

The Organizational Justice and Organizational Reputation Attracting Digital Natives with High Self-Esteem [†]

Hasnun Anip Bustaman ^{1,*}, Azni Zarina Binti Taha ², Mohammad Nazri Bin Mohd Nor ²,
Muhammad Zia Aslam ²  and Mohammed Mustafa Mohammed Yousif ³

¹ Faculty of Business Management, MARA University of Technology, Bukit Ilmu, Machang 18500, Malaysia

² Faculty of Business and Accountancy, Department of Business Strategy and Policy, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur 50603, Malaysia

³ College of Business Studies, Sudan University of Science and Technology, Khartoum P.O. Box 407, Sudan

* Correspondence: hasnu380@uitm.edu.my

† Presented at the International Academic Symposium of Social Science 2022, Kota Bharu, Malaysia, 3 July 2022.

Abstract: The present study seeks an understanding of digital natives' preference to join an organization based on the factors of organizational justice, organizational reputation and self-esteem. The study conceptualizes organizational reputation as a mediator between organizational justice and digital native attraction, while self-esteem is a moderator. Three-hundred and twenty-seven digital natives undergoing internships at reputable organizations comprise the selected sample for the present study. The result shows that organizational reputation mediated the relationship between organizational justice and digital native attraction, and it is stronger for digital natives with high self-esteem. The findings imply that organizations have no other choices but to improve their organizational reputation through organizational justice, which will attract digital natives with high self-esteem, while the government and related parties cooperate with each other to develop digital native self-esteem to a high level, which in turn will attract digital natives to apply for the job.



Citation: Bustaman, H.A.; Taha, A.Z.B.; Nor, M.N.B.M.; Aslam, M.Z.; Yousif, M.M.M. The Organizational Justice and Organizational Reputation Attracting Digital Natives with High Self-Esteem. *Proceedings* **2022**, *82*, 112. <https://doi.org/10.3390/proceedings2022082112>

Academic Editor: Mohamad Rahimi Mohamad Rosman

Published: 27 October 2022

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Keywords: digital native attraction; third-party organizational justice; organizational reputation; self-esteem and recruitment

1. Introduction

Digitalization is part of our socialization, religiosity, modes of exercise, and work. The avoidance of digitalization in our lives is not an option anymore [1]. Moreover, the digitalization wave is set to expand even faster than ever imagined, ultimately becoming a new global trend [2]. Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla (a globally leading company in digitalization), has warned that the world should be ready to face frightening outcomes from the next generation of artificial intelligence [3], and the drive to bring digitalization to the next level. In today's world, the development of the younger generation is greatly affected by digitalization. Young people are known as some of the heaviest users of technology. Technology has a great influence, and they are constantly surrounded by it. In other words, they are the generation who rely most heavily on technology for learning, communicating and entertainment, and so scholars have referred to them as digital natives [4].

Recent studies have shown that digital natives as organizational outsiders pay attention to organizational justice; for instance, the way hotel staff are treated by management has a significant effect on the guests' feedback to the organization. For examples, Ref. [5] found that the way employers manage their employees in a hotel significantly predicts customers' responses to the company. The presence of social media makes organizations more vulnerable to outsiders' responses [6]. One study discovered that the organizational justice gossip that spreads beyond the company's control, through social media, can reach customers and affect outsiders' responses [7]. In a nutshell, organizational justice, as a universal concept, is a significant organizational characteristic to outsiders; thus, the concept

implies there will be influences on digital natives, who are surrounded by social media all the time, in choosing an organization.

As for Malaysian digital natives, most of them rate a company's reputation as the main criterion when making a decision [8]. Digital natives should be concerned about a company's reputation, because it signifies the "bonding signals" that transmit information about an organization's positive brand image in the absence complete information [9]. This means that digital natives with limited knowledge of an organization will make decisions to apply and accept job offers based on the reputation of a company, because it can spread a positive value to them. The positive value associated to a company will be shared through social media, emotionally attracting digital natives to apply for jobs with them. In another study, employer reputation was found to be more important than the digital native's employer knowledge in attracting them to apply for a job at an organization [10,11]. For example, an organization's good reputation will affect digital natives, because it makes them perceive the company as a strong potential employer. Ref. [12] mentioned that if peers rated an organization positively, then this perception will act to strongly attract an individual to an organization. Therefore, we assume that an organization's reputation does have a significant impact on digital native attraction.

Finally, the present study seeks to understand how self-esteem plays a role in the relationship between organizational reputation and digital natives' attraction. Long ago, [13] found that an organization with positive identity will attract digital natives who having low self-esteem. Ref. [12] acknowledged the finding, and translated it into a proposition. The proposition articulates the relationship between organizational reputation and digital native attraction, moderated by self-esteem. The scholars subdivided the organizational reputation characteristics into such categories as reward system, the size of the company, the management system (whether centralized or not), and the organization's location; thus, they did not study organizational reputation per se [14]. This relationship has never been tested explicitly, but manipulative factors have been used to generate propositions. Therefore, building from these arguments, the present study proposes to study how self-esteem intercepts with organizational reputation and digital native attraction using a moderated mediation model.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Digital Natives Attraction Related to Organizational Justice

A digital native's attraction refers to the digital native's overall evaluation of the organization's attractiveness [15]. In other words, it is a concept that helps us understand why digital natives are attracted to a company [16]. Typically, scholars use the definition of the perceptions of digital natives set out in [17]. Other scholars state that the digital native's attitude or general positive emotion towards an organization is the meaning of this attraction [18]. Later, researchers described digital natives' attraction as reflected in individuals' affective and attitudinal thoughts about companies as potential places for employment [19,20]. All in all, digital native attraction can be understood as digital natives' perception of a company as an attractive place to work, or as a reference to digital native's fascination in pursuing employment with an organization.

In studies on digital natives' attraction, researchers outlined the predictors as "job and organizational characteristics, recruiter characteristics, perceptions of the recruitment process, perceived fit, perceived alternatives and hiring expectancies" [15,21]. Over the past 50 years, digital natives' attraction has been studied extensively, and so in our study, reviewing 71 reputable papers is the first step in listing the predictors. The findings show that digital native attraction should be understood through the organizational working environment.

There are varieties of work environment that have been tested; thus, it is essential that a study be focused. This study focuses on the one of the more renowned aspects of a work environment, which is organizational justice, mainly because the subject has recently received more attention from scholars following the finding that it is related to

third-party individuals' perceptions [22]. Previously, studies on organizational justice have been aimed at understanding those who are involved with the justice situation, but rather being exclusively focused on this, they have extended beyond it to understand how the concept affects third-party individuals' perception. A recent meta-analytical review released has shown the relevance of and scholarly interest in the concept [23]. Therefore, the organizational justice of the work environment has become an interest of the present study. This interest has been channeled to investigate relevant theory to better understand the concept and to help develop new guidelines.

A theory related to discussions of third-party perception that is lacking complete information is signaling theory. The theory suggests that the organizational work environment is the initial information that is given to describe the situation of working with the organization. For this reason, the organizational work environment is understood to signal information about the working conditions in that organization [24], as understood via signaling theory. For example, the organizational working environment, such as its romance policy [25], and its approach to flexitime, flexplace [26] and corporate social performance [24], provide information about the organization's working conditions. Likewise, organizational justice represents an organizational working environment by signaling information about the organizational working conditions. The organizational working environment signifies certain organizational moral values and norms [23]. As [27] noted, digital natives would prefer to join a company they perceive as having positive values, moral and norms. The present study considers that organizational justice signals certain positive values, moral and norms that will affect the digital native's attraction to apply for a job. Hence, informed by signaling theory, the present study predicts that organizational justice is an aspect of the organizational working environment that is significant to attracting digital natives to apply job at that company. Thus, the hypothesis has been developed:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *Perceived organizational justice is related to digital native attraction.*

2.2. The Role of Organizational Reputation in Attracting Digital Native

Over the last two decades, organizational reputation has been frequently associated with digital native attractiveness [27]. In fact, the concept is the strongest predictor of digital natives attraction [28]. Moreover, the organizational reputation, defined by scholars as a universal, has appeared in many studies across time and countries [11,29–31]. However, researchers' interest in the organizational reputation as associated with digital native attraction is far from being exhausted, and in some places has massively increased due to the digitalization organizations. In some studies (on, e.g., Corporate Social Responsibility, pro-environment, flexible working hours and others) related to organizational reputation, the concept has received a very positive response from researchers [32,33].

Previously, organizational reputation has been directly related to digital natives attraction [34]. As time goes by, some organizational characteristics have been associated with organizational reputation [33] in understanding the attractiveness of a job. In other words, organizational reputation has become a mediator between organizational characteristics and digital native attraction. For example, organizational characteristics such as organizational pro-environmentalism [35], corporate social performance [33] and media richness [36] have been associated with organizational reputation in understanding digital native attraction towards a job. According to [14], a study would contribute a better understanding by providing a mediator in the direct relationship.

The present study found that organizational justice relates to organizational reputation [23], while reputation has a strong influence on digital native attraction. In other words, organizational justice associates to organizational reputation, then the relationship anticipates an affect on digital native attraction. Thus, the present study anticipates that the relationship between organizational justice and digital native attraction is mediated by organizational reputation [37–39]. Scholars have drawn out the mediator effect of organi-

zational reputation, but have not examined the particular mechanisms, e.g., [32,33,35,40]. Thus, the hypothesis is developed:

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *The relationship between organizational justice and digital native attraction is mediated by organizational reputation.*

2.3. Self-Esteem and Digital Native Attraction

Organizational reputation as related to digital natives underlies the individual self-concept. Particularly, social identity theory states that people generally endeavour for a positive self-concept, and that can be generated from organizational membership [41]. In other words, a person may have a huge desire to associate themselves with a positively perceived organization, because the association will help them to derive a positive self-concept, as underlying social identity theory.

Studies have discovered that positive self-concept is something that people strive for, e.g., [11,33,35,36]; however, some studies found an insignificant relationship. A study on determining the positive or negative effect of the reputation of an organization found that both are significant to the organization [42]. A good reputation is not always consistently associated with positive value; thus, people do not strive to assimilate with this positive self-concept. Ref. [43] demonstrated that the relationship between organizational reputation and perceived suitability is not significant. Ref. [44] supported Falkenreck's study, as they found an insignificant relationship between organizational reputation and digital native attraction. Ref. [45] suggested introducing a moderator variable in the unpredictably weak or inconsistent results between an antecedent and a dependent variable. Thus, the present study introduces self-esteem as a moderator between organizational reputation and digital native attraction.

Ref. [13] mentioned that individuals are different in defining their self-concept, since each individual's characteristics are different; thus, the inconsistent results of the recent study are not unexpected. Ref. [46] supported Turban and Keon's finding that individual differences are influenced by environmental cues associated with self-esteem. Self-esteem is defined as an individual's set of thoughts and feelings about his or her own worth and importance [47]. Self-esteem is the most commonly studied moderator of self-concept in digital native attraction, which explains the differences in how individuals associate themselves to organizations' characteristic [12,13,46].

The present study refers to the behavioral plasticity hypotheses in understanding how individuals differ in terms of self-esteem response to different environments [48]. The behavioral plasticity hypotheses propose individual's differences in terms of self-esteem respond to external factors based on low or high self-esteem. According to [49], because people with low self-esteem tend to be more sensitive to external factors, the scholar hypothesized that they are more behaviorally plastic (reactive) than those with high self-esteem. In other words, the level of susceptibility to environmental and social cues is higher in people with low self-esteem compared to those with high self-esteem [49,50]. A study has been executed on organizational attractiveness [13] to empirically investigate the hypotheses that digital natives with low self-esteem are more inclined to choose organizations with a positive image, such as large companies, than high-self-esteem digital natives. The reason is they (low-self-esteem individuals) would like to associate themselves with a reputable company [51,52], as the association will help them to derive a positive self-concept from the positive identity of the organization. We posit that digital natives with low (versus high) self-esteem have a stronger attraction to reputable organizations.

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *The relationship between organizational reputation and digital native attraction is moderated by self-esteem.*

Hypothesis 4 (H4). *The indirect effect of organizational justice on digital native attraction via organizational reputation is moderated by self-esteem.*

The present study illustrated the four (4) study hypotheses in the hypothesized theoretical model (see Figure 1)

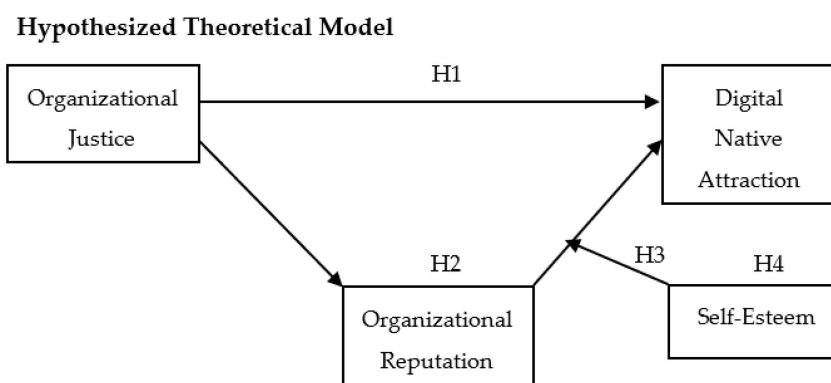


Figure 1. Model of Organizational Justice Inference and Digital Native Attraction (MOJA).

3. Methodology

The present study uses a quantitative method to investigate the role of organizational justice, organizational reputation and self-esteem in digital native attraction. The sample in the study consists of 327 accounting and financial services interns. In terms of the demographical composition, the sample were 22% male and 55% non-Malays, including Chinese, Indian and other. The present study purposely concentrated on two significant courses, which were accounting with 56% and financial services with 44%, according to the Critical Occupational List (COL), which lists difficult-to-fill vacancies. For the record, our participants are from the big four accounting firms in Malaysia, which consist of Ernst & Young, KPMG, Deloitte and Pricewaterhouse Coopers, with percentages of 32%, 23%, 22% and 23%, respectively.

3.1. Design and Procedure

The present study’s design and the procedure for data collection strictly follow the purposive sampling method. This method requires a study be confined to the problem it faces and the purpose of the study in selecting participants. The problem that drives the present study is the difficulty experienced in organizations in hiring the right candidate, for the reason that digital natives exhibit a choosiness attitude. A study [53] discovered numerous business sectors facing difficulties in filling job vacancies in organizations. The sector listed these under the Critical Occupational List (COL). The accounting and financial sector has been categorized as the most critical sector by the Manpower Group in facing the problem. Thus, the present study confines the selection of participants to digital natives undertaking internships at the big four accounting firms in Malaysia, undoubtedly involving the accounting and financial services. The big four firms were chosen because the procedures for hiring interns at the firms are relatively strict; they only hire those who possess competency and are of a high academic quality. Consequently, the present study’s findings are more fascinating, as they are related to competent digital natives.

The participants in the present study answered the questionnaire after three months spent in an organization as an intern. They expressed their answers by referring to the organization with which they are doing their internship program. The present study states that the period employed was sufficient to provide participants with the information to answer the questionnaire. Compared to information from the vignette version, or a policy capturing study, which involves using identical information pertaining to the organization, the participants’ experience provides the best information with which to answer the present questionnaire. Next, the participants answer the question as to whether they are in an organization or in university. For those who answer the questionnaire while they are at the organization, they receive the questionnaire through their organization. Upon approval from the organization, the questionnaire is handed to the present study

participant. Meanwhile, interns who are attending university courses, such as data analysis, problem statement development and others, will receive the present study questionnaire. This means that they answer the questionnaire while at university; however, they refer to their internship organization in providing the answers. A few questions related to their demographic are provided to get details on the participant involved.

3.2. Measures

Digital natives' attraction was measured using five items developed by [18]. Organizational justice was measured using twenty items developed by [47]. As regards organizational reputation, the participant expresses their perception based on the experiences they have had during the internship program. The information provides them with some understanding with which to rate the organization as being reputable or not. The expressions were derived after they reviewed five items with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.83, as developed by [54]. Finally, self-esteem was measured using eight items adapted from [47], with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.83. The present study adopts a similar scale for all variables, which is 1 = strongly disagree, and 7 = strongly agree.

4. Data Analysis and Result

The present study adopted a model called the moderated mediation model, wherein the mediator (organizational reputation) and the moderator (self-esteem) are tested simultaneously with an independent variable (organizational justice) and a dependent variable (digital native attraction). To perform the test, four procedures have to be followed. The first step is to assess the relationship of organizational justice with organizational reputation. The present study found no straddle (0) when referring to the CI bias correlation (LL = 0.911, UL = 1.016); thus, the result is significant [55,56]. The second step is the assessment of the relationship between organizational reputation and digital native attraction, and the results were also significant for no straddle (0) (LL = 0.684, UL = 1.045). The second last step is to assess the moderator of the present study, as the direct relationship of organizational justice was shown to be significant by referring to ($b_{2i} = -0.297, t = 6.731$) (LL = 0.211, UL = 0.385). Previous assessments have stated that the eligibility of the present study depends on the last step. The final step is to test the interaction of self-esteem and organizational reputation to determine the relationship between organizational justice and digital native interaction. The results demonstrate a significant relationship ($b_{3i} = -0.105, t = -2.196$) (LL = -0.200, UL = -0.011); however, the impact is negative ($p < 0.05$) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Moderated Mediation Regression Result of Organizational Justice.

| Equation | T Statistics | Std Error | LL | UL | |
|----------|--------------|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| ai | 36.1031 ** | 0.0267 | 0.9105 | 1.0155 | H2 Supported |
| bi | -2.8804 ** | 0.0830 | -0.4024 | -0.0758 | |
| c' | 9.4173 ** | 0.0918 | 0.6839 | 1.0451 | H1 Supported |
| b2i | 6.7312 ** | 0.0443 | 0.2108 | 0.3849 | |
| b3i | -2.1962 * | 0.0479 | -0.1995 | -0.0110 | H3 Supported |

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

In term of hypotheses, the present study developed its own based on the four procedures of the moderated mediation model. Thus, the hypotheses can be seen in Table 1, and Table 2 contains the moderated mediation regression result of digital native attraction. The first hypothesis of the present study in terms of the relation between organizational justice and digital native attraction is referred to via the c' value. The value of c' demonstrates the positive significant relationship with no straddle (0) (LL = 0.911, UL = 1.016) [55,56]; thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

Table 2. Moderated Mediation Indirect Effect of Organizational Justice.

| | Self-Esteem | Effect | BootSE | BootLLCI | BootULCI | |
|---------------------|-------------|---------|--------|----------|----------|------------------|
| Indirect Effect | Low | −0.1572 | 0.0901 | −0.3289 | −0.0246 | |
| | Medium | −0.2302 | 0.0839 | −0.3943 | −0.0600 | |
| | High | −0.3033 | 0.0863 | −0.4718 | −0.1324 | |
| Mediated Moderation | | −0.1013 | 0.0377 | −0.1816 | −0.0311 | H4 not Supported |

The next hypothesis assesses the relation of organizational justice to digital native attraction, mediated by organizational reputation. To assess the relationship, the present study strictly adheres to the suggestions of [45]. First, the independent variable is regressed to the outcome, followed by the mediator being regressed to the outcome variable, and the last step is the independent variable being regressed to the mediator. In case of all three steps are significant, the second hypothesis is supported. The present assessment of the first step ($c' = 0.845, t = 9.417$) (LL = 0.6839, UL = 1.0451) shows a significant relationship. The second step yields the same result ($b_{11} = -0.239, t = 9.417$) (LL = 0.684, UL = 1.045). The final step also showed a significant relationship ($a_1 = 0.963, t = 36.103$) (LL = 0.911, UL = 1.016), meaning Hypothesis 2 is supported.

The third hypothesis describes self-esteem as a moderator of organizational reputation regressed to digital native attraction. The present study refers to ($b_{31} = -0.105, t = -2.196$) (LL = −0.200, UL = −0.011), as suggested by [45]. The results show that it does not straddle 0 in between the lower level and the upper level (LL = −0.200, UL = −0.011), and the t-value also supports this, which means self-esteem significantly impacts the relationship [55,56]; thus, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

The final step is crucial for the present study, following the assessment of the moderated mediation model, which is the main purpose of the study. The continuous variable is transformed to be mean-centered, following the recommendations of [57], and the present study assumes normal distribution. Table 2 shows a conditional indirect effect at three different levels, concluding with a moderated mediation model. The level describes the conditions in detail, and the moderated mediation assessment is used to show the significance of the organizational reputation and self-esteem in the present study. The assessment of the moderated mediation model found significance, with reference to $IE = -0.101, se = 0.037, 95\% CI (-0.182, -0.031)$, with no straddle (0) in between the lower lever and the upper level; however, the result is negative. Thus, Hypothesis 4 is not supported. The details of the condition’s indirect effects need to be reviewed. The low $IE = -0.157, se = 0.090, 95\% CI (-0.329, -0.246)$, medium $IE = -0.230, se = 0.084, 95\% CI (-0.394, -0.060)$ and high $IE = -0.303, se = 0.086, 95\% CI (-0.472, -0.132)$ showed that all conditions’ indirect effects are significant. An interesting conclusion is generated by these results, as detailed in the next paragraph.

Hypothesis 4 of the present study is not supported, despite the significant moderated mediation model achieved. This means that organizational justice, organizational reputation and self-esteem are still relevant to digital native attraction; however, the presence of low self-esteem does not strengthen the relationship, as hypothesized. Likewise, the presence of low self-esteem weakens the relationship, whereas the higher the reputation an organization achieves, the weaker the attraction for those who have low self-esteem. This finding necessitates the further investigation of the impact of self-esteem on the proposed model. The two levels of self-esteem are intensely scrutinized, and the discussion is given in the next paragraph.

The two levels, namely, low and high self-esteem, have been reviewed to develop a clearer picture. The results show both levels make a significant negative contribution to digital native attraction (see Table 2). Nevertheless, the straight-line position for people with high self-esteem is higher than that of people with low self-esteem (see Figure 2); similarly, people with high self-esteem show greater digital native attraction. In addition, Figure 2 has demonstrated that organizations go far in establishing a stronger reputation,

while the changes made to improve attractiveness to the organization are diminished, and the magnitude of the change is even higher for people with low self-esteem compared to people with high self-esteem, as can be seen from the steepness of the slope. Therefore, the present study has revealed that digital natives with high self-esteem are more attracted to reputable organizations than those with low self-esteem, and this correlation is even stronger for organizations with better reputations.

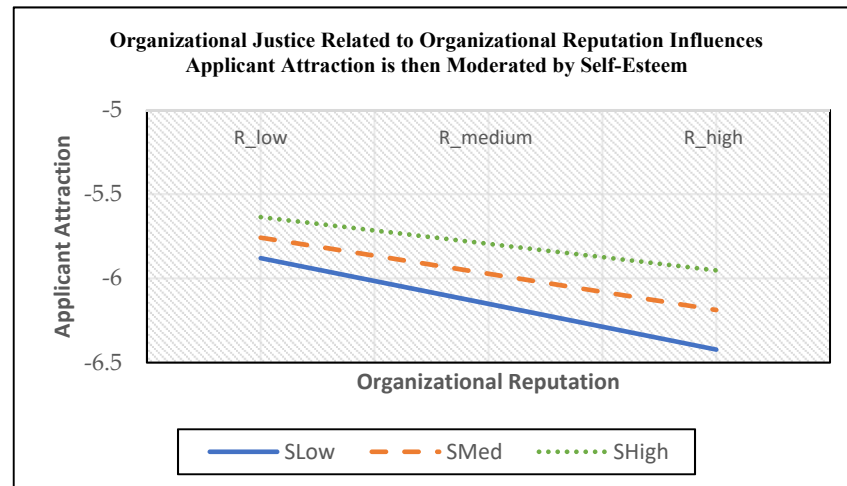


Figure 2. Moderated Mediation Interaction of Organizational Justice.

The intriguing part is the negative impact, despite the significant relationship, of the moderated mediation model. The present study finds that today, the Malaysian labor market is relatively challenging in terms of the competitiveness for jobs. The difficulty of getting a job explains the result of this study. Psychologically, there will be a negative impact when people feel it is impossible to get a job in the extremely competitive labor market, and this experience is even worse for people with low self-esteem. The impact is lesser for people with high self-esteem, as explained by the higher level of self-confidence they have in competing with other people. A high confidence level (high self-esteem) contributes to their likelihood to apply a job at a reputable company, which is stronger compared to those with low self-esteem, who are less self-confident. Therefore, the present study finds that the competitiveness of the labor market plays a substantial role in influencing individuals with different levels of self-esteem in responding to organizational attractiveness.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, H.A.B., A.Z.B.T., M.N.B.M.N., M.Z.A. and M.M.M.Y.; methodology, A.Z.B.T. and M.M.M.Y.; validation, M.Z.A. and M.M.M.Y.; formal analysis, H.A.B., A.Z.B.T. and M.M.M.Y.; investigation, H.A.B., A.Z.B.T. and M.N.B.M.N.; resources, H.A.B., A.Z.B.T. and M.N.B.M.N.; data curation, M.Z.A. and M.M.M.Y.; writing—original draft preparation, H.A.B.; writing—review and editing, H.A.B.; supervision, A.Z.B.T. and M.N.B.M.N.; project administration, H.A.B., A.Z.B.T., M.N.B.M.N., M.Z.A. and M.M.M.Y. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Acknowledgments: Paper presented during a panel organized by UiTM in the context of the Social Science conference, organized and hosted by the Faculty Information Technology, during the IASSc 2022.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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