

Exploring employer attitude towards migrant workers

Evidence from managers across Europe

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Abstract

Purpose – Migrants play an essential role in economic and societal outcomes of the host society, both as members of the workforce and as citizens. However, integration and finding employment after migration remain critical issues. The purpose of this paper is to employ an evidence-based quantitative approach to identify migrant workers' most important qualifications from an employer perspective and to explore factors that influence employer perception of migrants.

Design/methodology/approach – This study uses European Social Survey data that contain responses from managers in European countries in 2014 ($n = 2,828$) and 2016 ($n = 3,014$). Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling are used to analyse the data.

Findings – For managers, migrants' commitment to the host country's way of life is more important than their job skills, educational level and language proficiency. The effects of managers' individual characteristics, including demographics, expectancies and personal values, on their general attitude towards migrants are also quantified.

Practical implications – The study's outcomes can assist migrants to develop the qualifications most valued by employers, and allow policymakers to integrate the organizational perspective into policies and initiatives for integration of migrant labour.

Originality/value – Through HR practices, organizations significantly affect migrants' career outcomes. Yet research on migrant workers from an organizational and managerial perspective is limited. This study identifies migrant workers' most important qualifications from an employer perspective. It also explores which individual characteristics most influence organizational decision-makers' perception. Utilizing a cross-cultural and longitudinal data set provides a unique opportunity to generate generalizable findings.

Keywords Personal values, Migrant worker, Attitude towards migrants, European labour markets

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The need to fill skill shortages in certain occupations in developed countries (Cerna and Czaika, 2016), political and economic instabilities in some regions and the globalization of products and services (Nguyen *et al.*, 2015) have led to a sharp increase in the number of migrants. Finding proper employment is a sustainable way for migrants to integrate into their host society, but despite the efforts, migrant's employment remains a challenge that concerns migrants, employers and policymakers. Research that takes an organizational perspective on migrant employment is at an early stage (Cao *et al.*, 2012; Fernando *et al.*, 2016).

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This study explores the role of managers and organizations in shaping migrant workers' employment and careers.

After migration, most migrants experience a decline in their career outcomes (Tharmaseelan *et al.*, 2010). Attitudes and other individual characteristics of decision-makers involved in hiring and promotion can influence migrants' career attainment. As key decision-makers in HR processes, managers determine evaluation methods, set assessment criteria, and interpret the information acquired through resume and job interview (Arvey and Campion, 1982). How managers perceive migrant candidates can, therefore, affect the results of selection and promotion processes (Horverak *et al.*, 2013).

Managers' perceptions and attitudes are susceptible to decision errors. Examples of such errors include the "similar to me" effect, referring to the more favourable evaluation of a candidate whose mind-set, personality traits, or nationality is similar to the evaluator's (Almeida *et al.*, 2012), and stereotyping, referring to generalization and evaluating candidates based on gender, race, appearance, dress or accent (Murray and Ali, 2017). Managers have a more complex task when assessing migrant job applicants (e.g. managers are not familiar with the migrant's previous employers and educational institutes; cultural differences and language barriers can lead to lower level of communication) and, therefore, are even more susceptible to decision errors in this context. Due to the higher level of complexity a new line of research is required to examine how organizational decision-makers perceive and assess migrant workers.

While the effects of organizational processes on workplace inequality have been investigated, little is known about how managers, in particular, may shape the employment outcomes of migrant candidates and employees (Castilla, 2011). Managers are agentic actors and their attitudes and beliefs significantly affect HR practices. The existing literature documents and empirically verifies that managers' attitudes towards particular groups can influence the selection prospects of candidates belonging to those groups. For instance, evaluation of groups such as disabled persons (Hernandez *et al.*, 2000; Jackson *et al.*, 2000), migrants with specific home countries (Stangej *et al.*, 2018) and individuals of a certain race (Pager and Karafin, 2009) can be affected by manager's attitude. Assuming that managers' attitudes can bias selection decisions, we aim to explore the determinants of these attitudes. Such research should help organizations to formulate a more inclusive hiring process, and to identify and remove unfair managerial attitudes. The results should also help migrants understand organizations' assessment criteria, thus helping them to develop better career management strategies for advancing their careers in the destination country.

The next section presents a brief overview of migration in Europe. Then, hypotheses on determinants of manager attitude towards migrant (ATM) worker are presented. Using data from the European Social Survey (ESS), the role of managers' values and demographics in their ATM is investigated. Using two data sets, the effect the recent influx of refugees is also examined. The theoretical and practical implications of the findings and the limitations are discussed at the end.

Migration in Europe

The European Union's (EU) internal market was established in 1993 with the Maastricht Treaty. The EU created the concept of common European citizenship, which has also promoted and facilitated the movement of workers across the borders of European countries (Damay and Mercenier, 2016). The addition of ten new central and Eastern European countries in 2004 and 2007 further increased the scope of intra-European mobility (Dobson, 2009). Europe has also been a primary destination for immigrants and asylum seekers from non-EU countries, mainly due its economic prosperity and quality of life. While refugee flows have been a favoured subject of discussion for politicians and the media, other routes of entry into Europe have diversified the migrant population. People with a diverse origins and migration motives are settling in Europe. For instance, many international and

intra-European students come to study at European universities and decide to stay and work afterwards; or many come to Europe to join their partners and families.

Migrants in EU are not a homogeneous group. However, seeking employment seems to be a common challenge for migrants. Even though migrants actively seek employment, employment rates among migrants are lower than locals in almost all EU countries (Bussi and Pareliussen, 2017; Cueto and Rodríguez Álvarez, 2015). Migration is also often associated with the underutilization of skills and working in less desirable positions and occupations. In extreme cases, migration is even associated with working under unacceptable working conditions (Sardana *et al.*, 2016).

Manager's individual characteristics as predictors of attitude towards migrant workers

Since the decline of migrants' job statuses and career outcomes is not completely explained by human capital, there seem to be other influencing factors. The assessment of a migrant worker is associated with the attitude of native managers often not in favour of migrants (Mancinelli *et al.*, 2010). Hence, managers' ATM might be an influencing factor. ATM concerns the degree to which a person favourably or unfavourably evaluates capabilities and performance of migrants in general. According to the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), a manager with a positive attitude towards migration is more likely to evaluate a migrant candidate positively during the hiring process. A manager's values, human capital expectancy (HCE), cultural dominance expectancy and demographic variables such as gender, age, education and being a migrant themselves are among the determinants of attitude that this study investigates.

Individual values

Human values can theoretically explain attitudes and behaviours (Maio and Olson, 1995). Individual ATM vary according to people's basic values (Ariely, 2011). In particular, drawing from Schwartz's classification of human values (2012), self-transcendence and conservation values are relevant to the context of this study. Self-transcendence values include understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection. Davidov, Meuleman, Billiet and Schmidt (2008) argue that migration provides opportunities for members of the host society to actualize these self-transcendence values. An individual with high self-transcendence values tries to understand the new culture of a migrant, appreciates the diversity that the new culture creates, perceives cultural mix as a societal enrichment and source of innovation and is more agreeable to cultural incongruence. Furthermore, such an individual recognizes the vulnerable position of a migrant and tries to support them by providing means of sustenance and growth. In the labour market, a manager with high self-transcendence values considers a migrant worker as equal to native candidates, since they believe in social justice and consider themselves responsible for helping. Therefore, we hypothesize:

- H1.* Managers with higher levels of self-transcendent values hold more positive attitudes towards migrants.

On the other hand, migrants belong to a different culture and bring new norms and beliefs. Therefore, an individual with high conservation values that prefers stability and the traditional culture perceive migrants as a threat to the status quo (Sagiv and Schwartz, 1995). It is expected that conservative individuals hold negative attitudes towards out-group migrants and, consequently, undervalue their potential (Green, 2007, 2009). Similarly, a manager with high conservation values is expected to have a negative ATM candidates, perceiving incoming migrants as threatening the current societal and organizational order and shared culture. Therefore, we hypothesize:

- H2.* Managers with higher levels of conservative values hold more negative ATM.

Human capital expectancy

Many studies show that locals, including the general public and policymakers, prefer high-skilled migrants over low-skilled ones, irrespective of locals' level of skill, education, income or ethnocentrism (Helbling and Kriesi, 2014). A migrant with proper educational qualifications and a set of skills needed in the country is expected to find proper employment, impose no burden on the social welfare system and contribute to the host society's economy and organization's competitive advantage (Zikic, 2015). In particular, employers show more negative attitudes towards lower educated than higher educated migrants (Andriessen *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, we propose the construct of HCE as the manager's evaluation of the desirable level of migrants' job skills and qualifications. However, the discourse of "lack" surrounding refugees and migrants suggests they are usually perceived by locals as lacking necessary personal qualities and human capital, and consequently dependent on assistance from the host society (Ponzoni *et al.*, 2017). Hence, we hypothesize:

- H3.* Higher HCE (the expectation that migrants should be skilled and educated) is associated with managers' less positive ATM with lower human capital.

Acculturation expectancy

In addition to economic factors such as human capital, cultural factors also help to explain ATM. Encountering a new distinct set of morals, norms, behavioural patterns and shared beliefs in the host society, migrants perceive the need to adapt to the new culture through acculturation. Acculturation is a bi-dimensional process in which the member of a migrant group decides: (not/) to maintain their cultural heritage; and (not/) to participate in the culture of the receiving society (Berry, 1997). There are, thus, four possible acculturation strategies, as combinations of these two dimensions that a migrant might adopt. However, acculturation involves two parties: the migrant non-dominant group and the host dominant group. Members of the host dominant group might prefer migrants to adopt particular acculturation strategies, referred to as acculturation expectancy (ACE) (Berry, 2013). Previous studies indicate that host society members prefer migrants to engage actively in their culture (Berry, 2013; Hui *et al.*, 2015). It should be noted that this expectancy makes no assumption about migrants' country of origin culture and does not concern whether migrants should be assimilated or absorbed into the dominant group. Instead, ACE refers merely to migrants' acceptance of and integration into the host society culture. Interestingly, empirical studies show that cultural factors have higher explanatory power than economic factors (Malhotra *et al.*, 2013). Therefore we hypothesize:

- H4.* Higher ACE (the expectation that migrants commit to the host society's lifestyle and become proficient in the language) is associated with managers' less positive ATM.
- H5.* Manager's ACE has higher explanatory power than HCE in explaining the ATMs.

The recent influx of migrants into Europe

Migration can cause challenges for both migrants and their host society. These challenges might include decreasing salaries for native workers (Connell and Burgess, 2009), lack of societal integration and pressure on welfare and educational systems (Zorlu, 2013), brain waste from overqualified migrants being employed in non-career, low-status jobs (Humphries *et al.*, 2013; Toh and Quinlan, 2009) and employment of migrant workers under precarious working conditions (Rodriguez and Mearns, 2012). These challenges can affect the attitude of host society members towards migrants.

As the admittance of migrants becomes officially supported by the government and positively portrayed in mass media, perceived threat is reduced and attitudes become more

favourable. While intra-EU migration is largely accepted and substantiated, both legally and institutionally, international migration from non-EU countries adds an extra dimension to the migration challenge facing EU member states. For instance, in 2015–2016, around 2.7m refugees entered the EU, primarily from the Middle East and North Africa. This mass migration was the biggest movement of people since the Second World War and generally not perceived favourably in Europe (becoming associated with integration challenges and pressure on host countries' welfare systems). Given the significant impact of this influx on the political sphere of European countries and the subsequent changes in immigration policies and public discourse on migration (Geddes and Scholten, 2016, p. 2), it is important to examine how this phenomenon has influenced the employability of migrant workers in terms of managers' ATM.

We use social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) to delineate the effect of the influx on managers' ATM. SIT is well-suited to showing how macrovariables such as globalization shape attitudes towards migration, either positively or negatively (Ariely, 2011). It suggests that people are inclined to build social identity through categorizing people (including themselves) based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age and gender. Consequently, people create us/them or in-group/out-group distinctions (Tajfel and Turner, 1979, 1986). SIT also suggests that members of the national in-group will seek to positively differentiate themselves from out-group migrants. This distinction and positive thinking about the in-group does not necessarily result in feeling superior to the out-group (i.e. superiority of a native-born candidate over a migrant candidate) (Ariely, 2011). As Pehrson *et al.* (2009) show, the relationship between national identification and attitudes towards immigrants can be positive or negative.

Migration increases the cross-border flow of people, culture and information and so can reshape societal intergroup relations. A higher number of migrants can lead to blurred boundaries between cultures, undermining national identification and, consequently, providing a proper setting for activating self-transcendence (e.g. understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protecting the welfare of all people) and weakening conservatism (e.g. having no dominant norms or rules in a multicultural environment). Conversely, migration and globalization might have the opposite impact. Migrants might challenge the sense of belonging and threaten the homogeneous national identity. In response, members of the in-group might reinforce their ethnic, religious or national identities, providing a setting for activating conservatism (e.g. societal and internal harmony and stability, restraining violation of social norms and acceptance of the customs and ideas of one's own national culture and identity) and undermining self-transcendence. The flow of migrants can, thus, trigger either positive or negative ATM. However, the latter appears more prevalent in Europe, as illustrated by the influx being termed a refugee crisis, immigration being perceived as a threat, rather than a benefit (Greussing and Boomgaarden, 2017) and immigration media coverage often being negative and conflict-centred (Eberl *et al.*, 2018).

Based on the above arguments, we hypothesize:

- H6. Managers' ATM are less favourable after the refugee influx than before.
- H7. The relationship between managers' self-transcendence values and ATM is weaker after than before the refugee influx.
- H8. The relationship between managers' conservation values and negative ATM is stronger after than before the refugee influx.

Methodology

Data

We obtained data for empirical analysis from the ESS. Since its launched in 2001, the ESS has conducted biennial surveys across Europe to systematically collect data on the attitudes,

beliefs and behavioural patterns of individuals in more than 30 European countries (www.europeansocialsurvey.org). The ESS offers an academically driven, cross-national database that has been used extensively by researchers from different fields. It continues to be a highly regarded international values and attitudes survey, offering high-quality data that are a critical academic resource for researchers across the social sciences, (Kolarz *et al.*, 2017) including migrant studies (e.g. Billiet *et al.*, 2014; Green, 2007; Joly and Reitz, 2018) and HR management studies (e.g. Koster and Wittek, 2016; Lange, 2015).

We use data collected in the seventh and eighth rounds of the ESS, respectively conducted in 2014 and 2016. Although core questions are repeated in every round of data collection, each round has its own theme (rotating module). Both ATM and demographics are covered by core questions, so relevant data were collected in both years. However, questions regarding HCE and ACE were only included in the seventh round and used for the second part of the analyses.

Respondents identified as holding managerial positions are selected as the sample for this study. The ESS uses the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO08) as the basis for classifying respondents' occupations. The ISCO08 was developed by the International Labour Organization (www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/index.htm). Occupations with codes 1000–1439 are considered managerial and so included in this research. The number of managers in the two data sets totals 2,828 in 2014 and 3,014 in 2016. Davidov *et al.* (2018) showed that the ESS measurement parameters regarding immigration are approximately invariant across most countries; therefore, we can aggregate managers from different countries in one group. The distribution of managers in different managerial positions is presented in Table A1. As it shows, the sample includes managers at top executive- and functional-level positions, in the private and public sectors and across different industries. This distribution suggests that the data are representative of the population of managers in Europe. The majority of managers (62.1 per cent in 2014 and 62.2 per cent in 2016) were male. The average age of managers was 53.4 years in both 2014 and 2016. Table I presents demographic characteristics and other specification of the sample.

Measures

Manager attitude towards migrants (ATM). Attitudes can be differently defined in terms of evaluation, affect, cognition and behavioural predisposition (Breckler and Wiggins, 1989). Most researchers examine attitudes in terms of overall evaluations. Global attitudes are evaluative responses (good-bad, degree of liking or disliking, desirable-undesirable and pleasant-unpleasant) concerning a general topic that typically do not involve declaring planned actions or intentions. Managers' global ATM was measured by asking three questions: "Is immigration bad or good for a country's economy?"; "Is the country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants?"; and "Do immigrants make the country a worse or a better place to live?". Responses were given on an 11-point scale from "0" for most negative evaluation to "10" for most positive evaluation.

Individual values. Schwartz's theory of basic values proposes ten basic human values which are further classified into four more concrete and explicit higher-order values, including openness to change, self-enhancement, conservation and self-transcendence (Schwartz, 2012; Schwartz *et al.*, 2012). ESS uses a short version of the portrait values questionnaire (PVQ) to measure the ten basic values. The ESS measurement of the PVQ offers cross-cultural validity. Our analysis focuses on self-transcendence and conservation. Self-transcendence (ST) is included as a second-order reflective measure comprising five indicators related to benevolence and universalism. Conservation (CON) is included as a second-order reflective measure comprising six indicators related to tradition, conformity and security. The items for measuring values are presented in Table II. Participants responded to questions regarding personal values on a six-point scale, from 1 (very much

Table I.
Descriptive analysis
of the managers

	2014 (<i>n</i> = 2,828)		2016 (<i>n</i> = 3,014)	
	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	1,757	62.1	1,875	62.2
Female	1,071	37.9	1,139	37.8
<i>Age</i>				
25 and younger	63	2.2	60	2.0
25–34	362	12.8	384	12.8
35–44	541	19.2	578	19.2
45–54	579	20.5	653	21.7
55–64	545	19.3	568	18.9
65–74	490	17.4	480	16.0
75 and older	244	8.6	282	9.4
Missing	4	–	9	–
<i>Education</i>				
Elementary	101	3.6	107	3.6
High School	224	8.0	185	6.2
College/Vocational Studies	908	32.3	1007	33.5
Bachelor	854	30.3	840	28.0
Master	680	24.2	805	26.8
PhD	48	1.7	60	2.0
Missing	13	–	10	–
<i>Migrant background</i>				
Native-Born	2,414	88.9	2,673	88.7
Foreign-Born	314	11.1	341	11.3

like me) to 6 (not like me at all). Measures are then reversed and entered into the model in order to have a similar direction of lower to higher with other measures.

Human capital expectancy (HCE). Managers’ expectations regarding migrant workers’ human capital were measured in terms of educational qualification and job skills. The two related questions were: “How important is it for a migrant born, brought up, and living outside [this country] to have good educational qualifications [Q1], and have work skills that [this country] needs [Q2]?”. Managers responded to both questions on an 11-point scale from 0 (extremely unimportant) to 10 (extremely important).

Acculturation expectancy (ACE). Managers’ expectations regarding migrant workers’ acculturation were measured by two related questions: “How important is it for a migrant born, brought up, and living outside [this country] to be able to speak [the country’s official language (s)] [Q1] and be committed[1] to the way of life in [this country] [Q2]?”. As for HCE, managers responded on an 11-point scale from 0 (extremely unimportant) to 10 (extremely important).

Analytical methods

Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) is used to evaluate how managers’ characteristics affect their ATM. SEM enables us to estimate the linear regressions coefficient among variables in a single model. It also enables us to compare the relationships between variables across different groups.

In addition to the hypothesized variables, managers’ demographic characteristics (i.e. age, gender, education and being foreign-born) were also entered into the SEM model. Two models were run: the first uses data from the European Social Survey Round 7 Data (2014) (see Figure 1); the second is a multi-group analysis and compares the size effects of values on attitude in different years (European Social Survey Round 7 Data, 2014 vs

Panel A: loading of indicators on the first-order constructs

Second-order construct	First-order construct	Indicators	Loading					CR					AVE				
			2014	2016	2014	2016	2014	2016	2014	2016	2014	2016	2014	2016	2014	2016	2016
Self-Transcendence	Universalism	(1) Important that people are treated equally and have equal opportunities	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.67	0.66			
		(2) Important to understand different people	0.83	0.83													
		(3) Important to care for nature and the environment ^a	0.61	0.61													
Conservatism	Benevolence	(4) Important to be loyal to friends and devoted to people	0.83	0.85									0.71	0.73			
		(5) Important to help people and care for others' well-being	0.86	0.86													
		(6) Important to be humble and modest, and not to draw attention to oneself	0.71	0.70									0.74	0.58	0.59		
Attitude towards migrants	Tradition	(7) Important to follow traditions and customs	0.81	0.83													
		(8) Important to do what is told and follow rules	0.80	0.83									0.82	0.69	0.71		
		(9) Important to behave properly	0.86	0.86													
Human capital expectancy	Security	Important to live in secure and safe surroundings	0.85	0.84									0.82	0.71	0.70		
		(10) Important that government is strong and ensures safety	0.83	0.84													
		(11) Migrants Should have good educational qualifications	0.86	na								na	0.80	na			
Acculturation expectancy	Human capital expectancy	(12) Migrants Should have work skills that the host country needs	0.93	na								na					
		(13) Be able to speak country's official language(s)	0.84	na								0.81	na	0.68	na		
		(14) Be committed to the way of life in the host country	0.82	na													
Attitude towards migrants	Attitude towards migrants	(15) Immigration bad or good for a country's economy?	0.84	0.87								0.90	0.92	0.76	0.79		
		(16) The country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants?	0.88	0.90													
		(17) Immigrants make the country a worse or a better place to live in?	0.88	0.89													

Panel B: loading of the first-order constructs on the second-order value constructs

Second-order construct	First-order construct	Indicators	Loading					CR					AVE					MSV				
			2014	2016	2014	2016	2014	2016	2014	2016	2014	2016	2014	2016	2014	2016	2016	2014	2016	2014	2016	2016
Self-Transcendence	Universalism	(1) Important that people are treated equally and have equal opportunities	0.96	0.97									0.83	0.73	0.71	0.20	0.17					
		(2) Important to understand different people	0.73	0.70																		
		(3) Important to care for nature and the environment ^a	0.76	0.78									0.82	0.60	0.61	0.12	0.12					
Conservatism	Tradition	(4) Important to be loyal to friends and devoted to people	0.78	0.78																		
		(5) Important to help people and care for others' well-being	0.80	0.80																		
		(6) Important to be humble and modest, and not to draw attention to oneself	0.80	0.80																		
Attitude towards migrants	Security	(7) Important to follow traditions and customs	0.80	0.80																		
		(8) Important to do what is told and follow rules	0.80	0.80																		
		(9) Important to behave properly	0.80	0.80																		

Notes: CR, composite reliability; AVE, average variance extracted; na, not available scores due to lack of data in ESS round 8, 2016. ^aItem was deleted due to a low loading on the latent construct (< 0.70)

Table II.
Reliability and
validity of measures

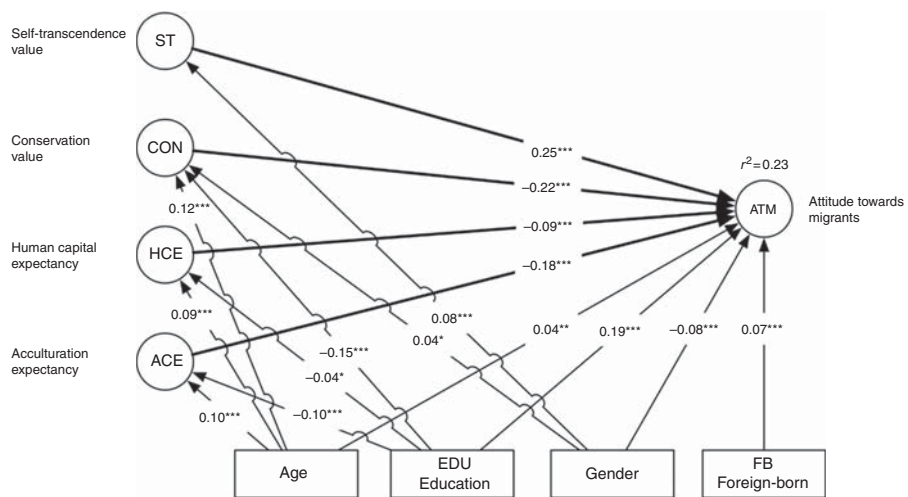


Figure 1.
Path model and SEM
estimates

Notes: *, **, ***The path coefficients are significant at 0.05, 0.01 and 0.001 levels, respectively

European Social Survey Round 8 Data, 2016). Since the ESS eighth round does not include human capital and ACE questions, the SEM for the multi-group comparison does not include those variables. Before running the SEM, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to test the reliability and validity of the measurement model.

Results

The reliability and validity of the measurement model were tested by conducting a CFA for each of the two data sets. In this regard, the values of items loaded on latent variables, composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE) and maximum shared variance (MSV) were calculated. Following Hair *et al.* (2016), the following thresholds were set for internal consistency, reliability and convergent and discriminant validity of the measures: each indicator's absolute standardized loading on the designated construct > 0.70; CR > 0.7; AVE > 0.5; MSV < AVE; and each indicator's loadings higher than all of its cross-loadings (Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion). Since ST and CON values constructed as second-order reflective measures, the analysis was repeated for the second level. MSV values in the 2014 model are 0.25, 0.20, 0.12, 0.25 and 0.20 for ATM, ST, CON, HCE and ACE, respectively. Table II provides the details of the results. Accordingly, the reliability and validity of the measures were established.

Managers' values, attitudes and expectancies are self-reported, and data in each round were collected simultaneously in one questionnaire. Therefore, the possible effect of common method bias (CMB) and systematic error in the model (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003) should be checked. CMB was assessed by applying Harman's single factor test. We conducted an exploratory factor analysis of all 16 indicators in the SEM model. No dominant factor explaining the majority of variance (greater than 50 per cent) emerged, suggesting that the data are not susceptible to CMB.

After validating the measurement model, the structural model was run using partial least squares regression in SmartPLS software (Ringle *et al.*, 2015). The root mean square residual (RMSR) is a measure of model fit, and a value less than 0.08 is considered to indicate a good fit (Henseler *et al.*, 2014; Hu and Bentler, 1998). Our SEM model yields a satisfactory model fit (RMSR = 0.06).

The descriptive statistics and correlations among key variables are shown in Table III. On average, manager attitude (ATM) is slightly positive: both $M_{ATM-014}$ (5.67) and $M_{ATM-2016}$ (5.69) are significantly greater than the scale's median of 5 ($p < 0.001$). In the same manner, managers' expectancies are relatively high. The calculated means are in congruence with similar calculations (e.g. Davidov, Schmidt and Schwartz, 2008). Interestingly, ACE is significantly higher than HCE ($d = 0.32, t = 8.12, p < 0.001$). As Table III shows, the key constructs are significantly correlated, as expected.

The SEM results for the European Social Survey Round 7 Data (2014) data are presented in Figure 1. The numbers on lines in Figure 1 show the standard path coefficients among the constructs. Managers with higher self-transcendence values and lower conservation values have more positive ATM workers ($r_{ST} = 0.25$ and $r_{CON} = -0.22, p < 0.001$). Managers with higher HCE and cultural capital expectancy have less positive ATM workers ($r_{HCE} = -0.09$ and $r_{ACE} = -0.18, p < 0.001$). Managers' demographic characteristics also significantly affect their attitudes but in different direction and through direct and indirect effects, as shown in Table IV. Being a foreign-born manager is associated with attitudes that are relatively more positive. Older age is directly associated with positive attitudes but also leads indirectly to negative attitudes through its association with higher conservation values and higher human capital and acculturation expectancies. Because the positive direct effect and indirect negative effects neutralize each other, there is no net association between age and attitudes. Being a female manager is associated with having relatively more

	Mean		ATM	ST	CON	HCE	ACE	FB	Age	EDU
	2014	2016								
(1) ATM ^a	5.67	5.69	1.00							
(2) ST ^b	4.96	4.87	0.20**	1.00						
(3) CON ^b	4.32	4.25	-0.21**	-0.34**	1.00					
(4) HCE ^a	6.47	na	-0.25**	-0.08**	.21**	1.00				
(5) ACE ^a	6.79	na	-0.31**	-0.05*	0.23**	0.59**	1.00			
(6) FB	—	—	0.09**	0.05**	0.05*	0.01	-0.04	1.00		
(7) Age	53.4	53.4	-0.04*	-0.02	0.14**	0.10**	0.12**	0.02	1.00	
(8) EDU	3.7	4.3	0.24**	0.01	-0.15**	-0.05**	-0.11**	0.05**	-0.15**	1.00
(9) Gender	—	—	-0.06**	0.08**	-0.03	-0.03	-0.01	-0.01	-0.06**	0.02

Notes: Pearson correlation coefficient ($n_{2014} = 2,828$); ATM, attitude towards migrants; ST, self-transcendence value; CON, conservation value; HCE, human capital expectancy; ACE, acculturation expectancy; FB, being foreign-born; EDU: level of education; Gender as being female. ^aScale from 0 to 10; ^bscale from 1 to 6. *,**Correlations are significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels, respectively

Table III.
The means of the key
constructs and the
correlation matrix

Control variables	Direct effect	The indirect paths and effects	Total indirect effect	Total effect on ATM
Being foreign-born	0.07***	—	—	0.07***
Older age	0.04*	Age → CON → ATM: -0.03*** Age → HCE → ATM: -0.01*** Age → ACE → ATM: -0.02***	-0.06***	ns
Being female	-0.08***	Gender → ST → ATM: 0.02*** Gender → CON → ATM: -0.01*	0.02*	-0.07***
Higher educational level	0.19***	EDU → CON → ATM: 0.03*** EDU → ACE → ATM: 0.00*** EDU → HCE → ATM: 0.02***	0.05***	0.24***

Notes: *,**The path coefficients are significant at 0.05 and 0.001 levels, respectively

Table IV.
The effects of
manager's
demographic variables
on their attitude
towards migrants

negative attitudes. Manager’s educational level is the control variable with the strongest explanatory power. A higher education degree is associated with positive ATM, both directly and indirectly through lower conservation values, higher self-transcendence value and lower HCE.

Multi-group analysis

To test *H6*, the means of managers’ attitudes in the two surveys (2014 vs 2016) were compared. The results show that the means are not significantly different ($d = -0.02$, $t = 0.054$, $p = 0.81$). Furthermore, a multi-group SEM analysis was conducted to test *H7* and *H8*. Multi-group SEM compares relationships among constructs in the 2014 and 2016 data sets. The results are presented in Table V. Since the 2016 data set does not include HCE and ACE, the multi-group analysis only compares the relationships among managers’ values, demographics and attitudes. Except for the effect of education, the path coefficients do not significantly differ between the two samples. Although managers’ higher educational level is related to positive attitudes in both years, the association was stronger in 2014 than 2016 ($r_{2014} = 0.20 > r_{2016} = 0.15$, $p = 0.02$).

Discussion

A significant positive path coefficient between ST and ATM supports *H1*. Moreover, significant negative coefficients for the paths from conservation values, HCE and ACE to ATM respectively support *H2*, *H3* and *H4*. Managers’ self-transcendence values, conservation values, HCE, ACE and demographics explain around 23 per cent of the variance in their attitude towards migration (6.2, 4.6, 0.8, 3.1 and 8.0 per cent, respectively).

Regarding ST values, as one reviewer noted one may argue that benevolence is inherently different to universalism, as the former refers to preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact (the in-group), while the latter applies to everyone (both the in-group and out-group) (Schwartz, 2012). Therefore, we entered five values (universalism, benevolence, tradition, security and conformity) as separate constructs in a new SEM model. Items 3, 6 and 9 in Table II were deleted to establish sufficient reliability and validity. The standardized path coefficients between the first-order values and ATM are as follows: $r_{\text{Universalism}} = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$; $r_{\text{Benevolence}} = 0.08$, $p < 0.001$; $r_{\text{Tradition}} = -0.04$, $p = 0.04$; $r_{\text{Security}} = -0.14$, $p < 0.001$; $r_{\text{Conformity}} = -0.09$, $p < 0.001$. The relationships among first-order values and ATM have the same nature and direction as the second-order values presented in Figure 1.

The absolute value of the path coefficient is greater for ACE than HCE can explain 0.8 per cent of managers’ ATM while ACE can explain 3.1 per cent thereof. This finding supports *H5*. Although managers’ perception of migrants’ job skills and educational qualifications are significant determinants of attitude, managers’ perception of the migrant’s commitment to the host country’s lifestyle and of their language ability are stronger factors in shaping the attitude. Townley *et al.* (1989, p. 97) state that the recruitment and selection

Table V.
The comparison
of path coefficients
in year 2014
vs year 2016

Paths	r_{2014}	r_{2016}	Path coefficients difference $ r_{2014} - r_{2016} $	p -value (difference)
CON → ATM	0.29***	0.26***	0.02	0.20
ST → ATM	-0.29***	-0.25***	0.04	0.93
FB → ATM	0.07***	0.09***	0.02	0.75
Age → ATM	0.03 ^{ns}	0.02 ^{ns}	0.00	0.45
Gender → ATM	-0.08***	-0.04**	0.04	0.94
Edu → ATM	0.20***	0.15***	0.05	0.02

Notes: **, ***The path coefficients are significant at the 0.01 and 0.001 levels, respectively

process presents “the opportunity for management to emphasize employee acceptability for which they apply certain criteria to choose, or discriminate, between possible candidates”. Our findings suggest that, when assessing migrant workers, managers might interpret acceptability as their degree of conformity with the host society’s cultural norms and lifestyle. Migrants work competencies and educational qualifications make them suitable but not necessarily acceptable candidates. Person–organization fit (P–O fit) is a related concept that can be used to elaborate on acceptability and suitability. P–O fit emphasizes value congruence between the employee and the organization (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005, p. 285). This congruence is mainly “achieved through determining a good fit when making the employment decision” (Morley, 2007). During the selection process, employers assess P–O fit (i.e. acceptability) by evaluating the likelihood of congruence between the potential employee’s value systems and beliefs and the organizational values and norms. One indication of congruence could be the employee’s commitment to the way of life in the host country. A migrant employee adopting the host country’s lifestyle thereby demonstrates that they are following national norms and values. National culture is known to be a determinant of organizational culture as organizations are embedded in the larger society in which they exist (Pothukuchi *et al.*, 2002). Thus, it is logical to assume that a migrant committed to the lifestyle and culture of the country would fit most of the organization’s cultural aspects. Therefore, employers see migrants’ commitment to the local way of life as a predictor of P–O fit, while migrants’ human capital is a criterion for their suitability or person-job fit. Similarly, Almeida and Fernando (2017) observed that, during hiring, employers focus especially on migrant candidates’ commitment to the host country’s value system and lifestyle, considering it more difficult to change candidates’ values than their skills and level of education. In line with Rivera (2012), our finding that ACE is higher than HCE provides empirical evidence on the frequently believed but empirically unexamined notion that cultural similarity between employer and job candidate is highly salient for the hiring decision.

Around 50 per cent of the managers in our sample were aged 55 or over. Stereotypical bias and discrimination against migrants are frequently associated with older age (Fernando *et al.*, 2016). Although the total effect of age on ATM is insignificant, older age indirectly creates less favourable attitudes through higher conservation values and higher expectancies (see Table I). An intriguing difference identified in our findings is that female managers compared to male counterparts hold less favourable ATM. Schwartz and Rubel (2005) showed that while the sexes do not differ on conservation values, women attribute more importance than men to self-transcendence. In contrast to our finding, this suggests that, holding all other factors constant, female managers should show positive ATM. The incongruence implies that factors other than personal values led to a difference in attitudes towards migration between the two genders. One plausible explanation is that attitudes towards the out-group (migrants) might stem from its perceived threat (Meuleman *et al.*, 2009). The male-dominated cultures in countries from which increasing numbers of migrants are coming may be affecting women’s threat perception and leading to less favourable ATM. In line with the previously identified correlation between older age and prejudice or stereotypical bias (Gonsalkorale *et al.*, 2009), our finding predicts that an older manager is more likely to demand higher human capital ($r = 0.09$, $p < 0.001$) and acculturation in terms of lifestyle commitment and language proficiency ($r = 0.10$, $p < 0.001$). There is no significant difference between male and female managers regarding human capital and acculturation expectancies. Among the demographic characteristics, being male, having a higher educational level and being foreign-born all contributed to positive ATM.

The overall ATM was the same in 2014 and 2016. The multi-group analysis indicates that ATM was not less favourable in 2016 and shows the same pattern of relationships

among constructs in 2014 as in 2016. Therefore, *H6*, *H7* and *H8* are not supported. It appears that the recent influx of refugees into Europe has not produced any immediate effects on managers' ATM.

Empirical implications

Managers' focus on migrants' commitment to the host country's way of life has important implications. This commitment is a signal of how a migrant will assimilate into the work life of the organization. It reflects managers' opinion on whether a migrant would fit the organization and its day-to-day operations, and how well they would be able to complete job tasks without managerial mentorship and supervision, especially when communicating with customers, suppliers or co-workers is a critical part of the job. This implies that migrants should be assisted to build understanding of how culture operates in their host country. As well as language courses and job searching techniques, labour market integration initiatives should encompass the working culture. Policymakers need to understand the importance of this component for increasing migrants' employability. A working culture component should teach, guide and assist migrants to understand the implicit and unwritten dimensions of work in the host society, including acceptable norms, values and conventions for day-to-day communication in the workplace. Discussion topics may include, for instance, whether to use the first or last name, the role of unions, the importance of punctuality, gender roles, the importance of developing a personal relationship before doing business, spontaneous discussion vs detailed agenda in a meeting, and power relationship and role expectations in teams.

Managers and organizations looking to recruit migrants should be aware of the effects revealed in this study and reflect on their decision-making to minimize the risk of unconscious subtle discrimination against migrant workers. Organizations also need to re-examine their newcomer orientation programmes to include not only formal work procedures but also informal rituals and norms, as these can be interpreted as part of commitment to the local way of life. We suggest that a mentorship programme focusing on implicit rules in the workplace would be beneficial. Finally, migrants should realize that taking a proactive approach (e.g. networking with host country natives) and changing their behavioural patterns (e.g. language usage, dress code and communication style) to adapt to the host country's culture can increase their employability, as also suggested by Cao *et al.* (2013).

Our findings suggest that, during the job interview, migrants should go beyond presenting their job competencies by sending a strong signal of their fit with the organizational and national culture, and even with the manager. Language proficiency is itself a strong signal. Another strategy could be to show their cultural integration. For instance, cultural differences regarding power distance or perception of time are well-known phenomena; so in a job interview in a Western European context, a non-European migrant could address these differences and the ways s/he copes with them. Rivera (2012) demonstrated the importance of applicants showing shared culture with hiring decision-makers, particularly through lifestyle markers such as similar extracurricular interests and extraprofessional experiences.

Theoretical implications

Tajfel and Turner's (1979) SIT was developed in a socio-economic and political context different from today's globalized world (Reese *et al.*, 2015). Globalization and migration have provided opportunities for reaching talents and resources, particularly for multinational corporations and even for born-global small and medium-sized enterprises. Globalization might also encourage supranational identification. These developments may pose a challenge to SIT's classic formulation. Furthermore, Guerra *et al.* (2015) suggest that we should expect nuanced responses to the recent mass displacement of people, even inside one

seemingly homogenous host society. Understanding the political sphere and social relations in host societies can provide better understanding of migrant-host society relations. Furthermore, identity should be seen as a temporary, context-sensitive and evolving set of constructions, rather than a fixed notion of self (Ashforth, 1998). Multiple shifting and competing identities exist at the individual and collective level (Alvesson *et al.*, 2008). For instance, in an organizational decision-making context, organizational identity, professional identity, personal identity and social identity mutually exist. It would be interesting to investigate in what order these competing identities appear. For instance, future research could explore how occupational/organizational identity of a decision maker preferring the most competent candidate compete with social identities that supposedly promote in-group membership. Our results seem to indicate that in the migrant candidate assessment process, social identity is more crucial than professional identity.

Methodological implications

Researchers have previously reported that ESS data do not fully support Schwartz's model of ten basic human values (e.g. Beierlein *et al.*, 2012; Davidov, 2010). It appears that this problem is due to neglecting higher-order values, such as self-transcendence and conservation. As a methodological contribution, this research shows that second-order modelling of values is an appropriate strategy and yields satisfactory validity and reliability.

Conclusion

This study explored how managers' expectancies and individual characteristics affected their ATM. The results contribute to existing literature on employer behaviour with respect to migrant workers. Adopting an organizational perspective, this study empirically identified some of the organizational sources of negative ATM in Europe. The findings confirm that migrants' employment and career outcomes are not merely influenced by their human capital and qualifications but also by employers' values and cultural expectancies.

Limitations and future research

Based on studies exploring similar contexts, such as the employment of disabled and minorities, we assumed that managers' negative attitude would negatively affect the hiring process. More empirical evidence should be collected for verification. By utilizing high-quality ESS data covering many countries in two different years, we studied migrants as one group. However, migrant groups are diverse and managers' attitudes towards different groups of migrants (e.g. skilled vs low-skilled, EU vs non-EU, employer-sponsored vs refugees or unauthorized) might differ. Future research should differentiate between these groups to provide a more detailed picture. To increase this study's explanatory power, future research might include other individual-level variables, such as managers having international experience, their political viewpoint and personality traits such as openness to new experience and risk-taking. To broaden understanding of factors affecting the assessment of migrant labour, it would be helpful to adopt a multilevel approach and to incorporate country-level, occupation-level, organization-level and individual-level factors. In addition, further research needs to distinguish between education abroad and local education to assess whether they are considered differently from a managerial perspective (Stangej *et al.*, 2018).

The comparison of 2014 and 2016 data indicates no significant decline in ATM or differences between the construct relationships. The prevalence of global humanitarianism among privileged western managers might explain the findings. However, our analysis is limited to immediate reflections on the mass migration of refugees, and further analysis using data from later ESS rounds should reveal the long-term effects. Finally, our results

suggest that, from managers' perspective, migrant workers' local language proficiency and ability to adapt to the host society's culture and lifestyle are vital qualifications for employment. Further qualitative research should scrutinize and try to grasp the rationale behind this assessment. It would also be interesting to explore how migrant workers' degree of acculturation and assimilation affects their performance after being hired, and what role is played by managers' individual characteristics in other HR processes, such as promotion and competency development of migrant workers.

As migration has become a challenging issue in the political agendas of almost all European countries, we hope this paper inspires other researchers to address the important topic of migrant workers.

Note

1. The ESS defines "committed" in the sense of embracing and fully accepting the way of life.

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Appendix

Position	No. in 2014	No. in 2016	Position	No. in 2014	No. in 2016	Position	No. in 2014	No. in 2016
Managing directors and chief executives	275	304	Financial and insurance services branch managers	57	69	Senior officials of special-interest organizations	16	24
Retail and wholesale trade managers	235	289	Policy and planning managers	54	80	Administrative and commercial	16	31
Sales and marketing managers	219	169	Sports, recreation and cultural centre managers	53	46	Manufacturing, construction, and distribution	16	22
Manufacturing managers	214	235	Agricultural and forestry production	50	36	Legislators	15	21
Business services and administration managers not elsewhere classified	189	115	Senior government officials	46	33	Aged care services managers	15	27
Supply, distribution and related managers	171	154	Health services managers	40	50	Professional services managers	9	7
Construction managers	157	148	Hotel managers	39	52	Hotel and restaurant managers	7	27
Finance managers	143	141	R&D managers	35	42	Other services managers	6	9
Restaurant managers	143	159	Social welfare managers	33	17	Hospitality, retail and other services	5	17
Education managers	141	138	Child care services managers	27	32	Mining managers	4	12
Human resource managers	90	108	Production and specialized services	24	28	Sales, marketing and development	3	9
Services managers not elsewhere classified	81	67	Advertising and public relations managers	23	21	Aquaculture and fisheries production	1	7
Professional services managers not elsewhere classified	76	80	Business services and administration managers	18	49			
ICT service managers	66	105	Managers	16	34	Total	2,828	3,014

Table AI.
Distribution of
managerial positions
based on ISCO08
classification

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