

KREM, 2026, 3(1013): 135–153
ISSN 1898-6447
e-ISSN 2545-3238
<https://doi.org/10.15678/krem.18798>

The Role of Diversity and Inclusion Value Signalling in Job Advertisements: A Survey-based Study on Employer Attractiveness

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Suggested citation: Podrózna, K., Voropai, O., & Maj, J. (2026). The Role of Diversity and Inclusion Value Signalling in Job Advertisements: A Survey-based Study on Employer Attractiveness. *Krakow Review of Economics and Management / Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Krakowie*, 3(1013), 135–153. <https://doi.org/10.15678/krem.18798>

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study investigates the impact of diversity and inclusion (D&I) value signalling in job advertisements on employer attractiveness, focusing on Generation Z job seekers' responses to explicit D&I messaging.

Research Design & Methods: A survey was conducted with Generation Z participants in Poland. Respondents were presented with two job advertisements for an HR specialist position, differing only in their emphasis on D&I values. Responses were analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression to determine the influence of D&I signalling on job attractiveness.

Findings: Results indicated that the majority of respondents preferred the advertisement with D&I signalling, showing a significant relationship between positive perceptions of D&I values and employer attractiveness. Regression analysis revealed that D&I initiatives and company culture were significant factors in job attractiveness for respondents choosing the D&I advertisement, while those selecting the non-D&I advertisement prioritised traditional elements like work-life balance.

Implications/Recommendations: Organisations aiming to attract talent should consider incorporating clear D&I signals in their recruitment materials. Emphasising inclusivity not only appeals to job seekers valuing D&I but also enhances organisational image as a supportive employer. Furthermore, aligning D&I messaging with internal policies and practices can strengthen long-term employer attractiveness.

Contribution: This study adds to the understanding of how D&I value signalling influences employer attractiveness, particularly for Generation Z. It underscores the growing importance of person-organisation fit in recruitment strategies and provides insights for organisations to effectively target a values-driven generation through strategic communication of inclusivity.

Article type: original article.

Keywords: diversity, inclusion, signalling, job advertisements, employer attractiveness.

JEL Classification: M12, M14, O15.

1. Introduction

The importance of diversity in contemporary organisations is constantly growing, as organisations across the globe have come to realise the significant benefits of a diverse workforce (Hunt *et al.*, 2023). Diversity has been recognised as a key resource in enabling organisations to achieve a high-performing work culture that empowers all members to contribute to their fullest potential (Cox, 2001).

Diversity in the workplace encompasses not just differences in race, gender, and cultural background, but also differences in age, experience, and perspectives. As the global workforce becomes increasingly interconnected, organisations that embrace diversity and inclusion are better positioned to innovate and meet the diverse needs of their customer base (Shen *et al.*, 2009). Several studies have suggested a positive relationship between diversity and the individuals' perception of the organisation (Brammer, Millington & Pavelin, 2009). Furthermore, diversity and inclusion are perceived as desired values not only by the organisation but also by employees and potential employees, who are attracted to organisations that promote diversity and inclusion (Iseke & Pull, 2019). Consequently, Schäpers *et al.* (2021) argued that organisational diversity increases organisational attractiveness. What is significant is the fact that the positive perception of inclusive workplaces extends beyond the targeted beneficiary groups (e.g., women, the elderly, disabled)

to the general workforce (Dauth *et al.*, 2023; Satzger & Vogel, 2023). Employees generally appreciate inclusive environments, which leads to favourable evaluations and referrals for their employers (Satzger & Vogel, 2023). Diversity and inclusion significantly influence employer attractiveness, particularly for job seekers who value organisational justice and equitable treatment (Iseke & Pull, 2019).

One way of reaching potential employees with the information that an organisation values diversity and inclusion is through the organisation's recruiting process and especially through job advertisements (Wofford & Smith, 2022). They are an important communication tool that can be used to convey an organisation's commitment to certain values, and they can signal the organisational culture (Story, Castanheira & Hartig, 2016). The shift in recruitment practices and job candidates' preferences has led to a predominantly online hiring process, driving the search for increasingly innovative methods to attract and recruit employees (Sidorkiewicz & Tokarz-Kocik, 2017; Branowska, 2021). An analysis of job advertisements in Poland reveals that discriminatory language still occasionally appears (Kędziora, Śmiszek & Zima, 2009; Kamińska, 2015), highlighting the importance of examining how an organisation's commitment to diversity and inclusion in job advertisements influences job candidates' perception of the employer. This is especially important, since research has shown that there is a positive relationship between employer branding and a streamlined recruitment process, suggesting that a well-regarded employer brand positively influences candidates' intentions to apply for a job and that this relationship is strongest among the youngest job applicants (Mikołajczyk-Szewczyk & Waligóra, 2019).

Given that, the following article aims to explore the extent to which potential employees consider an organisation's commitment to diversity and inclusion in job advertisements when deciding whether to apply, and how this influences their perception of the organisation as an employer. For this purpose the concept of diversity value signalling (DVS) has been used, which has been defined as "the use of inclusive language and terms in public organisational communication such as job advertisements, press releases, media advertisements, diversity statements, mission statements (mission, vision, and values), and the like which reflect a strategic intention to value diversity and inclusion across the organisational stakeholders" (Cole, Haun & Silvera, 2022, p. 2). We believe that, through the use of DVS, job seekers assess their fit with the organisation and the organisational values, and based on that, they decide whether to apply for a position in the organisation or not. For this purpose, we conducted a survey, using a dedicated job advertisement, and we asked respondents to indicate which job advertisement was more attractive to them: the one which promotes diversity and inclusion or the one including a more homogeneous (thus non-diversity) content.

2. Literature Review

Job seekers often have limited insight into what the job they apply for will actually be like. Due to that, they rely on signals provided in job advertisements to form their expectations about the possible job experience (Drewery, Pretti & Church, 2022). The signalling theory originates in economics and was first used to analyse how job applicants convey their skills to potential employers via the language used in job applications (Spence, 1973). Since then, it has also been used to explain organisational behaviour and how organisations signal their values to potential employees (Stiglitz, 2000). When assessing opportunities and the way their identities will be affirmed within organisations, job seekers use signals – available information, including job advertisements (Schmidt, Chapman & Jones, 2015). Job seekers interpret these signals to form perceptions about the organisation and its culture (Van Hove *et al.*, 2013). They analyse job advertisements and interpret information cues about what it might be like to work in a certain organisation (Sievert, Vogel & Feeney, 2022).

Signalling theory has been used to analyse how corporate social responsibility (CSR) influences talent management, particularly in attracting potential employees (Story, Castanheira & Hartig, 2016). Research has shown that through an active promotion of CSR practices, sending positive signals to job seekers about organisational values and commitment to social and environmental issues, organisations can enhance their attractiveness as an employer (Story, Castanheira & Hartig, 2016). CSR practices signal that an organisation is reputable, more attractive and a desirable place to work (Story, Castanheira & Hartig, 2016).

Signalling theory has also been used to analyse signals of (in)equalities and power in internship advertisements (Wofford & Smith, 2022). Using signalling theory, Wofford and Smith (2022) found that certain linguistic elements, like pronouns, can convey gendered or racialised power dynamics within the organisation. In their study, Wofford and Smith (2022) established that although many advertisements acknowledge diversity values, they do so using vague cues rather than acknowledging specific actions or the commitment to diversity and inclusion. Cole, Haun and Silvera (2022) found that organisations using DVS tend to perform better in terms of organisational performance, attracting a diverse workforce and customer experience compared to those, who do not utilise DVS. Diversity and inclusion signalling can rely on instrumental and symbolic signals. White *et al.* (2019) argue that job seekers rely on those signals when they form judgements about the organisation's value systems. They interpret, i.e. symbolic diversity signals, as the personnel displayed on the organisation's website to determine their chances to get hired (White *et al.*, 2019). Cole, Haun and Silvera (2022) analysed actual job advertisements and assessed the inclusion of DSV language using words like

“diversity,” “diverse,” “inclusion” and “equity.” On the other hand, White *et al.* (2019) also analysed visual cues as signals promoting diversity. They focused, however, on websites of organisations.

Given that the following hypothesis was developed:

H1: The likelihood that job seekers are going to apply for a position increases if job advertisements include signals and/or statements regarding diversity and inclusion.

Studies have also shown that job seekers are more likely to apply for jobs that signal a high- quality experience (Drewery, Pretti & Church, 2022). Because of the importance of aligning organisational values with those of potential employees, job advertisements should clearly communicate those work details, to attract individuals who share those values and are inspired by the organisation (Ganesan, Antony & George, 2018). Research conducted by Ganesan, Antony and George (2018) has shown, that the key dimensions of job advertisements, that influence job seekers application intentions include the job and work characteristics, the aesthetics appeal of the advertisement, employee testimonials and images of current employees, corporate image statements, organisational culture statements, especially when they help to understand the work environment and values and finally human resource offerings.

Given that, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H2: Job seekers who choose advertisements with diversity and inclusion signals will exhibit different preferences regarding job attractiveness elements – such as compensation and benefits packages, career growth and advancement opportunities, company culture and values, work-life balance, alignment of job responsibilities with their skills and interests, and the importance of diversity and inclusion initiatives – compared to those who choose job offers without diversity and inclusion signals.

Aligning organisational values with job seekers’ preferences is crucial, emphasising the importance of perceived person-organisation fit – the alignment of a job seeker’s skills, values, and goals with those of the organisation (Drewery, Pretti & Church, 2022). This concept suggests individuals are drawn to organisations that reflect their values, culture, and personality (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown, Reeves & Follmer, 2013). Job advertisements play a vital role by signalling values, influencing perceptions of fit and belonging, especially for minority groups (Wofford & Smith, 2022). Communicating organisational culture and values effectively helps candidates assess their fit (Deeter-Schmelz *et al.*, 2020). Schneider’s (1987) ASA model shows applicants self-select based on perceived value alignment, with evidence linking organisational image to engagement intentions (Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager, 1993; Ryan *et al.*, 2000). Aligning values aids in attracting,

hiring, and retaining well-fitting candidates (Kristof-Brown, Reeves & Follmer, 2013) and drives organisational appeal (Herold & Roedenbeck, 2025).

Given that, we developed the following hypothesis:

H3: Job seekers are more inclined to apply for positions which include diversity-related signals in their job advertisements if they believe diversity and inclusion programmes are significant.

The literature emphasises the importance of showcasing diversity to enhance attractiveness to a broad range of potential employees (White *et al.*, 2019). Scholars have found strong evidence linking inclusive workplace policies and employer attractiveness (Satzger & Vogel, 2023). Satzger and Vogel (2023) found that employees who rated their organisations highly on inclusiveness were more likely to recommend their workplace to others, indicating that inclusivity enhances employer attractiveness. Therefore in order to verify this and test the developed hypothesis a survey-based study was conducted.

3. Methodology

To test the developed hypotheses, we decided to conduct a survey among potential job seekers. We limited our study to the representatives of Generation Z, which following the literature (Ng *et al.*, 2021) we defined as born after 1997. However, we acknowledge that there are differences in defining time frames for individual generations (e.g., Kozłowski, 2024; Michałkiewicz, 2024; Żarczyńska-Dobiesz, Janiak-Rejno & Chomątowska, 2024). Research on determinants of employer attractiveness for Generation Z is crucial as this cohort enters the workforce with distinct preferences. Studies show that different generations have different values, which influence their preferences and expectations in the workplace (Różańska-Bińczyk, 2022). Furthermore, studies indicate that Gen Z values workplace flexibility, work-life balance, and meaningful tasks (Hofer *et al.*, 2024). Previous research has also shown that Gen Z values CSR in their employer choice (Maj & Kasperek, 2020). Scholars have also found that Gen Z prioritises growth and learning opportunities more than millennials (Kunal, Philip & Pooja, 2022). Given that, we believe that the focus on Gen Z is justified and helps fill the gap in the generational perspective on employer attractiveness.

For the purpose of the research artificial intelligence (AI) tools on a Bing.com website were used to generate visuals for two advertisements for a position of an HR specialist. Ads' visuals and wording differed in terms of diversity and inclusion emphasis: Figure 1 presents the ad that promotes diversity and inclusion, while Figure 2 has a more homogeneous content. These two different recruitment advertisements were presented to the participants, followed by an online questionnaire. Both the survey and the ad that formed an integral part of it (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2) were designed in English.

Using AI for creating job advertisements pursued several goals. Firstly, it allowed for ads to be accurate and relatively comparable to real-world hiring advertisements, avoiding diversity and inclusion overstatement. The goal of the survey alternatives was to have subtle rather than overt differences in inclusion and diversity description. Secondly, the AI tool and the prompts used ensured that the two adverts were as similar as possible, notwithstanding variations in inclusive content. Lastly, AI-generated visuals created a modern and innovative survey look, making it more appealing for the target audience to participate in.



Fig. 1. Job 1 – Diversity and Inclusion-based Job Advertisement

Source: own elaboration using Bing Image Creator.

Fig. 2. Job 2 – Non-diversity and Inclusion-based Job Advertisement

Source: own elaboration using Bing Image Creator.

Primary data was collected from May to June 2024, using online surveys posted through social media platforms Facebook and LinkedIn, as the most popular platforms for job search in Poland according to the latest industry research (Marszycki, 2023). The survey targeted young adults from Generation Z, individuals born after 1997, residing in Poland and other countries. It was conducted in Poland in 2024 and gathered 79 responses. Table 1 provides information about the demographic structure of the sample.

Table 1. Structure of the Sample

Metric Categories	Metric Variables	Number of Respondents	Share of Respondents (%)
Gender	male	21	26.6
	female	56	70.9
	other	2	2.5
Education	primary	34	43
	higher	43	54
	vocational	2	3
Place of residence	up to 50,000 inhabitants	35	44
	50,001 to 100,000 inhabitants	5	6
	100,001 to 500,000 inhabitants	10	13
	over 500,000 inhabitants	29	37
Country of origin	Poland	72	91
	Belarus	2	3
	Belgium	1	1
	Germany	1	1
	India	1	1
	Ukraine	2	3

Source: own study.

Gender, place of residence, and country of origin were treated as control variables, and statistical analysis revealed no statistically significant influence of these variables on the results.

4. Results

The analysis of the respondents' answers showed that 66% of them preferred the hiring ad message that clearly communicated diversity and inclusion (D&I) characteristics of the organisation and the offered job. We also compared the respondents' answers who chose offer 1 and offer 2 about the likelihood of them choosing the advertisement based on the D&I statements in their descriptions. Those preferring offer 1 scored on average 3.75, while those preferring offer 2 scored 3.33. As both distributions were identified as non-normal via the Shapiro-Wilk test, we used the non-parametric Mann-Whitney *U* test (Nunan, Birks & Malhotra, 2020) to confirm that there is a significant difference between the two groups (those who chose job 1 vs. those who chose job 2) regarding their likelihood to apply for jobs that include D&I statements (see Table 2).

Table 2. The Difference between the Likelihood to Apply for a Job with a D&I Emphasis in the Message across Two Groups

Job Advertisement Choice	Mean Likelihood	SD	Shapiro-Wilk W	Shapiro-Wilk p-value	Mann-Whitney U Statistics	Mann-Whitney p-value
Offer 1	3.75	0.926	0.845	0.0282	6,241.0	0.0
Offer 2	3.33	0.92	0.893	0.0460	N/A	N/A

Notes: N/A – not applicable.

Source: own study.

The above findings therefore support hypothesis H1, stating that Gen Z individuals are more likely to apply for a job when diversity and inclusion are emphasised in the job advertisement.

To verify hypotheses H2 and H3, we analysed the answers to the following question:

Choose to what extent you agree with the following statements for offer 1 (for offer 2). Please rate the following aspects on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “not important” and 5 is “very important”:

- *compensation and benefits package,*
- *career growth and advancement opportunities,*
- *company culture and values,*
- *work-life balance,*
- *job responsibilities and role alignment with skills and interests,*
- *the importance of diversity and inclusion initiatives.*

Based on the obtained results, we analysed descriptive statistics (Table 3), ran a non-parametric ANOVA correlation analysis with Kruskal-Wallis test (Table 4), and conducted regression analysis (Tables 5 and 6) (Nunan, Birks & Malhotra, 2020).

The descriptive statistics for offer 1 (which includes D&I signalling) and offer 2 (which does not), provided in Table 3, show that for most elements there is no significant difference in the levels of importance across respondents. However, a noticeable difference exists between the two groups for two EVP elements – D&I initiatives and career growth. Respondents rated the “value of diversity and inclusion initiatives” higher for offer 1 (mean = 3.43, median = 4) than for offer 2 (mean = 3.03, median = 3), suggesting that those who chose the D&I-signalling ad (offer 1) tend to prioritise D&I more highly than those who chose offer 2.

The Kruskal-Wallis test results provide additional evidence regarding differences in job attractiveness elements for offer 1. The results in Table 4 present the outcomes of Kruskal-Wallis tests, where the independent variable is the respondents’ preference towards the job offers (offer 1 and offer 2) and the dependent variable is

the candidates' preferences for specific EVP elements. Significant differences were observed for career growth and advancement opportunities ($p = 0.007$) and professional responsibilities and role matching to skills ($p = 0.041$), suggesting that these elements may play a role in assessing job attractiveness for the respondents, who preferred offer 1. For offer 2, the Kruskal-Wallis test did not identify any statistically significant differences.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Candidates' Preferences towards EVP Elements for Two Offers

Category	<i>N</i>	Missing	Mean	Median	<i>SD</i>	Minimum	Maximum
Offer 1 (compensation and benefits package)	79	2,907	3.85	4	1.21	1	5
Offer 1 (career growth and advancement opportunities)	79	2,907	3.86	4	1.14	1	5
Offer 1 (company culture and values)	79	2,907	3.69	4	1.2	1	5
Offer 1 (work-life balance)	79	2,907	3.96	4	1.18	1	5
Offer 1 (professional responsibilities and role matching to skills)	79	2,907	3.85	4	1.25	1	5
Offer 1 (the value of diversity and inclusion initiatives)	79	2,907	3.43	4	1.34	1	5
Offer 2 (compensation and benefits package)	79	2,907	3.86	4	1.12	1	5
Offer 2 (career development and promotion opportunities)	79	2,907	3.42	4	1.24	1	5
Offer 2 (company culture and values)	79	2,907	3.48	4	1.12	1	5
Offer 2 (work-life balance)	79	2,907	3.96	4	1.18	1	5
Offer 2 (professional responsibilities and role matching to skills)	79	2,907	3.66	4	1.2	1	5
Offer 2 (the value of diversity and inclusion initiatives)	79	2,907	3.03	3	1.24	1	5

Notes: Numbers in bold denote the EVP element directly related to the experimental manipulation, namely the presence or absence of D&I signalling in the job offer.

Source: own study.

Table 4. Correlation Analysis of Candidates' Preferences towards EVP Elements for Two Offers

Category	χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Offer 1 (compensation and benefits package)	1.51	1	0.219
Offer 1 (career growth and advancement opportunities)	7.317	1	0.007
Offer 1 (company culture and values)	1.685	1	0.194

Table 4 cnt'd

Category	χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Offer 1 (work-life balance)	3.267	1	0.071
Offer 1 (professional responsibilities and role matching to skills)	4.17	1	0.041
Offer 1 (the value of diversity and inclusion initiatives)	0.812	1	0.368
Offer 2 (compensation and benefits package)	0.0004656	1	0.983
Offer 2 (career development and promotion opportunities)	2.5293	1	0.112
Offer 2 (company culture and values)	0.2174	1	0.641
Offer 2 (work-life balance)	3.1356	1	0.077
Offer 2 (professional responsibilities and role matching to skills)	1.2064	1	0.272
Offer 2 (the value of diversity and inclusion initiatives)	0.0386	1	0.844

Source: own elaboration.

Tables 5 and 6 present results for the regression analysis, conducted to check hypotheses H2 and H3. The regression analysis for offer 1 with a clear D&I signaling (Table 5) indicates that the model shows a statistically significant baseline preference for offer 1 (intercept estimate = 1.6661, $SE = 0.617$, $t = 2.701$, $p = 0.009$). While the intercept reflects the overall attractiveness of offer 1 when other factors are controlled, given that D&I initiatives are a defining characteristic of this offer, it is reasonable to infer that they contribute to its appeal. Additionally, company culture and values (estimate = 0.5229, $p < 0.001$) play a significant role in respondents' job attractiveness evaluation.

Table 5. Linear Regression for Offer 1

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²		
1	0.494	0.244		
Predictor	Estimate	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	1.6861	0.617	2.701	0.009
Which job advertisement did you ultimately choose to apply for? (Chosen job offer: 1 = offer 2, 0 = offer 1)	-0.0753	0.283	-0.266	0.791
Offer 1 (compensation and benefits package)	-0.202	0.198	-1.116	0.27
Offer 1 (career growth and advancement opportunities)	0.1486	0.181	0.821	0.414
Offer 1 (company culture and values)	-0.5229	0.139	-3.765	0.001
Offer 1 (work-life balance)	-0.0491	0.208	-0.236	0.814
Offer 1 (professional responsibilities and role matching to skills)	0.0712	0.171	0.418	0.677

Source: own elaboration.

For offer 2 (see Table 6), the last of the two elements also turned out to have a significant effect (estimate = 0.5615, $SE = 0.109$, $t = 5.175$, $p < 0.001$) together with the work-life balance (estimate = 0.5965, $SE = 0.143$, $t = 4.181$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 6. Linear Regression for Offer 2

Model	R	R^2		
1	0.764	0.584		
Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	0.2466	0.375	0.658	0.513
Which job advertisement did you ultimately choose to apply for? (Chosen job offer: 1 = offer 2, 0 = offer 1)	-0.1088	0.209	-0.521	0.604
Offer 2 (compensation and benefits package)	-0.3234	0.124	-2.599	0.011
Offer 2 (career growth and advancement opportunities)	-0.094	0.125	-0.753	0.454
Offer 2 (company culture and values)	0.5615	0.105	5.365	0.001
Offer 2 (work-life balance)	0.5965	0.143	4.181	0.001
Offer 2 (professional responsibilities and role matching to skills)	0.0955	0.118	0.812	0.42

Source: own elaboration.

Therefore, the results support the hypothesis H2 that job seekers who choose ads with clear communication of D&I will have different preferences compared to those choosing ads without clear D&I signalling. However, both groups tend to value company culture and values.

Moreover, regression analysis revealed no significant effect of the D&I initiatives on applicants' decision to apply for offer 2 (estimate = 0.2466, $SE = 0.375$, $t = 0.658$, $p = 0.513$). Hence, together with the corresponding data for offer 1, described above, we can accept hypothesis H3 and conclude that job seekers are more inclined to apply for the position which includes D&I signals if they believe in the importance of diversity initiatives.

5. Discussion

The presented research reveals that Generation Z job seekers are particularly drawn to job advertisements that signal diversity and inclusion, aligning with Maj and Kasperek's (2020) findings that this generation values CSR when selecting employers. This study supports and builds on Satzger and Vogel's (2023) research, emphasising the need to target diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives toward both millennials and Gen Z. Brammer, Millington and Pavelin (2009) also found a positive link between organisational diversity and individuals' perceptions

of the organisation. Furthermore, Iseke and Pull (2019) highlighted that employers visibly committed to inclusive practices attract both current employees and job candidates. Schäpers *et al.* (2021) argued that promoting diversity enhances employer attractiveness, and Ng, Schweitzer and Lyons (2010) noted that millennials advocate for DEI policies. This study confirms that Gen Z responds strongly to DEI-focused job advertisements, underscoring the importance of these values in shaping employer attractiveness and influencing job-seeking behaviour.

The findings indicate that job seekers drawn to ads emphasising diversity and inclusion differ in preferences from those choosing ads without explicit D&I messaging, though both value company culture and values. This highlights the importance of signalling organisational culture, supporting Pacelli, Shi and Zou (2022), who found that emphasising corporate culture, especially after movements like Black Lives Matter, attracts more applicants. They argue that organisations should effectively communicate cultural values in job advertisements to appeal to job seekers.

The findings presented in this paper are also in line with the study conducted by Mauger (2024) and Hicklenton *et al.* (2021), who found that personal values also influence job preferences, with individuals seeking organisations that align with their values. As stated by Ng and Burke (2005) the person-organisation fit is of importance also when job seekers consider if the value they put into diversity or representing a minority group fits the organisations' actions in this area. The findings of the presented study indicate that job seekers are more inclined to apply for positions that include clear diversity and inclusion signals when they personally value diversity initiative, thus actively looking to maximise the person-organisation fit.

The presented findings have important practical implications. Firstly, the findings show that organisations should put greater emphasis on diversity management and inclusion practices to attract and retain talents. Investing in inclusivity can serve as a strategic lever for organisations to improve their attractiveness, helping them to effectively compete for talent. To enhance the diversity and inclusion signalling, organisations should reinforce the signals in job advertisements and beyond, developing a coherent communication strategy. According to the Diversity Barometer survey (Forum Odpowiedzialnego Biznesu, 2021) in Poland, the recruitment area demonstrated the worst results among the diversity management actions. Although present in the job offerings of some of the diversity leaders in Poland (e.g., using foreign languages for the job offering page by Biedronka, avoiding wording that discourages applicants over 50 years by Accenture) (Forum Odpowiedzialnego Biznesu, 2024), diversity and inclusion signalling is still limited. Organisations could ensure that diversity and inclusion signalling is present also on their web page, in their internal communications and actions or for example by obtaining relevant

certifications and rewards, that could demonstrate their commitment to D&I and enhance their message. Also, in light of the presented findings, it becomes clear that organisations should develop internal and external branding strategies that will communicate their commitment to inclusion and diversity. As suggested by Satzger and Vogel (2023), clear signals of inclusiveness can help in creating an image of the organisation as a caring employer that values equal treatment. It is also of importance to align diversity signals and statements with organisational actions, as misalignments between the signals and actual actions lead to a negative perception of employer attractiveness (Windscheid *et al.*, 2016). Organisations could also develop proactive communication strategies, which could include sharing success stories, diversity metrics or initiatives they undertook, to foster an inclusive work environment (Dauth *et al.*, 2023).

The conducted research is not free from limitations. First and foremost, we recognise that the very limited and not representative sample resulted from the constrained time frame allocated for data collection, which does not allow for generalisability. Sample limitations related to the disproportionate representation of individuals without higher education and unclear relevance of the respondents' education to the HR field suggests uncertainty about the alignment with HR qualifications which could influence their responses. Moreover, a high share of small town residents (44%) could have shaped their preferences and perspectives due to the differences in socio-economic and labour market conditions compared to large urban areas. These limitations highlight the importance of interpreting results with caution. Also, the fact that we used AI-developed job advertisements limited the possibility to look for diversity and inclusion signalling in other places. As job seekers will probably not rely only on the job advertisement but also look at the organisation's side for further information, an additional source confirming diversity and inclusion signalling was left out.

Future research should therefore not only be conducted on a representative sample, but it could also include a longitudinal study, which could show the effectiveness of diversity initiatives over time, thus going beyond mere diversity and inclusion signalling in job advertisements. Future research could also compare the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion signalling across different cultures and generations. In further research, we plan to analyse actual job advertisements from popular platforms to examine how they emphasise values such as diversity and inclusivity, which would address the limitations of using artificially generated ads and provide more practical insights. Also, a study which would differentiate between internal and external diversity and inclusion practices and their influence on employer attractiveness should be undertaken. This could provide deeper insights into how a holistic diversity and inclusion-based employer attractiveness can be developed. Also, a broader focus on talent management, including talent

management strategies, employee retention and employee engagement could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how diversity and inclusion influence the overall employee experience.

6. Conclusion

Young job seekers show an increasing interest in and place increasing importance on diversity and inclusion in their professional lives and choices. For example, the “woke” movement and changing political landscape demonstrate how younger generations are more open-minded and value diverse perspectives more than their predecessors. As the latest generation to enter the workforce, they are known to be the “most technically literate, educated and ethnically diverse generation in history” (Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008, p. 367). This has important implications for organisations seeking to attract, retain, and develop this talent pool, especially in times of the war for talent. The conducted research showed that emphasising diversity and inclusion in job advertisements can attract young job seekers, showing the importance of diversity and inclusion signalling. Because job seekers look for the optimal person-organisation fit, information on the organisation’s values, culture and commitment towards diversity and inclusion can be a key differentiator. The presented research showed that job seekers are going to apply for a job offer with a higher likelihood if the communication of this offer uses clear and concise D&I signalling. Furthermore, if they choose advertisements including D&I signalling, they will probably have different preferences regarding what constitutes job attractiveness. The data suggest that applicants drawn to D&I-signalling ads value cultural and D&I-related factors more, while those opting for non-D&I-signalling ads may focus more on traditional benefits like compensation. The conducted research also showed that applicants who believe in the significance of the D&I initiatives tend to prefer positions that explicitly signal D&I for those who prioritise these values. However, due to the exploratory nature of the presented study, the issue of diversity and inclusion signalling on employer attractiveness requires further research.

Authors’ Contribution

The authors’ individual contribution is as follows: Katarzyna Podrózna: conceptualisation, methodology, data collection and formal analysis. Olga Voropai: writing of the manuscript. Jolanta Maj: conceptualisation, writing of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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