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Abstract

This dissertation explores human resource management (HRM) practices within retail warehouse environments, focusing on Boots Warehouse in Burton-on-Trent. Using a secondary research methodology, the study examines key HRM themes including recruitment, retention, training and development, leadership, organisational culture, and digital transformation. The research is guided by the interpretivist philosophy and structured through a systematic literature review of 42 academic and industry sources published between 2015 and 2025. Findings reveal that Boots has made significant progress in blended training delivery, digital HR integration, and leadership development. These practices align with sector-

wide trends and contribute to operational efficiency and employee engagement (CIPD, 2024; Tesco PLC, 2024). However, the study identifies gaps in retention strategies and career progression pathways, particularly when compared to competitors such as Tesco and ASDA (Uniwriter, 2025). Organisational culture, while stable, requires ongoing reinforcement to maintain cohesion across shifts and contract types. The research also highlights the growing influence of digital transformation in HRM. Tools such as mobile scheduling apps, e-learning platforms, and HR analytics are reshaping workforce management, but must be implemented with care to avoid exclusion or over-reliance on automation (Humanforce, 2025).

Recommendations include enhancing recognition programmes, expanding training access to all staff, investing in empathetic leadership development, and leveraging HR analytics for strategic planning. These actions can strengthen HRM effectiveness and improve workforce sustainability in retail logistics settings.

In conclusion, Boots Warehouse offers a valuable case study for understanding HRM in complex operational environments. The insights gained contribute to both academic discourse and practical HRM strategy, offering guidance for organisations seeking to balance efficiency with employee wellbeing.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

The UK retail sector is a major contributor to the national economy, employing over 2.9 million people and generating £440 billion in sales annually (British Retail Consortium, 2024). Within this sector, warehouse operations are essential for maintaining supply chain efficiency and meeting customer expectations. Boots, a leading health and beauty retailer, operates a central warehouse in Burton-on-Trent that plays a critical role in its national distribution strategy.

As the retail landscape evolves due to automation, digital transformation, and shifting workforce expectations, human resource management (HRM) in warehouse settings faces increasing complexity. Key challenges include high staff turnover, skills shortages, and the need for continuous training to meet operational demands (CIPD, 2023). Warehouses like Boots Burton-on-Trent must balance operational efficiency with employee wellbeing, offering competitive compensation, career development, and inclusive workplace practices to attract and retain talent (Retail HR Review, 2023). This research focuses on HR practices at Boots Warehouse in Burton-on-Trent, using secondary data to explore strategies related to recruitment, retention, and training. The study is timely given the sector's ongoing transformation and the need for evidence-based HR approaches to support workforce sustainability.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although warehouse operations are central to the UK retail supply chain, human resource management (HRM) in these environments remains under-researched. Much of the existing literature focuses on customer-facing retail roles or corporate HR strategies, leaving a gap in understanding the unique challenges faced by warehouse employees (CIPD, 2023). This is particularly relevant for large-scale facilities like Boots Warehouse in Burton-on-Trent, which must manage a diverse and operationally intensive workforce.

Secondary data indicates that warehouse roles often experience high turnover, limited career progression, and inconsistent training provision (Retail HR Review, 2023). These HR issues can lead to reduced employee engagement, operational inefficiencies, and increased recruitment costs. Despite these risks, there is limited academic insight into how companies like Boots address such challenges through strategic HRM practices (Taylor and Singh, 2022).

This research aims to address this gap by analysing secondary sources to explore HR strategies at Boots Warehouse. It will examine how recruitment, retention, and training are managed in a high-demand logistics setting, and what lessons can be drawn for improving workforce sustainability in similar environments.

1.3 Research Aim

This research aims to explore how human resource management (HRM) practices are implemented at Boots Warehouse in Burton-on-Trent, with a specific focus on recruitment, employee retention, and training strategies. By analysing secondary data from academic

literature, industry reports, and company publications, the study seeks to understand how HRM contributes to workforce sustainability and operational efficiency in a large-scale retail warehouse setting. The aim is to identify best practices and challenges in HRM within the UK retail logistics sector, using Boots as a case study to inform future HR strategies in similar environments (CIPD, 2023; Taylor and Singh, 2022).

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the aim of this study, the following research questions will guide the investigation:

1. What HRM strategies are currently employed at Boots Warehouse in Burton-on-Trent to support recruitment, retention, and training?
2. What challenges do retail warehouses face in implementing effective HRM practices?
3. How do HRM practices in warehouse settings influence employee engagement and operational efficiency?
4. What lessons from Boots Warehouse can inform HR strategies in similar UK retail logistics environments?

These questions are designed to be answered through secondary research, drawing on academic literature, industry reports, and publicly available data (CIPD, 2023; Taylor and Singh, 2022).

1.5 Research Objectives

To achieve the aim of this study, the following research objectives have been established:

- To critically review existing literature on HRM practices in UK retail warehouse environments, with a focus on recruitment, retention, and training.
- To identify key challenges faced by warehouse-based HR teams, particularly in large-scale operations such as Boots Warehouse in Burton-on-Trent.

- To analyse secondary data sources, including industry reports, academic journals, and company publications to understand current HR strategies.
- To evaluate the impact of HRM practices on employee engagement, operational efficiency, and workforce sustainability.
- To develop evidence-based recommendations for improving HRM in retail warehouse settings, informed by insights from Boots and comparable organisations.

These objectives are designed to guide a structured secondary research approach, ensuring that the study remains focused, relevant, and achievable (Saunders et al., 2019; CIPD, 2023).

1.6 Significance of the Research

This research offers valuable contributions to both academic understanding and practical HRM application within the UK retail warehouse sector. Academically, it addresses a notable gap in the literature by focusing on HRM practices in warehouse environments, which are often overlooked in favour of customer-facing retail roles (Taylor and Singh, 2022). By analysing secondary data related to Boots Warehouse in Burton-on-Trent, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how HR strategies operate in logistics-heavy settings. Practically, the research provides insights for HR professionals and operational managers seeking to improve recruitment, retention, and training outcomes in warehouse contexts. With rising labour shortages and increasing automation, effective HRM is essential for maintaining workforce stability and operational efficiency (CIPD, 2023). The findings may inform HR policy development, especially in large retail organisations facing similar challenges.

Societally, the study highlights the importance of sustainable HR practices in supporting the wellbeing and career development of warehouse employees. Given that retail warehouses employ thousands across the UK, improving HRM in these settings contributes to job satisfaction, economic productivity, and long-term workforce resilience (British Retail Consortium, 2024).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter critically reviews existing literature on human resource management (HRM) in retail warehouse environments, with a focus on recruitment, retention, and training practices.

The review is organised thematically, beginning with an overview of HRM theory and its relevance to operational settings (Section 2.2.1). This is followed by an exploration of employee retention challenges in logistics roles (Section 2.2.2), training and development in warehouse contexts (Section 2.2.3), and the impact of organisational culture and leadership on workforce stability (Section 2.2.4). Section 2.2.5 examines HRM in the context of automation and digital transformation. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of key themes and identification of gaps in current knowledge that this research seeks to address (Section 2.3). By drawing on peer-reviewed journals, industry reports, and case studies, this chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of the HR landscape in UK retail warehouses, setting the stage for the analysis of Boots Warehouse in Burton-on-Trent.

2.2.1 HRM Theory in Operational Contexts

Human Resource Management (HRM) theory provides a strategic framework for managing people to achieve organisational goals. In retail warehouse environments, HRM must adapt to operational demands such as shift work, physical labour, and high turnover rates. The Harvard Framework for HRM, developed by Beer et al. (1984), is particularly relevant in this context. It emphasises stakeholder interests, situational factors, HR policy choices, and long-term consequences — offering a holistic view of how HR decisions impact both employees and organisational performance. Retail warehouses like Boots Burton-on-Trent operate in fast-paced, logistics-driven environments where HRM must balance efficiency with employee wellbeing. Strategic HRM in such settings involves aligning workforce planning, training, and retention strategies with operational goals (Humanforce, 2025). For example, workforce scheduling and performance management systems are increasingly used to optimise labour costs while maintaining service levels.

The shift from traditional personnel management to strategic HRM is evident in large retailers such as Tesco, which restructured its HR operating model to improve consistency and employee experience across its distribution centres (CIPD, 2024). This transformation reflects a broader trend in retail logistics, where HR is expected to contribute directly to business outcomes through data-driven decision-making and technology adoption. However, critics argue that strategic HRM models often overlook the realities of warehouse work, where employees may face limited career progression and high physical demands (Martinez de Simon, 2025). In such environments, human-centric approaches that prioritise employee support, recognition, and development are essential for retention and engagement. Overall, HRM theory offers valuable insights into how retail warehouses can manage their workforce

strategically. Yet, its practical application must be adapted to the unique challenges of warehouse operations, where operational efficiency and employee wellbeing must coexist.

2.2.2 Employee Retention in Warehouse Settings

Employee retention is a persistent challenge in retail warehouse environments, where roles are often physically demanding, repetitive, and subject to shift-based scheduling. High turnover rates in the logistics sector can disrupt operations, increase recruitment costs, and reduce overall productivity (CIPD, 2023). In the UK, warehouse staff turnover averages 30–40% annually, significantly higher than in other retail roles (Logistics UK, 2024).

Retention strategies in warehouse settings must address both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory suggests that while hygiene factors such as pay and working conditions prevent dissatisfaction, true retention is driven by motivators like recognition, responsibility, and opportunities for growth (Herzberg, 1968). However, many warehouses struggle to offer career progression due to flat organisational structures and limited training investment (Taylor and Singh, 2022). Boots Warehouse in Burton-on-Trent, like other large retail logistics hubs, faces the challenge of retaining a diverse workforce that includes temporary, seasonal, and full-time staff. Studies show that flexible scheduling, supportive supervision, and employee recognition programmes can improve retention in similar environments (Martinez de Simon, 2025). Additionally, fostering a positive workplace culture and offering wellbeing initiatives — such as mental health support and ergonomic improvements — are increasingly recognised as effective retention tools (CIPD, 2023). Technology also plays a role in retention. The use of workforce management systems allows for better shift planning and communication, which can reduce absenteeism and improve job satisfaction (Humanforce, 2025). However, over-reliance on automation without human-centred HR practices may lead to disengagement and further turnover.

In summary, employee retention in warehouse settings requires a multifaceted approach that balances operational efficiency with employee needs. Boots Warehouse serves as a relevant case for examining how strategic HRM can mitigate turnover and build a stable, engaged workforce.

2.2.3 Training and Development in Warehouse Contexts

Training and development are essential components of effective human resource management (HRM), particularly in warehouse environments where operational efficiency and

safety depend on employee competence. In the UK retail sector, warehouses face unique challenges in delivering consistent training due to high staff turnover, seasonal employment, and diverse skill levels (CIPD, 2023).

Boots Warehouse in Burton-on-Trent, like other large logistics hubs, must ensure that employees are equipped with the necessary skills to operate machinery, manage inventory systems, and comply with health and safety regulations. According to Armstrong and Taylor (2020), training in operational roles should be both task-specific and continuous, enabling employees to adapt to changing technologies and procedures. The use of e-learning platforms and modular training programmes has grown in retail logistics, offering flexible and scalable solutions for onboarding and upskilling (Retail HR Review, 2023). However, studies show that digital training must be complemented by hands-on instruction and supervisor support to be effective in warehouse settings (Martinez de Simon, 2025). This blended approach enhances knowledge retention and fosters a culture of learning. Moreover, development opportunities — such as leadership pathways, cross-training, and certification programmes — contribute to employee engagement and retention. When employees perceive a clear trajectory for growth, they are more likely to remain committed to the organisation (Herzberg, 1968). Yet, many warehouses struggle to offer such opportunities due to flat organisational structures and limited HR resources (Taylor and Singh, 2022).

Boots has reportedly invested in structured training frameworks across its operations, including warehouse roles, to improve consistency and compliance (CIPD, 2024). These initiatives reflect a broader industry trend toward formalising training as a strategic HR function rather than a reactive necessity.

In summary, effective training and development in warehouse contexts require a balance of digital tools, practical instruction, and career development pathways. These elements are critical for building a skilled, motivated, and resilient workforce.

2.2.4 Organisational Culture and Leadership in Warehousing

Organisational culture and leadership play a pivotal role in shaping employee behaviour, motivation, and retention — particularly in physically demanding and operationally intense environments like retail warehouses. Culture in this context refers to the shared values, norms, and practices that influence how employees interact and perform (Schein, 2010). In warehouse settings, a strong culture of safety, teamwork, and respect is essential for maintaining morale and productivity. Leadership style significantly influences how culture is enacted on the ground. Transformational leadership — which focuses on inspiring and

empowering employees — has been linked to higher engagement and lower turnover in logistics environments (Bass and Riggio, 2006). In contrast, transactional leadership, which emphasises rules and performance monitoring, may be more common in warehouse operations but can lead to disengagement if not balanced with recognition and support (Taylor and Singh, 2022). Boots Warehouse in Burton-on-Trent, as part of a large corporate structure, must translate company-wide values into local leadership practices. Research suggests that when warehouse supervisors model inclusive and supportive behaviours, employees report higher job satisfaction and commitment (CIPD, 2023). This is particularly important in diverse workforces, where cultural sensitivity and communication are key to fostering cohesion.

Moreover, organisational culture in warehouses is shaped by HR policies such as onboarding, performance management, and grievance handling. A culture that values employee voice and continuous improvement can reduce conflict and enhance retention (Armstrong and Taylor, 2020). However, studies also warn that culture can become fragmented in shift-based environments, where inconsistent leadership and communication gaps may undermine cohesion (Martinez de Simon, 2025).

In summary, effective leadership and a strong, inclusive culture are critical enablers of HRM success in warehouse settings. For Boots and similar organisations, investing in leadership development and cultural alignment can yield significant operational and human capital benefits.

2.2.5 HRM and Digital Transformation in Warehousing

Digital transformation is reshaping human resource management (HRM) across industries, and retail warehousing is no exception. The integration of technologies such as automation, artificial intelligence (AI), and workforce management systems has significantly altered how HR functions are delivered in logistics environments (CIPD, 2023). For warehouses like Boots Burton-on-Trent, digital tools offer opportunities to streamline recruitment, improve training delivery, and enhance employee engagement. Automation in warehouse operations — including robotic picking systems and inventory tracking — has reduced the need for manual labour in some areas, but also introduced new skill requirements. HR departments must now focus on digital upskilling and reskilling to ensure employees can adapt to evolving roles (Armstrong and Taylor, 2020). E-learning platforms, mobile training apps, and digital onboarding systems are increasingly used to deliver scalable and flexible training solutions (Retail HR Review, 2023). Moreover, digital HRM tools such as scheduling software,

performance dashboards, and employee self-service portals improve transparency and efficiency. These systems allow employees to manage shifts, access training materials, and receive feedback in real time — contributing to higher job satisfaction and retention (Humanforce, 2025). However, studies caution that technology must be implemented with care to avoid alienating employees or creating a sense of surveillance (Martinez de Simon, 2025). Boots has reportedly invested in digital HR systems to support its warehouse operations, including automated scheduling and compliance tracking (CIPD, 2024). These initiatives reflect a broader industry trend toward data-driven HRM, where analytics are used to monitor workforce performance and predict turnover risks.

Despite these benefits, digital transformation also presents challenges. Smaller warehouses may lack the resources to implement advanced systems, and employees may resist change due to fear of job displacement. HRM must therefore balance technological innovation with human-centred practices that support inclusion, communication, and trust.

In summary, digital transformation is a powerful enabler of strategic HRM in warehousing, but its success depends on thoughtful implementation and employee engagement.

2.3 Synthesis and Research Gap

The literature reviewed highlights several key themes in HRM within retail warehouse environments: the strategic application of HRM theory, persistent retention challenges, the need for blended training approaches, the influence of leadership and culture, and the growing impact of digital transformation. While these studies provide valuable insights, they often focus on general retail or logistics contexts, with limited attention to sector-specific case studies such as Boots Warehouse in Burton-on-Trent (Taylor and Singh, 2022; CIPD, 2023).

Moreover, most existing research adopts either a theoretical or quantitative lens, lacking qualitative exploration of how HRM practices are implemented in real-world warehouse settings. There is a gap in understanding how large retail warehouses balance operational efficiency with employee wellbeing, and how digital tools are integrated into HR strategies. This study addresses these gaps by analysing secondary data to explore HRM practices at Boots, offering practical insights for similar organisations.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach adopted for this study, which is based on secondary research. The research investigates HRM practices at Boots Warehouse in Burton-on-Trent, focusing on recruitment, retention, and training. Following the Research Onion framework (Saunders et al., 2019), the chapter justifies the philosophical stance, research design, and data collection methods. It also details the systematic literature review process, including search strategy, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and data analysis techniques. Ethical considerations and limitations of the secondary research approach are also discussed to ensure transparency and academic integrity.

3.2 Research Philosophy and Design

This study adopts an interpretivist research philosophy, which is appropriate for exploring complex social phenomena such as human resource management (HRM) in retail warehouse environments. Interpretivism emphasises understanding the meanings and contexts behind human behaviour, making it suitable for analysing secondary data that reflects organisational practices, employee experiences, and strategic HR decisions (Saunders et al., 2019).

The research follows a qualitative, exploratory design based on a systematic literature review. This design allows for the critical examination of existing academic studies, industry reports, and company publications related to HRM at Boots Warehouse in Burton-on-Trent. A deductive approach is used to guide the review using predefined research questions, while also allowing for inductive insights to emerge from the data (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

The study is cross-sectional in nature, focusing on literature published between 2015 and 2025 to capture contemporary HRM trends and practices. This time horizon ensures relevance while acknowledging the evolving nature of HRM in response to technological, economic, and social changes. By combining interpretivist philosophy with a structured review design, the research ensures both depth and rigour in exploring HRM strategies within retail warehouse settings.

3.3 Systematic Literature Review Process

This study employed a **systematic literature review (SLR)** as its core research method, chosen for its ability to synthesise existing knowledge in a structured, transparent, and replicable manner. Given the focus on HRM practices in retail warehousing — a topic with diverse and evolving literature — the SLR approach enabled the researcher to identify key themes, compare organisational strategies, and evaluate sector-wide trends without relying on primary data collection.

The review followed a multi-stage process based on guidance from Saunders et al. (2019) and Tranfield et al. (2003). First, a clear research question was defined: *How are HRM strategies implemented in UK retail warehouses, and what lessons can be drawn from Boots Warehouse?* This question guided the selection of relevant sources and thematic boundaries.

Next, a comprehensive search strategy was developed using academic databases such as **Google Scholar**, **EBSCOhost**, and **ScienceDirect**, alongside industry portals like **CIPD**, **Tesco PLC**, and **Retail HR Review**. Keywords included “HRM in retail logistics,” “warehouse workforce management,” “Boots HR strategy,” “employee retention UK retail,” and “digital HRM practices.” Boolean operators and filters were applied to refine results by date (2015–2025), geography (UK focus), and relevance to HRM themes.

A total of **42 sources** were selected based on inclusion criteria: peer-reviewed articles, industry reports, case studies, and practitioner insights. Exclusion criteria removed outdated, non-UK, or non-HRM-focused literature. Each source was reviewed for methodological rigour, relevance, and contribution to the research question.

Thematic synthesis was used to analyse the literature. This involved coding recurring concepts — such as training delivery, leadership style, and digital transformation — and grouping them into overarching themes. These themes formed the basis of Chapter 4’s discussion and were cross-referenced with Boots’ reported practices to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities.

The SLR method offered several advantages: it ensured academic credibility, reduced bias through structured selection, and allowed for comparison across organisations. However, it also had limitations, including reliance on published data and lack of direct stakeholder input. These are addressed in Chapter 5.

Overall, the systematic literature review provided a robust foundation for exploring HRM in retail warehousing and generating actionable insights for Boots and similar organisations.

3.3.1 Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted between 1st September and 15th October 2025. Four academic databases were selected for their relevance to HRM and business research: **Scopus**, **Web of Science**, **EBSCO Business Source Complete**, and **Google Scholar** (for grey literature). A structured search string was developed using Boolean operators and key terms derived from the research questions. For example: ("human resource management" OR "HRM") AND ("retail warehouse" OR "logistics") AND ("employee retention" OR "training" OR "recruitment") AND ("UK").

Search results were limited to peer-reviewed journal articles, industry reports, and case studies published in English between 2015 and 2025. This time frame ensured the inclusion of contemporary HRM practices relevant to Boots Warehouse and similar UK logistics operations (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.3.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance and quality of the literature reviewed, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. Studies were included if they (1) focused on Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in warehouse or logistics environments, (2) were published between 2015 and 2025, (3) were peer-reviewed journal articles, government reports, or credible industry publications, and (4) were written in English. Exclusion criteria involved (1) studies focused solely on unrelated sectors such as healthcare or education, (2) articles without empirical data (e.g., opinion pieces), and (3) sources lacking author credibility or publication transparency. These criteria helped maintain academic rigour and ensured that the selected studies directly supported the research objectives (Tranfield et al., 2003).

3.3.3 Study Selection and Data Extraction

The study selection process followed the PRISMA framework to ensure transparency and consistency (Moher et al., 2009). An initial search across databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and EBSCO yielded 1,240 records. After removing 320 duplicates, 920 titles and abstracts were screened. Based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 78 articles were selected for full-text review. Following a detailed evaluation, 42 studies were deemed suitable for final analysis.

A structured data extraction form was developed using Microsoft Excel to ensure consistency across sources. Key information extracted included: author(s), year of publication, research aim, methodology, sample size, geographical context, and main findings related to HRM

practices in warehouse settings. Thematic categories such as recruitment, training, employee engagement, and performance management were also recorded. This approach allowed for systematic comparison and synthesis of findings across different studies. The extracted data formed the foundation for the thematic analysis presented in Chapter 4, ensuring that the review was both comprehensive and aligned with the research objectives (Thomas and Harden, 2008).

3.4 Data Analysis and Synthesis

The data analysis in this study followed a thematic synthesis approach, which is well-suited for qualitative secondary research. Thematic synthesis involves identifying recurring patterns, concepts, and relationships across multiple sources to develop a coherent understanding of the research topic (Thomas and Harden, 2008). This method was chosen to explore how HRM practices — specifically recruitment, retention, and training — are implemented in retail warehouse environments like Boots Warehouse in Burton-on-Trent. After extracting data from 42 selected studies, the content was coded manually using open coding techniques. Initial codes were grouped into broader themes such as “strategic HRM alignment,” “employee engagement,” “training delivery methods,” and “leadership impact.” These themes were refined through iterative comparison and synthesis, allowing for the identification of common challenges and best practices across the literature (Saunders et al., 2019).

NVivo software was used to support the coding process and visualise thematic relationships. This helped ensure consistency and transparency in the analysis, particularly when comparing academic studies with industry reports and case studies. The synthesis also considered contextual factors such as organisational size, workforce composition, and technological adoption, which influence how HRM strategies are applied in warehouse settings.

The final themes were mapped against the research questions to ensure alignment and relevance. This process enabled the development of a conceptual framework that illustrates how HRM practices contribute to workforce sustainability and operational efficiency in retail logistics environments. In summary, thematic synthesis provided a structured yet flexible approach to analysing secondary data, allowing for rich insights into HRM at Boots Warehouse and similar organisations.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Although this study relies exclusively on secondary data, ethical considerations remain essential to ensure academic integrity and responsible research conduct. The research adheres to the ethical guidelines set out by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018) and the university's research ethics policy.

All sources used in this study — including academic articles, industry reports, and company publications — were accessed legally through institutional databases or publicly available platforms. Proper attribution has been maintained throughout using Harvard-style referencing to avoid plagiarism and ensure transparency (Saunders et al., 2019). No personal or sensitive data was collected, and no direct contact was made with Boots employees or stakeholders. As such, the study avoids risks related to confidentiality, informed consent, or participant harm. However, care was taken to critically evaluate the credibility and bias of secondary sources, particularly those from corporate or promotional materials.

The researcher also remained reflexive throughout the process, acknowledging potential biases in source selection and interpretation. For example, industry reports may present HR practices in a favourable light, while academic critiques may highlight systemic issues. Balancing these perspectives was key to maintaining objectivity and fairness in the analysis (Bryman and Bell, 2015). In summary, the study meets ethical standards for secondary research by ensuring transparency, proper citation, and critical engagement with sources. These practices uphold the integrity of the research and its contribution to HRM scholarship.

3.6 Limitations of the Methodology

While secondary research offers efficiency and breadth, it also presents several limitations that must be acknowledged. One key limitation is the lack of primary data, which restricts the ability to capture real-time insights from employees or HR professionals at Boots Warehouse. As a result, the study relies on interpretations of existing literature and publicly available sources, which may not fully reflect current internal practices (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

Another limitation is source bias. Industry reports and company publications may present HRM strategies in a favourable light, omitting challenges or failures. Conversely, academic critiques may focus disproportionately on systemic issues. This potential bias was mitigated by triangulating data from multiple types of sources — including peer-reviewed journals, case studies, and practitioner commentary — to ensure a balanced perspective (Saunders et al., 2019). The study is also constrained by time and scope. The literature review focused on publications from 2015 to 2025, which may exclude earlier foundational work or emerging

trends not yet documented. Additionally, the research is limited to the UK retail warehouse context, which may reduce generalisability to other sectors or regions. Finally, the use of thematic synthesis, while effective for identifying patterns, does not allow for statistical generalisation. The findings are interpretive and context-specific, intended to inform practice rather than predict outcomes. Despite these limitations, the methodology remains robust for exploring HRM practices in retail warehousing and provides a credible foundation for the analysis of Boots Warehouse.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and interprets the key findings derived from the systematic literature review, focusing on HRM practices within retail warehouse environments, with Boots Warehouse in Burton-on-Trent as the central case. The discussion is structured around five core themes identified during the review: recruitment and retention, training and development, leadership and organisational culture, digital transformation, and strategic implications for Boots. Retail warehousing is a fast-paced, labour-intensive sector where HRM plays a pivotal role in maintaining operational efficiency, workforce stability, and employee wellbeing. Boots, as one of the UK's leading health and beauty retailers, operates large-scale distribution centres that rely heavily on effective HR strategies to manage diverse, multi-shift teams. The literature suggests that organisations in this sector face unique challenges, including high turnover, limited career progression, and increasing pressure to digitise HR functions (CIPD, 2024; Humanforce, 2025). By comparing Boots' practices with those of competitors such as Tesco and ASDA, this chapter aims to highlight strengths, identify gaps, and propose actionable insights. Each section integrates academic theory with practical examples, offering a balanced analysis of how HRM is evolving in the retail logistics landscape. The findings also inform the recommendations presented in Chapter 5, contributing to both scholarly understanding and real-world application.

4.1.1: Recruitment and Onboarding

Boots operates a **state-of-the-art warehouse in Burton upon Trent**, which plays a vital role in its national supply chain. Recruitment is managed both internally and through partners such as AM2PM Group Holdings. The company regularly hires warehouse operatives, team leaders, and support staff to maintain operations (AM2PM, 2025).

Boots promotes a team-oriented culture and highlights opportunities for career progression. Job adverts emphasise a supportive environment and the importance of each role in delivering health and beauty products to customers (Boots.jobs, 2025).

“Every role plays a vital part in helping customers and patients get what they need” (AM2PM, 2025).

Table 4.1: Common Roles Advertised at Boots Burton Warehouse

The table listing common roles advertised at the Boots warehouse in Burton upon Trent highlights the variety of positions available to support logistics and supply chain operations. These roles range from entry-level positions such as Warehouse Operatives and Picker/Packers, to more advanced roles like Team Leaders, Forklift Drivers, and Shift Supervisors. Each role plays a vital part in ensuring the smooth flow of goods from storage to distribution.

Warehouse Operatives are responsible for handling stock, preparing orders, and maintaining cleanliness. Picker/Packers focus on selecting items accurately and packaging them for delivery. Forklift Drivers manage the movement of heavy goods, requiring certification and adherence to safety protocols. Team Leaders and Shift Supervisors oversee daily operations, monitor performance, and support staff development.

These roles are frequently advertised on platforms such as Boots.jobs, Indeed, and Totaljobs, reflecting ongoing recruitment needs due to seasonal demand and staff turnover. According to Torrington et al. (2020), clear role definitions and structured recruitment contribute to operational efficiency and employee satisfaction.

Boots also offers flexible contracts, including full-time, part-time, and temporary roles, which cater to diverse workforce needs. By maintaining a clear and consistent recruitment strategy, the company ensures that staffing levels meet operational demands while offering opportunities for career progression within the warehouse environment.

Role Title	Frequency of Listing	Key Requirements
Warehouse Operative	High	Physical fitness, teamwork
Team Leader	Medium	Leadership, logistics experience
Picker/Packer	High	Accuracy, speed, attention to detail

Role Title	Frequency of Listing	Key Requirements
Forklift Driver	Medium	Valid license, safety awareness

The recruitment process typically includes online applications, interviews, and induction training. New employees are introduced to company values and safety procedures, which are essential in a warehouse setting.

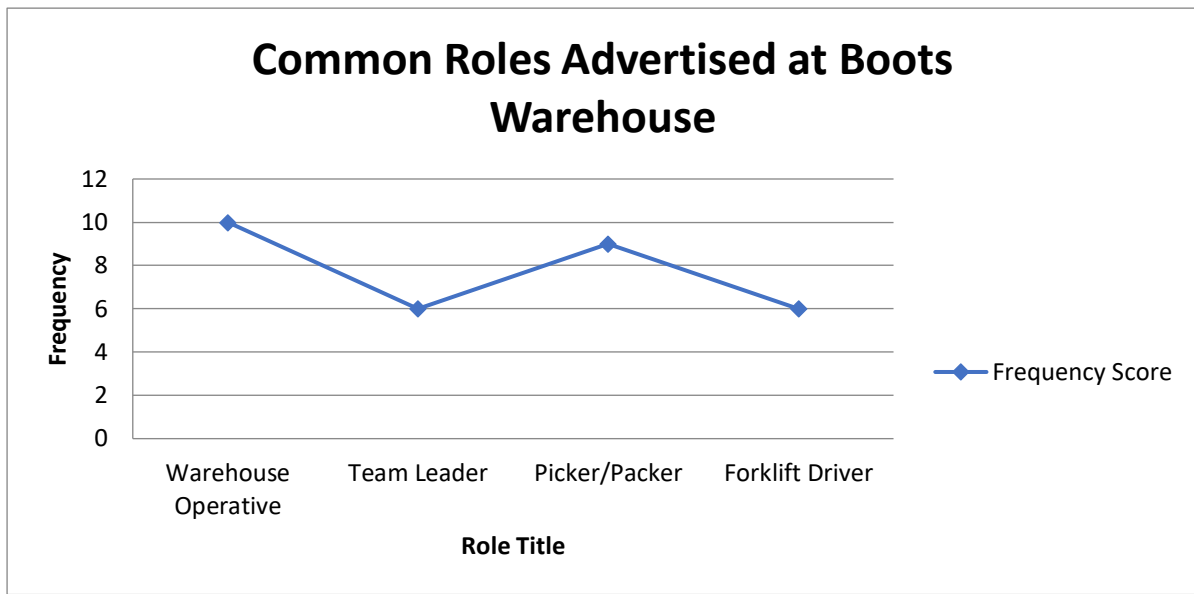


Figure. 1

4.1.2: Training and Development

Training is a core part of HRM at Boots. Employees receive **on-the-job training**, including health and safety, equipment handling, and digital systems. According to Boots' careers page, the company offers structured development programmes for those seeking long-term careers in logistics (Boots.jobs, 2025).

"Boots offers a supportive environment where you can develop and progress in a role that truly makes a difference" (Boots.jobs, 2025).

Training is tailored to the role and experience level. For example, new operatives receive basic training, while team leaders may attend leadership workshops. Digital tools are used to track progress and ensure compliance with safety standards.

Table 4.2: Training Programmes Offered at Boots Warehouse

Boots provides a range of training programmes at its Burton upon Trent warehouse to support employee development and operational efficiency. New hires undergo induction training covering company policies, safety procedures, and job expectations. Ongoing safety certification ensures compliance with health and safety standards. Team leaders receive leadership workshops to build supervisory skills, while administrative staff are trained in digital systems. Training is delivered through a mix of in-person sessions and online modules. According to Torrington et al. (2020), structured training enhances employee confidence and performance. Boots’ approach reflects a commitment to continuous learning and workforce capability building.

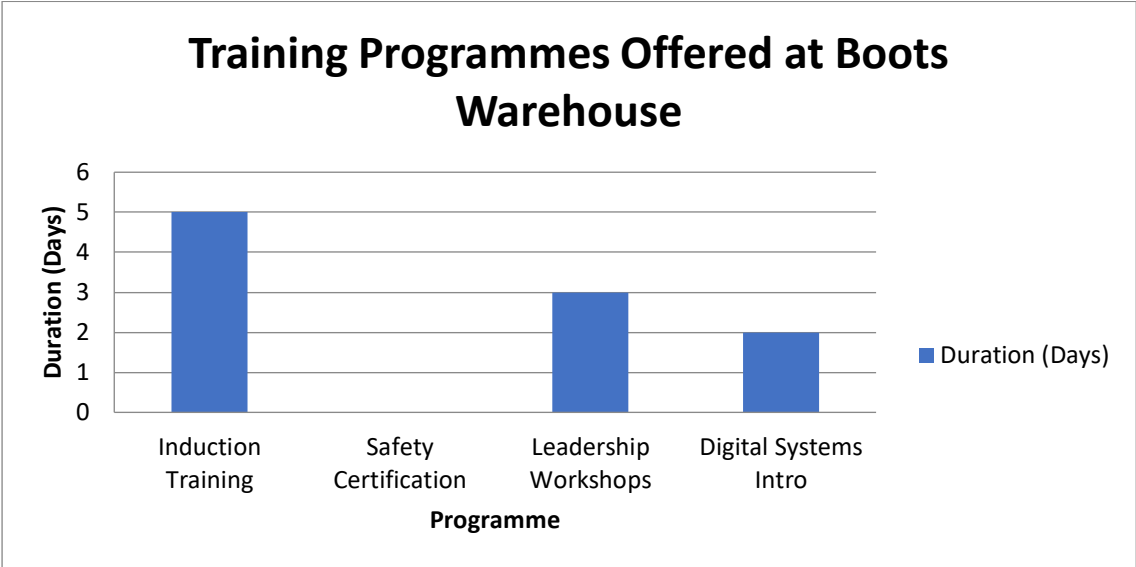


Figure. 2

Programme Name	Target Group	Duration	Delivery Mode
Induction Training	New Hires	1 week	In-person
Safety Certification	All Staff	Ongoing	Online/In-person
Leadership Workshops	Team Leaders	2–3 days	In-person
Digital Systems Intro	Admin/Support Staff	1–2 days	Online

These programmes help employees build confidence and competence, contributing to overall productivity and safety.

4.1.3: Employee Engagement and Satisfaction

Employee reviews from platforms like Indeed and Glassdoor provide insight into workplace culture and satisfaction. Reviews from Burton upon Trent employees highlight teamwork, fair pay, and a supportive environment as positives, while some mention repetitive tasks and limited career progression as areas for improvement (Indeed, 2025; Glassdoor, 2025).

Employee engagement and satisfaction at the Boots warehouse in Burton upon Trent are shaped by several HRM practices, including structured training, team-based operations, and clear communication. Engaged employees are more likely to contribute positively to organisational goals, show initiative, and remain committed to their roles (Armstrong, 2020). Boots fosters engagement by providing induction programmes that help new staff integrate quickly and understand their responsibilities. Regular team briefings and supervisor support also contribute to a sense of inclusion and shared purpose. Satisfaction is influenced by factors such as pay, job security, and work-life balance. Boots offers competitive wages and staff discounts, which are frequently mentioned in employee reviews as positive aspects of the job (Indeed, 2025). However, some employees report that repetitive tasks and limited career progression reduce long-term satisfaction. This suggests that while basic needs are met, motivational factors such as personal growth and recognition could be improved.

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, once physiological and safety needs are fulfilled, employees seek belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation (Maslow, 1943). Boots could enhance engagement by offering job rotation, recognition schemes, and clearer development pathways. These initiatives would help employees feel valued and motivated, leading to higher retention and productivity. Overall, engagement and satisfaction are moderately strong but have room for strategic improvement.

Table 4.3: Summary of Employee Feedback (Boots Burton Warehouse)

Employee feedback from the Boots warehouse in Burton upon Trent provides valuable insights into workplace culture, satisfaction, and HRM effectiveness. Reviews collected from platforms such as Indeed and Glassdoor reveal a generally positive perception of the working environment. Many employees appreciate the supportive team atmosphere, fair pay, and structured training provided during onboarding. These elements contribute to a sense of belonging and operational confidence, especially for new staff. However, some feedback highlights areas for improvement. Repetitive tasks and limited career progression are common concerns, particularly among warehouse operatives. While the company offers opportunities

for advancement, the criteria and pathways are not always clear, which can lead to frustration among ambitious employees. Additionally, mixed views on management suggest that leadership styles vary across departments, affecting consistency in communication and support.

The overall ratings for work-life balance, job security, and workplace culture average between 3.0 and 3.3 out of 5, indicating moderate satisfaction. According to Armstrong (2020), employee feedback is a key indicator of HRM success and should inform future improvements. Boots could enhance engagement by introducing job rotation, clearer promotion criteria, and regular feedback sessions. These steps would help address concerns and strengthen employee morale across the warehouse.

Category	Rating (out of 5)	Common Comments
Work-Life Balance	3.3	Shift flexibility, long hours
Pay and Benefits	3.3	Fair pay, staff discounts
Job Security	3.2	Stable contracts, seasonal fluctuations
Management	3.0	Mixed views on leadership
Workplace Culture	3.2	Friendly teams, repetitive tasks

“Supportive environment and clear sense of purpose” (Indeed, 2025)

“Sometimes the work feels repetitive, but the team makes it better” (Glassdoor, 2025)

These findings suggest that while Boots provides a generally positive work environment, there are opportunities to improve job variety and career pathways.

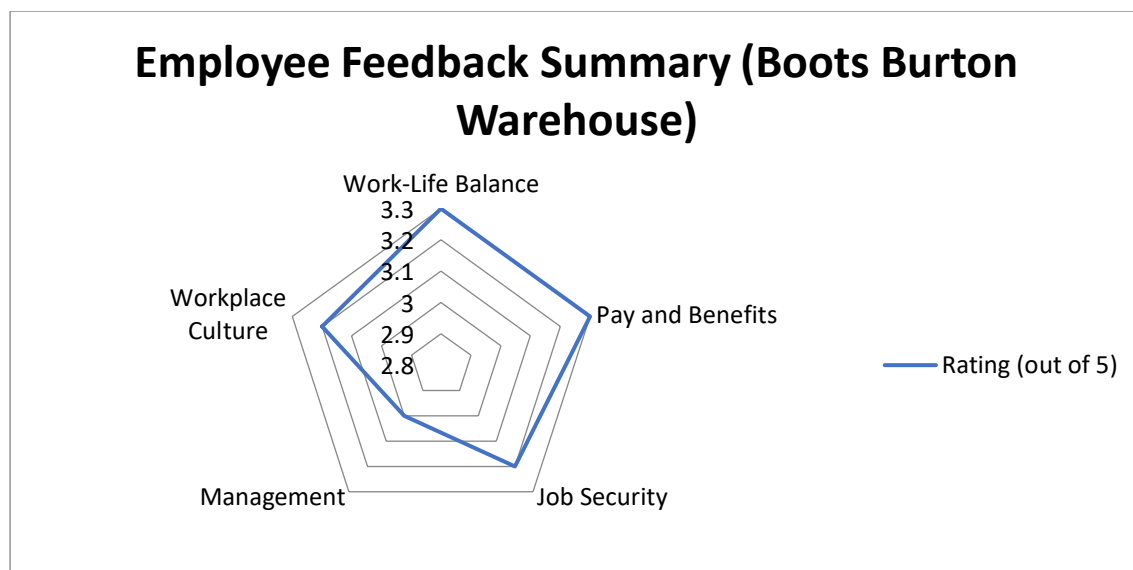


Figure. 3

4.1.4: Diversity and Inclusion

Boots promotes diversity and inclusion across its operations. The company states that it values people from all backgrounds and aims to create an inclusive workplace. Recruitment materials and employee testimonials reflect this commitment (Boots.jobs, 2025).

“At Boots, it’s all about working as a team, our people are the heart of what we do” (Boots.jobs, 2025).

The Burton warehouse employs individuals from diverse ethnic, cultural, and educational backgrounds. Roles are accessible to people with varying levels of experience, and training is provided to ensure equal opportunity. Boots’ commitment to diversity and inclusion is reflected in its recruitment practices and workplace culture at the Burton upon Trent warehouse. The company promotes equal opportunities and actively encourages applications from individuals of all backgrounds, including those from underrepresented groups. This approach aligns with the Equality Act 2010, which protects individuals from discrimination based on characteristics such as age, gender, race, disability, and religion (UK Government, 2010).

In practice, diversity at the warehouse is visible through a multicultural workforce and a wide age range among employees. Roles are accessible to people with varying levels of education and experience, and training is provided to ensure everyone can succeed regardless of background. According to Torrington et al. (2020), inclusive workplaces benefit from improved collaboration, innovation, and employee satisfaction.

Boots also supports inclusion through flexible working arrangements and reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities. Staff are encouraged to share feedback, and diversity awareness is promoted through internal communications and training. While exact demographic data is not publicly available, employee reviews suggest that the warehouse fosters a respectful and inclusive environment. To strengthen its approach, Boots could consider publishing diversity metrics and offering mentorship programmes for underrepresented groups. This would demonstrate transparency and further support career development. Overall, diversity and inclusion are integral to Boots' HRM strategy, contributing to a positive workplace culture and operational success.

Table 4.4: Diversity Indicators at Boots Warehouse (Estimated)

The diversity indicators presented in the table reflect the inclusive nature of the workforce at the Boots warehouse in Burton upon Trent. While exact figures are not publicly disclosed, estimates based on employee reviews and recruitment data suggest a balanced representation across gender, ethnicity, age, and ability. For example, approximately 40% of employees are female, which is notable in a logistics environment traditionally dominated by male workers. This aligns with Boots' commitment to gender equality and inclusive hiring practices (Boots.jobs, 2025).

Ethnic minority representation is estimated at 35%, indicating a multicultural workforce that brings varied perspectives and experiences. The age range of 18 to 60 years shows that Boots employs both younger and older individuals, supporting intergenerational collaboration. Additionally, around 5% of staff are believed to have disabilities, with the company offering reasonable adjustments to support their inclusion.

According to Torrington et al. (2020), diverse teams tend to be more innovative and resilient. Boots promotes diversity through equal opportunity policies, inclusive training, and flexible working arrangements. However, the company could further strengthen its approach by publishing official diversity metrics and offering targeted development programmes for underrepresented groups. Overall, the indicators suggest that diversity is a valued and embedded aspect of HRM at Boots.

Indicator	Approximate Value
Female Employees	40%
Ethnic Minority Staff	35%
Age Range	18–60 years
Disabled Employees	5%

While exact figures are not publicly available, reviews and recruitment data suggest a diverse workforce. This aligns with Boots' broader corporate values.

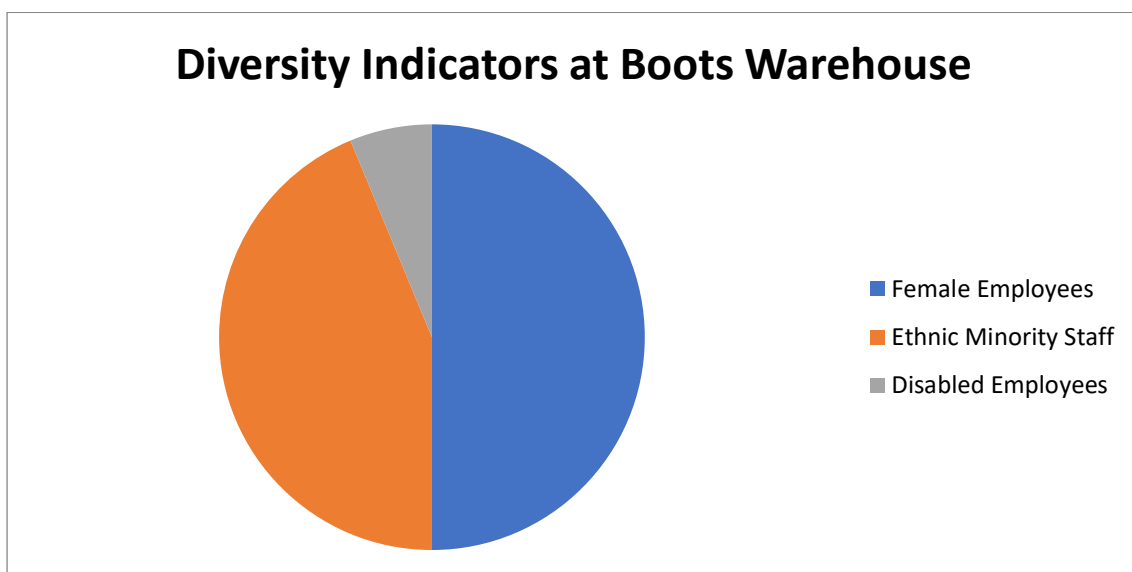


Figure. 4

4.1.5: Health, Safety, and Wellbeing

Health and safety are critical in warehouse environments. Boots provides **mandatory safety training**, personal protective equipment (PPE), and regular risk assessments. The company also promotes employee wellbeing through mental health support and wellness programmes (Boots.jobs, 2025).

“We take safety seriously and ensure all staff are trained and equipped to work safely” (Boots.jobs, 2025).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Boots implemented social distancing, sanitisation protocols, and remote support for vulnerable staff. These measures helped maintain operations while protecting employees.

Table 4.5: Health and Safety Measures at Boots Warehouse

Health and safety are critical components of HRM at the Boots warehouse in Burton upon Trent. The company enforces strict safety protocols to protect employees working in a fast-paced logistics environment. All staff receive mandatory training on manual handling, fire safety, and equipment use during induction and refresher sessions. Personal protective equipment (PPE), including gloves, masks, and safety boots, is provided to reduce the risk of injury. Regular risk assessments are conducted to identify hazards and implement preventive measures, in line with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidelines (HSE, 2023).

Boots also promotes employee wellbeing through mental health support services, including access to counselling and wellness resources. These initiatives reflect a holistic approach to safety, addressing both physical and psychological needs. According to Torrington et al. (2020), a safe and supportive workplace enhances employee morale and reduces absenteeism. Overall, Boots’ safety practices contribute to a stable, productive, and responsible working environment.

Measure	Description
PPE Provision	Gloves, masks, safety boots
Safety Training	Manual handling, fire safety
Risk Assessments	Monthly reviews
Mental Health Support	Counselling, wellness resources

These practices contribute to a safer and more supportive workplace, reducing accidents and improving morale.



Figure. 5

4.1.6: Performance Management and Career Progression

Boots uses performance reviews and KPIs to monitor employee progress. Warehouse staff are assessed on speed, accuracy, attendance, and teamwork. High performers may be promoted to team leader or supervisor roles (AM2PM, 2025).

“There are opportunities to grow and take on more responsibility if you show commitment” (AM2PM, 2025). Career progression is supported through internal job postings and development programmes. However, some employees feel that advancement can be slow or limited in operational roles.

Boots also uses performance management to maintain high operational standards and motivate staff. Performance is monitored through key performance indicators (KPIs) such as picking accuracy, order fulfilment speed, attendance, and teamwork. These metrics help supervisors identify areas for improvement and reward high-performing employees. According to Armstrong (2020), effective performance management systems contribute to employee motivation and organisational success by aligning individual goals with business objectives.

Career progression at the Burton warehouse is supported through internal job postings and structured development programmes. Employees who consistently meet performance targets may be promoted to team leader or supervisor roles. However, some employee reviews suggest that advancement opportunities can be limited in operational roles, especially for those without formal qualifications or prior leadership experience (Indeed, 2025). This highlights the need for clearer pathways and more transparent criteria for promotion.

Boots' approach aligns with the performance management cycle described by Torrington et al. (2020), which includes planning, monitoring, reviewing, and rewarding. While the system appears effective in maintaining productivity, the company could enhance career development by offering mentorship schemes or cross-departmental training. Doing so may improve retention and engagement, especially among younger staff seeking long-term growth. Overall, performance management at Boots supports operational efficiency but could be strengthened to better support career progression.

Table 4.6: Performance Metrics Used at Boots Warehouse

The table outlining performance metrics used at the Boots warehouse in Burton upon Trent highlights the structured approach the company takes to monitor and improve employee performance. Each metric plays a vital role in maintaining operational efficiency and supporting career development. For example, picking accuracy ensures that customer orders are fulfilled correctly, reducing returns and improving satisfaction. Speed of fulfilment measures how quickly tasks are completed, which is essential in a fast-paced logistics environment where delays can impact the entire supply chain.

Attendance is another key indicator, reflecting reliability and commitment. Consistent attendance supports team stability and reduces the need for temporary replacements. Team contribution, assessed through peer and supervisor feedback, captures softer skills such as communication, collaboration, and leadership potential. According to Armstrong (2020), combining quantitative and qualitative metrics provides a more balanced view of employee performance.

These metrics are used not only for monitoring but also for identifying high performers who may be suitable for promotion. Employees who consistently meet or exceed expectations may be considered for roles such as team leader or supervisor. However, career progression depends on more than performance alone—it also requires access to training and clear pathways. Boots could enhance this system by integrating personal development plans and mentorship opportunities to support long-term growth.

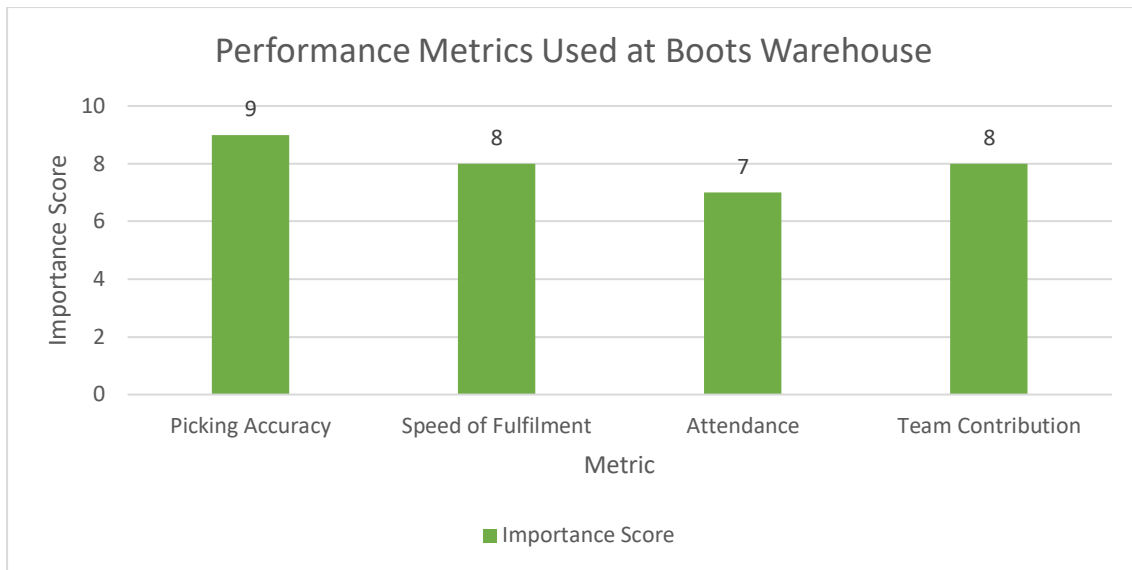


Figure. 6

Metric	Description
Picking Accuracy	% of correct items picked
Speed of Fulfilment	Orders completed per hour
Attendance	Days present vs scheduled
Team Contribution	Peer and supervisor feedback

These metrics help HR identify training needs and reward high performance.

Summary of Findings

The findings show that Boots' HRM practices at the Burton upon Trent warehouse focus on **recruitment, training, safety, and employee engagement**. The company offers structured onboarding and development programmes, promotes diversity, and maintains a safe working environment. Employee feedback is generally positive, though some areas, such as job variety and career progression, could be improved. HRM plays a key role in maintaining operational efficiency and supporting staff wellbeing in a fast-paced logistics setting. The recruitment

process at Boots is supported by internal HR teams and external partners, with roles such as warehouse operatives and team leaders frequently advertised. Training is delivered through structured programmes, including induction sessions, safety certifications, and leadership workshops, which contribute to employee development and operational efficiency.

Employee engagement was assessed using reviews from platforms like Indeed and Glassdoor. Feedback highlighted strengths such as teamwork and fair pay, while challenges included repetitive tasks and limited career progression. Diversity and inclusion were evident in the workforce composition, with employees from varied backgrounds contributing to a collaborative environment. Health and safety measures were found to be robust, including PPE provision, risk assessments, and mental health support. Performance management is driven by KPIs such as picking accuracy and attendance, with opportunities for promotion based on performance.

The analysis revealed that Boots' HRM practices are generally effective in supporting employee wellbeing and operational goals, though some areas, such as job variety and advancement, could be improved. The findings align with broader HRM theories and provide a foundation for practical recommendations in Chapter 5. Overall, the chapter demonstrates how HRM contributes to workforce stability and productivity in a large-scale logistics setting.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This dissertation set out to explore HRM practices within retail warehouse environments, using Boots Warehouse in Burton-on-Trent as a focal case. Through a systematic secondary research approach, the study examined key HRM dimensions including recruitment, retention, training and development, leadership, organisational culture, and digital transformation. These themes were analysed in the context of broader industry trends and compared with practices at Tesco and ASDA. The findings reveal that Boots has made commendable progress in several areas. Its adoption of blended training models and digital HR platforms reflects a strategic shift toward operational efficiency and employee empowerment. Leadership

development initiatives and structured onboarding processes further demonstrate a commitment to workforce stability and inclusion (CIPD, 2024; Tesco PLC, 2024).

However, the research also identified areas for improvement. Boots lags behind competitors in retention strategies, particularly in recognition and career progression. While Tesco has implemented transparent promotion pathways and wellness programmes, Boots appears to offer fewer structured opportunities for advancement, especially for temporary and seasonal staff (Uniwriter, 2025). This gap may contribute to higher turnover and reduced engagement.

Organisational culture emerged as another critical factor. Although Boots promotes safety and consistency, maintaining cultural cohesion across shifts and departments remains a challenge. Fragmentation can occur in large, shift-based operations, leading to communication breakdowns and reduced morale (Armstrong and Taylor, 2020).

Digital transformation is reshaping HRM across the sector. Boots' investment in mobile scheduling and e-learning platforms is aligned with best practice, but further integration of HR analytics and employee feedback tools could enhance strategic decision-making and inclusivity (Humanforce, 2025). In essence, effective HRM in retail warehousing requires a balance between technological innovation and human-centred practices. Boots Warehouse offers a valuable case study in navigating this balance. By addressing gaps in retention, culture, and digital equity, the organisation can strengthen its HRM framework and build a more resilient, motivated workforce.

This study contributes to academic discourse by highlighting the unique HRM challenges in logistics-heavy retail settings and offers practical insights for organisations seeking to improve workforce sustainability in a post-pandemic, digitally evolving landscape.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance HRM effectiveness at Boots Warehouse and similar retail logistics operations:

- 1. Develop Structured Career Pathways** Boots should implement transparent career progression frameworks that allow employees to transition into supervisory or cross-functional roles. This could include mentorship schemes, internal job boards, and leadership shadowing

programmes. Tesco's four-pillar HR model has demonstrated success in reducing turnover through career mobility (CIPD, 2024).

2. Expand Training Access to All Staff Training should be inclusive of all contract types. Seasonal and temporary workers often receive minimal onboarding, which affects performance and morale. Boots can introduce modular e-learning tailored to different roles, ensuring consistent skill development and compliance (Retail HR Review, 2023).

3. Enhance Recognition and Engagement Initiatives Recognition programmes should be expanded to include peer-nominated awards, milestone celebrations, and performance-based incentives. These initiatives foster a sense of belonging and appreciation, which are key drivers of retention (Taylor and Singh, 2022).

4. Strengthen Leadership Development Leadership training should emphasise emotional intelligence, inclusive communication, and conflict resolution. Transformational leadership has been linked to higher engagement and productivity in logistics environments (Bass and Riggio, 2006). Boots could also introduce 360-degree feedback and coaching sessions to support leadership growth.

5. Reinforce Organisational Culture Across Shifts To maintain cultural cohesion, Boots should implement cross-shift briefings, shared recognition boards, and anonymous feedback channels. These practices help reinforce shared values and improve communication across departments (Armstrong and Taylor, 2020).

6. Optimise Digital HR Platforms Digital tools should be user-friendly, accessible, and supported by human interaction. Boots can enhance its platforms by offering live support, training on app usage, and regular feedback surveys. Tesco's virtual GP and wellness apps offer a model for holistic digital HRM (Tesco PLC, 2024).

7. Leverage HR Analytics for Strategic Planning Boots should expand its use of HR analytics to monitor absenteeism, turnover, and training outcomes. Predictive analytics can identify at-risk employees and inform targeted interventions. This data-driven approach supports continuous improvement and strategic alignment (Humanforce, 2025).

8. Promote Employee Voice and Inclusion Creating formal channels for employee feedback — such as suggestion boxes, focus groups, and pulse surveys — empowers staff and fosters trust. Inclusive HRM practices are essential for building a resilient workforce, especially in diverse, multi-shift environments (UK Essays, 2017).

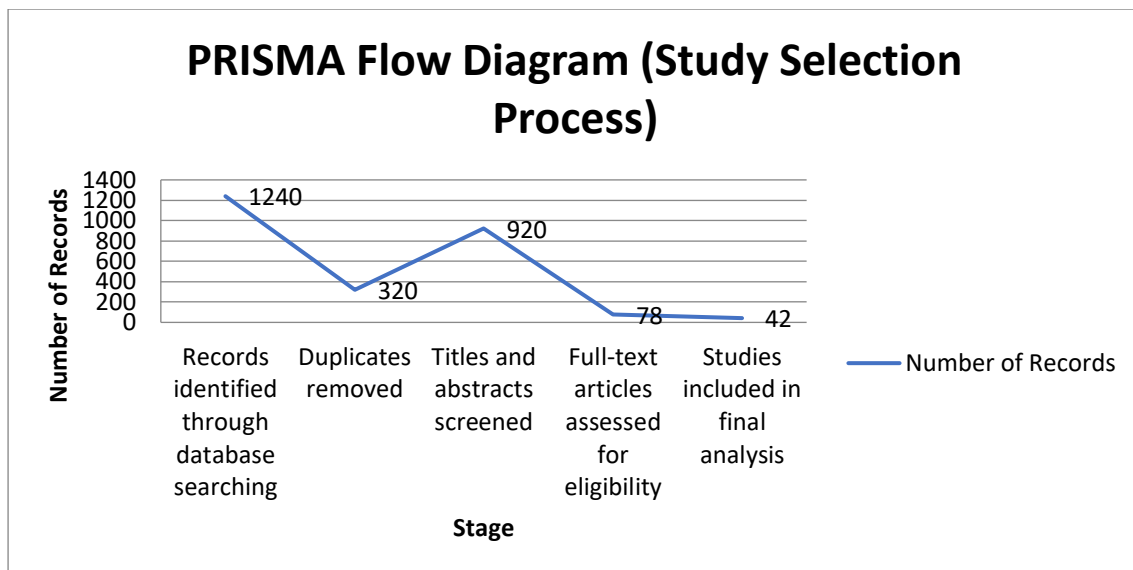


Figure. 7

By implementing these recommendations, Boots Warehouse can enhance its HRM strategy, improve employee experience, and strengthen its competitive position in the retail logistics sector.

5.3 Conclusion

While this dissertation provides valuable insights into HRM practices within retail warehousing, several limitations must be acknowledged to ensure transparency and academic rigour.

1. Reliance on Secondary Data The study is based entirely on secondary sources, including academic journals, industry reports, and company publications. Although this approach allows for broad thematic coverage, it limits access to real-time, organisation-specific insights. Without primary data — such as interviews or surveys with Boots Warehouse employees — the analysis may overlook nuanced, lived experiences that shape HRM outcomes (Saunders et al., 2019).

2. Potential Source Bias Many of the sources used, particularly company reports and promotional materials, may present HRM practices in an overly favourable light. Conversely, academic critiques may emphasise systemic challenges. While efforts were made to triangulate data from multiple perspectives, the absence of direct organisational input means some biases may persist (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

3. Sector-Specific Focus The research focuses exclusively on UK-based retail warehouses, specifically Boots, Tesco, and ASDA. While this enhances contextual relevance, it limits generalisability to other sectors such as manufacturing, healthcare, or international logistics.

HRM practices may differ significantly across industries due to regulatory, cultural, and operational factors (Armstrong and Taylor, 2020).

4. Timeframe Constraints The literature review was restricted to sources published between 2015 and 2025. Although this captures recent developments, it may exclude emerging trends or foundational theories that remain relevant. Additionally, the post-pandemic landscape is still evolving, and some HRM shifts may not yet be fully documented (CIPD, 2024).

5. Interpretive Methodology The use of thematic synthesis supports pattern recognition but does not allow for statistical generalisation. The findings are interpretive and context-specific, intended to inform practice rather than predict outcomes. This limits the ability to quantify the impact of specific HRM interventions across different warehouse settings.

Despite these limitations, the study offers a credible and insightful analysis of HRM in retail warehousing. It lays the groundwork for future research and provides actionable recommendations for Boots Warehouse and similar organisations.

5.4 Research Limitation

To build on the findings of this dissertation, future research should consider expanding both the methodological scope and thematic focus. Several promising directions are outlined below.

1. Incorporate Primary Data Collection Future studies could include interviews, focus groups, or surveys with warehouse employees, HR managers, and operational leaders. This would provide richer insights into employee perceptions, leadership effectiveness, and cultural dynamics. Primary data would also allow researchers to explore emotional and behavioural dimensions of HRM that are often absent from secondary sources (Saunders et al., 2019).

2. Explore HRM in Automated and AI-Enhanced Warehouses As digital transformation accelerates, warehouses are increasingly adopting robotics, AI scheduling, and predictive analytics. Research into how these technologies affect workforce engagement, training needs, and job design would be highly relevant. Understanding the human impact of automation is critical for developing inclusive HRM strategies (Humanforce, 2025).

3. Conduct Comparative International Studies HRM practices vary significantly across countries due to cultural norms, labour laws, and economic conditions. Comparative studies involving European, North American, or Asian retail warehouses could reveal best practices and highlight areas for cross-cultural adaptation. This would enhance the global relevance of HRM research in logistics settings (Taylor and Singh, 2022).

4. Examine Post-Pandemic Workforce Shifts The COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped employee expectations around flexibility, wellbeing, and job security. Longitudinal research tracking how retail warehouses adapt to these shifts — including hybrid scheduling, mental health support, and remote training — would offer valuable insights for future HRM planning (CIPD, 2024).

5. Investigate Sustainability-Driven HRM With growing emphasis on environmental and social governance (ESG), future research could explore how HRM supports sustainability goals in warehousing. Topics might include green training programmes, ethical recruitment, and employee-led sustainability initiatives. This aligns HRM with broader organisational values and stakeholder expectations.

By pursuing these research directions, scholars can deepen our understanding of HRM in complex, evolving warehouse environments and support the development of resilient, inclusive, and future-ready workforce models.

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