

Employee development and retention in the workplace: A Survey of Industrial Goods Companies in Nigeria

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Abstract

In recent times, the need to develop and retain highly-skilled employees in the workplace has received much debate in the human resource management literature. The debate stems from the fact that human resource management role has shifted from employee hiring, benefits and wages to strategic human resources where focus has been on strategies aimed at developing and retaining employee. Consequently, this study was carried out with the view to assessing the effect of employee development (coaching, participation and delegation) on retention in the workplace of two industrial goods companies with headquarters in Lagos State, Nigeria. Questionnaire was administered on a sample of ninety (90) respondents who are employees of the industrial goods companies and data obtained were analyzed via descriptive (mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum values and Karl Pearson correlation) and inferential (variance inflation factor, Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg and simple regression) statistical tools. The regression results showed that all employee development dimensions positively and significantly affect retention in the workplace. Given the findings, it was recommended that management should strive towards engaging the workforce in development initiatives such as coaching, participation and delegation in the workplace; the development initiatives should be tailored towards the current and future needs of the employees in order to make them relevant at all times in the workplace.

Keywords: 1.Employee development; 2.Employee retention; 3.Coaching; Participation; 4.Delegation; 5.Industrial Firms; 6.Nigeria

JEL Classification: M10; M12

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee development (ED) and retention (ER) are among the contemporary roles of human resource management (HRM) and appeared to be the most stirring theme among management practitioners and researchers alike. ED occupies a vital role as part of HRM role in managing employees in the workplace

that leads to high employee-retention (Amushila and Bussin, 2021; and Tej, Vagaš, Taha, Škerhánková and Harničárová, 2021). HRM has swiftly moved from only roles like hiring, employees' benefits and payroll to strategic human resources where the focus has been on developing and retaining strategies (Ume, Ume and Adnan, 2021; Bhawna, Samax and Vinod, 2021; and Walid, Siti, Al-Hussain and Ishaq, 2021). This raises the question about the need of re-skilling of HRM roles.

Consequently, this epitomizes a foremost drift in how management sees the value of HRM, as they comprehend the strategic value of ED and the impact it has on ER in the workplace. As observed by Al Karim (2019); and Bhawna, *et al*, (2021), ED refers to the process of growing the workforce existing skills and competencies and building new ones to sustain the goals of the business organization. On the other hand, ER is the capability of the organizations to hold, preserve, keep possession and engage the services of value-contributor employees in mission-critical and scarce skills positions in the workplace (Aleem and Bowra, 2020; Al-sharafi, Hassan and Alam, 2018).

Alrazehi and Amirah (2020); Fletcher, Alfes and Robinson (2018) observed that ED is a core investment and serves as a currency of ER in any business organization. Notably, Nigeria has been confronted with retaining employees in most sectors of the economy (Oganezi and Lozie, 2017). According to Ivana (2020), it is still a foremost issue for numerous organizations to retain top-performing employees; the reason being that most organizations have not yet grasp the most formidable ED strategies that could positively affects ER.

In the HRM literature, several ED strategies promoting ER have been identified to include but not limited to coaching, delegation, participation, task rotations, mentoring, simulations, self-study, career planning, training and development, workshops/committees/working groups, empowerment, conference, and 360-degree performance review. The overreaching goal of ED strategies is to strengthen workforce broad-range of competencies and skills, whether it is flexibility, organizational creativity, leadership or communication (Khan, 2020; Malik, Baig and Manzoor, 2020; Dhanya and Prashath, 2019). In this study, three(3) dimensions of ED were employed - coaching, delegation and participation as they relate with retention in the workplace.

1.1 Problem

Coaching, delegation and participation in leadership are becoming increasingly imperative and strategic for most organizations in the current environment of business (Murtiningsih, 2020; Nguyen and Duong, 2020). These ED dimensions are deemed vital because they accord less experienced employees the opportunities of working one-on-one with experienced senior employees (coaching) (Gan and Yusuf, 2019); assigned tasks to employees to learn something novel or to have an opportunity to put into practice what has been learnt (delegation) (Jwu, Hassan, Abdullah and Kasa, 2018), as well as enabling employees to involve themselves in the day-to-day operations of the business organization (participation) (Nava-Macali, Nava-de Jesus and Almari, 2019).

Furthermore, without valuable workforce, business organizations cannot generate revenue and flourish. Besides, numerous studies have shown that ED plays a significant role in promoting ER, particularly in developed countries (see Tej, *et al*, 2021; Walid, *et al*, 2021; Ivana, 2020; Alhmoud and Rjoub, 2019; Fletcher, Alfes and Robinson, 2018); however, whether this is also a big factor when it comes to developing nation like Nigeria, has not been deeply researched in the HRM literature. Hence, this study was carried out with the view to assessing the effect of employee development on retention in the workplace for industrial goods companies in Lagos State, Nigeria.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 *Employee Development (ED)*

The term 'employee development' has been well-defined in the human resource management (HRM) literature and considered as one of the most vital HRM practices. ED refers to the systematic practice of management aimed at strengthening the talents, skills, experiences, knowledge and capabilities of employees for enhancing their efficiency in the workplace. Al Karim (2019); and Bhawna, *et al*, (2021) defined ED as a process of growing the workforce skills and competencies and building new ones aimed at sustaining the business organization.

Similarly, Aleem and Bowra (2020); and Jehanzeb, K. and Mohanty (2018) see ED as a cluster of varied plans and activities resulting to continuous learning and sprouting of job and career affiliated capabilities. ED protects the organization from high-employee turnover (see Belete, 2018; Alias, Ismail, Othman and Koe, 2018; and Walid, *et al*, 2021) and adjust the employees' task with the organizations goals by offering them the skills needed to enhance their loyalty (Amushila and Bussin 2021; and Bhawna, *et al*, 2021), thus making them not to quit or leave the organization.

Some recent studies (see Amushila and Bussin, 2021; Ume, *et al*, 2021; Bhawna, 2021; Dede and Oluoch, 2021; Khan, 2020; Karim, *et al*, 2019; Nambira and Enkali, 2019) have shown that ED is significantly and positively related to employee retention (ER). The reason for the positive and significant effect may be linked to the fact that when employees are engaged in incessant development programmes, they see themselves as relevant to the organization and being able to realize the organization's goals and those relating to them.

Remarkably, virtually all of the studies divulge that employee development have significant effect on employee retention in the developing nations. According to Dede and Oluoch(2021); Aleem and Bowra (2020), an organization that desires to strengthen its tie with the employees must committee sufficient investments in the development of employees. Diverse ED strategies have been identified in the HRM literature to encompass coaching, task rotations, participation, mentoring, self-study, delegation, simulations, career planning, training and development, empowerment, 360-degree performance review, workshops/committees/ working groups, etc.; within the study's scope, three ED dimensions were used - employee coaching, participation and delegation.

First, employee coaching plays a vital role in assisting employees to gain alertness into how senior executives operate (Murtiningsih, 2020; and Nguyen and Duong, 2020). Less experienced employees can become more effective and efficient in the workplace when they are coached by senior executives who are very experienced (Gan and Yusof, 2019). Jwu (2018); and Nava-Macali (2019) believed that coaching provides guidance, supports and encouragements to the employees and make them more useful in the workplace.

Second, employee participation is fundamentally learning the job, by getting involved in the processes and operations of the business organization (Alrazehi and Amirah, 2020; and Tej, *et al*, 2021). Employee participation is more effective when some basic development initiatives on a skill have been obtained. According to Ume, *et al*, (2021), most organizations make use of employee participation to develop the employees because they may not have the ample time to send them out for advancing their knowledge, skills and competencies.

Third, employee delegation refers to assigning tasks to employees to learn something new or to have the chance of putting into use, what has been learnt in the training and development processes (Jwu, *et al*, 2018; and Gan and Yusof, 2019). In delegating responsibilities to the employees, they learn novel ways of doing the job, thus making the employees perform better when they are faced with similar job responsibility. More importantly, organizations desire to have talented employees, given the need to attain sustainable competitive advantage and the needs to fit into the information and technology age and this they can achieve via employee development.

2.2 Retention in the Workplace

Employee retention (ER) is the way of stirring and inspiring employees so as to make them more committed to the organization for a prolonged period of time. According to Ivana (2020); and Khan (2020), ER is the process of retaining highly-talented and skilled employees for an extended period of time. Malik, *et al* (2020) contended that ER plays a significant role in the success of the organization. Currently, most organizations, industrial goods companies inclusive are undergoing the challenge of employee turnover due to their ineffective retention strategies of highly-talented and skilled employees (Alhmoud and Rjoub, 2019; Al-sharafi, *et al*, 2018).

ER is directly linked to the human resource management strategies of the organization and for the organizations to realize their goals, it depends on how they are able to make employees not to quit or leave the organization (Bibi, *et al*, 2018; Dhanpat, *et al*, 2018). Again, employee retention largely depends on the ability of the organizations to motivate their workforce, both intrinsically and extrinsically (Dhanya and Prashath, 2019), because the driving force behind organizational productivity and employee retention lies in the capability of the organizations to motivate their workforce.

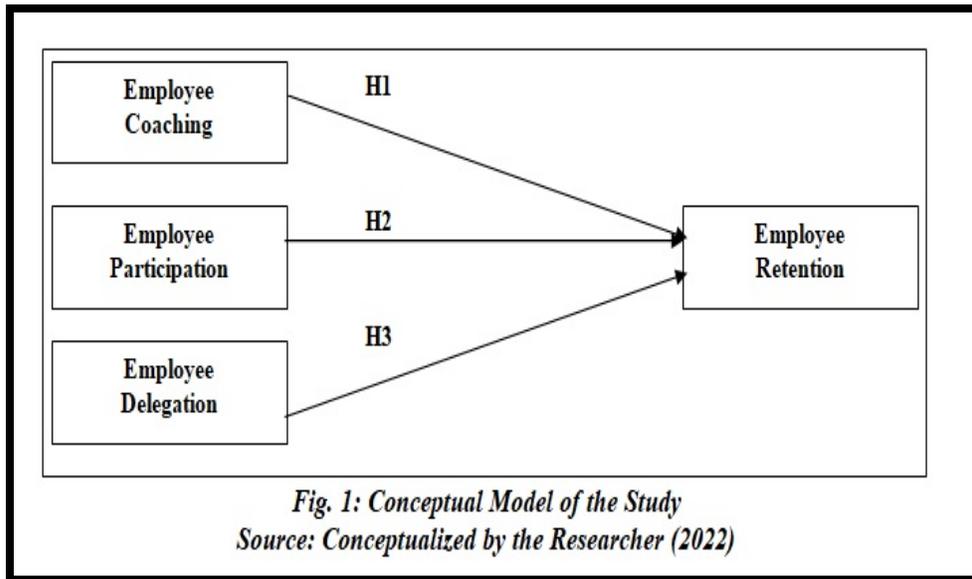
Letchmiah and Thomas (2017) asserted that employees who are highly motivated are more satisfied with management and thus would be willing to remain or stay with the organization. Contrarily, when employees are unsatisfied with their organization, they switch job or quit the organization (Murtiningsih, 2020; and Nava, *et al*, 2019). Hence, the feelings of the employee (good or bad) will determine whether the employee will leave/remain with the organization. Several factors have been linked with employee retention – job satisfaction, job engagement, rewards and benefits, and work environment.

Employee development is the most significant component of HRM as it relates to increased commitment, loyalty and productivity of the workforce (Nguyen and Duong, 2020; and Jeffrey and Prasetya, 2019) Prior empirical studies have shown that employee retention is influenced by employee development in developed countries (Amushila and Bussin, 2021; Dede and Oluoch, 2021; Khan, 2020; Karim, *et al*, 2019; and Nambira and Enkali, 2019); however, the link has not been well researched for industrial goods companies in Lagos State, Nigeria. Thus, a gap in HRM literature exists on the relationship between employee development and retention in the workplace in the Nigerian context. Given the conceptual review, the following conceptual model was developed to guide the empirical model of the study: Consequent upon the above, we thus hypothesized that:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between employee coaching and retention in the workplace

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between employee participation and retention in the workplace

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between employee delegation and retention in the workplace



2.3 Theoretical Framework

The study hinged on the William Ouchi's Theory (WOT) (1981). The WOT is a participative paradigm showing that employees involvement in the workplace is vital to employee retention, enhanced productivity and performance. The WOT suggests that when employees are well involved in the organization, they develop a sense of belongingness and maintains cohesion with other employees in realizing the organization's goals and those relating to them (Belete, 2018; Alias, Ismail, Othman and Koe, 2018; and Alhmoud and Rjoub, 2019). More so, it is assumed that when management is trusted about the involvement of the employee in the policy of the organization, employees do not feel like quitting, except for other reasons.

As regards employees' attitude towards workplace tasks, they will crave for opportunities aimed at advancing their knowledge about the organization and sought for experiences and skills capable of making them relevant in the workplace now and in the future (Bibi, Ahmad and Majid, 2018; Dhanpat, Modau, Lugisani, MaboJane and Phiri, 2018; and Jeffrey and Prasetya, 2019). The relevance of WOT paradigm to this study is that via employee development, high employee retention in the workplace can be ascertained.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this study, the survey research design was used since the study is concerned with obtaining the perceptions of individuals on employee development and retention in the workplace. In view of this, the study used questionnaire in obtaining the views of individuals on the research theme.

The study population comprised of all the employees of two (2) industrial goods companies with headquarters in Lagos State: Avon Crowncaps and Containers Plc. and PZ Cussons Plc. As of December 31, 2021, there are about thirty-seven (37) employees in Avon Crowncaps and Containers Plc and seventy-nine (79) in PZ Cussons Plc., amounting to one hundred and sixteen (116) employees in both companies (HRM, Avon Crowncaps and Containers; Pz Cussons, 2021). This study used the Taro-Yamane (1964) sample size determination formula for obtaining the sample size of the study, resulting to a sample size of approximately ninety (90) respondents.

The major instrument of data collection was the structured questionnaire, which was designed on 4-point scale of 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' and presented in a precise way to minimize respondents times on answering the question. The questionnaire was designed to elicit respondents' perceptions on employee development and retention in the workplace. The questionnaire was adapted from the works of Bhawna, Samax and Vinod (2021); and Tej, Vagaš, Taha, Škerháková and Harničárová (2021).

The questionnaire was based on three (3) dimensions of employee development, namely coaching, delegation and participation and retention. The questionnaire was designed into two sections – bio-data of the respondents and thematic issues relating to employee development and retention in the workplace. The choice of using questionnaire is based on the fact that the study was designed to assess the views of individuals on the effect of employee development on retention in the workplace.

The Cronbach Alpha reliability technique was employed in ascertaining the reliability of the research instrument. The procedures entailed the administration of the validated instrument to 20 per cent of the sample size, which amounts to eighteen (18) respondents who are not employees of Avon Crowncaps and Containers Plc and PZ Cussons Plc. Data from the pilot test was correlated to find the instrument stability. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients of 0.81(employee coaching), 0.78(employee participation), 0.74(employee delegation) and 0.88 (retention) were obtained. This implies that the research instrument is deemed reliable, since the Cronach Alpha coefficient is greater than 0.5.

The study employed several techniques to analyse the data: first, descriptive (mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum values and Karl Pearson correlation) and second, inferential (variance inflation factor, Breusch-Pagan and Cook-Weisberg and simple regression) statistics were computed to determine the relationship and effect of employee development (coaching, delegation and participation) on employee retention in the workplace. The f-prob. ratio was used in validating the research hypotheses of the study. The decision rule is that if f-prob. is < than the level of significance (0.05%), the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted vice-versa.

Given the dependent and independent variables of the study, the following simple regression models were estimated to examine the link between employee development and retention in the workplace:

$$Ert = f(EMCoach) \quad \text{eq. 1}$$

$$Ert = f(EMPart) \quad \text{eq. 2}$$

$$Ert = f(EMDel) \quad \text{eq. 3}$$

Equations 1-3 can be written econometrically as follows:

$$ERT_i = \eta_0 + \eta_1 ECoach_i + \sum_t \text{eq.4}$$

$$ERT_i = \eta_0 + \eta_2 EPart_i + \sum_t \text{eq.5}$$

$$ERT_i = \eta_0 + \eta_3 EDel_i + \sum_t \text{eq.6}$$

Where: i is industrial goods companies' employees; Ert is employee retention; $ECoach$ is employee coaching; $EPart$ is employee participation; $EDel$ is employee delegation (employee development dimensions of the study). $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ =coefficients of the proposed estimates. A-priori expectations are as follow: $\beta_1 > 0, \beta_2 > 0, \beta_3$ which implies that a unit increase in the dimensions of employee development, will result to an increase in retention in the workplace.

4. FINDINGS

Table 1: Bio-Data of the Respondents on Employee Development and Retention in the Workplace (Avon Crowncaps Plc. and Containers and PZ Cussons Plc.)

Ranks	Variables	Respondents	Frequency N=90	Percent(%)
1	Gender	Male	53	58.8%
		Female	37	41.2%
		Total	90	100%
2	Marital Status	Single	38	42.2%
		Married	47	52.2%
		Unmarried, lived with spouse	3	3.33%
		Divorced	1	1.14%
		Separated	1	1.14%
		Widowed	-	-
		Total	90	100%
3	Educational Status	OND/NCE	26	28.9%
		B.Sc./HND	49	54.4%
		M.Sc./MBA	15	16.7%
		PhD	-	-
		Total	90	100%
4.	Category of Staff	Top Level Management	12	13.3%
		Middle Level Management	29	32.2%
		Lower Level Management	49	54.5%
		Total	90	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2022

From Table 1, it can be seen that 53(58.8%) of the respondents are male while 37(41.2%) are female. Also, it was shown that 38(42.2%) and 47(52.2%) of the respondents are single and married respectively while 3(3.33%), 1(1.14%), and 1(1.14%) are unmarried but living with spouse, divorced and separated respectively. On the basis of educational qualification, it was shown that 26(28.9%) and 49(54.4%) of the respondents are holders of OND/NCE and B.Sc./HND degree certificates respectively while 15(2.4%) of the respondent had M.Sc./MBA certificates.

Furthermore, the category of staff investigated revealed that 12(13.3%) are top level management staff, 29(42.2%) are middle level management while a larger proportion of the respondents 49(54.5%) represents lower level management. Overall, the bio-data showed that majority of the sampled respondents are well educated and may possess the ability to respond adequately to the questionnaire.

Table 2: Descriptive Results of Employee Development and Retention in the Workplace

	Ert	ECoach	EPart	EDel
Mean	3.4005	3.4632	3.4217	3.3577
Standard Deviation	0.2371	0.2386	0.2135	0.2006
Minimum Value	1	1	1	1
Maximum Value	5	5	5	5
Observations	90	90	90	90

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Presented in Table 2, is the descriptive result of employee development and retention in the workplace. It was shown that employee retention (Ert) had a mean of 3.4005 with a standard deviation of 0.2371 while employee development dimensions had means of 3.4632, 3.4217 and 3.3577 for coaching (ECoach), participation (EPart) and delegation (EDel) respectively with corresponding standard deviations of 0.2386, 0.2135 and 0.2006.

The descriptive result (standard deviation) indicated that the perceptions on employee development and retention in the workplace among the respondents in the two industrial goods companies are not far from each other. Also, the mean values are clear indication that the respondents support all the items in the research instrument as good indicators for assessing the link between the dimensions of employee development (coaching, participation and delegation) and retention in the workplace.

Table 3: Correlation Results

	ERt	ECoach	EPart	EDel
ERt	1.0000			
ECoach	0.0604	1.0000		
EPart	0.1226	0.0498	1.0000	
EDel	0.3020	0.0236	0.0841	1.0000

Source: Field Survey, 2022

In Table 3, the result showed that all the dimensions of employee development (ECoach, EPart and EDel) are positively correlated with retention (ERt). Moreover, correlation matrix revealed that no two independent variables were perfectly correlated, given that none of the correlation coefficients exceeded 0.8 as suggested by Gujarati (2003) as cited in Okoro and Ekwueme (2021); and Okoro and Ihenyen (2020).

Table 4: Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) Results

Variable	VIF	1/VIF
Coaching (ECoach)	1.00	0.999924
Participation (EPart)	1.06	0.942214
Delegation (EDel)	1.04	0.954170
Mean VIF	1.03	

Source: Field Survey, 2022

In results in Table 4 showed whether multicollinearity exists among the explanatory variables, which may lead to wrong sign in the estimated model of employee development and retention in the workplace.

The mean VIF = 1.03, which is less than the accepted VIF level of 10.0, indicating that there is absence of multicollinearity problem in the empirical model of the study.

Table 5: Breusch-Pagan and Cook-Weisberg Results

Ho: Constant Variance			
Chi2(3) =	192.30	Prob. > Chi2	= 0.0000

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg result in Table 5 revealed that employee development and retention dimensions fit-well in the estimated model(Chi2=192.30), since it is statistically significant at 5% level; an indication of the absence of heteroskedasticity problem in the estimated model of employee development and retention in the workplace study.

Table 6: Regression Results for Employee Coaching and Retention in the Workplace

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs.	=	90
Model 1	6.2716	1	2.0905	F(1, 88)	=	19.63
Residual	27.362	88	0.2171	Prob. > F	=	0.0000
Total	33.633	89	2.3077			
ERt	Coef.	Std. Err.	t-value	R-Squared	=	0.8650
ECoach	0.1116	0.1013	5.38	Adj. R-Squared	=	0.7670
_cons	3.7832	0.3348	11.73			

Source: Field Survey, 2022

In Table 6, the regression result showed that R-squared is 0.865, indicating that employee coaching explains 86.5% of the systematic variations in employee retention in the workplace. The f-statistics(df=1, 88, f-ratio=19.63) with a p-value of 0.0000 revealed that the relationship between employee coaching and retention in the workplace is significant at 5% level. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted; this means employee coaching has significant effect on retention of industrial goods companies. More so, the coefficient showed that an increase in employee coaching will lead to 11.16% in retention in the workplace.

Table 7: Regression Results for Employee Participation and Retention in the Workplace

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs.	=	90
Model 2	6.5119	1	2.0905	F(1, 88)	=	12.14
Residual	28.4107	88	0.2171	Prob. > F	=	0.0000
Total	34.922	89	2.3077			
ERt	Coef.	Std. Err.	t-value	R-Squared	=	0.7780
EPart	0.1159	0.1052	6.62	Adj. R-Squared	=	0.7140
_cons	3.9282	0.3476	12.17			

Source: Field Survey, 2022

In Table 7, the regression result showed that R-squared is 0.7780, indicating that employee participation explains 77.8% of the systematic variation in retention in the workplace. The f-statistics(df=1, 88, f-ratio=12.14) with a p-value of 0.0000 revealed that the relationship between employee participation and retention in the workplace is significant at 5% level. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and the

alternate hypothesis was accepted; this means employee participation has significant effect on retention of industrial goods companies. More so, the coefficient showed that an increase in employee participation will lead to 11.59% in retention in the workplace.

Table 8: Regression Results for Employee Participation and Retention in the Workplace

Source	SS	df	MS			
Model 3	6.7615	1	2.1706	Number of obs.	=	90
Residual	29.499	88	0.2254	F(1, 88)	=	9.06
Total	36.261	89	2.3961	Prob. > F	=	0.0000
ERT	Coef.	Std. Err.	t-value	R-Squared	=	0.8078
EDel	0.1203	0.1092	6.87	Adj. R-Squared	=	0.7414
_cons	4.0788	0.3609	12.63			

Source: Field Survey, 2022

In Table 8, the regression result showed that R-squared is 0.8078, indicating that employee delegation explains 80.8% of the systematic variation in retention in the workplace. The f-statistics (df=1, 88, f-ratio=9.06) with a p-value of 0.0000 revealed that the relationship between employee delegation and retention in the workplace is significant at 5% level. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted; this means employee delegation has significant effect on retention of industrial goods companies. More so, the coefficient showed that an increase in employee delegation will lead to 12.03% in retention in the workplace.

In recent times, the need to develop and retain highly-skilled employees in the workplace has attracted much debate in the human resource management (HRM) literature. The debate stems from the fact that HRM role has shifted from employee hiring, benefits and wages to strategic human resources where the focus has been on strategies aimed at developing and retaining the employee (Ume, *et al*, 2021; and Walid, *et al*, 2021). Prior studies have shown that employee development is a driving force for retention in the workplace; however, studies are yet to establish if employee development (coaching, delegation and participation) drive retention in the workplace particularly as it concerns industrial goods companies in Lagos State, Nigeria.

In this study, the effect of employee development and retention in the workplace of industrial goods companies was assessed and the study concludes that employee development (coaching, delegation and participation) significantly and positively affects retention in the workplace. The study's findings agree in part with the empirical results of Amushila and Bussin (2021); Tej, *et al* (2021); Ume, *et al*, (2021); Bhawna, *et al*, (2021); Walid, *et al*, (2021); Aleem and Bowra (2020); and Al-sharafi, *et al*, (2018) that employee development significantly affects retention in the workplace,

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that employee development (coaching, participation and delegation) positively and significantly affects employee retention. The results thus call for some policy recommendations. First, management of companies should strive towards engaging the workforce in development initiatives such as coaching, participation and delegation in the workplace. As a matter of fact, employee development

initiatives should be poised towards meeting the current and future needs of the employees and should be carried out on a routine basis.

Furthermore, the employee development initiatives can be more viable if management can make a part of their policy that both old and new employees must be engaged in development programmes capable of transforming their skills, experiences and knowledge so as to make them more useful to the organization and themselves.

This study contributes to knowledge by filling the gap in the literature on what is known about employee development and retention in the workplace, particularly as it concerns industrial goods companies. Also, the study contributes to knowledge by establishing that employee development dimensions of coaching, participation and delegation are driving factors of retention in the workplace.

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