The Impact of Corporate Image Towards Job Applying Intention
of Graduating University Students

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Abstract

*T*his research is conducted with the purpose to study the relationship between a corporate image and a job applying intention of graduating university students, focusing on three dimensions of a corporate image; (1) Product/Service image (2) Employer image, and (3) CSR image, and further examine the strongest predictor that can determine a job applying intention of graduating university students. A Theory of Planned Behavior, which has been widely used in investigating and predicting human intentions in various fields of study, was applied in this study to examine the job applying intention behavior of graduating university students in the Thailand context. The data was gathered using purposive sampling by distributing questionnaires to 408 respondents drawn from 8 universities, both public and private universities in Bangkok and the vicinity. The results from correlation analysis showed a moderate level of relationship between a corporate image and a job applying intention. In this regard, an 'Employer image' had the highest values of moderate relationship, compared to other dimensions. The model test for a corporate image variable using a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) also affirmed that an 'Employer image' had the highest factor loading values at 0.89. Besides, another model test for a job applying intention variable showed that an 'Individual's attitude' had the highest factor loading values at 0.89, compared to other observed variables entered in the model. In addition, the multiple regression analysis further indicated that a 'CSR image' dimension had the strongest predictive power to determine a job applying intention. To be specific, 28.2% of the variation in a CSR image of a studying company can explain the variation in a job applying intention of graduating university students.

Keywords: Job Applying Intention, Corporate Image, Theory of Planned Behavior

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Introduction

Since the world has been moving forward to the 4th industrial revolution, the concepts of Smart Factory, the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) or Robots have been mentioned many times. Some experts have explained their beliefs that these things will replace a "Human Workforce" or accompany humans' labor, and COVID-19 pandemic is one of the important factors that rapidly drives this change (Donlao et. al, 2021).

Interestingly, a study by Pricewaterhouse Coopers reports that from 2017 to 2037, even AI technology will take over 7 million job positions; it will also create 7.2 million new job characteristics. Hence, there will actually be 200,000 job vacancies increase. In fact, many companies still have a demand in integrating a human workforce with AI technology as a result of their unique advantages: the rapidness and the accuracy of AI technology, the sympathy and the soft skill of humans (Digital Economy Promotion Agency, 2021).

Humans are considered as an important factor to drive a company's success; therefore, a company starts putting more effort and focusing on employee recruitment, retention and engagement (Janice and Leosaputro, 2014; Nelloh, 2017; Santiago, 2018). Many companies have been starting talent programs, for example, management trainee programs, young talent recruitment programs, internship programs, aimed at attracting a qualified employee to work with them.

In the petrol industry, PTT Exploration and Production Public Company Limited (PTTEP), which is under the PTT Public Company Limited, has a "Youth Development Program (Internship Program)" targeting to recruit active students who are studying in degree and above in various fields, including Communication Arts (PTTEP, 2021). Besides, one of a well-known company that has been established for over 100 years like SCG, also has a couple of programs to attract various groups of job applicant, for example, an "Excellent Internship Program" for sophomore and junior students, a "Career Roadshow" for graduating students and an "International Career Roadshow" for Thai graduating students in both bachelor and master degree who have been studying abroad (SCG, 2021).

In the food and beverage industry or FMCG business, Nestlé Thailand has a "Nestlé Management Trainee Program" to attract a new graduate with a good academic result to apply and gain intensive experience from over the course of a 24 months program with a company (Nestlé Thailand, 2021). Also, in the hospitality and tourism industry, Minor Hotel, which is one of Minor Group's businesses, has developed a "Minor is More" campaign to seek out the graduates who have a passion for excellence in service and teamwork, to get hands-on experience in the hotel and resort industry (Minor Hotel, 2021).

In reference to the programs offered by various industries, it is noticeable that a common target group of these programs are senior students, graduating university students and/or new graduates. In fact, the businesses have been seeking advantages in hiring these target groups as young people can bring a fresh perspective and new ideas to a business. Also, there is an opportunity for a company to easily add-on desired skills and develop competency of young people to meet a company's vision, mission and culture since young people are energetic and ready for new chapters. Besides, if a company targets the millennial market, young people can provide a better understanding on how to reach and

communicate with their peers. Importantly, young people have grown up around technology, therefore, they are good at technology and able to work with technology (UNICEF, 2019). To be specific, a company can earn a benefit from recruiting young people, especially in this digital era where human and technology workforces should be aligned and integrated.

Interestingly, young people who have been stepping in the labor market since 2019 and becoming first jobbers, are mostly Generation Z. Generation Z, aged 12 - 26 years, is considered as 25% of the population and starts playing an important role in a company's recruitment process, especially when there is a multigenerational organization in a company (Kasikorn Research Center, 2020). To be specific, the changing paradigm of generation is one of factors that affects organizations' effort in the processes of recruitment and retention of the best professionals (Santiago, 2018).

One of the best ways to attract qualified graduates to work with a company is a good corporate image (Janice and Leosaputro, 2014). Asanbekova and Maksüdünov (2018) further stated that the concept of corporate image plays a significant role in the employee recruitment process of a company. A company with a better image can attract better job applicants, therefore, a job offered by a company with a positive image is definitely more attractive to job applicants than other players in the same industry.

Many scholars have shown interest in a corporate image and cited that a corporate image is composed of various dimensions. It is noticeable that even a dimension of corporate image is differently categorized (e.g. Keller, 2003; Lapirattanakul,

2003; Vungsuntitum, 2007; Highhouse et al, 2009; Wanakasemsan, 2009; Sabaiwan, 2010; Tsai and Yang, 2010; Seritanondh, 2011; Carpenter, 2013; Janice and Leosaputro, 2014), but there are three common dimensions that have been mentioned in the previous studies, which are (1) Product/Service Image, (2) Executive/Employer Image and (3) CSR/Social and Environmental Responsibility Image.

There are previous studies about "a corporate image" and "a job applying intention" of graduating students and/or new graduates in these three dimensions, both in Thailand and abroad, for example, a study of Janice and Leosaputro (2014) about the Impact of Corporate Image of PT XYZ towards Job Applicant Attraction in Surabaya using Multiple Linear Regression analysis. The results showed that a corporate image has a significant impact on job applicant attraction, and both employer image and CSR image have a significant impact towards job applicant attraction. In India, Agrawal and Swaroop (2009) examined the Effect of Employer Brand Image on Application Intentions of B-school Undergraduates by collecting data from five different business schools and provided the suggestion based on the finding that employer brand equity can influence the application intentions of the students. Likewise, "responsibility and empowerment" and "compensation and social factors" are likely to influence the students to apply for a job with a company. Hence, a company should work on these significant dimensions in building up their corporate image. A study of Asanbekova and Maksüdünov (2018) also affirmed that a perceived corporate image and a job applying intention have a positive and significant relationship. Then, a

company is recommended to focus more on the employer image to attract talented applicants.

In Thailand's context, Tantivejakul et. al (2012) also studied about the new generation's perceptions towards corporate image, media exposure, job-applying intention at Osotspa, and further tested the relationship of these variables. The results indicated that the new generation's media exposure of Osotspa information was related to the perceptions towards corporate image. Then, the new generation's perceptions towards corporate image were related to job applying intention too.

Besides, it is noticeable that many scholars have applied a "Theory of Planned Behavior" to measure the job applying intention of graduating university students and/or new graduates, for example, a study of Ngatuni and Ulomi (2020) about the "Behavioral Predictors of Students' Career Intentions in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Tanzania." The results of Multiple Regression showed that perceived behavioral control had the strongest predictive power for students' career intentions in the Hospitality and Tourism industry. Wen et al. (2018) also studied Chinese hospitality students' career intentions in the hospitality industry and reported that perceived behavioral control is the most important predictor of career intentions of Chinese students, especially from four-year programs while the effect of subjective norms on career intentions was significantly stronger for students from three-year programs. Another study in Tanzania, Amani and Mkumbo (2016) also investigated the predictors of career intentions among undergraduate students. The results from multiple regression analysis revealed that attitudes towards career were the strongest predictor of

career intentions, followed by subjective norms, career knowledge and career self-efficacy.

The recent study in Thailand of Hiranrat et. al (2021) also used a Theory of Planned Behavior to study the influence of communication self-efficacy on intention to pursue a software development career. The result showed that attitudes toward software development careers and communication self-efficacy for software development had a positive influence on the students' intention to pursue a career in software development. Besides, Poolphon and Teangsompong (2020) mutually constructed and investigated the causal model of job application intention in the Thai automotive industry. The five latent variables; job application intention, attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and welfare were applied from the Theory of Planned Behavior for testing. The study reported that the hypothetical model was highly consistent with the empirical data and could explain 73% of variance of job application intention. Additionally, the finding revealed that attitude had the most direct effect on job application intention, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and welfare respectively.

To point out, in Thailand's context, it seems like even some previous studies have investigated a corporate image and a job applying intention, still there is no study on these three dimensions of a corporate image and apply a Theory of Planned Behavior in studying a job applying intention of graduating university students who are Generation Z and becoming first jobbers in the current labor market. Also, the research of JobThai.com (Positioning, 2018) revealed the different findings from scholars that Generation Z

people (the graduating university students) are more interested in the working atmosphere than the company's reputation. Therefore, this study is conducted to fill the academic gap by examining the impact of a corporate image towards job applying intention of graduating university students in Thailand. Indeed, the author aims to examine the strongest predictor that mostly affects job applying intention of graduating university students. Eventually, the results of this study are expected to be used as a guideline and beneficial to a company in modifying its corporate image and attracting qualified prospective employees, especially Generation Z. Besides, the author intends to test a Theory of Planned Behavior that has been used for studying behavior of people in previous studies on this topic with Thailand's context.

Research Objectives

1) To study the relationship between Corporate Image and Job Applying Intention of graduating university students

2) To find out the strongest predictor that can determine the Job Applying Intention of graduating university students

Literature Review

Corporate Image

There are various terms when mentioning a corporate image, for example, an institutional image, organizational image, corporate brand, brand image, reputation and so on. To clarify, an organizational image refers to an overall impression (facts, beliefs, feelings) that stakeholders have toward organizations (Afroze, 2016). Similarly, the term a corporate image refers to an image of a company in the viewpoints of target groups. To be specific, it's an overall feeling of an individual having toward a particular company (Gray and Balmer, 1998; Pope and Voges, 1999). In short, it is an impression of stakeholders having toward a company. (Barnett et. al 2006). Hence, it should be noted that the definitions of "an organizational image" and "a corporate image" are aligned.

Definitions of Corporate Image

The term "image" has been widely used in several contexts; therefore, the confusion probably arises. Dowling (1986) clarified that "image" is a set of meanings that an individual has toward surrounding things through memory and connection with people. In fact, image is a result of belief, thought, feeling, and impressions of individuals toward something.

When image is specifically mentioned in terms of "a corporate image" in the job applying context, it can refer to a set of beliefs that job seekers hold about the attributes of a particular company (Tsai and Yang, 2010).

In fact, image can occur from both direct and indirect experiences individual has toward something, for instance, a corporate image probably occurred from either a direct experience an individual has toward a company like being customer or from an indirect experience like hearing a good story of a company narrated by others (Lapirattanakul, 2003).

Santiwong and Santiwong (1999) noted that people can perceive a corporate image differently. They further pointed out that a corporate product, employee personality, corporate environment, and corporate communication are considered as important factors affecting the contribution of a corporate image. This note was supported by the explanation of

Theerasorn (2009) that said a corporate image cannot be created immediately through any communications or advertisements. It requires several factors such as quality products and services, application of innovation to product and service design, social responsibility, and transparency.

Gray and Balmer (1998) developed a conceptual model to explain a corporate image (see Figure 1). The model starts at a corporate identity in which a company creates and controls. Then, a company communicates these identities (e.g., slogan, logo, vision, mission) through its corporate communication activities and imprints a desired corporate image in the target groups' mind. Eventually, if a company can develop a good corporate image and maintain its corporate reputation, a company can generate its competitive advantages. Therefore, when mentioning the industry, target groups will think about a certain company, not other players in the same industry. For example, when mentioning the best low-cost airline, a corporate name of Air Asia will come to people's mind before other competitors.
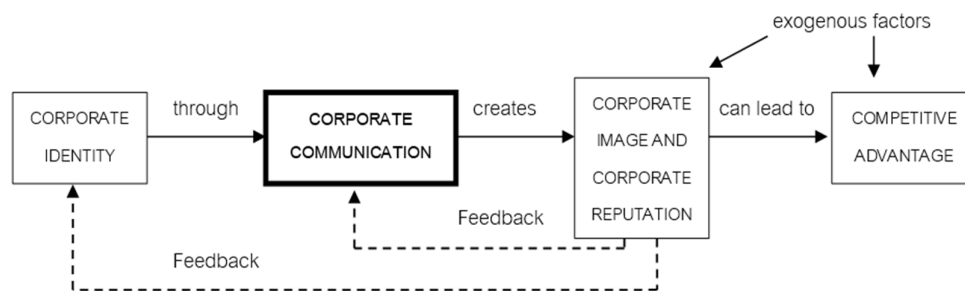
Figure 1 Operational Model for Managing Corporate Reputation and Image

Source: Gray, E. R., & Balmer, J. M. T. (1998). Managing corporate image and corporate reputation. Long Range Planning, 31(5), 695-702.

Dimensions of Corporate Image

According to Keller (2003), a corporate image can be created and perceived through four dimensions; (1) product image (i.e., common product attributes, benefits or attitudes), (2) employee image (i.e. people and relationships), (3) citizenship image (i.e. values and programs related to social and environmental activities) and (4) credibility (i.e. credibility and expertise). Likewise, Vungsuntitum (2007), stated that a dimension of a corporate image can be extended into six dimensions which are executives, employees, products/services, business practices, social activities and artifacts or corporate identity (e.g., uniform, office supplies).

According to the study of Highhouse et. al (2009), a corporate image was examined through four dimensions: (1) employer image, (2) market image, (3) financial image and (4) social image. The findings showed the significant relationship between a corporate image and general evaluation of a corporation. To be specific, they were either fully or partially mediated by impressions of company respectability and impressiveness. Interestingly, a 'market image' dimension was significantly related to impressiveness and respectability for both case

studies: Microsoft and Disney. Besides, both employer and social image dimensions were related to respectability.

Besides, Janice and Leosaputro (2014) also applied these dimensions in examine an effect of a corporate image toward job applying intention, but renamed a social image dimension with CSR image dimension. Therefore, four dimensions were: (1) employer image, (2) market image, (3) financial image and (4) CSR image. The results indicated that both employer image and CSR image have a significant impact towards job applicant attraction.

In reference to the concepts of these scholars, the author, therefore, simplified various dimensions of a corporate image into three dimensions by considering a common dimension among these concepts to study the impact of a corporate image toward job applying intention of graduating university students in Thailand. Then, in this study, the author focused on (1) *product/service image* (people's perceptions of a company's product and service i.e. How well does a company produce quality products and/or deliver good services to its customers?), (2) *employer image* (image of a company as an employer i.e., how well does a company treat an employee?), and (3) *CSR image* (people's perceptions of a company's social and environmental responsibilities i.e. how well does a company concern its stakeholder, society and environment?).

Measurement of Corporate Image

Since a corporate image occurs in the viewpoint of stakeholders, for example, in the perception, belief and attitude of job seekers (Gomes and Nerves, 2011; Tsai and Yang, 2010). To explain, stakeholders would form a perception and attitude toward a company after a company has communicated its corporate identities through corporate communication activities (Gray and Balmer, 1998). Then, a corporate image is a measurable variable, and scholars have proposed how to measure it.

According to the study of Wanakasemsan (2009) on 77 theses and special projects of PhD students in Thailand, a corporate image was measured using a likert scale since it is an interval indicator. That is to say, there are questions for informants to answer about whether they agree or disagree on certain topics. Besides, Wanakasensan developed a new questionnaire to measure a corporate image. Its measurements were tested for validity and reliability. The result showed that reliability was 0.9525. To clarify, the questionnaire contained questions that measure corporate image regarding 6 attributes as follows: executive image, employee image, product and service image, business management image, workplace environment image, and social responsibility image. Later, Sabaiwan (2010) further developed the measurement of corporate image from Wanakasemsan and tested it with 500 samples. After testing, the reliability of the questionnaire was 0.9808 and consisted of the same six attributes, but different names.

Reference to the previous studies and concepts about dimension and measurement of a corporate image, this study has applied some of these questions in measuring a corporate image using likert scale to examine three dimensions of a corporate image as mentioned.

Job Applying Intention: A Theory of Planned Behavior

A "Job Applying Intention" is one of the variables that many scholars have studied to understand job applicants' intention to apply for a job at certain companies in their countries. (e.g., Lemmink et. al 2003; Agrawal and Swaroop, 2009; Adams, 2013; Amani and Mkumbo, 2016; Janice and Leosaputro, 2014; Nelloh, 2017; Wei et al, 2018; Vilkaite-Vaitone, and Lukaite, 2019; Ngatuni and Ulomi, 2020; Putra and Purba, 2020; Hiranrat et. al 2021; Tantivejakul et. al, 2012; Thanarittivarapak, 2018; Poolphon and Teangsompong, 2020).

Nelloh (2017) stated that "an intention to apply," which is the final stage of organizational attraction, has a significant effect on the employer branding and can attract high quality job applicants to apply in the employment market. This is similar to what Asanbekova and Maksüdünov (2018) stated. They noted that a company with a better image can attract larger and higher-quality job applicants. The new job applicants would have the intention to apply if they have favorable attitudes and attention toward the organizations (Gomes and Nerves, 2011). In summary, a job applicant's attraction is the result of an organization's performances to obtain individuals to apply for a job in the company. Therefore, understanding the applicants' intention to apply will lead the organization into effective hiring and to get attention from potential job applicants (Asanbekova and Maksüdünov, 2018; Janice and Leosaputro, 2014).

A Theory of Planned Behavior

Interestingly, the previous studies show that many scholars have been using a "Theory of Planned Behavior" to investigate job applicants' intention behavior.

A Theory of Planned Behavior, which is one of popular psychological concepts, has been widely used in investigating and predicting human intentions in various fields of study such as donation, education, health, tourism and hospitality, management, and communication technology, including in a job applying intention context (see Table 1).

Table 1 Summary Table of Previous Studies about Job Applying Intention Using a Theory of Planned Behavior

Scholar(s)	Title	Studying Context
E.A.J. Van Hooft et al. (2004)	Job Search and The Theory of Planned Behavior: Minority–majority Group Differences in The Netherlands	The Predictors of Job Search Behavior *(in Netherlands context)*
Adams (2013)	Examining Graduate's Applicant Intentions to Apply to an Organization: The Theory of Planned Behavior in the South Africa	Intention to Apply for a Job *(in South Africa context)*
Amani and Mkumbo (2016)	Predictors of Career Intentions among Undergraduate Students in Tanzania	Career Intentions of Undergraduates *(in Tanzania context)*
Wen et. al. (2018)	What influences Chinese students' Intentions to Pursue Hospitality Careers? A Comparison of three-year versus four-year Hospitality Programs	Intention to Apply for a Job in Hospitality Industry *(in China context)*
Hemachandra et. al (2018)	**Career Intention of Undergraduate Students: An Application of Theory of Planned Behavior**	Career Intention of Undergraduate Students *(in Sri Lanka context)*
Vilkaite-Vaitone and Lukaite (2019)	Company Image in Social Network as Predictor of Intention to Apply for a Job Position	Company Image and Intention to Apply for a Job *(in Lithuania context)*
Ngatuni and Ulomi (2020)	Behavioral Predictors of Students' Career Intentions in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Tanzania	Intention to Apply for a Job in Hospitality and Tourism Industry *(in Tanzania context)*
Putra and Purba (2020)	Effects of Satisfaction, Subjective Norms, and Self-efficacy on Job Application Intentions of Student Interns	Intentions to Apply to Convert the Internship into a Permanent Employee *(in Indonesia context)*
Poolphon and Teangsompong (2020)	The Causal Model of Job Application Intention in the Thai Automotive Industry	Job Applying Intention of Junior and Senior Students in Automotive Industry *(in Thailand context)*
Hiranrat et. al (2021)	The Influence of Communication Self-efficacy on Intention to Pursue a Software Development Career	Career Intention in Software Development Career *(in Thailand context)*

A Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explained that human intentions can be predicted by three main aspects: (1) *individual's attitude* (favorable or unfavorable evaluation of attractive behavior), (2) *subjective norms* (social pressures, beliefs of surrounding people who are important, and can approve or disapprove the individual's behavior), and (3) *perceived behavioral control*

(individual's perception of the ease or difficulty to perform the behavior) (Ajzen, 1985; 1991). To be specific, these three main aspects affect the individuals' readiness to perform a certain behavior (Ngatuni and Ulomi, 2020).

In reference to the above summary table, it's noticeable that both local and international scholars in various regions have applied TPB in studying a job applying intention variable. For instance, Amani and Mkumbo (2016) used the principles of TPB to investigate the career intentions among undergraduate students. The results from multiple regression analysis revealed that attitudes towards career (students' view on their prospective career) were the strongest predictor of career intentions, followed by subjective norms, career knowledge and career self-efficacy.

Another study in Tanzania, Ngatuni and Ulomi (2020) have recently applied a TPB to study students' career intentions in the hospitality and tourism industry. The results of Multiple Regression technique showed that perceived behavioral control had the strongest predictive power for students' career intentions in the hospitality and tourism industry. This point was affirmed by the previous findings of Wen et al. (2018) who studied Chinese hospitality students' career intentions in the hospitality industry and reported that perceived behavioral control is the most important predictor of career intentions of Chinese students.

Hemachandra et. al (2018) studied students' career intentions to work in the public sector, private sector and own business startups separately by applying the TPB. The findings revealed that all three aspects: attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control have a significant positive relationship with career intention in public and private sectors and own business startups. Interestingly, only career intentions in the private sector are significantly different between the final year and first year students.

In the internship context, Putra and Purba (2020) also applied a TPB to study factors that probably influence an internship student's intentions to apply to convert the internship into a permanent employee position at the same company after graduating from university. The results disclosed that internship satisfaction and subjective norms positively and significantly predicted the intentions of internship students to apply to convert their internships into permanent jobs at the same company.

Besides, Adams (2013) investigated the graduate applicant's intentions to apply to an organization in South Africa by using the TPB and found that the hypothesized models fit the retrieved data, and all three aspects of TPB: attitudes towards the behavior, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control, were significantly related to intention to apply for a job.

In reference to the affirmation of these studies, the author, therefore, has decided to apply three main aspects of a Theory of Planned Behavior in examine a job applying intention behavior of graduating university students in Thailand.

Relationship between Concepts and The Previous Studies

Many scholars have previously shown the linkage between "a corporate image" and "a job applying intention" through their studies. Janice and Leosaputro (2014) stated that a corporate image is

one of the best company's weapons to attract job applicants and their studies further affirmed that a corporate image has a significant impact on job applicant attraction. To be specific, 30.3% of variation in a corporate image of their studying company in Surabaya can explain the variation in the job applicant attraction. Interestingly, employer image and CSR image dimensions have a significant impact towards job applicant attraction.

Previously, Agrawal and Swaroop (2009) also analyzed the effect of employer brand image on the application intentions of business school undergraduates in India and found that the feelings or attitudes of the prospective candidate about a company is an important predictor of intent to apply for a job. In addition, the students' application intentions are influenced by their perceptions of the responsibility and empowerment inherent in the job, as well as on compensation and locational considerations. Based on these findings, it seems very likely that a corporate image is one of important predictors of job applicants' intention, especially in a responsibility (CSR) dimension.

In Bangladesh, Afroze (2016) examined how developed corporate image influences talented candidates to apply for the job using qualitative research methods and gathering data from fresh graduates, final year students, and new employees through the in-depth interview. The study found that a positive corporate image can influence the potential candidate's intention to apply for a job. Most of the candidates showed that they prefer multinational companies as well as reputed local organizations to join because of their positive images.

There was a similar study in Taiwan. Tsai and Yang (2010) investigated the influences of corporate image dimensions on organizational attractiveness, specifically taking into account the effects of applicant individual differences. The findings showed that corporate images relevant to product, social and environmental responsibility, and credibility are important determinants of organizational attractiveness. Therefore, it seems like having a good corporate image in these dimensions can attract job applicants' intentions. Besides, Wei et al. (2016) also examined the relationship between an organization's corporate image and a job seeker's intention to apply by gathering the data from fresh graduates. The results unveiled that a corporate image has a positive relationship with intention to apply and person-organization fit. In addition, comprehensive recruitment messages can strengthen the positive relationship between corporate image and person-organization fit as well.

Lemmink et. al (2003) reviewed the previous studies and showed the conclusion that a corporate image perception can influence applicants' intentions to pursue employment opportunities at a particular organization. Then, they further affirmed this point with their own study about the role of corporate image and company employment image in explaining application intentions in the Netherlands. What they found is that a corporate image and a company employment image have independent significant positive effects on the intentions to apply.

Similarly, Asanbekova and Maksüdünov (2018) also pointed out that a corporate image is important in the recruitment process of a company since their studies unveiled that a perceived corporate image and a job applying intention have

a positive and significant relationship. To attract potential talented employees, a company should focus on a corporate image, especially on an employer image dimension. The findings and suggestions are similar to a research paper in Thailand of Tantivejakul et. al (2012) showing that the new generation's perceptions towards corporate image was related to job applying intention. Hence, the author presented that a company with a better corporate image is likely to have more competitive advantage and has potential to attract a job seeker.

In Thailand's context, there are more studies about "a corporate image" and "a job applying intention", for example, a study of Seriphaisan (2015) studied a corporate image and job applicants' intentions with CP ALL Public Company Limited. The findings showed that job applicants had a very good opinion level towards the overall CP ALL Public Company Limited Image. Interestingly, three dimensions of a corporate image, which are Institutional image, Product/Service image and Brand image have a positive correlation with job applicant's intention at low level. Likewise, a study of Thanarittivarapak (2018) about the factors of employer attractiveness that have an effect on job application intentions of generation z who are undergraduates, clarified that workplace credibility was the most influential factor. Therefore, it can be implied that a corporate image in terms of credibility, plays a significant role towards the job application intentions of undergraduates.

Dechporn (2020) examined the consumers' perception towards the image of organization by implementing a concept of CSR to study for Ampol

Food Processing Company in Thailand. The results presented 39.4% of variation in a corporate image (three aspects: social and environmental image, consisting of fair business operation, consumer responsibility image and community and social development image) of their studying company can explain the variation in the perception of social activities for the environment of a company. Based on this finding, it seems like a corporate image in terms of CSR dimension is important in generating a good corporate image in consumers' perception.

Therefore, in reference to the research findings and concepts of previous studies, this study has been conducted to fill in the academic gap by further investigating the linkage between two variables: a corporate image and a job applying intention of graduating university students who are Generation Z and have been entering to the labor market since 2019 in Thailand's context. To be specific, three dimensions of a corporate image, which are (1) Product/Service image, (2) Employer image and (3) CSR image, would be the focus of this study in examining the relationship of a corporate image and a job applying intention (Dechporn, 2020; Asanbekova and Maksüdünov, 2018; Janice and Leosaputro, 2014; Agrawal and Swaroop, 2009;). For a job applying intention variable, the author applies a Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), including (1) Individual's Attitude, (2) Subjective Norms, (3) Perceived Behavioral Control (Poolphon and Teangsompong, 2020; Ngatuni and Ulomi, 2020; Wen et al., 2018; Amani and Mkumbo, 2016;), and accompanying with (4) Intention to Apply a Job to measure a job applying intention of graduating university students.

Conceptual Framework
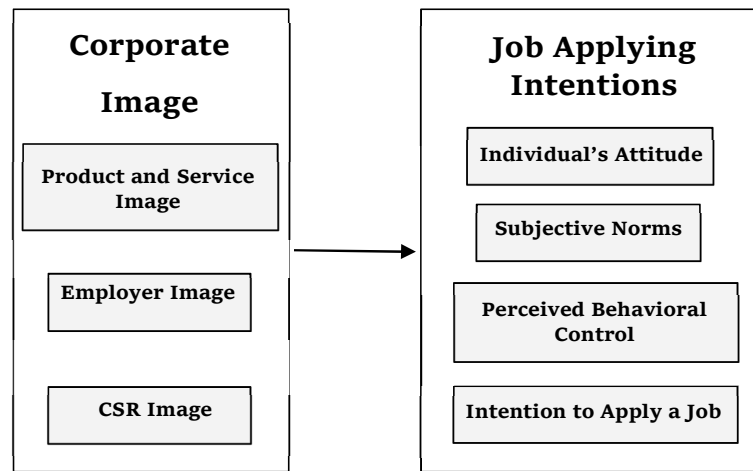
Hypotheses

H1: Corporate Image has a positive correlation with Job Applying Intention of graduating university students.

H1a: Product and Service Image has a positive correlation with Job Applying Intention of graduating university students.

H1b: Employer Image has a positive correlation with Job Applying Intention of graduating university students.

H1c: CSR Image has a positive correlation with Job Applying Intention of graduating university students.

H2: Corporate Image can be a behavioral predictor of Job Applying Intention of graduating university students.

Research Methodology

The researcher uses a quantitative research methodology (a single cross-sectional design) for this study and has questionnaires (survey) as a research instrument.

The purposes of this research are (1) to study the relationship between two variables; Corporate Image and Job Applying Intention of graduating university students, and (2) to find out the strongest predictor of dependent variables that can determine the Job Applying Intention of graduating university students.

Population and Sampling Group:

The population of this study is the graduating university students who are Generation Z (i.e., junior, senior students or graduating students) of the universities located in Bangkok and vicinity. The author used a purposive sampling to identify a sampling group.

Since the population of this study is the graduating university students, therefore, the researcher intentionally selects "The University located in Bangkok and vicinity" as a location of the data collection. This is to ensure that the researcher can reach the targets, and the data will be properly collected.

The criteria for selecting the university is from the "Thai University Ranking" reported by 4Icu Unirank institute in 2021. The selected universities should be (1) ranked in the top 10 of each category: public and private universities, (2) located in Bangkok and vicinity, and (3) have a possibility to access for collecting the data.

In reference to the mentioned criteria, there were 8 universities in total for collecting the data, which were as follows:

Table 2 The criteria for selecting the university is from the "Thai University Ranking" by 4Icu Unirank institute in 2021.

Public Universities (200 Sets)	Private Universities (200 Sets)
1. Chulalongkorn University	1. Assumption University
2. Thammasat University	2. Bangkok University
3. Srinakharinwirot University	3. Thai Chamber University
4. Ramkhamhaeng University	4. Rangsit University
Grand Total: 400 sets	

Data Collection Procedure:

The author conducted a questionnaire by using a Google form and generated a QR code for respondents to scan and access to the questions. Later, the author made contact with the faculty members of each university and asked for permission to collect the data from their students. Firstly, the author had a self-introduction to the students and informed about the purpose of this study. Then, the students were asked to scan QR code for accessing the link and answering questions. Before they started, they were recommended to carefully read the consent form and make their own decision whether to volunteer or leave the data collection procedure. All processes consumed around 15 minutes.

The Research Instruments:

In this study, a **Corporate Image** will be measured by using items from the previous studies of Fombrun et al. (2000), Seritanondh (2018), Sabaiwan (2010) and Wanakasemsan (2009) about corporate image measurement with the reliability value of all measurement instruments over 0.90.

There are 12 items asked in this part of the questionnaire. The items have been divided into four sub-questions using five-point Likert scales to measure the level of respondents' agreement (1 strongly disagree, 5 strongly agree) towards the following statements of each dimension.

Those items are: (1) Product and Service Image - "The products and services of the company make people's daily lives much easier." / "The quality of products and services of the company meets the global standard." / "The company has offered the products and services at a reasonable price." / "The

company has offered a good quality product and service to you." (2) Employer Image – "The company gives a competitive working salary." / "The company has a professional internal management." / "The company has a good working culture." / "The company's executives give importance to employees and treat them well." (3) CSR Image – "The company has shown that it supports the charity." / "The company is responsible towards society and the environment." / "The company has shown good treatment towards people." / "The company has executed its business under the concept of sustainable development."

Besides, a **Job Applying Intention** will be measured by using the concept of "*Theory of Planned Behavior*" and guided questions from Amani and Mkumbo (2016), Ngatuni and Ulomi (2020), Thienthaworn (2021) with the reliability value of all measurement instruments over 0.70.

There are 12 items asked in this part of the questionnaire. The items have been divided into three sub-questions using five-point Likert scales to measure the level of respondents' agreement (1 strongly disagree, 5 strongly agree) towards the following statements of each dimension.

Those items are: (1) Individual's Attitude – "I find the idea of having a career in this company." / "I think it is quite interesting to apply for a job with this company." / "The job announcement of this company makes me interested." (2) Subjective Norms – "Most people who are important to me probably want me to work in this company after graduation." / "I think it is very likely that my family and friends want me to work with this company after graduation." / "My family and friends probably think that I should apply for a job with this company

after graduation." (3) Perceived Behavioral Control – "It is completely up to me to decide whether I will work in this company after graduation." / "I am a final decision marker if I would like to apply for a job with this company after graduation." / "To me, there is an easy and possible way to apply for a job with this company after graduation." (4) Intention to Apply for a Job – "I plan to work in this company after graduation". / "Applying for a job with this company is something I would do after graduation." / "I am willing to work with this company after graduation."

The Selected Company of this Study:

The criteria of selecting a company for this study are (1) The products and services of a company should be related with the daily consumption of graduating university students, therefore, they could be familiar with a company and could recall its products and services' performance when filling in a questionnaire for this dimension, (2) The CSR activities of a company should have been organized for over 3 years, following the explanation of two scholars: Kotler and Lee (2005), and the presence of top management team and company's policy should be regularly presented on media. This is to ensure that graduating university students could have adequate information in evaluating a corporate image in employer and CSR dimensions.

In reference with the mentioned criteria, *PTT Public Company Limited*, which has been (1) offered products and services that are related to daily consumption of people, for example, PTT petrol stations and Cafe Amazon (under the execution of PTT Oil and Retail Business Public

Company Limited (PTT OR) and, (2) executed CSR activities for over 3 years and presented a top management team to the media regularly as reported in the Stock Exchange of Thailand's annual report. Besides, the company has been voted as a top 10 company that people are interested to work with, following the survey results in 2020 of Work Venture and Universam 2021 Thailand (Brand Buffet, 2021; Krungthep Turakij, 2021; Work Venture 2020).

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument:

Before distributing the questionnaires, the researcher conducts a pilot survey on a small sample of respondents (N = 35). This process aims to check if all measurement scales are valid and reliable, and all statements used in the questionnaires are understandable. The construct reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) of all items used in the questionnaire is at 0.96. Besides, the researcher also submits the questionnaires to both scholars and experts for examining the content validity.

Data Analysis:

The researcher uses descriptive statistics and inferential statistics for analyzing the data.

1. Descriptive statistics - The frequency, percentage, means, and standard deviation are used for analyzing demographics and the retrieved data of each variable.

2. Inferential statistics - The correlation is used for (1) analyzing the correlation between two variables, which are, Corporate Image and Job Applying Intention of graduating university students, and the multiple regression analysis is used for (2) finding the strongest predictor affecting Job Applying Intention of graduating university students, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is for a model test of these studying variables.

Research Findings

There were 408 respondents in total. To be specific, there were 133 male students (32.6%), 255 female students (62.5%) and 20 ungendered students (4.9%).

The age of respondents were 21 years old (46.3%), more than 22 years old (19.9%), 22 years old (19.6%), 20 years old (12.3%) and 19 years old (2%) accordingly. The percentage of each range for their monthly income choices (from less than 3,000 THB to more than 15,000 THB) were between 11% - 16% similarly, except for 11,001-13,000 THB and 13,001-15,000 THB choices that showed lower than 10%.

Besides, among 408 respondents, 201 respondents (49.3%) were public university students while 207 respondents (50.7%) were private university students. Most of them (89%) were studying in the schools of social sciences and 70.6% of respondents were junior students, followed by senior students (16.4%) and more than 4 years of study (13%). For the internship experience, 74% of them had no experience while 26% had been internship students before.

Table 3 Correlations of a Corporate Image and a Job Applying Intention variable among graduating university students

Variables	Pearson's Correlation (r)		Sig
		Job Applying Intention	
Corporate Image	1.00	.534 (moderate)	.000

*Significant at 0.05 level (Sig. < 0.05)

Apart from the above table, the result indicated that two variables, which are a Corporate Image and a Job Applying Intention, showed a moderate level of correlation (r=.534). This might be inferred that if PTT Public Company Limited has a good corporate image among graduating university students, there will be a possible way at moderate level for a company to recruit new graduates, however, if it doesn't, the result might be the opposite.

Table 4 Correlations of a Corporate Image and a Job Applying Intention variable among graduating university students

Variables	Pearson's Correlation (r)				Sig
	Job Applying Intention	Corporate Image "Product Image"	Corporate Image "Employer Image"	Corporate Image "CSR Image"	
Job Applying Intention	1.00	.471 (moderate)	.500 (moderate)	.470 (moderate)	.000
Corporate Image "Product Image"	.471 (moderate)		.702 (high)	.688 (high)	.000
Corporate Image "Employer Image"	.500 (moderate)	.702 (high)		.760 (high)	.000
Corporate Image "CSR Image"	.470 (moderate)	.668 (high)	.760 (high)		.000

*Significant at 0.05 level (Sig. < 0.05)

In reference with the above table, all three dimensions of a corporate image showed a moderate level of correlation with a Job Applying Intention of graduating university students. Indeed, it was noticeable that at the moderate level of correlation, an **"Employer Image"** dimension of a corporate image, showed the highest r score (r=.500). This might be interpreted that if PTT Public Company Limited has a good employer image among graduating university students, for example, offering a competitive working salary, treating employees well, there will be a possible way at

moderate level for a company to attract new graduates to submit their application forms, however, if it doesn't, the result might be the opposite. The results *accepted hypotheses H1* (H1a, H1b and H1c).

Table 5 Regression of a Corporate Image and a Job Applying Intention variable among graduating university students

Independent Variables	Adjusted R2	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig	Durbin-Watson
		b	Sb	Beta			
(constant)		.866	.213		4.061	000	
Corporate Image "Product Image"	.248	.292	.084	2.46	3.484	.001	
Corporate Image "Employer Image"	.275	.240	.075	.196	3.186	.002	1.755
Corporate Image "CSR Image"	**.282**	.163	.072	.152	2.257	.025	

R = .536 / Adjusted R2 = .282 / F = 54.222*, Sig. = .000

  *Significant at 0.05 level (Sig. < = 0.05)

Apart from the above regression table, the result indicated that, at significance level 0.05, all dimensions of independent variable (a Corporate Image), which are Product Image, Employer Image and CSR Image can be together used to predict the dependent variable, namely a Job Applying Intention among graduating university students. Despite this result, the strongest predictor is '**CSR Image**', with a percentage of 28.2% (Adjusted R2 = .282), followed by Employer Image (Adjusted R2 = .275) and Product Image (Adjusted R2 = .248). In conclusion, all of these dimensions of independent variable show a positive value of prediction towards a Job Applying Intention among graduating university students. The results *accepted hypotheses H2.*

The author further investigated the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of two studying variables: a Corporate Image and a Job Applying Intention. The result of construct validity measurements was as follows:

Table 6 Factor Loading of Observed Variables of Latent variable: "**Corporate Image**" of PTT Public Company Limited
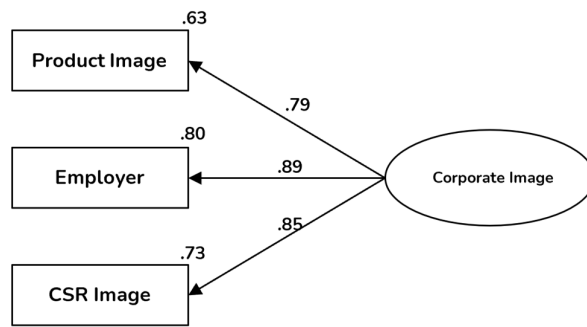
*Significant at 0.05 level (Sig. < = 0.05)

Chi-square = .163, df = 1, p = 0.687,

Chi-square/df = .163, GFI = 1.000, AGFI = 0.998,

CFI = 1.000, IFI = 1.001, NFI = 1.000, RMSEA = 0.000, RMR = 0.008

The findings showed the factor loading of these observed variables at significance level 0.05. Indeed, the observed variables of a corporate image of PTT Public Company Limited. are composed of three variables, including Product Image, Employer Image, and CSR Image dimensions.

Each observed variable reports its factor loading as follows: 0.79 for Product Image, **0.89 for 'Employer Image'**, and 0.85 for CSR Image dimensions. The results affirmed the findings of correlation analysis that the author presented previously.

Table 7 Factor Loading of Observed Variables of Latent variable: "**Job Applying Intention**" of PTT Public Company Limited
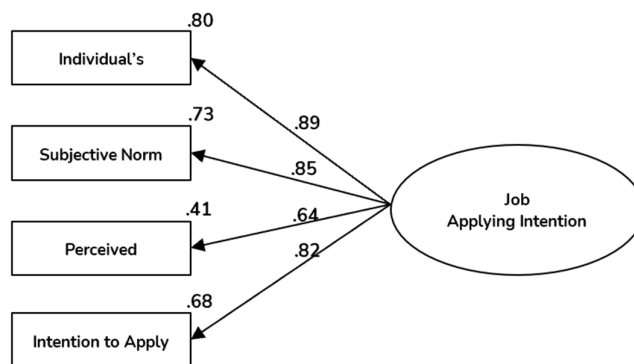
*Significant at 0.05 level (Sig. < = 0.05)

Chi-square = 2.084, df = 2, p = 0.353,

Chi-square/df = 1.042, GFI = .997, AGFI = 0.987,

CFI = 1.000, IFI = 1.000, NFI = .998, RMSEA = 0.100, RMR = 0.007

The findings showed the factor loading of these observed variables at significance level 0.05. Indeed, the observed variables of a Job Applying Intention of graduating university students are composed of four variables, including Individual's Attitude, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavioral Control and Intention to Apply dimensions.

Each observed variable reports its factor loading as follows: **0.89 for 'Individual's Attitude'**, 0.85 for Subjective Norm, 0.64 for Perceived Behavioral Control and 0.82 for Intention to Apply dimensions. The results were congruent with the previous studies and the author will further discuss and present in the next part.

Conclusion and Discussion

The findings accepted hypotheses and aligned with theory and previous studies. Theoretically, the findings affirmed that a corporate image and a job applying intention have a positive correlation, especially in an 'employer image' dimension. The findings were congruent with a further study in the model test of a corporate image. The model showed that an 'employer image' had the highest factor loading values, compared to other observed variables entered in the model. To explain, these findings implied that if PTT Public Company Limited, which was a studying company of this research, had a positive corporate image, especially in an employer image dimension (i.e., attractive salary, friendly atmosphere, interesting welfare), there was an opportunity to attract potential job applicants like graduating university students. The results were in line of what previous studies (both national and international studies) stated, in terms of positive relationship and

employer image dimension findings (Lemmink et.al, 2003; Tantivejakul et.al, 2012; Wei et.al., 2016; Asanbekova and Maksüdünov, 2018).

As mentioned, an employer image dimension seems to play a significant role in job applying intention of graduating students. Deloitte's 2022 Gen Z and Millennial Survey indicated that Generation Z who are graduating students mostly focus on organizational culture and workplace atmosphere when applying for a job (PPTVHD36, 2022). It might be implied that a company with a good organizational culture and workplace atmosphere can generate a good employer image and eventually can lead to a job satisfaction and job retention among Generation Z employees.

Since an employer image dimension plays a significant role in enhancing a positive corporate image and relates to a job applying intention of graduating university student, a company, therefore, should give more attention to an employment process as well as deliver comprehensive and attractive messages about job recruitment to undergraduates, for example, clear job characteristics and responsibilities, attractive salary and welfare, good workplace atmosphere and organizational culture. To be specific, a corporate image in terms of workplace credibility or employer image, plays a significant role towards the job application intentions of Generation Z who are undergraduates (Thanarittivarapak, 2018). Additionally, comprehensive recruitment messages can also strengthen a positive relationship between corporate image and person-organization fit (Wei et al., 2016). Therefore, if a company aims to attract potential talented employees, a company should focus on a corporate

image, especially on an employer image dimension (Asanbekova and Maksüdünov, 2018).

Besides, the findings additionally indicated that a corporate image can be used as a behavioral predictor of a job applying intention. Interestingly, 'CSR image' dimension was the strongest predictor that can determine a job applying intention of graduating university students, followed by an employer image dimension. This is aligned with the recent studies affirming that a corporate image, especially in CSR and employer image dimensions, can influence a job applicant attraction significantly (Tsai and Yang, 2010; Janice and Leosaputro, 2014; Afroze, 2016). In fact, graduating university students' application intentions can be influenced by their perceptions of the responsibility inherent in the job, as well as on compensation consideration (Agrawal and Swaroop, 2009). Similarly, in Thailand's context, the study of Dechporn (2020) for Ampol Food Processing Company also showed that a corporate image can explain the variation in the perception of social activities for the environment of a company. To be specific, a corporate image in terms of CSR dimension is an important factor in generating a good corporate image in consumers' perception.

CSR is now a trend and draws attention from young generation like Generation Z. Graduating university students who are Generation Z currently put their extra concerns to social and environmental issues. They will consider CSR performances of companies when they make some decisions i.e. buying company's products (Wong, 2021). The recent survey of Wunderman Thompson (2020) about Generation Z of 9 countries, including Thailand unveiled that Generation Z aim to change the world with social and environmental issues. It

seems like they also loyally support companies that support their values. Hence, companies should start communicating their values and show Generation Z how brand values align with those Generation Z beliefs. In summary, integrating social and environmental issues into corporate strategy is a valuable approach for attracting Generation Z job seekers, because these two things showed a positive relationship (Ngoc Thang et. al., 2022)

Additionally, the findings affirmed the appropriateness of using a theory of planned behavior in examining potential job applicants in Thailand context. In this regard, all four attributes were influential in determining a job applying intention of graduating university students upon graduation. 'Individual's attitude' had the highest factor loading values, compared to other observed variables entered in the model. This point was congruent with the previous studies using a theory of planned behavior to investigate job seekers' attention in their countries (E.A.J. Van Hooft et al., 2004; Adams, 2013; Amani and Mkumbo, 2016; Wen et. al., 2018; Hemachandra et. al, 2018; Vilkaite-Vaitone and Lukaite, 2019; Ngatuni and Ulomi, 2020; Putra and Purba, 2020) and in Thailand's context (Poolphon and Teangsompong, 2020; Hiranrat et. al, 2021)

Interestingly, in Thailand's context, even in the software industry study of Poolphon and Teangsompong (2020) or in the Thai automotive industry study of Hiranrat et. al (2021), the findings about career intention using a theory of planned behavior, aligned with the findings of this study in the petrol industry (PTT Public Company Limited). The studies affirmed that individual's attitude had a positive influence on the students' intention to pursue a career in the industries. This might imply

that graduating university students who are Generation Z, mainly relied on their attitudes and themselves when applying for a job or working in a company.

This was probably resulting from characteristics of Generation Z in Asean. According to a survey result 'Now you Z me: Debunking myths about ASEAN's Generation Z' by Hakuhodo Institute of Life and Living ASEAN: HILL ASEAN, Generation Z have been raised by families with a strong bond relationship. They are encouraged to rely on their attitudes and make their own decisions (Brand Buffet, 2021). In fact, attitude is the factor that affects intention and can determine the trend of behavior (Lutz, 1991; Solomon, 2011), therefore, individual's attitude plays important role in determining a career intention of Generation Z.

In conclusion, the new job applicants would have the intention to apply if they have favorable attitudes and attention toward the organizations (Gomes and Nerves, 2011). Then, companies should focus on creating favorable attitudes among Generation Z through CSR activities by integrating CSR concept in business model, and creating attractive employment process. This is to ensure that Generation Z who are potential job applicants, would have positive feelings toward organizations and are likely to be attracted in a job recruitment process.

Limitation and Suggestion for Future Research Study

1. As this study was about a corporate image and a job applying intention, the findings on correlation and confirmatory factor analysis of an employer image might only indicate respondents' career intention at a specific time. A further study probably examines other dimensions of a corporate image or specifically focuses on CSR dimension with various categories of CSR activity that might have an effect on a job applying intention of Generation Z. Besides, other variables, for example, a monthly income, an industry's characteristic, might be interesting variables for the further study on a job applying intention too.

2. The study focused on petrol industry in Thailand, therefore, the results might not be able to represent a macro industry. A further study probably extends to investigate career intentions in other industries, for example, hotel industry, IT industry. In fact, a cigarette manufacturer or an alcohol beverage company, two business players who probably have negative corporate images from their business executions, could be an interesting choice of further study.

3. A comparison between a public and a private university in terms of a corporate image and a job applying intention, might be considered for a further study as well. Besides, other research methodologies, for example, focus group, in-depth interview, might be further used in generating insightful findings.

Acknowledgement

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