

Executive Development of Selected Manufacturing Firms in Port Harcourt City, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: The study assessed the executive development of selected manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt City, Nigeria. An adapted survey questionnaire and personally formulated interview guide questions were used to solicit responses to the following research objectives, namely: to identify the level of hard and soft skills of managers/executives; to identify the differences in skills of top, middle, and specialized executives; to identify the extent of the practice of off-the-job and on-the-job executive development; and finally, to uncover the problems preventing the full implementation of executive development programs in manufacturing companies. The human capital theory and resource-based theory guided the study.

Study findings show that managers/executives of manufacturing companies had very high levels of hard and soft skills, transforming them into efficient leaders. The study further established no significant difference in skills of top, middle, and specialized executives because they perform similar roles and functions in manufacturing companies. Findings also revealed that manufacturing companies' management fully implemented off-the-job and on-the-job training methods for managers/executives. Finally, the study established that several challenges were preventing the full implementation of executive development, particularly lack of funds, and is attributed to factors such as the high cost of diesel to power machines, erratic power supply, and duplication of government agencies for tax collection purposes, thus necessitating the diversion of training funds for these needs. Based on these findings, the researcher concluded that the proposed recommendations may be used to address the issues raised in this study.

I. THE PROBLEM

Globally, executive development is a well-known human capital management role that methodically deals with refining the skills and competence of executive employees (including managers, middle managers, and specialized executives) for enhancing career growth prospects, leadership roles, service delivery, and optimum utilization of managerial resources (Master et al., 2022; Knowles, 2021; and Kumlangphaet, 2021). As indicated by Klar et al. (2019), developing employees or managers in executive positions is a process that involves providing them with soft and hard skills in managerial functions, which could be acquired either through on-the-job or off-the-job training methods.

For the purpose of this study and convenience, executive employees will be used interchangeably with managers and executives throughout the paper, and this refers to top managers, middle managers, and specialized executives. Effective executive development training is a program that provides managers with opportunities to sharpen their critical thinking capabilities and take critical decisions, especially in terms of crises that affect work operations and processes. Hence, executive employees must be given the opportunity to improve their soft skills which includes communication, interpersonal, management, team work, entrepreneurial, leadership, work ethics, and conflict management) and their hard skills including operational planning, labor division, evaluation, managerial knowledge, financial management, marketing, and logistics through on-the-job training methods that may include coaching, understudy, job rotation, special projects, committee assignments, multiple management, and selective reading, and off-the-job training methods that may also include special courses, case studies, role playing, conferences, syndicate method, management games, and brainstorming to deal with high level responsibilities in line with the current realities in the business environment (Remedios, 2021; Ibay, Pa-Alisbo, 2020; Kasingu, 2018; Tinapati & Moronge, 2018; MburuMaina & Waithaka, 2017; Patacsil et al., 2017).

Such skills not only ensure that the executive employee uses effective and efficient techniques in tackling workplace issues but also lead other employees in achieving the highest level of commitment, which is manifested in reducing turnover and increasing employee loyalty to the organization (Triwidyati & Pangastuti, 2021; and Sopa et al.,

2020). Achieving the desired organizational commitment suggests that leaders of organizations, who are also known as executive employees, lead the people they serve by consistently showing the acceptable kinds of behaviors, aptitude, and professionalism in discharging their duties and responsibilities to the organization. This can be actualized when executive employees, such as managers and employees occupying senior management positions, are provided with executive development training opportunities to improve their soft and hard skills and, in turn, develop competencies to define commitment and growth outcomes and, at the same time, help subordinates utilize their expertise to achieve the desired organizational objectives (Wang et al., 2019).

One of the aims of providing executive development training to executive employees is to enhance their leadership capacity and management skills, which they need to increase and sustain organizational efficiency (Douglas et al., 2022; and Birou & Hoek, 2021). For the most part, organizations provide executive development opportunities for their executive employees in order to make them more resourceful and continuously deliver the expected outcomes (Sarkar, 2022). For these reasons, scholars such as Elezi and Bamber (2022) argue that organizations around the world are now providing executive development training programs for senior management simply to make their staffs more efficient and effective in their responsibilities.

Perry & Boylan (2017) highlighted that executive development training for executive employees is a carefully planned program of events that is meant to alter the behaviors and attitudes of senior management, which they need to cause a positive change in the employees they manage and control towards the attainment of organizational goals and objectives. The executive development training could be provided to the executive employees either on the job (when training for skill acquisition is provided in-house by the organization) or off the job (when training is provided outside the organization) (Pastore & Pompili, 2020). Studies show that executive employees having the right kind of attitude and behaviors to deal with complex and emerging situations within their industry is effectively performed when they have soft skills such as decision-making, conflict management, work ethics and morals, leadership, entrepreneurship, presentation, team work management, management, communication, and interpersonal skills (Hendarman & Cantner, 2018; and Patacsil et al., 2017); and hard skills including operational planning, logistics, marketing, computer, financial management, labor division, operational planning, absorption and retention of human force, and managerial knowledge and experience skills (Ibay & Pa-Alisbo, 2020); which can be acquired through on-job and off-job training.

Executive development is an integral part of running a successful organization, especially in manufacturing companies where managers and other senior staff interact with low-level employees on a daily basis in order to get things done according to plan, suggesting that executive employees must be subjected to continuous skill development so they can continue to provide the right leadership to their subordinates. For this reason, executive development training initiatives are tailored to specific executive managers because they aim to improve their personal growth at an individual level and can also be used as inspiration to enhance organizational performance and achieve desired organizational objectives (Bailey & McIntosh, 2020). This is also based on the fact that organizations may not achieve their desired level of growth if the best individuals saddled with the responsibilities of overseeing the activities of others are not provided with executive development training opportunities to keep them motivated, assist them, and guide them in discovering creative and innovative solutions to complex and challenging problems affecting organizational efficiency (Harrison, 2019).

For these reasons, scholars such as Cascio (2017) argue that hiring the best employees or putting the best employees in executive positions is not enough unless they are given the opportunity to continuously develop their soft and hard skills, which is a crucial step to achieving a sustainable competitive advantage within their industry. For example, researchers such as Mihnea and Narayandas (2019) maintained that executive development training programs are specifically essential for developing the leadership skills of executive employees and are also used to enhance their managerial roles in organizations that continuously witness declines in expansion and growth. For instance, executive employees in manufacturing organizations such as production line managers, chief operating officers, and chief marketing officers, among others, need executive development training due to changes such as the introduction of new technology and machinery that have changed how goods and services are produced; changing consumer preferences that have influenced the type of good or service to produce; and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that has changed the entire work process (Baget al., 2021).

Thus, executive employees are expected to adapt to these new realities and the rapidly changing business environment. It means that executive development programs are crucial and an integral part of ensuring that executive employees improve their expertise and capacities as leaders, which they require to influence workplace behaviors and attitudes among employees at the lower level to achieve organizational objectives. Simultaneously, executive development programs are viable avenues for improving the leadership skills of executive employees and achieving their dedication and loyalty to the organization. Thus, organizations that provide their executive employees with the

opportunity to improve their skills and competencies can be assured that these individuals will in turn improve their managerial functions, plan in advance for the challenges they may likely confront in the future, and help others behind them deal with difficult and complex situations in a more efficient and effective manner (Andenoro & Skendall, 2020; and Deshmukh & Haleem, 2020).

Although previous literature has already established the significance of executive development for both executive employees and their organizations, the standard and consistency of the development program vary significantly from one organization to another. Suberg (2021) noted that factors such as the changes taking place in the external environment, like inflation and government policy, and the internal factors, like paucity of funds, poor leadership from senior management, and organizational strategic goals, affect not only the frequency and quality of executive development programs but also the level at which the management of organizations embraces the executive development training program as a tool in developing the leadership and management skills of their executives (Sparkman, 2021).

Also, in spite of the abundance of evidence showing that executive development training is significant to achieving firm growth and efficiency, it is not without its challenges. For example, it is alarming to note that close to 66% of chief executive officers (CEOs) in top global companies do not get executive development training (Sallis, 2021). A good number of these CEOs have resisted all attempts to have them participate in executive development courses, but the bigger problem could be the misplaced priorities of individuals tasked with the responsibility of conducting executive development training for senior management. Rather, the focus is on increasing sales and profit without realizing the enormous influence of poor leadership skills on the overall organizational goals. Regardless, organizations know that they cannot favorably compete and remain relevant in their industry without availing themselves of executive development training because their decisions and activities have overriding effects on the entire organization's work processes and operations.

Training needs assessment remains one of the greatest challenges impeding the successful implementation of executive development training programs, especially among large organizations in Africa (Bushe, 2019). Pourasad et al. (2021) pointed out that some organizations failed to carry out training needs assessments that could determine the specific areas of training executive employees' needs prior to the training proper, and that even in situations where the needs assessment was carried out, the process was often fraught with irregularities and the information collected was rarely used as input to the training program. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to effectively evaluate the needs assessment tool that could have been used to develop an efficient executive development program for senior management (Sankofa, 2021). Most organizations are in business to increase shareholder value through increased sales and profits at the lowest possible cost.

This behavior simply shows that executive development training is neglected due to the inherent costs associated with it.

The other challenge of inefficiency in executive development programs stems from the non-implementation of the programs by top management tasked with the responsibility of managing human resources. Executive development is a well-thought-out process guided by organizational policies, memos, and other regulations issued by the highest level of management in an organization. The complexities of adhering to these policies and measures also mean that not much attention is given to the specific needs of executive employees before the actual training is carried out. This makes the executive development training program more supply-driven, hence leading to inefficiency in the training outcomes (Omotesho et al., 2019).

Overcoming the above-mentioned challenges is not an easy feat. However, studies show that successful organizations are those that make executive development training a priority, which is aimed at assessing the current level of an executive employee's soft and hard skills and could be done either on the job or off the job (Lee et al., 2019; and Lee & Suh, 2018). Executive employees confront a myriad of challenges in the current workplace environment, which puts a lot of strain on their mental and physical well-being. These problems include leading change, handling workplace conflict, communication challenges, competency challenges, and the challenges of motivating others (Vandenbroucke et al., 2018). All these situations, if not properly addressed, will certainly interfere negatively with the responsibilities of executive employees, which could manifest in poor morale, low commitment, and high turnover rates.

According to Guterresa et al. (2020), motivation is fundamental to achieving the full participation of employees in a training program and also because of the level of commitment and enthusiasm employees bring to performing their tasks and responsibilities on a daily basis. Executive development training programs should also include incentives like recognition and awards, bonuses and raises, and fun gifts in order to achieve full employee participation and implementation of the program (Wolor et al., 2020). In doing so, Alrowwad et al. (2020) argued that one of the most fundamental driving forces that helps support the efficient implementation of a training and development program is good leadership support.

Accordingly, Niati et al. (2020) emphasized that motivated employees will have no problem increasing their commitment

to joining a training program because they feel valued as strategic partners of their organization when involved in activities such as executive development training programs.

Obviously, the above challenges call for the highest level of leadership in organizations to invest in their executive employees through executive development training programs. This is because for organizations to achieve their objectives, resources must be invested in those tasked with the responsibility of leading other employees, and then they can achieve a competitive advantage (Matcham, 2022). Executive employees without adequate executive development training may never have the chance of getting promoted since they are unable to update their skills required for the new position. As a result, the affected employees will most certainly seek another job elsewhere since their futures with the present company remain uncertain. Kumar (2022) posited that executive employees value the executive development training program because it provides them with the opportunity to update their current skills and competencies, which they use to vie for higher positions, and is also perceived as a form of motivation for them to stay and increase their commitment and loyalty to the organization. Moreover, employees are more likely to be obliged, engaged, and committed if the organization is the one financing the executive development training program. Thus, the organization's scarce financial resources are not wasted.

Executive development is a continuous process because the business environment is also constantly changing, so manufacturing companies need to know that executive development training is an ongoing process that all their executive employees must be motivated to join without stopping. Whenever there is a change in executives or they are promoted to new executive positions, they still need to know the roles and responsibilities required of them to function effectively in that role. This means executive employees with adequate executive development training are capable of meeting organizational targets, which is manifested in their organizational objectives as leaders.

If executive employees wish to be effective and efficient, they have to be given the opportunity to improve their leadership skills, which can be acquired through executive development training programs (Moldoveanu et al., 2019). Individuals working in an organization regardless of their positions have needs, and the less satisfied these needs are, the less engaged and committed the employees will be, and such engagement and commitment would also be affected by executive development training, the reward system, and job tenure (Mwesigwa et al., 2020).

Globally, studies have been done focusing on the training of different categories of employees in different industries, which were relevant to the current study. Some of these studies focused on executive employee soft skills, hard skills, and training methods like on-the-job and off-the-job training, whereas others focused on assessing the significant difference in skills of employees as well as problems encountered by organizations in the implementation of executive development practices, which were included in this study. The review of the literature was systematically presented based on the research objectives established in this study. Studies on employee soft skills have been investigated by researchers in many industries. For example, the study by Ibrahim et al. (2017) investigated the impact of soft skills training and development among selected executives and managers of some Malaysian private companies. The authors found that soft skills, including communication and conflict management skills, as well as the training methodology used, were the most significant predictors of employee commitment.

Similar empirical findings were reported by other researchers. These findings include those reported in the banking sector, where it was found that soft skills acquired by employees significantly helped to improve their organizational efficiency (Lahope et al., 2020); in the health sector, employees with soft skills have a higher chance of being employed (Vasanthakumari, 2019); in service organizations, the acquisition of soft skills by employees was the reason for the successful modification of behavior, thus having an impact on their efficiency and effectiveness (Sanjay & Munshi, 2020); in the public sector, results revealed that the more opportunities are given for manager training, the better they can utilize these skills to impact employee commitment (Krpalek et al., 2021); and in the manufacturing, retail and service sector, employees place more value on improving their soft skills than their employers even though former view the latter as "not properly equipped with the necessary skills" (Tsirkas et al., 2020).

Studies have also been done by researchers aimed at assessing the hard and soft skills of employees through training and their impact on organizational achievement. The research of Wibowo et al. (2021) and Novitasari et al. (2020) in the education sector in Indonesia found that "hard skills, soft skills, organizational learning, and innovation capacities had a direct and significant effect on teachers' commitment, and those soft skills had more influence on teachers' commitment to work".

Other similar findings were also reported by researchers in different sectors. These include results of researchers who found that hard skills had greater influence on employee innovation (Sopa et al., 2020); hence, the higher the level of hard skills acquired, the higher the level of commitment and organizational productivity will also increase (Che et al., 2019; Boadu et al., 2018; and Terhorst et al., 2018); however, there are studies that report soft skills as the skill with the greatest influence on employee innovation and commitment (Albadea & Giret, 2018; and Escrig-Tena et al., 2018); Also, researchers such as Kok (2020) found "no significant differences in the levels of employee's skills and

qualifications, but those well-trained employees tend to achieve higher organizational commitment levels compared to those with less training", and Asadullah et al. (2021) found no statistically significant differences among the different categories of employees when grouped by gender and skills among employees regarding their productivity in the restaurant sector. Regardless, some studies proved that both hard and soft skills significantly and positively influence employee innovation, creativity in taking crucial decisions, and loyalty to the organization (Nugraha et al., 2021; and Hendarman et al., 2018).

There is also literature on the different training methods (on-the-job and off-the-job) used by organizations' management to train their employees to enhance and acquire soft and hard skills. In Indonesia, some researchers reported that factors such as "training content, self- inspiration, and manager support" were responsible for the positive influence of on-the-job training effectiveness, but that "manager support was the most influential factor of all variables" (Ibrahim et al., 2020).

Similar findings were also reported. These results include on-the-job training that "developed and enhanced the managerial skills of employees" (Hossain & Rattanawiboonsom, 2020); Al-Romeedy (2019) discovered that enhanced employee motivation and engagement to work are the antecedents of job rotation critical to improving employee skills that can be used to maintain a competitive advantage; and Halawi & Hydar (2018) found that on-the-job training programs benefited employees of two Lebanese companies and that employees increased their commitment levels because they were satisfied with the feedback and positive evaluation they receive from management of their companies. The researchers, however, discovered that challenges such as paucity of funds, lack of management support, bureaucracy, and poor organizational structures were partly to blame for the inconsistent implementation of training programs for employees.

Studies on both the job and off the job have also been carried out by researchers. Isah et al. (2020), in their study, also found a lack of support from top management for off-the-job training programs because management perceived that more human and financial resources were required to fund this type of training. Beside other challenges preventing the successful implementation of training programs as reported in literature, these include "lack of support from training supervisors to employees to transfer skills and knowledge" acquired from the training into work responsibilities (Segbenya & Berisie, 2020); demonstrating training impact; deciding how to manage participants' discomfort during training proper; and misaligning of goals in the training programs (Carter et al., 2020); and a lack of managerial interest, poor funding for training, and lack of organizational support (Islam et al., 2020).

Empirical findings in this aspect include that both "on-the-job and off-the-job training methods have positive impacts on employee work commitment" (Mahadevan & Yap, 2019); both on-the-job and off-the-job are "correlated and significantly associated with employee turnover intention" (Ju & Li, 2019); employees with opportunities to participate in formal training (both on-the-job and off- the-job) display higher levels of work commitment and loyalty as well as innovative and creative behaviors in line with their work requirements; and off-the-job training has more positive contributions to employees' skill improvement (Coetzer et al., 2019).

The reviewed empirical studies above presented several literature gaps that the present study filled. The most obvious literature gap identified was that most of the studies focused on assessing the training and performance outcomes provided to employees at lower levels of the organization. However, the current study's focus is on the executive development of executive employees (top managers, middle managers, and specialized executives). Second, the majority of the studies focused on training, which is job- oriented, whereas the current study focused on executive development, which is career-oriented. Third, the majority of the studies were done in other sectors other than the manufacturing sector, suggesting that there is a paucity of empirical literature on executive development in the manufacturing sector, which the present study filled. This suggests that despite the importance of executive development in enhancing leadership and organizational growth, it has received less attention and therefore served as one of the important motivations for this study.

Fourth, none of the researchers investigated executive development and used the variables of hard and soft skills and on-the-job and off-the-job training methods in a single study, which the present study filled. Fifth, very limited studies have investigated the significant differences in the skills of top managers, middle managers, and specialized executives, thereby making the current study unique. Finally, several studies reported divergent results on the effectiveness and level of implementation of skills and training methods, which further calls for the conduct of additional studies that can either affirm or confirm these findings. Thus, this study adds more literature to the growing body of knowledge on executive development in the Nigerian context.

In Nigeria, the manufacturing sector plays a very crucial role in the country's economic growth and development. The sector contributes an estimated 13% to the country's gross domestic product as of the end of 2020 and employs an estimated workforce of 1,644,392 (Sasu, 2022; and Moiseh, 2020). However, despite the sector's contribution to poverty reduction through job creation in the country, it also faces challenges that interfere with its

operations negatively.

One of the greatest challenges confronting the manufacturing sector in reaching its desired potential is the problem of acute and erratic power supply, as most manufacturing companies rely heavily on emergency power generators to power their production machines, and this has led to companies in the sector incurring poor profitability (Edward, 2021). Besides, other challenges such as difficulty in accessing foreign exchange by manufacturers to purchase raw materials not locally available, a poor road network, low demand for products from Nigerian consumers, poor access to credit from commercial banks and other financial institutions, and duplication of government regulatory agencies have led to the underdevelopment of the manufacturing sector in the country (Oladele, 2021; and Adekoya, 2021).

Although a handful of these problems have been studied in several literatures, a challenge that has also negatively affected the manufacturing sector's success and is yet to be explored in the extant literature is related to executive development. For instance, challenges such as increased turnover, a paucity of funds for training senior management staff, and a lack of support from the highest leadership in manufacturing companies negatively affected senior management's leadership skills and were responsible for the high rate of organizational failures in Nigeria (Adegunle, 2017). The author went further to highlight that the presence of these problems led to a 45 percent decrease in the number of all functioning organizations operating in the country. Besides, the amount spent by manufacturing companies in Nigeria on training an employee is low. On average, manufacturing companies spent approximately N138,123 (US\$300) per employee per year, which is less than one percent of their total yearly earnings (Obulor & Ohaka, 2019). This amount is lower than the US\$1,252 per employee per year recommended by the Association for Talent Development (Markovic, 2020).

Also, previous studies on executive development in Nigeria revealed that senior management employees are leaving and resigning in droves due to several factors, chiefly a lack of career development and training opportunities (Esemudje, 2022). This suggests that there is a skill gap among executive employees in Nigerian companies, especially manufacturing companies. This is a major issue that is yet to be adequately addressed by the highest level of management in organizations and also in literature, especially within the Nigerian context.

Furthermore, although the majority of the executive employees employed in the manufacturing sector have received one form of executive development training or another, it is still unclear and there is little evidence to show to what extent career development has been provided. Consequently, a handful of these manufacturing companies' executive employees are excluded from promotion opportunities while the companies are in constant search for highly skilled personnel to provide quality and efficient services (Ethelmary et al., 2019). This means that executive development is taken aback, even though it is part of the statutory requirements for setting up manufacturing companies in Nigeria. This is because the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), which is the statutory body in Nigeria, is authorized, among other functions, to require manufacturing companies operating in the country to create training and development opportunities for lower-level and senior-level employees and also develop career paths for employees to attain after attaining the goals of the training and executive development program (Njoku, 2021).

A large number of studies have justified the need for organizations to continuously provide career path development for managers through training and executive development because it not only reduces turnover but also increases retention rates and enhances commitment to organizational objectives (Jivan, 2020; and Okorie & Musonda, 2018). This shows that the manufacturing sector's prospects and growth potential in Nigeria can be improved even further if much attention is given to executive development for executive employees to improve their organizational and managerial functions.

This study was conducted in Port Harcourt City, the capital of Rivers State, located in the southern part of Nigeria. The city is one of the most oil-rich regions in the country and is home to many local and multinational petroleum companies' headquarters. Given that the city is adjudged to be the third most industrialized and second wealthiest city in the country, just behind Lagos (Ikenwa, 2019), this led to the establishment of many oil and non-oil manufacturing companies in the city. This factor, coupled with the fact that the author currently lives and resides in this city, was the motivation for conducting the study in the city. Moreover, it was humanly impossible for the researcher to contact all executives of manufacturing companies across the country due to distance and time factors that were obviously beyond her control.

At present, there are 76 manufacturing companies in the city; however, due to time constraints and limited financial resources, the researcher opted to conduct her study with executives drawn from 20 companies in the city that are closest to her place of residence, as well as those that indicated a greater willingness to subject their executives to participation in the study. The targeted 20 companies were those that had participated in the Greenville executive development training, a leadership training program customized to the needs of senior management employees in the

manufacturing sector.

The selected manufacturing companies are: Paschal Technical Services Limited, which operates a fleet of support vehicles for the offshore oil and gas industry; Indorama Eleme Fertilizer and Chemicals Limited, involved in manufacturing fertilizers and agricultural chemicals; Matpatson Petroleum Service Limited, involved in well completion engineering and drilling consultancy projects; Adamac Group of Companies, involved in oil and gas production and the construction of pipelines; Cinjex Group of Companies, involved in specialist engineering services; West African Glass Industry Plc, involved in the manufacture and sale of glass and metals; Cyclopedia Bicycles and Accessories Limited involved in the sale and distribution of bicycles; Ace Toys and Plastics Nigeria Limited involved in the manufacture and sale of toys; Ace Toys and Plastics Nigeria Limited involved in the manufacture and distribution of bicycles; Ace Toys and Plastics Nigeria Limited involved in the manufacture and sale of toys and household plastics; Ace Toys and Metals Nigeria Limited involved in the manufacture and plastics; Ace Toy Others include Crushed Rock Nigeria Limited, involved in the mining and quarrying of granite; Danelec Limited, involved in diving and marine contracting; DangoteBail Limited, involved in the manufacturing of cement; and Keedak Nigeria Limited, involved in manufacturing industrial chemicals.

Others include Boskel Nigeria Limited, involved in thermal process engineering and environmental management; Eastern Wrought Iron Limited, involved in the manufacturing and sale of furniture; Dulfil Prima Foods Limited, involved in the manufacture of consumer products like noodles, tomato paste, and flour, among others; Galba Limited, involved in providing engineering services to oil and gas firms; Delta Plastic, involved in the production and sale of industrial and household plastics; and St. Aluminum Manufacturing Company Limited, involved in the manufacturing and marketing of building materials like aluminum, tables, and windows. All these companies have one thing in common: they have, at some point in time, subjected their executive employees to an executive development training course. However, the level of skills and extent of implementation of executive development have yet to be assessed and explored in research. Also, just like other manufacturing companies across the country facing numerous challenges such as erratic power supplies, a poor road network, and duplication of government agencies, as previously documented in extant literature, the manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City are also not immune from these problems. Aside from these problems, the manufacturing companies in the city also confront leadership challenges.

For instance, during an informal encounter with some executives of these companies prior to the conduct of this study, the researcher was informed that many of these organizations do not have enough budget available for executive development training of their senior management due to the high cost of running their businesses, and for some that do provide executive development, the program is generic, whereby all senior management are trained on the same contents without realizing each executive is unique and different. In addition, from the brief encounter, the researcher also discovered that some of these organizations are not consistent in providing their executive employees with executive development training, and this is due to reasons such as inconsistent leadership support, the fact that the program is costly, the fact that the leadership does not perceive the executive development program as beneficial to the organization, and the fact that some executives are unwilling to participate in the executive development training program due to the failure of the leadership to properly communicate the benefits of the program to them.

All these issues portend danger to the smooth functioning and management of these organizations because failure to adequately update the skills and competencies of executive employees may cause them to reduce their managerial roles and functions, which may eventually affect productivity, efficiency, and motivation to work in the organization from the top to the lowest level of employees. This growing concern informs the need to evaluate the executive development training programs to ascertain whether they are indeed transforming executive employees (top managers, middle managers, and specialized executives) in the manufacturing sector for effective delivery of goods and services or not.

Just like any research undertaking that specifically points out those who may directly or indirectly benefit from the research outcome, the current study was not an exception.

Hence, the author identified the following as direct beneficiaries of the outcome of this study: the management of manufacturing firms, executive employees, government regulatory agencies, training organizations, future researchers, and the body of knowledge of this study: the management of manufacturing firms, executive employees, government regulatory agencies, training organizations, future researchers, and the body of knowledge.

Management of manufacturing organizations may use the information in the study to understand how to properly communicate the benefits of executive development training programs to their employees before subjecting them to the program. This will help them reduce their executive employees' unwillingness to participate in executive development. Executive employees in the manufacturing sector will also find the information provided in this study useful, as it reveals to them the benefits of participating in executive development programs, such as the acquisition of new skills and the updating of current skills, which they need to improve not only organizational commitment and

managerial functions but also their career development prospects.

Government agencies such as the Corporate Affairs Commission may benefit from the outcome of this study because the study provided them with quality and first-hand information on areas where the manufacturing sector evidently needs urgent intervention. The intervention of the commission is likely to help the sector grow and develop, which ultimately translates into economic growth since growth in the sector will most likely increase the employment rate in the sector.

Training organizations may benefit from the outcome of this study because it provided them with information on the executive development training needs of senior management in the manufacturing sector, which they can use to provide training programs in the future. This helps them to develop and customize executive development training programs based on the most pressing needs of executive employees in the manufacturing sector. Future researchers can make meaningful deductions from the information provided in this study, which they can use to support the conduct of their studies in another context. Finally, the conduct of this study additionally adds more literature on executive development practices to the growing body of knowledge in the Nigerian context.

Theoretical Framework/Conceptual Framework

In understanding executive development, a number of theories and concepts have been identified as relevant to the conduct of this study. These theories and concepts further serve as guides that provide a clear idea of what information is significant to gather in this study. The theories and concepts are systematically presented, and this includes a) human capital theory, b) resource-based theory, and concepts such as c) hard skills, d) soft skills, and e) off-the-job. In addition, the operational definitions of all important variables were discussed based on how they were used in this study. This makes it easier for readers to comprehend the context in which the variables were used, thus allowing them to see how the ideas presented in this paper were measured.

Human Capital Theory

The research is anchored on the human capital theory proposed by Becker (1964), who argued that organizations gain competitive advantage by providing opportunities for their human resources to develop and enhance their skills and competencies in a systematic manner and in tandem with organizational policies that add value to them. It is for this reason that organizations are today heavily investing in their human resources due to the fact that they are their greatest assets, upon which all other assets depend to function effectively (Ozkeser, 2019). One of the ways organizations promote the development and enhancement of employees' skills and competencies is through executive training that is career-oriented in nature (Macke & Genari, 2019).

According to Sopa et al. (2020), organizations have two options for providing training to their management staffs, which could be either on-the-job or off-the-job training. On-the-job training is conducted within the organization and could take several forms, such as coaching, job rotation, understudy, special projects, committee assignments, and selective reading (Tiampati & Moronge, 2018; MburuMaina & Waitthaka, 2017). Off-the-job training, which is a training program done outside the firm, could be implemented via several methods, including brainstorming, role-playing, case studies, conferences, management games, special courses, and syndicate methods (Jamil et al., 2019; and Porter et al., 2019).

The participation of executive employees in any of these trainings ultimately provides them with the opportunity to acquire new skills as well as update and enhance their current skill levels, which they use to increase employee motivation, efficiency, and better decision-making, especially in critical situations affecting the organization's operations and processes (Bello & Mela, 2022). Among the skills obtained are soft and hard skills, which executive employees use to ensure a conducive and positive working atmosphere. Researchers such as Nugraha et al. (2021) and Hederman & Cantner (2018) specifically pointed out that when executive employees' soft skills—which include work ethics, leadership, presentation, communication, interpersonal, decision-making, and conflict management—and hard skills—which include operational planning, evaluation, absorption and retention of human resources, financial management, marketing, and logistics—are improved and developed, it improves their skills to motivate teams and accomplish excellent organizational results, and they are able to transform their organizations, improve value creation, and create efficiencies that inspire others to deliver outstanding results.

The use of the human capital theory that guided the conduct of this study is therefore justified for the following reasons: The first is the theory confirmed that organizations that invest in training and educating their employees can use this as a competitive advantage, which is difficult to imitate by competitors, to retain their best employees because the employees are guaranteed of advancing their career path prospects (Jafari-Sadeghi et al., 2020). Next, the theory also suggested that the executive development training provided to employees ultimately translates to

the promotion of executive employees' commitment to work and efficiency, which is manifested through their creativity, innovation, and improved decision-making that positively affects other members of the organization (Samad, 2020).

Finally, the theory also affirms that executive employees subjected to executive training can gain and improve their soft and hard skills through on-the-job and off-the-job training methods because the skills and training methods are grounded in human capital, the main variable investigated in this study. These variables are further explained below:

Hard Skills. Hard skill, also known as technical

skill, is a skill acquired through specialized knowledge and competence required to accomplish specific duties and functions through the use of devices and programs in the organization (Sousa & Rocha, 2019). These are skills required to perform difficult and complex tasks in organizations, thus suggesting this type of skill is very significant in motivating executive employees to use their competencies and abilities to manage their teams (Asbari et al., 2020). For the purpose of this study, the hard skills of executive employees are operationalized broadly into operational planning skill, labor division skill, definition of labor skill, evaluation of employees, absorption and retention of human resources, managerial knowledge and experience, financial management, computer, marketing, and logistics skill (Ibay & Pa-Alisbo, 2020).

Labor skill and labor division skill differ in that labor skill simply refers to the competence of managers and executives in identifying the right candidate for a vacant position in the company. Labor division skill, on the other hand, refers to the manager's or executive's competence in recognizing employees that can appropriately perform a specific task in a specific department or unit within the company.

These skills are usually developed and enhanced through on-the-job and off-the-job experiences and are impacted by the individual's interests and motivation, training contents, training incentives, and leadership support (Lombardi, 2019). For example, employees with high levels of managerial skills have the opportunity to improve their commitment and engagement at work, and without these skills, in many situations, the competence of managers does not have any significant effect on the employees; they act as effective leaders who are capable of making good decisions given that they also spend more time planning, organizing, leading, problem solving, and controlling (Yusliza et al., 2019). Therefore, continuous managerial training is important because, as Aboramadan et al. (2020) suggested, it positions employees in higher positions to control others in the organization.

Hard skills are particularly important for executive employees to have in the manufacturing sector because it is the skill they need to manage employees working with machines and equipment that is directly tied to the transformation of raw materials into finished products (Lumague, 2017). Scholars such as Day and Liu (2018) reiterated the importance of executive development training that encompasses hard skill types that include computer, marketing, financial management, and labor division for managers and executives because it forms part of the skills that are imitable and rare and add value to an organization's competitive advantage. It is for this reason that Jaeger & Upadhyay (2020) noted that it is logical to expect executive employees to have technical knowledge of the employees they manage in manufacturing industries.

The need for hard skills varies from one manager to another. For example, middle managers need hard skills such as operational planning, employee evaluation, computer skills, and logistic skills (Alam et al., 2021); top managers require hard skills that include labor division, managerial knowledge and experience, marketing skills, and computer skills (Leito et al., 2020); and specialized executives need hard skills that include all the skills of middle and top managers for them to function efficiently in line with the organizational objectives (Flores et al., 2020). Regardless, Sumbal et al. (2020) posited that the level of skill acquisition is more essential because the more updated the skills are, the better the achievement of organizational goals and objectives, which is manifested in the executive employee's managerial and operational roles in the organization.

Soft Skills. Soft skills are skills required by

employees in managerial and operational roles, including executive employees, to help them communicate and interact efficiently with stakeholders in the organization (Chen et al., 2018). These skills describe the personal characteristics of employees in leadership positions and how they use these competencies to interact with employees working with them in the organization (Anggiani, 2017).

Soft skills are skills executive employees need to manage the daily affairs of employees they control as well as their organization's operational processes. Within the context of this study, the soft skills of executive employees are operationalized broadly into communication skills, interpersonal skills, management skills, teamwork management skills, presentation skills, entrepreneurship, leadership skills, work ethics and morals, conflict management skills, and decision-making skills (Patacsil et al., 2017; Remedios, 2021).

Researchers such as Abujbara & Worley (2018) and Musembi et al. (2018) explained that soft skills such as communication and leadership are the most important skills for top, entry, and middle management, and this also includes executive employees. For instance, when the level of communication skills is high, managers and executives use it to improve their leadership roles in terms of molding positive relationships that improve collaboration, conflict resolution, and effective decision-making (Udin et al., 2019). The extent of teamwork is dependent on several factors, including employee commitment and satisfaction, incentive programs, effective communication, leadership style, policies, and the working environment (Ali et al., 2021). This closely aligns with the ideas of Inegbedion et al. (2020), who argue that in the present fiercely competitive business environment, it is teams and not individuals that drive organizational engagement, commitment, trust, and overall success. Consequently, training in teamwork encourages managers and executives to execute their functions and responsibilities to their organizations more effectively (Sabri & Abu-Atiah, 2020).

In line with this thought, Sarkar et al. (2020) recommended that organizational leaders with high emotional intelligence are more inclined to develop competencies that are part of soft skills that include efficient interactions, effective communications, and effective conflict management techniques to manage emerging and future workplace conflict (Shum et al., 2018). This means that executive employees who possess such skills are likely to overcome simple to complex challenges, achieve better results, and work more effectively with other employees (Pinto, 2018).

Although different researchers have proposed a varied number of soft skill sets, one thing common among these skills is that they are all capable of helping leaders, including executive employees, improve their career path prospects and organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Jelonek et al., 2020). According to Maiti & Jae-Ho (2018), developing senior management's conflict management skills improves leadership capacity and decision-making, further enhancing talent retention. Also, employees with a higher degree of soft skills like conflict management can be used to build relationships and address workplace issues, thereby influencing managers and executives to make meaningful contributions to their organization (Fadhil et al., 2021).

Additionally, Javed et al. (2020) pointed out that upholding ethics is part of achieving sustainable competitive advantage, and this can only be achieved if it is visible and practiced by leaders in organizations. It is for this reason that Patel et al. (2018) highlighted that while developing ethics policies, it is vital to develop strategic methods of implementing the policies, and that leaders must be at the forefront of these efforts.

Moreover, a range of soft skills are required for executive employees to achieve the growth and success they desire. Consequently, Nusrat & Sultana (2019) proposed that employees in senior management roles with a soft skill set that includes communication, teamwork, work ethics, and conflict management skills are crucial to developing and managing people and solving broader issues that affect an organization.

Off-the-Job-Training. As the name suggests, off-the-job training is a method of training provided to employees about specific job requirements or the latest developments within their industry. This type of training means that employees would have to leave their place of work or organization in order to participate in the training program. This type of method is increasingly embraced by many organizations due to the limitations of training facilities and the unavailability of the right training personnel within the workplace (Bajpai et al., 2020).

Perhaps organizations prefer this type of training method for several reasons, including exposing employees to different environments other than their immediate place of work, helping employees gain more confidence in their abilities to accomplish their tasks, training employees quickly, and also because this type of training method is proven to improve employees' commitment and loyalty to work and the organization (Fletcher et al., 2020; and Lee et al., 2017). Moreover, off-the-job special training for management staff in line with their job requirements results in increasing their efficiency, manifested in quality decision-making and supervision of employees they manage (Ismael et al., 2021).

However, researchers like Pastore and Pompili (2020) noted that a major limitation to this type of training is that it is costly since organizations would have to spend more financial resources to pay external training organizations to use their facilities and equipment, and also because employees would have to remember and apply all the things they learn outside their workplace, which may not be easy for them to recall.

Different methods of off-the-job training have been proposed and investigated in different contexts. Alias et al. (2019) proposed that determining the person to become the trainer is the first step in determining the type of off-the-job training to be employed. Thus, researchers such as El-Hajja & Alkhanaizi (2018) and Sahoo & Mishra (2019) recommended that organizations train their senior management staff, which also includes executive employees, through off-the-job training through coaching, role playing, case studies, the syndicate method, conferences, special courses, management games, and brainstorming, which can be used to enhance the skills and abilities of employees towards achieving organization objectives. These types of off-the-job training methods were taken as the operational definition of off-the-job training methods in this study.

These methods of training are most appropriate for teaching executive employees skills on the use of the latest

innovations and how they can use this knowledge to manage the affairs of their employees (Gaulke, 2021). Chan et al. (2021) observed that besides strengthening employees skills, special training courses empower would-be future leaders to be great planners in the organizations they are affiliated with. Hamed et al. (2022) further maintained that senior management staff can be trained on how they can use new policies or regulations to influence change in employees through off-the-job training (Noe & Kodwani, 2018).

A case study is one of the off-the-job training methods commonly utilized for training employees on specific situations they are most likely to confront in the workplace. Case study training done outside the organization empowers employees to be effective in decision-making and service delivery to their organization and customers (Eli, 2021). This was acknowledged by Mone et al. (2018), suggesting that consistent implementation of off-the-job case study training makes managers and executives more effective and efficient in their duties and functions as well as in overall service delivery. It can be suggested that consistent implementation of off-the-job case study training prepares and makes managers and executives acquire better competencies, which assist in decision-making in the organization (Akther et al., 2019). The level of implementation is more important to make sure that trained executive employees use the skills they learn to improve their efficiency and productivity as leaders of their organizations. This is also because organizations with a higher level of implementation of off-the-job training in terms of conferences enhance participants' work commitment and leadership skills and develop a positive attitude that encourages team collaboration in production and service delivery (Hu et al., 2019).

On-the-Job. On-the-job training is the direct opposite of off-the-job training. This is training provided to employees on specific areas of their work requirements within or outside the organization (Kipruto & Mose, 2021). This type of training provides employees with the opportunity to learn from experienced and senior colleagues about the exact duties and functions they will be providing to the organization. Hence, this type of training enables trainees to acquire first-hand experience and knowledge directly from their place of work (Riswandi et al., 2020). It is a type of training that trainees learn from an experienced individual while implementing the actual work; thus, trainees can imitate what they learn in their assigned duties and responsibilities (Riswandi et al., 2020).

On-the-job training can also take different forms. One of them is job rotation, whereby employees are moved from one job or division to another within the organization with the end goal of improving their skills and knowledge of organizational work processes and operations (Ibrahim et al., 2020). Within the context of this study, on-the-job training of executive employees is operationalized broadly into coaching, understudy, job rotation, special projects, committee assignments, multiple assignments, and selective readings (Tinapati & Moronge, 2018; and Mburu Maina & Waithaka, 2017).

Coaching is one popular method of on-the-job training used by many organizations. According to Ary et al. (2020), continuous coaching could be used to encourage employees to work towards achieving organizational goals because it allows them to make better decisions and take initiatives. Thus, Nguyen et al. (2020) noted that employee motivation is a fundamental factor in influencing higher levels of organizational commitment, which can be achieved through the coaching process.

On-the-job training is suitable for organizations that have an aging working population, a need for employees to learn new technological skills between departments, or new organizational policies (Collins & Beauregard, 2020). Since employees will be learning directly from experienced employees, it is capable of increasing their confidence in their abilities to deliver the desired results later on.

This in turn enhances their job satisfaction level and eliminates or reduces the fear employees may have about attempting new tasks and responsibilities (Kausch-Zongo & Schenk, 2022).

Vasanthi & Basariya (2019) argued that on-the-job training has become one of the avenues for developing the skills and competencies of senior management staff, including executive employees, especially due to the growing number of job vacancies in the developed manufacturing sector. According to Haryono et al. (2020), organizations can improve the skills and capacities of their workforce by providing them with the opportunity to fill important management positions that may arise within the organization in the future. Hence, organizations with consistent implementation of career succession planning reduce employee turnover because internal career progression policies increase employee commitment to work and loyalty to the organization (Aburumman et al., 2020). Moreover, most organizations only develop 25% of their entire workforce for succession planning (Talentguard, 2022). It is for this reason that Cherif (2020) recommended that early succession planning and consistent implementation are likely to guarantee sustainability in the future and are also likely to improve work commitments to an organization. Regardless, the level of implementation of the different on-the-job methods is crucial because the more employees are trained, the better their chances are of improving and sustaining their managerial roles and work efficiency (Koo et al., 2019).

Resource-Based Theory

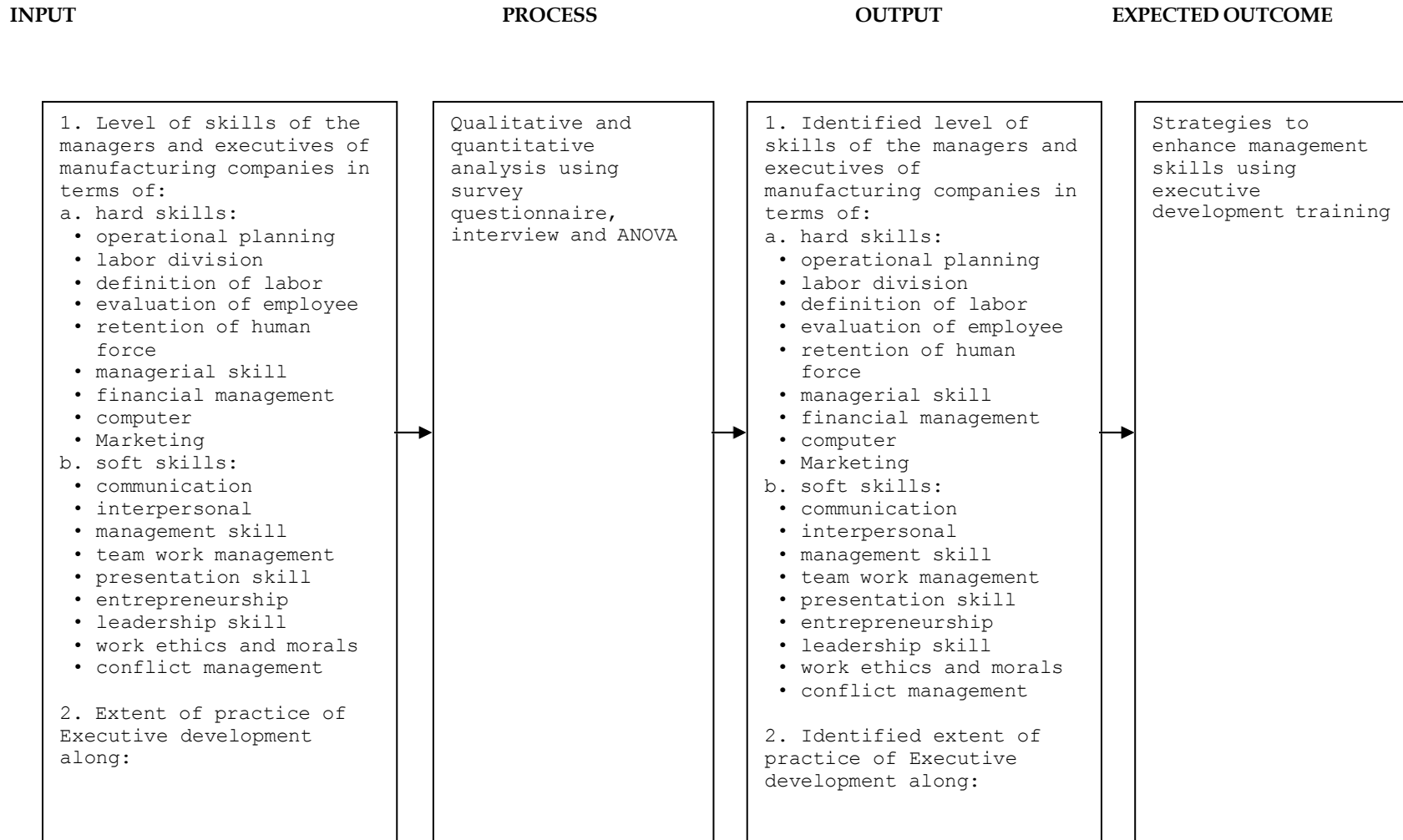
The second and final theory that guided the conduct of this study was conceptualized from the resource-based theory developed by Barney (1991), who argued that for organizations to favorably compete in the competitive business environment, they need to develop resources that are not easily imitable, rare, and valuable, and that their human resources stand out as the most important of all the resources organizations have. The theory claims that by developing human resources through training such as executive development training, executive employees acquire skills, including soft and hard skills, that are considered highly valuable and inimitable by competitors and can be used to improve competitiveness, organizational commitment to work, and effectiveness (Utami & Alamanos, 2022). The theory recognized the human resource as an organization's greatest asset that must be developed through training methods comprising both on-the-job and off-the-job to update current skills and acquire new ones required to help executive employees properly manage employees under their supervision, leading to the achievement of organizational objectives and goals (Shibin et al., 2020).

In addition, the skills acquired from developing and executing employees are not only beneficial to the progression of the employee's career growth prospects but also give them the motivation to remain committed and loyal to the organization, which the organization uses to ward off interest from rivals. Moreover, the continuous changes taking place within the manufacturing sector are an indication that executive employees may be motivated to leave their organization for another, so long as their expectations are met in the new organization. This situation often leads to brain drain across the sector since the movement of executive employees may deprive other organizations of the chance to compete favorably in the industry. Thus, developing the human resource through executive development training is inevitable, as it serves as a catalyst for improving retention and reducing turnover rates (Boon et al., 2019; and Hung et al., 2019).

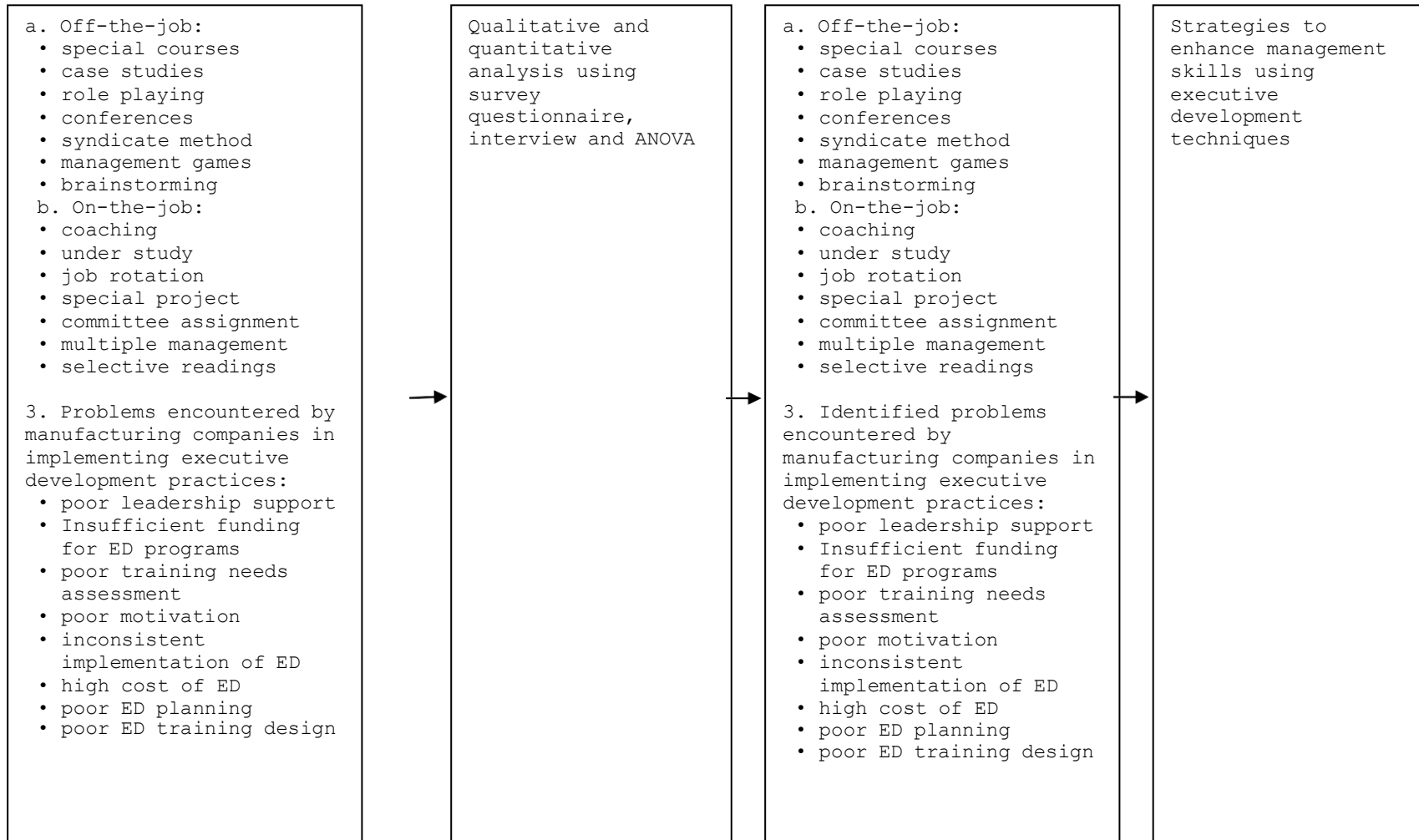
The use of this theory in this study is justified because it specifically pointed out the role that people, especially executive employees, play in not only maintaining an organization's competitiveness but also highlighted the need for organizations to invest heavily in training employees so they can acquire the necessary soft and hard skills to continue to provide the expected levels of service delivery.

Executive Development of Selected Manufacturing Firms in Port Harcourt City, Nigeria

Figure 1 Research Paradigm



Executive Development of Selected Manufacturing Firms in Port Harcourt City, Nigeria



Statement of the Problem

The main goal of this research was to assess the executive development of selected manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt City, Nigeria.

Specifically, it provided answer to the following research questions:

- 1 . What is the level of skills of the managers/executives of manufacturing companies in terms of:
 - a . hard skills; and
 - b . soft skills?
- 2 . What is the difference in skills of top, middle and specialized executives?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in skills of top, middle, and specialized executives.

- 3 . What is the extent of practice of executive development along:
 - a . Off-the-job; and
 - b . On-the-job?
- 4 . What are the problems encountered by manufacturing companies in implementing executive development practices?

II. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methods and procedures employed in gathering and analyzing the data in this study. The details of the methods and procedures used were presented below in the following order: research design and methodology, population and locale of the study, data gathering tools, data gathering procedures, and the treatment of data.

Research Design and Methodology

The study used the quantitative descriptive survey and descriptive-comparative method of research design to assess the executive development of selected manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Consequently, the study used a quantitative descriptive survey to describe the level of skills of managers and executives, the practices of executive development, and the problems encountered by manufacturing companies in implementing these practices. Whereas, the descriptive-comparative design was used to analyze and describe the differences in skills between top managers, middle managers, and specialized executives without any manipulation.

Population and location of the Study

The population of the study was executive employees, including top managers, middle managers, and specialized executives of selected manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt City, Nigeria. The locale of the study was Port Harcourt City, which is the capital of Rivers State and situated in the south-south, one of the six geo-political zones in Nigeria.

Port Harcourt City is very rich in crude oil resources and is in fact dubbed the oil capital of Nigeria due to its vast amount of crude oil reserves, more than any other oil-producing state in the country. This attracted many local and international companies to set up businesses in and around the city. The majority of these companies formed part of the respondents that supplied the necessary data used in providing answers to the research objectives. Furthermore, the study targeted executive employees at twenty (20) manufacturing firms, comprising top managers, middle managers, and specialized executives.

Twenty manufacturing firms were included in this study for the following reasons: First, among all the manufacturing companies contacted by the researcher during the initial phase of this study, only twenty (20) agreed to join the study. Second, the majority of the chosen companies were easily accessible from the researchers' current place of residence. Finally, some of the manufacturing companies that opted out of the study did so because they felt the information their staffs were to provide was too sensitive, while others were unwilling to devote efforts to providing

Executive Development of Selected Manufacturing Firms in Port Harcourt City, Nigeria

information. Hence, the respondents, comprising top, middle, and specialized executives, were drawn from these companies. The aforementioned reasons were the criteria used in selecting the twenty manufacturing companies in the study area. The population as well as the exact sample size used in the study is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Population Distribution and Sample Size

No.	List of Companies	Total Number of Executive Employees	Exact Number of Samples Used
1	Company A	79	20
2	Company B	40	17
3	Company C	29	15
4	Company D	33	20
5	Company E	30	6
6	Company F	41	23
7	Company G	19	5
8	Company H	10	4
9	Company I	17	6
10	Company J	38	11
11	Company K	26	6
12	Company L	50	5
13	Company M	83	13
14	Company N	20	4
15	Company O	18	3
16	Company P	31	11
17	Company Q	44	5
18	Company R	26	7
19	Company S	24	7
20	Company T	37	12
Total		695	200

The exact number of samples used was determined by the respondent's permission to participate in the study given by the management of each company surveyed. Hence, the companies rather than the researcher chose the respondents used in this study. 200 samples were used for the following reasons: first, the original sample size of 98 based on earlier computations was too small to answer the primary research questions and may result in statistically insignificant results. Finally, the larger the sample size, the more the results of the study can be generalized to other contexts, meaning a larger sample size can be more representative of the population and consequently provide more accurate results (Andrade, 2020).

In addition, during the actual conduct of the study, purposive sampling, a type of non-probability sampling, was used to select the respondents. This sampling method was used because the researcher used her judgment to segregate the respondents, that is, top managers, middle managers, and specialized executives, who were the appropriate personnel that provided the required information that satisfied the research objectives previously formulated.

This suggested that only respondents who were in the category of work positions classified as top managers, middle managers, and specialized executives were chosen to participate in the study, further justifying the use of purposive sampling in this study.

Data Gathering Tools

A questionnaire and interview guide was used to gather data for this study. The questionnaire and interview

guide were accompanied by a cover letter introducing the researcher as well as the motivation for conducting this study. The questionnaire contained four sections. The first section consisted of statements describing the demographics of the respondents. This part was personally formulated by the researcher and contained a total of six statements.

The second part of the questionnaire comprised statements relating to the first research objective of this study, which was aimed at assessing the level of skills of managers and executives of manufacturing companies. Two variables were used, namely hard skills and soft skills conceptualized from previous literature on the same theme being studied. This part of the questionnaire was adapted from the studies of Ibay & Pa-Alisbo (2020); Remedios (2021); Patacsil et al. (2017); and Brungardt (2011), with some modifications made to fit the objectives mentioned in the previous chapter of this research. Each of the two dimensions contained a total of nine (9) specific statements, thereby making it a total of eighteen (18) statements, and was measured on a four-point Likert scale type of measurement ranging from 4 (very proficient), 3 (proficient), 2 (moderately proficient), and 1 (not proficient).

The third section of the questionnaire contained statements related to the third research objective of this study, which was to determine the extent of executive development practices. Similarly, two variables were used, namely off-the-job and on-the-job, conceptualized from past literature on the same subject matter. This part of the questionnaire was adapted from the studies of Geek (2021), Nwabali (2019), Lynton & Prateek (2002), and Fitzgerald (1992), but was later modified to fit the research objectives of this study. Each of the two dimensions contained a total of seven (7) specific statements, thereby making it a total of fourteen (14) statements, and was measured on a 3-point Likert scale type of measurement ranging from 3-fully implemented, 2-partially implemented, to 1-not implemented.

The final section of the questionnaire contained interview guide questions that aimed to provide answers to the problems encountered by manufacturing companies in implementing executive development practices. This part is an open-ended questionnaire, personally formulated, and contains a total of four specific questions. Overall, the questionnaire was pilot tested with 15 respondents, and the result was later subjected to a reliability test using the Cronbach Alpha. The distribution and collection of the data for the pilot test were done on December 1, 2022. The reliability test was done on December 2, 2022, after tallying and tabulating the results of the survey. The result of the reliability coefficient yielded a value of 0.8639 (See Appendix F), affirming that the questionnaire has high reliability. Moreover, the original study from which the questionnaire was adapted had the same reliability results. However, the results of the pilot test were excluded from the actual research so as to avoid preemption that may affect the study's credibility and reliability.

Data Gathering Procedures

The following procedures were applied in gathering data for this study: First, the researcher incorporated all the recommendations and suggestions of her adviser and panel. The edited survey was pilot tested with 15 respondents, and the results were confirmed to be reliable. The results were then communicated to the research panel and adviser for their final approval before actual distribution. Next, although her research panel recommended the use of hybrid methods in gathering data, the researcher chose to implement this process in person for the following reasons.

First, the researcher realized that the majority of the targeted respondents were not willing to provide their answers via the online survey; in fact, no response was recorded during the first three days of distributing the online survey. For this reason, the online survey was discarded. Finally, the researcher currently resides in the study area and, as such, was able to distribute and retrieve all the answered questionnaires in person directly from the respondents. The researcher printed exactly 200 copies of the questionnaire and sought the assistance of two of her colleagues in the distribution and collection of all answers to the surveys from the respondents. The distribution and collection of all answered questionnaires were completed within a span of three days, specifically from December 5, 2022, to December 7, 2022. Data tallying, computation, and tabulation were done within a span of three days, specifically from December 7, 2022, to December 9, 2022.

In addition, the researcher contacted some employees working under different managers and executives in manufacturing companies within the study area for an interview after the conduct of the study so as to either affirm or contradict the analysis and interpretation of the study results. The interview was also important because it prevented the study results from being viewed as biased due to the fact that the managers and executives could not be interviewed to provide the basis for their opinions expressed in the survey. Hence, employees working under these managers and executives were considered to be in a better position to substantiate the claims made by their superiors in this study. The interview was done informally, and their recorded responses were used to support the interpretation of the survey results in this study. The informal interview was done face-to-face and completed within a span of three days, specifically from January 30, 2023, to February 1, 2023. The recorded statements were later deleted and disposed of in accordance with the Nigerian law on e-waste disposal. Overall, the writing of the subsequent chapters of this paper was accomplished within a span of six days, specifically from December 10, 2022, to December 15, 2022.

Finally, the ethical principles of informed consent, voluntarism, anonymity, and confidentiality were guaranteed to the respondents in the survey and participants in the interview before, during, and after the completion of the study. With regards to informed consent, respondents and participants were required to verbally give their consent before participating in the study. The researcher also explained to the respondents and participants that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they were free to leave at any time without further questioning. No respondent or participant was identified either by name or by any other element that could jeopardize their work safety or put pressure on them to give the wrong response, as this part was intentionally omitted in the questionnaire and interview guide. Finally, the respondents and participants were also guaranteed that the data and information provided by them would not be shared with unauthorized persons, as this research was purely an academic exercise.

Treatment of Data

The gathered data was statistically treated using the following statistical tools:

Weighted Mean. This tool was used to organize,

analyze, and interpret data for the level of skills of managers and executives in manufacturing companies and the extent of practice in executive development.

ANNOVA. This tool was used to analyze and interpret the data for the differences in skills among top, middle, and specialized executives.

Frequency and percentages. This tool was used to organize and interpret the problems encountered by manufacturing companies in implementing executive development practices.

To interpret the data for the level of skills of managers and executives as well as their extent of practice, the following scales were used as references:

Interpretation for the Level of Skills of Managers/Executives of Manufacturing Companies

Rate	Range	Description
4	3.26 - 4.00	Very Proficient
3	2.51 - 3.25	Proficient
2	1.76 - 2.50	Moderately Proficient
1	1.00 - 1.75	Not Proficient

Interpretation for the Extent of Practice of Executive Development

Rate	Range	Description	Interpretation
3	2.33 - 3.00	Fully Implemented	Executive development activities are always practiced
2	1.67 - 2.32	Partially Implemented	Executive development activities often times practiced
1	1.00 - 1.66	Not Implemented	Executive development activities are never practiced

III. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Presented in this chapter are the analysis and interpretation of findings. The findings are presented in tabular form in the following order: level of skills of the managers and executives of manufacturing companies; difference in skills of top, middle, and specialized executives; extent of practice of executive development; and problems encountered by manufacturing companies in implementing executive development practices.

Level of Skills of Managers and Executives of Manufacturing Companies

Presented in this subsection of the chapter are the analysis and interpretations of findings that provided answers to the first research objective of this study, which was aimed at assessing the level of skills of managers and executives of manufacturing companies. Two variables, namely, the hard skills and soft skills of managers and executive employees conceptualized from readings in past literature, were examined, analyzed, and interpreted.

Presented in Table 2 are findings of the level of skills of managers and executives of manufacturing companies in terms of hard skills, where the overall weight is 3.47. This means that managers and executives had very high levels of skill.

Table 2

Level of Skills of Managers/Executives of Manufacturing Companies in terms of Hard Skills

	Skills	Skill Value
1	Operational planning skill	3.63
2	Managerial skill	3.58
3	Retention of human force skill	3.49
4	Financial management skill	3.45
5	Definition of labor skill	3.45
6	Labor division skill	3.44
7	Evaluation of employee skill	3.43
8	Marketing skill	3.40
9	Computer skill	3.40
Overall Weighted Mean		3.47

The findings presented cover the following hard skill constructs of managers and executives: 3.63 for operational planning skill, 3.58 for managerial skill, 3.49 for retention of human force skill, and financial management skill definition of labor skill, respectively; 3.44 for labor division skill; 3.43 for evaluation of employee skill; and 3.40 for marketing skill and computer skill, respectively.

It is evident from the findings that operational planning was the highest level of hard skill accomplished by managers and executives of manufacturing companies in the study area. It means that executive employees demonstrated a very high level of proficiency in planning and managing the daily affairs and activities of their organizations. The finding in this aspect is interesting given that all manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City are heavily involved and affiliated with the oil sector, where a handful of their activities such as planning, production, repairs, marketing, sales, and distribution are a daily occurrence. These activities serve as the manufacturing company's engine room because they provide managers and executives with opportunities to maximize efficiency, effectiveness, and revenue, which are fundamental to the organization's growth, sustainability, success, and competitive advantage. Moreover, a handful of these organizational activities are usually managed by employees occupying the positions of middle managers and operations managers (See Appendix B).

Given that the manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City, Nigeria, are currently competing in an already saturated market, it suggests that they are all striving to remain successful and relevant in the sector. And stakeholders in the sector recognized that one of the ways of achieving a sustainable competitive advantage is by providing managers

and executives with opportunities for executive development training that can help them upgrade existing skills and acquire new ones that are most relevant to their specific work responsibilities in line with the current realities in the business environment. One of such skills is operational planning, which is considered vital to the survival of manufacturing companies in the current business environment.

The finding resonates well with the ideas of Alam et al. (2021) that operational planning skills are acknowledged as one of the hard skills middle managers need to function efficiently in line with organizational objectives. This means that the higher the level of operational planning skill attained by executive employees in manufacturing companies, the higher their level of organizational efficiency and effectiveness, thus confirming what Krpalek et al. (2021) affirmed: the more opportunities given for manager training, the better they can utilize these skills to impact employee commitment and gain a competitive advantage. Buttressing this point, an employee working under one of the managers of the manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City mentioned that "managers and other senior management staff in my company are highly skilled, especially with their daily activities, and because of this, the managers use their operational planning skills to effectively delegate tasks to employees, provide them with the needed support, and define outcomes for them to measure the daily responsibilities required to accomplish the organizational goals" (Interviewee "A", Appendix D).

Another employee working under another manager went further to assert that the managers I currently work with in this company are highly skilled with their operations, that is, they constantly take decisions on a daily basis that affect production, work with teams, and have a thorough understanding of the company's processes and management. This improved the level of employees' motivation and commitment to work, thus preventing many of us from leaving the company even when working under the most extreme conditions" (Interviewee "B", Appendix D).

The findings also revealed that managers and executives of manufacturing companies attained a very high level of managerial skill. This is a testament to the fact that a substantial number of the respondents have participated in one form of executive development training or another specifically targeted at enhancing their managerial skills provided by their organization. For example, one of the most popular trainings provided to managers and executives of manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City is usually targeted at their managerial skills, which they need to propel their organization's goals and objectives, or mission and vision. Thus, organizations, especially those in the oil and gas sector, to which most of the companies in this study belong, spent a substantial amount of their budget on enhancing their managers and executives managerial skills through training.

Perhaps managers and executives need very high levels of managerial skills because they are always in regular contact with people in order to get certain tasks done. The people that work for managers also need to be motivated enough to accomplish the tasks set for them, suggesting that managers with excellent managerial skills can use their skills to inspire trust and confidence in the people that work for them. When probed on this, an employee working under one of the managers mentioned in an informal interview that "I can tell you that most employees working under the different senior managers in this company are really happy because these managers make us feel valued with their effective communication and coordination of all activities, and also because they work hand in hand with teams of employees to ensure that everyday tasks are completed much to the desire of everyone" (Interviewee "C" Appendix D). These views closely align with the propositions of the human capital theory proposed by Becker (1964) that guided this study: organizations gain competitive advantage by providing opportunities for their human resources to develop and enhance their skills and competencies in a systematic manner and in tandem with organizational policies that add value to them.

Consistent with this notion, Yusliza et al. (2019) reported that employees with high levels of managerial skills have the opportunity to improve their commitment and engagement at work, and that without these skills, in many situations, the competence of managers does not have any significant effect on the employees they control. Therefore, continuous managerial training is important because, as Aboramadan et al. (2020) suggested, it positions employees in higher positions to act as effective leaders who are capable of making good decisions given that they also spend more time planning, organizing, leading, problem solving, and controlling others in the organization.

On the other hand, in the aspect of hard skills, the two lowest mean scores that indicate managers and executives need further training were marketing and computer skills, even though they attained a very high level rating. This means that managers and executives demonstrated a very high level of proficiency in hard skills but still need improvement in marketing and computer skills. As previously reported, majority of the companies in Port Harcourt City are found in the oil and gas sector where computers are rarely used except for communication and exchange of information purposes and marketing is usually provided by advertising companies, hence, the lack of need for this skill for managers/executives.

Buttressing this point, one of the respondents mentioned during an informal interview that "computer and marketing skills are among the least type of development training provided to my managers because most of our

transactions are paper-based involving the use of physical papers, computers are most used for communication and exchange of information purposes, and our advertisements are usually outsourced to advertising agencies" (Interviewee B, Appendix C). Supporting this claim, an employee working under one of the managers in the manufacturing companies mentioned during an informal interview that "one of the skills I observed that managers in my company are not highly skilled at is their computer and marketing skills. Investment in computer skills is low, which is why some of the company's computer work-related activities are outsourced to technology companies as a means of cutting costs. And given that my company is in the oil sector, management does not invest much in marketing skills for its managers because oil is a product that is readily sought after by consumers because it is the mainstay of the Nigerian economy" (Interviewee "D", Appendix D).

Regardless, scholars such as Day and Liu (2018) reiterated the importance of executive development training encompassing hard skill types that include computer, marketing, financial management, and labor division for managers and executives because it forms part of the skills that are imitable and rare that add value to an organization's competitive advantage. This is acknowledged by the propositions of the resource-based theory developed by Barney (1991) that also guided the conduct of this study: that for organizations to favorably compete in the competitive business environment, they need to develop resources that are not easily imitable, rare, and valuable, and that their human resources stand out as the most important of all the resources organizations have. Hence, opportunities for improving marketing and computer skills for managers and executives form part of the rare and imitable human capital asset the manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City can use to improve their pool of talent. This is because the business environment in the manufacturing sector continues to evolve and computers are gradually taking over and replacing human efforts in production activities.

Overall, the current finding has implications for the management of manufacturing companies and training organizations. Given that the hard skill level of executive employees has been established to be very high, they will continuously have the opportunity to update, improve, and maintain their managerial roles more efficiently and effectively. And this may ultimately lead to lower turnover rates (a reduced number of employees leaving the organization) and increased employee commitment, satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty, further making the organization more competitive in terms of its human capital. Acknowledging this fact may necessitate manufacturing companies to increase the number of executive development programs for their executive employees, which benefits training organizations in terms of increased profits and the design of new training and development programs.

Table 3

Level of Skills of Managers/Executives of Manufacturing Companies in terms of Soft Skills

	Skills	Skill Value
1	Communication skill	3.56
2	Team work management skill	3.51
3	Leadership skill	3.45
4	Management skill	3.44
5	Interpersonal skill	3.42
6	Entrepreneurship skill	3.42
7	Presentation skill	3.40
8	Work ethics and morals skill	3.37
9	Conflict management skill	3.27
Overall Weighted Mean		3.43

Presented in Table 3 are findings of the level of skills of managers and executives of manufacturing companies in terms of soft skills, where the overall weight is 3.43. This means that managers and executives had a very high level of skill. The findings presented cover the following soft skill constructs of managers and executives:

3.56 for communication, 3.51 for teamwork management, 3.45 for leadership, 3.44 for management, 3.42 for interpersonal and entrepreneurship, respectively, 3.40 for presentation, 3.37 for work ethics and morals, and 3.27 for conflict management.

From the findings, it can be observed that communication appeared to be the skill with which the majority of the respondents are highly skilled and proficient as they carry out their daily managerial functions. The finding did not come as a surprise because managers and executives of manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City are in constant touch with employees working for them in order to get certain tasks accomplished in line with their organizational objectives. For example, managers in these manufacturing companies are usually tasked with the responsibility of delegating and supervising employees to produce products that are of high quality and also meet all the required standards in the industry. For this reason, managers have no choice but to continuously update their communication skills if they are to get work done in line with their organizational objectives.

Recognizing this value is perhaps one of the reasons why the management of these manufacturing companies regularly subjects their managers and executives to communication training, as evidenced by the respondents responses in this study. The management of manufacturing companies in the study area therefore acknowledges that maintaining their managers and executives level of communication skills is crucial to improving their roles as leaders and decision-makers. Moreover, communication skills are among the skills that are rare, imitable, and valuable when properly developed, which aligns with the views of the resource-based theory that guided the conduct of this study (Barney, 1991).

When probed on this, an employee working under a manager in one of the manufacturing companies mentioned affirmed that "in my company, most of the managers are highly skilled when communicating with their subordinates, especially in terms of providing them with guidance and how certain things should be done. In my view, the managers' communication skills are very useful because they have helped employees working under them increase their morale, commitment, engagement, and satisfaction levels. Moreover, because of my manager's communication skills, it has helped me as an individual to better collaborate and cooperate with members of my team in the department" (Interviewee "A", Appendix D). These views further affirm the importance of communication skills as a vital tool in achieving success in manufacturing companies.

Findings correspond with those of Abujbara & Worley (2018) and Musembi et al. (2018), who established that soft skills such as communication and leadership are the most important skills for top, entry-level, and middle managers, and this also includes executive employees. In line with this thought, Sarkar et al. (2020) recommended that organizational leaders with high emotional intelligence are more inclined to develop competencies that are part of soft skills that include efficient interactions, effective communications, and effective conflict management techniques to manage emerging and future workplace conflict. This is also because, according to Pinto (2018), managers and executives who possess very high communication skills are more likely to overcome simple to complex challenges, achieve better results, and work more effectively with other employees. Moreover, the survival and success of any organization are dependent on the level of information and interactions taking place, which explains the expected level of responsibilities and commitment employees, need to know to properly discharge their obligations.

In addition, teamwork was also found to be the second highest level of soft skills attained by the respondents in this study. The finding is a testament to the fact that manufacturing companies surveyed in this study provide a wide range of services such as pipeline repairs and maintenance, oil drilling, and delivery of petroleum products, which makes it physically and humanly impossible to implement by single individuals. Hence, it is not unusual to see employees at all levels in manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City working together to deliver specific outputs to clients and customers. Organizational leaders in the manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City encourage and motivate employees to deliver their tasks as a team rather than as individuals because they recognize that when people work together, trust improves, and they deliver better and superior results. It therefore shows that manufacturing organizations have put in place policies that encourage managers and executives to closely work across the different departments they manage.

When probed on this, an employee working under a manager in one of the manufacturing companies mentioned that "obviously, managers in my company work hand in hand with all employees in each department to implement a task to its logical conclusion. Managers are skilled at working with teams and encouraging everyone to do their part to achieve the desired objectives. The managers of my company always check on everyone whenever a task is assigned to us and make sure that things are working according to plan. In situations where things are not working the way they were designed to, managers assist us with proper guidance, and in some extreme situations, further training is provided to the affected employees. This is the reason why it is impossible in my company for one single individual to take all credit when things go right or take blame when things are going in the opposite direction" (Interviewee "E", Appendix, D).

The findings validate the ideas of Inegbedion et al. (2020) that in the present fiercely competitive business environment, it is teams and not individuals that drive organizational engagement, commitment, trust, and overall success. Further, the results mirrored those of Sabri and Abu-Atiah (2020), who supported the idea that training in teamwork, encourages managers and executives to execute their functions and responsibilities to their organizations more effectively. It means that unless managers and executives are motivated enough, they may not have the courage and motivation to inspire trust and confidence in the teams they lead. This observation ultimately informs us about the importance of teamwork in supporting executive development as the appropriate training for improving the leadership roles of managers and executives in manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City.

On the other hand, in the aspect of soft skills, the two lowest mean scores that indicate that managers and executives need further training were identified as work ethics and morale skills and conflict management skills, even though both attained a very high level of skill rating. This means that managers and executives demonstrated a very high level of proficiency in soft skills but still need improvement in work ethics and morale skills, as well as conflict management skills. The finding in this aspect is not unusual among manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City.

For example, when probed on this in an informal interview, an employee working under a manager in one of the manufacturing companies mentioned that "work ethics and morals as well as conflict management skills are part of my organization's job contract; however, based on my observation, I realized that the implementation of these policies is not regularly observed. For instance, some managers simply ignore following the company's rules and regulations when managing conflict between employees due to their bias and preference for one employee over the other" (Interviewee "B", Appendix D). Another employee working under an executive employee buttressed this claim by mentioning that "work ethics and conflict skills of managers are not often practiced not because they are not skilled but because they simply ignore to implement them." Moreover, I also observed that the management of my company rarely updates its conflict and work ethics manuals and also does not regularly subject their managers to these kinds of trainings because they are of the view that these managers know what to do in different circumstances" (Interviewee "F", Appendix D).

These views suggest that besides providing ethics and conflict management training, important stakeholders in manufacturing companies, such as managers and executives, need to be seen as role models and communicate ethical expectations at all times to their employees. These views authenticate those of Javed et al. (2020), who pointed out that upholding ethics is part of achieving sustainable competitive advantage, and this can only be achieved if it is visible and practiced by leaders in organizations. Even though work ethics are acknowledged to improve leadership skills, it is good to note that employees at the lower level might be motivated but may not be committed to displaying the same level of behavior if their leaders are not doing the same. Consistent with this notion, Patel et al. (2018) posited that while developing ethics policies, it is vital to develop strategic methods of implementing the policies and that leaders must be at the forefront of these efforts. Consequently, an understanding of the method of implementation of the ethics program will make it easy for the management of manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City to determine the specific areas of their ethics programs that need review and adjustments.

Conflict management, which appeared to be the lowest level of skill attained by the respondents, indicates that the management of manufacturing companies needs to provide further training to their managers and executives in this aspect. This is important given that these managers and executives of manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City constantly deal with myriad issues that affect them and their employees on a daily basis, and as such, a deficiency in the appropriate conflict management skill could discourage team collaboration efforts among employees and ultimately delay the achievement of organizational success. The finding is in congruence with Maiti & Jae-Ho (2018), who found that developing senior management's conflict management skills improves leadership capacity and decision-making, further enhancing talent retention.

Moreover, conflict management skills are among the pool of soft skills required to develop an organization's invaluable, rare, and imitable talent used to sustain competitive advantage, which aligns with the ideas of the resource-based theory theorized by Barney (1991) that guided this study.

In general, the finding has several implications for the management of manufacturing companies and training organizations. A very high level of soft skills enhances managers and executives relationships with stakeholders, creates trust and credibility, and leads teams to achieve the desired organizational outcomes. The results also imply that training organizations will have the opportunity to design specific soft skills training programs for managers and executives in the manufacturing sector, thereby improving their service offerings and revenue as well.

Table 4

Summary of the Level of Skills of Managers/Executives of Manufacturing Companies

	Skills	Skill Value
1	Hard skills	3.47
2	Soft skills	3.43
Overall Weighted Mean		3.45

Table 4 presents a summary of the level of skills of managers and executives of manufacturing companies, where the overall weighted mean was established to be 3.45. The dimensions that measured the level of skills of managers and executives are presented as follows, starting with the highest mean of 3.47 for hard skills and 3.43 for soft skills.

The fact that hard skills achieved the highest rating suggests that the management of manufacturing companies in the study area is investing more in their managers and executives hard skills training. The reason for this is not far-fetched because these manufacturing companies core services in Port Harcourt City involve higher amounts or levels of physical human effort to accomplish. These companies provide services such as crude oil exploration, transportation of petroleum and gas to refineries, pipeline construction, oil well maintenance and repairs, and logistical support services, among others. These services require a great deal of physical manpower, which further justifies the huge investments in hard skill training provided by manufacturing companies for their managers and executives. Thus, the higher the level of hard skills acquired by managers and executives, the better their level of leadership skills in managing their workforce.

When probed on this during an informal interview, an employee working under a middle manager in one of the manufacturing companies opined that "all managers are regularly trained on how to handle the most physical and challenging aspects of the job like pipeline construction, oil drilling mechanics, and logistics from warehouse to customer businesses. This is the reason why managers in my current company are provided with all the necessary support in spite of the limited funds to continuously improve the different areas of their hard skills. This is because these skills are frequently used to get work done in this company" (Interviewee "C", Appendix D). Moreover, as an employee working under a manager in one of the manufacturing companies puts it "any employee aspiring to occupy a higher position like a manager in my company must have acquired and had experience in different skill sets like managerial skills, operational skills, and the like before they are considered for the position" (Interviewee "D", Appendix D).

These views closely align with the results of Sopa et al. (2020), who discovered that hard skills had a greater influence on employee innovation. Consequently, the higher the level of hard skills acquired, the higher the level of commitment, and organizational productivity will also increase (Che et al., 2019; Boadu et al., 2018; and Terhorst et al., 2018).

Although findings showed that managers and executives had higher levels of hard skills than soft skills, the importance of soft skills for employees cannot be underestimated. This is because employees with higher levels of soft skills can demonstrate the ability to work in harmony with others, which is a vital skill required in running a successful manufacturing organization. Moreover, as Fadhil et al. (2021) highlighted, employees with higher degrees of soft skills like conflict management can be used to build relationships and address workplace issues, thereby influencing managers and executives to make meaningful contributions to their organization. The findings also follow similar observations made by researchers such as Albadea & Giret (2018) and Escrig-Tena et al. (2018), who reported soft skills as the skill with the greatest influence on employee innovation and commitment.

Therefore, management of manufacturing companies cannot neglect to increase their commitment to increasing training investments for their managers and executives' soft skills through executive development because it is the most significant predictor of employee commitment (Krpalek et al., 2021; and Ibrahim et al., 2017) that leads to organizational efficiency (Lahope et al., 2020). Overall, the finding supports the use of resource-based theory theorized by Barney (1991), who argued that by developing human resources through training such as executive development training, executive employees acquire skills, including soft and hard skills, that are considered highly valuable and inimitable by competitors and can be used to improve organizational commitment to work and effectiveness (Utami & Alamanos, 2022).

In general, the practical implication of the finding is that the very high level of hard and soft skills of managers

and executives provides them with the opportunity to increase their knowledge and expertise and acquire more experience, which they use to attract, develop, and retain talent, facilitate strategy implementation, and increase success in navigating change in an increasingly disruptive manufacturing business environment.

Difference in Skills of Top, Middle, and Specialized Executives

The researcher sought to find out whether there is a difference in the skills of top, middle, and specialized executives in manufacturing companies. An analysis and understanding of this was important as it provides a better insight into whether there are differences in the skills of managers and executives considering they perform similar roles and functions in the manufacturing companies covered in this study. To carry out this task, the responses of top, middle, and specialized executives in the survey were segregated, and their means were then computed. Finally, the means of the three managerial positions were then subjected to further analysis using the analysis of variance (ANNOVA), which is presented and interpreted below.

Table 5

Means of Top, Middle and Specialized Executives

Statement	Top Level	Middle Level	Specialized Executives
	N = 77	N = 83	N = 40
Hard Skills	Weighted Mean	Weighted Mean	Weighted Mean
1. Operational planning skill	3.64	3.47	3.58
2. Managerial skill	3.55	3.45	3.53
3. Retention of human force skill	3.52	3.45	3.45
4. Financial management skill	3.49	3.43	3.43
5. Definition of labor skill	3.45	3.40	3.38
6. Labor division skill	3.45	3.39	3.35
7. Evaluation of employee skill	3.43	3.37	3.35
8. Marketing skill	3.43	3.36	3.30
9. Computer skill	3.39	3.35	3.28
Soft Skills	Weighted Mean	Weighted Mean	Weighted Mean
10. Communication skill	3.49	3.45	3.83
11. Team work management skill	3.45	3.43	3.53
12. Leadership skill	3.43	3.42	3.43
13. Management skill	3.39	3.40	3.43
14. Interpersonal skill	3.36	3.37	3.38
15. Entrepreneurship skill	3.35	3.37	3.38
16. Presentation skill	3.35	3.35	3.35
17. Work ethics and morals skill	3.34	3.35	3.33
18. Conflict management skill	3.30	3.33	3.30

Table 6

Difference in Skills of Top, Middle and Specialized Executives

Source	DF	Sum of Square	Mean Square	F Statistic	P-value
Hard Skills					
Groups (between groups)	2	0.03529	0.01764	2.929	0.07275
Error (within groups)	24	0.1446	0.006024		
Total	26	0.1799	0.006918		
Soft Skills					
Groups (between groups)	2	0.01816	0.009078	0.8692	0.4321
Error (within groups)	24	0.2506	0.01044		
Total	26	0.2688	0.01034		

Table 6 presents the inferential statistical results for the difference in skills among top, middle, and specialized executives in manufacturing companies. From the analysis, since the p-value is $> \alpha$ (0.07275 and 0.4321), H_0 is accepted. The averages of all groups are assumed to be equal. In other words, the difference between the averages of all groups is not big enough to be statistically significant. Also, the observed size of F is small (2.929 and 0.8692). This indicates that the magnitude of the difference between the skills of top, middle, and specialized executives is small. In other words, the differences between the averages of all groups are not big enough to be statistically significant.

As part of their skill set, top, middle, and specialized executives in manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City are required to acquire hard and soft skills because they implement myriad tasks and functions that require both technical and personal traits to establish good working relationships among employees. For example, managers and executives need communication, interpersonal, management, and team management skills, among others, to empower their employees to collaborate and work as a team to collectively achieve the organization’s mission and vision, which can in turn lead to enhanced work commitment, career path growth, and heightened satisfaction.

Consistent with this notion, Jelonek et al. (2020) highlighted that although different researchers have proposed a varied number of soft skill sets, one thing common among these skills is that they are all capable of helping leaders, including managers and executives, improve their career path prospects and organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Jelonek et al., 2020). Moreover, a range of soft skills are required for managers and executives to achieve the growth and success they desire. Consequently, Nusrat & Sultana (2019) proposed that employees in senior management roles with a soft skill set that includes communication, teamwork, work ethics, and conflict management skills are crucial to developing and managing people and solving broader issues that affect an organization.

Additionally, top, middle, and specialized executives in the manufacturing sector need a set of hard skills that include operational planning, managerial, and financial management skills, among others, because it is the skill they need to manage employees working with machines and equipment that is directly tied to the transformation of raw materials into finished products (Lumague, 2017). It is for this reason that Jaeger & Upadhyay (2020) noted that it is logical to expect managers and executives to have technical knowledge of the employees they manage in manufacturing industries. The current finding is in congruence with Kok (2020), who found no significant differences in the levels of employees skills and qualifications but opined that well-trained employees tend to achieve higher organizational commitment levels compared to those who are less trained. Buttressing this point, Asadullah et al. (2021) found no statistically significant differences among the different categories of employees when grouped by gender and skills.

However, there are researchers who suggest different types of skills for different types of positions in an organization, which is contrary to the findings in this study. For example, middle managers need hard skills such as operational planning, employee evaluation, computer skills, and logistic skills (Alam et al., 2021); top managers require hard skills that include labor division, managerial knowledge and experience, marketing skills, and computer skills (Leito et al., 2020); whereas Flores et al. (2020) recommended that specialized executives need hard skills that include all the skills of middle and top managers for them to function efficiently in line with the organizational objectives.

Regardless, the current finding means that both hard and soft skills are equally important for top, middle, and specialized employees to have because both skills significantly and positively influence employee innovation, creativity in taking crucial decisions, and loyalty to the organization (Nugraha et al., 2021; and Hendarman et al., 2018). Both hard and soft skills are essential for managers and executives to have because they are one of the most effective ways of creating a sustainable competitive advantage and also because they make the affected employees more resourceful and motivated to continuously deliver the desired organizational outcomes. These views further validate the use of human capital theory and resource-based theory postulated by Becker (1964) and Barney (1991), respectively, that guided this study and highlighted that organizations can create a rare and imitable competitive advantage by developing their human resource skills (hard and soft) through training, one of which is executive development training for managers and executives to update and acquire both skills.

Overall, the practical implication of the finding for management of manufacturing companies is that although top, middle, and specialized executives require different sets of skills, regardless, each can perfectly play the role of the other in the absence of any because they all take decisions and implement similar functions and responsibilities in the companies. Hence, by training top, middle, and specialized executives, management of manufacturing companies will not only save costs but also ensure that there is continuity of operations in the absence of a top-level manager, middle-level manager, or specialized executive since any of them can perfectly perform each other's roles and responsibilities.

Extent of Practice in Executive Development

This subsection of the chapter was devoted to understanding the extent of the practice of executive development among managers and executives in manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City. The analysis was important because it provides better insight into the level of implementation of training provided to their managers and executives that aids their career path growth and management roles as leaders of their organizations. To achieve this, two variables, namely off-the-job and on-the-job training methods conceptualized from previous literature, were adapted and are presented below.

Presented in Table 7 are findings for the extent of practice of executive development in terms of off-the-job, where the overall weighted mean was 2.56 with a qualitative interpretation of "executive development activities are always practiced". The findings presented cover the following off-the-job constructs of executive development:

2.70 for the opportunity to attend a special course, 2.63 for participation in case study training, and 2.59 for participation in role playing. Others include 2.53 for the opportunity to participate in brainstorming ideas and a specific type of training, 2.51 for the opportunity to participate in management games, and 2.41 for the opportunity to attend conferences. All the indicators got a qualitative interpretation of "Executive development activities are always practiced".

Table 7 Extent of Practice of Executive Development in terms of Off-the-Job

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Description	Interpretation
1. Executive employees are regularly given the opportunity to attend special course training in line with their job requirements outside the organization	2.70	Fully Implemented	Executive development activities are always practiced
2. Executive employees are regularly given the chance to participate in case study training outside the organization	2.63	Fully Implemented	Executive development activities are always practiced
3. Executive employees are regularly given the opportunity to participate in role playing training programs outside the organization	2.59	Fully Implemented	Executive development activities are always practiced
4. Executive employees are given the opportunity to brain storm on ideas that can be used to help solve future and emerging challenges in the organization	2.53	Fully Implemented	Executive development activities are always practiced
5. Executive employees are regularly given the opportunity to participate in specific types of group training that is required to help them improve their work	2.53	Fully Implemented	Executive development activities are always practiced

performance		Fully Implemented	Executive development activities are always practiced
6. Executive employees are regularly given the opportunity to participate in management games that allows them to compete with other colleagues and experience is gained as a result of team work	2.51		Executive development activities are always practiced
7. Executive employees are regularly given the opportunity to attend conferences where they can gain more knowledge on the latest trend within their industry	2.41	Fully Implemented	
Overall Weighted Mea	2.56	Fully Implemented	Executive development activities are always practiced

It is apparently clear from the findings that the management of manufacturing companies regularly provides opportunities for their managers and executives to attend special course training in line with their job requirements off-site. The finding is a testament to the fact that manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City are constantly evolving, and the duties and functions performed by executive employees tend to change consistently due to the disruptions and changes taking place in the global business community. A handful of the manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City have budgets dedicated to training their managers and executives on special courses with the expectation that after training, the employees can use the skills acquired to improve their responsibilities and roles as important decision-makers. This perhaps explains the reason why the majority of the respondents are of the view that the management of their organizations has fully implemented off-the-job executive development training for them.

To be specific, a handful of these manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City usually subject their managers and executives to special training courses like environmental management system awareness, effective production management, facilities management training, and advanced planning of quality in project management, among others, on an annual basis. These special course trainings are usually provided by companies such as Alpha Partners, RCES Oil and Gas Ltd., Deslog Training and Consulting Ltd., and Oil Training Institute, among others, most of whom have their headquarters situated within the City of Port Harcourt.

In addition to preparing managers and executives to enhance and acquire new skills, these trainings also prepare them to assume additional responsibilities as demanded by the management of the manufacturing companies. The upgraded and acquired new skills are then used by these managers and executives to evaluate opportunities and make better decisions for the effective functioning of their companies. Besides, all the companies surveyed in this study have incorporated, as part of their long-term strategic goals, policies that include employee and executive development training, which includes all the activities and learning provided to staff to replenish their knowledge and acquire new skills to perform their duties and functions more efficiently and effectively. This perhaps also explains why the different off-the-job training methods are believed to be fully implemented based on the perceptions of the respondents.

When probed on this during an informal interview, an employee working under a manager in one of the manufacturing companies mentioned that "in our company, managers and other senior executives are provided with training opportunities to attend at least 2-3 special training courses both within Nigeria and abroad. Based on my experience, I realized that the management of the company does this because they want to advance their managers careers by ensuring they acquire the latest knowledge to make effective decisions, such as managing and mentoring their subordinates, as well as influencing the necessary change around them" (Interviewee "D", Appendix D). Another employee working under a manager went further to mention that "the investment for the special course program provided to managers in the company I am currently working for, from my observation, makes them better managers because it provides them the opportunity to overcome myriads of challenges that emerge during their tenure" (Interviewee "E", Appendix D).

These views agree with Ismael et al. (2021) that off-the-job special training for management staff in line with their job requirements results in increasing their efficiency, manifested in quality decision-making and supervision of employees they manage. Findings also correspond with those of Chan et al. (2021), who established that besides strengthening employees skills, special training courses empower would-be future leaders to be great planners in the organizations they are affiliated with.

For example, managers and executives in the manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City, specifically those in the oil and gas sector, are usually provided with off-the-job training opportunities on specific areas of their job

requirements, such as safe handling, storage, and transportation of crude oil, petroleum project economics and risk analysis, and enhanced oil recovery, among others, usually off-site. These trainings are provided off-site because the companies do not have the facilities or equipment to do so on their own and also because they do not have in-house experts or capacity to provide such kinds of training to their management. This concurs with the position of Bajpai et al. (2020) that the off-the-job method of training is increasingly embraced by many organizations due to the limitations of training facilities and the unavailability of the right training personnel within the workplace.

Besides, there are several reasons why many manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City would prefer to provide special training courses for their managers and executives. This includes exposing employees to different environments other than their immediate place of work, helping employees gain more confidence in their abilities to accomplish their tasks, training employees quickly, and also because this type of training method is proven to improve employees' commitment and loyalty to work and the organization (Fletcher et al., 2020; and Lee et al., 2017). This suggests that manufacturing companies with consistent provision for off-the-job special course training will encourage their managers and executives to carry out their responsibilities better, which will assist in improving their overall roles as one of the most important decision-makers in the organization.

It was also observed from the findings that the management of manufacturing companies regularly allows their managers and executives to participate in case study training outside their organization. The result came out this way because the oil and gas sector, in which many of the companies surveyed in Port Harcourt are found, consistently deals with many issues like air pollution, water contamination, and environmental concerns that negatively affect their operations. These organizations continuously strive to develop effective tools through case study scenarios by engaging their most important and high-level staff on how to mitigate and manage these problems before, during, and after they emerge.

In the case study training, each manager is given the opportunity to come up with solutions to a specific problem based on their knowledge and the facts available to them.

The aim is to stimulate the workforce to think critically and make practical decisions to successfully accomplish their job requirements as well as manage and enhance work processes. When probed on this during an informal interview, an employee working under a manager in one of the manufacturing companies established that "managers of my company regularly use case study measures to respond to the negative effects of our operations on the environment and source of livelihood for the people in the society. For example, one good case study scenario usually done by managers in this company is on the issue of how to prevent oil spillage, which negatively affects aquatic life and water for the people in our host communities. This is done on a bi-monthly basis outside the company's office in cooperation with members of the host communities where our business operations take place. The managers use these trainings to empower employees that work for them to be more responsible in handling their tasks" (Interviewee "B", Appendix D).

These views are in congruence with Eli's (2021) view that case study training done outside the organization empowers employees to be effective in decision-making and service delivery to their organization and customers. This is also acknowledged by Mone et al. (2018): consistent implementation of off-the-job case study training makes managers and executives more effective and efficient in their duties and functions as well as in overall service delivery. It can be suggested that consistent implementation of off-the-job case study executive development prepares and makes managers and executives acquire better competencies that can assist them in decision-making in the organization. Hence, the higher the level of implementation and prominence given to off-the-job case study executive development, the better the quality of decisions that will be taken and implemented by managers and executives.

Finally, it can be observed that management of manufacturing companies needs to increase their efforts in the implementation of off-the-job training, specifically on managers and executives conference participation, as the evidence shows this was partially implemented. The reason why respondents felt this way is because manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City are already spending huge sums of their financial resources on providing off-the-job special training courses for their managers and executives. And also because of the nature of their jobs, which involve a great deal of physical effort, most do not see the benefit of making provision in their training budget for employees to attend conferences because they involve more speaking and interactive engagements than actual training. When probed on this, an employee working under a manager in one of the manufacturing companies mentioned that "from what I have seen so far, management of my company does not regularly provide funds for its managers to attend conferences both home and abroad because they simply do not have enough funds to do so or feel that the special course training already provided is enough to strengthen the skills of its managers" (Interviewee "B", Appendix D). It therefore means that the manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City are more inclined to spend more of their financial resources on off-the-job special training courses than on off-the-job conferences for managers and executives.

These views were also shared by Pastore & Pompili (2020), who noted that a major limitation to off-the-job training is that it is costly since organizations would have to spend more financial resources to pay external training

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organizations to use their facilities and equipment, and also because employees would have to remember and apply all the things they learn outside their workplace, which may not be easy for them to recall. In line with this thought, Isah et al. (2020) reported a lack of support from top management for off-the-job training programs because management perceived that more human and financial resources were required to fund this type of training. Consistent with this report, Islam et al. (2020) also discovered that lack of managerial interest, poor funding for off-the-job training, and lack of organizational support were responsible for the low level of implementation of off-the-job training methods in organizations.

However, the finding is contrary to the findings of Huet al. (2019), who noted that organizations with a higher level of implementation of off-the-job training in terms of conferences enhanced participants' work commitment and leadership skills and developed a positive attitude that encouraged team collaboration in production and service delivery. It can therefore be assumed that positive managers and executives leadership behavior and management roles that motivate team members and employees to excel in their tasks are associated with full implementation of participating in conferences as a method of off-the-job executive development training.

The finding has practical implications for the management of manufacturing companies and external training organizations. The practical implication of this result for manufacturing companies is that full implementation of off-the-job training for managers and executives provides them the opportunity to learn more about their duties and functions as well as the latest advancements in the manufacturing sector. They use these skills to remain committed to their work requirements consistently. This, in turn, improves organizational efficiency and effectiveness. The finding also implies that external training organizations will continuously strive to introduce new training designs and services due to the high demand for off-site training by manufacturing companies. Consequently, the higher the demand for training by manufacturing companies, the higher the profit and revenue that will be earned by external training service providers.

Table 8 Extent of Practice of Executive Development in terms of On-the-Job

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Description	Interpretation
1. Continuous coaching is provided by superiors to help executive employees achieve growth opportunities within the organization	2.76	Fully Implemented	Executive development activities are always practiced
2. Executive employees are regularly given the opportunity to rotate between jobs in order to help them gain more exposure to various departments in the company while learning and improving their skill sets	2.65	Fully Implemented	Executive development activities are always practiced
3. Executive employees are given the opportunity to guide employees at the lowest level on certain job challenges which enhances their management skills	2.63	Fully Implemented	Executive development activities are always practiced
4. Continuous support is given to executive employees to engage in selective reading in order to upgrade their professional competencies	2.60	Fully Implemented	Executive development activities are always practiced
5. Executive employees are regularly given the opportunity to participate in special project that can help them acquire professional information	2.59	Fully Implemented	Executive development activities are always practiced
6. Executive employees are given the chance to participate in committee assignments which helps them to understand their superiors better	2.54	Fully Implemented	Executive development activities are always practiced
7. Continuous support is given to executive employees to attain higher positions when there is vacancy like retirement, transfer,	2.46	Fully Implemented	Executive development activities are always practiced

promotion or death

Overall Weighted Mea	2.60	Fully Implemented	Executive development activities are always practiced
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Presented in Table 8 are findings for the extent of practice of executive development in terms of on-the-job, where the overall weighted mean was 2.60, with a qualitative interpretation of "executive development activities are always practiced". The findings presented cover the following on-the-job constructs of executive development: 2.76 for coaching, 2.65 for job rotation, and 2.63 for opportunities provided to executive employees to guide employees at the lowest level. Others include 2.60 for support for selective reading, 2.59 for participation in special project training, 2.54 for participation in committee assignments, and 2.46 for succession planning. All the indicators got a qualitative interpretation of "Executive development activities are always practiced".

It is evident from the findings that coaching is the most dominant and regularly provided type of on-the-job training for managers and executives of manufacturing companies. The results were expected given that manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City have their own in-house experts that serve as coaches and mentors to guide employees in the execution of their responsibilities on a daily basis. Usually, the highest level of management, such as presidents and CEOs, guides other high-level management staff, such as top, middle, and specialized executives, during in-house training on specific work requirements they are expected to provide. In addition, coaching is a normal practice in many of these manufacturing companies because the nature of the jobs such as production, packaging, drilling, repairs, and storage carried out by employees at the lower level of management requires persons in higher positions, such as top, middle, or specialized executives, to guide, mentor, and lead them so they can continue to deliver their targets efficiently and effectively. Besides, these organizations use the coaching method to improve and increase their employee motivation by giving their employees the opportunity to ask questions, and feedback is instantly provided while they are performing actual work.

To be specific, in some of the manufacturing companies surveyed in this study, CEOs and presidents sometimes coach their managers and executives on different aspects of their job requirements. To do this, the CEOs and presidents first identify the strengths of their personnel, which include proficiency in communication, decision-making, and time management, among others. After determining their strengths, the CEOs then identify the areas for improvement as well as the obstacles that may stand in the way of the improvement. Based on this information, solutions are then provided with an end goal or objective to achieve the desired aim. At the end of the coaching session, an action plan is developed and drafted, and the coaching is again repeated as needed. Adjustments to the action plans are made when necessary.

When probed on this, an employee working under a manager in one of the manufacturing companies mentioned during an informal interview that "senior management in my company regularly coaches managers of the different departments. During these trainings, managers ask questions, and feedback is instantly provided. The coaching method of training based on experience helped managers perform their supervisory roles effectively because they knew when to motivate an employee that was struggling with a given task" (Interviewee "F", Appendix D). These views validate the ideas of Nguyen et al. (2020) that employee motivation is a fundamental factor in influencing higher levels of organizational commitment, which can be achieved through the coaching process. This situation is in consonance with Ibrahim et al. (2020), who in their empirical study in Indonesia reported that manager support, which is another form of coaching, was the most influential factor responsible for the positive influence of on-the-job training effectiveness.

Perhaps the management of manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City regularly provides coaching to their managers and executives because, in this type of training, trainees can imitate what they learn in their assigned duties and responsibilities, and as such, the level of supervision decreases as competency increases since the trainee has mastered the work and can complete it with little to no monitoring required. Consequently, continuous coaching could be used to encourage employees to work towards achieving organizational goals because it allows them to make better decisions and take initiatives (Ary et al., 2020).

Furthermore, managers and executives of manufacturing companies are also provided with the opportunity to rotate between jobs in order to help them gain more exposure to various departments in the organization while learning and improving their skill sets. The finding supports earlier findings of this study that regardless of the positions occupied by managers and executives (top, middle, and specialized executives), all play similar roles in managing the affairs of their organizations (See Table 5), and as a norm, the employees are regularly rotated to perform different tasks as required in the organization. For the manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City, the goal of this type of on-the-

job training is to help their managers and executives develop new skills that can be used to further assist them in exploring hidden talent that was previously unknown.

When probed on this, an employee working under a manager in one of the manufacturing companies was of the opinion that "managers in my company are flexible, meaning they are continuously rotated as needed by higher management. This is why most, if not all, managers in my company can effectively perform different tasks because of their exposure to the different work requirements across the many departments in the company. For instance, the absence of a manager due to sickness or on leave in one department does not necessarily affect the operations of that department because a manager from another department can effectively replace the manager on leave" (Interviewee "G", Appendix D). The finding corresponds with that of Ibrahim et al. (2020), who found that the end goal of rotating employees from one job or division to another within the organization is to improve the employee's skills and knowledge of organizational work processes and operations. Buttressing this point, Al-Romeedy (2019) pointed out that enhanced employee motivation and engagement at work are the antecedents of job rotation, which are critical to improving employee skills that can be used to maintain a competitive advantage.

These views support the use of resource-based theory developed by Barney (1991), which states that by developing human resources through training such as executive development training, executive employees acquire skills, including soft and hard skills, that are considered highly valuable and inimitable by competitors and can be used to improve competitiveness, organizational commitment to work, and effectiveness (Utami & Alamanos, 2022). Consistent with this notion, the findings further justified the use of human capital theory postulated by Becker (1964), who argued that organizations gain competitive advantage by providing opportunities for their human resources to develop and enhance their skills and competencies in a systematic manner and in tandem with organizational policies that add value to them. Job rotation in this aspect appears to be one of the ways manufacturing companies in the study area can achieve a competitive advantage. It therefore means that job rotation as one of the methods of on-the-job training is recognized as an important training method that allows managers and executives to acquire new skills and enhance their knowledge across the general organizational processes and operations.

On the other hand, results showed that management of manufacturing companies in the study area partially implemented or supported managers and executives to attain higher positions when there was a vacancy due to retirement, transfer, promotion, or death. This means that in spite of the manufacturing company's investment in different types of on-the-job training methods, not much attention has been given to succession training. The partial implementation of succession training is not an uncommon practice among manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City, and this is due to several reasons.

First, manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City develop reactionary succession plans instead of proactive succession plans. And because of this, organizations often deal with failure because they rush and, in the process, end up overlooking several important areas when a vacant leadership position emerges. Finally, manufacturing companies consider succession training and plans as an independent process instead of an integral part of their overall organizational strategic plans. For this reason, successors are left to develop the skills required to occupy the position of leadership on their own. Moreover, the majority of these companies usually provide succession training to a limited number of their workforce, thereby alienating others in the process.

When probed on this, an employee working under a manager in one of the manufacturing companies opined that "managers in this company are not often provided with training opportunities on succession planning because, from my observation, it will appear that top management already knows who is to succeed the next CEO or boss of the company when the time comes. So once a vacant leadership position emerges, management of the company rushes to appoint anybody to occupy the position on a temporary basis pending when they can find a suitable person for the post" (Interviewee "D", Appendix D). The same views were shared by Talentguard (2022), which found that most organizations only develop 25% of their entire workforce for succession planning. However, the reality is that succession planning should be for every employee and not a few occupying higher positions because this practice expands the scope of talent pools and motivates talent retention, especially for employees aspiring to occupy certain higher positions in the future. This is significant because each division within an organization is interconnected, and every employee plays a significant role in accomplishing the overall organizational objectives.

Findings follow similar observations made by Haryono et al. (2020) that organizations can improve the skills and capacities of their workforce by providing them with the opportunity to fill important management positions that may arise within the organization in the future. Hence, organizations with consistent implementation of career succession planning reduce employee turnover because internal career progression policies increase employee commitment to work and loyalty to the organization (Aburumman et al., 2020). It is for this reason that researchers such as Cherif (2020) recommended that early succession planning and consistent implementation are likely to guarantee sustainability in the future and are also likely to improve work commitments to an organization. Thus, it is important for

manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City to increase their investment in succession planning because of its potential benefits for their survival and work improvements, as evidenced from past literature.

In general, the practical implication of the finding for management of manufacturing companies is that continuous support and full implementation of on-the-job training helps managers and executives adapt faster to their work requirements and encourages career progression, which in turn motivates the employees to be more effective and productive in achieving the overall organizational goals and objectives. The finding also implies that consistent and full implementation of on-the-job training will provide managers and executives with the opportunity to gain experience working in situations closely linked to the ones they encounter on a daily basis and will put them in a better position to easily adapt to changes unique to the organization's operational processes.

Table 9 Summary for the Extent of Practice of Executive Development

Dimensions	Weighted Mean	Description	Interpretation
1. On the job	2.60	Fully Implemented	Executive development activities are always practiced
2. On the job	2.56	Fully Implemented	Executive development activities are always practiced
Overall Weighted Mea	2.58	Fully Implemented	Executive development activities are always practiced

Presented in Table 9 are a summary of the findings for the extent of practice of executive development, where the overall weighted mean was 2.58 with a qualitative interpretation of "executive development activities are always practiced". The findings presented cover the following dimensions of executive development: 2.60 for on-the-job and 2.56 for off-the-job. All the dimensions got a qualitative interpretation of "Executive development activities are always practiced".

From the summary, it appears that the management of manufacturing companies invested more in on-the-job training compared to off-the-job training for their managers and executives. The reason for this can be attributed to the comments of the following employees, who are currently working under the supervision and tutelage of managers in their respective companies. An employee in the informal interview mentioned that "having worked in this company for close to 10 years, I noticed that management of the company invested more in on-the-job training, especially in training managers, because it is a cost-effective method of training since the company will not be spending extra funds to pay external training service providers for their services. And also because it saves time since employees do not have to leave the workplace for training, and because it is easily applicable because employees learn real work experience while performing the actual work" (Interviewee "E", Appendix D). These views appear to complement Pastore & Pompili's (2020) argument that a major limitation to off-the-job method training is that it is costly since organizations would have to spend more financial resources to pay external training organizations to use their facilities and equipment, and also because employees would have to remember and apply all the things they learn outside their workplace, which may not be easy for them to recall.

Consistent with this notion, Collins & Beauregard (2020) established that on-the-job training is suitable for organizations that have an aging working population, a need for employees to learn new technological skills between departments, or new organizational policies. Since on-the-job training allows employees to learn directly from experienced employees, it is capable of increasing their confidence in their abilities to deliver the desired results later on. This in turn enhances their job satisfaction level and eliminates or reduces the fear employees may have about attempting new tasks and responsibilities.

Regardless of the fact that manufacturing companies appeared to have implemented more on-the-job than off-the-job training practices, it should be noted that both training methods are equally significant and play similar roles in improving the skills and organizational efficiency of their managers and executives. This is based on the fact that the participation of executive employees in any of these trainings ultimately provides them with the opportunity to acquire new skills as well as update and enhance their current skill levels, which they use to increase employee motivation, efficiency, and better decision-making, especially in critical situations affecting the organization's operations and processes (Bello & Mela, 2022).

This revelation appears to complement Mahadevan & Yap's (2019) finding that both on-the-job and off-the-job

methods of training have positive impacts on employee work commitment. Thus, the finding indicates that when employees are given the opportunity to participate in formal training, both off-the-job and on-the-job, they display higher levels of work commitment and loyalty, as well as innovative and creative behaviors in line with their work requirements.

Overall, the practical implications of the findings for management of manufacturing companies are that consistent implementation of both off-the-job and on-the-job training improves managers and executives' job satisfaction, commitment, efficiency, and competence and motivates them to feel more valued, hence their willingness to stay in the organization. The more managers and executives are given the opportunity to enhance their skills via the different training methods, the more productive and efficient they become in the implementation of their responsibilities as key decision-makers in the organization. This is also based on the evidence that with full implementation of both off-the-job and on-the-job training methods, managers and executives become more equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to actualize their organizational goals and objectives.

Problems encountered by Manufacturing Companies in Implementing Executive Development Practices

Presented in this section of the paper are findings that provided an answer to the last research objective, which was aimed at identifying and evaluating the problems encountered by manufacturing companies in implementing executive development practices. Initially, an interview guide was formulated to collect data; however, the researcher was unsuccessful because all the respondents that initially agreed to participate in the interview opted to give their written statements, and some provided the required information via an informal interview. Hence, the written statements as well as comments from the informal interviews were the data assessed and analyzed in this section of the paper.

Table 10 presents findings for the problems encountered by manufacturing companies in implementing executive development practices. It is evident from the findings that insufficient funding for executive development training programs (94.0%) appeared to be the most serious problem affecting the implementation of executive development practices.

Table 10 Problems encountered by Manufacturing Companies in Implementing Executive Development Practices

No.	Indicators	F	%
1	Insufficient funds for executive development programs	188	94.0
2	Insufficient assessment of training and development needs	141	70.50
3	Poor motivation to implement executive development training	93	46.50
4	Inconsistent implementation of executive development training program	75	37.50
5	High cost of executive development training	67	33.50
6	Poor executive development training planning	60	30.0
7	Poor executive development training design	41	20.50
8	Poor leadership support	12	6.0

This was closely followed by other problems such as poor training assessment needs (70.50%), poor motivation to implement executive development training (46.50%), inconsistent executive development training program (37.50%), high cost of executive development training (33.50%), poor executive development training plan (30.0%), poor executive development training design (20.50%), and poor leadership support, which comprised 6.0 percent of the total study population.

As evidenced from the findings, the paucity of funds for training was mentioned as the major problem preventing the full implementation of the executive development program. Obviously, the respondents felt this way because, even before the outbreak of COVID-19, many manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City were already struggling to make ends meet financially. Many of these companies spent a lot of funds purchasing diesel and gas to power their machines for production purposes due to the erratic power supply to the industry. Confirming this, Edward (2021) identified that one of the greatest challenges confronting the manufacturing sector in reaching its desired potential is the problem of acute and erratic power supply, as most manufacturing companies in Nigeria have to heavily rely on emergency power generators to power their production machines, and consequently, this has led to companies in the sector incurring poor profitability. Hence, this situation leaves many companies with no choice but to abandon investments in improving their human resources through executive development training.

In addition, the unavailability of funds suggests that many of these manufacturing companies had to abandon some of their planned projects, including provisions for training their managers and executives through an executive development program. When this happens, it limits the ability of these managers and executives to function effectively as required since they are not given the opportunity to update and acquire new skills for their roles in line with the present business realities in the sector. The situation could also lead to increased turnover because these managers and executives feel demotivated and hence attempt to seek another job elsewhere since their future with the present company remains uncertain.

The lack of funds may also explain why some of the off-the-job practices, like inconsistent provision of opportunities for managers and executives to attend conferences (See Table 7), and on-the-job practices, like inconsistent succession planning for managers and executives to occupy vacant positions due to retirement, transfer, death, promotion, or resignation, are not frequently practiced or implemented (See Table 8). These training activities require a substantial amount of funding, which a handful of these manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City do not have due to other costs incurred in running their organizations. This also means that managers and executives may not be given adequate opportunity to enhance and acquire hard skills that include marketing and computers, as well as soft skills that include work ethics and morale and conflict management (See Tables 2 and 3). Consequently, paucity of funds played a greater role in the inconsistent implementation of executive development practices among manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City.

Moreover, the amount spent by manufacturing companies in Nigeria, including those in Port Harcourt City, on training an employee is low. On average, manufacturing companies spent approximately N138,123 (US\$300) per employee per year, which is less than one percent of the company's total earnings (Obulor & Ohaka, 2019). This amount is lower than the US\$1,252 per employee per year recommended by the Association for Talent Development (Markovic, 2019). This shows that not much money has been invested in training managers and executives in manufacturing companies. Poor training can lead to several problems. For example, researchers such as Adegunle (2017) found that challenges such as increased turnover, paucity of funds for training senior management staff, and lack of support from the highest leadership in an organization negatively affected senior management's leadership skills and were responsible for the high rate of organizational failures in Nigeria. The author went further to highlight that the presence of these problems led to a 45 percent decrease in the number of all functioning organizations operating in the country.

Further, the results mirrored Halawi & Hydar (2018), who reported challenges such as paucity of funds, lack of management support, bureaucracy, and poor organizational structures were partly to blame for the inconsistent implementation of training and development programs for employees. It therefore means that organizations need to invest in their executive employees through executive development training programs to prevent the above problem from occurring. This is because for organizations to achieve their objectives, resources must be invested in those tasked with the responsibility of leading other employees, and then they can achieve a competitive advantage (Matcham, 2022). The same views were shared by Kumar (2022) that executive employees value the executive development training program because it provides them with the opportunity to update their current skills and competencies, which they use to vie for higher positions, and is also perceived as a form of motivation for them to stay and increase their commitment and loyalty to the organization. Moreover, employees are more likely to be obliged, engaged, and committed if the organization is the one financing the executive development training program. Thus, the organization's scarce financial resources are not wasted.

Additionally, another most reoccurring problem preventing the full implementation of the executive development program identified was insufficient assessment of training and development needs before the actual design and implementation of the training program. Perhaps the respondents felt this way due to the complexities and numerous responsibilities they play, which do not give them enough chance to adequately assess the needs of their employees before embarking on the training program. For example, when probed on this during an informal interview, an employee working under a manager in one of the manufacturing companies mentioned that "I observe in my present

organization that needs assessment is rarely done because management of the company has limited planning or failed to empower its senior staff to do so before rolling out the training proper. This negatively affected the managers because from my observation, it appears that, in spite of their training, managers occasionally fail to perform their managerial functions to their employees as expected" (Interviewee "D", Appendix D).

Similarly, another employee working under a manager in one of the manufacturing companies mentioned that "I am aware of the fact that my company provides executive development training for senior staff; however, I am also aware that little attention is paid to the conduct of needs assessments before the training is actually implemented.

This, in my view, is inappropriate given that different managers perform different managerial roles, and as such, each is supposed to be assessed so as to determine the specific area of skills they need to update before rolling out the training proper" (Interviewee "F", Appendix D).

These revelations appear to complement Bushe's (2019) argument that training needs assessment remains one of the biggest challenges impeding the successful implementation of executive development training programs, especially among large organizations in Africa. Buttressing this point, Poursad et al. (2021) pointed out that some organizations failed to carry out training needs assessments that could determine the specific areas of training executive employees' needs prior to the training proper, and that even in situations where the needs assessment was carried out, the process was often fraught with irregularities and the information collected was rarely used as input to the training program.

In consonance with this situation, Sankofa (2021) further argued that this kind of situation makes it difficult, if not impossible, to effectively evaluate the needs assessment tool that could have been used to develop an efficient executive development program for senior management. Most organizations, especially those surveyed in this study, are in business to increase shareholder value through increased sales and profits at the lowest possible cost. Hence, the needs assessment that should have been conducted first before implementing executive development is neglected and taken aback.

Besides inadequate assessment of training and development needs, poor motivation is adjudged to be another major problem preventing the full implementation of executive development training among manufacturing companies in the study area. When the individuals for whom a particular training is meant are not provided with or given the necessary support and resources, they become less motivated to participate. And even in situations where they are forced to join the program, they refuse to fully participate or leave the training ground without achieving most of the training objectives. These practices are unfortunately very common among manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City.

Manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City are sometimes fond of subjecting their managers and executives to executive development training without providing them with the necessary support and resources to encourage their participation. Rather, these employees have no choice but to attend these training programs since it is a requirement for them to retain their position as senior managers.

However, the problem with this practice is that it leaves managers and executives without the passion to enjoy their work. The finding simply suggests that the managers and executives in manufacturing companies in the study area are often not well motivated to participate in the executive development program.

These views correspond with those of Mwesigwa et al. (2020), who established that individuals working in an organization regardless of their positions have needs and that the less satisfied these needs are, the less engaged and committed the employees will be, and such engagement and commitment would also be affected by executive development training, the reward system, and job tenure. Perhaps poor managers and executives motivation could better explain the reason why a good number of managers and executives, such as CEOs, resisted all attempts to participate in executive development training programs (Sallis, 2021).

It means that by motivating managers and executives, their level of engagement and commitment is likely to increase, which leads to the full implementation as well as the attainment of the goals of the executive development program. This is because motivation is fundamental to achieving the full participation of employees in a training program and also because of the level of commitment and enthusiasm employees bring to performing their tasks and responsibilities on a daily basis.

This is in line with Wolor et al.'s (2020) sentiment that executive development training programs should also include incentives like recognition and awards, bonuses and raises, and fun gifts in order to achieve full employee participation and implementation of the program.

Accordingly, Niati et al. (2020) emphasized that motivated employees will have no problem increasing their commitment to joining a training program because they feel valued as strategic partners of their organization when involved in activities such as executive development training programs. Finally, poor leadership support for executive development training was found to be the least problematic problem affecting the implementation of executive development practices. The finding suggests that by addressing the problems of paucity of funds, insufficient assessment of training needs, and poor motivation, manufacturing companies can overcome this challenge since only a

very limited number of respondents held this opinion. The fact that only a few respondents mentioned poor leadership as a problem preventing the full implementation of executive development cannot be overlooked by manufacturing companies. This is because, without leadership support, managers and executives will not be motivated and committed to participate in executive development, and even when they do, they will not feel empowered to work at their full potential.

These views validate the ideas of Alrowwad et al. (2020) that the most fundamental driving force that helps to support the efficient implementation of a training and development program is good leadership support. Greater achievement in an executive development program is associated with higher leadership support. The main reason is that the attitudes and behaviors of leaders towards a training and development program directly affect the managers and executives' motivation to participate as well as the achievement of the overall objectives of the program.

Buttressing this point, Suberg (2021) noted that factors such as the changes taking place in internal factors, like paucity of funds, poor leadership from senior management, and organizational strategic goals, affect not only the frequency and quality of executive development programs but also the level at which the management of organizations embraces the executive development program as a tool in developing the leadership and management skills of their executives.

Additionally, the finding in this aspect of the paper indicates that leadership support is directly linked to the full or partial implementation of an executive development program. Hence, manufacturing companies with the full support of their leadership tend to have an executive development program that is more efficient and effective.

This is because leadership support has the capacity to encourage, direct, lead, and motivate managers and executives to achieve the aims and objectives of the executive development program. It is the leadership of an organization that has the ultimate power and final decision to empower its most important human resources (managers and executives) to participate in an executive development program, which in turn supports the effective delivery of the program, and their skills and knowledge obtained from the program are then used to increase and sustain their competitive advantage. These views further justified the use of the human theory proposed by Becker (1964) and the resource-based theory theorized by Barney (1991), who all agreed that for organizations to achieve sustainable competitive advantage, they need to develop their human resources in such a manner that they cannot be easily imitated and are valuable.

Overall, in comparison with the earlier findings in the previous part of this paper, where it was found that managers and executives' levels of hard and soft skills were very high, and the level of implementation of executive development practices was fully implemented, this does not in any way contradict the findings in this aspect of this paper for the following reasons: first, managers and executives take it upon themselves to develop innovative ways of strengthening their skills and competencies without the help of their company, which is why they continue to give their best to the company they represent. Some of these managers attend offsite training courses on their own provided by external training organizations, while others learn more about their job requirements by reading books. This explains why they perceive themselves to have very high levels of hard and soft skills.

Second, managers and executives in these companies are also aware of the efforts of the management of their company in providing training opportunities for them despite working in a difficult Nigerian business environment where most companies are forced to spend huge sums of money purchasing diesel to power their operating machines, consequently leaving little or no money for training purposes. This perhaps explains the reason why, in spite of the challenges, managers and executives still perceive that executive development practices have been fully implemented by their organizations. This is also based on the fact that managers and executives are provided with one form of either off-the-job or on-the-job executive development at least once a year. This means that the presence of these problems does not in any way prevent the managers and executives from performing their functions due to their high motivation and commitment, but that the management of these organizations can do more by increasing the number of executive development training opportunities for them if they wish to retain their pool of talent since this type of talent is rare, imitable, and valuable.

The practical implication of the finding for the management of manufacturing companies is that the presence of these problems influences managers and executives to become less productive and unable to manage employees under them, which may ultimately result in a loss of profitability when employees make repeated mistakes due to poor supervision.

In addition, the presence of these problems will influence managers and executives to feel increasingly unhappy and unsatisfied, which ultimately increases their search for another job elsewhere where they are guaranteed career progression and development opportunities. This situation damages the company's reputation, which they worked so hard to build over the years, because organizations with high employee turnover are unattractive to potential job applicants.

IV. Conclusions AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Presented in this chapter are the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the findings generated from this study.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

- 1 . a. Managers and executives of manufacturing companies had great levels of technical expertise that they used effectively to manage specific tasks and functions.
b. Managers and executives of manufacturing companies had great levels of people skills that they used to effectively work well with employees.
- 2 . Top, middle, and specialized executives perform similar leadership and managerial roles in manufacturing companies, and as such, each could replace the other in the absence of the other.
- 3 . a. Manufacturing companies consistently invest in

off-site training for their managers and executives because they could not provide all the training facilities and equipment to train their growing workforce.

b. Manufacturing companies consistently invest in

on-site training for their managers and executives because it is considered a cost-effective form of training.

4 . Paucity of funds prevented the full and successful implementation of executive development programs among manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions and findings that this research generated, the following recommendations are made:

1 . a. Manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City may collaborate with IT training companies such as HiiT to provide practical, hands-on ICT and computer training to their managers and executives on a weekly or monthly basis. This company provides customized and different training packages, from basic computer and computer appreciation to architectural and structural design, that manufacturing companies can take advantage of for the benefit of their managers and executives.

b. Manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City are encouraged to continuously update their training manual on workplace conflict by organizing quarterly workshops where managers and executives can learn the different scenarios of emerging issues in the sector as well as effective ways to manage the situation.

2 . Manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City may provide a similar skill set of leadership and management workshops that provide managers with the opportunities to learn and practice a range of skills of the different units within the organization on a quarterly basis since they all perform similar roles and functions.

3 . a. Manufacturing companies may increase their investments for sponsoring managers and executives to attend local and international business conferences, which provides them the opportunity to learn more about the latest developments in the manufacturing sector, and this knowledge can then be applied to improve their managerial roles and functions as important decision-makers.

b. Manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt City may include succession planning as part of their overall organizational policies. Effective succession planning can be determined through career pathing, which allows the management of the company to work with employees to outline their potential trajectory through the organization.

4 . Manufacturing companies may provide group training, and workshop sessions as a way of optimizing their training structure and minimizing costs.

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APPENDIX B

Respondents’	Demographics	
Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	133	66.50
Female	67	33.50
Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
25-30 years	21	10.50
31-36 years	38	19.0
37-42 years	69	34.50
43 years and above	72	36.0
Current position in the organization	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Middle manager	83	41.50
Top manager	77	38.50
Specialized executive	40	20.0
Highest level of education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Masters’ degree	104	52
Bachelor’s degree	50	25.0

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Doctorate degree	35	17.50
Associate degree	11	5.50
Current job position	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Operations manager	64	32.0
Plant manager	45	22.50
Chief marketing officer	42	21.0
Human resource manager	29	14.50
Head of department	20	10.0
Length of service with the firm	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 15 years	58	29.0
15-24 years	46	23.0
25-34 years	41	20.50
25-34 years	40	20.0
35 years and above	15	7.50

APPENDIX C

Random Informal Interview Guide Questions with Employees Working under Managers/Executives

- 1 How would you describe the hard skills of your manager/executives in your organization?
- 2 Can you describe how the decisions taking by managers/executives help to improve your company's operations?
- 3 What is your take with the communication style of managers/executives in your company? Can you cite your experience?
- 4 What is your take on the different skills particularly computer and marketing skills of managers/executives in your company?
- 5 How managers/executives do coordinate the activities of their employees?
- 6 How would you describe the work ethics and conflict management strategies of managers/executives in your company?
- 7 What is the extent of training such as special training courses provided by your organizations to its managers/executives? Please cite an example.
- 8 Based on your experience, would you say your organization has invested enough to providing special course training for its managers/executives? Cite some specific examples.
- 9 Besides special course training, to what extent would you say case studies have been used to train managers/executives in your company?
- 10 Similarly, how would you describe the use of coaching and job rotation as methods of training managers/executives in your organization?
- 11 Are managers/executives provided with succession training in your company? If yes, to what extent? And if no why?
- 12 What is your overall view regarding your present company's implementation of off-the-job and on-the-job method for training its managers/executives?
- 13 What would you say are the problems preventing the full implementation of executive development in your company?
- 14 Are needs assessment carried out before the training proper for managers/executives? If yes, to what extent? And if no, why?
- 15 Overall how have these problems affected the implementation of executive development for managers/executives?

APPENDIX D

Transcripts of Interview with Employees Working Under Managers/Executives

- 1 Managers and other senior management staffs in my company are highly skilled especially with their daily activities and because of this, the managers use their operational planning skills to effectively delegate tasks to employees, provide them with the needed support and defines outcomes for them to measure daily responsibilities required to accomplish the organizational goals (Interviewee "A").
- 2 Managers I currently work with in this company are highly skilled with their operations that are they constantly take decisions on a daily basis that affect production, work with teams and have a thorough understanding of the company's processes and management. This improved the level of employees' motivation and commitment to work, thus preventing many of us from leaving the company even when working under the most extreme conditions (Interviewee "B").
- 3 I can tell you that most employees working under the different senior managers in this company are really happy because these managers make us feel valued with their effective communication and coordination of all activities, and also because they work hand in hand with teams of employees to ensure that everyday tasks are completed much to the desire of everyone (Interviewee "C").
- 4 One of the skills I observed that managers in my company are not highly skilled at is their computer and marketing skills. Investment on computer skills is low which is why some of the company's computer work-related activities are outsourced to technology companies as a means of cutting costs. And given that, my company is in the oil sector, management do not invest much on marketing skills for its managers because oil is a product that is readily sought after by consumers because it is the mainstay of the Nigerian economy (Interviewee "D").
- 5 In my company, most of the managers are highly skilled when communicating with their subordinates especially in terms of providing them with guidance and how certain things should be done. The managers' communication skill in my view is very useful because it has helped employees working under them increase their morale, commitment, engagement and satisfaction levels. Moreover, because of my manager's communication skill, it has helped me as an individual to better collaborate and cooperate with members of my team in the department (Interviewee "A").
- 6 Obviously, managers in my company work hand in hand with all employees in each department to implement a task to its logical conclusion. Managers are skilled in working with teams and encouraging everyone to do his part achieving the desired objectives. The managers of my company always check on everyone whenever a task is assigned to us and make sure that things are working according to plan. In situations where things are not working the way it was designed to be, managers assist us with proper guidance and some extreme situations, further training is provided to the affected employees. This is the reason why it is impossible in my company for one single individual to take all credits when things goes right or take blame when things are in the opposite direction (Interviewee "E").
- 7 Work ethics/morals as well as conflict management skills are part of my organizations job contract, however, based on my observation, I realized that implementation of these policies are not regularly observed. For instance, some managers simply ignore following the company's rules and regulations when managing conflict between employees due to their bias and preference for one employee over the other (Interviewee "B").
- 8 Work ethics and conflict skills of managers are not often practiced not because they are not skilled but because they simply ignore to implement it. Moreover, I also observed that management of my company rarely updates it conflict and work ethics manuals and also do not regularly subject their managers for these kinds of trainings because they are of the view that these managers know what to do in different circumstances (Interviewee "F").
- 9 All managers are regularly trained on how to handle the most physical and challenging aspects of the job like pipeline construction, oil drilling mechanics, and logistics from warehouse to customers businesses. This is the reason why managers in my current company are provided with all the necessary support in spite of the limited funds to continuously improve the different areas of their hard skills. This is because these skills are frequently used to get work done in this company" (Interviewee "C").
- 10 Any employee aspiring to occupy a higher position like a manager in my company must have acquired and had experience in different skill sets like managerial skills, operational skills and the likes before they are considered for the position" (Interviewee "D").
- 11 In our company, managers and other senior executives are provided with training opportunities to attend at least 2-3 special training course both within Nigeria and abroad. Based on my experience, I realized that management of the company do this because they want to advance their managers careers by ensuring they acquire the latest knowledge to make effective decisions such as managing and mentoring their subordinates as well as influencing

- the necessary change around them (Interviewee "D").
- 12 The investment for the special course program provided to managers in the company I am currently working for, from my observation it makes them better managers because it provides them the opportunity to overcome myriads of challenges that emerges during their tenure (Interviewee "E").
 - 13 Managers of my company regularly use case study measures to responds to the negative effects of our operations on the environment and source of livelihood for the people in the society. For example, one good case study scenario usually done by managers in this company is on the issue of how to prevent oil spillage which negatively affects aquatic life and water for the people in our host communities. This is done on a bi-monthly basis outside the company's office in cooperation with members of the host communities where our business operations take place. The managers use these trainings to empower employees that work for them to be more responsible in handling their tasks (Interviewee "B").
 - 14 From what I have seen so far, management of my company do not regularly provide funds for its managers to attend conferences both home and abroad because they simply do not have enough funds to do so or feel that the special course training already provided is enough to strengthen the skills of its managers (Interviewee "B").
 - 15 Senior management in my company regularly coach managers of the different departments. During these trainings, managers ask questions and feedback is instantly provided. The coaching method of training based on experience helped managers to perform their supervisory roles effectively because they know when to motivate an employee that is struggling with a given tasks (Interviewee "F").
 - 16 Managers in my company flexible meaning they are continuously rotated as needed by higher management. This is why most if not all managers in my company can effectively perform different tasks because of their exposure to the different work requirements across the many departments in the company. For instance in the absence of a manager due sickness on or on leave in one department does not necessarily affects the operations of that department because a manager from another department can effectively replace the manager on leave (Interviewee "G").
 - 17 Managers in this company are not often provided with training opportunities on succession planning because from my observation it will appear that top management already know who is to succeed the next CEO or boss of the company when the time comes. So once a vacant leadership position emerges management of the company rushes to appoint anybody to occupy the position on a temporary basis pending when they can find a suitable person for the post (Interviewee "D").
 - 18 Having worked in this company for close to 10 years, I noticed that management of the company invested more on on-the-job training especially in training managers because it is a cost effective method of training since the company will not be spending extra funds to pay external training service providers for their services. And also because it saves time since employees do not have to leave the workplace for training as well as easily applicable because employees learn real work experience while performing the actual work (Interviewee "E").
 - 19 I observe in my present organization needs assessment is rarely done because management of the company has limited for planning or failed to empower its senior staffs to do so before rolling out the training proper. This negatively affected the managers because from my observation it appears that in spite of their training, managers occasionally fail to perform their managerial functions to their employees as expected" (Interviewee, "D").
 - 20 I am aware of the fact that my company provides executive development training for senior staffs however, I am also aware little attention is paid to the conduct of needs assessment before the training is actually implemented. This in my view is inappropriate given that different managers perform different managerial roles and as such each is supposed to be assessed so as to determine the specific area of skills they need to update before rolling out the training proper (Interviewee "F").