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## MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Mediating role of organizational attractiveness on the relationship between green recruitment and job pursuit intention among students of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

Muhammad Hamza Khan<sup>1</sup> and Syaharizatul Noorizwan Muktar<sup>1\*</sup>

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to investigate whether green recruitment practice attracts prospective candidates to join environmental responsible firms through organizational attractiveness. A total of 127 students from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia participated in the survey. SPSS version 23 was used to test the mediation model with the help of regression analysis. Results showed that green recruitment relates positively to job pursuit intention and organizational attractiveness partially mediates the relationship and students studying in universiti teknologi Malaysia have higher job pursuit intention towards environment responsible firms. Findings further highlight that green recruitment is a source of attracting potential candidates to pursue career in the green organizations and will allow practitioners to merge green human resource management with their traditional human resource policies to recruit quality candidates. Finally, by empirically providing positive outcomes this study adds to the body of literature in the field of green human resource management which is still at emerging stages.



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### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Green Human Resource Management is the need of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Due to ever-rising concern to environmentalism, the firms are closely audited for environmental damage caused by their business operations. Green Recruitment is the modern approach which comes under the umbrella of green human resource management allows organizations to target a pool of candidates who are environmentally responsible. Another point of inflection which differentiates green recruitment from traditional recruitment is the digital transformation in which potential candidates are hired through the use of technology in order to minimize travel impact therefore HR 4.0 and green recruitment are interrelated. Both HR 4.0 and Green Recruitment strives for attracting qualified talents, incorporating green innovative culture in the organization and gaining competitive edge. Professional around the world get jobs from organizations more frequently than in the past. Therefore, it is necessary to make attractive recruitment style for the current generation that is born in today's age of technology.

**Subjects: Environmental Policy; Corporate Social Responsibility & Business Ethics; Human Resource Management**

**Keywords: green recruitment; green human resource management; organizational attractiveness; job pursuit intention**

## 1. Introduction

Importance of sustainable development and concern for the environmental issues are among the top priorities of the developed and developing world (Gupta, 2015) and all is due to the heavy industrial growth which depleted the environment (Jabbour & Santos, 2008). As a consequence, nowadays most of the organizations have become concerned about green practices and merging “green” in their organizational strategies and hence helps reducing and eliminating ecological wastage in their organizational activities (Ahmad, 2015; Shrivastava & Berger, 2010). In this regard, acknowledging green human resource management will nourish organization to execute green tasks by flourishing employee behaviours and attitudes (Jackson & Seo, 2010; Renwick et al., 2016; Shen et al., 2018)

According to Zoogah (2011) “Green HRM is integration and transformation of social information through HR managers with a dynamic, cognitive and psychological approach to encourage and manage green behaviours”. Jabbour and Santos (2008) emphasized the need to merge sustainability with the human resource management, in addition they gave an empirical evidence of integrating the human resource management practices with the environmental management to boost organizational environmental performance based on Brazilian firms. GHRM comprises of those HRM policies and practices that inspire sustainable use of resources and reduce the harmful effects on the environment originating from business activities (Zoogah, 2011). The concept of green human resource management desires to recruit a labour force that is environmentally sound and faithful to sustainability issues (Masri & Jaaron, 2017). For instant, referring to green recruitment which comes under the umbrella of GHRM to attract potential candidates using green branding (Tang et al., 2018), selecting employees using environmental criteria such as environmental knowledge (Jose Chiappetta, 2011; Masri & Jaaron, 2017), training of employees to create awareness for environmental issues (Jabbour, 2013; Tang et al., 2018), setting green performance appraisal (Nejati et al., 2017; Tang et al., 2018), giving monetary and non-monetary awards on the achievement of environmental goals (Yusoff et al., 2018) and involving employees in solving the environmental issues (Mishra, 2017).

The concept of green human resource management is a new research paradigm and recent studies have explored its relationship with various environmental outcomes. For example, Pinzone et al. (2016) surveyed English national health-care sector and noted a positive relationship between GHRM practices and organizational citizenship behaviour for the environment through mediating effect of collective affective commitment to environmental management change. Masri and Jaaron (2017) reported a positive relationship of GHRM practices and environmental performance in Palestine manufacturing corporations. Kim et al. (2019) studied GHRM on employees’ organizational commitment, and green behaviours among hotels environmental performance in Thailand.

Seeing the above scenario, the existing literature on GHRM scholarship have been performed at organizational level and focused on the organizational performance and green behaviours (Jabbour et al., 2010; Masri & Jaaron, 2017; Pinzone et al., 2016). The studies at employee level were mostly checking the effect of GHRM on employees’ attitude and behaviours (Kim et al., 2019; Shen et al., 2018)

By considering the above discussion points, the authors have noted some of the gaps in the GHRM scholarship. Firstly, organizational level studies were mostly performed, secondly employee level studies were mainly focused on employee green values during the training stages. Therefore,

the author proposes the mediating role of organizational attractiveness on the relationship between green recruitment and Job pursuit intentions during the recruitment stage using social identity theory. This theoretical lens says that the influence on the employee's attitudes and behaviours are not completely influenced by HRM practices rather there are some social and psychological processes that shapes behaviours and attitudes.

## 2. Literature review and developing hypothesis

Green recruitment means to select people who have knowledge of environmental management systems in the organizations (Obaid & Alias, 2015). In green recruitment the potential candidates are hired through electronic means like email, video-based interviews in order to minimize any travel-related environmental effect (Saini & Shukla, 2016). Previous literature in HRM points out that employee initial interest in joining is depending on the organization's perception created during the appointing phase (Behrend et al., 2009; Turban & Greening, 1997). From the lens of Social Identity theory, organizations that adopt green HRM practices would be seen as more responsible organizations as well as their employers by the prospective candidates who would be willing to join the firm. Therefore, organizational attractiveness is defined as "individuals' affective and attitudinal thoughts about particular companies as potential places of employment" (Highhouse et al., 2003). Moreover, the Social Identity Theory (SIT) as according to Abrams and Hogg (1988) claims that people feel a sense of proud in their social groups by associating themselves with the responsible organization. Therefore, when potential candidates are interested to join an organization, they show higher job pursuit intentions and organizational attractiveness is reported positive association with the job pursuit intentions. Behrend et al. (2009) found that environment centred messages during the recruitment phase affect job pursuit intentions through organizational reputation. Jones et al. (2014) found during scenario-based analysis of one hundred and eighty one participants that organizational attractiveness was higher for firms known for taking green initiatives than others firms who are not involved in green tasks. Dogl and Holtbrugge (2014) also found out a positive relationship between corporate environmental responsibility on environmental reputation of a firm in both developed and developing countries. Rupp et al. (2013) found that corporate socially responsible companies have higher job pursuit intentions. On the other hand Turban and Greening (1997), did not find any significant impact of organizational attractiveness and environmental responsible firms. Similarly Lis (2012) also found the same results and corporate social responsibility merely affected organizational attractiveness; therefore, there exist some contradictory results in finding.

In the light of the above arguments, it is important to collect evidences regarding GHRM especially green recruitment in multicultural environment as very limited research is available on GHRM scholarship and future study is needed to address the problems on how environment responsible recruiters can attract green talent in achieving environmental tasks (Jackson et al., 2011; D. Renwick et al., 2008; D. W. Renwick et al., 2013). Referring to the arguments based on Social Identity theory, the following hypothesis are proposed:

**Hypothesis 1(H1).** *green recruitment is positively related to organizational attractiveness*

**Hypothesis 2(H2).** *organizational attractiveness is positively related to job pursuit intention*

**Hypothesis 3(H3).** *organizational attractiveness mediates the relationship between green recruitment and job pursuit intention*

## 3. Methodology

The population considered for this study was a notable research institution, namely universiti teknologi Malaysia located in Johor Bahru State. Data were collected from students and close-

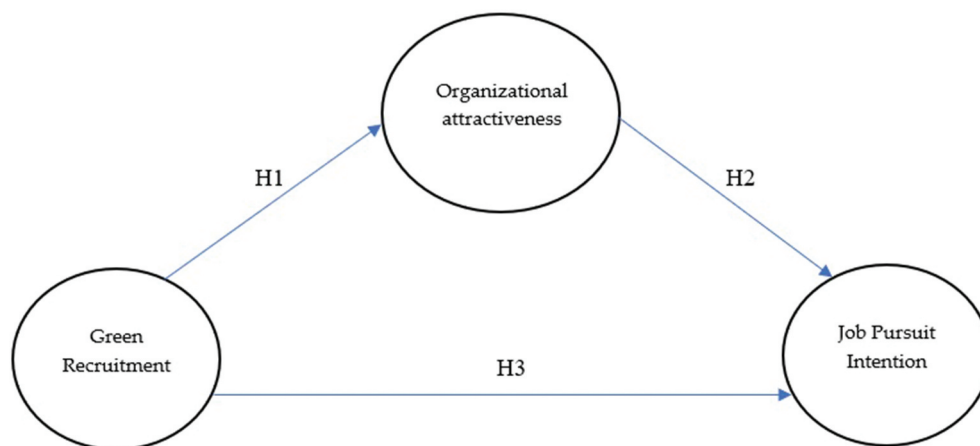
ended questionnaires were distributed through mail method. By distributing the questionnaires through mail, it allows the researcher to target the respondent in an efficient and economical way. Questionnaires consisted of two sections. Section one was related to the general information about the respondent. Section two was related to variables (green recruitment, organizational attractiveness, job pursuit intention) used in the study. The students were required to show their views on scale containing 1 –5. On these scales, 5 represents “strongly agree” and 1 represents “strongly disagree”.

Regarding the measurement of the variables included in this study, organizational attractiveness and job pursuit intention was measured from scale given by Highhouse et al. (2003). And for green recruitment scale developed by Tang et al. (2018) was used. For data analysis SPSS Hayes Process version 23 was used.

### 3.1. Purpose of study

In recent times, sustainability has arisen as a major area of concern among the researchers and the practitioners. The concept of green recruitment is a new recruitment style in which the firms focus on the environmental capabilities of the candidates during the hiring phase. Determining the student’s capabilities and their perceptions to join green organizations is necessary for society and the organizations. The aim of this study is to investigate the students' job intention towards those organizations who use green criteria to hire potential candidates and the mediating role of organizational attractiveness.

### 3.2. Proposed model



## 4. Results

### 4.1. Demographic characteristics

Demographic characteristics of the respondents are given in Table 1. The respondents were the students of universiti teknologi Malaysia (n = 127). According to table, the respondents were generally male students (57.5%) while (42.5%) of the females participated in the survey. Considering the age, respondents having age of 21–25 has the highest percentage of participation (39.3%) while respondents from 31 to 34 contributed to (23.7%) in the survey.

**Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	73	57.5
Female	54	42.5
Age	-	-
21-25	50	39.3
26-30	47	37
31-34	30	23.7

**Table 2. Reliability**

Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Green recruitment	03	0.662
Organizational attractiveness	05	0.610
Job pursuit intention	05	0.774

#### 4.2. Reliability analysis

The reliability of the data depends upon the value of the Cronbach's alpha (Table 2); therefore, if the alpha value is greater than 60% then it is considered as reliable (Hair et al., 2019)

#### 4.3. Correlation analysis based on male and female respondents

The correlation coefficients among male and female respondents are shown in Table 3. All the variables are positively correlated. Among the male respondents there is significant positive correlation between green recruitment and organizational attractiveness having  $r = 0.465$ ,  $p < 0.001$  and between green recruitment and job pursuit intention having  $r = 0.585$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Similarly, the correlation between organizational attractiveness and job pursuit intention among male students is relatively high having  $r = 0.746$ ,  $p < 0.001$

**Table 3. Correlation matrix (n = 73 males and 54 females)**

**Summary of Correlation Coefficient of Green Recruitment, Organizational Attractiveness and Job Pursuit Intention (N<sub>male</sub> = 73, N<sub>Female</sub> = 54)**

			Green Recruitment	Organizational Attractiveness	Job Pursuit Intention
Green recruitment	Pearson correlation		1	.333*	.661**
	Sig. (two-tailed)			.014	.000
Organizational attractiveness	Pearson correlation		.465**	1	.611**
	Sig. (two-tailed)		.000		.000
Job pursuit intention	Pearson correlation		.585**	.746**	1
	Sig. (two-tailed)		.000	.000	

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

\*\*.. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Note: the lower left value is the correlation coefficient of the male students while the upper right value is that of female students

On the other hand, the correlation coefficient between green recruitment and organizational attractiveness among female students  $r = 0.333$ ,  $p < 0.05$  is relatively low as compared to male students but still statistically significant. Moreover, correlation coefficient between green recruitment and job pursuit intention among female students  $r = 0.661$ ,  $p < 0.001$  is positive and the correlation between organizational attractiveness and job pursuit intention is also positive and statistically significant  $r = 0.611$ ,  $p < 0.001$

#### 4.4. Fisher's r to z transformation (Z test)

Fisher Z test is an effective approach to determine whether two constructs are equally correlated among two different populations (Fisher, 1921). Based on the values from Table 4, we first converted the r values into z scores and then used an equation to calculate the Z-observed values to determine statistically whether correlation among green recruitment, organizational attractiveness and job pursuit intention is same or different among male and female students. The Z observed values obtained in all the three cases are 0.856 for green recruitment and organizational attractiveness for both genders, 0.673 for green recruitment and job pursuit intention and 1.37 for organizational attractiveness and job pursuit intention respectively. All the Z-observed values are in the boundaries between  $-1.96$  and  $+1.96$  therefore the correlation coefficients is not significantly different among male and female students. Moreover, there is no statistically significant difference in the strength of correlation between green recruitment, organizational attractiveness and job pursuit intention among male and female students.

#### 4.5. Overall Correlation Analysis

Correlation is an effective mean to verify either the relationship between the two variables is weak or strong (Mukaka, 2012). Green recruitment is positively correlated with organizational attractiveness

**Table 4. Z test (n = 73 males and 54 females)**

Variables	Pearson Correlation		Fisher's r to z Transformation	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Green recruitment and organizational attractiveness	$r = 0.465$ $p < 0.001$	$r = 0.333$ $p < 0.05$	Z(score) = 0.5036	Z(score) = 0.3461
	Z Observed = 0.856			
Green recruitment and job pursuit intention	$r = 0.585$ $p < 0.001$	$r = 0.661$ $p < 0.001$	Z(score) = 0.670	Z(score) = 0.794
	Z Observed = 0.673			
Organizational attractiveness and job pursuit intention	$r = 0.746$ $p < 0.001$	$r = 0.611$ $p < 0.001$	Z(score) = 0.963	Z(score) = 0.710
	Z Observed = 1.37			

**Table 5. Correlation matrix (n = 127)**

		Green Recruitment	Organizational Attractiveness	Job Pursuit Intention
Green recruitment	Pearson correlation	1	.403**	.612**
	Sig. (two-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	127	127	127
Organizational attractiveness	Pearson correlation	.403**	1	.676**
	Sig. (two-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	127	127	127
Job pursuit intention	Pearson correlation	.612**	.676**	1
	Sig. (two-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	127	127	127

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

having  $r = 0.403$ ,  $p < 0.001$  and job pursuit intention having  $r = 0.612$ ,  $p < 0.001$  and organizational attractiveness is also positively correlated with job pursuit intention having  $r = 0.676$ ,  $p < 0.001$  (Table 5). Moreover the mediation model was tested using process marco for SPSS devised by Hayes (2018).

#### 4.6. Hayes Process Mediation Analysis

The value of ( $R^2$ ) in Table 6 is the most common way to determining the goodness of fit of the linear model. This value shows how much change in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable and also point outs the explanatory strength of the regression model. R square value of (0.1627) shows that green recruitment impacts organizational attractiveness to (16.27%).

Similarly, in Table 7, R square value of (0.5946) shows that green recruitment and organizational attractiveness impacts job pursuit intention to (59.46%), whereas ( $p = 0.000$ ) and beta value of (0.4055) and (0.5125) shows that impact is positive and statistically significant.

From the model, positive beta value of 0.4033 and  $p$  value of 0.000 explains that green recruitment has positive and statistically significant impact on organizational attractiveness. Similarly, beta value of 0.5125 and  $p$  value of 0.000 shows that organizational attractiveness has meaningful impact on job pursuit intention (Tabel 8 and 9).

The total effect of green recruitment on job pursuit intention is 1.1590 with  $p$  value of 0.000 and  $R^2$  value of 0.3748. However, with the insertion of organizational attractiveness, the total effect of 1.1590 was decreased to 0.7677 with no change in the  $p$  value. This reduction in the beta value

**Table 6. Mediating variable (organizational attractiveness)**

R	R <sup>2</sup>	MSE	F	Df1	Df2	P
0.4033	0.1627	4.9794	24.2866	1.0000	125.000	0.0000
Model						
	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.1255	1.1532	3.57773	0.0005	1.8431	6.4079
Green recruitment	0.4904	0.995	4.9281	0.000	0.2934	0.6873
Standardized coefficient green recruitment	0.4033					

**Table 7. Dependent variable (job pursuit intention)**

R	R <sup>2</sup>	MSE	F	Df1	Df2	P
0.7711	0.5946	5.8927	90.9533	2.0000	124.000	0.0000
Model						
	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	4.1755	1.3172	3.1700	0.0019	1.5684	6.7826
Green Recruitment	0.7677	0.1183	6.4895	0.000	0.5336	1.0018
Organizational Attractiveness	0.7980	0.973	8.2015	0.000	0.6054	0.9906
Standardized Coefficient Green Recruitment	0.4055					
Standardized Coefficient Organizational Attractiveness	0.5125					



**Table 8. Total effect of green recruitment on job pursuit intention**

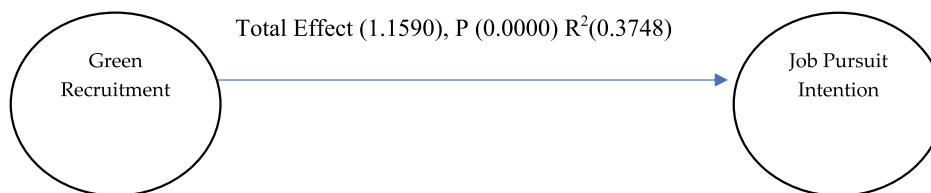
R	R <sup>2</sup>	MSE	F	Df1	Df2	P
0.6122	0.3748	9.0166	74.9233	1.0000	125.000	0.0000
Model						
	Coefficient	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	7.4677	1.5519	4.8121	0.0000	4.3964	10.5390
Green Recruitment	1.1590	0.1339	8.6558	0.0000	0.8940	1.4240
Standardized Coefficient Green Recruitment	0.6122					

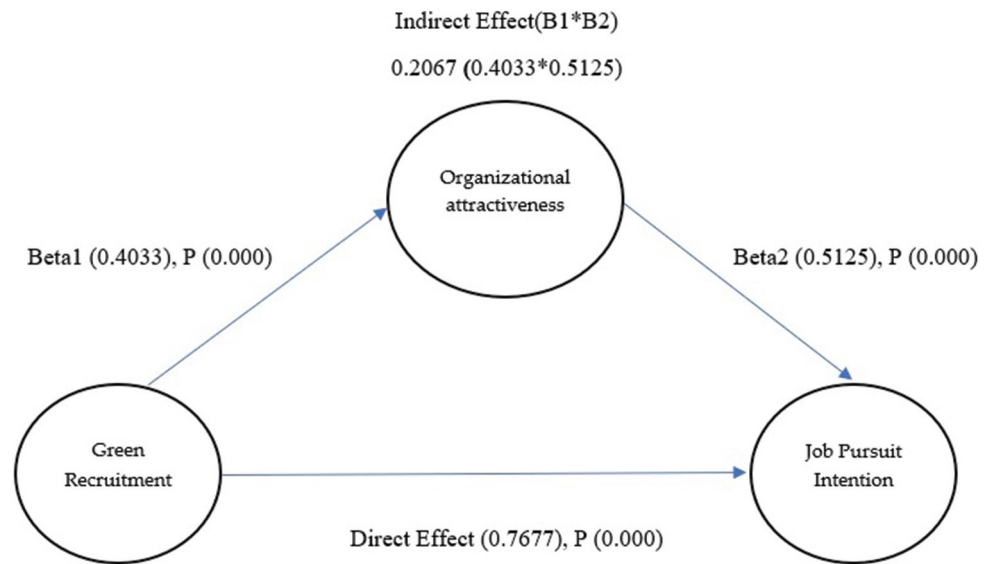
**Table 9. Total effect, direct effect, indirect effect of green recruitment on job pursuit intention**

	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect of Green Recruitment on Job Pursuit Intention	1.1590	0.1339	8.6558	0.0000	0.8940	1.4240
Direct effect of green recruitment on job pursuit intention	0.7677	0.1183	6.4895	0.0000	0.5336	1.0018
Indirect effect of green recruitment on job pursuit intention		BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
Organizational attractiveness	0.3913	0.1022	0.2084	0.6121		
Partially standardize indirect effect of green recruitment on job pursuit intention						
Organizational attractiveness	0.1035	0.257	0.568	0.1592		
Completely standardize indirect effect of green recruitment on job pursuit intention						
Organizational attractiveness	0.2067	0.489	0.1151	0.3086		

Level of confidence level for all confidence intervals: 95.000

Number of bootstraps samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals: 5000





**Table 10. Hypothesis results**

Hypothesis	Accepted/Rejected
H1: Green Recruitment is positively related to Organizational attractiveness	H1: Accepted
H2: Organizational attractiveness is positively related to Job Pursuit Intention	H2: Accepted
H3: Organizational Attractiveness mediates the relationship between Green recruitment and Job Pursuit Intention	H3: Accepted

indicates partial mediation. The indirect effect of green recruitment on job pursuit intention with the insertion of organizational attractiveness was calculated by multiplying the beta1 and beta2 ( $0.4033 \times 0.5125 = 0.2067$ ). The total  $R^2$  value of the mediation model 59.46 with p value 0.000 explains deviation in the dependent variable which is job pursuit intention by the independent and mediating variables, i.e. green recruitment and organizational attractiveness.

### 5. Discussion

This empirical study adds to the body of literature on green human resource management which is still at nascent stages. Corporations that go green affect employee's intention to join them in a positive manner. Similarly, the prospective candidates see corporate socially responsible firms a perfect place to work therefore organizational attractiveness is that cognitive process which impacts prospective candidates' attitudes and behaviours. The results of this study (Table 10) are in line with the findings of Jones et al. (2014) and Rupp et al. (2013). However this study contradicts to the results of Turban and Greening (1997) and Lis (2012) where corporate social responsible firms did not find relationship with organizational attractiveness. The possible reason might be due to the employee level cultural contradictions and different criteria of recruiting the candidates. The other reason could be the country level cultural contradictions because in developed countries the environmental regulations are strict and there is a possibility that prospective candidates consider these regulations as standard requirement of the firms as compared to the Asian states.

## 6. Recommendations and conclusions

The concept of green recruitment comes under the umbrella of GHRM and this empirical analysis contributes in understanding green human resource management which is still a developing area. Further this study adds to the body of literature by focusing on the psychological behaviours through which green recruitment impacts job pursuit intentions of the prospective candidates. Similarly, this study bridges major gap in the green human resource management literature of linking green recruitment and student's behaviour. Lastly by giving empirical evidence from Malaysia, this study adds to green HRM literature in the context of developing countries.

Organizations that practice green recruitment are perceived as responsible institutions in the eyes of the potential candidates. The above results elaborate that green organizations ultimately turn their raw talent into more transform and skilful force. This empirical study is motivation for the industry persons to merge the concept of green human resource management with their existing human resource policies to recruit quality candidates. Furthermore, this study is also a guide for those organizations that are not environment friendly and these organizations are most likely to be avoided by the potential candidates when they think of potential places of work.

Although the study provides a comprehensive empirical analysis yet the study is subjected to some limitations. The data collected were collected from the students studying only in universiti teknologi Malaysia so the issue of generalizability may arise. Further research should repeat the study in different universities and make a comparison. Secondly the sample size was small; therefore, future study can use larger sample size and cross-country comparison in order to get the overall view. Thirdly, future researchers can test other mediating variables like organizational reputation and organizational prestige.

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