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Research Article

# Strategic Human Resource Development and Talent Retention in Business Organisations in an Emerging Economy

**Linus Adama[1*], Ejiofor Ngozi Ukamaka[2], Anyalor Chichi Maureen[3], Chidi Ebele Grace Bernards[4], Onyibo Chidimma Evelyn[5] and Akan Pius Azabeye[6]**

[1-5]Department of Business Administration, Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State, Nigeria
[6]University of Calabar, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria

***Corresponding Author**
Linus Adama
(linusadama@gmail)

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**Abstract:** The study investigated strategic human resource development and talent retention among commercial banks in Nigeria. Causal Research design was used in the study. The accessible population was 1,499 permanent staff of five selected commercial banks in Ebonyi, Delta and Benue States. The Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table was used to determine the minimum sample size, which was 306 respondents and the snowball sampling technique was used. The data was gathered from a structured questionnaire having five-point likert scale. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) has been used to analyse the data in SmartPLS 4. The results showed that ability to influence organisational culture was significant positive relationships with supervisor support, organisational culture and career growth and development. The relationship of strategic partnership with line management was also positive, however the relationship was insignificant with career training and development, career growth and development and organisational culture. The findings of the study have been telling that strategic HRD has a significant role to play and nurturing organisational culture through HRD is significant in strengthening the outcomes of retaining talents in commercial banks. The study suggests that HRD will need to have a more strategic role in the development of the organisational culture, improve the partnership relationship between HRD and line management and define a formal career development system regarding employee retention.

**Keywords:** Career Development, Organisational Culture, Strategic Human Resource Development, Talent Retention

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## INTRODUCTION

In emerging economies, the business enterprises exist in an environment of turbulence and limited resources which affect their way of competing, innovating and managing human resources. This is more compounded in Nigeria due to institutional weaknesses, poor infrastructure and sporadic regulatory environment, which makes strategic planning difficult across the various sectors [1]. The negative business conditions in Nigeria are also evident in the findings of Orjiakor [2], who analysed the extent to which the business climate in Nigeria is negatively affecting firms' exit rates across a sample of 1,676 companies based on the World Bank Enterprise Survey panel data and based on a composite score of business hindrances, found that the probability of a firm survival decreases by 11% points with each additional unit of the composite score of business hindrances. Despite these development pressures, Nigeria is now considered to be a fledgling entrepreneurial ecosystem with increasing opportunities for further demographic economic diversification and international trade [1]. It highlights the importance of strengthening organisational internal mechanisms, including human capital systems, in emerging economies like Nigeria, given the continuing and high level of external volatility.

A key component of this in-house strength is the ability to attract and keep qualified and high-achieving staff. Employee retention has grown more critical of late, particularly in a job market characterized by an abundance of outstripped by

a lack of qualified employees in an environment of economic constraints. In the Nigerian banking sector alone, the empirical findings revealed that rewards were found to be a significant instrument which could facilitate the retention of bank employees, where remuneration, promotion and recognition were seen to have a positive correlation with the retention of bank staff [3]. In addition to compensation, the study also found that the psychological contract (unwritten, perceived obligations between the employer and employee) has a mediating effect on retention. Breaches of this contract have been identified as a key contributor to Nigerian organizations' employee turnover [4]. More generally, the quality of general human resource management (HRM) has been identified in Nigeria as a contributing cause to their emigration of skilled workforce: The recent study revealed a negative statistical significant relationship between HRM quality, as measured by flexibility at work, structured career development and incentivisation based on performance and skilled emigration rate, with an increase in HRM quality being significantly positively correlated in the retention of skilled workforce [5]. This solidifies the fact that HR quality generally, as opposed to any one practice, significantly impacts on the capacity of Nigerian organizations to hold their talented employees.

There has also been some studies that have shown that retention of talent in Nigerian organizations has been related to general activities of the organization and its culture. For example, research has shown that structured Talent Management (TM) positively influences employee turnover intention among Bank staffs in the Nigerian banking industry [6] and more recently, the researchers found that while structured talent management positively influenced employee productivity, the relationship is mediated by the organizational culture which explains why employee productivity differs despite using the same TM practices [7]. To further emphasize this, research done in relation to the relationship between employee retention strategies and organization's performance has shown that retention strategies can be seen as an expression that has measurable influence on the general performance of an organization [8]. This body of work overall suggests that multiple factors contribute to talent attrition in Nigeria and that a multi-organisational approach is needed, rather than an HR-centric solution.

Strategic Human Resource Development (SHRD) is a one such coordinated approach, which is a systematic linking of an organization's learning and training and development efforts with its long-term, strategic business goals instead of HRD being a standalone administrative training unit. The most extensive and ample conceptualization of the nature of this strategic embeddedness is that of McCracken and Wallace [9,10] who set out to define what they termed the "learning organization". They explain maturity at SHRD in terms of strategic aspects such as strategic partnerships with line management, HRD's role in developing and altering organizational culture and the focus on strategic evaluation of HRD. Later, the work of McCracken and Wallace was criticized and extended by Mitsakis [11] who noted that existing models of SHRD, such as McCracken's and Wallace's, were inadequate to address how organizations maintain strategic HRD practices in dynamic, complex and uncertain economic climates and suggested a different set of HRD strategic criteria appropriate to that context for SHRD maturity. It's crucial to differentiate SHRD from the bigger picture of strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM), which involves all the HR aspects of recruitment, compensation, appraisal and development, as well as SHRM's strategic learning and development aspect.

In the current body of literature, however, there are two noteworthy local lacunae. First, empirical studies that specifically relate aspects of SHRD with particular talent retention dimensions, rather than that of HRM or talent management in general to general validated and validated constructs of talent retention, continues to be limited among the extant literature on HRM and talent management within the context of both the Nigeria and the global literature on emerging-economy context. How HRM practices affect the specific psychometrically measured factors behind turnover or retention is rarely acknowledged in existing Nigerian studies, which tend to focus on HRM practices and on retention as generalized constructs, instead of breaking HRM down into its strategic dimensions as presented by McCracken and Wallace [9,10] and assessing each attempt separately on psychometrically validated factors of retention. This gap, the lack of an empirical, dis-aggregated model testifying the causal relationships between specific SHRD dimensions and specific constructs measuring talent retention in an environment of businesses, which is under-represented in Nigeria and emerging-economies is the point of departure for the present study.

Therefore, in order to carry out this study, the following research hypotheses will be tested:

- **$H_{01}$:** There is no significant relationship between the ability to influence organizational culture and supervisor support
- **$H_{02}$:** There is no significant relationship between the ability to influence organizational culture and organizational culture
- **$H_{03}$:** There is no significant relationship between the ability to influence organizational culture and career growth and development
- **$H_{04}$:** There is no significant relationship between strategic partnership with line management and supervisor support
- **$H_{05}$:** There is no significant relationship between strategic partnership with line management and organizational culture
- **$H_{06}$:** There is no significant relationship between strategic partnership with line management and career growth and development

## Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

**Theoretical Framework:** This study has its foundation in two related theories. First, Human Capital Theory [12], which assumes that employee training, skill and human resources development are invested just as a firm invests in physical capital and should yield return as both physical and human capital investments. This theory is why organisations seek to invest in their employees' strategic human resource development; that is, through planned career progression, learning and management development, they are recognising that employees are assets and that paying for staff training is likely to result in better performance and competitiveness from the organisation in the long-term.

A second is Social Exchange Theory [13], the reason that investment is why employees remain. Indirect reciprocity is determined by Blau, if one party to a relationship is getting something of great value, the other party feels a need to return it. When companies invest in their employees, it's likely that their employees will invest in them and stay loyal to the company. These two theories, combined, pinpoint the logic for this study: Human Capital Theory, which argues that organizations invest in SHRD; and, Social Exchange Theory, which argues that employees reciprocate with staying.

## Strategic Human Resource Development

Strategic Human Resource Development (SHRD) grew out of an increasing realization that the traditional training and development roles were too focused on operational skill development and insufficient to link to the broader competitiveness strategy of an organisation, the role became more strategic. Garavan [14] is generally regarded as the first individual to systematically theorise SHRD, outlining nine characteristics which set apart a strategically embedded HRD function from regular training activity: Integration with organisation's mission and goals, Top Management support, Environmental scanning, Increased role for HRD professionals beyond their capacity as trainers, etc. In the same period, Torraco and Swanson [15] seconded a similar argument, saying HRD takes a strategic dimension when it is focused on better or worse performance, leverages existing employee knowledge and displays clear strategic skills and not just administrative powers. These were different lenses altogether, Lee [16,17] suggesting that maturity of training and development could be classified by a continuum ranging from purely operational training in the bottom end to the highest level of strategic HRD.

McCracken and Wallace [9] used this base research to redefine and improve on Garavan's nine characteristics, to produce what remains to this day the most complete [11] and most cited SHRD model available in the literature. They view SHRD as "the conscious establishment of a learning culture that is connected and influences and in turn influenced by corporate strategy", a multidimensional concept they call the "holy trinity" of the strategic HRD function. They also tested a notion that SHRD needs to guide corporate strategy rather than just influence it in an accompanying empirical study on data from 96 companies [10], which addressed such constructs as senior management environment scanning, strategic partnership with line managers and HRM, HRD executives not as trainers but rather facilitators and change agents and HRD evaluation and nurturing organizational culture. This is the benchmark model that is compared to almost all subsequent research in SHRD.

Garavan [18] further developed the approach, suggesting a more complex SHRD model, which considers the contributions from the global context, organizational context, stakeholder profiles and HRD orientation as interacting elements influencing the strategic embeddedness of HRD in an organisation. This model, however, has found criticism for its complexity, large number of internal and external dimensions for it to be validated in empirical studies [11]. In the most significant critique of the SHRD literature to date, Mitsakis [11] asserted that the current bodies of SHRD-related knowledge were created and tested in relatively stable business settings, which do not adequately reflect how organizations maintain strategic HRD practices during complex and dynamic business contexts and uncertain economic times. His framework modified some of the contents and added strategic elements such as building 'strategically bought in' HRD strategies to ensure that organisations will be sensitive to changing micro and macro environmental factors and an increased focus on strategic partnerships outside of line managers and more on-line managers directly.

As far as the emerging-economy and the Nigerian context in particular, the empirical application of the SHRD concept as far as it is concerned is still relatively weak but the evidence seems to show otherwise. The study of Isiaka [5] showed that development of HRM quality practices, such as having a structured career development, was strongly and significantly related to employee retention and skilled emigration of professionals, thus indirectly supporting the theoretical proposition that strategically integrated HRM development practices have empirical consequences for the workforce in the Nigerian case. This collection of writing features a clear theme of theoretical development from Garavan's [14] characteristics to McCracken and Wallace's [9,10] redefinitions and empirical testing and finally to the critique and extension of Mitsakis [11]. In particular, McCracken and Wallace's [9,10] model highlights six key strategic development areas of SHRD: Environmental scanning by senior management, HRD's influence on organizational missions and goals, strategic partnership with line management, strategic partnership with HRM, extension of HRD executives' roles and HRD's capacity to influence and shape organizational culture and control and focus on strategic HRD evaluation. Based on the fact that strategic partnership with line management and ability to influence

organizational culture are contributing constructs of SHRD that most directly involve its implementation at the operational level (through line management) and climate level (through organizational culture) in Nigerian business organisation respectively; thus, two of them were taken as the focal constructs of the SHRD in the present study.

**Talent Retention**

As the market for qualified employees becomes more competitive, the attractiveness of workers increases with the mobility of professionals, as well as the awareness that the loss of an institutionally valuable worker has very real costs, talent retention has become one of the most pressing issues in modern HRM. Talent retention is essentially a concerted effort to prevent key staff members from leaving the organization and thereby to ensure the continuity, skills and knowledge it has built. One of the earlier theoretical developments that explains why workers are willing to continue working for a Company is by Blau [13] Social Exchange Theory which is based on the idea that employees feel that mutual exchange is warranted and will feel obliged to stay because of the investments made in them by the Company as a result of its support, development or fair-treating. Much of the current empirical retention literature still bases itself on this exchange theory.

The mechanisms by which organisations can retain their employees is a subject of several studies within Nigeria context. The study by Amadi *et al*. [3] reveals that among SSA employees in the banking sector in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, reward systems, namely remuneration, promotion and recognition were positively correlated with employee retention, showing retit is still relevant when it comes to employee retention strategies in the financial services. Apart from monetary compensation, Okolie and Memeh [4] highlighted that the psychological contract, the implied and implicit duties and expectations of both parties are an important determinant of retention and violation of the psychological contract was found to be a cause of employee departure in Nigerian organizations. Similarly Ochuko [6] found that structured talent management practice had a significant negative impact on the intention of staff to leave organizations in the banks' sector of Nigeria and Oladimeji *et al*. [7] proved working climate in organizations has an impact on the relationship between employee turnover intention and employee productivity with formal HR policy manifested as informal HR policy in the Nigerian banking sector, implying that working climate in an organization is as important as formal HR policy in employee retention. Igbinoba *et al*. [8] continued this research by proposing a direct connection between employee retention mechanisms and organizational performance, emphasizing that employee retention is not just a retention metric but a factor that influences organizational performance.

In addition to these singular-construct studies other studies have been turning to the multidimensional measurement models that are able to incorporate factors that affect an employee's choice of retention. One of the most centered of these is the Retention Factor Scale created by Döckel [19] that translates the concept of retention into various dimensions such as compensation and benefits, job attributes, preparing and improvement, management belongings, career development and preparation and work-life balance. Since then, this scale has been adopted by numerous organisations and nation states owing to favourable psychometric characteristics of some of the scale's subdivisions. This is complemented by Martins [20] South African Culture Instrument (SACI) which is a comprehensive validated instrument which measures organizational culture and it was used extensively in subsequent studies involving retention and organization culture to capture the influence of the wider organization culture on employees' retention intentions. These older instruments were subsequently combined in a state owned enterprise context by Most recently, Maphanga and Olivier [21] integrated few of the above mentioned instruments, including Döckel's [19] Retention Factor Scale and Martins's [20] South African Culture Instrument into a combined model of employee retention thus revealing the continued empirical relevance of the instruments in extant employee retention research.

The literature combined suggests that talent retention can be seen as a multidimensional, multi-spectral phenomenon dichotomously and mutually contingent with transactional and relational/climate-based factors (from compensation to supervisory support, organizational culture and so on). Since this research was focused on strategic partnership with the line management and the influence that HRD may have on the organizational culture, these three dimensions of HRD's retention constructs, which are theoretically equivalent to this research, were used: Supervisory support (Basa); Organizational culture (Upton); Career growth and development [21]. The two dimensions were chosen to reflect, on the employee-experience side, the two constructs on the organizational-practice side of this study, SHRD1 and SHRD2, which were examined.

**Ability to Influence Organizational Culture and Supervisor Support**

Within HRD, being a central element of HRD's capacity to influence and shape the culture of the organization is considered to be one of the key characteristics of HRD strategic action. McCracken and Wallace [9,10] argue that HRD professionals who actively influence the culture of their organization in a learning direction create conditions under which supportive supervisory behaviour becomes a habit and not a mere individual disposition. An HRD culture can be one of one where one supervisor reinforces and models supportive behaviours towards his/her subordinate workers, as Blau [13] suggests that organizational climate influences supervisor-employee interpersonality, where "reciprocity" is a supportive response. On this basis, it is hypothesized:

**$H0_1$:** HRD's ability to influence organizational culture has no significant relationship with supervisor support

**Ability to Influence Organizational Culture and Organizational Culture**

The relationship is the most directly theoretically aligned relationship in the study as HRD abilities to shape the organizational culture [9,10] is conceptually the organizational-practice-side antecedent of the employee-perceived organizational culture captured by Martins [20] SA culture instrument. When HRD actively and successfully develops this strategic capability, it is expected that it will also foster a similar (or greater) level of coherence and firmness within the organizational culture; the two constructs stem from the same phenomenon and are measured from different perspectives - from HRD's strategic investments and from the employee's lived experience of the outcome. Accordingly:

**$H0_2$:** HRD's ability to influence organizational culture has no significant relationship with organizational culture

**Ability to Influence Organizational Culture and Career Growth and Development**

A component in employees' willingness to remain in an organization is career growth and development, which involves their perceptions of the opportunities opposing them for career advancement and career progress in this or that company [19]. Where Healthcare Recruitment and retention (HRD) has an authentic strategy and impact on organizational culture, the impact is theorised to be felt at the level of national visibility of career progression as an integral part of the organisation's value system, as opposed to addressing care progression at a more informal or ad hoc level. Following Becker's [12] Human Capital Theory, an organization with a strong HRD culture should align and show management's commitment to "employee growth as a strategic investment policy", which would be reflected in a more visible career track. It is therefore hypothesized:

**$H0_3$:** HRD's ability to influence organizational culture has no significant relationship with career growth and development

**Strategic Partnership with Line Management and Supervisor Support**

According to McCracken and Wallace [9,10], strategic partnership with line management is a central theme of advanced SHRD since HRD executives and line managers work together to determine the training needs of employees and to provide training interventions and support to employees at the operational level. Improving HRD-line management strategic tie should be expected to lead to better and more consistent supervisory efforts of the workers, which should be expected to be linked with the retention as observed by Amadi *et al*. [3] that supportive workplace practices have positive relationship with retention outcomes in Nigerian organizations. On this basis:

**$H0_4$:** Strategic partnership with line management has no significant relationship with supervisor support

**Strategic Partnership with Line Management and Organizational Culture**

A sound strategic relationship between HRD and line management suggests that line management are not merely beneficiaries of HR policy imposed from on high, but are actually partners in the overall process of developing the organization. The collaboration scheme is hypothesized to bolster and spread a common organizational culture: line managers, because of their firsthand interaction with employees, are active agents of the organization's values and norms that HRD is attempting to instill [9,10]. If the partnership is weak or inexistent, then culturally, HRD may not reach the operation level where the employees are experiencing it, in alignment with Oladimeji *et al*. [7] outcomes of organizational culture having a significant impact on the outcomes of the individual employees. Accordingly:

**$H0_5$:** Strategic partnership with line management has no significant relationship with organizational culture

**Strategic Partnership with Line Management and Career Growth and Development**

It is likely that line managers will be the first to notice an employee's developmental requirements and to recommend them for training and to get feedback from their employees on the organization's career path [9,10]. It was therefore logical to expect that a strong strategic link between HRD and line managers would have a direct impact on the career growth and development of employees through the development plans, which line managers will be the operating agents of HRD. This means it is similar to the result of the finding by Ochuko and Olumola [6] of evidence that clearly shows that structured practices in talent development significantly reduce the intention to quit with the organizations that Nigerian companies experience. It is therefore hypothesized:

**$H0_6$:** Strategic partnership with line management has no significant relationship with career growth and development (Figure 1)

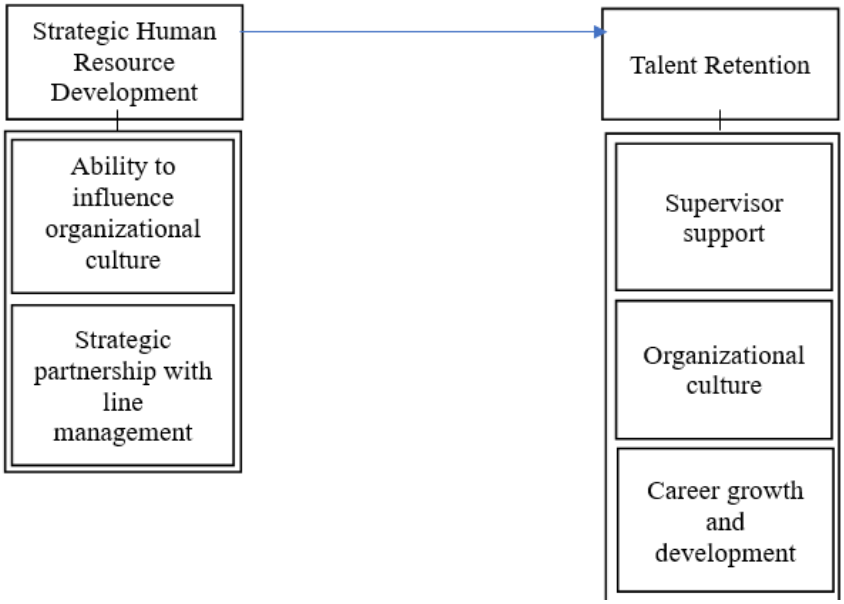



Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
Source: The dimensions and items of strategic human resource development were adapted from McCracken and Wallace [9,10] while the measures and items of talent retention were adapted from Maphanga and Olivier [21]

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Research Design, Population and Sampling Procedure**

This study used a causal research design and investigated the relationship between strategic human resource development and talent retention in commercial banks in Nigeria. The design was judged to be appropriate because the dimensions of SHRD (ability to influence organizational culture, strategic partnership with line management) and dimensions of talent retention (supervisor support, organizational culture, career growth and development) were considered to be hypothesized to have cause-and-effect relationship [22].

The population involved were the employees of the 24 licensed commercial banks in Nigeria with Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) regulatory framework [23]. The study however, was constrained by the geographical dispersion and size of the workforce of the banking industry which made it impossible to link the study to all the banks in the country; limiting the study to five commercial banks with operational branches in Ebonyi, Delta and Benue states were selected for this purpose. These banks had a relatively good number of permanent employees whohad knowledge regarding their strategic human resource development practices and talent retention and therefore they were considered as a readily available population. The accessible population consisted of 1,499 permanent employees, distributed as presented in Table 1.

The snowball sampling technique was adopted for the study because of the organizational constraints to direct access to employee's databases. The initial participants identified in one of the selected banks identified additional eligible permanent employees. Snowball was used as recommended to be used in cases where respondent access is limited in organizations due to gate keeping/confidentiality concerns [24]. Krejcie and Morgan [25] sample size determination table showed that 306 is the minimum sample size to be taken for the accessible population.

**Measurement of Variables and Data Analysis**

A structured questionnaire with two sections was used as a tool to gather primary data. Demographic details were captured in Section A and the study constructs measured on the five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) in Section B. Strategic Human Resource Development: Ability to Influence organizational culture and straregic parnership were adapted from McCracken and Wallace [9,10], while Talent retention: Supervisor support, Organization culture and Careergrowthanddevelopmentwere adapted from Maphanga and Olivier [21]. When copies of the questionnaire were retrieved 285 were complete and usable for this study yielding a 93.1% valid response rate.

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyse the data using the software SmartPLS 4. Indicator loadings, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, composite reliability, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) were used to assess the measure model. The structural model was tested by bootstrapping with the number of resamplings being 5000, path coefficient and coefficients of determination (R2) which was recommended by Hair *et al*. [22].

Table 1: Accessible Population of the Study

| State | Permanent Employees |
|---|---|
| Ebonyi State | 312 |
| Delta State | 768 |
| Benue State | 419 |
| Total | 1,499 |

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

| Demographic Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 162 | 56.8 |
| | Female | 123 | 43.2 |
| Age | 21-30 years | 70 | 24.6 |
| | 31-40 years | 118 | 41.4 |
| | 41-50 years | 67 | 23.5 |
| | 51 years and above | 30 | 10.5 |
| Educational Qualification | HND/Bachelor's Degree | 151 | 53.0 |
| | Postgraduate Diploma | 28 | 9.8 |
| | Master's Degree | 94 | 33.0 |
| | Doctorate Degree | 12 | 4.2 |
| Years of Work Experience | Less than 5 years | 63 | 22.1 |
| | 5-10 years | 121 | 42.5 |
| | 11-15 years | 69 | 24.2 |
| | Above 15 years | 32 | 11.2 |
| State of Operation | Ebonyi State | 67 | 23.5 |
| | Delta State | 145 | 50.9 |
| | Benue State | 73 | 25.6 |

Source: Field Survey Data (2026)

**Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

**Analysis of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents:** The demographic results show that the male and female respondents were 56.8 and 43.2% respectively indicating good gender representation of the employees of the banks studied. It is evident from the age distribution that the majority of the respondents were from within the age group 31-40 (41.4%) and 21-30 (24.6%) which is considered the active prospective experience in providing informed assessment about organizational practices.

In terms of educational qualification, majority of the respondents had HND or Bachelor's degree (53.0%) and a third of them have master's degree; which means that respondents have adequate educational exposure to understand strategic human resource development practices. Response patterns regarding work experience indicated a high number of respondents (42.5%) had 5-10 years of experience, meaning many of the respondents had enough organizational tenure and experience to assess talent retention efforts.

The analysis of respondents' distribution across the study areas indicates that 50.9% belonged to Delta State, 25.6% to Benue State and 23.5% to Ebonyi State. The higher representation of Delta State is coincidental to the agenda since it is larger in commercial and banking activities than the other two states. Overall, the demographic profile showed that the respondents had sufficient characteristics and experiences when it comes to studying the relationship between strategic human resource development and talent retention (Table 2).

**Test of Non-Response Bias**

The non-response bias was reviewed to check whether there were any significant differences in responses between early and late respondents. Information from late respondents are treated as proxies for non-respondents as recommended by Armstrong and Overton [26] which assumes that late respondents have similar characteristics as those that are less likely to respond. To test the effect of the various constructs of the study, an independent sample t-test was used to compare the means of the responses for early and late respondents.

All the results showed no significant difference between Early Respondents and Late Respondents on all of the study constructs with all of p values being higher than the 0.05 level. In particular, the mean differences shown between the two groups were slight, indicating that there were no significant differences in the respondents who were contacted later compared with those who were contacted earlier.

The study, therefore, found that there was no need to be concerned with non-response bias problems and the responses collected adequately showed the views of the respondents that were attached. This helps to ensure trustworthiness and validity of the subsequent statistical analysis (Table 3).

Table 3: Test of Non-Response Bias

| Constructs | Early Respondents (n = 145) Mean | Late Respondents (n = 140) Mean | Mean Difference | t-value | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ability to Influence Organizational Culture | 4.18 | 4.15 | 0.03 | 0.421 | 0.674 |
| Strategic Partnership with Line Management | 4.12 | 4.10 | 0.02 | 0.316 | 0.752 |
| Supervisor Support | 4.09 | 4.06 | 0.03 | 0.447 | 0.655 |
| Organizational Culture | 4.16 | 4.13 | 0.03 | 0.489 | 0.625 |
| Career Growth and Development | 4.05 | 4.02 | 0.03 | 0.392 | 0.695 |

Source: Field Survey Data (2026)

**Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM)**

Partial Least Square Structured Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) program using smartPLS 4 was used in this study to test the hypothesized relationship between Strategic Human Resource Development and talent retention. Among the variance-based multivariate analytical methods, PLS-SEM is an excellent method for prediction-oriented research, complex models with multiple latent constructs and studies for theory development and extension [22]. This method simultaneously evaluates the, (i) measurement model for constructs and the, (ii) structural relationships between the constructs, giving parameters structural estimates with robustness and reliability. In line with the two-stage process suggested, the measurement model was assessed first, followed by the assessment of the structural model and hypothesis testing [22].

**Measurement Model Assessment**

Before testing the hypothesized ideas, it was decided to examine the measurement model for checking reliability and validity of the latent constructs in this study. Measurement models are integral components of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) as they help determine if the measurement instruments are measuring what they are supposed to measure and that future analysis of the structural model will have meaningful and reliable results [22].

The reflective measurement model was evaluated as per the recommendation of Hair *et al*. [22] in terms of reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. The reliability of the indicators was evaluated through Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha$) and Composite Reliability (CR) level: $\geq 0.70$ = satisfactory reliability. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and outer loadings were used for convergent validity with 0.5 and 0.708 as the acceptable cut-off point respectively. Confirmatory analysis of the concept using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations yielded values below the suggested 0.90, thus demonstrating that the constructs are empirically different from each other.

To this end, the measurement model assessment is presented under the three subsections: Convergent validity, discriminant validity and reliability. These assessments give evidence of the psychometric quality of the measurement instrument before moving on to the assessment of the structural model and the tests for the hypotheses.

**Convergent Validity and Reliability**

**Convergent Validity:** When items being used to measure the same construct are correlated and are thought to measure the same idea there is an assessment of convergent validity. All the external loadings are greater than the recommended minimum value of 0.70 [27] in Table 4. This shows that every observed item has a high loading onto the intended latent construct and none of the items are deleted because of having a low loading. For the supportive measures eight four out of 5 constructs are above the 0.50 threshold with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values including: Ability to Influence Organisational Culture (0.600), Career Growth and Development (0.661), Organisational Culture (0.625), Strategic Partnership with Line Management (0.674) and Supervisor Support (0.622). This finding indicates that all constructs measure more than 50% of the variance in their respective indicators, contributing to the good convergent validity of the overall measurement model.

**Reliability**

The reliability was tested employing Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability ($\rho c$) which was used to test the internal reliability of the items within each construct. All Cronbach's alpha values are higher than the acceptable threshold for internal consistency of 0.70 [27] reflecting the acceptable level of internal reliability of a scale, ranging from 0.783 (Ability to Influence Organisational Culture) to 0.852 (Strategic Partnership with Line Management). The composite reliability values are also high (from 0.857 to 0.892), which generally supports the assumption that the different items within each construct are in fact reflecting an underlying construct. Interestingly, composite reliability values are indeed

higher than the corresponding Cronbach's alpha values in all five constructs, a typical pattern, inasmuch as composite reliability reflects the distinguishing outer loadings of items whereas Cronbach's alpha reflects the total outer loading.

Table 4: Convergent Validity and Reliability

| Construct/Item | Convergent Validity<br>Outer loading/AVE | Reliability<br>Cronbach's α | Composite reliability (ρc) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ability to Influence Organisational Culture | AVE = 0.600 | 0.783 | 0.857 |
| IOC1 | 0.740 | | |
| IOC2 | 0.776 | | |
| IOC3 | 0.803 | | |
| IOC4 | 0.778 | | |
| Career Growth and Development | AVE = 0.661 | 0.828 | 0.886 |
| CGD1 | 0.837 | | |
| CGD2 | 0.775 | | |
| CGD3 | 0.867 | | |
| CGD4 | 0.768 | | |
| Organisational Culture | AVE = 0.625 | 0.812 | 0.869 |
| ORC1 | 0.855 | | |
| ORC2 | 0.798 | | |
| ORC3 | 0.794 | | |
| ORC4 | 0.708 | | |
| Strategic Partnership with Line Management | AVE = 0.674 | 0.852 | 0.892 |
| SPM1 | 0.861 | | |
| SPM2 | 0.872 | | |
| SPM3 | 0.815 | | |
| SPM4 | 0.729 | | |
| Supervisor Support | AVE = 0.622 | 0.798 | 0.868 |
| SUS1 | 0.784 | | |
| SUS2 | 0.765 | | |
| SUS3 | 0.816 | | |
| SUS4 | 0.788 | | |

Table 5: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

| | Ability to influence Organisational Culture | Career Growth and Development | Organisational Culture | Strategic Partnership with line Management | Supervisor Support |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ability to influence_Organisational Culture | 0.775 | | | | |
| Career Growth_and Development | 0.462 | 0.813 | | | |
| Organisational_Culture | 0.584 | 0.635 | 0.791 | | |
| Strategic_Partnershipwith_line Management | 0.496 | 0.321 | 0.373 | 0.821 | |
| Supervisor_Support | 0.694 | 0.429 | 0.646 | 0.377 | 0.788 |

**Overall Conclusion**

Results presented in Table 4 support the conclusion that the measurement model has a high convergent validity (outer loadings and AVE) and high internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability). All five constructs (Ability to Influence Organisational Culture, Career Growth and Development, Organisational Culture, Strategic Partnership with Line Management and Supervisor Support) exceed the criteria set out and provide an acceptable level of empirical validity to move on to the discriminant validity and structural model (path) analysis.

**Discriminant Validity**

Table 5 shows the discriminant validity measure (determined by Fornell-Larcker criterion) where the diagonal elements (in bold) refer to the square root of each construct's AVE and the off-diagonal elements show the correlation between the two constructs. Discriminant validity: Every correlation value in the diagonal is smaller than the diagonal value in its row and column. At this site, each of the five diagonal correlation values (0.775, 0.813, 0.791, 0.821, 0.788) is higher than the corresponding off-diagonal value, which indicates discriminant validity in the model at this site (5). The highest inter-construct correlation amongst the two constructs is between the Ability to Influence Organisational Culture with the Supervisor Support construct in which the correlation is 0.694 and far from the two diagonals; the slight difference may need further analysis with HTMT to give more weight to the correlation.

Table 6 presents the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) of correlations, which is a more conservative measure of discriminant validity than Fornell-Larcker criterion. Discriminant validity is confirmed by HTMT values less than 0.85 (0.90 as recommended by certain researchers). Table 6 shows that all the values are below 0.85 with highest value Strategic Partnership with Line Management (0.828) and Supervisor Support and Organisational Culture (0.823) which

justified according to the 1st concept that both of the constructs are closely connected. Because the highest ratio of HTMT for all constructs is below the threshold of 0.85, the results of the tests indicate that the studied constructs obtained good discriminant validity, supporting the previous Fornell-Larcker results as presented in Table 5:

Table 6: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

| | Ability to influence_Organisational Culture | Career Growth_and Development | Organisational _Culture | Strategic Human_Resource Development | Strategic_Partnershipwith_line Management | Supervisor _Support | Talent_Retention |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ability to influence_Organisational Culture | | | | | | | |
| Career Growth_and Development | 0.574 | | 0.371 | 0.828 | 0.486 | 0.258 | |
| Organisational_Culture | 0.717 | 0.718 | | | | | |
| Strategic Human_Resource Development | 0.431 | 0.247 | | | | | |
| Strategic_Partnershipwith_line Management | 0.604 | 0.407 | 0.424 | | | | |
| Supervisor_Support | 0.768 | 0.521 | 0.823 | 0.316 | | | |
| Talent_Retention | 0.431 | 0.237 | 0.222 | 0.656 | 0.730 | | |

Table 7: Test of Hypotheses

| | | | Sample mean (M) | Standard deviation (STDEV) | T statistics (\|O/STDEV\|) | p values |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ability to influence Organisational Culture -> Supervisor Support | Original sample (O) | | | | | |
| | H1 | 0.655 | 0.663 | 0.084 | 7.812 | 0.000 |
| Ability to influence Organisational Culture -> Organisational Culture | H2 | 0.554 | 0.561 | 0.088 | 6.325 | 0.000 |
| Ability to influence Organisational Culture -> Career Growth and Development | H3 | 0.383 | 0.390 | 0.104 | 3.695 | 0.000 |
| Strategic Partnership with line Management -> Supervisor Support | H4 | 0.367 | 0.360 | 0.167 | 2.205 | 0.027 |
| Strategic Partnership with line Management -> Organisational Culture | H5 | 0.380 | 0.378 | 0.158 | 2.399 | 0.016 |
| Strategic Partnership with line Management -> Career Growth and Development | H6 | 0.331 | 0.333 | 0.187 | 1.770 | 0.077 |

Table 8: Coefficient of Determination and Effect Sizes

| Endogenous Construct | $R^2$ | Adjusted $R^2$ | Predictive Accuracy | Predictor → Endogenous Construct | $f^2$ | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Supervisor Support | 0.533 | 0.530 | Moderate | Ability to Influence Organisational Culture → Supervisor Support | 0.837 | Large |
| | | | | Strategic Partnership with Line Management → Supervisor Support | 0.110 | Small |
| Organisational Culture | 0.402 | 0.398 | Weak | Ability to Influence Organisational Culture → Organisational Culture | 0.440 | Large |
| | | | | Strategic Partnership with Line Management → Organisational Culture | 0.102 | Small |
| Career Growth and Development | 0.243 | 0.238 | Very Weak | Ability to Influence Organisational Culture → Career Growth and Development | 0.185 | Medium |
| | | | | Strategic Partnership with Line Management → Career Growth and Development | 0.039 | Small |

**Structural Model Assessment:**

- **H1:** Is supported (β = 0.655, p = 0.000). The best path in the model was ability to influence organisational cultureand supervisor support.Contention that HRD-defined culture makes supportive supervision behaviours more an organizational norm than an individual disposition
- **H2:** Is supported (β = 0.554, p = 0.000). Culture's significance in HRD's predictions for employees' perceptions of the organization's culture. The assertion here is that HRD's strategic function and employees' experience of culture are the same phenomenon seen from two perspectives
- **H3:** Is supported (β = 0.383, p = 0.000), though more weakly than H1 and H2. The small correlation of HRD's cultural influence with career growth and development supports treatment of growth as a separate retention factor
- **H4:** Is supported (β = 0.367, p = 0.027). strategic partnership yields a weaker coefficient but significant relationship with supervisor support, suggesting a less powerful effect than these two other paths
- **H5:** Is supported (β = 0.380, p = 0.016). The use of strategic partnership is a key determinant in organizational culture.
- **H6:** Is not supported (β = 0.331, p = 0.077). There is no significant relationship (p = 0.05) between strategic partnership with line management and career growth and development (Table 7)

**Coefficient of Determination and Effect Sizes**

As can be seen from the results, there is moderate level of explanation, the $R^2$ value is 0.533 or 53.3% of the variance in the predictor explains 53.3% of the variance in Supervisor Support. The value of $R^2$ obtained in this study for Organisational Culture is 0.402 and for Career Growth and Development is 0.243 which is relatively weak to determine the variance explained by the predictors. The adjusted $R^2$ values are close to the respective $R^2$ values, which indicates the stability of the models.

The results of the effect size also show that endogenous constructs are most influenced by the Ability to Influence Organisational Culture; with a large effect on the Supervisor Support ($f^2 = 0.837$) and Organisational Culture ($f^2 = 0.440$); then a medium effect for Career Growth and Development ($f^2 = 0.185$). On the other hand, Strategic Partnership with Line Management shows small effects for all three variables: Supervisor Support ($f^2 = 0.110$), Organisational Culture ($f^2 = 0.102$) and Career Growth and Development ($f^2 = 0.039$). Overall, the greatest influence in the structural model is Ability to Influence Organisational Culture (Table 8).

## DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis established a positive and significant relationship between the ability of Human Resource Development (HRD) to influence organisational culture and supervisor support. This implies that where HRD actively shapes organisational values, behaviours and workplace practices, employees are more likely to experience supportive supervision. The finding is consistent with McCracken and Wallace [9,10], who identified the ability to influence organisational culture as an important characteristic of strategic HRD and with Blau's [13] social exchange perspective, which emphasises the role of organisational conditions in shaping employee-supervisor relationships. The implication is that HRD should be positioned as a strategic function capable of promoting supportive supervisory practices. The first null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

The second hypothesis revealed a positive and significant relationship between the ability of HRD to influence organisational culture and organisational culture. This indicates that strategic HRD involvement in shaping organizational values, behaviours and practices contributes to strengthening the organizational culture. The finding supports McCracken and Wallace [9,10], who emphasised the strategic capacity of HRD to influence organizational culture and align employee behaviour with organizational objectives. The implication is that organisations should involve HRD in communicating organizational values, developing employees and reinforcing behaviours that support organisational objectives. The second null hypothesis was consequently rejected.

The third hypothesis established a positive and significant relationship between the ability of HRD to influence organizational culture and career growth and development. The finding suggests that an organizational culture influenced by strategic HRD is more likely to provide an environment that supports employee learning, professional development and career advancement. This agrees with Döckel [19], who identified career growth and development as an important factor in employee retention and is supported by Becker's [12] Human Capital Theory, which views employee development as a strategic investment. The implication is that organizations should integrate career development into their HRD and organisational culture strategies through continuous learning and development opportunities. The third null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

The fourth hypothesis showed a positive and significant relationship between strategic partnership with line management and supervisor support. This suggests that effective collaboration between HRD professionals and line managers enhances the ability of supervisors to provide appropriate support to employees. The finding agrees with McCracken and Wallace [9,10], who regarded partnership with line management as an important feature of strategic HRD and with Amadi *et al*. [3], who found that supportive workplace practices are associated with employee retention outcomes. The implication is that organizations should strengthen HRD-line management collaboration in employee development, coaching, performance management and workplace support. The fourth null hypothesis was rejected.

The fifth hypothesis established a positive and significant relationship between strategic partnership with line management and organizational culture. This finding indicates that collaboration between HRD and line managers contributes to the reinforcement of organizational values, norms and workplace practices. It supports McCracken and Wallace [9,10], who highlighted the role of line managers in implementing HRD initiatives and influencing organizational culture and is consistent with Oladimeji *et al*. [7], who reported a significant relationship between organizational culture and employee outcomes. The implication is that organizational culture should be promoted jointly by HRD and line managers, since line managers translate organizational values into everyday employee experiences. The fifth null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

The sixth hypothesis found a positive but non-significant relationship between strategic partnership with line management and career growth and development. Although collaboration between HRD and line management was positively associated with career development, the finding did not provide sufficient evidence of a significant

relationship. This differs from McCracken and Wallace [9,10], who emphasised the role of line managers in identifying employee development needs and Ochuko and Olumola [6], who reported significant effects of structured talent development practices. The implication is that HRD-line management collaboration alone may not guarantee career advancement. Organizations should complement such collaboration with formal career pathways, mentoring, coaching, succession planning and transparent promotion systems. The sixth null hypothesis was therefore not rejected.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that strategic HRD and effective partnership with line management are important for strengthening supervisor support and organizational culture and for creating an environment conducive to employee development. However, the non-significant relationship between line-management partnership and career growth suggests that formal career development structures are also necessary. The study therefore implies that organizations should reposition HRD as a strategic function and strengthen its collaboration with line management to support employee development, organizational culture and effective supervisory practices.

## CONCLUSION

The study makes it clear that the results of the organisation can be influenced by strategic human resource development practices. To be precise, it hikes the supervisors' support system, fortifies organisational culture and aids in career development and growth quite a bit better with HRD. It also finds that strategic partnership between HRD and line management has a significant impact on boosting the support of supervisors and organisational culture. It did show a positive association with career growth and development but it was not significant at the alpha level of 0.05. Overall, the results suggest that the strategic role of HRD becomes more significant when it is ingrained in the organisation's culture and implemented through positive management practices.

**Recommendations:**

- HRD managers should enhance their roles in organisation through the induction of learning, development, teamwork and co-operative values. This should be done by policies and development programmes that help supervisors to consistently demonstrate supportive behaviours, thereby increasing their supervisor support and organisational culture
- HRD should be incorporated into the strategic decision making of the organisation by including HRD members in implementing policies that impact the enjoyment of employees. This will help HRD to play more useful role in an organisation's culture and helps to build workplace culture for employee growth and development
- The strengthening of working partnerships between HRD and line managers is to be achieved by creating more frequent lines of contact, sharing in identifying development needs and jointly implementing training and development programmes. This will enhance the supervisors' support and contribute to the consistent availability of organisational values in employees' work experiences
- The organisations need to develop more formal and defined systems for career progression of its team members than just relying on career development partnership between individuals in the line of management. To enhance career growth and development, career pathways, mentoring, training opportunities, promotion criteria and transparency should be communicated to employees

**Implications of the Study**

These findings have implications for management practice. The results offer guidelines for HRD management: HRD cannot be regarded as a mere administrative function, but it can act as a strategic partner influence over organisational culture and supervisory practices. The firmness of supportive environments for employees should increase with HRD's influence in the organisation. The stronger the supportive environment created by the organisations, the more influence the HRD has.

The study findings also suggest that the line managers play a key role in the implementation of HRD practises. Poor HRD-line management relationships can hinder the implementation of strategic HRD policies in their daily actions and everyday practice. Though the relationship between strategic partnership and career is insignificant, it implies that the staffer's career may not just be guaranteed by strategic partnership. Career development structures are therefore necessary or desirable in addition to HRD and line management activities, in order to support organisations in their career development operations.

Academically, the study offers empirical findings on how recognizing strategic nature of HRD influences different aspects of superiors' support, organisational culture and career growth and development. It thus emphasizes the need for a more specialisation agenda and a breaking down of the construct of strategic HRD into individual HRD practices and its organisational outcomes.

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