MASTER THESIS

#Lovemyjob

Researching the Influence of Social Media on Employer Branding

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to answer the question: *"What is the influence of the use of social media, age and other factors on the strength of employer branding in the decision-making process of job-seeking employees?"*
Employer branding is the practice of actively using marketing principles in the process of building the employer brand, with the eventual objective of finding new employees. This can be done in several ways, e.g. by using social media. The rise of social media has caused a shift of power from business to their customers, but that does not mean that businesses cannot use it to their advantage. Social media have given businesses the opportunity to create a way to talk with their customers, to attract potential employees, and ultimately, to establish a stronger brand personality. Based on the outcomes of this research, we found that the use of social media has a positive influence on the strength of employer branding. Age was hypothesized to have a negative influence on the strength of employer branding, but this research was not able to find such an effect. Age did however have a significant effect on the way that social media was used and might therefore indirectly influence the strength of the employer brand as well. Other factors, such as the size of the company and whether it is well-known or not, seem to have significant inlfuence employer brand strength as well, as we have seen in the comparison between the two companies included in this research. Lastly, the strength of the employer brand was found to have a positive relationship with the willingness of (job-seeking) employees to work for a certain company.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Imagine: You are 25 years old, you just graduated, and you are looking for a job. Every morning, you check the newspapers for the job listings, and a couple of times per week, you go to the library to write up motivation letters and look up information on the companies you are applying to. This probably does not sound like an everyday practice to you, since the job-hunting process has changed a lot since the days when you depended on your local library's resources. Today, job-searching can be done from the comfort of your own home, via job boards such as LinkedIn, background information on companies is widely available online, and you can even research your interviewer's hobbies on Facebook (although bringing that up in your interview is not necessarily advisable).

But the digitization is not only noticeable on the job-seeking end of the spectrum. Companies are making more and more use of social media accounts as well. Whether it is a make-up brand showing off their products on Instagram, or illustrating that their employees *#lovetheirjob*, accessibility, approachability, and visibility seem to be getting more and more important, and therefore, many companies think that having social media accounts are the key to success, both in reaching potential customers and potential employees. In this thesis, the focus lies on reaching potential employees; therefore, on branding your company in such a way that potential employees will want to work for you, which is referred to as employer branding.

In light of these events, employer branding has become increasingly important for companies. The questions "What is the image people have of our company and does that match with our own view?" and ultimately "How can we brand our company in a way that will attract the right kind of people?" need to be answered if an employer wishes to create a good understanding of their own brand. This, in turn, is necessary to create a solid, clear employer brand that can be carried out on all available channels, such as social media.

But how effective is the use of social media in the process of looking for a job or looking for suitable applicants? Do companies that make good use of social media actually have a better image with potential employees, and do they receive more applications? In short, do social media have an influence?

This thesis aims to research whether and how the use of social media and other factors have an influence on the decisions people make when looking for a job. It thus aims to answer the following research question:

"What is the influence of the use of social media, age on the strength of employer branding in the decision-making process of job-seeking employees?"

2 RESEARCH QUESTION

For this thesis, the following research question has been formulated:

"What is the influence of the use of social media, age and other factors on the strength of employer branding in the decision-making process of job-seeking employees?"

2.1 Sub Questions

To answer the central research question, the following sub-questions have been formulated:

1) *What is employer branding and how does it work?*

2) *What role do social media have in employer branding?*

3) *Who are the people that interact with an employer brand?*

4) *How does it relate to the decision-making in the job-seeking?*

3 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Literature Review

In this section, the definitions and scope of the core concepts of this research will be defined and described. The core concepts are:

1) Employer Branding
2) Social Media
3) Job-Seeking Process

3.1.1 Employer Branding

Before elaborating on employer branding in detail, the concepts of *brand* and *branding* will be discussed and defined.

Defining the term brand can be quite a challenge, and it is not uncommon that the definitions used by different authors vary greatly (Kapferer, 2008). A product can be referred to as the company producing the product, and therefore as the brand, for example; "I drive a BMW" or "I only use Nivea skincare". Therefore, it serves as a way for customers to make distinctions between the products and/or services of one company and another (Knox & Bickerton, 2003), but a brand can also represent a certain level of quality (e.g. Chanel supposedly delivers a higher quality product than Primark) and/or level of consumer trust (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). In short: "A brand is a name that influences buyers" (Kapferer, 2008, p. 11). As can be seen from these examples, there is no unambiguous definition of the term 'brand'; there are multiple ways of looking at a brand and many different components within. Hollebeek (2011) researched customer brand engagement and selected five dimensions (brand attitude, brand image, brand identity, brand personality, and brand experience; (Hollebeek, 2011)) in her study, illustrating the many ways of looking at the term brand.

In research, there is also talk about *brand equity* (amongst others: Aaker, 1996; Yoo & Donthu, 1997; Wood, 2000; Cable & Turban, 2001; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Kapferer, 2008), which refers to the value that is added to a product by its brand name (Yoo & Donthu, 1997), or the "… perception of belief that extends beyond mere familiarity to an extent of superiority that is not necessarily tied to specific action." (Brady, Cronin Jr., Fox, & Roehm, 2008, p. 152). Brand equity is a broad concept, encompassing brand image and familiarity, but 'high' or 'good' brand equity does not necessarily lead to purchasing behaviour (Nam, Ekinci, & Whyatt, 2011), it is only the set of assets and liabilities linked to a particular brand that add to or subtract from the value provided by a certain product. (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

As with the term brand, *employer branding* can also be defined in many different ways. Most commonly, it is described as using principles of marketing in HR activities, with the objective of influencing the perception people, or rather potential employees, have of a company as an employer (i.e. the employer brand) (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Edwards, 2010; Cable & Turban, 2001). From a recruitment point of view, employer branding "is the package of psychological, economic, and functional benefits that potential employees associate with employment with a particular company" (Wilden, Gudergan, & Lings, 2010) by which it defines the identity of the company as an employer (Dell et al., 2001, as cited in Wilden, Gudergan, & Lings, 2010).

According to Davies (2008), a brand has four attributes when considering customers:

1) The ability to differentiate
2) To create loyalty
3) To satisfy
4) To develop an emotional attachment.
   (Davies, 2008)

Davies notes that these attributes are also argued to be relevant to the employer brand, and not only to the brand from a customer perspective.

Following all of the above, in this thesis we will refer to employer branding as the practice of consciously and actively using principles of marketing in the process of building the employer brand, with the eventual objective of finding new employees.

There are different ways to do so, for example by using your current employees as advocates for your company as a great place to work. This, of course, only works if your current employees are proud of the work they do and of the company they work at. After all, people like to be associated with companies that have a distinctive (positive) reputation (Davies, 2008). Consequently, this also means that the corporate reputation of a company is crucial when looking for the best employees (Sivertzen, Nilsen, & Olafsen, 2013; Cable & Turban, 2001). In their 2015 article, Kumar and Pansari develop and describe a scale to measure employee engagement. Based on the research they conducted with the help of this scale, they conclude that “engaged employees will pass on their enthusiasm to customers, and they will develop and deliver better products and services — thereby positively impacting sales and profit.” (Kumar & Pansari, 2015, p. 72). It is not unreasonable to think that engaged employees will also pass on their enthusiasm to potential new employees.

But there are more ways to build an employer brand. According to Keller’s Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model (2001), there are four steps to building a strong brand:

1) Establishing proper brand identity;
2) Creating appropriate brand meaning;
3) Eliciting positive, accessible brand responses;
4) Forging brand relationships with customers.
   (Keller, 2001)

These steps are aimed at building customer-based brand equity, but following these, or similar, steps could also be considered to target potential employees.

Now that we have considered the different ways in which an employer brand can be built, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

H1: The strength of the employer brand will have a positive relationship with the willingness of job-seeking employees to work for a certain company

Based on previous literature, we have defined employer branding as the practice of consciously and actively using marketing principles with the objective of attracting new employees. It is therefore hypothesized that people are more attracted to a certain company and are more willing to work there when a company has a strong brand, thus making use of said marketing principles ‘well’ or, in other words, that a positive relationship exists between the strength of the employer brand the willingness of a potential employee to work there.

H2: Younger people value the employer brand more than older people

Since research often finds to that young people are in general more technologically adapt and spend more time online than older people (Bennett, Maton, & Kervin, 2008) (though it must be said that this particular article also states that variation amongst the younger generation exist maybe even just as much as between generations), it is hypothesized that younger people value the employer brand more than older people and therefore, that age has a negative relationship with the employer brand.

3.1.2 Social Media

Kaplan and Haenlein suggest that in order to properly define 'social media', one must first look at two related concepts, namely 'Web 2.0' and 'User Generated Content' (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Based on the definitions of those two concepts, they then refer to a definition of social media as follows: "Social media employ mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content." (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011, p. 241)

Social media are changing the world around us, and that also extends to the business world; it changes consumer behaviour and the expectations that people have of companies as employers, as well as how business ought to behave in communicating with customers (Dutta, 2010; McCabe, 2017; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Whereas consumers were previously dependent on the information that was provided by companies itself, they now have easy access to reviews and information provided by peers. Social media are therefore magnifying the possible impact of the provided knowledge and information provided by consumers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). This transition is an indication of the shift of power from businesses to their customers (Karjaluoto, Mustonen, & Ulkuniemi, 2015; Shen & Bissell, 2013).

In their 2009 article, Mangold & Faulds talk about the effect of social media on the traditional marketing promotion mix and the *Integrated Marketing Communications*. According to Boone & Kurtz (2007), integrated marketing communications (from now on referred to as IMC) "attempts to coordinate and control the various elements of the promotional mix – advertising, personal selling, public relations, publicity, direct marketing, and sales promotions – to produce a unified customer-focused message and, therefore, achieve various organizational objectives" (Boone & Kurtz, 2007, p. 488).

Previously, we determined that the rise of social media has caused a shift of power from businesses to their customers. Mangold & Faulds further illustrate this: Traditionally, all of the elements of the promotional mix are consciously coordinated to fit the IMC strategy set by the company. The power to coordinate these elements and the appropriate following actions, lies with the company itself; the company orders a market research or hires an advertising agency, and therefore has power and control over the content and timing, amongst others, of the information being shared with the targeted customers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). By adding social media to this mix, the company loses control over the content and timing, as customers are free to share their experiences online. This may work in a positive way but could also backfire completely.

A good example of this is the recent drama around the launch of Jaclyn Hill's line of lipsticks. The beauty guru developed a line of lipsticks, that was sold out online almost instantly. However, when customers received their orders, a lot of them received faulty lipsticks, that would either crumble immediately when using them or even seemed to contain hairs, metal shards or other strange pieces. Huge numbers of customers took their dissatisfaction to social media; Twitter was flooded with picture evidence and YouTube with videos allegedly proving the poor quality of

the lipsticks. Jaclyn Hill herself responded two weeks after the launch, claiming in a YouTube video the lipsticks were not dangerous to use and that anyone with a faulty lipstick would get new lipsticks or be refunded. Needless to say, this was a huge scandal for her make-up brand and whether her apology will be enough to save the situation has yet to be seen. (Rackham, 2019)

However, this does not mean that the rise of social media is only bad for business. It also creates an opportunity for companies to employ new sorts of marketing techniques that can help achieve competitive advantage (Valos, Maplestone, Polonsky, & Ewing, 2016).
A well-known example of this is Facebook: as well as being a way for individuals to get in touch with each other, Facebook also provides a platform for businesses to promote or enhance their brand (Shen & Bissell, 2013). Additionally, it has become a place where businesses can interact with their customers. An example of this is the letter 10-year-old Alex wrote to Quantas (an Australian airline) CEO Alan Joyce. In his letter, Alex asks for advice, since he has just started his own airline. Alan Joyce responded with a letter himself, and the whole interaction was posted to Quantas' Facebook page, where it received a lot of *likes* and comments, and the post was even picked up by other pages such as The Best Social Media (Bugdayci, 2019).

In this research, we will focus on two social media channels: Facebook and LinkedIn. Facebook was selected because it is still estimated to be the largest overall online social media platform (Clement, 2019), LinkedIn because it is estimated to be the largest online B2B social media platform (Payton, 2019).

Following these examples of how social media can have either a good or bad influence on situations, the next hypotheses are formulated as follows:

H3: Use of Social Media will have a positive relationship with the strength of the Employer Brand

As we have discussed above, use of social media can have an influence on businesses' image, whether that may be a good or bad influence. It is therefore hypothesized that a positive relationship exists between the use of social media and the strength of the employer brand.

H4: Younger people make more use of Social Media than older people

H5: Younger people spend more time on Social Media than older people

As stated before, it is often believed that younger people spend more time online and make more use of social media than older people. It is therefore hypothesized that younger people make more use of (H4) and spend more time on (H5) social media than older people.

3.1.3 Job-Seeking Process and Willingness to Work for a Company

As discussed in the introduction, the job-seeking process has changed quite a bit over recent years. The implementation of and adaptation to the internet has caused a shift in the way that job-seeking employees look for job openings and, consequently, the way that companies handle recruitment. (Stevenson, 2009). Gatewoord, Gowan and Lautenschlager define the job-seeking process, or as they refer to it; the job choice process, as "a series of decisions made by an applicant as to which jobs and organizations to pursue for possible employment" (Gatewood, Gowan, & Lautenschlager, 1993, p. 414). More generally, this series of decisions can be seen as all activities one undertakes to achieve their employment goal, or in other words: find and get the job they want (Kanfer, Wanberg, & Kantrowitz, 2001). The job search process can be split into two separate processes: the information search process and the choice process (Crossley & Highhouse, 2005).

In the information search process, the applicant aims to find information about possible jobs and employers. There are several ways in which this can be done, also depending on the aim of the information search process: in some cases, the applicant might just be looking for any job, and will keep an open mind about the details, while in other cases, the applicant will only be looking for the perfect job and will put a lot of thought and effort into the information search process (Koen et al., 2009). The choice process focusses on, as the name implies, choosing the desired job.

The strategies have also changed over the years, shifting from off- to online strategies. As the name implies, in the choice process, the applicant makes a decision based on the information he or she obtained in the information search process. According to Crossley & Highouse (2005), this can be done either rationally or intuitively. Rational decision making is characterized by objectively looking at the facts obtained in the information search process (Hammondet al., 1987), while intuitive decision making is less structured and is based more on subjective cues (Hammond, 1980).

In this research, the focus will be on establishing what it is that makes a potential employee willing to work for a certain company. This thesis will therefore refer to this as 'the willingness to work for a company'.

3.2 Overview of hypotheses

The abovementioned hypotheses and the corresponding relationships between Age, Social Media, Employer Branding, and Willingness to Work for a Company can be found in figure 1.

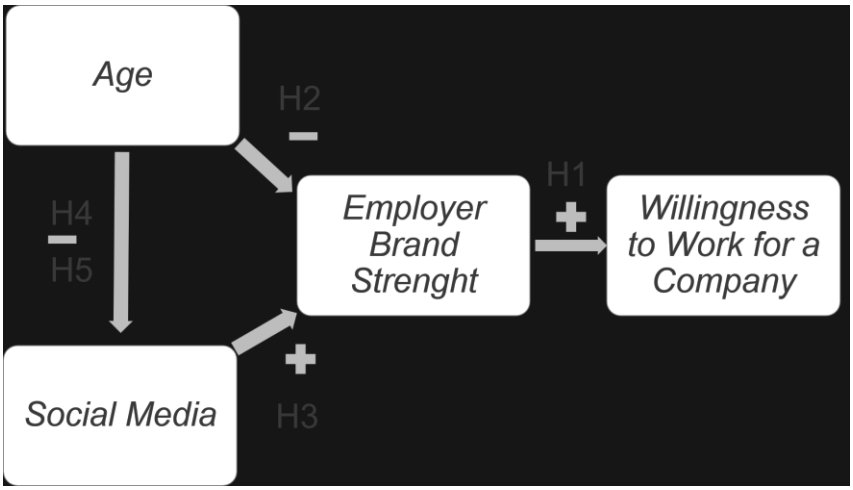


FIGURE 1: OVERVIEW OF HYPOTHESES AND THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN AGE, SOCIAL MEDIA, EMPLOYER BRAND AND THE WILLINGNESS TO WORK FOR A COMPANY.

3.3 Davies Corporate Character Scale

In order to test the strength of an employer brand, a suitable scale must be chosen. After careful research, the Corporate Character Scale (Davies, Chun, Vinhas da Silva, & Roper, 2004) was selected.

The corporate character scale is used to 'rate' a company, and to look at it as if it were a person. The scale uses a list of adjectives that was adapted from a list that can be used to describe people (Caprara, Barbaranelli, & Guido, 2001). From that list, the corporate character scale has been adapted.

The scale has five dimensions:

1) Agreeableness;
2) Enterprise;
3) Chic;
4) Competence; and
5) Ruthlessness.

Each of the dimensions has a number of items that can be used to describe each them, which can be seen below in table 1.

Table 1 - Corporate Character Scale (Davies et al., 2008, based on Davies et al., 2004)

Agreeableness	Enterprise	Competence	Chic	Ruthlessness
Cheerful	Cool	Reliable	Charming	Arrogant
Pleasant	Trendy	Secure	Stylish	Aggressive
Open	Young	Hardworking	Elegant	Selfish
Straightforward	Imaginative	Ambitious	Prestigious	Inward-looking
Concerned	Up to date	Achievement-oriented	Exclusive	Authoritarian
Reassuring	Exciting	Leading	Refined	Controlling
Supportive	Innovative	Technical	Snobby	
Agreeable	Extravert	Corporate	Elitist	
Honest	Daring			
Trustworthy				
Socially responsible				

It is thought that the higher a brand scores on these items, the stronger the employer brand is. After all, high scores indicate that respondents have a clear and predominantly positive image of the brand. This would also go for low scores of course, though in the opposite direction.

The Corporate Character Scale will be used to measure employer brand strength. With the help of the scale, a questionnaire will be set up, which will be discussed more extensively in the next section.

4 RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

Following the theoretical framework, the methodology will be described. This section will explain the measures and the final research design.

4.1 Measures

4.1.1 Strength of employer brand

To measure the strength of employer brand, Davies' corporate character scale will be used, which was described in the section 'Theoretical Framework'.

Each pillar from the corporate character scale will be measured with items from the scale. The respondent will rate whether they agree that the item suits the company shown to them, which will be done on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

In order to minimize the amount of time a respondent has to spent on the questionnaire to complete it, one item per pillar of the corporate character will be selected. For example, to measure the 'Agreeableness' of a company, one of the corporate character scale pillars, the item 'Friendly' is selected. Additionally, each respondent will be shown only one of the two companies included in the questionnaire, which will also shorten the amount of time the respondent has to spend on the questionnaire.

This process will be repeated for the other pillars of the corporate character scale, which will result in a matrix. This matrix will be presented twice per company: once following screenshots of the recruitment/career webpages of the company's own website, and once following screenshots of social media pages. As mentioned above, two companies will be included in the questionnaire: Coolblue and Xsens.

The reason for including two companies is to potentially see differences between a larger company (Coolblue) and a medium-sized company (Xsens).

Respondents will also be asked whether they find it important that a company clearly shows what kind of employer they are. They will rate the statement ("I find it important") on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly agree, and 5 = strongly disagree.

4.1.2 Use of social media

The extent to which a respondent uses social media will be measured in the questionnaire by means of a set of closed questions.

These questions will be about:

- whether the respondent uses social media;
- which platforms they use;
- how much time they spend on these platforms;
- whether they would consider using social media platforms in their search for a job
- which platforms they would use when looking for a job.

4.1.3 Willingness to work

The willingness to work for a certain company will be measured by asking whether the respondent found the company in question attractive as an employer. This will be done twice: once based on the company's own website, and once based additionally on the company's social media pages.

4.2 Research Ethics

This research will be conducted completely anonymously. Responses will be gathered by sending out an anonymous link to the questionnaire (will be discussed more extensively in the next section) via several different platforms. This link will be provided by Qualtrics, which also ensures that no personal data (such as IP-addresses) is recorded and cannot be seen by the researcher. The researcher will also not be able to see though which platform a respondent has accessed the questionnaire.

No personal information (such as name or city of residence) that could lead to identification of a respondent is required to be filled in. Respondents will only be asked their age, nationality, and level of education as that particular information is relevant to the research. Other information, such as gender, is not relevant to this research and therefore, respondents will not be asked to fill this in.

Additionally, using Qualtrics to distribute and conduct the survey ensures that interviewer influence and bias is minimized, as respondents read the questions themselves and the researcher does not (subconsciously) steer the responses with their body language and/or intonation.

4.3 Research Design

After conducting a literature review, selecting the Corporate Character scale and choosing the measures, a questionnaire was designed.

The questionnaire followed a fixed sequence:

Firstly, the general aim of the questionnaire was explained and consent for the use of the provided answers and data was requested.

Secondly, each respondent was assigned randomly to one of two groups of questions included in the questionnaire. This was done by using Qualtrics' own 'Randomizer' option, which, next to randomizing the respondents automatically, also ensured that the number of respondents assigned to each group would be approximately the same.

Both groups contained questions pertaining one company, either Coolblue or Xsens. Every group contained three blocks of questions, starting with a block in which a short introduction was given and in the respondent was asked if he or she knew the company. The second block presented a set of screenshots of the company's own career/recruitment pages on their website.

The respondent was asked to rate the personality of the company and was asked whether he or she thought the company was an attractive employer. The third block repeated this sequence, but with screenshots of the company's social media pages (Facebook and LinkedIn) and the question whether the respondent's opinion of the company as an employer had changed.

The company-specific groups of questions were followed by two general blocks of questions, which were the same for every respondent. The second-to-last block pertained questions about the social media use of the respondent, and the last block contained questions about demographics, such as age and level of education.

The questionnaire ended with a short description of the research for which this questionnaire was designed and a brief 'thank you'.

The questionnaire was distributed via various channels, such as the personal Social Media pages of the researcher and by email. The questionnaire was self-administered, meaning that the respondents took part in the questionnaire on their own devices and in their own time. No time limit was set, and respondents were allowed to take a break from the questionnaire and come back to finish it if needed. However, the respondents are required to provide a response to every question.

The full questionnaire was designed in Qualtrics (with a University of Twente license) and can be found in the appendix (See Appendix I).

5 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In this section, the results of the questionnaire and the analysis of the data will be discussed. First, some general results and outcomes of the questionnaire will be discussed, and then the results per hypothesis will be discussed.

471 respondents took part in the questionnaire. Most of these respondents were Dutch (459), the remaining respondents were either Belgian (2), French (1), German (1), Italian (1), Polish (1), Turkish (1), or did not want to state their nationality (2). (see Appendix II-A). Most of the respondents (202) stated that University of Applied sciences was their highest completed level of education (see Appendix II-B). The respondents were also asked to report how old they were (see Appendix II-C), this data turned out to be normally distributed, which will be discussed in more detail in the sections where it is relevant.

To test whether the five items (friendly, innovative, corporate, prestigious, and authoritarian) measure Employer Branding a reliability analysis was conducted. This was done both for the strength of the employer brand based on the company's own website pages (EmployerBrand), and for the strength based on the company's social media pages (sEmployerBrand) (see table 2). According to the Cronbach's Alpha, we can conclude that model based on the five items shows sufficient internal consistency and is therefore appropriate to measure Employer Branding as one concept.

Table 2 – Reliability Statistics

	EmployerBrand	**sEmployerBrand**
Cronbach's Alpha	0.702	0.722
N of Items	5	5

Because in both cases the reliability coefficient is higher than 0.70, the internal consistency of the items used in this research is acceptable and we can therefore proceed with the analysis.

Before we will run the analyses to test our hypotheses, some findings about the differences between the two companies included in this research will be discussed. The SPSS output for this section can be found in the appendix (see Appendix II-D).

In general, Coolblue is better-known than Xsens. The mean answer to the question "Do you know Coolblue/Xsens?" (where 1 = yes, 2 = no) was lower for Coolblue (1.0255) than it was for Xsens (1.9313) and this difference was found to be significant, therefore indicating that Coolblue is better-known than Xsens. This is hardly surprising, as Coolblue is a much larger company and operates nationally, whereas Xsens is a smaller company selling products to a niche market.
Computing the variables employer brand strength without social media (named EmployerBrand) and with social media (named sEmployerBrand) was done in SPSS. By conducting T Tests, the differences between the employer strength, both without and with social media, of Coolblue and Xsens (Coolblue having the stronger scores) were found to be significant ($p < .05$).

To see the differences between employer brand strength without and with the addition of social media, a T Test was performed. This was done separately for Coolblue and Xsens. For Coolblue, the difference in employer brand strength between the non-social media and the social media strength was found not to be significant ($p > .05$). For Xsens, however, the difference was found to be significant ($p < .05$).

H1: The strength of the employer brand will have a positive effect on the willingness of job-seeking employees to work for a certain company

After viewing the company's own website pages, respondents were asked whether they thought the company was an attractive employer. After also viewing the company's social media posts, the respondent was asked whether their opinions had changed. First, the data were tested for normality by plotting a histogram and overlaying a normal curve, which can be seen below in figure 2. From these histograms, we can deduce that the data appears to be normal, and we can therefore continue the analysis.

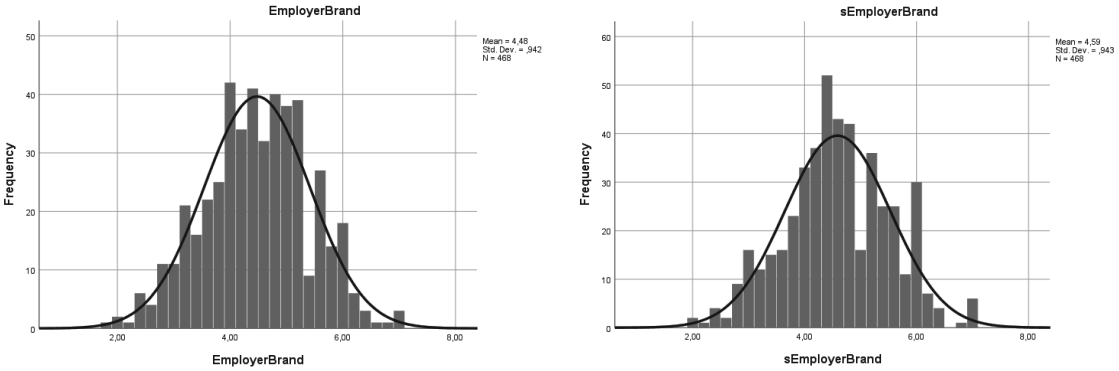


FIGURE 2: HISTOGRAM WITH NORMAL CURVE FOR EMPLOYER BRAND STRENGTH (WIHTOUT AND WITH SOCIAL MEDIA)

To determine whether significant differences existed between the three answer options about attractiveness, three Independent Sample T tests were performed to compare the categories. The answers to the question 'Do these social media screenshots change how you feel about Coolblue/Xsens as an employer, compared to the previous screenshots?' (where 1 = yes, more attractive, 2 = yes, less attractive, 3 = no) were compared with the scores for employer brand strength. The results of these test can be found in the appendix (see Appendix II-E).

Based on the tests and the outcomes, we can conclude the following:

1) The mean for *yes, more attractive* was 4.75, for *yes, less attractive* the mean was 4.24. This difference between these two answers was found to be significant ($p < .05$)
2) The mean for *no* was 4.52. The difference between category 2 and 3 was found not to be significant ($p > .05$), but since the p-value was so close to α ($p = .058$), it could be considered significant
3) The difference between *yes, more attractive* and *no* was also found to be significant ($p < .05$)

Based on this, we can conclude that when people rate the company higher on employer brand strength, they also tend to rate the company higher as an attractive employer. Therefore, we can conclude that, based on the evidence found in this research, the strength of the employer brand does have a positive influence on the willingness of job-seeking employees to work for one of the companies included in this research. Thus, this research has found evidence that supports hypothesis 1.

H2: Younger people value the employer brand more than older people

The second hypothesis concerned potential differences between older and younger people when it comes to the valuation of the employer brand. It was hypothesized that younger people would value the employer brand more than older people.

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to rate the statement "I value it when companies show me what it's like to work for them (on their website, or on social media)" on a scale of 1 to 5. The answers to this question were compared with the age of the respondents.

To find out whether there are significant differences between people of different ages, a multiple linear regression was performed, of which the results can be seen below in table 3.

Table 3 – Multiple Linear Regression

		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1,682	,143		11,791	,000	1,402	1,963
	What is your age?	,043	,037	,057	1,149	,251	-,030	,115

a. Dependent Variable: I value it when companies show me what it's like to work for them (on their website, or on social media)

As can be seen in table 3, the regression turned out not to be significant. Therefore, this research has not found evidence that supports hypothesis 2, and, subsequently, we cannot state that younger people value the employer brand more than older people.

H3: Use of Social Media will have a positive effect on the strength of the Employer Brand

To test the hypothesis that the use of social media will have a positive effect on the strength of the employer brand, the two variables (employer brand strength without and with the inclusion of social media) were compared by running a Paired Samples T Test, which can be seen below (see table 4).

Table 4 - Paired Samples Test

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	EmployerBrand	4,4774	468	,94205	,04355
	sEmployerBrand	4,5897	468	,94331	,04360

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	EmployerBrand - sEmployerBrand	-,11239	,71408	,03301	-,17726	-,04753	-3,405	467	,001

As can be seen in table 4, there is a difference in employer brand strength without and with the inclusion of social media. The strength was rated to be higher when respondents had seen the social media screenshots in addition to the company's own website pages, and this difference was found to be significant ($p < .05$).

Therefore, this research has found evidence that supports hypothesis 3; the use social media does have a positive effect on the strength of the employer brand.

H4: Younger people make more use of Social Media than older people

One of the aims of this research was to find out whether age made any differences in the way that people view employer branding and make use of social media. Therefore, respondents were asked to select one of the seven age categories (15-20; 21-30; 31-40; 41-50; 51-60; 61-70; 71-75).

In order to make data processing a bit simpler and to ensure that each group would have a sufficient number of respondents in it, the seven categories were transformed into three categories (15-30; 31-50; 51-75). Then, the data were tested for normality by plotting a histogram and overlaying a normal curve, which can be seen below in figure 3. From this histogram, we can conclude that the data appears to be normal, and that therefore, we can continue the analysis.

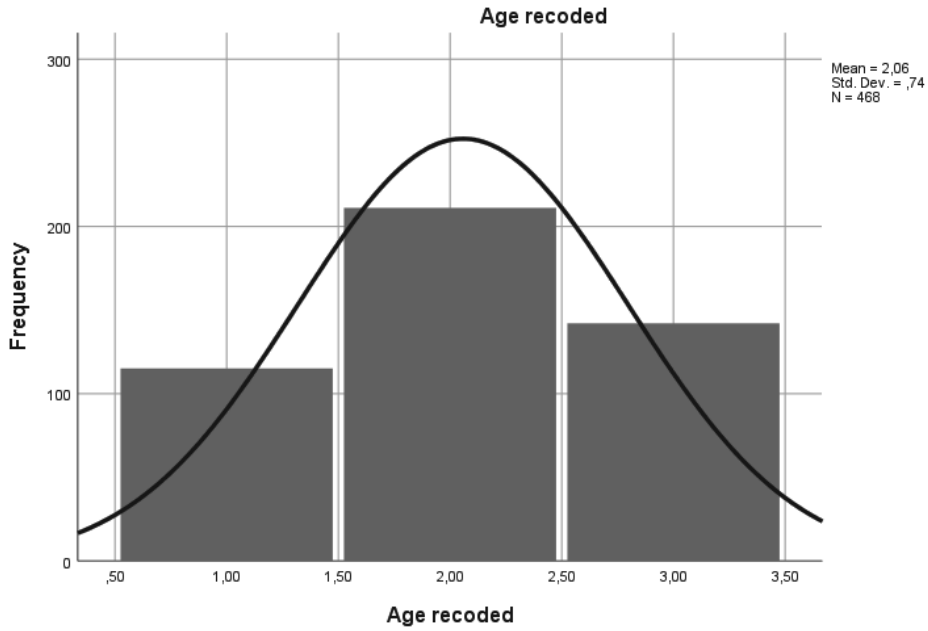


FIGURE 3: HISTOGRAM WITH NORMAL CURVE FOR AGE

To determine whether significant differences existed between the three age categories, three Independent Sample T tests were performed to compare the three categories. The answers to the question 'Do you use Social Media platforms?' (where 1 = yes, 2 = no) were compared with the age of the respondents. The results of these test can be found in the appendix (see Appendix II-F), and a table summarizing the significance levels can be seen below (see table 5).

Table 5 – Group Statistics and Significance Levels

	Age recoded	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Do you use social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)?	15 – 30	95	1,05	,224	,023
	31 – 50	182	1,21	,411	,030
	51 – 75	127	1,23	,421	,037

	15 – 30	31 – 50	51 – 75
15 – 30	-	,000	,000
31 – 50	,000	-	,770
51 – 75	,000	,770	-

Based on the tests and the outcomes, we can conclude the following:

1) The mean for age category 1 (15-30) was 1.05, for category 2 (31-50) the mean was 1.21. This difference between category 1 and 2 was found to be significant ($p < .05$)
2) The mean for category 3 (51-75) was 1.23. The difference between category 2 and 3 was found not to be significant ($p > .05$)
3) The difference between category 1 and 3 was also found to be significant ($p < .05$)

These conclusions are further supported when conducting a multiple regression (see Appendix II-D). The constant was found to be 1.030, which is raised by 0.042 every time we move up a category, and this difference was also found to be significant ($p < .05$).

To summarize, we can conclude that, based on the evidence found in this research, people in the age category of 15 to 30 years old do indeed make more of use of social media platforms than people between the ages of 31 and 75. Therefore, this research has found evidence that supports hypothesis 4.

H5: Younger people spend more time on Social Media than older people

Similar to testing whether younger people made more use of social media platforms than older people, we can also test whether younger people spend more time on these platforms. In the tests for previous hypotheses, we have already concluded that the age data is normally distributed, and we can therefore repeat the same analysis with the new variable (time on social media).

Again, three Independent Sample T tests were performed to compare all three categories. The answers to the question 'Do you use Social Media platforms?' (where 1 = less than 1 hour, 2 = 1-2 hours, 3 = 2-3 hours, 4 = 3-4 hours, 5 = more than 4 hours) were compared with age. The results of these test can be found in the appendix (see Appendix II-G), and a table summarizing the significance levels can be seen on the below (see table 6).

Table 6 – Group Statistics and Significance Levels

	Age recoded	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
How much time per day do you spend on social media platforms?	15 – 30	90	2,39	1,168	,123
	31 – 50	143	1,99	,880	,074
	51 – 75	98	1,64	,840	,085

	15 – 30	**31 – 50**	**51 – 75**
15 – 30	-	,003	,000
31 – 50	,003	-	,003
51 – 75	,000	,003	-

Based on the tests and the outcomes, we can conclude the following:

1) The mean for age category 1 (15-30) was 2.39, for category 2 (31-50) the mean was 1.99. This difference between category 1 and 2 was found to be significant ($p < .05$)
2) The mean for category 3 (51-75) was 1.64. The difference between category 2 and 3 was found to be significant ($p < .05$)
3) The difference between category 1 and 3 was also found to be significant ($p < .05$)

These conclusions are further supported when conducting a multiple regression (see Appendix II-E). The constant was found to be 2.748, which is lowered by 0.372 every time we move up a category, and this difference was also found to be significant ($p < .05$).

To summarize, we can conclude that, based on the evidence found in this research, people in age category 15-30 spend more time on social media platforms than people in the categories 31-50 and 51-75, and people in age category 31-50 spent more time on social media than people in age category 51-75. Therefore, this research has found evidence that supports hypothesis 5: younger people do indeed spend more time on social media platforms than older people.

6 DISCUSSION

The main aim of this research was to find out whether the use of social media and age had an influence on employer branding, and subsequently, whether the strength of the employer brand influenced the willingness of job-seeking employees to work for a certain company.

This study hypothesized that younger people tend to make more use of social media platforms and also spend more time on those platforms than older people. The results of this research indicated significant differences between the different age groups and therefore supported these hypotheses. This is also in line with previous research.

This research also hypothesized that younger people would value the employer brand more than older people. However, the results obtained in the analysis turned out not to be significant. Therefore, this research failed to provide evidence that the employer brand is more important to younger people than it is to older people. Since little prior research was done on the fact, it is difficult to say whether this research failed to prove something that should be there, or whether younger people simply do not care more about the employer brand than older people. Further research needs to be conducted in order to be certain about this.

This research has found evidence that use of social media does have a positive (and significant) relationship with the strength of the employer brand. This is in line with Davies et al.'s (2008) research, as it can be believed that use of social media can enhance, or clarify, the image one can have of a brand.

Finally, the results obtained in this research have shown that when people rate the company higher on employer brand strength, they also tend to rate the company higher as an attractive employer. Therefore, we can conclude that this research has found evidence that the strength of the employer brand does have a positive influence of the on the willingness of job-seeking employees to work for a certain company. This is also in line with previous research.

Now that we've discussed the results of this research, some limitations of this study and research design will be discussed.

Due to an initial mistake in the survey flow of the questionnaire, about 70 respondents did not answer the questions about their use of social media. This was due to the fact that the block of questions about social media use was accidently grouped under the block of questions about Xsens, meaning that only respondents answering questions about Xsens got to see the questions about social media use. However, this was corrected immediately when noticed (after about 125 responses were recorded, of which approximately 70 did not answer these questions), and the final number of respondents was high enough to base significant conclusions on, as the questionnaire was closed at 471 (complete) responses.

After the survey was closed, the number of responses went up considerably from 471 to 790. However, all these extra responses were completely empty. This was due to Qualtrics recording incomplete or unfinished entries as a response as well. In order not to disturb the obtained data and subsequent analysis, only the finished responses were downloaded as the dataset to be used for the analysis. Responses in which questions were missing (2 to be exact) were also omitted.

Some further limitations were met in the distribution of the respondents. The age of the respondents was normally distributed, which, although it was required for the analysis to be

performed, also means that the ‘edge’ categories (15 – 20 and 71 – 75) did not contain a substantial number of respondents. In future research, it would therefore be advised to do a more controlled experiment and to ensure that each age category has an even number of respondents in it, to see if the same conclusions could be made.

Additionally, a small part of the respondents were internationals (as in, not from the Netherlands). As was hypothesized before, Coolblue might have scored better on being known because it operates nationally. However, internationals might not be familiar with either brand, and if by chance more internationals were assigned to Xsens, the rating of Xsens might have suffered from this. Nonetheless, the number of internationals was relatively small compared to the number of Dutch respondents and this difference is therefore negligible. In future research, it may be wise to include international companies or keep the questionnaire within one country to see if the same conclusions could be made.

Lastly, most of the respondents had a relatively high level of completed education. This research did not look into whether significant differences existed between the levels of education, but it might be that this influenced the results. In future research, it would therefore be advised to try and obtain similar numbers of respondents in each category of education level, to see if the same conclusions could be made.

Despite these limitations, this study was proven to give reliable results (as was discussed in the results section), and since it was based on valid previous literature, we can also state that the results of this research can be considered valid as well. As this study has entered uncharted territory and researched areas that have not been researched before, additional research in the future is needed to confirm the results of this study.

7 CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to answer the question:
"What is the influence of the use of social media, age and other factors on the strength of employer branding in the decision-making process of job-seeking employees?" Based on the sub-questions, five hypotheses were formulated, of which four were accepted after analysis of the data.

Employer branding is the practice of actively and consciously using marketing principles in the process of building the employer brand, with the eventual objective of finding new employees. This can be done in several ways, one of which is by using social media.

The rise of social media has caused a shift of power from business to their customers, but that does not mean that businesses cannot use it to their advantage. Social media have given businesses the opportunity to create a way to talk with their customers, to attract potential employees, and ultimately, to establish a stronger brand personality, both as a company and an employer.

This study hypothesized that younger people would value and interact more with the employer brand more than older people but has failed to find the evidence to confirm this. Further research into who the people that interact with an employer brand are is therefore necessary.

We have however been able to establish that the strength of the employer brand has a positive relationship with the willingness to work for a company.

In conclusion, what is the influence of social media, age and other factors on the strength of employer branding?
Based on the outcomes of this research, we found that the use of social media has a positive influence on the strength of employer branding.
Age was hypothesized to have a negative influence on the strength of employer branding, but this research was not able to find such an effect. Age did however have a significant effect on the way that social media was used, and might therefore indirectly influence the strength of the employer brand as well.
Other factors, such as the size of the company and whether it is well-known or not, seem to have significant influence as well, as we have seen in the comparison between the two companies included in this research. Lastly, the strength of the employer brand was found to have a positive relationship with the willingness of (job-seeking) employees to work for a certain company.

8 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THEORY AND PRACTICE & RECOMMENDATIONS

This research involves important and new contributions to both theory and practice, which will be discussed shortly in this section.

As was mentioned before in this thesis, very little research has been done so far on the combination of employer branding and social media. Using social media in HR/recruiting practices is a relatively new concept, and not a lot has been known on the effects of it. This study has therefore contributed to the understanding of these effects and might be considered a good starting point for future research.

The research in this thesis has shown that the use of social media does have a positive relationship with the strength of employer branding, thus indicating a promising subject for further, more elaborate research. Future research might focus on finding a more structured theory behind the workings of this, which could subsequently be used to optimize HR/recruiting practises.

As for further contributions to practice, the differences in results between the bigger Coolblue and the smaller Xsens have given interesting insights into whether the use of social media is beneficial to the strength of the employer brand. As we have seen, the smaller company benefitted from the use of social media more than the bigger company. This might be because a bigger company like Coolblue is already better-known, and the use of social media does therefore not add much to the perceptions of job-seeking employees, whereas a smaller company like Xsens stands much more to gain from the use of social media. Further research should be conducted with different companies to see if these results can be replicated, before definitive conclusions can be made, though it does seem promising.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to Dr. Agata Leszkiewicz, for being the first supervisor on this thesis. Your feedback, calming words, patience and support have helped me out more times than I can count. Your help has been invaluable, and I would not have been able to complete my thesis without it. I would also like to thank Dr. Efthymios Constantinides for being the second supervisor to my thesis.

I would like to thank everyone who has given me advice about (parts of) my thesis, and in particular Kimberly de Jonge, for helping me tackle my fear of statistical analysis.

Lastly, I would like to thank my loved ones: my friends, family and my boyfriend, all of you have supported me unconditionally and helped me through the tougher times when I could not keep myself going. Your supporting words, encouragement and listening ears have meant a lot to me.

My gratitude goes out to all of you. It has been a long process and I have met quite some obstacles along the way, but I got there in the end. I could not have done it without your support!

10 APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix I: Questionnaire

Survey Flow (done in Qualtrics)

Block: Intro & Consent (1 Question)

Branch: New Branch
If
If *Thank you for your participation in this questionnaire! This questionnaire consists of two parts... 'No, I do not'* Is Selected

EndSurvey: Advanced

BlockRandomizer: 1 group – Evenly Present Elements

Group: Coolblue

Standard: Coolblue intro (2 Questions)
Standard: Coolblue questions (3 Questions)
Standard: Coolblue questions (4 Questions)

Group: Xsens

Standard: Xsens intro (2 Questions)
Standard: Xsens Questions (3 Questions)
Standard: Xsens social (4 Questions)

Standard: Social Media use (6 Questions)
Standard: Demographics (4 Questions)

Start of Block: Intro & Consent

Thank you for your participation in this questionnaire!

This questionnaire consists of two parts. You will be asked to take a look at a company in two different situations, from an employee perspective. This means that you will be observing the company as an employer, not as the seller/manufacturer of a product or service. Please try to base your answers on the information provided to you, and not on any previous knowledge or experience you have with the company.
In this research, I am interested in the opinions of people who are eligible to work, therefore the age limit for this research is between 15 and 75 (as defined by the Dutch CBS as the 'labor force'). You do not necessarily have to have a job at the moment to participate, but a sense of what you are looking for in a job and employer is helpful.
There are no right or wrong answers, the aim is to find out how you feel about the information presented to you. All of your answers will be treated confidentially, and you will remain anonymous.

Thank you!
Janique Westerbeek
MSc. Business Administration student

I have read the above, I confirm that I am between 15 and 75 years old and I give my permission for my answers to be used for this research.

○ Yes, I do

○ No, I do not

End of Block: Intro & Consent
Start of Block: Coolblue intro

In this section, you are asked to have a look at a number of screenshots from the recruitment/careerpages of Coolblue, a large online retailer based in the Netherlands.

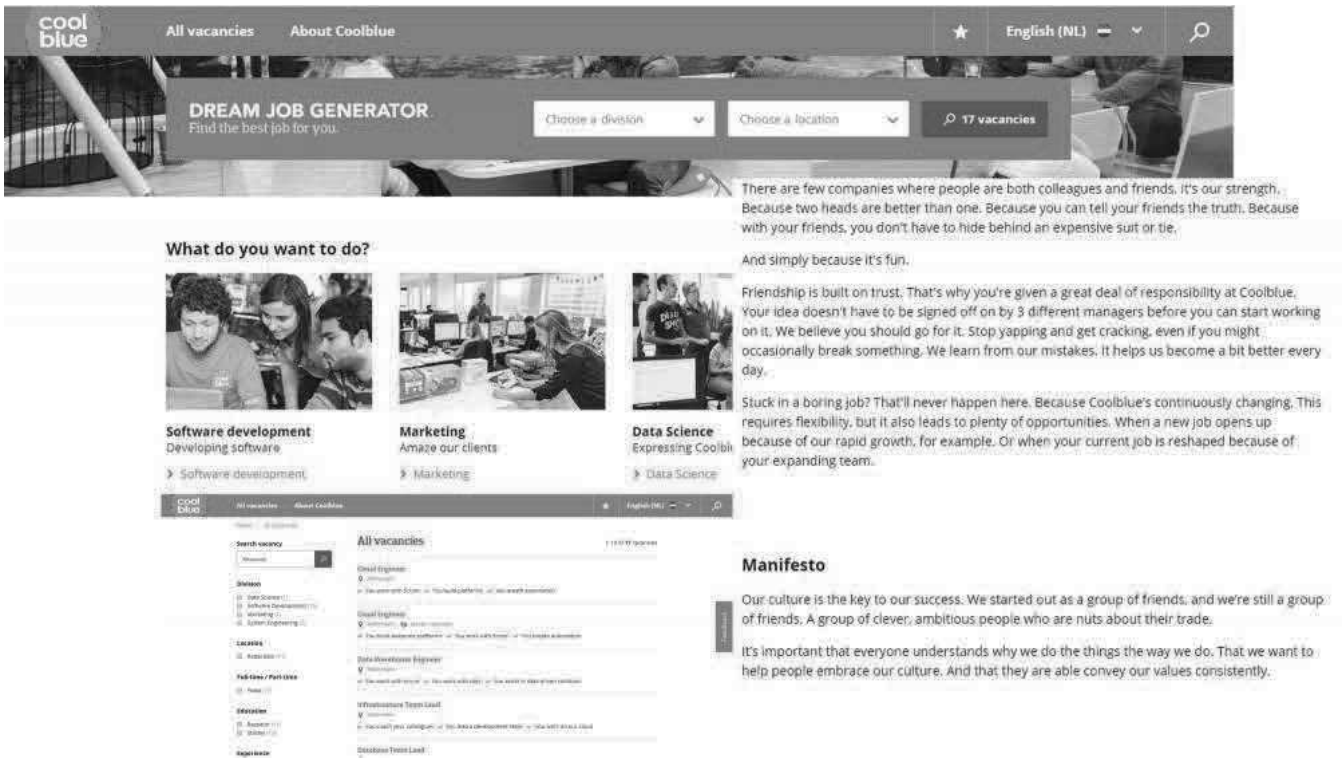
Following these screenshots, you are asked to rate the 'personality' of Coolblue as if it were a person.

C2. Coolblue Do you know Coolblue?

○ Yes

○ No

End of Block: Coolblue intro
Start of Block: Coolblue questions



C3. Following these screenshots, I feel like Coolblue is...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
...friendly	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...innovative	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...corporate	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...prestigious	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...authoritarian	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

C4. Based on these screenshots, do you think Coolblue is an attractive employer?

○ Yes

○ No

End of Block: Coolblue questions
Start of Block: Coolblue questions

In this section, you are asked to have a look at a number of screenshots from the social media pages (Facebook and LinkedIn) of Coolblue.

Again, please rate the ‘personality’ of Coolblue.

C5. Following these screenshots, I feel like Coolblue is...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
...friendly	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...innovative	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...corporate	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...prestigious	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...authoritarian	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

C6. Do these social media screenshots change how you feel about Coolblue as an employer, compared to the previous screenshots?

○ Yes, I feel they are more attractive as an employer now

○ Yes, I feel they are less attractive as an employer now

○ No

End of Block: Coolblue questions
Start of Block: Xsens intro

In this section, you are asked to have a look at a number of screenshots from the recruitment/careerpages of Xsens, a growing technology company based in the Netherlands.

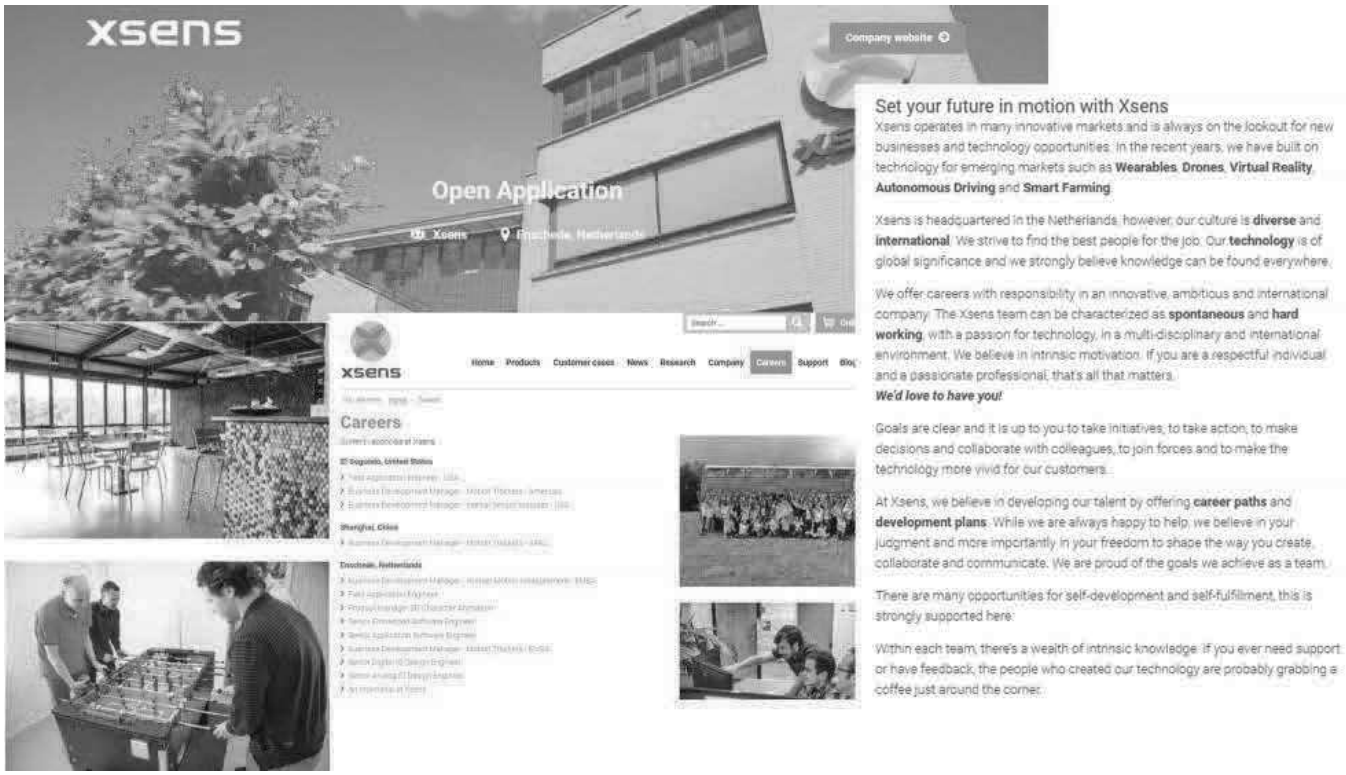
Following these screenshots, you are asked to rate the 'personality' of Xsens as if it were a person.

X2. Do you know Xsens?

○ Yes

○ No

End of Block: Xsens intro
Start of Block: Xsens Questions



X3. Following these screenshots, I feel like Xsens is...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
...friendly	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...innovative	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...corporate	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...prestigious	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...authoritarian	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

X4. Based on these screenshots, do you think Xsens is an attractive employer?

○ Yes

○ No

End of Block: Xsens Questions
Start of Block: Xsens social

In this section, you are asked to have a look at a number of screenshots from the social media pages (Facebook and LinkedIn) of Xsens.

Again, please rate the ‘personality’ of Xsens.

X5. Following these screenshots, I feel like Xsens is...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
...friendly	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...innovative	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...corporate	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...prestigious	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
...authoritarian	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

X6. Do these social media screenshots change how you feel about Xsens as an employer, compared to the previous screenshots?

○ Yes, I feel they are more attractive as an employer now

○ Yes, I feel they are less attractive as an employer now

○ No

End of Block: Xsens social
Start of Block: Social Media use

7. Do you use social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)?

○ Yes

○ No

Display This Question:
If Do you use social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)? = Yes

8. On which social media platforms do you have an account?

☐ Facebook

☐ Twitter

☐ Instagram

☐ LinkedIn

☐ Snapchat

☐ Youtube

☐ Other: _____

Display This Question:
If Do you use social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)? = Yes

9. How much time per day do you spend on social media platforms?

○ less than 1 hour

○ 1 – 2 hours

○ 2 – 3 hours

○ 3 – 4 hours

○ more than 4 hours

10. Would you use social media platforms when looking for a job?

○ Yes

○ No

11. If you would use social media platforms when looking for a job, which platforms would you be most likely to use?

☐ Facebook

☐ Twitter

☐ Instagram

☐ LinkedIn

☐ Snapchat

☐ Youtube

☐ Other: _____

12. I value it when companies show me what it's like to work for them (on their website, or on social media)

○ Strongly agree

○ Somewhat agree

○ Neither agree nor disagree

○ Somewhat disagree

○ Strongly disagree

End of Block: Social Media use
Start of Block: Demographics

Please fill out these last general questions. After that, you have concluded the survey!

13. What is your age?

- ○ 15-20
- ○ 21-30
- ○ 31-40
- ○ 41-50
- ○ 51-60
- ○ 61-70
- ○ 71 – 75

14. What is your nationality?

---

15. What is your highest completed level of education?

- ○ High School
- ○ Intermediate Vocational Education (MBO in Dutch)
- ○ University of Applied Sciences (HBO in Dutch)
- ○ University (WO in Dutch)

End of Block: Demographics
End of Survey

10.2 Appendix II: SPSS Output

10.2.1 Appendix II-A: Distribution of Nationalities of Respondents

Nationality (recoded)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Dutch	459	97,5	98,1	98,1
	Belgian	2	,4	,4	98,5
	French	1	,2	,2	98,7
	German	1	,2	,2	98,9
	Italian	1	,2	,2	99,1
	Polish	1	,2	,2	99,4
	Turkish	1	,2	,2	99,6
	Not stated	2	,4	,4	100,0
	Total	468	99,4	100,0	
Missing	System	3	,6		
Total		471	100,0		

10.2.2 Appendix II-B: Distribution of Education Levels of Respondents

Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	High School	42	8,9	9,0	9,0
	Intermediate Vocational Education (MBO in Dutch)	84	17,8	17,9	26,9
	University of Applied Sciences (HBO in Dutch)	202	42,9	43,2	70,1
	University (WO in Dutch)	140	29,7	29,9	100,0
	Total	468	99,4	100,0	
Missing	System	3	,6		
Total		471	100,0		

10.2.3 Appendix II-C: Age Distribution of Respondents

What is your age?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	15-20	19	4,0	4,1	4,1
	21-30	96	20,4	20,5	24,6
	31-40	113	24,0	24,1	48,7
	41-50	98	20,8	20,9	69,7
	51-60	117	24,8	25,0	94,7
	61-70	23	4,9	4,9	99,6
	71 - 75	2	,4	,4	100,0
	Total	468	99,4	100,0	
Missing	System	3	,6		
Total		471	100,0		

10.2.4 Appendix II-D: SPSS output per Company

Group Statistics

	CoolbluevsXsens	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
EmployerBrand	Coolblue	235	4,7004	,92918	,06061
	Xsens	233	4,2524	,90239	,05912
sEmployerBrand	Coolblue	235	4,7481	,91718	,05983
	Xsens	233	4,4300	,94429	,06186

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
EmployerBrand	Equal variances assumed	,081	,776	5,291	466	,000	,44807	,08468	,28166	,61447
	Equal variances not assumed			5,292	465,801	,000	,44807	,08467	,28168	,61445
sEmployerBrand	Equal variances assumed	,060	,806	3,696	466	,000	,31804	,08605	,14895	,48714
	Equal variances not assumed			3,696	465,339	,000	,31804	,08606	,14892	,48716

Group Statistics

	CoolbluevsXsens	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Know	Coolblue	235	1,0255	,15807	,01031
	Xsens	233	1,9313	,25344	,01660
Friendly	Coolblue	235	5,3149	1,14111	,07444
	Xsens	233	5,2103	1,08813	,07129
Innovative	Coolblue	235	4,9574	1,36747	,08920
	Xsens	233	4,4206	1,46920	,09625
Corporate	Coolblue	235	5,0213	1,31541	,08581
	Xsens	233	4,4936	1,41153	,09247
Prestigious	Coolblue	235	4,6000	1,49986	,09784
	Xsens	233	4,0000	1,51145	,09902
Authoritarian	Coolblue	235	3,6085	1,51909	,09909
	Xsens	233	3,1373	1,35762	,08894
Attractive	Coolblue	235	1,2213	,42614	,02780
	Xsens	233	1,2833	,45155	,02958
sFriendly	Coolblue	235	5,6809	1,09596	,07149
	Xsens	233	5,5708	,94932	,06219
sInnovative	Coolblue	235	4,8681	1,34118	,08749
	Xsens	233	4,5536	1,39516	,09140
sCorporate	Coolblue	235	4,8936	1,39954	,09130
	Xsens	233	4,4335	1,45806	,09552
sPresitgious	Coolblue	235	4,6426	1,45587	,09497
	Xsens	233	4,3605	1,43797	,09420
sAuthoritarian	Coolblue	235	3,6553	1,58934	,10368
	Xsens	233	3,2318	1,37635	,09017
sAttractive	Coolblue	235	2,0468	,96185	,06274
	Xsens	233	2,0558	,95203	,06237

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Know	Equal variances assumed	20,360	,000	-46,433	466	,000	-,90580	,01951	-,94413	-,86746
	Equal variances not assumed			-46,345	388,220	,000	-,90580	,01954	-,94422	-,86737
Friendly	Equal variances assumed	,613	,434	1,015	466	,311	,10459	,10309	-,09798	,30717
	Equal variances not assumed			1,015	465,294	,311	,10459	,10307	-,09794	,30713
Innovative	Equal variances assumed	3,497	,062	4,092	466	,000	,53685	,13119	,27905	,79464
	Equal variances not assumed			4,091	463,024	,000	,53685	,13123	,27896	,79473
Corporate	Equal variances assumed	3,523	,061	4,184	466	,000	,52771	,12611	,27989	,77554
	Equal variances not assumed			4,183	463,113	,000	,52771	,12615	,27981	,77561
Prestigious	Equal variances assumed	,000	,995	4,310	466	,000	,60000	,13920	,32647	,87353
	Equal variances not assumed			4,310	465,877	,000	,60000	,13920	,32646	,87354
Authoritarian	Equal variances assumed	5,393	,021	3,537	466	,000	,47117	,13322	,20939	,73295
	Equal variances not assumed			3,539	461,071	,000	,47117	,13315	,20951	,73284
Attractive	Equal variances assumed	7,312	,007	-1,527	466	,127	-,06199	,04058	-,14174	,01776
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,527	463,954	,127	-,06199	,04059	-,14176	,01779
sFriendly	Equal variances assumed	,426	,514	1,161	466	,246	,11004	,09482	-,07628	,29636
	Equal variances not assumed			1,161	457,759	,246	,11004	,09476	-,07618	,29625
sInnovative	Equal variances assumed	2,085	,149	2,486	466	,013	,31444	,12650	,06585	,56302
	Equal variances not assumed			2,485	464,929	,013	,31444	,12652	,06581	,56307
sCorporate	Equal variances assumed	1,555	,213	3,483	466	,001	,46014	,13211	,20054	,71975
	Equal variances not assumed			3,482	464,861	,001	,46014	,13213	,20049	,71979
sPresitgious	Equal variances assumed	,000	,985	2,108	466	,036	,28204	,13377	,01916	,54491
	Equal variances not assumed			2,108	465,993	,036	,28204	,13377	,01918	,54490
sAuthoritarian	Equal variances assumed	4,735	,030	3,081	466	,002	,42356	,13749	,15339	,69373
	Equal variances not assumed			3,083	457,730	,002	,42356	,13740	,15354	,69357
sAttractive	Equal variances assumed	,117	,732	-,102	466	,919	-,00899	,08847	-,18284	,16487
	Equal variances not assumed			-,102	465,999	,919	-,00899	,08847	-,18283	,16486

10.2.5 Appendix II-E: Independent Sample T Test and multiple regression for attractiveness*social media use

Group Statistics

	sAttractive	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
sEmployerBrand	Yes, I feel they are more attractive as an employer now	199	4,7528	1,00140	,07099
	Yes, I feel they are less attractive as an employer now	43	4,2419	,83900	,12795

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
sEmployerBrand	Equal variances assumed	,861	,354	3,116	240	,002	,51090	,16395	,18793	,83388
	Equal variances not assumed			3,492	70,422	,001	,51090	,14632	,21911	,80270

Yes, more attractive vs. Yes, less attractive

Group Statistics

	sAttractive	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
sEmployerBrand	Yes, I feel they are more attractive as an employer now	199	4,7528	1,00140	,07099
	No	225	4,5191	,87955	,05864

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
sEmployerBrand	Equal variances assumed	5,300	,022	2,558	422	,011	,23365	,09135	,05410	,41320
	Equal variances not assumed			2,538	397,001	,012	,23365	,09207	,05264	,41466

Yes, more attractive vs. No

Group Statistics

	sAttractive	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
sEmployerBrand	Yes, I feel they are less attractive as an employer now	43	4,2419	,83900	,12795
	No	225	4,5191	,87955	,05864

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
sEmployerBrand	Equal variances assumed	,204	,652	-1,908	266	,058	-,27725	,14534	-,56342	,00892
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,970	60,991	,053	-,27725	,14074	-,55868	,00418

Yes, less attractive vs. No

10.2.6 Appendix II-F: Independent Sample T Test and multiple regression for age*social media use

Group Statistics

	Age recoded	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Do you use social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)?	1,00	95	1,05	,224	,023
	2,00	182	1,21	,411	,030

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Do you use social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)?	Equal variances assumed	69,883	,000	-3,561	275	,000	-,162	,045	-,251	-,072
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,230	274,445	,000	-,162	,038	-,237	-,086

Age category 1 vs. 2

Group Statistics

	Age recoded	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Do you use social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)?	2,00	182	1,21	,411	,030
	3,00	127	1,23	,421	,037

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Do you use social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)?	Equal variances assumed	,340	,560	-,293	307	,770	-,014	,048	-,109	,080
	Equal variances not assumed			-,291	267,103	,771	-,014	,048	-,109	,081

Age category 2 vs. 3

Group Statistics

	Age recoded	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Do you use social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)?	1,00	95	1,05	,224	,023
	3,00	127	1,23	,421	,037

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Do you use social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)?	Equal variances assumed	73,421	,000	-3,690	220	,000	-,176	,048	-,270	-,082
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,001	200,958	,000	-,176	,044	-,262	-,089

Age category 1 vs. 3

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1,030	,056		18,331	,000	,920	1,141
	What is your age?	,042	,015	,141	2,848	,005	,013	,070

a. Dependent Variable: Do you use social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)?

Multiple regression analysis

10.2.7 Appendix II-G: Independent Sample T test and multiple regression for age*time on social media

Group Statistics

	Age recoded	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
How much time per day do you spend on social media platforms?	1,00	90	2,39	1,168	,123
	2,00	143	1,99	,880	,074

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
How much time per day do you spend on social media platforms?	Equal variances assumed	13,251	,000	2,992	231	,003	,403	,135	,138	,668
	Equal variances not assumed			2,809	151,824	,006	,403	,143	,120	,686

Age category 1 vs. 2

Group Statistics

	Age recoded	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
How much time per day do you spend on social media platforms?	2,00	143	1,99	,880	,074
	3,00	98	1,64	,840	,085

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
How much time per day do you spend on social media platforms?	Equal variances assumed	,703	,403	3,028	239	,003	,343	,113	,120	,566
	Equal variances not assumed			3,054	214,738	,003	,343	,112	,122	,565

Age category 2 vs. 3

Group Statistics

	Age recoded	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
How much time per day do you spend on social media platforms?	1,00	90	2,39	1,168	,123
	3,00	98	1,64	,840	,085

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
How much time per day do you spend on social media platforms?	Equal variances assumed	8,818	,003	5,057	186	,000	,746	,148	,455	1,037
	Equal variances not assumed			4,989	160,471	,000	,746	,150	,451	1,041

Age category 1 vs. 3

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	2,748	,150		18,261	,000	2,452	3,044
	Age recoded	-,372	,070	-,283	-5,346	,000	-,510	-,235

a. Dependent Variable: How much time per day do you spend on social media platforms?

Multiple regression analysis

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