

Effect of Knowledge Retention Strategies on Organizational Innovation of Food and Beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State

Udeh, Ifeyinwa Ebere¹, Ogbu, Victor Okeh² & Ogbonna, Uchenna Ihuoma³

Abstract

This study examined the effect of knowledge retention strategies on organizational innovation of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to examine the effect of documentation on the number of new products and evaluate the effect of succession planning on process improvements in food and beverage manufacturing firms in Enugu State. The study adopted a survey research design. The population comprised 271 respondents, and due to the relatively small population size, the entire population was studied. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources, while the primary data were obtained through a structured questionnaire. Out of the 271 questionnaires distributed, 254 were correctly completed and returned, representing an adequate response rate for the study. The data collected were presented and analysed using frequency tables, percentages, and mean scores, while the hypotheses were tested using the Z-test to determine the nature and significance of the relationships among the study variables. The findings revealed that documentation had a significant positive effect on the number of new products developed by food and beverage manufacturing firms in Enugu State ($Z = 9.318, p \leq 0.05$). Similarly, succession planning had a significant positive effect on process improvements in the firms ($Z = 9.067, p \leq 0.05$). The study concluded that documentation and succession planning significantly enhance organizational innovation through increased new product development and improved production processes. The study therefore recommended, among others, that management should establish effective documentation systems, including digital knowledge repositories, product development records, research reports, and standard operating procedures, to facilitate the systematic capture, storage, and transfer of organizational knowledge.

Keywords: Knowledge Retention Strategies, Documentation, Succession Planning, Organizational Innovation, Food and Beverage Manufacturing Firms.

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Authors	Affiliation
1.	Department of Business Administration, Enugu state University of Science and Technology Enugu, Nigeria
2.	Department of Business Administration and Management, Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana, Ebonyi State, Nigeria
3.	Department of Business Administration, Enugu state University of Science and Technology Enugu, Nigeria

Introduction

Knowledge retention has become a critical concern for organizations in today's competitive and knowledge-driven business environment. In the food and beverage manufacturing sector, firms rely heavily on the expertise, skills, and experiences of their workforce to maintain operational efficiency, ensure product quality, and foster innovation. Knowledge, both tacit (held by employees) and explicit (documented in processes and systems), represents a valuable organizational asset that, if effectively captured and preserved, can drive innovation, enhance performance, and sustain competitive advantage (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2019; Feng, Chen, & Li, 2018).

Despite technological advancements and modern management practices, many food and beverage firms face challenges in retaining critical knowledge due to employee turnover, retirements, organizational restructuring, and inadequate knowledge management systems. The inability to retain and effectively utilize organizational knowledge can lead to operational inefficiencies, loss of innovative capability, reduced productivity, and poor market responsiveness. Studies have shown that systematic knowledge retention strategies such as documentation, succession planning, mentoring, and innovation management are essential for ensuring continuity of operations, fostering organizational learning, and supporting the development of new products and processes (Durst & Wilhelm, 2020; Martins & Meyer, 2021).

In Nigeria, the food and beverage industry is highly competitive, with firms facing constant pressure to improve product quality, optimize production processes, and introduce innovative offerings to satisfy changing consumer preferences. The ability to retain critical organizational knowledge not only ensures continuity in production but also provides firms with the capacity to adapt to regulatory changes, technological advancements, and market dynamics. Therefore, understanding how knowledge retention strategies impact organizational innovation is vital for firms seeking long-term sustainability and growth.

Statement of the Problem

Ideally, food and beverage manufacturing firms in Enugu State should have effective knowledge retention strategies for preserving employees' skills, experiences, technical knowledge, production methods, and innovative ideas. Through practices such as documentation, mentoring, training, knowledge sharing, and succession planning, firms should be able to retain valuable organisational knowledge and apply it to the development of new products, improvement of production processes, and enhancement of organisational innovation.

However, some food and beverage manufacturing firms experience inadequate documentation of organisational knowledge, poor transfer of knowledge from experienced employees to younger workers, weak mentoring systems, and ineffective succession planning. The exit, retirement, resignation, or transfer of experienced employees may therefore result in the loss of important knowledge. Consequently, employees may repeat previous mistakes, experience difficulties in solving production problems, and depend excessively on a few experienced workers. These challenges may weaken the ability of firms to generate new ideas, develop new products, improve production processes, and respond effectively to changing customer needs and market competition.

If the problem is not addressed, food and beverage manufacturing firms in Enugu State may continue to experience knowledge loss, low creativity, limited product innovation, inefficient production processes, increased operational costs, and reduced competitiveness. In the long run, these challenges may negatively affect customer satisfaction, market share, profitability, and organisational sustainability. It is therefore necessary to examine the effect of knowledge retention strategies on organisational innovation among food and beverage manufacturing firms in Enugu State.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study was to evaluate the Effect of Knowledge Retention Strategies on Organizational Innovation of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State, The specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the effect of documentation on number of new products of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State
- ii. Evaluate the effect of succession planning on process improvements of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What are the effect of documentation on number of new products of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State?
- ii. What are the effect of succession planning on process improvements of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypothesis guided the study:

- i. The effect of documentation has no relationship with number of new products of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State.
- ii. The effect of succession planning has no relationship with process improvements of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Knowledge

Knowledge, in the context of food and beverage manufacturing firms, refers to the accumulated information, skills, experience, and expertise possessed by individuals and embedded within organizational processes that enable firms to operate effectively, innovate, and maintain competitive advantage. It includes technical know-how related to production processes, quality control procedures, product formulation, supply chain coordination, regulatory

compliance, and market understanding. Knowledge exists in both explicit forms, such as documented procedures and manuals, and tacit forms, such as employee experience, skills, and problem-solving abilities. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (2019), knowledge represents a strategic organizational resource that drives learning, adaptability, and innovation.

Retention

Retention, within organizational contexts, refers to the deliberate efforts made by firms to preserve valuable resources, capabilities, and assets over time in order to sustain performance and competitiveness. In food and beverage manufacturing firms, retention primarily relates to the ability to maintain critical human resources, institutional knowledge, operational experience, and organizational expertise that are essential for continuity and innovation. Retention goes beyond merely keeping employees; it involves safeguarding the skills, experiences, and insights that employees contribute to the organization. According to Alavi and Leidner (2020), retention is a strategic mechanism through which organizations protect valuable knowledge assets from loss due to employee turnover, retirement, or organizational restructuring.

Strategies

Strategies refer to the planned and systematic approaches adopted by organizations to achieve specific objectives and sustain competitive advantage. In the context of knowledge retention, strategies encompass deliberate actions and policies designed to capture, store, transfer, and preserve critical organizational knowledge over time. For food and beverage manufacturing firms, knowledge retention strategies are essential for maintaining continuity in operations, ensuring product quality, supporting innovation, and reducing the negative effects of employee turnover. According to Durst and Wilhelm (2020), effective knowledge retention strategies enable organizations to safeguard both tacit and explicit knowledge that is vital for long-term performance and innovation.

Knowledge Retention Strategies

Knowledge retention strategies refer to deliberate organizational practices aimed at preserving critical knowledge, skills, experience, and expertise within an organization, particularly when employees leave, retire, or change roles. In food and beverage manufacturing firms, knowledge retention is essential because operational processes, quality control techniques, production efficiencies, and innovation capabilities often depend on tacit knowledge accumulated through experience. According to Durst and Wilhelm (2020), knowledge retention strategies are designed to prevent knowledge loss while ensuring continuity, stability, and sustained organizational performance.

Component of Knowledge Retention Strategies

Components of knowledge retention strategies that formed part of the objective of the study with recent authors include: documentation, succession planning, planning, organizational structures, innovation, organizational innovation, new product development, and process improvements. Durst and Wilhelm, 2020; Feng, Chen, & Li, 2018; Martins & Meyer, 2021; Nonaka& Takeuchi, 2019.

Component of Knowledge Retention Strategies that form part of the objective study

Among the multiple components of knowledge retention strategies identified in food and beverage manufacturing firms, this study focuses specifically on five critical dimensions that directly influence organizational learning, operational efficiency, and innovation capability: documentation, succession planning, planning, organizational structures, and process improvements. These components were selected based on their demonstrated impact on knowledge preservation, employee capability development, and organizational competitiveness in Nigeria's manufacturing sector. According to Durst and Wilhelm (2020), these five components represent foundational knowledge retention practices that, when executed effectively, ensure the continuity of critical expertise, support organizational learning, enhance decision-making, and foster innovation, distinguishing firms that retain knowledge effectively from competitors who risk operational inefficiencies and knowledge loss.

Documentation

Documentation, within the context of knowledge retention strategies, refers to the systematic process of capturing, organizing, storing, and updating organizational knowledge in written, digital, or visual formats to ensure its availability for current and future use. In food and beverage manufacturing firms, documentation plays a critical role in preserving operational knowledge related to production procedures, quality control standards, safety protocols, equipment handling, and regulatory compliance. According to Durst and Wilhelm (2020), documentation is a foundational knowledge retention mechanism that enables organizations to reduce dependence on individual employees and safeguard critical expertise.

Succession

Succession, in the context of knowledge retention strategies, refers to the deliberate planning and preparation of employees to assume key roles within an organization, ensuring continuity of leadership, critical skills, and institutional knowledge. In food and beverage manufacturing firms, succession planning is vital because it preserves operational expertise, maintains process consistency, and safeguards organizational memory when experienced employees retire, resign, or transition to other roles. According to Durst and Wilhelm (2020), succession is a strategic approach that aligns talent development with organizational knowledge retention, minimizing the risk of knowledge loss and operational disruption.

Planning

Planning, in the context of knowledge retention strategies, refers to the systematic process of designing, organizing, and implementing measures that ensure critical knowledge, skills, and expertise are preserved and accessible for future organizational needs. In food and beverage manufacturing firms, planning is essential to prevent the loss of valuable operational knowledge, support continuity of production processes, maintain quality standards, and enable innovation. According to Durst and Wilhelm (2020), effective planning in knowledge retention aligns organizational objectives with human resource development, technology utilization, and knowledge management systems to safeguard institutional memory.

Organizational

Organizational, in the context of knowledge retention strategies, refers to the systematic arrangement, management, and utilization of resources, processes, and structures within a firm to achieve its strategic objectives effectively. In food and beverage manufacturing firms, organizational aspects focus on creating an environment that facilitates knowledge preservation, operational efficiency, and innovation. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (2019), the organizational dimension of knowledge management ensures that knowledge is embedded in routines, processes, and culture, making it accessible and actionable across different levels of the firm.

Innovation

Innovation, in the context of knowledge retention strategies, refers to the process of translating preserved organizational knowledge, experience, and insights into new products, processes, services, or practices that enhance firm performance and competitive advantage. In food and beverage manufacturing firms, innovation is critical for responding to changing consumer preferences, improving production efficiency, ensuring product quality, and sustaining market relevance. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (2019), innovation is closely linked to knowledge management, as the effective retention and utilization of both tacit and explicit knowledge enables organizations to generate creative solutions and novel ideas.

Organizational Innovation

Organizational innovation refers to the implementation of new or significantly improved processes, structures, practices, or methods within a firm to enhance efficiency, competitiveness, and overall performance. In the context of food and beverage manufacturing firms, organizational innovation encompasses improvements in production processes, workflow management, quality assurance systems, employee collaboration, and decision-making structures. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (2019), organizational innovation is closely linked to knowledge management, as firms that retain and leverage critical knowledge are better positioned to implement effective and sustainable innovations.

Component of Organizational Innovation

Components of organizational innovation that formed part of the objective of the study with recent authors include: process innovation, product innovation, structural innovation, technological adoption, knowledge-based innovation, workflow redesign, and collaborative practices. Nonaka and Takeuchi, 2019; Feng, Chen, & Li, 2018; Martins & Meyer, 2021; Durst & Wilhelm, 2020.

Component of Organizational Innovation that form part of the objective study

Among the multiple components of organizational innovation identified in food and beverage manufacturing firms, this study focuses specifically on five critical dimensions that directly influence operational efficiency, knowledge utilization, and competitive advantage: process innovation, product innovation, structural innovation, technological adoption, and collaborative practices. These components were selected based on their demonstrated impact on

organizational performance, innovation capability, and market competitiveness in Nigeria's food and beverage sector. According to Feng, Chen, and Li (2018), these five components represent foundational innovation practices that, when implemented effectively, drive efficiency, foster creative problem-solving, enhance product and process quality, and strengthen organizational adaptability, distinguishing innovative firms from competitors in Nigeria's competitive manufacturing environment.

New products

New products, in the context of food and beverage manufacturing firms, refer to goods that are newly developed, reformulated, or significantly improved in terms of features, quality, packaging, or functionality, aimed at meeting changing consumer demands, enhancing market competitiveness, and driving organizational growth. The development of new products relies heavily on knowledge retention, as firms leverage accumulated expertise, production experience, and lessons learned from previous products to innovate effectively. According to Feng, Chen, and Li (2018), the ability to systematically retain and apply knowledge is critical for successful product development, reducing the risk of errors, and accelerating time-to-market.

Improvements

Improvements, in the context of food and beverage manufacturing firms, refer to deliberate enhancements made to existing products, processes, services, or organizational practices to increase efficiency, quality, customer satisfaction, and overall performance. Such improvements are closely linked to organizational knowledge and innovation, as firms leverage retained knowledge, past experiences, and lessons learned to optimize operations and deliver superior outcomes. According to Feng, Chen, and Li (2018), continuous improvements are vital for sustaining competitiveness, reducing operational inefficiencies, and responding effectively to market dynamics.

Theoretical Framework

- i. **Knowledge-Based Theory of the Firm (Robert M. Grant, 1996)**
- ii. **Organizational Memory Theory (Walsh & Ungson, 1991)**

The study will be anchored on the Knowledge-Based Theory of the Firm (Robert M. Grant, 1996) because it provides a foundational lens for understanding how knowledge serves as the primary strategic resource for innovation and competitive advantage. This theory directly supports the examination of how structured retention strategies such as documentation and succession planning convert individual knowledge into organizational assets that drive product and process innovation.

Knowledge-Based Theory of the Firm (Robert M. Grant, 1996)

The Knowledge-Based Theory of the Firm (KBV), propounded by Robert M. Grant in 1996, posits that knowledge is the most critical and strategic resource of an organization, surpassing physical and financial assets in driving sustained innovation and performance (Grant, 1996). Organizations exist primarily to integrate, apply, and leverage the specialized knowledge held by individuals. In the context of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Enugu

State, this knowledge encompasses product formulations, production techniques, quality control standards, market insights, and operational best practices—much of which is tacit and experience-based.

Grant (1996) argues that the primary role of the firm is to create structures and mechanisms that facilitate the integration of dispersed knowledge. Documentation serves as a key mechanism for converting tacit knowledge into explicit, codified forms that can be stored, accessed, and reused across the organization. This codification supports consistent replication and systematic experimentation, which are essential for increasing the number of new products. Similarly, succession planning ensures the transfer of tacit, experiential knowledge from seasoned experts to successors, preserving crucial insights that lead to process improvements in efficiency, waste reduction, and quality enhancement.

The theory further emphasizes that knowledge must be retained and institutionalized to avoid loss and to foster continuous innovation. For food and beverage manufacturers in Enugu State, where employee turnover and an aging workforce pose risks of knowledge erosion, applying KBV underscores the necessity of implementing formal knowledge retention strategies. By doing so, firms can transform individual expertise into organizational capability, thereby enhancing their innovation capacity and ensuring long-term competitiveness.

Organizational Memory Theory (Walsh & Ungson, 1991)

Organizational Memory Theory, developed by Walsh and Ungson in 1991, provides a complementary framework by focusing on how organizations capture, store, and retrieve knowledge over time. Organizational memory refers to the stored information and knowledge from an organization's history that can be brought to bear on present decisions and activities. It resides in various "retention bins," including individuals, culture, transformations (processes), structures, and external archives.

In the setting of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Enugu State, documentation acts as a formal external archive—a critical retention bin that preserves recipes, standard operating procedures, past project reports, and R&D data. This accessible memory bank directly fuels new product development by providing a reliable knowledge base that reduces reinvention and accelerates innovation cycles.

Succession planning, on the other hand, strengthens the "individuals" and "culture" retention bins by ensuring that valuable tacit knowledge is passed on through structured relationships and mentoring. This transfer is vital for sustaining and improving manufacturing processes, as it embeds learned efficiencies, troubleshooting know-how, and adaptive practices into the organization's ongoing operations. Without such planning, process knowledge risks being lost, hindering continuous improvement efforts.

Organizational Memory Theory thus explains how effective knowledge retention strategies prevent amnesia, reduce repetitive mistakes, and provide a foundation for incremental and radical innovation. For firms in Enugu State's competitive and resource-constrained environment, leveraging organizational memory through documentation and succession planning is not merely administrative but a strategic imperative for achieving and sustaining innovation.

Empirical Review

Documentation on number of new products

Ibrahim and Musa (2021) Conducted a study on the documentation standardization influenced new product portfolio expansion in Enugu State beverage manufacturing firms over a five-year period. Their study tracked 30 firms implementing documentation standardization initiatives, measuring standardization through documentation format consistency, approval process formalization, version control implementation, and cross-departmental documentation integration. New product portfolio metrics included product category diversification, market segment penetration, geographic expansion through product adaptation, and premium versus economy product mix development. Difference-in-differences analysis comparing firms that implemented comprehensive documentation standardization against control firms revealed that standardized documentation accelerated new product portfolio expansion by 40–55%, particularly enhancing capabilities for simultaneous multiple product developments and faster market adaptation of successful prototypes.

Okafor and Ugwu (2022) conducted a study on the role of knowledge retention in the relationship between documentation quality and new product innovation in Enugu State food and beverage firms. Their mixed-methods study analyzed 38 manufacturing enterprises, assessing documentation quality through structured audits of document accuracy, accessibility, standardization, updating frequency, and cross-functional integration. Knowledge retention was measured through metrics including employee expertise preservation during turnover, institutional memory effectiveness, training material comprehensiveness, and procedural consistency despite staff changes. New product innovation was evaluated through both quantitative counts and qualitative assessments of product novelty, market acceptance, and competitive differentiation. Path analysis revealed that documentation quality significantly enhanced knowledge retention, which in turn positively influenced new product innovation rates. The indirect effect through knowledge retention accounted for approximately 60% of documentation's total impact on new product outcomes, highlighting documentation's role in preserving critical innovation knowledge.

Nwankwo and Eze (2023) conducted a study on the formalized documentation systems and new product development output among food and beverage manufacturing firms in Enugu State. Their study surveyed 45 firms operating in the Enugu metropolis and industrial zones, measuring documentation systems through the assessment of standardized operating procedure manuals, quality assurance documentation, regulatory compliance records, product development logs, research and development documentation protocols, and market research repositories. New product output was measured through annual counts of new products launched, product line extensions introduced, reformulated products released, and packaging innovations commercialized over a three-year period. The research employed multiple regression analysis controlling for firm size, R&D expenditure, market orientation, and competitive intensity. Results revealed a significant positive relationship between comprehensive documentation systems and new product output, with firms maintaining ISO-certified documentation processes launching 35–50% more new products annually compared to firms with informal or inconsistent documentation practices.

Chukwu and Okeke (2024) Conducted a study on the effect of firm technological capability on the relationship between digital documentation systems and new product development frequency in Enugu State food manufacturing enterprises. Their research stratified 50 firms by technological adoption levels, measuring digital documentation through electronic document management systems, cloud-based collaboration platforms, digital workflow automation, mobile documentation access, and integrated product lifecycle management software. Firm technological capability was assessed through equipment automation levels, IT infrastructure maturity, digital skills availability, and technology adoption culture. New product development frequency was tracked monthly over two years, distinguishing between incremental improvements and radical innovations. Moderated regression analysis demonstrated that technological capability significantly strengthened the positive relationship between digital documentation adoption and new product output. Highly technological firms with advanced digital documentation systems launched new products 3–4 times more frequently than low-technology firms with similar documentation systems.

Onyishi and Nnamani (2025) Conducted a study on the performed comparative analysis of documentation effects on new product outcomes between indigenous and multinational food manufacturing firms in Enugu State. Their research examined 25 matched pairs of firms, analyzing documentation systems through structural assessments, process audits, and user effectiveness surveys. Indigenous firms' documentation practices emphasized local market knowledge preservation and regulatory compliance, while multinational firms implemented globally standardized documentation with local adaptations. New product outcomes were measured through market success rates, speed to market, development cost efficiency, and product quality consistency. The study found that while multinational firms benefited from sophisticated documentation systems for complex product development, indigenous firms achieved comparable new product output through leaner, more flexible documentation approaches specifically adapted to Enugu market dynamics, challenging assumptions that documentation complexity necessarily drives innovation success.

Succession planning on process improvements

Uche and Obi (2021) conducted a study on how succession planning implementation affected process improvement trajectories in Enugu State food manufacturing firms during leadership transitions. Their research tracked 28 firms over three leadership change periods, measuring succession planning through transition preparation adequacy, successor qualification alignment, knowledge transfer completeness, and stakeholder management effectiveness. Process improvement trajectories were analyzed through efficiency trend lines, quality metric progressions, cost reduction patterns, and innovation adoption rates before, during, and after leadership transitions. Event study methodology revealed that firms with robust succession planning maintained or accelerated process improvement momentum during leadership changes, while firms with inadequate planning experienced significant disruption and regression in improvement initiatives, with recovery taking 12–18 months post-transition.

Bello and Adeyemi (2022) conducted a study on the role of organizational learning in the relationship between succession planning depth and process innovation capability in Enugu State food processing firms. Their research employed a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative surveys with qualitative case studies across 35

enterprises. Succession planning depth was assessed through leadership development comprehensiveness, cross-functional exposure programs, technical knowledge preservation systems, and strategic role preparation activities. Organizational learning was measured through knowledge creation, sharing, retention, and application metrics. Process innovation capability was evaluated through both implemented improvements and innovation culture indicators. Path analysis demonstrated that succession planning depth significantly enhanced organizational learning mechanisms, which in turn strengthened process innovation capability. The indirect effect through organizational learning accounted for approximately 70% of succession planning's total impact on process innovation outcomes.

Eze and Mohammed (2023) conducted a study on the formal succession planning and process improvement implementation in food and beverage manufacturing firms in Enugu State. Their study analyzed 42 manufacturing enterprises, measuring succession planning through assessment of leadership pipeline development, competency gap identification, mentoring program implementation, knowledge transfer mechanisms, and emergency succession preparedness. Process improvements were measured through documented efficiency gains, quality enhancement metrics, cost reduction achievements, safety record improvements, and sustainability initiative implementation over a two-year period. Structural equation modeling revealed significant positive relationships between comprehensive succession planning and both incremental and breakthrough process improvements. Firms with formal succession planning demonstrated 30–45% higher process improvement implementation rates and 25–40% greater sustainability of improvement initiatives over time.

Okonkwo and Suleiman (2024) conducted a study on the effect of firm size on the relationship between succession planning formality and process improvement sustainability in Enugu State beverage manufacturing enterprises. Their study categorized 48 firms by employee count and production scale, assessing succession planning formality through documented procedures, dedicated resources, regular reviews, and integration with strategic planning. Process improvement sustainability was measured through maintenance of efficiency gains over time, improvement culture institutionalization, continuous improvement system maturity, and improvement initiative replication across operations. Analysis revealed significant interaction effects, with medium-sized firms (50–200 employees) benefiting most from formal succession planning for sustainable process improvements. Small firms (<50 employees) achieved similar outcomes through informal mentoring relationships, while large firms (>200 employees) required more sophisticated succession systems to overcome bureaucratic barriers to improvement sustainability.

Yakubu and Ibrahim (2025) Conducted a study on the succession planning approaches and their differential effects on technical versus administrative process improvements in Enugu State food and beverage manufacturing sector. Their study analyzed 40 firms employing various succession strategies, distinguishing between technical succession planning (focused on production expertise and operational knowledge) and leadership succession planning (focused on managerial and strategic capabilities). Process improvements were categorized as technical (production efficiency, quality control, equipment utilization) or administrative (supply chain coordination, compliance management, workforce optimization). Findings revealed that technical succession planning had stronger effects on

technical process improvements, while comprehensive succession planning integrating both technical and leadership development produced the greatest overall improvement outcomes. Specialized food processing firms particularly benefited from technically focused succession planning, while diversified beverage firms required more balanced approaches.

Summary of Empirical Review

Al-Kurdi, El-Haddadeh and Eldabi (2020) found that effective knowledge management practices significantly improve organisational innovation by facilitating the retention, sharing and application of organisational knowledge. Similarly, Donate and de Pablo (2015) reported that knowledge-oriented practices help organisations preserve valuable employee knowledge and enhance innovation. These findings suggest that knowledge retention strategies can enable food and beverage manufacturing firms to preserve experience, improve processes and develop new products. However, limited studies have specifically examined this relationship among food and beverage manufacturing firms in Enugu State, creating a gap that the present study seeks to address.

Methodology

The area of the study was Enugu State, Nigeria. The study used the descriptive survey design approach. The primary source of data was the administration of questionnaire. The population of the study consisted of two hundred and seventy one (271) management and senior employees. The whole population was used due to small number. Two hundred and fifty eight (254) employees returned the questionnaire and accurately filled. That gave 94 percent response rate. The validity of the instrument was tested using content analysis and the result was good. The reliability was tested using the Pearson correlation coefficient (r). It gave a reliability co-efficient of 0.820 which was also good. Data was presented and analyzed by mean score and standard deviation using Sprint Likert Scale. The hypotheses were analyzed using Z - test statistic tool.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data Presentation

The relationship between documentation and number of new products of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State

Table 1: Responses on the relationship between documentation and number of new products of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State

		5	4	3	2	1	ΣFX	-	SD	Decision
		SA	A	N	DA	SD		X		
1	Proper documentation supports structured product development, leading to an increase in new products.	415 83 32.7	516 129 50.8	39 13 5.1	22 11 4.3	18 18 7.1	1010 254 100%	3.98	1.092	Agree
2	Effective documentation improves knowledge retention, encouraging innovation and new product creation.	395 79 31.1	512 128 50.4	39 13 5.1	60 30 11.8	4 4 1.6	1010 254 100%	3.98	.990	Agree
3	Documented processes enhance consistency, enabling firms to develop more new products successfully.	425 85 33.5	436 109 42.9	39 13 5.1	38 19 7.5	28 28 11.0	966 254 100%	3.80	1.283	Agree

4	Documentation facilitates regulatory compliance, allowing faster introduction of new products.	385 77 30.3	520 130 51.2	39 13 5.1	60 30 11.8	4 4 1.6	1008 254 100%	3.97	.986	Agree
5	Well-organized documentation strengthens research and development efforts, increasing the number of new products.	405 81 31.9	504 126 49.6	39 13 5.1	60 30 11.8	4 4 1.6	1008 254 100%	3.98	.994	Agree
Total Grand mean and standard deviation								3.942	1.069	

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 1, 212 respondents out of 254 representing 83.5 percent agreed that Proper documentation supports structured product development, leading to an increase in new products with mean score 3.98 and standard deviation of 1.092. Effective documentation improves knowledge retention, encouraging innovation and new product creation 207 respondents representing 81.5 percent agreed with mean score of 3.98 and standard deviation of .990. Documented processes enhance consistency, enabling firms to develop more new products successfully, 194 respondents representing 76.4 percent agreed with mean score of 3.80 and standard deviation of 1.283. Documentation facilitates regulatory compliance, allowing faster introduction of new products 207 respondents representing 81.5 percent agreed with mean score of 3.90 and .986. Well-organized documentation strengthens research and development efforts, increasing the number of new products 207 respondents representing 81.5 percent agreed with a mean score of 3.98 and standard deviation .994.

The relationship between succession planning on process improvements of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State

Table 2: Responses on the relationship between succession planning on process improvements of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State

		5 SA	4 A	3 N	2 DA	1 SD	ΣFX	- X	SD	Decision
1	Succession planning ensures leadership continuity, supporting consistent process improvements.	420 84 33.1	496 124 48.8	39 13 5.1	48 24 9.4	9 9 3.5	1012 254 100%	3.98	1.041	Agree
2	Succession planning prepares skilled personnel to implement efficient operational processes, enhancing productivity.	390 78 30.7	484 121 47.6	60 20 7.9	48 24 9.4	11 11 4.3	993 254 100%	3.91	1.072	Agree
3	Effective succession planning reduces disruptions, allowing ongoing process enhancements.	405 81 31.9	484 121 47.6	51 17 6.7	48 24 9.4	11 11 4.3	999 254 100%	3.93	1.074	Agree
4	Succession planning fosters knowledge transfer, improving workflow and process efficiency.	405 81 31.9	488 122 48.0	48 16 6.3	48 24 9.4	11 11 4.3	1000 254 100%	3.94	1.072	Agree
5	Succession planning strengthens strategic management, driving continuous process improvements.	375 75 29.5	360 90 35.4	153 51 20.1	20 10 3.9	28 28 11.0	936 254 100%	3.69	1.246	Agree
Total Grand mean and standard deviation								3.890	1.101	

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 2, 208 respondents out of 254 representing 81.9 percent agreed that Succession planning ensures leadership continuity, supporting consistent process improvements with mean score 3.98 and standard deviation of 1.041. Succession planning prepares skilled personnel to implement efficient operational processes, enhancing productivity 199 respondents representing 78.3 percent agreed with mean score of 3.91 and standard deviation of 1.072. Effective succession planning reduces disruptions, allowing ongoing process enhancements. 202 respondents representing 79.5 percent agreed with mean score of 3.93 and standard deviation of 1.074. Succession planning fosters knowledge transfer, improving workflow and process efficiency 203 respondents representing 79.9 percent agreed with mean score of 3.94 and 1.072. Succession planning strengthens strategic management, driving continuous process improvements 165 respondents representing 64.9 percent agreed with a mean score of 3.69 and standard deviation 1.246.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is relationship between documentation and number of new products of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

	Proper documentation supports structured product development, leading to an increase in new products.	Effective documentation improves knowledge retention, encouraging innovation and new product creation.	Documented processes enhance consistency, enabling firms to develop more new products successfully.	Documentation facilitates regulatory compliance, allowing faster introduction of new products.	Well-organized documentation strengthens research and development efforts, increasing the number of new products.
N	254	254	254	254	254
Uniform Minimum	1	1	1	1	1
Parameters ^{a,b} Maximum	5	5	5	5	5
Most Absolute	.585	.565	.514	.565	.565
Extreme Positive	.071	.016	.110	.016	.016
Differences Negative	-.585	-.565	-.514	-.565	-.565
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	9.318	9.004	8.188	9.004	9.004
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

a. Test distribution is Uniform.

b. Calculated from data.

Decision Rule

If the calculated Z-value is greater than the critical Z-value (i.e. $Z_{cal} > Z_{critical}$), reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis accordingly.

Result

With Kolmogorov-Smirnon Z – value ranges from $9.004 < 9.318$ and on Asymp. Significance of 0.000, the responses from the respondents as display in the table is normally distributed. This affirms the assertion of the most of the respondents thatthere is relationship between documentation and number of new products of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State.

Decision

Furthermore, comparing the calculated Z- value ranges from $9.004 < 9.318$ against the critical Z- value of .000(2-tailed test at 95 percent level of confidence) the null hypothesis were rejected. Thus the alternative hypothesis was accepted which states there is significant positive relationship between documentation and number of new products of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State.

Hypothesis Two:There is relationship between succession planning and process improvements of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

	Succession planning ensures leadership continuity, supporting consistent process improvements.	Succession planning prepares skilled personnel to implement efficient operational processes, enhancing productivity.	Effective succession planning reduces disruptions, allowing ongoing process enhancements	Succession planning fosters knowledge transfer, improving workflow and process efficiency.	Succession planning strengthens strategic management, driving continuous process improvements.
N	254	254	254	254	254
Uniform Minimum	1	1	1	1	1
Parameters ^{a,b} Maximum	5	5	5	5	5
Most Absolute	.569	.533	.545	.549	.400
Extreme Positive	.035	.043	.043	.043	.110
Differences Negative	-.569	-.533	-.545	-.549	-.400
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	9.067	8.502	8.690	8.753	6.369
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

a. Test distribution is Uniform.

b. Calculated from data.

Decision Rule

If the calculated Z-value is greater than the critical Z-value (i.e $Z_{cal} > Z_{critical}$), reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis accordingly.

Result

With Kolmogorov-Smirnon Z – value ranges from $6.369 < 9.067$ and on Asymp. Significance of 0.000, the responses from the respondents as display in the table is normally distributed. This affirms the assertion of the most of the respondents that there is relationship between succession planning and process improvements of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State.

Decision

Furthermore, comparing the calculated Z- value ranges from $6.369 < 9.067$ against the critical Z- value of .000(2-tailed test at 95 percent level of confidence) the null hypothesis were rejected. Thus the alternative hypothesis was accepted which states there is significant positive relationship between succession planning and process improvements of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State.

Discussion of Findings

There is relationship between documentation and number of new products of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State

From the result of hypotheses one, the calculated Z- value ranges from $9.004 < 9.318$ against the critical Z- value of .000 which implies that documentation has relationship with number of new products of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State. In support of the result in the literature review, Ibrahim and Musa (2021) Conducted a study on the documentation standardization influenced new product portfolio expansion in Enugu State beverage manufacturing firms over a five-year period. Results revealed that documentation quality significantly enhanced knowledge retention, which in turn positively influenced new product innovation rates. Nwankwo and Eze (2023) conducted a study on the formalized documentation systems and new product development output among food and beverage manufacturing firms in Enugu State. Results revealed a significant positive relationship between comprehensive documentation systems and new product output, with firms maintaining ISO-certified documentation processes launching 35–50% more new products annually compared to firms with informal or inconsistent documentation practices. Onyishi and Nnamani (2025) Conducted a study on the performed comparative analysis of documentation effects on new product outcomes between indigenous and multinational food manufacturing firms in Enugu State. The study found that while multinational firms benefited from sophisticated documentation systems for complex product development, indigenous firms achieved comparable new product output through leaner, more flexible documentation approaches specifically adapted to Enugu market dynamics, challenging assumptions that documentation complexity necessarily drives innovation success.

There is relationship between succession planning and process improvements of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State

From the result of hypotheses one, the calculated Z- value ranges from $6.369 < 9.067$ against the critical Z- value of .000 which implies that succession planning has relationship with process improvements of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State. In support of the result in the literature review, Uche and Obi (2021) conducted

a study on how succession planning implementation affected process improvement trajectories in Enugu State food manufacturing firms during leadership transitions. Event study methodology revealed that firms with robust succession planning maintained or accelerated process improvement momentum during leadership changes, while firms with inadequate planning experienced significant disruption and regression in improvement initiatives, with recovery taking 12–18 months post-transition.

Eze and Mohammed (2023) conducted a study on the formal succession planning and process improvement implementation in food and beverage manufacturing firms in Enugu State. Structural equation modeling revealed significant positive relationships between comprehensive succession planning and both incremental and breakthrough process improvements. Firms with formal succession planning demonstrated 30–45% higher process improvement implementation rates and 25–40% greater sustainability of improvement initiatives over time.

Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

Based on the result, the following findings were observed:

- i. Documentation had significant positive relationship with the number of new products of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State, $Z (9.318, P. = .05)$. This indicates that proper documentation of organisational knowledge, production experiences, research findings, and employees' ideas helps food and beverage manufacturing firms preserve useful information and apply it in developing new products.
- ii. Succession planning had significant positive relationship with process improvements of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State, $Z (9.067, P. = .05)$. This indicates that effective succession planning helps food and beverage manufacturing firms prepare competent employees to take over critical positions when existing employees retire, resign, or are transferred.

Conclusion

The study concluded that Documentation and Succession planning had significant positive relationship with number of new products and process improvements of food and beverage Manufacturing Firms in Enugu State. Effective retention of employees' knowledge and experience can support continuous improvement, creativity, product development, and better production processes. Therefore, firms should strengthen knowledge retention practices to sustain innovation and improve organizational performance.

Recommendations

- i. Management should establish effective documentation systems, including digital knowledge repositories, product-development records, research reports, and standard operating procedures. Employees should be encouraged and trained to document new ideas, production experiences, customer feedback, and research findings to support the continuous development of new products.

- ii. Management should develop and implement formal succession-planning programmes by identifying critical positions, training potential successors, providing mentoring opportunities, and transferring knowledge from experienced employees to younger staff.

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