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International Marketing and Management

Master's Thesis

**Who cares? Analysis of the Country of Origin Effect
applied to Immigrant Elderly Caregivers**

Supervisor: Alexander Josiassen, Department of Marketing

Authors:

Kristin Möller (123734)

Marisa Patricia Hohmann (124984)

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ABSTRACT

While national labor shortages for elderly care increase policy and firm decision makers' dependence on immigrants to fill this gap, an understanding of individuals' predispositions toward the foreign workers' country of origin is vital for their integration in the host country's labor market. These country predispositions and attitudes toward immigrant workers are influenced by people's personality traits. However, research on the country of origin (COO) effect on immigrants as service providers, and the impact of individual personality traits on the country predispositions in an employment context is scarce. Drawing on a holistic country-induced predispositions model that unites cognitive and emotional components of the COO image construct, we qualitatively and quantitatively shed light on how the COO image of the immigrant's nationality affects personnel decision makers' employment behavior, and how this relation is moderated by personality traits. Thereby, we compare one culturally close-knit and one distant immigrant country of origin regarding the host country's perception. Findings show that country-induced predispositions play a role in employers' willingness to hire and expected service quality of foreign caregivers, with personnel decision makers being more positively inclined toward immigrants from countries with appreciated COO images. Further, the personality trait extraversion has a moderating influence on the effect of country predispositions on employment behavior. This research extends the COO image concept to the people service and employment context as well as provides governmental institutions and private companies with an understanding that the COO image of immigrants' nationalities matter for personnel decision makers' employment behavior, and which cognitive and emotional components need to be considered.

Keywords: Country of origin image, country-induced predispositions, elderly care, national labor shortage, immigrant workers, Big Five personality traits, employment behavior

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1 INTRODUCTION

With the ongoing ageing of the German population and the prediction of rising nursing cases which it brings, there is an increasing need of caregivers for the elderly (Destatis, 2020a; Jacobs et al., 2019; Dittmann, 2008). At the same time, Germany already sees the popularity of the vocational training in elderly care decreasing, and generally faces a severe lack of skilled workers (Brady, 2018; Hasselhorn & Wittich, 2008). This gap in demand and supply of caregivers might lead to a care crisis. Therefore, the topic is highly prominent in German politics, and part of the recent package of measures to fight this predicted care crisis, is to attract foreign caregivers to Germany (Jacobs et al., 2019).

Due to the prosperity gap between foreign caregivers' home country and Germany, the number of migrating workers has already increased, particularly from the Balkan countries and Poland, which is the most common country of origin of caregivers (Rada, 2016). Polish caregivers are publicly known for their nursing qualifications, and Poland's country image, in general, is relatively positive (Jacobs et al., 2019; Ipsos, 2020). However, since the demand is predicted to grow even further, the government also considers to strategically attract caregivers from overseas, such as from Mexico, the Philippines, Vietnam or Brazil. Here, the focus is on countries with a relatively young population and excess of caregivers, however, also cultural closeness is an important factor (Bundesministerium für Gesundheit, 2019). Besides, there have been initiatives aiming to train individuals with migration background (Jacobs et al., 2019; Grunau, 2020). Since 2015, many migrants and refugees have come to Germany, particularly from Syria due to the civil war in the Middle Eastern country (AbuJarour & Krasnova, 2017). Hence, societal inclusion, particularly of Syrian refugees continues to be challenging, as the country image of Syria is perceived negatively in comparison to other countries (AbuJarour & Krasnova, 2017; Ipsos, 2020).

Global migration within the past few years has highly diversified nowadays' societies regarding the national background (Pettigrew, 1998). Particularly now, the increasing dependence on immigrants to fill the gap in national labor shortages makes understanding associations and images of a host country's population regarding foreign workers vital for their integration in the host country's labor market (Esses, Dietz & Bhardwaj, 2006). Hence, the nationality of applicants has been found an important factor contributing to employment discrimination (Krings & Olivares, 2007; Almeida, Fernando & Sheridan, 2012). Employment discrimination implies the "unequal treatment of persons or groups" (Pager & Shepherd, 2008, p.182) based on an applicant's personal characteristics, such as nationality (Bendick, Jackson & Reinoso, 1994), and can influence the employment outcome (Imdorf, 2010).

Generally, the ongoing globalization and the broad selection of options makes it increasingly difficult for consumers to obtain information on these choices (Kock, Josiassen & Assaf, 2019). In the context of tangible products, extensive research has been conducted on the reliance of consumers on other signals to base their decision on, such as the country of origin (Kock et al., 2019). The country of origin (COO) image can be defined as a “simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information” (Kotler, Haider, and Rein, 1993, p. 141), forming a consumer’s overall picture of a product or service. Often, the construct is also viewed as a commonly held opinion, stereotype or bias about foreign goods (Nagashima, 1970; Bilkey & Nes, 1982). This perception can positively or negatively influence consumers’ evaluations and perceptions of brands (Elliott & Cameron, 1994; Javed, 2013).

Although scholars started researching the COO image in 1960 already, the topic is, with more than 23,000 publications since 2019, still one of the most studied research fields in the international marketing literature (Samiee & Chabowski, 2012; Kock et al., 2019; Rezvani et al., 2012; Google Scholar, 2020). Although the COO effect can be applied to multiple research fields (Samiee & Chabowski, 2012; Kock et al., 2019; Rezvani et al., 2012), existing literature has mainly been focused on tangible products. However, research on the COO effect on people as service providers is limited (Javalgi, Cutler & Winans, 2001; Dinnie, 2004). Particularly in the employment context, there is a dearth of research on the COO image, and even more so with regard to the employment of immigrants (e.g. Evans & Kelly, 1991; Binggeli, Dietz & Krings, 2013). Moreover, Horverak, Sandal, Bye and Pallesen (2013) have found that personality traits may moderate the COO effect on personnel decision makers’ hiring preferences. However, personality traits have not yet been extensively tested in an employment related context (Horverak et al., 2013).

Marketers have recognized the perceived relation of products to countries as potential to influence consumers’ perceptions and consequently boost sales (Josiassen, Kock & Meß, 2016; Josiassen, Lukas, Whitwell & Assaf, 2013; Josiassen, 2011; Olson, 1972). However, to optimally use this opportunity, it is vital to thoroughly understand how consumers make decisions (Kock et al., 2019; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Verlegh, Steenkamp & Meulenberg, 2005). Also, in the context of the service provider selection, the COO image might have influences on employment decisions. In the case of the German elderly caretaking market, knowledge on how nationalities of caregivers are perceived by institutions and individual employers, and which effect these perceptions have on the hiring process, may have a great impact on the effectiveness of attracting foreign caregivers.

1.1 Problem Formulation

Especially in services, despite becoming an increasingly important and rapidly growing research field, the COO image's effects have rarely been examined (e.g. Javalgi et al., 2001; Veale & Quester, 2010; Meese et al., 2019; Guilhoto, 2018). Thereby, particularly people as service providers have barely been shed light on (e.g. Jean Harrison-Walker, 1995). Scholars (Javalgi et al., 2001; Dinnie, 2004) suggest that within a COO image context, the nationality of people as service providers should be further investigated. Furthermore, in this respect, the influence of the COO image on personnel decision maker's employment behavior regarding immigrant service providers depicts an interesting but still relatively unexplored research stream. Thus, following the call of academia for further research, the subsequent overall overarching research question will guide our study:

How does the COO image affect personnel decision makers' employment behavior?

Furthermore, research on the COO image has found that consumer characteristics can have a moderating effect on the COO image's effect (e.g. Ahmed & d'Astous, 2008; Rawwas, Rajendran & Wuehrer, 1996; Hett, 1993; Niss, 1996; Han & Terpstra, 1988). Particularly, personality traits as predisposition to shape negative attitudes toward individuals from foreign countries, are related to employment discrimination, and can influence the immigrant applicants' employment outcome (Posthuma, Morgeson & Campion, 2002; Macan, 2009; Huffcutt, 2011; Horverak et al., 2013). However, research on personality influencing the COO cue is still scarce and requires further research, particularly in an employment related context (Horverak et al., 2013). Therefore, we raise the following subsequent research question:

How do personnel decision makers' personality traits moderate the COO image's effect on employment behavior?

In order to answer these research questions, we introduce a theoretical model following Kock et al. (2019). Thereby, we investigate the effect of country-induced predispositions (CIPs) on personnel decision makers' employment behavior regarding the willingness to hire Polish and Syrian caregivers and their respective expected service quality. Kock et al.'s (2019) CIP model is the first integrative framework to incorporate the two distinct research areas on the COO cue, performance-related cognitive COO images and performance-unrelated country emotions. Furthermore, we incorporate

the Big Five personality trait model (McCrae & Costa, 2008; Goldberg, 1992) to our applied CIP framework to test a moderating impact of the traits openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism on the country-induced predispositions' effect on the outcome variables. The Big Five model has been established as a widely used personality assessment tool within the human resources literature (Barrick & Mount, 1991), and is said to extensively capture humans' main dimensions of personality (e.g. Akrami, Ekehammar & Bergh, 2011; John, Naumann & Soto, 2008a). Using a mixed methods research design, we first conduct interviews and, in a second step, embed our insights within our theoretical framework and test them in an online survey.

This master thesis contributes to the existing, but still undeveloped literature on the COO image in an employment context in several ways. From a theoretical point of view, the first fundamental contribution is to add knowledge in this field with our finding that country predispositions, both cognitive and emotional determinants, influence employment behavior, and thus, are applicable to people as service providers. Thereby, literature is extended by a more holistic approach on the COO image regarding employment. The second theoretical contribution of this paper is that the personality trait extraversion has a moderating impact on the effect of the country predispositions on the expected service quality. We thereby advance previous research that consumer characteristics can influence employment behavior.

1.2 Delimitations

The master thesis at hand is subject to several delimitations. First, our thesis context is focused on the German elderly caretaking landscape only. Germany is facing the challenge of a rapidly aging society and a shrinking workforce, especially with regard to skilled workers such as caregivers (Jacobs et al., 2019; Dittmann, 2008). Therefore, the gap for skilled caregivers in Germany is intensifying and requires specific examination. Second, caretaking is only examined for elderly people taken care of at home by 24-hour (or "live-in") service personnel. This has been for the reason that 70% of elderly dependents are cared for at home with their relatives being actively involved in care (Jacobs et al., 2019; Geyer & Schulz, 2014). Next to traditional caretaking homes, a high number of intermediaries procuring "live-in" migrant caregivers has emerged due to the high demand and respective financial prospects (Jacobs et al., 2019). Third, we only investigate personnel decision makers' employment behavior toward Polish and Syrian immigrant caregivers in a German elderly's home. The research is particularly focused on these two countries to allow for a comparison of a culturally close-knit country and a culturally distant nation in an employment context (e.g. Krings & Olivares, 2007;

Dinesen, Klemmensen & Nørgaard, 2014). Poland presents the caretaking base case in our thesis due to its status of the most common country of origin for caregivers (Rada, 2016) and its generally positively perceived country image (Ipsos, 2020). Syria, on the contrary, was chosen because of its negatively perceived country image (Ipsos, 2020) and the fact that Germany in the last couple of years has become the home for several thousands of Syrian refugees given political events in their home country (AbuJarour & Krasnova, 2017). Fourth, our sample group is limited to Germans that possess the German citizenship and are aged between 35 and 67 years. This target group was chosen for the following reasons: First, given our research context, we aimed to examine how German national citizens deal with elderly care. Second, as family relatives such as a pensioner's descendants are actively involved when it comes to choosing an elderly caregiver (Auth, 2012; Dittmann, 2008), we chose this age group. Since in Germany, children have maintenance obligation regarding their parents in a nursing case, they are often in charge of finding a place in a caretaking home or hiring a caregiver (Auth, 2012; Dittmann, 2008). The maximum age of 67 was selected because from age 67 on, in Germany the pensionable age begins (Deutsche Rentenversicherung, n.d.). Furthermore, with the age of 60, generally, more care is needed (Destatis, 2019a). The minimum age of 35 years was chosen, because one generation nowadays comprises 30 years, as German women, on average, give birth to their first child at the age of 30 (Destatis, 2019b) with a maximum average age of 32 years for specific German federal states (Destatis, 2016). Thereby, our target group comprises the age group of relatives in charge of organizing care for the German elderly citizen.

1.3 Thesis Structure

This master thesis is structured as follows. First, we outlay the theoretical background of this work with an emphasis on the country of origin image in products and services, followed by an introduction of the employment context. Second, our theoretical framework is introduced, and hypotheses are developed. Third, our thesis continues with presenting our methodological approach for both our qualitative and quantitative study. Fourth, our findings are described and analyzed. Afterward, a discussion of our results with regard to the literary context is undertaken, including theoretical and practical implications, as well as limitations and avenues for future research. Lastly, we finish the master thesis with concluding remarks.

NOTE:

Prior to the master thesis at hand, an independent research project titled “Does Nationality matter? Analysis of the Country of Origin Effect applied to Foreign Service Providers” was conducted by the two authors of this research. This project was written as a component of the CEMS Master’s in International Management double-degree program with Copenhagen Business School, and in collaboration with the same supervisor. The research project acted as a pilot study toward our master thesis, which goes along with requirements of both master programs. For this reason, specific parts of the literature review (chapter 2), theoretical framework (chapter 3), and hypotheses development (chapter 4) of this master thesis were directly taken from the mentioned research project. This goes along with formal requirements of both master programs from Copenhagen Business School and the respective CEMS Master’s in International Management. Therefore, it does not go along with self-plagiarism, as declared by the subsequent extract from the official course catalogue of Copenhagen Business School:

“The CEMS Research Project may be used as a pilot project / steppingstone toward the later MSc thesis. This implies that the contents of the CEMS Research Project may be designed so that it feeds into the MSc thesis, e.g. with an introduction, delimitation of research question(s), a review of the literature in the field, or research methodology. If the student chooses to integrate the text produced for the CEMS Research Project paper in the subsequent master’s thesis at CBS, the student must mention this in the master’s thesis.” (Copenhagen Business School Course Catalogue, 2020).

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In the following section, we provide an overview of the existing literature on the COO image in products and services, before investigating prior research in the employment field, including previous findings on personality traits on behavioral outcomes. Hence, the subsequent literature review serves as a foundation for our theoretical framework and hypotheses development.

2.1 Country of Origin Image in Products and Services

Multiple scholars have found the concept of the COO image to be highly relevant, due to its influence on consumers' stereotypes, product evaluations and behavioral intentions (e.g. Rezvani et al., 2012; Josiassen et al., 2016; Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2017; Verlegh et al., 2005). Almost a thousand researchers have investigated a multitude of antecedents, outcome variables and moderators (Samiee & Chabowski, 2012). Even though international services have become increasingly important and grow rapidly, to date, only few scholars have examined the impact of the COO image's effects in this context (e.g. Javalgi et al., 2001; Veale & Quester, 2010; Meese et al., 2019; Guilhoto, 2018). Also, previous research has found that the COO image's determinants and effects differ across product and services types, and depend on whether raw materials, finished goods or service providers are judged (Josiassen et al., 2013; Xie, Chen, Zhang & Cui, 2018; Meese et al., 2019; Kock et al., 2019). Hence, researchers' opinions diverge on which factors influence the COO image, and how to measure its effect (Kock et al., 2019).

2.1.1 Country of Origin Image Cues

A major discussion topic is, whether the COO effect simply is a cognitive process, or a combination of cognitive and emotional elements (Chattalas, Kramer & Takada, 2008). According to Kock et al. (1990) and Josiassen et al. (2016), most researchers approach the COO image construct either from the cognitive (e.g. Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999; Koschate-Fischer, Diamantopoulos & Oldenkotte, 2012) or the emotional side (e.g. Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Maheswaran & Chen, 2006; Verlegh, 2001). However, few scholars (e.g. Kock et al., 2019; Josiassen, Assaf & Karpen, 2011; Maheswaran, Chen & He, 2013) and psychologists (e.g. Centerbar, Schnall, Clore & Garvin, 2008; Festinger, 1957) emphasize that the COO image is determined by attitude, which is influenced by both cognitive and emotional elements. The cognitive factors are also called performance-related, and emotional factors equal performance-unrelated variables (Kock et al., 2019; Josiassen et al., 2011; Josiassen et al.,

2016). In the following part, we present antecedents of the COO image that have previously been found in literature, structured in performance-related and performance-unrelated determinants.

Performance-Related Determinants

Most scholars only take the performance-related perspective of the COO into account, in which customers cognitively evaluate the source country as indication for product or service quality (Kock et al., 2019; Josiassen et al., 2016; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Javed, 2013). According to Kock et al. (2019, p. 46), the COO image is influenced by a “consumer’s diverse cognitive associations relating to a country as an origin of products”, such as rational reflections, biases, notions or evaluations (Josiassen et al., 2016). Cognitive associations may be different across cultures and nationalities and may change over time, as information about a country’s society, politics and economy is collected from various unrelated sources (Gürhan-Canli & Maheswaran, 2000; Josiassen et al., 2011). On the other hand, the COO image might be influenced by a one-dimensional total evaluation of the source country (Kock et al., 2019; Kotler et al., 1993; Roth & Romeo, 1992; Maheswaran et al., 2013). Also, in services, the country image may have an effect on consumers’ predispositions. According to Guilhoto (2018), a service provider’s performance would be compared to the commonly held opinion on the specific type of service from his/her country of origin.

Performance-Unrelated Determinants

While performance-related determinants have been a popular research field, according to Kock et al. (2019) and Josiassen et al. (2016), only few scholars have tested the effect of performance-unrelated determinants on customers’ purchase intentions (e.g. Maheswaran & Chen, 2006; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Verlegh, 2001). Consumers’ emotions are rather on a country- than on a product level, and can be understood as their general impression, which may serve as a standardized conscious or subconscious heuristic for their purchase decision (Kock et al., 2019; Pham, 2004; Verlegh, 2001). This overall feeling summarizes multidimensional thoughts into one clear positive or negative feeling that complements information, consumers have on the product or service (Kock et al., 2019; Schwarz, 1990; Josiassen et al., 2016). Positive feelings toward a country may consist of likability, sympathy and connection to a particular nationality (Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011). These can result from either positive personal experiences or country similarities, for instance in politics, economy or culture (Josiassen, 2011). In contrast, there might also be feelings of anger or fear toward a specific nation (Klein, Ettenson & Morris, 1998). These might be caused by prior or current politics, economic

or cultural differences, military disputes, or negative personal experiences, ethnocentrism and patriotism (Klein et al., 1998; Rezvani et al., 2012; Chattalas et al., 2008; Josiassen, 2011; Lee, Lee & Li, 2017). Veale and Quester (2010) found similar negative influencing factors for services. Emotional attributes are especially vital in services, as the relationship of service providers and consumers plays a major role. According to Javalgi et al. (2001), consumers generally prefer service providers from their home country, a more industrialized or culturally similar nation. Overall, connotations influence a consumer's perception in different ways, as their effect also depends on the accessibility of the mental connection (Kock et al., 2019). Further information and promotion of other COOs could also change attitudes (Javalgi et al., 2001). While the COO image has been found relevant and similar also in a service context, especially people as the service providing component have only rarely been shed light on (e.g. Jean Harrison-Walker, 1995). Therefore, scholars (Javalgi et al., 2001; Dinnie, 2004) suggest that within a COO image context, the nationality of people as service providers should be further investigated.

2.1.2 Country of Origin Image Effects

The COO image has already been applied to multi-faceted research fields and its influence on both general and more detailed consumers' behavioral intentions has been explored (e.g. Kock et al., 2019; Kan, Cliquet & Gallo, 2014; Josiassen, Lukas & Whitwell, 2008). Prior research has found positive respective negative influences of a positive respective negative COO image on behavior across multiple stages within the customer journey. Starting with consumers' product or service attitudes (see Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999; Rezvani et al., 2012; Chattalas et al., 2008; Kock et al., 2019), also product or service evaluations (see Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2017; Ahmed & d'Astous, 2008), product or service quality expectations (see Majid, 2017; Bilkey & Nes, 1982; Javalgi et al., 2001), purchase intention (see Kock et al., 2019; Rezvani et al., 2012; Bilkey & Nes, 1982; Javed, 2013), purchase decisions (see Kock et al., 2019; Majid, 2017; Meese et al., 2019; Jean Harrison-Walker, 1995) and willingness to pay have been investigated (see Drozdenko & Jenson, 2009; Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012).

Only few scholars (e.g. Speece & Pinkaeo, 2002; Javalgi et al., 2001; Dinnie, 2004), however, have tested variables specifically tailored to services. Especially in the COO image's application to services with regard to people as service providers, many other potential variables could be examined. Jean Harrison-Walker (1995) has tested the impact of the country image on the service provider selection. However, the effect of the COO image has not yet been verified on the decision regarding

people, specifically (Jean Harrison-Walker, 1995). In previous research, particularly the expected service quality and purchase intention proved to be strongly affected by the COO image, which is the reason for the further elaboration on these variables, and the respective research gaps in the services context in the following.

Based on the finding that a positive relation of consumers' country image and their service expectations (e.g. Majid, 2017; Bilkey & Nes, 1982; Javalgi et al., 2001), few scholars argue that expectations serve as a foundation for consumers' purchasing intentions (Josiassen et al., 2016; Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2017; Verlegh et al., 2005; Boulding et al., 1993). This means that the COO image can also affect buying decisions (Meese et al., 2019; Kock et al., 2019). Majid (2017) found that, if customers have a positive country image, they expect a higher service quality. However, according to Bilkey and Nes (1982), the COO's effect on customers' quality expectations might be only marginal, due to the lower importance of connotations with products or services compared to product or services' intrinsic cues. In contrast, Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) proved that among the tested outcome variables - attitude, perceived quality, and purchase intentions - the implications of the COO image were the greatest for the perceived quality. Even though the expected product or service quality is one of the most researched outcome variables, these differential views demonstrate the need for future research, particularly in other research contexts, such as employment.

Furthermore, several scholars have found evidence for the COO image's effect on consumers' purchase intentions (e.g. Kock et al., 2019; Rezvani et al., 2012; Bilkey & Nes, 1982; Javed, 2013). A consumer's purchase intention, which can be understood as the likelihood of the consumer buying the product or service, is strongly correlated with the purchase decision (Josiassen et al., 2016; Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2017; Verlegh et al., 2005; Boulding et al., 1993). Bilkey and Nes (1982) and Javed (2013) also found direct connections of country characteristics and consumers' purchase intentions. If a country is perceived negatively, consumers are less likely to purchase, no matter how positive their service evaluations might be. This is caused by the strong norms that are connected to the COO (Chattalas et al., 2008; Rezvani et al., 2012). However, if there is a positive COO image, purchase intentions may in turn also be influenced in a favorable way (Kock et al., 2019). Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999), on the other hand, emphasize that external factors such as financial contingencies are more important for consumers in forming their purchase intention than cues like the COO image. Therefore, also in terms of the purchase intention, there are contradicting opinions among scholars, and there is potential to further explore the variable in other research fields, for instance, in the employment context as willingness to hire.

2.1.3 Country of Origin Image Moderators

In the COO image literature, researchers have investigated numerous multi-faceted moderators in relation to products and services, partly tailored to distinct contexts. Many previously studied moderators concern predispositions dependent on product or service attributes, as the COO image can not always be transferred to other categories (Ahmed et al., 2004; Chattalas et al., 2008; Guilhoto, 2018). The moderating effect on the influence of the COO image has been examined regarding different attributes of product and service types, such as the perceived risk (Krupka & Arežina, 2018), the amount of customer contact (Chattalas et al., 2008; Guilhoto, 2018), the competitive context and general price level within the product or service category (Cordell, 1991) and the public awareness or knowledge about the product or service (Lampert & Jaffe, 1998; Javed, 2013). In a service context, Meese et al. (2019) found that, when it comes to purchase decisions for new services, the COO image gains in relevance due to consumers' usual high uncertainty about quality. This effect is especially strong in services where qualification is perceived most important (Veale & Quester, 2010). Veale and Quester (2010) additionally consider the moderating effect of a service provider's training in a different country, which might offset the so-called Country of Birth image of the employee.

Besides, the COO image's effect may also be moderated by the individual consumers' relations with the product or service. Apart from the general public's knowledge on product, service or country knowledge, differences in each consumer's familiarity may reinforce or weaken the COO image's effect (Ahmed & d'Astous, 2008; Meese et al., 2019; Roth & Romeo, 1992; Balabanis, Mueller & Melewar, 2002; Rezvani et al., 2012; Javed, 2013; Cowley & Mitchell, 2003). Other moderating factors might be the product involvement (Josiassen et al., 2008; Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012; Ahmed et al., 2004), "purchase ease, extent of information search, purchase and product ownership" (Ahmed & d'Astous, 2008, p. 82). Josiassen (2010) and Chao (2001) add that, since consumers wish to express themselves with a product, products with a product-origin congruency may be evaluated positively, especially for younger people. Herz and Diamantopoulos (2017) also found that consumers might deliberately neglect the COO image in their evaluation to protect their own image of not being easily influenced.

Lastly, consumer characteristics may influence the effect of the COO image on behavior. Moderating factors were found in the extent of direct contact with the country and a consumer's knowledge of the local language (Balabanis et al., 2002; Hilton & von Hippel, 1996), the accessibility of information from unbiased local sources (Bar-Tal, 1997), and the consumer's own demographics, values and culture (Rawwas et al., 1996; Chattalas et al., 2008; Sharma et al., 1994; Ahmed &

d'Astous, 2008; Balabanis et al., 2002). The influence of demographics such as “age, marital status, having children, income and education” (Ahmed & d'Astous, 2008, p. 81) can be traced back to their effect on consumers' personality traits, which in turn influence prejudice, acceptance and evaluations of foreign products and services (Rawwas et al., 1996; Hett, 1993). Dinesen et al. (2014) particularly emphasize the influence of personality traits on hostility against immigrants. Therefore, when considering services and people as service providers, it is vital to take into account and further explore individuals' personality traits in their moderating effect on the COO image.

To conclude, in the existing literature on the COO image, there is only limited research on its effects in the employment context (Jean Harrison-Walker, 1995). Moreover, consumer traits have been found important in their moderating effect on the influence of the COO image on behavior, and personality is strongly associated with hostility based on nationality (Ahmed & d'Astous, 2008; Dinesen et al., 2014). However, to our knowledge, personality has not been researched as moderating factor in the COO image construct and employment behavior. Therefore, in the following part, we review prior literature in employment and personality traits as foundation for our theoretical framework and hypotheses development.

2.2 Country of Origin Image in the Employment Context

In the following section, we explore existing literature on employment behavior, specifically with regard to the personnel employment decision, prejudices, and personality traits. These topics will be put into relation with immigrant workers.

2.2.1 Prejudice in Personnel Employment Decisions

Within the employment literature, research on the personnel employment decision as a part of the human resource acquisition process has received much attention (Huber, Neal & Northcraft, 1987; Posthuma et al., 2002). Particularly, decision makers' prejudice within personnel employment has become a widespread topic (e.g. Huber et al., 1987; Posthuma et al., 2002; Imdorf, 2010). Following Dovidio (2001, p. 829), “prejudice is commonly defined as an unfair negative attitude toward a social group or a person perceived to be a member of that group”. The hiring of new employees can be biased by the predominant power, employers have over the recruitment and personnel selection process (Almeida et al., 2012; Bratton & Gold, 2017). It displays how the personnel decision maker's prejudice influences the employment of an applicant (Bratton & Gold, 2017). While managers consider both relevant (e.g. degree, position, experience) and irrelevant (e.g. sex, age, national

background) cues for decision-making (Hitt & Barr, 1989), Kahneman, Slovic and Tversky (1982) argue that especially irrelevant cues can substantially bias decision making processes such as personnel employment decisions (Huber et al., 1987). According to Miller and Rosenbaum (1997), the professional employment decision is supposed to be objective, based on relevant facts, rather than being subjective, based on irrelevant facts. However, even though managers consider themselves rational, employment decisions are often based on subjectivity (Miller & Rosenbaum, 1997; Imdorf, 2010; Lee & Wrench, 1983). Thereby, this allows for an emotion-based space for prejudice in the employment decision (Moss & Tilly, 2001), and limits human decision-making in an employment context (Huber et al., 1987).

2.2.2 Employment Discrimination toward Immigrants

Several empirical studies suggest that a recruiter's negative attitudes, hence prejudices, influence the personnel employment decision, and thus, contribute to employment discrimination (e.g. Agerström & Roth, 2009; Petersen & Dietz, 2005; Rooth, 2010; Brief, Dietz, Cohen, Pugh & Vaslow, 2000). Personnel decision makers' discrimination has especially been prevalent regarding minority groups and has been widely discussed within the employment literature (e.g. Krings & Olivares, 2007; Petersen & Krings, 2009) as a continual problem in the workforce (Brief et al., 2000; Petersen & Dietz, 2005). Most studies on minority employment discrimination have been focused on women (e.g. Burgess & Borgida, 1999; Heilman, Martell & Simon, 1988) and people of color (e.g. Brown & Ford, 1977; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000). However, global migration within the past few years has highly diversified nowadays' societies regarding the national background (Pettigrew, 1998). Studies on this topic have therefore been growing in the last years and have identified nationality of applicants as an important factor contributing to employment discrimination (Krings & Olivares, 2007; Almeida et al., 2012).

Within the literature on applicants' nationality and employment discrimination, only few studies have shifted the focus on immigrants in the workforce (e.g. Evans & Kelly, 1991; Binggeli et al., 2013). In this context, an immigrant is defined as a person who was born abroad and has come to live permanently in a foreign country without possessing the local citizenship (Binggeli et al., 2013). Often, immigrants are not regarded as citizens of their host country (Krings & Olivares, 2007), as according to Pettigrew (1998), nationality is biologically grounded. In spite of an advancing dependence on immigrants to fill the gap in national labor shortages, immigrants have only been unwillingly accepted in a host country's labor market (Esses et al, 2006). Especially hiring managers'

negative attitudes toward foreign-born candidates from culturally and linguistically diverse communities contributes to this and influences the employment outcome (Evans & Kelly, 1991; Shinnaoui & Narchal, 2010).

Personnel decision makers with more distinctive prejudices are said to be less likely to hire immigrants (Petersen & Dietz, 2005; Rooth, 2010). Following the prejudice and discrimination theory, discrimination mirrors social distance, with less prejudice directed toward the closest groups and more prejudice directed toward more distant groups (Evans & Kelley, 1991). Krings and Olivares (2007) found that a hiring person's prejudice toward immigrants is more likely to result in employment discrimination when immigrants belonged to disliked ethnic groups than when they belonged to well-accepted groups. Therefore, the authors (Krings & Olivares, 2007) conclude that employment discrimination against immigrants is targeting only members of certain ethnic groups.

2.2.3 Personality Traits and Employment Discrimination toward Immigrants

While research on interviewer characteristics has grown within the last years (Posthuma et al., 2002), the role of hiring managers' personality with regard to their employment preferences is only mentioned, and requires further research (Posthuma et al., 2002; Macan, 2009; Huffcutt, 2011; Horverak et al., 2013). Following the definition of Caprara and Vecchione (2013, p.24), "[personality] can be thought of as a dynamic system of psychological structures and processes that mediates the relationship between the individual and the environment and accounts for what a person is and may become." Thereby, personality traits are considered the primary elements of psychological structures, and particularly allow for the explanation of a person's attitudes (Caprara & Vecchione, 2013). They are indicators of dispositions for certain cognitive processes and behaviors, and responses to situations vary by personality (e.g. Mischel & Shoda, 1995; Canli, 2008). Furthermore, according to McCrae and Costa (2008, p.160), the traits are "relatively enduring patterns of thoughts, feelings, and actions" that are able to characterize humans and that are consistent over time. Depending on the research context, scholars have made use of diverse personality traits (e.g. Horverak et al., 2013; Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013).

Researchers (e.g. Sibley & Duckitt, 2008; Ekehammar & Akrami, 2003) have consistently demonstrated a link between personality traits and prejudice. Prejudicial negative attitudes may derive from personality traits and thus, the latter plays an important role in shaping negative attitudes (e.g. Sibley & Duckitt, 2008; Ekehammar & Akrami, 2003). While few scholars in the employment field (Posthuma et al., 2002; Macan, 2009; Huffcutt, 2011) have investigated that the hiring manager's

personality affects the rating of an applicant, less is known about how personality traits impact the hiring manager's personnel employment decision, especially with regard to the applicant's national background (Horverak et al., 2013). To our current knowledge, Horverak et al. (2013) are the first scholars to investigate the relation in this field.

In their study, the authors (Horverak et al., 2013) examined the relationship of multicultural personality traits and manager's personnel selection preferences in the hiring of Turkish foreign-job applicants and Norwegian native applicants. The five multicultural personality traits were emotional stability (the reverse form of neuroticism), open-mindedness, cultural empathy, social initiative, and flexibility. The scholars found that emotional stability was the only personality trait predicting the hiring manager's personnel employment decision preference. According to the authors, the higher the emotional stability of a hiring manager, the higher the likelihood of hiring a foreign-born Turkish applicant. In that context, they concluded that individuals feeling threatened by intercultural encounters, tend to hire the native Norwegian applicant over the foreign-born Turkish applicant, even when the native applicant was less qualified.

While this research is a first contribution in its field, Horverak et al. (2013) state that the extent to which negative attitudes, and thus prejudices, are expressed in the personnel employment decision may depend on other characteristics of the hiring manager, and hence, requires further research at the individual level.

Our literature review shows that the COO construct is prevalent in an employment context, however, it needs to be further researched. Therefore, following the call of academia, the research question guiding our master thesis is raised as follows:

How does the COO image affect personnel decision makers' employment behavior?

Furthermore, particularly the influence of personnel decision makers' individual personality traits on employment behavior is only scarcely covered in academia and requires further research. Thus, our sub-research question is stated in the following:

How do personnel decision makers' personality traits moderate the COO image's effect on employment behavior?

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, we introduce the theoretical framework guiding our research. Before explaining the employment behavioral outcome variables, we introduce Kock et al.'s (2019) Country-Induced Predispositions Model, which our framework is based on. Last, we present the third component of our model, the moderating effect of the Big Five personality traits, following McCrae and Costa's (2008) model.

3.1 Country-Induced Predisposition Model

To answer our research questions, we built our study on the theoretical construct of the Country-Induced Predisposition model (CIP). The CIP model proposed by Kock et al. (2019), is an integrative framework that incorporates the two distinct research areas on COO cues, performance-related cognitive country image and performance-unrelated country emotion.

According to Kock et al. (2019, p. 44), the main objective of the model is to clarify “how consumers mentally store information about and respond to the COO cue” with specific behavior, both seen from a performance-related and performance-unrelated perspective. Building our research on the theoretical framework of the CIP model is appropriate for several reasons: Firstly, the CIP model is the first one to connect and propitiate the two often conflicting research areas on country image and country emotion in one unifying model (Kock et al., 2019). While in previous research, scholars have either concentrated on one area, the overarching CIP model offers a holistic overview of how consumers use country cues to construct their purchasing preferences (Kock et al., 2019). Therefore, it offers substantial instructions on how to conceptually approach this topic. Secondly, the CIP model follows the call of academia to integrate performance-unrelated cues. Scholars (e.g. Kock et al., 2019; Josiassen et al., 2011; Maheswaran et al., 2013) have emphasized these as important antecedents to affect consumer behavior next to the performance-related determinants. By integrating both schools of thought into one comprehensive model, the CIP model examines the interplay of both components (Kock et al., 2019). Therefore, due to its holism, the CIP model can be considered the most thorough one to observe the COO image in all its facets.

The CIP model consists of the two sub-models, performance-related country images and performance-unrelated country emotions, that comprise the five components imagery, image, affinity, animosity, and holistic country affect (Kock et al., 2019). The performance-related country image constitutes the cognitive element, which contributes to a consumer's perception of a COO and can be further examined with the “imagery-image” model (Josiassen et al., 2016). Imagery, on the one hand,

is a multidimensional concept composed of the “consumer’s diverse cognitive associations relating to a country as an origin of products” that is formed for every decision (Kock et al., 2019, p. 46). Image, on the other hand, is a unidimensional concept comprising the consumer’s summary evaluation “of the diverse associations captured by imagery”, acting more as a mental shortcut for the consumer when relating to a country as an origin (Kock et al., 2019, p. 46). Overall, the performance-related “imagery-image” model of a COO allows consumers to comprehensively “inform decision making under varying levels of cognitive capacity and demands” (Kock et al., 2019, p. 46).

The performance-unrelated country emotions constitute dimensions of the diverse positive and negative emotions, individuals experience regarding countries, including affinity, animosity, and the holistic country affect component (Kock et al., 2019). Affinity depicts positive feelings toward a country such as likability, sympathy, and connection to a specific nationality (Oberecker & Diamantopoulos, 2011). On the contrary, animosity describes feelings of anger or fear toward a specific nation (Klein et al., 1998) that might be caused by prior or current politics, economics or cultural differences, military disputes, or negative personal experiences (Klein et al., 1998; Rezvani et al., 2012; Chattalas et al., 2008). Both, affinity and animosity, form the holistic country affect (Kock et al., 2019). Thereby, the holistic country affect comprises the aggregated feelings toward a country (e.g. Kock et al., 2019; Lerner & Keltner, 2000). This overall “gut feeling” summarizes multidimensional thoughts into one clear positive or negative feeling that complements information consumers have on the product or service (Schwarz, 1990; Josiassen et al., 2016).

3.2 Employment Behavior Outcome Variables

The overarching CIP model comprises the integration of country cognitions and country emotions that in unison affect consumers’ behavioral intentions (Kock et al., 2019). We will apply the CIP model in an employment context and include the outcome variables willingness to hire and the expected service quality.

Personnel decision makers’ willingness to hire in relation to the national origin of the immigrant applicant has only rarely been investigated (Petersen & Dietz, 2005; Rooth, 2010). Nevertheless, it has often been mentioned in an employment discrimination context (Bendick et al., 1994; Imdorf, 2010). From a country cognition perspective, we know that, if a country is perceived negatively, consumers are less likely to purchase, independent of how positive their service evaluations might be (Kock et al., 2019). Vice versa, if there is a positive COO image, purchase intentions may in turn be influenced in a favorable way (Kock et al., 2019). However, research has

found (Evans & Kelly, 1991; Shinnaoui & Narchal, 2010) that especially the personnel decision-maker's attitudes toward foreign-born candidates influences the employment outcome with hiring managers discriminating more against immigrants from culturally different and distant countries to the host country (Krings & Olivares, 2007). Therefore, we argue that also the holistic country affect plays an important role in forming personnel selection decisions. Thus, in our research, we aim to examine the willingness to hire both from a country cognition and country emotion lens based on the CIP model.

Furthermore, we will examine the expected service quality as an outcome variable. From a country cognition perspective, literature states that country images influence consumers' perceptions of services (Rezvani et al., 2012; Chattalas et al., 2008; Kock et al., 2019). Consumers with a more positive country image also expect a higher service quality and vice versa (Majid, 2017). However, the country image's effect on consumers' quality expectations might only be minor due to the lower importance of connotations with products or services compared to their intrinsic cues (Bilkey & Nes, 1982). From a country emotion perspective, consumers often just rely on their "gut feeling" about a product or service when intrinsic product- or service-specific information is missing, and search is time-consuming (Kock et al., 2019, p. 47). Thus, the holistic country also plays an important role in shaping the expected service quality, wherefore we will investigate the outcome variable with the CIP model.

3.3 Moderating Effect of the Big Five Personality Traits

Within our research, we test if an individual's personality traits moderate the COO image's effect regarding the mentioned outcome variables. We base the personality traits on the Big Five model that includes a person's openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (e.g. McCrae & Costa, 2008; Goldberg, 1992).

Openness to experience describes a person's aesthetic and intellectual capacities as well as the individual attraction to new experiences (Mondak, 2010). People, who are open to experiences, are assumed to be open-minded, curious, tolerant, culturally interested and appreciative toward new encounters, regarding people or situations (Dinesen et al., 2014; Mondak & Halperin, 2008; Jackson & Poulsen, 2005; John, Robins & Pervin, 2008b). People scoring high on *conscientiousness* are assumed to be organized, thorough, dutiful, adherent to norms and rules, reliable, and with a need for structure, order and dependability (Dinesen et al., 2014; Mondak, 2010; McCrae & Costa, 2003; Mondak & Halperin, 2008). *Extraversion* implies that individuals scoring high in this domain are

assumed to be talkative, sociable, and outgoing with a positive emotionality in general (Dinesen et al., 2014; Mondak & Halperin, 2008, Mondak, 2010). *Agreeableness* is a trait that refers to the way how an individual interacts with others (Mondak, 2010). People scoring high in this dimension tend to be pro-social and communal, trustful, warm, and kind, and try to avoid conflicts (McCrae & Costa, 2003; Dinesen et al., 2014). Last, *neuroticism*, as contrasted with emotional stability, implies that people scoring high in that field easily become anxious, troubled, or nervous and are in general more sensitive toward negative emotions (Mondak, 2010; Dinesen et al., 2014).

We apply the Big Five personality model for three reasons. First, within an employment context, the Big Five personality model has been established as a widely used applicant personality assessment model within the human resources literature to predict employees' workforce behavior and performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991). The Big Five are regarded as the general taxonomy of personality traits, allowing to capture the main dimensions of an individual's variation, and thus, the human's basic units of personality (e.g. Akrami, Ekehammar & Bergh, 2011; John et al., 2008a). On the one hand, they are said to capture the human as a whole, as the personality traits are stable over different cultural and linguistic areas (Gallego & Oberski, 2012). Also, the Big Five personality traits are stable during adulthood (Terracciano, McCrae & Costa, 2010) and, therefore, only to a limited degree vulnerable to socially caused changes in later life stages (Bouchard & McGue, 2003; John et al., 2008b). On the other hand, they are to a large extent genetically inherited and thus internal to the individual (Yamagata et al., 2006; Bouchard, 2004). Thus, given their stability, the Big Five personality traits have been applied to predict workforce attitude and behavior of applicants (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Second, the Big Five also have been applied as a determinant that influences negative attitudes toward immigrants (Akrami et al., 2011; Ackermann & Ackermann, 2015; Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013; Dinesen et al., 2014). Third, Horverak et al. (2013) have already investigated the relationship of personality traits and managers' personnel employment decisions in a COO context. However, the authors (Horverak et al., 2013) used the multicultural personality trait model instead of the Big Five. In that case, emotional stability, the reverse form of neuroticism, was the only significant predictor for the employment decision. Since emotional stability with its reversed form of neuroticism is also incorporated within the Big Five model, we will apply the Big Five model, and observe if the other factors also have a moderating effect on the COO image's effect.

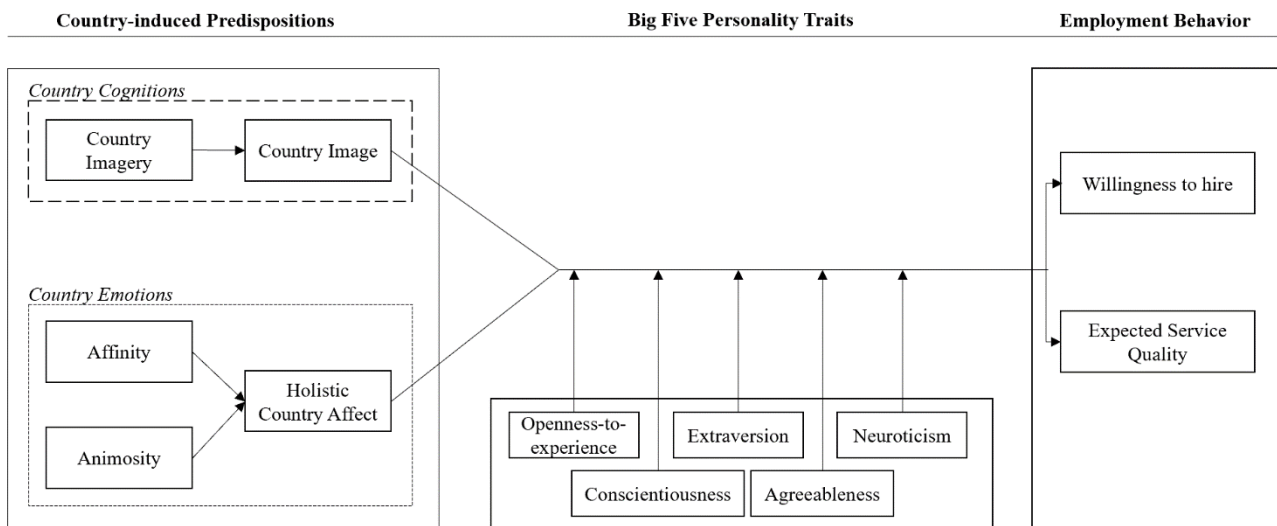


FIGURE 1: Theoretical Framework (Source: Own creation following Kock et al. (2019), McCrae & Costa (2008) and Goldberg (1992))

4 HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

In the subsequent part, taking previous research and our theoretical model into account, we develop hypotheses regarding the effect of the country image and holistic country affect on employment behavior outcome variables. Furthermore, we formulate hypotheses on the moderating influence of the Big Five Personality Traits on the COO image in employment.

4.1 The Country of Origin Image's Effect on Employment Behavior

According to the previous literature review, the COO image influences consumers' attitudes which again affect their expectations and evaluations of products and services (Zeithaml et al., 1993; Javalgi et al., 2001; Josiassen et al., 2016; Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2017). On the cognitive side, the country image which summarizes the effect of the country imagery, influences attitudes and behavioral intentions (Josiassen et al., 2016). On the emotional side, the holistic country affect, as one-dimensional variable, comprised of a consumer's readily accessible affinity and animosity cues, affects consumers' product and service perceptions (Kock et al., 2019). Previous studies have also found that stereotypes and attitudes play an important role in personnel employment decisions (Reich, 2017). Therefore, the COO image might influence personnel decision makers in their expectations and evaluations of employees and affect their behavioral intentions. In the following section, we therefore develop hypotheses on the influence of country image and the holistic country affect on the outcome variables willingness to hire and expected service quality.

4.1.1 The Country Image's Effect on Employment Behavior

Before making a behavioral decision, people generally either count on their past experiences and know-how as evaluation basis, or search for new information on the product, service, or service provider (Rezvani et al., 2012). Personnel decision makers also take other factors into account such as the vacancy of jobs, required skills, motivation, appearance, and personality traits (Holzer, 1990; Reich, 2017). Nevertheless, recruiters' decisions are strongly influenced by their "underlying generalized beliefs about others" (Reich, 2017, p. 130). First, an employer's attitude toward the applicant is formed by stereotypes that are subjective and "readily accessible" (Josiassen et al., 2016, p. 45) assumptions which depend on categorized attributes. Second, attitudes are influenced by objective individualized information based on character traits, appearance, skills or activities. These act as counter element to the stereotype and are used to identify those employees that differ from the rest of the generalized group (Reich, 2017). According to Kock et al. (2019) and Rezvani et al. (2012), a person's overall attitude toward a product or service is influenced by the country of origin. Bilkey and Nes (1982) and Javed (2013) also find direct connections of country characteristics and consumers' behavioral intentions. In recruitment processes, the employer usually only has limited information on the applicant, and might therefore use the COO image as "quality halo" (Meese et al., 2019, p. 184) for an easier assessment (Rezvani et al., 2012; Javed, 2013). Therefore, we argue that this theory might also be applicable to employee selection processes, and that recruiters' formation of stereotypes is, among others, influenced by the source country. According to Chattalas et al. (2008) and Rezvani et al. (2012), the strong norms that are connected to the COO image can cause that if a country is perceived negatively, it is less likely to be selected, no matter how positive evaluations based on other factors might be. However, if there is a positive COO image, behavioral intentions may in turn be influenced in a favorable way (Kock et al., 2019). In consequence, we raise the following hypothesis:

H1: The more positive/negative a personnel decision maker's country image of the employee's country of origin is, the higher/lower is the decision maker's willingness to hire the immigrant employee as service provider.

Several scholars have already tested the effect of consumers' country images on their evaluation of services (Rezvani et al., 2012; Chattalas et al., 2008; Kock et al., 2019). Hence, not only does the country image affect service perceptions, but also expectations, since these two behaviors are

correlated (Majid, 2017). Customer expectations are “pretrial beliefs” (Zeithaml et al., 1993, p. 1), that are used as reference for rating a product or service and predicting likely outcomes of behavioral decisions toward it. Due to the subjectivity and dependence of previous experience that characterize expectations, they vary from consumer to consumer (Thøgersen et al., 2009). According to several scholars, country images and stereotypes influence consumers’ perceptions of services (Rezvani et al., 2012; Chattalas et al., 2008; Kock et al., 2019). In consequence, if they have a positive country image, they expect a higher service quality (Majid, 2017). Especially in the case of a new or unfamiliar service, consumers lack information and might therefore depend on the COO image as indicator for quality (Meese et al., 2019; Kock et al., 2019; Majid, 2017). However, Bilkey and Nes (1982) question a strong effect of the country image on the service expectations, as they argue that intrinsic cues are more important in the creation of consumers’ expectations. Nevertheless, due to the intangibility and general lack of intrinsic cues of services and employment decisions, consumers might rely on the COO reference even more (Meese et al., 2019; Chattalas et al., 2008). Therefore, we argue that there could be a strong positive relation between the personnel decision maker’s country image and the expected service quality. Hence, we formulate the subsequent hypothesis:

H2: The more positive/negative a personnel decision maker’s country image of the employee’s country of origin is, the higher/lower the expected service quality of the immigrant employee.

4.1.2 The Effect of the Holistic Country Affect on Employment Behavior

In product or service purchase decisions, the holistic country affect has been found vital. It functions like a summary of consumers’ complex thoughts into a one-dimensional overall emotion toward a source country, and therefore summarizes all accessible cues into one positive or negative emotion (Schwarz, 1990; Josiassen et al., 2016; Kock et al., 2019). This emotional element is even more important when it comes to services due to the service provider’s customer contact and relationship (Chattalas et al., 2008; Guilhoto, 2018). Stereotypes on the perceived warmth, friendliness, intimacy and interaction of a specific source country (Chattalas et al., 2008) might also be relevant for the assessment of qualities of an employee. Therefore, this theory might also be applicable to the employer-employee interaction in hiring processes. Service providers are judged according to the mental categories they have been assigned to by the decision maker in combination with the employer’s beliefs associated with these categories (Reich, 2017). Åslund and Rooth (2004) also found that a society’s general affinity toward a minority group could be positively related with an

increased willingness to hire members of this group, and vice versa. Therefore, the subsequent hypothesis is raised:

H3: The more positive/negative a personnel decision maker's holistic country affect of the employee's country of origin is, the higher/lower is the personnel decision maker's willingness to hire the immigrant employee as service provider.

When consumers are unfamiliar with a product or service, they need a certain reference to base their considerations on. Due to the lack of intrinsic product- or service-specific information and time-consuming search, consumers often just rely on their “gut feeling” (Kock et al., 2019, p. 47) about a product or service. Here, the COO image also plays an important role (Kock et al., 2019). Consumers may have many associations for a certain country, but only those that are instantly accessible eventually influence the perception of the COO. The holistic country affect therefore helps consumers translate their multidimensional feelings into an overall positive or negative direction (Schwarz, 1990; Josiassen et al., 2016). These overall feelings are shaped by affinity and animosity which is again influenced by ethnocentrism (Veale & Quester, 2010; Kock et al., 2019). According to these general feelings, consumers build their expectations regarding the product or service (Zeithaml et al., 1993). A personnel decision maker's expectations about a candidate's performance may lie in between a desired standard of an applicant exceeding all conditions, and an adequate standard of a candidate that just meets the minimum requirements. Similar to evaluations in products and services, expectations may vary for different decision makers, due to the unique interpretation and previous experiences of each of them (Thøgersen et al., 2009). When there is a lack of information about the employee, a general “gut feeling” (Kock et al., 2019, p. 47) about the COO image might also be applicable in hiring processes to base evaluations, predictions, and expectations on. Consequently, we suggest the subsequent hypothesis:

H4: The more positive/negative a personnel decision maker's holistic country affect of the employee's country of origin is, the higher/lower is the expected service quality of the immigrant employee.

4.1.3 The Effect of the Country-Induced Predispositions on Employment Behavior

According to Kock et al. (2019), both the country image, which is influenced by country imagery, and the holistic country affect, which is affected by affinity and animosity, work together to have an

effect on behavioral decisions. Besides, recruitment processes and employment decisions may be affected by this combination of predispositions as simplifying heuristic that is either positive or negative (Meese et al., 2019; Rezvani et al., 2012; Javed, 2013; Kock et al., 2019). Whereas predominantly, negative predispositions are assumed to have a negative on employment behavior, if predispositions are positive, behavioral intentions may be more favorable (Kock et al., 2019). In consequence, we raise the following hypotheses:

H5: The more positive/negative a personnel decision maker's CIPs of the employee's country of origin is, the higher/lower is the personnel decision maker's willingness to hire the immigrant employee as service provider.

H6: The more positive/negative a personnel decision maker's CIPs of the employee's country of origin is, the higher/lower is the expected service quality of the immigrant employee.

4.2 The Moderating Effect of Personality Traits

Following the literature review, especially personnel decision makers' negative attitudes toward immigrants from culturally and linguistically diverse communities influence the employment outcome (Evans & Kelly, 1991; Shinnaoui & Narchal, 2010). Thereby, particularly disliked ethnic groups underly employment discrimination based on those negative attitudes (Krings & Olivares, 2007). Previous research has found that hiring managers with more distinct negative attitudes are less likely to hire immigrants (Petersen & Dietz, 2005; Rooth, 2010).

4.2.1 The Big Five Personality Traits and Attitudes Toward Immigrants

While most studies concentrate on cultural, ideological, socio-economic, and interpersonal contact as stimuli of attitudes toward immigrants, only few studies have shed light on the psychological underpinnings of attitudes toward immigrants. (Ackermann & Ackermann, 2015; Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013; Dinesen et al., 2014). To our current knowledge, only four studies have focused on the Big Five personality traits with regard to attitudes toward immigrants (Ackermann & Ackermann, 2015; Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013; Dinesen et al., 2014; Akrami et al., 2011). Akrami et al. (2011) and Gallego and Pardos-Prado (2013) were the first scholars in this area to study this link extensively. In a Dutch context, Gallego and Pardos-Prado (2013) found that all Big Five personality traits can be associated with attitudes toward immigrants, with the magnitude of effect varying for each personality

trait. It was found that people scoring high in agreeableness and openness to experience tend to have more positive attitudes toward immigrants (Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013; Akrami et al., 2011). Furthermore, Gallego and Pardos-Prado (2013) state that higher levels of neuroticism and conscientiousness are assumed to lead to more negative attitudes toward immigrants.

Dinesen et al. (2014) examined the effect of personality toward immigration within a Danish study. Furthermore, Dinesen et al. (2014) are first in taking the country of origin into consideration. They measure the extent to which Western immigrants - that are regarded as more culturally close-knit - and non-Western immigrants are perceived as a threat to the native population. Results indicate that a higher openness to experience is associated with a higher willingness to accept immigrants. Thereby, the personality trait openness to experience is universal, meaning that individuals scoring high on this trait are in general more positive toward immigration, independent of the different cultural backgrounds of the immigrant groups. Furthermore, people scoring high on agreeableness are assumed to see immigration more positively. Thereby, the influence of agreeableness depends on the background of the specific immigrant group. This means that agreeable individuals tend to be more positively inclined toward Western immigrants than non-Western immigrants. Overall, no moderating effect of agreeableness on the country of origin was detected. Regarding the personality traits conscientiousness and neuroticism, it was found that the higher individuals score in those traits, the more likely they are to oppose immigration (Dinesen et al., 2014).

Lastly, Ackermann and Ackermann (2015) investigated the relationship of the Big Five personality traits toward equal opportunities for immigrants. Within a Swiss context, results indicate that people scoring high on openness to experience and agreeableness are more positively inclined toward equal opportunities for immigrants. Furthermore, people scoring high on conscientiousness were found to be more negatively inclined toward equal opportunities for immigrants. Building on literature on the attitude toward immigrants, we build hypotheses on how the Big Five personality traits *openness to experience*, *conscientiousness*, *extraversion*, *agreeableness*, and *neuroticism* of the personnel decision-maker might moderate the COO image's effect on employment decisions.

Openness to experience

Within Horverak et al.'s (2013) study, the multicultural personality trait open-mindedness, which shares elements with openness to experience, did not have an effect on the likelihood of hiring a foreign job applicant. However, people scoring high in openness to experience (in the following also called openness) tend to have more positive attitudes toward immigrants (Gallego & Pardos-Prado,

2013; Akrami et al., 2011). They have a greater willingness to accept immigrants independent of their cultural background (Dinesen et al., 2014), and are in general more positively inclined toward equal opportunities for immigrants (Ackermann & Ackermann, 2015). This might implicate that the COO of the immigrant does not influence the personnel decision maker's willingness to hire an immigrant. Furthermore, open people enjoy different types of diversity, are more tolerant (John et al., 2008b) and more considerate regarding information disconfirming stereotypes (Flynn, 2005). According to Jackson and Poulsen (2005), people scoring high on this trait are more interested in various cultures and are more inclined to become friends with individuals from an immigrant origin. Furthermore, studies found that more open people have more liberal political attitudes (Schoen & Schumann, 2007). Given that employment outcomes are influenced by the personnel decision-makers negative attitudes toward immigrants (Evans & Kelly, 1991; Shinnaoui & Narchal, 2010), we propose that the higher/lower the personnel decision-maker scores on openness, the lower/higher is the effect of the COO predispositions on the willingness to hire an immigrant.

Also, the expected service quality is influenced by the COO image (Rezvani et al., 2012; Chattalas et al., 2008; Kock et al., 2019). This results in a more positive country image which increases the expectation of a higher service quality (Majid, 2017). We assume that the more open a person is, the more positively perceived is the immigrant and thus, the service quality provided. Therefore, we propose that the higher/lower the personnel decision-maker scores on openness, the lower/higher is the effect of the COO predispositions on the expected service quality of the immigrant employee.

H7: The higher/lower the personnel decision makers scores on openness to experience, the lower/higher is the effect of the COO predispositions on a) the willingness to hire, and b) the expected service quality regarding the immigrant employee.

Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness from a personnel decision-maker perspective has not been applied in an immigrant employment outcome context. Nevertheless, people scoring high on conscientiousness tend to have more negative attitudes toward immigrants (Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013), are more likely to oppose immigration (Dinesen et al., 2014) and to be more negatively inclined toward equal opportunities for immigrants (Ackermann & Ackermann, 2015). Furthermore, across countries, people scoring high on conscientiousness are associated with more conservative attitudes and

traditional values (Schoen & Schumann, 2007; Mondak, 2010), which predicts a personnel decision-maker's higher tendency to discriminate immigrants in the employment process. Therefore, we propose that the higher/lower the personnel decision-maker scores on conscientiousness, the higher/lower is the effect of the COO predispositions on the willingness to hire and the expected service quality regarding the immigrant employee.

H8: The higher/lower the personnel decision maker scores on conscientiousness, the higher/lower is the effect of the COO predispositions on a) the willingness to hire, and b) the expected service quality regarding the immigrant employee.

Extraversion

Like conscientiousness, also extraversion from a personnel decision maker's perspective has not yet been examined in an immigrant's employment outcome context. So far, the link between extraversion and attitudes toward immigrants has not been detected in the literature (Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013; Dinesen et al., 2014; Ackermann & Ackermann, 2015; Horverak et al., 2013). However, since extroverted individuals are regarded as talkative, sociable and outgoing with a positive emotionality in general (Mondak, 2010; Mondak & Halperin, 2008; Dinesen et al., 2014), we propose that the higher/lower the personnel decision maker scores on extraversion, the lower/higher is the effect of the COO predispositions on the willingness to hire and the expected service quality regarding the immigrant employee.

H9: The higher/lower the personnel decision makers scores on extraversion, the lower/higher is the effect of the COO predispositions on a) the willingness to hire, and b) the expected service quality regarding the immigrant employee.

Agreeableness

Also, the personality trait agreeableness seen from the personnel decision-maker perspective has not been investigated in an immigrant employment outcome context yet. However, people scoring high in agreeableness tend to have more positive attitudes toward immigrants (Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013; Akrami et al., 2011) and are assumed to view immigration more positively (Dinesen et al., 2014). Thereby, Dinesen et al. (2014) found that the influence of agreeableness depends on the background of the specific immigrant group, with more agreeable individuals being more positively

inclined toward culturally closer immigrant groups than more distant immigrant groups. Also, a higher agreeableness is more positively inclined toward equal opportunities for immigrants (Ackermann & Ackermann, 2015). People scoring high on this trait have a kind orientation toward other people in general (Mondak & Halperin, 2008; Mondak, 2010), are pro-social and communal, and try to avoid conflicts (McCrae & Costa, 2003; Dinesen et al., 2014). Furthermore, more agreeable individuals hold liberal values and favor liberal policies (Schoen & Schumann, 2007; Sibley & Duckitt, 2008). For these reasons, we argue that the higher/lower the personnel selection decision maker scores on agreeableness, the lower/higher is the effect of the COO predispositions on the willingness to hire and the expected service quality regarding the immigrant employee.

H10: The higher/lower the personnel decision maker scores on agreeableness, the lower/higher is the effect of the COO predispositions on a) the willingness to hire, and b) the expected service quality regarding the immigrant employee.

Neuroticism

Horverak et al. (2013) found that emotional stability, the reverse form of neuroticism, predicts the hiring manager's personnel selection decision preferences. According to the authors, the higher the emotional stability of a hiring manager, the higher the likelihood of hiring a foreign-born applicant. Vice versa, the more neurotic the hiring manager, the lower the likelihood of hiring a foreign-born candidate. Neurotic individuals are more sensitive to specific threats (Horverak et al., 2013). Especially, when foreigners are perceived as a threat (Marcus, Sullivan, Theiss-Morse & Wood, 1995), negative attitudes become reinforced (Horverak et al., 2013). In that context, Horverak et al. (2013) conclude that managers feeling threatened by intercultural encounters and foreign applicants participating in the host country, tend to hire native applicants over foreign-born applicants, even when the native applicant was less qualified. Higher levels of neuroticism are assumed to lead to more negative attitudes toward immigrants (Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013) and individuals are more likely to oppose immigration (Dinesen et al., 2014). For that reason, we argue that the higher/lower the personnel decision maker scores on neuroticism, the higher/lower is the effect of the COO predispositions on the willingness to hire and the expected service quality regarding the immigrant employee.

H11: The higher/lower the personnel decision maker scores on neuroticism, the higher/lower is the effect of the COO predispositions on a) the willingness to hire, and b) the expected service quality regarding the immigrant employee.

5 METHODOLOGY

According to Creswell (2014), the methodology or broadly formulated research approach is the plan to investigate the defined research problem. It therefore involves the underlying worldview of the researchers that shape the approach toward the study, the methodology, research design and particular data collection methods used (Creswell, 2014), which we will specify in the following part after explaining our research context. All of these components work together to develop knowledge that is suitable to address the research question and therefore serve the research aim (Malhotra et al., 2017).

5.1 Research Context

Germany has a population of roughly 83 million people (Destatis, 2020a). Currently, this number is increasing, given the relatively high number of immigrants. However, in the long term, this population count is projected to shrink, due to a decrease in mortality and fertility of the ageing society. Therefore, the age structure has changed tremendously, and the average age has risen to 44 years in 2018, in comparison to 39 years in 1990 (Destatis, 2020a). At present, the highly populous groups of baby boomers that are now aged between 40 and 60, are the predominant population group - younger generations are much smaller in size. As the baby boomer generation is on the verge of entering the retirement age in the next 20 years, there will be an increase in individuals that are older than 70 years, to 13 million people (Destatis, 2020a). Given the high number of immigrants, which are mainly younger people (37% below 20 years and 53% below 39 years old), the younger population is temporarily enlarged (Destatis, 2020a). These younger immigrants also strengthen and partly balance the labor force. This is highly needed because currently, more than half of the labor force is at least 45 years old, and as soon as the more populous generations enter retirement age, the labor force is expected to be reduced by 9 million individuals in 2035 (Destatis, 2020a). To be concrete, to counterbalance this reduction, every year, 530,000 workers would need to be transferred to Germany (Destatis, 2020a).

With an advancing age, the risk of becoming a nursing case, and the general need for caretaking is increasing (Jacobs et al., 2019; Dittmann, 2008). At the moment, approximately 3

million Germans receive care – a number which is projected to grow to 4.5 million in 2060 (Brady, 2018). At the same time, the general workforce is shrinking. The general population statistics already demonstrate a two-sided problem of an already high and further increasing average age – and therefore expected amount of elderly needing caretaking – and on the other side, a diminished number of working individuals. Due to this general trend, the number of caregivers is likely to decrease. However, additionally, Germany particularly faces a shortage of skilled labor, which intensifies the problem (Jacobs et al., 2019). Especially in the healthcare and elderly care sector, this shortage is distinct, and already now, it is challenging to fill open positions (DIP, 2018; Brady, 2018). In Germany, the vocational training to become a caregiver has decreased in popularity (Brady, 2018; Hasselhorn & Wittich, 2008). Reasons for this trend are the high workload and psychic stress going along with understaffed shifts, physically demanding tasks, atypical working hours, and the perceived bad image of the job. Work-life balance is perceived to be bad, and on top of that, remuneration is on average €4 per hour lower than in comparable professions (Jacobs et al., 2019; Brady, 2018; Hasselhorn & Wittich, 2008). The effect of the high stress level at work can be seen in the frequent changes of profession and the relatively numerous and long sick leaves, compared to the norm in other professions (Jacobs et al., 2019). Jacobs et al. (2019) report that due to the effect of the demographic change, in 2030, between 30,000 and 60,000 additional caregivers will be required, further reinforcing the problem of lack in labor supply. These numbers show that Germany is expected to plunge into a care crisis.

In the meantime, an entire new sector has emerged and numerous governmental projects are concerned with the topic of procuring foreign caregivers with the focus on Eastern European countries. Asian countries of origin, such as China, the Philippines and Vietnam are also considered, but play a significantly smaller role (Jacobs et al., 2019). Due to the high demand and profit potential, many – partly illegal – intermediaries for Eastern European circular migration have materialized, and a tremendous legal grey zone has built, according to the German-Polish Centre for Public Law and Environmental Network (Jacobs et al., 2019; DIP, 2018). Most circular migrants work as 24-hour (or “live-in”) caregivers in the homes of the elderly and switch with another migrant every two to three months. There are no exact numbers on the number of circular migrants but according to estimations, there are expected to be around 400,000 circulating temporary workers from Eastern Europe (Jacobs et al., 2019). Ambulant caregivers like these are an enormous relief for the existing care system, as more than 70% of elderly dependents are cared for at home (Jacobs et al., 2019; Geyer & Schulz, 2014) and 71% of German caretaking homes maintain waiting lists for completely stationary long-

term care (DIP, 2018; Dittmann, 2008). The high number of ambulant or domestic caretaking can be explained through the fact that Germany is a conservative-corporatist welfare state, where children have maintenance obligation regarding their parents in a nursing case, supported by a nursing allowance. Therefore, traditionally, families are actively involved in the welfare system (Auth, 2012; Dittmann, 2008).

As the predictable shortage of caregivers becomes more evident, there is an increasing focus on it in German politics (Jacobs et al., 2019). The current Health Minister Jens Spahn has introduced a new package of measures specifically for the care sector. One focus area is also to actively recruit skilled caregivers from abroad and qualifying people with migration background (Jacobs et al., 2019). For foreign caregivers, the prosperity gap between their home country and Germany is the main reason for temporary migrating, and in the past years, the number of migrated care workers has increased. In 2018, approximately 143,000 of 1.7 million caregivers were foreign (70,800 of those in elderly care), compared to around 80,000 in 2013 (Jacobs et al., 2019). According to HR managers with experience in hiring foreign caregivers, their competency level is comparable to German caregivers, they have a high commitment and efficiency. Most managers were overly satisfied or very satisfied with the foreign workers, even though they often lacked practical experience, since training abroad is often more academically oriented than in Germany (Jacobs et al., 2019). However, language barriers and cultural problems may arise, which cannot be neglected, since clear and effective communication is key in elderly care (Jacobs et al., 2019). The main focus of countries of origin are the Poland, Romania, Croatia, Hungary, and the Balkan countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia – because caretaking certifications from these countries are perceived as qualitative (DW, 2019). With more than 18,000 caregivers in 2018, these countries therefore make up a big part of foreign skilled workers in the industry (Jacobs et al., 2019). However, the government is also considering Mexico, the Philippines, Brazil, India and Vietnam, as countries of origin for caregivers (DW, 2018). According to Grunau (2020), there could also be potential to qualify refugees in the caretaking profession, as many of the newcomers look for career possibilities. The initiative “Springboard: Care” at the Bonn Association for Health Professionals, has already started to train 200 refugees with 40 nationalities in German language and caretaking (Grunau, 2020).

On basis of the focus countries to recruit caregivers, and with regard to the nation brand index (Ipsos, 2020), which ranks the most and least popular countries by their image, five countries with good image (Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Switzerland, US), five countries with neutral image (Mexico, Philippines, Romania, Thailand, Russia), and five countries with bad image (Morocco,

Nigeria, Syria, Turkey, Afghanistan) were listed. This list was given to ten German residents (aged 35-67) according to our sampling group (see 5.5.3 Data Collection) to rank, in order to find out the average worst perceived country of origin of caregivers (Appendix 1). This pre-study on country images was conducted to find the perceived worst case to compare it with the base case of Poland. Poland was selected as base case due to its status of most common country of origin for caregivers (Rada, 2016). As a result of the study, Syria had the average lowest score (Appendix 1).

5.2 Research Philosophy

To better understand the data interpretation and assumptions made throughout the research process, we first need to further explain our research philosophy. This worldview serves as our fundamental array of assumptions, and shapes the influence of our values, how we see our research participants, and how we produce knowledge (Creswell, 2014; Saunders et al., 2016). In the following part, we will further elaborate on the adopted ontology, epistemology and axiology (Saunders et al., 2016).

In essence, our research is based on a positivist worldview, which is the traditional view in marketing research (Creswell, 2014). Opposed to interpretivists, positivists believe that there is one universal reality and it is likely that causes predispose outcomes. Following the reductionist approach, positivists also attempt to isolate concise variables that represent the research question and may be tested (Malhotra et al., 2017; Creswell, 2014). Knowledge is produced by reviewing existing research, which serves as basis for the hypotheses development. These are later verified or falsified with predominantly quantitative methods by translating human behavior into numeric values and can further be tested in other contexts and generalized in future research, following a functionalist paradigm (Saunders et al., 2016; Creswell, 2014).

In terms of axiology, we aim not to influence the data and findings with our own values, as the observed reality is viewed as external (Saunders et al., 2016). In contrast to other philosophies such as interpretivism and constructivism, our approach is rather objectivist than subjectivist, as we aim to reveal the social world's reality by collecting perceptible measurable data on it, which is used to generalize commonly applicable theories (Saunders et al., 2016). Nevertheless, we conduct qualitative interviews with open-ended questions to explore country associations, in which we seek to get a broad variety of responses and aim to understand the subjective view of each interviewee (Creswell, 2014). However, by coding the interviews, we follow our overarching objective to reduce complexity and identified categories for similar thoughts, which serves as foundation for our quantitative study (Creswell, 2014). Malhotra et al. (2017, p. 155) also confirms, that "if qualitative

research is just seen as a series of techniques, they can be used to develop an understanding of the nature of a research problem and to develop and pilot questionnaires”.

5.3 Research Approach

Our research methodology, as structure of theory development processes, is predominantly deductive (Amaratunga et al., 2002). Deductive reasoning allowed us to explore existing literature on country predispositions and employment, so we could identify primary causal connections between the contexts. This approach helped us explore the research problem and gain more knowledge on the background of the research (Saunders et al., 2016). Hypotheses were formulated on the basis of the existing literature as propositions to explain the research problem. Also, a suitable research strategy could be crafted to test these hypotheses. Through this deductive approach, we incrementally developed knowledge based on existing theories, which gave first insights into potential behavioral outcomes (Saunders et al., 2016; Malhotra et al., 2017). For our semi-structured, exploratory, qualitative interviews, we adopted an inductive approach to be able to explore the diverse field of country associations with a small, fair sample of our target group to get impressions and understanding of their personal opinions (Saunders et al., 2016; Malhotra et al., 2017). The categorized, and to some extent, generalized insights were then included in the quantitative study which was conducted to test the proposed hypotheses. The quantitative method allowed us to measure the effect of country predispositions and personality on behavior and analyze it in a statistical manner (Malhotra et al., 2017). By adopting inductive reasoning and qualitative methods in our mainly deductive approach, we allowed diversity and complexity to enrich our understanding about this highly subjective topic (Saunders et al., 2016). Nevertheless, with our research, we aim to produce theories on the COO effect in employment that can be generalized and applied to the entire population, which would mean that the deductive reasoning and quantitative methods as dominant approach is suitable (Saunders et al., 2016). This mix of both schematic, quantitative methods with typically larger sample groups, and qualitative methods usually with exploratory interviews with smaller sample groups, is what defines a mixed methods approach (Saunders et al., 2016; Newman et al., 1998). According to Creswell (2014), utilizing mixed methods may lead to a more exhaustive comprehension of the research field than either approach alone could offer. Thus, the mixed methods approach combines the strengths of both the qualitative and quantitative approach and resolves for their individual shortcomings (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Morgan, 2018). Bringing together

both quantitative and qualitative methods in a mixed methods approach, therefore, allows the consideration of multiple perspectives and points of view (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007).

5.4 Research Design

Building our study on a mixed methods research approach, it was furthermore on us to decide on a research design, or strategy of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), that would provide specific direction for procedures (Creswell, 2014). Following Creswell (2014), researchers have to make three major decisions when choosing a particular form of mixed methods research design. First, we needed to decide if the timing of qualitative and quantitative data would occur concurrently or sequentially (Creswell, 2014). Second, a decision must be made if qualitative and quantitative data would be given higher priority (Creswell, 2014). Third, it had to be decided how the qualitative and quantitative data would be mixed (Creswell, 2014). Following Creswell's (2014) research design selection criteria, we decided for the *embedded mixed methods* research design. The main idea of this research design is that either qualitative or quantitative data is embedded within a major design, and that one set of data plays rather a secondary, supportive role, based on the other set of data (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutman & Hanson, 2003). According to the authors (Creswell, Plano Clark et al., 2003), the embedded mixed methods research design is particularly useful when qualitative or quantitative data needs to be incorporated to answer a research question within a major qualitative or quantitative study. In our research, we embedded qualitative interview results within a larger quantitative online survey to tackle our research questions. We will explain the rationale behind choosing these data research tools at a later stage in chapter 5.5 and 5.6.

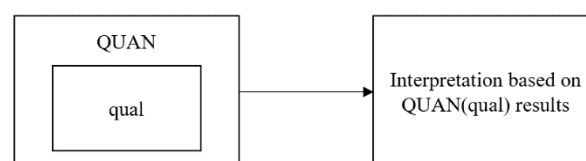


FIGURE 2: Embedded Mixed Methods Research Design (Source: Following Creswell, 2014)

We proceeded following a sequential two-phase approach. First, we conducted qualitative interviews, of which results were embedded within the quantitative online survey in the second phase. An advantage of this research design is that its two-phase approach facilitates a straightforward description, implementation and reporting of the process (Creswell, 2014). However, the two-phase

approach is also more time-intensive to implement and required us to consider the time factor of this research design for our data collection study plan. The *exploratory sequential mixed method* (ESMM) research design also could have been an appropriate strategy of inquiry. This is for the reason that differentiating between an embedded design and another mixed methods design can be of a challenge (Creswell, 2014). Similar to our chosen research design, the ESMM happens to be sequential, with first, exploring participant views within a qualitative research phase, and second, analyzing and using the data to incorporate it into a quantitative research phase (Creswell, 2014). However, for our research, it was necessary to embed the qualitative data set within a larger research design instead of only connecting the data between the two phases as it is done in the ESMM (Creswell, 2014). Thus, we decided to utilize the embedded mixed methods research design. Also, we followed Creswell's (2014) guiding decision question if the outcome of the supporting qualitative data would be useful when not being embedded in the larger quantitative data set. As the qualitative data would not be as meaningful without incorporation in the online survey, our final decision for an embedded mixed methods design was made.

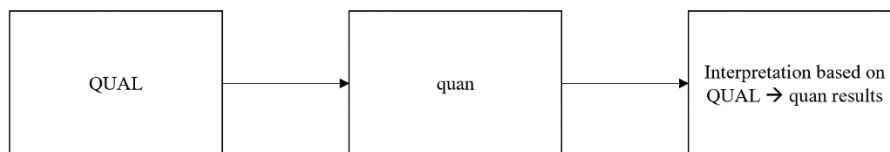


FIGURE 3: Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Research Design (Source: Following Creswell, 2014)

In the following, we explain the two-phase approach of our research design, in which we made use of two different primary research tools for conducting either part of the mixed methods research. First, we will begin with the qualitative interview research phase and second, introduce the quantitative online survey research phase.

5.5 Qualitative Study

In the following part, the research design of the qualitative study is explained. After introducing our rationale behind the choice of interviews, we explain the measurement and data collection methods. Subsequently, the actual sample profile is demonstrated, and we present our analysis and interpretation process. Lastly, the credibility of our qualitative data is justified.

5.5.1 Rationale of the Interview Choice

For the qualitative component, we decided to conduct interviews as a primary research tool. According to Malhotra et al. (2017), thereby an individual is directly interviewed by an experienced researcher in a personal conversation with the intention to explore underlying beliefs, motivations, feelings, and attitudes on a given topic. Interviews are a useful research tool for our study as they help to better understand the individual's' point of view (Kvale, 2008; Morris, 2015). Following the two-phase approach of our research design, the purpose of the initial qualitative phase was to examine the country imagery of our theoretical framework.

The measurement process of country imagery is split in two phases, a qualitative and a quantitative one. While the purpose of the qualitative phase is to uncover and define specific consumer association sets regarding different countries within a specific product category, by conducting interviews, the second phase is meant to quantitatively measure the country imagery based on the qualitative association set findings with a closed-ended questionnaire (Kock et al., 2019; see Appendix 2). The detailed qualitative and quantitative measurement process will be explained at a later stage.

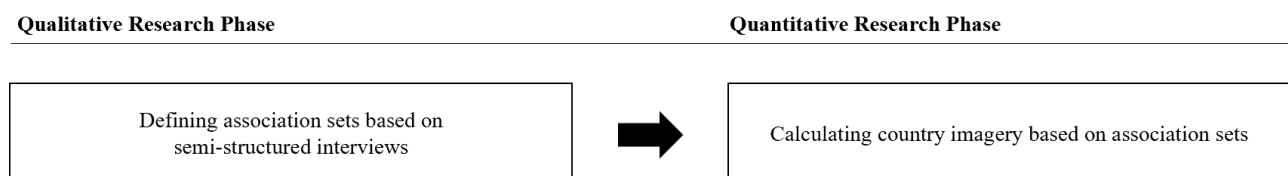


FIGURE 4: Measurement Process of Country Imagery (Source: Following Kock et al., 2019)

5.5.2 Measurements

We examined the country imagery associations and collected first insights on the willingness to hire and expected service quality by using the semi-structured interview approach of Kock et al. (2019). Semi-structured interviews are exploratory interviews, in which participants answer preset open-ended questions by using their own formulations, but still give the interviewer space to seek clarity to a participant's reasoning and meaning behind particular answers (Morris, 2015). They help the researcher to focus on the given research topic, maintain consistency across different participant interviews, and keep track of the interview process (Jamshed, 2014). Furthermore, given their open-ended questions' nature, interviews provide for richer information than other data collection methods

(Jamshed, 2014). Audio recording the answers as well as writing notes, furthermore, helped us reflect upon what the interview participants were saying (Guion, Diehl & McDonald, 2011).

By examining the associations, our goal in the qualitative research phase was to uncover German consumers' specific associations regarding the countries Poland and Syria that they mentally link with immigrant caregivers (Kock et al., 2019). These associations were then further examined in the second, quantitative research phase to measure the country imagery. Within the semi-structured interviews, we followed the approach of Kock et al. (2019) and asked interview participants to describe the two respective countries as an origin of immigrant caregivers in Germany using their own formulations. In the data analysis and interpretation section, we explain the process of how we defined the respective association sets that we further used as a base for our quantitative research phase. Furthermore, as we based our interview questions on the English speaking interview approach following Kock et al. (2019), we had to translate the questions to the German language to match the requirements of our sample group and fit in our research context. Thereby, we used the often in cross-cultural research applied back-translation-method as a quality assessment tool to ensure an appropriate translation (Brislin, 1970). While one researcher translated the questions from the original version to our German target language, the second researcher translated it back from the target to the source language (Brislin, 1970). Afterward, an independent person compared both versions and checked for translation errors to improve the overall questionnaire quality (Brislin, 1970). However, it is recommended to have two bilinguals to do the translation work to guarantee a more accurate translation outcome (Son, 2018). As neither of the two researchers grew up bilingually and thus, translations might have been limited in matching the exact meaning, we made sure that an independent party supports in correcting translation differences and reaching the best possible meaning congruence. Interview translations are attached in Appendix 3.

5.5.3 Data Collection

Sampling Rationale

Our target group presented German citizens aged between 35 and 67 years old. With 35 million people in the target group, this covers roughly 40% of all 83 million people living in Germany (Destatis, 2020b). The specific target group was chosen for the following reasons: First, given our research context, we aimed to examine how German national citizens deal with elderly care. Second, as family relatives such as an elderly citizen's descendants are actively involved when it comes to the selection of a caregiver (Auth, 2012; Dittmann, 2008), we chose this age group. The maximum age of 67 was

selected for our target group because from this age on, people enter the statutory retirement age in Germany (Deutsche Rentenversicherung, n.d.). Moreover, people aged 60 and older require more care (Destatis, 2019a). We chose the minimum age of 35 years because one generation nowadays comprises 30 years, as German women, on average, give birth to their first child at the age of 30 (Destatis, 2019b) with a maximum average age of 32 years for specific German federal states (Destatis, 2016).

Interview Process

To collect qualitative interview data, we applied the non-probability convenience sampling technique (Saunders et al., 2016). This technique implies that our sample is not statistically chosen at random. In convenience sampling, interview participants are selected because they are easily available (Saunders et al., 2016). An advantage is that this method is low in cost, less time-consuming and an easy technique to obtain data. However, while this method is widely used in research, it is still prone to selection biases and less representative as the interviewees' contents only appear because of their ease of access (Saunders et al., 2016). We reached out to our personal network such as family and friends within the respective target group to conduct the interviews. Before fully undertaking all interviews, we conducted a pilot test with close family members to find and fix lack of clarity in questions and structure, and thus, improve the overall interview quality (Saunders et al., 2016). We intended to interview our participants in familiar environments on their terms such as their living room. The reason for this method was that environments, in which interviewees feel comfortable, can lead to an interview participant's higher willingness to be more open, honest, and reflective (Malhotra et al., 2017). However, we also made use of phone calls given that some participants were harder to reach in person, taking into account our research time plan. For practical reasons, the interviews were conducted by both researchers. Nevertheless, we are aware that it would have been preferable to have one single responsible interviewer, as conducting interviews and understanding participants is a learning process (Malhotra et al., 2017). Before the interview, each participant was briefly informed about the purpose of the interview without exposing more information than needed for understanding the context, as we intended to understand the interviewee's immediate thoughts on the topic. By sharing only limited study details we aimed to avoid participants to feel worried about the "right" answer or make up possible answers. Also, prior to the interview, we asked for permission to record the interview for the purpose of the later interview analysis. Interviews had an average length of 15 minutes and were conducted over a time span of two weeks from January 3 to January 17, 2020.

5.5.4 Sample Profile Interviews

In total, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten German people within our respective target group aged between 35 and 67 years. We tried to balance our participants' gender resulting in 60% insights generated through women and 40% through men. Regarding the age, we wanted to cover each decade of our target group, however, we put more emphasis on people aged 50 years and older as these age groups are most involved in the care of elderly relatives (Nowossadeck, Engstler & Klaus, 2016). This resulted in participant's being on average 53.1 years old. To guarantee an equal distribution of interview answers across Northern and Southern Germany, we made sure that half of the interviews were conducted in the Northern federal state Mecklenburg Western Pomerania (MWP) and the Southern federal state Bavaria.

Age			Gender			Location		
#	%		#	%		#	%	
(10)	(100)		(10)	(100)		(10)	(100)	
35-44	2	20	Female	6	60	MWP	5	50
45-54	3	30	Male	4	40	Bavaria	5	50
55-67	5	50						
Ø Age	53.1							

FIGURE 5: Sample Characteristics Qualitative Study (Source: Own illustration)

5.5.5 Data Analysis and Interpretation

In order to accumulate our interview responses in a consistent, applicable and practicable way, we coded the data following Raymond's (1992) method. This formatting of data allowed us to derive findings, compare results and conduct interview analyses by summarizing the key points (Raymond, 1992). After having collected all qualitative data and finalized the transcription of the interviews, coding categories were identified, following the interview guide questions (Raymond, 1992). Even though the interviews were explorative and the open-ended questions were answered in multiple ways, they all followed the same interview guide, which allowed a relatively clear comparison. Further, the most relevant pieces of information were retrieved and added to the respective category whenever there was the need for rearrangement. Lastly, the main findings were summarized for each category (Raymond, 1992). To facilitate finding the original source, we established a code structure. Here, the first digit represents the interview, followed by the category. The third number refers to the

respective country and last comes the specific sentence (Raymond, 1992). The coded interview findings can be found in Appendix 4.

The coding method was particularly useful to measure and derive the respective country associations required for the imagery component of the CIP model (Kock et al., 2019). According to Kock et al. (2019), it is required to determine the most significant and prominent associations by measuring both strength and valence. This is particularly important to ensure validity due to the individual causality of each impression (Kock et al., 2019). In a first step, for each country, the associations were rearranged in the order of how frequently they were named. The aim was to include these in the quantitative survey, as they are most likely to have the most significant effect on the behavioral outcome (Kock et al., 2019). However, due to the limited length of the survey questionnaire, only the first 70% of the list of most frequently mentioned associations were included, following the method suggested by Kock et al. (2019). In order to retain the meaning of each country impression, the phrasing of the respective best description was used in the survey questionnaire (Kock et al., 2019). The full list and selected associations will be described in part 6 Findings and Analysis.

5.5.6 Credibility of Research Data

In order to ensure credibility of our research data, we followed Saunders et al.'s (2016) approach of assessing reliability and validity to assure the quality of our study. In terms of generalizability, our mixed methods research design may be of advantage and reinforce its relevance. By utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data collection, a broader variety and consequently knowledge can be derived more exhaustively (Saunders et al., 2016).

When it comes to reliability, a qualitative research project needs to be both consistent and replicable (Saunders et al., 2016). Firstly, we establish consistency for an internal reliability of our study by clearly defining each step in the interviewing process, so that even though most interviews were conducted by only one researcher for practicality reasons, there was a consistent understanding. Moreover, a consistent and standardized coding system was used to derive findings. Throughout the process, there was a constant discussion on the detailed methods, and the results were analyzed together. Furthermore, external reliability and dependability was ensured by recording our research approach, methodology, research design and methods transparently and in detail, so that they can be understood and replicated by other researchers (Saunders et al., 2016). Regularity and reliability could also be demonstrated through the similar associations for the imagery component that were found

across interviews. Within the qualitative study, participant bias was limited by interviewing respondents in a familiar setting, and ensuring privacy (Saunders et al., 2016).

To further ensure suitability of the used measures, truthfulness and generalizability of the analysis and findings, besides the reliability, also validity needs to be proved (Saunders et al., 2016). Throughout the qualitative study, we therefore aim to ensure credibility, transferability, and authenticity. By using the validation technique of triangulation through our mixed methods research design, several data sources and types of analysis were utilized, which served as verification. Moreover, this design allowed richness and variety of the data set (Saunders et al., 2016). Construct validity was ensured by using existing measures for associations from Kock et al. (2019). Credibility, which means that respondents' answers were received in the intended way, was assured by involving them in the research. Moreover, confidence and rapport were built through projective techniques, and uncertainties and ambiguous meanings were clarified through the test-retest method, following Raymond (1992). Furthermore, transferability is provided through documentation of the process, so that external researchers may assess the applicability to other contexts. Lastly, authenticity was assured by thoroughly considering all mentioned country associations in the selection process (Saunders et al., 2016).

5.6 Quantitative Study

The qualitative part of our study is complemented with quantitative data, and in the following section, we explain the research design of the latter. This part follows the same structure as the research design of the qualitative study, firstly explaining our rationale behind using an online survey, our measurement of the variables in a pre-study and the actual online survey, and data collection methods. Besides, we explain the sample profile our data analysis and interpretation method, and lastly, the credibility of our quantitative data.

5.6.1 Rationale of Online Survey Choice

Following the qualitative component, we conducted an online survey as a second part of our two-phase research design. Online surveys have the advantage that they can be quickly spread via the internet ensuring to reach a high number of participants at a low cost in diverse locations (Malhotra et al., 2017). The purpose of the online survey was twofold. Firstly, as country imagery is measured in a qualitative and subsequent quantitative phase, it allowed us to further measure the derived association sets, and thus, country imagery. Second, taking our theoretical framework as a whole, the

online survey enabled us to test our previously developed hypotheses. In the following, we will explain how we measured each component of the theoretical framework.

5.6.2 Measurements

We used reflective scales to operationalize the components in our theoretical framework. Similar to the qualitative interviews, we utilized the back-translation-method (Brislin, 1970) to ensure that the survey measures were accurately translated from the source language to our German target language to ensure an appropriate measure outcome (see Appendix 5 for translation). Each single theoretical framework component and its measurement scales will be described in more detail in the following.

Country Imagery

Kock et al. (2016) state that country imagery is measured in two dimensions, the association *strength* and *valence*. According to Ajzen and Fishbein (2000), the latter expresses the positive or negative subjective degree that is attached to an individual's association regarding purchase decisions. We posed one question for each dimension, for association statements regarding both Polish and Syrian caregivers. Following Kock et al. (2019), we asked the participants the following questions to measure the *strength* and *valence*: “How much do you relate this attribute to [Poland/Syria] as a [provider of caregivers]?” for *strength* and “For you as a relative considering to hire a caregiver from [Poland/Syria], would this attribute be rather positive or negative?” for *valence*. We then measured the two dimensions on a seven-point Likert scale. While *strength* ranged from (0) “not at all” to (6) “very much”, *valence* ranged from (-3) “very negative” to (3) “very positive”.

Country Image

The scale for country image was derived from Kock et al. (2019) that they adapted from Bagozzi, Batra and Ahuvia (2016). We asked respondents to state their overall impression regarding Poland and Syria on a seven-point Likert scale with three items. By asking for the overall impression toward the respective country in our survey, using three sets of adjectives (“bad and good”, “unfavorable and favorable” and “negative and positive”), we could also get insights into the respondents' general attitude toward the two countries. The item scale ranged from (1) “bad” to (7) “good”, (1) “unfavorable” to (7) “favorable”, and (1) “negative” to (7) “positive”.

Affinity

Drawing on Kock et al. (2019) that adapted the affinity scale from Thomson, MacInnes and Park (2005), we adopted the three-dimensional affinity measure that covers the dimensions admiration, liking, and attachment that each cover three emotions. Within these categories, we asked the survey respondents to rate the extent to which they connected three adjectives with the respective country. For the category admiration, we asked for the rating of “captivated”, “impressed” and “admired”, whereas in liking, we tested “like”, “fondness” and “sympathy”. Lastly, attachment contained the adjectives “connected”, “bonded” and “attached”. On a seven-point Likert scale, respondents had to describe their typical feelings toward Poland and Syria based on the total 9 emotions ranging from (1) “not at all” to (7) “very well”.

Animosity

We adopted the animosity scale from Kock et al. (2019) that the authors derived from Harmeling, Magnusson and Singh (2015). On a five-point Likert scale, we asked the respondents to state their emotions regarding Poland and Syria in two dimensions, contending and accommodating emotions with each dimension containing three emotions. Within contending emotions, we asked survey participants to rank the extent to which they feel “angry”, “mad” and “irritated” toward the respective country. With the accommodating emotions, we tested the feeling of being “worried”, “afraid” and “scared” for each country. The scale ranged from (1) “I feel this emotion not at all” to (5) “I feel this emotion very strongly”.

Holistic Country Affect

The holistic country affect was measured by us using the emoticon scale of Kock et al. (2019) that they built on research from Roberts, Roberts, Danaher and Raghavan (2015). We asked interview participants to indicate their overall feelings toward Poland and Syria by selecting one of five emoticon faces. These emoticons ranged from an (1) unhappy to a (5) happy emoticon face.

Willingness to Hire

Willingness to hire to our knowledge was not measured with regard to our context. While different ways exist to measure the willingness to hire, however, we only could detect qualitative measures or measures inappropriate for our research purpose (e.g. Reich, 2017; Jean Harrison-Walker, 1995). Given that existing scales to measure willingness to hire (e.g. Reich, 2017) were not appropriate for

quantitative measurement, we adapted the scale measuring willingness to buy from Oberecker and Diamantopoulus (2011) to our research context. On a seven-point Likert scale, we asked respondents three questions regarding their willingness to hire for each Poland and Syria ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” to (7) “strongly agree”. To test the differences in willingness to hire for Poland and Syria, we selected a set of six questions for our survey questionnaire: “It is very likely that I will hire someone from Poland/Syria”, “I will hire someone from Poland/Syria, the next time I need to hire someone”, “I will definitely try a Polish/Syrian employee”.

Expected Service Quality

We adapted the five-dimensional expected service quality measure of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1994) that covers the dimensions reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. Each dimension included four to five statements and participants were asked to indicate how each statement regarding Polish and Syrian caregivers agreed with them, ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” to (7) “strongly agree”. Given the extensive questions of the expected service quality measure and our already comprehensive questionnaire, we decided to reduce some questions with the help of a pre-study. Latter will be explained in the next section. Within reliability, we asked participants to rate the extent they agree to the following statements: “I assume a Polish/Syrian caregiver to provide the service as promised”, “I assume a Polish/Syrian caregiver to reliably handle the problems of seniors”, “I assume a Polish/Syrian caregiver to perform services right the first time” and “I assume a Polish/Syrian caregiver to provide services at the promised time”. For responsiveness, we tested the subsequent statements: “I assume a Polish/Syrian caregiver to keep the senior informed about when services will be performed”, “I assume a Polish/Syrian caregiver to offer a prompt service to seniors”, “I assume a Polish caregiver to be willing to help the senior”, “I assume a Polish/Syrian caregiver to be ready to respond to the senior’s enquiries”. In terms of assurance, three questions were posed per country: “I assume a Polish/Syrian caregiver to instill confidence in the senior”, “I assume a Polish/Syrian caregiver to be consistently courteous”, “I assume a Polish/Syrian caregiver to have the knowledge to answer the senior’s questions”. The category empathy contained the subsequent statements: “I assume a Polish/Syrian caregiver to give the senior individual attention”, “I assume a Polish/Syrian caregiver to deal with the senior in caring fashion”, “I assume a Polish/Syrian caregiver to have the senior’s best interest at heart”. Lastly, tangibles included one final question: “I assume a Polish/Syrian caregiver to have a neat, professional appearance”.

Big Five Personality Traits

To measure the Big Five Personality Traits as our moderators, we based our questions on the Mini-IPIP (International Personality Item Tool) of Donnellan, Oswald, Baird and Lucas (2006). The Mini-IPIP measures the five dimensions openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. We chose this measure for several reasons: First, with only 20 questions in total, the Mini-IPIP is derived as a shorter version from the standard 50 question IPIP-FFM (Five-Factor Model). Given our already extensive research framework, we wanted to secure higher survey response rates by minimizing the number of questions. Second, being based on the IPIP-FFM is important because it is not only frequently used in personality research but also the IPIP-FFM results correlate with the NEO-PI-R, a 240 questions-heavy measure that is used as a standard tool for the Big Five (Donnellan et al., 2006). Third, the Mini-IPIP, in contrary to other more extensive Big Five measurement tools, is publicly available at no cost, and thus, was accessible easily for the researchers of this work. The five dimensions with each containing several personality statements were measured by asking respondents to indicate the respective statements that agreed with them on a five-point Likert scale (Donnellan et al., 2006). Thereby, the scale ranged from (1) “very inaccurate” to (5) “very accurate”.

However, it is important to mention that several questionnaires exist to measure the Big Five personality traits with each one offering different advantages (e.g. Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg, 1999; Gosling, Rentfrow & Swann, 2003). While standard models such as the NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992) with its 240 questions might cover personality the best, it was not appropriate for our research purpose. Nevertheless, given our already comprehensive questionnaire, we also had to reduce questions for the Big Five with the help of a pre-study that we will shortly introduce in the following. Eventually, for each category, we asked three questions that survey participants had to rate on a scale from 1 to 5. For openness to experience, participants had to evaluate “I am interested in abstract ideas”, “I do not have difficulties understanding abstract ideas”, and “I have a good imagination”. For conscientiousness, we tested the following statements: “I get chores done right away”, “I rarely misplace things”, and “I like order”. To measure extraversion, participants had to evaluate the subsequent statements: “I am the life of the party”, “I talk a lot”, and “I talk to a lot of different people at parties”. Agreeableness was measured by the following statements: “I sympathize with others’ feelings”, “I feel others’ emotions”, and “I am really interested in others”. Lastly, we tested neuroticism by asking survey participants to rate the following: “I have frequent mood swings”, “I am unrelaxed most of the time”, and “I am often sad”.

Pre-Study

To reduce the number of questions within our online survey to a manageable amount, we conducted a pre-study with 30 participants prior to spreading the final survey online (see Appendix 6). The purpose of the pre-study was to reduce the items used to explore the expected service quality and the Big Five personality traits as these framework components were extensive in their items, and we were afraid that people would be less willing to fill out our survey. We again made use of our personal network in the respective target group. For the pre-test, we used Qualtrics, an online service tool provided to us by CBS. Respondents were sent an online survey link with a unique token that ensured the identity verification of each respondent, guaranteeing that each respondent could answer only once. All questions were fixed response questions based on literature. Within a statistical analysis conducted via SPSS, we then removed items that would lead to a higher Cronbach's Alpha value when excluded. Our aim was to exclude items whose reduction would lead to a Cronbach's Alpha > 0.6 as a value higher than 0.6 indicates a reliable scale (Keizer, de Haan, Bobeldijk & Paus, 2019). All pre-study Cronbach's Alpha results can be found in Appendix 7.

For the expected service quality component, we excluded two items. The first question removed belonged to the reliability dimension. The reduction of the item that was asked with regard to a Polish and Syrian context led to a Cronbach's Alpha value for the reliability dimension of 0.94 for Poland and 0.93 for Syria, respectively. The second item removed belonged to the empathy dimension and its removal led to a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.94 for both Poland and Syria.

For the Big Five personality traits we aimed to reduce the number of items per dimension from four to three statements if possible. According to Gosling et al. (2003), personality can also be measured with one to two items per dimension. However, Credé, Harms, Niehorster and Gaye-Valentine (2012) argue that very short and less reliable measures might underrate personality's impact on human behavior. Thus, moderately longer measures can balance the impact (Credé et al., 2012). Given that Cronbach's Alpha proved to be > 0.6 for each dimension after removing one item, we have been able to reduce the number of four to three statements per category. The reduction led to following Cronbach's Alpha results: Openness to experience = 0.67, conscientiousness = 0.75, extraversion = 0.73, agreeableness = 0.75, and neuroticism = 0.73. After reducing the items, we were able to finalize the full questionnaire. In the following, we will explain its data collection process.

5.6.3 Data Collection

Sampling Rationale

We used the same target group, namely German citizens aged between 35 to 67 years, as we did in our interviews for the already previously mentioned reasons. With personal questions asking about the participants' age and nationality within the online survey, we made sure that our survey participants were in the respective target group.

Data Collection Process

Similar to the pre-study, we built our questionnaire in Qualtrics. Again, a unique token ensured that respondents could fill out only one questionnaire. Also, our questionnaire consisted of fixed response questions based on literature. The survey was structured the way that we first asked respondents questions about Poland before asking questions about Syria. Thereby, we wanted to ensure that participants do not get biased by answering questions regarding the countries alternately. Again, a pilot study with family members helped us to find and fix a lack of clarity in questions and improve the survey quality before fully spreading it (Saunders et al., 2016). Following a two-step approach for sharing the survey link, we first reached out to family and friends following again the convenience sampling technique (Saunders et al., 2016). Furthermore, we also asked our families and friends to spread the link among their network to faster identify members of the target group, also called snowball sampling (Saunders et al., 2016). Second, we shared the link online via social media groups or survey websites to reach an even bigger audience. On average, it took respondents 15 minutes to fill out the questionnaire that contained 111 items to answer, including four personal questions. The data collection took six weeks, from April 4 to May 19, 2020.

5.6.4 Sample Profile Online Survey

Regarding our online survey, a total of 226 people participated, out of which 155 people delivered valid answers (69% response rate). Age and gender matched with our interview sampling characteristics, with participants being on average 53.8 years old. In terms of gender, we reached a distribution of 61% females and 39% males. Different than in the interviews, we covered 15 out of the 16 German federal states to ensure an even distribution of interview answers across the country.

Age			Gender			Location		
#	%		#	%		#	%*	
(155)	(100)		(155)	(100)		(155)	(100)	
35-44	22	14	Female	95	61	Bavaria	74	48
45-54	51	33	Male	60	39	MWP	31	20
55-67	82	53	Diverse	0	0	Baden Württemberg	11	7
Ø Age	53.8					Berlin	6	4
Median	55					Hesse	5	3
						Thuringia	5	3
						Brandenburg	4	3
						North Rhine Westphalia	4	3
						Bremen	3	2
						Hamburg	3	2
						Schleswig Holstein	3	2
						Lower Saxony	2	1
						Rhineland Palatinate	2	1
						Saarland	1	1
						Saxony	1	1
						Saxony-Anhalt	0	0

*results vary due to rounding

FIGURE 6: Sample Characteristics Quantitative Study (Source: Own illustration)

5.6.5 Data Analysis & Interpretation

To analyze and interpret the responses of the quantitative study, IBM SPSS Statistics was utilized as statistical software. When the final number of responses was collected, we exported them from Qualtrics into SPSS, and for each variable, numerical values were created on ordinal scales to be able to compare them and investigate relationships (Kremelberg, 2011). Before analyzing the data and conducting the regressions, the data needed to be cleaned to sort out invalid responses. Invalid responses were those that indicated a lack of German citizenship or were younger or older than the determined age group (35 – 67 years). Also, a reliability analysis was conducted by calculating the Cronbach's Alpha value. Since all variables' values exceeded the threshold of 0.6, following Keizer et al. (2019), they can be viewed as reliable. Besides reliability, the assumptions of linear regression

were tested in SPSS for all variables and both countries' models to further prove reliability and validity of our data. Specifically, linearity (the assumption that "continuous predictor variables and the outcome variable are linearly related", following Casson & Farmer, 2014, p. 592), multicollinearity (the assumption that there is no high correlation of independent and dependent variables, according to Ruginski, 2019), autocorrelation (the assumption that "observations are [not] correlated with lagged values", Williams, Grajales & Kurkiewicz, 2013, p. 9), homoscedasticity (the assumption that "[t]here is constant variance across the range of residuals for each X", following Ruginski, 2019), normality (the assumption that "residuals are normally distributed", Ruginski, 2019) and outliers (the assumption that outlying results do not distort the analysis, following Williams et al., 2013) were analyzed.

As a next step, linear and multiple regressions were conducted. First, within the main relationship, the effect of 'affinity' and 'animosity' on the 'holistic country affect' was measured, followed by the impact of 'imagery' on 'image'. Thereafter, the causal relationship between the country predispositions and the dependent variables, 'expected service quality' and 'willingness to hire', were individually and jointly evaluated. Lastly, the moderating effect of each of the five personality traits on the dependent variables was analyzed separately and conjointly. SPSS calculated coefficients in the form of the standardized beta, the unstandardized beta, the p-value which determines the significance, and the t-test. For our research, specifically the unstandardized beta and p-value were taken into account for analysis and interpretation. While the p-value confirms whether or not a relationship is significant, the beta indicates the magnitude of the relation between the values, and whether it is positive or negative (Kremelberg, 2011).

5.6.6 Credibility of Research Data

Even though the mixed method research design is assumed to bring us closer to finding the reality underlying the data, also in our quantitative study, we undertook several additional procedures to ensure reliability and validity (Saunders et al., 2016). To ensure internal reliability in our quantitative study, existing measures from credible sources were adapted to the research context and applied in the questionnaire. (Saunders et al., 2016). Before conducting the regression analyses, we also performed a reliability test in SPSS, which ensured that all variables reached Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.6 (Keizer et al., 2019). All variables' Cronbach's Alpha values can be found in Appendix 8. When testing the assumptions of linear regression, we concluded that the assumptions of autocorrelation and outliers were met for all variables (see Appendix 9). However, there were

marginal deviations for the assumptions of linearity in several cases, and homoscedasticity in few cases (Appendix 9). In these cases, the interpretation of our findings needs to be viewed with caution. Nevertheless, since the differences to the acceptable thresholds are mostly small, our results may still be counted as valid.

In terms of validity, also by both applying parts of the measures in both the data collection methods, and the quantitative pretest, we aimed to provide consistency and replicability in future research (Saunders et al., 2016). Construct validity was achieved by applying existing measures and following Kocks et al.'s (2019) method of selecting associations. Consistency was assured by partly modifying scales. Through previous research of existing literature, causal relations of variables could be predicted and later on tested to ensure internal validity (Saunders et al., 2016). In our research, only one specific research context was investigated. However, by conducting a quantitative prestudy and final study with 30, respective 155 valid respondents in total, in combination with 10 qualitative interviews as part of our triangulation could improve the likelihood of generalizability to the entire population and external reliability of the study, as it is in line with marketing research.

6 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The following part of our study is dedicated to the presentation of our quantitative and qualitative data. After the introduction to our empirical data, we present our hypotheses test results and conclude with a combined analysis of our findings.

6.1 Empirical Data

The section on our empirical data is structured in findings on country predispositions, employment behavior and personality traits, including the results on a statistical test of the direct effect of personality traits on employment behavior. Thereafter, we analyze differences in the data for several demographic groups in our sample.

6.1.1 Country Predispositions Data

In the subsequent part, we present the results of our empirical data analysis for each variable. Additional graphs for each variable's sub-categories can be found in Appendix 10, and the entire data set is enclosed in Appendix 13.

Country Imagery Data

According to Kock et al.'s (2019) model, the country predispositions' influencing behavior may consist of the country image and the holistic country affect, which are again influenced by country imagery, and affinity and animosity. First, country imagery for Poland and Syria was explored through semi-structured interviews, utilizing open-ended questions. In terms of Poland, 20 associations could be found, which could be clustered in 7 distinct categories: "Poland is the main supplier for caregivers" (mentioned 5 times), "Polish caregivers are motivated and have good qualifications" (mentioned 4 times), "There is a big salary differential between Poland and Germany, therefore Poles come to work in Germany" (mentioned 3 times), "Poles know the German language" (mentioned 3 times), "There are positive associations regarding Polish caregivers because of good word of mouth" (mentioned twice), "There is a good connection of Germany and Poland" (mentioned twice) and "Polish caregivers are cheaper than German ones" (mentioned once). With regard to Syria, 18 associations were mentioned, which could be classified in 6 groups: "Syrian caregivers are not very common" (mentioned 8 times), "There are cultural differences and reservations toward Syria" (mentioned 3 times), "Syrians don't speak German" (mentioned twice), "Syrians are more cordial, especially to the elderly" (mentioned twice), "There is a lack of knowledge or qualification of Syrian caregivers" (mentioned once) and "There is no close relation to Syria as country" (mentioned once). For the quantitative survey, only the first five associations regarding Poland, and the first four in terms of Syria were selected due to their higher representativeness, following Kock et al.'s (2019) method. These were assessed both in their strength ("How much do you relate this attribute to Poland/Syria?") and valence ("For you as relative considering to hire a caregiver from Poland, would this attribute be rather negative or positive?"). By multiplying strength and valence for each association, we found that, in terms of Poland, the tested associations were all in the positive, whereas for Syria, the majority turned out negative. This result shows us that on average, for Poland, country imagery is better than for Syria.

Poland		Syria	
Association 1 - Poland is the main supplier for caregivers	3,03	Association 1 - Syrian caregivers are not very common	-1,06
Association 2 - Polish caregivers are motivated and have good qualifications	3,82	Association 2 - There are cultural differences and reservations toward Syria	-2,68
Association 3 - There is a big salary differential between Poland and Germany, therefore Poles come to work in Germany	2,77	Association 3 - Syrians don't speak German	-2,39
Association 4 - Poles know the German language	2,15	Association 4 - Syrians are more cordial, especially to the elderly	1,42
Association 5 - There are positive associations regarding Polish caregivers because of good word of mouth	4,66		
	3,29		-1,18

FIGURE 7: Country Associations Averages for Poland and Syria (Source: Own illustration)

Country Image Data

Having tested the relationship between each association's strength and valence and the country image, we found that for Poland, both in terms of strength and valence, Association 2 (Polish caregivers are motivated and have good qualifications), Association 4 (Poles know the German language) and Association 5 (There are positive associations regarding Polish caregivers because of good word of mouth) have a significant relation with country image. The significant positive effect of Association 2 on country image shows us that the fact that Polish caregivers are perceived as motivated and well qualified positively influences the Polish image. Moreover, we found that Association 4 has a significant positive relationship to country image, which means that the fact that Poles are perceived to know the German language positively affects the image of Poland. Also, Association 5 has a significant positive image, which translates into the positive effect of the positive associations due to a good word of mouth of Polish caregivers on the Polish country image. In terms of valence, Association 2, 4 and 5 also have significant relationships to country image. Therefore, we can conclude that the Polish caregivers' motivation and qualification, German language knowledge and positive associations due to good word of mouth are important in employment decisions about Polish caregivers. Taking into account the strength of associations, we found that Association 2 explains the Polish country image to the largest extent. In terms of valence, Association 5 has the largest explanatory power.

	Strength			Valence		
	R Square	Beta	Significance	R Square	Beta	Significance
Association 1 - Poland is the main supplier for caregivers	0.007	-0.068	0.314	0.012	0.101	0.177
Association 2 - Polish caregivers are motivated and have good qualifications	0.088	0.304	0.000	0.048	0.184	0.006
Association 3 - There is a big salary differential between Poland and Germany, therefore Poles come to work in Germany	0.004	-0.700	0.442	0.000	0.001	0.993
Association 4 - Poles know the German language	0.035	0.183	0.020	0.067	0.201	0.001
Association 5 - There are positive associations regarding Polish caregivers because of good word of mouth	0.060	0.267	0.002	0.660	0.224	0.001

FIGURE 8: Strength and Valence Association Analysis for Poland (Source: Own illustration)

Regarding Syria, except the strength of Association 1, all associations are highly significant both for strength and valence. Association 2 and 3 have significant negative relationships in their strength with the Syrian country image. This demonstrates that the perception that there are cultural differences and reservations toward Syria and that Syrians do not speak German negatively influence the Syrian image. Furthermore, Association 4 has a significant positive effect on the country image, which means that the perception that Syrians are more cordial positively affects the image of Syria. When it comes to valence, all four associations are highly significant and have positive relations with the country image. This result shows that all four associations are important in employment behavior regarding Syrian caregivers.

	Strength			Valence		
	R Square	Beta	Significance	R Square	Beta	Significance
Association 1 - Syrian caregivers are not very common	0.014	-0.100	0.137	0.153	0.426	0.000
Association 2 - There are cultural differences and reservations toward Syria	0.056	-0.215	0.003	0.225	0.528	0.000
Association 3 - Syrians don't speak German	0.045	-0.219	0.008	0.150	0.380	0.000
Association 4 - Syrians are more cordial, especially to the elderly	0.058	0.313	0.002	0.135	0.398	0.000

FIGURE 9: Strength and Valence Association Analysis for Syria (Source: Own illustration)

Our analysis of the one-dimensional country image shows that, on average, Poland received more positive ratings than Syria. To better compare the two countries' results, we depict each variables' values in a box plot diagram. This graphical visualization allows us to compare different location parameters, such as each country's average, median, minimum, and maximum values, the interquartile range, and outliers. Besides the average value for each country, the diagram on country image below demonstrates that in the case of Poland, half of all data is within 4 and 5, compared to 3 and 4 for Syria. Due to this interquartile range, for Poland, the selection of 2 and 7 was classified as outliers, whereas in the case of Syria, the options 1, 6 and 7 were viewed as outliers. When there are scattered extreme values, this visualization might therefore give us more meaningful insights into the distribution of our data than the average (Poland $\bar{X} = 4.72$; Syria $\bar{X} = 3.74$).

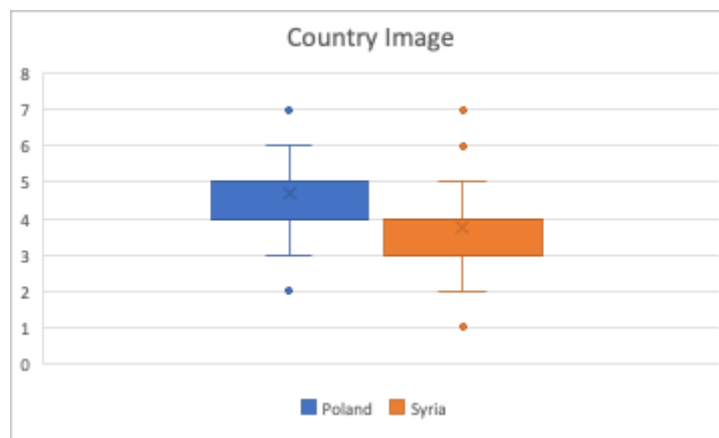


FIGURE 10: Country Image Box Plot Diagram (Source: Own illustration)

Affinity Data

With regard to Poland, on average, liking ($\bar{X} = 4.28$) and attachment ($\bar{X} = 3.69$) were rated higher than admiration ($\bar{X} = 3.58$). In general, with an exception of the highest potential score, Poland received more positive ratings than negative ones in terms of affinity. In the case of Syria, liking was also rated higher ($\bar{X} = 3.60$) than admiration ($\bar{X} = 3.18$), as well as attachment ($\bar{X} = 2.94$). It is noticeable that in contrast to the values for Poland ($\bar{X} = 3.86$), affinity to Syria was ranked less positive ($\bar{X} = 3.25$), and there are particularly many responses with the lowest possible option. Within the category admiration, the average score for the feeling “captivated” was 3.46 for Poland and 3.23 for Syria, while “impressed” averaged 3.69 for Poland and 3.24 for Syria. Lastly, “admired” was rated 3.59 on average for Poland compared to 3.08 for Syria. Also, in terms of liking, Poland was generally rated significantly higher (\bar{X} like = 4.48, \bar{X} fondness = 4.02, \bar{X} sympathy = 4.35) than Syria (\bar{X} like

= 3.72, \bar{O} fondness = 3.43, \bar{O} sympathy = 3.64). Lastly, also in the category attachment, Poland received slightly higher ratings (\bar{O} connected = 3.46, \bar{O} bonded = 3.69, \bar{O} attached = 3.59) than Syria (\bar{O} connected = 2.97, \bar{O} bonded = 2.79, \bar{O} attached = 3.06). It is noticeable, that for Poland, the majority of respondents' answers lie between the values 3 and 5, whereas for Syria, it is between 2 and 4. Nevertheless, for both countries, there are participants that selected the lowest and highest possible option regarding affinity.

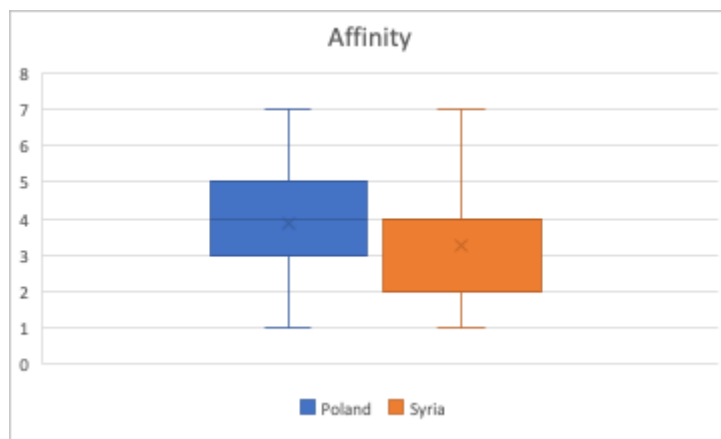


FIGURE 11: Affinity Box Plot Diagram (Source: Own illustration)

Animosity Data

In terms of Poland, the majority of respondents felt both categories of emotions neutrally or not at all, and only few participants rated stronger feelings of mostly accommodating emotions toward Poland (\bar{O} contending emotions = 1.95, \bar{O} accommodating emotions = 2.32). With regard to Syria, we found that accommodating emotions were rated to be felt much stronger (\bar{O} = 3.05) than contending emotions (\bar{O} = 2.19), and overall animosity (\bar{O} Poland = 2.13, \bar{O} Syria = 2.62) is higher. Within the category of contending emotions, Syria received higher average ratings (\bar{O} angry = 2.25, \bar{O} mad = 2.12, \bar{O} irritated = 2.21) than Poland across all questions (\bar{O} angry = 1.98, \bar{O} mad = 1.94, \bar{O} irritated = 1.92). Also, in terms of accommodating emotions, the average scores were significantly higher for Syria (\bar{O} worried = 3.47, \bar{O} afraid = 2.75, \bar{O} scared = 2.93) than for Poland (\bar{O} worried = 2.65, \bar{O} afraid = 2.13, \bar{O} scared = 2.18). Except the different average values for the two countries, for both countries the distribution of answers is similar, and the majority of responses was in between the values 1 and 3. Also, for both countries, all options from the worst to the best rating were represented. Nevertheless, it has to be noted that for animosity, the scale only reached from 1 to 5, whereas the previous variables were measured from 1 to 7.

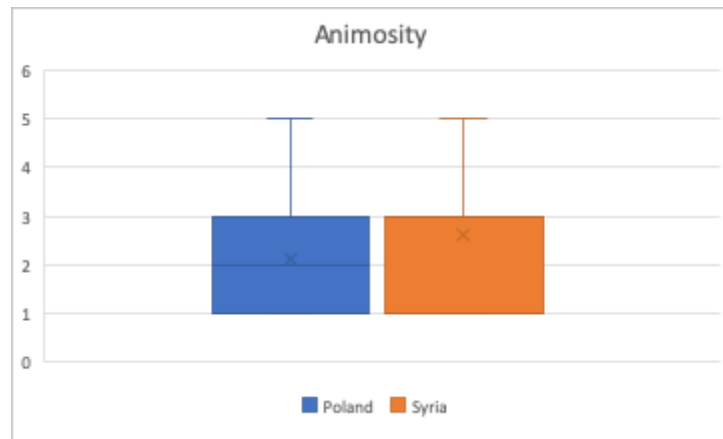


FIGURE 12: Animosity Box Plot Diagram (Source: Own illustration)

Holistic Country Affect

By statistically analyzing the relationship of both affinity and animosity with the holistic country affect, we found very highly significant results for both countries ($p > 0.001$). As expected, both for Poland ($B = 0.498$) and for Syria ($B = 0.314$), affinity is positively related with the holistic country affect, whereas animosity has a negative effect on the variable (Poland: $B = -0.255$; Syria: $B = -0.377$). It is remarkable that in terms of Poland, affinity has a stronger influence than animosity, and with regard to Syria, it is the other way round. Besides, a comparison of the R Square result demonstrates that for Poland, the combination of affinity and animosity together explain more of the holistic country affect (R Square = 0.519) than it is in the case of Syria (R Square = 0.228).

Besides the relation of affinity and animosity, we independently also asked the survey respondents for their overall feelings toward Poland and Syria by selecting the representative emoji (1 being very bad and 5 very good). We found that, on average, Poland received a better rating in terms of overall feelings toward the country ($\bar{X} = 3.65$) than Syria ($\bar{X} = 2.95$). Interestingly, whereas for Poland, the majority of responses lie in between 3 and 4, answers for Syria vary more, with more than half of the participants having selected values in between 2 and 4. This also means, that in terms of Poland, the respondents having indicated 1 for the holistic country affect, are seen as outliers.

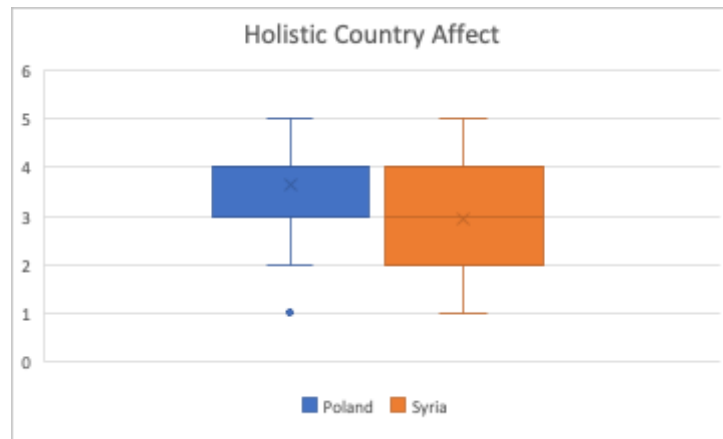


FIGURE 13: Holistic Country Affect Box Plot Diagram (Source: Own illustration)

6.1.2 Employment Behavior Data

The results show that for Poland, on average, respondents had a rather positive attitude toward hiring Polish caregivers ($\bar{X} = 4.45$). In contrast, the willingness to hire Syrian caregivers is rather low ($\bar{X} = 2.98$). It is particularly outstanding that about a third of respondents selected the option “totally disagree” for the question whether they would definitely try a Syrian employee ($\bar{X} = 2.90$). With regard to Poland, this number is much lower ($\bar{X} = 4.21$). Regarding the likelihood to hire someone from the respective country, Poland averaged 4.71, whereas for Syria, the average value was 3.08. The average score of hiring a Polish caregiver, the next time an employee is needed was 4.44, whereas for Syria it was 2.97. In the case of willingness to hire, the difference between Poland and Syria becomes particularly clear. The diagram below shows that most respondents specified their willingness to hire a Polish caregiver with 4 or 5, while for Syria, it was only 2 to 4. Consequently, respondents selecting 1, 2 and 7 for Poland were already seen as outliers, whereas for Syria, there is a higher variation.

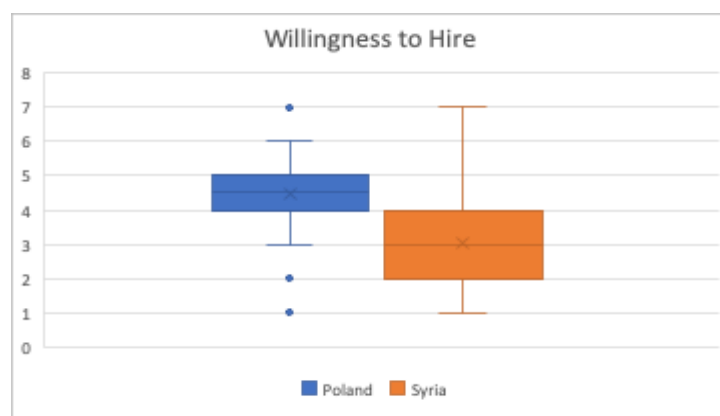


FIGURE 14: Willingness to Hire Box Plot Diagram (Source: Own illustration)

The analysis of our results shows that in the case of Poland, all categories were ranked in a rather conform way. Overall, the expected service quality for Polish caregivers is relatively high across the categories reliability ($\bar{O} = 5.19$), responsiveness ($\bar{O} = 5.28$), assurance ($\bar{O} = 5.28$), empathy ($\bar{O} = 5.32$) and tangibles ($\bar{O} = 5.26$). In contrast, in terms of Syria, expectations differed more across categories. Whereas empathy seems to be comparably highly expected ($\bar{O} = 5.05$), reliability ($\bar{O} = 4.51$) withholds lower expectations. In general, service quality expectations for Syrian caregivers are lower ($\bar{O} = 4.76$) than for the Polish counterpart ($\bar{O} = 5.27$). The detailed results and averages for each question in the five dimensions of expected service quality can be found in Appendix 10. Similar to the willingness to hire, also in the expected service quality, the variance for Syria was higher and values in general lower than for Poland, as it can be seen in the diagram below.

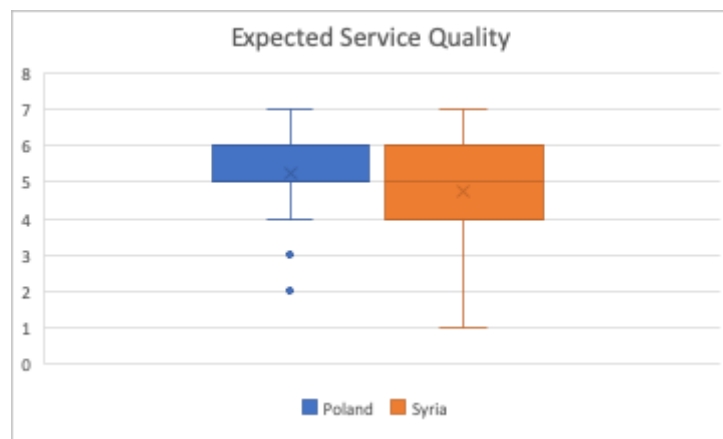


FIGURE 15: Expected Service Quality Box Plot Diagram (Source: Own illustration)

6.1.3 Personality Data

Furthermore, we tested if a personnel decision maker's Big Five personality traits moderate the effect of the COO predispositions on the employment outcome. Results show that our participants, on average, tend to be slightly agreeable ($\bar{O} = 3.98$), conscientious ($\bar{O} = 3.66$), and open to experience ($\bar{O} = 3.51$) while moderately extroverted ($\bar{O} = 2.84$) and less neurotic ($\bar{O} = 2.35$). All data and averages for each traits questions, as well as a visualization of the distribution of personality traits in our sample can be found in Appendix 11.

We also tested the direct effect of the Big Five personality traits on the subsequent employment outcome variables willingness to hire and expected service quality for each, Polish and Syrian caregivers. Results indicate takeaways for the dimensions openness to experience, agreeableness, and neuroticism. For openness to experience, we found a positive significant

relationship with regard to the expected service quality for the base case of a Polish caregiver ($B = 0.224, p < 0.05$) and a less favorable Syrian caregiver ($B = 0.329, p < 0.01$). This indicates that the more open a personnel decision maker is, the less important is the COO of the caregiver when rating the expected service quality and the more likely the personnel decision maker is to give also caregivers with an unfavorable COO a better rating. For agreeableness, results show a positive significant influence of agreeableness on the expected service quality of Polish ($B = 0.268, p < 0.01$) and Syrian caregivers ($B = 0.304, p < 0.01$). This indicates that the more agreeable a personnel decision maker is, the less important is the COO of the caregiver when rating the expected service quality. Lastly, for neuroticism, we found a negative significant influence regarding the expected service quality for the Polish caregiver base case ($B = -0.215, p < 0.05$) and the less favorable Syrian caregiver case ($B = -0.218, p < 0.05$). The finding implies that the more neurotic the personnel decision maker is, the more likely s/he is to expect a lower service quality of a caregiver from a less favorable COO compared to a caregiver from a more favorable COO.

Given that some relations were insignificant, we could not derive valid results for the influence of openness to experience on the willingness to hire, the effect of conscientiousness on both willingness to hire and the expected service quality, the influence of extraversion on both willingness to hire and the expected service quality, the influence of agreeableness on the willingness to hire, and last, the impact of neuroticism on the willingness to hire.

	Openness	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Neuroticism
WTH Poland	-	-	-	-	-
WTH Syria	0.353*	-	0.406**	0.511**	-
ESQ Poland	0.224*	0.187*	-	0.268**	-0.215*
ESQ Syria	0.329**	-	0.202*	0.304**	-0.218*

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

FIGURE 16: Analysis of the Direct Effect of Personality Traits on Employment Behavior
(Source: Own illustration)

6.1.4 Demographic Findings

To further explore differences in the identified demographic groups of our sample, we conducted a second analysis of our results, differentiating in gender, age and location of residence (Eastern and Western states of Germany). When investigating the findings separated in female and male respondents, we noted that overall, female participants responded more favorably toward both Polish and Syrian caregivers than males. Interestingly, with regard to Poland, there are bigger differences between female and male responses, whereas for Syria, they were more similar. The most extreme difference occurred for the Syrian country imagery, where the female average is -0.87 compared to the average male answer of -1.67. This difference largely leads back to the fact that males weighted the associations 1 (“Syrian caregivers are not very common”) and 3 (“Syrians don’t speak German”) significantly more negatively than females. Personality-wise, females scored higher than their male counterparts in agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. Only in openness, males are ranked slightly higher. However, these findings need to be viewed taking into account that more responses were received from women (61%) than from men (39%).

Regarding age, we analyzed the results within the specified three age groups, 35 to 44 years, 45 to 54 years, and 55 to 67 years. Generally, the youngest generation had more favorable attitudes toward foreign caregivers of both nationalities, followed by the 45 to 54 year olds. However, results varied for each variable. Whereas the 35 to 44 year olds’ country image of Poland is the highest among all generations, the country imagery is the lowest for this age group. This difference in perceived country imagery can mainly be traced back to associations 1 (“Poland is the main supplier for caregivers”) and 4 (“Poles know the German language”), which were weighted less by the youngest age group compared to the other two generations. Nevertheless, Syria is rated more favorably by the youngest generation across all explored variables. In terms of personality, we found that - on average - the younger the respondent, the more open and extroverted s/he is. For all other traits, the middle-aged generation scored highest. Whereas the oldest generation proved to be more conscientious than the youngest age group, the 35 to 44 year olds’ scored higher in agreeableness. Nevertheless, it needs to be taken into account, that the distribution of respondents across age groups was not equal, as 53% were aged between 55 and 67, 33% between 45 and 54, and only 14% between 35 and 44 years.

Lastly, we separated the results into responses from Eastern and Western states of Germany. Here, we found that overall, respondents from Eastern Germany had more positive attitudes toward caregivers from both Poland and Syria. The only exceptions to this observation were the variable

willingness to hire, where the Western respondents ranked Polish caregivers higher. Mainly, the option “I will hire someone from Poland, the next time I need to hire someone” was selected more often by Western respondents than their Eastern counterparts. In terms of personality, respondents from both parts of Germany proved to be on average equally extraverted. Whereas in openness and neuroticism, Western participants ranked higher, participants from Eastern Germany scored higher in conscientiousness and agreeableness. However, the distribution across the geographical parts of Germany differed, since 70% of respondents come from Western Germany and only 30% from the Eastern states of Germany (see Appendix 10).

6.2 Hypotheses Results

Subsequently, we present the results of the hypotheses testing, which were retrieved from our statistical analysis with SPSS. First, the effect of the country image is introduced, after which we declare the results of the holistic country affect and of the combined country predispositions. Lastly, the findings on the moderating effect of the personality traits are presented.

6.2.1 The Effect of the Country Image on Employment Behavior

With the first two hypotheses, *H1* and *H2*, we measured the effect of the country image on employment behavior. The first hypothesis *H1* was raised as follows: *The more positive/negative a personnel decision maker's country image of the employee's country of origin is, the higher/lower is the decision maker's willingness to hire the immigrant employee as service provider.* In the case of Poland, we found a significant positive effect of the country image on the willingness to hire ($B = 0.275, p < 0.01$). Therefore, the hypothesis can be approved. With regard to Syria, there is a highly significant positive effect of the country image on the willingness to hire ($B = 0.561; p < 0.001$). Consequently, also for Syria, this hypothesis is approved. When comparing the results for the two countries, it is notable that in Syria's case, a stronger relationship could be found with a higher significance. In the research context, this means that in the case of Syria, the country image plays a greater role in the willingness to hire than for Poland.

H2 was stated as follows: *The more positive/negative a personnel decision maker's country image of the employee's country of origin is, the higher/lower the expected service quality of the immigrant employee.* In terms of Poland, a highly significant positive effect of the country of origin on the expected service quality was found ($B = 0.407, p < 0.001$). In consequence, the hypothesis can be supported. Also, when it comes to Syria, a highly significant positive effect could be seen ($B =$

0.320, $p < 0.001$), and $H2$ is therefore accepted for both countries. However, in the case of the expected service quality, the effect for Syria was found to be lower than for Poland. This means that for Poland the country image is more important in explaining an employer's expected service quality than for Syria.

6.2.2 The Effect of the Holistic Country Affect on Employment Behavior

$H3$ and $H4$ were utilized to quantify the effect of the holistic country affect on employment behavior. $H3$ was formulated as follows: *The more positive/negative a personnel decision maker's holistic country affect of the employee's country of origin is, the higher/lower is the personnel decision maker's willingness to hire the service of the immigrant employee.* With regard to Poland, we found a significant positive effect of the holistic country affect on the willingness to hire ($B = 0.396$, $p < 0.01$). Consequently, this hypothesis is supported. In terms of Syria, there is an even higher positive effect that is also more significant ($B = 0.762$, $p < 0.001$). Also, in the case of Syria, the hypothesis is accepted. In our research context, this result can be translated into a higher importance of the holistic country affect on the willingness to hire in the Syrian context.

With $H4$, we investigated the second outcome variable as follows: *The more positive/negative a personnel decision maker's holistic country affect of the employee's country of origin is, the higher/lower is the expected service quality of the immigrant employee.* By looking at the results for Poland, we can support the hypothesis and find a highly significant positive effect of the holistic country affect on the expected service quality ($B = 0.514$, $p < 0.001$). In the case of Syria, there is a similarly strong positive effect, which is also highly significant ($B = 0.445$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, $H4$ is accepted for both countries. Regarding the expected service quality, there is only a slight difference in the effect of the holistic country affect for both countries. The holistic country affect therefore plays a significant role in service expectations for both countries, and it is marginally higher for Poland.

6.2.3 The Effect of the CIPs on Employment Behavior

In $H5$ and $H6$, we measure the effect of both country predispositions on employment behavior. $H5$ was raised as follows: *The more positive/negative a personnel decision maker's CIPs of the employee's country of origin is, the higher/lower is the personnel decision maker's willingness to hire immigrant employee as service provider.* In the case of Poland, both the holistic country affect ($B = 0.299$, $p > 0.05$) and the country image ($B = 0.109$, $p > 0.05$) were found to have an insignificant

positive effect. In comparison to the independent consideration of each variable, the results have now turned insignificant. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. When it comes to Syria, however, both variables effect's turn significant (country image: $B = 0.246, p < 0.05$; holistic country affect: $B = 0.540, p < 0.001$). In the context of Syria, when combining both variables, the effect of each variable has become slightly weaker, but the significance level has not changed. In this case, the hypothesis is accepted. Practically, we conclude that in the case of Polish caregivers, we are not able to claim the relation of country predispositions affect the willingness to hire. With regard to Syrian employees, however, country predispositions play a role in the employer's willingness to hire.

H6 was concerned with the expected service quality and was raised in the subsequent way: *The more positive/negative a personnel decision maker's CIPs of the employee's country of origin is, the higher/lower is the expected service quality of the immigrant employee.* In our model on Poland, we noted a significant positive effect of both holistic country affect ($B = 0.297, p < 0.01$) and country image ($B = 0.241, p < 0.01$). Therefore, the hypothesis can be accepted. For Syria, the effect of holistic country affect ($B = 0.330, p < 0.01$) is significant and positive, whereas country image ($B = 0.128, p > 0.05$) is insignificant and positive, so that the hypothesis can be partly supported. Whereas each variable marginally loses in magnitude when considered in combination, the proportionality stays the same in the context of Syria. With regard to our research context, these findings confirm the results of the effect on the willingness to hire. Also, for the expected service quality, there is a significant effect of country predispositions for Poland, which confirms the previous findings. For Syria, however, only the holistic country affect seems to matter for the expected service quality when both predispositions are combined.

6.2.4 The Moderating Effect of Personality Traits on the CIP Model

The remaining hypotheses 7 to 11 investigate the moderating effect of personality traits on the CIP Model. First, in *H7a*, we examined the effect of the openness to experience on employment behavior, as follows: *The higher/lower the personnel decision makers scores on openness to experience, the lower/higher is the effect of the COO predispositions on the willingness to hire.* For Poland, an insignificant negative effect of openness to experience in combination with the holistic country affect ($B = -0.926, p > 0.05$), and an insignificant positive effect of openness to experience combined with the country image ($B = 0.163, p > 0.05$) was found. Therefore, this hypothesis is rejected. Regarding Syria, on the contrary, an insignificant positive effect of the holistic country affect ($B = 0.130, p > 0.05$) and an insignificant negative effect of the country image ($B = -0.512, p > 0.05$) can be noted.

Consequently, also in the context of Syria, the hypothesis is rejected. In practice, these results demonstrate that we cannot claim that openness to experience affects employers' country predispositions in their influence on the willingness to hire.

In *H7b*, we investigated the effect of openness to experience on the expected service quality in the following: *The higher/lower the personnel decision maker scores on openness to experience, the lower/higher is the effect of the COO predispositions on the expected service quality*. Regarding Poland, both variables, the intersection of the holistic country affect and openness to experience ($B = 0.156, p > 0.05$), and openness to experience in combination with the country image ($B = 0.419, p > 0.05$), had an insignificant positive effect. In consequence, this hypothesis cannot be supported. In the case of Syria, the holistic country affect combined with openness to experience had an insignificant positive effect ($B = 0.078, p > 0.05$). Hence, the intersection of openness to experience and country image was found to have an insignificant negative effect ($B = -0.622, p > 0.05$). Also, with regard to Syria, the hypothesis is rejected. In our research context, these findings show that also with regard to the expected service quality, openness to experience cannot be proven to affect employers' country predispositions.

In *H8a* and *H8b* we tested whether the Big Five personality trait conscientiousness has a moderating influence on the effect of the CIPs on the employment outcome variables. *H8a* states that *the higher/lower the personnel decision maker scores on conscientiousness, the higher/lower is the effect of the COO predispositions on the willingness to hire*. For Poland, the results show that conscientiousness has an insignificant negative influence on the effect of the holistic country affect on the willingness to hire ($B = -0.206, p > 0.05$), as well an insignificant positive influence on the effect of the country image on the willingness to hire ($B = 0.084, p > 0.05$). Therefore, we reject the hypothesis. For the case of Syria, results also show an insignificant negative influence on the effect of the holistic country affect on the willingness to hire ($B = -0.126, p > 0.05$) and an insignificant positive influence on the effect of the country image on the willingness to hire ($B = 0.04, p > 0.05$). Therefore, the hypothesis can be rejected. Given the insignificant results, no comparison between Poland and Syria is possible. We can reject *H8a* that the personality trait conscientiousness has a moderating influence on the country predispositions' effect on the willingness to hire.

Similar applies to *H8b*, which states that *the higher/lower the personnel decision maker scores on conscientiousness, the higher/lower is the effect of the COO predispositions on the expected service quality*. Results show that conscientiousness, for Poland, has an insignificant negative influence on the effect of the holistic country affect on the expected service quality ($B = -0.167, p >$

0.05) and an insignificant negative influence on the effect of the country image on the expected service quality ($B = -0.023, p > 0.05$). Thus, we reject the hypothesis. For Syria, we noted that conscientiousness has an insignificant negative influence on the effect of the holistic country affect on the expected service quality ($B = -0.056, p > 0.05$), and an insignificant positive influence on the effect of the country image on the expected service quality ($B = 0.04, p > 0.05$). Therefore, we also reject the hypothesis. Again, given the insignificance of results, we can reject *H8b* that conscientiousness has a moderating influence on the country predispositions' effect on the expected service quality. Therefore, we cannot say that conscientiousness has a moderating influence on the effect of the country predispositions on our chosen employment outcome variables.

In *H9a* and *H9b* we tested a potential moderating influence of the personality trait extraversion on the effect of the country predispositions on the employment outcome variables. *H9a* states that *the higher/lower the personnel decision maker scores on extraversion, the lower/higher is the effect of the COO predispositions on the willingness to hire*. The results show that extraversion, for Poland, has an insignificant positive influence on the effect of the holistic country affect on the willingness to hire ($B = 0.104, p > 0.05$) and an insignificant positive influence on the effect of the country image on the willingness to hire ($B = 0.023, p > 0.05$). Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. For Syria, we found that extraversion has an insignificant positive influence on the effect of the holistic country affect on the willingness to hire ($B = 0.212, p > 0.05$) and an insignificant negative influence on the effect of the country image on the willingness to hire ($B = -0.141, p > 0.05$). Thus, we also reject the hypothesis for Syria. This demonstrates that it is not possible to say that extraversion has a moderating influence on the country predispositions' effect on the willingness to hire.

H9b, on the other hand, states that *the higher/lower the personnel decision maker scores on extraversion, the lower/higher is the effect of the COO predispositions on the expected service quality*. Results show that extraversion, for Poland, has an insignificant negative influence on the effect of the holistic country affect on the expected service quality ($B = -0.007, p > 0.05$) and an insignificant positive influence on the effect of the country image on the expected service quality ($B = 0.077, p > 0.05$). Thus, the hypothesis is rejected for Poland. For Syria, however, we found that extraversion has a significant positive moderating influence on the effect of the holistic country affect on the expected service quality ($B = 0.303, p < 0.05$) and a significant negative moderating influence on the effect of the country image on the expected service quality ($B = -0.244, p < 0.05$). Given the results, we, partially for the case of Syria, can accept *H9b* that extraversion has a moderating influence on the COO predispositions' effect on the expected service quality, with a significant positive influence on

the effect of the holistic country affect on the expected service quality and a negative one regarding the country image on the expected service quality. That being said, the more extroverted a person is, the less the person's holistic country affect impacts the expected service quality of a Syrian caregiver, and vice versa. However, for the second COO predisposition variable applies that the more extroverted a person is, the more the person's country image impacts the expected service quality of a Syrian caregiver, and conversely. Thus, *H9b* is only partially applicable.

Next, in *H10a* and *H10b* we examined a potential moderating influence of agreeableness. *H10a* states that *the higher/lower the personnel decision maker scores on agreeableness, the lower/higher is the effect of the COO predispositions on the willingness to hire*. For Poland, results indicate that agreeableness has an insignificant negative influence on the effect of the holistic country affect on the willingness to hire ($B = -0.299, p > 0.05$) as well an insignificant positive influence on the effect of the country image on the willingness to hire ($B = 0.133, p > 0.05$). Therefore, for Poland, we reject the hypothesis. For the case of Syria, we found an insignificant positive influence on the effect of the holistic country affect on the willingness to hire ($B = 0.152, p > 0.05$) and an insignificant negative influence on the effect of the country image on the willingness to hire ($B = -0.048, p > 0.05$). Therefore, the hypothesis can be rejected also for Syria. Overall, the results demonstrate that the personality trait agreeableness does not affect employers' country predispositions in their influence on the willingness to hire.

Further, we investigated *H10b*, which states that *the higher/lower the personnel decision maker scores on agreeableness, the higher/lower is the effect of the COO predispositions on the expected service quality*. Results show that agreeableness, for Poland, has an insignificant negative influence on the effect of the holistic country affect on the expected service quality ($B = -0.162, p > 0.05$) and an insignificant positive influence on the effect of the country image on the expected service quality ($B = 0.041, p > 0.05$). Thus, the hypothesis is rejected. For Syria, our findings show that agreeableness has an insignificant positive influence on the effect of the holistic country affect on the expected service quality ($B = 0.121, p > 0.05$) and an insignificant negative influence on the effect of the country image on the expected service quality ($B = -0.009, p > 0.05$). Therefore, we also reject the hypothesis. Again, given the insignificance of results, we can reject *H10b* that agreeableness has a moderating influence on the COO predispositions' effect on the expected service quality. In our research context, these findings show that with regard to our chosen employment outcome variables, agreeableness cannot be said to affect employers' country predispositions.

Last, in *H11a* and *H11b* we tested if the personality trait neuroticism has a moderating influence on the effect of the COO predispositions on the employment outcome variables. *H11a* states that *the higher/lower the personnel decision maker scores on neuroticism, the higher/lower is the effect of the COO predispositions on the willingness to hire*. For Poland, we found that neuroticism has an insignificant negative influence on the effect of the holistic country affect on the willingness to hire ($B = -0.247, p > 0.05$) and an insignificant positive influence on the effect of the country image on the willingness to hire ($B = 0.140, p > 0.05$). Thus, the hypothesis is rejected. For Syria, results show an insignificant negative influence on the effect of the holistic country affect on the willingness to hire ($B = -0.059, p > 0.05$) and an insignificant positive influence on the effect of the country image on the willingness to hire ($B = 0.07, p > 0.05$). Therefore, the hypothesis can be rejected. Thus, in practice, we cannot claim that neuroticism has a moderating influence on the country predispositions' effect on the willingness to hire.

Finally, *H11b* states that *the higher/lower the personnel decision maker scores on neuroticism, the higher/lower is the effect of the COO predispositions on the expected service quality*. Results show that neuroticism, for Poland, has an insignificant positive influence on the effect of the holistic country affect on the expected service quality ($B = 0.1, p > 0.05$) and an insignificant negative influence on the effect of the country image on the expected service quality ($B = -0.048, p > 0.05$). Thus, for Poland, we can reject the hypothesis. For Syria, we found that neuroticism has an insignificant positive influence on the effect of the holistic country affect on the expected service quality ($B = 0.016, p > 0.05$) and an insignificant negative influence on the effect of the country image on the expected service quality ($B = -0.03, p > 0.05$). Therefore, also in the case of Syria, the hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, overall, we can reject *H11b* that neuroticism has a moderating influence on the COO predispositions' effect on the expected service quality. This means that we cannot say that the degree of a person's neuroticism influences the effect of the country predispositions on our chosen employment outcome variables.

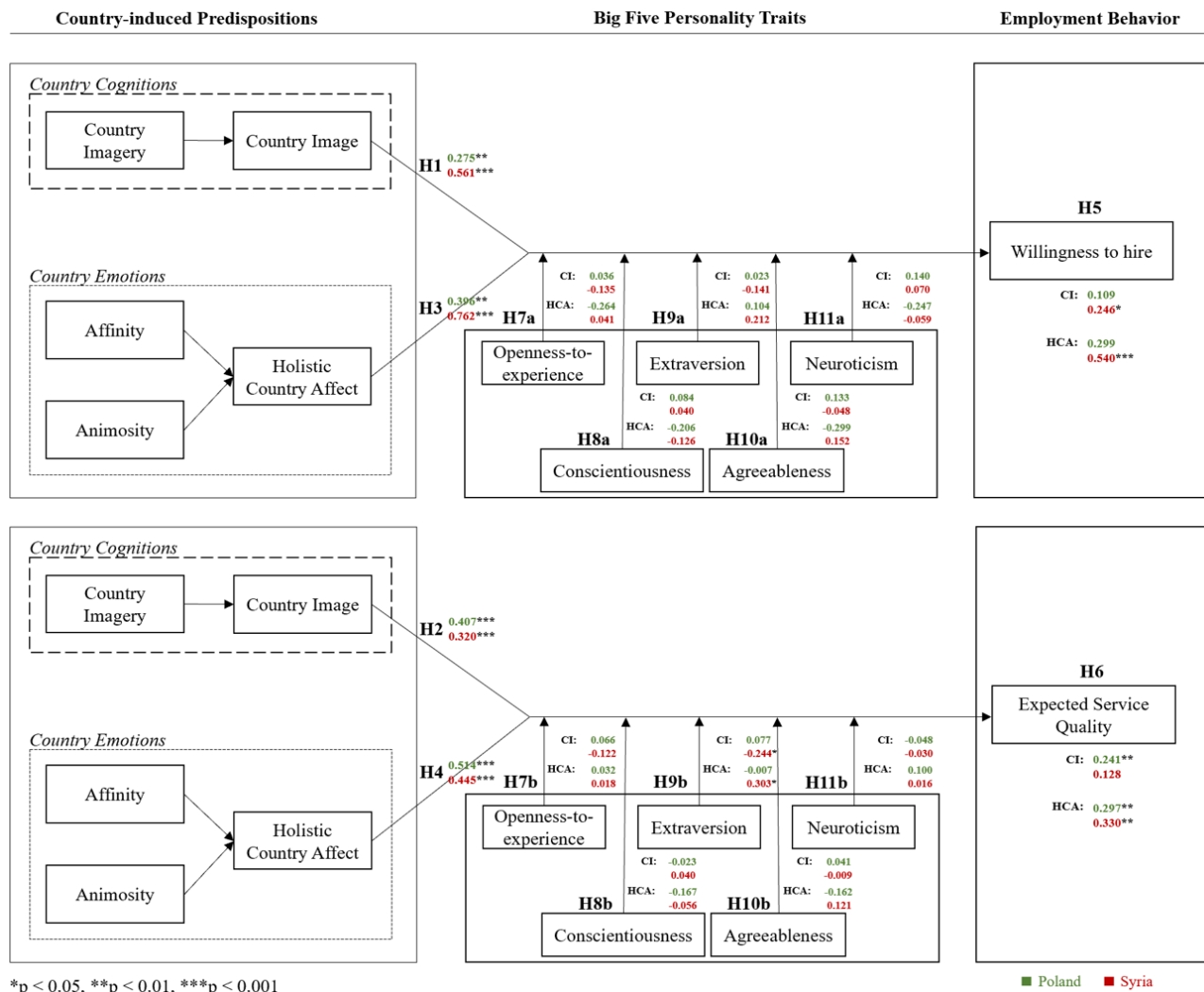


FIGURE 17: Hypotheses Results (Own illustration)

6.3 Analysis of Findings

In this final section of the Findings and Analysis part, we summarise and analyse the previously introduced results. At first, our findings on the country predispositions in the employment context are combined. Second, the empirical data and hypotheses results on the moderating effect of the personality traits are evaluated.

6.3.1 Country Predispositions' Effect in the Employment Context

Our findings demonstrated that, in contrast to the case of Polish caregivers, the average willingness to hire Syrian employees is comparably low. A high number of respondents specified that they have a low willingness to hire a Syrian, which might be related to the lower service expectations for Syrian caregivers. Particularly reliability and physical appearance are expected to be of lower standards

compared to Polish workers. As we have found in our confirmed hypotheses, in both countries' cases, the country image is significantly related to employment behavior - the willingness to hire and the expected service quality. In terms of willingness to hire, for Syria, the country image shows a stronger relationship, whereas for the expected service quality, the Polish country image demonstrates a greater effect. Overall, the Syrian country image was ranked lower than the Polish one. This result could mean that in terms of willingness to hire, the perceived negative image was weighted more. Regarding the expected service quality, potentially the expected positive characteristics could have been more salient.

This interpretation is also supported by our country imagery findings, where we observed that associations about Poland were better than the impressions on Syria. Particularly the association that Polish caregivers are motivated and well qualified has a positive effect on the Polish image and might partially explain the high service expectations. The perception that Poles know the German language well was found to reinforce the positive effect and might be correlated to the expected high responsiveness and assurance, where communication plays a considerable role. Besides, the anticipated good reputation of Polish caregivers might partly cause the high rating of expected reliability of Polish caregivers, as this category is related to performing the service right the first time and as promised. Overall, we found that the association on the high motivation and qualification of Polish caregivers shapes the Polish country image the most. However, for the selection of Polish caregivers, the good reputation is the most decisive. In contrast, with Syria, respondents mainly connected cultural differences and reservations and a lack of German language knowledge which might cause the negative influence on employment behavior. However, there was also a significant positive relation with the association that Syrians are particularly cordial toward the elderly. This might be related with the relatively high ratings for expected empathy of Syrian caregivers.

Not only the country image was found to have a significant effect on employment behavior for both countries, but also the holistic country affect. Similar to the findings of country image, also the holistic country affect proved to be of higher importance in the willingness to hire of Syrian employees. Additionally, when it comes to the expected service quality, the holistic country affect was marginally more decisive considering Polish caregivers. Generally, we found that survey respondents on average indicated a better overall feeling toward Poland than Syria. Our analysis demonstrated that for both countries, affinity and animosity are significantly related with the holistic country affect - affinity positively and animosity negatively. Interestingly, for Syria, affinity and animosity combined explain the holistic country affect less than it is the case of Poland, which means

that there might also be more important factors influencing the holistic country affect. Also, in terms of Syria, animosity had a stronger effect than affinity, whereas it was the other way round for Poland. Poland in general was rated more positive in affinity than Syria, for which there was a particularly high selection of the lowest possible option across affinity categories. Within the affinity categories (liking, attachment, and admiration), Poland scored highest in liking and attachment, whereas Syria only received relatively high ratings in liking. This finding demonstrates that, in comparison to Poland, respondents did not feel as attached to Syria, which explains lower affinity values and potentially a worse holistic country affect. When it comes to animosity, regarding Poland, respondents reacted mostly neutrally or did not feel any contending emotions. Overall, animosity was higher for Syria than Poland. Moreover, many survey participants indicated accommodating emotions, such as being worried, afraid, or scared, in the context of Syria. This result, combined with the finding that for Syria, animosity has a stronger effect than affinity, might explain the perceived lower holistic country affect of Syria.

6.3.2 Moderation of the Big Five Personality Traits

For our Big Five moderators, only the personality trait extraversion for the case of Syria had a partially moderating influence on the effect of the COO predispositions on the expected service quality. While extraversion has a positive moderating impact on the effect of the holistic country affect, it has a negative moderating impact on the effect of the country image on the expected service quality. This implies that the more extroverted a person is, the less the person's holistic country affect impacts the expected service quality of a Syrian caregiver, and vice versa. However, for the second COO predisposition applies that the more extroverted a person is, the more negatively the person's country image impacts the expected service quality of a Syrian caregiver, and conversely. This could be for the reason that more extroverted people appreciate contact and active exchange with others. However, especially cultural differences of Syria and the Syrian's lack of the German language that were negatively associated with Syrian caregivers could prevent extroverts from having sufficient contact with Syrians. Therefore, our negatively perceived country imagery findings could cause the negative impact on the expected service quality for more extroverted people.

Our findings show that the Big Five personality traits with extraversion only marginally show a moderating effect of the country predispositions on employment behavior. However, our results also indicate a direct influence of the personality traits openness to experience, agreeableness, and neuroticism on the employment behavior. While openness to experience and agreeableness positively

impact the expected service quality, the personality trait neuroticism has a negative influence. These findings are interesting to that extent as the personality traits openness to experience, agreeableness, and neuroticism have been insignificant when testing for moderation, but show a significant influence when measuring the direct impact on employment behavior. Reasons could be that the normally extensive Big Five personality trait measurement questions were shortened by us to a maximum extent as we wanted to prevent people from not filling out or fully responding our study. Therefore, our way of measurement for the personality traits could have caused the difference in significant values that we will more explain in the later limitations section.

7 DISCUSSION

In the following part of our study, we combine our findings from prior research with our own data to further discuss them within the research context and build a foundation to derive our theoretical and managerial implications. Moreover, limitations and further research directions will be discussed.

7.1 Discussion of Findings

Before determining our contribution to research, we discuss our findings on the country predispositions in the employment context, including both performance-related and -unrelated determinants individually and in combination. Moreover, we review our results on the moderating effect of extraversion on the influence of country predispositions on employment behavior, combined with other scholars' findings.

7.1.1 Country Predispositions' Effect in the Employment Context

The purpose of this study was to analyze employers' attitudes toward immigrant service providers in the context of the German caretaking market. Following the call of academia to further investigate services and immigrant service providers in a COO image context (Javalgi et al., 2001; Dinnie, 2004), we explored the research question of how the COO image affects the personnel decision maker's employment behavior. Several scholars and psychologists agree that the COO construct is affected by cognitive performance-related and emotional performance-unrelated determinants (Kock et al., 2019; Josiassen et al., 2011; Maheswaran et al., 2013; Centerbar et al., 2008; Festinger, 1957). Due to its holistic overview of cognitive and emotional country predispositions, we selected the CIP model by Kock et al. (2019) as foundation for our study. So far, the model has only been tested for products.

Therefore, we aimed to test whether it fulfils the purpose of clarifying “how consumers mentally store information about and respond to the COO cue” (Kock et al., 2019, p. 44) also in a services context, particularly in employment behavior.

Multiple scholars agree that employment decision makers are substantially influenced by irrelevant cues (among others the national background) and prejudices (Bratton & Gold, 2017; Hitt & Barr, 1989; Kahneman, 1982; Huber et al., 1987). Previous research has found that subjectivity and emotion-based prejudices are prevalent in hiring processes, even though professional employment decisions are meant to be objective, independent of irrelevant cues, and employers mainly consider themselves rational (Miller & Rosenbaum, 1997; Imdorf, 2010; Lee & Wrench, 1983; Moss & Tilly, 2001; Huber et al., 1987). Therefore, several studies proved that negative attitudes and prejudices can lead to employment discrimination, which is particularly common regarding minority groups (Agerström & Roth, 2009; Petersen & Dietz, 2005; Rooth, 2010; Brief et al., 2000; Krings & Olivares, 2007). Due to the reinforced attraction and hiring of foreign caregivers in Germany and increased immigration also by refugees seeking career opportunities, we aimed to explore employers’ attitudes and prejudices, and detect a potential employment discrimination based on nationalities (Jacobs et al., 2019; Grunau, 2020; Krings & Olivares, 2007; Almeida et al., 2012).

Significance of Performance-Related Determinants in Employment Behavior

Following Kock et al.’s (2019) model, we explored the performance-related imagery and image variables, as well as the performance-unrelated affinity, animosity and holistic country affect on employment behavior in form of the willingness to hire and the expected service quality. Since *H1* and *H2* have been confirmed, we can prove a significant relationship of country image on employment behavior in the form of willingness to hire and expected service quality for both Poland and Syria. This finding supports those of Josiassen et al. (2016), who detected the country images influence on general attitudes and behavioral intentions. Our analysis resulted in the finding that the country image of Poland is perceived better than the Syrian image. This finding goes along with the nation brand index (Ipsos, 2020), which ranked the Polish image higher than the Syrian country brand. Consequently, we found that, on average, there is a lower willingness to hire and a lower expected service quality for Syrian caregivers, compared to Poles. Consequently, our results for Syria support Majid’s (2017) finding, that if there is a positive country image, a higher service quality is expected. Chattalas et al. (2008) and Rezvani et al. (2012) also identified that the strong norms connected to the COO image may cause a country to be less likely selected if it is perceived negatively, independent

of other determinants, as Syria in our case. Kock et al. (2019) add that if there is a positive COO image, behavior could be positively affected, which resembles our findings for Poland. Also, Krings and Olivares (2007) confirm this inference in employment processes, and state that employment discrimination is more likely for prejudices toward people of disliked nationalities. This result might also be caused by a potential more severe weighting of the perceived negative image of Syria, as for Syria, we found a stronger relationship of the country image on the willingness to hire. In contrast, in terms of the expected service quality, there was a higher effect of the country image of Poland, which might suggest that the expected positive characteristics, due to the more positive country image, are more salient. Zeithaml et al. (1993), Javalgi et al. (2001), Josiassen et al. (2016) and Herz and Diamantopoulos (2017) also confirm the influence of the COO image on service expectations.

According to Josiassen et al. (2016), the country image is influenced by the country imagery. This relationship is supported by our statistical analysis, and we identified associations about Poland to be on average better than impressions on Syria. As DW (2019) has found, the most common countries of origin of foreign caregivers in Germany are Eastern European countries due to their perceived high qualifications in caretaking. Jacobs et al. (2019) also found that on average, HR managers, who have hired Eastern European caregivers praised their competency level, commitment, and efficiency. Also, our results detected that the Polish country image in the caretaking context is mainly shaped by the association that Polish caregivers are highly motivated and qualified, which could explain the higher service expectations compared to Syria. This mental connection might be the reason for the good reputation of Polish caregivers, which we found to be the main decisive factor in the selection process of Polish caregivers, as employers are strongly influenced by salient “underlying generalized beliefs about others” that shape their expectations (Reich, 2017, p. 130; Josiassen et al., 2016; Zeithaml et al., 1993). The accessible cue of Polish caregivers’ good reputation might cause their expected high reliability, and the common association that Poles know the German language well might explain the high rating in expected responsiveness and assurance. In contrast, our results demonstrate that Syria was mainly connected with cultural differences, reservations and a lack of German language knowledge, which might contribute to the lower rating in willingness to hire and expected service quality. Previous research has found that particularly employees from culturally and linguistically distant communities are likely to be perceived negatively, which has consequences on the employment decision (Evans & Kelly, 1991; Shinnaoui & Narchal, 2010). Especially in elderly care, clear and effective communication is key, which explains the high emphasis on language skills and culture (Jacobs et al., 2019). Overall, service quality of Syrian

caregivers was expected to be lower than of Poles, and the most significant shortcomings were anticipated in reliability. Nevertheless, there are also significant positive relations of the perception that Syrians are more cordial toward elderly with the Syrian country image, and this association might explain the relatively high expected empathy of Syrian caregivers. According to Grunau (2020), there are initiatives that make use of this potential of refugees, among others Syrian nationals, and compensate for their lack of German knowledge with language classes. Since they are trained in Germany, following Veale and Quester's (2010) theory, this Country of Training image might overshadow negative connotations to the Country of Birth image.

Significance of Performance-Unrelated Determinants in Employment Behavior

Also, *H3* and *H4* have been approved, wherefore we found a significant effect of the holistic country affect on the willingness to hire and expected service quality of both Poles and Syrians. This finding supports Kock et al.'s (2019, p. 47) conclusion that a general "gut feeling" about the COO image influences behavior, by summarizing emotions in a one-dimensional either positive or negative foundation for expectations (Schwarz, 1990; Josiassen et al., 2016). Similar to the findings for country image, also for emotional determinants, there is a better overall feeling toward Poland than Syria. Whereas the holistic country affect has a greater effect on the willingness to hire of Syrian caregivers, it in the expected service quality, it is slightly more important for Poland. This may be the case because, according to Schwarz (1990) and Josiassen et al. (2016), only those associations that are instantly accessible influence an individual's COO image. Those most salient feelings, consisting of animosity and affinity, are summarized in the either positive or negative holistic country affect (Schwarz, 1990; Josiassen et al., 2016), which proved to be more positive for Poland than for Syria. Following Zeithaml et al. (1993), the overall feelings toward a country significantly shape service expectations, which explains the higher expectations for Poland. Chattalas et al. (2008) state that also stereotypes on perceived warmth, friendliness and interaction may influence quality expectations of an employee. This is confirmed by our findings, as toward Poland there were overall better feelings, and the country was ranked higher in the expected responsiveness, reliability, assurance and empathy in interaction with elderly.

Our statistical analysis also confirmed that affinity and animosity both have a significant, positive respectively negative effect on the holistic country affect. This result approves Veale and Quester's (2010) and Kock et al.'s (2019) theory that the holistic country affect is affected by the two determinants. However, in the case of Syria, the combination of affinity and animosity explain a

smaller percentage of the holistic country affect than for Poland, which could mean that in terms of Syria, there are other important factors that influence the holistic country affect. Concerning Syria, animosity is more prevalent than affinity, in contrast to Poland, where affinity is overriding animosity in its effect. According to Oberecker and Diamantopoulos (2011), affinity summarizes positive feelings, such as likability, sympathy, and connection toward a nation, which may arise from personal experiences or country similarities in politics, economy or culture (Josiassen, 2011). Our results show that Poland received more positive ratings than Syria, particularly in liking and attachment. Syria was only ranked relatively highly in liking, which shows that respondents did not feel as attached to Syria, which could be caused by greater country differences of Germany and Syria than to Poland. Animosity describes feelings of anger or fear toward a country (Klein et al., 1998), and was felt more strongly toward Syria. Particularly accommodating emotions, such as being worried, afraid, or scared, were rated higher for Syria. Klein et al. (1998), Rezvani et al. (2012) and Chattalas et al. (2008) agree that feelings of animosity may result from prior or ongoing politics, economic or cultural differences, wars or negative personal experiences. The ongoing military disputes in Syria, and the association of being culturally distant may cause this animosity. Therefore, the lower holistic country affect of Syria could have its root cause in the outstanding accommodating feelings that might be particularly salient and therefore have a stronger influence on the holistic country affect. Our results therefore approve the findings of Åslund and Rooth (2004), Chattalas et al. (2008) and Rezvani et al. (2012), who specified that if there is general public animosity connected to a COO image, decision makers are more likely to have negative attitudes toward this nationality. Also, Reich (2017) mention that employees are judged according to the mental categories, to which the decision maker has assigned them and which feelings they connect with these. These mainly negative feelings were found to result in a lower willingness to hire and expected service quality for Syria.

Partial Significance of Combined Country Predispositions

H1 to *H4* have all been accepted, and therefore a separate significant effect on both performance-related and performance-unrelated determinants on employment behavior was found. However, the effect of the combined cognitive and emotional country predispositions is only partially significant. When it comes to the willingness to hire a Polish caregiver, country predispositions were identified to have an insignificant positive effect. Nevertheless, in the case of Syria, the willingness to hire is significantly influenced by the combined predispositions. In terms of the expected service quality, there is a significant positive effect of the united cognitive and emotional determinants for Poland.

However, for Syria, in the combination, only the holistic country affect proved significant. This result is unexpected, as when analyzed separately, all relationships proved to be significant. Nevertheless, it again emphasizes the most relevant determinants in the case of each country and type of employment behavior, which we have found in the previous hypotheses. In *H1* to *H4* we already identified a stronger effect of country predispositions for Syria, which might explain their significance, also in combination. When it comes to the expected service quality, however, only for Poland both emotional and cognitive determinants were jointly significant. This underlines prior findings on the higher influence of predispositions in Poland's case. Hence, with regard to Syria, only the holistic country affect turned significant, which was analyzed to be of greater influence than for Poland in the separate analysis. The deviating results in the combined analysis demonstrate that when observed holistically, cognitive, and emotional determinants may have different effects on behavior, and that their influence may vary across countries with different country images and associations.

7.1.2 Partially Moderating Effect of the Extraversion Personality Trait

Furthermore, scholars have found that consumer characteristics can have a moderating influence on the COO image's effect (e.g. Ahmed & d'Astous, 2008; Rawwas et al., 1996; Hett, 1993; Niss, 1996; Han & Terpstra, 1988). Particularly, personality traits can influence the immigrant applicant's employment outcome (Posthuma et al., 2002; Macan, 2009; Huffcutt, 2011; Horverak et al., 2013). However, research on personality influencing the COO cue is still scarce and requires further research, especially in an employment related context (Horverak et al., 2013). Therefore, our master thesis was also dedicated to the sub-research question of how the personnel decision maker's Big Five personality traits moderate the COO image's effect on employment behavior.

Of all tested Big Five personality traits, we only found extraversion in the case of Syria to have a partially significant moderating influence on the COO predispositions' effect on the expected service quality. Since *H9b* has been partially confirmed, we can say that the personality trait extraversion has a positive influence on the effect of the holistic country affect on the expected service quality, but however, against our hypothesis, a negative one regarding the country image on the expected service quality. That implies that the more extroverted a person is, the less the person's holistic country affect impacts the expected service quality of a Syrian caregiver, and vice versa. For the second COO predisposition variable applies that the more extroverted a person is, the more the person's country image impacts the expected service quality of a Syrian caregiver, and conversely.

Extraversion from a personnel decision maker's perspective has not yet been examined in an immigrant's employment outcome context. Also, the link between extraversion and attitudes toward immigrants has not yet been detected in the literature (Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013; Dinesen et al., 2014; Ackermann & Ackermann, 2015; Horverak et al., 2013). However, for the holistic country affect, our hypothesis can be confirmed that the more extroverted a person is, the lower is the effect of the holistic country affect on the expected service quality. Extroverted individuals are regarded as talkative, sociable, and outgoing with a positive emotionality in general (Mondak, 2010; Mondak & Halperin, 2008; Dinesen et al., 2014). This lets us conclude that the COO predisposition is positively moderated, the more extroverted a person is.

For the country image, however, we need to reject the hypothesis as we found extraversion to have a negatively moderating effect on the effect of the country image on the expected service quality. We explain our finding with the following: while extroverts seek contact and talks with their fellows (Mondak, 2010; Mondak & Halperin, 2008; Dinesen et al., 2014), however, in general, the country image has an influence on attitudes and behavioral intentions (Josiassen et al., 2016). Especially, personnel decision makers' negative attitudes exist toward immigrants from linguistically and culturally diverse communities (Evans & Kelly, 1991; Shinnaoui & Narchal, 2010) that could lead to employment discrimination (Krings & Olivares, 2007). This could explain why extroverts are not able to actively live out their sociable, talkative, and outgoing nature regarding Syrian caregivers, and thus, might lead to lower expectations regarding the service quality. Our empirical findings on the country imagery, furthermore, support the more negative tendencies toward Syrian caregivers as they are associated with cultural differences and a lack of the German language. This lets us conclude that the more extroverted people are the more negatively moderated is the effect of the country image on the expected service quality.

While extraversion has shown to be the only moderating influence on the COO predispositions on the expected service quality, however, we could detect a direct influence of the personality traits neuroticism, openness to experience, and agreeableness on the employment behavior of Polish and Syrian caregivers. For neuroticism, we found a negative influence on the expected service quality. This finding goes along with another employment related detection of Horverak et al. (2013), who found that emotional stability, the reverse form of neuroticism, predicts hiring manager's personnel employment decision preference. According to the authors (Horverak et al., 2013), in other words, the more neurotic and less emotional stable the hiring manager, the lower the likelihood of hiring a foreign-born Turkish applicant. Horverak et al. (2013) concluded that individuals feeling threatened

by intercultural encounters tend to hire the native Norwegian applicant over the foreign-born Turkish applicant. As also our findings show that more neurotic people would expect a lower service quality from the more culturally and linguistically diverse Syria than from the less distant Poland. Moreover, our findings align with Gallego and Pardos-Prado (2013) who state that higher levels of neuroticism are assumed to lead to more negative attitudes toward immigrants. Furthermore, it is in line with Dinesen et al. (2014) who found that more neurotic individuals tend to oppose immigration.

For openness to experience, we detected a positive influence on the expected service quality. This goes along with scholars' findings that more open people tend to have more positive attitudes toward immigrants (Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013; Akrami et al., 2011), are more positively inclined toward equal opportunities for immigrants (Ackermann & Ackermann, 2015), and have a higher willingness to admit these (Dinesen et al., 2014). Our finding supports Dinesen et al.'s (2014) detection that more open people are in general more positive toward immigration, independent of the different cultural backgrounds of the immigrant group, culturally close-knit or not. In our case, the less positively perceived Syria (Ipsos, 2020) even received a slightly higher rating on the expected service quality than the more positively perceived Poland (Ipsos, 2020), showing that the cultural background does not matter.

Lastly, for agreeableness we found a positive influence on the expected service quality. This supports the academic status quo that more agreeable people tend to have more positive attitudes toward immigrants (Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013; Akrami et al., 2011), immigration (Dinesen et al., 2014), and are more positively inclined toward equal opportunities for immigrants (Ackermann & Ackermann, 2015). However, Dinesen et al. (2014) found that the influence of agreeableness depends on the cultural background of the specific immigrant group. They (Dinesen et al., 2014) state that more agreeable people tend to be more positively inclined toward culturally close-knit Western immigrants than less culturally close-knit Non-Western immigrants. Our findings, on the contrary, for the expected service quality, however, show slightly higher ratings for the less positively perceived Syria, indicating that agreeableness is independent of the cultural background.

Since neuroticism, openness to experience, and agreeableness have proven a significant direct impact on employment behavior, we would have also expected a moderation of these on the effect of COO predispositions on the employment behavior outcome variables. Moreover, scholars also made detections on conscientiousness, stating that more conscious people tend to have more negative attitudes toward immigrants (Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013) and are more likely to oppose immigration (Dinesen et al., 2014). However, conscientiousness proved insignificant in our case,

which we, given the findings in literature, also would have expected to have a moderating effect. Therefore, the more surprising it is to us that extraversion proved to have the only partially moderating influence on the COO predispositions' effect on the employment behavior, even though in recent research, a link between this personality trait and immigrants has not yet been detected (Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013; Dinesen et al., 2014; Ackermann & Ackermann, 2015; Horverak et al., 2013).

7.2 Theoretical Implications

In our study, we explored the COO image from several perspectives, incorporating theories from marketing and employment. In previous research, there is only a restricted amount of studies on the COO image and employment discrimination. Prior studies have also suggested to further research the COO image in services and have uncovered a research gap in attitudes toward service providers (Javalgi et al., 2001; Dinnie, 2004; Jean Harrison-Walker, 1995). Particularly, the context of the German caretaking market, to our knowledge, has not been topic of prior research yet, even though in recent years, many initiatives have been launched to procure caregivers from abroad, due to the shortage of labor within the country. Therefore, our fundamental theoretical contribution is to add knowledge in this field with our finding that both cognitive and emotional determinants influence employment behavior.

First, our study explored COO image as holistic construct of cognitive and emotional country predispositions and their effect on employment discrimination. Even though the majority of researchers only focus on cognitive determinants (e.g. Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999; Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012), particularly in services, the emotional perspective has been proven to be important (Chattalas et al., 2008; Guilhoto, 2018). Through the application of Kock et al.'s (2019) CIP model in our study, we were able to test the effect of both emotional and cognitive determinants in separation and combination in a previously tested construct. However, since the COO image in general, and also Kock et al.'s (2019) framework has only been tested for tangible products, our research extends Kock et al.'s (2019) work in two ways: On the one hand, the influence of country image and emotions is tested on the broader concept of employment behavior. On the other hand, its applicability to service, specifically the new research context of employment is demonstrated. Our finding that both, performance-related and -unrelated determinants affect decision makers' employment behavior, supports previous results in the broader marketing context. We confirm that country characteristics and associations can be directly connected to behavioral intentions, as Bilkey and Nes (1982) and Javed (2013) have previously concluded. Our results approve that an individual's overall attitude

toward a service is influenced by the country of origin of the service provider, as it was found for products by Kock et al. (2019) and Rezvani et al. (2012). The analysis of our findings indicated that, not only in services but also in employment, the COO image functions as “quality halo” (Meese et al., 2019, p. 184) for easier employment decisions when there is limited information (Rezvani et al., 2012; Javed, 2013). Also, not just the cognitive country image, but also the emotional component – the holistic country affect – proved to be highly relevant in employment.

Secondly, we further investigated factors that could moderate the influence of the COO image, with the particular focus on personality traits. Even though previous research has found that consumer characteristics can influence employment behavior (e.g. Posthuma et al., 2002; Macan, 2009; Huffcutt, 2011; Horverak et al., 2013), studies on personality as moderator to the COO image are limited. In terms of extraversion, we found that the more extroverted a person is, the less the person’s holistic country affect impacts the expected service quality of a Syrian caregiver, and conversely. Also, the more extroverted a person is, the more the person’s country image impacts the expected service quality of a Syrian caregiver, and vice versa. Although in our sample, not all hypotheses were significant, and we only found a significant moderating relationship of extraversion when it comes to Syrian caregivers, we found a significant direct effect of multiple personality traits on employment behavior.

Even though extraversion to our knowledge has not been tested in its moderating effect on the COO image’s influence on behavior yet, the result fits prior research on extroverts’ character traits (Mondak, 2010; Mondak & Halperin, 2008; Dinesen et al., 2014). In the independent analysis of the direct effect of personality traits on behavior, we detected that neuroticism, openness to experience, and agreeableness have a significant effect on the employment behavior toward caregivers of both countries. These results confirm previous studies’ findings on the influence of emotional stability and neuroticism on the expected service quality (Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013) and employment decisions (Horverak et al., 2013). Also in terms of openness to experience and agreeableness, scholars have found typical character traits that would influence employment decisions in a positive way (Dinesen et al., 2014; Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013; Akrami et al., 2011; Ackermann & Ackermann, 2015).

Overall, with this thesis, we contribute to earlier findings in marketing and employment research with novel findings on the COO image in the employment context, and how individuals’ personality traits may moderate them. In our study, we particularly focused on the German caretaking market with a rather specific target group and context, which could cause the insignificance of several

personality traits' effect even though the hypotheses were built on previously found causal relationships by prior studies. Due to the specificity of our selected context, there might be a lack in generalizability, and in other research contexts, there could be a significant impact. Hence, since the care crisis is expected to worsen, we predict that the topic of the COO image in employing foreign caregivers might attract more attention in the future, wherefore our research could be used as basis.

7.3 Managerial Implications

According to our findings, a positive COO image has a positive influence on employment behavior. In a managerial context, this knowledge is of relevance, as the probability of being hired may be improved when the reputation of a job-seeker's nationality can be improved. This is due to the higher expected service quality that we proved to result from a better COO image, and the higher willingness to hire of more favorable country images and emotions. According to several scholars (e.g. Majid, 2017; Bilkey & Nes, 1982; Javalgi et al., 2001; Kock et al., 2019; Rezvani et al., 2012; Javed, 2013), a high expected service quality, as well as a high willingness to hire are likely to lead to a positive behavioral response, which would be the hiring decision in the employment context. Due to this positive relationship of the COO image on employment behavior, for countries of origin with a favorable country image and emotion, this means an advantage in the hiring process. However, applicants with a negatively perceived COO image may face disadvantages and employment discrimination.

In our research on the German caretaking market, we found decision-makers on the supplying side of foreign caregivers to be the government and governmental institutions, as well as private companies and intermediaries, which have emerged as the shortage of caregivers within the country becomes more evident (Jacobs et al., 2019; Grunau, 2020; Geyer & Schulz, 2014). Most actors' focus has been on procuring caregivers from Eastern European countries, with Poland as most common country of origin because of the perceived qualitative certifications (Rada, 2016; DW, 2019). However, the current Health Minister, Jens Spahn, is also considering training people with migration background that are already in Germany, and there are already several initiatives in place to specifically offer opportunities to refugees, among others Syrians (Jacobs et al., 2019; Grunau, 2020). Intermediaries and private companies providing particularly ambulant foreign caregivers proved to be not only an enormous relief to the overburdened system but also a profitable business model, as 70% of elderly prefer to stay in their own homes (Jacobs et al., 2019; Geyer & Schulz, 2014).

With our findings in mind, both governmental institutions and private companies may improve their strategic response to the current developments of the market. Firstly, organizations could specifically focus on hiring caregivers from countries with a positive country of origin image, such as Poland. In this case, governments and companies should proactively emphasize the caregivers' country of origin in their marketing and promotion to raise awareness among potential employers and evoke the mainly positive connotations. Nevertheless, as the care crisis is predicted to worsen, and we found that at the moment, Poland is already the most common country of origin for caregivers, also other countries need to be considered. Whereas the German government has been considering training refugees, among others also Syrians, to become caregivers, in our sample, the intentions to hire a Syrian caregiver and openness toward them was relatively low. Therefore, it might be worth reconsidering this measure and focusing on other countries with a better image. Alternatively, as Bilkey and Nes (1982) have found, other product or service cues might be even more relevant than the country of origin image. Also, in our interviews, few respondents mentioned the importance of price, the especially cordial character traits of Syrians, and the opportunity to help in the hiring decision of a caregiver (see Appendix 3). Thus, organizations providing or training caregivers with a negative COO image, should rather focus on offering competitive prices, a special cultural experience, and/or the chance to help a refugee. Moreover, our study showed that extroverted individuals had fewer negative emotions toward Syrians, wherefore this group of people could specifically be targeted. According to Veale and Quester (2010), also an increased emphasis on the training in Germany and the attained German language knowledge could mitigate negative associations with Syria, as the Country of Training image might take on more prominence. Furthermore, measures could be taken to improve the country image and connected emotions toward the more negatively perceived countries, such as Syria. Grunau (2020) pointed to the two-sided issue that the training of refugees in the caretaking profession might solve, as many refugees are also looking for career opportunities. Therefore, trying to improve the Syrian country image through marketing activities may be of relevance. As we found word of mouth to be of significant importance in the hiring process, and at the same time a perceived scarcity of Syrian caregivers, the first step for governments and private organizations could be to employ more Syrian caregivers, to provide them with suitable training in language, culture and caretaking skills, and to promote their qualities. Once there are customers that are satisfied with their employment decision of a Syrian caregiver, these success stories can be promoted.

7.4 Limitations

Nevertheless, our thesis is not free of limitations, and potential for improvement, in our opinion, exists in the area of the theoretical framework and methodology. First, we want to put emphasis on the theoretical framework before, second, explaining the limitations of our methodology.

Theoretical Framework

To begin with the theoretical construct, we are aware of the fact that the applied Big Five personality trait model (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg, 1992) is only one out of several personality models (e.g. Lee & Ashton, 2012; van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000; Myers, 1962) that could have been applied to test a moderating impact on the effect of the COO predispositions on employment behavior. An individual's personality is a complex construct that has been tested in several ways in academia (e.g. Lee & Ashton, 2012; van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000; Myers, 1962), and no "single best" model exists as the choice of model always depends on the given purpose of the study. As our literature review showed, other authors such as Horverak et al. (2013), applied the multicultural personality trait model to examine the relationship of personality traits and a manager's personnel selection preferences with regard to the applicant's background. Furthermore, while the Big Five model has been established as the optimal structural framework for personality traits (Ashton, Lee & de Vries, 2014; Costa & McCrae, 1992), one could argue that the Big Five model is not all-embracing personality. Building on the works of the Big Five creators (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg, 1992), the HEXACO model has been proposed as an alternative (Ashton et al., 2014). While the Big Five model covers five dimensions of personality, the HEXACO model captures six dimensions. The dimensions covered are honesty-humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness (Lee & Ashton, 2012). Even though the six factors overlap heavily with the Five Factor model, it captures some important areas of personality not represented in the Big Five, namely the dimension honesty-humility (Lee & Ashton, 2012). This dimension implies that the higher the scores reached on the scale, the more honest, fair, sincere, and, modest the individual. Conversely, the lower the score, the greedier, more deceitful, conceited, and pretentious the person (Ashton et al., 2014). Therefore, one could argue that the HEXACON model could have been a more comprehensive version for our theoretical model to cover personality.

Furthermore, we could have considered another model than the CIP model proposed by Kock et al. (2019) for our research. As scholars approach the COO construct often either from the cognitive (e.g. Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999; Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012) or the emotional side (e.g. Eagly &

Chaiken, 1993; Maheswaran & Chen, 2006; Verlegh, 2001), only few researchers (e.g. Kock et al., 2019; Josiassen et al., 2011; Maheswaran et al., 2013) to date emphasize that the COO construct is determined by both sides. As cognitive, performance-related country predispositions present the largest research stream regarding the country of origin in academia (Kock et al., 2019), testing this more established research field would have been more scientifically proven and discussed.

Methodology

On the other hand, we also see several limitations with regard to our methodology. First, our sample size could have been larger for both, our interviews and online survey. Interviewing more than ten participants would have been favorable as this could have led to more identified associations with regard to the respective country imagery for Poland and Syria, and thus, offered us further rich insights. In terms of the online survey, we are aware that having an empirical data set of more than 155 valid survey participants would have led to a higher validity and reliability of our results. Due to our extensive questionnaire with a total of 111 response items, participants were more reluctant to fully answer the survey, resulting in a response rate of only 69%. Thus, incentivization to participate in the survey could have triggered more people to completely answer the questions.

Second, using a more extensive Big Five personality questionnaire would have allowed us to capture the participants' personality more comprehensively. We used a heavily shortened questionnaire with the Mini-IPIP (Donnellan et al., 2006) that only contained 20 items to measure personality, and even eliminated five more items given our survey's extensiveness. However, it is to our knowledge that shorter personality tests are limited in their validity and reliability (Donnellan et al., 2006; Gosling et al., 2003), and thus do not capture personality as accurately as a more comprehensive one. Therefore, more extensive questionnaires such as the 240 questions-heavy NEO-PI-R standard tool (Costa & McCrae, 1992) would have been favorable. Also, scholars that we referred to in our literature review (e.g. Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013; Dinesen et al., 2014) made use of more comprehensive tools by using 50 or 60 items-heavy questionnaires for their personality research. Thus, given our shortened Big Five personality testing tool, we assume that its application could have led to the enhanced insignificance of our moderators and could have been avoided with a more extensive questionnaire.

Third, while testing our participants' personality, their behavior could have been subject to the social desirability bias. This implies that respondents tend to answer according to what is "right" or socially acceptable (Maccoby & Maccoby, 1954), and thus, following social identity theory, they

might have wished to portray a desired identity (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). The social desirability bias, however, can lead to fallacious research results as it, for example, can have a mitigating, inflating, or moderating effect on variable relationships (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). Therefore, the social desirability bias furthermore could explain the majority of our Big Five personality moderation insignificance.

Fourth, both, interviews and survey are not balanced in their sampling data. We know that it would have been preferable for the reliability and validity of our data to have a more balanced age, gender, and especially geographic distribution of our interview and survey participants to create a more representative sample for our research. Last, not all of our interviews were conducted face to face but also via phone. This has been disadvantageous as the interviewer did not have possibilities to create a good interview ambience for the interviewee. This would have been preferable as a personal face to face interview might better uncover underlying beliefs, attitudes, and feelings toward a certain topic (Malhotra et al., 2017).

7.5 Future Research

This study has produced novel insights on the topic of the country of origin in an employment context. Nevertheless, many avenues for future research exist. First, we propose to extend the context from caretaking for seniors only to other care-needing target groups. While we applied our research to the senior caretaking marketing in Germany, however, seniors are by far not the only care needing group. Out of the more than 3 million Germans receiving care (Brady, 2018), approximately 640,000 are under the age of 65 (Destatis, 2020a). From this statistics, it becomes clear that especially the age groups 15 to 59 and 60 to 64 receive care in professional establishments (10% - 20%) next to care at home, while care needing children up to age 15 are to 99.8% cared for at home, mostly by their parents (Destatis, 2020a). Therefore, it would be interesting to extend our research to the context of care needing children, also as an immigrant caregiver could lead to a significant relief for parents.

Second, we suggest to further extend our research to other professions next to caretaking. Immigrant workers play an important role in the German economy and are especially prevalent in areas such as meatpacking, food manufacturing, or concrete and steel construction (Eckert, 2018). Therefore, it would be interesting to investigate the role of the country of origin in employment decisions with regard to professions, in which typically immigrants are employed.

Third, future research would be advised to include socioeconomic variables such as the income or educational level as these also have an impact on immigrants (e.g. Dinesen et al., 2014; Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013). Previous studies (Dinesen et al., 2014; Gallego & Pardos-Prado,

2013) found income to have a positive impact on attitudes toward immigrants and immigration. Also, education was found to have a positive impact on immigrants (Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013). Therefore, it would be interesting to examine the influence of these socioeconomic variables in our employment context with regard to the diverse caregiver country of origins.

Fourth, a future research area could be to investigate the COO predispositions' effect on several more outcome variables. In the COO literature, the country of origin's impact has been measured with regard to variables such as product or service evaluations (see Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2017; Ahmed & d'Astous, 2008), product or service quality expectations (see Majid, 2017; Bilkey & Nes, 1982; Javalgi et al., 2001), purchase intentions (see Kock et al., 2019; Rezvani et al., 2012; Bilkey & Nes, 1982; Javed, 2013), purchase decisions (see Kock et al., 2019; Majid, 2017; Meese et al., 2019; Jean Harrison-Walker, 1995), or willingness to pay (see Drozdenko & Jenson, 2009; Koschate-Fischer et al., 2012) among others. However, only few scholars (e.g. Speece & Pinkao, 2002; Javalgi et al., 2001; Dinnie, 2004) have tested variables specifically tailored to services, and even less have tested the COO specifically regarding people in services (Jean Harrison-Walker, 1995) and in an employment context (Horverak et al., 2013). Therefore, investigating the COO predispositions' effect on other outcome variables such as the willingness to pay for caregivers with different national backgrounds would follow the call of academia (Jean Harrison-Walker, 1995; Horverak et al., 2013) to shed more light on this topic.

Fifth, future research could make use of a more extensive personality questionnaire that could resolve shortcomings of our chosen Mini-IPIP test (Donnellan et al., 2006). Following other scholars in that field (e.g. Gallego & Pardos-Prado, 2013; Dinesen et al., 2014), we would advise to use slightly longer measures such as the 50 item-heavy IPIP (Goldberg et al., 2006) or the 60 item-heavy NEO-FFI (John et al., 2008a) to improve reliability and validity. If time allows, we even suggest testing personality with the 240-item standard tool NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992) that is said to capture the Big Five personality traits the best (e.g. Costa & McCrae, 1992; Donnellan et al., 2006). We assume that a moderating impact of personality on the effect of the COO predispositions on employment behavior could be better examined when having a more reliable and valid personality measurement tool.

Sixth, another research avenue could be to examine personality with another model in our theoretical framework such as the HEXACO model (Ashton et al., 2014). This would allow to capture personality even more extensively than is possible with the Big Five model (Ashton et al., 2014). Using the HEXACO model would include questioning people in a sixth dimension, namely honesty-

humility that is not covered by the Big Five (Ashton et al., 2014). As a higher level of honesty-humility is associated with an individual being fairer among other characteristics (Ashton et al., 2014), we would assume a positively moderating effect of the honesty-humility dimension of the effect of the COO predispositions. However, this hypothesis is open for future research.

Last, as we investigated the COO of caregivers specifically with regard to elderly care, it would be interesting to examine the perception of the respective senior target group instead of the relatives in future research. The demographic variable age was found to have a negative impact on attitudes toward immigration (Dinesen et al., 2014), which we also detected in our empirical data with regard to immigrant caregivers. Therefore, investigating care needing seniors as a target group could be an area for future research and lead to further insightful results.

8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this last chapter, we finish with concluding remarks on this thesis, return to the initial problem formulation, and respond to our guiding research questions.

Our principal objective in this thesis was to investigate the relationship of both cognitive and emotional country predispositions on behavioral outcomes in an employment context and explore a potential influence of personality on this effect. We hereby addressed the gap in existing literature of the country of origin in employment (Jean Harrison-Walker, 1995; Javalgi et al., 2001; Dinnie, 2004), and additionally opened the discussion of the influence of personality traits in connection with the country of origin. By developing knowledge on the interrelations of the country of origin image and employers' behavioral intentions, we also aimed to provide a tool for governments, organizations, and individual employers to ensure that they effectively select international caregivers.

In order to achieve this goal, we developed a new theoretical framework, building on Kock et al.'s (2019) CIP model and additional existing literature, tailored to the employment context with the new outcome variables willingness to hire and expected service quality. Moreover, we introduced the novel moderating variables of the personality traits openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism, based on the Big Five personality trait model (McCrae & Costa, 2008; Goldberg, 1992). Our mixed methods research design allowed us to collect both qualitative data from interviews, and in consequence also quantitative data through an online survey, further testing the found country associations. When testing our deductively designed theoretical model, it was found partially significant.

How does the COO image affect personnel decision makers' employment behavior?

For our overarching research question, our findings suggest that country-induced predispositions play a role in the employer's willingness to hire and expected service quality regarding foreign caregivers. Specifically with regard to the performance-related country image, our results state that the more positive a personnel decision maker's country image of the caregiver's country of origin is, the higher is the decision maker's willing to hire the immigrant caregiver and the expected service quality, and vice versa. Regarding the performance-unrelated holistic country affect, we find that the more positive a personnel decision maker's holistic country affect of the caregiver's country of origin is, the higher is the hiring manager's willingness to hire the immigrant caregiver and his or her expected service quality.

How do personnel decision makers' personality traits moderate the COO image's effect on employment behavior?

For our sub-research question, our findings suggest that the personality trait extraversion has a moderating influence on the COO predispositions' effect on the expected service quality, with a positive influence on the effect of the holistic country affect on the expected service quality and a negative one regarding the country image on the expected service quality. Whereas we found significant direct effects of openness to experience, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism on employment behavior, a moderating effect could not be verified. The trait conscientiousness did not prove to have a significant influence on employment behavior.

When analyzing our qualitative and quantitative data, we found that, on average, associations regarding Syria were more negatively rated than for Poland. Also, in terms of country image, affinity and holistic country affect, Poland was perceived better than Syria, whereas Syria ranked higher in animosity. In line with our hypotheses results, willingness to hire and expected service quality were lower for Syria, the country with the worse perceived country of origin image. Interestingly, the results from our sample demonstrated, that women, younger people, and individuals from the Eastern states of Germany tended to have more positive attitudes toward Syria.

Our thesis implies that both country images and emotions are vital in employment behavior, and an employers' extraversion influences the overall country of origin image and consequent behavior. This finding is important for the employment of caregivers, as a good fit and matched expectations are essential for effective employment and eventually the wellbeing of the elderly person. As of the limited generalizability of our findings, further research could extend our methods and context, to understand employment behavior toward international workers even better.

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