

Use of Social Networks as a self-promotion tool in the Labor Market: a study with bachelors and students of Tourism in the city of Natal, RN, Brazil

Jéssyca Rodrigues Henrique da Silva^aLuiz Augusto Machado Mendes Filho^bLeiliane Michelle Trindade da Silva Barreto^c

Abstract

The importance of social networks is increasing in the professional scope, favoring the search for opportunities and building of reputations. We aimed at analyzing how bachelors and students of tourism use online social networks to promote themselves in the labor market. We conducted a descriptive and qualitative study with bachelors and students of tourism in the city of Natal, state of Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil. We collected data through an electronic questionnaire composed of open and closed questions, and analyzed them through frequency description and content analysis. We found that online social networks are increasingly being used to disseminate professional profiles of candidates who want a position in the labor market. People can find job positions, improve their networking and perform self-promotion through online networks. However, it became evident that professional networks such as LinkedIn are still poorly exploited by the investigated audience, while Facebook appeared as the most widely used social network. We also found that personal and professional online social networks are targets of tourism-related recruiters, and thus we conclude that people in search of tourism job positions should be careful regarding what they post in social networks and be mindful of the reputation that is built from them in the virtual environment.

Keywords: Tourism labor market; Recruitment; Online social networking; Natal-RN.

Resumo

Uso das redes sociais para se promover no mercado de trabalho: um estudo com bacharéis e estudantes de turismo em Natal, RN, Brasil

As redes sociais estão assumindo cada vez mais importância no âmbito profissional, favorecendo a busca de oportunidades e a construção de uma reputação. Este estudo se propôs a analisar como os bacharéis e estudantes de Turismo utilizam as redes sociais on-line para se promover no mercado de trabalho. Para tanto, foi realizado um estudo descritivo e qualitativo, junto a alunos e profissionais egressos do curso de Turismo situado na cidade de Natal-RN. O instrumento de coleta foi um questionário eletrônico composto por questões abertas e fechadas, analisadas por meio de descrição de frequências e análise de conteúdo. Como resultados, observou-se que as redes

- a. Masters Degree in Tourism from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, Natal, Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil. E-mail: jessyca.r.henrique@gmail.com
- b. Postdoctoral degree in Tourism from Bournemouth University, Bournemouth, England. Professor of the Postgraduate Program in Tourism of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, Natal, Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil. E-mail: luiz.mendesfilho@gmail.com
- c. PhD in Administration from the University of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil. Professor of the Postgraduate Program in Tourism of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, Natal, Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil. E-mail: leiliannebarreto@hotmail.com

sociais on-line têm sido cada vez mais utilizadas para divulgação do perfil profissional do candidato que almeja uma colocação no mercado de trabalho. Através desses canais é possível encontrar vagas de emprego, fazer networking e se autopromover. Porém, ficou evidente que redes profissionais como o LinkedIn ainda são exploradas de forma deficiente pelo público investigado, e o Facebook apresenta-se como a rede social mais amplamente utilizada. Ao final, concluiu-se que redes sociais on-line de caráter pessoal e profissional são alvos de recrutadores de empresas relacionadas ao turismo, devendo-se haver, portanto, cuidado com o que se posta e com a reputação que é construída no ambiente virtual.

Palavras-chave: Mercado de trabalho do turismo; Recrutamento; Redes sociais on-line; Natal-RN.

Resumen

Uso de las redes sociales para promocionarse en el mercado de trabajo: un estudio con bachilleres y estudiantes en turismo en Natal, RN, Brasil

Las redes sociales están asumiendo cada vez más importancia en el ámbito profesional, favoreciendo la búsqueda de oportunidades y la construcción de una reputación. El presente estudio se propuso analizar cómo los bachilleres y estudiantes del turismo utilizan las redes sociales en línea para promoverse en el mercado de trabajo. Para ello, se realizó un estudio descriptivo y cualitativo, junto a bachilleres y estudiantes del curso de Turismo situado en la ciudad de Natal-RN. El instrumento de recolección fue un cuestionario electrónico compuesto por cuestiones abiertas y cerradas, analizadas por medio de descripción de frecuencias y análisis de contenido. Como resultados, se observó que las redes sociales en línea se han utilizado cada vez más para divulgar el perfil profesional del candidato que desea una colocación en el mercado de trabajo. A través de estos canales es posible encontrar puestos de trabajo, hacer Networking y autopromover. Sin embargo, quedó evidente que las redes profesionales como el LinkedIn todavía son explotadas de forma deficiente por el público investigado. Sin embargo, Facebook se presenta como la red social más ampliamente utilizada. Al final, se concluyó que redes sociales en línea de carácter personal y profesional son blancos de reclutadores de empresas relacionadas con el turismo, debiendo, sin embargo, tener cuidado con lo que se pone y con la reputación que se construye en el ambiente virtual.

Palabras clave: Mercado de trabajo del turismo; Reclutamiento; Redes sociales en línea; Natal-RN.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an expanding activity that contributes to the increase of foreign currency influx and has evident growth in Brazil and in the world. However, there has been a shortage of tourism courses in undergraduate levels. Much has been discussed about the reasons leading to the decrease in the number of these courses relatively to their demand; nevertheless, what is known is that it is difficult for many professionals to get involved in the tourism market (Silveira, Medaglia, & Gandara, 2012; Milito, Guardia, & Cavalcante, 2016).

This scenario becomes evident in a study carried out by Medaglia and Silveira (2010), who identified that more than half of the bachelors in tourism surveyed (54%) remained in the same jobs, even after concluding their courses. Similarly, Marques, Darn and Imamura (2018) pointed out that 67% of these individuals

had limitations to insert in the activity. Thus we highlight the importance of a deeper investigation of issues related to the tourism labor market, since facilitating the insertion of these professionals can lead to the formation of a highly qualified workforce.

In this context, online social networks are considered an element to search for jobs (Nikolaou, 2014; Ladkin & Buhalis, 2016). People have been increasing their time spent on the internet, mainly accessing online social networks, which have gained significant visibility. Recent data show that there is an average of 126.4 million Internet users, whose main purpose is to use social networks in Brazil alone (Silveira, 2018).

Therefore, social networks can be seen as facilitators of relationships between people in contemporary society, and although they were created for the purpose of distraction and leisure, they have been assuming new functions. Through the web it is possible to establish relationships, learn and develop networking, as well as find new professional opportunities, and thus it constitutes an environment conducive to building reputations. Consequently, a new type of social network focused on the professional side has emerged, known as online recruitment platforms. Many organizations have benefited from these environments, by establishing more efficient communication with their external public and developing business activities, among them, the recruitment and selection of candidates.

Many studies on tourism have been showing these practices, such as Abreu, Baudanza, Ataíde, & Serqueira, 2014b; Ladkin & Buhalis, 2016; and Santos & Lima, 2018. Abreu et al. (2014b) found that 51.1% of the hotel companies investigated in Maceió, state of Alagoas, use these channels to search for people in the labor market. Consistently, the study of Santos and Lima (2018) also verified that technological tools have been used to find professionals in the hotel setting of João Pessoa, state of Paraíba. In a broader perspective, other authors have also been working on the subject (Araújo & Ramos, 2002; Gomes, 201; Lemes & Weschenfelder, 2016; Cassiano, Lima, & Zuppani, 2016; Machado, 2016). However, these studies sought to evaluate the use of Internet recruitment as a tool for companies to act strategically in the labor market. On the other hand, little is known about how bachelors in Tourism use these channels to position themselves professionally.

Considering this scenario, we formulated the following question: how do students and bachelors on Tourism use online social networks to promote themselves in the labor market? To answer this question, we aimed at analyzing how bachelors and students of tourism use online social networks to promote themselves in the labor market. Specifically, we sought to: (1) verify how LinkedIn is used to promote people in the labor market; (2) identify other social networks used for professional purposes; (3) verify the efficiency of social networks in the search for job positions; and (4) evaluate the relevance of social networks to the labor market.

In the following topics, we present the concepts of online recruitment in tourism, as well as how labor market relations are established within online social networks. Subsequently, we present the methodological aspects of the research, the analysis of the data and, finally, the final considerations of the study.

Online recruitment in tourism

Recruitment and selection are distinct and interrelated processes that pertain to the field of people management. These are important activities related to the identification, development and retention of employees in the labor market. They play a crucial role in the efficiency and effectiveness of organizations, ensuring employees' performance and positive organizational results (Daniel, 2018).

While recruitment is related to the need of human capital communication, selection regards the choice of the candidate that best suits the desired profile (Gomes, 2011). To achieve these results, the recruiter will use a set of techniques to compare the candidate with the skills required for the job position. These processes presuppose knowledge and definitions of specific competencies. When not performed properly, they may have many negative implications, such as employees not meeting the required results and increases in the company's turnover level (Lamonato & Presser, 2015).

For Nickson (2007) it is important to consider the match between the individual and the organization, avoiding mistakes and hiring the best people in terms of commitment, flexibility and work quality. Although many organizations conduct these processes following traditional methods, it is well-known that recruitment and selection have undergone changes.

Technological advancement and the spread of different communication channels in society caused organizations to incorporate a number of technologies in their functions, and it was not different regarding recruitment and selection processes. Indeed, the internet has had great influence on communication, entertainment, social activities, and especially on business management (Araújo & Ramos, 2002). "As people begun to rely on the Internet for seeking information and making transactions, organizations started exploiting it strategically" (Abreu, Baudanza, Ataíde & Serqueira 2014a, 55).

In addition, the constant impact of technology on work activities increases the level of complexity in these environments, requiring more qualified people (Albuquerque & Leite, 2009). An alternative to deal with this situation is the Internet aggregation process, since it may cover the entire recruitment and selection processes, making it possible to quickly and efficiently hire the most suitable people for the job positions, independently of geographical location (Abreu et al. 2014a).

In this context, online recruitment emerges as a modern methodology, because it provides tools that guarantee efficiency gains. According to Daniel (2018), it is currently one of the greatest resources used by organizations to attract potential employees. By using online options, companies have the opportunity to customize recruitment and attract larger audiences of candidates, while gaining better information to support the selection process. With the support of some applications, the selection process comes down to few candidates, without the need of analyzing long curricula, as was common in the past (Araújo & Ramos, 2002). Among the resources used in online recruitment, we mention the organization's own sites, recruitment sites and, more recently, the use of social networks (Cassiano et al., 2016).

According to Quevedo (2007), the tourism industry is keen to incorporate information technology, so they can be easily introduced to the work process,

providing it with better services related to information, management and control systems, which reduce costs. Therefore, online recruitment is also gaining visibility in tourism activity, because despite the significant number of professionals in the labor market, it is not always easy to find suitable candidate to the job positions available.

This fact is evident in Corrêa and Teixeira (2014) study, in which it they found that 75% of hotel businessmen and travel agencies in Aracaju, state of Sergipe have difficulties to find qualified professionals for the tourism industry. Ladkin and Buhalis (2016) explain that high turnover rates and difficult-to-fill job positions increasingly require tourism organizations to seek innovative ways of recruiting. "The means used to develop such functions need to be adequate, and require technologies that bring greater agility and reliability to these processes" (Santos & Lima, 2018, p.289). Therefore, tourism professionals should be aware of such changes and benefit from the use of technology and perform self-promotion, in addition to generating competitive differential while seeking employment opportunities.

Labor market and online social networks

According to Albuquerque and Leite (2009), the labor market can be defined as the configuration of people employed or looking for jobs in a given geographical area, be it at municipal, state, regional or national level. This scenario is marked by a process of inter-relationship between the parties, that is, between jobseekers and prospective employers.

With the expansion of the internet, these relationships have been altered, so that while companies have the opportunity to capture and evaluate personal and professional attributes of potential employees, these in turn can also take advantage of the internet by finding job positions and knowing more about possible employers (Ladkin & Buhalis, 2016). Therefore, more and more candidates use the internet to search for jobs, since above all, these resources can provide them with greater convenience. For Zhang, Jabutay, & Gao (2018), some other factors have also influenced this process, foremost among them the ease of use and the perceived utility of these mechanisms.

Among various resources established on the internet, online social networks have become one of the most used in the labor market. According to Gomes (2011), there is a trend according to which companies are increasingly seeking candidates for job offers directly through social networks, since they allow direct contact between these parties. Thus, such interaction space may facilitate contacts, since they speed up information exchange maintain relationships and establish connections among the members of a group (Gomes, 2011).

Also, individuals may find in such virtual environments essential support and tools to assist them in finding jobs. Even though it may facilitate the process, the use of social networks requires some precaution, because although many people do not admit it, "talent scouts" always consult the profiles of candidates in online environments in search for information during the selection process (Gomes, 2011). Thus, "the Internet is presented as a possible professional showcase where recruitment and selection through social networks can help recruiters to

identify traits of the candidate's personality, which would often not be perceived by traditional methods" (Lemes & Weschenfelder, 2016, p.21).

According to Machado (2016), all the content made available online will reflect as a digital copy of the person's attitudes and behaviors outside the network. The author proposes the concept of "digital identity" as a representation of the physical or "real" identity of the individual as a factor of influence in the decision of the employer. For the author, the blurring between what is public and private becomes relevant in professional terms, since all public content on the Internet may influence the decision of the employer. For the recruiter, it will be the image created about the individual, associated with a set of information published in networks that will represent his/her way of being.

Lemes and Weschenfelder (2016) analyse some candidate behaviors that negatively influence the recruiter's perception, such as inappropriate information, comments, photos and videos published by the candidate, as well as criticisms of former employers, employees and clients. By contrast, the authors remark that coherence between attitudes and publications in social networks, the good writing skills, as well as consistency and credibility in their profile, are positively seen. Also, maintaining a strategic profile corresponds to weighing the publications by elevating the positive attitudes and minimizing the negative ones in the online environment. Therefore, candidates in employment selection processes may either be benefited or be excluded respectively due to the good or bad use of social networks.

In this context, there are many online social networks, professional or not, already used in the labor market. It is possible to highlight some that have been commonly cited by authors as the main ones: LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter (Almeri, Martins, & Paula, 2013; Ladkin & Buhalis, 2016), as stated in Chart 1.

LinkedIn started to make it easy for companies to find the ideal human capital to meet their needs, as well as helped professionals in achieving their desired space in the labor market. One of its advantages is the ability to overcome the barriers imposed by geographic distance, allowing contact regardless of location. Networking has assumed great proportions, since professionals perceive this platform as a tool to promote themselves. "Ever since the site was launched, in May, 5 2003, it has been contributing to connect professionals around the world, turning them more efficient and excellent" (Almeri et al., 2013, p. 83).

Unlike LinkedIn, which was founded mainly focusing on labor market relationships, Facebook and Twitter have been incorporating such purpose as they became popular among users. For Ladkin and Buhalis (2016), while LinkedIn is the preferred online social network for recruitment, Twitter is widely used to advertise jobs efficiently, using hashtags to target specific groups. Facebook, on the other hand, often measures organizations online reputation organizations and is used to engage people in their brands.

Based on this we may infer that there are some social networks that can be used in the labor market. Since tourism companies are also using such mechanisms, it is up to tourism professionals to elaborate strategies that best benefit them in their positioning, since those who do not seek such adaptation may lose space.

Chart 1 – Main online social networks used in the labor market

Social network	Year of foundation	Number of users in the world	Features and purposes
LinkedIn	2003	500 millions (Year 2017)	Promotes the professional profiles of users on the network, with the aim of making them more efficient and excellent.
Facebook	2004	1,5 billion (Year 2018)	It is the largest social network in the world and provides a variety of tools for exchanging information and sharing content.
Twitter	2006	326 millions (Year, 2018)	The initial idea was to answer the question What are you doing? using a maximum of 140 characters. Therefore, users express themselves clearly and positively in order to attract new followers.

Source – Adapted from Almeri et al. (2013); G1 (2017); O Globo (2018); and Oliveira (2018)

METHODOLOGY

To understand how professionals in the tourism industry use social networks to promote themselves in the labor market, we conducted a qualitative and exploratory-descriptive study. According to Poupart et al. (2008), this type of research is directed at familiarizing the researcher with a theme. In addition, the researcher searches in the literature aspects that are relevant to understanding certain phenomena. This definition suits well this research, since after performing a literature review, we applied an empirical investigation aiming to understand a reality, based on the experiences and opinions of a specific public.

The respondents were students and bachelors of the Tourism course located in the city of Natal, state of Rio Grande do Norte (RN), Brazil. As they are professionals facing difficulties in finding jobs, we envisioned alternatives in the virtual environment that might favor them in the relationships between professionals and companies.

We defined a non-probability, convenience sample, since only those who had a profile on LinkedIn – a platform specialized in professional relationships – were selected. We started by face-to-face contact with students from different periods of the course inside the institution. However, this action was not effective, since the students contacted did not use and many did not even know LinkedIn. Then a new approach was made online, this time by searching students and bachelors of the Tourism course in Natal-RN directly on the LinkedIn platform. After locating and sending online invitations to this people, we obtained a total of 26 respondents.

The instrument of data collection was an electronic questionnaire, composed of open and closed questions. Of the total of 14 questions, 5 were focused on the identification of respondents and 9 were specific questions on the subject

under study. Data collection was carried out between March and April 2016. The questions and their objectives are shown in Chart 2.

With regard to data analysis, closed questions were analyzed by frequency distributions and open questions by content analysis. Bardin (1977) states that this method is important because it uses techniques for analysis and communication in a systematic way to describe the content collected in the messages. Therefore, categories of analysis were created to aid the understanding of the information collected, which was grouped according to the frequency in the respondent's answers, creating keywords that were fundamental to the constitution and interpretation of the information relevant to the study.

Chart 2 – Data collection objectives

Research question	Related objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For what purposes do you use LinkedIn? How often do you keep your information updated on LinkedIn? 	Check how LinkedIn is used by the respondent to promote his/herself in the labor market.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to LinkedIn, in which other social networks do you have a profile? Do you also use these other social networks for professional purposes? If so, how do you use it? 	Identify other social networks used for professional purposes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you answered any job ads on social networks? If yes, which ones? Did you get responses from applications? If so, how long did they take? 	Check the efficiency of social networks for the search of job positions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you consider important the use of social networks in job selection processes? Why? Do you use or intend to use social networks in the future to promote yourself in a job selection process? In what ways do you believe that a good profile in social networks can positively influence the search for a place in the labor market? 	Evaluate the relevance of social networks in the labor market.

Source – Authors (2016)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussions of the research are exposed in the categories described below: Respondent's profile; Use of LinkedIn; Other social networks used; Efficiency of social networks for job search; and Relevance of social networks in the labor market.

Respondent's profile

In order to evaluate the profile of the respondents, we asked questions about gender, age, civil status, level of education and time of experience with Internet use. We obtained an effective return of 26 valid questionnaires from the total of individuals approached online.

Regarding the respondents' gender, women prevailed, accounting for 79% (21 people), whereas only 21% (5 people) were male. Regarding age groups we observed that young people constituted the vast majority of the interviewees: 96% (25 people) were 30 years old or less. And in relation to the marital status, the number of singles also largely prevailed, with 94% of the respondents.

The education varied between undergraduate students and professionals already trained. Out of the 26 respondents, 71% (18 people) are bachelors in Tourism, since they already had at least a full tertiary education. In addition, 83% of the respondents were proficient in digital tools, as they had been using the Internet for more than 8 years. Therefore, the general profile of the respondents was mainly composed of single young women, who have already completed higher education and are experienced Internet users.

Use of LinkedIn

According to Araújo (2018), the profile of a LinkedIn user consists of a basic description of individual and professional aspects, similar to a traditional curriculum. In this platform, the candidate provides information on professional and academic experiences, as well as specific skills. The fact that you can include photos and profile descriptions makes LinkedIn a more interactive and humanized type of curriculum. In addition, the "request referral" feature enables other people in the professional environment to recommend specific competencies of the candidate. This recommendation will follow the logic of a traditional recommendation letter and will provide greater credibility to the professional vis-à-vis new employers.

Faced with these advantages, we asked the respondents about their purposes in using LinkedIn in the labor market. It was verified that the majority (53%) use the tool to promote the professional profile and search for job positions (21%). In addition, the tool is also considerably used to develop networking (23%) (Table 1).

Table 1 – Purpose of using LinkedIn

PURPOSE	PERCENTAGE
Disclose my professional profile	33%
Increase my networking	23%
Search for a job position	21%
Add new knowledge	15%
Exchanging information with company	5%
Acquire new skills	3%

Source – Research data (2016)

By these results it is possible to observe that these professionals have a vision restricted to the job search. LinkedIn is more commonly used as a page to register professional data and promote itself to companies. This assertion can be confirmed by the relatively low number of people (18%) who stated that they use LinkedIn to add new knowledge and acquire new skills.

Therefore, we highlight that respondents are not using the network as a source of knowledge to learn about business. According to Ganomar (2015),

LinkedIn already provides applications that help professionals to update themselves on the market and the requirements it poses. These benefits can be provided through LinkedIn Pulse, which allows professionals with opportunities to learn and get acquainted to the needs of their area of expertise. According to the author, another relevant application added to the platform is www.lynda.com. This site allows candidates to acquire new competencies for enhancing their professional curriculum, so as to better match the desired job profile (Ganomar, 2015).

By contrast, data also revealed that LinkedIn has been used by a significant number of respondents to increase networking. For Minarelli (2001), the term networking means relationships, and what enables this process is the information obtained in every human exchange. The author also argues that networking has been an increasingly important tool for job search and through professionals can keep abreast of the opportunities available in the labor market.

Therefore, the use of networking by professionals in the tourism industry is beneficial, because it shows that people are concerned about maintaining high level of relationship, as well as broad network of contacts that will facilitate their careers. In addition, it enables professionals to following important and influential people in their area of action on the network, so as to remain well-informed about the changes and needs of the industry.

Regarding how frequently the interviewees update their profiles, we found that 34% of them have the habit of doing it every month. This result can be considered as positive, for companies will always be able to access current information, which also allow greater probability of professionals having their profile perceived. Araújo (2018) stated that LinkedIn allows gathering more information than a traditional curriculum, so that it is important to constantly improve it, which may help the candidate to get an interview.

However, 54% of the respondents take from six months to a year to update their profiles. This result is counterproductive as it shows that people have the LinkedIn profile, but they do not care very much about their page. This may be negative for the candidate, since failure at maintaining it updated may be disadvantageous. Thus, the posted data may be insufficient to apply for interesting job positions, leading to loss of opportunities, on a possible visit from a recruiter.

Other social networks used

When asked if they used non-professional online social networks for professional purposes, 65% of respondents answered positively. Gomes (2011) explains that social networks can be differentiated as to their personal and professional character, but that a personal network can also be used for professional purposes. Consistently to this assertion, the double usage of these networks has been performed by the majority of respondents.

In addition to LinkedIn, we found that 100% of the respondents had a profile on Facebook (Table 2). Cristescu and Balog (2018) indicated that the reasons that lead young university students to use Facebook are related to the needs of these individuals in maintaining social relations and strengthening

the bonds with the groups they participate. Based on the data obtained, we assumed that, although Facebook is not a network with a primary professional focus, it presents wide acceptance among this people. However, this is an expected result, given that Facebook is currently the largest social network in the world (Almeri et al., 2013). Recently, Facebook reached 1.5 billion users, which makes it an immense platform (Oliveira, 2018). In this context, it is certain that there should be considerable concern about the image that candidates convey on the network, since this popularization of the page constantly makes it the target of recruiters. This result is in line with the survey conducted by Lemes and Weschenfelder (2016), in which they authors identified that 93.75% of the managers interviewed claimed to use Facebook for recruitment purposes. Other results of this study pointed out that LinkedIn was the second most used network, with 62.5%, followed by Twitter, with 37.5%.

Table 2 – Other online social networks used

Social network	Respondents percentage 100%	Number of answers
Facebook	100%	26
Instagram	83%	22
Lattes Curriculum	75%	20
Twitter	67%	18
YouTube	55%	15
Academia.com	13%	3
ResearchGate.com	0,4%	1
Others	17%	4

Source – Research data (2016)

Respondents were also allowed to comment freely on some matters. To understand how tourism professionals have made use of other social networks online in their professional lives, some excerpts have been selected to illustrate the answers, which were grouped according to the subject addressed, as evidenced in Chart 3 (Social Networks, Lattes Curriculum and Information/Knowledge).

For respondents, Facebook has been used as an important contact tool with companies and professionals of the area. According to Abreu et al. (2014a), these online tools facilitate interaction mobility by presenting the job positions to the candidates and vice versa. Thus, networks have stood out mainly in the search for job positions, since people have faster access to the opportunities offered by the groups formed for this purpose.

In addition, networks such as Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp have also been used. This result is consistent with previous studies that cited Twitter, Facebook and Instagram as networks used in the labor market (Almeri et al., 2013; Lemes & Weschenfelder, 2016; Ladkin & Buhalis, 2016). However, it brings evidence of emerging networks, such as WhatsApp, which has been little studies in previous works.

The Lattes Platform is also used with considerable frequency among respondents, mainly by professionals who have chosen and/or intend to pursue

an academic career. For the respondents, the primary function of the curriculum is to keep track of intellectual and academic output. There were also respondents who use it to obtain specific knowledge about the area or company they would like to work for.

Chart 3 - Purposes of the use of online social networks in the labor market

Social networks: Facebook/Twitter/ Instagram/WhatsApp	<i>Facebook as a means to exchange contacts. All people have it! Therefore, it is easy to find and contact people (Respondent 6).</i>
	<i>Twitter, Facebook and Instagram are great tools for information on jobs and opportunities information (Answer 8).</i>
	<i>Looking for job positions in groups on Facebook and WhatsApp (Responder 2).</i>
Lattes Curriculum	<i>I use the Lattes Curriculum for academic and professional purposes, such as entries in papers, civil service examinations, selective processes (Respondent 1).</i>
	<i>I always keep the Lattes curriculum updated, since it records all my intellectual and professional production (Responder 3).</i>
	<i>Yes, the Lattes Curriculum usually assists in trying to position myself academically (Respondent 13).</i>
Information/knowledge	<i>Through these networks, I seek more knowledge about the areas in which I have affinity (Respondent 26).</i>
	<i>I use it to improve my knowledge on some subjects (Respondent 11).</i>
	<i>Usually to get more information about the company or the function that I will carry out if I work for it (Respondent 13).</i>

Source – Research data (2016)

Efficiency of social networks for job search

Most respondents (71%) have already answered at some point to job ads on online social networks. Data indicate that, despite having non-professional purposes, other social networks are being used to intermediate the company-candidate contact. In recruitment, companies use social networks for the disclosure of job positions and, from this information, candidates first contact the company they would like to work for.

We emphasize that once professionals apply for a job, they propose to be part of an organization incorporating all the intrinsic knowledge in their culture. On the other hand, the organization will seek those professionals who are most suitable to incorporating its values, in search for commitment. According to Gomes (2011), this is a **two-way street** in which not only companies choose candidates, but also candidates will choose the organization they want to be part of.

Considering the share of respondents who have responded to ads on social networks, 88% have used Facebook to respond to job positions. Therefore we note that Facebook plays increasing roles as days go by, and it is possible to extend new horizons to its use, migrating from an informal network to new perspectives with professional scope. In this scenario, Ladkin and Buhalis (2016) explain that the

tourism industry is a field of work that has a pre-disposition for the hiring of young generation Y professionals. As a result, tourism companies will increasingly use platforms online to capture talented people, given the predisposition to use those channels to interact with that specific audience.

Among the respondents who have already applied for job positions through social networks, 82% said they received answers about their application. Regarding the response time, 50% obtained return in up to one week and only 29% of respondents between one and two months. This is an increasingly evidence of the effectiveness of online social networks in finding opportunities. In addition to being efficient, these channels stimulate rapid returns of potential employers.

This result is similar to the study by Lemes and Weschenfelder (2016), in which managers also considered the use of online social networks during the capture of people to be agile and efficient. However, despite this efficiency, managers have made clear the existence of other resources that they consider even more effective, such as the recruitment sites Infojobs and Catho. In this way, it is considered important for tourism professionals to use online social networks, but it is necessary to widen the possibilities in order to combine other methods of online recruitment available on the Internet.

Relevance of social networks in the labor market

We noticed that opinions are divided regarding the importance that the use of online social networks represents in the labor market: part of the respondents acknowledge its usefulness, while others reject it with contrary opinions (Chart 4).

Thus, part of the population interviewed mentioned that online social networks are important, given that companies often analyze candidates through these tools. Also, the study of Almeri et al. (2013) revealed that all the employment agencies interviewed used the candidate's social networks for level of analysis in the selective employment process. Therefore, the authors' finding confirms the reports of a parcel of respondents in this study.

In this context, respondents consider that a well-designed profile influences positively, as it will present beneficial truths about them as candidates to job positions. Therefore, they have positive intentions and seek to use these tools as a means of self-promotion. They still complement by stating that in some cases the recruiter will look for a specific personality. Therefore, they must be prepared in order to position themselves competitively.

This result corroborates the concept of digital identity cited by Machado (2016), in which the author explains that the blurring between what is public and private becomes important in professional terms, since all the content on the Internet will influence the decision of the contractor. Therefore, when they become aware of this influence, tourism professionals can take precautions in order to avoid unnecessary exposures in online social networks, avoiding future obstacles during an analysis for possible hiring.

When the respondents were addressed questions about how they believed that online social networks could contribute to better positioning in the workplace, they mentioned factors such as: importance of maintaining an up-to-date profiles, exposure of only relevant information about the career,

careful selection of the pages they follow or “like”, and finally, the need to participate in discussions related to their area of professional performance by registering intelligent opinions.

Chart 4 – Perceptions about the importance of online social networks in selective employment processes

SOCIAL NETWORKS ARE IMPORTANT	SOCIAL NETWORKS ARE NOT IMPORTANT
<i>Yes, because through social networks, you can have a broader idea about the person who is to be selected. How he/she behaves in his public, personal and professional life (Respondent 8).</i>	<i>No, because social networks are mere distractions and should not be related to the importance of selective employment processes (Respondent 5).</i>
<i>Yes! I understand that it is a great tool to get to know a little of the candidate who wants to vacate somewhere. The level of his/her posts, the pages he/she likes, among others (Respondent 14).</i>	<i>No. Because a personal profile is intimate and may be limited. It is not ethical to measure character for social conviviality outside the employment field. Many people do not use these networks for a good social, personal, or professional issue. Currently, psychological factors, social status, instant fame, among others are the things sought by these people (Respondent 14).</i>
<i>Yes, because through them you can perceive personal aspects that are often left out during the interview, but that are important when deciding on the most qualified person for the job opportunity (Respondent 9).</i>	<i>No, because people often try to be what they are not, so the positivity that is passed on social networks might be a big lie (Respondent 2).</i>
<i>Yes, because social networks are excellent means for publicizing jobs, where we can access the opportunities without leaving home (Respondent 4).</i>	<i>Important, no! I think social networks are leisure environments that can be used for other purposes (Respondent 3).</i>

Source – Research data (2016)

In addition, we highlight that for some respondents, social networks are important, and this is also due to the easy disclosure of opportunities, which contributes to candidates finding jobs comfortably and efficiently. In this regard, the study by Zhang et al. (2018) analyzed the Chinese labor market and found that the perceived ease and utility, as well as the self-efficacy derived from the user’s experience with the Internet, are important factors that stimulate professionals to join the Internet for job search. Ladkin and Buhalis (2016) corroborate that social networks are important for both sides: companies and tourism professionals. In this context, the authors argue that while organizations can advertise for free on their platforms, professionals are given more information about the organizational structure and culture of the companies they want to be part of.

However, some respondents put themselves in opposition to these answers, stating that they did not consider relevant the use of social networks in the labor market. For these professionals, social networks are directed only for purposes of distraction and leisure, and should not be associated

with something more serious as selective processes of employment. These statements do not match the studies of other authors (Almeri et al., 2013; Abreu et al., 2014a, Abreu et al., 2014b, Cassiano et al., 2016, Machado, 2016, Lemes & Weschenfelder, 2016, Zhang et al., 2018).

We highlight that such statements by some respondents show that although there is evidence of the use of social networks by companies for recruitment, there is still a lack of recognition by a specific group who consider them irrelevant. This situation reveals weaknesses of some bachelors in Tourism, who do not take social networks seriously and may not benefit from opportunities that arise.

However, it should be noted that while presenting their justifications, professionals also raised an important dilemma about ethics in recruitment. They consider that because online social networks have the purpose of leisure, they are intimate spaces, and as such, it is not correct that organizations "invade" them for the purpose of recruitment. This statement is consistent with the argument presented by Contreras-Pacheco, Camacho-Cantillo and Badrán-Lizarazo (2017). The authors argue that it is important for the recruiter to pay attention to ethical standards, since the use of personal profiles in social networks may cause substantial vulnerability for respondents, so that these professionals will be more susceptible to suffer discrimination related to skin color, race or gender.

In this context, it is relevant for the tourism professional to know this scenario. In order not to be harmed, people must control effectively their privacy options, be honest in their publications and expose only true content.

CONCLUSIONS

Social networks are potential tools to be used in the tourism labor market. These resources help in the distribution of information, presenting job positions to potential stakeholders and vice-versa (Abreu et al., 2014a). Through this use, professionals seeking a position can benefit, while companies are also exploring them strategically. In this context, we aimed at analyzing how bachelors and students of tourism use online social networks to promote themselves in the labor market.

Results showed that although LinkedIn provides potential tools for professional self-promotion, it is a resource that needs to be regarded with a more strategic focus. It was found that the main utilities exploited are the search for job positions and the dissemination of the professional profile for the market. However, professionals still use little of the essential tools that the platform provides, whether to acquire skills or learn about business.

By contrast, Facebook stood out as the social network with the greatest impact on the labor market. Many candidates looking for job opportunities get return quickly and efficiently using this platform. In addition, it is possible to maintain a strategic position through this network, since many recruiters consult this page for recruitment and selection of employees.

In general, interviewees have an understanding of the importance of maintaining a strategically positioned profile in online social networks, and that

it is necessary to think of some precautions when entering these environments. Good relationships, as well as personal marketing strategies are essential elements for a positive reputation. There is also a small part of the sample interviewed that has opposed such practices, since they do not consider them to be ethical and correct.

The study also shows that social networks are in fact a means by which tourism professionals seek strategies to promote themselves, both in professional and non-professional environment, but they need to be more careful in their use.

The research contributes to highlighting in the scientific field new interests and discussions based on the use of technologies and means of communication applied to the labor market, through a sector in constant process of change. In addition, it provides society – more specifically the tourism industry – with relevant information base that adds knowledge to the market, given the difficulties faced by tourism professionals.

The main limitation of the research was the difficulty in finding individuals able to participate, since few of the addressed people were using LinkedIn platform, and because of that they could not participate in the research. In addition, the fact that the research was applied in the tourist destination of Natal-RN restricts the results to the context of that place, so that conclusions may diverge if investigations are carried out elsewhere.

We suggest as future research another analysis of the use of social networks in the tourism labor market, but applied to companies that use them as tools in the process of recruiting and selecting employees. It is important to highlight the importance of online tools to build and maintain a positive self-image in order to attract the best professionals in the labor market.

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CONTRIBUTIONS

Jéssyca Rodrigues Henrique da Silva: Definition of research problem and objectives; development of the theoretical proposition; bibliographical review and theoretical foundation; choice of methodological procedures; data collection and analysis; elaboration of tables, graphs and figures; and writing and adaptation of the manuscript to the RTA rules.

Luiz Augusto Machado Mendes Filho: Research problem definition and objectives; development of the theoretical proposition; choice of methodological procedures; and critical review of the manuscript.

Leilianne Michelle Trindade da Silva Barreto: Writing and critical review of the manuscript.