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Employer Branding and Compensation Effects on Job Seekers' Interest in FMCG: Reputation as Mediator

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Abstract. Today's increasing number of companies in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector is intensifying the competition among FMCG firms in Indonesia for top talent, which has triggered a "war for talent." The battle to attract the best employees has become just as intense as the competition for customers, compelling organisations to distinguish themselves from their competitors to be seen as an appealing employer to prospective candidates and current staff. This study aims to identify the key factors that influence Employer Branding (EB) among job seekers in Indonesia to support FMCG companies in crafting more effective recruitment strategies. The research utilised a questionnaire survey with 250 respondents selected through quota sampling. Using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with the AMOS 23 tool, the results of this study indicate that company attractiveness, compensation, and company reputation can affect job application interest, where company attractiveness is the most influential factor in job application interest in FMCG companies. Company reputation has also been proven to mediate the influence of company attractiveness on job application desire.

Keywords: Compensation, Company Reputation, Employer Branding, Employer Attractiveness, FMCGs.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organisations must aim for excellence in today's cutthroat market to secure higher profits and guarantee survival (Aslam, 2013). Businesses must recruit qualified workers in the escalating "war for talent" because human resources are essential to accomplishing organisational goals (Aslam, 2015). According to research conducted in Indonesia's FMCG sector, employer branding and pay significantly impact job seekers' interest in applying to companies. Wijaya et al. (2023) emphasise the significance of a strong employer brand in influencing job application intentions. Nonetheless, little is known about the connection between organisational reputation and e-recruitment. Due to its fast-paced environment and chances for professional advancement, the FMCG sector, which provides a variety of roles and well-known brands, draws a lot of job seekers (Glints, 2022). Furthermore, the industry's potential is in line with SDG Goal 8, which advocates for full employment, decent work, and inclusive and sustainable economic growth (Lapinskaitė & Vidžiūnaitė, 2020). Reputations and competitive pay packages from businesses help to create long-term employment opportunities that support the SDGs of the UN. Research in this field can offer essential insights into attaining sustainable economic growth and decent employment by highlighting the significance of fair wages and career advancement in boosting job seekers' interest and lowering unemployment. IDXChannel (2022) states that Indonesia's top seven FMCG companies are Unilever, Mayora,

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Indofood, Kalbe, Ultrajaya, Sari Roti, and Sampoerna. Their products almost control the market. These businesses are highly competitive in the domestic market and are well-known to the general public.

About 90 FMCG companies are listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange (IDX), according to another reference taken from Stockbit.com (2022). Because there are so many businesses in the FMCG sector, there is fierce competition among them to find qualified applicants. As a result, there is intense competition for talent (the "war of talent"). Information about expected salaries at Indonesian FMCG companies:

Table 1. Estimated Salaries at FMCG

Position	Salary
Outsourcing	Pas UMR (UMR Cikarang 2023 = Rp 5.137.575)
Staff/Admin	UMR + Rp 300.000 /bulan
Senior Staff	Rp 6 Juta/bulan
Team Leader	Rp 6 - 6,5 Juta/bulan
Supervisor	Rp 7 - 8 Juta/bulan
Assistant Manager	Rp 10 - 12 Juta/bulan
Manager	Rp 12 - 15 Juta/bulan
Senior Manager	Rp 20 - 25 Juta/bulan
Head of Department	Rp 30 - 35 Juta/bulan

Source: https://www.e-knowledge.id/2023/05/daftar-gaji-sektor-fmcg.html

Due to Indonesia's high number of FMCG businesses, businesses compete for existing and new consumers. Companies also compete regarding human resources (HR), claims Keller (2017). "The best workers do the best and the most work," he said, demonstrating this. Finding and retaining them, however, is a terrible task for many businesses. Because of this, companies are working to establish their employer brands to draw in young people and get an advantage over other companies in the competition.

However, to develop employer branding, businesses frequently struggle to recruit suitable workers and human resources to grow the business, start a talent war, and fill open positions relative to job seekers. According to Almaçık & Almaçık (2012) and Berthon et al. (2005), the battle for the best staff has grown to be nearly as intense as that for customers. This means that companies need to stand out from the competition and be viewed as desirable employers by both existing and prospective workers (Almaçık & Almaçık, 2012; Hıghhouse, S., F. Lievens, 2003). To hire qualified workers who meet the needs of the business, organisations must also comprehend the elements that affect the emergence of interest in

applying for a job. Applications will be evaluated when potential candidates deem a company appealing (Daniel & José, 2010).

Only 7.1% of talented individuals are hired, according to data from Jobstreet Indonesia (2022), which shows that there are 39,842 job openings in Indonesia overall, compared to 560,994 active job applicants. Additionally, according to data from Badan Pusat Statistik (2022), the majority of Indonesia's workforce, which totals 144,014,048 employees, is made up of millennials and Generation Z. 144,014,048 members of Generation Z make up the workforce as a whole. In the realm of work, the differences in ideals and characteristics between Generation Z and millennials further exacerbate this scenario. Millennials like to switch occupations frequently (Purnono et al., 2019). However, because they want to attain their goals, Generation Z will often change firms after a year of employment (Syana, S., 2018). Nowadays, with so many businesses in the FMCG sector, job seekers usually base their company selection on their requirements. As a result, businesses can use their employer branding, reputation, and pay packages to set themselves apart from rivals. To stand out from the competition, draw in competent candidates, and keep top talent in the organisation, the corporation uses one of the strategies—developing employer branding—based on this phenomenon. The company may have a clear edge over its rivals if it can attract and retain qualified workers more effectively (Purnono et al., 2019). Companies aim to establish a favourable corporate image in the labour market to attract top talent by implementing employer branding (Tikson et al., 2018). When looking for a job, potential employees frequently evaluate several organisations and use the company's reputation as a resource to learn more about the working environment there. Therefore, the organisation's reputation is commonly linked to the first judgments made when choosing an employer (A. Junça Silva & Dias, 2022). The company's reputation (Belt & Paolillo, 1982; Gatewood et al., 1993) and the pay it offers are two appealing aspects of the business that affect job applicants (Arthur, 2001). Everyone wants to meet their financial necessities and use their professional experience. Accordingly, a job seeker's expectations for salary increase with their level of quality (Arthur, 2001). According to them, people prefer to work for companies that offer compensation commensurate with schooling. When suitable candidates are considering applying for a position at the company, they also frequently consider the company's pay. Job seekers are impacted by compensation, career progression, and work-life balance, with compensation being the most significant aspect, according to (Hoang et al., 2020). Another study on the impact of business reputation (Brockner et al., 2006) claims that a company's reputation can draw in the kind of prospective employees it wants. Regarding their desire to apply for positions, potential employees' perspectives can be gleaned from the company's reputation. Potential employees will apply for employment more frequently if a company has a better reputation (Tkalac Verčič & Sinčić Ćorić, 2018). The three elements mentioned above suggest that a person's motivation to apply for a job may be influenced by the company's image, pay, and employer branding, according to the abovementioned description. Therefore, this study examines the elements significantly affecting job seekers' interest in Indonesia. It seeks to assist FMCG businesses in enhancing their hiring practices.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Job Seekers Interest

Company reputation, job features, and recruitment tactics all affect job application interest; employer branding is crucial for attracting applicants. Pontillo, P. et al. (2024). Schuler et al. (2023) state that job attractiveness is fueled by role features complementing applicants' objectives. According to Kanwal, Hoye, and Schollaert (2022), a company's crisis response affects employment appeal, such as during the COVID-19 epidemic. The interests of job searchers are also significantly shaped by psychological aspects (DIllahunt et al., 2021). Recently, job seekers' opinions of an organisation's attractiveness have been substantially impacted by corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Ali, E., Satpathy, B., and Gupta, 2024). According to Butterworth et al. (2020), employment advisors can help job searchers find opportunities that fit their interests and strengths by utilising data-enabled performance feedback. By improving matching procedures and enabling job seekers to connect with opportunities more successfully, advancements in algorithmic recruiting are creating a more effective labour market (Kaya, M. and Bogers, 2023).

Employer Branding

One crucial tactic businesses use to differentiate themselves in a crowded labour market is employer branding. To draw in and keep talent, it entails developing and promoting a compelling employer brand and combining marketing and human resources to produce an appealing workplace (Alzaid & Dukhaykh, 2023). External and internal branding are the two primary subcategories of employer branding. By highlighting the company's distinctive employment value propositions, including organisational culture, employee benefits, and career possibilities, external employer branding aims to attract potential employees (Alzaid & Dukhaykh, 2023). On the other hand, internal branding guarantees that current workers interact entirely with the employer brand through everyday interactions with the company. Fostering a unified brand culture that aligns with the organisation's values and objectives requires this

involvement (Rys et al., 2024). Corporate branding has a significant impact on employee engagement and retention. According to research, elements that improve the overall employer brand include psychological empowerment, organisational trust, and a healthy work environment (Drūteikienė et al., 2023; Ekhsan & Saroh, 2021). Employer branding affects innovation and organisational performance. According to John and Jagathy Raj (2020), a strong employer brand can encourage creative work practices among staff members, increasing innovation and productivity.

Compensation

According to Natsir et al. (2024), compensation is broadly defined to cover direct benefits like salaries and bonuses and indirect ones like health insurance and retirement plans. Several frameworks for comprehending compensation systems, such as merit-based, performance-based, and job-based structures, are intended to better match employee contributions with corporate goals (Zhang, 2021). Effective pay plans have been shown to majorly impact employee work satisfaction and retention, frequently mediating organisational commitment and motivation (Abdul Malik & Alhassan Musah, 2024). Since disparities or discontent with pay can hurt staff retention and organisational performance, compensation must align with employee expectations. This emphasises the necessity of fair and competitive compensation systems (Afrizal et al., 2022).

Company Reputation

Today, a company's reputation significantly impacts its performance and long-term viability. It includes how stakeholders view a business, considering its principles, conduct, and level of product quality. According to Haymoba et al. (2024), a comprehensive comprehension of reputation encompasses its constituent elements, including the company's image, financial stability, transparency, and ethical procedures. Scholars have examined the definition and composition of a company's reputation (Mihus et al., 2022). Improvements in sustainable practices and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) have become essential to preserving and improving a business's reputation. According to research, customers are becoming more loyal to brands that exhibit moral behaviour and a dedication to social concerns (Latif et al., 2020). A complex environment where proactive reputation tactics can result in competitive advantages is revealed by the convergence of stakeholder perception, ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) aspects, and reputational management (Kakar et al., 2019).

Employer Branding and Company Reputation

Company reputation and employer branding are connected ideas that significantly impact each other. An organisation's attempts to portray itself as a desirable workplace to draw

and keep talent are called employer branding. (Nullaela Arief & Andhany, 2024). According to research, a strong employer brand benefits a company's reputation, encouraging prospective employees to apply for positions (Aghna & Kurniawan, 2023). Furthermore, this relationship is further extended by the interaction between social media and employer branding. Public employers may be disadvantaged in the digital era if their branding initiatives are not shared on social media (Keppeler & Papenfuß, 2021). Social media has emerged as a key tool for influencing employer brand perceptions, directly affecting an organisation's standing. Laila (2024). Silva and Dias discovered links between job application intents, corporate reputation, and perceived employer branding. They observed that effective employer branding initiatives improved the organisation's reputation, affecting people's inclination to accept employment offers (Junça Silva, 2022).

Employer Branding and Job Seekers' Interest

The importance of employer branding as a strategic tool in recruitment has been highlighted by the strong empirical evidence supporting the link between job seekers' interest and employer branding in recent literature. In addition to improving their reputation, companies with a great employer brand significantly impact job searchers' intent to apply (Thang & Trang, 2024). Employer branding and organisational reputation have a well-established relationship. Strong company reputations positively impact job searchers' opinions and are crucial in determining how they apply (Junça Silva, 2022). Employer views are shaped by various informational signals, such as organisational characteristics and branding messaging, and they directly influence job seekers' inclinations to apply for jobs in general (Anggoro & Harsono, 2023).

Compensation and Company Reputation

In forming this association, founder behaviours are crucial (Zimon et al., 2022). Executives may put shareholder interests ahead of the welfare of other stakeholders, but this strategic alignment helps to alleviate agency concerns. Concurrently, CEO compensation incorporating CSR targets conforms to different corporate governance frameworks across nations and aligns with firm ideals and social performance (Aresu et al., 2023). Therefore, stakeholder engagement, especially from employees, is essential because perceptions of business reputation and executive compensation significantly impact organisational commitment (Pérez-Cornejo et al., 2023). Additionally, there have been notable advantages to using corporate social responsibility in CEO compensation. According to research, businesses that incorporate CSR factors into their pay plans frequently see increased employee loyalty and satisfaction, enhancing their reputation. Employee dedication is a mediator in this interaction,

establishing a strong connection between CSR initiatives and improved organisational performance and business image (Gao, 2024).

Compensation and Job Seekers' Interest

The connection between pay and job seekers' interests in different employment qualities is crucial in today's labour market. Depending on their demands and the state of the labour market, job seekers rank several employment traits in order of importance (Sonu, S.K., Jawahar, I.M. & Saini, 2022). One of the qualities that job candidates respect the most is compensation. Numerous studies have shown how perceptions of job seekers can be influenced by organisational reputation and compensation transparency (Wünderlich et al., 2020). Additionally, technological developments are impacting how job searchers obtain information about pay. Job seekers can now more precisely assess their value based on their talents thanks to the emergence of machine learning-based wage prediction models in recent years (Shiqi Yang, 2023).

Company Reputation and Job Seekers' Interest

A company's positive reputation significantly increases an applicant's intention to apply for a job. According to research, prospective employees are more likely to look for possibilities in companies that are seen favourably since these perceptions encourage a desire to work for the company (Thang & Trang, 2024). Employer branding is crucial for drawing in job searchers in addition to reputation (Wu, L., and Dineen, 2023). The firm's organisational culture and value proposition influence job searchers' judgements. Testimonials from staff members and their perceptions of job satisfaction can improve the company's reputation, which will draw in top talent (Wijaya et al., 2023)

Company Reputation mediates the relationship between Company Employer Branding and Job Seekers' Interest.

Attracting potential employees is primarily dependent on employer branding. According to Collins and Martinez-Moreno (2021), a favourable company reputation greatly improves employer branding efforts by cultivating an image of dependability and appeal. Corporate reputation influences job seekers' opinions of employers (Mardiana, 2021). Employers using employer branding to successfully convey their good reputation will likely attract more job seekers because it gives them a sense of belonging to a reputable company (Azizah et al., 2022).

Compensation mediates the relationship between Employer Branding and Job Seekers' Interest.

According to numerous studies, effective employer branding encourages job seekers to apply by improving perceptions of the company and the offered position. Several aspects of employer branding, including economic value, are closely related to compensation, implying that higher pay can make a potential employer more appealing (Junça Silva, 2022). Furthermore, as Thắng and Trang (2024) point out, job seekers actively evaluate employer benefits, such as pay and employment perks, which affect how they perceive employer branding. This highlights the need for openness in pay and benefits as part of the employer branding strategy, which is especially pertinent for candidates who might know little about possible companies. By showing that millennials, who are frequently mentioned as a major group of job seekers, are highly motivated to apply for jobs when pay is in line with their own beliefs and the company culture, the study adds to this conversation (Wijaya et al., 2023). Research indicates that pay acts as a mediator to increase the allure of a good employer brand when it is included in a larger value proposition. Elucidate how companies can leverage their employer branding to attract job seekers by offering attractive compensation packages that speak to the objectives and goals of potential hires (Kurniawan et al., 2020). Recognising that pay is not the only factor influencing job seekers' interest in an employer is essential. Elbendary, I., Elsetouhi, A.M., Marie, M., and Aljafari (2024) point out that while financial compensation is necessary, other factors like work-life balance, corporate culture, and career development opportunities also play a significant role in employer branding and its effect on job seekers.

3. METHODOLOGY

This kind of research is classified as quantitative research, and an online questionnaire is used to collect data. A Likert Scale with five numerical options—5 denoting a very high level of agreement and 1 denoting a very high level of disagreement—was used to gauge respondents' thoughts. The EmpAt scale, one of five dimensions created by Berton et al. (2005), measures employer branding. Dessler et al. (2015) created the two dimensions that calculate compensation. Then, using six dimensions created by (Fombrun Charles, J., 1996), company reputation is evaluated. In the meantime, the dimensions created by Highhouse, S., and F. Lievens (2003) are used to measure job application interest. Details about the respondents' age, gender, most recent level of education, and the name of the chosen FMCG company.

This study focused on people looking for work and interested in working in the FMCG sector, was carried out in Indonesia. The non-probability sampling method utilised in this study does not give every member of the population an equal chance of being included in the sample. Purposive sampling is used, and the sample size of 250 respondents is predetermined. According to the study's features, the respondents' ages range from 20 to 35.

Using AMOS 23 software, structural equation modelling (SEM) is used in this study to assess how well the data sample fits the current theoretical model. The model fit test was evaluated using several goodness-of-fit index parameters, including Tucker Lewis Index (TLI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Root Mean Squared Residual (RMR), chi-square (χ 2), CMIN/DF, and Goodness of Fit Index (GFI). The Standardised Loading Factor (SLF), which must attain a minimum value of 0.50, was used to assess the study's validity. Construct dependability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) data are used to gauge dependability. The hypothesis is then tested after meeting the goodness of fit requirements. If the t-score value is greater than the t-table value, often around 1.96, and the significance threshold roughly equals 0.05, the hypothesis can be deemed accepted. Additionally, the Sobel test determines the mediating variable's indirect effect.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

It is evident from the testing and data processing outcomes that the hypothesis test employs SEM AMOS 23. The findings for each of the hypotheses put out in this investigation are as follows:

In Indonesia's FMCG sector, employer branding significantly impacts company reputation. This result is consistent with a study (Vondrea & Riza, 2024) that indicated that employer branding appeal had a beneficial impact on corporate reputation and Generation Z's propensity to apply for jobs in FMCG businesses. The relationship between employer branding and the intention to apply for a job is also mediated by corporate reputation. Employer brand attributes like interest, economic, development, and application value have positively impacted Generation Z's inclination to apply for jobs in the FMCG sector (Purborini & Basid, 2022). This suggests that some elements of employer branding can improve a company's favourable image in the eyes of young, potential workers.

The study's findings suggest that pay significantly affects a company's reputation in Indonesia's FMCG sector. These results align with a study (Fany & Iryanto, 2024) that found agency costs mediate the positive relationship between executive compensation and

firm value. This implies that fair compensation can improve stakeholders' favourable opinions of the business. According to research (Prasetya, A. D., & Suryono, 2025), in the context of the FMCG business, pay significantly impacts Generation Z's enthusiasm in applying for jobs in Jakarta. This suggests that offering competitive pay might make a company more appealing to young, potential workers and enhance its standing as a desirable workplace.

The variable that has the most significant influence on job seekers' interest in applying for jobs is employer branding, which has a favourable and significant impact on job seekers' interest in applying for jobs in the FMCG business. It can be inferred that job seekers will pay attention to and are thought to be able to draw their attention to apply for jobs at FMCG companies if they are offered a pleasant work environment, job security, opportunities for promotion and career advancement, and the chance to put their knowledge to use. According to earlier research, Employer Branding influences job seekers' interest in applying for jobs (Gomes and Neves, 2011; Siverzen et al., 2013; Jain and Bhatt, 2013; Soeling et al., 2017; Ha and Luan, 2018). The findings of this study support these findings.

The interest of job seekers in applying for a position in the FMCG sector is positively and significantly impacted by compensation. It is thought that the presence of insurance, adequate work facilities, and high pay and incentives can entice competent job seekers to apply for a position at the company. The study's findings corroborate those of other research, which found that job seekers' interest in applying for a job was positively and significantly correlated with compensation (Porter et al., 2007; Wayne and Casper, 2012; Verwaeren et al., 2017; Hoang et al., 2020).

Job seekers' interest in applying for positions in the FMCG sector is positively and significantly impacted by company reputation. The more a company's reputation is, the more interested job seekers are in applying for positions there, and the easier it will be for the business to draw in competent employees. Job seekers define corporate reputation as a feeling of respect and confidence in the organisation, a clear and good vision and leadership, and evidence that the company is a respectable workplace. According to earlier research, company reputation significantly influences job applicants' interest (Williamson et al., 2010; Saini et al., 2015; Xie et al., 2015; Vercic and Coric, 2018; Sharma and Prasad, 2018; Liu, 2018). The results of this study corroborate these findings.

Employer branding and job seekers' interest in the FMCG sector are mediated by company reputation. The study's findings support earlier research by emphasising the critical moderating function of corporate reputation. According to earlier research, the relationship between Employer Branding and Job Application Interest was mediated by Corporate Reputation (Sivertzen et al., 2013). When job searchers believe the organisation is worthy and aligned with their preferences, the Employee Branding Dimension might stimulate them. Job seekers will be persuaded to apply for employment at the company because of this positive impression of its reputation.

The study's findings suggest that pay significantly affects job seekers' interest, with corporate reputation as a mediating factor. This result aligns with a study (Aise Hayomi & Suharnomo, 2024) that discovered that pay and company reputation significantly impact new graduates' desire to apply for jobs in Semarang. The study highlights how crucial a company's reputation is in enhancing the impact of pay on job seekers' interest. Pay acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between company branding and the intention to apply for a job, according to research conducted in the FMCG sector (Ekhsan et al., 2022). This suggests that offering competitive pay can increase a company's attractiveness to prospective workers, enhancing its standing as a desirable workplace.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study identified three factors—employee branding, compensation, and company reputation—that substantially impact job seekers' interest in applying for a position. It has also been demonstrated that corporate reputation mediates the relationship between job application intentions and company attractiveness. Therefore, it can be said that job seekers interested in working in the FMCG industry will consider these factors when searching for FMCG companies to apply to. By better understanding the perspectives of potential applicants, FMCG firms may create more effective policies, practices, and strategies that cater to their target audiences. Therefore, it is advised that FMCG companies incorporate these practices into their hiring processes. If the company is successful in attracting a large number of applicants, this will help to increase the likelihood that the company will hire the most qualified applicants. Furthermore, research indicates that employee branding has the most significant impact on both pay and company reputation; for this reason, it is critical for businesses to fully disclose their values on their website and in other media. This is meant to make it easy for potential hires to learn about the organisation's work culture, vision, mission, and any programmes it already runs. It has to do with the fact that the younger generation is more concerned with having a cosy workplace, a healthy atmosphere, and a reputable business that will eventually become their place of employment. The misalignment of employee expectations with their workplace

is one of the leading causes of today's high employee turnover rates. The inability of businesses to provide information about their companies is one of the factors.

This study has several limitations and research opportunities. The conclusions of this study might not apply to other potential employees outside of Indonesia because the data collection was limited to Indonesia. Nonetheless, the study's findings offer some preliminary evidence in favour of the link between applicants' inclination to apply, remuneration, firm reputation, and attractiveness. Given that many job seekers in this study were between the ages of 20 and 25, more research is anticipated to expand the number of samples by identifying the traits of job seekers, such as those from Generation Y or Z. The goal is to ascertain what draws respondents from that generation to apply for jobs at FMCG companies. Adding additional elements that may affect interest in a job application is also necessary.

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