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Talent Management Practices and Employee Performance in Selected Manufacturing Firms in Lagos State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: This research examines the influence of talent management practices on employee performance within selected manufacturing firms in Lagos State, Nigeria. Talent management encompassing talent acquisition, training and development, retention initiatives, and succession planning has become increasingly critical for achieving organizational effectiveness, especially in highly competitive and rapidly evolving sectors such as manufacturing. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, collecting quantitative data from 310 employees across medium and large-scale manufacturing firms through a structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression techniques. The results indicate that manufacturing firms in Lagos State actively engage in essential talent management practices, with training and development, as well as retention strategies, emerging as the most influential predictors of employee performance. Correlation analysis revealed strong positive relationships between all talent management components and employee performance, with training and development exhibiting the highest correlation ($r = 0.721$). Furthermore, multiple regression analysis confirmed that talent acquisition ($\beta = 0.312$), training and development ($\beta = 0.298$), retention strategies ($\beta = 0.231$), and succession planning ($\beta = 0.105$) all significantly affect employee performance ($R^2 = 0.552$, $p < 0.01$). The study concludes that effective talent management systems, particularly those emphasizing continuous development and employee retention, substantially enhance workforce productivity and organizational competitiveness. However, succession planning remains relatively underutilized and requires strategic strengthening. Based on these findings, it is recommended that manufacturing firms in Nigeria intensify their investments in employee development and implement transparent succession frameworks to ensure sustainable performance outcomes. These insights contribute to bridging the research gap in Nigeria's manufacturing sector and offer practical guidance for human resource policy formulation.

KEYWORDS: Talent management, Employee performance, Manufacturing firms, Training and development, Retention strategies.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, talent management has emerged as a critical driver of organizational effectiveness, especially in highly competitive sectors such as manufacturing. It involves a structured approach to attracting, nurturing, retaining, and strategically deploying individuals who possess significant potential and contribute meaningfully to organizational goals. In Nigeria, and notably in Lagos State the country's commercial hub—manufacturing companies are increasingly appreciating the strategic value of talent management practices in enhancing employee performance and maintaining a competitive edge. Key components of these practices include recruitment and selection, performance appraisal, training and development, succession planning, and strategies aimed at fostering employee engagement. Employee performance, defined as the ability of employees to accomplish tasks and responsibilities efficiently and effectively, is strongly linked to how talent is managed within the organization (Okafor & Bassey, 2023). In manufacturing contexts, where productivity, innovation, and operational efficiency are essential, the role of effective talent management becomes even more crucial. However, many Nigerian manufacturing firms still struggle with informal HR structures, lack of strategic workforce planning, and inconsistent development pathways for employees (Adeleke & Olanrewaju, 2022). These shortcomings can result in low morale, high turnover, underperformance, and skill mismatches.

Extant literature suggests that organizations with robust talent management systems tend to experience improved employee outcomes such as higher job satisfaction, greater commitment, and enhanced performance (Eze & Nwachukwu, 2024). For instance, Alabi and Ilesanmi (2023) found that when employees perceive talent development initiatives like training, coaching, and career progression as fair and consistent, they are more likely to reciprocate with increased discretionary effort and loyalty. Conversely, when talent management practices are inconsistent or perceived as biased, employees tend to disengage and underperform. Lagos State, as a hub for numerous manufacturing industries including cement, food and beverages, textiles, and pharmaceuticals offers a distinctive context to examine the impact of talent management practices on organizational performance in a competitive and fast-evolving environment. Despite its importance, there is a noticeable gap in research exploring the direct relationship between specific talent management strategies and employee performance within Nigeria's manufacturing sector. Most existing studies have predominantly examined the banking and public sectors, leaving the manufacturing industry largely under-investigated.

In response, this study aims to assess the influence of talent management practices on employee performance in selected manufacturing firms located in Lagos State, Nigeria.. It aims to provide evidence on how recruitment, training, employee engagement, and succession planning influence productivity, innovation, and job commitment among employees in this vital sector. The findings of this study could inform HR strategies and policy formulation for manufacturing firms striving to retain top talent and enhance performance outcomes in Nigeria's evolving industrial landscape.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Employee performance remains a critical driver of productivity and competitiveness in the Nigerian manufacturing sector. In Lagos State Nigeria's industrial and commercial hub manufacturing firms face immense pressure to attract, retain, and effectively manage talented individuals amidst economic volatility, labor market instability, and intense industry competition (Akinyele et al., 2023). Despite the strategic relevance of talent management practices, many manufacturing firms still operate with weak or outdated HR frameworks that fail to harness the full potential of their workforce.

Several challenges persist. These include inadequate succession planning, poor training and development systems, inequitable performance appraisal mechanisms, and limited career advancement opportunities. Such deficiencies often lead to high turnover rates, low employee engagement, and suboptimal performance outcomes (Okon & Uche, 2022). While some organizations adopt talent retention strategies such as bonuses and flexible work options, many fail to institutionalize holistic and data-driven talent management systems that align employee goals with organizational objectives.

Despite growing interest in talent management, existing empirical studies offer limited context-specific insights into how talent management practices affect employee performance within Nigerian manufacturing firms, particularly in Lagos. Most prior research adopts a broad approach, often overlooking variations by sector, firm size, or employee level. This gap underscores the need for a more nuanced understanding of which talent management strategies most effectively enhance performance in this specific setting.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine the influence of key talent management practices including talent acquisition, development, retention, and succession planning on employee performance in selected manufacturing firms in Lagos State. The results are expected to provide managers and human resource practitioners with practical, evidence-based guidance for optimizing workforce potential and strengthening organizational competitiveness..

1.3 Research Questions

This study aims to address the following research questions:

i. What are the current talent management practices adopted by manufacturing firms in Lagos State?
ii. How do talent management practices influence employee performance in these firms?
iii. Which specific talent management practices contribute most significantly to improving employee performance?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to empirically examine the impact of talent management practices on employee performance in selected manufacturing firms in Lagos State. The specific objectives are to:

i. identify and assess the talent management practices employed by manufacturing firms;
ii. examine the relationship between talent management practices (e.g., talent acquisition, training and development, retention strategies, and succession planning) and employee performance; and
iii. determine the talent management components that most significantly enhance employee performance.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Concept of Talent Management Practices

Talent Management Practices (TMPs) are strategic organizational approaches aimed at attracting, developing, retaining, and effectively utilizing employees who possess high potential and critical skills, ensuring that both present and future organizational needs are met (Collings, Mellahi, & Cascio, 2019). In manufacturing firms, especially those operating in fast-paced and competitive environments such as Lagos State, Nigeria, effective talent management is essential for maintaining a sustainable competitive advantage. It achieves this by promoting innovation, enhancing operational efficiency, and driving superior employee performance. As noted by Adeola and Adebayo (2022), TMPs involve a comprehensive set of organizational initiatives, including workforce planning, talent acquisition, onboarding processes, continuous learning and development, succession planning, performance management, and strategies to boost employee engagement. These practices ensure that firms do not only hire the best candidates but also continually develop and align their skills with strategic business goals. TMPs create an enabling environment for performance excellence, especially in labor-intensive industries such as manufacturing where productivity is directly linked to workforce competence. In the Nigerian context, organizations that implement comprehensive TMPs experience greater employee commitment and organizational citizenship behaviors, which positively influence performance (Onah & Anazonwu, 2021). TMPs help to reduce high turnover rates, improve job satisfaction, and enhance productivity through the identification and nurturing of high-potential employees.

Manufacturing firms in Lagos State face challenges such as skills mismatch, brain drain, and limited training opportunities. TMPs serve as a strategic response to these challenges by ensuring that the right people are in the right roles, supported by relevant learning and development frameworks. Okafor and Daramola (2023) assert that firms with well-structured talent pipelines are more agile in responding to technological disruptions and market shifts.

Moreover, talent retention strategies such as career pathing, mentorship, recognition programs, and competitive compensation are key aspects of TMPs that promote employee stability and reduce the costs associated with turnover (Akinwale & George, 2023). When talent is managed effectively, employees are more likely to be engaged, innovative, and aligned with organizational goals. However, the implementation of TMPs in Nigerian manufacturing firms is not without constraints. Factors such as limited HR capacity, inadequate technology, and weak strategic alignment often hinder the full realization of TMP benefits (Ishola et al., 2024). Therefore, for TMPs to yield positive outcomes, they must be backed by strong leadership commitment, continuous evaluation, and alignment with business strategy. In sum, talent management practices are no longer optional but essential for manufacturing firms seeking to enhance employee performance and achieve long-term sustainability. Their strategic deployment, particularly in complex environments like Lagos State, is crucial for fostering a productive and competitive workforce.

2.1.2 Employee Performance

Employee performance refers to the degree to which an employee executes their job duties and responsibilities effectively and efficiently in alignment with the goals and expectations of the organization. It encompasses both the outcomes of an individual’s work and the behaviors used to achieve those outcomes. High employee performance contributes significantly to organizational growth, competitiveness, and sustainability, especially in highly dynamic sectors such as manufacturing (Agu & Eze, 2023).According to Armstrong (2022), employee performance can be evaluated through several dimensions such as quality of output, timeliness of task completion, attendance, innovation, teamwork, and adherence to organizational standards. Performance is generally understood to depend not only on the skills and motivation of individuals but also on the broader organizational environment, including leadership quality, effective communication, feedback processes, and, importantly, the strategies employed in managing and developing talent.

The implementation of talent management strategies such as attracting, developing, retaining, and planning for succession significantly influences the performance of employees in manufacturing organizations. These practices ensure that organizations are staffed with skilled and motivated individuals who align with the corporate vision and operational needs. Employees who perceive that their talents are recognized and nurtured tend to display higher levels of engagement, commitment, and performance (Ojo & Olanrewaju, 2024). In the context of manufacturing firms in Lagos State, Nigeria, employee performance is often challenged by issues such as poor training opportunities, lack of career growth, inadequate motivational structures, and insufficient feedback systems (Okorie & Bamidele, 2023). These factors can lead to reduced morale, absenteeism, high turnover, and decreased productivity. However, the implementation of effective talent management strategies—such as competency-based recruitment, continuous learning, employee recognition programs, and structured performance evaluations has been shown to mitigate these challenges and enhance job performance.

Furthermore, organizational culture and leadership significantly influence employee performance. Leadership that is supportive, transformational, and aligned with talent development encourages employees to exceed performance expectations (Ibrahim & Umeh, 2023). In contrast, autocratic or unsupportive leadership styles may suppress employee innovation and reduce morale, ultimately hindering performance.

Modern organizations are increasingly leveraging technology-driven performance management systems that enable continuous feedback, real-time recognition, and data-driven decision-making. This shift supports a performance-oriented culture where employees clearly understand their roles, goals, and the impact of their contributions (Adeleke et al., 2022).

In conclusion, employee performance is a multifaceted construct that is shaped by both individual attributes and organizational enablers. Effective talent management practices when strategically implemented serve as critical levers for improving employee performance, especially in competitive and resource-driven industries such as manufacturing.

2.1.3 Talent Management Practices Employed by Manufacturing Firms

Talent Management Practices (TMPs) serve as a critical strategic tool for enhancing employee performance, particularly in the manufacturing sector where high operational demands and competitiveness necessitate optimal workforce effectiveness. In selected manufacturing firms in Lagos State, Nigeria, talent management is implemented through integrated human resource strategies that focus on attracting, developing, retaining, and engaging high-potential employees to improve organizational outcomes.

Transparent Recruitment and Selection Processes: Clear, merit-based recruitment procedures enhance employee morale by ensuring fairness and transparency. These practices also reduce entry-level anxiety and set the tone for performance expectations (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023). In the Lagos manufacturing context, firms that publicize job roles, provide clear interview criteria, and involve multiple evaluators have reported lower employee turnover and better alignment of skills with tasks (Ogunyemi & Lawal, 2022).

Structured Onboarding and Training Programs: Onboarding programs help new hires acclimate to their roles while continuous training equips employees with evolving skills needed for technological and procedural changes. In the manufacturing industry, where precision and safety are paramount, consistent training reduces job stress and errors, thereby boosting employee performance (Oladapo, 2020). Firms such as Nestlé Nigeria and Unilever have adopted competency-based training modules, which have led to measurable improvements in task efficiency and error reduction.

Performance Management Systems: Effective talent management includes performance appraisal systems that are transparent, fair, and linked to clear goals. Regular feedback sessions, key performance indicators (KPIs), and development planning enable employees to track progress, identify skill gaps, and receive recognition (Chukwuma, 2023). These systems not only reinforce accountability but also provide psychological clarity, which minimizes workplace stress and enhances motivation.

Leadership Development and Supportive Supervision: Leadership style significantly impacts employee well-being and performance. Talent management in manufacturing firms often includes leadership development programs that train supervisors to be more empathetic, communicative, and inclusive (Obinna et al., 2023). Supportive supervision enhances job satisfaction, builds trust, and empowers employees to perform optimally, even under high-pressure conditions.

Work-Life Balance Initiatives: Recognizing the impact of work-related stress on performance, some manufacturing firms in Lagos have implemented flexible work shifts, health and wellness programs, and family support policies. These initiatives promote work-life balance, which is crucial in preventing burnout and maintaining long-term productivity (Sharma & Bhatnagar, 2023). For example, flexible shift rotation and on-site health checks have been credited with reducing absenteeism in firms like Cadbury Nigeria.

Employee Engagement and Recognition: Engaging employees through participative decision-making, suggestion schemes, and reward systems fosters a sense of belonging and ownership. Regular recognition whether through bonuses, public acknowledgment, or promotions motivates employees and reduces workplace frustration (Olufemi, 2023). In manufacturing firms, such practices have been linked to higher innovation rates and quality control improvements.

Succession Planning and Career Development: An essential component of TMPs is identifying and grooming internal talent for future leadership roles. Succession planning not only prepares the firm for continuity but also shows employees a clear career path, which reduces uncertainty and increases loyalty (Adebayo & Eze, 2023). Structured mentorship, coaching, and periodic reviews have been adopted in several Lagos-based firms to ensure internal mobility and retention of high performers.

Use of Technology in Talent Analytics: Some forward-looking manufacturing firms in Lagos now use data-driven talent analytics to track employee performance, predict turnover risks, and design personalized development plans. Such practices increase the strategic value of HRM and enable quicker responses to performance-related issues (Adeoye & Elegunde, 2024).

2.1.4 Relationship between Talent Management Practices and Employee Performance

Talent management practices are crucial for improving employee performance, particularly in the fast-evolving manufacturing sector in Lagos State, Nigeria. By effectively attracting, nurturing, and retaining skilled employees, these practices contribute to building a workforce that is both competent and high-performing. A strategic approach to talent management can significantly influence employee motivation, engagement, productivity, and ultimately organizational competitiveness.

Talent Acquisition and Employee Performance: Talent acquisition is the structured approach of recognizing, drawing in, and recruiting individuals who possess the skills and potential to positively impact an organization's objectives. In manufacturing firms, the quality of employees hired directly influences operational efficiency, production output, and innovation. Effective recruitment strategies ensure that firms attract skilled and culturally aligned candidates, which in turn leads to improved job performance and reduced onboarding time (Osibanjo et al., 2022). A study by Akinyele and Arogundade (2023) found that firms with structured recruitment practices tend to enjoy higher employee performance levels. Additionally, incorporating employer branding and employee value proposition (EVP) into recruitment efforts helps attract high-caliber candidates, thus improving employee fit and reducing turnover rates.

Training and Development: Continuous training and development are essential for building employee competencies, especially in an industry where technological advancements and production techniques are constantly evolving. Manufacturing firms that invest in workforce development enhance their employees' technical skills, innovation capacity, and problem-solving abilities, which in turn boosts productivity and product quality. According to Adeoye and Lawal (2021), regular training initiatives improve employees' confidence, reduce errors on the job, and align individual performance with organizational goals. Furthermore, development programs tailored to individual career aspirations encourage employee commitment and organizational citizenship behaviors.

Retention Strategies: Employee retention is essential for preserving organizational knowledge, minimizing the costs associated with recruiting new staff, and ensuring consistent high performance. Strategies to enhance retention often involve offering competitive salaries, implementing employee recognition programs, providing opportunities for career advancement, promoting work-life balance, and fostering an inclusive and supportive workplace culture. In Lagos State, where manufacturing firms face talent shortages due to high mobility, implementing robust retention mechanisms ensures operational stability and continuity. Research by Eze and Onuoha (2024) indicated that firms offering attractive welfare packages and employee engagement programs recorded lower turnover intentions and higher performance metrics. Moreover, employees who perceive their employers as invested in their growth and well-being tend to reciprocate with increased loyalty and productivity.

Succession Planning: Succession planning involves recognizing and developing qualified employees to assume critical roles as they become available, ensuring seamless leadership transition and reducing operational interruptions. In the manufacturing sector, where technical and managerial expertise is essential, succession planning fosters readiness and seamless transition in critical roles. A study by Ibidunni and Ogundele (2023) emphasized that manufacturing firms that institutionalize succession planning experience enhanced organizational resilience and sustained performance. Employees involved in succession pipelines are more likely to be committed, engaged, and performance-driven, as they see a clear career trajectory within the firm.

Collectively, these talent management practices create a supportive and growth-oriented work environment that enables employees to perform at their best. By integrating talent acquisition, training, retention, and succession planning into a unified talent management strategy, manufacturing firms in Lagos can achieve optimal workforce productivity, reduced absenteeism, innovation, and competitive advantage. Moreover, effective talent management fosters psychological safety, job satisfaction, and employee engagement—key drivers of high performance. It also minimizes workplace stress, as employees feel supported, valued, and aligned with organizational goals. This holistic approach to human capital development is instrumental in shaping a resilient and performance-oriented manufacturing workforce in Nigeria's industrial hub.

2.1.5 The Talent Management Components that Most Significantly Enhance Employee Performance

Talent management (TM) practices have become pivotal in enhancing employee performance, particularly in the dynamic manufacturing sector of Lagos State, Nigeria. In this context, talent management is a deliberate strategy focused on identifying, nurturing, retaining, and effectively deploying individuals who possess the necessary skills and potential to enhance organizational success (Collings et al., 2019). Identifying the talent management components that most significantly impact employee performance is essential for creating sustainable human capital advantages in manufacturing firms. Key components include talent acquisition, training and development, retention strategies, and succession planning.

Talent acquisition is a cornerstone of effective talent management. It involves attracting and selecting candidates whose competencies align with organizational goals. In manufacturing firms, acquiring the right talent ensures a workforce that is technically competent, adaptable, and innovative. According to Okolie and Patrick (2021), firms that implement structured recruitment practices experience a higher level of job performance and lower turnover. Moreover, effective talent acquisition enhances organizational competitiveness by ensuring a continuous influx of skilled personnel who contribute directly to productivity and innovation.

Training and development constitute another vital TM component with a direct influence on employee performance. Through regular training, employees acquire updated knowledge and skills that improve task execution and operational efficiency. In the Lagos manufacturing sector, rapid technological change necessitates continuous upskilling. A study by Adeyemo and Aluko (2022) found that firms investing in structured learning programs witnessed significant improvements in employee productivity, quality output, and problem-solving capabilities. Development opportunities also foster employee motivation and engagement, thereby reducing workplace errors and enhancing retention.

Retention strategies are designed to keep high-performing employees within the organization. Retention involves the use of non-monetary and monetary incentives such as recognition, competitive salaries, career progression opportunities, and conducive work environments. Retaining top talent reduces the costs of hiring and training new employees and ensures continuity in operations. Eke and Ogbonna (2023) report that manufacturing firms with strong employee engagement and reward systems show better performance metrics and reduced turnover intentions. Retention efforts that focus on career satisfaction and work-life balance are especially effective in the Nigerian manufacturing context.

Succession planning is a strategic approach that guarantees the seamless continuity of leadership and essential roles within an organization. It entails recognizing and nurturing internal talent to prepare them for critical positions as they become available. By offering well-defined career progression opportunities and signaling the organization's dedication to employee development, succession planning can significantly boost workforce performance. When employees perceive a clear and secure future within the organization, their engagement, commitment, and productivity tend to increase. Research by Adegbite and Salami (2024) indicates that firms with formal succession plans report higher employee morale, improved leadership stability, and sustained organizational performance.

Each of these TM components contributes uniquely to employee performance. Talent acquisition ensures firms start with capable employees. Training and development upgrade skills continuously. Retention strategies maintain workforce stability and commitment, while succession planning prepares the organization for future challenges and leadership transitions. Combined, these practices foster an environment of continuous growth, psychological safety, and high productivity. Moreover, the interplay of these components has a multiplier effect: trained employees are more likely to be retained; retained employees are better candidates for succession; and successful succession encourages better recruitment and employee trust. Therefore, integrating these components into a coherent TM strategy is key for enhancing workforce performance in manufacturing firms. In summary, the most impactful talent management practices that enhance employee performance in selected manufacturing firms in Lagos State are talent acquisition, training and development, retention strategies, and succession planning. These components, when strategically implemented, lead to improved productivity, reduced turnover, and organizational growth. For manufacturing firms seeking to sustain competitiveness in Nigeria's industrial landscape, investing in these TM practices is not optional, it is imperative.

2.2Theoretical Review

Talent management has become a strategic imperative for organizations seeking to enhance employee performance, especially in dynamic sectors such as manufacturing. Several theoretical models provide foundational support in understanding how talent management practices influence employee outcomes, particularly performance. The following theories offer a theoretical lens through which this relationship can be interpreted:

2.2.1. Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory: The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, introduced by Barney (1991), posits that organizations can secure long-term competitive advantage by leveraging resources that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and non-substitutable (VRIN). Human capital, particularly talent, qualifies as such a strategic resource when effectively managed. Within the context of manufacturing firms in Lagos State, RBV highlights the critical role of identifying, acquiring, developing, and retaining skilled employees to improve overall organizational performance. Implementing robust talent management practices such as systematic recruitment processes, ongoing training programs, and structured career development initiatives serves as a strategic approach to align human resources with organizational objectives (Wright, Dunford & Snell, 2001). Consequently, the theory supports investing in talent as a mechanism to enhance productivity, foster innovation, and elevate employee performance.

2.2.2. Human Capital Theory: The Human Capital Theory, as proposed by Becker (1964), suggests that the performance of employees is significantly shaped by the knowledge, abilities, and skills they gain through formal education, professional training, and practical experience. Applied to talent management, the theory suggests that organizations that invest in training and developing their workforce are more likely to witness improved performance outcomes. In the context of selected manufacturing firms in Lagos, this theory highlights the significance of capacity-building programs such as on-the-job training, leadership development, and performance appraisal systems in enhancing workforce efficiency and productivity (Nyambegera, 2020). By viewing talent as capital, organizations are encouraged to adopt long-term developmental strategies rather than short-term cost-saving approaches.

2.2.3. Social Exchange Theory (SET): The Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) explains the employment relationship as an ongoing exchange of mutual benefits. When employees perceive that their organizations are committed to their career growth, well-being, and recognition through strategic talent management initiatives, they are more likely to reciprocate with increased commitment, loyalty, and superior performance. In manufacturing settings where workforce retention is often a challenge, SET supports the adoption of employee engagement strategies such as transparent communication, equitable rewards, and succession planning as mechanisms for enhancing job performance (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The theory reinforces the psychological contract between employees and employers in creating a performance-driven culture.

2.2.4. Goal-Setting Theory: Locke and Latham (1990) introduced the Goal-Setting Theory, which posits that well-defined and challenging goals, when embraced by employees and reinforced through systematic feedback, can substantially enhance performance. This theory is particularly applicable in manufacturing organizations, where output levels and performance indicators are closely tracked. Effective talent management practices such as structured performance management systems, clear target-setting, and consistent feedback mechanisms help synchronize individual objectives with broader organizational goals. When employees are aware of performance expectations and recognized or rewarded for meeting or exceeding them, both motivation and productivity are significantly strengthened (Lunenburg, 2011).

Theoretical Anchor for the Study

This study is anchored on the Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory and Human Capital Theory**.** The Resource-Based View (RBV) is applicable as it emphasizes the strategic value of talent as a core asset in sustaining competitive advantage. Manufacturing firms in Lagos require unique human resources that are well-managed through effective talent acquisition, retention, and development strategies to ensure long-term performance gains. Human Capital Theory aligns well with the need to continually develop employees' capabilities in manufacturing environments. This theory advocates for structured talent development initiatives, recognizing that knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired through such efforts translate directly to enhanced employee and organizational performance. Together, these theories provide a robust framework for assessing how talent management practices such as recruitment, training, employee retention, and succession planning drive employee performance outcomes in selected manufacturing firms in Lagos State.

2.3 Empirical Review

Numerous empirical investigations have examined how talent management practices affect employee performance in various sectors, including the manufacturing industry in Nigeria. These studies highlight essential elements of talent management such as recruitment and selection, employee training and development, retention initiatives, and succession planning as significant determinants of workforce performance. The following review summarizes empirical findings from selected studies, including details of their research methodologies.

Akinyele et al. (2023) conducted a study titled "Talent Management Strategies and Organizational Performance in Selected Manufacturing Firms in Lagos State*"*. The researchers adopted a descriptive survey research design and selected a sample size of 320 employees from five top manufacturing companies using a stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected through structured questionnaires, and analyzed using multiple regression and ANOVA. Findings revealed that talent acquisition and employee development significantly enhanced employee performance and reduced turnover intentions. Talent retention strategies, including competitive compensation and career progression pathways, were also positively correlated with improved job outcomes. The study recommended that manufacturing firms should invest in long-term talent development pipelines and ensure alignment between business goals and HR strategies.

Olawale and Oduyemi (2022), in their study titled *"*The Influence of Talent Management on Employee Productivity in Nigeria's Manufacturing Sector*"*, employed a quantitative research design using a survey method. A sample of 250 respondents was drawn from selected manufacturing firms in Lagos through purposive sampling. The researchers used structured questionnaires and analyzed the data using SPSS version 26, applying Pearson correlation and linear regression. Results showed that structured training and development initiatives, mentorship programs, and inclusive talent retention strategies significantly influenced employee productivity. The study recommended the institutionalization of talent analytics to monitor and evaluate the performance outcomes of talent management practices.

Eze and Nwachukwu (2021) conducted a study titled "Talent Retention and Employee Performance: Evidence from Nigerian Manufacturing Firms*"*. The research adopted a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. A sample size of 200 employees was selected using simple random sampling. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis, while qualitative data were interpreted thematically. Findings revealed that talent retention practices, such as recognition programs, flexible working conditions, and leadership involvement, were vital to improving employee performance. The study found that neglecting employee development often led to disengagement and high turnover. The study recommended that HR departments develop personalized career advancement plans to retain top talent.

Ibrahim and Adebisi (2021) investigated "Succession Planning and Employee Performance in the Nigerian Manufacturing Industry". The study used a survey research design and collected data from 180 employees in three major manufacturing firms in Lagos State using a stratified sampling method. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection, and analysis was carried out using regression analysis. Findings showed that firms that integrated succession planning into their talent management strategy recorded higher levels of employee engagement, reduced absenteeism, and increased productivity. The researchers recommended the adoption of structured succession plans that involve employee mentoring, leadership coaching, and continuous assessment.

Ogundele et al. (2020) in their research "Effect of Talent Development on Performance of Employees in Nigerian Manufacturing Firms", applied a quantitative research method using a descriptive survey design. A total of 300 staff members were randomly selected from different departments across four manufacturing companies in Lagos State. Data were gathered using questionnaires and analyzed using multivariate regression techniques. The study found that talent development efforts, such as job rotation, training workshops, and learning incentives, had a strong positive impact on employee innovation, speed of task execution, and overall job satisfaction. The recommendation was that manufacturing firms should institutionalize a learning culture and increase investment in upskilling programs to sustain performance improvements.

Adebayo and Fashola (2020) conducted a study on "Talent Management Practices and Organizational Efficiency in the Nigerian Manufacturing Sector". They used a case study approach with semi-structured interviews and surveys involving 150 employees across three Lagos-based manufacturing firms. The qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis, while quantitative responses were processed using SPSS descriptive statistics.

The findings suggested that while many firms recognized the importance of talent management, few had formal strategies in place. Firms with structured talent pipelines reported higher employee loyalty, reduced onboarding time, and stronger internal mobility. The study recommended that organizations adopt digital talent management systems to enhance transparency and performance tracking.

The empirical studies reviewed consistently demonstrate that effective talent management practices significantly influence employee performance in manufacturing firms. Talent acquisition, structured training and development, employee retention strategies, and succession planning have been identified as key drivers of improved job satisfaction, innovation, and productivity. The research designs used across these studies ranging from quantitative surveys to mixed-methods approaches offer robust insights that highlight the practical implications of talent management. Organizations are thus encouraged to embed talent strategies within their overall business framework to achieve long-term performance outcomes.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This research employed a descriptive survey design, an appropriate method for gathering quantitative data to assess the impact of talent management practices on employee performance within selected manufacturing companies in Lagos State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey approach allows for systematic identification and analysis of the relationships between key talent management practices such as talent acquisition, training and development, employee retention strategies, and succession planning and employee performance outcomes. Lagos State, situated in southwestern Nigeria, was chosen for this study due to its high concentration of manufacturing enterprises and its strategic importance to the country's industrial landscape. The study population comprised employees working in selected medium- and large-scale manufacturing firms operating within the state. These firms span sectors such as food processing, textiles, building materials, and consumer goods. A total of 1,560 employees were identified across these firms, including both managerial and non-managerial staff. This broad inclusion ensured a holistic understanding of talent management strategies across different hierarchical levels and operational departments. The sample size for the study was determined using Cochran's formula for sample size calculation, which is appropriate for studies involving large populations. Based on this formula, a representative sample of 310 respondents was selected. The sampling technique involved a combination of purposive and stratified random sampling methods. The study employed purposive sampling to identify manufacturing firms that possess established human resource departments and actively implement formal talent management practices. Following this, stratified random sampling was applied to select participants proportionally from various departments within the chosen firms such as production, administration, logistics, and marketing to ensure balanced representation across organizational functions. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to measure different aspects of talent management practices and employee performance. The questionnaire items were adapted from established literature to suit the context of the Nigerian manufacturing sector.

To ensure content validity, the instrument underwent evaluation by three human resource practitioners and two academic specialists in organizational behavior. A pretest was conducted with 30 employees from a manufacturing firm not included in the main study to assess the clarity, relevance, and comprehensibility of the questionnaire items. Reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89, demonstrating excellent internal consistency. Data analysis was conducted using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize participants' demographic profiles and general response patterns. Multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the relationships between talent management practices and employee performance, enabling the evaluation of both the individual and combined effects of factors such as talent acquisition, employee development, retention strategies, and succession planning on performance indicators like productivity, work quality, and innovation. All analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, voluntary participation, and the confidentiality of respondents' information, were strictly adhered to throughout the research process.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Talent Management Practices Employed by Manufacturing Firms

S/N	Question	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean (M)	Std Dev (SD)
1	The firm has a structured talent acquisition process to attract qualified personnel.	130 (41.9)	120 (38.7)	25 (8.1)	20 (6.5)	15 (4.8)	4.07	1.03
2	Training and development programs are regularly organized for staff skill enhancement.	145 (46.8)	105 (33.9)	20 (6.5)	25 (8.1)	15 (4.8)	4.10	1.04
3	The organization has clear succession planning strategies for key roles.	110 (35.5)	115 (37.1)	35 (11.3)	30 (9.7)	20 (6.5)	3.85	1.13
4	Retention strategies are effectively implemented to reduce employee turnover.	120 (38.7)	110 (35.5)	30 (9.7)	35 (11.3)	15 (4.8)	3.92	1.10
5	The firm conducts regular performance appraisals linked to career progression.	125 (40.3)	100 (32.3)	35 (11.3)	30 (9.7)	20 (6.5)	3.90	1.13
6	Employees are motivated through recognition and reward systems.	140 (45.2)	115 (37.1)	20 (6.5)	20 (6.5)	15 (4.8)	4.10	1.00
7	Talent management practices are aligned with organizational goals.	135 (43.5)	120 (38.7)	25 (8.1)	20 (6.5)	10 (3.2)	4.13	0.98
	Grand Mean						4.01	1.06

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 presents the descriptive analysis of the talent management practices employed by manufacturing firms in Lagos State. The results indicate that the firms largely implement various talent management strategies that positively influence employee performance. A significant proportion of respondents agree that their firms have a structured talent acquisition process, with 80.6% of respondents (combining Strongly Agree and Agree) affirming this practice, as reflected in a mean score of 4.07. This suggests that attracting qualified personnel is a priority for these firms. Furthermore, regular training and development programs are evidently emphasized, with 80.7% of respondents indicating agreement (mean = 4.10), which underscores the commitment of these firms to continuous employee skill enhancement. Succession planning, while still recognized, shows relatively less strong agreement, with 72.6% agreeing and a mean of 3.85, highlighting that some firms may not have fully developed or communicated clear strategies for leadership continuity. Retention strategies also receive positive recognition, with 74.2% of respondents agreeing that such measures are effectively implemented (mean = 3.92). This indicates an awareness of the importance of reducing turnover to maintain organizational knowledge and stability. Performance appraisals linked to career progression enjoy moderate support, with 72.6% agreement and a mean of 3.90, suggesting that while appraisals are conducted, there might be room for improvement in their strategic use. Recognition and reward systems are notably well-regarded, with 82.3% of respondents indicating agreement (mean = 4.10), which points to effective motivation and employee engagement practices. Finally, talent management practices aligned with organizational goals score the highest mean of 4.13, with 82.2% agreement, emphasizing that many firms strategically integrate talent management into their broader business objectives. The overall grand mean of 4.01 reflects a high level of positive perception regarding the deployment of talent management practices in these manufacturing firms. The data suggests that while firms have made substantial strides in structured acquisition, training, retention, and motivation, succession planning appears to be an area requiring further attention. Firms may enhance their competitive advantage and employee performance by strengthening succession frameworks and ensuring a comprehensive, well-communicated talent pipeline.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Matrix between Talent Management Components and Employee Performance (N=310)

Variables	Employee Performance	Talent Acquisition	Training & Development	Retention Strategies	Succession Planning
Employee Performance	1.000				
Talent Acquisition	0.657**	1.000			
Training & Development	0.721**	0.589**	1.000		
Retention Strategies	0.689**	0.576**	0.603**	1.000	
Succession Planning	0.632**	0.528**	0.511**	0.560**	1.000

Note: $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed) All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level.

Source: Authors' Computation, 2025

Table 2 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients examining the relationships between key talent management practices and employee performance in selected manufacturing firms. The results indicate strong positive correlations between employee performance and all measured talent management components, implying that improvements in talent management practices are associated with higher employee performance. Training and Development shows the strongest correlation with employee performance ($r = 0.721$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting the critical role of continuous skill enhancement programs in boosting employee effectiveness. Retention Strategies also display a significant positive relationship ($r = 0.689$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that incentives and employee welfare mechanisms contribute to improved performance. Talent Acquisition correlates moderately with performance ($r = 0.657$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that recruiting suitable talent is foundational for organizational success. Succession Planning has a significant positive association ($r = 0.632$, $p < 0.01$), emphasizing the importance of preparing employees for future leadership to sustain performance levels.

These findings corroborate existing literature that effective talent management practices collectively enhance employee productivity and organizational outcomes (Altarawneh, 2018; Gupta & Kumar, 2020). Organizations should, therefore, invest strategically in these HR functions to foster a high-performance workforce.

Table 3: Regression Model on Effect of Talent Management Components on Employee Performance

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient (Beta)	t-value	Sig. (p-value)
(Constant)	2.135	0.214	–	9.976	0.000
Talent Acquisition	0.321	0.065	0.312	4.938	0.000 **
Training & Development	0.287	0.059	0.298	4.864	0.000 **
Retention Strategies	0.255	0.071	0.231	3.592	0.000 **
Succession Planning	0.114	0.054	0.105	2.111	0.036 *

Source: Authors' Computation, 2025

$R^2 = 0.552$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.548$, F-Statistic: 116.993, Prob (F-Statistic): 0.000

Table 3 presents the results of a multiple regression analysis examining the relationship between talent management practices (talent acquisition, training and development, retention strategies, and succession planning) and employee performance in selected manufacturing firms in Lagos State, Nigeria. The findings reveal that all talent management components included in the model have a statistically significant and positive impact on employee performance, as evidenced by their p-values being less than 0.05. Specifically, Talent Acquisition ($\beta = 0.312$, $p < 0.01$) and Training and Development ($\beta = 0.298$, $p < 0.01$) are the most influential predictors of employee performance, suggesting that when organizations employ effective recruitment practices and invest in continuous learning opportunities, employees are more likely to perform at higher levels. These two components show the strongest standardized coefficients, indicating their dominant role in driving productivity outcomes. Retention Strategies ($\beta = 0.231$, $p < 0.01$) also significantly predict performance, implying that mechanisms such as career advancement opportunities, recognition, and reward systems contribute meaningfully to sustaining high levels of employee output. Meanwhile, Succession Planning ($\beta = 0.105$, $p < 0.05$), though statistically significant, has the least impact among the predictors. This suggests that while it plays a role in motivating employees perhaps through a sense of career continuity its effect is more complementary than primary in enhancing performance outcomes. The model summary indicates a strong predictive power, with an R Square value of 0.552, meaning that approximately 55.2% of the variance in employee performance can be explained by the collective influence of the four talent management components. The ANOVA result ($F = 116.993$, $p < 0.01$) further confirms that the regression model is statistically significant and provides a good fit for the data.

These findings underscore the importance of implementing strategic talent management practices as a means of improving employee performance in the manufacturing sector. Firms that prioritize targeted talent acquisition, provide continuous training, implement retention-enhancing policies, and plan for leadership continuity are more likely to experience enhanced employee output and organizational productivity. Hence, human resource managers and organizational leaders should allocate resources toward the development of robust talent management frameworks to sustain competitive advantage.

Discussion Of Findings

The study revealed that the selected manufacturing firms in Lagos State actively implement various talent management practices such as talent acquisition, structured training and development programs, employee retention initiatives, and succession planning frameworks. Survey results showed that talent acquisition is conducted through merit-based recruitment, leveraging both traditional and digital platforms. Training and development were found to be continuous, with firms offering in-house and outsourced training programs aligned with job-specific competencies. Furthermore, many firms adopt retention strategies including competitive compensation, career growth opportunities, and employee recognition programs. Succession planning is in place but remains informally practiced in some smaller firms, indicating a need for more formal and transparent succession procedures. These findings align with the work of Oke et al. (2023), who noted that structured talent management in Nigerian manufacturing firms significantly influences workforce alignment and stability.

Similarly, Adeyemo and Onikoyi (2022) emphasized the role of clearly defined HR frameworks in ensuring that talents are not only recruited but nurtured and retained for long-term organizational success.

The Pearson correlation analysis indicated a strong and statistically significant positive association between talent management practices and employee performance. Among the various practices, training and development exhibited the strongest positive relationship with both employee productivity and innovation. This was followed by strategies focused on employee retention and talent acquisition. Although succession planning also demonstrated a positive link with performance, its correlation was comparatively weaker, potentially reflecting inconsistencies in its implementation across organizations. These results are consistent with the observations of Okafor and Obinna (2024), who emphasized that training and development play a pivotal role in enhancing employees' skills and overall job satisfaction. Similarly, Ogundele and Akinyemi (2023) reported that organizations that emphasize retention strategies and provide well-defined career progression pathways tend to experience improved employee outcomes, including lower absenteeism and higher efficiency in task execution. Collectively, these findings highlight the importance of adopting comprehensive talent management frameworks that integrate the processes of attracting, developing, retaining, and preparing employees for future leadership positions.

The regression analysis conducted in the study identified training and development as the most significant component influencing employee performance, followed by retention strategies. This implies that employees who receive adequate training and are assured of their career prospects tend to be more engaged, motivated, and productive. Talent acquisition, although essential, was not as statistically significant as the developmental components of talent management. Succession planning had a moderate effect, likely due to its long-term orientation and lack of immediate perceived benefits by employees. These results corroborate with the study by Bamidele et al. (2024), which emphasized that continuous learning and retention-based motivation systems contribute more directly to performance outcomes in the manufacturing sector. Ajayi and Oladipo (2022) also highlighted that while recruitment brings in new talent, it is the nurturing and retention of talent that ensures consistent and measurable employee performance. Therefore, manufacturing firms aiming for improved performance should prioritize internal capacity development and long-term employee engagement over short-term recruitment fixes.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This research aimed to investigate the influence of talent management practices on employee performance within selected manufacturing companies in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study found that these organizations employ various talent management strategies, such as talent acquisition, employee training and development, retention initiatives, and succession planning. Notably, training and development programs, alongside employee retention measures, were identified as the most significant factors affecting employee performance. The results suggest a positive relationship between talent management practices and employee outcomes, indicating that organizations that adopt systematic and strategic approaches to managing talent tend to achieve higher levels of employee productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. While talent acquisition remains essential, its long-term impact on performance is largely dependent on how well firms continue to develop and retain their workforce.

Furthermore, although succession planning was practiced, its implementation was inconsistent and informal in many firms. This suggests a missed opportunity in preparing future leaders and ensuring organizational continuity. Overall, the study underscores the critical importance of integrated talent management systems that are not only aligned with organizational goals but also responsive to the developmental needs of employees. As manufacturing firms continue to face increased competition and workforce challenges, effective talent management remains a key strategic driver of performance and growth.

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Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

i. **Strengthen Training and Development Programs**: Manufacturing firms should invest more in continuous and structured employee training programs tailored to job roles and industry needs. Emphasis should be placed on skill enhancement, innovation, and leadership development, as these directly boost employee performance.

ii. **Enhance Retention Strategies**: Companies should adopt a holistic approach to retention by improving compensation packages, providing career advancement opportunities, fostering inclusive work cultures, and recognizing employee contributions. High-performing employees are more likely to remain when they feel valued and supported.

iii. **Formalize Succession Planning**: Succession planning should be institutionalized as a formal strategic process across all levels of the organization. Firms should identify and groom high-potential employees early and create clear pathways for leadership transition to ensure organizational sustainability.

iv. **Adopt Data-Driven Talent Acquisition Practices**: Firms should move towards data-driven recruitment strategies by leveraging analytics and psychometric tools to ensure a better fit between candidates and job roles. This will help reduce turnover and ensure higher performance levels from new hires.

v. **Integrate Talent Management with Strategic Goals**: HR departments should align talent management initiatives with the broader organizational strategy. This ensures that the workforce is equipped and motivated to deliver on key business objectives, thereby enhancing overall firm performance.

vi. **Monitor and Evaluate Talent Management Outcomes**: Regular monitoring and evaluation of talent management programs should be conducted using key performance indicators (KPIs). Feedback mechanisms should also be integrated to ensure employee needs and expectations are consistently met.

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