

The Influence of Employer Branding and E-Recruitment on Job Interest of Gen Z at SMK Negeri 1 Katapang

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ABSTRACT

Rapid technological advancement and shifting labor market dynamics have significantly influenced job application behavior, particularly among Generation Z. Vocational high school graduates remain one of the largest contributors to open unemployment in Indonesia, indicating a gap between labor market expectations and workforce readiness. This study aims to examine the influence of employer branding and e-recruitment on job interest among Generation Z students at SMK Negeri 1 Katapang. A quantitative descriptive approach was employed using purposive sampling. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms to 240 twelfth-grade students. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0. The results demonstrate that employer branding has a positive and significant effect on Generation Z's job interest ($\beta = 0.600$; $p < 0.05$), indicating that organizational values, career development opportunities, social value, and application value strongly shape students' intentions to apply for jobs. Furthermore, e-recruitment was also found to have a positive and significant effect on job interest ($\beta = 0.311$; $p < 0.05$), highlighting the importance of perceived usefulness, ease of use, and accessibility of digital recruitment platforms. These findings suggest that Generation Z prefers employers who not only offer competitive economic benefits but also emphasize innovation, ethical values, and career development, supported by efficient and transparent online recruitment systems. The study concludes that companies must strengthen their employer branding strategies and optimize e-recruitment practices across multiple digital platforms to attract qualified Generation Z talent. Future research is recommended to incorporate additional variables such as work–life balance, recruitment effectiveness, and organizational culture to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Generation Z employment preferences.

Keywords: *Employer Branding, E-Recruitment, Job Interests, Generation Z.*

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INTRODUCTION

Technological advances and strong commercial rivalry have affected people's employment interests. These changes influence job seekers, particularly generation z. hakim (2023) in Amalia et al. (2025) states that Generation Z prefers a workplace that allows them to grow, choose a company that is able to provide a decent income and consider life balance. This phenomenon poses problems for labor absorption, especially for vocational students (Nanda & Prasetya, 2019; Samsuri et al., 2025; Staniec & Kalińska-Kula, 2021). Based on data released by the Center for Parliamentary Analysis of the Expertise Agency of the Secretary General of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia, data shows

that vocational school graduates as of August 2024 contributed to the unemployment rate reaching 7.47 million people or 4.9 percent. Data released by the Central Statistics Agency also explains the same thing regarding the number of open unemployment among vocational school graduates in the 2020-2024 period, showing that the contributors to the open unemployment rate are dominated by vocational students.

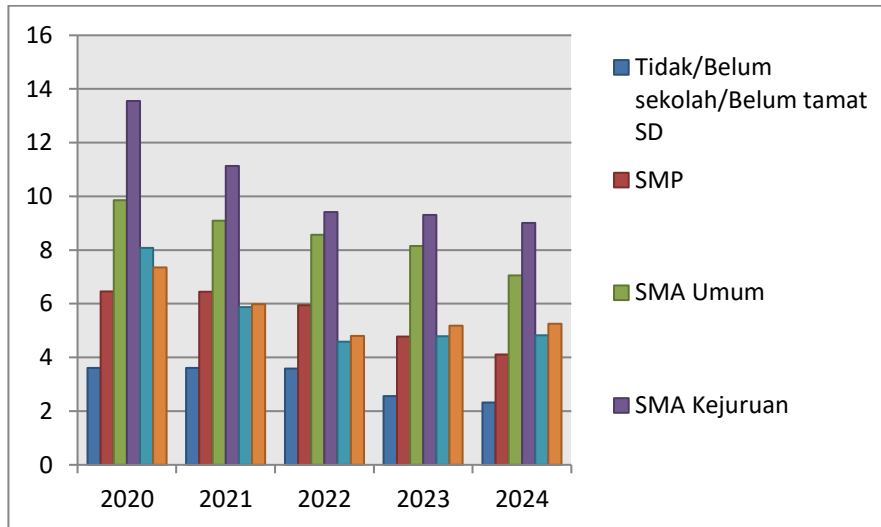


Figure 1. Open Unemployment Rate (TPT) Graph by Education Level

Source: Central Statistics Agency

Work interests according to Zulfirhan Maulana & Henri Dwi Wahyudi, (2025) Define that work interest is an encouragement from within oneself to get a job that suits what he needs, the process starts from finding out information related to job vacancies, making choices and finally making a decision to apply. In its development, the interest in applying for jobs for generation z has a tendency to choose a workplace that is more focused on a workplace that provides non-material development such as a workplace that pays attention to ethics and has a special program that focuses on CSR compared to a workplace that only offers material bonuses such as bonuses (Sengupta et al., 2024).

Technology factors greatly influence the decision of generation z in considering choosing a workplace that suits their needs. One of the uses of technology by the young workforce is by applying for jobs through job vacancies and social media or E-Recruitment (Ananda & Santosa, 2024). The E-recruitment process itself according to Geofanny & Faraz, (2023) began to grow rapidly in the 1990s until now, recruiters and job seekers worldwide utilise it extensively. According to a Statista.com poll in Safitri et al. (2022), 33.4% of Indonesian LinkedIn users were 18-24 years old in April 2021. Similar presentations are explained in the study Sugiyanto et al., (2025). Through goodstats.id site, the most widely used job vacancy site is JobStreet.

Facing changes in the preferences of the work interests of the young generation like today, companies also need to make a change by forming a positive image to the community whose goal is to get the right talent and quality so that they can maintain their excellence or it can be called Employer Branding (Junaedi et al., 2024; Kumar, 2021; Manao et al., 2024). According to Purborini & Basid, (2022) defines that employer branding is a way that companies use to differentiate themselves from other companies, making the work and values

offered more visible compared to other companies. In implementation employer branding The company is not only in the scope of recruiting new employees but also strives to retain the talent they already have (Mutiara et al., 2025). In practice, the concept employer branding Facing the challenges of increasing the involvement of potential employees and in the recruitment process need to be improved again through electronic recruitment which is most commonly used by job seekers (Pangenan et al., 2024).

This study aims to examine how each independent variable such as employer branding and E-recruitment affects the dependent variable of interest in applying for jobs of generation z at SMK Negeri 1 Katapang which is carried out partially to find out how much of an influence it is and the level of significance.

METHOD

Our descriptive quantitative study examined how employer branding and E-recruitment affect Generation Z's career inclinations at SMK Negeri 3 Baleendah. This research included 417 level 12 SMK Negeri 3 Baleendah students. Purposive sampling was utilised in this work, using the formula Hair et al. (2020). Thus, 140 persons were researched since the number of samples equalled the number of indicators multiplied by 10. The questionnaire employs a 1–5 Likert scale. This quantitative research collected data via a questionnaire given to respondents who replied in writing using an online form.

Table 1. Construct Research

Variable	Indicator	References
Employer Branding	EB1 = <i>Interest Value</i> measures interest in an employer that provides an attractive work environment, company innovation, suitability with expertise and high-quality production	Mutiara et al., (2025) Mostafa., (2022)
	EB 2 = <i>Social value</i> assesses the attractiveness of employers who are able to create a pleasant work environment, establish harmonious relationships between employees and have supportive colleagues.	
	EB3 = <i>Economic value</i> assesses the attractiveness of a provider who provides compensation, security, promotion and cross-departmental experience.	
	EB4 = <i>Development value</i> measures the interest of employers who provide recognition, career-enhancing experiences and improve self-esteem and confidence.	
	EB5= <i>Application value</i> measures interest in employers who provide opportunities to apply knowledge, various knowledge, and are oriented towards CSR activities.	
E-recruitment	ER1 = Perception of usefulness measures the trust of the E-recruitment system can increase effectiveness in the job application process	Adawiah, Halim, and Kusuma., (2024)
	ER2 = Perception of the ease of learning and ease of use of E-recruitment sites.	
	ER3 = Perception of satisfaction when using an E-recruitment site.	
	ER4 = Something that hinders the use of E-recruitment sites	

Variable	Indicator	References
	which can result in a decrease in interest in looking for a job through E-recruitment sites.	
	ER5 = The specialization aspect includes preferences and interests in using different types of E-recruitment sites.	
Work Interests	MK 1 = Characteristics of work and organization.	Brahmin & Brahmana., (2013) & Sciences et al., (2022)
	MK2 = Recruiter behavior.	
	MK3 = Applicants' perception of the recruitment process	
	MK4 = Candidate's expectations of the recruitment process.	

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Demographics

The study included questionnaires from 240 grade 12 students at SMK Negeri 1 Katapang. The demographics of the respondents were adjusted based on gender, study major and experience of using the device in units of years. Demographic data of respondents is presented in table 1 below.

Table 1. Respondent Demographics

By Gender	Number of Respondents	of Introduce yourself
Male	128	53,2%
Women	112	46,8%
By Study Department		
Industrial Electronics Engineering	46	19%
Television Production and Broadcast	44	18,5%
Software Engineering	31	12,9%
Network Computer Engineering	30	12,5%
Textile Finishing Techniques	26	10,9%
Light Vehicle Engineering	20	8,5%
Machining Techniques	18	7,7%
Mechatronics Engineering	12	5,2%
Machine Design Techniques	12	4,8%
Based on the Experience of Using Gadgets		
> 7 Years	70	29%
6 – 7 Years	63	26,2%
4 – 5 Years	62	25,8%
2 – 3 Years	40	16,5%
< 1 Year	6	2,4%

Source: Data processed (2025)

Validity Test Results

Convergent Validity testing is needed to detect favourably associated construct assessments utilising different steps (Salsabila et al., 2025). The fulfilment of values depends on AVE and outside loading. The validity test data processing findings are below :

Table 2. Validity Test

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading
Employer Branding	EB1	0,972
	EB2	0,963
	EB3	0,960
	EB4	0,930
	EB5	0,968
E-Recruitment	ER1	0,929
	ER2	0,925
	ER3	0,950
	ER4	0,837
	ER5	0,953
Work Interests	MK1	0,976
	MK2	0,930
	MK3	0,962
	MK4	0,835

Source: Data processed (2025)

The largest outer loading value of an element suggests indicator similarities. The largest outer loading value of an element indicates comparable indications (Ramdhani & Yuliana, 2023; Ningsih et al., 2023). Hair et al. (2019) stated that latent variables can explain at least 5% of each indicator variant in accordance with the established policy, where the outer loading reference value is 0.5 or greater and the optimal value is 0.7 or greater. Based on the AVE value, brand credibility had the greatest score (0.717) and brand familiarity the lowest (0.414).

Results of Feasibility and AVE Tests

The following table shows Smart PLS 4.0 reliability value test results utilising the PLS-Algorithm process and Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values.

Table 3. Reliability and AVE Tests

	Crobach's Alpha	Rho_a	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Employer Branding	0,981	0,981	0,982	0,704
E-Recruitment	0,975	0,975	0,977	0,712
Work Interests	0,974	0,974	0,977	0,749

Source: Processed Data (2025)

The reliability test on each variable had a composite reliability score > 0.7, indicating that all instruments were trustworthy and consistent with respondent replies.

Hypothesis Test Results

Table 4. Hypothesis Test

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	Statistic (O/STDEV)	P Values	Hypothetical Results
Employer Branding → Generation Z's Work Interests	0,600	0,601	0,066	9,081	0,000	Supported
E-Recruitment → Generation Z's Work Interests	0,311	0,307	0,067	4,646	0,000	Supported

Source: Processed Data (2025)

Based on table 4, each hypothesis is explained in detail this research found that Employer Branding positively affects generation Z's employment interest at SMK Negeri 1 Katapang. ($\beta=0.600$; $p=0.000$). A p-value of less than 0.05 implies that employer branding affects generation Z's career interests. This description supports Hypothesis 1 (H1).

Upon testing Hypothesis two, E-Recruitment was shown to positively and significantly impact generation Z's interest in job applications ($\beta = 0.311$; $p=0.000$). Figure following shows each variable's association. E-Recruitment significantly impacts Generation Z's job interest at SMK Negeri 1 Katapang ($p < 0.05$). Given this description, Hypothesis 2 is supported.

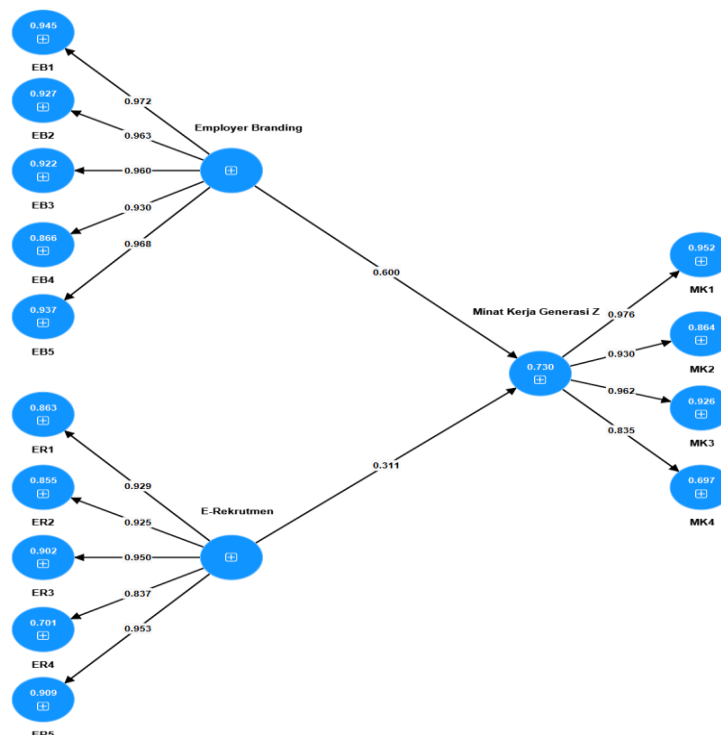


Figure 1. Data Processing Results with SmartPLS 4.0
Source: Data processed (2025)

Discussion

First hypothesis (H1): Employer branding positively and significantly affects generation Z's employment interests at SMK Negeri 1 Katapang. This theory supports Pangenan et al.'s (2024) finding that employer branding influences generation Z's job application. Regitha Lania Putri & Abdurrahman (2023) agree that employer branding affects generation Z's employment interests. Generation Z's job application interest is heavily influenced by employer branding. Generation Z's shift in job preferences affects their interest in applying for jobs. One indicator that distinguishes them from previous generations is Application Value and Development Value, where in addition to a decent income, generation Z expects companies that can accommodate their desire to innovate (besides that generH2 reveals that E-recruitment affects generation Z's interest in SMK Negeri 1 Katapang positions in both ways. Sulistyanto & Bernarto (2024) found that E-recruitment increases job application interest, supporting the second hypothesis. Other study by Hardiansyah et al. (2023) found that E-recruitment positively and significantly affects generation Z employment interest.

Changes in recruitment methods from conventional methods such as sending a cover letter to companies are no longer relevant to Generation Z (Wanda Evrina & Wulansari, 2023; Wijaya et al., 2023). The abundance of information sources about jobs spread on the internet greatly affects the work interests of generation Z. In the process of applying for jobs for generation Z, they have used online-based recruitment methods or E-recruitment. Generation Z thinks that the E-recruitment method can speed them up in getting information related to job vacancies. In addition, using an E-recruitment site also provides a structured recruitment process and makes it possible to apply for multiple jobs at once. The E-recruitment method is very effective in searching for different types of jobs.

CONCLUSION

The first hypothesis, that employer branding positively and significantly affects generation Z's job interest at SMK Negeri 1 Katapang, was supported by the analysis and discussion. Second hypothesis: E-Recruitment positively and significantly affects generation Z's job interest at SMK Negeri 1 Katapang. The survey found that generation z is applying for employment differently, so employers must establish employer branding that matches their changing work preferences and improve the E-recruitment process. Practical steps for companies to build their employer branding for searching based talents among Gen Z for example offer a flexible work hours, ensuring career path and providing development programs. The companies needs to advertise their job vacancy through various social media, it can be formal for example linked id or jobsreet, or job vacancy can be advertised through mainstream platform for example Instagram, facebook, tiktok or x, considering that Gen Z use various platform of social media. The goal is for companies to get the best talent from the young workforce such as generation z. The research conducted also has limitations in its writing which can be evaluated for future research. This study only focuses on the employer branding, E-recruitment and the work interests of generation Z, it is recommended for future

research to be able to test using other variables such as the effectiveness of the use of E-recruitment, adding the Work-life-balanced (WLB) as an indicator employer branding.

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