EMPLOYER'S ATTRACTIVENESS: GENERATION Y EMPLOYMENT EXPECTATIONS IN LITHUANIA

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Abstract

This study aimed to apply generational perspective to employer branding and to facilitate better understanding of factors that drive organizational attractiveneess as an employer by exploring Generation Y perceptions in Lithuania. Literature review and analysis of Generation Y characteristics and work-value preferences was used to extract information and to develop a six-dimensional 34 item survey instrument that was administered to Generation Y respondents. This artice identifies that Generation Y have high expectations of Recognition and Economic value factors. Findings of this study reveal that wage, paid on a timely basis, support getting over mistake, career opportunities, manageable workload, valued efforts, safe and comfortable working environment effective conflict management, pay, meeting expectations and purposeful training are very much appreciated by Generation Y, and, accordingly, influence this generation's inferences about employer's attractiveness. Suggestions for practitioners are provided on how to meet Generation Y expectations and facilitate positive perceptions of the whole organization as a good place to work.

Key words: employer's attractiveness, organizational attractiveness, Generation Y, employment expectations, employer branding.

Classification JEL: M12 – Personnel Management.

1. Introduction

"… the traditional rules of management, motivation, and reward fly out the window. Can this be the essence of the change going on in the workplace today? Can it be as simple, and as complicated, as a change in philosophy about the reason for working? Maybe. Time will prove this theory right or wrong. But many employers say that this is precisely what they're seeing. They describe the tremendous repercussions this change in values and principles is having on management's mode of operations – on the way executives recruit, communicate with, manage, motivate, and retain employees in order to remain competitive in the marketplace" *(Marston, 2007: 4).*

Nowadays human resources are being recognized by increasing number of organizations all over the world as their most important asset. So firstly the ability to select, attract and retain the right employees is crucial to the success of any organization. Employer's attractiveness – the degree to which potential applicants and current employees favorably perceive organization as place to work *(Jiang & Iles, 2011),* helps an organization outperform its competitors and achieve financial success; it creates reputation which attracts talents; it reduces turnover, fosters creativity and innovation of employees, sets a high-quality standard on culture, increases resistance against downturns or market shocks and eventually provides higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty *(Great Place to Work, 2014).* It is also asserted, that being a 'great place to work' helps winning the war for talent *(EB Insights, 2011),* since people want to work for organizations with strong and positive reputation and prestige *(Rousseau, 2008)* in preference to higher wages, thus expecting a pride which will be provided by organizational membership *(Cable & Turban, 2006).*

The topic of employer's attractiveness has been explicitly discussed in the literature for the past decades. Much attention has been paid on the construct and attributes of an attractive employer/organization *(e.g., Highhouse et al., 2003; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Berthon et al., 2005; Joo & Mclean, 2006),* manifestation of the best employer's concept in the context of HRM *(Love & Singh, 2011; Figurska & Matuska, 2013),* influence of demographic

characteristic of employees perceiving the attractiveness of foreign companies *(Newburry et al., 2006),* word of mouth impact on organizational attractiveness *(Uen et al., 2009),* and characteristics, sectors of organizations that are most attractive for the young applicants in the labour market *(Lievens et al., 2001; Aslan et al., 2010).*

Becoming an employer of choice means creating the image of organization as a 'great place to work' in the mind of current and potential employees, represents organizations' efforts to communicate what makes it both desirable and different as an employer and is concerned with the attraction, engagement and retention initiatives targeted at enhancing company's employer brand *(Minchington, 2011; Jenner & Taylor, 2007).*

Most of the approaches for clarifying and uncovering employer brand are aimed at discovering "what is common among employees, their shared needs, motivations, perceptions and values. However, most organizations are diverse" *(Barrow & Mosley, 2011: 100)* and the simple fact is that different people have different perceptions about the value and importance of different job characteristics *(Schokkaert et al., 2009).* Even though 'different' has many names, after a few decades of coping with gender, racial, ethnical, and cultural diversity, the modern workplace worldwide now is most sharply facing multigenerational challenges *(Zemke et al., 2000).*

Recent years have witnessed a steady march of studies on the development of generational competencies offering bundles of insights, methods and tools on how to effectively recruit, retain, motivate, manage each generation, and bridge the gap *(Marston, 2007; Espinoza et al., 2010; Martin & Tulgan, 2006; Sujansky & Reed, 2009; Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009; Dorsey, 2010; Elliott, 2011).* However, only limited and mixed empirical evidence for generational differences in work values is available to reliably demonstrate whether or not and to what extent these differences exist *(Smola & Sutton, 2002; Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Hansen & Leuty, 2012; Parry & Urwin, 2011; Twenge et al., 2010; Tolbize, 2008).*

Due to the effects of ageing society, when a large part of the Baby Boomers will retire *(European Commission, 2012),* while *Generation Y* will be growing in the workforce, and "the competition to attract and retain key performers will become more fierce − companies will solicit candidates and not vice versa" *(Dahlström, 2011: 10),* generational perspective will become increasingly important.

Therefore, clarifying generational expectations should be viewed as a starting point for every employer's branding campaign *(Hubschmid, 2013)* which assists organizations in becoming an attractive employer, building trust and commitment, and staying competitive in the marketplace.

Accordingly, this study aims is to determine Generation Y perceptions of employer's attractiveness attributes in Lithuania. The following objectives have been set to reach this goal:
- To explore the concept of organizational attractiveness;
- To disclose Generation Y characteristics and their work value preferences;
- To identify which dimensions and characteristics make an employer attractive and desirable to Generation Y in Lithuania;
- To describe the ideal attractive employer, meeting Generation Y expectations in Lithuania and provide practical implications.

2. Attracting Generation Y employees: theoretical considerations

Organizational attractiveness as an employer denotes "the envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organization" *(Berthon et al., 2005: 156),* or the degree to which potential and current employees perceive organizations as good places

to work (Jiang and Iles, 2011). Organizational attractiveness is also referred to as "the power that draws applicants' attention to focus on an employer brand and encourages existing employees to stay" *(Ibid: 101)*. Meanwhile Berthon, Ewing and Hah *(2005)* refer to organizational attractiveness as an envisioned and expected value potential employees relate to a particular organization.

2.1. Organizational attractiveness construct

Research on organizational choice and the premises of organizational attractiveness as an employer basically focus on instrumental (job/organization characteristics) and symbolic (trait-based inferences about organization) attributes *(e.g. Lievens & Highouse, 2003; Lievens et al., 2005; Lievens et al., 2007; etc.)* and interactionist perspective, which refers to organizational attractiveness as a fit between person characteristics and characteristics of the job/organization *(e.g. Lievens et al., 2001; Kroustalis & Meade, 2007; Schreurs et al., 2009; Chapman et al., 2005, etc.)*. This stream is based on the concept of corporate personality, where organizations are regarded like people and attributed human characteristics and different personality traits *(Berens & Riel, 2004)*. Lievens and Highouse *(2003)* developed the instrumental-symbolic framework of organizational attraction and five personality trait-based inferences, as significant predictors of organizational attractiveness as an employer.

It should be noted that personality trait-based inferences have predominantly showed out to be more important organization's attractiveness factor and differentiator than specific job/organization characteristics *(e.g. Lievens and Highhouse, 2003; Martin, 2007; etc.)*. That supports evidence from marketing literature, where emotional appeal is given preference over functional benefits in the marketplace with similar products or services.

According to Jiang and Iles *(2011)*, organizational attractiveness is a two-dimensional construct, where internal attractiveness expresses perceptions of existing employees and external attractiveness represents perceptions of external applicants.

Relatedness of employer branding, employer attractiveness and organizational attractiveness concepts have been specifically noted and evidently demonstrated by numerous researches *(e.g. Berthon et al., 2005; Jiang & Iles, 2011; etc.)*. As it was argued by Berthon et al. *(2005)* and later explicitly shown by Jiang and Iles *(2011)*, employer's attractiveness is an antecedent of employer brand equity, and the more attractive an employer, the stronger employer brand equity. Furthermore, Hillebrandt and Ivens *(2013: 4)* claim that employer value proposition is a reflection of organizational attractiveness and vice versa, therefore "dimensionality of both the employer brand and the organizational attractiveness should be consistent" *(p. 4)*.

Organization's attractiveness as an employer was repeatedly measured in employer branding context and concept (e.g., *Lievens, 2007; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Lievens et al., 2005;* etc.). For example, Berthon et al. *(2005)* have extended three-dimensional employer brand structure proposed by Ambler and Barrow *(1996)* to a five-factor scale for measurement of employer attractiveness (EmpAt) from potential applicants' perspective, comprising Interest value, Social value, Economic value, Development value and Application value. Although the scale demonstrated appropriate reliability (0.96), it was not widely used *(Sivertzen et al., 2013)*, but contributed more as a theoretical model of dimensionality of employer's attractiveness.

Scilicet, EmpAt was explored and elaborated by Pingle and Sodhi *(2011)* who have developed and applied an eleven-factor instrument in Western India case. Authors have aggregated eleven dimensions into three-dimensional construct of (1) *Psychological benefits*, capturing Relationship, Recognition, Interest/Fun Value, Existing personal contacts, and Altruistic value; (2) *Functional dimension* encompassing Application value, Learning and Development value, Global opportunities, Local advantage; and (3) *Economic dimension*

(Pingle & Sodhi, 2011). It was found that potential employees put most importance on economic value, existing personal contacts, global opportunities and CSR, while current employees appreciate relationship with colleagues, recognition and altruistic value most.

The Great Place to Work Institute carries out probably the most famous worldwide research and assessment of an attractive workplace, as well as the election of the best ones, which is performed using the Great Place to Work survey tool Trust Index *(Great Place to Work, 2014).* This tool has been used to evaluate employers since 1980, concluding that trust, pride and joy make a workplace great. Another well-known tool is Gallup's Q12, designed to measure employee engagement *(Harter et al., 2006)* and used annually for The Gallup Great Workplace Award. Other most popular instruments applicable to measuring the construct or just some facets of organizational attractiveness include Reputation Quotient *(Fombrun et al., 2000),* Corporate Personality Scale *(Davies et al., 2001),* Corporate Credibility Scale *(Newell & Goldsmith, 2001),* and numerous job satisfaction surveys. To see a whole but not yet final scale of this phenomenon, the data by the Reputation Institute *(2013)* shows that best employers, top brands, most admired, socially responsible companies and corporate reputations have been assessed in more than 100 lists published by magazines and newspapers around the world up to date.

The survey 'Most Desirable Employer' in Lithuania is performed by business daily Verslo Žinios and the career website cv.lt since 2005[1].The most important factors in attracting and maintaining the best employees that have remained consistent over the years as indicated by the respondents are an Attractive Salary, Social Guarantees, Good Management and possibility to have an Interesting Job. Other important features of a desirable employer are Appreciated Employees, Financial Success and Friendly Staff[2].

2.2. Generation Y characteristics

'Generation' is a cohort of people, born around the same time, raised in a unique era and sharing significant social and historical life events and experiences at critical development stages *(Parry & Urwin, 2011; Twenge et al., 2010; McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2011),* and divided by five to seven years into the first wave, core group, and last wave *(Tolbize, 2008).*

As Kotler et al. *(2009: 347)* assert, "each generation is profoundly influenced by the age in which it is reared – the music, films, politics and defining events of that period …", and as a result generational behaviors, work values and preferences do differ *(Zemke, et al., 2000; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Hansen and Leuty, 2012; Cogin, 2012; Buahene & Kovary, 2007; Schultz et al., 2012).* This "difference of attitudes between people of different generations, leading to a lack of understanding" *(Oxford Dictionaries, 2013)* termed as a '*generation gap'* has always existed, but as a phenomenon in fields of marketing and business management literature it has attracted increasing attention since the late 1960s when two generations, the *Traditionalist* and *Baby Boomers*, have been fighting and learning how to co-exist *(Howe & Strauss, 1992; Simons, 2010).*

A new generational gap emerged in 1990 when *Generation X* rushed into the labor market with their different visions of society and self *(Howe & Strauss, 1992),* and, eventually, after *Generation Y* has joined the battle, it is the first time in history when four different generations are working side by side, sharing and dividing the labor market *(Hansen & Leuty, 2012; Tolbize, 2008).*

Nevertheless there is little agreement on the starting and ending points for generations with high discrepancies of time spans *(Smola & Sutton, 2002, Crowley & Florin, 2011; Burke, 2004; Tolbize, 2008; McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2011; Buahene & Kovary, 2007;*

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[1] http://www.cv.lt/darbdavys2013
[2] http://www.swedbank.lt/en/articles/view/800

Simons, 2010. Zemke et al., 2000; Becker, 2012; Hansen & Leuty, 2012), the majority of literature defines *Traditionalists* as those born before 1946, *Baby Boomers* as individuals born between 1946 to 1964, *Generation X* as people born between 1965 and 1980, and *Generation Y* as including members born between 1980 and 1994 *(Hansen & Leuty, 2012),* (Table 1). The newest *Generation Z* is reported to begin as early as 1991 or as late as 2001.

Table 1. Generational time spans (own processing)

Generation	Birth Years
Traditionalists (aka Veterans, Matures, Silent Generation, WWII Generation)	Born before 1943/1945/1946/
Baby Boomers	1943/1945/1946/–1960/1964/1970
Generation X (aka Baby Bust Generation, Gen Xers, Pragmatic Generation)	1960/1963/1965/1968/1970–1976/1979/1980/1985
Generation Y (aka Millennials, Nexters, Digital generation, Echo Boomers, Generation www, Generation E, Net Generation, Gen Yers, Generation Me, Unlimited Generation)	1977/1978/1980/1981/1985– 1994/1998/2000
Generation Z	1991/1995/2000/2001 – Present

Generation Y, which was raised in the era of financial boom, is the most highly educated generation *(Tolbize, 2008).* Its members embrace diversity, learn quickly *(Burke, 2004),* are devoted to their own careers *(Marston, 2007),* confident, optimistic, innovative, techno-savvy, loyal to peers, not title or company; they expect continuous change, rapid career growth and personalized experiences *(Buahene & Kovary, 2007).*

Generation Y feels comfortable with multitasking, connects responsibility with personal goals, builds parallel careers and is characterized by productivity, networking and openness *(Employer Branding Today, 2012).* Besides, several studies have revealed that representatives of Generation Y are more active volunteers but not "more caring, community oriented, and politically engaged than previous generations" *(Twenge et al., 2012: 1060).*

Generation Y is able to keep the balance between idealism and pragmatism, or more specifically, between cereer development, variety of experience, meaning and significance at work, and social networking as well as work-life balance. This reality, in turn, will prompt organizational change looking for new human resource recruitment and retention strategies *(Sampath, 2007).* Acknowledging this, leaders should be able *(Axten, 2015):*
- To create an attractive and compelling organizational vision, effective action programmes and inspire people to get commited and engaged to their implementation;
- To focus on effective communication and to actively listen to their employees;
- To know their employees strengths and weaknesses and build on first, while improving the latter;
- To accept different opinions, contructive criticism and to be openminded;
- To learn new things, to adapt to changes and to learn form mistakes;
- To keep job challenging and provide training and growth opportunities;
- To create an environment that cherishes creativity.

Moreover, Generation Y seems to become a wave that will break the norms. Flexibility, quick learning skills, technological intelligence, seeking the common good is the potential of Generation Y which should not be ignored by modern organizations, but nurtured and explored.

2.3. Generation Y preferences for organizational attractiveness

Previous observations *(e.g., Tolbize, 2008),* indicate that generations, starting with dedicated Traditionalists and ending with self-concerned Generation Y, are successively less loyal to their employers. Furthermore, Generation Y was found to be driven by personal relationships with colleagues, respect, flexibility to combine work and personal life needs, sense of greater good, technologies and working conditions, need for immediate, straight and continuous supervision, and inclusive, transparent management style *(Smith, 2008; Burke, 2004; Marston, 2007; Meister and Willyerd, 2010; Zemke et al., 2000; Tolbize, 2008; Twenge et al., 2010; Bendaraviciene et al., 2013; Sampath, 2007).*

As Terjesen, Vinnicombe and Freeman *(2007)* have demonstrated, generation Y has different preferences and expectations towards employer's attractiveness characteristics. Their study has revealed that young male applicants put most significance on starting salary, while young female candidates value organization's concern for employees, respect for personality, task variety, international profile, and at the lesser extent, but still fairly enough − friendly environment, informal culture, possibility to apply knowledge, working conditions, low stress jobs and organization-person fit.

The study carried out by Roongrerngsuke and Liefooghe *(2013)* comparing organizational attractiveness and work-related values across generations in China, India and Thailand has supported the previous research suggesting that Generation Y, which is locally labelled 'Little Emperor' in China, mention competitive rewards as their first priority. Other indicated desired organizational characteristics were interesting job (fitting their specialization), well-recognized company with growing, learning and training (especialy abroad) opportunities, connecting them to new technologies. Company's reputation was chosen over the pay by Indian Generation Y, as well as convenient location was highly valued. Generation Y in Thailand, responding to political instability and recession, has put most significance on job security and organizational stability, benefits and welfare.

The Thailand student survey of their preferences for ideal employer *(Universum, 2014)* revealed that top three aspirations that attract graduates are security and stability in ones job, autonomity and independence, and work-life balance.

Corporaal and Riemsdijk *(2013)* have found that organizational attractiveness increases for young job seekers when development opportunities, flexibility in workplace (opportunities to work form home), job clarity, availability of digital tools and comfortable workplace is offered to potential employees.

Notably, high salary is one of first priorities for Generation Y; therefore some are blaming it for being selfish and problematic. On contrary others *(e.g. Axten, 2015)* see Generation Y more as a possibility, not a problem. Generation Y is tech-savvy, multifunctional, multitasking, proactive, always connected − they are able to cope with variety of activities. And they succeed. Generation Y is using social media as 'digital natives' and know how to benefit from it. Being socially engaged, active, team working, and optimistic this generation reaches effectiveness.

The study carried out by the Employer Brand International *(2010)* on the influencers of employment choice, investigated perceptions of more than 400 employees worldwide towards 15 employer brand attributes. It was found that the key drivers of employer's choice for young (18–29 years) candidates were reward for performance, friendly working environment, inspiring and visionary leadership, corporate social responsibility, and global perspective.

Reizenwitz and Iyer *(2009)* have compared and contrasted the characteristics of Generation X and Generation Y, regarding such variables as Internet satisfaction, volunteerism, brand loyalty, work orientation, and risk aversion. Results indicated that Generation Y is keener on Interenet use, less brand loyal and less risk averse, but equally to Generation X interested in volunteerism. Authors have concluded that Generation Y is the

most educated and tech-savy generation so far and can be expected to put extra time and efforts to donate and contribute to the organization. However, Generation Y is less independent workforce and less loyal, so can easily quit if offered a better job.

The comprehensive study of undergraduate university students from across Canada by Ng, Schweitzer and Lyons *(2010)* revealed that Generation Y caeer expectations and priorities focus on individualistic aspects of a job. Scilicet, rapid advancement, development of new skills, and work-life balance were of greatest importance to Generation Y. Young candidates were found to be realistic about first job and ready to accept less-than ideal job as a career starter. Half of respondents wanted to work for a single organization for their whole working-life. Generation Y was found to have quick career and salary growth therefore quite impatient to succeed. Good people to work for and to report to and strong desire for professional growth were among highly rated attributes when making career deci-sions, while pay, benefits and job security were ranked in the middle. Generation Y was not putting much emphasis on social responsibility, social impact and employee diversity.

The role of organizations' leaders, managers and team coordinators enhancing employer's attractiveness for Generation Y is substantial. Creating and nurturing pleasant and healthy working environment facilitates positive perceptions of the whole organization as a good place to work. Being appreciated, respected and able to achieve their potential, Generation Y will get commited to organization and will likely to stay for the long run.

3. Methods

A quantitative research method, i.e. questionnaire survey was used to identify what attributes make an organization attractive for Generation Y in Lithuania and what expectations this generation holds for the employer of choice. The questionnaire to collect the data was created based on the above theoretical considerations *(Berthon et. al, 2005; Pingle & Sodhi, 2011; Bakanauskienė et. al., 2014, etc.),* and on the refined Organizational Attractiveness Extraction Scale *(OAES),* that has proven useful in determining most experienced and significant organizational attractiveness attributes, unfolding employee work values preferences, and assessing the health and strength of employer brand in Lithuanian higher education institutions *(Bakanauskiene et al., 2011; Bendaravičienė, 2015).*

OAES was developed and pilot tested following a 7-step procedure: 1) definition of research area; 2) development of scale items: literature search, analysis of 8 international employer's attractiveness methodologies, semistructured interviews and content analysis; 3) data collection, first stage; 4) purification of the scale: factor analysis to verify the dimensionality of the overall scale, computation of coefficient alpha and item-to total correlations to each dimension; 5) data collection, second stage; 6) assessment of reliability: computation of coefficient alpha and item-to total correlations with new data to each dimension, and 7) identification of the final version of the instrument: 67 items measuring 11 dimensions *(Organizational Culture, Fairness and Trust, Teamwork, Academic Environment, Strategic Management, Job Satisfaction, Supervisor Relationship, Compensation and Benefits, Training and Development, Work-Life Balance, and Working Conditions).* OAES as organizational attractiveness inventory showed a stable internal factor structure and was found to be highly reliable ($\alpha = .985$).

Eventually, the six-dimensional structure with 34 items was developed here (Table 3):

1. ***Work environment.*** This dimension was set to identify employees' perceptions of job itself and characteristics of a workplace and their impact on organizational attractiveness. Therefore, 10 items, defining the positive work environment were included to gather information about such features of attractive employers as: (1) freedom of decision making; (2) interesting, intellectually challenging job; (3) work-life balance; (4) manageable workload; (5) necessary equipment and resources; (6) role clarity; (7) self-

realization; (8) attentive and supportive supervision; (9) safe and comfortable working environment; (10) encouraged workpace innovation.

2. ***Organizational environment.*** This dimension was compounded of 12 organizational attractiveness variables that were most oftenly mentioned in literature as key drivers for Generation Y, namely organizational culture and leadership principles (1) equal opportunities, clear strategy and direction; (2) effective conflict management; (3) employee participation; (4) organizational integrity an value congruence; (5) support getting over mistake; (6) freedom to choose vacation days; (7) teamwork; (8) organizational flexibility and external responsiveness; (9) creativity enchancement; (10) care for employees welfare; (11) communication on change; (12) given feedback on one's progress.

3. ***Economic value.*** Taking into consideration Generation Y preferences, worldwide attractive employers' practices, Lithuanian context and possible reward packages this dimension included 6 items: (1) wage, paid on a timely basis; (2) pay, meeting expectations; (3) performance based pay; (4) fixed salary; (5) social guarantees according to Lithuanian laws; (6) additional benefits and incentives.

4. ***Training and development.*** This dimension was intended to evaluate Generation Y perceptions of employer's efforts of bettering the performance of its employees: (1) purposeful work-related training; (2) opportunities for personal growth (e.g. self-confidence, stresss management, positive thinking, etc.).

5. ***Recognition.*** Acknowledging Generation Y work values and expectations for appreciation and personalized reward this dimension was comprised of: (1) valued efforts; (2) praise; (3) career opportunities.

6. Finally a statement about ***international opportunities*** as a possible antecedent of employer's attractiveness for Generation Y was included.

All 34 instrument statements were positively worded and formulated, explained and, were needed, exemplified to clearly describe characteristics of attractive employer. The list of scale items was randomly mixed not to provide the respondents with a clue as to what dimension is being measured and to avoid inertia and bias.

The respondents were asked to assess the perceived importance of a statement to organizational attractiveness on a five-point scale, with 5 used to indicate 'Very important', 4 – 'Important', 3 – 'Moderately important', 2 – 'Slightly important', and 1 – 'Not important'. Respondents were also asked to list three organizational attractiveness features that influence their job choice intentions most. This question was included to control for self-determination and informed choice deviations. Additionally, demographics of gender, age, education, marital status, work experience and city were examined. Before the main research, the pilot study was conducted to test and verify the questionnaire and increase its efficiency. Table 2 shows the demographis characteristics of the sample (N = 143).

Non-probability sampling technique was used for gathering data. An internet-based questionnaire survey was carried out during the period from January to March, 2015 using the online survey portal apklausa.lt (http://pollmill.com/).

As Table 2 indicates, the study sample is not homogeneous, therefore effects of demographics on Generation Y perceptions of organizational attractiveness were not analysed and interpreted.

The data of the survey was analyzed applying IBM SPSS Statistics 22 for Windows software package and MS Office Excel 2013. Model's reliability score as measured by Cronbach's alpha was .841, which exceeds a threshold of 0.70 and, according to George and Mallery *(2003),* is good.

Table 2. Demografic characteristics of the sample (own study)

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Males (M)	105	73.4
	Females (F)	38	26.6
Age (in years)	16 – 20	37	25.9
	21 – 25	85	59.4
	26 – 30	21	14.7
Education	Non-tertiary	71	49.7
	Tertiary	72	50.3
Marital status	Single	132	92.3
	Married	11	7.7
Work experience	Yes	109	76.2
	No	34	23.8
City	Vilnius	23	16.1
	Kaunas	105	73.4
	Other	15	10.5

4. Results, discussion and implications of survey

As it is summarized in Table 3, analysis of data included total means of responses and frequency for each dimension and item. Dimensions of organizational attractiveness as well as items inside each diensio were rank-ordered from most important to least important as perceived by respondents.

It could be concluded that ***Recognition*** (M = 4.36) and ***Economic Value*** (M = 4.14) are key drivers for Generation Y, while *International Opportunities* is a low priority (M = 2.36). Observing most salient features in each dimension, it appears that Generation Y puts most emphasis on *Career Opportunities* (M = 4.62) and least on *Praise* (M = 3.95) as ***Recognition*** variables. When it comes to ***Economic Value***, it most powerfully emanates from *Social guarantees* (M = 4.75) and *Wage, paid on a timely basis* (M = 4.69). Performance based pay (M = 3.11) is not perceived as an attractive orgazational feature by Generation Y. Dimension ***Training and development*** is most expressed through *Purposeful work-related training* (M = 4.38). In the area of ***Organizational Environment*** the highest means are found in *Support getting over mistake* (M = 4.63), *Effective conflict management* (M = 4.46), and *Communication on change* (M = 4.28). Least important for Generation Y seem to be Teamwork (M = 3.31) and Care for employees welfare (M = 2.85). Generation Y expects, that employer of choice will offer *Manageable workload* (M = 4.53) and *Safe and comfortable working environment* (M = 4.50) and do not put much emphasis on *Role clarity* (M = 3.18) and *Attentive and supportive supervision* (M = 3.06) as listed in dimension ***Work Environment***.

Evaluating the overall most important characteristics of organizational attractiveness as perceived by Generation Y, the following variables dominate other employer's features with the highest mean ranks and create a top 10 list:
1) Social guarantees (M = 4.75);
2) Wage, paid on a timely basis (M = 4.69);
3) Support getting over mistake (M = 4.63);
4) Career opportunities (M = 4.62);
5) Manageable workload (M = 4.53);
6) Valued efforts (M = 4.51);
7) Safe and comfortable working environment (M = 4.50);

8) Effective conflict management ($M = 4.46$);
9) Pay, meeting expectations, and ($M = 4.45$);
10) Purposeful work-related training ($M = 4.38$)/Necessary equipment and resources ($M = 4.38$).

Table 3. Generation Y perceptions of organizational attractiveness attributes ranked according to importance (own study)

Dimensions and items	Means	Frequency of answers in %				
		Very important	Important	Moderately Important	Slightly Important	Not Important
1. Recognition	**4.36**	**55.48**	**30.77**	**9.56**	**2.56**	**1.63**
(23) Career opportunities	4.62	67.83	28.67	2.10	0.00	1.40
(15) Valued efforts	4.51	59.44	32.17	8.39	0.00	0.00
(22) Praise	3.95	39.16	31.47	18.18	7.69	3.50
2. Economic value	**4.14**	**48.83**	**26.92**	**15.74**	**6.06**	**2.45**
(20) Social guarantees	4.75	81.12	14.68	2.80	0.70	0.70
(16) Wage, paid on a timely basis	4.69	73.42	23.78	1.40	1.40	0.00
(17) Pay, meeting expectations	4.45	56.65	34.26	6.99	1.40	0.70
(21) Additional benefits and incentives	4.29	48.96	33.56	16.08	0.70	0.70
(19) Fixed salary	3.52	23.78	29.37	28.67	11.89	6.29
(18) Performance based pay	3.11	9.09	25.88	38.46	20.28	6.29
3. Training and development	**3.98**	**41.61**	**29.02**	**19.23**	**6.29**	**3.85**
(24) Purposeful work-related training	4.38	55.94	28.67	12.59	2.80	0.00
(26) Opportunities for personal growth	3.59	27.27	29.37	25.88	9.79	7.69
4. Organizational environment	**3.90**	**33.62**	**36.01**	**20.29**	**6.76**	**3.32**
(6) Support getting over mistake	4.63	68.53	26.57	4.20	0.70	0.00
(3) Effective conflict management	4.46	58.74	30.77	8.39	2.10	0.00
(30) Communication on change	4.28	42.66	44.76	11.19	0.70	0.70
(7) Freedom to choose vacation days	4.20	41.96	37.76	18.88	1.40	0.00
(13) Organizational flexibility and external responsiveness	4.01	32.87	41.96	20.28	3.50	1.40
(33) Given feedback on one's progress	3.94	26.57	45.45	24.48	2.80	0.70
(5) Organizational integrity and value congruence	3.94	34.97	32.17	27.27	2.80	2.80
(25) Creativity enchancement	3.82	30.77	34.97	23.08	7.69	3.50
(4) Employee participation	3.78	19.58	48.25	24.48	5.59	2.10
(2) Equal opportunities (flat organization)	3.56	22.38	37.76	19.58	13.99	6.29
(12) Teamwork	3.31	13.99	28.67	38.46	12.59	6.29
(29) Care for employees' welfare	2.85	10.49	23.08	23.08	27.27	16.08
5. Work environment	**3.80**	**30.56**	**32.45**	**26.43**	**7.83**	**2.73**
(10) Manageable workload	4.53	63.63	28.68	5.59	1.40	0.70
(31) Safe and comfortable working environment	4.50	62.94	27.27	6.99	2.79	0.00
(11) Necessary equipment and resources	4.38	55.24	32.17	9.79	0.70	2.10
(8) Interesting, intellectually challenging job	3.96	32.87	37.77	22.37	6.29	0.70
(27) Self-realization	3.71	18.88	44.06	27.97	6.99	2.10
(1) Freedom of decision making	3.68	18.89	41.25	31.46	5.60	2.80
(9) Work-life balance	3.61	22.38	30.07	35.66	9.79	2.10
(32) Encouraged workpace innovation	3.42	12.59	38.46	32.87	10.49	5.59
(14) Role clarity	3.18	10.49	27.97	37.07	18.18	6.29
(28) Attentive and supportive supervision	3.06	7.69	16.79	54.55	16.08	4.89
6. International opportunities	**2.36**	**7.69**	**7.69**	**26.58**	**28.67**	**29.37**

Additional insights might be gain analyzing frequency distribution, allowing to group individual measurements into classes, i.e. to see how each variable is distributed across respondents.

It could be noticed that most distributions are positively skewed, except *International opportunities,* with the negatively skewed distribution.

The top ten characteristics of employer's attractiveness as identified above are also found to be *extremely* skewed right, indicating the high level of agreement on these aspects among Generation Y respondents.

Additionally *moderately* skewed right distributions and thus, quite important drivers of organizational attractiveness for Generation Y are *Additional benefits and incentives*, *Communication on change*, *Freedom to choose vacation days*, *Organizational integrity and value congruence*, *Given feedback on one's progress*, *Opportunities for personal growth*, *Creativity enchancement*, and *Interesting, intellectually challenging job*.

Another list of *slightly* skewed right distributions could be compounded of the following organizational attractiveness features: *Self-realization*, *Freedom of decision making*, *Employee participation*, *Fixed salary*, *Work-life balance*, *Equal opportunities (flat organization)*, and *Organizational flexibility and external responsiveness*. These benefits, provided by the employer are important but not equaly seen as priority by Generation Y.

Interestingly, a number of variables represent the bell-shaped frequency distribution, which is most common and informs that intermediate values become increasingly more frequent. More specifically, variables, those records cluster towards the center of frequency distribution are *attentive and supportive supervision*, *performance based pay*, *role clarity*, *care for employee's welfare*, *encouraged workplace innovation,* and *teamwork*. In this case it means, that these employer's attractiveness characteristics are perceived by Generation Y as moderately important, therefore it will depend on particular individual's preferences and expectations, wheather particular facet will be valued or not.

Analyzing responses to open-ended question about most important organizational attractiveness attributes as perceived by Generation Y, word frequency tool *Word Cloud Generator[3]* as a coding scheme was used.

Figure 1. Word frequency in open-ended response about most important organizational attractiveness attributes as perceived by Generation Y

As it is visible from the Figure 1, monetary reward (mentioned by respondents as salary, wage or pay) as well as career opportunities, job itself, flexible wok schedule, convenient location, working conditions, stability, culture, good colleagues are found among key Generation Y expectations for attractive employer in Lithuania.

These results overlap to a large extent with the quantitatvive research findings and complement theorethical underpinnings discussed therein, i.e. Generation Y expects high salary, lots of vacation time, rapid career growth and recognition.

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[3] https://www.jasondavies.com/wordcloud/

5. Conclusion

This study attempted to explore Generation Y expectations and preferences of employer's attractiveness characteristics in Lithuania.

In terms of theoretical contribution, this study complements the research on organizational attractiveness and generational differences, specifically Generation Y work value needs and expectations. It also provides a methodological contribution to the operationalization of *employer's attractiveness construct*.

The six-dimensional scale with 34 items to collect the data was elaborated based on Berthon et al., *(2005);* Pingle & Sodhi *(2011);* Bakanauskiene et al. & Bendaravičienė *(2015)* and administered to Generation Y representatives (N = 143) aged from 16 to 30 years old.

In terms of practical implications, research results allow to describe the ideal attractive employer, meeting Generation Y expectations in Lithuania, and to identify organizational attractiveness dimensions and characteristics that are perceived as most important by this generation, and therefore, that require a particular employers' attention and efforts to attract and retain young candidates.

It was found that generation Y appears to be predominantly driven by *recognition* and *economic value*. Interestingly, *international opportunities* were not given much importance. Further, the findings of the current study revealed that wage, paid on a timely basis, support getting over mistake, career opportunities, manageable workload, valued efforts, safe and comfortable working environment effective conflict management, pay, meeting expectations and purposeful training were highly appreciated by Generation Y, and, accordingly, defining principles of a great workplace.

Consequently, employers should provide Generation Y employees ample opportunities for vertical career growth and horizontal career development as this generation expects continuous change and rapid promotion. Since interesting job and creativity enchancement are sigificant benefits associated with attractive employer, job enrichment should be explored redesigning jobs and increasing the range and complexity of tasks so that they were more challenging and less repetitive.

Employers should also show respect for Generation Y competencies and value their efforts. Although monetary rewards are preferred over the praise, giving a positive feedback and acknowledging achievements, could be a leading strategy to attract Generation Y and keep motivated and engaged.

As Generation Y has witnessed economics recession and striking numbers of emigration in Lithuania, which was most common for young people (20–29), it is not suprising that social guarantees and wage, paid on a timely basis are the most important factors and facilitators of attraction to organization. While additional benefits and incentives were high priority making employement choice, organizations should use personalized approach finding out the importance of this facet to particular existing or potential employee. Justifying the fame of being very demanding in the workplace, Generation Y expects to be paid more and to get fixed instead of performance-based salary that provides additional benefit of financial stability.

Apart from expecting reward for their work, Generation Y seeks constant and honest feedback, coaching and plenty of help; therefore employers need to create succesfull and effective communication culture, building supervisor/employee relationships and sense of connectedness.

As far as Generation Y was found to highly value organization's ability to resolve conflicts effectively, and being informed on change, employers should put more efforts developing and implementing inclusive as well as responsive style of management.

Generation Y in Lithuania expects their employers to provide purposeful work-related training, and on contrary to previous research *(Tolbize, 2008)* prefers it to opportunities for

personal growth or learning 'soft skills'. Thus, employers are encouraged to introduce formal training as a norm and investment in employees' satisfaction and motivation

Employers have to ensure manageable workload, safe and comfortable working environment, necessary equipment and resources, as well as freedom to choose vacation days to get Generation Y on board and to make it happy.

Eventually, research results prompt revaluation of recruitment messages and employer value propositions highlighting teamwork, equal opportunities, care for employees' welfare, international opportunities and attentive supervision, since these attributes were not embraced by Generation Y in Lithuania.

All in all, Generation Y regards social and economic factors as most attracting. Optimism, enthusiasm, striving for knowledge, challenges and growth are at the heart of this generation. Obviously, organizations have to rethink and adapt their recruitment and employer branding strategies to attract and retain Generation Y, as what was effective a decade ago, won't meet needs and expectations of this workforce any more.

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