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Strategic Talent Management and Employee Retention of Oil and Gas Servicing Firms in Rivers State

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Abstract
This study examined the effect of strategic talent management on employee retention in oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Employee retention was measured through two dimensions: job commitment and employees' loyalty. The study adopted a survey research design, targeting a population of 310 employees across selected oil and gas servicing firms. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using correlation and regression techniques. The results revealed a strong and positive relationship between strategic talent management and both measures of employee retention. Specifically, strategic talent management was found to significantly enhance job commitment and loyalty among employees, accounting for over fifty percent of the variance in retention outcomes. The findings underscore the importance of structured recruitment, training, career development, and succession planning in fostering workforce stability within specialized and competitive industries. The study contributes to theory by validating the Resource-Based View and Human Capital Theory in the context of talent management, while providing empirical evidence relevant for policy and practice in oil and gas servicing firms. It is recommended that firms implement strategic talent management practices to strengthen employee commitment and loyalty, thereby reducing turnover and enhancing organizational performance.

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Keywords: Strategic Talent Management, Employee Retention, Job Commitment, Employee Loyalty, Oil and Gas Servicing Firms, Rivers State

Introduction

Oil and gas servicing firms are integral to the exploration and production value chain in Nigeria, particularly in Rivers State, which is widely recognized as the industrial hub of the Niger Delta. Nigeria remains highly dependent on hydrocarbon resources, with proven crude oil reserves estimated at 36.97 billion barrels and natural gas reserves above 208 trillion cubic feet, figures that highlight the immense scale of operations requiring a reliable workforce to sustain production and service delivery (Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission, 2023). In recent years, the downstream industry has experienced fluctuations due to production instability, policy reforms, and supply chain disruptions, which have exerted significant pressure on the human resource capabilities of oil and gas servicing firms (Okeke, Eze, & Nwankwo, 2021). The Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) has increased domestic participation, yet ensuring the availability of qualified Nigerian professionals has made talent management and retention a crucial issue (Amah & Ahiauzu, 2021). Security challenges, oil theft, and disruptions in production further compound these pressures, making it difficult for firms to maintain workforce stability (Umeokafor, 2022). In this environment, strategic talent management emerges as a critical lever for retaining skilled employees who are essential for the efficiency, safety, and sustainability of oil and gas servicing operations.

Scholars have argued that effective talent management strategies improve employee retention, strengthen organizational resilience, and enhance productivity in resource-dependent sectors (Collings, Mellahi, & Cascio, 2019) [4]. The significance of this study lies in its attempt to provide empirical evidence on how strategic talent management practices influence employees' retention within oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State, thereby contributing to organizational sustainability, local content realization, and broader socio-economic development in Nigeria.

Strategic talent management can be described as a set of integrated practices that identify pivotal positions, attract and develop scarce skills, align workforce competencies with organizational objectives, and create long-term value through human capital (Collings, Scullion, & Vaiman, 2015) [5]. The growing body of research suggests that talent management practices, when strategically aligned, significantly influence employees' decisions to remain in an organization (Mensah, 2019) [9]. Empirical studies have emphasized that effective recruitment, fair selection, leadership support, training and development, and career progression opportunities all play key roles in sustaining employee retention across industries (King, 2017; Mensah & Bawole, 2020). Furthermore, research indicates that talent practices often operate through mediating factors such as employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, which subsequently reduce turnover intentions (Al Ariss, Cascio, & Paauwe, 2014) [1]. For oil and gas servicing firms that operate in project-based environments, stable retention reduces learning curves between assignments and protects productivity amid changing client demands (Glaister, Karacay, Demirbag, & Tatoglu, 2018). Consequently, this study situates employees' retention as the outcome of strategic talent management and operationalizes it through two key measures, namely job commitment and employee loyalty, which reflect the behavioral and attitudinal dimensions of employees' willingness to remain and contribute productively within organizations (Nguyen, 2020). The choice of these measures ensures that retention is examined from both affective attachment and loyalty perspectives, aligning with management strategies that influence employees' long-term intentions.

The Nigerian oil and gas labor market continues to face significant challenges, including cyclical price fluctuations, global energy transition pressures, and evolving skill demands (Obeidat, Al Bakri, & Elbanna, 2020). Surveys of the international energy workforce have shown high levels of contractual employment and significant labor mobility, thereby increasing the cost of replacing experienced staff and intensifying the need for effective retention strategies (Schuler, Jackson, Tarique, & Tarique, 2011) [14]. At the macroeconomic level, regulatory reforms such as the Petroleum Industry Act of 2021 and industry volatility in 2022 and 2023 have required firms to adapt rapidly while still meeting quality and safety benchmarks (Okeke et al., 2021). Within the Niger Delta, operational risks related to oil theft and insecurity continue to affect workforce planning, highlighting the urgent need for strategies that enhance commitment and loyalty (Umeokafor, 2022). Contemporary studies have established that talent management interventions such as employee development, performance management, and leadership support positively influence retention outcomes (Collings et al., 2019; Mensah, 2019) [4, 9]. For oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State, such interventions reduce costs associated with recruitment, onboarding, and training, while also preserving institutional knowledge crucial for complex technical operations such as equipment maintenance and offshore support (Amah & Ahiauzu, 2021). The significance of studying this phenomenon in the Rivers State context is that it addresses the local realities of workforce retention in a high-pressure, project-driven industry where most research has previously focused on operators or other sectors rather than the service supply chain. Existing evidence on human resource management in the Nigerian oil and gas sector remains fragmented, with most studies focusing on single dimensions such as employee engagement, reward systems, or turnover intentions (Adeleye, 2020). In Rivers State, recent studies have highlighted that structured onboarding and training significantly influence employee experience and retention outcomes in oil and gas firms (Agwu & Okechukwu, 2019). Others have found that downsizing and layoffs create long-term retention risks by eroding trust and psychological safety among employees (Onwuchekwa & Chukwuma, 2021). Similarly, research on multinational oil and gas companies in Nigeria has shown that retirement and healthcare benefits influence employees' willingness to remain, suggesting that reward structures are critical to retention strategies (Adeleye, 2020). At the same time, comparative studies from other industries underscore that integrated talent management practices, when linked to organizational strategy, enhance job satisfaction and commitment, thereby reducing turnover (Mensah & Bawole, 2020). These insights collectively highlight the importance of adopting a holistic approach rather than piecemeal interventions. Therefore, the present study is significant because it synthesizes the various strands of evidence into a coherent model that empirically examines the relationship between strategic talent management and employees' retention in oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State, with retention operationalized through the twin measures of job commitment and employee loyalty (Nguyen, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

The oil and gas servicing industry in Rivers State has remained a critical driver of Nigeria's economy, yet the sector is plagued by persistent human resource challenges, particularly the inability to retain skilled employees. Amidst the implementation of local content policies intended to foster indigenous capacity, firms still grapple with high employee turnover, loss of technical expertise, and instability in workforce planning (Amah & Ahiauzu, 2021). Retention challenges are further exacerbated by global industry fluctuations, insecurity in the Niger Delta, and stiff competition for scarce talent from multinational operators and other high-paying industries (Okeke, Eze, & Nwankwo, 2021). These realities impose significant costs on servicing firms, including increased expenditure on recruitment, onboarding, and training, as well as productivity losses due to prolonged skill gaps. Existing empirical research has highlighted that while talent management practices such as training, rewards, and career development can enhance retention, their adoption among service providers remains fragmented and inconsistent (Mensah, 2019) [9]. Consequently, many firms fail to institutionalize strategic approaches that could build commitment and loyalty among employees. There is therefore an urgent need for empirical investigation into how strategic talent management practices can be leveraged to strengthen employees' retention in oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State. This study is designed to address this gap and provide evidence-based insights that can guide managers, policymakers, and stakeholders in the industry.

Objectives of the Study

The study is guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between strategic talent management and job commitment of employees in oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State.
2. To assess the relationship between strategic talent management and employee loyalty in oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State.

Research Questions

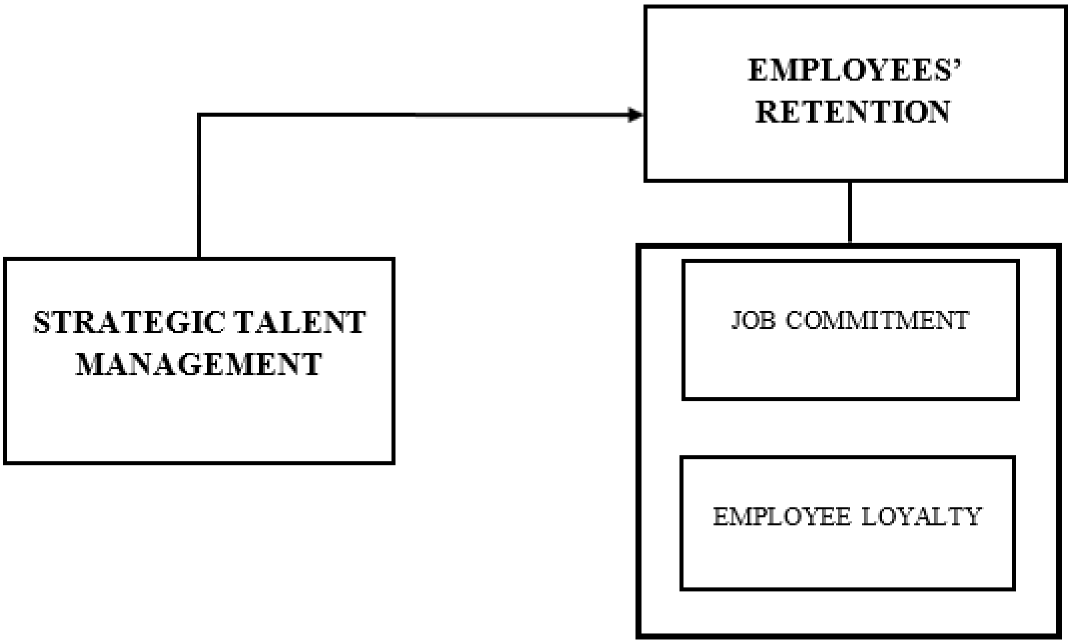
1. What is the relationship between strategic talent management and job commitment of employees in oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between strategic talent management and employee loyalty in oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State?

Research Hypotheses

The study is anchored on the following hypotheses, stated in null form:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between strategic talent management and job commitment of employees in oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between strategic talent management and employee loyalty in oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State.



Source: Conceptualized by the Researcher (2025)

Fig 1: Conceptual framework Strategic Talent Management and Employees' Retention of Oil and Gas Servicing Firms in Rivers State.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital Theory, first advanced by Becker (1964), posits that the skills, knowledge, and abilities embedded in individuals constitute valuable assets that contribute to organizational performance and societal development. According to this theory, investment in people through education, training, and development enhances their productivity and yields measurable returns both to the individual and the organization. Within the organizational context, firms that strategically allocate resources to human capital development through structured training, capacity-building initiatives, and career development programs can foster enhanced employee performance and long-term organizational growth (Schultz, 1993). The theory emphasizes that human capital, much like physical or financial capital, must be nurtured and retained to generate sustainable competitive advantage. In knowledge-intensive industries such as oil and gas, where operations depend on technical expertise and precision, the importance of human capital becomes more pronounced.

In relation to this study, the Human Capital Theory provides a relevant foundation for explaining how strategic talent management practices influence employees' retention. Oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State rely heavily on skilled engineers, technicians, and project managers, whose retention is vital for consistent service delivery. By investing in these employees through development programs, mentorship, and career growth opportunities, firms not only improve employees' job commitment but also build loyalty that reduces turnover risks. This theoretical underpinning aligns with the study's measures of employees' retention, namely job commitment and employee loyalty, as these are strengthened when individuals perceive value in the developmental resources provided by their organizations. Thus, the Human Capital Theory highlights the significance of deliberate and sustained investment in employees as a driver of both organizational resilience and reduced attrition.

Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory, popularized by Barney (1991), emphasizes that an organization's resources and capabilities are central to achieving sustainable competitive advantage. The theory argues that resources must be valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable for firms to attain and sustain superior performance. While tangible resources such as equipment and infrastructure contribute to performance, intangible assets such as human skills, organizational culture, and tacit knowledge often provide the most enduring advantage. Human capital is therefore considered a strategic resource that, when effectively managed, enhances organizational success and resilience (Wernerfelt, 1984). The RBV perspective underscores that talent management practices are not merely administrative activities but strategic investments in resources that competitors may find difficult to replicate.

For this study, the RBV Theory is particularly relevant in demonstrating the strategic importance of talent management practices in retaining employees within oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State. Skilled personnel who possess specialized technical knowledge represent rare and valuable resources that are critical to project execution and service delivery. Strategic talent management practices such as succession planning, career development, and leadership support help organizations retain these employees, thereby safeguarding their unique resource base. Employees who feel valued and supported are more likely to remain committed and loyal, thereby ensuring that the firm continues to derive competitive advantage from its workforce. This aligns directly with the study's objective of assessing the influence of strategic talent management on employees' retention, since the RBV framework emphasizes that retaining valuable human resources is central to organizational competitiveness and survival in dynamic sectors such as oil and gas.

Conceptual Review

Strategic Talent Management

Strategic talent management has emerged as a critical approach to addressing workforce challenges in contemporary organizations, particularly in industries that are knowledge-intensive and highly competitive. It refers to a deliberate set of human resource practices that focus on attracting, developing, engaging, and retaining individuals who occupy pivotal positions essential for organizational success (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). Unlike traditional human resource management, which applies generalized policies to all employees, strategic talent management emphasizes differentiated approaches by identifying roles that contribute disproportionately to organizational outcomes. This involves aligning talent strategies with organizational objectives, ensuring that employee skills and capabilities are harnessed to achieve long-term goals (Vaiman, Scullion, & Collings, 2017). For oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State, strategic talent management is particularly crucial given the technical complexity of operations, the shortage of specialized skills, and the pressures of regulatory compliance and project timelines. By systematically identifying critical roles and strategically managing the individuals who occupy them, organizations can create value and sustain competitive advantage in volatile environments.

A central dimension of strategic talent management is employee development, which includes training, mentoring, and career advancement opportunities that equip employees with the competencies needed to meet changing organizational demands. Studies have shown that organizations that invest in comprehensive development initiatives tend to achieve higher retention rates, as employees perceive such practices as signals of commitment to their personal and professional growth (Mensah, 2019) [9]. Another key aspect is succession planning, which ensures continuity in leadership and technical expertise by preparing internal candidates to fill critical roles as vacancies arise (Glaister et al., 2018). These practices reduce the risk of operational disruption and create pathways for employees to envision long-term careers within the organization. In high-risk industries such as oil and gas, where safety and quality are paramount, strategic development and succession planning also foster a culture of stability and reliability that further strengthens employees' commitment and loyalty. Thus, strategic talent management goes beyond short-term staffing needs to embed resilience in the workforce.

Furthermore, reward and recognition systems are integral components of strategic talent management that directly influence employee retention. Fair compensation, performance-based incentives, and non-financial recognition such as acknowledgment of achievements and opportunities for career progression enhance employees' sense of value and belonging (King, 2017). Research has consistently established that organizations with robust reward structures experience higher job commitment and stronger loyalty among their employees (Al Ariss, et al., 2014) [1]. In the context of oil and gas servicing firms, where employees often operate in demanding and high-risk conditions, recognition and equitable reward systems are crucial for reducing turnover intentions. Additionally, strategic workforce planning, which anticipates future skill requirements and labor market shifts, ensures that organizations remain prepared to manage talent shortages and industry changes (Mensah & Bawole, 2020) [9]. Collectively, these practices underscore the holistic nature of strategic talent management, which integrates multiple dimensions of human resource practices into a coherent system that sustains employee retention and organizational performance.

Employees' Retention

Employees' retention refers to an organization's ability to retain its workforce over time, particularly those individuals whose knowledge, skills, and contributions are critical to organizational success. Retention has become a priority issue in contemporary organizations due to the high costs associated with turnover, including recruitment, training, lost productivity, and diminished morale (Nguyen, 2020). In the context of oil and gas servicing firms, retention is even more critical because employees often possess specialized technical skills that are not easily replaceable. Research has shown that when organizations effectively implement retention strategies, they reduce turnover intentions and create a stable workforce that can drive efficiency and innovation (Amah & Ahiauzu, 2021). Retention strategies are therefore more than reactive measures to prevent attrition; they represent proactive approaches that build long-term organizational resilience. The oil and gas servicing industry in Rivers State exemplifies a sector where retention is directly tied to operational sustainability, given the reliance on experienced technicians, engineers, and project managers whose expertise directly affects service quality and safety standards.

A key dimension of employees' retention lies in the creation of a work environment that fosters job satisfaction and psychological attachment to the organization. Employees who feel valued, supported, and fairly treated are more likely to exhibit job commitment and demonstrate loyalty to their employers (Mensah, 2019) [9]. Organizational culture, leadership style, and employee engagement initiatives play decisive roles in shaping retention outcomes. For instance, supportive leadership and transparent communication have been shown to reduce turnover intentions by strengthening trust and organizational identification (King, 2017). Moreover, the provision of professional development opportunities and career progression pathways signals to employees that their long-term growth is aligned with the organization's strategic direction, which enhances loyalty and reduces attrition (Glaister et al., 2018). These factors underscore that retention is not an isolated human resource outcome but a reflection of the broader organizational climate that either encourages or discourages employees from staying.

Employees' retention is also influenced by external factors such as labor market conditions, industry competition, and regulatory policies. In highly competitive sectors such as oil and gas, where demand for specialized talent often exceeds supply, employees are presented with alternative employment opportunities that may offer higher remuneration or more favorable working conditions (Obeidat, Al Bakri, & Elbanna, 2020). This mobility increases the challenge of retaining top talent and places pressure on organizations to differentiate themselves as employers of choice. Scholars have argued that retention strategies should therefore be holistic, combining both intrinsic factors such as recognition, engagement, and meaningful work, and extrinsic factors such as compensation and benefits (Al Ariss et al., 2014) [1]. For oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State, achieving effective retention requires balancing these dynamics within an environment characterized by industry volatility, security challenges, and changing skill requirements due to the global energy transition. By integrating these elements, organizations can foster both job commitment and loyalty, the two key indicators of employees' retention examined in this study.

Job Commitment

Job commitment represents the psychological attachment and dedication an employee has toward their work and the organization. It encompasses the willingness of employees to exert discretionary effort, align with organizational goals, and remain persistent in fulfilling their duties even under challenging circumstances (Irefin & Mechanic, 2014) [7]. Employees with high levels of job commitment demonstrate consistency in performance and contribute to organizational stability by reducing voluntary turnover. In the oil and gas servicing industry, job commitment is particularly significant due to the technical demands, safety concerns, and project-driven nature of operations. Commitment ensures that employees maintain focus, adhere to safety standards, and perform reliably in environments where errors can have costly or hazardous consequences. Studies have shown that organizations that nurture job commitment through recognition, fair treatment, and career development achieve superior retention outcomes compared to those that do not prioritize these practices (Karatepe, 2016).

Job commitment is not only shaped by organizational practices but also by individual perceptions of fairness, trust, and value alignment. When employees perceive congruence between their personal values and the organization's mission, they are more likely to internalize organizational objectives and sustain their employment relationship over time (Chughtai & Buckley, 2011). Moreover, supportive work environments, opportunities for skill development, and transparent communication channels foster stronger job commitment. In oil and gas servicing firms, the presence of challenging yet meaningful assignments also enhances employees' sense of purpose, thereby reinforcing their commitment. Scholars have consistently emphasized that job commitment serves as a mediating factor between retention strategies and actual employee retention, underscoring its relevance as a measurable construct in this study (Al Zefeiti & Mohamad, 2017).

Employee Loyalty

Employee loyalty reflects the degree of allegiance and sense of belonging those employees develop toward their organization over time. Unlike job commitment, which emphasizes task dedication, loyalty captures the emotional and relational dimension of retention, including trust, advocacy, and long-term attachment (Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2009) [12]. Loyal employees are less likely to explore external employment opportunities, more likely to defend the organization in external forums, and willing to contribute to organizational goals even when immediate personal gains are limited. In industries such as oil and gas servicing, where employees are frequently targeted by competitors with attractive offers, loyalty acts as a critical buffer against poaching and voluntary turnover (Jain & Singh, 2013). The presence of loyalty within the workforce signals organizational credibility, leadership integrity, and the effectiveness of human resource practices that foster enduring employee-employer relationships.

Employee loyalty is cultivated when organizations demonstrate consistent fairness, provide competitive rewards, and establish trust-based relationships with their workforce. Elements such as open communication, transparent decision-making, and recognition of employee contributions strengthen the emotional contract between employees and their employers (Matzler & Renzl, 2006) [8]. Furthermore, when employees perceive stability, respect, and genuine concern for their welfare, their loyalty intensifies, leading to reduced turnover and increased advocacy. In the context of oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State, employee loyalty is further influenced by socio-economic conditions, industry volatility, and organizational responses to security and welfare concerns. Firms that successfully address these contextual challenges are more likely to build a loyal workforce capable of sustaining long-term service quality and operational efficiency. This justifies the adoption of employee loyalty as a central measure of employees' retention in this study.

Empirical Review

Friday and Mlanga (2019) examined ten oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State using a cross sectional survey of managers and supervisors and reported that talent management measured as attraction, development, and retention was positively and significantly related to workers commitment, including continuance and affective commitment. Their analysis showed large positive correlations between each talent management dimension and the commitment measures, and the authors recommended stronger compensation and development bundles to deepen attachment to the firm. These findings suggest that strategic talent management can be tested as a predictor of job commitment in oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State, reinforcing our choice of job commitment as a measure of employees retention.

Barine and Don Baridam (2024) [2] analyzed retirement plan practices and retention outcomes in multinational oil and gas companies in Nigeria and found that well designed retirement plans, pensions, and career end security were significantly associated with staff retention and lower turnover intention. The study highlighted that benefits clarity and perceived fairness were as important as absolute benefit size in shaping loyalty. Retirement security is a strategic retention lever in capital intensive industries; therefore, our model should treat rewards and benefits within strategic talent management as potential drivers of loyalty, the second measure of employees' retention.

Charity (2017) investigated human resource management practices and core employee retention in oil and gas companies in Port Harcourt and reported that selection quality, training and development, leadership, and culture jointly predicted retention, while poor supervisory support increased intention to quit. The work connected structured development pipelines to longer tenure among technical staff. Because development and supervisory support are integral to strategic talent management, this evidence justifies testing development practices against both job commitment and loyalty among servicing firms in Rivers State.

Arubayi (2022) assessed engagement strategies and employee retention in Nigeria and found that meritocracy, employer branding, and succession planning all improved retention, with meritocracy ranked most influential. The results imply that transparent advancement and perceived fairness strengthen psychological attachment to the organization. Succession planning and fair advancement policies should be treated as strategic talent management mechanisms with direct pathways to loyalty and commitment in the Rivers State context.

Festus and Asawo (2020) [6] studied oil drilling and well servicing companies in Rivers State and concluded that talent management capabilities enhanced competitiveness by reducing attrition and improving service reliability. The authors linked focused recruitment, skill development, and retention incentives to stability in project delivery. Although positioned around competitiveness, the results indicate that strategic talent management lowers attrition risks, which aligns with our retention measures and supports testing development and retention practices against job commitment and loyalty among servicing firms.

Asikhia (2022) explored employee mobility and skills retention in upstream oil and gas firms in Nigeria and showed that high external mobility without internal development pathways eroded firm specific skills and retention. The study recommended structured mobility and career ladders to keep scarce competencies. Internal mobility and career pathing are strategic talent management elements that likely influence loyalty; therefore, testing their effects on employees retention is warranted for servicing firms that compete for scarce technical talent.

Gabriel, Jaja and Ifidon (2024) examined training practices in oil companies in Port Harcourt and found that apprenticeship and structured induction improved performance and reduced early exit risks by improving socialization. The authors argued that context sensitive training mitigates environmental and operational stressors common in Port Harcourt. Since early exit is a retention concern, training and induction within strategic talent management should positively influence job commitment and loyalty in Rivers State servicing firms.

Ekundayo (2023) investigated employees training and development in selected oil services companies in Port Harcourt and reported that targeted development improved organizational performance and was associated with stronger attachment among technical staff, particularly where development was linked to clear advancement. Development investments within strategic talent management are expected to heighten commitment and perceived reciprocity, thus strengthening our retention measures.

Ebirim and Onyema (2023) studied training and job security in oil and gas companies in Rivers State and found that perceived training relevance predicted job security perceptions which in turn reduced turnover intention. The study emphasized that job security perceptions mediate the link between capability development and retention. Because loyalty is sensitive to perceived security, our model should recognize the indirect effect of development on loyalty via security cues in servicing operations.

Opuiyo and Lawrence (2024) discussed strategic intelligence and efficiency in the Nigerian oil and gas sector and noted that micromanagement undermined workforce trust and attachment, while strategic intelligence practices supported empowerment and retention of critical talent. Although not a pure retention test, the evidence connected managerial style to people stability. Managerial style is part of the strategic talent management climate and may shape both job commitment and loyalty among servicing staff.

Across studies in Rivers State and the wider Nigerian oil and gas space, strategic talent management practices that blend selective attraction, planned development, fair rewards, succession planning, and dignified management are consistently associated with stronger job commitment and higher loyalty, which supports the specification of employees' retention as a two measure criterion in the current inquiry.

Methodology

The study employed a quantitative research design with a survey strategy to examine the relationship between strategic talent management and employees' retention in oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State. The total population comprised 1,248 employees drawn from twelve registered oil and gas servicing firms, and from this figure, a sample size of 302 study elements was determined using the Taro Yamane formula at a 5 percent margin of error. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was adopted to ensure fair representation across firms, after which simple random sampling was applied in the final selection of respondents. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed from validated scales, segmented to capture the predictor variable, strategic talent management, and the criterion variable, employees' retention, operationalized through measures of job commitment and loyalty. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity checks by experts, and a pilot test with thirty respondents outside the sample confirmed reliability with Cronbach's alpha coefficients above 0.70. Data collection involved direct administration and retrieval of the instrument to ensure a high response rate, while analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics to summarize demographic information and inferential statistics, specifically Pearson's correlation and multiple regression, to test the hypotheses and ascertain the predictive strength of strategic talent management on employees' retention, with a significance level set at 0.05.

Results

The analysis began with an assessment of the response rate. Out of the 302 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 287 were correctly completed and returned, yielding a response rate of 95.0 percent, which was considered sufficient for statistical analysis. Demographic characteristics were first examined to establish the profile of respondents before proceeding to the inferential analysis.

Table 1: Correlation Analysis of Strategic Talent Management and Employees' Retention

Variables	Job Commitment	Loyalty	Strategic Talent Management
Job Commitment	1	0.731**	0.684**
Loyalty	0.731**	1	0.702**
Strategic Talent Management	0.684**	0.702**	1

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation results indicate that strategic talent management is positively and significantly related to employees' retention in oil and gas servicing firms. Specifically, strategic talent management showed a strong positive correlation with job commitment ($r = 0.684$, $p < 0.01$) and with loyalty ($r = 0.702$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that effective implementation of strategic talent management practices such as career development, succession planning, and employee engagement is associated with higher employee job commitment and loyalty.

Table 2: Regression Analysis of Strategic Talent Management on Employees' Retention

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1 (Constant + STM)	0.761	0.579	0.577	0.428		
ANOVA Table						
Model	**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**		**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	65.213	1	65.213		122.35	0.000
Residual	47.457	285	0.167			
Total	112.670	286				
Coefficients Table						
Predictor		**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**t**	**Sig.**
(Constant)		0.412	0.102	—	4.039	0.000
Strategic Talent Management		0.693	0.063	0.761	11.065	0.000

The regression analysis revealed that strategic talent management significantly predicts employees' retention ($R = 0.761$, $R^2 = 0.579$, $F = 122.35$, $p < 0.05$). The coefficient results indicate that a one-unit increase in strategic talent management leads to a 0.693 unit increase in employees' retention. This demonstrates that strategic talent management accounts for 57.9 percent of the variation in employees' retention among oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State.

Interpretation of Hypotheses Testing

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between strategic talent management and employees' job commitment in oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State.

The results reject the null hypothesis, as correlation analysis indicated a strong and positive relationship between strategic talent management and job commitment ($r = 0.684$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that strategic talent management enhances job commitment among employees.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between strategic talent management and employees' loyalty in oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State.

The results also reject the null hypothesis, as a significant positive relationship was found between strategic talent management and loyalty ($r = 0.702$, $p < 0.01$). This confirms that strategic talent management improves employees' loyalty.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that strategic talent management has a significant and positive effect on employee retention in oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State. The regression outcomes demonstrated that the predictor variable explained a substantial proportion of the variation in the criterion variable, affirming that effective management of talent is critical to stabilizing the workforce in this sector. This result supports the position of Al Ariss, et al. (2021) that organizations that consciously plan, attract, develop, and retain their workforce are more likely to experience sustainable retention outcomes. The evidence from this study confirms that when talent management is treated as a strategic priority, organizations benefit from a workforce that is both committed and loyal.

The result also showed that job commitment, as one of the measures of employee retention, is significantly influenced by the extent to which talent management is strategically deployed. Employees are more committed to their roles when they perceive that their growth and contributions are valued and supported. This outcome is consistent with the findings of Mensah (2019) [9] who argued that structured and well-aligned talent management initiatives build employee confidence, foster greater attachment to tasks, and ultimately strengthen commitment to organizational goals. The implication is that job commitment does not arise in isolation but is enhanced through deliberate organizational practices that invest in employees' career development, recognition, and alignment of individual skills with organizational objectives.

In addition, the findings highlighted that employees' loyalty is positively associated with the adoption of strategic talent management practices. Loyalty in this context reflects the willingness of employees to remain with the organization and identify with its mission over time. The results demonstrated that where organizations integrate talent management into their overall strategy, employees are more inclined to display long-term attachment and remain within the system despite competitive labor market dynamics. This aligns with the submissions of Chitsaz-Isfahani and Boustani (2014) [3] who reported that organizations that pay strategic attention to employee development and succession planning are able to foster loyalty and reduce turnover. The current study therefore affirms that loyalty is not merely a product of external incentives but is cultivated when employees experience a sense of belonging and career assurance.

The implications of these findings are particularly significant for oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State, given the highly specialized nature of the industry and the intense competition for skilled labor. Organizations that fail to embed talent management as a strategic tool may encounter high attrition rates, escalating recruitment costs, and the loss of institutional knowledge. Conversely, firms that prioritize strategic talent management are better positioned to enhance commitment and loyalty among their workforce, thereby ensuring organizational stability and long-term competitiveness.

Theoretically, the findings validate the assumptions of both the Resource-Based View and Human Capital Theory. The Resource-Based View emphasizes the centrality of valuable and inimitable resources such as human capital as sources of sustained competitive advantage. This is reflected in the significant link between strategic talent management and employee retention established in this study. Similarly, Human Capital Theory is reinforced by the findings, as continuous investment in human resources through career development, engagement, and growth initiatives enhances both job commitment and loyalty, thereby strengthening the organization's long-term capacity for survival and growth.

Finally, the findings address the contextual gap in the empirical review by providing evidence specific to oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State. While earlier works established the relevance of talent management in broader organizational settings, this study contributes localized evidence that demonstrates how strategic management of talent directly improves employee retention in an industry with unique demands and competitive pressures.

Conclusion

The study investigated the relationship between strategic talent management and employee retention in oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State. The findings established that talent acquisition, development, and management practices significantly influence employee retention, particularly through the dimensions of job commitment and employee loyalty. This suggests that oil and gas servicing firms that deliberately implement strategic talent management frameworks are better positioned to retain their workforce, minimize turnover, and sustain operational efficiency. The results also affirm the alignment of the study with extant theoretical and empirical literature, underscoring the importance of strategic human capital practices in contexts marked by high competition for skilled labor.

Recommendations

1. Oil and gas servicing firms in Rivers State should strengthen their talent acquisition and development policies to foster greater job commitment among employees.
2. Management should deliberately implement strategic retention initiatives such as reward systems, career growth pathways, and supportive work environments to improve employee loyalty.

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