UMEÅ UNIVERSITET

Millennials' employer preferences and the role Corporate Social Responsibility plays in them

Authors:

Paulina Knopf
(Primary author of 3. Methodology, 4 Results and 6. Conclusion)

Aron Jahn
(Primary author of 1. Introduction,2. Previous studies and theoretical framework and 5. Analysis and discussion)

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to investigate what millennials prefer in their future employers. Three research questions were formulated from the purpose statement: (1) what kind of values do millennials prefer in their future employers? (2) How important are values connected to CSR for millennials? And finally, (3) how do group settings influence the importance of CSR in millennials' employer preferences? In order to understand and explore the stated purpose, literature on the subjects of millennial employer preference, the millennial labor market and the Scandinavian context are used. Furthermore, Maslow's hierarchy of needs was used to understand the motivational psychology of employer preferences. The theoretical framework on commitment, consistency and social influence was used to examine the influence of group dynamics on CSR preferences. The data was gathered through eight semi-structured interviews and one focus group consisting of all participants from the interviews. This interview data was analyzed through a thematic analysis whilst the findings from the focus group were examined through a content analysis. The main themes that were identified that outline millennials' preferences in a future employer were; relationships, meaningfulness, career and structure. Further results from the thematic analysis suggest that millennials who are about to enter the labor market do not regard CSR as a crucial aspect in their employer preferences. Finally, the results from the focus group hint at a disconnect between private and public opinions in relation to CSR preferences.

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1. Introduction

As the first millennials entered the labor force around the early 2000s, they were hit with two recessions that sent them into a downwards trend that left many unemployed and underemployed. Outsourcing, automation and underlying structural changes in the workplace left millennials with a labor market that was vastly different from their parents' days (Hanson & Gulish, 2016). This has made the millennial generation different than any other generation in history, whilst millennials are the most educated generation ever, competition and work requirements have risen substantially, making it difficult to find meaningful work (Carnevale, 2015).

Millennials or commonly known as generation Y, are the demographic following generation X and the baby boomers. A millennial is typically defined as born between the early eighties and the late nineties (Pew Research Center, 2019). Now, millennials have become the largest generation currently in the workforce. However, the workplace has lost a lot of its perceived security. Job security is low, due to competition and automation millennials can no longer expect to work inside the same profession throughout their entire career, they are forced to switch jobs more and don't have the same financial security compared to previous generations. The technology that defines their generations has proven to be both a blessing and a curse. Combined with stagnating wages all over the western world, it looks like the millennials who are entering the labor market can expect an increasingly complex and challenging career (Forbes, 2018).

These circumstances alongside the cultural context have molded the millennial worker, each generation's work life is defined by its unique circumstances, characteristics and history. Whilst work values change slowly over generations, different life experiences are what cause generational clashes in the workplace (Forbes, 2018). Employers recognize these generational differences and have set out to understand the millennial generation. Companies in the United States alone, spend over 70 million a year on consulting in order to understand the millennial generation (Wall Street Journal, 2016).

Defined by the zeitgeist and often stereotyped, there are plenty of opinions about millennials work values, preferences and morals (Forbes, 2018). Compared to previous generations, millennials have a more relaxed attitude towards working hours and attire, they communicate

differently, and the labor market allows them to work more flexibly. Perhaps the most common stereotype of them all being that millennials have an unearned sense of entitlement, that they are overly sensitive, fixated on social justice and easily offended. These are stereotypes and have little to no basis in research (Thomson & Gregory, 2012). Many differences between millennials and older generations are mostly stylistic and rooted in myth (GW Today, 2017). However, there is evidence to support the notion that millennials emphasize the importance of an ethical employer to a greater extent than previous generations.

When polled, millennials come down in favor of organizations that act economically, environmentally and socially responsible because these values reflect their own (Örtqvist & Eklund, 2008). This kind of corporate behavior is known as corporate social responsibility, a set of self-regulating organizational policies that push beyond laws and regulations in the pursuit of acting in an ethical manner. CSR is defined as a company taking economic, social and environmental responsibly on its own accord, e.g. a company that plants a tree for every product sold (Jones, 1980, p.59). This creates an interesting dynamic between millennials and how employers position themselves to attract them, and how organizations communicate CSR and how millennials respond to it.

Whilst CSR is attractive to millennials all over the western world, CSR practices are seen as part of national policy in Scandinavia and especially Sweden (Maitland, 2005). Whilst practices associated with CSR are a relatively new concept in most of the western world, CSR has a longer history in the Scandinavian setting, dating back to the industrial revolution (Ditlev-Simonsen, 2015). Scandinavian countries consistently score among the highest in the social justice index and in research where they examine the correlation between CSR and affective commitment to an employer (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2017; Ditlev-Simonsen, 2015).

Given these conditions this thesis explores what Swedish millennials who are about to enter the labor market prefer in their future employer. When elaborating on this task it asks: (1) what values do millennials prefer in their future employer? (2) How important are values connected to CSR for millennials? The data used to answer these research questions was collected through eight semi-structured interviews with Swedish millennials who were about to enter the job market and was analyzed through a thematic analysis.

Finally, it might be argued that millennials' focus on CSR related issues is a manifestation of a public persona in order to conform to cultural and generational norms. To address this possibility, this thesis attempts to answer a third research question, leading directly from the second. (3) How do group settings influence the importance of CSR in millennials' employer preferences? The data used to answer this research question was gathered through a focus group designed exclusively around this research question. This data was analyzed with the help of a content analysis. Relevant literature and theoretical framework will speak to the findings brought forth in the discussion and analysis.

Purpose statement:
- The purpose of this paper is to investigate what millennials prefer in their future employers.

Research questions:
1. What kind of values do millennials prefer in their future employers?
2. How important are values connected to CSR for millennials?
3. How do group settings influence the importance of CSR in millennials' employer preferences?

This thesis has six further chapters. The second chapter will explore the previous studies and the theoretical framework that speaks to this thesis. The third chapter will discuss the methodology of this thesis. The fourth chapter will present the results of the interviews and the focus group. The fifth chapter will discuss and analyze these results. The sixth and final chapter will be a conclusion of this thesis.

2. Previous Studies and theoretical Framework

This chapter presents previous studies that speak to the subject and purpose of this thesis. These previous studies pertain to the distinct characteristics of the millennial labor market, millennials' work preferences and the Scandinavian context of these subjects. Furthermore, Maslow's hierarchy of needs is introduced as a theoretical framework that will aid our understanding of motivational psychology in the context of the study at hand. Theories regarding consistency and commitment are meant to explain the desire to stay consistent with ourselves, to counteract this the theoretical framework of social influence will examine the

reason for why we might not. These literatures and theories will be used when considering our findings in the analysis and discussion section of this thesis.

2.1 The millennial labor market

Although research suggests that there are differences between millennials and older generations in how they view different values related to their work (Lindgren et al, 2005, p.16), there is no generational difference how much work is valued. Millennials and older generations alike have valued work at the same rate for three decades. At the same time, free time and family has gained importance among all generation, not just millennials. Millennials are not less work-oriented than other generations, however the challenges that millennials face are still new ones. These difficulties are not due to millennials internal work values like the stereotype would let us to believe but rather external labor market forces (Pyöriä et al, 2017).

When the baby boomers arrived at working age, the labor market looked vastly different. With only a high school diploma they could generally find work that would give them a living wage that was enough to raise a family on and sometimes be the sole breadwinner in the household (Moretti, 2012). During this time employers were more willing to provide on the job training to lower skilled workers instead of expecting greater work experience or education (Carnevale, 1988). As members of generation X came of age in the 1980's, manufacturing was on decline, but the economy was booming and therefore there were many high paying jobs available. At this time women and minorities saw a relatively big wage increase in the western hemisphere (Moretti, 2012). But even though equality on the labor market increased when millennials started hitting the job market, the global economic situation had changed for the worse (Cappelli, 2012).

When the first millennials started looking for work around the early 2000s, they were hit with two recessions. This made the fact that millennials are the most educated generation in history obsolete, their academic accomplishments were not sufficient to overcome the impact of two recessions on the global labor market (Hanson &Gulish, 2016). The two recessions hit the entire global economy; however, young adults are the most punished by slack labor markets. They are the last hired and the first fired due to their lack of work experience. In addition, competition for work increased whilst well-paying jobs became scarcer (Carnevale, 2015). Millennials had to settle for jobs below their qualifications in bad times which meant that they also stayed behind their older colleagues in good times. Entering such a slack labor market at the start of

one's career generally has long term negative ramifications on wage development, this was no different for millennials (Kahn, 2010).

The two recessions around the 2000s are however not the only reason for the disproportionate wage development between the generations. Underlying structural changes technologically and economically have also worsened the job prospects for millennials. Employers decreased on the job training whilst they increased their job requirements. Millennial applicants are generally required to have college degrees and relevant job experience before their application is considered. In contrast baby boomers entered a less competitive labor market were the only requirement was a high school diploma to earn a living wage (Carnevale, 2015). Entering into a labor market weakened by two recessions coupled with structural changes has left millennials underemployed (Hanson & Gulish, 2016). Automation and globalization have also made many blue-collar jobs obsolete, by outsourcing manufacturing to less economically developed countries or replacing workers with robots. This has left a gap in the middle of the labor market where well-paid jobs used to be. The western labor market is now defined by high competition and a big gap between high skill, high wage jobs and low skill, low wage jobs (Carnevale & Rose, 2015). Because of these modern changes in the labor market, the millennial work experience is defined either by low paying service minded labor or high-wage, high-skill jobs, the generational wage differences are however not in favor of the millennials (Hanson &Gulish, 2016).

2.2 Millennials' work preferences

Every generation comes with its distinct characteristics, millennials work place preferences differ from other generation mainly through a greater focus on personal fulfillment and meaning (Örtqvist and Eklund, 2008). This is because millennials are defined by their attitude towards self-reliance and self-realization (Lindgren et al, 2005, p.16). These attitudes originate from the environment that has molded this generation, a fast pace, modern information society that has made millennials the first global generation (Parment, 2008, p.20).

Örtqvist and Eklund (2008) explain that generational values are formed in youth and that they generally stay with the individual through life. Millennials travel more in their youth, enjoy longer educations, enter the workforce and have kinds later in life compared to previous generations. Örtqvist and Eklund go on to explain that Millennials do this because their generations defining features are their individuality, belief in technology and familiarity with a

fast pace society. These features enable them to explore the world and develop a sense of impatience, unparalleled by older generations (Örtqvist and Eklund, 2008). Gardner elaborates and explains that there are generational differences in work values when it comes to the psychological contract between the employee and the employer. Younger generations prefer values that emphasize status, freedom, social involvement and equality to a greater extent than older generations do (Gardner, 2008, p.891).

Furthermore, this global access to information, especially in the western hemisphere has made millennials more aware of their rights, which has manifested itself in their employer preferences. Örtqvist and Eklund (2008) claim that millennials generally have a clear ethical expectation in their future employers. They argue that millennials not only prefer ethical employers but also demand that organizations take social, economic and environmental responsibilities (Örtqvist and Eklund, 2008).

According to data from the Pew Research Center (2019), which has tracked social and demographic trends in the United States of America (USA), millennials are more socially conscious and supportive of liberal polices than older generations. 56 percent of millennials believe in a link between climate change and human activity, compared to 45 percent of baby boomers. 25 percent of millennials are familiar with using gender-neutral pronouns, 61 percent of millennials regard a more diverse society positively. It is however important to note that these numbers apply to the population of the USA. These statistics can therefore only be seen as a hint in the right direction and cannot be taken at face value in the context of this study. This is because the participants in this study all are from Sweden. The statistics from Pew Research Center can be used to explain the millennial stereotype, as the USA serves as one of the biggest hubs for popular culture and consequently for perpetuating stereotypes (Pew research center, 2019).

Ohlrich (2015) explains that engaging in CSR has recently become corporate strategy, it is beneficial for corporation in order to grow market share, remain competitive and enhance customer loyalty. However, it does not have the same positive impact on talent acquisition and retention. Ohlrich (2015) argues that millennials are not as attracted by an employer's CSR program, but rather by the values employers perpetuate. These findings suggest that millennials are not attracted by or made more loyal to a company due to its engagement in CSR (Ohlrich, 2015, p. 111).

2.3 The Scandinavian context

In understanding CSR, the cultural aspect becomes important. In Germany CSR is associated with providing good working opportunity for employers, in China CSR is synonymous with high quality products, In the UK CSR generally means a greater focus on environmental issues. In the Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway and Sweden) however, CSR is often seen as a part of the national policy (Maitland, 2005).

Scandinavians have a general strong belief and expectation that employers should act in accordance with CSR. Studies show that 90 percent of Scandinavians want companies to take a responsible stance in general with emphasis on treatment of employees and environmental responsibility (Apéria et al, 2004). In another study examining how Scandinavians value CSR, a positive correlation between affective commitment to a company and an employee's perception of CSR was found (Ditlev-Simonsen, 2015).

Furthermore, in Sweden, the primary context of this study, the population is arguably among the top, if not the most socially conscious and liberal when it comes to issues related to CSR in Scandinavia. According to the Social Justice Index (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2017) that measures factors like poverty prevention, discrimination and social cohesion, Sweden is the second most socially just country in the European Union. Sweden has consistently been placed among the top two countries in the index since the index was created in 2008 (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2017).
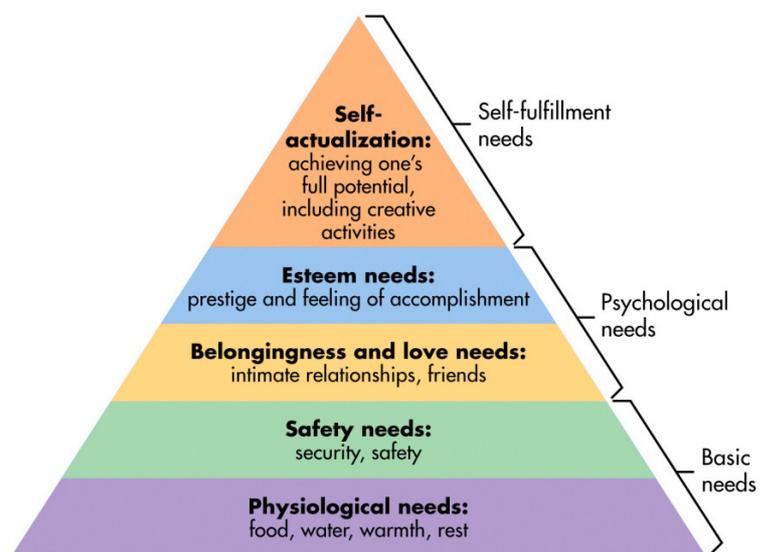
CSR practices are thus deeply embedded in the Scandinavian labor market. CSR has however not been established through corporate marketing but rather through strong state intervention. Whilst corporate philanthropy in the USA is fairly common, the Scandinavians deal with this through social programs funded by the government (Ditlev-Simonsen &Brøgger, 2013). Scandinavians familiarity with CSR practices also comes from the historically strong role that labor unions have played since the industrial revolution. Involvement from the government, community and employees is a norm in Scandinavia and has played a crucial part in establishing and practicing CSR. This attitude is mirrored in the Scandinavian leadership style which emphasizes inclusiveness, informality as well as flat hierarchies. Recognizing this distinct, non-authoritarian leadership style compared to the rest of the world means that CSR plays an even greater role for Scandinavians (Ditlev-Simonsen &Brøgger, 2013). These aspects of the Scandinavian leadership model are becoming attractive internationally. As the global economy

is moving away from manual labor towards automation and large parts of the workforce are engaged in white collar jobs, the need to tie employees to an employer through CSR practices becomes greater.

2.4 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs helps us understand and theorize millennials motivational psychology. The theory explains which underlying needs have to be fulfilled in order to motivate people. In this context, Maslow's hierarchy is used to examine which factors impact employer preference among millennials. Understanding these needs and in which order they manifest themselves may be an important key to understanding what drives millennials' preferences in their future employer (Maslow, 1943, p.370). Maslow argued that humans are multifaceted and complex. This means we have an inner urgency to put food on the table, to survive, and tend to our most basic needs. At the same time, we also strive for abstract and psychological needs, above all, our desire for inner fulfillment and self-actualization.

Maslow developed a hierarchy, which can be illustrated like a pyramid. Where the most basic needs are at the bottom of the pyramid and the psychological and self-fulfilling needs are at the middle and top. The lowest needs had to be met first, in order to progress upward in the hierarchy (Maslow, 1987, p.56). The first two steps in the hierarchy were the basic needs, those needs that were necessary to sustain life like food, water, security and safety. These steps are at the bottom of the hierarchy because they tend to drive behavior the most, if someone finds themselves without water or in danger these needs quickly become the most pressing concerns any induvial can have. According to Maslow the need for security does not only encompass the physical wellbeing of an individual but also includes emotional realm of safety and security. An example of this would be the financial safety of an individual, would this concern manifest itself this need for financial safety would override other less pressing needs. Maslow therefor argued that these basic needs would take president, and all the other less essential needs like friendship and social connection would take a backseat (Maslow, 1987, p.15-23).

When these needs are met, the individual would move on to the next two steps consisting of the psychological needs. These psychological needs are the needs for social interactions and self-esteem. A social need is the feeling of wanting to belong to a particular group or person, in the workplace this would be the relationship between colleagues and superiors. At home, the relationship to friends and family. Assuming that we have met our lower needs, the need for esteem would be the next step in the hierarchy that could be driving our behavior according to Maslow. Self-esteem is driven by a desire for prestige, these needs are met by acceptance from others, status or material rewards like the individuals job title, office size or country club membership. Maslow argued that the esteem need is met by feeling successful and good about one self (Maslow, 1987, p.15-23).

On the top of the pyramid is the need for self-actualization, this is the need to reach one's full potential. According to Maslow reaching our fullest potential is determined by our individual capacity, therefore what a person's fullest potential is, varies greatly. Self-actualization is achieved through education or developing or improving skills. However, it can be argued that the last level of the pyramid cannot be achieved because becoming a better version of oneself is a never-ending process. This in turn means that the need for self-actualization will always keep driving our motivation assuming all the needs below are met (Maslow, 1987, p.125).

When Maslow's hierarchy of needs is transferred to examine the factors that influence millennials workplace motivations, the results show that this generation is not only more diverse demographically but also with respect to their motivating factors (Calk & Patrick, 2017, p.137). Millennials motivational needs are hard to generalize but differ significantly from previous generations. Belonging, teamwork and inclusiveness are high motivational factors. This result is also consistent with other findings concerning work attitudes of millennials (Josiam et al. 2009, p.5) and the generational differences in work values (Twenge et al. 2010, p.117). Millennials do not value security as much as other generations, this finding reinforces the notion that millennials change jobs and therefore engage in riskier behavior in order to find more meaningful or challenging work, thereby jeopardizing the need for security in exchange for the opportunity to fulfill a psychological need. This would seemingly be contradiction to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Calk and Patrick explain that in order for employers to attract and retain millennials, focus should be on a collaborative, inclusive workplace that promotes belonging. In addition, recruiters should emphasize meaningful and challenging work to

provide millennials with the opportunity to meet the need of self-esteem. Salary, insurance, retirement and other seemingly more basic needs take a backseat (Calk & Patrick, 2017, p.137).

2.5 Consistency and commitment

To answer the question of why people, change their views in a public setting, and thereby change their previous stance on a subject, we have to address the theoretical framework that supports the notion of our desire to stay consistent with our younger self.

Researchers have been able to demonstrate and exploit our desire for consistency through experiments, where participants were asked to make a small or insignificant commitment which then made the participants more likely to make bigger commitments that followed up on the smaller one. This method is commonly used by advertisers and is called the foot-in-the-door technique. Burger suggest that getting a small initial commitment increases the likelihood significantly that the same or a bigger commitment will be done by the same individual (Burger, 1999, p.211).

Freedman and Fraser provided empirical evidence in support of Burgers reasoning. This was done through an experiment designed to showcase the impact of an initial smaller commitment on a second, bigger commitment. Residents of a neighborhood were asked to put up a small sign that encouraged driver safety. These residents were in turn more likely then put up a big sign telling drivers to drive carefully (Freedman, Fraser, 1966, p.195).

This literature showcases that we like to act consistent with our previous statements or actions. If we do not, we run the risk of falling into cognitive dissonance. This occurs when our statements and actions don't match and it creates the uncomfortable feeling of not being true to our word, or in other words when we hold two thoughts that are inconsistent with each other. The feeling of cognitive dissonance can be one of both physical and psychological discomfort due to the conflict in our attitudes, beliefs or actions (Crisp & Turner, 2014, p.98). Therefore, we have a strong desire to avoid cognitive dissonance, through following up on our own words with actions. In our case this would mean following up on the views expressed in private with being consistent with those views in a group (Crisp& Turner, 2014, p.99).

However, if we cannot address this internal imbalance, or dissonance, we look for ways to justify our own inconsistent behavior. According to Festinger (1957), the father of cognitive

dissonance theory, the motivation that occurs to get out of, or avoid a state of dissonance all together is the heart of the theory (Crisp& Turner, 2014, p.99). We will do whatever is necessary to justify our own internal inconsistency, if the discrepancy between our actions or thoughts cannot be explained away, we resort to changing our attitude so it will match the behavior we have exhibited (Crisp& Turner, 2014, p.100).

To summarize, the theoretical evidence of foot-in-the-door compliance and the desire to stay consistent with our previous statements would suggest that people would be unwilling to change their views on their own preferences in future employers, especially when there is seemingly nothing to gain from doing so. Furthermore, this is supported by the theoretical framework of cognitive dissonance, which explains that we act in a manner to avoid being caught in our own inconsistencies by others or ourselves. If we despite the theoretical evidence discussed above, act in an inconsistent manner, it would seem that this contradiction is due to the group environment the participants were asked to state their preferences in.

2.6 Social influence

Social influence explains and discusses how our attitude and behavior change when we find ourselves in the presence of others (Crisp& Turner, 2014, p.116). It all starts with the group norm, this norm can be implied, remembered or simply imagined. As long as this norm exists in one's mind, social psychologists would argue that it has an effect on us. This social norm can be likened to a stereotype, for instance that members of the working class tend to have a low IQ, or a more relevant stereotype in our case; that millennials are overly concerned with social justice (Crisp& Turner, 2014, p.120).

We conform to different social norms in almost all situations in life, we adjust our behavior depending on the situational variable. We wear a certain dress code or adjust our behavior to match a specific social setting. Some of this conformity is non conscious, in other words, we don't even know it's happening. Like when we smile or laugh along to mimic someone else's behavior. However, we do not merely restrict ourselves to mimicking others behavior. We are also prone to do so in thought. Therefor the theory of conformity describes how we adjust our behavior and thinking to follow the norms of the group we belong to (Crisp & Turner, 2014, p.121).

Asch (1951) was able to showcase the power of conformity in his groundbreaking visual perception experiment. On the surface participants were asked test their visual perception, in reality Asch was observing how social pressure would affect the participants performance. The purpose of the experiment was to examine the social effects on the participants judgement when there was a mismatch between public and private attitudes. Asch (1951) found that when participants gave their judgements in private, only one percent failed, confirming that the experiment was easy. However, when the social element was introduced 76 percent of participants conformed to the majority false judgement call in at least one of the trails. Asch (1951) reasoned that if participants would be uncertain about a judgement call and the task would be difficult, it would make sense to conform to the majority and use their viewpoint as a guide. In this experiment this was clearly not the case, as the task was too easy for anyone to have doubt in their private opinion (Asch, 1951).

The explanation for this seemingly curious behavior is called *normative influence*. Normative influence explains that we tend to adjust our private attitudes to match the attitudes of the group in order to gain acceptance or praise from the other group members. Deutsch and Gerard argue that we all have a desire to be liked, and through conforming to normative influence we not only want to appear in a positive light, we also avoid being sanctioned through bullying or exclusion (Crisp& Turner, 2014, p.123).

Normative influence goes a long way in explaining why conformity occurs in Asch's (1951) experiment (Asch, 1951). Normative influence would arguably also go a long way in explaining why millennials would change their privately expressed preferences in a future employer to match the *normative* attitude of the majority. However, in this discussion it is important that our study did not involve any use of confederates to produce normative conformity, but solely relied on the social norm attributed to millennials preferences.

3. Methodology

In this chapter we explain the methodology behind the thesis. We present our data collection and our method selection. We also discuss and reflect over our own preunderstanding throughout the gathering of the data and the ethical considerations we have made during the collection of data.

3.1 Method selection

According to Bryman (2011) the basic principles of qualitative research is the pursuit of understanding how people in different contexts perceive reality, from their perspective. Further he states that qualitative research starts from the participant's perspective. Since our purpose is to understand what millennials value in future employers and also how important CSR is for them, we found it suitable to use a qualitative approach. It gives us as researchers an opportunity to get a deeper understanding of what is important for the participants and why. Through interviews we also get the opportunity to see reactions, emotional expressions, something one misses in a quantitative study. This is important since we want to learn about and also immerse ourselves in their thoughts and values when it comes to their future employer preferences (Bryman, 2011, p.167).

3.1.1 Researcher Positionality.

Since we in qualitative research, work close to our material and as researcher are a part of the process, reflexivity is an important concept. Reflexivity means that during the process we consciously reflect on our own understanding and how our role as a researcher affects the entire process from choice of subject to how we collect data, the results we get and also how we analyze this.

We behind this essay are both students at Umeå University and 22 and 28 years of age. We ourselves have reflected on future workplaces, based on our own desire to make a career while at the same time ethical and more complex issues concerning CSR also are important issues for us when it comes to future employers. It was these thoughts that created our curiosity to what other students think is important in a future employer, it is this curiosity that has been the basis for this thesis. Since we are a part of the millennial generation, and about to enter the workforce, we share many common characteristics with the individuals we interviewed, this we see as strength of our thesis as it enables a deeper interpretation of how our participants think and feel (Kvale et al, 2017, p.327). Since much of what we write about in the essay can be related to ourselves, it is important that we reflect over our own preconceptions. That we allow ourselves to take a step back, to see how our own preconceptions can affect how we interpret and move on in our work in order to create a transparency in the work of this thesis (Bryman, 2011, p.401).

3.1.2 Subject selection

Since we want to study millennials, the people we interviewed were between 23 and 32 of age. All interviewees were studying their last year at Umeå University. The reason why we chose these students is because they will soon enter the labor market and probably have both expectations and hopes for where they can work. The participants came from 4 different institutions, we tried to get a broad spread because CSR awareness may vary depending on what you are studying. We have used a convenience sampling strategy because of the time limitations. That means that the participants we have collected are through our own contacts at the university, some of the participant we knew and some of them we contacted through mutual friends. The reason we choose this strategy was because we wanted to be able to do both interviews and a focus group with the participants during this time frame. We discussed whether this would be a disadvantage in our research, but since we did not ask about sensitive issues, our hope is that this will not be an obstacle to our research.

3.2 Data collection

We contacted the participants through email or phone call to ask if they could consider participating in the research. We talked roughly about how the study was structured with individual interviews with one of us and then a focus group where 7 others who also had made an interview will participate. We were clear to inform the participants that their participation to some extent won't be anonymous by participating in the focus group. Given this we urged everyone to show respect for the other participants and respect everyone's anonymity. We also sent out an information letter to them and contacted them to confirm that they still wanted to participate in the study and select a time and place for the interview (see Appendix 1).

First, we did 8 interviews, we divided it to four interviews each, the interviews lasted for 20-30 minutes, we transcribed the interviews we had conducted. After all the interviews were conducted the participants then took part in the focus group where we both participated and facilitated the group discussion. The participation in our study was not incentivized financially or through any other means, participants agreed to participate without any palpable gain to them. Thereby we ensured that participants took an active role in their own participation. The interviews and focus group were conducted for two weeks period in April of 2019.

3.2.1 Interviews

We used a semi-structured approach and followed an interview guide (see Appendix 2) since we want the participants to be able to address what is important to them regarding future

employers. In order to get reliable answers, we asked as broad and open questions as possible and tried to avoid leading questions (Bryman, 2011, p.415). We started the interview with open questions about what is important regarding a future employer, we also asked questions about what they didn´t want from a future employer. The purpose of the introductory questions was to mainly see what was important for them, but also if they themselves raised whether it was important with values regarding CSR or not. Furthermore, in the interview, the issues were addressed to different areas concerning CSR depending on whether the interviewees themselves addressed these in their initial answers. (For more detailed information about the interview questions see Appendix 2).

Before we did the interviews, we let the participants choose where and when the interview would take place so that they would feel as comfortable as possible during the interview. It was also important for us that we could sit in a single place so that we were not disturbed and that the participants felt that they could speak freely about the topic (Bryman, 2011, p.421). We recorded the interviews and after each interview we transcribed them, while our memory was still was fresh (Kvale et al, 2017, p.66). Since the interviews were conducted in Swedish, we have translated the quotes that we show in the analysis and discussion to English.

3.2.2 Focus group

Since we wanted to understand how group setting affects the values that an individual has when it comes to future employers, we found it suitable to also do a focus group with the people we had interviewed. This because we wanted to see if their views changed by attending a group discussion. The focus group allow us to study how individuals jointly create preferences and opinions by discussion their thoughts and expectations of future employers with other students about to enter the work force (Kvale et al, 2014, p.191, Bryman et al, 2011, p.440). According to Bryman, the focus group distinguishes itself against group interviews since focus group wants to deepen within a certain theme or subject area compared to group interviews which often have the purpose of replacing individual interviews to quickly generate information.

We tried to be as passive as possible through the entire meeting when the purpose of a focus group is that the participants are the ones who lead the conversation and discuss the topic. Only when needed, we asked questions to keep the discussion alive (Kvale et al, 2014, p.193).

At the time of the focus group, the participants in the initial phase got to see two work descriptions, one of which raised values for the CSR while the other raised individual career opportunities. It was important for us that the job descriptions were real so that it would be realistic. The companies we took these job descriptions from were Tesla and KPMG, but the participants were not informed of this. The job descriptions are presented below.

Tesla
Is about to solve the world's most important problem together with talented people who share our passion to change the world. We have an energy-rich and innovative culture with a high tempo. With offices around the world, we work to build an inclusive environment where everyone, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, age or background, can do their best.

KPMG
You will get the opportunity to work with the country's most exciting company and organization, in Sweden and international. Working in a broad and internationally leading business such as KPMG not only means that you help our customers succeed, together with your colleagues you get enormous opportunities to develop and create your own future.

They had to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the two different job descriptions, and then see if they could agree as a group on which company they would prefer to work for. At the end of the focus group the participant got to see which company the job descriptions belonged to and then we asked them if this had any impact on their choice. The focus group lasted for approximately 40 minutes and none of the participants showed dissatisfaction in the participation of the focus group.

3.3 Analysis
We chose to use thematic analysis in order to analyze the interview material in a reliable way. Thematic analysis is not tied to any pre-existing theoretical framework and therefore it can be used within different theoretical frameworks. We had an inductive approach in the coding work where the material led us further in the process and we did not try to fit it into a preexisting coding frame. We chose to use thematic analysis since it is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns in the data. Analyzing the text, we used the steps Braun and Clark describes (Braun & Clark,2006, p.86). To get a broader and deeper analysis of the text, we both read all the interviewees and code them.

Following the first step we started by reading the text and acquainting ourselves with it, after which we started with the text-close coding meaning we read the transcribed interviews line by line as we coded interesting features throughout the entire interviewee. After coding the text, we began to go through all the codes and what our participants raised on the basis of our questions to see similarities and differences that existed (Braun &Clark, 2006, p.87). Based on this we created different themes that we found interesting and captured something important from the text. In thematic analysis as in other qualitative research we have an active role as we read the text and identifying the themes and patterns in the text. (Braun & Clark, 2006, p.80). For the coding process see Appendix 3 in the appendices.

We have chosen to record and transcribe the group discussion to be able to repeat what was said during the focus group. In our focus group, they had to discuss argue for and against the two job ads. (Tjora, 2012 p.97, Bryman, 2011, p.177)

Analysis of the focus group started already at the time of collection by observing how they interacted with the others in the group. When we wanted to see how their opinions were influenced by discussing in a group, we used content analysis, which means that coding categories are derived directly from text data. With a targeted approach, analysis begins with a theory or relevant research results as a guide for initial codes. We considered this to fit well into the interpretation of data as we want to analyze what they say in the focus group with the individual interviews (Olsson et al., 2011 p.138).

3.4 Ethics

Throughout the research process, we have balanced the research requirement that exists and also the individual protection requirement, and it´s main rules which are the information requirements, the consent requirement, the confidentiality requirement, and the use requirement in order to protect those who participated in the research. When selecting participants, we informed them that the research would involve both an interview and focus group so that they were aware of what was expected of them. We also informed that the participation is voluntary and that they can cancel participation at any time. Also, we informed that it will be published in Diva when it is complete.

Since they will participate in a focus group, we informed that the anonymity will be limited to the other participants. In this thesis we will not mention them by name or other characteristics

that might reduce their anonymity. To create a safe and secure environment for our participants during the focus group has been a challenge that we encountered during our research process. By being clear and repeatedly informed all participants about the duty of secrecy and the respect that applies when participating during the focus group for the other participants. This we did because we wanted everyone to feel as safe and comfortable as possible to discuss the topics during the focus group (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017, p.7).

Because we want to investigate the attitudes and opinions, we have considered how to inform the participants in order to not influencing them during the process but at the same time taken into account the ethical aspects of the information requirement. In addition to these challenges, we as researchers have been as open and transparent as possible in our dealings with the interviewees to create a good and reliable process as possible (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017, p.12).

In the analysis and discussion section we have chosen not to describe the participants by number because the participants were involved in both interviews and in a focus group and we want to safeguard their anonymity throughout the entire process (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017, p.11).

4. Results

Reading and analyzing the interview transcriptions, we found themes that the participants addressed as important factors regarding future employers and what they consider relevant to CSR. When we asked the question of what was most important in a future employer, we found four main themes. The themes are, Relationships, Meaningfulness, Structure and Career, these themes encompass multiple smaller themes. During the process of creating main themes we found that themes correlate to each other to some extent, but we also found differences between themes. Below we describe the different themes we found and what characterizes these regarding what our participants found important in a future employer.

In addition to answer how important CSR is for the students we have three themes that are based on how important CSR is in a future employer. This because we want to create as clear picture as possible of the results. The result from the focus group will be reported under 4.2 where we discuss how opinions have changed in relation to the interviewees.

4.1 Interviews

4.1.1 Themes connected to millennials preferences in a future employer

Relationships

Many of the interviewees pointed out that it is important for them that they have good relationship at the workplace. Both between the employees at the workplace and also to their boss. In the text below, we will address to the sub-themes that we found which is communication, community and good relationship, that the interviewees considered as important factors.

When it comes to good relationship, it is important that one's boss contributed to good relations and not just steered and posed. One of the participants gave an example that it would be good with a speed date with one's boss to create a good relationship in this way a feeling of friendship would be possible. Also, when we addressed the question of what they did not want for values in a future employer many replied that they did not want a manager who only control and runs over them, a place where there is no opportunity for good relations.

The relationship with their peer colleagues also proved to be very important for the interviewees. It was also important that they could talk with their colleagues and feel comfortable in their company. Regarding relationships, activities with colleagues were taken up as an important factor for them when it comes to choosing future employers. For example, activity days, after-work and other events that were not work-related were brought up as important. Because they felt this could lead to the opportunity to get to know their colleagues outside of work. The information we received shows that the participants consider it important that relationships to the peers should feel genuine. Some of the interviewees felt that this could give a sense of true fellowship. That they did not just came because they worked at the same workplace, but because they wanted to socialize with each other.

Good communication was also an important factor for the interviewees in order to feel that it is a workplace they could enjoy in the future. They addressed to the importance of trust and communication at a future workplace because it essential to have a good working climate, but also for being able to develop and make a career. In summary, in terms of relationships and also communication, several interviewees returned to it as the most important factors regarding what is important to them in a future employer.

Meaningfulness

That their work should feel meaningful was brought up as an important factor among the interviewees. The sub themes behind this theme were, do something that affects, develop and make changes, intellectually stimulating. Some of them said it was their own goals and the will to self-fulfillment that created meaning. The feeling that the job was rewarding for them in the sense that they got something out of it them self. That they saw their own work effort important.

Others pointed out that it was important that their jobs should be intellectually stimulating to be able to create a meaning for them. With this meant showing that they wanted different work tasks, that one day is not similar to the other one, that they get varying and challenging tasks that they feel they can handle. Another thing that they thought created meaning was to feel that their work contributed to an improvement in society. That they could see that their work made a change for the better.

Structure

Regarding what is important in a future workplace, we also found that the hierarchy at the workplace is of great importance. The sub themes that created the main theme structure are, flat hierarchy, clear tasks, clear corporate structure, security, flexibility. This theme is closely rooted in how relationships are at the workplace, under this theme we want to highlight how the structure and power hierarchy at the workplace is important for our interviewees.

They pointed out that it is important to be able to influence their work situation and work tasks and not just be controlled by a manager. Some of them talked about horizontal leadership style, meaning that the boss and coworkers are at the same level when it comes to creating a good work environment. Another thing that was raised regarding the structure of the workplace and the opportunity to influence their own working conditions was that there should be a creativity and flexibility at the workplace. Where they can be flexible by setting their own worktimes.

During the interviewees some of the participants considered that large companies were associated with good and clear structure. They believed that big companies to a greater extent had a good structure and therefore would be a good company to work at. Among the interviewees it was important with structure at the workplace. For many of them structure was

associated with a sense of security, in what was expected of them and what they could expect from their boss and co-workers.

Career

For many, it was also important to be able to make a career in a future employee. The sub themes are, be able to develop, make a career and salary. This theme was something that they brought up mostly on their own in the interview. If there were other workers at a company who previously had made a career, they considered it as a great motivation to start working for that company.

The opportunity to feel that you can develop and make a career was a clear factor for which workplace many of the interviewees would choose. Some of the interviewees felt that it was not so important to make a career. They saw the relationships with colleagues and boss as more important. When it comes to salary, many people initially said that it was not the most important factor when it came to choose future jobs. The important thing was that there were opportunities to develop and make a career at the company and that the salary comes in second place.

4.1.2 Themes connected to the importance of CSR
CSR does not impact job preferences

When we asked our participants about how CSR plays a role regarding future employers, some of the participants felt that when it comes to getting a job after graduating it is the employer's market therefore CSR will not impact their job preferences. The reason why they considered this was because they will be new graduates entering the labor market and believe that their ability to choose a workplace is small. Therefore, they will take a job they get and not make demands about whether the company engaged on issues concerning CSR.

Another view among the participants was that CSR did not play a crucial role as long as the job worked well, and they enjoyed it. It appeared during the focus group that there were other factors that were important in a future workplace and that values associated with CSR did not have any impact on job choice among the participants When we asked questions about CSR, it was very clear that the interviewees either did not reflect on or did not care whether the employer was working on issues concerning CSR. Some of the participants were also skeptical about this and felt that they did this for self-gain to create an attractive brand.

CSR is a bonus but not crucial

Some of the participants said that they saw CSR as something positive, but not as decisive to whether they would work there or not. Among the interviewees some of them saw CSR as something positive but at the same time as a bonus and not decisive in terms of future workplaces. Among the interviewees who felt that it was positive that they worked on issues concerning CSR, it emerged during the interview that certain issues concerning CSR were important to them, but that it still didn´t affect whether they would take a job or not.

Another interviewee thought regarding what is important also showed that most had not reflected on this. But nevertheless, felt it was positive if the workplace engaged in such matters. They also raised that it aren´t something that they themselves actively check or are looking for in the future workplaces.

When we brought up questions about CSR many of the interviewees who career is driven thought it was good with CSR if it made the branding of the company better and that in the long run made them look good, that their own status on the job market will increase.

CSR is crucial

When we asked questions about CSR, many of the interviewee considered that it was very important. But further into the interview it turned out that it was only one of the participants who stated that it would be a decisive factor in whether she could work at a workplace.

Furthermore, when they discussed gender equality, many raised the importance of an equal pay and that it was important to get the same salary regardless of gender. For some it was important but not crucial and for a few it was a decisive factor. But at the same time through the interviewees many of the participants said that it would not affect if they would take a job or not even though it sounded important initially.

4.2 Focus group

In this section we will highlight how the participants relate to CSR during the focus group in contrast to the interviewees. Also, we want to see the impact a group setting has on the participants. In order to do so we have the two workplaces we presented during the focus group. The two workplace descriptions are different in the sense that one addresses CSR more, that

company is Tesla while the second company which is KPMG mainly addresses to the individual career opportunities in their descriptions.

During the interview, one of the participants stated that the question of whether the workplace was working on issues concerning CSR was decisive in case she would choose to work there. The others considered that CSR was a bonus but not something that decided whether they could work there or not.

During the focus group matters regarding CSR were something that received more attention, something that was not addressed to so much by the participants at the interview before we asked questions specifically about CSR. During the focus group, quite soon everyone reasoned that it was important with a workplace that is inclusive when it so comes to gender, and nationality. They for example brought up diversity, one of the participants brought up that it was good that one of the companies highlighted this in their text.

All participants agreed and said that it was a great reason why they felt they could imagine working for that particular company with that job description. The importance of CSR the participants returned to continuously during the focus group as an important factor why they would like to choose that workplace. There were only two participants who insisted that it was important for them with career opportunities and that they would choose it in front of CSR values.   Other values considered CSR for example environment never came up during the focus group.

Both workplace descriptions, mentioned how the work was meaningful. Participants highlighted Tesla's text and how the description felt. Most of the participants said it felt too overpowering and that it seems like the workplace put a lot of pressure on the staff. What we could see was that a job, where the work goal felt overpowering did not appeal to the participants to a great extent. Even though they said in their individual and the group setting that it was important to make a difference and feel that the work they do is meaningful.

When the participants discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the companies, we could see that many of the participants were offering to change their mind so that everyone would agree on one of the companies. Some of the participants were confident in their opinions and felt that a particular company was the best. During their discussion the participants had

difficulties to agree on a company. They all saw positive and negative factors of the both companies during their discussion and we could see that most of the participants stayed quite open in their wives.

In the end of the focus group when we showed them, the company names it was clear that the all that had advocated for KPMG wanted to work for Tesla, because of the brand name. This was something that we saw appealed to all the participants and the fact that they previously discussed that Tesla's work description felt unattainable and very demanding for those who worked there were as blown away. Their brand weighted this out and everyone felt it was worth it if they got the opportunity to work there. We asked them if the name changed their opinions and if it made the choice easier and they all said that it is the brand, it´s a company that's developing and they saw their opportunity to make a career.

5. Analysis and discussion

In order to understand the results in the context of the research questions and how it speaks to the literature and the theoretical framework, this chapter is divided into three parts. Each part analyzes, theorizes and discusses each research question separately.

5.1 What kind of values do millennials prefer in their future employers?

From the thematic analysis of the interviews, four themes were identified that can guide the discussion and answer what kind of values millennials prefer in their future employers? These themes are: relationships, meaningfulness, structure and career.

The empirical data suggests that the social aspect of work being fulfilled is a crucial aspect to millennials in their future employer. During the interviews the desire for good relationships between co-workers and superiors was stated frequently. Below are two quotes that were expressed during the interviews that showcase the importance that millennials put on relationships with everyone in their working environment.

" It's important that you get to know your boss. Maybe a speed date when you start working in order to get to know everyone."

"... It's important that you can talk to your colleagues, it's important that everyone is comfortable with each other ..."

If seen in the context of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the theme of *relationships* fits into Maslow's third need of *belonging and love*. The theme *relationships* is highly prevalent in the interview data, in line with Maslow's theoretical framework this would suggest that millennials need fulfilling relationships before the higher needs can be addressed. These findings are supported by previous research in the field, that suggests that teamwork, belonging and inclusiveness are high motivational factors for millennials (Twenge et al. 2010. p.117; Josiam et al. 2009, p.5). This could also be seen in the interview data, as the participants often mentioned relationships first and often valued it above other themes as well. These findings are consistent with literature of Calk and Patrick, who describe that millennials do not value safety as much as previous generations and often choose relationships and a good work environment over financial benefits (Calk, Patrick, 2017, p.137).

To earn a good living, advance in one's job and earn status in the workplace was something all participants expressed a desire for. There were individual differences, however statements that fit into the theme of *Career* were expressed by everyone. Two excerpts from the interview data that exemplify the importance of *Career* to the participants are presented below:

"… the opportunity to grow in a company is important. That you know you can and people have done it before you."
"… The first salary does not play such a big role. After a while it will definitely be important, absolutely. After all, income is important."

The question of categorizing the *Career* theme in the right hierarchical order in Maslow's pyramid is determined by what is meant by the participants. Participants were asked to describe what they prefer in an employer and ended up in a sense describing their ideal employer. In this description it became apparent that things like salary, career advancement were not seen as requirements to survive. They were rather seen as a means to express the need of self-esteem, being able to express prestige and a feeling of accomplishment. Therefore, the theme of *Career* would in this case be categorized as an *esteem needs* in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. As *belonging and love* comes prior to the *esteem needs* in Maslow's hierarchy, the theoretical framework would also suggest that theme of *career* could be seen as less important than the theme of *relationships* for millennials who are about to enter the workplace.

Structure was the third theme identified. This theme originated from frequent mentions of a flexible work structure, clearly defined goals and responsibilities and a flat hierarchy in the interview data. The findings suggest that a good work structure is essential for millennials in the workplace, as exemplified below:

"... A flat hierarchy where you can communicate openly and have influence over your own job..."

"... A creative space where I can set my own schedule, where I can be flexible"

Structure is harder to categorize into Maslow's hierarchical pyramid as the theme could belong to several of Maslow's needs. Nonetheless, it can be argued that the *structure* theme, just like the *career* theme fits as an *esteem need* in Maslow's hierarchy. Structure is a theme that encompasses the statements made in the interviews that all revolve around using structure to better one's own position and prestige in the workplace. Structure as a theme in our analysis can therefore be seen as a means to an end, a flat hierarchy for being able to quicker influence office politics than it was possible in a traditional hierarchy. A clearly defined goal and purpose can arguably serve to be an easier path to advancement through the company ranks.

Lastly, the theme of *meaning* was identified in the interview data. The theme encompasses all statements that express desire for engaging in something impactful, engaging in something that has meaning, changing, innovating and doing something intellectually stimulating. This theme originated from statements expressing a need for *meaning* like the two below:

"I don't want to work for this large company where you're just a gear in the machinery. I work for my own values and not for someone else's gain."

"... I would like to work with something that is intellectually stimulating"

Although this theme has elements that could just as easily be categorized as esteem needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, as this theme also emphasizes personal prestige through doing something impactful, it was arguable even more fitting to be categorized as *self-actualization* in the top of Maslow's pyramid. The reason being that the responses that make up the theme of *meaning* have an undertone of a desire to express one's creativity and achieve one's full potential. Calk and Patrick elaborate on the importance of meaning for millennial workers. They

explain that basic needs like financial security, retirement or insurance often take a backseat to employers who instead provide them with meaning and self-esteem. (Calk, Patrick, 2017, p.137).

The interview themes suggest that millennials value *relationships*, *career*, *structure* and *meaning* in their future employer. It is notable that all these themes fit into the top of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. None of the bottom two, most essential needs were addressed. This might be because of the interview context; the interviewees were asked to state their employer preferences whilst studying in Sweden. Sweden is a welfare state, where most citizens do not have to fear that Maslow's two most basic needs aren't met (Ahlberg, 2009, p.157). This frees up room for progressing up Maslow's motivational pyramid.

Furthermore, the themes created from the interview data suggests that millennials motivational needs are hard to generalize but differ significantly from previous generations. The literature suggests that millennials value relationships in the workplace greatly, even more so than previous generations (Josiam et al. 2009, p.5; Twenge et al. 2010. p.117). We find those findings consistent with our own. The findings also suggest job security is no priority for millennials, as this was not mentioned in the interview data and also was not included in any theme. These findings seem to be consistent with the literature, that suggest that older generations switch jobs more conservatively whilst millennials emphasize job security less (Calk, Patrick, 2017, p.137).

An explanation for this behavior comes from the millennial labor market, that has made it hard for millennials to expect job security (Hanson & Gulish, 2016). It could be argued that growing up and working in a competitive, difficult and quickly changing labor market has made millennials deem job security as unattainable. Instead millennials expect and even want a career defined by multiple employers and changing job descriptions. An upside of moving between jobs is that it gives millennials more opportunity to find more meaningful and challenging work, thereby jeopardizing the need for safety in exchange for the opportunity to fulfill psychological needs. However, this exchange of a basic need in order to fulfill a higher need would seemingly be contradictory to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. It could be argued that the current labor market has forced millennials to be bigger risktakers than previous generations. The tradeoff between financial and job security for relationships and meaning is not because of a generational change in behavior but out of necessity. In the millennial labor market, job security

is often a rare commodity and has therefor disappeared out of view for millennials (Hanson & Gulish, 2016), it can therefore be argued that relationships, prestige and meaning has taken its place. If millennials can't have the same financial success as their parents, their motivational factors change due the labor market forces not their values.

In conclusion our findings suggest that in order for employers to attract and retain millennials, focus should be on a well-structured, meaningful workplace that promotes relationships. In addition, a path for career advancement is also crucial. Long term financial and job security, retirement and other seemingly more basic needs take a backseat. The findings of this study seem to be in-line with Calk and Patrick's findings as our participants emphasized values towards the top of the pyramid more than values towards the bottom (Calk, Patrick, 2017, p.137).

5.2 How important are values connected to CSR for millennials?

The results of this study suggest that four out of eight millennials in this study regard corporate social responsibility as bonus but not crucial when it comes to choosing a future employer. Three respondents stated that CSR does not affect their preferences in a future employer at all. Merely one interviewee stated that it was crucial that her future employer would engage in CSR.

These results indicate that the millennials do not necessarily lay as much importance on CSR in their future employer as the literature would have us to believe (Thomson & Gregory, 2012).As laid out by the literature review, millennials are known for their individualistic tendencies that originate from the fast peace, global and socially conscious society they grow up in (Örtqvist & Eklund, 2008). Statistics from Pew research center (2019) and the social justice index (2017) seem to further support the notion that millennial Swedes are concerned with values enforced by CSR policies. In fact, our findings suggest that the stereotype that millennials are overly sensitive, fixated on social justice and easily offended does not seem to translate into their employer preferences. (Thomson & Gregory, 2012). The majority of respondents stated that CSR does not affect their preferences or that it was merely a bonus in a future employer. Below are two quotes from the respondents, these excerpts suggest that a employers CSR practice is not a crucial aspect in millennials employer preferences.

> *"... I wouldn't refuse a job if they didn't work on social issues."*
> *"... I really have no opinion about it... it's nothing I expect the company to do"*

Our findings are seemingly contradicting the literature on employer preferences and attitudes. Parment (2008) explains that millennials, as the first global generation, prefer values that emphasize social corporate responsibility (Parment, 2008 p.20). Gardner argues that millennials value a stronger psychological contract between employers and employees in order foster the "millennial values" like social consciousness, freedom and equality in the organization (Gardner, 2008, p.891). Ohlrich (2015) sheds some light into this apparent contradiction and explains that CSR has become a corporate strategy in recent history. It is popular with shareholders and millennial consumers. However, it doesn't have the same positive effect on retaining or attracting millennial employees. Other values that benefit the employer directly like freedom, salary and meaning are more influential factors in employer preference. (Ohlrich, 2015, p.111).

There is an argument to be made grounded in the findings of this study that millennials act far more cynically than their stereotype would lead one to believe. Living in and interacting with a fast paced, global information society does not only perpetuate a more progressive generation but also one who is critical towards corporate marketing strategies. Millennials may prefer organizations who act socially responsible, but that does not mean they believe them. This would be an explanation to the seeming contradictions between millennials values and their employer preferences.

Another aspect to consider is the local context in which the respondents are basing their preferences in. Scandinavia in general and Sweden in particular is known for its roots in CSR practices even before it became a corporate strategy. It could be argued that the reason for millennials not prioritizing CSR is that the respondents have grown up in a country where CSR practices are embedded in the corporate culture and are expected. Had this not been the case, and the respondents would have been asked to state their preferences in a geographical context where CSR practices are not regarded as the norm but the exception, the results could have been different.

In conclusion, the findings suggest a contradiction between millennials' values and attitudes and their employer preferences. Millennials do not see CSR as a crucial aspect in their

employers. However, they still value CSR related issues highly. This contradiction can be explained by taking several factors into account. Millennials have been brought up in a fast paced, global society that has not only thought them to value CSR but also to be critical towards it. Furthermore, all respondents are from Sweden, a welfare state that has CSR embedded in their corporate practices since the industrial revolution (Ditlev-Simonsen & Brøgger, 2013). Which in turn makes the participants expect rather than demand CSR practices.

5.3 How do group settings influence the importance of CSR in millennials' employer preferences?

The findings of the interview study suggest that an employer's CSR practices are not crucial for millennials. All of the themes identified through the thematic analysis of the interview data were connected to values that would benefit the individual. None of the participants described values that emphasized social, economic or environmental corporate responsibilities. This was until specifically asked about CSR, in more pointed questions towards the end of each interview.

However, in the focus group the same participants that had stated little to no interest in CSR in the private interview setting, advocated openly for the importance of CSR. The participants were then asked to argue for two vastly different job ads. Below are two quotes from the focus group that summarize the sentiment expressed by the majority of the group:

"It should be fair; men and women should have equal pay"
"I am passionate about equality and it would be strange if there were any problems. Then it would not be a workplace where I would like to work"

Then a joint decision was made by all eight participants to choose the company with the more socially responsible job ad, instead of the ad emphasizing career opportunity and personal benefits. These findings seem to suggest yet another contradiction between privately and publicly held opinions. Yet a similar technique to the foot-in-the-door-technique use was used by us (Burger, 1999, p.211), as we asked the participants to make an initial commitment in the interviews and a similar commitment in the focus group. The literature suggests that making a small initial commitment or statement significantly increases the likelihood to make a similar or bigger commitment in the future (Burger, 1999, p.211).Crisp and Turner go on to explains that we generally want to act in line with our previous self to avoid falling into cognitive

dissonance(Crisp & Turner, 2014, p.98). Although the theoretical case for the participants to be consistent with their preferences, opinions seemed to have changed between the privately held interviews and the focus group.

The theoretical and empirical evidence of the consistency principle and our desire to avoid cognitive dissonance would suggest that we have plenty of reason not to change our behavior when there is seemingly nothing to gain from it. If the participants however willingly choose to ignore their desire for consistency, like the findings of this study indicate. It would seem that the contradiction between our public and private behavior is due to the social influence in the focus group.

The literature on social influence explains that attitudes and behaviors change in group settings. This social influence comes from a perceived norm that exists in the group; this norm can be likened to a stereotype. Furthermore, we tend to adjust our views to match the groups norm, we do this to gain acceptance or praise from other group members (Crisp & Turner, 2014, p.123). In case of the focus group, the dominant stereotype surrounding millennial employer preference is consistent with CSR practices. In addition, this norm is further emphasized in Swedish society. Where CSR practices have been a norm since the industrial revolution and CSR is deeply embedded in the Swedish culture (Ditlev-Simonsen 2015). Therefore, it was beneficial for the participants to conform to this norm, wheatear or not their private opinion matches it. It can be argued that the findings in this study can be likened to Asch's "visual perception experiment". Where a mismatch between private and public beliefs was overcome by social influence (Crisp & Turner, 2014, p.122).

The findings in this study support the notion that there is a contradiction between the preferences stated in face to face interviews and the preferences stated in focus groups. Or in other words, a discrepancy between public and private opinions. This discrepancy occurs despite the compliance principle and the threat of cognitive dissonance. There is a strong case to be made that this is due to the social influence of conformity and normative influence. Yet it could be argued that millennials are aware of this tradeoff between public and private beliefs. They are aftercall the generation with the easiest access to information and the greatest exposure to employer branding (Parment, 2008 p.20). Perhaps these public opinions are not just a caving into social influence but a savvy exercise of personal branding. This would also mediate the

negative effect of cognitive dissonance. Festinger (1957) argues that cognitive dissonance can be avoided when the individual has a justification for engaging in contradictory behavior.

Further research on the personal branding aspect of this study is needed. There is support for this in both the interview data and the observations made during the focus group. Several participants mentioned that they wouldn't want to be associated with an unethical employer, others saw reputational benefits in working for an employer that engages in CSR. None of these points were however expressed during the focus group, which could lead one to believe that the participants willingly accepted the social influence and used it to their advantage in an act of personal branding.

Finally, the two employers behind the ads were revealed. Tesla; a high-status brand, picked because of its CSR influenced job ad and KPMG, a lesser known brand, picked because of the emphasis on personal benefits in its job ad. Consequently, participants were asked if they felt confirmation or regret in their employer ad choice. Everyone stated that their newfound knowledge about the companies behind the ads reaffirmed their choice.

It is important to note that this study was not designed to examine the distinction between social influence and personal branding. Although some of the findings point towards an acute awareness of the benefits of personal branding among the participants. Yet the decisions to conform to the social norms in the focus group could just as easily have been due to social influence and not personal branding, or a combination of the two. It is our recommendation, that the relationship and distinction between personal branding and social influence needs further research.

6. Conclusion

To answer our first research question about what kind of values millennials prefer we found in our interviewees four themes that millennials place great emphasis in: relationships, career, structure and meaning. They saw this as some of the most important factors that would make them happy at work. The results of this study seem to be in-line with previous findings Calk and Patrick's (2017) as our participants emphasized values towards the top of the pyramid more than values towards the bottom. These results show that millennials, as well as previous generations, give less priority to safety at work, but value other values such as, relationships, flexibility, the opportunity to realize themselves through work.

When it comes to our second research question concerning the importance of CSR in the workplace, it turned out that it was something most of the participants did not find as a crucial aspect of their employer preference. Some of them thought certain issues such as pay; gender and equality were important. There were some that believed the companies addressed to CSR just for making their brand attractive. The results we found indicate that millennials act more cynically and do not place much emphasis on issues concerning CSR this is in line with Olrich's statement that CSR has become a corporate strategy and that meaningfulness and relationship are more influential factors in employer preferences (Olrich, 2015).

Regarding our third question, we could see that participants highlighted CSR more during the focus group compared to the interviews, when issues regarding gender equality and also issues regarding discrimination got more focus. These findings show that social influences could have had an impact in the changes in their opinions as is described by Crisp and Turner (2014). Furthermore, this is interesting for the companies to know, so that they can create an attractive workplace. Our results show that millennials are not interested by CSR, but that relations and also career opportunities are more important to them when it comes to choosing a future workplace. Our findings indicate however that there seems to be a disconnect between private and public opinions. As CSR was regarded with greater importance in the focus group than in the interviews, where CSR was not mentioned until questioned about it.

Concerning our questions about CSR, many of the participants highlighted both during the interviews and also during the focus period that they did not want to be associated with "bad" companies. They considered that CSR was important in order to strengthen their "own" brand and reputation. Through the interviews, we could see that the company's image was important to them because they themselves wanted a good status in working life. This we could see clearly at the end of the focus group when the participants saw the companies' logos, it was clear that everyone wanted to work for Tesla since their brand was associated with the opportunity to make a career.

In our study we have conducted both interviews and focus group, which has been valuable in our analysis and processing of opinions among millennials. This has enabled us to analyze and interpret the data material at a deeper level. This is a strength in our thesis and something that we have not found in previous research. Through this, we feel that we have contributed with a

well-executed study in which we have had the opportunity to carry out opinions in both interviews and focus group.

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8. Appendix

Intervjuguide
Info
Denna uppsats är ett examensarbete inom socialpsykologi vid Umeå

Universitet.Syftet med studien är att att undersöka hur unga studenter känner inför sina framtida arbetsplatser. Studien kommer att genomföras med intervjuer under april 2019. Det kommer att ske dels genom enskilda

intervjuer samt ett tillfälle med fokusgrupp, i en grupp om minst 3 andra. Frågorna vid intervjun och i fokusgruppen kommer att beröra din uppfattning och inställning till framtida arbetsplatser.

Intervjutillfället kommer att vara mellan 20-40 min och fokusgruppen ca 30

min.Det som sägs under intervjuerna och i fokusgruppen är konfidentiellt och vi som närvarar har tystnadsplikt för respekt till de andra deltagarna. Intervjuerna kommer att spelas in och sedan skrivas i text. Informationen som du lämnar kommer att behandlas säkert och redovisningen av materialet kommer att ske så att ingen individ kan identifieras.

Resultatet kommer att presenteras genom en presentation till andra studerande i Socialpsykologi programmet. När examensarbetet är godkänt

kommer det att finnas på Diva. DiVA portal är en gemensam söktjänst och

ett öppet arkiv för forskningspublikationer och studentuppsatser. Deltagandet är helt frivilligt och du kan närsomhelst avbryta din medverkan.

Har du frågor om studien är du välkommen att höra av dig till någon av oss.

Väl mött

// Paulina och Aron

Studerande vid sociologiska institutionen

Paulina Knopf

Aron Jahn

Handledare

Dr. Samuel Merill

Intervjufrågor:
1. Information
Intervjun är frågor om framtida arbetsplatser, det kommer att ta ca 20-30 min. Kommer att spelas in och transkriberas du kommer att vara anonym. Du kan när som helst avbryta intervjun om du vill.
2. Inledningsfråga
a. Vad heter du?
b. Hur gammal är du?
c. Vad studerar du (varför)?
3. Värderingar om förmåner
a. Har du tänkt på vad du skulle vilja jobba med efter studierna?
b. Vad är viktigt för dig hos en framtida arbetsgivare? Varför
c. Vilken typ av arbetsgivare skulle du inte vilja jobba för, och varför?

d. Finns det någon speciell arbetsgivare du skulle vilja arbeta för?

Följdfråga:

- Om de nämner en specifik arbetsplats, varför just den och vilka förmåner har den som lockar?

- Om de inte nämner någon specifik arbetsplats, be dem beskriva deras framtida arbetsplats och vilka förmåner den ska ha.

e. Sammanfatta vilka de viktigaste förmånerna som en framtida arbetsgivare kan ha?

Följdfrågor: Hur viktigt är möjligheten till att kunna arbeta flexibilitet, arbetstider, jobba hemifrån, status, semesterdagar, arbetsprylar etc.

4. värderingar om SCR

a. Är det företagets ansvar att jobba med frågor om samhällsansvar utöver det de är skyldiga till?

Varför?

b. Hur viktigt är det för dig att din framtida arbetsgivare värnar om miljön utöver det de är skyldiga till?

Varför?

Exempel : Klimatkompensation, resursanvändning, transporter.

c. Hur viktigt är det för dig att din framtida arbetsgivare befattar sig med sociala frågor utöver det som krävs i lagen?

Varför?

Exempel : Jämställdhet (kvotering), nöjda medarbetare.

d. Hur viktigt är det för dig att din framtida arbetsgivare engagerar sig i samhället utöver det som är nödvändigt?

Varför?

Exempel : Donationer, bidrag, katastrofhjälp.

e. Hur viktigt är det för dig att din framtida arbetsgivare har ett etiskt förhållningssätt?

Varför?

Exempel: Import från utvecklingsländer eller arbetsvillkor för underleverantörer etc.

5. Avslutande frågor

a. Tror du att dina preferenser liknar andras i din generation?

b. Finns det något du skulle vilja tillägga?

Fokusgrupp:

1. Alla välkomnas, introduceras till syftet och ges nödvändig information.

2. Alla får se de två olika annonserna i ca 1 minut, därefter får skriva ner initialer och val på ett papper som vi samlar in.

3. Därefter ska var och en i gruppen berätta vilka och fördelar och nackdelar de olika annonserna har.

4. Gruppen ska nu självständigt diskutera sinsemellan för och nackdelarna i syfte för att komma fram till ett gemensamt beslut.

5. Gruppen frågas hur och varför de kom till detta beslut.

6. Företagen bakom annonserna avslöjas. Gruppen får diskutera huruvida deras åsikter förändras nu när det ser företagets logga.

7. Gruppen tillfrågas ifall de vill ändra sitt svar?

Appendix 3: Excerpt from coding scheme:

Quote, extract	Code	Category	Theme
"It is important for me that I feel that I can give back, that I have the opportunity to change and give back to society trough the work I am doing."	Give back to society	Make changes	Meaningfulness
"A creative workplace where I can set my own times, where I can choose my own work times. I don't want to have a 8-17 work where I can't choose my own times."	Freedom at workplace	Flexible	Structure
"It is important with that you can talk to your colleagues. That everyone is comfortable with each other and that you feel good in their company."	Workcolleagues	Community	Relationships