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Personality characteristics and workplace trust of majority and minority employees in the Netherlands

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The workforce of the Netherlands and other countries is becoming increasingly culturally diverse. Nevertheless, there is a lack of research specifically investigating differences between majority and minority employees' experiences at the workplace. Particularly comparisons between minority employees of different generations have hardly been reported in the literature. In this cross-sectional study, we investigated whether differences in workplace trust exist between majority employees and, first-, and second-generation minority employees. In addition, we studied the role of a number of relevant personality traits in relation to workplace trust, conceptualized as trust in colleagues, trust in the supervisor and trust in the organization. Findings show that differences in workplace trust exist and that personality traits are related differently to workplace trust across the three groups of employees. The findings are discussed and practical implications are proposed.

Keywords: Personnel; Trust; Minority groups; Attachment; Personality; Adulthood (18 yrs and older).

Throughout Europe, cultural diversity of the workforce is increasing, and the Netherlands are no exception. At the end of 2012, first-, and second-generation¹ minority employees made up about one quarter of the working population in this country (Statistics Netherlands, 2013a). Accessing the job market is more challenging for members of the cultural minorities than for Dutch majority group members, which is visible in longer periods of unemployment (Statistics Netherlands, 2010a) and discrimination (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2009; The Netherlands Institute of Social Research/SCP, 2010a, 2010b). Especially first-generation minorities appear to suffer from such disadvantages (Lucassen & Penninx, 1997).

Although a great number of studies have focused on problems and benefits associated with a culturally diverse workforce (Jackson et al., 1991; Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999; Milliken, Bartel, & Kurtzberg, 2003; Riordan & Shore, 1997; Yang & Konrad, 2011), the question whether, once they are employed, experiences at the workplace of cultural

minority employees differ from those of majority employees, has received little attention in the literature.

It is widely accepted that trust within organizations is vital to organizational success and the well-being of employees (Argyris, 1962; Fukuyama, 1995; Kramer & Cook, 2004; Shaw, 1997). Trust enhances effective and open communication (Mellinger, 1956; Zand, 1972), collaborative behaviour (Gambetta, 1988), problem-solving (Boss, 1978) and learning (Song, Kim, & Kolb, 2009). If there is no trust between individuals and towards the employing organization itself, this can have negative consequences, such as lowered job satisfaction, lack of loyalty towards the organization, low levels of intrinsic motivation (Cook & Wall, 1980), less organizational citizenship behaviour (Van Dyne, Vandewalle, Kostova, Latham, & Cummings, 2000), less organizational commitment (Aryee, Budhwar, & Chen, 2002) and higher levels of conflict (Porter & Lilly, 1996). Moreover, the presence of trust within organizations may foster innovative and prosocial behaviours that help create economic advantages (Dasgupta, 2000; Fairholm, 1994). Employees who have

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¹As defined by Statistics Netherlands, the first-generation migrant status is defined by being born abroad and at least one parent born abroad; second-generation migrant status is defined by being born in the Netherlands and having at least one parent who is born abroad.

constructive and satisfying relationships at the workplace and who trust the organization seem to be a prerequisite for efficiently functioning organizations.

Trust at the workplace is thus a highly relevant component of employees' functioning. But is trust at the workplace equally high for majority and minority employees? To our knowledge, this has not been investigated systematically, so far. Therefore, the first goal of the current study is to investigate whether majority and minority employees differ in trust at the workplace. More specifically, we aim to close the gap in the literature with regard to the question of possible differences in workplace trust between majority employees and, first-, and second-generation minority employees.

The organizational trust literature has been largely concerned with characteristics of trustees (those to be trusted, Mayer & Davis, 1999) and the context in which trust emerges (Davis, Schoorman, Mayer, & Tan, 2000). However, little is known about characteristics of trustors (those who trust), and specifically the role of individual differences in personality traits for trust at the workplace: "While acknowledging their existence, organizational theorists generally have not evinced much interest in such individual differences, except in so far as they might be reliably measured and used as a basis for screening and selection of more trustworthy employees" (Kramer, 1999, p. 575; see also Dirks and Ferrin (2002) and Simmons et al. (2009)). Previous investigations showed that employees' personality characteristics indeed influence the degree of trust expressed in the work context (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Mooradian, Renzl, & Matzler, 2006). However, in the light of increasing cultural diversity of the workforce, the question whether the influence of personality characteristics on trust at the workplace differs across cultural groups remains unanswered. If the influence of personality characteristics on trust at the workplace differs between cultural groups of employees, professionals should tailor personnel selection and training strategies, accordingly. The second goal of the current study pertains therefore to the investigation of individual differences as antecedents of trust at the workplace for majority employees, first-, and second-generation minority employees.

DEFINITIONS OF WORKPLACE TRUST AND ITS ANTECEDENTS

Trust is increasingly investigated in organizational settings. As "an important lubricant of a social system" (Arrow, 1974, p. 23) and the wide range of benefits that trust fosters, it should be regarded as a commodity of organizations (Dasgupta, 2000). Numerous definitions of trust exist; most include positive expectations, taking a risk or allowing vulnerability on part of the employee. (see Chughtai and Buckley (2008) for an overview.)

Recent studies have shown that trust in the organizational context could best be differentiated with respect to employees' most relevant targets of trust: their colleagues, their supervisors and their employing organizations (Chughtai & Buckley, 2008; Ferres, 2002; Lehmann-Willenbrock & Kauffeld, 2010). Trust in the organization is distinct from these two forms of interpersonal trust in that it does not involve a group of individuals (colleagues) or a person (the supervisor), but a rather abstract entity with humanlike characteristics (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). In alignment with the definition of trust as proposed by Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer (1998), we define workplace trust as "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of [another]" colleagues, the supervisor and the organization (p. 395).

The need to treat workplace trust as multidimensional, even though this is rarely done, is supported by studies showing that workplace trust dimensions differentially predict work outcomes. For example, trust in the supervisor is more strongly positively related to job performance and job satisfaction than is trust in the organization (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002), trust in colleagues is more strongly related to information sharing between and across teams than is trust in the supervisor (Mooradian et al., 2006), trust in the organization is uniquely related to affective commitment whereas trust in the supervisor is uniquely related to idea creation and implementation (whereas controlling for the influence of the other targets of trust; Lehmann-Willenbrock & Kauffeld, 2010).

Due to our aim to investigate the influence of personality on workplace trust, it is important to clarify the distinction between workplace trust and trait trust. Whereas trait trust is the general willingness of individuals to trust others, a relatively stable individual difference variable (Rotter, 1980), facets of workplace trust are specific, temporal and situation-dependent states (see also Fleeson and Leicht (2006)). Trait trust and dimensions of workplace trust can furthermore be distinguished by their respective antecedents: trait trust is rooted in early rearing experiences and genetic predisposition (Allport, 1961; Erikson, 1950; Sturgis et al., 2010), interpersonal facets of workplace trust are informed by employees' evaluations of the trustworthiness of the respective target of trust, and trust in the organization depends on employees' judgements about organizational structures (including fairness perceptions with regard to policies, regulations and practices).

Most of the conceptual work on workplace trust emphasizes the importance of employees' trait trust (Bigley & Pearce, 1998; Chughtai & Buckley, 2008; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995), and there is ample evidence that employees' trait trust is positively related to dimensions of workplace trust (Colquitt, Scott, &

LePine, 2007). The meta-analysis by Colquitt et al. (2007) showed that trustors' trait trust predicted unique variance in trust at the workplace, even when controlling for perceived ability, benevolence and integrity of the target of trust. The question which traits influence workplace trust has largely remained unanswered.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THREE CULTURAL GROUPS OF EMPLOYEES

Unlike earlier research about workplace trust, in the current study we investigate majority employees, first-, and second-generation minority employees. First-, and second-generation minority employees comprise a considerable and increasing proportion of the Dutch workforce (Statistics Netherlands, 2003, 2013a). One difference between first-generation minority employees and second-generation minority employees is that the former have spent only a part of their lives in the Netherlands, whereas the latter have lived in the Netherlands their whole lives and consequently are more accustomed to Dutch culture and therewith Dutch organizational culture.

Another difference may pertain to the salience of being an immigrant. Compared to second-generation minority employees who are raised within the context of the new society, first-generation minority employees are more likely to have a salient immigrant identity. This increased salience of being an immigrant may reinforce perceptions of in- and out-group differences at work, which undermines trust (Brewer, 1979; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004).

Cultural minority employees have different experiences at the workplace than majority employees. For example, minority employees more often experience discrimination at the workplace than majority employees (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2009). Hofhuis, Van der Zee, and Otten (2008) found that minority employees were more likely to leave Dutch governmental institutions than majority employees because they felt less at home in the organization. Especially difficulties with the supervisor seemed to be a more pronounced reason to leave the organization among minority employees than among majority employees.

With respect to trust, additional challenges can arise for cultural minority employees at the workplace. There is evidence that trust differs between cultures (Bjørnskov, 2008; Fukuyama, 1995; Huff & Kelley, 2003; Inglehart, 1999) and positive trust scores of the Netherlands rank among the top of the world. For most immigrants this means living in a country where a trust culture has evolved that extends its reach beyond family and friendship structures (Realo, Allik, & Greenfield, 2008). These cultural differences might also translate to lower levels of workplace trust, especially for first-generation employees, who are most likely socialized in countries with lower generalized trust than the Netherlands.

Also pressure from majority employees on minority employees to assimilate to Dutch organizational culture could suppress the emergence of workplace trust among minority employees. A study in the Netherlands by Oerlemans and Peeters (2010) found that while minority (mostly first-generation) employees preferred a dual pathway of adapting to the host culture whereas maintaining their own cultural heritage (integration strategy), majority employees wanted "immigrants to completely adapt to the Dutch culture, without maintaining aspects of their heritage culture" (assimilation strategy, p. 472).

Cultural differences and related challenges are thus typically more pronounced for first-generation minority immigrants than for second-generation immigrants (Lucassen & Penninx, 1997). Overall, it seems that first-generation minority employees are more prone to experience low workplace trust than second-generation employees. Based on the given empirical evidence, we cannot straightforwardly predict whether second-generation minority employees will differ from majority employees, in terms of workplace trust. Therefore our first hypothesis only contrasts first-generation minority employees with both second-generation minority employees and majority employees.

H1: First-generation minority employees have lower workplace trust than majority employees and second-generation minority employees.

PERSONALITY AND WORKPLACE TRUST

Which aspects of employees' personality are related to dimensions of workplace trust? Most of the conceptual and empirical work on antecedents of dimensions of workplace trust has focused on trait trust. Possibly due to the intuitively appealing and empirically supported link between trait trust and state trust, few studies have investigated which aspects of employees' personality influence dimensions of workplace trust.

For example, Mooradian et al. (2006) found that agreeableness positively influenced trust in colleagues and trust in the supervisor. The study by Bergman, Small, Bergman, and Rentsch (2010) found that extraversion and emotional stability were positively related, but agreeableness, the trait which is usually described in terms of interpersonal warmth, and includes the subfacet trust, was unrelated to trust in others in newly formed teams. Evans and Revelle (2008) examined the predictive value of the Big Five and trait trust in an investment game and found that of the Big Five only agreeableness positively predicted trusting behaviour. Interestingly, when trait trust was introduced in the model, the effect of agreeableness was no longer significant, suggesting that broad measures of personality have little predictive

value with regard to trusting behaviour, when more specific and theoretically aligned traits are considered at the same time. In the current study, we therefore investigate the impact of narrow and specific traits in relation to workplace trust.

The first trait that we included in the current study is *self-esteem*. Self-esteem is defined as an individual's sense of self-worth (Rosenberg, 1979), entailing positive thoughts and feelings individuals have about themselves, which is also informed by how positively individuals believe *others* perceive and evaluate them (Shrauger & Schoeneman, 1979). Its positive implications have been demonstrated extensively in the organizational context (Judge & Bono, 2001; Pierce & Gardner, 2004). Self-esteem may play an important role in workplace trust for several reasons. Anthony, Wood, and Holmes (2007) showed that a high self-esteem can buffer against cues of rejection in social situations. Individuals with low self-esteem refrained from joining a group when acceptance by a group was ambiguous, whereas the willingness of individuals with high self-esteem to join a group was not affected by ambiguity of acceptance. Individuals with a high level of self-esteem feel more included in groups and assume that others accept them more readily than individuals with a low level of self-esteem (Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995), suggesting that it is "essentially a meter that serves to monitor, regulate, and maintain interpersonal attachments, and it is designed to motivate behaviors to increase inclusion and forestall rejection" (Leary & Baumeister, 2000, p. 24). It is therefore likely that employees high in self-esteem tend to trust others at their workplace more readily than employees low in self-esteem. Therefore, we expect:

H2: The higher employees' self-esteem the higher is their workplace trust.

The *secure attachment style*, the second trait we consider in the current study, refers to the ability of individuals to engage in trusting relationships. Of all traits assessed in the current study, the secure attachment style is conceptually most closely related to trait trust. It is a relational personality characteristic entailing self-worth derived from the feeling that supportive others would be available should one be in distress (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Mikulincer, Shaver, Sapir-Lavid, & Avihou-Kanza, 2009). From this stance, securely attached individuals are willing to explore and take risks, and as a consequence are able to establish and maintain satisfying and trusting interpersonal relationships. The applicability of attachment theory to understanding the interpersonal functioning of adults has been studied extensively (see, for example, Mikulincer, and Shaver (2007)). Earlier studies found that attachment security is an important antecedent for desired interpersonal and work-related outcomes (Davidovitz, Mikulincer, Shaver, Izsak, & Popper, 2007;

Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Simmons et al., 2009) and adjustment in intercultural settings (Handojo, 2000; Polek, Wöhrle, & Van Oudenhoven, 2010).

Hazan and Shaver (1990) investigated the influence of attachment styles on several work-related outcomes and attitudes. In comparison with insecurely attached employees, employees with a secure attachment style had a confident approach to work, enjoyed working without fear of failure and did not use work to avoid social interactions. Similarly, a study by Hardy and Barkham (1994) found that a secure attachment style of employees could contribute to adjustment at the workplace through higher satisfaction with relationships at work. Geller and Bamberger (2009) found that employees who were securely attached more often provided instrumental help to colleagues and were perceived as helpful (highest frequency of instrumental helping as indicated by their colleagues). Simmons et al. (2009) found that securely attached employees were able to maintain a trusting relationship with their direct supervisor which resulted in better work performance. Therefore, we expect:

H3: The more securely attached employees are, the higher is their workplace trust.

The Dutch workforce is culturally diverse. In diverse organizational settings, intercultural competences may be required for developing and maintaining workplace trust. The subtlety or specificity of intercultural competences that are needed in order to function effectively in a culturally diverse setting might not be captured by broad measures of personality, as the Big Five. Therefore, in order to increase precision, Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2000, 2001) proposed their intercultural personality framework. Their analysis of literature with respect to traits or competences that characterize an intercultural effective person was complemented with the development of an instrument that assesses the identified traits: openmindedness, social initiative, flexibility, emotional stability and cultural empathy. Validity of this framework has been supported by studies showing its predictive abilities with respect to psychosocial adjustment of students (Leong, 2007) and expatriates (Van Oudenhoven, Mol, & Van der Zee, 2003), cognitive and emotional reactions to stressful intercultural situations (Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, & De Grijjs, 2004), acculturation strategies of immigrants at work (Luijters, Van der Zee, & Otten, 2006), international orientation, multicultural activity and aspiration for an international career (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). In the following, we will describe these traits in more detail, and drawing on earlier findings to support our claims, we provide arguments why these traits should influence employees' workplace trust.

First, *social initiative* refers to the tendency to approach others actively. Leong (2007) found that high social initiative predicted reduced psychosocial adaptation difficulties among two groups of students, either residing abroad or in their home country. Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee (2002) found that among foreign students, social initiative was positively related to receiving social support from peers. Furthermore, social initiative is highly related to extraversion (Leone, Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Perugini, & Ercolani, 2005; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). Bergman et al. (2010) found that individuals with high scores on extraversion perceived others as being more trustworthy than individuals with low scores on extraversion. In sum, the inclination to approach others actively can be regarded as an essential trust building capacity. Second, *flexibility* describes individuals' ease in deviating from habitual behaviour. The relevance of this trait for the current study is exemplified by the study by Van Oudenhoven, Mol, et al. (2003), which found that expatriates scoring highly on this trait were more satisfied with their job and perceived higher levels of social support from others than expatriates who had low scores on flexibility. Flexibility in a fast-paced economical market might allow individuals to adjust with ease to rapid changes, for example, by adjusting strategies according to situations or persons, or by forming alliances in and across teams, when it is necessary. From this stance, it is likely that flexibility positively influences workplace trust. Third, *openmindedness* describes an open attitude towards others, including others' norms and values. The construct openmindedness is related to openness to experience (Leone et al., 2005; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000), but specifically entails openness towards other cultures. Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2000) found that students with high scores on openmindedness were more likely to be engaged in intercultural activities (such as speaking different languages or having friends with a different cultural background) than students who had low scores on this trait. When employees work with others who are different from them (e.g., in terms of cultural background, expertise, position), a high level of openmindedness might be needed in order to remain receptive to others' ideas (even in times of disagreement) and build trust, whereas low openmindedness might lead to misunderstanding or conflict and hence reduce trust. Fourth, *emotional stability* describes the ability to remain calm in stressful situations. It has been shown that this trait is highly negatively related to neuroticism (Leone et al., 2005; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000) and that individuals with low emotional stability (high neuroticism) tend to have low trust in others (Bergman et al., 2010; Omodei & McLennan, 2000). Fifth, *cultural empathy* refers to the ability to empathize with culturally different others. This dimension is frequently named as a crucial component of intercultural effectiveness (Bennett, 1986;

Chung & Bemak, 2002). Inferring from literature showing positive relations between empathy and prosocial behaviours (Archer, Diaz-Loving, Gollwitzer, Davis, & Foushee, 1981; Batson, Ahmad, & Lishner, 2002; Eisenberg et al., 1994), the tendency to empathize with different others can be considered crucial for establishing and maintaining trusting relationships. Therefore, we expect:

H4: Social initiative is positively related to workplace trust.

H5: Flexibility is positively related to workplace trust.

H6: Openmindedness is positively related to workplace trust.

H7: Emotional stability is positively related to workplace trust.

H8: Cultural empathy is positively related to workplace trust.

METHOD

Participants and procedure

A total of 439 employees were approached through an online, nation-wide panel and filled out a questionnaire. Because we wanted to test our hypotheses in the three groups, the sample consisted of 206 majority employees, 123 first-generation minority employees and 110 second-generation minority employees (see Table 1). Requirements for inclusion were a minimum age of 18, full-time employment at an organization and command of the Dutch language. We asked respondents to indicate their age and educational level (six categories ranging from *no formal education* to *university diploma*). Furthermore, we requested information about organizational characteristics, the estimated number of employees and the percentage of minority employees. For the number of employees we provided eight answer categories ranging from *fewer than 4* to *more than 500 employees*. Six answer categories were provided for percentage of minority employees, ranging from *less than 2%* to *more than 20%*. For ease of presentation, demographic information and organizational characteristics were recoded into broader categories (see Table 1). Among first-generation employees, 47 (38.2%) had a non-western² migration background. In the sample of second-generation employees, 21 (19.1%) had at least one parent with a non-western migration background.

²Non-western, in the definition applied by Statistics Netherlands, includes people from all countries from Africa, Latin America, Asia (except Indonesia and Japan) and Turkey.

TABLE 1
Demographic characteristics of participants and their organizations

Variable	Majority	Second generation	First generation
	(<i>N</i> = 206)	(<i>N</i> = 110)	(<i>N</i> = 123)
Gender			
Male	126 (61.2%)	71 (64.5%)	73 (59.3%)
Female	80 (38.8%)	39 (35.5%)	50 (40.7%)
Age			
21–30	54 (26.2%)	26 (23.6%)	26 (21.1%)
31–40	55 (26.7%)	38 (34.5%)	37 (30.1%)
41–50	49 (23.8%)	28 (25.5%)	31 (25.2%)
51–65	48 (23.3%)	18 (16.4%)	29 (23.6%)
Educational level			
Low	77 (37.4%)	39 (35.5%)	40 (32.5%)
Medium	110 (53.4%)	53 (48.2%)	58 (47.2%)
High	19 (9.2%)	18 (16.4%)	25 (20.3%)
Cultural diversity in the organization			
Low (<1%)	56 (27.2%)	18 (16.7%)	20 (16.9%)
Medium (1–8%)	69 (33.5%)	34 (31.5%)	32 (27.1%)
High (>8%)	81 (39.3%)	56 (51.9%)	66 (55.9%)
Size of the organization			
Small (<20)	42 (20.4%)	20 (18.5%)	26 (22%)
Medium (20–99)	41 (19.9%)	28 (25.9%)	28 (23.7%)
Large (100–499)	58 (28.2%)	29 (26.9%)	24 (20.3%)
Very large (>500)	65 (31.6%)	31 (28.7%)	40 (33.9%)

Sample sizes varied slightly due to missing data.

Materials

For all measures a 5-point Likert scale was used ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). We used existing instruments to measure traits.

Self-esteem was measured with the 10 items of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory (Rosenberg, 1965). An example item is “I am able to do things as well as most other people”.

Secure attachment was measured with the secure attachment subscale of the Attachment Style Questionnaire (Van Oudenhoven, Hofstra, & Bakker, 2003). This subscale comprises 7 items; an example is “I find it easy to get engaged in close relationships with other people”.

Intercultural traits were measured with a short 28-item version of the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000; Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002), consisting of five subscales. Emotional stability (example item: “is nervous”, reversed coded) and cultural empathy (“notices when someone is in trouble”) were each measured with 7 items, openmindedness (“is interested in other cultures”) with 6 items, social initiative (“takes initiative”) and flexibility (“likes routine”, reversed coded) with 4 items, each.

Measurement of workplace trust. At the time of this study, we were unaware of an existing instrument measuring trust in all three targets of trust, trust in colleagues, trust in the supervisor and trust in the organization. Therefore, we developed an instrument ourselves. For

the creation of items, we drew on Mayer et al.’s (1995) conceptual framework including items referring to ability, benevolence and integrity with respect to the three targets. Nineteen items were developed to capture three dimensions of workplace trust. The scales were constructed to entail items referring to various aspects indicative of trust, e.g., ability (“I have capable colleagues”, indicative for trust in colleagues), benevolence (“My supervisor helps me, when it is necessary”, indicative for trust in supervisor) and integrity (“My supervisor keeps his/her promises”, indicative for trust in supervisor; “This organization treats employees fairly”, indicative for trust in the organization).

First, we applied parallel analysis to our data set, to investigate the correct number of factors to retain (Horn, 1965), using the programme FACTOR by Lorenzo-Seva and Ferrando (2006). We compared our observed eigenvalues to the 95th percentile of eigenvalues created from completely random data (500 replications) in order to reject factors that were artificial ($p < .05$). The results were in line with our theoretical expectations, as three factors were retained.

Next, we conducted principal components analysis on the pooled sample in order to examine the factor structure and to identify problematic items (loadings below .5 and cross-loadings larger than .32, Costello & Osborne, 2005). Because we assumed that the workplace trust factors would be correlated, we applied the oblique direct oblimin rotation. We found that all items loaded on their intended factor, with loadings higher than .5 and

TABLE 2
Results of factor analysis for the pooled sample ($N = 439$) and standardized loadings of a CFA with selected items for the three groups of employees

Items	Factor loadings (varimax)			Standardized loadings CFA		
	1	2	3	maj	sec	fir
Factor 1: Trust in the supervisor						
1 My supervisor is competent	.79	.23	.27	.86	.79	.82
2 I trust my supervisor	.79	.32	.21	.87	.80	.83
3 My supervisor gives good guidance to our department	.79	.30	.24	.89	.86	.87
4 I get along well with my supervisor	.78	.30	.20			
5 My supervisor helps me, when it is necessary	.77	.30	.21			
6 My supervisor keeps his/her promises	.74	.29	.29	.80	.79	.89
7 My supervisor's intentions towards me are always good	.75	.40	.24			
Factor 2: Trust in the organization						
8 This organization treats employees fairly	.26	.80	.16	.81	.85	.79
9 This organization cares about its employees	.36	.74	.15	.85	.83	.78
10 This organization's intentions towards me are good	.41	.70	.15	.76	.83	.79
11 In this organization, there is enough room for having an own opinion	.37	.69	.30			
12 The goals of this organization are clear	.13	.57	.37	.55	.56	.65
13 I can be myself in this organization	.38	.59	.35	.66	.66	.72
14 My abilities are useful to this organization	.43	.58	.28			
Factor 3: Trust in colleagues						
15 I have capable colleagues	.17	.18	.80	.82	.85	.78
16 I am glad about the colleagues I have	.28	.18	.76			
17 My colleagues sympathize with me	.21	.23	.76	.79	.77	.72
18 My colleagues take responsibility for their work	.22	.13	.70	.71	.71	.72
19 My performance is valued by my colleagues	.22	.34	.69			
Percentage of explained variance	28.1	21.0	19.3			

Maj, majority employees ($N = 206$); sec, second-generation minority employees ($N = 110$); fir, first-generation minority employees ($N = 126$).

cross-loadings not exceeding .27. We also applied the orthogonal varimax rotation, which aims at creating uncorrelated factors. Table 2 presents the results with varimax rotation of all items for the pooled sample. As can be seen in Table 2, a conservative strategy (retaining only items with loadings above .5 and cross-loadings below .33) would have led to the dismissal of 9 of 19 items. Even though the oblique rotation results indicated that there were no problematic items, we used the information obtained from the orthogonal rotation results in order to reduce overlap between the three factors. Using confirmatory factor analysis conducted with AMOS, we compared whether model fit improved when removing the most problematic item per scale. Indeed, our results supported that removing these problematic items (item 7, item 14 and item 19) increased model fit significantly ($\Delta\chi^2 = 203.39$, $\Delta df = 48$, $p < .01$). We also tested whether this three-factor solution had a better fit than a number of alternative factor solutions. This was indeed supported by our data.³

³None of the alternative factor solutions, namely, the one factor solution and all possible combinations of latent variables (e.g., trust in the organization vs. trust in colleagues and trust in the supervisor, see also Lehmann-Willenbrock and Kauffeld (2010)) came close to the fit of the three-factor solution. The CFI increase of the three-factor solution compared to the alternative factor solutions ranged from .06 to .24.

In order to test whether our instrument reliably measured the three factors across the three groups of employees, we conducted invariance tests with AMOS. First, we tested whether item loadings were non-invariant (did not differ significantly) across the three groups (supporting weak invariance) and, second, we tested whether item intercepts were non-invariant across the three groups (supporting strong invariance). Model comparisons evaluated with χ^2 difference tests indicated that we had to reject the weak invariance model. In order to obtain weak invariance, we dropped item 5 from the scale trust in the supervisor (The loading was weaker for majority employees than minority employees.), item 11 from the scale trust in the organization (The loading was weaker for second-generation minority employees than for the other two groups.) and item 16 from the scale trust in colleagues. (The loading was weaker for first-generation minority employees than for the other two groups.) Similarly, strong invariance was not supported. To obtain strong invariance, we dropped item 4 of the scale trust in the supervisor (the item intercept was higher for the second-generation minority employees than for the other two groups). Good fit is indicated by a comparative fit index (CFI) of at least .90 (Bentler, 1990), and a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) not exceeding .08 (Byrne, 2001). The final

instrument showed acceptable to good model fit in the three samples (majority employees: $CFI = .95$, $RMSEA = .084$; second-generation minority employees: $CFI = .94$, $RMSEA = .092$; first-generation minority employees: $CFI = .99$, $RMSEA = .028$), composite reliability (CR) exceeded the .70 threshold (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), and the average variance extracted (AVE) exceeded the .50 threshold (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) in all groups of employees (see Table 3). Overall, these findings suggest that the construct validity of our instrument is satisfactory.⁴

Analytic procedures

To test whether first-generation minority employees had lower workplace trust than majority employees and second-generation employees (H1), we conducted multi-group latent mean analysis (LMA) in AMOS. We used LMA to test true mean differences in employees' trust in colleagues, trust in supervisor and trust in the organization across groups (first-, and second-generation minority employees and majority employees). The advantage of LMA compared to traditional approaches (e.g., *t*-tests, MANOVA) is that it is not subject to measurement error due to composite scores. We already established strong invariance of our instrument across the three groups, which is a necessary precondition for conducting LMA (Byrne, 2004; Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998; Vandenberg & Lance, 2000). We then tested the LMA.

⁴We also investigated relationships of the three subscales with potentially related constructs (convergent validity; job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational climate, friendship avoidance/breach of psychological contract) and unrelated constructs (divergent validity; social trust, political trust), which were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The workplace trust scales were strongly positively related to job satisfaction (correlations ranged from .46 to .64, $p < .001$ with the two items "I enjoy going to work" and "I can sufficiently develop myself") and strongly positively related to organizational commitment (correlations ranged from .52 with trust in colleagues to .77 with trust in the organization; organizational commitment was measured with scale consisting of the three items "I am proud to be working for this organization", "The organization I work for means a lot to me" and "I feel connected to this organization", Cronbach's $\alpha = .90$). The three scales were also strongly related to perceiving a positive organizational climate (correlations ranged from .59 to .63, $p < .001$, with the item "There is a good atmosphere at work"). Trust in colleagues was most strongly negatively related to friendship avoidance ($r = -.24$, $p < .001$, with the item "It is better not to establish friendships at work") and we found negative weak to moderate relationships between the workplace trust scales with breach of psychological contract (correlations ranged from $-.25$ to $-.39$, $p < .001$, with the item "There are people in this organization who abuse you"). With respect to divergent validity, the workplace trust scales were weakly related to social trust ($r \leq .25$, $p < .001$, three item measure, Cronbach's $\alpha = .78$, example item: "People in the Netherlands help one another"), whereas relationships with the two items measuring political trust ("The government is capable to take good care of its citizens" and "The government acts with good intentions") were weak ($r = .10$, $p < .05$) or non-significant, showing that the workplace trust scales indeed tap into rather situation specific than workplace unrelated trust constructs.

Because we expected the lowest scores in the first-generation minority group, we used this group as reference group.

The analytic procedures, described from here on, were applied separately to each sample of employees, majority employees, first-, and second-generation minority employees. We expected personality traits to be positively related to trust in colleagues, trust in the supervisor and trust in the organization (H2–H8). To test our hypotheses we first investigated correlations between traits and the three trust outcomes. This was followed by structural equation modelling (SEM) using maximum likelihood method of estimation in order to identify which personality traits uniquely predict workplace trust outcomes. SEM offers the simultaneous test of the independent variables (traits) on the three dependent variables (the three workplace trust outcomes), whereas controlling for interrelations between independent, as well as, interrelations between dependent variables.

Before testing the structural models, we tested the fits of the measurement models. All potential control variables (demographic and organizational characteristic) were included in the measurement models. If they were related to an outcome variable, we would include them in the structural model. For reasons of parsimony, control variables were excluded from the structural models if they were unrelated to outcome variables.

RESULTS

In the following, we will first present outcomes pertaining to differences between the three groups of employees (H1), before turning to the results of the investigation of the relations between personality traits and workplace trust dimensions, within each group of employees (H2–H8).

Differences in workplace trust between the three groups of employees

We expected that first-generation employees would have lower workplace trust outcomes than second-generation minority employees and majority employees (H1). The first generation served as reference group. Therefore, in this group the means were fixed to zero whereas means in the other two groups were freely estimated. A critical ratios index ($CR = \text{parameter estimate divided by its standard error (SE)} \geq \pm 1.96$) would reject the hypothesis that the estimate equals zero. Additionally, we provide Cohen's *d*. We found that second-generation employees had higher scores than first-generation employees in trust in the supervisor ($CR = 2.33$, $d = .31$) and trust in colleagues ($CR = 2.01$, $d = .27$). None of the other comparisons revealed significant differences. These outcomes did not change when we included all covariates in a MANCOVA conducted in SPSS with planned contrasts. Hence, these mean differences were not influenced

TABLE 3
Means, standard deviations and latent variable correlations of study variables

Variable	Sample	CR	AVE	M	SD	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 Self-esteem	maj	0.86	0.67	3.93	0.71	.53***	.37***	.01	.06	.75***	.35***	.38***	.28***	.38***
	sec	0.86	0.67	4.03	0.70	.67***	.39**	-.01	.16	.77***	.19	.34**	.46***	.45***
	fir	0.88	0.71	3.93	0.71	.40***	.56***	-.05	.26*	.81***	.53***	.40***	.26*	.36***
2 Secure attachment	maj	0.83	0.62	3.65	0.61	—	.35***	-.13	.31***	.38***	.61***	.58***	.37***	.51***
	sec	0.86	0.68	3.78	0.58	—	.46***	.05	.33**	.37**	.50***	.52***	.43***	.40**
	fir	0.85	0.66	3.73	0.62	—	.54***	-.10	.57***	.39***	.60***	.31**	.24*	.44***
3 Social initiative	maj	0.81	0.59	3.34	0.79	—	—	-.08	.24**	.39***	.28***	.11	.04	.14
	sec	0.83	0.62	3.26	0.84	—	—	.08	.09	.31*	.39***	.17	.24*	.25*
	fir	0.75	0.50	3.35	0.73	—	—	-.18	.52***	.46***	.63***	.25*	.37**	.57***
4 Flexibility	maj	0.81	0.52	2.73	0.73	—	—	—	.10	.09	-.18*	-.01	-.14	-.23**
	sec	0.83	0.55	2.79	0.80	—	—	—	-.05	.12	.19	-.02	-.19	-.01
	fir	0.80	0.51	2.67	0.70	—	—	—	-.06	.04	-.18	-.17	-.30**	-.25*
5 Openmindedness	maj	0.82	0.61	3.23	0.77	—	—	—	—	.06	.45***	.20*	.02	.07
	sec	0.85	0.66	3.35	0.80	—	—	—	—	.14	.36**	.18	.06	.14
	fir	0.80	0.59	3.55	0.69	—	—	—	—	.13	.67***	.26*	.27*	.36***
6 Emotional stability	maj	0.87	0.69	3.60	0.79	—	—	—	—	—	.19*	.30***	.19*	.30***
	sec	0.82	0.61	3.71	0.74	—	—	—	—	—	.01	.14	.21	.43***
	fir	0.87	0.69	3.57	0.82	—	—	—	—	—	.33**	.24*	.25*	.31**
7 Cultural empathy	maj	0.85	0.66	3.68	0.64	—	—	—	—	—	—	.30***	.19*	.30***
	sec	0.85	0.65	3.73	0.61	—	—	—	—	—	—	.37**	.17	.29*
	fir	0.81	0.59	3.76	0.56	—	—	—	—	—	—	.21	.26*	.40***
8 Trust in colleagues	maj	0.82	0.60	3.76	0.75	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.66***	.62***
	sec	0.82	0.61	3.88	0.72	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.71***	.66***
	fir	0.78	0.55	3.67	0.75	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.45***	.55***
9 Trust in supervisor	maj	0.92	0.74	3.60	0.93	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.80***
	sec	0.88	0.66	3.80	0.81	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.79***
	fir	0.91	0.72	3.55	0.88	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.81***
10 Trust in organization	maj	0.85	0.54	3.62	0.77	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	sec	0.87	0.57	3.69	0.83	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	fir	0.86	0.56	3.56	0.78	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Maj, majority group employees; sec, second-generation minority employees; fir, first-generation minority employees.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

by subsample distributions of age, gender, educational level and non-western migration background, percentage of minority employees and size of the employing organization.

Relationships between traits and workplace trust dimensions

We expected that the seven traits would be positively related to the three trust outcomes (H2–H8). Table 3 shows the means, standard deviations, reliabilities and latent variable correlations of all variables in this study for the three samples. Of the 63 expected correlations, 41 (65%) were found to be significant, and in the expected direction (14 with small effect size, $r < .30$; 23 with medium effect size, $r < .50$; and four with large effect size, $r > .50$, Cohen, 1992). We found that self-esteem (H2) and secure attachment (H3) were consistently positively related to all three workplace trust measures across all groups of employees. Also emotional stability (H7) and cultural empathy (H8) were, with few exceptions, significantly related to the workplace trust dimensions. We found significant correlations of social initiative with our outcomes (H4) only among the two minority groups. Openmindedness was significantly related to all three outcomes (H6) only among first-generation employees. Unexpectedly, we did not find support for the relationships between flexibility and workplace trust outcomes (H5). We found that being flexible was even negatively related to facets of workplace trust among majority employees and first-generation minority employees.

Measurement model. The measurement models included 10 latent variables and 33 indicators. We screened the personality traits for items that did not load highly ($< .50$) on the expected factor or that showed high cross-loadings and removed these three from subsequent analyses.⁵ For social initiative and trust in colleagues (each 3 items), flexibility and trust in the supervisor (each 4 items) and trust in the organization (5 items) items were used as indicators of the respective latent variable. Parcels (groups of items) were used when latent factors consisted of more than five items. This was because of higher reliability of parcels compared to items, decreased risk of spurious correlations and more efficient estimates of latent variables (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002; Rushton, Brainerd, & Pressley, 1983). We randomly assigned items to parcels, so that each latent variable with more than 5 items had three parcels as indicators. As can be seen in Table 4, these models had superior fit compared to those using only items as indicators of latent variables

⁵Self-esteem: “I feel I do not have much to be proud of”, “I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others”; social initiative: “likes to stay in the background” (reversed).

TABLE 4
Model fit of measurement models

Group	χ^2	df	CFI	RMSEA [90% CI]
Majority (items)	2388.88***	1229	.81	.068 [.064; .072]
Majority (parcels)	898.41***	482	.90	.065 [.058; .072]
First generation (items)	1970.44***	1229	.79	.071 [.065; .076]
First generation (parcels)	703.57***	482	.90	.062 [.052; .071]
Second generation (items)	2023.22***	1229	.75	.078 [.072; .084]
Second generation (parcels)	734.25***	482	.88	.070 [.060; .080]

CFI, comparative fit index; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation.

*** $p < .001$.

(see also Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto, and Fietzer (2013)).

A number of potential control variables were included in the measurement model. Relations of age, gender, educational level with organizational trust outcomes have been found in previous studies but findings are inconclusive (Cook & Wall, 1980; Thau, Crossley, Bennett, & Sczesny, 2007; Zhang, Tsui, Song, Li, & Jia, 2008). Previous research showed that non-western immigrant status did have a negative impact on general social trust outcomes (Statistics Netherlands, 2010b), but it is not evident if this translates to lower trust outcomes at the workplace. We also included organizational characteristics, such as size and cultural diversity of the organization's workforce to test if these factors qualified for inclusion as control variables. In all three samples the model fit was adequate to good. With respect to control variables, we found in the sample of majority employees that age was positively related to trust in colleagues ($r = .17$, $p < .05$) and organizational size was negatively related to trust in the organization ($r = -.19$, $p < .01$). However, these paths were not significant in the structural model, thus we proceeded our analyses without control variables. In the other two samples none of the control variables were significantly related to the outcome variables and were consequently dropped in the structural model. Model fits of the measurement models were adequate and can be found in Table 4. Further evidence for the reliability of our models was provided by significant loadings of all items and parcels on their latent factors, in all three samples (see also CR and AVE in Table 3).

Structural model. We expected that the personality traits under investigation would be positively related to the three trust dimensions (H2–H8). In the structural model, the seven personality traits were allowed to

correlate, as were the three outcome variables (The model fits were identical to the measurement models).

The outcomes of the structural models for the three samples are summarized in Table 5. In the following we will present the results separately for each group of employees.

In the sample of majority employees, in line with hypothesis 3, secure attachment was positively related to trust in colleagues ($\beta = .59, p < .001$), trust in the supervisor ($\beta = .36, p < .01$) and trust in the organization ($\beta = .43, p < .001$). The unexpected negative relationship between flexibility and trust in organization was also evident in the structural model results ($\beta = -.20, p < .05$). None of the remaining traits were uniquely related to dimensions of workplace trust.

Similarly to the findings for majority employees, in the sample of second-generation employees the secure attachment style was, as expected, positively related to trust in colleagues (H3, $\beta = .46, p < .05$). None of the remaining personality traits were uniquely related to dimensions of workplace trust.

In line with our expectations, in the sample of first-generation employees self-esteem was positively related to trust in colleagues (H2, $\beta = .69, p < .001$), and social initiative was positively related to trust in the organization (H4, $\beta = .42, p < .05$). We had earlier found an unexpected negative correlation between flexibility and trust in the supervisor among first-generation employees. These findings were also revealed in the structural model: flexibility was negatively related to trust in the supervisor ($\beta = -.28, p < .01$). None of the remaining personality traits were uniquely related to dimensions of workplace trust.

We repeated the analyses with the models including only items as indicators of latent variables (see Table 4), in order to test whether the use of parcels led to different results. We replicated the results for each group. Only among second-generation minority employees, the estimate of secure attachment style predicting trust in colleagues was no longer statistically significant ($\beta = .51, p = .07$).

DISCUSSION

So far, there has been little if any investigation of possible differences in workplace trust between majority and minority employees, and even less between first-, and second-generation minority employees. This is surprising, because the workforce, not only in the Netherlands, is becoming increasingly culturally diverse. Similarly, little attention has been paid to the influence of personality traits on workplace trust (Kramer, 1999). The current study provides a first step to filling these gaps in the literature.

Due to increased challenges arising from cultural differences, we expected that first-generation minority employees would experience lower workplace trust than majority employees (H1). Our findings show that

this was not the case. First-generation minority employees in the Netherlands do not experience less trust in their colleagues, their supervisor or their employing organization than Dutch majority employees. Whereas cultural minorities often experience more difficulties than the Dutch majority *prior* to employment (e.g., higher unemployment; discriminatory applicant selection, The Netherlands Institute of Social Research, 2010a, 2010b; quicker unemployment increases among cultural minorities in times of economic decline, Statistics Netherlands, 2013b), our findings encourage the idea that once employed, coming from another country does not hinder development and maintenance of trusting interpersonal relationships at work as well as the perception that the employing organization can be relied upon.

We had also expected, and indeed found, that first-generation minority employees have lower workplace trust than second-generation minority employees (H1). More specifically, these differences were evident for the two interpersonal facets of workplace trust, trust in colleagues and trust in the supervisor. This shows that second-generation minority employees seem especially adept, in comparison with first-generation minority employees with regard to establishing interpersonal trust at the workplace. This could be explained by the fact that they have been socialized in the Dutch culture, and are consequently more accustomed to Dutch work culture. It is then surprising, that we did not find that majority employees had higher levels of interpersonal trust than first-generation minority employees. One possible explanation might be that second-generation minority employees, due to socialization in multiple cultures, have developed personalities that indicate greater adaptability to various settings than majority employees. A post hoc test of this idea based on all personality traits measured in the present study using MANOVA did not reveal differences between the two groups. However, inspecting univariate test statistics we found that the secure attachment style was marginally higher among second-generation minority employees ($F(1,311) = 3.54, p = .061, \eta^2 = .01$), indicating some preliminary support for this argument.

The second goal of the current study was the investigation of the relationships between personality traits and dimensions of workplace trust. Because we wanted to take into account the possibility that different personality traits might be related to workplace trust within each group of employees, we conducted our analyses separately for the three groups of employees. We had expected, and the correlational findings supported our hypotheses (H2–H4; H6–H8) that self-esteem, secure attachment, social initiative, openmindedness, emotional stability and cultural empathy were related to workplace trust dimensions.

Unexpected was our finding that flexibility was negatively related to workplace trust dimensions. This finding

TABLE 5
Path coefficients from the structural models

Trait	Sample	Trust in colleagues			Trust in supervisor			Trust in organization		
		B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Self-esteem	maj	0.13	0.19	.10	0.26	0.24	.16	0.17	0.21	.12
	sec	0.07	0.35	.07	0.66	0.40	.52	0.07	0.49	.04
	fir	0.89	0.34	.69***	0.01	0.31	.01	0.05	0.29	.04
Secure attachment	maj	0.73	0.15	.59***	0.56	0.18	.36**	0.58	0.16	.43***
	sec	0.54	0.26	.46*	0.22	0.29	.16	0.25	0.36	.07
	fir	0.30	0.20	.24	-0.02	0.19	-.02	0.23	0.18	.18
Social initiative	maj	-0.12	0.07	-.14	-0.13	0.09	-.13	-0.09	0.07	-.10
	sec	-0.09	0.08	-.13	0.03	0.09	.03	-0.03	0.11	-.03
	fir	-0.08	0.19	-.07	0.24	0.19	.21	0.46	0.18	.42*
Flexibility	maj	0.03	0.08	.03	-0.14	0.11	-.11	-0.23	0.09	-.20*
	sec	-0.07	0.11	-.07	-0.20	0.13	-.18	-0.13	0.16	-.09
	fir	-0.18	0.12	-.17	-0.32	0.12	-.28**	-0.19	0.11	-.17
Openmindedness	maj	0.15	0.17	.08	-0.09	0.21	-.04	-0.05	0.18	-.03
	sec	-0.06	0.16	-.05	-0.11	0.18	-.07	-0.14	0.22	-.07
	fir	0.51	0.38	.24	0.47	0.37	.21	0.15	0.33	.07
Emotional Stability	maj	0.06	0.13	.06	0.01	0.16	.01	0.11	0.14	.10
	sec	-0.02	0.24	-.02	-0.26	0.28	-.23	0.53	0.35	.37
	fir	-0.27	0.22	-.29	0.18	0.21	.17	0.04	0.19	.04
Cultural Empathy	maj	-0.13	0.15	-.10	-0.09	0.19	-.05	-0.02	0.17	-.01
	sec	0.24	0.16	.22	0.05	0.18	.04	0.42	0.23	.26
	fir	-0.49	0.31	-.35	-0.17	0.30	-.11	-0.12	0.27	-.09
Explained variance (%)	maj		37.0			17.9			31.8	
	sec		30.8			30.6			29.2	
	fir		28.0			23.0			38.0	

Maj, majority employees; sec, second-generation minority employees; fir, first-generation minority employees.

B, unstandardized coefficient; SE B, Standard error unstandardized coefficient; β , standardized coefficient.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

is inconsistent with previous research by Van Oudenhoven, Mol, et al. (2003), who showed that flexibility was positively related to perceived social support and job satisfaction.

In order to identify those aspects of personality with the strongest influence on workplace trust, we conducted structural equation models for each group (majority, first-, and second-generation minority employees) with personality traits as simultaneous predictors of the three dimensions of workplace trust. We found that the influence of traits on dimensions of workplace trust differed across the groups of employees. The previously reported influence of trait trust (in the current study conceptualized as secure attachment) on workplace trust dimensions (Colquitt et al., 2007; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Simmons et al., 2009) was most evident for majority employees. Among this group, the secure attachment style significantly and positively predicted all three workplace trust outcomes. In the group of second-generation minority employees, the secure attachment style explained unique variance only in trust in colleagues (no other trait was uniquely related to any of the three workplace trust dimensions), and among first-generation minority employees the secure attachment style was not uniquely related to the workplace trust dimensions. However, among first-generation minority employees we found that traits other than secure attachment explained unique variance in workplace trust. Interestingly, in this group, the single significant predictor of trust in colleagues was not secure attachment, as in the other two groups, but self-esteem. For first-generation minority employees, relationships with colleagues, which may oftentimes be perceived as “outgroup members”, may potentially be stressful. For them, self-esteem may act as a protective mechanism, as a buffer against stress and negative emotions arising from feelings of rejection (Anthony et al., 2007; Leary et al., 1995).

We also found that social initiative positively impacted trust in the organization among first-generation minority employees. This finding is rather surprising given that social initiative did not explain unique variance in interpersonal trust. Possibly, this finding could be interpreted as an artefact originating in the pre-employment phase of first-generation minority employees. For this group, accessing the employment market is especially difficult. Social networks are an important asset for finding employment (Granovetter, 1995), and the social networks of immigrants are less functional to achieve this in the Netherlands (Klaver, Mevissen, & Odé, 2005). Hence, social initiative, the ability to actively seek contact with others and to activate social resources, might be especially crucial for this group: it implies better chances to become and stay employed, which also allows for higher levels of trust (De Vroome, Coenders, Van Tubergen, & Verkuyten, 2011).

Unexpected were two findings regarding the negative relations between flexibility and workplace trust

dimensions. We found that flexibility negatively influenced trust in the supervisor among first-generation minority employees, and among majority employees it negatively influenced trust in the organization. For second-generation minority employees, we did not find that flexibility was related to workplace trust dimensions. Post hoc analyses showed that the effect of flexibility on trust in the supervisor in this group of employees (the correlation was marginally significant, $r = -.19$; $p = .099$) was conditional on scores on other traits. We found that the effect of flexibility was moderated by all other traits except openmindedness with a clear picture emerging: flexibility negatively influenced trust in the supervisor only among those second-generation minority employees who lacked cultural empathy (interaction term: $p = .015$), social initiative ($p = .032$), self-esteem ($p = .045$), emotional stability ($p = .072$) and secure attachment ($p = .092$).

It is possible that highly flexible employees easily adapt to their working environment at first but become frustrated over time if their efforts are not sufficiently recognized or valued. In other words, initial attempts to establish trusting relationships, for example, by repeatedly accommodating the supervisor's requests, could result in an imbalance between expectations and justice perceptions, and in interpersonal dynamics, that in the long-term deteriorate trust (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Another explanation of the negative effects of flexibility on workplace trust dimensions might be that highly flexible employees are perceived as unreliable. For example, Leone et al. (2005) found that flexibility was negatively related to conscientiousness and to performance orientation.

These explanations are post hoc and speculative and they are furthermore complicated by the fact that the effects of flexibility were found for trust in the supervisor among minority employees and trust in the organization among majority employees. It could be argued that highly flexible majority employees are more likely to leave the organization (low trust in the organization), whereas highly flexible minority employees (and in case of second-generation minority employees only those with low scores on other traits) react with decreased trust in the supervisor, because they have fewer alternative employment opportunities (for example, less effective social networks and a higher chance of discrimination during application procedures).

Clearly, follow-up research is needed. For example, it would be interesting to investigate whether individual's reported ease in deviating from routine behaviour (flexibility as measured in the current study) relates to justice perceptions, functional flexibility (job changes due to organizational restructuring; Cordery, Sevastos, Mueller, & Parker, 1993) and to turnover (intentions).

Research about the role of traits for workplace trust is scarce. The findings of this study show that the positive relations between secure attachment (trait trust) and

different trust states in the organizational setting do not hold across all cultural groups of employees. Among first-generation minority employees, the links between trait trust and states of trust, which are clearly evident among majority employees, and to a lesser extent also among second-generation minority employees, are not strongly supported by our data. Rather, for first-generation minority employees, levels of workplace trust depend on other traits.

Implications and limitations

Our findings may inform professionals who are aiming to increase workplace trust through personnel selection, trainings and interventions. In line with the eminent role of trait trust for workplace trust (at least for majority employees), professionals could align procedures in order to build on the availability of the secure attachment style in their workforce (Davidovitz et al., 2007; Kahn, 1995), for example, by assigning key roles to individuals with highly secure attachment styles. Davidovitz et al. (2007) showed that securely attached leaders served as security providers for their subordinates, enhancing their socioemotional and instrumental functioning and mental health. The findings of the current study, as well as knowledge about what is “inside the minds of securely and insecurely attached people” (Mikulincer et al., 2009, p. 615), could motivate professionals to adjust existing organizational procedures and policy. The procedural knowledge underlying secure attachment: if I encounter obstacles or become distressed, I know that approaching another person who is supportive brings relief (Mikulincer et al., 2009) could be used to guide training programmes and interventions. The script could, for example, also be formalized in structural guidelines for whom to approach when under distress (e.g., securely attached mentors), or manifested in organizations’ visions and strategic goals. This could increase the availability of an organizational attachment security script of employees and provide a secure setting for maintaining or increasing trust.

Moreover, a practical implication of the present findings is that HR managers and supervisors might be well-advised to differentiate their trainings directed at enhancing interpersonal trust at the workplace for first-generation minority employees: A high level of self-esteem could serve as a protective mechanism, especially when working with culturally insensitive colleagues or supervisors. Future studies could, for example, investigate whether the effect of self-esteem and secure attachment on trust is moderated by the diversity climate of an organization. Finally, our findings suggest that encouraging more flexibility may be risky.

There are also limitations to this study. It is cross-sectional and relied on self-reports. Also, we did not include tenure and time spent in the Netherlands as control variables. Even though tenure has mostly been found to be unrelated to dimensions of workplace trust

(Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995; Robinson, 1996), it is possible that time spent in the Netherlands could explain some variance in workplace trust for immigrant employees. For example, it is possible that the longer immigrants stay in a host country, the more familiar they become with the host’s working culture and hence assimilate accordingly.

The current study only included participants with good command of the Dutch language and relatively high educational levels. Inclusion of low-educated blue-collar workers with little command of the Dutch language in the study may have caused different outcomes in terms of differences in workplace trust compared to the Dutch majority employees. Further validation of our findings among immigrants with little command of the Dutch language and low educational levels, possibly with translated versions of instruments is therefore recommended.

Finally, the current study only included participants with a full-time employment. Our findings might not be generalizable to employees who work part-time. The centrality of workplace trust might be lower in the lives of employees working part-time in comparison with full-time employees, as they spend less time at the workplace. Also, part-time employees might differ with respect to traits from full-time employees. For example, Krausz, Bizman and Braslavsky (2001) showed that employees with an anxious/ambivalent attachment style preferred working as external employees, in contrast to individuals with a secure attachment style who preferred working at the organization.

Yet, even though further differentiation and specification is needed, the present study clearly reveals that distinguishing employees in terms of their cultural background and taking into account individual differences provides greater insight into the determinants of workplace trust.

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