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경영학석사학위논문

The Influence of Employer Brand Personality on Attraction: Focusing on the Moderation of Self-esteem

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조 은 서

The Influence of Employer Brand Personality on Attraction: Focusing on the Moderation of Self-esteem

지도 교수 강 성 춘

이 논문을 경영학 석사 학위논문으로 제출함

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서울대학교 대학원
경영학과 경영학 전공

조 은 서

조은서의 석사학위논문을 인준함


2021 년 2 월

위 원 장
부위원장
위 원

최 진 남

이 정 면

강 성 춘



Abstract

This study attempts to unravel the mixed message in the extant literature regarding how an employer brand personality attracts applicants. In particular, this paper aims to show how stable personal characteristics moderate the relative effect of symbolic considerations against the instrumental job attributes and what kind of self-concept works as focal imagery for job seekers. Based on the social identity theory and self-congruity theory, the moderation and moderated moderation of self-esteem on the relationships between five employer brand personality dimensions, the Big Five personality, and organizational attraction are hypothesized. The clustered regression analyses with a sample of 196 university students revealed that while the incremental variance of firms' employer images was significant over the effect of instrumental job considerations, the hypothesized moderation effects were not significant. Implications of the results are discussed.

Keyword: Attraction, Employer brand personality, Big Five personality, self-esteem, social identity theory, self-congruity theory

Student Number: 2018-24332

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I. INTRODUCTION

The focus and goal of recruitment studies have been how to increase the number of attracted job seekers to an organization in some parts of the literature. Breaugh (1992) has emphasized, however, that the goal of the long process of recruiting should rather be directed towards the better quality of the candidates than the quantity. Acknowledging that other functions of human resources management are linked to recruiting, scholars have established a great body of research on the objectives, strategy, and detailed activities of recruitment and variables or elements that influence each of them (Breaugh & Starke, 2000).

In line with this interest, scholars started to introduce the literature on brand and brand management in marketing studies to better attract the recruits that fit better to the organization by establishing *recruitment equity* (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Cable & Turban, 2001). After Lievens and Highhouse (2003) showed inferred symbolic traits of the organizations have incremental variance over and above the effect of instrumental attributes — such as pay level, benefits, opportunities for, advancement and location — employer brand research started to investigate when and how this effect

becomes stronger or weaker. Over the last decade, several studies have shown that individual differences, such as personality, self-presentation motives, or demography, for example, moderates the attraction on different symbolic images or brands of the firms (e.g. (Lievens, 2007; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016; Slaughter & Greguras, 2009)).

Theories supporting these studies can be listed as person-organization fit perception (Kristof-brown et al., 1998), functionalist approach (Shavitt, 1990), signaling theory (Spence, 1973), social identity theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel, 1982), and elaboration likelihood model(ELM) of persuasion (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Studies based on the person-organization fit perception of applicants have shown that individuals prefer employer brands with which they perceive supplementary fit (Cable & Judge, 1996; Judge & Cable, 1997; Wei, Chang, Lin, & Liang, 2016) as well as complementary fit (Kausel & Slaughter, 2011; Slaughter & Greguras, 2009). The functionalist approach views attitude regarding its function and personal needs and explains that attitude serves utilitarian, social-identity, and self-esteem maintenance functions (Argyriou & Melewar, 2011; Shavitt, 1990). With the social-identity function of attitude, studies explained how socially constructed positive attitude towards a brand leads to the organizational attraction (Highhouse, Thornbury, & Little, 2007).

Signaling theory supports the employer brand personality effect on attraction by telling that the symbolic traits attached to the organizations signal information for job seekers about whom they would work with or how it would be like to work in an organization (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Social identity theory provides and explains why individuals choose or intend to apply for organizations that portray similar personality image with themselves and why organizations perceived as prestigious are preferred over the others (Highhouse et al., 2007; Schreurs, Druart, Proost, & De Witte, 2009). The ELM explains that application decisions for individuals take a central than a peripheral route, taking a relative variety of information into consideration before making the final decision (Cable & Turban, 2001; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016).

However, there are two questions unanswered previously. First, how some of the personal characteristics change the extent to which one takes the employer's symbolic aspect into account has not been investigated at this point. Previous studies mainly dealt with each dimension's relative strength of symbolic inferences on the attraction moderated by the third individual-level variable. It was stated that given the equivalent level of consideration given for an employer brand personality, some personal attributes perceive greater or lesser attraction to the organization. How the incremental variance of

employer brand personality over and above the instrumental considerations of job choice could differ awaits further explanation.

Second, the extant literature gives a mixed message regarding which employer brand personality are job seekers attracted to. Some of them insist that the similarity leads individuals to show a preference (Avery & McKay, 2006; Kausel & Slaughter, 2011; Schreurs et al., 2009; Slaughter & Greguras, 2009), while the others provide how recruitment equity is rather established by prestigious and reputable image as employing firms (Cable & Turban, 2001; DeArmond & Crawford, 2011; Highhouse et al., 2007; Wei et al., 2016). This is contrary to the marketing literature, which specifies the self-concept from a multidimensional perspective (Sirgy, 1982). Specifically, the match between the brand personality and one of the self-concepts is investigated with the various underlying motivation or boundary conditions (Aguirre-Rodriguez, Bosnjak, & Sirgy, 2012). As the concept of the brand, brand management, and brand personality could be applied to the recruitment and organizational context, the way individuals reflect their self-concept on their application decision would not be too far from the mechanism of consumer decision-making.

The present paper holds two purposes. One, it attempts to provide how individual personality and self-esteem moderate the relative effect of employer brand personality against the utilitarian

considerations. Additionally, it attempts to fill the research gap by specifying the self-concept with which individuals refer to in attraction to organizations. This paper will establish a three-way interaction hypothesis among employer brand personality, the Big Five personality, and self-esteem influencing the organizational attraction.

The following section presents the background literature on organizational attraction, employer brand, personality dimensions, and social identity theory. After the review of relevant research, an empirical study design is introduced. The analyses and the results follow it. Lastly, a summary of the study, and the limitations and contributions of this paper are discussed.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. Organizational Attractiveness

Recruitment research has long been focused on attracting talents based on the human resources department's recruitment activities and inducements (Rynes & Barber, 1990). Job and organizational characteristics such as pay level, work environment, type of work, advancement, location, and size were examined in terms of inducements (Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005). In terms of recruitment activities, the effect of recruitment sources, messages, timing, recruiter characteristics, justice perception on the recruitment process, hiring expectancies were examined (Breaugh & Starke, 2000; Chapman et al., 2005; Rynes & Barber, 1990). Specifically, the effect of diverse routes that individuals stumble upon job posts was found to have differing impacts on organizational attractiveness (Rynes & Barber, 1990). For recruiter characteristics, practitioners were preferred over human resource personnel with greater credibility and minority status of organizational representatives in influencing attractiveness (Avery & McKay, 2006; Breaugh & Starke, 2000). However, most early studies focusing on organizational representatives in the campus recruiting context were

found to lose their significance when tested with other elements (Rynes & Barber, 1990). The lengthy process dropped an organization's attractiveness compared to the timely ones in some parts, while the certainty of job offer significantly influenced the attraction (Rynes & Barber, 1990).

The effect of organizational image on attraction has not been as extensively examined until the 1990s (Gatewood, Gowan, & Lautenschlager, 1993). The brand-equity perspective from marketing studies (Keller, 1993) was introduced to the recruitment context relatively recently (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Cable & Turban, 2001). With this perspective, organization image was found from the following studies to have a meaningful influence on recruitment outcomes, including attraction to organizations (Chapman et al., 2005; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016).

2. Employer Brand

2.1 Brand in the recruiting context

The concept of a brand can be defined as “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to

differentiate them from those of competitors” (Kotler, 1991; p.442), and brand equity is formed based on brand knowledge, which is consisted of brand image and brand awareness (Keller, 1993). Various marketing studies have shown how brands can enhance awareness or establish a brand image, how brand image influence customer loyalty or brand preference, what kind of function does brand awareness have on this effect, or how individual difference makes a difference in the relationship between brand equity and customer behavior(e.g. Kim, Han, & Park, 2001; Kressmann, Sirgay, Herrmann, Huber, Huber, & Lee, 2006; Lin, 2010; Sung & Kim, 2010; Hosany & Martin, 2012). The major theoretical explanation on the relationship between customers’ self-image and brand image was made via self-congruity or social identity theory (Aaker, 1997). Individuals would try implicitly or explicitly to wear the brand images that products or services have with the purpose to compensate their self-image, which can either be actual, social, ideal, or ideal social self (Hosany & Martin, 2012). This purposeful behavior is influenced not only by personal attributes but also by the situation at the point of purchase (Aaker, 1999).

Research on human resource management found the brand or branding literature relevant to the job market in effectively attracting, recruiting, and retaining necessary personnel, as the “war for talent” became more competitive and complicated (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016;

Theurer, Tumasjn, Welppe, & Lievens, 2018). Ambler and Barrow (1996) demonstrated the practical implication for investigating employer brands' effect and formation with series of interviews with managers in London, the majority of which relate strong employer brand with greater performance and positive reputation. Just as brand knowledge in marketing is a combination of brand awareness and brand image, Cable and Turban (2001) provided the framework for future research on employer brand by conceptualizing employer knowledge as a function of employer familiarity, employer image, and employer reputation.

Based on the literature on integrated marketing communication and how a brand is marketed to the mass or the target, the interest in the role of brands in the HR management perspective was followed by how the employer brand image can be managed. At first, evaluating and identifying the employer image of firms got the most attention, and this interest was followed by studies on the influence recruiting activities, such as campus recruiting or job advertisement, have on the employer brand (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). For instance, the recruiting web-page attribute (e.g. Allen, Mahto, & Otondo, 2007), recruiting tool (e.g. Collins & Han, 2004; Cable & Yu, 2006; Cromheecke, Van Hove, & Lievens, 2013) affect the image or attitude of job seekers differently. Additionally, the moderating effects of firm

characteristics or applicant traits were studied as well, having Christopher Collins and his colleges as the major contributors. They have shown how job seekers' previous knowledge of the brand or the firm's general reputation could affect each recruiting activity (Collins, 2007; Collins & Han, 2004; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016).

2.2 Employer brand and organizational attraction

While the studies mentioned above focused on the employer reputation and employer familiarity among the three components of employer knowledge presented in Cable and Turban (2001), research on the diverse dimension of employer image started to gather attention since the introduction of the instrumental-symbolic framework in Lievens and Highhouse (2003). The framework explains that the employer image is formed by instrumental attributes and symbolic trait inferences of the firms. It was shown from Lievens and Highhouse (2003) and other papers on attraction (Chapman et al., 2005) that perception of instrumental attributes such as pay level, benefits, or location positively influence the attraction of potential applicants. In addition to this, the authors suggested that perception of symbolic attributes have incremental variance on organizational attraction. In

other words, the intangible image of the employer brand could make a significant difference in the job market by differentiating the firms from each other. Following studies have also shown the incremental variance of symbolic attributes on job seekers' attraction (Lievens, Van Hove, & Schreurs, 2005; Van Hove, Bas, Cromheecke, & Lievens, 2013).

2.3 Development of the employer brand personality scales

The dimensions of brand personality in marketing studies, referring to the Big 5 individual personality scales, were developed by Aaker (1997), and this development contributed to numerous studies investigating the effect of each dimension of brand image. The brand personality scale had five dimensions: Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, and Ruggedness. Likewise, acceleration of employer brand studies was made possible by the development of employer brand personality scales. Multiple studies in dissimilar settings have developed the brand personality dimensions in the recruiting context and were named differently. Lievens and Highhouse (2003) identified five dimensions of symbolic trait inferences - Sincerity, Innovativeness, Competence, Prestige, and Robustness -

based on the Belgian banking industry samples. Later on, Lievens et al. (2005) established six dimensions - Sincerity, Cheerfulness, Excitement, Competence, Prestige, Ruggedness - with the samples in a military setting. Meanwhile, Slaughter, Zickar, Highhouse, and Mohr (2004) identified five dimensions of Organizational Personality Perception (OPP): Boy Scout, Innovativeness, Dominance, Thrift, and Style. Davis, Chun, Da Silva, & Roper (2004) developed the Corporate Character Scale, reflecting the firm's external and internal views and the human personality scales. There were five major dimensions - Agreeableness, Ruthlessness, Enterprise, Competence, and Chic - as well as two minor dimensions - Machismo and Informality. Among these scales, OPP by Slaughter et al. (2004) and five symbolic trait inferences from Lievens and Highhouse (2003) were mostly utilized in the later studies (DeArmond & Crawford, 2011; Kausel & Slaughter, 2011; Lievens, 2007; Schreurs et al., 2009; Slaughter & Greguras, 2009).

2.4 Employer brand personality and individual personality

Employer brand personality, as perception on symbolic attributes, had an incrementally significant impact on organizational attraction.

Besides, studies have shown that this effect differs from person to person, depending on their individual difference. For instance, individual personality (Kausel & Slaughter, 2011; Schreurs et al., 2009; Slaughter & Greguras, 2009), social identity consciousness (DeArmond & Crawford, 2011), job application status (Lievens, 2007), gender and ethnicity (Avery & McKay, 2006), cultural background (Turban, Lau, Ngo, Chow & Si, 2001; Caligiuri, Colakoglu, Cerdin, & Kim, 2010; Baun & Kabst, 2013) were found to have a moderating effect on applicant attraction. For research on the moderating role of personality, Schreurs et al. (2009) suggested that the relationship between symbolic trait inferences from Lievens and Highhouse (2003) and organizational attraction is moderated by the Big 5 personality of the applicants. Specifically, high conscientiousness was related positively to the Sincerity dimension, while Openness to experience moderated the effect of Excitement on attraction. Slaughter and Greguras (2009) said that OPP from Slaughter et al. (2004) influence organizational attraction positively, while several of the Big 5 personality dimensions moderate the relationships of each OPP dimensions: Conscientiousness moderated the effect of Boy Scout, Innovativeness, and Thrift; Openness moderated the effect of Innovativeness and Style; Extraversion moderated the effect of Thrift. Kausel and Slaughter (2011) also found a significant main effect

between OPP and organizational attraction, while they attempted to explain why the majority of hypotheses in the previous studies were not supported by focusing on sub-scales of the Big 5 personality and by providing the complementary fit perspective. They have shown that Trustworthiness (a sub-scale of Boy Scout dimension) was moderated by Trust (a sub-scale of Agreeableness), Dominance was moderated by Assertiveness (a sub-scale of Extraversion), and Innovativeness was moderated by Imagination (a sub-scale of Openness).

3. Social Identity Theory

3.1 The concept of social identity

Social identity theory was developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, starting from the 1970s, based on the previous research on the intergroup relationship. It takes a social psychology perspective on individuals' or groups' attitudes and behaviors in the context where multiple groups exist. The theory explains that individuals interpret each social group by selectively accentuating the information collected from the social environment and putting the groups or their members into categories (Allport, 1954). Social accentuation helps individuals

process complex social networks (the cognitive function) and incorporate the newly perceived system into the existing one based on the similarities and differences among categories (Tajfel, 1982). This leads individuals to depersonalize those who are affiliated to the out-groups and prescribe attributes to those groups, forming the prototype of each category (Hamilton & Bishop, 1976; Tajfel, 1982; Turner, 1985). With depersonalization, people can rationalize their own behaviors against the out-groups while preferring in-group through positive differentiation, and they are provided with the basis for inferring social relationships and causality of them. Hence the attributes of each category become the identity of the differentiated groups, and one put themselves in a context by defining who they socially are (the social identity) as opposed to who they are independent of any of those social settings (the personal identity) (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The literature on social identity provides two hypotheses explaining why individuals are motivated to form a social identity. One is the need to enhance one's self-esteem by becoming a member of the socially desirable or positively viewed group, and the other is the need to eliminate uncertainty, which suggests that the natural inclination of individuals to reduce uncertainty is applied to the perception of self-concept (Hogg & Terry, 2000).

However, social accentuation is not made on the fixed dimensions

and, rather, the self-categorization occurs contextually (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Specifically, individuals are affiliated to multiple categories, determined by their gender, age, race, job, team, organization, or region, for example. Depending on the situation that an individual is going through, either one of the criteria could become salient. Scholars have established that the accessibility of criteria (category accessibility) interacts with the extent to which one fits with a category (category fit) so that one of the in-groups becomes salient for an individual (Oakes & Turner, 1990; Hogg & Terry, 2000). Single group identity is perceived for an individual at a time, while under a different context, he or she would identify themselves in a different categorical dimension. Research has shown, for instance, the demographic categories are perceived with the situational cues that are emphasized the most (Hogg & Terry, 2000).

Antecedents and determinants of social identification can be summarized into three. One's social identity is influenced by the distinctiveness of the values and practices of the in-group (Oakes & Turner, 1986; Tolman, 1943), the prestige of the affiliated group (Chatman, Bell, & Staw, 1986; March & Simon, 1958), and the salience of out-group against the existence of the in-group (Allen et al., 1983; Turner, 1981)(Ashforth & Mael, 1989). At the same time, social identity affects individual behavior, such that individuals act in line

with their social identity or choose to be affiliated to an organization with the corresponding character, behave cooperatively to the in-group and the members, and perceive the above-mentioned antecedents more strongly (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

3.2 Social identity theory in organizational contexts

From its development, studies based on social identity theory have focused on how individuals prefer in-group over out-group and how this preference leads to different attitudes and behavior (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel, 1982). Social categorization is followed by social identification (Tajfel, 1982), a process that one perceives own psychological group regardless of the level of interaction or internalization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Perceiving the differentiation among different groups or categories and salience of a certain attribute of the in-group over the others naturally leads one to favor the affiliated group against the others (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel, 1982). Social identification or self-categorization occurs in a greatly relative manner, yet this relative contrast between the in-group and the out-groups becomes a basis for preference on the in-group characteristics (Tajfel, 1982).

Many social psychology studies presume that in-group favoritism exists (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). However, although numerous scholars have concretely supported individuals' selective favoring behavior, the empirical results are mixed in terms of showing what is actually favored. On the one hand, the lack of similarity between two or more categories could highlight what one likes or does not like. Turner and his colleagues make this point clear (i.e. Turner, 1978; Turner et al., 1979). On the other hand, the distinction itself among the groups could trigger liking versus disliking of the in-group. In line with belief congruence (Rokeach, 1960, 1968) or theory of prejudice, it could be the affiliation itself that cause favoritism, rather than the specific dissimilarity (Tajfel, 1982). However, both perspectives imply the uniformity of in-group members in their attitude and behavior or at least perceives it to be true (Tajfel, 1982).

According to the review by Ashforth and Mael (1989), studies on the management of organizational behavior with the social identity theory perspective can be summarized largely into three themes. First, social identity theory explains organizational socialization, which is a process a recruit understands themselves and the unfamiliar environment by defining the situation and the self through symbolic interaction within the organization. It is said that direct or indirect internalization, specification of social identity, and leaders' symbolic

management can be explained through social identity theory. Second, organizational or management's assistance in resolving individuals' role conflict is appeared possible by triggering one identity over the others. An individual's identity exists with multiplicity, and segregation or sequential use of each identity could resolve the role conflict. In the organizational context, it is explained how this could be intentionally or systematically done in an organization. Lastly, symbolic management has been discussed in terms of inter-group and intra-group conflicts as well. In-group favoritism of the members could work positively, but when directed towards other team members or subunits, it could cause negative stereotypes on the out-group and rationalize the distancing against those out-group members. This results in competition and conflicts rather than cooperation. The literature suggests that legitimization of social comparison and distribution of resources could alleviate the occurrence of inter- or intra-group friction.

3.3 Similarity-attraction to employees and employers

A large body of research on applicant attraction presents that the similarity between the employing organization or its members and

potential applicants influence organizational attraction (e.g. (DeArmond & Crawford, 2011; Devendorf & Highhouse, 2008; Highhouse et al., 2007)). Some of the studies give attention to the employee characteristics, explaining how an employee's behavior or traits could represent the organization for potential applicants to perceive similarity and get more or less attracted (Avery & McKay, 2006; Devendorf & Highhouse, 2008). Other papers state that organization-level traits of the companies such as reputation, value, or culture signal the applicants with the symbolic attributes of the organization, hence the social identity that the employer is wearing (Highhouse, Lievens & Sinar, 2003; Montgomery & Ramus, 2003).

Individuals compare their own identity with the social identity that is portrayed either by employees or organizations and perceive attraction when similarity is salient for psychological comfort or for expression of a positive identity (Devendorf & Highhouse, 2008). Since the social identity that can describe an organization is established in the social context, job seekers are influenced by the potential images that they would be expressing after joining the firms in making application decisions. This is also related to the in-group favoritism, in that similarity forms a sense of belonging to an identical category so that positive evaluation or affect is generated towards the focal individual or group (Schreurs et al., 2009). This approach is

analogous to person-environment fit perception as well, such that perceived similarity between the organization and the self or between an employee and the self would lead to the thinking that one fits with the other (Slaughter & Greguras, 2009).

III. HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

1. The Incremental Variance of Employer Brand Personality on Attraction

1.1 The incremental variance of symbolic over instrumental attributes

The extant literature on employer brand concretely argues that symbolic traits inferred from firms have incremental variance on the effect that instrumental attributes have on organizational attraction (e.g. (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003)). Specifically, studies have shown how symbolic trait inferences developed by Lievens and Highhouse (2003) and five dimensions of organizational personality perception developed by Slaughter et al. (2004) have a significant effect on organizational attractiveness. Yet, it was pointed out that dimensions developed and used in Lievens and Highhouse (2003) were simply adopted from Aaker (1997), leaving room for additional validation of the items (Slaughter & Greguras, 2009). In marketing studies, there were a number of attempts to develop brand personality dimensions that suit the cultural background of the samples. For instance, Aaker et al. (2001) conducted two separate studies in Spain and Japan and figured out that some of the dimensions are specific to the culture and that it would be adequate to measure brand personality using the scales developed in the local context. Findings in Sung et al. (2005)

also support this, with two unidentical sets of brand personality dimensions discovered from the United States and South Korea. Following these studies, the first hypothesis in this paper follows the previous findings while attempting to reaffirm how employer brand personality developed in the local context of South Korea predicts the incremental variance on attraction.

Hypothesis 1: Employer brand personality has incremental value in addition to instrumental attributes in explaining organizational attraction.

1.2 Moderation of Self-esteem

Aside from the effect on general attraction, the individual difference in the extent of the attraction caught the interest of the scholars. Particularly in recruitment studies, how the enduring characteristics of individuals have a constant influence on the attraction and selection brought great attention (e.g. Wei et al., 2016; Tsai & Yang, 2010; Judge & Cable, 1997; Cable & Judge, 1994). One of the individual characteristics that are relatively stable is self-esteem (Korman, 1976). Self-esteem can be defined as “the extent to which one prize, values, approves, or likes oneself” (Blascovich &

Tomaka, 1991). Previous studies have found the moderating role of self-esteem on the relationship between the congruence of self-and organizational images and organizational choice (Keon, Latack, & Wanous, 1982; Korman, 1966). It has also been shown that the source or goal for job search differs in the high versus low self-esteem group, as well as the level of satisfaction on the job acceptance and job search outcome (Ellis & Taylor, 1983). From this literature, it seems clear that self-esteem influences recruiting activities as well as organizational attraction.

This leads to hypothesizing the influence of self-esteem on the effect of employer brand personality on employers' attractiveness as well as applicants' intention to apply or accept the job offer from those employers. In social identity theory, it is explained that the motivation for individuals to identify with an organization is the enhancement of self-esteem and reduction of uncertainty (Hogg & Terry, 2000). This implies that the greater the motivation for boosting self-esteem, the more one would be eager to identify with an image that they wish to express. When an individual finds an organization close to the identity that he or she desires to be seen as, this identification leads to behaviors supporting that organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). In the recruiting context, it is the application intention or behavior towards that organization. Individuals with low self-

esteem would consider the brand personality of an employer more than the ones with high self-esteem, and this will be reflected in the effect of the employer brand personality on the organizational attraction. Thus,

Hypothesis 2: The incremental variance of employer brand personality above the effect of instrumental attributes on organizational attraction is negatively moderated by self-esteem.

1.3 Self-employer Congruity Effect

In the previous section, the extant literature that sought and proved the moderating effect of the Big 5 personality on the relationship between organizational trait perception and attraction were discussed (i.e. (Schreurs et al., 2009)). However, it is also important to note that more than half of the hypotheses in those studies were not supported. To be specific, only two of six hypotheses were supported in Schreurs et al. (2009), and only three of ten hypotheses in Slaughter and Greguras (2009) were supported. Kausel and Slaughter (2011) hypothesized three sets of hypotheses, each with the supplementary and complementary fit explanation. The results show

that only two of three complementary fit hypotheses were supported, while none of the supplementary fit hypotheses were found significant. In this section, it would hence be worthy of introducing the hypotheses that failed to be supported as well and find a way to build up from there.

The results presented above might look like the similarity between employer image and perception on one' s own personality, or the fit perception arising from the two do not interact to have a significant impact on organizational attraction. Yet, theoretical demonstration of self-congruity effect on consumer preference in marketing studies (e.g. (Hosany & Martin, 2012; Sirgy, 1982)) provides profound rationale to support the positive self-brand congruity effect on attraction to employers. The self-congruity theory developed by Joseph Sirgy explains that products (or brands) symbolize traits and attributes with which customers could express corresponding images through consumption or loyal behavior (Sirgy, 1982). The congruence of the self and the brand or product is moderated by involvement level, advertisement type, instrumental product attributes, as well as brand personality facet (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012). In particular, the brand personality that is compatible with individual personality dimensions were empirically found to have a significant interaction effect on brand preference (Dikcius, Seimiene, & Zaliene, 2013; Lin,

2010; Mulyanegara, Tsarenko, & Anderson, 2009). For instance, Competent brands were preferred more by individuals high in Conscientiousness and Agreeableness, and Sincere brands were favored by open, agreeable, and conscientious consumers (Dikcius et al., 2013; Mulyanegara et al., 2009).

Based on the predictions from marketing studies and the extant employer brand research, this paper suggests that congruence between employer brand and the Big 5 personality would interact to provide an incremental explanation on applicant's attraction to organizations.

This is also in line with the person-organization fit literature providing additional support for the moderation role of the Big 5 personality. Although the initial attraction of applicants to the recruiting firms was not a major theme taken for person-organization fit studies (Slaughter & Greguras, 2009), the interactionist perspective that the characteristics of organizations and the individuals (in this case, applicants) interact with each other. Provided that instrumental aspects of the firms such as the level of centralization, size, reward structure, or geographical dispersion interact with the level of applicants' self-esteem and need for achievement to have the individuals more or less attracted to the organization (Turban & Keon, 1993). Applicant personality was found to interact with perceived

organizational culture in determining the attraction (Judge & Cable, 1997). For instance, individuals high in Agreeableness were more attracted to supportive and team-oriented culture while less attracted to the outcome-oriented, aggressive, and decisive culture, and the ones high in Extraversion were attracted more to aggressive and team-oriented culture while they do less for supportive culture (Judge & Cable, 1997). Based on these findings, the moderation of individual personality on the relationship between employer brand personality and organizational attraction is hypothesized as follows.

The five dimensions of the Korean Employer Brand Personality are Warmth, Honest, Excitement, Competence, and Ruggedness. Firms high in the Warmth dimension would reflect family-oriented, small-town, and friendly traits. Applicants who perceive themselves to show similar traits would find those firms comfortable and attractive. Among the Big Five dimensions, Agreeableness has similar items with Warmth, such as warm, kind, agreeable, and cooperative (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Sung & Choi, 2009). The prediction that Agreeableness would moderate the relationship between Warmth and attraction was implied in the previous papers as well. Slaughter and Greguras (2009) hypothesized that the Boy Scout dimension reflecting friendliness, attentiveness, and cooperativeness would interact with Agreeableness and Schreurs et al. (2009) hypothesized that the Sincerity dimension

would interact with Agreeableness to predict the positive effect on attraction, although both of them were not supported empirically. Having a clearer facet than the other two measures, this study posits the moderating effect of Agreeableness on the influence of Warmth dimension and hypothesize as below:

Hypothesis 3a: The relationship between Warmth and organizational attraction is positively moderated by Agreeableness.

Traits such as honest, sincere, real, and wholesome are inferred by the firms high in the Honest dimension. Individuals who find themselves conscientious tend to be more organized, efficient, and careful (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Sung & Choi, 2009). As a person who finds himself or herself as a dependable person (Barrick & Mount, 1991), favoritism will lean more towards firms that are transparent and believable. In the perspective of social identity theory, a firm or a person perceived sincere would be grouped into the in-group for individuals high in Conscientiousness. Conversely, conscientious and careful individuals would define dishonest, untruthful organizations as out-groups. Due to the nature of in-group favoritism, their conscientious personality would moderate their attraction towards Honest brands in a positive direction. Thus,

Hypothesis 3b: The relationship between Honest and organizational attraction is positively moderated by Conscientiousness.

The employer brand personality dimension of Excitement has been universally found in other developed scales as well as the brand personality dimension of Aaker (1997). The Excitement dimension in Korean Employer Brand Personality does not include the innovativeness facet that can be found in other measures. Rather, it is associated with traits being trendy, spirited, young, and charming. However, the positive attitude towards learning found in individuals with high Openness and their tendency for sensation-seeking show resemblance with traits describing Exciting firms (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Goldberg, 1990). This paper finds it likely for intellectual, creative, bright, and innovative individuals to be attracted to organizations high in Exciting dimension. Previous studies show mixed results, as in Openness to Experience was found to moderate the relationship between Excitement (the dimension from the measure developed by Lievens and Highhouse (2003)) and organizational attractiveness while the moderation on Innovativeness dimension in Organizational Personality Perception to the organizational attraction was found insignificant. It is possible the daring and spiritedness facet

of the Exciting dimension interacts with Openness while the imagination and innovativeness facet do not. For these reasons, I posit that:

Hypothesis 3c: The relationship between Exciting and organizational attraction is positively moderated by Openness to Experience.

On top of that, individuals with high Extraversion show resemblance with Exciting firms as well. Applicants who are energetic and active would perceive the spirited trait of Exciting firms similar to themselves, forming the in-group perception of those organizations. Extraverted individuals also tend to be sociable and outgoing, both of which are similar traits to the employer brand personality of Exciting. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 3d: The relationship between Exciting and organizational attraction is positively moderated by Extraversion.

Organizations perceived with greater competence are described as being technical, corporate, confident, hard-working, leader, and successful. These organizations are likely to be expected to be organized and efficient. This expectation shares similar traits with

Conscientiousness. People highly conscientious are ambitious and thorough, persevering, and work hard for greater achievements (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Costa & McCrae, 1992; Slaughter & Greguras, 2009). The in-group favoritism for these applicants will lean towards organizations that reflect the hard-working and corporate image. This leads to the Hypothesis 3e, which states:

Hypothesis 3e: The relationship between Competence and organizational attraction is positively moderated by Conscientiousness.

Finally, the last dimension is Ruggedness, which is described with traits such as masculine, tough, and rugged. From a social identity theory perspective, identification with these traits will be especially harder for individuals high in Agreeableness and Neuroticism. Agreeable applicants find themselves to be agreeable and sympathetic, and these characters are on the opposite side with being tough and rugged. The finding from Judge and Cable (1997) that decisiveness culture is less preferred by individuals with higher Agreeableness and Neuroticism tells that it is more likely that people high in these two personality dimensions would rather find Rugged organizations as the out-group. It would neither be the case that agreeable and emotionally unstable applicants wish to be seen as a rugged person, which means

that social identification on these traits is particularly less probable.

For these reasons, I posit that:

Hypothesis 3f: The relationship between Ruggedness and organizational attraction is negatively moderated by Agreeableness.

Hypothesis 3g: The relationship between Ruggedness and organizational attraction is negatively moderated by Neuroticism.

1.4 Specification of the self: the three-way interaction

At the center of the social identity theory explanation, two concepts can be told as the key. One is the audience, and the other is the self. Previously in this paper, the role of the audience was mainly discussed, such that the importance of value and prestige that groups or organizations hold influence the social identity of individuals (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Categories and prototypes of the group identities reflect the socially constructed concept of positivity on different identities; wearing a particular identity could either enhance or lower one's self-esteem (Highhouse et al., 2007). This is related to expressing what is deemed right or valuable to the audience, or

simply put, the other people.

The other key term, the self or self-concept, is formed in relation to but at the same time independent of the audience. A person's self-concept could be identical to the social identity at a given moment, but the two are distinct from each other. Self-concept can be defined as "[the] totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object" (Rosenberg, 1979. p. 7). Studies on brand or brand management had a particular interest in the multidimensionality of self-concept (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al., 2012; Dikcius et al., 2013; Keller, 1993; Sirgy, 1982). There are four facets of self-concept which are: actual self (how one perceives himself or herself in truth); ideal self (how one wish to be like); social self (how one perceives he or she is viewed from the others); and ideal social self (how one wish to be viewed from the others).

The self-concept in social identification is mostly not specified in the organizational attraction studies. The present paper aims to connect the two literature and explain how and why certain congruity effect occurs. In that endeavor, I propose that self-esteem moderate the effect that congruity between employer brand personality and individual's personality has on organizational attraction. Strong support can be found in the previous literature on the job search process. Korman (1966) hypothesized and proved that people with

high self-esteem were more likely to choose an occupation that is based on the congruity between self-perception and the attributes portrayed by the organization. This point was confirmed by numerous later studies, including the author himself reviewing a decade of literature supporting the self-consistency motivational hypothesis (Behling & Tolliver, 1972; Dipboye, 1977; Keon et al., 1982; Korman, 1976). Points made by these papers were that individuals act consistently to their self-perception, especially when it comes to the job choice, and that self-esteem represents the stability of the self-concept (Korman, 1976). The organizational or occupational characteristics were measured either by required personal attributes of jobs (Korman, 1966) or general image using a seminal different scale (Keon et al., 1982).

The social identity theory is consistent with the consistency theory of work behavior of Abraham Korman, in a sense that individuals act in a way that is consistent with their own self-concept (Ellis & Taylor, 1983; Hogg & Terry, 2000). Yet, the explanation from the social identity perspective provides the reason why individuals act consistently and why sometimes they seem not to. It is because individuals identify with the focal identity — the self-concept — which determines a set of attitudes or behaviors that is consistent with it (Hogg & Terry, 2000), sometimes even getting to the point of disliking

the out-group identity(Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel, 1982) in an organizational context. Additionally, the reason why individuals with low self-esteem are less likely to choose an occupation that matches their self-image is that they are less likely to wish to be identified as their actual selves. The social identity that one would be portraying when he or she joins an organization is previewed in the job search process. Individuals with high self-esteem would be happy to apply for and become a member of the organizations that are more relatable to themselves. This is supportive of Korman' s theory, as well (Keon et al., 1982; Korman, 1970). Conversely, individuals with low self-esteem would feel ashamed to express themselves as who they really are. Instead, they would hope to be identified with a different image. In other words, individuals with low self-esteem would be attracted to organizations that are close to their ideal self. Hence the consistency is kept. This would have resulted in a blurred effect of congruence between the images of the self and the organization in the previous studies (DeArmond & Crawford, 2011; Kausel & Slaughter, 2011; Keon et al., 1982; Korman, 1976; Slaughter & Greguras, 2009). Thus, this paper suggests that applicants with high self-esteem would be attracted to employers with brand personalities similar to their actual self, while the ones with low self-esteem would be attracted to employer brand personality resembling their ideal self.

Hypothesis 4: The interaction effect between perceived individual personality and employer brand personality on organizational attraction is moderated by self-esteem.

IV. METHOD

1. Samples and Procedure

Two groups of participants were recruited. The first group of participants was recruited from an online school board of a university in Seoul, South Korea. Data were collected with two sets of online questionnaires, having a one-week lag between the first and the second survey. The second group of participants was recruited from a business class at another university in Seoul. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the data collection was made online. Three sets of online questionnaires were conducted, again each having a week lag in between. For each survey, an identification number was used to match the responses from the separated sets of data.

In Time 1, participants were asked to answer questions about themselves and two employers. The participants were provided with a list of nine firms and were asked to choose two of them to answer the questions. The focal firms were selected based on a pre-study conducted several months before. Undergraduate students were given eleven firms and asked to answer a questionnaire on three of those firms. The five firms that were chosen by the students were included in the current list, and four firms matching the industry and size were added. The list of the firms can be found in the Appendix. A total of

217 participants responded to the questions.

A week later, Time 2 data were collected by sending emails to the Time 1 participants with a link to an online questionnaire. They were asked to rate an organizational attraction on all nine firms that were listed in the Time 1 survey. Among the participants, 196 participated in the second survey. The participants were given a coupon for a cup of coffee roughly worth 4,000 won after the completion of the second survey. The final sample of the first group included 55.6% female and 44.4% male, ages ranging from 19 to 31. The descriptive statistics for gender and age can be found in Table 1.

2. Measures

2.1 Dependent variable

2.1.1 *Organizational attraction*

The organizational attraction was measured with 15 items on the scale developed by Highhouse, Lievens, and Sinar (2003), following the previous studies (DeArmond & Crawford, 2011; Kausel & Slaughter, 2011; Lievens et al., 2005). The scale consists of three dimensions, each measured by five items with a 5-point Likert scale. It separates the general attractiveness of organizations (Attractiveness), the intention to accept job offers from the organizations (Intention), and

the perceived prestige of the organization as a place to work into distinct factors (Prestige). For the purpose of the present study, items measuring Attractiveness and Intention was utilized to represent organizational attraction. Sample items include 'A job at this company is very appealing to me,' 'I would make this company one of my first choices as an employer.' Eight of the ten items were included in the analysis as a single dimension, with the reliability .92 and a decent fit: CFI = .985, TLI = .977, SRMR = .018, RMSEA = .067.

2.2 Independent variables

2.2.1 Employer brand personality

The employer brand personality was measured by the scale developed by Kang (2021) on a 7-point Likert-type scale, considering the cultural context. Aggregating the items identified from the previous studies which developed brand personality scales, the paper identified five dimensions, namely Warmth, Honest, Competence, Excitement, and Ruggedness. The items for each factor are reported in the Appendix.

Considering the Kang (2021) measure is relatively new, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. It showed a good fit for the five-factor scale measure: CFI = .933, TLI = .906, SRMR = .055,

RMSEA = .80. The reliabilities of each dimension were: $\alpha=.80$ for Warmth, $\alpha=.84$ for Honest, $\alpha=.86$ for Competence, $\alpha=.82$ for Exciting, and $\alpha=.85$ for Ruggedness. The average standardized item loadings were: Warmth=.67, Honest=.80, Competence=.73 , Exciting=.67 , Ruggedness=.75.

2.2.2 Instrumental organizational attributes

The instrumental attributes of the organizations were measured using 27 items from Lievens et al. (2005) on a 5-point Likert scale. Perceptions on pay, advancement opportunities, task diversity, job security, the structure of the organization, and team/social activities were measured. Items for physical activities and educational opportunities were not included in the survey considering the context. Since the original measure was developed in a military context, items irrelevant to the private job-seeking market were omitted, and the word “army” was substituted for “firm.” This measure was used following previous studies(Lievens, 2007; Van Hoyer et al., 2013). The reliabilities for each variable are as follows: pay=.77, advancement=.74, job security=.81, task diversity=.76, structure=.80, team activities=.74, travel opportunity=.

2.3 Moderating Variables

2.3.1 *Big Five personality traits*

The Big Five personality traits were measured using the items developed by Goldberg (1992) rated on a 7-point Likert scale following Sung and Choi (2009). A total of 22 items measured the five personalities, each with four to five items. The alpha reliabilities for the variables are Agreeableness=.80, Extraversion=.86, Conscientiousness=.50, Openness=.80, Neuroticism .72.

2.3.2 *Self-esteem*

The self-esteem of the participants was measured with 10 items developed by Rosenberg (1979). Among the various scales for self-esteem, this tool has been one of the most frequently used scales (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991). The reliability of self-esteem was .90. Sample items are: “I take a positive attitude toward myself.” and “All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure.” . Five items out of ten were reverse coded.

2.4 Control Variables

Following the previous studies, this paper controlled for gender (0=female, 1=male), age, and job experience (0=none, 1=employed before) (Schreurs et al., 2009; Slaughter & Greguras, 2009). These variables were collected along with other Time 1 measure. Among the samples, 71.43% have no experience of being employed before (excluding part-time jobs), and 28.57% have worked for an employer previously (including internships).

V. RESULTS

1. Descriptive statistics and preliminary analyses

Internal reliabilities, intercorrelations, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table 1 for all study variables. Correlations between instrumental organizational attributes and attraction measures were mostly significant except for structure. All employer brand personality dimensions, except for Ruggedness, showed a significant positive correlation. The correlation between the Honest and Warmth dimension was exceptionally high, signing the possibility that the two factors are not discriminant enough. Yet, following the results of confirmatory factor analysis, which showed a greater fit with the two dimensions separated, the present paper decided to keep the two factors. A high negative correlation was found between Agreeableness and Neuroticism, and a high positive correlation was found between Extraversion and Openness to Experience. Most of the correlations among the Big Five factors were significant, as well as the five dimensions of employer brand personality. The instrumental attributes and employer brand personalities were significantly correlated. All predictor variables were mean-centered for further analyses

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Demographics										
Gender	0.44	0.50								
Age	24.19	2.43	.40**							
Job experience	0.29	0.45	.14**	.35**						
Big 5 Personalities										
Agreeableness	5.39	0.97	-.00	.10**	.04	(.80)				
Conscientiousness	5.42	0.88	-.05	-.05	-.03	.36**	(.50)			
Extraversion	4.87	1.19	-.04	-.08**	.04	.37**	.21**	(.86)		
Openness to Experience	4.24	1.24	.11**	.08**	.07**	.13**	-.05	.38**	(.80)	
Neuroticism	4.24	1.19	-.12**	-.09**	-.09**	-.02	-.15**	-.15**	-.03	(.72)
Self-esteem										
Self-esteem	3.99	0.67	-.03	-.11**	-.05*	.16**	.17**	.43**	.23**	-.45**
Job Attributes										
Advancement	3.33	0.24	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Task Diversity	3.23	0.30	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Pay	3.70	0.51	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Job Security	2.98	0.31	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Structure	3.65	0.40	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Team Orientation	3.65	0.22	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Employer Brand Personality										
Competence	5.21	0.52	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Excitement	4.89	0.73	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Honest	4.37	0.32	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Ruggedness	4.14	0.93	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Warmth	4.46	0.51	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Organizational Attraction										
Organizational Attraction	3.66	0.85	-.05	-.02	-.02	.09**	.07**	.04	.03	.02

Note. N =417. Internal consistency reliabilities are in the brackets along the diagonal. *p<.05. **p<.01.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations (Continued)

	M	SD	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Demographics									
Gender	0.44	0.50							
Age	24.19	2.43							
Job experience	0.29	0.45							
Big 5 Personalities									
Agreeableness	5.39	0.97							
Conscientiousness	5.42	0.88							
Extraversion	4.87	1.19							
Openness to Experience	4.24	1.24							
Neuroticism	4.24	1.19							
Self-esteem									
Self-esteem	3.99	0.67							
Job Attributes									
Advancement	3.33	0.24							
Task Diversity	3.23	0.30							
Pay	3.70	0.51	(.77)						
Job Security	2.98	0.31	-.26**	(.81)					
Structure	3.65	0.40	.26**	.06*	(.80)				
Team Orientation	3.65	0.22	.46**	-.32**	-.51**	(.74)			
Employer Brand Personality									
Competence	5.21	0.52	.94**	-.46**	.16**	.63**	(.73)		
Excitement	4.89	0.73	.20**	-.27**	-.91**	.67**	.16**	(.67)	
Honest	4.37	0.32	-.24**	.38**	-.30**	-0.01	-.38**	.05*	(.80)
Ruggedness	4.14	0.93	.66**	-.07**	.87**	-.12**	.57**	-.68**	-.38**
Warmth	4.46	0.51	-.64**	.45**	-.62**	-.10**	-.71**	.30**	.77**
Organizational Attraction									
Organizational Attraction	3.66	0.85	.34**	-.11**	-.07**	.31**	.35**	.13**	-0.01

Note. N =417. Internal consistency reliabilities are in the brackets along the diagonal. *p<.05. **p<.01.

2. Test of hypotheses

Series of hierarchical moderated multiple regression analyses were conducted for hypotheses tests. Since the survey asked the participants to choose which firm to answer to, clustered regression was conducted so that firm-level variables could be analyzed by firms. Hypothesis 1 proposed that the employer brand personalities would have incremental variance over and above the influence of the instrumental job or organizational attributes. To test the hypothesis, control variables and instrumental job attribute variables were sequentially added to the regression analysis before adding the employer brand personality dimensions. Employer brand personalities contributed unique variance ($\Delta R^2 = .04$, $p < .01$). Among the five employer personality dimensions, Honest ($\beta = .11$, $p < .01$) significantly showed the greatest effect while Exciting ($\beta = .06$, $p < .05$) showed significant relationship as well. The other three dimensions failed to show meaningful result. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported. The results are presented in Table 2. Note that the result is consistent with the extant research, showing the incremental variance of symbolic attributes over and above instrumental job considerations around 4 to 10 percent. Implications are discussed in the following section.

Table 2. Hierarchical regression analyses result for testing Hypothesis 1

	Step 1	Step 2
Step 1: Control Variables		
Gender	-.05	.01
Age	-.02	-.03 ⁺
Agreeableness	.06	.05
Conscientiousness	.08 ⁺	.04
Extraversion	.03	-.01
Openness to Experience	.03	.02
Neuroticism	-.04	-.04
Self-Esteem	-.19*	-.15*
Step 2: Main Effects of Instrumental Job Attributes		
Advancement		-.10*
Task Diversity		.09
Pay		.38**
Job Security		.06
Structure		.04
Team Orientation		.15*
Step 3: Main effects of Employer Brand Personalities		
Competence		
Exciting		
Honest		
Warmth		
Ruggedness		
ΔR^2		.14**
Model R^2	.25**	.39**

Notes: N=417. ⁺p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01.

Next, Hypotheses 2 was tested, obtaining the results shown in Table 3. Self-esteem did not have a meaningful moderation on employer brand personality dimensions. Having self-esteem losing its significant negative relationship to attraction after the moderation effect was added none of the five dimensions showed valid moderation effect. The output indicates that the relationship expected in Hypothesis 2 do not explain applicants' attraction to firms by their personality.

Table 3. Hierarchical regression analyses result for testing Hypothesis 2

	Variable entered	β	ΔR^2
Analysis 1			
Step 1	Competence	.060	.038**
	Self-esteem	-.171**	
Step 2	Competence	-.094	.001
	Self-esteem	-.386	
	Competence*Self-esteem	.039	
Analysis 2			
Step 1	Excitement	.060*	.038**
	Self-esteem	-.171**	
Step 2	Excitement	-.130	.002
	Self-esteem	-.415 ⁺	
	Excitement*Self-esteem	.047	
Analysis 3			
Step 1	Honest	.109**	.038**
	Self-esteem	-.171**	
Step 2	Honest	.107	.000
	Self-esteem	-.173	
	Honest*Self-esteem	.000	
Analysis 4			
Step 1	Warmth	.000	.038**
	Self-esteem	-.171**	
Step 2	Warmth	-.078	.001
	Self-esteem	-.257*	
	Warmth*Self-esteem	.020	
Analysis 5			
Step 1	Ruggedness	.021	.038**
	Self-esteem	-.171**	
Step 2	Ruggedness	.096	.000
	Self-esteem	-.093	
	Ruggedness*Self-esteem	-.018	

Notes: N=417. ⁺p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01.

Hypotheses 3a to 3g predicted the moderation of the Big Five personality on the relationship between the employer brand personality dimensions and organizational attractiveness. Specifically, the interaction between Warmth x Agreeableness, Honest x Conscientiousness, Exciting x Extraversion, Exciting x Openness to Experience, Competence x Conscientiousness, Ruggedness x Agreeableness, Ruggedness x Neuroticism were hypothesized. To see the impact of the employer brand dimensions as a whole and in part, eight sets of regression analyses were conducted. None of the hypotheses were supported in the prediction of organizational attraction. Further discussion on this will be followed in the later section. The results for the multi-level regression tests are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Results for moderated regression analyses testing Hypotheses 3

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3				
			All	H3a	H3b	H3c	H3d
Control Variables							
Gender	.03	.01	.02	.02	.01	.01	.01
Age	-.03 ⁺	-.03*	-.03*	-.03 ⁺	-.03*	-.03*	-.03*
Self-Esteem	-.11**	-.17**	-.18**	-.17**	-.17**	-.17**	-.17**
Instrumental Job Attributes							
Advancement	-.18**	-.17**	-.16**	-.16**	-.17**	-.17**	-.16**
Task Diversity	.06	.06	.05	.05	.06	.06	.05
Pay	.35**	.35**	.35**	.35**	.35**	.35**	.35**
Job Security	.05	.04	.04	.04	.04	.04	.04
Structure	.03	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02	.02
Team Orientation	.10	.07	.08	.07	.07	.07	.07
Employer Brand Personalities							
Competence	.07	.06	.09	.07	.06	.06	.06
Exciting	.06 ⁺	.05*	.01	.06 ⁺	.06 ⁺	.06	-.00
Honest	.12**	.11**	.13	.11**	.11	.11**	.11**
Warmth	.00	.00	-.13	.00	.00	.00	-.00
Ruggedness	.02	.02	.11	.02	.02	.02	.02
Big 5 Personalities							
Agreeableness		.04	-.07	.04	.04	.04	.04
Conscientiousness		.03	.09	.04	.03	.03	.03
Extraversion		-.00	-.08	-.00	-.00	-.00	-.07
Openness to Experience		.02	.05	.02	.02	.02	.03
Neuroticism		-.04	.05	-.04	-.04	-.04	-.04
Two-way Interactions							
Warmth x Agreeableness			-.01	-.00			
Honest x Conscientiousness			-.02		.00		
Exciting x Openness to Experience			-.00			-.00	
Exciting x Extraversion			-.00				.01
Competence X Conscientiousness			.02				
Ruggedness x Agreeableness			.00				
Ruggedness x Neuroticism			.02				
ΔR^2	.042**	.008	.004 ⁺	.001	.000	.000	.000
Model R	.414**	.422**	.436**	.422**	.422**	.422**	.422**

Notes: N=1417. ⁺p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01.

Hypothesis 4 predicted the moderated moderation of self-esteem on the Big Five personality traits, on the main effect of attraction towards employer brand personality dimensions. The hypothesized effect of specification of the self was not supported. Yet, the addition of the three-way interaction effect made a significant increase in R^2 for the relationship testing Hypotheses 4d. Unfortunately, this result does not indicate meaningful implications for the present study. The summary of the test for Hypothesis 4 is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Summary of predicted interactions for testing Hypothesis 4

	Variable entered	β	R ²	ΔR^2
Analysis 1				
Step 1	Warmth	-.10	.423**	.001
	Agreeable	-.04		
	Self-esteem	-.17**		
	Warmth x Agreeable	.02		
Step 2	Warmth	.26	.424+	.001
	Agreeable	.29		
	Self-esteem	.19		
	Warmth x Agreeable	-.06		
	Warmth x Self-esteem	-.09		
	Agreeable x Self-esteem	-.08		
	Warmth x Agreeable x Self-esteem	.02		
Analysis 2				
Step 1	Honest	.11	.422**	.000
	Conscientiousness	.03		
	Self-esteem	-.17**		
	Honest x Conscientiousness	.00		
Step 2	Honest	.07	.422**	.001
	Conscientiousness	-.11		
	Self-esteem	-.37		
	Honest x Conscientiousness	.01		
	Honest x Self-esteem	.01		
	Conscientiousness x Self-esteem	.04		
	Honest x Conscientiousness x Self-esteem	-.00		
Analysis 3				
Step 1	Exciting	-.00	.422**	.001
	Extraversion	.02		
	Self-esteem	-.17**		
	Exciting x Extraversion	.01		
Step 2	Exciting	-.39	.427**	.004
	Extraversion	-.47		
	Self-esteem	-.94		
	Exciting x Extraversion	.06		
	Exciting x Self-esteem	.11		
	Extraversion x Self-esteem	.11		
Exciting x Extraversion x Self-esteem	-.01			

Notes: N=417. ⁺p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01.

Table 5. Summary of predicted interactions for testing Hypothesis 4 (Continued)

	Variable entered	β	R ²	ΔR^2
Analysis 4				
Step 1	Exciting	.06	.422**	.000
	Openness	.02		
	Self-esteem	-.17**		
	Exciting x Openness	-.00		
Step 2	Exciting	.50	.431**	.009**
	Openness	1.13*		
	Self-esteem	.59		
	Exciting x Openness	-.17		
	Exciting x Self-esteem	-.10		
	Openness x Self-esteem	-.26 ⁺		
	Exciting x Openness x Self-esteem	.04		
Analysis 5				
Step 1	Competence	.07	.422**	.000
	Conscientiousness	.04		
	Self-esteem	-.17**		
	Competence x Conscientiousness	-.00		
Step 2	Competence	.59	.424**	.002
	Conscientiousness	.65		
	Self-esteem	.34		
	Competence x Conscientiousness	-.13		
	Competence x Self-esteem	-.12		
	Conscientiousness x Self-esteem	-.14		
	Competence x Conscientiousness x Self-esteem	.03		
Analysis 6				
Step 1	Ruggedness	.07	.422**	.000
	Agreeableness	.08		
	Self-esteem	-.17*		
	Ruggedness x Agreeableness	-.01		
Step 2	Ruggedness	.41	.423**	.001
	Agreeableness	.30		
	Self-esteem	.19		
	Ruggedness x Agreeableness	-.06		
	Ruggedness x Self-esteem	-.08		
	Agreeableness x Self-esteem	-.06		
	Ruggedness x Agreeableness x Self-esteem	.01		

Notes: N=417. ⁺p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01.

Table 5. Summary of predicted interactions for testing Hypothesis 4 (Continued)

	Variable entered	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Analysis 7				
Step 1	Ruggedness	.10	.424**	.002
	Neuroticism	.04		
	Self-esteem	-.18**		
	Ruggedness x Neuroticism	-.02		
Step 2	Ruggedness	.22	.426**	.002
	Neuroticism	-.10		
	Self-esteem	-.22		
	Ruggedness x Neuroticism	-.01		
	Ruggedness x Self-esteem	-.02		
	Neuroticism x Self-esteem	.04		
	Ruggedness x Neuroticism x Self-esteem	-.00		

Notes: N=417. +p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01.

VI. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this paper is centered around investigating the mystery behind the similarity attraction effect of perceived individual and organizational personality. It attempted to explain this by proposing that self-esteem moderates the congruity effect, such that the focal self-concept in action differs between job seekers with high versus low self-esteem. Seven hypotheses on the moderation of the Big Five personality on the relationship between employer brand personality and organizational attraction were established, and moderated moderation of self-esteem were tested on each of them.

Results of the analyses stated above show that the hypotheses were denied. Hypothesis 1 was confirmed for all five dimensions, supporting the point made by the extant research and this paper. Particularly, significance of Honest and Exciting dimensions shown in the present study is consistent with the results of the previous studies showing meaningful variance in Sincerity and Excitement. The low significance of Competence, considering studies in the past found meaningful variance in the dimension, could be due to the overly high correlation between the image proposition and pay. This is probable as pay shows consistently powerful influence on application intentions or decisions. To sum, the above result could imply that while some

cultural differences exist, the wholesome, real image or exciting, cool brand as employing firms could enjoy greater attraction effect.

None of the hypothesized moderation of self-esteem, the Big five personality and the moderated moderation by self-esteem on it for the employer brand personality effect on employers' attraction in the job market was supported. The reason for this failure could be the effect size of the hypothesized relationship itself. The results shown in this study reveals less than 5% of additional variance explained by the addition of employer brand personality dimensions in the multi-level regression model. The majority of attraction effect was placed by instrumental job attributes, consistent with the previous studies (Chapman et al., 2005). Considering that the incremental variance of the symbolic aspect of employer image was not too noticeable, the aim of the current paper would have been too narrow from the first place.

This paper makes several contributions to the current body of research. First, using the Korean Employer Brand Personality scales, the main relationship between the symbolic images and organizational attraction was found to have incremental variance. This supports the previous literature on the relationship between employer brand personality and attractiveness of organizations as employers, providing 4% - 10% of additional explanation on the antecedents of organizational attraction. Second, this is one of the first studies to

specify the self-concept in explaining the social identification process of different individuals in job seeking. Although the hypotheses were not supported, it contributes to the literature by providing an additional layer of explanation on the constructs that influence applicants' attraction to each employer brand personality. Future research could investigate other individual difference or antecedent that explains how some individuals are attracted to similar organizations while others are rather not.

The limitations of the present study are as follows. First, the source of measuring each variable was not divided. This could cause a collinearity problem with a common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). To minimize this bias, the measurement was conducted with a time lag of one week following the previous literature (Schreurs et al., 2009; Slaughter & Greguras, 2009). Second, the incremental variance for each tested model was not significant in most of the analyses. This could indicate that the moderation of individuals' personality is not notable. Another possibility for the small variance could be due to the measurement of perceptions for all variables. Instrumental job attributes and symbolic inferences were all measured with survey questions, which is the way normally taken in the previous studies. Yet, there is room for validation for the relationship between the actual job attributes and

abstract imagery. All in all, the moderation of individual differences in the relationship between employer brand personality and attraction to organizations is still left as a mystery to be dealt with by the following studies. It is noteworthy again in this study that the instrumental face of the firms gives clearer hints both for the applicants and the organizations.

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APPENDIX

A. List of firms included in the survey

No.	Company Name
1	Samsung Electronics
2	Naver Corporation
3	LG Electronics Inc.
4	AmorePacific Corporation
5	SK Telecom Co., Ltd
6	KT Corporation
7	Hyundai Motor Company
8	Lotte Confectionery Co., Ltd.
9	CJ Cheil Jedang

B. Korean Employer Brand Dimensions and items

Competence	Excitement	Honest	Warmth	Ruggedness
hard-working	trendy	honest	family-oriented	masculine
technical	spirited	sincere	small-town	tough
corporate	young	real	friendly	rough
successful	charming	wholesome		
leader				
confident				

국 문 초 록

본 연구는 고용브랜드 퍼스넬러티의 지원자 유인효과가 어떤 것을 근거하여 나타나는 지에 관하여, 기존의 상반된 연구 결과의 근거를 찾고자 하였다. 특히, 본 연구는 개인의 특성이 채용 시장에서의 기업이 가지는 상징적인 이미지가 실제적인 조건과 관련된 이미지에 비하여 갖는 효과를 조절함을 보이고자 한 동시에, 이 과정에서 구체적으로 어떤 자아의 역할이 더욱 대두되는지를 보이고자 하였다. 사회적 정체성 이론과 자기 일치성 이론을 바탕으로 하여, 고용브랜드 퍼스넬러티의 각 차원과 5요인, 그리고 조직 유인의 관계를 자부심(self-esteem)이 조절할 것이라는 가설을 수립하였다. 총 196명의 한국 대학생을 대상으로 실시된 연구 및 분석에서 고용브랜드는 근무 조건에 대한 이미지에 더해 기업의 매력도에 영향을 미치는 것으로 나타났다. 그러나, 개인 특성의 조절 및 조절된 조절효과는 발견할 수 없었다.

키워드: 지원자 유인, 고용브랜드, 개인특성 5요인, 자부심, 사회적 정체성 이론, 자기 일치성 이론