

# Contributo alla validazione della scala di Attrattività Complessiva delle organizzazioni

Marco Giovanni Mariani, Elena Lo Piccolo, Silvia Galassi e Gerardo Petruzzello<sup>1</sup>

## Sommario

Questo studio mirava a validare la versione italiana della dimensione *General Attractiveness* dalla scala sviluppata da Highhouse et al. (2003). La scala *General Attractiveness* misura come i potenziali candidati percepiscono l'attrattività complessiva di un'organizzazione come luogo di lavoro. Un campione di 430 studenti laureati italiani ha partecipato a questo studio. È stata utilizzata l'analisi fattoriale confermativa (CFA) per valutare la validità interna della scala e i risultati hanno mostrato forti carichi fattoriali e un'eccellente affidabilità (McDonald's  $\omega = .92$ ). Inoltre, la validità esterna della scala è stata dimostrata attraverso la sua significativa correlazione con la scala *Intention to Apply* ( $r = .70$ ). I risultati supportano la robustezza della versione italiana della scala *General Attractiveness* come strumento affidabile per valutare l'attrattività organizzativa. Tuttavia, lo studio presenta una limitazione nella composizione del campione di studenti laureati, suggerendo la necessità di ulteriori ricerche con popolazioni più diversificate. La scala validata ha importanti implicazioni pratiche per le organizzazioni italiane, in quanto può essere utilizzata per migliorare le strategie di reclutamento, l'employer branding e lo sviluppo organizzativo.

## Parole chiave

Attrattività organizzativa, Reclutamento, Validazione della scala, Intenzione di candidarsi, Adattamento italiano.

<sup>1</sup> Dipartimento di Psicologia «Renzo Canestrari», Alma Mater Studiorum, Università di Bologna, Italia.

# A Contribution to the Italian Adaptation of the *General Attractiveness to Organizations Scale*

---

Marco Giovanni Mariani, Elena Lo Piccolo, Silvia Galassi, and Gerardo Petruzzello<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

This study aimed to validate the Italian version of the *General Attractiveness* dimension from the scale developed by Highhouse et al. (2003). The *General Attractiveness scale* measures how potential job applicants perceive the overall appeal of an organization as a workplace. A sample of 430 Italian graduate students participated in this study. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to assess the scale's internal validity, and the results showed strong factor loadings and excellent reliability (McDonald's  $\omega = .92$ ). Additionally, the external validity of the scale was demonstrated through its significant correlation with the Intention to Apply scale ( $r = .70$ ). The findings support the robustness of the Italian version of the *General Attractiveness scale* as a reliable tool for assessing organizational appeal. However, the study has a limitation in the sample's composition of graduate students, suggesting the need for further research with more diverse populations. The validated scale has important practical implications for Italian organizations, as it can be employed to enhance recruitment strategies, employer branding, and organizational development.

## Keywords

Organizational attractiveness, Recruitment, Scale validation, Intention to apply, Italian adaptation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Department of Psychology «Renzo Canestrari», Alma Mater Studiorum, University of Bologna, Italy.

## Introduction

Organizational attractiveness refers to the extent to which potential job applicants perceive an organization as a desirable place to work. This concept plays a crucial role in recruitment, particularly during the initial stages when organizations aim to attract a broad pool of candidates. Lievens and Highhouse (2003) highlighted that organizational attractiveness is shaped by factors like instrumental attributes (e.g., salary, job security) and symbolic attributes (e.g., reputation, innovation), which, when combined, help organizations stand out in competitive labour markets. Highhouse and colleagues (2003) developed a scale to measure organizational attractiveness, composed of three distinct factors: General Attractiveness, Intentions to Pursue, and Prestige. This scale has significantly impacted organizational psychology and human resources management, with over 500 citations on Scopus, reflecting its broad adoption and influence in the literature. Researchers have utilized this scale to explore various dimensions of how organizations can appeal to potential employees and enhance their recruitment strategies.

This study aims to validate the Italian version of the General Attractiveness dimension for several reasons. First, General Attractiveness captures broad attitudinal perceptions of an organization's appeal as a workplace, making it highly relevant for early-stage recruitment, when organizations aim to create a positive impression among potential applicants. Furthermore, this dimension demonstrated the highest internal consistency among the three scales in Highhouse et al. (2003). Given its robustness, General Attractiveness provides a reliable and comprehensive measure of how attractive prospective employees perceive an organization. We have chosen not to include the Prestige dimension in this validation, as some authors (e.g., Behrend et al., 2009) argue that Prestige is better understood and measured as Organizational Reputation. Organizational Reputation concerns the external evaluation of the organization's standing in the market rather than the personal desire of applicants to work there. Since Organizational Reputation is often treated as a separate construct in research, it is less central to our objective of assessing the immediate appeal of an organization to job seekers.

Additionally, we excluded the Intentions to Pursue dimension, which focuses on applicants' behavioural intentions, such as applying for a job or accepting an offer. This dimension may be influenced by external factors such as job availability or personal career goals, making it less suitable for assessing the organization's intrinsic attractiveness. Focusing on General Attractiveness provides a more precise and direct assessment of how positively potential candidates view an organization, offering a solid foundation for understanding employer branding and recruitment strategies.

## Development and Validation of the Scale

Highhouse et al. (2003) developed their scale to measure organizational attractiveness to provide a more structured and empirically validated tool for understanding how potential job applicants perceive organizations. The authors aimed to address inconsistencies in the recruitment literature regarding the measurement of organizational attraction by creating a scale that could reliably differentiate between various components of attraction. Their approach was grounded in Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action, which posits that attitudes, behavioural intentions, and social norms are distinct but related factors that influence behaviour.

General Attractiveness was defined as an organization's overall appeal as a workplace. It captures broad, attitudinal perceptions about how attractive and desirable the organization is, regardless of specific job offers. It differs from the Intentions to Pursue scale, which assesses applicants' behavioural intentions (i.e., whether they would consider applying for a job or accepting an offer from the organization) and from the Prestige scale (i.e., the degree to which an organization is perceived as reputable and prestigious, based on social perceptions and recognition).

The scale was developed through a multi-step process. First, Highhouse et al. (2003) collected responses from 305 undergraduate students who were asked to evaluate the attractiveness of five well-known companies. Participants responded to a series of items adapted from previous studies on organizational choice (e.g., Fisher et al., 1979; Turban & Keon, 1993). Using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), the authors tested the dimensionality of the items, confirming that General Attractiveness, Intentions to Pursue, and Prestige could be reliably distinguished. Highhouse et al. (2003) reported robust psychometric properties for the scale. Specifically, the General Attractiveness factor demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .88, indicating high reliability.

This dimension, which assesses the overall desirability of an organization, was found to be remarkably stable and reliable across different organizational contexts. The CFA results further supported the three-factor structure of the scale, with indices such as the comparative fit index (CFI) of .97 and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of .04, indicating a good model fit. These psychometric properties demonstrated that the scale is a valid and reliable tool for measuring organizational attractiveness and its related constructs, making it a valuable instrument for academic research and practical applications in recruitment.

## Goal of the study

The primary aim of this paper is to contribute to the validation of the Italian version of the General Attractiveness dimension of the scale developed by

Highhouse et al. (2003). In particular, this study aims to assess two key aspects: internal validity and external validity (Grimm & Widaman, 2012). Internal validity refers to the investigation of the scale's dimensionality and reliability, verifying whether the structure of the Italian version is consistent with the original scale and ensuring it reliably measures the intended construct. This involves conducting a confirmatory factor analysis and evaluating internal consistency through metrics such as Cronbach's alpha.

Furthermore, this research explores external validity by examining the relationship between General Attractiveness and applicants' intention to apply for a job. The use of intention to apply as a criterion is well justified, as this construct is directly linked to actual recruitment behaviours, representing a key indicator of how organizational attractiveness influences candidates' decision-making processes. Research has demonstrated that organizational attractiveness strongly predicts applicants' behavioural intentions, such as applying for a position (Mariani et al., 2016).

## Method

### *Participants*

The final sample consisted of 430 Italian graduate students, mostly women (59.10%). Participants ranged from 21 to 30 years of age ( $M = 23.31$ ,  $SD = 2.32$ ).

### *Procedures and Measures*

First, the General Organizational Attractiveness scale developed by Highhouse et al. (2003) was translated into Italian using a back-translation procedure, following Hambleton's (2005) guidelines to ensure accuracy. The participants were then presented with a well-known company and asked to complete the General Organizational Attractiveness scale. After exploring the company's website, they were asked to complete a scale measuring their intention to apply to the company. The General Organizational Attractiveness scale comprises five Likert-type items (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Example items include: «For me, this company could be a good place to work» and «I am not interested in this company except as a last resort.» To measure the intention to apply, we used a three-item scale developed based on the recommendations of Venkatesh and Davis (2000) and validated in Italy by Mariani et al. (2016). The items included: «In the future, I think I will use this site to submit my application», «When I search for a job, I will return to this site», and «I will consider the job offers on this site». A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for the single-factor model

demonstrated that all factor loadings were statistically significant, with values above .85. The reliability of this scale was excellent ( $\alpha = .93$ ).

### *Data Analyses*

To test the original factor structure of the scale, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using AMOS software. We evaluated model fit using the following goodness-of-fit indices: comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR). Values greater than .90 for the CFI and TLI and less than .08 for RMSEA and SRMR indicated an acceptable fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Additionally, McDonald’s omega ( $\omega$ ) was used to assess the scale’s reliability, while correlation indices were employed to examine external validity.

## **Results**

The model’s overall fit was good. The CMIN/DF ratio was 3.38, within the acceptable range (below 5), indicating a reasonable fit between the hypothesized model and the observed data. The SRMR was .02. The RMSEA was .07, with a 90% confidence interval ranging from .03 to .12, suggesting a reasonable fit, although the PCLOSE value of .14 requires cautious interpretation. The CFI and TLI were .99 and .99, exceeding the threshold of .90, indicating excellent model fit.

The results showed that the standardized factor loadings for the five items on the scale were statistically significant and demonstrated strong relationships with the underlying construct. These results suggest that all items were reliable indicators of the General Attractiveness factor, with most loadings exceeding the recommended threshold of .70 (Table 1).

**Table 1**

CFA: Standardized Regression Weights

Items	Factor Loading
Item 1	.91
Item 2	-.70
Item 3	.93
Item 4	.75
Item 5	.95

Regarding reliability, the McDonald's  $\omega$  coefficient showed strong internal consistency for the scale, with a point estimate of .92 and a 95% confidence interval ranging from .91 to .94. This suggests excellent reliability of the overall scale. The individual item reliability statistics indicated that if Item 1 were dropped, the McDonald's  $\omega$  would be .89; if Item 2 (a reverse-coded item) were dropped, the McDonald's  $\omega$  would increase to .94. Dropping Item 3 would result in a McDonald's  $\omega$  of .89, dropping Item 4 would yield .92, and dropping Item 5 would reduce the reliability to .89. This indicates that all items contribute positively to the overall reliability of the scale, though Item 2 slightly detracts from the scale's reliability. These results support the strong internal validity and reliability of the Italian version of the General Attractiveness scale, confirming its robustness as a measure of organizational attractiveness.

Regarding external validity related to criterion validity, the correlation between the General Attractiveness scale and the Intention to Apply scale was = .70. This strong positive correlation suggests that individuals who perceive an organization as generally attractive are also significantly more likely to express an intention to apply for a job within that organization. This result provides substantial evidence for the predictive power of the General Attractiveness scale, demonstrating that it is not only internally reliable but also externally valid in predicting actual applicant behaviours. The high correlation underscores the scale's utility for organizations aiming to assess their appeal to potential job candidates and improve their recruitment strategies.

## Discussion

This study aimed to validate the Italian version of the General Attractiveness dimension of the scale developed by Highhouse et al. (2003), focusing on internal and external validity. The value of this study lies in providing Italian organizations with a reliable and validated tool to assess how attractive they appear to potential job candidates, which is crucial in shaping recruitment strategies and employer branding. The results demonstrated that the Italian version of the General Attractiveness scale maintains solid psychometric properties, with high internal consistency (McDonald's  $\omega = .92$ ) and strong factor loadings for all items. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) supported the scale's dimensionality, with fit indices indicating an acceptable model fit. Additionally, the positive correlation ( $r = .70$ ) between the General Attractiveness scale and the Intention to Apply scale provides evidence of the scale's external validity, confirming that individuals who perceive an organization as attractive are more likely to express an intention to apply for a job with that organization. This evidence is similar to the correlation coefficient ( $r = .71$ ) that Gomes and Neves (2011) found between the same variables in their research.

However, the study is not without limitations. First, the sample was composed solely of graduate students, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations, such as experienced professionals or individuals from different sectors. Future research should aim to test the scale across more diverse groups to assess whether the results hold in other contexts. Additionally, while the General Attractiveness dimension proved reliable, future studies could explore the validation of other dimensions of the original scale, such as Prestige and Intentions to Pursue, to offer a more comprehensive understanding of organizational attractiveness.

Regarding practical implications, the validated Italian version of the General Attractiveness scale provides a useful tool for Italian organizations. It can be employed in various contexts, such as recruitment campaigns, employer branding assessments, and organizational development strategies, allowing companies to better understand how they are perceived by potential applicants. By using this tool, organizations can gain insights into enhancing their attractiveness, thereby improving their ability to attract top talent.

## References

- Behrend, T. S., Baker, B. A., & Thompson, L. F. (2009). Effects of pro-environmental recruiting messages: The role of organizational reputation. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 24*(3), 341-350. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-009-9112-6>
- Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitude, intention, and behavior: An introduction to theory and research*. Addison-Wesley.
- Fisher, C. D., Ilgen, D. R., & Hoyer, W. D. (1979). Source credibility, information favorability, and job offer acceptance. *Academy of Management Journal, 22*(1), 94-103. <https://doi.org/10.5465/255478>
- Gomes, D., & Neves, J. (2011). Organizational attractiveness and prospective applicants' intentions to apply. *Personnel Review, 40*(6), 684-699. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00483481111169634>
- Grimm, K. J., & Widaman, K. F. (2012). Construct validity. In H. Cooper, P. M. Camic, D. L. Long, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf, & K. J. Sher (Eds.), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology: Vol. 1. Foundations, planning, measures, and psychometrics* (pp. 621-642). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/13619-033>
- Hambleton, R. K. (2005). Issues, designs, and technical guidelines for adapting tests into multiple languages and cultures. In K. Hambleton, P. Merenda, & C. Spielberger (Eds.), *Adapting educational and psychological tests for cross-cultural assessment* (pp. 3-38). Lawrence Erlbaum. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410611758>
- Highhouse, S., Lievens, F., & Sinar, E. F. (2003). Measuring attraction to organizations. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 63*(6), 986-1001. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164403258403>
- Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling, 6*(1), 1-55. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10705519909540118>
- Lievens, F., & Highhouse, S. (2003). The relation of instrumental and symbolic attributes to a company's attractiveness as an employer. *Per-*



- sonnel Psychology*, 56(1), 75-102. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2003.tb00144.x>
- Mariani, M. G., Curcuruto, M., & Zavalloni, M. (2016). Reclutamento online: Il ruolo della fiducia verso la tecnologia. *Psicologia Sociale*, 11(2), 199-209. <https://doi.org/10.1482/84099>
- Turban, D. B., & Keon, T. L. (1993). Organizational attractiveness: An interactionist perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78(2), 184-193. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.78.2.184>
- Venkatesh, V., & Davis, F. D. (2000). A theoretical extension of the technology acceptance model: Four longitudinal field studies. *Management Science*, 46(2), 186-204. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.46.2.186.11926>

## APPENDIX

---

Italian translations of the Items	
Item 1	Per me, questa azienda potrebbe essere un buon posto in cui lavorare
Item 2	Non sono interessato a questa azienda, se non come ultima spiaggia
Item 3	Questa azienda per me è attrattiva come luogo di impiego
Item 4	Sono interessato a sapere di più di questa azienda
Item 5	Un lavoro presso questa azienda è molto attraente per me