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## **Employer Branding in Generation Z Recruitment**

A Study on Vietnamese Gen Z's Perceptions and Job Seeking Behaviors

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## Thesis abstract <sup>1</sup>

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This thesis aims to study the perceptions regarding Employer Brand and job seeking behaviors under the influence of Employer Branding practices of the Vietnamese Generation Z. Henceforth, provide companies with key insights and suggestions of how to increase their attractiveness and competitiveness in young talents' perception as well as keep these talents engaged in the recruitment process and eventually get them onboard.

The key theoretical foundations of this thesis are based on the theories of Employer Brand Equity, Employer Brand Knowledge framework, the Instrumental – Symbolic framework, literature on recruitment, as well as concepts related to generation gap and Gen Z people's characteristics. These theories are synthesized into an integrated conceptual framework to better demonstrate the relationship between Employer Brand, job seekers' characteristics, and recruitment outcomes.

The assumptions made based on theoretical reviews are addressed with a cross-functional online survey targeting Vietnamese Gen Z. The survey participants were asked to respond to a questionnaire consisting of several multiple choice and scale-rating questions, which collected information on people's demographic background, perception toward a set of Employer Brand image factors, and general job seeking behaviors. The questionnaire gathered 125 responses from university students and young employees, who are seeking or may seek for a job in the near future. The analysis from data collected has confirmed the significance of Employer Brand in the job seeking and selecting decisions of Vietnamese Gen Z, narrowed down the most significant instrumental and symbolic factors in their perceptions, and recorded a pattern of job seeking behaviors that may provide useful insights to employers.

Thereby, relevant practical suggestions for companies, as well as theoretical implications were given upon the thesis' empirical results. Certain limitations and not-covered possibilities were also acknowledged to provide recommendations for future research.

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<sup>1</sup> Keywords: Employer Branding, Employer Knowledge, Gen Z, Recruitment, Job seeking behavior

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## Terms and Abbreviations

<b>CAGR</b>	Compound annual growth rate
<b>HR</b>	Human resource
<b>HRM</b>	Human resource management
<b>WOM</b>	Word of mouth
<b>EVP</b>	Employer Value Proposition
<b>EOC</b>	Employer of Choice



# I. INTRODUCTION

## 1 Thesis Background

In today's business environment, numerous disruptions have been brought about by global trends of internationalization, technology advancement, and change in demographic structure (i.e. urbanization) as well as the growing trend of D.E.I.: Diversity – Equality – Inclusion. Moreover, along with the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, many new concepts have been introduced and many conventional ways of living as well as working have been replaced or alternated. To adapt to these changes, organizations must be equipped with adequate capital and resources, especially robust and effective human resources. These changes in fact accentuate the cruciality of a competent workforce as it has been proven to be the sole resource that can turn the tide and play the role of a sustainable competitive edge for all organizations. As people are considered the most valuable asset, bringing the necessary talents to the organizations is in fact weighed to be the top priority. Therefore, undoubtedly, recruitment serves as the most important business function (Van Hoyer & Lievens, 2009).

However, much of the demand of such competent labor is underscored, with the growth of both domestic and international economies, employment opportunities are also increasing, which leads to more job openings to be filled. Moreover, in order to adapt to an economy where change is rapid and constant, people are also willing to change their jobs often. According to Collins & Kanar (2014), as a reaction to the nature of staffing and conventional lay-offs culture, many individuals have changed their mindset: instead of looking for a stable position and committing to a single employer, people are now more committing to their own careers with strong pursuit of individual growth, skills advancement, and personal marketability. In other words, nowadays labor is not hesitant to actively look for new and better job opportunities outside of their current employers. In addition, more and more firms are willing to seek, attract and recruit the top talents of other companies as an attempt to gain upper advantages. Thus, inevitably, all organizations with the intention to attract and retain highly desirable labors must enter a battle so-called "war for talents" (Van Hoyer & Lievens, 2009). In fact, businesses are facing immense pressure to attract and retain the right talents for their organizations.

As the demand for talents in both quantity and quality inflated while the growth of high-quality labor cannot sustain, there has been an intensive and urgent labor shortage happening and

continuing to escalate (Lievens et. al., 2016). A study has shown that 75% executives in the United States stated that their organizations were lacking adequate human resources and this talent shortage situation was hindering their companies' growth opportunities (Cable & Turban, 2003). The labor shortage situation is also recognized in many developing countries, such as Vietnam.

With Vietnam's CAGR development from 2014-2019 being 14.3%, labor demand was estimated to grow with the relatively same speed. However, in reality, the growth of skilled labor as well as high-quality talents in Vietnam were not enough to supply such fast-increasing demand. According to a study in 2019 by TopCV, more than 40% of businesses in Vietnam were in severe labor shortage with the large and giant corporations having the largest shortage. One of the top reasons responsible for Vietnam's labor shortage were the lack of competent candidates as many employers stated the majority of applicants did not meet with the recruitment standards and requirements. As a matter of fact, a "thirst" for high-quality labor is recognized in Vietnam. It was reported that the high-quality human resources in Vietnam were relatively limited compared to its ASEAN neighbors such as Thailand and Malaysia. In fact, according to the 2018 Global Competitiveness Report, Vietnam only ranked 84th out of 137 listed countries in terms of university graduates' skills and 79th out of 134 countries in innovation capacity. However, in recent years, there is a positive momentum registered: Vietnam labor force is increasing with the labor landscape recording a rapid shift from low-skilled to highly skilled labor, with the well-trained workforce accounting for 95% of newcomers (Talentnet, 2019).

On the other hand, there are other reasons why some organizations are experiencing labor shortage. In a survey by Vietnamworks, many job seekers, especially those considered as high quality and highly desirable, claimed that one of the main reasons why they rejected the employer was due to that employer brand. In fact, for this reason, Employer Branding is becoming a highly sought-after tool for recruiters to achieve competitive advantages in recent years.

Employer Brand, by definition, is the "package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company" (Ambler & Barrow 1996, p.3; Backhaus 2004; Theurer et al. 2018). Employer Branding in recruitment – the main purpose of external Employer Branding, is intended to promote the company as an

employer of choice; presumably, that reputation should help the company to attract the most qualified applicants (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Backhaus, 2016; Behrends et al, 2020).

Research has indicated that Employer Brand is a major determinant of an employer's ability to recruit new talents, that a job tends to appear as appealing to the job seekers when it comes from a company with a highly positive reputation (Cable & Turban, 2003). Therefore, the highly regarded employer should naturally have access to a better talent pool to select from, improve the chance of successfully hiring individuals who best suit the companies' values and needs. Some employers aim for a match between the candidates' abilities and traits with the need of the companies, while others look for the top talents; either way, their tasks are finding the appropriate contents and approaches to trigger the attention and curiosity of the desired candidate and encourage them to follow through the application process (Backhaus, 2004).

### **Nowadays, employer branding has become a rising trend in recruitment.**

Technology has advanced tremendously along the recent decade with the appearance of new information channels connecting every corner of the World. Communication methods which used to be unimaginable are nowadays essential practices: social media, websites, online forum discussions, etc. As a result, recruiters are using those channels as the main Employer Branding methods for reaching targeted employees. The employer originated information and official announcements are actively published on the social fan page, the organization's website, which are the main interface to connect with job seekers and display the desired image. Aside from that, applicants are also coming up to online discussion forums on social media and recruitment sites for reviews of current and former employees, while actively updating on third-party employer rankings available free of charge online for reference (Jawahar & Saini, 2019). The technology also facilitates possibilities for using data and AI in Employer Branding and audience targeting. One of the major Employer Branding trends of 2020 is data-driven decision-making. Survey has shown that the most attractive employers are more data-driven than its competitors, proving the practice to be a favorable orientation for Employer Branding investment (Universum, 2020).

Another major disruption in recent years involves the unwelcomed arrival of the global pandemic. The COVID-19 crisis has challenged all existing ways of doing, urging for a total transformation to adapt to a "new normal" that is expected to last long even after the pandemic threat is ended. The Universum's 2020 study on Employer Branding has highlighted a number

of key tendencies recruiters should pay attention to, most notably the growing difficulties in hiring top-talents, priority for emphasizing diversity, and enabling virtual touchpoints for branding and recruiting activities. Although the unemployment rates tend to increase in most countries, the recruitment task is getting more challenging, especially for high-quality in-demand talents: 56% of Universum's top 100 world most attractive employers, (2020) feedback to see a harder hiring situation in the next 12 months. This is assumed to be caused by the reluctance of people to switch jobs amidst the economic uncertainty, the wave of mixed-quality applications putting pressure on the selection process, and geopolitical challenges hindering candidates' mobility. The problem is even more detrimental for start-ups due to the financial and the downfall beliefs of jobseekers in their stability and chance to survive. The pandemic has further accentuated the conversations on diversity and equality, requiring employers to be more delicate in supporting diversity initiatives. Additionally, it is crucial for companies to seriously put effort in changing their old process to a more pandemic-friendly approach by enabling virtual recruitment and Employer Branding experience such as video interviews or AI targeting and advertising (Universum, 2020). The ongoing COVID-19 crisis is a destructive threat to employers, yet also a revolutionary opportunity for companies to innovate and practice new recruitment and Employer Branding methods that differentiate themselves from lagged competitors.

## **2 Thesis Objectives**

This thesis aims to study the job seeking behaviors of the Generation Z in Vietnam, and how these behaviors are influenced by the Employer Brand and Employer Branding techniques. Based on that, provide companies with key insights and suggestions about the newest generation of the workforce to not only increase their attractiveness and competitiveness in young talents' perception, but also keep these talents engaged to the recruitment process and eventually get them onboard.

The main problems the author aim to uncover throughout the discussions in this thesis can be summarized as below:

- How important is Employer Brand in the job finding decisions of Vietnamese Gen Z?

- How does the Employer Brand affect the job seeking behavior of Gen Z young people in Vietnam?
- What characteristics of the Employer Brand are meaningful to Gen Z in Vietnam?
- Which Employer Branding methods and channels companies should focus on to effectively communicate their Employer Brands to Gen Z job seekers?

The outlined questions are expected to be answered by accomplishing the following objectives:

- Understand the importance and influence of Employer Brand in the job seeking process of Vietnamese Gen Z.
- Find out the Employer Brand attributes that are most valued by Vietnamese Gen Z.
- Identify the Employer Branding strategies that can attract Vietnamese Gen Z talents most effectively.

### **3 Research methods**

- Reviewing literature:  
The foundation theories and influential literature surrounding the concept of Employer Branding and Generation.
- Online quantitative survey:  
Distribution of questionnaires on social media platforms and job seeking networks and collect data digitally.
- Survey result analysis with statistical analysis software.

## **II. THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### **1 The Employer Branding Concept**

Employer Brand and the process of Employer Branding are relatively new concepts that combine practices in human resource management (HRM) and marketing fields. Over the past decade, the concept has drawn increasing interest from both scholars and practitioners, especially as a powerful tool for displaying a competitive advantage over high quality potential employees in the so-called “war for talents” (Behrends, Baur & Zierke, 2020).

Being a highly regarded technique in recruitment, there have been a variety of different theoretical and empirical approaches and directions toward Employer Branding. It is hence important to present, clarify and focus on a core stream of most widely acknowledged findings on this concept. Before being able to understand the content, dimensions, and influences of Employer Branding, it requires one to get a hold on the definitions of Employer Brand and its branding process.

Employer Brand and Employer Branding are two adherent yet different definitions, fundamentally with the brand is the “identifier” of the company as an employer, and Employer Branding is “the means to build or modify” the Employer Brand (Theurer et al. 2018, p.2). It is important to separate the two terms to avoid possible confusions.

## 1.1 The Employer Brand

Brand is considered as one of the most important assets of a business that brand management is deemed a mainly focused area in many companies. Although brand is more commonly known in relation to products and corporate images, it is also an important concept used in human resource management (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). To emphasize a clear distinction from the company's brands used in other areas, the personnel management's function specially terms it "Employer Brand". In order to better clarify the concept of Employer Brand, the origin of the concept and a number of employer definitions are cited below.

The discussions about Employer Brand sparks with Ambler and Barrow's 1996 pioneering work addressing a then novel concept concerning the connection of HRM and brand marketing. Largely based on the principles of Kotler and Armstrong's relationship marketing, Ambler and Barrow (1996) proposed and defined Employer Brand as the "package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company" (Ambler & Barrow, 1996, p.3; Backhaus, 2004; Theurer et al., 2018). They suggested that what Employer Brand offers the employees is parallel to the value a normal brand delivers to its customers in the marketing concept. Employer Brand "also has a personality, and may be positioned in much the same way as a product brand" (Ambler & Barrow, 1996, p.4) that traditional techniques used in marketing should also be applicable.

The Conference Board (2001, cited in Backhaus, 2004; Backhaus, 2016) describe Employer Brand as "identity of the firm as an employer, including the firm's value system, policies and behaviors toward the objectives of attracting, motivating and retaining the firm's current and potential employees." Backhaus (2016) argued that Employer Brand is the ***promise about the experience*** potential and current employees will have working in the company. It highlights the ***unique*** aspects of the organizational employment offerings or environment, distinguished from those of its competitors (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Although all employers have a brand, not all do it right to show themselves as an attractive employer (Backhaus, 2016).

In a frequently cited exhaustive literature review on academic publications, Theurer et al. comprehensively studied and provided an integrative definition of Employer Brand as "an organization's bundle of employment attributes targeted at potential and current employees that are attractive and sufficiently unique to distinguish an employer from its labor market competitors" (Theurer et al., 2018, p.5). This annotation consolidated and highlighted the

characteristics of the Employer Brand in both facets: as a package of offers to its audience (i.e. employees), and as a distinctive identity as an appealing employer.

Overall, most researchers shared a consensus on the linkage of marketing and HRM fields in bearing the concept of Employer Brand, and their explanations describe Employer Brand with either or both of the two things: **1) the company's unique identity as an employer**, and **2) exclusive package of employment offers**. Later in the thesis, the authors will discuss in depths the concept so-called Employer Brand Equity, which can be simplified into the strengths or implied value of the Employer Brand. Understanding the Employer Brand Equity and how to develop it is the primary significance of the majority of theoretical and practical studies surrounding the Employer Brand topic.

## 1.2 Employer Branding

With an Employer Brand – an identifier, the organizations then need a tool to shape and communicate it to their target employees. At the same time, employees, especially job seekers look for “descriptions of attributes that match their own”, yet often find themselves lacking sufficient information about the actual working environment and conditions of the employers to assess their own degree of fit with the employer (Backhaus, 2004; Behrends et al., 2020). This is where the process of Employer Branding steps in to connect the needs from both ends. Since Employer Branding originated from the concept used in product branding and corporate branding, it shares the main principles and characteristics with those fields, and thereby, can borrow most practices used in product and corporate branding with a few modifications.

Edwards (2010, p.6) defined Employer Branding as “an activity where principles of marketing, in particular the “science of branding”, are applied to HR activities in relation to current and potential employees”. He focused on the branding goals to explain the clear difference between “product branding”, which targets customers; “corporate branding”, which considers the organizational representation to a variety of external audiences, and “Employer Branding”, which targets current and potential employees specially.

Branham (2001) theorized Employer Branding as a tool to position an organization as an employer of choice by advertising the right mix of psychological, economic and functional benefits to current and potential employees (Jawahar & Saini, 2019). Although in rare



occasions, it may be possible for Employer Brands to emerge naturally, the branding term focuses on the “**conscious strategic action** of positioning a specific company or product as distinctive and desirable in the minds of potential customers” (Behrends et al., 2020, p.6). Similar to that, Theurer et al. (2018, p.5) defines Employer Branding as “the process of strategically promoting the Employer Brand externally and internally, using brand marketing activities with the aim of establishing the desired employer image in the organization’s target groups”. That notion is based on earlier statements that “Employer Branding describes the process of building an identifiable and unique employer identity” or, more specifically, “the promotion of a unique and attractive image” as an employer (Backhaus, 2004; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Theurer et al., 2018; Behrends et al., 2020).

Behrends et al. (2020, according to Petkovic, 2007) posited that the Employer Branding process is made up of all decisions on the configuration of the Employer Brand and the marketing activities following that brand. They summarized three main fields of practical managerial actions of Employer Branding commonly mentioned in research papers: managing **employer value proposition**, maintaining a consistent **Employer Branding promise**, and finally segmenting and developing a suitable **communication strategy** toward the relevant target group (Behrends et al., 2020).

Looking at it from an action-oriented point of view, Employer Branding is a process in which the organization first **identifies** its own characteristics, key values and principles that shapes the kind of experience and rewards it can offer to its workers. Evaluate what its employment offering **differs** (better) from competitors, or what it can adjust to differentiate itself. The last step is **communicating** its desirable authenticity and difference as an employer to the target current and potential employees (Edwards, 2010).

### **Application areas and target groups of Employer Branding**

According to Theurer et al. (2018), there are three application areas and target groups of Employer Branding prevalently discussed in academic research:

- First, from the **job market perspective**, Employer Branding techniques are deemed to be particularly useful in highly competitive and high value-added, knowledge intensive job markets, such as consulting or banking industries where quality talents are short rather than large-scale manufacturing industries with less specialty

requirements (Ewing et al., 2012; Hughes & Rog, 2008; cited in Theurer et al., 2018).

- Second, in the **functional organization perspective**, researchers suggested Employer Branding to be a framework for career management programs and a sustainable tool for company's values communication such as in corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy (Aggerholm et al., 2011; cited in Theurer et al., 2018).
- Third, in **HR cycle perspective**, Theurer et al. suggested that the Employer Branding target groups are sectioned in two: potential employees for recruitment and current employees for maintaining loyalty. Lievens and Slaughter (2016) called the former "employer image management" and the latter "employer identity management". The employer image management stems from the incentive to shape an outsider's thinking of an organization as an employer, whereas the identity management aims to influence insiders' feelings about their workplace (Lievens & Slaughter 2016). As the objectives of this thesis focus on studying the effects of Employer Branding on recruitment, the authors will discuss mainly aspects related to external branding. However, one exception to this boundary is the findings in current (and former) employees' advocacy, which Generally falls under internal Employer Branding, yet have substantial impact on the recruitment process. This inter-external Employer Branding crossover approach is built on the assumption that when the employer fails to implement appropriate branding to its current employees, they are prone to poor employee loyalty; this likely results in negative employees' reviews, which arguably are one of the most popular sources that weaken the Employer Brand in jobseekers' eyes.

## **2 Employer Brand Equity**

Precedingly mentioned, the concept of Employer Brand and the process of Employer Branding have their foundations built upon the integration between human resource management (HRM) practices and branding practices in marketing fields. In addition, according to Merz, He & Vargo (2009), employees are internal customers; thus, such understanding establishes the relationship between a company (employer) and its employees (both potential employees and existing ones) as a part of the marketing approach. Subsequently, the majority of current academic research on Employer Brand, Employer Branding, Employer Brand Equity and all relevant concepts and theories are built upon the theoretical foundations of Consumer Brand Equity in Marketing literature (Collins & Kanar, 2014). To further understand the concept of Employer Brand Equity (Employer Brand Equity) and its construct, the following section will discuss the concept of Brand, Branding and Brand Equity of Marketing Literature and how those concepts are relevant and applied to Employer Brand Equity theory.

### **2.1 Brand and Branding concept in Marketing**

Brand consists of different identifiers such as name, sign, symbol, color, or the mixture of all which serve to help consumers distinguish a firm's products or services from their competitors in the market (Keller, 1993; Keller and Kotler 2016). Moreover, a brand sends signals to consumers about the product or service's level of quality (Keller and Kotler, 2006) which delivers signals of trust in the eye of the consumers (Alshathry, 2015). Moreover, a brand provides the customers with a mental structure with organized knowledge and information on the brand and its unique traits so that customers can easily recognize and identify the brand's uniqueness when making purchasing decisions.

A brand is gradually established by strategically linked steps (i.e Marketing communications and PR activities) with consumers rather than by a sole accident (Keller, 2011). These steps are Branding activities. In other words, Branding is the process of "endowing products and services with the power of a brand" (Kotler & Keller, 2015). When operating in a highly competitive market, organizations consider and strategically adopt branding as an immensely powerful tool to differentiate their commercial products and services from the rival products and services (Alshathry, 2015). Successful branding activities can convince consumers that the

brand in fact owns meaningful differences compared to other brands and minimize the consumers' uncertainty worries of their purchasing decisions (Keller and Kotler, 2006).

As a method to measure a brand's success or the efficiency of branding activities, a concept called (Consumer) Brand Equity was built to measure the brand's strength and explain how its success can be directly attributed to the consumers' overall attitudes towards the brand.

## **2.2 Consumer Brand Equity Concept & Knowledge Dimensions**

### **2.2.1 Consumer Brand Equity vs Employer Brand Equity.**

Consumer Brand Equity or Brand Equity comprises a set of various assets and liabilities and is closely associated with the brand identifiers such as name, sign, symbol, color (Aaker, 1991, p.15). Moreover, Brand Equity is considered to be the added value to the selling products or services (Aaker, 1991). Moreover, Brand Equity has either positive or negative impacts on consumers' brand preferences and purchasing decisions of a product and service marketed under the brand (Aaker 1991, 1996) by (a) increasing the chances of consideration of branded products or services among all other unbranded in the market, (b) creating positive impacts of branded product and services, and (c) creating points of differentiation and reasons for consumers to choose the branded products or services over their competitors (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). In other words, Brand Equity is the differentiation factor and has differential effect on consumer response and behavior toward a strongly branded product or service comparing to the unbranded or weekly branded product or service with equal levels of quality and features (Aaker, 1991; Farquhar, 1989; Keller, 1993)

In parallel to the HRM context, Employer Brand Equity (Employer Brand Equity) is referred as a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to an employer in the employment context, and the Employer Brand itself alongside with its name, symbol and other identifiers can be the added value of an organization to that organization's employees (Ewing, Pitt, de Busy and Berthon, 2002, p.14) as per mentioned, Employer Branding concepts and theoretical foundations are rooted from the Brand Equity theory from Marketing literature. Concisely, Employer Brand Equity is referred to as "the intangible asset in the minds of existing and potential employees which has been built up by good marketing and HR practices" (Ambler & Barrow 1996, p.4).

Additionally, Employer Brand Equity is defined to be the outcomes of employment decisions that are attributable to an Employer Brand, these decisions can vary from decisions to apply, accept job offers or remain loyal to the employer (Cable & Turban, 2001; Collins & Stevens, 2002; Collins & Kanar, 2014) – which posited that Employer Brand Equity comprises a set of attributes that can both encourage and discourage potential employees to work for an organization as well as current employees of that organization to remain loyal (Kamel and Albassami, 2015). Thus, the Employer Brand Equity concept is applicable to both prospective employees and current ones of an organization (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004).

Consumer Brand Equity and Employer Brand Equity theories share a similar set of 3 essential aspects shaping value for the brand in an individual's mind. According to Alshathry (2015), these aspects are: (1) How much an individual knows about a particular brand/ Employer Brand, (2) How that individual evaluate that brand/ Employer Brand based on their knowledge, and (3) What experience do they have with that particular brand/ Employer Brand. And over time, actual experiences with the brand/ the employer would result in loyalty to that brand/ that employer.

### **Consumer Brand Equity's Dimensions vs Employer Brand Equity's Dimensions.**

The foundational ground of Consumer Brand Equity is built upon the perceptions of consumers rather than objective factors (Aaker, 1996; Lassar, Mittal and Sharma, 1995). Also, these perceptions are formed by the consumer's knowledge of a brand (Keller, 1993), which means that **Consumer Brand Equity is attributed by Brand Knowledge**. Similarly, the Employer Brand Equity theory's skeleton was built up from a framework called Employer Brand Knowledge, or Employer Knowledge in short which explains the determinants of an Employer Brand equity. The so-called Employer (Brand) Knowledge framework is one of the main guiding constructs for the majority of Employer Brand studies.

To explain the Employer Knowledge framework and the relationship between this concept and the Consumer Brand Knowledge in Marketing, the following sections will discuss the original Brand Knowledge framework of Marketing first and then go on with the corresponding Employer Brand concepts in the HRM context.

### 2.2.2 Consumer Brand Knowledge

Keller (1993) proposed a model of **Brand Knowledge** consisting of two dimensions: Brand Awareness and Brand Image.

**Brand Awareness = Brand Awareness + Brand Image** (Keller, 1993).

Keller (1993)'s model is greatly adapted and supported as many brand equity researchers posited that consumer decision making is "driven by brand image that resides in the memory of individual consumers" (Wyer and Srull, 1989). These memories are stored in the form of nodes which are specific bits of information connected by links with different levels of strength (Anderson, 1983; Wyer and Srull, 1989). Furthermore, these pieces of information and memory of the brand (or the product/ service marketed under the brand) have 2 key dimensions: the node itself, which is called **Brand Awareness**, and the associated feelings and evaluations related to the known information which is also known as **Brand Associations**.

**Brand Awareness** is defined to be the individual's ability to recognize and recall a specific brand from its competitors, and Brand Awareness is the key component forming Brand Equity. Keller (1993) proposed that a positive value of Brand Equity occurs when the consumer is aware of the brand, and this awareness reaches a certain level of favorability, recallability and uniqueness in that consumer's mind. Moreover, Brand Awareness also forms the base of other dimensions of Brand Equity (Aaker, 1991). In fact, Brand Awareness is a prior required condition to building Brand Associations (Alshathry, 2015). As a result, Brand Awareness Generates associations in an individual's mind that can be retrieved when triggering situations occur (Holden, 1993).

In Keller (1993)'s model, after the establishment of awareness, Brand Image relies on Brand Associations and the association's favorability, strength and uniqueness. Similarly, according to Aaker (1991), consumers draw their awareness and associations (which are Generated by their awareness circumstances) with a brand when making purchasing decisions.

**Brand Image = Brand Awareness + Brand Associations** (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993).

Keller (1991, 1996) posited that **Brand Associations** included anything containing meanings that were linked to a brand in an individual's memory. Moreover, Brand Associations can be

formed under different sources (i.e., advertising from brands) (Keller, 1993). These associations have fundamental impacts on consumers' perceptions and behaviors such as brand preference and purchase intentions (Cobb-Walgren, Ruble and Donthu; 1995; del Rio, Vazquez and Iglesias, 2001; O'Cass and Lim, 2002). Hence, Brand Association is also the vital factor influencing an individual's overall attitudes toward a brand (O'Cass and Grace, 2003). To give an in-depth understanding of Brand Associations, Keller (1993) classified the associations into 3 types: (1) Product attributes-related associations, (2) Overall brand attitudes and (3) Benefits related associations.

- **Product attributes** related associations are those distinctively connected to the features of products or services marketed under the brand
- **Overall brand attitudes** are consumers' General evaluations, opinions and feelings that can either be positive or negative toward a brand. Brand attitude can inform and explain customers behaviors (del Rio, Vazquez, and Iglesias, 2001)
- **Brand benefits** represent the perceived value attached to the brand. These benefits can either be functional (which are linked to consumers' basic needs), symbolic (which are associated to non-product attributes like prestige) or experiential (related to the feelings when using a product or service) (Keller, 1993).
- Overall, Brand Association captures a broad array of information related to the brand (Keller, 2003) and their various dimensions of the association concept.
- However, when mapping the associations concept of Marketing to the HRM context, Collins & Kanar (2014) redefined the categories of Brand Associations into 2 types:
  - **Surface associations** are General evaluations. These associations are knowledge and beliefs about a brand that require little cognitive processing and are majorly subjective in nature (Keller, 1993). In fact, surface associations' formation tends to require little cognitive processing (Keller, 1993).
  - **Complex associations** are detailed perceptions of specific attributes related to the brand. The complex ones are often codified knowledge including lots of details and require great cognitive efforts to process and retrieve (Keller, 1993). Although complex associations are also rooted in the consumers' perceptions, they are more objective compared to the surface ones (Keller, 1993).

Nonetheless, at a basic level, brand associations of all types all have impacts on consumers' purchasing intentions by "implying the ability of a brand or its product/ service to fit the consumers' needs" (Keller, 1993; Kirmani and Zeithaml, 1993).

### 2.3 Employer Knowledge Dimensions

Previously mentioned, Employer Knowledge or Employer Brand Knowledge is hypothesized by many studies as the main contribution of Employer Brand Equity. This framework was first introduced by Cable and Turban in the highly influential work "Establishing the dimensions, sources and value of job seekers' employer knowledge during recruitment" (2001) - inspired by the findings of Brand Equity model (Aaker 1991) and Brand Knowledge framework (Keller 1993). With this framework, Employer Knowledge was defined as the memories and associations regarding an employer that influence how potential employees process and react to information about the organization" (Cable & Turban 2001, p. 123).

The Employer Knowledge varies from three extents, including: **(1) Employer Awareness, (2) Employer Reputation, (3) Employer Image.**

These three aspects are linked and altogether create impacts on the Employer Brand Equity as well as the outcomes of Employer Branding activities (Cable and Turban, 2003; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016; Theurer et al., 2018). These three knowledge domains act as the templates for the individuals to "categorize, store, and recall" information about the employers they are considering.

The rationale behind the studying of the Employer Knowledge concept (corresponding to brand knowledge/ organization knowledge in marketing) comes from the assumption that the employee' behaviors toward the employer are dictated by their beliefs about the organization: "how a given person responds to a given employer depends entirely on what that person knows, or thinks that she knows about the organization" (Cable & Turban 2001, p. 117). In the recruitment context, Cable and Turban (2001) argued that the prime source for success or failure of a recruitment activity is the employer's knowledge: whether the applicants are aware of such a job, apply for it, attend an information session, and eventually accept the position or not. Precedingly, the employer's knowledge beliefs are formed by a psychological processing course inside the head of the individual, in which she starts evaluating the message content



based on the cues picked up and meanings interpreted when receiving the information. In turn, understanding the targeted applicants' the information processing scheme and the resulting content of beliefs about them is crucial for employers to design the proper interventions and investments needed to yield the greatest recruitment outcome.

Cable and Turban emphasized a key notion that the jobseekers' beliefs about the employer are not only based on the information they acquired during a certain recruitment activity but are likely to exist prior to that. "People are not blank slates when they begin the recruitment process" (Cable & Turban, p. 157), they already possess the knowledge about the companies before they are attracted and become a potential applicant. Corresponding to this assumption, the thought process of the jobseekers can be considered a complex **feedback loop** where the existing knowledge is the base for evaluation and obtaining new information, and new information is the tool for shaping, re-shaping, or strengthening the knowledge picture of potential employees. This also implies there are several rooms for companies to input actions and influence the jobseekers' beliefs to their favor. Yet before strategic approaches can be taken to affect employer knowledge, companies need to understand the domains that exist for them to identify their current assets – the position they are holding in target applicants' minds. Applying findings from brand equity literature and past recruitment research, Cable and Turban (2001) developed a construct representing three domains of employer knowledge including familiarity/awareness, reputation, and image, whereas the owner of these dimensions is the Employer Brand rather than product or corporate brand. This three-dimensional construct is central to the framework of Employer Brand equity which determines the development of each company's unique Employer Branding practice.

### 2.3.1 Employer Awareness

"Brand awareness" or "brand familiarity" are the two terms used interchangeably by branding scholars to call the first pillar of employer knowledge. In marketing theories, they refer to the ease with which a customer can recall a particular brand, and it is a prerequisite before the individual can have any knowledge about the brand (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Cable & Turban, 2001). Accordingly, theorists studying Employer Brand applied the concept and defined **employer awareness/familiarity** as "the level of awareness that a job seeker has of an organization" (Cable & Turban, 2001, p.124). Employer familiarity is the template job

seekers used to collect and develop memory nodes (i.e. stored bits of information) about the employer (Wyer & Srull, 1989; Cable & Turban, 2001).

Simply put, one cannot recall or have knowledge about an employer, or anything, without even knowing it exists (Cable and Turban, 2001, p.124). Employer familiarity is the precursor for developing employer knowledge, that it activates the information processing cycle in the job seeker's mind. In other words, job seekers have little motivation or intention to process information about employers which they are unaware of. Nevertheless, high familiarity may have a potential downside when negative or incorrect information about the employer exists, that requires the company to pay close attention and investment to strategically manage (Cable & Turban, 2001; Theurer et al., 2018).

In both marketing and human resources literature, scholars labelled four levels of (employer) brand familiarity, ranging from lowest to highest respectively: Unawareness, recognition, recall, and top of the mind awareness (Aaker, 1991; Cable & Turban, 2001).

- **Unawareness** is the least familiar level, in which the job seeker has never heard of the employer and is not aware it exists.
- The **recognition level** is where the person can vaguely recognize the name of the company but cannot recall any further attributes about it or its job.
- A higher stage of familiarity is **recall**. The brand recall means that the job seeker does not only remember the name of the company but can also enclose that name with a little information (regardless of accuracy) about it.
- The most familiar employer possesses **top of the mind awareness**. The job seeker is able to recall and list out several facts about these employers at ease.

### 2.3.2 Employer Reputation

Corporate reputation is Generally referred to as the affective or emotional public evaluation of a company in relation to other competing organizations (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Cable & Turban, 2001, 2003). Following this notion, Cable & Turban (2001, p.127) defined **employer reputation** as “a job seeker's beliefs about the public's affective evaluation of the organization”. It is argued to be influenced by the organization's financial performance, size, media exposure, advertising expenditures, and type of industry it's operating in (Cable & Turban, 2003). Job

seekers' perception of reputation is collected only after they have already achieved a sufficient awareness of the employer, and different to awareness, employer reputation is developed from a stable, affective basis rather than an individual cognitive processing (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016).

Cable and Turban (2001, according to Swait et al., 1993) theorized that an organization's reputation as an employer is an important medium to communicate its competitive position under conditions of imperfect information. Correspondingly, employer reputation is empirically confirmed to be a critical component in employer knowledge as it serve as a mean for potential applicants to validate their personal beliefs through the eyes of General public (e.g. Kilduff, 1990; Jacoby et al., 1992; cited in Cable & Turban, 2001), and job seekers are more likely to apply for jobs at companies with good reputations (e.g. Belt & Paolillo, 1982; Gatewood et al., 1993; cited in Cable & Turban, 2003).

The theoretical motivation behind the significance of employer reputation to potential applicants supposedly stems from individuals' needs to express their self-esteem and be seen with a better social status, which is explained in the Social Identity Theory (Collins & Kanar, 2014). As people tend to believe that others infer attributes about them based on group membership (e.g. company they work for), this thought affects their self-concepts and leads to their desire to pursue a more prestigious employer (Cable & Turban, 2001, 2003). Another frequently studied approach, the Signaling Theory, also resonates with the applicant's reason to apply for companies with positive reputation. It suggests that, because employees have incomplete information about the organization, especially during primitive stages of recruitment, they rely on employer reputation as signals to anticipate the working conditions in the company (Cable & Turban, 2003).

### 2.3.3 Employer Image

In marketing literature, the brand image is regarded as an important concept, referring to the associations, attributes, and perceptions one has connected with a brand in her memory (Aaker, 1996; Biel, 1992; Keller, 1993; cited in Cable & Turban, 2001). In an attempt to understand the components constituting the brand image, Biel (1992, cited in Cable & Turban, 2001) propose three types of elements included in a brand image: image of a **maker**, image of the **product**, and image of *the users*. Upon this principle, Cable and Turban (2001) theorized

a concept of image dedicated to the human resources field, so called ***employer image***. It is then defined as “the content of beliefs held by a job seeker about an employer” (Cable & Turban, 2001, p. 125).

The psychological and job choice literature shows that people evaluate potential employers and select themselves into environments that match their personal values and needs, based on what they learn about these employers and their employing environments (Cable & Turban, 2001). This psychological motivation drives people to pursue a job at a certain company and not the others. Similarly, Van Hoye and Saks (2011) noted that results from earlier research on employer knowledge and recruitment have recognized employer image as a primary determinant of attraction to the job that applicants tend to be drawn to employers with favorable image, or ones whose images match with how the job seekers see themselves.

Parallel to Biel (1992)’s three brand image elements, Cable and Turban (2001) also suggests three components that are presumably significant to applicants: employer information (vav. image of the maker), job information (vav. Image of the product), and people information (vav. Image of the users):

- Employer information is the descriptive details about the employing organization, ranging from the company’s performance characteristics like size, centralization, operation, and geographical distribution to less-objective details including organizational values and culture, or social and environmental concern.
- Job information refers to job seekers’ knowledge about the specific job they are interested in at the company. This includes the actual job content, title, type of work, pay level, and advancement opportunities.
- People information hints the applicants about the type of individuals comprising the organization, who would be their potential colleagues. This information sends a powerful signal about the working environment in the company, and how well this environment fits their own personalities and style.

All this information is received and processed by job seekers and from then on being associated with the employing organization whenever it is being referred to. Therefore, the information pieces which the employer is associated with by the applicants are called “Employer Associations”. They result in feelings about the employer that can be positive or

negative, and later on influence the Employer Image, and consequently Employer Reputation (Cable & Turban, 2001).

### **Employer Brand associations**

Correspondingly, Employer Association or Employer Brand Association is frequently used in external Employer Branding to examine the attributes such as thoughts and evaluations that come into potential employees' mind when referring to an Employer Brand. Consistent to its foundational concept of Brand Association in Marketing, Employer Association are anything meaningful linked to an Employer Brand in an individual's memory and can result from various sources (Collins & Kanar, 2014). To further explain Employer Associations, Collins & Kanar (2014) categorized the Employer Associations into (1) Surface Associations and (2) Complex Associations.

Surface Associations take the form of attitude and overall evaluations of an Employer Brand. In the HRM context, Surface Associations is conceptualized as a company's General attractiveness of an employer and is referred to as the feelings of what it is like to work for that particular organization (Collins & Stevens, 2002; Highhouse et al., 1999). However, keep in mind that surface associations only refer to the General attractiveness, not the full spectrum of organizational attractiveness.

Complex Associations refer to the specific associations about the company as an employer. This type of association includes any perceived characteristics of the employer and the job offer regarding specific elements of what it is like to work in that particular organization. These associations are linked directly to an individual's needs relating to the job (i.e. the work environment) (Collins and Stevens, 2002). These needs can serve functional, symbolic and experiential values similar to the Complex Associations in Consumer Brand Equity concept of Marketing literature (Highhouse, Lievens and Sinar, 2003).

In other words, effective Employer Branding activities ideally generate positive Employer Associations which consequently forms a positive Employer Image and Reputation, and eventually leads to an intention to apply (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Theurer et al. (2018) also suggests that Employer Brand Associations are the building blocks of Employer Value Proposition (EVP), which are moderated by individual motivation, perspectives, and cultural

differences. As EVP is the practical body of the Employer Branding concept, more detailed techniques involved in EVP will be discussed further in a later part of this thesis.

Additionally, as scholars have taken numerous different approaches and addressed the employer image and other knowledge dimensions from multiple angles, making it prone to confusion, it is useful to clearly distinguish them. Cable and Turban (2001, p.127) emphasized two main differences between employer image and employer reputation:

“(1) image **does not** include an affective evaluative component whereas reputation does; and (2) employer reputation is a job seeker's belief about how the organization is evaluated **by others**, while employer image consists of a job seeker's **own beliefs** about the organization.”

Due to this difference, it is possible that a company has a positive reputation from the General public, but has a negative image in mind of a job seeker (e.g. through a bad experience with an inappropriate interviewer during a recruitment process) (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016).

#### a) Influence of employer image on recruitment process

##### Employee's initial attraction

The phase where Employer Branding is most commonly applied in recruitment is during the first touch point of the applicant to the hiring process: “the attraction phase” (Barber, 1998; Cable, Slaughter & Turban, 2014). The rationale behind this comes from the assumption that potential applicants are drawn to the employer's open positions due to the connection or similarity they find themselves shared with the attributes the company exhibited. Backhaus, based on multiple earlier works (e.g. Byrne & Neuman, 1992; Cable & Judge, 1994, 1996; Chatman 1989, 1991; etc. cited in Backhaus, 2004), posed that initial attraction of applicants toward the employer and decisions to apply are driven by the perceived fit of themselves and the company's image.

“The better the match between the values of the firm and the values of the individual, the more likely the individual is to be attracted to the organization” (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p.506; Backhaus, 2004)

This aligns with the assumption that the jobseekers' behaviors toward the recruitment activities, including the intention to apply to a certain organization, are determined by their beliefs/perceptions at time about the values of that organization that is resulted from a logical information processing course (Cable & Turban, 2001; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016).

Yet this psychological information processing of potential applicants can strongly be affected by the company's attempts to communicate its employer image to the (future) employees through branding. The message may convey corporate aspects such as goals, values, achievements; product related associations; and the nature of the employment itself. Depending on their value, purpose, and previous knowledge about the employer, each individual or group of applicants may pick up the content differently, resulting in different comprehension, emotions, and evaluations of fit toward the message. For this reason, it is essential for the employer to define the group of people they want to target, and tailor the communication content on specific key qualities to achieve a higher response rate as well as better applicant quality.

### **Employees' job pursuit intention**

Recruitment is not a single encounter but rather a timely process from the first discovery of the applicants about the job to the final onboarding point. The initial attraction and applicant submission of the job seeker, despite being a precursor for later hiring stages, does not always reliably predict if the individual will follow until the end of the recruitment process and take the offered position. Understanding the pattern in the transience of the applicant's psychological perceptions could contribute significantly to helping employers to manage their branding measures and image effectively.

For example, Cable et al. (2014) empirically studied the effects of site visit on the change of job seekers' employer image perceptions and posed that the information obtained in later stages of recruitment (e.g. in a site visit) may confirm or disconfirm the applicant's initial beliefs about the employer image and the job itself, in turn affect their decisions to follow the recruitment. There are a number of influencing elements during later stages that may significantly change the perception of the individual about the Employer Brand and its suitability, e.g. experience with the recruitment process, feelings about the recruiting staff, new knowledge acquired about the employer in the course of recruitment.

This pattern is also theorized in Cable and Turban (2001)'s employer knowledge framework that job seekers' attraction to the organization is only the first step of the recruitment story. After being attracted to the organization, the applicant still needs to go through a loop of several information processing sessions to evaluate their fit before eventually arriving at a decision to search for a specific open position or accept the job (Cable & Turban, 2001). Lievens and Slaughter (2016) called this process "employee's job pursuit intention", distinct from employee's initial employer attraction.

Cable et al., 2014 argued that the confidence of the applicant on the beliefs they have about the employment, and the gap between previous knowledge and the newly learned image/experience will determine the strength of the shift in job pursuit intention and the corresponding behaviors. The applicants may maintain and even put more effort in showing more qualified aspects of themselves to the employer or withdraw from the application process and turn down the offer, putting the employer's earlier branding and recruitment efforts to waste. Hence, maintaining the interest of potential employees in the company and the position is another important math for recruiters.

#### **b) Perspectives in employer image research**

Upon studying the types of association employees have with organizations' employer image, scholars commonly followed two main paths, including a holistic approach and an elementalistic approach.

##### **Holistic perspective: Organizational attractiveness**

Consistent to Collins and Kanar (2015)'s surface associations, the holistic view on employer image focuses on the general and wholly attractiveness of the employer. Supporters of holistic perspective center on the concept of organizational attractiveness and view employer image as a singular General perception jobseekers have with a brand, rather than a set of attributes being associated with that brand. According to Collins and Stevens (2002), the brand image can be separated into attributes and attitudes. While attributes are more useful for elementalistic perspective, attitudes are defined as "General positive feelings that job seekers hold toward an organization" and frequently adhere to organizational attractiveness (Collins & Stevens, 2002, Lievens & Slaughter, 2016, p.4.6).



Although job seekers' attitudes toward the employer, or the employer's organizational attractiveness, is proved to be a critical contribution to the jobseekers' employer knowledge and their resulting decisions; it can not be broken down to specific mental representations and knowledge structures, making it more difficult to be measured and influenced (Collins & Stevens, 2002, Lievens & Slaughter, 2016).

Furthermore, General attitudes will only be significant for individuals when their awareness level of the employer is low, or during the early recruitment stage when job seekers' initial attraction with companies are being developed. Positive General attitudes toward the organization are useful at this point as the applicant is gathering a set of potential employers that they have good feelings with to put up for consideration. However, as applicants become more familiar with the company's information and start selecting within their consideration set, overall positive attitudes are no longer enough for the differentiation purpose. Job seekers will need to look for more detailed and specific attributes in the employer image that will extend their knowledge about the employer rather than vague positive feelings.

Additionally, Theurer et al. (2018) concluded in their exhaustive literature review that the research on organizational attractiveness only intersected without directly involving the concept of Employer Brand or branding; this implies a less relevant application of the holistic approach and the organizational attractiveness concept in General for further studying and practicing this approach in the Employer Branding context.

### **Elementalistic perspective: Instrumental – Symbolic framework**

More interest and focus have been placed on the elementalistic perspective of the employer image. This approach breaks down the Employer Brand image into a set of attributes that job seekers associate with an organization, which are categorizable into ***instrumental attributes*** and ***symbolic attributes***. The origin of this perspective was again adapted from marketing literature, in which brand image is decomposed into product's functional attributes and symbolic meanings (e.g. Gardner & Levy, 1955; Keller, 1993; Padgett & Allen, 1997; cited in Lievens & Highhouse, 2003).

The brand functional attributes (also referred to as the instrumental attributes) represent the objective, physical and tangible attributes of the product, and correspond to individuals' need to "maximize rewards and minimize punishments" (Katz, 1960; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003,

p.77-79); whereas symbolic attributes are linked to other subjective, intangible, and non-product-related attributes derived from the person's own thoughts and imaginary. Symbolic meanings fulfil customer's need to express themselves and establish their desired self-identity due to people's tendency to assign human traits to brands (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003). Lievens and Highhouse (2003) argued that this symbolic function makes brands more personal to individuals and serves as an important strategic tool to differentiate among brands which are instrumentally similar.

Learning from pre-established findings from research in brand image, Lievens and Highhouse (2003) conceptualized the instrumental-symbolic framework (I/S framework) tailored to the recruitment field. This perspective is similar to Collins and Kanar (2015)'s description of "complex associations". Analogous to the associations of brand image, instrumental attributes of a job portray its objective, concrete, and factual characteristics (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003). They tell the applicants (vav. customers) functional, utilitarian information about the characteristics of the organization and the job itself (e.g. pay, benefits, working hours, location, advancement opportunities), which in turn influence applicants' attraction to the employer (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016; Theurer et al., 2018). Lievens and Highhouse (2003) empirically tested the effects of instrumental attributes on the perceived attractiveness of the employer on a sample of 275 banking students and found that the beliefs of the potential applicants toward instrumental job and organizational attributes are positively related to their perceived employer attractiveness.

In the same manner as product branding, the job's functional attributes alone are not enough to comprise the potential applicant's attraction to the job, but the job seeker also relies on their perceptions about the symbolic meanings that the employer image conveys. The symbolic attributes of an Employer Brand represent the subjective and intangible attributes, or the imaginary and trait inferences, that the job seeker associates with the job/organization (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Slaughter et al. (2001), Lievens and Highhouse (2003) posit and empirically confirmed that job seekers ascribe specific human traits to the organization based on its advertising, social information, products/services, centralization, its employees and customers, and be attracted to that organization if they find a match between those organizational traits and their personal values. Lievens and Highhouse (2003, based on Aaker's 1997) included five elements representing employer image's symbolic attributes: **Sincerity** (i.e. honest), **Excitement** (i.e. daring, trendy, exciting, young),

**Competence** (i.e. secure, intelligent, reliable), **Prestige** (i.e. prestigious, superior), and **Ruggedness** (i.e. tough, strong, robust). Lievens and Highhouse (2003)'s empirical study also showed that symbolic meanings explain the employer attractiveness in addition to instrumental attributes, and the traits associated to them help companies to differentiate from the competitors.

In addition to the frequently applied I/S framework, Lievens and Highhouse (2016) suggested that the elementalistic perspective of the employer image should also include the experiential dimension. The experiential attributes stand for the actual experience gained by job seekers through past recruitment processes and encounters with the employing organization (Lievens & Highhouse, 2016). This type of attributes may have an even more impactful influence on the applicant's employer image as they are actual, personal information that the person experienced herself and therefore is the most trustful and established to her.

The theories set forth by the I/S framework provide valuable implications for the company management in terms of how to identify and manage their employer image strategically for effective recruiting outcomes. According to Lievens and Highhouse (2003), the I/S framework gives practitioners a tool for analyzing their current image as well as benchmarking it with that of the other companies. They argued that a benchmarking method using only the physical, instrumental attributes is too narrow and insufficient to define the competitive position of the employer against other competitors within the same industry, where the job and organizational characteristics are likely to be similar and can easily be replicated by others. Therefore, it is suggested that employers should cover both instrumental attributes and symbolic meaning in the image audit, and the branding message communicated to job seekers to effectively identify their competitive position in the industry and differentiate themselves in potential applicants' perceptions (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003).

#### **2.3.4 Relationship of the Employer Knowledge's dimensions**

Aside from the direct effects each dimension of the employer knowledge placing on the Employer Branding and recruitment activities, it is also believed that the knowledge dimensions have mutual effects on each other; thereby, indirectly moderating the actual branding and hiring outcomes. Cable and Turban (2001) examined the connections between the three employer

knowledge dimensions and conceptualized a model explaining the relationships between these dimensions and their outcomes (see Fig. 1).

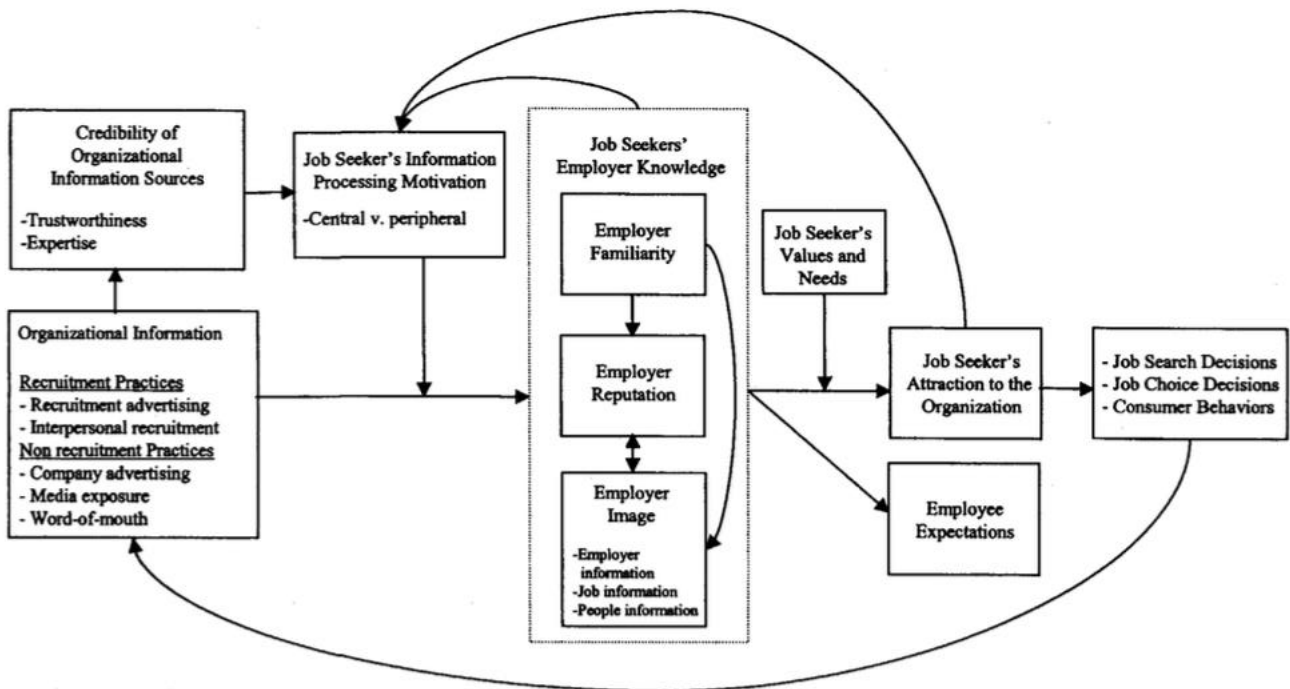


Figure 1 Employer Knowledge and Outcomes (Cable & Turban, 2001)

Employer awareness/familiarity is regarded as the antecedent of employer image and employer reputation. Without a certain extent of familiarity with the job and the company, the job seeker does not have a memory anchor to develop affective beliefs (i.e. reputation) and contents of beliefs (i.e. image) about the employer (Cable & Turban, 2001).

Cable and Turban (2001) proposed that employer familiarity affects the image a job seeker has about that company in terms of its legitimacy (i.e. the assumption that the company's actions are desirable, proper, or appropriate). This means that when a company is mostly unknown to an applicant, her level of trust with it will go down because she cannot assume the basic conditions of the employment will be met with that company. In contrast, when the company name sounds familiar, the job seekers will often take the default assumptions that the employer is legit, that it will continue to exist in the future and offers the bottom-line employment benefits consistent with others (Cable & Turban, 2001). Following the same principles, Cable and Turban (2001) argued that when a company is known to the job seeker, she is more likely to view it as socially appropriate, thereby, assuming that others in the society also have a positive

evaluation of it. In other words, employer familiarity is assumed to be positively related to employer reputation.

Lastly, Cable and Turban (2001) proposed a two-way influence between employer reputation and employer image. They believed that employer image affects employer reputation directly through certain image attributes. An example is when an employer is believed to pay a good salary and is socially responsible, potential applicants are likely to believe it also possesses a public reputation, and vice versa. On the other hand, job seekers also tend to look at an organization's reputation to make inferences about its functional attributes and traits. For example, there are numerous limitations for applicants to learn about the company before getting on-board, which means they will have to look at other signals to anticipate the job conditions (Cable & Turban, 2001). Due to this difficulty, the job seeker will need to rely on their perceptions about the public's view of the company to expect its actual employment attributes.

### 3 Sources of Employer Brand Knowledge

#### 3.1 Types of information sources

As stated by Cable & Turban (2001), any information source possesses a potential to impact job seekers' employer knowledge and thus their behaviors afterwards. To easier identify which type of source is more efficient for employers in the recruitment context, in their article "Establishing the dimensions, sources and value of job seekers' employer knowledge during recruitment", Cable & Turban (2001) defined 2 dimensions of information sources: (1) The external – internal dimension, and (2) The experiential – informational dimension. The detailed concepts of these 2 concepts will be discussed in the later parts. In this section, we will focus on categorizing different organizational information sources.

In short, the external sources are the independent sources that are not navigated or manipulated by the organization and are not regarded as self-presentation of that organization. Conversely, internal sources are those presented by the organization itself. (Cable & Turban, 2001). This dimension shares a similarity to Lievens & Slaughter (2016)'s concept of Organizational and Non-organizational information sources. To be specific, organizational sources are those coming from the organizations themselves – which are similar to internal sources definition of Cable & Turban (2001). Likewise, non-organizational sources are considered to be an external source in Cable & Turban (2001)'s definition.

The most popular internal sources are (1) Recruiters, (2) Recruitment advertisements such as job ads, career fairs and company's information sessions, and (3) Company web pages & social media accounts. Interestingly, most of the Fortune 500 firms have recruitment information on the web pages (Lievens & Harris, 2003).

On the other hand, a major external source is word of mouth. Word of mouth (WOM) is an interpersonal communication about an organization as an employer and is independent of the organization's recruitment activities (Van Hove & Lievens, 2009). This definition further implies that WOM is an external source as in Cable & Turban (2001). Moreover, the definition of WOM highlights its three characteristics: Firstly, word-of-mouth is a social phenomenon occurring between people in an informal manner (Cable et al., 2000). Secondly, WOM represents a type of informational social influence. Informational social influence refers to accepting information

provided by other people as evidence. This type of social influence is motivated by an individual's desire to copy one's environment (Van Hoyer, 2013). Lastly, word-of-mouth is an organization-independent source (Cable & Turban, 2001) that is generated by people who are perceived to have no purpose of promoting the organization as an employer (Buttle, 1998; cited in Van Hoyer, 2013). Therefore, information from recruiters and those who engage in recruitment promoting activities are not considered as word-of-mouth. Since WOM is a company-independent source, it is very likely to contain both positive and negative information (Van Hoyer & Lievens, 2007). Thus, word-of-mouth should be carefully observed and taken in consideration when measuring the effectiveness of Employer Branding activities (Collins & Steven, 2002). Moreover, in the reality, social actors (e.g. family, friends, acquaintances, or people that are perceived as current employees at the organization) often play the consultant roles to job seekers about the potential jobs or employers (Wanberg, Kanfer & Banas, 2000; cited by Van Hoyer & Lievens, 2009). Therefore, word-of-mouth is likely to have a significant impact on job seekers' perceptions and behaviors due to its easier accessibility in the memory and its diagnostic nature (Herr, Kardes & Kim, 1991; cited by Van Hoyer & Lievens, 2009). Lastly, word-of-mouth is divided into 2 umbrella categories:

- (1) WOM from people having mutual relationships/ connections with the job seekers. For example: family, friends, job counsellor or university personnel.
- (2) Another type of WOM is the digital job bulletin board, or also known as an online job board. Online job boards are unofficial, non-company-sponsored information exchange sites about potential jobs and employers, on which current and former employees can post about their experience of what it is like to work in that organization. Studies suggest that current and former employees' experience shared through word-of-mouth is a superior factor affecting the applicants' perception about the employer knowledge, as it is believed to convey more realistic and credible information about the company and the job (Edwards, 2010; Jawahar & Saini, 2019). Employees are well equipped and more willing to share their actual employment experience through online platforms and forums, whose highly contagious nature requires employers to look at it seriously and put efforts in nurturing it (Jawahar & Saini, 2019). Moreover, on these online job boards, job seekers can also post questions asking for an insider point of view (Lievens & Harris, 2003; cited by Cable & Yu, 2006). The most popular online job boards currently are Glassdoor.com, Indeed.com, and LinkedIn.com.

Apart from word-of-mouth, another dominant external source of information about employers is media exposure. The media refers to mass media such as news articles, brand commercials, TV & radio news about the organizations. One of the most impactful sources in the media exposure genre is the third-party employer rankings, such as Glassdoor's "Best Place to Work", Forbes' "Best Employers", or Universum's "Most Attractive Employers", etc. Researchers argued that employer rankings send significant signals to job seekers that high-ranked companies are more preferred over others. Although it is not possible for organizations to directly affect the results of the rankings, these reports act as a useful way to measure their current propositions as an employer. According to Slaughter et al. (2014), a certain amount of exposure to the organization's media would have a great impact on an individual's perception of that organization in terms of trustworthy image as an employer. However, for large organizations, a certain extent of media exposure would eventually result in worsened reputation for the organizations (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990).

### **3.2 How job seekers process information from different types of source**

As discussed previously, information about the employer needs to be obtained in order to develop Employer Knowledge's dimensions and Employer Knowledge is formed under a course of psychological processing (Cable & Turban, 2001). However, job seekers are not passive recipients of information (Cable & Turban, 2001). In fact, people are generally skeptical of claims and "facts" presented by organizations and most often assign different meanings to the information (Ford, Smith & Swasy, 1990). Therefore, it is important for organizations to understand their potential employee's information processing schemes as it is the prime factor deciding the successfulness of recruitment activities. Moreover, in order to understand and correctly measure the effectiveness of recruitment interventions, employers are required to properly understand how job seekers process information from different sources (Barber, 1998; Rynes, 1991; Rynes & Barber, 1990).

In 1986, Petty & Cacioppo developed the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) suggesting that all individuals process information through 2 routes: (1) Central processing route and (2) Peripheral processing route. The ELM model by Petty & Cacioppo is the most adapted model of information processing and attitude change nowadays (Cable & Turban, 2001).



- (1) According to the ELM model, the Central route requires efforts and resources spent in order to pursue and carefully examine the information quality (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The example of an information source that requires central processing is information sessions and job interviews.
- (2) In contrast, with Peripheral route, information is processed using simple informative cues that are parts of the communicating message, thus does not require scrutiny to obtain and the quality of information is not majorly considered (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989).

The core difference between Central and Peripheral route is similar to distinction between “deep vs. shallow processing”, “controlled vs. automatic processing”, “thoughtful vs. mindless processing” and systematic vs. heuristic processing” – which were constructed by other information processing scholars (Petty et al., 1981, p.268). With central processing, the information has a higher likelihood to result in changes and enhancements in associations and beliefs as they require more active cognitive involvement (Cable & Turban, 2001). Moreover, knowledge resulting from central processing schemes lasts in the memory longer than those resulting from peripheral processing (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Therefore, the information’s impact on Employer Knowledge is determined by whether the information is obtained via central or peripheral processing route (Cable & Turban, 2001). In addition, Petty & Cacioppo (1986) proposed that the route of information processing is determined by each individual’s ability and motivation when processing that piece of information. In other words: if the person does not carefully consider the quality of receiving information, that piece of information will be processed via a peripheral route and consequently result in less impact on that person’s Employer Knowledge.

Moreover, from the Employer Brand Equity perspective, job seekers already acquired some extent of knowledge about the employers before they become the potential employees (Cable & Turban, 2001). Similarly, Barber (1998) proposed that “people are not blank slates” for recruiters to start writing any information upon. As a result, the preexisting Employer Knowledge will inevitably affect how job seekers interpret, process, and respond to the recruitment interventions (Cable & Turban, 2001). Therefore, when researching the impacts of information sources on information processing schemes and consequently impacts on Employer Knowledge, it is important to extend the observation scope beyond recruitment practices (Cable & Turban, 2001). In addition to recruitment materials & touchpoints, sources

can vary greatly from the brand's advertisement to friends' word of mouth or word of mouth on social media platforms (Cable et al., 2000). The information sources can also extend to the company's commercial products and services and the media exposure (Cable & Turban, 2001). To sum up, any source with information about or relating to the organization has the potential to impact job seekers' Employer Knowledge (Cable & Turner, 2001).

Furthermore, one of the employer's goals is to influence the potential employee's Employer Knowledge. In other words, the initial steps determining recruitment success is raising awareness from the job seekers and thus building certain beliefs about the organizations (Cable & Turban, 2001). Naturally, in order to have a belief built or changed, job seekers need to process certain information. As a result, it is necessary to understand how job seekers become motivated to process information about an employer and how different information sources impact different levels of information processing motivation (Cable & Turner, 2001).

With this perspective, the following sections will focus on (1) Job seeker's information processing motivations and (2) The characteristics of information sources and their impacts on the overall information processing.

### **3.3 Job seekers' motivation to process information from different types of source**

Theoretically, job seekers are only motivated to engage in central processing when it brings back a certain level of valuable benefits and the costs of effort required to perform central processing do not outweigh the associated benefits (Cable & Turner, 2001). To further explain people's motivation to engage in a certain route when processing information, Cable & Turner (2001) developed a theoretical model of Recruitment Equity. This model reflects the correlations among different variables impacting the potential employee's intention, behavior decision making in terms of job search and job acceptance.

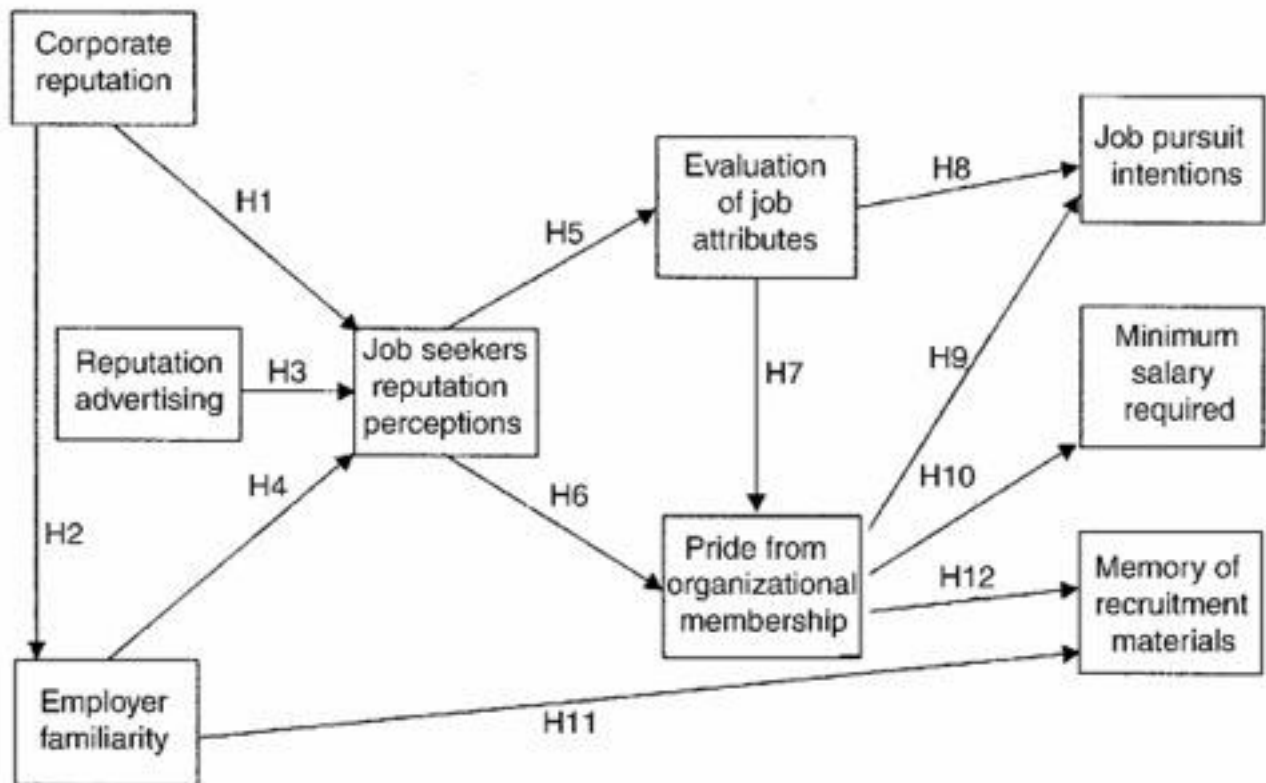


Figure 2 Theoretical Model of Job Seekers' Reputation Perceptions (Cable & Turban, 2003)

In the Recruitment Equity Model, there are three contextual variables influencing the job seekers' motivation to adopt a central processing route:

- Credibility of the information source.
- The pre-existing Employer Knowledge.
- The job seeker's level of attraction to that employer.

### 3.3.1 Credibility of the information source.

It is established that to job seekers, they are more focused on collecting information about how it would be like to work at the target organizations, thus theoretically, job seekers are interested in obtaining information from credible sources.

Source credibility is factored by the expertise and the trustworthiness of the source (Ilgen, Fisher & Taylor, 1979; Petty & Cacippo, 1981; Tuppen, 1974).

Expertise, in recruitment context, refers to the extent of information usefulness to the job seekers during job search. The higher relevant level reflects the greater expertise level of that information source. A prime example of a source with high expertise level is the company information session (Cable & Turban, 2001).

Trustworthiness, on the other hand, refers to the sources that provide job seekers with accurate, truthful information. In empirical research, it is suggested that sources that provide one-sided information are usually regarded as less trustworthy than other sources of information. For example, in general, recruiters are expected to only provide positive information about the jobs and their organizations, thus considered to be a source provide low trustworthiness (Cable & Turban, 2001; Fisher et al., 1979).

In general, sources with high levels of expertise and trustworthiness are altogether considered as credible sources and job seekers would more likely adopt a central route when processing information obtained from these sources (Cable & Turban, 2001). To further explain the credibility of information sources, Cable & Turban (2001) took into consideration the characteristics of different information sources and developed 2 conceptual dimensions of information sources that structure the expertise level and the trustworthiness of a source. They are:

- Internal vs. External sources.
- Experiential vs. Informational sources.

These 2 dimensions reflect and determine the extent of information sources' credibility and influence on the job seeker's Employer Knowledge (Cable & Turban, 2001).

### **Internal vs. External sources**

Precedingly, it is established that the Employer Knowledge is gained via various mixtures of sources. For example, some knowledge sources from recruitment interventions whereas other knowledge can be obtained via non-recruitment channels like commercial brand advertisement, media exposure and word of mouth of friends and family. Therefore, it is necessary to differentiate the information considered to be "self-presentation" of organization that is specified to job seekers and information available to the general public (Cable & Turban, 2001). According to Cable & Turban (2001), the self-presentation information tailored for the

job seekers are called internal information and those broadly available to the public are considered external.

Furthermore, Cable & Turban (2001) posited those internal sources are generally considered as less trustworthy as it is widely acknowledged that organizations have regular tendency to manage and narrate the image and impressions that public audiences and job seekers have of them (Cable et al, 2000; Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Ferris & Judge, 1991; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990). In example, recruiters are considered as a source with low trust level as recruiters are usually regarded as “job sellers” (Fisher et al., 1979). According to Cable & Turban (2001), this is consistent with the concept of consumers’ skepticism toward advertising claims in Marketing literature. However, when an internal source presents a message with the balance of positive and negative information, the internal source can be regarded as trustworthy (Cable & Turban, 2001).

On the other hand, while internal sources are considered to be less trustworthy than external sources, internal sources have far greater edges in terms of expertise compared to external ones. In other words, current employees are presumably considered to be a more important source of information about the organizations in comparison to the outsiders (Fisher et al., 1979). In fact, the information obtained from internal sources like recruitment brochures or reviews from current employees of the organization has stronger impacts on the beliefs relating to the organization’s culture while external sources like random word of mouth from people directly linked to the organization have inconsiderable effects (Cable et al., 2000).

To sum up, it is proposed by Cable & Turban (2001) that internal sources are considered to possess greater expertise level than external sources and thus are more likely to engage central information processing than external sources. As a result, internal sources have a more significant impact on job seekers’ Employer Knowledge in comparison to external sources.

### **Experiential vs. Informational sources**

The experiential-informational continuum represents the differences as between information obtained by personal experiencing some aspects of the organization (e.g. using the company’s product or joining an information session) and information sources from reading or learning from other information sources throughout media exposure like company’s annual report,

recruitment brochure or word-of-mouth on job sites (Cable & Turban, 2001). In other words, the experiential sources utilize personal experience to deduct interpretations about the organizations whereas information obtained via reading using “pre-processed” information that has been interpreted by other people.

This dimension reflects the extent of job seeker’s willingness to centrally process the received information from each source. In fact, information obtained from personal experiences are more meaningful and relevant to job seekers and consequently more salient to job seekers’ minds (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Therefore, experiential sources’ information is more likely to be processed via central route than informational sources as they are considered to be more credible. As a result, experiential sources provide information that has greater impact on job seeker’s Employer Knowledge than the informational sources (Cable & Turban, 2001).

### **3.3.2 The pre-existing Employer Knowledge**

Whether which route the information is processed via, the motivation to process information is either way impacted by the pre-existing Employer. In the Recruitment Equity model by Cable & Turban (2001), there is a feedback between Employer Knowledge and its dimensions and the Information Processing Motivation. In fact, for job seekers to process any information about the employer, it is necessary that the job seekers must be aware of the employer’s existence thus begin to develop a certain level of associations about the employer’s reputation and image. In other words, in order to gain motivation to process the information, awareness alongside a certain level of interest from job seekers is needed. As the job seekers gain more knowledge of the employer, they will eventually become more selective of different information sources and consequently, less information is centrally processed as opposed to when they have little knowledge of the employer. Moreover, when there is the pre-existing employer knowledge, information from external sources would be less centrally processed as opposed to information from internal sources. Specifically, once a proper knowledge level of the employer has been developed, job seekers will be less likely to consider external sources as useful as internal sources and hence less motivation to centrally process information from external sources (Cable & Turban, 2001).

### **3.3.3 The job seeker's level of attraction to that employer.**

As mentioned in the previous section, in order to develop motivation to process information about an employer, the job seeker must have a certain level of interest in that particular employer. Thus, the employer must match the job seeker's set of considerations to be considered as one of the employment options (Power & Aldag, 1985). When the employer fails to meet any attributional standard in the consideration set, the job seeker will subconsciously develop no motivation to actively process any information about that employer (Cable & Turban, 2001).

#### **4 Mechanism behind job seekers' organizational attraction**

Given the competitive nature of the labor market, it is beneficial for employers to have a profound level of understanding of the mechanism behind how job seekers react and be attracted to the recruitment activities as well as the Employer Brands themselves (Celani & Singh, 2011). Over the last decades, studies have been conducted to construct various hierarchical, multi-level concepts of organizational activities (Kozlowski and Klein, 2002; cited by Celani & Singh, 2011) to further understand the corresponding multi-level issues in recruitment and job seekers' selection. In all studies, Signaling Theory is one of the most adopted ones in the recruitment literature when studying the various predictors of job seekers' organizational attraction (Saini & Jawahar, 2019). According to Ehrhart and Ziegert (2005), the Signaling Theory offers the capacity to explain the impact of different factors that are likely to act as predictors for job seekers' organizational attraction.

By definition, Signaling Theory, first introduced in by Spence (1973), proposes that two parties can solve the problem of asymmetric information by having one party send a signal that would reveal some piece of relevant information to the other party (Spence, 1973). This theory mainly focuses on the deliberate communication of information (signal sending) regarding an entity by a sender (signaler) to a receiver. In the HRM context, the signals are desired organizational information which is lacking from the receiver (job seekers)'s knowledge. The signal sources' credibility and receiver's interpretation of signals determine the effectiveness of said signals. To further facilitate the efficiency of the signaling process, receivers can send back countersignals to the signalers. It is established that the receivers desire information from and about signalers, but signalers also desire information about the receivers as it informs them which signals are most efficient, reliable, and how receivers interpret the signals. This definition exhibits the crucial role of Signaling Theory in Employer Branding (Saini & Jawahar, 2011).

According to Celani and Singh (2011), during the early stages of the recruitment process, job seekers are likely to receive signals from different sources. In "Signaling theory and applicant attraction outcomes" article, Celani and Singh (2011) conceptualized the signals into two levels: individual-level and organizational-level. The individual-level signals involve those received through experiences during recruitment activities and word-of-mouth endorsement. On the contrary, the organizational-level signals are organization's advertising, either it is commercial advertising or recruitment advertising (Celani & Singh, 2011). Both types can impose influence on individual-level outcomes such as applicant's job pursuit intention, job



acceptance intentions and organizational attraction. In addition, the signals can also impact on organizational-level outcomes such as applicant pool's quantity and quality. Thus, the organizational-level outcomes can be further operationalized to result in the individual-level outcomes (Celani & Singh, 2011). This means that the higher the quantity and quality level of employers' applicant pool, the stronger the applicant's organizational attraction and intention to work at that organization.

When explaining the signaling theory in the recruitment, under the perspective of job seekers, Rynes (1991) posited that when information about the characteristics of an organization is absent, job seekers will form impressions and associations based on the signals conveyed from their experiences during recruitment episodes. Many studies have demonstrated that, beside recruitment activities and recruitment information (Collins & Steven, 2002; Cable & Turban, 2003), signals of employer's characteristics are also interpreted from recruiters' personal characteristics and behaviors (Rynes, 1991; Turban et al., 1998). This finding is consistent with Chapman et al. (2005)'s meta-analysis in "Applicant Attraction to Organizations and Job Choice: A Meta-Analytic Review of the Correlates of Recruiting Outcomes" that recruiter behaviors are correlative with job seekers' job pursuit and acceptance intention as well as their organizational attraction. Thus, recruiters' behavior is also regarded as a signal of organizational characteristics (Celani & Singh, 2011).

Additionally, during the recruitment process, job seekers also consider the employer reputation aspect. Nowadays, the employer reputation is likely operationalized into a form of third-party employer rankings and are regarded as important signals to job seekers (Cable & Turban, 2003). Most of the time, these rankings are based on surveys' responses to questions about various employers from former, current, and potential employees, which reflect the employers' organizational attractiveness. This finding indicates that the favorableness of the online word-of-mouth can act as leverage factors to employers' chances to be featured in such rankings. Therefore, these types of employer ranking in fact reflect the employers' performance in terms of the employers' offers to the employees. This means that the former and current employees will impact the individual-level signal of organizational characteristics (Saini & Jawahar, 2019). In fact, employer rankings are regarded as important signals of an employer's quality and characteristics sent to the job seekers as higher ranked employers are more likely to be preferred over those lower ranked ones (Dineen & Allen, 2016; Love & Singh, 2011). Therefore, according to Love & Singh (2011), the surveys of employer ranking are in fact new forms of

Employer Branding. Additionally, many other researchers have proven that positive employer reputation and employer image have significant impact on the size and quality of applicant pool as well as the job seeker's decision making (e.g. job applying and job acceptance decisions).

## 5 Outcomes of Employer Brand equity in the recruitment context

### 5.1 Outcomes

#### 5.1.1 Job seekers' attraction

One of the most important and frequently suggested outcomes of Employer Brand Equity and Employer Branding activities is employer attraction. According to Gardner, Erhardt and Martin-Rios (2011), strong, positive employment knowledge results in increased attention to the employer, better comprehension and remembering about employment information, and higher willingness to listen to employer's message by both passive and active job seekers. Likewise, positive knowledge is believed to increase the positive interpretation and evaluation about the Employer Brand (Gardner et al., 2011), and therefore, showcase the organization to be more appealing in potential applicants' minds.

Each dimension of employer knowledge has its own contribution to the overall effects of drawing job seekers' attraction to the company. When inspecting the influence of employer familiarity on employer attraction, Cable and Turban (2001), Cable and Yu (2012) argued that familiarity of an employer has no direct impact on the individual's attraction to the company but influences the attraction indirectly through employer image and reputation. As mentioned in earlier parts of the theoretical review, this is because familiarity is the precursor to employment image and reputation: no one can be attracted and motivated to find more information about an employer they did not know existed.

Employer reputation, on the other hand, has a direct influence on employer's attraction: "employers with better reputations will be more attractive to job seekers" (Cable & Turban, 2001, p. 143). Cable and Turban (2001), Collins and Hans (2004) proposed that people's organizational membership plays an important part in their personal concept, through which they can express their values and increase or maintain their self-esteem. Therefore, employers with positive reputations give its employees a desirable social identity reflected from the organization's social position, whereas companies with several negative associations put its people in embarrassment and discomfort, resulting in a loose attachment and reduced interests

among job seekers. This explanation has been backed up by several empirical studies (as mentioned in Cable & Turban, 2001 and Cable & Yu, 2012).

Cable and Turban (2001) also suggested that job seekers' beliefs in an employer's image have an influence on their attraction to the organization, based on the fit between that employer image and their personal values. Lievens and Highhouse (2003) agreed to this thought and further argued that symbolic, intangible elements of the employer image have a key role, over and above tangible actual job attributes, in creating the initial attraction of the right candidates to the right companies. In concrete, the content of employer image, especially symbolic inferences, has a direct link to the job seekers' attraction outcomes. Depending on the suitability between the company's portrayed image and its target audience, it may lead to better attraction of better-matched potential applicants and motivate them to research further about the employment.

### **5.1.2 Job seekers' application and job choice decisions**

The initial attraction to the job is only the preliminary condition to the actual recruitment process. Once the attraction to the employer is established, the job seeker has a motivation to further research about the company and later decide if they wish to submit an application and pursue the position (Cable & Turban, 2001). During this information development stage, the Employer Brand equity and knowledge serve an important purpose to shape the job seekers' behaviors toward the company communication efforts and differentiate an employer from the others.

First, the employer knowledge acts as both antecedent and participating factor that critically influence potential applicants' decision-making process. When a job seeker learns about and develops an interest in a company, she is driven to search for more information about that company and the position. If the newly gained information fits her values and aligns with the existing beliefs, she is motivated to acquire more knowledge about this employer. This flow goes back and forth, forming a feedback loop that determines the job seeker's final decision if she will apply and get onboard if the job is offered (Cable & Turban, 2001). Therefore, it is logical to assume that a strong, well-fit Employer Brand Equity likely anticipates a favorable job seekers' perception and job pursuit decision during the recruitment process. Empirical tests have also shown that positive Employer Brands increase the quantity and quality of applicants

that the company can attract (Collins & Stevens, 2002; Cable & Turban, 2003; Cable & Yu, 2012) through Employer Branding efforts (Collins & Hans, 2004).

Second, the Employer Brand impacts the recruitment success by differentiating the company among other employers in the market. Lievens (2007) argued that job seekers rely on Employer Brand image attributes to consider between prospective employers. Additionally, findings suggested that the symbolic image has a significant differentiation effect over traditional job characteristics (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Cable & Yu, 2012). Especially when the competing employers belong to the same industry with similar instrumental employment conditions, employer symbolic image attributes will impose a stronger influence to differentiate the company compared to instrumental attributes (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003).

### **5.1.3 Employer loyalty and word-of-mouth effect**

Analogous to brand loyalty where customers are attached to a brand and less likely to switch to another one (Aaker 1991), Employer Brand loyalty or employer loyalty shows the commitment of employees to their current organizations. Employer Branding techniques are practiced internally to influence organizational culture and organizational identity, and thereby affect Employer Brand loyalty. Employer Branding efforts are spent to create a culture that reinforces desired work behaviors and supports individual quality of work life, while strengthening the identification of employees with organization, which in turn, increases employees' positive attitude about the employer, organizational commitment and productivity (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004).

An important outcome of Employer Brand loyalty in the recruitment context is the word-of-mouth (WOM) effect. Spreading word-of-mouth is a common behavior of current and former employees that they share both internally among themselves and externally to outsiders about their experience working in the organization. Employees' satisfaction and their loyalty largely determine whether they will endorse and recommend the company as an employer of choice or not. Although not frequently examined in early Employer Branding literatures, WOM is gaining significant interests recently as it is believed to strongly influence Employer Brand and being a preferred source over organizational information (Collins & Stevens, 2002; Van Hove & Lievens, 2005; 2007). It is suggested that positive WOM or employee endorsements is linked with positive organizational attractiveness, whereas negative WOM decreases the effect of

recruitment advertising, and the effects of negative words are stronger than positive testimonies (Van Hove & Lievens, 2007).

The content of WOM, whether positive or negative, is largely based on the actual employees' experience and the consistency between employees' expectations before getting onboard vis-à-vis the employment reality. Researchers have examined the situation when there is a gap between employer's promise and what they actually give (e.g. Edwards 2010; Theurer et al. 2018; Jawahar & Saini 2019) and associate it with the breach of "psychological contract" (i.e. "the subjective beliefs regarding an exchange agreement between an individual..., the employing firm and its agents" (Rousseau 1989)). The psychological contract breach results in negative employee's attitudes, turnover, and unfavorable word-of-mouth when they are working or even after they have left the organization (Jawahar & Saini 2019). As employees' testimonies are increasingly perceived as a more credible source of information about the company and is easier to access than ever thanks to social networks, negative WOM may be detrimental to the Employer Brand and scares away a number of high-quality job seekers.

The effects caused by WOM presented above emphasizes the needs for employers to manage their brand promises and actions both internally and externally. The consistency between the employer image portrayed to the applicants during the recruitment process and the actual job conditions should be assured if the employing organization wants high employer loyalty and a sustainable Employer Brand equity (Backhaus, 2016; Behrends et al., 2018). As a remark for recruitment and human resource managers, Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) advised that the employer image communicated through Employer Branding should be sufficient and accurate, reflecting the job realistically, and representing the organizational culture. An accurate and realistic promise about the job gives applicants more precise expectations, while a true preview of organization culture helps job seekers to make valid decisions related to their perceived fit with the employer. Failure in maintaining these conditions throughout the branding activities could lead to psychological contract breach and its subsequently low Employer Brand loyalty.

## 5.2 Factors affecting the outcomes

### 5.2.1 Organizational Factors

Although scholars communally agreed that Employer Brand results in several key recruitment outcomes and plays a big part in recruitment success, they also believed there is no set of best Employer Branding practices due to the distinctiveness of each employer and the individual uniqueness of each job seeker. This implies that company “must understand job seekers’ existing knowledge structures” or understand “their existing position in the minds of their target market”, before deciding which kind of Employer Branding and recruitment would return the highest value (Cable & Turban, 2001, p.157; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Employer Branding and recruitment literature have suggested that the knowledge structures of applicants are influenced by different organizational and job seekers’ characteristics, which are discussed below under two groups of moderating factors: organizational factors, and individual factors.

#### **Current Employer Brand position**

First, the type of company has an important impact on the outcome of the Employer Brand. The Employer Brand of a long-established, market leading organization would create a different impression compared to that of a start-up (Cable & Turban, 2001; Tasmajan, Strobel & Welpel, 2011). The company’s native industry and geographical location also determine which kind of Employer Branding investments should be focused on. According to Theurer et al. (2018), the competitiveness of the industry decides the importance of Employer Brand equity and the effectiveness of branding efforts. For example, Employer Branding is more critical in high value – added, knowledge – intensive service businesses like consulting or banking industries, where professional skills and development are essential and talent is scarce vs. large-scale manufacturing companies, where individual differences are less relevant (Theurer et al., 2018).

Another factor needed to be carefully managed in Employer Branding activity is the current Employer Brand knowledge position. For example, Cable and Turban (2001) posited that the issues faced by a small, mostly unfamiliar company is completely different to the problem encountered by a large company with a negative image. These differences require distinctive employer strategies: if the former needs to advertise its brand actively to raise awareness, the

latter is advised to keep its profile low while putting persistent efforts in improving its image attributes (Cable & Turban, 2001). These shed light to a common practice of managing employer value proposition, in which a company evaluates its current position, the market situation, as well as other supporting factors, to customize a suitable Employer Branding strategy fit best to its circumstance.

### **Recruitment phase**

In terms of the recruitment process itself, scholars believed that the Employer Brand effects are also influenced by the current recruitment phase. According to Lievens and Slaughter (2016), the Employer Brand equity and additional knowledge acquired will have different value to job seekers depending on the stage of the recruitment: first attraction, applicant status maintenance, or offer acceptance. For instance, organizational image is found to be especially important in keeping the applicant status along the recruitment, but less significant in final job accepting decisions (Uggerslev et al., 2012; Walker & Hinojosa 2013; cited in Lievens & Slaughter, 2016).

### **5.2.2 Job seekers' factors**

Unlike organizational factors, the factors originated from job seekers' individual characteristics are mostly uncontrollable and cannot be influenced by companies. However, understanding these factors is necessary for them to correctly target the suitable candidates and make the right Employer Branding investments to attract and hire these people.

### **Cultural and regional factor**

As globalization has become the norm of the new century, more and more companies, not limited by sizes, have strived to expand their operations worldwide, which naturally also expands their needs to attract and hire workers from different national backgrounds. Due to this, companies are required to deal with different perspectives and behaviors governed by individuals' cultural and regional characteristics.

Scholars suggested that employer image associations and their recruitment cycle outcomes might be affected by cultural values (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Such proposition has been



confirmed by cross-culture studies among applicants from multiple countries across Europe, Asia-Pacific, the US, which showed that people from different countries value specific instrumental attributes (e.g. work-life comfort, task attractiveness, payment, need for achievement and power) differently (Caligiuri et al., 2010), and the cross – cultural traits and symbolic national values are significant moderators for job seekers' employer attraction (Caligiuri et al., 2010; Froese et al., 2010).

Nevertheless, Lievens and Slaughter (2016) argued that some of the differences found in Employer Branding surveys might not be explained by the country's cultural traits, but the current national or regional "economic, educational, social, and political situations". The blend of these two variables challenged the ability to precisely assess the weight of each factor in a long-term analysis. Yet, when simply analyzed to examine the behaviors of people in different countries/regions for practical purposes rather than explaining the cause for those behaviors, national factors can still be a useful parameter for designing locally tailored Employer Branding strategies or deciding if a global branding practice is feasible.

### **Generation**

Another factor that should be taken into account when analyzing the Employer Branding target is generational group factors. As discussed in an earlier part of the thesis paper, generation gaps are believed to exist and dimly separate the world population into groups of individuals with shared features. These features distinguish each generation from the others in several contexts, from their lifestyles to behaviors in working environments (Rudolph, Rauvola and Zacher, 2017; Statnické, 2019). The uniqueness of the generations makes a noticeable factor influencing individuals' needs and values and how they see Employer Brands.

The newest observable generation of workers – generation Z supposedly possess several characteristics that might be critical to employers: their diversity in world view, gender acceptance, family and education backgrounds, and information seeking and processing. Guided by their desires for building self-esteem, financial independence and job security, it can be assumed that the instrumental attributes highly sought-after by these job seekers are clear career paths, good income, and secured positions (Robert Half, 2015; Iorgulescu, 2016). Studies also proposed that this generation have high expectations toward work ethics, and social and environmental responsibilities, which implied that those values should be found in Employer Brands as basic conditions for employee attraction (Deloitte & NEW, 2019). Other

equally important points to consider in building a preferable brand targeting Gen Z include, but not limited to honoring diversity, transparency, and innovation.

What challenged the Employer Branding process targeting Gen Z is not only their complicated expectations that vary from individual to individual, but also the habit of acquiring and processing information. Recent literature frequently emphasized on how Gen Z's extremely short attention span and the multi-sourcing, non-centralized information processing behavior of this generation can affect the content and branding methods of employers (Behrer et al., 2016; EY, 2020). Gen Z's companionship with the internet and social media has fundamentally changed the way companies execute their employment branding activities in both good and bad ways. On a positive side, the internet makes it easier to get in touch with job seekers and publish branding and recruitment content. Unfortunately, the chaoticity of the online world also increases recruiting competition, decentralizes the information sources available to job seekers and additionally, makes it hard for employers to shape and modify their public image and reputation in a way that is favorable to them.

### **Individual difference**

Last but not least, a fundamental, yet difficult variable to control when it comes to Employer Branding is the job seekers' individual differences. Although it may somehow be possible to group people into different segments based on a few features they share, the distinctiveness of each individual is hardly ignorable. The effect of Employer Brand and Employer Branding activities are largely based on each job seeker person-organization fit. Unfortunately, multiple attempts in studying and creating a framework for individual differences' impact have returned with little success (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). This may be due to the extreme complication in studying each and every interaction between an individual's information processing and employer image.

## 6 The Concept of Generation

A generation can be defined as “a group of people of a similar age, living in a particular time and historical space” (Sitko-Dominik, 2019, p.123). Due to the similarity in their life experience, historical and social context, unifying communalities are believed to form between these people (Mannheim, 1953; Howe & Strauss, 2000; Sitko-Dominik, 2019). The dominant approach to the separation of generations is based on birth-year ranges, in which scholars describe generations to be constituted from people who shares “birth years, age and significant life events at critical developmental stages” (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Statnickè, 2019). The logic behind this comes from the assumption that the common living conditions and experiences people possess leads to similar personalities, qualities, and life views among them. Rudolph et al. (2017), Statnickè (2019, p.275) noted that this shared consciousness between cohorts result in distinguishable features that are unique to each new generation, thus contributing to the observation of different generations’ behaviors in working environments.

There are three variables determining the formation of generations often examined by scholars, including **(1) period** (i.e. historical time frame in which significant events happened), **(2) life-cycle** (i.e. people’s life stage and maturity), **(3) cohort** (i.e. group of peers with common values) (Pew Research; Costanze & Finkelstein, 2015; Grubb, 2016).

- (1) Significant events (e.g. wars, disasters, or revolutions (Mannheim, 1953)) or cultural elements (e.g. music, popular culture (Strauss & Howe, 2000)) appear in a certain historical period are claimed to be a fundamental condition challenges the existing social order and give basis for the raise of a new generation.
- (2) The impacts the historical events or cultural elements have on people at different life stages are different. For example, older people have already long established their beliefs and attitudes, making them less susceptible to change compared to younger ones whose consciousness starts upon those events.
- (3) Those who experience the same historical circumstance, especially when they are in the opinion forming process, share cohort characteristics and mindset that become rather fixed after they are fully matured. This experience may result in a difference that distinguishes them from the ones who did not go through it. For example, the young people living in the war time have similar experiences to their peers, which is completely different to that of people born after the war.

These factors guide the segmentation of generational groups, yet studying the effects they imposed on individuals is bound to great complexity. This leads to multiple different approaches to the boundaries, labels and suggested characteristics of generations. Pew Research Center's approach as shown in the Table 1 below is among the most commonly adopted definitions by recent scholars and practitioners. In its analysis, Pew Research set the boundaries of generations by taking into account a range of demographics, attitudes, historical events, popular culture, and researchers' consensus, which are however considered to be guidelines for analysis rather than clear scientific distinctions.

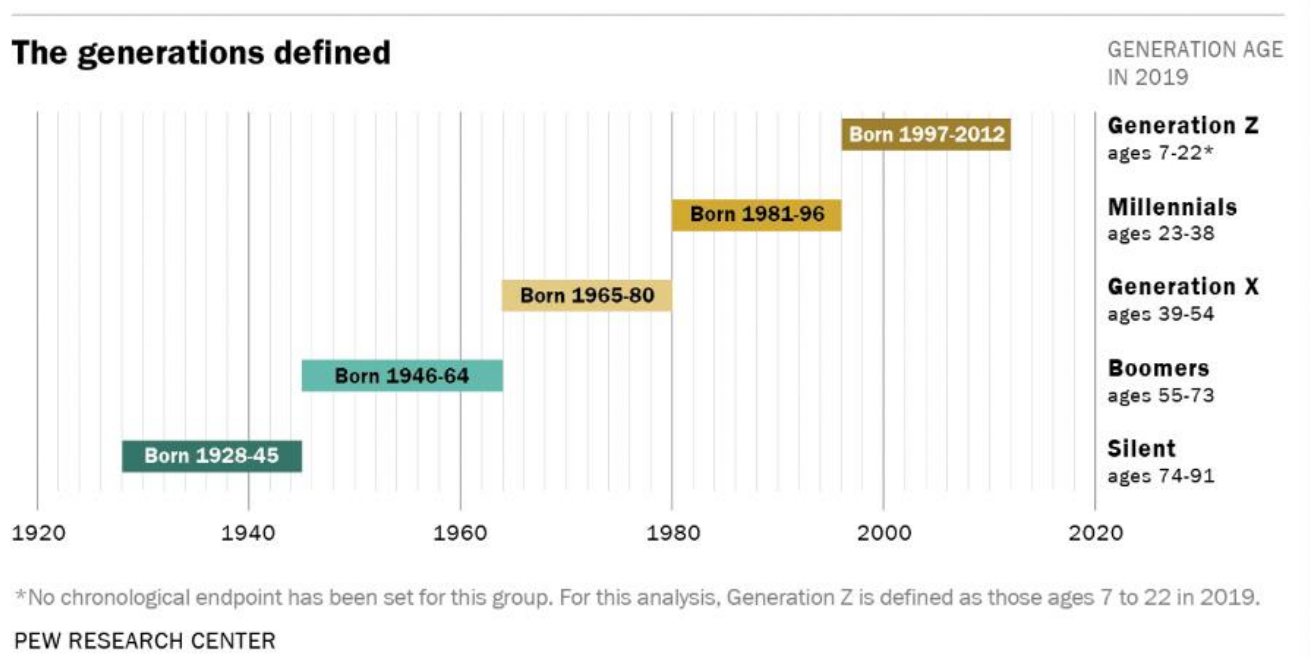


Figure 3 The Generations (Pew Research Center, 2019)

- The “Silent” generation consists of people born between 1928 and 1945. This group is defined according to their growing up conditions bound to the Great Depression and World War II. The name comes from their supposed conformist and civic-minded characteristics.
- “Boomers” or “Baby Boom” generation is made of people born after WWII, their youngest of this group turning 57 by 2021, with their label representing the fast population boom period after the war. The Baby Boomers grew up together with the appearance and popularity of televisions.
- “Generation X” are adults born from 1965 through 1980, who grew up as the computer revolution takes place.

- Following the X is supposedly the most talked about generation until date: the “Millennials” or “Generation Y”. Born between 1981 and 1996, they are the first to witness the explosion of the internet. Being the most researched generation, they are also subjected to most stereotypes and criticisms by older generations.
- So far, the youngest people to enter their adulthoods and join the workforce is “Generation Z”, “iGeneration” or “Digital Natives”. Born after 1997, they have never lived a day without digital devices or the internet. Using smart mobile devices lies in their instincts and is a norm for them. Gen Z members are statistically the most diverse, highest educated individuals, with sharply different characteristics and perspectives than any preceding generations. Attention has recently been widely shifted to this group as they will be the one to shape the society in the upcoming decades.

Although the idea of studying and applying the concept of generational difference created numerous possibilities for understanding social psychology and developing practical schemes targeting segmented groups of individuals, the concept itself is sometimes criticized for its lack of in-depth theoretical research and more or less assumptive nature. Elder (1998), Sackett (2002), Costanze and Finkelstein (2015), argued that ages and fixed dates are not valid clues to support the segmentation and comparison of cohorts, but other factors such as individual characteristics, historical events, technology, and developmental changes have stronger theoretical and empirical grounds to explain individual differences. Costanze and Finkelstein (2015) suggested that the approach to segmenting generations promotes group stereotyping at work that likely advocates a uniformed, yet often inaccurate treatment to the individuals who are thought to be parts of the same group. According to Cadiz, Truxillo, Fraccaroli (2015), most definitions of generational cohorts' cutoffs are based on U.S. centric events, which ignored the geographical and cultural differences of people in other regions in the U.S. and outside of the U.S. who did not experience or is not affected by the same events as the ones in the studied region (e.g. the tragedy of 11/9 attack has less impact on people outside of Northeastern U.S. area, and merely any influence on people in Europe or Asia).

Despite these limitations, the concept of generation gaps still provides valuable advice for future social psychology research and strategic management, especially with proper orientations that patch its criticized imperfections. The common method of segmenting of the population according to birth-year period holds a somewhat justifiable explanation, that there

exists turning points and great developments (e.g. wars, migrations, technological advancements, pandemics) along the chronological history of the World that shifted human lives on a global scale (e.g. Strauss & Howe, 2000; Töröcsik et al., 2014; Costanze & Finkelstein, 2015; Turner, 2015). These breakthrough events may determine the ways of doing, needs, and perceptions of individuals born and raised during that particular period, making them substantially distinctive to that of the others. Thereby, this concept gives a relevant standpoint to better understand why a certain cohort of people think the way they think and act the way they act, putting aside the individual variables, which in turn, help better predict people's thinking and their future actions. Organizations and managers have been using the guidance implied in generation research to design strategies and policies to deal with customers and employees corresponding to their cohorts' suggested characteristics: What kind of message best received? What benefits will suit their needs? How to design a product or a job? A little is better than none, practitioners still praise the concept of generations and employ it as a powerful tool to refine their image and actions.

Taking the contributive criticisms of the concept into considerations, one may improve its theoretical builds and effectively and create a strong conceptual framework for the generation gap construct. Costanza and Finkelstein (2015) suggested managers to, instead of viewing the generational differences through the lens of biased and monotonous stereotypes, pay more attention to individual traits and the changing developmental and demographic trends representing the current and future workforce that have actual impact on organizational performance and outcomes. Additionally, it is necessary to take into account the geographical and cultural differences influencing the kind of experiences people from different regions undergo rather than assuming a one-size-fit-all strategy (Costanza and Finkelstein, 2015). It is important to note that the ultimate goal of learning and applying knowledge about generation gap is embracing and better facilitating the diversity and strength of people's differences, not widening the gap and fragmenting the generations with unjust treatments based on prejudices "these people belong to this particular generation, so they are all the same and all act this particular way".

## **7 Generation Z**

## 7.1 Generation Z's characteristics

Among the Generations currently defined, Generation Z is the most recent wave to enter the workforce, with its oldest members turning 24 by 2021 (according to Pew Research's conception). Being raised by mostly Gen Xers and sometimes Millennials parents, Gen Z members are surrounded by a more individualistic style which values inner qualities like "hard-working", "confidence", "independence" and "organized" (Behrer & Bergh, 2016). This bring-up condition contributes to the formation of Generation Z's mindset that centralizes creativity and independence. Furthermore, as they were heavily affected by widening income gap, raising living expense and tuition fee, as well as direct effects from multiple economic crisis, including the World's financial downturn during 2008-2010 period and most recently the Covid pandemic, Generation Z youngsters and kids growing up in income troubled families gained consciousness of the importance of financial stability at a very young age. Recent studies suggest that Gen Z "see job stability as more important than a high salary" (Francis & Hoefel, 2018) and further, "prioritize financial security over personal fulfillment" (Deloitte & NEW, 2019). Compared to Millennials, Gen Zers are seen to be more pragmatic and have a stronger desire to pursue job security and stable income.

When it comes to how Gen Z views identity, a 2019 Facebook – commissioned survey targeting Generation Z, 61% of respondents considered themselves global citizens. Accordingly, researchers named Gen Z "the first truly global Generation", who are signified by their ability to adapt to a boundless global life and universal understanding thanks to connection technologies (Robert Half, 2015; Iorgulescu, 2016, p. 48). Gen Z is the most diverse youth Generation growing up in the World where female empowerment, *Pride*, and racial equality have grown prominent (Behrer & Bergh, 2016), these social matters have been embedded in their mindset and have become a part of their bottom-line codes of conduct. Environmental concern also lies in Gen Z considerations when making decisions on lifestyle, purchasing, and job as more than anyone else, Generation Z youths understand what degrading environment and climate change imply for their own future. Their diversity, pragmatism, and willingness to speak have given Gen Z another name "True Gen": stay true to themselves, respect different truths unique to others, be willing to open up, and want to see things by how they truly are (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Correspondingly, Gen Z do not limit themselves to a single identity – a box fits everyone, but authenticity is what matters most, which leads to Gen Z high preference in transparency and inclusiveness (Francis & Hoefel, 2018; EY, 2020; Deloitte & NEW, 2019).

Technology lies in the blood of this Generation:

“The minute they were born, they already had a domain name and a Facebook profile and Twitter feed. Social media is second nature to them. Even members of Gen Z who don’t necessarily think they’re tech savvy absolutely are. Technology is an extension of their self-expression.” (America, n.d)

The label “digital natives” of Gen Z members stems from the fact that commercial internet was introduced and popularized around 1995, that even the oldest individuals of this Generation have never seen life without the World Wide Web. The broad access to network connections and different kind of convenient devices at an early age gave this Generation an exceptional capability to comfortably process a great amount of information at a very short amount of time and cross-referencing from several sources of knowledge comparing to their predecessors (Iorgulescu, 2016; Francis & Hoefel, 2018). With computers, smartphones or tablets as the basic necessities available to nearly all youths, Gen Z tends to bring everything to the digital domain: from information searching, learning, shopping, to communicating. They are fluent in social networking and reportedly find it “more convenient to talk with friends online than in real life” (Palley, 2012; Turner, 2015, p.108). From a positive standpoint, Gen Z technology sensitivity and powerful information processing ability enable these people to acquire knowledge effectively, make better decisions and creativity inventing new methods. Nevertheless, the huge amount of information exposed to them not only makes it hard to refine the information source, but also result in an extremely short attention span of statistically “eight seconds” (Behrer & Bergh, 2016; Deloitte & NEW, 2019; Vivendi, 2020). These drawbacks increase the difficulty for Gen Z to stay focused, keep patience, and from the other viewpoint, make it hard for brands to approach and attract them (Turner, 2015; Behrer & Bergh, 2016).

## **7.2 What do Gen Z members look for in a prospective job?**

Due to Gen Z’s insecurity in financial status and living conditions, stability and a good income are presumably the most important value they would prefer to seek for in a prospective job, which is consistent to Gen Z’s preference to work full-time for large-scale, international corporations (Robert Half, 2015; Iorgulescu, 2016, Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Iorgulescu (2016) further noted that Gen Z are likely to be attracted to employers who could provide them opportunities to advance in career, experience new things, and achieve leading positions. This is completely aligned with Gen Z’s love for creativity, self-expression and their



entrepreneurship mind. The fear of uncertainty fuels strong motivation of many Gen Z youths to become independent, qualify several achievements, and gain top positions, with a large proportion of those young people constantly stressing themselves to prepare for their future (EY, 2020). Accordingly, results from multiple researches suggested the most important factors to Gen Z when looking for a job are **advancement possibilities, salary, job security, and personal impact** (Robert Half, 2015; Adecco, 2015; Iorgulescu, 2016)

Although it is important to emphasize that Gen Z members do not share a definite set of same characteristics and preferences, they do have a common desire to pursue the job choice that is **aligned to their personal identities** and **allow them to express themselves**. Result of a Deloitte & NEW study (2019) has shown that Gen Z prefers to work in industries they are familiar with and have things in common with them rather than ones they do not frequently interact with. Additionally, the quality of the products/services or the jobs themselves is no longer the only parameter used by Gen Z to evaluate the employer, but its **ethics, practices and social impacts** also have weight in Gen Z job seekers' consideration (Deloitte & NEW, 2019). Being people with great diversity themselves, and finding promoting diversity important, Gen Z values organizations that also mind and **honor differences**: Gender, ethnicity, religion, personalities, and anything else. As one's job is frequently associated with a person's identity, it is significant for Gen Z to choose a correct employer who can represent their personal values rightfully.

Since digital places a big part of Gen Z's identity, its effects are visible in every aspect of their personal styles and work lives. Digital processes and online platforms are presumably preferable and intuitive for Gen Z than any older generations. First, generation Z youths establish all their connections and information seeking activities through online channels and social networks, which indicates that the **online social platforms** are the right kind of communication method companies must use to approach them. This is however not an easy task since the internet makes it more convenient than ever for all employers from around the globe to get in contact with the job seekers, enraging the competition for talents (Sidorcuka & Chesnovicka, 2017). The huge amount of information and distractions surrounding Gen Z all the time constantly dilute their focus and reduce their ability to remain patient. This results in a tricky problem requiring recruiters to be connected to Gen Z on a daily basis and to have an efficient message content to gain a spot in their eight-second attention span (Behrer & Bergh, 2016).

Second, as Gen Z understands more than anyone else the untrustworthiness and chaos of the mass internet source, they value security and transparency more than anyone else. **Transparency** is deemed the utmost important element employers need to show if they want to create the bond with the contemporary youths (EY, 2020). Third, as technology has shed light to unlimited flexibility, Gen Z – as the early adopters of all trends – favor **flexibility** and engage it as the basis for everything they do. A study surveying young employees in Europe suggested that flexible schedule was rated as the most attractive job factor for Gen Z (Sidorcuka & Chesnovicka, 2017), which agrees with a Glassdoor's study in Gen Z's employment experience in the US in which flexibility placed second in the list of Gen Z in US' most common perceived working benefits (Stansell, 2019). The reason for this appears to be that a flexible schedule allows these young people to combine work with personal learning activities and balance life (Sidorcuka & Chesnovicka, 2017)

Although the discussion on generation Z, the newcomers to the job market, has been fierce in recent years, there are still a number of limitations on the extent of knowledge available for these individuals. First and foremost, while the number of commissioned practical studies and reports are tremendous, there is a recognizable lack of theoretical literature on this topic. Additionally, the large number of published reports is directly proportional to the variety of different approaches and slightly conflicting results to the concluded findings about Gen Z, from their birth year endpoints to their characteristics. This situation may derive from the short duration of time since the first job market entry of Gen Z, the geographical and cultural differences where the studies took part, or the lack of a communally confirmed data collecting and analyzing method. This implies a need for more studies dedicated to the Gen Z group, which target more facets of these people and cover more geographical and cultural areas. This thesis aims to serve this need for more diverse findings to the contemporary research about Gen Z employees, especially in terms of their attraction to the **Employer Brand**, which hopefully will provide companies with a broader view to better prepare their strategies to attract top talents.

## 8 Employer Branding in Vietnamese Gen Z recruitment

## 8.1 Employer of Choice

Precedingly mentioned, an Employer Brand is an identifier or differentiating factor that helps the employer to stand out from its competitor in the labor market. Therefore, in fact, any employer can develop its own Employer Brand with several distinctions established. However, not all employers can succeed in becoming an Employer of Choice (EOC) in the mind of talented members of the workforce. Employer of Choice is defined as an employer of any size, operating in any sector and industry (public, private sector or non-profit) that can attract and retain the top talents for long tenure due to the willingness of employees to stay working at that company (Herman & Gioia, 2000). In other words, Employers of choice are those that stood out in the labor market and succeeded in attracting and retaining the best talents for their organizations. Those employers possess a set of attractive attributes that are important to the job seekers. Therefore, being considered as an employer of choice is extremely vital for employers with intention to target a higher quality pool of applicants.

Additionally, although all Employer Brands have their own unique traits and different levels of attractiveness to the job seekers, the “Employer of Choice” title embodies the employer possessing a certain level of attractiveness. In fact, the EOC title must be asserted by a significant portion of job seekers, especially the more talented ones (Ghadeer, Badr and Aboul-Ela, 2016).

According to past studies, the central core of an EOC is constituted by two factors: (1) a psychological contract between the employers and the prospective employees and (2) the organizational identity; the two factors gesture the expected quality of the employment relationship in the mind of the potential employees (Bellou et al., 2015). Similar to the relationship between a product’s brand and its consumer where the brand is regarded as a promise linked to the product’s characteristics and overall quality, the psychological contract represents a promise about the employment relationship between the employer and its employees (Bellou et al., 2015). As for the organizational identity, according to Dutton et al. (1994), it refers to the cognitive connection between the organization’s identity and an individual’s identity, which means that when an individual forms some sort of psychological connection with an organization, that person’s social identity is enhanced when the organization to which he/she belongs earns more favorable reputation than that of other organizations (Ashforth et al., 2008; Bellou et al., 2015). Therefore, in order for a company to

be identified as an employer of choice, that company must be (1) distinguishable and (2) offer a package of benefits considered to be relevant and important to the job seekers.

There have been numerous research and frameworks studying the factors contributing to an employer of choice in the employee's perspective such as compensation package, company work culture, prospective career growth, emotional benefits, etc. To give a clearer structure, Aboul-Ela (2016) defined 5 dimensions summarizing all the contributing factors of the EOC concept:

- (1) **Economic value** including salary and compensation package, holidays, and annual leaves as well as maternal and retirement packages.
- (2) **Development value** comprising organizational training, empowering and motivational work environment as well as promotion opportunities.
- (3) **Social value** which encompasses the overall work environment like team spirit, friendliness between co-workers, respectable leaders & management board.
- (4) **Diversity value** which refers to the exciting aspects of the job itself such as challenging tasks and task variety.
- (5) **Reputation value** which highlights the company's reputation as well as the product's brand name.

In some studies, the benefit packages are often called Employee Value Proposition (EVP). EVP describes the attractiveness as well as the benefits of working for an employer. (Pawar and Charak, 2014). In other words, the employer value propositions represent the deal between the employer and its employees (both current and prospective). The deal regards the benefits employees receive in return for their contribution to the organization. The said benefits will act as the factors determining whether the organization is an employer of choice or not. In fact, the organization is required to tailor unique benefit packages to different groups of employees (Pawar and Charak, 2014). For example, Microsoft has 3 separate EVP messages for each of the functions: Tech positions – Make a difference, Marketing positions – Your impact knows no boundaries, Human Resources positions – Fulfillment is the catalyst for achievement.

Parallel to the glossary "USP" - the unique characteristics to differentiate a conventional product or service from its par, EVP tells apart an employer from other firms. EVP is the desired or ideal employer identity; it represents the image the company wants to be seen by potential

and current employees as an attractive employer (Theurer et al. 2018). The EVP leads the firm's Employer Brand by communicating the benefits, opportunities, and rewards that the employment offers; while the Employer Brand takes that statement to build its overall reputation as an employer through Employer Brand marketing and advertising efforts (Einck 2018).

## **8.2 Employer Brand attributes preferred by Gen Z workforce in Vietnam + Hypotheses**

In previous sections, the authors have discussed the intensity of the war talents and put forth implications that investing Employer Brand efforts are no longer a cherry-on-top, but a necessity for companies. A good job offering itself is not sufficient and cannot guarantee the quantity and quality of the applicant pool if the recruitment advertising is not efficient enough to promote it. As new employment opportunities emerge everywhere and job seekers have a huge number of choices, the Employer Brand arguably should be taken care of no less than its consumer brand. It can be said that the Employer Brand is considered to be even more important to Gen Z than to previous generations, as Gen Z may never be able to cross the ocean of mixed information to get to know a low-profile employer. Due to the ease of accessing online information and the amount of mixed information available on the internet, the Employer Branding efforts have a growing importance in increasing visibility and highlighting the jobs among million pieces of information surfacing to young people every day. Furthermore, the internet's ability enabling employees to search and compare alternative jobs accentuates the urgency for organizations to take Employer Brand communication seriously. Keeping that in mind, the authors argue that the Employer Brand is a significant element influencing the job seeking process and employment decision making of Gen Z in Vietnam.

### ***H1: Employer Brand is important to Vietnamese Generation Z job seekers***

As discussed in an earlier part of this thesis, it can be assumed that Gen Z members, despite the individual differences, share a common set of needs and expectations toward future employers. The insights on the expectations and values of Gen Z are useful information for companies to develop their organizational attractiveness toward target potential applicants. It is common knowledge that Gen Z is a flexible, innovative and tech-savvy generation, thus it is natural for them to expect companies to possess at least a competent level of agility and innovativeness. Equally importantly, literatures indicate that the era of great technological

advancements yet full of uncertainties has equipped Gen Z youths with a strong desire for growth opportunities, stable income, and a highly secured job (Robert Half, 2015; Adecco, 2015; Iorgulescu, 2016), which have certainly been emphasized by the cultural and economic circumstances in Vietnam. Hofstede Insights on cross-cultural dimensions have highlighted Vietnam culture with characteristics such as collectivism and moderately long-term orientation, which compliment Gen Z's needs for financial stability and long-term job security. Furthermore, as Vietnam is still currently a developing country, of which economy is still under the stage of satisfying the bottom levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943), the tendency of job seekers' attraction inclining toward basic and safety needs rather than top level values could somehow affects the importance of basic factors in Gen Z's perception of job attractiveness.



Figure 4 Maslow Hierarchy of Needs (Thomson, n.d)

For better understanding, the Hierarchy of Needs at the workplace proposed that people's needs are ranging on five incremental levels, where the bottom hierarchy needs to be fulfilled before the next level can motivate the individual. The five levels, ordered from lowest level to highest need include: Basic needs (i.e. pay, benefits, working environment), Safety (i.e. job security, protectant from threats), Belonging (i.e. relationship with colleagues, teamwork), Esteem (i.e. recognition and appreciation), and Self-actualization (i.e. individual's potential maximization) (Indeed, 2021).

In summary, the reasons above can give some helpful suggestions on the set of employer image's instrumental attributes that are attractive to Gen Z in Vietnam, which includes **good**

*salary and benefits, high job security, innovative and agile job content, and career growth opportunity.*

***H2: Among the instrumental attributes of Employer Brand image, (1) good salary and benefits, (2) high job security, (3) innovative and agile job, and (4) career advancement opportunities are more important to Vietnamese Generation Z job seekers.***

Precedingly discussed, Gen Z's pragmatism in instrumental values is, however, not necessarily an easy trade-off over individual genuineness. Their unmatched diversity and respect for diversity, as well as yearning for authenticity and transparency have shaped Gen Z motivation to seek for the same values in their prospective organizational identity. Gen Z's desire to protect and express personal identity and style, or the need to pursue Truth aligns with the values like honesty/sincerity, indicating that **Sincerity** (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003) could be an attractive symbolic trait to them. Likewise, Lievens and Highhouse (2003)'s symbolic element **Innovativeness** may also be a relevant employer's trait sought after by Gen Z, as this trait represents the exciting, daring, spirited facets that these young, proactive individuals want to describe about themselves. Last but not least, **competence**, the symbolic trait empirically confirmed to be significant in Lievens and Highhouse's 2003 study, should also possess a certain level of attractiveness for Gen Z members due to their needs for job security and a prosperous career path. Hence, these assumptions lead to hypothesis 3 about the symbolic dimension of employer image.

***H3: Among the symbolic traits of Employer Brand image, (1) sincerity, (2) innovativeness, and (3) competence are more important to Vietnamese Generation Z job seekers.***

## **9 Conceptual framework**

In order to summarize the theories presented throughout the first parts of the thesis in a systematic way, the authors would like to propose an integrated conceptual framework as shown in Figure 4 below. It is developed to better demonstrate the concept of Employer Brand Equity and Employer Branding with a strong focus on the Recruitment context. The framework is a synthesis of theories and concepts set forth in Cable and Turban (2001)'s Theoretical Model of Recruitment Equity, Lievens and Highhouse (2003)'s Instrumental – Symbolic

Framework, as well as other concepts suggested by scholars regarding Employer Branding, organizational attractiveness, recruitment, and generation topics.

This model presents four key aspects of the discussed Employer Branding in Recruitment literature, including the antecedents of the Employer Brand **Information Sources**, the **Employer Brand Equity and Knowledge** formed upon information received and processed, the **Information Processing** intermediary stage, and lastly the **Recruitment Outcomes** as a result of all the preceding components.

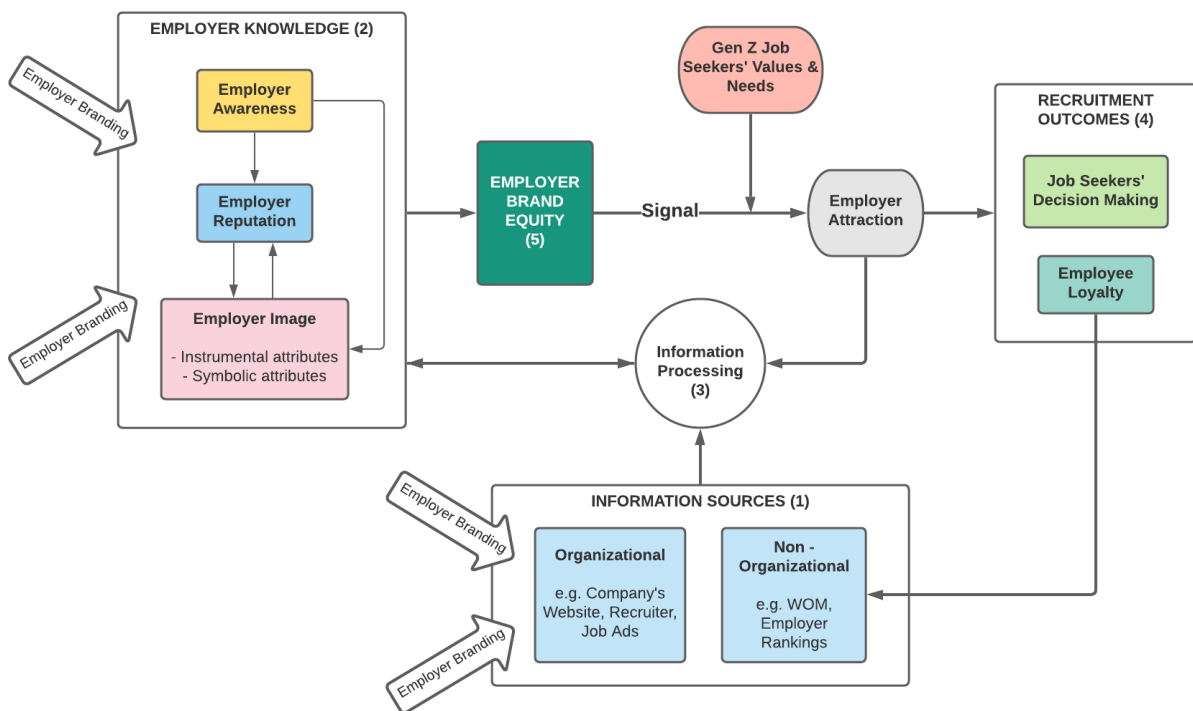


Figure 5 Theoretical framework (fit)



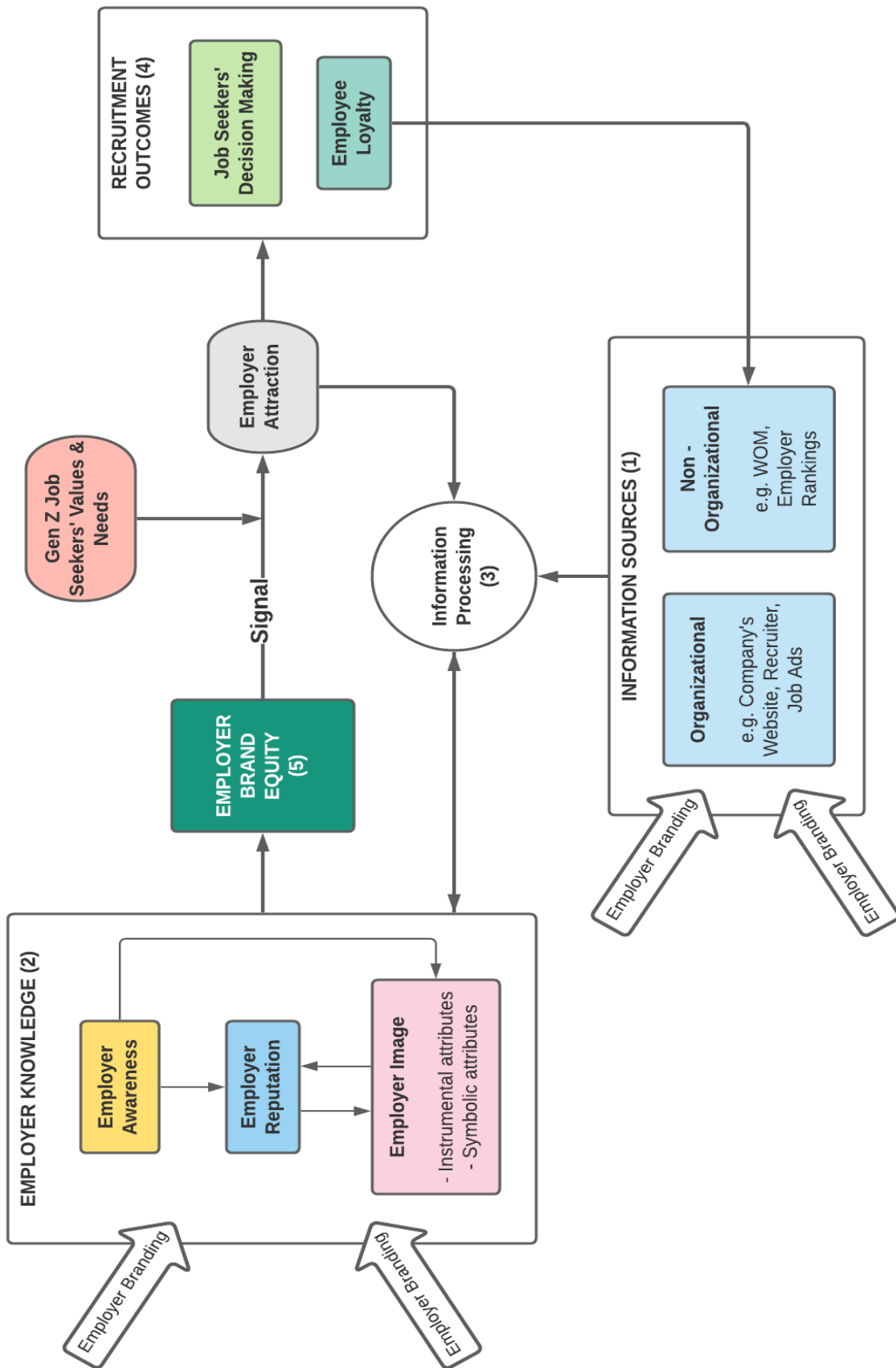


Figure 6 Theoretical Framework (large)

(1) The **Information Sources** include employer information from **Organizational** and **Non-organizational** origins. When job seekers receive information from both (or one) of these sources, they process it and add the new information to the accumulated knowledge about the employer. Without the sources communicating information to the job seekers, they will not be aware and develop knowledge about the company, which is why the information sources are the antecedents for Employer Brand.

(2) The **Employer Knowledge** segment is presented according to Cable and Turban's 2001 model, which suggested a system of three cross-affecting constituents constructing the employees' knowledge about the organization as an employer. In this system, **Employer Awareness/Familiarity** is the foundation factor initiating the employer knowledge development in application's mind. **Employer Reputation** is the job seekers' beliefs about the public's opinions toward the organization, which creates a two-way influence with **Employer Image** – the job seekers' own opinions/beliefs about the employer. Following Lievens and Highhouse (2003)'s framework, the authors break down Employer Image into **Instrumental attributes** (i.e. physical elements of the employment like pay, job demands, work location, etc.) and **Symbolic traits** (i.e. inferred "personalities" of the company, such as sincerity, trendy, robust, etc.). The employer knowledge is developed throughout a rather long feedback loops, where job seekers continuously obtain new information, analyze it, compare it with existing knowledge, pair it with their personal needs and values, being attracted to the employer, and start the loop again until they can eventually decide if they want to work for a certain company or not.

(3) The **Information Processing** bubble is fundamentally a handling center where newly obtained information is stored and treated. This is where the job seekers analyze the employer information and employer knowledge and determine if the recruiting company is a fit to their personal values and needs, that it is worth it for them to learn more about the employer and follow through the recruitment process. As shown in the figure, there is a loop formed by the information processing, Employer Brand, and employer attraction. Additional information and (Gen Z's) personal characteristics are the inputting factors to this loop, whereas the Recruitment Outcomes are the final output.

(4) The most important **outcomes** of Employer Branding in recruitment context are undoubtedly job seekers' job choice decisions, as the final goal for employers is to get top talents to work for them. However, it should not be neglected employee loyalty as an important

outcome of Employer Branding. Although employee loyalty and disloyalty are not always the result of the Employer Brand, but far too often, employees become dissatisfied and/or quit the job because the reality inside the organization is not what they expected. The unhappy individuals may be not only unengaged to the job, but also leave negative words of mouth about the employer, which may heavily affect the employer reputation later on.

(5) The **Employer Brand Equity**, however, is not a guarded fortress. It can be penetrated and altered to the employer's desired proposition thanks to proper **Employer Branding** efforts. Through effective Employer Value Proposition activities that either increase awareness, or fix bad reputation and image depending on the current equity point, the company can develop a desired Employer Brand Equity that best suits their style and helps them attract well-fit candidates. The most important touchpoints the employer should put branding efforts in are improving the actual company and job's characteristics, and realistically communicating those "actually good" characteristics via both organizational and external channels.

This conceptual framework, together with the hypotheses outlined in the prior section provide a guiding foundation for the authors to proceed to the empirical part of the thesis: empirically researching the importance of Employer Brand equity and the effects of Employer Branding in recruiting Vietnamese Gen Z job seekers.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 1 Research design

##### 1.1 Research philosophy and approach

The authors carried out this research based on a pragmatism stance where the most important determinant of the research philosophy adopted is the research question. We adopt the suitable philosophy based on what is deemed meaningful for each research question needed to be answered and the practical purpose of the findings, rather than diving too deep into the discussion of what is better, positivism or interpretivism (Chetty, 2016; Saunders & Thornhill, 2007).

The research approach taken is deductive in which the theory of Employer Branding, generation and a few critical hypotheses are put under test. According to Collis and Hussey (2003, cited in Saunders & Thornhill, 2007), deductive is a frequently adopted approach in the natural sciences, in which the theories explain and facilitate the prediction of phenomena, their occurrence, and hence, allow them to be controlled.

Therefore, this thesis followed a deductive research progress similar to one suggested in Saunders & Thornhill (2007, according to Robson, 2002):

1. Deducing testable hypotheses (or propositions about the concepts or variables) from the theory.
  - H1: Employer Brand is important to Vietnamese Generation Z job seekers.
  - H2: Among the instrumental attributes of Employer Brand image, (1) good salary and benefits, (2) high job security, (3) innovative and agile job, and (4) career advancement opportunities are more important to Vietnamese Generation Z job seekers.
  - H3: Among the symbolic traits of Employer Brand image, (1) sincerity, (2) innovativeness, and (3) competence are more important to Vietnamese Generation Z job seekers.

2. Expressing the hypothesis in operational terms (how the concepts are to be measured)

The above listed hypotheses are constructed in a measurable manner where the element variables will be measured on a five-scored numeric scale, allowing the data collected to be meaningfully calculated and interpreted.

3. Testing the hypotheses

In the first hypothesis, H1, the hypothesis will be accepted if the mean responses' mean is greater than 4 on a 1 to 5 scale.

Similarly, for H2 and H3, the factors will be measured independently and will be tested based on the comparison between its mean value and the overall mean of all factors in the same category.

4. Assessing the outcomes of the test (if the hypotheses are confirmed or any other pattern shown)
5. Presenting the conclusions about the theory based on the findings and suggesting the theory modifications (if needed)

Saunders & Thornhill (2007) listed out the key characteristics possessed by deduction research approach:

- Controls of the variables to enable the accurate testing of hypotheses.
- Structured methodology to allow replication of future research
- Operationalized concepts that facilitate the quantitative measurement of facts.
- Strictly defined concepts to the simplest possible elements according to the principle of reductionism to ensure the problems are clearly understood.
- Sufficient sample size to enable the generalization of the concepts under test.

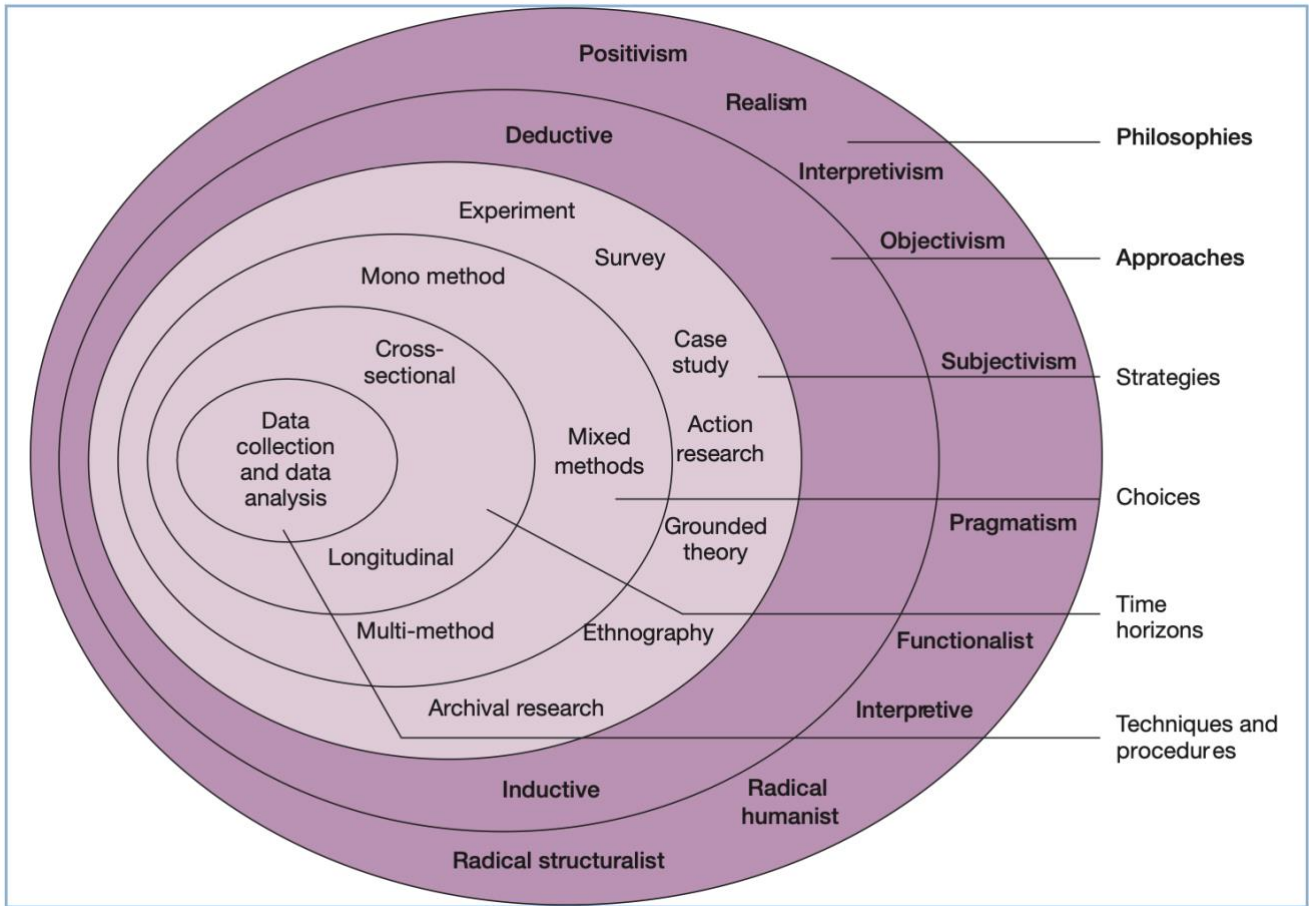


Figure 7 Research design visualization “The Research Onion” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2006)

## 1.2 Research purpose and strategy

According to Robson (2002; cited in Saunders & Thornhill, 2007), the objective of descriptive research is to create an accurate portrait of the profile of a person, an event, or a situation. Akin to this definition, the purpose of this thesis is to describe the preferences and behaviors of young job seekers in Vietnam. By studying the theories set forth by earlier researchers on Employer Branding and generation Z’s characteristics, the thesis authors hoped to collect the opinions from the targeted research subjects, and consequently, draw meaningful conclusions that give organizations useful insights about these newcomers into the job market.

Usually associated with deductive approach, survey - questionnaire is the strategy of choice for this thesis. Survey is also a suitable strategy to match with descriptive research as it allows the authors to economically collect a large amount of data from the chosen sample. In order to carry out this strategy, the survey questions are made simple, standardized for easy record, interpretation, and comparison. Despite the limitation in its possibility to record opinions that

are external to the predefined structure (such as the data from a free-form interview), the survey questionnaire enables the authors to collect sufficient quantitative data and effectively analyze them with quantitative methods to generate reliable prediction and estimation of the population being researched.

### **1.3 Research method and time-horizon**

Due to the nature of the survey strategy, it is the most appropriate to adopt the quantitative research. Quantitative stands for the data collection techniques or analysis procedures that generate or use numerical data (Saunders & Thornhill, 2007). The authors took on mostly the quantitative monomethod with a small inclusion of an optional open-ended qualitative element to carry on the data collection and analysis of the thesis. The reason for choosing the monomethod quantitative research includes the following points:

- The data generated from quantitative method is suitable for scaling and estimation. The control of data is made easy thanks to the structuredness and restriction of the survey, the elements of uncertainty and unusuality are largely exempted.
- The readiness of pre-established theories on the topic has diluted the need to re-defining the issues and introduce new ideas through exploratory qualitative research. However, it is the lack of empirical evidence on the topic that calls for further descriptive research and testing, which are the strength areas of quantitative survey.
- As Gen Z has just begun to enter the job market, it is too early to sufficiently record their characteristics and behaviors and publish full reports on these characteristics, not to mention trying to explain them. During this stage, descriptive studies and their quantified reports should still be the focal point for researchers. Nevertheless, this implies the needs for further re-testing of the theory in the future and longitudinal studies.
- The mono method research is more economic, effort and time saving, in the event where qualitative method does not add significant value, it is a more efficient choice to focus on a single method procedure.

Due to the time constraints and the fact that only a part of Gen Z individuals has reached the working age, it is the most appropriate for the authors to take on a cross-sectional study instead of a longitudinal study. However, the authors would encourage later researchers to

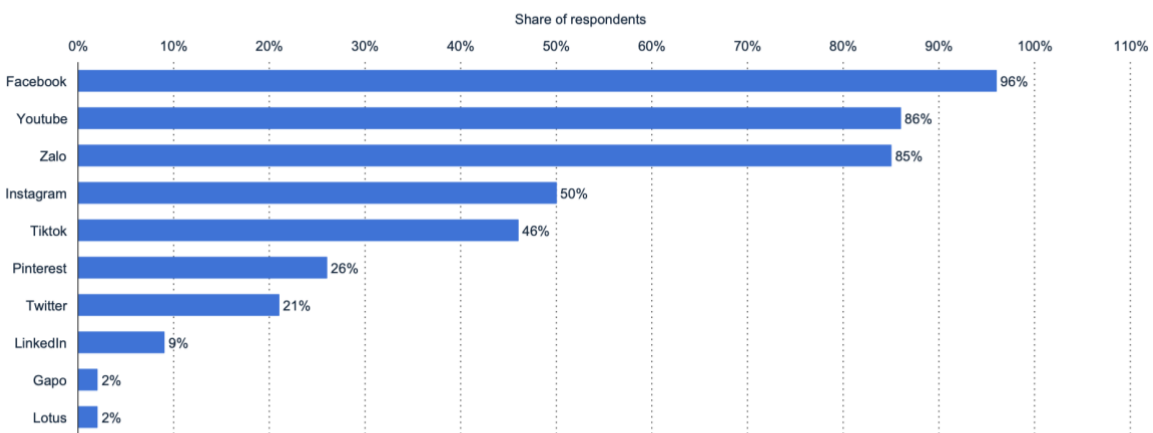
carry out longitudinal study when the time has come to better portray the image of Gen Z job seekers.

## 2 Data collection & analysis

### 2.1 Data collection

The data used in this research is collected from the primary source by conducting a quantitative survey to gather information on Vietnamese Gen Z’s perspectives on Employer Brand and their job seeking behaviors. The survey is carried out in the form of a close-ended questionnaire distributed online on Facebook, the most popular social media among internet users in Vietnam, in which the responses are collected anonymously. The sampling is made on a convenience basis, where the respondents are self-selected to respond to the questionnaire at their own will. Although these respondents are less likely to have anything in common due to being random people on Facebook, the fact that they all were using Facebook and decided to participate in the survey have somehow violated the randomness of the sample to a certain extent. The survey successfully collected more than 100 qualified responses over a period of one week.

Leading active social media apps among internet users in Vietnam as of 2nd quarter of 2021  
 Leading social media apps in Vietnam in Q2 2021



Note(s): Vietnam; Q2 2021; 16-60 years; 1833 respondents; among internet users nationwide  
 Further information regarding this statistic can be found on [page 56](#).  
 Source(s): Decision Lab; ID:941843

Figure 8 Leading active social media apps in Vietnam in Q2 2021 (Statista, 2021)



The questionnaire has three parts: the respondents' backgrounds, their perceptions on Employer Brand, and their job seeking behaviors. The first part is made up of questions asking for respondents' birth year, gender for defining the demography and diversity; questions about their education, working experience, personal background, interested job area, etc. to filter responses for a more detailed data analysis in a later phase. The questions in this part are selection and multiple choice, allowing the surveyed individual to choose the answer that is best fit to their situation, or type in a short alternative answer if they own something aside from the predefined choices.

In the second part, the respondents are asked about their opinions on Employer Brand, and the instrumental and symbolic Employer Brand image factors that they perceived as important. Example questions are "How important is Employer Brand to you when searching for a job?", "How important is Salary and Benefits to you when seeking for a job?", and "How important is Sincerity trait of an employer to you?". The questions in this part are measured on a five-point scale, from very unimportant (1) to very important (5). The data collected in this part are considered numerical interval data due to the assumed equal increments from one point to the next and the lack of a true zero point.

The last part of the questionnaire consists of questions asking people about their information seeking and word-of-mouth hearing preferences. Example questions are "Do you search for information about the employer you want to apply for?" and "Do you search/ask for company reviews when applying for a job?".

The authors also include one special question that is different to the main data collection method of the entire survey, which is an optional qualitative question asking for any negative Employer Brand image that the individual may consider critical. The purpose of this question is to find out about any factor that the authors may have overseen during the making of the core research, thereby, it can be presented and recommended for future research.

This survey method has two limitations. First, the survey questions were written in Vietnamese as the questionnaire's target respondents are Vietnamese, whereas the main research language was English. This makes the research prone to possible translation errors, which the authors have tried to prevent by pretesting the questionnaire to multiple subjects to make sure the wordings and sentences are correctly interpreted. Another possible issue lies in the honesty

and dedication of respondents. As the survey data is collected anonymously from unidentified individuals online, it is impossible to control the quality and honesty of responses received.

## **2.2 Data analysis**

According to Saunders & Thornhill (2007), quantitative data in its raw form has little meaning to people, which requires researchers to process and turn them into useful information and insights. This task can be completed using graphs, charts and statistics quantitative analysis techniques, which are the powerful tools for exploring, presenting, describing and examining relationships and trends within the collected data (Saunders & Thornhill, 2007).

Following the same principle, the data collected from the online survey are then transferred to a spreadsheet, allowing further processing to be made. The data is first cleaned for flaws and unusual patterns to ensure its integrity. After that, the responses were translated from Vietnamese to English, coded, and summarized into a functional matrix before starting the analysis. The cleaned data is then turned into tables, visual graphs and input in statistical tests to assess the hypotheses set out in the research approach. This process is mainly done by working on data with graphing and hypothesis testing methodologies on Excel spreadsheet.

### **3 Reliability and validity of the result**

#### **3.1 Reliability**

Reliability represents the consistency of the research findings generated from data collection techniques and data analysis procedures (Saunders & Thornhill, 2007). According to Easterby-Smith et al. (2002; cited in Saunders & Thornhill, 2007, p.149), the research reliability can be assessed by answering the three following questions:

- Will the measures yield the same results on other occasions?
- Will similar observations be reached by other observers?
- Is there transparency in how sense was made from the raw data?

In order to avoid subject and participation bias, the survey was conducted in an anonymous mode which does not collect and reveal respondents' identity and those respondents can feel free to answer at their true will without feeling threatened. To make sure subject and participation error is not involved, the questions in the survey were generically structured that external factors such as time of response, the conditions of responding, respondents' mood have least influence on the choices of answer. The survey was assessed before actual distribution by testing it with different representatives of possible respondent groups to ensure no potentially misunderstanding or confusing words, sentences, or ideas are included. Observer error and bias are also avoided as the questionnaire is designed to include only closed-ended and selection questions (but one optional exploratory question for further discussion).

#### **3.2 Validity**

Validity, on the other hand, refers to the strengths of the research conclusions in answering the research questions, or simply the accuracy of the research measurement (Adams et. al., 2007). The threats to validity include history, testing, instrumentation, mortality, maturation, and selection (Saunders & Thornhill, 2007; Adams et. al., 2007).

Although it is unavoidable for any research during the time of Covid19 pandemic to be subjected to certain impacts brought about by the crisis, several of these impacts are expected to become permanent as a part of “the new normal”; thus, the validity threat related to historical period could still be considered as being under control, provided that the authors encountered no other time-period specific issues during the time this research was being conducted. As the duration of the survey distribution is relatively short, there is only a single, uniformed survey method, and no change in the surveying pool occurs, there is little room for testing, instrumentation, and mortality issues to happen.

However, there are a few limitations to the validity of the research as the authors cannot control its maturation and selection validity. First, the maturation threat is caused by the fact that Gen Z are young people in the first steps of their career, their maturation in terms of both age and seniority might be a significant factor that affect their perceptions and behaviors toward Employer Brand and job seeking. This issue would require another study on the same matter at a future period to confirm the validity of the research. Second, the case with selection validity is that the research may be subjected to a selection bias as the questionnaire is distributed online, anonymous, and on a free-will basis that the respondents are self-selected to complete the response. The self-selection may indicate some difference between the people who responded and the ones who didn't.

## IV. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

### 1 Overview of research sample

The survey aims to collect responses from Vietnamese Gen Z who are new entrants to the workforce or soon to join the workforce. By definition, these people are born from 1997 to around 2003, which makes them 18 to 24 in 2021. In order to reach this group and take samples, the survey has been distributed on Facebook. The survey gathered 154 responses, 125 of which will enter the analysis after the authors have filtered out invalid responses and ones from non-targeted generations. The 125 valid responses are from Vietnamese Gen Z from a variety of diverse demographic, educational and professional backgrounds.

#### 1.1 Demographics and personal background

The birth years of the samples range from 1997 to 2003, in which 1998 is the most frequently recorded year that accounts for 32% of the total number of responses.

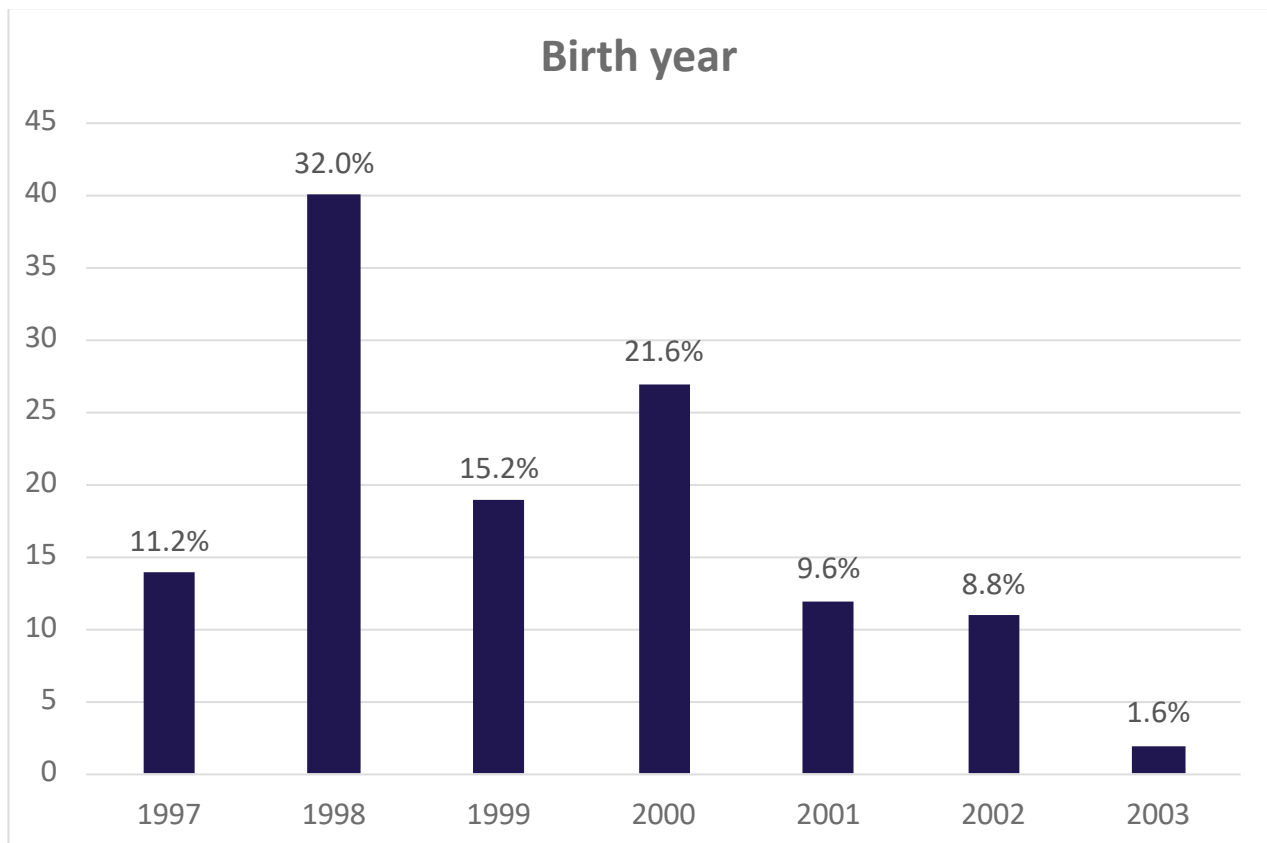


Chart 1 Sample birth year distribution (n=125)

The gender distribution of the respondents is relatively uneven, with more women participating in the survey than men. While 87 respondents (69%) identified as female, only 37 identified as male, and 1 person preferred to not specify their gender.

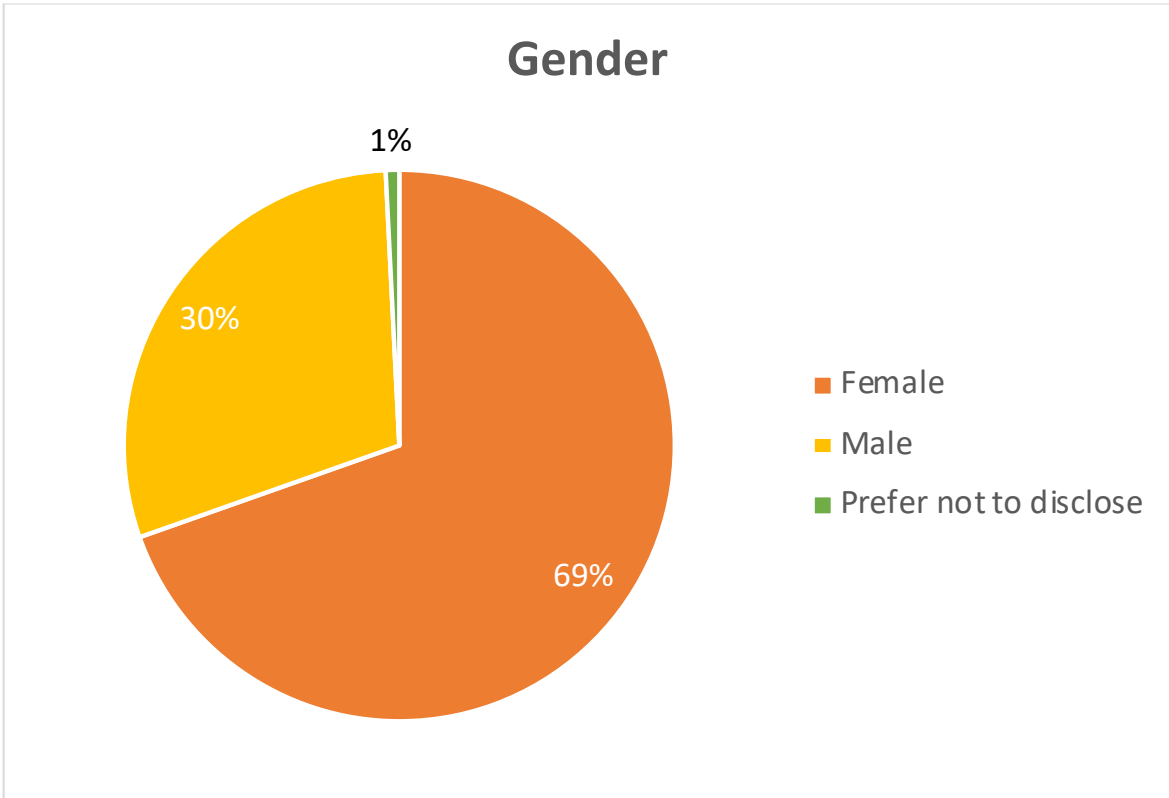


Chart 2 Sample Gender Structure (n=125)

The surveyed individuals are also asked to provide their personal status of marital and living conditions. Not surprisingly, the majority of respondents are single, 66% of which live with their parents. This tendency aligns with Vietnamese culture in which children are expected to stay with their parents until or even after getting married. However, this tendency is gradually changing, and young people are more often departing to live on their own, which is also somewhat reflected in the survey data.

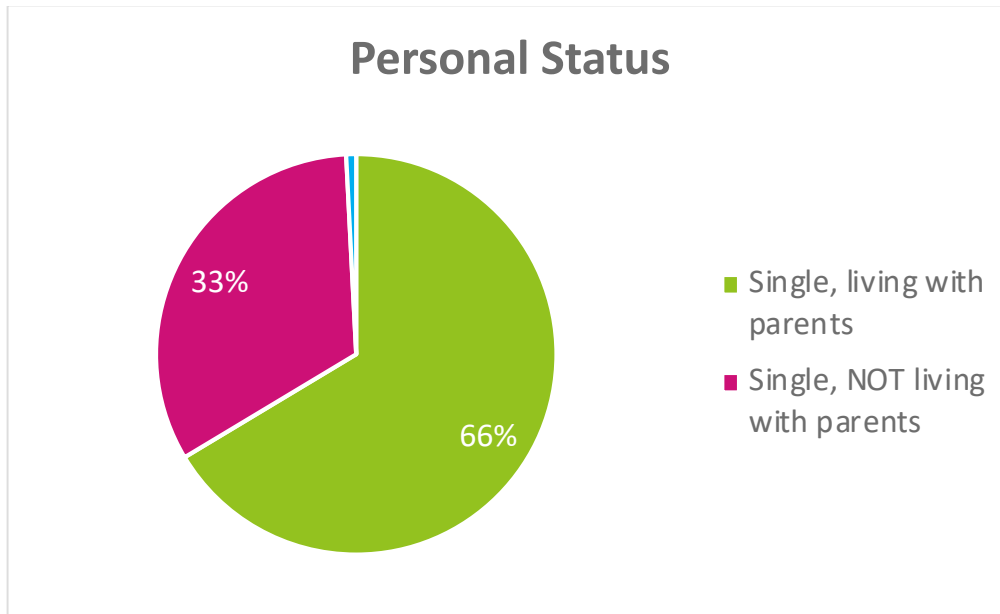


Chart 3 Sample personal status (n=125)

## 1.2 Professional and educational background

41% the total number of responses are from employed people, which makes them the biggest group among the respondents. Undergraduates in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year to final year of university, who will very soon join the workforce as full-time workers, are the second most frequent type of respondents. Their responses make up 34% of the total number of survey participants. This tendency makes sense as these two groups of people are the ones who are most likely to be affected by Employer Brand, and therefore, should care about it most. The other occupations including postgraduate students, self-employed and unemployed people, and bachelor students in their first to second year together make up 25% of the total responses count.

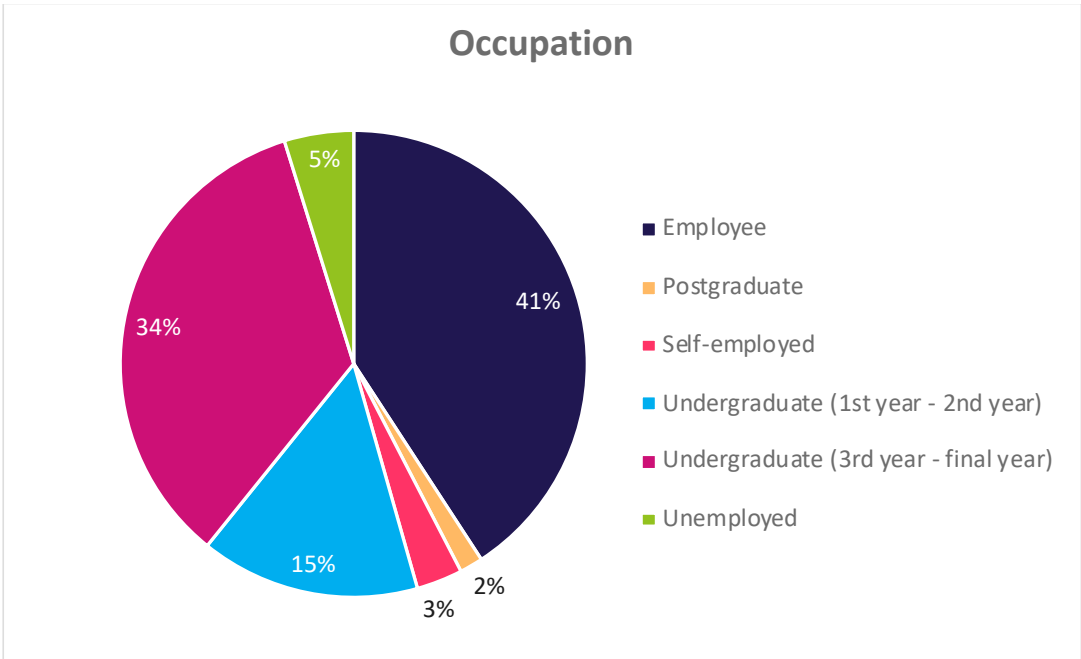


Chart 4 Sample occupation (n=125)

In terms of working experience, nearly all of Gen Z responded to the survey have less than three years of experience with the only exception of one person who answered to have been working for longer than that.

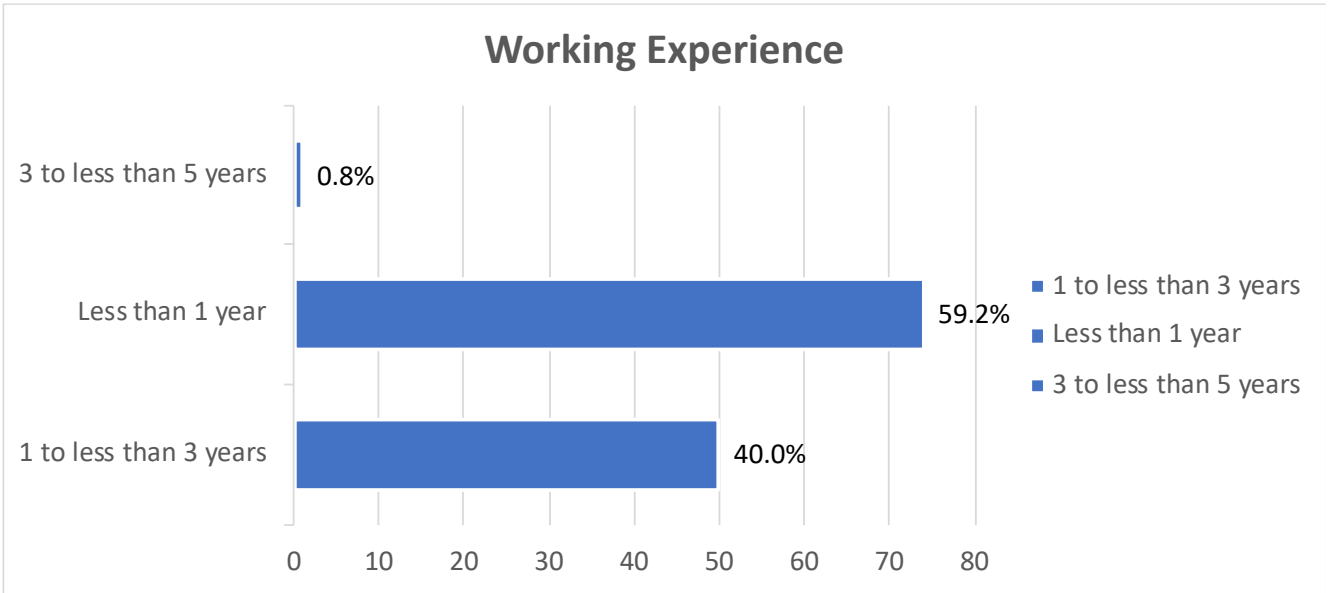


Chart 5 Sample working experience distribution (n=125)

In terms of educational background, 99% of respondents are pursuing higher education or have graduated with at least a Bachelor’s Degree. This information agrees with the suggestions at earlier part of the thesis that Gen Z are the highest educated generation to date.



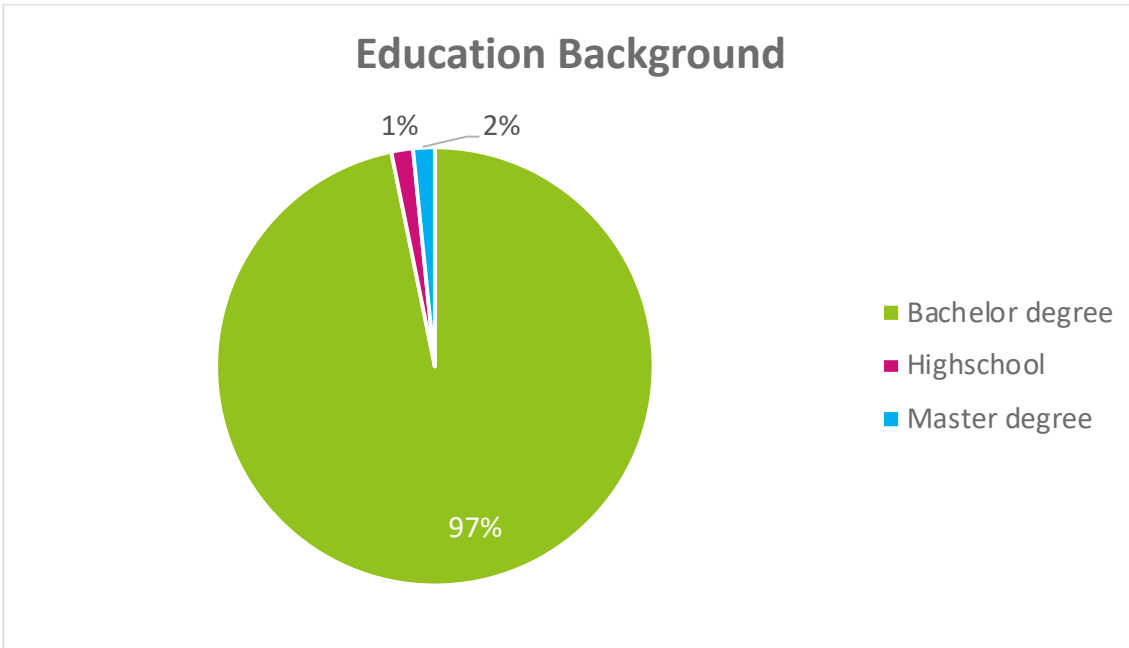


Chart 6 Sample education background (n=125)

### 1.3 Job types and areas of interest

Full-time jobs and internships are the two most popular types of job among respondents, with 62.4% and 26.4% of people saying they would search for them, respectively. While full-time jobs are more popularly sought after by people who have already been employed, internships are deemed important by undergraduates.

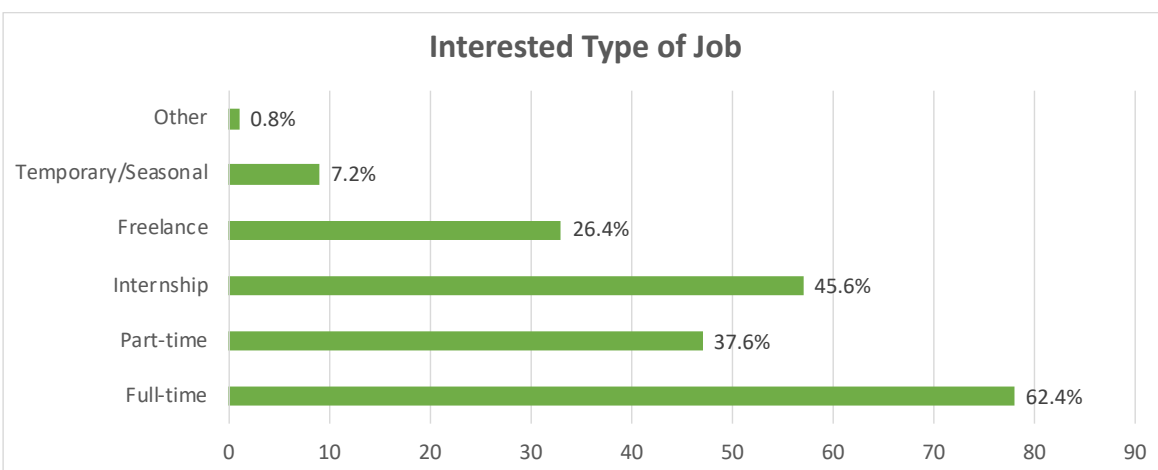


Chart 7 Sample interested job types (n=125)

In terms of interested job industries, Business & Management, Banking & Finance, Entertainment & Media, Information Technology & Telecommunications, and Human Resources Management are the most popular areas the survey participants are paying

attention to. Among those, Business & Management is the dominant field with more than 30% of responses showing interests toward this area.

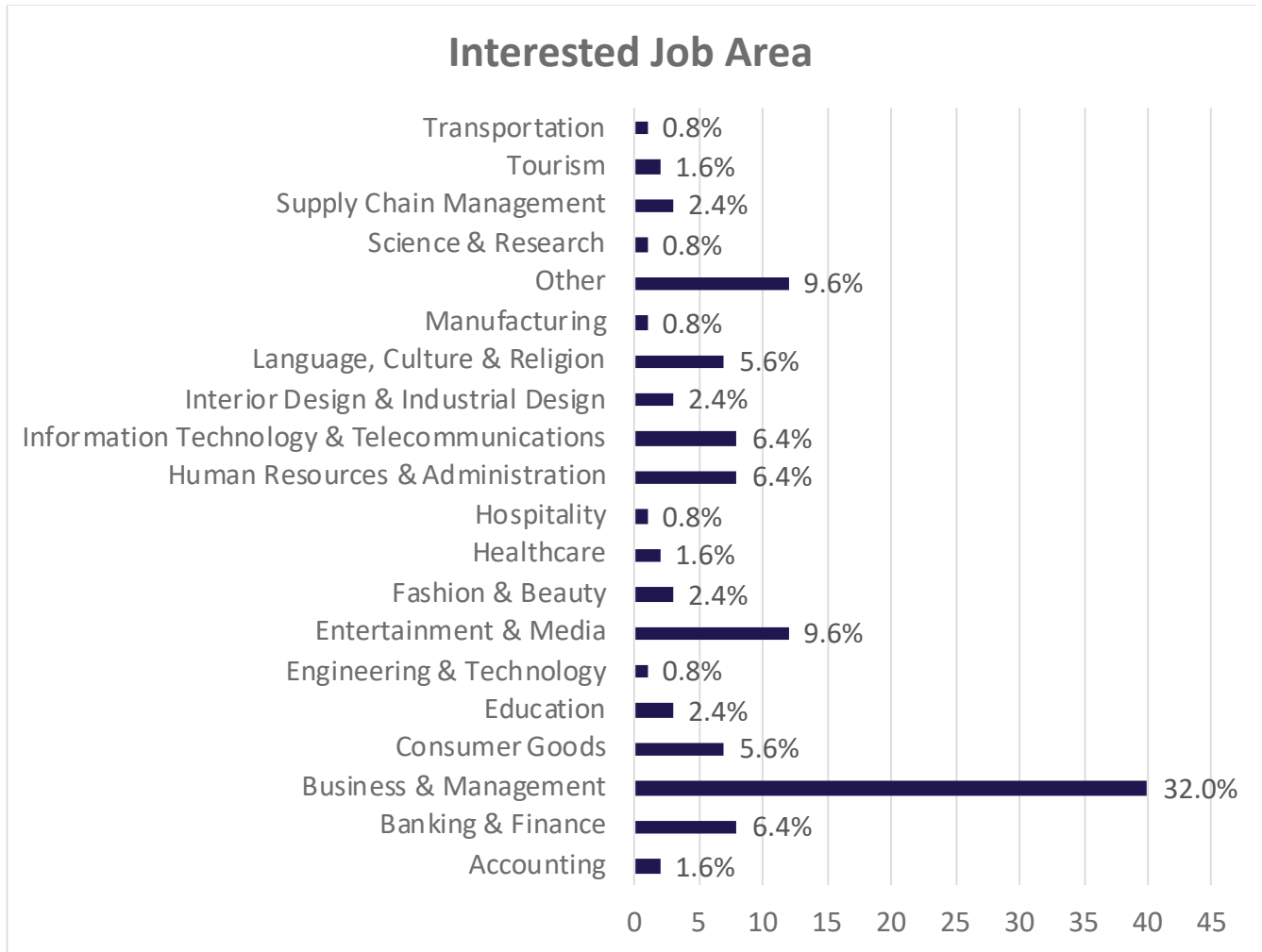


Chart 8 Sample interested job areas (n=125)

## 2 Research results

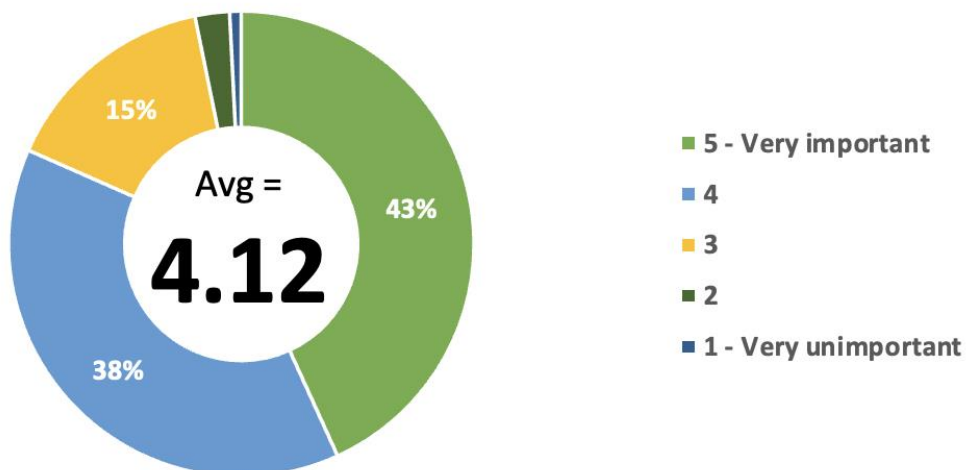
### 2.1 Vietnamese Gen Z's perception on Employer Brand

#### Importance of Employer Brand in Vietnamese Gen Z job seeking decisions

Entering the first main section of the survey, the participants are asked “How important is Employer Brand to you when searching for a job?” and required to rate their opinions on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being “Very unimportant”, 2 as “Unimportant”, 3 is a neutral score (neither important nor unimportant), 4 and 5 are “Important” and “Very important”, which scale will be used for other questions in this section. The scale can be considered an interval numeric scale keeping in mind the assumption that the grades are equally distant.

The mentioned question has revealed that the majority of Vietnamese Gen Z respondents consider Employer Brand an important aspect they consider when searching for job and job information. 81% of survey participants rated 4 or 5– the two highest grades in the importance scale, among which, 5 accounts for 43% and 4 takes 38%. The average rating for the importance of Employer Brand in job seeking among the sample is 4.12, and the standard deviation is 0.85.

#### How important is Employer Brand to you when searching for a job? (n=125)



stDev = 0.85

Chart 9 Importance of Employer Brand

### Testing H1: Employer Brand is important to Vietnamese Generation Z job seekers

The authors have conducted a one-tailed t-hypothesis test on the sample size of 125 (df=124) to test whether the population average would be equal or higher than 4. Support for this hypothesis test means it can be safely stated that Employer Brand is considered an important to very important part influencing the job seeking decisions.

The hypothesis tests used in this section followed the statistical hypothesis testing methodologies for one-sample one-tailed t-test for the mean, guidance and samples can be found in statistics guidebooks and articles, such as NCSS Statistical Procedures guides.

The result from the hypothesis test 1 with 95% confidence level has shown support for H1 (see Table 1), therefore, the authors have sufficient evidence to claim that Employer Brand is important to Vietnamese Generation Z job seekers.

Table 1 Hypothesis Test 1 (n=125)

<b>H1: Employer Brand <math>\geq</math> 4</b>	
Sample mean	4.12
Hypo. mean	4
stdev	0.85
st error	0.076
t-value ( $\alpha=0.05$ )	-1.658
t-value ( $\alpha=0.01$ )	-2.358
t-stat	1.578
<b>Result (<math>\alpha=0.05</math>)</b>	<b>Support</b>

To further understand the differences in perceptions regarding the importance of Employer Brand between a working Gen Z and an undergraduate Gen Z, the authors combined and compared two dominant groups: (1) Working people with 57 samples, comprising of post-graduate, employee and self-employed respondents, and (2) University students with 62 samples, comprising of university students (year 1 to year final). The result in Chart 10 reflects that both groups consider Employer Branding as important with the average mean score being 4.0 and 4.4 for university student group and working group respectively. However, Employer Brand seems to be regarded as more important for people that has already been working than

the student group. On the other hand, the university students seem to put less emphasis on the importance of Employer Brand comparing to the total sample's average.

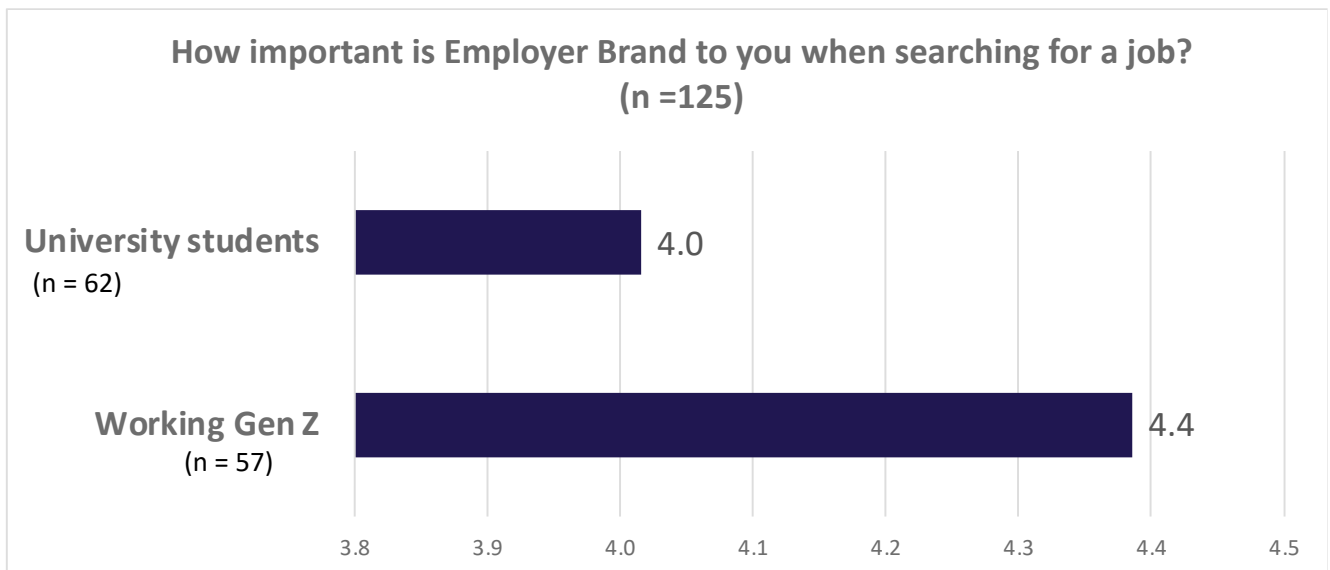


Chart 10 Importance of Employer Brand to University students and Working Gen Z

### **Importance of the Employer Brand instrumental – symbolic image factors in Vietnamese Gen Z job seeking decisions**

To dive deeper into the studies of Employer Brand image and the reviewed Instrumental-Symbolic framework, the thesis authors have predefined 12 instrumental factors and 5 symbolic factors selected and consolidated from other publications on job seeking and employer branding. The instrumental factors include **salary & benefits, job security, advancement opportunity, working location, office & facilities, training & development, innovative & agile job content, highly demanding & challenging job content, easy & predictable job content, company's products or services, relationship with coworkers, and leadership style**. The symbolic factors derive from the original Lievens and Highhouse (2003)'s publications on the instrumental-symbolic framework, which includes **sincerity, innovativeness, competence, prestige, and robustness**.

#### **Instrumental factors**

To understand how Vietnamese Gen Z perceive the importance of each symbolic factor, the respondents are asked to use the same rating scale from 1 to 5 to rate each factor introduced

under the question “How important are the following instrumental factors to you when searching for a job?” Chart 11 below has summarized the responses from 125 survey participants with the percentage of grade 5 rating and accumulated grade 4 and 5 rating shown. As highlighted in the chart, four instrumental factors including **salary & benefits, advancement opportunity, training & development, and leadership style** mean the most to Vietnamese Gen Z job seekers. All these four factors have the accumulated percentage of 4 and 5 ratings equal to more than 90% of the responses, among which, 5 accounts for 56% to 65% of the total responses. This result is partly aligned with the authors’ original expectation. Another worth noting insight from the survey is that the surveyed Gen Z seems to be adventurous challenge-takers. While 85% and 77% of surveyed people consider innovative & agile and highly demanding & challenging jobs respectively to be important to them, an easy & predictable job is not very much to their taste with only 38% of respondents value it, the lowest figure among all 12 instrumental factors. The next least important factor is working location with only 22% of the respondents rated as 5 – Very Important, and 41% considered this factor as 4 in the important scale. This could indicate that some of Gen Z are not too hesitant traveling for work while they will still consider a reasonable travel distance when choosing their working location.

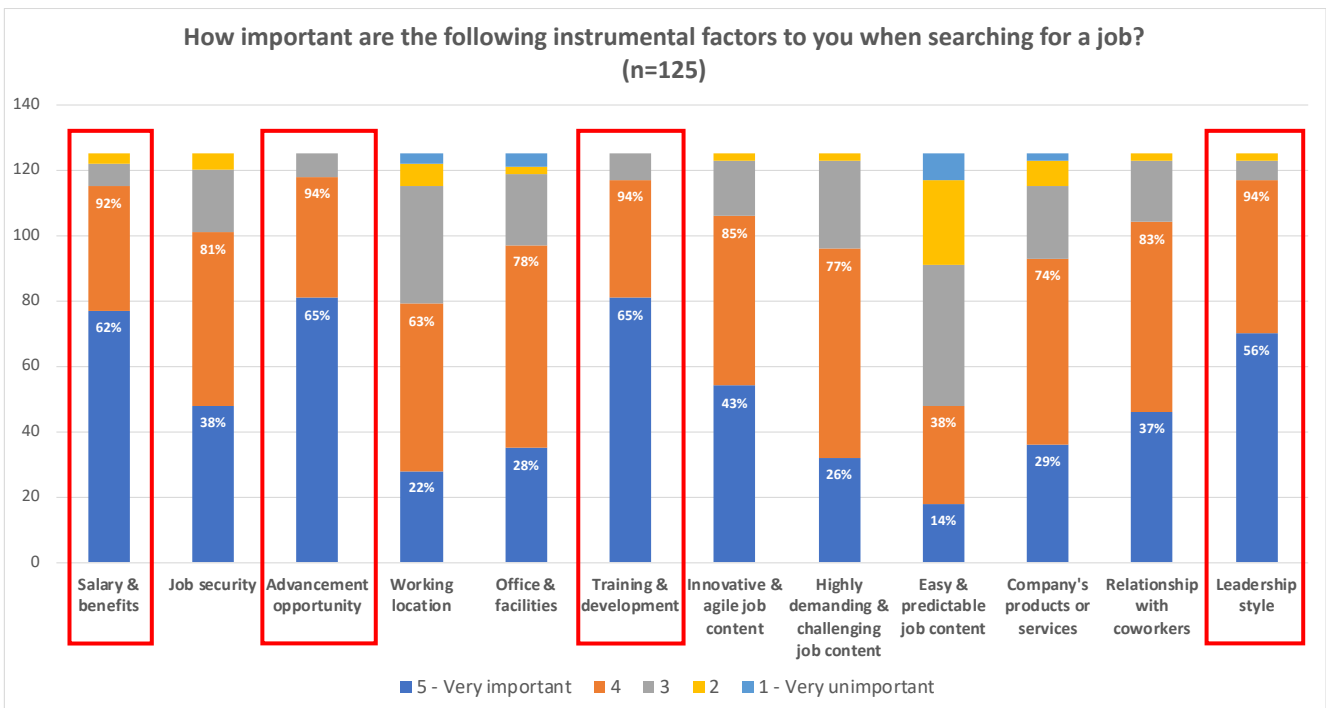


Chart 11 Importance of instrumental factors

To further confirm the hypothesized expectation, the authors have carried out a t-hypothesis test on the instrumental Employer Brand image factors to test the representativeness of the sample result against population data.

**Testing H2: Among the instrumental attributes of Employer Brand image, (1) good salary and benefits, (2) high job security, (3) innovative and agile job, and (4) career advancement opportunities are more important to Vietnamese Generation Z job seekers.**

The claim made in the above-mentioned hypothesis derives from the expectation that the average rating of the Vietnamese Gen Z population for each of the four factors **(1) good salary and benefits, (2) high job security, (3) innovative and agile job, and (4) career advancement opportunities** would be equal or higher than the sample's average rating score of all instrumental factors, which is recorded to be **4.14**. Thereby, hypothesis test 2 tries whether the population's average ratings of these four factors are higher than other factors and higher than 4.14.

Hypothesis test 2 with significance level  $\alpha=0.05$  and  $\alpha=0.01$  are presented in Table 2. The result of which supports all four instrumental factors included in the hypothesis, but it does not fully support H2 itself because the test failed to reject all remaining factors aside from the four stated in the hypothesis. Other instrumental factors including **training and development, relationship with coworkers, and leadership style** also appear to be very important considerations to Vietnamese Gen Z that they should be equally regarded alongside with the four hypothesized factors.

Additionally, other factors such as office & facilities, highly demanding & challenging job content are supported at significance level 0.01 and rejected at 0.05, which indicates that they have less meaning to people during job search. Finally, the rejection of three remaining factors at both significance levels implies that they have little impact on Vietnamese Gen Z's job seeking decision.

Table 2 Hypothesis Test 2 (n=125)

<b>Instrumental Factors</b>	<b>Sample mean</b>	<b>Hypo. mean</b>	<b>stdev</b>	<b>st error</b>	<b>t-value (<math>\alpha=0.05</math>)</b>	<b>t-value (<math>\alpha=0.01</math>)</b>	<b>t-stat</b>	<b>Result (<math>\alpha=0.05</math>)</b>	<b>Result (<math>\alpha=0.01</math>)</b>
<b>Salary &amp; benefits</b>	<b>4.51</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>0.064</b>	<b>-1.658</b>	<b>-2.358</b>	<b>5.824</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Support</b>
<b>Job security</b>	<b>4.15</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>0.074</b>	<b>-1.658</b>	<b>-2.358</b>	<b>0.163</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Support</b>
<b>Advancement opportunity</b>	<b>4.59</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>0.053</b>	<b>-1.658</b>	<b>-2.358</b>	<b>8.465</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Support</b>
Working location	3.75	4.14	0.95	0.085	-1.658	-2.358	-4.579	<b>Reject</b>	<b>Reject</b>
Office & facilities	3.98	4.14	0.90	0.081	-1.658	-2.358	-2.032	<b>Reject</b>	<b>Support</b>
<b>Training &amp; development</b>	<b>4.58</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>0.055</b>	<b>-1.658</b>	<b>-2.358</b>	<b>8.118</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Support</b>
<b>Innovative &amp; agile job content</b>	<b>4.26</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>0.067</b>	<b>-1.658</b>	<b>-2.358</b>	<b>1.841</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Support</b>
Highly demanding & challenging job content	4.01	4.14	0.74	0.066	-1.658	-2.358	-2.008	<b>Reject</b>	<b>Support</b>
Easy & predictable job content	3.19	4.14	1.12	0.100	-1.658	-2.358	-9.468	<b>Reject</b>	<b>Reject</b>
Company's products or services	3.94	4.14	0.93	0.083	-1.658	-2.358	-2.450	<b>Reject</b>	<b>Reject</b>
<b>Relationship with coworkers</b>	<b>4.18</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>0.067</b>	<b>-1.658</b>	<b>-2.358</b>	<b>0.661</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Support</b>
<b>Leadership style</b>	<b>4.48</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>0.060</b>	<b>-1.658</b>	<b>-2.358</b>	<b>5.697</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Support</b>



### Symbolic factors

Using the same 5-point rating scale as above for five symbolic factors, the result for the question “How important are the following symbolic factors to you when searching for a job?” is completely aligned with the authors’ expectation. **Sincerity, innovativeness, and competence** of an employer are the three traits most frequently perceived as important by 125 survey participants with around 60% of people rated 5 for them, and 93% – 94% people rated 4 or 5.

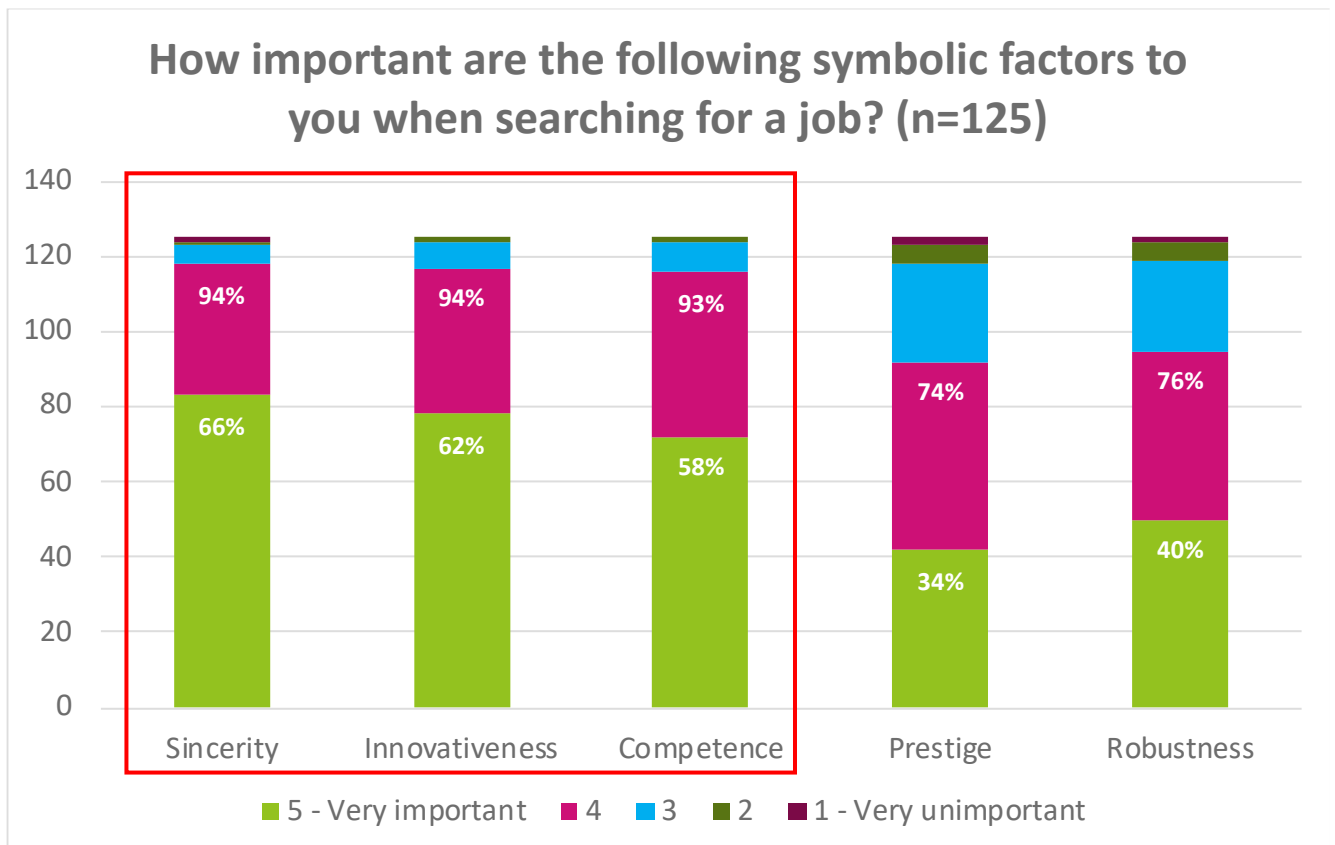


Chart 12 Importance of symbolic factors

To better explore if the situation found in the survey applies to the population, a similar hypothesis test as above is also conducted.

**Testing H3: Among the symbolic traits of Employer Brand image, (1) sincerity, (2) innovativeness, and (3) competence are more important to Vietnamese Generation Z job seekers.**

The test checks if **(1) sincerity, (2) innovativeness, and (3) competence** individual average ratings of the population would exceed the overall sample average of all symbolic factors, which is **4.35**. The result shows a full support toward H3 that the three stated factors are supported for both significance levels, while the remaining two are rejected. This result backs up the authors’ hypothesis that **Sincerity, Innovativeness, and Competence have significantly**

**stronger influence** on Vietnamese Gen Z job seekers' decisions than the other employer image symbolic factors (see Table 3).

Table 3 Hypothesis Test 3 (n=125)

Instrumental Factors	Sample mean	Hypo. mean	stdev	st error	t-value ( $\alpha=0.05$ )	t-value ( $\alpha=0.01$ )	t-stat	Result ( $\alpha=0.05$ )	Result ( $\alpha=0.01$ )
Sincerity	4.58	4.35	0.69	0.061	-1.658	-2.358	3.813	Support	Support
Innovativeness	4.55	4.35	0.64	0.057	-1.658	-2.358	3.525	Support	Support
Competence	4.50	4.35	0.66	0.059	-1.658	-2.358	2.491	Support	Support
Prestige	4.00	4.35	0.92	0.083	-1.658	-2.358	-4.232	Reject	Reject
Robustness	4.10	4.35	0.91	0.081	-1.658	-2.358	-3.038	Reject	Reject

## 2.2 Job seeking behavior

Another main objective of the thesis is to find out the job seeking behavior of Vietnamese Gen Z, thereby providing employers with insights and recommendations regarding communicating touchpoints and channels so that the employers can best communicate their desired employer brand to the potential candidates. In order to study the job seekers' behavior, the survey participants are asked a set of questions regarding whether they do research on the employer's information and reviews before applying, and which channels they use to search for this information.

### Information researching behavior

The first question in this section is "Do you search for information about the employer you want to apply for?", to which, **63% of respondents saying they always search for the employer**

**information before applying**, 36% said they sometimes do the research, and only 1 respondent never did any research prior to applying (see Chart 13). This confirms the authors' stated assumptions that before making any employment decisions, job seekers are keen on collecting a comprehensive set of information to answer their question: "What does it feel like working at the target employer?".

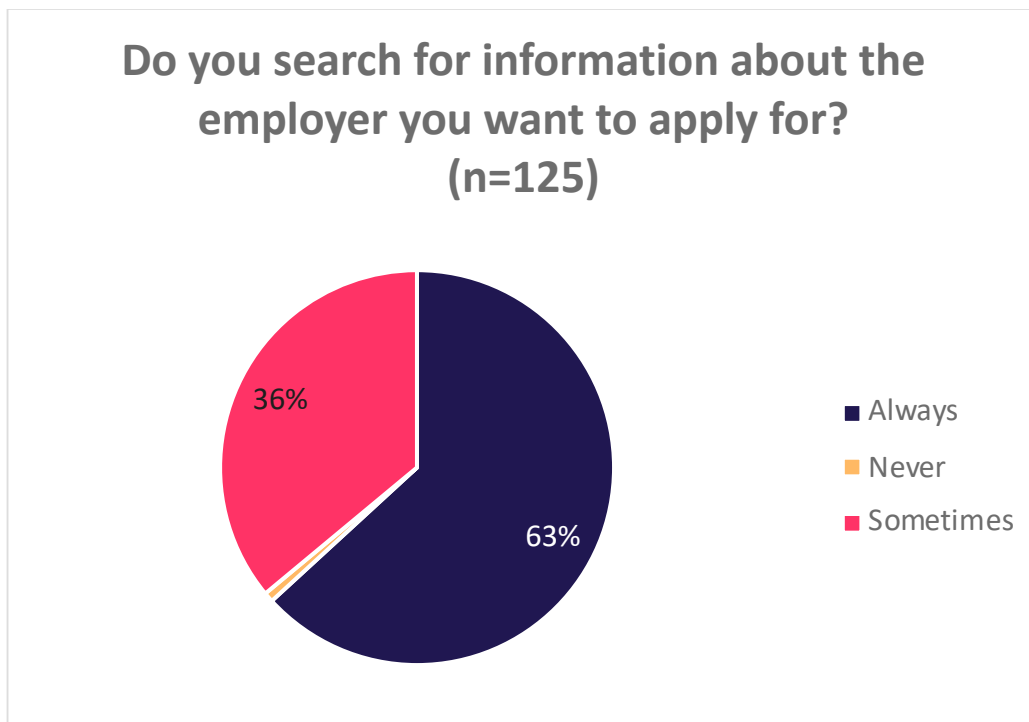


Chart 13 Information seeking behavior

The 124 people who do have information research attempts are further asked "Which channels do you use to search for information about the employer you want to apply for?"

Regarding the channels used for searching employer's information, a variety of popular channels were provided for selection, and the respondents were also free to add any additional channels not included in the selection. The result of this question (Chart 14) shows that the most popular information channels are **job boards, social networks, and company's website**, which are used by **80%, 88% and 83%** of respondents, respectively. It is also revealed that online news sites are the least used channel by people to find information about employers with only 24% of respondents saying they use it.

### Which channels do you use to search for information about the employer you want to apply for? (n=124)

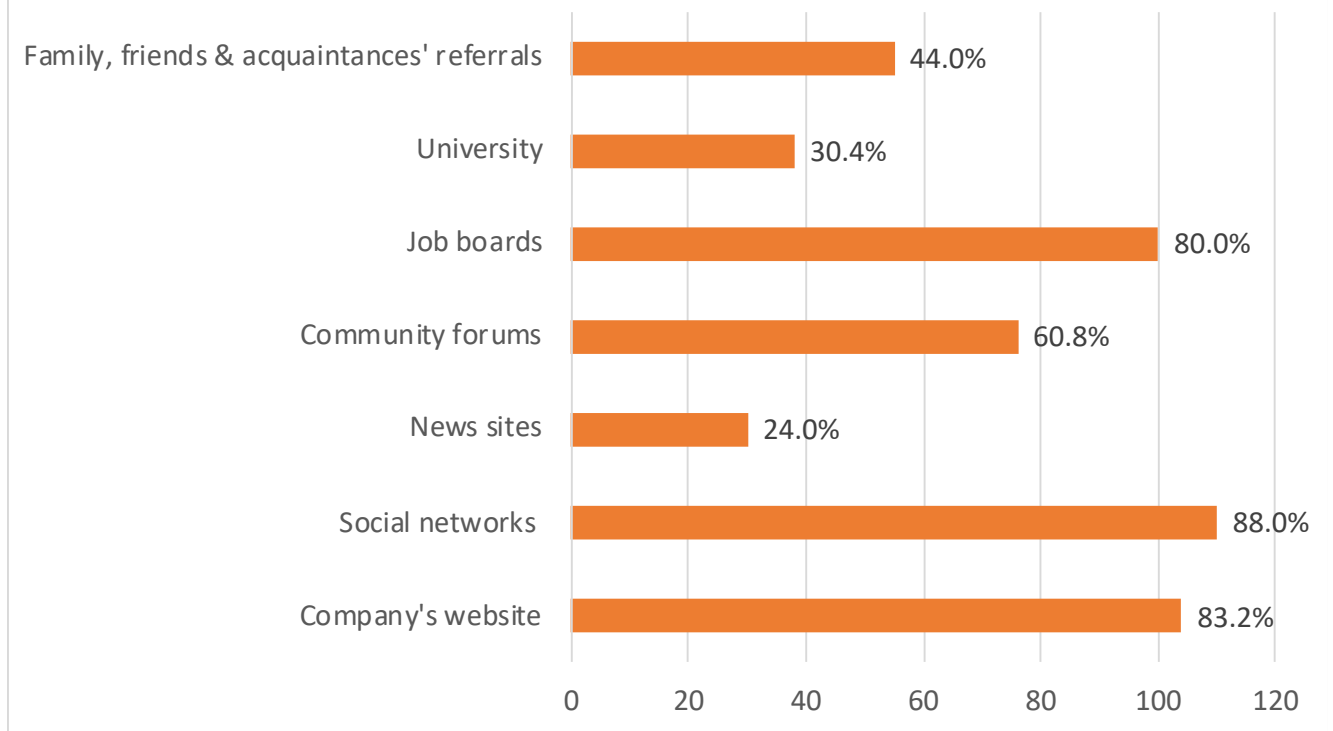


Chart 14 Information channels preference among respondents

The authors then asked the respondents to clarify their ratings on the usefulness of the listed channels in terms of whether the survey participants usually find what they look for from that channel. The analysis of the rating results has shown that company's website is deemed most useful, followed by social media and then job boards (see Table 4). This corresponds to the previous question's result, which means people choose a channel based on its usefulness.

Table 4 Usefulness of employer information channels

Ranking	Usefulness of channel
1 - Most useful	Company's website
2	Social networks
3	Job boards
4	Community forums
5	Family, friends & acquaintances' referrals
6	University
7 - Least useful	News sites

### **Employer reviews researching behavior**

The last part of the survey asked the respondents if they research about the reviews related to the employer and if yes, which reviews channel they would prefer. Reviews here are defined as the ratings, comments, recommendations, or warnings from other people who have experience with the said employer such as past or current employees, past candidates, stakeholders, partners, etc.

Among 125 respondents, **69% of people always find and read reviews about the employer**, 29% sometimes do so, and only 2% (or 3 people) said they never search for reviews about the potential employer when applying for a job (Chart 15). This result is in general quite similar to the pattern seen in information seeking behavior and according to the analysis, 80% of people who said they always research employer information also always search for employer reviews.

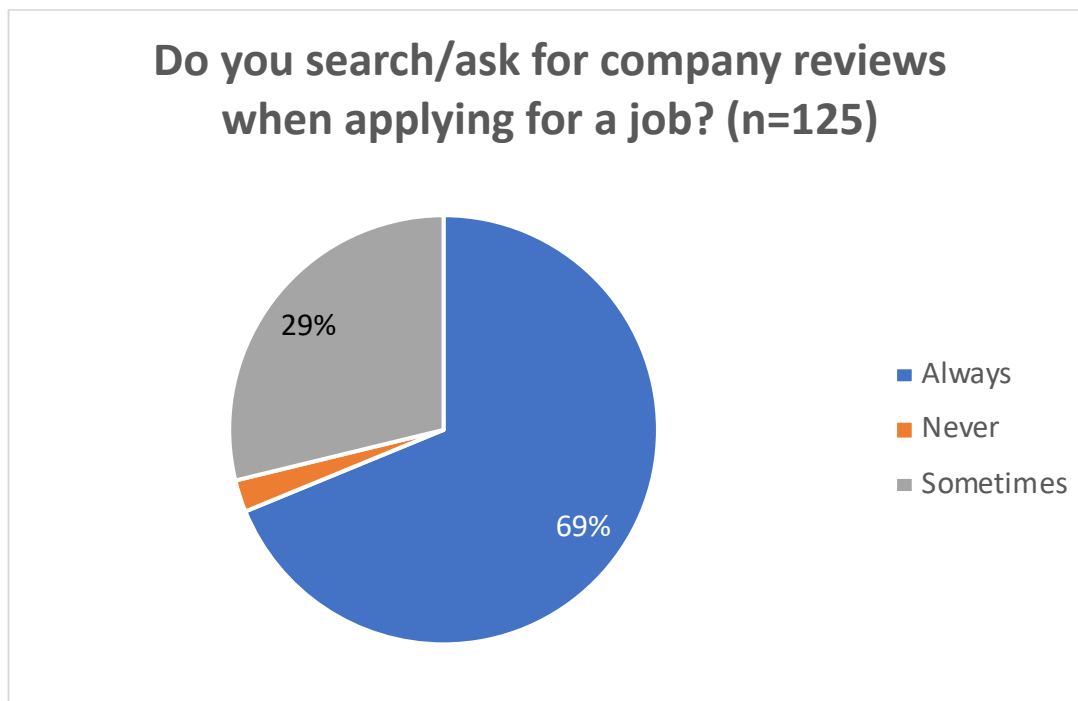


Chart 15 Employer reviews researching behavior

In terms of the channels used for reading reviews, the responses are distributed more evenly. Except for employer rankings that receive less attention, the other reviews channels are quite equally popular, especially the online channels including social network forums, job review sites, and job boards are popular among job seekers. Job boards reviews appear to be most viewed by Vietnamese Gen Z job seekers with 68% of 122 respondents saying they visit it for reading reviews. (see Chart 16)

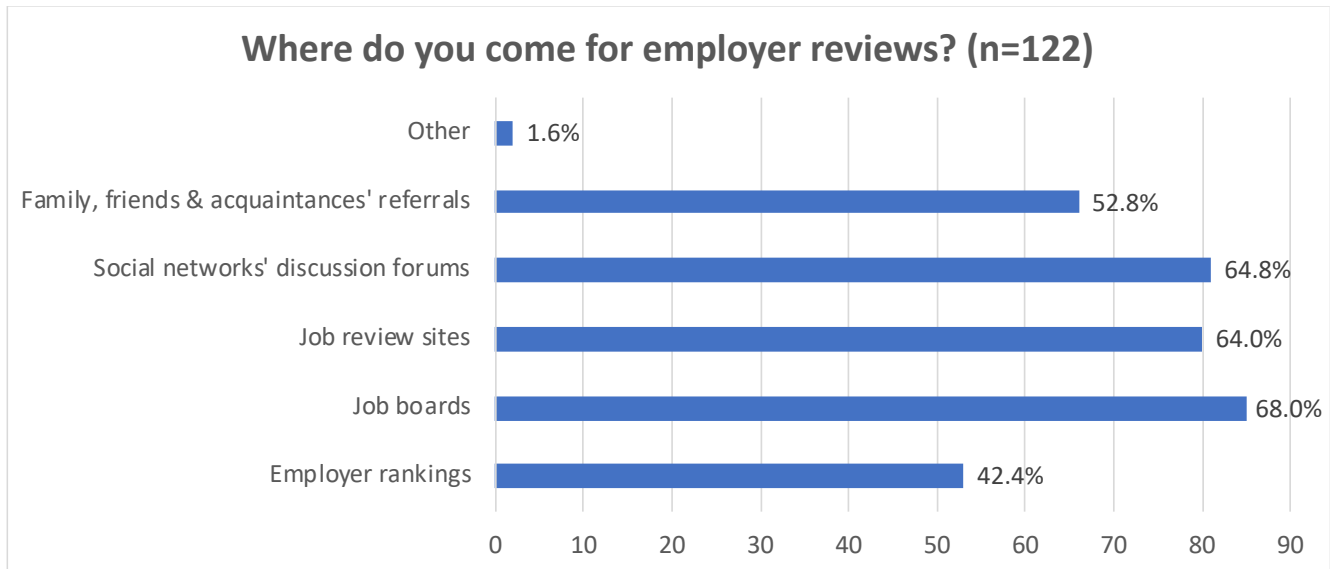


Chart 16 Employer reviews channels preference among respondents

### 3 Conclusion and discussion

#### 3.1 Theoretical and hypothesis summary

Regarding the theoretical framework developed earlier, Employer Brand is defined as an identifier, an exclusive perceived benefits package attached to an employer and an employment offer of which the benefits can be functional, economic, and psychological (Ambler & Barrow 1996, p.3; Backhaus 2004; Theurer et al. 2018). Despite being a fairly new concept, many HRM and recruitment researchers posited that Employer Brand can bring off a unique identity to a company as an employer. Moreover, Employer Brand is established to give an employer unique values and extensive competitive edges, distinguishing that employer from its labor market competitor. With that established, Employer Branding is described to be a process of synthesizing and applying the marketing and branding principles to the HR field, in which the organization communicate its desirable authenticity and difference as an employer to the target current and potential employees (Edwards 2010). The whole dynamic of Employer Brand is in fact an asset to the company itself, hence the concept of Employer Brand equity is established in order to fully understand the Employer Brand concept and therefore implement Employer Branding practices. In Chapter II, Employer Brand Equity is defined as an “intangible asset in the minds of both existing and potential employees which has been built up by good

marketing and HR practices” (Ambler & Barrow 1996, p.4). Additionally, Employer Brand Equity is referred as the outcomes of employment decisions that are attributable to an Employer Brand. Employer Brand Equity comprises a set of attributes that can both significantly influence the decision making of potential employees regarding their decision to whether work for that organization or not as well as the current employees’ loyalty (Kamel and Albassami, 2015). Moreover, Employer Brand equity is built upon the job seekers’ perceptions rather than objective factors (Aaker, 1996; Lassar, Mittal and Sharma, 1995). Also, these perceptions are formed by the job seekers’ employer awareness, employer knowledge and association of that Employer Brand. For this reason, Employer Brand and Employer Brand equity are regarded as perceptive. The attributes structuring an Employer Brand and are categorized into two groups: instrumental attributes and symbolic attributes. Instrumental attributes are those factors that are described to be objective, physical, and tangible whereas symbolic represent subjective, intangible traits of an employer. However, as stated that the whole Employer Brand and Employer Brand equity are perceptive, the attributes are most often derived from job seekers’ own thoughts. These attributes, alongside with other signals received from the employer, act as determining factors influencing the job seekers’ decision making.

Nowadays, Employer Brand and its practices are widely applied as recruitment strategies, especially in Vietnam, where Gen Z – the younger and higher-skilled are generation is entering the labor market while the country’s labor market landscape is experiencing alarming shortage for high quality workforce. Therefore, this thesis is established with aim to help companies in Vietnam gain better understanding of the Gen Z job seekers, especially in terms of their attraction to Employer Brand and perception of an employer of choice; therefore, better prepare and adjust their HRM strategy to attract the young top talents. For this reason, the authors developed three hypotheses:

- H1: Employer Brand is important to Vietnamese Generation Z job seekers
- H2: Among the instrumental attributes of Employer Brand image, (1) good salary and benefits, (2) high job security, (3) innovative and agile job, and (4) career advancement opportunities are more important to Vietnamese Generation Z job seekers.
- H3: Among the symbolic traits of Employer Brand image, (1) sincerity, (2) innovativeness, and (3) competence are more important to Vietnamese Generation Z job seekers.

By answering these three hypotheses with empirical research, the authors were able to gain a comprehensive understanding of Employer Brand's importance in the mind of the Vietnamese Gen Z job seekers as well as understand which attributes are most important to the young talents. Thus, this would help the authors to provide recommendations to employers regarding their HRM and recruitment communication strategy.

### 3.2 Summary of empirical study

From the empirical results, it is confirmed that during job seeking process, Employer Brand is considered as an important factor for Vietnamese Gen Z, especially with the job seekers that already accumulate some amount of work experiences. In fact, the significance of Employer Brand is further enhanced as the Gen Z job seekers gain more work experiences.

From the results of hypothesis 2 testing where the top four instrumental attributes are salary and benefit, job security, job's innovativeness and agility and career advancement opportunity were selected to be most important to the Gen Z job seekers. However, this result does not fully support H2 where the top four factors reported to be most important instrumental attributes were **salary and benefit, career advancement opportunity, training and development and leadership style**. Therefore, only two instrumental attributes of H2 are confirmed to be more important than all others for Gen Z employees: these two attributes are **salary and benefit and career advancement opportunity**. However, job security and job's innovativeness and agility are still considered to be somewhat important for this generation's job seekers. Future research can examine further into this matter.

On the other hand, regarding H3, all three symbolic attributes that were hypothesized to be most important among all other symbolic attributes are confirmed to be more important. The three attributes are employer's **sincerity, innovativeness and competency**.

Moreover, the empirical result also confirmed that most Gen Z job seekers in Vietnam **actively search for the target employer's information**. The searched information can range from internal sources such as company's website and job postings on job boards (i.e. LinkedIn, Vietnamworks, etc.) to external sources such as word-of-mouth and online discussion on social networks (i.e. Facebook) and also discussion section (comment sections) on job boards. Additionally, the result shows that the source preference is determined upon each source's



usefulness. As previously discussed in this thesis, the usefulness of a source is determined based on its trustworthiness as well as the level of expertise that source provide. Moreover, based on the theoretical review, it is deduced that while external sources like social networks are the most popular channel for employer information research as it is regarded as more trustworthy, internal sources like the company's website is ranked most useful as it is considered to provide higher level of expertise. However, as per mentioned in the literature review, an internal source can also gain both level of expertise and credibility by balancing the negative and positive messages delivered in the communication. Therefore, employers can better utilize the internal sources like endorsement from current employees, especially with the gained trust level of word-of-mouth sources.

### **3.3 Conclusion and recommendation**

Overall, the empirical study has achieved the thesis objectives by confirming (or rejecting) a number of important theoretical assumptions about the Vietnamese Gen Z job seekers' perceptions on Employer Brand and their job seeking behaviors with regards to these perceptions. However, due to the geographical and time constraints, there are several appealing topics surrounding Employer Brand that the authors haven't been able to include in the scope of the survey, such as the impact of people's individual backgrounds and personalities on their perception about the Employer Brand and their job search behaviors. The authors also decided to leave out some possible study branches including the situations of change of mind/opinions about the employer between recruitment phase, the effects of previous rejection on later applying decisions, as well as some other intensive aspects of the topics that may have grasped the interest. The authors also call for future longitudinal studies of the Gen Z perceptions of Employer Brand to more reliably validate the results presented in this work. With that being said, future researchers may consider diving deeper into these topics and unveiling more valuable aspects of the Employer Brand concept.

Based on the findings concluded from the research results, the authors can reasonably recommend employers a few strategies that may help them in building a suitable Employer Brand and communicate that Brand to Vietnamese Gen Z job seekers. First of all, employers should start with reassessing their current employer value proposition, including how their image is being perceived by internal stakeholders and the external public, and placing that against the image they desire to portray to the targeted candidates. This step is crucial as it

determines the direction for next Employer Branding efforts. By having clear understanding of their current situation and the gap between the existing brand image and the ideal image, companies would be able to accurately design an effective Employer Branding plan to develop, adjust, or correct it to match targeted candidates' values and needs. Secondly, it is important that employers pay attention to creating an authentic and consistent image through their branding activities. Employers may refer to the instrumental and symbolic factors the authors have concluded in this study for adding more attractive images to their desired brand. More than any earlier generations, Generation Z is perhaps the people who value authenticity and truth the most, which means it is critical for them to find those aspects in a prospective employer. In that regard, employers who fail to develop themselves an appealing image that consistently and truthfully (no more, no less) reflect their actual organizational culture and offerings face the risks of pushing their wanted talents away.

Third, the authors also recommend employers to find the right channel to communicate their Employer Brand efficiently. As suggested in the survey results, Vietnamese Gen Z job seekers most frequently come to job boards, social networks, and company's own website to search for employer information, which indicates that employers may want to focus on their branding efforts on these channels to showcase their image among young talents. It is also equally important that companies put regular efforts in nurturing their image on the information channels by paying close attention to what the stakeholders and general public are saying about them. As discussed earlier, WOM is an extremely powerful tool that may be a friend or foe to employers, especially nowadays with the presence of internet. Gen Z as the digital natives have developed themselves the habit to validate information before making any important decisions, which urge employers to carefully develop and maintain a positive Employer Brand on not only official information channels but also on reviews and WOM channels. This can only be done when the companies stay true to their Employer Brand with both words and actions and keep their promises throughout the relationships with current employees and stakeholders.

Overall, this thesis aims to portray a big picture of the Employer Branding concept in the recruitment perspective with regards to the workforce entry of the youngest defined generation: Gen Z. The findings showcased may hopefully give useful insights that help employers make robust branding and recruitment investment for successful hiring of top talents.

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1. Survey questionnaire (English)

Appendix 2. Survey questionnaire (Vietnamese)

## Appendix 1. Survey questionnaire (English)

Employer Branding and Vietnamese Gen Z

01/12/2021, 19:45

### Employer Branding and Vietnamese Gen Z

This survey is a part of a research project studying Vietnamese Gen Z's perceptions regarding employer branding, conducted by two students at Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences. This survey DOES NOT collect or store any identifying information such as your name, email address and IP address. Therefore your answer will remain strictly confidential and anonymous. No one will be able to identify you or your answers, and no one will know whether or not you participated in the study.

This survey would take about 10 minutes to complete. Thank you for your participation!

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\* Required

1. Birth year \*

Ex: 1999

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2. Gender \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Male

Female

Prefer not to disclose

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Occupation \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Higher Education Student (year 1 - 2) *Skip to question 7*
- Higher Education Student (year 3 - 4) *Skip to question 8*
- Employee *Skip to question 8*
- Self-employed *Skip to question 7*
- Unemployed *Skip to question 7*
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. Working experience \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Less than 1 year
- 1 - less than 3 years
- 3 - less than 5 years
- 5 years or more

## 5. Educational background \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Highschool Diploma
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Personal status \*

Mark only one oval.

- Single, living with parents
- Single, NOT living with parents
- Married with kids
- Married with NO kids
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Skip to question 8

## Demand for Job

## 7. Are you current looking for a job? \*

Mark only one oval.

- Yes, actively
- Yes, casually
- No

## EMPLOYER BRAND PERCEPTION

## 8. What types of job are you considering? \*

Check all that apply.

- Full time
- Part time
- Internship
- Freelance
- Seasonal/Temporary

Other:  \_\_\_\_\_

## 9. Interested job area \*

Mark only one oval.

- Kế toán (Accounting)
- Tài chính & Ngân hàng (Banking & Finance)
- Kinh doanh & Quản trị (Business & Management)
- Hàng tiêu dùng (Consumer Goods )
- Kiến trúc, Xây dựng & Bất động sản (Architecture, Construction & Real Estate)
- Y tế & Chăm sóc sức khoẻ (Healthcare )
- Nhà hàng & Khách sạn (Hospitality )
- Quản trị nhân lực & Hành chính nhân sự (Human Resources & Administration)
- Luật (Legal)
- Giáo dục (Education )
- Công nghệ thông tin (Information Technology & Telecommunications)
- Kỹ thuật & Công nghệ (Engineering & Technology)
- Sản xuất (Manufacturing)
- Quản lý chuỗi cung ứng (Supply Chain )
- Ngôn ngữ, Văn hoá & Tôn giáo (Language, Culture & Religion)
- Truyền thông & Giải trí (Entertainment & Media)
- Vận tải (Transportation)
- Du lịch (Tourism)
- Nông lâm ngư nghiệp (Agriculture, Forestry & Fishery)
- Khoa học & Nghiên cứu (Science & Research)
- Thiết kế (Interior Design & Industrial Design)
- Thời trang & Làm đẹp (Fashion & Beauty)
- Other

## 10. How important is Employer Brand to you when searching for a job? \*

Employer Brand is the name, image, value you recall when thinking about a particular employer

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unimportant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very important

## 11. How likely are you to be interested in learning about a job opportunity from a new employer you haven't heard of? \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unlikely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very likely

## 12. How important is the public's opinions about the employer to you when searching for the job? \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unimportant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very important



## 13. Please rate the importance of these factors to you when looking for a job \*

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	1 = Very unimportant	2	3	4	5 = Very important
Salary & benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advancement opportunity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working location	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Office facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training & development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 14. Please rate the importance of these factors to you when looking for a job \*

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	1 = Very unimportant	2	3	4	5 = Very important
Innovative & agile job content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Highly demanding & challenging job content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Easy & predictable job content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Company's products/services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationship with coworkers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leadership style	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Please rate the importance of these factors to you when looking for a job \*

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	1 = Very unimportant	2	3	4	5 = Very important
Sincerity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Innovativeness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Competence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prestige	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Robustness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. Are there any negative factors that would make you want to avoid the company right awa

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#### JOB SEEKING BEHAVIORS

17. Do you search for information about the employer you want to apply for? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never    *Skip to question 20*

#### Employer Information Channel

18. Which channels do you use to search for information about the employer you want to apply for? \*

*Check all that apply.*

- Company's website  
 Social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)  
 News sites (VnExpress, Tuoitre, Kenh14, etc.)  
 Community forums (Facebook groups, Voz, etc.)  
 Job boards (LinkedIn, Vietnamworks, Ybox, etc.)  
 University  
 Family, friends & acquaintances' referrals

Other:  \_\_\_\_\_

19. How much do you value information from these channels? \*

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	1 = Very not useful	2	3	4	5 = Very useful
Company's website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social networks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
News sites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community forums	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job boards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
University	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family, friends & acquaintances' referrals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## JOB SEEKING BEHAVIORS

20. Do you search/ask for company reviews when applying? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

### Employer Review Channel

21. Where do you come for reviews? \*

*Check all that apply.*

- Employer rankings (e.g. Anphabe's "Top 100 Vietnam Best Places To Work" )
- Job boards
- Job review sites (Congtytot, Reviewcongty, v.v.)
- Social networks' discussion forums
- Family, friends & acquaintances' referrals

Other:  \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix 2. Survey questionnaire (Vietnamese)

Khảo sát về Thương hiệu Nhà tuyển dụng theo quan điểm của Thế hệ Z Việt Nam

21/11/2021, 10:32

### Khảo sát về Thương hiệu Nhà tuyển dụng theo quan điểm của Thế hệ Z Việt Nam

Khảo sát này là một phần của dự án nghiên cứu quan điểm của Thế hệ Z Việt Nam về Thương hiệu Nhà tuyển dụng. Dự án nghiên cứu được thực hiện bởi hai sinh viên của trường Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences.

Khảo sát này KHÔNG thu thập hay lưu trữ bất kì thông tin cá nhân nào của bạn (Ví dụ: tên, địa chỉ email, địa chỉ IP). Do đó, mọi câu trả lời sẽ được giữ bí mật và ẩn danh. Không ai có thể xác định danh tính của bạn, các câu trả lời của bạn hay việc bạn tham gia khảo sát này.

Khảo sát này sẽ cần khoảng 10 phút để hoàn thành. Cảm ơn bạn đã tham gia khảo sát!

\* Required

1. Năm sinh \*

Ví dụ: 1999

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Giới tính \*

Mark only one oval.

Nam

Nữ

Không muốn tiết lộ

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Nghề nghiệp \*

Mark only one oval.

Sinh viên (năm 1 - năm 2) Skip to question 7

Sinh viên (năm 3 - năm cuối) Skip to question 8

Nhân viên Skip to question 8

Công việc tự do Skip to question 7

Chưa có việc làm Skip to question 7

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. Số năm kinh nghiệm làm việc \*

Mark only one oval.

- Dưới 1 năm
- Từ 1 đến dưới 3 năm
- Từ 3 đến dưới 5 năm
- 5 năm hoặc hơn

## 5. Tình trạng bậc học \*

Vui lòng chọn bậc học gần nhất của bạn

Mark only one oval.

- Trung học phổ thông
- Đại học/ cao đẳng
- Thạc sĩ
- Nghiên cứu sinh/ Tiến sĩ
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Tình trạng cá nhân \*

Mark only one oval.

- Độc thân, hiện đang sống cùng bố mẹ/ gia đình
- Độc thân, hiện KHÔNG sống cùng bố mẹ/ gia đình
- Đã kết hôn, có con
- Đã kết hôn, chưa có con
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Skip to question 8

**Nhu cầu việc làm**

## 7. Hiện tại bạn có đang tìm kiếm công việc mới không? \*

Mark only one oval.

- Có, tôi đang tích cực tìm kiếm
- Có, nhưng chỉ thỉnh thoảng tìm kiếm
- Không

## QUAN ĐIỂM VỀ THƯƠNG HIỆU NHÀ TUYỂN DỤNG

## 8. Bạn đang tìm kiếm loại công việc nào? \*

(Có thể chọn nhiều hơn 1 đáp án)

*Check all that apply.* Toàn thời gian Bán thời gian Thực tập Freelance Thời vụOther:  \_\_\_\_\_



## 9. Ngành nghề bạn đang quan tâm nhất \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Kế toán (Accounting)
- Tài chính & Ngân hàng (Banking & Finance)
- Kinh doanh & Quản trị (Business & Management)
- Hàng tiêu dùng (Consumer Goods )
- Kiến trúc, Xây dựng & Bất động sản (Architecture, Construction & Real Estate)
- Y tế & Chăm sóc sức khoẻ (Healthcare )
- Nhà hàng & Khách sạn (Hospitality )
- Quản trị nhân lực & Hành chính nhân sự (Human Resources & Administration)
- Luật (Legal)
- Giáo dục (Education )
- Công nghệ thông tin (Information Technology & Telecommunications)
- Kỹ thuật & Công nghệ (Engineering & Technology)
- Sản xuất (Manufacturing)
- Quản lý chuỗi cung ứng (Supply Chain )
- Ngôn ngữ, Văn hoá & Tôn giáo (Language, Culture & Religion)
- Truyền thông & Giải trí (Entertainment & Media)
- Vận tải (Transportation)
- Du lịch (Tourism)
- Nông lâm ngư nghiệp (Agriculture, Forestry & Fishery)
- Khoa học & Nghiên cứu (Science & Research)
- Thiết kế (Interior Design & Industrial Design)
- Thời trang & Làm đẹp (Fashion & Beauty)
- Khác

## 10. Vui lòng đánh giá mức độ quan trọng của Thương hiệu Nhà tuyển dụng đối với bạn khi tìm kiếm một công việc mới (trên thang 1-5) \*

"Thương hiệu Nhà tuyển dụng" là tên và các hình ảnh, giá trị mà nhà tuyển dụng đó gợi nhớ cho bạn khi nghĩ đến

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Rất không quan trọng	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Rất quan trọng

11. Khả năng bạn sẽ quan tâm và tìm hiểu về các cơ hội việc làm từ một nhà tuyển dụng mà bạn chưa từng nghe tên là như thế nào? \*

(Thang 1-5, vui lòng kéo trái phải nếu thang không hiện hết)

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Rất ít khả năng tôi sẽ quan tâm và tìm hiểu	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Khả năng cao tôi sẽ quan tâm và tìm hiểu

12. Ý kiến của mọi người xung quanh đối với công việc của bạn có mức độ quan trọng như thế nào? \*

(Thang 1-5, vui lòng kéo trái phải nếu thang không hiện hết)

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Rất không quan trọng	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Rất quan trọng

13. Vui lòng đánh giá mức độ quan trọng của các yếu tố sau đây đối với bạn khi tìm kiếm việc làm \*

(Thang 1-5, vui lòng kéo trái phải nếu thang không hiện hết)

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 = Rất không quan trọng	2	3	4	5 = Rất quan trọng
Chế độ lương thưởng & phúc lợi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Công việc ổn định, bảo đảm	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cơ hội thăng tiến	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Địa điểm làm việc	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cơ sở vật chất nơi làm việc	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cơ hội đào tạo & phát triển	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. Vui lòng đánh giá mức độ quan trọng của các yếu tố sau đây đối với bạn khi tìm kiếm việc làm \*  
(Thang 1-5, vui lòng kéo trái phải nếu thang không hiện hết)

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 = Rất không quan trọng	2	3	4	5 = Rất quan trọng
Tính chất công việc: sáng tạo & linh hoạt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tính chất công việc: đòi hỏi cao & thử thách	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tính chất công việc: nhẹ nhàng & dễ nắm bắt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sản phẩm & Dịch vụ công ty kinh doanh	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mối quan hệ với đồng nghiệp	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Phong cách lãnh đạo của cấp trên	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Khi tìm kiếm việc làm, các yếu tố sau đây (của nhà tuyển dụng) có mức độ quan trọng như thế nào đối với bạn?  
(trên thang 1-5) \*

Lưu ý: Vui lòng cân nhắc trên cả phương diện hoạt động kinh doanh và hoạt động tuyển dụng của công ty

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 = Rất không quan trọng	2	3	4	5 = Rất quan trọng
Sự trung thực (Sincerity)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sự tiến bộ & sáng tạo (Innovativeness)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Năng lực của công ty (Competence)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vị thế & danh tiếng của công ty (Prestige)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sự quyết liệt & mạnh mẽ (Robustness & Aggressiveness)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. Có yếu tố hay thông tin tiêu cực nào về một công ty, nếu biết được, sẽ khiến bạn muốn tránh xa nhà tuyển dụng đó ngay lập tức không?

(Không bắt buộc)

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#### HÀNH VI CỦA NGƯỜI LAO ĐỘNG KHI TÌM VIỆC

17. Bạn có thường tìm kiếm/nghiên cứu thông tin về nhà tuyển dụng mà bạn có ý định ứng tuyển không? \*

Mark only one oval.

- Có, luôn luôn
- Có, thỉnh thoảng
- Không bao giờ    *Skip to question 20*

#### Kênh thông tin nhà tuyển dụng

18. Bạn thường sử dụng các kênh nào sau đây để tìm kiếm thông tin về nhà tuyển dụng? \*

(Có thể chọn nhiều hơn 1 đáp án)

Check all that apply.

- Website chính thức của công ty
- Mạng xã hội (Facebook, LinkedIn, v.v.)
- Kênh thông tin/ Báo điện tử (VnExpress, Tuoitre, Kenh14, v.v.)
- Các diễn đàn/ nhóm cộng đồng (Các nhóm tìm kiếm việc làm trên Facebook, Voz, v.v.)
- Các trang thông tin việc làm (LinkedIn, Vietnamworks, Ybox, v.v.)
- Thông tin từ các kênh của trường đại học (Hội nhóm, Văn phòng sinh viên, Giảng viên...)
- Thông tin từ gia đình, bạn bè, người quen

Other:  \_\_\_\_\_

19. Mức độ hữu ích của mỗi kênh trên như thế nào đối với bạn? \*

(Thang 1-5, vui lòng kéo trái phải nếu thang không hiện hết)

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 = Rất không hữu ích	2	3	4	5 = Rất hữu ích
Website chính thức của công ty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mạng xã hội	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kênh thông tin/ Báo điện tử	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Các diễn đàn/ nhóm cộng đồng	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Các trang thông tin việc làm	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thông tin từ các kênh của trường đại học	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thông tin từ gia đình, bạn bè, người quen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### HÀNH VI CỦA NGƯỜI LAO ĐỘNG KHI TÌM VIỆC

20. Trong quá trình tìm kiếm việc làm, bạn có chủ động tham khảo các ý kiến đánh giá về công ty mà bạn muốn ứ tuyển hay không? \*

Mark only one oval.

- Có, luôn luôn
- Có, thỉnh thoảng
- Không bao giờ

#### Kênh đánh giá nhà tuyển dụng

21. Khi tìm kiếm các ý kiến đánh giá về nhà tuyển dụng, bạn hay sử dụng các kênh nào sau đây? \*

(Có thể chọn nhiều hơn 1 đáp án)

Check all that apply.

- Các bảng xếp hạng nhà tuyển dụng (Ví dụ: BXH "100 nơi làm việc tốt nhất Việt Nam" của Anphabe)
- Các trang thông tin việc làm
- Các trang thảo luận về nhà tuyển dụng, việc làm (Congtytot, Reviewcongty, v.v.)
- Các hội nhóm, chuyên mục thảo luận về nhà tuyển dụng, việc làm
- Thông tin từ gia đình, bạn bè, người quen

Other:  \_\_\_\_\_

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