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Recruitment Practices and Employee Retention in Petroleum Service Stations in Delta State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: This study examined the relationship between recruitment practices and employee retention in petroleum service stations in Delta State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated how recruitment planning, selection methods, and induction programs influence employee retention outcomes. A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was adopted. The population comprised registered petroleum service stations operating across the three senatorial districts of Delta State, from which a sample size of stations was selected using Krejcie and Morgan's sampling table and stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire measured on a point Likert scale. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation at significance level. Findings revealed that recruitment practices adoption was at a moderate-high level (Mean = 3.52), while employee retention was moderate (Mean = 3.38). Correlation analysis showed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between recruitment practices and employee retention ($r = 0.674$, $p < 0.05$). The study concludes that implementing systematic and transparent recruitment practices significantly enhances employee retention in petroleum service stations. It recommends that stations should adopt merit-based selection processes, provide comprehensive induction programs, ensure realistic job previews during recruitment, and develop clear career progression pathways to improve retention outcomes.

Keywords: Recruitment practices, employee retention, petroleum service stations, Delta State, quantitative study

INTRODUCTION

Recruitment practices and employee retention represent critical dimensions of human resource management success, particularly in service-oriented industries where employee performance directly influences customer satisfaction and organizational outcomes. As organizations worldwide seek to build stable and committed workforces, understanding how recruitment processes affect employees' decisions to remain with their employers becomes essential for strategic human capital management and long-term organizational sustainability. In Nigeria, the petroleum downstream sector, including service stations, plays a significant role in the national economy, providing employment opportunities and essential services to communities across the country. However, employee turnover in this sector has been a topic of concern due to various challenges, including intense competition for skilled workers, changing workforce expectations, economic volatility, and inadequate human

resource practices. This study focuses on petroleum service stations operating in Delta State, Nigeria, to explore the relationship between recruitment practices and employee retention.

Recruitment practices encompass the organizational activities and processes through which employers attract, identify, and select qualified candidates for vacant positions. These practices represent the first point of contact between potential employees and organizations, shaping initial perceptions and expectations that influence subsequent employment relationships (Breaugh, 2021). Key dimensions of recruitment include recruitment planning, which involves determining staffing needs and developing strategies to attract suitable candidates; selection methods, which encompass the tools and techniques used to assess candidate qualifications and fit; and induction programs, which facilitate new employees' integration into organizational culture and operations. When organizations implement effective recruitment practices, they are more likely to attract candidates whose values, skills, and expectations align with organizational requirements, thereby establishing foundations for long-term employment relationships.

Employee retention refers to the ability of organizations to maintain a stable workforce by minimizing voluntary turnover among valued employees. It reflects the extent to which employees choose to remain with their current employers rather than seeking opportunities elsewhere. Retention is influenced by multiple factors, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, compensation adequacy, career development opportunities, and the quality of workplace relationships (Allen, Bryant & Vardaman, 2022). High retention rates benefit organizations through reduced recruitment and training costs, preserved institutional knowledge, maintained customer relationships, and enhanced operational stability. Conversely, excessive turnover disrupts operations, increases costs, and undermines organizational performance and competitiveness.

Previous studies have demonstrated the importance of recruitment practices across various sectors, with particular focus on their impact on employee retention. For instance, research by Breaugh (2021) highlights that realistic job previews during recruitment reduce early turnover by aligning candidate expectations with actual job conditions. Similarly, studies by Ryan and Ployhart (2023) indicate that valid and reliable selection methods identify candidates with better job fit, leading to longer tenure and higher performance. In contrast, poorly designed recruitment processes can attract mismatched candidates, create unrealistic expectations, and ultimately contribute to premature turnover and organizational inefficiency (Phillips & Gully, 2022).

Despite the strategic importance of effective recruitment in building stable workforces and enhancing organizational performance, many petroleum service stations in Delta State continue to experience significant employee retention challenges. Station owners and managers frequently face difficulties such as high turnover rates, difficulty retaining skilled attendants and supervisors, inconsistent service quality, and recurring recruitment costs, which threaten operational efficiency and long-term viability. These conditions often result from inadequate recruitment planning, ineffective selection methods, insufficient induction programs, and weak alignment between recruitment processes and employee expectations, leaving stations vulnerable to workforce instability and competitive pressures. In a state with substantial petroleum industry activity, where numerous service stations compete for market share and customer loyalty, the inability to retain experienced employees can lead to operational disruptions and diminished competitiveness.

Although several empirical studies have examined recruitment practices and employee retention in large corporations and developed economy contexts, there remains limited research focusing specifically on petroleum service stations and small-scale petroleum retail operations within Delta State. The unique characteristics of the local business environment, including informal employment practices, limited human resource expertise, regulatory frameworks, and community dynamics, may produce different outcomes compared to those observed in other settings. Consequently, there is insufficient localized evidence explaining how dimensions of recruitment practices recruitment planning, selection methods, and induction programs contribute to employee retention in this context. This gap in literature underscores the need for the present study to provide empirical insights that can guide human resource decision-making and policy interventions for petroleum service stations in Delta State.

The specific objectives of the study include: to examine the effect of recruitment planning on the employee retention of petroleum service stations in Delta State.; to assess the influence of selection methods on the employee retention of petroleum service stations in Delta State; to investigate the effect of induction programs on the employee retention of petroleum service stations in Delta State. Hypothetically, the study stated in the null form that recruitment planning, selection methods and induction programs have no significant effect on the employee retention of petroleum stations in Delta State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recruitment Practices

Recruitment practices refer to the organizational policies, procedures, and activities through which employers attract, identify, and select qualified candidates for employment. These practices represent the foundational stage of the employment relationship, shaping both the quality of hires and their subsequent experiences within organizations. In contemporary human resource management literature, recruitment is viewed as a strategic function that influences not only staffing outcomes but also employer branding, employee engagement, and long-term retention (Breaugh, 2021). Research consistently demonstrates that organizations with systematic recruitment practices achieve better hiring outcomes, reduced turnover, and enhanced workforce quality compared to those relying on ad hoc approaches.

A growing body of evidence shows that recruitment practices are strongly linked to employee retention. Effective recruitment is positively associated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and tenure, while inadequate recruitment correlates with early turnover and employment relationship failure (Phillips & Gully, 2022). For instance, organizations that implement well-structured recruitment processes tend to attract candidates whose values align with organizational culture, leading to stronger person-organization fit and longer retention. This suggests that businesses benefit directly when they invest in systematic recruitment practices.

Recruitment Planning

Recruitment planning refers to the systematic process of determining an organization's staffing needs and developing strategies to attract suitable candidates to fill identified positions. It encompasses workforce analysis, job analysis, candidate sourcing strategies, and resource allocation for recruitment activities. In contemporary human resource management research, recruitment planning is considered a critical foundation for effective hiring because it ensures alignment between organizational objectives and staffing outcomes (Breaugh, 2021). According to Gatewood, Feild, and Barrick (2023), recruitment planning enables organizations to anticipate staffing requirements, identify appropriate candidate sources, and allocate resources efficiently.

Workforce analysis, job analysis, candidate sourcing strategies and resource allocation for recruitment activities represents important elements of recruitment planning.

Selection Methods

Selection methods refer to the specific tools, techniques, and procedures organizations use to evaluate candidates and make hiring decisions. These methods are designed to assess candidates' knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics relevant to job performance and organizational fit. In contemporary human resource management research, selection methods are recognized as critical determinants of hiring quality because they influence the accuracy with which organizations identify candidates likely to succeed and remain with the organization (Ryan & Ployhart, 2023). According to Schmitt (2022), valid and reliable selection methods improve both immediate job performance and long-term retention outcomes. Dimensions of selection methods include the use of structured interviews, assessment tests, and background checks and reference verification.

Induction Programs

Induction programs, also referred to as onboarding or orientation, encompass the structured processes through which organizations integrate new employees into the workplace and facilitate their transition to productive organizational members. These programs introduce new hires to organizational policies, procedures, culture, colleagues, and job responsibilities, establishing foundations for their subsequent experiences and performance. In contemporary human resource management research, induction is recognized as a critical determinant of early retention because it shapes new employees' initial impressions, social integration, and commitment development (Bauer & Erdogan, 2022). According to Klein and Polin (2023), effective induction programs accelerate new hire adjustment and reduce the likelihood of early turnover.

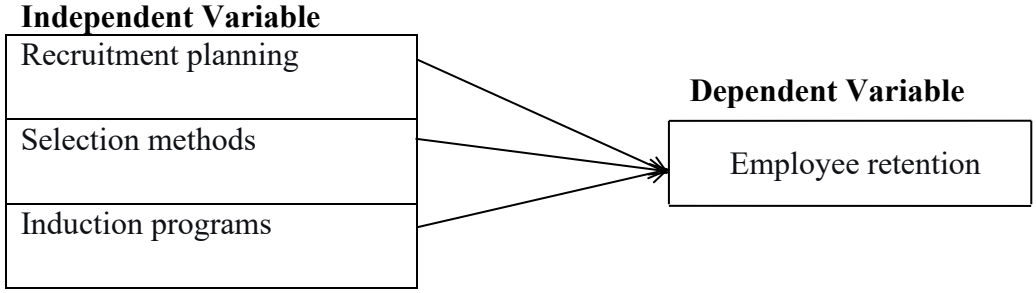
One critical aspect of induction programs is the provision of job-specific training that equips new employees with the knowledge and skills required to perform their roles effectively. This training may cover technical procedures, equipment operation, safety protocols, customer service standards, and administrative systems relevant to position requirements.

Employee Retention

Employee retention is a fundamental concept in human resource management that refers to the ability of organizations to maintain a stable workforce by minimizing voluntary turnover among valued employees. It reflects the extent to which employees choose to remain with their current employers rather than seeking alternative employment opportunities. In contemporary organizational literature, employee retention is viewed not merely as the absence of turnover but as an indicator of workforce engagement, satisfaction, and organizational health (Allen, Bryant & Vardaman, 2022). According to Hom, Allen, and Griffeth (2023), employee retention is strongly influenced by human resource practices, including recruitment, selection, and induction, that shape employees' experiences and perceptions throughout the employment relationship.

Job satisfaction (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2022), organizational commitment (Meyer and Maltin, 2023), Compensation adequacy (Gupta and Shaw, 2022); Career development opportunities (Ng and Feldman, 2023); Work-life balance (Kossek and Lautsch, 2022), quality of supervision and workplace relationship (Chiaburu and Harrison, 2023) are all essential drivers of employee retention.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



Developed by the Researcher, 2026

This conceptual framework proposes that petroleum service stations' recruitment practices significantly influence employee retention outcomes. The independent variables recruitment planning, selection methods, and induction programs represent key dimensions of the recruitment process available to organizations. Recruitment planning refers to systematic determination of staffing needs and candidate attraction strategies, which affects the quality and appropriateness of applicant pools. Selection methods encompass the tools and techniques used to evaluate candidates and make hiring decisions, influencing person-job and person-organization fit. Induction programs involve structured processes for integrating new employees, shaping initial experiences and adjustment. Together, these factors are hypothesized to directly impact the dependent variable, employee retention, suggesting that organizations implementing systematic, transparent, and supportive recruitment practices are more likely to achieve workforce stability and reduced turnover.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the Social Exchange Theory (SET), a well-established theoretical framework in organizational behavior that explains how employment relationships develop and why employees choose to remain with or leave their organizations. Originally developed by Blau (1964) and subsequently extended by organizational scholars, SET posits that employment relationships involve ongoing exchanges between employers and employees, where both parties contribute resources and receive benefits. When these exchanges are perceived as fair, balanced, and mutually beneficial, they generate feelings of obligation, trust, and commitment that bind employees to organizations. Conversely, when exchanges are perceived as unbalanced or unfair, employees may withdraw commitment and ultimately leave (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2023).

The SET framework proposes that employment relationships involve both economic exchanges (wages, benefits, working conditions) and social exchanges (recognition, support, respect, developmental opportunities). Social exchanges are particularly important for retention because they generate feelings of personal obligation, gratitude, and trust that transcend purely transactional considerations. According to SET, employees who perceive that their organizations invest in them through supportive practices, including effective recruitment processes, feel obligated to reciprocate through continued organizational membership, positive attitudes, and discretionary effort (Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels & Hall, 2022).

A key contribution of SET is its explanation of how early employment experiences, including recruitment processes, shape subsequent exchange relationships. When organizations invest in thorough recruitment planning, fair selection methods, and comprehensive induction programs, they signal to new employees that they are valued and that the organization is committed to

their success. These positive signals initiate reciprocal obligations, with employees responding through engagement, commitment, and intention to remain. Research consistently confirms that positive recruitment experiences predict stronger psychological contracts and lower turnover intentions (Robinson & Rousseau, 2023).

An important assumption of SET is the norm of reciprocity, the social principle that individuals feel obligated to return favorable treatment received from others. In employment contexts, reciprocity operates through employees' tendency to respond to organizational investments with increased commitment and reduced turnover intentions. When organizations provide thorough induction training, fair selection processes, and respectful treatment during recruitment, employees reciprocate through loyalty and continued organizational membership. Empirical research has provided substantial support for reciprocal processes in explaining retention outcomes (Gouldner, 2022).

Recent extensions of SET incorporate the concept of perceived organizational support, which refers to employees' beliefs that their organizations value their contributions and care about their well-being. Perceived organizational support develops through favorable treatment received from organizations, including effective human resource practices. Research by Eisenberger and Stinglhamber (2022) demonstrates that perceived organizational support strongly predicts retention, mediating the effects of organizational practices on turnover decisions.

Empirical Review

Adewale & Oyewale (2025) investigated the effect of recruitment planning on employee retention in manufacturing firms in Lagos, Nigeria. The study adopted a quantitative research design using survey questionnaires. Regression analysis was employed to test the relationship between recruitment planning and employee retention. The results revealed a strong positive relationship between recruitment planning and employee retention. It shows that recruitment planning accounted for 54.7% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.547$) in employee retention. The study concluded that effective recruitment planning significantly improves workforce stability and reduces turnover.

Oyedele & Fadipe (2024) highlights how workforce analysis influences retention outcomes among various sectors in Nigeria. The study used a survey research design and secondary data analysis. Correlation analysis was applied to examine relationships between variables. The findings indicated a significant positive relationship between recruitment planning and employee retention, though variations existed across sectors and firm sizes. The study concluded that recruitment planning is a critical determinant of employee retention and organizational success.

In the study of Akinola & Babalola (2025), selection methods and employee retention in banking institutions in Ibadan, Nigeria was examined. A quantitative research design was adopted using structured questionnaires. Multiple regression analysis was used to assess the impact of selection methods on retention. The results showed that selection methods significantly influenced employee retention. Techniques such as structured interviews and aptitude tests had a statistically significant effect ($p < 0.05$). The study concluded that effective selection methods enhance employee-job fit and improve retention rates.

Mensah & Asare (2025) examined selection methods and employee retention in SMEs in Ghana The study adopted a quantitative approach using questionnaires. Correlation and regression analyses were used for data analysis. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between structured selection methods and employee retention. Organizations with systematic hiring

processes experienced lower turnover. The study concluded that effective selection practices are essential for sustaining employee retention in SMEs.

Folorunso et al (2025) paper was anchored on predicting employee retention using artificial intelligence and survival analysis approaches. The study applied advanced survival analysis techniques, including the Kaplan–Meier estimator, Cox proportional hazards model, and Random Survival Forests (RSF), to predict employee retention and identify key determinants of turnover. Data from 1,480 employees, with 16% (238) having left the organization, were analyzed, considering variables such as age, job satisfaction, overtime, and departmental affiliation. Results showed that employees working overtime are 3.57 times more likely to leave, indicating overtime as a major risk factor. In contrast, older employees and those with higher job satisfaction show reduced turnover risks, with hazard ratios of 0.93 and 0.79, respectively. Departmental differences were observed, with Research & Development exhibiting the highest retention, including employees staying beyond 30 years, while Human Resources had the highest turnover, particularly within the first five years. The study highlights the importance of job satisfaction, overtime policies, and department-specific retention strategies in reducing turnover. Survival modeling provides actionable insights into the timing and drivers of employee exits, enabling organizations to implement targeted interventions that enhance workforce stability and long-term organizational success.

Tan and Tanner (2025), in their study titled Enhancing Safety Induction Programs in Malaysia's Oil and Gas Sector: A Comprehensive Review of Best Practices and Strategic Recommendations, examined how modern approaches can improve safety training effectiveness within the oil and gas industry in Malaysia. The study adopted a comprehensive review and analytical methodology, drawing on participants across diverse job roles within the sector to ensure a broad and representative assessment of safety induction practices. The findings revealed that the integration of advanced technologies such as multimedia presentations and interactive simulations significantly enhances employee engagement and knowledge retention during safety training. The study further established that tailoring training methods to accommodate different learning styles, alongside the introduction of mentorship systems, plays a critical role in helping new employees adapt quickly to organizational safety culture.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive cross-sectional survey design, which collects data at a single point in time to examine existing relationships among variables without manipulation. This design is suitable for assessing petroleum service stations' recruitment practices and employee retention outcomes. The population consisted of 185 registered petroleum service stations operating across the three senatorial districts of Delta State, from which 125 respondents (station managers or human resource officers) were selected using Krejcie and Morgan's sampling table and stratified random sampling technique. This method ensures proportional representation across senatorial districts, reducing sampling bias and improving the study's accuracy.

Instrumentation

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The instrument was divided into three sections:

Section A: Demographics: Collected information on station location, years of operation, and number of employees.

Section B: Recruitment Practices Scale: Measured recruitment planning, selection methods, and induction programs using point Likert scale items.

Section C: Employee Retention Scale: Measured turnover rates, employee tenure, intention to stay, and retention satisfaction.

All items in Sections B and C were measured on a point Likert scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Demographic Characteristics

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Senatorial District	Delta North	42	33.6
	Delta South	38	30.4
	Delta Central	45	36.0
Years of Operation	1–5 years	35	28.0
	6–10 years	52	41.6
	Above 10 years	38	30.4
Number of Employees	1–10	68	54.4
	11–20	42	33.6
	Above 20	15	12.0

The results in Table 1 show fairly even distribution across the three senatorial districts of Delta State. The majority of respondents (41.6%) had been in operation for 6–10 years, indicating established stations with sufficient experience to evaluate human resource outcomes. Over half (54.4%) were small operations with 1–10 employees, representing the typical service station structure in the state.

Level of Recruitment Practices Adoption

Mean Decision Rule: 1.00–2.49 = Low; 2.50–3.49 = Moderate; 3.50–5.00 = High

Table 2: Recruitment Practices Levels

Dimension	Mean	Std. Dev	Interpretation
Recruitment Planning	3.58	0.72	High
Selection Methods	3.48	0.71	Moderate
Induction Programs	3.51	0.73	High
Overall Recruitment Practices	**3.52**	**0.72**	**High**

As shown in Table 2, the overall level of recruitment practices adoption among petroleum service stations was high (Mean = 3.52). Recruitment planning was rated the highest, while selection methods, though still in the moderate-high range, was the lowest of the three dimensions. This suggests a generally positive orientation toward systematic recruitment among stations in Delta State, with particular strength in planning activities.

Level of Employee Retention

Mean Decision Rule: 1.00–2.49 = Low; 2.50–3.49 = Moderate; 3.50–5.00 = High

Table 3: Employee Retention Levels

Indicator	Mean	Std. Dev	Interpretation
Turnover Rate (reverse scored)	3.35	0.71	Moderate
Average Employee Tenure	3.40	0.73	Moderate
Intention to Stay	3.42	0.72	Moderate
Retention Satisfaction	3.36	0.70	Moderate
Overall Employee Retention	**3.38**	**0.72**	**Moderate**

The overall level of employee retention was moderate (Mean = 3.38). While all indicators fell within the moderate range, intention to stay was rated slightly higher, while turnover rate (reverse scored) indicated that stations experience moderate turnover challenges. This suggests room for improvement in workforce stability across the sector.

Correlation Analysis

Table 4: Pearson Correlation between Recruitment Practices and Employee Retention

Variables	r	p-value	Decision
Recruitment Practices & Employee Retention	0.674	0.000	Significant
Recruitment Planning & Employee Retention	0.642	0.000	Significant
Selection Methods & Employee Retention	0.603	0.000	Significant
Induction Programs & Employee Retention	0.638	0.000	Significant

The results in Table 4 reveal a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between recruitment practices and employee retention ($r = 0.674$, $p = 0.000$). Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypotheses are rejected. This implies that improvements in recruitment practices adoption are strongly associated with increases in employee retention levels. The specific correlations between each recruitment dimension and employee retention further support this finding, highlighting the critical role of systematic

recruitment in driving workforce stability outcomes.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study demonstrate a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between recruitment practices and employee retention in petroleum service stations in Delta State (r = 0.674). This correlation indicates that as stations' recruitment planning, selection methods, and induction programs improve, their employee retention levels also increase. The strength of this relationship suggests that recruitment practices are not peripheral considerations but central determinants of workforce stability within the petroleum downstream sector.

Stations implementing systematic recruitment planning are more likely to identify and attract candidates whose skills, values, and expectations align with organizational requirements. Thorough job analysis, accurate job descriptions, and strategic sourcing enable stations to build applicant pools containing candidates suited to service station roles, which typically involve customer interaction, safety responsibilities, and shift work. Selection methods also play a crucial role; stations using structured interviews, relevant assessments, and realistic job previews identify candidates with appropriate fit, reducing the likelihood of early turnover. Furthermore, comprehensive induction programs facilitate new hire adjustment through job training, social integration, and organizational socialization, accelerating competence development and building commitment that supports retention.

These findings align with Social Exchange Theory (SET), which posits that employment relationships involve reciprocal exchanges where organizational investments generate employee obligations. According to the theory, when stations invest in thorough recruitment planning, fair selection, and supportive induction, they signal to employees that they are valued. Employees respond to these positive signals through increased commitment and intention to remain, creating the reciprocal relationship observed in this study. The strong correlation reinforces the theoretical assumption that investing in systematic human resource practices is a pathway to enhanced workforce stability, particularly within service sector contexts where employee continuity directly affects customer relationships and operational quality.

The findings are consistent with recent empirical research demonstrating positive relationships between recruitment practices and retention outcomes in Nigerian organizations. They also align with sector-specific evidence from the petroleum industry highlighting the importance of systematic human resource management for workforce stability. The moderate level of retention observed suggests that while stations are making progress in recruitment practices, additional attention to post-hire integration and ongoing support could further enhance retention outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that recruitment practices are significant predictors of employee retention among petroleum service stations in Delta State. The positive relationship identified implies that improvements in recruitment planning, selection methods, and induction programs can lead to measurable gains in workforce stability, including reduced turnover, increased tenure, and stronger employee intentions to remain. Therefore, strategic decisions aimed at enhancing recruitment processes such as systematic workforce planning, valid selection procedures, and comprehensive onboarding are likely to yield substantial benefits for organizational retention outcomes.

In summary, prioritizing recruitment practices is not merely an administrative necessity but a strategic investment in enhanced workforce stability and sustainable organizational performance. Petroleum service stations that invest in systematic, transparent, and supportive recruitment processes establish foundations for long-term employment relationships that benefit both employees and organizations. Based on the findings that recruitment practices significantly influence employee retention, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance workforce stability and organizational effectiveness:

1. Station owners and managers should invest in thorough workforce analysis, job analysis, and candidate sourcing strategies before initiating recruitment.
2. Stations should develop structured interview protocols, utilize relevant assessment tools, and conduct thorough reference verification to identify candidates with appropriate skills and organizational fit. Selection processes should provide realistic job previews that inform candidates about shift requirements, customer service expectations, and safety responsibilities.
3. New employees should receive structured onboarding that includes job-specific training, safety orientation, introduction to station procedures, and opportunities for social integration with colleagues.
4. Station managers and supervisors should receive training in supportive supervision, performance feedback, and employee development. Research consistently shows that people leave managers, not companies. Developing management capabilities to support, motivate, and develop employees strengthens the relational foundations of retention.

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