



Employer Branding Strategies and Recruitment Effectiveness in Construction Companies: A Case of NPD Ltd, Rwanda

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Abstract: The study aimed to assess the influence of employer branding strategies on recruitment effectiveness in construction companies in Rwanda. This study used theories like signaling theory, social identity theory, equity theory and psychological contract theory. The target population consisted of 550 people (14 members of NPD Ltd management and 536 operational staff) while the sample size was 243 respondents. These were selected by using stratified simple random and universal sampling strategies. However, only 218 (89.7% response rate) were able to participate in the study. Data were collected using a structured close-ended questionnaire, interview guide and document analysis. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviation) and inferential analysis (correlation and regression) were employed for data analysis using SPSS and Microsoft Excel. The study found that the working environment had a statistically significant effect on recruitment effectiveness in NPD Ltd ($\beta=0.425$, $p<0.05$). Staff compensation and benefits ($\beta=0.186$, $p<0.05$) and staff development programs ($\beta=0.253$, $p<0.05$) had statistically significant effects on recruitment effectiveness, resulting in the rejection of H_01 , H_02 and H_03 , respectively. The study recommended that NPD Ltd should enhance work culture, interpersonal relationships, and employee safety to foster collaboration and attract talent.

Keywords: Employer Branding Strategies, Working Environment, Employee Compensation and Benefits, Staff Development Programs and Recruitment Effectiveness

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1. Introduction

Research by Iwu and Pienaar (2022) emphasizes that many construction companies in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Rwanda, fail to communicate their employer brand effectively, leading to a disconnect between organizational values and potential employee perceptions. The study found that 68% of surveyed construction firms did not actively promote their brand on social media or other platforms, resulting in reduced recruitment effectiveness. A research article by Habimana and Mugisha (2022) reveals that a strong

organizational culture positively affects employer branding and attracts candidates who align with company values. The study found that 75% of job seekers prioritized cultural fit over salary in their job search. However, many construction firms in Rwanda struggle to develop and communicate their unique organizational culture, resulting in difficulties attracting candidates who resonate with their brand.

It has been observed that employer branding plays a critical role in the success of any organization, as it directly impacts on the effectiveness of recruitment, and the quality of talent acquired and retained. At the same

time, NPD Ltd witnessed notable improvements in its recruitment effectiveness. Employee retention rates increased by 45%, while productivity also saw a significant boost, as measured by fewer employees leaving the company (Mushi, 2020).

Despite the mentioned significant improvement, Rwanda Development Board (2022) reported that approximately 70% of construction firms encountered difficulties in filling skilled positions due to the prevailing perception of the industry as labor-intensive with minimal career growth opportunities (Rwanda Development Board, 2022). Furthermore, a study by the International Labour Organization (2023) indicated that nearly 60% of construction workers in Rwanda left the industry within their first year due to poor working conditions and a lack of career advancement, emphasizing the need for strong employer branding to enhance retention rates.

There is still no empirical research that has been conducted on NPD Ltd to determine the extent to which employer branding strategies were responsible for contributing to the improvements in recruitment effectiveness. This gap in the literature makes it necessary to investigate how NPD Ltd.'s employer branding strategies have influenced its recruitment outcomes, providing insights that can inform future branding and recruitment practices in the Rwandan construction industry.

The study sought to assess the effect of employer branding strategies on recruitment effectiveness in construction companies in Rwanda.

Specific objectives:

- i. To examine the effect of working environment on recruitment effectiveness at NPD Ltd in Rwanda
- ii. To investigate the effect of employee compensation and benefits on recruitment effectiveness at NPD Ltd in Rwanda
- iii. To assess the effect of staff development programs on recruitment effectiveness at NPD Ltd in Rwanda

Research hypotheses:

- i. H₀₁: Working environment has no significant effect on recruitment effectiveness at NPD Ltd in Rwanda
- ii. H₀₂: Employee compensation and benefits have no significant effect on recruitment effectiveness at NPD Ltd in Rwanda
- iii. H₀₃: Staff development programs have no significant effect on recruitment effectiveness at NPD Ltd in Rwanda

2. Literature Review

This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the existing knowledge and research pertaining to the effect of employer branding strategies on recruitment effectiveness.

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study used signal theory, social identity theory, equity theory, and psychological contract theory.

2.1.1 Signaling Theory

Signaling Theory was introduced by Michael Spence in 1973, focusing on how individuals or organizations communicate information to reduce information asymmetry between parties. Over the years, the theory has evolved, being applied in various domains like marketing, economics, and human resources, particularly in understanding recruitment and job markets. Researchers have expanded on Spence's work by exploring how signals, such as employer branding, influence job applicants' perceptions (Connelly *et al.*, 2011).

Signaling Theory states that people use signals to transmit information about themselves to others, particularly in competitive contexts like hiring. Prospective employees use NPD Ltd. and its employment branding strategies to understand signals such as job adverts, company reputation, and employee testimonials to assess the firm's quality and desirability as an employer. NPD Ltd. distinguished itself from competitors in the building industry by effectively employing employer branding to send strong positive signals and attract suitable candidates.

2.1.2 Social Identity Theory

Henri Tajfel developed Social Identity Theory in 1979 to explain how individuals derive their identity from membership in social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The theory evolved through research on intergroup relations, examining how social categorizations affect behavior. Over the years, it has expanded into various fields, including organizational behavior, where it helps explain how employees' identification with a company influences job satisfaction and performance (Hogg & Terry, 2000).

Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals derive a sense of self from their affiliations with groups, including organizations. This theory was relevant to the study as it explores how NPD Ltd.'s employer branding strategies foster a strong organizational identity that resonates with prospective employees. By promoting a distinct and positive corporate culture, values, and mission, NPD Ltd. encouraged candidates to identify with the organization, ultimately enhancing recruitment effectiveness by attracting individuals who align with the company's identity and values.

2.1.3 Equity Theory

Equity Theory was developed by J. Stacy Adams in 1963, focusing on fairness in social exchanges, particularly in workplace settings (Adams, 1963). The theory has evolved to examine perceptions of equity in compensation, promotions, and recognition, influencing how individuals evaluate their work environment and their motivation levels (Carrell & Dittrich, 1978).

Equity Theory focuses on the perceived fairness of the employment relationship, where individuals assess their contributions and rewards relative to others. In the context of recruitment at NPD Ltd., the company's employer branding must communicate a commitment to equitable practices, such as fair compensation, career opportunities, and workplace culture. By highlighting these equitable aspects, NPD Ltd. appealed to prospective employees who seek fairness and balanced rewards in their employment, thus improving recruitment outcomes.

2.1.4 Psychological Contract Theory

The Psychological Contract Theory was first introduced by Argyris in 1960 and later expanded by Rousseau in 1989, focusing on the unwritten, implicit agreements between employers and employees regarding mutual expectations (Argyris, 1960; Rousseau, 1989). The concept has evolved to encompass how changes in the employment relationship, such as shifts toward more flexible work arrangements, affect employee commitment (Rousseau, 2004).

Psychological Contract Theory involved the unwritten expectations and obligations between employers and employees. In assessing recruitment effectiveness, it is essential to understand how NPD Ltd.'s employer branding communicates promises regarding employee experiences and organizational support. By aligning their branding strategies with clear and realistic expectations about roles, growth opportunities, and the work environment, NPD Ltd. strengthen psychological contracts, leading to higher attraction and engagement of job candidates.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

A study conducted by Kwofie *et al.* (2019) in Ghana explored the relationship between the adequacy of facilities and recruitment efficiency in the construction industry. The study employed a survey methodology, collecting data from 200 construction firms through structured questionnaires. Findings revealed a significant positive correlation between the availability of modern equipment and facilities and the ability of firms to attract skilled workers. The study highlighted that construction professionals, particularly engineers and architects, are

more likely to be attracted to firms that offer state-of-the-art tools and resources for design and project execution. However, some firms reported a lack of advanced technology, leading to difficulty in recruiting highly qualified personnel. The study's limitations included its focus on urban firms, leaving rural firms under-represented. Future research could explore the impact of technology in rural construction sectors (Kwofie *et al.*, 2019).

The work culture of an organization significantly affects its recruitment effectiveness. According to a study by Wong and Cheung (2020) in Hong Kong, a strong and positive work culture within construction firms enhances their ability to attract top talent. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews with HR managers and quantitative surveys with construction employees. Results indicated that firms with a collaborative and transparent culture reported higher recruitment success. Specifically, candidates were drawn to companies that emphasized teamwork, continuous learning, and ethical practices. On the other hand, firms characterized by a hierarchical or authoritarian culture experienced difficulties in attracting skilled labor, particularly younger professionals. While the study showed a positive influence of work culture on recruitment, it did not account for variations between large and small firms, suggesting a need for further comparative studies (Wong & Cheung, 2020).

A study by Smith and Johnson (2021) conducted in the United States examined the impact of pay equity on attracting skilled workers in the construction sector. Utilizing a quantitative survey methodology, the researchers gathered data from 500 construction employees and hiring managers across various firms. The findings indicated a positive relationship between perceived pay equity and the effectiveness of recruitment; firms with transparent pay practices attracted more qualified candidates. However, the study focused on large firms, leaving a knowledge gap in understanding how pay equity is perceived in smaller construction companies, which may operate under different compensation structures (Smith & Johnson, 2021).

Zhao and Chen (2022) conducted a study in China, employing a mixed methods approach that included surveys of 300 construction professionals and interviews with HR managers. The study found that firms offering salaries above the industry average had a higher recruitment success rate, especially for technical positions. However, the authors noted that while competitive pay attracted applicants, it was not the sole factor in their decision-making process; candidates also considered company culture and growth opportunities. A limitation of the study was the potential bias in self-reported data from HR managers, which may not fully reflect the realities of recruitment challenges faced by firms (Zhao & Chen, 2022).

A study conducted by Lee and Kim (2021) in South Korea explored how skills training impacts the recruitment process in construction companies. Utilizing a quantitative survey methodology, the researchers collected data from 350 employees and HR managers across various construction firms. The findings revealed a positive relationship between skills acquisition and recruitment effectiveness, as firms that invested in skills training attracted a higher number of qualified candidates. However, the study identified a limitation in its focus on large construction firms, leaving a gap in understanding the impact on small to medium-sized enterprises, which may have different needs and resource constraints (Lee & Kim, 2021).

A study by Garcia and Martinez (2022) in Spain utilized a qualitative case study approach, examining four construction firms with robust development programs. The findings showed that employees who effectively applied their new skills were more likely to refer to potential candidates, thereby enhancing recruitment efforts. Nonetheless, the study highlighted a limitation in its small sample size, indicating that broader research could provide more generalized findings applicable across different contexts within the construction industry (Garcia & Martinez, 2022).

3. Methodology

The study used both descriptive and correlational design. This study adopted also a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative component involves surveys to collect numerical data, enabling the analysis of measurable relationships between project practices and outcome

The researcher used Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29 to analyze data. The data was analyzed using descriptive

statistics (means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation and regression analysis).

The researcher also conducted a multiple linear regression analysis. This helped to determine the extent to which the independent variables under employer branding strategies: working environment (X_1), employee compensation and benefits (X_2), and employee development programs (X_3) affected recruitment effectiveness (Y) in the period under study. The regression model for this analysis is as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

Y = Recruitment effectiveness

β_0 = Constant

$\beta_1 \dots \beta_3$ =

Regression coefficients for predictors ($X_1 - X_3$)

X_1 = Working environment

X_2 = Employee compensation and benefits

X_3 = Employee development programs

ε = Error term

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents and analyses the findings generated from primary data. The section focused on inferential analysis and discussion of findings.

4.1 Correlation Analysis

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to assess the level of association between recruitment effectiveness and factors such as working environment, compensation and benefits, and development programs/initiatives for surveyed employees in NPD Ltd. Table 1 shows the matrix for the correlation coefficients generated from the SPSS output.

Table 1: Correlation matrix

		Working environment	Employee compensation and benefits	Staff development programs	Recruitment effectiveness
Working environment	Pearson Correlation	1	.752**	.735**	.769**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	218	218	218	218
Employee compensation and benefits	Pearson Correlation	.752**	1	.714**	.703**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	218	218	218	218
Staff development programs	Pearson Correlation	.735**	.714**	1	.720**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	218	218	218	218
Recruitment effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.769**	.703**	.720**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	218	218	218	218

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field data, 2024

As Table 1 shows, it can be observed that the working environment is highly correlated with recruitment effectiveness ($r=0.769$, $N=218$, $p<.05$). it indicates that there is a significant relationship between working environment and recruitment effectiveness in NPD Ltd. A study conducted by Kwofie *et al.* (2019) in Ghana explored the relationship between the adequacy of facilities and recruitment efficiency in the construction industry. Findings revealed a significant positive correlation between the availability of modern equipment and facilities and the ability of firms to attract skilled workers.

Similarly, the data shows that compensation and benefits are strongly and positively associated with recruitment effectiveness ($r=0.703$, $N=218$, $p<.05$). it indicates that there is a significant relationship between compensation, benefits and recruitment effectiveness in NPD Ltd. A study by Smith and Johnson (2021) conducted in the United States examined the impact of pay equity on attracting skilled workers in the construction sector. The findings indicated a positive relationship between perceived pay equity and the effectiveness of recruitment; firms with transparent pay practices attracted more qualified candidates.

Furthermore, staff development programs were also highly correlated with recruitment effectiveness ($r=0.720$, $N=218$, $p<.05$). it indicates that there is a significant relationship between staff development programs and recruitment effectiveness in NPD Ltd. A study conducted by Lee and Kim (2021) in South Korea explored how skills training impacts the recruitment

process in construction companies. The findings revealed a positive relationship between skills acquisition and recruitment effectiveness, as firms that invested in skills training attracted a higher number of qualified candidates.

These findings underscore the strong relationships between the examined factors and recruitment effectiveness, highlighting the critical role of enhancing working conditions, offering competitive benefits, and investing in development programs for achieving improved recruitment outcomes in NPD Ltd.

4.2 Regression analysis

Multiple linear regression was utilized to assess the effect of working environment, compensation and benefits, and development programs/initiatives as predictor variables on recruitment effectiveness in NPD Ltd. Additionally, this analysis aimed to quantify the individual contributions of each predictor variable towards recruitment effectiveness.

4.2.1 Regression model summary

The summary of the regression model (Table 2) presents the overall correlation between employer branding and recruitment effectiveness in NPD Ltd. It also reveals the general effect of employer branding and recruitment effectiveness in NPD Ltd that were covered by the study.

Table 2: Regression summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.810 ^a	.657	.652	.29927

a. Predictors: (Constant), staff development programs, employee compensation and benefits, working environment

Source: Field data, 2024

As Table 2 shows, that the model generated a combined $R=0.810$ and this indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between employer branding (staff development programs, employee compensation and benefits, working environment) and recruitment effectiveness. Similarly, the R Square of 0.657 shows that 65.7% of the variation in recruitment effectiveness in NPD Ltd during the period can be explained by variables of employer branding. This is like what Hadi and Ahmed (2021) said that employer branding has been a key differentiator in sectors like technology and

healthcare, where talent shortages are prevalent in Canada. Organizations with clear and attractive employer brands have reported improved recruitment outcomes, as candidates are drawn to their positive workplace reputation.

4.2.2 Analysis of variance

Table 3 shows the analysis of variance (ANOVA), which illustrates the suitability of the regression model in explaining the regression outcomes.

Table 3: Analysis of variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	36.661	3	12.220	135.778	.000 ^b
	Residual	19.167	214	.090		
	Total	55.828	217			

a. Dependent Variable: recruitment effectiveness

b. Predictors: (Constant), staff development programs, employee compensation and benefits, working environment

Source: Field data, 2024

According to Table 3, the probability value (Sig.) of .000 which is less than the 0.05 level of significance ($p < .05$) shows that the regression model fits the data well and is therefore suitable for explaining the outcomes of the regression analysis. Nkosi and Sibanda (2021) argued that employer branding is increasingly being adopted by companies seeking to compete for talent in a rapidly evolving job market. In South Africa, for example, financial institutions such as Standard Bank have used

employer branding to position themselves as employers of choice, thereby improving recruitment outcomes.

4.2.3 Regression coefficients

The regression coefficients in Table 4 show the contribution of employee working environment, staff compensation and benefits, and staff development programs and initiatives toward variation in recruitment effectiveness (RE) for employees in NPD Ltd.

Table 4: Regression coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.499	.166		3.006	.003
Working environment	.425	.067	.428	6.343	.000
Employee compensation and benefits	.186	.064	.188	2.906	.004
Staff development programs	.253	.059	.271	4.288	.000

a. Dependent Variable: recruitment effectiveness

Source: Field data, 2024

The regression analysis reveals that the employee working environment contributes positively to recruitment effectiveness, but the coefficient ($\beta = 0.425$, $p < 0.05$) indicates that this effect is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This suggests that a unit improvement in the employee working environment leads to a 0.425-unit increase in recruitment effectiveness in NPD Ltd. According to a study by Wong and Cheung (2020) in Hong Kong, a strong and positive work culture within construction firms enhances their ability to attract top talent. Results indicated that firms with a collaborative and transparent culture reported higher recruitment success.

Staff compensation and benefits, on the other hand, exhibit a strong and statistically significant effect on recruitment effectiveness, with a coefficient of $\beta = 0.186$, $p < 0.05$. This indicates that for every unit an increase in staff compensation and benefits, recruitment effectiveness increases by 0.186 units, underscoring the critical role of competitive compensation in attracting and retaining talent. Zhao and Chen (2022) conducted a study in China, employing a mixed methods approach that included surveys of 300 construction professionals and interviews with HR managers. The study found that firms offering salaries above the industry average had a higher recruitment success rate, especially for technical positions.

Similarly, staff development programs show a positive and statistically significant effect on recruitment effectiveness, with $\beta = 0.253$ and $p < 0.05$. This suggests that a unit improvement in staff development programs leads to a 0.253-unit increase in recruitment effectiveness. In a study conducted in the United Kingdom, Smith *et al.* (2024) applied a longitudinal design to assess the retention rates of 250 employees in

construction firms with varying levels of staff development investment. The findings revealed a strong positive correlation between high retention rates and effective recruitment processes, as firms with robust development programs were better at retaining talent, which in turn attracted new candidates.

To test the hypotheses using the regression coefficients in Table 4, the statistical significance of the effect of each independent variable (employee working environment, staff compensation and benefits, and staff development programs and initiatives) on the dependent variable (recruitment effectiveness) is analyzed.

H_{01} states that the employee working environment has no statistically significant effect on recruitment effectiveness. The p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected, the results indicating that the working environment has a statistically significant effect on recruitment effectiveness in NPD Ltd.

H_{02} states that staff compensation and benefits have no statistically significant effect on recruitment effectiveness. Since the p-value is less than the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that staff compensation and benefits have a statistically significant effect on recruitment effectiveness in NPD Ltd.

H_{03} states that staff development programs have no statistically significant effect on recruitment effectiveness. As the p-value is less than the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected. This shows that staff development programs have a statistically significant effect on recruitment effectiveness in NPD Ltd.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study examined the effect of employer branding strategies on recruitment effectiveness in NPD Ltd. The primary objectives were to identify the effect of employee working conditions, staff compensation and benefits, and staff development programs and initiatives on recruitment effectiveness. The working environment showed positive results. The findings highlight the significance of staff compensation and benefits on recruitment effectiveness. Similarly, staff development programs were found to be crucial for recruitment success. The research contributes to the understanding of how employer branding strategies affect recruitment effectiveness, emphasizing the need for targeted improvements in compensation, staff development, and the working environment.

5.2. Recommendations

1. Management of NPD Ltd should enhance work culture and interpersonal relationships to foster productivity and collaboration among employees.
2. The safety and compliance teams of NPD Ltd should continue prioritizing employee safety while exploring ways to make the work environment more appealing to potential recruits.
3. Training and development team of NPD Ltd should tailor training programs more closely to job-specific responsibilities to maximize their impact on skill development.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

Future research could explore the role of organizational culture and interpersonal dynamics on recruitment effectiveness in Rwanda. Analyze the impact of employer branding strategies on recruitment effectiveness across different organizations in Rwanda. Study the impact of employer branding strategies on recruitment effectiveness by combining quantitative recruitment metrics with qualitative feedback from employees and potential candidates.

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