

## MASTER THESIS

Textual manipulation of the intention to apply: an explorative study to investigate the effects of congruently-framed messages in job advertisements.

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## Preface

Since some time, I have been visiting various in-house days at different multinational companies in the search for a first job after my graduation. During these visits, I have made an observation: large corporations seem to have a hard time attracting technical-educated graduates. Due to technological advances, corporates are more and more dependent on technicians. However, what also struck me was that these companies are trying to attract these technical students in the same way as they attracted me. This seemed strange to me, because if I have learned anything from studying at a technical university as a non-technical student, it was that there tend to be some fundamental differences between technical and social science students. Of course, these are pure assumptions and these differences could be caused by numerous factors. However, it did make me wonder whether the manner in which graduates are approached can be manipulated in such a way that recruitment can be more effective.

The fascination of the topic of this thesis connects with my general interest in large organizations. After starting this thesis, I have accepted a job offer at one of the largest organizations in the Netherlands, resulting in a lengthy process to finalize this project. Therefore, I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Ad Pruyn, who has supported, challenged, and coached me throughout this process, which I have quite underestimated. I am honored that I have had the chance to work with Prof. Dr. Pruyn on this project and I am sure that we will remain friends once this is finalized.

Furthermore, a special thank you to all the respondents that have donated their time to participate in both studies (pre-study and main-test).

Lastly, I would like to extent my gratitude to everyone that has helped and supported me in every possible way to complete this master thesis. I am blessed to have so many individuals around me to help me with shaping my thoughts and ideas, or giving me the occasional metaphorical ass-kicking that I needed to finish this whilst working fulltime.

Koen van Muijen

## Abstract

Recruiting talented graduates is a seemingly growing challenge for companies, as economic growth and changing demographic factors are creating intense competitions among organizations in the war for talent. This study investigates and applies person-organization fit theory in an attempt to find out whether effects of framed congruence in textual job advertisement could lead to a more successful recruitment process. More specifically, this study investigated the extent to which framed congruence in job advertisements affects the job seekers' Intention to apply, Organizational identification, and Organizational attractiveness.

The literature study on the core concepts led to the hypotheses that congruence has direct influence on the Intention to apply, Organizational identification, and Organizational attractiveness. Moreover, it was hypothesized that the effect of congruently or incongruently framed conditions on Intention to apply is mediated by Organizational identification and Organizational attractiveness.

The study consisted of a pre-study and main study. In the pre-study, the assumed difference in terms of career-related preferences between respondents with a technical study background and respondents with a non-technical study background was tested by means of a survey ( $N=106$ ). In order to test this, a factor analysis was conducted and found four significant career-related factors on which the two target groups differentiated. The outcomes of the factor analysis were also used to create the various stimuli for the main study.

The main study investigated the hypothesized effects of congruence on the three dependent variables, as well as the hypothesized mediation of Organizational identification and Organizational attractiveness on the relation of congruence on Intention to apply. For this purpose, a 2 (technical or non-technical study background) X 2 (technical or non-technical image of organization) research design was used. Congruence was framed by randomly assigning respondents to one of the four experiment conditions. By means of an online questionnaire, the effects were measured among  $N=124$  Dutch students and graduates of higher education (HBO and WO).

The MANOVA of this study confirmed that framed congruence lead to a significant multivariate interaction effect on the Intention to apply, Organizational identification, and Organizational attractiveness. Therefore, the results suggest that targeting a job advertisement to a specific group by adding elements that fit to the group characteristics results in higher evaluations of Intention to apply, Organizational identification, and Organizational attractiveness. In addition, the study has shown with statistical significance that the relation of congruence and Intention to apply is mediated by Organizational identification and by Organizational attractiveness.

This study adds to the comprehension of how framed congruence can be applied in textual stimuli and confirms findings of previous research done in the academic fields of congruence theory, Social Identity Theory, Organizational identification, and Human resources.

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## 1. Introduction

“Scarce technical talent says no to a career at ‘dirty’ Shell” (Het Financieel Dagblad, 2018). In May 2018, this was the headline of the Dutch newspaper Het Financieel Dagblad. The article covers a recent market study by Universum that shows a drop in popularity of Shell as an employer. One student is quoted in the article as he reasons: “In 2050 we have to be oil and gas free. I am wondering whether that consciousness is present at Shell” (Het Financieel Dagblad, 2018). Also, a director of a headhunter bureau is interviewed; “It is no longer the case that Shell is interviewing candidates, candidates are interviewing Shell” (Het Financieel Dagblad, 2018).

According to Adams & De Kock (2015), graduate talent is an increasingly sought-after commodity in the war for talent. In the quest for talent, employers exploit multiple strategies to attract their target group of applicants. Attracting applicants is central to recruiting (Barber, 1998; Rynes, Bretz & Gerhart, 1991 in Terjesen, Vinnicombe & Freeman, 2007), as firms establish a pool of applicants who are both attractive to the organization and attracted to the organization (Wanous, 1992).

Additionally, economic growth and changing demographic factors are creating intense competition among organizations that wish to attract the most qualified applicants. Jones, Shultz & Chapman (2006) claim that specifically in the earliest stages of recruiting, Organizational Attraction is largely dependent upon employment advertising. This is in line with Dowling (1988) in Feldman, Bearden, & Hardesty (2006) as he argues that recruiting advertisements are often the first engagement potential applicants have with an organization, and that due to that fact, it functions as the first source of information about *how* the organization will go about selecting employees and the kinds of jobs being offered to workers. In addition, Feldman et al. (2006) state that recruiting ads can act as important devices to potential job applicants. Walker, Feild, Giles, & Bernerth (2008) explain that job seekers often use job advertisements presented during the early stages of recruitment to gather important information about potential employers. In their research, Walker et al. (2008) found that the content of these advertisements, as well as associated peripheral cues, have the potential to influence job seekers’ organizational attitudes.

At the start of the graduate recruitment process, the organization has the opportunity to communicate its values and image through publicity and advertising. Potential graduate applicants then evaluate their understanding of the organization and make a decision to apply or not to apply (Herriot, 1984). Using identity theory, Barber (1998) argues that corporate images conveyed in recruiting ads may directly influence the attractiveness of jobs offered to applicants. Individuals will want to work at companies that would enhance their self-image or the esteem in which they are held by others.

The previous mentioned articles display a quite traditional function of the job advertisement. However, according to an article found on Intermediar.nl, career coach Van den Meerendonk (2016) stated that 80 percent of the job seekers focus on responding to job advertisements, while only 13 percent of these people find a job via that route. Therefore, the question can be raised: Are traditional recruitment advertisements still effective and shouldn't they be more made fit-for-purpose?

The usage of the person-organization fit theory to recruitment has been derived from the attraction-selection-attrition model (Schneider, 1987) which describes how individuals seek organizations which they perceive to have characteristics similar to their own. These ideas were extended to person-organization fit theory which describes the extent of congruence of patterns between individuals' values and those of an organization (Chatman, 1989). The literature of person-organization fit is focused on how individuals select organizations to join and work for. It generally concerns the later stages of the recruitment process. Moreover, Chatman (1991) explains that individuals who perceive a closer fit to the organization to which they have been recruited are more likely to adjust quickly and feel most satisfied. According to Wanous (1992), perceived fit is an important early indicator in the "matching model" of individuals and organizations in the process of recruitment.

The above-mentioned literature suggests that a person-organization fit is key to a successful recruitment process of talent. But in addition, according to Rao and Raju (2007), technical-skilled employees have significantly different needs than non-technically-skilled employees. It could therefore be argued that this might also apply for technical-skilled applicants. This is in line with the research of Abidin & Daud (2012), who evaluated the gap in personality traits possessed by business and technical graduates and found that higher education institutions should focus on specific personality development and make it part of the curriculum development strategies. For business management graduates, this would be openness and extroversion personality and for technical graduates conscientiousness personality.

### 1.1 Problem statement

This research intends to find factors that can manipulate the Intentions to apply for students that are about to start with their careers. More specifically, the main research question tries to investigate whether congruence between someone's Perceived self-image and the Perceived image one has of the organization mentioned in a job advertisement, positively influences the Intention to apply.

### 1.2 Relevance

#### 1.2.1 Academic relevance

Impact and influence of employee knowledge, skills, and abilities to an organization's performance has been increasingly recognized over the past two decades (Breaugh & Starke,

2000). Research has been done to examine the wording and content of job advertisements, for instance related to gender (Born & Taris, 2010) or the specificity of the information (Feldman et al., 2006). So far, not much is known about the effects of study background (technical or non-technical) or specific technical affinity. This study investigates whether the combination of Perceived self-image and congruently-framed recruitment text (technical or non-technical) has an effect on the Intention to apply, Organizational identification, and Organizational attractiveness. Furthermore, this study investigates whether Organizational identification and Organizational attractiveness mediate the relation of congruence on Intention to apply.

### 1.2.2 Practical relevance

According to Universum's research (2018) in the first paragraph of this chapter, companies are increasingly facing challenges with recruiting technical-skilled staff. According to Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod (2001), learning how to attract the best applicants has become critical for many organizations. Moreover, recruiting qualified applicants might become increasingly difficult over the next fifteen years as demographic and economic factors create a "war for talent". This study exams methods to improve that. In other words, with the outcomes of this study, recruiters will be able to improve their current talent recruitment tools in order to be more successful in attracting technical graduates.

### 1.3 Research question

Based on the problem statement and the academic and practical relevance, the following main research question is formulated:

*To what extent can congruently-framed messages improve corporate recruitment advertisements and positively influence the Intention to apply of graduates?*

### 1.4 Research goal

The goal of this study is to define and specify methods of more efficient talent recruitment and help organizations to assure a "fit" with the applicant by using congruently-framed messages. Ultimately, the research tries to understand whether textual manipulation of a corporate recruitment text has a significant effect on the respondents' Intention to apply.

### 1.5 Outline of thesis

By explaining the core concepts used in this study, the second chapter of this thesis provides a theoretical framework that is used to build a theoretical model. Chapter three describes the research methods that are used and presents the results of the pre-study, proving the significant difference between the target respondent groups. In chapter four, the results of the manipulation checks, multivariate and univariate

analyses, and the linear regression analyses are displayed. The discussion, limitations, and conclusion are described in chapter five of this thesis.

## 2. Literature study

There is a number of core concepts that are relevant to better understand the dynamics of the research question. In this chapter, these core concepts will be elaborated, leading to the establishment of the theoretical model of this study.

### 2.1 Effectiveness of job recruitment advertisements

As discussed by Jones et al. (2006); Dowling (1988); Feldman et al. (2006); Walker et al. (2008), the typical graduate recruitment process begins with the organization communicating values and image through publicity and advertising. Potential graduate applicants then evaluate their understanding of the organization and make a decision to apply or not to apply (Herriot, 1984 in Terjesen et al., 2007). The job advertisement is a moment for the employer to influence one's Intention to apply. When looking at gender, for example, studies on the effects of the wording and content in advertisements have shown significant differences of perception between men and women (Hentschel, Shemla, Wegge & Kearney, 2013; Terjesen et al., 2007). However, aside from gender, it is imaginable that there might be other factors that can be of influence on the *Intention to apply* based on job adverts, such as the academic background of a graduate.

#### 2.1.1 Intention to apply

Looking at the concept of "intention", Bratman (1990, p. 15) describes it as "intending to do something". Bratman (1990) explains that intention is part of our common-sense of mind and action. Intending to do something is an intention of how we intend to act in the future. Chapman, Uggarslev, Carroll, Piasentin & Jones (2005, p.929) defined Intention to apply with examples: "the person's desire to submit an application, attend a site visit or second interview, or otherwise indicate a willingness to enter or stay in the applicant pool without committing to a job choice".

To better understand the concept of Intention to apply, the scientific field of Marketing discusses a seemingly equivalent concept, namely: *Willingness to buy*. This concept is the subject of numerous consumer marketing studies (e.g. Amine & Shin, 2002; Klein et al., 1998; Wang & Lamb, 1983) and makes an attempt to understand the behavioral process of consumers.

Willingness to buy consists of the patron's likelihood to shop, buy products and recommend the store to others. These measures are similar to those used throughout the service literature (Baker et al., 1992). It is the reliance on self-reported answers to measure the consumers' willingness to buy user friendly PC peripheral products or their willingness to pay higher prices for PC brands, resulting in a socially desirable response bias. Respondents professing their willingness to buy PC peripheral products might respond differently in case of other products (Lampe & Gazda, 1995). Although it could be argued that

Willingness to buy and Intention to buy are different concepts, various scholars use both concepts as synonyms (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Moon, Chadee & Tikoo, 2008; Hajli, 2015).

An individual's intention to perform a particular type of behavior is a central factor in the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). From a TPB perspective, behavioral intentions are regarded as direct antecedents to behavior, and influenced by the presence of salient beliefs or information about the probability that performing a particular behavior will lead to a specific outcome (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

A study of Jaidi, Van Hooft & Arends (2011) investigated the effects of different recruitment-related information sources on intentions and actual job-pursuit behavior among master graduates. This study displayed the role of information sources in the job-pursuit process. Yet another research, examined the process that leads potential applicants to apply for a position when one is under consideration of applying (Gomes and Neves, 2011).

## 2.2 Congruence theory

Jagre, Watson, and Watson (2001), were among the firsts to introduce the concept of congruence (or congruity) in the field of social psychology in order to examine memory and attitude formation. Osgood and Tannenbaum (1955) define the essential concept of congruity as the perception of fit between objects; humans evaluate different objects and develop attitudes based on the perceived congruity between them. According to Rokeach & Rothman (1965), combining two objects with separate meanings provokes a congruity process, resulting in attitude change to sustain cognitive consistency (Tannenbaum, 1967) and to maintain uniformity among different attitude objects (Solomon, 2014). Congruity can be formulated as the relationship between images of compared objects, either between images of different physical objects or between the image of a physical object and an individual's self-image. In other words, congruence is the effect of the interaction of two items that fit with each other and the effect becomes more than the sum of its parts.

Congruity theory has been previously applied in other research fields such as brand strategy, advertising, and marketing communications (Fleck & Quester, 2007). According to Sirgy (1985), congruity theory has also been extended to include the concept of self-congruity. Self-congruity is defined as the match between a consumer's perceived product image and self-image (Sirgy, 1985).

According to research of Erdem and Swait (1998; 2004), congruity induces higher levels of perceived brand or product value. Moreover, in their studies, Bottomley and Doyle (2006) and Erdem and Swait (1998; 2004) found that congruity may positively affect various kinds of consumer responses such as brand choice, brand impressions, and perceived value. Obviously, this does not automatically mean that

similar effects of congruence are to be expected in recruitment setting. Nonetheless, an assumption can be made that the tendency to appreciate congruence might also work in other situations. The main difference between the previous studies and this study is that the target group consists of potential employees, rather than consumers. According to the research of Lee and Labroo (2004) and Reber, Schwarz, and Winkielman (2004), stimuli that can be easily processed are generally evaluated in positive terms and inspire favorable attitudes. It is hard to determine what the extent of congruence is. For example, to what extent do students regard a message to be congruent with the company? And does congruence have the same effects with textual stimuli as it has with visual images?

In marketing, congruence is often used to persuade consumers to buy certain products. Brands perform their role as social congruity mean between brand and user self-image, which is considered as a significant motivational element in consumer choice (Belk, 1988; Sirgy, 1982). In their studies, Birdwell (1968); Sirgy (1982, 1986), mostly focused on the effects of consumer self-image and product and/or brand user-image on purchase behavior (intention). These studies indicated that there is a positive relationship between the congruity between consumer self-image and typical user-image of a given product, and the purchase intention a consumer will have.

Dolich (1969) investigated the relation between self-image and brand preference and found that the preferred brands were consistent with the self-concept of the respondents. In their research, Hamm and Cundiff (1969) found a relationship between the ideal self-image and product image. Belk (1988) argues that belongings/products are not just “things” people own, but rather extensions of the self-concept. In a more recent study, Einwiller, Fedorikhin, Johnson & Kamins (2006, p. 192) refer to the emotional elements of customer-company identification as the following: “Strong identification occurs when a company becomes personally relevant for consumers, and personal relevance creates the potential for emotional reactions.”

According to the literature study above, congruence seems to consist out of two main influencers: 1) Self-identification and 2) company-identification. All these studies focus on a customer-organization interaction. Yet, there is little research available to indicate whether these congruence effects also apply on an applicant-organization relationship. Therefore, this study hypothesizes that the same effects are valid for an applicant-organization interaction. The following hypothesis can be made:

*Hypothesis 1:* Respondents who have received congruently framed stimuli, will have a stronger Intention to apply than respondents that are conditioned with an incongruently framed stimuli

## 2.3 Influencing factors Intention to apply

### 2.3.1 Perception of self

Although in various forms, the studies of Birdwell (1968), Dolich (1969), Hamm and Cundiff (1969), Sirgy (1982; 1985; 1986), and Belk (1988) all make note of the concept of self as an influencing factor of congruence. Due to the absence of one commonly accepted term, this study uses the term Perception of self. The Perception of self refers to underlying research concepts such as self-concept, self-image, self-congruity, self-esteem, and self-attitude.

#### *Self-concept*

According to Brée (1994), the notion of self-image started to emerge in the field of marketing 1960's and further developed in the 70's. Moreover, Achouri and Bouslama (2010, p. 4) argue that these kind of studies "refer to the theory of self-image set up by motivation psychologists, such as Rodgers and Maslow, and to Freud's work on the ego".

Following Rosenberg (1979, p. 7), most scholars seem to agree that the term "self-concept" denotes the "totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object". Generally, self-concept is construed from a multidimensional perspective (Bums, 1979; Rosenberg, 1979). There are various concepts of self to be found. Actual self refers to how a person perceives him- or herself; ideal self refers to how a person would like to perceive him- or herself; and social self refers to how a person presents him- or herself to others (Beerli, Meneses & Gil, 2007). Global self-attitude (e.g., self-esteem or self-satisfaction) has been treated as a netting action between one's actual self and the ideal or social self (Bums 1979; Rogers 1951). According to Epstein (1980), there is a consensus regarding the existence and independent influence of at least two self-concept motives: self-esteem and self-consistency (Epstein 1980). The self-esteem motive refers to the tendency to seek experiences that enhances the self-concept. The self-consistency motive denotes the tendency for an individual to behave consistently with his or her view of him- or herself (Sirgy, 1982). These two motives affect the multi-dimensional self-concepts: actual self-concept, ideal self-concept and social self-concept (Sirgy, 1982). Other scholars mention that these two (twin) motives are harmonious, but under some circumstances, these same motives conflict (Jones, 1973; Schlenker, 1975; Shrauger & Lund, 1975).

#### *Self-congruity*

Kang, Tang, & Lee (2015) define self-congruity (or to be more specific: self-image congruence) as the congruence between the individual's self-concept (actual self, ideal self, social self) and the value expressive attributes of an object (brand, organization, etc). Self-congruity theory has been applied in consumer behaviour and marketing research as it can provide marketing strategies for brand positioning, market segmentation (Sirgy et al., 2008), and decision-making (Back, 2005, Ibrahim and Najjar, 2007). Sirgy (1982) argues that for consumers, the needs for self-consistency and positive self-congruity with a brand-image affect both brand-attitude (Sirgy, 1982) and brand loyalty (Sirgy et al., 2008). For

example, Smith (2004) found that self-congruity with sponsoring brand-image also influences image transfer from the sponsored event to the sponsoring brand.

There is no literature found that mentions a direct link between the Perception of self and the Intention to apply or the other dependent variables mentioned in this study. Nonetheless, in order to be able to exclude any direct effects of the Perception of self on the dependent variable Intention to apply, Organizational identification, and Organizational attractiveness, the open research questions below are suggested. In this study, a respondent's study background (technical or non-technical) used as a characteristic of the respondent's Perception of self.

*Open research question 1:* Respondents with a technical study background have a stronger Intention to apply than respondents with a non-technical study background

*Open research question 2:* Respondents with a technical study background identify more with the organization than respondents with a non-technical study background

*Open research question 3:* Respondents with a technical study background are more attracted to the organization than respondents with a non-technical study background

### 2.3.2 Perceived image of the organization (organizational image)

According to Collins & Stevens (2002), findings in the marketing literature suggest that individuals' application decisions regarding firms in their decision set (in other words: those firms about which they are making application decisions) might be affected by employer brand image. This can be defined as potential applicants' attitudes and perceived attributes about the job or organization. They further argue that "recruitment researchers have provided definitions of organizational image that are similar to these two dimensions of brand image". Gatewood, Gowan, & Lautenschlager (1993) have described organizational image in the context of general reactions towards a company. Belt & Paolillo (1982) took the perspective of organizational image as beliefs about a specific set of attributes about the firm. According to Barber (1998) and Rynes et al. (1991) recruitment research has converged on both job seekers' attitudes (e.g., organizational attractiveness) and perceived job attributes as critical dimensions of job seekers' beliefs about employers.

Keller (1993) remarks that organization image refers to the perceptions, attributes, and associations connected with a brand in job seekers' memories. According Cable and Turban's (2001) model, *image* is another factor of employer-related knowledge. Empirical evidence has also supported the link between image and attraction to the organization (Belt & Paolillo, 1982; Gatewood et al., 1993). Tajfel & Turner (1985) argue that *image* is expected to influence attraction to the organization for several

reasons. According to the scholars, individuals prefer to be associated with groups or organizations that have attractive or prestigious reputations. Cable & Turban (2003) mention that acquiring membership in a socially desirable organization with a publicly positive image in most cases improves self-image.

Moreover, Allen, Mahto & Otondo (2007) denote that signaling theory suggests that generally positive or favorable impressions of organizational image are likely to be used as signals regarding unknown job and organization characteristics. Therefore, job seekers might be more likely to make favorable inferences regarding these unknown attributes. Lastly, brand equity theory and research suggest that individuals have more positive affects toward the products and services of organizations with more favorable images. Therefore, job seekers may also hold more positive affects toward the employment opportunities of organizations with more favorable images (Allen et al., 2007). In the light of the apparent function of organizational image, the following hypothesis was brought forwards:

Similar to the Perception of self, there has not been any literature found on a direct relation between Perceived image of the organization and the Intention to apply. However, in a pursuit to exclude any effects of the Perceived image of the organization on the dependent variables, the open research questions below are suggested. In the case of this study, the version of stimulus material (technical or non-technical) that a respondent received was used to project the respondent's perceived image of the organization. This has led to the following open research questions:

*Open research question 4:* Respondents that receive technical stimulus material have a stronger Intention to apply than respondents that receive non-technical stimulus material

*Open research question 5:* Respondents that receive technical stimulus material identify more with the organization than respondents that receive non-technical stimulus material

*Open research question 6:* Respondents that receive technical stimulus material are more attracted to the organization than respondents that receive non-technical stimulus material

#### **2.4. Identification with the organization**

According to Bartels (2006), stronger identification with the organization results in more job satisfaction, increased willingness to take on roles outside the formal job description, lower intention to leave and lower levels of absenteeism. Bartels also argues that organization identification is not only relevant for the internal organization, but also has an effect on its environment. Future employees are also part of an organization's environment. Therefore, one might assume that organizational identification can influence future employees as well.

In order to understand Organizational identification, it is important to get the bigger picture. A social identity is the portion of an individual's self-concept derived from perceived membership in a relevant social group (Turner & Oakes, 1986). Moreover, social identity can be seen as a person's knowledge that he or she belongs to a social category or group (Hoss & Abrams, 1988). Social Identity Theory, as introduced by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s, conceptualized social identity as a way to explain intergroup behaviour (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1999).

According to Tajfel & Turner (1979; 1986), social identity theory predicts various intergroup behaviors based on perceived group status differences, perceived legitimacy and stability of those status differences, and the perceived ability to potentially move to other groups. In other words, the group functions as a referential frame for the individual in various dimensions. It is important to understand how this process works, in order to understand organizational identification. According to social identity theory, social behavior diverges along a continuum between interpersonal behavior and intergroup behavior (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This means that on one end of the spectrum, there is completely interpersonal behavior that is solely determined by individual characteristics and interpersonal relationships that exists between two or more people. On the other end, there is completely intergroup behavior that is solely determined by social category memberships that apply to two or more people (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Tajfel and Turner (1979) note that in reality, people are never on the complete end of this continuum but are rather expected to be compelled by a compromise between the two extremes. According to Ashforth & Mael, employees who identify strongly with their respective organizations are more likely to show a supportive attitude toward them (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Furthermore, these employees are more likely to make decisions that are consistent with organizational objectives (Simon, 1997). Based on this, it can be hypothesized that similar effects may occur for applicants identifying with corporations. Therefore, the following hypothesis is noted for the effects of congruence on Organizational identification.

*Hypothesis 2:* Respondents who have received congruently framed stimuli, will identify more with the organization than respondents that are conditioned with an incongruently framed stimuli

## 2.5 Attractiveness of the organization

Akçay (2014) argues that Organizational attractiveness means that employees perceive their Organization as an attractive place. Furthermore, organizational attractiveness plays an important role in initiating the recruitment process (Perez, Walton, Cooper, Pacheco, 2014) and also decision-making process (Akçay, 2014; Turban and Keon, 1993; Backhaus, Stone and Heiner, 2002). According to Collins and Stevens (2002), *Organizational attractiveness* represents a construct of attitude that is

already measurable in the early stages of the recruitment process, and it is suggested that it is related to actual application and job decisions-making in later stages.

According to the work of Highhouse et al. (2003), Organizational attractiveness can be defined based on organizational level and individual level. In an organizational context, organizational prestige or perceived reputation could be considered as a component of organizational attractiveness, hence implying that the organization most-likely has a reputation to be an excellent employer (Highhouse et al., 2003). At the individual level, organizational attractiveness refers to applicants who would like to work for the organization and exert a great deal of effort to work for it (Highhouse et al., 2003).

Organizations need to deliver and communicate a particular message about the organization to a target group of potential applicants through a specific channel or source to enhance their organizational attractiveness (Barber, 1998). This implies that recruitment-related information sources and their characteristics can be important antecedents of organizational attractiveness (Van Hoye and Lievens, 2005).

The theories of person-environment fit (Holland, 1973, 1785) that have guided vocational choice research are applicable to research on Organizational attraction and choice. Vroom (1966), for example, in the process of selecting an organization in which to work, found that a fit between 49 graduate students' individual goals and the beliefs that an organization could provide goal fulfilment was related to Organizational attractiveness. The job goals were factors such as salary and opportunity for advancement. Hall (1976) extended the person-environment fit to include individual needs and personality variables, as well as the more objective factors measured by Vroom. According to Hall, individuals with high achievement needs may choose aggressive achievement-oriented organizations. Power-oriented people may choose influential, prestigious organizations, and affiliative people may choose warm, friendly organizations. According to Highhouse et al. (2003), actual applications for employment and ultimate choice of one place to work would be the most direct measures of attraction to an organization. Considering the theories of person-environment fit in relation to the attractiveness of organizations, the following hypothesis regarding the effects of congruence on Organizational attractiveness is made:

*Hypothesis 3:* Respondents who have received congruently framed stimuli, are more attracted to the organization than respondents that are conditioned with an incongruently framed stimuli

## 2.6 Mediation of Organizational identification and Organizational attractiveness

When looking at social identity theory from a marketing perspective, it is argued that consumers may identify and associate themselves with brands that reflect and reinforce their self-identities (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). In addition, consumers often regard brands as an extension of the self (Belk, 1988). Furthermore, brand identification may lead to important positive behavioral outcomes such as brand loyalty (Ahearne, Bhattacharya & Gruen, 2005). Following this line of reasoning and with regards to social identity theory, it can be argued that similar effects may occur when applicants identifying with an organization and thus, Organizational identification might be a predictor of Intention to apply.

Hypothesis 1 of this study focusses on the effects of congruence on Intention to apply, while hypothesis 2 argues that the effects of congruence influence Organizational identification. Although there was no literature found that discusses the relation of these concepts specifically, based on the hypothesized effects of congruence on Organizational identification and Intention to apply, and the argued effects of Organizational identification on Intention to apply (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), it is hypothesized that Organizational identification mediates the relation of congruence on Intention to apply.

*Hypothesis 4:* The effect of congruently framed stimuli on Intention to apply is mediated by Organizational identification.

The study of Rynes et al. (1991) suggested that, provided the limited amount of information available to applicants early in the job choice process, initial application decisions are profoundly grounded on general impressions of Organizational attractiveness. Rynes et al. (1991) labeled those general impressions as "Organizational image" and argued that "one useful direction of future research would be to determine the major components of Organizational image, and whether any of them can be cost-effectively modified or communicated to improve applicant attraction". In addition, Fombrun and Shanley (1990) indicated that (Organizational) image is a key component of early job-choice decisions as well. In later research, Uggerslev, Fassina & Kraichy (2012) found that there are various predictors of applicant attraction to organizations, including Organizational attractiveness (Highhouse, Lievens & Sinar, 2003) and word-of-mouth communication (Van Hoye & Lievens, 2007).

Gomes and Neves (2011) targeted a mixed sample group of marketing professionals and undergraduates and found that Organizational attractiveness mediated the relationship between job characteristics and organizational attributes on the one hand and Intention to apply for a job vacancy on the other. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be drawn:

*Hypothesis 5:* The effect of congruently framed stimuli on Intention to apply is mediated by Organizational attractiveness

## 2.7 Research model

Figure 1 presents the conceptual research model of this study. It is hypothesized that congruence has a direct influence the dependent variables Intention to apply, Organizational identification, and Organizational attractiveness. The combination of the Perception of self and the Perceived image of the organization leads to a congruent or incongruent condition. It is hypothesized that congruently framed conditions influence the dependent variables. Lastly, it is hypothesized that the effect of congruently or incongruently framed conditions on Intention to apply can be mediated by Organizational identification and Organizational attractiveness.

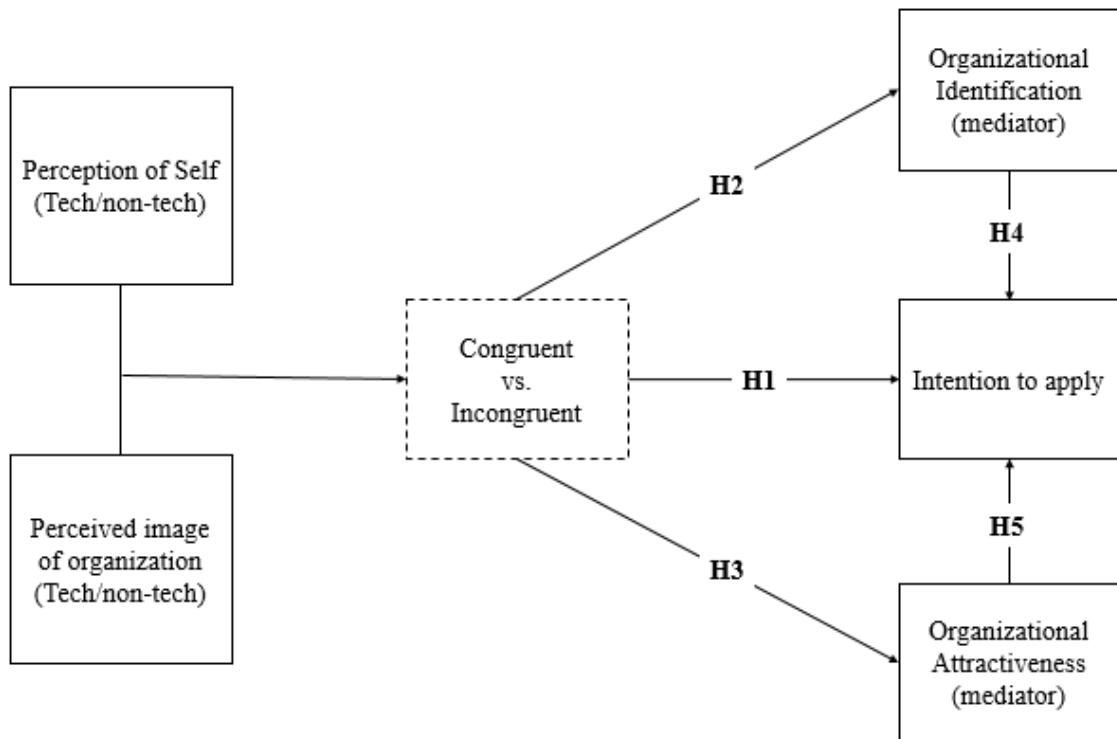


Figure 1. Conceptual research model

### 3. Methodology

The methodology chapter will provide a description of the used research methods and the reasoning behind them. This chapter will discuss the pre-study, stimulus development, sample group, research procedures, and measures.

#### 3.1 Research design

In the main study, the effects of congruence on the dependent variables Intention to apply, Organizational identification, and Organizational attractiveness are investigated. Also, the hypothesized mediation of Organizational identification and Organizational attractiveness on the relation of congruence on Intention to apply was incorporated.

To test the hypothesis, a 2 (technical or non-technical study background) X 2 (technical or non-technical image of organization) design is used. The table below shows that there are two independent variables that can lead to two possible outcomes: congruent or incongruent.

*Table 1. Research conditions 2x2 congruently framed between-subjects design*

Stimulus material	Study background	
	Tech	Non-tech
Tech	<i>Congruence</i>	<i>Incongruence</i>
Non-tech	<i>Incongruence</i>	<i>Congruence</i>

Based on congruence theory, this study assumed that when the study background fits with the portrayed image of the organization, there is perceived congruence. When this is not the case (i.e. there is a mismatch), the study regards this as perceived incongruence.

It is hypothesized that the respondents who are exposed to a congruent situation, answer significantly different than respondents exposed to an incongruent situation. In order to execute the research design, an experiment is used in order to test the effects of congruence.

The experiment exposes respondents to a corporate recruitment text. Based on the text that the respondents read, they have had to answer a list of questions related to the variables of the theoretical model. Half of the respondents receive a text with technical framed-message, and half of the respondents receive a text with non-technical framed-message.

### 3.2 Design stimuli

In order to create stimuli that can trigger perceived congruence or perceived incongruence, a pre-study was needed to figure out on which elements or dimensions the two target groups (respondents with a technical study background and respondents with a non-technical study background) differed on. Also, the pre-study was used to validate that the two target groups are significantly different from each other in terms of what they value as most important in their career choices. The reasons for working with a pre-study were the following:

- to see how respondents respond to questions regarding their (future) careers;
- to develop a scale for measuring career aspects;
- to investigate whether the two target groups (technical and non-technical students) were giving significantly different answers to career aspects and to validate whether a differentiation can be made between the two target groups in terms of Perception of self;
- to find factors by executing a scree plot and factor analysis;
- to serve as input for the creation of the stimulus material of the main test.

#### 3.2.1. Pre-study

##### 3.2.1.1 Research design and procedure pre-study

To test the assumed difference between respondents with a technical study background and respondents with a non-technical background, a survey in the form of a questionnaire was used. According to Dul & Hak (2008), a survey is a form of study in which (A) a single population in a real-life context is selected, and (B) obtained scores from this population are analyzed in a quantitative (statistical) way. This method will help to statistically show whether the two target groups (technical and non-technical students) are significantly different in what influences them in terms of Intention to apply for an organization. This differentiation of groups is needed in order to prove whether the manipulations of the experimental research are actually caused by a manipulation of an object and not by the inter-differences of the group itself.

In this research, the survey was set-up by using two scales. The first scale was taken from Kanungo and Hartwick's (1987) study of work motivators. A couple of extra items were added, in order to make the list fit-for-purpose. These additional questions were specifically technology-related, for example: "To what extent do you value an organization that uses innovative technology?". The second scale was used to measure the importance of intrinsic, extrinsic, and interpersonal factors in choosing a career. This scale was based on the three-dimensional framework proposed by Carpenter & Foster (1977), Beyon, Kelleen & Kishor (1998), and Biggerstaff (2000): intrinsic factors (e.g., 'My personal values in life'), extrinsic factors (e.g., 'availability of jobs'), and interpersonal factors (e.g., 'The expectations of people close to me'). The two scales were combined into one questionnaire with 32 items. The items were

measured by using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = of least importance to 5 = of utmost importance). The respondents were asked to provide an answer on how important they thought each item was. Please see appendix I for the complete pre-study questionnaire.

The respondents were invited to take part in this survey by filling in an (anonymous) online questionnaire via Qualtrics. Respondents were contacted via e-mail, Facebook, WhatsApp, and personal requests to participate. Respondents would receive a common hyperlink that would bring them to a start page that gave a short description of the research. Respondents were asked to imagine that they would be available to enter the job market in a starting position. The respondents did not know what the purpose of the research was, nor that their study background was used as a characteristic to test for target group differences. The respondents were given an estimated time to complete the questionnaire. Participation was completely voluntarily as there were no rewards allocated to participants of this study.

### 3.2.1.2 Pre-study sample group

The sample group that has been chosen for the pre-study consists of students of higher education in the Netherlands (HBO & WO). The reason is quite simple: this group is likely to start with a career after a long period of studying. Students are also the target group for job ads for new graduates. Participants were approached via personal messages on Facebook and LinkedIn which were shared by my personal network.

For the pre-study, a group of N=106 respondents was taken. The sample group consists out of technical (N=25) and non-technical students (N=81). The respondents study background was determined by letting them fill in the field of study.

### 3.2.1.3 Pre-study results

Before starting with the pre-study analysis, a data clean-up was performed. The survey was initially completed by N=109 participants, but two participants did not fit the respondent age criteria (both older than 35) and one respondent had a survey duration of 33 seconds, which is unrealistic to finalize the complete survey. All three participants were removed from the data before analysis.

#### *Factor analysis type*

In order to figure out on which elements or dimensions the two target groups (respondents with a technical study background and respondents with a non-technical study background) differed, a factor analyses was performed on all 32 items. For this analysis, the choice was made to use the exploratory factor analysis (EFA). This is due to the fact that it takes into account the unique variances of variables rather than the error variance.

Correlating items that scored equal to or higher than .30 were taken into the scope of the factor analysis. This was done based on the rule of thumb of Hair et al. (1998), suggesting to filter out lower factor loadings when N is not very large (in this study, N=106).

### *Negative correlations*

Due to the large set of items, some items also show a negative correlation within the factor. Normally, this happens when questions are not asked in the same direction (positive versus negative). However, in this case, all questions were formulated the same (“to what extent do you find it important that...”). Therefore, it was chosen to not include these items into the dimensions. Negative statements are not usable for the creation of the stimulus material.

### *Factor loadings of >1.00*

Two factor loading have a value of 1.00 or higher. According Jöreskog (1999), it is a common misunderstanding that coefficients in the completely standardized solution must be smaller than 1.00 in magnitude. Jöreskog (1999) argues that this misconception probably stems from classical exploratory factor analysis, in which factor loadings are correlations if a correlation matrix is analyzed and the factors are standardized and uncorrelated (orthogonal). However, when the factors are correlated (oblique), factors loadings are regression coefficients and not correlations. Therefore, the factor loadings can be larger than 1.00 in magnitude.

### *Results of Factor analysis*

According to the Scree plot (see appendix IV, Figure 3), the EFA indicated that there were five strongly correlating factors. This is in line with the interpretation of the Correlation Matrix, which also indicated that there were five factors.

In order to improve the distribution of variables onto the factors and improve the interpretation of the outcomes of the factor analysis, factor rotation was used. Due to the fact that it was expected that the variables in this study were related, the Oblimin rotation was used.

The five factors explained 47% of the variance. The five factors and the items that loaded on them can be found in table 2. The item *Possibility to contribute to society* loaded both on factor 2 and 4. However, since it loaded stronger on factor 2, it was removed from factor 4. In order to improve readability, the five factors have been named as followed: 1) career development, 2) contribution to society, 3) Social aspects, 4) Influence of society and people close to me, and 5) Organizational identification

Table 2. Factor analysis of the pre-study

	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Career development</b>					
Career opportunities	.54				
Possibility for personal growth	.30				
Status in society	.35				
Possibility to move step up	1.00				
<b>Contribution to society</b>					
Your contribution to society	.70				
Possibility to contribute to society	.73				
<b>Social aspects</b>					
Atmosphere on the work floor	.33				
Good interpersonal relations	.44				
<b>Influence of society and people close to me</b>					
Expectation of people close to me	.61				
Career choices of people close to me	.53				
Image of society about organization	.85				
Image of people close to me about organization	.91				
Values of organization according society	.79				
Values of organization according to people close to me	.84				
<b>Organizational identification</b>					
Possibility to be creative	.30				
Accessibility	.35				
My personal values	.31				
Fitting to self-image	1.04				
<b>Explained variance in %</b>	.08	.17	.11	.06	.05

Note: Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization. Factor loadings < .30 are suppressed.

### *Process of analysis and results*

As mentioned above, the rule of thumb of Hair et al. (1998) was applied and thus only factor loadings of  $> .30$  were selected. First, in order to analyse the reliability of the factor loadings per factor, a Cronbach's alpha test was performed. For all of the factors, a satisfying reliability was measured (Cronbach's alpha =  $> .70$ ).

Secondly, for each of the five factors new variables were created by using the factor loadings per factor. The new variables represent the mean of all the items in the factor. For each of the new variables an independent T-test was executed to show whether the two groups have answered significantly different. Based on the p-value (significant when  $p=<0.05$ ), the conclusion was drawn whether the two groups differentiate significantly from each other on a specific factor. The descriptive statistics for each of the five factors can be found in table 3.

*Table 3. Target group differences*

Factor	( $\alpha$ )*	Mean tech students	Mean non-tech students	T-test	Sig.
1 Career development	.76	3.99	4.14	T(df)=1.15, P=.25	No
2 Contribution to society	.95	2.56	3.76	T(df)=5.45, P=.000	Yes
3 Social aspects	.70	3.46	4.36	T(df)=4.94, P=.000	Yes
4 Influence of society and people close to me	.90	2.44	3.11	T(df)=3.83, P=.000	Yes
5 Organizational identification	.74	3.27	3.95	T(df)=4.69, P=.000	Yes

\*Note: Cronbach alpha is satisfactory when  $> .70$

Based on table 2 and table 3, the following statements can be made regarding the factors of the factor analysis:

*Career development (1)* – The first factor has four items in it related to possibilities to personally grow and develop and the possibility to move up the career ladder. It also includes an item on status in society. The independent T-test indicates that the two groups were not significantly different from each other on this factor.

*Contribution to society (2)* – This factor includes two items that are related to contribution to society (by self and organization). The independent T-test indicates that the two groups responded significantly different from each other on this factor.

*Social aspects (3)* – This factor has two items correlating regarding atmosphere on the work floor and interpersonal relations. The independent T-test indicates that the two groups answered significantly different from each other on this factor.

*Influence of society and people close to me (4)* – This factor includes six items regarding the opinion of people that are close to the respondents and the opinion of the society with regard to the organization. It also included an item on contributing to society. However, it was removed as it loaded stronger on factor 2. The independent T-test indicates that the two groups answered significantly different from each other on this factor.

*Organizational identification (5)* – The last factor includes four items regarding the possibilities of being creative, accessibility of the organization, personal values and Organizational identification. The independent T-test indicates that the two groups answered significantly different from each other on this factor.

### **3.2.2 Construction of main study stimulus material**

The stimuli chosen to test the effects of congruence was a typical corporate recruitment text. A couple of design principles were applied:

- to use a fictional company, to ensure that there was no pre-existing image-bias applicable;
- to promote a generic vacancy/role that is not necessarily more popular for either one of the target groups;
- to use a company that has a generic core product that many people can relate to;
- to use the structure and tone of voice of the actual corporate recruitment text of Royal Dutch Shell (Royal Dutch Shell, 2018). Nonetheless, personal amendments were made to improve readability.

The corporate recruitment texts were altered by using specific key words that were related to factors of the factor analysis of the pre-study. The factors that came out of this analysis were: 1) career development, 2) contribution to society, 3) social aspects, 4) influence of society and people close to me, and 5) Organizational identification. The factor career development (1) did not show a significant difference between the two target groups and was therefore not used to alter the texts.

An attempt was made to keep the subjects of the sentences in both versions of the stimulus text as similar as possible, but with an altering adjective. For example, the technical text would state “KVM is a technology-oriented organization”, while the non-technical text would state “KVM is a society-oriented organization”. The stimulus material can be found in Appendix 2.

### **3.3 Participants main study**

The sample group that has been chosen for the main research is similar to the sample group of the pre-study, namely, students and recent graduates of higher education in the Netherlands (HBO and WO). The only demographic difference is that respondents until the age of 34 were allowed in the data set,

instead of 30. Like the pre-study respondents, the group consisted out of technical and non-technical educated respondents.

These respondents were asked via an online request to (anonymously) participate in the main survey. Respondents did not know what the research was for, nor that study background mattered. For this research, a group of N=124 was taken and randomly assigned to one of the four conditions (approx. 30 per condition).

### 3.3.1 Profile of respondents

The survey of the main test has yielded N=124 (valid) respondents. In Table 4, the sample distribution over the four conditions can be found. Furthermore, Table 4 displays the following demographic characteristics: age, gender, and education level. All of the respondents either had HBO or WO education (HBO and WO refer to levels of higher education in the Netherlands).

The overall sample distribution over the four conditions is satisfactory. Of all respondents (N=124), N=60 were men and N=64 were women. Condition 3 (non-tech study background/tech text) has a noticeable uneven amount females versus males. However, with 34,7% male respondents, there is no reason to assume that this would impact the research results.

The amount of respondents with a technical background (N=64) was in balance with the amount of respondents with a non-technical background (N=60). Out of the respondents with a technical background N=28 were female and N=36 were male. Of the respondents with a non-technical study background N=36 were female and N= 24 were male. The gender vs. study background dimension does not provide any reason to argue that this would impact the main study results.

The sample was divided in three age classes: 20-24, 25-29, and 30-34. The majority (62,1%) of the respondents were in class 25-29 (N=77). Overall, age class 30-34 was underrepresented with 8,9% of the respondents. Moreover, condition 2 did not have any respondents of that age class. Nonetheless, there is no reason to assume that this age distribution should cause abnormalities in the results.

All four conditions include respondents with from all various levels of education, although it should be noted that condition 3 did not include any males with a HBO study background. In all conditions, WO Master was represented most (N=71). None of the levels of education was noticeably underrepresented.

*Table 4. Demographic characteristics per condition (study background vs. stimulus text version)*

Study background vs. text version	Education level	Male			Female			Sub total
		20-24	25-29	30-34	20-24	25-29	30-34	
Tech/tech (1)	HBO	2	2	1		2		7
	WO Bachelor	3	2		2	2		9
	WO Master	3	6	1	1	5	2	18
	Sub total	8	10	2	3	9	2	34
Tech/non-tech (2)	HBO		2		2	4		8
	WO Bachelor	3	1		4	1		9
	WO Master	4	6		1	2		13
	Sub total	7	9		7	7		30
Non-tech/tech (3)	HBO				1	1	1	2
	WO Bachelor	1	1			3		5
	WO Master	2	3	1	1	8	1	16
	Sub total	3	4	1	1	12	2	23
Non-tech/non-tech (4)	HBO	1	2		2	2	1	8
	WO Bachelor	1	1		2	1		5
	WO Master		8	3	1	12		24
	Sub total	2	11	3	5	15	1	37
Total		20	34	6	16	43	5	124

*Note: The age varied from 20-34. Respondents are categorized by age for presentation purposes.*

### 3.4 Procedure and administration of the survey

The participants were invited to take part in this survey by filling in an online questionnaire that was hosted on the virtual domain of Qualtrics. They were contacted to participate via e-mail, Facebook, Whatsapp, and personal requests. All participants were able to go to the webpage of the questionnaire by clicking on a common hyperlink. Respondents landed on a start page that gave a description of the experiment they were about to take. In that introduction, the respondents were asked to read the job advertisement carefully, imagine that they were recently graduated and looking for a starting position.

It was also mentioned that they would have to fill in a questionnaire afterwards. The participants were given an estimated time to complete. Participation was completely voluntarily as there were no rewards allocated to participants of this study.

There were two versions of the online survey per condition. The difference in the two versions was the framed messages in the advertisement text based on key word enrichment (see paragraph 3.2.2: “Construction of main study stimulus material”). The respondents were randomly assigned to one of the conditions.

After the respondents read the advertisement, they were asked to fill in a questionnaire regarding the text they just read. The participants had to answer questions that measured the independent and dependent variables of the conceptual theoretical model. Furthermore, the respondents were also asked general demographic questions such as gender, age, and study background. The questionnaire was conducted in Dutch. Please see appendix III for the complete questionnaire.

### 3.5 Measures

The items used in Q1 of the survey to measure the constructs of the theoretical model are mostly adopted from previous research. Additional items have been added to make the survey fit-for-purpose. The items are written in the form of statements that the respondent can agree or disagree with. For example: “I identify myself with the company of this advertisement”. All items of this study were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Totally disagree, 5 = totally agree). See Q1 in Appendix 3 for all 37 items.

Besides the items of Q1, there were additional items to investigate the credibility of the author (Q2, 6 items), the opinion regarding the advertisement (Q3, 4 items), the respondent’s affinity with technology (Q4, 3 items), and demographics (Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9). All items and answers were translated to Dutch to fit the target sample group.

#### 3.5.1 Intention to apply

The construct of *Intention to apply* was measured by three items (see appendix 3) on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Totally disagree to 5 = Totally agree). For example, “I would like to work for this organization”. The Cronbach’s alpha was satisfactory ( $\alpha = .86$ ). This construct was used to measure whether framed congruence had an effect on the respondents’ Intention to apply at the organization of the stimulus material, or recommend others to apply.

### **3.5.2 Congruence**

For this research, it is defined that framed congruence is achieved when the study background of the respondents (tech or non-tech) fits the stimulus material (tech or non-tech). The construct of Congruence was measured by two items, namely the demographic item *study background* and the one of the stimulus material versions. The construct was formed by a combination of the two items, leading to either congruence (tech/tech and non-tech/non-tech) or incongruence (tech/non-tech and non-tech/tech). For example, when a respondent has a study background in engineering (tech study background) and was exposed to a technical job advertisement (tech stimulus version), there is framed congruence. This construct was used to measure the differences with congruent and incongruent conditions on the dependent variables Intention to apply, Organizational identification, and Organizational attractiveness.

### **3.5.3 Perception of Self**

The construct of *Perception of Self* was measured by two items (see Appendix 3) on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Totally disagree to 5 = Totally agree). For example, “I have affinity with technology”. The Cronbach’s alpha was satisfactory ( $\alpha = .87$ ). This construct was used to get a more holistic view on whether a respondent considers him or herself as technical or non-technical, besides only study background. This was crucial in order to validate whether framed congruence or incongruence was achieved by the condition parameters.

### **3.5.4 Organizational image**

The construct of *Organizational image* was measured by two items (Q1\_5 and Q1\_35: see Appendix 3) on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Totally disagree to 5 = Totally agree). For example, “I find this text technical”. The Cronbach’s alpha was satisfactory ( $\alpha = .95$ ). This construct was used to get a more holistic view on whether a respondent considered the stimulus material (and thus the company) as technical or non-technical and validate whether framed congruence or incongruence was achieved by the condition parameters.

### **3.5.5 Organizational identification**

The construct of Organizational identification was measured by ten items (Q1\_1, Q1\_2, Q1\_3, Q1\_4, Q1\_6, Q1\_7, Q1\_8, Q1\_12, Q1\_13, and Q1\_14: see Appendix 3) on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Totally disagree to 5 = Totally agree). For example, “I identify strongly with the company of this advertisement”. The Cronbach’s alpha was very high ( $\alpha = .94$ ). This construct was used to measure whether framed congruence had an effect on the extent to which respondents identified with the organization of the stimulus material.

### **3.5.6 Organizational attractiveness**

The construct of Organizational attractiveness was measured by three items (Q1\_11, Q1\_15, and Q1\_19; see Appendix 3) on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Totally disagree to 5 = Totally agree). For example, “It would give me a good feeling to work for this organization”. The Cronbach’s alpha was very high ( $\alpha = .84$ ). This construct was used to measure whether framed congruence had an effect on the extent to which respondents were attracted to the organization of the stimulus material.

## **4. Results**

In chapter 3, Table 4 showed that the sample group was evenly divided over the various conditions. Therefore, we can conclude that variations between the different conditions are not directly influenced by demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, or level of education.

### **4.1 Manipulation checks**

For this study, it is assumed that the Perception of self and Organizational image can be used to split the respondent groups in four conditions and that the combination of these two variables will cause a congruent or incongruent situation. In order to investigate whether these variables are indeed true indicators of congruent or incongruent conditions, a manipulation check is mandatory. The respondent groups need to be significantly different from each other in terms of whether they consider themselves technical or non-technical and in terms of whether they consider the company of the stimulus material as technical or non-technical.

#### **4.1.1 Perception of Self**

For this study, a manipulation check is performed by using the median split technique. In the case of Perception of Self, the higher the score, the more a respondents identifies as technical. The median of the Perception of Self was 4.00 ( $N=124$ ). 44.8% of the respondents scored lower than 4.00, while 55.2% scored higher.

Based on these scores, two new groups were created. Respondents with a score lower than 4.00 were assigned to group 1 ( $M=2.20$ ,  $SD=.70$ ), while respondents with a score higher than 4.00 were assigned to group 2 ( $M=4.55$ ,  $SD=.44$ ). The independent T-test ( $T(123) = -22.98$ ,  $P=.000$ ) revealed that there is a significant difference between the two groups on Perception of self.

#### **4.1.2 Organizational image**

Similar to the manipulation check for the Perception of Self, it was also investigated whether the respondent group was significantly different in terms of how they evaluated the Organizational image of the company of the stimulus material. The median of Organizational image was 3.83 ( $N=124$ ). 49.6% of the respondents scored lower than 3.83, while 50.4% scored higher.

Based on these scores, two new groups were created. Respondents with a score lower than 3.83 were assigned to group 1 ( $M=3.09$ ,  $SD=.57$ ), while respondents with a score higher than 3.83 were assigned to group 2 ( $M=4.20$ ,  $SD=.32$ ). The independent T-test ( $T(123) = -13.56$ ,  $P=.000$ ) revealed that there is a significant difference between the two groups on Organizational image.

#### 4.1.3 Manipulation check criteria control

Besides checking whether the groups for each independent variable are significantly different from each other, it is also crucial to investigate the criteria that determine that one half of the group perceives themselves as less technical and the other half perceives themselves as more technical. Likewise for the independent variable Organizational image. Both variables were measured on a 5-point Likert scale and the assumption was made that all scores lower than the middle, 3, mean that respondents perceive themselves and the company as less technical. Moreover, all scores higher than 3 were assumed to mean that respondents perceive themselves and the company as more technical. This raises the question whether the means of the lower half of the group are significantly deviating from the middle point (=3) and thus whether it can be claimed that the lower half of the group indeed has a perception of themselves and the company as less technical. This goes for the mean scores of the higher scoring half of the group as well. By doing so, not only is displayed that the manipulation worked, but also that the groups comply to the criteria that are set. In order to test the assumptions, a One-Sample T test was used with Test Value = 3.

For Perception of Self, the mean ( $M = 2.20$ ,  $SD = .69$ ) of the lower scoring half of the group was significantly deviating from the middle point ( $T(57) = -8.88$ ,  $p= .00$ ). The mean ( $M = 4.55$ ,  $SD = .44$ ) of the higher scoring half of the group was also significantly deviating from the middle point ( $T(68) = 29.38$ ,  $p = .00$ ). It can be concluded that the manipulation worked and the group means fit the criteria.

For Organizational Image, the mean ( $M = 3.09$ ,  $SD = .56$ ) of the lower scoring half of the group was not significantly deviating from the middle point ( $T(62) = 1.34$ ,  $p = .185$ ). However, the mean ( $M = 4.20$ ,  $SD = .32$ ) of the higher scoring half of the group deviated significantly from the middle point ( $T(63) = 30.05$ ,  $p = .00$ ). It can be concluded that the manipulation worked, as the mean of lower scoring half of the group was significantly deviating from the mean of the higher scoring half of the group. However, the lower scoring part of the group did not deviate significantly from the middle point of the Likert scale (=3) and therefore it cannot be proven that respondents that scored lower than the middle point perceive the organization as less technical.

#### 4.1.4 Check differences congruence

In the experiment of this study, the respondents are divided over four conditions that are based on a respondent's study background and the version of stimulus material that the respondents received. An Independent sample T-test can demonstrate whether these variables indeed are a true indicator for differences between the groups. An independent sample T-test was performed with Study background as independent variable and Perception of Self as dependent variable. For the mean scores of Perception of Self, the difference between the mean of the group with a technical study background ( $M = 4.42$ ,  $SD = .75$ ) and the mean of the group with a non-technical study background ( $M = 2.53$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ) was significant ( $T(122) = -11.73$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Therefore, it can be assumed that study background is a proper dimension to base a condition on.

The same approach was used for to validate whether the version of the stimulus material is a true indicator for whether the respondents also considered the text as tech or non tech. An independent sample T-test with stimulus material version (tech or non-tech text) as independent variable and Organizational image as dependent variable was performed. For the mean scores of Organizational image, the differences between the mean of the group with a technical stimulus material version ( $M = 3.95$ ,  $SD = .61$ ) and the mean of the group with a non-technical stimulus material version ( $M = 3.39$ ,  $SD = .72$ ) was significant ( $T(123) = -4.64$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Therefore, it can be assumed that stimulus material version is a proper dimension to base a condition on.

## 4.2 Descriptive statistics

### 4.2.1 Means and standard deviations

Table 6 below provides an overview of the means and standard deviations of the four conditions of the experiment on the dependent variables Intention to apply, Organizational identification, and Organizational attractiveness.

In the congruent condition where respondents with a technical study background received a technical text, the scores on Intention to apply ( $M = 4.23$ ,  $SD = .66$ ), Organizational identification ( $M = 4.10$ ,  $SD = .53$ ), and Organizational attractiveness ( $M = 4.20$ ,  $SD = .53$ ) were quite high.

For the incongruent condition where respondents with a technical study background received a non-technical text, the scores on the dependent variables were moderately low. For Intention to apply, the mean was 2.68 ( $SD = .73$ ). For Organizational identification, the respondents showed a mean of 2.58 ( $SD = .64$ ). For Organizational attractiveness, the mean score was 2.76 ( $SD = .76$ ).

In the incongruent condition where respondents with a non-technical study background received a technical text, the results for Intention to apply ( $M = 3.29$ ,  $SD = .78$ ), Organizational identification ( $M$

$M = 2.91$ ,  $SD = .70$ ), and Organizational attractiveness ( $M = 3.33$ ,  $SD = .69$ ) were at a first glance not very high or low.

In the congruent condition in which respondents with a non-technical study background that received a non-technical text, the results showed moderately high levels. For Intention to apply, the mean was 3.50 ( $SD = .89$ ). For Organizational identification, the respondents rated on average 3.24 ( $SD = .74$ ) and for Organizational attractiveness the mean was 3.65 ( $SD = .71$ ).

*Table 6. Means and standard deviations of experiment conditions on dependent variables*

Stimulus material version	Dependent variable	Study background			
		Tech		Non-tech	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Tech	<i>Intention to apply</i>	4.23	.66	3.29	.78
	<i>Organizational identification</i>	4.10	.53	2.91	.70
	<i>Organizational attractiveness</i>	4.20	.53	3.33	.69
Non-tech	<i>Intention to apply</i>	2.68	.73	3.50	.89
	<i>Organizational identification</i>	2.58	.64	3.24	.74
	<i>Organizational attractiveness</i>	2.76	.76	3.65	.71

#### 4.3 Main and interaction effects (MANOVA)

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed in order to test the two-way effects of the congruently framed conditions (study background vs. stimuli version) on the dependent variables Intention to apply, Organizational identification, and Organizational attractiveness. The main advantage of MANOVA is that multiple dependent variables can be analyzed at once and the outcomes have more observed power than the results of an analysis of variance (ANOVA). The following hypotheses were tested using MANOVA:

- H1** Respondents who have received congruently framed stimuli, will have a stronger Intention to apply than respondents that are conditioned with an incongruently framed stimuli
- H2** Respondents who have received congruently framed stimuli, will identify more with the organization than respondents that are conditioned with an incongruently framed stimuli

**H3** Respondents who have received congruently framed stimuli, are more attracted to the organization than respondents that are conditioned with an incongruently framed stimuli

Before conducting the MANOVA, the input data were validated in order to inspect whether all underlying assumptions were met. The univariate and multivariate normality was assessed with boxplots and Shapiro-Wilk tests for all dependent variables. The results of these inspections indicated that there were no outliers in the dataset and that the data were normally distributed. Furthermore, the Mahalanobis distance test did not show any variables exceeding the critical  $X^2$  for  $df = 3$  (at  $\alpha < .001$ ).

#### 4.3.1 Multivariate main effects on dependent variables

Table 7 displays the computed results of the MANOVA. A statistically significant multivariate main effect for study background was found (Wilks' Lambda = .89,  $F(3) = 4.77$ ,  $p = .004$ ) with an observed power of .89. Furthermore, a statistically significant multivariate main effect was also found for stimulus version (Wilks' Lambda = .81,  $F(3) = 9.09$ ,  $p = .000$ ) with an observed power of .99. Given the significance of the multivariate main effects for study background and stimulus version, univariate main effects were examined and further tests were conducted to test open research questions 1 to 6 (see section 4.3.3).

*Table 7. Main and interaction effects 2x2 MANOVA*

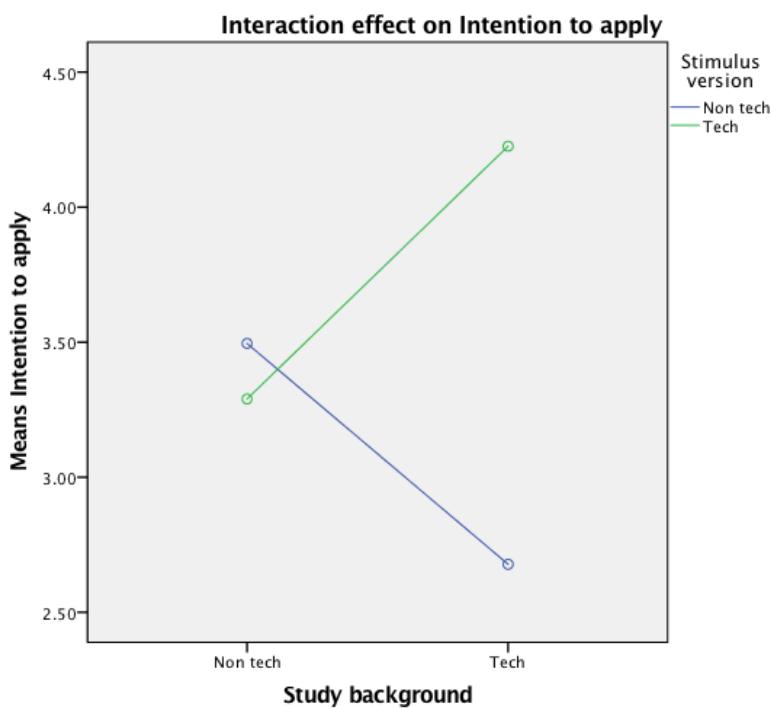
	Dependent variable	DF	F	Sig.
Study background	Intention to apply	1	.174	.68
	Org. identification	1	4.75	.03
	Org. attractiveness	1	.02	.89
Stimulus material version	Intention to apply	1	22.59	.000
	Org. identification	1	24.78	.000
	Org. attractiveness	1	20.81	.000
Study background * Stimulus material version	Intention to apply	1	38.56	.000
	Org. identification	1	59.22	.000
	Org. attractiveness	1	51.33	.000

#### 4.3.2 Multivariate interaction effect

Table 7 also presents the results of the two-way interaction effects between study background and stimulus material version. This interaction simulates congruence or incongruence. A significant multivariate two-way interaction effect was found between study background and stimulus version (Wilks' Lambda = .66,  $F(3) = 20.44$ ,  $p = .000$ ) with an observed power of 1.00.

Given the significance of the multivariate interaction effects of study background and stimulus material version on the dependent variables, univariate interaction effects were examined and further tests were conducted to test the three interaction hypotheses.

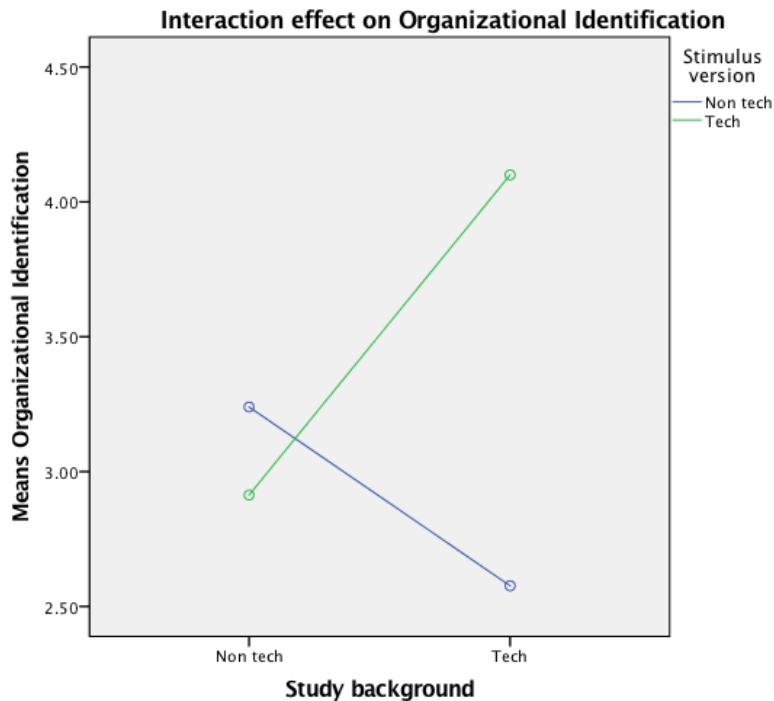
For the Intention to apply, a significant two-way interaction effect was found between study background and the version of stimulus material ( $F(1) = 38.56, p = .000$ ). Respondents with a technical study background that received technical stimulus material ( $M = 4.22, SD = .66$ ) showed stronger Intention to apply than respondents with a technical study background that received non-technical stimulus material ( $M = 2.68, SD = .73$ ). The same goes for respondents with a non-technical study background that received non-technical stimulus material ( $M = 3.50, SD = .89$ ). This group showed stronger Intention to apply than respondents with a non-technical study background that received technical stimulus material ( $M = 3.29, SD = .78$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 1 can be supported. The interaction effect of study background and stimulus material version on Intention to apply is presented in figure 2.



*Figure 2. Interaction effect of study background and stimulus version on Intention to apply.*

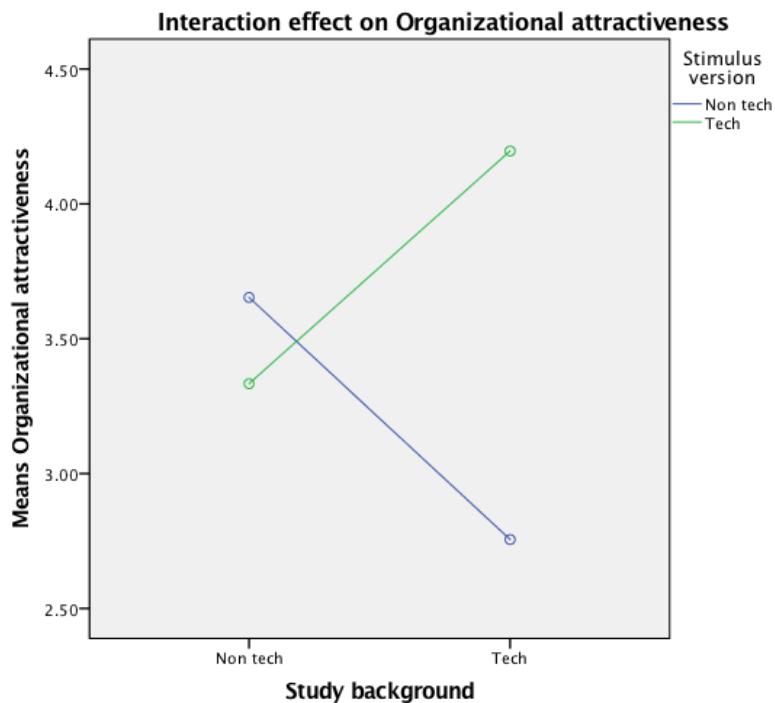
For Organizational identification, a significant two-way interaction effect was found between study background and the version of stimulus material ( $F(1) = 59.22, p = .000$ ). Respondents with a technical study background that received technical stimulus material ( $M = 4.10, SD = .53$ ) identified more strongly with the organization than respondents with a technical study background that received non-technical stimulus material ( $M = 2.58, SD = .64$ ). The other way around is similar, as respondents with a non-technical study background that received non-technical stimulus material ( $M = 3.24, SD = .74$ )

identified more strongly with the organization than respondents with a non-technical study background that received technical stimulus material ( $M = 2.91$ ,  $SD = .70$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 2 can be supported. Figure 3 presents the interaction effect of study background and stimulus material version on Organizational identification.



*Figure 3. Interaction effect of study background and stimulus version on Organizational identification.*

For Organizational attractiveness, a significant two-way interaction effect was found between study background and the version of stimulus material ( $F(1) = 51.33$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Respondents with a technical study background that received technical stimulus material ( $M = 4.20$ ,  $SD = .53$ ) were more attracted to the organization than respondents with a technical study background that received non-technical stimulus material ( $M = 2.76$ ,  $SD = .76$ ). Also for this dimension it goes both ways, as respondents with a non-technical study background that received non-technical stimulus material ( $M = 3.65$ ,  $SD = .71$ ) were more attracted to the organization than respondents with a non-technical study background that received technical stimulus material ( $M = 3.33$ ,  $SD = .69$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 3 can be supported. The interaction effect of study background and stimulus material version on Organizational attractiveness is presented in figure 4.



*Figure 4. Interaction effect of study background and stimulus version on Organizational attractiveness.*

Overall, the MANOVA has shown that the effects of congruent conditions in the experiment result in significant multivariate and univariate interaction effects.

#### 4.3.3 Between-subject effects of study background and stimulus version on dependent variables

Besides computing the multivariate main effects and interaction effect, the MANOVA analysis also produces the univariate main effects for study background and stimulus material version on the dependent variables Intention to apply, Organizational identification, and Organizational attractiveness. Although the literature or the research model did not provide a specific indication, several significant main effects were found. The six open research questions mentioned in the Literature study of chapter 2 refer to these findings.

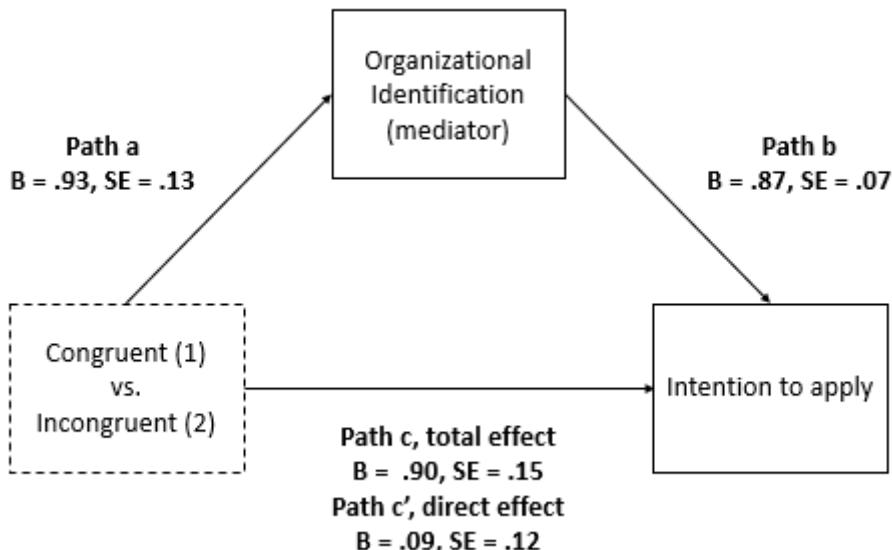
Although the ANOVA did not display a significant main effect for study background on Intention to apply or Organizational attractiveness, it did show that there was a significant main effect for study background on Organizational identification ( $F(1) = 4.75, p = .03$ ). This means that respondents with a technical study background ( $M = 3.39, SD = .96$ ) identified more strongly with the organization than respondents with a non-technical study background ( $M = 3.11, SD = .74$ ), regardless of which version of the stimulus material was received.

In addition, the ANOVA uncovered that there were significant main effects for the version of the stimulus material on Intention to apply ( $F(1) = 22.59, p = .000$ ), Organizational identification ( $F(1) =$

24.78,  $p = .000$ ), and Organization attractiveness ( $F(1) = 20.80$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Respondents that received technical stimulus material ( $M = 3.84$ ,  $SD = .84$ ) had a stronger Intention to apply than respondents that received non-technical stimulus material ( $M = 3.13$ ,  $SD = .91$ ). Also, respondents that received technical stimulus material ( $M = 3.62$ ,  $SD = .84$ ) identified more strongly with the organization than respondents that received non-technical stimulus material ( $M = 2.94$ ,  $SD = .77$ ). Lastly, respondents that received technical stimulus material ( $M = 3.84$ ,  $SD = .73$ ) were more attracted to the organization than respondents that received non-technical stimulus material ( $M = 3.25$ ,  $SD = .85$ ). This means that technical stimulus material was causing significant main effects on respondents' Intention to apply, Organizational identification, and Organizational attractiveness, regardless of the respondent's study background.

#### 4.4 Mediation by Organizational identification

The MANOVA showed that there was a significant interaction effect between the congruent conditions and the Intention to apply. Hypothesis 4 was formulated to investigate whether this relation is mediated by Organizational identification. As suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986), Judd and Kenny (1981), and James and Brett (1984), the mediation effect can be tested by using a linear regression analysis. Figure 5 displays the various paths of the mediation model of Organizational identification, including the coefficients per path.



*Figure 5. Mediation model of Organizational identification*

A linear regression analysis was performed in order to predict Intention to apply based on Congruence and Organizational identification. Congruence was recoded as 1 = congruent condition and 2 = incongruent condition. The constructs of Organizational identification and Intention to apply were

measured by several items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 5 = very much) in which a higher value means stronger Organizational identification and stronger Intention to apply.

To perform the linear regression analysis for this purpose properly, an instruction of Pierce (2003) was followed. Before conducting the linear regression analysis, it was needed to determine whether mediation had occurred. A bivariate correlation analysis was performed to test whether the following conditions were met:

The independent variable predicts the dependent variable (Pearson = .47, p = .000)

The independent variable predicts the mediator (Pearson = .53, p = .000)

The mediator predicts the dependent variable (Pearson = .82, p = .000)

The bivariate correlation showed that the correlation coefficients for each path of the mediation model were statistically significant, and thus all three conditions were met.

Baron and Kenny (1986), Judd and Kenny (1981), and James and Brett (1984) discussed four steps in establishing mediation. The first step is to show that the causal variable is correlated with the outcome (path c of Figure 5). Intention to apply is used the dependent variable in the regression equation and Congruence as the predictor. This step establishes that there is an effect that may be mediated. The linear regression analysis showed that Congruence had a significant effect on Intention to apply ( $F(1) = 34.95$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $R^2 = .22$ ) and thus congruence is a predictor of Intention to apply, the total effect, path c ( $B = .90$ ,  $T = 5.91$ ,  $p = .000$ ).

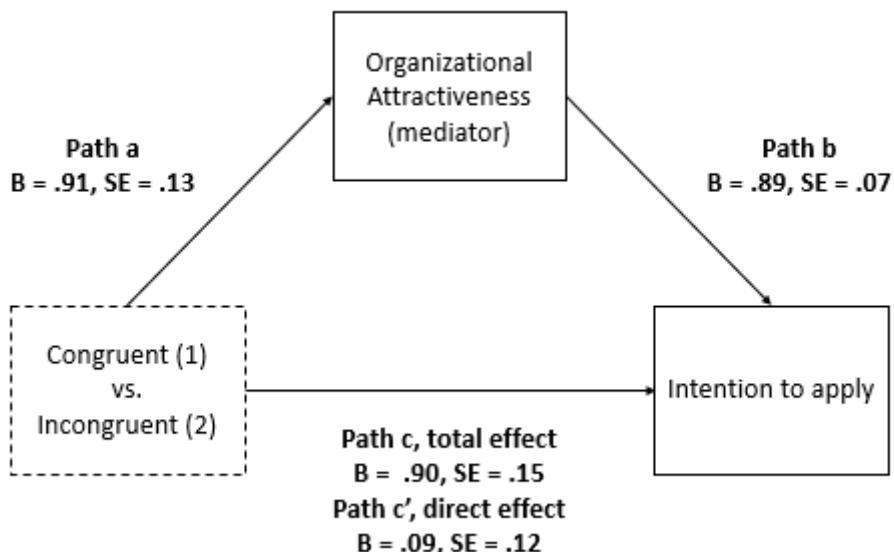
The second step intends to display that the causal variable is correlated with the mediator (path a of Figure 5). In this regression equation Organizational identification is the dependent variable and Congruence as the predictor. The linear regression analysis showed that congruence had a significant effect on Organizational identification ( $F(1) = 47.96$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $R^2 = .28$ ) and congruence was a significant predictor of Organizational identification, path a ( $B = .93$ ,  $T = 6.93$ ,  $p = .000$ ).

The third step shows that the mediator affects the outcome variable (path b of Figure 5). Intention to apply was used as the dependent variable in this regression equation and Congruence and Organizational identification as predictors. It is not sufficient just to correlate the mediator with Intention to apply, because the mediator and the dependent variable may be correlated due to the fact they are both caused by the causal variable Congruence. Therefore, the causal variable must be controlled in establishing the effect of the mediator on the outcome (Baron and Kenny, 1986; Judd and Kenny, 1981; James and Brett, 1984). The linear regression analysis showed that Congruence and Organizational identification had a significant effect on Intention to apply ( $F(2) = 128.80$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $R^2 = .68$ ) and showed that Organizational identification is a significant predictor of Intention to apply, path b ( $B = .87$ ,  $T = 13.16$ ,  $p = .000$ ). The direct effect of this equation was not significant, path c' ( $B = .09$ ,  $T = .79$ ,  $p = .43$ ).

For the fourth step and to satisfy the hypothesis (H4) that Organizational identification completely mediates the relationship between Congruence and Intention to apply, the effect of Congruence on Intention to apply controlling for Organizational identification should be zero. To test this significance, a Sobel test is suggested by Kenny (2018). The Sobel test formula is noted as  $Z = b^2s_a^2 + a^2s_b^2$  with 'a' as the relation of Congruence on Organizational identification and 'b' as the relation of Organizational identification on Intention to apply (values are used from the regression equation of step two and three). The Sobel test shows that there is a significant mediation effect ( $Z = 6.14, p = .000$ ). As the total effect is larger than the direct effect and the Sobel test is significant, all conditions are met to conclude that Organizational identification completely mediates the causal relation of Congruence on Intention to apply.

#### 4.5 Mediation by Organizational attractiveness

Similar to the mediation of Organizational identification on the relation of congruence on Intention to apply, it is hypothesized (H5) that the same relation is mediated by Organizational attractiveness. Figure 6 displays the various paths of the mediation model of Organizational attractiveness, including the coefficients per path.



*Figure 6. Mediation model of Organizational attractiveness*

The same approach as suggested by Pierce (2003) was followed in order to predict Intention to apply based on Congruence and Organizational attractiveness. The congruent conditions were recoded as 1 = congruent condition and 2 = incongruent condition. The constructs of Organizational attractiveness and Intention to apply were measured by several items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 5 = very

much) in which a higher value means stronger Organizational attractiveness and stronger Intention to apply.

In order to determine whether mediation had occurred, a bivariate correlation analysis was performed. The following pre-conditions for linear regression analysis were tested:

1. The independent variable predicts the dependent variable (Pearson = .47, p = .000)
2. The independent variable predicts the mediator (Pearson = .53, p = .000)
3. The mediator predicts the dependent variable (Pearson = .82, p = .000)

The bivariate correlation resulted in statistically significant correlation coefficients for each of the paths of the mediation model. Hence, all three conditions were met.

The same four steps as suggest by Baron and Kenny (1986), Judd and Kenny (1981), and James and Brett (1984) will be followed to determine whether mediation occurred. First, in order to show that the causal variable is correlated with the outcome (path c of Figure 6), Intention to apply was used as the dependent variable in the regression equation and congruence as the predictor. The linear regression analysis showed that Congruence had a significant effect on Intention to apply ( $F(1) = 34.95$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $R^2 = .22$ ) and thus congruence is a predictor of Intention to apply, the total effect, path c ( $B = .90$ ,  $T = 5.91$ ,  $p = .000$ ).

Secondly, in order to prove that the causal variable is correlated with the mediator (path a of Figure 6), Organizational attractiveness was used as the dependent variable and Congruence as the predictor in the regression equation. The linear regression analysis showed that congruence had a significant effect on Organizational attractiveness ( $F(1) = 47.62$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $R^2 = .28$ ) and Congruence was a significant predictor of Organizational attractiveness, path a ( $B = .91$ ,  $T = 6.90$ ,  $p = .000$ ).

Thirdly, for the purpose of showing that the mediator affects the outcome variable (path b of Figure 6), Intention to apply was used as the dependent variable in this regression equation and Congruence and Organizational attractiveness as predictors. Similar to the process for testing the mediation effect of Organizational identification, it is not sufficient to only correlate the mediator with Intention to apply, as the mediator and the dependent variable may be correlated, as they are both caused by the causal variable Congruence. Hence, it is necessary to control the causal variable when establishing the effect of the mediator on the outcome (path c' of Figure 6). The linear regression analysis showed that Congruence and Organizational attractiveness had a significant effect on Intention to apply ( $F(2) = 128.90$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $R^2 = .68$ ) and showed that Organizational attractiveness is a significant predictor of Intention to apply, path b ( $B = .89$ ,  $T = 13.17$ ,  $p = .000$ ). The direct effect of this equation was not significant, path c' ( $B = .09$ ,  $T = .81$ ,  $p = .42$ ).

Fourthly, with regard to satisfy the hypothesis (H5) that Organizational attractiveness completely mediates relationship between Congruence and Intention to apply, the effect of Congruence on Intention to apply controlling for Organizational attractiveness should be zero. The significance was tested with a Sobel test with the following test formula:  $Z = b^2S_a^2 + a^2S_b^2$  with 'a' as the relation of Congruence on Organizational attractiveness and 'b' as the relation of Organizational attractiveness on Intention to apply (values are used from the regression equation of step steps and three). The Sobel test shows that there is a significant mediation effect ( $Z = 6.12$ ,  $p = .000$ ). As the total effect is larger than the direct effect and the Sobel test is significant, all conditions are met to conclude that Organizational attractiveness completely mediates the causal relation of Congruence on Intention to apply.

#### **4.5 Overview of hypotheses**

The results of the study have shown that all hypotheses were supported with statistical significance. An overview of the hypotheses is presented in Table 8.

*Table 8. Overview of the hypotheses*

Hypotheses	Result
H1 Respondents who have received congruently framed stimuli, will have a stronger Intention to apply than respondents that are conditioned with an incongruently framed stimuli	Supported
H2 Respondents who have received congruently framed stimuli, will identify more with the organization than respondents that are conditioned with an incongruently framed stimuli	Supported
H3 Respondents who have received congruently framed stimuli, are more attracted to the organization than respondents that are conditioned with an incongruently framed stimuli	Supported
H4 The effect of congruently framed stimuli on Intention to apply is mediated by Organizational identification.	Supported
H5 The effect of congruently framed stimuli on Intention to apply is mediated by Organizational attractiveness.	Supported

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

The key driver of this study was to contribute to the understanding of effects of congruence on job advertisements. This study aimed to add insights on how graduates from different study backgrounds (technical vs. non-technical) respond to and evaluate framed congruence in job advertisement ads (technical text vs non-technical text). This chapter will discuss the results of this study as they are projected on the existing theory. Furthermore, the practical implications and conclusions will be discussed.

### 5.1 Effects of framed-congruence

As hypothesized in this study (H1, H2, H3), respondents in congruently-framed conditions showed a significant multivariate interaction effect on Intention to apply, Organizational identification, and Organizational attractiveness. This means that respondents who are conditioned with congruently framed stimuli have a stronger Intention to apply, identified more with the organization, and were more attracted to the organization than respondents that were conditioned with incongruently framed stimuli.

These multivariate interactions effects are consistent with the theory. Eckstein (1997) explains congruence as isomorphism (sameness of form). He describes the concept of congruence as a broadly corresponding condition that is in agreement in essentials. As the technical text was specifically written to appeal to technical students it could be suggested that the congruently-framed message was more obvious than the non-technical text for non-technical students. This fits with the suggestions of Langan (2000) that when emphasizing characteristics that show close resemblance to the needs and preferences of employees (or applicants), a more successful recruitment process may occur.

In their article, De Cooman & Pepermans (2012) analyzed the value-related information prospective applicants receive from employers through the communication in job ads. “Because applicants typically possess only limited information about organizations, the wordings of the ads are interpreted as signals of the organizational culture and values (Judge & Bretz, 1992). It is stressed by De Cooman & Pepermans (2012) that in attracting and retaining talent, an organization should present and enact an image consistent with employees’ (i.e. applicants) views of the organization’s identity and their own value preferences.

Concrete information attracts more attention than pallid and abstract propositions, and hence increases message scrutiny and persuasion (Nisbett & Ross (1980); Frey & Eagly (1993)). Chapman et al. (2005), identified six broad factors typically examined as predictors of applicant attraction. One of these is Perceived fit. This factor suggests that applicants seek a fit with the organization or with the type of job

applying for (Cable & Judge (1996, 1997); Judge & Bretz (1992); Kristof (1996); Tom (1971)). According to Kristof (1996), applicants are supposed to interpret characteristics of the job, organization, and recruiter in the context of their own needs and values. This would determine a fit. This suggests that the research results are in line with earlier findings in this specific field of research.

Interestingly, Adams & De Kock (2015, p. 1) found “that the attitude towards the organization and beliefs about the likely outcome of applying to an organization did not contribute as strongly as expected to the formation of Intentions to apply”.

## 5.2 Mediating effect of Organizational identification and Organizational attractiveness

In this study, it was hypothesized (H4) that the effect of congruently framed stimuli on Intention to apply is mediated by Organizational identification. The four step approach as suggested by Kenny and Baron (1986) revealed that Organizational identification completely mediates the causal relation of Congruence on Intention to apply.

As mentioned by Bhattacharya & Sen (2003), consumers behave in a seemly similar manner, as they are likely to identify and associate with brands that reflect and reinforce their self-identities, and often regard brands as an extension of the self (Belk, 1988). This study followed a similar line of reasoning and applied it to applicants, rather than consumers. The linear regression analysis of the mediation effect of Organizational identification on the relation between congruence and Intention to apply supported the hypothesis that Organizational identification is a significant predictor of Intention to apply. As mentioned in the literature study, there was no evidence found to explain this mediating effect. Therefore, it can be suggested that this finding opens a door to future research on the mediating effect of Organizational identification.

As hypothesized (H5), a mediating effect of Organizational attractiveness on the relation between Congruence and Intention to apply was found. The linear regression analysis revealed that Organizational attractiveness completely mediates the causal relation of Congruence on Intention to apply.

The mediating effect of Organizational attractiveness found is in line with the study of Gomes & Neves, (2011) and Chapman et al. (2005). Effect of employer attractiveness has been proved and results of their study revealed that symbolic attributes of a brand (sincerity, innovativeness, competence, prestige and robustness) are the best predictors of the Organizational identification while instrumental frameworks do not have any contribution to identification (Van Hoye & Lievens, 2007).

In order to place the strong mediation effects of Organizational identification and Organizational attractiveness in perspective, Chapman et al. (2005) argue that fit perception are often found to be stronger predictors than recruiter characteristics or job-organizational characteristics, but the extent of the improvement is often rather small. In other words, although there is definitely a strong mediation effect, the total effect of the manipulation is often still limited. This notion is essential as targeting individual applicants to establish congruently-framed situations consumes considerably more organizational resources than providing a broad-based recruiting practices that is attractive to the vast majority of applicants (Chapman et al., 2005). However, Chapman et al. (2005) also mention that when one is trying to fill certain key positions or positions that are difficult to fill, it may be beneficial to engage in highly individual targeted recruitment processes to maximize fit. Thus, in the context of this study, it can be hypothesized that technically-skilled talent fits the criteria of “positions that are difficult to fill” and thus are highly individual targeted recruitment processes could be considered to maximize the job-fit (Chapman et al., 2005).

### 5.3 Direct effects of Organizational image

Although there was no strong literature evidence, this study suggested to investigate the potential direct effects of Organizational image on the dependent variables Intention to apply, Organizational Identification, and Organizational attractiveness. For that purpose, open research questions 4, 5 and 6 were added to the study. It was suggested that regardless of their study background, respondents who received technical stimulus material might have a stronger Intention to apply, identify more with the organization, and are more attracted to the organization than respondents who received non-technical stimulus material. The study indeed revealed significant univariate main effects for Organizational image on all three dependent variables.

The significant main effects of Organizational image on the dependent variables are in line with the study of Jo Hatch & Schultz (1997), who argue that mutual influences of organizational culture, organizational identity, and organizational image suggest a specific model of ways in which properties and processes interpenetrate one another. In addition, Alvesson (1990) coined a more complex definition which is a combination of marketing and organization theory approaches. According to Alvesson (1990, p. 376), “organizational image is a holistic and vivid impression held by an individual or a particular group towards an organization and is a result of sense-making by the group and communication by the organization of a fabricated and projected picture of itself”.

In their model of Organizational identification, Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail (1994) suggest that there are two key organizational images influencing the strength of individuals' identification with the organization. The first one is the perception of the identity of the organization. In other words: self-concept versus Organizational identification. The second one focusses on the beliefs of how outsiders

view an individuals' organization. Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail (1994) propose that the attractiveness of construed external image also affects the strength of Organizational identification. Social identity theory suggests that individuals assign importance to the status of groups with which they are or feel associated (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Tyler and Blader, 2000). Therefore, construed external image refers to how the organization's members believe others (i.e., outsiders) view the organization (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Tyler and Blader, 2000).

#### 5.4 Direct effects of study background

Similar to Organizational image, there was no strong literature evidence that there would be direct effects of study background on the specific dependent variables of this study. Nonetheless, for the sake of completeness, this study wanted to investigate the direct effects of study background on the Intention to apply, Organizational identification, and Organizational attractiveness and for that purpose, open research questions 1, 2 and 3 were added to the study. The open research questions questioned whether, regardless of their study background, respondents who have a technical study background might have a stronger Intention to apply, identify more with the organization, and are more attracted to the organization than respondents who have a non-technical study background. The study revealed there were indeed significant univariate main effects for study background on Organizational identification and Organizational attractiveness. There was no significant univariate main effect found for study background on Intention to apply.

The results of the ANOVA show that respondents with a technical background in general have stronger feelings of identification and attraction to the organization of the experiment than respondents with a non-technical background. In an attempt to uncover why the two target groups show a difference in Organizational identification and Organizational attractiveness, an explanation based on social identity theory is proposed.

Pratt (1998) argues that the social identity theory of Tajfel (1982) has two basic motives for identification, namely the necessity for self-categorization and the desire for self-enhancement. The first motive, self-categorization, discusses the extent to which a person feels that he or she belongs to the social group (Tajfel, 1981). In the case of this research, the social group is the organization to apply for. Looking at the results of the univariate analyses of variance of study background on Organizational identification and Organizational attractiveness, it could be argued that the stimulus material evoked stronger feelings of belonging among respondents with a technical background. While the group of technical respondents seemed to respond in a quite similar fashion, the group of non-technical respondents was significantly more diverse in their responses. In other words, when it comes to Organizational identification and Organizational attractiveness, the group of respondents with a technical study background appears to be more homogeneous than the group of respondents with a non-

technical study background. A restriction and thus also a research limitation that can be mentioned here is that the group with the classification of “non-technical” study background is too broad and cannot be categorized as a specific target group. This would explain the weaker effects of self-image (as it is quite scattered) on Organizational identification.

According to Fisher & Wakefield (1998), the second motive, self-enhancement, finds itself in the way that a person wants to associate oneself with a successful organization. Furthermore, this effect seems to be dependent on the (perceived) prestige (Mael & Ashforth, 1992) and the attractiveness of the organization (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail, 1994). According to Dutton et al. (1994), members of a social group have feelings of proudness to belong to an organization that is believed to have “socially valued characteristics”. An important question to ask here would be: are graduates with a technical background more sensitive to organizational prestige and Organizational attractiveness than graduates with a non-technical background? Moreover, the question could be raised to what extent graduates with a technical background see a job or organization as an extension of their self-concept versus the way how graduates with a non-technical background see this.

### 5.5 Limitations and future research directions

The theoretical model was estimated on cross-sectional data. This is a common practice in the field of behavioral science. Nevertheless, it is necessary to mention that one has to be cautious with the interpretation and generalization of the results. In a similar fashion, this goes for the chosen research method of self-reporting. It is impossible to completely rule out the possibility of common-method bias that may have altered the relationships between constructs. Nonetheless, when one takes into account the relatively large sample group (N=109 for the pre-study and N=124 for the main study), the plausible relationships between the core concept constructs, and the extensive applied analyses, this study produces empirical evidence that the congruently-framed stimuli have significant effects on the Organizational identification, and thus the Intention to apply.

Regarding the sample profile of the respondents, a couple of remarks can be made. Firstly, this study has only investigated Dutch respondents and used a fictional international company in the stimuli of the experiment. It can be argued that an individual’s perception on careers and organizations is influenced by their cultural background or nationality. Future research can investigate the role and the significance of these demographics by replicating this experiment in other countries with variating cultural dimensions.

For the purpose of comparing the target groups, the respondents were divided in two categories, namely technical and non-technical. As mentioned in the Discussion of this study, the two groups were not evenly homogeneous in their answers regarding Organizational identification and Organizational

attractiveness, as the spread of answers was wider among the group that was categorized as “non-technical”. Future research should make an attempt to not make a binary classification of study background, but rather apply a categorical approach to achieve more concrete evidence of the effects of self-image on the dependent variables.

More research is required on the various applications of congruence. In this study, study background (as an element of one's self-concept) was taken as a building block to craft congruence. However, based on the work of Rokeach & Rothman (1965); Tannenbaum (1967); Solomon (2014), it can be hypothesized that there are numerous, possibly infinite, independent variables to craft congruence and congruently-framed messages.

For the sake of pursuing a homogeneous respondent sample, this study only allowed respondents with a study background of high education (HBO and WO). In order to broaden the application of the findings of this study, it is advised to extent this experiment to other levels of education as well. This could prove the effects of congruence in job advertisement for a larger target audience, and thus increasing its potential as a recruitment tool.

Another way to investigate whether this research can be used to create more successful recruitment tools, is to understand the effects of framed-congruence on experienced professionals, rather than on students or recently graduated young professions. Given the fact that experienced professionals have more experience within organizations, it could be argued that this also has an impact on their vulnerability for self-image and Organizational image manipulation in the form of framed-congruence.

The experiment of this study focused on only one, fictional, organization. One could hypothesize the likeability of characteristics of the organization as proposed in the stimulus material causes priming effects for the respondents. In order to be able to completely exclude stimuli-bias, future research could reproduce the experiment. The effect of this and other moderator variables should be studied in further research.

This experiment of the main study only focusses on job advertisements in the recruitment process. However, according to the research of Rynes et al. (1991); Fombrun and Shanley (1990); Uggersley, Fassina & Kraichy (2012); Highhouse Lievens & Sinar (2003); Van Hoye & Lievens (2007), there are multiple information sources and/or influencing factors that have effect on the possible applicants' Intention to apply. Therefore, it can be suggested that further research replicates the experiments while using different stimuli in order to validate the congruence effects in that as well and thus strengthening the claim of the positive effects of congruently-framed messages on Organizational identification and the Intention to apply.

## 5.6 Conclusion

This study has confirmed the assumption that congruently-framed conditions lead to higher evaluations of Intention to apply, Organizational identification, and Organizational attractiveness. Furthermore, it confirmed that study background and Organizational image were proper indicators for establishing framed congruence. In addition, this study has proven that Organizational identification and Organizational attractiveness both mediate the relation of congruence on Intention to apply. The results of this study add to the understanding of how framed congruence can be applied in textual stimuli (in this case job advertisements) and supports and confirms findings of previous research done in the field of Congruence, Social Identity Theory, Organizational identification, and Human resources.

A special note can be made regarding the direct effects of Organizational image on the dependent variables. More specifically, in this study, it appeared that regardless of a respondent's study background, the technical stimulus material led to higher evaluations of Intention to apply, Organizational identification, and Organizational attractiveness. As the organization in the technical stimulus material was depicted as very technically-oriented, with a focus on innovation and usage of new technologies, it may be argued that these are elements or characteristics that could lead to more attraction of potential applicants.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: questionnaire pre-study

Q1 Hoeveel waarde hecht je aan de volgende aspecten bij het zoeken naar een baan na je studie?

	Heel weinig (1)	Weinig (2)	Niet veel, niet weinig (3)	Veel (4)	Heel veel (5)
Macht hebben (Q1_1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Autoriteit uitstralen (Q1_2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Salaris (Q1_3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Carrièremogelijkheden (Q1_4, factor 1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sfeer op de werkvloer (Q1_5, factor 3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rustige werkomgeving (Q1_6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Invloed op beslissingen (Q1_7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Autonomo kunnen zijn in mijn werk (Q1_8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mogelijkheid tot persoonlijke groei en ontwikkeling (Q1_9, factor 1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gevoel dat je het gemaakt hebt (Q1_10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mogelijkheid om creatief te zijn (Q1_11, factor 5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goede interpersoonlijke relaties (Q1_12, factor 3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interessant werk (Q1_13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Werken in een prestigieuze organisatie (Q1_14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Perspectief op een vaste baan (Q1_15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gevoel van trots op het bedrijf (Q1_16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Verantwoordelijkheid in mijn werk (Q1_17)	<input type="radio"/>				
Beloningen voor uitzonderlijke prestaties (Q1_18)	<input type="radio"/>				
Goede secundaire arbeidsvoorwaarden (Q1_19)	<input type="radio"/>				
Mogelijkheid om verschillende vaardigheden te gebruiken (Q1_20)	<input type="radio"/>				
Jouw bijdrage aan de maatschappij (Q1_21, factor 2)	<input type="radio"/>				
Duidelijke doelstellingen van de organisatie (Q1_22)	<input type="radio"/>				
Werken met collega's met dezelfde studie-achtergrond (Q1_23)	<input type="radio"/>				
Arbeidsveiligheid (Q1_24)	<input type="radio"/>				
Feedback op mijn werk (Q1_25)	<input type="radio"/>				
Toegankelijke organisatie (Q1_26, factor 5)	<input type="radio"/>				
Waardering van leidinggevenden (Q1_27)	<input type="radio"/>				
Duidelijke hiërarchische lijnen (Q1_28)	<input type="radio"/>				
Gebruik van innovatieve technologie (Q1_29)	<input type="radio"/>				
Sterk verband met mijn studie (Q1_30)	<input type="radio"/>				
Organisatie is bereid om te investeren in nieuwe techniek (Q1_31)	<input type="radio"/>				
Niet teveel technische collega's (Q1_32)	<input type="radio"/>				

Q2 Hoe belangrijk zijn de volgende aspecten in je toekomstige carrière?

	Helemaal niet belangrijk (1)	Niet belangrijk (2)	Neutraal (3)	Belangrijk (4)	Heel belangrijk (5)
Mogelijkheid om een goede levensstandaard te hebben (Q2_1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mogelijkheid om een goed salaris te verdienen (Q2_2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Status in de maatschappij (Q2_3, factor 1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mogelijkheid om stapje omhoog te gaan in carrière (Q2_4, factor 1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mijn persoonlijke waarden (Q2_5, factor 5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mogelijkheid om bij te dragen aan de maatschappij (Q2_6, factor 2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mogelijkheid om te leren en te ontwikkelen (Q2_7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mogelijkheid om mijn persoonlijke wensen te uiten (Q2_8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Passend bij het beeld dat ik heb van mijzelf (Q2_9, factor 5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
De verwachting van mensen die dicht bij mij staan (Q2_10, factor 4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
De carrièrekeuzes van mensen die dicht bij mij staan (Q2_11, factor 4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Beschikbaarheid van banen (Q2_12)	<input type="radio"/>				
Uitdagende aard van de baan (Q2_13)	<input type="radio"/>				
De lifestyle die bij de baan komt kijken (Q2_14)	<input type="radio"/>				
Mijn vaardigheden en competenties (Q2_15)	<input type="radio"/>				
Het beeld dat de maatschappij heeft van de organisatie waar ik werk (Q2_16, factor 4)	<input type="radio"/>				
Het beeld dat mensen die dicht bij mij staan hebben van de organisatie waar ik werk (Q2_17, factor 4)	<input type="radio"/>				
Het beeld dat ik zelf heb van de organisatie waar ik werk (Q2_18)	<input type="radio"/>				
De waardes die de organisatie heeft volgens de maatschappij (Q2_19, factor 4)	<input type="radio"/>				
De waardes die de organisatie heeft volgens mensen die dicht bij mij staan (Q2_20, factor 4)	<input type="radio"/>				
De waardes die de organisatie heeft volgens mijzelf (Q2_21)	<input type="radio"/>				

Q3 Wat is je geslacht?

- Man (1)
- Vrouw (2)
- Dat zeg ik liever niet (3)

Q4 Wat is je leeftijd?

Q6 Wat is je hoogste niveau van studie?

- HBO (1)
- WO Bachelor (2)
- WO Master (3)

Q5 Wat is je studie-achtergrond?

- Economie & Bedrijfskunde (1)
- Geesteswetenschappen (2)
- Geneeskunde (3)
- Maatschappelijke en gedragswetenschappen (4)
- Exakte wetenschappen (wiskunde, natuurkunde, biologie, scheikunde, etc.) (5)
- Rechten (6)
- Informatica (7)
- Techniek (Elektro, werktuigbouw, civiele techniek, etc.) (8)
- Anders, namelijk (9) \_\_\_\_\_

Q7 Beschouw je jezelf als technisch geschoold?

- Ja (1)
- Nee (2)

## Appendix 2: stimulus main test

### *Text 1 (non-technical)*

#### KVM GRADUATE TRAINEESHIP PROGRAMME

##### **Wie zijn wij?**

KVM is een internationaal, maatschappelijk gericht bedrijf dat de wereld voorziet in haar energiebehoeften. Opgericht in 1987, richtte het eerste kantoor in Nederland zich op het aangaan van samenwerkingsverbanden met partners om schone energienetwerken te creëren en benutten. Inmiddels is KVM actief in meer dan dertig landen.

##### *Onze missie*

Wij zijn van mening dat de stijgende levensstandaard voor een groeiende wereldbevolking waarschijnlijk nog jarenlang de vraag naar energie, inclusief olie en gas, zal blijven stimuleren. KVM wil de wereld helpen door samen te werken aan een betere wereld, met als doel schone energie op de lange termijn te kunnen waarborgen. Dit doen wij door onze expertise op gebied van samenwerking, maatschappelijke ontwikkeling en organisatie in te zetten.

Ons vermogen om onze strategische ambities te realiseren, hangt af van hoe we reageren op de concurrentie. We evalueren voortdurend de externe omgeving en luisteren naar de meningen die spelen in de maatschappij en de politiek. We streven voortdurend naar verbetering van onze operationele prestaties, met de nadruk op gezondheid, veiligheid, beveiliging en milieu.

##### *Onze mensen*

Wij geloven dat de drijvende kracht achter KVM haar medewerkers zijn. Om succes in de toekomst te garanderen, hechten wij belang aan gelukkige collega's. Dit betekent dat je bij KVM een goede werk-privé balans vindt, veel ruimte voor persoonlijke ontwikkeling en je veel aansluiting vindt bij je collega's.

##### **Wat doen wij?**

Het afgelopen jaar hebben wij ons op een aantal pijlers gericht:

- aangaan van nieuwe samenwerkingsverbanden binnen de energiesector;
- ontdekken van mogelijke partnerschappen met organisaties buiten de branche;
- herstructureren van onze organisatie, met als doel de sterke eigenschappen van onze collega's maximaal tot uiting te laten komen.

Het komende jaar staat in het teken van het verder verdiepen van onze relaties, zowel binnen de organisatie als met onze partners. Dit geven wij graag verder met jou vorm!

##### **Ontdek jouw carrière bij KVM**

KVM stelt jou in staat jouw karakter, waardes en zelfbeeld te ontplooien binnen een gevestigde organisatie. Je kunt je creativiteit volop kwijt, terwijl je je breed ontwikkelt en werkt aan een glansrijke carrière binnen een vooraanstaand en toonaangevend bedrijf. Daarnaast werk je in een bedrijf dat trots is op haar imago in de maatschappij en de mensen om haar heen.

Ben jij in staat om vraagstukken met een uitdagende aard te vertalen in specifieke oplossingen? Schrijf je dan nu in voor het KVM Graduate Traineeship.

##### **Wat ga je doen?**

Jij bent het koppelstuk tussen topmanagement en het bedrijf. Jouw interne klanten zitten overal, van Sales tot HR. Je breidt je netwerk steeds meer uit. Door in gesprek te gaan met stakeholders, verzamel jij informatie over de eisen en wensen van de business en vertaal je deze in bruikbare en structurele oplossingen die waarde bieden voor KVM. Tijdens het traineeship werk je nauw samen met ervaren managers die jou coachen, regelmatig feedback geven en beoordelen om je op veel verschillende vaardigheden te ontwikkelen. Bij KVM vinden we het creëren van een prettige werkomgeving belangrijk, en daarom investeren wij in een goede sfeer op de werkvloer en proberen we als organisatie zo toegankelijk mogelijk te zijn.

## **Waarom kies je voor het KVM Graduate Traineeprogramma?**

Je sluit je aan bij een toonaangevend ontwikkelprogramma, met de volgende voordelen:

Investeren – KVM gelooft in teruggeven aan de maatschappij en investeert volop hierin.

- Collega's – je bent onderdeel van onze open, dynamische en ondersteunende werkcultuur; een netwerk van vriendelijke, maatschappelijk georiënteerde professionals die elkaar volledig ondersteunen om het meeste uit hun carrière te halen.
- Werkomgeving – de open kantooruituin biedt je voldoende mogelijkheden met je collega's te sparren en aan je relaties te werken.
- Salaris – Vanaf de start van je traineeship ontvang je een salaris dat boven het marktgemiddelde ligt en uitmuntende arbeidsvoorwaarden.

## **Klaar om te solliciteren?**

Als je geïnteresseerd bent in het starten van je carrière bij KVM, of om je carrière naar het volgende niveau te brengen, neem dan contact met ons op via onze HR-afdeling.

### ***Text 2 (technical)***

## **KVM GRADUATE TRAINEESHIP PROGRAMME**

### **Wie zijn wij?**

KVM is een internationaal, technologisch-gericht bedrijf dat de wereld voorziet in haar energiebehoeften. Opperdicht in 1987, richtte het eerste kantoor in Nederland zich op onderzoek naar en ontwikkelen van alternatieve energiebronnen om schone energie te waarborgen. Inmiddels is KVM actief in meer dan dertig landen.

### ***Onze missie***

Wij zijn van mening dat de stijgende levensstandaard voor een groeiende wereldbevolking waarschijnlijk nog jarenlang de vraag naar energie, inclusief olie en gas, zal blijven stimuleren. KVM heeft als missie om op een slimme manier in de wereldwijde energiemarkt te werken aan een langetermijnoplossing. Dit doen wij door onze expertise op gebied van innovatie, technologische kennis en onderzoek in te zetten.

Ons vermogen om onze strategische ambities te realiseren, hangt af van hoe we reageren op de concurrentie. We evalueren voortdurend de externe omgeving en volgen nauwlettend de ontwikkelingen op het gebied van technologie. We streven voortdurend naar verbetering van onze operationele prestaties, met de nadruk op automatisering, technologie, security en milieu.

### ***Onze mensen***

Wij geloven dat de drijvende kracht achter KVM haar medewerkers zijn. Om succes in de toekomst te garanderen, hechten wij belang aan gelukkige collega's. Dit betekent dat je bij KVM met de allernieuwste technologie werkt, je jouw kennis volledig kunt benutten en je een prettige en rustige werkomgeving hebt.

### **Wat doen wij?**

Het afgelopen jaar hebben wij ons op een aantal pijlers gericht:

- onderzoek naar de laatste ontwikkelingen op IT-vlak;
- onderzoek naar de laatste ontwikkelingen op vlak van (schone) energie;
- herstructureren van onze organisatie, met als doel de (technische) capaciteiten maximaal tot uiting te laten komen.

Het komende jaar staat in het teken van technologische vooruitgang, zowel intern als extern. Dit geven wij graag verder met jou vorm!

### **Ontdek jouw carrière bij KVM**

KVM stelt jou in staat jouw vaardigheden in te zetten binnen een gevestigde organisatie. Je kunt je denkkracht volop kwijt, terwijl je je specifiek ontwikkelt en werkt aan een glansrijke carrière binnen

een vooraanstaand en toonaangevend bedrijf. Daarnaast werk je in een bedrijf dat bekend staat om haar investeringen in innovatie.

Ben jij in staat om vraagstukken met een uitdagende aard te vertalen in specifieke oplossingen? Schrijf je dan nu in voor het KVM Graduate Traineeship.

### **Wat ga je doen?**

Jij bent het koppelstuk tussen topmanagement en het bedrijf. Jouw interne klanten zitten overal, van Engineering tot IT. Je werkt veel zelfstandig aan projecten. Door nauwkeurige analyse, verzamel jij informatie over de eisen en wensen van de business en vertaal je deze in bruikbare en structurele oplossingen die waarde bieden voor KVM. Tijdens het traineeship werk je nauw samen met ervaren specialisten die jou helpen om problemen op te lossen om jouw specifieke vaardigheden te ontwikkelen. Bij KVM vinden we het creëren van een prettige werkomgeving belangrijk, en daarom zorgen we voor een rustige werksfeer en werkplekken waar je goed kunt concentreren.

### **Waarom kies je voor het KVM Graduate Traineeprogramma?**

Je sluit je aan bij een toonaangevend ontwikkelprogramma, met de volgende voordelen:

- **Investeren** – KVM investeert volop in innovatie en nieuwe technologie om zo te groeien in de markt. Collega's – je bent onderdeel van onze intelligente en oplossingsgerichte werkcultuur; een netwerk van sterke technologische specialistische professionals.
- **Werkomgeving** – de rustige werkplekken bieden je voldoende mogelijkheden om tot interessante ideeën te komen en complexe vraagstukken op te lossen.
- **Salaris** – Vanaf de start van je traineeship ontvang je een salaris dat is afgestemd op je ervaring en marktconforme arbeidsvoorwaarden.

### **Klaar om te solliciteren?**

Als je geïnteresseerd bent in het starten van je carrière bij KVM, of om je carrière naar het volgende niveau te brengen, neem dan contact met ons op via onze HR-afdeling.

### Appendix 3: questionnaire main test

Q1 In hoeverre ben je het eens met de volgende stellingen met betrekking tot de tekst?

	Helemaal mee oneens (1)	Oneens (2)	Neutraal (3)	Mee eens (4)	Helemaal mee eens (5)
Ik identificeer me sterk met het bedrijf waar het in deze advertentie over gaat ( <i>Q1_1: Organizational identification</i> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik vereenzelvig me met de organisatie ( <i>Q1_2: Organizational identification</i> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik voel me solidair met de organisatie ( <i>Q1_3: Organizational identification</i> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik voel me betrokken bij de organisatie ( <i>Q1_4: Organizational identification</i> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik vind dit een technisch bedrijf ( <i>Q1_5: Organizational image</i> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik voel me met mijn studie-achtergrond sterk aangesproken door de missie van dit bedrijf ( <i>Q1_6: Organizational identification</i> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Het profiel van de organisatie past perfect aan bij wat ik heb gestudeerd <i>(Q1_7: Organizational identification)</i>	<input type="radio"/>				
Dit bedrijf staat voor veel dingen die ik leuk vond in mijn opleiding <i>(Q1_8: Organizational identification)</i>	<input type="radio"/>				
Dit lijkt mij een prettige organisatie om voor te werken <i>(Q1_9)</i>	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik denk dat mensen die hier werken veel hebben om trots op te zijn <i>(Q1_10)</i>	<input type="radio"/>				
Het zou me een goed gevoel geven om voor deze organisatie te werken <i>(Q1_11: Organizational attractiveness)</i>	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik deel de waardes van deze organisatie <i>(Q1_12: Organizational identification)</i>	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik sta voor hetzelfde als waar de organisatie voor staat <i>(Q1_13: Organizational identification)</i>	<input type="radio"/>				

Ik ondersteun de doelen van deze organisatie <i>(Q1_14: Organizational identification)</i>	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik vind deze organisatie interessant <i>(Q1_15: Organizational attractiveness)</i>	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik vind dat deze organisatie goed bezig is <i>(Q1_16)</i>	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik ben positief gestemd over deze organisatie <i>(Q1_17)</i>	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik vind het wenselijk dat dit soort organisaties bestaan <i>(Q1_18)</i>	<input type="radio"/>				
Deze organisatie stelt me tevreden <i>(Q1_19: Organizational attractiveness)</i>	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik denk dat hier leuke mensen werken <i>(Q1_20)</i>	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik denk dat hier interessante mensen werken <i>(Q1_21)</i>	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik denk dat mijn vrienden en familie vinden dat deze organisatie goed werk verricht <i>(Q1_22)</i>	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik denk dat mijn vrienden en familie vinden dat een carrière bij deze organisatie een goed idee is <i>(Q1_23)</i>	<input type="radio"/>				

Ik denk dat deze organisatie een goed imago heeft in de maatschappij (Q1_24)	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik denk dat mijn vrienden en familie vinden dat deze organisatie een goed imago heeft (Q1_25)	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik denk dat deze organisatie goed gewaardeerd wordt in de maatschappij (Q1_26)	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik denk dat mijn vrienden en familie deze organisatie goed weten te waarderen (Q1_27)	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik zou voor deze organisatie willen werken (Q1_28: <i>Intention to apply</i> )	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik zou anderen aanraden voor deze organisatie te werken (Q1_29: <i>Intention to apply</i> )	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik zou deze vacature aan anderen aanraden (Q1_30: <i>Intention to apply</i> )	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik vind dit een goede advertentie (Q1_31)	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik vind de organisatie achter de advertentie goed (Q1_32)	<input type="radio"/>				

De tekst in deze advertentie sluit goed aan mij mijn studie-achtergrond (Q1_33)	<input type="radio"/>				
De tekst in deze advertentie sluit goed aan bij mijn interesses (Q1_34)	<input type="radio"/>				
Ik vind dit een technische tekst (Q1_35: <i>Organizational image</i> )	<input type="radio"/>				
Als ik een meer technisch profiel had, dan had ik hier wel willen werken (Q1_36)	<input type="radio"/>				
Als ik een meer maatschappelijk-georiënteerd profiel had, dan had ik hier wel willen werken (Q1_37)	<input type="radio"/>				

Q2 Ik vind de auteur van deze tekst:

	Helemaal mee oneens (1)	Oneens (2)	Neutraal (3)	Eens (4)	Helemaal mee eens (5)
Betrouwbaar (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Onbevoordeeld (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bekwaam (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Deskundig (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Geloofwaardig (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Waardevol (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q3 Ik vind deze personeelsadvertentie:

	Helemaal mee oneens (1)	Oneens (2)	Neutraal (3)	Eens (4)	Helemaal mee eens (5)
Informatief (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Compleet (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interessant (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Goed (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4 Deze stellingen gaan over jezelf. Geef aan in hoeverre je het eens met bent de volgende stellingen:

	Helemaal mee oneens (1)	Oneens (2)	Neutraal (3)	Eens (4)	Helemaal mee eens (5)
Ik heb affiniteit met techniek (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik vind dat ik een technische achtergrond heb (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik voel mij maatschappelijk geëngageerd (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q5 Wat is je geslacht?

- Man (1)
- Vrouw (2)

Q6 Wat is je leeftijd?

Q7 Wat is je hoogste niveau van studie?

- HBO (1)
- WO Bachelor (2)
- WO Master (3)

Q8 Wat is je studie-achtergrond?

- Economie & Bedrijfskunde (1)
  - Geesteswetenschappen (2)
  - Geneeskunde (3)
  - Maatschappelijke en gedragswetenschappen (4)
  - Exacte wetenschappen (wiskunde, natuurkunde, biologie, scheikunde, etc.) (5)
  - Rechten (6)
  - Informatica (7)
  - Techniek (Elektro, werktuigbouw, civiele techniek, etc.) (8)
  - Anders, namelijk (9) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Q9 Beschouw je jezelf als technisch geschoold?

- Ja (1)
- Nee (2)

Appendix 4: Supporting statistical tables and figures

Figure 3. Pre-study EFA factor analysis, Scree Plot.

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