

## Mediating Effect of Corporate Reputation on the Influence of Employer Branding on Intention to Apply

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**Abstract:** This study aims to investigate the roles of Employer Branding and Corporate Reputation in influencing potential job applicants' Intention to Apply, focusing on the mediation effect of Corporate Reputation. This study employs a quantitative research design, collecting data from 369 undergraduate students in their final semester through a survey. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized relationships among Employer Branding, Corporate Reputation, and Intention to Apply. The results indicate that Employer Branding significantly enhances Corporate Reputation ( $\beta = 0.545$ ), which in turn has a substantial positive effect on Intention to Apply ( $\beta = 0.398$ ). The mediation analysis reveals that Corporate Reputation mediates the relationship between Employer Branding and Intention to Apply ( $\beta = 0.217$ ). These findings underscore the importance of employer branding in attracting job applicants by improving corporate reputation. This study contributes to the existing literature by elucidating the dual pathways through which employer branding impacts job seekers' intentions, highlighting the critical mediating role of corporate reputation, particularly in the context of the transparency era and social media influence. The study provides practical insights for HR managers and organizational leaders aiming to attract top talent, especially from Generation Z. Keywords: Employer Branding, Corporate Reputation, Intention to Apply, Intention to Apply for a Job, Generation Z

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### Citation:

Sudrajat, Y. A., & Br Surbakti, D. L. (2024). Conference Proceedings Paper: Mediating Effect of Corporate Reputation on the Influence of Employer Branding on Intention to Apply. *Proceedings of ASBN International Conference 2024* (pp. 542-554), Yogyakarta, Indonesia. ASEAN School of Business Network.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64458/asbnc.v1.43>

## INTRODUCTION

In an era of globalization and digitalization, the competition for the best talent is becoming more stringent. (Tarique & Schuler, 2010). Companies not only compete in products and services but also in attracting the interest of qualified prospective employees (Breaugh, 2008). In this context, various factors can influence a person's decision to apply for a job at a company (Chapman et al., 2005). The interest in applying for employment for the prospective workforce is driven by the inward motivation of a person to meet his or her needs. According to the theory of motivation, motivation occurs when a person has the desire and will to undertake an activity or action to achieve a certain goal (Dewi et al., 2023).

Dewi et al. (2023) stated that interest in applying for employment is a decision made by job seekers in relation to their choice of job offers and companies available in the labor market. On the

company's side, human resources (HRM) is an important asset of the organization in conducting operational activities and achieving strategic goals, visions, and missions (Soeling et al., 2022).

All organizations strive for sustained competitive advantage in order to gain economic advantage and survive in an increasingly global and competitive market. Human resources (HRMs) are critical to competitive advantage and are often a major investment in highly knowledge-intensive companies. In order to be a source of competitive advantage, the selection of human capital must have a high level of competence and a willingness to demonstrate productive behavior (Sivertzen et al., 2013). Therefore, if a company is able to find and retain talent that is better and more qualified than its competitors, then it can have a competitive advantage (Boxall, 1996).

In order to convey realistic and concise internal and external brand messaging, businesses must then match their plans with components that appeal to various groups. Employer branding is to establish and maintain the organization's reputation as a desirable place to work (Silva & Dias, 2023). An initial attempt is made through the recruiting process to draw in and hire suitable workers who share the company's goals, vision, and mission. According to Mello (2014), one of the most important intangible assets that a business might have that can give it a competitive edge is its reputation. When applying for a job, job seekers also consider this reputation to be quite significant (Mullins, 2007).

Melo & Morgado (2012) explained that an organization's excellent reputation can attract and retain potential employees. One way to increase this attractiveness is by creating a positive reputation through employer branding. Ambler & Barrow (1996) first studied employer branding, emphasizing the significance of cultivating a positive organization image to enhance talent attraction and retention. According to Chhabra & Sharma (2014), corporate investments in employer branding are the latest trend that is relevant to an organization, as one of the biggest challenges that companies face is finding and acquiring quality talent.

The company's reputation reflects the public's perception of its credibility and superiority. A company with a favorable reputation tends to be more attractive to prospective employees because it is considered stable and reliable (Cable & Turban, 2003). Aside from that, clear and comprehensive job descriptions are also important. Candidate employees need detailed information about responsibilities, qualifications required, and career prospects offered (Carless & Imber, 2007). This information helps them assess whether their skills and expectations match the position offered.

According to Sivertzen et al. (2013), employer branding is an important factor in increasing the attractiveness of the company and the intention to apply for employment. Several studies have also tested the relationship between employer brand and interest in applying for employment (Chowdhury, 2022; Ergun & Berivan, 2016; Santiago, 2019; Silva & Dias, 2023; Tien Thanh et al., 2024). However, many previous studies have regarded a company's reputation as an independent variable rather than a mediation variable (Dewi et al., 2023; Erlinda & Safitri, 2020; Liu, 2018; Sivertzen et al., 2013; Tien Thanh et al., 2024). Some studies also place the company's reputation as a mediation variable (Ekhsan & Nurfitri, 2021; Silva & Dias, 2023; Soeling et al., 2022).

The research will provide theoretical additions to the existing body of knowledge on employer branding and business reputation. Additionally, it will contribute to the field of human resource management, specifically recruiting and selection procedures. Gaining insight into how applicants perceive a company's level of interest in their decision to apply for employment can help Indonesian companies refine their recruitment and branding strategies in a more focused manner, while also enhancing their corporate reputation. Hence, the researchers deliberated on employer branding as a means to enhance the company's appeal and reputation in order to attract job applicants, particularly among students in their last semester of undergraduate studies across all faculties at the Islamic University of Indonesia.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Employer Branding

Employer branding is defined as a set of functional, economic, and psychological benefits that a job from the employer's company offers. Ambler & Barrow (1996) interpret employer branding as a sequence of processes aimed at constructing a distinctive company identity and organizational value concept, which sets the company apart from its competitors. Employer branding aims to establish a distinctive company identity, setting it apart from competitors (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Employer branding is the process by which the company forms and communicates its brand both internally and externally, while the employer brand is a unique and easily recognizable brand identity (Sharma & Prasad, 2018). The stronger the attraction of employer branding, the more applicants perceive its value (Jiang & Iles, 2011). According to the concept of employer branding, the product is the job that must attract, develop, and motivate employees while meeting their needs, all integrated with the organization's goals or vision (Gupta et al., 2018).

Ambler & Barrow (1996) define employer branding as a package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by a job and recognized by the organization. Thus, employer branding offers three types of benefits: (1) functional (related to the activities offered to employees for their development); (2) economic (material and monetary rewards); and (3) psychological (related to feelings of belonging to the organization, a sense of direction, and purpose) (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). Subsequently, Berthon et al. (2005) developed by Ambler & Barrow (1996) model into five dimensions:

- 1) **Attraction Value:** This assesses whether innovative work practices, employee creativity, the creation of high-quality new products, and a pleasant work environment influence the company's attractiveness, thereby reflecting the degree of candidates' attraction to an organization. Ambler & Barrow (1996) derived this dimension from the enhancement of psychological benefits.
- 2) **Social Value:** This measures whether the company's attractiveness is influenced by a healthy work environment that supports good interpersonal relationships. This dimension is derived from the enhancement of psychological benefits (Ambler & Barrow, 1996).
- 3) **Economic Value:** This assesses whether above-average remuneration, job security, and promotion opportunities influence the company's attractiveness. Ambler & Barrow (1996) derived this dimension from the enhancement of economic benefits.
- 4) **Development Value:** This assesses whether employer recognition and professional career development, which serve as a foundation for future job opportunities, influence the company's attractiveness. Ambler & Barrow (1996) derived this dimension from the enhancement of functional benefits.
- 5) **Application Value:** This assesses whether opportunities for employees to apply and teach their knowledge in a customer-oriented environment and for humanitarian actions influence the company's attractiveness (Ambler & Barrow, 1996).

### Corporate Reputation

Reputation is a crucial strategic asset for every firm. Reputation is the measure of confidence that customers, clients, the market, and the industry as a whole are part of a brand (Langham, 2018). There is a connection between corporate reputation, company image, and beauty. Organizations with a favorable corporate reputation are more appealing to potential applicants and can influence their decision to apply for a job based on their perception of the business (Potgieter & Doubell, 2020). Based on this notion, building a reputation takes several years, but it can quickly collapse if a corporation engages in illegal or unethical behavior. Thus, trust serves as the fundamental basis for a company's reputation. An organization's reputation is a reflection of its standing compared to the talent within the firm and its relationship with external stakeholders (Fombrun et al., 2000).

Roberts & Dowling (2002) define corporate reputation as a set of organizational attributes that develop over time and influence stakeholders' perceptions of the company's behavior. (Barnett et al., 2006) classify reputation into three distinct categories:

- 1) Active: This describes the organization's reputation as an abstract asset.
- 2) Evaluative: Here, reputation is the result of moral judgments by stakeholders.
- 3) Perceptual: This encompasses reputation from the perspective of stakeholders, particularly the organization's customers.

### **Intention to Apply**

The Interest in applying for a job is a stage in the job-seeking process that begins with searching for information about job vacancies, selecting jobs, and making decisions by potential employees to choose their desired company (Barber, 1998). There are several stages that potential employees go through in their interest in applying for a job: first, they select and consider the jobs they want; next, they seek information from recruitment sources provided by the company; and finally, they make a choice to accept or reject the job offer (Ekhsan & Nurfitri, 2021).

Barber & Roehling (1993) propose a connection between personal interest and the intention to apply for a job offer. Other authors Roberson et al. (2005) identify three types:

- 1) Job application intent: This encompasses an individual's personal aspiration and determination to actively pursue a job opportunity.
- 2) Job pursuit intention: This refers to the active desire to seek employment or to maintain one's position on a list of potential job candidates.
- 3) Job acceptance intention: This refers to the likelihood that a candidate will accept a job offer if it comes their way.

Meanwhile, Highhouse et al. (2003) also investigated candidates' intentions in the recruitment process and identified three key aspects:

- 1) Organizational attractiveness
- 2) Desire for the organization
- 3) Organizational reputation

Therefore, in terms of recruitment, interest in applying for a job can strongly predict applicants' decisions to apply for a job vacancy (Gomes & Neves, 2011).

## **RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS**

### **Employer brand on intention to Apply**

According to Berthon et al. (2005), employer brand refers to the benefits recognized by potential employees when they consider working for an organization or company. This concept is crucial in a company's strategy to attract employees with superior skills and knowledge, the primary sources of competitive advantage. Soeling et al. (2022) found a positive and significant relationship between employer branding and interest in applying for a job. Gandasari et al. (2024) conducted another study with 100 Generation Y and Z respondents, reporting similar results, indicating that almost all dimensions of employer brand attractiveness influence the interest in applying for a job. Several other researchers have also found an impact of employer branding on job application interest (Phalevi & Handoyo, 2023; Santiago, 2019; Sharma & Prasad, 2018). Based on previous research findings and supporting theories, the hypothesis formulation is as follows:

H1: The employer's brand influences the interest of final-year undergraduate students in applying for jobs.

### **Corporate Reputation on Intention to Apply**

Corporate reputation is crucial in applying for jobs at specific organizations (Cable & Turban, 2003; Highhouse et al., 2003). Organizations with higher levels of reputation or appeal often attract job seekers (Soeling et al., 2022; Tsai et al., 2015). Consequently, companies focus on enhancing their corporate reputation to attract potential employees, particularly in competitive labor markets (Sharma & Prasad, 2018; Silva & Dias, 2023). Chhabra & Sharma (2014) demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between employer branding and the intention of students to apply for jobs. Another study involving 281 respondents (approximately 60% of whom were millennials) also showed that nearly all dimensions of employer brand attractiveness influence the intention to apply for jobs (Santiago, 2019). However, Soeling et al. (2022) showed different results, stating that organizational reputation does not significantly influence final-year students' intention to apply for jobs. Based on previous research findings and supporting theories, the hypothesis formulation is as follows:

H2: Corporate reputation significantly influences job application interest among final-year undergraduate students.

### **Employer Brand on Corporate Reputation**

According to Cable and Turban (2003), job seekers consider employer brands and organizational reputation as crucial factors. This is because they perceive the organization's reputation as a reflection of the job and the attributes of the organization. This finding is also supported by Soeling et al. (2022), which showed that employer brand significantly influences organizational reputation. This means that a positive perception of the attractiveness of the employer brand also increases the organization's reputation. Based on the results of previous research and supporting theories, the hypothesis formulation is as follows:

H3: Employer brand influences corporate reputation by final-year undergraduate students

### **Employer Brand On Intention To Apply Through Corporate Reputation As A Mediating Variable**

Employer branding is vital in increasing a company's appeal and the desire to apply for job positions. The researchers Sivertzen et al. (2013) have categorized employer brand appeal into five dimensions: application value, development value, economic value, interest value, and social value. Research has indicated a correlation between a company's reputation and capacity to recruit potential candidates (Collins & Han, 2004). Furthermore, the test results indicate that organizational reputation does not influence the impact of employer brand attractiveness on the propensity to apply (Soeling et al., 2022). Employer brand attractiveness significantly impacts both the desire to apply and organizational reputation. However, organizational reputation is not a significant mediator between employer brand attractiveness and the intention to apply, as Soeling et al. (2022) found. Tests conducted by Ekhsan & Nurfitri (2021) and Silva & Dias (2023) have shown that organizational reputation is crucial in influencing the connection between employer brand and the intention to apply for employment. . Based on the results of previous research and supporting theories, the hypothesis formulation is as follows:

H4: The employer brand influences the final-year undergraduate students' job application interest, with corporate reputation acting as a mediating variable.

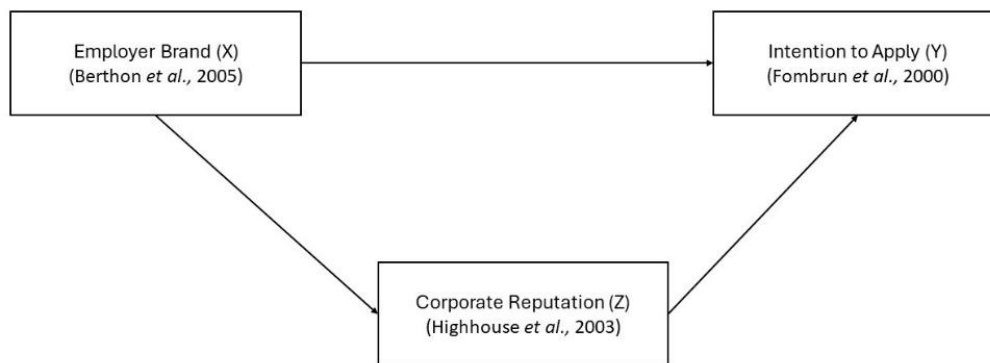
## **METHOD**

The study employed a quantitative approach, which involves collecting data in numerical form or transforming qualitative data into numerical values (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This approach uses statistical methods to analyze and interpret the data. The study's objectives, as stated, were focused on explaining the relationships between variables, which is a hallmark of explanatory research in the

quantitative paradigm. The data was collected at a single time, specifically in Mei 2024, so this research was cross-sectional. This research population was the Universitas Islam Indonesia undergraduate students' class of 2020 in their final semester (8th semester).

The study employed accidental or convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method where samples are chosen from the population due to their availability to the researchers (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Two techniques were used to conduct this research: collecting primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly through surveys, while secondary data were gathered from information published by other sources.

The questionnaire was distributed via student email. Employer brand was measured in five dimensions by Berthon et al. (2005): interest value, social value, economic value, development value, and application value. Corporate reputation was measured using theory from (Fombrun et al., 2000), consisting of fifteen question items. Finally, the intention to apply was measured by using the theory from Highhouse et al. (2003). The applicants were asked if they intended to apply to a well-known State-Owned Enterprise in Indonesia. Their responses were measured using a 1-6 interval Likert scale, where one indicated Strongly Disagree and 6 indicated Strongly Agree. This scale intentionally excludes a midpoint to reduce social desirability bias (Nadler et al., 2015). Participants were also asked to provide demographic details such as age, gender, educational background, and job position for descriptive analysis.



**Figure 1.** Research Model

## RESULTS

### Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are fundamental concepts in quantitative research, essential for assessing the quality and credibility of measurement instruments. Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure, whereas reliability pertains to the consistency of the instrument's results. Validity can be divided into several types, including content validity, construct validity, and criterion validity (Hair et al., 2014). This means all indicators used in this study are valid. The validity test results of the indicators can be seen in Table 1.

Construct validity, for example, is often evaluated using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and the Fornell-Larcker criterion to ensure that the variables in the model are related as hypothesized (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Researchers commonly assess reliability using Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha, which should exceed a threshold of 0.7 to indicate adequate internal consistency (Nunnally, 1994). In the context of analysis using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), tools like SmartPLS enable researchers to efficiently evaluate the validity and reliability of measurement and structural models, ensuring that research findings are both reliable and valid (Hair et al., 2019).

**Table 1.** Indicator's validity test.

Variable	Indicator	Loading factor	Validity
Employer Branding	EB1	.779	Valid
	EB2	.781	Valid
	EB3	.820	Valid
	EB4	.753	Valid
	EB5	.840	Valid
	EB6	.818	Valid
	EB7	.796	Valid
	EB8	.801	Valid
	EB9	.841	Valid
	EB10	.831	Valid
	EB11	.791	Valid
Corporate Reputation	CR1	.743	Valid
	CR2	.739	Valid
	CR3	.805	Valid
	CR4	.801	Valid
	CR5	.840	Valid
	CR6	.783	Valid
	CR7	.824	Valid
	CR8	.748	Valid
	CR9	.823	Valid
	CR10	.804	Valid
	CR11	.749	Valid
	CR12	.756	Valid
	CR13	.790	Valid
	CR14	.825	Valid
	CR15	.710	Valid
Intention to apply	IA1	.778	Valid
	IA 2	.785	Valid
	IA 3	.785	Valid
	IA 4	.810	Valid
	IA 5	.807	Valid
	IA 6	.808	Valid
	IA 7	.811	Valid
	IA 8	.795	Valid
	IA 9	.803	Valid
	IA 10	.819	Valid
	IA 11	.789	Valid
	IA 12	.757	Valid
	IA 13	.805	Valid
	IA 14	.811	Valid
	IA15	.753	Valid

**Table 2.** Construct Reliability and Validity

Variable	Cronbah's Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Corporate Reputation	.955	.956	.960	.614
Employer Branding	.946	.948	.953	.648
Intention to Apply	.958	.959	.962	.631

**Table 3.** Discriminant Validity

Variable	Corporate Reputation	Employer Branding	Intention to Apply
Corporate Reputation	.784		
Employer Branding	.545	.805	
Intention to Apply	.596	.580	.794

The measurement model analysis for convergent validity indicated that the factor loadings for all indicators were above 0.70, and the AVE for all variables exceeded 0.50 (Table 2). For discriminant validity, the cross-loading analysis demonstrated that each indicator had a higher loading on its respective variable than on any other variable, indicating a strong correlation with its variable. Additionally, the Fornell-Larcker criterion values were below 0.90. All indicators were deemed valid based on these results, including factor loadings, AVE, cross-loadings, and the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

Regarding reliability, the analysis showed that Cronbach's alpha values were above 0.50 for all variables, and Composite Reliability values were above 0.70 (see Table 3). Therefore, all indicators were considered reliable. Furthermore, the VIF values for all indicators were below 5, indicating no multicollinearity issues. Consequently, the analysis can proceed to the next step.

### Descriptive Analysis

Based on the analyzed data, this study involved predominantly female respondents, accounting for 71.82%, while male respondents comprised 28.18%. The age distribution of respondents was primarily within the 22-year-old group, representing 65.04%, followed by 21-year-olds at 24.39% and 23-year-olds at 10.57%. Respondents hailed from various faculties, with the distribution as follows: the Faculty of Psychology and Cultural Sciences had the highest representation at 23.58%, followed by the Faculty of Business and Economics at 17.89%, and the Faculty of Industrial Technology at 17.62%. The Faculty of Civil Engineering and Planning contributed 13.01%, the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences 11.11%, the Faculty of Islamic Studies 9.21%, the Faculty of Law 7.05%, and the Faculty of Medicine had the most miniature representation at 0.54%.

### Structural Model Analysis

Figure 2 shows the path coefficients of the model. The path coefficients ( $\beta$ ) and R-squared ( $R^2$ ) values are vital indicators to assess these relationships. Employer Branding (EB) directly impacts Corporate Reputation (CR) with a path coefficient of 0.545, indicating a strong positive relationship. This suggests that improved Employer Branding significantly enhances Corporate Reputation.

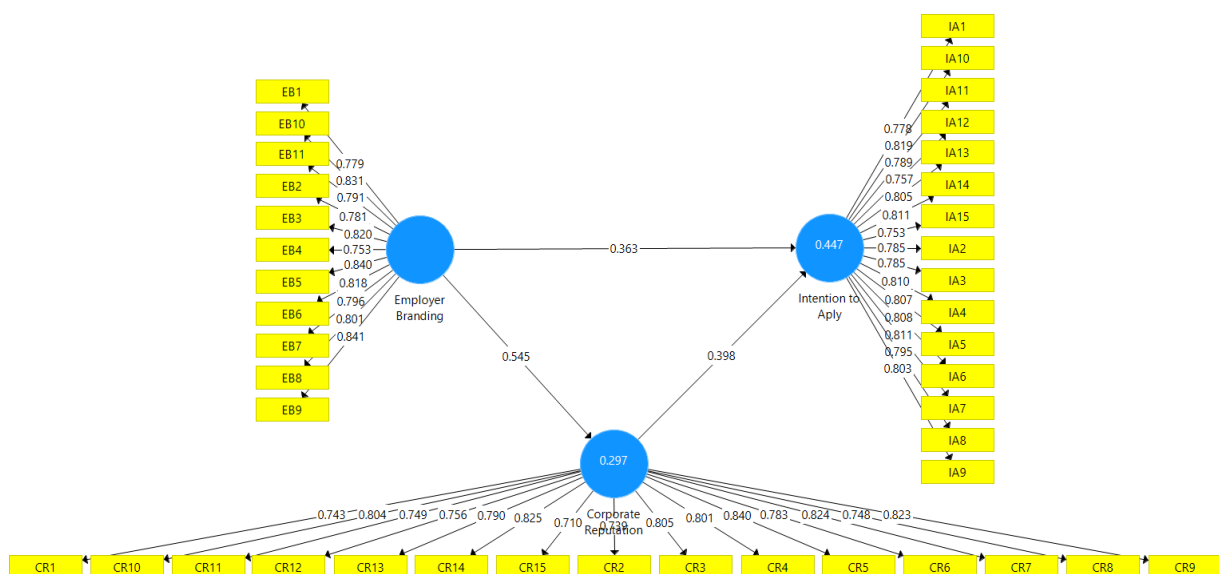


Figure 2. Path coefficient

Further, Corporate Reputation influences Intention to Apply (IA) with a path coefficient of 0.398, demonstrating a significant positive impact. This signifies that a better Corporate Reputation encourages a higher intention among potential candidates to apply. Moreover, Employer Branding



directly affects the Intention to Apply with a path coefficient of 0.363. While this impact is positive and significant, it is slightly less influential than the indirect effect mediated by Corporate Reputation.

The R-squared values indicate that Employer Branding explains 29.7% of the variance in Corporate Reputation, and the combined effect of Employer Branding and Corporate Reputation explains 44.7% of the variance in Intention to Apply. These values suggest a substantial explanatory power of the model.

**Hypothesis Testing**

The results of the hypothesis testing, detailed in Table 4, provide substantial statistical evidence supporting the proposed relationships. The first hypothesis (H1), which posits that Employer Branding positively influences Corporate Reputation, is supported by a significant path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.545, a T-statistic of 9.350, and a P-value of 0.000. This indicates a strong positive influence, confirming that Employer Branding is crucial in enhancing Corporate Reputation.

The second hypothesis (H2) asserts that Corporate Reputation positively influences Intention to Apply. This hypothesis is supported by a path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.398, a T-statistic of 5.156, and a P-value of 0.000. These results demonstrate a significant positive impact of Corporate Reputation on Intention to Apply, highlighting the importance of maintaining a favourable corporate image to attract potential applicants.

The third hypothesis (H3), which suggests that Employer Branding positively influences Intention to Apply, is confirmed with a path coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.363, a T-statistic of 4.340, and a P-value of 0.000. This indicates that Employer Branding directly enhances the Intention to Apply, emphasizing the importance of developing a strong employer brand to attract prospective employees.

Additionally, the mediation analysis results, outlined in Table 4, test the indirect effect of Employer Branding on Intention to Apply through Corporate Reputation. The fourth hypothesis (H4) proposes that Employer Branding positively influences the Intention to Apply through Corporate Reputation. The mediation effect is significant, with an indirect effect ( $\beta$ ) of 0.217, a T-statistic of 4.288, and a P-value of 0.000. This supports the hypothesis that Corporate Reputation partially mediates the relationship between Employer Branding and Intention to Apply.

**Table 4.** Hypothesis Testing

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values	Remark
CR → IA	.398	.404	.077	5.156	0.000	Hypothesis is supported
EB → CR	.545	.546	.058	9.350	0.000	Hypothesis is supported
EB → IA	.363	.360	.084	4.340	0.000	Hypothesis is supported
EB → CR → IA	.217	.221	.051	4.288	0.000	Hypothesis is supported

**DISCUSSION**

This study highlights the crucial roles that Employer Branding and Corporate Reputation play in shaping potential job applicants' Intention to Apply. The results demonstrate a significant direct and indirect relationship among these constructs. The path coefficient between Employer Branding and Corporate Reputation ( $\beta = 0.545$ ) suggests that well-implemented employer branding initiatives can significantly enhance an organization's reputation. This is in line with the findings of Gandasari et al. (2024), Silva & Dias (2023), and Soeling et al. (2022), who emphasized the importance of employer branding in developing a favourable corporate image.

Additionally, Corporate Reputation has a notable positive effect on Intention to Apply ( $\beta = 0.398$ ), reinforcing that a positive corporate reputation attracts job applicants, as noted (Santiago, 2019). However, the results of the study differ from those conducted by (Soeling et al., 2022), where the results of the study state that organizational reputation does not influence the intention to apply. The mediation analysis shows that Employer Branding affects Intention to Apply indirectly through Corporate Reputation ( $\beta = 0.217$ ), supporting Silva and Dias (2023), who highlighted the mediating role of corporate reputation. This suggests that while employer branding directly influences job seekers' intentions, its impact is significantly magnified when it improves the company's reputation.

Managing an online presence is crucial in today's transparency era, where social media platforms allow instant access to information about companies. Social media has become vital for job seekers, especially Generation Z, in evaluating potential employers. This is particularly relevant as the respondents of this study are primarily from Generation Z. Thang, and Trang (2024) highlighted the crucial role of social media in shaping employer branding and corporate reputation. They found that job seekers' perceptions of employer branding, influenced by information available on social media, significantly affect their intention to apply. This underscores the importance of maintaining a positive online presence and engaging with potential applicants through social media platforms. Pew Research Center (2018) found that social media significantly influences job seekers' perceptions of companies. Generation Z, characterized by their demand for transparency and social responsibility, greatly values a company's reputation when considering employment opportunities (McKinsey & Company, 2018). The results of this study align with these findings, showing that a strong Employer Brand can significantly enhance Corporate Reputation, which in turn positively affects the Intention to Apply among Generation Z. This is consistent with Seemiller and Grace (2018), who noted that Generation Z seeks meaningful work and values alignment in their employment choices.

## CONCLUSION

This study has underscored the significant roles that Employer Branding and Corporate Reputation play in shaping potential job applicants' Intention to Apply. The findings provide robust empirical support for the hypothesis that a strong Employer Brand positively influences Corporate Reputation, enhancing Intention to Apply. The direct effect of Employer Branding on job seekers' intentions highlights the importance of developing compelling employer branding strategies. Moreover, the mediation analysis reveals that Corporate Reputation is a crucial intermediary that amplifies the impact of Employer Branding on Intention to Apply.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature by clarifying the dual pathways through which employer branding influences job seekers' intentions, directly and indirectly, via corporate reputation. These findings have practical implications for HR managers and organizational leaders, indicating that investments in employer branding can yield significant returns in terms of improved corporate reputation and a higher-quality applicant pool.

## Recommendations

Through this discussion, company management can use the study's findings to focus on factors that boost the intention to apply. Additionally, the company can continue to uphold aspects that are already performing well, such as employer branding, to sustain its reputation.

Future research could explore the long-term effects of employer branding and corporate reputation on actual job applications and retention rates, providing a deeper understanding of these constructs' sustained impacts. Additionally, examining relationships in different cultural and specific industrial contexts could offer more generalized insights and validate the current study's findings across diverse organizational environments.

## Acknowledgements or Notes

We want to express our gratitude to Desviani Lestari Anggreini Br Surbakti for her invaluable assistance in proofreading the paper and preparing the presentation. Her contributions were instrumental in the successful completion of this work.

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