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Company Culture & Attracting Gen Z: A Tale of Two Industries—Financial Services and FMCG

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Abstract

This thesis explores how management philosophy, approachability, and level of control affect the employer attractiveness for Portuguese Gen Z employees in the FS and FMCG industries, using a survey of 106 Gen Z professionals and multiple linear regression analysis. Findings indicate that employee-oriented practices enhance employer attractiveness. The interaction revealed stronger effects for open systems in FMCG and weaker for employee-oriented and loose control compared to FS. Industry-specific effects show that open systems in FMCG, and closed systems and employee-oriented practices in FS enhance attractiveness. These findings emphasize the need for industry-specific management strategies to attract Gen Z employees.

Keywords: Organizational Culture; Employer Attractiveness; Portugal; Fast Moving Consumer Goods; Financial Services; Generation Z

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Introduction

In the current business landscape, attracting and retaining talent has become an increasingly critical concern for organizations across various industries. One group that is particularly intriguing in this context is Generation Z (Gen Z), who are now making their entrance into the workforce. Born between the early 1990s and the mid-2000s, this generation is unique in its digital nativism, diversity, and values (Lanier 2017; Pichler, Kohli and Granitz 2021; Schroth 2019). According to Mercer's 2023 report, with Gen Z projected to constitute over a quarter of the global workforce by 2025, employers must adapt to their distinctive needs, and those who fail face a future defined by labour shortages.

Gen Z's upbringing in a digital realm has crafted a tech-savvy demographic, having witnessed rapid digital transformations throughout their lives. This generation, born amidst global challenges like the economic downturn and climate crises, is driven by values of inclusivity and a purpose-driven approach to work (Lanier 2017; Pichler, Kohli and Granitz 2021). Their workplace values often diverge from previous generations, emphasizing digital nativism, a desire for purpose-driven work, an appreciation for constant feedback, and a focus on work-life balance (Benítez-Márquez et al. 2022).

In light of these insights, employers can take several practical steps to adapt workplaces to attract Gen Z. This involves creating tech-forward environments, supporting their desire for growth, and promoting diversity and inclusivity. Companies that align with these values will be more appealing to Gen Z employees.

In the FMCG industry, the influence of Gen Z has become palpable. Their penchant for authenticity and transparency means they are more likely to be drawn to brands that highlight their sourcing, production, and sustainability efforts transparently (Ewe and Tjiptono 2023). When they form part of the workforce, they are motivated to work for companies that resonate with these values. Gen Z's quest for work-life balance means they value efficiency and flexibility in the schedule over prolonged working hours (Schroth 2019).

The Financial Services industry witnesses a slightly different manifestation of Gen Z's characteristics. Traditionally a more structured sector, Financial Services are now seeing a demand from its Gen Z workforce for transparency and ethical practices (Benítez-Márquez et al. 2022; Higgins, Tang and Stubbs 2020). Generation Z job seekers value international financial opportunities and are more inclined to join institutions with strong CSR initiatives (Thang et al. 2022). Their preference for regular feedback might motivate the industry to rethink its mentorship and training programs (Lanier 2017).

Furthermore, organizations are increasingly challenged to attract and retain Generation Z employees, given their job-hopping tendencies. Recent research has indicated that Gen Z employees tend to change jobs more frequently than previous generations (Benítez-Márquez et al. 2022). Therefore, organizations must focus on comprehending the organizational culture characteristics that influence Gen Z's connection to the workplace, especially as these nuances might vary across different industries, to effectively attract and retain talent. This study will assess whether three dimensions (level of control, management philosophy and approachability) of organizational culture serve as factors that could potentially influence Gen Z's employees' views of the organization as a desirable place to work in the Portuguese context, as cultural values in recruiting and retaining talent vary across cultural settings (Ma and Allen 2009).

As a result of the aforementioned challenges, researchers have been working towards developing a deeper understanding of generational differences in the workplace (Gursoy, Maier and Chi 2008). Research findings demonstrate value alignment is positively related to higher retention rates (Cable and DeRue 2002). Other research suggests that Gen Z employees' workplace values diverge significantly from previous generations (Lyons and Kuron 2014).

Studies also mention the role of organizational culture in attracting and retaining employees, with key studies highlighting variables such as management philosophy, level of control, and approachability (Ashford, Lee and Bobko 1989; Mirji, Bhavsar and Kapoor 2023; O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell 1991; Sheridan 1992). Research showed that Gen Z employees often prefer to work for organizations where managers tend to prioritize employee well-being and give them flexible work arrangements (Pichler, Kohli and Granitz 2021; Seemiller and Grace 2016). However, most of the research has been focused on potential Gen Z employees, targeting mostly students (Aggarwal et al. 2022; Seemiller and Grace 2016). Hence, it is essential to understand the effects of organizational culture dimensions on current Gen Z employees, as they have already perceptions of what drives them positively and negatively in a company, to adopt managerial policies that influence positively current and potential Gen Z employees' views.

In recent times, the concept of employer attractiveness has gained prominence, indicating that individuals are drawn not only to specific roles but also to organizations that align with their personal values, aspirations, and desired work environment (Hicklenton et al. 2021). The research on the effects of industry type on employer attractiveness is limited (Dassler et al. 2022; Datta, Guthrie and Wright 2005) and, to our knowledge, there has not been conducted research that incorporates analysis across various industries. A potential moderator between the three dimensions of organizational culture and employer attractiveness can be related to the industry type in which employers work, as industries are characterized by different organizational values (Boot and Thakor 1997; Handoyo et al. 2023). The industry type can shape how these three dimensions of organizational culture are perceived and valued by potential employees, thereby impacting their impact on employer attractiveness. This understanding acknowledges that the effectiveness of specific cultural attributes in attracting employees is not uniform across all industries but is instead influenced by the unique characteristics and expectations within each sector. The Person-Organization fit theory suggests that individuals are more satisfied and productive when their values align with those of the organization (Kristof 1996). Applying this to Gen Z employees, industry type becomes a key factor in their attraction and retention. The degree to which an industry reflects or adapts to Gen Z's values determines its success in attracting and retaining them, underscoring the importance of industry-specific approaches in applying the P-O Fit Theory. This gap in research on Gen Z's unique workplace preferences and industry nuances may have unintentionally led organizations to rely on generalized, outdated insights for the current generational landscape. Addressing this concern, Vibha Kumar from Johns Hopkins University highlights, "Today's youthful employees are tomorrow's CEOs. Therefore, companies must develop new strategies to cater to Gen Z employees. Although these changes are long-term and may require years to implement, (...) can help you manage your Gen Z employees better, thus allowing you to understand where they are coming from and how you can meet them where they're at!" (Kumar, 2023). This statement underscores the urgency for organizations to rethink and adapt their approaches, acknowledging the unique attributes and needs of the Gen Z workforce.

In pursuit of a deeper understanding, this thesis primarily seeks to address the following research questions: To what extent do management philosophy, level of control and approachability affect the attractiveness of employers for Gen Z employees and to what extent do the FMCG and FS industries influence these relationships?

To unpack these overarching questions, the thesis will explore several sub-questions:

a) To what extent does management philosophy, level of control and approachability influence employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees?

b) Are the effects of management philosophy, level of control and approachability on employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees' uniform across the FMCG and FS industries?

c) How do management philosophy, level of control and approachability affect the perceived attractiveness of an employer to Gen Z within these industries?

This thesis will use the Multi-Focus Model on Organizational Culture by Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov (2010), which outlines six key dimensions of organizational culture as a lens to scrutinize these questions. The study will concentrate on the dimensions of tight vs. loose control, open vs. closed systems, and employee orientation vs. work orientation. These dimensions offer a valuable framework for exploring the intricate relationship between Generation Z's traits and organizational culture, as the dimensions provide a robust framework to investigate how Gen Z's unique characteristics may resonate with or challenge prevailing organizational cultures, thereby influencing their retention and engagement levels.

The Financial Services (FS) and Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sectors are particularly interesting for examination in this context, given their distinct organizational cultures and the unique challenges they face in integrating Gen Z employees. The FS industry is often perceived as more hierarchical due to its regulatory framework and the nature of its services which require a clear chain of command and accountability (Boot and Thakor 1997). In contrast, the FMCG sector, due to its significant investments, has historically been a culture that promotes faster decision-making processes, adaptability to market trends and a more dynamic and flexible work environment (Handoyo et al. 2023).

Academically, this study will contribute to filling an essential gap in our understanding of how organizational culture dimensions interact with employer attractiveness of Gen Z's employees. This effort is expected to yield a new understanding of the field of generational workplace culture, especially for the emerging workforce.

Transitioning from academic contributions to real-world applications, the implications of this research are significant for shaping industry practices as there are tangible business outcomes that can stem from these insights. McKinsey's article on Gen Z (2022) mentions that companies should consider the perspectives of this emerging generation as they plan for the future if employers want to win their fair share of talent from this generational cohort in the workforce. In this context, Dave MacLeod, CEO of ThoughtExchange, offers a warning: “Leaders who fail to rapidly shift their organizations into a force for good or include their people in figuring out just how to do that will end up becoming the Blockbusters of the business world.” This reflects the urgency and necessity for companies to evolve and resonate with Gen Z’s values, stressing the critical role of adaptability and inclusivity in retaining this dynamic workforce segment.

The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for leaders, managers, and HR professionals across both industries. The outcomes will equip them with the knowledge to adapt their organizational practices, policies, and strategies to better suit Generation Z's distinctive qualities and job expectations. The ultimate goal is to foster a more effective alignment between this emerging workforce and organizational culture. By enhancing employee engagement and job satisfaction, organizations can experience increased productivity.

Although the study is primarily targeted towards academia and industry professionals in the mentioned sectors, its implications extend to fields like psychology, and sociology, given the interdisciplinary nature of the research. The broader impact of this research could extend to informing public policy, specifically in terms of labour laws and educational training programs designed to prepare Gen Z for the workforce. Moreover, it is also crucial to note some of the limitations of this study including its focus on only two industries and reliance on self-reported data, which might be subject to bias.

The structure of this thesis is structured in four more chapters: Chapter Two delves into the existing literature, focusing on Generation Z's work attitudes, organizational culture, and the Multi-Focus Model, alongside employer attraction and industry-specific traits. This chapter aims to construct a theoretical framework, laying the groundwork for the study's hypotheses and research model. Chapter Three describes the research methodology, encompassing the research design, the approach to data collection and sampling, and the definition of variables. Chapter Four details the analysis of the data and outlines the key findings. Finally, Chapter Five concludes the thesis, encapsulating the primary discoveries and their potential interpretations, discussing the managerial implications, acknowledging the study's limitations, and suggesting avenues for future research.

Literature Review & Theoretical Framework

Generation Z and their Work Attitudes

Generation Z often referred to as “Gen Zers”, “post-Millennials,” and “iGen”, born from the mid-1990s to the 2010s, is recognized as the first true "digital native" generation, raised in an era dominated by technology that has shaped their unique characteristics and perspectives (Lanier 2017). Members of this generation are known for its outspoken nature, challenging the status quo, and leveraging social media and internet platforms to affect change in businesses and societies (Deloitte 2021). Studies suggest that Gen Z employees exhibit unique values and preferences that set them apart from earlier generations. They greatly value digital tools, meaningful work, supervisors’ frequent feedback and work-life balance.

The profound impact of technology on Gen Z's expectations and worldviews has been widely documented. Seemiller and Grace (2016) observed that Gen Z's tech-savviness goes beyond the use of social media - they expect to leverage technology in problem-solving and collaboration. Additionally, a study by Deloitte (2018) showcased that Gen Z expects workplaces to be on the cutting edge of technology trends, as they believe in its potential to augment personal growth and efficiency.

Gen Z is more value-oriented, placing priority on roles that resonate with their personal values and ambitions. This generation tends to hold an idealistic perspective of their work environment, expecting tasks assigned to them to be both meaningful and stimulating. Such expectations arise from a desire to feel that their superiors will acknowledge and integrate their ideas and innovations (Schroth 2019). Consequently, when their work is perceived as mundane or unchallenging, it can lead to reduced contributions to the organization. In this context, managers play a pivotal role in ensuring that employees comprehend the significance of their roles and how their contributions underpin the success of the enterprise (Pradhan and Jena 2019). The connectivity employees feel to the mission and objectives of the company is amplified when they derive meaning from their work.

Shifting the focus to performance management, it is evident that Generation Z leans more towards the continuous feedback-oriented approach. They exhibit a preference for prompt feedback (Lanier 2017). They also tend to be impatient, with a strong inclination for real-time, in-person feedback as opposed to digital communication channels (Lanier 2017; Lazányi and Bilan 2017). This emphasis on the promptness and transparency of feedback is aligned with a growth orientation, as it enables them to understand and track their performance metrics more effectively, thereby facilitating continuous self-improvement and skill enhancement (Chillakur 2020).

Additionally, Gen Z believes that blending work and personal life leads to enhanced productivity and efficiency (Chillakuri and Mahanandia 2018), and as such they advocate for flexible work arrangements that are accessible and unrestricted for employees at all levels. Trust, cultivated through regular interactions with managers, is instrumental in actualizing such flexible arrangements (Chillakur 2020).

Gen Z's characteristics and preferences are diverse, and a one-size-fits-all approach might not fully capture this generational cohort. Notably, Twenge (2017) points out that technological and economic variations in regions can significantly affect the attitudes and behaviours of Gen Z. McKinsey (2020) further substantiated that the socio-cultural environments in Asia-Pacific offer different experiences for Gen Z when compared to their Western counterparts. Therefore, while exploring the dynamics of organizational culture and Gen Z, it is essential to delve into the specific workplace characteristics that influence their attitudes and behaviours. This includes understanding how factors such as management philosophy, level of control and approachability impact Gen Z’s perceptions and interactions within organizations. Given the regional differences, this study focuses on Portugal to provide a nuanced and context-specific understanding of Gen Z and their relationship with organizational culture. This targeted approach aims not only to offer insights that are relevant to Portuguese and European contexts but also to contribute to the broader discourse on Gen Z’s multifaceted relationship in the workplace.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is a multifaceted set of shared beliefs and assumptions that shape how members interpret and act within the organization. It delineates suitable behaviour in various situations (Ravasi and Schultz 2006). Its influence extends to employee attitudes, behaviours, and the overarching performance of the organization (Denison, Haaland and Goelzer 2003).

Organizational culture is deemed crucial for both immediate and long-term organizational success (Schein 2010). This idea closely aligns with related concepts like structural context and organizational climate (Gibson and Birkinshaw 2004). Organizational culture touches upon the core beliefs and values of an organization's internal stakeholders (Pettigrew 1979). Past studies highlight the profound impact of organizational culture on firms' current strategies, prospective changes, and the initiation of appropriate decision-making processes (Jung, Wu and Chow 2008).

The interplay of generational values and organizational culture has been an area of interest for scholars over the years. Deal, Altman and Rogelberg (2010) provided a comprehensive examination of how organizational culture evolved from the era of Baby Boomers to

Millennials. They highlighted how each generational cohort brought unique challenges and expectations to the workplace, reshaping the organizational landscape. Gen Z, as put forth by Turner (2015), amalgamates these historical shifts and further pushes the boundaries, given their unique upbringing in a hyperconnected world.

The distinctive traits and values of Generation Z significantly shape their perception and interaction with organizational culture. Known for challenging conventional norms, Gen Z places a high emphasis on meaningful work, values diversity, and regards social responsibility as a priority (Deloitte 2021). Consequently, they tend to seek out and favour organizational cultures that reflect these priorities, favouring environments that promote employee well-being, openness, and a sense of purpose in their work (Deloitte 2021).

Multi-Focus Model on Organizational Culture

This study explores the complex interplay between organizational culture and employer attractiveness using the Multi-Focus Model on Organizational Culture (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov 2010). This model emphasizes six distinct dimensions rooted in organizational sociology: tight vs. loose control, open system vs. closed system, employee-oriented vs. work-oriented, process-oriented vs. results-oriented, normative vs. pragmatic, and parochial vs. professional (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov 2010). The current study concentrates on the initial three dimensions.

The first dimension, level of control, examines the extent of internal structuring, discipline, and control within an organization. Cultures with very loose control are characterized by flexible structures, unpredictability, minimal control, and frequent improvisation. Conversely, cultures with tight control demonstrate opposite traits, with high cost-consciousness, punctuality, and seriousness. This dimension also includes aspects of formality and punctuality within the organization (Hofstede 2011). For example, banks and pharmaceutical companies typically exhibit tight control, whereas advertising agencies may tend to have a loose control approach.

To measure these constructs, the research employed a quantitative method and survey participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements on a Likert scale in order to measure punctuality, cost-awareness, professional appearance, and formal communication (Hofstede et al. 1990). The aggregated results for these survey items will facilitate a quantitative analysis of the organization's leaning towards either loose or tight control.

The second dimension explored in this study is approachability, characterized by the contrast between an open system and a closed system. This dimension focuses on the style of internal and external communication and the openness to integrating outsiders and newcomers. In very open cultures, new members are warmly welcomed, with a belief that almost anyone can fit into the organization. This contrasts with very closed organizations, where there is significant resistance to integrating new individuals (Hofstede 2011).

Previous research has highlighted the importance of these dimensions in influencing employee attraction and organizational outcomes. Studies examining work discipline have found that employees' perceptions within an organization greatly affect their job satisfaction, commitment, and performance (Ashford, Lee and Bobko 1989; O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell 1991). Similarly, research on openness in organizational cultures suggests that an open and inclusive environment promotes employee engagement, creativity, and effectiveness (Mirji, Bhavsar and Kapoor 2023).

To measure the constructs of approachability, this study deployed a quantitative approach based on Hofstede's dimensions, using Likert-scale items to gauge employees' perceptions of perceived exclusivity, department alienation, management care for employee needs, emphasis on the physical work environment, transparency, and integration speed of newcomers (Hofstede et al. 1990).

The third dimension of this study delves into the management philosophy within an organization, focusing on the contrast between an employee-oriented and a work-oriented approach. In employee-oriented organizations, the emphasis is on the well-being of employees, with consideration for personal issues and their impact on work. On the other hand, work-oriented organizations stress the importance of task performance, sometimes compromising employee well-being to achieve work objectives (Hofstede 2011).

This dimension of management philosophy has been extensively researched, highlighting its impact on both employee well-being and organizational effectiveness. Cultures that are employee-oriented, valuing staff welfare, have been linked to higher job satisfaction, stronger organizational commitment, and lower turnover rates (Sheridan 1992). In contrast, work-oriented cultures, which focus primarily on task performance, have been associated with increased employee stress, burnout, and intentions to leave the organization, as noted in the studies (Bakker, Demerouti and Verbeke 2004).

In the investigation of the employee-oriented versus work-oriented dimension, a survey has been employed based on Hofstede's dimensions, using Likert-scale items to measure employees' perceptions surrounding decision-making, employee treatment, and the prioritization of job functions over individual well-being (Hofstede et al. 1990).

Each dimension operates independently, but they can strengthen or weaken the impact of others, ultimately affecting employer attractiveness.

Gen Z having grown up in an era defined by technological fluidity, naturally gravitates towards environments that balance structure with the freedom for creativity and innovation, hence the relevance of the tight vs. loose control dimension. Furthermore, their interconnected, global perspective, shaped by the digital age, aligns with the dimension of open system vs. closed system. They value a workplace that is receptive to diverse influences and is not insular in its approach. Lastly, the dimension of employee-oriented vs. work-oriented resonates deeply with

Gen Z's emphasis on mental health, personal development, and work-life balance. Their inclination is towards companies that see them as more than just workers but as individuals with aspirations and needs. By focusing on these three dimensions, we are positioning our study to understand and engage with the core values and preferences of the Gen Z demographic in the organizational context.

Organizational Culture and Employer Attractiveness

Bhanot (2016) defines employer attractiveness as the perceived benefits a prospective employee expects to receive by working for an organization. Mostafa (2022) introduced the concept of company attractiveness as a dual-dimensional construct, comprising external attractiveness and internal attractiveness. External attractiveness pertains to the perceptions held by external candidates or stakeholders regarding an organization being an excellent workplace. Conversely, internal attractiveness encompasses the perspectives of current employees or internal stakeholders regarding the company. In essence, company attractiveness reflects the extent to which both potential applicants and existing employees view the organization favourably as a desirable place to work. It affects recruiting and employee retention (Helm 2013).

Understanding employer attractiveness is crucial for any organization seeking to attract potential applicants. The Employer Value Proposition (EVP), as defined by Botha, Bussin and Swardt (2011), encompasses the unique set of attributes and benefits that not only motivate target candidates to join a company but also encourage current employees to stay. Job seekers actively seek organizations that align with their specific needs and preferences. Therefore, employers must grasp the attributes they should offer in order to become an appealing choice for job seekers (Alnıaçık and Alnıaçık 2012). This study anticipates that for Gen Z the specific organizational culture elements of level of control, management philosophy, and approachability, will be pivotal in shaping the EVP and thereby significantly influencing the attractiveness of these organizations to Gen Z employees.

Ehrhart and Ziegert's (2005) research further emphasizes that job seekers form perceptions about organizational culture based on available cues, and these perceptions significantly influence their inclination to apply. In this context, Person-Organization (P-O) Fit theory becomes relevant. Kristof (1996) elucidates that P-O Fit occurs when an individual's values and personality align with the organizational culture, leading to increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The theory posits that Gen Z employees are likely to be attracted to and remain with organizations where there is a congruence between their individual preferences and the organization's culture.

In line with Bhanot's (2016) conceptualization of employer attractiveness, Kristof's (1996) P-O Fit theory and Mostafa's (2022) framework, this study concentrates on Gen Z within the workforce, hypothesizing that their preferences will sway them towards employers characterized by an employee-centric management philosophy, a loose level of control, and an open work environment culture. Such attributes are reflective of Gen Z's tendency for digital innovation, a balanced lifestyle, and a workplace that values diversity and open communication.

Industry Specific Characteristics

Industry type plays a pivotal role in shaping the relationship between organizational factors and outcomes such as employer attractiveness. Studies such as Schneider, Goldstein, and Smith's Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) framework (1995) propose that industries attract individuals who resonate with their existing culture, leading to distinct employer attractiveness profiles. In alignment with this, Datta, Guthrie and Wright (2005) indicated that industry volatility influences human resource practices and culture, further impacting employer attractiveness. In essence, the unique demands and characteristics of each industry undeniably moderate the interplay between organizational culture and its attractiveness to potential employees. For Gen Z individuals, poised with a distinct set of values and expectations, this interplay between industry-specific organizational culture and employer attractiveness has not been confirmed.

This study will employ a comparative methodology, examining organizational culture perception of organizational culture across two distinct industries: Financial Services (FS) and Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG).

FMCG and FS are two of the most dominant industries globally (Novicio 2021). The Financial Services sector encompasses a broad spectrum of firms, from banks and investment houses to lenders, finance companies, real estate brokers, and insurance companies. The Financial Services sector is usually known for its structured culture and strict adherence to formal rules (Boot and Thakor 1997). On the other hand, the FMCG sector comprises businesses that offer products with a quick turnover, consumed rapidly, and generally available at relatively low costs. The FMCG sector is typically characterized by a flexible and adaptive work environment (Handoyo et al. 2023).

Recent research highlights a rising interest among Gen Z in both industries. A 2018 PwC report noted a growing attraction of Gen Z to the Financial Services sector, particularly due to the rise of fintech. On the other hand, a 2019 study by Accenture pointed out the FMCG sector's appeal to Gen Z, driven by its focus on innovation and sustainability. Understanding these sectors offers a window into the dynamics of Gen Z's perception. Specifically, this exploration offers an opportunity to identify industry-specific elements that influence Gen Z's perspectives on organizational culture.

In conclusion, the relationship between organizational culture dimensions—management philosophy, approachability, and level of control—and their impact on employer attractiveness to Generation Z employees is pivotal for organizations striving to secure their position in the talent marketplace. By using the lens of Hofstede's multi-factor model, this study delves deep into the perceptions of Gen Z employees within the distinct landscapes of the FMCG and Financial Services industries. As Generation Z begins to dominate the workforce, understanding their inclinations towards organizational culture becomes imperative. For companies to not only attract this new wave of talent but also to foster their continued commitment and drive, aligning with Gen Z's workplace values and preferences is paramount.

Conceptual Model and Hypothesis

The model proposes that organizational culture dimensions of management philosophy, level of control and approachability will have different impacts on employer attractiveness of Gen Z employees. This perception will be influenced by strength depending on which industry (FMCG or FS) it occurs.

The conceptual model (Fig. 1) integrates the dimensions of the Multi-Focus Model of organizational culture (tight vs. loose control, open system vs. closed system, and employee-oriented vs. work-oriented) as the independent variable. It is anticipated that these dimensions will vary across industries in their effectiveness at attracting Generation Z employees.

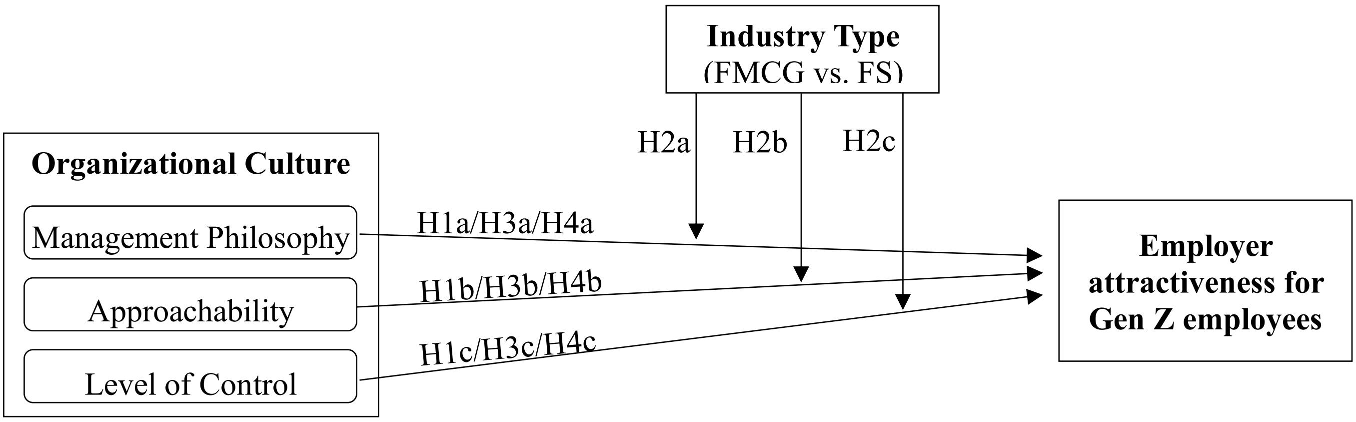

Figure 1- Conceptual Model

The proposed conceptual model, grounded in P-O Fit Theory, offers a robust framework for dissecting the intricate relationship between organizational culture and its attraction for employees, with a particular focus on Gen Z within varying industry contexts. P-O Fit Theory predicts that Gen Z employees will be more attracted to and satisfied with organizations whose cultures resonate with their personal values and work preferences. This theory illuminates the propensity of Gen Z employees to gravitate towards organizations that echo their personal values and beliefs (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman and Johnson 2005). This alignment between an individual's identity and an organization's culture not only attracts Gen Z candidates but also contributes to their satisfaction and intent to remain with the organization (Cable and DeRue 2002). This theoretical perspective underscores the importance of cultural congruence in shaping Gen Z's attraction towards potential employers.

Drawing upon P-O Fit Theory and generational work values research, this study proposes to examine specific aspects of organizational culture valued by Gen Z, such as flexibility, inclusivity, and digital innovation, and how these aspects correlate with job satisfaction and commitment among Gen Z employees. According to Kristof (1996), a congruence between an individual's values and those of their organization can significantly boost job satisfaction and commitment. This alignment is particularly vital for Gen Z, a generation distinguished by its emphasis on flexibility, inclusivity, and digital innovation (Benítez-Márquez et al. 2022; Seemiller and Grace 2016). Alnıaçık and Alnıaçık (2012) note the attractiveness of employee-oriented cultures for younger workers, while Benítez-Márquez et al. (2022) and Seemiller and Grace (2016) highlight Gen Z's preference for open, collaborative, and autonomously flexible work environments. Given these considerations, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Organizational Culture dimension employee-oriented (a), open system (b) and loose control (c) has a positive impact on employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees.

Building upon these insights, industry characteristics significantly influence how organizational culture is perceived by potential employees. In the FMCG sector, where rapid innovation and responsiveness are prized, the impact of an open, flexible, and employee-centric culture on employer attractiveness might be more pronounced. In contrast, the Financial Services sector, while also adapting to modern workforce demands, operates within a more structured and regulated framework. Here, the blend of flexibility with structured career progression could be more appealing, suggesting a different kind of moderation effect as compared to the FMCG sector. Therefore, we hypothesise that the strength of the relationship between organizational culture and employer attractiveness varies depending on the industry type.

Hypothesis 2: The relationship between organizational culture, characterized by employee-oriented (a), open system (b), and loose control (c) practices, and employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees is moderated by industry type, as such that the FMCG industry strengthen this relationship compared to the FS industry.

Considering the differences between the FMCG and FS industries as identified in the existing literature, separating the analyses could provide more precise insights into how organizational culture influences employer attractiveness to Generation Z employees within each distinct industry context.

In the dynamic FMCG industry, flexibility and adaptability are key to innovation and responsiveness to market changes (Handoyo, Mulyani, Ghani and Soedarsono 2023). The importance of these traits in FMCG companies is underscored by Deloitte's report on resilience in the sector, highlighting how businesses are adapting to new consumer and market trends by enhancing shopper experiences, adopting omnichannel strategies, and focusing on sustainable practices (Deloitte 2021).

Literature suggests that Gen Z values flexibility in the workplace (Seemiller and Grace 2016), as per Mirji, Bhavsar and Kapoor's 2023 study, implying that a less rigid control structure in FMCG aligns with their preferences for autonomy and creative freedom. Gen Z's inclination towards collaborative and inclusive work environments, as identified by Benítez-Márquez et al. (2022), aligns with open systems in organizations. In the FMCG sector, where rapid product innovation and market responsiveness are critical, open system cultures that encourage information flow and collaborative efforts could be particularly appealing to Gen Z employees. Gen Z has a strong focus on work-life balance and personal well-being, as highlighted by Seemiller and Grace (2016). Employee-oriented practices in the FMCG industry, which often involve fast-paced work environments, could enhance the attractiveness of these firms by providing support, development opportunities, and an emphasis on employee well-being. Given these considerations, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: In the FMCG industry, an organizational culture characterized by employee-oriented (a), open systems (b) and loose control (c) practices has a positive impact on attractiveness for Gen Z employees.

In the Financial Services industry, traditionally characterized by its structured nature, there is an emerging need to integrate elements of loose control to better align with Generation Z's preferences for autonomy and flexibility. This integration is pivotal in a sector renowned for its closed-system approach, where defined procedures and confidentiality are paramount (Boot and Thakor 1997). By achieving a balance between the inherent structure and a degree of flexibility, financial services firms can cater to Gen Z's desire for structured career progression yet provide the individual innovation and contribution space they value.

Deloitte's insights on the financial services sector support this evolving trend. Deloitte (2019) highlights the continuous regulatory and supervisory focus on culture, including a move towards more structured approaches to managing culture and conduct, aligning with the concept of a closed system. These developments reflect a trend towards formal accountability regimes and a focus on diversity, inclusion, and psychological safety, which are crucial to employee-oriented practices that resonate with Generation Z. This balance between a structured, regulated environment and a flexible, employee-focused culture could enhance the appeal of the financial services sector to this emerging generation. Given these considerations, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 4: In the Financial Services industry, an organizational culture characterized by employee-oriented (a), closed system (b) and loose control (c) practices has a positive impact on employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees.

These hypotheses aim to extend the existing academic discourse by integrating generational concerns into the evaluation of organizational culture's impact on employer attractiveness, particularly for the Gen Z cohort.

Methodology

This research aimed to investigate the interactions between organizational culture and employer attractiveness of Gen Z employees and whether industry-specific context influenced their perceptions of employer attractiveness. The research was conducted on a sample of 106 Gen Z employees of Portuguese nationality employed or previously employed in the Financial Services and FMCG industries- sectors chosen for their contrasting operational environments, which have significant implications for employee engagement and retention. Concentrating on employed or previously employed individuals ensures current and actionable insights into the organizational culture. The strategic focus on the Portuguese market leverages the researcher's access to participants in this region and ensures a rich, contextually relevant data set for examining the influence of cultural and economic factors on employer attractiveness to Gen Z.

Data Collection and Sample Design

This research utilized a quantitative method to analyse how Generation Z views organizational culture in Portugal and how this influences employer attractiveness. Industry type also played a role in this relationship. It was conducted through a voluntary response sampling method (online questionnaire) among Portuguese Gen Z employees with experience in FMCG and FS industries. The questionnaire was distributed between the final days of October to November

2023, primarily through social networks such as Instagram, LinkedIn, and personal connections.

Acknowledging the risk of sample selection bias inherent in voluntary response sampling, especially when leveraging personal networks, several measures were put in place. The initial section of the survey provided participants with a brief overview of the research's purpose as well as emphasized the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. They were also presented with a consent form, highlighting that participation was voluntary and that there would be no repercussions or rewards based on their decision to participate or decline. The second section emphasized the defined requirements for participating in the survey. The exclusion criteria included age, nationality, and industry of employment.

Out of the initial pool of 153 respondents, 139 completed the survey in its entirety. Exclusions were made for those who did not consent to the research terms, did not meet the participation requirements, or did not complete all sections of the survey, resulting in a final sample size of 106 for data analysis. The average age of the sample was 23.04 years, with a standard deviation of 1.38. The gender distribution was 45.3% male and 54.7% female. Moreover, the majority of the respondents are interns (48.1%), analysts (17.9%), trainees (7.6%) and another 26.4% have other job titles.

Furthermore, according to the number of years working in the industry, a high proportion of them said to have worked less than 1 year (55.7%). 1-3 years of experience represented 42.5% of the sample and over 3 years totalized 1.9% of respondents. 53 respondents have experience in the Financial Services industry and 53 had experience in the FMCG industry.

Measures

The independent variable "management philosophy" was rated by a total of four questions adapted from Hofstede et al. (1990), that measured people's perceptions of the practices in their work. Each item consisted of two opposite statements, randomly attributed so that their position could not suggest their desirability. A five-point Likert scale was used to assess preference per each statement (1- Strongly agree with the statement on the left, 2- Somewhat agree with the statement on left, 3- Neutral, 4- Somewhat agree with the statement on the right, 5- Strongly agree with the statement on the right). Sample question: Left- "My organization is primarily interested in the work people do"; Right- "My organization is interested in both the well-being and the work of its people". Reliability analysis for management philosophy was α=0.77 for this sample, which is considered to have an acceptable internal consistency.

The independent variable "level of control" involved six questions, adapted from Hofstede et al. (1990), gauging perceptions of workplace practices. Items presented two contrasting statements, randomly positioned to avoid bias. Preferences were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1-Strongly agree with the statement on the left to 5-Strongly agree with the statement on the right. Sample question: Left- "In my organization meetings always start and end punctually"; Right- "In my organization meeting times are flexible and not strictly adhered to". Reliability analysis for level of control was α=0.39 for this sample, which is considered a questionable scale. Thus, the decision was made to remove the item related to the employee dress code; by deleting the item, the scale reliability is $\alpha = 0.60$.

The independent variable "approachability" was assessed by seven questions adapted from Hofstede et al. (1990). Again, each item consisted of two opposite statements, randomly attributed to avoid their desirability. A five-point Likert scale was used to assess preference per each statement (1- Strongly agree with the statement on the left; 5- Strongly agree with the statement on the right). Sample question: Left- "In my organization management is generous even with the finer details"; Right- "In my organization management is stingy even with small things". Reliability analysis for approachability was α=0.63 for this sample, which is considered a questionable scale. To address this, the second item, which pertained to the physical work environment, was also removed, resulting in an enhanced scale reliability of α = 0.70.

The dependent variable "employer attractiveness" was rated by five questions, measured on a five-point Likert-type scale (5- Strongly Agree, 1- Strongly Disagree), from Pattnaik and Misra (2014) to measure employer attractiveness from current employees of the organization. Sample question: "I feel proud to say that I am working for this company". Reliability analysis for this scale was α=0.86 for this sample, which is considered to have an excellent internal consistency. Gender and Years of Experience in the Industry were controlled for possible confiding effects. Both were coded as dummy variables.

Research Preparation and Execution

The analysis of the data involved various frequency functions to confirm the absence of missing data. Additionally, multiple tests were conducted to assess if the data satisfied the assumptions required for linear regression (Li 2018).

Multicollinearity among the independent variables was carefully assessed using both correlation coefficients and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) analysis to ensure that they provide unique contributions to the regression model. The correlation matrix revealed that no pairs of variables had correlation coefficients above the threshold of 0.7, which is commonly considered high. Additionally, all VIF values were below 5, indicating no evidence of multicollinearity.

The analysis examined whether a linear relationship existed with the dependent variable. Analysis of the Residuals vs Fitted plot confirmed this assumption, as the scatterplot showed that residuals were dispersed randomly, indicating homoscedasticity without any clustering. The Normal Q-Q Plot revealed that most data points were aligned with the residual line, although with some deviations. The independence of observations was evaluated using the Durbin-Watson test. Li (2018) suggests that values close to 2 are ideal, and those between 1.5

and 2.5 are acceptable. The model summary showed that the residuals were independent, as indicated by a Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.54. The plot Scale vs Location demonstrates that the variance is homogeneous. The scatter plot analysis confirmed that all values remained within the -3 to 3 range.

Data Analysis and Results

Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix

The Pearson Correlation test was conducted to evaluate the relationships between various variables. The findings are summarized in Table 1, titled "Correlation Between Variables".

Level of Control shows positive correlations, although weak, with Approachability ($r = 0.286$, $p < 0.01$), Management Philosophy ($r = 0.194$, $p < 0.05$), and Employer Attractiveness ($r = 0.271$, $p < 0.01$). Approachability exhibits a moderate positive correlation correlated with Management Philosophy ($r = 0.693$, $p < 0.01$) and Employer Attractiveness ($r = 0.449$, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, Management Philosophy has a moderate positive relationship with Employer Attractiveness ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.01$).

These significant correlations suggest intertwined relationships between levels of control, approachability, management philosophy, and employer attractiveness, with implications for organizational dynamics and outcomes.

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. Level of Control – Loose Control	1	0.286**	0.194*	0.271**
2. Approachability- Open System	0.286**	1	0.693**	0.449**
3. Management Philosophy- Employee-Oriented	0.194*	0.693**	1	0.61**
4. Employer Attractiveness	0.271**	0.449**	0.61**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level
Table 1- Correlation Between Variables

Comprehensive descriptive statistics are detailed in Table 2. The data reveal that the mean score for Level of Control is 2.8, with a standard deviation of 0.89, indicating a moderate level of perceived control within the organization with some variation among employees. The mean score for Approachability is 3.64, with a standard deviation of 0.76, suggesting that employees generally perceive the organization as approachable, with some variability in responses. Management Philosophy has an average score of 3.26 and a standard deviation of 0.77, reflecting a positive orientation towards employee management with consistent agreement among participants.

Furthermore, Employer Attractiveness has an average score of 4.05 with a standard deviation of 0.81, which implies a high level of attractiveness as perceived by employees, although there is some variation in this perception.

	Mean	**SD**
Level of Control – Loose Control	2.8	0.89
Approachability- Open System	3.64	0.76
Management Philosophy- Employee Oriented	3.26	0.77
Employer Attractiveness	4.05	0.81

Table 2- Means and Standard Deviation

Hypothesis Testing

To evaluate Hypothesis 1a-c, the study employs multiple linear regression, with the findings detailed in Table 3. Hypothesis one specifies that employee-oriented, open system and loose control positively influence employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees. Hence the following linear equation was created:

$$Employer\ Attractiveness = \beta_0 + \ \beta_1 LevelControl_t + \ \beta_2 ManagementPhilosophy_t + \beta_3 Approachability_t + \beta_4 Gender_t + \ \beta_5 Experience < 1\ year_t + \beta_6 Experience > 3\ years_t + \varepsilon$$

The model is significant (p = 0.000) and there appears to be a moderate fit, with an adjusted R squared of 0.4405, explaining 44.05% of the model variance with these variables. The variables of management philosophy (p = 0.000) and gender (p = 0.033) were significant. At the same time, the level of control, approachability and experience are statistically insignificant (see Table 3). Based on the regression analysis, Hypotheses 1b and 1c are rejected; loose control and open system are not significant predictors of employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees. Hypothesis 1a is supported, employee oriented organizational cultures influence positively employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees.

The control variable gender contributed to explaining variance. Gender was negatively related to employer attractiveness ($\beta =$-0.29, p = 0.033), so Gen Z male employees are associated with a lower employer attractiveness. Experience was not statistically significant in explaining employer attractiveness.

Variables	**Coefficient**	**P-Value**
Intercept	1.88	0.000
Level Control	0.13	0.104
Management Philosophy	0.55	0.000
Approachability	0.05	0.654
Gender	-0.29	0.033
Experience <1 Year	-0.11	0.463
Experience >3 Years	-0.35	0.448

Table 3- Organizational Culture Dimensions and Employer Attractiveness

For Hypothesis 2a-c, a multiple regression analysis with Industry as the interaction term was performed with the same independent and control variables as before. Table 4 presents the results of the analyses. Hypothesis two tests that the FMCG sector strengthens the relationship between employee-oriented, open system, and loose control practices and employer attractiveness, especially for Generation Z employees. Hence the following linear equation was created:

$$Employer\ Attractiveness = \beta_0 + \ \beta_1 LevelControl_t * Industry_t +$$

$$\beta_2 ManagementPhilosophy_t * Industry_t + \ \beta_3 Approachability_t * Industry_t +$$

$\beta_4 Gender_t + \beta_5 Experience < 1\ year_t + \beta_6 Experience > 3\ years_t + \varepsilon$

The model is significant (p = 0.000) and here appears to be a moderate fit, with an adjusted R squared of 0.6144, explaining 61.44% of the model variance with these variables. The variables of management philosophy (p = 0.000), level of control (p = 0.000), approachability (p = 0.045) and industry (p= 0.033) were all statistically significant as well as their interaction effects. Experience >3 Years (p= 0.054) was partially significant. At the same time, the gender and experience <1 year are statistically insignificant (see Table 4).

Based on the regression analysis, Hypothesis 2a and c are rejected; loose control and employee-oriented practices are a stronger driver of attractiveness for FS industry. Hypothesis 2b is supported; open systems cultures strengthen employee attractiveness for Gen Z employees in the FMCG industry compared to FS industry.

The control variable experience >3 Years was partially significant associated with a negative relationship to employer attractiveness (β=--0.76, p = 0.054). Experience <1 Year and gender were not statistically significant in explaining employer attractiveness.

Variables	**Coefficient**	**P-Value**
Intercept	0.41	0.509
Level Control	0.73	0.000
Industry	1.77	0.033
Management Philosophy	0.85	0.000
Approachability	-0.37	0.045
Gender	-0.03	0.797
Experience <1 Year	-0.12	0.311
Experience >3 Years	-0.76	0.054
Level Control x Industry	-0.50	0.010
Approachability x Industry	0.70	0.002
Management Philosophy x Industry	-0.77	0.000

Table 4-Interaction Effects of Industry Type on Organizational Culture Dimensions and Employer Attractiveness

For hypotheses 3 and 4, the dataset was segmented to understand industry-specific relationships.

For Hypothesis 3a-c, a multiple regression analysis was performed using the first model. However, the dataset was segmented to include only FMCG industry participants. Table 5 presents the results of the analyses. Hypothesis three states that in the FMCG industry, loose control, open systems, and employee-oriented practices are positively correlated with employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees, regardless of gender and years of experience in the industry.

The model is significant (p = 0.000) and there appears to be a moderate fit, with an adjusted R squared of 0.5475, explaining 54.75% of the model variance with these variables. The variables of level of control (p = 0.009), approachability (p = 0.001) and experience (p= 0.015; p= 0.002). At the same time, management philosophy and gender are insignificant (see Table 5). Based on the regression analysis, Hypothesis 3a is rejected; management philosophy is not a significant predictor of employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees. Hypotheses 3b and 3c are supported, open system and loose-control organizational cultures influence positively employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees in the FMCG industry.

Experience >3 years was statistically significant associated with a negative relationship to employer attractiveness ($\beta =$-0.97, p = 0.002) and Experience <1 year is significant associated with a decrease in employer attractiveness ($\beta =$-0.38, p = 0.015). This implies that having 1-3 years of experience increases employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees. Gender was not statistically significant to explain employer attractiveness in the FMCG industry.

Variables	**Coefficient**	**P-Value**
Intercept	3.02	0.000
Level Control	0.2	0.009
Management Philosophy	0.15	0.179
Approachability	0.33	0.001
Gender	0.03	0.818
Experience <1 Year	-0.38	0.015

Experience >3 Years	-0.97	0.002

Table 5- Organizational Culture Dimensions and Employer Attractiveness in the FMCG Industry

For Hypothesis 4a-c, a multiple regression analysis was performed using the first regression model. However, the dataset was segmented to include only FS industry participants. Table 6 presents the results of the analyses. Hypothesis four tests that in the Financial Services industry, loose control, closed systems, and an employee-oriented organizational culture will positively impact employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees.

The model is significant (p = 0.000) and appears to be a moderate fit, with an adjusted R squared of 0.5888, explaining 58.88% of the model variance with these variables. The variables of management philosophy (p = 0.000), approachability (p= 0.026) and gender (p= 0.002) were statistically significant. At the same time, the level of control and experience <1 year are statistically insignificant (see Table 6). Based on the regression analysis, Hypothesis 4c is rejected; the level of control is not a significant predictor for the FS industry. Hypothesis 4a and 4b are supported; open systems cultures influence negatively employee attractiveness and employee-oriented organizational cultures influence positively employee attractiveness for Gen Z employees.

The control variable gender was statistically significant associated with a negative relationship to employer attractiveness ($\beta =$-0.7, p = 0.002), so male is associated with a lower employer attractiveness score for Gen Z employees in the FS industry. Experience was not statistically significant in explaining employer attractiveness in the FS industry.

Variables	**Coefficient**	**P-Value**
Intercept	3.02	0.000
Level Control	0.05	0.690
Management Philosophy	0.93	0.000
Approachability	-0.52	0.026
Gender	-0.7	0.002

Experience <1 Year	0.06	0.079

Table 5- Organizational Culture Dimensions and Employer Attractiveness in the FS Industry

Discussion and Conclusions

This thesis examines how organizational culture dimensions such as management philosophy, level of control and approachability affect employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees through two different industries (FMCG and FS Industries). The study takes into account control variables such as gender and industry experience duration. This section will delve into the key insights derived from the empirical analysis, from which pertinent practical implications will be drawn. Furthermore, the thesis will highlight the contributions of this research to the field and suggest avenues for future exploration.

Main Findings

In line with the objectives of this research, hypotheses formulated from a comprehensive review of existing literature were examined using regression analyses. Table 6 presents a summary of these hypotheses, indicating whether each one is supported or refuted by the findings. The conclusions suggest that the impact of different organizational practices on employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees varies depending on the industry, however, generally employee-oriented practices seem to be generally attractive to Portuguese Gen Z employees.

Hypothesis	Supported
1a: Employee-oriented has a positive impact on employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees.	Yes
1b-c: Open system and Loose control has a positive impact on employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees.	No
2a; c: FMCG industry strengths the relationship between employee- oriented and loose control practices and employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees compared to the FS industry	No
2b: FMCG industry strengths the relationship between open system practices and employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees compared to the FS industry	Yes

3a: In the FMCG industry, employee-oriented practices have a positive impact on employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees.	No
3b-c: In the FMCG industry, loose control and open systems practices has a positive impact on employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees.	Yes
4a-b: In the Financial Services industry, closed system and employee-oriented practices has a positive impact on employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees.	Yes
4c: In the Financial Services industry, loose control practices have a positive impact on employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees.	No

Table 6-Overview Hypotheses and Results

Hypothesis 1a posited that employee-oriented practices would positively influence employer attractiveness to Gen Z employees, which was supported. This suggests that Gen Z employees place a high value on personal treatment and consider it a crucial factor when evaluating potential employers (Lassleben and Hofmann 2023).

Contrary to Hypotheses 1b-c, open systems and loose control did not generally influence employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees. This could indicate that while Gen Z may appreciate a flexible and open work environment, these factors alone are not decisive in their attractiveness evaluations.

Hypothesis two assessed the strength of the moderating effect between the two industries. The findings reject 2a and c indicating that the relationship is actually weaker in the FMCG industry compared to the FS industry. This suggests that while these practices might be influential, their impact is less pronounced in the FMCG sector than in the Financial Services sector. These findings are surprising and suggest that in the FS industry, these practices may be valued differently, potentially due to the industry's inherent stability and structure. Contrarily, in the FMCG sector, which is characterized by its dynamic nature, these same practices appear to have a less pronounced effect on employer attractiveness. This proposes that Gen Z's value systems or expectations from employers might vary significantly between industries.

The hypothesis 2b posited that the FMCG industry would strengthen the relationship between open system practices and employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees, more than in the FS industry. The results supported this hypothesis, showing that open system practices are indeed more influential in attracting Gen Z employees in the FMCG industry than in the FS industry.

In the FMCG industry, Hypothesis 3b-c was supported, showing that loose control and open systems practices are positively correlated with employer attractiveness. This reflects the industry's dynamic nature, which may align with Gen Z's preference for innovation and agility in the workplace (Pandita 2021).

However, Hypothesis 3a was not supported in the FMCG industry, indicating that employee-oriented practices are not significantly correlated with employer attractiveness. This finding is particularly intriguing and may suggest that other elements of organizational culture carry more weight in influencing Gen Z's perceptions within this sector.

In the Financial Services industry, Hypothesis 4c regarding loose control practices was not supported, which may reflect the industry's traditionally structured environment. However, Hypotheses 4a-b were supported, revealing that closed system and employee-oriented practices positively correlate with employer attractiveness. This outcome underscores the potential influence of structured environments and the perceived stability they offer, which may resonate with Gen Z's professional aspirations in this industry sector. The positive influence of employee-oriented cultures aligns with the growing body of research that emphasizes Gen Z's prioritization of supportive and caring work environments (Lanier 2017; Pichler, Kohli and Granitz 2021).

This highlights the preference of Gen Z employees in the FMCG sector for more open, flexible, and dynamic work environments (Handoyo et al. 2023).

These mixed results highlight the importance of industry context in determining the impact of specific organizational culture dimensions on employer attractiveness. They also underscore the nuanced preferences of Gen Z employees, suggesting that their values and expectations may vary significantly between different industry environments. The discussion will now delve into the practical implications of these findings, their contribution to existing research, and the avenues they open for future studies.

Research Contributions

This research offers two significant contributions to existing literature. Firstly, this study enriches the Person-Organization Fit Theory by elucidating the role of organizational culture in shaping employer attractiveness for Generation Z. Additionally, this study deepens our understanding of the impact of management philosophy, underscoring the significance of employee-oriented practices for Generation Z employees. Evidence has been found that employee-oriented practices influence positively employer attractiveness (Cable and DeRue 2002; Dassler et al. 2022; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman and Johnson 2005).

Secondly, this research offers a detailed examination of the Portuguese Gen Z workforce within the FMCG and Financial Services industries, providing a contextual analysis that can inform industry-specific strategies. The distinction between the cultural dynamics of these two sectors presents a rich comparative backdrop for understanding how industry contexts can differentially influence the perceptions of potential employees (Datta, Guthrie and Wright 2005). The study suggests that the three examined dimensions of organizational culture influence differently employer attractiveness across the FS and FMCG industries, therefore management styles and HR strategies should be adapted considering industry characteristics. Hence, this study opens the direction towards the effectiveness of organizational culture dimensions based on industry type.

Managerial Implications

In terms of practical implications, the findings of this study can guide decision-makers regarding organizational culture in their management practices. Organizational culture has become an essential element for professionals which can inform targeted policies and practices, enhancing the appeal of organizations to young talent (Pichler, Kohli and Granitz 2021). HR professionals and managers should aim to understand of Gen Z views on organizational culture and how it is moderated by the industry the company is positioned in. We argue that by the industry context perceptions of management philosophy, level of control and approachability vary across this generation of employees. As companies strive to adapt to the evolving expectations of this generation, the insights provided here can support leadership development and diversity management initiatives aimed at fostering inclusive and appealing workplace environments. Thus, in the case of the FS industry in Portugal, managers should focus on prioritizing the well-being of employees and decrease the accessibility of the organization (closed system), which might increase employer attractiveness. As for the FMCG industry in Portugal, this study suggests that managers should aim for a fluid internal structure and good onboarding strategies that emphasize the integration of visitors and newcomers in order to increase employer attractiveness.

Limitations and Future Research

When interpreting the findings of this study, certain limitations must be acknowledged, which also pave the way for potential avenues in future research. Firstly, the sample size of 106 respondents is relatively small and is exclusively comprised of Portuguese Generation Z employees working in one of the two studied industries. Given that Gen Z is only now entering the labour market, it was challenging to find a large number of employees meeting the study's criteria. Most of the employees approached were from large companies, predominantly located in urban areas of Portugal. This could suggest a potential bias toward the practices and cultures of larger, urban-based organizations, which may differ from those in smaller or rural enterprises. Consequently, considering the specific nature of the sample, the results have limited generalizability. Potential biases, such as social desirability bias and consistency bias, must be acknowledged when interpreting the results.

Moreover, different industry contexts should be considered to analyse organizational culture and its relation to employer attractiveness for Gen Z employees. Future research should expand the scope to include a broader range of industries and geographical areas within Portugal, to understand if and how Gen Z's preferences vary across different professional landscapes and locations. The study may also be influenced by cultural biases, as it was conducted within the specific geographical context of Portugal. Future research should incorporate a cross-cultural perspective to provide a more holistic understanding of Gen Z's preferences globally.

Additionally, another limitation concerns the reliability of the scale used to measure the level of control, which exhibited a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = 0.60$. This score is considered borderline for reliability. Consequently, future studies should delve deeper into understanding the perception of status differences using qualitative methods. A qualitative approach would offer the chance to identify specific facets of organizational culture that influence employer attractiveness.

Thirdly, this study attempted to explain the organizational culture through three dimensions, while not examining the other dimensions provided by the Multi Focus model. Moreover, it only provides insights from one moderator. Thus, future research could focus on extend it to other moderators such as organizational size and income. Organizational culture is a complex concept, so it is important for researchers to investigate the relationship between employer attractiveness of Gen Z employees and organizational culture using various theoretical frameworks.

Finally, there are limitations related to the data used in this study. As noted earlier, the data did not adhere to the assumptions of normality. The lack of a normal distribution raises questions about the validity of some statistical conclusions drawn from the data. Future research should aim to validate these findings with larger sample sizes, which may be more representative of a normal distribution.

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