

## Employer Branding and Person-Organization Fit in Building Career Intention Gen Z

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Career Intention, College Students, Employer Branding, Generation Z, Person-Organization Fit.

### Abstract

*This study aims to examine the effect of Employer Branding and Person-Organization Fit on Career Intention of Digital Business Study Program students at Jember State Polytechnic. The background of this research is based on the shifting expectations of the younger generation towards the world of work, where they increasingly prioritize the alignment of personal values with organizational values in choosing a career. This research uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory method. The research sample amounted to 72 students selected through purposive sampling technique. Data were collected through a closed questionnaire and analyzed using multiple linear regression. The results showed that simultaneously, Employer Branding and Person-Organization Fit had a significant effect on Career Intention ( $p < 0.05$ ), but partially only Person-Organization Fit had a significant effect. The Person-Organization Fit variable has a dominant influence, while Employer Branding does not show a significant influence individually. In conclusion, value fit between individuals and organizations is a key factor in shaping students' career intentions. Therefore, companies are advised to highlight internal values that are in line with the characteristics of the younger generation, while educational institutions need to equip students to be able to recognize the value fit in planning their careers.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years the world of work has experienced a significant shift, especially in terms of the younger generation's expectations of careers and companies. Younger generations prioritize work-life balance more than previous generations, and consider it important for well-being (Trifan, V. A., & Pantea, 2024). Generation Z students, as the future workforce, now face a major challenge in choosing a career path that matches their personal values and expectations. Many college students experience anxiety and low self-confidence when contemplating their career choices, which can hinder their decision-making abilities (Yates, J., & Hirsh, 2024). Many college graduates feel unprepared for the world of work due to the mismatch between what they learned in college and the reality of industry needs. Yates, J., & Hirsh, (2024) explain that students often have unrealistic or limited self-awareness and understanding of the labor market, which complicates their career planning. In addition, global trends show that generation Z is more selective in choosing the company they want to work for, not only based on salary, but also on aspects of company values, work environment, and organizational reputation. Leslie, B., et al (2021) said that gen Z prioritizes working in companies with high moral and ethical standards. In addition, a positive work environment is very important for Gen Z, who value work-life balance, job security, and flexibility in work schedules (Hatoum, M., & Nassereddine, 2025). This illustrates that there is a phenomenon about the *career intentions* of students or Gen Z in determining their career path.

Career Intention itself is a person's commitment to follow a career path that matches their values and aspirations and achieve certain professional goals (Reardon, R., Lenz, J., Sampson, J., & Peterson, 2019). This concept refers to the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which states that a person's intention is the main predictor of actual behavior. In this context, Employer Branding and Person organization fit (P-O Fit) can be cognitive variables that shape students' attitudes and perceptions of companies that become their career goals. Attraction-Selection-Attrition Theory by Schneider, (1987) also explains that individuals are attracted to organizations whose values match, and tend to stay longer if the fit occurs. Therefore, these two factors are believed to complement each other in shaping Career Intention. This is corroborated by the results of research conducted by (Ramadhanty, E. A. P., 2022) which states that Employer Branding and also personal organizational fit have a considerable influence on job application intentions.

In this context, Employer Branding is one of the factors that influence individual decisions, especially students, in determining their career direction or Career Intention. (Amelia, 2018) defines Employer Branding as the image and reputation of the company as an ideal workplace, which includes values, culture, and benefits obtained by employees. Strong Employer Branding provides a positive perception of the work environment, career development opportunities, company values, and job stability. This can increase individuals' interest in joining the company, because they believe that the workplace is aligned with their career goals and expectations. Research by (Sa'diah. D & Susanto. E, 2023) in their thesis shows that Employer Branding significantly affects the intention to apply. This is also in line with Ervina and Wulansari's study (2023) which found that Employer Branding and company reputation have a significant positive effect on intention to apply to Gen Z.

However, Employer Branding alone is not enough. Individuals also tend to consider the compatibility of personal values with organizational values before deciding to join. This is referred to as person organization fit (P-O fit). Fit is identified by comparing a person's internal aspects such as values, personality, goals, and relevant individual abilities with the external environment, such as organizational characteristics, goals, and work demands Oh, I.,et al, (2014) P-O fit itself is the suitability or compatibility between employee values and the organization (Astakhova, 2015). A fit between organizations and employees is important, especially when considering work-related impacts such as career decisions, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention which are factors that must be considered by organizations in achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Astuti, 2010: 43; Alniacik et al., 2013: 280; Ahmadi et al., 2014: 33). Research conducted by (Firfiray, S., & Mayo, 2017) shows that job seekers are more attracted to organizations that align with their values, especially when organizations offer work-life benefits. This fit increases their perception of the organization as a desirable employer, leading to an increased intention to work. On the other hand, value mismatches can create discomfort, reduce interest in joining, or even increase intention to leave if already employed. The study conducted by (Ramos, J. R., Ferreira, M. C., & Martins, 2022) states that when employees feel their personal values are in line with organizational values, they tend to be more satisfied at work and have a lower desire to leave the company.

Unfortunately, studies that integrate Employer Branding and P-O fit together in explaining students' Career Intention are still limited, especially in the context of generation Z in Indonesia. Most studies only focus on one variable, without looking at the interaction between the two. In fact, the synergy between perceptions of Employer Branding and the level of fit between personal and organizational values is very likely to be a strong predictor of students' intentions in determining their future careers. Thus, this research is important to fill the gap and provide theoretical and practical contributions for higher education institutions and the industrial world in

designing recruitment and human resource development strategies that are more effective and in accordance with the expectations of today's younger generation.

## METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory type to examine the effect of *Employer Branding* and *Person-Organization Fit* on *Career Intention*. The research population is all active students of the Jember State Polytechnic Digital Business Study Program. The number of samples used was 72 respondents, who were selected by *purposive sampling* method based on certain criteria, namely students who have taken *workshops on decision-making systems* and human resource management. Data collection was carried out using a closed questionnaire with a 5-point *Likert* scale, from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Data analysis was carried out by multiple linear regression analysis using *SPSS software* to see the direct and indirect effects between variables. Before the analysis, validity, reliability, classical assumption tests such as normality, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity were carried out to ensure that the data were suitable for analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before conducting multiple linear regression analysis, this study first tested the feasibility of data through validity, reliability, normality, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity tests. The validity test results show that all statement items on the Employer Branding, Person-Organization Fit, and Career Intention variables have a significant correlation value to their respective total construct scores, with a correlation value greater than 0.3 and a significance below 0.05. This indicates that all research instrument items have good validity. Furthermore, the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha shows a value of 0.708 for Employer Branding, 0.793 for Person-Organization Fit, and 0.819 for Career Intention. All three values are above the minimum limit of 0.7, which means that all constructs have high and consistent reliability. In addition, the normality test results show that the data is normally distributed, the heteroscedasticity test shows no particular pattern in the residual distribution, and the multicollinearity test results show a Tolerance value > 0.10 and VIF < 10, so it can be concluded that the data has met all regression assumptions and is suitable for further analysis using the path analysis method.

In this study, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the effect of Employer Branding (EB) and Person-Organization Fit (POF) variables on Career Intention (CI). Based on SPSS output, the regression equation model is obtained as follows:

**Table 1. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results and t Test (Partial)**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error				Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	9.633	4.246		2.269	.026					
1 EB	.253	.222	.127	1.141	.258	.432	.136	.106	.698	1.433
POF	.772	.155	.555	4.980	.000	.625	.514	.464	.698	1.433

Source: SPSS Output

$$CI = 9.633 + 0.253 ( ) + 0.772 ( ) \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

This equation shows that when the value of Employer Branding and Person-Organization Fit is zero, the value of Career Intention is predicted to be 9.633. The regression coefficient for the EB variable of 0.253 indicates that every 1 unit increase in EB will increase CI by 0.253, but this effect is not statistically significant. Conversely, the POF regression coefficient of 0.772 indicates that each 1 unit increase in POF will increase CI by 0.772 and this effect is statistically significant.

This is supported by the results of the T test (partial) which aims to test the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable separately. Based on the T-test results, it is known that the t-count value for the Employer Branding variable is 1.141, while the t-count for Person-Organization Fit is 4.980. With 72 respondents and two independent variables, the degree of freedom (df) is 69, so the t-table value at the 5% significance level is 1.994. Because the t-count value for EB < t-table ( $1.141 < 1.994$ ) and sig.  $0.258 > 0.05$ , it can be concluded that Employer Branding has no significant effect on Career Intention. Conversely, because the t-count for POF > t-table ( $4.980 > 1.994$ ) and sig.  $0.000 < 0.05$ , then Person-Organization Fit has a significant effect on Career Intention.

**Table 2. F Test Results (Simultaneous)**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	258.604	2	129.302	23.171	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	385.049	69	5.580		
Total	643.653	71			

Source: SPSS Output

Furthermore, the results of the F test (simultaneous) show that the F-count value is 23.171, while the F-table at  $df_1 = 2$  and  $df_2 = 69$  is around 3.13 at the 5% significance level. Because F-count > F-table ( $23.171 > 3.13$ ) and sig.  $0.000 < 0.05$ , it can be concluded that simultaneously Employer Branding and Person-Organization Fit variables have a significant effect on Career Intention. This indicates that the two independent variables together make a real contribution in explaining changes in Career Intention.

**Table 3. Determinant Test**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.634 <sup>a</sup>	.402	.384	2.362

Source: SPSS Output

Finally, based on the test results of the coefficient of determination (R Square), a value of 0.402 is obtained. This means that 40.2% of Career Intention variability can be explained by the Employer Branding and Person-Organization Fit variables, while the remaining 59.8% is explained by other variables outside this research model. The adjusted R Square value of 0.384 also shows the stability of the model when the number of predictors is taken into account. Thus, it can be concluded that this regression model is strong enough to explain the influence of the two independent variables on students' career intentions, especially showing that the Person-Organization Fit (POF) factor has a more dominant role than Employer Branding.

## DISCUSSION

### The Effect of Employer Branding and Person-Organization Fit on Career Intention

Based on the results of multiple linear regression analysis, it is known that the Employer Branding and Person-Organization Fit variables simultaneously have a significant effect on Career Intention of students of the Jember State Polytechnic Digital Business Study Program. This is indicated by the results of the F test with an F-count value of 23.171 which is greater than the F-table (3.13), with a significance level of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This means that the two independent variables together have a contribution in shaping students' future career intentions.

These results state that to attract and retain talent from among students, especially students of the digital business study program at Jember State Polytechnic, company branding alone is not enough. Companies need to build authentic employer branding with social responsibility that is inclusive, flexible, and in accordance with the characteristics of today's digital generation. Thus, students not only see the company in terms of external image, but also from social responsibility and internal value matches which are key factors in building loyalty and long-term career intentions.

Research by (Soleha, F. Z., & Satria, 2024) found that companies that effectively communicate corporate social responsibility initiatives along with their employer branding, will further increase attractiveness to young job seekers. They emphasized that the digital generation prefers a workplace that is not only "famous", but also reflects an agile, collaborative, and socially responsible work culture.

### **Effect of Person-Organization Fit on Career Intention**

Partially, the results showed that Person-Organization Fit (POF) has a significant effect on Career Intention. The t-test results show a t-count value of  $4.980 > t\text{-table } 1.994$ , with a significance value of  $0.000$ . In the recruitment process, the fit between individuals and organizations (P-O fit) has a significant effect on recruiters' decisions. Recruiters increasingly prioritize candidates who share the same values as their organizations, enhancing the effectiveness of the recruitment process. This alignment, known as person-organization (P-O) fit, is crucial for fostering employee engagement, commitment, and overall job satisfaction, which ultimately leads to improved organizational outcomes (Hsieh, A.-T., & Chen, 2011) (Rane, 2025). Students who feel that the values and culture of the organization are in line with their personal beliefs, tend to have a stronger intention to join and make a career in the organization. The alignment between personal values and organizational values allows individuals to feel more comfortable and integrated in the work environment. This finding reinforces the argument made by Abrori & Hidayati, (2021) that the level of discipline and compliance with company values and rules can increase job satisfaction, which ultimately strengthens loyalty to the organization. Good alignment between individuals and organizations can create a conducive work environment, which triggers motivation to develop a career within the company (Abrori, I., Rizki, V. L., 2024).

These results provide a signal that organizations that want to attract talent from among students, especially digital business study programs, need to pay attention to aspects of value compatibility and organizational culture, not just offering high salaries or brand image. Companies must develop *employer branding* strategies that emphasize internal values such as innovation, teamwork, flexibility, and commitment to employee development. This is because the alignment between personal values and organizational values not only creates comfort at work, but also motivates employees to pursue long-term careers. In this context, the findings of Abrori, Rizki & Muttaqien (2022) support the notion that employees with high levels of discipline, as represented by their compliance with organizational values and rules, tend to demonstrate higher and more consistent performance. High individual and organizational value congruence has a positive contribution to organizational performance by fostering a culture that supports and aligns with individual competencies and values (Kim, 2024). So, it is important for educational institutions, namely the digital business study program of Jember State Polytechnic, to provide access for students to explore more types of organizations and assess the extent to which they feel personally compatible. This will lead them to build a career plan that is more focused, realistic, and in line with who they are.

### **The Effect of Employer Branding on Career Intention**

On the other hand, the Employer Branding (EB) variable has no significant effect partially on Career Intention, indicated by the t-count value of  $1.141 < t\text{-table}$  and  $\text{sig. } 0,258 > 0,05$ . This shows that the perception of the company's image as an ideal workplace has not been the main

consideration in shaping the career intentions of Digital Business students. Although in the context of modern business employer branding is often considered an important strategy to attract young talent, this finding shows that in the population of vocational students, especially the Digital Business Study Program, this factor has not become a major determinant in the formation of career intentions. Although studies show that employer brand appeal has a direct relationship with students' intention to apply for a job. For example, a study of final-year students found that a strong corporate image and corporate social responsibility programs significantly increased interest in applying for jobs (Soleha, F. Z., & Satrya, 2024). However, company branding has not fully become a dominant factor for digital business study program students. Digital Business students tend to be more pragmatic in assessing the workplace. Students pay attention to competency development, work flexibility, opportunities to innovate, and job relevance to their digital skills, rather than just being lured by the reputation or popularity of the company brand. This is because students are still in the exploration phase and are more focused on seeking work experience, skill development, and a work environment that supports learning and creativity.

This finding is in line with the results of research conducted by (Sanina, N. Loktaeva, E. Mishina, V. Rodina, 2019) who found that students show a higher need for self-development, which is very important in the transition to adulthood. In this age group, individuals tend to align their career choices with personal values, reflecting a preference for meaningful work over simply working in a prestigious company (E. Sanina, N. Loktaeva, E. Mishina, V. Rodina, 2019). Employer branding becomes more relevant when individuals have had previous work experience and begin to consider factors such as job stability, industry reputation and career benefits.

Furthermore, based on the coefficient of determination test, the R Square value is 0.402, which indicates that 40.2% of *Career Intention* variability can be explained by the Employer Branding and Person-Organization Fit variables. While the remaining 59.8% is influenced by other factors not examined in this model. This shows that although Employer Branding and Person-Organization Fit have a considerable role, there are still other factors that are important to be investigated further, such as career interest, perceptions of digital industry prospects, the influence of the social environment, internship experience, and skills mastered by students.

In general, the results of this study contribute to the understanding of the factors that influence Career Intention of Digital Business study program students. In today's digital era, students tend to have more flexible, independent, and personal value-oriented career preferences. Therefore, companies that want to attract students to pursue a career in them need to highlight organizational values and culture that are in line with the characteristics of the digital generation, in addition to just building a brand image as an employer.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that Person-Organization Fit (POF) has a significant effect on students' Career Intention, while Employer Branding (EB) has no significant effect partially. But simultaneously, the two variables together influence students' intentions in planning their careers. POF has a stronger influence than EB, indicating that the value match between individuals and organizations is a major factor in shaping students' career intentions.

Companies are advised to not only build an image through employer branding, but also emphasize values and work culture that are in line with the characteristics of the younger generation. Higher education institutions, in this case the digital business study program of Jember State Polytechnic, also need to facilitate students in exploring the world of work and understanding the importance of matching personal values with organizational values in order to form a more realistic and meaningful career plan.

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