

The influence of corporate reputation on millennials job pursuit intentions: the moderating role of employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – The research paper aims to determine whether corporate reputation is a predictor of the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa and whether employer brand equity and/ or organisational attractiveness moderate this relationship.

Design methodology – The research methodology undertaken is a cross sectional, quantitative study where results were collected through a structured questionnaire that was circulated to the sample population. This comprised of millennials aged between 18 – 36 years and residing in South Africa. A linear regression analysis and two moderation analysis were conducted to determine the research objectives.

Research findings – The study found that there is a positive and significant relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intentions as 61.2% of the variance in the job pursuit intention of millennials in South Africa can be explained by corporate reputation. The outcome of hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3 confirmed that employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness do not moderate the relationship between corporate reputation and the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa. A new conceptual model was proposed for further research.

Research limitations – A limitation of the study is that respondents may not be familiar with the ethical transgressions committed by the organisations, limiting the purpose of the study and therefore limiting the researcher’s ability to test for the influence of a negative or positive corporate reputation.

Implications – Employers should build and maintain a good corporate reputation in order to attract and retain skilled employees, as it has a significant and positive relationship with the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa.

KEYWORDS

Corporate Reputation, Job Pursuit Intentions, Employer Brand Equity, Organisational Attractiveness

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

X

Nokwanda Linda Zungu

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1. RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

Drucker (2009, p. 17) suggests that “If you’ve got ambition and smarts, you can rise to the top of your chosen profession, regardless of where you started out”. This is particularly applicable to individuals who are well-read, well-travelled, digitally savvy, energised and entrepreneurial. According to Smith (2011), such individuals are millennials. Because of their character, as described by Smith (2011), such individuals should be in demand and therefore attractive to employers. This gives them leeway to choose where they would like to work. Smith (2011) further indicates that millennials are community orientated and diverse suggesting that money alone is not necessarily the primary criteria for where they would choose to work. Accordingly, organisations that seek to employ millennials need to have other attributes that would attract millennials beyond the pay cheque. This research sought to establish whether corporate reputation has an influence on millennial’s job pursuit intentions and the extent to which such intentions are moderated by employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness.

As the research was conducted in South Africa, the contextual elements of South Africa were taken into account. In particular the transition of the country from being an industrial and manufacturing economy to a services economy (Stuart, 2018) was critical due to consequential demand for millennials, as defined by Smith (2011). It should however, be noted that the definition of millennials advanced by Smith (2011) applies to the diverse well-read, well-travelled, digitally savvy, energised, entrepreneurial who are also community orientated. Slavkovic, Pavlovic & Simić (2018) argue that the move of an economy from a capital-intensive to a knowledge- driven economy makes human resource management critical. This research is concerned with millennials more because of their numbers as an economically active part of the population. Anderson, Baur, Griffith & Buckley (2016) indicate that the millennial population are individuals who were born between 1982 and 2000. According to Statistics South Africa (2018), they make up approximately 43.5% of the total population in South Africa.

1.1 Research Problem

Kitchen & Laurence (2003, p. 103) postulate that corporate reputation is integral to a company’s ability “to build and maintain its market position, attract and retain customers and skilled employees, and increase its market share in a global economy”. However, this reputation, which is a result of years of investment, could be damaged or destroyed instantaneously due to sudden, deliberate or unintended deeds as Hasanbegovic (2011)

& Coombs (2007) point out. Such damage, or destruction, could be detrimental to the company and its stakeholders who, as Park (2017) points out, hold it accountable for its actions. The damage or destruction of a company's reputation could result in its stakeholders choosing to disassociate themselves from it while encouraging those they come into contact with to do the same (Coombs, 2007).

Given the definition of millennials advanced by Smith (2011), those who are the focus of this study (diverse well-read, well-travelled, digitally savvy, energised, entrepreneurial) form a sizeable portion of the knowledge-worker population given that, in 2017, millennials comprised 43.5% of the population of South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2017). Their disassociation with companies with questionable reputations and their encouragement of those with whom they come into contact with could be detrimental to the staffing strategies of such companies. Those they encounter could be the 29.6% of the population which in 2017, was below the age of 15 according to Statistics South Africa (2017). The population pyramid of South Africa, as depicted in the figure below, shows that the 20 – 34 year age group is the most populous in the country for both males and females.

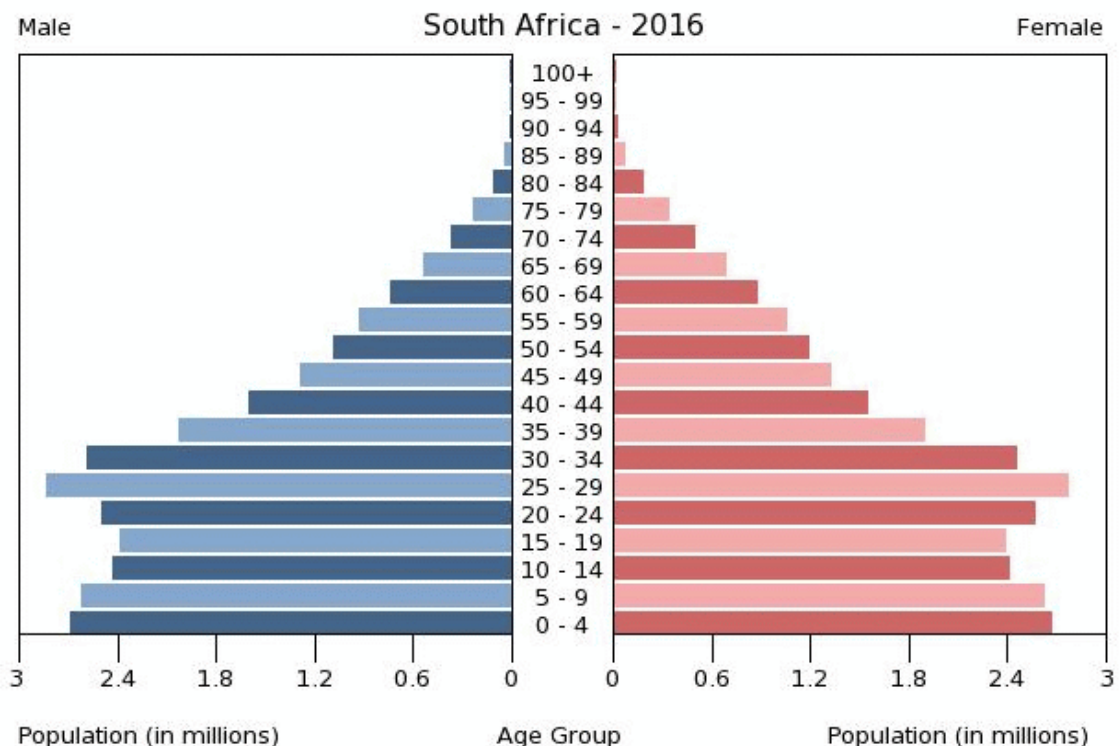


Figure 1: South African Population Pyramid

Source: Index Mundi (2018)

Although there is no agreement on the exact age bracket of millennials, with some authors saying they were born between 1982 and 2000 (Anderson, Baur, Griffith &

Buckley, 2016) while others categorise them as individuals born between 1980 – 2000 (DeVaney, 2015; Culiberg & Mihelić, 2016), it is clear that with the eldest members of this group being 38 in 2017 and the youngest 18, this makes this group a critical part of the labour force. Therefore, where they choose to work should be of interest to potential employers. This paper seeks to understand whether corporate reputation has an influence on the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa and whether employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness have any effect on this relationship. To understand this, this research seeks an answer to the question, does corporate reputation influence the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa and is this intention moderated by brand equity and organisational attractiveness?

1.2 Rationale for the paper

Given that millennials are the work force of the future with a large proportion of them being and entering the knowledge-worker category, knowing whether corporate reputation, employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness influence their decisions to pursue employment opportunities, can help organisations and recruiters tailor their affairs in a manner that would make them attractive to this population category. While providing a competitive advantage to companies that are successful in improving their reputations, such endeavours could contribute to a more ethical business environment.

Because, as Kitchen & Laurence (2003) point out, the reputation of an organisation is integral to its ability to attract and retain skilled employees it should be of importance for a company to protect its reputation. According to past research, corporate reputation has a significant and positive relationship with job pursuit intention but does the theory hold for the South African millennial given his/ her economic challenges? Additionally, does brand equity and organisational attractiveness moderate the relationship.

Sharma & Prasad (2017) believe that brand equity and human capital are the most important sources of competitive advantage for the current and future economic landscape. They believe that talented and highly educated recruits are a scarce resource making talent attraction and retention a critical issue of concern (Sharma & Prasad, 2017). This makes answering the question of what influences the job pursuit intentions of millennials a critical question for organisations.

Berthon, Ewing & Hah (2005) note that organisations seek to attract a wide pool of high calibre talent to increase their competitive advantage. Masibigri & Nienaber (2011) believe that the current work environment is characterised by talent and skills shortages, employee mobility and the retirement of Baby-boomers. They believe that this may hamper organisations' ability to create competitive advantage and maintain performance (Masibigiri & Nienaber, 2011). The notion of "war for talent" speaks to the increasing importance of knowledge workers and the rivalry amongst organisations to attract, recruit and retain the best knowledge workers (Fishman, 1998). According to Alshathry, Clarke & Goodman (2016) and Kumari & Saini (2018), to address this challenge, some organisations have embarked on employer branding programs with the objective of building employer brand equity to become an employer of choice.

1.3 Background to the Research Problem

Martins & Martins (2014) believe that different generations have different characteristics, needs and value sets that impact the workplace. An understanding of how these generations differ may be helpful for human resource practitioners in understanding the factors that attract and help retain certain generations in the workplace. The millennial generation are an important part of the work force and candidates for future organisational leadership. Therefore, organisations should pay closer attention to what impacts their decisions to pursue employment in certain organisations and not in others. Employer brand equity, the "cumulative evaluation of a package of benefits that reflects the value of being an employee of a company" and organisational attractiveness, "a desirable entity with which to initiate some relationship" play a pivotal role in this decision (Alshathry, Clarke & Goodman, 2016, p. 416; Gomes & Neves, 2011, p. 221).

The paper seeks to determine the resultant effects of a negative or positive corporate reputation on the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa and whether variables such as employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness affect the strength of the correlation of corporate reputation and job pursuit intentions.

1.4 Significance of Research

Zyglidopoulos, Alessandri, & Alessandri (2006, p. 8) suggest that business leaders are realising the importance of corporate reputation and see it as a valuable intangible asset "that would take them the longest to replace, if they were to start from scratch".

Millennials form the largest part of the South African workforce and are therefore the country's future leaders (Statistics South Africa, 2017). This generation is community oriented and diverse and believes that businesses should behave ethically and responsibly (Smith, 2011; Deloitte, 2018). Millennials believe that organisations should, over and above profit delivery, contribute positively to society and the environment in which they exist, improve people's lives and promote inclusion and diversity in the workplace (Deloitte, 2018). Millennials believe that their values should be consistent with those of the organisation they seek to join therefore organisations should be influenced by their dispositions and should adjust their positioning and offering accordingly as Millennials will continually oscillate towards companies that have a good reputation.

Millennials are digitally savvy and well- travelled (Smith, 2011), making the global economy their oyster and opening up possibility for international careers. An open economy makes it easier for international organisations to poach local knowledge workers. There are South African born professionals, such as Elon Musk, who are achieving phenomenal feats in technology and research in international economies as the local environment is not conducive (Weinberger, 2018). Similarly, millennials will gravitate towards environments that are more conducive resulting in a brain drain of the local talent market.

1.5 Scope of the Research

The research study will take place in South Africa amongst a group of individuals aged 18 – 36 years, termed millennials. A large majority of the respondents reside in the metropolitan of Johannesburg as this is the economic hub of South Africa. The study therefore excludes individuals outside of the designated age group, those who are entrepreneurs (as they will not be in pursuit of a job) and those residing outside South Africa.

1.6 Research Purpose

The research study seeks to uncover the influence of corporate reputation on job pursuit intentions and whether employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness moderate the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intentions.

A few authors have explored the relationship between corporate reputation, job pursuit intention, organisational attractiveness and employer brand equity (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Hall, 1992; Turban & Greening, 1996; Gomes, 2001; Cable & Turban, 2003; Walker, 2010; Jiang & Iles, 2011; Gomes & Neves, 2011; Alniacik, Alniacik and Erdogmus, 2012; Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager, 1993; Kissel & Büttgen, 2015; Khan, 2017, Sharma & Prasad, 2018). A positive and significant relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention (Cable & Turban, 2003; Alniacik, Alniacik and Erdogmus, 2012; Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager, 1993; Khan, 2017), corporate reputation and organisational attractiveness (Turban & Greening, 1996; Gomes & Neves, 2011), corporate reputation and employer brand equity (Kissel & Büttgen, 2015), employer brand equity and job pursuit intention (Jiang & Iles, 2011), employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness (Sharma & Prasad, 2018) and organisational attractiveness and job pursuit intention (Gomes, 2001; Kissel & Büttgen, 2015) has been proven to exist. However, there is no evidence of researchers having explored the moderating effects of employer brand equity and/ or organisational attractiveness on the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention. It could be assumed that the more attractive an organisation is to job seekers, the stronger the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intentions and likewise for employer brand equity. Therefore, the focus of this study is to determine the strength of the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention and to determine whether a high/low employee brand equity and/ or a high/ low organisational attractiveness would have an impact on the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention.

This paper will take the following structure;

Chapter two will review the existing academic literature on the key theories and topics relevant to the research objective such as, corporate reputation, employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness and the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa. Chapter three outlines the research hypothesis and briefly discusses the measurements of each. Chapter four discusses and defends the research methodology employed for the study. Chapter five presents the results of the research study. Chapter six establishes a discussion of these results in relation to the academic literature reviewed. Chapter seven gives a recap of the principle findings and discusses implications thereof, ending with suggestions for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

According to Boote and Beile (2015), the purpose of a literature review is to frame and contextualise the research study, clearly defining the scope to be covered. The authors assert that a literature review should report on and critique the claims made in past research and the methodology by which those claims were begotten to qualify what is known about the field, and what is yet to be achieved (Boote & Beile, 2015).

In this chapter, literature on theories such as corporate reputation, employer brand equity, organisational attractiveness and the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa will be reviewed. The objective will be to identify what is known about the field, and what is yet to be achieved (Boote & Beile, 2015). This research is concerned with the job pursuit intentions of millennials. Therefore, literature on millennials, and their job pursuit intentions will be reviewed as well as literature related to employer brand equity and other aspects of this research.

2.2 Millennials

According to Martins & Martins (2014) there is evidence of differences in values and work ethic amongst the different generations. Smith (2011) suggests that the South Africa millennial is highly educated, opinionated, a global citizen (worldly), digitally savvy, energised and works well within team structures. This generation, according to Smith (2011), is family orientated, entrepreneurial, social, community orientated, diverse and often described as “entitled”. Chang (2011), on the other hand, believes that this generation lacks soft skills such as networking, relationship building, communications and organisation skills. It is this difference in values that often leads to intergenerational conflicts in the workplace, according to Martins & Martins (2014).

2.3 Corporate Reputation

Fombrun (1996), believes that corporate reputation signals the firm’s standing within the industrial social system. According to Heinberg, Ozkaya & Taube (2017) corporate reputation can ease uncertainty of an organisation’s products or services and can enhance brand equity. In his paper, Walker (2010, p. 370), reviews and analyses past definitions of corporate reputation and concludes by proposing a new definition that

aggregates theoretical discussions and empirical findings and defines the concept as, “A relatively stable, issue specific aggregate perceptual representation of a company’s past actions and future prospects compared against some standard.”

According to Walker (2010), the earliest definition of corporate reputation was formulated by Weigelt & Camerer in 1988. They defined the concept as, “a set of attributes ascribed to a firm, inferred from the firm’s past actions” (Walker, 2010, p. 368). On the other hand, Fombrun (1996, p. 72) defines corporate reputation as “a perceptual representation of a company’s past actions and prospects that describes the firm’s overall appeal to all of its key stakeholders when compared to other key rivals in the market; and as such signals the firm’s status within the industrial social system”. This definition was later refined by Fombrun & Van Riel, (1997, p. 10) who said corporate reputation was “... a collective representation of a firm’s past actions and results that describes the firm’s ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders. It gauges a firm’s relative standing both internally with employees and externally with its stakeholders, in both its competitive and institutional environment.”

Fan, Geddes & Flory (2013) refer to corporate reputation as opinions, and not facts, that stakeholders form about a company which stem from or are deeply influenced by mass media. Other influences include the customer experience, the quality of products or services and the extent to which the customer feels like he or she has been treated fairly (Ali, Lynch, Melewar & Jin, 2015). Gray & Balmer (1998, p. 697) define corporate reputation as “a result of consistent performance reinforced by effective communications”.

Hall (1992) asserts that reputations are perceptions held by external observers (publics), whereas Fombrun & Shanley (1990) state that the perceptions held by publics are as a result of the choices made by the organisation. Fombrun & Shanley (1990) indicated that company reputations were formed by decisions taken by organisations on risk investments, assignment and management of assets, obligation to contribute to the welfare of society, institutional ownership, media exposure and corporate diversification. Fombrun & Shanley (1990) suggest that people develop their interpretation of corporate reputation from signals derived from these indicators. Hall (1992) contributed to a framework of intangible resources and capability differentials which lead to sustainable competitive advantage. He conducted a survey amongst 95 chief executives in the UK, who worked across different industries, to ascertain the most important contributor to company success. Corporate reputation was found to be the most important contributor

(Hall, 1992). Hall also asserted that corporate reputation had the potential to be the most important factor in gaining competitive advantage through differentiation and that it contributed to a defensible position (Hall, 1992).

It can be deduced, from the definitions of the construct, that corporate reputation is perceptual and not factual (Fombrun, 1996; Fan, Geddes & Flory 2013). The implications of this, as Ali, Lynch, Melewar & Jin (2015) point out, are that there may not be a consensus on reputation as people's perceptions and experiences with an organisation may differ leading to positive or negative feelings and emotions about the organisation. It is because of this that Walker (2010) suggests that it would be inappropriate to sum aggregate views on corporate reputation. There are some reputation rankings which help standardise corporate reputation. Ali, Lynch, Melewar & Jin (2013) cite the following as popular measures of corporate reputation but suggest that managers also employ independent surveys such as focus groups and in-depth interviews for richer insights: (1) The most admired companies by Fortune, (2) Reputation Quotient Scale by Fornbrun, Gardberg & Server (2000) and (3) the Customer- Based Corporate Reputation Scale by Walsh & Beatty (2007). Some of these measures have been adapted and used to measure corporate reputation in this research study.

Unlike corporate image, which is an individual's immediate impression of an organisation, corporate reputation is based on history or an accumulation of past incidences (Wilkins & Huisman, 2014; Fombrun & Van Riel, 1997; Urde & Greyser, 2016). It can then be inferred that one bad occurrence will not negatively affect reputation and that numerous incidences (which are perceived as negative) would have to occur before a bad reputation could be formed. Walker (2010) corroborates this statement by saying that corporate reputation takes time to build and is relatively stable whereas corporate image may result in quickly attained perceptions of the organisation. Barnett, Jermier & Lafferty (2006) argues corporate image and corporate reputation are still often used interchangeably.

Greyser (2009, p. 600) suggests that organisations build a "reputational reservoir" or goodwill which they can draw on in times of crisis. Walker (2010), on the other hand, suggests that if an organisation participates in numerous corporate social investment programmes, then it builds enough latitude to buffer itself from reputational harm. This is often achieved through corporate social investment (CSI) or any other publicised social outreach enabling the public (including job seekers) to develop a more favourable outlook on the organisation. Kumari & Saini (2018) cite a research study conducted by

Deloitte in 2014, that states that millennials believe CSI is an important factor as 63% donate to charities and 43% volunteer their time and services or are members of a community organisation.

Fombrun (1996) points out that an organisation's corporate reputation is comparable to others and not seen in isolation. Accordingly, an organisation is considered in relation to its competition. Walker (2010) argues that corporate reputation is comparable not only to rivals but to certain standards such as industry average.

Signaling theory is most commonly used in corporate reputation research and examines how rhetoric is used to influence public perception (Walker, 2010). Job seekers might have limited information on the company or the job being advertised and may therefore rely on signaling theory to determine fit (Cable & Turban, 2003). Corporate reputation sends signals to prospective employees on the organisation's work environment and market positioning (Alshathry, Clarke & Goodman, 2016). In his paper titled, "A systematic review of the Corporate Reputation Literature: Definition, Measurement, and Theory" Walker (2010), states that certain authors concur that the use of signaling theory impacts on employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness through its role in attracting future job applicants.

Reputation is influenced by newsfeed from the media (Fan, Geddes & Flory 2013) suggesting that any positive or negative media activity would influence reputation. It is in this regard that Heinberg, Ozkaya & Taube (2017) suggest that communications reinforce reputation. Communications to strengthen employer brand equity or organisational attractiveness is known as employer branding. Organisations address the uncertainty of job seekers through employer branding initiatives (Jiang & Iles, 2011). This enables the organisation to establish an identity and communicate its values, systems and policies to potential job seekers (Jiang & Iles, 2011).

Theory also alludes to social identity theory being an important concept within human resources as job seekers may want to be associated with an organisation that has a positive reputation or one that reflects shared values as associations are viewed as an extension of oneself (Cable & Turban, 2003). Cable & Turban (2003) further point out that social identity theory suggests that individuals tend to associate themselves with brands that will improve their self-esteem or that invoke feelings of pride. Tajfel (1978, p. 63) defines social identity as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from

his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership”.

Heinberg, Ozkaya & Taube (2017) state that to create a good corporate reputation, a company must meet the expectations of its stakeholders. Stakeholders hold the organisation to what it says it will do i.e. organisations must meet stakeholder expectations and create value (Heinberg, Ozkaya & Taube, 2017; Fombrun & Van Riel, 1997). Should the organisation fall short, then this may result in a negative reputation. “When customers get what they expect from a company time and time again (i.e. the corporate brand promise is kept), reputation is strengthened” (Argenti & Druckemiller, 2004, p. 372).

Walker (2010), theorizes that corporate reputation cannot be the aggregate perception of all stakeholders as it may differ for different issues. This is because organisations have multiple stakeholders who have different interests in the company (Alniacik, Alniacik & Erdogmus, 2012). “A corporation may have a particular, and potentially different, reputation for each of the following issues: profitability, environmental responsibility, social responsibility, employee treatment, corporate governance, and product quality” (Walker, 2010, p.369).

2.3.1 Corporate Reputation and Employer Brand Equity

According to Cable & Turban (2003), brand equity is important to consumers as it is used to make inferences on the attributes of a product. The authors also suggest that people want to associate themselves with certain brands to elevate their self-esteem (Cable & Turban, 2003). When making an employer choice, job seekers do not evaluate job attributes in isolation but consider all information and all aspects of the attributes (Kumari & Saini, 2018). According to Cable & Turban (2003) job seekers use reputation to make inferences about the attributes and quality of the job, as they have little information available to them at the start of the job pursuit process. The presence or absence of one attribute may detract from or enhance the effect of the other attributes (Kumari & Saini, 2018).

Cable & Turban (2003) propose that knowledge workers form perceptions of a company based on corporate reputation, recruitment advertisement and corporate familiarity. Walker (2010) on the other hand, suggests that potential employees use their perception of a company's reputation as a signal to make inferences on the quality of the employer.

2.3.2 Corporate Reputation and Organisational Attractiveness

Alniacik, Alniacik & Erdogmus, (2012), state that corporate reputation is important because it assists in attracting and retaining top talent and that job seekers use an organisation's corporate reputation as a signal that provides them with information about an organisation, and that they would prefer to join organisations with favourable reputations. They go on to say that, the more favourable an organisation's reputation is perceived, the more likely it is to be targeted by job seekers (Alniacik, Alniacik & Erdogmus, 2012). This perspective is shared by Cable & Turban (2003). Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager (1993, p. 415), opine that job seekers rely on "general impressions of organisational attractiveness" to make decisions as they have little information at the start of the job search.

Kanar, Collins & Bell (2015) found that companies with more favourable employer reputations receive substantially fewer lower-quality job applications than companies with poor employer reputations. On the other hand, Sharma & Prasad (2017) Have established that poor reputation in the labour market may cost an organisation at least 10% more per hire than an organisation with a more favourable reputation. Kavitha & Srinivasan (2012) tested the effects of corporate image on organisational attractiveness among respondents in an Indian information technology sector and found that a significant and positive relationship existed between the variables.

2.4 Job Pursuit Intentions of millennials in South Africa

According to Beenen & Pichler (2014, p. 1), job pursuit intentions is defined as, "the intentions, decisions, or behaviors indicative of a candidate's interest in a particular employer." Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager (1993), posit that job seekers use the information obtained from a recruitment source, such as a job advertisement, as a source to decide whether to pursue possible employment with an organisation. They then continue to say that, this initial decision in the job search process affects all subsequent decision alternatives and the resultant outcome of the search process (Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager, 1993). This highlights the critical importance of employer branding. However, other authors suggest that employer branding for example, is only

one aspect that influences the job pursuit intentions of an individual and that factors such as corporate reputation and brand familiarity are other motivating factors (Cable & Turban, 2003; Alniacik, Alniacik & Erdogmus, 2012; Xie, Bagozzi & Meland, 2015; Khan, 2017).

Figure 2 below depicts a model constructed by Khan (2017), which illustrates the relationship between variables that lead to job pursuit intentions. In his study, Khan (2017) proves that employer branding, perceived corporate reputation and employer familiarity, amongst other variables, influence a job seeker's intentions to join an organisation.

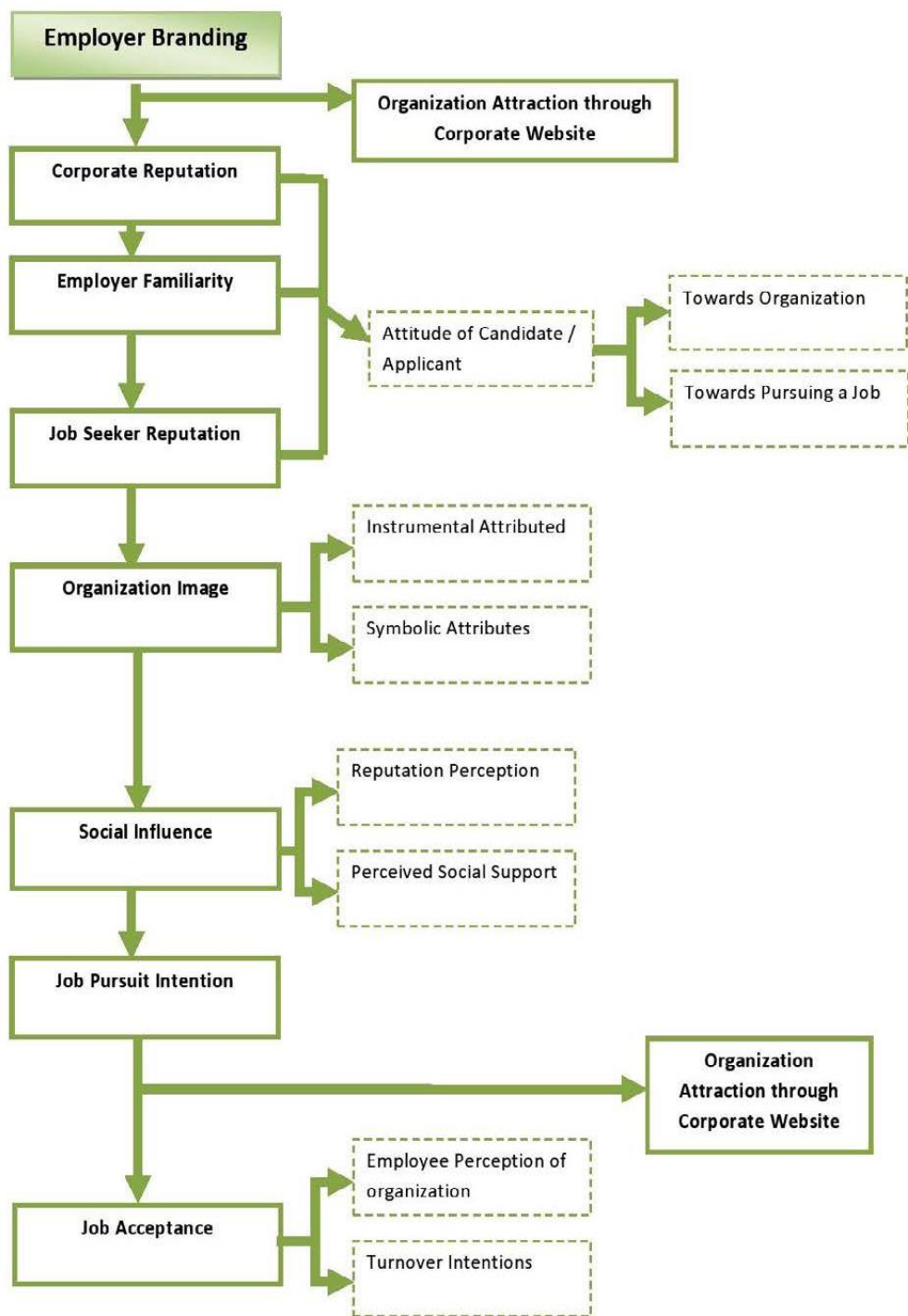


Figure 2: The relationship between a unique and attractive employer brand and the brand related behaviour of employees

Source: **Khan (2017)**.

A study conducted by Deloitte (2018), shows that millennials' sentiment on organisational motivations and ethics is taking a downward trend. There seems to be a mis-alignment between what millennials believe responsible businesses should prioritise, such as social and environmental investment, and what they then do (Deloitte, 2018). Deloitte (2018) have also found that millennials believe that their values should match that of the organisations they associate themselves with. This supports the validity of employee-organisation fit and social identity theory advanced by several authors (Turban & Leon, 1993; Cable & Turban, 2003). Xie, Bagozzi & Meland (2015), state that individual and organisational congruence has a positive effect on job pursuit intentions. Therefore, similarities between an individual and an organisation will result in positive job pursuit intentions. Khan (2017) believes that organisational image and employer branding are two key factors that influence a job seeker's application intentions. The author suggests that there exists a high correlation between job seeker's initial job choice decisions and positive organisational image as job seeker's wish to associate themselves with organisations with strong reputations (Khan, 2017).

Kumari & Saini (2018) have established that an employer that engages in CSI or has a strong CSI reputation is perceived more positively by a job seeker. This is because the organisation would have built up a "reputational reservoir" by engaging in CSI initiatives (Greyser, 2009, p. 600). However, when compared with other attributes such as career growth opportunities and work-life balance, CSI was a weaker predictor of organisational attractiveness and job pursuit intentions (Kumari & Saini, 2018).

Based on a study conducted using participants in the private sector in China, Jiang & Iles (2011) propose that job seekers should evaluate job offers based on both organisational attractiveness and employer brand equity and that these two variables may also play a key role in mediating the initial recruitment process.

Past research has shown that potential employees are more likely to pursue jobs at companies that have better reputations (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Rynes, 1991; Cable & Turban, 2003; Walker, 2010; Alniacik, Alniacik & Erdogmus, 2012; Xie, Bagozzi & Meland, 2015; Khan, 2017) as joining an organisation is viewed as a public declaration of a person's values and abilities. Being associated with an organisation with a poor reputation may bring a sense of embarrassment and shame to individuals.

In a study about how different components of corporate reputation influence job pursuit intentions, Alniacik, Alniacik & Erdogmus (2012), corroborate the findings that corporate reputation drives job pursuit intentions (Cable & Turban, 2003; Alniacik, Alniacik & Erdogmus, 2012; Xie, Bagozzi & Meland, 2015; Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager, 1993; Khan, 2017). They go further to say that a good corporate reputation enables an organisation to attract, retain and develop higher quality employees (Alniacik, Alniacik & Erdogmus, 2012). Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager (1993) posit that it is the information that job seekers obtain from a recruitment source that drives job pursuit intentions. Xie, Bagozzi & Meland (2015) state that corporate reputation and familiarity motivate job pursuit intentions. Khan (2017) agrees that organisational image and employer branding influence job pursuit intentions. Sharma & Prasad (2018) found corporate reputation to be one of the important elements to job pursuit intentions. According to a study conducted by Leekha, Chhabra & Sharma (2014), there exists a significant and positive relationship between employer brand image and job seeker's job pursuit intentions. It is evident that the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intentions has been explored in numerous contexts, and the aggregated findings are that there exists a significant and positive relationship between the concepts, which supports the first hypothesis.

H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention

According to Edwards & Lambert (2007, p.1), moderation takes place when “the effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable varies according to the level of a third variable, termed a moderator variable, which interacts with the independent variable”. Lai (2013, p. 240) defines a moderator as “independent variable that affects the strength and/or direction of the connotation between another independent variable and an outcome variable”. Farooq and Vij (2017) posit that a moderator should only be considered when the relationship between the dependent and independent variables, and in this case the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intentions, is strong.

The following section discusses employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness as the recognized moderators in the relationship between corporate reputation and employer brand equity.

2.5 Employer Brand Equity

According to Collins & Kanar (2013), the employer brand equity concept draws heavily on the consumer brand equity literature from Marketing and has been used extensively in human resource literature. There are two distinct perspectives of the literature; namely business and customer based. Early contributors to this concept include Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) who focused on customer-based brand equity and proposed conceptual models to measure it. Aaker's (1991) model has, however, been criticised for its lack of distinction between brand awareness and brand associations (Pappu, Cooksey & Quester, 2005).

Berthon, Ewing & Hah (2005) concur with Jiang & Iles (2011) that organisations must attract and retain talent to gain a competitive advantage. This is particularly important in an increasingly competitive environment where skilled knowledge workers have become a scarce resource. Therefore, maintaining a strong employer brand equity has become of paramount importance.

Brahmbhatt & Shah (2017) assert that organisations with strong brand equity, are said to be more resilient to product-harm crisis. Therefore, a strong brand equity can serve as a buffer in times of crisis, insulating an organisation's corporate reputation without affecting organisational attractiveness or the job pursuit intentions of job seekers, and in this case, millennials in South Africa.

Keller (1993) notes that authors define brand equity in numerous ways, depending on the purpose at hand. Heinberg, Ozkaya & Taube (2017) define brand equity as the consumer preference for one brand over a potential alternative. A more comprehensive definition as cited by Aaker (1991), is that brand equity is "a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that adds to or subtracts from the value provided by a product or a service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers". Employer brand equity, as defined by Theurer, Tumasjan, Welppe & Lievens (2018), is the value add and favourable employee response to all brand related information (employer knowledge). It encompasses an organisation's values, policies and behaviour in relation to attracting, motivating and retaining employees (Franca & Pahor, 2012).

For an organisation to have a positive employer brand equity, it must add value to the job seeker, illicit a favourable response to its employer branding activities, demonstrate values and policies that attract job seekers and must be better than an alternative organisation (Aaker, 1991; Theurer, Tumasjan, Welppe & Lievens, 2018; Heinberg,

Ozkaya & Taube, 2017; and Sharma & Prasad, 2017).Theurer, Tumasjan, Welppe & Lievens (2018), look at employer brand equity from the point of view of a current employee and not that of a potential employee thereby contradicting most other authors.

Aaker's (1991) definition of (employer) brand equity suggests that an organisation comprises certain attributes that are regarded as assets (strengths) or liabilities (weaknesses), that either add to or detract from the value provided by the organisation. This suggests that the employer brand equity of the organisation can be viewed as an equation and should the liabilities outweigh the assets, then the resultant effect would be a weaker or negative brand equity and vice versa.

Aaker's (1996) model of brand equity (featured below) is comprised of five components: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association and other proprietary brand assets. The most important for this study include brand awareness and brand association. Brand awareness is a component of brand equity and reflects the prominence of the brand in the customer's mind (Aaker, 1996). Brand association includes everything that consumers associate the company with i.e. products, communication, advertising and other such associations (Alshathry, Clarke & Goodman, 2016). Alshathry, Clarke & Goodman (2016) also suggest that when employment brand associations are present and strong, they will have a significant influence over other associations. Strong associations can be developed through media consumption and exposure to an employer brand, suggesting the importance of positive media coverage or advertising (Alshathry, Clarke & Goodman, 2016). Berthon, Ewing & Hah (2005), believe that advertising may be significant in identifying, obtaining and retaining qualified employees. According to Aaker (1993), brand equity results in efficient and effective marketing programs, increased brand loyalty and competitive advantage for organisations.



Figure 3: David Aaker Brand Equity Model

Source: Aaker (1996)

Keller (1993), advocates brand knowledge, brand awareness and brand image as dimensions of brand equity. His brand equity pyramid is based on consumer perspectives. For the purposes of this study, this will be adapted to job seekers. Keller (1993, p.1) defines customer- based brand equity as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand” and occurs when a consumer is familiar with the brand and holds “some favorable, strong, and unique brand associations in memory”.

Brand awareness is a person’s ability to identify the brand under varying conditions (Keller, 1993). The construct refers to brand recognition and brand recall; the probability and ease that a brand comes to mind (Keller, 1993). Brand recognition and recall are based on a person’s ability to confirm prior exposure and ability to retrieve brand name given a product category (Keller, 1993). Increasing the frequency of brand exposure, to enable brand awareness gives rise to the probability that the brand will become a part of

a person's consideration set (Keller, 1993). When faced with limited brand information, people will make choices based on brand awareness (Keller, 1993). In light of this, human resource practitioners should ensure consistent advertising to increase brand awareness.

Keller (1993, p.3), defines brand image as “perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory”. Brand associations are the pieces of information related to the brand which contain the meaning of the brand to the consumer, and are held in the consumer's brain (Keller, 1993). The stronger the brand associations, the less reinforcement required by the organisation (Keller, 1993) saving the organisation financial resources.

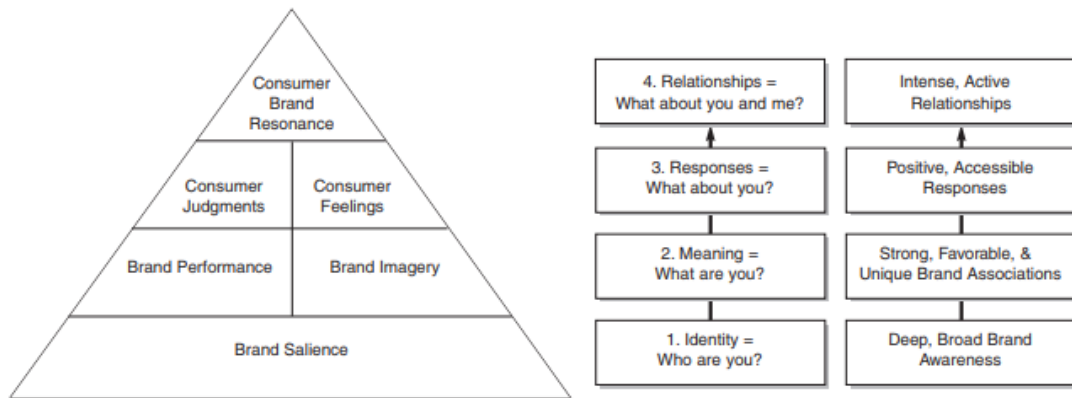


Figure 4: Keller Customer-based brand equity pyramid

Source: Keller (1993)

In their paper titled, “The role of employer brand equity in employee attraction and retention”, Alshathry, Clarke & Goodman (2016) draw on three constructs that they believe summarise employee brand equity: (1) employer knowledge, (2) employer brand associations and (3) employer brand experience. The first two constructs are consistent with Aaker's (1996) brand equity model and Keller's (1993) consumer- based brand equity pyramid. Employee brand experience is a unique and important construct as “customer” experiences begins to gain more relevance as power shifts from the organisation to the consumer. According to Kumar, Dash & Purwar, (2013), little research has been conducted on the effect of brand experiences on brand equity.

Brahmbhatt & Shah (2017) theorise that the brand equity of a product affects its resilience to product-harm crisis and that the higher the brand equity, the more credible the product and the lower the perceived risk.

Edwards (2010) believes that the strength of an organisation's employer brand equity, gives it a comparable advantage even amongst organisations with similar attributes as it enables the organisation to develop a reputation as a good place to work. Hence, organisations with strong employer brand equity can reduce the uncertainty faced by job seekers by helping to simplify their decision-making and help mitigate the risk associated with selecting the wrong employer (Kissel & Büttgen, 2015). Kissel & Büttgen (2015), believe that employer brand equity is expressed through the organisation's ability to attract job seekers and that organisational attractiveness is the key antecedent of the job pursuit intentions of job seekers. "The employer brand image, provides the basis for their attractiveness evaluations, though their perceptions are still influenced by their general impressions of the corporate image" (Kissel & Büttgen, 2015).

Sharma & Prasad (2017), believe that employer brand equity is a critical strategic tool that organisations should use to establish themselves as employers of choice as this will enable them to attract and retain the right pool of employees.

2.5.1 Employer Brand Equity and Job Pursuit Intentions

Employer brand equity "influences potential applicants to apply or not to apply and is the desired outcome of employer branding activities" (Jiang & Iles, 2011, p. 100). Sharma & Prasad (2017, p. 558) however, believe that employer branding might not always affect the pursuit intentions of job seekers, as the job "might appear unobtainable or beyond the potential of a candidate".

Aggarwal, Vaidyanathan & Venkatesh (2009) believe that job seeker's attitudes and perceived job attributes are positively related to job pursuit intentions. Sharma & Prasad (2017), tested employer brand (equity) as an independent variable against job pursuit intentions and found the relationship to be significant. No research was found on the moderating effects of employer brand equity on the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intentions therefore, the research sought to test the outcome thereof.

H2: Employee brand equity moderates the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention.

2.6 Organisation Attractiveness

Jiang & Iles (2011) point out that attracting and retaining high calibre employees is important to an organisation's success and contributes to its competitive advantage. The term "war for talent", coined by Fishman in 1998, refers to companies competing for top talent because of a skills shortage or gap resulting in a shrinking talent pool.

Tsai & Yang (2010, p. 49), define organisational attractiveness as an "applicant's willingness to pursue jobs and to accept job offers" in an organisation. Perceived organisational attractiveness is defined as "the way employers strategically attempt to exploit their strengths in order to attract applicants" (Gomes & Neves, 2011, p. 684). Studies have shown that perceived organisational attractiveness and organisational attributes are two of several factors that determine job pursuit intentions (Gomes & Neves, 2011; Tsai & Yang, 2010). Aiman-Smith, Bauer & Cable (2001, p. 221), define organisational attractiveness as "an attitude or expressed general positive affect toward an organization and toward viewing the organization as a desirable entity with which to initiate some relationship". Jiang and Iles (2011, p. 101) define it as "the power that draws applicants' attention to focus on an employer brand and encourages existing employees to stay". And lastly Berthon, Ewing & Hah (2005, p. 151) define it as "the envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organisation". They further assert that organisational attractiveness is an antecedent of employer brand equity; the more attractive an employer is perceived, the stronger its employer brand equity (Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005).

Theurer, Tumasjan, Welpel & Lievens (2018), describe employer branding as an approach to attracting and retaining candidates that involves internally and externally promoting what differentiates an organisation from its competition and makes it desirable as an employer. Employer branding involves communications that positively influence the perceptions of prospective and existing employees of an organisation. This takes the form of job advertisements, employer advertisements on social media platforms (i.e. LinkedIn) and presence at career fairs and universities. Franca & Pahor (2012) suggest that media exposure may have spill-over effects on recruitment efforts. Frequency in exposure builds familiarity which results in more favourable perceptions of the

organisation (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996). Job seekers will tend to have stronger opinions about an organisation that has received high media exposure (Franca & Pahor, 2012). It was found that job seekers were able to recall more advertising from organisations with a positive brand image and were willing to receive less remuneration from these organisations (Jiang & Iles, 2011).

Berthon, Ewing & Hah (2005) developed a scale to measure employer attractiveness. The scale was developed using existing constructs adapted from Ambler & Barrow (1996) as well as from qualitative feedback gleaned from focus groups. Five factors were identified: social value, market value, economic value, application value, cooperation value and working environment. The scale is made up of 25 items. For the purposes of this study- only social value, market value and economic value were applied as these included items which were relevant to the research question. The other items were thought to be generic and of little value to the overall objective. Including these into the study would result in a longer questionnaire, increasing the risk of despondence and non- completion of the questionnaire. Social value, “assesses the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer that provides a working environment that is fun, happy, provides good collegial relationships and a team atmosphere”. Whereas economic value, “assesses the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer that provides above-average salary compensation package, job security and promotional opportunities” (Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005). Berthon et al (2005) believe that organisations should integrate the six factors into their employer brand, as a recruitment strategy, so that they can compete globally on attracting skilled job seekers.

There is also a growing body of research that implies the significance of employer reputation in a knowledge worker’s application intentions and decisions (Cable & Turban, 2003). However, Rynes (1991) suggests that job attributes may be the more dominant factor in employee attraction.

Lis (2018) postulates that the most important and consistent variables of organisational attractiveness, from the perspective of job seekers, are remuneration, location and intellectual challenges. Remuneration was a decisive factor for young graduates however, factors such as corporate social responsibility, which can improve the attractiveness of an organisation have gained importance over the years (Lis, 2018). One can then infer that even though an organisation may have a poor corporate reputation and low employee brand equity, if it engaged in social upliftment programmes and had

a favourable remuneration structure, location and offer intellectual challenges it could remain attractive to job seekers.

van Prooijen & Ellemers (2014) suggest that moral judgements are central to the impressions that people form of certain individuals, groups or organisations, and moral traits are of more significance than competence. Social identity theory holds that people are attracted to organisations that give them a more positive or enhanced sense of self and social approval (Cable & Turban, 2003; Tsai & Yang, 2010). Turban & Greening (1996) remark that job seekers are more inclined to pursue jobs with organisations that comply with recognized ethical standards. Kumari & Saini (2018) assert that CSI plays a critical role in corporate reputation and in determining organisational attractiveness.

Turban & Leon (1993), use an interactionist perspective to study organisational attractiveness. They refer to it as person- organisation fit which is an alignment of organisational characteristics with individual needs. Organisational characteristics have been proven to influence a job seeker's perception of the organisation and influences his/ her attraction to it (Turban & Leon, 1993). Furthermore, they suggest that individuals differ in their attraction to certain organisational characteristics (Turban & Leon, 1993).

Some authors have identified four organisational characteristics that are salient to job seekers' impression of the organisation: (1) reward structure, (2) centralisation of decision- making, (3) organisation size and, (4) geographical dispersion of organisational plants & sites (Turban & Leon, 1993). Job seekers believe that an organisation should reward employees based on merit and not seniority i.e., remuneration and/ or incentives should be based on expertise and performance and not on tenure in the organisation or hierarchy (Turban & Leon, 1993). They also believe that centralising decision-making influences organisational attractiveness as job seekers are attracted to decentralized decision- making (Turban & Leon, 1993).

Kumari & Saini, (2018), state that existing research on the job expectations of newer generations, such as millennials, highlight three factors that contribute to organisational attractiveness; (1) career growth opportunities, (2) work-life benefits and (3) associations with organisations that either engage in social investment initiatives or with those who

have a good reputation in that regard. Intergenerational research suggests that millennials prefer work environments that enable flexibility, are of high social standing and invest in social responsibility initiatives (Kumari & Saini, 2018). They will leave organisations if their expectations are not fulfilled (Kumari & Saini, 2018).

Sharma & Prasad (2017) conclude that organisational attractiveness influences a job seeker's intentions to join an organisation and that an organisation's reputation is the most significant determinant of a job seeker's intent to join an organisation. No research was found on the moderating effects of organisational attractiveness on the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intentions therefore, the research sought to test the outcome thereof.

H3: Organisational attractiveness moderates the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention

2.7 Conclusion

Organisations experience difficulties in attracting and retaining talented knowledge workers due to the current VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) economy, which is characterised by an unstable talent demand and supply equation, and the unpredictable attrition trends and rivalry between competitors dubbed "war for talent" (Fishman, 1998; Khan, 2017). Some industries face knowledge worker shortages due to scarce skill requirements, whilst other industries face an ageing workforce (Khan, 2017). To increase the job pursuit intentions of knowledge workers, an organisation should have a good corporate reputation moderated by positive employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness.

The literature alludes to corporate reputation as a perceptual construct, based on the inferences of a series of past occurrences (Wilkins & Huisman, 2014; Fombrun & Van Riel, 1997; Urde & Greyser, 2016). An organisation can have many reputations (Alniacik, Alniacik & Erdogmus, 2012) and they may not all be affected by a single incident as corporate reputation is a long-term view of the organisation which is made up of a series

of past incidences, versus organisational image which is an immediate view of the organisation (Walker, 2010; Wilkins & Huisman, 2014; Fombrun & Van Riel, 1997; Urde & Greyser, 2016).

As the job seeker has limited information on the organisation at the start of the job search process, based on either the job advertisement, media consumed or an experience with the organisation, signaling theory is utilised. Signaling theory suggests that employer branding, job attributes, familiarity of the organisation and experience shape a job seeker's perceptions of corporate reputation Walker (2010). Media is also a strong stimulus and greatly influences perceptions of an organisation's reputation (Fan, Geddes & Flory, 2013; Heinberg, Ozkaya & Taube, 2017).

Social identity theory suggests that people are attracted to groups that reflect shared values and that will uplift their self-esteem or result in pride of association (Cable & Turban, 2003; Tsai & Yang, 2010). Therefore, job seekers will pursue jobs with organisations they believe have a good reputation and alignment in ethics (Xie, Bagozzi & Meland, 2015).

For organisations to minimise reputational harm during a crisis, they must build a "reputational reservoir" as a negative reputation may cost the organisation more money (Greyser, 2009, p. 600). A poor reputation results in lower calibre candidates and more money per hire than an organisation that has a good reputation. However, job seekers are not the organisation's only stakeholders (Sharma & Prasad, 2017). The organisation has many stakeholders who hold it to account on its brand promise (Park, 2017). Coombs (2007) suggests that failure to deliver brand promise will result in a weakened reputation and lost customers.

Keller (1991) and Aaker (1993), are the biggest contributors to brand equity theory. Their models are rooted in the marketing discipline and are both consumer based but have been adapted to suit human resource literature. Although the authors define brand equity differently, their definitions do have converging factors. The similarities include Aaker's brand awareness which speaks to familiarity of the brand and a positive disposition towards it, and Keller's brand salience. Brand salience refers to awareness and recognition of the brand; how the brand stands out in relation to its environment or competitors (Keller, 1991). The second level of similarities includes Aaker's brand associations and Keller's brand imagery and consumer feelings. Aaker's brand associations allude to how consumers process or retrieve brand information to

differentiate between a competitor brand and how positive attitudes and feelings are formed towards the brand (Aaker, 1993). Brand imagery is about creating brand meaning in the minds of consumers resulting in strong, favourable and unique brand associations (Keller, 1991). Brand feelings is about the positive feelings that are created through the brand experience.

Aaker (1993) suggests that brand equity will result in efficient and effective marketing programmes, increased brand loyalty and competitive advantage. Brand equity affects a brand's resilience to product harm, increases credibility and lowers perceived risk (Brahmbhatt & Shah, 2017). Therefore, an organisation with a strong employer brand equity will be perceived as more credible and a safer bet than an organisation with a weaker employer brand equity.

Employer brand equity helps to establish an organisation as the right place to work and aids in attracting high calibre job seekers (Kissel & Büttgen, 2015). Employer brand equity has been proven to positively influence job pursuit intentions. Job seeker's attitudes and perceived job attributes also positively influenced job pursuit intentions (Aggarwal, Vaidyanathan & Venkatesh (2009). Organisational reputation was singled out as the most significant determinant of job pursuit intentions (Sharma & Prasad, 2017).

Organisational attractiveness and organisational attributes are two of several factors that positively influence job pursuit intentions. Lis (2018) highlights the most important and consistent variables to organisational attractiveness as remuneration, location, intellectual challenges and CSI. Remuneration and location variables are consistent with Turban & Leon's (1993) findings on the characteristics that drive organisational attractiveness.

Authors argue that employer branding is only one aspect that influences job pursuit intentions and other variables such as corporate reputation, brand familiarity, CSI and organisational and individual congruence are just as effective in influencing job pursuit intentions (Xie, Bagozzi & Meland, 2015).

A review of the literature suggested that even though prior research confirmed a relationship between corporate reputation and employer brand equity (Kissel & Büttgen, 2015) and one between employer brand equity and job pursuit intention (Jiang & Iles, 2011; Leekha, Chhabra & Sharma, 2014), no authors had explored the moderating

effects of employer brand equity on the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention.

Chapter three aggregates the literature discussed in chapter two to refine the research questions and objectives of this study.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to determine whether corporate reputation influenced the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa, using employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness as moderators of this relationship. The research sought to determine whether a negative or positive corporate reputation would have any influence on job pursuit intentions, further to this, whether employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness moderated the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intentions. In other words, would a positive or negative employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness result in increased or decreased job pursuit intentions? A positive relationship between the independent variable, corporate reputation, and the moderating variables, employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness are assumed and confirmed in the literature (Gomes & Neves, 2011; Sharma & Prasad, 2017).

To this end, a conceptual framework has been included to consolidate and outline the research objectives. The research aimed to answer three questions, which were derived from the literature review.

3.2 Conceptual Model

A conceptual model was developed to map the key constructs of the research and to answer the main research question; What is the influence of corporate reputation on the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa and does employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness moderate this relationship?

The main research objective was to determine the influence of corporate reputation on the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa and to determine whether employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness moderated this relationship.

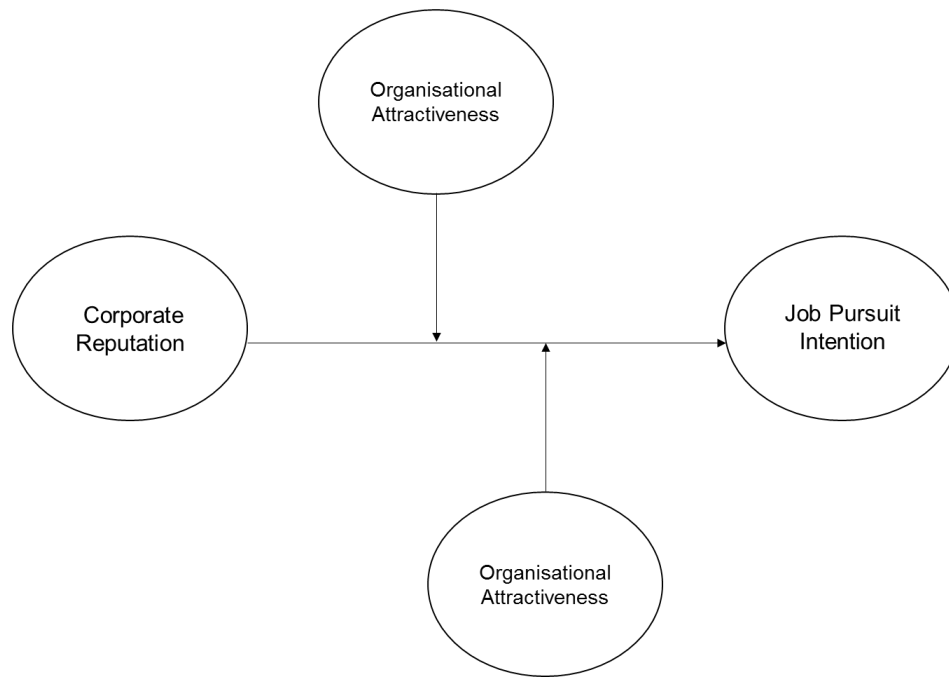


Figure 5: Conceptual model

3.3 Research question 1

Research question 1: *What is the influence of corporate reputation on the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa?*

Research objective 1: to determine the influence of corporate reputation on the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa.

Research question 1 is intended to answer hypothesis 1. This aims to determine whether corporate reputation has an impact on the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa. H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention.

3.4 Research question 2

Research question 2: *Does employer brand equity moderate the relationship between corporate reputation and the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa.*

Research objective 2: to determine whether employer brand equity moderates the relationship between corporate reputation and the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa.

Research question 2 seeks to identify the influence that employer brand equity has on the relationship between corporate reputation and the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa. H2: Employee brand equity moderates the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention

H2: Employee brand equity moderates the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention.

The literature proposes that job seekers use an organisation's reputation as a measure of the attributes and quality of a job (Cable & Turban, 2003). It also proposes that job seekers form perceptions of corporate reputation based on recruitment advertisement (to bring about awareness of the job to the job seeker) and corporate familiarity (Cable & Turban, 2003).

3.5 Research question 3

Research question 3: *Does organisational attractiveness moderate the relationship between corporate reputation and the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa.*

Research objective 3: To determine whether organisational attractiveness moderates the relationship between corporate reputation and the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa.

Research question 3 seeks to determine whether organisational attractiveness has any bearings on the relationship between corporate reputation and the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa. H3: Organisational attractiveness moderates the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention.

Social identity theory alludes to people's tendency to associate themselves with brands (and groups) that will improve their self-esteem and those that they will take pride in belonging to (Cable & Turban, 2003; Tsai & Yang, 2010). The more favourable an

organisation's corporate reputation, the more attractive it becomes to job seekers (Alniacik, Alniacik & Erdogmus, 2012) as people tend to associate themselves with brands that will improve their self-esteem or that invoke feelings of pride (Cable & Turban, 2003).

According to prior research, there exists a positive relationship between corporate reputation and organisational attractiveness (Gomes & Neves, 2011).

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology and design, describes the population, the unit of analysis used, the sampling method employed, and sampling size followed by a discussion of the measurement instrument and tool, the data gathering and analysis approach and study limitations.

4.2 Research methodology and design

4.2.1 Philosophy

The research philosophy adopted for the study is positivism in nature. According to Saunders & Lewis (2012), this philosophy stems from the universal law of cause and effect and aims to predict outcomes of research based on various stimuli applied to the variable by the researcher. This philosophy is also rooted in testing theories. Wallimam (2011, p.21) defines positivism as a philosophy based on knowledge attained from scientific method, sensory experience or comparative analysis to uncover universal laws and generalisations. Saunders & Lewis, (2012) recommend using positivism or realism philosophies for quantitative research studies.

4.2.2 Approach

A deductive research approach was employed, which “involves the testing of a theoretical proposition by using a research strategy designed to perform this test.” (Saunders & Lewis, 2012, p.108). Wallimam (2011, p.19) posits that deductive research is guided by preceding theory which means that propositions, research questions or hypothesis are derived from existing theory. Deductive research comprises five sequential steps which are (1) defining the research questions from the current theory, (2) specifying how the questions may be answered, (3) seeking answers to the defined research questions, (4) analysing the results to ascertain whether the theory is supported and or suggesting modifications to the theory and (5) confirming the initial theory or modifying considering the research findings (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

4.2.3 Strategy

A survey method was employed via the internet and a link with the survey was sent either to an email address or to a mobile telephone number. Surveys are a means to collect

structured data from a selection of the sample from the main population to test a theory (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). This survey includes cross-sectional studies using questionnaires, with the objective of generalising from a sample to a population (Creswell, 2003).

A pre-test was conducted, with family and friends, to check for understanding, ambiguity and effectiveness of the questions posed.

4.2.4 Choices

A quantitative, mono method, research approach was employed. This is the most appropriate research approach to use when testing a theory or for developing knowledge (Creswell, 2003). Quantitative research “employs strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys and collects data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data” (Creswell, 2003).

4.2.5 Time horizon

The research study was conducted at a point in time and is therefore cross-sectional in nature. Cross-sectional research design entails collecting data at a single point in time with the objective to examine the body of data to determine a pattern or association (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.53). Saunders & Lewis (2012) recommend using a cross-sectional method when a researcher has time constraints.

4.2.6 Techniques and Procedures

A questionnaire was distributed to the sample population via a link generated from Survey Monkey. Respondents were encouraged to forward the link to people in their network that fit the targeted age range, in a method called snowballing.

Questionnaires are regarded as a flexible tool that is cheap, easy and convenient for respondents to answer (in an environment they prefer and at their own time) and quick to administer to many people, covering a large geographic territory (Wallimam, 2011). Questionnaires distributed via the internet are the cheapest and the least time consuming, however response rates tend to be low (Wallimam, 2011). There is no

personal influence or physical presence required with questionnaires, as they would be in an interview, and as a result ensures non-biased feedback (Wallimam, 2011). This method was selected because it was cost effective and time efficient. It enabled confidentiality of all participants encouraging honest responses. It enabled comparability as participants were asked similar questions and lastly, it reduced subject bias through minimized contact with respondents (Saunders & Lewis, 2014).

Once the required number of respondents had been reached, the survey link was closed to limit further participation in the survey. The results from the questionnaire were aggregated on Survey Monkey and an excel report was pulled. The results were sorted according to the various construct measurements. Once the data had been prepared, statistical tests were run. These included a linear regression test, two moderating analysis, an exploratory factor analysis (comprising of a KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity), followed by a regression analysis.

4.3 Population

The target population of this study comprised of millennials in South Africa. This population group was born between 1980 and 2000 and is therefore between the ages of 18 – 36. This includes men and women of varying ethnicities (Black, White, Coloured, Indian and Asian). The sample survey included participants who had a minimum tertiary qualification, those who would be entering the workplace within the next year and who had started to gather information about future employers or who are currently involved in a job search as well as those who are currently employed (professionals) and may be interested in moving to a different company. The population sample was obtained via snowballing of the survey amongst peers. The sample population had access to smartphones and data, making completion of the survey possible at a time and place most suited to the respondent. It was anticipated that the majority of the population resided in the Gauteng province, one of the most populous province in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2017).

The millennial population was targeted because it contributed significantly to the South African population and workforce. Moreover, this population was either entering the workplace and intended to embark on corporate careers or, as DeVaney (2015) remarks, this population is likely to move from one company to the other, and so is always interested in new job openings.

The millennial sample includes members of the population that are enrolled in universities, unemployed, entrepreneurs or those that are working in the corporate environment.

4.4 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis are the individuals (born between 1983 – 2000) in the sample population covered in the research study.

4.5 Sampling method and size

The objective was to gather 200 completed questionnaires from the sample population to ensure statistical relevancy. According to Kline (2005), an acceptable per variable participant ratio is 10 or 20. Creswell (2003) postulates that to be able to draw generalisations from a sample, it would have to be representative of the population. A sample is said to be biased if it is not representative of the population, implying that inferences drawn from the sample may not apply to all. Creswell (2003) recommends the use of a random sampling method, but also endorses the use of a stratified random sampling procedure to obtain a proportional representation of population subgroups. As the sampling required respondents to identify and provide or forward the survey to other potential respondents that met the criteria, the sampling methods used were the non-probability purposive and snowball sampling. Questionnaires were initially sent to purposively selected individuals, who fall met the criteria via a link sent to their email or mobile. These individuals then identified, provided or forwarded the survey to their contacts who met the criteria. According to Saunders & Lewis (2014), non-probability sampling method is appropriate when it is not possible to obtain a complete list of the population.

The job advertisements that were created for this study were based on four companies which had, in the last two years, received negative media attention. The job advertisements created for this study were adapted from existing job advertisement on PNet, a recruitment website. PNet is a job site where job seeker and potential employer engage. Job seekers can register a profile and load their curriculum vitae detailing qualifications and experience. So too are organisations able to load job advertisements and recruitment advertisements on the platform. job advertisements were randomly distributed to respondents, and each was given the choice to select one job

advertisement at random. After reading the job advertisement, the respondents completed a survey to assess their awareness and familiarity of the organisation, their perception of the organisation's corporate and employer brand reputation, organisation attractiveness, job attributes, job pursuit intentions and pride from association with that organisation. Kumari & Saini (2018) state that job seekers evaluate the attractiveness of an organisations through the presence of attributes such as remuneration, security, career growth etc. before seeking employment with that organisation. Therefore, these elements had to be present in the job advertisements created.

4.6 Measurement instrument and data collection tool

Saunders & Lewis (2012) state that there are three measures that assess validity, namely content validity (ensuring that your measurement questions encompass the investigative questions), criterion- related validity (the extent to which the questions predict the outcome) and finally construct validity (that the questions posed measure the presence of the constructs). The constructs in the study were measured using existing scales from previous studies thus ensuring construct validity.

According to Saunders & Lewis (2012), reliability testing can be conducted using Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha, a statistical analysis, was employed to establish correlation and internal consistency of the questions posed (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

4.6.1 Questionnaire design

The respondents received a questionnaire with a preamble, an introduction, assurance of anonymity and contact details of both the research and supervisor. This was followed by descriptive statistics in the form of demographics, the option to select one of four job advertisements and a control variable that sought to determine whether the respondent had seen the organisation featured in the news latterly and if so, whether they were featured positively or negatively. The objective of this control variable was to ascertain whether the newsfeed received from the media influenced their perception of the organisation's corporate reputation and whether the perception of a positive or negative corporate reputation influenced their job pursuit intentions. The subsequent questions were based on the chosen job advertisement. The companies chosen were either multinationals or JSE listed organisations whose reputations had been tarnished during the previous two years. All variables were measured using multiple items on a five – point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The variables

or constructs were measured using questions adapted from previous authors and studies.

Corporate reputation was measured using questions from Walsh, Beatty & Shiu (2009). Employer brand equity was measured using the following constructs Brand Awareness (Aaker, 1996; Yoo, Donthu & Lee, 2000) and Employer Brand Reputation (Cable & Turban, 2003). Organisational Attractiveness was measured through attributes such as Employer Attractiveness (Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005), Job Attributes (Turban et al, 1998; Cable & Judge, 1996) and Pride from membership (Turban, Lau, Ngo, Chow, & Si, 2001). Job Pursuit Intentions was measured through questions adapted from Turban & Keon (1993).

4.6.2 Pre-testing of the questionnaire

The questionnaire contained 32 questions and took an average of seven minutes to complete. The questionnaire was conveniently distributed to 52 friends and colleagues with the objective to receive feedback on the ease of completing and to test for understanding items. 32 questionnaires were completed and usable. The pre-test also served to test the validity and reliability of the constructs, to enable adjustment before sending out to the larger sample of the population.

4.6.2.1 Corporate reputation

This construct comprised seven questions, however, one question, “[Corporate brand] seems to recognize and take advantage of market opportunities” had to be removed from the construct as the item did not relate to the question. Removing the question resulted in an increased Cronbach’s alpha.

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.836	.827	6

Inter-item statistics

Table 2: Inter-item Correlation Matrix

	Corporate Reputation	V26	V27	V28	V29	V30
Corporate Reputation	1.000	.545	.564	.565	.459	.092
V26	.545	1.000	.724	.666	.613	.121
V27	.564	.724	1.000	.616	.470	.196
V28	.565	.666	.616	1.000	.695	.091
V29	.459	.613	.470	.695	1.000	.237
V30	.092	.121	.196	.091	.237	1.000

All items were positive.

4.6.2.2 Employee brand equity

This construct was measured using brand awareness, familiarity and employer brand reputation as key components. Brand awareness and familiarity both obtained Cronbach alpha scores of less than .800, meaning that these questions had to be reworked and improved or that more questions needed to be added (as none of the inter-items was negative) to increase reliability of the measure. Familiarity was removed as a component, as it was found that Aaker (1993) classified this component under brand awareness, nullifying the need to measure separately. The brand awareness component was strengthened with questions adapted from Yoo, Donthu & Lee (2000).

Brand awareness

Cronbach's alpha

Table 3 reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.516	.517	2

Inter-item statistics

Table 4: Inter-item Correlation Matrix

	Brand awareness	V17
Brand awareness	1.000	.348
V17	.348	1.000

Familiarity

Cronbach's alpha

Table 5: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.696	.693	3

Inter-item statistics

Employer Brand Reputation

Cronbach's alpha

Inter-item statistics

Table 6: Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	Familiarity	V19	V20
Familiarity	1.000	.469	.244
V19	.469	1.000	.577
V20	.244	.577	1.000

All items are positive.

4.6.2.3 Organisational attractiveness

Organisational attractiveness was measured using job attribute and pride from membership questions. One of the questions from the job attribute measure, "High

employee morale” had to be removed from the construct as it did not measure job attributes. Removal of this question resulted in an increased Cronbach’s alpha.

Cronbach’s alpha

Table 7: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.824	.824	7

Inter-item statistics

Table 8: Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	Job Attributes	V2	V3	V4	V6	V7	V8
Job Attributes	1.000	.566	.532	.436	.384	.523	.209
V2	.566	1.000	.297	.440	.392	.510	.211
V3	.532	.297	1.000	.566	.391	.322	.313
V4	.436	.440	.566	1.000	.499	.337	.417
V6	.384	.392	.391	.499	1.000	.262	.434
V7	.523	.510	.322	.337	.262	1.000	.383
V8	.209	.211	.313	.417	.434	.383	1.000

Pride from membership

Pride from membership was measured using three questions adapted from Turban, Lau, Ngo, Chow & Si (2001). This construct scored a high Cronbach’s alpha and all items were correlated.

Cronbach’s alpha

Table 9: Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.947	.947	3

Inter-item correlation

Table 10: Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix			
	Pride from membership	V14	V15
Pride from membership	1.000	.886	.871
V14	.886	1.000	.811
V15	.871	.811	1.000

4.6.2.4 Job Pursuit Intentions

Job pursuit intentions was measured using four questions adapted from Turban & Keon (1993). This construct scored a high Cronbach's alpha and all items were correlated.

Cronbach's alpha

Table 11: Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.929	.933	4

Inter-item statistics

Table 12: Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix				
	Job pursuit intention	V10	V11	V12
Job pursuit intention	1.000	.814	.734	.694
V10	.814	1.000	.760	.712
V11	.734	.760	1.000	.944
V12	.694	.712	.944	1.000

All items are positive.

4.7 Data gathering process

The job advertisement coupled with a structured questionnaire were distributed via Survey Monkey, a data collection tool. The survey was accompanied by a cover letter, detailing the purpose of the research, how the results would be aggregated and presented, expectations of each participant, the anonymity of the study (to encourage honest responses) and the option to opt out at any stage in the processes.

Data was collected between the period of August 2018 to early October 2018 from colleagues, friends and family who fit the target profile. As the survey method was snowballing, those that had completed the survey were encouraged to forward on to their networks.

4.8 Data analysis approach

The data gathered from the study was be analysed using statistical procedures and hypothesis testing (Creswell, 2003). The data collected from the survey was ranked/ ordinal and was checked for errors prior to commencing on the analysis (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

Respondents returned the completed questionnaire via internet. The results were aggregated by Survey Monkey and made available in excel format. The data was coded, set up into a data matrix and evaluated using statistical analysis. Common themes were highlighted, and the results interpreted and presented in a graph format. Statistical tests helped determine the relationship between corporate reputation, employer brand equity and organisation attractiveness.

Data was collected using Survey Monkey; it was then uploaded into Microsoft excel for coding. After coding the data, it was exported into SPSS for data analysis. The data analysis started with some descriptive statistics on the biographic information. Then a factor analysis with principal component was conducted to establish the convergent validity of the items used in the model as well as the structure of the constructs involved in the model. After identifying the valid items, they were further computed to build the three constructs specify in the model. Finally, a regression and a moderation test were conducted to test the research hypotheses.

4.9 Limitations

The following limitations were identified; first, the total population was unknown as an existing database was used for the purposes of this study, thereby limiting the generalisability of the research results. Secondly, it was not possible to control for all possible variables which could affect the outcome. And lastly, respondents might not have been familiar with the ethical transgressions committed by the organisation limiting the purpose of the study therefore limiting the researcher's ability to test for the influence of a negative or positive corporate reputation.

5. RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the results of the study will be presented. Descriptive statistics are displayed to give an overview of the sample under study. This is followed by an exploratory factor analysis, the regression results, an assessment of the reliability and normality of the scales, a discriminant validity test and hypothesis testing results.

5.2 Survey response rate

123 responses were received, however only 106 respondents completed the survey giving a response rate of 86%. The reasons that respondents may have not completed the survey could be that they did not fall within the target age group of 18 – 36 years, and because they found the survey too long (the host site, Survey Monkey, gave an estimate of 7 minutes) or laborious as a job advertisement was included at the start of the survey.

5.3 Respondent demographics

Table 1 summarises the demographic information of the respondents. The results show that 123 respondents provided demographic information. From Table 1 below, 61.0% of the respondents were females and 56.9% were aged between 32 and 36 years old. With regards to ethnicity, most of the respondents (84.6%) who participated in the survey were black. The results also indicate that a large majority of respondents were employed (83.7%) and 45.5% of them had more than 10 years of experience. Finally, most respondents (52.8%) were involved in a job search and 41.5% of the respondents who participated in this survey selected the Tiger Brands survey.

Table 13: Summary of respondent demographics

	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
Gender		
Female	75	61,0
Male	48	39,0
Total	123	100,0
Age		
18 to 24	10	8,1
25 to 31	43	35,0
32 to 36	70	56,9
Total	123	100,0
Ethnicity		
Black	104	84,6
White	7	5,7
Asian	8	6,5
Coloured	4	3,3
Total	123	100,0
Education level		
Undergraduate	42	34,1
Postgraduate	81	65,9
Total	123	100,0
Are you currently employed?		
Yes	103	83,7
No	20	16,3
Total	123	100,0
How many years of work experience do you have?		
< 1 year	11	8,9
2 years – 5 years	25	20,3
6 years – 9 years	31	25,2
10 years >	56	45,5
Total	123	100,0
Are you in the process of gathering information about potential employers or are you involved		
Yes	65	52,8
No	58	47,2
Total	123	100,0
Company		
Tiger brand	51	41,5
Mc Kinsey	24	19,5
KPMG	29	23,6
Grant Thornton	19	15,4
Total	123	100,0

5.4 Construct validity

5.4.1 Exploratory factor analysis: Principal component

An exploratory factor analysis was performed to test the structure of the four main constructs involved in the study: corporate reputation, job pursuit intention, employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness. Moreover, it also allowed the researcher to empirically assess the convergent validity of the scales used (Field, 2013). The Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin (KMO- Table 2) measure was calculated to ensure that the sample was adequate for factor analysis. According to Table 2, the suitability of the data is supported because the KMO value (.647) was superior to the threshold of 0.6; and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant (.000) (Pallant, 2010:199).

Table 14: KMO and Bartlett's Test

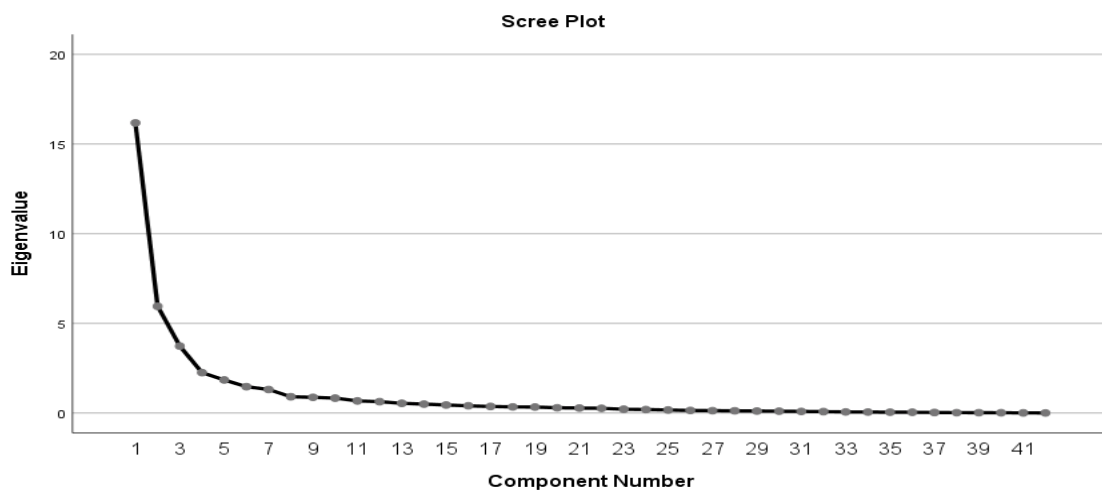
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.647
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2651.539
	df	861
	Sig.	.000

The principal component with orthogonal rotation (Varimax) was used as the extraction method. This method was selected because it essentially captured the components with eigenvalues above 1 and organised them by order of importance. Table 3 provides details regarding the contribution of each factor to the total variance. The results were also mapped out on a Scree plot, also below (Table 4).

Table 15: Total variance explained

Components	Total eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	16.176	38.515	38.515
2	5.950	14.167	52.682
3	3.733	8.888	61.570
4	2.253	5.364	66.934
5	1.844	4.389	71.323
6	1.467	3.494	74.817
7	1.311	3.122	77.939

Table 16: Scree plot



The principal component analysis revealed the presence of seven factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1. According to Table 3, the component number 1 has the highest eigenvalue (16.176) which corresponds to 38.515% of the total variance while the last component (number 7) has an eigenvalue of 1.311 which represents 3.122% of the total variance. This result is consistent with the scree plot which also suggests a seven-factor solution as there was a clear break after the seventh component. Both Table 3 and Table 4 indicate the number of components extracted. However, they do not inform on the items loading on each component. Information about the item's loadings is provided in Table 17.

Table 17: Rotated component matrix

	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
BA1				.814			
BA2				.826			
BA3				.841			
BA4				.770			
BA5						.854	
BA6				.685		.355	
EBR1	.595					.588	
EBR2	.535		.480			.429	
EBR3	.461					.483	.448
EBR4	.311		.316			.438	.543
JA1			.619		.340		
JA2			.768				
JA3			.699		.434		
JA4	.438		.704		.317		
JA5	.470		.735				
JA6	.304				.729		
JA7		.310			.776		
JA8	.410			.335	.687		
JPI1	.715				.304	.304	
JPI2	.820				.333		
JPI3	.553		.303		.593		
JPI4	.538		.311		.536		
PFM1	.841						
PFM2	.839						
PFM3	.834						
CR1	.475	.342			.313		.400
CR2	.521	.319					.597

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.

- a. Rotation converged in 12 iterations.

Table 5 above, provides details on the items associated with each component. Following the results of the rotated matrix, three factors (constructs) mostly loaded in component number 1; namely some items of employer brand equity (employer brand reputation), the items of job pursuit intention (job pursuit intention and pride from membership) and

the items of corporate reputation (corporate reputation). The remaining items of employer brand equity (brand awareness) loaded in component number 4. The items of organisational attractiveness split between component number 2 (organisational attractiveness) and component number 3 (job attributes).

For this study, the factor loadings of the first four components were preferred compared to the factor loadings of the last three components because the overall factor loadings of the items in the last three components (5, 6 and 7) were lower than those in the four first components (1, 2, 3 and 4). In addition, the first four components taken together were heavier (66.93%) than the last three components (11.0%) in terms of total eigenvalue. Therefore, only the items loading satisfactorily in the first four components were considered valid (convergent) and adequate for the regression analysis.

5.5 Linear regression analysis

The following report uses linear regression analysis conducted on IBM SPSS version 25 to test eight structural hypotheses. The purpose of regression analysis is to evaluate if there is any statistically significant relationship among the variables specified in the conceptual model. Furthermore, two moderation analyses were conducted to determine whether the strength of this relationship varied based on the moderating variables; employee brand equity and organisational attractiveness. Other analyses such as reliability analysis, correlation and assumption of multicollinearity were also scrutinised and reported. Below is a list of hypotheses that were tested in this study.

H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention

H2: Employee brand equity moderates the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention

H3: Organisational attractiveness moderates the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention

5.5.1 Assessing reliability and normality of scales

The scale reliability was conducted on four constructs to measure the internal consistency of each construct. The results in table 18 demonstrate that all the constructs represented in the conceptual model (corporate reputation, job pursuit intentions, organisational attractiveness and employer brand equity) were internally consistent with their measurement as all their Cronbach Alphas were all above 0.7 (Malhotra et.al 2012).

Table 18: Scale reliability

Overall Scale	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items
Corporate reputation	3.41	0.8207	-0.449	0.278	0.918	7
Job pursuit intention	3.2077	1.0676	-0.389	-0.576	0.955	7
Organisational attractiveness	3.6773	0.7412	-1,188	2.021	0.938	14
Employer brand equity	3.5915	0.6199	-0.141	-0.022	0.734	10

Generally, a value for Skewness and Kurtosis between -2 and +2 is considered acceptable to prove normal univariate distribution (George & Mallery, 2010). The results show normal distribution of data as almost all the constructs had a coefficient which is between the interval [-2 and +2]. The exception was organisational attractiveness which had a Kurtosis slightly above 2 (2.021). As this was negligible, it was ignored.

Table 19 below represents the multicollinearity tests of the three independent variables: corporate reputation, organisational attractiveness and employer brand equity. The results indicate that there was no multicollinearity issue in this study because the value of the tolerance for each variable was above 0.1 and the VIF was below 10. This means that the three independent variables were distinct enough to be considered as different entities.

Since discriminant validity is the extent to which variables are distinct from each other in the model (Hair et al., 2014), the VIF and tolerance results can also be considered as evidence of discriminant validity.

Table 19: Multicollinearity

	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Corporate reputation	0,606	1,651
Organisational attractiveness	0,577	1,732
Employer brand equity	0,670	1,494

5.5.2 Results for hypotheses tests

Before running the regression analysis to test the hypotheses, a bivariate correlation test was conducted to ascertain the relationships between the constructs. Table 8 (below) shows that all the correlations were positive and statistically significant at least at 0.05 level. Meaning that there was at least an 95% of chance that these correlations occurred.

Table 20: Correlation matrix

		Employer brand equity	Organisational attractiveness	Job pursuit intention	Corporate reputation
Pearson Correlation	Employer brand equity	1			
	Organisational attractiveness	0.521	1		
	Job pursuit intention	0.571	0.532	1	
	Corporate reputation	0.587	0.59	0.785	1

A linear regression test was conducted to evaluate the influence of corporate reputation on job pursuit intentions.

Table 21: Model summary

Model Summary^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.785 ^a	.616	.612	.66467
a. Predictors: (Constant), Corporate reputation				
b. Dependent Variable: Job pursuit intention				

Table 22: ANOVA

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	67.460	1	67.460	152.700	.000 ^b
	Residual	41.969	95	.442		
	Total	109.429	96			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Pursuit intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Corporate Reputation

Table 21 and Table 22 (above) show that the model predicting job pursuit intention was statistically significant ($F= 152.700$; $P= .000$; $Ad. R^2= .612$). This indicates that Corporate reputation explained up to 61.2% of the variance of job pursuit intention in the sample (millennials in South Africa).

Table 23: Coefficients

Coefficients		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	sig	Decision hypotheses
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	-.279	.290		-.962	.339	
	Corporate reputation	1.021	.083	.785	12.357	.000	Accepted

dependent Variable: Job pursuit intention

Table 24: Scatterplot

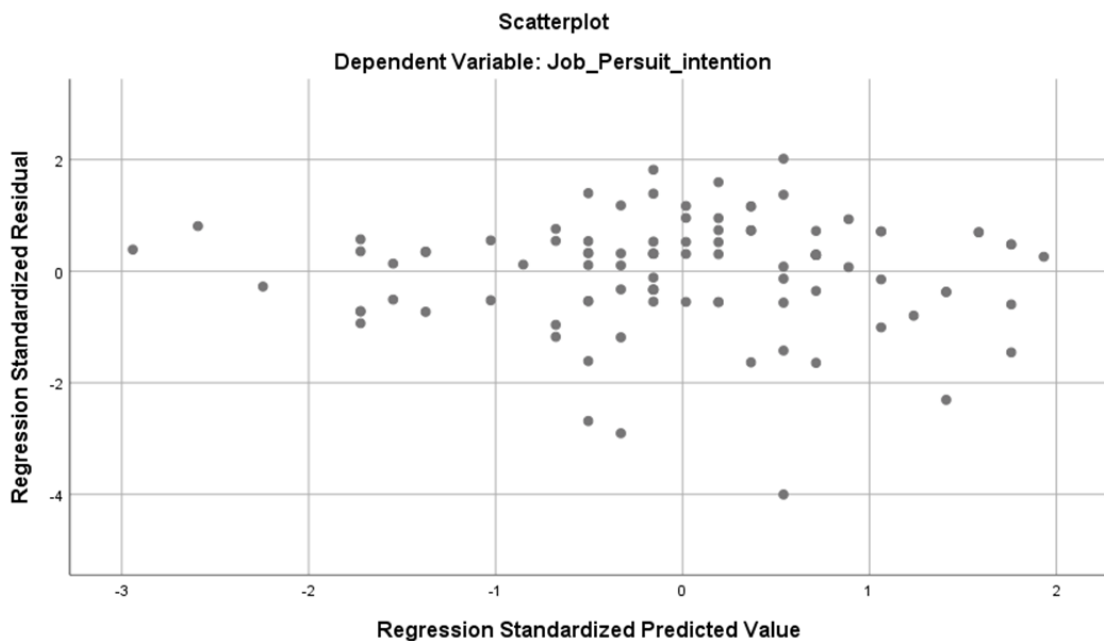


Table 23 presents the predictive effect of corporate reputation on job pursuit intention. The results reveal that corporate reputation had a positive and significant effect on job pursuit intention because $\beta = .785$; $p < 0.05$; $t = 12.357$. Following this result, we can confidently say that corporate reputation was a predictor of job pursuit intention. Meaning that the better an organisation's reputation is, the more likely it would be able to attract job seekers who would actively pursue employment at that organisation. Therefore, the hypothesis (H1) is accepted.

5.5.2.1 Moderation analysis

Moderation is the influence of a third variable (also called a moderator) on the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable. In this study, the moderation analysis was carried out using the Hayes & Preacher's (2010) PROCESS macro with SPSS. Find the research hypotheses tested below.

H2: Employer brand equity moderates the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention

- Moderation Model 1 (relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention)
- Moderator: Employer brand equity

Table 25: Moderator: Employer brand equity

	coeff	se	t	p
Constant	3,1011	,2172	14,2757	,0000
Employer brand equity	,2674	,1594	1,6773	,969
Corporat reputation	,9056	,1006	9,0061	,0000
Interaction_1 (int_1)	,0428	,0877	,4877	,6269

The moderation model (1) indicates two independent variables (Corporate reputation and the interaction variable - in red), one controlled variable (having seen them or not in the news lately- in blue), and one dependent variable which is Job pursuit intention.

According to the moderation model (1) result, the effect (.0428) of the interaction variable (int_1) on job pursuit intention is non-significant as the t value is 0.4877 and the p value (.6269) is greater than .05. In conclusion, Employer brand equity does not moderate the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention. Meaning, the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention was the same regardless of the level of employer brand equity; it did not change according to employer brand equity. Conclusion, H2 is rejected

H3: Organisational attractiveness moderates the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention

- Moderation Model 2 (relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention)
- Moderator: Organisational attractiveness

Table 26: Moderator: Organisational attractiveness

	coeff	se	t	p
Constant	3,0328	,2241	13,5328	,0000
Organisational attractiveness	-,0394	,1631	-,2415	,8097
Corporate reputation	1,0324	,0904	11,4148	,0000
interaction_2 (int_2)	-,0267	,0790	-,3375	,7365

The moderation model (2) indicates two independent variables (Corporate reputation and the interaction variable – in red), one controlled variable (having seen them or not in the news lately- in blue), and one dependent variable which is Job pursuit intention.

According to the moderation model (2) result, the effect (.0267) of the interaction variable (int_2) on Job pursuit intention is non-significant as the t value is 0.3375 and the p value (.7365) is greater than .05. In conclusion, Organisational attractiveness did not moderate the relationship between corporate reputation and Job pursuit intention. Meaning, the relationship between corporate reputation and Job pursuit intention was the same regardless of the level of organisational attractiveness. Conclusion, H3 is rejected.

5.6 Conclusion

106 people completed the survey (resulting in an 86% completion rate) and according to the KMO and Bartlett's test, the dataset was determined suitable and adequate for factor analysis. The Varimax extraction method was employed which confirmed a seven-factor loading (i.e. seven factors with eigenvalues of above 1 were identified). Factor loading of the first four components contributed 66.93% to the total and therefore valid for the regression analysis. A linear regression analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses put forward. Further to this, two moderation analysis were conducted to test the strength and validity of the moderating variables. A reliability test was run to measure internal consistency between each construct. All constructs were internally consistent as their Cronbach Alphas returned above 0.7. All constructs proved to have normal univariate distribution except for organisational attractiveness which was slightly above the 2

thresholds. A multicollinearity test of the three independent variables found that each was distinct enough to be considered as a different entity. The results of the hypotheses testing revealed that corporate reputation explained 61.2% of the variance of job pursuit intentions amongst millennials in South Africa, therefore H1 was accepted. The moderation analyses revealed that the effect of the interaction of employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness on the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention was non-significant therefore H2 and H3 were rejected.

Chapter 6 will discuss the research study findings and draw linkages to theory found in the literature review to confirm or reject previous research.

6. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the results presented in Chapter 7 will be discussed on the backdrop of the literature review conducted in Chapter 2. The results from the research will contribute in clarifying the relationship between corporate reputation and the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa as well as the impact of the moderating role played by organisational attractiveness and employer brand equity.

6.2 Respondent demographics

The demographic composition of respondents confirm that 123 people provided demographic information even though, only 106 completed the survey. At 61.0%, the majority of respondents were female. 56.9% of all respondents were between the ages of 32 and 36 years old at the time of the research. At 84.6%, the majority of the respondents were Black. These results almost reflect the country's gender and racial statistics as 50.94% are females and 79.4% of the population has been identified as Black (World Population Review, 2018).

83.7% of the respondents indicated that they were employed with 45.5% of them having more than 10 years of work experience. It was interesting that the majority of respondents had similar attributes to the researcher. It is however unclear whether this was reflective of the sample in general or selection bias given the sampling strategy used in this research. 41.5% of the respondents selected the Tiger Brands survey, 23.6% took the KPMG survey, 19.5% took the McKinsey survey and 15.4% took the Grant Thornton one.

6.3 Research question 1

Research question 1 was intended to determine whether corporate reputation had any impact on the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa. In other words, could the millennial's choice to pursue employment at an organisation be determined by that organisation's corporate reputation, and if so, to what extent? The hypothesis tested was, H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention.

A linear regression analysis between the dependent variable, job pursuit intention, and the independent variable, corporate reputation, showed a strong, positive relationship between the variables. The adjusted R square (adjusted for sampling bias) revealed that 61.2% in the variance of the probability of job pursuit intention could be explained by corporate reputation. Results from the ANOVA table revealed that the relationship between job pursuit intention and corporate reputation was significant. This relationship was illustrated by the equation: $F= 152.700$; $P= .000$; $Ad. R^2= .612$. This meant that millennial job seekers were likely to pursue jobs with organisations that had good or positive reputations. This supports Cable & Turban's (2003) findings.

In their study using sample data from a career services office in the College of Business at a midwestern university in the United States to determine whether organisational reputation influenced the number and quality of applicants seeking employment within the organisation, Cable & Turban (2003) found that company reputation positively influenced the number of applicants an organisation received. Organisations with a positive reputation received 50 percent more applicants than those with a negative reputation. They concluded that corporate reputation influenced job pursuit intention.

The same conclusion, that corporate reputation influenced job pursuit intention was reached by Alniacik, Alniacik & Erdogmus (2012). Alniacik, Alniacik & Erdogmus (2012). studied how different components of corporate reputation influenced job pursuit intention. They discovered that work place conditions exerted the strongest effect on job pursuit intention.

Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager's (1993) findings also support those of this research as they proved that corporate image was significantly correlated with job pursuit intention. Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager's (1993) study focused on the relationship between job seeker's perception of corporate image (not corporate reputation) and intentions to pursue further contact with that organisation. They used a quantitative method using surveys as their data collection instrument. Thereafter correlation analyses were run. Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager's, (1993) declared a limitation regarding non-significance of the interpretation of the correlations in their data due to a small sample size and low statistical power. Although Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager's (1993) tested the relationship between corporate image and job pursuit

intention, Barnett et. al (2006) argue that corporate image and corporate reputation are often used interchangeably.

In a quantitative research utilising a survey method, Khan (2017), found that there was a positive and significant relationship between an organisation's corporate reputation and a job seeker's intention to pursue employment with that organisation. The study was intended to establish how organisational reputation and job attributes influenced potential job seeker's intention to apply for a job.

In their study using a combination of qualitative (semi- structured interviews to determine items for employer branding) and quantitative research methods (structured equation modelling) in the IT sector in India, Sharma & Prasad (2018) found that there was a positive and significant relationship between corporate reputation and a job seeker's intentions to join an organisation. In analysing their relationship model, they found that corporate reputation played a fundamental role in generating intent to join an organisation (Sharma & Prasad, 2018).

Similar to this study, Khan (2017) and Sharma & Prasad's (2018) conducted their research in developing countries (South Africa, Pakistan and India). Although the context and research methodologies differed, the research results are similar in all countries suggesting that this could be applicable across developing countries.

The review of literature revealed that values were a dominant theme for millennials. Additionally, millennials wanted to associate themselves with organisations whose values reflected theirs as they saw organisations as associations and extensions of themselves (Deloitte, 2018; Cable & Turban, 2003; Tsai & Yang, 2010). The review of literature also suggested that millennials joined or associated themselves with groups that would uplift their self-esteem and those that they could feel proud of belonging to (Cable & Turban, 2003; Tsai & Yang, 2010).

Turban & Keon (1993) use an interactionist perspective to study person- organisation fit. This refers to an alignment of organisational characteristics with individual needs. Turban & Keon (1993) theorize that person- organisation fit influences a job seeker's perception of an organisation and his/ her attraction to it. This suggests that people will be more

attracted to organisations that are congruent with their characteristics, values and needs. Social identity theory was revealed to be an important concept within human resources literature as job seekers may want to join or affiliate themselves with groups that give social or psychological consensual validation of attitudes and values and that enhance self-esteem (Turner & Tajfel, 1982). Turner & Tajfel (1982) notes that such interdependence leads to mutual attraction. This makes corporate reputation a significant predictor of job pursuit intention.

In the South African context of high unemployment (27%) and low economic growth (1.61%) (Statistics South Africa, 2017), it would be logical to assume that the millennial population would be desperate to join any organisation, regardless of reputation, especially given the higher levels of debt the population has taken on compared to previous generations (Statistics South Africa, 2017; O'Connor & Raile, 2015). However, theory and the results of this research show that corporate reputation remains a strong predictor of job pursuit intention regardless. As 84.06% of the respondents in this research were employed, it could be argued that corporate reputation may matter more to respondents who were already employed and had the luxury to turn down employment if there were misalignments between organisational attributes and individual needs and may matter less to those who are unemployed and desperately seeking employment.

Corporate reputation was measured using an adjusted structured questionnaire developed by Walsh, Beatty & Shiu (2009). The responses to the survey showed that 52.17% of the respondents had seen Tiger Brands featured negatively in the news, however only 19.57% believed the company had a bad reputation and 50% of the respondents agreed to work for the organisation. These results corroborate sentiments advanced by Walker (2010), Wilkins & Huisman (2014) Fombrun & van Reil (1997) and Urde & Greyser (2016), that corporate reputation is relatively stable and is based on an accumulation of past incidences and not just a single incident. Depending on the number of times the respondents had seen Tiger Brands featured, the results negate the findings from Fan, Geddes & Flory (2013) and Heinberg, Ozkaya & Taube (2017) that media strongly influences the opinions we form about certain organisations as any negative media would have resulted in respondents holding negative sentiments about Tiger Brands. The survey results were similar for McKinsey. Berthon, Ewing & Hah (2005) posit that advertising may be significant in obtaining qualified employees.

84% of the respondents who took the KPMG survey reported to have recently seen the organisation featured negatively in the news, 12% believed KPMG to have a good corporate reputation while 40% stated that they would like to work for the organisation. This seems inconsistent with the literature reviewed that corporate reputation was a predictor of job pursuit intention (Cable & Turban, 2003; Alniacik, Alniacik & Erdogmus, 2012; Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager 1993; Khan, 2017). The reasons for this discrepancy could be because of the small sample size and because of industry differences (context does matter).

62.5% of the respondents who completed the Grant Thornton survey had not seen the organisation featured in the news recently. However, 56.25% of the respondents were aware of the organisation. 37.5% believed that the organisation had a good corporate reputation and 62.5% would want to work for it. The results confirmed that an organisation may have more than one reputation (Walker, 2010). According to Walker (2010), an organisation's corporate reputation may differ from its employer reputation. This explains the willingness of respondents to want to work for the organisation.

Job Pursuit Intention was measured using scales adapted from Turban & Keon (1993) and Turban, Lau, Ngo, Chow, & Si (2001). Although 89.05% of the respondents were employed, 52.90% indicated that they were currently in the process of gathering information about potential employers or were actively looking for a job. According to a study on millennials conducted by Deloitte (2018), turnover was predicted to be higher in uncertain environments (like South Africa). 43% of the millennial population intended to leave their jobs within two years.

After selecting a survey and reading one of four job advertisements, respondents were asked to indicate, on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) the level with which they agreed with certain statements such as, "I would be interested in gathering more information about this job opening", "I would exert a great deal of effort to work for [company name]" and "I would feel proud to be an employee of [company name]". Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager (1993) specified that job seekers use information obtained from job advertisements as a basis to decide whether or not to seek employment at that organisation.

There were some variances in the results between organisations. This could be due to the respondent's knowledge and reputation perception of the organisation. What stood out in the results was that only 20% of the respondents indicated that they would feel proud to be an employee of KPMG while 24% indicated that they would be proud to associate themselves with the organisation. These were the lowest scores across the board.

From social identity theory, we learn that people are attracted to organisations that give them a more positive or enhanced sense of self and social approval (Cable & Turban, 2003; Tsai & Yang, 2010). Cable & Turban (2002) further suggest that job pursuit intentions are positively affected by the pride a job seeker expects from organisational membership. Tiger Brands scored above average for all job pursuit criteria, McKinsey scored above average on all criteria bar "I would exert a great deal of effort to work for [company name]", "I would feel proud to be an employee of [company name]" and "I would be proud to tell others I work for [company name]". Khan (2017) developed a model of the relationship between employer brand and the behaviour of employees. In the model, he highlighted social influence- an interesting and unique variable that had not been mentioned by prior researchers- which spoke to the importance of social influence in decision- making linking also to social identity theory as discussed earlier. KPMG scored below average on all criteria bar, "I would be interested in gathering more information" and "I would be willing to attend an information session about this job". Grant Thornton scored above average on all criteria.

6.4 Research question 2

Research question 2 sought to identify the influence that employer brand equity has on the relationship between corporate reputation and the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa. The hypothesis tested was, H2: Employee brand equity moderates the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention.

Literature reviewed alludes to an organisation possessing different reputations (Walker, 2010). Accordingly, an organisation may have different reputations for its social and environmental contribution, corporate governance and employee treatment (Walker, 2010). This suggests that should an organisation have a negative corporate reputation and a positive employer brand equity, this should positively impact job pursuit intention. This would mean that there is a possible moderating effect of employer brand equity on the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention. However, when

tested, no relationship was found between these two constructs amongst millennials in the South African context.

Having a strong employer brand equity is critical to organisations because it influences a job seeker's decision to apply or not apply to a job advertisement (Jiang & Iles, 2011). Prior research asserts that the presence of employer brand equity will enable the organisation to position itself as a good place to work- increasing the attractiveness of the organisation and as a result, the number of job applicants who would want to pursue employment with that organisation (Edwards, 2010). As there was little information of the job sought, in the early stages of the job pursuit process, the presence of a high employer brand equity gives job seekers a sense of comfort and assurance with regards to their decision- making (Kissel & Büttgen, 2015) as it enables them to make inferences on the job attributes (Cable & Turban, 2003).

A moderation analysis was conducted to determine the result of the interaction variable (corporate reputation x employer brand equity) on job pursuit intention. According to the model, the effect was not significant as the p value was greater than .05. These findings connote that employer brand equity does not moderate the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention. Employer brand equity does not affect the strength and/ or direction between the independent variable, corporate reputation, and the dependent variable, job pursuit intention (Farooq & Vij, 2017).

According to Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) brand awareness, recall, recognition and brand knowledge are dimensions of employer brand equity. These dimensions would need to be present to measure an organisation's employer brand equity. Respondents were asked to rank the following questions on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree): "I am aware of [company name]", "I can quickly recall the company", "I can recognize [company name] amongst other competing companies" "I know what [company name] stands for" "I have an opinion about [company name]". The results revealed that 93.48% of the respondents who took the Tiger Brands survey were aware of the organisation, 93.48% could recall the company amongst competing organisations, 86.96% of the respondents would recognize the organisation, 39.13% knew what the company stood for and 47.83% of the respondents had an opinion about the company.

Of the respondents who took the McKinsey, KPMG and Grant Thornton surveys, the majority were aware of the organisations and could recall and recognize them amongst competing organisations. A minority of the respondents knew what the organisations stood for. 25% of the respondents who took the McKinsey survey had an opinion about the organisation. The figures for the KPMG and Grant Thornton surveys were 60% and 31.25% respectively. The results suggest that in order to increase employer brand knowledge, organisations should increase the amount of content posted on recruitment sites or increase the volume of advertising as media exposure may have spill-over effects on recruitment efforts (Franca & Pahor, 2012). Aaker (1993) believes that brand equity results in efficient and effective marketing programs, increased brand loyalty and competitive advantage for organisations. Franca & Pahor (2012) believe that job seekers tend to have stronger opinions about an organisation that has received high media exposure. This does not seem to be the case in this instance as most of the respondents agreed to seeing the organisation in the news although only a few held an opinion on the organisation.

Employer reputation was measured using questions amended from Cable & Turban (2003). These questions sought to determine the respondent's perception of the employer reputation. This was found to be consistent with answers on the organisation's corporate reputation. Leekha, Chhabra & Sharma (2014) found that there is a significant and positive relationship between employer brand image and a job seeker's likelihood to apply. Job seekers believed the image of the employer might become positive and strong depending on the branding initiatives undertaken by the organisation (Leekha, Chhabra & Sharma, 2014). This suggests that an organisation should invest in employer branding activities in order to increase its brand equity.

The possible reasons that H2 was rejected could be as follows:

- I. Corporate reputation explained 61.2% of the variance of job pursuit intention of millennials in South Africa at a 95% confidence level.
- II. Employer brand equity impacts the corporate reputation and job pursuit intention variables separately. There was evidence of a relationship between corporate reputation and employer brand equity as well as between employer brand equity and job pursuit intention.
- III. Mediation theory alludes to a possible mediating effect of employer brand equity on the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention. Hair

et al. (2010, p. 1061) state that, “If the direct effect of the independent variables to mediating variables and the direct effect of mediating variables to dependent variable are both significant, it can be stated that the mediation effect is significant.” Therefore, employer brand equity could mediate, and not moderate the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention.

6.5 Research question 3

Research question 3 sought to determine whether organisational attractiveness had any bearings on the relationship between corporate reputation and the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa. The hypothesis tested was, H3: Organisational attractiveness moderates the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention.

A second moderation analysis was run to determine the interaction variable (corporate reputation x organisational attractiveness) on job pursuit intention and the result revealed a non-significant relationship. The p value was greater than the threshold of .05. The analysis confirmed organisational attractiveness did not moderate the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention.

Kissel & Büttgen (2015) found organisational attractiveness to be a key antecedent of job pursuit intention meaning that job seekers must find an organisation attractive for him/ her to want to pursue employment there. This confirms the relationship between organisational attractiveness and job pursuit intentions.

Rynes (1991) suggests that job attributes may be the more dominant factor in employee attraction. The literature review in chapter 2 revealed that remuneration, location and intellectual challenges were the most important factors for young graduates. However, factors such as corporate social responsibility had gained prominence over the years (Lis, 2018) and have become important to the millennial population.

Research conducted by Smith (2011) and Deloitte (2018) suggests that millennials are community oriented and believe that businesses should behave ethically and responsibly by contributing positively to society and the environment in which they operate, improve people’s lives, and promote inclusion and diversity in the workplace.

The most important job attributes noted by respondents across all four surveys include:

- Opportunity for new learning experiences
- Opportunity to use my abilities
- Challenging & interesting work
- Good promotion opportunities within the organisation
- Gaining career- enhancing experience
- The organisation produces innovative product and services

This reveals that millennials value other attributes such as personal development and growth, above remuneration. Berthon et. al (2005) group these attributes as interest value, application and developmental value. It can then be concluded that money was not necessarily the primary criteria for the organisations that millennials choose to work for. South African millennials also prefer to work for organisations that produce innovative products and services. This finding is consistent with the characteristics of millennials as stated by Smith (2011).

The possible reasons that H3 was rejected could be as follows:

- I. Organisational attractiveness impacts the corporate reputation and job pursuit intention variables separately; there is evidence of a relationship between corporate reputation and organisational attractiveness as well as between organisational attractiveness and job pursuit intention.
- II. Mediation theory alludes to a possible mediating effect of organisational attractiveness on the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention. Hair et al. (2010, p. 1061) state that, "If the direct effect of the independent variables to mediating variables and the direct effect of mediating variables to dependent variable are both significant, it can be stated that the mediation effect is significant."

6.6 Summarised findings

The research results indicate that corporate reputation mattered to the South African millennial as this population group read it as a signal indicating the quality of an organisation, job attributes and work environment (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990). Corporate reputation has been proven to predict job pursuit intentions of millennials in

South Africa. The relationship was proven to be significant and positive and explains 61.2% of the variance in job pursuit intention.

Corporate reputation was confirmed to be relatively stable. Fan, Geddes & Flory (2013) established that negative feature of an organisation in the news did not change the respondent's reputation perception. It was also confirmed that an organisation may have more than one reputation (Walker, 2010) and the one may not necessarily influence the other as reflected in the respondents' reaction to Tiger Brands.

Associations were proven to be an important consideration for this respondent group as pride from membership (Cable & Turban, 2003), alignment of organisational characteristics with individual needs (Turban & Keon, 1993) and the need to affiliate with groups that validate shared values (Deloitte, 2018; Cable & Turban, 2003; Tsai & Yang, 2010) was consistent throughout the sample.

Some of the company results were inconsistent - suggesting that respondents may have held stronger opinions on some organisations based on their awareness, knowledge or familiarity of them. According to theory, familiarity results in more favourable perceptions of the organisation (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996).

The study disproved the moderating effect of employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness on the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention as the p- value for both was returned above the .05 threshold. There was no evidence from literature of the presence of research conducted on the moderating effect of employer brand equity or organisational attractiveness on the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intentions.

6.7 Conclusion

The shift towards a services economy means that knowledge workers have become a critical resource as they help an organisation to create competitive advantage (Slavkovic, Pavlovic & Simić, 2018; Berthon et al., 2005; Jiang & Iles, 2011). Kitchen & Laurence (2003) theorise that an organisation's corporate reputation helps it to attract skilled

employees. On the backdrop of an environment characterised by talent and skills shortages (Masibigri & Nienaber, 2011), the South African millennial, who is the subject of this research study, is set to become well sought after by organisations. This enterprising, well-read, well-travelled, diversified and digitally savvy (Smith, 2011) population group is increasing in numbers and prominence in the work place making them an asset to any organisation.

Millennials have distinct values which play a vital role in their decisions to pursue certain jobs (Martins & Martins, 2014). This generation is community oriented and values organisations that look further than their bottom line; and admire those that contribute positively to society and the environment (Kumari & Saini, 2018). They will only join organisations whose values match their own (Deloitte, 2018; Cable & Turban, 2003; Tsai & Yang, 2010). Their motivations are not driven by money but by a higher purpose. Turban & Greening (1996) add that job seekers are more inclined to pursue jobs with organisations that uphold recognized ethical values. The study revealed that the South African millennial values organisations that will prioritise their self- development such as opportunities to grow further in the organisation, to utilise skills learned at tertiary and to do challenging and interesting work. Accordingly, organisations that seek to employ millennials need to have other attributes that would attract them beyond the pay cheque. Research alludes to corporate social investment initiatives work- life balance and flexibility as other such attributes that will attract this population group (Kumari & Saini, 2018).

Although employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness do not moderate the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention, there were linkages that were proven to exist amongst the variables.

7. CONCLUSION

The findings of this research were discussed in Chapter 6 in light of the research questions and literature reviewed in chapter 2. This chapter will recap the research objectives, discuss the principal research findings, highlight implications and recommendations for business and managers and conclude with limitations and suggestions for future research.

7.1 Recap of the research objectives

The main objective of this research was to determine whether corporate reputation influenced the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa and whether employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness moderated this relationship.

Research objective 1 was to determine the influence of corporate reputation on the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa. Research objective 2 was to determine whether employer brand equity moderated the relationship between corporate reputation and the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa. And research objective 3 was to determine whether organisational attractiveness moderated the relationship between corporate reputation and the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa.

Prior research had been conducted on the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention. However, there was no evidence of a similar study conducted in South Africa amongst the biggest contributor to the workforce, the millennials. The literature review revealed no prior research on the moderating effects of employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness on the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention. Seeing that these variables were linked, the exploration of the moderating effect of these variables was thought to add to the current body of literature.

7.2 Principal findings

The research study revealed key findings which are discussed below. The three principal findings of the research were:

- i. Corporate reputation had a positive and significant relationship with the job pursuit intention of millennials in South Africa.

- ii. Employer brand equity did not moderate the relationship between corporate reputation and the job pursuit intention of millennials in South Africa.
- iii. Organisational attractiveness did not moderate the relationship between corporate reputation and the job pursuit intention of millennials in South Africa.

A linear regression analysis was conducted between the dependent variable (job pursuit intention) and the independent variable (corporate reputation). The test revealed a strong, positive relationship between the variables. The adjusted R square (adjusted for sampling bias) revealed that 61.2% in the variance of the probability of job pursuit intention could be explained by corporate reputation. The findings from the ANOVA table detailed that the relationship between job pursuit intention and corporate reputation was positive and significant.

A moderation analysis was conducted to determine the result of the interaction variable (corporate reputation x employer brand equity) on job pursuit intention. According to the model, the effect was non-significant, connoting that employer brand equity did not moderate the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention.

A second moderation analysis was run to determine the interaction variable (corporate reputation x organisational attractiveness) on job pursuit intention and the result also revealed a non-significant relationship. The analysis confirmed organisational attractiveness did not moderate the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention.

7.3 Recommendations and implications

This section details the recommendations based on literature and research findings and states implications for business and managers followed by suggestions for future research.

7.3.1 Recommendations

Job seekers use signals, such as an organisation's corporate reputation, to determine the quality of the organisation at the start of the recruitment process, as they have limited

information on the job or employer work environment (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Fombrun, 1996; Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager, 1993; Alshathry, Clarke & Goodman, 2016). To help eliminate uncertainty (Heinberg, Ozkaya & Taube, 2017) organisations can strengthen the employer brand equity through employer branding as this enables the organisation to establish an identity and communicate its values, systems and policies (Jiang & Iles, 2011).

Organisations that uphold certain ethical standards (Turban & Greening, 1996) and those that concern themselves with making a significant impact on society and the environment are valued by millennial consumers and are more attractive to this generation (Deloitte, 2018). The recommendation therefore is for organisations to clearly articulate their values on job adverts & recruitment advertising amongst job seekers to attract and shortlist only those candidates whose values are congruent with the values of the organisation (Cable & Turban, 2003; Tsai & Yang, 2010).

Organisations with good reputations have been proven to reduce average cost per hire as job seekers are willing to receive less remuneration from organisations that have a positive brand image (Jiang & Iles, 2011). Recommendations for organisations to increase their corporate reputation include: investment in CSI initiatives (Kumari & Saini, 2018), increased frequency of media advertising to drive familiarity (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996) and increase awareness and knowledge of the organisation.

Millennials are attracted to organisations that will prioritise their self- development such as opportunities to grow further in the organisation, to utilise skills learned at tertiary and, ensure that recruitment information mentions the following attributes as these were ranked by respondents as the most important for an organisation to possess.

- I. Opportunity for new learning experiences
- II. Opportunity to use my abilities
- III. Challenging & interesting work
- IV. Good promotion opportunities within the organisation
- V. Gaining career- enhancing experience
- VI. The organisation produces innovative product and services

7.3.2 Implications for business

Fishman (1998) refers to the “war for talent” as the increasingly competitive recruitment landscape for attracting, recruiting and retaining high calibre employees. With an apparent skills shortage in South Africa, and at a time where the economy has shifted from a capital- intensive to services economy, the need for highly skilled knowledge workers has never been more critical (Slavkovic, Pavlovic & Simić, 2018). Organisations seek to attract a wide pool of high calibre talent to increase their competitive advantage (Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005).

According to Statistics South Africa (2017), millennials constitute approximately 43.5% of the total population in South Africa. This population group is between the ages of 18 – 36 years and therefore falls within the economically active part of the population. Millennials job choices are influenced by an organisation’s values, policies and behaviour inherent in its corporate reputation. A misalignment of values could deter the millennial from that organisation and lead to failed recruitment strategies for such companies. Therefore, what motivates their job choices and where they choose to work should be of interest to potential employers.

7.3.3 Implications for managers

Given that millennials are the work force of the future with many of them either entering or actively present in the economy, knowing how corporate reputation influences their job pursuit intentions, can help organisations and recruiters tailor their affairs in a manner that would make them attractive to this population. Alshathry, Clarke & Goodman (2016) and Kumari & Saini (2018), suggest that, to address this challenge, some organisations have embarked on employer branding programs with the objective of building employer brand equity to become an employer of choice. Investment in building a stronger more positive corporate reputation will result in the organisation gaining a competitive advantage and could contribute to a more ethical business environment.

Integral to its ability to attract and retain skilled employees it should be of importance for a company to protect its reputation as it has a significant and positive relationship with job pursuit intention.

7.4 Limitations and suggestions for future research

The limitations of the study include:

- I. respondents may not be familiar with the ethical transgressions committed by the organisation limiting the purpose of the study therefore limiting the researcher's ability to test for the influence of a negative or positive corporate reputation.
- II. Some respondents may not have been aware of the companies that they were asked to complete a survey about thereby skewing the results/ not conveying a true reflection of the results.

Authors have researched linkages between these variables but there exists a gap for future research to test the model below in its entirety as this would help strengthen an organisation's proposition. A conceptual model has been listed below for reference.

A second suggestion for future research would be to look at partial mediation effects of organisational attractiveness and employer brand equity on the relationship between corporate reputation and job pursuit intention.

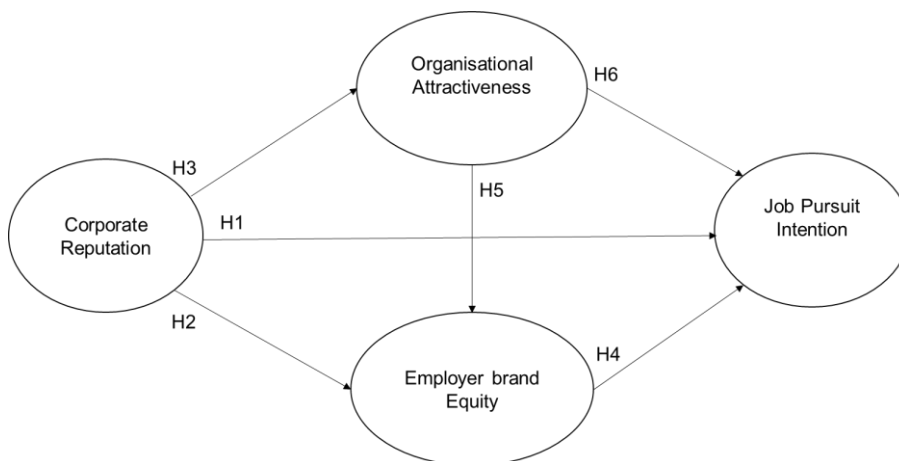


Figure 6: Conceptual model illustrating relationship between corporate reputation, job pursuit intention, organisational attractiveness and employer brand equity

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9. APPENDICES

CONSISTENCY MATRIX

RESEARCH QUESTION	LITERATURE REVIEW	DATA COLLECTION TOOL	ANALYSIS
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<p>Research Question 1: What is the influence of corporate reputation on the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa?</p>	<p>(Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager, 1993) (Fombrun, 1996) (Fombrun & Van Riel, 1997) (Cable & Turban, 2003) (Argenti & Druckenmiller, 2004) (Greyser, 2009) (Walker, 2010) (Jiang & Iles, 2011) (Smith, 2011) (Chang, 2011) (Alniacik, Alniacik & Erdogmus, 2012) (Fan, Geddes & Flory, 2013) (Beenen & Pichler, 2014) (Wilkins & Huisman, 2014) (Martins & Martins, 2014) (Ali, Lynch, Melewar & Jin, 2015) (Kanar, Collins & Bell, 2015) (Xie, Bagozzi & Meland, 2015) (Sharma & Prasad, 2016) (Urde & Greyser, 2016) (Alshathry, Clarke & Goodman, 2017) (Khan, 2017) (Heinberg, Ozkaya & Taube, 2017) (Kumari & Saini, 2018)</p>	<p>Survey questionnaire: Corporate reputation was measured using questions adapted from Walsh, Beatty & Shui. (2009). Job Pursuit Intentions was measured through questions adapted from Turban & Keon (1993).</p>	<p>Descriptive statistics Linear regression analysis Factor analysis with principal component</p>
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<p>Research Question 2: Does employer brand equity moderate the relationship between corporate reputation and the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa?</p>	<p>(Aaker, 1991) (Aaker, 1996) (Keller (1993) (Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005) (Aggarwal et al. 2009) (Edwards, 2010) (Franca & Pahor, 2012) (Collins & Kanar, 2013) (Kumar, Dash & Purwar, 2013) (Kissel & Buttgen, 2015) (Alshathry, Clarke & Goodman, 2016) (Brahmbhatt & Shah, 2017) (Theurer, Tumasjan, Welpel & Lievens, 2018)</p>	<p>Survey questionnaire: Employer brand equity was measured using the following constructs Brand Awareness (Aaker, 1996; Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000) and Employer Brand Reputation (Cable & Turban, 2003). Job Pursuit Intentions was measured through questions adapted from Turban & Keon (1993).</p>	<p>Descriptive statistics Moderation Analysis Factor analysis with principal component</p>
<p>Research Question 3: Does organisational attractiveness moderate the relationship between corporate reputation and the job pursuit intentions of millennials in South Africa?</p>	<p>(Rynes, 1991) (Turban & Leon (1993) (Fishman, 1998) (Aiman-Smith, Bauer & Cable, 2001) (Cable & Turban, 2003) (Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005) (Tsai & Yang, 2010) (Jiang & Iles, 2011) (Gomes & Neves, 2011) (Franca & Pahor, 2012) (van Prooijen and Ellemers, 2014) (Lis, 2018) (Theurer, Tumasjan, Welpel & Lievens, 2018)</p>	<p>Survey questionnaire: Organisational Attractiveness was measured through attributes such as Employer Attractiveness (Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005), Job Attributes (Turban et al, 1998; Cable & Judge, 1996) and Pride from membership (Turban, Lau, Ngo, Chow & Si, 2001).</p>	<p>Descriptive statistics Moderation Analysis Factor analysis with principal component</p>

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent

You are invited to participate in a research project titled, "How Corporate Reputation Influences Organisation Attractiveness and the job pursuit intentions of Millennials in South Africa". The research is being conducted as a partial requirement for a Masters in Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science.

The purpose of the study is to determine the influence that corporate reputation has on employer brand equity and how this impacts on the job pursuit intentions of Millennials in South Africa. To that end, you are asked to read a short job advertisement and complete a questionnaire about your intentions to pursue the advertised job.

The survey should take no more than 15 minutes of your time. Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. All responses are anonymous and only aggregated data will be reported. By completing the survey, you indicate that you voluntarily participate in this research. If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me on the details provided below.

Researcher name: Nokwanda Zungu

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Phone: +27 78 654 3008

Research Supervisor: Jacqueline Carnelley

Email: jaccarn@iafrica.com

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Demographics

Please select all options applicable to you.

Gender

- Male
- Female

Age

- 18 – 24
- 25 – 31
- 32 – 38

Ethnicity

- Black
- White
- Coloured
- Indian
- Asian
- Other

Educational Level

- Undergraduate
- Post- graduate

Work Experience

Are you currently Employed?

- Yes
- No

How many years of work experience do you have?

- < 1 year
- 2 years – 5 years
- 6 years – 9 years
- 10 years >

Are you in the process of gathering information about potential employers or are you involved in a job search?

- Yes
- No

Please select one survey from the below

- 1 [Tiger Brands]
- 2 [McKinsey]
- 3 [KPMG]
- 4 [Grant Thornton]

Please read the job advertisement below and answer the questions based on your personal response to this job opportunity

[Tiger Brands/ McKinsey/ KPMG/ Grant Thornton]

A global leader in the FMCG/ Management Consultant/ Financial industry is looking to hire top performing, passionate graduates across disciplines (marketing, engineering, supply/ demand chain, finance, HR) for their graduate programme. If you are self-driven, a strong communicator and enjoy being in a dynamic team, then this opportunity is for you.

The incumbents will be responsible for assisting middle management to implement company plans in accordance with the company's strategic and financial objectives.

This entry level position will allow you to start your career with a highly successful company who will provide you with the developmental tools and opportunities to growth within the company.

Requirements:

Matric

Undergraduate degree

Excellent written and verbal skills

Microsoft Office

No work experience required

All training provided

Please indicate which of these statements you think apply to Tiger Brands/ McKinsey/ KPMG/ Grant Thornton

- I have not seen them featured in the news lately
- I have seen them featured negatively in the news lately
- I have seen them featured positively in the news lately

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements, on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree):

Corporate Reputation

Corporate reputation (Walsh, Beatty & Shui, 2009)

- [Corporate brand] is concerned about its customers
- [Corporate brand] looks like a good company to work for
- [Corporate brand] seems to treat its people well
- [Corporate brand] seems to have excellent leadership
- [Corporate brand] looks like it has strong prospects for further growth
- [Corporate brand] tends to outperform competitors
- [Corporate brand] seems to recognize and take advantage of market opportunities

Employer Brand Equity

Brand Awareness (Aaker, 1996); Employer Brand Reputation (Cable & Turban, 2003)

- I am aware of [company name]
- I can quickly recall the company
- I can recognise [company name] amongst other competing companies
- I can recognise the [company name] symbol or logo
- I know what [company name] stands for
- I have an opinion about [company name]
- [company name] has a good public image
- [company name] has a good reputation
- I have heard a lot of good things about [company name]
- [company name] has an excellent reputation on campus

Please rate the below factors in terms of employee attractiveness on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree):

Organisational Attractiveness

Employer Attractiveness (Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005)

- Social Value

- Gaining career- enhancing experience
- Acceptance and belonging
- Having a good relationship with your superiors
- Good promotion opportunities within the organisation
- Recognition/ appreciation from management
- Job security within the organisation
- Feel confident to associate yourself with the organisation

- Market Value

- The organisation produces innovative product and services
- The organisation produces high-quality product and services
- Opportunity to apply what was learned at a tertiary institution

Job Attributes (Turban et al, 1998; Cable & Judge, 1996)

Please indicate the degree to which you think this job will provide the following job attributes using a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree):

- Excellent promotion possibilities
- Excellent prospects for high future earnings
- Opportunity for advancement
- Good career paths
- High employee morale
- Challenging and interesting work
- Opportunity to use my abilities
- Opportunity for new learning experiences

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements, on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree):

Job Pursuit Intention

Job Pursuit Intention (Turban & Keon, 1993)

- I would exert a great deal of effort to work for this company
- I would like to work for this company
- I would be interested in gathering more information about this job opening
- I would be willing to attend an information session about this job

Pride from membership (Turban, Lau, Ngo, Chow & Si, 2001)

- I would feel proud to be an employee of this company
- I would be proud to tell others that I work for this company
- I would be proud to identify myself personally with this company

RESEARCH CONSENT

**Gordon
Institute
of Business
Science**
University
of Pretoria

02 August 2018

Zungu Nokwanda

Dear Nokwanda

Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been approved.

You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.

Please note that approval is granted based on the methodology and research instruments provided in the application. If there is any deviation change or addition to the research method or tools, a supplementary application for approval must be obtained

We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

Kind Regards

GIBS MBA Research Ethical Clearance Committee

CERTIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

17. APPENDIX 5 CERTIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

(Additional support retained or not - to be completed by all students)

Please note that failure to comply and report on this honestly will result in disciplinary action

I hereby certify that (please indicate which statement applies):

- **I DID NOT RECEIVE** any additional/outside assistance (i.e. statistical, transcriptional, thematic, coding, and/or editorial services) on my research report:

- **I RECEIVED** additional/outside assistance (i.e. statistical, transcriptional, thematic, coding, and/or editorial services) on my research report

If any additional services were retained— **please indicate below which:**

- Statistician**

- Coding (quantitative and qualitative)**

- Transcriber**

- Editor**

Please provide the name(s) and contact details of all retained:

NAME: EMILE SAKER

EMAIL ADDRESS: emile@osmozconsulting.co.za

CONTACT NUMBER: 078 780 3795

TYPE OF SERVICE: Statishcion

NAME: JABU MAPHALALA

EMAIL ADDRESS: jabumaphalala88@gmail.com

CONTACT NUMBER: 071 679 2770

TYPE OF SERVICE: Editor

~~NAME:~~

~~EMAIL ADDRESS:~~

~~CONTACT NUMBER:~~

~~TYPE OF SERVICE:~~

I hereby declare that all interpretations (statistical and/or thematic) arising from the analysis; and write-up of the results for my study was completed by myself without outside assistance

NAME OF STUDENT: NOKHANDA ZUNGU

SIGNATURE: 

STUDENT NUMBER: 23256037

STUDENT EMAIL ADDRESS: 23256037@mygibs.co.za

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Qualification details			
Degree:	MBA	Year completed:	2018
Title of research	The influence of corporate reputation on millennials job pursuit intentions: the moderating role of employer brand equity and organisational attractiveness		
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Supervisor email:	jaccam@isfrica.com		
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