

Generational Differences in Employer Preferences: Using the Employer Attractiveness Scale
in The Netherlands

Kaylee Krommendijk, 6854508
k.krommendijk@students.uu.nl

Utrecht University

Supervised by
dr. Wieby Altink
dr. Wiebren Jansen

August 2020

Manuscript should be made accessible after 01-09-2020

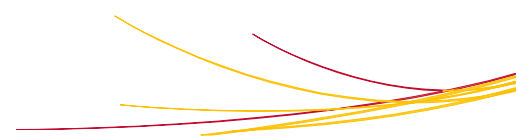


Utrecht University

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate whether different generational groups, in specific Millennials (Generation Y), differ from their preceding generations (Baby Boomers and Generation X) in their employer preferences and whether this could be investigated by a translated, Dutch version of the Employer Attractiveness Scale (EmpAt) (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005). This EmpAt consists of five values: Interest, Social, Economic, Development, and Application Value. There seems to be no consensus in literature about whether there are differences between generations and their employer preferences. To be able to fill the gap of a relatively large group of retiring employees, for employers, it is important to know how to attract scarce and younger employees. This study employed a cross-sectional and questionnaire survey design. Participants were recruited using convenience sampling and were all employees of a Dutch Regional Community College. In total, there were 177 participants (120 women, 57 men, $M_{\text{age}} = 47.2$ years, age range: 24 – 66 years). The participants were classified in three groups: Baby Boomers ($n = 55$), Generation X ($n = 72$), and Generation Y ($n = 50$). These participants were asked to fill in the Dutch EmpAt, measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important). The original five factors of the EmpAt did not similarly arise in the Dutch EmpAt. Furthermore, only Development Value was significantly more important for Generation Y than for Baby Boomers. The effect of Age on Economic Value was positively moderated by Social, Development, and Application Value and the effect of Age on Interest Value was positively moderated by Development Value. These findings add to the growing body of literature that contradicts current popular literature suggesting generational differences with regard to employer preferences exist. This different perspective might shed light on an ongoing discussion regarding generational differences between empirical research and a more theoretical point of view.

Keywords: Baby Boomers, Generation Y, Generation X, Employer Attractiveness, employer preferences

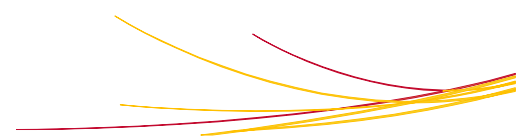


Generational Differences in Employer Preferences: Using the Employer Attractiveness Scale in The Netherlands

In the near future, a relatively large group of experienced seniors will retire due to an ageing population and a newer, younger generation will enter the job market. This will result in a potential job market being dominated by younger employees (CBS, 2015). However, long-standing branches like education, public administration-, government-, corporate services, and healthcare experience difficulties in attracting new and younger employees (Bontekoning, 2014). It is generally known that potential employees are particularly attracted to organisations they share values with and vice versa (De Cooman, et al., 2009). However, literature does not clarify whether there are differences between different generations and their specific employer preferences. Some researchers say that there are differences between generations and their employer preferences, while others do not. Hence, there seems to be no clear answer to the question whether generational differences in employer preferences exist, while this information might be important in employers' search for potential employees, especially when they are scarce. Therefore, this study will elaborate on different generations of employees and their employer preferences.

As mentioned before, in five to ten years, the distribution of different working generations is expected to change. More specifically, expected is that until 2021, the potential Dutch labour force in total will continue to increase up to thirteen million people. After that, from 2021 till 2050, it is expected that the labour force will decrease by more than half a million due to an ageing population. Consequently, the potential labour force is expected to decline mainly within the age group of 40 to 70 years old, while the number of young people remains stable. This means that the consequences are two-fold: this is likely to lead to a shrinkage in the labour market and leaves mainly younger people as potential employees. (CBS, 2015). Therefore, to be able to fill the gap of retiring employees, it is important for employers to know how to attract those scarce and younger employees.

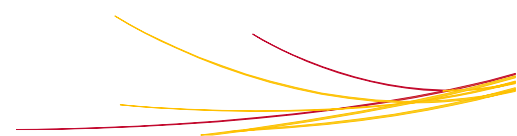
As stated above, there seems to be no consensus in literature about whether newer, younger generations have different employer preferences than older generations. Generations are defined as “the aggregate of all people born over a span of roughly twenty years or about the length of one phase of life: childhood, young adulthood, midlife, and old age” (Howe & Strauss, 1991, as cited in Özçelik, 2015, p. 102). Some literature suggests that the younger generation, called Generation Y or Millennials (born between 1981 – 2000) (Bontekoning, 2014; Özçelik, 2015) have different employer preferences as compared to earlier generations



like Baby Boomers (born between 1946-1964) and Generation X (born between 1965-1980) (Reis & Braga, 2016). Research from Shaw and Fairhurst (2008) supports this finding, as it describes differences between Generation X and Y in, for example, employer preferences, attitudes to career development, and the learning environment. However, other researchers did not confirm these differences, therefore implying that both generations are likely to have similar employer preferences (Corporaal, 2014). These contradictions in literature raise the question whether generational differences regarding employer preference exist or not.

There are different findings about how generations value different employer- and job aspects. Özçelik (2015), for example, argues that millennials have higher expectations than the other generations with regard to learning requirements, attitudes to career- and self-development, work orientation, and engagement. Moreover, young employees attach great importance to attractive work tasks and challenges which contribute to their knowledge, development, and future employability (Ritz & Sinelli, as cited in Ten Broek, 2015). Cennamo and Gardner (2008) emphasize that Generation Y places more importance on status and autonomy than Baby Boomers. Berthon, Ewing & Hah (2005) developed the Employer Attractiveness Scale (EmpAt) to measure overall employer attractiveness (Appendix A). “Employer attractiveness is defined as the envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organisation” (Berthon et al., 2005, p. 151). Reis and Braga (2016) found that from this EmpAt, Economic, Application, and Development Value are more important for Millennials than for the other generations (Baby Boomers and Generation X). Social and Interest Value, on the other hand, were found as being less important for Millennials. A notable aspect of studies (Reis & Braga, 2016; Sivertzen, Nilsen, & Olafsen, 2013) is that Economic Value in general is appreciated the most by their respondents. Furthermore, Reis & Braga (2015) found that age had a significant negative relationship with Economic Value in all generational comparisons, stating that Millennials appreciate Economic Value more than the two other generations. Similarly, Generation X appreciates Economic Value more than Baby Boomers do (Reis & Braga, 2016). Finally, a significant positive relationship between age and Interest Value was found; Baby Boomers appreciate Interest Value more than Generation X does and Generation X appreciates this more than Generation Y does. These results are quite consistent with other findings.

Contrary to this research about the differences between different generations and their employer preferences, other studies have been conducted focusing on employer and job values, characteristics, and preferences. Corporaal (2014) states that Millennials consider the



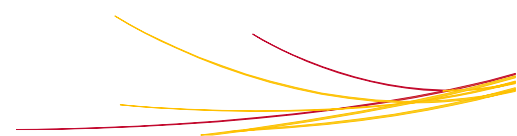
same job- and employer characteristics important as other generations. It seems like this generation does not have new or unique preferences, despite this being often suggested in literature. Jorgensen (2003), for example, seems to agree with this finding and stated: “I reject the notion of distinct generations and therefore the need to tailor workforce policy to match discrete generational needs” (p. 48). This shows that there is no consensus in literature about this topic.

Following from the described lack of consistency in research about generational differences regarding employer preferences, this study will focus on how younger and older generations differ concerning employer and job values they hold and prioritize. Moreover, most of the studies with regard to employer preferences have been done outside The Netherlands. Therefore, at this point, it is difficult to generalize the previous findings, developed methods and instruments to the Dutch population. Concluding, this study aims to gain insight into generational differences regarding employer preferences and the applicability of previous findings, developed method and instrument (EmpAt) to the Dutch population.

Practical and theoretical relevance

As mentioned previously, it is expected that the distribution of different generations in the labour market will be different in five to ten years. This leads to the question whether generation management might be needed in the near future. Generation management is a concrete form of a personnel policy that takes the different life-phases into account, focusing on all generations (Zestor, 2009). Moreover, it offers practical insights on how to implement an aligned HR policy with regard to for example skill- and career development and autonomy. As a company, it is important to be and stay attractive to be ensured of employees. Knowing how to attract scarce younger employees is an important prerequisite.

This study will contribute to the conceptualization of the Generation Theory by Bontekoning (2007). He was the first to point out the lack of a general generation theory, which “explains the origin, development of its own collective identity and the functions of generations or generational differences in organisations” (Bontekoning, 2007, p. 155). This might have been a reason why there is so little research about generations and organisations. Another reason might have been that there was no suitable research method available. Bontekoning (2007) came up with a Generation Theory, suggesting that generations and their preferences can be distinguished regarding their organisational preferences. This will be elaborated on further in the Theoretical Framework section. Due to the lack of studies and



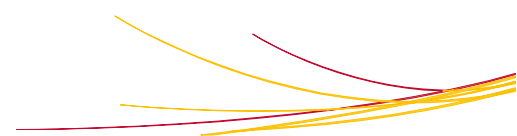
differences in opinions of researchers about this topic, this study will contribute to the knowledge and findings in this field, especially within The Netherlands.

Theoretical framework

At the moment, there is not a lot of insight into the specific preferences of the newest generation job-seekers; Millennials. There are mainly global descriptions of generations and it is unclear to what extent current job positions offered by various organisations, fit the needs and preferences of this newest generation of job-seekers (Corporaal, 2014). In this research, we will apply theoretic models and literature from work and organisational psychology. The previously mentioned generation classification will be used for this study (Baby Boomers: 1946 – 1964, Generation X: 1965 – 1980, Millennials: 1981 – 2000). First, Bontekoning's (2007) Generation Theory will be further elaborated, then attention is given to The Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964), the Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) Framework (Schneider, 1987), and research of Reis and Braga (2016) about using the EmpAt for different generations.

Bontekoning (2007) recites three important parts of his Generation Theory. First, successive generations react spontaneously to the surrounding culture and its renewal impulses – society, organisations, association, political party etc. – that keep the social system to which they belong up-to-date. Secondly, this evolutionary process of cultural change within their society through successive generations evolves optimally when the most energetic members of each generation are present and when the generations are open to each other's influences and actively integrate these influences in the existing culture. Third, in a rhythm of approximately fifteen years, new generations arise with a shared development, which succeed others and focus on the renewal of outdated social patterns. In short, a generation consists of a cluster of peers that are connected by a shared upbringing and *Zeitgeist*, reaction on renewal impulses, and a shared emotional and physical development (Bontekoning, 2014). With this theory, he suggests that generations can be distinguished and therefore it is relevant to examine the differences between generations and their preferences. We will use this notion of Bontekoning's (2007) generation theory, together with the various research findings on possible generation differences, as a starting point for our research about how generations differ with regard to employer preferences.

Further, the Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) and the ASA Framework (Schneider, 1987) are also applied in this study. Both frameworks can explain how people make decisions based on employer preferences. The Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) is an often-used



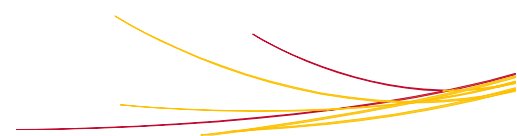
motivation theory in the workplace (Chiang & Jang, 2008). The motivational reason, the so-called motivation force directs specific behavioural alternatives is supposed to be a multiplicative function of three distinct perceptions; Expectancy \times Instrumentality \times Valence. This Expectancy Theory states that people will select their behaviour based on the option with the greatest motivational force:

Expectancy is the perceived probability that effort will lead to good performance ...
Instrumentality is the perceived probability that good performance will lead to desired outcomes ... Valence refers to the value the individual personally places on rewards: the function of needs, goals, values and preferences. (Chiang & Jang, 2008, p. 314)

This Expectancy Theory can be used as a framework for assessing, interpreting and evaluating employee behaviour in different situations. This can be about learning, making decisions, and forming attitudes (Chen & Lou, 2002). This theory can be used to examine how future employees make job decisions based on their considerations about employer attractiveness. In addition, the ASA framework (Schneider, 1987) is useful to take into consideration when investigating the relationship between employees' and organisational values. Values are defined as one fundamental and enduring characteristic, which both employees and organisations possess and which can be directly compared in terms of value congruence (De Cooman, et al., 2009). The ASA framework can be explained as follows:

The ASA model assumes an influence of [expected] P-O fit [(person-organisation fit)] on the applicant's job choice behaviour (self-selection) as well as on the organization's hiring decision (employer selection). People are attracted to organizations that have values similar to their own (attraction) and organizations select people who share their values (selection). Finally, individuals who do not fit the organization will often leave voluntarily or are asked to leave (attrition). (De Cooman, et al., 2009, p. 103)

Both the Expectancy Theory and the ASA framework will be used as a foundation for this study. This will be combined with research of Reis and Braga (2016), as their research about generations and job values conceptualises this P-O fit. Moreover, Reis and Braga (2016) used the EmpAt (Berthon et al., 2005) to conceptualise and measure Employer Attractiveness. The EmpAt is deductively based on Ambler and Barrow's (1996) delineation of three dimensions;



developmental or useful activities (functional); material or monetary rewards (economic); feelings such as belonging, direction and purpose (psychological) and two additional dimensions that Berthon et al. (2005) uncovered in an inductive way. The five factors of the EmpAt include Interest Value (IV), Social Value (SV), Economic Value (EV), Development Value (DV), and Application Value (AV).

The definitions of the five factors of the EmpAt are as follows:

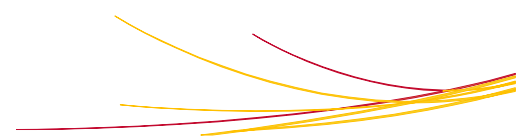
1) Interest Value...: a challenging and stimulating job, with innovative working practices, products and services, in an environment that encourages creativity and innovation; 2) Social Value...: a positive and pleasant social and interpersonal environment; 3) Economic Value...: above- average wages, compensation package, job security, and promotion opportunities; 4) Development Value...: provides recognition, self-worth and confidence, the development of skills and career-enhancing experiences; 5) Application Value...: opportunity to apply expertise and convey knowledge to others, in a customer-oriented and humanitarian workplace. (Reis & Braga, 2016, p. 106)

As mentioned previously, most of the studies with regard to this topic have been conducted outside of The Netherlands, making it questionable whether and how their results, methods, and instruments (in this case, the EmpAt) can be generalized and applied to the Dutch population. Hence, to the author's knowledge, this will be the first study to apply these findings, methods, and instruments to the Dutch population.

Taken together, this study has three aims. First, it will be examined whether the translated Dutch EmpAt can be used in a reliable and valid way in The Netherlands with a Dutch sample. Secondly, the results of this EmpAt will be compared with the findings for different generations as described by Reis & Braga (2016). Third, an in-depth examination of the used EmpAt and the results will be executed, investigating differences between generations' appreciation of Interest and Economic values. Next to these main effects, interaction effects will also be investigated.

Research questions and hypotheses

The first sensible step in order to examine the generalizability of the Dutch scale, is to investigate whether the five factors of this scale can also be distinguished in The Netherlands. The hypothesis is as follows:



H1. The five factors of the EmpAt (Interest, Social, Economic, Development, and Application Value) can be distinguished in The Netherlands with a Dutch sample when conducted among all generations.

After this, following from literature research and practice, the focus of this study will be on Millennials and their employer preferences due to their likely domination of the labour market in the near future. When it turns out that there are differences between generations, this is important to be addressed by HR when developing policies about for example development, autonomy, and collaboration (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000, as cited in Bontekoning, 2014, p. 98). This way, it can be ensured that organisations attract scarce, younger potential employees.

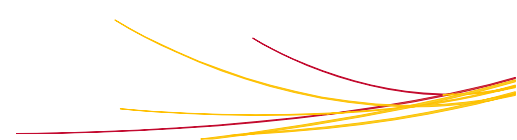
Following from this, a research question was constructed: “To what extent is Age related to Interest Value and Economic Value and are these relations moderated by Social, Development, and Application Value?”. Expected is that there will be a moderation effect of three values, because these values are all related to one and the same concept; employer attractiveness (Berthon et al., 2005). It is expected that the three values will positively affect the direct relationship between Age and the two other values. Within the hypotheses, a distinction has been made between generational groups (age ranges), to be able to compare them, and age itself, to be able to measure the relationships between age in numbers and different values.

In line with the results of Reis and Braga, the following hypothesises will be used in this research:

H2: Economic Value is *more* important for Millennials than for the other generations (Baby Boomers and Generation X).

H3: Application Value is *more* important for Millennials than for the other generations (Baby Boomers and Generation X).

H4: Development Value is *more* important for Millennials than for the other generations (Baby Boomers and Generation X).



H5: Social Value is *less* important for Millennials than for the other generations (Baby Boomers and Generation X).

H6: Interest Value is *less* important for Millennials than for the other generations (Baby Boomers and Generation X).

H7. Age is *positively* related to Interest Value.

H8. Age is *negatively* related to Economic Value.

The following hypothesises for the moderation effects all have a positive relationship, because all off the five variables are factors of and measure one concept; employer attractiveness in general.

H9. The effect of Age on Interest Value and Economic Value is *positively* moderated by Social Value.

H10. The effect of Age on Interest Value and Economic Value is *positively* moderated by Development Value.

H11. The effect of Age on Interest Value and Economic Value is *positively* moderated by Application Value.

The proposed model of the relationships is shown in Figure 1.

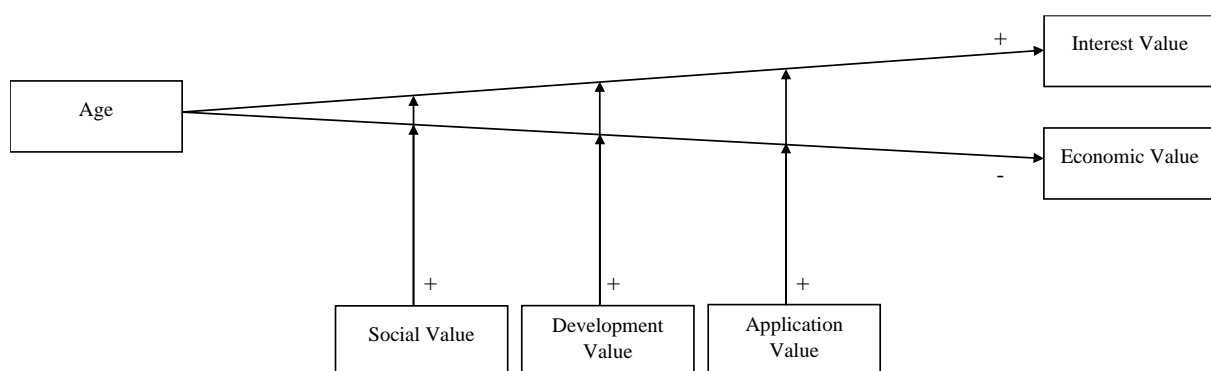
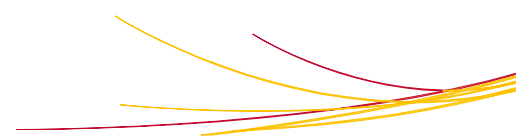


Figure 1. Proposed model of the relationships between the independent variable ‘Age’ and the two dependent variables ‘Interest Value’ and ‘Economic Value’, with ‘Social Value’, ‘Development Value’, and ‘Application Value’ as moderators.



Methods

Design

This study employed a cross-sectional and questionnaire survey design. The independent variable was Age and there were two dependent variables; Interest and Economic Value. The three moderators were Social, Development, and Application Value.

Participants

G*power analysis has been used to determine the sample size, with a medium effect size of $f^2 = 0.15$, an α error probability of 0.05, Power ($1 - \beta$ err prob) of 0.95, and the Number of predictors = 6. The used parameters are based on the five variables of the EmpAt and Age. The total sample size derived from this analysis was 146.

The participants were recruited using convenience sampling and were employees of ROC van Twente (a Dutch Regional Community College). The employees were either (Assisting) Teaching staff or Support and Management personnel. The recruitment question about generations was on the agenda of ROC van Twente. In total, there were 177 participants ($N = 177$, 120 women, 57 men, $M_{age} = 47.2$ years, age range: 24 – 66 years). These participants can be classified in three groups; Baby Boomers (born between 1946 – 1964) ($n = 55$), Generation X (born between 1965 – 1980) ($n = 72$) and Generation Y (born between 1981 – 2000) ($n = 50$). Furthermore, 49.2 per cent of the participants ($n = 87$) indicated that to be (Assisting) Teaching staff and 50.8 per cent ($n = 90$) indicated to be part of Support and Management Personnel.

Instruments

In this study, an online questionnaire was used. First, demographic questions regarding gender, year of birth, and the participants' job position within ROC van Twente were presented. After this, a translated, Dutch version of the 25-item EmpAt by Berthon et al. (2005) was used (Appendix B) to measure the participants' appreciation of employer attractiveness values. The scale comprises five attractiveness attributes; Interest, Social, Economic, Development, and Application Value. All constructs of the questionnaire were measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important).

Translation. The English version of the EmpAt has been translated from English to Dutch; a back-translation was performed to ensure that it was equivalent enough to be compared to the results of the original scale (American Psychological Association, 2013). This was done by the researcher, an external supervisor with a background in Change

Management, and a Psychology graduate. After this, the final version was composed by the researcher and the internal first supervisor.

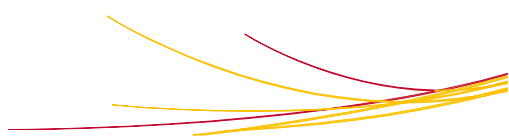
Procedure

The online survey was distributed in April 2020 among the employees of ROC van Twente using the weekly 'e-Bulletin'. This is an internal communication channel of ROC van Twente, which keeps them up to date about events, agreements, and developments within the organisation. Additionally, the survey was uploaded on Plaza 2.0, which is the intranet of ROC van Twente, as well as distributed via Microsoft Teams. Moreover, HR advisors distributed the survey per e-mail among directors and team managers with the question to further distribute the survey within their team. During the distribution of the survey, there was a Corona (COVID-19) pandemic.

The participants could participate in the survey by clicking on an anonymous link. First, they had to read and agree with the informed consent explaining the purpose and background of the study and information about participation, such as voluntariness and duration. This presented information was in line with the guidelines of the Ethical Review Board of the Utrecht University. Furthermore, the participants were asked to answer the questions as they would normally do, hence independent of the ongoing Corona pandemic, to get the most reliable answers as possible. Afterwards, the 25 items of the EmpAt were shown to the participants. They were asked to indicate how important the items were to them on the five-point Likert scale. In addition, the possibility for participants to elaborate further on what aspects they consider important was offered. The survey ended by thanking the participants for their participation. Finally, contact details of the researcher, the internal first supervisor and the complaints officer of Utrecht University were provided to the participants in case necessary.

Statistical analyses

The statistical software SPSS (26.0) was used to execute all statistical analyses. First, as a preliminary analysis, a principal component analysis (PCA) was executed to test whether the expected five factors of the original EmpAt also arise within the translated Dutch version of the EmpAt (H1). Because it was assumed that the factors were correlated, an Oblique rotation method (Promax) was used (Allen, Bennet, & Heritage, 2014; Field 2009). Moreover, Cronbach's alpha was measured to examine the reliability of the questionnaire scales. Pearson's r was measured to examine whether there were relationships between Age and the variables of the EmpAt. Following from these results, choices were made regarding the



retainment or necessary adjustments of certain scales and items to be able to proceed with the following analyses.

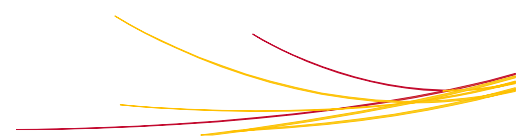
To test hypotheses two to six regarding generational differences in employer preference, a two-way MANOVA was executed. Before executing this analysis, it was investigated whether the necessary criteria were met: normality, absence of multicollinearity, a linear relationship between the dependent variables, and homogeneity of variance-covariance. In case of a significant effect for the differences between generational groups, a post-hoc analysis was performed to exactly see between which generational groups the differences occurred. For this, Gabriel's post-hoc test was used, because the groups were unequal (Allen et al., 2014)

For the remaining five hypotheses (H7 – H11), hierarchical multiple regression analyses (MRA) were performed to estimate the proportion of variance in Interest and Economic Value that can be accounted for by Age and the three moderators Social, Development, and Application Value. New variables were computed to test the moderation effects. Because our model is based on interaction effects, it was chosen to execute Hierarchical MRA's with the interaction effects instead of the direct effects. Before executing these analyses, it was investigated whether the normality assumption was met. Moreover, the presence of univariate and multivariate outliers was evaluated. For each of the three moderators, a hierarchical MRA was performed to see whether the interaction effects showed up, always entering Age in the first block and the moderator in the second block. Another MRA was executed to see how much variance was explained in the model by the four predictor variables together. This was supported by the calculation of Cohen's f^2 , following the categorization of f^2 into small (.02), medium (.15) and large (.35) effects as described by Cohen (1988).

Results

Principal Component Analysis

To investigate the underlying structure of the 25-item EmpAt questionnaire, data of the entire sample ($N = 177$) were subjected to PCA with Promax rotation. The assumption of normality was tested with the Shapiro-Wilk test of Normality, which indicated a violation of the normality distribution for all items. However, histograms indicated only mild deviations from normality, which allowed for continuation of the analysis as factor analysis is fairly robust against violations of the normality assumptions. Therefore, it was decided to continue



the analysis with the original data, without deleting or rescaling items. Finally, the assumption of absence of multicollinearity was met. Also, The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy reports the amount of variance in the data that can be explained by the factors. Values of $> .60$ are acceptable (Allen et al., 2014). The KMO value was $.747$, which suggests that the data of this questionnaire is suitable for PCA.

For this PCA, the first extraction was based on an eigenvalue greater than one. This resulted in an extraction of eight factors, which does not correspond with the original idea of five factors within the questionnaire. In total, these eight factors accounted for 62.1% of the variance in the questionnaire data. The items of the five original scales were scattered over eight different factors and sometimes loaded on more than one factor (Appendix C).

Based on the questionnaire with five different factors, we chose to execute another PCA with the extraction based on a fixed number of factors, which was five. In total, these five factors accounted for 48.5% of the variance in the questionnaire data. The Component matrix of this is shown in Appendix D. As can be seen, some questions load on more than one factor or do not load on the expected factor.

Hence, it can be concluded that the original five factor structure was not present in our study. As for continuing with subsequent analyses, it has been decided to adapt some EmpAt scales, based on further analyses as elaborated below.

Reliability and correlation analyses and descriptive statistics

Reliability analyses were executed for both the original and adjusted EmpAt scales (Table 1). In addition, correlations between six variables were computed (Table 2). Mean scores were overall quite high, whereas the standard deviations were quite small. This suggests that all values seem to be relatively important to the participants and that the mean is an accurate representation as there were only small standard deviations (Field, 2009). A closer examination of the questionnaire Item-Total Statistics indicated that alpha for Economic Value would increase to $.582$ if items 13, 14, and 15 were deleted. Also, alpha for Development Value would increase to $.632$ by deleting item 20. This was also supported by the results of the Corrected item-total correlation (Appendix E). According to Field (2009), items that are $< .3$ do not correlate very well with the scale overall and these have to be dropped.

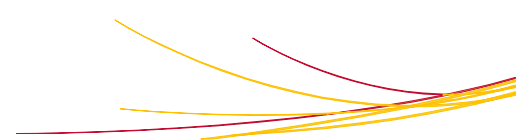


Table 1

Descriptive statistics and Cronbach's alpha for the sample as a whole, for both the original (25 questions) as the adjusted (21 questions) EmpAt

Value	Original EmpAt					Adjusted EmpAt				
	No. items	Cronbach's alpha	M	SD	Mean correlation	No. items	Cronbach's alpha	M	SD	Mean correlation
IV	5	.650	4.22	.39	.28	5	.650	4.22	.39	.28
SV	5	.771	4.46	.39	.40	5	.771	4.46	.39	.40
EV	5	.468	4.02	.37	.15	2	.582	4.12	.43	.43
DV	5	.627	3.85	.46	.25	4	.632	3.92	.54	.30
AV	5	.610	4.12	.43	.24	5	.610	4.12	.43	.24
All	25	.820	4.13	.28	.16	21	.795	4.13	.28	.16

Note. The scores are from a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very unimportant) to 5 (Very important). $N = 177$.

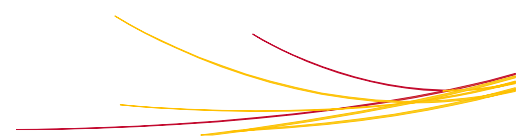
Table 2

Pearson's Correlations of Age, Interest, Social, Economic, Development and Application Value (adjusted EmpAt)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Age	1					
2 IV	.02	1				
3 SV	-.15*	.20**	1			
4 AV	.15*	.32**	.41**	1		
5 EV	.04	.14	.12	.10	1	
6 DV	-.21**	.35**	.20**	.41**	.24**	1
M	47.21	4.22	4.46	4.12	3.92	4.12
SD	11.28	.39	.39	.43	.54	.43

Note. * $p < .05$ (2-tailed). ** $p < .01$ (2-tailed). $N = 177$.

To summarize the above mentioned results, it can be concluded that four of the 25 items were dropped to optimise the EmpAt for the Dutch sample (Appendix E). In addition, it



appeared that the expected five factors of the original English questionnaire that accounted for a cumulative 74% of the variation in the data (Berthon et al., 2005), did not emerge in a similar way in the Dutch questionnaire. No clear patterns were found in the PCA to rearrange the survey with eight new factors, as the factor loadings of the five original scales were scattered over eight different factors and sometimes loaded on more than one factor (Appendix C). Therefore, it was decided to maintain the division of items per scale as proposed in the original study of Berthon et al. (2005). Concluding, the first hypothesis (H1) ‘the five factors of the EmpAt can be distinguished in The Netherlands’, could not be confirmed by these findings. For the next analyses, the data of the adjusted version of the questionnaire was used, making it possible to compare the results of this research with other studies in the most reliable way.

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA)

A MANOVA was used to examine whether generational differences exist with regards to the participants’ scores on the five scales of the EmpAt. Means and standard deviations of the EmpAt scores per generational group are shown in Table 3. Before conducting the MANOVA, the data was examined to ensure that the underlying assumptions were met.

The Shapiro-Wilk test of univariate normality showed that most of the scores were significant, therefore suggesting a violation of the normality assumption. However, a MANOVA is fairly robust against violations whenever group sizes exceed thirty participants (Allen et al., 2014). Therefore, it was decided to continue with the analysis without making adjustments to the data. The assumption of absence of multicollinearity was met. Moreover, Mahalanobis distance did not exceed the critical χ^2 for $df = 4$ (at $\alpha = .001$) of 20.515 with $\chi^2 = 20.429$, indicating no multivariate outliers were present. Furthermore, the relationships between the dependent variables were roughly linear. Finally, Box’s M was non-significant at $\alpha = .001$, indicating that homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices could be assumed.

The MANOVA showed that there was a significant effect of the generational group on the combined dependent variables, $F(5, 171) = 3.49, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .09$. Analyses of the dependent variables individually (Table 4) indicated no effects for IV, SV, AV and EV. However, DV was statistically significant with $F = 4.66, p = .011$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$. Consequently, a post-hoc test (Gabriel) showed that Generation Y ($M = 3.88, SD = .07$) scored significantly higher, $p = .011$, on DV than Baby Boomers ($M = 3.58, SD = .07$). Hence, this means that Generation Y considered DV as more important than Baby Boomers.

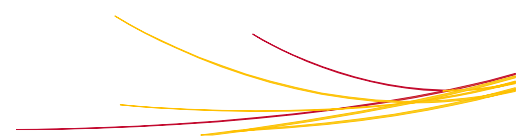


Table 3

Descriptive statistics for three generational groups (adjusted EmpAt)

	n	IV		SV		AV		EV		DV	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Baby boomers (age 56 – 74)	55	4.20	.06	4.43	.05	4.19	.05	3.96	.07	3.58	.07
Generation X (age 40 – 55)	72	4.26	.04	4.41	.05	4.11	.05	3.88	.06	3.78	.06
Generation Y (age 20 – 39)	50	4.18	.05	4.56	.05	4.05	.07	3.95	.08	3.88	.06

Note. The scores are from a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very unimportant) to 5 (Very important). *N* = 177.

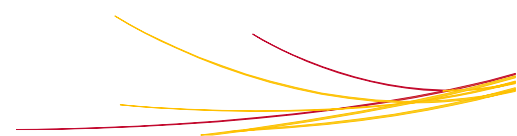
Table 4

Summary of Univariate Analyses of the Subscales of the EmpAt

Predictor	Dependent variables	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Partial η^2
Generational group	IV	.72	.489	.008
	SV	2.51	.084	.028
	AV	1.53	.220	.017
	EV	.51	.604	.006
	DV	4.66	.011*	.051

Note. * $p < .05$ (2-tailed).

These findings could not confirm H2, H3 (EV and AV being more important for Millennials), H5, and H6 (SV and IV less important for Millennials). Moreover, H4 (DV more important for Millennials) could only be partially confirmed, as more value was indeed assigned to DV by Millennials than by Baby Boomers, but not more than by Generation X. A summary of the hypotheses and whether these could be confirmed or not, can be found in Table 6.



Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA)

Hierarchical MRA's were performed to estimate the proportion of variance in Interest and Economic Value that can be accounted for by Age and the three moderators Social, Development, and Application Value. Because our model is based on interaction effects, it has been chosen to execute Hierarchical MRA's with the interaction effects instead of the direct effects. The correlations between the main variables are shown in Table 2. To be able to measure the relationships between Age and the different values, Age in numbers instead of generation was used for these analyses.

Prior to interpreting the results of these MRA's, it was investigated whether the belonging assumptions were met. First of all, stem-and-leaf plots indicated that the variables in the regression were normally distributed. Moreover, an inspection of the normal probability plot of standardised residuals and the scatterplot of standardised residuals against standardised predicted values indicated that the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity of residuals were met. Mahalanobis distance exceeded the critical χ^2 for $df = 4$ (at $\alpha = .001$) of 18.47 with $\chi^2 = 19.12$. This finding was ignored, because there was no reason to believe that these outliers were not represented by people from the intended sample population (Field, 2009).

First, the results of the MRA for Interest Value will be discussed. Suggested was that Age would be positively related to Interest Value and that this effect would be positively moderated by Social, Development, and Application Value. Three hierarchical MRA's were performed to see whether these interaction effects could be confirmed. Age was always entered in the first block, followed by one of the three interaction effects separately in the second block. In block 1 of the Hierarchical MRA's, Age accounted for a non-significant 0% of the variance in Interest Value, $R^2 = .00$, adjusted $R^2 = -.01$, $F(1, 175) = .08$, $p = .779$. In block 2 of the first MRA, the interaction effect of Age and SV was added to the regression equation, and accounted for a significant additional 4.1% of the variance in Interest Value, $\Delta R^2 = .04$, $\Delta F = (1, 174) = 7.36$, $p = .007$. In block 2 of the second MRA, the interaction effect of Age and DV was added to the regression equation, and accounted for a significant additional 11.5% of the variance in Interest Value, $\Delta R^2 = .12$, $\Delta F = (1, 174) = 22.68$, $p < .001$. In block 2 of the third MRA, the interaction effect of Age and AV was added to the regression equation, and accounted for a significant additional 9.6% of the variance in Interest Value, $\Delta R^2 = .10$, $\Delta F = (1, 174) = 18.48$, $p < .001$. Another separate MRA indicated that, in combination, the four predictor variables explained a significant 14.5% of the variance in

Interest Value, $R^2 = .15$, adjusted $R^2 = .13$, $F(4, 172) = 7.29$, $p < .001$. According to Cohen (1988), a combined effect of this magnitude can be considered “medium” ($f^2 = .17$).

Next, the results of the MRA for Economic Value will be discussed. Suggested was that Age would be negatively related to Economic Value and that this effect would be positively moderated by Social, Development, and Application Value. Again, three hierarchical regression analysis were performed to see whether the interaction effects would show up. Again, Age was always entered in the first block, followed by one of the three interaction effects.

In block 1 of the MRA, Age accounted for a non-significant 0% of the variance in Economic Value, $R^2 = .00$, adjusted $R^2 = -.00$, $F(1, 175) = .30$, $p = .582$. In block 2 of the first MRA, the interaction effect of Age and SV was added to the regression equation, and accounted for a non-significant additional 1.7% of the variance in Interest Value, $\Delta R^2 = .02$, $\Delta F = (1, 174) = 3.09$, $p = .081$. In block 2 of the second MRA, the interaction effect of Age and DV was added to the regression equation, and accounted for a significant additional 4.5% of the variance in Interest Value, $\Delta R^2 = .05$, $\Delta F = (1, 174) = 8.26$, $p = .005$. In block 2 of the third MRA, the interaction effect of Age and AV was added to the regression equation, and accounted for a non-significant additional 1.1 % of the variance in Interest Value, $\Delta R^2 = .01$, $\Delta F = (1, 174) = 1.90$, $p = .169$. Another separate MRA indicated that, in combination, the four predictor variables explained a significant 5.4% of the variance in Economic Value, $R^2 = .05$, adjusted $R^2 = .03$, $F(4, 172) = 2.47$, $p = .047$. According to Cohen (1988), a combined effect of this magnitude can be considered “small” ($f^2 = .06$). Unstandardized and standardised regression coefficients, and squared semi-partial correlations, giving the proportion of variance in the criterion that is uniquely explained by the predictor, are reported in Table 5.

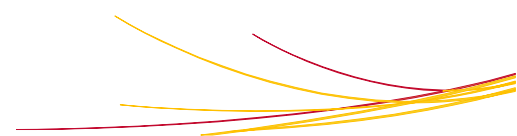


Table 5

Unstandardized (B) and Standardised (β) Regression Coefficients, and Squared Semi-Partial Correlations (sr²) for Each Predictor Variable on Each Block of the Hierarchical Multiple Regressions Predicting Interest and Economic Value.

		IV					EV			
	Variable	R ²	B [95% CI]	β	sr ²	R ²	B [95% CI]	β	sr ²	
Block 1	Age	.00	.00 [-.00, .01]	.02	.00	.00	.00 [-.01, .01]	.04	.00	
Block 2 (1 st MRA SV) SV)	Age × SV	.04	.00 [.00, .01]*	.55	.04	.02	.00 [.00, .01]	.36	.01	
Block 2 (2 nd MRA DV) DV)	Age × DV	.12	.01 [.00, .01]**	.69	.11	.05	.01 [.00, .01]*	.43	.05	
Block 2 (3 rd MRA AV) AV)	Age × AV	.10	.01 [.00, .01]**	.83	.10	.01	.00 [-.00, .01]	.28	.01	

Note: CI = Confidence Interval. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

These findings could not confirm H7 and H8 as they suggest that Age was negatively related to Interest Value and positively related to Economic Value and no significant relationship was found. Additionally, for H9, H10, and H11, the findings suggested that, indeed, the effect of Age on Economic Value, was positively moderated by Social, Development and Application Value. However, H9 and H11 could only be partially confirmed, as both SV and AV were significant predictors for IV, but not for EV. Therefore, H10 could be confirmed, as Development Value is a significant predictor for both IV and EV (Table 6).

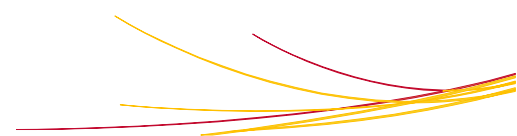
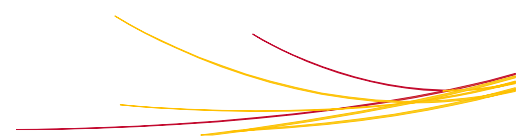


Table 6

Summary of the hypotheses and whether they are confirmed or rejected.

Hypothesis	Findings
H1: The five factors of the EmpAt (Interest, Social, Economic, Development, and Application Value) can be distinguished in The Netherlands with a Dutch sample when conducted among all generations.	Rejected
H2: Economic Value is <i>more</i> important for Millennials than for the other generations (Baby Boomers and Generation X).	Rejected
H3: Application Value is <i>more</i> important for Millennials than for the other generations (Baby Boomers and Generation X).	Rejected
H4: Development Value is <i>more</i> important for Millennials than for the other generations (Baby Boomers and Generation X).	Partially confirmed*
H5: Social Value is <i>less</i> important for Millennials than for the other generations (Baby Boomers and Generation X).	Rejected
H6: Interest Value is <i>less</i> important for Millennials than for the other generations (Baby Boomers and Generation X).	Rejected
H7. Age is positively related to Interest Value.	Rejected
H8. Age is negatively related to Economic Value.	Rejected
H9. The effect of Age on Interest Value and Economic Value is positively moderated by Social Value.	Partially confirmed**
H10. The effect of Age on Interest Value and Economic Value is positively moderated by Development Value.	Confirmed
H11. The effect of Age on Interest Value and Economic Value is positively moderated by Application Value.	Partially confirmed**

Note. * Confirmed for Baby Boomers, not confirmed for Generation X. ** Confirmed for IV, not confirmed for EV.



Explorative Stepwise regression

Because some unexpected results were found, additional explorative analyses have been executed. This with the aim to infer more information as where future research should focus on. As post hoc analyses, two stepwise MRA’s have been employed without interaction effects to examine how much of the variance in the dependent variables IV and EV was explained by the four main predictors (Age, SV, DV, AV). In this type of regression analysis the decisions about the order in which the predictors are entered into the model is based on mathematical criterions, calculated by SPSS (Field, 2009).

First, a stepwise MRA for IV was executed. In Model 1, DV accounted for a significant 11.9% of the variance in IV. In Model 2, AV was added and accounted for a significant additional 3.8% of the variance in IV. Age and SV were excluded variables, which indicates that these variables did not account for a significant variance in IV.

Second, a stepwise MRA was performed for EV. Only one variable, DV, accounted for a significant 5.7% of the variance in EV (Table 7). Age, SV, and AV were excluded variables, which indicates that these variables did not account for a significant variance in IV.

Table 7

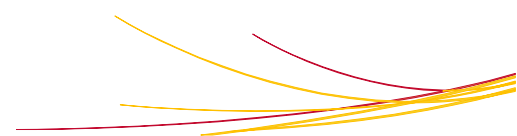
Results of the Stepwise MRA on IV and EV

Model and predictor	β	R^2	ΔR^2	F	p
Interest value					
Model 1		.12	.12	23.71	.000
DV	.26**				.000
Model 2		.16	.04	16.24	.000
DV	.19*				.001
AV	.19*				.006
Economic value					
Model 1		.06	.06	10.57	.001
DV	.25*				

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$

Discussion

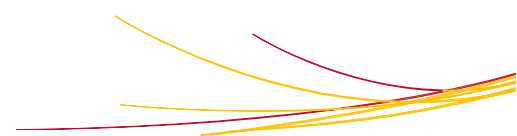
The goal of this research was to examine whether different generational groups, in specific Millennials, differ from their preceding generations (Baby Boomers and Generation



X) in their employer preferences and whether this could be investigated by a translated, Dutch version of the EmpAt scale. The main research question was investigated “To what extent is Age related to Interest Value and Economic Value and are these relations moderated by Social, Development, and Application Value?” by testing the following hypotheses. First of all, it was expected that the five factors of the original EmpAt would also arise within the Dutch version of the EmpAt (H1). Furthermore, it was expected that Economic, Application, and Development Value were more appreciated by Millennials than by the other generations (H2 – H4), where in turn these other generations were expected to appreciate Social and Interest Value more than Millennials would (H5 and H6). Moreover, it was expected that Age was positively related to Interest Value (H7) and negatively to Economic Value (H8), with the three moderators Social, Development, and Application Value having a positive effect on these relationships (H9 – H11). Finally, as an explorative analysis, it was investigated which variables accounted for a significant variance in IV and EV.

Interpretations of the results

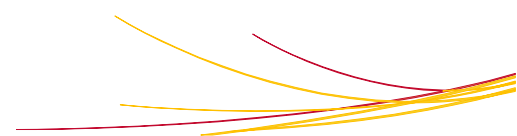
The original five factors of the EmpAt did not similarly arise in the Dutch EmpAt. The items were scattered over eight different factors and sometimes loaded on more than one factor. This suggests that some questions in the Dutch version of the EmpAt, against expectations, fit with various factors. An explanation for this might be that the 25 questions together measure one overarching construct (for example; employer attractiveness), which can be supported by the high value of Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = .820$). This can make it difficult to distinguish five separate values within the Dutch EmpAt scale. Due to theoretical considerations, it was decided to keep the original format of the EmpAt, using the proposed five factors. Nevertheless, a few items of the questionnaire were deleted due to conceptual reasons. For example, for the value EV, it seems as if the underlying meaning can be interpreted in various ways. One part of this sub-scale of the EmpAt (questions 11 and 12) seems to be focused on money, whereas the other part (questions 13, 14, and 15) seems to be more focused on job opportunities and the content of the job itself. This can be the explanation for the fact that these three questions caused a lower reliability. Furthermore, the conceptual explanation for the fact that question 20 was deleted from the sub-scale regarding DV, is that this question was focused on recognition from others, the external environment, whereas the other four questions were about personal and intrinsic feelings. Conceptually, the adapted scales are still comparable with the original scales, making them still generalizable to other studies.



Moreover, it was expected that Economic, Application, and Development Value were more appreciated by Millennials than by the other generations (H2 – H4), where in turn these other generations were expected to appreciate Social and Interest Value more than Millennials would (H5 and H6). Four out of these five hypotheses could not be confirmed as no significant differences were found between the three generations groups for EV, AV, SV, and IV. This suggests that there are no differences between generations and their employer preferences regarding their economic compensation, application and convection of knowledge, having a pleasant social work environment and having a stimulating job with innovative practices. An explanation for this finding could lie in research from Corporaal (2009), as he is one of the few to suggest that the newest generation does not have radically new employer preferences in comparison to their preceding generations. He concluded that young people consider the same job- and organisational characteristics important as what was found in the past decades in recruitment studies among jobseekers of other ages. Additionally, other studies about work-related differences and similarities between different generations also found that generations do not seem to differ that much in their work-related preferences and seem to share the same concerns and needs about for example income, responsibility, and influence within the organisation (e.g. Jurkiewicz, 2000; Jurkiewicz & Brown, 1998, as cited in Parry & Urwin, 2010). Similarly, research of Becton, Walker, and Jones-Farmer (2014) suggests that popular stereotypes about generations are not always consistent with job behaviours, attitudes, and values.

However, significant differences were found between Millennials and Baby Boomers for Development Value. Findings show that Millennials score significantly higher on DV than Baby Boomers do. However, Millennials do not score higher on DV than Generation X, therefore only partially confirming H4. Furthermore, a significant negative correlation was found between Age and DV, suggesting that the older people are, the less value is assigned to developing themselves and development opportunities. Özçelik (2015) states that Millennials have distinct expectations about (self-)development. They search more for opportunities to learn and grow (Eisner, 2005) and they want to improve their career by having provided career opportunities, challenging and meaningful assignments, and an employer that fosters their skills development (Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008; Baruch, 2006).

The hypotheses about relationships between Age and IV and EV (H7 – H8), were not confirmed by our results. These findings are not in line with the study of Reis & Braga (2016), in which they stated that whenever employees are older, the content of the work is



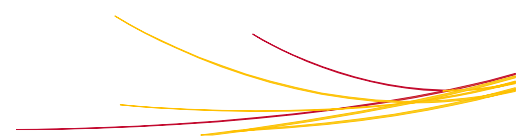
valued more than the extrinsic rewards received. In contrast, this study did not confirm the effect of Age on EV and IV, indicating that both Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y appreciate these values in the same way.

Although these relationships were not significant, the moderators were found to have a significant effect on these relationships. SV, DV, and AV positively moderated the relationship between Age and IV. Additionally, DV positively moderated the relationship between Age and EV. This can be explained by the assumption that the five values conceptually measure one overarching construct (employer attractiveness), and therefore are all positively related to each other. A remarkable point is that all mean scores were high for both the separate generational groups as for the sample as a whole. This suggests that, in general and thus independent of generation or age, all five factors of the EmpAt are of importance when considering employer attractiveness or preferences. This finding is in line with research about employer attractiveness subjects like the meaning of work and work values (Parry & Urwin, 2010; Deal, Altman, Rogelberg, 2010). For example, Deal et al. (2010) state that for employers to have the greatest potential benefit within an organisation, it is important to treat all employees, apart from their generation(al differences) the same and well; “If you provide employees with an interesting job, good compensation, opportunities to learn and advance, colleagues they like to work with, a boss they trust, and leaders who are competent, employees of all generations will respond positively” (Deal et al, 2010, p. 196).

Theoretical framework

To refer back to the theoretical framework, Bontekoning (2007) stated that generations were distinct and that because of this reason, it is important to look at their different preferences. Although this is an important message which is currently popular in research in this field, it is important to know that these differences, according to this research and others (Corporaal, 2014; Becton et al., 2014; Jurkiewicz, 2000; Jurkiewicz & Brown, 1998) could be seen from another perspective as well; the perspective that suggests that there might not be that many differences between generations as often assumed and even if they are present, the effect sizes are often small.

These different perspectives might shed light on an ongoing discussion regarding generational differences between empirical research and a more theoretical point of view. To illustrate, when looking at recent empirical findings, the evidence for these generational differences in work values is rather mixed. An explanation for these mixed results can lay in the fact that, first of all, generations are in practice hard to define because of the differences in



empirical findings about birthyear cut-off points. Also, the generational effects may differ across location, culture and individual differences (Parry & Urwin, 2011).

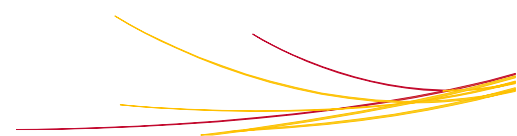
However, derived from psychological and sociological theory, this concept of generational differences has a strong basis, making it logical to argue that these differences would have an impact within the workplace as well (Parry & Urwin, 2011). Furthermore, most of the previously conducted studies employed cross-sectional designs and experienced methodological issues like these cut-off points, which do not overcome this failing. These shortcomings in empirical research suggest that the theoretical view in practice might be correct, but simply could not yet be confirmed by research.

Furthermore, the Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) and ASA framework (Schneider, 1987) are still important to take into consideration when making decisions about for example challenges, salary, needs, and values. This has to fit with the preferences of (future) employees. The expected P-O fit is an important factor when thinking about employer attractiveness in general, even though the differences between generations are not that present (except for DV) within this study.

Limitations

General limitations of this study are that it employed a cross-sectional design, which is a form of research in which is observed what naturally occurs without directly interfering in it, resulting in the reporting of correlational relationships rather than cause-and-effect relationships (Field, 2009). Nevertheless, this study did help explore how generations value employer attractiveness factors and which variables predict variances in scores of these values. Additionally, the questionnaire itself had low scores on reliability, resulting in doubts about the construct validity and a common method bias. Nevertheless, the combination of all subscales were reliable with a Cronbach's alpha of .795, hence making it possible to investigate employer attractiveness in general.

Another potential limitation of this study is that it the findings might indicate generational differences in employer preferences, but it could also well be that these preferences cohere with age rather than generations. Age effects are developmental in nature and caused by psychological or biological ageing, resulting in changing views, attitudes, and behaviours, whereas generational effects arise as a result of the impact of the environment or experiences. Moreover, it is hard to make a perfect distinction between generations merely based on their year of birth, for example, because different researchers use different cut-off points to define a generation (Parry & Urwin, 2011). In addition, some of the characteristics



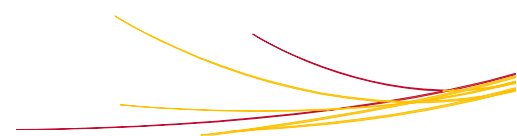
of certain generations, can also be accounted for by age effects (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). Rhodes (1983) states that, for example, age effects are developmental and not necessary stable. Consequently, these effects can have both psychological and biological reasons, thus making it impossible for individuals to have the exact same age effects over a lifetime. However, these individuals with varying age effects, could well belong to the same generation. Therefore, it is hard to establish whether certain differences and similarities between generations are due to generational or rather age effects (Rhodes, 1983).

Furthermore, the recruited participants for this study were all part of the same organisation. However, the questions of the EmpAt reflect a general idea about the attractiveness about employers in general and, therefore, various organisations. It might be that due to the possibly good P-O fit in this specific organisation, the mean scores were quite high and the standard deviations were quite low, indicating that the variance in the scores was small. Hence, it could be that the participants in this study shared the same needs and values as the organisation as well as their colleagues (Schneider, 1987). Concluding, the fact that all participants work for the same organisation, might be an explanation for the little variance between participants and more specifically, between different generations within this pool of participants.

Finally, the Corona pandemic might have had an influence on how participants answered the questions. To reduce the chance of having biased answers by the Corona pandemic, participants were asked to answer the questions as they would do in a 'normal' situation. Even though this was asked, it might still have had an influence on certain values within the questionnaire. From a practical point of view it seems logical that particularly the questions about EV were maybe scored higher during this pandemic than during a 'normal' situation. As was generally known, people lost their jobs and countries, organisations, and individuals suffered difficult (economic) times. Topics related to EV such as an attractive overall compensation package and job security within the organisation, might have had a higher score during this time, because people were likely more aware of the risks of losing their job. This is not necessarily an issue for the comparison between generational groups within this study, as every person was affected by this environmental disturbance, but might, for example, have had an effect on the relationship between Age and Economic Value.

Theoretical and practical implications

Even though we expected to find five factors within the translated EmpAt scale, instead eight factors were found. Despite this finding, it is not yet ruled out that these five



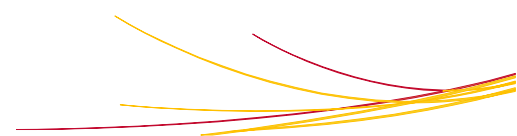
factors in fact are represented by the EmpAt. This study possibly rather showed that linguistic and cultural differences may arise during translation. Moreover, these findings may even raise the critical question as to whether the importance and conceptualisation of the values in the EmpAt have changed or will change in the future, therefore, taking on a different meaning.

In addition, this study indicates that the role of age might not be that important when investigating employer preferences, therefore putting popular publications about generational differences in another perspective (Özçelik, 2015; Eisner, 2005; Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008; Bontekoning, 2007). This study contributes to the less popular and less often mentioned side of literature about employer preferences; the one that argues that these generational or age differences are not affecting employer preferences to a large extent and that all values seem to be important to individuals of any age or generation.

Practically, this study could contribute to the knowledge of organisations concerning whether generation management is needed, thus taking the different generations into account within their personnel policy and recruitment and selection procedures. The findings of this study suggest that generation management is not necessarily needed, as individuals of various generations seem to appreciate the investigated values in a similar way. This means that, to be an attractive employer for both Millennials and other generations, all values should be taken into consideration. Nevertheless, differences between generations were found concerning DV. Therefore, it is recommended for organisations to specifically attend to this specific topic when recruiting employees of Generation Y. Focusing on challenging assignments, providing opportunities for (self-)development and career advancements, are all examples of how an organisation can make itself more attractive to this generation, while including individuals from the other generations as well, as employees, according to this study, in general seem to consider the Development Value important. Finally, it is important for organisations to take into account that the observed effects are not necessarily generational effects (environmental), but could also well be age effects (developmental). This suggests that the findings could be applicable for a longer period of time, and could, therefore, help attract future potential and specifically young employees.

Future research

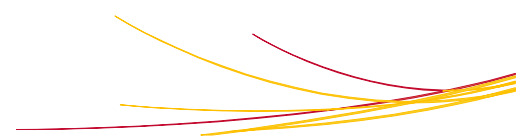
A first proposal for future research is to focus on distinguishing between age (developmental) and generational (environmental) effects. In this study, it might well be that the findings can be explained by age effects rather than generational effects. Therefore,



longitudinal research might be necessary to investigate the difference between the two. It can be expected that attitudes and beliefs of generations in itself remain relatively stable, whereas age effects result in the fact that younger people become more like older people in their beliefs and attitudes as they age (Parry & Urwin, 2011). Longitudinal research might provide insight into whether participants of a certain age and generation differ in their opinions about employer preferences over time, and hence, giving more insight into whether these preferences are more related to age- or generational effects. A way to do so, is to monitor their preferences over time to determine which characteristics are specifically apparent within different generations and ages. This has to be conducted with different generational groups, focusing on both their generational group, environments and experiences, and psychological and biological age. With this future research, the greater pool of job seekers can be taken into account.

Additionally, the newest generation that is gradually entering the job market, can be included in these future studies. This newest generation is called Generation Z and precedes the Millennials. That means the first individuals of this generation are born in 2001, being at the most 19 years old at this moment. Seemiller & Grace (2017) state that this Generation Z is different than their preceding generations when it comes to needs, expectations, perspectives, and aspirations. Generation Z, for example, are observers; they like to watch others completing tasks before applying learning themselves and have a preference for intrapersonal learning. This could then focus on a more diverse pool of participants, differing in both age, gender, educational level, function, and when looking at the limitation of this study, also differing in the organisation they work for. This will leave us with a broader image of the employer preferences of the whole population.

Furthermore, the initial model with Age as a direct predictor of IV and EV, with SV, DV, and AV as moderators, can be reconsidered when looking at the explorative post hoc stepwise MRA. From this analysis, it was found that DV accounted for a significant variance in both IV and EV and that AV accounted for an additional significant variance for IV. This suggests that there might be other direct effects of predictor variables on the dependent variables IV and EV than what was expected in this study. It might be that for example recently, there has been more focus on career- and self-development in general, resulting from the view of employability, as jobseekers shape their perceptions, among other things, on the opportunities that employers provide for employee development (Cable & Graham, 2000). This can be further investigated in future research. Moderators in this research might be for

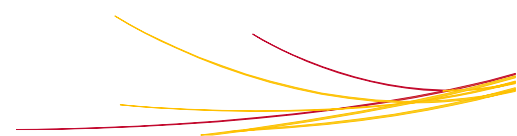


example education level or function level, as research about this is mostly focused on higher educated jobseekers (Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005). This will result in a broader image of the effects of different predictors and its dependent variables of employer attractiveness.

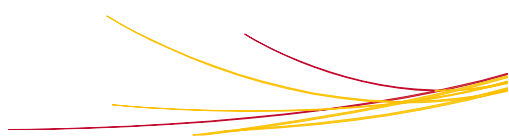
Conclusion

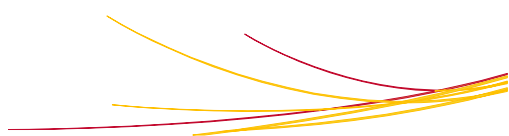
To summarize this study, the following answers can be given to the main research question “To what extent is Age related to Interest Value and Economic Value and are these relations moderated by Social, Development, and Application Value?”. No significant relationship between Age and EV, nor Age and IV was found. Besides, moderation effects of all three moderators were present for the relationship between Age and IV, and this effect of DV was present for the relationship between Age and EV. Moreover, no differences were found between generations and their appreciation of the values of the EmpAt, except for DV. In general, independent of generation or age, all five values are of importance when considering employer attractiveness or preferences.

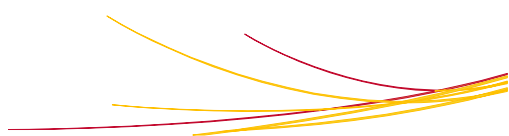
These findings add to the growing body of literature that contradicts current popular literature suggesting generational differences with regard to employer preferences exist. With the help of suggestions to improve future research, hopefully, more insight can be gained as to whether generational differences with regard to employer preferences and work values in fact do exist. Ultimately, this might help bringing the ongoing discussion regarding generational differences between empirical research and a more theoretical point of view forward. For now, the picture is still incomplete and the doubts whether some effects are age or generation related, still remain.



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Appendix A: EmpAt scale

Table 1.

25 items of the EmpAt scale by Berthon et al. (2005)

Value	Question: How important are the following to you when considering potential employers?
IV	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation produces innovative products and services 2. Innovative employer – novel work practices/forward-thinking 3. The organisation both values and makes use of your creativity 4. The organisation produces high-quality products and services 5. Working in an exciting environment
SV	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Having a good relationship with your colleagues 7. Having a good relationship with your superiors 8. Supportive and encouraging colleagues 9. A fun working environment 10. Happy work environment
EV*	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. An attractive <i>overall</i> compensation package 12. An above average basic salary 13. Job security within the organisation * 14. Good promotion opportunities within the organisation * 15. Hands-on inter-departmental experience *

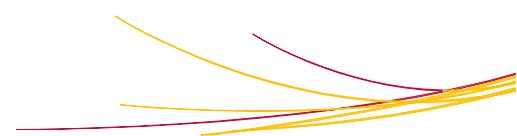
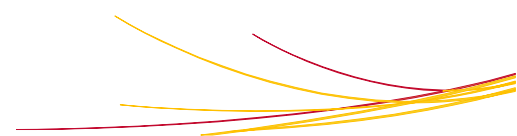


Table 2: continuation

Value	Question: How important are the following to you when considering potential employers?
DV*	16. Feeling more self-confident as a result of working for a particular organisation
	17. Feeling good about yourself as a result of working for a particular organisation
	18. Gaining career-enhancing experience
	19. A springboard for future employment
	20. Recognition/appreciation from management *
AV	21. Opportunity to teach others what you have learned
	22. Opportunity to <i>apply</i> what was learned at a tertiary institution
	23. The organisation is customer-orientated
	24. Humanitarian organisation – gives back to society
	25. Acceptance and belonging

Note. IV = Interest Value, SV = Social Value, EV = Economic Value, DV = Development Value and AV = Application Value. The Asterix emphasizes items within this value that were deleted after analyses.



Appendix B: Dutch EmpAt scale

Table 2.

25 items of the translated Dutch EmpAt scale

Value	Vraag: Hoe belangrijk zijn de volgende aspecten voor jou wanneer je overweegt voor een werkgever te gaan werken?
IV	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. De organisatie produceert innovatieve producten en diensten 2. Innovatieve werkgever – vooruitstrevend in uitvoering en denkprocessen 3. De organisatie waardeert en maakt gebruik van je creativiteit 4. De organisatie produceert producten en diensten van hoge kwaliteit 5. Werken in een boeiende omgeving
SV	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Het hebben van een goede relatie met je collega's 7. Het hebben van een goede relatie met je leidinggevende(n) 8. Steun en aanmoediging van je collega's 9. Een werkomgeving waar ik plezier ervaar 10. Een werkomgeving waar ik mij gelukkig voel
EV*	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Een aantrekkelijk arbeidsvoorwaardenpakket 12. Een bovenmodaal basissalaris 13. Baanzekerheid bij de organisatie * 14. Goede doorgroeimogelijkheden bij de organisatie * 15. Een pragmatische samenwerking tussen afdelingen *

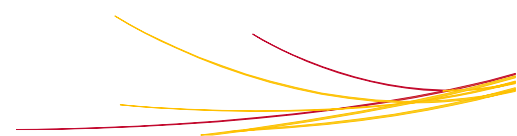
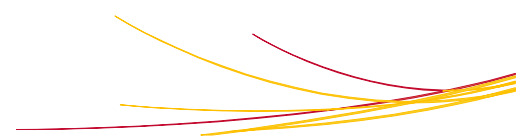


Table 2: continuation

Value	Vraag: Hoe belangrijk zijn de volgende aspecten voor jou wanneer je overweegt voor een werkgever te gaan werken?
DV*	16. Meer zelfverzekerd voelen als gevolg van werken voor een bepaalde organisatie 17. Je goed voelen over jezelf als gevolg van het werken voor een bepaalde organisatie 18. Ervaringen opdoen die je loopbaankansen vergroten 19. Een springplank voor toekomstig werk 20. Erkenning en waardering van het management*
AV	21. De mogelijkheid om anderen te leren wat je hebt geleerd 22. De mogelijkheid om in praktijk te brengen wat je tijdens je opleiding of elders hebt geleerd 23. De organisatie is klantgericht 24. Een humanitaire organisatie die bijdraagt aan de samenleving en het maatschappelijk belang 25. Het gevoel geaccepteerd te worden en erbij te horen

Note. IV = Interest Value, SV = Social Value, EV = Economic Value, DV = Development Value and AV = Application Value. The Asterix emphasizes items within this value that were deleted after analyses.



Appendix C: Component Matrix of the PCA with 8 factors

Table 3

The component matrix of the PCA with eigenvalue greater than 1, resulting in 8 factors, together with the percentage of variance explained.

	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
% variance	19.80	10.67	6.60	5.92	5.47	4.93	4.63	4.11
De organisatie produceert innovatieve producten en diensten	.24	.46	-.31	.20	.30		-.24	.43
Innovatieve werkgever – vooruitstrevend in uitvoering en denkprocessen	.40	.47	-.19	.34	.21	.16	-.34	
De organisatie waardeert en maakt gebruik van je creativiteit	.44	.33	-.15	.23			.52	.17
De organisatie produceert producten en diensten van hoge kwaliteit	.41		-.38		.42			-.20
Werken in een boeiende omgeving	.50	.17	-.12	.14	.13	-.40	.37	-.21
Het hebben van een goede relatie met je collega's	.46	-.53		.22				
Het hebben van een goede relatie met je leidinggevende(n)	.48	-.37		.17				.11
Steun en aanmoediging van je collega's	.56	-.47		.17			-.18	
Een werkomgeving waar ik plezier ervaar	.49	-.35		.34		-.23	.12	-.19
Een werkomgeving waar ik mij gelukkig voel	.57	-.33		.33	-.17	-.10		

Table 3: continuation

	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Een aantrekkelijk arbeidsvoorwaardenpakket	.29		.59		.34	.31		-.21
Een bovenmodaal basissalaris	.24	.23	.52		.35	.15		-.34
Baanzekerheid bij de organisatie	.27	-	.36	-	.12	.30	.27	.35
Goede doorgroeimogelijkheden bij de organisatie	.41	.44	.38	.20	-.15			.24
Een pragmatische samenwerking tussen afdelingen	.45	.18	-.37	-.20	.18	.25		-.14
Meer zelfverzekerd voelen als gevolg van werken voor een bepaalde organisatie	.47		.20	-.51	.15	-.37	-.21	.23
Je goed voelen over jezelf als gevolg van het werken voor een bepaalde organisatie	.46		.22	-.43	.27	-.47	-.13	
Ervaringen opdoen die je loopbaankansen vergroten	.47	.57	.22		-.26	-.11		-.13
Een springplank voor toekomstig werk	.40	.51	.21		-.46	-.11	-.28	-.15
Erkenning en waardering van het management	.53	-.17			-.28	.23		

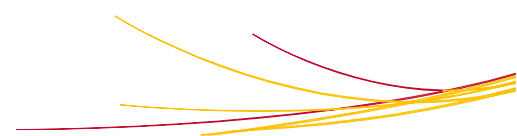
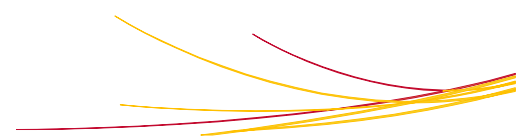


Table 3: continuation

	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
De mogelijkheid om anderen te leren wat je hebt geleerd	.40	.16		-.20	-.41	.25	.17	.17
De mogelijkheid om in praktijk te brengen wat je tijdens je opleiding of elders hebt geleerd	.46	.24	-.15	-.38	-.19		.43	
De organisatie is klantgericht	.44		-.28	-.38		.29	-.23	-.33
Een humanitaire organisatie die bijdraagt aan de samenleving en het maatschappelijk belang	.52			-.13		.34		.25
Het gevoel geaccepteerd te worden en erbij te horen	.54	-.43			-.17		-.17	

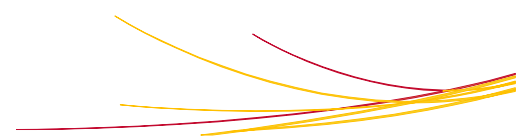


Appendix D: Component Matrix of the PCA with 5 factors

Table 4

The component matrix of the PCA with a number of fixed factors, which is 5, together with the percentage of variance explained.

		Component				
		1	2	3	4	5
% variance		19.80	10.67	6.60	5.92	5.47
Value	Item					
IV	1 innovative products		.46	-.31		.30
	2 innovative employer	.40	.47		.34	
	3 creativity	.44	.33			
	4 high-quality products	.41		-.38		.420
	5 exciting environment	.50				
SV	6 relationship colleagues	.46	-.51			
	7 relationship superiors	.48	-.37			
	8 supporting colleagues	.56	-.47			
	9 fun environment	.49	-.35		.34	
	10 happy environment	.57	-.33		.33	
EV	11 compensation package			.59		.34
	12 basic salary			.52		.35
	13 job security			.36		
	14 promotion opportunities	.41	.44	.38		
	15 inter-departmental experience	.45		-.37		
DV	16 feeling self-confident	.47			-.51	
	17 feeling good	.46			-.43	
	18 career-enhancing experience	.47	.57			
	19 springboard future employment	.40	.51			-.46
	20 recognition management	.53				
AV	21 teach others	.40				-.41
	22 apply knowledge	.46			-.38	
	23 customer-oriented organisation	.44			-.38	
	24 humanitarian organisation	.52				
	25 acceptance and belonging	.54	-.43			



Appendix E: Corrected item-total correlation matrix

Table 5

Corrected-item-total correlation

Value	Item	Corrected item-total correlation
Interest	1	.40
	2	.49
	3	.45
	4	.36
	5	.34
Social	6	.57
	7	.46
	8	.57
	9	.53
	10	.58
Economic	11	.40
	12	.31
	13	.19
	14	.27
	15	.10
Development	16	.42
	17	.35
	18	.46
	19	.44
	20	.24
Application	21	.36
	22	.37
	23	.39
	24	.39
	25	.31