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Salary or job interest?

How salary and job interest moderates the willingness to apply for a job

Abstract

Purpose –The purpose of the study is to explore whether salary and job interest moderates the relationship between corporate image and willingness to apply for a job and to examine that salary or job interest has a stronger influence on willingness to apply for a job.

Design/methodology/approach–Research data were obtained through questionnaires by method of convenience sampling, distributed in employment expos and career guidance centers in Taichung and Chiayi area, Taiwan. 300 responses were collected. Excluding the invalid questionnaires, totally there were 285 valid questionnaires. Then the study applied hierarchical regressions to test moderating effects and each hypothesis.

Findings–The study found that corporate image, salary, and job interest have significant positive effects on willingness to apply. In order of level of influence on willingness to apply, the factors successively are job interest, salary and corporate image. Both salary and job interest will exert moderating effects on willingness to apply, and job interest has a stronger influence than salary.

Research limitations/implications–This study was limited on sample selection from only two regions, in addition to time and space restrictions. However, the research results still help an employer to understand the priority factors that may influence a job seeker's decision to apply for a job.

Originality/value–A company with a good corporate image and generous salary system can enhance the interest of job seekers. At the same time, if the job content is consistent with the interest of the job seekers, they will be more eager to apply. It would be beneficial for both enterprises and applicants when the right candidate in the sea of job seekers is chosen for the right job.

Paper type Research paper

Keywords: Salary, Job interest, Corporate image, Job application willingness

Introduction

Every enterprise is operated by people, and people are the most important assets of an enterprise (Pamenter, 1999). Attracting talented employees has become an important factor in the success of an enterprise (Ehrhart and Ziegert, 2005). With the development of the internet in recent years, job seekers find their way to job vacancies through various channels. Now enterprises are using the internet to find ideal talent. Such actions not only increase vacancy information available for the job seekers, but also increase the chance of companies finding suitable talent (Zusman and Landis, 2002). This transition indicates that enterprises nowadays have taken the initiative in recruitment activities to reach out to potential talent instead of waiting for them to come. However, job seekers place emphasis not only on the information provided by business organizations, including working conditions, working environment, salary, benefits, and promotion, but also external assessments and general impressions of the organization.

In recent years, Taiwan's brain drain has attracted more and more attention from both home and abroad. In IMD's World Talent Report 2016, which evaluated the three indicators of "Investment and Development", "Appeal" and "Readiness", in a total of 60 countries, Taiwan ranked 51 in "Foreign High-Skilled People" under the indicator of "Appeal", and 42 in "International Experience" under the indicator of "Readiness" (IMD World Competitiveness Center, 2016). In this report, Taiwan's performance ranked poorly on the global stage. In addition, in a report concerning "International talent shortage", Taiwan's ranking was even worse, which showed the issues of talent attraction and talent cultivation had not been improved. Chang (2011) put forward a report on the issue of brain drain, the astonishing discovery of which was that the top researchers in Taiwan were being poached by Mainland China's research institutions with 3 to 4 times larger salaries. Another recent report from the Asia-Pacific region disclosed that the salaries of top executives in Taiwan ranked 10th in 13 countries (Rti Anchors, 2014). Yang (2014) found that Taiwan's current salary level is low, with 49% of the sample earning an income of around NT\$25,000. Chang (2011) concluded that the cause of the brain drain is "relatively low salaries". Taiwan does not only suffer from average wage stagnation but also the inability to attract overseas talent. The brain drain plight and wage stagnation are dragging down the country's momentum in social development. The overall decline in Taiwan's labor demand is the root of the problem of brain drain and 20-year wage stagnation (Chang, 2011). In this regard, Mainland China has chosen to recruit domestic and foreign talent with high salaries because Mainland China is deeply aware of the role of talent and technology in catching up with advanced countries. Therefore, salary design is of paramount importance in attracting and retaining talent.

"Work not for work's sake but for where your interest lies" is an ideal scenario for each job seeker. Because of a harsh reality, people will often have to choose a job that they neither hate nor like. The problem with this mentality is that people face career limitations and bottlenecks

because they cannot excel at a job they are not enthusiastic about. On the contrary, when people have a job that they like, they can often make the best use of their imagination flowing from passion and interest. If someone works only for money, their heart will gradually fill with emptiness and in the end, work becomes a means of killing time. Rynes (1987) found that job interest is an important factor influencing job seekers' willingness to apply. Therefore, when companies are in the process of recruitment, they must first determine whether the applicant's interest is in conformity with the work characteristics.

A good corporate image consists of good reputation and public recognition. An outstanding corporate image will have a positive and incentive effect on employees, who will be more confident, motivated and driven by career goals. This morale boost will attract more talent to apply, thus enhancing diversification of the organization's human resources. In the end, the enterprise will boast internal and external competitive advantages, and have the potential to come up with diversified and practical ideas and strategies for the achievement of the organizational vision. McLean et al. (1996) suggested that when the job-seekers apply for jobs, they tend to choose employers with a good corporate image and similar ideals, which will reflect in their future development.

Past studies of talent recruitment have often considered corporate image and salary as factors that attract job seekers (Yen, 2011; Chen and Chen, 2011; Gatewood, *et al.*, 1993). These studies show that job seekers are influenced by corporate image and salary. However, there are few studies that discuss and measure the moderating effect of salary and job interest on corporate image and willingness to apply for a job. Therefore, this study aims to explore the relationship between corporate image, salary, job interest and willingness to apply for a job by analyzing the moderating effects of salary and job interest on the relationship between corporate image and willingness to apply for a job.

Literature review

Corporate image

Corporate image is an enterprise's establishment of values and code of conduct. It derives from the overall perception, impression and cognition towards the enterprise from the internal and external environment. In summary, it is a comprehensive reflection of the enterprise's status. In the past, many studies have also discussed an enterprise's influences on an applicant's evaluation and perception of the organization (Ehrhart and Ziegert, 2005; Ahlrichs, 2000; Highhouse, *et al.*, 2003). According to social identity theory by Tajfel and Turner (1985), individuals form judgments in accordance with social evaluations. When an enterprise has a good public image, the applicants will be more willing to provide services for the enterprise. If not, they will refuse to serve the enterprise. At the same time, when a company has a good image, its employees will reinforce the image themselves and enhance positive evaluations from outsiders. On the contrary, employees in a company with a bad reputation will suffer increased stress and negative emotions (Ashforth and Mael, 1989).

In past studies, the concept of "corporate image" has had many different interpretations and measurements. Worcester (1972) argued that corporate image is the product of the reciprocal effect of all the experiences, feelings, ideas and knowledge that the general public has for an enterprise. Belt and Paolillo (1982) began to put forward the concept of interaction, defining corporate image as a series of attributes an individual gain through interaction with staff, customers or the public. Lemmink et al. (2003) put forward the main points for measuring corporate image, which include attraction, developing and retaining talent, community and social responsibility, stable economic conditions, innovation capacity, marketing and communication capacity, and product and service quality. Nguyen and Leblanc (2001) proposed that the formation of corporate image starts from individual perceptions of customers for the behavior of the enterprise, including its name, products, services, management, goals, etc. It is the product of the customers' interactions, ideas, and experiences that influence each other concerning the enterprise.

According to Agrawal and Swaroop (2009), a good corporate image can influence a job seekers' acceptance of salary, and can improve their self-esteem and self-confidence. Thus, companies with a good corporate image can have a greater number of options to choose from during the recruitment process, which will provide the right talent for the enterprise and enhance the organizational competitive advantage. In this sense, how an enterprise manages its external perception, namely corporate image, can exert an influence on its attraction to talent.

Salary

Salary refers to the income of an individual through work. An exchange relationship exists between an employee and an enterprise, and an employee trades his or her labor or knowledge with an enterprise in exchange for money or benefits that can provide the individual with life necessities and improvement (Ouchi, 1980). From the perspective of employees, so-called salary includes wages, overtime pay, bonuses (or commission), a variety of benefits and allowances, meaning the direct, general, and financial remuneration from the employer (Wang, 1997). Huang (1989) argued that salary can be divided into three categories: basic salary, subsidies and bonuses. Basic salary and bonuses are direct salary, while subsidies are indirect salary. Chu (2003) argues the key of salary design lies in recruiting talent and retaining good employees in the company. To summarize the points of view of the above scholars, salary includes basic salary, subsidies, and bonuses. But regarding salary standards, an enterprise must establish equal and fair standards to maximize the incentive effect and enhance work performance as well as reduce labor cost to avoid lowered revenue.

Other studies found that salary is an important factor when job seekers make job choices (Rynes, 1987; Cable and Judge, 1994) because the main purpose of working is to earn a salary in order to meet personal needs (Kissan and Manohar, 1998). A good salary system can be a source of attraction for talented applicants. Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (Herzberg,

1968) proposed that motivational factors can promote an employee's work performance and willingness while hygiene factors can maintain employees' current work performance and wishes. Fu (1989) argues that hygiene factors can eliminate the psychology of employee dissatisfaction, and motivation factors can improve employee job performance and intent. In Chen and Chen's (2011) study of the two-factor theory, they found that both hygiene factors and motivation factors positively influence work intention, and a good salary system will help acclimatize new people in the workplace, promote on-the-job workers' willingness to work, and can motivate and strengthen employees' devotion to work. Therefore the salary system, either from the perspective of hygiene or motivation, can give employees incentives which can lead to good job performance, further improving the image and reputation of the company, and significantly helping attract more talent.

Job interest

Many fresh graduates, during job hunting, are in a dilemma because they do not know whether to put job satisfaction, salary or accumulated experience first. They face the choice of either committing to job interest or a high salary to meet their personal needs, or pursuing professional development. However, some job seekers may only consider the good reputation or the competitive salary and or the benefits of the company before throwing themselves into jobs that do not interest them. Such choices tend to lead to painful experiences of boredom or even disgust. However, job interest is the driving force for job seekers. Those who have chosen a job that matches their interests will be encouraged to be happily engaged in the job. Chiang (2015) advised that interest can serve as the entry point for the transition from a student to a working professional, which indicates that career choices based on interest are more reliable. One's entire career could be affected if interests and background are not taken into consideration when choosing a job. Otherwise, it could lead to a lifetime of regret.

Holland (1996) put forward the personality-job fit theory, which combines research on occupational environments and individual differences in job interest. He thought that an individual's personality type and job interest are closely related to one's career. When a job seeker has engaged in a job that matches vocational interest, his potential can be tapped fully and his performance will be better (Robbins and Judge, 2013; Bambara, *et al.*, 1994). Spokane *et al.* (2000) suggested that occupational congruence is the consistent degree of a person's job interests or personality traits with professional types or career choices. However, the job characteristics and work styles of different occupations will result in different requirements for the vocational interest of job seekers. A real match occurs when a candidate's personality and job interests fit with what the job requires of him or her. Therefore, during recruitment, it is vital to put job seekers through a job interest assessment to understand their vocational interests and personality types.

Willingness to apply

From the perspective of human resources management, talent is an important human capital that assists the enterprise in strategic planning, reaching goals and obtaining a competitive advantage (Mondy and Noe, 2005). Whether a business organization can acquire great talent lies in whether job seekers are willing to apply. The willingness to apply describes the job seekers' desire to work in a certain business organization (Ehrhart and Ziegert, 2005). This appeal is a key to company competitiveness. If a company possesses strong attraction for talent, it will have a greater opportunity to select gifted employees.

Behling et al. (1968) thought job seekers mainly evaluate vacancies based on attributes including salary, welfare and job type as well as organizational attributes such as corporate image, scale and familiarity. The Job Fit theory (Edwards, 1991; Kristof, 1996) was proposed to give job seekers a clear understanding of whether they are fit for a job during the recruitment process by providing them with clear job specifications and organizational goals. Studies found that job fitness will affect job seekers' intention to accept jobs (Edwards, 1991) and produce a willingness to apply (Kristof, *et al.*, 2005; Kristof and Guay, 2011). **Moreover**, during recruiting, according to the theory of person-organization fitness (Kristof, 1996), potential job-seekers will realize whether their values match the organization's culture and value if the relevant information is available. When potential applicants are in conformity with the organization's culture and values, then the organization will have a higher appeal (Boone and Hartog, 2011; Schwab, *et al.*, 1987; Kristof, 1996; Andrews, *et al.*, 2011).

"External selection" is a source of human capital and the fastest way to boost organization competitiveness (Chang, *et al.*, 2005). During external selection, organizations are supposed to provide clear information on selection standards, company systems, and welfare systems so that job seekers can understand company requirements. According to ERG theory (Alderfer, 1972), an organization can in the meantime attract job seekers with "existence needs", "relatedness needs", and "growth needs". If job seekers acknowledge the values and attitudes that companies hold, they will display a degree of willingness to work for those companies (Highhouse, *et al.*, 2003). When an enterprise has a strong appeal for talent, the great number of applicants that it attracts will provide a large selection base. In other words, if an enterprise can attract job seekers to submit their resumes and commit to the application process, the enterprise will be able to increase their competitiveness (Tsai, *et al.*, 2008).

The attraction that an enterprise possesses describes its ability to prompt job seekers to submit resumes. The degree of such a tendency can influence job seekers' willingness to work for the enterprise. An organization's attractiveness will have an effect on this tendency because job seekers may be attracted by two or more companies at the same time. Therefore, the concept of job seekers' willingness to apply is more about their initiative, which induces job seekers to actively look for a job interview. This is a later-stage concept because only when the organization possesses a certain degree of attraction will job-seekers enter the application

process (Highhouse, *et al.*, 2003). Attraction factors that induce a job seekers' willingness to apply include good company conditions and positive image (Cable and Turban, 2001). Organization attraction plays a decisive role in the prosperity of the company in sourcing talent. In addition to holding on to the idea of putting profit first, a company is encouraged to formulate strategies to promote talent attraction, such as promoting corporate image, and reviewing its salary welfare system.

The relationship between corporate image, salary, job interest, and job application willingness and their influence on each other

In 2005, Ehrhart and Ziegert mentioned that the key factor for business success of an organization is a good talent attraction. The recruitment model of Cable and Turban (2001) indicates that familiarity with the enterprise, prestige, corporate image and the content of the recruiting information will greatly influence job seekers' willingness to apply. Huang *et al.* (2003) pointed out that job seekers usually put corporate image as the first consideration factor. In general, the top ten requirements or conditions of a company from a job seekers' perspective are as follows: opportunity for further education, a harmonious atmosphere, stable operation, an open-minded corporate style, ideal salary, well-established corporate systems, a comfortable working environment, profit sharing, guaranteed stability, great prospect, and a sound welfare system. The above ten requirements can be summarized as the corporate image. The salary and the welfare system have a key influence on enterprise operation and talent attraction. Yen (2011) took the welfare system as the moderating variable in his study and concluded that corporate image has a positive influence on talent attraction; Chen and Chen's (2011) study concluded that salary has a positive effect on college students' willingness to apply. Chen (2009) studied the salary system of insurance salespersons and discovered it had a positive influence on talent attraction. One of the most important motivating factors for enterprise employees is the salary system. The more a high-compensation job vacancy can meet the needs of a job seekers' life, the more attractive it is for the job seeker (Chapman *et al.*, 2005). Leopold (2010) mentioned that a well-managed system of salary and welfare will have positive effect on talent attraction, employee retention, and productivity. This study will explore whether talent attraction is influenced by corporate image under the moderating effect of salary systems.

Past research indicates that during recruitment, salary, job interest, organization attraction, and corporate image are often factors that job applicants take into account (Ahlrichs, 2000). Just as Powell (1984) mentioned, the perception of corporate image before application will affect the attraction the organization possesses for them. Meanwhile, corporate image is one of the factors that induce the public to have contact with the enterprise (Mazzarol, 1998). Some studies have pointed out that when an enterprise has a good corporate image, wages and benefits tend to be better (Schreurs, *et al.*, 2008). A good corporate image strengthened by

support from friends and relatives will increase job seekers' willingness to apply. Past studies also **indicate** that a good corporate image has a positive effect on attracting talent and often means the company has outstanding profitability and performance (Highhouse, *et al.*, 2003). Hackman and Oldham (1975) thought work preferences generate job interest and job interest has a positive interactive relationship with job performance (Hackman and Lawler, 1971). Therefore, when the employees are involved in the work that they are interested in, they will be able to perform better (Wright and Bonett, 1997; Cable and Judge, 1994; Zeytinoglu, *et al.*, 2006). For the purpose of attracting the best talent, an enterprise may provide high salaries (Li and Mao, 1995) to retain and convert human capital into organizational effectiveness and performance. When the other job seekers receive information about the operation and revenue of the company, perceptions of the corporate image will be improved (Walsh, *et al.*, 2009), and evaluations will be made of whether the salary is in proportion with the cost of time, energy and money before making applications.

Research Methodology

Research framework

The research framework is as follows. Corporate image will be set as the independent variable, with salary and job interest as moderation variables to explore whether these two variables have moderating effects on the willingness to apply.

Research hypotheses

According to the framework, the hypotheses of this study are as follows:

H1: Corporate image has a significant positive effect on the willingness to apply.

H2: Salary has a significant positive effect on the willingness to apply.

H3: Job interest has a significant positive effect on the willingness to apply.

H4: Salary has a moderating effect on the relationship between corporate image and willingness to apply.

H5: Job interest has a moderating effect on the relationship between corporate image and willingness to apply.

Research instrument

Research data were obtained through questionnaires by method of convenience sampling, distributed in employment expos and career guidance centers in Taichung and Chiayi area, Taiwan. The subjects were fresh graduate job-seekers. The theoretical framework of the design of the questionnaire was based on previous literature. Different dimensions including corporate image, salary, job interest and willingness to apply were measured by seven-point Likert **scales**: "strongly agree", "agree", "slightly agree", "neither agree nor disagree", "slightly disagree", "disagree" and "strongly disagree". Responses on the seven-point scale were respectively given equidistant scores (7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1). Three-hundred

questionnaires were issued and distributed. Three-hundred questionnaires were collected. Invalid questionnaires or questionnaires with unclear data were eliminated. In total, there were 285 valid questionnaires, for a response rate of 95%.

Research results

Sample characteristics and analysis of variance

The description of the sample is as follows. In the aspect of gender, the majority were women (55.1%); in the aspect of age, the majority were under 23 (included); in the aspect of work experience, the majority had over 5 (included) years of experience (37.9%); as far as the education is concerned, the majority had a bachelor degree (43.9%); as for marital status, the majority were still unmarried (66.3%).

The influence of gender was compared by a T-Test. Age, education, and work experience were put through One-way ANOVA. No significant variance was shown in variables of corporate image, salary, job interest, and willingness to apply among samples of different genders ($F=0.255$, $p=0.614$; $F=0.046$, $p=0.831$; $F=0.040$, $p=0.842$; $F=0.052$, $p=0.820$). The results of the One-way ANOVA are as follows. Age ($F=0.533$, $p=0.751$; $F=1.060$, $p=0.383$; $F=0.617$, $p=0.687$; $F=0.637$, $p=0.671$), education ($F=0.452$, $p=0.812$; $F=0.720$, $p=0.609$; $F=0.986$, $p=0.427$; $F=2.636$, $p=0.024$), and work experience ($F=0.736$, $p=0.621$; $F=0.389$, $p=0.886$; $F=1.320$, $p=0.248$; $F=1.826$, $p=0.094$). The results indicate that only education can cause significant variance. However, after being verified via Scheffe's post hoc test, no significant variance was produced. In conclusion, there were no statistically significant differences among corporate image, salary, job interest and willingness to apply.

Reliability

This study adopted Cronbach's α coefficient to measure the reliability of the questionnaire. The Cronbach's α of the corporate image was 0.885, the Cronbach's α of salary was 0.943, the Cronbach's α job interest was 0.915, and the Cronbach's α of the willingness to apply was 0.816. Each research variable of this study reaches 0.7 and above, showing that has the good internal consistency (Cuieford, 1965).

Pearson's correlation analysis

Based on the correlation analysis of each variable, it can be known that corporate image is significantly positively correlated with the variable of salary ($r=0.691$, $p<0.001$). Corporate image is significantly positively correlated with the variable of job interest ($r=0.660$, $p<0.001$). Corporate image is significantly positively correlated with the variable of willingness to apply ($r=0.679$, $p<0.001$). Salary is significantly positively correlated with the variable of perceived value of job interest ($r=0.596$, $p<0.001$). Job interest is significantly positively correlated with the variable of willingness to apply ($r=0.660$, $p<0.001$). (See Table 1).

(Table 1 about here)

Regression analysis

The regression analysis of each variable for this study is shown in Table 2. Model 1 shows that corporate image has a significant positive influence on willingness to apply ($\beta=0.679$, $p<0.001$, $R^2=0.461$, $\text{adj.}R^2=0.459$). Model 2 shows that salary has a significant positive influence on willingness to apply ($\beta=0.661$, $p<0.001$, $R^2=0.437$, $\text{adj.}R^2=0.435$). Model 3 shows that job interest has a significant positive influence on willingness to apply ($\beta=0.660$, $p<0.001$, $R^2=0.436$, $\text{adj.}R^2=0.434$). Therefore, hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 are verified. Model 4 shows that corporate image and salary have significant positive influences on willingness to apply ($\beta=0.426$; $\beta=0.367$, $p<0.001$, $R^2=0.532$, $\text{adj.}R^2=0.529$). Model 5 shows that corporate image and job interest have significant positive influences on willingness to apply ($\beta=0.431$; $\beta=0.376$, $p<0.001$, $R^2=0.541$, $\text{adj.}R^2=0.538$). Model 6 shows that corporate image, salary and job interest have significant positive influence on willingness to apply ($\beta=0.281$; $\beta=0.286$; $\beta=0.305$, $p<0.001$, $R^2=0.581$, $\text{adj.}R^2=0.576$).

(Table 2 about here)

Moderating analysis

The study uses hierarchy regression analysis to explore the influence of moderating effect of salary/job interest and corporate image to willingness to apply, and adopts Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedures by inserting independent variable, moderating variable and interactive effect variable (independent* moderating variable) to predict dependent variable. In order to avoid adjustment for exogenous variables, this study has controlled factors of gender, age, work experience, education, and marital status. Only education produced significant impact. Table 3 displays the results of hierarchical regression analysis.

The following results were found based on the regression and standardized coefficient analysis. Model 2 shows that corporate image has a significant influence on willingness to apply ($\beta=0.680$, $R^2=0.491$, $\text{Adj.}R^2=0.480$). Model 3 shows that salary has significant influence on willingness to apply ($\beta=0.660$, $R^2=0.463$, $\text{Adj.}R^2=0.451$). Model 4 shows that corporate image has a stronger influence on willingness to apply than salary ($\beta=0.429>\beta=0.360$); Model 5 shows that the interaction between corporate image and salary has a significant impact on willingness to apply ($\beta=-0.141$, $R^2=0.567$, $\text{Adj.}R^2=0.555$, $\text{Max VIF}=2.995$) where $\text{Adj.}R^2$ increased from 0.480 to 0.555. In conclusion, the interaction between salary and corporate image exerts a moderating effect on willingness to apply, so H4 is verified.

To further understand the moderating effect, this study adopted the advice of Aiken and West (1991) to set the moderating effects of low and high salaries and job interested on a

low(1)/high(2) median as a benchmark. Figure 1 shows that both corporate image and salary have a positive effect on willingness to apply and as such the willingness to apply will increase with an increase in salary. However, compared to companies with low corporate image, those with high corporate image enjoy less growth in the willingness to apply with an increase in salary. The implication being that a low salary has a stronger impact on the willingness to apply than a high salary.

(Table 3 about here)
(Figure 1 about here)

In addition, the study also explored the moderating effect of job interest on the relationship between corporate image and willingness to apply. Table 4 displays the results of hierarchical regression analysis. Model 2 shows that corporate image has significant influence on willingness to apply with standardized coefficient $\beta=0.680$, $R^2=0.491$, and $\text{Adj.}R^2=0.480$; thus verifying hypothesis H1. Model 3 shows that job interest has significant influence on willingness to apply with standardized coefficient $\beta=0.656$, $R^2=0.459$, and $\text{Adj.}R^2=0.447$; thus verifying hypothesis H2. Model 4 shows that corporate image ($\beta=0.437$) has a stronger influence on the willingness to apply than job interest ($\beta=0.366$). Model 5, moderating effect of job interest shows that the interaction between corporate image and job interest has a significant impact on willingness to apply. The standardized coefficient was $\beta=-0.186$, $R^2=0.584$, $\text{Adj.}R^2=0.572$, $\text{Max VIF}=2.984$ and $\text{Adj. }R^2$ increased from 0.480 to 0.572 (See Table 4).

In conclusion, the interaction between job interest and corporate image exerts a moderating effect on willingness to apply, so hypothesis H5 is verified. Further understanding was made on the moderating effect of job interest on the relationship between corporate image and willingness to apply. Figure 2 shows that both corporate image and job interest have a positive effect on willingness to apply such that the willingness to apply will increase with an increase in job interest. However, compared to companies with low corporate image, those with high corporate image enjoy more growth in the willingness to apply with an increase in job interest. That means high job interest has a stronger impact on willingness to apply than low job interest.

(Table 4 about here)
(Figure 2 about here)

Findings and recommendations

Findings

By sample analysis, it was found that the corporate image, salary, job interest, and willingness to apply do not vary with differences in gender, age, education, and work experience. The study also found that corporate image, salary, and job interest have significant positive effects on willingness to apply. From Model 4 and 5 in Table 2, we know that taking corporate image into consideration, when job seekers are looking for work, the level of salary and job interest will influence their willingness to apply, and job interest has a stronger influence on willingness to apply than salary. From Model 6 of Table 2, we know the order in which a factor will have on the willingness to apply, these factors successively are job interest, salary and corporate image. That means job interest will enjoy the first priority, then salary and finally corporate image ranking last.

From Model 2, 3 and 5 in Table 3, we know that the standardized coefficient of corporate image decreases from 0.680 to 0.388, a decline of 0.292; and the standardized coefficient of salary decreases from 0.660 to 0.296, a decline of 0.364. From Models 2, 3 and 5 in Table 4, we know that the standardized coefficient of corporate image decreases from 0.680 to 0.351, a decline of 0.329, and the standardized coefficient of salary decreases from 0.656 to 0.321, a decline of 0.335. The standardized coefficient of salary*corporate image was $\beta = -0.141$, while the standardized coefficient of job interest*corporate image is $\beta = -0.186$. Therefore, from the moderating effect analysis, we know that both salary and job interest will exert moderating effects on willingness to apply, and job interest has a stronger influence than salary. In other words, when job seekers take corporate image into consideration, job interest plays a more important role in influencing their willingness to apply.

Recommendations

A company's ability to attract outstanding talent has become one of the main factors for success. In addition to understanding and meeting an applicant's individual needs, the company must first understand the factors that influence an applicant's decision making to attract good candidates. The study found that job seekers hold values and that one should work for interest instead of working just for work's sake. Working for interest can boost enthusiasm and work satisfaction. Therefore, enterprises must first understand job seekers' interests before conducting the recruitment process. Thus, it is recommended that organizations acquire a more comprehensive understanding of the job interest of the candidate through an interest inventory for the purpose of recruiting the right person with the right interests for the right job.

In addition to good corporate image, an enterprise should provide higher salaries to attract job seekers because potential candidates will evaluate returns on investment of time, and money before applying. The study found that salary has a positive relationship with the corporate image, and a high salary can strengthen the relationship between the corporate image and

willingness to apply. In other words, if a company can provide a high salary, the chances of attracting more qualified talent increases.

Moreover, in terms of person-organization fitness and person-job fitness, when enterprises are recruiting, related information should be provided so that the job seekers can decide whether the organization and job are right for them. If so, the organization will be more attractive to job seekers. In this way, the right job seekers will be more eager to apply and the enterprise will have more choices.

Corporate image, salary, and job interest are often factors of consideration when job seekers are looking for work. A company with a good corporate image and generous salary system can enhance the interest of job seekers. At the same time, if the job content is consistent with the interest of job seekers, they will be more eager to apply. It would be beneficial for both enterprises and applicants when the right candidate in the sea of job seekers is chosen for the right job.

Future Research

The subjects of the study were selected samples from the Taichung and Chiayi area, Taiwan so the study is regional, which reduces the possibility of general application. Therefore, it is recommended that future researchers can choose subjects from more regions. Also, due to restrictions of time and space, the subjects could be distracted, giving rise to errors. Therefore, for future improvement, qualitative research such as interviews can be included to increase the objectivity and integrity of the study.

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Tables:

Table 1. The correlation analysis

	Mean	S.D	1	2	3	4
1. Corporate image	6.0130	0.74105	1			
2. Salary	6.3255	0.74380	0.691*** (0.000)	1		
3. Job interest	6.0842	0.90524	0.660*** (0.000)	0.596*** (0.000)	1	
4. Willingness to apply	5.8713	0.80941	0.679*** (0.000)	0.661*** (0.000)	0.660*** (0.000)	1

Note: *p< 0.05; **p< 0.01; ***p< 0.001

Table 2. Results of regression analysis

Willingness to apply							
	β	R	R ²	Adj.R ²	VIF	F	P
Model 1							
Corporate image	0.679	0.679	0.461	0.459	1.000	242.422	0.000
Model 2							
Salary	0.661	0.661	0.437	0.435	1.000	219.679	0.000
Model 3							
Job interest	0.660	0.660	0.436	0.434	1.000	218.876	0.000
Model 4							
Corporate image	0.426	0.729	0.532	0.529	1.912	160.183	0.000
Salary	0.367						0.000
Model 5							
Corporate image	0.431	0.736	0.541	0.538	1.772	166.218	0.000
Job interest	0.376						0.000
Model 6							
Corporate Image	0.281	0.762	0.581	2.341	129.817		0.000
Salary	0.286		0.576				0.000
Job interest	0.305		0.000				

Note: *p< 0.05 ; **p< 0.01 ; ***p< 0.001; β =standardized coefficient

Table 3. Analysis of moderated regression of salary

	Willingness to apply job				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Controlled variables					
Gender	-0.028	0.001	-0.004	0.004	0.002
Age	0.020	0.002	0.065	0.034	0.041
Work Experience	0.021	0.005	-0.034	-0.020	-0.023
Education	-0.177**	-.163**	-.149**	-.153**	-.168***
Marital Status	-0.118	-0.132	-0.076	-0.103	-0.112
Independent variable					
Corporate Image		0.680***		0.429***	0.388***
Moderating variable					
Salary			0.660***	0.360***	0.296***
Corporate image*Salary					-0.141*
N	285	285	285	285	285
Max VIF	2.967	2.968	2.977	2.995	2.995
F-value	1.180	44.629	39.919	49.723	45.250
R ²	0.031	0.491	0.463	0.557	0.567
Adj. R ²	0.014	0.480	0.451	0.546	0.555

Note : *p< 0.05 ; **p< 0.01 ; ***p< 0.001; β=standardized coefficient

Table 4. Analysis of moderated regression of job interest

	Willingness to Apply				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Controlled variables					
Gender	-0.028	0.001	-0.004	0.004	0.002
Age	0.020	0.002	0.065	0.034	0.041
Work experience	0.021	0.005	-0.034	-0.020	-0.023
Educational level	-0.177**	-.163**	-.149**	-.153**	-.168***
Marital status	-0.118	-0.132	-0.076	-0.103	-0.112
Independent variable					
Corporate image		0.680***		0.437***	0.351***
Moderator variable					
Job interest			0.656***	0.366***	0.321***
Corporate image *Job interest					-0.186***
N	285	285	285	285	285
Max VIF	2.967	2.968	2.972	2.981	2.984
F-value	1.180	44.629	39.278	51.345	48.518
R2	0.031	0.491	0.459	0.565	0.584
Adj. R2	0.014	0.480	0.447	0.554	0.572

Note : *p< 0.05 ; **p< 0.01 ; ***p< 0.001; β=standardized coefficient

Figures

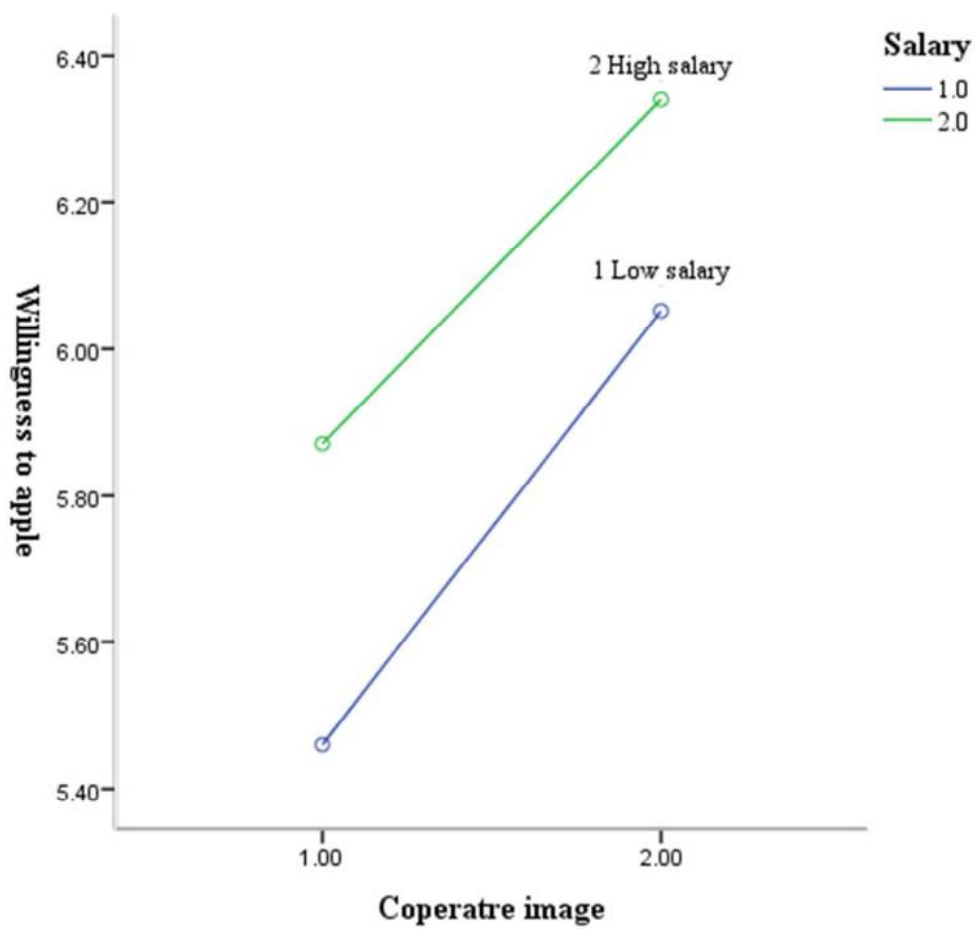


Figure 1. Moderating effect of salary

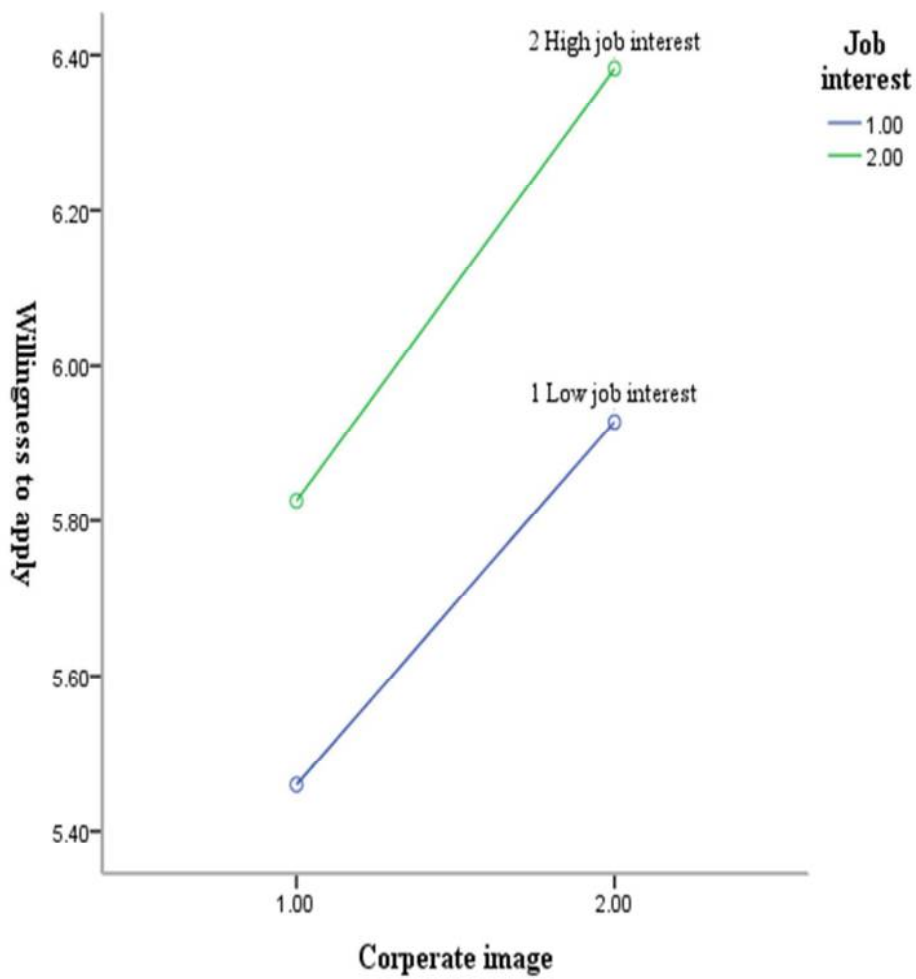


Figure 2. Moderating effects of job interest