How does the mediating role of the use of social media platforms foster the relationship between employer attractiveness and generation Z intentions to apply for a job?

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Abstract

The way Jobseekers apply for jobs has drastically changed due to the rise of digital technology. With the rise of social media Jobseekers nowadays typically utilize social networking sites or other online platforms to look for work and it has made it a vital part of the labor market, especially among the young generation. The aim of this research was to determine the mediating effect of Social Media Platforms on the relationship between Employer Attractiveness and Generation Z intentions to apply for a job. The researchers use a Judgmental sampling method among fresh graduates and final-year students of number of Private universities in Egypt. Structure Equation Modeling were then used to analyze the data. The finding of this research revealed that Social Media Platforms has a mediating effect on the relationship between Employer Attractiveness and Gen Z intentions to apply for a job. Moreover, when it comes to choosing an employer, the younger generations prioritize economic value, social value, Reputation and development-interest factors over the application-diversity, working environment aspects, and management and work life balance. Furthermore, this research revealed that, the significance of certain aspects of a job change depending on the participants' educational level and the study's program. The contribution of this research provides valuable insight into how employers are perceived by young job seekers. They can also be used to develop effective recruitment strategies and improve the communication between HR professionals and candidates.

Keywords Employer attractiveness, Employer branding, Social media platforms, Generation Z, Job pursuit intention

Introduction

Understanding how Generation Z enters the workforce is crucial as they start to graduate and enter the job market. Generation Z is defined by (Oxford English [1] as individuals born between the 1990s and 2010s. They are the generation of people who have changed their online behavior due to how they use technology. The main difference between Millennials and Generation Z, according to [2] is how they use technology when they were young. In addition to being constantly connected to their digital environments, [3] stated that Generation Z also spend a lot of time-consuming videos and interacting with their social networks. Moreover, [4] declared that they try to show off their reliable identities on social media. According to a study conducted by Chen et al. [5], Generation Z's social media usage has become a tool for shaping their personal brand and influencing job market performance. The genuineness of a Generation Z individual's online image can affect their job-seeking behavior. This is why social media has become a vital component of recruitment process [6].

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Employer may use branding techniques to build a distinctive image that sets it apart from its rivals [7]. it is clear that Employer reputation and image affect the organization's ability to attract candidates [8]. The concept of employer branding was first explored by Barrow and Ambler [9]. It is a process that aims to improve the image of an organization to attract and retain the best talent. In 2014, Sharma and Chhabra noted that it is a trend that is becoming more prevalent due to the increasing number of companies struggling to find qualified candidates. When job seekers are considering various organizations for their next job, they usually rely on number of attractiveness factors such as corporate reputation, diversity, work life balance and work environment to get a deeper understanding of the working conditions of the company.

Social media enables marketers to create distinctive interactions between their brands, customers, and employees [10]. Due to the rise of social media, customers, employees, and others have become more empowered and engaged in their relationships with businesses [11]. Organizations must exercise caution while managing and auditing their social media branding operations as viewers have grown more active [10]. While businesses are aware of the potential and advantages of social media marketing, many are still unclear about how to use it and gauge its efficacy, which makes it difficult to manage and implement social media campaigns [12].

With focus on the fact that Generation Z have grown up with social media and are now digital natives. They will likely start working for companies in the future, though the exact traits and working habits of this group are still unclear. According to [13], the expectations of Gen Z workers are different from those of previous generations. Without a comprehensive understanding of this group, businesses will not be able to find the ideal candidates. This will also affect their retention and recruitment efforts. To accommodate the needs of Generation Z workers, businesses should conceptualize and construct workplaces that are conducive to their talents. Moreover, Cennamo and Gardner [14], [15], Twenge [16] asserted that the difference between generations in how they prioritize an employer's attractiveness varies. According to a study conducted by [17], Terjesen et al. [18], there is still a gap in the knowledge about the preferences of various generations when it comes to the attributes of an employer's attractiveness. Also, there is a lack of reliable research on the preferences of professionals coming into organizations from Gen Z. This research aims to identify the dimensions of employer attractiveness among Generation Z and investigate whether there is a statistically significant difference in the perceived importance level of each attractiveness dimension based on gender, education, and study program. Taking into considerations the mediating role of the social media platforms in shaping Gen Z preferences to apply for a job. Also, the research was conducted in Egypt among students of private universities with various disciplines, explores the expectations of Gen Z workers and the characteristics of employers that they consider when it comes to choosing a job (Figs. 1, 2).

The structure of this research is as follows to accomplish the purpose of this research. To build the groundwork for the empirical research on employer
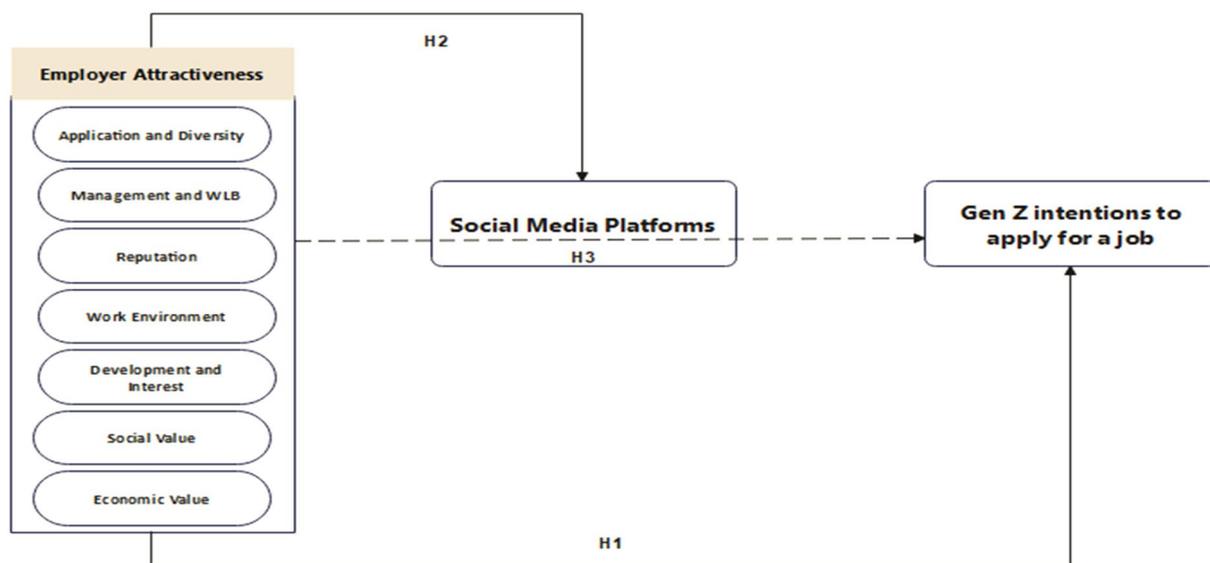

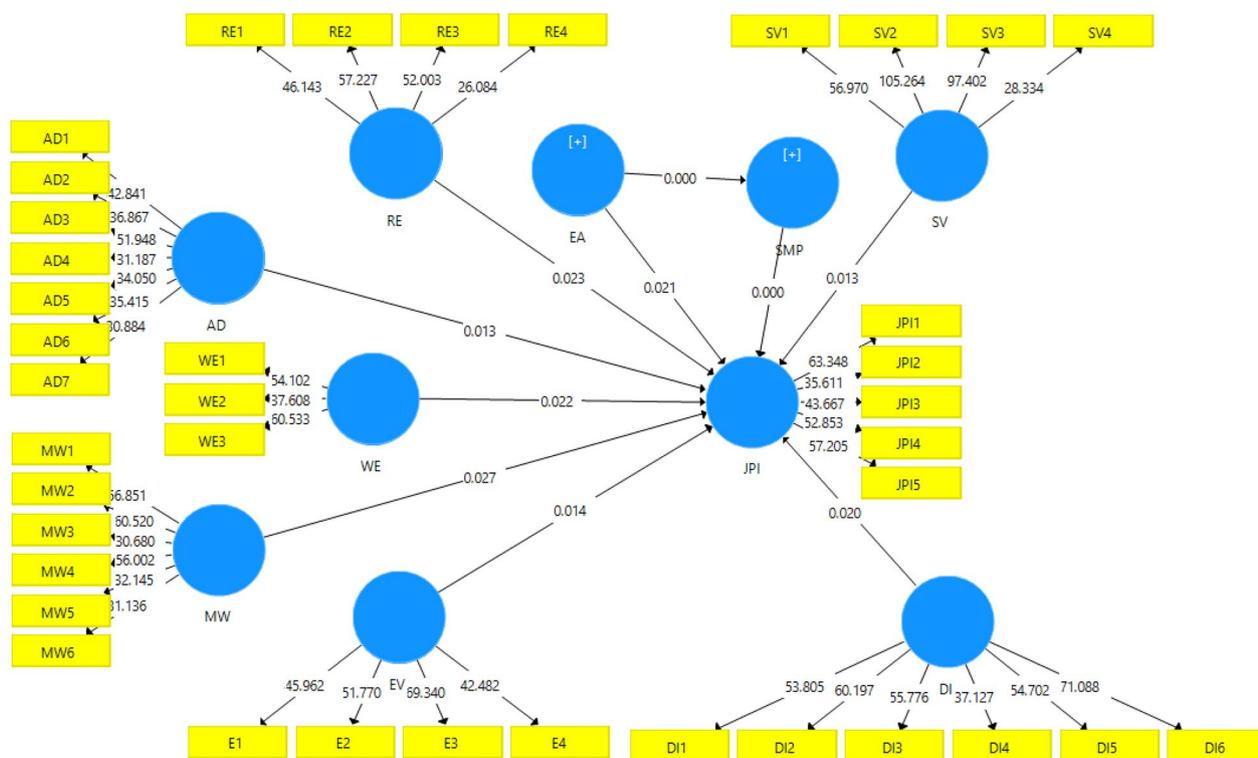
Fig. 1 Research conceptual model

Fig. 2 PLS-SEM algorithm mediation

attractiveness, thorough literature review is carried out, and the various traits of the generation z are reviewed. The social media platforms and Gen Z preferences to apply for a job. The methodological processes are then displayed. The empirical portion then begins with a description of the research sample, and dimensions of employer attractiveness are found using Structure Equation Modeling analysis. This research extends the existing literature and contributes to the theory by testing the research model in a different context, applying it to current students in the private universities in Egypt.

Literature review and research hypotheses
Employer branding and employer attractiveness
Due to the various demographic factors and trends that affect the labor market, companies are now revising their positions. It is clear that not every candidate is interested in the same job position at the same company. Instead, there are multiple positions that are available for the same candidate in the market. This has caused the HR department to rethink its role and how it sells the jobs. Franca and Pahor [19] emphasized that it's beneficial to seek help from areas that used to fall under the category of pure marketing disciplines. After examining the image and reputations of companies, the concept of employer brand emerged. According to [20] they declared that

companies are looking for new ways to retain and attract skilled and experienced workers due to the global shortage of qualified and experienced individuals. According to Urbancov et al. [21] Employer branding programs can help organizations attract and retain skilled workers and improve public awareness. Moreover, employer branding refers to a corporation's reputation and value proposition. It also includes a set of principles and tools that can help companies improve their image. Furthermore, the management of a company's employer brand involves planning, developing, and communicating its value proposition. This stage involves coming up with a set of goals and values that are tied to the organization's culture and goals. The second stage involves developing a strategy that will help attract and retain workers. Finally, the third stage involves aligning the internal and external brands to ensure that the organization's image is easily recognized. employer attractiveness is defined as the perceived benefits a potential employee anticipates receiving by working for an organization [22]. Hence, it affects recruiting and employee retention [23]. An attitude or expressed overall good affect toward an organization, toward considering the corporation as a desirable entity with whom to establish some interaction, is another definition of employer attraction [24], p. 221). Organizations should advertise their employer brand to recruit talent. Attractiveness

and accuracy are the two key metrics for determining an employer brand's success. Understanding what appeals to job searchers is crucial for firms in a severe talent shortage since it affects both employee retention and recruiting [25]. In contrast, company independent information sources like word-of-mouth, employee recommendations, and online reviews are thought to be more reliable because they are less likely to be manipulated by organizations [26]

Previous studies have demonstrated a significant correlation between employer attractiveness and employer brand [22, 27]. Employer branding is the idea of "creating a clear view of what makes a firm different and appealing as an employer" both internally and externally [28], p. 51). In order to create a positive employer brand image, distinctiveness must be carefully crafted. This influences the brand's appeal and attractiveness in the long run. Organizations must focus on employer attractiveness to draw in job candidates and differentiate their brand [, 8]. Being attractive is a quality of the employer brand [29].

According to [30] the attractiveness of an employer is operationalized based on the attributes that candidates consider when making their job selection. These attributes can then be categorized into different groups according to the preferences of potential employees, which makes it easier for them to choose an employer. Although [31] defined the concept of employer attractiveness as a combination of factors that include the location, salary, and culture, (O'Brien [32]) differentiated the concept from symbolic elements. This concept is commonly used in empirical studies. According to [30] the attributes that candidates consider when choosing an employer are usually can be used by prospective employees to determine which organizations they should choose based on their preferences. Literature has various suggestions on how to categorize employer attractiveness. The Scale was suggested by [30]. It features five different values which is represents a scale that can be used to determine an organization's level of attractiveness according to the perception of the employees and Job Seekers. The five values defined as follows:

The Interest Value is an individual's interest value is determined by the extent to which they are attracted to a company that provides a stimulating work environment and innovative work practices, The concept of Social Value is defined as the extent to which individuals are attracted to organizations that provide enjoyable work environments, good relationships, and a cooperative atmosphere. The Economic Value of an individual is determined by how much they are attracted to an organization that provides them with high-quality employment and compensation. The concept of Application Value is used in our research to measure the level of attraction

that individuals have to an organization that values them and provides opportunities for them to develop their skills and knowledge. A person's Development Value is linked to the confidence and recognition that they receive from an employer, as well as their career-boosting experiences. In this research we also add a Management and work-life balance value to the Employer Attractiveness measurement, which indicates the extent to which people are attracted to an employer that provides them with opportunities to balance their private and professional lives. Moreover, we also add Reputation to the Employer Attractiveness measurement.

The characteristics of generation Z

Based on the work of Mannheim in 1952 and presented in management research, the term generation denotes individuals who were born at the same time as the historical or social events that occurred during that period. The proximity of such individuals to similar environments can influence their perception and behavior (Connolly 2019, Mannheim 1952). Moreover, Benson and Brown [33], [17], Lyons et al. [34], Twenge et al. [16] declared that the concept of generation has gained widespread recognition among management practitioners and academics. It stems from the belief that various generations have their own work attitudes and values, which dictate the kinds of work environments and management practices that they prefer.

The most racially and technologically diverse generation is Generation Z, according to the Institute for Emerging Problems (2012). Social networking is a crucial aspect of Generation Z's existence, and they have a casual, direct, and distinctive communication style. They are a generation that values. According to a study by Dan Schawbel [, 35], Generation Z is less driven by money than Generation Y and is more entrepreneurial, trustworthy, tolerant, and open-minded. Based on the findings of Singh and Dangmei [13] Generation Z is the most demanding, acquisitive, materialistic, and entitled generation to date. It also tends to be impatient, lacking the ambitions of previous generations, suffering from attention deficit disorder with a high dependence on technology and a low attention span. Moreover, Mihelich [36] declared that the Generation Z has a strong feeling of responsibility for the environment and is particularly worried about environmental issues. Furthermore, generation Z want to be heard and although they are tech aware and have made technology a part of their identity, they lack problem-solving abilities and have not shown that they can look at an issue, put it in context, analyze it, and come to a decision. Consequently, the following general hypothesis is formulated.

H1   Employer attractiveness Significantly Impacts Generation Z intentions to apply for a job.

The effect of social media platforms on generation z

The rise of social media and online job portals has drastically changed the way recruitment is conducted. Today's younger generations are looking for jobs on the Internet. Besides job portals, applications and other social media platforms also play a crucial role in the recruitment process. Nowadays, the recruitment strategy is more individualized and focused [37]. Moreover, social media has made it much easier for companies to find candidates who are not actively searching for work. In the past, it was very challenging to reach out to these individuals. Since people can easily access information about companies and individuals due to the widespread use of the Internet, employers should monitor how they market their businesses online. Moreover, it is important for job seekers to monitor their social media profiles to make sure that they are not only presenting themselves as a credible candidate, but that they are also contributing to the company's success. Also, declared that over 70% of recruiters check an applicant's social media page before making a decision. The most popular and extensively used social media include the social networking site Facebook, the micro-blogging site Twitter, the video-sharing website YouTube, the photo-sharing website Instagram, and niche social media sites like LinkedIn and Golden Line (portals with a recruitment and professional-business profile). 86% of employees have coworkers among their friends on social media, according to research by O'Connor, Schmidt, and Drouin, while 77% of people use social media at work. The fact that 44% of people share information about their jobs on social media is significant from the perspective of the topic of this essay [38, 39].

The distinction between personal and professional social media platforms is one of the various methods to classify social media platforms [40, 41]. User behaviors are essentially unrestricted in personal social media platforms, exposing a wide range of details about different aspects of their lives [42]. Almost 2.89 billion people use Facebook, the largest personal social media platform [43]. Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok are some additional significant personal SM platforms. LinkedIn, the largest professional social media platform, has nearly 800 million users. In these platforms, more constraints (both explicit and implicit) are imposed upon the user, sharing a larger depth of professional information (e.g., work history, professional affiliations, accomplishments), but less information from other facets of life. Accordingly, we hypothesis the following hypothesis:

H2   There is significant relationship between Employer Attractiveness and the use of Social Media Platforms.

Job pursuit intention

Positive social media posts are typically shared by staff who have great opinions of their employers and produce real information about their work and abilities [44]. Based on the research by [45] they declared that due to the increasing number of people using social media, both employees and employers are trying to promote their brands. Both parties should take the necessary steps to protect their online reputations. Moreover, [46, 47] revealed that the rise of social media has shown that it is no longer just a place for informal communication and entertainment. It has also become a vital part of people's lives, as it allows them to connect with their networks. Most of companies nowadays are sharing content related to their business and also about their employees on different social media platforms, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Furthermore, [47] and Malaska and Nadeem (2012), stated that, LinkedIn has become the social media platform that businesses, professionals, and employees most frequently utilize. As the largest professional network in the world, LinkedIn has inevitably become a crucial social media tool for businesses [48]. Professionals from all over the world use LinkedIn to access the most recent business material, connect with current and former coworkers, seek professional advice, and look for potential job vacancies [49, 50]. Students use LinkedIn to showcase their capabilities, accomplishments, learned skills, and prospective work interests in order to develop a distinctive brand in the cutthroat job market [51]. By adding their work experience, recommendations from former coworkers, professional credentials, and other information to their LinkedIn profiles, professionals maintain and improve their personal brands [52, 53]. LinkedIn is a platform used by staff members to discuss their jobs, career experiences, and accomplishments [54]. The promise of an employer's brand is enhanced through social media. This process involves leveraging existing employees to endorse the organization's message and provide a voice for the brand. Social media affordances also help the employer brand reach its target audience and increase its visibility. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated.

H3   The use of Social Media Platforms has a mediating effect on the relationship between Employer Attractiveness and Gen Z intentions to apply for a job.

Methodology

This research aimed to find out what Generation Z thought about the various aspects of an employer's attractiveness and whether social media platforms influenced their perception of an employer's attractiveness and whether they would be more inclined to apply for a job. Also, this research was conducted on fresh graduates and final year undergraduate students from private universities in Egypt. The participants are from different majors (Marketing, Human Resource Management, Finance, Business Technology), which is a group of individuals that are expected to be highly skilled and sought after by employers.

Data collection and sample design

This research utilized a quantitative method to analyze how generation Z views the workplace's attractiveness in Egypt and how this influences their choices when it comes to apply for a job. Social media platforms also played a role in this relationship. It was carried out through a Judgmental sampling method among fresh graduates and final-year students of number of Private universities in Egypt. The researchers were able to enroll them through various means, such as social media groups, mailing lists, and personal contacts, and the participants were chosen from private universities in Egypt. The researchers conducted the survey online among the students, who are expected to graduate within the next couple of months and join the workforce and also the fresh graduates. All the participants had been chosen from different majors. Three hundred questionnaires were distributed and 200 complete and valid questionnaires were received.

As shown here in Table 1 it could be concluded that the sample group's proportions, with females comprising 49.2% and males 50.8%. The sample group's age breakdown indicates that the majority of the respondents, 52%, are aged between 21 and 22, while 32.7% are below 20 years old. The remaining 2% are aged 23–24 or above. Moreover, the majority of the respondents have a bachelor's degree, with 20% stating that they have a master's degree, and another 17% having a doctorate. Furthermore, according to the specialization, a high proportion of them claimed to have studied various fields of business (65.3%), such as finance (73.4%), human resource management (76.9%), and marketing (76.9%), Among the most popular study subjects among the respondents were international business (92.5%) and entrepreneurship (93.5%).

Generally, the data collected by the research questionnaire revealed valuable information about the educational backgrounds of the respondents, which can be used to inform future research and improve the recruitment and marketing strategies of companies.

Table 1 Respondent's profile

Demographic variable and category		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	101	50.8%
	Female	98	49.2%
Age	< 20	65	32.7%
	21 – 22	111	55.8%
	23 – 24	18	9%
	25 +	5	2.5%
Education	Bachelor's Degree	252	63%
	Master's Degree	80	20%
	Doctorate	68	17%
Field of specialization			
General business administration	Yes	130	65.3%
	No	69	34.7%
Finance	Yes	146	73.4%
	No	53	26.6%
Marketing	Yes	117	58.8%
	No	82	41.2%
Entrepreneurship	Yes	184	92.5%
	No	15	7.5%
International business	Yes	186	93.5%
	No	13	6.5%
Human resource management	Yes	153	76.9%
	No	46	23.1%
Other fields of business	Yes	152	76.4%
	No	47	23.6%

Measurement development

The Independent Variable "employer attractiveness" scale was adapted from Berthon et al. [30] taking into account some modifications to fit the respondent's culture, this was set to make it easier for the respondents to understand. This scale was modified by Dabirian et al. [55] added two dimensions to the scale: work-life balance and management. In addition, this scale was modified by Schlager et al. [56] by adding Reputation to the Scale. A Five-Point Likert scale was used to assess the importance of each item (1—not important at all, 2—unimportant, 3 – neutral, 4—important, 5—extremely important). The dependent variable" Job Pursuit Intention" scale was adapted from Highhouse et al. [57]. The Scale of the mediator variable "social media" was adapted from Collins and Stevens [58]. This scale was developed originally to be used in general marketing. Consequently, it was modified to match the objectives of this research to know the mediating role of Social Media platforms in the

relationship between Employer Attractiveness and Generation Z intentions to apply for a Job.

Data analysis

The researchers used partial least squares (PLS) in the analysis of structural equation modeling to test the hypothesis of this study. The study also analyzed the structural model and the measurement model's validation. The advantages of using partial least squares over the traditional methods were numerous. It helps minimize inaccuracies in the calculation of variables.

Results

Reliability and validity of the measurement

It could be concluded from Table 2 that the validity and reliability measures of the different constructs are presented in Table 2. The first one, which is Employer Attractiveness, exhibited an average variance of 0.878 and an average composite reliability of 0.980. The construct's Cronbach's alpha of 0.977 also indicated that the items within it are related to each other. While Social Media Platforms' composite reliability and internal consistency score of 0.202 and 0.719 indicates that it may be less reliable and consistent than the other constructs. However, they still have acceptable factor loadings ranging from 0.320 to 0.699. But its individual components show that they still follow the same underlying concept. Moreover, The Job Pursuit Intention's composite reliability and internal consistency score of 0.814 and 0.956 indicates that it is highly reliable. Its Cronbach alpha of 0.943 also supports its reliability. Furthermore, the different constructs of Employer Attractiveness dimensions that are related to the concept of work life balance, development, and interest, social value, and management and work environment exhibited high internal consistency. They also have high alpha values ranging from 0.8 to 0.957. This is concluding that the different constructs used in the research are reliable and valid indicators of the concepts they are related to. They support the use of such constructs in future studies.

As shown in Table 3, the results of the Larcker and Fornell criterion for assessing the validity of various constructs. The value of the diagonal is the average variance of each construct, while the off diagonal is the correlation between them. According to the results, the average variance (AV) of each construct is higher when compared to the correlations between them and other constructs. Although the link between Working Environment and Social Media Platforms is relatively high, this suggests that there might be overlap between these two constructs. Further research on their operationalization and conceptualization is required.

Table 4 illustrates the results of the HTMT analysis, which is a type of test for discriminant validity that involves calculating the ratio between two constructs. If the ratio falls below 0.9, then the discriminant validity can be upheld. The table shows that the HTMT ratios for all the constructs were below 0.9, which indicates that the discriminant validity of each pair of constructs can be upheld. This means that the measures used in the analysis exhibited good discriminant validity.

As shown in Table 5, it represents the model's testing quality with regard to the two main variables, namely, job pursuit intention and social media platforms. The R Square represents the variance in the dependent factor's value, while the R Square Adjusted considers the model's predictors. The table indicates that the R Square for job pursuit intention is 0.583, which implies that about 58.3% of the variance can be explained by the model's independent variables. On the other hand, the adjusted value indicates that this figure drops to 56.3% after taking into account the predictors. The R Square for social media platforms is 0.315, which indicates that about 31.5% of the variance can be attributed to the model's independent factors. On the other hand, the adjusted value shows a slight decrease when the model takes into account the predictors.

Generally, from the above discussion it could be concluded that, the values indicate that the model can provide good explanatory power when it comes to job pursuit intention and moderate power when it comes to social media platforms. Nevertheless, it is crucial to keep in mind that these values may be affected by the model's specific measures and variables, and these may not be generalized to other situations.

Testing research hypotheses

The following Table 6 summarizes the results of a mediation study that analyzed the link between various factors that affect job pursuit intention. These include social media platforms and employer attractiveness.

From Table 6 it could be concluded that In H1, the notion that an employer's attractiveness can influence job seekers' minds is supported by the hypothesis's path coefficient -23.129 and *p*-value 0.015. and this is showing a significant relationship between the two. These hypothetical ideas try to determine how an employer's attractiveness affects job seekers' intentions. In addition to economic and social status, other factors like reputation and work-life balance can also have an effect Generation Z intention to apply for a job. As shown from the above-mentioned table, the hypothesis H2 indicates the relationship between the social media platforms and an employer's attractiveness. The path coefficient for its relationship is 0.562, while the p-value is 0.001. This

Table 2 Construct reliability and validity measures

Construct	Indicator	Factor Loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Employer attractiveness	AD	0.937	0.878	0.980	0.977
	DI	0.953			
	EV	0.949			
	MW	0.944			
	RE	0.930			
	SV	0.948			
	WE	0.897			
Social media platforms	SMP1	0.411	0.719	0.202	0.649
	SMP2	0.601			
	SMP3	0.320			
	SMP4	0.563			
	SMP5	0.554			
	SMP6	0.699			
	SMP7	0.683			
	SMP8	0.587			
	SMP9	0.617			
Job pursuit intention	JPI1	0.916	0.814	0.956	0.943
	JPI2	0.872			
	JPI3	0.887			
	JPI4	0.923			
	JPI5	0.912			
Application and diversity	AD1	0.876	0.750	0.954	0.944
	AD2	0.872			
	AD3	0.901			
	AD4	0.834			
	AD5	0.851			
	AD6	0.865			
	AD7	0.860			
Development and interest	DI1	0.884	0.822	0.965	0.957
	DI2	0.917			
	DI3	0.908			
	DI4	0.885			
	DI5	0.916			
	DI6	0.929			
Economic	E1	0.890	0.815	0.946	0.924
	E2	0.916			
	E3	0.920			
	E4	0.885			
Management and work life balance	MW1	0.901	0.771	0.953	0.940
	MW2	0.909			
	MW3	0.842			
	MW4	0.909			
	MW5	0.868			
	MW6	0.836			
Reputation	RE1	0.879	0.778	0.933	0.904
	RE2	0.909			
	RE3	0.897			
	RE4	0.841			

Table 2 (continued)

Construct	Indicator	Factor Loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Social value	SV1	0.923	0.840	0.955	0.936
	SV2	0.944			
	SV3	0.940			
	SV4	0.858			
Working environment	WE1	0.896	0.810	0.927	0.883
	WE2	0.887			
	WE3	0.916			

Table 3 Discriminant validity of construct (Fornell and Larcker Criterion)

	AD	DI	EC	EA	JPI	MW	RE	SV	SMP	WE
AD	0.866									
DI	0.869	0.907								
EC	0.872	0.900	0.903							
EA	0.937	0.953	0.949	0.937						
JPI	0.695	0.676	0.687	0.709	0.902					
MW	0.873	0.873	0.896	0.944	0.646	0.878				
RE	0.859	0.861	0.848	0.930	0.653	0.858	0.882			
SV	0.866	0.907	0.879	0.948	0.685	0.870	0.864	0.917		
SMP	0.574	0.526	0.547	0.562	0.588	0.507	0.533	0.523	0.449	
WE	0.795	0.838	0.819	0.898	0.607	0.823	0.813	0.828	0.469	0.900

Table 4 Discriminant validity (Heterotrait and Monotrait Ratio (HTMT))

	AD	DI	EC	EA	JPI	MW	RE	SV	SMP
DI	0.914								
EC	0.932	0.957							
EA	0.973	0.985	0.997						
JPI	0.737	0.711	0.733	0.737					
MW	0.925	0.920	0.962	0.985	0.683				
RE	0.929	0.926	0.928	0.990	0.706	0.931			
SV	0.921	0.959	0.945	0.990	0.727	0.925	0.938		
SMP	0.610	0.524	0.581	0.559	0.600	0.515	0.554	0.531	
WE	0.868	0.908	0.905	0.969	0.663	0.900	0.906	0.906	0.593

Table 5 Testing quality of the model

Variables	*R* square	*R* square adjusted
Job pursuit intention	0.583	0.563
Social media platforms	0.315	0.312

is reflecting the significant relationship between Social Media Platforms and Employer's Attractiveness.

While in hypothesis H-3, the effect of social networking sites on the connection between job seekers' intentions and companies' attractiveness is analyzed. The path coefficient and *p*-value of 0.240 and 0.001, respectively, suggest that these sites mediate the link between the two.

It could be concluded that the result of the study indicates that the employer's attractiveness has a positive

Table 6 Results of hypotheses testing (Mediation Test)

Hypotheses	Path coefficient	Stand error	*T*-statistics	*P*-value	Decision
H_1 : EA > JPI	− 23.129	9.454	2.446	0.015	Significant
$H_{1.a}$: AD > JPI	4.012	1.540	2.604	0.009	Significant
$H_{1.b}$: MW > JPI	3.298	1.418	2.325	0.020	Significant
$H_{1.c}$: RE > JPI	3.470	1.435	2.417	0.016	Significant
$H_{1.d}$: WE > JPI	3.124	1.284	2.434	0.015	Significant
$H_{1.e}$: DI > JPI	3.633	1.464	2.482	0.013	Significant
$H_{1.f}$: SV > JPI	3.863	1.486	2.601	0.010	Significant
$H_{1.g}$: EV > JPI	3.873	1.489	2.601	0.010	Significant
H_2 : EA > SMP	0.562	0.062	9.067	0.000	Significant
H_3 : EA > SMP > JPI	0.240	0.071	3.389	0.001	Significant

effect on generation Z intentions to apply for a job. It also found that social media platforms can partially mediate this link. Moreover, the result indicated that the employer attractiveness dimensions (application and diversity, management and work-life balance, reputation, working environment, development and interest, social value, and economic value) have significant positive effects on generation Z intentions to apply for a job.

Discussion and implications

The aim of this research was to identify the various attributes that employers consider when it comes to hiring and retaining Gen Z talents. In a sample of 200 students in Egypt, the research was conducted to determine the differences between the various attributes of employers. Although the dimensions of employer attractiveness were highly rated, the significant differences can be determined based on the requirements of Gen Z workers. For instance, they really consider the development and personal growth and how the employer will invest in their skills to maximize their competencies. In addition, they highly rate the attractive pay and benefits as one of the important dimensions they consider when they decide which job to apply for. Moreover, want a fun work environment that is conducive to their personal development and a positive relationship with their superiors. Other factors such as workplace diversity, as well as the employer reputation and work life balance which may be provided in flexible working hours and remote working are also taken into account to attract talent. This is support what was believed about Generation Z attitudes according to Chillakuri and Mahanandia [59] and Schroth [60]. Moreover, the results of this study revealed that the low rankings of the application value and interest dimensions contradict the expectations of this generation's leaders regarding their goals and ethical practices. This was contradicted with [61]. This suggests

that the development of a comprehensive understanding of this generation's expectations should be conducted through a systematic approach. Moreover, the results of this research can act as a launching point for the development of a more accurate understanding of workers' expectations from Generation Z towards the attributes of the Employer Attractiveness. Furthermore, the results of this research can be used to compare the expectations of Gen Z talents with those of their counterparts in other studies. Also, in research conducted by Liu et al. [50], the Generation Z prioritize the development value as the first value they consider when they decide to apply for a job. Moreover, in research by Wallace and Colleagues (2012) asserted that the interest value was ranked as the most important value when it comes to choose their future employer. Furthermore, the study conducted by [62] revealed that economic value was at the center of students' perspectives on cultural, disciplinary, and generational factors. They were not able to identify the underlying factors that influenced these differences. Nevertheless, our research serves as a starting point for further research that explores the multiple disciplinary, cultural, or generational elements of knowledge that shape Generation Z perceptions of the different attributes of the employer attractiveness that may affect their choices to apply for a job. The findings of this research contribute to the literature by providing insight into the factors that influence the attractiveness attributes of employers. It also shows how the use of different social media platforms such as (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok) can affect Generation Z decisions to apply for a job and choose a specific employer. In addition, that this research can help employers develop effective branding strategies. Moreover, the findings of this research show that the various dimensions of employer attractiveness were relevant to the participants. The mean scores indicate that the importance of the dimensions of an

employer's attractiveness is acknowledged by the applicants. This is in line with studies conducted by [63] and [64] Furthermore, in this research, the classification process used to determine the expectations of each group was carried out based on the education, gender, and study program.

The way an employee sees the organization can become a resonance of their perceptions, which is why it is important that an organization takes into account the needs of its external and internal markets when developing its messages. The study revealed that various factors, such as Development interest, Economic Value, Social Value, besides the working environment, the company reputation, and to what extent the organization provides the employees with the Work-Life-Balance. All of those attributes can affect the intentions of Generation Z to apply for a job. Consequently, this finding is quite vital from a professional and academic perspective. The attributes of employer attractiveness can help them create effective marketing and HR strategies that are aligned with the needs of its employees and job candidates. Furthermore, the research revealed that a positive image of an organization is very important in attracting candidates. In addition to being able to manage the various aspects of its brand, social media activities can also help improve the company's image. Even if individuals have different images of the organization and its logo, the latter still exerts an influence on the preferences of potential employees.

Conclusion

The results of our research indicate that social media can help improve a company's corporate image, which in turn increases the likelihood of attracting and retaining more candidates. In addition to its content, the platform's communication channels also play a vital role in its success. This is by utilizing symbolic brand attributes in social media, companies can stand out from the crowd and develop a distinct personality. One of the most important factors that employers consider when it comes to building their social media presence is having a distinct personality and this is can be achieved in their social media platforms and specifically most our sample stated that LinkedIn is considered the most trustful platform when it comes to look for a job. This can help them identify their ideal candidate and reach a wider audience. However, it's also important to avoid providing too much information about the company. Doing so might cause people to think that the company is not interested in them or that they are not capable of handling the situation. It was concluded that in order to become more competitive, employers need to become more agile in their approach to improve the attractiveness of their brands to

young job seekers. This can be done through the development of new technologies and strategies that can help them attract and retain the right talent. The findings of this research have practical implications for HR professionals. It further reinforced the academic literature on the topic of employer attractiveness and how it affects the decision of generation Z in applying for a job. Also, the role of the use of social media platforms by the employer to reach and influence generation z decisions to apply for a job. Also, this is research provided the perceptions of Egypt's generation Z towards the attributes of employer attractiveness.

Limitations and future area of research

In Egypt, certain restrictions on education, culture, or discipline may prevent the generalization of findings about Generation Z. These can identify the effects of varying cultural and educational factors on the population. Our research focused on the mediating role of social media platforms in the relationship between Employer attractiveness and generation z intention to apply for a job, we may take into account the different elements such as social identity consciousness, employer prestige, career awareness and career self-efficiency when assessing its role for generation Z into their decisions to apply for a job. We recommend that future studies apply Longitudinal analysis, since our study was conducted as a cross-sectional analysis, we are not able to determine the extent to which the attributes of employer's attractiveness that respondents value influence their employment decisions. This research focuses on generation Z perceptions of the attributes of employer attractiveness to apply for a job. For many job seekers, their expectations and observations about the attributes of employers vary significantly from one another. This study is not applicable to the older generation, such as the Baby Boomers and Millennials. Future research should focus on choosing Students from a wider range of academic background and colleges; different generational cohorts like millennials, etc., Human Resource managers, middle- and upper-level managers and executives; and Generation cohorts from different geographies to understand how Gen Z is now more interconnected with the Gen Z population of other geographies and the world through Internet culture. Suppose there are any similarities or differences in the employer. In that case, preferences can be attributed to them, which will lead the organization to improve further and adapt their talent acquisition strategies due to the similarity/dissimilarity of the found results. Furthermore, we would suggest that future studies explore the various elements of brand appeal that generation Z consider when it comes to choosing an organization for their future employment such as Organization's sustainable

development strategy, Gender diversity and Remote work environment. Understanding these factors can help businesses attract and retain skilled workers. Finally, the generalizability of the research findings is questioned due to two major factors. First, it only analyzed a single generation the workplace which is generation Z, and the second is that it used a small sample size for quantitative study. Future research on this topic is suggested to use qualitative approach with both job candidate and HR managers to close the gap between the HR professionals and the job candidates.

Abbreviations

SMP	Social media platforms
Gen Z	Generation Z
AD	Application and diversity
DI	Development and interest
E	Economic
MW	Management and work life balance
RE	Reputation
SV	Social value
WE	Working environment
EA	Employer attractiveness
WE	Working environment
JPI	Job pursuit intention

Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate
Not applicable.

Consent for publication
Not applicable.

Competing interests
The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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