

**UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITIES: EXAMINING THE EFFECT OF ORGANIZATIONAL ATTRACTIVENESS ON APPLICATION INTENTIONS IN SRI LANKA'S FINAL YEAR MANAGEMENT UNDERGRADUATES**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Organizational values and mission statements are crucial communication tools that provide insight into the purpose and goals of a business (Cable & Edwards, 2000, Pandey et al., 2017). They act as signals to potential candidates, conveying the values and beliefs that create the culture of the firm. However, there has been little research on the impact of alignment between university undergraduate students' ideals and the values advocated by organizations on their application intentions. This study gap highlights the need to investigate how the alignment of people's values and corporate values influences their decision to apply to specific organizations.

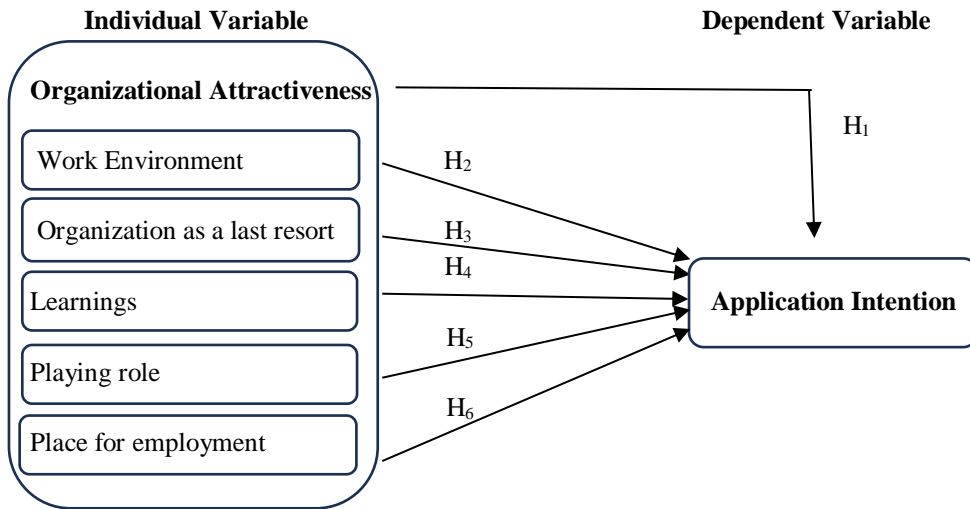
Internships and experiential learning opportunities are important in delivering real-world experiences to university undergraduate students and improving their employability (Pool & Sewell, 2007, Pitan & Muller, 2019). These opportunities for experiential learning expose students to the practical aspects of employment and allow them to apply their academic knowledge in real-world circumstances. However, little is known about how the availability and quality of internships and experiential learning programs influence undergraduates' perceptions of organizational attractiveness and, as a result, their application intentions. As a result, it is critical to evaluate the impact of internships and experiential learning opportunities on the decision-making processes of undergraduates. Additionally, organization recruitment events such as career fairs, on-campus interviews, and employer presentations provide crucial venues for companies to communicate with potential applicants (Stuss & Herdan, 2018). These programs allow undergraduates to interact with businesses, learn about job options, and acquire insight into organizational cultures. Despite their importance, little research has been conducted to investigate how different forms of university recruitment efforts influence undergraduates' perceptions of organizational attractiveness and subsequent application intentions. To better understand the impact of various university recruitment operations on student decision-making processes, a thorough analysis of their impact is necessary. Employer branding and reputation, on the other hand, have been highlighted as critical elements in shaping undergraduates' opinions of firms (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). These aspects include an organization's image, identity, and reputation as viewed by potential applicants. While the significance of workplace branding and reputation is recognized, further research is needed to uncover the specific features and dimensions of employer branding and reputation that have a substantial impact on students' application intentions. Investigating these features will yield useful insights into the underlying mechanisms that shape undergraduate perceptions and decision-making processes. Furthermore, company culture and work environment are important variables in attracting students (Breaugh, 2008, Kim et al., 2012). An organization's culture reflects its beliefs, conventions, and practices, whereas the work environment includes the physical, social, and

psychological aspects of the workplace. Although the impact of organizational culture and work environment on attraction has been recognized, little research has been conducted to investigate the specific cultural and work environment characteristics that influence undergraduates' perceptions of organizational attractiveness and subsequent application intentions. As a result, a more thorough examination is required to comprehend the underlying elements that impact undergraduates' perspectives in this regard. The study gaps revealed suggest specific areas for exploration in terms of organizational attractiveness and university undergraduate application intents. Filling these gaps will help us better understand the elements that influence undergraduates' decisions to apply to various organizations. Hence, the current study aims to determine the impact of organizational attractiveness on application intention in Sri Lankan final-year undergraduates. Furthermore, this research will provide valuable insights to inform recruitment strategies in the organizational context, benefiting both organizations and students seeking meaningful employment opportunities.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research article aims to investigate the impact of Organizational Attractiveness on the application intention of final-year management undergraduates in Sri Lankan universities. The study employs a cross-sectional design, utilizing an applied research approach with a quantitative orientation. The unit of analysis in this research is the undergraduate students, recognizing them as the primary subjects of interest. The dependent variable under examination is application intention, which represents the likelihood of final-year management undergraduates applying for positions within organizations. The independent variable of focus is Organizational Attractiveness, representing the perceived desirability and appeal of organizations to students. The target population for this research comprised 21,664 (University Grants Commission, 2020) final-year management undergraduates enrolled in Sri Lankan universities. However, for this study, a sample of 975 final-year management undergraduates was selected from two specific universities. According to the Morgan table, the sample size of this research is 274 university students (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) using stratified random sampling. This sampling method argues that the number of 4th-year undergraduates in universities varies, so the sample should be given a deeper chance to represent the population (Sekaran & Roger, 2016). The individual student served as the unit of analysis. To collect primary data, a structured questionnaire was developed specifically for assessing Organizational Attractiveness on Application Intention. The validity and reliability of the instrument were evaluated through Cronbach's Alpha value. To examine the effects between the variables, inferential statistical tests were performed. Specifically, multiple regression analysis was employed to determine the impact and direction of the pairs of variables. For data analysis, the statistical package SPSS was utilized, enabling the assessment of reliability and the testing of relevant hypotheses. The empirical data gathered from the questionnaire were carefully analyzed, and the research article presents the results, which encompass response rates, validity and reliability measures, differences in means, and correlations.

**Figure 1**  
Conceptual Framework



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and deployed demographic analysis, reliability test, descriptive analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The researcher first time distributed the questionnaires to 60 students from Rajarata University & and 40 students from Wayamba University. However, it can be only 43 questionnaires from Rajarata University and 24 questionnaires from Wayamba University. Secondly, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to 59 students from Rajarata University and 115 students from Wayamba University. According to the sample percentage rate of responses, Rajarata University is 86% (No of 102 undergraduates) & and Wayamba University is 74% (No of 115 undergraduates).

When assessing reliability, researchers commonly employ Cronbach's Alpha as a statistical measure to evaluate the internal consistency of a scale or questionnaire. This measure effectively quantifies the extent of interrelatedness among the items or variables within the scale. The values of Cronbach's Alpha range from 0 to 1, with higher values denoting stronger internal consistency. In this study, the reported Cronbach's Alpha value for the variables surpassed 0.80, exceeding the generally accepted threshold of 0.70 or 0.80. This exceptional value indicates that all the variables in question demonstrated an exceptionally high level of internal consistency, signifying a remarkable degree of reliability. As a result, researchers can confidently place substantial trust in the consistency and dependability of the measurements derived from these variables. Results suggest that internal consistency between the items is satisfactory and will bring the expected results. The test results are given in Table 1.

To evaluate the external reliability of the instrument, the Test-retest method was employed. The questionnaire was administered twice to a sample of 12 final-year management undergraduates within two weeks. This approach was utilized to determine whether the instrument demonstrates consistency over time. Table 1 presents the coefficients derived from the Test-retest analysis. These coefficients serve as indicators of the instrument's external reliability. It is generally accepted that an instrument with a test-retest coefficient of 0.7 or higher demonstrates sufficient reliability in measuring application intention.

**Table 1**  
*Results of Reliability Analysis*

Variable	Test-retest	Cronbach's Alpha
Work Environment	0.891	0.821
Organizations as a last resort	0.934	0.838
Learnings	0.832	0.791
Playing Role	0.903	0.813
Place for employment	0.835	0.813

Based on the results shown in Table 1, the coefficients obtained from the Test-retest analysis indicate that the instrument exhibits an acceptable level of external reliability. This implies that the instrument consistently measures application intention across the two-time points, suggesting that it reliably captures the intended construct.

**Table 2**  
*Model Summary for Organizational Attractiveness & Application Intention*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error	F	Sig.
1	0.794 <sup>a</sup>	0.631	0.629	1.028	367.526	0.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Attractiveness

Based on the results obtained in Table 2, it was observed that the R<sup>2</sup> value was 63.1%, indicating that a considerable portion of the application intention can be explained by the organizational attractiveness of this model. It is noteworthy that when examining the unstandardized coefficients, organizational attractiveness was found to have a significant influence on application intention.

**Table 3**  
*Result of Multiple Regression Analysis for Organizational Attractiveness & Application Intention*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	$\beta$	Std. Error	$\beta$		
(Constant)	3.124	0.478		6.542	0.000
Org. Attractiveness	2.208	0.115	0.794	19.171	0.000
Work Environment	0.107	0.152	0.040	0.706	0.481
Org. as a last resort	1.127	0.136	0.429	8.293	0.000
Learnings	0.189	0.130	0.077	1.454	0.147
Playing Role	0.272	0.144	0.098	1.890	0.060
Place for employment	0.866	0.105	0.369	8.254	0.000

Additionally, it was found that organizational attractiveness had a significant positive impact on application intention, as evidenced by the coefficient value of  $B = 2.208$  ( $p = 0.000$ ). These findings underscore the substantial role played by organizational attractiveness in driving individuals' inclination toward the application.

When considering the unstandardized coefficients for work environment significant negative influence by application intention. Furthermore, it explained it had a significant positive and negative impact on application intention. Also unstandardized coefficients for organization as a last resort & and place for employment indicated there was a significant positive impact on application intention. Considering other Learnings, playing a role also shows a significant negative impact on application intention. Finally, it revealed that work environment, organization as a last resort, learnings, playing role, and place for employment had strong positive and negative impacts on application intention.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the significant impact of Organizational Attractiveness on the application intention of final-year management undergraduates in a carefully selected group of universities. Despite their significance, limited research has examined how different types of university activities (work environment, organization as a last resort, learnings, playing role, place for employment) shape undergraduates' perceptions of organizational attractiveness and their subsequent application intentions. In this study, five hypotheses were tested on a stratified simple random sample of 274 final-year undergraduates of two university students to fulfill the research objectives. There was a significant positive impact on the application intention. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate the impact of internships and experiential learning opportunities on undergraduates' decision-making processes. Organizational values and mission statements are important communication tools that provide insights into an organization's purpose and goals (Cable & Edwards, 2004). These factors encompass the image, identity, and reputation of an organization as perceived by potential applicants. They serve as signals to potential applicants, conveying the principles and beliefs that shape the organization's culture. These activities provide undergraduates with opportunities to interact with employers, learn about job prospects, and gain insights into organizational cultures. Furthermore, organization recruitment activities, including career fairs, on-campus interviews, and employer presentations, serve as important platforms for organizations to engage with potential applicants (Maurer, Solamon, & Farley, 2015). While the importance of employer branding and reputation is acknowledged, there is a need for further exploration to identify the specific elements and dimensions of employer branding and reputation that significantly impact undergraduates' application intentions.

**Keywords:** Learnings, organizations as a last resort, place for employment, playing role, work environment.

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