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# The Impact of Employer Brand and Company Reputation on Physician's Intention to Apply in Healthcare Through Job Preference

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## Abstrak

Saat ini, fasilitas kesehatan sedang menghadapi persaingan dalam menarik talenta terbaik karena kekurangan tenaga medis profesional potensial di pasar tenaga kerja. Dokter merupakan sumber daya manusia utama dalam mencapai tujuan pengembangan bisnis di fasilitas kesehatan. Untuk menarik niat melamar kerja dokter, perusahaan perlu meningkatkan daya tariknya sehingga fasilitas kesehatan menjadi pilihan tempat kerja yang disukai. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengaruh langsung *employer brand* dan reputasi perusahaan sebagai variabel independen terhadap niat melamar kerja dokter, serta pengaruh tidak langsung dari preferensi pekerjaan sebagai variabel mediasi di PT. Prodia Widyahusada, Tbk. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner yang disebarakan kepada 88 dokter spesialis penyakit dalam di Kota Medan. Pengisian kuesioner dilakukan menggunakan skala Likert dan data yang dikumpulkan dianalisis menggunakan *Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Square* (SEM-PLS) untuk menilai hubungan antar variabel. Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa *employer brand* dan reputasi perusahaan secara positif mempengaruhi niat melamar kerja dokter. Selain itu, preferensi pekerjaan secara positif memediasi hubungan antara *employer brand*, reputasi perusahaan, dan niat melamar kerja. Berdasarkan hasil ini, Prodia harus membangun *employer brand* yang kuat dan reputasi perusahaan yang positif untuk meningkatkan preferensi pekerjaan dokter, yang pada akhirnya dapat meningkatkan niat untuk melamar kerja. Dengan demikian, Prodia dapat menarik calon dokter potensial yang mampu berkontribusi pada tujuan pengembangan bisnis perusahaan.

**Kata Kunci:** Employer Brand; Reputasi Perusahaan; Preferensi Pekerjaan; Niat Melamar Kerja; Dokter

## Abstract

Healthcare facilities are currently facing competition in attracting top talent due to a shortage of potential medical professionals in the labor market. Physicians are a primary human resource in achieving business development goals within healthcare facilities. To attract potential physicians, companies need to enhance their appeal so that healthcare facilities become a preferred workplace choice. This study aims to examine the direct influence of employer brand and company reputation as independent variables on physicians' job application intentions, as well as the indirect influence of job preferences as a mediating variable in PT. Prodia Widyahusada, Tbk. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 88 internal medicine specialists in Medan City. The questionnaires utilized a Likert scale, and the collected data were analyzed using *Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Square* (SEM-PLS) to assess the relationships between variables. The study results indicate that employer brand and company reputation positively affect physicians' job application intentions. Additionally, job preferences positively mediate the relationship between employer brand, company reputation, and job application intentions. Based on these findings, Prodia must build a strong employer brand and positive company reputation to enhance physicians' job preferences, ultimately increasing their intention to apply for a job. Consequently, Prodia can attract potential physicians who can contribute to the company's business development objectives.

**Keywords:** Employer Brand; Company Reputation; Job Preferences; Intention to Apply; Physician

## 1. Introduction

In accordance with Government Regulation No. 28 of 2024, Health Service Facilities are defined as locations and/or resources utilized to deliver healthcare services to individuals and the wider community. These services encompass promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative, and palliative efforts and may be administered by the central government, regional governments, or community-based entities. Over the last eleven years, Indonesia has experienced a significant expansion in the number of health

service facilities, with an increase of approximately 80%. This rapid growth has intensified competition within the national healthcare sector (Tambun et al., 2024).

Among the prominent healthcare providers in Indonesia is PT Prodia Widyahusada Tbk, a leading organization specializing in clinical laboratory diagnostic services (Narolita & Gede, 2020). One of its largest branches is Prodia Medan S. Parman. To remain competitive in the healthcare industry in Medan City, during 2025–2026 Prodia Medan S. Parman expanded its healthcare business not only in the field of clinical laboratory testing but also by establishing a Main Clinic specializing in Internal Medicine. In addition, a Main Clinic is categorized as a healthcare facility that delivers specialized medical services or an integrated combination of general and specialized care. Human resources (HR) are essential assets in such clinics, responsible for delivering services and carrying out operations to achieve the organization's strategic goals, vision, and mission (Soeling et al., 2022; Tambun et al., 2024). The primary human resource in achieving business development goals in healthcare facilities is the physician (Tambun et al., 2024). In the modern era, organizational challenges do not solely stem from the economic market but also from the labor market, which has become a critical issue in corporate management (Nurfaizi & Abdi, 2024). Beyond competition in products or services, companies are also faced with competition in attracting the best talent, commonly referred to as the “war for talent” (Stuss, 2020).

This phenomenon also affects the healthcare industry due to a talent shortage, particularly the limited availability of qualified medical professionals such as physicians (Tambun et al., 2024). To attract such potential physicians, healthcare organizations must increase physicians' willingness to choose their facilities as a preferred workplace (Nurfaizi, 2024). The willingness to apply for a job, often referred to as the “intention to apply,” is the individual's intention to obtain employment, beginning with seeking job-related information and ending with choosing the organization to which they will apply (Setiawan & Ria, 2021). Furthermore, job application intention serves as a strong predictor in the early stages of recruitment attractiveness. Without this stage, subsequent recruitment processes, including selection, cannot proceed. Thus, organizations must understand the factors influencing intention to apply, as effective recruitment is essential (Soeling et al., 2022). One such factor is physicians' job preferences, which significantly affect their intention to apply to healthcare facilities (Tian et al., 2023). According to Kozak (2020), job preference refers to an individual's inclination in choosing a particular job. Prior studies by Koelewijn et al. (2014) and Tian et al. (2023) indicate that the greater the alignment between physicians' job preferences and the attributes of a healthcare facility, the stronger their intention to apply to that facility.

Individual preferences in employment are shaped by various determinants, one of which is the employer brand. It plays a critical role in influencing physicians' decisions when evaluating employment opportunities in healthcare institutions (Koelewijn et al., 2014). As defined by Soeling et al. (2022), employer brand refers to the collection of benefits and values offered by an organization to its workforce, aimed at establishing a unique and favorable image among existing and potential employees. This branding strategy seeks to foster employee loyalty while simultaneously attracting new talent. The attractiveness of an employer brand is closely linked to how prospective applicants perceive its value; consequently, organizations with stronger employer brands tend to generate higher levels of interest from job seekers (Soeling et al., 2022). Supporting this view, Suwarsi et al. (2024) highlight that healthcare institutions with well-established employer brands are more likely to be regarded as preferred employers by physicians.

In addition to employer brand, corporate reputation is another key consideration for job seekers that influences job application intentions (Ekhsan & Nur, 2021). Corporate reputation refers to an organization's ability to attract potential employees. A stronger corporate reputation increases an individual's intention to apply for a job in that organization (Silva, 2022). Lui et al. (2016) suggest that a strong reputation of healthcare facilities can also enhance physicians' personal image. Moreover, job seekers typically compare multiple organizations before applying. Corporate reputation serves as a reference point for assessing workplace environment and conditions across different organizations. Therefore, it is crucial for companies to develop a strong reputation to attract talented candidates, thereby creating a competitive advantage (Soeling et al., 2022).

In line with Prodia Medan S. Parman's business development into clinical services, the branch must attract qualified internal medicine specialists to provide healthcare services and establish a competitive advantage in its new line of business. To date, no study has examined the influence of employer brand and corporate reputation on physicians' intention to apply at Prodia Medan S. Parman. Therefore, this study aims to determine the extent to which employer brand and corporate reputation affect physicians' intention to apply at Prodia Medan S. Parman. Additionally, this study explores the mediating role of job preference in the relationship between employer brand, corporate reputation, and physicians' intention to apply at Prodia Medan S. Parman.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. *The Relationship Between Employer Brand and Intention to Apply*

The association between employer branding and individuals' intention to apply for a position can be interpreted through the lens of Signaling Theory (Spence, 1973). This theoretical framework suggests that employer brand acts as a signal conveying essential organizational attributes—such as reputation, workplace culture, career advancement prospects, and employee welfare—to potential applicants. Job seekers rely on these signals to evaluate the degree of alignment between their personal values and

aspirations and those of the organization. Empirical evidence provided by Spurk, Hirschi, and Dries (2021) confirms a positive and direct relationship between employer brand and intention to apply, demonstrating that employer branding strategies emphasizing organizational strengths and growth opportunities significantly enhance candidates' willingness to submit applications. Consistent with these findings, research by Soeling et al. (2022) revealed that a strong employer brand within the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector positively influenced application intentions among final-year university students.

### *2.2 The Relationship Between Corporate Reputation and Intention to Apply*

The relationship between corporate reputation and intention to apply can be understood through Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This theory suggests that individuals tend to identify themselves with groups or organizations that hold a positive image and reputation, as such affiliations strengthen their social identity and self-esteem. Applicants who perceive a company as having a strong reputation are more likely to apply, as they believe that employment in such an organization will enhance their social status and quality of life. Research conducted by Turban and Cable (2021) and Silvia (2022) confirmed that positive corporate reputation significantly increases job application intentions. A good reputation fosters perceptions that the company offers a stable work environment, promising career opportunities, and adequate employee welfare.

### *2.3 The Relationship Between Job Preference and Intention to Apply*

The relationship between job preference and intention to apply can be explained using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) proposed by Ajzen (1991). According to this theory, an individual's intention to perform a behavior, such as applying for a job, is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Job preference, which reflects a positive attitude toward a particular organization or position, can directly enhance intention to apply, as individuals are motivated to pursue opportunities aligned with their values and goals. When applicants hold strong job preferences, they are more likely to take concrete actions, such as submitting applications, because they perceive the job to be consistent with their aspirations. Studies by Nguyen et al. (2022) and Zhang et al. (2021) also found that job preferences—including personal intentions, values, and skill alignment—significantly influence intention to apply.

## **3. Research Method**

### *3.1. Population and Sample*

Hermawan (2019) explains that a population refers to a defined group of objects or individuals possessing particular characteristics established by the researcher for the purpose of investigation and inference. Meanwhile, Sugiyono (2017) describes a sample as a portion of the population that represents these identified characteristics. In the present study, the population consisted of internal medicine specialists who were registered clients of Prodia Medan S. Parman in 2024. These physicians had previously referred patients to Prodia for laboratory diagnostic services, resulting in a total population of 88 doctors.

This research applied a non-probability sampling approach, specifically utilizing a saturated sampling or census method. According to Hermawan (2019), saturated sampling is considered appropriate when the population size is relatively limited, typically fewer than 100 participants, as it involves including all members of the population as research subjects. Accordingly, the sample in this study was equivalent to the population, encompassing all 88 internal medicine specialists who were clients of Prodia Medan S. Parman.

### *3.2. Research Instrument*

Data were analyzed using SmartPLS software, as the research model adopts a reflective measurement approach. In a reflective framework, observed indicators are assumed to be manifestations of the underlying latent constructs (Ghozali & Latan, 2020). To examine the relationships among latent variables, this study applied Structural Equation Modeling based on the Partial Least Squares approach (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS version 4.0. As outlined by Ghozali and Latan (2020), PLS-SEM comprises two primary components: the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model). The measurement model explains the extent to which observed indicators accurately reflect their respective latent constructs, whereas the structural model evaluates the magnitude and direction of the relationships among the latent variables or constructs within the proposed research framework.

## **4. Result and Discussions**

### *4.1. Evaluation of the Outer Model (Measurement Model)*

The evaluation of the outer model, or measurement model, describes the relationship between each block of indicators and their corresponding latent variables. The results of the outer model testing in this study are presented in Figure 1.

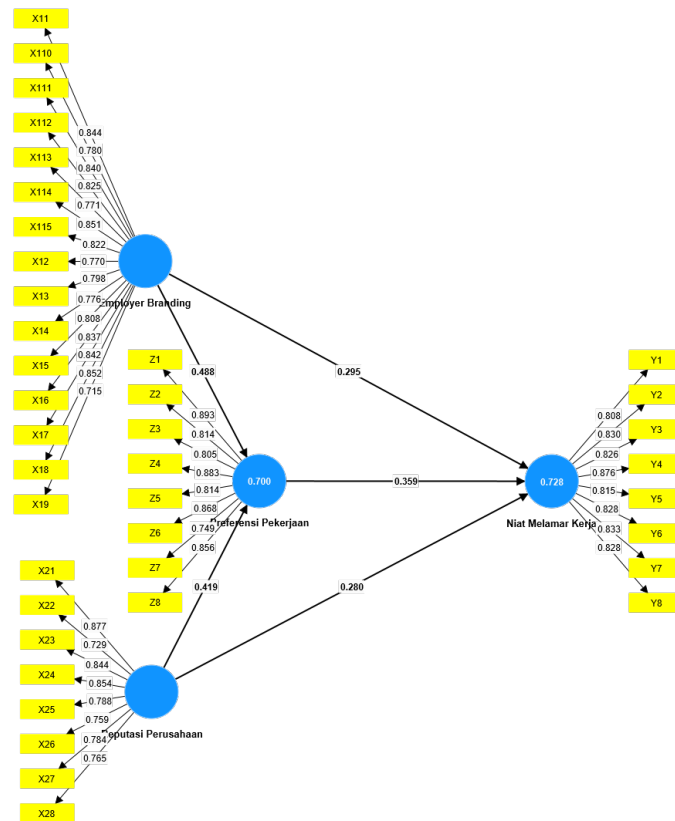


Figure 1. Evaluation of the Outer Model

In SmartPLS analysis, the evaluation of the outer model is conducted using two criteria: (1) testing the validity of variables through convergent validity, and (2) testing the reliability of variables through composite reliability. Convergent validity is assessed using outer loading (loading factor) values. An indicator is considered to demonstrate good convergent validity if its outer loading exceeds 0.70. Based on Figure 1, the results of data processing indicate that all outer loading values, or correlations between constructs and their indicators, are greater than 0.70. Thus, it can be concluded that all indicators satisfy the requirements of convergent validity and are valid.

Tabel 1 Composite Reliability

Variable	Composite Reliability	Interpretation
Employer Brand	0,966	Reliable
Intention to Apply	0,947	Reliable
Job Preference	0,949	Reliable
Corporate Reputation	0,935	Reliable

Then, composite reliability is used to assess the internal consistency of variable indicators. A variable is considered to meet the composite reliability requirement if its value exceeds 0.70. Table 1 presents the composite reliability values for each construct in this study. The results show that the composite reliability for the constructs of Employer Brand, Intention to Apply, Job Preference, and Corporate Reputation ranges between 0.935 and 0.966, all exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.70. These results indicate that all constructs demonstrate strong reliability.

4.2 Evaluation of the Inner Model (Structural Model)

The evaluation of the inner model in SEM-PLS is conducted to test the relationships among latent constructs. Figure 2 presents the PLS program scheme for the inner model evaluation in this study. The relationships between latent constructs are explained as follows:

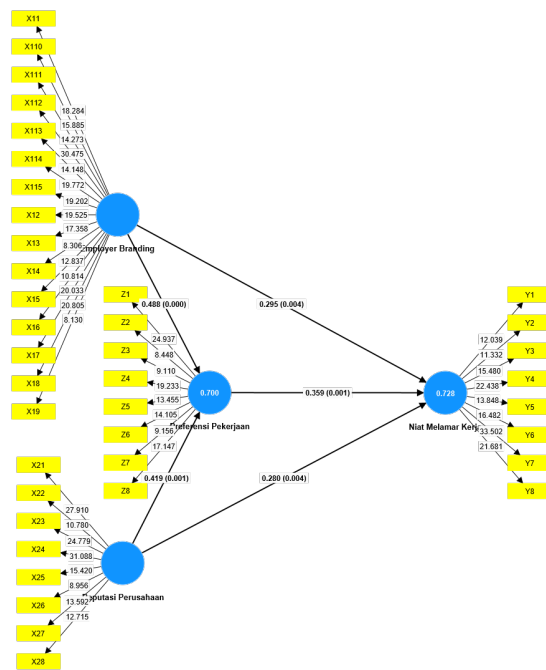


Figure 2 Evaluation of the Inner Model

4.2.1 Employer Brand and Intention to Apply

The results indicate that Prodia’s employer brand exerts a positive and statistically significant influence on the intention of internal medicine specialists to submit job applications (path coefficient = 0.295,  $p = 0.004$ ). This finding supports Signaling Theory (Spence, 1973), which explains that employer branding operates as a reliable signal that reduces information asymmetry by communicating organizational quality to prospective physicians. In this context, Prodia’s employer brand conveys multiple value dimensions, including attractiveness, social, economic, development, and application values. These favorable signals help mitigate uncertainty among specialists when assessing Prodia as a potential workplace, thereby strengthening their intention to apply.

The present findings are consistent with the work of Terjesen et al. (2022), who reported that in highly competitive healthcare labor markets, a strong employer brand functions as an effective signaling tool for attracting qualified medical professionals. Likewise, Backhaus and Tikoo (2022) found that healthcare practitioners—particularly medical specialists—tend to favor organizations whose employer brands highlight opportunities for career advancement, supportive and collaborative work environments, and competitive remuneration. Drawing on these insights, Prodia can further enhance its employer brand by emphasizing state-of-the-art medical infrastructure, broad professional networks, research engagement opportunities, and targeted professional development and compensation schemes aligned with the expectations of internal medicine specialists.

4.2.2 Employer Brand and Job Preference

The study also found that Prodia’s employer brand has a positive and significant effect on job preference among internal medicine specialists (path coefficient = 0.488,  $p = 0.001$ ). This finding is in line with the Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) Theory proposed by Schneider (1987), which suggests that organizations with strong employer brands naturally attract individuals whose values and career aspirations align with organizational characteristics. In this context, internal medicine specialists seeking workplaces with advanced medical facilities and opportunities for professional development are more likely to form strong preferential perceptions.

This indicates that the benefits offered by an organization in creating a distinctive identity in the eyes of employees and applicants can shape strong job preferences among physicians. Recent research by Kumar and Sharma (2023) also found that job preferences formed through a strong employer brand can enhance candidate commitment from the early stages of recruitment. These findings imply that Prodia’s efforts in employer branding not only generate awareness but also actively shape preferential perceptions that influence application decisions. According to Sivertzen et al. (2022), employer branding in healthcare that highlights advanced medical facilities and attractive compensation programs tends to generate strong appeal among highly qualified medical professionals.

#### 4.2.3 Corporate Reputation and Intention to Apply

The results further demonstrate that Prodia's corporate reputation has a significant positive influence on the intention of internal medicine specialists to apply (coefficient = 0.280,  $p = 0.004$ ). This relationship can be explained through Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which suggests that individuals are more likely to identify with organizations that hold a positive reputation, as such affiliations enhance their self-esteem and social identity.

In the healthcare context, Malhotra et al. (2022) confirmed that specialists, as professionals with strong identities, are more motivated to join reputable healthcare institutions such as Prodia, as this strengthens their professional identity while also providing social legitimacy. This finding is consistent with Handoko and Wibowo (2021), who emphasized that corporate reputation in the healthcare sector is a decisive factor influencing specialists' choice of workplace. Prodia's position as a leading diagnostic laboratory provides a credible signal regarding organizational quality, work facilities, and professional standards valued by internal medicine specialists.

Recent studies also reinforce this argument. Liu et al. (2023) found that medical specialists highly value the clinical and academic reputation of healthcare institutions in career considerations. Johnson et al. (2023) argue that healthcare reputation must be managed holistically, encompassing clinical performance, research contributions, and social responsibility. Therefore, Prodia is advised to actively communicate its achievements in diagnostic excellence, collaborations with leading medical institutions, and contributions to the advancement of internal medicine. Anderson and Brown (2023) further showed that specialists respond positively to clinical reputation when supported by empirical evidence and recognition from the medical community. Strengthening Prodia's reputation among internal medicine specialists can thus be an effective strategy to attract high-quality talent.

#### 4.2.4 Corporate Reputation and Job Preference

The findings indicate that Prodia's corporate reputation has a significant effect on the job preferences of internal medicine specialists, with a path coefficient of 0.419 ( $p = 0.001$ ). This result can be explained by the Person–Organization Fit Theory proposed by Kristof (1996), which states that individuals tend to choose organizations whose values and characteristics align with their professional identity. As a leading diagnostic laboratory, Prodia's strong reputation in the field of internal medicine creates a distinct appeal for specialists seeking a work environment that supports the development of clinical competencies and research. Gupta and Sharma (2023) confirmed that medical specialists tend to demonstrate strong job preferences toward highly reputable institutions due to the perceived alignment between their professional values and organizational values.

The relationship between corporate reputation and job preference in this study also reflects the P–O Fit mechanism through cognitive evaluation processes. According to Cable and Judge (2021), organizational reputation serves as critical information used by professionals to assess their compatibility with an organization. In the context of Prodia, reputation in internal medicine diagnostics provides a strong signal regarding clinical development opportunities, quality of facilities, and professional working conditions—factors highly valued by internal medicine specialists. A recent study by Lee and Park (2023) also found that medical specialists tend to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of organizational reputation as a proxy for predicting their fit with the organization's culture and working system.

#### 4.2.5 Job Preference and Intention to Apply

The results reveal that job preference significantly influences the intention of internal medicine specialists to apply, with a path coefficient of 0.359 ( $p = 0.001$ ). This finding is consistent with the attitude toward behavior component of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which suggests that positive attitudes toward job characteristics shape behavioral intentions. In the context of Prodia, preferences for aspects such as advanced diagnostic facilities create strong behavioral beliefs, thereby enhancing the intention to apply.

Putra and Santoso (2023) similarly confirmed in their study of medical specialists that job preferences based on objective evaluations of facilities and work systems are strong predictors of job application intentions within the TPB framework. Furthermore, Nguyen et al. (2022) and Zhang et al. (2021) found that job preferences encompassing personal goals, values, and skill alignment significantly influence intention to apply. Job preference, as a reflection of positive attitudes toward a company or specific position, directly increases intention to apply, as individuals are motivated to pursue opportunities that align with their values and aspirations. When candidates have strong job preferences, they are more likely to engage in concrete actions, such as submitting applications, because they perceive the job to be consistent with their professional goals.

#### 4.2.6 Employer Brand and Intention to Apply Through Job Preference

The findings demonstrate that Prodia's employer brand significantly affects physicians' intention to apply through the mediating role of job preference, with an indirect path coefficient of 0.175 ( $p = 0.008$ ). This result is consistent with Sivertzen et al. (2023), who noted that a strong employer brand generates positive job preferences by influencing applicants' perceptions of job characteristics such as work environment, development opportunities, and compensation. In the case of Prodia, its positive

image as a leading diagnostic service provider strengthens physicians' job preferences, which ultimately enhances their intention to apply. Kumar and Sharma (2022) also confirmed that employer branding in the healthcare sector plays a critical role in shaping job preferences among medical professionals, particularly for those seeking stability and clinical development.

The mediating mechanism of job preference in the relationship between employer brand and intention to apply can also be explained through Signaling Theory (Spence, 1973). Employer brand functions as a signal that reduces information uncertainty for prospective applicants, thereby shaping their preferences for specific jobs. Ghosh et al. (2023) found that employer brands emphasizing licensing status, workplace facilities, organizational culture, and opportunities for clinical research significantly enhance job preferences, which in turn influence application decisions. In the context of Prodia, job preferences shaped by employer brand serve as a key factor that bridges positive perceptions of the organization with concrete behavioral intentions (i.e., intention to apply).

#### 4.2.7 Corporate Reputation and Intention to Apply Through Job Preference

The findings further demonstrate that Prodia's corporate reputation has a significant indirect effect on physicians' intention to apply through job preference as a mediating variable, with an indirect path coefficient of 0.150 ( $p = 0.027$ ). This outcome aligns with the argument of Handoko and Wibowo (2023), who suggested that organizational reputation in the healthcare sector functions as an important heuristic guiding job preference formation among medical specialists. In Prodia's context, its established standing as a leading diagnostic laboratory fosters favorable perceptions of employment quality, which subsequently enhance physicians' willingness to pursue job opportunities within the organization. Consistent evidence is also provided by Liu et al. (2022), whose multi-hospital study across 15 referral institutions revealed a positive association between clinical reputation and physicians' job preferences.

Further supporting this perspective, Chen and Zhang (2023) highlighted that corporate reputation represents a credible informational signal that shapes job preference development among medical professionals. A well-regarded organization is commonly perceived as offering a conducive work environment alongside transparent and sustainable career advancement pathways, thereby increasing its attractiveness to highly qualified candidates. Accordingly, Prodia's reputation as a trusted diagnostic service provider plays a pivotal role in influencing the specific job preferences of internal medicine specialists..

## 5. Conclusion

This study concludes that both employer brand and corporate reputation play critical roles in influencing physicians' intention to apply, either directly or indirectly through the mediating role of job preference. The findings demonstrate that a strong employer brand not only enhances physicians' application intentions by signaling organizational quality, opportunities for development, and competitive benefits, but also strengthens their job preferences, which further increase the likelihood of applying. Similarly, corporate reputation was found to significantly shape physicians' professional preferences by providing credible signals regarding clinical excellence, organizational culture, and long-term career opportunities, ultimately fostering stronger application intentions. Overall, the results highlight the importance for healthcare organizations, particularly diagnostic service providers such as Prodia, to strategically manage both employer branding and corporate reputation as key mechanisms to attract and retain high-quality medical talent in an increasingly competitive healthcare labor market.

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