

The Influence of Social Media, Employer Branding, and Organizational Reputation on Generation Z's Job Application Intentions at Yayasan Widya Sentana Badung

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study analyzes the influence of social media, employer branding, and organizational reputation on Generation Z's job application intentions at Yayasan Widya Sentana Badung. The study is motivated by the growing use of social media as a primary source of job-related information and by the increasing importance of employer image and organizational reputation in shaping young job seekers' decisions. **Method:** A quantitative causal-associative design was employed. The population consisted of 186 Generation Z students, from which 127 respondents were selected through purposive sampling using the Slovin formula as a basis for determining the minimum sample size. Data were collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, multiple linear regression, t-tests, an F-test, and the coefficient of determination. **Results:** Social media influence had a positive and significant effect on job application intention ($b = 0.144$; $p = 0.040$). Employer branding and organizational reputation also had positive and significant effects, with organizational reputation showing the strongest influence. Simultaneously, the three independent variables significantly affected Generation Z's job application intention ($F = 11.189$; $p < 0.001$). **Novelty:** These findings indicate that organizations can strengthen Generation Z's intention to apply by improving the quality of job-related information communicated through social media, building a credible employer brand, and maintaining a positive organizational reputation.

INTRODUCTION

In the employment context, job application intention is no longer shaped only by traditional considerations such as salary, location, and job security. It is increasingly influenced by digital-era factors, particularly social media, employer branding, and organizational reputation. For Generation Z, social media has become an important source of information about organizations, work culture, work environments, vacancies, and employee experiences. Such information, whether published by organizations or other users, can shape perceptions that influence the decision to apply for a job [1], [2].

Employer branding has therefore become an important strategy for attracting potential talent. It reflects how an organization positions itself as an attractive and desirable place to work. Generation Z tends to pay attention to organizational values, culture, development opportunities, and the extent to which a prospective employer's image is consistent with their expectations. The employer-brand concept emphasizes the functional, economic, and psychological benefits associated with employment in an organization [3], [4].

Organizational reputation also plays an important role in the perceptions of prospective applicants. A favorable reputation can strengthen trust in an organization's credibility, stability, and quality, whereas a poor reputation can reduce interest even when competitive compensation is offered. In an environment characterized by rapid information exchange, reputation is increasingly visible through social media and other digital platforms and is formed through stakeholder evaluations of the organization over time [5], [6], [7].

The use of social media as a job-search channel has also increased. Organizations use LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and similar platforms to publish vacancies, introduce organizational culture, communicate activities, and strengthen their image as employers. Prospective applicants, in turn, do not rely only on formal recruitment websites; they also seek information about organizational reputation, employee experiences, and workplace conditions through digital channels. This situation shows that job application decisions are influenced not merely by the availability of vacancies but also by the information and perceptions surrounding the organization.

A similar phenomenon can be observed among students and graduates of Yayasan Widya Sentana in Badung Regency, Bali. Yayasan Widya Sentana is a non-formal educational institution that provides equivalency education for people who do not follow regular formal education. Its learning system is flexible and makes use of digital media and online learning to accommodate diverse student needs.

Most students at Yayasan Widya Sentana fall within the Generation Z age range and are active users of social media. Based on preliminary observations, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and WhatsApp are among the platforms most frequently accessed. Students also use these platforms to look for job vacancies, learn about workplace culture, and observe the work experiences of others. This pattern suggests that social media may substantially shape perceptions of prospective employers and, consequently, job application intention [8].

The students have diverse social backgrounds and educational experiences, so their preferences for employers are also influenced by the organizational images and reputational information they encounter online. Generation Z may be more attracted to organizations that present a positive work environment, a credible employer brand, and a trustworthy reputation. Understanding these factors is therefore important in the local context of Yayasan Widya Sentana as a non-formal educational institution in Bali [9].

This phenomenon is also relevant to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which explains behavioral intention as an immediate antecedent of behavior. Intention is shaped by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control [10], [11]. In the present context, information obtained through social media and perceptions of employer branding and organizational reputation can contribute to the evaluative process through which Generation Z forms an intention to apply for employment. Previous studies, however, have reported differences in the magnitude of

these relationships, and studies examining all three variables simultaneously among Generation Z in a non-formal educational setting remain limited.

Accordingly, this study addresses a contextual research gap by examining how social media influence, employer branding, and organizational reputation affect Generation Z's job application intention at Yayasan Widya Sentana Badung. The local setting is important because cultural values, educational experiences, labor-market exposure, and job-seeking preferences may differ across regions and populations.

RESEARCH METHOD

Operational definitions specify how each research variable is understood and measured. This study includes three independent variables – social media influence (X1), employer branding (X2), and organizational reputation (X3) – and one dependent variable, job application intention (Y). The variables were measured using a Likert-scale questionnaire [12].

Social media influence refers to the effect of social-media-based information, content, interaction, and digital experiences on Generation Z's perceptions, attitudes, and decisions concerning organizations and employment. It is observed through the intensity of social media use, information credibility, content attractiveness, the influence of reviews or testimonials, and digital interaction between organizations and users [1].

Employer branding refers to Generation Z's perception of an organization as an attractive, supportive, and desirable place to work. It describes the identity and value proposition communicated by an organization to prospective employees. The construct is measured through dimensions related to interest value, social value, economic value, development value, and application value [13], which in this study are operationalized through the work environment, career-development opportunities, organizational culture, compensation and benefits, and company image.

Organizational reputation refers to Generation Z's overall assessment of an organization's credibility, quality, stability, and positive public image. It is formed through accumulated information, experiences, and public evaluations. The indicators used in this study include company credibility, public trust, company popularity, organizational stability, and corporate social responsibility [5].

Job application intention refers to Generation Z's interest and willingness to seek information about a job, submit an application, participate in a selection process, and pursue employment in a particular organization. The indicators include attraction to the organization, willingness to obtain job information, intention to apply, willingness to join the selection process, and enthusiasm for working in the organization [14], [15].

Based on these operational relationships, the conceptual framework of the study is presented in Figure 1.

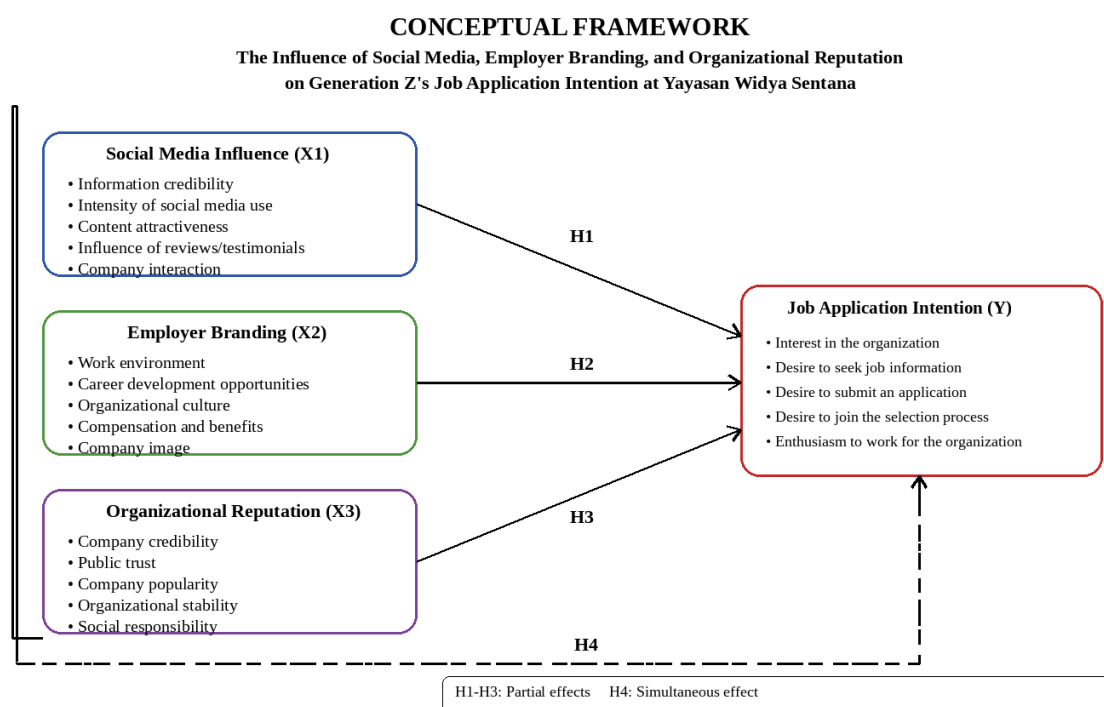


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Based on the conceptual framework, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Social media influence has a positive effect on Generation Z's job application intention at Yayasan Widya Sentana.

H2: Employer branding has a positive effect on Generation Z's job application intention at Yayasan Widya Sentana.

H3: Organizational reputation has a positive effect on Generation Z's job application intention at Yayasan Widya Sentana.

H4: Social media influence, employer branding, and organizational reputation simultaneously have a positive effect on Generation Z's job application intention at Yayasan Widya Sentana.

According to Sugiyono [16], a sample is a subset of a population that represents the population's characteristics. This study used purposive sampling, meaning that respondents were selected according to predetermined criteria relevant to the research objectives [17]. The criteria were as follows:

1. Students aged 17-27 years;
2. Active users of social media;
3. Individuals who had searched for job-related information through social media; and
4. Individuals willing to participate as respondents.

The minimum sample size was determined using the Slovin formula:

$$n = N / (1 + N(e^2))$$

Based on the calculation, the minimum sample size was rounded to 127 respondents. Therefore, the study used 127 respondents who met all established criteria.

Incomplete questionnaires or responses that did not satisfy the eligibility criteria were excluded, and data collection continued until at least 127 complete and eligible responses had been obtained.

Classical assumption tests were conducted to ensure that the multiple linear regression model met the required statistical assumptions. The tests included normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. The analysis also included instrument validity and reliability testing, multiple linear regression, partial t-tests, a simultaneous F-test, and the coefficient of determination [18].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Yayasan Widya Sentana Badung was selected as the research site because it is an educational institution involved in developing human resources through education and training. In addition to improving educational services, the foundation seeks to build a professional organizational image through human-resource management, service-quality improvement, and the use of information technology in its operations.

Along with the development of digital technology, Yayasan Widya Sentana Badung has increasingly used social media and other communication channels to share information with the public. This digital presence is used not only to introduce educational programs but also to communicate organizational activities, increase visibility, and strengthen public perceptions of the foundation. It also enables prospective students and prospective employees to obtain information about organizational activities, culture, and available opportunities.

The reputation of Yayasan Widya Sentana Badung as an educational institution is another relevant contextual factor. Organizational reputation may be built through service quality, achievements, staff professionalism, and constructive relationships with the community. These characteristics can shape how individuals evaluate the organization and may ultimately affect their willingness to join and pursue a career in the institution.

The respondents were appropriate to the research objectives because they were members of Generation Z. This generation is characterized by extensive exposure to digital technologies and frequent use of social media to obtain information before making educational or career-related decisions. The setting therefore provides a relevant context for examining the effects of social media influence, employer branding, and organizational reputation on job application intention.

Taken together, the characteristics of the institution and the respondents provide a useful setting for examining how external organizational signals shape Generation Z's perceptions and employment intentions. The findings are expected to inform recruitment strategies and help the institution strengthen its attractiveness to potential applicants.

A total of 127 Generation Z respondents participated in this study. Most were between 17 and 27 years old and actively used social media platforms such as Instagram,

TikTok, Facebook, and WhatsApp as sources of job-related information. Respondent characteristics by age are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics by Age

No.	Age	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	17-19 years	38	29.9
2	20-22 years	52	40.9
3	23-24 years	25	19.7
4	25-27 years	12	9.5

Source: Processed data (2026)

Table 1 shows that the largest group consisted of respondents aged 20-22 years, with 52 respondents (40.9%). This was followed by 38 respondents aged 17-19 years (29.9%), 25 respondents aged 23-24 years (19.7%), and 12 respondents aged 25-27 years (9.5%). The predominance of respondents aged 20-22 years indicates that many participants were in a transition period toward the labor market, when individuals typically become more active in seeking job information, preparing for careers, and evaluating employment opportunities.

Respondents were also classified by gender. As shown in Table 2, 69 respondents were female and 58 were male, indicating a relatively balanced representation with a modest female majority.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics by Gender

No.	Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Male	58	45.7
2	Female	69	54.3

Source: Processed data (2026)

The gender distribution indicates that the study captures perceptions from both male and female members of Generation Z. Both groups have comparable access to social media and job-related digital information and may therefore be influenced by social media, employer branding, and organizational reputation when forming job application intentions.

Discussion

Effect of Social Media Influence on Generation Z's Job Application Intention at Yayasan Widya Sentana

The results show that social media influence has a positive and significant effect on Generation Z's job application intention at Yayasan Widya Sentana Badung. This finding indicates that more positive, credible, and relevant information obtained through social media is associated with a stronger intention to apply for employment. This is consistent with Generation Z's familiarity with digital technology and its tendency to use

social media as a primary source of information about work opportunities, organizational culture, career prospects, and employee experiences.

The relationship can be interpreted through the Theory of Planned Behavior [10]. In TPB, intention precedes behavior and is formed through attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In this study, social-media information can contribute to the beliefs through which Generation Z evaluates an organization before deciding whether to apply.

Information credibility, content attractiveness, reviews and testimonials, and digital interactions can shape attitudes toward applying for a job. When organizational information is perceived as positive, informative, and trustworthy, prospective applicants may evaluate the organization more favorably. Social-media comments, testimonials, and employee experiences can also operate as social cues that contribute to subjective norms because they indicate how other people perceive the organization.

Most respondents were in a productive age range and actively used social media to search for organizational information. Consequently, information delivered through Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, Facebook, and similar platforms can form an early impression of an employer. Informative, engaging, and credible content may encourage prospective applicants to seek additional information and consider submitting an application.

This finding is consistent with Alshurideh et al. [19], who reported that social-media marketing and communication can strengthen recruitment outcomes and employer attractiveness by enabling organizations to engage prospective applicants through relevant digital content. It is also consistent with Aulia [20], who found a positive relationship between social media influence and Generation Z's intention to apply for jobs.

Social media is therefore not merely a communication channel; it has become an important information environment in the job-search process. Generation Z grew up alongside digital technology and regularly uses social platforms to evaluate organizations and employment opportunities. Information encountered online can shape perceptions of workplace conditions, organizational culture, and employer credibility.

Kaplan and Haenlein [21] describe social media as internet-based applications that enable users to create, share, and exchange content interactively. In recruitment, this interactive environment enables organizations to communicate identity, values, workplace culture, and employment opportunities directly to potential applicants. When the information presented is attractive, relevant, and credible, it can strengthen favorable perceptions of the organization.

The indicators used in this study—intensity of social media use, information credibility, content attractiveness, reviews or testimonials, and digital interaction—show why communication quality matters. Engaging and informative content can increase curiosity about the organization and encourage respondents to seek further information about available employment opportunities.

Information credibility is particularly important. Accurate, transparent, and consistent information can strengthen trust in the organization, whereas unclear or contradictory information may reduce confidence among prospective applicants. Organizations should therefore ensure that recruitment-related messages communicated through social media are reliable and aligned with actual organizational practices.

The result is also consistent with Collins and Stevens [22], who showed that early recruitment-related activities can influence organizational attraction and application decisions, and with Sivertzen et al. [23], who found that social media can support employer attractiveness. Together, these studies reinforce the interpretation that digital communication is part of a broader employer-attraction process [24].

Accordingly, social media has developed into a strategic recruitment instrument. Organizations should manage their social-media presence by presenting accurate, transparent, interactive, and authentic information about work, culture, values, and career opportunities. Such communication can increase visibility, build trust, and strengthen Generation Z's willingness to apply.

Effect of Employer Branding on Generation Z's Job Application Intention at Yayasan Widya Sentana

The results show that employer branding has a positive and significant effect on Generation Z's job application intention at Yayasan Widya Sentana Badung. A stronger employer image is associated with a stronger intention to apply. Positive employer branding can signal that an organization offers a supportive work environment, career development, employee welfare, and opportunities to build competencies.

This relationship can also be interpreted through TPB [10], particularly through the formation of attitudes and beliefs about an organization as a workplace. The employer-branding indicators used in this study—work environment, career-development opportunities, organizational culture, compensation and benefits, and company image—provide evaluative information that can shape prospective applicants' attitudes toward applying.

Employer branding may also be associated with perceived behavioral control because information about training opportunities, career development, workplace facilities, and employment conditions can help individuals assess whether an organization is compatible with their abilities, needs, and career goals. Although perceived behavioral control was not measured directly, employer-related information can contribute to the beliefs underlying intention.

Generation Z does not evaluate prospective employment solely in financial terms. Organizational values, workplace culture, opportunities for self-development, work-life balance, and an inclusive environment are also important considerations. Employer branding is therefore relevant because it organizes and communicates these characteristics as part of the employer's value proposition.

Employer branding can be understood as a strategy for building a positive and recognizable identity as a place to work. For prospective Generation Z employees, a

consistent employer image can reduce uncertainty and provide an initial basis for judging whether an organization is compatible with their expectations and career aspirations.

The employer-brand concept originally emphasized the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits associated with employment [3]. In the present study, the positive effect of employer branding suggests that these perceived benefits remain relevant to young applicants, although their expression increasingly includes digital communication, workplace culture, and opportunities for growth.

The indicators used in this research show that respondents tended to be more willing to apply to organizations that offered a comfortable work environment, a positive culture, clear career-development opportunities, appropriate compensation and benefits, and a favorable company image.

Generation Z's emphasis on personal development and work-life balance further explains the importance of employer branding. Organizations that demonstrate a commitment to competency development, collaboration, creativity, and innovation can be more attractive to prospective applicants in this age group [25], [26], [27], [28].

The finding is consistent with Backhaus and Tikoo [25], who conceptualized employer branding as a strategic mechanism for attracting and retaining employees. A strong employer brand can improve the perceived attractiveness of an organization and differentiate it from competing employers.

The result also supports the employer-attractiveness dimensions developed by Berthon et al. [13]. These dimensions emphasize social value, development value, economic value, interest value, and application value, all of which can contribute to an individual's overall assessment of a prospective employer.

Employer branding should therefore be treated as a central component of recruitment strategy. The stronger and more credible the employer value proposition, the greater the likelihood that Generation Z will perceive the organization as a desirable place to work and develop an intention to apply.

Effect of Organizational Reputation on Generation Z's Job Application Intention at Yayasan Widya Sentana

The results show that organizational reputation has a positive and significant effect on Generation Z's job application intention at Yayasan Widya Sentana Badung. Among the independent variables examined, organizational reputation was reported as the strongest influence. This indicates that a more favorable organizational reputation is associated with a stronger willingness among prospective applicants to join the organization.

The finding can be interpreted through TPB [10]. Organizational reputation provides information that can shape Generation Z's beliefs about organizational credibility, stability, quality, and future prospects. These beliefs can influence attitudes toward applying. Reputation can also contribute to subjective norms because public evaluations, media coverage, reviews, and the experiences of other people may function as social information when prospective applicants make employment decisions.

A favorable reputation can also reduce uncertainty about the organization. Information about credibility, stability, workplace conditions, and social responsibility gives prospective applicants a basis for evaluating employment before making a decision. Thus, a positive reputation may support a more favorable evaluation of the act of applying and strengthen application intention.

Organizational reputation is formed through stakeholder judgments concerning credibility, service quality, performance, organizational values, and social responsibility. For Generation Z, such reputation can serve as an indicator of career security, development opportunities, and long-term prospects before an application is submitted.

From a signaling perspective, organizational reputation functions as an external signal when prospective applicants do not have complete information about internal organizational conditions. A positive reputation may be interpreted as evidence of professional management, organizational stability, and a supportive work environment, thereby reducing uncertainty and increasing attraction.

Generation Z commonly searches for organizational information through digital media, employee reviews, news reports, and other people's experiences. This behavior makes reputation especially visible in contemporary recruitment. Consistent positive signals across these sources may strengthen confidence in the organization.

The reputation construct used in this study follows the view that organizational reputation represents an accumulated stakeholder evaluation of an organization. The measurement emphasized company credibility, public trust, popularity, stability, and social responsibility [5].

The results indicate that respondents were more attracted to organizations that were widely recognized, trusted by the public, perceived as stable, and associated with responsible behavior. These characteristics can make an employer appear less risky and more promising for career development.

For Generation Z participants who are preparing to enter or advance in the labor market, organizational reputation can therefore become an important heuristic for evaluating workplace quality and future prospects.

A favorable reputation also reinforces employer branding because organizational claims about workplace quality are more persuasive when they are consistent with broader public evaluations. In this way, employer image and organizational reputation can mutually reinforce perceptions of employer attractiveness.

This interpretation is consistent with Cable and Turban [29], who found that organizational reputation has value in the recruitment context and can influence organizational attraction. Reputation can increase the perceived value of association with an organization and thereby strengthen applicant interest.

The present finding is also consistent with the broader pattern described in the source literature: organizations with strong reputations tend to generate greater confidence among prospective applicants because they are perceived as more credible, stable, and capable of supporting career development [30], [31], [32], [33].

Organizational reputation should therefore be treated as a strategic intangible asset in recruitment. Maintaining service quality, professional conduct, transparency, and responsible relationships with stakeholders can strengthen public trust and improve the organization's ability to attract Generation Z applicants.

Simultaneous Effect of Social Media Influence, Employer Branding, and Organizational Reputation on Job Application Intention

The results show that social media influence, employer branding, and organizational reputation simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on Generation Z's job application intention at Yayasan Widya Sentana Badung.

The F-test reported a significance value below 0.05 ($F = 11.189$; $p < 0.001$), supporting the fourth hypothesis. The result indicates that the three variables complement one another in shaping prospective applicants' perceptions of an organization. Improving digital communication, strengthening employer branding, and maintaining a favorable reputation can therefore jointly increase job application intention.

The simultaneous relationship can be explained through TPB [10]. Each independent variable provides a different source of beliefs and information: social media provides accessible organizational information and social experiences; employer branding communicates the values and benefits of working for the organization; and organizational reputation provides signals of credibility, stability, and public standing.

For Generation Z, the decision to apply is not based only on the existence of a vacancy. It is also influenced by digital information, the image of the organization as an employer, and the reputation that the organization has developed in the wider community. Because this generation routinely searches for information through social media, official websites, and employee reviews, recruitment communication should be coherent across channels.

The findings show that job application intention is not the product of a single informational source or organizational attribute. It develops from a combination of information, perceptions, and beliefs. Social media functions as an information channel, employer branding frames the organization as a place to work, and organizational reputation strengthens confidence in the credibility of that image.

The three variables are therefore interconnected. Social media can expose prospective applicants to employer-brand messages, while organizational reputation can validate or weaken those messages. When these signals are consistent and positive, applicants are more likely to form a favorable overall evaluation of the organization.

This pattern supports the TPB view that intention develops through evaluative beliefs before actual behavior occurs [10]. Positive digital information, a strong employer value proposition, and a credible reputation can collectively contribute to more favorable attitudes and social evaluations concerning the act of applying for employment.

The significant simultaneous effect also indicates that recruitment strategy should not treat the three variables independently. An organization may have an active social-

media presence but still fail to attract applicants if its employer brand is unclear or its reputation is weak. Likewise, a good reputation may not be fully translated into applicant interest if recruitment information is difficult to access or poorly communicated.

This conclusion is consistent with Permatasari and Ahsani [34], who reported that e-recruitment, employer branding, and corporate reputation jointly influence Generation Z's interest in applying for jobs. Their findings support the view that digital recruitment mechanisms, employer image, and reputation operate as mutually reinforcing elements rather than isolated predictors.

The present results also align with earlier recruitment and employer-branding research showing that recruitment communication, employer attractiveness, and organizational image contribute to application decisions [22], [23], [25]. In this study, their combined relevance is demonstrated within the specific context of Generation Z students at Yayasan Widya Sentana Badung [35], [36], [37].

Practically, organizations seeking to attract Generation Z should integrate informative and interactive social-media management, an authentic employer brand, and sustained reputation management. Transparent communication, credible descriptions of workplace conditions, development opportunities, sound governance, and consistent organizational behavior can jointly strengthen trust and increase the likelihood of receiving applications from qualified young candidates.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding: Social media influence, employer branding, and organizational reputation have positive and significant effects on Generation Z's job application intention at Yayasan Widya Sentana Badung, both partially and simultaneously, with organizational reputation reported as the strongest influence. **Implication:** Organizations can increase Generation Z's willingness to apply by providing credible and attractive job-related information through social media, developing a strong employer brand that reflects a supportive work environment and career-development opportunities, and maintaining a favorable organizational reputation that strengthens applicant trust and confidence. **Limitation:** This study was limited to 127 Generation Z respondents from Yayasan Widya Sentana Badung selected through purposive sampling and examined only social media influence, employer branding, and organizational reputation as predictors of job application intention, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader populations and organizational contexts. **Future Research:** Future studies can involve larger and more diverse samples from different institutions and geographical areas and examine additional factors influencing Generation Z's job application intention to provide a more comprehensive understanding of their employment decisions.

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