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Manpower Development Strategies and Firm Productivity in the Hospitality Industry Yenagoa Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of manpower development strategies on firm productivity in the hospitality industry in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the effects of training and development, talent retention, and diversity and inclusion on firm productivity. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 327 staff of selected hospitality firms, from which a sample size of 180 respondents was determined using Yamane's formula. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire. The validity of the instrument was established through face and content validity. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of SPSS version 25. The study focused on examining the relationship between manpower development strategies and firm productivity in the hospitality industry. The study concluded that effective manpower development strategies are important for improving firm productivity and process efficiency in the hospitality industry. It recommended that management should invest in continuous training and development programmes that equip employees with the knowledge, skills, and competencies required to improve productivity.

Keywords:

Manpower development, firm productivity, training, talent retention, diversity, inclusion.

Introduction

In today's competitive economic environment, where productivity and survival are critical, a company's human capital has become one of its most valuable assets. In the hotel sector, the lack of proper training and experience for workers in their respective roles has a negative impact on their efficiency. The success and growth of a company is directly proportional to the productivity of its employees. Productive employees can enhance profitability, customer satisfaction and market leadership. On the other hand, low productivity can lead to inefficient use of resources, missed opportunities and poor performance (Shaibu et al., 2025). Efficient employees complete their work quickly and make fewer errors, which makes the organization operate more efficiently. Productivity gains mean more output per unit of input which means that the business spends less money (Singh & Chaudhary, 2022). Highly productive employees are more likely to pay close attention to detail and this produces better results. Highly productive people have more time and energy to spend on problem solving and creative thinking which leads to innovation within the organization. This can be achieved only if companies put more effort in training their employees and improving their workflow. The efficiency of an employee can be defined as the ability to complete a task quickly and accurately (Olawale et al., 2022).

Any company that is worth its salt will do its best to train and develop its employees. The training and development of employees are essential for the success of all companies because even though the internet and other technological advancements have made global collaboration and competition easier, the competitive advantage of a company is still its people (Hopkins, 2020). Human resource development and training are directed towards equipping the workforce with the knowledge and skills that will enhance the bottom line of their respective organisations. Shaibu et al. (2025) stated that training is important because it increases the knowledge and skills of workers and increases their output. If workers are not well-trained, they may become less confident in their abilities and this in turn decreases productivity in terms of quality, timeliness and quantity.

Moreover, the importance of skill management in the workplace cannot be overstated, particularly in terms of maximising the efficiency and output of employees. (Olawale et al., 2022) Staff members need appropriate tools to do the job fast and effectively. To do a job efficiently, you need to have certain talents. These talents may be intellectual, technical, strategic or managerial. All management teams are orientated to the achievement of organisational objectives. An organization's ability to achieve its goals is heavily dependent on the efficiency and effectiveness of its human capital. Human resource efficiency is important to any successful business because people are the most valuable asset of an organization (Ebeofor & Nnaji, 2022; Chioke & Mbamalu, 2020). The most important resource is the people who actively work to accumulate capital, exploit natural resources and build social, political and human capital. Human resources (HR) are essential, so it is important to acknowledge the strong correlation between HRD and worker productivity (Chioke et al., 2023). The development of HR will have a positive effect on the performance of an organization. Unfortunately, this vital component of the organisation is lacking in quality.

It has been established that no organisation can effectively function without skilled human resources (Chioke & Mbamalu, 2020). Therefore, the importance of human resources in an organisation means that the development of human resources is a necessity and not an option, irrespective of the previous training and experience of the personnel. A key aspect of strategic HRM in minimising waste of an organization's most valuable resource, its people resources, is manpower development. Increasing worker productivity and overall organisational effectiveness is important. Organisations are believed to be primarily for performance outcomes (Aguilera et al., 2023). Thus anti-performance is performance that does not meet expectations but does not fall short of them either. Some of the firms were focused on optimum performance while others were looking for ways to improve even further (Tanko et al., 2025). Therefore, there is need to examine the effect of manpower development strategies on firm productivity of hospitality industry in Bayelsa state, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Training needs must be met and staff development is vital in order for any organization to survive. If they don't, they could go out of business. Human development is important but it encounters several barriers in commercial and public organisations. The hospitality sector is particularly affected by the lack of capital for employee training, pay and proper facilities. The connection between the two problems is evident, since the absence of workforce development funding leads to employees providing poor service quality. Sometimes a business can see a decrease in employee output. The decline includes low volumes of productivity, poor quality of jobs, and delays in delivery. This is especially evident in employees with lower productivity in the organization: errors in tasks, missed deadlines and lack of attention to detail. Chronic lateness and failure to meet deadlines frequently create disruptions and delays in the organization's process. The expected work cannot be completed in the available time (Amin & Syafaruddin, 2021). It is important to realise that when employees are not productive the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the company can suffer. An organization's purpose or objective cannot be achieved without plans for the growth and improvement of its human resources. Without a formal program to help them grow professionally, employee morale and output take a big hit.

Previous empirical research has addressed the growth of manpower in many other industries, but not in the hospitality industry. For instance, Okonta (2025) studied the effect of manpower development programmes on faculty output at Delta State University, Abraka. Chisom et al. (2025) also conducted a study on few aluminium firms in Asaba, Delta State and the impact of developing their workers on their performance. Rahis and Ali (2025) investigated the effect of human resource training and development programs of the Borno State Ministry of Health and Human Services on the productivity of a sample of businesses that participated in the programs. Also, Ebeofor and Nnaji (2022) studied human capital development and employee service delivery in the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Matters, Awka, Anambra State and Abasili et al. (2023) studied the relevance of manpower development in the administration of Nigerian local governments. Given the absence of a single empirical study that specifically deals with workforce development in the hospitality industry; There is little research on the effect of human resource development approaches on organisational productivity in the hospitability industry in Bayelsa State, Nigeria, hence the need to study this.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine the effect of manpower development strategies on firm productivity of hospitality industry in Bayelsa state, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- **i.** Explore the effect of training and development on firm productivity of hospitality industry in Bayelsa state, Nigeria.
- ii. Evaluate the effect of talent retention on firm productivity of hospitality industry in Bayelsa state, Nigeria.
- **iii.** Ascertain the effect of diversity and inclusion on firm productivity of hospitality industry in Bayelsa state, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Manpower Development

Manpower development is a systematic effort to improve the knowledge, skills and competences of people that can better align an organization's performance with its goals (Okonta, 2025). This category includes structured and unstructured methods, including courses, seminars, mentorship and scholarly exchange. Manpower development is the investment in the knowledge, skills and talents of individuals or workers in an organisation (Etim et al., 2024). The importance of manpower in achieving organisational goals and objectives (Chisom et al., 2025) is observed in the positive impacts of manpower development on organisational performance. This is because development programs are targeted at upgrading manpower skills, knowledge and competencies. Staff development increases the happiness, growth and commitment of employees, which reduces turnover and increases productivity. Manpower development includes training on and off the job, coaching and mentoring, job rotation, career planning, performance review, and a host of other tactics.

The organisations and its workforce will define the strategy best fitting to their unique needs and characteristics. There are also some factors that influence the success of manpower development programs. These include funding, quality of trainer, content relevance, feedback mechanism, knowledge transfer and outcome assessment. To make workforce development successful, we must consider and address these elements (Ezeani et al., 2023). To perform at its best, any organization needs to be equipped with competent human resources (Chioke & Mbamalu, 2020). People are at the core of capital accumulation, resource exploitation, social and political organization building and other core organisational functions (Ebeofor & Nnaji, 2022). There is a strong link between human capital development and employee performance, which is important because human resources (HR) are the most valuable asset (Chioke et al., 2023). Figure 1 shows the influence of human resources development methods on the process efficiency.

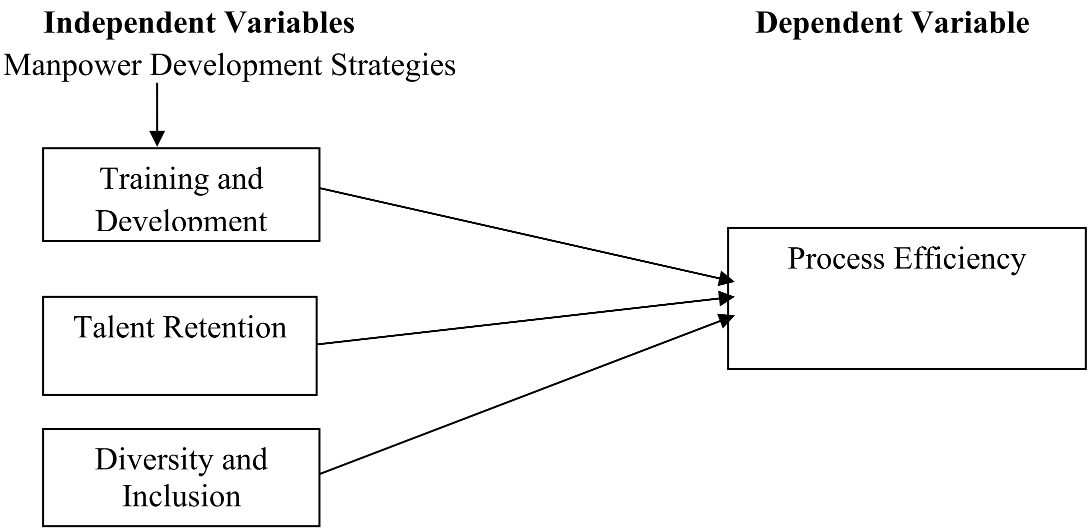

Figure 2.1: Dimensions of Manpower Development Strategies

Source: Researcher's Desk Research (2026)

Training and Development

Training and development activities are one of the main strategies for enhancing the employee's performance and productivity (P&P) and make the employees the most valuable resource of any organization (Kuknor & Kumar, 2024). One of the best ways for businesses to gain a competitive advantage in the market is through training and development programs (KG & Yajurvedi, 2022). In addition to supporting the company overall in adapting to new situations, these programs also help people advance in their careers. Li et al. (2022) states that the purpose of training and development programs is to prepare personnel for future human resource demands and to facilitate their advancement within a business. This goal can be achieved by employees by improving existing skills and acquiring new skills.

Hussen et al. (2023) defines training as "the learning process by which employees acquire the knowledge, skills, experience, and attitudes necessary to perform their jobs effectively and contribute to the organization's goals." "Any effort that leads to the gaining of knowledge or skill for the sake of progress" is what development is, say Sohail et al. (2023). Yimam (2022) states that training is the process of systematically improving workers' understanding of the task to guarantee their success in carrying out some or all parts of their job. Development initiatives are aimed at acquiring state-of-the-art knowledge and skills to prepare for the needs of the future workforce (Anjum, 2020). Employee training, empowerment and cooperation were found to be the three most important behavioural elements on workplace efficiency by Abu Daqar and Constantinovits (2021).

Every company, to succeed, needs to increase employee productivity and good management and training and development programs are two ways to do this. Similarly, Yu et al. (2022) argue that training is a common strategy adopted by many companies to address the "skill deficit" – the gap between the capabilities that employees need to have and those they actually possess. The skill gap, which is directly related to productivity, can be bridged through the enhancement of an employee's knowledge, skills and competences on the job. The low production is often caused by the lack of motivation and depression among workers with poor training (Yu et al., 2022). Productivity, growth, and development within the company are all negatively affected by this. Reason being, trained workers not only have a better chance of succeeding in their jobs, but they're also more likely to approach them with a can-do spirit and a clear sense of direction. Your organization can gain a competitive edge and boost productivity across the board by investing in personnel training and education. These figures prove that companies perform better when they help their employees grow in their careers.

Talent Retention

This strategy has been employed over the years by several organisations that prioritise employee retention. To retain its honest and intelligent workers, these companies have developed what are called functional employee retention methods. These strategies, according to Kamselem et al. (2022), are supposedly based on what keeps loyal employees around: competitive pay, a pleasant workplace, frequent organization-funded training programs, and frequent promotions. This retention is the business ability to retain personnel serving for a longer period of time (Lee et al., 2022). Good hands in an organization are kept for a long time, the trajectory of peak performance is maintained. Ali et al. (2024) argue that organisations are under serious threat when qualified hands go to the competition. Finding a replacement is costly and the organization may not be able to afford it. This is why it's so critical for the company to hang on to those able workers.

Talent retention is defined as the organization's efforts to build and maintain an enabling environment with above-average levels of operational commitment to avoid talented people leaving and, instead, retain them in the organization (De Angelis and Grinstein, 2020). According to De Angelis and Grinstein (2020), the best way to retain talent in a business is to employ competent individuals who can contribute to the work system or offer continuous education to the community of practice where they can clearly see a route to advancement. Also, a business can create a sense of belonging by taking responsibility and working together towards a common goal.

This can be done by creating channels of open communication between staff, management and customers, where information is presented in a manner that is honest and transparent enough to allow for fair evaluation. Aisha (2022) and Krishnamoorthy (2022) agree, describing employee retention as an idea in business management defining how employers want to keep their current staff. Businesses need to systematically work to make their workplaces appealing places to work to keep good employees around (Akanmu et al., 2025). This includes adopting rules and practices that will allow for a diverse workforce. Part of it, too, is how you keep the good ones from leaving.

Diversity and Inclusion

In today's fast-paced, globally competitive business environment, companies are beginning to understand the strategic value of diversity and inclusion (D&I) in driving long-term success. Being diverse means having a workforce that is diverse in terms of gender, age, race, ethnicity, education, culture and professional experience; being inclusive means ensuring that every employee feels that they belong and can contribute to the company's success. A diverse and inclusive workplace is one that values and acts upon different viewpoints, encourages creativity and keeps employees invested in their work (Vimal & Rajamannar, 2025). A truly belonging community is one where you feel loved, close and at ease in being yourself. Kumar (2024) suggests that belongingness in a group is experienced by individuals because of the positive valence that they derive from the bonds they sustain. When leaders attempt to recognise and validate the views of employees, it makes them feel needed (Schaechter et al., 2023). This reality gives rise to a feeling of psychological safety and authentic inclusion, which physically manifests itself in the form of increased productivity by employees, longer tenure in their current roles, and positive word-of-mouth about the company (Scheide & Giblin, 2024).

The leader's inclusive behaviours shape the group's understanding of belonging as interpersonal interactions (Fernández et al., 2023). Employees become more attached to the company and its mission through the development and maintenance of a strong organisational culture by the company (Pathan, 2023). Welcoming environments, encouragement of collaboration and assurances about the unknown can help marginalised staff feel more included, according to business leaders (Pathan, 2023; Shore & Chung, 2022). Organisations promote an inclusive culture by deliberately encouraging inclusive recruiting, training and career development (Shafaei & Nejati, 2024; Shore & Chung, 2022). Inclusive workplaces produce more socially responsible company models. They are marked by higher productivity, innovation, employee happiness and retention (Pfajfar et al., 2022). Nwachukwu and Ede (2022) state that an inclusive workplace is indicated by job satisfaction, reduced stress and increased professional engagement. In addition, there is research that points to the fact that diverse teams tend to have higher innovation and decision-making skills, since they combine multiple perspectives to create more comprehensive solutions and a competitive edge in the marketplace (Omodia & Adeyemi, 2021). Adebayo (2020) highlights the importance of inclusive work cultures in increasing job satisfaction and minimising communication barriers. These cultures aim to create a culture in which employees feel valued and listened to. Diversity and inclusion policies help connect workers of different backgrounds to each other which increases teamwork and output.

Organisational diversity and inclusion (D&I) have emerged as important aspects in attaining workplace equity and improved performance in the 21st century. Diversity happens when an organization has people from different backgrounds and ideologies (Sharma & Mann, 2021). When these differences are accepted and integrated into the work environment, everyone can make a meaningful contribution. This is called inclusion (Nwachukwu & Adeoye, 2022). Global studies (Hofhuis et al., 2020) report that D&I improves decision-making, market understanding and problem-solving. An inclusive organization is one that guarantees psychological safety, encourages mutual respect, and eliminates barriers to participation in opportunities such as training, leadership development, and promotions (Sharma & Mann, 2021).

Firm Productivity

The success of any company in the modern day is determined by the quality of its employees (Muriuki & Wanyoike, 2021; Haralayya, 2022). As Singh and Chaudhary (2022) have defined, productivity is the ratio of inputs (time, money, human resources) to the outputs. The productivity of workers is the amount and value of the output produced by an organization in a given time period. Organisations depend on productivity as it affects their long term growth, profitability and competitiveness (Makombo et al., 2024). Employees should be worth more than they get paid. Productivity is defined as "the ability to deliver specific work-related tasks according to a specified predetermined standard with accuracy in speed, cost and completeness" (Kanapathipillai and Azam, 2020). Many scholars have not given precise definitions of productive labour. Jong et al. (2021) define productivity as the time required to perform a task as per job description versus the time required to perform work and produce the desired output. In addition, Piwowar-Sulej et al. (2023) pointed out that productivity can be evaluated by comparing the quantity and quality of the output with the input. Productivity gains by employees are the prerequisites of gains in organisational efficiency and productivity. Sohail et al. (2023) identified that the primary aim or objective of any business entity is to attain and produce superior work performance and enhance the productivity of the organisation, as performance system is a big issue and discovering effective ways to empower people is a big challenge.

Theoretical Review

Resource-Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View (RBV) was first articulated by Jay Barney in 1991 as a strategic lens to understand the ways in which an organization's resources – in particular, intangible resources such as human capital – can be leveraged to achieve competitive advantage. RBV suggests that superior performance can be achieved by organisations through the possession of valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable resources. The idea says that to maintain competitive advantage in long run one has to depend on its own internal resources. These may be material, human or organisational resources. Few resources are more valuable than human resources in terms of creativity, problem solving and organisational agility. Diversity in perspectives, experiences and talents are valuable human capital. Hence, workplace diversity is seen as an ethical requirement and strategic resource that can enhance organisational performance.

Organisations in Nigeria are able to bring together people from a variety of backgrounds successfully and to access a wide range of perspectives in order to promote innovation, creativity and adaptability. This is particularly the case when you consider the competitive and often unstable economic environment of a country, which RBV highlights as a strategic asset to be managed by organisations. For instance, if a company's personnel are from different cultural and professional backgrounds and offer their own particular ways of dealing with problems, it can better survive changes in the market or other external factors. Effective management of diversity can enhance organisational performance by enabling better decision-making, increasing productivity and stimulating creativity, according to the RBV (Onyekwere, 2024a, b).

The RBV model is central to this research in order to understand the effects diversity and inclusion policies have on organisational performance. The theory's view of diversity as a strategic resource that enhances the competitive advantage of an organization provides a link between diversity management practices and measurable outcomes such as increased responsiveness, profitability and efficiency. RBV also highlights the significance of inclusive policies in attracting and retaining the best people, thereby creating a work environment that supports the organization's long-term success. Thus, the RBV enriches the study's performance-based perspective by conceptualising diversity as a significant resource for long-term organisational success and competitive advantage in Nigeria.

Social Identity Theory

This theory states that the social groups people put themselves and others into influence how people behave and interact with each other. It all depends on the degree of inclusiveness of the organization, but this can lead to harmony or conflict in diverse workplaces. Social Identity Theory (SIT) was developed in the 1970s and 1980s by Henri Tajfel and John Turner to explain social categorisation, prejudice and intergroup behaviour. This view implies that the groups to which people belong are in some way contributing to their identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Race, religion, occupation, or gender are just a few examples of how group membership affects a person's identity and how they react in social settings. SIT states that individuals often show in-group prejudice and in-group favouritism because of self and other categorisation into “in-groups” and “out-groups” respectively.

In particular, this social categorisation is powerful on workplace dynamics within organisations that are culturally, ethnically or demographically heterogeneous (Nwachukwu & Adeoye, 2022). Failure to manage these differences properly can lead to stereotyping, intergroup conflict, and barriers to communication. SIT explains how people’s group memberships affect their feelings of belonging, work satisfaction and interpersonal relationships in organisational settings. Chukwu and Eneh (2023) argue that if employees have a strong sense of belonging to their team or organization (i.e., good social identity), they are more likely to exhibit commitment, cohesiveness, and organisational citizenship behaviour. Disengagement, lower productivity or even leaving the job can result from marginalisation or exclusion based on group identity.

One way to apply SIT to diversity and inclusion, according to Ahmed and Khan (2023), is to create an environment in which people’s group identities are appreciated and acknowledged rather than simply represented. This would imply the development of a culture of inclusive identity integration. Through intentional leadership, communication and policy, organisations can create inclusive group norms that allow potential divisions within groups to be a strength. This leads to cross-cultural collaboration and psychological safety (Hofhuis et al., 2020).

Review of Empirical Studies

Onyinye et al. (2025) examined the correlation between workforce development strategies and organisational efficacy across telecommunication companies in Delta State, Nigeria. Descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses were utilised on data collected from a survey involving 116 employees. Studies have shown that businesses achieve significantly enhanced performance when staff are afforded opportunities for professional growth and practical training. The research indicates that ongoing employee training and development can enhance a firm's competitiveness, customer contentment, and overall efficacy.

Okonta (2025) examined the impact of personnel development initiatives on the academic productivity of Delta State University, Abraka. The data were examined employing descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis. Descriptive survey techniques were employed to gather information from 100 academic personnel chosen through stratified random sampling. The findings indicated that the personnel development programs significantly enhanced academic output. The primary determinants were research funding and professional development courses. The report recommended formalising evidence-based workforce planning, broadening funding alternatives, and enhancing workforce development initiatives.

Platania et al. (2025) examined 307 personnel within the Italian public sector and their responses to organisational discontent in relation to inclusive leadership and a diverse environment. The researchers' examination of survey feedback revealed that diversity climate and inclusive leadership acted as mediators for employees' reactions to dissatisfaction, whereas organisational identity had a beneficial effect on diversity climate and positive employee conduct. The research indicated that enhancements in organisational identity and inclusive leadership foster positive workplace conduct and inclusive organisational environments.

Chisom et al. (2025) performed research in Asaba, Delta State regarding the impact of workforce development on the operational efficacy of several aluminium enterprises. The results were examined by correlation analysis utilising a descriptive survey approach with a sample of 311 participants. The findings indicated a favourable relationship between employee mentorship, coaching, training, and career advancement and the organization's success. The research indicated that strategic mentoring, coaching, training, and career development initiatives are effective methods for enhancing organisational performance and employee productivity.

McAdoo (2025) examined the effects of diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) policies and programs on the bottom line of Fortune 100 companies. A quantitative method was utilised to analyse the association between diversity and inclusion scores and revenue for three out of five organisations. In this context, Pearson correlation analysis and linear regression analysis were employed. But the demographics of the workforce did not correlate with revenue. The research advocates for additional enquiries into diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) within strategic human resource management.

Akanmu et al. (2025) performed an investigation of the efficacy of employee retention tactics aimed at diminishing turnover rates at Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Nigeria. The research employed a mixed-method strategy by conducting a survey of 255 individuals. The research indicated that involvement of leadership, prospects for career progression, and prompt promotions markedly diminished employee attrition. The researchers assert that effective retention strategies foster stable workforces and advocate for sustained financial support for extensive HR policies.

Saleh and Azimi (2025) examined the influence of professional growth on the productivity and efficacy of the personnel at the Afghan charity JACK NGO. The research identified a robust positive correlation between training and development, particularly on-the-job training, and employee performance. It employed a quantitative approach and examined data by linear regression including 275 participants. The analysis indicated that investing additional funds in strategic training initiatives can enhance organisational performance and guarantee sustained development.

In Osta's (2025) research, normative commitment served as a moderating variable to investigate the influence of employee engagement on turnover intentions among Lebanese SMEs. The research gathered survey responses from 56 small and medium-sized enterprises and discovered that normative commitment significantly reduces employee turnover by mediating the connection between employee engagement and the intention to go. The study identified that the most effective methods for keeping valuable personnel involved initiatives that enhanced employee involvement and dedication.

Onyekwere’s (2025) analysis of diversity and inclusion strategies in Nigerian organisations focused on organisational efficacy and employee welfare. The mixed-methods examination of 679 employees revealed no statistically significant relationship between the enactment of diversity and inclusion policies and organisational success or employee well-being. However, the regulations did enhance morale and efficiency. The document advocated for enhanced policy implementation, sustained leadership backing, and ongoing assessment of inclusion initiatives.

Rahis and Ali (2025) evaluated the effect of staff development and training on organisational effectiveness in several chosen health facilities under the Borno State Ministry of Health and Human Services. The study’s mixed-methods methodology indicated that despite constraints such as lack of resources and infrastructure, training programs enhanced organisational efficiency and staff competency. The research suggested increasing funding for workforce development and online education, as well as enhancing governmental assistance for long-term human resource strategies.

The impact of employee retention on organisational efficiency at the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Abuja was examined by Tanko et al (2025). The research employed a survey methodology and utilised multiple regression analysis to interpret the findings. The research indicated that training initiatives, incentive structures, and a positive workplace atmosphere significantly influenced organisational achievement and employee retention. The research proposed incentive structures based on performance and ongoing professional growth to enhance employee retention and organisational effectiveness.

Kavitha and Lavanya (2025) examined the impact of investing in employee training and development on organisational performance. A research investigation utilising questionnaire data alongside correlation and regression analysis revealed that training markedly enhanced productivity, diminished turnover, and elevated job satisfaction. The research indicated that for organisations to achieve long-term success, prioritising individuals' professional growth is essential.

Okeyea (2025) conducted an empirical study on the impact of Diversity and Inclusion Programs on the productivity of industrial firms in Delta State. The research revealed that diversity and inclusion initiatives profoundly influenced employee engagement, creativity, and productivity. This was accomplished by regression analysis of quantitative survey data from 200 employees. The research indicated that enhancing diversity policies and fostering inclusive leadership are essential for improving organisational performance.

Suparyanto et al. (2025) examined workplace diversity and inclusion to determine their impact on employee performance and innovation. The research, employing a multiple regression analysis and a quantitative survey of 20 individuals, revealed that diversity and inclusion significantly influenced employee performance, collaboration, innovation, and workplace satisfaction. The survey indicated that organisations could enhance their performance and innovation by formulating inclusive policies for all employees.

Methodology

The research design used in this study was a cross-sectional survey. This method allowed the researcher to gather data from respondents at a point in time. The design was directed toward recording the present circumstances and studying the interrelationships of variables in their intrinsic state. A cross-sectional survey method is used because it enables quick and consistent collection of data from a large population. It enabled quantitative methods like regression analysis to be used to test hypotheses. The study included a total of 327 participants which comprised both employees and management of some hospitality enterprises in Bayelsa State. 180 sample size was determined by using the formula provided by Yamane (1967). Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select respondents from the population. This selection approach was justified as it ensured the equitable representation of diverse workforce demographics and organisational tiers. This further reduced sample bias and increased the generalisability of study results.

This study used the primary source of data. The validity, repeatability and robustness of the results are directly linked to how carefully and properly the data was collected (Bell et al., 2018). The primary data were collected by way of a survey of a group of employees and management personnel of hospitality companies through standardised questionnaires. The investigators had valid justification for using primary data as it provided them with firsthand and contemporary insights. The research tool was evaluated by experts in management and research methodologies to establish the content and face validity. Their recommendations were used to ensure all study objectives and factors were included in the questionnaire. Test-retest reliability of the instrument was determined with the Cronbach's Alpha technique. The device is deemed suitable for data collection if its reliability coefficient is 0.70 and above.

Table 1: Reliability Test for All Items in the Questionnaire

S/N	Variables	Type of Variable	Alpha (α) Value	No. of Items
1	Training and development	Independent	0.721	4
3	Talent retention	Independent	0.723	4
4	Diversity and inclusion	Independent	0.812	4
5	Process efficiency	Dependent	0.722	4

Source: Analysis of field survey, (2026)

The Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs were greater than 0.7 as suggested by Hair et al. (2019), which indicated that the measurements were reliable. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to check the internal consistency reliability of all the items and constructs in the study.

Data coding and analysis was done by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics like frequencies and percentages were used to summarise demographic data of the respondents. The hypotheses were tested through inferential statistics, i.e., multiple regression analysis at the significance level of 5 percent. The method revealed the significant relationships between the research variables, the intensity and the direction of these relationships. The statistical functional connection model made between firm productivity and workforce development strategies are:

$FP = f(TD, TR, DI)$

Where:

FP = Firm Productivity

TD = Training and Development

TR = Talent Retention

DI = Diversity and Inclusion

The econometric model will be expressed as:

$FP = \beta0 + \beta1TD + \beta2TR + \beta3DI + \varepsilon$

Where:

$\beta0$ = Intercept

$\beta1$–$\beta4$ = Regression Coefficients

ε = Error Term

This model was justified because it enabled the researcher to determine the individual and combined effects of manpower development variables on process efficiency.

Data Presentation

Table 2: Response Rate

S/N	Field Survey	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Copies of questionnaires administered	180	100.0
2	Questionnaires returned and properly completed	174	96.7
3	Questionnaires not returned	6	3.3

Source: Field Survey, (2026).

Table 2 showed that a total of 180 copies of the questionnaire were given to the respondents. Of these, 174 questionnaires constituting 96.7% of the total administered were properly completed and returned while 6 questionnaires constituting 3.3% were not returned. The response rate of 96.7% is very high and adequate for statistical analysis because it minimises the possibility of non-response bias and increases the reliability and generalisability of the study findings.

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	98	56.3
	Female	76	43.7
	Total	174	100.0
Age	23–30 years	41	23.6
	31–40 years	69	39.7
	41–50 years	47	27.0
	Above 50 years	17	9.8
	Total	174	100.0
Educational Qualification	ND/NCE	29	16.7
	HND/B.Sc.	92	52.9
	M.Sc./MBA	41	23.6
	Others	12	6.9
	Total	174	100.0
Work Experience	Below 5 years	32	18.4
	6–10 years	61	35.1
	11–15 years	48	27.6
	Above 15 years	33	19.0
	Total	174	100.0

Source: Field Survey, (2026).

The results for gender in Table 3 indicated that there were 98 respondents (56.3%) male and 76 respondents (43.7%) female. This indicates that the majority of the respondents were male, but it also indicates that the study had a fair representation of both genders. In terms of age, majority was 31-40 years with 69 respondents (39.7%). This was followed by 47 respondents (27.0%) who were 41–50 years, 41 respondents (23.6%) who were 23–30 years and 17 respondents (9.8%) who were above 50 years. The results indicate that most of the respondents were in the economically active and productive age bracket suggesting that they have sufficient working experience and are involved in organisational activities. In terms of educational qualification, majority of the respondents, 92 (52.9%) had HND/B.Sc. It was followed by 41 respondents (23.6%) with M.Sc./MBA, 29 respondents (16.7%) with ND/NCE and 12 respondents (6.9%) with other qualifications. These results indicate that the respondents were generally well educated and they had the academic background to understand and provide reliable responses to the questionnaire.

Regarding the work experience, the majority of the respondents (35.1%, n = 61) had 6–10 years of work experience. This was followed by 48 respondents (27.6%) with 11-15 years of experience, 33 respondents (19.0%) with >15 years of experience, and 32 respondents (18.4%) with <5 years of experience. The distribution shows that majority of the respondents had vast working experience and as such were conversant with the operations of their organisations and could provide informed responses relevant to the objectives of the study.

Table 4: Manpower Development Strategies and Firm Productivity

Coefficients[a]

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.750	1.011		.741	.460		
	Training and Development	.479	.055	.480	8.749	.000	.673	1.486
	Talent Retention	.263	.068	.250	3.898	.000	.494	2.025
	Diversity And Inclusion	.221	.066	.222	3.333	.001	.456	2.195

a. Dependent Variable: firm productivity

The results of Table 4 showed that training and development has positive and significant effect on firm productivity ($\beta = 0.480$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that a higher firm productivity is related to better training and development practices. Similarly, talent retention has a positive and significant effect on firm productivity ($\beta = 0.250$, $p < 0.05$). This means that organisations that implement effective talent retention strategies are likely to experience higher productivity. The results further showed that diversity and inclusion also had a positive and significant effect on firm productivity ($\beta = 0.222$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that the creation of an inclusive work environment that is open to diversity is critical to improving organisational productivity. The collinearity statistics indicated Tolerance values ranging from 0.456 to 0.673 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values ranging from 1.486 to 2.195, all below the acceptable levels (Tolerance > 0.10 and VIF <10). This means that multicollinearity is not a problem, and the independent variables do not correlate too highly with each other.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	244.778	3	81.593	107.916	.000[b]
	Residual	128.533	170	.756		
	Total	373.310	173			

a. Dependent Variable: firm productivity

b. Predictors: (Constant), diversity and inclusion, training and development, talent retention

The results in Table 5 indicate that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 107.916$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that the combined effect of training and development, talent retention, and diversity and inclusion is a significant predictor of firm productivity.

Table 6: Model Summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.810[a]	.656	.650	.870

a. Predictors: (Constant), diversity and inclusion, training and development, talent retention

The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.656$) in Table 6 indicated that 65.6% of the variation in firm productivity is explained by training and development, talent retention and diversity and inclusion. The remaining 34.4% of the variation is due to other factors not included in the model. The Adjusted R^2 of 0.650 showed that even after taking into account the number of predictors, the model still explains about 65.0% of the variation in firm productivity. The small difference between R^2 and Adjusted R^2 indicates the stability of the model and not overfitting.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that training and development has a positive and significant effect on firm productivity ($\beta = 0.480$, $p = 0.000$). This is consistent with the finding of Ogbuma (2025) that mentoring, career advancement, training and counselling have significant positive effect on employee performance. Likewise, Saleh and Azimi (2025) discovered that on-the-job training is one of the effective training and development elements that directly contributes to employee performance and productivity. Similarly, Kavitha and Lavanya (2025) found a significant positive relationship between training, employee productivity, job satisfaction and low employee turnover. The finding shows that continued investment in training and development of employees improves the knowledge, skills and competencies of employees that improve productivity of firm. Moreover, training and development was the most significant predictor of firm productivity among the manpower development strategies examined in this study.

The results further revealed that talent retention has a positive and significant effect on firm productivity ($\beta = 0.250$, $p = 0.000$). This is also in line with Mugambi et al. (2025) findings which indicated that talent retention strategies such as employee engagement, healthy work environment, employee recognition and work-life balance significantly enhance employee performance. The finding suggests that organisations with skilled and experienced employees are more likely to increase operational efficiency, reduce employee turnover and improve overall productivity.

Similarly, the findings showed that diversity and inclusion positively and significantly influence firm productivity ($\beta = 0.222$, $p = 0.001$). The finding supports the work of Suparyanto et al. (2025) who reported a significant positive relationship between workplace diversity and employee performance, collaboration and innovation. It also supports the findings of Platania et al. (2025) who found that organisational identification, diversity climate and inclusive leadership promote positive employee behaviours and organisational effectiveness. Similarly, Vimal and Rajamannar (2025) found that employees' perceptions of their workplace as inclusive and fair are positively related to their job satisfaction, collaboration and organisational commitment. The finding suggests that an inclusive environment where diversity is respected and equal opportunities are offered, enhances employee motivation, teamwork, innovation and leads to better firm productivity.

Conclusion

The study examined the effect of manpower development strategies on firm productivity. The results indicate that training and development, talent retention, and diversity and inclusion have a positive and significant effect on firm productivity. Among the three strategies, training and development was the best predictor of firm productivity. This underscores the need for continuous learning and skills development of employees to enhance organisational performance. The study further proved that companies that retain talented employees and develop an inclusive work environment are more likely to realise increased productivity that results from greater employee engagement, collaboration, innovation, and efficiency. Therefore, the study concludes that effective manpower development strategies are necessary to improve the productivity of the firm and sustain the competitiveness of the organization.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

i. Management should invest in continuous training and development programmes that provide employees with the knowledge, technical skills and competencies they need to improve productivity.
ii. To lower turnover and retain top performers, organisations should implement stronger talent retention strategies that include competitive pay, career development paths and a supportive work environment.
iii. Firms should champion diversity and inclusion by implementing fair human resource policies, championing inclusive leadership and creating a workplace culture that promotes diversity, collaboration and equality of opportunity for all staff.

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