



GENERATION Z'S INTEREST IN APPLYING FOR JOBS INFLUENCED BY EMPLOYER BRANDING AND DIGITAL RECRUITMENT

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze the influence of Employer Branding and Digital Recruitment on Job Application Interest among Generation Z students. The study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive-verify method. Data were collected through questionnaires from 35 final-year students selected using purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis with the help of SPSS 20. The results showed that both partially and simultaneously, Employer Branding and Digital Recruitment had a positive and significant effect on Job Application Interest. Employer Branding has a more dominant influence (Beta Coefficient = 0.571) than Digital Recruitment (Beta Coefficient = 0.444). The regression model formed was able to explain 83.7% of the variation in Interest in Applying for Jobs (Adjusted R Square = 0.837). To attract Gen Z talent, companies need to simultaneously build a strong employer brand image (Employer Branding) and implement a user-friendly and efficient digital recruitment process. The integration of these two strategies is key to effectively attracting potential employees from the digital native generation.

Keywords: Employer Branding; Digital Recruitment; Job Application Interest; Generation Z.

1. Introduction

The development of digital technology has transformed the recruitment landscape, shifting conventional methods to digital platforms such as social media, job search sites, and online portals (Kurniawan, 2022). This change requires companies to adjust their strategies in attracting Generation Z (Gen Z)—a demographic group born between 1997 and 2012 and known as digital natives (Pew Research Center, 2020). Gen Z is not only looking for financial compensation but also values work culture, company values, and reputation (Schawbel, 2019).

In Indonesia, Gen Z faces significant challenges with high open unemployment rates (16.16% as of February 2025) and the dominance of informal jobs (Detik, 2025; Kompas, 2024). These conditions emphasize the importance of targeted recruitment strategies. Employer Branding, which is the process of building a company's image as an ideal workplace (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004), and Digital Recruitment, which is the use of technology in the recruitment process (Parry & Tyson, 2008), are believed to be key factors that influence Gen Z's Interest in Applying for Jobs.

Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). This theory is considered a grand theory because it forms the conceptual foundation for the dependent variable, Job Application Interest (Behavioral Intention). TRA states that a person's intention to perform a behavior (in this case, applying for a job) is the strongest predictor of their actual behavior. This intention itself is influenced by the individual's attitude toward the behavior and subjective norms.

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Signaling Theory (Spence, 1973). This theory acts as a middle theory that bridges the grand theory (TRA) with the independent variables of the study. In this context, Employer Branding and Digital Recruitment are seen as "signals" sent by companies to prospective applicants (Gen Z). These signals (such as reputation, company values, ease of application) are used by prospective applicants to reduce uncertainty and form perceptions about what it is like to work at the company. These perceptions then shape their attitudes and ultimately influence their intention (interest) to apply, as explained in TRA.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Employer Branding is defined as a company's efforts to communicate its unique value (Employer Value Proposition/EVP) to attract and retain talent (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Employer Branding influences interest in applying through the formation of positive perceptions and value alignment (person-organization fit) (Theurer et al., 2018).

Digital Recruitment encompasses the use of online platforms (websites, social media, ATS) in the recruitment process. Its dimensions include ease of access, quality of information, interactivity, and user experience (Braddy et al., 2008; Allen et al., 2007). A positive user experience in the digital recruitment process contributes significantly to interest in applying (Sylva & Mol, 2009).

Generation Z, as digital natives, are responsive to a company's digital image and seek meaningful and flexible jobs (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Based on this framework, the research hypothesis is formulated as follows:

- H₁: Employer Branding has a positive and significant effect on Gen Z's Interest in Applying for Jobs.
- H₂: Digital Recruitment has a positive and significant effect on Gen Z's Job Application Interest.
- H₃: Employer Branding and Digital Recruitment simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on Gen Z's Interest in Applying for Jobs.

3. Research Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with an exploratory descriptive and verifacative method. The exploratory element is included to explore Generation Z perceptions regarding employer branding and digital recruitment, while the verifacative element is used to test the proposed hypotheses. The total number of respondents in this study is **n = 35**. The population in this study was final-year students at Siliwangi University from Generation Z. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) Active final-year students, (2) Belonging to Generation Z (born 1997-2012). The number of samples involved was 35 respondents.

Data were collected using an online structured questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. The questionnaire link was shared via WhatsApp class groups and academic community channels to reach the target respondents. The data collection process was carried out from 5-12 Oktober 2025. Respondents filled out the questionnaire voluntarily after being informed of the research purpose and confidentiality statement.

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The questionnaire was developed based on previous validated research instruments. The statements were adapted from Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) for Employer Branding, Braddy et al. (2008) for Digital Recruitment, and Sylva & Mol (2009) for Job Application Interest. All items used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from **1 = Strongly Disagree** to **5 = Strongly Agree**. Prior to distribution, the instrument was reviewed by two academic experts to ensure content validity and clarity.

- Employer Branding (X₁): Measured through 10 indicators covering brand awareness, brand association, values and culture, quality perception, and brand loyalty. Sample Item Statements: Companies with strong employer branding are more attractive compared to companies with weak branding.
- Digital Recruitment (X₂): Measured through 5 indicators covering ease of access, process efficiency, credibility, and technical barriers. Sample Item Statements: Technical issues (such as website errors or inactive links) reduce my interest in applying for a job.
- Interest in Applying for Jobs (Y): Measured using 8 indicators covering trust, attractiveness, preference, and behavioral intent. Sample Item statements: My interest in applying decreases if a company's branding appears negative on the internet.

The data was analyzed using inferential statistics with SPSS 20, through the following stages:

- Validity and Reliability Test: Using Pearson Product Moment correlation and Cronbach's Alpha.
- Multiple Linear Regression Analysis: To measure the effect of independent variables (X₁, X₂) on the dependent variable (Y).
- Hypothesis Testing: Including t-test (partial) and F-test (simultaneous).

4. Results and Discussion

Validity and Reliability Test:

Table 1. Validity Test Table

Variable	Number of Items	r-calculated Range	r-table	Sig. (2-tailed)	Result
X ₁ (Employer Branding)	10	0.696–0.863	0.334	0.000	Valid
X ₂ (Digital Recruitment)	5	0.647–0.908	0.334	0.000	Valid
Y (Job Application Interest)	8	0.783–0.925	0.334	0.000	Valid

Table 2. Reliability Test Table

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items	Criterion	Result
X ₁ (Employer Branding)	0.948	10	> 0.70	Highly Reliable
X ₂ (Digital Recruitment)	0.858	5	> 0.70	Highly Reliable
Y (Job Application Interest)	0.943	8	> 0.70	Highly Reliable

In the table above, it is clear that all statement items for the three variables (X₁, X₂, Y) are valid because the calculated r value is greater than the table r value (0.334) and the significance is less than 0.05. The instruments are also declared reliable with Cronbach's Alpha values for X₁ = 0.948, X₂ = 0.858, and Y = 0.943 (all > 0.70).

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Table 3. Multicollinearity Test

Coefficients ^a			
Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	X1	,304	3,285
	X2	,304	3,285

a. Dependent Variable: Y

Multicollinearity testing shows that the VIF value for Employer Branding is (3,285) and for Digital Recruitment is (3,285), with Tolerance values greater than 0.10. Thus, all independent variables in the model meet the criteria and are free from multicollinearity.

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,920 ^a	,847	,837	2,190

a. Predictors: (Constant), Jumlah_X2, Jumlah_X1

Based on the table of multiple linear regression analysis results in the Model Summary above, the regression model formed has excellent (strong) explanatory and predictive capabilities. This is indicated by an R value of 0.920 and an Adjusted R Square value of 0.837.

Table 5. F Test (Simultaneous):

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	846,725	2	423,363	88,289	,000 ^b
	Residual	153,446	32	4,795		
	Total	1000,171	34			

a. Dependent Variable: Jumlah_Y

b. Predictors: (Constant), Jumlah_X2, Jumlah_X1

Calculated F value = 88.289 with sig. 0.000 < 0.05. H3 is accepted, meaning that X₁ and X₂ influence Y.

Table 6. t-test (Partial):

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	,546	2,458		,826
	Jumlah_X1	,571	,108	,663	,000
	Jumlah_X2	,444	,191	,292	,027

a. Dependent Variable: Jumlah_Y

The hypothesis testing results show that Employer Branding (X₁) has a significant effect on Job Application Interest, with a t-value of 5.280 and a significance value of 0.000,

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which is below 0.05. Therefore, H_1 is accepted. Digital Recruitment (X_2) also has a significant effect on Job Application Interest, with a t-value of 2.324 and a significance value of 0.027, which is below 0.05. Therefore, H_2 is accepted. The regression equation is $Y = 0.546 + 0.571X_1 + 0.444X_2$. The constant of 0.546 indicates that when Employer Branding and Digital Recruitment are equal to zero, Job Application Interest is 0.546. The coefficient of X_1 , which is 0.571, indicates that every one-unit increase in Employer Branding increases Job Application Interest by 0.571, assuming that Digital Recruitment remains constant. Similarly, the coefficient of X_2 , which is 0.444, indicates that every one-unit increase in Digital Recruitment increases Job Application Interest by 0.444, assuming that Employer Branding remains constant.

The Adjusted R Square value is 0.837. This means that 83.7% of the variation in Job Application Interest (Y) can be explained by the variation in Employer Branding (X_1) and Digital Recruitment (X_2). The remaining 16.3% is explained by other variables outside the model. This study concludes that employer branding and digital recruitment have a positive and significant effect on Generation Z's interest in applying for jobs at Siliwangi University. Companies are advised to strengthen their positive image through consistent communication strategies and the use of interactive digital media.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study confirm that both Employer Branding and Digital Recruitment are important determinants of Job Application Interest among Generation Z, particularly students at Siliwangi University.

First, Employer Branding has been proven to have the most dominant influence. This is in line with Signaling Theory (Spence, 1973), where Gen Z uses the image and reputation of a company as the main signal to assess the quality and suitability of a future workplace. For Gen Z, Employer Branding is not just advertising, but a reflection of the company's values, culture, and social commitment that must be in line with their personal identity (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). These results are consistent with the research by Vieira et al. (2024), which confirms Employer Branding as the main strategy for attracting Gen Z talent.

Second, Digital Recruitment also has a significant impact. As digital natives, Gen Z expects a fast, transparent, easily accessible application process that can be done via mobile devices. A positive user experience during the digital recruitment process creates a good first impression of the company as a modern and efficient organization (Sylva & Mol, 2009). These findings support the research by Zahrudini & Afrianty (2020) and Rani et al. (2022) on the importance of social media and e-recruitment.

Third, the strong simultaneous influence (Adjusted $R^2 = 83.7\%$) shows that the two variables complement each other. Strong employer branding will be useless if the application process is complicated and not user-friendly. Conversely, an advanced digital recruitment platform will not be effective if the company's image in the eyes of Gen Z is poor. Thus, the integration between the "message" (Employer Branding) and the "means of delivering the message" (Digital Recruitment) is the key to success.

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6. Practical Implications

1. For Companies: It is necessary to build authentic Employer Branding by highlighting EVP, inclusive work culture, work-life balance, and social commitment. At the same time, companies must optimize the digital recruitment process by ensuring a responsive career website, clear application status notifications, and the use of social media (such as Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok) to convey employer value.
2. For Educational Institutions (Universities): It is recommended to incorporate discussions on Employer Branding and digital recruitment trends into career preparation programs and soft skill training, so that students are better prepared and able to navigate the modern job market.

7. Limitations and Recommendations

This study has limitations in terms of the small sample size and specific research location. For future research, it is recommended to expand the sample and geographical coverage, as well as explore mediating or moderating variables such as Candidate Experience or Person-Organization Fit to obtain a more comprehensive model.

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