

FACTORS INFLUENCING INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A JOB ACROSS THREE LIFE STAGES: A  
STUDY IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT



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THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FELLOW  
PROGRAMME IN MANAGEMENT

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT

INDORE

BY

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FEBRUARY 17, 2015

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# FACTORS INFLUENCING INTENTION TO APPLY FOR A JOB ACROSS THREE LIFE STAGES A STUDY IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

## **Abstract**

Organizations all over the world struggle to win the war for talent. Paradoxically this is even more acute in a growing economy like India, where the demographic dividend and the burgeoning education industry should ideally be able to sustain this demand. However, this is clearly not the case as recent studies indicate that less than 25 percent of the graduating populations are “employable”. The war for talent is critical for strategic and competitive advantage for organizations. There is now wide agreement among practitioners and researchers that talent shortages are going to be one of the greatest challenges before the organizations in the coming decade.

Given the importance of talent in organizations, there is a need to understand the factors that motivates the talent pool to consider an organization for a job. Studies have indicated that multiple factors influence the applicants’ intention to apply for a job in an organization. These factors may be different across various life stages of the applicants. However, studies exploring the critical factors that might influence intention to apply for job across life stages is relatively scant. The present study proposes to address this gap.

The present study explores the factors that influence applicants’ intention to apply for a job across three life stages, within two industries, specifically the Manufacturing and IT/ITeS sectors in India. Based on 889 respondents in the Manufacturing and 1093 respondents in the IT/ITeS industries, the study found support for some of the assertions regarding the factors influencing applicants’ intention to consider an organization for a job. The implications of the study are discussed.

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## ABSTRACT

Organizations all over the world struggle to win the war for talent. This is paradoxically, even more acute in a growing economy like India, where the demographic dividend and the burgeoning education industry should ideally be able to sustain this demand. However, this does not seem to be the case. For example, recent studies indicate that about less than 25% of the graduating population were “employable”<sup>1</sup>. The war for talent is argued to be critical for strategic and competitive advantage in organizations (Ariss, Cascio, & Paauwe, 2013; Chambers, Foulon, Handfield-Jones, Hankin, & Michaels, 1998; Gatewood, Gowan, & Lautenschlager, 1993; Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001; Rynes, 1991; Turban & Greening, 1997). There is now wide agreement among practitioners and researchers that talent shortages is going to be one of the greatest challenges facing organisations in the coming decade (Ariss, Cascio, & Paauwe, 2013; Festing & Schafer, 2013; Mellahi & Collings, 2010; Tymon, Stumpf, & Doh, 2010).

Given that this war has to be won by organizations, it warrants a deep understanding of the motivators and behaviours of the talent pool. Multiple predictors influence the applicants’ intention to apply for a job with a particular organization. These predictors may be common or differ across various life stages of applicants (Festing & Schafer, 2013). The potential applicants may be considered as a target segment across three life stages (i.e. entry level talent, mid-management level talent and leadership level talent) which align with the exploration, establishment and maintenance life stages of an individual. Most of existing research on applicant attraction has predominantly had a narrow focus on studying the impact of organizations’ communication and recruitment process on applicant interest. In

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.aspiringminds.in/docs/national\\_employability\\_report\\_engineers\\_2011.pdf](http://www.aspiringminds.in/docs/national_employability_report_engineers_2011.pdf)

addition, most of the studies on factors influencing applicant attraction have drawn inferences from campus student responses. Increasingly researchers (Festing & Schafer, 2013) feel that understanding and managing the generational differences in issues of becoming an employer of choice, is critical for effective talent management. In India, there exists a wide berth of talent at the campus level and there is neither any apparent dearth of talent nor a war for talent at this segment. Clearly there exists an avenue for further research (Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries, & Gonzales-Cruz, 2013), "... to examine the differences at the organizational, departmental, sectoral, country and/or cultural level using multi-level designs".

Therefore, there is the need to do research on understanding the main predictors which shape the behaviours of the talent segments and how these translate into their intention to apply for a job across different life stages.