Attracting Digital Natives as Talents:
Assessing the Strength of Good Employer, Product Quality, and Information Credibility Perceptions on Intent to Apply[1]

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The evaluation of organizational talent attraction strategies has occupied a substantial collection of human resource management (HRM) research, motivated by wide-ranging shifts in employer branding and other attraction efforts. Across economies, these trends affect the younger talent pool who have more employment options and employer information at their disposal as digital natives in a globalized workforce. This study substantially builds on current literature by examining three conceptual triggers that can guide potential applicants' understanding of employers – namely (1) Good Employer, or the perception of leadership quality and workplace policies that promote employee wellbeing in the organization, (2) Product Quality, or the perception of competitive advantages of the employer's core product or service portfolio, and (3) Information Credibility, or the perception of truthful and complete information reporting by the employer – on Intent to Apply. While these triggers have been the subject of existing body of HRM research, this study explores a conceptual model that correlates the triggers individually with Intent to Apply and also in conjunction with Information Credibility as a mediating variable. The study applies the said conceptual framework among digital native (i.e., millennials and Generation Z) jobseekers in Indonesia. The results indicate that both Good Employer and Information Credibility perceptions have positive associations with Intent to Apply, while Product Quality perceptions do not. Both Good Employer and Product Quality perceptions have a positive association with Information Credibility as a mediating variable towards Intent to Apply. This study should then guide organizations to shift their employer brand improvements to strengthening comprehensive employee wellbeing programs and perceptions, as well as truthful public reporting of the implementation of these programs, in order to attract jobseekers.

Keywords: Employer branding, Intent to Apply, talent attraction, Good Employer, Product Quality, Information Credibility

1   Introduction

Theorists and practitioners have long established that human capital has a focal role in supporting organizational existence and performance (see Biron et al., 2021 for a review). To adapt to tectonic shifts in organizational development, the practices of human resource management (HRM) gravitate towards investment in people development for effective attraction, productivity, and retention practices, and therefore, the achievement of organizational goals. Some examples of this line in HRM evolution include the expectation that firms must now implement a flexible, mobile, sensitive, and results-focused working environment to adjust to the needs of work-family balance (Lu, Siu, Spector, & Shi, 2009) and an inclusive workplace (Munongo & Pooe, 2021) in order to be considered an outstanding employer.

Recently, HRM practices transformed again due to the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic (Ichsan, Santosa, Shara, & Liriwati, 2020), which has negatively affected most traditional economies and companies. Nurzaman et al. (2020) reports that the firms that survived the onslaught of the pandemic are now confronted with rising costs, declining revenues, reducing production capacities, poor financial performance, and demotivated employees due to uncertain social and economic conditions. Post-crisis, human resource (HR) departments have been tasked to appreciate potential

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talent beyond the fundamental skill-fit screening methods, and pursue talent that activates learning, creativity, and innovation for organizational survival and recovery (Cooke, Schuler, & Varma, 2020; Gloet & Terziovski, 2004). To tap into this specialized workforce, more than ever, the "war for talent" or the interfirm competition to attract and onboard talent by highlighting organizational advantages, is a foremost issue for HR departments (Malik & Mujtaba, 2018; Wei, Chang, Lin, & Liang, 2016). For the purpose of this study, the target metric of success for HR departments is labeled as Intent to Apply, or the expressed motivation by an active and qualified jobseeker to pursue employment in a firm (Gupta & Saini, 2020; Zaki & Pusparini, 2020). Intent to Apply corresponds to a positive or negative individual behavior, that respectively translates to the willingness or unwillingness to apply to a job posting by a specific employer (Lin, 2010).

Significant research has been undertaken to identify the underlying factors that influence this particular behavior. Scholars have demonstrated the importance of clear job definitions, robust organizational attributes, and overall organizational attractiveness (Gomes & Neves, 2011) as well as attractive salary, compensation and benefits (Chi, Yeh, & Guo, 2018) on Intent to Apply. While these studies have established that there are definitive attributes of an organization and an employment relationship that will be universally attractive, there are opportunities to explore other dimensions of the firm and its impact on Intent to Apply. For instance, Saini et al. (2014) has emphasized the importance of employer branding on Intent to Apply (see also Wei et al., 2016). Employer branding has become an integral HRM discipline in recent decades, as HR departments have mined the toolkit of marketing practitioners to design, curate, and promote their employment programs akin to consumer goods and services.

The emergence of employer branding as a discipline birthed the two fundamental research motivations of this study. These research questions aim to add significant dimensions to the existing body of HRM research on Intent to Apply. The first motivation is to document any generational shifts that are now prevalent among talent-attracting firms. With the advent of information technology and globalization, the established competitive aspects of embedded corporate employment programs (such as compensation and benefits, training and development, etc.) have become public knowledge and can then easily be standardized across industries and economies. These developments, partnered with the evolution of e-HRM (including e-recruitment) because of its efficiency and convenience (Biron et al., 2021; Lin, 2010; Moghaddam, Rezaei, & Amin, 2015), are reshaping the talent attraction landscape. On the other hand, from the perspective of jobseekers, using digital information is thought to be the most practical way to look for any information on prospective companies and provided vacancies (Moghaddam et al., 2015). The digital age has widely disseminated information about organizations, and their products and services, through online platforms (Carpentier, Van Hoye, & Weijters, 2019) that may shape how candidates evaluate their attractiveness. Lievens and Highhouse (2003) has even suggested that jobseekers consume information about the targeted organizations for which they wish to apply faster and more comprehensively. As millennials and Generation Z, who are considered as digital native generations possessing mastery over access to information (Zaki & Pusparini, 2020), begin participating in the workforce, it is imperative to look at what could be emerging triggers to Intent to Apply. These generations will dominate the workforce in the next few decades and require significant attention especially from HRM literature (see Santiago, 2019 for a review).

This leads to the second motivation of this study: the identification of soft triggers, or perceptual dimensions of an organization, that affect Intent to Apply. In contrast to hard triggers, such as compensation and benefits, pertaining to functional and/or economical employment program benefits that employees directly and personally gain, these soft triggers are reputational in nature and look beyond traditional organizational attributes as points of attraction. Instead of tangible economic benefits, these soft triggers may instead provide social currency (i.e., respect among peers) and intrinsic work motivation. The body of HRM literature tends to either overlook these soft triggers, or analyze them wholesale with the image attributes of the organization as a whole. Further research can be designed to determine whether the existence and promotion of these perceptual advantages contribute to improved productivity or retention. However, this study limits its coverage towards mapping the existence and strength of these perceptions and their effect on Intent to Apply.

This study is primarily intended for HR practitioners who are enjoined to recognize the importance of building a consistent and relevant public image (both for their organizations and their products)

and managing the information they provide to the public – some of the fundamental tenets of employer branding. The overarching hypothesis is that when job applicants perceive that organizations are highly valuable, in additional consideration of the applicants' personal gain through economic incentives, they will be motivated to apply to the organizations.

2   Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1   Intent to Apply and Person-Organization Fit Theory

Theorists have suggested that individuals can change their perceptions, attitudes, and behavior through learning (Bandura, 1969, 1986; Liu, Huang, & Wang, 2014). For the purposes of this study, the jobseekers can then intentionally or unintentionally consume information about organizations from a variety of sources, including purposeful marketing communication, incidental word of mouth, and so on to guide their employment selection decisions. Jobseekers, as individuals, may also look for confirmatory information about organizations they would apply to and may produce further favorable or unfavorable impressions about the firm. The more jobseekers are consistently able to confirm that organizations are favorable places to work, the better the feeling of compatibility towards the organizations will be developed.

The perceived compatibility or comfort with the observed organizations (Grobler, 2016) is an important factor to influence jobseekers' willingness to become a candidate for employment within an organization (Chi et al., 2018). Person-Organization (P-O) Fit Theory can suitably explain this phenomenon. The theory describes that people will select employment environments that optimally fulfill their imagined needs (Cable & Judge, 1996). Kristof (1996) extends this from the needs-supplies perspective, by suggesting that P-O Fit is achieved if an organization can optimally satisfy both economic (physical) and developmental (emotional) needs. The P-O Fit perspective is therefore typically interactionist concerned (Grobler, 2016) when the individual and the environment interact to develop the individual's perceptions, attitudes, and behavior. From this perspective, jobseekers will be likely to search for jobs that they confirm to be most suitable to not just their careers, but to their life aspirations as well.

Extant research has suggested that two important learning domains can be derived from information gathered by jobseekers. These are whether a particular organization can be perceived as (1) being a good employer (Cable & Yu, 2006; Walker, Feild, Giles, Bernerth, & Short, 2011) and (2) providing a high quality product (Collins, 2007; Johnson, Soutar, & Sweeney, 2000; Santiago, 2019). The first trigger, Good Employer, reflects less on the tangible economic benefits that an employee receives from the employment program, but on the reputation of the overall design and delivery of the program. As such, Good Employer, as a metric, is best attributed to the level of consistency and attractiveness of benefits and compensation, plus workplace policies, workplace culture, employee well-being, and advancement opportunities, among others. It is a wholesale interpretation of the quality of employment in an organization. For the purposes of this study, the component elements of Good Employer are not cumulative. It is instead the holistic individual evaluation whether an organization is a Good Employer or not. The second trigger, Product Quality, measures the portfolio of goods and services that constitute the value chain and business model of the organization. Hypothetically, jobseekers may prefer to work for organizations that produce high-quality products (as perceived by the jobseeker and/or the market) and/or have market-related distinction such as market leadership and top-of-mind brand awareness (Johnson et al., 2000). In this study, a better perception on the soft trigger learning domains of Good Employer and Product Quality can support a better P-O Fit. Based on the literature thus far, it is therefore posited that if an organization is perceived as a Good Employer and a provider of high-quality products and services, it may enhance Intent to Apply of jobseekers.

2.2   Good Employer, Product Quality, and Intent to Apply

Good Employer is conceptually defined as the degree to which jobseekers rate an organization as a promising or an unpromising place to work (Figurska & Matuska, 2013). Being perceived as a Good Employer may play a significant impact in motivating or discouraging the relevant jobseeker audience to apply for job openings (Gupta & Saini, 2020). As discussed, the perception of Good Employer is based

on the company's continuous efforts to maintain its public image in various aspects (Figurska & Matuska, 2013; Wadhawan & Sinha, 2017). For example, Gomes & Nieves (2011) conclude that job characteristics (e.g., task diversity) and organizational contexts (e.g., work environment) are important factors to improve perceived organizational attractiveness (e.g., considered as a compatible place to work), which in turn, improve jobseekers' Intent to Apply. In line with P-O Fit Theory, it can be suggested that if the jobseekers perceive the targeted organization as Good Employers, then they perceive that the organization is congruent with their personal and career goals, and thus, the higher their Intent to Apply through an available job vacancy. From here, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Good Employer is positively associated with Intent to Apply.

To some extent, an individual is expected to become familiar with the employers' business model and revenue stream before applying for a job (Cable & Turban, 2001) and, in turn, the company should have a reputable brand before it is attractive to jobseekers (Kogel, 2020). A reputable brand, however, is only a partial element in the organizational attractiveness concept and the added dimension of the quality of the goods or service can influence the whole corporate reputation. In this study, Product Quality is defined as an overall perception of jobseekers on the market performance levels of the goods and services produced by targeted companies (Johnson et al., 2000). This, of course, extends to intangible ideas or other value-based exchanges for non-profit institutions that employ the same HRM talent attraction strategies. The company's image, rooted on their products and services, may become a crucial factor for jobseekers to evaluate how good the company is (Figurska & Matuska, 2013). This suggests that, in addition to marketing and commercial functions, the HR department also benefits from a positive perception of the brand architecture portfolio of the company. From another lens, the quality of a product can be indicative of how well the company is operated (Wilden, Gudergan, & Lings, 2010), and therefore signifies employment longevity and career stability. Scholars also argue that trust in a company develops when the public perceives a company's product as having extraordinary quality. This favorable opinion may evolve into the favorable assessment of the company as an "attractive work environment" (Figurska & Matuska, 2013). According to P-O Fit Theory, it is likely that a favorable assessment toward the quality of product may develop fit perception in jobseekers, and in turn, may increase Intent to Apply. As a result, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Product Quality is positively associated with Intent to Apply.

2.3   Good Employer, Product Quality, and Information Credibility

In general, Information Credibility is defined as the degree to which the public can trust the information that the organization makes publicly available (Gupta & Saini, 2020). In today's employment ecosystem, jobseekers can search for relevant information about organizations from a variety of sources, such as personal contacts, university career centers, job vacancy ads, company websites, and state employment service offices, among others. Jobseekers can then organize and interpret the information such as remuneration, career opportunity, working environment, and employee equity given their own means. The credibility of this kind of information carries a lot of weight in the jobseeker's decision-making (Acarlar & Bilgiç, 2013). It was suggested that purposive job advertisements could promote Information Credibility (i.e., based on the source of information and the competence of the source, Cable & Turban, 2001) and, in turn, organizational attractiveness and Intent to Apply. This phenomenon may be well explained by Social Judgment Theory, arguing that one can have acceptable levels of an idea (from reject to accept) based on an individual developmental cognitive map (Sherif & Hovland, 1961). Other scholars have proposed that there are three levels of attitude structure when a person gets a message or an idea, namely a latitude of acceptance, a latitude of non-commitment, and a latitude of rejection (Atkin & Smith, 2008; Siero & Doosje, 1993, p. 541). Further, according to Atkin and Smith (2008), the latitude of acceptance is likely to have an optimum absorption effect and cause audiences' attitudes to alter (Siero & Doosje, 1993).

For our purposes, the application of Information Credibility using Social Judgment Theory in the talent attraction process posits that if a company is recognized for having a high-quality product and being a Good Employer by the jobseekers (i.e., a credible message, Walsh & Beatty, 2007) based on past experience and verified information about the organization and its products and services, the jobseekers will more likely want to apply (Cable & Turban, 2001; Gupta & Saini, 2020). Good Employer

and Product Quality, as triggers, can then be strengthened by the jobseekers' perception of the credibility of information released by the firm. Said another way, potential talent may perceive that the information about organizations is equivalent in quality (i.e., trusted, credible, and reliable, etc.) and may eventually factor in the decision to make the organization an ideal place of employment. This hypothesis is strengthened by research that concludes that honest and truthful management practices can influence perceptions of the P-O Fit Theory (Boon, Hartog, Boselie, & Paauwe, 2007). In the context of this study, it is postulated then that the perception Information Credibility, which lends to P-O Fit perception, is increased when companies are associated with well-executed HR practices (i.e., a Good Employer) and marketing practices (i.e., high Product Quality). Based on this discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: Good Employer is positively associated with Information Credibility.

H4: Product Quality is positively associated with Information Credibility.

2.4 Information Credibility and Intent to Apply

In relation with the P-O Fit perspective, Information Credibility should improve the potential talent's perception towards the particular organizations to be trusted and it may relate to their personal dispositions (e.g., personality and values, Kristof, 1996), which in turn, improve Intent to Apply. To guide this discussion, we conceptualize the process of information gathering and consideration setting among potential jobseekers by linking established bodies of research on talent attraction. First, jobseekers will search for the information about the organizations and the offered jobs that are compatible to their personal goals and values (Asseburg, Homberg, & Vogel, 2018). Second, jobseekers will use information about a company as part of the job search process if they believe it is credible. This stage may include the desire to confirm the veracity of publicly available information through second-source confirmation (Gupta & Saini, 2020). Lastly, the more credible and consistent the information perceived by the jobseekers, the more likely they are to highly value the information gathered. Said another way, any inconsistencies in information gathered may lead to distrust, and then disinterest (Muduli & Trivedi, 2020). The individual can then view the companies with more credible information as more favorable employment options. This motivates them to evaluate job vacancies within the company carefully (Cable & Turban, 2001) and enhance their Intent to Apply. Therefore, the following hypothesis is developed:

H5: Information Credibility is positively associated with Intent to Apply.

2.5 Information Credibility as a Mediator

According to the Social Judgment Theory, a positive message about a company's goods or services and the company itself can influence how jobseekers feel about the company's publicized information. As established in the previous section, high Information Credibility may encourage job searchers' Intent to Apply. With the three soft triggers taken together though, the responsibility of Information Credibility is not evaluated in the same vein as Good Employer and Product Quality. While all three metrics can be measured in degrees, Information Credibility can theoretically have a proportional effect on the jobseekers' ability to evaluate the latter two variables. As previously discussed, Information Credibility is a constant point of evaluation in the entire process of jobseeking, while Good Employer and Product Quality are outcome perceptions from information gathering. It can then be deduced that the extent to which jobseekers recognize that a company will be Good Employers or create good products (Walsh & Beatty, 2007; Wei et al., 2016) is reliant on the belief that the companies are credible and competent source of information (Gupta & Saini, 2020). This could then have a domino effect on jobseekers' Intent to Apply (Muduli & Trivedi, 2020). It is worth the effort then to determine the likelihood that Information Credibility mediates the influence of Good Employer and Product Quality on Intent to Apply. Therefore, these hypotheses are proposed:

H6a: Information Credibility mediates the positive influence of Good Employer on Intent to Apply.

H6b: Information Credibility mediates the positive influence of Product Quality on Intent to Apply.

In summary, these hypotheses contribute to this study's conceptual research framework, represented by Figure 1 (See Figure 1. Proposed Research Framework).

Figure 1. Proposed Research Framework
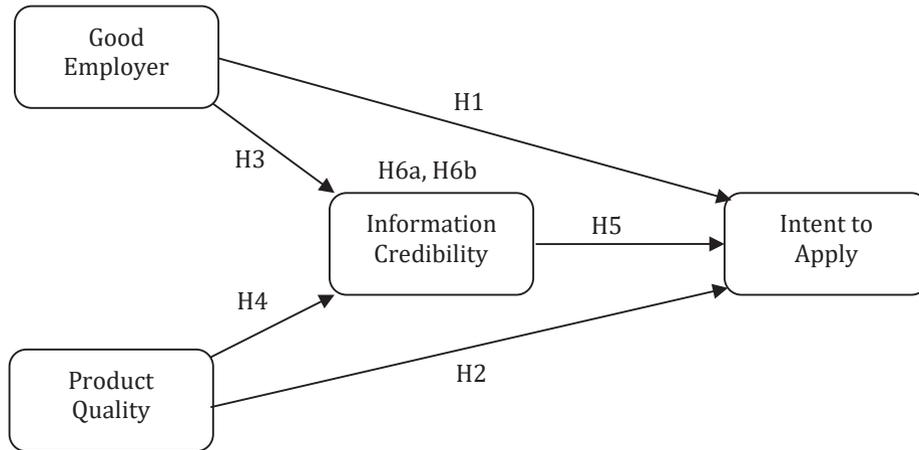
3 Method

3.1 Sample Context and Procedure

The research framework was initially field-tested using respondents from Indonesia, via convenience sampling, given the proximity of the researchers to the Southeast Asian archipelago and availability of data. The profile of the country aligns with the general scope of the study: an economy affected by COVID-19 with a significantly emerging workforce belonging to the digital native generations of millennials and Generation Z.

The context sample of this study are millennials (born between 1981 and 1996, representing roughly 26% of Indonesian population) and Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012, representing roughly 28% of the Indonesian population). The Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics has reported that there are 4.15 million people (1.98%, reported in November 2022) of the working age population affected by COVID-19. The number consists of unemployment due to COVID-19 (0.24 million people in workforce and 0.32 people not in workforce), temporarily unemployed due to COVID-19 (0.11 million people); and are also part of the working population who experienced reduced working hours due to COVID-19 (3.48 million people) (https://www.bps.go.id/).

For this study, the sample included undergraduates in their penultimate or last semester, fresh graduates who had finished their studies in the last six months at the time of the data collection, and active jobseekers within the identified age range. The study includes those applying to or targeting government companies. In addition to providing promising career opportunities, compensation, and pension plans, government companies are often regarded as reputable workplaces. The survey was conducted online using Google Forms. They were requested to identify whether they were thinking and considering a government firm as the company to work for (a Yes/No question). Respondents with "Yes" answer were eligible to continue the next sections of the survey and requested to identify the company names. A total of one hundred and seventy (170) samples were collected. All participants provided complete responses and are, therefore, all usable.

The demographic profile of the collected responses was balanced in terms of gender, but leaned towards Generation Z (i.e., younger) respondents. Regardless, the representation will include those searching for potential job opportunities and those currently employed but aware of potential changes in employment.

In terms of qualifications, all have finished or are completing their undergraduate degrees, while a small portion (5.9%) have higher education credentials. A majority completed their highest education attainment in a private university. Detailed information about the respondents' profile is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents' Profile

Identity	Sub Identity	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	86	50.6
	Female	84	49.4
Age (years)	<25	141	82.9
	25 or more	29	17.1
Highest Education	Undergraduate	160	94.1
	Graduate	10	5.9
State/Private University	State	69	40.6
	Private	101	59.4

SmartPLS 3.0 and SPSS Statictics 22.0 were used for the analyses. First, the research constructs' convergent and discriminant validity were assessed as part of the validity investigation, while their reliability were determined by calculating their respective composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values. Second, means and standard deviations of the research variables were calculated to ascertain (1) the general agreement/disagreement of the respondents with the measuring scales and (2) the data dispersion. Third, the proposed model's goodness-of-fit was determined. The proposed hypotheses were then tested as the final step. SmartPLS was chosen because of its capability to examine a variety of analyses as mentioned above as well as create and evaluate complicated models (Ringle, Da Silva, & Bido, 2015). Additionally, this covariance-based approach to structural equation modeling (SEM) is strong enough to analyze a model with a modest number of samples.

3.2 Study Instruments

The study instruments were all derived from validated instruments used in previous studies. All items of the instruments have been translated from their original English into Bahasa Indonesien. All measurements were adjusted in Indonesian context and language expression to ensure that each item's purpose and meaning could be easily understood. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure all items, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). They assessed the survey items based on their knowledge about the companies they mentioned in the early section of the survey.

Good Employer. The measurement for Good Employer was taken from Walsh and Beatty (2007, p. 135). This scale consists of four items. The statements evaluated under this trigger are the following:
1. This company looks like a good company to work for.
2. This company seems to have excellent leadership.
3. This company has management who seems to pay attention to the needs of the employees.
4. The company seems to have good employees.

Product Quality. The measurement for Product Quality was also taken from Walsh and Beatty (2007, p. 135). This scale consists of three items. The statements evaluated under this trigger are the following:
1. This company offers a high quality of goods and service.
2. This company develops innovative goods and service.
3. This company offers goods and service that are good value for the money.

Information Credibility. Information Credibility was measured by using Li and Suh's (2015, p. 326) property that consists of four items. The statements evaluated under this trigger are the following:
1. In general, the information about the organization is convincing.
2. In general, the information about the organization is objectively presented.
3. I do not have any difficulty in understanding information about the organization.
4. In general, the information about the organization is trustworthy.

Intent to Apply. Intent to Apply was measured with the property proposed by Kogel (2020, p. 34). This scale consists of four items. The statements evaluated under this trigger are the following:
1. I would like to apply for this job vacancy.
2. This job vacancy is highly interesting to me.
3. If I were searching for a job, I would apply for this job vacancy.
4. Applying for this vacancy is of no interest to me.

3.3   Validity and Reliability Testing for the Measurements

In order to validate the convergent validity of the measurements, average variance extracted (AVE) values were evaluated. The AVE measures the extent to which each indicator can be used to measure a particular construct. The expected value for AVE is 0.50 or more (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Table 2 shows the AVE values for all constructs (See Table 2. The Results of Convergent and Discriminant Validity Testing). The AVE values for Good Employer, Information Credibility, and Product Quality were higher than 0.50. The AVE value for Intent to Apply was approaching 0.50, thus deemed acceptable. The loadings of all factors were higher than 0.60. According to these results, convergent validity was achieved. Table 2 also illustrates the discriminant validity of the constructs. The items were grouped within the corresponding variables, giving initial indications of good discriminant validity as well.

Table 2. The Results of Convergent and Discriminant Validity Testing

Indicator	AVE	Variable			
		X1	X2	X3	X4
GE1		0.757			
GE2	0.570	0.825			
GE3		0.669			
GE4		0.762			
IC1			0.657		
IC2	0.568		0.771		
IC3			0.728		
IC4			0.845		
IA1				0.764	
IA2	0.493			0.723	
IA3				0.649	
IA4				0.667	
PQ1					0.755
PQ2	0.602				0.802
PQ3					0.770

Note: AVE = Average Variance Extracted, X1 = Good Employer (GE), X2 = Information Credibility (IC), X3 = Intent to Apply (IA), X4 = Product Quality (PQ)

Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values were used to measure reliability. The composite reliability measures the overall internal consistency of a variable, while Cronbach's alpha refers to the degree to which a set of items are closely related (i.e., the average measure of internal consistency). There must be a minimum value of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha of 0.70. All composite reliability values were higher than 0.80. Furthermore, for the Good Employer and Information Credibility variables, Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.70 (Hair et al., 2010). Cronbach's alpha results of Product Quality and Intent to Apply were approaching the minimum value of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2010), and are thus deemed acceptable as well (See Table 3. The Results of Reliability Testing). Overall, the reliability of all variables was also reached.

Table 3. The Results of Reliability Testing

Variable	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Good Employer	0.841	0.748
Product Quality	0.819	0.670
Information Credibility	0.839	0.742
Intent to Apply	0.795	0.656

4   Results and Discussion

4.1   Correlations and Descriptive Analysis

The means and standard deviations of the variables are displayed in Table 4. To assess the initial situation before causal linkages, correlation analysis was employed. As can be seen, there was a significant correlation between each research variable. As shown, Information Credibility was correlated with Good Employer (0.661, p 0.01) and Product Quality (0.637, p < 0.01). Intent to Apply

was also correlated with Good Employer (0.566, p < 0.01), Product Quality (0.476, p < 0.01), and Intent to Apply (0.605, p < 0.01). The correlations coefficients were all positive and significant and were therefore consistent with the direction of the proposed hypotheses. In addition, the square root AVEs for each variable were all higher than the correlations of each variable. Therefore, the discriminant validity was also reached (See Table 4. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlation).

Table 4. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Good Employer	4.24	0.53	*.755*			
2. Product Quality	4.27	0.56	.730**	*.776*		
3. Information Credibility	4.35	0.49	.661**	.637**	*.754*	
4. Intent to Apply	4.44	0.50	.566**	.476**	.605**	*.702*

N = 170, ** p < 0.01, bolded, italicized numbers in the diagonal are the squared root AVEs

4.2   Goodness-of-Fit Evaluation

Predictive relevance (Q^2) was used to assess the model's goodness-of-fit. A Q^2 is a substitute of the coefficient of determination (R^2). It was found that Q^2 was 0.727. The Q^2 value was more than 0 and close to 1. It expressed that the proposed model possessed sufficient predictive relevance. To confirm these fit-model results, a structural model was developed. It was demonstrated that all suggested indices were met (see Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005 for a review), i.e., relative χ^2 (CMIN/DF) = 1.626, GFI = 0.911, CFI = 0.945, TLI = 0.929, and RMSEA = 0.06.

4.3   Direct Relationship Testing

This study proposes five direct relationships as previously detailed in the hypothesis statements.

Hypothesis H1 suggests that Good Employer is positively associated with Intent to Apply. As shown, Good Employer was positively related to Intent to Apply (β = 0.321, p < 0.01), thus providing empirical support for Hypothesis H1. This result is consistent with Saini et al. (2014) arguing that a successful company branding developing reputation will develop Intent to Apply.

Hypothesis H2 posits that Product Quality is positively associated with Intent to Apply. However, this variable was not significantly related to Intent to Apply (β = -0.039, p = 0.694), therefore failing to provide empirical support for this study. At this point, it is suggested that the perception of product/service quality cannot be a strong enough reason to decide that the company is good place to work in.

Hypothesis H3 suggests that Good Employer is positively related to Information Credibility. The coefficient of this path was positive and statistically significant ((β = 0.428, p < 0.001). Hence, if a company successfully built and maintained a good image at the same time, it is likely that the company could improve the perception of Information Credibility from the jobseekers' point of view (Figurska & Matuska, 2013).

Hypothesis H4 suggests that Product Quality is positively related to Information Credibility. The result was as predicted (β = 0.321, p < 0.01). Kogel (2020) argues that product attributes (e.g., brand equity, market leadership) of a company will likely improve the perception of Information Credibility if and when jobseekers evaluate job vacancies in the company.

Finally, Hypothesis H5 suggests that Information Credibility is positively associated with Intent to Apply. The result shows that this coefficient was also positive and statistically significant (β = 0.405, p < 0.01). This is consistent with Cable and Turban's (2001) suggestions that when knowledge about an organization is trusted, jobseekers will positively interpret information and will be more interested in pursuing employment in the organization. Table 5 and Figure 2 detail the path coefficients of the discussed hypotheses (See Table 5. The Results of Direct Relationship Testing and Figure 2 The Results of Path Analysis).

Table 5. The Results of Direct Relationship Testing

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	t-value	Significance
H1, GE --> IA	0.321	3.129	0.002
H2, PQ --> IA	-0.039	0.394	0.694
H3, GE --> IC	0.428	4.363	0.000
H4, PQ --> IC	0.321	3.462	0.001
H5, IC --> IA	0.405	3.271	0.001

Note: GE = Good Employer, IA = Intent to Apply, PQ = Product Quality, IC = Information Credibility.

4.4 Mediating Relationship Testing

This study also proposes to test the mediating effect of Information Credibility between (1) Good Employer and Intent to Apply (H6a) and (2) Product Quality and Intent to Apply (H6b). The results showed that Hypothesis H6a is supported (indirect effect = 0.173, p = 0.013). Because the Good Employer-Intent to Apply link was significant (H1), the mediation type as specified is clarified to be a partial mediation. Hypothesis H6b is also supported (indirect effect = 0.130, p = 0.009). The Product Quality-Intent to Apply link was not significant, therefore the mediation type as specified is classified as a full mediation. Taken together, Good Employer and Product Quality can improve a company's Information Credibility, and in turn, it can improve Intent to Apply. Table 6 (See Table 6. Mediating Relationship Testing Results) and Figure 2 further provide details on these results.

Table 6. Mediating Relationship Testing Results

Hypothesis	Indirect Effect of IC	Significance
H6a, GE --> IC --> IA	0.173	0.013
H6b, PQ --> IC --> IA	0.130	0.009

Note: GE = Good Employer, IA = Intent to Apply, PQ = Product Quality, IC = Information Credibility

Figure 2. The Results of Path Analysis
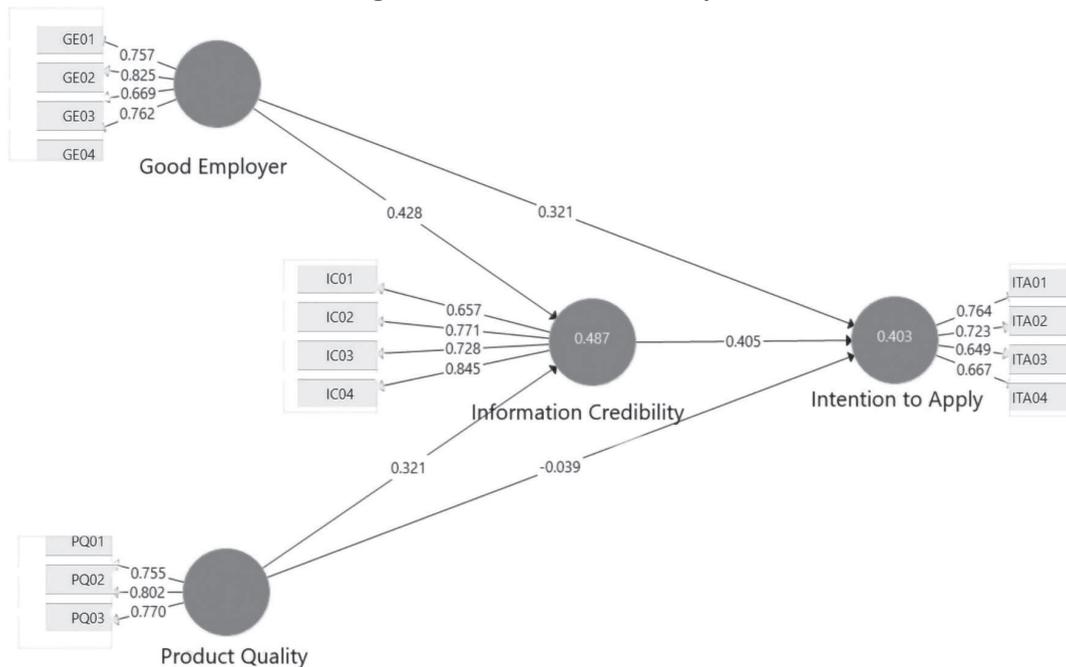
4.5 Discussion of Results

An effective recruitment process contributes to the overall HRM effectiveness and the organizational goal achievement. This study empirically validated a conceptual research framework incorporating Good Employer, Product Quality, and Information Credibility as soft triggers that could

influence potential jobseekers' Intent to Apply in a company. The research framework is formed based on P-O (person-organization) Fit Theory (e.g., Cable & Judge, 1996; Grobler, 2016). This study offers important contributions in several ways. First, it is suggested that Good Employer can enhance both jobseekers' Intent to Apply and perception of Information Credibility. The linkage of organizational image and Intent to Apply has been discovered by prior work (Wei et al., 2016), but this study validates this by offering other dimensions of the organization that can be used as consideration when considering Intent to Apply. In addition to the prior findings, the present study suggests that the employer reputation (i.e., Good Employer) can also improve the jobseekers' perception on the organizational Information Credibility.

Second, the study suggests that Product Quality is significant in developing Information Credibility. it implies that the perceived Product Quality (although the variable itself can be very subjective) can also improve organizational Information Credibility. Jobseekers' point of view of the firm's product may simply align with that of publicly available information, and not a lot of weight is placed on it when deciding on employment. This may explain why the Product Quality-Intent to Apply relationship was not confirmed in this study. This finding is not in line with the prior research assessing a similar relationship (Santiago, 2019). The reasonable explanation of this findings is that Santiago (2019) may have over-emphasized the effects of brand on Intent to Apply. A brand image is only a subset of product dimensionality, and is evaluated from the lens of a consumer versus that of a potential employee. Arguably, not all potential talent belongs to the potential market of a firm's products and services. In addition, jobseekers may perceive the Product Quality based not only on brand, but also personal experience on features and other subjective measures (Alzoubi, Ahmed, & Alshurideh, 2022; Sebastianelli & Tamimi, 2002) and could include other subjective metrics of market performance in potential talents' minds. Future research may wish to investigate deeper into the relationship by detailing which dimensions of Product Quality may directly relate to applicants' Intent to Apply.

Third, the findings suggest that Information Credibility may enhance jobseekers' Intent to Apply. Extant literature has emphasized on the importance of publicly available information being correct and verifiable (Acarlar & Bilgiç, 2013; Gupta & Saini, 2020). It is suggested in this study that the credibility of information is the heart of a communication process which has the potential power to alter jobseekers' attitudes and inclinations (Acarlar & Bilgiç, 2013). This work adds an empirical factor particular to this issue that supports the development of jobseekers' Intent to Apply.

Fourth, the study expands the use of P-O Fit Theory in other ways. It is posited here that the perceptions of Good Employer can develop a higher P-O Fit. Also, Information Credibility is an attitudinal state among jobseekers that can improve P-O Fit in relation to Intent to Apply. The P-O Fit perception then is not only significant to current employees (Kristof, 1996; van Vianen, Shen, & Chuang, 2011), but also relevant to examine the intention and behavior of job applicants (Firfiray & Mayo, 2017).

HR managers and professionals must maintain those attitudes by developing employer branding strategy based on various factors affecting the corporate image, the quality of the products and services they offer, and the credibility of information about their organization. Managers can improve the overall recruitment process by ensuring that these soft triggers are part of the wholesale package that describes their own employment programs. As discussed earlier, most companies now need to recruit and select candidates who can support organizational agility, survival and performance in a post-COVID-19 recovery situation (Ichsan et al., 2020; Pambudy & Sopiah, 2021). In line with this effort, HR departments must include these new standards in recruiting and selection that are more targeted to attractive applicant audiences (Alsultanny & Alotaibi, 2015). To execute this, HR managers should also then co-work in cross-functional teams to develop firm reputation, perceived Product Quality, and Information Credibility, most especially with marketing, corporate communications, and other public-facing corporate teams. From a corporate governance perspective, there is also value in total company awareness (and experience) of employer branding in order to maintain positive word of mouth. This aligns with research that declares that Intent to Apply is more of a cross-functional than an HR issue (Stock, Totzauer, & Zacharias, 2014).

In closing, the proponents wish to highlight some limitations to this study. First, the sample respondents were from a relatively small geographical area (Medan, Indonesia). Ideally, future research should collect data from a broader range of respondents to enhance the findings' generalizability. Future research should still build on the established profile (i.e., digital natives) to

continue the headway pursued by this study. Second, data collection was conducted through an online survey. It was an efficient method, but it was unable to capture the unprompted insights of jobseekers towards the organizations that they apply for. A future research study can combine short interviews with respondents to gain more informative insights about the relationships. Moreover, the perception of P-O Fit may rely on several variables such as industry preference, experience, educational background, and perceived competence of jobseekers. Future research should consider whether the factors can shift the magnitude of the relationships.

5   Conclusion

The study proposes an integrative model involving the soft triggers Good Employer, Product Quality, and Information Credibility on Intent to Apply. The findings indicate that (1) Good Employer and Information Credibility can promote Intent to Apply, (2) Good Employer and Product Quality can promote Intent to Apply, and (3) Information Credibility can mediate both (a) the relationship between Good Employer and Intent to Apply and (b) the relationship between Product Quality and Intent to Apply. The findings signify that digital natives have additional sensitivities when it comes to education on and consideration of employment options in talent marketplace. HR practitioners are enjoined to consider the findings as a recommendation to ensure that a comprehensive, consistent, truthful, and relevant corporate image is presented to potential talent during talent attraction executions, in addition to tangible economic benefits of employment.

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