

THE ROLE OF SITE HOARDINGS IN BRANDING & ADVERTISING LANDSCAPE IDENTITY TO PROMOTE TOURISM IN RWANDA

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Abstract

Construction site hoarding is a traditional requirement to keep sites safe and protected. In Rwanda empty plots and sites with ongoing constructions are hoarded with panels that offer images for public awareness. This study addresses the untapped latent potential of advertising national identity and heritage aspects on site hoardings to promote tourism. Existing studies in this domain are scanty. Focus of this study is on sites whose hoardings advertise aspects of landscape identity. The aim of the study is to explore and document the various aspects of national identity and heritage captured on the hoardings and to explore the role in promoting tourism. The study postulates that adopting the printed site hoardings actively contributes to valorization, preservation and transmission of heritage identities. The study focused on 15 sites: 7 sites within the CBD and environs with ongoing constructions and 8 undeveloped hoarded sites. Qualitative research approach was adopted through expert opinion, key informant interviews and field investigation. Findings reveal the common features are Kigali Convention Centre, national parks with wildlife heritage, Imigongo pattern and Lake Kivu. The findings are important in policy making within tourism industry and local governments on importance of site hoardings in advertising heritage.

Key Words: Site hoardings, Advertising, Landscape identity, Heritage, Tourism, Rwanda

Introduction

Traditional site hoardings are considered temporary (Andrew and Farnaz, 2017; Latib *et al.*, 2016; Rwanda Housing Authority, 2012). They should be properly delineated to minimize the interaction between construction personnel and general passers-by. They should be complete with comprehensive signage to inform the workers and passers-by to ensure safety (Andrew and Farnaz,

2017). Khamis *et al.* (2017) posited that state compliance with safety requirements within a construction site is essential and it starts with correct placement of hoarding to define its boundary. Latib *et al.* (2016) point out that temporary hoarding is one of the aspects of occupational safety and health that is spelt out in some of the project documents for selected construction projects that they studied. Rwanda's building control

regulations (2012) require hoarding to be erected around the construction sites.

Hoarding according to these regulations means a temporary fence made of lightweight, approved material erected around a building site. In recent years Kigali City and other towns have embraced the idea of turning these temporary barriers into visually captivating and aesthetically appealing physical advertisement for various aspects of the national identity and heritage. These unique and creative approaches to construction site hoardings adorn various sites within the CBD and the neighborhoods. The main message “Tembera u Rwanda” which loosely means “Walk/tour within Rwanda”, “visit Rwanda” is evident on the hoardings. The authors in this article believe that in Africa, Rwanda is the pioneer in using this simple yet effective novel approach to advertise and market aspects of national identity and heritage.

Di Pietro *et al.* (2018) posited that the concepts of heritage, culture and identity are interlinked. According to Light and Dumbraveanu-Andone (1997) a sense of national identity provides a powerful means of defining and locating individual selves in the world. This connects a group of people to a particular geographic place. National heritage is represented by buildings or monuments and in this process, they acquire dynamic, complex and multi-layered meanings. However, not every historic building and monument has this role (Light and Dumbraveanu-Andone, 1997). Can *et al.* (2021) support this by stating that heritage sites that include monuments, buildings and places should be preserved for future generations due to that artistic, historic and cultural values that imbue them. This is further

supported by Mayas and Dalia (2023) who opine that heritage is a platform for intangible attributes embedded with physical urban values. It encompasses and overlaps between urban forms and social history (Mayas and Dalia, 2023).

According to K'oyoo and Breed (2023) landscape identity is the resident's opinion and perception of the special features that help them to differentiate and develop attachment to a place. It encompasses the forms/physical aspects, functions/activities (social-cultural aspects) and meaning aspects. All these three aspects combine to create memories for the residents (K'oyoo and Breed, 2023). The authors in this paper propose that there exists landscape identity in two dimensions; urban landscape identity and rural landscape identity which are place specific and which combine to constitute the national identity and heritage at the country/national level. This paper adopts the term national identity to mean the unique and distinct aspects of urban and rural landscapes that are both tangible and intangible that contribute to heritage. K'oyoo (2023a); K'oyoo and Breed, (2023) supporting Oktay and Bala (2015) state that cities are striving to be unique and distinct, in order to attract and promote world trade and tourism, making city identity an issue of great concern. Vasavada and Kour (2016) indicate that tourism campaigns heavily use heritage and portray it as a pride of the state. This is through communication of both tangible and intangible aspects of the heritage in advertisements. These authors opine that it is important to identify the main drivers for a destination to make it unique (Vasavada and Kour, 2016). Mayas and Dalia (2023) opine that heritage is a brand value proposition between urban settings

and the users. They further posit that a society's identity is based on its heritage that is a part of the present that was drawn from the past (Mayas and Dalia, 2023).

Vela *et al.* (2017) argue that landscapes play a crucial role in place branding, not only symbolically but also in terms of their aesthetic and social significance. They emphasize that landscapes are valuable for branding strategies at various scales. K'oyoo (2024a) investigated the role of urban spaces within roundabouts and other road islands in promoting urban landscape identity through landscape branding. The landscape projects aimed to not only promote the city's unique urban identity but also enhance the corporate image through landscape branding. This provided a different aspect of promoting the urban landscape identity. Previous study by K'oyoo (2023a) used Photo elicitation photos to study the contribution of various elements in constituting the urban landscape identity. Various aspects of the man-made and natural environment were perceived to have a contribution to urban landscape identity. Amer (2020) opine that the branding process for a country/nations heritage should be based on the local identity. Mayas and Dalia (2023), Amer (2020) each feel heritage and identity are related with each having an influence on the other.

Lewicka (2008) refers to two identity terms. This includes local identity and national identity and believes that national symbolism features lead to national identity. This author emphasizes the role of physical features of places as cues to the place history that lead to memory of places leading to place identity and place memory. Light and Dumbraveanu-Andone (1997) posit that aspects of a national heritage acquire powerful

symbolic importance in representing national aspirations and identity. Vasavada and Kour (2016) opine that heritage is about unique features of a destination and promise of a memorable experience. Amer (2020) concur with Mclean (2006) that heritage has an identity conferring status. Kavoura (2014) find support in Amer (2020) in stating that heritage sites are part of the national identity. Beverland *et al.* (2021) also support role of identity in creating national identity, they believe that crafting national identity through various brands is through collective identity. These authors support the brand as culture to shape national identity. They argue that meanings of things, places and people are created through linkage to brands. These objects play an active role in constructing images of collective identity for futures (Beveland *et al.*, 2021).

Light and Dumbraveanu-Andone (1997) posit that the relationship between heritage and national identity has been complicated by a third factor-tourism. Heritage is now the basis for the major economic activity of heritage tourism. Veghes (2022) opine that tourist destinations succeeding to promote and capitalize more effectively on heritage tend to attract more visitors. This leads to higher revenue and more workplaces besides being more competitive. Vasavada and Kour (2016) support Light and Dumbraveanu-Andone (1997) by opining that promoting heritage and focusing on preservation of local cultural heritage works towards sustainable heritage tourism development (Vasavada and Kour 2016).

Study Area

The City of Kigali, Rwanda is comprised of three districts called Gasabo, Nyarugenge, and Kicukiro. The case study

was based within the CBD of Kigali, with a few adjoining areas near the downtown area all within Nyarugenge District. Kigali City has distinct natural features that consist of hilly landform, valleys, gardens and wetlands. According to Rwanda's official website for advertising and marketing its tourism (Visit Rwanda.com), Rwanda is known as the

land of a thousand hills, Rwanda's stunning scenery and warm, friendly people offer unique experiences in one of the most remarkable countries in the world. It is blessed with extraordinary biodiversity, with incredible wildlife living throughout its volcanoes, montane rainforest and sweeping plains (Visit Rwanda.com).

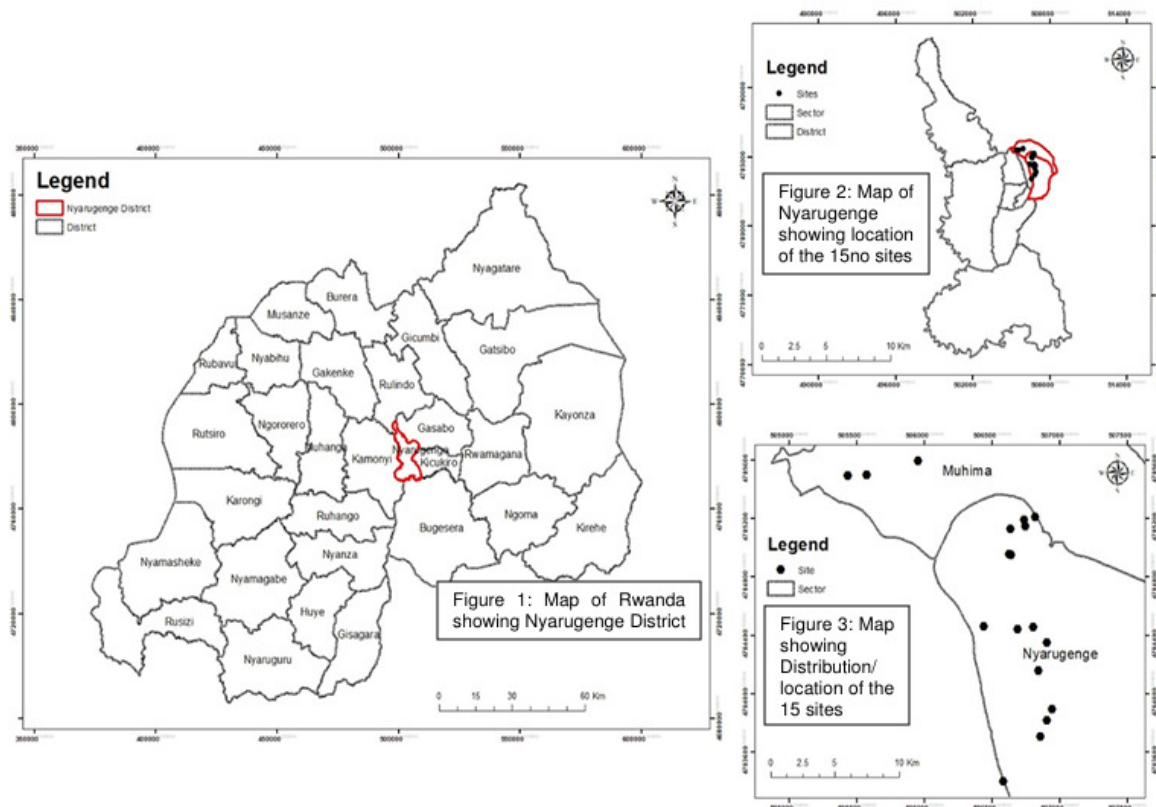


Figure 1, 2 and 3 showing Rwanda, Nyarugenge and distribution of site locations

Methodology

Research Design

This study used three data-capturing methods, interviews with 7 respondents within the ongoing sites, key informant interview with 1 Rwanda Development Board (RDB) official and field investigation through mapping to locate the various sites and photography to capture the various aspects that are captured on the printed canvas panels. The

various images were interpreted and analyzed for the various aspects they represented.

The study largely relied on expert opinion from the authors. The authors' expert knowledge, experience and opinion in this paper seeks to identify, classify, analyze and map the various aspects of urban and rural landscape identity that they believe contribute to the national identity and heritage. The first author has

previously conducted studies on landscape identity from a landscape perspective. The second author has the Rwandan experience of the various environments within the urban and rural landscapes together with GIS knowledge.

Interview Sampling

Interviews were carried for all the 7 sites where construction was ongoing. Guest *et al.* (2006) found that data saturation occurred within the first twelve interviews, with key thematic elements emerging as early as the sixth interview. The profiles of the seven interviewees, labelled S1 to S7, and RDB, are summarised in Table 1 under findings. An official of RDB within Kigali City served as the key informant, as this entity was responsible for this idea of branding various aspects of national identity and heritage on site hoardings to promote tourism.

Data Collection

The primary data collection process began in July 2024 after the first author conceived the idea from the first sight of the site hoardings within the CBD and its environs. The study was limited in terms of literature that is available on role of site hoardings beyond the traditional roles of safety and access barrier within sites. The field visits for reconnaissance and subsequent data collection were conducted prior to the interviews, ensuring that the researcher had a comprehensive understanding of the sites before engaging with interviewees.

Field Investigation

The field investigation for this study involved the documentation of various sites under study through photography. The researchers took the photographs between 9:00am and 12.30pm during

December 2024, with follow-up visits in January 2025. Earlier reconnaissance in July 2024 also had some photos taken and additional ones added for new sites. To accurately locate the projects within the city, aerial images from Google Maps were utilized in ArcGIS (Figures 1, 2 and 3). Mapping of the project sites via ArcGIS was conducted in January 2025, alongside photography that captured the current status of the site hoardings. These visual materials were supplemented with descriptions from interview responses of the respondents who were willing and could adequately respond to the questions during the site visits.

Interviews

In December 2024 and January 2025, eight interviews were conducted with purposively selected participants (see Table 1). These participants were chosen based on their willingness to contribute to the study. The interviews were structured using an interview schedule, with semi-structured questions. Additionally, a key informant interview was conducted with a Rwanda Development Board (RDB) official, who provided insights into the ongoing use of the unique printed site construction hoardings, their history in Rwanda. The interview with the RDB official informed the study's recommendations. The researcher encouraged participants to elaborate on their choices, probing for further clarification when necessary. Interviews were recorded with the participants' consent using a mobile phone, while notes were simultaneously taken. Direct quotes from key informants were included to highlight important insights. Each interview lasted between 10 to 20 minutes.

Data Analysis

Interview Responses

The interview responses were transcribed verbatim, and no specialized software was employed for the analysis. The researcher manually analyzed the data, identifying key themes that aligned with the study's broad research questions.

Field Investigation Photo Analysis and Mapping

These images on the site hoardings were analyzed through a frequency count based on the common aspects that were found in most of them. Mapping was conducted to document the locations of all the sites under study. Mapping the locations was crucial for understanding how spatial factors, such as site placement, might influence key aspects of

the sites in terms of safety to road users, being a barrier to bad sights. This is also important in deciding the traffic volume of both pedestrians and motorists who are being targeted with the advertisements on the printed site hoardings.

Results

Interviewees Demographics

The demographic characteristics of the interviewees (S1 to S7) and RDB presented in Table 1 below, reveal that all were aged over 25 years and had resided in Kigali City for 5 years. This suggests that the participants were sufficiently mature and had lived in the city long enough to provide informed responses regarding the site hoardings within the sites.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of interviewees

<i>ID</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age (years)</i>	<i>Profession/Occupation</i>	<i>Residence (years)</i>
S 1	Male	40-55	Project manager	6-10
S 2	Male	25-39	Site supervisor	Over 30
S 3	Male	Over 40	Site supervisor	Over 30
S 4	Male	25-39	Site supervisor	Over 30
S 5	Male	25-39	Site supervisor	Over 20
S 6	Male	25-39	Site supervisor	Over 30
S 7	Male	Over 40	Site supervisor	Over 40
RDB	Male	Over 40	Official	Over 40 years

Interview Responses

According to a Rwandan Development Board official, the "Visit Rwanda" branded site hoardings were introduced during the 2023 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held in Rwanda. These hoardings were initially used to promote Rwanda's top tourist attractions to CHOGM attendees. As part of a broader initiative to boost the country's tourism sector, the hoardings were later retained and continue to be used to enhance the aesthetic appeal of Kigali.

According to the project manager for site 1 he would have wished that the construction site hoardings had advertisement on what the project is about in terms of the available office spaces, parking spaces and other amenities for the prospective be tenants. According to site supervisor in plot 14, the administration within the sector where the project is located advised that they should hoard the site using the printed canvas to ensure neatness within the downtown area. This was also to ensure aesthetics through good images to block the site activities besides

protecting the passersby from any harmful construction activities. All the site respondents stated that it was not a requirement in law in Rwanda to hoard the sites with the printed canvas that depicts the various images of national identity and heritage. Most sites revealed that the need to use the various images was initiated by

the project architects in a bid to achieve an aesthetically appealing site hoarding.

Aspects from photos in all the 15 sites

Field visit to each of the sites for identification and analysis of the various images depicted on the site hoardings yielded the information presented on Table 2 below.

Table 2: Aspects captured in the various hoardings

Site & status	Aspects on hoarding photos
Site 1 (S1) Ongoing site	-Wildlife heritage found in Akagera & Virunga National Parks, Lake Kivu, Crater lake, Imigongo pattern, “Visit Rwanda message”, Developers brand product-the mountain tea, Hilly landscapes of mountain tea.
Site 2 (S2) Undeveloped/empty	-Cultural dance troupe (Intore), Wildlife heritage within the national parks, Nyungwe forest with its board walk, Lake Kivu, Imigongo pattern, “visit Rwanda” message.
Site 3 (S3) Undeveloped/empty	-Wildlife heritage, Nyungwe Forest, Bisoke crater lake, Sabyinyo volcano, Lake Kivu, traditional dance, traditional art and craft, Imigongo pattern, “Visit Rwanda” message
Site 4 (S4) Ongoing site	-Wildlife heritage, Lake Kivu, KCC, images of building under construction, Imigongo pattern, “visit Rwanda” message.
Site 5 (S5) Undeveloped/empty	-KCC, wildlife heritage, traditional long horned cattle (Inyambo), Nyungwe Forest, Lake Kivu scenery and boating.
Site 6 (S6) Ongoing site	-KCC, Lake Kivu, Wildlife heritage, Nyungwe Forest, Imigongo pattern, “visit Rwanda” message, site safety signs, ongoing project photos.
Site 7 (S7) Ongoing site	-Wildlife heritage, Lake Kivu, Imigongo pattern, “visit Rwanda” message.
Site 8 (S8) Undeveloped	-Lake Kivu, traditional long horned cattle, Karisimbi volcano, wildlife heritage, Imigongo pattern.
Site 9 (S9) Undeveloped	-Wildlife heritage, Imigongo pattern
Site 10 (S10) Ongoing site	-Kigali Arena, Amahoro Stadium, Lake Kivu, Nyungwe Forest, wildlife heritage, traditional dance, traditional art and craft, Sabyinyo volcano, Imigongo pattern, “visit Rwanda” message.
Site 11 (S11) Undeveloped	-Nyungwe Forest, Volcano mountain, KCC, wildlife heritage
Site 12 (S12) Undeveloped	-Wildlife heritage, Nyungwe Forest, KCC, Lake Kivu, Sabyinyo volcano, traditional palace house, traditional art and crafts, Imigongo pattern, “visit Rwanda” message.
Site 13 (S13) Undeveloped	- Wildlife heritage, KCC, Lake Kivu, Nyungwe Forest, Amahoro Stadium, traditional cattle, traditional king’s house, traditional male dance, Imigongo pattern, “visit Rwanda” message.
Site 14 (S14) Ongoing	-KCC, wildlife heritage, aerial view of Kigali City, Hilly tea landscapes, Karisimbi volcano, traditional long horned cattle, Imigongo pattern, “visit Rwanda” message.
Site 15 (S15) Ongoing	KCC, wildlife heritage, traditional dance troupe, hilly tea landscapes, aerial view of Kigali City, Imigongo pattern, “visit Rwanda” message.

Selected sites and their images are depicted below. A brief description of the hoardings is presented.



Figure 4a: S1-Wildlife heritage captured on hoardings within CBD for ongoing site.

Figure 4b: S2-Images of Lake Kivu with boating activities captured on undeveloped site.

Source: Authors, December 2024.

From field investigation the panel boards on site S2 have adequately covered the undeveloped plot that is sited among completed developments that are mostly hotel blocks within the busy CBD Street. The images are attractive and informative in addition to blocking unauthorized entry into this land. The hoarding on site 11 is offering a good barrier to the vacant plot

within the slopy terrain of the site that would not be aesthetically appealing within the neighborhood of already developed neighboring plots along a busy road. Field observation reveals that the site hoardings are appearing quite old implying the hoardings has been in place for long. Elements of vandalism through tearing is also evident.



Figure 5a: S3-Imigongo pattern on edges of the hoardings and visit Rwanda message.

Figure 5b: S6-Images of Kigali Convention Centre (KCC) & Lake Kivu's scenery.

Source: Authors, December 2024.

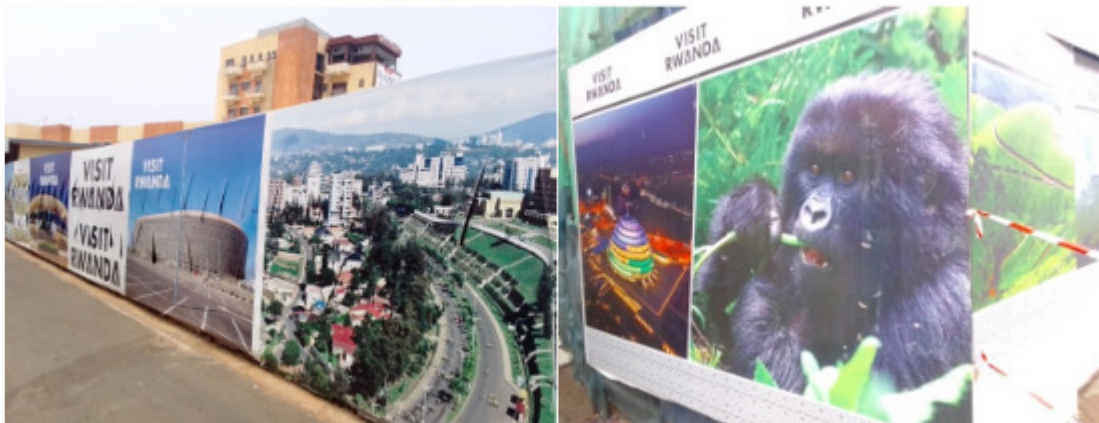


Fig. 6a: S10-Amahoro Stadium and part of Kigali City CBD

Fig. 6b: S14-KCC, Wildlife heritage and hilly tea landscapes

Common Aspects in All the Sites

Vasavada and Kour (2016) analyzed major aspects of the cultural heritage through three main aspects of natural, cultural and built. The natural attributes included landforms, rural scenery, flora and fauna. Cultural attributes included festivals, arts and crafts, and traditional practices. The built attributes included monuments, historic homes, and industrial sites. K'oyoo (2023a); K'oyoo and Breed (2023) analyzed aspects of landscape identity according to physical aspects,

socio-cultural aspects and meaning aspects. Mayas and Dalia (2023) analyzed according to tangible and intangible heritage as earlier discussed.

The unique and creative site hoardings are communicating brand identities that are unique to Rwanda's national identity and heritage. Based on simple frequency count the common aspects found on most of the site hoardings have been tabulated below. The common aspects are presented in Table 1 below and discussed briefly.

Table 3: Aspects identified as common in majority of site hoardings

Aspect	Frequency count	Landscape identity & heritage categorization according (K'oyoo 2023a; K'oyoo & Breed, 2023; Mayas & Dalia; 2023; Vasavada and Kour, 2016)
1 Kigali Convention Centre	12	-Physical aspect with socio-cultural, functions/activities -Tangible heritage (Built heritage)
2 Wildlife species within Akagera, Virunga National Park	15	-Tangible heritage (Natural heritage)
3 Imigongo pattern	12	-Socio-cultural aspect with meanings -Intangible heritage
4 Traditional dance	7	-Intangible heritage
5 Lake Kivu	12	-Physical aspect of natural environment (Natural heritage)
6 Volcanic mountains	10	-Physical aspect of natural environment (Natural heritage).
7 Nyungwe Forest National Park	10	-Physical (natural aspect) on UNESCO World Heritage list -Tangible/natural heritage

According to Table 3 above, the various aspects forming the urban and rural landscape identity have been categorized into physical, socio-economic, cultural and meaning.

Physical aspects: The physical aspect considered as tangible heritage e.g. Lake Kivu is an important element of the natural environment providing vital habitat for animal species and has economic functions that benefit the economy through revenues. It's important for recreation through sporting like boating activities that is commonly depicted within its images. It's important for heritage tourism to the islands within it. The islands are an aspect commonly depicted within the site hoarding photos.

The national parks like Akagera, Virunga and Nyungwe Forest National Park are important physical aspects of the natural environment that are habitat to various animal species and indigenous flora. They are important in heritage eco-tourism among local and foreign tourists. They are important to economic growth through revenue collection. The hilly landscapes that depict the volcanic mountains are an element of the physical natural environment that characterizes many parts of Rwanda. They act as tourist destinations that generate revenue and impact the economic growth of the nation. K'oyoo and Breed (2023) found out that, similar to other cities in the world, the urban landscape identity of Kisumu, as a postcolonial African city, is constituted by both natural and human-made elements. The natural environment and main geographic feature and its position on Lake Victoria came out strongly as very decisive aspects of the city's image. The connection of people to the natural

environment and its importance in terms of their own identity is perhaps understated in the Global South, where socioeconomic challenges such as unemployment prevail and influence the perceptions of cities.

Kigali Convention Centre is a physical aspect that is man-made. It is an iconic architecture within Kigali and entire Rwanda. It's vital in its meaning aspect based on its form. It's important in economic growth from the revenues obtained from hosting various events and functions. Imigongo pattern is common in many man-made structures within Rwanda. It is an art form popular in Rwanda traditionally for example made by women using cow dung often in the colors black, white and red. Its popular themes include spiral and geometric designs that can include zigzags, spirals, diamonds, or squares that are painted on walls, pottery, and canvas. It has a meaning aspect with effect on socio-cultural aspects to the locals. The traditional Kings palace in Southern province had these patterns on the walls. Other aspects with cultural meanings include the traditional King's house and traditional long-horned cattle. The traditional aspects like the troupe dance is an intangible aspect of the local culture that has economic importance and has meaning aspects thus an impact on socio-cultural life of the locals. The traditional artifacts are tangible aspects of the locals' heritage which have various meanings to the locals and impact the socio-cultural life.

The aspects identified above as common in most of the hoardings are also presented on the Visit Rwanda.com website accessed during the study on 7th

January 2025). The tourism site elegantly presents the Lake Kivu with its islands, beautiful scenery and boating activities, magnificent gorillas, aerial view of the high-rise building constituting part of the CBD, Kigali Convention Centre. The tea plantations, hilly landscapes with natural environment with variety of flora are part of the natural rural landscapes presented. The wildlife heritage is presented in terms of giraffes, lions, and lioness. The aspects of cultural heritage are presented by the traditional King's palace house, traditional dancing troupe. Other aspects of culture and heritage include the Kigali Cultural Village, museums and art galleries, Rwandan culture and traditions, ethnographic museum (Visit Rwanda.com, January 2025).

Discussion

Role of the Printed Site Hoardings

The findings from field investigation revealed that the sites have attractive and compelling printed canvas with various images of urban and rural landscape identity aspects. They either depict the proposed ongoing developments or advertise the aspects that contribute to the national identity and heritage to promote tourism. The construction site hoardings have aesthetically appealing images of various aspects that contribute to national identity and heritage. They block any bad sights within vacant plots and ongoing constructions. They successfully act as barrier to rugged terrain within the hilly landscapes of Rwanda. They can invoke interest in the proposed, ongoing construction project (Site 6 next to city hall). The panel boards can be used to market and advertise various properties (site 8 and 9 that were vacant at the time of the study). Site 1 for example had

aspects that contribute to national identity and heritage in addition to advertising the developer and its brand product of tea within the hilly landscapes of Rwanda. The printed site hoardings can be used to improve safety by providing a medium for strategically placing the site safety instructions and warning signs (site 6 and site 14 ongoing storey building). The authors from field investigations found the site hoardings to be visually stunning thus elevating the surrounding urban landscapes.

Aspects of Urban and Rural Landscape Identity on the Site Hoardings

Light and Dumbraveanu-Andone (1997) state that relationship between heritage and national identity changes over time. This is supported by Oktay and Bala (2015), Yanmaz and Cengiz (2019); Shao *et al.* (2020), Seidl *et al.* (2021) and K'oyoo (2023b). They argue that heritage is subject to a multitude of meanings and interpretations representing different things to different people. They aver that what is considered as heritage by some people may be despised by other people. The aspects that were identified as common among the site hoardings include: Kigali Convention Centre, Species of wildlife heritage found in the various parks, Imigongo pattern, and Visit Rwanda (Tembera u Rwanda) message. The authors' opinion is that the site hoardings despite being temporary requirement within the construction industry can be fully tapped to catapult tourism in Rwanda and other countries through advertising of heritage aspects.

K'oyoo (2023a) through photo elicitation interviews revealed that Lake Victoria and its scenery were important both as a natural feature of the physical environment and for socio-cultural

contribution to the image of Kisumu City (K'oyoo, 2023a). K'oyoo (2023b) found that Lake Victoria is not only considered the most influential and best feature of Kisumu in terms of its scenery and view of the hills but also as a symbolic element evoking individual or collective memory among most residents. Public, private buildings and other infrastructures that shape the urban realm constitute an important daily image in the life of the urbanites in terms of sense of belonging through memories. According to K'oyoo and Breed (2023) built/human-made features can be considered as symbolic and thereby contribute to urban memories and urban landscape identity (K'oyoo and Breed, 2023).

The Kigali Convention Centre in addition to other buildings within the CBD are important in forming the landscape identity and are etched in the memories of the residents and that is why they are in the site hoardings as part of the images being marketed through the visual advertisements. Lake Kivu is a common aspect of the natural environment within most of the site hoardings. The authors feel Lake Kivu is valued for its scenery consisting of the islands and recreation activities like boating apart from other revenue generating activities. Kigali Convention Centre a public building that is in most of the hoardings is a man-made feature that is comparable to the public buildings that were identified in Kisumu City as being important in constituting the urban landscape identity. Features of the natural environment play a critical role in constitution of the urban and rural landscape identity.

A study by K'oyoo and Breed (2023) on rating various aspects that constituted landscape identity revealed that the

Kisumu city's location along Lake Victoria, which represented an element of the natural environment, gave it the highest rating. The proximity to Lake Victoria and views of the hills were regarded as the most outstanding features of the city. These findings suggest that the urban landscape identity in Kisumu is strongly connected to features of the natural environment. Lake Kivu and the national parks with their wildlife heritage and flora could be a major contributor to national identity and heritage due to the high frequency on all the site hoardings that depict them. The common features depicted on the site hoardings are definitely the greatest elements of the natural and man-made environments that are highly regarded for tourism that is why they are advertised and marketed for tourism. The rating and contribution of natural and man-made elements in constituting the landscape identity is supported by previous studies by Oktay and Bala (2015).

Branding and Advertising National Identity and Heritage Through Site Hoardings

According to Huybrechts (2018), branding the city through several touristic aspects of culture and heritage has become a key tool for marketing to achieve development. Vasavada and Kour (2016) point out the use of media through messages that are verbal and visual as ways of promoting tourism. This is through communication of the heritage aspects. The authors opine that social media has transformed ways of promoting heritage. Other ways include holding fairs for tourism, advertising online and campaigns by media (Vasavada and Kour, 2016). The site hoardings in this study offer a visual means of advertising the

aspects of urban and rural landscape identity. The panels in some sites provide the website for visit Rwanda, facebook page details that act to market and promote the heritage destinations. Hassan and Mahrouz (2019) argue that nation branding entails strategic communication of a nation's brand identity. This is achieved with audiences and stakeholders in ways that bring perceptions that is positive from the target groups. The authors in paper through the Rwandan case study agree with Hassan and Mahrouz (2019) as the study findings demonstrate that the aspects of urban and rural urban landscape captured on the site hoardings are representing the nations brand that contribute to national identity and heritage. This encourages heritage tourism that leads to economic growth and development.

Vela *et al.* (2017) assert that landscape branding is an identity-focused approach that highlight the importance of linking perceived and actual qualities of places. These authors argue that landscape branding in attractive urban environments may convince public awareness and appreciation, encouraging the preservation of such spaces and contributing to sustainability and improved quality of life (Vela *et al.* 2017). The site hoardings in the Rwandan case study provide a unique and creative landscape approach to landscape branding towards tourism by marketing and promoting the aspects of urban and rural landscape identities.

Conclusion

This paper has several study contributions to the body of knowledge. First, the study contributes to the role of construction site hoardings beyond the

traditional use as barriers for safety and for controlling site access. It delves into their latent potential role in promoting urban and rural landscape identities through unique and creative branding on printed site hoardings. Second, past research have not considered the construction site hoardings from a landscape perspective in promoting tourism but traditionally from a health and safety perspective to provide the warning signs and messages. The landscape perspective makes a vital contribution through valorization of aspects of the urban and rural landscapes as brands of a nation. The third contribution is that the study explores the contribution of printed site hoardings in promoting national identity and heritage to promote tourism. It's important to note that this form of advertising on construction site hoardings is temporary and is replaced once the construction activities are completed. The findings within this article were as at the time of the study.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following general recommendations are presented for Rwanda and other jurisdictions:

- Need for landscape studies to identify, classify, inventorize and map out the various aspects that constitute the urban and rural landscape identities that have significant contribution to national identity and heritage.
- Recognising the symbolic value of landscape: Policymakers in landscape, urban planning and tourism planning should understand the symbolic and heritage value of urban and rural landscape identity aspects that contribute to national identity and heritage.

- There is need to adopt place branding strategies that incorporate landscape beautification in both public and private spaces as a means of promoting national identity and heritage to promote tourism.

- Valorization of the natural environment: Aspects of the natural environment specifically Lake Kivu, Akagera National Park, Virunga National Park and Nyungwe Forest National Park that are considered as important habitats for various animal and plant species and for recreational tourism should be advertised and marketed as emblems of national identity and heritage.

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