



SCHOOL OF
ECONOMICS AND
MANAGEMENT

Rethinking the Employer Branding Landscape

A quantitative study exploring the entrance of Generation Z into the
labour market

by

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Abstract

In this bachelor's thesis, the employer preferences among Generation Z individuals are explored. Generation Z is currently the youngest generation entering the labour market. The entrance of Generation Z individuals is predicted to come with new challenges for firms in how to attract and retain skilful employees from this generation.

By conducting a quantitative study, business students from Sweden and Denmark, belonging to Generation Z, have been asked to participate in a survey about their individual employer preferences. In the survey, participants have been asked to answer questions about how they value certain employer branding attributes. The objective of this study is threefold. The main objective is to identify what employer branding attributes are of most importance for Generation Z individuals. Further, the second and third objectives are to examine if employer preferences among Generation Z individuals are influenced by cultural dimensions, as well as if preferences are different between men and women. This study aims to provide useful insights for firms to consider in their employer branding strategies and activities. The aims and objectives are met by evaluating three hypotheses related to three research questions.

The findings presented in this study show what employer branding attributes are of the highest value for Generation Z individuals, with one attribute being of particular importance - good development opportunities. Further, the findings presented show that cultural dimensions do impact employer preferences to some extent. Lastly, the findings show that employer preferences do differ between men and women. Although findings support previous research to some extent, the results of this study emphasize the importance of synergizing these three aspects in considering employer branding strategies and activities.

Keywords: Employer Branding, Generation Z, Employer Preferences, Human Resources, Competitive Advantage, Resource-Based View, Culture, Gender, Sweden, Denmark

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1 Introduction

1.1 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we introduce the reader to concepts of employer branding, Generation Z, culture, and gender. Furthermore, the connection between firm performance and employer branding is outlined, followed by a discussion of definitions and a discussion of the connection between employer branding, Generation Z, culture, and gender. The aim and objectives of this research, research purpose, and delimitations are presented. Lastly, the outline of the thesis is displayed.

1.2 Background

People are influenced by their background and shaped by values, norms and beliefs. These may derive from culture or generational factors (Hofstede, 1994 ; Pichler, Kohli, & Granitz, 2021). Over the past three decades, the concept of employer branding has been studied and developed in various settings (Sengupta et al., 2015; Itam, Misra, & Anjum, 2020). We and our fellow colleagues are approaching the end of our Bachelor's programme, and some of us are shortly entering the labour market ready to start working. Our generation, Generation Z, is currently the youngest generation entering the labour market (Starecek et al., 2020) and accordingly, the idea arose here, what employer branding attributes our generation, Generation Z, value the most. Several definitions for our generation are used, however, for this study, Generation Z individuals are defined as individuals born between 1995-2010 (Babelová et al., 2019).

1.2.1 Employer Branding and Generation Z

For several years, companies in developed countries have encountered challenges in attracting and retaining high-quality employees. Already in the early 2010s, this challenge was predicted to intensify (Stahl et al., 2012). As a result, many organizations have started to develop strategies for employer branding to overcome these challenges (Alshathry, Clarke & Goodman, 2017; Itam, Misra, & Anjum, 2020). Yet, new challenges have started to arise (Pichler, Kohli, & Granitz, 2021), how should employers manage to attract and retain Generation Z individuals?

Much attention has been drawn to the fact that Generation Z is entering the labour market (Pichler, Kohli, & Granitz, 2021). The scrutiny of this debut derives from the fact that Generation Z is a unique generation, characterized by rapid disruptions in a short period of time. The childhood of Generation Z is characterized by changes in racial inequity, as well as political-, technological-, social- and economic changes. In comparison, previous generations are coloured by other events related to their childhood. With that being said, Generation Z is uniquely coloured by these disruptions and events, which, in turn, make it fundamentally different from other generations (Ernst & Young, 2015). Consequently, these disruptions and events, particularly the rapid technological advancements, influence both the mindset and behaviour of Generation Z (Starecek et al., 2020).

In terms of employer branding, Generation Z entering the stage requires new considerations for managers regarding how to attract and retain employees (Pichler, Kohli, & Granitz, 2021). Employer branding is vital to attract employees with the right set of skills, but it is also a crucial manner of how to retain and sustain employees to not lose intangible assets to competitors within the same industry (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). Similarly, understanding Generation Z is crucial for firms to gain a competitive advantage (Pichler, Kohli, & Granitz, 2021). According to Sullivan (2004), employer branding could be defined as the strategic development of building a unique identity different from that of the competitor. When reviewing previous research on employer branding it is evident that much focus has been made in developing the concept and attributes of employer branding (Tumasjan et.al., 2020). However, less attention has been drawn to what actually influences the preferences of employer branding attributes.

1.2.2 Firm Performance and Employer Branding

To bring a line of argument, we would like to start by providing a firm performance perspective on employer branding, in other words, display why firms benefit from leveraging employer branding activities.

Organizations aim towards having as successful businesses as possible. Success can take the form of, for example, financial performances, market share, or return on investment. Regardless of definition, the foundation remains equal among companies, namely the one of human resource. To reach goals associated with a successful outcome, the way in which doing so matters. As a result, companies highly focus on the employees and people who sought to reach the objectives. Human resources can thus be seen as a competitive advantage of a company over those of another, and the question follows, how a company can attract and retain skilled employees to achieve advantages of competitive character. Employer branding is henceforth an important consideration for companies as it allows for the recruitment of qualified team members as well as possibilities of competitive advantages (Stahl et al., 2012).

The idea that human resources, and more specifically employees, create competitive advantages was argued by Barney (1991), who wrote the widely cited article “Firm resources and Sustained Competitive advantage”. Barney (1991) was the founder of the resource-based view, also referred to as RBV, which is a framework of managerial character. The framework suggests that companies can achieve competitive advantages by exploiting strategic and organizational resources. This indicates that human resources enable companies to develop capabilities and competencies which can be used to generate superior advantages, which are unique to the owner of those resources. Employees are not only valuable, unique and irreplicable, but they are also possessing intangible assets and skills which are difficult to copy. As a result, companies that are able to carry such employees are prone to develop competitive advantages. Being able to attract and retain employees to gain a competitive advantage has, as previously mentioned, become a greater challenge for organizations (Stahl et al., 2012).

To summarize, the resource-based view and the concept of competitive advantage supports the importance for organizations to strategize continuously around employer branding. It is

however to be noted that although the resource-based view is not directly linked with the concept of branding, they are still relatable. As the resource-based view highlights the importance of human resources to create competitive advantages, and as employers need to know how to brand themselves to attract these resources to gain competitive advantages, one could argue that the concepts intersect. In the literature and theoretical review (chapter 2), the concept of employer branding is displayed more thoroughly to provide a foundation for further concepts discussed.

1.2.3 Employer Branding, Generation Z, Culture, and Gender

As previously mentioned, preferences are shaped by several factors, among these are generational factors, cultural factors, and gender-related factors. Building on the idea that organizations need skilled workers to reach predefined objectives and goals, and that employer branding is a way of promoting the company to attract competent employees, Hofstede (1994) further argued that the people involved are subject to culture. He implied that backgrounds, values, and norms matter and that national culture, in other words, “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another” (Hofstede, 1994 p.1), may influence people’s preferences. Similarly, Mannheim (1952) describes that generations are also shaped by shared values. These values are shaped by shared experiences related to technology, economics, war, culture, among other events. In other words, as employer branding to the widest extent involves human resources, it is of high importance to consider where people come from and what preferences they have. As a matter of fact, people who are subject to certain cultural or generational characteristics may value some employer branding attributes more, whereas the opposite may occur for people with other cultural backgrounds or generational belongings.

Based on the perception that culture matters, Eger et al. (2018) argued that the article “Captivating company: dimensions of attractiveness in employer branding”, written by Berthon, Ewing, and Hah (2005), called for future research as it was poor in including cultural dimensions. Eger et al. (2018) claimed that differences in culture most likely affect what attributes people find important. Hence, the relationship between cultural differences and employer branding requests further examination as the attributes seem to have unequal

priorities across countries. To make a comparison between the importance of employer branding attributes and that of the cultural differences, it could be interesting and useful to captivate the six dimensions developed by Hofstede to explore if there are any differences in employer preferences and thus if there are any cultural explanations.

Furthermore, there is existing literature examining what managers should consider in attracting Generation Z individuals (Pichler, Kohli, & Granitz, 2021), as well as to the understanding of the employer brand outside of the Western World Culture and what is perceived as important in China (Fei et al., 2014). However, scholars have called for further research regarding how culture can impact perceived employer preferences (Eger et al., 2018). As Generation Z is entering the labour market, insights and challenges are most likely to arise in relation to the generational shift in the labour market (Stahl et al., 2012). On that account, we aim towards filling the gap in which mainly generational factors, especially for Generation Z, seem to be less included aspects. Within this field, we further aim to fill the gap in which cultural aspects seem to be less included. Also, within both the cultural and generational aspects, previous research has called for a deeper examination of differences between men and women (Eger et al., 2018). Hence, we find it interesting to include that comparison in our study as well.

1.3 The Concepts of Generation, Culture, and Gender - Definitions and Discussion

1.3.1 Definitions - Discussion

Although there are several definitions and names for Generation Z, we choose to use the name Generation Z, and we rely on the definition of the age range to be people born between 1995-2010, which is also the definition of Generation Z according to Babelová et al. (2019).

As previously mentioned, Hofstede (1994) defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another” (Hofstede, 1994, p.1). Although widely cited and applied in the business context, Hofstede's

Cultural Dimension framework is subject to critique. For instance, scholars imply that the framework is limited as it holds an oversimplification of cultural differences with a lack of empirical evidence, and the dimensions are shaped from the perspective of culture being static, and not dynamic (Signorini, Wiesemes, & Murphy, 2009).

Furthermore, Bryman & Bell (2015) explains that cross-cultural research, in which this study can be partly classified, comes with challenges due to the definitions and assumptions of the concept of culture. One concern is that nationality often is translated to culture. This translation is troubling as individual differences and characteristics automatically are explained by nationality while these, instead, often are explained by other factors, such as historical or religious connections.

The term culture is hard to define. For this study, despite the limitations, we endorse the definition of culture being related to nationality. However, we urge you to remember that this definition is ambiguous, and comes with limitations.

As previously mentioned, culture and employer branding can be studied in relation, but how is culture perceived by Generation Z individuals? Hinkel (n.d.) argues that Generation Z defines culture and cultural identity differently compared to their ancestors. Due to increasing globalization, culture has become more homogeneous. Consequently, Hinkel (n.d.) suggests that Generation Z perceives culture beyond the one of ethnicity. In other words, Hinkel (n.d.) argues that Generation Z associates culture with attitudes and behaviours, which might indicate an overall less significant cultural belonging. Consequently, the question arises whether or not cultural differences or similarities are relevant to study among Generation Z individuals?

Although the above mentioned might seem reasonable to assume, we have found little research confirming that cultural differences are insignificant to Generation Z individuals. However, this idea led us to investigate this assumption more thoroughly and has served as an important part of the formulation of our second hypothesis (see section 2.4).

We would further like to explain that the definition of gender in this study is limited to men and women. We fully acknowledge other definitions of gender. However, due to the time and

scope of this study, we limit this study to only compare potential differences between men and women.

1.3.2 Concept Connection

For this study, we explore the aspects of Generation Z, culture and gender in relation to employer branding. To bring a line of argument, we would like to elaborate on, and explain how these aspects are framed for this study.

As previously mentioned, Hofstede (1994) defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another” (Hofstede, 1994, p.1). Hofstede further explains that national culture is referred to as norms, beliefs, behaviours, and values which are shared by the population. Further, Mannheim (1952) describes generations to be shaped by similar factors, in other words, shared values and beliefs. Mannheim’s (1994) description of the mindset and behaviour of particular generations is somewhat similar to the explanation of culture provided by Hofstede (1994). Further, the mindset, as well as motivational and personal characteristics, differs between men and women (Dwyer, Richard, and Chadwick, 2003; Starecek et al., 2020; Eger et al., 2018). During the process of the literature and theoretical review for this study, the question arose regarding what actually defines the mindset, behaviour, values, beliefs, and hence, preferences of individuals? Can these be independently defined based on generational belonging, cultural belonging, and/or gender belonging?

However, we do not explore how these terms could be redefined. We instead use the definitions presented in section 1.3.1. Moreover, as presented in the literature and theoretical review (chapter 2) there are several indications that these aspects do independently affect employer preferences in different ways. Hence we do believe it is further interesting to explore their implications for employer branding in this research setting.

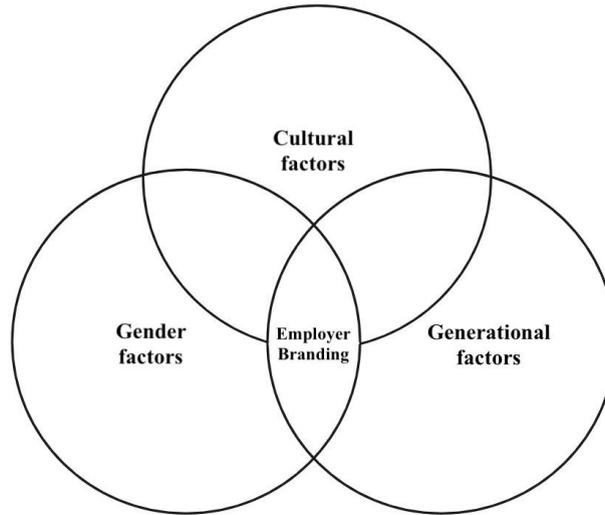


Figure 1: The connection between Employer Branding, Generation, Culture, & Gender (Berggren & Kock, 2021)

1.4 Aim and Objectives

The objective of this study is threefold. As suggested by the resource-based view, human resources may allow for competitive advantages (Barney, 1991). It is thus of high importance to attract and retain skilled workers. Based on the material presented in the background, our main objective is to identify what employer branding attributes are of most importance for Generation Z individuals.

Furthermore, as implied by Eger et al. (2018) and Hofstede (1994), employer branding is about attracting competent employees, indicating a need for cultural adaptation as the importance of employer branding attributes may vary depending on the national culture. Hence, our second objective of this study is to examine if employer preferences among Generation Z individuals are influenced by cultural dimensions.

Additionally, previous research has called for a further examination of differences in preferences among women and men (Eger et al., 2018). Thus, we aim to explore, compare and observe whether there are any potential differences between men and women regarding employer preferences.

We meet these objectives by performing a quantitative study where business students from Denmark and Sweden have been asked to take part in a survey, answering questions about their employer preferences. The survey is designed based on employer branding attributes, which have been defined based on previous literature. In turn, the survey questions are written based on the employer branding attributes.

In summary, the threefold objective is to research what attributes are of the highest value to Generation Z individuals, whether or not preferences between Danish and Swedish business students are similar, and if preferences are similar or different between men and women. In other words, we explore if some attributes are more or less important, and if so, are there any cultural or gender-related explanations.

1.5 Research Purpose

We aspire for this study to provide useful insights for managers in considering their human resources and employer branding strategies and activities. Consequently, our intentions are for our findings to be used in enhancing the competitive advantages for organizations through attracting and retaining skilful employees.

By collecting data from Generation Z individuals, which in our case are Danish and Swedish business students, we first examine what employer branding attributes are the most prominent among Generation Z individuals belonging to these nationalities. Secondly, we explore if there are any similarities or differences. In any case, we analyze if there are any explanations for the results related to culture and gender, and thus provide insights for employers to consider when managing their human resources in those countries. For that reason, the research questions are as follow:

RQ1: What do Generation Z individuals find most attractive with their future employer?

RQ2: Are employer preferences among Generation Z individuals influenced by cultural dimensions?

RQ3: Are there any differences in preferences between men and women?

To answer our research questions we outline, based on our literature and theoretical review, three hypotheses which we aim to explore through data collection and statistical analysis.

These hypotheses are:

H1: We expect various forms of recognition, attributes related to an enhanced career path, work-life balance, and diversity and inclusion to be valued the highest among Generation Z individuals.

H2: We expect preferences of employer branding attributes between Danish business students and Swedish business students to be similar.

H3: We expect preferences of employer branding attributes between men and women to be different.

1.6 Delimitations

Firstly, our target group is limited to Generation Z. To make an accurate and deeper conclusion, we choose to include only people within the age range of 1995-2010 in our study, as that is the definition of Generation Z according to Babel'ová et al. (2019). If we would have included people outside that age range, it would no longer be an analysis of Generation Z, nor would a comparison of a too large target group be as precise and representable as people from several generations assumably are subject to different preferences.

As mentioned in section 1.2.1. generations are coloured by particular events and disruptions related to their age. These events and disruptions do, in turn, create differences among generations and their characteristics. As we are studying business students, who are to become employees or who have just entered the labour market, it is reasonable to assume that the previous generation has different expectations due to them being further in terms of their job career. Hence, we limit our target group to Generation Z individuals to avoid misleading influences and to achieve a more accurate and detailed conclusion.

Moreover, we choose to base our study on business students. One can assume that students with contrasting fields of studies have somewhat different preferences, and although not tested, we limit our study to business students to avoid potential ambiguity. Further, the term “business students” includes a broad spectrum of majors. For this study, we are quite generous in what is defined as a business student. With business administration being the most common field of study within the one of business, we also include majors in finance, accounting, international business, and other equivalent majors.

Additionally, as we aim towards exploring if Danish and Swedish business students have similar preferences, it would not be relevant to include other nationalities as that would cause a non-comparable observation in terms of Danish and Swedish business students. This delimitation derives from our decision to define culture as related to nationality (see section 1.3.1). Hence, in case a business student with another nationality than Swedish and Danish answers our survey, it will as of now be excluded for us to be able to make an accurate comparison between the two nationalities of interest.

Additionally, due to time limitations, we limit our study to only analyzing national culture. Other types of culture could have been included, such as organizational culture. However, as we aim towards studying similarities in preferences between Danish and Swedish business students, an analysis of, for example, an organizational character is beyond our scope and left for future studies.

Furthermore, it could have been interesting studying two contrasting countries, argued to be diverse in terms of Hofstede’s six dimensions. However, with regards to the limited time, we have decided to analyze Swedish and Danish business students, as finding respondents in each country was more manageable.

Lastly, we further rely on the definitions for Generation Z, culture, and gender presented in section 1.3.1.

1.7 Outline of the Thesis

The aim of the thesis is to explore what attributes are the most prominent among Generation Z individuals, whether the preferences are similar among Swedish and Danish business students, and if preferences are different between men and women. Potential similarities or dissimilarities are thus analyzed from a cultural and gender point of view. To answer the research questions, we begin by introducing the subject of employer branding and human resources. The introductory parts of the literature and theoretical review constitutes information regarding the concept of employer branding, internal and external employer branding, and the main differences from an attribute point of view. Following the basic principles, we address the area of Generation Z and employer branding. Further, we address the areas of culture and gender in relation to employer branding and Generation Z characteristics. The main idea is that employer branding to the widest extent involves people, indicating a call for culture-related and gender-related adaptation as preferences may differ among various national cultures and gender.

Building on the idea that employer branding is important to attract and retain skilled and competent employees and that the importance of attributes may alter, we present and review relevant literature in the field of employer branding, human resources, Generation Z, gender and culture. Following the literature review, we present a methodological chapter including how to approach and design the research. The data collection method additionally encompasses an explanatory paragraph demonstrating how we statistically analyze the data collected. This, to systematically explain how the data contributes to evaluating the hypotheses and answer the stated research questions. Due to time limitations and potential tendencies of biases, we outline the validity, the credibility and whether there are any limitations restraining the scope of the thesis.

Succeeding the introductory parts, the results of the survey are presented following an analysis and discussion, which sets the foundation for exploring and evaluating our hypotheses and research questions. Lastly, we provide insights for managers to consider when trying to strengthen the employer brand in attracting and retaining Generation Z individuals in Sweden and Denmark, as well as in relation to gender.

2 Literature and Theoretical Review

2.1 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, literature related to the concept of employer branding is presented to provide a foundation for further literature staged. Further, literature regarding Generation Z and employer branding are presented, followed by the presentation of our first hypothesis. Next, literature regarding employer branding, Generation Z, culture, and Hofstede's cultural dimensions are presented, followed by the presentation of our second hypothesis. Lastly, literature regarding employer branding, Generation Z, and gender are presented, followed by the presentation of our third hypothesis.

2.2 What is Employer Branding?

As mentioned in section 1.2.1., employer branding could be defined as the strategic development of building a unique identity different from that of the competitor (Sullivan, 2004). Branding has traditionally been seen as part of the marketing function. Branding activities are usually associated with corporate brands and product development, however, organizations have started to realize the potential of branding in terms of human resources, as that, as earlier mentioned, may give rise to competitive advantages (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) also recognize that firm performance can be enhanced as a result of skilful investment in human capital. This is consistent with the resource-based view which implies that the resources of a firm add to the firm's sustainable competitive advantage (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) refer to an early definition of employer branding, stated by Ambler and Barrow (1996) being, “the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company.” (p. 502). Another definition referred to by the authors was proposed by the Conference Board (2001), being “...the employer brand establishes the identity of the firm as an employer. It encompasses the firm’s value system, policies and behaviours toward the objectives of attracting, motivating, and retaining the firm’s current and potential employees.” (p. 502).

According to Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), part of the employer branding process is to create and develop a value proposition. The value proposition should be embodied in the brand. That is, the particular values the company offers to employees are packaged by organizational culture, current employment image, management style, impressions of product or service quality, and qualities of current employees. The value proposition constitutes important information about what the employer can offer to its employees. This information is transmitted by the brand.

The employee value proposition is further discussed by Sengupta et al. (2015). They explain that the value proposition is a concept borrowed from marketing management. The concept is based on the assurance regarding value-in-exchange and value-in-use a seller makes to the customer. This can be applied to the employer-employee relationship in employer branding. Successful employer value proposition efforts could lead to talent attraction and retention if value propositions are aligned with the potential employees’ values and needs (Sengupta, Bamel & Singh, 2015).

To sum up, employer branding is a somewhat new term used in the business context. The importance of entailing a strong employer brand to gain competitive advantages has been outlined in the previous paragraphs. Further, Vatsa (2016) explains that employer branding includes the activities of corporate leaders to attract, recruit, and retain desirable employees. Successful employer branding strategies result in lower recruitment turnover rates, an increased number of quality applicants, lower recruitment costs, and an increased competitive advantage (Alshathry, Clarke & Goodman, 2017). These activities do, in turn, synergize in two different focus areas, that is, internal and external employer branding (see figure 2). Both perspectives are essential means for realizing a strong employer brand, in other words,

realizing a culture of trust, and further, realizing the mission and vision of the company (Vatsa, 2016).

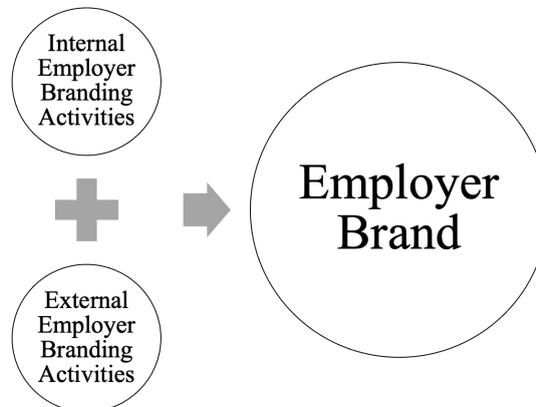


Figure 2: The Universe of Employer Branding I (Berggren & Kock, 2021, inspired by Vatsa, 2016)

2.2.1 External Employer Branding

External employer branding is an indicator of how attractive the employer is to the potential employee (Vatsa, 2016). These activities are concerned with the external marketing of the employer brand, and activities are performed with the aim of attracting potential employees (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

Further, Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) describe that external employer branding activities not only are concerned with attracting potential employees. This activity is also essential in enhancing the corporate brand itself. Hence, it is important that the external employer branding activities are consistent with other branding activities, such as product branding.

The external marketing of the employer brand is crucial in shaping the perceptions of the company as an employer of choice. The external employer branding activities display how the company differentiates from other employers, and in that way, manage to attract the most desired workers. Once potential employees have been recruited they have shaped assumptions and values based on the external employer brand. The employee will bring these values and assumptions into the employment which, in turn, will facilitate the values of the firm and the employees' commitment (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). However, other activities need to be

considered once employees are part of the working organization. These activities are referred to as internal employer branding, which will be elaborated on in the next section.

2.2.2 Internal Employer Branding

Internal employer branding activities refer to ensuring living up to what was promised by the external employer branding activities. The activities aim to create a workforce that commits to the values and goals of the firm. This includes creating a culture among the workforce that builds up to the behaviours that are desired by the managers, as well as aiding the quality of working life for the employees. Successful internal employer branding means the firm is able to retain employees (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

Vatsa (2016) refers to internal employer branding as the process in which the employer promotes the company brand value among existing employees, compared to external employer branding activities which are concerned with promoting the company brand value among potential employees. Internal employer branding activities are part of a strategic process in which the aim is to coordinate and encourage employees to perform well. The activity areas of such a kind are, for example, internal communications, sustainability factors, recruitment practices, leadership practices, training support, and reward and recognition programs.

Furthermore, Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) describe that by attaining strong employer brand equity, the employer branding efforts are perceived to be effective and successful. In other words, the firm has succeeded in retaining employees through internal employer branding activities. To accomplish these goals, internal employer branding activities, such as promoting the existing value of the company, are used by firms to enhance the organizational culture, or, if needed, make changes within the existing organizational culture.

2.2.3 Employer Branding Attributes

As mentioned in section 1.2.1., much focus has been on developing the concept and attributes of employer branding (Tumasjan et.al., 2020). As we aim at researching what attributes are of

the highest value to Generation Z individuals, and whether there are any cultural or gender-related explanations for the results, the theoretical foundation of employer branding attributes is a valuable framework for us to use in designing our study.

Employer Branding Dimensions

Among the most prominent and well-cited researchers are Berthon, Ewing, and Hah (2005), who were early in their design of employer branding attributes. Berthon, Ewing, and Hah (2005) refer to employer branding attributes as “dimensions”. In their research, the authors identify five dimensions for employer attractiveness. The dimensions identified are; social value, economic value, interest value, development value, and application value.

As explained by Berthon, Ewing, and Hah (2005), the first dimension, social value, is related to the extent to which potential employees are attracted to an employer that provides a happy and fun working environment. Additionally, the social value is related to the overall team atmosphere and whether the relationships between colleagues are generally good.

Being the second dimension, economic value constitutes the degree to which a potential employee is attracted to economic attributes, such as, above-average salary, compensation package, job security and promotional opportunities (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005).

The third dimension, interest value, is related to the extent to which a potential employee is prone to an employer due to the employer providing novel job assignments, provides an exciting work environment, and an employer who makes use of its employee’s creativity to produce high-quality, innovative products and services (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005).

Moreover, another dimension, development value, assess the extent to which the potential employee is attracted to an organization where the work environment accounts for emphasizing self-worth and confidence, an employer which is career-enhancing, provides recognition and becomes a spring-board for future employment and career opportunities (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005).

Application value is the last and fifth dimension, assessing to what extent a potential employee is attracted to an employer emphasizing the importance of applying existing skills and knowledge as well as teaching others (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005).

The Instrumental - Symbolic Framework

Berthon, Ewing, and Hah (2005) were early in their development of employer branding attributes. They called for further research which has been responded to by several well-cited scholars within the field of employer branding (Eger et al., 2018). Other scholars who have been prominent in researching and discussing the attributes of employer branding, even earlier than Berthon, Ewing, and Hah (2005), were Lievens and Highhouse (2003) who are referred to by several scholars as providers of the most dominant framework for employer branding attributes (Tumasjan et.al., 2020).

Lievens and Highhouse (2003) designed an employer branding framework influenced and based on branding theory to give a marketing angle on organizational attractiveness. The authors shape their attributes based on the instrumental-symbolic framework from marketing theory. The authors emphasize that their study provides managers with guidance in how they should strategize the employer brand, and hence, maximize recruiting effectiveness, and gain competitive advantage. Furthermore, the authors imply that only incorporation of both instrumental and symbolic attributes into their employer branding strategy will enhance their competitive advantage.

The employer brand attributes presented by Lievens and Highhouse (2003) are, as previously mentioned, categorized as instrumental attributes and symbolic attributes. Instrumental attributes are related to job- or organizational attributes. Lievens and Highhouse (2003) refer to these as the “classical” attributes to the brand when it comes to organizational attributes. The instrumental attributes include attributes such as salary, flexible working hours, benefits, job security, advancement opportunities, and task demands.

The other category of the employer brand attributes according to Lievens and Highhouse (2003) are symbolic attributes. These are related to the individual’s personality and self-perception. The symbolic attributes are sincerity (concerned with warmth, acceptance, honesty), innovativeness, competence, and robustness (masculine, strong, robust).

Functional-, Economical-, Psychological-, and Organizational- Attributes

At a more recent point in time, Kucherov and Zavyalova (2012) defined a common classification of employer brand attributes as economical, psychological, functional and organizational attributes.

Organizational attributes are referred to as external employer brand attributes, while economic, psychological and functional attributes are referred to as internal employer brand attributes. As previously mentioned, successful efforts within these areas together create a successful employer brand (Kucherov and Zavyalova, 2012).

Economic attributes include attributes such as high salary, stable guarantees of employment, a fair system of rewards and bonuses, and a flexible work schedule. Psychological attributes concern strong corporate culture, positive interpersonal relations in the company, team-working and objective assessment of work. Functional attributes concern content of work, training perspectives, opportunities for career growth, and opportunities to fully realize employees' knowledge and skills. Lastly, Organizational attributes concern leadership in the market segment, the international scope of activity, the company's history, the reputation of consumer brands, the reputation of top managers, and management style (Kucherov & Zavyalova, 2012).

On a conclusive note, we have highlighted four main employer branding attributes based on the work of the three scholars presented above. The four classifications are functional-, economic-, psychological-, and organizational (see figure 3). These classifications are chosen as they have been widely cited and they are also the most recent presented in employer branding literature. The literature presented in this section serves as a foundation for constructing the questions in our survey. Our interpretation will be further described in section 3.3 - Research Design, and an overview is provided in Appendix A.

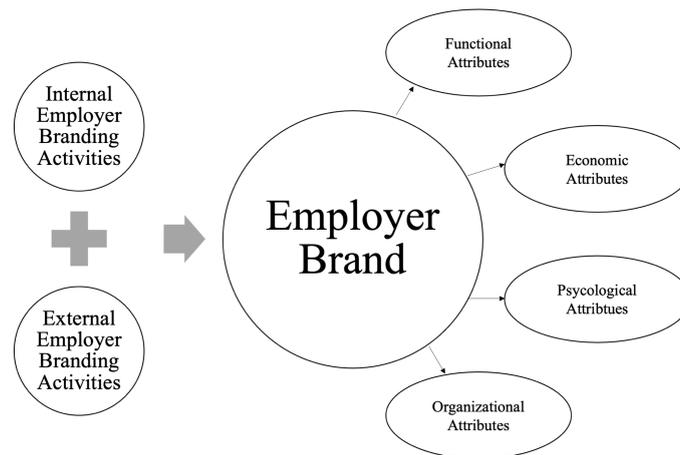


Figure 3: The Universe of Employer Branding II (Berggren & Kock, 2021, inspired by Vatsa, 2016, & Kuchеров & Zavyalova, 2012)

2.3 Generation Z and Employer Branding

As previously mentioned, Generation Z entails particular uniqueness, and their characteristics are essential to consider in shaping a competitive advantage through attracting and retaining desired employees (Pichler, Kohli, & Granitz, 2021). In a recent study by Pichler, Kohli, and Granitz (2021), they aim at highlighting the particular characteristics of Generation Z. The authors concretize these into a comprehensive framework for managers to use in how to manage and leverage these individuals to gain increased productivity and competitive advantage. In a similar study, Schwieger and Ladwig (2018) research the characteristics of Generation Z as well as what they might expect from their employer based on these factors. The studies of Pichler, Kohli, and Granitz (2021) and Schwieger and Ladwig (2018) are relevant to review for our research as their contributions provide a significant foundation in designing our first hypothesis, which shortly will be presented.

Pichler, Kohli, and Granitz (2021) framework is called DITTO, an acronym for Diversity, Individualism, Teamwork, Technology, and Organizational Support. These aspects are all carefully compiled and suggested as the most important to consider in designing policies and practices for leveraging the characteristics of Generation Z. The selected aspects derive from

previous studies, and the authors state that the aspects are all designed as a result of researching what factors have shaped Generation Z individuals.

According to Pichler, Kohli, and Granitz (2021), the main relevant factors that have shaped Generation Z values, norms, and behaviour, are technology, mental health, individualism and teamwork, and diversity. Considering the first factor, technology, the authors refer to the hyper-technological advancements Generation Z has been subject to. Pichler, Kohli, and Granitz (2021) mean that these have impacted greatly on our values, norms, and behaviour, as the advancements have been part of the life of Generation Z to a great extent.

Similarly, Schwieger and Ladwig (2018) highlight that technology has been integrated into Generation Z individuals' everyday life, dissimilar to any previous generation. This has impacted Generation Z behaviours in several ways. For example, the generation has been acclimated to always be online. Schwieger and Ladwig (2018) refer to Monsters (2016) in explaining that this condition has caused Generation Z to be absorbed with determining their own schedule and creating personalized career paths. Additionally, Chicca and Shellenbarger (2018) imply that the “always online” condition and incorporation of technology have made Generation Z more individualistic in learning, communication and how they interact with others.

The second factor, mental health, is referred to the increased levels of depression, anxiety, and other mental unhealth among Generation Z (Pichler, Kohli, & Granitz, 2021). As previously mentioned, the technological integration of our everyday life has made the generation more individualistic in several ways (Chicca & Shellenbarger, 2018; Pichler, Kohli, & Granitz, 2021). Generation Z spends more time alone which indicates a decline in interpersonal interactions compared to previous generations (Pichler, Kohli, & Granitz, 2021). Meanwhile, an increase in demand for organizational support in terms of health benefits and social support from coworkers and supervisors is prevailing. Accordingly, this rise does not appear to be surprising given that Generation Z individuals experience a high level of anxiety and depression compared to previous generations (Pichler, Kohli, & Granitz, 2021).

For the third factor, individualism and teamwork, Generation Z individuals suggested to be more individualistic and less social (Pichler, Kohli, & Granitz, 2021). According to Seemiller and Grace (2017), Generation Z individuals have been shaped by the technological

incorporation of our everyday life in which learning is comfortably performed independently. Moreover, Pichler, Kohli, and Granitz (2021) imply that Generation Z individuals' individualistic preferences when it comes to learning, communication, and social interaction might cause difficulties for the generation to work in groups. Similarly, Schwieger and Ladwig (2018) find that the generation is characterized by individualistic traits, both when it comes to learning and planning for the future. Additionally, Generation Z individuals value working hard and expect that work to be rewarded (Schwieger & Ladwig, 2018).

Lastly, the fourth factor, diversity, is referred to as Generation Z being the most diverse generation ever. That is, Generation Z individuals have an overall stronger belief in diversity being good for society, compared to previous generations (Pichler, Kohli, & Granitz, 2021). Also, other indicators suggesting Generation Z is the most diverse generation ever are, among others, that Generation Z individuals have a lower tolerance for inequality (Pichler, Kohli, & Granitz, 2021). In sum, studies suggest that diversity and inclusion are essential to promote and adapt to policies and practice to attract and retain Generation Z individuals (Starecek et al., 2020; Pichler, Kohli, & Granitz, 2021).

Other interesting findings relevant for this study is that Schwieger and Ladwig (2018), concludes that Generation Z also is creative and appreciates personalization. Additionally, one prominent factor in their study is that Generation Z individuals appreciate fairness, loyalty, trust, and respect from their employer.

Based on the literature presented in this section, we identify some characteristics to be particularly prominent among Generation Z. Firstly, Generation Z is presented to be individualistic in their mindset, and some prominent characteristics are that they prefer to learn individually, work individually, and entail an individualistic mindset regarding their career plans. In addition, the literature indicates generation Z valuing to work hard, as well as being rewarded and recognized by managers. Hence, we expect Generation Z individuals to value various forms of recognition and attributes related to an enhanced career path. These traits can, in turn, be related to the functional and organizational attributes (Kucherov and Zavyalova, 2012) and are thus explored through questions in our survey.

Secondly, the rapid technological advancements have made Generation Z acclimatize by, for example, determining their own schedule. Also, the generation does overall experience a

higher degree of mental unhealth, as well as demanding organizational support in terms of health benefits and social support. The aforementioned can be summarized to call for an increased desire for work-life balance. Work-life balance, in turn, relates to the economic attribute (Kucherov and Zavyalova, 2012) and is explored through a question in our survey.

Thirdly, Generation Z individuals value diversity and inclusion. Both Starecek et al. (2020) and Pichler, Kohli, and Granitz (2021) imply that it is essential for organizations to promote and adapt to policies and practice to attract and retain Generation Z individuals. Hence, valuing diversity and inclusion can be related to psychological factors (Kucherov and Zavyalova, 2012), and is explored through a question in our survey.

As summarized in the recent paragraphs, the literature presented indicates that various forms of recognition, attributes related to an enhanced career path, work-life balance, and diversity and inclusion are the most prominent preferences among Generation Z individuals. These are explored through questions in our survey and fits under the umbrella of the functional, economic, and psychological attributes. Hence, our first hypothesis is phrased as follows:

H1: We expect various forms of recognition, attributes related to an enhanced career path, work-life balance, and diversity and inclusion to be valued the highest among Generation Z individuals.

2.4 Culture and Employer Branding

Although culture might be seen as an underlying factor in employer branding, there have been several researchers studying the matter. As mentioned previously, Mannheim (1952) suggests that generations are shaped by shared norms and values. These are further a result of shared experiences in terms of, for example, traditions, economics, technology and other social events. Thus, as employer branding builds upon human resources, it is highly relevant to study employer preferences in relation to culture and Generation Z. Moreover, we use the framework developed by Hofstede to provide a foundation for our second hypothesis, which is shortly presented.

To begin with, Geert Hofstede (1994) argues that culture is an important aspect when operating on an international basis. He continues by imposing that countries differ substantially in terms of language, preferences and ways of doing business which needs to be taken into consideration when handling varying markets and people. Hofstede (1994) therefore, developed a framework that aims towards explaining cross-cultural differences and he suggests in his article “The Business of International Business is Culture”, that people within one group may act and react differently in certain situations as compared to those of another.

The six dimensions which Hofstede presented sought to explain the impact of different national cultures, and more specifically the impact culture has on business. As businesses are associated with delivery, that is, setting goals that are to be reached, Hofstede (1994) argues that all organizations are subject to human resources, indicating that cultural differences need to be taken into consideration to understand the people behind the delivery. He further imposes that if we can understand the background, values and norms of a group of people, it becomes easier to manage an international formation as one can adapt the entity in terms of, for example, preferences. The article presented by Hofstede (1994) is thus relevant in the context of employer branding as preferences in what attributes matter the most may differ from one national culture to another.

Throughout Hofstede’s article, culture is defined as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another” (Hofstede, 1994, p.1), and moreover, national culture is referred to as norms, beliefs, behaviours, and values which are shared by the population (Hofstede, 1994).

The first dimension presented by Hofstede is power distance. He suggests that countries may vary in terms of how members accept and expect that power is unequally distributed (Hofstede, 1994). Countries with a high power distance index tend to have centralized and hierarchical business structures and the gap in authority is known to be large (Mindtools, n.d.). Hofstede then proposed that some countries are more individualistic whereas some are more collectivistic, which refers to how people are integrated into groups (Hofstede, 1994). People subject to individualism may prefer individual rewards and they also value privacy

and freedom. On the contrary, collectivistic countries opt for intrinsic rewards and harmony among group members is highly prioritized (Mindtools, n.d.).

Moreover, the third dimension is about femininity versus masculinity, which means that the distribution of roles between sexes may be more or less skewed towards one side in certain countries. People from a country with a high masculinity index tend to find achievement and money important whereas a focus on the quality of life and balance is more important to people from more feminine cultures (Mindtools, n.d.).

The fourth dimension, indulgence, was added at a later stage and it refers to the degree of freedom people have to fulfil their needs and desires. Hence, a country with a high indulgence index tends to focus on personal happiness, freedom and emphasize work-life balance (Mindtools, n.d.).

The fifth and sixth dimension refers to uncertainty avoidance and long term versus short term orientation. The former indicates how members of one nation feel towards uncertainty, hence people subject to high uncertainty avoidance tend to avoid risks and they prefer having well-structured organizations with little space for innovation. In contrast, people who are of the opposite character tend to be open to change and prefer less bureaucratic structures. The latter dimension refers to if people are focused on the future or the present and past. People subject to long-term orientation are often more thrifty, modest, and pragmatic whereas short-term oriented countries tend to be more consistent and rely on principles and the truth (Mindtools, n.d.).

Succeeding the six dimensions developed by Hofstede, he also applied the framework to different countries and suggested an index measuring power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation and indulgence. The index is thus used to compare countries and to what extent they are characterised by different dimensions. According to Hofstede Insights (n.d.), Denmark and Sweden are argued to be similar as their indexes are relatively equal. Denmark has an individualism score of 74, whereas Sweden scores 71, indicating that both countries prioritize the individual person over the collective group. Moreover, Sweden has an uncertainty avoidance index of 29, compared to Denmark with a score of 23, which is, yet again, a relatively similar finding. According to Hofstede Insights (n.d.), Sweden has an indulgence index of 78 while Denmark has a score of 70. The

dimensions - indulgence, uncertainty avoidance, and individualism - are thus very similar between the countries. The three remaining dimensions are also relatively similar, however, the differences are still greater as compared to the three previous dimensions.

Accordingly, Sweden has a power distance index of 31 while Denmark has 18, which is slightly different. This indicates that Sweden expects and accepts that power is unequally distributed to a wider extent as compared to Denmark. Moreover, Denmark scores 16 in terms of masculinity, whereas Sweden only has an index of 5, which means that Sweden has a more feministic society and values work-life balance to a wider extent for example. Finally, Sweden is also more long-term oriented as compared to Denmark with a score of 53. As Denmark has an index of 35, the country is more subject to the present and past and is also more principle oriented (Hofstede Insights, n.d.).

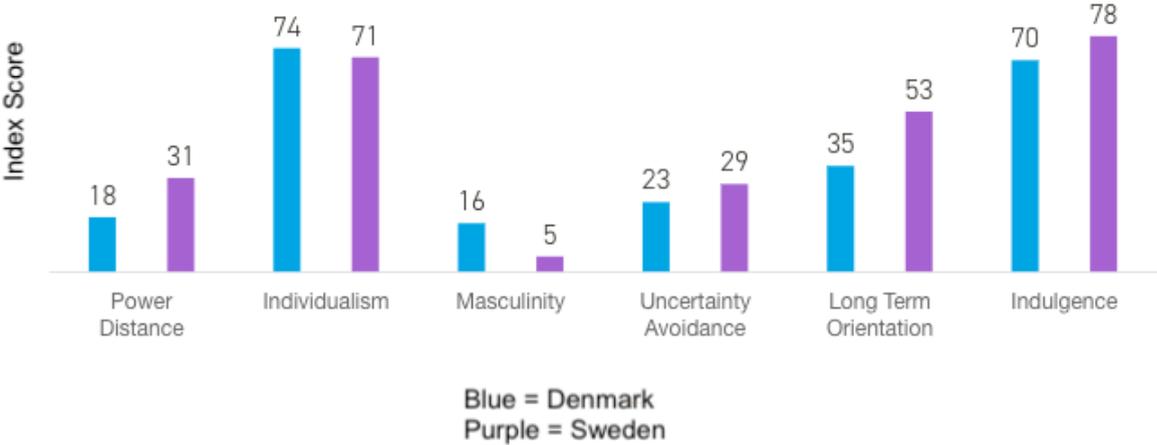


Figure 4: Country Comparison, Sweden versus Denmark (Hofstede Insights, n.d.)

To conclude, as the countries are relatively similar in terms of Hofstede’s six dimensions, it seems reasonable to expect that preferences among business students in both Denmark and Sweden are somewhat homogeneous.

Moreover, as culture and employer branding can be studied in relation, it is thus of high relevance to study whether or not Generation Z is subject to cultural differences and to what extent culture matters as Generation Z is the target group of this study. As mentioned in section 1.3.1, Hinkel (n.d.) argues that Generation Z defines culture and cultural identity

differently compared to its ancestors. Due to increasing globalization, culture has become more homogeneous. Consequently, Hinkel (n.d.) suggests that Generation Z perceives culture beyond ethnicity. Further, Hinkel (n.d.) argues that Generation Z associates culture with attitudes and behaviours, which might indicate an overall less significant cultural difference. Hence, as Generation Z is argued to be less subject to culture, we further expect the preferences to be similar as culture, according to previous statements, is not as definite when studying Generation Z. On the other hand, we have found little research confirming that cultural differences are insignificant to Generation Z individuals. Thus, this idea has led us to explore this interpretation more thoroughly. Thus, based on the information given, the second hypothesis is as follows:

H2: We expect preferences of employer branding attributes between Danish business students and Swedish business students to be similar.

2.5 Different Preferences Between Men and Women

In the research by Starecek et al. (2020), a study analyzing the configuration of motivational and personal characteristics of Generation Z also referred to as young professionals, is performed. The study is performed from the perspective of gender diversity focusing on the development of managerial skills for Generation Z individuals. The study is particularly relevant for our study as it investigates and tests whether there are any differences in motivational and personal characteristics of Generation Z while testing whether there are differences between women and men.

Findings from Starecek et al. (2020) implies that there are significant differences between men and women from Generation Z in terms of their personalities and motivational characteristics. Firstly, findings imply that there was a difference between men and women in terms of openness and conscientiousness. Openness captures how open a person is to other people, as well as that person's openness to opportunities. Conscientiousness represents a part of one's relationships with co-workers and managers, as well as one's ability to work in teams. Both factors are essential for developing managerial skills (Starecek et al., 2020).

Elaborating within a similar spectrum, Dwyer, Richard, and Chadwick (2003) implies that women are more likely than men to cooperate in achieving goals. Additionally, women are less likely to compete with each other in terms of career and working life. On the contrary, Dwyer, Richard, and Chadwick (2003) mean that men are more dominant and individualistic in their way of achieving. Men are more likely compared to women to fight amongst their colleagues to reach their goal. With that being said, men can still be prone to work in teams efficiently, although not to as large an extent as women.

Further, findings made by Starecek et al. (2020) in terms of motivational characteristics were identified. The motivational characteristic which differs between men and women in Generation Z is mainly anxiety. The authors state that anxiety affects a person's ability to cope with stressful situations negatively. Additionally, anxiety affects one's usage of time negatively.

Similar to our study, Eger et al. (2018) examine whether the gender of Czech business students influences what attributes they find important in terms of employer branding, including what influences cross-cultural differences might have. In their findings, they identified several differences between men and women and concluded that gender does influence what individuals find appealing in terms of employer branding. Eger et al. (2018) make use of Berthon, Ewing, and Hah (2005) dimensions of employer branding. Findings indicate that women think more dimensions are important compared to men. The dimensions which women find more important are Application Value, Social Value, Economic–Development Value, and Development–Application Value. However, men and women find Interest value to be equally important according to the results.

As suggested by the literature presented in this section, there can be significant differences in employer preferences between men and women within Generation Z. Hence, our third hypothesis is phrased as follows:

H3: We expect preferences of employer branding attributes between men and women to be different.

3 Methodology

3.1 Chapter Summary

In the following chapter, we will begin by providing the reader with an overview of our research approach. Besides our quantitative and deductive research approach, the research has a cross-sectional and comparative research design, which is further explained in the second part of the methodology chapter. Moreover, we present our survey design followed by a section explaining the sample of this study. Succeeding, the data collection method is explained, in other words, how we collected the data, followed by a section explaining our data analysis. Lastly, validity and reliability are presented, in other words, the extent to which our concept is measured accurately, and the extent to which the results of our study are repeatable. An overview of our methodological approach is presented in figure 5.

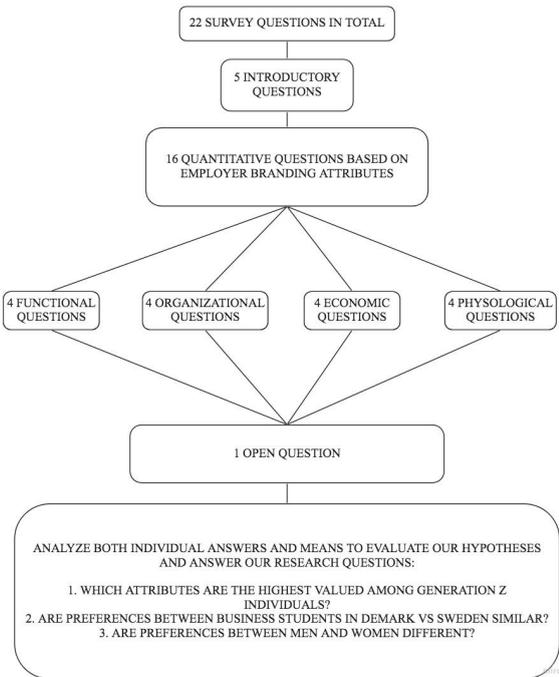


Figure 5: Methodology Map (Berggren & Kock, 2021)

3.2 Research Approach

According to Bryman and Bell (2015), the definitions of differences between quantitative and qualitative research are ambiguous in many ways. However, Bryman and Bell (2015) describe the differences between these research strategies as, in general, a matter of numbers and words. A quantitative research strategy emphasizes quantification in the collection and analysis of data, while a qualitative research strategy is more concerned with words in the collection and analysis of data. This study entails a quantitative research approach, in which the threefold objective is to research what attributes are of highest value to Generation Z individuals, whether there are any similarities or differences between Danish and Swedish business students or gender, in other words, if some are more or less important, and if so, are there any explanations related to culture and gender.

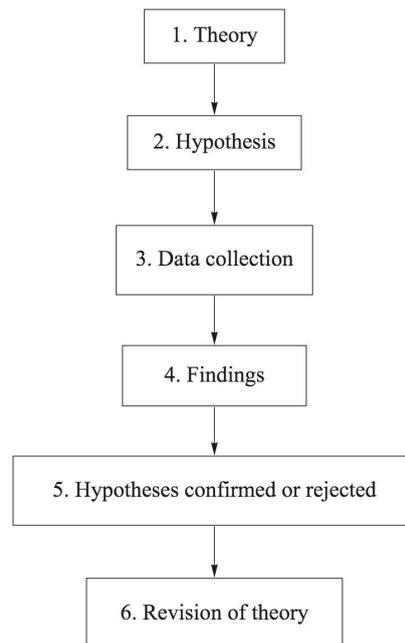


Figure 6: The Process of Deduction (Bryman & Bell, 2015)

Further, to address the research questions, a deductive approach has been undertaken. A deductive approach implies that theory guides research. In comparison, an inductive approach is said to produce theory (Bryman & Bell, 2015). For this study, we have followed the process

of deduction (displayed in figure 6) in which we have reviewed and explored the field of employer branding and Generation Z. Based on our theoretical and literature review, we have created three hypotheses that we sought to evaluate. 21 survey questions have been created that aim towards providing a foundation for evaluating and analyzing the hypotheses. Further, after discussions with the Department of Statistics at Lund University School of Economics and Management, we arrived at the conclusion that creating hypotheses is a suitable method to use for approaching this research. It is however to be noticed that our hypotheses will be evaluated rather than accepted or rejected. As previously mentioned, the hypotheses are constructed as follows:

H1: We expect various forms of recognition, attributes related to an enhanced career path, work-life balance, and diversity and inclusion to be valued the highest among Generation Z individuals.

H2: We expect preferences of employer branding attributes between Danish business students and Swedish business students to be similar.

H3: We expect preferences of employer branding attributes between men and women to be different.

After collecting the data, results were analyzed to explore and evaluate our hypotheses. Further, regardless of the outcome, the results were first analyzed to answer our first research question - What do Generation Z individuals find most attractive with their future employer? Secondly, the results were analyzed to answer our second research question - Are the employer preferences among Generation Z individuals influenced by cultural dimensions? Additionally, the results were analyzed to answer the third research question - Are there any differences in preferences between men and women?

Moreover, we chose to include an open question in our survey, which could be defined as a qualitative part. However, the open question was included with the aim of providing a further dimension for explaining the results. Hence, the open question results were not analyzed through a qualitative approach of method. Instead, the results from the open question provided the results with a further dimension. Additionally, the open question was included to give rise to new questions and perspectives that could be subject to future research.

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Study Design

As previously mentioned, this study entails a quantitative and deductive approach. Further, the design of our study is partly cross-sectional and partly comparative. A cross-sectional research design includes collecting data from more than one case. Further, a cross-sectional design collects data at a single point in time and aims to collect quantitative data to use for the examination of particular patterns (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Hence, this research design suits well with our first research question and hypothesis, to explore what employer branding attributes are most prominent among Generation Z individuals.

Furthermore, described by Bryman and Bell (2015), a comparative research design is usually related to cross-cultural or cross-national research. Further, Bryman and Bell (2015) refer to Hantrais (1996), who provides a definition in which it is explained that this type of research design seeks to examine particular phenomena or issues that occur in two or more countries. The study design seeks to explore a nations' or cultures' sociocultural settings, with a further aim to seek similarities or differences. The comparative research design is hence a suitable design for our research, as we do compare employer preferences between Danish and Swedish business students, as well as between men and women. Accordingly, this type of research design applies to evaluating our second and third hypotheses and answering the second and third research questions.

Furthermore, both the cross-sectional and comparative design usually takes the form of a social survey, in which two or more cases are compared (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The aforementioned further emphasizes that a cross-sectional research design and a comparative research design is most suitable for the objectives and purposes of this research, which are to research what attributes are of the highest value to Generation Z individuals, whether or not preferences between Danish and Swedish business students are similar, as well as whether or not there are any differences between gender. We aspire for this study to provide useful insights for managers in considering their human resources and employer branding strategies.

Consequently, our intentions are for our findings to be used in enhancing the competitive advantages for organizations.

To summarize, our study has a partly cross-sectional design, applied to the first research question and first hypothesis, and partly a comparative research design that applies to the second and third hypotheses and research questions. The study entails a cross-sectional design in terms of examining the employer preferences among Generation Z individuals, which is done through examining more than one case, at a single point in time, by collecting quantitative data and exploring patterns of association. Additionally, the study entails a cross-cultural perspective in which Danish and Swedish business students are compared, and results between men and women are compared. A social survey is common for these types of research designs, and this format is also conducted in this study. In the next section, the survey design for this study is displayed.

3.3.2 Survey Design

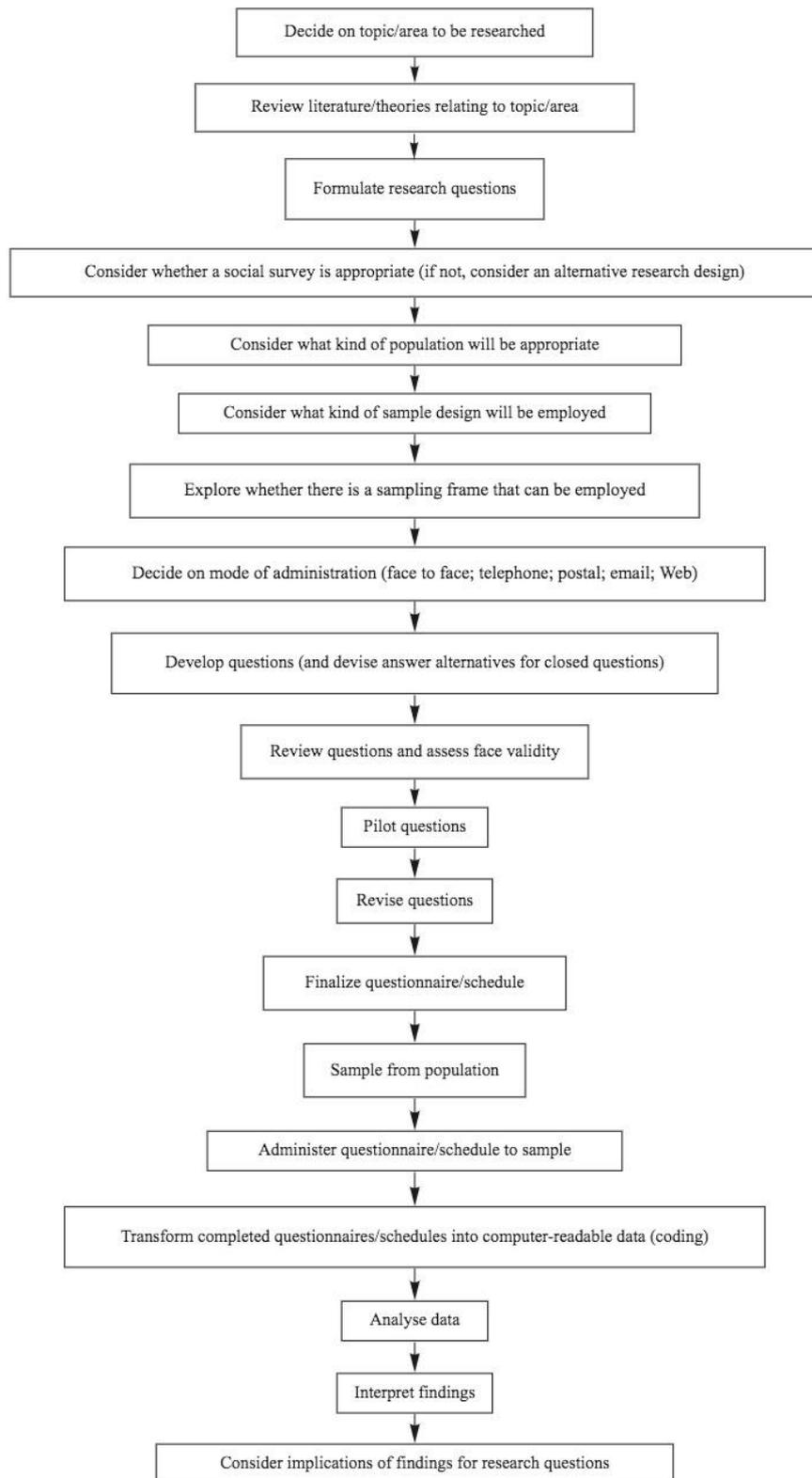
As mentioned in the previous section, a common data collection method to use for both a cross-sectional and a comparative research design is a social survey, a format also used in this study. Our survey is a type of self-completion questionnaire, including a majority of closed questions, and only one open question. According to Bryman and Bell (2015), such a format ensures a fast and non-costly way of collecting data, which hence, suits well with our timeframe and scope.

When designing our survey, the process has been similar to the one presented by Bryman and Bell (2015). This process is displayed in figure 7, Steps in Planning for a Social Survey. After deciding on a topic to research, reviewing literature and deciding on our research questions, we considered which data collection method is the most appropriate one for our survey. Due to connections in both Swedish and Danish business schools, we concluded that conducting a study within this population suits well with our research purpose. As previously mentioned, a self-completion questionnaire suits well with our timeframe and scope, and hence, we arrived at conducting a web-based survey.

Further in our process, we considered whether to ask closed or open questions. According to Bryman and Bell (2015), in a closed question respondents are provided with a set of fixed alternatives in which they have to select a fitting answer. In contrast, an open question provides the respondent to answer whatever they want. Some advantages with including closed questions, compared to open questions, in a survey are the following:

- Answers from the questions are easy to process answers.
- Closed questions enhance the comparability of answers. Hence it is easier to show relationships between variables.
- Providing respondents with closed questions may clarify the meaning of the questions which, in turn, makes it easier for respondents to answer the questions.

The advantages of asking closed questions suits well with our timeframe and scope. Additionally, this type of question provides a more comprehensive experience for the respondents which, in turn, might increase our response rate.



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Figure 7: Steps in Planning for a Social Survey (Bryman & Bell, 2015)

In designing our survey questions, we used a Likert scale for the answers. For our survey, the Likert scale is ranging 1-5, with the following definitions:

1 = Not important/true

2 = Fairly unimportant/untrue

3 = Undecided

4 = Fairly important/true

5 = Very important/true

A Likert scale of 1-10 would probably give us more significant differences as respondents in that case would have more options to choose from. However, we believed that it is difficult to define the difference between for example 7 and 8, indicating that we chose a Likert scale of 1-5, as respondents find it easier to understand the meaning of the individual Likert numbers. The benefit of having a Likert scale of 1-5 was also confirmed by our pilot study as a greater scale was difficult to comprehend.

For this survey, we have analyzed and compiled the attributes and dimensions presented in section 2.3. These attributes are used as the foundation for our survey. The reason for using these three studies is because they are all prominent and well-cited in existing employer branding literature. Common themes have been identified and categorized according to Kucherov and Zavyalova (2012) classification of employer branding attributes (see Appendix A), which are functional-, economic-, psychological-, and organizational attributes. The common themes provide the foundation for our survey questions, as the collected data was used to explore which attributes are the highest valued.

Before finalizing our survey, a small pilot study was carried out, only among 4 respondents. The pilot study was performed with the aim of receiving feedback on, for example, the phrasing of the questions and the structure of the survey. After receiving the feedback, only minor changes were made. These changes were mainly related to clarifying the questions. Further, as previously mentioned, an open question was included with the aim of providing a further dimension for explaining the results. Feedback from the pilot study was to make the open question not mandatory, in order to make the survey more comprehensive to answer.

The survey questions are displayed in Appendix B. The survey was designed in three parts. Part one included questions searching to answer the respondent's gender, age, field of study, nationality and which country the respondent studies or works in. The introductory questions sought to provide a foundation for the analysis in terms of relevant respondents, in other words, whether or not they are part of our target group - Generation Z business students from Sweden and Denmark. Additionally, to be able to make a fair comparison of the samples, it was necessary to trace the respondents' nationality (open question) and country of studies or work (open question). As the study aims towards exploring if there is a difference in preferences among men and women, the question of gender was thus unavoidable to include. The questions about gender and nationality are moreover known to be nominal variables, used to categorize and distinguish the respondents.

Besides the introductory questions, the second part of the survey included questions based on the four classifications of employer branding attributes. Each attribute represents four questions which are extracted from the common themes identified under the umbrella of functional-, economic-, psychological-, and organizational attributes (presented in Appendix A). The 16 questions aim at providing data for evaluating our three hypotheses, which in turn will set the foundation for answering our research questions. The 16 questions are known to be ordinal variables as they include a Likert scale that respondents get to choose from.

Lastly, the third part of the survey included an open question, which serves to provide a further dimension for explaining the results. The question is stated as follows: "When thinking about the job of your dreams, what do you expect from that employer? What aspects are less important?". Additionally, the open question was included to give rise to new questions and perspectives that could be subject to future research.

3.3.3 Sampling

According to Bryman and Bell (2015), there are different principles of sampling. Further, the most common type of sampling is based on constructing a sample that is supposed to be representative of a wider population. As our study aims towards outlining which employer branding attributes are the most prominent among Generation Z, and whether or not

preferences are similar among Danish versus Swedish business students and males and females, our target group is niched towards individuals born between 1995 and 2010. Moreover, the target group consists of business students and is limited to people of Danish and Swedish origin to be able to evaluate our hypotheses and answer our stated research questions. Hence, our target group was designed so that we can make a general statement about a wider population. A further elaboration concerning delimitations of our target group is presented in section 1.6.

Although our study would benefit from increasing the sample size to be able to provide a wider and more representable picture, we found it satisfactory to study a sample size of 30 respondents from each country. In accordance with the Central Limit Theorem, which indicates that the sample mean will be closer to the population mean as the sample size increases, a sample size of $n \geq 30$ is sufficient enough for the Central Limit Theorem to hold. This means that although a greater sample would give us a sample mean closer to the population mean, a sample of 30 respondents in each country would be sufficient to predict the characteristics of Generation Z, Danish and Swedish business students and men and women (Fischer, 2011). It is to be noticed that differences between men and women are evaluated independently of nationality (H3). Additionally, the H1 is evaluated independently of nationality and gender.

The choice of sample size was not straightforward, it depended on several factors, with time being one of the most eminent. As we were restricted by a limited time period, there was no opportunity to spend more time on collecting data, as we also needed to put effort into analyzing the results to evaluate our hypotheses, followed by answering our research questions. Hence, due to a limited time period, we aimed to keep our sample size relatively small but sufficient enough to be able to reach a representable conclusion, in other words, the Central Limit Theorem applies as our guideline for our target of $n=60$. Moreover, as we expected to receive answers from respondents who are not part of our target group, for example, business students who are not Danish or Swedish, we forecasted to collect approximately 70 responses, where 60 of the respondents should fit our target group and 10 should not fit.

Although we aimed towards achieving a sample size of $n=30$, we did not achieve our target sample size. Due to lack of time and lack of opportunities to hand out the survey personally, we did, in total, receive 59 responses, for which 40 responses were valid. However, after discussions with the Department of Statistics at Lund University School of Economics and Management, we decided that the sample size was sufficient for the scope of our thesis.

3.4 Data Collection Method

The analysis and discussion in this study are based on responses from a survey sent out to Danish and Swedish business students. The survey was conducted online and created in Google Forms and is moreover in a self-completion format. As previously mentioned, such a format ensures a fast and non-costly way of collecting data. Moreover, self-completion questionnaires, in comparison to other data collection methods such as structured interviews, tend to be easier to answer as most questions are closed (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Furthermore, surveys made in Google Forms are designed in a user-friendly way and are easy to follow, indicating that we minimize the risk that respondents will fail to follow the questions and therefore omit to respond. Google Forms also allow for making questions mandatory, which means that we lowered the risk of getting invalid responses as the respondents had to fill in all questions before submitting them, except for the open question included in the end. Furthermore, self-completion questionnaires also tend to be shorter compared to, for example, structured interviews, hence we reduced the risk of “respondent fatigue” which means that the quality of responses decreases when the survey is too lengthy (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

However, besides the fact that self-completion questionnaires are cheaper, quicker to administer and more convenient for the respondents, there are some disadvantages that we took into account when collecting the data. To begin with, respondents were able to read the whole survey before answering the first question, which can result in questions being dependent on each other. Hence, if questions would have been asked independently, there is a risk that the outcome of the answers would have been different (Bryman & Bell, 2015). For that reason, however, we chose to ask questions that are of different character and not similar, indicating that questions are not fully interrelated.

Furthermore, we were not able to ensure exactly who answers our survey as there was no face-to-face interaction. Nor was it possible to predict the number of answers as there were no guaranteed responses, which could be the case if you agree to set a structured interview for example. On the other hand, however, we tried to use as many channels as possible to increase our response rate, and since our survey was quick to answer and easy to follow, we hoped to increase our chances of gathering sufficient data.

Lastly, our survey was accessible through an online link and we approached friends and colleagues in Denmark as well as Sweden to distribute the survey. In specific, we used groups on Messenger, Facebook, and other Social Media Platforms to share our survey. On the last note, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, handing out the survey face-to-face was not possible, indicating that the data was collected completely online.

3.5 Data Analysis

As previously mentioned, a quantitative study with a deductive approach, and with a combined cross-sectional and comparative design has been conducted. Data collection was performed in the form of a social survey. The survey was created in Google Forms and provides an easy way to transfer the data from the Google Forms programme to Excel.

For analyzing the data, we used both the tools in Excel and SPSS. In excel, diagrams for the means of each question among the different groups of interest were created. Additionally, diagrams and pie charts were created for individual values as well, such as the distribution of gender, for example. These are further presented in section 4.2 - pre-analysis.

In SPSS data from Excel was transferred to the sheet “Data View”. Each question (1-16) represented an ordinal variable. Further, data about gender and nationality was transferred to use for evaluating hypotheses 2 and 3, and research question 2 and 3. Additionally, the variables of nationality and gender were also included in the “Data View”, these were classified as nominal variables. The variables were labelled, defined and valued according to the description in section 3.3.2.

After preparing the data in both Excel and SPSS, we were able to construct the necessary diagrams, pie charts, frequency tables, contingency tables as well as coherent standard deviations and chi-square test for analysis.

To summarize, the social survey format provided us with a comprehensive way to transfer and analyze data. The easy transfer possibility reduced the risk for manual errors. However, we moved the data into different sheets in excel to categorize the data for the research hypotheses and questions. Hence, a small risk for manual error occurred, which made it important for us to pay particular attention to this risk in our process.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which the results of a study are repeatable, in other words, if someone else were to conduct the same study, will the results be similar (Heale & Twycross, 2015)? We believe that the study is reliable. The questions are clearly stated and so is the scale from which the respondents are able to choose. The scale provided individual answers and means for each variable measured, indicating that it was easy to see which attributes were the most prominent, if preferences were similar between Danish and Swedish business students and if preferences differed among men and women. Hand in hand, if someone were to repeat our survey, we believe the results will be similar as the data analysis is straightforward. It is, however, to be noted that results from the same respondents may vary in case preferences change in the future, for example, if cultural dimensions diminish or if preferences adjust due to social events.

Moreover, as the survey was easy to follow, respondents understood how to answer the survey, indicating that we were able to gather consistent answers. This was also confirmed by our pilot survey, as the test respondents found no influences of ambiguity. Furthermore, as there was an open question included in the end, reliability increases as respondents were able to give further insights in case any aspect was forgotten in the survey.

Validity refers to the extent to which a concept of interest is measured accurately (Heale & Twycross, 2015). Heale and Twycross (2015) posit that if a researcher creates a survey

designed to explore X, whereas it measures Z, the degree of validity is low. Hence, as our survey aims towards exploring the most prominent employer branding attributes among Generation Z, if preferences are similar between Danish and Swedish business students, and if preferences differ among men and women, one could argue that the questions are valid as they are extracted from the four common employer branding classifications, in other words, our responses do not provide indications of other subject fields. Moreover, as the attributes can be studied from Hofstede's six dimensions, the questions are also valid from that point of view as we were able to explore if preferences are similar among people of Danish versus Swedish origin. Lastly, as we analyzed if there are differences in preferences among men and women, our questions can furthermore be argued to be valid as we also asked our respondents about what gender they define themselves with.

Looking at the validity of our respondents, one could argue that as our sample is withdrawn from Danish and Swedish business schools, interpretations are expected to be homogeneous as the universities are of similar character (highly ranked business schools in Sweden and Denmark). If we were to send out our survey to dissimilar universities, responses may be subject to different interpretations and non-validity in case there are subcultures affecting student preferences. Also, respondents not fitting our target group were not accounted for to reduce the risk of sampling errors.

Lastly, we have chosen to include secondary sources, which have been carefully selected. To find secondary sources, we have conducted systematic research to avoid non-credible and biased resources. Most of the literature used is known to be peer-reviewed, indicating a valid and authentic status. Peer-reviewed articles have moreover mostly been found on LubSearch. For the non-peer-reviewed literature, we have only included information that is either widely cited or neutral.

4 Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Chapter Summary

In the following chapter, we begin by providing the reader with information regarding the number of respondents and how we prepared the data. In addition to that, findings related to Generation Z, Swedish and Danish business students, and men and women are presented to answer our hypotheses. Moreover, analyses and discussions are being carried out to eventually explore our research questions. Lastly, a discussion concerning implications for employer branding is presented followed by a conclusion of our main findings.

4.2 Pre-analysis

4.2.1 Data Screening

Our target was to collect 70 responses in total, whereof 60 were expected to be valid responses. Out of the 60 responses, we also aimed at receiving 30 responses from Danish business students, and 30 responses from Swedish business students. Moreover, our target was, out of the 60 responses, to collect answers from 30 males and 30 females, for the Central Limit Theorem to hold. Due to lack of time and lack of opportunities to hand out the survey personally, we did not reach our target sample size. In total, we received 40 valid responses, of which 21 were classified as Danish Business students, 19 were Swedish Business students. Out of the 40 respondents, 20 were males whereas 20 were females. As the survey was sent out on Facebook, student chats, and other social media platforms, respondents who were not part of our target group also answered. Therefore, we received 19 responses that could not be

included in the analysis. Furthermore, we also had to exclude 3 responses as there was a systematic error, registering the same response 4 times.

To be able to answer our three research questions and explore the associated hypotheses, some respondents are excluded from the sample to make an accurate analysis and comparison. The definitions we derived from are presented in section 1.3.1. Individuals are excluded based on four conditions;

1. **Age.** A valid respondent is born between 1995-2010, as that is the definition for being part of Generation Z.
2. **Nationality.** A valid respondent is either a Danish business student from Denmark or a Swedish Business student from Sweden.
3. **Field of study.** A valid respondent studies within the field of business.
4. **Gender.** A valid respondent is either male or female.

The excluded sample consists of respondents not possessing a valid nationality and/or a valid field of study. No respondents are excluded based on gender, as all respondents identified themselves as either male or female. One respondent is excluded based on age.

In terms of representability, we cannot for sure know how many people have been notified about the survey but not chosen to answer. For that reason, we cannot know if people, representing Generation Z with contrasting preferences, are excluded. Hence, to what extent this study is representing Generation Z is difficult to foresee.

As noticed in figure 8 the number of respondents from Denmark was higher than respondents from Sweden (figure 8 includes non-target respondents). However, as the difference is minor after excluding non-target respondents, we still believe the findings are reliable and representable. Moreover, as seen in figure 9, the majority of respondents belong to Generation Z, in other words, they are born between 1995-2010, indicating that our findings to a wide extent represent Generation Z. As previously mentioned, the one respondent not belonging to that age range has been excluded to avoid ambiguous influences.

Total amount of Respondents from Sweden and Denmark

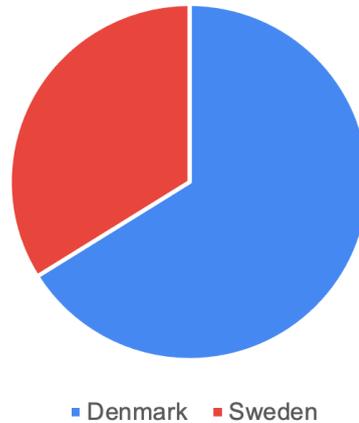


Figure 8: Total amount of Respondents (Berggren & Kock, 2021)

Age Distribution among Respondents

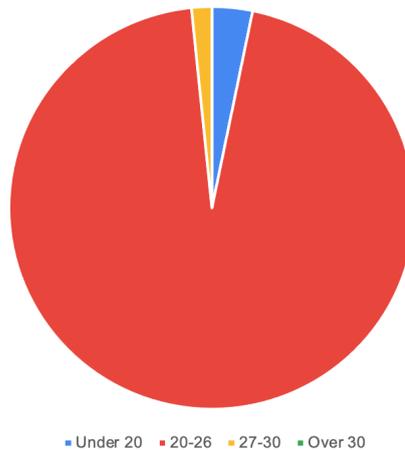


Figure 9: Age Distribution (Berggren & Kock, 2021)

4.2.2 Preparation of Data

Before conducting the analysis, data from the responses had to be prepared. First, we imported the data from Google Forms and transferred it into Excel. As we included 5 introductory questions, we secondly identified respondents fitting our target group. Accordingly, we excluded respondents that were not part of Generation Z, that were not, per

definition business students, that had other nationalities than Danish and Swedish, or who did not define themselves as men or women. After screening our respondents, we made three pages in Excel, and the first page included respondents belonging to Generation Z. The second page included responses from Danish and Swedish business students, and lastly, the third page displayed responses from males versus women.

After creating the three pages in Excel, we created means for each question to see how each question was valued, on average, among the respondents. In excel, diagrams and pie charts were created to see the mean rating per question among Generation Z individuals, Danish versus Swedish business students, and men versus women. The means will give us an estimation of what attributes are the highest valued among Generation Z individuals, if preferences are similar among Danish and Swedish business students, and if preferences are different between men and women. Hence, the means will allow us to explore our hypotheses and thus our research questions.

Succeeding, data from Excel was imported into SPSS. As previously mentioned, each question (1-16) serves as ordinal variables where values in SPSS are labelled according to the Likert scale (1=Not important/true - Very important/true). Further, the variables of gender and nationality are included in which the values for the variables are coded as follows;

Gender:

1 = Male

2 = Female

Nationality:

1 = Swedish

2 = Danish

Henceforth, Frequency Tables, Standard Deviations, Contingency Tables, and Chi-Square Tests were created for each question. The tables will be referred to in our analysis and discussion of the three hypotheses and research questions. Frequency Tables, Standard Deviations, Contingency Tables, and Chi-Square Tests are presented in Appendices D, E, and F. Furthermore, standard deviations are included to explore whether or not there are any particular dispersions interesting to analyze and compare. The Chi-Square Tests for

Independence are included to test whether or not there are any statistically significant differences in the results regarding the comparison between Danish and Swedish business students, as well as between men and women. In other words, the Chi-Square Tests for Independence tests whether preferences of employer branding attributes are related to either nationality or gender.

4.3 Analysis and Discussion of Key Findings

In the subsequent paragraphs, findings, analyses, and discussions are presented, with the aim of exploring our hypotheses and research questions. The hypotheses and research questions are assessed in individual parts. We begin by presenting the key findings, and henceforth, we present analyses and discussions exploring each field of interest. Additionally, findings, analysis, and a discussion related to the open question answers are presented. Lastly, a section including suggestions for employers in what to consider to strengthen their employer brand is presented, in other words, what do employers need to prioritize to attract and retain employees.

It is to be noticed that not all results are presented in the text. Summarizing diagrams of the means are given, whereas all questions and coherent results for Generation Z are presented in frequency tables in Appendix C. Contingency tables for a comparison between nationality and gender are also presented in Appendices D and E. Furthermore, all valid responses from the open question are presented in Appendix F. Results with particular interesting outcomes are prioritized in the analysis and discussion.

4.3.1 Findings Hypothesis 1

In this section, the results related to the first hypothesis are presented. As previously mentioned, the hypothesis is constructed as follows:

H1: We expect various forms of recognition, attributes related to an enhanced career path, work-life balance, and diversity and inclusion to be valued the highest among Generation Z individuals.

After screening the respondents, we identified 40 answers that were valid and suitable in terms of our defined target group. Succeeding the preparation of data, a diagram was made in Excel followed by frequency tables and standard deviations for each question made in SPSS (which are presented in Appendix C) Hence, we found the following mean ratings per question among Generation Z individuals:

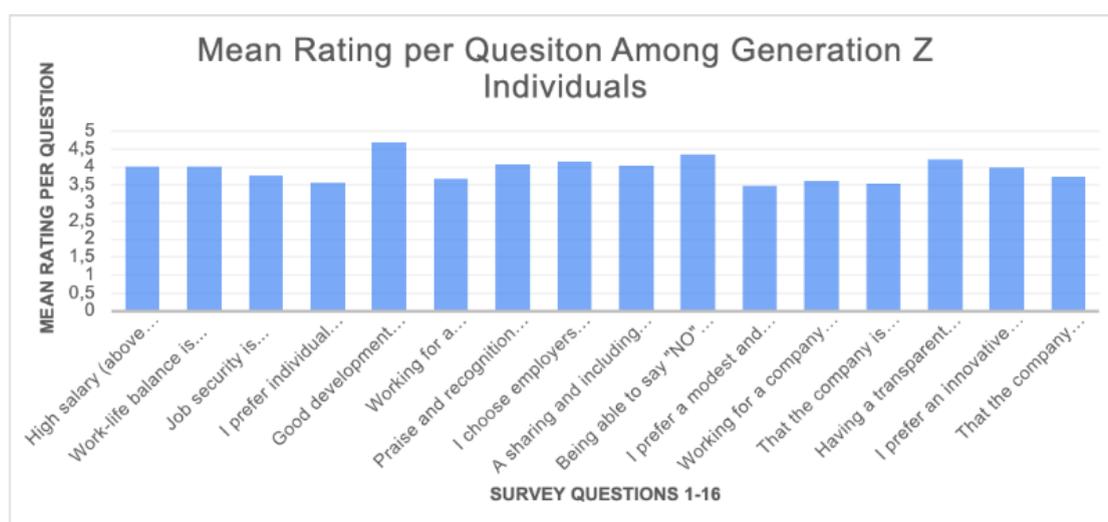


Figure 10: Mean Rating among Generation Z (Berggren & Kock, 2021)

As seen in the diagram, some questions are deviating, although not significantly. As hypothesis 1 involves questions related to recognition, an enhanced career path, work-life balance, diversity, and inclusion, we find it reasonable to first present means for each question related to these aspects. It is to be noticed that both the hypothesis and the survey questions are based on the information presented in the literature. For that reason, questions are closely related to the attributes presented in the hypothesis, which enables us to explore our

hypothesis. Subsequently, means which are not in line with the hypothesis are presented to explore if the hypothesis is accurate.

Firstly, one could argue that recognition is related to question 6 - *“Working for a prestigious company would make me seem more prestigious to others”*. Recognition could also be related to question 7, and 13 - *“Praise and recognition from my employer is...”*, and *“That the company is well-known and prestigious is...”*. It is to be noticed that question 13 is a matter of definition, however, as Generation Z seek recognition in various forms, such as from people in general terms, we find the question related to recognition. Moreover, an enhanced career path could be related to question 5, and 8 - *“Good development opportunities are...”*, and *“I choose employers based on whether I believe the employment should be an advantage for future employment”*. Work-life balance is furthermore related to question 2 - *“Work-life balance is...”*, and diversity and inclusion could be related to question 9, and 12 - *“A sharing and including organizational culture is...”*, and *“Working for a company where diversity is actively promoted is important to me”*.

When looking at the diagram, one could notice that question 6 has a mean of ≈ 3.68 . Question 7 has a mean of ≈ 4.08 , whereas question 13 has a mean of ≈ 3.53 . Moving on to question 5, it has a mean of 4.70, and question 8 has a mean of 4.15. Moreover, question 2 has a mean of ≈ 4.03 , and question 9 has a mean of 4.05. Finally, question 12 has a mean value of ≈ 3.63 . Hence, question 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, and 13 are related to the attributes mentioned in the hypothesis, in other words, recognition, an enhanced career path, work-life balance, diversity, and inclusion. However, as seen by the means, not all questions which were predicted to be highest valued were top-rated by the respondents, as some questions have low means.

Hence, besides the questions related to the hypothesis, it is highly relevant to present the questions with the highest means, as that will reveal the answer to our hypothesis. As observed in the diagram above, question 1 - *“High salary (above market average) is...”* has a mean of ≈ 4.03 . Moreover, question 10 *“...being able to say NO if you do not agree with your manager or colleague..”*, has a mean of 4.35. Lastly, question 14 is about *“...having a transparent relationship with the manager...”*, and it has a mean of 4.20.

In accordance with the results, it is noticeable that questions 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 14 are of the highest value to Generation Z individuals. However, our hypothesis only includes question

2, 5, 7, 8, 9, whereas it excludes 1, 10, and 14. For that reason, there are some questions that are of greater value to Generation Z individuals than those which were included in our hypothesis and predicted by literature. Hence, our hypothesis - We expect various forms of recognition, attributes related to an enhanced career path, work-life balance, and diversity and inclusion to be valued the highest among Generation Z individuals - is not fully accurate as some attributes, which were not included in the hypothesis, were of higher value meanwhile some attributes, which were included in the hypothesis, turned out to be of less value.

4.3.2 Findings Hypothesis 2

In the following section, results related to the second hypothesis are presented. As previously mentioned, the hypothesis is as follows:

H2: We expect preferences of employer branding attributes between Danish business students and Swedish business students to be similar.

After identifying 40 answers, we recognized that 21 were classified as Danish Business students, and 19 were identified as Swedish Business students. Hence, two more respondents were Danish Business students. Although the sample size is not equal, there is still a fair distribution for making a representable comparison.

Distribution Swedish and Danish Business Students within target sample

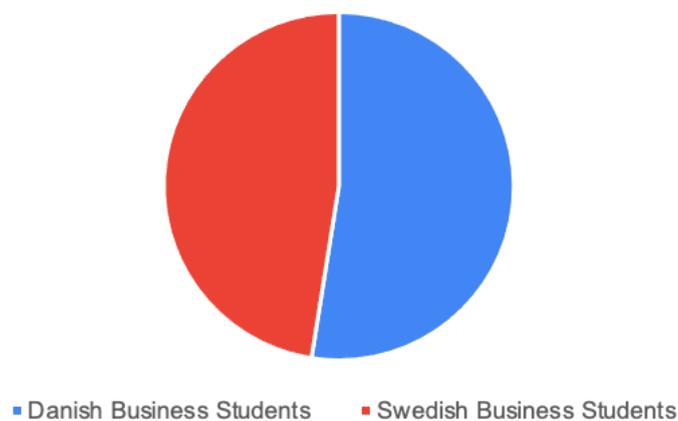


Figure 11: Distribution Danish vs Swedish business students (Berggren & Kock, 2021)

Once preparing the data, a diagram in Excel was made. The following mean ratings for each question from Generation Z individuals in Sweden and Denmark were found:

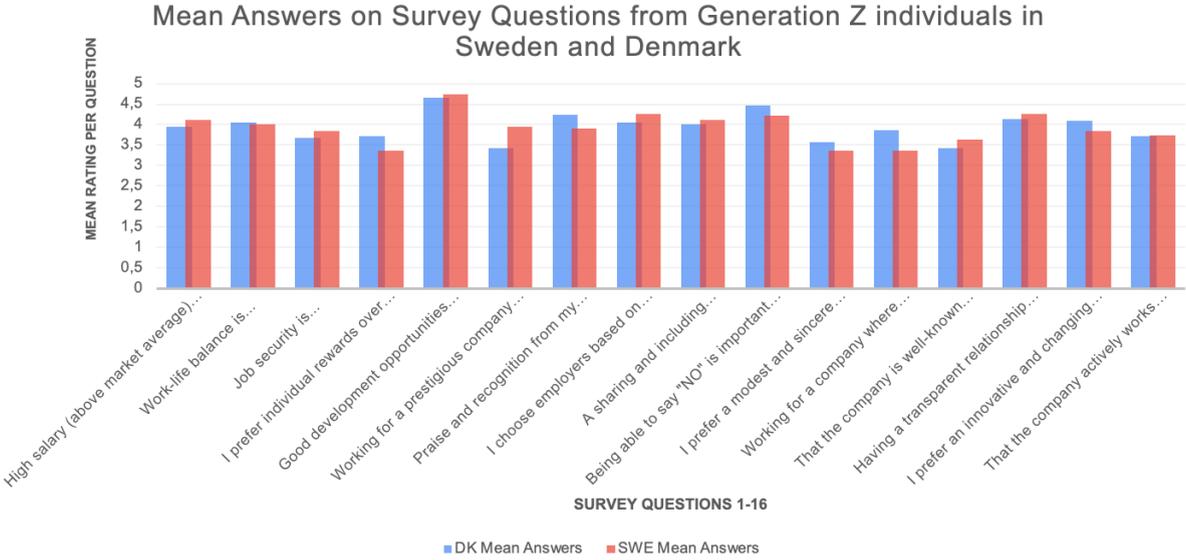


Figure 12: Mean Rating among Swedish vs Danish business students (Berggren & Kock, 2021)

As could be seen in the diagram, most questions have similar means. However, to be able to make a fair comparison, and decide if there are any statistically significant differences between the responses of Swedish and Danish business students, contingency tables with coherent Chi-Square Tests have been created and performed (see Appendix D).

Looking at question 4, 6, 7, and 12, one can notice that there are some slight differences in terms of preferences between Danish and Swedish business students. The questions are; “I prefer individual rewards over collective rewards”, “Working for a prestigious company would make me seem prestigious to others”, “Praise and recognition from my employer are...”, and “Working for a company where diversity is actively promoted is important to me”. These questions have a mean difference and Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) (now on referred to as AS2) of the following values:

Question 4 - I prefer individual rewards over collective rewards: mean difference ≈ 0.15 , AS2 = 0.625

Question 6 - Working for a prestigious company would make me seem prestigious to others: mean difference ≈ 0.51 , AS2 = 0.333

Question 7 - Praise and recognition from my employer is...: mean difference ≈ 0.34 , AS2 = 0.470

Question 12 - Working for a company where diversity is actively promoted is important to me: mean difference ≈ 0.48 , AS2 = 0.123

The Chi-Square Tests indicate a statistically significant difference between the responses of the two groups when the AS2 is < 0.05 . In accordance with the findings, it is to be noticed that none of the questions with slight differences in terms of the means is statistically significant, which means that the preferences between Danish and Swedish business students are similar.

Besides the fact that most answers do not differ significantly between Danish and Swedish business students, one can further strengthen the argument by looking at some other questions with a high AS2. Firstly, question 2 - *“Work-life balance is...”*, has a mean difference of ≈ 0.05 , whereof the AS2 is 0.585, indicating that preferences are very similar among Danish and Swedish business students. Moreover, as question 16 - *“That the company actively works with CSR related topics is...”*, has a mean difference of ≈ 0.02 , and an AS2 of 0.627, preferences are furthermore proven to be of similar character.

To conclude, preferences between Danish and Swedish business students are found to be similar. Although some slight mean differences, the AS2 indicated that differences were statistically insignificant. Hence, our hypothesis - We expect preferences of employer branding attributes between Danish business students and Swedish business students to be similar - was explored to be accurate.

4.3.3 Findings Hypothesis 3

For this section, the results related to the third hypothesis are presented. As previously mentioned, the hypothesis is constructed as follows:

H3: We expect preferences of employer branding attributes between men and women to be different.

Distribution of Gender among Target Group

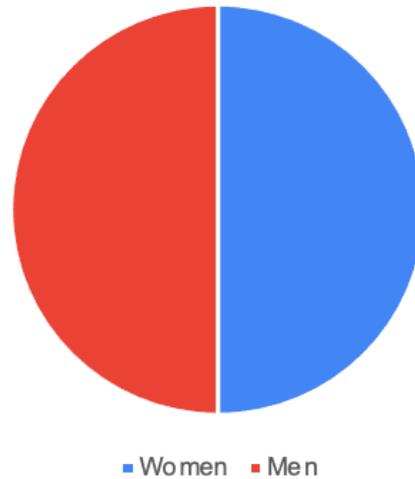


Figure 13: Distribution of Gender among Target Group (Berggren & Kock, 2021)

The number of men and women within the target group who responded were equally many, 20 responses from each group. As previously mentioned, responses from men and women are evaluated regardless of nationality. The mean rating per question is presented in the diagram, where it also is possible to observe the mean difference between how men responded compared to women.

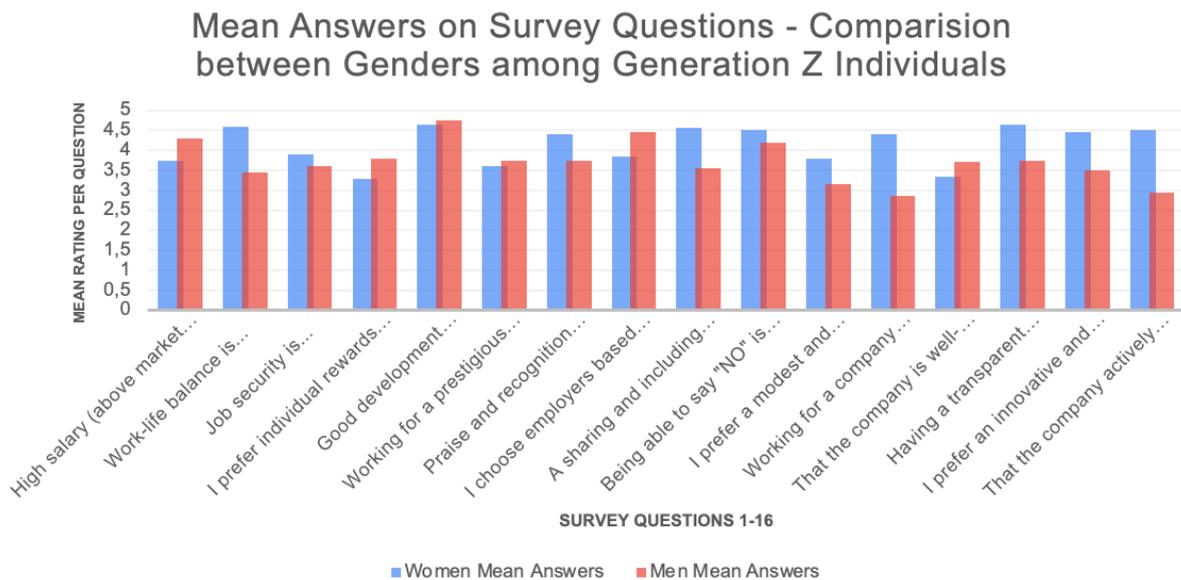


Figure 14: Mean Rating among Men vs Women (Berggren & Kock, 2021)

To be able to make a fair comparison, and decide if there are any statistically significant differences between the responses of men and women, contingency tables with coherent Chi-Square Tests have been created and performed (see Appendix E).

As can be observed in the diagram, some means in the rating per question differs particularly. These concerns questions 2, 9, 12, and 16 - “*Work-life balance is...*”, “*A sharing and including organizational culture is...*”, “*Working for a company where diversity is actively promoted is important to me*”, and “*That the company actively works with CSR related topics is...*”. These responses have a mean difference in rating of the following values:

Question 2 - Work-life balance is... ≈ 1.15

Question 9 - A sharing and including organizational culture is... ≈ 1.00

Question 12 - Working for a company where diversity is actively promoted is important to me ≈ 1.55

Question 16 - That the company actively works with CSR related topics is... ≈ 1.55

The coherent Chi-Square Tests to each question further confirms that there is a statistically significant difference between men and women in their responses to the above-mentioned questions. As previously mentioned, the Chi-Square Tests indicate a statistically significant difference between the responses of the two groups, when the AS2 is < 0.05 . For the above-mentioned questions, the AS2 are equal to:

Question 2 - Work-life balance is...: 0.022

Question 9 - A sharing and including organizational culture is...: 0.005

Question 12 - Working for a company where diversity is actively promoted is important to me: 0.010

Question 16 - That the company actively works with CSR related topics is...: 0.001

There are other questions for which the results differ significantly between men and women. Other questions where the Chi-Square Test $AS2 < 0.05$, and hence, indicates a statistically significant difference are the following:

Question 1 - High salary (above market average) is...: 0.038

Question 14 - Having a transparent relationship with the manager is...: 0.005

Question 15 - I prefer an innovative and changing working environment over a well-structured and bureaucratic organization: 0.043

The above-presented results indicate a statistically significant difference on 7 out of the 16 questions in our survey.

On the contrary, the question for which results are most similar is the question concerning the importance of good development opportunities (question 5). For this question, not only is the mean difference low (= 0.10), but also the Chi-Square Test is high. The Chi-Square Test for this question is equal to 0.729, indicating no statistically significant difference between men and women in this question.

Evidently, differences do exist in preferences between men and women, as indicated by the results. Hence, evaluating our third hypothesis - We expect preferences of employer branding attributes between men and women to be different - it can be concluded that the hypothesis is accurate.

4.3.4 Analysis & Discussion; Generation Z

In accordance with the literature review presented in section 2.3, Generation Z individuals are known to be individualistic in their mindset, and especially in terms of their career plans. Moreover, the literature reviewed in section 2.3 indicated that Generation Z individuals are prone to value various forms of recognition from their managers. Questions 5, 6, 7, 8, and 13 are all related to recognition and an enhanced career path, however, by studying the results, one could notice that only questions 5, 7, and 8 were highly valued. Praise and recognition from the employer (question 7), good development opportunities (question 5) and the fact that one chooses employers because it will be an advantage for future employment (question 8), were results supporting the literature, as literature predicted that Generation Z individuals are subject to an enhanced career path and recognition, which turned out to be true.

On the other hand, question 6 and 13 - “*Working for a prestigious company would make me seem more prestigious to others*”, and “*That the company is well known and prestigious is...*”, had lower means in comparison to question 5, 7, and 8, indicating that it was not as important as expected. Hence, although prestige could be related to recognition, results for these questions do not support the literature in section 2.3 as prestige was not as important as praise and recognition from the employer. However, it should be noticed that results were not significantly different from those of the expectations.

Secondly, the literature in section 2.3 indicated that Generation Z individuals do experience an overall higher degree of mental unhealth, and they also value health benefits and support from the organization and their managers. As a result, there is an increased demand for work-life balance. Work-life balance is related to question 2, and as the question has a mean of ≈ 4.03 , one can conclude Generation Z individuals highly value work-life balance, indicating that results support the literature. Not only does it seem reasonable to assume that the increased demand for work-life balance is a result of mental unhealth and the fact that Generation Z individuals find support important, but answers to our open questions also imply that people highly value freedom and balance in life. This strengthens the idea that our results support the literature. Moreover, a common theme among our open question answers was the fact that people want to enjoy a fun work environment, indicating, yet again, that results are aligned with the literature as Generation Z individuals seem to prioritize well-being over for example hard work and prestige.

Thirdly, Starecek et al. (2020) and Pichler, Kohli, and Granitz (2021) imply that Generation Z finds diversity and inclusion highly important. As question 9 - “*A sharing and including organizational culture is...*”, was highly rated, one can conclude that the results support the literature in terms of inclusion. On the other hand, working for a company where diversity is actively promoted (question 12), was not a top-rated question, indicating that the results do not support the literature in terms of diversity. On the contrary, standard deviations were made to see how reliable and accurate means are, and accordingly, it was noticed that question 12 had the highest standard deviation among all questions. With a standard deviation of 1.37164, one can conclude that respondents had contrasting answers, and when studying the responses individually, one could notice that some respondents rated diversity the highest. This may

indicate that diversity could be of high value, although the mean for that question is not the highest.

Other Observations

Moving on to the results which were not predicted nor supported by the literature in section 2.3, one could notice that high salary (question 1), being able to say "NO" if one does not agree with its manager or colleague (question 10), and having a transparent relationship with the manager (question 14), is of high importance to Generation Z individuals. Hence, as the literature did not predict that questions with similar themes were going to be of high value, results do not support our predictions as they were of high value although not expected. This may indicate that our first hypothesis is not completely accurate, although not significantly false due to the lightweight differences. The idea that there are other attributes that are of higher value than those predicted by literature can be further strengthened by some of the answers to our open question. Answers indicate that Generation Z individuals want a high salary, they want to be treated as equals, in other words, being able to agree or disagree with managers as a result of less definite hierarchies, and they moreover want healthy and transparent relationships with the employers.

Based on the findings, Generation Z individuals value high salary, work-life balance, development opportunities, praise and recognition from the employer, a sharing and including organizational culture, being able to say NO if not agreeing, having a transparent relationship with the manager, and they also choose employers based on the fact that current employment could be an advantage for future employment. Hence, on the one hand, some of the questions which were predicted to be of the highest value were of such character according to the outcome of our study. On the other hand, questions that were not predicted to be highly valued were in fact of high value, and moreover, questions expected to generate high means had contrasting findings as they were not as highly valued as predicted. A note of caution must however be raised. As all responses are relatively similar, that is, the means are not significantly different, no questions are significantly more or less important, as all have a mean between $\approx 3.48 - 4.70$. For that reason, it is not possible to say that our hypothesis is fully inaccurate as the questions with lower means are not significantly different. On the other

hand, one could argue that there are a few questions which are of higher importance, although, yet again, not significantly.

On a further note, the previously mentioned aspects which are the most prominent among Generation Z individuals can be further strengthened by some of the answers to our open question. Respondents commonly argue that work-life balance, being treated as equals, having transparent and healthy relationships with the employer and that current employment should fit future career plans are of high importance, indicating that the answers to the open questions are in line with the results from the survey. This, yet again, strengthens that the previously mentioned preferences are the most prominent among Generation Z individuals.

4.3.5 Analysis & Discussion; Culture

As suggested by the findings above, preferences between Danish and Swedish business students are found to be similar. Although some slight mean differences, the Chi-Square tests indicated that differences were of statistical insignificance. Hence, as implied in section 4.3.2, our hypothesis - We expect preferences of employer branding attributes between Danish business students and Swedish business students to be similar - was explored to be accurate.

However, to answer our research question - Are the employer preferences among Generation Z individuals influenced by cultural dimensions? - we will first explore what Hofstede's six dimensions imply in terms of preferences, followed by if preferences, in fact, turned out to be as expected. Lastly, as our study targets Danish and Swedish business students (who all belong to Generation Z), we will discuss whether there are any other angles of approach as Generation Z is said to perceive culture differently compared to other generations.

As mentioned in the literature section 2.4, countries with a high individualism index tend to prefer individual rewards over collective rewards, and the individual journey is also more prioritized. For that reason, one could look at questions 4 and 5 - "*I prefer individual rewards over collective rewards*", and "*Good development opportunities are...*", as those could be related to the dimension of individualism. When analyzing the results, one can see that Swedish, as well as Danish business students, highly value development opportunities, as means are approximately equal to 4.60 and 4.70. Moreover, respondents find individual

rewards more important than collective rewards. Hence, our results support the literature as Swedish and Danish business students, with country-related high individualism indexes seem to prefer individual benefits.

Moreover, when analyzing the dimension of uncertainty avoidance, the literature in section 2.4 suggests that Sweden, as well as Denmark, score relatively low, indicating that both countries are open to change, innovation and prefer less bureaucratic structures. To bring a line of argument, question 15 - *“I prefer an innovative and changing working environment over a well-structured and bureaucratic organization”*, could be related to a low uncertainty avoidance index. As the Swedish business students have a mean of 3.80, and the Danish business students have a mean of 4,00, one could further argue that both nationalities prefer an innovative and changing working environment over a bureaucratic organization. Hence, one could posit that culture seems to influence preferences as our results support the literature.

Thirdly, when studying the indulgence index, literature suggested that Sweden, as well as Denmark, score high as the two countries have a score of 78 and 70 respectively (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). As countries with a high indulgence index emphasize work-life balance (Mindtools, n.d.), it could be directly related to question 2 - *“Work-life balance is...”*. When studying the results, one can see that the question has a mean of approximately 4.00 for both Swedish and Danish business students, indicating that all respondents highly value work-life balance. For that reason, one could argue culture influences preferences, since the two countries, characterized by a high indulgence index, prioritize work-life balance, as implied by Hofstede (1994) and Mindtools (n.d.).

Other Observations

In the literature review (section 2.4), it was further argued that Sweden and Denmark differ slightly in terms of power distance, masculinity, and long-term orientation. Mindtools (n.d.) suggested that countries characterized with low power distance prefer less hierarchical business structures, which could be related to question 14 - *“Having a transparent relationship with the manager is...”*. Hofstede Insights (n.d.) implied that Sweden has a power distance index of 31, whereas Denmark has a score of 18. Although a slight difference,

the results from the survey were almost identical, with a mean difference of only 0.12. For that reason, as preferences are similar, although a greater difference in the power distance index, another angle of approach is requested. As argued by Hinkel (n.d.), Generation Z associates culture with attitudes and behaviours, and although a versatile definition, culture seems to be more homogeneous among Generation Z. For that reason, one could argue that as the power distance index differs, and preferences are still proven to be similar, the characteristics of Generation Z, rather than the ones of culture, might explain why preferences are similar. Hence, although culture might influence preferences to some extent, there might be generational factors explaining the results of the study. However, it is to be noticed that both countries still score relatively low in terms of the power distance index, hence, it is not a definite conclusion that results do not support the literature in this question. However, the generational factors are to be considered.

Moreover, Denmark is, according to Hofstede Insights (n.d.), known to be more masculine than Sweden, which according to literature, should indicate that Danish business students value money and achievement higher than work-life balance. Accordingly, this could, for example, be related to question 1, 2, 13 - "*High salary (above market average) is...*", "*Work-life balance is...*", and "*That the company is well-known and prestigious is...*". In theory, Danish business students should therefore value a high salary more than Swedish business students. However, results show that Swedish business students find a high salary slightly more important than Danish business students. Swedish business students should also value work-life balance higher, which contradicts the findings as our results show that both nationalities value this as much. Furthermore, when looking at question 13, Swedish business students find a prestigious company slightly more important than Danish business students, which is another contrasting finding in relation to the literature, as Sweden should be more feminine than Denmark.

For that reason, other angles of approach are requested as the literature is not aligned with the findings. As suggested by Pichler, Kohli, and Granitz (2021), Generation Z wants to work hard, be rewarded and recognized. Taking this into consideration, it might explain why preferences between Danish and Swedish business students are similar, although literature suggests that some cultural dimensions are of slight difference. One could expect that the slight index differences would equal the same differences in preferences. However, either

preferences were similar or contradicting, indicating that some results do not support what was predicted by the literature in section 2.4.

Furthermore, Pichler, Kohli, and Granitz (2021) argued that Generation Z is more subject to mental unhealth, and organizational and managerial support is important, indicating that work-life balance is highly valued. This might explain why question 2 - *“Work-life balance is...”*, is equally valued among the respondents, and not more valued by Swedish business students, as suggested by the literature. This thought can be further strengthened by some of the answers to our open question. Common themes such as *“A fun working environment”*, *“Work-life balance”*, *“An exciting workplace”*, and *“Freedom from my employer”* are included in many responses, indicating that respondents, regardless of nationality, seem to value balance in life. This further suggests that employer preferences are influenced by generational factors, and not only by culture.

Finally, when looking at the last dimension, namely long-term orientation, Mindtools (n.d.) argued that countries subject to long-term orientation are often more thrifty and modest. This could therefore be related to question 11 - *“I prefer a modest and sincere organizational culture over a robust and strong culture”*. As Hofstede Insights (n.d.) implied that Sweden is more long-term oriented than Denmark, results are aligned with the literature as Swedish business students have a slightly higher mean than Danish business students. On the other hand, means are still relatively similar, indicating that generational factors, yet again, are to be considered. According to the open question answers, most respondents indicated they want to be treated as equals, have an open and healthy relationship with the employer, and expect a flexible approach from the manager. To bring a line of argument, Generation Z seems to prefer a modest organizational culture, hence, cultural as well as generational characteristics might influence employer preferences.

To conclude, as the literature in section 2.4 suggested that Denmark and Sweden are similar in terms of Hofstede’s six dimensions, and as some results are aligned with the expectations, culture is considered to influence preferences. On the other hand, some findings are not supporting Hofstede’s six dimensions, indicating that generational factors, such as the ones brought up by Pichler, Kohli, and Granitz (2021), also impact preferences among Generation Z individuals.

4.3.6 Analysis & Discussion; Gender

Based on the findings presented in section 4.3.3., it is evident that there are particular differences in preferences between men and women. There are 7 questions for which the results between men and women differ significantly. These are the questions; “*Work-life balance is...*”, “*A sharing and including organizational culture is...*”, “*Working for a company where diversity is actively promoted is important to me*”, “*That the company actively works with CSR related topics is...*”, “*High salary (above market average) is...*”, “*Having a transparent relationship with the manager is...*”, “*I prefer an innovative and changing working environment over a well-structured and bureaucratic organization*”. The results for these 7 questions are further elaborated on in this section, as well as results to other questions we believe are interesting to elaborate on, due to similarities or dissimilarities with the literature reviewed.

As presented in section 2.5, differences in preferences between men and women were predicted to differ and provided the foundation for the third hypothesis. According to Starecek et al. (2020), the motivational characteristic which differs the most between men and women is anxiety, and in turn, affects a person's ability to cope with stressful situations negatively, and could thus be related to the extent one values work-life balance. Similar to Starecek et al. (2020), the results in this study also indicate a difference to what extent the two groups of gender value work-life balance, indicating that our results support the literature. For the results presented in this study, women on average value work-life balance higher than men.

Furthermore, Starecek et al. (2020) imply that there are significant differences between men and women from Generation Z in terms of openness and conscientiousness. Openness represents how open a person is to other people, as well as that person's openness to opportunities. Conscientiousness represents a part of one's relationships with co-workers and managers, as well as one's ability to work in teams. One could argue that the terms “openness” and “conscientiousness” can be related to questions such as “*A sharing and including organizational culture is...*”, “*Having a transparent relationship with the manager is...*”, and “*I prefer an innovative and changing working environment over a well-structured and bureaucratic organization*”. In all three questions, women think these attributes are more important than men, on average. Hence the results of our study could be argued to support the

literature in section 2.5, as answers to these questions do differ between men and women according to the findings.

Moreover, one question in which results differed significantly in this study, is for the question; *“High salary (above market average) is...”*. For this question, men thought it was significantly more important to have a high salary than women. As mentioned by Dwyer, Richard, and Chadwick (2003), men are more individualistic in their mindset, and more dominant in achieving goals. The individualistic mindset could, hence, be a possible explanation for valuing a high salary more than women do. The results regarding this attribute do support the literature in section 2.5.

Another question for which the difference between the results of male and female responses differed is for the question; *“That the company actively works with CSR related topics is...”*. For this question, women rate higher on average compared to men. This could once again be related to the term “conscientiousness”, presented by Starecek et al. (2020). As previously mentioned, women and men do differ in their characteristics regarding conscientiousness, which could be a possible explanation for women rating higher on this question compared to men. In turn, this result supports previous research.

Other Observations

However, there are other questions in the survey that could be argued to align with the terms “openness” and “conscientiousness”. For example, the question *“Being able to say ‘NO’ is important if you do not agree with your manager or colleague”*, as this question could be argued relating to the relationships with your co-worker or manager, Additionally, *“I prefer a modest and sincere organizational culture over a robust and strong culture”* as this question could be related to openness and relationships in the work-place. For the results of this study, there are no statistically significant differences in the results between men and women in these two questions. Further, these results do not support the literature reviewed.

Based on the findings by Dwyer, Richard, and Chadwick (2003), one could have expected that the results between men and women should have differed more than they do in some other questions. In line with Dwyer, Richard, and Chadwick (2003) notion, some questions that could be related to the individualistic spectrum are; *“I prefer individual rewards over*

collective rewards”, “*Working for a prestigious company would make me seem prestigious to others*”, “*I choose employers based on whether I believe the employment should be an advantage for future employment*”, and “*That the company is well-known and prestigious is...*”. Surprisingly, the results to this question do not differ significantly between men and women, as otherwise suggested by the literature in section 2.5. A possible explanation for this result could be that Generation Z individuals as a group are shaped to have an individualistic mindset (Pichler, Kohli, & Granitz, 2021). As previously mentioned, the individualistic mindset is a result of the technological incorporation of everyday life in which learning is comfortably performed independently (Seemiller & Grace, 2017). This is further expressed in the open questions, where both male and female respondents highlight the importance of, for example, rewards and prestige.

For the question, “*Working for a company where diversity is actively promoted is important to me*”, the literature in section 2.5 does not suggest that valuing diversity and inclusion should differ between men and women. Although, results in this study present a significant difference in the rating of this attribute between men and women, where women on average value this attribute higher compared to men. In fact, possible differences are not predicted in the literature presented. However, as presented in section 2.3, studies suggest that diversity and inclusion are essential to promote and adapt to policies and practice to attract and retain Generation Z individuals, regardless of gender (Starecek et al., 2020; Pichler, Kohli, & Granitz, 2021).

Lastly, the question for which results are most similar between men and women is the question measuring how individuals value good development opportunities. Not only are the average ratings almost the same, but this is also the question which rates the highest among both men and women and Generation Z individuals overall in this study. Surprisingly little is brought up about the connection between good development opportunities among Generation Z individuals in the literature (section 2.3). Although brought up by previous literature, little attention is directed towards this attribute. Moreover, this result could be argued to be related to the individualistic mindset of Generation Z (Schwieger & Ladwig, 2018), as that mindset is related to opportunities for career growth according to Dwyer, Richard, and Chadwick (2003).

4.3.7 Findings, Analysis & Discussion of Open Question

The open question was not mandatory for respondents to answer in order to provide a more comprehensive experience for the respondents. However, out of the 40 valid responses in total for this study, 14 of these respondents answered the open question - "*When thinking about the job of your dreams, what do you expect from that employer? What aspects are less important?*". The answers are displayed in Appendix F. Note, however, that the small number of open question answers are not representative of either Generation Z, gender or Swedish or Danish respondents. The open question was included with the aim of providing a further dimension for explaining the results. Additionally, the answers to the open question might give rise to new questions, dimensions, and perspectives that might be subject to future research.

Analyzing the answers to the open questions, there are some common "themes" brought up regarding what is important and what is less important for Generation Z individuals when they think of their future employer.

Observing Appendix F, it is evident that the open question answers indicate an importance of trust, respect, equal treatment regardless of position. These findings are coherent with previous findings from Schwieger and Ladwig (2018), who emphasize that Generation Z individuals appreciate fairness, loyalty, trust, and respect from their employer.

Furthermore, the open questions indicate an importance of openness at the workplace, as well as valuing good relationships with colleagues and managers. These findings are similar to the findings made by Starecek et al. (2020) who implies that there is a difference in terms of openness between men and women. As can be observed by the open question answers, the respondents who emphasized the importance of openness are female respondents. Hence, these findings strengthen the findings made by Starecek et al. (2020), as our results, both from other questions in the survey and the open question, imply a similar difference.

Other interesting findings, that are most prominent among female respondents, regards the importance of work-life balance. According to Pichler, Kohli, and Granitz (2021), Generation Z experiences increased levels of depression, anxiety, mental unhealth, and thus an increased demand for a flexible work schedule, which, in turn, can be related to an increased demand

for work-life balance. Findings from both the open question, as well as results from question 3 (“*Work-life balance is...*”) are evidence for this factor being more important to women compared to men. Previous research reviewed in this study does not emphasize this phenomenon to a large extent.

Reviewing the open question results, it is further clear that there is a pattern in the answers of some male respondents. These respondents seem to have expressed the importance of the “..employment fits with my career plans”, and the importance of high salary and working for a prestigious company. Another male respondent expressed that “...Less important is wellbeing workshops because it helps no one, just takes time from tasks that will make you feel bad if you can’t get them done in time”. It could be argued that these types of responses align with an individualistic mindset. As previously mentioned, men are more individualistic in their mindset, and more dominant in achieving goals (Dwyer, Richard, & Chadwick, 2003). However, responses related to high salary, prestige, and career plans are not solely exclusive to men. As observed by both the open questions, and responses to other questions in the survey, women do value these attributes high too. However, not to the extent as men do.

No patterns are observed in terms of particular differences between Danish and Swedish respondents, however, Swedish female respondents seem to be particular in expressing the importance of openness.

To summarize, it should be noticed that the open question answers constitute a small sample size, which perhaps is limited in its representativeness. However, the open question seems to indicate the importance of work to be fun, and being part of a fun workplace. Overall, many of the open question answers indicate that Generation Z individuals desire their employment to contain elements of their everyday and social life, in terms of openness, good relationships, trust, respect, and a fun workplace. This notion is not explicitly emphasized in the literature reviewed for this study. Additionally, the literature reviewed in this study does not emphasize the difference in valuing work-life balance between men and women to a large extent.

4.3.8 Discussion - Implications for Employer Branding

Building on the findings in terms of Generation Z, if we were to give recommendations for employers to consider to strengthen their employer brand, we would suggest prioritizing the preferences which are of the highest value to Generation Z individuals. Based on the results, Generation Z individuals value high salary, work-life balance, development opportunities, praise and recognition from the employer, a sharing and including organizational culture, being able to say NO if not agreeing, having a transparent relationship with the manager, and they also choose employers based on the fact that current employment could be an advantage for future employment. Special attention should also be drawn to good development opportunities, as this question had the lowest standard deviation of 0.56387 and a mean of 4.70. In other words, almost all respondents valued this question similarly and thus similarly high, indicating that good development opportunities is one of the most prominent employer preferences among Generation Z.

For employers to strengthen their employer brand, and hence, attract and retain Generation Z individuals, culture is a factor that should be considered. Evidently, cultural dimensions do influence individuals' employer preferences to some extent. More specifically, as Denmark and Sweden are subject to high individualism, individual rewards and good development opportunities are to be considered. Moreover, having an innovative and changing working environment is also important to Danish and Swedish business students as they seem to be less subject to uncertainty avoidance. Furthermore, work-life balance seems to be highly valued among the two countries as they have a high indulgence index.

On the other hand, power distance, masculinity and long-term orientation seem to be dimensions of diffuse character, as results do not match exactly with the literature. For that reason, generational factors might explain why having a transparent relationship with the manager is as important to both nationalities. Moreover, as having a high salary and joining a prestigious company is more important to Swedish business students, although not significantly more important, other influences might play a role as it was not predicted by Hofstede Insights (n.d.). Lastly, as both nationalities prefer a modest organizational culture, it could both be related to cultural as well as generational factors.

Although findings show that culture might influence preferences, culture is argued to be of diffuse character when speaking of Generation Z, indicating that generational factors need to be taken into consideration when using the knowledge of preferences to strengthen the employer brand.

The results of this study as well as previous studies indicate that there are significant differences between employer preferences between men and women within Generation Z. However, as previously mentioned, some results do differ compared to previous studies. Those results could possibly be explained by the particular employer preferences among Generation Z individuals as a group, regardless of gender belonging.

For firms to attract and retain and skilful human capital from Generation Z, the employer branding activities and strategies could be tailored based on the findings of differences between men and women concerning employer branding attributes.

Furthermore, results in this study indicate that there is a need for firms to consider not solely the gender belonging and coherent characteristics, but also consider the generational aspects related to Generation Z as a group. In other words, the intersection of gender characteristics and Generation Z characteristics of individuals could be considered when communicating the employee value proposition through the employer brand.

Lastly, looking at the responses from the open question, the overall preferences observed regards the importance of work to be fun and being part of a fun workplace. Further, many of the open question answers indicate that Generation Z individuals desire their employment to contain elements of their everyday and social life, in terms of openness, good relationships, trust, respect, and a fun workplace. Although a small sample of open question answers, which perhaps is limited in its representativeness, these are elements that could be considered by firms to incorporate into their employer brand.

In summary, firms could pay attention to those attributes most prominent among Generation Z. In addition, firms could consider that cultural belonging and cultural dimensions do, to some extent, influence the employer preferences among Generation Z individuals. Firms could also consider the fact that employer preferences differ between men and women.

4.3.9 Conclusion of Main Findings

In the sections above, findings related to our three hypotheses are presented, followed by associated analyses and discussions. The hypotheses are evaluated and relevant implications for employer branding are outlined.

In analyzing and discussing the results, it is evident that the first hypothesis is not of completely true character. Although the attributes predicted to be important are so, 3 other attributes are evidently highly valued among Generation Z individuals, beyond those attributes that were predicted. Furthermore, both the second and third hypotheses are, to a more or less extent, proved to be accurate, indicating Swedish and Danish business students have similar preferences in terms of employer branding attributes, and differences in preferences of employer branding attributes between men and women do exist.

Consequently, the research questions are answered as follows:

RQ1: What do Generation Z individuals find most attractive with their future employer?

Answer: What Generation Z individuals find most attractive with their future employer is an employer who is able to provide a high salary (above market average), opportunities for achieving work-life balance, praise and recognition from the employer, an employment which is advantages for future employment, a sharing and inclusive organizational culture, the possibility to say “NO” if the employee does not agree with managers and colleagues, and most important, an employer who provides good development opportunities. Special attention should also be drawn to this attribute, as this question had the lowest standard deviation and highest mean. In other words, respondents did not only value this question the highest, but the majority of respondents valued it similarly.

As mentioned in the findings section, our hypothesis is not fully accurate. In other words, some of the attributes which were predicted to be of high value were not valued as high as expected, and some attributes which were not predicted to be important to Generation Z individuals turned out to be more important than the attributes predicted by literature. On the other hand, it is to be noticed that as all responses are relatively similar, that is, the means are not significantly different, in turn, no questions are significantly more or less important. For

that reason, it is not possible to say that the attributes mentioned above are significantly more important, although they have higher means. Beyond our observation that some attributes are slightly more important, although not significantly, one can also argue that the small differences may be due to our small, homogenous sample and the fact that respondents are only able to choose a number from a 1-5 Likert scale. If we would have had a larger sample size, more significant deviations might have occurred, indicating that we could have given a more definite answer in terms of what attributes are the most prominent among Generation Z individuals. On the other hand, our findings still show that some questions are slightly higher valued, indicating that employers could begin considering these rather than the ones of slightly less value.

Another observation made as a result of our findings not supporting literature is the fact that literature seems to lack some attributes which turned out to be highly valued among Generation Z individuals. Although predicted to be highly valued, good development opportunities turned out to be the most prominent attribute, and meanwhile reviewing the literature, no special attention was drawn to this aspect in terms of Generation Z. Hence, literature could include the aspect of good development opportunities to a greater extent to picture the findings of this study.

RQ2: Are employer preferences among Generation Z individuals influenced by cultural dimensions?

Answer: Employer preferences among Generation Z individuals are to some extent influenced by cultural dimensions.

As suggested by the analysis and discussion, generational factors may, beyond culture, explain the preferences of Generation Z individuals as some findings in terms of culture did not support the literature. It is also to be noticed that not only does this study include two countries that are relatively similar in terms of Hofstede's cultural dimensions, but they are also assumed to be overall less subject to culture, as compared to other countries. For example, if we would have studied Generation Z individuals in the US and China, findings may show that culture matters to a wider extent. Moreover, one could assume that Denmark and Sweden have become similar due to close country relations, for example, Swedish people might work in Denmark and vice versa, which might have caused more homogeneous

preferences. For that reason, the results of this study, such as that culture only influences preferences among Generation Z individuals to some extent, are not to be applied to Generation Z individuals with different nationalities. With that being said, Generation Z individuals belonging to other national cultures are, likely, influenced by cultural dimensions. However, such an evaluation is beyond our scope of research.

RQ3: Are there any differences in preferences between men and women?

Answer: Preferences of employer branding attributes do differ between men and women.

As evident by the results in this study, differences between men and women do exist. Furthermore, as significant differences do exist, firms could consider this in their employer branding strategies. Although some results of our study do not align with previous literature regarding differences in preferences between men and women in Generation Z, these can be explained by generational characteristics for Generation Z.

End Conclusion

The literature indicates that generational factors, cultural factors, and gender-related factors individually affect employer preferences. However, results in our study differ to some extent compared to previous research. As presented in the analysis and discussion, these gaps can to some extent be explained by other literature, not directly related to the established area.

Consequently, the results can be explained by factors other than those related to the particular aspect studied. This notion emphasizes the need to synergize all three aspects, Generation Z characteristics, cultural factors, and gender-related factors, in considering employer branding strategies and activities. Hence, for employers to attract and retain skilful Generation Z employees, and in turn, gain competitive advantages, employer branding strategies and activities should recognize the intersection of Generation Z characteristics, cultural factors, and gender-related factors. This intersection should be considered when communicating, both internally and externally, the employee value proposition through the employer brand.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Chapter Summary

In the following chapter, the main conclusion of findings is presented, followed by a section explaining to what extent we have fulfilled our aims and objectives. Moreover, practical implications are presented to suggest what employers could consider when attracting and retaining employees. Furthermore, limitations found are presented, and along those lines, suggestions for future research are given. Lastly, final reflections are provided to comment upon the landscape of employer branding.

5.2 Main Conclusion

Based on the findings presented in the previous chapter, Generation Z individuals seem to be influenced by generational, cultural, and gender factors, however, to various extents. To begin with, attributes which employers could consider when attracting and retaining Generation Z individuals are high salary, work-life balance, recognition from the employer, an employment which is advantageous for future employment, a sharing and inclusive organizational culture, the possibility to say “NO” if the employee does not agree with managers and colleagues, and most important, an employer who provides good development opportunities. However, special attention should be drawn towards development opportunities as Generation Z individuals seem to highly value an enhanced career path.

To what extent the previously mentioned attributes are explained by cultural influences is two-sided. According to the findings, culture was found to influence preferences to some extent, however, for the results not supporting literature, it was argued that generational

factors also influence preferences. For that reason, one can conclude that firms could consider cultural characteristics when trying to attract and retain employees, but it is also important to account for generational factors as Generation Z seems less subject to culture and more prone to generational aspects.

Moreover, it was also found that employer preferences do differ among men and women. Although Generation Z is more homogeneous in terms of culture and preferences, it might be beneficial to adapt and tailor employer branding activities to gender, to satisfy the preferences among men and women.

Hence, for employers to attract and retain Generation Z employees, and in turn, gain competitive advantages through talent retention, employer branding strategies should capture the intersection of Generation Z characteristics, cultural factors, and gender-related factors. This should be considered when communicating the employee value proposition through the employer brand, internally as well as externally.

5.3 Research Aims, Objectives, and Purpose

The objective of this study is threefold. Our first objective is to identify what employer branding attributes are of most importance for Generation Z individuals. Secondly, the objective of this study is to examine if employer preferences among Generation Z individuals are influenced by cultural dimensions, followed by whether there are any potential differences between men and women. The research questions and hypotheses were constructed with the aim of exploring if generational, cultural, or gender-related factors influence Generation Z employer preferences. Based on this, the purpose was to use the findings to provide insights for employers to consider in attracting and retaining skilful employees.

After conducting the study, it was noticeable that the most prominent attributes for Generation Z are high salary, work-life balance, recognition from the employment, an employment which is advantageous for future employment, a sharing and inclusive organizational culture, the possibility to say “NO” if the employee does not agree with managers and colleagues, and most important, good development opportunities. Moreover, it was found that culture to some

extent influences employer preferences, followed by the fact that employer preferences differ, regarding some attributes, between men and women. For that reason, we have fulfilled our objectives as we have answered our research questions as well as evaluated our hypotheses. Moreover, the aim to explore if generational, cultural, and gender-related factors influence employer preferences were also fulfilled. However, in case research and survey limitations would have been absent, our conclusion could have been more accurate.

Moreover, we have provided useful insights for employers to consider when attracting and retaining employees as our findings imply what managers could think about when adapting their strategy in relation to Generation Z, culture, and gender. Hence, the purpose to use observations to provide recommendations for employer branding activities and strategies has been fulfilled.

5.4 Practical Implications

The findings in this thesis provide insights regarding the importance of synergizing around all three aspects, Generation Z characteristics, cultural factors, and gender-related factors, in considering employer branding strategies and activities. For employers to attract and retain skilful Generation Z employees, and thus gain competitive advantages, employer branding strategies and activities should recognize this intersection, internally as well as externally.

In practice, these implications could be translated by employers to be more transparent regarding what the employer could offer the potential or current employee in terms of employer branding attributes. Further, employers could consider branding themselves based on what culture they target. Similarly, employers could consider branding how to attract both men and women to an equal and fair extent. In sum, firms could consider profiling their employer brand based on all three aspects.

It seems reasonable to assume that firms today incorporate similar insights, as presented by this study, into their current employer branding strategies. However, employers could perhaps consider focusing beyond those employer branding attributes that otherwise might be considered. For example, the open questions in our survey indicated that Generation Z

individuals desire their employment to contain elements of their everyday and social life, in terms of openness, good relationships, trust, respect, and a fun workplace. Although these attributes are incorporated to a more or less extent in previous employer branding literature, employers could perhaps try to incorporate these elements into their strategies and activities, and further, transmit those into their employee value proposition, and further, their internal and external employer brand.

5.5 Limitations and Future Research

5.5.1 Research Limitations

Research limitations for this thesis mainly occur as a result of limited time, which in turn poses implications for the scope. As a result, our research design and approach has been forced to be framed and we have consciously delimited the research to a particular extent. For example, due to limited time, the sample size is not as great as preferred. Although our current sample size is sufficient to explore our hypothesis and research questions, a bigger sample size could allow greater representability. As of now, it is difficult to draw conclusions for the population of Generation Z, and for that reason, an increased sample size would make our conclusions more accurate. Moreover, as mentioned in chapter 4, a greater sample size would most likely create less similar means. As we for example compared 21 Danish business students with 19 Swedish business students, means would probably deviate to a greater extent if more respondents would have participated in the survey. Although our sample means are of true character, a bigger sample size would make us more confident with the numbers.

Moreover, due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, we were not able to approach respondents face to face. This indicates that we had to conduct the survey fully online. For that reason, it was not possible to trace the response rate.

Furthermore, our sample is assumed to be relatively homogenous, and also as a result of us choosing to send the survey to business students studying at high ranked schools. Hence, there is a chance that results would differ in case respondents from other universities would have

participated. This also goes in line with the assumption that there may be academic or social cultures, and not national cultures, influencing the preferences of the respondents. In case there are other underlying factors influencing the preferences of Danish and Swedish business students, for example, status, behaviour, or approaches, it is difficult to determine if the national cultures have caused the similar preferences, or if there are other factors affecting the results. Accordingly, due to time limitations, we have only chosen to study national culture and not organizational culture, for example, indicating that results might deviate if we would have included other cultural types.

Moreover, due to time limitations and the fact that we could manage to get in contact with Swedish and Danish business students, we have only studied two relatively similar countries. In case we would have explored two countries that are known to be culturally distant, results might have varied. Furthermore, cross-cultural research is also subject to challenges in terms of achieving accuracy. For example, although some people live in the same country, they may still belong to different cultures in terms of, for instance, history or religion. For that reason, culture is known to be indefinite, and hence, comes with limitations.

Lastly, another limitation that might cause less accurate findings is the critique of Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Although Hofstede's dimensions were developed in a business context, which is aligned with our study as we explore preferences among business students, it can't be neglected that his framework is of outdated character. The critique also includes that the framework is too simple to describe such a complex subject.

5.5.2 Survey Limitations

As previously mentioned, the limited amount of time has impacted the limitations of this thesis. This aspect has impacted the distribution of the survey. For distributing the survey we have used different social media platforms on which the survey has been published, with some help from our friends both in Sweden and Denmark. Hence, we have not been able to control the exact amount of individuals who have had access to the survey. Consequently, predicting a particular response rate has been challenging.

Furthermore, we have not been able to control whether respondents are fully honest in their answers. However, based on the nature of the questions, we are confident that respondents are honest. Additionally, we have not made any statistical tests to see whether or not the questions are correlated. That is, is there a pattern in how to answer the survey question?

We have, as previously outlined, chosen to study particular attributes of employer branding, these attributes derive from previous employer branding literature. We are aware that our study might not consider all possible attributes that individuals consider with their future employer. However, the open question provides an opportunity for those attributes to be mentioned.

The open question in the survey is not mandatory for respondents to answer, which constitutes a further limitation. The open question is optional for respondents to answer in order to make it more convenient for respondents to actually take their time to answer our survey. Once again, the short amount of time for writing this thesis has been a challenge. Hence, we have tried to create a survey that is convenient to answer, which made us decide to make the open question optional. However, the challenge arises as there is a risk of not reaching a large enough sample size of responses for the open question.

5.5.3 Future Research

There are several interesting findings in our study which provide a foundation for future research. Firstly, future research could add another level of statistical analysis when processing the data. For example, if a similar study were to be carried out in the future, researchers could perform a principal component analysis of the data from the survey questions. The interpretation of the principal component analysis is based on observing what variables are correlated to each other. Further, researchers could explore how correlated the survey questions are to each other. In other words, researchers could explore if there are any correlations in how respondents answer the survey questions.

For this study, the open question in the survey is not mandatory, nor are answers from the open question processed through a qualitative approach. If a similar study were to be carried out in the future, researchers could include a mandatory open question, to achieve a greater

sample of open question answers. Additionally, researchers could analyze the open question answers through a qualitative approach, which could give rise to other outcomes.

Furthermore, to achieve more representable results, a similar study could be performed with larger sample size. Additionally, other national cultures could be compared. Nationalities with more contrasting cultures, compared to Denmark and Sweden who are both parts of the same region, could be explored. Similarly, preferences among other gender identities than men and women could be further assessed.

Moreover, employer preferences among students within other fields of study could also be explored in future research. As previously mentioned, the field of study may impact employer preferences as the environment and impressions might be characterised by other factors compared to those within the field of business. Hence, employer preferences among other students may differ compared to the preferences of business students. Further, the students participating in this study are all attending highly ranked business schools, which might impact their employer preferences. Future research could study students from a broader range of universities, to achieve a less homogenous sample.

As outlined in chapter 1, and as previously mentioned in research limitations, the framework of Hofstede is subject to critique. Scholars imply that the framework is limited as it holds an oversimplification of cultural differences with a lack of empirical evidence, and the dimensions are shaped from the perspective that culture is static, and not dynamic. Hence, the area of culture could be researched through another framework.

Additionally, due to time limitations, we have limited our study to only analyzing national culture. Other types of culture could have been included, such as organizational culture. However, as this has been beyond our scope, future research could further explore what subcultures could impact employer preferences among Generation Z individuals.

As evident by the results of this study, there is one employer branding attribute that is of particular importance for Generation Z individuals. Good development opportunities is one such attribute, which has been studied in previous research. Although, previous research lacks in emphasizing the magnitude of this attribute for Generation Z, and the importance of

providing good development opportunities for Generation Z individuals. Hence, future research could focus on this area.

Furthermore, the results of this study show that women tend to value work-life balance higher than men. Although similar results are evident in previous research, future research could emphasize this difference further, as the attribute seems to be of particular difference between men and women in Generation Z.

Lastly, as evident by the open question, Generation Z individuals could be argued to desire their workplace to include elements of their everyday and social life. Although a small sample of open question answers, which perhaps is limited in its representativeness, future research could further explore the importance of these elements, how to strategize accordingly, and perhaps, whether or not these elements could constitute a “new” employer branding attribute.

5.6 Final Reflections

As implied by our findings, generational, cultural, as well as gender factors influence employer preferences, indicating that employer branding strategies should be carefully adapted depending on the employee of interest.

We ourselves agree with the findings of this study, and especially with some of the answers to our open questions, namely that good development opportunities, transparent relationships, and fun and exciting work environments are important when considering a workplace. We believe that increased technology has made us more fast-moving and subject to inclusion and equality, indicating that we do not prefer settling with hierarchical and non-innovative work environments. Nor do we believe that a person belonging to Generation Z wants to stay at one workplace throughout the entire career, which indicates that development opportunities are of high value. It seems reasonable to assume that this is a result of Generation Z individuals being used to quick changes and fast stimulation due to for example social media and the fact that everything is nowadays more accessible.

Lastly, when performing this research, our thoughts have been guided to question what actually defines and influences one's employer preferences. Evidently, aspects of culture, generation, and perhaps gender, are hard to define. Further, could these aspects solely or interrelated actually explain what influences the preferences of individuals? The individuals participating in this research are all attending highly ranked business schools in the metropolitan areas of Sweden and Denmark. Perhaps preferences are influenced by factors related to the environment in which these individuals are fostered within? Nonetheless, we are content with the outcome of this study, emphasizing the importance of considering several aspects in shaping the strategies for employer branding. However, we urge the reader to consider that people come from different backgrounds, with different values and norms, which, hence, emphasize that no single employer branding strategy could be defined as the right one.

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Appendix A

Attributes Researchers	Functional attributes	Economic attributes	Psychological attributes	Organizational attributes
Kuchеров and Zavyalova (2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content of work • Training perspectives • Opportunities of career growth • Opportunities to realize fully employees' knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High salary • Fair system of rewards and bonuses • Stable guarantees of employment • The work schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong corporate culture • Positive interpersonal relations in company • Team-working • Objective assessment of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership in market segment • International scope of activity • Company's history • Reputation of consumer brands • Reputation of top-managers • Management style
Lievens and Highhouse (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancement opportunities • Task Demands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary • Job Security • Benefits • Flexible working hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sincerity (warmth, acceptance, honesty) • Robustness (masculine, strong, robust) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competence (reliable, secure, successful) • Innovativeness
Berthon et. al. (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Novel work practices • Makes use of its employee's creativity to produce high-quality, innovative products and services • Employer that provides recognition • Coupled with a career-enhancing experience • A springboard to future employment • Self-worth and confidence • Ability to apply skills and knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Above-average salary • Compensation package • Job security • Promotional opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun and happy working environment • good collegial relationships • Good team atmosphere • Exciting work environment 	Makes use of its employee's creativity to produce high-quality, innovative products and services
Common themes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancement opportunities • Job content • Recognition from employer • A starting block for future employment/career-enhancing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High salary • Benefits • Flexible working hours • Job security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun and happy working environment • Good relationships with colleagues • Sincerity (warmth, acceptance, honesty) • Robustness (masculine, strong, robust) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate reputation • Management style • Innovativeness • Leadership in the market

Appendix B

What is important for you as a current, or soon to be, employee?

Introductory questions:

- Gender
- Age
- What is your field of study?
- Nationality?
- In which country do you work/study?

How do you value the following attributes with your future employer?

Likert scale: 1-5, whereof:

1 = Not important/true

2 = Fairly unimportant/true

3 = Undecided

4 = Fairly important/true

5 = Very important/true

Questions related to economic attributes (these titles are not displayed in the survey)

1. High Salary (above market average) is...
2. Work-life balance is...
3. Job security is...
4. I prefer individual rewards over collective rewards

Questions related to functional attributes

5. Good development opportunities are...
6. Working for a prestigious company would make me seem prestigious to others

7. Praise and recognition from my employer are...
8. I choose employers based on whether I believe the employment should be an advantage for future employment

Questions related to psychological attributes

9. A sharing and including organizational culture is...
10. Being able to say “NO” is important if I do not agree with a colleague
11. I prefer a modest and sincere culture over a robust and strong culture
12. Working for a company where diversity is actively promoted is important to me

Questions related to organizational attributes

13. That the company is well-known and prestigious is...
14. Having a transparent relationship with your manager is...
15. I prefer an innovative and changing environment over a well structured and bureaucratic organization
16. That the company actively works with CSR related topics is...

Open question

17. When thinking about the job of your dreams, what do you expect from that employer?
What aspects are less important?

Appendix C

Q1 - High salary (above market average) is...			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Undecided	10	25.0
	Fairly important	19	47.5
	Very important	11	27.5
	Total	40	100.0

Standard deviation: 0.73336

Q2 - Work-life balance is...			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Not important	1	2.5
	Fairly unimportant	3	7.5
	Undecided	10	25.0
	Fairly important	6	15.0
	Very important	20	50.0
	Total	40	100.0

Standard deviation: 1.14326

Q3 - Job security is...			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Not important	1	2.5
	Fairly unimportant	3	7.5
	Undecided	10	25.0
	Fairly important	17	42.5
	Very important	9	22.5
	Total	40	100.0

Standard deviation:
0.98058

Q4- I prefer individual rewards over collective rewards			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Fairly untrue	6	15.0
	Undecided	16	40.0
	Fairly true	8	20.0
	Very true	10	25.0
	Total	40	100.0

Standard deviation: 1.03651

Q5 - Good development opportunities are...			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Undecided	2	5.0
	Fairly important	8	20.0
	Very important	30	75.0
	Total	40	100.0

Standard deviation: 0.56387

Q6 - Working for a prestigious company would make me seem prestigious to others			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Not true	1	2.5
	Fairly untrue	6	15.0
	Undecided	9	22.5
	Fairly true	13	32.5
	Very true	11	27.5
	Total	40	100.0

Standard deviation:

1.11832

Q7 - Praise and recognition from my employer are...			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Fairly unimportant	2	5.0
	Undecided	10	25.0
	Fairly important	11	27.5
	Very important	17	42.5
	Total	40	100.0

Standard deviation: 0.94428

Q8 - I choose employers based on whether I believe the employment should be an advantage for future employment			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Not true	1	2.5
	Fairly untrue	2	5.0
	Undecided	4	10.0
	Fairly true	16	40.0
	Very true	17	42.5
	Total	40	100.0

Standard deviation: 0.97534

Q9-A sharing and including organizational culture is...			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Fairly unimportant	1	2.5
	Undecided	12	30.0
	Fairly important	11	27.5
	Very important	16	40.0
	Total	40	100.0

Standard deviation: 0.90441

Q10 - Being able to say "NO" is important if you do not agree with your manager or colleague			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Fairly unimportant	1	2.5
	Undecided	6	15.0
	Fairly important	11	27.5
	Very important	22	55.0
	Total	40	100.0

Standard deviation: 0.83359

Q11- I prefer a modest and sincere organizational culture over a robust and strong culture			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Not true	1	2.5
	Fairly untrue	5	12.5
	Undecided	17	42.5
	Fairly true	8	20.0
	Very true	9	22.5
	Total	40	100.0

Standard deviation: 1.06187

Q12 - Working for a company where diversity is actively promoted is important to me			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Not important	3	7.5
	Fairly unimportant	8	20.0
	Undecided	5	12.5
	Fairly important	9	22.5
	Very important	15	37.5
	Total	40	100.0

Standard deviation: 1.37164

Q13 - That the company is well-known and prestigious is...			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Not important	1	2.5
	Fairly unimportant	6	15.0
	Undecided	11	27.5
	Fairly important	15	37.5
	Very important	7	17.5
	Total	40	100.0

Standard deviation: 1.03744

Q14 - Having a transparent relationship with the manager is...			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Fairly unimportant	1	2.5
	Undecided	7	17.5
	Fairly unimportant	15	37.5
	Very important	17	42.5
	Total	40	100.0

Standard deviation: 0.82275

Q15 - I prefer an innovative and changing working environment over a well-structured and bureaucratic organization			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Not true	1	2.5
	Fairly untrue	3	7.5
	Undecided	8	20.0
	Fairly true	12	30.0
	Very true	16	40.0
	Total	40	100.0

Standard deviation: 1.07387

Q16 - That the company actively works with CSR related topics is...			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Not important	1	2.5
	Fairly unimportant	6	15.0
	Undecided	11	27.5
	Fairly important	7	17.5
	Very important	15	37.5
	Total	40	100.0

Standard deviation: 1.19802

Appendix D

Crosstab Q1				
Count				
		Nationality		Total
		Swedish	Danish	
High salary (above market average) is...	Undecided	3	7	10
	Fairly important	11	8	19
	Very important	5	6	11
Total		19	21	40

Chi-Square Tests Q1			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.070 ^a	2	.355

Crosstab Q3				
Count				
		Nationality		Total
		Swedish	Danish	
Job security is...	Not important	1	0	1
	Fairly unimportant	2	1	3
	Undecided	2	8	10
	Fairly important	8	9	17
	Very important	6	3	9
Total		19	21	40

Chi-Square Tests Q3			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.907 ^a	4	.206

Crosstab Q2				
Count				
		Nationality		Total
		Swedish	Danish	
Work-life balance is...	Not important	1	0	1
	Fairly unimportant	2	1	3
	Undecided	3	7	10
	Fairly important	3	3	6
	Very important	10	10	20
Total		19	21	40

Chi-Square Tests Q2			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.840 ^a	4	.585

Crosstab Q4				
Count				
		Nationality		Total
		Swedish	Danish	
I prefer individual rewards over collective rewards	Fairly untrue	3	3	6
	Undecided	9	7	16
	Fairly true	4	4	8
	Very true	3	7	10
Total		19	21	40

Chi-Square Tests Q4			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.754 ^a	3	.625

Crosstab Q6				
Count				
		Nationality		Total
		Swedish	Danish	
Working for a prestigious company would make me seem prestigious to others	Not true	0	1	1
	Fairly untrue	3	3	6
	Undecided	2	7	9
	Fairly true	7	6	13
	Very true	7	4	11
Total		19	21	40

Chi-Square Tests Q6			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.584 ^a	4	.333

Crosstab Q5				
Count				
		Nationality		Total
		Swedish	Danish	
Good development opportunities are...	Undecided	1	1	2
	Fairly important	3	5	8
	Very important	15	15	30
Total		19	21	40

Chi-Square Tests Q5			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.401 ^a	2	.818

Crosstab Q7				
Count				
		Nationality		Total
		Swedish	Danish	
Praise and recognition from my employer are...	Fairly unimportant	2	0	2
	Undecided	5	5	10
	Fairly important	5	6	11
	Very important	7	10	17
Total		19	21	40

Chi-Square Tests Q7			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.527 ^a	3	.470

Crosstab Q9				
Count				
		Nationality		Total
		Swedish	Danish	
A sharing and including organizational culture is...	Fairly unimportant	0	1	1
	Undecided	5	7	12
	Fairly important	7	4	11
	Very important	7	9	16
Total		19	21	40

Chi-Square Tests Q9			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.307 ^a	3	.511

Crosstab Q8				
Count				
		Nationality		Total
		Swedish	Danish	
I choose employers based on whether I believe the employment should be an advantage for future employment	Not true	1	0	1
	Fairly untrue	1	1	2
	Undecided	1	3	4
	Fairly true	5	11	16
	Very true	11	6	17
Total		19	21	40

Chi-Square Tests Q8			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.635 ^a	4	.228

Crosstab Q10				
Count				
		Nationality		Total
		Swedish	Danish	
Being able to say "NO" is important if you do not agree with your manager or colleague	Fairly unimportant	1	0	1
	Undecided	4	2	6
	Fairly important	4	7	11
	Very important	10	12	22
Total		19	21	40

Chi-Square Tests Q10			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.573 ^a	3	.462

Crosstab Q12				
Count				
		Nationality		Total
		Swedish	Danish	
Working for a company where diversity is actively promoted is important to me	Not important	1	2	3
	Fairly unimportant	7	1	8
	Undecided	1	4	5
	Fairly important	4	5	9
	Very important	6	9	15
Total		19	21	40

Chi-Square Tests Q12			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.263 ^a	4	.123

Crosstab Q11				
Count				
		Nationality		Total
		Swedish	Danish	
I prefer a modest and sincere organizational culture over a robust and strong culture	Not true	1	0	1
	Fairly untrue	3	2	5
	Undecided	7	10	17
	Fairly true	4	4	8
	Very true	4	5	9
Total		19	21	40

Chi-Square Tests Q11			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.745 ^a	4	.783

Crosstab Q13				
Count				
		Nationality		
		Swedish	Danish	Total
That the company is well-known and prestigious is...	Not important	0	1	1
	Fairly unimportant	3	3	6
	Undecided	5	6	11
	Fairly important	7	8	15
	Very important	4	3	7
Total		19	21	40

Chi-Square Tests Q13			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.203 ^a	4	.878

Crosstab Q15				
Count				
		Nationality		
		Swedish	Danish	Total
I prefer an innovative and changing working environment over a well-structured and bureaucratic organization	Not true	1	0	1
	Fairly untrue	2	1	3
	Undecided	3	5	8
	Fairly true	6	6	12
	Very true	7	9	16
Total		19	21	40

Chi-Square Tests Q15			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.988 ^a	4	.738

Crosstab Q14				
Count				
		Nationality		
		Swedish	Danish	Total
Having a transparent relationship with the manager is...	Fairly unimportant	1	0	1
	Undecided	1	6	7
	Fairly unimportant	9	6	15
	Very important	8	9	17
Total		19	21	40

Chi-Square Tests Q14			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.143 ^a	3	.162

Crosstab Q16				
Count				
		Nationality		
		Swedish	Danish	Total
That the company actively works with CSR related topics is...	Not important	0	1	1
	Fairly unimportant	4	2	6
	Undecided	4	7	11
	Fairly important	4	3	7
	Very important	7	8	15
Total		19	21	40

Chi-Square Tests Q16			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.601 ^a	4	.627

Appendix E

Crosstab Q1				
Count				
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
High salary (above market average) is...	Undecided	3	7	10
	Fairly important	8	11	19
	Very important	9	2	11
Total		20	20	40

Chi-Square Tests Q1			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.528 ^a	2	.038

Crosstab Q3				
Count				
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Job security is...	Not important	0	1	1
	Fairly unimportant	3	0	3
	Undecided	6	4	10
	Fairly important	7	10	17
	Very important	4	5	9
Total		20	20	40

Chi-Square Tests Q3			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.041 ^a	4	.283

Crosstab Q2				
Count				
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Work-life balance is...	Not important	1	0	1
	Fairly unimportant	3	0	3
	Undecided	8	2	10
	Fairly important	2	4	6
	Very important	6	14	20
Total		20	20	40

Chi-Square Tests Q2			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.467 ^a	4	.022

Crosstab Q4				
Count				
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
I prefer individual rewards over collective rewards	Fairly untrue	3	3	6
	Undecided	5	11	16
	Fairly true	5	3	8
	Very true	7	3	10
Total		20	20	40

Chi-Square Tests Q4			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.350 ^a	3	.226

Crosstab Q5				
Count				
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Good development opportunities are...	Undecided	1	1	2
	Fairly important	3	5	8
	Very important	16	14	30
Total		20	20	40

Crosstab Q6				
Count				
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Working for a prestigious company would make me seem prestigious to others	Not true	1	0	1
	Fairly untrue	3	3	6
	Undecided	4	5	9
	Fairly true	4	9	13
	Very true	8	3	11
Total		20	20	40

Chi-Square Tests Q5			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.633 ^a	2	.729

Chi-Square Tests Q6			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.307 ^a	4	.257

Crosstab Q7				
Count				
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Praise and recognition from my employer are...	Fairly unimportant	2	0	2
	Undecided	7	3	10
	Fairly important	5	6	11
	Very important	6	11	17
Total		20	20	40

Chi-Square Tests Q7			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.161 ^a	3	.160

Crosstab Q9				
Count				
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
A sharing and including organizational culture is...	Fairly unimportant	1	0	1
	Undecided	10	2	12
	Fairly important	6	5	11
	Very important	3	13	16
Total		20	20	40

Chi-Square Tests Q9			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.674 ^a	3	.005

Crosstab Q8				
Count				
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
I choose employers based on whether I believe the employment should be an advantage for future employment	Not true	0	1	1
	Fairly untrue	1	1	2
	Undecided	0	4	4
	Fairly true	8	8	16
	Very true	11	6	17
Total		20	20	40

Chi-Square Tests Q8			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.471 ^a	4	.167

Crosstab Q10				
Count				
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Being able to say "NO" is important if you do not agree with your manager or colleague	Fairly unimportant	1	0	1
	Undecided	3	3	6
	Fairly important	7	4	11
	Very important	9	13	22
Total		20	20	40

Chi-Square Tests Q10			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.545 ^a	3	.467

Crosstab Q12				
Count				
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Working for a company where diversity is actively promoted is important to me	Not important	3	0	3
	Fairly unimportant	7	1	8
	Undecided	3	2	5
	Fairly important	4	5	9
	Very important	3	12	15
Total		20	20	40

Chi-Square Tests Q12			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.211 ^a	4	.010

Crosstab Q11				
Count				
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
I prefer a modest and sincere organizational culture over a robust and strong culture	Not true	1	0	1
	Fairly untrue	4	1	5
	Undecided	9	8	17
	Fairly true	3	5	8
	Very true	3	6	9
Total		20	20	40

Chi-Square Tests Q11			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.359 ^a	4	.360

Crosstab Q13				
Count				
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
That the company is well-known and prestigious is...	Not important	1	0	1
	Fairly unimportant	3	3	6
	Undecided	3	8	11
	Fairly important	7	8	15
	Very important	6	1	7
Total		20	20	40

Chi-Square Tests Q13			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.911 ^a	4	.141

Crosstab Q15				
Count				
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
I prefer an innovative and changing working environment over a well-structured and bureaucratic organization	Not true	1	0	1
	Fairly untrue	2	1	3
	Undecided	7	1	8
	Fairly true	6	6	12
	Very true	4	12	16
Total		20	20	40

Chi-Square Tests Q15			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.833 ^a	4	.043

Crosstab Q14				
Count				
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Having a transparent relationship with the manager is...	Fairly unimportant	1	0	1
	Undecided	7	0	7
	Fairly unimportant	8	7	15
	Very important	4	13	17
Total		20	20	40

Chi-Square Tests Q14			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.831 ^a	3	.005

Crosstab Q16				
Count				
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
That the company actively works with CSR related topics is...	Not important	1	0	1
	Fairly unimportant	5	1	6
	Undecided	9	2	11
	Fairly important	4	3	7
	Very important	1	14	15
Total		20	20	40

Chi-Square Tests Q16			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.531 ^a	4	.001

Appendix F

Respondent ID	Gender	Nationality	When thinking about the job of your dreams, what do you expect from that employer? What aspects are less important?
Respondent 4	Female	Swedish	When thinking of my dream job, I expect that position to be coloured by openness, inclusiveness, good development opportunities, and to be a good source of inspiration. For me, work should be as equally joyful as possible to life out of office!
Respondent 9	Female	Swedish	An encouraging place of work with clear communication and directives about what I can expect and what I am supposed to deliver. I expect an open environment and a flat organization.
Respondent 10	Female	Swedish	I expect a decent employer who sees the value in all employees, regardless of position in the company. I also expect an understanding that life is more than work, especially during certain stages of life. For me, it is important to have an equal and humane view of one's employees. It is not quite as important to be on site at work 40 hours a week. If there is an opportunity to work from home, let say for 1 day a week, then it is definitely appealing for me. It gives me, and other employees, the freedom to choose what place to work from (and for example being able to work out before the working day starts, since we save time by not having to transport ourselves).
Respondent 12	39	Swedish	That I don't have an employer
Respondent 13	Male	Swedish	Funny and nice people. Less important is wellbeing workshops because it helps no one, just takes time from tasks that will make you feel bad if you can't get them done in time
Respondent 14	Female	Swedish	A fun work environment is important as that will make you more eager to go to work! Rewards are also key as you might appreciate the work place more when getting rewards you did not expect.
Respondent 18	Male	Swedish	Healthy relationship between the employer and myself.
Respondent 20	Female	Danish	I expect freedom and trust from my employer - that (s)he knows my skills and therefore allow myself to decide when and how I do the task
Respondent 27	Male	Danish	I expect them to value all stakeholders' opinions and goals
Respondent 28	Female	Danish	I expect to be treated as an equal, to be challenged by tasks, to get praise and constructive feedback from my employer, for there to be an inclusive company culture. Aspects that are less important are rewards, and prestige of the company.
Respondent 46	Male	Danish	Let me do the work that I was hired to do
Respondent 51	Male	Swedish	Above all, what I value the most is that my place of employment fits with my career plans
Respondent 59	Male	Danish	High salary, prestigious company and employment benefits are important to me
Respondent 60	Female	Danish	An exciting and dynamic workplace is important for me! Good development opportunities and work life balance is also very important

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