

The Influence of Employer Attractiveness and Job Characteristics on Intention to Apply Among Generation Z Jobseekers in East Java: Organizational Reputation as a Mediating Variable (A Survey of LinkedIn Users)

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Abstract

Keywords:

Employer Attractiveness; Job Characteristics; Intention to Apply; Organizational Reputation; Generation Z; PLS-SEM

Purpose: This study aims to examine the influence of **Employer Attractiveness** and **Job Characteristics** on **Intention to Apply** among Generation Z jobseekers in East Java, Indonesia, with **Organizational Reputation** as a mediating variable. The research tests seven hypotheses to understand both direct and indirect effects of these variables on job application intentions.

Methods: A quantitative survey approach was employed, targeting 100 Generation Z individuals with active LinkedIn accounts. Data were collected using structured questionnaires adapted from previous studies. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze the data, including measurement model evaluation (outer loading, AVE, reliability), structural model assessment (path coefficients, R²), and bootstrapping procedures for hypothesis testing.

Results: The findings indicate that Employer Attractiveness directly and positively influences Intention to Apply, while Job Characteristics has no direct effect. Both variables significantly influence Intention to Apply indirectly through Organizational Reputation. Organizational Reputation also directly and positively affects Intention to Apply. The measurement and structural models demonstrated adequate validity, reliability, and goodness of fit.

Implications: The study highlights the importance of employer branding, organizational reputation, and meaningful job design in attracting Generation Z talent. Organizations can leverage these insights to improve recruitment strategies and strengthen their reputation among young professionals. Future research is encouraged to explore other mediating factors and test the model in different regions or industries.

INTRODUCTION

East Java, Indonesia, is experiencing a significant demographic shift as Generation Z increasingly enters the labor market. With a total workforce of over 5.5 million Generation Z individuals, this group represents a substantial proportion of the productive population. Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, exhibits unique characteristics shaped by growing up in the digital era, such as high adaptability to technology, preference for meaningful work, and sensitivity to organizational ethics (Sekar Arum et al., 2023), (Nurhabibah & Farid, 2025). Despite the increasing demand for qualified personnel, organizations often struggle to attract and retain this generation due to its selective job search behavior, high mobility, and distinct expectations for job characteristics. These trends present both practical and theoretical challenges for

understanding what motivates Generation Z to apply for jobs and how organizational factors, such as employer attractiveness and reputation, influence their decisions.

Several studies have examined factors affecting job application intention among young jobseekers. For instance, (Das & Kumar, 2023) highlighted the role of corporate social responsibility, perceived work environment, and organizational reputation in shaping organizational attractiveness for Generation Z students in India. Similarly, (Junça Silva & Dias, 2023) found that employer branding positively influences corporate reputation, which subsequently affects intention to apply. Research by (El-Menawy & Saleh, 2023) demonstrated that social media platforms mediate the relationship between employer attractiveness and Generation Z's job application intentions. Other studies have explored job characteristics as influential factors; (Gina et al., 2025) found that job design, skill variety, and task significance impact applicants' perceptions, although often mediated by organizational reputation. Collectively, these studies establish a state-of-the-art understanding of employer attractiveness, job characteristics, and organizational reputation as determinants of job application behavior, but gaps remain in applying these findings to the specific context of Generation Z in East Java, Indonesia.

While existing research provides valuable insights, most studies either focus on general populations or are conducted in international contexts that may not reflect local labor market conditions. Moreover, empirical studies on Generation Z jobseekers in Indonesia, particularly those utilizing professional platforms such as LinkedIn, remain limited. Prior work often emphasizes direct relationships between employer attractiveness or job characteristics and intention to apply, with less attention given to the mediating role of organizational reputation in this demographic. Therefore, a comprehensive investigation is needed to examine not only the direct effects of employer attractiveness and job characteristics but also how these factors indirectly influence intention to apply through the formation of organizational reputation. Addressing this gap is critical to developing a nuanced understanding of the decision-making process of Generation Z in competitive regional labor markets.

Based on the identified research gap, this study aims to investigate the influence of employer attractiveness and job characteristics on intention to apply among Generation Z jobseekers in East Java, with organizational reputation serving as a mediating variable. The key research questions are: (1) How does employer attractiveness influence intention to apply? (2) How do job characteristics affect intention to apply, both directly and through organizational reputation? (3) What is the role of organizational reputation in shaping application intentions? The novelty of this study lies in its regional focus on East Java, the use of LinkedIn as a primary source for measuring jobseeker perceptions, and the integration of employer attractiveness, job characteristics, and organizational reputation into a unified empirical framework. This research contributes theoretically by extending the Theory of Planned Behavior to a local Generation Z context and practically by offering actionable insights for organizations aiming to attract and retain top young talent in digitally mediated labor markets.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research design using a survey approach to investigate the influence of employer attractiveness and job characteristics on intention to apply among Generation Z jobseekers in East Java, with organizational reputation serving as a mediating variable. The research design was selected to test the proposed hypotheses and to measure the

relationships between multiple constructs numerically, allowing for statistical analysis using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

The sample population consisted of Generation Z individuals aged 15–29 years who were actively seeking employment or planning to apply for jobs in East Java. Participants were required to have an active LinkedIn account, as this platform was used to assess their exposure to organizational reputation and employer attractiveness. Using purposive sampling, a total of 100 respondents were selected to ensure they met the criteria relevant to the study objectives. This sampling method was deemed appropriate because it targeted respondents most likely to provide valid and relevant insights into the research problem.

Data collection was conducted via an online questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. The survey instrument was developed based on established scales from previous studies: employer attractiveness indicators were adapted from (Junça Silva & Dias, 2023), job characteristics indicators, organizational reputation indicators, and intention to apply indicators. Each construct was measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire was designed to capture respondents' perceptions accurately and was pre-tested for clarity and reliability.

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics to summarize respondents' demographics and mean perceptions of each variable, followed by inferential analysis using PLS-SEM. Outer model evaluation was conducted to assess indicator validity and reliability, including outer loading, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability. The inner model assessed path coefficients, R-squared values, and significance of hypothesized relationships. Bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 resamples were used to evaluate the significance of direct and indirect effects, ensuring robustness in hypothesis testing. All procedures were documented to ensure the study can be replicated by future researchers.

Overall, the method provides sufficient detail for replication, clearly describes the study design, sampling approach, data collection techniques, measurement instruments, and analytical procedures, while adhering to the recommended length for quantitative research sections.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Outer Loading

The table below presents the outer loading values for all indicators of the four latent variables: Employer Attractiveness, Job Characteristics, Intention to Apply, and Organizational Reputation. Outer loading measures the extent to which each indicator represents its underlying construct. Values equal to or greater than 0.70 are considered acceptable, indicating adequate convergent validity (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 1: Outer Loading

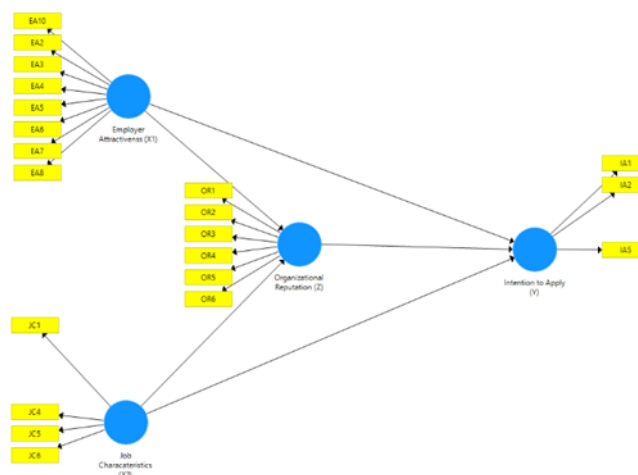
Variable	Item	<i>Outer Loading</i>	Status
<i>Employer Attractiveness</i>	EA10	0,714	Valid
	EA2	0,805	Valid
	EA3	0,839	Valid
	EA4	0,826	Valid
	EA5	0,815	Valid
	EA6	0,766	Valid
	EA7	0,765	Valid
	EA8	0,726	Valid
<i>Job Characteristics</i>	JC1	0,797	Valid
	JC4	0,836	Valid
	JC5	0,780	Valid
	JC6	0,767	Valid
<i>Intention to Apply</i>	IA1	0,802	Valid
	IA2	0,858	Valid
	IA5	0,710	Valid
<i>Organizational Reputation</i>	OR1	0,737	Valid
	OR2	0,772	Valid
	OR3	0,845	Valid
	OR4	0,843	Valid
	OR5	0,774	Valid
	OR6	0,804	Valid

Source: Smart PLS 3.0

All items listed in the table demonstrate strong outer loading values ranging from **0.710 to 0.858**, confirming that each indicator reliably represents its corresponding construct. This ensures that the measurement model is robust and suitable for subsequent structural analysis. Items that initially failed to meet the threshold (e.g., EA1 and EA9) were removed to enhance construct validity, resulting in a final model with indicators that significantly contribute to the representation of respondents' perceptions.

Figure 1 Measurement Bootstrapping Model

Source: Smart PLS 3.0



2. Discriminant Validity

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is a metric used to assess the convergent validity of latent constructs in PLS-SEM (Hair Jr et al., 2021). AVE represents the proportion of variance in the indicators that can be explained by the latent construct relative to measurement error. A value of $AVE \geq 0.50$ indicates that the construct meets the requirement for convergent validity, as it explains at least 50% of the indicator variance. Additionally, the Fornell-Larcker criterion evaluates discriminant validity by comparing the square root of the AVE of each construct with its correlations with other constructs. A construct demonstrates good discriminant validity if its square root of AVE is higher than its correlations with other constructs.

Table 2 : Discriminant Validity

Variabel	AVE	EA	JC	IA	OR
<i>Employer Attractiveness</i>	0,613	0,783			
<i>Intention to Apply</i>	0,628	0,694	0,792		
<i>Job Characteristics</i>	0,633	0,774	0,578	0,795	
<i>Organizational Reputation</i>	0,635	0,727	0,657	0,748	0,797

Source: Smart PLS 3.0

As shown in the table, all constructs in this study Employer Attractiveness (0.613), Job Characteristics (0.633), Intention to Apply (0.628), and Organizational Reputation (0.635) have AVE values above 0.50. This indicates that each latent construct explains approximately 60% of the variance in its indicators, confirming that the measurement model meets the requirements for convergent validity.

3. Uji Reliability

Ensuring the consistency and reliability of measurement instruments, such as questionnaires, is a critical step in research. According to (Hair et al., 2021), reliability refers to the extent to which an instrument consistently produces the same results under repeated measurements in identical conditions. In other words, the validity of the research is supported by stable and trustworthy data generated from reliable instruments.

Reliability can be assessed through internal consistency, which examines how closely related the items within a construct are. Cronbach's alpha is the most widely used metric, with values ≥ 0.70 considered acceptable. Stability can also be evaluated by repeating the measurement with the same respondents over time. In PLS-SEM, composite reliability (CR) is commonly used as an additional measure of internal consistency, with values > 0.70 indicating adequate reliability.

Table 3 : Uji Reliability

Variable	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>Composite Reliability</i>	Status
<i>Employer Attractiveness</i>	0,910	0,927	Reliabel
<i>Intention to Apply</i>	0,702	0,834	Reliabel

<i>Job Characteristics</i>	0,807	0,873	Reliabel
<i>Organizational Reputation</i>	0,884	0,912	Reliabel

Source: Smart PLS 3.0

In this study, all constructs met the reliability criteria. Employer Attractiveness (EA) showed the highest reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.910 and a composite reliability of 0.927. Intention to Apply (IA) achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.702 and CR of 0.834. Organizational Reputation (OR) had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.884 and CR of 0.912, while Job Characteristics (JC) reached a Cronbach's alpha of 0.807 and CR of 0.810. These results indicate that all constructs were measured reliably, with strong internal consistency across items.

4. *R-Square*

The R-squared (R^2) metric is used to evaluate how well the independent variables in a model explain the variability of the dependent variable. It represents the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables. Higher R^2 values indicate better explanatory power of the model. R^2 values range from 0 to 1, with 0.25 considered weak, 0.50 moderate, and 0.75 strong (Hair et al., 2021).

The adjusted R-squared accounts for sample size and the number of independent variables, providing a more realistic assessment of model performance. Unlike conventional R^2 , adjusted R^2 does not automatically increase when additional variables are included, making it a more conservative and reliable metric.

Table 4 : R-Square

Variable	<i>R Square</i>	<i>R Square Adjusted</i>
<i>Intention to Apply</i>	0,532	0,518
<i>Organizational Reputation</i>	0,615	0,607

Source: Smart PLS 3.0

In this study, the dependent variable Intention to Apply has an R^2 of 0.532 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.518. This indicates that Employer Attractiveness, Job Characteristics, and Organizational Reputation collectively explain 53.2% of the variance in Intention to Apply, while 46.8% is influenced by factors outside the model. The slightly lower adjusted R^2 reflects correction for the number of predictors and sample size, providing a more accurate estimate of the independent variables' contribution.

For Organizational Reputation, R^2 is 0.615 and adjusted R^2 is 0.607, showing that Employer Attractiveness and Job Characteristics explain 61.5% of the variance. The small difference between R^2 and adjusted R^2 suggests minimal influence from extraneous factors, confirming that the model provides a robust explanation of variability in the studied constructs.

5. Indeks Goodness of Fit

Table 5 : Indeks Goodness of Fit

Variable	<i>Communality</i>	R^2
<i>Employer Attractiveness</i>	0,613	
<i>Job Characteristics</i>	0,633	
<i>Intention to Apply</i>	0,628	0,532
<i>Organizational Reputation</i>	0,635	0,615

Total	2,508	1,147
Average	0,627	0,574
GoF Index	0,600	

Source: Smart PLS 3.0

The Goodness of Fit (GoF) index is used to evaluate how well the overall model fits the observed data in PLS-SEM. It combines the measurement model quality (communality) and the structural model quality (R^2) into a single metric. Higher GoF values indicate better model fit and stronger predictive capability.

As shown in the table, the communality values for the constructs are: Employer Attractiveness (0.613), Job Characteristics (0.633), Intention to Apply (0.628), and Organizational Reputation (0.635), indicating that each construct explains a substantial proportion of the variance in its indicators. The R^2 values for the endogenous constructs are 0.532 for Intention to Apply and 0.615 for Organizational Reputation, reflecting the proportion of variance explained by the independent variables in the model.

The total communality and R^2 are 2.508 and 1.147, respectively, with average values of 0.627 and 0.574. The resulting GoF index is 0.600, indicating a strong overall model fit and suggesting that the proposed model effectively captures the relationships among the constructs while providing reliable predictive power for the dependent variables.

6. Direct Effect

Table 6 : Direct Effect

Hubungan Antar Variabel	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values
<i>Employer Attractiveness terhadap Intention to Apply</i>	0,486	2,994	0,003
<i>Employer Attractiveness terhadap Organizational Reputation</i>	0,369	2,961	0,003
<i>Job Characteristics terhadap Intention to Apply</i>	-0,057	0,334	0,739
<i>Job Characteristics terhadap Organizational Reputation</i>	0,463	4,271	0,000
<i>Organizational Reputation terhadap Intention to Apply</i>	0,346	2,676	0,008

Source: Smart PLS 3.0

The direction and direct effects among the variables were evaluated using path coefficients from Smart PLS analysis, with statistical significance assessed via t-statistics and p-values.

H1: The effect of Employer Attractiveness on Intention to Apply has a path coefficient of 0.486, t-statistic = 2.994, and p-value = 0.003. This indicates a positive and significant effect, meaning that the higher Generation Z jobseekers' perception of employer attractiveness, the greater their intention to apply for jobs in that company. H1 is accepted.

H2: The effect of Job Characteristics on Intention to Apply has a path coefficient of -0.057, t-statistic = 0.334, and p-value = 0.739. This shows a non-significant effect, indicating that job characteristics do not directly influence Generation Z jobseekers' intention to apply in East Java. H2 is rejected.

H3: The effect of Employer Attractiveness on Organizational Reputation has a path coefficient of 0.369, t-statistic = 2.961, and p-value = 0.003. This demonstrates a positive and significant effect, implying that good employer attractiveness positively shapes the perception of organizational reputation among Generation Z. H3 is accepted.

H4: The effect of Job Characteristics on Organizational Reputation has a path coefficient of 0.463, t-statistic = 4.271, and p-value = 0.000. This indicates a positive and significant effect, suggesting that clear and attractive job characteristics enhance the perceived organizational reputation for Generation Z. H4 is accepted.

H5: The effect of Organizational Reputation on Intention to Apply has a path coefficient of 0.346, t-statistic = 2.676, and p-value = 0.008. This confirms a positive and significant effect, showing that organizational reputation is an important factor motivating Generation Z to intend to apply. H5 is accepted.

7. Indirect Effect

Table 7 : Indirect Effect

<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Original Sample</i>	<i>T Statistics</i>	<i>P Values</i>
<i>Employer Attractiveness dengan Intention to Apply melalui Organizational Reputation</i>	0,128	1,979	0,048
<i>Job Characteristics dengan Intention to Apply melalui Organizational Reputation</i>	0,160	2,033	0,043

Source: Smart PLS 3.0

The indirect effects of certain interactions mediated by Organizational Reputation (OR) were evaluated using bootstrapping analysis in SmartPLS.

H6: The effect of Employer Attractiveness on Intention to Apply through Organizational Reputation has a path coefficient of 0.128, t-statistic = 1.979, and p-value = 0.048. This indicates a positive and significant mediation effect, suggesting that employer attractiveness can enhance job application intention by strengthening the organization's reputation. H6 is accepted.

H7: The effect of Job Characteristics on Intention to Apply through Organizational Reputation has a path coefficient of 0.160, t-statistic = 2.033, and p-value = 0.043. This demonstrates a positive and significant mediation effect, implying that job characteristics influence intention to apply indirectly via the improvement of organizational reputation, rather than directly. H7 is accepted.

DISCUSSION

1. Effect of Employer Attractiveness on Intention to Apply

The first hypothesis (H1) proposed that Employer Attractiveness positively affects Intention to Apply among Generation Z jobseekers. The analysis revealed a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.486$, $t = 2.994$, $p = 0.003$), confirming H1. This indicates that when potential applicants perceive a company as attractive due to its culture, benefits, innovation, or reputation they are more inclined to submit job applications.

(Mokhlis et al., 2021) applied the Theory of Planned Behavior to predict Malaysian university students' intentions to pursue a career in retailing, finding that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control significantly influence their career choice intentions. (Ruslim et al., 2021)) emphasized that employer attractiveness serves as an initial trigger in the job application decision-making process, where the stronger a candidate's positive perception of a company's appeal, the greater the motivation to submit an application. The study conducted by (Gina et al., 2025) found that desired job characteristics can positively influence intention to apply, although this effect is often mediated by other factors such as organizational reputation. According to the study, when employees feel valued and are given freedom to be creative, they tend to remain with the company and recommend it to others (Ek Styvén et al., 2022).

This finding aligns with prior research by (Junça Silva & Dias, 2023) and (Das & Kumar, 2023), who found that employer branding and organizational appeal significantly increase job application intentions among young adults. Practically, this suggests that organizations should strategically communicate their value proposition, maintain a strong employer brand, and highlight unique organizational strengths to attract Generation Z candidates. By enhancing employer attractiveness, companies can directly influence applicants' motivation and behavior.

2. Effect of Job Characteristics on Intention to Apply

The second hypothesis (H2) tested the direct effect of Job Characteristics on Intention to Apply. The results showed a non-significant effect ($\beta = -0.057$, $t = 0.334$, $p = 0.739$), indicating that the characteristics of the job itself such as autonomy, task significance, and skill variety do not directly influence Generation Z's intention to apply in the context of East Java. This contrasts with some global findings suggesting that job design can motivate prospective employees (Gina et al., 2025). (Kusumawan & Sary, 2025) It was found that job characteristics have a significant effect on job application intention among Generation Z in the Indonesian pharmaceutical industry, particularly through the mediating role of employer. This implies that when a job aligns closely with an individual's expectations, prior experiences, and personal skill set, Generation Z jobseekers are more likely to exhibit a strong intention to apply, as the perceived fit enhances their confidence in successfully performing the role and achieving both professional growth and personal satisfaction (GOMATHY, 2023). According to (Junça Silva & Dias, 2023), the specific attributes of a job, such as task variety, autonomy, and meaningful responsibilities, play a critical role in shaping applicants' perceptions, whereby greater alignment between the job's characteristics and the individual's skills and expectations significantly enhances their intention to apply. (Kiyak & Karkin, 2023). (Li et al., 2025) found that among highly-qualified public employees, job characteristics such as skill variety and autonomy have a significant positive relationship with public service motivation, whereas task identity, task significance, and feedback were not significant predictors, indicating that skill variety and autonomy together accounted for 73% of the variance in motivation. found that relational job characteristics significantly affect turnover intention among nurses, and this relationship is mediated by subjective well-being, highlighting the importance of supportive job design in influencing employees' motivational and attitudinal outcomes. However, it is consistent with studies emphasizing that young jobseekers often prioritize organizational image, culture, and reputation over the technical details of job tasks at the initial stage of their job search. This highlights the need for organizations to focus not only on designing attractive roles but also on ensuring that the company's reputation and employer brand are effectively communicated.

3. Effect of Employer Attractiveness on Organizational Reputation

Hypothesis 3 (H3) posited that Employer Attractiveness influences Organizational Reputation. The findings confirmed a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.369$, $t = 2.961$, $p = 0.003$). This result indicates that organizations perceived as highly attractive by potential applicants also enjoy a stronger reputation in the eyes of Generation Z. Employer attractiveness can serve as a signal of organizational quality and reliability, enhancing the perception of credibility and prestige. This finding supports prior research (Nurhabibah & Farid, 2025), which highlighted employer attractiveness as a key driver of reputational strength. For practice, companies should recognize that their attractiveness as an employer does not only influence application intentions but also builds a lasting organizational image that can further attract talent.

4. Effect of Job Characteristics on Organizational Reputation

The fourth hypothesis (H4) examined the impact of Job Characteristics on Organizational Reputation, and the results revealed a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.463$, $t = 4.271$, $p = 0.000$). This implies that clear, engaging, and meaningful job designs enhance the organization's perceived reputation. When Generation Z perceives jobs as well-structured and challenging, they also attribute higher credibility and value to the organization. (Plakhotnik et al., 2025) well-designed jobs incorporating skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback enhance employees' engagement and sense of responsibility, which in turn positively influences the organization's perceived reputation among Generation Z jobseekers. This outcome aligns with (Hackman & Oldham, 1976), which emphasizes the link between job design and organizational outcomes. Practically, providing well-defined roles with meaningful tasks contributes not only to employee satisfaction but also strengthens the organization's reputation among potential applicants.

5. Effect of Organizational Reputation on Intention to Apply

Hypothesis 5 (H5) proposed that Organizational Reputation positively affects Intention to Apply, which was supported by the data ($\beta = 0.346$, $t = 2.676$, $p = 0.008$). This finding demonstrates that organizational reputation is a critical factor motivating Generation Z to apply for jobs. A strong reputation communicates reliability, professional growth opportunities, and ethical standards, which are highly valued by young jobseekers. This supports studies by (El-Menawy & Saleh, 2023) emphasizing the mediating role of reputation in influencing job application intentions. The reputation of an organization becomes increasingly important as stakeholders, particularly employees, use it as a basis to evaluate the ethics and character of the business. In many situations, organizational reputation is employed to assess the credibility and integrity of the company (Lee, 2022). The better a company's reputation is perceived by the public, the higher the likelihood that individuals will be interested in applying for a job with that company. Research conducted by (Nando & Sukarno, 2024) demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between organizational reputation and job application intention. The organizational reputation of a company serves as an initial signal for Generation Z jobseekers, enabling them to evaluate the credibility, ethics, and social responsibility of the organization, which in turn significantly influences their intention to apply by providing a verified and consistent basis for assessing whether the company aligns with their personal values and career expectations (Febrina & Erlin, 2025). For organizations, these findings highlight the importance of reputation management through consistent communication, positive social media presence, and ethical corporate practices.

6. Mediation of Organizational Reputation between Employer Attractiveness and Intention to Apply

Hypothesis 6 (H6) tested the indirect effect of Employer Attractiveness on Intention to Apply through Organizational Reputation. The analysis showed a significant mediation effect ($\beta = 0.128$, $t = 1.979$, $p = 0.048$), indicating that employer attractiveness enhances application intentions by strengthening organizational reputation. This suggests that Generation Z does not only respond to the perceived attractiveness directly but also considers the organization's reputation as a validating factor before applying. This finding aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior, where attitudes and subjective norms shape behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1991). Organizations should therefore ensure that their attractive features are perceived and reinforced through reputation-building activities.

7. Mediation of Organizational Reputation between Job Characteristics and Intention to Apply

Finally, Hypothesis 7 (H7) examined the indirect effect of Job Characteristics on Intention to Apply through Organizational Reputation. The results showed a significant positive mediation ($\beta = 0.160$, $t = 2.033$, $p = 0.043$), confirming that even though job characteristics alone do not directly influence application intention, they positively affect applicants' perceptions via organizational reputation. This indicates that job features contribute to the overall image of the organization, which in turn motivates Generation Z to apply. The finding highlights the importance of combining meaningful job design with strong organizational branding to effectively attract young talent.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the influence of Employer Attractiveness and Job Characteristics on Intention to Apply among Generation Z jobseekers in East Java, with Organizational Reputation serving as a mediating variable. The findings indicate that Employer Attractiveness directly and positively affects Intention to Apply, while Job Characteristics influence Intention to Apply indirectly through Organizational Reputation. Organizational Reputation itself significantly drives the application intentions of Generation Z, highlighting its pivotal role in shaping job-seeking behavior.

The study also confirms that the mediation of Organizational Reputation is significant for both Employer Attractiveness and Job Characteristics, demonstrating that a strong organizational image enhances the effectiveness of employer branding and job design in motivating applications. These results extend the theoretical understanding of Generation Z's job-seeking behavior by integrating employer attractiveness, job characteristics, and organizational reputation into a unified model. It also validates the applicability of the Theory of Planned Behavior in the context of regional Indonesian job markets, showing that attitudes toward an employer and perceptions of organizational reputation jointly influence behavioral intentions.

Despite these contributions, caution is advised in generalizing the results beyond Generation Z jobseekers in East Java or to other cultural and labor market contexts. The sample was limited to LinkedIn users, which may not fully represent all jobseekers in the region.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, organizations seeking to attract Generation Z talent should:

1. Enhance Employer Attractiveness: Develop and communicate clear employer branding strategies, emphasizing unique organizational values, culture, and benefits.

2. Strengthen Organizational Reputation: Invest in reputation-building initiatives, including transparent communication, ethical practices, and positive social media presence, to reinforce applicant perceptions.
3. Design Engaging Job Characteristics: Structure job roles to be meaningful, challenging, and skill-enhancing, as these characteristics indirectly enhance application intentions through improved organizational reputation.
4. Future Research Suggestions: Subsequent studies could examine similar models in different regions or industries, include other mediating variables such as perceived organizational support, or investigate longitudinal effects to capture changes in job-seeking behavior over time.

By implementing these strategies, organizations can effectively increase the intention of Generation Z to apply, thereby attracting top young talent while contributing to the broader understanding of human resource practices in emerging labor markets.

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