

**Employer attractiveness by Gen Z through organizational values in job applications
and social media**

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Bachelor Thesis

BSc Communication Science

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July 23rd 2021

Abstract

Background: A new generation has entered and will enter the job market in the next years, however Generation Z is different from previous generations. For attracting these new potential employees, companies have to effectively use employer branding. This employer branding can be done by communicating organizational values and communicating these can be done in a variety of ways. With regard to Generation Z, being a digital generation, their main communication channels are social media. In order for organizations to increase attractiveness by these Digital Nomads, they have to discover the values and beliefs of Gen Z, to gain an advantage in the search for new talented employees.

Aim: The aim of the research is to explore whether communicating organizational values in job applications and on social media channels has an influence on the perceived employer attractiveness by generation Z and their application intentions. This study investigated the effect of choice of communication channel (job application vs. social media posts) and the effect of communication of organizational values (yes vs. no) on employer attractiveness and application intentions.

Method: A 2x2 research design with four conditions was used. Participants got randomly assigned to one of these conditions which consisted out of a job application or social media posts with organizational values, or a job application or social media posts without organizational values. The participants had to fill out an online survey, where they were asked about their personal perceptions on the stimulus material they were assigned to.

Results: It was expected that communicating organizational values generally lead to a higher perceived employer attractiveness and higher application intentions. However, it was revealed by the results that communicating organizational values increased the interest/innovation value and application value of employer attractiveness. And when communicating via job applications this also increased the application value of employer attractiveness among Generation Z.

Conclusion: It can be concluded that there are some positive effects going on between communication channel and employer attractiveness, and communication of organizational values and employer attractiveness.

Practical implications: The findings of this study can be applied by communication and HRM departments of organizations. Thereby, the information given could be of use when

marketing an organization as an attractive employer and to increase the effectiveness of this marketing directed at Generation Z.

Key words: Generation Z, employer attractiveness, application intentions, communication channel, organizational values.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. J.J. van Hoof for dedicating his time to offer guidance and advice in the process of writing my bachelor thesis. Furthermore, I would also like to thank my second supervisor Dr. H. Scholten for her useful feedback. Finally, I would like to express gratitude to my loving home front and fellow students who supported me throughout my entire study at the University of Twente.

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1 Introduction

In today's society we live with multiple generations, where now five of these can be found on the work floor (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek [CBS], 2021). Generation Z is the newest generation in the workforce and the 'one size fits all' approach does not work anymore, this is due to differences between these generations. When it comes to organizations effectively attracting new employees, they should consider adjusting their employer branding strategy to the generation they want to attract. This can be done in a variety of ways, for example by choosing specific communication channels, like traditional media sources or via social media (Kuşçu, 2020). Communicating organizational values is also a way to enhance the employer branding (Kissel & Büttgen, 2015). However, the question is what effect these ways of employer branding have on employer attractiveness and application intentions among the newest generation in the workplace, namely Generation Z.

The idea of generation was introduced and developed by social theorists as Auguste Comte and Karl Mannheim. Early theorists that were engaged in social dynamics and change presented that generational groups were seen as agents of change or associated with distinctive forms of knowledge and consciousness (Furlong, 2013). Comte's point of view was that intergenerational conflict eventually led to social change, as the conservatism of the older generation was tested by the younger age cohort (Furlong, 2013). However Comte did not succeed in developing these ideas further, that is where Mannheim proceeds.

In the 1920s Karl Mannheim introduced the concept of generation as a group of people who share common habits, culture and a collective memory that serves to integrate (Mannheim, 1952). He suggested that people who grew up in a particular point in time, often share a range of shaping experiences, and develop common 'modes' of behaviour, feeling and thought, and a collective memory (Mannheim, 1952). This collective memory is embedded in a group of individuals that share birth years, major life events, and social changes during critical periods in development (Kupperschmidt in Xi et al., 2014). These factors have an impact on each

generation, they influence ways of thinking, values, and attitudes and behaviours. All these together make the differences between different generations, as one generational identity is not the same as another (Egri & Ralston, 2004).

The generational theory of Mannheim can be divided into 4 stages. The first stage suggests that intergenerational continuity arises from socialization to societal values by one's parents (Furlong, 2013). Following, those values are being challenged by generational experiences when new contact occurs. From this process the development of a generational consciousness arises, which results in generational units being formed that can advocate a political force of social change (Furlong, 2013). To illustrate this, youngsters living in the 21st century are growing up in a very different environment than their parents did in the 20th century. More people stay in school longer, there are more career opportunities, and they no longer expect to have a lifelong job. Their life journey does not have to be mapped out that specific anymore, there are opportunities everywhere. They realize that their parents' experiences cannot be used as a roadmap anymore and start rethinking their core values. Social change does not lead to the rising of a new generation that uniformly adapts or rebels, since all generations are internally divided or stratified (Furlong, 2013). Therefore, groups of youngsters with the same core values are formed, these could be groups that share the same values about climate change or societal inclusion.

In this research the focus will be on one of the youngest generations now, namely Generation Z. This generation is entering the job market and is the future of employment. Just like other generations this generation is also has peer personality. For organizations it is important to discover the values and beliefs from Generation Z to increase attractiveness and to gain an advantage in the search for new talent employees, who in turn will support organizational growth (Singh & Dangmei, 2016). Generation Z members are also known as 'Digital Natives', they grew up in a digital world (Dolot, 2018). These Digital Natives values

transparency a lot, they are willing to work for a leader that is honest, open and integer (Schawbel, 2014). They also value working for an organization that invests in the community and social responsibility (Singh & Dangmei, 2016). Combining these characteristics of Gen Z. Together with the fact that businesses need to be more transparent in the future, which can be done via communicating organizational values and since social media are the communication channels this generation connects on. Raised the question whether these have an effect the perceived employer attractiveness and application intentions of Gen Z.

The aim of the study is to explore whether communicating organizational values in job applications and on social media channels has an influence on the perceived employer attractiveness by generation Z and their application intentions. The effect of choice of communication channel (job application vs. social media posts) and the effect of communication of organizational values (yes vs. no) on employer attractiveness and application intentions was tested. This was done by the following research question: *‘To what extent does communication of organizational values in job applications and social media channels influence employer attractiveness and application intentions as perceived by potential employees of Generation Z?’*

This paper starts with a theoretical framework where relevant theoretical background information is given. Based on this framework hypotheses are formulated. Thereafter, the experimental research of this study is described, evaluated, and discussed. At last, limitations and a conclusion of this study are showed.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Generation Z

The indications about the year of birth of Generation Z differ and studies have addressed the dividing line between Millennials and Generation Z to be ‘tentative’ and it cannot be sure where history will draw a line for cohorts until a generation reaches full maturity (Howe, 2014). Many studies use 1996 till 2012 as age range (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021; Pew Research Center, 2018; Williams, 2010, as cited by Bolser and Gosciej, 2015, and Adecco, 2015). Generation Z, also known as Gen Z, is raised in a century with the most drastic changes in a short period of time. This period is characterized by the rise of the world wide web, freely available networks, smartphones, laptops and digital media (Singh & Dangmei, 2016). Their lives are more connected to electronics and the digital world than those of other generations, being digital centric is therefore part of their identity (Karácsony et al., 2020). Other synonyms for this generation are ‘Digital Natives’ or ‘GenTech’ (Dolot, 2018). It is natural for this generation to be able to connect with anyone at any time, since the majority of the people around them are also online. By growing up in this digital era this generation can function well in both the real and virtual world, and thereby can easily switch between these worlds (Żarczyńska-Dobiesz & Chomałowska, in Dolot, 2018). As a result, they are skilled in source and information checking, this also relates to gaining information of parties they are or will be involved with (Dolot, 2018).

Next to the changes in technology use, they also got to deal with social, political, and environmental crises (Singh, 2014). They are fully awakened by the social responsibilities towards society, laws, rules and regulation (Singh, 2014). One term that is frequently mentioned by Generation Z is to be ‘woke’. As mentioned in the dictionary of Merriam-Webster, woke is a term that refers to being ‘aware of and actively attentive to important facts and issues, especially issues of racial and social justice’. It is increasingly used as a proverb for social awareness (Merriam-Webster, 2017). Cohen (2020) describes Gen Z as the

generation of activism. Members of this generation feel like they do not have the luxury of being silent, since the systems and previous generations will not save the world in 50 years (Cohen, 2020).

Generation Z is considered the most ethnically diverse and technologically savvy generation (Pew Research Center, 2018). In doing so, they are also on their way to become the best educated generation yet. Parents of this generation, generation X, are better educated than parents of Millennials and of previous generations, this most likely contributes to the relative affluence of the households in which Generation Z lives and the quantity of information sources available (Pew Research Center, 2018).

2.2 Generation Z: preferences in the workplace

Generation Z has an informal and straight way of communicating, and networking is an essential part of their lives (Singh & Dangmei, 2016). This communication is preferred to be face-to-face, especially on the work floor, to connect on a deeper level (Schawbel, 2014).

According to research from Workplace Intelligence (2014) tends Generation Z to be more entrepreneurial, realistic, career-minded, and less motivated by money but more by achievements than Millennials. The generation has great leadership aspirations and has a strong desire for managers to listen to their ideas (Workplace Intelligence, 2014). While working they are looking for jobs and learning opportunities to thrive in the business world, by creating these opportunities mutual investment will be built up (Adecco, 2016). Since they are inexperienced employees, they are interested in mastering soft and hard skills that will have a positive influence on their performance (Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021). However, members of the generation are also looking for a fun place to work, a place where they can express themselves and feel like they make a significant contribution (Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021). Gen Z's also prefer to have a flexible schedule, transparency, and independence

(Singh & Dangmei, 2016). Their independence ties to their competitiveness, the ability to manage their own projects makes it possible for them to show their skills and abilities. In addition, they do not want their work to depend on others (Patel, 2017). Tulgan (2013) emphasized on the need for security on Generation Z. He explained that members grew up in a recessionary period and seeing that impact on their parents made this generation conscious about money and focused on saving and job security. From research done by Randstad (2016) more than half of Generation Z is worried about the future, due to student debts and a rocky labour market.

As mentioned above, Generation Z values transparency a lot. They want to work for a leader that is honest, open and integer (Schawbel, 2014). Combined with this honesty and openness, they also value working for an organization that invests in the community and social responsibility (Singh & Dangmei, 2016). This connects with their activism and feeling of responsibility for the future world. This young generation will spark their own workplace needs when they enter an organization.

2.3 Employer attractiveness and application intentions

The attractiveness of an organization is related to the way in which characteristics of the job and the organization are perceived (Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005). Therefore, does employer attractiveness mainly depend on the evaluation of an organization in terms of its corporate image (Kissel & Büttgen, 2015). Potential employees use perceptions of this corporate image as determinants how it would be to work for this organization (Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005). The concept of employer attractiveness has been used in multiple studies (Ahamad, 2019). Berthon et al. (2005) define employer attractiveness as ‘the envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organization’ (p. 156).

Berthon et al. (2005) describe that their study shows that employer attractiveness is determined by five values:

- Interest value (innovation value): refers to the extent the working environment is perceived as exciting, the working conditions are new and whether the employer benefits from their employees in order to be innovative and deliver high-quality products and services.
- Social value: refers to the corporate culture, whether the person feels attracted to the work environment, relationships with colleagues, and a positive sphere within the team.
- Economic value: describes the extent to which the person is attracted to the employment circumstances, containing salary, job security and career opportunities.
- Development value: examines to what extent the employer is seen as an institution that is a springboard for further professional development. In particular, whether the employer or work environment provides recognition, self-esteem, and confidence.
- Application value: investigates the extent to which knowledge can be applied and transferred and whether there is an environment which is customer-oriented and includes ecological and social goals.

An attractive employer gives a good return on investment by attracting and retaining talented job seekers. Thereby does employer image significantly affect the attractiveness towards the organization (Chhabra & Sharma, 2014).

The entry of Generation Z into the workforce will bring some changes for recruiters (Sidorcuka & Chesnovicka, 2017). They will be ready to advertise and engage potential employees on a wide variety of different platforms on a daily basis. Companies will need to understand the importance of being as connected as Generation Z if they are willing to recruit young talents. In order to attract this young generation organizations will have to follow up with their favourite networks. And as Generation Z tends to be sceptical of marketing, organizations will have to be honest and transparent (Sidorcuka & Chesnovicka, 2017). By openly communicating about the processes that are going on in the organization, communicating organizational values and providing information this sceptical attitude will most likely be decreased.

In research done by Lemmink et al. (2003) the importance of availability of information was stressed. A positive effect was found on greater amounts of information about the company on application intentions. When potential employees are exposed to information they will become more familiar with the organization, indirectly their perceived attractiveness to the employer will also be influenced. More information, thereby greater familiarity will positively influence the organizational perceptions of the potential employees and thus increase application intentions (Lemmink et al., 2003; Foroudi, 2019). A similar study done by Agrawal & Swaroop (2009) found that attitudes towards the employing organization affected the application intentions of their respondents. A favourable impression of the organization and thus a higher perceived attractiveness is important for the application intentions of the potential employees (Agrawal & Swaroop, 2009). Employer attractiveness is therefore an important antecedent of application intentions (Kissel & Büttgen, 2015).

2.4 Employer branding and social media

In such a competitive market as organizations are in, being able to attract high-quality employees is seen as a competitive advantage for an organization (Priyadarshini et al., 2017). This can be done by a variety of ways, one of the commonly used ways nowadays is to do so via the Internet. Organizational websites have gained popularity in recent years, this offers opportunities for employers to reach potential candidates and attract them to apply for a job position (Priyadarshini et al., 2017). However, with all the new developments on trends on the Internet and in e-job recruitment, a study from Bradwell & Reeves (2008) has shown a decrease in the use of organizational websites by employers due to the shift towards social networking sites. Social networking sites, also called social media, allow the recruiters to constantly maintain connectivity and long-term conversations with job seekers (Bondarouk & Olivias-Lujan, 2013; Carpentier et al., 2019). Another advantage of using social media is the option to easily share one's identity, which can effectively be used by organizations to communicate their organizational identity. This employer branding is aimed to build a good employer image and provide value propositions that feature attributes that potential talents will consider as valuable and attractive. Because of the well-developed audio-visual tools, an organization is more likely to effectively communicate the employer brand personality than when using other media channels (Kissel & Büttgen, 2015). Therefore, the Internet and social media channels make it easier for potential employees to estimate their fit with the organization (Gregory et al., 2013). The signalling theory proposes that when there is no complete data available, or there is uncertainty about the organization or job position, individuals will derive conclusions from the information that is available (Spence, 1973). In today's online world, this means that applicants will gather information from social media sources, since these channels offer large amounts of information regarding organizations (Kissel & Büttgen, 2015).

Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) describe that organizations experience competitive advantages when employer branding is used effectively and helps to attract and retain employees. They describe there are two differences in this employer branding: internal and external employer branding. Internal employer branding is focussed on exposing employees to the values proposition of the organization, focussing on creating a workplace culture that will achieve corporate goals in the organization's way. External employer branding, on the other hand, is external marketing of the organization which places the organization as an employer of choice and is able to attract worthy talents (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). The employer brand is focussed on employment and characterizing the firm's identity as an employer. Employer brand associations shape the employer's image which in turn influences the attractiveness of the organization to potential employees (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). This external marketing of the employer brand makes the company a preferred employer and therefore enables it to attract the best possible employees. When recruits are attracted to the brand, they develop a set of assumptions about employment at the company that they will take into the company when working there. Thereby, they will support the company's values and increase their commitment to the company (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Communicating this employer brand via social media will allow employing organizations and active Gen Z job seekers to effectively connect with each other.

2.5 Employer branding and job applications

Which source information provides to potential applicants is an important determinant of their attraction to an employer (Kissel & Büttgen, 2015). Generally corporate descriptions in job applications contain a minimum amount of essential information about the organization, this includes elements like organisational culture and values (Elving et al., 2012). Previous research of Elving et al. (2012) suggests that companies who are emphasizing employer

branding elements in their job advertisements generate a higher perception of the attractiveness of companies among job seekers. Showing their advantages as employers, especially with regard to the opportunities for development and information about the working culture in organizations, does create a stronger employer brand (Elving et al, 2012).

In job applications there is one specific section dedicated to the important information about the employing organization, addressing who they are and what they stand for.

However, it takes more than one social media post to communicate that same message about the employer brand. For example, missing one social media post causes not the whole message getting delivered. Also is social media used as a helpful tool to communicate the corporate brand, while a job application is directly connected to hiring practices. For these reasons, the following hypotheses were created:

H1: *Providing a job application will lead to a higher perceived employer attractiveness among Generation Z than providing social media posts.*

H1a: *Providing a job application will lead to a higher interest/innovation value in the employer attractiveness scale than providing social media posts.*

H1b: *Providing a job application will lead to a higher economic value in the employer attractiveness scale than providing social media posts.*

H1c: *Providing a job application will lead to a higher development value in the employer attractiveness scale than providing social media posts.*

H1d: *Providing a job application will lead to a higher application value in the employer attractiveness scale than providing social media posts.*

H2: *Providing a job application will lead to higher application intentions among Generation Z than providing social media posts.*

2.6 Definition of organizational values

Organizational values have been gaining importance in the past few years. The importance of these values is stressed by their central role in many organizational phenomena, including organizational identity, culture, person-organization fit and socialization (Bourne & Jenkins, 2013). Having and communicating these organizational values gives guidance with strategic choices and change, management decision-making, and functional activities (Bourne & Jenkins, 2013). They also shape the ethical attitude of an organization, and employee commitment (Ostroff et al., 2005). Organizational values have a wide range and a large influence on critical processes and characteristics in organizations (Bourne & Jenkins, 2013).

Milton Rokeach (1973) developed a definition of a value, he described it as ‘an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally and socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence’ (p.5). He also developed a classification of values based on goals and means of achievements, defining terminal values apart from instrumental values: ‘terminal values refer to desirable end-states, thus representing the goal that an individual would like to achieve; instrumental values refer to means of achieving terminal values’ (p.7). Other authors followed, Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) generated a conceptual definition of values that is as follows: ‘values (a) are concepts or beliefs, (b) about desirable end states or behaviors, (c) that transcend specific situations, (d) guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events, and (e) are ordered by relative importance’ (p. 551). These definitions of values are also applicable in business practices with regards to organizational values (Malbašić & Brčić, 2012).

An organization’s identity arises from the organization’s values, these values transform into a real image through employee perceptions and behaviours. This way other stakeholders find out what kind of an organization they are involved with (Malbašić & Brčić, 2012). It should be borne in mind that potential employees are more likely to be attached to

an organization that, according to them, has the same values (Malbašić & Brčić, 2012). It is proven that an organization's values influence the performance of employees and the organizations overall performance when these are being used passionately and positively. Employees that strongly identify with their organization, generally have a high level of person-organization fit (Jehanzeb, 2020). Gregory et al. (2013) found that when this fit was high, attitudes towards the organization were more favourable. Therefore, the following hypotheses were created:

H3: *Communicating organizational values will increase the employer attractiveness among Generation Z.*

H3a: *Communicating organizational values leads to a higher interest/innovation value in the employer attractiveness scale than not communicating organizational values.*

H3b: *Communicating organizational values leads to a higher economic value in the employer attractiveness scale than not communicating organizational values.*

H3c: *Communicating organizational values leads to a higher development value in the employer attractiveness scale than not communicating organizational values.*

H3d: *Communicating organizational values leads to a higher application value in the employer attractiveness scale than not communicating organizational values.*

H4: *Communicating organizational values will increase the application intentions among Generation Z.*

H5: *Communicating organizational values in a job application leads to higher employer attractiveness perceived by Generation Z than communicating organizational values on social media channels.*

H6: *Communicating organizational values in a job application leads to higher application intentions among Generation Z than communicating organizational values on social media channels.*

3 Method

This research was conducted by means of a quantitative research method in the form of an online survey experiment. The survey consisted of 29 questions, which focus on the respondents' opinions and judgements in relation to the stimuli material that was presented.

The study employed a 2 (Communicating organizational values yes vs. no) x 2 (job application vs. social media posts) between-subjects design. The dependent variables were *employer attractiveness* and *application intentions*, and the independent variables were *communication of organizational values* and *communication channel*. A fictitious company was designed, and four experimental job application conditions were created, where two different job descriptions and two different social media posts were used. These can be seen in table 1.

Table 1.

2x2 Experimental design with 4 conditions

Communication channel	Organizational values	
	Yes	No
Job application	Condition 1	Condition 2
Social media posts	Condition 3	Condition 4

3.1 The aim of the research

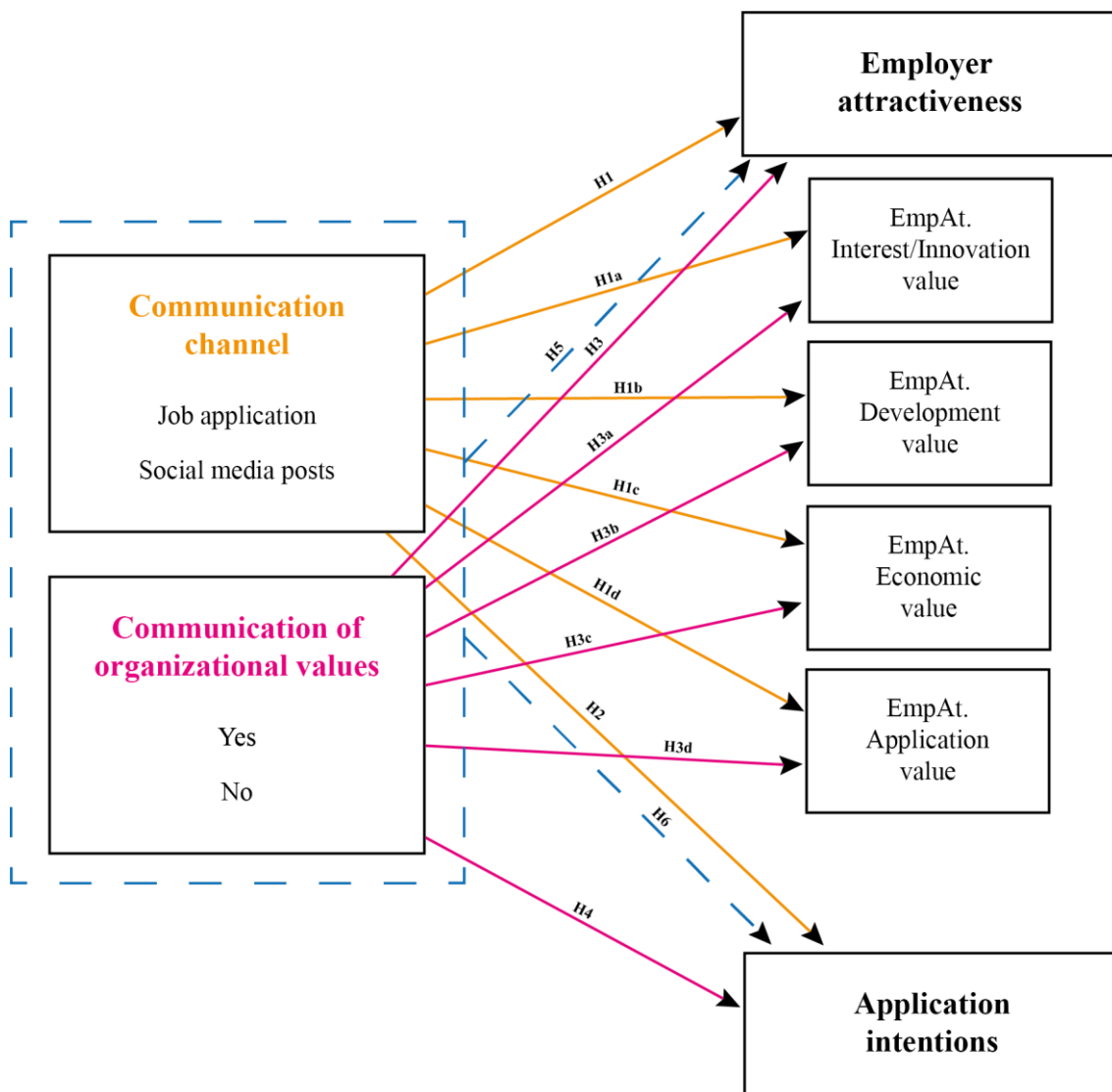
The aim of the research is to explore whether communicating organizational values in job application and social media channels has a significant effect on the employer attractiveness perceived by generation Z. The research question is as follows: *'To what extent does communication of organizational values in job applications and social media channels influence employer attractiveness and application intentions as perceived by potential employees of Generation Z?'*

This topic is important in allowing companies to successfully attract the next generation of talents, so they can enrich their business with new skilled employees. Social media and transparency play an important role in the lives of young generations. To be able to hire skilled young employees, employers have to be innovative and develop a modern employer image in the context of job application situations. This research serves to enlighten the importance of communicating organizational values in this process.

3.2 Research Model

Based on the literature and previous research, the following research model was designed.

Figure 1. Research model



3.3 Procedure

Before the start of the data collection, the study was approved by the ethical committee of the University of Twente. After the study approval, participants were approached by using a combination of purposive sampling, voluntary sampling and snowball sampling which happened online. Via various online platforms like Instagram, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Reddit and SONA, members of Generation Z were targeted. Using online recruiting methods were the most appropriate and feasible in times of the Corona crisis, thereby is the target group very active online and accessible with this way of recruitment. The online survey at first was made in English with the Qualtrics software, after discovering there were multiple dropouts, the survey was also translated into Dutch. Thereafter, the participants were able to choose their language they were most comfortable with, less dropouts were captured after this. The online survey can be found in Appendix C.

When starting the online survey, the participants had to give their informed consent on the purpose of the study. The first page enlightened the respondents on the study, its procedure, requirements for participants, their rights regarding participation, the processing of their data, as well as the contact information of the researcher. After agreeing on this consent, the participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. In these conditions they were expected to read the stimulus material, depending on the assigned condition, this was a job application or social media posts. After taking in the provided information questions had to be answered, where personal perceptions on this information were being asked.

First, the 20 questions about employer attractiveness were being asked. In the second part, 5 questions about application intentions needed to be filled in. Thereafter, 2 questions of the manipulation check were asked. Concerning whether the participant had seen a job application or social media posts, and if there were organizational values communicated in

this job application or social media posts. The job application had the format of an old-fashioned job application. The social media posts consisted of one Instagram post and one LinkedIn post. After the manipulation check, the demographics of the participants were being asked, including age, gender, nationality, level of education, and occupation. One last question was asked, where if the participants had any comments or questions, they could write them down. If not, they were able to click further and come to the closing screen with a short debriefing of the study.

3.4 Stimuli material

The stimuli material can be found in figures 1 and 2 of Appendix A. One communication channel was shown per condition. In condition one a job application with organizational values, in condition two a job application without organizational values, in condition three social media posts with organizational values, and in condition four social media posts without organizational values. For all the conditions the stimulus material was held constant and the participants were randomly allocated to one of the four conditions.

For this study, the employing company was fictitious in order to make sure the respondents had no prior knowledge and connotations that could influence the results. The fictitious company is a software company named W-Serve.

The stimuli material shown in condition one was a job application for an UI-designer at this fictitious company W-Serve. At the basis of the job application an introduction of the company, what they do. Then what talents and experiences in an applicant they are looking for and what they offer the applicant. This part is followed by a paragraph where the employing company describes what they stand for as an organization and what they value. The organizational values are based on the following values: innovativeness, enthusiasm, friendly and open culture, personal development, environmentally conscious, high quality

products, and customer satisfaction. These values have adjusted wordings to match context of the medium (e.g., for environmentally conscious adjusted wordings are planet-friendly business practices and environmentally responsible) and are written in *italic* to highlight their presence.

The stimuli material shown in condition two was also a job application for an UI-designer at W-Serve. The basis of the application is completely identical to the basis of the first condition, however here the paragraph with the organizational values is not present.

For condition three, two social media posts of the company W-Serve were shown, one LinkedIn post and one Instagram post. The LinkedIn post is related to a service W-Serve offers, here they are enlightening their software maintenance service for bar installations in the catering industry. The post starts with a headline, then a paragraph related to this service where organizational values get mentioned, followed by a line to invite the reader to read their full blogpost. The organizational values mentioned in the LinkedIn post are innovative and accountability. The Instagram post shown with this LinkedIn post is about celebrating the company's birthday. In the post they show gratitude for everybody helping with their successes. The organizational values mentioned in this post are enthusiasm, services and customer satisfaction, and environmentally responsible.

For the last condition four also a LinkedIn and Instagram post are shown. In the basis the same as in condition three, the images are the same including the headlines, however the texts with the organizational values have been omitted.

3.5 Manipulation check

In order to test whether the manipulation of communicating organizational values with the corresponding media channel was successfully perceived by participants during the data collection process, to prove the internal validity of the experiment a manipulation check was

performed. For the manipulation check respondents were asked in the survey what communication channel they had been answering questions about, and another question to indicate the extent to which they perceived the stimuli material to contain organizational values by means of a 5-point bipolar scale ranging from ‘Yes’ to ‘No’.

By means of an ANOVA T-tests were performed in order to see whether there was a significant difference between the four conditions. The results revealed significant effects, for communication channel this was $p < .001$ and for communication of organizational values this was $p = .010$. All the results can be seen in table 2.

Table 2
Results of Manipulation Check – Descriptives and Between Subject Effects

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
				113	6.915	.010
Job application	58	1.10	.307			
Social media posts	56	1.57	.499			
				112	80.656	.000
Organizational values No	48	3.21	1.129			
Organizational values Yes	67	4.03	.887			

Note. The manipulation of communication channel was measured by means of a 2-point scale with values 1 (job application) 2 (social media posts).

Note. The manipulation of communication of organizational values was measured by means of a 5-point bipolar scale ranging from 1 (No) to 5 (Yes).

In total the sample consisted of 123 respondents. The target group included Generation Z that were born between 1996 and 2005. Thereby, they are currently following a

secondary education or have successfully completed one. This is the youngest generation in the working field nowadays and soon to be the biggest. For gaining this data sample, a combination of purposive sampling, voluntary sampling and snowball sampling are used. The final sample consisted for 59.3% of females ($N = 73$), 31.7% of males ($N = 39$), and 1.6% addressed 'other or will not tell' ($N = 2$). Moreover, the participants of this research had a minimum age of 16 years and a maximum age of 26 years, with a mean of 20.91 years. In this research mainly respondents with a Dutch (54.4%) ($N = 62$) or German (33.3%) ($N = 38$) nationality participated. Respondents with other nationalities (12.3%) ($N = 14$) came from all over the world. Also, relevant to consider is that 85.5% of the participants were students ($N = 97$). Other relevant information on the scope of the research can be found in table 1 of Appendix B.

3.6 Randomization check

For the randomization check Pearson's Chi-Square tests of independence were performed to examine the relationship between the demographic variables and the different conditions. The purpose of the randomization check was to explore if participants were assigned randomly to the four conditions during the data collection. In table 3 the results of Pearson's Chi-Square tests of independence can be seen. These show that there were no significant relationships between the demographic variables and conditions, meaning that it can be stated that the participants were randomly assigned to the conditions. The distribution of the sample over the conditions can be seen in table 1 of Appendix B.

Table 3.

Pearson's Chi-Square tests of independence

Variable	X^2	df	p	N
Age	34.572	33	.393	20.91
Gender	3.597	6	.731	114
Nationality	5.295	6	.507	114
Education	13.416	15	.570	114
Occupation	8.072	9	.527	113

Note. The final sample consisted of 123 participants ($N = 123$).

Note. Results were significant below alpha = 0.05

3.7 Measures

The survey consisted of 33 questions of which 20 refer to the dependent variable 'employer attractiveness' (EmpAt), and 5 refer to the dependent variable 'application intentions'. In this study employer attractiveness is a scale that consists out of four dimensions; interest/innovation value, development value, economic value, and application value. First, a reliability analysis was performed. Based on the outcomes of this analysis, 5 out of 6 scales scored Cronbach's alphas above .7, which indicates a high internal consistency within the scale. The results of the reliability analysis can be seen in table 4. Due to the low alpha of the application value of employer attractiveness a factor analysis and Varimax Rotation were performed to see whether a higher Cronbach's alpha could be achieved. However, these were not successful and it was decided to continue with a single item scale for the application value of employer attractiveness.

Table 4.

Scale Statistics – Results of Reliability Analysis

Variable	<i>Chronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>N of Items</i>
EmpAt – Interest/Innovation	.798	18.16	9.113	3.019	5
EmpAt – Development	.709	17.62	7.538	2.745	5
EmpAt – Economic	.720	15.97	7.461	2.731	5
EmpAt – Application	.563	17.11	6.462	2.542	5
Application Intentions	.921	15.92	22.711	4.766	5

3.7.1 Employer attractiveness

Employer attractiveness was measured using a scale of 20 indicators of employer attractiveness that is based on the EmpAt Scale developed by Berthon et al. (2005). Four out of five dimensions mentioned in their study were measured with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). These four dimensions contain: interest/innovation value (e.g., “The organisation produces innovative products and services”), development value (e.g., “Feeling good about yourself as a result of working for a particular organisation”), economic value (e.g., “An attractive overall compensation package”), and application value (e.g., “A customer-oriented firm”). The latter was transformed into a single item scale, which consisted of the statement ‘There is acceptance and belonging in the organization’.

3.7.2 *Application intentions*

The application intentions were measured using a scale that is similar to the scale from Taylor and Bergmann (1987). Here a 5-point Likert scale was used from 1 (Extremely attractive) to 5 (Very unattractive). Thereby, a scale inspired on a three-item, seven-point scale by Kozup et al. (2003) was used. Originally this scale was focussed on purchase intentions, with some changes it now measured the self-reported likelihood that a job seeker will apply for the job based upon the available information he/she has read about the employing company. Thereby, to provide a broader range of the general impressions of the company additional items from Roberson et al. (2005) were used (e.g., ‘A job opportunity at this company is very attractive to me’).

4 Results

To test the research hypotheses, Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) were used to run F -tests. The purpose was to examine the main and interaction effects of choice of communication channel (job application vs. social media posts) and the effect of communication of organizational values (yes vs. no) on employer attractiveness as well as application intentions.

For the application value of employer attractiveness, due to the low Cronbach's Alpha a scale reconstruction was required. A factor analysis with a Varimax Rotation led to non-logical new scales and were therefore taken out of consideration. As a result, a single item scale was constructed with the item that represented the original scale the most.

4.1 Multivariate Analysis of Variance

To explore the effects between the independent variables and dependent variables a Multivariate Analysis of Variance was performed. The participants have seen either a job application or social media posts with or without organizational values. By means of a MANOVA the effects of communication channel and communication of organizational values on employer attractiveness and application intentions were examined in order to see whether communication channel and communication of organizational values have a significant effect on employer attractiveness and application intentions.

To check whether the performed MANOVA revealed a significance main effect between the independent variables, their Wilk's Lambda values were inspected, these can be seen in table 5, together with the belonging descriptive statistics.

The results showed no significant main effect of communication channel $\Lambda = .924$, $F(6) = 1.475$, $p = .194$ and no significant main effect of communication of organizational

values $\Lambda = .928$, $F(6) = 1.377$, $p = .230$. These non-significant results indicate that there was no significant difference found between communication channel and communication of organizational values and their effect on employer attractiveness and application intentions. Moreover, there was no significant interaction effect between communication channel and communication of organizational values found $\Lambda = .951$, $F(6) = .916$, $p = .486$. Thus, there was no significant interaction effect examined between communication channel and communication of organizational values on employer attractiveness and application intentions.

Table 5.

Multivariate Test: Wilk's Lambda values and Descriptive statistics of the independent variables Communication channel and Organizational values

	<i>Wilk's Lambda</i> (Λ)	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Partial Eta</i> <i>Squared</i>
Communication channel	$\Lambda = .924$	1.475	.194	.076
Organizational values	$\Lambda = .928$	1.377	.230	.072
Communication channel * Organizational values	$\Lambda = .951$.916	.486	.049

4.2 Main effects of Communication channel and Organizational values

4.2.1 Effects on Employer attractiveness

The main effects of communication channel and communication of organizational values on employer attractiveness were found to be non-significant in the Multivariate Analysis of

Variance. To find out whether underlying significant effects were present, an ANOVA was conducted. For the overall employer attractiveness no significant effects were found. The effect of communication channel on employer attractiveness was found to be non-significant $F(1,119) = 1.478, p = .227$. The effect of communication of organizational values on employer attractiveness was also considered non-significant $F(1,119) = 2.104, p = .150$. Thereby, the interaction effect of communication channel and organizational values on employer attractiveness was $F(1,119) = .795, p = .374$, and therefore found to be non-significant. The results can be seen in table 6.

Table 6

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent variable: Employer Attractiveness				
<i>Source</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Corrected Model	3	.267	1.349	.262
Intercept	1	1402.346	7080.848	.000
Communication channel	1	.293	1.478	..227
Organizational values	1	.417	2.104	.150
Communication channel * Organizational values	1	.157	.795	.374
Error	119	.198		
Total	123			
Corrected Total	122			

R Squared = .033 (Adjusted R Squared = .008)

Effects on the Interest/Innovation value of Employer attractiveness

As mentioned above, a follow-up ANOVA was conducted to discover underlying effects. The dependent variable Employer attractiveness consists out of 4 sub dependent variables: interest/innovation value, economic value, development value, and the application value.

These four dependent variables were analysed by means of an ANOVA. The ANOVA revealed a marginally significant effect of communicating organizational values on the interest/innovation value of employer attractiveness $F(1,119) = 3.784, p = .054$. The results can be seen in table 7. By these results H3a can marginally be accepted. The term marginally significant is used often in social studies and accounts for p values between .05 and .10 (Olsson-Collentine, Van Assen, & Hartgerink, 2019). These marginally significant results have a higher chance to fall under the ‘true’ model than under the null hypothesis (Johnson, 2019). The means and descriptive statistics of the groups can be found in table 8.

However, for the effects of communication channel, and the interaction effect of the two independent variables on the interest/innovation value of employer attractiveness were found to be non-significant.

Table 7

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent variable: Employer attractiveness Interest/Innovation value				
<i>Source</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Corrected Model	3	.663	1.871	.138
Intercept	1	1550.424	4378.803	.000
Communication channel	1	.086	.243	.623
Organizational values	1	1.340	3.784	.054
Communication channel * Organizational values	1	.634	1.791	.183
Error	119	.354		
Total	123			
Corrected Total	122			

R Squared = .045 (Adjusted R Squared = .021)

Table 8

Descriptive statistics EmpAt – Interest/Innovation value

Statistics	Communication channel		Organizational values	
	Job application	Social media posts	Yes	No
Mean	3.62	3.65	3.72	3.51
Std. Deviation	.64	.57	.658	.62
N	61	62	73	50

Effects on the Economic value of Employer attractiveness

For the effects on the economic value of employer attractiveness the ANOVA revealed non-significant effects. The effect of communication channel on the economic value of was considered non-significant $F(1,115) = 1.139, p = .288$. Just like the effect of communicating organizational values on economic value of employer attractiveness $F(1,115) = .814, p = .369$. And also the interaction effect of the two independent variables on the development value of employer attractiveness was found to be non-significant $F(1,115) = .088, p = .767$.

The results can be seen in table 9.

Table 9

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent variable: Employer attractiveness Economic value				
<i>Source</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Corrected Model	3	.201	.647	.586
Intercept	1	1162.693	3742.249	.000
Communication channel	1	.354	1.139	.288
Organizational values	1	.253	.814	.369
Communication channel *	1	.027	.088	.767
Organizational values				
Error	115	.311		
Total	119			
Corrected Total	118			

R Squared = .017 (Adjusted R Squared = -.009)

Effects on the Development value of Employer attractiveness

The ANOVA showed non-significant effects for independent variables on the development value of employer attractiveness. The effect of communication channel on the development value is $F(1,118) = .044$, $p = .835$, and therefore considered non-significant when dealing with a significance level of 0.05. This also applies for the effect of communication of organizational values on the development value $F(1,118) = .297$, $p = .587$, and for the interaction effect of communication channel and organizational values on the development value of employer attractiveness $F(1,118) = .570$, $p = .452$. These results can be found in table 10.

Table 10

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent variable: Employer attractiveness Development value				
<i>Source</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Corrected Model	3	.089	.291	.832
Intercept	1	1459.751	4786.252	.000
Communication channel	1	.013	.044	.835
Organizational values	1	.091	.297	.587
Communication channel *	1	.174	.570	.452
Organizational values				
Error	118	.305		
Total	122			
Corrected Total	121			

R Squared = .007 (Adjusted R Squared = -.018)

Effects on the Application value of Employer attractiveness

The effects on the application value of employer attractiveness, were analysed with a single item scale. The results of the item 'There is acceptance and belonging in this organization' were analysed and are showed in table 11. By means of a descriptive statistics analysis, the means and standard deviation were calculated. By focussing on the means of this item regarding communication channel, with job application $M = 3.66$, $SD = .595$, with social media posts $M = 3.60$, $SD = .699$. The means of the application value with communication of organizational values are $M = 3.80$, $SD = .608$, and without communication of organizational values $M = 3.44$, $SD = .649$.

Table 11

Descriptive statistics EmpAt – Application value

Statistics	Communication channel		Organizational values	
	Job application	Social media posts	Yes	No
Mean	3.66	3.60	3.80	3.44
Std. Deviation	.595	.699	.608	.649
N	59	58	48	69

4.2.2 Effects on Application intentions

The main effects of communication channel and communication of organizational values on application intentions were found to be non-significant in the Multivariate Analysis of Variance, therefore an ANOVA was conducted to explore whether underlying significant effects were present. The effect of communication channel on application intentions was found to be non-significant $F(1,112) = .319, p = .573$. The effect of communication of organizational values on application intentions was also considered non-significant $F(1,112) = .525, p = .470$. At last, the interaction effect of communication channel and organizational values on employer attractiveness was $F(1,112) = .049, p = .826$, and so found to be non-significant. The results can be seen in table 12.

Table 12

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent variable: Application intentions				
<i>Source</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Corrected Model	3	.265	.289	.833
Intercept	1	1136.224	1240.882	.000
Communication channel	1	.292	.319	.573
Organizational values	1	.481	.525	.470
Communication channel *	1	.044	.049	.826
Organizational values				
Error	112	.916		
Total	116			
Corrected Total	115			

R Squared = .008 (Adjusted R Squared = -.019)

4.2.3 Overview of Hypotheses

The following table 13 shows the hypotheses of this research and an indication whether these have been supported or rejected based on the results of the performed analyses.

Table 13.

Overview of stated hypotheses of this research

Hypotheses		<i>Supported?</i>
		<i>Yes/No</i>
H1	Providing a job application will lead to a higher perceived employer attractiveness among Generation Z than providing social media posts.	Partially
H1a	Providing a job application will lead to a higher interest/innovation value in the employer attractiveness scale than providing social media posts.	No

H1b	Providing a job application will lead to a higher economic value in the employer attractiveness scale than providing social media posts.	No
H1c	Providing a job application will lead to a higher development value in the employer attractiveness scale than providing social media posts.	No
H1d	Providing a job application will lead to a higher application value in the employer attractiveness scale than providing social media posts.	Yes
H2	Providing a job application will lead to higher application intentions among Generation Z than providing social media posts.	No
H3	Communicating organizational values will increase the employer attractiveness among Generation Z.	Partially
H3a	Communicating organizational values leads to a higher interest/innovation value in the employer attractiveness scale than not communicating organizational values.	Yes
H3b	Communicating organizational values leads to a higher economic value in the employer attractiveness scale than not communicating organizational values.	No
H3c	Communicating organizational values leads to a higher development value in the employer attractiveness scale than not communicating organizational values.	No
H3d	Communicating organizational values leads to a higher application value in the employer attractiveness scale than not communicating organizational values.	Yes
H4	Communicating organizational values will increase the application intentions among Generation Z.	No

H5	Communicating organizational values in a job application leads to higher employer attractiveness perceived by Generation Z than communicating organizational values on social media channels.	No
H6	Communicating organizational values in a job application leads to higher application intentions among Generation Z than communicating organizational values on social media channels.	No

5 Discussion

For this research, a theoretical framework was made in order to provide relevant information concerning employer attractiveness and application intentions among Generation Z. In the context of this study, the focus was on employer attractiveness and application intentions specifically through communication of organizational values and the sort of communication channel this was done with.

5.1 Discussion of the effects

The first important finding of this study that will be discussed, refers to the effect of the choice of communication channel on employer attractiveness and application intentions. Hypothesis 1d could be supported. This hypothesis referred to the effect of providing a job application will lead to a higher application value in the employer attractiveness scale than providing social media posts. Thereby, it could be partially accepted (since only the application value increased), that choosing a job application as communication channel does have a positive effect on the perceived employer attractiveness (H1). A job application is a medium with high social control from the organization, media with high social control get to be perceived as a credible source where people can rely on (Kissel & Büttgen, 2015). This could be an important factor, why using job applications as communication channel for organizational values leads to a higher perceived application value in employer attractiveness. A job application a traditional communication channel in the recruiting process, and a channel that is perceived as a credible information source regarding to the recruitment process. Thereby, another possibility for this effect on employer attractiveness might be that a job description is directly linked to the job itself, whereas social media does not necessarily give specific information about the job position or recruitment activities (Cooley & Parks-

Yancy, 2016). Which might potential talents feel more connected to the organization when reading a job application, than when scanning through the organizations social media posts.

For the other hypotheses H1a, H1b, H1c, and H2 no effects could be found. Which means that based on this study, no better communication channel to communicate organizational values on in order to increase the interest/innovation value, development and economic value of employer attractiveness could be identified. By this it can be said that a traditional job application has not lost its power due to social media practices. From previous research it is proven that social media also a useful tool is to use as an organization when attracting potential employees (Kissel & Büttgen, 2015). Organizations check their applicants out on social media to do an identity check and to see whether they would fit into the organization (Cooley & Parks-Yancy, 2016). Potential applicants can do the same thing with organizations, to check whether they are thinking the organization is an attractive employer and to determine whether they would fit into the organization. So, if an organization uses its social media channels effectively, this medium could also be of good use to sharpen and improve company images and thus benefit from increased attractiveness and application intentions (Kissel & Büttgen, 2015). However, a good traditional job application provides extensive information about what the employers search for in an employee, for example a team player and a good communicator, by stressing these characteristics, the job seeker can also determine whether they would be a good fit for the organization (Cooley & Parks-Yancy, 2016). If employers would standardly put a piece of information about their organizational identity in job applications, this would convey a clear message to potential talents and they would directly know what kind of organization they are dealing with. Searching for this organizational identity on social media takes more time and most of the times this identity is communicated via multiple posts, which makes it harder for potential

employees to clearly identify this organizational identity. However, the results of this study did not prove that a job application is a better tool to communicate organizational values on.

Another important finding addresses the effect of communicating organizational values (yes vs. no), on employer attractiveness and application intentions. Hypothesis 3a and 3d could be marginally supported. These referred to the effect of communicating organizational values on the interest/innovation and application value of employer attractiveness. The result means that by communicating organizational values the interaction/innovation and application value of the perceived employer attractiveness by Generation Z is higher than when not communicating organizational values. Which in turn confirmed that members of this young generation in this study did perceived the W-Serve working environment as more exciting, beneficial, innovative and of more high-quality, than when not communicating organizational values to these potential employees. With these outcomes it could be partially accepted, that communicating organizational values does have a positive effect on the perceived employer attractiveness (H3). Knowing that Generation Z is a generation that has its own values and want people around them to communicate their identity too, they want to be involved and want to know whom they are working for. Sharing is caring, is always said. Social responsibility is high on the value list of Gen Z (Singh & Dangmei, 2016). It indicates that the organization shows responsibility for their impact on society, the environment and economy (Verčič & Ćorić, 2018). This leads to employers needing to step up their transparency game. For employers this means communicating about their identity, showing the processes that are going on in the organization, and honest communication (MVO Vlaanderen, 2019). From this study it was proven that being proactive in communicating who you are and what you stand for makes you a more attractive employer.

However, most hypotheses referring to the effects of communicating organizational values on employer attractiveness and application intentions could not be supported and therefore had to be rejected. This concerns H3b, H3c, and H4. By these results it can be said that communicating organizational values as an organization to potential employees of Generation Z has no effects on these dimensions of perceived employer attractiveness and does not influence the application intentions amongst this target group. Which is unexpected, since from previous research indicated that Generation Z is known for their needs for transparency, honesty, and openness in an employment setting (Singh & Dangmei, 2016; Cohen, 2020). Communicating organizational values gives an insight of how the organization operates and is a smart way of showing the organizations identity (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Therefore, Generation Z and communicating organizational values were combined, it was expected that these led to a higher perceived employer attractiveness and higher application intentions. However, it might be that Generation Z does not find organizational values important in the development and economic value of employer attractiveness. Or it might be that Generation Z does not value organizational values that much at all, and they value other way of being transparent as an organizational more. Other ways might be sharing a behind the scenes or sharing a business secret (Leeuw, 2018).

Finally, for the interaction effects of communication channel and communication of organizational values on employer attractiveness and application intentions, no significant effects were found, meaning H5 and H6 can be rejected. Concluding, that communication channel and communication of organizational values do not influence each other and combined do not have an impact on employer attractiveness and application intentions. Together they might not have an effect on employer attractiveness and application intentions, however apart from each other they do have an influence. Due to what was mentioned before in previous research about Generation Z being different than other generations, a woke

generation where transparency and open communication is more important than ever (Schawbel, 2014). Communication of organizational values is an effective means of being open and transparent (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). And Generation Z is known for its familiarity with multiple communication channels, with its digital diverse characteristic (Pew Research Center, 2018). Combining these factors together would be expected to lead to an interaction effect. However, the stimuli material of this study was focussed on one-way communication, from the organization to a Gen Z member. These young people want their voices to be heard, something they do not feel like getting (Reinikainen et al, 2020). This stems from when Generation Z is taking action against for issues that concern them, for example climate change, they only have seen little response from the corporate world (Margolin, 2020). These developments affect their trust in organizations (Reinikainen et al, 2020). By improving listening to them, letting them feel heard, their perception of the attractiveness of the employer and their application intentions might be influenced.

5.2 Implications

Even though, that with this study it was not proven that the interaction of communication channel and communication of organizational values lead to higher perceived employer attractiveness and higher application intentions, further insights and understanding of employer branding to Generation z are provided. When communication channel and communication of organizational values are not contributing to the perceived employer attractiveness, other factors might play an important role that influence this.

The findings of this study can be applied by communication and HRM departments of organizations. Since Generation Z members are the future employees, organizations have to grow with this generation in order to be able to create an appealing employer brand. This

study could be of use when marketing an organization as an attractive employer, and thereby to increase the effectiveness of this marketing directed at Generation Z.

The purpose of this research was to contribute to the research field of Generation Z joining the workforce, in the context of how employer branding can be done most effective and successful. The knowledge acquired by this study can be used as an input for further research of employer branding regarding Generation Z. It might also be interesting to take this study in consideration when further investigating the effects of communicating organizational values in organizational expressions, since these will continue to play an important role in organizations with respect to stakeholders.

5.3 Limitations of the study

For this study, multiple limitations must be considered. The first limitations are related to the sample. First, there was not an even distribution in gender. There were significantly more female respondents, which might have led to generalizability of the findings. Secondly, most participants were had an age of 19-22 years, in comparison younger and older participants were less represented in the sample. However, over 60 questionnaires had to be deleted, it might be that several responses of participants of 16-18 and 23-26 were deleted and might have influenced the mean age of participants. This unequal distribution in age might have led to not all generational cohorts having an equal voice in this study. Since there are also differences between these generational cohorts, differences in values and in experience on the work floor. This might have contributed to the non-significant effects of communication of organizational values and communication channel. The unequal distributions in the sample, are most likely influenced by the fact that participants mainly via social media or the SONA system were approached for this study. These are places where it was not possible to have an influence on the scatter of gender or age of the participants.

The following limitation is related to a functionality of the survey, in feedback from the respondents appeared that some found it quite limiting that they could not go back to the stimulus material once they were at the question sections. This might have influenced the results, that when respondents were not sure what they had read, they complemented the material in their minds and then filled in the remaining questions. Which means their responses were not strictly based on the stimuli material, but also for a big part on their imagination. In this way the communication of organizational values has lost its power and effect.

Some questionnaires were not filled in completely, however these were included in the analysis. Therefore, some missing values were present, for example a few respondents did not fill in the demographics at the end of the survey. This might have had an influence on the demographic analysis and contributed to the above-mentioned unequal distribution of the sample.

For the manipulation check the results were significant, however the means of the groups did not have a big difference. In an ideal situation the means of the different groups would have been not close together. This closeness of the means addresses that some participants were not sure about the communication channel they answered questions about, or they were not sure whether there were organizational values communicated in their condition. This might have influenced outcomes in such a way that they confused the stimuli material and therefore also might have contributed to the non-significant effects of communication of organizational values and communication channel on employer attractiveness and application intentions.

Furthermore, the application value of the scale employer attractiveness had a Cronbach's Alpha under 0.7, and therefore needed a scale reconstruction. The factor analysis

and Varimax Rotation led to non-logical new scales and were taken out of consideration. Therefore, was the scale transformed into a single item scale, with the item that represented the original scale the most. By using a single item scale other outcomes might have appeared than when using a five-item scale, since not all available data was used. More data secures a more accurate outcome of the situation of the whole population.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

It is important for researchers to study on Generation Z in context of employment. The work environment is changing, and this new generation is new in the employment scene. Since businesses are becoming more and more human focussed, it is important for employers to know what their potential employees need and want. For future research, it is recommended to further investigate the factors that influence employer attractiveness and application intentions. Since from this study mostly appeared that communication channel and communication of organizational values do not play a really big role in this perceptions, other factor might have a great influence. What these factors are, must be researched further.

Another suggestion for further research is to regulate the sample in order to create an even distribution. This might avoid any generalization biases. It is also suggested to conduct a similar research but on a greater scale, this fosters reliability.

In this study the focus lied on the textual part of communication. However, communication also takes place via imagery. Another interesting suggestion for further research entails the effects of communication of organizational values on employer attractiveness and application intentions via imagery rather than, or in a combination with, textual elements. Thus, there are many interesting and important aspects of perceived employer attractiveness and application intentions to be researched among Generation Z.

5.5 Conclusion

This research was focussed on identifying possible effects of communication channel and communication of organizational values on the perceived employer attractiveness and application intentions of Generation Z. Within the scope of this study and with regard to the research question it can be inferred that choice of communication channel and communication of organizational values did not lead to higher application intentions.

However, a higher perceived employer attractiveness was seen in the application value of employer attractiveness when communication took place via a job application. For the effect of communication of organizational values on employer attractiveness, the perceived interest/innovation value of employer attractiveness appeared to be higher when communicating organizational values. The same applies to the application value of employer attractiveness, this value was higher when organizational values were being communicated. These results indicate that communication channel and communication of organizational values do have an effect on perceived employer attractiveness by Generation Z. However, there might be other factors that are stronger indicators for the perceived employer attractiveness among this particular generation.

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7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix A: Stimuli Material

Figure 1. Social media posts with organizational values vs. social media posts without organizational values.

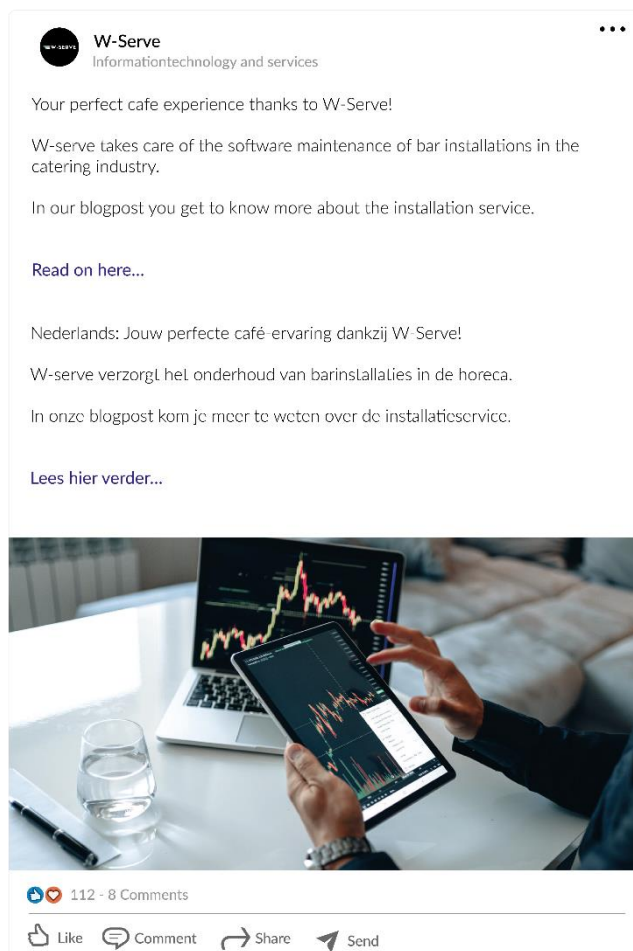
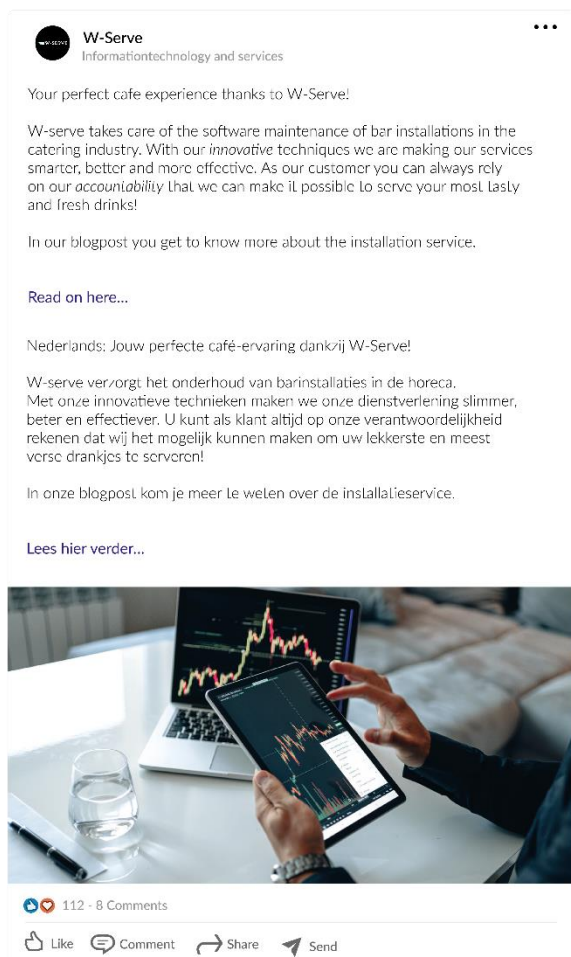


Figure 2. Job application with organizational values vs. job application without organizational values.

Job application

(English)

UX DESIGNER

At W-Serve, we are expanding our product design and development team. Therefore we are looking for someone that will strengthen our organization. The software platform we have created is used by large, global organizations. They use our software to make better and faster business change decisions, which is essential in a world that requires continuous change.

Your talents and experience:

- You have completed a relevant HBO/WO degree.
- You have at least 1 year of experience as a UX designer.
- You have experience designing complex features and interactions in a software platform facilitating multiple user types.
- Preferably you have experience with design and prototyping tools (e.g. Adobe XD).
- You can structure tests and analyze results.
- Are proficient in the Dutch and English language.

What we offer you:

- A good salary.
- 25 vacation days per calendar year (based on 40 hours).
- Travel allowance.
- A good pension scheme.
- A fun and flexible workplace with enthusiastic colleagues.
- Coffee in all shapes and sizes.

W-Serve is an *innovative enthusiastic* organization and in a time of rapid change we think it is important to grow with our world and our employees. We have a *friendly and open culture*, with plenty of room for *personal development*, something that is very valuable to us. What we also care for is the condition of our environment, with our services we strive to stimulate *planet-friendly business practices*. We are known for our *high quality* products and keenness for *customer satisfaction*.

Do you like what you've read? Do not hesitate and apply!

(Dutch)

UX DESIGNER

Bij W-Serve breiden we ons productontwerp- en ontwikkelingsteam uit. Daarom zijn we op zoek naar iemand die onze organisatie komt versterken. Het door ons gecreëerde softwareplatform wordt gebruikt door grote, wereldwijde organisaties. Ze gebruiken onze software om betere en snellere zakelijke veranderingsbeslissingen te nemen, wat essentieel is in een wereld die continue verandering vereist.

Jouw talenten en ervaring:

- Je hebt een relevante HBO/WO opleiding afgerond.
- Je hebt minimaal 1 jaar ervaring als UX designer.
- Je hebt ervaring met het ontwerpen van complexe features en interacties in een softwareplatform dat meerdere gebruikers types faciliteert.
- Bij voorkeur heb je ervaring met design en prototyping tools (bijvoorbeeld Adobe XD).
- Je kunt testen structureren en resultaten analyseren.
- Beheerst de Nederlandse en Engelse taal.

Wat bieden wij jou:

- Een goed salaris.
- 25 vakantiedagen per kalenderjaar (op basis van 40 uur).
- Reiskostenvergoeding.
- Een goede pensioenregeling.
- Een leuke werkplek met enthousiaste collega's.
- Koffie in alle soorten en maten.

W-Serve is een *innovatieve enthousiaste* organisatie en in een tijd van snelle veranderingen vinden wij het belangrijk om mee te groeien met onze wereld en onze medewerkers. We hebben een *vriendelijke en open cultuur*, met veel ruimte voor *persoonlijke ontwikkeling*, iets wat voor ons erg waardevol is. Waar we ook om geven is onze leefomgeving, met onze diensten streven we ernaar om *planeetvriendelijk ondernemen* te stimuleren. We staan bekend om onze producten van *hoge kwaliteit* en een scherp oog voor *klanttevredenheid*.

Vind je het leuk wat je hebt gelezen? Aarzel niet en solliciteer!

(English)

Job application

UX DESIGNER

At W-Serve, we are expanding our product design and development team. Therefore we are looking for someone that will strengthen our organization. The software platform we have created is used by large, global organizations. They use our software to make better and faster business change decisions, which is essential in a world that requires continuous change.

Your talents and experience:

- You have completed a relevant HBO/WO degree.
- You have at least 1 year of experience as a UX designer.
- You have experience designing complex features and interactions in a software platform facilitating multiple user types.
- Preferably you have experience with design and prototyping tools (e.g. Adobe XD).
- You can structure tests and analyse results.
- Are proficient in the Dutch and English language.

What we offer you:

- A good salary.
- 25 vacation days per calendar year (based on 40 hours).
- Travel allowance.
- A good pension scheme.
- A fun workplace with enthusiastic colleagues.
- Coffee in all shapes and sizes.

Do you like what you've read? Do not hesitate and apply!

(Dutch)

Job application

UX DESIGNER

Bij W-Serve breiden we ons productontwerp- en ontwikkelingsteam uit. Daarom zijn we op zoek naar iemand die onze organisatie komt versterken. Het door ons gecreëerde softwareplatform wordt gebruikt door grote, wereldwijde organisaties. Ze gebruiken onze software om betere en snellere zakelijke veranderingsbeslissingen te nemen, wat essentieel is in een wereld die continue verandering vereist.

Jouw talenten en ervaring:

- Je hebt een relevante HBO/WO opleiding afgerond.
- Je hebt minimaal 1 jaar ervaring als UX designer.
- Je hebt ervaring met het ontwerpen van complexe features en interacties in een softwareplatform dat meerdere gebruikerstypes faciliteert.
- Bij voorkeur heb je ervaring met design en prototyping tools (bijvoorbeeld Adobe XD).
- Je kunt testen structureren en resultaten analyseren.
- Beheerst de Nederlandse en Engelse taal.

Wat bieden wij jou:

- Een goed salaris.
- 25 vakantiedagen per kalenderjaar (op basis van 40 uur).
- Reiskostenvergoeding.
- Een goede pensioenregeling.
- Een leuke werkplek met enthousiaste collega's.
- Koffie in alle soorten en maten.

Vind je het leuk wat je hebt gelezen? Aarzel niet en solliciteer!

7.2 Appendix B: Sample

Table 1.

Overview of relevant information and distribution of the sample over the conditions

Demographics	Condition 1	Condition 2	Condition 3	Condition 4	Total	Total %
Gender						
Female	21	18	20	14	73	59.7%
Male	12	6	13	8	39	31.7%
Other	1	0	0	1	2	1.6%
Age						
16	1	3	0	0	4	3.3%
17	1	0	1	0	2	1.6%
18	3	0	2	3	8	6.5%
19	8	3	4	2	17	13.8%
20	7	1	6	5	19	15.4%
21	6	4	6	4	20	16.3%
22	4	8	7	2	21	17.1%
23	3	1	2	3	9	7.3%
24	0	1	2	1	4	3.3%
25	1	1	3	1	6	4.9%
26	0	2	0	2	4	3.3%
Mean age					20.91	
Origin						
Dutch	23	13	17	9	62	54.4%
German	8	9	11	10	38	33.3%
Other	3	2	5	4	14	12.3%
Education						
Primary school	1	2	0	0	3	2.6%
Secondary school	22	10	24	16	72	63.2%
MBO (senior secondary)	3	3	5	2	13	11.4%

vocational education)							
HBO/WO	6	6	4	3	19	16.7%	
Bachelor							
HBO/WO	1	2	0	1	4	3.5%	
Master							
PhD	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	
Other	1	1	0	1	3	2.6%	
<hr/>							
Occupation							
Employed (full-time)	1	3	3	2	9	8.0%	
Employed (part-time)	2	1	1	0	4	3.5%	
Unemployed (currently looking for work)	0	2	1	0	3	2.7%	
Unemployed (currently not looking for work)	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	
Student (school or university)	31	18	28	20	97	85.8%	
Unable to work	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	

Note. The final sample consisted of 123 participants ($N = 123$).

Note. 9 cases are missing for gender, age, nationality.

Note. 10 cases are missing for occupation.

7.3 Appendix C: Survey

Start of Block: Consent

Intro Dear respondent, You are invited to participate in this study about perceived employer attractiveness among Generation Z through communication of organizational values in job applications and social media. Your personal opinion is asked on the provided information. To participate you must be between 16 and 26 years old, and following or have completed a secondary study. This research is conducted by Dorien ten Brinke from the Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences at the University of Twente. The data of the study will solely be used for the researcher's bachelor thesis of the study Communication Science. The data will be handled confidentially and anonymously. The aim of this study is to see whether communicating organizational values in job applications and on social media channels has an influence on the perceived employer attractiveness among Generation Z. It will take approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey. A fictitious company was used. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. Questions can be asked to Dorien ten Brinke (d.tenbrinke-1@student.utwente.nl). The survey is anonymous and we believe there are no known risks associated with this study and precautions are being taken to minimize privacy harm. The data will be stored offline and your provided responses will be anonymized.

Consent I consent to be a participant in this study. I understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time.

Yes, I consent. (1)

No, I do not consent. (2)

End of Block: Consent

Start of Block: Condition 1

Q64 Imagine, you are looking for a new job as a UX designer. You come across this job application from a company named W-Serve and you meet all their requirements. Take a look at the job description and answer the questions on the next pages.

End of Block: Condition 1

Start of Block: Condition 2

Q147 Imagine, you are looking for a new job as a UX designer. You come across this job application from a company named W-Serve and you meet all their requirements. Take a look at the job description and answer the questions on the next pages.

End of Block: Condition 2

Start of Block: Condition 3

Q88 Imagine, you are looking for a new job and you came across an interesting job application from a company named W-Serve. You want to do some research on the company, so you check out their social media channels. You see the following LinkedIn and Instagram posts. Take a look at the social media posts of W-Serve, especially focus on the written text and answer the questions on the next pages.

End of Block: Condition 3

Start of Block: Condition 4

Q148 Imagine, you are looking for a new job and you came across an interesting job application from a company named W-Serve. You want to do some research on the company, so you check out their social media channels. You see the following LinkedIn and Instagram posts. Take a look at the social media posts of W-Serve, especially focus on the written text and answer the questions on the next pages.

End of Block: Condition 4

Start of Block: Questions

Q112 The following questions are related to employer attractiveness.

Q113 Based on the information I have seen from this company I think that...

	Stronlgy disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
The organization produces innovative products and services (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization is an innovative employer (has novel work practices / thinks forward) (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization produces high-quality products and services (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization both values and makes use of your creativity (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization offers an exciting work environment (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

Q114 Based on the information I have seen from this company I think that...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I will receive recognition/appreciation from the management (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will feel confident as a result of working for this organization (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will feel good about myself as a result of working for this organization (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will gain a career-enhancing experience (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization is a springboard for future employment (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

Q115 Based on the information I have seen from this company I think that...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
There are good promotion opportunities within the organization (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is a hands-on inter-departmental experience (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is job security within the organization (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will have an attractive overall compensation package (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will have an above average salary (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

Q116 Based on the information I have seen from this company I think that...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
There is an opportunity to teach others what you have learned (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is an opportunity to apply what was learned at a tertiary institution (school, university, etc.) (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is acceptance and belonging in the organization (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This organization gives back to society (humanitarian organization) (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This organization is customer-oriented (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

Q119 The following questions are related to application intentions.

	Very unlikely (1)	Unlikely (2)	Neutral (3)	Likely (4)	Very likely (5)
Given the available information, how likeable is it that you would consider a job at this organization? (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I were searching for a job, there would be a strong probability of applying to this offer (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I were searching for a job, I would apply to this organization (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I were searching for a job, I would not apply to this job offer (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I were searching for a job, I would not apply to this organization (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Questions

Start of Block: Manipulationcheck

Q142 There are multiple versions of this survey, which communication channel did you answer questions about

a job application (1)

social media posts (2)

Q149 There were organizational values in the content I have seen and read

(for example, innovative, accountability, environmentally responsible)

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Yes

End of Block: Manipulationcheck

Start of Block: Demographics

Q124 Demographics

Q125 What is your gender?

Male (1)

Female (2)

Other / Will not tell (3)

Q126 What is your age?

Q127 What is your nationality?

Dutch (1)

German (2)

Other, namely (3) _____

Q128 What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed?

Primary school (1)

Secondary school (similar to high school) (2)

MBO (senior secondary vocational education) (3)

HBO/WO Bachelor (4)

HBO/WO Master (5)

PhD (6)

Other degree, namely (7) _____

Q129 What is your current occupation?

- Employed (full-time) (1)
 - Employed (part-time) (2)
 - Unemployed (currently looking for work) (3)
 - Unemployed (currently not looking for work) (4)
 - Student (school or university) (5)
 - Unable to work (6)
-

Q147 If you have comments about this study, you can write them down below

Q137 You have answered all the questions of this survey. Thank you so much for your time and input!

By clicking on the arrow below the survey will end and your responses will be saved.

End of Block: Demographics
