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(IJIREV)www.gaexcellence.com/ijirev**EMPLOYER BRANDING STRATEGIES AND THEIR
IMPACT ON TALENT ATTRACTION AMONG
GENERATION Z IN THE MALAYSIAN MANUFACTURING
SECTOR**Azura Abdul Rahman^{1*}, Hazliza Haron², Afiqah Ahmad³, Nawal Esa Yazid Esa⁴¹Department of Business Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perak, Malaysia azurarahman@uitm.edu.my <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-1750-6110>² Department of Business Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perak, Malaysia hliza457@uitm.edu.my <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1065-2208>³ Department of Business Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perak, Malaysia nurukafiqah@uitm.edu.my <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-3954-2111>⁴Department of International Business, School of International Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Kedah, Malaysia nawal.esa@uum.edu.my <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-1930-9233>

*Corresponding Author

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Abstract:

This study explores the effect of employer branding strategies (employee value proposition (EVP), organizational reputation (OR)) and talent attraction within Malaysian Gen Z in manufacturing sector. The framework posits that effective employer branding strategies are proposed to influence Gen Z's talent attraction in the manufacturing sector. Methodologically, this study utilizes a conceptual research design to generate a conceptual framework that examines the relationships among employer branding strategies (employee value proposition, organizational reputation) and talent attraction. As a non-empirical paper, this study focuses on theory development by systematically reviewing, synthesizing, and integrating existing literature. Theoretically, the paper is expected to demonstrate that EVP and OR strengthens the relationship with talent attraction among Generation Z in Malaysian manufacturing. Practically, it offers insights for policymakers and organizations seeking to develop their recruitment strategies aligned with EVP and OR. This propose relationship is expected to find that all employer branding dimensions positively influence talent attraction among Generation Z in the manufacturing sector. In conclusion, the findings suggest that employer branding

strategies play a key role in helping organization attract prospective job candidates.

DOI: 10.35631/IJIREV.826042 **Keyword:**

Employee Value Proposition, Employer Branding Strategies, Gen Z, Organizational Reputation, Talent Attraction



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Introduction

The global economic environment has seen significant transformation in recent decades. In an increasingly competitive labour market, organizations encounter growing challenges in attracting and retaining talented employees, particularly members of Generation Z, who enter the workforce with distinctive expectations concerning career development, organizational values, workplace flexibility, and employer reputation.

Job-seeking behaviour has evolved considerably, with contemporary job seekers becoming increasingly selective in their employment choices and placing greater emphasis on factors including factors related to work-life balance, organizational culture, and prospects for career advancement and professional development (Ferdian Adyaksa & Arief, 2024). In response to these evolving expectations, employer branding has gained attention as an important strategic Human Resource Management (HRM) practice that allows organizations to establish themselves as attractive employers by effectively communicating their distinctive value propositions to prospective employees. Employer branding has consistently been recognized as an important factor in attracting talent to organizations.

In addition, business success and the effective development and implementation of strategies depend largely on the quality and capabilities of talent within the organization (Collins, 2001). Hence, when a manufacturing company develops a strong employer brand dimensions that influence Generation Z's perspective of an organization, the company then become an attractive employer and lead to more people willing to apply for jobs. Each generation has its lifestyle, perception and work values. Therefore, this paper aims to examine how these employer branding dimensions such as employee value proposition and organizational reputation influence Generation Z talent attraction within the manufacturing sector.

Problem Statement

Despite its significant contribution to national economic growth and employment, the manufacturing sector continues to face challenges in attracting Generation Z talent. As competition for highly skilled young employees increases, employer branding has become increasingly important; however, many manufacturing firms still struggle to establish themselves as attractive employers compared to service and technology-based industries.

In Malaysia and worldwide, the manufacturing sector serves as a prominent role in development and economic growth; however, talent shortages remain a major challenge (MIDA, 2025). The rapid transition towards Industry 4.0 further intensifies this issue by increasing the demand for skilled and technologically adaptable employees. For manufacturing firms, effective talent attraction is crucial for supporting Industry 4.0 transformation and ensuring workforce sustainability. Without strong employer branding, these firms may continue to experience labor shortages and struggle to remain competitive. Few empirical studies have specifically investigated employer branding strategies in the manufacturing sector, particularly from the viewpoint of Generation Z. To address this practical and theoretical gap, this study examines the effect of employer branding strategies in attracting Generation Z talent to the manufacturing sector. The findings are expected to offer valuable insights for HR practitioners in developing effective talent attraction strategies while extending the understanding of employer branding theory in the context of contemporary workforce management.

Research Question 1:

How does employee value proposition (EVP) influence talent attraction among Generation Z in the manufacturing sector?

Research Question 2:

How does organizational reputation influence talent attraction among Generation Z in the manufacturing sector?

Research Objective 1:

To determine the influence of employee value proposition (EVP) on talent attraction among Generation Z in the manufacturing sector.

Research Objective 2:

To examine the effect of organizational reputation on talent attraction among Generation Z in the manufacturing sector.

Literature Review

This section provides an overview of employer branding strategies and the effect on talent attraction among Generation Z in the Malaysian manufacturing sector. There are four points will be discussed in this literature review.

Talent Attraction

Talent attraction has contributed substantially on organizational performance (Sembiring & Damayanti, 2023). Attracting talented individuals, particularly those from Generation Z, has become a key priority for organizations across various industries. Initially, talent encompasses not only knowledge and skills but also creativity, critical thinking, ethics, adaptability, and the ability to collaborate, making it an important driver of innovation and sustainable development (Nguyen Minh & Author, 2024). The ultimate goal of talent attraction in the organization is to ensure everyone improve their quality of works in order to enhance performance as well (Nguyen Minh & Author, 2024). Failure to meet the needs and expectations of talented individuals may negatively affect organizational performance.

Employer Branding Strategies

The practice of Employer Branding (EB), Ambler and Barrow (1996) first introduced and describes the combination of economic, functional and psychological benefits associated with employment in a particular organization. Employer branding plays a critical role in influencing candidates' career choices and their willingness to apply for a position (Gandasari et al., 2024). Moreover, employer branding is a process of how organization communicates promotes the benefits of workplace. Therefore, employer branding can be viewed as a strategic process (Kilson, 2025)) to transform the benefits and value of working for the organization to current and future employees (Bronlet et al., 2024). In this study, we explore two dimensions of employer branding strategies: employee value proposition (EVP) and organizational reputation (OR).

Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

Employer branding needs a clear Employee Value Proposition (EVP) that explains what employees receive in return for working for an organization and why they should choose that organization over other employers (Bronlet et al., 2024). Whether to stay or join other organization, employers need to emphasize on the employer branding strategies such as developing employee value proposition.

However, the development of an attractive employee value proposition (EVP) should consider the different needs and expectations of specific target groups. For experienced job applicants, salary is often a key consideration when selecting an employer. In contrast, graduates entering the labour market with limited or no work experience may place greater importance on the organization's reputation. Therefore, organizations should effectively communicate their employer reputation through appropriate channels to attract different groups of potential employees (Samoliuk et al., 2022).

Organizational Reputation (OR)

Nowadays, organizational reputation (OR) has become increasingly important, particularly with the rapid growth and widespread use of social media (Soeling et al., 2022). Organizational reputation plays an important role in making an organization relevant to both current and prospective employees. It refers to stakeholders' views and attitudes toward an organization. A positive organizational reputation can help organizations attract new talent (Rosa et al., 2024). Initially, potential applicants often consider multiple organizations when applying for

jobs and may use organizational reputation as a source of information to assess the working conditions offered by different organizations. A strong and positive (Silva & Dias, 2023) organizational reputation can serve as a powerful tool in attracting potential employees (Soeling et al., 2022). Moreover, potential employees show greater interest in applying for a job or continue with the application process when they perceive a potential employer as having a strong reputation (Tien Thanh et al., 2024).

Conceptual Framework

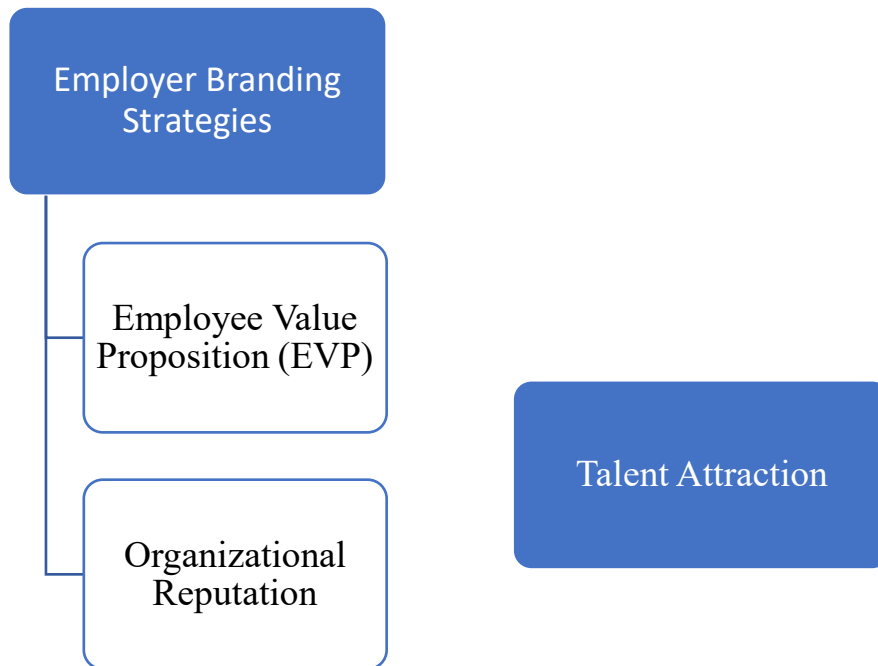


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's work

Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Employee Value Proposition (EVP) influences the Talent Attraction of Generation Z in Malaysian Manufacturing.

Organizations with a strong positive reputation have a stronger potential to attract talented individuals (Silva & Dias, 2023). Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Organizational reputation influences the Talent Attraction of Generation Z in Malaysian Manufacturing.

Supporting Theory

Signaling Theory

The theoretical framework of this study is based on Signaling Theory, which clarifies how organizations transmit information to potential employees through employer branding activities. The theory comprises five key components: the signal, the signaler, the receiver,

receiver feedback, and the signaling environment. Signalers are individuals or organizations with access to information that is not available to external parties. They use signals to communicate this information to outsiders who have limited knowledge about them. Generally, signalers intentionally provide positive information to create favorable perceptions among receivers. However, according to Friske et al., 2023, signals may also unintentionally reveal negative information. Whether positive or negative, and whether sent deliberately or unintentionally, signals can help reduce information asymmetry by providing external stakeholders with additional information for evaluation and decision-making.

Methods

This study proposes to employ a conceptual research design to develop a theoretical framework that examines the relationships among employer branding strategies (employee value proposition, organizational reputation) and talent attraction. As a non-empirical paper, this study focuses on theory development by systematically reviewing, synthesizing, and integrating existing literature.

This study will adopt a quantitative research design using a cross-sectional survey method. This design is suitable addressing this study because it allows the researcher to collect data at a single point in time and examine the relationship between employer branding strategies and talent attraction among Generation Z in the manufacturing sector.

Data Analysis Technique

Data will be analyzed using SPSS and SmartPLS (SEM-PLS) due to its suitability for predictive models and complex relationships.

Expected Findings

This framework proposes to find that all employer branding dimensions positively influence talent attraction among Generation Z in the manufacturing sector.

Specifically:

EVP is expected to significantly influence talent attraction among Generation Z in the manufacturing sector. Organizational reputation is expected to positively influence talent attraction among Generation Z in the manufacturing sector.

Practical Implications

For industry practitioners, in this context refers to the manufacturing sector, the findings underscore the importance of embedding employer branding strategies such as employee value proposition and organizational reputation to talent attraction. Organizations can better design their employee value proposition based on the expectations of Generation Z. In other words, the findings may assist human resource managers to develop their recruitment strategies to attract more potential employees. Human resource department and their recruiters may strengthen their method to help organization to generate opportunities to employees work in a positive work environment.

Theoretical Implications

The findings supposed to provide empirical support by demonstrating that employee branding strategies significantly influences Gen's Z talent attraction in the context of manufacturing sector.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the relationship between employer branding strategies (employee value proposition, organizational reputation) and talent attraction of Generation Z in Malaysian manufacturing. In conclusion, EVP and OR has emerged as an important employer branding strategies for organization seeking to attract potential employees. This study highlights the role of employer branding strategies in shaping organizational attractiveness and influencing Generation Z's intention to apply for jobs, particularly in the Malaysian manufacturing sector. Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of employer branding literature and offers practical implication for policymakers with valuable insights. In addition, for a practical standpoint, it also provides guidance for organizations seeking to develop effective talent attraction strategies. Organizations should anticipate recruitment challenges and align talent acquisition strategies with broader organizational goals to effectively attract and retain candidates who fit the organizational culture (Linh et al., 2024). Employees' personal values and traits should align with the organization's employer brand to enhance employee satisfaction and protect the organization's corporate brand and reputation.

Future Research Suggestions

As a conceptual study, this paper does not include empirical data. Therefore, the proposed relationship and their direction cannot be statistically tested and confirmed. Future studies should expand to other industries such as services, healthcare, and education for comparative analysis. Longitudinal studies should be conducted to observe changes in Gen Z preferences over time. Future research should include mediating variables such as organizational trust or moderating variables such as work experience. Additionally, this framework is developed in the Malaysian context, which may limit its applicability to other regions with different cultural, religious, and regulatory environments.

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