, such as trust, organizational commitment, and perceived organizational support play a significant role in shaping workplace behavior, including employee performance and proactivity (Colquitt et al., 2013). These aspects are considered particularly important in the context of gender equality in the workplace, as perceived fairness in the context of career opportunities and an inclusive corporate culture can directly impact employee engagement and satisfaction.

Today, the work environment is changing, which poses new challenges to the classic SET, requiring adaptation of its traditional provisions. With the development of flexible forms of employment, digital platforms and remote work, the ways in which employees and employers interact are changing, which entails the need to rethink the factors that influence social exchange. Thus, in the era of digital communications, corporate branding, presented on platforms such as LinkedIn, has become an important tool for creating and maintaining relationships between a company and potential employees. In this context, gender-inclusive messages conveyed through social media can shape job seekers' expectations of fair treatment and equal opportunities, which in turn increases the attractiveness of the employer brand.

Moreover, the theory of social exchange views the perceived organizational support (POS) as a factor which leads to mutual employees' reciprocal reactions (Blau, 1964). Social exchange interactions involve reinforcement and interdependent relationships between participants in the process. However, such relationships may come at a cost, as both parties are forced to invest resources in the exchange process (Tsarenko et al., 2018). These investments might include not only tangible but also intangible assets such as effort, involvement, emotional attachment and loyalty to the organization in order to obtain certain benefits. Today, researchers assume that employees who receive support from the organization and feel that their contributions are appreciated develop positive emotions toward their work and form a more favorable attitude toward the company (Tsarenko et al., 2018).

Thus, perceived organizational support plays a key role in shaping employees' subjective experiences in the workplace and influences their intentions to either stay with or leave the

company. In this paper, SEM is used to analyze how POS, as an employer branding strategy, might influence employee commitment and retention: high level of commitment, strong emotional involvement and a sense of belonging to the organization increase the likelihood that an employee will stay with the company in the future. These aspects are particularly essential in the context of gender-inclusive employer branding, as the initiatives aimed to support gender equality may be perceived by employees as part of organisational involvement and social responsibility.

In addition, SET must take into account cultural differences, since perceptions of fairness and interaction in an organization vary depending on the cultural context. Research shows that in individualistic societies - in western countries - employees are oriented to personal profits and career development, while in collectivist cultures, that are common in East Asian countries, social connections and group interests are considered key factors for success (Hofstede, 1991; Triandis, 1996). It means that the perception of inclusive employer initiatives and their impact on employee commitment may vary across cultural settings, which needs to be taken into account when developing gender-responsive branding strategies.

Applying the SET framework in this context provides a deeper understanding of how employer branding strategies based on inclusivity and equality not only help attract talent but also build long-term employee loyalty. Companies that actively focus on values of support and gender equality create an environment where employees feel appreciated, which as a result reduces staff turnover and increases employee engagement. Today, in the age of digital transformation and global shift in hiring approaches, companies need to take into account social exchange as a key mechanism in forming trust and engagement of employees. Using this theory in the context of gender employer branding allows one to better understand how companies are able to translate the values of equality and inclusivity effectively in order to attract and retain diverse talents.

2.2 Employer Branding and the Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

The term Employer Branding was first suggested by Simon Barrow and Tim Ambler in 1996 in their article "The Employer Brand". They defined it as the value proposition associated with a company as an employer, similar to how brands are positioned in the consumer market. Thus, an employer brand includes a set of functional, economic and psychological benefits that a company offers to its current and potential employees (Ambler & Barrow, 1996).

Since then, the concept of Employer Branding has expanded considerably. Modern research, including the work of Backhaus & Tikoo (2004), views it as a strategic process of building a positive employer image aimed at attracting, motivating and retaining talented employees. This approach involves a close connection between HR management, marketing and corporate communications.

In addition, in today's work environment, the focus is shifting from external attractiveness to the internal employee experience (Morgan, 2017). This means that companies must not only promise attractive working conditions, but also actually provide them within the organization. Negative employee experiences are easily spread through modern online platforms like Glassdoor, undermining trust in the employer brand.

The concept of Employee Value Proposition (EVP), introduced into scientific and practical circulation in the early 2000s, is a set of benefits that employees receive in exchange for their involvement, skills and loyalty. In essence, EVP is the core of Employer Branding: it forms the basis for why employees choose a particular company as a place to work (Minchington, 2006).

According to the classification by Berthon, Ewing and Hah (2005), Employee Value Proposition (EVP) can be divided into five key components. The first one is Economic Value, which includes wages, bonuses, insurance and pension programs. The second is Development Value, which reflects opportunities for training, professional growth and career prospects. The third component is Social Value, which covers the atmosphere in the team, support from colleagues and management, as well as corporate culture. The fourth is Application Value,

which implies the opportunity to apply one's knowledge and skills in practice. Finally, the fifth component is Interest or Innovation Value, which is associated with interesting tasks, the implementation of innovations, as well as flexibility and freedom of self-expression in the workplace.

This model was later more developed and supplemented with new aspects, such as Work-Life Balance, Purpose/Meaning, Diversity and Inclusion, and Sustainability and Ethics (Ronda et al., 2018; Saks, 2006).

Employee Value Proposition (EVP) performs several key functions that are important for modern HR management. Firstly, EVP helps attract talented specialists, which is especially important in the context of growing competition and shortage of qualified labor in the labor market. Secondly, a properly formed EVP helps retain employees, reducing the level of staff turnover by increasing employee satisfaction and loyalty. The third function is to increase staff engagement, when employees feel their importance and value for the organization, which directly affects their motivation and work efficiency. Finally, EVP becomes an important competitive advantage for the company, especially in industry clusters with high competition for qualified employees, allowing the employer to stand out and strengthen its reputation in the labor market. Such a comprehensive approach to the formation of EVP helps organizations not only attract and retain valuable personnel, but also create a sustainable corporate culture.

In particular, EVP is becoming a key tool when working with younger generations. Representatives of Generation Z (born after 1996) tend to perceive work as a way of self-realization and expression of values (Dzhulai, 2022). They expect transparency, inclusiveness, and social responsibility from their employer. Such expectations require a transformation of both the EVP itself and its communication methods.

Thus, today, one of the most important criteria for employer attractiveness is gender inclusion. Companies that strive to be open and fair are increasingly integrating elements into EVP that help create a comfortable environment for women and non-binary employees. Gender inclusion is becoming not just an ethical norm, but also a strategic advantage in the fight for talent. For women, especially young professionals, EVP should take into account their specific

needs and the barriers they face in the professional environment. This includes not only flexible working conditions or equal pay policies, but also a broader support system - from the availability of a safe and respectful environment to career opportunities without discrimination. According to Ng & Burke (2005), women are more likely than men to focus on intangible components of EVP, such as corporate culture, flexible employment opportunities, and anti-discrimination measures.

Research by Bellou et al. (2015) and Demel et al. (2019) highlight several key components of EVP that are particularly important for women. These include Flexible Work Arrangements, including the possibility of remote work, flexible hours, and special support programs for mothers, such as returning to work after maternity leave (maternity return). Also significant is Transparent Career Paths, which implies clear criteria for promotion and the absence of a “glass ceiling” that hinders the development of women in the organization. A Respectful Culture is important, in which an atmosphere of trust reigns and there is zero tolerance for harassment. Mentoring and Sponsorship Programs, which help women develop and overcome professional barriers, are no less important. Finally, having Equal Pay Policies in place to address the gender pay gap is a fundamental element of the EVP to attract and retain female talent.

In recent years, more and more attention has been paid to the concept of values-based employment - an employment model based on values of corporate culture. Employees increasingly choose employers not only based on salary or career opportunities, but also on the degree to which corporate values match their own beliefs. This may include the company's commitment to the principles of gender equality, sustainability, climate responsibility and other socially significant issues (PwC, 2017; Amaram, 2019).

In the context of such a transformation of the labor market, an effective Employee Value Proposition (EVP) must meet several key criteria. Firstly, it must be authentic, that is, correspond to the real experience of employees. This is confirmed, for example, through employee testimonials or exit interview data. Secondly, the EVP must be differentiating - clearly showing how the organization differs from competitors and why it is an attractive place

to work. Thirdly, the segmentation of the EVP is important: it should take into account the needs of different target groups - by gender, age, professional experience, geographic location and other characteristics. Finally, the EVP should be integrated - that is, permeate all aspects of the company's activities: from HR policies and corporate culture to external and internal communications.

EVP communication can be carried out through a wide range of channels. Among them are career sites and job pages, where the EVP is formulated in company descriptions. Social networks such as LinkedIn, Instagram or TikTok play a significant role, especially in attracting the younger generation of employees, in particular representatives of Generation Z. EVP is also broadcast through offline activities: career fairs, university presentations and other HR events. Internal communications - onboarding programs, corporate newsletters, internal portals - also serve as important tools for maintaining and strengthening the employer's value proposition. It is important to note that mere branding without supporting experience is perceived as "HR washing" - a formal use of inclusive rhetoric without changes in culture. This can lead to negative feedback and reputational risks.

Thus, Employer Branding and Employee Value Proposition (EVP) are key components of a modern HR strategy. They not only help attract qualified personnel, but also form a sustainable corporate identity. Adapting the EVP to the requirements of different target groups - in particular, women - is a challenge, but also an opportunity to create more resilient, diverse and effective teams. Creating an inclusive, value-oriented EVP allows organizations not only to compete for talent, but also to be part of positive social change. Investments in developing an authentic and adaptive employer brand are an investment not only in HR, but also in the long-term sustainability of the business as a whole.

2.3 Femvertising and Gender Empowerment in Branding

In the context of growing social awareness and gender sensitivity, brands and employers are increasingly using approaches aimed at strengthening female self-awareness and combating

stereotypes. One such approach is the phenomenon of femvertising, an advertising and branding communication strategy that seeks not only to sell a product but also to promote the values of gender equality. The term was first coined in 2014 by the platform SheKnows to describe advertising that raises themes of female power and challenges traditional roles of women in society (Drake, 2017).

Femvertising includes messages, visual images, and storylines aimed at empowering women, promoting positive role models, and dismantling outdated patriarchal narratives (Becker-Herby, 2016). Campaigns such as Dove's Real Beauty, Always's Like a Girl, Sport England's This Girl Can, and even Nike's Dream Crazier portray women as strong, independent, and capable of overcoming barriers. They feature real, diverse female bodies, mothers, athletes, leaders, and entrepreneurs, as opposed to the idealized, objectified female images that are common in traditional advertising (Akestam et al., 2017).

The effectiveness of femvertising is supported by empirical evidence: according to Feng et al. (2019), such campaigns increase brand trust, enhance emotional engagement, and drive purchasing behavior, especially among women. Moreover, when femvertising is used in advertising, consumers feel that the brand shares their values, which is especially important for millennials and Generation Z (Kapoor & Munjal, 2019). This makes femvertising not only ethically sound but also a strategically justified business practice.

Recently, there has been a trend of transferring femvertising ideas from consumer marketing to the field of employer branding. Researchers Ronda and Azanza (2021) proposed the term employer femvertising, which refers to employer brand communications aimed at attracting women through pro-gender messages, support for equality and female leadership. This direction is becoming especially relevant in the context of high competition for qualified female personnel, as well as a growing demand from women for authentic, fair and inclusive work environments.

Employer femvertising can manifest itself in different ways: from visual representation of female leaders on career sites to mentions of gender-sensitive HR practices in job descriptions. Companies communicate openness to diversity, focus on equal opportunities, a transparent

promotion system, a zero-tolerance policy for harassment, and, importantly, demonstrate real cases of successful women in the organization. All this forms an attractive EVP (Employee Value Proposition) for the female audience, which resonates with their expectations and beliefs.

It is noteworthy that femvertising is especially effective among women of the millennial and Z generations. According to research by Henard & Rossetti (2014), young women are twice as likely to choose a brand that promotes ideas of female power and social justice. Moreover, it is important for them that these ideas are not just a declaration, but part of the company's real policy. The availability of flexible forms of employment, support for mothers, mentoring programs and transparent evaluation criteria are becoming decisive factors when choosing an employer (Ronda et al., 2020).

However, it is important to emphasize that employer femvertising requires authenticity. Superficial use of feminist imagery and slogans without real support in corporate culture can have the opposite effect - accusations of "wokwashing" or "feminist washing". The study by Akestam et al. (2017) emphasizes that consumers quickly perceive a discrepancy between stated values and reality, which negatively affects brand trust. Therefore, effective employer femvertising should be an integral part of the inclusion and equality strategy built into the company culture.

In terms of communication channels, femvertising in the employer brand can be distributed through career sites, social networks (especially relevant for Gen Z), corporate videos, recruiting events, as well as internal communications - onboarding, newsletters and engagement initiatives. Of particular importance are campaigns dedicated to international gender dates, for example, March 8 or the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women - they allow you to convey the company's values and support public dialogue.

However, using femvertising requires a segmented approach. Women are not a homogeneous group, and their expectations of EVP may vary significantly depending on age, profession, family status and cultural context. For example, young female professionals value career prospects and flexibility, while experienced female employees value policies that support parenthood and combat ageism. That is why companies that want to be attractive to women

should use research data, employee feedback, and engage women's communities inside and outside the organization to jointly develop an EVP.

Thus, femvertising in the context of employer branding is a powerful tool not only for marketing, but also for social transformation. It allows companies not only to talk about equality, but also to demonstrate it through real actions and images. And for women, it is a signal that the employer is ready to take their experience into account, fight stereotypes, and create an environment where everyone can realize their potential. In the long term, employer femvertising can contribute not only to improving HR indicators, but also to the development of a more equitable and inclusive business landscape.

2.4 Gender Diversity and Talent Attraction in Different Industries

Using messages to support diversity and equal opportunity plays a crucial role in forming a positive image of employers in different sectors of economics, facilitating attraction of talented specialists and eliminating the gender barriers based on gender stereotypes and discrimination. In the technology sector and STEM industries, where there is a significant gender imbalance and persistent cultural biases, actively promoting the values of equality and inclusivity helps attract talented women and underrepresented groups, creating a sense that these professional fields are safe and open to everyone (Blair-Loy & Cech, 2017; Weisgram & Diekmann, 2017).

In addition, it is important to note that the specifics of messages on gender equality and diversity vary depending on the industry. For example, in the STEM field and the technology sector, there is a trend towards inclusion and support of women, due to the fact that these fields have historically been traditionally male-dominated and to this day there is a gender imbalance in them and female professionals face gender stereotypes (Cech & Blair-Loy, 2019). On the other hand, in healthcare and education sectors, where the representation of female employees is higher, messages about equality are perceived more neutral, and the key focus of women is placed on the balance between work and private life, as well as on professional development

(Kossek & Lee2020). This industry-based differentiation requires adaptation of employer branding strategies taking into account the specifics of cultural and social expectations within each sector.

Moreover, the framing of messages is crucial. Women may perceive messages that are gender-specific as limiting or inconsistent with their values if those messages do not include all categories of employees, regardless of gender (Cundiff et al., 2018; Olsen & Martins, 2012). There are two main approaches to creating inclusion-based messages: *identity-blind* (focused on individual qualities and equal opportunities without mentioning social groups) and *identity-inclusive* (when communication recognizes various social groups), which are perceived differently by men and women (Ely & Thomas, 2001).

In addition, in recent years, as part of the formation of employer branding campaigns, companies have increasingly used multi-genderization strategies aimed to create an inclusive environment for non-binary and transgender employees (Klysing et al., 2022). Multigender messages that mention men, women, and non-binary employees increase brand attractiveness among gender minorities, but can cause a sense of identity threat - a feeling of exclusion or rejection - among some gender majorities (Klysing et al., 2022).

Employer branding plays an important role in attracting talent, as potential employees want to see their own values reflected in the company's values, which is important for engagement in the hiring process. Women as a social group tend to pay attention to such employer criteria as inclusivity, career development opportunities, work-life balance, participation in decision-making, and corporate reputation during the job search process. Thus, companies whose values align with women's needs are more trustworthy for job seekers, which affects the company's perception as a progressive employer (Ng & Burke, 2005).

Companies that publicly highlight their commitment to gender equality and diversity build trust with potential employees, enhancing their reputation as progressive and inclusive employers (Mor Barak, 2015). This is especially important for promoting attractiveness in science and engineering, where stereotypes about the “natural” abilities of women and men

prevail and where existing organizational barriers hinder the career advancement of women and underrepresented groups (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012).

The public sector is an example of the successful use of equal opportunity messaging. A RAND Corporation study found that communications campaigns that promote equality and women's empowerment attract more students and young professionals, as well as people from underrepresented groups, creating a more diverse workforce and long-term engagement in the field (RAND Corporation, 2021). In traditionally male-dominated sectors such as finance and technology, and construction, the use of positive messages about supporting families and equal access initiatives has also been shown to reinforce corporate values and motivate workers to return to work after parental leave (UNICEF, 2019, Clark-Fox Policy Institute, 2024).

A number of international companies demonstrate successful use of gender and diversity messages in their employer brands. For example, Accenture actively promotes equal opportunities and career transparency policies, which are reflected in their public reports and communications (Accenture, 2022). Google implements programs to support women and non-binary employees, including special training and mentoring initiatives, which increases their attractiveness to candidates from underrepresented groups (Google Diversity Report, 2023). These examples illustrate effective practices for using gender empowerment in employer branding.

In addition, there are not only industry differences in employer branding approaches and gender-specific messaging, but also cultural and legal differences. For example, American companies place particular emphasis on policies and programs that support inclusion and diversity (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016). In Nordic countries, such as Sweden, this is reflected in support for the values of equality and work-life balance, which is expressed in the wider use of government support measures (Holgersson & Karlsson, 2019). In Germany and a number of other European countries, transparency in career development and the fight against implicit gender bias are important elements (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2020). These differences highlight the need to localize employer branding strategies to increase their effectiveness.

In conclusion, the effective use of messages supporting gender diversity and equal opportunities is an important tool for creating an attractive employer image in various sectors of the economy. Adapting employer branding strategies to industry specifics, cultural and social expectations allows not only to attract talented specialists from different groups, but also to reduce barriers based on gender stereotypes and discrimination. Successful practices of large international companies, as well as differences in approaches depending on the cultural and legislative context, emphasize the need for localization and inclusiveness of communications to create a truly diverse and supportive work environment.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

In this paper a qualitative content analysis of gender-focused messaging within the employer branding framework on the LinkedIn platform is used. The application of the method is due to the fact that qualitative methods traditionally focus on understanding “how” and “why” certain social phenomena is occurred in social practice, while in qualitative research which is designed to answer the questions “how much” and “to which degree” (Green & Thorogood, 2004).

This study applies an interpretive paradigm to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning constructions and communication strategies of companies in promoting gender equality within the framework of employer branding. Using a qualitative approach to research opens up opportunities for a deeper and more detailed understanding of the meaning and structure of messages in the field of corporate communications, revealing not only the actual content but also the context in which the message is formed. This is important when the object of study is complex topics such as gender or women's empowerment.

The choice of LinkedIn as the main data source for analyzing employer brand messages is not accidental and has a number of theoretical and practical justifications. Firstly, LinkedIn is the largest professional social network in the world, with more than 450 million users, including representatives of a wide variety of industries and professional levels (Chang et al., 2017). Secondly, research shows that LinkedIn is one of the key channels for forming and strengthening the employer brand, since the platform allows companies not only to publish vacancies, but also to demonstrate corporate culture, values, and initiatives to support diversity and equality (Kissel & Büttgen, 2015).

According to the researchers (Sivertzen et al., 2013), LinkedIn, as a social network that builds long-term relationships with potential employees and candidates, effectively fulfills the function of attracting qualified talent by giving them the opportunity to gain insight into the

employer and its values. Thus, companies can more specifically communicate with potentially interested users and send messages effectively, reaching target groups. Additionally, Randstad (2019) notes that LinkedIn is the most popular platform for checking employer reputations among young professionals, making it uniquely important in the employment decision-making process.

It is also worth mentioning that LinkedIn is integrated into the professional lives of its users, which distinguishes it from other social networks (Facebook, Instagram). The ability to view employee profiles, reviews, and company news creates a comprehensive picture of the company as an employer, which is especially important for women and other underrepresented groups, who often choose their place of work more carefully, paying attention to support for equality and inclusivity.

Returning to the methodological considerations, it is essential to mention that a qualitative approach allows to work with data in a systematic and consistent way, identifying significant categories and topics. In particular, Lai и To (2015) proposed their methodology of social media content analysis, which applies a step-by-step study of messages: beginning with the definition of research goals and boundaries, followed by the selection and sampling of relevant data, coding and categorization, and concluding with the interpretation and identification of key patterns. This framework offers both the structure of the analysis and the flexibility, allowing the research design to be adapted to the unique social and professional context of LinkedIn.

This study focuses on identifying messages that contain elements of femvertising as well as ideas of gender equality and women's empowerment in communication campaigns. Today, such communication strategies with potential employees are especially relevant, since women still face gender barriers and stereotypes that hinder career development, and in such conditions, the desire of employers to create an environment of inclusivity and support is especially important (Tabassum & Nayak, 2021). In order to record such messages, as well as to understand how they are formed and what communication strategies are used in their creation, qualitative content analysis will be used.

The study used the technique of purposive sampling of messages for analysis - a sample based on criteria of relevance to the research topic (Mohiya, 2024). Thus, posts of outgoing companies for a time period of 3 months in such sectors as technology, healthcare and finance, which most actively use gender messages in their communications on the LinkedIn platform, are selected for analysis (see Appendix C). At the coding and categorization stage, the researcher manually assigns codes to each message reflecting its thematic focus. The resulting categories and topics are then systematized and interpreted taking into account industry specifics. Such interpretations allow not only to identify trends, but also to make recommendations on adapting the employer brand to target audiences.

It is also important to note that an important part of the preparatory stage was the pilot study. As part of it, an analysis of posts from three companies was conducted - one from each industry - technology, finance and healthcare. The sample for the pilot study, as well as the main study itself, is based on LinkedIn Top Companies lists in three sectors: technology, healthcare, and finance. Thus, given that the focus of the study is on the LinkedIn platform as the main communication channel, using the list of companies noted by the social network itself reflects the strategic presence of the company on the site, and also speaks of relevancy. LinkedIn formed the lists based on three metrics: employee growth, applicant interest, employee retention, and audience engagement with publications. Such metrics indicate active involvement of companies in employer branding, which makes them suitable for this study. These indicators indicate high activity of companies in the field of employer branding on the platform, which makes them suitable objects for content analysis.

Purposive sampling was used as a sampling method, taking into account the activity and relevance to the topic of gender equality on LinkedIn of these companies. Thus, the sample included companies with different levels of engagement and size, which contributed to a comprehensive verification of the methodological tools.

A time period of two months was chosen for the pilot stage, which ensured a balance between the relevance of the data and a sufficient volume of content to test the applicability of the developed categories. However, based on the results of the pilot study, it was decided to

extend the time frame due to an insufficient number of posts corresponding to the research topic for a full-fledged study. In this regard, the data collection period for the main study was extended in order to obtain a sufficient number of units of analysis.

The main goal of the pilot study was to check the adequacy and applicability of the formulated categories. Analysis of the collected data showed some inaccuracies in the formulations, which could lead to ambiguous interpretations and lack of clarity. In view of this, edits were made to make the categories more unambiguous and applicable in the main part of the study to increase the accuracy and reliability of the subsequent content analysis.

Thus, the methodological basis for the study of gender representation in employer brand communications is provided by the choice of qualitative content analysis within the interpretive paradigm, the use of the LinkedIn platform and a targeted sample of companies. The next step was data collection, including a sample of company messages and the preparation of materials for systematic analysis.

3.2 Data Collection

In this study, the professional social network LinkedIn is used as an empirical field and perceived as one of the most important online channels of corporate communication. Today, the role of this network in the process of interaction with employees and various stakeholders is only growing. Thus, Joglekar and Tan (2022) argue that both branded and user publications on LinkedIn have a positive effect on the perception of the employer brand, suggesting that companies actively use LinkedIn accounts (their own and employees) to attract new talent and increase the attractiveness of the employer. Thus, the professional nature of LinkedIn and its target audience make the platform especially relevant for the study of employer branding strategies and communications on gender topics.

Three industries were purposely selected for qualitative comparative analysis: technology, healthcare, and finance. This choice was motivated by their different gender profiles, as well as high levels of HR communications activity and competition for talent. The

technology sector has a history of underrepresentation of women, which has led to interest in its communications on gender inclusion. In contrast, healthcare has a high proportion of women in the workforce, but there are still concerns about gender inequality in leadership and role models. Finance is also known for its gender imbalance and has made efforts to build an employer image that attracts diverse groups. In addition, all three industries make extensive use of LinkedIn to recruit and attract talent and actively build employer branding through the platform. In particular, research shows that large companies in these sectors engage in social media to promote innovation and diversity, and that diversity at the management level in technology, finance, and healthcare companies impacts their innovation and profitability. The choice of these industries allows for a variety of contexts and to identify similarities and differences in approaches to gender issues.

In this study, three business sectors were selected as part of the qualitative analysis: technology, healthcare, and finance. These industries were chosen due to differences in the gender composition of the workforce, as well as high activity in HR communications and high competition for qualified employees. The main reason for choosing these areas was the different female representation in each of them. For example, in the technology sector, there is historically an underrepresentation of women, it is a traditionally male sphere, for this reason, an examination of their corporate communications in the area of gender inclusion is especially interesting. Moreover, the finance industry is also known for its gender imbalance and is making active efforts to create an inclusive employer image. The healthcare sector, on the contrary, has a high proportion of women in the workforce, but at the same time, questions about gender inequality in leadership and role images remain. The finance sector is also known for its gender imbalance and makes efforts to form an employer image that attracts different groups. In addition, all three industries widely use LinkedIn to find and attract specialists and are actively building an employer brand through this platform. In particular, large companies in these sectors participate in social media to promote innovation and diversity, while diversity at the management level in technology, finance and healthcare companies affects their innovation

and profitability performance (Smith et al., 2015). The selection of these sectors allows for contextual variation and reveals similarities and differences in approaches to gender.

Since the study focuses on LinkedIn as the main communication platform, it is logical to select companies that the platform itself recognizes as significant. This allows us to form a sample of organizations that are truly active and strategically present on LinkedIn. LinkedIn evaluates such companies based on a number of metrics: employee growth, interest from job seekers, employee retention, and audience engagement in published content. All of these metrics indicate that companies are purposefully developing their employer image on the platform, which makes them ideal candidates for content analysis.

For each industry, a longlist of 10 companies was compiled based on LinkedIn ratings (see Appendix D). From these lists, companies were then selected that meet the criteria developed within the framework of this study (see Appendix C): significant organizational size, regular and strategic activity on LinkedIn, as well as the presence of publications related to the gender agenda (initiatives for the inclusion of women, equality, etc.). This approach is consistent with the criterion sampling methodological technique within purposive sampling: the companies that best matched the research objectives were selected, rather than a random or comprehensive sample.

For example, one of the selection criteria was the regularity and strategic nature of the company's presence on LinkedIn, since large and active organizations tend to have a well-thought-out communications strategy and systematically use the platform to develop their employer brand. Thus, our inclusion criteria ensure that each selected company represents an informative and relevant case for qualitative content analysis.

Purposive sampling, a method widely used in qualitative research, was used in this study. According to Palinkash et al. (2015), purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative research to identify and select informative cases related to the phenomenon of interest. In this case, the choice of the method was conditioned by the necessity to get an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study through the example of maximally relevant cases, which is not guaranteed by random representative sampling.

Purposive sampling is the most commonly used in content analysis because it allows the researcher to select those units that most accurately reflect the subject of the study (Kyngäs et al., 2011). The goal of this study is to analyze organizations that, according to our criteria (see Appendix C), meet the concept of information-rich cases, rather than a comprehensive analysis of the general population. This approach corresponds to the logic of criterion sampling, that is a sample of cases that satisfy pre-selected criteria, which is widely used in the qualitative approach, when the goal of the analysis is to identify patterns, rather than count frequencies. Thus, our approach allowed us to obtain variant examples of corporate messages on gender inclusion and gender empowerment.

As part of the preparatory stage of the study, a pilot study was conducted, in which the initial coding scheme and sample were tested and refined. Thus, the pre-developed categories were applied to a small number of companies (one company per industry - 3 in total: Technology - *Comcast*; Healthcare - *Bristol Myers Squibb*; Finance - *Visa*) corresponding to the selected categories, over a period of 2 months, in order to assess the quality and applicability of the codes. According to the recommendations for conducting qualitative content analysis, it is important to test the method before the main stage of the study on a pilot sample. One company was randomly selected from each industry list - three pilot cases in total. At this stage, the main goal was not representativeness, but checking the applicability of the analysis tools to real material. Random selection in the pilot allowed us to cover a wider range of cases and identify potential difficulties in the analysis process.

During the pilot study, it was discovered that some of the selected companies, despite regular publications, only formally touched on gender topics (for example, a general post on corporate values without real content on inclusion) or the total number of publications of a certain company was greatly disproportionate to the number of posts in other companies, which required the inclusion of additional companies from the list. This allowed us to adjust the inclusion criteria. In addition, some categories were not clearly formulated, ambiguously, so some instructions for codes were reworked, clarifications on semantics were added to avoid inaccuracies. In addition, within the framework of the pilot study, it was decided to increase the

time period of the cases under consideration from two to three months, because a two-month period turned out to be insufficient to collect sufficient data for analysis.

Thus, the pilot study helped to ensure the reliability and consistency of the main stage of the study. It helped to harmoniously combine the selection procedure by criteria with the content analysis methodology, confirming the relevance of the selected cases and the adequacy of the analytical scheme. As a result, the sample of companies was confirmed, the data of which were analyzed in detail within the framework of the subsequent stage of the study, and the inclusion criteria were confirmed in further work.

At the main stage, companies from the long lists were selected sequentially from top to bottom. If the first company on the list did not meet the established criteria, the next one was considered, and so on until a suitable case was found. Thus, 11 companies were selected: Technology - Amazon, AT&T, Verizon; Healthcare - UnitedHealth Group, Moderna, Elevance Health, Eli Lillie and Company; Finance - JPMorgan Chase and Co., Wells Fargo, Bank of America, Mastercard. While the original plan included 9 companies (3 per industry), it became evident during data collection that several of them had published only a very limited number of relevant LinkedIn posts during the selected time frame. To ensure sufficient data for qualitative analysis and maintain cross-industry comparability, two additional companies were included. This approach ensured the logicity of the selection and the compliance of the selected cases with the research tasks.

Therefore, the key principles of qualitative research were followed during data collection: LinkedIn was selected as a relevant employer communications channel by the research platform; industries and companies were selected in accordance with theoretically sound criteria of relevance and activity; a purposive sampling method was used to obtain a diverse and information-rich sample; and a pilot analysis confirmed and clarified the relationship between the established criteria and the content analysis procedure.

3.3 Data Analysis

This study applied a hybrid (inductive-deductive) content analysis of corporate posts on the LinkedIn platform to identify themes, strategies, and messages used by companies to promote gender equality. The methodology is based on the digital media content analysis model proposed by Lai and To (2015), in which content analysis in social platforms includes four key steps: (1) defining the purpose and scope of the study, (2) selecting sources and forming a sample, (3) coding and structuring data, and (4) interpreting the results. First, the goal and objectives of the analysis were formulated: to assess which messages, topics and themes companies use in their LinkedIn pages on the topic of female empowerment. The sample size was determined - posts of 11 leading companies in three key industries (technology, healthcare, finance) for 3 months - and the criteria for their selection were established (key tags, thematic relevance, corporate author) (see Appendix C).

In the next stage of the study, the messages were coded according to pre-defined categories displayed in the MAXQDA program interface. In particular, the following parameters were taken into account: Post Function - the post function, i.e. its main purpose (e.g. recruiting, informing, social responsibility and audience engagement); Presence of Femvertising - the presence or absence of a femvertising component; Post Format - the publication format (text, visual, video or mixed); Empowerment Categories - categories related to the topic of women's empowerment, such as Career Development & Growth, Work-Life Balance, Female Leadership Recognition and Inclusive Hiring. Narrative Type features were also coded, including information-neutral, inspirational or issue-oriented posts. A separate category was Call to Action - the presence of a call to action, which could be a direct invitation to apply for a vacancy, an invitation to participate in an initiative, or simply an informational update without an explicit action. The analysis also included the Language and Terminology category, which noted the use of gender-neutral vocabulary (Generic Language), femininities (Female-Specific Language), and inclusive formulations (Inclusive Language). In addition, each post was

assigned an industry code (Industry) - such as technology, healthcare, or finance - which allowed for subsequent comparison of data across different sectors.

The initial coding scheme was formulated deductively, based on existing concepts and research in the field of gender communication and advertising strategies. Thus, the category “Femvertising” is borrowed from the works on women’s empowerment advertising, where such messages are characterized by their appeal to women and the motive of combating stereotypes (Manohar & Puttaswamy, 2024). While the categories “work-life balance”, “female leadership”, “inclusive hiring” and “career development” were identified based on the literature on the preferences of female professionals - they indicate that flexibility and work-life balance are key factors in the attractiveness of an employer to women, and growth and development of career opportunities are one of the most important aspects (Azanza et al., 2024) (see Appendix A).

In the process of direct coding, another phase was carried out - the inductive stage: new semantic patterns and subthemes emerged that had not been previously taken into account. In accordance with the principles of content analysis described by Kleinheksel & Rockich-Winston (2020), in such cases, codes could be supplemented and refined based on the material obtained. For example, if a recurring category was encountered that was not included in the original category, a new subcode was created for it.

The data were interpreted according to the principles of qualitative analysis, with an emphasis on identifying semantic patterns, contexts and strategies used in corporate communications. The analysis focused on the correlation of codes with each other, their semantic load and industry specificity, and not only on their quantitative representation. Repeating narratives, themes and intonation structures characteristic of posts related to the women's empowerment agenda were identified. Moreover, there was also a focus on how companies formulate gender-empowerment narratives, what images and roles they convey, and what semantic dominants arise in their messages. At the same time, the frequency of mentions of certain codes was also calculated, but exclusively as an auxiliary indicator - to identify prevailing themes and ensure transparency in interpretation. The frequency of codes was used

not as a basis for quantitative summary statistics, but as an indicator of the stability and repeatability of semantic structures in various sectors in order to see latent meanings.

At the final stage, a thematic content analysis was conducted to synthesize the coded data into broader narratives and identify stable patterns in corporate messages. The codes were combined into superthemes reflecting the ways of representing women's empowerment within the framework of employer brand communications. This level of generalization allowed us to move from superficial categorization to the interpretation of latent meanings and value attitudes conveyed through corporate messages on gender equality.

The first stage of the analysis was a preliminary filtering process: only those posts that contained signs of femvertising were selected, since the study focuses on strategies for representing femininity and gender in corporate communication. After this stage, qualitative thematic coding, based on a pre-developed codebook (see Appendix A), was conducted, which included both deductive categories based on theoretical literature and inductive codes formed during exploration of the empirical data. Each post was analyzed according to a number of features: publication format, communicative function, narrative type, categories of symbolic empowerment, as well as the language and rhetoric used.

In the next stage of the analysis, the frequencies of the codes were examined, in order to record which themes and strategies appeared most often. However, the quantitative aspect was used not as a main source of information, but as a tool for primary orientation in the data. Whereas, key to the interpretation were the Code Map, Model Relationships, and Thematic Linkage Diagram (TLD) - visual analytical tools that allowed to identify both strong and weak links between categories. Based on these, the relationships between narrative types, post functions, and language features, and identified recurring patterns and exceptions were analysed.

In addition, in order to ensure the reliability and validity of the qualitative content analysis, a series of repeated coding iterations were conducted by one researcher. Multiple repetitions of the coding procedure allowed for the refinement of the coding scheme, as well as increased consistency of thematic categories, which helped to minimize subjective distortions.

During the analysis, detailed documentation of the decisions made and category definitions were noted, which ensured the transparency of the methodological approach and increased the possibility of reproducibility of the study. The measures applied contributed to improving the quality and reliability of the results obtained.

Thus, the chosen methodology allowed us to conduct a structured and multi-layered analysis of corporate communication strategies in the field of gender empowerment. The combination of deductive and inductive coding, as well as thematic analysis, ensured the identification of both the explicit content of messages and the deeper semantic structures embedded in the employer brand positioning. This approach allowed us to take into account industry specifics and, at the same time, identify general trends in how organizations form and broadcast the gender equality agenda.

4. Findings and Analysis

4.1 Overview of Gender Empowerment Messaging Trends

At this stage of the analysis, a qualitative interpretation of the thematic codes identified in the corpus of 40 messages, classified as femvertising, was performed. The main goal was not just to describe frequency characteristics, but also to reconstruct the hidden meanings behind corporate messages aimed at a female audience. The analysis used both quantitative metrics (primarily frequency analysis: see Appendix E) and qualitative tools, including Code Map, Model Relationships and Thematic Linkage Diagram (TLD), which allowed a deeper understanding of the logic behind the use of femvertising in the context of big business organizations.

At the initial stage, out of a total of 532 messages, only 40 met the criteria of femvertising, while the remaining 492 did not include elements related to this category and were excluded from further thematic analysis. Such representation is meaningful: despite the wide discussion of the gender agenda in the public space, femvertising is used limitedly in the context of HR communications. This indicates the selective nature of gender addressing in the corporate environment, where gender-inclusive messages are rather a rare phenomenon.

In the selected 40 posts, various aspects were coded, including the type of message (such as Inspirational and Informative/Neutral, etc.), the strategy of strengthening female representation (in particular, Female Leadership Recognition and Female Voices & Storytelling, etc.), post-functions (Recruiting, Employer Branding, etc.) and industry affiliation (Tech Industry, Finance Industry). Each of these codes was considered both in terms of frequency and in terms of its connections with other codes, which allowed us to build a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms of forming the image of a “successful woman” in corporate communications.

The most common type of message was Inspirational, present in 90% of all analyzed cases, while Informative/Neutral was much less common (12.5%). The Problem-Focused category was not represented at all, indicating the omission of a critical look at institutional barriers, discriminatory practices, and social inequality. This predominance of inspirational narratives indicates a preference for individualistic, post-feminist rhetoric, in which a successful woman is one who achieves results within the existing system, rather than fighting for its transformation. Corporate communications tend to replace talk about structural limitations with positive achievement agenda, which, on the one hand, gives messages a motivational character, but, on the other, conceals the real barriers that women face in the professional environment.

Among the forms and strategies of femvertising, the most common code is Female Leadership Recognition, occurring in 52.5% of cases. This may indicate the desire of organizations to use female leaders as a symbol of progress, without delving into the institutional aspects of supporting equality. This strategy creates an image of a woman in a leadership position who becomes not so much an agent of change as an object of symbolic capital of a company.

Other significant categories such as Direct Call to Action (62.5%), Career Development & Growth (37.5%), Female Voices & Storytelling (27.5%), Female-Specific Language (22.5%), Inclusive Language (27.5%) and Gender-Neutral/Generic Language (45%) demonstrate that femvertising is actively used not only as a means of attracting and engaging female audiences, but is also being tailored to specific business goals of companies.

The high percentage of Direct Call to Action indicates that most messages are aimed at activating the target audience - women and interacting with them, motivating them to apply for vacancies or participate in corporate initiatives. This shows a pragmatic approach to using femvertising - not just creating a positive image, but specifically involving the target audience in the company's processes. In addition, the Career Development & Growth category reflects a focus on supporting women's professional growth, which also has a motivational function and helps to create a positive perception of the company as a place where female talent is valued and developed. This helps to strengthen loyalty and attract diverse, qualified specialists.

Moreover, the use of Female Voices & Storytelling indicates a desire for personalization and creating an emotional connection with the audience through stories and real stories of women employees of the companies. Such a personalized approach increases trust and emphasizes the authenticity of the messages, which is an effective strategy in communications. In a similar way, Female-Specific Language complements the overall picture by creating a sense of targeted messages and emphasizing attention to the specificities of the female audience.

It should be noted that codes such as Female Voices & Storytelling and Female Representation were added inductively during the analysis. They reflect specific forms of femvertising based on the presentation of female experience or expertise of women in a professional context. Although these categories were not pre-defined, they proved their analytical relevance as they were consistently repeated across a number of messages and allowed for a more precise capture of the features of the context.

It is important to note that the code Gender Equality Initiatives appears in only 15% of posts, which again indicates the limited discussion of systemic and institutional initiatives aimed at promoting equality. On the contrary, categories related to personal growth, career development and inspirational stories dominate, thereby replacing structural approaches with personalized examples.

Certain trends can also be identified at the level of message functions. Thus, Recruiting is represented in 15% of posts, Company Information - in 30%, and Employer Branding - only in 5%, Social Responsibility & Engagement occupies a significant share (57.5%), and Internal Community Culture - 7.5%. It is also worth noting that the share of posts without a direct Call to Action is 27.5%, which indicates the presence of a certain part of messages working on a more delayed or indirect effect or response from the target audience. The Employer Branding category, although represented in the minority, demonstrates the use of femvertising as a tool for forming a positive image of the company. Similarly, Internal Community Culture, although rare, allows us to see how companies broadcast the values of female representation within the corporate environment, and not only for the external audience and potential employees.

Employer Branding and Internal Community Culture are also inductively introduced categories in the analysis. The high proportion of messages related to Social Responsibility & Engagement also suggests that femvertising is often positioned within the framework of corporate social responsibility. However, its use for these purposes remains rather symbolic.

An analysis of the industry distribution showed that the Tech Industry (47.5%) and Finance Industry (40%) lead in the number of messages with femvertising elements. This is especially significant given that these are the sectors that traditionally have a low level of female presence. Thus, the use of femvertising in these industries can serve as a reputational tool aimed at increasing the attractiveness of the employer to the female audience. At the same time, the Healthcare Industry, which is traditionally considered a more “feminine” field, is represented in only 12.5% of messages, which may indicate less attention to inclusive marketing in sectors with an already high proportion of women.

Moreover, in terms of media format, all 40 analyzed posts were classified as Mixed format, as they combined text with visual elements - photographs, graphics, or video clips. The absence of messages written exclusively in Text-Only, Image-Based, or Video Content formats emphasizes that femvertising as a communication strategy is inseparable from the visual component: the image of a woman - which is conveyed not only through verbal means, but also through purposefully constructed visual accompaniment.

Thus, femvertising in HR communications of companies is used in a limited volume, but at the same time it demonstrates structured and repeatable content. It relies on a positive, inspiring narrative, avoiding criticism or addressing structural problems. Its main function is both the symbolic involvement of women and the solution of practical problems (for example, recruitment or increasing loyalty). It emphasizes success, leadership and progress, without touching on the deep aspects of gender inequality. It is most active in the technology and financial sectors, where the gender imbalance is most pronounced.

4.2 Key Themes and Messaging Strategies

In recent years, corporate communication on social media has become an important tool for strategically promoting the values of inclusivity, equality and social responsibility. In this research a thematic analysis of corporate LinkedIn posts from big leading companies, including JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Bank of America, Moderna, Amazon, and AT&T, revealed recurring patterns through which corporate values and positioning strategies in the area of diversity, equity, and inclusion are represented. All 40 selected posts reflect the willingness of corporations to use women's experiences in their corporate communications as a means of strengthening their HR brand and enhancing social responsibility. Key topics include recognition of female leadership, personalized career development stories, work-life balance, historical context and women's participation in STEM, and corporate programs to support women.

One of the most prominent thematic blocks has become the recognition of female leadership and the achievements of women in leadership positions. According to the content coding, "Female Leadership Recognition" is present in more than half of the posts, making it one of the dominant thematic strategies. Companies actively use this thematic pattern to highlight the contribution of their employees to the development of a particular business and the industry as a whole. For example, Wells Fargo emphasizes in one of its publications: "we celebrate the women who have shaped our history and paved the way for future generations"(Wells Fargo. LinkedIn, March 2025). Such statements function as a symbolic recognition of the importance of women in the corporate structure, while promoting the brand as an inclusive employer.

Moreover, for example, JPMorgan Chase highlights its female executives' inclusion in the prestigious Barron's list: "JPMorganChase executives have earned spots on Barron's 100 Most Influential Women in U.S. Finance list" (JPMorgan Chase, LinkedIn, March 2025). This focus on women's achievements highlights the expertise and importance of female professionals

in traditionally male-dominated fields such as finance. Similarly, Moderna announces the appointment of Amy Mahery as its new SVP, focusing on her years of experience and leadership skills: “We’re excited to welcome Amy Mahery as our new SVP and Chief Marketing Officer”(Moderna, LinkedIn, March 2025). Posts like this contribute to the “Career Development & Growth” category and “Female Leadership Recognition”, underscoring upward mobility and leadership development. This approach demonstrates the companies’ desire to highlight the real career growth of women in leadership positions. However, such narratives often frame women’s success in an isolated manner, without addressing the institutional barriers or systemic inequalities that women face on their path to leadership. In terms of messaging strategies, these posts are usually “Inspirational” rather than “Problem-Focused”, which suggests a preference for symbolic over structural representation. The topic of “individual success” can mask structural limitations in this matter.

The second important theme is personalized career stories presented in the employee spotlight format or personal success stories of female employees, which are actively used by companies as a way to personalize the company's values and show real-life situations and people who embody them. This storytelling approach aligns with the “Female Voices & Storytelling” category and is often framed within the “Inspirational” tone. For example, Amazon publishes personal success stories of female employees with an emphasis on their path and challenges they face: “When Beverlyn first joined Amazon, she had two big motivations - helping support her mom through chemotherapy and taking advantage of the company’s education benefits to build her future” (Amazon, LinkedIn, April 2025). JPMorgan Chase uses similar themes when telling the story of how an employee rose from intern to vice president: “Meet Sara! From starting as a marketing intern to rising to the role of vice president”(JPMorgan Chase, LinkedIn, March 2025). These stories are accompanied by professional portraits and quotes from the female employees themselves, which gives the publications a sense of authenticity and enhances the emotional response. They are formatted as “Mixed Format” posts combining visual and textual elements for greater engagement. Such narratives form the image of the company as a space of opportunities, where the individual

development of women, their personal lives are combined with value, support and respect for personal experience.

In addition, a related narrative element is also evident in the posts – the topic of work-life balance and motherhood. Companies emphasize their support for women’s flexible working conditions during motherhood. AT&T, for example, publishes a story of an employee combining work with caring for her son: “As a working parent, Nikki’s top priority for a job was that she could be there for her son. She found the perfect fit in our Call Centers” (AT&T, LinkedIn, March 2025). These stories are coded under “Work-Life Balance” and “Inspirational”, reinforcing a humane and supportive brand image, which paints an image of a modern woman who is able to integrate personal and professional identities without sacrificing one of them. This also serves as a strategy for demonstrating social responsibility and corporate culture. However, the one question arises: how widely these conditions are available to all employees, including those who do not work in offices or hold less prestigious positions.

Another important topic that can be traced in the companies’ posts is historical memory and cultural heritage. They are tied to “Female Leadership Recognition” and “Social Responsibility & Engagement” codes. These themes are actively integrated into the rhetoric of corporate communications as part of the Women’s History Month (WHM) practice, which is attended by companies from various industries - from technology and finance to healthcare and pharma. The companies in question use WHM as an opportunity to highlight the historical contributions of women in the development of key areas, while strengthening their own reputations as culturally aware and socially responsible. AT&T refers to the history of female signalers during World War I (“Hello Girls”) and notes: “we couldn’t be prouder to have trained these trailblazing women who paved the way for generations in technology and service” (AT&T, LinkedIn, March 2025). This reference to female heroes of the past allows the company to connect its modern presence in the industry with the history of women’s contributions to technology as an industry. In doing so, such narratives tend to focus on heroic individual figures, sidestepping more complex aspects of history such as racial inequality, institutional oppression, or class difference. In this way, WHM becomes a space of symbolic recognition.

The WHM also discussed the place of women in STEM by companies that consistently build a positive image of women as bearers of scientific and technological progress. These messages are coded as “Female Representation”, “Female Leadership Recognition”, “Inspirational”, “Social Responsibility & Engagement”, and “Gender Equality Initiatives”. Moderna, for example, emphasizes the importance of female participation in science through its collaboration with Geek Girls LatAm in one of its posts: “Our collaboration with Geek Girls LatAm is helping young girls and women in Latin America to access tools and educational resources to explore the world of STEM” (Moderna, LinkedIn, March 2025). Such statements demonstrate the company’s attempt to build an intersectional narrative that emphasizes the diversity of women’s voices (Female Voices & Storytelling) and, at the same time, institutional responsibility for eliminating structural barriers in science. Using hashtags like #WomenInSTEM and #WomensHistoryMonth allows corporate rhetoric to be embedded in a broader global activist context, which also fits in with the Employer Branding strategy.

Another element of corporate communications strategies within femvertising has become the connection of corporate policy with social responsibility within the framework of the female agenda. Many posts combine narratives on the topics of career growth and women's experience with declarations of support programs. Wells Fargo publishes the story of a military spouse, highlighting the Homefront Heroes Hiring Program, which emphasizes corporate care for military families: “we're honored to highlight Senior Business Execution Consultant, Ali Nelson... supported by our Homefront Heroes Hiring program”(Wells Fargo, LinkedIn, May 2025). Thus, CSR becomes a platform for branding through a humanitarian agenda.

Moreover, a Code Relations analysis was conducted, which showed that HR communications using femvertising are built on stable semantic configurations. The most stable combination of codes was “Function: Social responsibility” and “Narrative: Inspirational”, which indicates the desire of companies to cause emotional involvement of the audience through motivating stories in the context of corporate social responsibility. This strengthens the positive perception of the brand and demonstrates value orientation. The combination of “Female leadership” and “Narrative: Inspirational” is also found. Companies tell success stories

of female leaders, forming a role model and emphasizing career opportunities for women. This is especially significant in the context of technical and scientific industries, where men traditionally dominate. An important observation is also the combination of Inspirational + Female Leadership Recognition + Direct Call to Apply. This may indicate a typical scenario: the message inspires, shows a successful woman and then directs the audience to action, most often - to apply for a vacancy. Thus, femvertising in HR communications is not just a tool for visual and textual design, but a targeted strategy based on reproducible patterns.

The analysed publications show that femvertising in corporate communications has become a conscious and structured strategy used by large companies to promote social responsibility, gender equality and the image of an inclusive employer. By systematically using inspirational stories, recognizing female leadership and personalized storytelling, these companies manage not only to communicate positive values but also to create role models and calls to action for the female audience. However, the analysis highlights the preference for symbolic and individual representations, often avoiding a structural approach to inequality. Thus, femvertising acts as a dual instrument - between the marketing of values and strategic branding in the context of inclusivity.

4.3 Industry-Specific Patterns in Gender Branding

In the context of high competition for qualified personnel, companies in various industries are increasingly turning to gender-oriented communication practices as part of building an HR brand. This is especially evident on the LinkedIn platform, where the largest corporations integrate the values of inclusivity, equality, and career opportunities for women into their public communication and representation. A qualitative content analysis of 40 LinkedIn posts from leading companies in the fields of technology (Amazon, AT&T, Verizon), finance (JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Bank of America), and healthcare (Moderna) revealed industry-specific features of the use of femvertising and defined key thematic patterns that distinguish communication strategies in these sectors.

The largest quantitative distribution of posts on the topic of femvertising is recorded in the technology sector (19 posts), which is almost half of the entire sample. The financial industry also demonstrates high activity (16 posts), while the number of posts in the healthcare sector is significantly lower (5 posts). These differences reflect both the structural features of the industries themselves (different levels of representation of women, level of competition for qualified workers), and different degrees of maturity of diversity-, equity-, inclusion-based communication strategies of companies.

The thematic content of the posts also illustrates industry differences. In the tech industry, the key focus is on demonstrating career opportunities, inclusive working conditions, and support for women in their professional and personal growth. The Amazon case is illustrative: “Thanks to Amazon’s Career Choice program... Beverlyn is just one year away from earning her BA in data analytics and Public Relations” (Amazon, LinkedIn, April 2025) — it uses an inspiring narrative showing how the company promotes education and career growth. It is important to note that all 19 tech posts were in Mixed Format, which indicates a desire to increase audience engagement through visual and textual elements. Notably, the emphasis on an inspiring narrative is particularly noticeable (16 out of 19 posts), which is combined with a thematic focus on women’s career growth (Career Development & Growth — 5), female leadership recognition (Female Leadership Recognition — 8), and personal stories (Female Voices & Storytelling — 10). This speaks to the desire not only to declare the values of equality and inclusivity, but also to back them up with real cases of personal success. The frequency of direct calls to action (Direct Call to Apply — 16) is indicative, which allows us to regard femvertising not only as an image practice, but also as a full-fledged recruitment tool and engagement of the target audience in corporate activities. The language strategy in this sector balances between gender-neutral (10), female-specific (4), and inclusive (3) approaches, demonstrating maturity in the formation of an inclusive and accessible discourse. All this creates an image of technology companies as proactive and progressive employers, focused on social transformation and individual development of employees.

The financial sector (16 posts) demonstrates a more formalized and structured approach. The prevalence of the topics “Female Leadership Recognition” (8) and “Career Development & Growth” (6) points to the institutional focus of femvertising: here, the women’s agenda is used as a mechanism for legitimizing success in a traditionally male-dominated industry. A post from JPMorgan Chase, for example, states: “JPMorganChase executives have earned spots on Barron’s 100 Most Influential Women in U.S. Finance list” (JPMorgan Chase, LinkedIn, March 2025). Such publications, coded as Female Leadership Recognition, create symbolic capital and emphasize the authority of women in high positions. It is worth noting that despite the high level of inspirational narratives (Inspirational — 16), financial companies more often than others do not accompany publications with direct calls to action — No Call to Action is present in 9 out of 16 cases, while Direct Call to Apply — only in 5. This reflects a focus on creating an image of a sustainable, inclusive culture, rather than solely on operational hiring or involvement. Terminologically, the texts rely primarily on gender-neutral (6) and inclusive (7) language. Thus, the women’s agenda in the financial sector performs primarily symbolic and legitimizing functions, acting as a tool for reputation management

The healthcare sector (5 posts) demonstrates the most restrained and representative nature of femvertising. With a limited volume of communications, one can see the desire of companies to highlight the participation of women in the professional and, most importantly, research environment. Thus, Moderna focuses on the importance of female leadership in scientific developments: “Join us in celebrating the women shaping the future of science and beyond” (Moderna, LinkedIn, March 2025). Most posts have an inspiring narrative, and the topics are dominated by “Female Leadership Recognition” (5) and “Career Development & Growth” (4). Within the limited sample, most posts contain a Direct Call to Apply, one — No Call to Action. The terminology is mostly balanced: gender-neutral (2), female-specific (2), inclusive (1). This allows us to talk about the partial integration of the women’s agenda into HR communications, but within a more limited, institutionally defined framework — as a rule, in conjunction with scientific achievements or corporate activity initiatives.

In addition, a cross-sectoral analysis of femvertising in company communications on LinkedIn revealed both quantitative and qualitative differences in the strategies for presenting the gender agenda. The most pronounced pattern is observed in the combination of the codes Social Responsibility & Engagement and Inspirational Narrative, which is especially characteristic of the technology (8) and finance (12) sectors. These messages are framed as emotionally inspiring narratives that emphasize women's contribution to social and corporate transformations, as well as companies' efforts to promote the values of inclusivity and equality. This thematic combination indicates the rhetoric of positive transformation and corporate social responsibility used to strengthen the HR brand and employer branding.

Moreover, the code Female Leadership Recognition is present in all three industries with high intensity: in technology - 8 mentions, in healthcare - 5, in finance - 8. However, the way companies in different industries use it varies. In the technology sector, it is often combined with Career Development & Growth and is implemented through personalized career stories that emphasize support from the employer. In the financial sector, the institutional form of recognition dominates - mentioning external awards, lists and ratings that confirm the company's status as supporting women's leadership. In healthcare, this code is manifested through the appointment of women to high scientific and administrative positions, but is not accompanied by career development or educational support, as in other sectors.

Another finding is that the Work-Life Balance theme is limited in its manifestation: two mentions were recorded in the technology and financial sectors, and none at all in healthcare. This may indicate both the weak institutionalization of work-life balance support in medicine and the professional realities of the industry, in which such an agenda is perceived as of little relevance. In contrast, in the financial and technology sectors, messages about flexibility, parental support, and personal work schedules are used as part of EVP communication.

Furthermore, a significant difference in the technology sector is the integrated approach to language strategies. Three codes are present here simultaneously: Gender-Neutral/Generic Language (10), Female-Specific Language (4) and Inclusive Language (3), while other industries tend to use one or two types of language. This indicates a more developed linguistic

toolkit and strategic attention to issues of identity and belonging. The use of Female-Specific Language in technology posts is combined with an emphasis on Female Voices & Storytelling, creating a narrative of emotional inclusion and support for individual experience.

Thus, femvertising in corporate communications does not have a universal communication model, but is adapted depending on the industry context. The degree of institutionalization of the agenda, priority topics and the vocabulary used reflect both the structure of the industry itself and its maturity in the field of inclusion, diversity and equality.

5. Discussion

5.1 Interpretation of Findings

Content analysis of LinkedIn content shows that companies from different industries integrate the gender equality and women's support agenda into their employer branding in different ways. However, in all areas, one way or another, there is a tendency towards "femvertising" posts - promoting the employer image through the values of female leadership and equal opportunities. The activation of such communication is especially noticeable in March, when the corporate pages of all the companies studied celebrate International Women's Day and Women's History Month. Such campaigns at this time allow organizations to demonstrate their commitment to the gender equality agenda, meeting the expectations of society and candidates.

However, there are industry differences: for example, the intensity of femvertising posts varies. Tech and finance companies tend to post significantly more on the topic of female empowerment than healthcare organizations. In the content sample, the volume of such posts from tech and banking was approximately 3–4 times higher than that of healthcare companies. This may reflect a greater need for tech and finance firms to demonstrate their inclusivity due to historical gender imbalances. Indeed, women make up only about 35% of the tech workforce, compared to about 46% in financial services. At the same time, healthcare is a traditionally "female" sector, with women making up the majority (approximately 70% of the workforce). At the same time, there is a significant gender gap at the leadership level across all industries (in healthcare, only ~25% of top management are women, with similar situations in finance and technology). Therefore, IT and financial companies are more actively using femvertising, seeking to attract and retain female talent in male-dominated teams, while for medical organizations this topic may seem less acute for basic recruitment.

In addition, key gender branding themes also vary across industries, reflecting their specific contexts. Tech companies focus their posts on women's success stories and opportunities for advancement, often featuring inspiring stories of female employees who have achieved success at the company or historical figures who have paved the way for women in tech. Amazon, for example, announced that it was holding "31 Days of Celebrating Women at Amazon," (Amazon, LinkedIn, March 2025) a series of special events, workshops, and guest speakers for all employees around the world. This storytelling (such as the "Life at..." series featuring personal stories) highlights the value of women's voices, with much of the sector's content being presented in the form of personal narratives (first-person stories or quotes from the heroines). This is consistent with firms seeking to project an image of a supportive corporate culture where women's experiences are heard. Verizon, for example, regularly highlights its WAVE women's resource community and shares stories of employees overcoming challenges and growing within the company — these pieces strike an inspiring tone, showing that women in tech can "move forward and up" with support from their team and new challenges to grow. In addition, a number of tech companies highlight internal initiatives to advance women, from educational events to mentoring programs. The presence of such programs and their coverage on social media demonstrates to candidates that the organization is serious about elevating the role of women within the team.

The financial services sector is particularly focused on recognizing female leadership and achievement, often highlighting the successes of its female employees in senior positions, seeking to provide role models, and affirming that women can pursue careers on an equal basis with men. For example, JPMorgan Chase has highlighted several female executives on Barron's 100 Most Influential Women in Finance list, praising their leadership, dedication to clients, and significant contributions to finance as an industry. These types of publications not only celebrate female employees, but also signal to external audiences that the company values women's contributions and thrives on diverse leadership. Additionally, financial firms often feature content that addresses career opportunities and development for women in the community, including posts about mentoring programs, partnerships, and corporate social

responsibility initiatives that support women. For example, a number of posts from the banking industry were dedicated to supporting female entrepreneurs and clients, as well as special recruitment programs, demonstrating that the company promotes women's self-realization not only inside the organization, but also outside the organization and in the industry as a whole. Thus, the tone of financial content combines information and motivation, while a direct call to action is quite rare. Communication is based more on building trust and engaging the audience, rather than on direct recruitment. Only occasionally do companies add a call-to-action, encouraging, for example, to learn more about vacancies or programs - the main emphasis is on the value positioning of the employer brand.

Healthcare companies typically focus on the professional development and leadership of women in science in their gender branding. Since the overall number of women in this field is already high, the emphasis shifts from attracting women in general to supporting their career growth and promotion to leadership roles. The theme of mentoring, training, and recognition of women specialists is evident in healthcare organizations' materials. For example, Moderna's LinkedIn posts highlighted career panels with female leaders in the scientific department and stories of employees who came to the company "to change medicine" – these cases illustrate the opportunities to realize their potential and contribute to innovation. The tone of such messages is predominantly neutral and informative or motivational and positive: companies celebrate the successes of their female employees and simultaneously convey the idea that success is possible for everyone and is possible within the entire industry. Personal stories are less common, but much attention is paid to corporate support tools - leadership development programs, specialized ERGs, partnerships to attract women to STEM. Like the technology sector, healthcare companies demonstrate the presence of internal communities and initiatives for the development of women. For example, Moderna's career site directly states the desire to create a diverse and inclusive environment where every employee feels accepted and empowered to work to their full potential. This principle is reflected in the content: it is emphasized that the company values the contribution of female scientists and managers, integrating their achievements into the employer brand story. Unlike banks, topics of open discussion of barriers

(discrimination or work-life balance) are less noticeable in the communications of healthcare companies; the rhetoric is focused on positive examples and growth opportunities. This can be explained by the specifics of the industry, where the problem of gender balance is felt not so much at the hiring level, but at the level of the career "glass ceiling" in the context of career advancement.

In addition, it is important to note that the nature of the messages themselves also varies: a significant part of the gender-focused content of financial firms has a shade of social responsibility (participation in public initiatives, honoring historical figures and supporting external women's communities), while technology companies also include elements of Internal Community Culture and Employer Branding in their communications, using the women's agenda as an element of the internal employer brand (demonstration of corporate culture, team values and growth opportunities), and healthcare organizations - as a tool for informing about the professional development of female employees in a particular company. Despite these nuances, there are also unifying trends. All the companies under consideration build their HR communications in line with corporate social responsibility and the ideology of diversity, equity, inclusion. The official missions and values of these organizations declare a commitment to equal opportunities and diversity, which is then converted into the content of the posts. Each company tries to show that the development of women is not a one-time event, but part of the corporate culture. Regular participation in international campaigns (such as Women's History Month) is only the most visible element of this strategy, when external information occasions favor strategies to strengthen the employer brand. However, even outside the framework of holidays, communication is supported by ongoing initiatives: the existence of resource groups for female employees, specialized trainings, target programs, and the promotion of women to leadership positions. For example, the aforementioned women's initiatives generate content on an ongoing basis, not limited to the March events.

As a result, the industry context largely determines the emphasis: in areas where women are historically underrepresented (IT, finance), it is important for companies to demonstrate real changes and inspire potential candidates with examples of successful careers in order to attract

new female talent. In more gender-balanced areas (medicine), the emphasis is on further growth and recognition of those who are already working. Nevertheless, in all industries, the goal of femvertising is similar - to strengthen the employer value proposition (EVP) through social significance. Analytics confirm the effectiveness of this approach: according to the Rally platform, posts dedicated to diversity and inclusion receive an average of 141% more impressions and 255% more clicks compared to regular employer content (Rally, 2024). In the context of fierce competition for talent, appealing to the values of gender equality is becoming a strategic tool: such messages not only enhance the company's reputation as socially responsible, but also resonate with the expectations of job seekers, especially representatives of younger generations, for whom DEI (diversity, equal opportunity, and inclusion) is an important criterion when choosing a place to work - according to surveys, about 77% of Generation Z representatives take into account a company's commitment to this area when hiring (*TalentLMS*, 2022). Thus, by emphasizing support for female leadership, equal value of contribution, and creating a comfortable environment for all employees, organizations seek to strengthen their image as a responsible, attractive employer in the eyes of talent.

5.2 Contributions to Employer Branding Theory

Today, the strategy of using femvertising as part of employer branding campaigns is becoming increasingly popular among companies in various fields. Gender-oriented communication practices are especially evident on the LinkedIn platform, where the largest corporations integrate the values of inclusivity, equality, and career opportunities for women into their public representation. A qualitative content analysis of 40 LinkedIn posts from leading companies in the fields of technology (Amazon, AT&T, Verizon), finance (JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Bank of America, Mastercard), and healthcare (UnitedHealth Group, Moderna, Eli Lillie and Company) revealed industry-specific features of femvertising and identified key thematic patterns that distinguish communication strategies in these sectors.

Thus, the study revealed that femvertising in employer branding demonstrates certain industry specifics. Tech companies focus on inclusion, career opportunities and support for women through narratives of personal stories and diverse career development. The financial sector is focused on promoting examples of success, leadership and institutional recognition, emphasizing career prospects in a traditionally male industry. Healthcare, despite the high proportion of women on the staff, demonstrates a more representational approach, without focusing on the transformational aspects of gender equality. These differences indicate that femvertising is becoming a strategic tool for HR branding from a formal practice, where each industry adapts the agenda to its own institutional and corporate parameters.

It is important to note that the development of femvertising strategies in the context of employer branding allows not only to understand the features of corporate representation of the gender agenda, but also to take a new look at its theoretical significance. The analysis of such communications gives grounds to speak about a significant contribution to the development of both the theory of employer branding itself and the expansion of the application of the Social Exchange Theory (SET) concept in relation to inclusive HR strategies.

Firstly, the patterns observed in the empirical data indicate that femvertising today is not a situational and isolated element of marketing or a simple manifestation of corporate adherence to the social agenda, but a sustainable tool for forming the value core of the employer brand. Through the systematic use of elements of visual representation of women, an emphasis on female leadership and career stories, companies not only build the image of a socially responsible employer, but also strengthen the strategic differentiation of EVP (Employee Value Proposition). This is especially relevant in the context of growing competition for female talent in areas with gender imbalance.

Secondly, femvertising in the context of employer branding can be seen as empirical confirmation of key provisions of Social Exchange Theory, in particular the idea of reciprocity in social relations. Female audiences (as potential and current employees) evaluate the actions of a company in terms of their symbolic and material returns. By providing recognition, a supportive culture, flexible working conditions and representativeness, the employer signals a

willingness to engage in equitable and fair exchange, which in turn evokes reciprocal loyalty, involvement and long-term commitment to the company from women. Such gestures are embedded in a broader cultural context of symbolic justice and recognition, which is especially important for women, for whom, according to Ng & Bure (2005), the intangible aspects of the work experience are significant.

Thirdly, the phenomenon of employer femvertising allows us to expand the theoretical understanding of the employer brand as a system in which communications become not only a reflection of organizational culture, but also a way of constructing it. Published narratives, visual images, language style and choice of heroes form a symbolic space in which a woman is presented as a subject of success, leadership and expertise. Thus, employer branding with a gender focus performs a transformational function, contributing to the deconstruction of outdated gender roles and redefinition of the norms of professional success.

Moreover, sector-based differences in femvertising strategies suggest the importance of contextualising the employer brand. The technology sector uses it to attract women to traditionally male-dominated fields; finance – to demonstrate career prospects and reputational capital; healthcare – as a representation of women's contribution. Such variation proves that gender-inclusive employer branding is not a universal form of rhetoric, but a flexible practice adapted to the institutional context (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

Finally, conceptualizing femvertising as an element of employer branding requires a broader inclusion in HR discourse. It is aligned with values-based employment, where job choice is an expression of personal beliefs (Amaram, 2019), and integrates practices of inclusion, equality, and diversity into the visual and linguistic representation of the brand. Such elements in the form of career stories, messages about equal pay, play a mediating role between actors of inclusion policies and brand perception. The effectiveness of femvertising depends on authenticity: superficial use of fem-rhetoric without reinforcement in culture is perceived as HR-washing (Akestam et al., 2017). Therefore, femvertising should be embedded in real efforts to ensure equality.

Thus, employer femvertising is not just a new communication trend, but a phenomenon at the intersection of employer branding theory and social exchange theory. It demonstrates how values, identity, and fairness become assets in the attention and trust economy, determining the behavior of employees and candidates. This understanding requires further research, including an analysis of the impact of these strategies on engagement, staff retention and corporate culture transformation.

5.3 Practical Implications for Organizations

Previous research has shown that branding and marketing communications have a significant impact on shaping gender norms in society. Historically, advertising has often reproduced stereotypical images of men and women, thereby reinforcing unequal gender roles. Women have traditionally been portrayed in passive or servile roles, and men in dominant and active roles, which is reflected in visual and linguistic images and limits ideas about socially acceptable roles for each gender. However, sociological and gender studies show that more inclusive and equal images can shift established attitudes towards greater equality. According to Ipsos survey (2018), 76% of consumers acknowledge that advertising in general influences how people perceive each other, so companies can influence social norms by using corporate communications to change social norms. Empirical evidence confirms that integrating gender equality principles into branding brings significant benefits. For example, Nguyen et al. show that Gen Z values not only tangible conditions, but also intangible ones, such as organizational ethics, office atmosphere, and CSR initiatives (Nguyen et al., 2022).

Thus, firstly, the introduction of an inclusive gender agenda meets audience expectations: many modern consumers consider the rigid division of goods and messages by gender to be outdated. According to a study by Nykänen (2020), Gen Zers show strong support for gender-neutral marketing and avoid traditional binary segmentation. Secondly, inclusive marketing improves business results. For example, a global study conducted in collaboration with UN Women and Oxford University (2024) found that campaigns with diverse and

gender-sensitive content generate an average of 3-4% higher short-term sales and 16% higher long-term sales, as well as significantly increasing consumer loyalty. Vertical implementation of equality principles (from corporate culture to advertising) creates a competitive advantage for a company: an inclusive brand is more trustworthy, attracts a wider and more diverse audience, and strengthens its reputation with potential consumers (candidates in the case of this study).

It is important to emphasize that the authenticity of gender-inclusive branding directly affects its success: if the communicated values of equality, inclusion and diversity diverge from the actual practices of the organization, the audience will quickly notice the insincerity, which will immediately affect the reputation. A critical attitude towards inclusive marketing by modern consumers can harm the brand if they suspect it of purely superficial goals. Therefore, a brand's efforts in the field of gender inclusion must start from within the company and be systemic, otherwise external campaigns will be perceived skeptically. Overall, the results of the study indicate that integrating gender equality into a brand is a complex task that requires changes in both the communication strategy and internal systemic structures.

Companies seeking to implement a gender-inclusive agenda in their practices should choose a comprehensive approach that covers all aspects of their activities – from marketing and product to HR policy and corporate culture. Thus, the starting point for implementing such an agenda should be a rethinking of the visual and semantic images of the brand in order to eliminate stereotypes. It is necessary to audit advertising materials and communication formats, identifying gender clichés and reworking them taking into account the principles of diversity and equality. An effective approach is to demonstrate women and men in atypical roles, which helps to destroy persistent ideas about “male” and “female” professions, responsibilities or characteristics. For example, an image of a man actively involved in childcare or a woman as a STEM company manager forms a new perception of role distribution. At the same time, visual images should be supported by appropriate language – neutral, devoid of gender hierarchies, and reflecting diversity. It is important to implement inclusive communication standards in all brand materials and train internal teams on these principles so that such communication does not become an end in itself, but rather a reflection of the company's real position.

Thus, for the external communication of the brand to correspond with the internal values of the company. This means that gender equality should be reflected in the HR policy, corporate culture and management structure. Marketing and PR departments should be gender diverse in order to form multi-perspective messages. Ideally, women and representatives of gender minorities should not only be part of the work groups, but also have access to decision-making. Examples of large companies such as Unilever show that such approaches are feasible: their global initiative Unstereotype assumes inclusivity both at the level of the production team and in the plots of advertising campaigns. In this way, the brand manages not only to convey the values of equality, but also to demonstrate their authenticity through organizational practice (WFA, 2024).

Special attention should be paid to the way brands convey ideas of gender equality through marketing and communication channels. Research shows that emotionally charged, value-oriented campaigns that tell stories that are personal, inspiring, and socially significant have the greatest impact. One of the striking examples is the #LikeAGirl campaign by Always, which redefined a derogatory expression as a symbol of confidence and strength. Thanks to honest, emotionally accurate communication, the brand achieved widespread support, became the object of public discussion, and strengthened the image of an ally of the female audience, accurately falling into the social agenda (Yoon & Lee, 2021). Another effective strategy is the normalization of diversity: when equality appears not as a special emphasis, but as a natural part of the everyday context. This is achieved by including atypical images in “ordinary” advertising - a woman running a business; a parent in a wheelchair taking care of a child. This presentation destroys the perception of equality as a “special topic” and makes it the norm.

In order to achieve a sustainable effect from gender-inclusive communication, brands need to be consistent. One-off campaigns rarely ensure long-term changes in public perception and are not remembered by the audience. Therefore, the transmission of values should be integrated into all communication channels - advertising, social media, PR, partnership projects. An example is the Dove company, which has been implementing a “real beauty” strategy for more than ten years - from casting models of different appearances to initiatives to combat

distorted beauty standards promoted by social networks. Thanks to a systematic and consistent position, Dove has strengthened consumer trust and formed long-term loyalty, turning the topic of appearance and self-esteem into part of its identity.

Finally, successful equality communication requires cultural sensitivity and consideration of intersecting identities. The concept of gender equality is not universal: it is perceived differently depending on the cultural context and intersects with other dimensions - ethnicity, class, age, disability, sexual orientation. Therefore, brands, especially international ones, must adapt their messages to local specifics, take intersectionality into account and avoid universal templates. Using an intersectional approach – recognizing multiple identities – allows us to make communications more fair and representative. This includes not only the diversity of visual content, but also the conscious inclusion of historically marginalized groups in the discourse.

Therefore, brands seeking to implement a gender-inclusive approach must think strategically: combine changes in the internal structure with a transformation of external communications, rely on authenticity, take into account the cultural context and build their messages on respect, equality and real stories. Only in this case the brand becomes not just a market participant, but also an active agent of social change, receiving in return trust, loyalty and a sustainable competitive advantage.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite the empirical results obtained in the analysis, the presented study has a number of limitations that should be taken into account when interpreting the findings and planning future research. First of all, the main limitation is the size and nature of the sample: the analysis covers only 40 posts selected from three industries - technology, finance and healthcare - and published on the LinkedIn platform. Such a size allows for qualitative analysis and identification of meaningful patterns in communication strategies, but limits the possibility of generalizing the results to a wider range of industries and regional contexts. In addition, it is important to note

that the companies included in the sample represent large corporations mainly from the United States, which creates a certain geographic and cultural shift towards the Anglo-Saxon model of corporate governance and communication. Thus, the results may be less relevant for the analysis of companies from Asia, Latin America or post-socialist countries of Eastern Europe, where value orientations and perceptions of inclusive practices may differ due to cultural and institutional differences.

In addition, the limited sample of industries distorts the overall picture of how femvertising is used across different sectors of the economy. The sectors represented in the study are indeed relevant from a gender analysis perspective, such as technology and finance, where women's participation has historically been low, and healthcare, where women make up a significant portion of the workforce. However, other important industries such as manufacturing, energy, construction, education, and the public sector were not included in the sample. However, these sectors also develop their own unique employer branding strategies, including gender-focused communications. Expanding the study to other sectors would provide a more comprehensive and representative understanding of the applicability of femvertising as an HR communications and employer branding tool in different sectors of economics.

The research methodology also imposes certain limitations. The approach used is based on qualitative coding and interpretation of messages, which implies a certain degree of subjectivity on the part of the researcher. Although pre-developed categories and a codebook (see Appendix A) were used, some codes were introduced inductively during the analysis, which, on the one hand, allows the study to be adapted to specific empirical material, but on the other hand, may reduce the reproducibility of the results in other contexts. In addition, the study does not include quantitative methods of analysis, such as regression modeling or factor analysis, which could further confirm statistical relationships between message types, post functions, and selected language or narrative strategies.

It is also worth noting the temporal static nature of the analysis. All messages were collected and analyzed within one time period - March-May 2025, including March, during which many campaigns are held to celebrate Women's History Month. This means that the

results of the study recorded communication activity that was maximally saturated with the topic of gender equality and strengthening female leadership. Thus, the identified patterns, in particular the high share of Inspirational Narrative and Female Leadership Recognition, may be associated with the calendar factor and do not reflect the actual regularity of the use of femvertising throughout the year. To obtain a more objective and sustainable picture of the structure and dynamics of femvertising, longitudinal studies are needed that cover both holiday periods and "regular" time intervals. This would allow us to track the cyclicity, sustainability and situationality of various strategies and determine the extent to which femvertising is integrated into ongoing communication practices rather than being used as a temporary symbolic campaign.

Moreover, this area of trust research has the potential to study femvertising from the perspective of the target audience. The limitations of this study's data are evident in the lack of information on the actual impact of the messages on the audience. The study does not include engagement metrics (likes, comments, reposts) or qualitative data on the perception of the content by recipients, both women and men. This means that the effectiveness of the chosen strategies remains unproven at the behavioral level. Thus, a promising direction for future research could be to conduct quantitative or mixed methods analyses, including, for example, online surveys, experimental designs, or interviews with potential applicants. Such approaches would help clarify which elements of femvertising have the greatest impact on employer brand perception and employment decisions. From a methodological point of view, cross-cultural comparative studies are also of interest, allowing us to identify differences in the perception and effectiveness of femvertising depending on cultural attitudes, gender norms, and the level of institutional support for equality in different contexts. Research by Hofstede (1991) and Triandis (1996) shows that individualistic and collectivistic cultures have different perceptions of the values of inclusion, fairness, and career advancement. Thus, the applicability of the same strategies may vary, and the use of femvertising in global companies requires cultural adaptation.

Finally, the study does not take into account internal organizational factors such as actual HR practices, the degree to which inclusive initiatives are integrated into the corporate culture, and the level of women's representation in leadership positions. This limits the ability to analyze the correspondence between external image and internal content. The lack of data on internal policy documents, sustainability reports, or statistics on the gender composition of employees does not allow drawing conclusions about the genuine transformation of the organizational environment. Future research could include a multi-level analysis, comparing external communications with internal practices, as well as interviews with employees to assess the perception of corporate culture from the inside.

Thus, the presented study contributes to the understanding of the strategic application of femvertising in employer branding communications and employer branding, but requires further theoretical and empirical development. Promising directions for future research include expanding the sample across industries and geographies, using longitudinal designs, analyzing the interaction between internal and external factors, and involving quantitative methods to assess the effectiveness of communication strategies. A comprehensive approach to studying femvertising as an employer branding tool will allow us to formulate more precise recommendations for companies seeking to create a sustainable, inclusive and attractive HR brand.

6. Conclusion

This study provides an empirical contribution to the concept of femvertising as a strategic tool within the concept of employer branding and illustrates its importance for the formation of an attractive, inclusive and value-oriented HR image of a company. Using the example of the analysis of LinkedIn communications of the largest employers in the field of technology, finance and healthcare, a stable tendency towards the integration of gender-sensitive messages into the structure of public representation was identified. In this context, femvertising ceases to be a marketing tool in brand formation and becomes a conscious mechanism for constructing symbolic capital aimed at attracting and retaining a female and gender-diverse professional community.

The study found that the use of femvertising varies across industries, with the technology sector demonstrating the most structured approach to shaping gender-inclusive narratives based on personal success stories, leadership support, and career development. The financial industry focuses on institutional recognition of women's achievements and career mobility, while healthcare focuses on representation and the sustainable presence of women in scientific and management positions. However, what all industries have in common is a desire to use inspiring narratives and language that creates a sense of belonging and social significance, in line with the current social agenda.

The key theoretical basis of the study was the Social Exchange Theory, which allowed us to understand how gender-oriented messages contribute to the formation of trust, perception of organizational support and the desire of job seekers to join the company. Inclusive messages that convey support, respect, career prospects and values of equality are perceived as elements of a beneficial exchange, within which employees are ready to invest loyalty and involvement. This is especially important in the context of the transformation of the labor market and the emergence of new generations of workers focused on social justice, diversity and value alignment with the employer.

The practical significance of the work lies in demonstrating how companies can adapt the employer branding strategy taking into account the expectations of the female audience and use femvertising to form a more sustainable and competitive employer brand. The identified communication patterns and code combinations (such as “Social Responsibility & Engagement” + “Inspirational Narrative” or “Female Leadership Recognition”) provide a basis for developing more targeted and effective messages. In addition, the research data confirms that EVP segmentation and its cultural relevance are becoming key requirements when building talent acquisition strategies.

However, the study has a number of limitations. In particular, the sample is limited in size (40 posts) and covers only three industries, which does not allow extrapolating the findings to the entire market. There is also no analysis of internal company policies and practices, which makes it impossible to compare external image with the real state of affairs. Future research could include longitudinal methods, quantitative verification of the effectiveness of communication strategies, and a comprehensive assessment - through interviews with employees, internal reports, and HR metrics.

Thus, femvertising within the framework of employer branding should be considered as a multi-level phenomenon located at the intersection of values, identity, marketing and social responsibility. Its application allows not only to enhance the attractiveness of the company in the eyes of candidates, but also to demonstrate the focus on equality and fairness as important elements of the organizational culture. In the context of the growing importance of the value component for new generations of workers and public pressure on brands to be ethically consistent, femvertising becomes an integral component of a competitive HR strategy. However, its effectiveness directly depends on the degree of authenticity, strategic thoughtfulness and compliance of the declared principles with the internal actions of the organization. This is why further theoretical and empirical understanding of femvertising is important both for the theoretical understanding of the phenomenon and for the practice of human resource management, recruitment and social media marketing.

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Appendixes

Appendix A: Codebook

The codebook covers format, function, narrative type, empowerment themes, language use, and industry categorization.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Subcategory</i>	<i>Description</i>
1. Presence of femvertising	Femvertising posts (1)	Posts that meet at least one of the five femvertising criteria: (1) use of diverse female talent in an intersectional manner, (2) pro-female messaging, (3) challenging gender norms/stereotypes, (4) downplaying of sexuality, (5) authentic portrayal of women (Becker-Herby, 2016).
	No femvertising posts (2)	Posts that do not meet any of the femvertising criteria and do not explicitly focus on female empowerment.
2. Post Format	Text-Only (1)	Posts with only written content, no images or videos.
	Image-Based (2)	Posts featuring photographs, infographics, or illustrations.
	Video Content (3)	Posts with video materials such as interviews, promotional clips, or behind-the-scenes footage.
	Mixed Format (4)	Posts that combine two or more types of media formats within a single post
3. Post Function	Company Information (1)	Posts about company operations, product updates, financial performance, and industry recognitions.

	Social Responsibility & Engagement (2)	Posts that focus on social issues, such as supporting natural disaster recovery, social causes, and initiatives aimed at building a better society, or supporting vulnerable groups.
	Recruiting (3)	Posts aimed at attracting employees, including job offers, descriptions of working conditions, and the benefits of working at the company.
	Internal Community Culture (4) ¹	Posts that showcase internal events, team spirit, or shared values among current employees — aimed at strengthening company culture from within.
	Employer branding (5) ²	Posts that promote the company to external audiences as a great place to work — focused on attracting talent and shaping public image.
4. Narrative type	Positive/Inspirational (1)	Posts celebrating women's achievements and empowerment.
	Neutral/Informative (2)	Posts delivering company updates without emotional emphasis.
	Problem-Focused/Negative (3)	Posts addressing gender-related challenges and workplace barriers.
5. Empowerment Categories	Career Development & Growth (1)	Posts about mentorship, leadership training, and

¹ Category added inductively during the coding process.

² Added during open coding phase based on data-driven insights

		career coaching for women.
	Female Leadership Recognition (2)	Posts highlighting successful women leaders and their achievements.
	Gender Equality Initiatives (3)	Posts on equal pay, workplace diversity, and inclusion policies.
	Inclusive Hiring (4)	Posts that emphasize diversity in recruitment, equal opportunities, or initiatives to attract candidates from underrepresented groups.
	Work–Life Balance (5)	Posts that highlight flexible work arrangements, employee wellbeing, or support for balancing personal and professional life.
	Female Voices & Storytelling (6) ³	Posts that feature personal stories, quotes, or achievements of women — aiming to highlight female perspectives and lived experiences.
6. Language and Terminology	Inclusive Language (1)	Posts using gender-neutral terms and inclusive phrasing.
	Female-Focused Language (2)	Posts explicitly addressing women and their professional growth.
	Neutral/Generic Language (3)	Posts without specific gender references.
7. Call to Action	Direct call to action (1)	Posts directly inviting women to interact with the content.
	Engaging Informational Update (2)	Posts that share company-related news or initiatives in an accessible and audience-oriented way — inviting interaction but without a direct call to action.

³ Category added inductively during the coding process.

	No CTA (3)	Posts without explicit engagement prompts.
8. Industry	Tech Industry (1)	Posts about women in technology, engineering, and innovation.
	Healthcare Industry (2)	Posts about women's roles in medicine, caregiving, and healthcare leadership.
	Finance industry(3)	Posts discussing gender diversity in banking, investment, and financial leadership.

Appendix B: Sample Posts (by company)

Due to space limitations, not all 40 posts are included in the appendix. However, Appendix B presents selected examples that represent key categories and patterns identified in the analysis.

Amazon

What a month! From International Women's Day to Women's History Month, we are wrapping up 31 days of celebrating the women of Amazon where we hosted curated events, workshops and guest speakers across the globe, for all employees to join.

Show us your celebrations throughout the month by sharing your photos in the comments. 

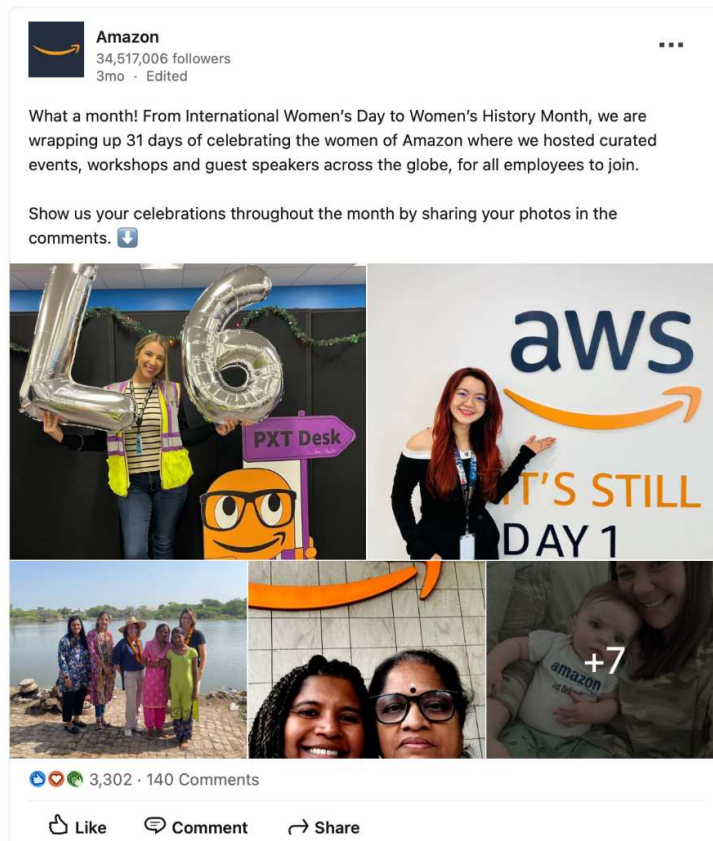


Figure B1: LinkedIn post by Amazon (approx. March 2024)

Moderna

This Women's History Month, our Women's ERG, WISDM, hosted a career panel featuring senior leaders in our research organization, including Rose Loughlin, EVP, Research, to discuss perseverance, discovery and success from the bench to the office.

WISDM plays a key role in fostering career development and leadership opportunities for women at Moderna, creating spaces for learning, connection and growth.

#WomensHistoryMonth #WomenInSTEM



Figure B2: LinkedIn post by Moderna (approx. March 2024)

JPMorgan Chase

JPMorganChase executives have earned spots on Barron's 100 Most Influential Women in U.S. Finance list, celebrated for their leadership, dedication to clients and significant impact on the financial services industry. <http://spr.ly/6041023K1>

Please join us in congratulating these leaders:

- 👏 Mary Callahan Erdoes, CEO of Asset & Wealth Management
- 👏 Marianne Lake, CEO of Consumer & Community Banking
- 👏 Jennifer Piepszak, Chief Operating Officer
- 👏 Anu Aiyengar, Global Head of Advisory and Mergers & Acquisitions
- 👏 Joyce Chang, Chair of Global Research

👤 **Natasha Kaneva, Head of Global Commodities Strategy**



Figure B3: LinkedIn post by JPMorgan Chase (approx. March 2024)

Appendix C: Company Inclusion Criteria

Criterion	Rationale
Belong to one of the three target industries (tech, healthcare, finance)	Enables cross-industry comparison of employer branding practices
Prominent or large companies (e.g., multinationals, large workforce)	More likely to engage in strategic employer branding on LinkedIn
At least one year of LinkedIn presence	Ensures the company has an established communication strategy
Regular LinkedIn activity (weekly or monthly posts)	Ensures sufficient data for content analysis
Engage with gender, culture, or recruitment themes	Aligns with research focus on gender-inclusive messaging

Sampling rationale:

Purposive sampling was applied to ensure comparability and content richness. Random selection was avoided due to risk of inactive profiles or irrelevant data.

Appendix D: Company Longlist and Sampling Plan

To compile the longlist of companies for this study, I relied on the **LinkedIn Top Companies rankings** for each of the three target industries:

- **Technology**
- **Healthcare**
- **Finance**

These rankings were chosen because the study focuses specifically on **LinkedIn** as the platform for employer branding communication. Selecting companies directly highlighted by LinkedIn ensures that the sample includes organizations with a strong and strategic presence on the platform.

According to LinkedIn, companies in these lists are evaluated based on key **engagement and growth metrics**, such as:

- Employee growth over time
- Interest from jobseekers
- Retention rates of employees
- Public engagement with the company's posts

These indicators suggest that the selected companies are actively investing in their employer brand and communication strategies on LinkedIn, making them suitable candidates for qualitative content analysis.

Technology:

- Amazon
- AT&T
- Verizon
- Alphabet
- Comcast
- STMicroelectronics
- Apple
- Siemens
- Dayforce
- Cisco

Healthcare:

- UnitedHealth Group
- Moderna
- Elevance Health
- Eli Lillie and Company
- Bristol Myers Squibb
- Takeda
- Vertex Pharmaceuticals
- Regeneron
- Boehringer Ingelheim
- Medtronic

Finance:

- JPMorgan Chase

- Wells Fargo
- Bank of America
- Mastercard
- Capital One
- Fidelity Investments
- Travelers
- Synchrony
- Visa
- American Express

Sampling Breakdown

- **Pilot study:** 1 company per industry
 - Technology: Comcast
 - Healthcare: Bristol Myers Squibb
 - Finance: Visa
- **Main sample:** 3 companies per industry (11 in total, due to little number of relevant posts): Technology - Amazon, AT&T, Verizon; Healthcare - UnitedHealth Group, Moderna, Elevance Health, Eli Lillie and Company; Finance - JPMorgan Chase and Co., Wells Fargo, Bank of America, Mastercard.
 - Selected based on LinkedIn activity, relevance of gender-related content, and industry representation.

Appendix E: Summary of Coding Frequencies

The table below presents the distribution of thematic and functional codes across three analyzed industries (Technology, Finance, and Healthcare) based on LinkedIn posts from selected companies. The coding categories are based on the established codebook and reflect the frequency of each theme within the analyzed dataset.

Code Category	Technology	Healthcare	Finance
Presence of femvertising > Femvertising posts	19	5	16
Post Format > Mixed format	19	5	16
Post Function > Internal Community Culture	3	0	0
Post Function > Employer Branding	2	0	0
Post Function > Recruiting	3	1	2
Post Function > Social Responsibility & Engagement	8	3	12
Post Function > Company Information	6	4	2
Narrative Type > Informative/Neutral	3	2	0
Narrative Type > Inspirational	16	4	16
Empowerment > Female Voices & Storytelling	10	0	1
Empowerment > Gender Equality Initiatives	4	2	0

Empowerment > Female Leadership Recognition	8	5	8
Empowerment > Inclusive Hiring	1	0	0
Empowerment > Female Representation	4	0	0
Empowerment > Work-Life Balance	2	0	2
Empowerment > Career Development & Growth	5	4	6
Call to Action > Engaging Informational Update	2	0	2
Call to Action > Direct Call to Apply	16	4	5
Call to Action > No Call to Action	1	1	9
Language > Gender-Neutral/Generic	10	2	6
Language > Female-Specific	4	2	3
Language > Inclusive Language	3	1	7

Appendix D: AI and Digital Tool Disclosure

In line with academic transparency, the following digital tools were used during the preparation of this thesis. All analytical decisions, academic interpretations, and final text versions were made and verified by the author.

Tool / Service	Purpose / Usage	Final Responsibility
ChatGPT (OpenAI)	Rephrasing, wording suggestions, clarifying academic tone, drafting preliminary ideas	Author reviewed and edited all content
Google Translate	Translating draft text from Russian to English	Author verified and corrected translations
Grammarly	Grammar checks, clarity improvement	Author confirmed suggested changes
DeepL	Occasional translation refinement	Same as above
Google Search	Locating primary sources, confirming citation formats	All sources cross-checked by author

Abstracts

Abstract (English)

The study examines how companies in the technology, healthcare, and finance sectors use women's empowerment messaging as part of their employer branding strategy on LinkedIn. Using a qualitative content analysis of 40 posts from 11 companies, purposely sampled between March and May 2025, the themes of femvertising, inclusive language, and inspirational narratives are analyzed. A custom-built codebook was used to classify posts by format, function, narrative type, and topic.

The results show industry differences, with tech focusing on career development and personal stories, finance focusing on institutional recognition of women, and healthcare focusing on representation and sustainable participation. Across all sectors, inspirational tone and socially oriented messaging prevail, with LinkedIn serving as a key platform for communicating employer brand values.

Drawing on social exchange theory, the study shows how inclusive messaging shapes perceptions of support and employer attractiveness. The study contributes to the academic debate on femvertising and offers practical recommendations for HR strategies.

Abstract (Deutsch)

Diese Masterarbeit untersucht, wie Unternehmen aus den Bereichen Technologie, Gesundheitswesen und Finanzen auf LinkedIn über Geschlechtergleichstellung kommunizieren. Im Mittelpunkt steht die Frage, wie sogenannte Empowerment-Botschaften als Teil von Employer-Branding-Strategien genutzt werden – insbesondere während des Women's History Month.

Die Analyse basiert auf einer qualitativen Auswertung von 40 Beiträgen, die von 11 gezielt ausgewählten Unternehmen stammen. Mit Hilfe eines selbst entwickelten Kategorien Schemas wurden die Beiträge nach Format, Funktion, Erzählweise und inhaltlichen Schwerpunkten systematisch eingeordnet. Besonderes Augenmerk lag auf der Verwendung inklusiver Sprache, inspirierender Geschichten sowie auf der Darstellung von Frauen in beruflichen Kontexten.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen Unterschiede zwischen den Branchen: In der Technologiebranche stehen berufliche Entwicklung und persönliche Erfolgsgeschichten im Vordergrund. Der Finanzsektor betont eher formelle Anerkennung von Leistungen. Das Gesundheitswesen hebt die Sichtbarkeit und langfristige Beteiligung von Frauen hervor. Übergreifend lässt sich feststellen, dass inspirierende und wertorientierte Kommunikation dominiert.

Ausgehend von der Theorie des sozialen Austauschs wird deutlich, wie inklusive Kommunikation das Gefühl von Unterstützung stärkt und die Arbeitgeber*innenmarke positiv beeinflusst. Die Arbeit liefert Impulse für Forschung und Praxis – insbesondere im Bereich Personalmarketing und Diversity-Kommunikation.