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## **EMPLOYER BRANDING AND EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION IN NIGERIAN CEMENT INDUSTRY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The prime focus of this study was to examine the effect of employer brand image on job satisfaction in the Nigerian Cement Industry. Data were gathered using standardized questionnaire method and for the purpose of hypothesis testing, correlation and multiple regression analysis were used as the tool for data analysis and SPSS was used for the analysis. Findings revealed that compensation and career development, diversity in job and work setting and organizational environment significantly impact on employee job satisfaction in Nigerian cement industry. The study concluded that focusing on a firm's individuality and uniqueness and identifying it with employees, increases employee job satisfaction in Nigerian cement industry and recommends that the Nigerian cement industry should employ more attractive ways of compensation and encourage employees to develop their careers.*

*Keywords: Employer branding, Job satisfaction, Cement industry*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Employer branding describes the ability of an employer to attract potential employees and at the same time retain the current employees. Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) explain that branding is a concept derived from marketing, and employer branding is defined as the process of applying branding principles to Strategic Human Resource Management, which is used to distinguish firms from competing firms by inviting, inspiring and engaging both potential, as well as existing employees. Companies usually focus on branding efforts towards developing products and corporate brands but in recent times they also include their focus on the branding of employers and appear to be expending considerable resources in the program.

Nowadays, it becomes even more crucial to create an own strong employer brand with core strengths and uniqueness to position the organizational distinctiveness on the labor market (Bendaraviciene, Kristolatitis, & Turauskas, 2013). Being distinctive offers the possibility for winning the war of talents by being authentic and memorable. Moreover, due to the demographic changes and high expectations, as well as a high self-interest attitude of generation Y, it becomes even more necessary for organizations to brand themselves as a

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good employer (Arachchige & Robertson, 2013). According to Ritson (2002) companies with strong employer brands can potentially reduce the cost of employee acquisition, improve employee relations, increase employee retention and even offer lower salaries for comparable staff to firms with weaker employer brands.

Job satisfaction is composed of beliefs and feelings that individuals have about their respective jobs. It is the contentment an employee derives about his job in the work place which could be positive or negative. Gülakan (2013) explains that employee satisfaction is pleasurable or positive emotional state as a result of employees' evaluation of their jobs and job experiences. If psychological state were positive as a result of the experience the employees get in the work place, satisfaction would result; if not, dissatisfaction. The employee satisfaction is an outcome of the perceptions that the employees get regarding what they experience on the job. Accordingly, employee satisfaction plays a key role in personal and family happiness, and in making the organizations achieve its goals (Yalim & Mizrak, 2017). Thus, employers nowadays employ various strategies to make their companies distinct among which is ensuring and increasing employee satisfaction, which matters to both the organizations and employees.

The main objective of this paper is to examine the effect of employer branding on job satisfaction in cement industry. Other specific objectives include:

- i) To assess the effect of compensation on job satisfaction of employees in cement industry.
- ii) To examine the effect of variety in job and work setting on job satisfaction of employees in cement industry.
- iii) To assess the effect of organizational environment on job satisfaction of employees in cement industry.

This study attempts to bridge the existing gap in literature by examining whether employer branding has a positive significant effect on job satisfaction of employees of cement industry in Nigeria with specific reference to BUA cement industry. To achieve this objective, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H<sub>01</sub>: Compensation has no significant effect on job satisfaction of employees in cement industry

H<sub>02</sub>: variety in job and work setting has no significant effect on job satisfaction of employees in cement industry

H<sub>03</sub>: organizational environment has no significant effect on job satisfaction of employees in cement industry

This paper is structured into five sections. Section one is this introduction. Section two reviews the concepts and empirical literature related to the study and presents theoretical framework and section three discusses the methodology. Section four is the discussions of the findings, while section five concludes and highlights the study's implications.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

***Theoretical Framework***

The theoretical basis for this paper is the social exchange theory by Homans (1961) which drew upon behaviorism to explain human behavior. Homans (1961) defined social exchange as the exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly between at least two persons. Social exchange theory proposes that social behavior is the result of an exchange process. People weigh the potential benefits and risks of social relationships. Social exchange theory stipulates that certain workplace antecedents lead to interpersonal connection- social exchange relationships (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel & Rupp, 2001). In relation to this study, social exchange theory implies that when employers take care of employees, through unique employment offerings and values, social exchange relationships evolve which engender beneficial consequences. These relationships produce effective work behavior and positive employee attitudes, in this case job satisfaction.

**Concept of Job Satisfaction**

In today's highly competitive world, ensuring and increasing employee satisfaction matters to both the organizations and employees. Employee satisfaction is a major job attitude which has serious effect on organizational performance. It is therefore, imperative that serious attention be given to it (Bakotic & Babic, 2013). It has been found that employees who are satisfied are less likely to leave the company, are less absent and show increased productivity at work (Kostea, 2011; Curtis & Glacken, 2014). According to Locke (1976), the employee satisfaction is pleasurable or positive emotional status as a result of the evaluation of their job and job experience. If psychological status were positive as a result of the experience the employee get in the work place, satisfaction would result; if not, dissatisfaction.

Job satisfaction is believed to be multidimensional and intricate. There are different dimensions based on factors believed to affect employee satisfaction. Mueller and Kim (2008) identify two types of job satisfaction. There is the overall feelings about the job and secondly the feelings employees have about aspects of the job such as benefits, salary, position, growth opportunities, work environment and relationships among employees. It is also suggested elsewhere that job satisfaction has emotional and behavioral components (Bernstein & Nash, 2008). The emotional components are feelings of happiness, anxiety, boredom and excitement evoked by the job. The behavioral components include early arrival, working late or faking illness in order to avoid work.

Several factors have been found to influence employee job satisfaction. Koc (2011) groups those factors into two; individual and organizational factors. The individual factors include age, gender, personality, educational level and seniority among others. On the other hand, the organizational factors include job content, wage, opportunity for promotion and development, working conditions and organizational atmosphere. On their part, Shju and Subhashini, (2017) grouped the factors that influence employee satisfaction into four. These are various personal demographic factors, economic factor, interpersonal relationships within the workplace and working conditions which include job design, working hours and opportunities for personal development.

Employee satisfaction is the desired positive outcome of employee branding; employee branding has direct effect on employee satisfaction. Therefore, understanding the various attributes of employer brand image can help facilitate employee satisfaction (Schlanger, Mareika, Maas, & Gachelin, 2011; Tanwar & Prasad, 2016).

**Concept of Employer Branding**

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Employer branding encompasses the company's value system, the company's policies towards attracting, motivating and retaining their current and potential employees. Employer brand image is an attempt by an employer to establish a sort of name or identity of the company as an employer. Employer branding has emerged as a strategy for employers to differentiate themselves from their competitors.

Berthon, Ewing and Hah (2005) explains that an attractive employer brand can be seen as an imagined benefit that a potential employee associates with working for a specific organization. This should be present in every part of the employment experience in the organization.

Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) on the other hand, explain that employer branding is essentially a three step process. First, a firm develops a concept of the particular value it offers to prospective and current employees. This value proposition provides the central message that is conveyed by the employer brand. It is of key importance that this value proposition derives from a thorough audit of the characteristics that make the firm a great place to work. Once the value proposition is determined, the second step in employer branding consists of externally marketing this value proposition to attract the targeted applicant population. The third step involves carrying the brand "promise" made to recruits in to the firm and incorporating it as part of the organizational culture. In a sense, the last step consists of internally marketing the employer brand. Thus effective employer branding requires the company to clearly communicate their unique employment offerings to employees, current and future (Erkmen, 2018).

Research suggests that strong employer brands that are perceived positively would result in employee satisfaction, commitment and retention (Shivaji, Shivashankar, Maruti & Reshna, 2013; Mahshwari, Gunesh, Lodorfos, & Konstantapoulou, 2017). According to Tanwar and Prasad (2016) an organization with strong employer brand is able to respond more effectively to employees' needs and thus enhance their satisfaction levels. A number of dimensions have been ascribed to employer brand by different researchers (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Backhaus & Tiko, 2004; Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005; Knox & Freeman 2006). This study will be adopting the dimensions of compensation and career development, diversity in job and work setting and work environment.

The first dimension for this study is the compensation and career development. Priyono and Marnis (2008) defined compensation as all income in the form of money or goods directly or indirectly received by employees in return for services provided to the company. They further highlight compensation as all income in the form of money or goods directly or indirectly received by employees in return for services provided to the company. Compensation is a significant motivator and thus has a positive impact on employee welfare (Crawford, 2015). Compensation systems in organizations must be aligned to organizational objectives and strategies and also require balancing the interests of the employer with the expectations of employees. Compensation affects how and why potential candidates choose to work at an organization over others. Employers must be fairly competitive on different types of compensation in order to hire, keep, and reward performance of employees in the organization. If a company offers competitive remunerations and recognition to its employees, attitudes that are favorable to the company are facilitated (Kashyap & Verma, 2018). A good reward system is found to positively affect employee satisfaction (Schlager, Mareika, Maas, & Gachelin, 2011; Heilmann, Saarenketo, & Liikkanen, 2013).

Career development, on the other hand, is defined as the process of increasing individual work abilities in order to achieve the desired career goals. It is a planned effort

and consists of structured activities or processes that result in joint planning efforts between employees and organizations (Proyono & Marnis, 2014). Career development practices have been found to help organization attract and retain high performing employees. Most employees are loyal to an organization that can ensure employee development programs as that is a certain way to bright future opportunities. Thus satisfaction among employees can be enhanced by providing training and development opportunities at work place (Arachchige & Robertson, 2013; Ahmad & Daud, 2016; Tanwar & Prasad, 2016).

The second dimension, diversity in job and work setting include all possible ways people can differ which includes race, gender, age and other demographic characteristics. People can also differ because of their values, personality and disabilities (Shin & Park, 2013). It is related to variety in the work performed by the employee and diversity in the work setting. Variety in the work performed by the employee refers to the interesting job characteristics. These interesting job characteristics are defined as “the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom independence and discretion to the individual to schedule the work and determine the procedure used in carrying it out” (Tomlison, 2002). Job characteristics have been found to be best predictors of job satisfaction (Judg & Church, 2000). This is built on the assumption that people do not just work for money but also create purpose and satisfaction in their life (Mitchell, Holten, & Lee, 2001). Thus, nature of the job itself, job challenge, autonomy, variety and scope significantly influence overall satisfaction. Diversity factors have been found to have significant impact on employee’s attitudes (Mackey et al., 2007).

Organizational Environment is the third dimension proposed in this study. Organizational environment is the surroundings in which the organization is premised on. According to Tripathi (2014), it is the environments in which people work that include physical setting, job profile, organizational culture and market condition. Each of the features is inter linked and has an impact on employees’ overall performance and productivity. Also, employee’s motivation and the desire to stay or leave the organization lies heavily most often times on the quality of the employees' workplace environment. Briner (2000) further explains that work environment can be thought of simply as the environment in which people work and as such, it is a very broad category that encompasses the physical setting like heat, equipment, characteristics of the job itself like workload, and task complexity and also broader organizational features for example: culture, history and even aspects of the external organizational setting like local labor market conditions, industry sector, and work life balance.

Chandrasekar (2011) explains that the type of workplace environment in which employees operate determines whether or not organizations will prosper. The workplace environment consists of physical factors that include the office layout and design among other factors; while the psychosocial factors include working conditions, role congruity and social support. Other aspects of the workplace environment are the policies which include employment conditions. A better physical workplace environment boosts employees’ performance. Friendly and respectful environment and an empowering environment within organization have been found to enhance employee satisfaction (Schlanger et al., 2011; Mantongolo, Masekende & Mafali, 2018).

This study adopts the explanation of the role of branding by Mittal and Kamakura (2001) who explain that the role of brand image is to create and enhance satisfaction and satisfaction predicts future behavior towards the brand. However, for the study only three dimensions of employer brand were used. Organizational fame had not been included since

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it was considered more relevant for potential employees. Our study relates to existing employees of the industry studied.

### **Employer Brand Image and Job Satisfaction**

Recently, considerable attention is being paid to the issue of employer branding. It has gained great popularity among human resource practitioners and in academic circle. There are a number of studies that seek to study employer brand image and its consequences on both current and prospective employees.

A study by Priyadarshi (2011) investigated the impact of employer brand image on current employees. The study was conducted using mostly engineers working in two telecommunication companies in Delhi. The objective was to investigate the impact of employer brand image on job satisfaction, affective commitment and intention to quit the organization. The different dimensions of employer image were found to have impact on all the three dependent variables. However, the extent of the impact varies with each dimension.

Wahba and Elmanadily (2015) conducted a study to investigate the impact of employer branding on employee differentiation, loyalty, satisfaction and affinity among employees in pharmaceutical industry in Egypt. The results indicated that employer branding impact employee differentiation, loyalty, satisfaction and affinity. Another study conducted by Tanwar and Prasad (2016) examined the impact of the different dimensions of employer brand upon job satisfaction in the IT industry in India. The study also addressed the moderating role of gender in the relation between employer brand dimensions and job satisfaction. The results of the study indicated that employer brand was a critical predictor of job satisfaction. All the six dimensions of employer brand used in the study (training and development, reputation, organization culture and ethics and corporate social responsibility, work-life balance and diversity) were found to be predictors of job satisfaction. Furthermore, gender was found to have moderating effect on the relation between employer brand dimensions and job satisfaction.

In another study by Chouhan and Rathore (2017), the relationship between employer branding and employee satisfaction among employees of telecommunication companies in India was investigated. Results of the study indicated that there was a positive significant relationship between employer branding and employee satisfaction. In a study in Turkey, similar results were obtained. The study was conducted by Yalim and Mizrak (2017) in Istanbul, Turkey, in a group of companies, ARKAS Holding, having strong employer brand. The study findings revealed that employer brand affects employee satisfaction. A positive direct relation between the employer brand and employee satisfaction was found. Also no significant difference was found between the demographic characteristics of the respondents and job satisfaction.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study seeks to assess the impact of employer brand image on employee job satisfaction. The population consists of all the permanent staff of BUA Abuja and Sokoto Cement (which has now been taken over by BUA Cement). The study administered questionnaires to the staff that have worked at BUA for more than 5 years. A total of 160 staff fit the criteria and so all of them were given questionnaires to fill and 146 were retrieved which form the basis for the data analysis. This staffs were from all cadres in the organization.

Data were collected from primary source using questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section is on personal information on the respondent.

The second consists of questions on employer brand image. This section was adopted from the work of Knox and Freeman (2006) which measured employer brand image. The instrument developed by Knox and Freeman (2006) was used in other studies (e.g. Priyadarshi, 2011) which validated its reliability for the measurement of employer brand image. Respondents were required to respond on a 5 point Likert's scale ranging from 1 (Strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Section three of the questionnaire is on employee job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is the contentment an employee derives from his job in the workplace which could be positive or negative. This is measured by overall job contentment questionnaire developed by Cammann, Fichman, Jekins, and Klesh (1983). Participants responded on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Example of items are, "I am greatly satisfied with this job" and "I am satisfied with the recognition I get for the job I do".

Multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the impact of employer branding on employee job satisfaction

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

A total of one hundred and sixty (160) questionnaires were distributed for the study and 146 were duly filled and returned. The analysis was based on the returned questionnaires. The results of the analyses were used to test if compensation and career, diversity in work setting, and organizational environment, which are proxies of brand image, have significant relationship with job satisfaction of employees

#### **Test of Hypothesis**

The hypotheses were tested using regression analysis at 5% level of significance.

**Table 1: Results for model summary of impact of brand image on employee job satisfaction**

#### **Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.928 <sup>a</sup>	.862	.857	.20831	1.966

The model summary for the results in table 1 above indicates that the three variables can significantly account for 86% of employees' job satisfaction (adjusted  $r^2=0.857$ ). The f- statistics was significant at 1% confidence level ( $F(3,100) = 199.195, p<0.05$ ) indicating the fitness of the model.

**Table 2: Results for impact of brand image on employee job satisfaction**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.255	.146		1.748	.084
	Org/environment	.532	.093	.569	5.719	.000
	Diversity in job/Work setting	.205	.063	.227	3.272	.001
	Compensation/career development	.184	.052	.256	3.552	.001

Also from table 2 above, it was also found that organizational environment, diversity in work setting and compensation and career were significantly related to employee job satisfaction and can significantly predicts it ( $\beta=0.569$ ,  $p<0.05$ ,  $\beta=0.227$ ,  $p<0.05$ ,  $\beta=0.256$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Based on the results in table.2, the first, second and third hypotheses were rejected.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The objective of the study is to examine the impact of brand image on employee job satisfaction in Nigerian cement industry. Analysis of the collected data revealed that there is a positive and significant impact of diversity in work setting, organizational environment and compensation and career development on employee job satisfaction. These particular variables (diversity in work setting, organizational environment and compensation and career development) signifies that a company’s ability to create and deliver an attractive image of the employer to the potential labor market increases the likelihood of retaining the existing employees of the organization through satisfying those employees. This is in line with the finding of Sivertzen, Nilsen and Olafsen (2013) who confirm that the three dimensions of brand image work setting, compensation and career development and organizational environment are key responsive features of employee job satisfaction in organizations. The result is also consistent with the study of Schlager, Mareika, Maas and Gachelin (2011) and Sokro (2012) who all argue that brand image influences favorable employee attitudes leading to increase in job satisfaction.

**CONCLUSION**

This study assessed the impact of brand image on employee job satisfaction in Nigerian cement industry. The results from the study confirms that employer branding particularly the proxies of diversity in work setting, organizational environment and compensation have a substantial impact on employees job satisfaction which thus indicates that employer branding is a means of motivating and enhancing the productivity of employees as it increases their satisfaction which in turn increases employees’ productivity. It is recommended that the Nigerian cement industry should find more attractive ways of compensation and encourage employees to develop their careers. Also, diverse workforce

should be maintained and the work environment should continuously adapt to changes in technological advancement, physical layout and design.

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