



The Effect of Employer Branding and Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) on Intention to Apply Mediated by Corporate Reputation with Social Media as a moderation Variable in E-Commerce Companies in Indonesia

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Abstract

Competition between companies is not only to win the market, but also in getting the best employees. Potential employees tend to be more selective in choosing which company to apply to. This study was conducted to see how the effect of the application of employer branding, and electronic word of mouth communication that occurs on the desire of potential employees to apply for jobs in e-commerce companies which are also seen as mediation and moderation relationships. Respondents of this study amounted to 398 consisting of FEB students from 3 universities that have a high level of employability in their graduates. The data analysis method used in this study is using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) with SMART-PLS software. In this study, it was found that there was a positive influence of the application of employer branding on the desire of potential employees to apply to e-commerce companies so that the application of employer branding in e-commerce companies is important to attract potential applicants.

Pengaruh *Employer Branding* dan *Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)* terhadap *Intention to Apply* yang Memediasi oleh Reputasi Perusahaan dengan Media Sosial sebagai Variabel Moderasi pada Perusahaan *E-Commerce* di Indonesia

Abstrak

Persaingan antar perusahaan tidak hanya untuk memenangkan pasar saja, tetapi juga dalam mendapatkan karyawan terbaik. Karyawan yang berpotensi cenderung lebih selektif dalam memilih perusahaan mana yang akan dilamar. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk melihat bagaimana pengaruh penerapan employer branding, dan komunikasi electronic word of mouth yang terjadi terhadap keinginan potential employee untuk melamar pekerjaan di perusahaan e-commerce yang juga juga dilihat hubungan mediasi dan moderasinya. Responden penelitian ini berjumlah 398 yang terdiri dari mahasiswa FEB dari 3 universitas yang memiliki tingkat employability tinggi pada lulusannya. Metode analisis data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini yaitu menggunakan Structural Equation Model (SEM) dengan software SMART-PLS. Dalam penelitian ini ditemukan adanya pengaruh positif dari penerapan employer branding terhadap keinginan potential employee untuk melamar pada perusahaan e-commerce sehingga penerapan employer branding pada perusahaan e-commerce merupakan hal yang penting untuk menarik minat pelamar potensial.

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The application of human resource management science is currently undergoing development. Theories that have existed since long time ago are updated based on current conditions, so that currently innovations continue to be made to find solutions to every problem that occurs, especially in the field of human resource management. Human resources management is fundamental to the development and progress of the corporate. It is the key to achieving competitive advantage in the corporate (Iskandar, 2018). Therefore, nowadays every corporate competes to have quality human resources in various ways which are considered effective. Competition between companies today is not only competition to win the market, but also competition to get potential employees for the progress of the corporate. Potential employees represent 20% of the 80% of employees who generate profits in business (Berglas, 2006) in (Rebet'ák & Farkašová, 2015). Potential employees is an employee who has good quality and skills so that they will have an impact on the development of the corporate in the future (Rebet'ák & Farkašová, 2015). The potential employees will be more selective in choosing the corporate to apply for. This is influenced by many things that make prospective employees interested in the intended corporate.

An intention to apply begins with an effort to find information about job vacancies. From this information, prospective employees will make a decision to determine which corporate they want. (Barber, 1998) in (Permadi & Netra, 2015). Most prospective employees will take into account several things about the corporate before applying at the corporate (Ekhsan & Fitri, 2021). Therefore, nowadays companies continue to create a good reputation and employer branding to attract applicants. Employer Branding is a form of combining the application of marketing science and human resource management science. The application of employer branding will create perceptions in each individual towards the

corporate. It is the perception that arises towards an organization that plays an important role in decision making in getting a job in a corporate (Choice et al., 1993). The perception of the applicant might be influenced by the existence of social media.

Social media is a digital platform where users can connect with each other, produce and distribute content, and conduct interactive communication (Carpentier et al., 2019). The use of social media provides convenience for everyone not only in disseminating information but also in communicating and creating innovation for human life. In Indonesia, the number of active social media users continues to increase every year. This can be seen based on data on active social users in Indonesia according to (Widi, 2023).

With an increase every year, social media has now penetrated not only for personal use but also for business activities. The use of social media in companies can help companies to attract the attention of users from social media. Facebook and LinkedIn are two platforms that are often used for job search or recruitment activities (Zanella et al., 2015). The use of electronic media allows everyone to share information with other users. The emergence of new media channels over the past few years has provided opportunities for electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM) communication (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). The development of the internet and electronic word of mouth (EWOM) can change a person's behavior and decisions, where there are many people who use the opinions and recommendations of others in making a decision (See-To & Ho, 2014). Reviews or recommendations shared electronically by workers or former workers will add to the applicant's information that affects the decision to be made. So that from the information spread about the corporate, a social characteristic called reputation will be formed. Corporate reputation is

a social characteristic of a corporate that is formed based on actions that have been taken or will be taken in the future (Sivertzen et al., 2013). Companies that have a good reputation will increase the benefits of attracting consumers to their products, investors to securities, or employees to job vacancies from the corporate (Fombrun et al., 2000).

There are many fields of companies that Indonesian people are interested in working for, one of which is e-commerce companies. Currently, many e-commerce companies are implementing employer branding so that candidates are interested in working at the corporate. One of the things that e-commerce companies highlight in doing employer branding is about the work environment and facilities at the corporate to support employee performance. The work environment is one of the most important things to attract prospective job seekers, especially the younger generation. (Susilo, 2022). However, companies in the e-commerce sector are currently experiencing a storm of layoffs in their companies. In the information provided in the media (Medcom.id, 2023), there were 7 e-commerce companies that laid off employees in the last few months and one of them had to close its services. It was also mentioned in several media outlets that e-commerce is currently experiencing layoffs of its employees (Meilanova, 2023; Prasetyo, 2023). However, even so (Andi & Simamora, 2023) explained that cutting the number of employees was carried out to cut the corporate's finances and e-commerce companies are considered to still have potential. So that the effect of applicant trust due to layoffs on e-commerce companies in this study will be answered. So that with this research, e-commerce companies will get a solution to this problem.

Employer Branding can be applied to get the attention of job applicants. Especially for students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Indonesia, Universitas Brawijaya

and Universitas Airlangga who have a high level of employability. In the QS Graduate Employability Rankings 2022, the employability level is measured based on employer reputation, alumni outcomes, employer-student connection, partnership with employers, graduate employment. The three universities are also included in the top 10 best Faculty of Economics and Business in Indonesia according to QS World University Ranking by subject Business and Management Studies. From this data, it can be said that graduates from the three universities, especially at the Faculty of Economics and Business, are potential employees needed by companies.

The use of respondents who have this level of employability is related to the needs of companies that want potential employees in their companies. This research also has complex and interesting variables to study. The combination of marketing science and human resource management makes this research interesting to study. Because indeed the current phenomenon makes companies look for ways to attract applicants to work in their corporate. So this study aims to determine the effect between employer branding and EWOM on interest in applying, the mediating effect of corporate reputation variables on the relationship between employer branding and EWOM on interest in applying, and the moderating effect of social media on the relationship between employer branding and EWOM on intention to apply for potential employees in e-commerce companies.

METHOD

In this research, the research method used is quantitative type. This means that researchers will test the relationship of each variable using instruments that will be processed statistically with samples taken randomly. This study uses questionnaires and purposive sampling to obtain the data to be studied. With the variables and

problems raised, the researcher will test the influence or relationship between the variables studied using quantitative research.

The population in this study is "Potential Employee" which consists of students from the Faculty of Economics and Business at three universities. The universities are University of Indonesia, Airlangga University and Brawijaya University. Students from the three campuses have a high level of employability and are the best faculty of economics and business in Indonesia according to QS World University Ranking. The total population of this study is 13,269 students, consisting of 2,662 students of FEB UI, 4,874 students of Airlangga University, and 5,733 students at Brawijaya University. The data is based on data taken from (Higher Education Database, 2023). The sampling technique used in this research is purposive sampling. To get the number of samples, in this study researchers used the Isaac and Michael table (Sugiyono, 2015). The sample taken is based on the total population of 13,269 students.

By using the table for determining the number of samples according to Isaac and Michael, the minimum number of samples needed in this study is 340 students, with an error rate of 5%. From this sample size, the researcher increased the number of samples referring to the minimum sample requirements based on the sample calculation using a sample size calculator. So that in calculating using a sample size calculator, the minimum number of samples for this study is 374 students with an error rate of 5%.

In conducting data analysis, researchers use descriptive statistical tests and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) where data processing is carried out by statistical tests. The SEM research method has been developed since the 1950s. According to (Ghozali, 2008) in (Haryono, 2016), SEM is the second generation of multivariate analysis that allows researchers to test each relationship between complex variables to

get a comprehensive picture of the entire model. The SEM method can be used to analyze research that has several independent, dependent, moderating, and intervening variables partially and simultaneously (Haryono, 2016). This SEM method is a continuation of path analysis and multiple regression which have in common, namely a multivariate form of analysis. Thus, compared to path analysis or multiple regression, the SEM method is superior because it can analyze data more comprehensively (Haryono, 2016). According to Ghozali & Latan (2015) in (Haryono, 2016) the purpose of SEM-PLS is to develop or build theory (prediction orientation).

RESULTS

Respondent Characteristics

The total number of respondents in this study was 389 respondents consisting of 162 (41.6%) men and 227 (58.4%) women. Respondents in this study were students from the three universities, there were 79 students from the University of Indonesia (20.3%), 161 students from Brawijaya University (41.4%) and 149 students from Airlangga University (38.3%). Of these students, 130 respondents were 4th semester students (33.4%), 156 6th semester students (40.1%), 2 7th semester students (0.5%), and 101 students from the 8th semester (26%). Furthermore, these students also consist of various majors, there are 121 students majoring in accounting (31.1%), 83 students majoring in management (21.4%), 10 students majoring in entrepreneurship management (2.6%) 66 students from the development economics department (17%), 39 students from the Islamic economics department (10%), 18 students from the entrepreneurship department (4.6%), 39 students from the economics, finance and banking department (10%), 7 students from the economics department (1.8%), and 6 students from the Islamic business department (1.5%).

Descriptive Statistics

In the descriptive statistics in this study, it shows that the employer branding variable has a mean value of "High" with a mean value of 3.87, the EWOM variable has a mean value of "High" which is 3.74, the intention to apply variable has a mean value of "High" which is 3.96, the social media variable has a mean value of "High" which is 3.74, and the corporate reputation variable has a mean value of "Very High" which is 4.3.

Validity and Reliability Testing

The first stage of testing in this study is the validity and reliability test. The validity test was carried out to describe the measuring instrument used in the study to provide appropriate measurement results. The results of the validity test of each item in this study show that there are 3 out of 26 indicators that are invalid and reliable. According to (Ghozali & Latan, 2015) indicators are said to be reliable if they have a correlation value above 0.70, but if they have a correlation value of 0.5 - 0.6 it is still acceptable. The invalid indicators in this study are EB1, EB2, and also EB3. The three indicators have an outer loading value below 0.5 so that these indicators cannot be said to be valid and reliable so that the three indicators must be removed. The other 23 items have a correlation value > 0.6 so that these indicators can be used in this study.

Tabel 2. Composite Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	Decision
EWOM	0.865	0.904	0.654	Reliable
EB	0.761	0.840	0.513	Reliable
ITA	0.866	0.904	0.653	Reliable
RP	0.797	0.867	0.621	Reliable
SM	0.796	0.865	0.617	Reliable

Sources: Data processed by SmartPLS

After 3 indicators are not used because they are invalid, based on table 1, it can be seen that all the values of the employer branding (EB), electronic word of mouth (EWM), intention to apply (ITA), corporate reputation (RP) and social media (SM) variables, in reliability testing using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) have a value

greater than 0.5 and the composite reliability value also has a value above 0.7. Therefore, it can be concluded that all constructs have a good level of reliability.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing

	Original Sample (O)	t-values	p values	Decision
EB → RP	0,299	4,888	0,000	H1 Accepted
EWOM → RP	0,298	5,059	0,000	H2 Accepted
EB → ITA	0,237	4,037	0,000	H3 Accepted
EWOM → ITA	0,025	0,443	0,658	H4 Rejected

Sources: Data processed by SmartPLS

Table 3 shows the results of the path coefficients that connect employer branding with corporate reputation which has a t-value of 4.888 with a p-value of 0.000 where the result is a p-value smaller than 0.05 and a t-value greater than 1.960. This proves that employer branding has a positive and significant influence on corporate reputation. Thus the results obtained are in accordance with the statement of Hypothesis 1, namely employer branding has a positive and significant effect on corporate reputation, so Hypothesis 1 is accepted.

The result of the t-value obtained from the path coefficient connecting the EWOM variable with the corporate reputation variable is 5.059 with a p-value of 0.000, where the t-value is greater than 1.960 and the p-value is smaller than 0.05, it can be concluded that the EWOM variable has a positive and significant effect on the corporate reputation variable. So it can be concluded that hypothesis 2 is accepted.

The t-value of the path coefficients connecting the employer branding variable with the intention to apply (ITA) variable is 4.037 with a p-value of 0.000. The original sample result is 0.237 which means positive. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the employer branding variable has a positive and significant influence on the intention to apply variable, therefore Hypothesis 3 can be accepted.

The result of the t-value obtained from the path coefficient connecting the EWOM variable with the intention to apply variable (ITA) is 0.443 with a p-value of 0.658, where the t-value is

smaller than 1.960 and the p-value is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the EWOM variable has no effect on the intention to apply variable. So, from these results hypothesis 4 is rejected.

Mediation Testing

Table 4. Mediation Testing

	Original Sample (O)	T Values	P Values	Decision
EB → ITA	0,019	1,072	0,285	H5 Rejected
EWOM → ITA	0,019	1,097	0,273	H6 Rejected

Sources: Data processed by SmartPLS

Table 4 presents the results of specific indirect testing to determine how the mediating effect of corporate reputation on the relationship between employer branding and interest in applying. The results show the original sample value of 0.019 and the calculated t value of 1.072 > t-table (1.960) and p-value 0.285 > 0.05, so it can be concluded that employer branding through corporate reputation has no effect on interest in applying. With the results of this analysis, Hypothesis 5 is rejected. The results of specific indirect testing to determine how the mediating effect of corporate reputation on the relationship between EWOM and intention to apply are presented in Table 4. The results show the original sample value of 0.019 and the t-value of 1.273 > t-table (1.960) and p-value 0.285 > 0.05, so it can be concluded that EWOM through corporate reputation has no effect on interest in applying. From these results it can be concluded that Hypothesis 6 is rejected.

Moderation Testing

Table 5. Moderation Testing

	Original Sample (O)	T Values	P Values	Decision
Moderating Effect 1 → Intention to Apply	0,003	0,048	0,962	H7 Rejected
Moderating Effect 2 → Intention to Apply	-0,030	0,640	0,522	H8 Rejected

Sources: Data processed by SmartPLS

Table 5 presents the results of testing the moderation relationship of social media on the relationship between employer branding and interest in applying. The results show the original

sample value of 0.003 and the calculated t value of 0.048 < t-table (1.960) and p-value 0.962 > 0.05, so it can be concluded that employer branding moderated by social media has no effect on interest in applying. From the moderation test results, Hypothesis 7 is rejected. The results of moderation testing to determine how the moderating effect of social media on the relationship between EWOM and intention to apply are presented in Table 5. The results show the original sample value of -0.030 and the t-value of 0.640 < t-table (1.960) and p-value 0.522 > 0.05, so it can be concluded that EWOM moderated by social media has no effect on interest in applying. From the results of the moderation test, Hypothesis 8 is rejected.

R-Square Testing

Table 6. R-Square Testing

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Intention to Apply	0,352	0,342
Corporate reputation	0,277	0,273

Sources: Data processed by SmartPLS

Based on table 6, it can be concluded that the R Square value of the joint or stimulant effect of employer branding constructs, EWOM and corporate reputation on intention to apply is 0.352. So that the constructs of employer branding, EWOM, and corporate reputation simultaneously affect the intention to apply by 0.352 or 35.2%, with an Adjusted R Square of 0.342 or 34.2%. The R Square test was also conducted to see the effect of employer branding and EWOM on corporate reputation together. Based on the R Square test table, employer branding and EWOM simultaneously affect corporate reputation by 0.277 or 27.7% with an Adjusted R Square value of 0.273 (27.3%).

DISCUSSION

The implementation of employer branding in the corporate will have an impact on a person's perspective on the corporate. The information provided by the corporate through employer branding will describe the conditions that occur

in the corporate. So that from this view, the corporate's reputation will be created. This study found that employer branding has a positive and significant effect on corporate reputation for potential applicants. This is in line with research that has confirmed that employer branding has a positive and significant effect on corporate reputation (Ekhsan & Fitri, 2021; Setiawan & Marginingsih, 2021). Research examining the relationship between employer branding and corporate reputation was also conducted by (Purborini & Basid, 2022), which confirmed that the employer branding variable has a positive and significant effect on corporate reputation, which is 43.5%, which is the largest effect compared to other variables. So that the application of employer branding is considered effective to improve the corporate's reputation in the eyes of the community. The application of good employer branding to improve the corporate's reputation in the eyes of many people, especially potential employees, can be applied by e-commerce companies. Especially in the last few months e-commerce is laying off its employees, so that by doing good employer branding e-commerce companies can improve their reputation so that there is trust from the public, especially for potential employees.

Currently, information is very easy to obtain through social networks. Information spread by electronic word of mouth (EWOM) can influence a person's point of view about the corporate. So that later from the information spread by word of mouth online, a reputation will be formed for the corporate. Information that is spread can be positive or negative information, which will create a reputation that can be a good or bad reputation. In this study, it was found that information conveyed by word of mouth online had a positive and significant effect on the corporate's reputation. From this it can be said that information spread by word of mouth electronically (EWOM) will affect the good and

bad reputation of a corporate. This has also been proven by several studies which confirm that EWOM has a positive and significant influence on corporate reputation (Nisar et al., 2020; Putri & Amalia, 2018). Word of mouth communication cannot be controlled by the corporate, so that any information that is spread will affect the reputation of a corporate in the eyes of the public. According to (Soeling et al., 2022), if people tell good things, then the corporate's reputation will be good. Bad reputation will occur when people start telling bad things about the corporate such as treating employees unfairly, unethical behavior towards the environment, cheating customers or paying employees below the minimum regulatory standards. This finding is also in line that there is a positive influence between word-of-mouth communication on a corporate's reputation (Bataineh, 2015).

This study proves that the employer branding variable has a positive and significant effect on intention to apply. This shows that potential employees who are respondents in this study will be interested in working for an e-commerce corporate if the corporate implements employer branding. Companies can provide information in the form of work culture, career paths, and salaries to attract potential applicants to join their corporate. This finding is also in line with several existing studies which also confirm that employer branding has a positive and significant effect on a person's intention to apply (Budiono & Suharnomo, 2021; Erlinda & Safitri, 2020; Junça Silva & Dias, 2022; Permadi & Netra, 2015).

Research on electronic word of mouth (EWOM) variables and their relationship to intention to apply is a combination of marketing science and human resources science. The research is still said to be new so that not many researchers have examined the relationship between the two variables. In this study, the results found that EWOM does not affect the interest of potential employees to apply at an e-

commerce corporate. This proves that the respondents of this study, namely potential employees, are not influenced by the information provided by electronic word of mouth in applying at an e-commerce corporate. This is not in line with research which found that word of mouth communication has a positive and significant effect on a person's intention to apply (Osburg et al., 2018). An applicant, especially a potential employee, will first search for information about the corporate before applying (Barber, 1998) in (Permadi & Netra, 2015). So that the data obtained from the results of information searches will be more accurate and clearer than information circulating by word of mouth. The effect is different if the word-of-mouth information that occurs is carried out by employees or former employees of a corporate. In research conducted (Keeling et al., 2013; Melián-González & Bulchand-Gidumal, 2016) information conveyed by workers by word of mouth can influence someone to apply. This is because the information obtained is information conveyed based on one's experience. In addition, according to (Soeling et al., 2022) the characteristics of potential employees, especially in the younger generation, are achievement-focused, work-life balance, career development and improvement, and corporate social responsibility (CSR). With such characteristics, a potential employee will be selective and seek information about which companies match his character.

Based on the results of data analysis, this study found that corporate reputation cannot mediate the relationship between employer branding and intention to apply. This finding rejects the fourth hypothesis that corporate reputation can mediate the relationship between employer branding and intention to apply. So that the results of this study are in line with research from (Soeling et al., 2022) which also found that corporate reputation does not mediate the effect

of employer branding with intention to apply for a person. The results showed that employer branding is important for job seekers without being influenced by the reputation of the corporate. Job seekers tend to apply due to employer branding from the corporate without seeing the reputation of the corporate. However, the results of this study are not in line with the researcher's hypothesis and research showing that corporate reputation can mediate the relationship between *employer* branding variables and intention to apply (Setiawan & Marginingsih, 2021).

Furthermore, this study also discusses the mediating relationship between corporate reputation and the relationship between EWOM and intention to apply. From the results of data analysis that has been carried out, it is found that corporate reputation cannot mediate the relationship between EWOM variables and intention to apply for jobs for potential employees in e-commerce companies. Previously it was explained that EWOM has no effect on intention to apply. The mediating role of corporate reputation also has no effect on intention to apply for jobs in e-commerce companies. So it can be interpreted that EWOM communication cannot affect a person's intention to apply through corporate reputation. Based on the findings in this study, EWOM can only affect corporate reputation, but here corporate reputation cannot mediate the relationship between EWOM and interest in applying. This is because potential applicants will apply for a corporate if they feel it is suitable for them. The applicant's level of suitability for the corporate can create a person's suitability and confidence in a corporate (Tanwar & Kumar, 2019). Meanwhile, EWOM information that is spread only gives a person's view of the corporate but does not create suitability, so that the information is not enough to be a reason for someone to work or choose the corporate to apply for.

The moderating role of social media also has no effect on a person's interest in applying. Of the two independent variables in this study, the results show that social media cannot moderate the relationship between the two variables on intention to apply for jobs in e-commerce companies. Social media variables proved unable to moderate the relationship between employer branding and intention to apply for potential employee jobs in e-commerce companies. This is not in line with research that proves that employer branding applied after viewing social media pages has a positive relationship to the intention to apply (Carpentier et al., 2019; Kissel & Buttgen, 2015; Sivertzen et al., 2013). The EWOM variable also proved not to be moderated by social media in relation to the intention to apply for potential employees in e-commerce companies. So that the results of this study are not in line with research conducted by (Carpentier et al., 2019) which shows that, the overall intention of potential applicants to spread electronic word of mouth (EWOM) increases after viewing the organization's social media page. This can occur due to differences in content that exists in each individual. Not all respondents in this study saw content related to a corporate. The content that appears on a person's social media homepage is determined by factors such as interests, age, background, gender, and so on. The majority of respondents in this study are 4th and 6th semester students where in that semester someone will focus more on their education, in contrast to final semester students or fresh graduates who tend to focus on their careers in the future.

CONCLUSION

In this study, all of the previously determined objectives have been answered. It was found that employer branding and EWOM have a positive and significant effect on corporate reputation. Employer branding also affects the desire of potential employees to apply to e-commerce

companies. However, this study found that EWOM has no influence on the desire of potential employees to apply to an e-commerce corporate. The mediating role of corporate reputation also cannot mediate the relationship between the two independent variables, namely Employer branding and EWOM on the desire of potential employees to apply for jobs in e-commerce companies. The moderating role of social media here also cannot moderate the relationship between the two independent variables, namely employer branding and EWOM on the desire of potential employees to apply for jobs in e-commerce companies. With the findings in this study, this research can be a recommendation for corporate management, especially in the HRD department in designing communication programs that can support recruitment activities. Here the management can form a good work environment and culture, provide incentives and salaries in accordance with the efforts made by employees, and corporate social activities. By doing this, the corporate can brand the corporate to potential employees so that they can be interested in applying to the corporate. Not only can attract intention to apply but the corporate will also have a good view or reputation from the general public.

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