

# Employer Branding & Graduates Career Aspiration Survey

An in-depth look at the graduating class of 2021 in Moldova

## General Report

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## SELECTED FINDINGS

### For Policy Makers

- For the class of 2021, there is a general greater motivation and intention to develop one's career as a professional, than as a leader or entrepreneur. This result is consistent across different demographic categorizations.
- However, there is a significant gap between the motivation of graduating students to be an entrepreneur versus their intention to be an entrepreneur. They have a smaller intention than motivation to start a business after they graduate. This gap appears to be compensated by a greater intention to grow their career as a technical professional or seeking to grow to become a leader within organizations. Discrepancy between motivation versus intention can be reflective of contextual consideration (e.g., social, political, economic conditions) that may encourage or suppress one towards pursuing their inner career motivation. In this case, the entrepreneurial motivation is significantly suppressed, where graduates do not feel they are working in career they would otherwise prefer.
- Female respondents are found to expect a lower salary and are more willing to accept a lower salary for their first job after they graduate.
- Female respondents are found to have higher levels of promotion focus than males. Promotion focused (Higgins, 1997) is one of two fundamental motivational traits. Higher levels of promotion focus means that female respondents are more likely than male respondents to take chances and seek out opportunities in order to achieve their goals.
- Graduating students who are more confident in finding a job does not necessarily have better grades, and those who have better grades do not necessarily expect a higher salary.

### For Companies

- The Class of 2021 rated the two highest work values (aspects of work that is important to them) as extrinsic rewards (e.g., salary) and growth and developmental opportunities. These two work values are almost equally important to them, while other work values such as meaningful job design, and good social environment are not as important.
- Respondents feel that working for a company with an employer that appears as honest and successful are important criteria for them when choosing their first job after graduation. Other criteria such as trendy and prestigious are less important. The gender image of a company is of the least consideration. This suggests that focusing on the image of an employer as being honest, having integrity, and being successful could be more effective than portraying the company as being fun and trendy.
- The average correlation between respondents' familiarity and intention to apply for a job at a company is  $r = 0.216$ , between respondents' perception of a good employer and intention to apply for a job at a company is  $r = 0.405$ , and between respondents' familiarity and perception of a good employer is  $r = 0.206$ . This means there is benefit towards increasing investments in employer brand awareness.
- Generally, graduates from Computer Science & IT background are less sensitive to moral issues and compared to graduates from other disciplines tended to be motivated by an avoidance of mistakes than seeking out opportunities.



## BACKGROUND

Employer Branding & Graduates Career Aspiration Survey 2021 is a joint collaboration between American Chamber of Commerce in Moldova and an MBA student from Moldova pursuing her studies at the American University of Central Asia. This is the first-ever cross-universities study in Moldova that sought to map graduating students' broad vocational interests (career aspirations), desired job characteristics (work values), employer brand image, and innate human motivational and moral dimensions.

The aim is to understand the psychological profiles of graduating students of Moldova and to provide insights for employers to develop jobs that the future of Moldova's workforce desire. The scientifically developed nature of this study will also allow new psychological insights to be known.

This survey is made possible with sponsorship from the following good companies.

**Bemol Retail**

**Efes Vitanta Moldova Brewery**

**Japan Tobacco International**

**Lafarge Ciment Moldova**

**Moldova Agroindbank**

**Metro Cash & Carry**

**Victoriabank**

**Rogob**

**Philip Morris Moldova**

**Orhei-Vit**

**Premier Energy**

**Sebo**



## DATA COLLECTION

Two separate surveys sampling graduating students from various universities across Moldova were conducted between 17.12.2020 and 12.02.2021. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, all data collection were conducted online via survey platform Qualtrics. Representatives of universities were contacted, and a social media campaign was run on Instagram and Facebook. Respondents of the first survey were given a chance to win one of forty 500 MDL vouchers from [www.elefant.md](http://www.elefant.md), while respondents of the second survey were given 100 MDL voucher from [www.elefant.md](http://www.elefant.md) for their time. For each completed survey, donation of 10 MDL was made to Chisinau City Hall to assist their fight against Covid-19.

The first survey sought 600 responses from students on questions about their career aspirations, work values, preferred employer brand, employment confidence, regulatory focus, and moral foundations. The second survey randomly invited 30% of respondents who completed the first survey to answer questions about their personal perceptions about the job and overall employer branding of our 12 sponsors. To prevent survey fatigue, each respondent in the second survey were randomly shown questions related to 4 out of 12 sponsors. Both surveys took about 20-30 minutes to complete.

Surveys were first developed in English and translated to Romanian. Back translation by professional translators unrelated to this study was used to check for accuracy following the recommendations of Brislin (1970). All questions related to the main psychological constructs were derived from published scientific sources and pilot tested with 30 respondents to assess if the inter-construct relationships were similar with what is known from existing scientific literature. The study design and questions were approved by an Institutional Review Board prior to data collection. All responses are voluntary.

Total 5,023 response attempts were recorded for survey 1 and 224 for survey 2. Responses with less than 80% completion for survey 1 and 95% for survey 2, and responses which showed obvious inattentive, random, or biased responding were deleted. The final number of responses that survived the stringent data cleaning criteria were:

- Survey 1, N = 903 responses
- Survey 2, N = 183 responses

No data imputation was used.



## MAIN DIMENSIONS

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### Work Values

Work values refer to the aspects of work one values and desires. It can refer to the job tasks, the environment, or the rewards one gets from working. Lyons et al's (2010) list of work values is used and re-organized based on additional supporting models and factor analysis of the data.

**Meaningfulness.** The extent to which a job is gives a sense of meaningfulness. It consists of sub-dimensions of interesting work, usage of a large variety of skills, feeling of having an impact and influence on organizational outcomes, and work that directly helps people.

**Balance & Autonomy.** The extent to which a job allows the employee to balance work and non-work demands, and have the autonomy to decide when, where, and how to work.

**Feedback & Support.** The extent to which a job allows the employee to know how well they are performing and provides sufficient support and resources from supervisor and colleagues.

**Social Environment.** The extent to which a job is conducted in an environment that is fun, with great colleagues, and offers social interaction.

**Growth Opportunities.** The extent to which a job offers opportunity for career development and promotion.

**Extrinsic Rewards.** The extent to which a job offers sufficient salary, benefits, and job security.

### Employer Branding

Employer Branding is "The package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with the employing company" (Ambler & Barrow,1996, p.187).

It's considered an extension of consumer brand dimension to brand dimensions for employer, and it's been well studied (e.g. Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Sivertzen et al.,2013; Gilani & Cunningham, 2017) including its

symbolic and instrumental personality characteristics (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Lievens et al., 2007).

Symbolic aspects of the organization's employer brand describe the organization in terms of its "subjective, abstract and intangible attributes" linked to the organization's image (Lievens et al., 2007).

Among the several possible dimensions, 5 employer brand dimensions are considered being similar to applicants' personality:

**Honest.** The extent to which a company is seen as honest, authentic, and exude integrity in its operations.

**Trendy.** The extent to which a company is seen as daring, exciting, cool, spirited, young.

**Prestigious.** The extent to which a company is seen as sophisticated, high-quality, upper-class.

**Successful.** The extent to which a company is seen as reliable, secure, competent, intelligent.

**Masculine.** The extent to which a company is seen as rugged, strong, tough, robust.

Career Aspirations, as defined by Chan et al (2012), refers to the motivation, confidence, and intention to pursue a career as an entrepreneur (E), professional (P), and/or a leader (L). It can be seen as a broad vocational interest of students. Even when students may switch between different professions, they tend to stay within the same career space; hence the broad vocational interest of students are much more stable over time.

Motivational and Intention aspects of Career Aspirations are more widely studied and is included in this survey. Discrepancies between motivation and intention may suggest perceived social or economical impediments that prevent or encourage students to pursue what their true career interests.

#### **Career Aspiration - Motivation**

**Entrepreneur.** The extent to which one has an innate motivation to pursue a career as an entrepreneur. These individuals inherently enjoy creating business ideas and believe in the benefits of starting a business.

**Professional.** The extent to which one has an innate motivation to pursue a career as a technical expert or professional (e.g., accountant, musician, teacher). These individuals inherently enjoy being skilled in their chosen area of expertise and believe in the benefits of being specialized.

**Leadership.** The extent to which one has an innate motivation to lead others. These individuals inherently enjoy taking initiative to lead others and will do so even when there is no tangible benefit to do so.

#### **Career Aspiration - Intention**

**Entrepreneur.** The extent to which one intends to start a business.

**Professional.** The extent to which one intends to be a professional.

**Leadership.** The extent to which one intends to work in a job with opportunity to lead others.

## **Career Aspirations**

*Motivation +  
Intention*

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## Regulatory Focus

Regulatory focus refers to how people engage in self-regulation, the process of bringing oneself into alignment with one's standards and goals. (Higgins et al., 2001) It affects whether one will be willing to experiment with new ideas and take up challenges at work or seek to conform to norms and regulations. Two corresponding motivational traits are:

**Promotion Focus.** The extent to which one focus on hopes and accomplishments (gains).

**Prevention Focus.** The extent to which one focus on safety and responsibilities (non-losses).

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## Moral Foundations

Moral foundation is defined as the source and driver of moral intuitions about what we feel is right or wrong. An individual with higher scores on a moral foundation is considered to be more sensitive and aware about issues related to that area (Haidt 2001 & 2007). There are five commonly studied moral foundations.

**Care.** Refers to cherishing and protecting others.

**Fairness.** Refers to our sense of justice and autonomy and addresses concerns about inequality, or matching proportionality of effort to reward.

**In-group Loyalty.** Refers to the group, family, nation loyalty, linked with nationalist/patriotic sentiments.

**Authority/Hierarchy.** Refers to recognition of leaders, reverence to hierarchies and preserving tradition.

**Purity.** Typically linked with religion and a fear of degradation.

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## Employment Confidence

Two questions tapping into two facets of employment confidence were asked. First asks about the "difficulty in finding a job", and second asks the "confidence to get their ideal job within 3 months after graduation" Scores were averaged to derived student's employment confidence.

**Employment Confidence.** The extent to which a graduating student is confident about finding a job after graduation.

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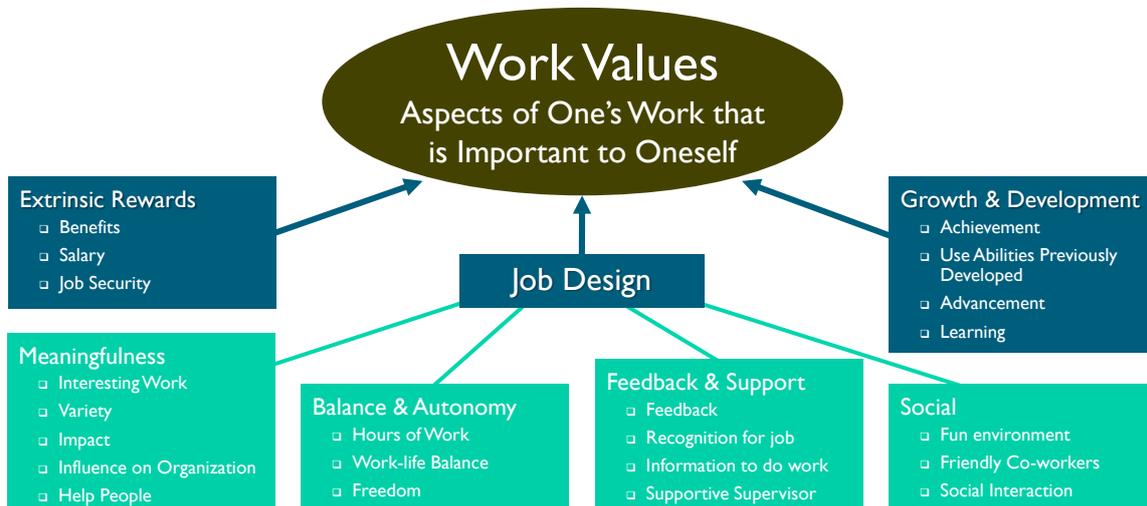
## Company-specific Questions

Four questions were asked about the 12 sponsor companies. Two questions ask about the intention to apply for a job in each of the 12 companies, while the other two ask about familiarity and the positive perception about each company respectively.

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## Work Values and Employer Branding

Work values are generally defined as enduring beliefs about the relative desirability of various aspects of work (e.g., pay, autonomy, working conditions), and work-related outcomes (e.g., accomplishment, fulfillment). (Lyons et al., 2010) Research have shown the predictive validity of work values on students' career and vocational interests (e.g., Rawls, et al., 1975; Ben-Shem & Avi-Itzhak, 1991; Choi, 2017; Berings, et al., 2004), and working adults' attitudes and behaviors at work (Shapira & Griffith, 1990; Benish-Weisman & Savaya, 2020; Zhang & Hirschi, 2021). Lyons et al.'s (2010) taxonomy of work values is claimed to be more comprehensive than others. The listing of 25 items from Lyons et al, (2010) is used to guide this survey, and to ensure parsimony, further literature on work design (e.g., Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006) is consulted to develop the following model that categories individual work values into higher-order components.



Employer brand dimensions are widely studied by organizational scientists and HR practitioners as knowing what employer brand dimensions matters to the target workforce will help in guiding the development of a suitable employee value proposition, and also help to audit the effectiveness of current recruitment and branding activities. Employer brand dimensions have been shown to increase interest from potential employees and determine higher levels of loyalty and commitment from current employees (Chhabra & Sharma, 2014); to boost employee morale and satisfaction, which in turn improves retention (Allen et al., 2010); to positively influence employee's satisfaction, affinity with the employer, and differentiation from other competitor brands (Davies, 2008); and It has been suggested that employees who enjoy working for an organization subconsciously become brand ambassadors (Holbeche & Matthews, 2012). The common brand dimensions measured in the context of symbolic framework in marketing are: Honesty (sincerity), Trendiness (excitement), Prestige (sophistication), Success (competence), Ruggedness (toughness, masculinity). These are considered the common symbolic functions of employer' branding as they can be associated with human traits. (Aaker, 1997; Plummer, 2000, Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Lievens et al., 2007)

From the perspective employee-job and employee-organization fit perspectives (Rounds et al., 1987; Bretz & Judge, 1994; De Clercq et al., 2008; Kristof, 1996), the knowledge of what future employees want will assist companies in evaluating the need to modify job and work environment so as to enhance employee satisfaction and commitment to the company. A good fit will ultimately help to increase productivity when the right person is assigned a job that fits their KSAs.

## Career Aspirations

Career Aspirations is one of the concepts of the vocational psychology, sharing similar and overlapping definitions with concepts such as occupational aspirations, occupational choice, occupational expectations and career ambitions. Compared to common vocational interests (such as interest to be a sports person, interest to be an accountant), career aspiration is generally fundamental, and It's developed from the experiences we have as we accumulate through the years. According to Arthur et al. (2005) "People have different career aspirations, and place different values on such factors as income, employment security, the location of work, status, progression through different jobs, access to learning, the importance of work versus personal and family time, and so on."

In the context of present study Chan's et al. (2012) construct is used, where career aspiration refers to ones' motivation, intention, and efficacies of towards one of three career forms, namely as an entrepreneur, professional or leader. EPL proposes a new framework for the modern workplace ecosystem influenced by globalization, introduction of technology in all occupational areas and changes in corporate structure. Compared to other models, It represents the subjective space in which careers unfold over time and refers to a broader concept of vocational interests, representing a person-centric framework for subjective careers in a boundaryless modern work context which can apply to the national, economic and organizational levels to asses human resources capacities.

(See References in Page 31)

# Respondent Demographics

## Sample Size

Survey 1: 903 | Undergraduate Program: 698 Graduate Program: 205  
 Survey 2<sup>1</sup>: 183

## Gender:

Female: 70.0% | Male: 30.0%

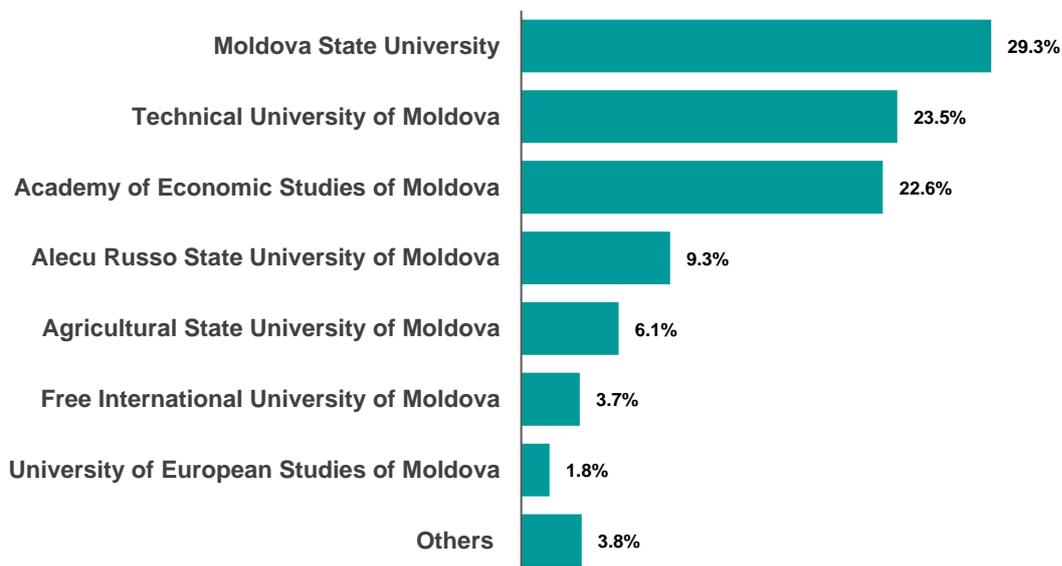
## Age:

Average: 23.3 years old S.D.: 3.20 years

## Ethnicity:

|                |                |              |                |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| Moldovan 81.0% | Romanian 7.9%  | Russian 4.0% | Ukrainian 3.2% |
| Gagauz 1.7%    | Bulgarian 0.7% | Others 0.4%  |                |

## University



## Experience Living Overseas (> 3 months)

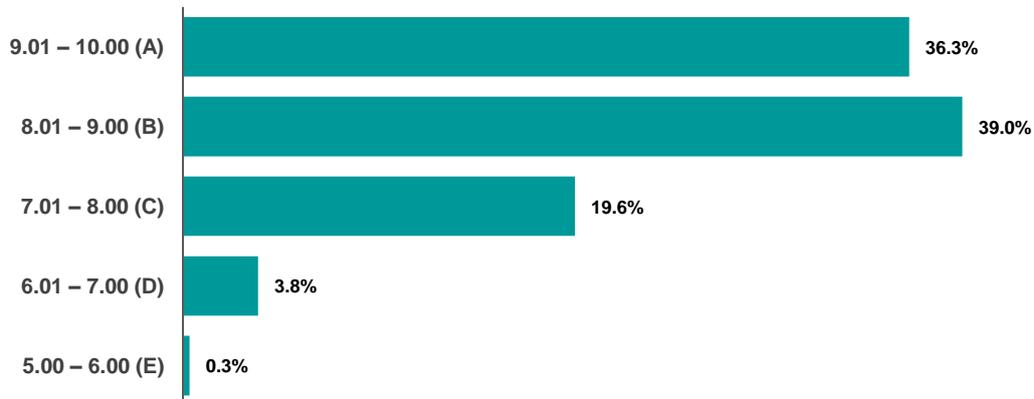
Yes: 24.1% | No: 75.0% | Not Sure: 0.9%

## Work Experience (> 3 months)

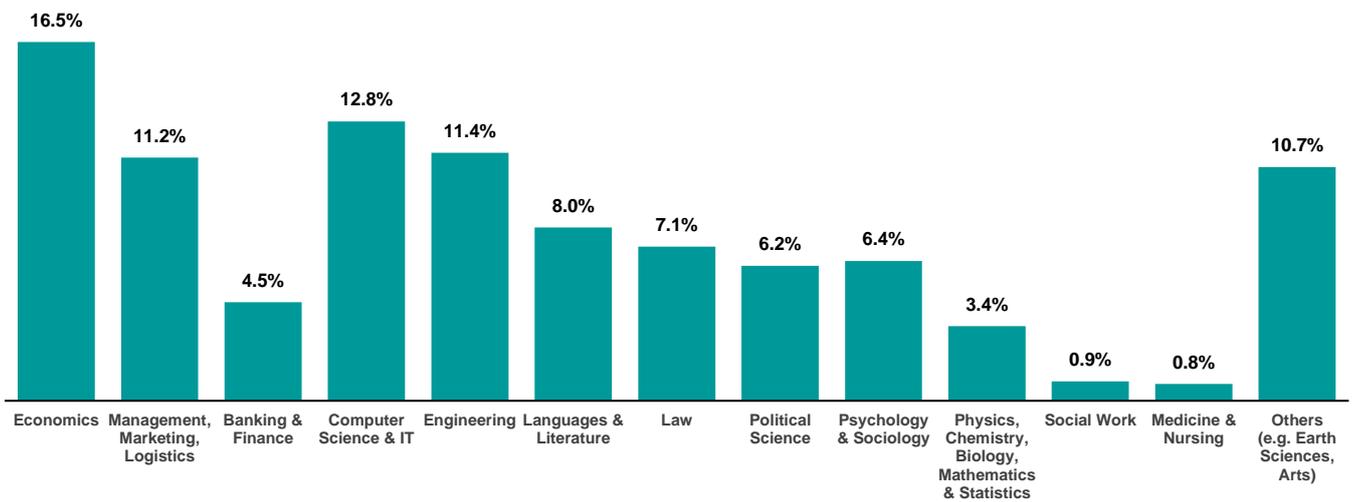
Yes: 63.7% | No: 35.4% | Not Sure: 0.9%

<sup>1</sup> Results of survey 2 pertains to students' perception towards each of the sponsor company and will not be made public in this version of the report. No demographic data were obtained for survey 2. Survey 2's respondents were randomly selected from respondents of survey 1. Response rate for those invited for survey 2 is relatively high. As a result, demographic distribution for survey 2 will likely be similar to that of survey 1.

### Cumulative Grades



### Discipline of Study



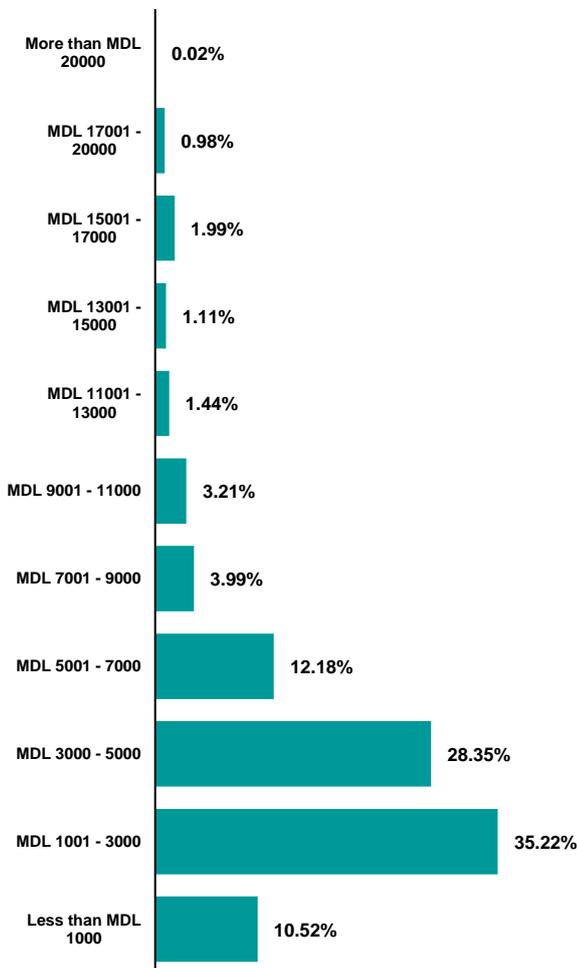
# Preferences, Perceptions, & Application Intention

## Preferred Organization Type, Salary, & Information Source

### Top Three Preferred Employer Organization Types

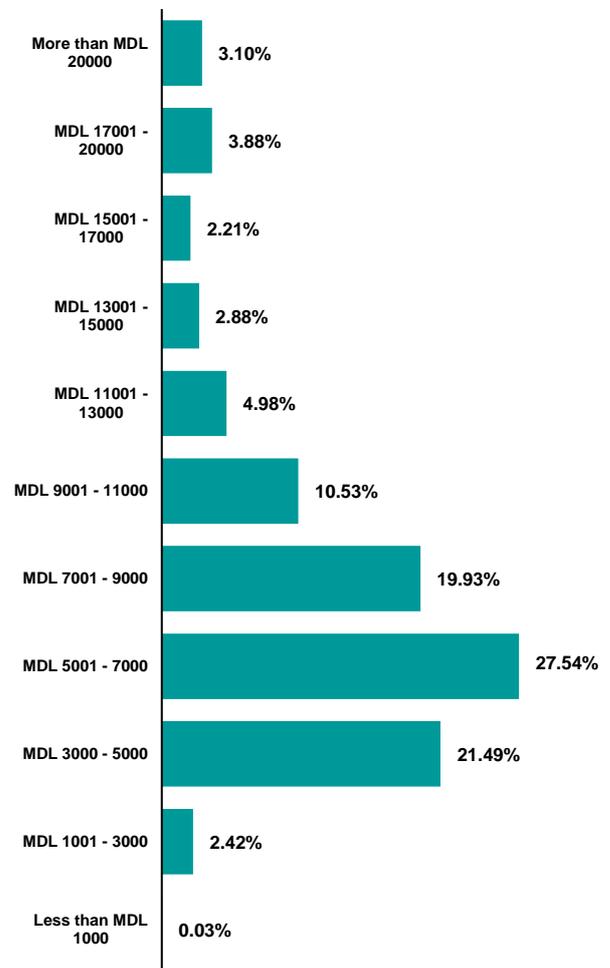
1. No Specific Preference (36.1%)
2. For-profit Foreign Private Organization (26.5%)
3. Government or Public Agencies (15.3%)

Monthly salary respondents will absolutely not accept for their first job after they graduate no matter how interesting the job is.



Average: **MDL 4,134**

Monthly salary respondents believe they will likely get for their first full-time job after they graduate.



Average: **MDL 8,026**

The class of 2021 primarily do not have a strong preference for any specific organization type. However, For-profit Foreign Private Organization seems to emerge as the much preferred organization type followed by Government and Public Agencies. Other organization type surveyed include: Non-profit Local Organization, Non-profit Foreign Organization, For-profit Local Organization.

The results of the two salary question seems to suggest that the reservation wage level is about 50% of the salary level the respondents feel they will likely get. While this may have implications on salary negotiation. Deeper analysis of the data suggests this ratio is highly diverse and is a function of employability confidence, grades, gender, and discipline.

## Top Five Information Sources for Job Search

1. **Job Portal** (e.g., rabota.md, jobs.diez.md, delucru.md, etc)
2. **Friends and Colleagues**
3. **Social Media**
4. **Company Websites**
5. **Employment Fair**

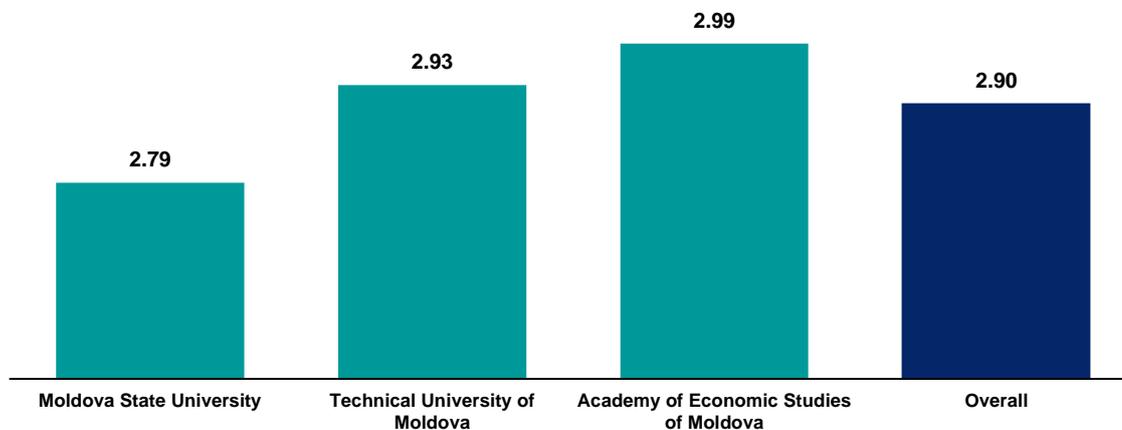
For respondents' preferred source of information for vacancies, the number of respondents for the first four sources (Job Portal, Friends and Colleagues, Social Media, Company Websites) are the most commonly selected option, with Employment Fair being far less frequently indicated by respondents. Other sources surveyed and further less popular are: Street Ads, University Announcements, Open Doors Events at Company's site, and Trade Media.

## Confidence to Find a Job

### Employability Confidence

Average of 2 questions, on a scale of 1 (lowest) – 5 (highest)

- Do you think you will face any difficulty finding a job after you graduate? (reversed-coded)
- How confident are you of getting your IDEAL job within 3 months from graduation?



Results showed that the general level of employability confidence amongst all graduates in Moldova for 2021 is just slightly less than the mid-point. This result is found to be statistically significant at the 95% confidence level [LL: 2.83; UL: 2.97]. This suggest that a general negative outlook across the graduating class of 2021. However, compared to similar studies done in developing countries such as the UK and Australia in 2020 (e.g., Striver Student Snapshot 2020) the level of employability confidence of Moldova's class of 2021 is only slightly lower. Nonetheless, the data from the three universities in Moldova with the greatest number of respondents suggest that employability confidence is far from homogenous. Some universities' graduating class of 2021 may be less confident than others.

## Sponsor-specific Questions

### Students' Perception of Company as Good Employer (Top 5)

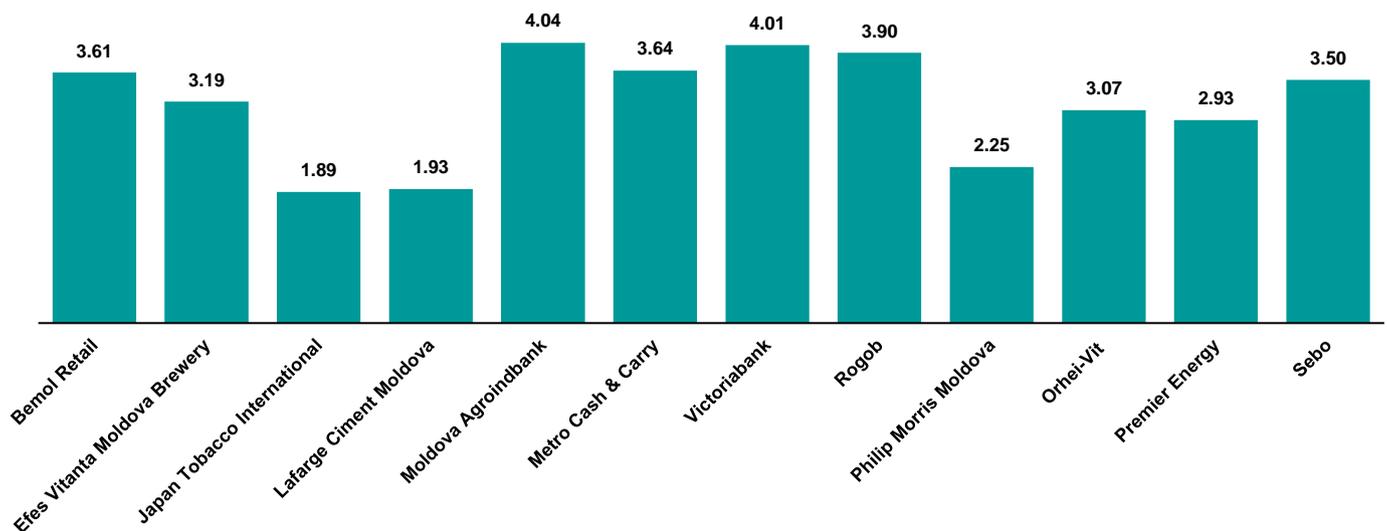
On a scale of 1 (lowest) – 5 (highest) how would you rate this company as a good employer?

This list **does not indicate** a company as being good or bad. It is an aggregate of students' opinions towards the above question for each of the 12 companies.

1. **Moldova Agroindbank**
2. **Victoriabank**
3. **Metro Cash & Carry**
4. **Philip Morris Moldova**
5. **Efes Vitanta Moldova Brewery | Rogob** (same average score)

### Students' Familiarity with the Company

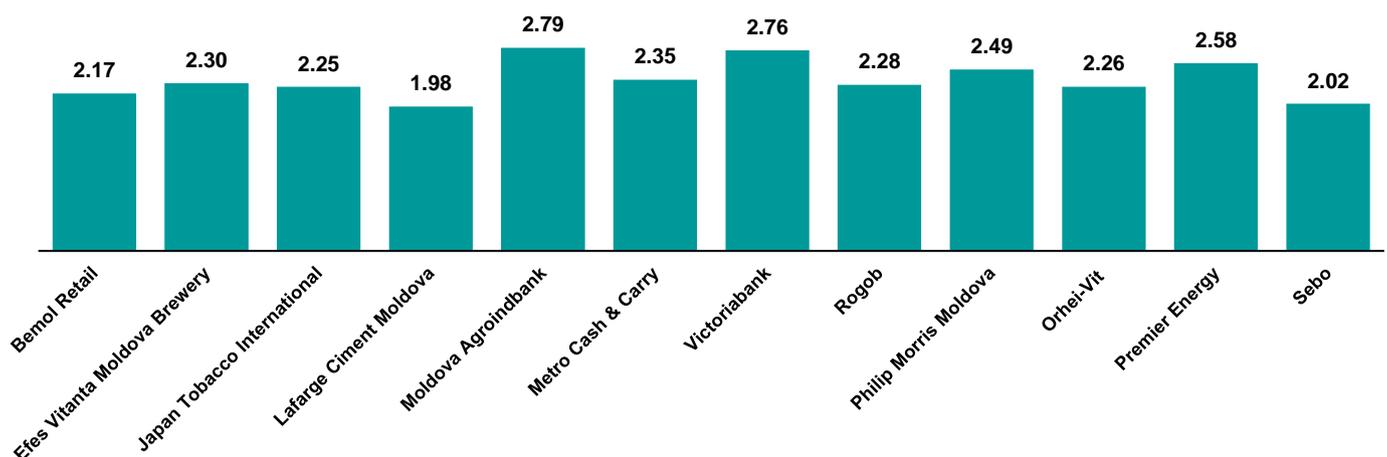
On a scale of 1 (lowest) – 5 (highest) how would you rate your familiarity with this company?



### Students' Intention to Apply for a Job in this Company

Average of 2 questions, on a scale of 1 (lowest) – 5 (highest)

- If there is a job suitable for your knowledge and skills, would you like to get a job in this company?
- Considering your own education and personality, how likely will you actually apply for a job in this company?

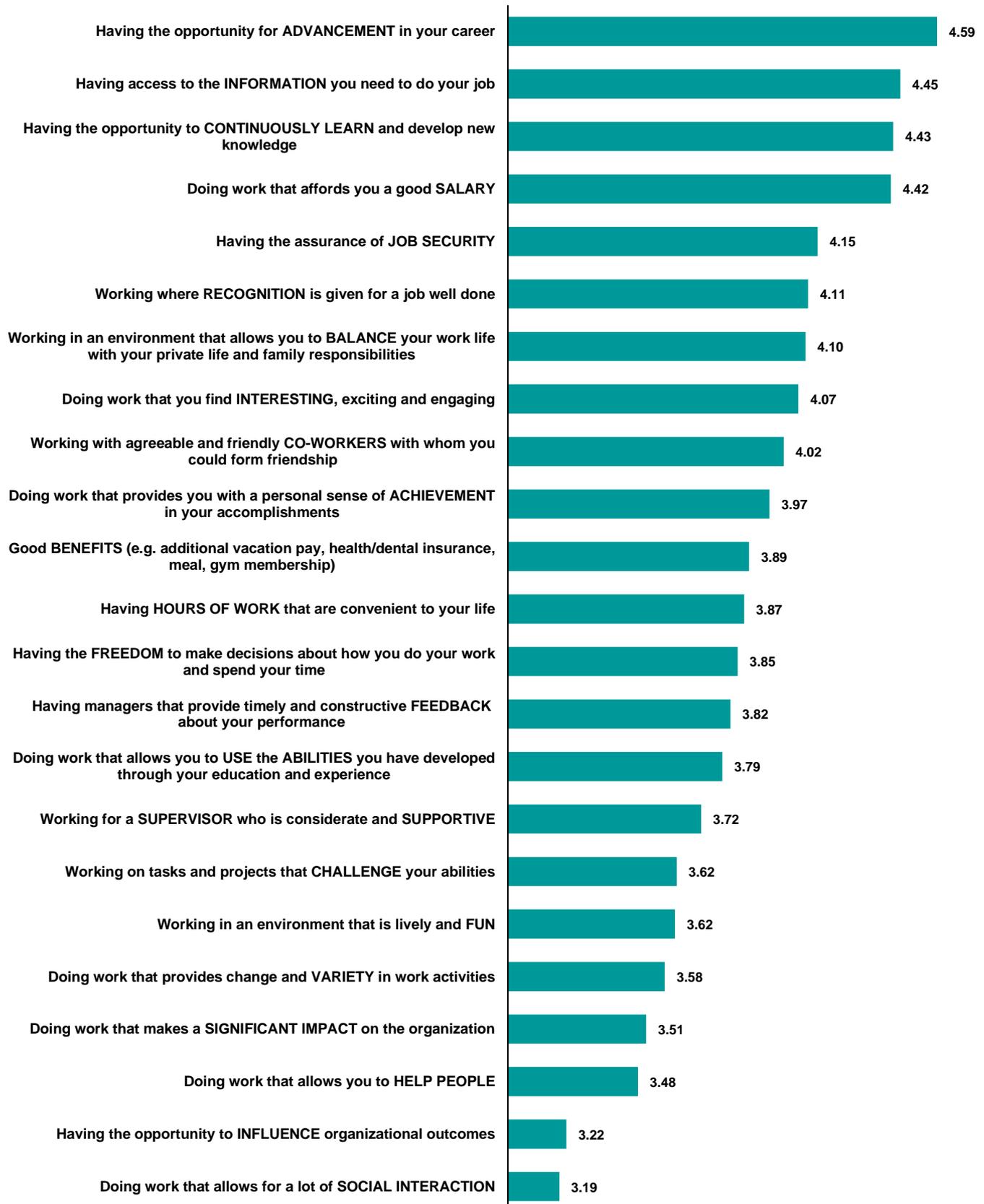


# **Aspects of Work & Employer Brand Dimensions in Choosing the First Job After Graduation**

## WORK VALUES – Itemized

### Importance of each work value when choosing the first job after graduation.

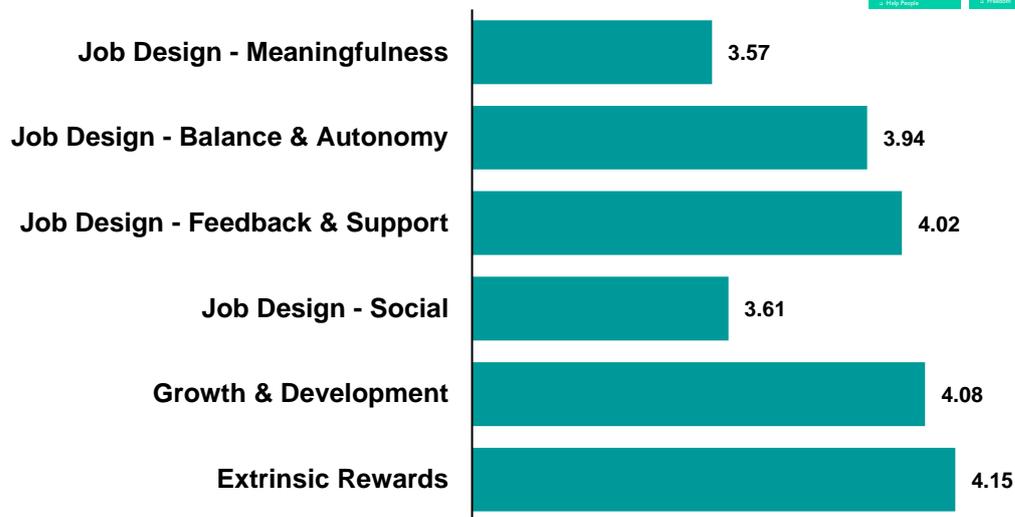
On a scale of 1 (Not Important at All) – 5 (Absolutely Essential), indicate the extent each work aspect below is IMPORTANT for you when choosing your first job after you graduate?



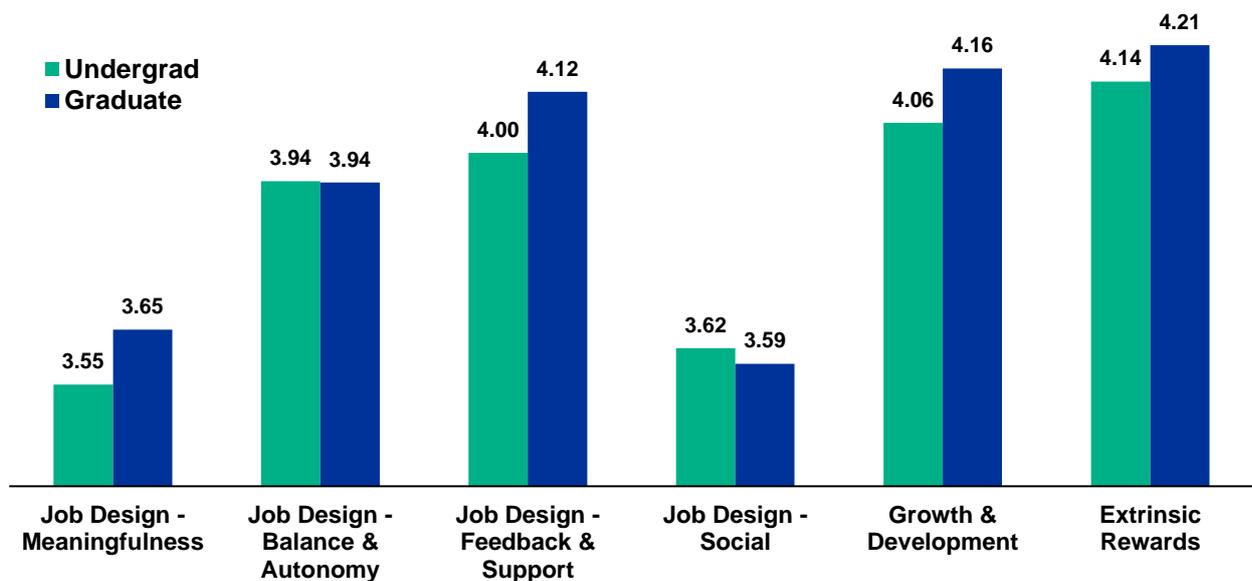
# WORK VALUES – Model-based



## Work Values – Model Based (All)



## Work Values – Model Based, by Level of Study



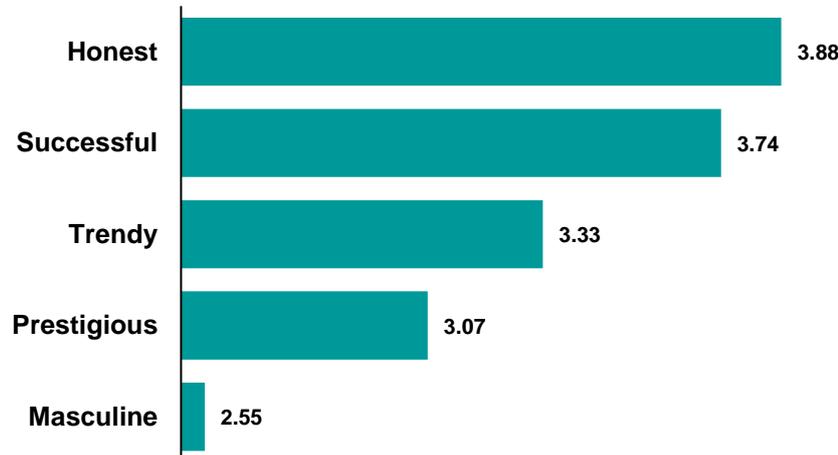
All work values are seen as somewhat important given the average values are consistently greater than the mid-point value of 3, however some work values that are rated more important than others. At the itemized level, the top four most important work values for the class of 2021 are Advancement Opportunities, Access to Information, Learning Opportunities, and Good Salary. Overwhelmingly, whether a job makes an impact to the organization and whether it influences organizational outcome is not seen as an important criteria. Likewise, whether the job offers opportunity for social interaction does not feature strongly. As 574 respondents out of 903 have some form of work experience lasting more than 3 months, further probing of data was conducted. Data showed that those with work experience were much clearer in knowing what they want, and feel is important for their work (e.g., having access to information and support).

Combining related work values items into the components of the work value model, the chart above replicated findings from the itemized analysis, and also showed that the class of 2021 is most concerned about Growth & Development Opportunities, Extrinsic Rewards, and having a job with good Balance & Autonomy and Feedback and Support. In general, graduate students expressed a greater level of importance to most work values except for that of desiring a good social environment that is fun. This last component is valued slightly higher by undergraduates.

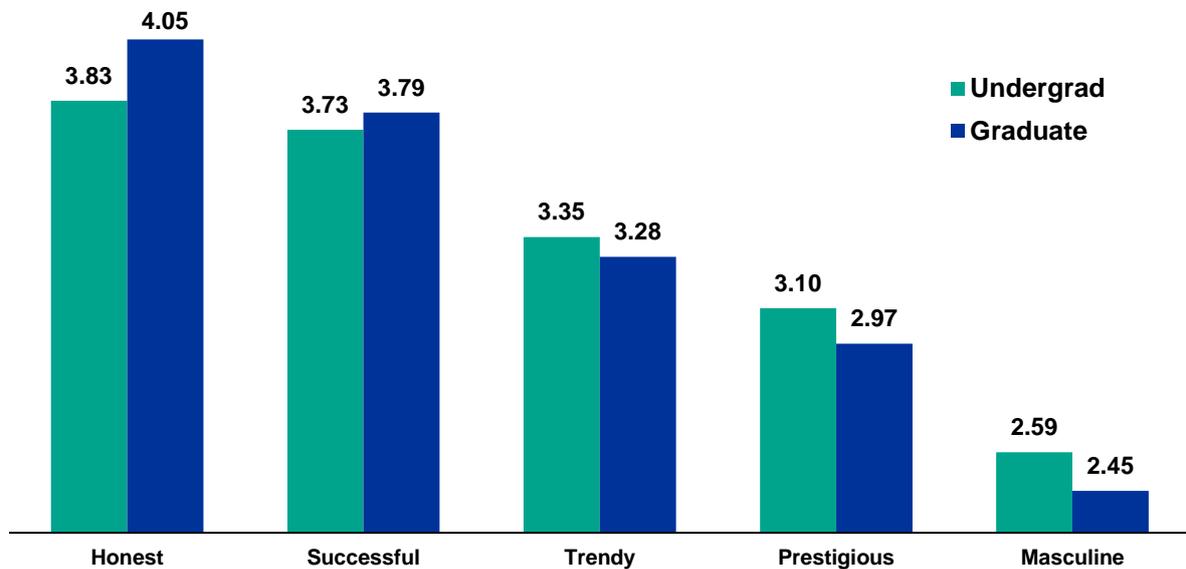
## EMPLOYER BRAND DIMENSIONS

Dimensions of Employer Brand that is important for respondents when choosing their first job after graduation.

### Importance of Each Employer Brand Dimension (All)



### Importance of Each Employer Brand Dimension by Level of Study



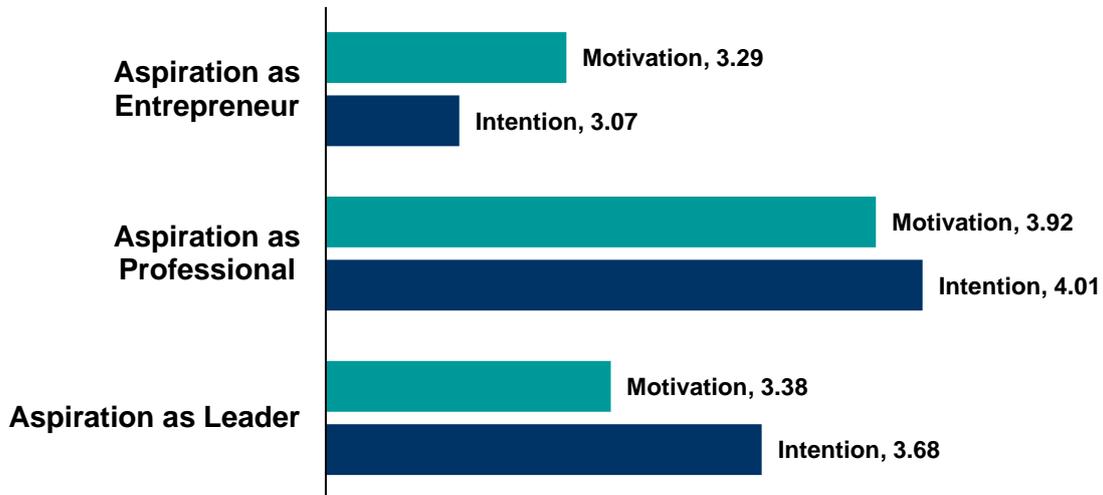
Out of 5 employer brand dimensions as described Lievens & Highhouse (2003) and used here, four dimensions are considered as important, with the two most important being whether the employer is seen as Honest and Successful. Whether an employer is seen as masculine is not consequential to the class of 2021. A major caveat here is that low importance placed on masculine image of an employer does not mean high importance on feminine image. The result can be interpreted as respondents do not feel whether a brand is masculine (or feminine) has any influence on their application choice for their first job.

While the pattern of importance across employer brand dimensions are relatively consistent between undergraduates and graduates, graduates place greater emphasis on the honesty of an employer than undergraduates do, and undergraduates places more emphasis on whether an employer appears as trendy. These differences are statistically significant.

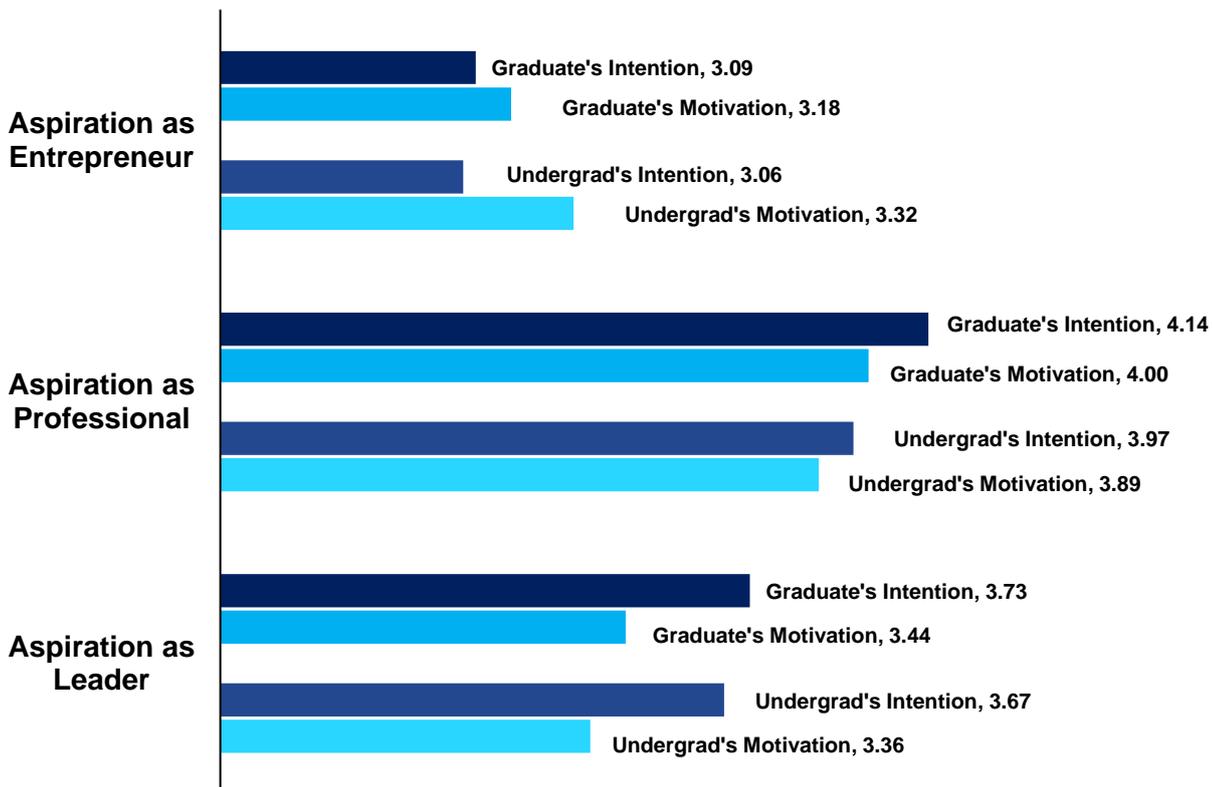
# Career Aspirations

## CAREER ASPIRATIONS – MOTIVATION & INTENTION

### Career Aspirations (All)



### Career Aspirations by Level of Study

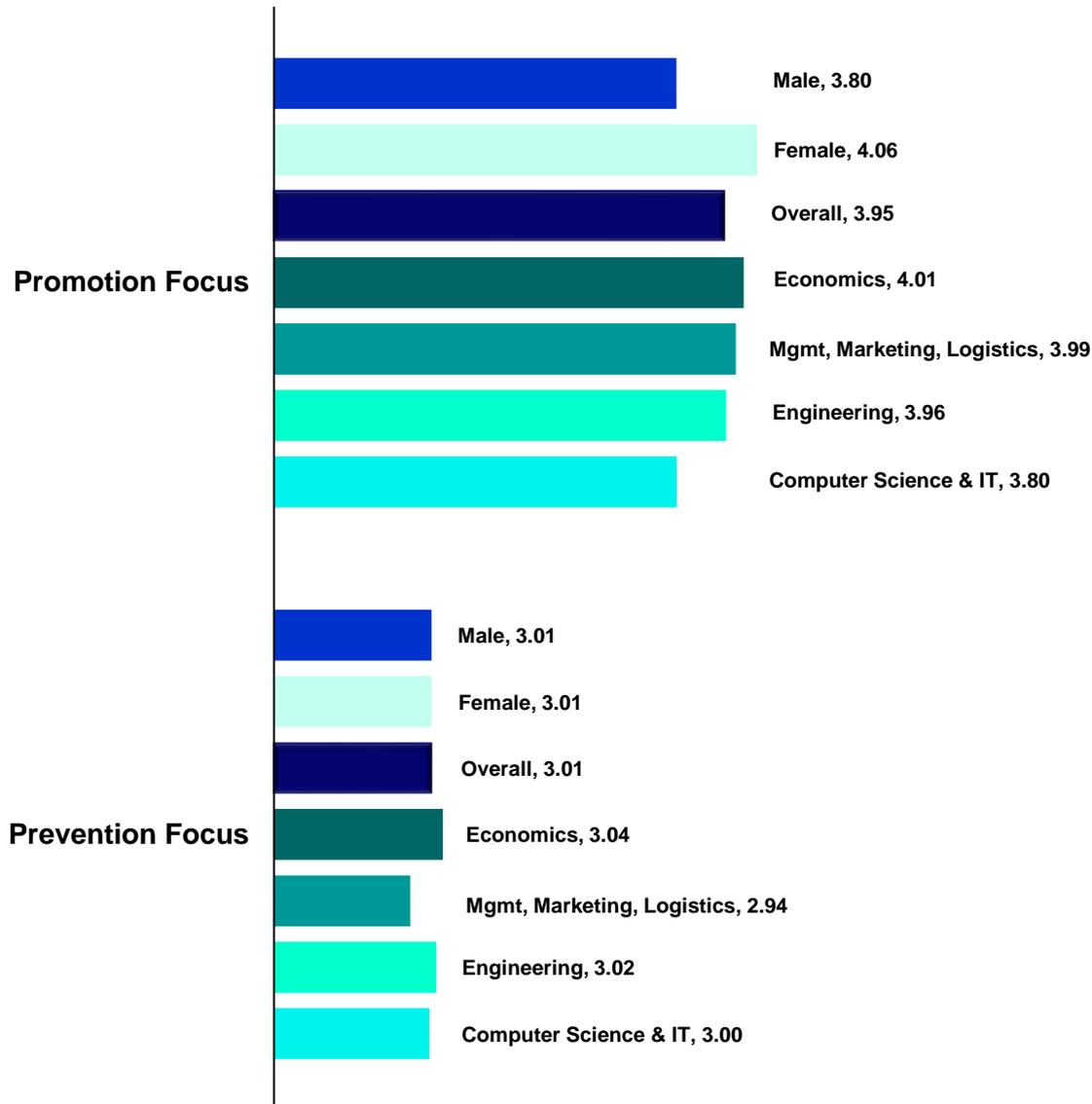


All individuals have different levels of aspiration to be entrepreneur, professional, and a leader. Evident from both the motivation and intention aspects of career aspirations, the Class of 2021 is more focused on developing their future career as a professional, followed by being a leader, then finally as a business owner. However, the difference between intention and motivation reveals a deeper insight. Motivation under the career aspiration framework is seen as nurtured through the years as one develops towards adulthood. Intention is seen as a proximal predictor of a chosen action/behavior and is a function of the evaluation of the overall economic-social context. When motivation towards a career path is higher than intention, this means possible suppression of one's inner motivation in consideration of the person's context. When the intention is higher than motivation, this means possible amplification of one's inner motivation. The above shows consistent results of entrepreneurial motivation being suppressed, and leadership motivation is amplified. This discrepancy is larger for undergraduate than graduates.

# Motivation & Moral Sensitivities

## REGULATORY FOCUS

### Promotion vs. Prevention Focus by Gender & Discipline

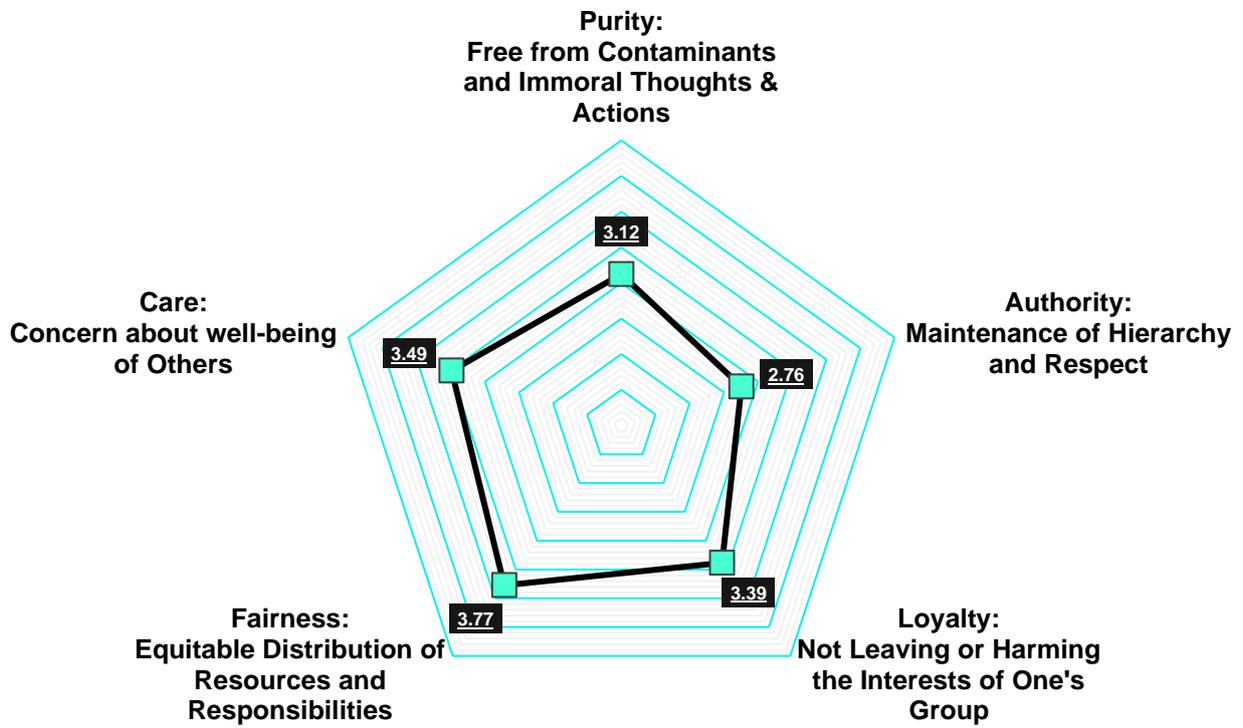


Regulatory focus describes human's pursuit of goal via avoidance of mistakes and following of rules (prevention focus) or working harder for gains and success even if there may be some risks (promotion focus). The class of 2021 is shown to be higher in promotion focus than prevention focus. This difference is considerable and consistent across disciplines and gender.

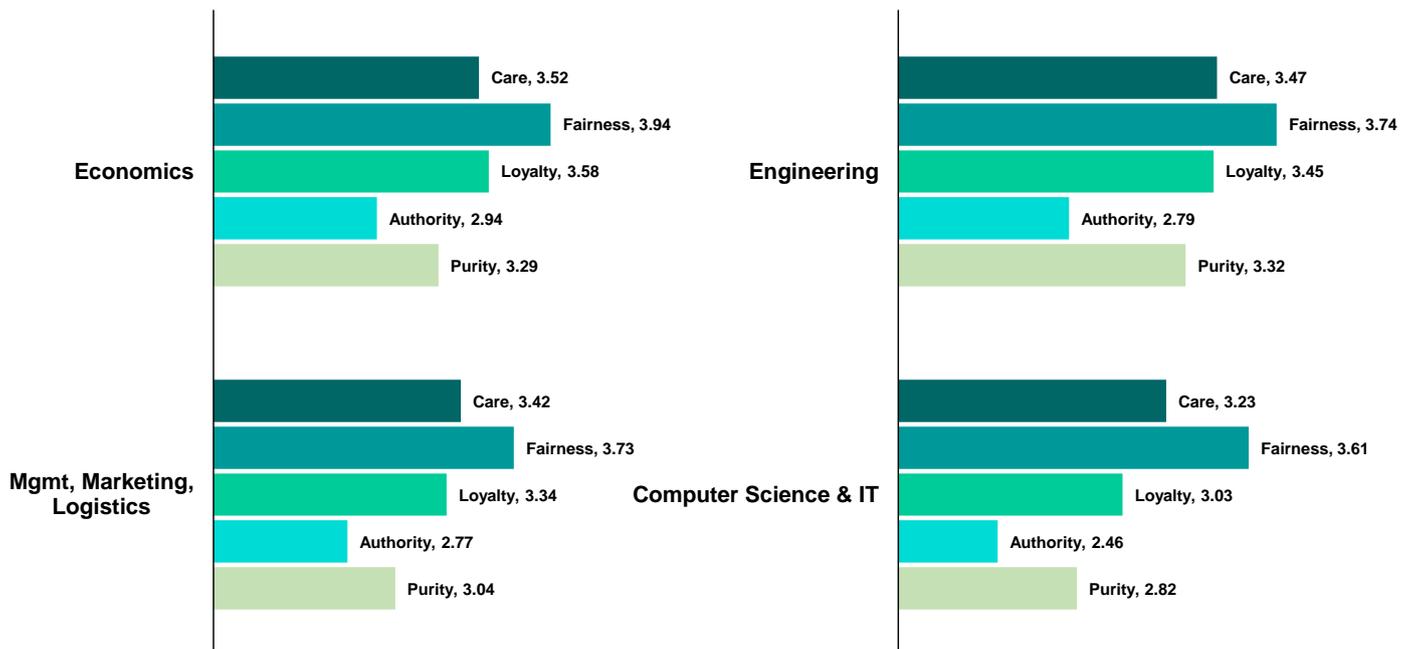
With regards to gender, it appears that females in the class of 2021 report a higher promotion focus than males do. However, there is no difference between genders for prevention focus. And with regards to disciplines, computer science students are significantly much lower in promotion focus than economics, business, and engineering students. It is also shown that business students studying management, marketing, or logistics appear to be the least prevention focused. This means that business students are more likely to be motivated by opportunities to strive for success, than by fear of making mistakes. In terms of appropriate supervisory behaviors for managing the class of 2021, focusing on the rewards and possibilities of success will be more useful than focusing on punishments and rules. This differential effect would likely be seen most for business graduates and least with computer science graduates.

# MORAL FOUNDATIONS

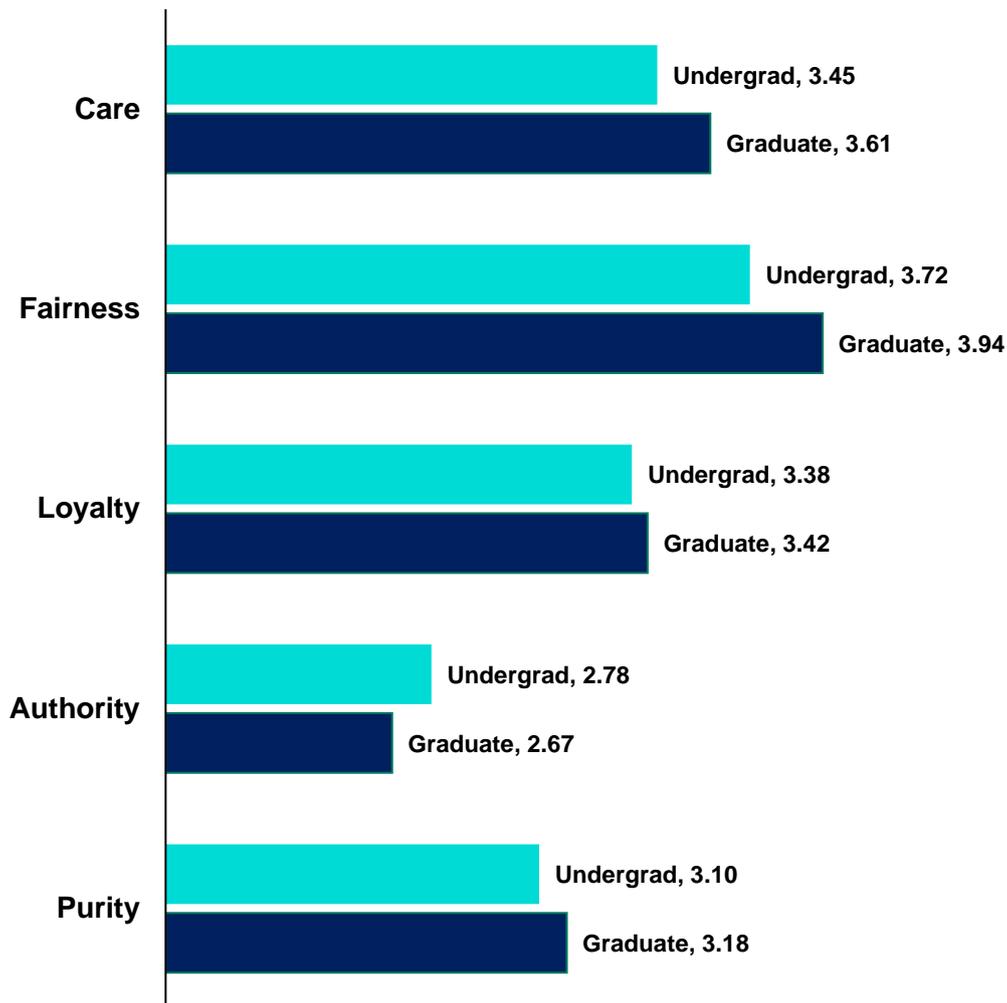
## Moral Foundation Profile (All)



## Moral Foundation Profile by Discipline



### Moral Foundation Profile by Level of Study



Moral foundations are the sources of human's intuitions. They state that there are five different moral domains where humans can be more aware, sensitive, and reactive towards. Example those who are high in the moral foundation of Fairness will be more sensitive and concerned about the extent to which resources are distributed fairly. Those who are high in the moral foundation of Authority will concern and reactive to situations where they see others not paying respect to those with higher social status.

Implications of moral foundation for organizations, let managers know what moral issues employees are most acutely sensitive to. If an employee is sensitive towards caring and not harming others, then allocating tasks that has a positive social impact will be more motivating. If fairness is the dominant moral foundation, then building an employee brand image as an employer with integrity will be more effective. In this case the results from the moral foundation is coherent with the results from employer branding dimensions, where the brand image of Honesty is rated to be the most important.

With regards to group differences, splitting the population reveals that respondents with a computer science & IT training are generally less concerned about all five moral foundations, and least so for the moral foundation of Purity. For graduates versus undergrads, graduates generally score higher on the moral foundations except for Authority. This means graduates do not see maintenance of hierarchical relationship as a moral concern and while not be responsive to violations by themselves or others.

# Deep Dive into the Numbers

# RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE NUMBERS

Beyond the comparison of averages, inferential statistics of relationships between dimensions can uncover deeper insights and “stories”. Zero-order correlations of selected dimensions were analyzed and displayed below.

|                           | Gender                  | Study Level |       |        |                |               |                       |                |             |                        |            |              |                   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------|--------|----------------|---------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------|------------------------|------------|--------------|-------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|                           | Grades                  | 0.19        | 0.24  | Grades |                |               |                       |                |             |                        |            |              |                   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Minimum Salary          | -0.25       | 0.13  | -0.02  | Minimum Salary |               |                       |                |             |                        |            |              |                   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Likely Salary           | -0.30       | 0.21  | 0.04   | 0.56           | Likely Salary |                       |                |             |                        |            |              |                   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Employment Confidence   | -0.06       | 0.06  | 0.02   | 0.20           | 0.26          | Employment Confidence |                |             |                        |            |              |                   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Work Values</b>        | Job Meaningful          | 0.16        | 0.07  | 0.11   | -0.03          | 0.00          | 0.07                  |                |             |                        |            |              |                   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Job Balance             | 0.14        | 0.00  | 0.08   | -0.01          | -0.02         | 0.00                  |                |             |                        |            |              |                   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Job Feedback & Support  | 0.22        | 0.08  | 0.16   | -0.09          | -0.04         | 0.03                  |                |             |                        |            |              |                   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Job Social              | 0.20        | -0.02 | 0.05   | -0.07          | -0.08         | 0.09                  |                |             |                        |            |              |                   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Growth & Dev            | 0.13        | 0.07  | 0.15   | -0.01          | 0.02          | 0.08                  |                |             |                        |            |              |                   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Extrinsic Rewards       | 0.20        | 0.05  | 0.12   | -0.05          | -0.04         | -0.04                 |                |             |                        |            |              |                   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           |                         |             |       |        |                |               |                       | Job Meaningful | Job Balance | Job Feedback & Support | Job Social | Growth & Dev | Extrinsic Rewards |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Employer Brand</b>     | Honest                  | 0.22        | 0.09  | 0.11   | -0.07          | -0.06         | 0.03                  | 0.50           | 0.28        | 0.43                   | 0.40       | 0.43         | 0.33              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Trendy                  | 0.12        | -0.03 | -0.01  | -0.05          | -0.02         | 0.05                  | 0.50           | 0.31        | 0.35                   | 0.49       | 0.42         | 0.26              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Prestigious             | -0.01       | -0.05 | -0.03  | 0.03           | 0.03          | 0.04                  | 0.40           | 0.25        | 0.24                   | 0.35       | 0.31         | 0.25              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Successful              | 0.12        | 0.03  | 0.07   | 0.01           | -0.01         | 0.07                  | 0.46           | 0.30        | 0.43                   | 0.35       | 0.46         | 0.37              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Masculine               | -0.02       | -0.05 | -0.04  | 0.01           | 0.04          | 0.03                  | 0.31           | 0.15        | 0.16                   | 0.29       | 0.24         | 0.17              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Career Aspirations</b> | Entrepreneur Motivation | -0.03       | -0.08 | -0.09  | 0.07           | 0.06          | 0.10                  | 0.32           | 0.11        | 0.11                   | 0.27       | 0.21         | 0.11              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Professional Motivation | 0.06        | 0.08  | 0.17   | 0.04           | 0.11          | 0.18                  | 0.28           | 0.07        | 0.21                   | 0.19       | 0.35         | 0.14              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Leadership Motivation   | -0.07       | 0.05  | 0.06   | 0.09           | 0.12          | 0.09                  | 0.32           | 0.08        | 0.13                   | 0.22       | 0.27         | 0.07              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Entrepreneur Intent     | -0.04       | 0.01  | -0.08  | 0.14           | 0.14          | 0.12                  | 0.25           | 0.09        | 0.05                   | 0.20       | 0.14         | 0.04              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Professional Intent     | -0.02       | 0.10  | 0.14   | 0.01           | 0.05          | 0.14                  | 0.18           | 0.04        | 0.19                   | 0.11       | 0.31         | 0.13              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Leadership Intent       | 0.01        | 0.03  | 0.06   | 0.09           | 0.08          | 0.12                  | 0.27           | 0.09        | 0.16                   | 0.21       | 0.23         | 0.12              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Reg Focus</b>          | Promotion Focus         | 0.19        | 0.04  | 0.13   | -0.06          | 0.00          | 0.05                  | 0.32           | 0.15        | 0.27                   | 0.28       | 0.31         | 0.22              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Prevention Focus        | 0.00        | -0.05 | -0.02  | -0.11          | -0.07         | -0.14                 | 0.06           | 0.06        | 0.07                   | 0.07       | 0.04         | 0.09              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Moral Foundations</b>  | Care                    | 0.17        | 0.09  | 0.15   | -0.10          | -0.08         | -0.03                 | 0.29           | 0.16        | 0.28                   | 0.21       | 0.22         | 0.24              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Fair                    | 0.13        | 0.12  | 0.18   | -0.07          | -0.02         | 0.03                  | 0.24           | 0.14        | 0.29                   | 0.14       | 0.27         | 0.24              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Loyalty                 | 0.12        | 0.02  | 0.06   | -0.12          | -0.09         | 0.11                  | 0.30           | 0.12        | 0.23                   | 0.27       | 0.24         | 0.19              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Authority               | 0.05        | -0.06 | 0.00   | -0.04          | -0.08         | 0.10                  | 0.17           | 0.06        | 0.15                   | 0.18       | 0.12         | 0.11              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                           | Purity                  | 0.05        | 0.04  | 0.04   | -0.01          | -0.06         | 0.04                  | 0.19           | 0.12        | 0.20                   | 0.18       | 0.15         | 0.17              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|                           |                         | Honest | Trendy | Prestigious | Successful | Masculine |                         |                         |                       |                     |                     |                   |                 |                  |  |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------|--------|-------------|------------|-----------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|--|
| <b>Career Aspirations</b> | Entrepreneur Motivation | 0.12   | 0.26   | 0.34        | 0.19       | 0.29      |                         |                         |                       |                     |                     |                   |                 |                  |  |
|                           | Professional Motivation | 0.19   | 0.21   | 0.22        | 0.25       | 0.16      |                         |                         |                       |                     |                     |                   |                 |                  |  |
|                           | Leadership Motivation   | 0.12   | 0.22   | 0.24        | 0.16       | 0.22      | Entrepreneur Motivation | Professional Motivation | Leadership Motivation |                     |                     |                   |                 |                  |  |
|                           | Entrepreneur Intent     | 0.04   | 0.21   | 0.26        | 0.11       | 0.25      | 0.70                    | 0.19                    | 0.45                  |                     |                     |                   |                 |                  |  |
|                           | Professional Intent     | 0.15   | 0.11   | 0.11        | 0.13       | 0.08      | 0.10                    | 0.63                    | 0.20                  |                     |                     |                   |                 |                  |  |
|                           | Leadership Intent       | 0.10   | 0.18   | 0.25        | 0.14       | 0.18      | 0.47                    | 0.31                    | 0.48                  | Entrepreneur Intent | Professional Intent | Leadership Intent |                 |                  |  |
| <b>Reg. Focus</b>         | Promotion Focus         | 0.21   | 0.21   | 0.21        | 0.24       | 0.16      | 0.28                    | 0.43                    | 0.25                  | 0.25                | 0.27                | 0.31              |                 |                  |  |
|                           | Prevention Focus        | 0.09   | 0.06   | 0.09        | 0.06       | 0.07      | 0.02                    | 0.07                    | -0.02                 | -0.01               | 0.02                | 0.00              | Promotion Focus | Prevention Focus |  |
| <b>Moral Foundations</b>  | Care                    | 0.30   | 0.15   | 0.04        | 0.17       | 0.02      | 0.14                    | 0.17                    | 0.12                  | 0.03                | 0.12                | 0.05              | 0.30            | 0.19             |  |
|                           | Fair                    | 0.26   | 0.08   | 0.01        | 0.18       | -0.01     | 0.05                    | 0.17                    | 0.09                  | -0.04               | 0.17                | 0.09              | 0.31            | 0.18             |  |
|                           | Loyalty                 | 0.26   | 0.25   | 0.18        | 0.21       | 0.20      | 0.26                    | 0.27                    | 0.21                  | 0.19                | 0.20                | 0.20              | 0.34            | 0.16             |  |
|                           | Authority               | 0.12   | 0.20   | 0.23        | 0.15       | 0.22      | 0.27                    | 0.20                    | 0.18                  | 0.18                | 0.10                | 0.22              | 0.21            | 0.20             |  |
|                           | Purity                  | 0.16   | 0.20   | 0.19        | 0.14       | 0.16      | 0.18                    | 0.18                    | 0.19                  | 0.13                | 0.13                | 0.20              | 0.25            | 0.18             |  |

Female is coded as 2 and Male as 1. Positive correlation with Gender means greater value for females than males for the variable.

\* Correlations < -0.07 and > 0.07 are significant.

### Selected Relationships

- Females are found to have better reported grades and lower minimum salary and expected salary.
- Females are found to be more promotion focused than males and more sensitive to moral issues surrounding harm and caring for others.
- Except for Honesty, the level of study (undergraduate vs graduate) does not have an impact on the importance of specific employer brand dimensions.
- The higher the minimum and expected salary, the lower one places on the importance of work values. This implies an implicit tradeoff between salary and work values.
- The lower the minimum and expected salary, the higher one’s moral foundations are.
- Those who have high employability confidence and have high cumulative grades are likely to place greater importance on companies with an image of being successful.
- Those who have better grades will have lower entrepreneurial career aspirations (motivation & intention)
- Prevention focus has no relationship with grades, while the effect of promotion focus is larger and significant.

**Grades are positively related to aspirations to be a career professional, and not significantly related to both Salary Expectations and Employability Confidence for the Class of 2021.**

A hand in a dark suit jacket is pointing upwards towards a digital interface. The interface features various data visualization elements such as a pie chart, a bar chart, and several circular gauges or progress indicators. The background is a light gray with a subtle grid pattern, suggesting a professional or technological setting.

## FURTHER NOTES

While this is a specially commissioned research work, this work is built upon the prior intellectual work of academics, consultants, and practitioners. Below are some key characteristics of this study and methodology employed.

- Aim of research is not just for policy-making or consulting recommendations. An important outcome of this research is to generate new insights on human's psychology.
- All main questions are adapted from published scientific sources and only minimal changes are made to maintain its content validity and match with the original authors intent. Questions go through stringent forward and backward translation process (such as that described in Brislin, (1970), and are tested for their psychometric adequacy before and after data is collected. Strict data cleaning is also used to ensure only sufficiently good data is entered for analysis.
- Due to the pandemic, timing, and voluntary nature of the study, in-person data collection was not possible. This led to low response rate from several universities and are greater representation of females.
- No sample-weighted statistics were used as both male and female respondents were of sufficiently large sample. Instead, when conducting regression test, gender and grades were added as control variables. This allows maximum utilization of information.
- As this study is customized and a first of its nature in Moldova, no comparison with other countries or past year's data was possible. In its place, a map of correlations for the general population and regression of key variables were conducted for the sponsoring company. This allows data-driven recommendation to be made. Past works in Moldova by consultants such as Magenta Consulting (2017) and AXA Management Consulting (2017) who used a different set of questions, methodology, and target population groups may be referred to for a different picture of the evolving employment landscape in Moldova.
- Assuming the total of 16,000 graduating students each year, the margin of error for Survey 1 mean-estimates at the 95% confidence interval level is +/- 0.04 on a 5-point scale. Margin of error for proportion-estimates at the 95% confidence interval level is +/- 3%. However due to our methodology, the margin of error for mean-estimates is more important to take note of.
- Survey 2 data is a random selection of Survey 1 respondents. Hence, the margin of error at the 95% confidence interval level for survey 2 mean estimates to infer to the population of Survey 1 respondents is approximately 0.2 on a 5-point scale. This number is an average due to different planned sample sizes for different questions in survey 2.



### VALID SOURCES

Scientifically validated questions used and back-translated.



### BALANCED

Balance of comprehensive coverage of work values with novel psychological dimensions.



### DEEPER ANALYSIS

Going beyond descriptive statistics to discover hidden relationships and stories.

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## MAIN CONTRIBUTOR



### **Iolanta Mura**

Mrs. Mura has over twenty years of professional experience in management, working in different countries for various companies and organizations, such as British American Tobacco and the World Bank. In December 2015 she became the General Manager of Bemol Retail and the only woman at the head of a petroleum business and a major foreign capital company in the Republic of Moldova. In 2016 she was recognized by two national publications as “Manager of the Year.” She also served on the Board of Directors of the American Chamber of Commerce in Moldova for several years and has a great knowledge of business environment and its issues in the Republic of Moldova.

## ADVISING FACULTY



### **Riyang Phang**

Dr. Phang is a research professor at AUCA. He is an organizational scientist with experience in creating organization diagnostics tool (e.g., engagement, salary, climate & culture surveys). Prior to AUCA he was a researcher at the Korn Ferry Institute, the R&D arm of the world’s top HR consulting company Korn Ferry. He combines computational physics with organizational psychology in his research and has presented at major international conferences. He obtained his PhD from the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

## LOGISTICAL LIAISON



### **Elena Buzu**

Mrs. Buzu has 13 years of experience within the American Chamber of Commerce in Moldova. She plays an integral role in the development of the business association by managing & supervising the activities of the HR Committee. Elena consolidated the strongest and largest HR community in Moldova to share best practices, support learning & knowledge-sharing projects and activities. Simultaneously, being involved in project and event management, she has worked with diverse teams for their successful implementation. Elena is also responsible for financial operations management and organizational management.

## APPENDIX: SAMPLE QUESTIONS

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### Work Values (adapted from Lyons et al., 2010)

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Meaningfulness</b>           | The extent to which having the opportunity to INFLUENCE organizational outcomes is important.                          |
| <b>Balance &amp; Autonomy</b>   | The extent to which having the FREEDOM to make decisions about how you do your work and spend your time is important.  |
| <b>Feedback &amp; Support</b>   | The extent to which having managers that provide timely and constructive FEEDBACK about your performance is important. |
| <b>Social Environment</b>       | The extent to which working with agreeable and friendly CO-WORKERS with whom you could form friendship is important.   |
| <b>Growth &amp; Development</b> | The extent to which having the opportunity for ADVANCEMENT in your career is important.                                |
| <b>Extrinsic Rewards</b>        | The extent to which doing work that affords you a good SALARY is important.  |

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### Employer Branding (adapted from Lievens & Highhouse, 2003)

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Honest</b>      | The extent to which working for a company that is seen to be honest, sincere, and down-to-earth is important.          |
| <b>Trendy</b>      | The extent to which working for a company that is seen to be daring trendy, exciting, and young is important.          |
| <b>Prestigious</b> | The extent to which working for a company that is seen to be sophisticated, prestigious, and upper class is important. |
| <b>Successful</b>  | The extent to which working for a company that is seen to be reliable, successful, and intelligent is important.       |
| <b>Masculine</b>   | The extent to which working for a company that is seen to be masculine, strong, and rugged is important.               |

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### Career Aspiration – Motivation (adapted from Chan et al., 2012)

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Entrepreneur</b> | Ever since I was a kid, I dreamed about opening my own business.                     |
| <b>Professional</b> | I am the kind of person who strives to be highly specialized in my field of study.   |
| <b>Leader</b>       | If I agree to lead a group, I would never expect any advantages or special benefits. |

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### Career Aspiration - Intention (adapted from Chan et al., 2012)

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>Entrepreneur</b> | I have a viable business idea and intend to start my own business soon after graduation.          |
| <b>Professional</b> | My main career goal is to be a technical expert, specialist or professional in my field of study. |
| <b>Leader</b>       | I plan to become a general leader or manager in the near future.                                  |

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### Regulatory Focus (adapted from Higgins et al., 2001)

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Promotion Focus</b>  | I frequently imagine how I will achieve my hopes and aspirations.  |
| <b>Prevention Focus</b> | In general, I am focused on preventing negative events in my life. |

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### Moral Foundations (adapted from Graham et al., 2011)

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Harm</b>                | Compassion for those who are suffering is the most crucial virtue.   |
| <b>Fairness</b>            | When the government makes laws, the number one principle should be ensuring that everyone is treated fairly. |
| <b>In-group Loyalty</b>    | People should be loyal to their family members, even when they have done something wrong.                    |
| <b>Authority/Hierarchy</b> | Respect for authority is something all children need to learn.   |
| <b>Purity</b>              | People should not do things that are disgusting, even if no one is harmed.                                   |

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### Employment Confidence

- Do you think you will face any difficulty finding a job after you graduate?
  - How confident are you of getting your IDEAL job within 3 months from graduation?
- 

### Company-specific Questions

- If there is a job suitable for your knowledge and skills, would you like to get a job in this company?
- How familiar are you with this company?

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