



The Relationship Between Product Brands, Corporate Brands, Employer Brands, Social Media, Corporate Reputation, and Intention to Apply for a Job

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ABSTRACT

Human resources play a crucial role in the corporate world because they have control over other resources. If the corporation lacks competent human resources, its operational activities will not be able to function properly. A person's intention to apply for a job can be influenced by some factors. This research examines the influence of product brand, corporate brand, employer brand, social media, corporate reputation, and the intention to apply for a job. The research is quantitative, and the sampling technique used is convenience sampling with 334 respondents, namely private company job seekers registered at Internship & Career Development, Sebelas Maret University, in 2021–2022. The analysis technique used is partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The research results show that product and corporate brands directly influence the intention to apply for a job through the mediating variable of the employer brand. The findings show that the effect of corporate reputation on the intention to apply for a job is significantly moderated by social media variables. The results of this research have important implications for theory and practice.

KEYWORDS: - product brand, corporate brand, employer brand, Social media, Human resources, Corporate reputation, intention to apply.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human resource management can assist corporations in achieving organizational effectiveness, and thus have a significant impact on whether the corporation is good enough, fast enough, and competitive enough to stay ahead of the competition and continue to grow (Schuler & Jackson, 2000). Human resource management consists of systems, practices, and policies that can influence employee behaviour, performance, and attitudes (Noe et al., 2007). A corporation should have good human resource management to improve the performance of teams that have been formed to achieve goals effectively and efficiently (Armstrong, 2001). A corporation's success is dependent on its highly competent human resources. Many factors can influence someone's decision to work for a corporation (Saini et al., 2013). These factors can include the corporation's services or products, location, geographic conditions, and reputation. According to previous research, salary, corporate image, and work interest are all factors that influence why a person chooses a corporation (Chi et al., 2018). As a result, based on many factors that the corporation can afford, it will expand its size so that applicants can choose it.

Corporate branding represents the corporation's efforts to disseminate corporate information related to its views that are different from those of other similar corporations (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). In studying the influence of brands on human resource functions, most human resource research focuses on corporate brands and their impact (Kim et al., 2010). For many new job seekers, the first point of interaction with the corporation is as a consumer (i.e., through advertising exposure and/or product use). Furthermore, job seekers can evaluate corporations based on perceived brand perception. Today, concern about the corporate brand is often used as a benchmark for employee recruitment. This indicates that the size of the brand can be measured by the attractiveness of a corporation (Sivertzen et al., 2013). Corporations certainly want to have a good point of view on some potential applicants (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Product Brand

In Aaker & Biel (2009), a "brand" is a unique name or symbol like a stamp or package that can provide identification for a service or goods that have been sold by a group. The concept of brand equity can be generalized for the context of recruitment and suggests that organizational efforts to recruit candidates are similar to organizational efforts to make people interested in buying a service or product (Cable and Turban, 2001). A brand is a necessary process to form an identity associated with emotions, perceptions, and feelings about something (Montoya, 2002). Branding can be obtained before marketing and sales. A brand that lacks the proper marketing techniques will not generate significant profits. Job seekers evaluate the attractiveness of employers based on perceptions of the employer's product or service brand portfolio (Wilden et al., 2010). Brand equity influences the evaluation of job characteristics, resulting in the perception that working for higher brand equity will build strength (Delvecchio et al., 2007).

Corporate Brand

A corporate brand is an explicit promise made by an organization to a key stakeholder group (Balmer, 1998). All aspects of an organization's identity must be recognized in the form of a clear branding proposition that supports the organization's efforts to communicate, differentiate, and improve its brand in relation to key stakeholder groups and networks (Balmer, 2001). Corporate branding involves systematically planned behaviour management, communication, and symbolism to achieve a good and positive reputation with an organization's target audience (Einwiller & Will, 2002). The "behaviour" aspect can specifically refer to employee behaviour in fulfilling the corporate's brand promise. Because a brand acts as a promise between an organization and its potential and existing customers, that promise must be understood internally and upheld by the entire organization. It should pervade all company actions (Tilley, 1999).

Social media

Social media can also be used to attract new employees (Davison et al., 2011). Users appear to accept the use of social media for recruitment, possibly because it is similar to job advertisements on the internet (Davison et al., 2011). The use of social media by organizations has benefits such as free, unlimited use, and faster response times to contacts and activities (Furu, 2011). Organizational impressions can be improved by utilizing the substantial and easy information available in job advertisements on digital platforms (Collins & Stevens, 2002). Social media can also be used to attract employees to send their application letters (Davison et al., 2011). The most important aspect of recruitment is the clarity of information regarding vacancies, such as salary levels, work hours, job duties, etc., (Breugh, 2008). However, it is important to ensure that the website is appealing and easy to use (Rynes & Cable, 2003).

Corporate Reputation

Corporate reputation can be defined as a "perceptual representation of the corporation's past actions and prospects that describe the attractiveness of the corporation to all its main constituents" (Fombrun, 1996). A good reputation is the most valuable intangible resource for a corporation because it reduces stakeholder uncertainty about future performance, builds target audience trust, increases the ability to provide high-value services and products, and strengthens competitive advantage (Gök & Zkaya, 2011). Corporate reputation is a collective evaluation of the corporation's attractiveness to certain stakeholder groups (Fombrun, 2012). Corporate reputation can be good or bad. Corporate reputation can be improved by producing high-quality products and services, having financial soundness, having superior management, and being competitive in the market (Singh & Misra, 2021). Concluded that corporate reputation consists of social and business reputation (De Castro et al., 2006). Company reputation is the main intangible asset of a corporation, which highlights the success of strategic environmental management to market stakeholders (Barnett et al., 2006). Social reputation is the insight and perception of stakeholders about company activities that ensure the welfare and safety of employees and society (Yaw et al., 2022).

Employer Brand

The term "employer brand" was first defined as a package of psychological, functional, and economic benefits provided by a job and identified with the employing organization (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). Since then, much research has focused on defining the concept from an internal and external perspective. An employer's brand, for example, is the identity of a corporation that opens job vacancies, including policies and behaviour, to the corporate's value system, to provide motivation, attract employees, and provide comfort for employees so they can survive (Hillebrandt & Ivens, 2013). Furthermore, employer branding is defined as the process of building an identifiable and unique employer identity that promotes a unique and attractive employer image (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Employer brand image is defined as "the image associated with the organization's role as an

employer" (Knox & Freeman, 2006). According to them, key attributes such as freedom to work, a dynamic business approach, scope for creativity, a stress-free work environment, opportunities for international travel, standard working hours, long-term career advancement, job rotation, diversity in work, care for the individual, a friendly culture, and so on are included in the construction of an employer's brand.

Intention to Apply for a Job

Applicants may remember more associations with corporations with which they are more familiar and have a higher intention to apply (Brooks et al, 2003). Research shows that knowledge or awareness of an organization greatly influences interest in or the intention to apply for a job (Collins, 2007). The intention to get a job can be observed from the activities that are continuously carried out by employees. The intention to get a job is described as a desire to act and search for information related to a corporation, matters related to the corporation, and conduct interviews that have been opened by the corporation (Aiman-Smith et al., 2001). Studies find that job fitness will influence the intention of job seekers to accept a job (Edwards, 1991). In addition, during recruitment, according to person-organizational fitness theory (Kristof, 1996), potential job seekers will be aware of whether their values match the culture and values of the organization if relevant information is available. When potential applicants match the company's culture and values, the organization has more attractiveness (Boon & Hartog, 2011).

Based on the background above, the following hypothesis can be drawn:

- H1: The product brand affects the employer brand.
- H2: The corporate brand affects the employer's brand.
- H3: The employer's brand affects the intention to apply for a job.
- H4: Corporate reputation affects the intention to apply for a job.
- H5a: Employer brand mediates the relationship between product brand and intention to apply for a job.
- H5b: Employer brand mediates the relationship between corporate brand and intention to apply for a job.
- H6: Social media moderates the relationship between corporate reputation and the intention to apply for a job.

3. METHODOLOGY

The framework of thinking is a conceptual model regarding the thoughts of researchers related to factors that have been identified to become problems discussed in research. The framework consists of variables that can be used to describe the relationship between these variables (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The conceptual framework in this research tested the variables Product Brand, Corporate Brand, and Corporate Reputation as independent variables, Employer Brand as a mediating variable, Social Media as a moderating variable, and Intention to Apply for a Job as the dependent variable.

3.1. Research design

This research used the cross-sectional research method. The cross-sectional research method is a research design where data is collected in only one timeframe to answer research questions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

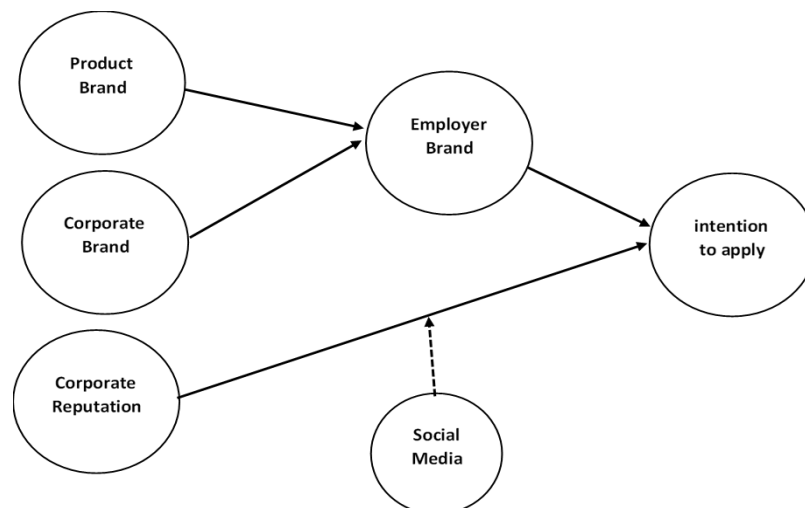


Figure 1 Research Framework

3.2. Sample and data collection

This research uses a convenience technique, namely, a technique for taking non-probability samples, referring to the collection of information from a population that can easily provide the information needed (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). This research will use a total sample of 334 job seekers from private companies who are registered at Internship & Career Development at Sebelas Maret University in 2021–2022. The distribution of questionnaires was distributed to respondents via telegram or WhatsApp via the survey link in the form of a predetermined Google form.

In this research, data on the respondents' characteristics was explained through tables to determine their backgrounds. The characteristics of the respondents studied, namely gender, age, education, and study program.

Table 1 Respondent Description Data

Profile	Gender	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Gender	Male	131	39%
	Female	203	61%
Age	20 – 25	286	86%
	26 – 30	42	12%
	>30	6	2%
Education	S1	291	87%
	S2	43	13%
Study Program	Management	112	33%
	Accounting	104	31%
	Economic	118	36%
	Development		

Source: Data processing results, 2023

3.3. Construct measures

All measurement items are based on a five-point scale ranging from "1 = strongly disagree" to "5 = strongly agree." Corporate brand is measured using the CBR scale (corporate brand reputation), according to research by Walsh & Beatty (2007). Product brands are measured using four question items taken from Yoo and Donthu's research (2001). Employer brand is measured along three dimensions: corporate brand awareness, perceived job attributes (based on Collins' 2007 research), and corporate brand attractiveness (based on Highhouse et al.'s 2003 research). Social media is measured using three question items developed by Collins and Stevens (2002). Corporate reputation can be measured using the two question items used Turban et al., (1998). Intention to apply for a job is measured using three question items based on research Highhouse et al.,(2003).

3.4. Data analysis

Data analysis techniques used in this research were Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). According to Wold in Ghazali (2014), PLS is a powerful analytical method because it does not rely on a number of assumptions, such as the data being normally distributed multivariate, which means it can be determined from each scale and the size of the research sample, which is not always large. The purpose of this PLS is to provide assistance to researchers in obtaining latent variable values so that they can predict answers to problem formulations (Ghozali, 2014).

4. RESULTS

4.1 Outer model evaluation

The outer model is the state of each indicator block associated with the latent variable. This measurement model will use CFA (Confirmatory Factor Analysis). The tests to be carried out are:

4.1.1. Test of Validity

The validity of the question items, as measured by the value of the outer loading, using convergent validity. Question items are considered valid if they have an outer loading value of ≥ 0.7 and have been perfectly extracted (Hair, 2014). Discriminant validity can be defined as the degree to which a construct differs empirically from other constructs (Hair, 2014). The results of testing the convergent validity of this study are presented in table table 2.

4.1.2. Test of Reliability

The first reliability test is to look at Cronbach's alpha coefficient. If it approaches one, the test results are said to have a high level of reliability. Cronbach's alpha can be accepted or said to be reliable if it has a value of more than 0.7 (Hair, 2014). The next reliability test is to look at the composite reliability value. It is used to determine whether the variable can be said to be reliable or not. Research indicators can be said to be reliable if repeated measurements produce consistent results (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Table 3 Test results of reliability

Variabel Laten	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability
Product Brand	0.931	0.936
Corporate Brand	0.940	0.942
Corporate Reputation	0.709	0.759
Social Media	0.776	0.781
Employer Brand	0.931	0.936
Intention To Apply	0.858	0.859

Source: Researcher Data Processing Results with Smart PLS (2023)

Table 2 Test results of Convergent Validity

Variabel	Item	Loading	Description	Variabel	Item	Loading	Description
Corporate Brand	MP 1	0.708	Valid	Employer Brand	MPK 1	0.720	Valid
	MP 2	0.713	Valid		MPK 2	0.710	Valid
	MP 3	0.753	Valid		MPK 3	0.712	Valid
	MP 4	0.711	Valid		MPK 4	0.762	Valid
	MP 5	0.702	Valid		MPK 5	0.720	Valid
	MP 6	0.741	Valid		MPK 6	0.770	Valid
	MP 7	0.737	Valid		MPK 7	0.743	Valid
	MP 8	0.733	Valid		MPK 8	0.729	Valid
	MP 9	0.727	Valid		MPK 9	0.780	Valid
	MP 10	0.740	Valid		MPK 10	0.750	Valid
	MP 11	0.729	Valid		MPK 11	0.760	Valid
	MP 12	0.741	Valid	Corporate Reputation	CR 1	0.836	Valid
	MP 13	0.722	Valid		CR 2	0.918	Valid
	MP 14	0.718	Valid		Social Media	MS 1	0.877
	MP 15	0.714	Valid	MS 2		0.850	Valid
	MP 16	0.725	Valid	MS 3		0.765	Valid
Product Brand	MPr 1	0.903	Valid	Intention To Apply	NUMP 1	0.876	Valid
	MPr 2	0.927	Valid		NUMP 2	0.880	Valid
	MPr 3	0.888	Valid		NUMP 3	0.893	Valid
	MPr 4	0.921	Valid				

Source: Researcher Data Processing Results with Smart PLS (2023)

4.2 Inner Model Evaluation

The structural model (inner model) measurement aims to test the effect of other latent variables (Hair, 2014). The R Square test value represents the influence of exogenous latent variables on endogenous latent variables. The coefficient, which is calculated as the squared correlation between the original value and the estimated value of certain endogenous variables, is a measure of model prediction accuracy (Hair et al., 2014). The model is said to be good if the results are 0.67, the model is said to be moderate if the results are 0.33 and if the result is less than 0.19, the model is said to be weak.

Table 4 R-Square value

Latent Variable	R-Square
Employer Brand	0.592
Intention To Apply	0.604

Source: Data processing results, 2023

4.2.1 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was carried out using bootstrapping in the Smart PLS software, then comparing the T-table values with T-statistics. The hypothesis can be accepted if the T-statistics value is higher than the T-table value (1.96), with a significant P value of 5% (Hair, 2014).

Table 5 Path Coefficient

Variable Relationship	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
Product Brand -> Employer Brand	0.230	0.229	0.045	5.137	0.000
Corporate Brand -> Employer Brand	0.623	0.626	0.038	16.319	0,000
Employer Brand -> Intention To Apply	0.534	0.535	0.050	10.712	0,000
Corporate Reputation -> Intention To Apply	0.132	0.134	0.049	2.706	0.007
Social Media -> Intention To Apply	0.168	0.166	0.062	2.691	0.007
Social Media X Corporate Reputation -> Intention To Apply	-0.102	-0.098	0.032	3.149	0.002

Source: Researcher Data Processing Results with Smart PLS (2023)

Table 6 Indirect Effects Results

Variable Relationship	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
Corporate Brand -> Employer Brand -> Intention To Apply	0.333	0.334	0.037	9.094	0.000
Product Brand -> Employer Brand-> Intention To Apply	0.123	0.123	0.028	4.453	0.000

Source: Researcher Data Processing Results with Smart PLS (2023)

Based on the data in Table 5 & Table 6, it is clear that all seven hypotheses are accepted because they have a p-value higher than 0.05. H1, H2, H3, H4, H5a, H5b, and H6 are the accepted hypotheses.

The results based on the results of testing hypothesis 1 in table 5 show that product brands have an effect on employer brands, as shown by the T statistic value above 1.96, namely 5.137. Then H1 in this research is accepted. This finding is relevant to previous research by Kim et al. (2010), which stated that an organization is able to create positive feelings about the corporation as an employer and job opportunities through its reputation. That the power of product-level brand equity moderates the relationship between product-level

brands, enterprise-level brands, job attributes, and job pursuits. Delvecchio et al. (2007) found that product-level brand equity was shown to significantly and positively influence potential job applicants' decisions.

Hypothesis 2: The results influence the impact of the corporate brand on the intention to apply for a job. Based on the test results in Table 5, the corporate brand has an effect on the employer's brand, as indicated by the T statistic value above 1.96, namely 16.319, so Hypothesis 2 in this research is accepted. The results of the research are in line with previous research, namely Banerjee et al. (2018), showing that corporate brands influence employer brands to a large extent, which then contributes to the intention to apply positively.

The influence of the employer's brand on the intention to apply for a job is the result of hypothesis 3. The effect of the employer's brand on the intention to apply for a job is shown in the T statistic above 1.96, namely 10.712, based on the test results in table 14.12. As a result, Hypothesis 3 in this research is accepted. Previous research by Saini et al. (2013) shows that employer brand strength, as measured by participation in the best employer survey, significantly increases job seekers' intention to apply, and employer familiarity is an important predictor of job seekers' intentions.

The results of hypothesis 4 influence the intention to apply for a job based on the corporate reputation. Based on the test results in Table 14.14, the effect of corporate reputation on the intention to apply for a job is indicated by the T statistic above 1.96, which is 2.706. Then hypothesis 4 in this research is accepted. The results of this research are in line with previous research conducted by Edwards (2009), explaining his opinion that if a corporation has a good reputation, then its chances of getting potential applicants are also higher.

The results of hypothesis 5a, the effect of product brand on the intention to apply for a job through the employer's brand as a mediating variable, Based on Table 6, the effect of the product brand on the intention to apply for a job through the employer's brand as a mediating variable has a T statistic of more than 1.96, namely 4.453. Then hypothesis 5b in this research is accepted. The results of this research are in line with previous research conducted by Kim et al. (2010) showing that product and company-level brands have a high indirect effect on the intention to apply for a job.

The results of hypothesis 5b, the effect of corporate branding on the intention to apply for a job through the employer's brand as a mediating variable, Based on Table 6, the effect of the corporate brand on the intention to apply for a job through the employer's brand as a mediating variable is shown by the T statistic of more than 1.96, namely 9.094. Then hypothesis 5a in this research is accepted. The results of this research are in line with previous research conducted by Collins' research (2007), proving that the intention to apply is one of the main results of a corporate brand.

Results of hypothesis 6 Seventh, the influence of corporate reputation and intention to apply for work is moderated by social media variables. Based on Table 5, the influence of corporate reputation and intention to apply for work, which is moderated by social media variables, has a T statistic of more than 1.96, namely 3,149. Then hypothesis 6 in this research is accepted. The findings of this research are consistent with Tanwar and Kumar's (2019) previous research, which found that using social media helps strengthen the relationship that already exists between an individual, their organization, and their corporation of choice.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion and Implication

The results of this research confirm that all the hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5a, H5b, and H6) proposed in this research are proven. First, the product brand is influential and significant to the employer's brand. Second, the corporate brand has a significant influence on the intention to apply for a job. Third, the employer's brand has a significant effect on the intention to apply for a job. Fourth, the reputation of the corporation has a significant impact on the intention to apply for a job. Fifth, the employer's brand significantly mediates the effect of the corporate brand on the intention to apply for a job. Sixth, the employer's brand mediates the effect of the product brand on the intention to apply for a job. Seventh, the influence of corporate reputation and intention to apply for work is significantly moderated by social media variables. This research offers implications for HR practitioners, as results such as the impact of corporate brand on employer brand are useful for identifying and understanding the main determinants of employer attractiveness. Meanwhile, to attract more candidates, corporate brand activities can be focused on creating higher employer awareness and making employers more attractive because employer branding leads to higher intentions to apply for jobs.

5.2. Limitation and Future Research

This research examines the variables that influence a person's intention to apply for a job. This researcher examines variables such as product brand, corporate brand, employer brand, corporate reputation, and social media. Future research may add other variables that have not been examined in this research. Different combinations of methods may be used in further research on the topic to account for the limitations of the cross-sectional design in this research.

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