

# The Effects of Organizational Justice, Organizational Reputation and Self-Esteem on Job Seeker Attraction: A Moderated Mediation Model

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## Abstract:

The present study examined the roles of organizational justice, organizational reputation perceptions and self-esteem in determining the expectations of success in attracting job seekers to an organization. We hypothesized that organizational reputation mediated the relationship between organizational justice and job seeker attraction and that self-esteem then moderated the relationship. Our sample consisted of 327 respondents undergoing internships who assumed the role of job seekers. The study required the respondents to assess the organizations in which they were undergoing internships since they would have gained experience and knowledge about the organizations during their internships and thus would have formed informed opinions about organizational justice, organizational reputation, and self-esteem and their attractiveness as job seekers. A moderated mediation model indicated that organizational reputation mediates the organizational justice and job seeker attraction relationship and that it was stronger for undergraduates with high self-esteem. The findings showed that organizations could improve organizational reputation through organizational justice, which would attract job seekers, especially those with high self-esteem. It was suggested that rather than focusing solely on undergraduate competency, the government and stakeholders should collaborate with each other to assist organizations to promote organizational justice, organizational reputation, as well as improve self-esteem of undergraduates, to attract undergraduates to apply for jobs which is mitigates the choosiness attitude.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

To manage companies efficiently and effectively, it is essential to have sufficient human capital. In view of this, difficulties in filling job vacancies need to be addressed promptly as the issue is capable of threatening an organization's workforce sufficiency.

Based on a recent study by Talent Corporation Malaysia (TalentCorp), which was jointly conducted with the Institute of Labour Market Information and Analysis (2016), Malaysian employers face difficulty in filling job vacancies in certain occupational fields such as electrical and electronics engineering, accounting, financial services, telecommunications and

multimedia, oil and gas, and global business services. These fields are part of TalentCorp's Critical Occupations List (COL).

Malaysian employers have reiterated that they are struggling to fill job vacancies with people with appropriate work skills, soft skills, and interpersonal skills in the COL fields. This is consistent with the finding of Malaysia's largest recruitment agency, Jobstreet, based on a job market survey that found that Malaysian employers have difficulty in filling job vacancies for certain occupations (Jobstreet, 2013). Therefore, it was necessary to examine the root cause of this difficulty in order to propose precise and practical solutions.

Most recently, a study on this issue related to job seekers' attitude of 'choosiness'. A survey by Jobstreet (2013) found that more than 30% of Malaysian employers believe that undergraduates are being too choosy in selecting potential companies to apply to. An empirical study by Jayasingam, Fujiwara, & Thurasamy (2016) also confirmed that Malaysian undergraduates have this type of attitude of choosiness. In fact, the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) has advised undergraduates not be choosy about employment (Kosmo, 2012). The Ministry realized that this attitude among Malaysian undergraduates was spreading.

Based on the latest study, 60% of Malaysian undergraduates have such an attitude (Jobstreet, 2016). The worst part is that they are even willing to be unemployed rather than take a job that is not attractive to them (Nursyamimi, 2015). The influence of the degree of choosiness among graduates was further revealed in a survey conducted by ManpowerGroup (2013) on graduates within the Asia Pacific region. Clearly, the reality in Malaysia and in the Asia Pacific region nowadays is that undergraduates are too particular in selecting an organization to work for.

Since this choosiness attitude is an issue among Malaysian graduates, and is related to the

difficulty in filling job vacancies (ManpowerGroup, 2015), Jayasingam et al. (2016) investigated this attitude based on organizational characteristics such as reward and benefit, workplace and office environment, company size, culture, job position, obligation in the organization, etc. The researchers believed that organizational characteristics are capable of attracting choosy job seekers to apply for and accept job offers.

Studies on organizational characteristics that affect jobseekers when applying for jobs with organizations, known as jobseeker attraction, have long been conducted. Organizational characteristics such as corporate social responsibility (Greening & Turban, 2000), flexible working hours (Thompson, Payne, & Taylor, 2015), a smoke-free policy (Park et al., 2010), organizational culture (Catanzaro, Moore, & Marshall, 2010), organizational reputation (Cable & Turban, 2003; Turban & Cable, 2003), etc. have been proven to attract jobseekers to apply for jobs with organizations. In this study, we investigated the role of organizational justice, organizational reputation and self-esteem in attracting potential employees.

The relationship between the constructs underlie the moderated mediation model as to respond to the great demand of combination between recruitment study and job search process study. Over a few years, the recruitment study and job search process have been apart. Lately, there is a call from scholars to combine the two disciplines in a study and elevate understanding of the attractiveness concept (da Motta Veiga & Turban, 2014). This study initiated found a breakthrough, is a valuable knowledge to share with.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Organizational Justice and Job Seeker Attraction

Jobseeker attraction concerns a jobseeker's general assessment of the attractiveness of the job

and/or company (Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005). Ehrhart & Ziegert (2005) stated that knowing why a person is attracted to a company from the jobseeker's point of view is also job seeker attraction. Rau & Hyland (2002) defined job seeker attraction as the job seeker's perspective in determining the attractiveness of an organization.

Past scholars highlighted that a job seeker's perception of the organization as a positive place of work involves job seeker attraction. Other scholars explained the attraction as an attitude or general positive emotion of a person towards a company (Aiman-smith, Bauer, & Cable, 2001; Ong, 2011). Later researchers supported the perspective that described job seeker attraction as interpretation of individuals' affective and attitudinal feelings regarding certain organizations as likely places of employment (Highhouse, Lievens, & Sinar, 2003).

In previous studies on the concept, researchers outlined the predictors of the concept as hiring expectancies, recruiter characteristics, the recruitment process, perceived fit, organizational characteristics and perceived alternatives (Chapman et al., 2005; Uggerslev, 2012). The predictors were discovered after researchers scrutinized 71 pieces of previous literature and an extensive variety of potential predictors of job seeker attraction over more than 50 years. The work environment aspect of organizational characteristics demonstrated the strongest positive significant impact on job seeker attraction; hence, it was worth reviewing this factor.

There have been several varieties of work environments that have been tested; thus, the emphasis of a study plays a significant role. In this study, organizational justice was the central feature, because scholars have only recently become interested in examining third-party individual perceptions of organizational justice (Crawshaw, Cropanzano, Bell, & Nadisic, 2013).

Moreover, the relevance of and scholarly interest in organizational justice were demonstrated by recent meta-analytical reviews (Skarlicki, O'Reilly, & Kulik, 2015). These review emphasized third-party organizational justice rather than the general concept of organizational justice, which is what the present study also maintained.

The signaling theory-based proposition states that an organizational characteristic conveys information to job seekers on what it would be like to be an employee of an organization. In other words, the characteristic is construed as information about working conditions in a company (Zhang & Gowan, 2012). For example, corporate social performance (Zhang & Gowan, 2012), the organization's romance policy (Pierce et al., 2012), and flexitime and flexplace (Thompson et al., 2015) can be construed as working conditions in a company.

Similarly, organizational justice conveys information about working conditions in a company. The characteristic symbolizes certain positive morals, values, and norms (Skarlicki et al., 2015). People are more attracted to an organization they perceive as having positive values and norms (Turban & Greening, 1997). Thus, organizational justice signals certain positive values and norms that will attract job seekers to apply for jobs. Therefore, the underlying signaling theory anticipates that organizational justice will attract potential job seekers to apply for jobs in organizations. Hence, based on the discussion above, it was hypothesized that:

H1: Organizational justice has a positive relationship with job seeker attraction.

## **2.2 Organizational Reputation and Job Seeker Attraction**

Organizational reputation is a relatively important concept in job seeker attraction. This was discovered more than two decades ago (Turban & Greening, 1997). The concept was

found to have the most influence on job seeker attraction (Lis & Bettina, 2012). The understanding of the extent to which the concept influences job seeker attraction is universal since it has been studied extensively across time and countries (Anderson, Haar, & Gibb, 2010; Cable & Turban, 2003; Rindova, Williamson, Petkova, & Sever, 2005; Williamson, King, Lepak, & Sarma, 2010).

However, researchers' interest in the concept is far from over as many more aspects have not been explored and the topic requires further understanding. For example, studies were conducted on social expectations (e.g. corporate social responsibility, pro-environment attitudes, flexible working hours, etc.) and this feature received a substantial response from researchers (Duarte, Gomes, & das Neves, 2014; Jones, Willness, & Madey, 2014).

In the beginning, the concept was directly associated with job seeker attraction (Turban, Forret, & Hendrickson, 1998). As the labor market became more complex, organizational reputation was associated with other social expectations (Jones et al., 2014). In other words, organizational reputation was tested as a mediator on the relationships between organizational characteristics and job seeker attraction, such as organizational pro-environment behavior (Behrend, Baker, & Thompson, 2009), corporate social performance (Jones et al., 2014), and media richness (Baum & Kabst, 2014).

According to Lievens & Slaughter (2016), it was an excellent idea to include a mediator to the direct relationship. Other scholars have also pointed out the mediating effect of organizational reputation, but have not tested its specific mechanisms (e.g. Banks, Kepes, Joshi, & Seers, 2015).

Our study found that, conceptually, organizational justice related to organizational reputation (Skarlicki et al., 2015), while reputation had a strong influence on job seeker attraction. In other words, organizational justice was related to

organizational reputation, which in turn influenced job seeker attraction. Thus, the present study anticipated that organizational reputation mediated the relationship between organizational justice and job seeker attraction (Edwards & Lambert, 2007; Mackinnon, Krull, & Lockwood, 2000; Shrout & Bolger, 2002). Hence, the present study postulated that:

H2: Organizational reputation is a moderator on the relationship between organizational justice and job seeker attraction.

### **2.3 Self-Esteem and Job Seeker Attraction**

Prior studies have pointed out that people strive for a positive self-concept (e.g. Baum & Kabst, 2014; Behrend et al., 2009; Cable & Turban, 2003; Jones et al., 2014). However, some studies found insignificant relationships. For example, Brooks, Highhouse, Russell, & Mohr (2003) ascertained that reputable organizations were not always related to positive associations; rather, being recognized as a reputable organization provided both positive and negative associations about that organization.

Falkenreck's (2010) study showed no significant relationship between organizational reputation and perceived fit. Waight & Chow (2009) supported Falkenreck's study as they found an insignificant relationship between organizational reputation and recruitment outcome. The weak or inconsistent results from these previous studies indicated that it was appropriate to introduce a moderator variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Thus, the present study introduced the moderator of self-esteem on the relationship between organizational reputation and job seeker attraction.

Understanding how individuals differ in terms of self-esteem responses to different environments is grounded on the behavioral plasticity hypothesis (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). The behavioral plasticity hypothesis proposes that an individual's self-esteem responds to external



factors based on whether the individual has low or high self-esteem.

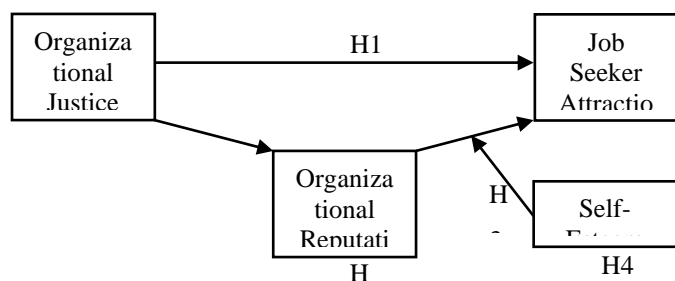
Brockner (1988) hypothesized that low self-esteem is more behaviorally plastic because it is more elastic to external cues than high self-esteem. This is because individuals with low self-esteem identify themselves with an organization that has a positive identity (Alexander Haslam, 2004; Ashforth & Mael, 1989) since the association with the organization helps them to derive a positive self-concept.

Since organizational reputation is translated as the positive identity of an organization, we posited that potential job seekers with low (versus high) self-esteem had stronger responses to reputable organizations. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H3: Self-esteem moderates the relationship between organizational reputation and job seeker attraction whereby low self-esteem has a stronger impact on the relationship.

H4: Self-esteem moderates the indirect effect of organizational justice on job seeker attraction via organizational reputation, whereby low self-esteem has a stronger impact on the relationship.

Figure 1 shows the present study's hypothesized theoretical model.



**Figure 1: Model of organizational justice inference and job seeker attraction (MOJA)**

### 3. METHODOLOGY

A total of 327 accounting and financial services interns participated in our study. Their demographics were as follows: 78% female; and 45% Malay, 44% Chinese, 10% Indian, and 1% others. 23% of the participants were aged below 22 years old while 77% were aged 22 years old and above. The participants' courses of study were accounting (56%) and financial services (44%). Their periods of internship in the organizations ranged from one to seven months ( $M [SD] = 5.36 [1.58]$ ). The participants interned at the big four Malaysian accounting companies—32% at Ernst & Young, 23% at KPMG, 22% at Deloitte, and 23% at PricewaterhouseCoopers.

#### 3.1 Design and Procedure

The accounting firms were selected for two specific reasons. First, the firms' nature of business was accounting and financial services. According to the study by the ManpowerGroup (2015), these disciplines were categorized as part of the COL, whereby Malaysian employers had difficulty in filling job vacancies because of potential job seekers' choosiness attitudes.

Our study was specifically designed to advance the understanding of undergraduates with choosiness attitudes, which was one way to assist employers in the recruitment process. Moreover, the big four firms' procedures for hiring interns were relatively strict with high preconditions and criteria that determined the quality and competency of potential job seekers applying to these firms. Consequently, our findings would be highly valued and appreciated by employers seeking to hire competent employees.

Once the participants were identified, they were presented with the questionnaires. The participants answered the questionnaires while they were at the organizations. We wanted respondents to assess the organizations in which they were currently undergoing internships to increase the likelihood that the experience and knowledge of the organizations obtained during their internships would have enabled them to form informed opinions about organizational justice

and reputation, as well as the organizations' attractiveness as employers.

The participants, who were assumed to be job seekers, were instructed to answer questions on organizational justice, attractiveness, and organizational reputation in the respective sections. The sections required participants to express their feelings regarding the organization where they were undergoing internships. Finally, they answered questions on self-esteem measurements and demographic items.

### 3.2 Measures

#### 3.2.1 Demographic Factors

Six questions related to demographics, i.e. on gender, ethnicity, age, experience, course of study, and interned company. This section was allocated as the last part of the questionnaire design simply to prevent negative feelings about the provision of personal information and its impact on participation answering behavior (Lietz, 2010).

#### 3.2.2 Job Seeker Attraction

Participants expressed their interest in applying for a position at the interned companies through five items adopted from Highhouse et al. (2003) that measured the attractiveness of potential job seekers (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.88$  in the study). The items were as follows:

- "For me, this company would be a good place to work."
- "I would be interested in applying for a job in this company."
- "This company is attractive to me as a place of employment."
- "I am interested in learning more about this company."
- "A job at this company is very appealing to me."

(The items were rated on a scale ranging from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 7 = "Strongly agree").

#### 3.2.3 Organizational Justice

Recent studies suggested that justice perceptions are aptly conceptualized with four dimensions—distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational (e.g. Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007). The model received more than 4,000 citations since it was released in 2001 (Colquitt, 2001). The constructs measuring organizational justice indirectly asked participants to evaluate the prevalence of 20 known antecedents of justice, which were also employed in the present study. The response options ranged from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 7 = "Strongly agree".

#### 3.2.4 Organizational Reputation

This variable was measured using five items adopted from Lievens & Highhouse (2003). The items were designed to assess the degree to which organizations were perceived as being well-regarded and reputable. The Cronbach's alpha of the study was 0.83. The items were as follows:

- "Employees are probably proud to say they work at this company."
- "This is a reputable company to work for."
- "This company probably has a reputation as being an excellent employer."
- "I would find this company a reputable place to work."
- "There are probably many who would like to work at this company."

(Response options ranged from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 7 = "Strongly agree").

#### 3.2.5 Self-Esteem

Self-esteem or global self-esteem was measured by using eight items adopted from Rosenberg (1965). The scale of the study ranged

from 1 = “Strongly disagree to 7 = “Strongly agree”. The Cronbach’s alpha of the study was 0.83.

#### 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the study variables. We determined that organizational justice and organizational

reputation had a strong relationship with job seeker attraction. In addition, the data in parentheses indicated that four key variables (organizational justice, organizational reputation, self-esteem, and job seeker attraction) had high internal consistency reliability.

**Table 1: Correlations, means, standard deviations, and internal consistency reliability of study variables**

No.	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Organizational Justice	5.9174	.68009	(0.866)							
2.	Procedural Justice	5.7881	.72255	.927**							
3.	Distributive Justice	5.9350	.72066	.888**	.795**						
4.	Interpersonal Justice	6.0558	.80125	.886**	.740**	.713**					
5.	Informational Justice	5.9737	.77486	.906**	.747**	.746**	.787**				
6.	Job Seeker Attraction	5.9462	.78062	.734**	.641**	.670**	.657**	.698**	(0.918)		
7.	Organizational Reputation	5.9590	.78430	.766**	.684**	.720**	.674**	.703**	.802**	(0.923)	
8.	Self-Esteem	5.6893	.721094	.494**	0.465**	.483**	.326**	.479**	.556**	.470**	(0.928)

**Note:** Means, SDs, and correlations below the diagonal are for job seeker \*p< .05 and \*\*p< .01. Figures in parentheses are for internal consistency reliability.

#### 4.1 Command Method Variance (CMV)

Recently, management literature has given considerable attention to the assessment of CMV (Brannick, Chan, Conway, Lance, & Spector, 2010). Since the present study used self-reported and single-source data, there were possible problems with CMV. CMV could have potentially produced spurious results and contaminated the present study measures in the same direction.

Therefore, in accordance with Tehseen, Thurasamy, & Sajilan (2017), the present study applied multiple strategies to avoid CMV, which

included a combination of a procedural remedy and a statistical remedy. For the procedural remedy, a psychological separation between the independent, mediator, moderator, and dependent variables was created to reduce the possibility of bias (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). For example, the independent variable was on a different page from the dependent variable, while the mediator and moderator were on another page. For the statistical remedy, the present study was verified using Harman’s singlefactor test.

##### 4.1.1 Harman’s Single Factor Test

For the first statistical remedy, which was Harman's single factor test, the present study considered the unrotated factor solution, which included 40 items of seven variables (procedural justice, distributive justice, interpersonal justice, informational justice, organizational reputation, self-esteem, and job seeker attraction) rated by the respondents.

The principal component analysis output showed that the factors accounted for 46% of the total variance and that only 46% of the first unrotated factor captured the variance in data. Based on these two assumptions, no single factor emerged and the first factor did not capture most of the variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Thus, CMV was not an issue in this study.

## 4.2 Hypothesis Testing

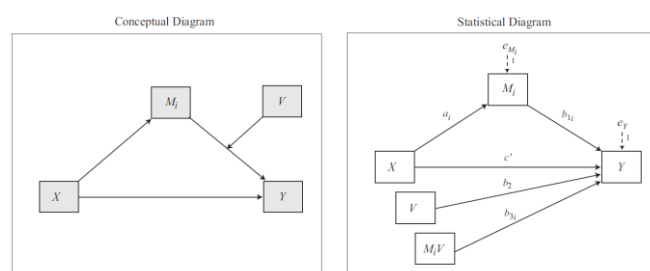
The hypothesis assessment was to evaluate the extent to which organizational justice related to job seeker attraction in the moderated mediation model. The PROCESS macro procedure was adhered to as the models were specifically developed for a combination of moderation and mediation (Hayes, 2013). In addition, the PROCESS macro estimated both conditional and unconditional direct and indirect effects and provided results for inference. We referred to the results to ascertain whether the conditions were fulfilled or not.

In the case of the moderator, the PROCESS macro produced a table containing the various values that reported the conditions of the moderator or moderators. The results included standard errors and  $p$ -values, as well as confidence intervals for direct effects and bootstrap confidence intervals for conditional indirect effects.

Many research models provide options for the inclusion of multiple moderators of the same path or of different paths and can combine moderation with parallel (but not serial) mediation (Hayes, 2013). The PROCESS macro consists of a number of models available for a researcher to

choose from, listed as Model 1 to Model 74. Thus, the decision to choose an appropriate model was rather critical considering that each model translated different paths and analysis.

The appropriate model for our study was determined to be Model 14. The conceptual model and statistical model (see Figure 2) demonstrated guidelines for the analysis.



**Figure 2: The present study's moderated mediation model (Model 14)**

The analysis to examine the moderated mediation hypotheses used the PROCESS Macro for SPSS v3.1 (Model 14) with 5,000 bootstrap samples, following Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes (2007). Generally, Model 14 could be interpreted as the strength of the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, which was conditional on the moderator value, as well as on the four study hypotheses developed from the concept of the present study.

The present study followed four steps to analyze the data, as recommended by Preacher et al. (2007), and to test our model. In the first step, we ensured that the independent variable was significant to the mediator variable. Next, we determined if the dependent variable was significant to the mediator, the moderator, and the interaction between the mediator and the moderator.

In the second step, we ensured the significance of the interactional variable. The third step involved the testing of the conditional indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable through the mediator at three different levels of the moderator variable. As this



test assumed a normal distribution (Edwards & Lambert, 2007; Shrout & Bolger, 2002), our study verified the specific conditional indirect effects with a bootstrapping procedure in the fourth step.

### 4.3 Moderated Mediation Model

The moderated mediation conditions of the hypotheses were assessed with regard to organizational reputation, which mediated the relationship between organizational justice and job seeker attraction, which was then moderated by self-esteem. The initial step of assessment was the independent variable (organizational justice) being regressed to the mediator variable (organizational reputation) ( $a_i = 0.963$ ,  $t = 36.103$ ). Referring to the indirect effect 95% boot CI Bias Corrected [LL = 0.911, UL = 1.016], it did not straddle zero, which indicated a significant relationship (Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008).

Furthermore, the dependent variable (job seeker attraction) was regressed on the mediator variable (organizational reputation) ( $b_{1i} = -0.239$ ,  $t = 9.417$ ) [LL = 0.684, UL = 1.045], the moderator (self-esteem) ( $b_{2i} = -0.297$ ,  $t = 6.731$ ) [LL = 0.211, UL = 0.385], the independent variable ( $c' = 0.845$ ,  $t = 9.417$ ) [LL = .6839, UL = 1.0451], and the interaction between the mediator variable and the moderator ( $b_{3i} = -0.105$ ,  $t = -2.196$ ) [LL = -0.200, UL = -0.011]. The interactional variable demonstrated a negative significant relationship ( $p < 0.05$ ) (see Table 2).

The results from Table 2 explained three hypotheses of the study. Hypothesis H1 related to the relationship between organizational justice and job seeker attraction, which was assessed by referring to the  $c'$  value. In our case, the  $c'$  value showed a positive significant relationship, as evidenced by the direct effect 95% boot CI Bias Corrected [LL = 0.911, UL = 1.016], which did not straddle zero and indicated a significant relationship (Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008). Thus, hypothesis H1 was supported.

The next hypothesis concerned the mediating impact of organizational reputation

(hypothesis H2). The present study's assessment was based on three conditions. The first was the relationship between organizational justice and job seeker attraction. The next condition was the relationship between organizational reputation and job seeker attraction and lastly, the relationship between organizational justice and organizational reputation.

We found that the present study's results supported the mediated model. First, organizational justice was found to predict job seeker attraction ( $c' = 0.845$ ,  $t = 9.417$ ) [LL = .6839, UL = 1.0451]. Second, organizational reputation was shown to predict perceptions of job seeker attraction ( $b_{1i} = -0.239$ ,  $t = 9.417$ ) [LL = 0.684, UL = 1.045]. Finally, organizational justice was discovered to predict perceptions of organizational reputation ( $a_i = 0.963$ ,  $t = 36.103$ ) [LL = 0.911, UL = 1.016]. Therefore, this study concluded that hypothesis H2 was supported.

The final hypothesis from Table 2 referred to self-esteem, which moderated the relationship between organizational reputation and job seeker attraction. The results showed that the interaction between organizational reputation and self-esteem negatively predicted job seeker attraction. The  $b_{3i}$  value showed a negative significant relationship, as demonstrated by the direct effect 95% boot CI Bias Corrected ( $b_{3i} = -0.105$ ,  $t = -2.196$ ) [LL = -0.200, UL = -0.011], which did not straddle zero and indicated a significant relationship (Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008). Hence, hypothesis H3 was not supported.

**Table 2: Moderated mediation regression results of organizational justice**

Equation	T Statistics	Std Error	LL	UL	
$a_i$	36.1031*	.0267	.9105	1.0155	H2 Supported
$b_i$	-2.8804**	.0830	-.4024	-.0758	
$c'$	9.4173**	.0918	.6839	1.0451	H1 Supported

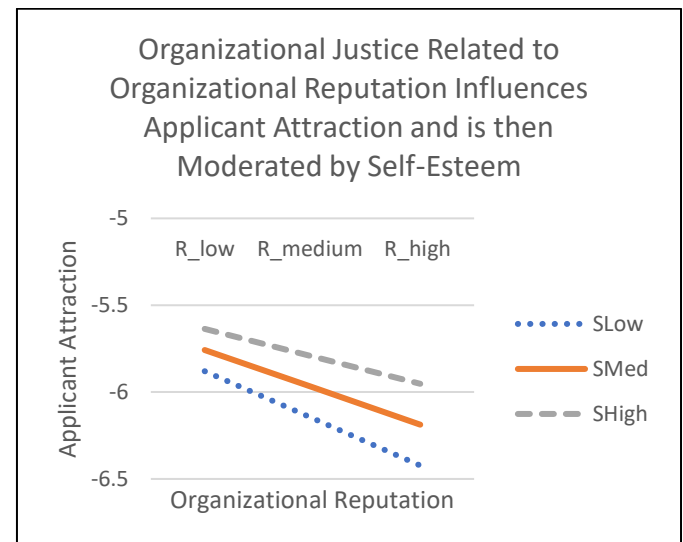
$b_{2i}$	6.7312**	.0443	.2108	.3849	
$b_{3i}$	-2.1962*	.0479	-	-	H3 Not Supported
			.1995	.0110	

Note: \*\* $p < 0.01$  and \* $p < 0.05$

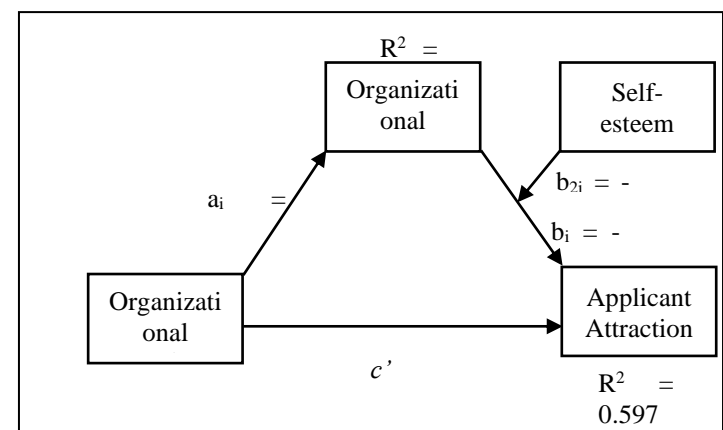
Lastly, to complete the moderated mediation model assessment, the interactional variable was created. The third step showed the conditional indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable through the mediator at three levels of the moderator variable—the low level (IE = - 0.157, se = 0.090, 95% CI [- 0.329, - 0.246]); the medium level (IE = - 0.230, se = 0.084, 95% CI [- 0.394, - 0.060]); and the high level (IE = - 0.303, se = 0.086, 95% CI [- 0.472, - 0.132]) (see Table 3). The last step displayed the index of moderated mediation (IE = - 0.101, se = 0.037, 95% CI [- 0.182, - 0.031]) (see Table 3). The final step indicated that hypothesis H4 was not supported. Summary of the results portrayed in the Figure 4.

**Table 3: Moderated mediation indirect effects of organizational justice**

	Self-Esteem	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LCI	Boot UCI	
Indirect Effect	Low	- .1572	.0901	-.3289	-.0246	
	Medium	- .2302	.0839	-.3943	-.0600	
	High	- .3033	.0863	-.4718	-.1324	
Mediated Moderation		- .1013	.0377	-.1816	-.0311	H4 Not Supported



**Figure 3: Moderated mediation interaction of organizational justice**



**Figure 4: Moderated mediation model of organizational justice**

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study found that the moderated mediation concept of justice, reputation, self-esteem, and job seeker attraction was not supported by the study hypotheses, while a significant relationship was shown in the analysis results (see Table 3). To recap, the present study's hypotheses on self-esteem posited that people with low self-esteem would display a stronger impact on the present study concept. The results showed a significant relationship but with a negative impact, meaning that people with low

self-esteem displayed a weaker impact on the present study concept instead of a strong impact. Hence, hypotheses H3 and H4 were not supported.

The discussion on self-esteem showed that self-esteem could be categorized into three different levels, i.e. low, medium, and high. However, the discussion only emphasized low and high self-esteem for the reasons stated in Section 2. The results showed that both levels had negative significant relationships with job seeker attraction (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). Apparently, people with high self-esteem had a higher impact on job seeker attraction, as shown by the straight-line position being higher for people with high self-esteem than for people with low self-esteem (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).

In addition, the figure demonstrated that organizations go far by establishing stronger reputations, that the changes regarding attractiveness to the organization were diminishing (negative impacts) and that the magnitude of the change was higher for people with low self-esteem compared to people with high self-esteem, based on the steepness of the slope. In other words, people with low self-esteem showed a higher level of sensitivity to organizational reputation than people with high self-esteem. In short, the present study revealed that potential job seekers with high self-esteem were more attracted to reputable organizations compared with low self-esteem, and the result shown even better with higher organizational reputation.

The intriguing finding from the moderated mediation model was the negative impact despite a significant relationship. The present study determined that the Malaysian labor market today is relatively challenging in terms of the competitiveness in obtaining employment. The difficulty in getting jobs explained the results of the present study. Psychologically, there is a negative impact when people feel unable to get jobs in an extremely competitive labor market and the situation is even worse for people with low

self-esteem. Nonetheless, the impact is lesser on people with high self-esteem, as explained by the higher level of self-confidence they possess to compete with other people.

This high confidence level (high self-esteem) contributes to their tendency to apply for jobs at reputable companies compared with job seekers with low self-esteem, who are less self-confident. Therefore, the present study ascertained that the competitiveness of the labor market plays a key role in influencing individuals with varying levels of self-esteem in responding to organizational attractiveness.

Organizational justice impacts job seeker attraction as it is an essential component of organizational reputation. Organizational reputation is the most influential characteristic in job seeker attraction, even more important than remuneration (Turban & Keon, 1993). This study revealed that people with high self-esteem were more attracted to reputable companies compared to people with low self-esteem. Thus, an organization has to practice and promote organizational justice because it empirically contributes to organizational reputation and is the supreme predictor of job seeker attraction, especially for job seekers with high self-esteem. The present study, therefore, suggests that this could be an important method of reducing employers' difficulty in filling job vacancies.

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