

Research Article

Employer Branding and Job Application Intention: The Mediating Role of Corporate Reputation among Generation Z

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Abstract: This study investigates how the perception of corporations acts as a mediator connecting employer branding with applicants' intentions to apply for jobs from the Gen Z demographic in Indonesia's private banking sector. While the broader context refers to the Indonesian private banking industry, the empirical support identified in this study was drawn from Semarang, involving 120 Generation Z respondents who were either final-year students or recent graduates residing in the city. A quantitative design was conducted through a survey approach with purposive sampling, and data were acquired through web-based questionnaires. The evaluation was carried out employing the PLS-SEM method with SmartPLS version 4. 0. The findings indicate that employer branding significantly influences both the reputation of the company and the likelihood of application in a positive manner. Additionally, a company's reputation is strongly and positively linked to the intention to apply, serving as a bridge between employer branding and the desire to seek employment opportunities. The study highlights that employer branding, when managed effectively, enhances Generation Z's application intention, operating both as a direct driver and via the mediating influence of corporate reputation. Practically, this implies private banks in Indonesia particularly those operating in Semarang should concentrate on advancing employer branding practices while upholding a strong corporate reputation to draw and involve talented candidates from Generation Z. This study provides a contribution to the academic field by highlighting empirical evidence collected in Semarang reflect the interaction between employer branding and corporate reputation in influencing job application behavior of Generation Z within the private banking sector.

Keywords: Applicant Intention; Corporate Reputation; Employer Branding; Generation Z; Private Banking

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1. Introduction

The rapid transformation of Indonesia's labor market positions Generation Z as a dominant workforce segment, characterized by digital savviness, career ambition, and a desire for meaningful work environments. Empirical evidence from Indonesian university students shows that most Gen Z prefer employment in state-owned enterprises (BUMN) rather than civil service roles, highlighting the challenges faced by the private sector in capturing their attention and trust (Ma'rifah et al., 2024). This issue is especially apparent in Indonesia's private banking sector, which must compete not only with BUMN that offer stronger job security and institutional prestige, but also with startups and multinational corporations that are often perceived as more innovative and flexible (Kaur et al., 2024; Marginingsih & Setiawan, 2021). Unlike BUMN or multinational firms that may rely on institutional prestige or global reputation, private banks in Indonesia face distinctive challenges in attracting Gen Z talent, making the influence exerted by employer branding and corporate reputation particularly crucial. These conditions make it difficult for private banks to position themselves as attractive

employers for Gen Z, who tend to value authenticity, career development opportunities, and organizational credibility (Hardiningrum & Harianto, 2024). Furthermore, work expectations such as job security, health benefits, and supportive management are significant predictors of job application intention among near-graduates, with social media serving as a critical channel for shaping employer images and influencing choices (Rani et al., 2022). This preference is reflected in real-world phenomena: the 2025 Rekrutmen Bersama BUMN attracted over 1.4 million applicants, predominantly Gen Z, competing for only about 2,000 openings (Antara, 2025; Kompas.com, 2025). In a labor market characterized by strong competition, private-sector employers, including banking institutions, need to strategically utilize leveraging employer branding and corporate reputation to effectively attract & maintain a strong workforce by retaining exceptional Generation Z professionals.

Recent research highlights that the branding of employers and the reputation of a company play significant roles in shaping the propensity of Generation Z to submit job applications, although the extent of their impact changes based on the specific organizational environment. Anggiawinata & Darmastuti (2025) showed that the brand image of an employer greatly influences people's willingness to apply for jobs, with corporate reputation acting as a robust mediating factor within private-sector companies. Similarly, Phalevi & Handoyo (2023) it was reported that although employer branding and corporate reputation enhance the attractiveness of startups, the translation into real job applications declines if reputational perceptions are unfavorable. Studies on state-owned enterprises (BUMN) and large corporations indicate that employer branding alone may be insufficient to drive application intention unless accompanied by sustained reputation management and credible endorsements. These variations across private firms, startups, and BUMN underscore that the interaction of employer branding and corporate reputation varies across contexts, highlighting the importance of investigating these dynamics in industries such as private banking, where both brand appeal and reputational credibility are crucial for attracting Generation Z talent.

The conceptual basis of this study utilizes the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to examine the intention behind applying for jobs Ajzen (1991), with conceptual models of employer branding and corporate reputation. Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior, a person's intentions to behave in a certain way, like looking for a job, are influenced by their feelings about that behavior, the societal influences they sense, and how much control they feel they possess in carrying out the behavior. Employer branding contributes to positive attitudes by enhancing organizational attractiveness, signaling career prospects, and conveying corporate values (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Corporate reputation represents a broader evaluative judgment of a firm's credibility and integrity, shaped by sustained organizational performance and stakeholder perceptions Doorley & Garcia (2015) and Fombrun et al. (2000) serve as a bridge connecting company reputation and the motivation to apply for jobs. Specifically, for Generation Z, who prioritize authenticity, transparency, and social responsibility, combining employer branding with a strong corporate reputation is expected to create a compelling signal that motivates their job application intentions, highlighting the importance of examining these dynamics in private banking contexts.

Given the intense competition for Generation Z talent in Indonesia's private banking sector, understanding the mechanisms that drive job application intention is critical. While prior studies have evidence provides evidence that the presence of strong employer branding and a favorable corporate reputation positively shapes applicants' job application intentions, findings vary across organizational contexts. For instance, Anggiawinata & Darmastuti (2025) highlighted the critical mediating role of corporate reputation in shaping the relationship between employer branding and Generation Z's intention to apply for jobs within private-sector companies. Conversely, studies focused on Indonesian state-owned enterprises (BUMN) and according to research conducted by Soeling et al. (2022), the employer brand plays a role in affecting outcomes within startups was sometimes statistically insignificant unless accompanied by a strong corporate reputation or credible endorsements. Additional studies in the Indonesian context also highlight the role of authenticity, value fit, and perceived organizational credibility in shaping Gen Z's job application intentions (Evrina & Wulansari, 2023; Hardiningrum & Harianto, 2024). Empirical research conducted in the private banking and financial services sector abroad similarly emphasizes that employer branding effectiveness is contingent upon organizational culture and trustworthiness (Jordan & Desiana, 2024; Kaur et al., 2024). Despite this growing evidence, most studies still concentrate on BUMN, startups, or multinational corporations, leaving a clear gap in empirical research on private banking firms in Indonesia, where professional credibility and corporate reputation are especially critical. Such inconsistencies underscore the importance of empirically studying how corporate

reputation serves as a bridge connecting employer branding in Indonesia's private banking industry in relation to Generation Z's job-seeking intents.

This research contributes novel insights by focusing specifically on the private banking sector and Generation Z job seekers in Indonesia an underexplored area in employer branding literature. By integrating TPB with an employer branding framework and explicitly testing corporate reputation as a mediating variable, accordingly, this study not only enhances theoretical understanding but also delivers actionable implications for practice. Its focus on the private banking sector considers the critical importance of reputation and trust in financial services, providing tailored strategies for banks to enhance their employer attractiveness among younger generations with distinct expectations. This study seeks to investigate the mediating role of corporate reputation in the relationship between employer branding and Generation Z's job application intentions in Indonesia's private banking sector. Specifically, it aims to provide empirical evidence on how employer branding efforts influencing corporate reputation can increase the attraction of private banks as employers of choice. The study aspires to guide private banking institutions in developing more effective recruitment strategies that align their brand image and reputation to meet the preferences and values of the emerging workforce.

2. Literature Review

The Conceptual Perspective of the Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), proposed by (Ajzen, 1991) acts as a development of the Theory of Reasoned Action (Mahyarni, 2013). The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) states that individuals act based on intentions, which are determined by their opinions about the actions, social norms and ability to control those actions. In this study, attitudes reflect how Generation Z job seekers employer branding and corporate reputation, where stronger positive perceptions correspond to a higher likelihood of pursuing applications. Subjective norms capture social influences, including the perspectives of family, peers, and the broader social environment regarding private banking organization. This factor can strengthen or weaken Generation Z's intention to apply. Meanwhile, perceived behavioral control describes the extent to which applicants feel capable and confident in navigating the recruitment process, from accessing job vacancy information to preparing for selection stages. Therefore, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) describes how attitudes, social standards, and the sense of collective competence contributes to determining intentions of Generation Z regarding job applications for positions. This draws attention to the significance of employer branding and the organization's image in affecting application decisions, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of recruitment strategies in Indonesian private banking companies.

Employer Branding

According to (Thang & Trang, 2024), employer branding is perceived by jobseekers as the benefits offered by a position within an organization, making it a critical determinant in attracting job application intentions. (Botella-Carrubi et al., 2021) additionally highlight that, from an outside viewpoint, the implementation of employer branding strategies enhances a firm's image as a preferred employer, thus aiding in attracting and keeping the right talent. Meanwhile, (Pantchev, 2022) emphasizes that successful employer branding entails comprehending the intended audience and the elements that draw in and retain talent, such as how a company's country-of-origin image affects jobseekers' views. Together, these viewpoints emphasize that employer branding plays a crucial role in shaping a company's reputation. This reputation, in turn, influences the likelihood of applying for jobs, particularly among Generation Z, who value genuine experiences and the standing of the organization when making career choices.

Corporate Reputation

According to Lara (2023), a company's corporate reputation indicates how the general public views its credibility and image. The public's perception of an organization's credibility and appearance is known as its corporate reputation. It is considered an intangible asset that influences how prospective job seekers assess the organization while also generating long-term benefits, such as enhanced financial performance. Moreover, it evolves over time through the evaluations of various stakeholders, including consumers, employees, suppliers, and business partners. According to (Wang et al., 2024) it is emphasized that emphasize that corporate reputation is a vital component of intangible assets, where any damage may hinder

value creation and growth. Similarly, (Megawati et al., 2025) points out that corporate reputation is a decisive factor influencing prospective applicants' intention to pursue employment opportunities. Therefore, employer branding effects's on the desire to submit an application for jobs is channeled through corporate reputation, a process that becomes increasingly relevant in connection with Generation.

Job Application Intention

The willingness to submit job applications reflects a process of seeking information, evaluating alternatives, and choosing target organizations. This generational shift has become increasingly relevant, particularly as Generation Z begins to enter the workforce (Lestari & Manggiasih, 2023). Jobseekers' willingness to apply can also be reflected in the organizations they frequently explore. Furthermore, job application intention is described as an applicant's decision to choose a specific organization as their preferred place of employment (Vondrea & Riza, 2024).

Hypothesis Development

The following assumptions align with the goals of the research and draw from theoretical models established in earlier investigations:

The Impact of Employer Branding on Job Seekers' Intent to Apply

An method that is long-term and strategic is employer branding aimed at cultivating a positive organizational image among current employees and prospective applicants. A well-established employer brand enhances corporate reputation and exerts a positive influence on job application intentions. This association has been substantiated by numerous research studies. According to Ekhsan et al. (2021) employer branding cultivates favorable perceptions among prospective employees, which subsequently drive their job application intentions. According to Elbendary et al. (2023) emphasized that positioning the company as an attractive workplace strengthens the interest of young generations in submitting applications. Evrina & Wulansari (2023) showed that employer branding demonstrates an organization's commitment to workforce well-being, thereby enhancing job application intention. In addition, Geofanny & Faraz (2023) noted that consistent employer branding reinforces organizational reputation, while Junça Silva & Dias (2023) highlighted that employer branding influences application intention both directly and indirectly through corporate reputation. Lestari & Manggiasih (2023) confirmed that a favorable employer brand motivates potential applicants by portraying the company as an attractive workplace, thus strengthening the desire to seek employment.

H1: Employer branding contributes positively to job application intentions.

The Impact of Employer Branding on Corporate Reputation

One essential strategy is leveraging employer branding to establish a strong organizational reputation and fostering a strong reputation. Employer branding, as noted by Junça Silva & Dias (2023) contributes to building a positive reputation by aligning corporate identity, work culture, and organizational values with stakeholder expectations. Similarly, Potgieter & Doubell (2018) emphasized that employer branding functions as a strategic tool in overseeing corporate reputation, as it significantly shapes public perception. Consistently, Binu Raj et al. (2022) emphasized the crucial importance of employer branding in creating a positive organizational reputation. Taken together, the research outcomes demonstrate that employer brand plays a significant role in reinforcing corporate reputation.

H2: Employer branding contributes positively to corporate reputation.

The Impact of Corporate Reputation Exploring Job-seeking Intentions

Based on the empirical evidence of Hanu et al. (2021), the evidence validates the relationship between the willingness to submit a job application and the company's reputation, which is in line with prior studies (Clardy, 2005; Collins & Han, 2004; Edwards, 2009; Sivertzen et al., 2013). Corporate reputation plays a crucial role for prospective employees, especially fresh graduates, who deliberately pursue opportunities in organizations they perceive to possess a favorable reputation. Recent research further emphasizes the significance of reputation within particular contexts. For instance, Soleha & Satrya (2024) demonstrate that employer branding and CSR influence organizational reputation, ultimately increasing the propensity of Generation Z to submit job applications within Indonesia. Similarly, Junça Silva & Dias (2023) emphasize that employer branding enhances reputation, which subsequently boosts job application intention. In high-trust industries such as private banking, Astuti (2023) emphasizes that a strong corporate reputation is essential for drawing in job candidates, even though the direct statistical impact may differ. Accordingly, it can be hypothesized that corporate reputation has a positive impact on job application intention.

H3: Corporate image positively affects job seekers' willingness to apply.

Corporate Reputation's Mediating Function in the Relationship between Employer Branding and Job Application Intention

Beyond shaping a positive image among prospective employees, employer branding contributes to the enhancement of corporate reputation. Khan (2024) found that employer branding creates positive perceptions that strengthen reputation and increase job application intention. Similarly, Marginingsih & Setiawan (2021) showed that corporate reputation plays a significant role in mediating the link between employer branding and the willingness to submit a job application. Yuspita et al. (2025) also highlighted that a robust employer brand strengthens company reputation, which subsequently motivates Generation Z to pursue job applications. Consequently, corporate reputation has a major mediating role in the relationship between employer branding and the aim to seek employment.

H4: Corporate reputation plays a pivotal role in shaping the link between employer branding & individuals' intent to pursue the application for jobs.

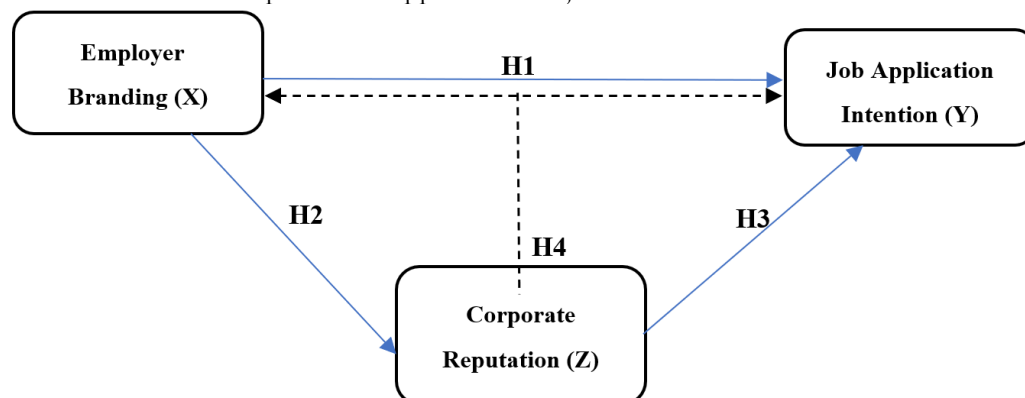


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. Research Method

This study adopts a quantitative research approach, utilizing a survey method administered through a structured questionnaire, with statements developed based on variable indicators. There are 3 variables in this study: employer branding as the independent construct, corporate reputation as the mediating construct, and job application intention as the dependent construct.

Purposive sampling was applied as the technique for participant selection in this study. The sampling was conducted to provide a representation of the characteristics of the observation units that meet the study criteria. The criteria for purposive sampling are: 1) Individuals belong to Generation Z (born 1997–2012), 2) Have completed or are currently pursuing higher education (D3, D4, or S1), 3) Reside in Semarang, 4) Are interested in applying to private banking companies and do not yet have permanent employment.

The sample size was established in accordance with Hair et al. (2019), who recommend setting the sample size at 5 to 10 times the overall count of indicators. Considering the 12 indicators, the research was conducted with 120 respondents. The research gathered original data by using questionnaires distributed through Google Forms. The survey utilized a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) to assess how much the participants agreed with statements related to the three variables. The tool for research was created based on the particular indicators connected to each variable.

The analysis of the data was performed with the help of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4.0. The study utilized PLS-SEM for its ability to evaluate and interpret the effects of multiple independent and dependent variables simultaneously (Yusuf, 2022). PLS-SEM is widely used because the indicators and structural paths can be estimated without requiring the data to meet specific distribution assumptions (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 1. Variable Indicators

Variable	Indicator	Sources
Employer Branding (X)	1. Value of interest, 2. Social value, 3. Economic value, 4. Application value.	(Berthon et al., 2005; Marginingsih & Setiawan, 2021; Wardani & Ikhrum, 2023)
Job Application Intention (Y)	1. The need for work 2. Job information search 3. Determination of job options 4. Decision making	(Marginingsih & Setiawan, 2021)
Corporate Reputation (Z)	1. Daya Tarik Emosional 2. Products and Services 3. Vision and Leadership 4. Workplace Environment	(Fombrun et al., 2000; Marginingsih & Setiawan, 2021; Romadhon & Khatimah, 2025)

4. Results and Discussion

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

No	Description	Characteristics	Total	%
1	Gender	Male	51	42.5
		Female	69	57.5
2	Educational Status	Graduated from higher education (D3/D4/S1)	60	50
		Final-year student (D3/D4/S1)	60	50
3	Age	20–22 years	72	60
		23–25 years	41	34.17
		26–28 years	7	5.83
4	Year of Birth	2003–2005	72	60
		2000–2002	41	34.17
		1997–1999	7	5.83

Table 2 displays the traits of the participants in this research, showing that females constituted the majority at 57.5%, whereas males comprised 42.5%. Regarding educational attainment, the distribution is balanced, with 50% having graduated from higher education (D3/D4/S1) and 50% still being final-year students.

Based on age, most respondents are between 20 and 22 years old (60%), followed by those aged 23–25 years (34.17%), with a small proportion aged 26–28 years (5.83%). This suggests that the respondents are predominantly young adults who are at the early stages of entering the workforce. Regarding birth year, the majority were born between 2003 and 2005 (60%), followed by 2000–2002 (34.17%), and a minority between 1997 and 1999 (5.83%). This finding is consistent with the age distribution, where most respondents are within the 20–22 age range.

Overall, this demographic profile confirms that the respondents represent Generation Z, a cohort that is digitally savvy, highly selective, and places strong emphasis on corporate reputation and employer branding when considering job applications. This makes them highly relevant to the focus of this study.

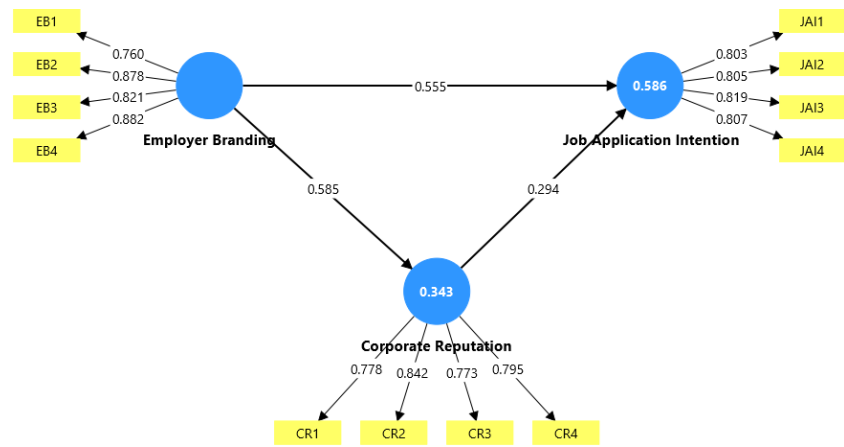


Figure 2. Full Structural Model

Figure 2 illustrates the complete structural model, highlighting the interrelationships among the study variables: employer branding, company reputation, and intention to apply for jobs. All indicators for the latent variables demonstrated factor loadings above 0.7, confirming their validity in capturing the intended constructs.

Employer branding has a role in affecting corporate reputation (0.585) and the willingness to submit job applications (0.555), according to the path coefficients, which show how strongly the variables are related to one another. Furthermore, Corporate Reputation also affects Job Application Intention with a coefficient value of 0.294.

In addition, the R-squared (R^2) values of 0.343 for Corporate Reputation and 0.586 for Job Application Intention suggest that the model possesses a moderate level of explanatory capability for these endogenous variables.

Table 3. Evaluation of Validity Results

	Corporate Reputation	Employer Branding	Job Application Intention
CR1	0.778		
CR2	0.842		
CR3	0.773		
CR4	0.795		
EB1		0.760	
EB2		0.878	
EB3		0.821	
EB4		0.882	
JAI1			0.803
JAI2			0.805
JAI3			0.819
JAI4			0.807

Based on the outer loading criteria, an indicator is regarded as acceptable if its value is ≥ 0.70 , although values ranging from 0.50 to 0.70 can still be tolerated provided they do not compromise the dependability of the concept (Hair et al., 2019). The research results show that all metrics related to job application, business reputation, and employer branding have outer loading values exceeding 0.70, with the lowest value recorded at 0.760 for the EB1 indicator. Therefore, all indicators can be considered valid and suitable for further analysis.

These findings indicate that each indicator adequately reflects its respective construct, thereby ensuring that with employer branding is seen as the independent factor, corporate reputation acts as the mediating element, and the willingness to submit a job application is regarded as the dependent aspect are reliable in explaining the research model.

R² Test

The following presents the R-Square values obtained from the SmartPLS 4.0 output, which indicate the explanatory power of the dependent variables.

Table 4. R² Test

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Corporate Reputation	0.343	0.337
Job Application Intention	0.586	0.579

Based on the SmartPLS 4.0 output, the R^2 value for Corporate Reputation is 0.343, showing that 34.3% of its variance is explained by the independent variable in the model, while the remaining 65.7% is influenced by external factors.

At the same time, the R^2 value for Job Application Intention stands at 0.586, indicating that the predictors included in the model explain 58.6% of its variance, since 41.4% is influenced by elements that fall beyond the boundaries of this research.

As noted by Chin (1998), R -squared figures of 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 fall into the categories of weak, moderate, and strong, respectively. Consistent with Hair et al. (2019), an R -squared value ranging from 0.25 to 0.50 is considered moderate, whereas values exceeding 0.50 are deemed substantial.

Therefore, the results suggest that the model demonstrates a moderate capability in predicting corporate reputation. It also reveals a significant level of predictive power in clarifying job application intention. These findings highlight the model's usefulness in understanding how organizational factors influence potential applicants' decisions.

Test of Discriminant Validity

Table 5. Test for Discriminant Validity

	Corporate Reputation	Employer Branding	Job Application Intention
Corporate Reputation (Z)	0.797		
Employer Branding (X)	0.585	0.837	
Job Application Intention (Y)	0.619	0.727	0.808

The discriminant validity test results, based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion, indicate that the square root of the AVE for each construct is greater than its correlations with other constructs, as shown on the diagonal. Specifically, Corporate Reputation has a square root of AVE of 0.797, which is higher than its correlations with Employer Branding (0.585) and Job Application Intention (0.619). Similarly, Employer Branding has a square root of AVE of 0.837, exceeding its correlations with Corporate Reputation (0.585) and Job Application Intention (0.727). Lastly, Job Application Intention has a square root of AVE of 0.808, which surpasses its correlations with Corporate Reputation (0.619) and Employer Branding (0.727). These results confirm that each construct demonstrates adequate discriminant validity according to the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

Thus, all constructs in this study (Employer Branding, Corporate Reputation, and Job Application Intention) satisfy discriminant validity, demonstrating the distinctiveness of each construct relative to the others and confirming their suitability for further analysis.

Table 6. Values of AVE

	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Corporate Reputation (Z)	0.636
Employer Branding (X)	0.700
Job Application Intention (Y)	0.654

Based on the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, all constructs in the research model Corporate Reputation, Employer Branding, and Job Application Intention have AVE values exceeding 0.50. An AVE value of ≥ 0.50 is considered satisfactory (Hair et al., 2019). This indicates that each construct demonstrates good convergent validity, as its indicators are able to adequately reflect the construct.

Specifically, Corporate Reputation has an AVE value of 0.636, Employer Branding has 0.700, and Job Application Intention has 0.654. Since all three constructs exceed the threshold of 0.50, it can be concluded that they are valid and suitable for further analysis.

Reliability Test

Table 7. Reliability Test

	Composite reliability (rho_a)
Corporate Reputation (Z)	0.816
Employer Branding (X)	0.860
Job Application Intention (Y)	0.826

The reliability test results illustrated in the table above indicate that all variables in this research possess Composite Reliability values exceeding 0.70, meeting the recommended minimum threshold (Hair et al., 2019). Furthermore, the minimum value of the 95% confidence interval for construct reliability must also be larger than 0.70.

This shows that every variable has satisfied the requirements for high reliability, including employer branding, job application intention, and corporate reputation. Specifically, the Composite Reliability values are 0.816 for Corporate Reputation, 0.860 for Employer Branding, and 0.826 for Job Application Intention. All of the study's variables are therefore regarded as trustworthy and appropriate for additional research.

Furthermore, the Cronbach's Alpha method was used to confirm the reliability evaluation, and the results were as follows:

Table 8. Cronbach's Alpha

	Cronbach's alpha
Corporate Reputation (Z)	0.810
Employer Branding (X)	0.856
Job Application Intention (Y)	0.824

As stated by (Hair et al., 2019), Cronbach's Alpha acts as a gauge for internal consistency, reflecting the lowest threshold of construct reliability. The recommended values range between 0.70 and 0.90, which demonstrates strong internal consistency. The lowest acceptable value is 0.70 (or 0.60 for exploratory research), while the highest advised value is 0.95 to avoid redundancy in indicators, as this might threaten content validity.

As presented in Table 4.7, the reliability test results indicate that all variables in this study have Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding 0.70: Corporate Reputation (0.810), Employer Branding (0.856), and Job Application Intention (0.824). These results confirm that all three variables satisfy the criteria for adequate reliability.

Therefore, all variables in this study exhibit sufficient internal consistency, confirming that the research instrument is reliable and suitable for subsequent analysis.

Hypothesis Testing

T-Statistic Test

Based on the hypothesis testing conducted using the bootstrapping method in SmartPLS 4.0, the decision criteria are as follows: A T-statistic > 1.98397 (T-table, $\alpha = 0.05$) and p-value < 0.05 indicate a statistically significant effect.

Table 9. Direct Effect

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
H3 Corporate Reputation (Z) -> Job Application Intention (Y)	0.294	0.288	0.077	3.802	0.000
H2 Employer Branding (X) -> Corporate Reputation (Z)	0.585	0.565	0.131	4.459	0.000
H1 Employer Branding (X) -> Job Application Intention (Y)	0.555	0.548	0.066	8.366	0.000

Table 10. Indirect Effect

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
H4 Employer Branding (X) -> Corporate Reputation (Z) -> Job Application Intention (Y)	0.172	0.166	0.064	2.692	0.007

The results indicate that Corporate Reputation (Z) has a considerable and positive effect on Job Application Intention (Y), as shown by a T-statistic of 3.802, which surpasses the critical value of 1.98397, alongside a p-value of 0.000. Similarly, Employer Branding (X) directly affects Job Application Intention (Y) in a favorable way ($T = 8.366$, $p = 0.000$) and has a statistically significant positive association with Corporate Reputation (Z) ($T = 4.459$, $p = 0.000$), all indicating strong statistical support at the 0.05 significance level.

Table 4.9 further shows that through corporate reputation, employer branding affects job application intention indirectly, presenting an effect size of 0.172. This mediation is significant ($T = 2.692 > 1.98397$, $p = 0.007 < 0.05$), confirming that Corporate Reputation acts as a significant mediator. These findings suggest that a strong employer brand can enhance Generation Z's desire to submit an application by fostering a positive corporate reputation.

Discussion

The Impact of Employer Branding on Job Seekers' Intent to Apply

The results indicate that the T-statistic (8.366) is greater than the T-table value (1.98397) and the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05. Accordingly, it can be concluded that Employer Branding (X) significantly and positively influences Job Application Intention (Y). This implies that a more robust employer branding strategy increases Generation Z's likelihood of applying for jobs at the company. Employer branding encompasses job seekers' perceptions of the work environment, organizational culture, and personal development opportunities offered by the company.

Generation Z, who grew up in the digital era, are highly responsive to information about companies as workplaces. Employer branding that highlights professionalism, transparency, and career development can increase their interest in joining a company. This is consistent with Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) and Berthon et al. (2005), who highlight the pivotal role of employer branding in talent attraction. Supporting this notion, Pitaloka & Moko (2024) show that strong employer branding enhances Generation Z's desire to apply, while Kusdiyanto & Ishbah (2024) find that employer branding, alongside corporate reputation, positively affects job application intentions among both Millennials and Generation Z. These findings confirm that a robust employer branding strategy substantially influences Generation Z's decisions regarding job applications.

The Impact of Employer Branding on Corporate Reputation

The test results indicate that the T-statistic (4.459) exceeds the T-table value (1.98397) and the p-value (0.000) is below 0.05. Accordingly, it can be inferred that Employer Branding (X) exerts a significant positive effect on Corporate Reputation (Z). This implies that a more effective employer branding strategy enhances a company's reputation among Generation Z. Strong employer branding is demonstrated through consistent messaging, the promotion of organizational values that align with the interests of younger generations, and the tactical application of social media to foster a positive company reputation.

In the context of private banking companies in Semarang, employer branding that emphasizes professionalism, transparency, and career development exerts a significant and positive influence on corporate reputation. Additionally, Tanwar & Prasad (2016) assert that employer branding is pivotal in establishing a positive corporate image among job seekers. Likewise, Theurer et al. (2016) note that corporate reputation is affected by public perceptions of consistently executed employer branding efforts. Moreover, Ekhsan et al. (2021) assert that robust employer branding significantly enhances a company's reputation, while Potgieter & Doubell (2018) emphasize the importance of hiring individuals whose values, morals, and personalities align with organizational culture to reinforce the corporate image. Together, these findings indicate that consistent employer branding not only improves external perceptions but also fosters internal alignment, contributing to a stronger overall company reputation.

The Impact of Corporate Reputation on Job Application Intention

The test outcomes indicate that the T-statistic (3.802) is greater than the T-table value (1.98397) and the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05. Hence, it can be concluded that Corporate Reputation (Z) positively and significantly influences Job Application Intention (Y). This suggests that a stronger company reputation increases Generation Z's willingness to pursue work with the organization. A strong reputation reflects public trust in the organization's stability, credibility, and adherence to ethical standards.

For Generation Z, who are particular about their choice of workplaces, corporate reputation is a key factor before applying. They are attracted to companies perceived as having integrity, innovation, and concern for sustainability. In private banking, a strong reputation increases confidence that working in the company will bring security and pride. These findings align with Turban & Cable (2003), who highlighted reputation as a main determinant of job seeker interest. Similarly, Gustiani et al. (2025) found that corporate reputation positively influences fresh graduates' intention to apply, and Tirtabudi, Hastuti, & Jessica (2024) reported a significant relationship between reputation and application intentions among students. Together, these studies confirm that a strong corporate reputation is crucial in attracting Generation Z talent.

The Mediating Role of Corporate Reputation in the Link between Employer Branding and Employment Application Intent

The examination shows that Employer Branding (X) has not directly effect on Job Application Intention (Y) via Corporate Reputation (Z), with an effect size of 0.172, a T-statistic of 2.692 exceeding the critical value of 1.98397, and a p-value of 0.007 (< 0.05). This demonstrates that employer branding and job application intention are significantly mediated by corporate reputation. According to the results, employers' brand image has a greater impact on job applicants than any other factor, and this is further evidenced by the positive reputation they create for themselves as an employer.

Within the context of private banking companies, employer branding that emphasizes professionalism, career opportunities, and a positive work culture enhances corporate reputation. This strong reputation, in turn, increases the company's attractiveness to Generation Z, encouraging them to apply. The findings of this research are in line with Megawati et al. (2025), the effect of Employer Branding on Generation Z's job application intention in West

Kalimantan is significantly shaped as a result of corporate reputation's role, a finding that supports the present study. Nisa, Lukito, & Pujani (2025), report that Corporate Reputation serves as a critical channel through which employer branding influences the desire to pursue job applications. These studies collectively reinforce that strategically managed employer branding, by strengthening corporate reputation, can meaningfully influence Generation Z's employment intentions.

5. Conclusion

This research aimed to develop a conceptual framework demonstrating how Employer Branding affects Job Application Intention among Generation Z, with Corporate Reputation acting as a mediating variable within a private banking company in Semarang. The findings provide several key insights.

First, Employer Branding has a positive and significant effect on Corporate Reputation. Among its dimensions, application value and social value appear to be the most influential in shaping perceptions of Generation Z, while value of interest is relatively less impactful. Second, Corporate Reputation plays an important mediating role: strong products and services, along with a supportive workplace environment, were found to contribute more substantially than emotional appeal alone in reinforcing job application intention. Third, Job Application Intention among Generation Z is more strongly driven by the determination of suitable job options rather than simply the immediate need for work. These outcomes indicate that employer branding, together with corporate reputation, is crucial in enticing potential job seekers to consider opportunities within private banking companies.

From a practical standpoint, private banking companies are encouraged to design employer branding strategies that emphasize transparent recruitment processes, highlight positive and authentic work values, and leverage social media platforms to actively engage potential Gen Z applicants. Moreover, maintaining and strengthening corporate reputation through consistent service quality, credible leadership, and social responsibility initiatives is crucial for positioning the company as an attractive employer. Compared to state-owned banks (BUMN) that already benefit from institutional reputation, private banks need to be more proactive in building trust and visibility through digital communication and workplace culture.

Although the broader context of this research relates to Indonesia's private banking sector, the empirical evidence was specifically obtained from Generation Z respondents residing in Semarang. Thus, the findings primarily reflect the perceptions of job seekers within this city. Future studies are recommended to expand the scope to other regions in Indonesia to provide a better knowledge of Generation Z's job-seeking behavior across diverse contexts.

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