

Effect of Employer Attractiveness on Application Intention of Z Generation Job Seekers in Sri Lanka

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The purpose of this study is to identify the expectations of Z Generation when selecting their future employer. With the arrival of Z Generation at the workplace, understanding the expectations of the Z Generation is essential to attract best talent out of them to organizations. The unique nature of the Z Generation will make this understanding, a crucial concern among many employers in the near future. At the same time, it is hard to find extant literature focusing on this aspect of Z Generation. This study contributes to find a solution to this problem and fill this knowledge gap. Through the findings of the study, employers receive the opportunity to direct their employer branding strategies to the right direction in order to attract Z Generation in the future. The study was a cross sectional, quantitative study which is deductive in nature. Z Generation job seekers were chosen as the population of the study, which is unknown in terms of the number. Sample size was 250 as per hair method and sample to item ratio, for this unknown population. Data collection was done via an online questionnaire while following convenience sampling technique. Altogether 277 responses were collected for the study via questionnaire. After removing the responses of individuals who are not seeking for a job and other data cleaning processes, no. of respondents was finalized at 229. Data collected were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), version 29.0 following simple linear regression analysis and multiple regression analysis techniques. The results of the study indicated that, employer attractiveness significantly affects the job application intention of Z Generation Job seekers in Sri Lanka. At the same time, it was found that interest value (Self-confidence, self-satisfaction of working in an organization, career enhancing experience, career progression and recognition from the management) and application value (Opportunity to teach and apply their knowledge, customer-oriented nature and humanitarian nature of the organization, acceptance and belongingness) as the highly preferred aspects of an employer when choosing their future employer by Z Generation job seekers. Researchers also found that the gender of the job seeker significantly moderates the relationship between employer attractiveness and application intention, whereas the level of education and highly focused field of study does not moderate the relationship between employer attractiveness and application intention of Z Generation job seekers in Sri Lanka significantly. Based on the findings of the study, employers can direct their employer branding strategies towards interest value and application value, which will help them to attract the most suitable candidate without incurring huge costs on campaigns with huge costs and less focus by Z Generation - the future of work. The use of the convenience sampling method and the inability to find expectations of job seekers in different educational levels and fields of study separately is a limitation of this study. In addition, the use of a standard questionnaire which was developed in the year 2005 is also a limitation since it does not consider the latest developments in the world we live today.

Keywords: *Employer Attractiveness, Application Intention, Z Generation, Gender, Level of Education, Field of Study*

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