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Retention Strategies and Employee Performance in Pharmaceutical Firms in South East Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined effect of retention strategies on employee performance in selected Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to: determine the effect of employee career development on employee commitment of Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria and assess the effect of favourable work environment on employee productivity of Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria. Research design was descriptive survey research. The population of this study comprises of 11 registered Pharmaceutical companies in South-East Nigeria with 2,455 total numbers of staff (Manufacturer Association of Nigeria, 2023). The study adopted the Freund and Williams's sampling technique to get sample size of 388 respondents. The study used structured questionnaire to obtain data. The research questions were answered using mean score and standard deviation. The hypotheses stated were tested with single regression. The empirical results showed that employee career development has significant effect on employee commitment of Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria (t-statistic; 7.238; P-value; 0.000 < Sig-value; 0.05) and favourable work environment has no significant effect on employee productivity of Pharmaceutical firms in South-East Nigeria (t-statistic; 9.516; P-value; 0.000 < Sig-value; 0.05). The study recommended that management of Pharmaceutical firms should place less emphasis on certain monetary rewards, such as bonuses, and consider other non-monetary rewards, such as promotions, recognition, flexible working hours, and career development opportunities. Rewards of this type are likely to boost employee performance and improve overall organisational performance.

Keywords: Retention Strategies, Employee Performance, Career Development, Favourable Work Environment

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Retention strategies are methods and practices designed to keep valuable employees engaged, satisfied, and committed to an organization, reducing turnover and ensuring long-term organizational success. Talent retention strategies are crucial for maintaining a stable, productive workforce and minimizing the costs associated with high employee turnover (Igbinoba, Joel, Igbadumhe & Peter, 2022) [13]. Key components of retention strategies include: career development and advancedment and favourable work environmental. Career development and advancement aims to enhance employees' skills, knowledge, and experiences, enabling them to achieve their career goals and contribute more effectively to the organization. By investing in career development and advancement, organizations can create a dynamic and motivated workforce ready to meet current and future challenges. A favourable work environment may directly drives higher employee performance by boosting motivation, engagement, and focus. When workers feel physically comfortable and psychologically safe, they experience reduced stress, leading to fewer absences, enhanced creativity, and greater organizational commitment.

Employee retention refers to the ability of an organization to retain its employees. Employee retention can be represented by a simple statistic (for example, a retention rate of 80% usually indicates that an organization kept 80% of its employees in a given period) (Nyongesa & Westhuizein, 2025) [27]. However, many consider employee retention as relating to the efforts by which employers attempt to retain employees in their workforce. In this sense, retention becomes the strategies rather than the outcome. Globally, managers and organisational leaders are faced with challenges of retaining employees. Some of these

challenges are linked with infrastructural support, remuneration packages, leadership style and culture within the organisation (Ndubuisi, Ubah & Ariwa, 2025) [24]. Employee retention strategy is the ability of an organisation to retain its valuable employees for better performance. Barween, Muhammad and Tayseer, (2020) [3] viewed retention of employees as an obligation to continue to run business or exchange with a particular company.

A supportive and well-structured work environment is widely recognized as a fundamental determinant of employee performance and overall job satisfaction (Olanipon, Ebhoaye, Oyamendan, Akionla, Adelakun & Akinradewo, 2023) [29]. The interplay between the physical workspace and the organizational culture forms a crucial foundation for enabling employees to perform optimally. A growing body of research underscores that favourable physical conditions, such as adequate lighting, noise control, ergonomic furniture, and air quality significantly enhance employee productivity, health, and well-being (Zhenjing, Chupradit, Ku, Nassani & Haffar, 2022) [36]. Additionally, a positive organizational culture characterized by open communication, supportive leadership, mutual respect, and shared values further strengthens employee engagement, reduces workplace conflicts, and promotes a sense of belonging and purpose.

Career development involves acquiring or transferring the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to carry out specific tasks (Paposa & Kumar, 2019) [31]. It offers strategic benefits for both employers and employees (Kathukya & Igoki, 2024) [17]. The primary aim of career development is to enhance employees' abilities to meet organizational goals and fulfil customer needs. As organizations strive to boost performance and productivity, career development has become increasingly appealing (Gaebel, Zhang, Bunescu & Stoeber, (2018) [9]. Career development benefits both employees and organizations (Kaseger, 2023) [16]. The positive effects are felt by both parties, as individual growth also supports the firm (Lyria, Namusonge & Karanja, 2017) [21]. Investing in career development enables employees to acquire new skills, build confidence, and enhance their competencies, which in turn boosts their motivation and productivity at work (Muntz, Dormann & Kronenwett, 2019). Ngeny (2022) emphasized that career development fosters employee commitment by helping them envision a future within the organization and providing the support needed to navigate ongoing challenges (Kathukya & Igoki, 2024) [17]. Thant and Chang (2021) noted that a lack of career growth can make employees feel stagnant, increasing their desire to leave and seek opportunities elsewhere.

Pharmaceutical companies are playing a vital role in maintaining the public health of people in society. Pharmaceutical companies have huge responsibility in the manufacturing of novel medicines to cure the new forms of diseases that emerges all over the world (Kirti & Karuna, 2020) [18]. Pharmaceutical companies also face many challenges such as competition, generic medicines and non-recoverable costs from failed approaches. These challenges continue until the drugs reach prospective patients. There are several drug substitution products on the market (Ikeagu, Okeke & Anah, 2023) [14]. The complimentary and substitute goods are higher for medicinal products when compared to the fast-moving consumer goods. These challenges are faced by these companies after huge capital investments in the pharmaceutical sector (Shreesha & Gundlapudi, 2024). Companies also faces the challenges in the marketing of products which are performed by the representatives of the respective organization.

Regrettably, the retention management strategies of many pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria do not harmonise the interests of employees and employers. The performance of these firms is perceived to be diminishing which may be associated with a lack of proper career development plans for its employees, the level of service delivery is observed to progress at a slow pace which seems to be associated with inadequate compensation by the employers. The study examined effect of retention strategies on employee performance in selected Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The pharmaceutical industry in Nigeria faces significant challenges, including heavy reliance on imported drugs and raw materials, leading to high costs and drug shortages. Other major issues are a weak regulatory system with inadequate enforcement, a chaotic distribution network enabling fake and substandard drugs to proliferate, poor infrastructure like unreliable power and transportation, and an unfavorable business environment characterized by policy discontinuity and foreign exchange volatility. These factors collectively hinder local production, deter investment, and threaten public health through lack of access to quality medicines.

The system of pharmaceutical industry is marred by irregular inspections, weak enforcement, inadequate funding, and pervasive corruption, which results in a market flooded with unregulated and illicit pharmaceuticals. The combination of a chaotic distribution system and weak regulation fuels the widespread prevalence of fake, substandard, and expired drugs, leading to treatment failures, increased costs, and public health risks. Volatile exchange rates, high import duties, stringent regulations, policy discontinuity, and bureaucratic hurdles create an uncertain and difficult environment for pharmaceutical companies to operate and invest. Unfair government policies and a lack of incentives for local manufacturers, along with price controls, further discourage investment and hinder the growth of domestic production.

Again, employees are seen not to be recognised for exceptional performance assumed to be the cause of their lackadaisical attitude to growing the firms (Igbinoba, Joel, Igbadumhe & Peter, 2022) [13]. There is a likelihood that many of these pharmaceutical firms will continue to experience low levels of employee performance, high production costs, and low profit margins. Again, there may be conflicting interests between employees and employers resulting in high labour turnover with its associated cost effect. It is on this premise that this study sought to investigate the effect of retention strategies on employee performance in selelcted Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine retention strategies and employee performance in Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria. The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Determine the effect of employee career development on employee commitment of Pharmaceutical firms in

South East Nigeria.
2. Assess the effect of favourable work environment on employee productivity of Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions
This study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions.
1. How does employee career development influences employee commitment of Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria?
2. To what extent do favourable work environment impact on employee productivity of Pharmaceutical firms in South-East Nigeria?

1.5 Scope of the Study
Unit Scope: The study examined the effect of retention strategies on employee performance in selected Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria.
Content scope: Basically, the study identifies the following proxies for retention strategies namely: employee career development and favourable work environment while the following are proxies for employee perfoemance namely: employee commitment and employee productivity.
Geographical Scope: The geographical scope of the study was South East Nigeria. The choice for South East Nigeria was due commercial nature of the place to develop small and medium enterprise. The selected pharmaceutical firms were Nemel Pharmaceutical Company Ltd, Pauco Pharmaceutical Company Ltd, A.C, Drug Pharmaceutical Company Ltd, Orange Drug Pharmaceutical Company Ltd and Juhel Nigeria Pharmaceutical Company Ltd.

1.6 Significance of the Study
The study would be of an immense significance to the following groups, entrepreneurship, general public, organization, and researchers.
Young Entrepreneurs: The study would be helpful for local entrepreneurship in the production of locally made goods with high price in the market and made profits in due season. It will also sensitize the entrepreneurship on how social capital can prove its superiority in the performance of their businesses.
Pharmaceutical SMEs owners: More so, the findings of this study would help improve the theoretical framework for business performance. In light of the contribution of the Pharmaceutical SMEs in Nigeria and Lagos State in particular, it is of significance to investigate factors that can improve their performance.

2.1 Conceptual Review
2.1.1 Employee Retention Strategies
Employee retention strategies entails strategies which organization use to sustain its valuable employees (Ndubuisi, Ubah & Ariwa, 2025) [24]. Similarly, Employee retention strategies is defined as a controllable components in which the right people are aligned to the right jobs in an organisation (Abbas, Majeed & Luma, 2021). Abdel-Monem (2022) is of the opinion that employee retention strategies lies in having the right culture and understanding of what motivates staff. Barween, Muhammad & Tayseer (2020) [3] in turn defined it as 'voluntary-dysfunctional-avoidable turnover'.

2.1.2 Employee Performance of Pharmaceutical Companies
Employee performance can be seen as the measure of an individual's effectiveness and ability to achieve organisational goals and objectives within the context of their role and responsibilities. It encompasses various aspects such as the quality and quantity of work produced, meeting deadlines, exhibiting the desired level of competence, displaying a positive attitude and behaviour, and actively contributing towards team and organisational success (Okeke, and Onuorah, 2023).
Employee performance is an assessment of the efficiency of a worker or group of workers. In actual terms, performance is a component which directly affects the company's profits (Hosen, Hamzah, Ismail, Alias, AbdAziz & Rahman, 2024). Performance may be evaluated in terms of the output of an employee in a specific period of time. Typically, the performance of a given worker will be assessed relative to an average out for employees doing similar work. It can also be assessed according to the amount of units of a product or service that an employee handles in a defined time frame (Kariuki & Kiiru, 2021) [15]. As the success of an organization relies mainly on the performance of its employees, therefore, employee performance has become an important objective for businesses (Lee, Lim, Seo & Kwak, 2022) [20].

2.2 Contextual Literature
2.2.1 Employee career development and Employee Commitment
Career Development or Career Development Planning refers to the process an individual may undergo to evolve their occupational status. It is the process of making decisions for long term learning, to align personal needs of physical or psychological fulfillment with career advancement opportunities. Career Development can also refer to the total encompassment of an individual's work-related experiences, leading up to the occupational role they may hold within an organization. Career Development can occur on an individual basis or a corporate and organizational level (Barween, Muhammad & Tayseer, 2020) [3].
Career development is the series of activities or the on-going/lifelong process of developing one's career which includes defining new goals regularly and acquiring skills to achieve them. Career development usually refers to managing one's career in an intra-organizational or inter-organizational scenario. It involves training on new skills, moving to higher job responsibilities, making a career change within the same organization, moving to a different organization or starting one's own business. Career development is directly linked to the goals and objectives set by an individual. It starts with self-actualization and self-assessment of one's interests and capabilities. The interests are then matched with the available options. The individual needs to train himself to acquire the skills needed for the option or career path chosen by him. Finally, after acquiring the desired competency, he has to perform to achieve the goals and targets set by him (Chelangat, 2020) [5].

Employee Commitment
Employee commitment is the deep emotional and psychological bond an employee forms with their organization, characterized by loyalty, dedication, and a

strong identification with the company's mission, values, and goals. It represents a genuine investment in the organization's success, with committed employees demonstrating proactive behavior, a willingness to go the extra mile, and a long-term perspective, ultimately benefiting the company through higher engagement, productivity, and retention (Samuel & Chipunza, 2019) [32].

Employee commitment is a vital aspect of any thriving organization. It goes beyond mere job satisfaction, encompassing a deeper emotional and psychological connection between an employee and their workplace. In today's dynamic and competitive business environment, organizations recognize the significance of cultivating a committed workforce. This article delves into the intricacies of employee commitment, exploring its definition, factors influencing it, and the profound impact it has on organizational success (Shimelis & Mahesh, 2021) [33].

2.2.2 Favourable work environment and Employee Productivity

Working environment is defined as an entirely which comprises the totality of forces, actions and other influential factors that are currently and, or potentially contending with the employee's activities and performance. Working environment is the sum of the interrelationship that exists within the employees and the environment in which the employees work. Ansari, Chimani, Baloch and Bukhari, 2020) was of the opinion that "the ability to share knowledge throughout organizations depends on how the work environment is designed to enable organizations to utilize work environment as if it were an asset. This helps organizations to improve effectiveness and allow employees to benefit from collective knowledge". In addition, he argued that working environment designed to suit employee's satisfaction and free flow of exchange of ideas is a better medium of motivating employees towards higher productivity.

Ayam and Darlane, (2020) [2] defines working environment is a composite of three major sub-environments: the technical environment, the human environment and the organizational environment. Technical environment refers to tools, equipment, technological infrastructure and other - physical or technical elements. The technical environment creates elements that enable employees perform their respective responsibilities and activities. The human environment refers to peers, others with whom employees relates, team and work groups, interactional issues, the leadership and management. This environment is designed in such a way that encourages informal interaction in the work place so that the opportunity to share knowledge and exchange ideas could be enhanced. This is a basis to attain maximum productivity. Organizational environment include systems, procedures, practices, values and philosophies. Management has control over organizational environment. Measurement system wherMuhammad, 2021).

Employee produce people are rewarded on quantity, hence workers will have little interest in helping those workers who are trying to improve quality. Thus, issues of organizational environment influence the entire organization (Malik, Wan, Dar, Akbar & **ctivity)**.

Employee productivity is a measure of an individual or group's efficiency in generating output relative to the time, effort, and resources invested to achieve organizational goals. It quantifies the quantity and quality of work accomplished over a specific period and is a critical Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for measuring an organization's effectiveness, impacting profitability, revenue, and overall business success (Nayak & Sharma, 2018) [23].

Employee productivity, or workforce productivity, is the quantifiable measure of an employee's output or efficiency in completing their assigned tasks or responsibilities within a specific period. This can be measured in terms of the work's quantity, quality or timeliness (Okeya, Ajayi, Olamide & Owoniyi, 2020) [28]. Employee productivity measures how efficiently and effectively a worker or a group of workers contribute to accomplishing organizational goals. It is a key performance indicator (KPI) that measures the output of work in relation to the inputs of time, effort and resources. Improving employee productivity is a critical component of organizational success. Improved productivity enables employees to achieve objectives faster, in a more efficient manner, leading to cost savings and enhanced profitability. It also contributes to employee satisfaction (Oludayo, Gberevbie, DejiPopoola & Omonijo, 2022) [30].

2.3 Theoretical Review

The study was guided by Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory, Expectancy Theory and Two-Factor Theory. The study was anchored on the Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory.

2.3.1 Maslow's Needs Hierarchy Theory

The drive to pursue and achieve a given goal is a consequence of their desire to satisfy needs higher up in the hierarchy (Armstrong, 2009). Abraham Maslow (1943) identifies five levels of needs that people seek to satisfy, ranging from low-level needs to selfactualization. Once the needs at one level are met, there is a rebirth of fresh determination to satisfy the needs in the next (Gunnigle, Heraty and Morley, 2011). Needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs are arranged in a pyramidal manner (Kouloubandi, Jofreh & Mahdavi, 2012). Physiological needs fall at the bottom of the pyramid and selfactualization at the top of the pyramid. Employees seeking the fulfilment of physiological needs will not find the energy to pursue the needs in the next level of the hierarchy. However, good remuneration is critical to the attainment of the lower-level needs requires among employees of an organization (Udechukwu, 2009). According to Udechukwu (2009), Maslow's hierarchy of needs is fundamental in management and psychology studies. The theory reinforces the need for constant reassessment of people's needs since needs change over time. For instance, depending on their remuneration, employees in any given organization happen to be pursuing attainment of needs at different levels on the Maslow's hierarchy. Money as a motivation works best for employees seeking lower level needs rather than those pursuing needs of a higher level. Lower level needs on Maslow's hierarchy of needs are applicable in matters of physical comfort and reasonable work hours in places of work. Better working conditions, security of tenure, remuneration and other non-monetary benefits constitutes the safety needs on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, while collegiate relations, good customer care services and good supervisor-supervisee relations comprise the social needs. Esteem needs are usually met through praise, recognition by supervisors and promotion of employees to coveted job positions. Opportunities to participate in companies' decision organs, training and engaging in challenging and sophisticated assignments are what fulfil the self-actualization needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory is relevant to this study since it supports the

non financial incentives in the sense that employees tend to fulfill certain needs maybe at the workplace or outside their work. When employees find the flexibility of attending to their personal commitments as they fulfill their career obligations, they get the motivation to pursue the next need in line. If the employees are able to achieve these needs while still at work, they are more comfortable staying in such an organization to make sure they actualize themselves.

2.3.2 Two-Factor Theory

Frederick Herzberg was a psychologist interested in the correlation between employee attitude and workplace motivation. He wanted to find out what made people feel satisfied and unsatisfied when it came to the workplace. After spending countless hours interviewing employees about what made them feel both good and bad about their jobs, Herzberg developed a theory of workplace motivation called the two-factor theory. The two-factor theory is based on the assumption that there are two sets of factors that influence motivation in the workplace by either enhancing employee satisfaction or hindering it. According to this theory, two factors decide employees' performance levels and working attitudes. These two factors are motivation and hygiene factors (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959) [12]. As described by Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman, (1959) [12] intrinsic factors (motivation factors) in-crease employees' satisfaction on the job, whereas extrinsic factors (hygiene factors) are the factors capable of preventing employees from being dis-satisfied. As noted by Robbins (2009), employers must put motivation or intrinsic factors into play to increase employees' performance or effectiveness. Therefore, to motivate employees, the motivation factors must be significant. To motivate and increase employees' effectiveness, organizations should emphasize providing intrinsic or motivation factors, as these factors improve employees' effectiveness and productivity (Yusouf *et al*., 2013).

The theory posited that certain factors in the workplace cause job satisfaction while a separate set of factors cause dissatisfaction. The theory further stated the independence of satisfiers and dissatisfies. That satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not on a continuum but independent in their effect. The theory suggested that managers must recognize and attend to both sets of job characteristics, which are satisfiers and dissatisfies, to improve job attitude and productivity at work, and not assume that increase in satisfaction leads to decrease in dissatisfaction. The findings of his investigation were that the job characteristics relating to nature of work performed by a worker can make him happy and satisfied, as well as satisfy needs like recognition, status, personal worth, and self realization. However, the absence of such job characteristics may not necessarily lead to unhappiness and dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction arises from an unfavorable assessment of job-related factors like organizational policies, working conditions, supervision, and job security. Therefore, to increase satisfaction on the job, the management should be focused on the nature of work itself, that is, how employees can gain status, taking responsibility and attaining self-realization. At the same time, to minimize dissatisfaction, managers should focus on job environment factors like policies, working conditions and so on. Nevertheless, management should give concern to both.

This theory is relevant to this study because it mentions two factors that affect work performance. That is, extrinsic which include salary and promotion and intrinsic factors which include praise and recognition. Therefore, in this research, rewarding employees' in terms of both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards would be expected to have effect on work performance of employee work which when aggregated and collectively their performance are extrapolated at company level measures overall organisational performance.

2.4 Empirical Literature

Ejike, Ifeanyi and Chiekezie, (2024) [8] investigated the relationship that exists between reward management and employee performance in pharmaceutical firms of Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, it determined the relationship that exists between flexible work hours and job satisfaction in pharmaceutical firms as well as the relationship that exists between compensation system and quality service delivery in pharmaceutical firms of Anambra State. This study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 549 out of which 231 was the sample size derived using Taro Yamane Technique. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Hypothesis one revealed that flexible work hours had a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction in the studied pharmaceutical firms with $r = 0.874$ $n = 202$ and p-value of 0.031 ($p<0.05$). Hypothesis two also indicated that there is a positive significant relationship between compensation system and quality service delivery in the pharmaceutical firms with $r = 0.923$, $n = 202$, and p-value of 0.026 ($p<0.05$). It was therefore recommended that pharmaceutical firms give employees flexible work hours as a reward to boost job satisfaction which will lead to client satisfaction. Again, pharmaceutical firms need to constantly adhere to a compensation system that can motivate employees to deliver effective and efficient services.

Ngaina and Nambuswa, (2023) [25] examined the effect of employee retention strategies on organizational performance. The study was guided by the following specific objective: to examine the effect of employee empowerment on organizational performance in TransNzoia County, Kenya. The study used descriptive research design. The target population of the study was 100 employees in human resource department within County government of TransNzoia. Census was adopted since the target population is small. The method of data analysis was multiple linear regression analysis. The empirical result showed that employee empowerment ($\beta = 0.670$) was found to be positively related organizational performance in the County Government of TransNzoia, Kenya. From t-test analysis, the t -value was found to be 4.330 and the ρ -value 0.000. The study recommends that the county government of TransNzoia should empower employee to perform highly since it plays a significant role in the success and survival abilities of the organization and as it encourages better connection amongst workers and their administrators as well as cultivation of innovation, to offer more thoughts and critical thinking arrangements.

Ikeagu, Okeke and Anah, (2023) [14] examined effect of employee retention strategies on organizational performance of mission secondary schools in Onitsha Archdiocese, Anambra State. The specific objectives of the study was to: determine the effect of flexible schedule on organizational performance of teachers in mission secondary schools in

Catholic Archdiocese of Onitsha, Anambra state, Nigeria; Ascertain the relationship between work environment and organizational performance of teachers in mission secondary schools in Catholic Archdiocese of Onitsha, Anambra state, Nigeria. The study adopted survey method of research. Percentage tables were used to analyse the questionnaire, while regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses of the study. The population of the study was1745, the sample size of the study were three hundred and thirty-five (335) using Borg and Gall Formula. The findings of the study revealed, Flexible schedule has significant impact on organizational performance of teachers in mission secondary schools in Onitsha Archdiocese of Anambra, T=3.511, p=0.000, Work environment has significant impact on organizational performance of teachers in mission secondary schools in Onitsha Archdiocese of Anambra. T=2.899, p=0.008. The study recommended that collaborative decision making and problem solving should be geared towards career development, rotation decisions should be made by the employee' opinions and taken together.

Dahiru, (2023) [7] investigates employee retention strategies and performance with emphasis on the National Assembly, Abuja with a view to determining the relationship. The specific objectives of the study were to investigate the relationship between the job context and employee performance in the Nigerian National Assembly and to ascertain the extent to which organizational culture affects the performance of management staff of the National Assembly. A survey of 380 employees of the National Assembly, Abuja was conducted and primary data was gathered through a close ended questionnaire designed on a five point liker scale. Four hypotheses were formulated, tested and analyzed using Pearson Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression Analysis. The findings of the study reveal a moderate positive relationship between employee retention strategies (job context, organizational culture, job holder's and economic climate) and employee performance in the Nigerian National Assembly. The study recommended among others a design of well-articulated organizational culture that will integrate the mission and vision of employees and provide a work-life balance programme so as to encourage valuable employees to stay with the organization for better performance.

Bhuvaneswari, (2023) [4] assessment of the factors affecting employee retention strategy in Pharmaceutical Companies. The objective of the research study is to identify the various factors that are influencing employee retention and also examine the various inter-relationships that exists among those factors. An empirical study was performed to collect data from 128 medical representatives in Salem, Tamilnadu, India through a self-administered questionnaire method. Convenience sampling technique was adopted. The research involved quantitative analysis using the IBM SPSS (version 23) software package and also determined percentage analysis and factor analysis. Structural equation modelling is used to analyse factors such as Monetary Rewards, Work Pressure and Performance and other perquisites which influences employee retention for pharmaceutical companies. The outcome of the study reveals that there exists a high level of inter-relationship amongst these factors which have significant impact on employee retention. The study recommended government and association medical representatives' reports, employee attrition rates in pharmaceutical companies are high when compared to various other sectors.

Igbinoba, Igbadumhe, and Peter, (2022) [13] determine the relationship between employees' retention strategies and organizational performance in Eifage construction metallique Kenya. Specifically, this study looked into the relationship between employee retention strategies and organisational performance. A well-structured self-administered questionnaire on a five-point Likert rating scale was administered to 180 respondents, of whom 158 were retrieved and evaluated as the primary data collection strategy. The data were evaluated with the help of social science statistical software (SPSS). A two-tailed Chi-square (x2) analytical methodology (error=0.05 per cent) was utilised to investigate the precise relationship between employee retention strategy and performance. The degree of association between the dependent and independent variables in this study was also determined using Cramer's V analytical approach. According to the findings, employee retention strategies and organisational performance are inextricably linked. As a result of the findings, it is proposed that firms implement performance-based employee retention strategies.

Yashwanth, Selvakumar and Jagajeevan. (2020) [35] examined employee retention in the Pharmaceutical Sector in Coimbatore India. The primary objective of this study is hence focused on studying the retention rates of the pharmaceutical sector, how it is collectively seen as an industry in terms of the employee mindset. The key factors that help in understanding the retention of the employees include HR policies, compensation & benefits, work pressure, relations with superior & job security. This study is conducted in the geographical region of Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India and the target group are employees belonging to the medical and pharmaceutical industries. This descriptive research uses Snowball Non-Probability sampling technique for data collection as the exact number of respondents is not known. A focus group research was carried out among the employees about their retention styles used in the companies their part of. Research response were analyzed and interpreted at different levels ranging from demographic analysis, descriptive statistical analyses and structural equation modelling. The findings of the research revealed that attrition of the employees in the pharmaceutical industries are likely dependent on HR policies, work pressure, salary & benefits, relations with superior and job security.

2.5 Gaps in Empirical Review

There exist research gap between this study and past researches. The research gap covers subject gap, gap on geographical location of the study, gap on the variables and contents of the study, gap on literature and gap on methodology.

Gap on geographical location of the study: This work covers manufacturing firm in Nigeria and specifically Pharmaceutical Industry in South East Nigeria. None of the past studies used the firms mentioned above and most of the past studies were done outside South East Nigeria.

Gap on the variables and contents of the study: The study identifies the following proxies for retention strategies namely: employee recognition; flexible working arrangement, employee career development and favourable work environment (for independent variable) and employee job satisfaction, employee commitment, employee commitment and employee productivity (for dependent variable) were not used by past researches.

Gap on methodology: The data analytical techniques used in this work in some ways differ from what was employed from past researches. The data analytical technique of the study was single regression method. The statistical technique was chosen because of its basic properties of best Linear, unbiased and efficient (BLUE) estimators. It is best for impact analysis.

3. Methodology

Research design was descriptive survey research. Study Area was South East, Nigeria. The population of the study was 2,455 total numbers of staff of 11 registered Pharmaceutical companies in South-East Nigeria (Manufacturer Association of Nigeria, 2023). The choice for only staff of the registered Pharmaceutical companies in South-East Nigeria was because of homogeneity nature of production function. The sample size of 362 respondents arrived by Freund and Williams's statistical formula. The study used structured questionnaire to obtain data. The selected pharmaceutical firms were Nemel Pharmaceutical Company Ltd, Pauco Pharmaceutical Company Ltd, A.C, Drug Pharmaceutical Company Ltd, Orange Drug Pharmaceutical Company Ltd and Juhel Nigeria Pharmaceutical Company Ltd. The data was analyzed using single regression analysis and hypotheses tested at a 5% level of significance using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences [SPSS].

4.1 Data Presentation

Table 1: Comprehensive Demographic distribution of the Respondents

Title	Frequency	Percentage
Questionnaire Distributed	362	100%
Returned Questionnaire	358	98%
Not Returned Questionnaire	04	02%
Gender		
Female	213	59.5%
Male	145	40.5%
Age Bracket		
20-30 Years	153	42.7%
31-40 Years	111	31.0%
41-50 Years	66	18.4%
51Years – above	28	7.8%
Marital Status		
Married	223	62.3%
Single	125	34.9%
Widow/widower	7	1.9%
Divorce	3	0.8%
Educational Qualification		
HND/B.sc	230	64.2%
MBA/M.sc	125	34.9%
Ph.D	3	1.10%

Sources: Field Survey, 2026

Three hundred and sixty two (362) copies of questionnaire were designed and distributed to the respondents. Out of the 362 Questionnaires distributed, 358 (98%) were completed and returned while 4 (02%) were not returned. Therefore, 98 percent respondents were a good representation. The table showed the respondents profile in frequency and percentage distribution of gender, age bracket, marital status and educational qualification.

4.2 Data Analysis

Question One: How does employee career development influences employee commitment of Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean rating of responses of respondents on how does employee career development influences employee commitment of Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria

S. No	Question Items	VGE (5)	GE (4)	ME (3)	LE (2)	VLE (1)	Total	Mean	SD
1	Induction training designed for newly engaged employees to get them acquainted with the overall requirement of the organization such as norms, ethics, goals, rules and regulations.	780 156 44%	496 124 34%	174 58 16%	24 12 3%	8 8 2%	1475 358 100%	4.20	0.0030
2	Job rotation enables management to discover employee's area of interest and to improve on his experiences especially in other area or tasks	620 124 35%	624 156 44%	144 48 13%	40 20 5%	10 10 2%	1438 358 100%	4.13	0.0029
3	Formal education provides opportunity to employee to get professional training and skills with certificate	1065 213 59%	364 91 25%	126 42 12%	18 9 2%	3 3 0.8%	1576 358 100%	4.18	0.0030
4	Programmed instruction creates confidence in an employee to enable him operates his tasks without obstacles and with efficiency and effectiveness.	985 197 55%	416 104 29%	111 37 10%	24 12 3%	8 8 2%	1544 358 100%	4.31	0.0032
	Grand Mean							**4.218**	**0.0031**

Source: Field Survey, 2026

This table showed the opinion of respondents on how does employee career development influences employee commitment of Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria. The research items 1,2,3,4,5 have mean score of above 3.5 point respectively and it was rated great extent by respondents. The study thereby revealed that employee career development has significant effect on employee commitment of Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria since programmed instruction creates confidence in an employee to enable him operates his tasks without obstacles and with efficiency and effectiveness (Grand-mean 4.218 was greater than the cutoff point 3).

Question Two: To what extent do favourable work environment impact on employee productivity of Pharmaceutical firms in South-East Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean rating of responses of respondents on what extent do favourable work environment impact on employee productivity of Pharmaceutical firms in South-East Nigeria

S. No	Question Items	VGE (5)	GE (4)	ME (3)	LE (2)	VLE (1)	Total	Mean	SD
1	Favourable work environment helps to increase employee engagement by creating a positive work environment where employees feel valued and appreciated.	780 156 44%	496 124 34%	174 58 16%	24 12 3%	8 8 2%	1475 358 100%	4.14	0.0029
2	Favourable work environment can lead to increased productivity, better collaboration and teamwork, reduced stress levels and increased employee retention.	620 124 35%	624 156 44%	144 48 13%	40 20 5%	10 10 2%	1438 358 100%	4.02	0.0027
3	A healthy and supportive work environment encourages employees to actively participate in achieving organizational goals and lead to improved mental and physical health, as well as better job performance.	1065 213 59%	364 91 25%	126 42 12%	18 9 2%	3 3 0.8%	1576 358 100%	4.40	0.0034
4	A good working environment can also help reduce stress levels. When employees are less stressed, they are more likely to be creative and come up with innovative ideas.	985 197 55%	416 104 29%	111 37 10%	24 12 3%	8 8 2%	1544 358 100%	4.31	0.0032
	Grand Mean							**4.218**	**0.0031**

Source: Field Survey, 2026

This table showed the opinion of respondents on what extent do favourable work environment impact on employee productivity of Pharmaceutical firms in South-East Nigeria. The research items 1,2,3,4,5 have mean score of above 3.5 point respectively and it was rated great extent by respondents. The study thereby revealed that favourable work environment has no significant effect on employee productivity of Pharmaceutical firms in South-East Nigeria since a healthy and supportive work environment encourages employees to actively participate in achieving organizational goals and lead to improved mental and physical health, as well as better job performance (Grand-mean 4.218 was greater than the cutoff point 3).

4.3 Test of Hypotheses

The two hypotheses were formulated for this study and were tested and a decision taken is based on the rule below.

Decision rule: The null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted when P-value is less than significant level at 0.05

4.3.1 Hypothesis One

H_1 = Employee career development has no significant effect on employee commitment of Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.826[a]	.933	.932	.30129
a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee career development				

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	41.911	1	41.911	13.692	.000[b]
	Residual	1103.487	357	3.091		
	Total	1145.398	358			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee commitment of Pharmaceutical firms						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee career development						

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.528	.109		4.846	.000
	Employee career development	.325	.045	.966	7.238	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Employee career development						

Employee career development = 0.528 + 0.325 Employee commitment

In testing this hypothesis, employee career development was regressed against employee commitment of Pharmaceutical firms. The result of the single-regression analysis showed the model to determine the effect of employee career development on employee commitment of Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria. The empirical result showed that the coefficient of employee career development has positive effect on employee commitment of Pharmaceutical firms; it means that employee career development has positive and direct effect on employee commitment of Pharmaceutical firms. The results of the t – statistic denoted that the coefficient of employee career development was statistically significance. This was because observed values of t – statistic (48.908) was greater than its P-values (0.000). The results of the F – statistical test showed that the overall regression of the hypothesis four was statistically significance. This was because observed value of the F – statistic (13.692) was greater than its P-value (0.000). Again, our empirical result showed that the Pearson product moment correlation analysis (r) was 0.826. The strength of relationship between the two variables was high. However, we rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that employee career development has significant effect on employee commitment of Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria.

4.3.2 Test of Hypotheses

H_4 = Favourable work environment has no significant effect on employee productivity of Pharmaceutical firms in South-East Nigeria.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.801[a]	.866	.865	.26055
a. Predictors: (Constant), Favourable work environment				

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	67.881	1	67.881	9.604	.000[b]
	Residual	2523.276	357	7.068		
	Total	2591.157	358			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee productivity of Pharmaceutical firms						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Favourable work environment						

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.366	.089		4.121	.000
	Favourable work environment	.780	.082	.931	9.516	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Employee productivity of Pharmaceutical firms						

Employee productivity = 0.366 + 0.780 Favourable work environment

In testing this hypothesis, favourable work environment was regressed against employee productivity of Pharmaceutical firms. The result of the single-regression analysis showed the model to assess the effect of favourable work environment on employee productivity of Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria. The empirical result showed that the coefficient of favourable work environment has positive effect on employee productivity of Pharmaceutical firms; it means that favourable work environment has positive and direct effect on employee productivity of Pharmaceutical firms. The results of the t – statistic denoted that the coefficient of favourable work environment was statistically significance. This is because observed values of t – statistic (9.516) was greater than its P-values (0.000). The results of the F – statistical test showed that the overall regression of the hypothesis two was statistically significance. This was because observed value of the F – statistic (9.604) was great than its P-value (0.000). Again, our empirical result showed that the Pearson product moment correlation analysis (r) was 0.801. The strength of relationship between the two variables was high. However, we rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that favourable work environment has significant effect on employee productivity of Pharmaceutical firms in South-East Nigeria.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

4.4.1 Effect of employee career development on employee commitment of Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria

The findings of the study revealed that employee career development has significant effect on employee commitment of Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria since programmed instruction creates confidence in an employee to enable him operates his tasks without obstacles and with efficiency and effectiveness (t-statistic; 7.238; P-value; 0.000 < Sig-value; 0.05). The findings of the study revealed that Ejike, Ifeanyi and Chiekezie, (2024) [8] that investigated the relationship that exists between reward management and employee performance in pharmaceutical firms of Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, it determined the relationship that exists between flexible work hours and job satisfaction in pharmaceutical firms as well as the relationship that exists between compensation system and quality service delivery in pharmaceutical firms of Anambra State. This study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 549 out of which 231 was the sample size derived using Taro Yamane Technique. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Hypothesis one revealed that flexible work hours had a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction in the studied pharmaceutical firms with r = 0.874 n = 202 and p-value of 0.031 (p<0.05). Hypothesis two also indicated that there is a positive significant relationship between compensation system and quality service delivery in the pharmaceutical firms with r = 0.923, n = 202, and p-value of 0.026 (p<0.05).

Effect of favourable work environment on employee productivity of Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria

The findings of the study revealed that favourable work environment has no significant effect on employee productivity of Pharmaceutical firms in South-East Nigeria since a healthy and supportive work environment encourages employees to actively participate in achieving organizational goals and lead to improved mental and physical health, as well as better job performance (t-statistic; 9.516; P-value; 0.000 < Sig-value; 0.05). The outcome of the study is in line with the study of Ikeagu, Okeke and Anah, (2023) [14] that examined effect of employee retention strategies on organizational performance of mission secondary schools in Onitsha Archdiocese, Anambra State. The specific objectives of the study was to: determine the effect of flexible schedule on organizational performance of teachers in mission secondary schools in Catholic Archdiocese of Onitsha, Anambra state, Nigeria; Ascertain the relationship between work environment and organizational performance of teachers in mission secondary schools in Catholic Archdiocese of Onitsha, Anambra state, Nigeria. The study adopted survey method of research. Percentage tables were used to analyse the questionnaire, while regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses of the study. The population of the study was1745, the sample size of the study were three hundred and thirty-five (335) using Borg and Gall Formula. The findings of the study revealed, Flexible schedule has significant impact on organizational performance of teachers in mission secondary schools in Onitsha Archdiocese of Anambra, T=3.511, p=0.000, Work environment has significant impact on organizational performance of teachers in mission secondary schools in Onitsha Archdiocese of Anambra. T=2.899, p=0.008.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The following are the major findings of the study:

1. The study showed that employee career development has significant effect on employee commitment of Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria since programmed instruction creates confidence in an employee to enable him operates his tasks without obstacles and with efficiency and effectiveness (t-statistic; 7.238; P-value; 0.000 < Sig-value; 0.05).
2. The study revealed that favourable work environment has no significant effect on employee productivity of Pharmaceutical firms in South-East Nigeria since a healthy and supportive work environment encourages employees to actively participate in achieving organizational goals and lead to improved mental and physical health, as well as better job performance (t-statistic; 9.516; P-value; 0.000 < Sig-value; 0.05).

5.2 Conclusion

The study concluded that retention strategies have positive and significant effect employee performance of Pharmaceutical firms in South East Nigeria. The major retention strategies were employee recognition; flexible working arrangement, employee career development and favourable work environment. Retention strategies serve as motivation that encourages employees to perform better. Performance will also increase if the employees are well rewarded non-financially. Therefore, non-financial rewards highly impact employee performance. Given the study's findings, financial service managers are urged to foster an environment that will generate good employee performance. The key to improving employee performance is an appropriate and structured reward system. It means that a different approach to rewarding employees in organisations and measuring employee performance should be employed to increase control, thereby using a reward system to positively impact employee performance. The results of this study may be integrated into the teachings of scholars and management practitioners. Employers who work by prioritising the interest of their employees and their organisations would do much better in developing a peaceful society with less worry about employee unrest and industrial action.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Management of Pharmaceutical firms should organize and arrange workshops and seminars on time management, stress, and effective work management; and prioritizing work activities for their employees. It will develop a habit of punctuality by avoiding the pressure of the time factor. New employees should be given a copy of the organisation's compensation manual and the opportunity to ask questions during orientation. In addition, the benefits policies and packages offered to employees should be explained at periodic workshops and training.
2. Management Pharmaceutical firms should place less emphasis on certain monetary rewards, such as bonuses, and consider other non-monetary rewards, such as promotions, recognition, flexible working hours, and career development opportunities. Rewards of this type are likely to boost employee performance and improve overall organisational performance.

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