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Strategic Talent Sourcing And Employer Image Retention In The Nigerian Oil And Gas Industry

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Abstract: *The study focused on strategic talent sourcing and employer image retention in the Nigerian oil and gas industry. To achieve this, three research questions were raised leading to the postulation of three hypotheses (proactive recruitment strategies, PRS, use of technology in talent sourcing, UTTS, and communication of employer value proposition, CEVP, on employer image retention. A descriptive research design was adopted. The target population comprised employees from selected oil and gas companies in Nigeria, with a total population of 330 which was used as sample size. The instrument for data collection was the use of questionnaires tested at 0.84 apha reliability and administered to the 330 employee. Data from 297 retrieved were found useable for the analysis. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that PRS had a statistically significant but negative effect on employer image retention ($\beta = -0.324$, $p < 0.01$), In contrast, UTTS showed a positive and significant relationship with EIR ($\beta = 0.255$, $p < 0.01$), Similarly, CEVP was positively and strongly associated with EIR ($\beta = 0.920$, $p < 0.01$). based on the findings it was recommended that proactive recruitment strategies should be re-evaluated and aligned with the company's brand identity and employee value offerings to ensure they positively contribute to the perception of the organization as a desirable workplace. Organizations must clearly articulate and consistently promote their employer value proposition through all recruitment channels to strengthen their public image and retain a competitive advantage. Oil and gas firms should prioritize the integration of advanced digital technologies and social media platforms into their recruitment processes to enhance visibility and attract top-tier talent.*

Keywords*: Strategic Talent Sourcing, Employer Image Retention, Proactive Recruitment Strategies, Talent Sourcing Technology, Employer Value Proposition.*

Introduction

In today's highly competitive and dynamic business environment, the ability of organizations to attract and retain top talent is critical to sustaining a positive employer image and achieving strategic goals. This reality is particularly evident in the Nigerian oil and gas industry, which plays a pivotal role in the nation's economy but faces unique challenges in human capital development due to fluctuating global oil prices, technological disruptions, and talent mobility (Adeosun, 2021; Okonjo & Emefiele, 2023). As companies strive to differentiate themselves as employers of choice, strategic talent sourcing has emerged as a core function in strengthening employer branding and long-term workforce stability (Nguyen, Yusuf, & Abubakar, 2022). Employer image retention is no longer solely based on compensation and benefits, but also on strategic recruitment practices that align with organizational values and employee expectations (Ezeugwu, Okafor, & Igwe, 2020).

Proactive recruitment strategies—such as talent mapping, campus engagements, and passive candidate sourcing—have gained prominence as organizations seek to build a resilient and future-ready workforce. In the oil and gas sector, where technical expertise is critical, adopting forward-looking recruitment tactics ensures that firms are not only filling current vacancies but are also preparing for future industry demands (Adeleke & Ojo, 2022). These strategies also help enhance the employer's image as one that values foresight and inclusiveness in its hiring practices (Chukwuemeka & Akinwale, 2021). Moreover, organizations that engage in proactive recruitment are perceived as innovative and committed to workforce development, which strengthens their reputation in a talent-driven market (Ikechukwu & Nwankwo, 2020).

The integration of technology in talent sourcing has further transformed traditional recruitment approaches. Advanced tools such as artificial intelligence (AI)-powered applicant tracking systems, data analytics, and social media platforms enable firms to reach a broader pool of candidates while improving the accuracy of hiring decisions (Bassey & Etim, 2021; Fapohunda & Uche, 2023). In the Nigerian context, where access to skilled professionals can be limited in certain sub-sectors, leveraging digital tools becomes vital for building a responsive and scalable recruitment pipeline (Afolabi, 2022). The use of digital recruitment platforms also contributes to a tech-savvy and progressive employer image, which is especially appealing to younger and more mobile job seekers (Smith & Olaleye, 2023).

Additionally, the communication of an organization's Employer Value Proposition (EVP)—which encapsulates its values, mission, work culture, and growth opportunities—is a vital component of strategic talent sourcing. A compelling EVP attracts candidates who resonate with the firm's identity and enhances retention by reinforcing organizational alignment (Aluko & Bello, 2022). In the oil and gas industry, where companies often operate in remote or volatile environments, effective EVP communication helps address employee concerns and expectations, leading to better employer image retention (Johnson, Musa, & Danjuma, 2021). As the

competition for skilled professionals intensifies, particularly in emerging markets like Nigeria, firms that clearly articulate and consistently communicate their value proposition stand a better chance of maintaining a strong employer brand and reducing employee turnover (Osagie & Emeka, 2020).

Statement of The Problem

Despite the strategic importance of the oil and gas industry to Nigeria's economy, many firms within the sector face persistent challenges in attracting and retaining top talent, which adversely affects their employer image and long-term sustainability. Traditional recruitment methods, coupled with limited adoption of proactive and technology-driven sourcing strategies, have proven inadequate in appealing to a new generation of highly mobile and digitally savvy professionals. Furthermore, the lack of effective communication of the Employer Value Proposition (EVP) has resulted in a weak employer brand, leading to high turnover rates and a diminished corporate image in the labor market. These gaps underscore the need to examine the extent to which strategic talent sourcing practices—specifically proactive recruitment strategies, use of technology in talent sourcing, and EVP communication—impact employer image retention in the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the strategic talent sourcing and employer image retention in the Nigerian oil and gas industry. The specific objectives are to:

i. Assess the effect of proactive recruitment strategies on employer image retention in the Nigerian oil and gas industry.
ii. Examine the impact of the use of technology in talent sourcing on employer image retention in the Nigerian oil and gas industry.
iii. Determine the effect of communication of employer value proposition on employer image retention in the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Review

Strategic talent sourcing refers to deliberate and forward-thinking approaches to attracting and acquiring the right talent, which are essential in building a strong employer image in competitive industries such as oil and gas (Waheed et al., 2022). This study conceptualizes strategic talent sourcing through three key dimensions: proactive recruitment strategies, use of technology in talent sourcing, and communication of employer value proposition. Proactive recruitment entails anticipating future hiring needs and engaging potential candidates before vacancies arise (Chatterjee et al., 2021), while technological tools such as AI, data analytics, and recruitment platforms enhance efficiency and reach in the talent acquisition process (Kapoor & Tripathi, 2023). Communication of employer value proposition (EVP) involves articulating the unique benefits of working with an organization to attract and retain top talent (Mihalcea & Mitan, 2022). These practices are believed to influence employer image retention, which reflects how positively current and potential employees perceive and remain loyal to an organization (Chhabra & Sharma, 2020; Uwizeyimana & Akinyemi, 2021). As such, this study investigates how these interconnected elements of talent sourcing contribute to the sustainability of employer branding in the Nigerian oil and gas sector.

Conceptual framework

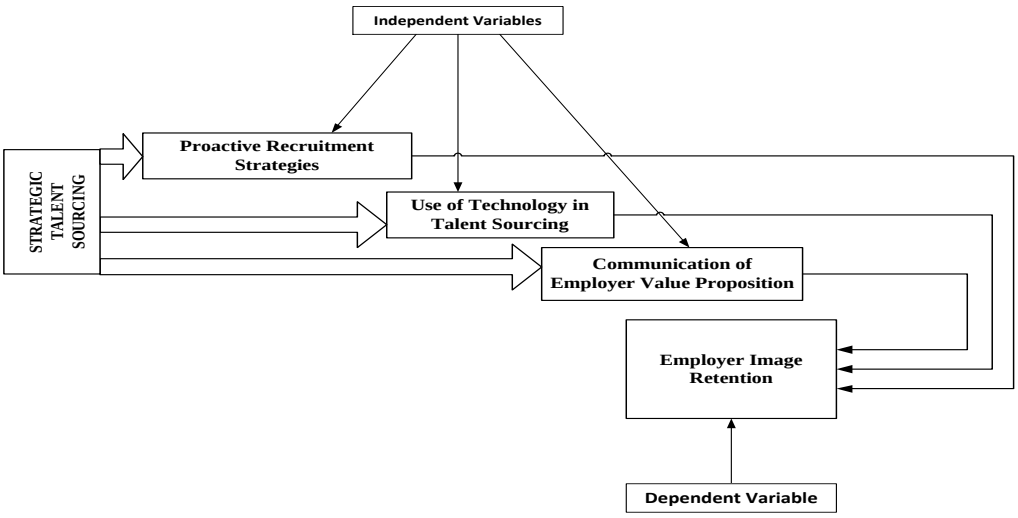

Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework for strategic talent sourcing and employer image retention (Researcher's Construct, 2025)

Strategic talent sourcing is a vital aspect of modern recruitment, directly influencing an organization's employer image. Companies that adopt proactive recruitment strategies take the initiative in identifying and attracting talent rather than waiting for applicants to seek them out. This approach enables businesses to secure top professionals who align with their corporate vision and long-term goals. By engaging in targeted outreach, networking events, and talent pooling, organizations cultivate a reputation for being dynamic and forward-thinking in their hiring practices. A strong employer brand is reinforced when candidates perceive the company as one that values innovation and continuous improvement.

The integration of technology in talent sourcing has revolutionized the hiring landscape, making recruitment faster, smarter, and more efficient. Advanced AI-driven tools, machine learning algorithms, and digital analytics platforms empower companies to refine their hiring processes. Through automated screening, predictive hiring models, and AI-assisted engagement, organizations can pinpoint candidates with precision, significantly reducing hiring time while maintaining quality. Leveraging technology not only enhances operational efficiency but also positions a company as a tech-savvy employer that embraces modern solutions. This strengthens employer brand credibility, attracting candidates who seek progressive and adaptable workplaces.

Another fundamental factor in employer image retention is the communication of an employer's value proposition (EVP). Organizations must clearly articulate the benefits and opportunities they offer to employees, ensuring that both current staff and potential hires understand what sets the company apart. Transparent messaging about workplace culture, compensation, career development, and employee well-being fosters a sense of trust and engagement. When employees feel valued and understood, they become brand advocates, enhancing the organization's reputation in professional circles. A well-communicated EVP ensures that businesses remain attractive to talent while maintaining a positive and lasting employer image.

Ultimately, all these elements—proactive recruitment strategies, technological advancements, and effective communication of the EVP—work together to drive employer image retention. Companies that strategically align these components build a sustainable employer brand that consistently draws in high-caliber candidates. A robust employer reputation is essential for long-term organizational success, ensuring that businesses not only attract the best talent but also retain them through strong engagement and trust.

Theoretical review

A major theory on which the study "Strategic Talent Sourcing and Employer Image Retention in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry" is based is the Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory.

The Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory serves as a critical framework for this study on strategic talent sourcing and employer image retention in Nigeria's oil and gas industry. According to the RBV, organizations gain a competitive advantage through the effective management of internal resources, including human capital (Barney & Hesterly, 2020). Human resources, especially talent acquisition strategies, are considered valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources that contribute significantly to organizational success (Hitt, Ireland, & Hoskisson, 2017). This view aligns with the idea that strategic talent sourcing practices, such as proactive recruitment, the use of technology in hiring, and the communication of employer value propositions (EVP), not only enhance internal capabilities but also strengthen employer branding and retention (Ployhart & Moliterno, 2011). Firms that strategically manage their talent pools are better positioned to build a strong employer image that attracts and retains top talent, ensuring long-term organizational sustainability (Collings & Mellahi, 2020). Furthermore, RBV emphasizes that organizations with strong employer brands are more likely to maintain a positive image and retain key employees, which in turn strengthens their market position (Tymon, Stumpf, & Smith, 2010). In the oil and gas industry, where competition for skilled labor is fierce, the application of RBV highlights how firms' talent management strategies can be a source of sustained advantage (Barney, 2021). This study leverages RBV to explore how proactive recruitment, technology-driven talent sourcing, and effective EVP communication contribute to employer image retention, addressing gaps in the literature regarding the role of these strategies in enhancing organizational reputation (Collings & Scullion, 2018; Ulrich, Brockbank, Johnson, Sandholtz, & Younger, 2021). Therefore, RBV offers valuable insights into how talent sourcing can shape employer image and retention in the Nigerian oil and gas sector, providing a theoretical foundation for understanding the strategic role of human resources in competitive industries (Jiang, Lee, & Kwek, 2020).

Empirical Review

Strategic talent sourcing and employer image retention have garnered significant attention in recent years, particularly within Nigeria's oil and gas sector. Anamege, Ibrahim, and Nwoye (2023) conducted a comparative study examining the impact of talent management strategies on employee performance across different generational cohorts in the Nigerian oil and gas industry. Their findings revealed that tailored talent management approaches significantly influence employee performance. However, the study did not delve into how these strategies affect employer image retention, a gap this research seeks to fill by exploring the direct relationship between strategic talent sourcing practices and employer image retention in the industry.

The study by Nzewi, Ogbeta, and Chiekezie (2015), empirically examined the relationship between talent management and employee performance in selected commercial banks in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from staff at Guaranty Trust Bank Plc and First Bank of Nigeria Plc through a structured questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale. The analysis employed Pearson Product Moment Correlation and regression techniques. The empirical findings revealed a significant positive relationship between talent management practices-such as attracting, developing, and retaining key talent-and employee performance. The results indicated that effective talent management directly enhances employee productivity and organizational competitiveness. The authors concluded that enriching job content and providing growth opportunities are essential for retaining top talent, which in turn drives superior performance in the banking sector. Although, it was financial sector centric did not focus on oil sector and also not for the employer's image retention.

Odili et al. (2024) presented a comprehensive review on the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on recruitment and selection processes within the oil and gas industry. Their study highlighted that AI enhances recruitment efficiency by automating routine tasks and improving candidate targeting. Nevertheless, the research lacked empirical data linking AI-driven talent sourcing to employer image retention. This study intends to empirically investigate this connection within the Nigerian context, assessing how AI integration in talent sourcing influences employer branding. Ozims and Alugbuo (2023) explored human resource management practices and firm performance in the Nigerian oil and gas industries. Surveying 714 HR professionals, they identified a correlation between effective HR practices and firm performance. Yet, the study did not specifically examine the impact of strategic talent sourcing on employer image retention. This research aims to address this by focusing on how such sourcing strategies influence employer branding.

Isiramen (2020) investigated talent acquisition outsourcing and employee commitment in the oil and gas sector in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study concluded that outsourcing talent acquisition had no significant effect on employee commitment. However, it did not explore how internal strategic talent sourcing practices affect employer image retention. This research seeks to fill this gap by analyzing internal sourcing strategies and their impact on employer branding. Okeah (2023) examined human resource succession planning and resilience of multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria. The research highlighted the positive relationship between succession planning and organizational resilience. Nonetheless, it did not address how succession planning as a talent sourcing strategy impacts employer image retention. This study seeks to investigate this specific relationship. Nwabude (2025) studied the effect of high involvement human resource practices on the resilience of oil and gas firms in South-South Nigeria. The findings revealed that practices such as fair reward and competence development significantly affect organizational resilience. However, the study did not examine how these HR practices influence employer image retention. This research aims to explore this aspect, particularly focusing on strategic talent sourcing. Onuegbu and Onuoha (2021) explored organizational support practices and employee engagement in the oil and gas sector in Nigeria. Their study concluded that organizational support practices significantly influence employee engagement. However, it did not consider how these practices intersect with talent sourcing strategies to affect employer image retention. This study aims to explore this intersection, particularly focusing on strategic talent sourcing. Motilewa et al. (2019) examined the influence of ecological protection on the corporate image of oil and gas firms in Nigeria. The study found that commitment to ecological protection enhances corporate image. However, it did not delve into how strategic talent sourcing contributes to employer image retention. This research seeks to assess the broader implications of internal talent management practices on employer branding.

Okpimah and Opatayo (2022) investigated the effect of strategic human resource management on employee job satisfaction in selected oil and gas companies in Nigeria. The study found that strategic HRM practices positively influence job satisfaction. However, it did not explore how these practices impact employer image retention. This research aims to fill this gap by analyzing the role of strategic talent sourcing in enhancing employer branding. John-Eke and Gabriel (2023) studied employee competence management and corporate vitality of indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South Nigeria. The findings revealed a significant relationship between employee competence management and corporate vitality. However, the study did not examine how competence management as a talent sourcing strategy affects employer image retention. This research seeks to investigate this specific relationship. Edih, Onoriode, and Faghawari (2023) examined recruitment strategies and employee's efficient performance in the maritime sector in Nigeria, focusing on the referral option. The study found that referral recruitment positively affects employee efficiency. However, it did not address how such recruitment strategies influence employer image retention. This research aims to assess the broader implications of recruitment strategies on employer branding. Ke, Sheng, and Xie (2023) analyzed employer reputation and the labor market using data from Glassdoor.com and Dice.com. The research demonstrated that employer reputation significantly affects labor market outcomes. However, it did not explore the internal strategies organizations employ to build and maintain such reputations. This study aims to investigate how strategic talent sourcing contributes to building a positive employer image.

Ekhsan et al. (2021) conducted a literature review exploring the relationship between employer branding and talent management to employee retention. The review highlighted the importance of employer branding in talent management but lacked empirical data, especially within the Nigerian oil and gas sector. This research seeks to provide empirical evidence on this relationship in the specified context. Steiner and Byrne (2022) examined employer post-crisis image restoration and its implications for recruitment.

The study found that post-crisis image restoration efforts can influence job seeker attraction. However, it did not delve into proactive talent sourcing strategies and their role in maintaining employer image. This research aims to explore how strategic talent sourcing can serve as a preventive measure in preserving employer branding. Finally, Jaja, Warmate, and Tamunomiebi (2020) investigated employee re-training and effectiveness of oil and gas firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study emphasized the importance of employee re-training in enhancing organizational effectiveness. However, it did not connect re-training initiatives with employer image retention. This research seeks to examine how continuous talent development strategies influence employer branding.

METHODOLOGY

The research adopted a quantitative research design to explore the relationship between strategic talent sourcing and employer image retention in the Nigerian oil and gas industry. The study focused on 15 selected oil and gas firms located in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. These firms were chosen because they represent a cross-section of the oil and gas industry, providing diverse perspectives on talent sourcing and employer branding practices. The population size of these firms was 330 employees, and a total of 330 individuals from the 15 firms were used as the sample size for this study. This approach aligns with the view of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), who recommend using the entire population when it is manageable, as in this case, to ensure comprehensive data collection.

To gather data, a structured questionnaire was employed as the primary instrument for collecting information on talent sourcing strategies and employer image retention practices. The questionnaire was developed based on established literature and aligned with the variables of interest. A pilot test was conducted prior to the main data collection process to assess the clarity and reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a reliability score of 0.84, indicating that the instrument was highly reliable for the study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This level of reliability ensured that the data collected was both consistent and dependable.

The study used simple random sampling to select respondents from the 15 oil and gas firms. This method was chosen to give every employee in the population an equal chance of being selected, thereby minimizing selection bias and enhancing the generalizability of the findings. The collected data was then analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including frequency distributions and multiple regression analysis. This approach enabled the researcher to assess the relationships between the independent variables—proactive recruitment strategies, the use of technology in talent sourcing, and communication of the employer value proposition—and the dependent variable of employer image retention. The findings were expected to provide insights into how these talent sourcing strategies impact employer branding in the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

In this study, the model specification is designed to examine the relationship between strategic talent sourcing practices and employer image retention. The independent variables are Proactive Recruitment Strategies (PRS), Use of Technology in Talent Sourcing (UTTS), and Communication of Employer Value Proposition (CEVP), while the dependent variable is Employer Image Retention (EIR).

The model can be expressed as:

$$EIR=\beta_0+\beta_1 PRS+\beta_2 UTTS+\beta_3 CEVP+\epsilon$$

Where:

EIR = Employer Image Retention
PRS = Proactive Recruitment Strategies
UTTS = Use of Technology in Talent Sourcing
CEVP = Communication of Employer Value Proposition
β_0 *= Intercept term*
β_1,β_2,β_3 *= Coefficients of the independent variables*
ϵ *= Error term*

RESULT

This segment deals with the results and discussion of findings.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Analysis of Questionnaire Distribution

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage
Returned	297	90.00%
Not Returned	19	5.76%

Unusable	14	4.24%
Total Distributed	330	100%

Source: Researcher's fieldwork 2025

Table 1 presents the analysis of the questionnaire distribution for the study. Out of the 330 questionnaires distributed to respondents across selected oil and gas firms, 297 were returned and found usable, representing a high response rate of 90.00%. Nineteen questionnaires, accounting for 5.76%, were not returned, while 14 (4.24%) were returned but deemed unusable due to incomplete responses and errors. The high percentage of usable returns indicates effective engagement with the target respondents and strengthens the reliability and representativeness of the data collected for the study.

Table 2: Respondents Rates of Responses to Variable Item question

S/N	Variable Item Question	Mean	Std	Remark
	Proactive Recruitment Strategies (PRS)			
1	My company actively searches for talented individuals before job openings occur.	3.52	0.89	Agree
2	We often recruit through employee referrals and professional networks.	2.23	1.41	Disagree
3	My organization attends career fairs or recruitment events regularly.	2.07	1.35	Disagree
4	The HR team plans ahead to meet future hiring needs.	2.84	1.23	Disagree
5	We attract qualified candidates by maintaining a strong talent pool.	3.64	1.26	Agree
	Mean total	**2.86**	**1.24**	**Disagree**
	Use of Technology in Talent Sourcing (UTTS)			
6	My company uses online platforms to advertise job vacancies.	2.26	1.46	Disagree
7	We use social media like LinkedIn, Facebook, or Twitter to find new employees.	4.01	1.14	Agree
8	Our recruitment process includes the use of digital tools or software.	3.10	1.74	Agree
9	We conduct virtual interviews or assessments during hiring.	3.06	1.05	Agree
10	The use of technology has improved our ability to find the right candidates.	3.26	1.16	Agree
	Mean total	**3.14**	**1.22**	**Agree**
	Communication of Employer Value Proposition (CEVP)			
11	My company clearly communicates its values and mission to potential hires.	3.58	1.22	Agree
12	We highlight our unique benefits and culture during recruitment.	3.44	1.39	Agree
13	Our job advertisements reflect what it is truly like to work here.	3.10	1.37	Agree
14	We regularly update the public on employee achievements and workplace culture.	3.13	1.38	Agree
15	Candidates often express interest due to the way we present our image online.	3.32	1.20	Agree
	Mean total	**3.32**	**1.28**	**Agree**
	Employer Image Retention (EIR)			
16	I believe my organization has a good public image as an employer.	3.87	1.12	Agree
17	People outside the company see this as a great place to work.	3.69	1.20	Agree
18	Our recruitment and employee experience support a positive employer brand.	3.66	1.25	Agree
19	I am proud to tell others I work here.	3.82	1.21	Agree
20	Many people want to work in this company because of its good reputation.	3.72	1.24	Agree

Mean total	**3.75**	**1.18**	**Agree**

Source: Researcher's fieldwork 2025

The results in Table 2 present the respondents' ratings on the various variables of the study using the mean ± standard deviation (SD) as indicators of central tendency and variability. For Proactive Recruitment Strategies (PRS), the overall mean was 2.86 ± 1.24, which falls within the "Disagree" range, suggesting that respondents generally perceived their organizations as not actively engaging in forward-thinking or anticipatory recruitment practices. While some items such as maintaining a strong talent pool (3.64 ± 1.26) and proactive talent search (3.52 ± 0.89) received agreement, the majority of items were rated low, leading to an overall disagreement.

In contrast, the Use of Technology in Talent Sourcing (UTTS) received a total mean score of 3.14 ± 1.22, reflecting an "Agree" remark. This suggests that digital tools, platforms, and virtual hiring practices are relatively well-utilized in the sampled oil and gas firms. Respondents particularly agreed with using social media platforms (4.01 ± 1.14) and digital recruitment processes (3.26 ± 1.16), indicating a positive trend toward tech-driven talent acquisition.

The variable Communication of Employer Value Proposition (CEVP) showed a favorable perception, with a total mean of 3.32 ± 1.28, denoting agreement. This reflects that the organizations are fairly effective in communicating their values, mission, culture, and image to external candidates. Each item under this variable received a mean above 3.0, which confirms a consistent and agreeable perception of employer branding efforts.

Finally, Employer Image Retention (EIR) scored the highest with a mean of 3.75 ± 1.18, suggesting strong agreement among respondents that their firms maintain a positive public image. All item questions received means above 3.5, particularly the belief in a good public image (3.87 ± 1.12) and pride in being associated with the company (3.82 ± 1.21), indicating a strong sense of employer loyalty and positive organizational reputation. This finding reflects the importance of employer branding strategies in shaping and retaining a desirable corporate image.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of the Variable used

Date: 05/06/25
Time: 21:00
Sample: 297

Parameters	PRS	UTTS	CEVP	EIR
Mean	2.858586	3.138047	3.315152	3.753535
Std. Dev.	1.123912	1.218855	1.279809	1.187717
Median	3.000000	2.800000	3.600000	4.000000
Maximum	5.000000	5.000000	5.000000	5.000000
Minimum	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
Skewness	0.343724	0.007521	-0.296647	-0.804218
Kurtosis	2.219661	1.758327	1.806235	2.643337
Jarque-Bera	13.38375	19.08198	21.99127	33.58913
Probability	0.001241	0.000072	0.000017	0.000000
Sum	849.0000	932.0000	984.6000	1114.800
Sum Sq. Dev.	373.9006	439.7401	484.8218	417.5588
Observations	297	297	297	297

Source: EViews 9.0 Statistical Output

The descriptive statistics in Table 3 offer a comprehensive summary of the distribution and central tendencies of the four key variables measured in the study: Proactive Recruitment Strategies (PRS), Use of Technology in Talent Sourcing (UTTS), Communication of Employer Value Proposition (CEVP), and Employer Image Retention (EIR). The mean scores for each variable indicate that EIR (3.75±1.18) received the highest average agreement from respondents, suggesting strong consensus that their organizations maintain a positive employer image. This is followed by CEVP (3.32±1.28) and UTTS (3.14±1.22), while PRS recorded the lowest mean (2.86±1.12), reflecting comparatively less proactive recruitment practices.

In terms of standard deviation, all variables exhibit moderate variability around their means, with values ranging between 1.12 and 1.28, indicating a reasonable level of dispersion in responses, especially for UTTS and CEVP. The median values further affirm central tendencies, with EIR showing the highest median of 4.00, reinforcing that most respondents leaned toward strong agreement regarding employer image. Conversely, UTTS had a median of 2.80, suggesting that opinions on technological sourcing are more varied or neutral. The skewness values highlight the shape of each distribution. EIR shows a negative skew (-0.80), meaning most

responses clustered at the higher end (agreement), while PRS and UTTS are slightly positively skewed, indicating a mild leaning toward lower scores. CEVP's skewness is close to zero, suggesting a relatively symmetrical distribution. Kurtosis values are all below 3, except for EIR (2.64), indicating that the distributions are relatively platykurtic (flatter than normal), though EIR is approaching normality.

The Jarque-Bera statistics and associated p-values for all variables are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating non-normal distributions. However, this is common in social science data, especially with large sample sizes (n=297). The maximum and minimum values (1 to 5 across all variables) confirm the Likert scale range used. Lastly, the sum and sum of squared deviations align with the number of observations, further validating the dataset's integrity.

The overall results suggest that respondents perceived their firms positively in terms of image and value communication, with some reservations about proactive recruitment efforts, while technological sourcing practices received mixed but generally favorable views.

Table 4: Correlation Variable Matrix

Variable	PRS	UTTS	CEVP	EIR
PRS	1.000			
UTTS	0.540	1.000		
CEVP	0.559	0.618	1.000	
EIR	0.381	0.260	0.491	1.000

Source: EViews 9.0 Statistical Output

The correlation matrix in Table 4 reveals the strength and direction of linear relationships among the four study variables: Proactive Recruitment Strategies (PRS), Use of Technology in Talent Sourcing (UTTS), Communication of Employer Value Proposition (CEVP), and Employer Image Retention (EIR). All variables show positive correlations, indicating that as one variable increases, the others tend to increase as well. The strongest relationship exists between UTTS and CEVP ($r = 0.618$), suggesting that the use of technology in sourcing talent is closely aligned with how well an organization communicates its value proposition. PRS is moderately correlated with both UTTS ($r = 0.540$) and CEVP ($r = 0.559$), indicating that proactive recruitment practices are associated with technological adoption and employer branding efforts. Meanwhile, EIR shows its highest correlation with CEVP ($r = 0.491$), implying that effective communication of the employer's value proposition is a key factor in retaining a strong employer image. The lowest correlation is between EIR and UTTS ($r = 0.260$), suggesting a weaker but still positive link between technological sourcing and perceived employer image. The matrix supports the interconnectedness of recruitment strategies, technology use, branding communication, and employer image retention.

Testing of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis
H_{01}: Proactive recruitment strategies have no significant effect on employer image retention in the Nigerian oil and gas industry.
H_{02}: Use of technology in talent sourcing has no significant effect on employer image retention in the Nigerian oil and gas industry.
H_{03}: Communication of employer value proposition has no significant effect on employer image retention in the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

Table 5: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3

Dependent Variable: EIR
Method: Least Squares
Date: 05/06/25 Time: 21:11
Sample: 330
Included observations: 297

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	0.832255	0.058664	14.18686	0.0000
PRS	-0.324938	0.071738	-4.529510	0.0000

UTTS	0.255007	0.071871	3.548143	0.0005
CEVP	0.919993	0.073245	12.56046	0.0000

R-squared	0.908310	Mean dependent var	3.753535
Adjusted R-squared	0.907371	S.D. dependent var	1.187717
S.E. of regression	0.361481	Akaike info criterion	0.816162
Sum squared resid	38.28589	Schwarz criterion	0.865910
Log likelihood	-117.2001	Hannan-Quinn criter.	0.836078
F-statistic	967.5188	Durbin-Watson stat	2.137535
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000		

Source: EViews 9.0 Statistical Output

The multiple regression analysis in Table 5 examined the influence of Proactive Recruitment Strategies (PRS), Use of Technology in Talent Sourcing (UTTS), and Communication of Employer Value Proposition (CEVP) on Employer Image Retention (EIR). Looking at the individual predictors, CEVP has the strongest positive effect on EIR ($\beta = 0.920$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that clearly communicating the employer's value proposition greatly enhances the organization's public image. UTTS also has a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.255$, $p < 0.01$), meaning the use of digital platforms and technology improves employer image. Interestingly, PRS has a negative and significant relationship with EIR ($\beta = -0.325$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that proactive recruitment strategies, as implemented, may be perceived unfavorably by employees or external observers, possibly due to inadequate alignment with employer branding or poor execution. The model is statistically significant, as indicated by the F-statistic of 967.5188 and a p-value of 0.0000, which confirms that the independent variables jointly explain a significant portion of the variance in EIR. The R-squared value of 0.9083 implies that about 90.83% of the variability in EIR is accounted for by the model, suggesting an excellent fit. On the whole, Hypotheses 2 and 3 are supported (positive influence of UTTS and CEVP on EIR), while Hypothesis 1 is not supported, as PRS negatively affects employer image retention.

Discussion of findings

Proactive Recruitment Strategies (PRS) and Employer Image Retention (EIR)

The result of Hypothesis One revealed a significant negative effect of Proactive Recruitment Strategies (PRS) and Employer Image Retention (EIR) ($\beta = -0.324$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that the current form of proactive recruitment strategies employed by oil and gas firms in Delta State may not enhance the organizations' employer image. This is counterintuitive to the findings of Dabirian, Kietzmann, and Diba (2019), who emphasized that proactive talent outreach and branding through strategic recruitment can strengthen employer attractiveness when done authentically. Likewise, Tanwar and Prasad (2021) noted that proactive recruitment increases organizational visibility and positive perception if the messages align with the actual work culture. However, the present findings support Eisenhauer and van Iddekinge (2022), who argued that aggressive or overly assertive recruitment can come across as insincere or manipulative, especially if the underlying employee experience is inconsistent with the promises made during the recruitment process.

This discrepancy could imply a disconnect between recruitment promises and workplace realities within the Nigerian oil and gas sector. Candidates who are attracted by proactive messaging but experience a misalignment once employed may develop a negative perception of the organization. The reputational damage caused by unmet expectations may outweigh the initial appeal of aggressive recruitment strategies (Eisenhauer and van Iddekinge, 2022). Therefore, without proper alignment between recruitment strategies and organizational culture, even proactive efforts may yield unintended reputational consequences.

Use of Technology in Talent Sourcing (UTTS) and Employer Image Retention (EIR)

Findings from Hypothesis Two showed a positive and statistically significant effect of Use of Technology in Talent Sourcing (UTTS) on Employer Image Retention (EIR) ($\beta = 0.255$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that the incorporation of digital tools and platforms in the talent acquisition process enhances how the organization is perceived by current and prospective employees. This is in agreement with Yamamoto and Kato (2023), who found that technology-based recruitment increases engagement and transparency, leading to a favorable employer image. Similarly, Acar and Okur (2022) emphasized that organizations that integrate AI-driven recruitment platforms and social media channels tend to attract and retain top talents more effectively due to their perception as modern and adaptive employers.

However, some studies caution against over-reliance on technology. Kraiczy et al. (2020) found that while technology improves efficiency, it may reduce the personal touch and human interaction that candidates value during the hiring process, potentially harming employer perception. Despite this, the current study supports the view that when applied strategically and inclusively, technology acts as a signal of innovation and responsiveness, positively influencing employer image, particularly in an industry where operational excellence and innovation are critical.

Communication of Employer Value Proposition (CEVP) and Employer Image Retention (EIR)

Hypothesis Three confirmed a very strong and positive effect of Communication of Employer Value Proposition (CEVP) on Employer Image Retention (EIR) ($\beta = 0.920$, $p < 0.01$). This underscores the central role of clearly and consistently articulating an organization's values, mission, and employment benefits in maintaining a positive employer image. This finding is supported by Sivertzen, Nilsen, and Olafsen (2019), who concluded that effective employer value proposition communication leads to stronger emotional engagement and positive employer brand recognition. Additionally, Jain and Bhatt (2022) asserted that organizations that align their external communications with internal realities see greater success in employee loyalty and public reputation.

On the other hand, Bailey et al. (2021) warned that overly polished or exaggerated EVP campaigns can backfire if employees do not experience what is being promised, leading to cynicism and reputational damage. In this study, however, the positive outcome suggests that oil and gas firms in Delta State are not only communicating their values effectively but are also aligning them with their internal culture, thus reinforcing trust and a strong employer brand. The strength of the relationship further highlights that EVP communication may be the most influential factor among those tested in this study.

Theoretical Implications

The findings have significant theoretical implications for human resource management and employer branding literature. Drawing on Signaling Theory, the results reaffirm that the way organizations communicate (CEVP) and adopt modern sourcing tools (UTTS) acts as signals to job seekers and employees about their values, technological maturity, and cultural consistency. The negative impact of PRS challenges the linear assumptions of Resource-Based View (RBV) and Human Capital Theory, which posit that strategic recruitment inherently strengthens organizational value. The findings suggest that recruitment strategies must be evaluated not just by their proactiveness but by their authenticity and alignment with internal realities. Ultimately, this study advances the argument that employer image retention is a function of coherence between external messaging and internal experience, with communication playing a far more decisive role than mere strategy.

Summary of findings

The study investigated Strategic Talent Sourcing and Employer Image Retention in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry. Three research question were raised leading to the potulationof three hypotheses (Proactive Recruitment Strategies (PRS), Use of Technology in Talent Sourcing (UTTS), and Communication of Employer Value Proposition (CEVP) on Employer Image Retention (EIR). A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The target population comprised employees from selected oil and gas companies in Nigeria, with a total population of 330 which was also used as sample size. The instrument for data collection was the use of questionnaires tested at 0.89 apha reliability and administered to the 330 employee, out of which, 297 retrieved were found useable and used for analysis. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that PRS had a statistically significant but negative effect on employer image retention ($\beta = -0.324$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that aggressive or unaligned recruitment strategies may negatively impact how the organization is perceived by current and potential employees. In contrast, UTTS showed a positive and significant relationship with EIR ($\beta = 0.255$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that digital recruitment tools enhance the organization's attractiveness. Similarly, CEVP was positively and strongly associated with EIR ($\beta = 0.920$, $p < 0.01$), underscoring the importance of transparent and consistent communication about organizational values and benefits. The overall model was robust, with an R-squared value of 0.91, meaning 91% of the variance in employer image retention could be explained by the independent variables.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study established that strategic talent sourcing practices significantly influence employer image retention within the Nigerian oil and gas industry. Specifically, while the use of technology in talent sourcing and effective communication of employer value proposition positively and significantly enhanced employer image, proactive recruitment strategies exhibited a negative impact, suggesting that such strategies must align with organizational culture and public perception to be effective. These findings underscore the importance of adopting a holistic and technology-driven approach to recruitment, coupled with transparent communication of organizational values, in order to sustain a favorable employer brand and attract top talent in a competitive industry landscape.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendation were made:

i. Proactive recruitment strategies should be re-evaluated and aligned with the company’s brand identity and employee value offerings to ensure they positively contribute to the perception of the organization as a desirable workplace.
ii. Organizations must clearly articulate and consistently promote their employer value proposition through all recruitment channels to strengthen their public image and retain a competitive advantage.

iii. Oil and gas firms should prioritize the integration of advanced digital technologies and social media platforms into their recruitment processes to enhance visibility and attract top-tier talent.

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