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Employer Branding in the Millennial generation:

The role of online recruitment channels and workplace
communication cultures for Millennial applicant attraction

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ACHKOWLEDGEMENT

"A lot of people experience the world with the same incredulity as when a magician suddenly pulls a rabbit out of a hat which has just been shown to them empty. In the case of the rabbit, we know the magician has tricked us. What we would like to know is just how he did it. But when it comes to the world it's somewhat different. We know that the world is not all sleight of hand and deception because here we are in it, we are part of it. Actually, we are the white rabbit being pulled out of the hat. The only difference between us and the white rabbit is that the rabbit does not realize it is taking part in a magic trick. Unlike us. We feel we are part of something mysterious and we would like to know how it all works.

As far as the white rabbit is concerned, it might be better to compare it with the whole universe. We who live here are microscopic insects existing deep down in the rabbit's fur. But [scientists] are always trying to climb up the fine hairs of the fur in order to stare right into the magician's eyes."

~ Jostein Gaarder – Sophie's World ~

It was not without the guidance and support of several people that I could perform my research and finish my thesis.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Since the recruitment of qualified employees is vital to an organization's success, companies are increasingly relying on employer branding practices for attracting potential applicants. Today, the widespread use of social network sites (SNSs) suggests the utilization of new online-recruitment channels such as LinkedIn to reach suitable candidates. Concurrently, a new generation of workforce, the Millennials, call attention to the incorporation of modern workplace communication cultures (WCCs) for creating an appealing employer brand.

Aim: The main goal of this study was to assess how the Millennial generation perceives companies using different online-recruitment channels and offering distinct WCCs. In particular, this study investigated the single as well as interactive effect of recruitment ads' website features (company website vs. LinkedIn) and content (traditional vs. modern WCC) on the employer image, employer attractiveness, person-organization fit perceptions and application intentions.

Method: A scenario-based and between-subjects experimental design was applied. Corresponding to four experimental conditions, different job descriptions were created. By means of an online survey among 252 undergraduate students, participants were asked to evaluate the employer based on the job description.

Results: The findings suggest that perceptions of WCC predicted Millennial applicant attraction. Offering a modern WCC had a significant positive effect on the employer attractiveness, perceived person-organization fit, application intentions and partly on the employer image. Yet, there was no difference in students' perception with regard to the online-recruitment channel. In addition, no significant interaction effect between recruitment ad's website feature and content could be found.

Conclusion: This study sheds more light on employer branding in the Millennial generation. The contribution of recruitment ads' website features and content were critically examined so that companies can understand how to manage their resources and attract valuable human capital accordingly.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Recruiting qualified employees is an essential prerequisite to develop a firm's human capital (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005). Increasingly, companies apply branding principles to human resource management (HRM) in order to attract, motivate and maintain qualified employees, a practice which is called employer branding (Yoa, Chen, & Chai, 2013). Investment in this practice leads to competitive advantage along with reduced employee acquisition costs, improved employee-employer relationships (Berthon et al., 2005) and enhanced employee retentions (Cascio, 2014). First defined by Ambler and Barrow (1996), employer branding is described as "the package of functional, economical and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company" (p. 187). In other words, companies try to respond to prospective applicants' needs and expectations by encompassing distinctive aspects of their value systems, policies or workplace behaviors (Backhaus & Tikko, 2004).

One of the objectives of building an employer brand is to stimulate applicant attraction by means of the perceived employer image and attractiveness as well as person-organization fit (POF) perceptions (Chapman et al., 2005). Studies suggest that these variables directly or indirectly influence application intentions (Elving, Westhoff, Meeusen, & Schoonderbeek, 2013; Highhouse, Lievens, & Sinar, 2003; Sokro, 2010). Employer branding is therefore used as a strategy with the intention of winning the so called 'war for talents' to ultimately become the employer of choice (Priyadarshi, 2011). However, little is known about which perceptions of today's highly skilled job seekers constitute this influence. To do so, we will look at recent technological and societal developments that indicate new influences but also opportunities for contemporary employer branding.

One major influence involves the rise of *online-recruitment* through *Social Network Sites* (SNSs). On the one hand, this recruitment channel represents a promising new medium to advertise or manage the employer brand and on the other hand is able to obtain background information of possible candidates (Nikolaou, 2014). While recruitment via corporate websites tends to fade into the background, the usage of SNSs has increased drastically in recent years (Kluemper, Rosen, & Mossholder, 2012). Especially professionally oriented SNSs, such as LinkedIn, are used to build professional rather than personal relationships or provide work-related rather than private information (Stopfer & Gosling, 2013). Research suggests that both applicants and recruiters are more likely to actively engage with LinkedIn than with non-professionally oriented SNSs such as Facebook, as it prevents the applicant from privacy violations or unfair discrimination (Nikolaou, 2014).

Launched in 2003, LinkedIn is not a new recruitment tool for HR managers to promote their employer brand but still has not been investigated in relation to well-established company websites and possible differences in effects on applicant attraction. Unlike a company website, LinkedIn has an advanced range of features, providing job seekers the opportunity for interactive career networking along with targeted company and job search. Since these functions are more suited for career building in today's highly technological era, this study wants to examine whether the exposure to LinkedIn as online-recruitment channel has a more positive effect on contemporary applicant attraction. It can be assumed that social-media recruitment is especially appropriate for Millennial students who tend to have particular computer-related skills and interests (Bolton et al., 2013). As in 2025 member of the Millennial generation will make up 75 percent of the workforce (Donston-Miller, 2016), their graduates represent the most qualified staff of tomorrow that companies need to adapt to.

A second influence on employer branding practices involves the unique characteristics of such upcoming Millennial generation workforce. Born between the early 1980's and the mid-2000's, Millennials share fundamental and distinctive life experiences that distinguish them from other generations and which significantly contribute to social and communicational changes (Kowske, Rasch, & Wiley, 2010; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffmann, & Lance, 2010). As a result, there is evidence to suggest that preferences and expectations regarding organizations and job seeking have changed, particularly involving the importance of a modern *workplace communication culture* (WCC) that incorporates new demands (Myers & Sadagiani, 2010; Twenge et al., 2010).

A modern workplace communication culture has several characteristics apparently important for Millennials that need further clarifications. Also known as Gen Y or digital natives, this group was the first highly exposed to the internet and electronic media. Generally, these young professionals are characterized as being more technological savvy and highly educated, but also as more informal and less independent than former generations (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010; Twenge et al., 2010; Wey Smola & Sutton, 2002). In their view, current management styles are too bureaucratic and hierarchical (McClellan, 2008), meaning that they strive for more casual interactions at the workplace accompanied by close relationships and more open as well as frequent contact with supervisors and managers (Hartman & Mc-Cambridge, 2011; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). According to the Forbes Magazine, casual workplace interactions, the implementation of virtual collaboration tools and instant feedback belong to the top 10 workplace trends of 2017 (Schawbel, 2016). However, academic research has not yet investigated whether modern WCCs, in comparison with rather traditional approaches, lead to greater millennial applicant attraction.

To sum up, it is important to investigate the value components of online-recruitment through LinkedIn and millennial-engaging communication cultures for employer branding. The purpose of this study is to improve our understanding of how to address the Millennial generation as new entrants into the labor market and potential targets for employer branding. Considering the two aforementioned forces in organizations, online-recruitment through LinkedIn may be especially applicable for the digital natives since it underlines a companies' modern communication culture. Consequently, the present study probes the single and interactive effect of recruitment ads' *website features* (Company website vs. LinkedIn) and *content* (traditional vs. modern WCC) on millennial applicant attraction. More precisely, these relationships are investigated while considering the perceived employer image and attractiveness, application intentions and POF perceptions. Following this aim, the present research draws on Signaling and Social Identity Theory to underline the importance of social-media recruitment and modern WCCs for millennial applicants' evaluation of a company.

1.1 Academic and Managerial Relevance

The contribution of this research is twofold. First, this paper seeks to contribute to the burgeoning literature on online-recruitment through SNSs as well as communicational characteristics of the Millennial generation. The significance of a WCC for employer branding has not yet been studied and particularly not in the context of online-recruitment through SNSs despite its importance to Millennials. Research on job seeking seems especially important for the Millennial generation as their already employed members experience person-organization misfits increasingly (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). These misfits have lead to less engagement and consequently in problems of retention, reduced organizational commitment and higher turnover intentions (Westerman & Yamamura, 2007). By investigating whether a workplace's communication culture is able to enhance perceptions of fit and to positively influence Millennial's job seeking behaviors, valuable knowledge and guidelines can be adapted to meet this challenge.

Second, this study wants to help HR practitioners in deciding whether to implement, adapt or improve aspects of their internal and/or recruitment communication management depending on its benefit for the organization. In order to attract Millennials, employers must understand their psychological makeup and desires in order to be able to custom-tailor their employer branding strategies to this future workforce. Proactive thinking might set companies apart because those with the most convenient employment offerings, environment and image will employ the most talented employees and will have best chances to lead their market.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Understanding Employer Branding

In general terms, employer branding can be described as an integral part of the staffing process through which organizations try to improve their returns on recruitment investment. Strikingly, the various definitions in the existing body of literature about the scope, purpose and conceptualization of employer branding are still inconsistent (e.g. Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Backhaus & Tikko, 2004; Ewing et al., 2002). For the purpose of this study, the definition from Aggerholm, Essmann-Andersen and Thomsen (2011) is adopted who describe employer branding as a "*strategic branding process which creates, negotiates and enacts sustainable relationships between an organization and its potential and existing employees under the influence of the varying corporate contexts with the purpose of co-creating sustainable values for the individual, the organization and society as a whole*" (p. 113). The definition provides a contemporary and advanced notion of employer branding, underlining the value of co-creation and employer-employee dialogue as strategic process for supporting sustainable organizational development. It is also supportive of the study's purpose investigating opportunities for employing companies to manage new dynamics in the workplace. Special attention is paid to communication on the background of social media and the Millennial generation as key stakeholders in the employer-employee dialogue. The present study presumes that the utilization of social media recruitment and Millennial engaging communication reflects the organization's willingness to co-create, negotiate and enact new sustainable relationships.

2.1.1 Employer Branding and Applicant Attraction

Research so far found that potential applicants' perceived employer brand is related to the perceived employer image (Knox & Freeman, 2007), employer attractiveness and application intentions (Highouse et al., 2003) as well as POF perceptions (Carless, 2005; Cho, Park, & Ordonez, 2013). Accordingly, having a favorable and distinctive employer brand is an important asset for organizations in order to attract possible candidates. It is therefore crucial to understand how employer branding practices can influence relevant recruitment outcomes.

As employer branding can affect how potential employees see and think about an organization, these thoughts and ideas are likely to affect the image of a firm as an employer (Backhaus & Tikko, 2004). *Employer image* is defined as "the image associated with an organization uniquely in its role as an employer" (Knox & Freeman, 2006, p.697). Research claims a positive relation between an attractive employer image, the company's perceived

attractiveness as an employer (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003) along with applicants' intentions and decisions to apply for a job (Knox & Freeman, 2006; Piryadarshi, 2011).

To determine potential applicants' employer image perceptions, prior research has applied the *instrumental-symbolic framework* (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Van Hoye & Saks, 2011; Van Hoye, 2012). According to this framework, an employer image can be divided in instrumental and symbolic dimensions (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003). *Instrumental attributes* of an organization or job involve tangible, objective characteristics such as the salary or working conditions. *Symbolic attributes* involve intangible, subjective characteristics such as the perceived prestige or innovativeness of the firm as well as feelings of identification or belongingness. Research claims that especially the symbolic attributes explain to a greater extent whether a company is perceived as attractive (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003). The current study will include both instrumental and symbolic image dimensions in the conceptualization of Millennials' employer brand perceptions. As a first objective, this study seeks to explore whether a modern WCC presented in a job ad on LinkedIn increase positive perceptions of the symbolic employer image dimensions (e.g. innovativeness) among Gen Y students.

Next to the image, employer branding can also influence the attractiveness of an employer as perceived by applicants (Backhaus & Tikko, 2004). *Employer attraction/attractiveness* is defined as the "envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organization" (Berthon et al., 2005; p. 156). It is described as a positive attitude or affect towards a company as a potential place for employment that satisfies employees' needs (Aiman-Smith, Bauer, & Cable; 2001, Elving et al., 2013). Thus, the second objective of this study is to explore whether a modern WCC offered via LinkedIn encourage Millennials' positive attitudes towards the employer by satisfying their communication-related needs.

Despite the importance of assessing employer attractiveness to determine applicant attraction, this does not necessarily imply that applicants will actually apply for a job (Highhouse et al., 2003). According to Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) Theory of Reasoned Action, actual behavior depends on individual's intention to engage in it. Relating to people's attitude towards pursuing a job, *application intentions* are referred to "a person's desire to submit an application, […] or otherwise indicate a willingness to enter or stay in the applicant pool without committing to a job choice" (Chapman et al., 2005, p. 929). Several studies claim a positive relationship between employer attractiveness and application intentions (Cho et al., 2013; Gomes & Neves, 2011; Lee, Hwang, & Yeh, 2013). The more attractive a company, the more people will be likely to apply for a job. Considering this effect, the third objective is to examine whether social-media recruitment and a modern WCC is also able to increase application intentions among Millennials.

Another prominent concept often considered in attraction research is that of *person-organization fit*. Based on Schneider's (1987) attraction-selection-attrition model, POF suggests that applicants seek a fit with the organization. Compatibility occurs when they meet each others' needs and/or share similar characteristics or values (Carless, 2005). When using an employer branded job opening, applicants can realize a better estimate of POF (Elving et al., 2013) which, in turn, positively influences employer attractiveness (Bhatnagar & Srivastava, 2008; Yu, 2014). In other words, POF also functions as a predictor of attraction. This study specifically focuses on millennials' values regarding communication at the workplace and the organizational statements in job descriptions representing those. In accordance with Cho et al.'s (2013) specified communication-oriented POF construct, the fourth objective of this study is to explore whether POF perceptions among Millennials can be increased as companies share similar characteristics regarding communication. Adjusting a companies' WCC and online-recruitment channel to Millennial's communication characteristics might be a mean to enhance *POF regarding communication*.

Considering these variables of applicant attraction, a research model is derived (Figure 1). The model shows the proposed impact of online-recruitment channels (LinkedIn vs. Company website) and WCCs (modern vs. traditional), as the independent variables, on the employer image, employer attractiveness, application intentions and perceived POF regarding communication as dependent variables. It has been argued that the perceived employer image and POF can influence employer attractiveness which consequently affects application intentions. Since the aim of this study is to assess the main (H1 and H2) and interaction effects (H3) of the two independent variables on these recruitment outcomes, the underlying relationships will not be examined.
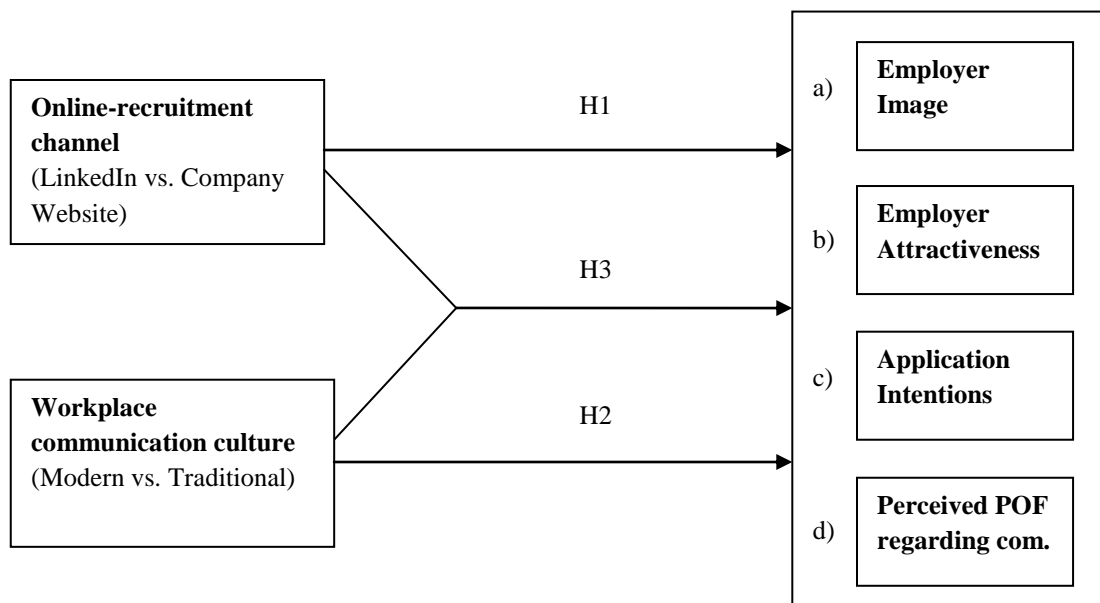

Figure 1. Research Model and hypothesized effects

2.2 Online-recruitment Channel and Workplace Communication Culture predicting Millennial Applicant Attraction

Past research on applicant attraction has investigated web-based recruitment (Ehrhart, Mayer, & Ziegert, 2012), style characteristics of company websites (Braddy et al., 2003; Zusman & Landis, 2002), the role, usage and differences between LinkedIn and Facebook as recruitment channels, as well as their relationship with more established internet job boards (Nikolaou, 2014; Carpentier et al., 2017). This study extends this research to the emerging trend of using social media as a recruitment tool by examining its effect in relation to company websites. In addition, prior research has given considerable attention to the communicational characteristics of the Millennial generation and corresponding work-related needs (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Hartman & McCambridge, 2011; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010; Twenge et al., 2010). The present research intents to deepen this salient issue by exploring the effect of different workplace communication cultures on applicant attraction among a new generation of labor force.

In what follows, online-recruitment channels as well as workplace communication cultures are discussed separately, then the interactive effect of recruitment ad's website features and content in predicting perceptions of the employer image, employer attractiveness, POF as well as application intentions. To support the research hypotheses, this study draws on Signaling and Social Identity Theory as a theoretical foundation for employer branding (Table 1).

Table 1. Theoretical foundation for Employer Branding

Theoretical Perspective	Description	Application for Employer Branding
Signaling Theory (ST)	"All organizational activities are perceived as signals sent by the organization" (App, Merk, & Büttgen, 2012; p. 267)	An organization's employer brand signals advantages of its employment offerings and environment; thereby influencing applicant attraction.
Social Identity Theory (SIT)	A person's self-concept depends on their membership in different social organizations (Ashforth & Mael, 1989)	People wish to identify with their employing company and the employer brand to heighten their self-image.

2.2.1 Online-recruitment Channel

In the last decade, online-recruitment has become increasingly common to recruit new employees as it provides companies with reduced expense and allows them to find or evaluate new candidates (Braddy et al., 2003). Corporate websites are one of the first and probably most common online-recruitment channels (Lievens & Harris, 2003). Despite the fact that corporate websites are viewed as effective recruitment channels (Chapman & Webster, 2003; Stone, Lukaszewski, & Isenhour, 2005), they are no longer viewed as sufficient sources for applicant attraction (Laick & Dean, 2011; Meister, Willyerd, & Foss, 2010). Instead, the interest in online-recruitment through SNSs has increased drastically, providing job seekers with extensive professional networking opportunities (Nicolaou, 2014).

LinkedIn, with more than 400 million registered members in 2016, is one of these SNSs initially designed for professional job search and recruitment (Carpentier et al., 2017; Nikolaou, 2014). Given the large amount of people active on LinkedIn, this channel seems to be an ideal mean to attract both active and passive job seekers (Nikolaou, 2014). Yet, social media recruitment significantly differs from traditional recruitment sources such as corporate websites (McFarland & Ployhart, 2015). In particular, LinkedIn allows users to present themselves as visual identities, to follow companies they are interested in and to connect with HR managers or other job seekers. Companies, on the other hand, are able to virtually transmit their corporate culture and to target their ideal prospects. Accordingly, information on user and company profiles are able to match in case the same keywords are used (e.g. job title, job function, professional skills), making online-recruitment much more targeted, interactive and personalized. In this study, we especially focus on targeted job offers along with the possibility to interact and network as these features are most distinctive from the viewpoint of job candidates.

Considering that technological advances have led to social media consumption changes amongst younger generations (Lichy, 2012), the Millennials seem to be an ideal target group for investigating social-media-based recruitment. Born in the digital age, they are more likely to prefer social media for personal as well as professional interactions than older age groups (Bolton et al., 2013). Besides, LinkedIn is one of the main business networks used by job seeking students (Herbold & Douma, 2013). Still, it has not been examined whether online-recruitment via LinkedIn has different or even greater effects on millennial applicant attraction than via a company's website. To develop a corresponding research hypothesis, it is important to understand how and why these effects might occur.

Hypothesis development

All available information conveyed via an online-recruitment channel, whether expressed directly (e.g. job-/organizational-related information) or indirectly (e.g. website features), could contribute to applicants evaluation of a company. *Signaling Theory* states that applicants interpret such information as signals about how it would be like to work for that company (Celani & Singh, 2011; Wallace et al., 2014). Research provides support for the influence of information types that could be considered as signals such as organizational characteristics or policies as well as recruitment channel characteristics (Cho et al., 2013; Erhart et al., 2012; Intindola et al., 2017).

The website features of LinkedIn could be seen as signals for other organizational characteristics. For example, as Millennials highly value new technologies and the possibility to interact (Bolton et al., 2013), a company's presence on LinkedIn might indirectly convey that the organization is technologically advanced and forward-looking. Social-media-based recruitment could also reflect an organization's interest in employee recruitment and attraction as they invest resources to create social media profiles. Given Millennial's high technological skills and experiences, social media recruitment might be perceived as a positive signal that yields perceptions of attraction.

In line with this theoretical justification, empirical studies suggest that an organizations' profile on social media can affect the employer image and attractiveness as well as application intentions (Kissel & Buttgen, 2015; Sivertzen, Nilsen & Olafsen, 2013). Similarly, to the extent that Millennials value technology and the possibility for interactive networking, increased perceptions that an organization shares these values (e.g. LinkedIn's website features) should yield greater POF regarding communication. Based primarily on theory, the following hypothesis can be derived:

H1: The usage of LinkedIn as an online-recruitment channel, as compared to a company's website, has a positive effect on Millennials' perception of a) employer image and b) employer attractiveness as well as on Millennials' c) application intentions and d) POF perceptions regarding communication.

2.2.2 Workplace Communication Culture (WCC)

The present study focuses on workplace communication cultures in the context of employer branding for several reasons. One is the increased attention to the assumption that Millennials drive and demand change in business communication due to changing ways of interacting with each other. Literature on generational differences suggests the increased importance of modern workplace communication for younger employees such as those in the Millennial generation (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Moreover, Millennials experience increased person-organization misfits while strategic internal communication might be a vehicle to incorporate societal and communicational changes into organizational processes (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; White, Vanc & Stafford, 2010). Aligning a company's WCC with Millennial's preferences regarding communication could stimulate applicant attraction. The content within a job advertisement is able to portray an organization's communication culture that Millennials wish to encounter. In this study, WCC is classified in terms of (1) workplace communication channels, (2) leader-member interaction, (3) communication flow and type. Table 2 summarizes key characteristics of modern and traditional WCCs as clarified below[1].

Table 2. Two different workplace communication cultures and their key characteristics

	Traditional communication culture	**Modern communication culture**
Workplace communication channels	*Communication via usual channels* - face-to-face - e-mail	*Communication via new media* - social media - mobile apps
Leader-member interaction	*Minimal supervision provided on request* - annual performance reviews, - loose leader- member relationships	*Maximal supervision provided frequently* - continuous performance reviews - close relationships
Communication flow & type	*Vertical & Formal* - hierarchies - ordered structures - little or no participative decision making	*Horizontal & Informal* - transparency and openness, - flexible structures - participative decision making

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[1] It should be noted that this research distinguishes between "traditional" and "modern" workplace communication for several reasons. In this study, a traditional WCC is understood as a rather conventional mean of workplace communication as practiced by various global companies. A modern WCC involves the characteristics of recent time (e.g. millennial-friendly) or contemporary communication on the background of recently developed or advanced technology. Accordingly, this study considers modern ways of workplace communication as being more sophisticated to meet the demands of the digital era and the Millennial generation which has grown up within it.

Communication Channels. Since their childhood, Millennials have been surrounded by new technologies and digital media such as cell phones, computers and social media. These digital natives are very comfortable with the internet world which gives them competitive advantage working with all new kinds of communication and information technologies (Hartman & McCambridge, 2011; Martin, 2005). Since the technology that is experienced outside work naturally influences Millennials to aspire the same technology at the office, communication via the usual channels (e.g., e-mail, face-to-face) may be less attractive (Schawbel, 2016). Preferences for workplace communication channels might change accordingly and affect how Millennials evaluate a possible employer. Supportive of this assumption, a study from Adobe discovered that 81 percent of Millennials say that "state of the art technology" is crucial to create their ideal workplace (Work in Progress, 2016).

Offering Millennials the possibility to communicate via new media at the workplace (e.g. social media, mobile apps) might be a mean to stimulate applicant attraction. For example, the utilization of mobile employee apps allows for instantaneous distribution of messages and content directly to an employee's mobile device. Sharing appointments, documents and events via social media or mobile friendly tools would make a workplace more engaging for the Millennium Generation, developments less expensive and free of distraction (Schawbel, 2016). It is therefore meaningful to investigate whether job ad's supporting workplace communication via new media influence Millennials' perceived employer image and attractiveness as well as their application intentions and POF perceptions regarding communication.

Leader-Member Interaction. As children of overly protective parents who have responded to their every need, Millennials are highly self-confident (Özcelik, 2015). Nevertheless, the constant superabundance to supportive messages from parents and teachers in addition to the instant gratification they receive on social media has also resulted in high expectations of recognition, approval and rewards by their employers (Özcelik, 2015). Similarly, these young professionals desire to be led with clear directions and support by their managers (Martin, 2005). Among other things, this manifests itself through their aspiration for frequent and affirming feedback accompanied by close relationships with their supervisors (Crampton & Hodge, 2009; Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008; Hill, 2002; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). However, this is in stark contrast to traditional performance reviews that are often handed at specific times (Schawbel, 2016). Generation Y seems to be especially unwilling and impatient to wait a whole year to learn about their strengths and areas of improvement.

Interestingly, two of the largest companies in the world, Adobe and GE, are forerunner in providing continuous performance reviews. According to the Forbes Magazine, this has resulted

in two percent decrease in voluntary attrition and five times increase in productivity (Schawbel, 2016). Continual feedback improves individual performance and creates motivated as well as informed workers (Ferri-Reed, 2014). Offering continuous performance reviews could imply that a firm is concerned with what Millennial employees need and value. The psychological benefits associated with frequent supervision and the possibility to engage in close leader-member relationships could yield millennial applicant attraction.

Communication Type & Flow. Rooted in the use of social media where most of Millennials share details of their lives online, they desire the same transparency and openness from their employer (Crampton & Hodge, 2009). Moreover, digital natives are considered as no longer intimated by more senior individuals with higher statuses because they can 'befriend' anyone on social media (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Yet this constant exposure to informal and "connecting" technologies became inherent to their way of communicating, whether personal or professional (Kaifi et al., 2012). Rather than formal and vertical, Generation Y is more likely to respond to horizontal and informal communication methods (Hartman & McCambridge, 2011, Schawbel, 2016). Asking for more personal influence and casual workplace cultures, Millennials call for a two-way symmetrical model of communication in which they might have the feeling of being able to communicate at work just the same as they would in their private lives. Sharing information freely and engaging employees in decision making or problem solving even creates competitive advantage and facilitates organizational success (Cornelissen, 2014; Ferri-Reed, 2014). Consequently, this study will explore whether companies presenting a transparent and open communication culture can increase millennial applicant attraction.

Hypothesis development

In line with the *Signaling Theory*, the three characteristics of a modern WCC could function as appealing signals in a job advertisement that help millennial candidates to determine the quality of an employer before joining it (App et al., 2012). The content of the recruitment ad (related to WCC) could not only contribute to attraction, but could also signal a company's support for Millennials' needs and concurrently provide the basis for the assessment of the organization's personality (Slaughter et al., 2004). In this case, a modern WCC would be likely to portray advantages of the employment relationship and environment (e.g. new media communication, frequent supervision, horizontal and informal communication) that are important to Millennials (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Transmitting these key characteristics in a job advertisement should have a positive effect on Millennial's perceived employer image and attractiveness, enhancing application intentions among this group.

However, it should be noted that virtually any characteristic observable to job seekers can serve as a signal. As a result, the value of signals promoting a modern WCC might diminish as the number of other signals within a job description increases (Connelly et al., 2011; Erhart & Ziegert, 2005). Research therefore suggests using more than one signal to underline a specific organizational characteristic (Chung & Kalnins, 2001). In order to further enhance the signaling effectiveness of specific recruitment ad's content, other signals not related to WCC should be kept to a minimum. Since we identified a WCC as related to the symbolic attributes of a firm (e.g. perceived innovativeness, belongingness or identification), it is crucial that the instrumental benefits (e.g. salary, working conditions) do not overweight in order to avoid the transmission of unintentional or even counteractive signals disturbing the signaling process.

In addition to the Signaling Theory, the *Social Identity Theory* provides further support for the assumption that modern WCCs can stimulate Millennial applicant attraction. According to this theory, applicant attraction depends on whether people can identify with a particular organization (Lievens, Van Hoye, & Anseel, 2007; Maxwell & Knox, 2009). Identification occurs when an individual recognizes similarities between values and beliefs shared within an organization and his or her own self-concept. The heightened self-image that is promised by membership makes the employer more attractive (App et al., 2012; Backhaus & Tikko, 2004). Millennial job seekers could be more likely to identify and seek membership in an organization that offers a modern WCC as it adds value to their self-concept. Consequently, increased perceptions that an organization shares similar values and preferences regarding communication (i.e., by providing recruitment ad content related to modern WCC) should yield greater person-organization fit regarding communication. All in all and in line with the theory, we assume that Millennials will be more attracted by a company that presents modern as compared to traditional characteristics of the company's WCC. Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is derived:

H2: Offering a modern workplace communication culture in job advertisements, as opposed to a traditional workplace communication culture, has a positive effect on Millennials' perception of a) employer image and b) employer attractiveness as well as on Millennials' c) application intentions and d) POF perceptions regarding communication.

2.2.3 Interaction between website feature and content

Besides the single effects of recruitment ads' website features (e.g. Company website vs. LinkedIn) and content (traditional vs. modern WCC), this study expects an interaction effect between both substance and style of the job advertisement. The premise for this assumption is that using LinkedIn as recruitment channel underlines or even matches a modern WCC in terms of new media usage, less formality and the perceived possibility to connect/network. Using LinkedIn while offering a modern WCC makes it more tangible for Millennial job applicants about what people within the firm value regarding communication. Essentially, social media as part of the Web 2.0 is characterized by openness, transparency and a two-way interactive communication that also accounts for a modern WCC (Laick & Dean, 2011).

Resulting from this argumentation, adjusting the internal and external organizational communication to the Millennials might reinforce the firm's symbolic attributes that most likely contribute to applicant attraction. Hence, this study expects that the combined effects of online recruitment through LinkedIn and a modern WCC produces highest values of the employer image and attractiveness as well as Millennials intention to apply and POF perceptions regarding communication. Accordingly, the hypothesis is formulated as following:

H3: In the condition of using LinkedIn as a recruitment channel, offering a modern WCC will have a greater effect on Millennials' perception of a) employer image and b) employer attractiveness as well as on Millennials' c) application intentions and d) POF perceptions regarding communication than offering a traditional WCC.

3. METHOD

3.1 Research Design

This research was conducted by means of a quantitative research design in form of an online survey experiment. Experimental surveys with manipulated independent variables tend to be stronger in terms of internal validity than ordinary surveys (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Furthermore, they do not have endogeneity problems (Antonakis et al., 2010) and are less vulnerable to common method bias (Brannik et al., 2010). Manipulating the independent variables is especially crucial when dependent variables are perceptual or self-reported measures (Baum & Überschaer, 2016) such as POF perceptions and application intentions in the present research.

This study employed a 2 x 2 between-subject design, in which the dependent variables were *employer image*, *employer attractiveness*, *application intentions* and *POF perceptions regarding communication*. A fictitious company was designed and four different job descriptions were created, each corresponding to the four experimental conditions (see Appendix A for the four different job descriptions). The aim of this manipulation was to find out if respondents experience the same company differently whether the job advertisement was presented on the company website vs. LinkedIn profile and offered a traditional vs. modern WCC. For all conditions, stimulus material was held constant and respondents were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions, which are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Experimental design

		Recruitment channel	
		Company website	LinkedIn
Workplaces' communication culture	Traditional WCC	*Condition 1: Traditional WCC presented on company website*	*Condition 2: Traditional WCC presented on LinkedIn*
	Modern WCC	*Condition 3: Modern WCC presented on company website*	*Condition 4: Modern WCC presented on LinkedIn*

The employing company devised for this study was fictitious in order to guarantee that participants would have no prior knowledge and connotations. Accordingly, a research institute was conceived that performs different types of researches in various sectors. The job description broadly described an opening for the position of a junior research consultant in behavioral, management and social sciences (BMS). To some extent, the position was designed to be flexible and general in order to capture students with a variety of interests and expertise.

For each key characteristic of a traditional and modern WCC (i.e. communication channel, leader-member interaction and communication type/flow), two manipulations were imbedded in the job description (Table 4). The influences in the traditional WCC condition are different to the influences in the modern WCC condition. The purpose of these manipulations was to inform participants so that they get a sufficient picture about the company's communication-related characteristics. Both conditions were pretested and improved to ensure that participants understand the manipulations. Particularly, some statements from the organization in the job description were adjusted or even deleted as participants evaluated them as contradictory and inconsistent.

Table 4. Manipulations used in job description related to WCC

Key characteristic	Traditional WCC	Modern WCC
Workplace communication channel	➢ "You communicate with clients and colleagues via the usual channels such as e-mail and face-to-face meetings" ➢ "You are able to plan, set up and attend regular team meetings with your coworkers"	➢ "You communicate with clients and colleagues via our new implemented mobile employee app (easily sharing appointments and documents)" ➢ "You are able to make use of social media (e.g. Facebook, social media apps) to communicate with your colleagues"
Leader-member interaction	➢ "You like to work with minimal supervision (on request by writing our CEO)" ➢ "We offer annual performance reviews to learn about your strength and areas of improvement"	➢ "You like to work with frequent, regular and maximal supervision" ➢ "We offer continuous performance reviews to learn about your strength and areas of improvement"
Communication flow & type	➢ "You are comfortable with the ordered and defined employee structures within our company" ➢ "We offer a high professional work environment that is characterized by respectable and well-mannered communication"	➢ "You like flat hierarchies and casual interactions at the workplace" ➢ "We offer a casual work environment that is characterized by open and transparent communication"

Besides the manipulated content, the job description was either presented on the company's website or LinkedIn page. Unlike the company website, LinkedIn has two distinct features which are targeted job offer and the possibility to interact and network within the channel. First, LinkedIn suggests companies that a user may be interested in based on his/her profile information and search activities. This feature was highlighted with a pop up window that appears from the 'notifications' message box (Figure 2). Second, job seekers on LinkedIn are able to connect/network with a company via a separated button to get deeper insights about the company but also to stay up-to-date with new job positions (Figure 3).

Figure 2. Manipulation used in job description related to targeted job offer
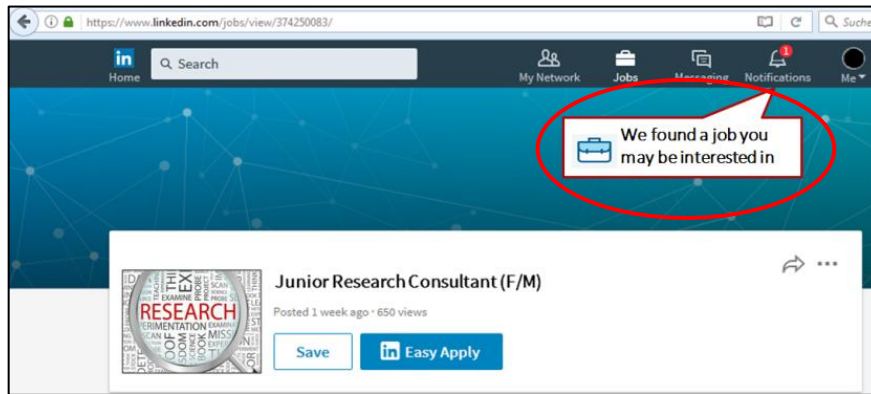
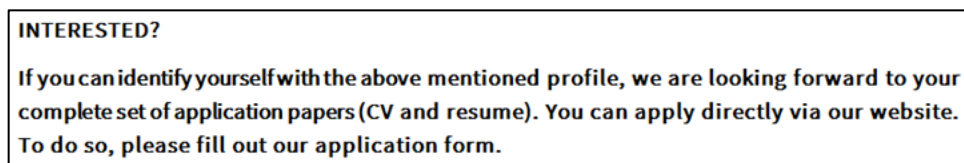*LinkedIn condition
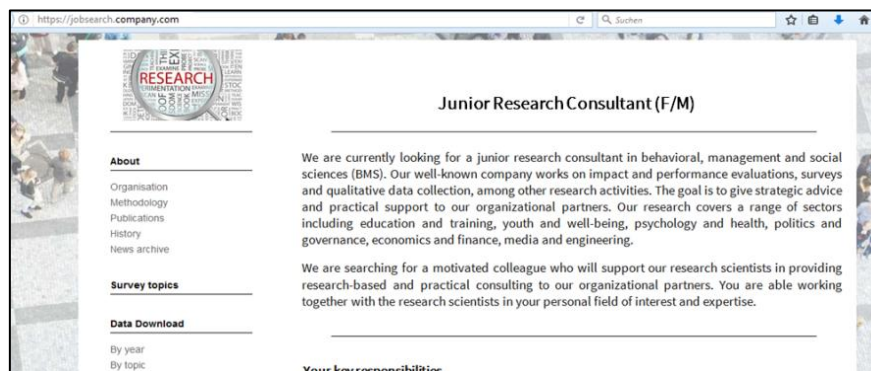
*Company website condition

Figure 3. Manipulation used in job description related to the possibility to interact and network
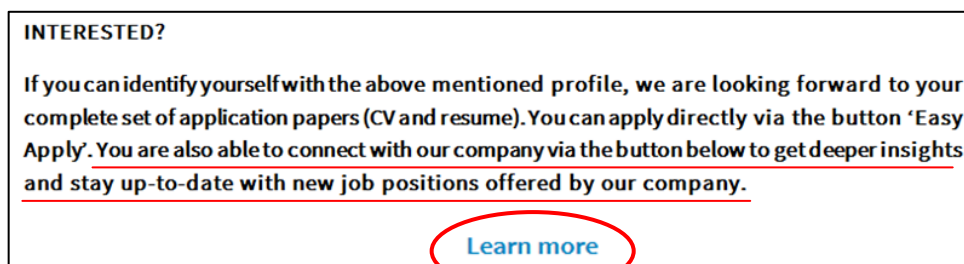
* LinkedIn condition

* Company website condition

3.2 Measures

The survey consisted of five subscales with a total number of 50 items (see Appendix B for a total overview of the items). Except the control variables, participants responded to each of the measures using a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Regardless of the assigned condition, participants were confronted with the same items.

Manipulation check

A manipulation check was performed in order to assess whether the participants recognized which workplace communication culture was presented in the job description. For each key characteristic of a traditional and modern WCC (e.g. channel, leader-member interaction and communication type/flow) one item was designed by the researcher. An independent t-test shows that respondents in the 'traditional WCC condition' and respondents in the 'modern WCC condition' evaluated the manipulation check questions significantly differently (Table 5). Hence, it can be assumed that the manipulations in the job description worked and participants understood the manipulations.

Table 5. Results of the independent t-test for the manipulation check questions

	Traditional WCC N = 130		Modern WCC N = 132		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	*t-test*
1a. Employees communicate via traditional channels	5.45	1.55	2.98	1.58	12.84**
1b. Employees communicate via new media	3.23	1.77	5.75	1.21	-13.45**
2a. Supervision is infrequent; performance reviews are provided annually	5.31	1.58	2.80	1.58	12.87**
2b. Supervision is frequent; performance reviews are provided continuously	2.82	1.68	5.23	1.57	-12.03**
3a. Communication within the company is vertical/ hierarchical and formal	4.71	1.68	2.45	1.61	11.08**
3b. Communication within the company is horizontal/ flat and informal	3.38	1.64	5.70	1.46	-12.05**

*p<.01   **p<.001

[a]Measured on a 7-point likert scale

Person-Organization Fit regarding communication

In accordance with Cho et al. (2013), a scale composed of three items was used to measure POF regarding communication. The original scale developed by Cable & Judge (1996) was modified to examine participants perceived fit with the companies communication culture. Participants were asked to consider their perception of (1) the channels used for workplace communication, (2) the frequency of supervisor interaction and (3) the type of workplace communication as stated in the assigned condition. An example item is: "My values for communication (e.g channel, frequency, type) match or fit the values of this company" (α= .85).

Employer image

To measure the perceived employer brand image, constructs and items were adapted from different previous studies that are in line with the instrumental-symbolic framework (Carpentier et al., 2017; Lievens, 2007; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Van Hoye & Saks, 2011; Van Hoye et al., 2013). There were four instrumental image dimensions, each of which consisted of three attributes/items. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which the company behind the job descriptions possessed each of these attributes. The instrumental image dimensions were pay/security (e.g. "Offers above average pay", α= .68), advancement (e.g. "Offers the possibility to advance", α= .81), task diversity/demands (e.g. "Offers challenging work", α= .78) and working conditions (e.g. "Offers flexible working arrangements", α= .63). One item from the working condition scale (e.g. "The company requires you to work standard working hours") had to be taken out in order to increase reliability of this scale. For the reason that the item was reverse coded, participants might have gotten confused.

Furthermore, there were six symbolic image dimensions. These included sincerity with four items (e.g. "honest", α= .69), innovativeness with four items (e.g. "daring", α= .78), competence with three items (e.g. "intelligent", α= .78), prestige with three items (e.g. "prestigious", α= .87), robustness with three items (e.g. "strong", α= .76) and atmosphere with four items (e.g. "friendly", α= .85). Respondents were asked to specify the extent to which these adjectives described the company as an employer.

Employer attractiveness

In order to measure employer attractiveness, five items from Highhouse et al.'s (2003) scale were used. Study participants were asked to respond to statements such as "This company is attractive for me as a place for employment", "I am interested in learning more about this company" and "A job at this company is very appealing to me" (α= .93).

Application intention

To assess application intention, one item was adapted from one used by Taylor and Bergman (1987): "I would intend to apply for a position with this organization". Based on this statement and the definition of application intention as suggested by Chapman et al. (2005, p. 929), two additional items were generated. The items were as follows: "I would be interested in submitting an application to this company"; "I would be willing to enter the applicant pool" (α= .92).

Control variables

Following previous studies in the recruitment literature, this study controlled for several individual demographics and characteristics (Erhart et al., 2012). Participants were asked to indicate their demographics, including age, gender and nationality in addition to their field of study (e.g. Business Administration) and phase of study (e.g. Bachelor, Master etc.). It was also important to know whether respondents are currently seeking a job. Further, the participants were asked whether they obtain a LinkedIn profile, including the answer options "Yes", "No", "Not yet but I am interested in obtaining one" and "I do not know LinkedIn".

3.4 Sample

The target group of this study included prospective young professionals in higher education that are close to graduation and belong to the Millennial generation. A total sample of 262 undergraduate students participated in the study. Nine people in the LinkedIn group did not know LinkedIn which is why their responses were filtered out, resulting in a final sample size of 252 respondents. The characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 6.

In line with the focus on the Millennial generation, participants of this study were born between 1988 and 1999. The mean age was 21.7 years (SD= 2.8 years). The sample was 42.5 percent male (n= 107) and 57.5 percent female (n= 145). In this study, it was not important to differentiate between Bachelor, pre-Master, Master or PhD students. There was a distribution of 185 Bachelor, 5 Pre-Master and 62 Master students. However, the field of study was an important factor as the job description was designed for BMS students. All participants belonged to the BMS study program. Attention was also paid to the country of origin. Participants included 76.6 percent Germans, 19.4 percent Dutch and the remaining 4 percent reported other nationalities. Of all the participants, 17.9 percent (n= 45) are currently seeking a job while 82.1 percent (n= 207) are not, which should be taken into account when analyzing the data. In addition, 52 respondents in the LinkedIn group (44.4 %) do have a LinkedIn profile while 65 respondents (55.6 %) have not, which should also be considered when analyzing the data.

Table 6. Sample characteristics

	Website & Traditional WCC	Website & Modern WCC	LinkedIn & Traditional WCC	LinkedIn & Modern WCC	Cumulative
	N = 68	N = 67	N = 57	N = 60	N = 252
Gender					
Male	27 (39.7 %)	26 (38.8 %)	29 (50.9 %)	25 (41.7 %)	107 (42.5 %)
Female	41 (60.3 %)	41 (61.2 %)	28 (49.1 %)	35 (58.3 %)	145 (57.5 %)
Nationality					
German	54 (79.4 %)	51 (76.1 %)	42 (73.7 %)	46 (76.7 %)	193 (76.6 %)
Dutch	12 (17.6 %)	14 (20. 9 %)	11 (19.3 %)	12 (20.0 %)	49 (19.4 %)
Other	2 (3 %)	2 (3 %)	4 (7 %)	2 (3.4 %)	10 (4 %)
Education					
Bachelor	48 (70.6 %)	48 (71.6 %)	46 (80.7 %)	43 (71.7 %)	185 (73.4 %)
Pre-Master	2 (2.9 %)	2 (3.0 %)	1 (1.8 %)	-	5 (2 %)
Master	18 (26.5 %)	17 (25.4 %)	10 (17.5 %)	17 (28.3 %)	62 (24.6 %)

To test for randomization of the participants demographics among the four experimental conditions (i.e. Website vs. LinkedIn; traditional vs. modern WCC), the Pearson Chi-square was conducted for the qualitative variables gender, nationality, field and phase of study. A two-way ANOVA analysis was conducted for the quantitative variable age. The results indicate that there is no significant association between the experimental condition and participants' age [$F(1,241)=.002$, $p=.96$; $F(1,241)=.02$, $p=.89$], gender [$\chi^2(1)=.83$, $p=.56$; $\chi^2(1)=1.20$, $p=.57$], nationality [$\chi^2(8)=7.43$, $p=.49$; $\chi^2(8)=7.17$, $p=.52$], study [$\chi^2(7)=3.12$, $p=.87$; $\chi^2(7)=6.48$, $p=.49$] and phase of study [$\chi^2(2)=1.82$, $p=.40$; $\chi^2(2)=.81$, $p=.67$]. Therefore, it can be anticipated that the randomization of the conditions worked.

3.2 Procedure

The online survey including a 2 x 2 experimental design was conducted with the program Qualtrics over a time frame of five weeks in October and November 2017. Participants were mainly recruited via the Sona-System of the Twente University in Enschede, the Netherlands. In addition, the link to the survey was spread over social media (e.g. Facebook). Completing the survey experiment took approximately 15 minutes.

Respondents were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions but still exposed to the same list of questions. All participants were informed beforehand about the nature and method of the study. Once they gave their consent to voluntarily take part in the anonymous research, they were exposed to one of the four job descriptions. They were told to imagine that they are qualified for the job and that the work is in their field of interest. After reading the job

description, participants were asked to evaluate the company. First, a manipulation check for one of the independent variables (i.e. WCC) was performed. Participants were then given the different items measuring (1) POF regarding communication, (2) employer image, (3) employer attractiveness and (4) application intention. In the last step, participants needed to indicate their demographics. The entire survey is presented in Appendix C.

3.5 Validity

In this study, validity is covered by using already established measurement scales. However, the measures were tested for their construct validity with exploratory factor analysis. Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was used for three independent factor analyses. The factors and factor loadings for each analysis are displayed in Appendix D.

First, it was determined whether the items of POF regarding communication, employer attractiveness and application intention group together. The eleven items were clustered into two factors. Items measuring POF regarding communication loaded on a single factor whereas items measuring employer attractiveness and application intention grouped together most strongly. Considering the strong correspondence and connection of the two research constructs in literature, this is not an unexpected result. Regarding further analyses with the two measurement scales in this study, similar outcomes might be yielded.

Secondly, it was examined whether items of the four instrumental image dimensions group together. The factor analysis showed that the items only clustered into three instead of the expected four factors. Notably, items measuring "advancement" do not form a sole factor. ADV1 and ADV2 loaded on the same factor as "pay/security" and "working conditions" while primarily on the first-mentioned. An explanation might be that the "possibility to advance" and "opportunity for promotion" were connoted with financial and personal success whereas working conditions might be perceived as important for making progresses at work. ADV3 also loaded on the same factor as "working conditions". The signaling words "fair opportunities" might have influenced participants to think of fair working conditions. However, considering the good reliability and successful use of the four instrumental image dimensions in past researches, this study uses these factors as intended.

Finally, a factor analysis among the six symbolic image dimensions showed that the items only clustered into four factors. Items measuring "prestige" loaded on "robustness" most strongly. Participants might have associated the adjectives describing prestige (e.g. high status) and robustness (e.g. strong) with the strength and power of the employer. Furthermore, the items measuring competence seem not to form a fixed factor. COMP1 and COMP3 loaded on multiple

factors at the same time. COMP2 was dropped from the study as it is not loading on any symbolic image factor at all. Considering that COMP1 and COMP3 still resulted in a high cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = .79$), this factor will still be used as intended. Besides, SIN3 and SIN4 loaded on the same factor as items measuring "atmosphere". It can be assumed that the adjectives "social" and "warm" were more associated with the atmosphere within an employing company than with its sincerity. Since all items of "sincerity" provided information about the atmosphere within a company in a much more general and higher sense, it can be assumed that these factors belong together. Supportive of this assumption, cronbach's alpha yielded a higher value for both "sincerity" and "atmosphere" together ($\alpha = .87$) than in isolation. As a result, this study considers these two factors as one factor "atmosphere/sincerity".

4. RESULTS

In Appendix E, the descriptive statistics of the dependent variables per condition are displayed. To test the research hypotheses, univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used. The purpose was to examine the main and interaction effects of online-recruitment channel (Company Website vs. LinkedIn) and WCC (traditional vs. modern) on perceptions of the employer image and attractiveness as well as on application intentions and POF perceptions regarding communication. Whereas the two-way ANOVA is suitable for investigating the effects of two independent variables (e.g. online-recruitment channel and WCC) on one dependent variable (DV), the two-way MANOVA extends this analysis by taking into account multiple DVs. Caution was therefore taken about which DVs were considered together in one MANOVA since the tested DVs are bundled together into a weighted linear combination or composite variable.

In this study, two-way MANOVA was used as a test for variables measuring the instrumental employer image dimension (Table 7) and the symbolic employer image dimension (Table 8). An argument in favor of doing so was that past literature provides both conceptual and empirical support for the applicability of instrumental and symbolic trait inferences to measure an organization's image as an employer (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Lievens et al., 2007; Van Hoye et al., 2013). In addition, two-way MANOVA was used to examine whether there were differences in the perceived employer attractiveness and application intentions based on the used online-recruitment channel and offered WCC (Table 9). The argument in favor for this analysis was that these two DVs are closely related constructs that very highly correlated with each other (r=.89) and even loaded on the same factor in our study. Accordingly, a simple two-way ANOVA was conducted for POF regarding communication (Table 10). Unlike the other DVs of this study, POF regarding communication is strongly person-related and subjective, enquiring about the personal values of the respondent. Further, POF could not directly be identified as either being a predictor of employer attraction or mediator of employer image and attraction.

4.1 Main effects

Hypothesis 1 proposed that the usage of LinkedIn as recruitment channel would yield higher scores on a) employer image, b) employer attractiveness, c) application intention, and d) perceived POF regarding communication than the usage of a company website. Results of the MANOVAs and ANOVA revealed that there were no statistically significant effects of recruitment channel on the dependent variables. Therefore, the first hypothesis under H1a, H1b, H1c and H1d was rejected. The results indicated that there was no difference in participants'

perception of the employer image and attractiveness as well as their application intentions and POF perceptions regarding communication in a job seeking process when either exposed to the employer's company website or LinkedIn page.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that offering a modern workplace communication culture would yield higher scores on a) employer image, b) employer attractiveness, c) application intention, as well as d) perceived POF regarding communication than offering a traditional WCC. First, the effect of WCC on the employer image was examined. Differences were especially expected among the symbolic rather than among the instrumental image dimensions. Results of the two-way MANOVA indicated that there was a significant difference in perceptions of the instrumental employer image dimension based on the WCC as stated in the job description, $F(4,000)=3.02$, $p<.05$; Wilk's $\Lambda=.951$, partial eta²= .049. In particular, a modern WCC outperformed the traditional WCC on the perceived working conditions/work-life balance, $F(1,252)=9.24$, $p<.01$, 95% CI [.131; .612], partial eta²= .037. With a small to medium effect size, this result indicated that modern workplace communication may be an indicator for people to be or feel a little more flexible and free at work.

Table 7. Results of the two-way MANOVA for the *instrumental employer image dimension*

Dependent Variables		F	df	Sig.	$\eta^2 p$
Instrumental Employer Image Dimension					
Pay/Security[2]	Workplace com. culture	0.30	1,252	.863	
	Recruitment channel	0.14	1,252	.709	
	Interaction	1.36	1,252	.245	
Advancement[3]	Workplace com. culture	0.12	1,252	.734	
	Recruitment channel	0.51	1,252	.475	
	Interaction	0.13	1,252	.724	
Task diversity/demands	Workplace com. culture	0.08	1,252	.779	
	Recruitment channel	0.31	1,252	.580	
	Interaction	0.11	1,252	.737	
Working conditions	Workplace com. culture	9.24	1,252	.003	.037
	Recruitment channel	0.01	1,252	.945	
	Interaction	0.02	1,252	.893	

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[2] A between groups ANOVA suggested that there were differences in means for *pay* between people who 1) do obtain a LinkedIn profile, 2) do not obtain a LinkedIn profile and 3) are interested in obtaining a LinkedIn profile, $F(3,252)= 3.52$, $p<.05$. However, the multiple comparison test showed that there were no significant differences between each pair of the three groups. Regarding the manipulations of this study, no significant differences for pay between these groups were found.

[3] Based on a one-way ANOVA, there were also differences in means for *advancement* among 'having or not having a LinkedIn profile', $F(3,252)= 3.95$, $p<.01$. However, the multiple comparison test showed that there were no significant differences between each pair of the three groups. Regarding the manipulations of this study, no significant differences for advancement between these groups were found.

Another MANOVA was performed for the symbolic employer image dimension. There was a statistically significant difference in perceptions of the symbolic employer image dimension based on the WCC as stated in the job description, $F(244,000)= 11.66$, p<.000; Wilk's $\Lambda=.807$, partial eta²= .193. Three of the five dimensions yielded a significant higher score in the modern than in the traditional WCC condition. This was the case for innovativeness $(F(1,252)=4.59, p<.05, 95\%$ CI [.023; .536], partial eta²=.018), prestige $(F(1,252)=7.86, p=.01, 95\%$ CI [.106; .604], partial eta²=.031) and atmosphere/sincerity $(F(1,252)=34.16, p=.000, 95\%$ CI [.418; .843], partial eta²=.121). Consequently, H2a could partially be confirmed. Noticeable, the effect size for atmosphere/sincerity was large, indicating that a company offering a modern WCC was perceived as having a quite better (work) atmosphere. However, no significant differences could be found for the perceived competence and robustness of the employer.

Table 8. Results of the two-way MANOVA for the *symbolic employer image dimension*

Dependent Variables		F	df	Sig.	$\eta^2 p$
Symbolic Employer Image Dimension					
Innovativeness	Workplace com. culture	4.59	1,252	.033	.018
	Recruitment channel	2.07	1,252	.151	
	Interaction	1.08	1,252	.301	
Competence[4]	Workplace com. culture	1.06	1,252	.304	
	Recruitment channel	0.48	1,252	.489	
	Interaction	0.03	1,252	.868	
Prestige	Workplace com. culture	7.86	1,252	.005	.031
	Recruitment channel	0.53	1,252	.486	
	Interaction	0.01	1,252	.939	
Robustness[5]	Workplace com. culture	2.55	1,252	.112	
	Recruitment channel	2.63	1,252	.106	
	Interaction	0.01	1,252	.941	
Atmosphere/Sincerity	Workplace com. culture	34.16	1,252	.000	.121
	Recruitment channel	1.73	1,252	.189	
	Interaction	1.39	1,252	.240	

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[4] A between groups ANOVA suggested that there were differences in means for *competence* between people who 1) do obtain a LinkedIn profile, 2) do not obtain a LinkedIn profile and 3) are interested in obtaining a LinkedIn profile, $F(3,252)= 4.18$, $p<.01$. Multiple comparison showed that people who do not have a LinkedIn profile assessed competence significantly more positive than people who are interested in obtaining a LinkedIn profile. Regarding the manipulations of this study, no significant differences for competence between these groups were found.

[5] A one-way ANOVA showed that there were significant differences in means for *robustness* between people who are searching a job and who are not, $F(1,252)= 10.00$, $p<.01$. People who are searching a job assessed robustness significantly more positive than people who are not searching a job. Regarding the manipulations of this study, no significant differences for robustness between these two groups were found.

Second, the effect of WCC on employer attractiveness and application intention was examined. Results of the two-way MANOVA indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in perceptions of the employer attractiveness and application intentions based on the WCC as offered in the job ad, $F(247,000)= 5.65$, p<.01, Wilk's Λ=.956, partial eta²= .044. The test showed that in the modern WCC condition scores were significantly higher for employer attractiveness than in the traditional WCC condition, $F(1,252)= 11.04$, *p*<.01, 95% CI [.210; .823], partial eta²= .043. The same applied for application intentions. Scores on application intention were significantly higher in the modern WCC condition as compared to the traditional WCC condition, $F(1,252)=7.25$, *p*<.01, 95% CI [.128; .822], partial eta²= .028. Accordingly, H2b and H2c with a small to medium effect size were confirmed. The results reveal that offering a modern WCC enhanced the employer attractiveness and the intentions to apply.

Table 9. Results of the two-way MANOVA for *employer attractiveness* and *application intention*

Dependent Variables		F	df	Sig.	$\eta^2 p$
Employer Attractiveness	Workplace com. culture	11.04	1,252	.001	.043
	Recruitment channel	0.96	1,252	.329	
	Interaction	2.66	1,252	.104	
Application Intention	Workplace com. culture	7.25	1,252	.008	.028
	Recruitment channel	0.52	1,252	.473	
	Interaction	3.15	1,252	.078	

Third, a two-way ANOVA was performed to examine the effect of WCC on POF regarding communication. The results indicated that means of POF perceptions are significantly higher in the modern WCC condition than in the traditional WCC condition, $F(1,252)=8.26$, *p*<.01, 95% CI [.141; .756], partial eta²= .032. Therefore, H2d was confirmed with a small to medium effect size. This indicates that Millennials perceive a little higher POF towards a company supporting modern workplace communication.

Table 10. Results of the two-way ANOVA for *POF regarding communication*

Dependent Variable		F	df	Sig.	$\eta^2 p$
POF regarding com.	Workplace com. culture	8.26	1,252	.004	.032
	Recruitment channel	1.76	1,252	.186	
	Interaction	0.49	1,252	.486	

4.2 Interaction

Hypothesis 3 proposed that in the condition of using LinkedIn as a recruitment channel, offering a modern WCC will have a greater effect on a) employer image, b) employer attractiveness, c) application intention, and d) POF perceptions regarding communication than offering a traditional WCC. The test revealed that there was no interaction effect of WCC and recruitment channel on the dependent variables. As a result, the third hypothesis under H3a, H3b, H3c and H3d was not supported. It can be concluded that the usage of LinkedIn did not seem to reinforce the effects of offering a modern WCC. The used recruitment channel, thus, did not influence the effects of WCC. Table 11 presents all established hypotheses and whether these were supported or not.

Table 11. Hypotheses

Hypothesis		Support for Hypotheses?
H1: The usage of LinkedIn as an online-recruitment channel, as compared to a company's website, has a positive effect on Millennials' perception of…	**a)** employer image	No
	b) employer attractiveness	No
	c) application intentions	No
	d) POF regarding com.	No
H2: Offering a modern workplace communication culture in job advertisements, as opposed to a traditional workplace communication culture, has a positive effect on Millennials' perception of…	**a)** employer image	Partly yes
	b) employer attractiveness	Yes
	c) application intentions	Yes
	d) POF regarding com.	Yes
H3: In the condition of using LinkedIn as a recruitment channel, offering a modern WCC will have a greater effect on Millennials' perception of…	**a)** employer image	No
	b) employer attractiveness	No
	c) application intentions	No
	d) POF regarding com.	No

5. DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this research was to understand how to address the Millennial generation as prospective employees and potential targets for employer branding. With an interest in their unique characteristics, the present study looked at the implications and opportunities of employer branding practices for millennial applicant attraction. The focus was on recruitment ads' website features (related to corporate website vs. LinkedIn) and content (related to traditional vs. modern workplace communication) given the relevance of these variables for Millennial workers.

This study found no evidence for the first hypothesis which proposed that recruitment ads' website features influence Millennial applicant attraction. Even though LinkedIn provides more advanced website features than a company website, the results suggested no difference in perceptions of the employer image, the employer attractiveness, application intentions and POF perceptions regarding communication. In contrast to the theoretical assumption, offering a targeted job and providing the opportunity for interactive networking was not perceived as a signal for an organization's commitment to technology and innovation (Erhart et al., 2012). Thus, unlike the claim that all organizational activities are perceived as signals, no differences were found due to perceptions of the company's instrumental and symbolic attributes that could have contributed to attraction (App et al., 2012; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003). Possibly, this result has occurred as a consequence of the limited research design or because of the focus on both recruitment ads' website features and content. As suggested by Connelly et al. (2011) that the value of signals may diminish as the number of other signals increases, different results could yield when focusing on the impact of website features solely.

Despite the outcome that LinkedIn might add no value to applicant attraction, this recruitment channel is none the less considered as effective for addressing both active and passive job seekers (Nicolaou, 2014). As LinkedIn had no significant effect on the selected variables of this study, it may be that it accounts for other company-relevant outcomes such as an employer's credibility or the global reach of recruitment messages. All in all, future research is encouraged that reinvestigates and improves the comparison of using corporate websites and LinkedIn in predicting millennial applicant attraction, as well as research that more deeply investigates how perceptions of web-based recruitment features function as signals.

Next to the recruitment channel, this research was the first of its kind examining whether perceptions of a company's workplace communication predict millennial applicant attraction. In line with the Signaling Theory (App et al., 2012; Connelly et al., 2011) and the Social Identity Theory (Lievens et al., 2007; Maxwell & Knox, 2009), this study found support for the second

hypothesis. The results indicated that offering a modern as opposed to a traditional WCC increase POF perceptions regarding communication, the employer attractiveness, application intentions and partly perceptions of the employer image. Presenting a modern WCC in a recruitment ad could therefore contribute to applicant attraction by signaling unseen organizational characteristics and advantages of employment (e.g. new media usage, close leader-member relationship, horizontal and informal communication). Reflecting the organization's personality through these communication-related values might underpin Millennials' feelings of identification with the employer. In view of that, the present study could improve the understanding about the role of modern workplace communication for addressing the highly talented candidates of the Millennial generation. Future work on employer branding should incorporate the role of internal communication systems, as some researchers have begun to do by investigating attitudes towards organizational social media policies (Cho et al., 2013).

Considering the partial impact of a modern WCC on the employer image, some effects were left unexplained. Results of this study suggested a positive effect on the perceived working conditions/work-life-balance, innovativeness, prestige and atmosphere/sincerity of the employer. As especially the latter is perceived as more positive, the WCC as stated in a job ad makes a great difference in Millennials' evaluations of the work atmosphere and environment. This is likely to be an important factor for Millennials in order to establish social relationships at the workplace considering that co-workers *"make the place"* (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; p. 1082). Noticeable, a modern WCC positively changes Millennial's opinion about being able to combine work with other domains of life. These perceptions of working condition/ work-life-balance might arise due to boundaries blurring between professional (e.g. work-related) and casual (e.g. private) interactions at the workplace. Moreover, this study found that presenting a modern WCC did not change perceptions of the employer's competence or robustness as part of the symbolic employer image. It can be concluded that workplace communication, as stated in a job ad, does not comprise how successful or strong a company seems. Still, further research should examine which other underlying processes are at play.

Beyond the independent effects of online-recruitment channel and WCC on applicant attraction, the interactive effect of both factors was investigated. This research found no evidence for the third hypothesis which proposed that the usage of LinkedIn would underline or match a modern WCC, thus contributing to applicant attraction. Possibly, differences between the website features have been too subtle whereas the content of the recruitment ad was more important for participant's evaluation. The task of reading the job description could have influenced respondents to more carefully attend to its content than its appearance in terms of the

provided features. Prospective researches should therefore further examine the possible reinforcing effect of recruitment ads' website features in relation to its content.

In sum, this study found significant relationships between a company's WCC and relevant recruitment outcomes. Although only one hypothesis could be supported, this finding highlights the underlying relationship(s) between the dependent variables. The effects remained consistent among those measures, supporting other researches that found indirect as well as direct effects of POF and employer image on organizational attraction and application intention (Backhaus & Tikko, 2004; Cho et al., 2013; Gomes & Neves, 2011). Further, as this study focused on communication-oriented POF in job seeking contexts, the findings suggest that the extension of POF into communication topics is suitable in an organizational context. Future research is encouraged to consider POF regarding communication as well as research that tests the present research model by integrating the underlying relationships between the variables.

5.1 Limitations and future research

Although the present study yields some meaningful findings, this research is not without limitations that offer paths for further research. A first limitation is the experimental design which might have influenced how participants have processed the given information (i.e. more consciously than they would in reality). Further, respondents of this study were exposed to screenshots (e.g. static pictures) of a fictitious company's website and LinkedIn page rather than to actual existing websites. This may have resulted in lower levels of realism as participants were not able to explore the website or features of LinkedIn. Corresponding to Erhart and Ziegert's (2005) claim that information on the web usually has greater information richness than newspaper ads, the exposure to screenshots in our study could have resulted in less accurate perceptions of the intended organizational characteristics (e.g. innovativeness). Participants were also not able to compare one employer with another which would likely be the case in real life settings. Future research should reexamine this study with an actual organization and its online-recruitment channels by also controlling participant's browsing process.

An additional limitation regarding the experimental design relates to the manipulations used to illustrate a WCC. This study included three key characteristics (e.g. communication channel, leader-member interaction, communication type and flow) of which the single importance for attraction is still unknown. Future research should focus on each characteristic in isolation as to investigate which attribute is most or least important for applicant attraction.

Another limitation concerns the use of a convenience sample. This study relied on self-reported measures from a BMS student population with different nationalities. Of these, only

17.9 percent were currently seeking a job. The sample may not be representative for a wide range of younger job seekers and the finding therefore not generalizable for a larger section of the population. Future studies should examine the findings with applicant samples that are currently seeking a job or actively applying to organizations.

Moreover, future studies could conduct longitudinal research to gain better insights in the different stages of the recruitment process. According to Chapman et al. (2005) there is a low relationship between applicant attraction and actual job choice. Hence, whereas the findings seem important for the early recruitment stage, future studies should not only focus on behavioral intentions (e.g. application intention) but also on behavioral responses (e.g. application or acceptance behaviors) after a fixed period of time. Furthermore, research should examine whether a company's WCC accounts for organizational commitment in the long run. Concerning the increasing person-organization misfits among Millennials that have led to problems of retention (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Westerman & Yamamura, 2007), future studies could also investigate whether a modern WCC can increase organizational commitment and decrease turnover intentions.

Another direction for future study is the distinction between different organizations/ sectors applying employer branding practices and different generational groups as potential targets. On the one hand, it is possible that the effects of online-recruitment channel depend on the work environment in general, such as in the private or public sector. Specific social media platforms could be more effective for certain organizations than for others. On the other hand, a modern WCC could be even more important for a younger generation (e.g. Generation Z) than for Millennials. Particularly, members of the Generation Z are labeled the most advanced generation in terms of technology, education and independence (Posnick-Godwin, 2010), indicating that workplace communication might also be an important factor for addressing them. Hence, it would be of particular benefit to expand this study to different types of organizations and alternative generational groups so as to explore whether any occupational or generational variations in terms of attraction exist.

Future study could also focus on different content characteristics of a recruitment ad that might influence applicant attraction. This study concentrated on recruitment channel and workplace communication culture because they are increasingly relevant for current job seekers of the Millennial generation. Still, there are also other interesting topics within employer branding which are hardly researched. These topics may possibly take in the role of career advancement opportunities (Kraimer et al., 2011) or corporate social responsibility (Birth et al., 2008; Lis, 2012) for applicant attraction.

5.2 Practical implications

This research has also some meaningful practical implications for Human Research managers and businesses in general. It provides substantial insights in how contemporary employer branding might look like. Specifically, the findings supported the notion that companies should not exceedingly concern themselves over whether their online job advertisements are presented on their corporate website or LinkedIn profile; the website features of LinkedIn do not create any significant differences in Millennial applicant attraction. Given the relatively low cost and the fact that most medium- to large-size companies already possess an own website, it would seem foolish not to recruit candidates via this channel. With regard to the usage of LinkedIn, the present study would like to underline the channel's significance and effectiveness for the recruitment practice although seemingly not relevant for employer branding.

Notably, LinkedIn already has a large user community and people go there for a specific reason. As one of the main business networks used by job seeking students, LinkedIn's career page provides the opportunity to approach a larger amount of them simultaneous- and instantaneously. Companies can directly search for talent, join discussion groups to identify and recruit young candidates and establish relationships with possible applicants. The website of a company is often linked back to a job ad on social media or job boards to help candidates discover more about the company. Job seekers rarely visit corporate websites on a first instance but as a consequence of an interesting job offer. Thus, although LinkedIn may not be more effective in attracting young applicants, it still has certain advantages above the usual company recruitment site. HR managers dealing with employer branding practices are therefore advised to at least consider their company's presence on LinkedIn. Online-recruitment via SNSs remains modern and valuable as long as it is not replaced by a channel that is cheaper, easier to use, technologically more developed or with a greater number of users. It is therefore important that HR managers are prepared to adjust quickly to new technologies and channels in order to reach their favored target group. For employer branding, however, our findings showed that recruitment ad's content (at least in terms of the characteristics included in the current study) could potentially provide larger contribution to attraction. Nevertheless, it is questionable whether the sole reliance on a company's website is sufficient for addressing an intended target group. Choosing a recruitment channel should be well thought and well prepared as it provides the basis for reaching and attracting a large amount of suitable job candidates.

The acquired knowledge of this study also produced practical implications for HR and communication departments of what companies need to require in order to meet the demands of prospective millennial employees. The most prominent implication this study delivered is the importance of established workplace communication cultures in which members of the

Millennial generation perceive a welcoming ambience and work environment. The findings of this study suggest that a modern WCC incorporating the demands, expectations and needs of Millennials significantly contributes to applicant attraction. HR departments are thus advised to offer a modern WCC in order to yield more positive outcomes with regard to their employer image and attractiveness but also to stimulate perceived POF and application intentions among young job seekers. Implementing a modern WCC would imply that the organization is willing to respond to the millennial needs. By doing this, companies will be able to attract high qualified and skilled employees, such as graduating students, who will contribute to the firm's human capital and success. However, the question remains in how far Millennials are really that different from other generations in terms of what they value regarding communication?

A modern WCC that is characterized by new media communication, frequent supervision and an open as well as transparent communication could be perceived attractive by other generations, too. Since companies would need to invest resources and capital to implement modern WCCs, it is crucial that they understand the added value for their businesses. Millennial generation workers are said to be '*tough to manage*' (Sinek, 2018). As outlined in the current study, modern workplace communication comprises what Millennials could really *need* in order to be managed properly. The difference between Millennials and other generations currently employed (e.g. Baby Boomers, Generation X) is therefore situated in their motivational drivers.

Born and raised with different social and historical events (e.g. 9/11), different economical factors (e.g. 2008 market crash, economic expansion), a different culture (e.g. helicopter parents, children of divorce) and new technologies (e.g. digital and social media), Millennials have been grown up in a world where nothing is certain and constantly fast changing (Kowske, Rasch, & Wiley, 2010; Twenge et al., 2010). As a result, they share a distinct view on work and life. For instance, they are less committed and loyal to their work than other generations as they work towards a more balanced life at the expense of income and promotion (Crampton & Hodge, 2009). This comes along with a strong sense of entitlement and a business world that isn't helping them to achieve that balance as they care more about economic reasons than about their younger employees (Sinek, 2018). New communication strategies inspired by Millennials' motivational drivers might enable employers to revitalize their workplace culture and create stronger employee relations in the long term. Streamlining workplace communication to meet Millennials' needs should therefore be seen as an opportunity, rather than a burden, as remodeling communication could have an overall positive workplace impact.

6. CONCLUSION

This research intended to identify the value components of Social Network Sites and workplace communication cultures for contemporary employer branding. By this means, the present study represents an advancement of previous work on recruitment and attraction that is not only theoretically grounded but also practically relevant. In providing answer to the research question, this study shed light on how to address the Millennial generation as new entrants into the labor market. The study explicitly stresses the importance of internal communication, especially workplace communication, for recruitment communication research and the novelty value for employer branding literature as it is the first of its kind. Moreover, this study pursues to help HR departments in managing their future resources and developing valuable human capital.

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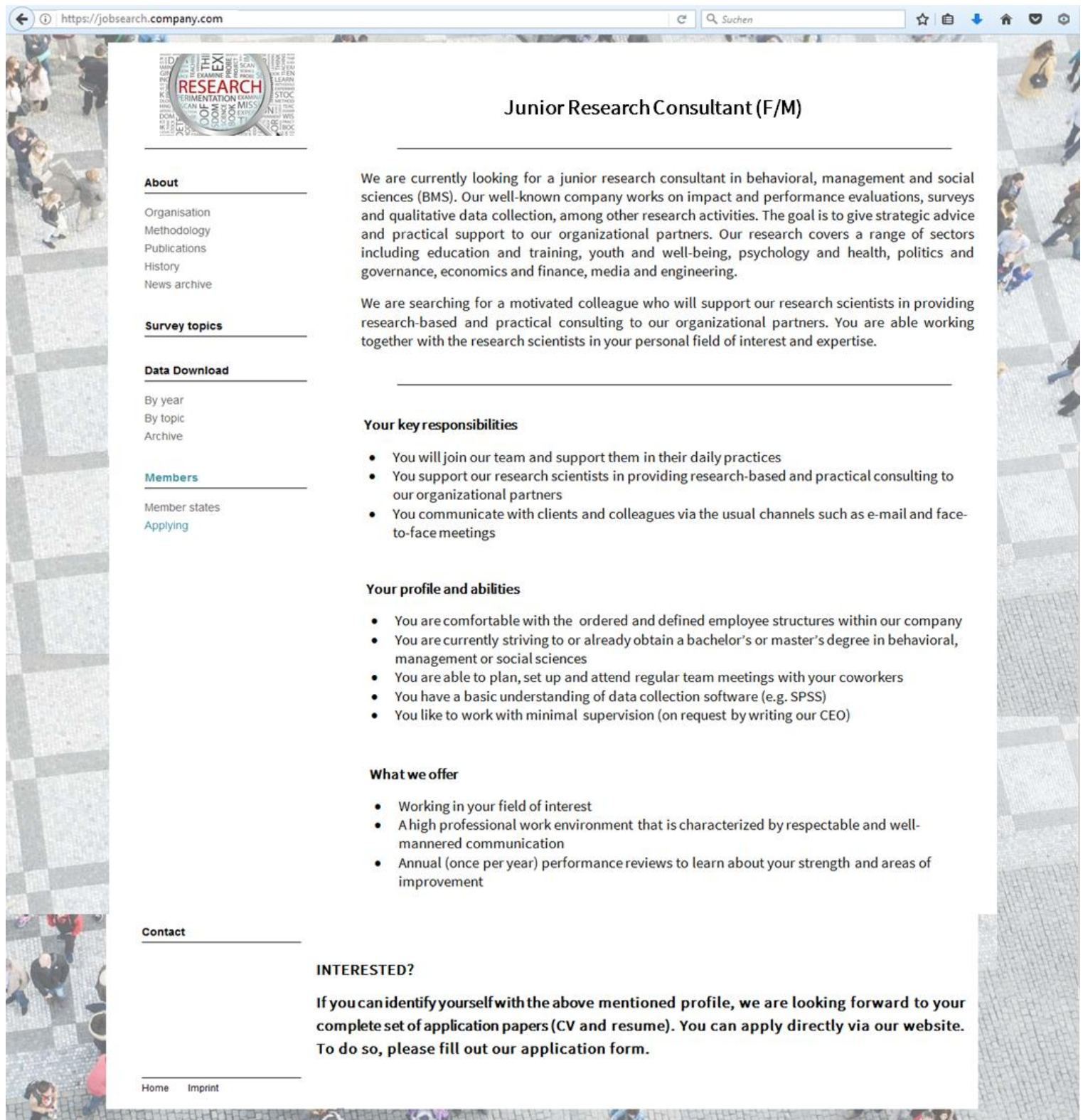
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Appendix

Appendix A: Four different Job Advertisements

Job advertisement A: Company Website & Traditional Workplace Communication Culture

Job Advertisement B: Company Website & Modern Workplace Communication Culture

Junior Research Consultant (F/M)

We are currently looking for a junior research consultant in behavioral, management and social sciences (BMS). Our well-known company works on impact and performance evaluations, surveys and qualitative data collection, among other research activities. The goal is to give strategic advice and practical support to our organizational partners. Our research covers a range of sectors including education and training, youth and well-being, psychology and health, politics and governance, economics and finance, media and engineering.

We are searching for a motivated colleague who will support our research scientists in providing research-based and practical consulting to our organizational partners. You are able working together with the research scientists in your personal field of interest and expertise.

Your key responsibilities

- You will join our team and support them in their daily practices
- You support our research scientists in providing research-based and practical consulting to our organizational partners
- You communicate with clients and colleagues via our new implemented mobile employee app (easily sharing appointments and documents)

Your profile and abilities

- You like flat hierarchies and casual interactions at the workplace
- You are currently striving to or already obtain a bachelor's or master's degree in behavioral, management or social sciences
- You are able to make use of social media (e.g. Facebook, social media apps) to communicate with your colleagues
- You have a basic understanding of data collection software (e.g. SPSS)
- You like to work with frequent, regular and maximal supervision

What we offer

- Working in your field of interest
- A casual work environment that is characterized by open and transparent communication
- Continuous and frequent performance reviews to learn about your strength and areas of improvement
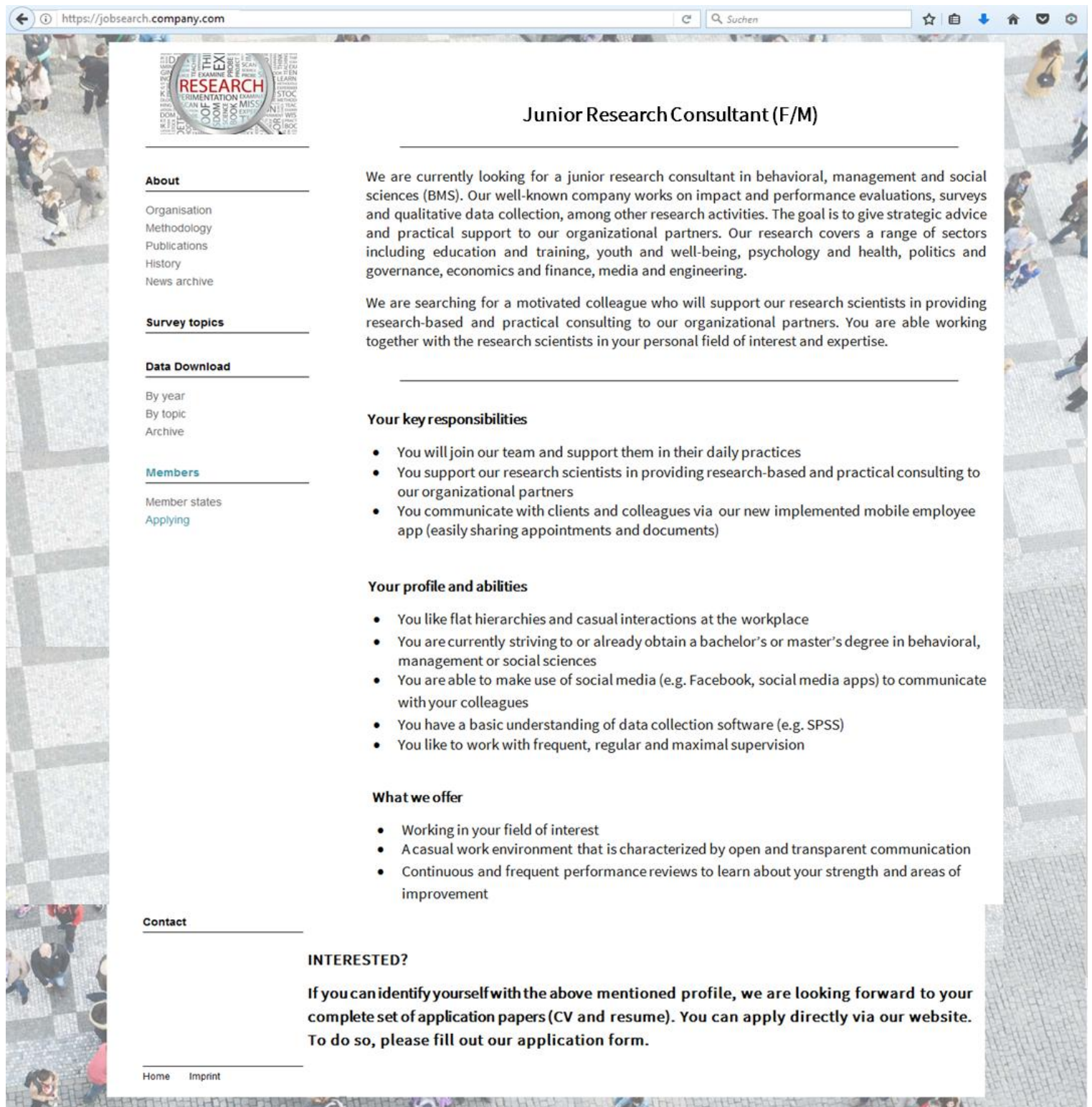
INTERESTED?

If you can identify yourself with the above mentioned profile, we are looking forward to your complete set of application papers (CV and resume). You can apply directly via our website. To do so, please fill out our application form.

Job Advertisement C: LinkedIn & Traditional Workplace Communication Culture

Job Advertisement D: LinkedIn & Modern Workplace Communication Culture

Construct	Items
Manipulation Check Questions	1a. Employees in the company communicate via traditional channels (e.g. e-mail, face-to-face) 1b. Employees in the company communicate via new media (e.g. social media, mobile apps) 2a. Supervision is infrequent and performance reviews are provided annually 2b. Supervision is frequent and performance reviews are provided continuously 3a. Communication within the company can be described as vertical/hierarchical and formal 3b. Communication within the company can be described as horizontal/flat and informal
Person-Organization Fit regarding Communication (Cable & Judge, 1996)	1. My values for communication (e.g. channel, type, frequency) match or fit the values of this company 2. I am able to maintain my values for communication (e.g. channel, type, frequency) at this company 3. My values for communication (e.g. channel, type, frequency) are different from the company's values (reverse coded)

Employer Brand Image Dimensions (Carpentier et al., 2017; Lievens, 2007; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Van Hoye & Saks, 2011; Van Hoye et al. 2013)	**Instrumental attributes**
	
	Pay/Security
	    1. The company offers a relatively high wage
	    2. The company offers above average pay
	    3. The company offers interesting benefits besides the wage (e.g. car, cell phone)
	Advancement
	    1. The company offers the possibility to advance
	    2. The company offers the opportunity for promotion
	    3. The company offers fair opportunities for advancement
	Task diversity/demands
	    1. The company offers a wide variety of tasks
	    2. The company offers an interesting range of jobs
	    3. The company offers challenging work
	Working conditions/Work-life-balance
	    1. The company offers flexible working arrangements
	    2. The company requires you to work standard working hours (reverse coded)**
	    3 The company allows to combine work with other domains of life (e.g. family and hobbies)
	
	Symbolic attributes*
	
	Sincerity
	    1. Honest
	    2. Sincere
	    3. Social
	    4. Warm

Innovativeness
    1. Daring
    2. Exciting
    3. Forward-Looking
    4.Creative
Competence
    1. Intelligent
    2. Technical**
    3. Successful
Prestige
    1. Prestigious
    2. High status
    3. Highly regarded
Robustness
    1. Strong
    2. Tough
    3. Rugged
Atmosphere
    1. Friendly
    2. Informal
    3. Caring
    4.Pleasant

Employer Attractiveness (Highhouse et al., 2003)

1. For me, the company would be a good place to work
2. I would not be interested in this company expect as a last resort (reverse coded)
3. This company is attractive for me as a place for employment
4. I am interested in learning more about this company
5. A job at this company is very appealing to me

Application Intention (Chapman et al., 2005; Taylor & Bergman, 1987)

1. I would be interested in submitting an application to this company
2. I intend to apply for a position with this organization
3. I would not be willing to enter the applicant pool (reverse coded)

*Applicants were asked to which extent the adjectives seem to describe the organization

***Cursive:* Items were deleted from the study to enhance reliability or cover validity

Appendix C: Online Survey

Q1 Dear Participant,

Thank you for participating in this online study about employer attraction.

In the next step, you will have to read a *job description of a company* that is currently searching for a new employee. Read it carefully. Based on this job description, you will be asked to *evaluate the employing company behind the job description*. Imagine that you are qualified for the job and that the job is in your field of interest. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions but you should fill in the survey faithfully. In the end, some demographical questions will be asked.

The study will take about 15 minutes. All data is kept anonymously and personal information will not be passed on to third parties under any condition. Participation is voluntarily and you can refuse or quit the study at any time. In case you are interested in the study results, please note the researcher's email address at the end of this survey.

Continuing with ">>" means that you declare to have been informed about the nature and method of the study.

University of Twente,
Lisa Völker

When participant was exposed to the company website (regardless of WCC condition):

You are now on the website of a company that is searching for a new employee.

 Please, look at the following job description <u>really carefully</u>.
 You will not be able to go back and look at it again.
 However, you can take notes on a separate piece of paper.

When participant was exposed to the LinkedIn page (regardless of WCC condition):

You are now on the LinkedIn profile of a company that is searching for a new employee.

LinkedIn is a business- and employment-oriented social networking service. It is mainly used for professional networking, including employers posting jobs and job seekers posting their curriculum vitae (CVs). Based on a users profile information and search activities, LinkedIn suggests companies that a user may be interested in working for.

 Please, look at the following job offering<u> really carefully</u>.
 You will not be able to go back and look at it again.
 However, you can take notes on a separate piece of paper.

Q3 Please rate the following statements about the <u>communication culture</u> which is present in the employing company

Rate the following statements about the *channels* used for workplace communication in the company

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Employees mainly communicate via traditional channels (e.g. e-mail, face-to-face) (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Employees mainly communicate via new media (e.g. social media, mobile apps) (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q34 Rate the following statements about the *frequency of interaction* with the supervisor in the company

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Supervision is infrequent (on request) and performance reviews are provided annually (once per year) (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Supervision is frequent (regularly) and performance reviews are provided continuously (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q35 Rate the following statements about the *type of workplace communication* present in the company

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Communication within the company can be described as vertical (hierarchical) and formal (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Communication within the company can be described as horizontal (flat) and informal (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q4 **Please rate the following statements about <u>your perceived fit with the communication culture</u> in the company**

For your assessment, please consider your previous evaluation of
(1) the *channels* that are used for workplace communication;
(2) the *frequency of interaction* with the supervisor and;
(3) the *type* of workplace communication in the company.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
My values for communication (e.g. channel, frequency, type) match or fit the values of this company (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am able to maintain my values for communication (e.g. channel, type, frequency) at this company (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My values for communication (e.g. channel, type, frequency) are different from the company's values (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q5 Based on the job description, please rate the following statement about the employing company

The Company...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Offers a high wage (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Offers above average pay (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Offers interesting benefits besides the wage (e.g. company car, cell phone) (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q6 The Company…

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Offers the possibility to advance (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Offers the opportunity for promotion (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Offers fair opportunities for advancement (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q7 The Company...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Offers a wide variety of tasks (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Offers an interesting range of jobs (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Offers challenging work(3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q8 The Company...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Offers flexible work arrangements (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Requires you to work standard working hours (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Allows to combine work with other domains of life (e.g. family, hobbies) (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q10 **Please indicate to which extent the following adjectives describe the organization**

To me, the Company appears...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Honest (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sincere (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Social (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Warm (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q11 To me, the company appears...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Daring (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Exciting (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Forward-looking (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Creative (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q12 To me, the company appears...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Intelligent (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Technical (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Successful (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q13 To me, the company appears...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Prestigous (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Having a high status (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Being highly regarded (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q14 To me, the company appears...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Strong (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Tough (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Rugged (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q15 To me, the atmosphere within the company appears...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Friendly (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Informal (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Caring (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pleasant (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q16 **Please indicate how attractive the company appears to you as a possible employer**

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
For me, the company would be a good place to work (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would not be interested in this company except as a last resort (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
This company is attractive for me as a place for employment (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am interested in learning more about this company (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A job at this company is very appealing to me (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q17 **Please indicate your intention to pursue a job at this company**

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I would be interested in submitting an application to this company (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would intend to apply for a position at this organization (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would not be willing to enter the applicant pool (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q18 You are nearly finished ! Just some last questions about your person.

What is you gender?

○ Male (1)

○ Female (2)

Q19 How old are you? ＿＿＿

Q20 What is your nationality?

○ Dutch (1)

○ German (2)

○ Other, namely (3) _____

Q21 What are you studying?

○ Business Administration (1)

○ Communication Studies (2)

○ Psychology (3)

○ Public Administration (4)

○ Educational Science and Technology (5)

○ European Studies (6)

○ Industrial Engineering and Management (7)

○ Other, namely (8) _____

Q22 In which phase of your study are you?

○ Bachelor (1)

○ Pre-Master (2)

○ Master (3)

○ PhD (4)

Q23 Do you have a LinkedIn profile?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

○ Not yet but I am interested in obtaining one (3)

○ I do not know LinkedIn (4)

Q24 Are you currently seeking a job?

    ◯ Yes (1)

    ◯ No (2)

Q25 Well done, you nearly finished the questionnaire! :)

Please click on the ">>" button to save your answers and finish the survey!

Thanks for your participation. For more information about the research and/or the research results you can contact the project leader Lisa Völker at any time via l.volker@student.utwente.nl

You can now enter your mail address below to win one out of three Amazon vouchers.

_____

Appendix D: Factor Analyses

Table E1. Items and Factor Loadings for POF regarding communication, employer attractiveness and application intention

Variable	Item	Factor	
		1	2
Person-Organization Fit regarding com.	POF1		.825
	POF2		.876
	POF3		.824
Employer Attractiveness	EA1	.799	
	EA2	.718	
	EA3	.834	.404
	EA4	.854	
	EA5	.837	
Application Intention	AI1	.906	
	AI2	.910	
	AI3	.787	

Table E2. Items and Factor Loadings for the instrumental attributes of employer image

Variable		Item	Factor		
			1	2	3
Employer Image *Instrumental*	Pay/Security	PAY1	.811		
		PAY2	.681		
		PAY3	.774		
	Advancement	ADV1	.458		.437
		ADV2	.621		.410
		ADV3			.546
	Task diversity/demands	TD1		.852	
		TD2		.805	
		TD3		.778	
	Working condition	WC1			.739
		WC3			.817

Table E3. Items and Factor Loadings for the symbolic attributes of employer image

Variable		Item	Factor			
			1	2	3	4
Employer Image						
Symbolic	Atmosphere	ATM1	.786			
		ATM2	.807			
		ATM3	.808			
		ATM4	.681			
	Robustness	ROB1		.577		.431
		ROB2		.839		
		ROB3		.856		
	Prestige	PRES1		.559		
		PRES2		.575		.430
		PRES3		.584	.457	
	Competence	COMP1			.464	.620
		COMP2				
		COMP3		.440	.400	.527
	Innovativeness	INNO1			.503	
		INNO2			.699	
		INNO3			.709	
		INNO4			.769	
	Sincerity	SIN1				.737
		SIN2				.725
		SIN3	.696			
		SIN4	.796			

Appendix E: Descriptive statistics of dependent variables

Table E1. Descriptive statistics of the dependent variables per condition

	Website & Traditional WCC		Website & Modern WCC		LinkedIn & Traditional WCC		LinkedIn & Modern WCC	
	N = 68		N = 67		N = 57		N = 60	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Employer Image								
Instrumental Attributes								
Pay/Security	3.98	0.91	3.87	0.79	3.81	0.93	3.95	0.53
Advancement	4.54	1.05	4.45	1.08	4.40	1.08	4.51	0.95
Task diversity/demands	4.86	1.04	4.94	1.07	4.83	0.89	4.91	1.01
Working conditions	3.99	0.97	4.38	0.86	4.02	1.04	4.32	1.06
Symbolic Attributes								
Innovativeness	4.41	0.94	4.55	1.07	4.46	0.99	4.88	1.13
Competence	5.06	1.21	5.21	0.86	5.17	0.93	5.28	0.91
Prestige	4.90	0.87	4.53	1.08	4.80	0.94	4.45	1.11
Robustness	4.31	0.85	4.11	0.99	4.50	0.97	4.32	1.06
Atmosphere/Sincerity	4.46	0.99	4.97	0.85	4.48	0.71	5.24	0.82
Employer Attractiveness	4.24	1.19	4.50	1.29	4.14	1.28	4.91	1.17
Application Intention	4.22	1.33	4.38	1.40	4.04	1.46	4.82	1.41
POF regarding com.	4.42	1.31	4.76	1.14	4.51	1.18	5.07	1.30