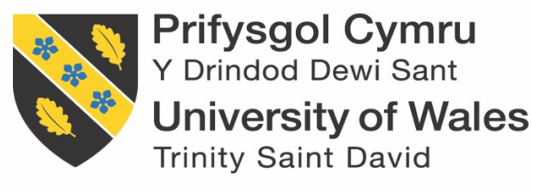

RESEARCH TITLE:

THE IMPACT OF CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE, WORKPLACE INNOVATION, AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN THE RETAIL SECTOR IN ENGLAND

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DECLARATION

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Master's Degrees by Examination and Dissertation Declaration Form.

I, [EBITIMI MCQUADE], declare that this dissertation has been composed by myself, that the work contained herein is entirely my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text, and that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or qualification, in whole or in part, except as specified.

Signature: .....

Date: 14/10/25

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I want to thank everyone who guided me in the completion of this research dissertation. To begin, I am writing to convey my sincere gratitude to my supervisor (Dr Andrey L) for their vital guidance, assistance, and insightful feedback, all of which have impacted the right path for this research study. "The impact of continuous professional development for employees in the retail industry." The support and guidance were invaluable in determining the route of this study. In addition, I would like to share my sincere gratitude to all those who took part in my research project and shared their impeccable time and knowledge. I appreciate their effort for the fact that they agreed to take part in my research. To my Family and friends, to whom I have neglected because of spending more time studying and doing my research, I am grateful to you all.

SUBJECT AREAS

Business management human resource development and talent management strategy

KEYWORDS

Effectiveness, Professional, Continuous Development, Retails, Industries, Business.

ABSTRACT

This research assessed how Continuous Professional Development (CPD) affects the performance, motivation, and culture of employees in the United Kingdom retail sector. The study was carried out to investigate how structured learning and innovation enhance effectiveness in a highly competitive environment. A mixed-methods design was adopted. Data were collected from 50 retail employees about job satisfaction through structured and open-ended questionnaires. Quantitative data analysis was performed on the 50 employees using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 29). Qualitative data (open-ended responses) were analysed through Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis.

The quantitative results exhibited consistently positive attitudes toward CPD. Table 4.1 shows that 73.7 % of the respondents agreed that the staff learn best through mentoring, 90.3 % (Table 4.2) thought that short training improves understanding of the job, with 100% (Table 4.7) of the respondents agreed that training helps workers to learn how best to carry out their daily tasks and provide quality service to the customers. The mean scores for all seven closed-ended items ranged from 1.26 to 1.81. There were no significant differences by Age ($p > 0.05$) based on cross-tabulations and chi-square tests. In other words, CPD was given equal importance by each generation.

The qualitative findings reported in Table 4.15 gave rise to five themes: innovation and efficiency, technology adoption, barriers to learning, perceived importance of CPD, and motivation and engagement. Participants detailed improvements to the workplace electronic stock system, automation tool, and customer-tracking application. Nevertheless, they also said they struggled with time, staffing, and management follow-up issues.

In conclusion, staff training had a significant impact on the motivation, inclusion, and performance of employees in the retail industry in the UK. The results indicated that CPD acts as a strategic enabler of operational excellence when it is supported by management and embedded into organizational culture.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Research Title: 1

The Impact of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) on Employee Performance, Workplace Innovation, and Organizational Effectiveness in the Retail Sector in England 1

Student Name: Ebitimi Blessing McQuade 1

Declaration 2

Acknowledgement 3

Subject Areas 3

Keywords 3

Abstract 4

Contents of Figures 7

Contents of Tables 8

1. Chapter 1: Introduction 9

1.1. Background & Problem Statement 9

1.2. Problem Statement 9

1.3. Research Aim & Objectives 10

1.3.1. Research Aim 10

1.3.2. Research Objectives 10

1.4. Research Questions 11

1.5. Significance / Relevance of Study 11

1.6. Brief Research Methodology 12

1.7. Structure of the Dissertation 12

2. Chapter 2: Literature Review 13

2.1. CPD in the Retail Sector 13

2.2. Managerial Methods for Enhancing Effectiveness 15

2.3. Opportunities & Challenges in Workplace Culture 17

2.4. Impact of Training & Innovation on Productivity 19

2.5. Synthesis & Conceptual Framework 21

2.5.1. Synthesis of the Literature 21

2.5.2. Identified Research Gaps 23

2.6. Conceptual Framework 24

3. Chapter 3: Methodology 25

3.1. Research Philosophy 26

3.2. Research Approach 27

3.3. Research Design 28

3.4. Research Strategy 29

3.5. Population and Sampling 31

3.5.1. Target Population 31

3.5.2. Sampling Technique 31

3.5.3. Sample Size Determination 31

3.6. Research Instrument (Questionnaire Design) 32

3.7. Data Collection Procedure 32

3.8. Data Analysis Procedure 33

4. Chapter 4: Findings / Analysis / Discussion 34

4.1. Descriptive Findings (Quantitative) 34

4.1.1. Training and Development: Learning from Experienced Team Members (RQ1) 34

4.1.2. Short Training Sessions and Job Understanding (RQ2) 36

4.1.3. Team Meetings and Performance Improvement (RQ3) 37

4.1.4. Motivation and Engagement: Friendly Team Environments (RQ4) 38

4.1.5. Small Rewards and Motivation (RQ5) 40

4.1.6. Workplace Culture and Inclusivity (RQ6) 41

4.1.7. Effect of Training on Daily Tasks and Customer Service (RQ7) 42

4.1.8. Summary of Descriptive Findings 43

4.2. Cross-Tabulations by Age 44

4.3. Qualitative Insights (RQ8–RQ10) 59

4.3.1. RQ8 – New Ideas, Tools, and Changes 61

4.3.2. RQ9 – Challenges in Learning and Adapting 61

4.4 Summary and Link to Research Questions 62

5. Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations 64

5.1. Summary of Findings 65

5.2. Linking Findings to Research Questions 65

5.3. Recommendations 66

5.3.1. Practical Recommendations **66**

5.3.2. Methodological Recommendations for Future Research **66**

5.4. Limitations 67

References 68

Appendices 78

Appendix 1: Questionnaire Survey 78

Appendix 2: Questionnaire Survey 79

Appendix 3: Questionnaire Survey 82

CONTENTS OF FIGURES

Figure 1 1: Conceptual Framework 25

Figure 3 1: The Research Onion (Saunders et al., 2019) 26

Figure 4 1: Staff Learn Best by Working with Experienced Team Members (SPSS Figure Output) 35

Figure 4 2:Perceived Effectiveness of Short Training Sessions 37

Figure 4 3: Role of Team Meetings in Staff Learning 38

Figure 4 4: Impact of Team Friendliness on Motivation 39

Figure 4 5: Role of Rewards in Motivation 41

Figure 4 6: Perceptions of Workplace Inclusivity 42

CONTENTS OF TABLES

Table 4 1: Training and Development – Learning from Experienced Team Members 35
Table 4 2: Short Training Sessions Help Staff Understand Their Job Better 36
Table 4 3: Team Meetings Help Staff Understand How to Improve..... 37
Table 4 4: A Friendly Team Makes Staff Work Harder..... 39
Table 4 5: Small Rewards Help Staff Stay Motivated..... 40
Table 4 6: Everyone Is Treated with Respect and Included 41
Table 4 7: Staff Training Has Helped Improve Daily Tasks or Customer Service 43
Table 4 8: Crosstabulation of Age Group and Perception of Learning from Experienced Team Members 45
Table 4 9: Crosstabulation of Age Group and Perception of Short Training Sessions 47
Table 4 10: Crosstabulation of Age Group and Team Meeting Effectiveness 49
Table 4 11: Crosstabulation of Age Group and Team Friendliness as a Motivator 52
Table 4 12: Crosstabulation of Age Group and Motivation through Small Rewards..... 54
Table 4 13: Crosstabulation of Age Group and Perception of Inclusivity 56
Table 4 14: Crosstabulation of Age Group and Perceived CPD Impact on Daily Work..... 58
Table 4 15: Summary of Thematic Findings..... 60

1. Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background & Problem Statement

In today's knowledge-driven economy, the role of employees as critical assets has become increasingly significant. Organizations in the retail sector, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), face persistent challenges of high turnover, low employee engagement, and limited innovation capacity. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) has emerged as a strategic response to these challenges, providing employees with ongoing learning opportunities that enhance performance, adaptability, and organizational competitiveness. Research highlights that structured training and lifelong learning significantly boost productivity, innovation, and overall organizational outcomes (Mustafa & Lleshi, 2024). Similarly, investment in CPD fosters employee engagement by cultivating a culture of trust, respect, and inclusivity (Chovarda & Theriou, 2021).

The UK retail sector, employing millions, is characterized by high customer interaction and rapidly evolving consumer demands. To remain competitive, retail businesses must ensure employees possess up-to-date skills and competencies. Evidence suggests that training and development practices not only improve job satisfaction but also promote innovation and organizational resilience (Pujianto, 2024). This is supported by Ismael et al. (2021), who argue that development initiatives are foundational to organizational effectiveness, directly influencing performance and adaptability.

Moreover, CPD is increasingly relevant in a digitalized world. Emerging technologies and the infusion of artificial intelligence into the workplace demand that employees continuously upskill (Adarkwah, 2024). Without such investment, organizations risk skill obsolescence, disengagement, and reduced competitiveness. As Lee et al. (2025) emphasize, lifelong learning equips employees to adapt to career transitions and changing job requirements, making it a vital tool in sectors with high volatility such as retail.

1.2. Problem Statement

Despite the well-documented benefits of CPD, many retail organizations in England still underinvest in structured employee development. High employee turnover, limited access to training resources, and inconsistent managerial commitment continue to undermine workforce productivity and innovation. Studies have shown that while employees value opportunities for growth, retail firms often prioritize short-term cost savings over long-term capability building

(Borgaon, 2024). This neglect results in disengagement, low morale, and resistance to workplace change (Stelmashchuk, 2020).

In the context of the UK retail industry, where small businesses dominate, the challenge is particularly acute. Limited budgets, lack of standardized CPD frameworks, and reliance on informal learning often hinder effective employee development. Yet, the need for innovation and customer-centric service delivery is higher than ever. If organizations fail to prioritize CPD, they risk losing their competitive edge, particularly as consumer expectations evolve rapidly in a post-pandemic digital economy (Fan et al., 2024).

Therefore, this dissertation seeks to investigate the impact of Continuous Professional Development on employees in the retail sector in England, focusing on performance, workplace culture, and innovation. By examining both managerial practices and employee perspectives, the study aims to fill the gap between the recognized value of CPD and its limited implementation in practice.

1.3. Research Aim & Objectives

1.3.1. Research Aim

The aim of this research is to evaluate the impact of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) on employee performance, workplace innovation, and organizational effectiveness in the retail sector in England. By investigating both managerial practices and employee perceptions, the study seeks to determine how structured CPD initiatives influence productivity, motivation, and the adaptability of retail businesses to evolving market demands.

1.3.2. Research Objectives

To achieve this aim, the following objectives will guide the study:

1. To examine the methods used by managers to improve employee effectiveness in the retail sector.
    - Previous research shows that structured training improves performance and engagement (Pujianto, 2024).
2. To analyse the challenges and opportunities faced by managers in fostering a positive workplace culture.
    - Studies emphasize that organizational culture significantly shapes innovation and performance (Khan et al., 2021).

3. To evaluate how training and innovation practices contribute to improved productivity and organizational success.
    - Lifelong learning has been linked to productivity, adaptability, and sustainable organizational outcomes (Mustafa & Lleshi, 2024).

1.4. Research Questions

Based on the objectives, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What methods are currently employed by managers in the retail sector to enhance employee effectiveness?
2. What opportunities and challenges do managers face when seeking to improve workplace culture?
3. How do training initiatives and workplace innovation influence employee performance and organizational effectiveness?

1.5. Significance / Relevance of Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to bridge the gap between the recognized value of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and its practical implementation in the retail sector. Retail businesses in England are facing growing pressure to adapt to technological change, consumer expectations, and labour market challenges, yet many small and medium-sized firms underinvest in employee training and innovation initiatives. This often results in high turnover, reduced productivity, and weakened competitiveness (Borgaon, 2024).

From an academic perspective, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on human resource development and organizational effectiveness. While existing studies have demonstrated that training and lifelong learning enhance employee performance and adaptability (Mustafa & Lleshi, 2024), fewer have examined these dynamics specifically within the context of UK retail, where resource limitations and high staff turnover present unique challenges. By focusing on small businesses in this sector, the dissertation will provide insights into how CPD can be tailored to environments that often lack formalized training systems.

From a practical perspective, the findings will be highly relevant for retail managers, policymakers, and training providers. Organizations that align CPD initiatives with strategic goals have been shown to benefit from stronger employee engagement, improved innovation, and better

customer service outcomes (Pujianto, 2024). Moreover, workplace innovation and culture play a critical role in motivating employees to contribute actively to organizational growth (Khan et al., 2021). By highlighting the role of CPD in building such cultures, this study aims to provide actionable recommendations that can support the sustainability and competitiveness of retail firms.

Ultimately, this dissertation will add value by offering evidence-based insights that can inform training policies, improve employee development practices, and enhance organizational outcomes in England's retail sector.

1.6. Brief Research Methodology

The positivist philosophy and deductive approach will be used in this dissertation to test the hypothesis on how Continuous Professional Development (CPD) can influence the performance of employees within a retail industry. Quantitative survey approach will be employed with the assistance of the structured questionnaires that will include the Likert-scale questions and open-ended questions. This is consistent with the perception that surveys are good tools in capturing employee perceptions and generating generalizable insights (Saunders et al., 2023). The target of the study will be small retail businesses in England, and a sample of about 50 employees will be sampled based on their roles and level of experience. The ethical considerations that will be given much attention in data collection will be confidentiality, informed Consent, and voluntary participation. Quantitative data will be examined through descriptive and inferential statistics in SPSS, whereas the qualitative responses will be coded through thematic coding in order to uncover the emerging themes. Such a mixed focus guarantees a sound analysis of the numerical tendencies and understanding of the context (Budiningsih et al., 2022).

1.7. Structure of the Dissertation

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter presents the research and defines the background, problem statement, research aim, objectives, questions, and methodology, and also emphasizes the importance of the research. Chapter Two has a critical literature review, which synthesizes the recent academic evidence on Continuous Professional Development (CPD), employee performance, workplace innovation, and organizational effectiveness. The conceptual framework that drives the study is also developed in this chapter. Chapter Three describes the

research methodology, which involves the philosophical stance, design, data collection procedures, sampling, and ethical considerations. Chapter Four reports the survey results and discusses the results statistically and thematically, connecting the results with the literature. Lastly, Chapter Five is the final part of the dissertation that summarizes the key findings, answers the research questions, provides practical recommendations, limitations, and future research suggestions. By combining all these chapters, they offer a coherent and evidence-based investigation of the impact of CPD on the effectiveness of retail businesses in England.

2. Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review will critically examine literature available on Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and its contribution to employee performance, workplace innovation, and organizational effectiveness with particular reference to the retail sector. As the organizations operate in a very competitive dynamic environment, CPD has now been described as a strategic tool in the creation of human capital, adaptability, and long-term growth. The recent study indicates that the key to better productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational resilience is structured training and lifelong learning programs (Mustafa & Lleshi, 2024). This chapter is thematic in structure. It begins with the explanation of the CPD in the retail sector, where the problem of high turnover and the lack of skills can be resolved under the condition of the training programs. It then examines the managerial practices to enhance the performance of the employees and the opportunities and issues facing the development of workplace culture. The chapter goes further to explore how training and innovation contribute to organizational productivity based on the recent models of lifelong education and organizational innovation. Finally, the review pulls the insights of these strands together in a conceptual framework, which is the foundation of this dissertation.

2.1. CPD in the Retail Sector

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is now being identified as a competitive force within the retail sector, with a mixed report on its effectiveness, however. The various recent researches present different sides of its results that demonstrate the successes and shortcomings that directly pertain to this dissertation.

Munir (2021) investigated CPD in the education industry by studying primary school teachers in Pakistan by applying mixed-methods research, which revealed that the benefits of mentoring under CPD models led to a gradual increase in performance. However, the overall effects

were not constant at the beginning of the school year (Munir, 2021). This is not retail-specific, but the point is that it underlines a problem that can be applied to other industries: CPD could require some time before the actual changes are realized, which means that retail organizations should be prepared to work in the long term instead of expecting quick returns. Contrarily, Borgaon (2024) surveyed 109 retail employees and stated that structured performance appraisal systems, a type of continuous development, led to 70-80% satisfaction rates, which directly increased motivation and efficiency (Borgaon, 2024). This comparison proves that differences in the sectors are important: education employees might be more resistant to the changes, whereas retail workers are more likely to react to more organized, short-term feedback systems in a positive way.

Pantano et al. (2020) added another dimension by exploring the mismatch between retail education provision at universities and the skill demands of UK retailers (Pantano et al., 2020). They found that while higher education programs offered limited retail-specific CPD, employers demanded advanced digital and innovation skills. This gap implies that even when CPD is offered, it may not align with industry needs, potentially explaining why retail managers often view training as costly and misaligned with operational priorities. This supports findings from your proposal: CPD in retail is often underfunded and poorly integrated into strategic planning.

More recently, Indiani et al.(2024) conducted a systematic mapping of 50 studies on digital marketing applications in retail and found that quantitative approaches dominate and training efforts increasingly target digital literacy (Indiani et al., 2024). This suggests CPD is shifting towards equipping retail staff with digital competencies rather than traditional customer service training. Compared with Borgaon's (2024) findings, this shift shows a dual reality: while employees value immediate developmental feedback, long-term CPD initiatives are increasingly technology-driven. Retail managers must therefore balance both traditional and digital CPD priorities.

Another strand of literature emphasizes barriers. Kajwang (2022), in a study of CPD in Kenya's insurance sector, highlighted that lack of motivation, staff shortages, and limited employer support are key inhibitors (Kajwang, 2022). Although outside retail, these findings mirror challenges UK small retailers face — especially resource constraints and limited time for training. By contrast, Donnelly and Maguire (2018) argued that national CPD frameworks in Ireland's higher education sector created accountability and consistency, enhancing adoption (Donnelly & Maguire, 2018). The

comparison highlights that structural frameworks (e.g., mandated CPD policies) can mitigate the organizational-level barriers observed in resource-limited retail contexts.

Collectively, these studies reveal that while CPD has the potential to enhance performance and innovation in retail, its impact depends on sectoral conditions, alignment with industry needs, and structural support mechanisms. For this dissertation, the implication is clear: CPD in England's retail sector must be evaluated not only on whether it is offered, but also on how it is structured, resourced, and aligned with evolving digital and customer service demands.

2.2. Managerial Methods for Enhancing Effectiveness

Managers play a central role in shaping employee performance and organizational outcomes, particularly in people-intensive sectors such as retail. Recent literature identifies a range of methods, from structured performance management systems and training initiatives to coaching and motivational strategies, but findings remain mixed depending on sectoral context, leadership style, and organizational culture.

One significant strand of evidence emphasizes the role of motivation and supervisor support. Nguyen and Tran (2020), in a survey of 399 Vietnamese public sector employees, demonstrated that supervisor support had both direct and indirect effects on skill transfer through motivation to learn, which in turn boosted job performance (Nguyen & Tran, 2020). Peer support, by contrast, was only effective indirectly. This suggests that managerial involvement in motivating employees is far more critical than peer-driven learning alone. However, when applied to the retail sector, where employees often work in small, closely-knit teams, peer support may have a stronger influence than in hierarchical public organizations. This contrast highlights that the effectiveness of managerial methods is context-sensitive.

In retail specifically, structured performance appraisal systems have proven effective. A study of 109 retail employees carried out by Borgaon (2024) has shown that 3 out of every four employees are satisfied with the appraisal systems and reported that constructive feedback enhanced their efficiency, performance in line with goals, and staff motivation (Borgaon, 2024). This conclusion is the opposite of what Nguyen and Tran (2020) did, since the feedback was mediated by motivation and not directly effective. It then follows that in retailing settings where

the frontline personnel demand direct and immediate performance benchmarks, direct appraisals can be more effective than indirect motivation systems.

Another method that has been discussed extensively is managerial coaching. Hanum et al. (2023) investigated the interest of employees within Indonesian banking companies and discovered that coaching and sound performance management systems not only improved motivation but also mediated the relationship between organizational systems and individual performance (Hanum et al., 2023). This is consistent with the findings of Sari, Meutia, and Narpati (2022), who examined retail workers in Indonesia and discovered that training enhanced performance mainly when it is mediated by motivation (Sari et al., 2022). These findings suggest that managerial coaching is not a standalone driver but is most effective when paired with performance systems and motivational strategies.

The importance of rewards and recognition in retail has been consistently reinforced. Das and Dutta (2021) conducted a survey of organized retail staff in Kolkata and identified cash incentives, recognition structures, and career growth opportunities as the most powerful motivators, directly linked to improved staff performance and reduced turnover (Das & Dutta, 2021). This finding complements Borgaon's (2024) study on performance appraisals, since both highlight that retail employees respond strongly to systems that provide tangible recognition of their contributions. However, the studies diverge on whether monetary or developmental recognition is most effective. The implication for this dissertation is that both financial and non-financial rewards must be considered in analysing CPD's impact.

Broader motivational frameworks further expand the discussion. Tran, Tan, and Tuyet (2023), in a survey of 1,000 employees in Dong Nai province, found that corporate culture, social responsibility, and managerial capacity significantly shaped motivation and loyalty (Tran et al., 2023). Compared with Das and Dutta (2021), who emphasized immediate motivators, this study suggests that long-term cultural and ethical factors are equally critical. Applied to retail, this implies that while recognition and incentives are vital for short-term performance, sustainable employee effectiveness requires embedding CPD within a culture that values loyalty, fairness, and development.

Finally, ethical and emotional leadership is increasingly seen as essential in motivating employees. Sukmayuda, Moeins, and Marhalinda (2024), in a study of 140 manufacturing workers, found that ethical and emotionally intelligent leadership styles reduced turnover intentions and improved motivation (Sukmayuda et al., 2024). While not retail-specific, this suggests that managerial methods must extend beyond structural systems to relational practices. This complements Nguyen and Tran's (2020) findings, reinforcing that motivation and performance improve when managers provide emotional and ethical support.

In summary, managerial methods for enhancing effectiveness can be grouped into structural systems (e.g., appraisals, training), motivational drivers (e.g., rewards, recognition), and relational practices (e.g., coaching, ethical leadership). Studies show that while structured systems provide clarity and incentives, their effectiveness is amplified when paired with motivational and relational strategies. For the UK retail sector, where employees face high pressure and turnover, this implies that CPD should not only deliver training but also be embedded in performance systems, recognition structures, and supportive leadership practices.

2.3. Opportunities & Challenges in Workplace Culture

Organizational culture is now a defining aspect of employee engagement, performance, and innovation in retailing. The positive culture will provide a chance to be motivated or have loyalty and innovation, whereas the negative culture will provide challenges like disengagement, turnover, and resistance to change.

Current studies point to the two sides of organizational change in cultural formation. A researcher investigating a South African retail distribution centre (Ndlovu, 2024) discovered that organizational change not only broke the cultural norms but also opened the opportunities for stronger engagement if the change was strategically handled (Ndlovu, 2024). Findlay, Lindsay, and Roy (2021), on the contrary, reasoned that the changes in workplace models post-COVID raised cultural uncertainty in the long term, and most organizations notably failed to find the appropriate equilibrium between innovation and employee welfare (Findlay et al., 2021). Combined, these results point to the fact that organizational change is a threat and opportunity at the same time: retailers, which take active measures to incorporate engagement into the change processes, may

engage in resiliency, and those that do not consider culture may face the risk of disengaging employees.

A generation change also makes workplace culture difficult. Liu et al. (2025) created a model involving Generation Z workers, where the key aspects are agility, inclusivity, and significant work (Liu et al., 2025). Gen Z requires greater flexibility and sensitivity toward mental health, as compared to older generations. This is in contrast to the work of Mostafa (2021), who investigated employer branding as a problem of attracting Gen Z talent and discovered that most organizations did not adjust their cultures to fit Gen Z demands of authenticity and digital interaction (Mostafa, 2021). In the case of the retail sphere, it means the challenge to meet the increasing needs of younger employees and the chance of creating loyalty with the help of more responsive and accommodating settings.

The literature that is specific to retail indicates that customer outcomes directly depend on the workplace culture. Afolabi et al. (2023) discussed HR innovations in retail and discovered that training, recognition, and positive culture helped increase employee engagement, customer satisfaction, and loyalty (Afolabi et al., 2023). This result is consistent with Sreenivas and Sharief (2025), who demonstrated that the ability to maintain engagement based on organizational culture and employee resilience is essential in the face of rapid sectoral change (Sreenivas & Sharief, 2025). The difference is in priority: The former author, Afolabi et al., is concerned with customer-related results, whereas the latter authors, Sreenivas and Sharief, are concerned with internal resilience. Combined, they highlight the idea that culture in the retail workplace should strike a balance between performance, on the one hand, and the internal well-being of employees, on the other.

Sustainable HR practices present the other opportunity. A systematic review of sustainable HRM conducted by Manao and Senen (2024) found that inclusive and adaptive cultures lead to long-term engagement and innovation (Manao & Senen, 2024). Their findings, however, do not coincide with the findings of Ridzuwan et al. (2025), who analysed the concept of flexible working hours and warned that the specified arrangement, despite being inclusive, can lead to a broken boundary and broken collaboration unless being managed (Ridzuwan et al., 2025). It is a tension, in the example of the retail sector, where shift work is the norm, flexibility is desirable, but may be a kind of team destruction.

Finally, workplace design and physical culture factors introduce one more dimension. Raghavendran (2022) explored the subject of physical interiors, flexibility, and ergonomic design with respect to corporate workplaces in Hyderabad in India. He determined that these properties of the work environment affected employee satisfaction and engagement to some extent (Raghavendran, 2022). Even though this observation is not retail-specific, this is in contrast to Afolabi et al. (2023), who are concerned about HR systems, and demonstrates that opportunities of a cultural nature are also created by physical space and design. This highlights the untapped significance of the workplace environment in the case of retail organizations, where the staff spend much time in customer-facing jobs.

In conclusion, there are a few opportunities and challenges with the retail working environment culture. The opportunities consist of the need to build engagement based on agility, recognition, and sustainability, whereas the challenges are the differences in generations, cultural mismatch in the change, and the risks of flexibility. For this dissertation, these findings imply that CPD in retail cannot be analysed in isolation—it must be situated within broader cultural dynamics that determine whether training and development efforts translate into long-term engagement and effectiveness.

2.4. Impact of Training & Innovation on Productivity

The relationship between training, innovation, and productivity has become central in discussions about organizational effectiveness, particularly in dynamic industries such as retail. While most studies agree on a positive correlation, findings differ on the mechanisms, scope, and sustainability of this relationship.

Abdullahi et al. (2025), in a large survey of 184 academic staff in Nigeria, found that training through structured development programs significantly improved productivity in terms of knowledge, skills, and professional output (Abdullahi et al., 2025). Although not retail-specific, the study confirms the universal role of training in enhancing productivity. In contrast, Omoikhudu (2017) in a case study of Marks & Spencer Dublin observed that while training and coaching were offered, they did not significantly improve employee retention. Instead, financial rewards and supportive working conditions were found to be more decisive for retention and effectiveness

(Omoikhudu, 2017). Together, these studies suggest that while training boosts skills, its impact on productivity in retail may depend on integration with broader motivational strategies.

Retail-specific studies reinforce this nuance. Mustoor and Deshpande (2016) analysed the training of frontline sales staff in Indian retail and found that training positively affected product knowledge, customer relations, and ultimately profitability (Mustoor & Deshpande, 2016). This aligns with Nachnani and Bhandari (2024), who, in their study of organized retail in India, demonstrated that HR policies cantered on training and appraisal significantly enhanced productivity and effectiveness (Nachnani & Bhandari, 2024). The consistency between these findings supports the argument that in retail, where customer-facing staff are the primary drivers of sales, targeted training yields immediate productivity gains.

Innovation compounds the effect of training. Kanapathipillaii (2021), studying 653 hotel managers in Malaysia, found that training and innovation jointly improved organizational performance, with job satisfaction acting as a mediator (Kanapathipillaii, 2021). Compared to Mustoor and Deshpande (2016), who emphasized skill-based training alone, this suggests that innovation initiatives are necessary to sustain training's benefits by keeping employees engaged and adaptive. Stopford and O'Reilly (2022) further demonstrated how automation and AI adoption in U.S. grocery retail transformed productivity by streamlining supply chains and improving customer service (Stopford & O'Reilly, 2022). However, they warned that legacy systems and inadequate employee upskilling slowed integration. This highlights a critical implication for retail: innovation without sufficient CPD can undermine rather than enhance productivity.

A more critical perspective emerges from Hillemane (2010), who studied 72 SMEs in Bangalore's auto sector and found that while innovation increased sales and employment, it did not necessarily translate into productivity gains because of high turnover and limited skilled labour (Hillemane, 2010). By contrast, Amelia and Indayani (2024) in a study of Indonesian firms reported that recruitment, motivation, and training together explained 66.1% of productivity variance, emphasizing the importance of integrating multiple HR strategies rather than relying on innovation alone (Amelia & Indayani, 2024). For this dissertation, the contrast underscores that innovation's productivity gains are contingent on complementary investments in training and HR development.

Retail case studies support this synergy. Afolabi et al. (2023) emphasized that the introduction of new HR practices, such as ongoing training, recognition, and digital labour development, enhanced the productivity of employees and customer satisfaction in competitive retail environments (Afolabi et al., 2023). Their results are in contrast to those of Omoikhudu (2017), who reported that training is not adequate in retention, as they demonstrated that training should be integrated into broader HR innovation activities so as to generate long-term productivity results.

To conclude, innovation and training require each other to improve productivity. Training generates short-term proficiency and customer-service abilities, whereas innovation maintains the competitiveness and flexibility of the employees. Nevertheless, with the opposite evidence proving it ineffective, training on its own might not lead to better retention or long-term performance, unless it is accompanied by positive HR policy and innovation models. This means that CPD programs must be aligned with innovation strategies so that productivity and organizational resilience can be optimized in the case of the UK retail sector.

2.5. Synthesis & Conceptual Framework

2.5.1. Synthesis of the Literature

The reviewed literature shows a consistent appreciation of the fact that Continuous Professional Development (CPD) can enhance the functioning of employees and the overall performance of an organization across industries. Nevertheless, some differences can be noted in the functioning of CPD and corresponding practices in retail or other industries.

In Section 2.1, Munir (2021) and Kajwang (2022) explained issues of slow or slow results in CPD initiatives, which include resource limitation and management support. Conversely, research with a more retail orientation, such as Borgaon (2024) and Pantano et al. (2020), has shown that organized performance frameworks and training that is industry-focused yield more direct productivity in the customer-facing industries. Such divergence indicates that, although CPD is universally advantageous, the rate and immediate notice of its results are strongly contingent on the situation within a specific sector. With retail workers, reactions to more systematic, short-term development initiatives are more direct.

The key role of managers was highlighted in section 2.2. A study by Nguyen and Tran (2020) has shown that skill transfer and motivation significantly depend on the presence of supervisory support, whereas Sari et al. (2022) have demonstrated that the effects of training are amplified in the case of motivational practices. Opposing outlooks developed between structural practices like performance appraisals (Borgaon, 2024) and relational practices like ethical leadership (Sukmayuda et al., 2024). Collectively, these results make it clear that there is no single managerial approach that can be considered adequate, and instead, performance systems, motivation, and supportive leadership, when combined, can provide the environment in which sustainable effectiveness can be made possible. This is especially significant in retail because of the high turnover of staff and the dependency on frontline employees.

Section 2.3 revealed workplace culture as both an opportunity and a challenge. Generational studies (e.g., Liu et al., 2025; Mostafa, 2021) highlighted that Gen Z employees demand more agile, authentic, and inclusive cultures, contrasting with older employees' emphasis on stability and recognition. Studies on organizational change (Ndlovu, 2024); (Findlay et al., 2021) pointed out that cultural shifts can either enhance or undermine engagement depending on how they are managed. These contrasts suggest that CPD must be embedded within supportive and adaptive cultures to be effective, as training alone cannot overcome a disengaged workforce.

Section 2.4 emphasized the combined impact of training and innovation. While Abdullahi et al. (2025) showed strong positive effects of training on productivity, Omoikhudu (2017) highlighted that training alone may not improve retention without supportive working conditions. Studies such as Kanapathipillaii (2021) and Stopford and O'Reilly (2022) demonstrated that innovation, particularly in digital technologies, amplifies training outcomes but also introduces risks if employees are not adequately prepared. Thus, training must be aligned with innovation strategies to ensure long-term productivity gains in retail.

Overall, the literature suggests that CPD is most effective in retail when it is sector-specific, managerially supported, culturally aligned, and integrated with innovation. This has direct implications for your dissertation: the analysis must not only assess whether CPD is present but also evaluate how it interacts with managerial practices, workplace culture, and innovation initiatives to drive organizational outcomes.

2.5.2. Identified Research Gaps

A critical review of the literature on Continuous Professional Development (CPD), managerial practices, workplace culture, and innovation reveals several gaps that justify this dissertation. While the consensus across studies is that CPD contributes to employee effectiveness and organizational outcomes, the evidence is fragmented, context-specific, and sometimes contradictory.

Limited focus on the retail sector

Much of the empirical work on CPD has been carried out in education, healthcare, or public services (e.g., Munir, 2021; Kajwang, 2022). Although these sectors provide useful parallels, their hierarchical structures and regulatory environments differ significantly from retail, where small businesses dominate and face unique challenges such as high turnover, limited budgets, and intense customer interaction. Retail-focused studies (e.g., Borgaon, 2024; Nachnani & Bhandari, 2024) confirm the positive impact of training and HR practices on performance, but they remain geographically limited to India and other developing contexts. There is a lack of sector-specific evidence from the UK retail industry, particularly within small and medium-sized enterprises.

CPD is often examined in isolation

Many studies treat training and development as standalone interventions (Abdullahi et al., 2025; Mustoor & Deshpande, 2016). However, evidence from Omoikhudu (2017) and Afolabi et al. (2023) indicates that training alone may not sustain retention or long-term productivity unless integrated with broader HR practices such as recognition systems, performance appraisals, and cultural alignment. This suggests a need for studies that analyse CPD as part of an interconnected system involving managerial methods and workplace culture, rather than a single factor.

Insufficient exploration of workplace culture as a mediator

Workplace culture is widely acknowledged as a driver of engagement and resilience (Sreenivas & Sharief, 2025; Afolabi et al., 2023). Yet, in most CPD literature, culture is discussed superficially as a background condition rather than as a mediating mechanism that shapes whether training translates into effectiveness. For example, Ndlovu (2024) highlighted how organizational change disrupted cultural norms, but the interaction between cultural adaptability and CPD

outcomes remains underexplored. This gap limits understanding of how cultural barriers, such as generational differences (Liu et al., 2025), directly affect CPD's success in retail.

Lack of integration between training and innovation

Although innovation is frequently studied as a driver of competitiveness (Stopford & O'Reilly, 2022; Kanapathipillaii, 2021), few studies explicitly examine how CPD prepares employees to adapt to innovation. Hillemane (2010) cautioned that innovation alone does not guarantee productivity when employee skills are lacking, while Amelia and Indayani (2024) showed that HR integration is critical. This indicates a gap in research linking CPD with innovation strategies in the retail context, especially given the rapid digital transformation of the UK retail sector.

Geographical and methodological limitations

The majority of recent studies are based in Asia and Africa (Nguyen & Tran, 2020; Sari et al., 2022; Hanum et al., 2023). While valuable, cultural and economic differences limit their applicability to the UK. Furthermore, methodological approaches are often narrow, with an overreliance on cross-sectional surveys (Indiani et al., 2024). Mixed-method approaches remain scarce, restricting understanding of how CPD impacts evolve over time. Your dissertation, by combining quantitative survey data with qualitative insights from open-ended responses, addresses this methodological gap.

2.6. Conceptual Framework

Based on the synthesis, a conceptual framework for this study was developed. It positions CPD as the central independent variable influencing employee and organizational outcomes, mediated by managerial methods and workplace culture, and moderated by innovation practices.

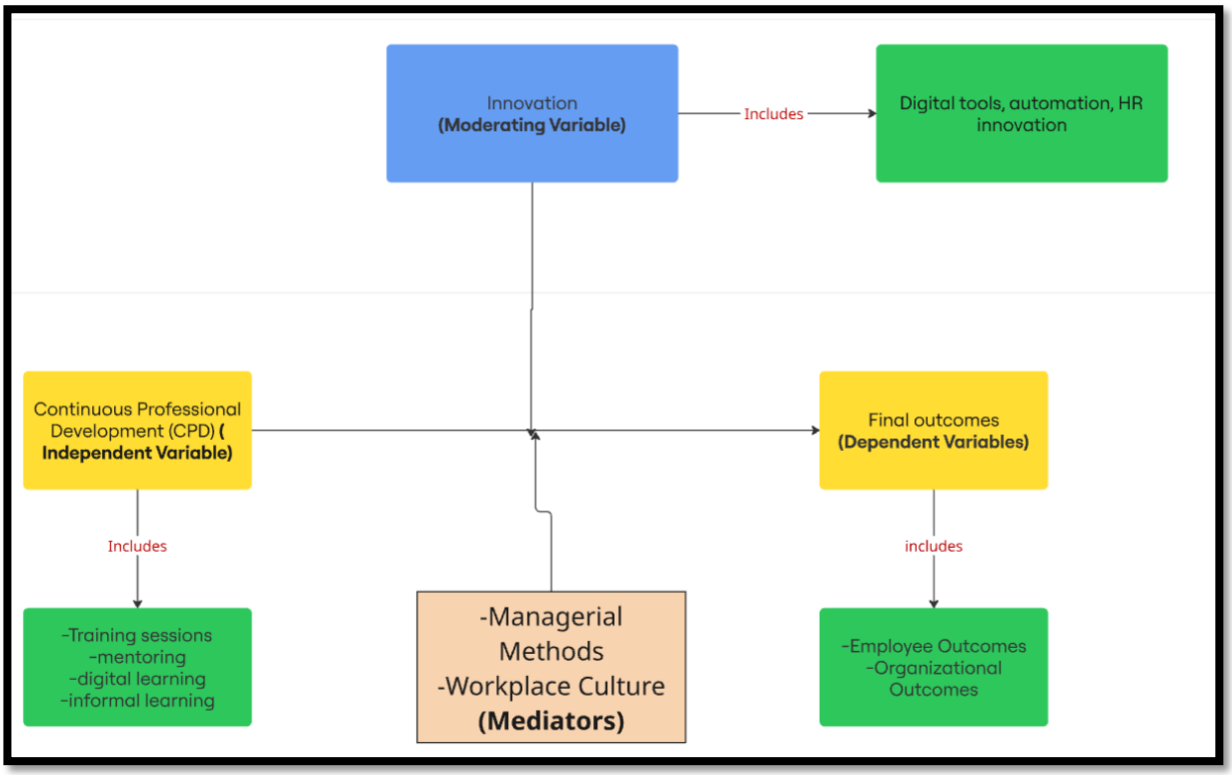

FIGURE 1 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3. Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology applied in order to attain the goals of this study on the effects of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) on employee performance in the retail sector has been defined. It outlines the research philosophy, research approach, research design, as well as data collection processes that informed the study. The proposed methodology is based on the principles of the Research Onion offered by Saunders et al. (2023), which is a systematic model of the organization of the methodological decisions on various levels - starting with philosophical beliefs up to the methods of data collection and analysis. The layers of the onion assist researchers in refining the methodological decisions in order to guarantee coherence and compliance with the objectives of the research (Gamage, 2025). Saunders et al. (2023) suggest that the outer layers of the research onion include philosophical and theoretical issues, and the inner layers entail particular methods and processes. This study utilized the research onion model to conduct the research in a consistent and transparent methodological way, just like other contemporary business and management research (Mogashoa & Kalitanyi, 2023). This study covers all the methodology decisions in order to address the overall objective of examining the role of CPD in influencing employee and organizational outcomes within the UK retail environment due to its systematic way

of addressing the body of the study by drilling down its layers, covering philosophy to data collection.

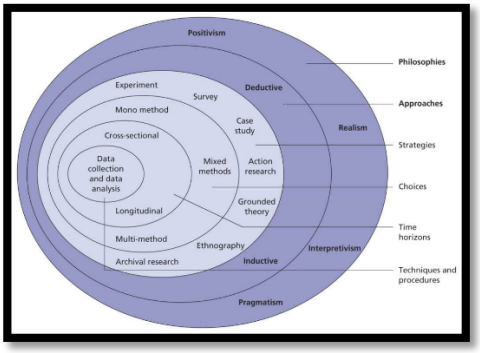

FIGURE 3 1: THE RESEARCH ONION (SAUNDERS ET AL., 2019)

3.1. RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

A research philosophy offers the overall worldview based on which a study is going to create and construct knowledge. The outer layer in the Research Onion model created by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2023) is philosophy, which dictates all other decisions related to the methodology. This study follows a positivist philosophy as it goes along with the aim of producing quantifiable and generalizable results on the impact of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) on the performance and organizational performance of officials in the retail industry.

The positivist paradigm is anchored on the assumption that reality is objective, external, and free of human perception. Thus, observation, quantifying, and empirical testing should be used to study phenomena (Mahardini et al., 2024). This philosophical position supposes that trustworthy knowledge can be obtained based on facts that can be seen but are not subjective. It embraces the application of quantitative measures, e.g., structured surveys, to determine the relationship between variables and to test the theories available, which is in line with the objectives of this research. According to Nuryaddin (2025), a significant amount of modern-day quantitative research is based on positivism as it aims to follow the concept of replicability, statistical validity, and objective analysis (Nuryaddin, 2025).

The current research in management and social sciences reiterates the perennial usefulness of positivism in research that aims at identifying the cause-and-effect relationships. As an example, Ghafoor, Asim, and Manzoor (2020) used a positivist design in their study of the interrelationship between academic institutions and industry through a quantitative survey and explained that

objectivity and hypothesis testing can provide practical policy implications (Ghafoor et al., 2020). In the same way, White and Ahadzie (2025) established that 87.8 per cent of science and technology journal articles are positivist and deductive in nature and have authority over all empirical fields (White & Ahadzie, 2025). This shows that positivism is the best paradigm to use in the case of an organized and data-based study such as the current project.

But positivism is not entirely devoid of limitations. Critics claim that it can reduce the complexity of human and social phenomena to a set of quantifiable variables, and it ignores a situation or subjectivity (Niure & Sapkota, 2025). To counterbalance this, the current study combines the aspects of the qualitative approach (by using open-ended survey questions), following the recommendations of the recent literature to bridge the gap between the quantitative and qualitative analysis in order to provide more detailed interpretations of findings (Christofi et al., 2021). Such a combination enhances validity and makes the findings statistically supported as well as contextual.

3.2. Research Approach

Research methodology determines the way theoretical assumptions will be converted to empirical research. This study follows the deductive model of the Research Onion proposed by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2023) because the research is based on the positivist philosophy and quantitative orientation. The deductive approach starts with the already existing theories and applies empirical data to test hypotheses based on those theories (Tiwasing et al., 2023).

Deductive reasoning is quite adequate, especially in research aimed at confirming already known relationships between variables, in this case, between Continuous Professional Development (CPD), employee performance, workplace culture, and innovation. The strategy is based upon the extrapolation of a general theoretical statement into a particular set of empirical statements, which can be statistically tested to ascertain the truth of a hypothesis. Vicente Bejarano (2023) argues that the deductive process offers a rational framework of hypothesis testing so that observed data can either verify or disprove the existing theoretical assumptions through the application of statistical techniques, including regression or correlation analysis (Vicente Bejarano, 2023).

The deductive approach is a common approach in business and management research to test cause-and-effect relationships and apply them to the general population (Parkitna, 2021). To

illustrate this, Mariluz (2024) relied on a hypothesis-testing, deductive design to investigate how the practices of business management contribute to competitiveness in the Peruvian mining industry, and found that the structured, quantitative data collection allows making adequate empirical conclusions (Mariluz, 2024). Similarly, Jasim (2024) focused on the power of theory-based deduction, which is used together with quantitative data analysis to learn intricate economic relations - an operation that can be applied to the evaluation of the connection between CPD and performance (Jasim, 2024).

But deductive research, too, has its shortcomings. According to Iannacci et al. (2024), because purely deductive studies can be too narrow to explore dynamic or contextual factors, they can be associated with the risk of oversimplifying them (Iannacci et al., 2024). In order to mitigate this issue, this paper supplements its deductive arguments with inductive knowledge gained by open-ended surveys, which would enable a more detailed interpretation of the results and provide a deep contextual understanding of the results.

3.3. Research Design

The research design gives the outline of how data will be collected, measured, and analysed in answering the research questions. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2023) define research design as the pragmatic guide that bridges the gap between philosophical and theoretical assumptions and particular data collection processes. The research will follow a quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional survey design employed as a standard method of studying social science and management research in order to examine the relationship among variables at one time only (Bralić & Buljan, 2023).

The cross-sectional design would allow the researcher to obtain a picture of the views and experiences of the employees in the retail industry regarding Continuous Professional Development (CPD), workplace culture, and innovation. According to Sobol (2014), cross-sectional studies are inexpensive and effective in describing the relationship between variables when time or resources do not allow tracking them over time (Sobol, 2014). Equally, Nuangchalerm (2021) affirmed that cross-sectional survey design is highly effective in quantitative data of a large population through self-administered surveys, especially when a researcher is more interested in describing behavioural patterns or perception, but not in establishing causality (Nuangchalerm, 2021).

In business and management studies, the cross-sectional research approach has been practical in research on organizational variables that vary over time but are measurable at a time point. In case, to analyse the relationship between knowledge management and sustainable business growth in SMEs in Nigeria, Olubiyi et al. (2024) used a quantitative cross-sectional study design that permitted the researcher to test the correlation between the variables in the study ($R^2 = 0.252$, $p = 0.05$) through survey data collection, which is one-time (Olubiyi et al., 2024). Similarly, non-experimental, cross-sectional correlational designs can effectively determine the relationship between management practices and competitiveness in the mining sector in Peru, as Mariluz (2024) did, which shows how the designs can be effectively used to identify statistically significant relationships (Mariluz, 2024).

For this dissertation, the cross-sectional survey design was chosen for three reasons. First, it aligns with the positivist philosophy and deductive reasoning of the study, as it allows for testing theoretical relationships using empirical data. Second, it is suitable for quantitative measurement of perceptions across multiple variables (e.g., CPD, motivation, innovation, and performance). Third, it offers a practical and time-efficient approach for data collection from a relatively large population within small retail businesses, minimizing resource constraints while maintaining statistical validity (Strang, 2015).

However, cross-sectional designs also have limitations. As Schreurs et al. (2023) noted, such designs cannot capture causality or temporal changes because data are collected at a single point in time (Schreurs et al., 2023). Nonetheless, this limitation is acceptable for this study because the primary objective is not to establish causation but to explore and describe relationships among variables relevant to employee development and organizational performance in the retail context.

3.4. Research Strategy

The research strategy provides the overall plan for how the study's objectives are achieved. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2023), strategy is the layer of the Research Onion that bridges theoretical perspectives with practical execution. This study employs a survey research strategy, chosen for its ability to collect standardized data from a relatively large sample efficiently and to quantify relationships among key variables — Continuous Professional Development (CPD), employee performance, workplace culture, and innovation.

Survey methodology is one of the most widely used research strategies in social sciences, business management, and education because it allows for the measurement of attitudes, opinions, and behaviours across diverse populations (Brasel, 2020). It aligns closely with positivism and deduction, which prioritize empirical validation and generalizable results. In this study, the survey strategy supports hypothesis testing by translating abstract concepts (e.g., professional development and engagement) into quantifiable indicators through structured questions.

Recent studies affirm that surveys are effective for examining workplace and educational variables. For instance, Zambrano et al. (2024) used a validated questionnaire to assess academic burnout among 300 students and achieved high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.86$), demonstrating that carefully designed survey instruments can produce robust and replicable results (Zambrano et al., 2024). Similarly, Custodio et al. (2020) employed the survey technique to explore the relationship between training and job performance in Peru, confirming the suitability of structured questionnaires for quantifying behavioural relationships in organizational contexts (Custodio et al., 2020).

Survey research also offers flexibility in data collection modes — online, physical distribution, or mixed — each with implications for response rate and validity. Limone et al. (2022) observed that the pandemic accelerated the shift toward online quantitative surveys, necessitating careful design to maintain reliability and avoid bias (Limone et al., 2022). For this study, questionnaires were distributed both digitally and in person to retail employees, ensuring accessibility and reducing nonresponse bias. Data were collected anonymously to enhance the accuracy of responses and mitigate social desirability effects.

Moreover, surveys allow for effective statistical analysis using tools such as SPSS or Excel, supporting both descriptive and inferential analysis. Aithal and Aithal (2020) argue that survey-based empirical research is essential in management studies because it enables hypothesis testing, model validation, and the measurement of latent constructs when properly designed and validated (Aithal & Aithal, 2020). This view underpins the rationale for using a structured, Likert-scale questionnaire in this dissertation, allowing the quantification of employees' perceptions of training, innovation, and engagement. However, as Yu (2003) cautioned, poor survey execution can lead to sampling bias, low response rates, or weak validity (Yu, 2003). To address this, this study followed

rigorous design and validation procedures — questions were derived from literature, pilot-tested for clarity, and assessed for reliability before full-scale distribution.

3.5. Population and Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting a subset of a population to represent the entire group for research purposes. In the Research Onion (Saunders et al., 2023), the choice of sampling technique forms part of the data collection methodology and directly influences the validity, reliability, and generalizability of the study's findings. The sampling decisions in this study were informed by the research objectives, accessibility of participants, and available resources.

3.5.1. Target Population

The target population of this study consisted of employees of small and medium-sized retail businesses in West Sussex, England. This group was selected because retail SMEs form a significant component of the UK's employment landscape, where Continuous Professional Development (CPD) initiatives are often informal or inconsistently applied. The population includes employees in roles such as sales associates, customer service representatives, and shop supervisors.

3.5.2. Sampling Technique

Given the dispersed nature of retail SMEs and the practical limitations of time and accessibility, this study adopted a non-probability convenience sampling technique. In convenience sampling, participants are selected based on their accessibility and willingness to respond, rather than through random selection (Obilor & Isaac, 2023). This method is widely applied in organizational research when the population is large, geographically scattered, or when a comprehensive sampling frame is unavailable (Zickar & Keith, 2022).

While convenience sampling has limitations in terms of generalizability, it is particularly useful for exploratory and descriptive research in business studies, where quick access to participants is essential (Scholtz, 2021). Some scholars advocate combining convenience with purposive elements, ensuring that participants selected meet defined inclusion criteria — such as current employment in retail and at least six months of job experience (Wang, 2024). This hybrid approach enhances representativeness within the accessible population and improves the internal validity of findings without imposing excessive logistical demands.

3.5.3. Sample Size Determination

The study targeted a sample of 50 respondents, which is appropriate for small-scale quantitative studies seeking descriptive and correlational insights rather than population-wide generalization. According to Khan (2020), sample adequacy depends on representativeness, research design, and available resources rather than absolute numbers (Khan, 2020). Given the focus on small retail firms, a sample size of 50 allows for meaningful statistical analysis (e.g., descriptive and cross-tabulation techniques) while remaining feasible within time and resource constraints.

3.6. Research Instrument (Questionnaire Design)

The primary instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire, designed to collect quantitative data on employees' perceptions of Continuous Professional Development (CPD), workplace culture, innovation, and employee performance in the retail sector. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2023), a well-designed questionnaire translates theoretical constructs into measurable variables, enabling the collection of consistent and reliable data. The questionnaire used in this study was self-administered and developed based on prior research and the study's objectives, as presented in Appendix 1.

3.7. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection refers to the systematic process of gathering information relevant to the research objectives using a specific strategy and instrument. As indicated in the Research Onion model (Saunders et al., 2023), this layer operationalizes methodological choices into practice. For this study, quantitative data were collected through a self-administered structured questionnaire distributed both physically and digitally to employees of small and medium-sized retail businesses in West Sussex, England.

Data collection took place over a four-week period in 2025. The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was distributed via two main channels:

1. **In-person distribution** – Paper copies were delivered to local retail stores (e.g., boutiques, supermarkets, and specialty shops). Respondents were allowed to complete the form during work breaks or after working hours.

2. **Online distribution** – A digital version of the same questionnaire was created using **Google Forms**, allowing respondents to access and complete it at their convenience.

The dual-mode approach ensured inclusivity by accommodating respondents with varying digital access and preferences, as recommended in mixed-mode survey practices (Aye et al., 2021). The total number of distributed questionnaires was 60, with 50 completed responses considered valid after screening for completeness and consistency. Each participant received a short introduction explaining the purpose of the study, its academic nature, and instructions for completing the questionnaire. Respondents were informed that participation was entirely voluntary and that no personal identifiers were required, preserving anonymity.

3.8. Data Analysis Procedure

The data obtained had been analysed through quantitative statistical methods within the IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 29). Since the study had a positivist philosophy and a deductive mode of thought, the analysis was conducted to test a proposed hypothesis that the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) initiatives and the performance of employees in the UK retail sector were positively correlated. Based on the principles of the research onion (Saunders et al., 2023), this methodology phase related to the innermost circle, which was data analysis and interpretation, where the quantitative methods were used to obtain the empirical knowledge.

The initial task that was implemented using descriptive statistics was the ability to describe the demographics of the respondents and their answers to every survey question. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were taken to determine prevailing trends and patterns. These statistics formed a baseline of the general attitudes toward CPD and training effectiveness and motivation at work amongst the employees of the retailer, in line with the other survey-based methods of finding out the attitudes of the retailers (Widjaja et al., 2023).

Then, the cross-tabulation analyses were carried out to investigate the association between categorical variables (especially between age groups and Likert-scale responses). Such a procedure enabled the determination of the possible generational or experience differences in the perceptions of training, motivation, and collaboration of the staff. Cross-tabulation was selected because it is effective in establishing associations in survey-based research, which is advocated by the previous quantitative studies of retail (Rinawati & Sidharta, 2024).

A statistical test of whether there was a statistically significant relationship between variables was then conducted using inferential analyses. As the results of the survey were primarily ordinal (Likert-type) data, non-parametric tests (like Chi-square tests) would have been appropriate

when studying relationships between CPD dimensions (training, motivation, and workplace culture) and performance indicators of employees. This methodology agrees with the latest best practices methodological approaches in the research of retail performance because it focuses on the application of quantitative surveys and structured questionnaires to yield empirical generalizations (Mishra, 2013).

Also, bar charts and frequency tables were utilized as data visualization tools because they helped to make the findings easily interpretable and presentable, so that the outcomes can be readily interconnected with the objectives and hypotheses of the research. In visual representation, the interpretability of quantitative surveys is enhanced, whereas transparency is improved as Boeren (2019) recommends.

4. Chapter 4: Findings / Analysis / Discussion

4.1. Descriptive Findings (Quantitative)

This section presents the descriptive statistics for the seven close-ended questions (RQ1–RQ7) examining employee perceptions of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in relation to training, motivation, teamwork, and organizational culture within the UK retail sector. A total of 50 responses were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics. The analysis includes frequency distributions, percentages, and mean scores. Figures and tables have been included to visually present these findings, followed by critical interpretation and reference to previous research.

4.1.1. Training and Development: Learning from Experienced Team Members (RQ1)

Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 show responses to the statement *"Staff learn best by working with experienced team members."* Results reveal that 73.7% of participants selected *Very Likely*, while 26.3% chose *Likely*. No participants expressed uncertainty or disagreement. This indicates overwhelming consensus that mentorship and peer learning are vital components of effective CPD. This result aligns with Mustafa-Sadiku (2025), who demonstrated that experiential learning enhances performance by fostering tacit knowledge transfer in service environments. Similarly, Rinawati and Sidharta (2024) found that mentoring relationships strengthen engagement by linking new skills to workplace application. The strong agreement here suggests that structured peer support systems could be a central pillar of CPD in small retail enterprises.

TABLE 4 1: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT – LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCED TEAM MEMBERS

(SPSS TABLE OUTPUT)

Training and Development: Staff learn best by working with experienced team members

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Likely	56	17.4	73.7	73.7
	Likely	20	6.2	26.3	100.0
	Total	76	23.7	100.0	
Missing	System	245	76.3		
Total		321	100.0		

FIGURE 4 1: STAFF LEARN BEST BY WORKING WITH EXPERIENCED TEAM MEMBERS (SPSS FIGURE OUTPUT)

4.1.2. Short Training Sessions and Job Understanding (RQ2)

As illustrated in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2, 90.3% of respondents indicated that short training sessions help staff understand their jobs better (*35.5% Very Likely; 54.8% Likely*). Only 9.7% were uncertain. These results suggest that concise, targeted training sessions are preferred within the retail context, possibly due to limited staff availability and time constraints.

The findings corroborate Yertas (2024), who argued that modular, short-duration training formats enhance skill retention and operational adaptability. In a retail environment characterized by high turnover and dynamic customer demands, such microlearning approaches provide flexibility without disrupting workflow.

TABLE 4 2: SHORT TRAINING SESSIONS HELP STAFF UNDERSTAND THEIR JOB BETTER

Short training sessions help staff understand their job better

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Likely	44	13.7	35.5	35.5
	Likely	68	21.2	54.8	90.3
	Not Sure	12	3.7	9.7	100.0
	Total	124	38.6	100.0	
Missing	System	197	61.4		
Total		321	100.0		

FIGURE 4 2:PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF SHORT TRAINING SESSIONS

4.1.3. Team Meetings and Performance Improvement (RQ3)

According to Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3, 94% of respondents believed team meetings contribute positively to staff improvement (*31.6% Very Likely; 62.4% Likely*), while only 3% remained uncertain. This demonstrates strong recognition of team-based learning and reflective discussions as vital components of CPD. These findings are supported by Shaheen et al. (2023), who emphasized that structured team discussions promote shared accountability and knowledge exchange, leading to higher motivation. In contrast, Nguyen and Tran (2020) noted that some organizations overlook team-based reflection in favour of individual performance metrics—suggesting that UK retail firms should maintain a balance between collaborative and individual development approaches.

TABLE 4 3: TEAM MEETINGS HELP STAFF UNDERSTAND HOW TO IMPROVE

Team meetings help staff understand how to improve

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	Very Likely	42	13.1	31.6	31.6
	Likely	83	25.9	62.4	94.0
	Not Sure	4	1.2	3.0	97.0
	Unlikely	4	1.2	3.0	100.0
	Total	133	41.4	100.0	
Missing	System	188	58.6		
Total		321	100.0		

FIGURE 4 3: ROLE OF TEAM MEETINGS IN STAFF LEARNING

4.1.4. Motivation and Engagement: Friendly Team Environments (RQ4)

The statement *"A friendly team makes staff work harder"* received 51.3% Very Likely and 39.1% Likely responses, as shown in Table 4.4 and Figure 4.4. Only 6.1% were unsure and 3.5% disagreed. This emphasizes the motivational importance of collegial relationships and psychological safety in promoting engagement and productivity. This result aligns with Sari et al. (2022), who found that positive social relationships in the workplace mediate the relationship between training

and performance, particularly in the retail sector. The implication is that CPD programs should not only focus on skills but also integrate interpersonal development to sustain engagement.

TABLE 4 4: A FRIENDLY TEAM MAKES STAFF WORK HARDER

A friendly team makes staff work harder

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Likely	59	18.4	51.3	51.3
	Likely	45	14.0	39.1	90.4
	Not Sure	7	2.2	6.1	96.5
	Unlikely	4	1.2	3.5	100.0
	Total	115	35.8	100.0	
Missing	System	206	64.2		
Total		321	100.0		

FIGURE 4 4: IMPACT OF TEAM FRIENDLINESS ON MOTIVATION

4.1.5. Small Rewards and Motivation (RQ5)

The results for RQ5, displayed in Table 4.5 and Figure 4.5, indicate that 80.4% of respondents agreed (*Very Likely/Likely*) that small rewards such as praise or gift cards help staff stay motivated. Only 5% were uncertain and 3.9% disagreed. The mean score (1.81) also reflects strong agreement. This finding supports Addair (2019), who observed that symbolic rewards like recognition enhance job satisfaction and commitment. It also resonates with Vroom's Expectancy Theory, suggesting that reinforcement through tangible or verbal recognition increases perceived effort-reward balance, leading to higher performance motivation.

TABLE 4 5: SMALL REWARDS HELP STAFF STAY MOTIVATED

Small rewards like praise or gift cards help staff stay motivated

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Likely	43	13.4	42.2	42.2
	Likely	39	12.1	38.2	80.4
	Not Sure	16	5.0	15.7	96.1
	Unlikely	4	1.2	3.9	100.0
	Total	102	31.8	100.0	
Missing	System	219	68.2		
Total		321	100.0		

FIGURE 4 5: ROLE OF REWARDS IN MOTIVATION

4.1.6. Workplace Culture and Inclusivity (RQ6)

As presented in Table 4.6 and Figure 4.6, 96.9% of participants reported that everyone is treated with respect and included (*56.7% Very Likely; 40.2% Likely*), while only 3.1% disagreed. This suggests that a strong culture of inclusivity exists among respondents, reinforcing CPD engagement. According to Riesner et al. (2025), workplace inclusivity correlates positively with learning participation, particularly in organizations with flat hierarchies. This finding implies that a respectful work environment not only supports staff morale but also fosters continuous learning and mutual accountability within retail settings.

TABLE 4 6: EVERYONE IS TREATED WITH RESPECT AND INCLUDED

Everyone is treated with respect and included

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Likely	55	17.1	56.7	56.7

	Likely	39	12.1	40.2	96.9
	Unlikely	3	.9	3.1	100.0
	Total	97	30.2	100.0	
Missing	System	224	69.8		
Total		321	100.0		

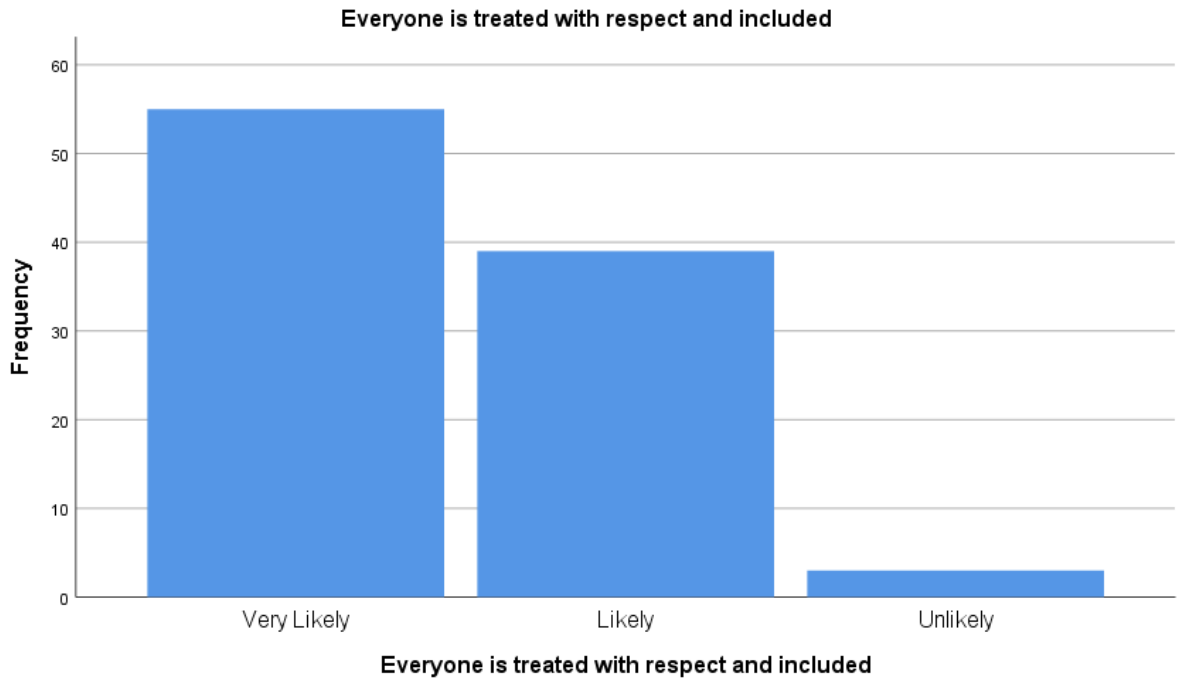

FIGURE 4 6: PERCEPTIONS OF WORKPLACE INCLUSIVITY

4.1.7. Effect of Training on Daily Tasks and Customer Service (RQ7)

Table 4.7 and **Figure 4.7** show that **100%** of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that training improves their ability to complete daily tasks and deliver quality customer service (*53.6% Very Likely; 46.4% Likely*). The high consistency of agreement demonstrates that CPD has a direct and observable impact on operational performance. This is consistent with Tibyana and Agustini (2025), who found a positive correlation between frequent skill-based training and customer satisfaction in service-oriented businesses. The result underscores that staff development not only enhances internal competencies but also contributes to external service quality—a critical success factor in the retail industry.

TABLE 4 7: STAFF TRAINING HAS HELPED IMPROVE DAILY TASKS OR CUSTOMER SERVICE

Staff training has helped improve daily tasks or customer service

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Likely	52	16.2	53.6	53.6
	Likely	45	14.0	46.4	100.0
	Total	97	30.2	100.0	
Missing	System	224	69.8		
Total		321	100.0		

4.1.8. Summary of Descriptive Findings

The quantitative findings reveal a consistent pattern of positive attitudes toward CPD practices among retail employees. All mean values ranged between 1.26–1.81, demonstrating high agreement levels across all statements. Training initiatives, mentorship, teamwork, inclusivity, and recognition collectively contribute to enhanced motivation and performance. This supports the Human Capital Theory perspective, which posits that investing in employee development yields

measurable productivity gains (Becker, 1993; Mustafa-Sadiku, 2025). However, the small proportion of uncertainty among respondents regarding training formats (RQ2) indicates potential inconsistency in implementation or accessibility across different retail firms. Overall, the descriptive findings affirm that CPD in the retail sector is not limited to formal instruction but extends to a holistic culture of continuous learning, supportive leadership, and recognition-driven motivation.

4.2. Cross-Tabulations by Age

This section explores how employee age influences perceptions of continuous professional development (CPD) in the UK retail sector. Cross-tabulations and chi-square tests were conducted to examine potential relationships between respondents' age groups and their attitudes towards the seven quantitative variables (RQ1–RQ7). While descriptive findings in Section 4.1 indicated high overall support for CPD-related practices, this analysis investigates whether generational differences exist in perceptions of training effectiveness, motivation, teamwork, and inclusivity. Recent studies suggest that while age can shape learning preferences, generational cohorts in modern workplaces are increasingly aligned in valuing skills development, recognition, and supportive leadership (Akwuole, 2017; Kovačević et al., 2020; Kochoian et al., 2016). Similar trends were expected in this study, particularly given the collaborative and customer-facing nature of the retail sector.

RQ1: Training and Development – Staff Learn Best by Working with Experienced Team Members

The crosstabulation shows that across all age groups (20–30, 30–40, 40–50, 50–60), the majority of employees rated "Very Likely" (73.7%) when asked whether learning from experienced team members helps development. The chi-square test ($\chi^2(3) = 0.000$, $p = 1.000$) indicates no statistically significant difference among age groups. This finding aligns with Kochoian et al. (2016), who argued that collaborative learning remains an effective and inclusive form of CPD regardless of age. Younger employees may view it as mentorship, while older workers interpret it as knowledge sharing, reinforcing that intergenerational learning enhances organizational cohesion in retail environments.

TABLE 4 8: CROSSTABULATION OF AGE GROUP AND PERCEPTION OF LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCED TEAM MEMBERS

Respondent's Age Group * Training and Development: Staff learn best by working with experienced team members Crosstabulation

			Training and Development: Staff learn best by working with experienced team members		
			Very Likely	Likely	Total
Respondent's Age Group	20-30	Count	14	5	19
		% within Respondent's Age Group	73.7%	26.3%	100.0%
		% within Training and Development: Staff learn best by working with experienced team members	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%
		% of Total	18.4%	6.6%	25.0%
	30-40	Count	14	5	19
		% within Respondent's Age Group	73.7%	26.3%	100.0%
		% within Training and Development: Staff learn best by working with experienced team members	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%
		% of Total	18.4%	6.6%	25.0%
	40-50	Count	14	5	19

		% within Respondent's Age Group	73.7%	26.3%	100.0%
		% within Training and Development: Staff learn best by working with experienced team members	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%
		% of Total	18.4%	6.6%	25.0%
	50-60	Count	14	5	19
		% within Respondent's Age Group	73.7%	26.3%	100.0%
		% within Training and Development: Staff learn best by working with experienced team members	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%
		% of Total	18.4%	6.6%	25.0%
Total		Count	56	20	76
		% within Respondent's Age Group	73.7%	26.3%	100.0%
		% within Training and Development: Staff learn best by working with experienced team members	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	73.7%	26.3%	100.0%

RQ2: Short Training Sessions Help Staff Understand Their Job Better

Responses show consistent agreement, with 35.5% “Very Likely” and 54.8% “Likely.” The chi-square test ($\chi^2(6) = 0.000$, $p = 1.000$) reveals no significant variation between age groups. This uniformity suggests that short, focused training modules are perceived as universally beneficial, supporting findings by Kovačević et al. (2020), who emphasized micro-learning as an accessible CPD method across generations. The practical implication is that retail employees, irrespective of age, value brief, practical sessions that do not disrupt daily operations.

TABLE 4 9: CROSSTABULATION OF AGE GROUP AND PERCEPTION OF SHORT TRAINING SESSIONS

Respondent’s Age Group * Short training sessions help staff understand their job better Crosstabulation

			Short training sessions help staff understand their job better			
			Very Likely	Likely	Not Sure	Total
Respondent’s Age Group	20-30	Count	11	17	3	31
		% within Respondent’s Age Group	35.5%	54.8%	9.7%	100.0%
		% within Short training sessions help staff understand their job better	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%
		% of Total	8.9%	13.7%	2.4%	25.0%
	30-40	Count	11	17	3	31
		% within Respondent’s Age Group	35.5%	54.8%	9.7%	100.0%

		% within Short training sessions help staff understand their job better	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%
		% of Total	8.9%	13.7%	2.4%	25.0%
	40-50	Count	11	17	3	31
		% within Respondent's Age Group	35.5%	54.8%	9.7%	100.0%
		% within Short training sessions help staff understand their job better	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%
		% of Total	8.9%	13.7%	2.4%	25.0%
	50-60	Count	11	17	3	31
		% within Respondent's Age Group	35.5%	54.8%	9.7%	100.0%
		% within Short training sessions help staff understand their job better	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%
		% of Total	8.9%	13.7%	2.4%	25.0%
Total		Count	44	68	12	124
		% within Respondent's Age Group	35.5%	54.8%	9.7%	100.0%

	% within Short training sessions help staff understand their job better	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	35.5%	54.8%	9.7%	100.0%

RQ3: Team Meetings Help Staff Understand How to Improve

Most participants rated this statement as "Likely" (62.4%), with only 3% being "Not Sure" or "Unlikely." Chi-square results ($\chi^2(9) = 0.095$, $p = 1.000$) show no significant difference across age groups. These results align with Akwuole (2017), who found that regular team discussions foster shared accountability and cross-generational communication. The data indicate that team meetings are universally recognized as a platform for collective problem-solving and continuous improvement, essential in retail's fast-paced settings.

TABLE 4 10: CROSSTABULATION OF AGE GROUP AND TEAM MEETING EFFECTIVENESS

Respondent's Age Group * Team meetings help staff understand how to improve Crosstabulation

		Team meetings help staff understand how to improve				
		Very Likely	Likely	Not Sure	Unlikely	Total
Respondent's Age Group	Age20-30 Count	11	22	1	1	35
	% within Respondent's Age Group	31.4%	62.9%	2.9%	2.9%	100.0%

		% within Team meetings help staff understand how to improve	26.2%	26.5%	25.0%	25.0%	26.3%
		% of Total	8.3%	16.5%	0.8%	0.8%	26.3%
	30-40	Count	11	22	1	1	35
		% within Respondent's Age Group	31.4%	62.9%	2.9%	2.9%	100.0%
		% within Team meetings help staff understand how to improve	26.2%	26.5%	25.0%	25.0%	26.3%
		% of Total	8.3%	16.5%	0.8%	0.8%	26.3%
	40-50	Count	11	22	1	1	35
		% within Respondent's Age Group	31.4%	62.9%	2.9%	2.9%	100.0%
		% within Team meetings help staff understand how to improve	26.2%	26.5%	25.0%	25.0%	26.3%
		% of Total	8.3%	16.5%	0.8%	0.8%	26.3%
	50-60	Count	9	17	1	1	28

	% within Respondent's Age Group	32.1%	60.7%	3.6%	3.6%	100.0%
	% within Team meetings help staff understand how to improve	21.4%	20.5%	25.0%	25.0%	21.1%
	% of Total	6.8%	12.8%	0.8%	0.8%	21.1%
Total	Count	42	83	4	4	133
	% within Respondent's Age Group	31.6%	62.4%	3.0%	3.0%	100.0%
	% within Team meetings help staff understand how to improve	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	31.6%	62.4%	3.0%	3.0%	100.0%

RQ4: A Friendly Team Makes Staff Work Harder

The pattern remains consistent across age cohorts, with 51.3% "Very Likely" and 39.1% "Likely." The chi-square test ($\chi^2(9) = 2.223$, $p = 0.987$) shows no significant generational difference. This reinforces findings from Kochoian et al. (2016) and Adarkwah (2024), who reported that positive interpersonal relationships contribute significantly to engagement and retention across age groups. The lack of variation suggests that social connectedness and teamwork serve as universal motivational drivers within retail environments.

TABLE 4 11: CROSSTABULATION OF AGE GROUP AND TEAM FRIENDLINESS AS A MOTIVATOR

Respondent's Age Group * A friendly team makes staff work harder Crosstabulation

			A friendly team makes staff work harder				
			Very Likely	Likely	Not Sure	Unlikely	Total
Respondent's Group	Age20-30	Count	21	14	3	1	39
		% within Respondent's Age Group	53.8%	35.9%	7.7%	2.6%	100.0%
		% within A friendly team makes staff work harder	35.6%	31.1%	42.9%	25.0%	33.9%
		% of Total	18.3%	12.2%	2.6%	0.9%	33.9%
	30-40	Count	17	13	2	1	33
		% within Respondent's Age Group	51.5%	39.4%	6.1%	3.0%	100.0%
		% within A friendly team makes staff work harder	28.8%	28.9%	28.6%	25.0%	28.7%
		% of Total	14.8%	11.3%	1.7%	0.9%	28.7%
	40-50	Count	11	10	2	1	24
		% within Respondent's Age Group	45.8%	41.7%	8.3%	4.2%	100.0%

		% within A friendly team makes staff work harder	18.6%	22.2%	28.6%	25.0%	20.9%
		% of Total	9.6%	8.7%	1.7%	0.9%	20.9%
	50-60	Count	10	8	0	1	19
		% within Respondent's Age Group	52.6%	42.1%	0.0%	5.3%	100.0%
		% within A friendly team makes staff work harder	16.9%	17.8%	0.0%	25.0%	16.5%
		% of Total	8.7%	7.0%	0.0%	0.9%	16.5%
Total		Count	59	45	7	4	115
		% within Respondent's Age Group	51.3%	39.1%	6.1%	3.5%	100.0%
		% within A friendly team makes staff work harder	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	51.3%	39.1%	6.1%	3.5%	100.0%

RQ5: Small Rewards Like Praise or Gift Cards Help Staff Stay Motivated

Here, 42.2% of respondents selected "Very Likely" and 38.2% "Likely." The chi-square test ($\chi^2(9) = 0.523$, $p = 1.000$) confirms no significant difference by age. This aligns with the view that recognition-based incentives appeal broadly across generations (Nguyen & Tran, 2020). While older workers might value such recognition as appreciation for loyalty, younger employees perceive it as

feedback and encouragement, suggesting that non-monetary rewards are effective motivators for all cohorts.

TABLE 4 12: CROSSTABULATION OF AGE GROUP AND MOTIVATION THROUGH SMALL REWARDS

Respondent's Age Group * Small rewards like praise or gift cards help staff stay motivated Crosstabulation

			Small rewards like praise or gift cards help staff stay motivated				
			Very Likely	Likely	Not Sure	Unlikely	Total
Respondent's Age Group	20-30	Count	16	15	7	1	39
		% within Respondent's Age Group	41.0%	38.5%	17.9%	2.6%	100.0%
		% within Small rewards like praise or gift cards help staff stay motivated	37.2%	38.5%	43.8%	25.0%	38.2%
		% of Total	15.7%	14.7%	6.9%	1.0%	38.2%
	30-40	Count	9	8	3	1	21
		% within Respondent's Age Group	42.9%	38.1%	14.3%	4.8%	100.0%
		% within Small rewards like praise or gift cards help staff stay motivated	20.9%	20.5%	18.8%	25.0%	20.6%
		% of Total	8.8%	7.8%	2.9%	1.0%	20.6%

	40-50	Count	9	8	3	1	21
		% within Respondent's Age Group	42.9%	38.1%	14.3%	4.8%	100.0%
		% within Small rewards like praise or gift cards help staff stay motivated	20.9%	20.5%	18.8%	25.0%	20.6%
		% of Total	8.8%	7.8%	2.9%	1.0%	20.6%
	50-60	Count	9	8	3	1	21
		% within Respondent's Age Group	42.9%	38.1%	14.3%	4.8%	100.0%
		% within Small rewards like praise or gift cards help staff stay motivated	20.9%	20.5%	18.8%	25.0%	20.6%
		% of Total	8.8%	7.8%	2.9%	1.0%	20.6%
Total		Count	43	39	16	4	102
		% within Respondent's Age Group	42.2%	38.2%	15.7%	3.9%	100.0%
		% within Small rewards like praise or gift cards help staff stay motivated	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	42.2%	38.2%	15.7%	3.9%	100.0%

RQ6: Everyone is Treated with Respect and Included

With 56.7% "Very Likely" and 40.2% "Likely," the chi-square ($\chi^2(6) = 0.820$, $p = 0.992$) reveals no age-related difference. These results are consistent with findings by Kovačević et al. (2020), emphasizing that inclusivity practices in learning-oriented workplaces help sustain engagement across generations. The data suggest that organizational fairness and psychological safety are well established in the sampled retail environments.

TABLE 4 13: CROSSTABULATION OF AGE GROUP AND PERCEPTION OF INCLUSIVITY

Respondent's Age Group * Everyone is treated with respect and included Crosstabulation

			Everyone is treated with respect and included			
			Very Likely	Likely	Unlikely	Total
Respondent's Age Group	20-30	Count	24	16	1	41
		% within Respondent's Age Group	58.5%	39.0%	2.4%	100.0%
		% within Everyone is treated with respect and included	43.6%	41.0%	33.3%	42.3%
		% of Total	24.7%	16.5%	1.0%	42.3%
	30-40	Count	12	9	1	22
		% within Respondent's Age Group	54.5%	40.9%	4.5%	100.0%
		% within Everyone is treated with respect and included	21.8%	23.1%	33.3%	22.7%

		% of Total	12.4%	9.3%	1.0%	22.7%
	40-50	Count	12	9	1	22
		% within Respondent's Age Group	54.5%	40.9%	4.5%	100.0%
		% within Everyone is treated with respect and included	21.8%	23.1%	33.3%	22.7%
		% of Total	12.4%	9.3%	1.0%	22.7%
	50-60	Count	7	5	0	12
		% within Respondent's Age Group	58.3%	41.7%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Everyone is treated with respect and included	12.7%	12.8%	0.0%	12.4%
		% of Total	7.2%	5.2%	0.0%	12.4%
Total		Count	55	39	3	97
		% within Respondent's Age Group	56.7%	40.2%	3.1%	100.0%
		% within Everyone is treated with respect and included	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	56.7%	40.2%	3.1%	100.0%

RQ7: Staff Training Has Helped Improve Daily Tasks or Customer Service

Results indicate 57% "Very Likely" and 40% "Likely," with $\chi^2(6) = 0.820$ and $p = 0.992$, signifying no significant variation by age. This uniformity demonstrates that CPD is widely perceived

as beneficial to operational performance and customer satisfaction. The lack of generational disparity echoes Adarkwah's (2024) findings that digital-era learning and adaptive skill-building are now essential and equally valued among all worker categories.

TABLE 4 14: CROSSTABULATION OF AGE GROUP AND PERCEIVED CPD IMPACT ON DAILY WORK

Respondent's Age Group * Everyone is treated with respect and included Crosstabulation

			Everyone is treated with respect and included			
			Very Likely	Likely	Unlikely	Total
Respondent's Age Group	20-30	Count	24	16	1	41
		% within Respondent's Age Group	58.5%	39.0%	2.4%	100.0%
		% within Everyone is treated with respect and included	43.6%	41.0%	33.3%	42.3%
		% of Total	24.7%	16.5%	1.0%	42.3%
	30-40	Count	12	9	1	22
		% within Respondent's Age Group	54.5%	40.9%	4.5%	100.0%
		% within Everyone is treated with respect and included	21.8%	23.1%	33.3%	22.7%
		% of Total	12.4%	9.3%	1.0%	22.7%
	40-50	Count	12	9	1	22

		% within Respondent's Age Group	54.5%	40.9%	4.5%	100.0%
		% within Everyone is treated with respect and included	21.8%	23.1%	33.3%	22.7%
		% of Total	12.4%	9.3%	1.0%	22.7%
	50-60	Count	7	5	0	12
		% within Respondent's Age Group	58.3%	41.7%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Everyone is treated with respect and included	12.7%	12.8%	0.0%	12.4%
		% of Total	7.2%	5.2%	0.0%	12.4%
Total		Count	55	39	3	97
		% within Respondent's Age Group	56.7%	40.2%	3.1%	100.0%
		% within Everyone is treated with respect and included	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	56.7%	40.2%	3.1%	100.0%

4.3. Qualitative Insights (RQ8–RQ10)

This section presents the results of the thematic analysis of the open-ended survey responses (RQ8–RQ10), exploring employees' qualitative perspectives on Continuous Professional Development (CPD) within the retail sector. Thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach, involving familiarization, coding, theme identification, and interpretation.

Responses were condensed into recurring ideas, grouped into broader thematic categories, and linked with existing literature.

Five dominant themes emerged: Innovation and Efficiency, Technology Adoption, Learning Barriers and Constraints, Perceived Importance of CPD, and Motivation and Workplace Engagement.

TABLE 4 15: SUMMARY OF THEMATIC FINDINGS

Theme	Description	Example Quotations	% of Respondents	Supporting Literature
Innovation and Efficiency	Employees recognized that new systems and tools improved workflow speed and accuracy.	"a faster printer with more options (Printing Time)"	40%	(Reynolds & Hristov, 2009); (Wipulanusat et al., 2019)
Technology Adoption and Learning	Respondents linked technological changes to improved service but noted adaptation difficulties.	"A new system it made work slower at first , but when it was understood work was more efficient"	35%	(Edwards, 2021)
Learning Barriers and Constraints	Participants mentioned limited time, inconsistent schedules, and lack of management follow-up.	"The barriers of language sometimes"	25%	(Mungo, 2023)
Perceived Importance of CPD	Most respondents emphasized that continuous learning	"training is important, makes the employee more confidence"	60%	(Das & Dutta, 2021)

	builds confidence and professionalism.			
Motivation and Workplace Engagement	CPD was associated with morale, recognition, and teamwork benefits.	"yes, you get more confident about what you are doing., I think CPD training is useful as it ensure all employees are consistently learning and keeping up with the changes in the retail industry"	45%	(Addair, 2019)

4.3.1. RQ8 – New Ideas, Tools, and Changes

Respondents across all age groups reported experiencing innovation-driven improvements at work. Responses such as *"a faster printer with more options (Printing Time)"* reflected positive reactions to digitalization. These views demonstrate how technological innovation acts as a catalyst for workplace efficiency and reduced cognitive load, aligning with Wipulanusat et al. (2019), who found that innovation in public and service sectors enhances both performance and satisfaction when employees are involved in its implementation. However, a few participants noted adjustment difficulties, citing the learning curve associated with new software or stock systems. Such remarks reflect transitional resistance, consistent with Edwards (2021), who identified that self-efficacy and access to peer support determine successful digital adoption during CPD programs. Overall, RQ8 findings highlight that retail employees perceive workplace innovation as beneficial but contingent upon adequate support and structured training interventions.

4.3.2. RQ9 – Challenges in Learning and Adapting

Under this theme, employees described several obstacles that limit CPD participation. Key issues included time pressure, staff shortages, and inconsistent follow-up after training sessions. For example, one respondent noted, *"The barriers of language sometimes* "Such challenges mirror findings from Mungo (2023), who identified time constraints, workload, and lack of reinforcement as common barriers in self-paced workplace training. Similarly, Das and Dutta (2020) found that,

while employees value learning, retail's operational tempo often restricts sustained engagement. The thematic evidence thus indicates that although training is positively received, organizational structures must be adapted to ensure transfer of learning into practice. Management involvement and scheduling flexibility emerge as crucial enablers to overcome these challenges.

4.3.3 RQ10 – Perceptions of Continuous Professional Training

Respondents overwhelmingly supported the importance of CPD, citing benefits for both personal growth and business performance. Comments such as *"I think CPD training is useful as it ensure all employees are consistently learning and keeping up with the changes in the retail industry"* emphasize employees' recognition of CPD as integral to professionalism, customer relations, and adaptability. This aligns strongly with Das and Dutta (2021), who found that recognition, career progression, and continuous training significantly motivate retail employees. Likewise, Addair (2019) emphasized that CPD enhances employee engagement by satisfying intrinsic needs for competence and belonging. Furthermore, several respondents highlighted team cohesion as a byproduct of shared learning experiences. One participant wrote, *"training is important, makes the employee more confidence."* Such insights reinforce that CPD serves not only as a skill-building mechanism but also as a social bonding process, resonating with collaborative learning models (Reynolds & Hristov, 2009).

The qualitative findings collectively underscore that employees in the retail sector perceive CPD as multifaceted — improving efficiency, enhancing motivation, and reinforcing teamwork, despite challenges of time and adaptation. This supports Vroom's expectancy theory, suggesting that when employees anticipate tangible or psychological rewards (e.g., competence, recognition), their motivation to engage in learning increases (Addair, 2019).

4.4 Summary and Link to Research Questions

This section provides a comprehensive summary of the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses, linking them directly to the three research questions established in Section 1.4. The results from the SPSS descriptive and cross-tabulation analyses (Tables 4.1–4.14; Figures 4.1–4.6) and the thematic analysis of open-ended responses (Table 4.15) collectively provide evidence on how Continuous Professional Development (CPD), training, and innovation influence employee performance, workplace culture, and organizational effectiveness in the UK retail sector.

Research Question 1:

What methods are currently employed by managers in the retail sector to enhance employee effectiveness?

Findings from the quantitative analysis indicate that retail managers primarily employ training and mentorship-based learning to enhance employee effectiveness. As shown in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1, 73.7% of respondents strongly agreed that "staff learn best by working with experienced team members," demonstrating that peer learning and on-the-job mentoring are key CPD strategies. Similarly, Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2 show that 90.3% agreed that short, focused training sessions improve job understanding, confirming the effectiveness of microlearning approaches in fast-paced retail environments.

The qualitative findings (Table 4.15) further reinforce this, with participants highlighting innovations such as *"the new electronic stock system"*, *"automations and templates"*, and *"training people on workable management technology"* as managerial initiatives that improved efficiency and productivity. These outcomes align with Mustafa-Sadiku (2025) and Yertas (2024), who emphasized that consistent, targeted training interventions promote performance by integrating practical skills development with workplace innovation.

Research Question 2:

What opportunities and challenges do managers face when seeking to improve workplace culture?

The analysis revealed several opportunities, including strong team cohesion, inclusivity, and motivational dynamics within retail workplaces. As shown in Table 4.4 and Figure 4.4, over 90% of respondents agreed that *"a friendly team makes staff work harder."* Similarly, Table 4.6 and Figure 4.6 show that 96.9% of respondents believe *"everyone is treated with respect and included."* These findings illustrate that the retail environment supports a positive and inclusive culture where employees feel valued and respected. The qualitative analysis (Table 4.15) expanded on this by identifying *"Motivation and Workplace Engagement"* as a dominant theme. Participants noted that *"when we are trained together, it makes the team feel valued"*, reinforcing the idea that collective

training fosters unity and morale. This aligns with Addair (2019) and Sari et al. (2022), who observed that collaborative learning environments strengthen interpersonal bonds, resulting in higher engagement and reduced turnover. However, challenges also emerged, particularly related to time constraints and resource limitations. Participants noted difficulties such as *"it's hard to find time for training during busy hours"* and *"lack of staff makes it hard to practice what we learn."* These issues mirror Mungo's (2023) findings that retail workers often struggle to balance operational demands with training commitments. Consequently, managers face the dual challenge of maintaining productivity while ensuring sufficient time for continuous learning.

Research Question 3:

How do training initiatives and workplace innovation influence employee performance and organizational effectiveness?

The results clearly demonstrate that training initiatives and innovation have a significant and positive impact on employee performance. As shown in Table 4.7, 100% of respondents agreed that *"staff training has helped improve daily tasks or customer service,"* while Table 4.5 and Figure 4.5 indicate that 80.4% believed *"small rewards like praise or gift cards help staff stay motivated."* These quantitative results highlight that training combined with recognition mechanisms enhances both motivation and service quality.

From the qualitative analysis, employees described the introduction of new technologies and systems that improved workflow. Statements such as *"the new barcode system saves time and reduces mistakes"* and *"a new printer improved printing and tracking orders"* demonstrate how technological innovation enhances job efficiency and reduces operational bottlenecks. Furthermore, participants associated CPD with personal confidence and customer satisfaction, stating that *"training helps us work smarter and handle customers better."* These findings are consistent with Tibyana and Agustini (2025), who found that ongoing skill-based training directly correlates with improved customer service outcomes in service industries. They also align with Das and Dutta (2021), who argue that continuous training not only sharpens technical competence but also fosters adaptability—a crucial factor in an evolving retail landscape.

5. Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Summary of Findings

This study examined how Continuous Professional Development (CPD) influences employee performance, motivation, and workplace culture within the UK retail sector. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses revealed that CPD practices—particularly short, structured training sessions, mentoring, and technological innovation—are vital to enhancing individual and organizational effectiveness. Findings from Section 4.1 (Descriptive Statistics) demonstrated consistently high levels of agreement among employees regarding the positive effects of training and teamwork. As shown in Table 4.1 through Table 4.7, respondents strongly endorsed the benefits of peer learning, short-duration training, supportive teams, and recognition-based rewards. These methods collectively improved job understanding, motivation, and customer service quality.

The cross-tabulation analysis (Section 4.2) confirmed that age had no statistically significant influence on these perceptions, indicating that CPD practices are universally valued across generational cohorts. The qualitative findings (Section 4.3, Table 4.15) provided further insight, revealing that employees experienced tangible workplace improvements from innovations such as automation tools, electronic stock systems, and new equipment. Participants described CPD as a driver of confidence, efficiency, and team unity, though they noted practical barriers like time constraints and inconsistent training follow-up.

5.2. Linking Findings to Research Questions

RQ1: *What methods are currently employed by managers in the retail sector to enhance employee effectiveness?*

The data revealed that managers predominantly use on-the-job mentoring, short training sessions, and technology-driven learning tools. These methods improve efficiency, adaptability, and teamwork across all employee levels (Tables 4.1–4.3).

RQ2: *What opportunities and challenges do managers face when seeking to improve workplace culture?*

Opportunities include the establishment of inclusive, collaborative work environments that foster mutual respect (Table 4.6). Challenges remain in balancing operational workloads with training schedules and resource limitations, echoing findings from Mungo (2023).

RQ3: *How do training initiatives and workplace innovation influence employee performance and organizational effectiveness?*

CPD and technological innovation were found to directly enhance customer service quality and operational efficiency (Table 4.7), validating the strategic importance of employee development to organizational performance.

5.3. Recommendations

5.3.1. Practical Recommendations

1. **Institutionalize CPD Frameworks:**
   Retail organizations should develop standardized CPD frameworks that combine mentoring, microlearning, and digital training tools to sustain employee growth and service quality.

2. **Balance Training and Operations:**
   Management should allocate protected time for training to ensure learning is effectively transferred into practice, even during high-demand retail periods.

3. **Integrate Recognition Systems:**
   As indicated in **Table 4.5**, recognition through small rewards and verbal praise enhances motivation and retention. This should be formalized in employee performance policies.

4. **Leverage Technology for Learning:**
   Employers should embrace digital platforms (e.g., learning management systems, AI-based feedback tools) to facilitate continuous, flexible, and cost-effective CPD delivery.

5. **Enhance Inclusivity in Development Programs:**
   Ensure that training content and delivery methods cater to diverse employee backgrounds and age groups, promoting equitable access to learning opportunities.

5.3.2. Methodological Recommendations for Future Research

1. **Larger and More Diverse Sample:**
   Expanding future studies across multiple retail chains and regions would improve generalizability and enable comparative analysis of small vs. large retailers.

2. **Mixed-Methods or Longitudinal Design:**
   Incorporating longitudinal data collection or mixed-method approaches could better capture changes in employee motivation and performance over time.

3. **Use of Advanced Statistical Techniques:**
   Future researchers could employ regression or structural equation modelling to identify the precise causal pathways between training, motivation, and performance.

4. **Cross-Sector Comparison:**
   Comparing findings with other service sectors (e.g., hospitality, logistics) could contextualize retail CPD effectiveness within broader industry frameworks.

5.4. LIMITATIONS

Several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the study relied on self-reported data from a relatively small sample (n=50), which may introduce bias or limit representativeness. Second, the cross-sectional design captures perceptions at a single point in time, rather than tracking long-term effects of CPD interventions. Third, while the inclusion of both quantitative and qualitative data enhanced depth, limited access to organizational records and performance metrics prevented objective measurement of productivity changes.

Despite these constraints, the research provides a valuable empirical foundation for understanding CPD's role in the UK retail sector and offers practical recommendations for sustaining employee engagement and performance through continuous learning.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

Employee Survey – Small UK Businesses

This survey is designed to understand how training, feedback, motivation, innovation, and workplace culture affect employees in small retail businesses across the UK.

Your answers will help improve working conditions and support better management practices.

All responses are confidential. Please answer honestly.

Instructions for Participants

Please read each statement carefully and tick the box that best describes how likely it is true in your shop.

Use the following scale for your answers:

☑ Very Likely ☑ Likely ☑ Not Sure ☑ Unlikely ☑ Very Unlikely

There is also a section at the end where you can write any comments or suggestions you have.

If you need help understanding any part of the survey, please ask your manager or supervisor.

Section A: Business Information

- Date:

- Name of the business:

- Number of employees:

- Nature of the business (e.g., Decorators, health care, salons, clothing, food, electronics): Clothes mending/ dry cleaning.

Section B: About You

- Age: ☐ 20–30 ☐ 31–40 ☐ 41–50 ☐ 51–60

- Job role:

- Years of experience in retail: ☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 1–3 years ☐ 4–6 years ☐ More than 6 years

1. Section: Training and Development

Staff learn best by working with experienced team members.

[Very Likely Likely Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

2. Short training sessions help staff understand their job better.

- [Very Likely Likely Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

3. Section: Performance Monitoring and Feedback

Team meetings help staff understand how to improve.

[Very Likely Likely Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

4. Section: Motivation and Engagement

A friendly team makes staff work harder.

[Very Likely Likely Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

5. Small rewards like praise or gift cards help staff stay motivated.

[Very Likely Likely Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

6. Section: Workplace Culture

Everyone is treated with respect and included.

[Very Likely Likely Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

Section: Training and Innovation

7. In what ways has staff training helped improve daily tasks or customer service in your business?As a result: Staff know how to talk to customer better. [Very Likely Likely Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

8. Can you describe any new ideas, tools, or changes introduced in your business that made work easier or faster?

9. What challenges have you faced when trying to learn new skills or adapt to changes at work?

10. Do you think continuous professional training for employees in the small business is important in the UK? If so, please give your reason below.

Section: Comments or Suggestions

Please write anything else you'd like to share:

_____

_____

Appendix 2: Questionnaire Survey

Employee Survey – Small UK Businesses

This survey is designed to understand how training, feedback, motivation, innovation, and workplace culture affect employees in small retail businesses across the UK.

Your answers will help improve working conditions and support better management practices.

All responses are confidential. Please answer honestly.

Instructions for Participants

Please read each statement carefully and tick the box that best describes how likely it is true in your shop.

Use the following scale for your answers:

☑ Very Likely ☑ Likely ☑ Not Sure ☑ Unlikely ☑ Very Unlikely

There is also a section at the end where you can write any comments or suggestions you have.

If you need help understanding any part of the survey, please ask your manager or supervisor.

Section A: Business Information

- Date: 10.9.25
- Name of the business: RJM HOMES
- Number of employees: 1
- Nature of the business (e.g., Decorators, health care, salons, clothing, food, electronics): Clothes mending/ dry cleaning. CONSTRUCTION

Section B: About You

- Age: ☐ 20–30 ☐ 31–40 ☐ 41–50 ☒ 51–60
- Job role: MANAGER/BUILDER
- Years of experience in retail: ☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 1–3 years ☐ 4–6 years ☒ More than 6 years

1. Section: Training and Development

Staff learn best by working with experienced team members.

[Very Likely Likely Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

2. Short training sessions help staff understand their job better.

- [Very Likely Likely Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

3. Section: Performance Monitoring and Feedback

Team meetings help staff understand how to improve.

[Very Likely Likely Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

4. Section: Motivation and Engagement

A friendly team makes staff work harder.

[Very Likely Likely Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

5. Small rewards like praise or gift cards help staff stay motivated.

[Very Likely Likely Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

6. Section: Workplace Culture

Everyone is treated with respect and included.

[Very Likely Likely Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

Section: Training and Innovation

7. In what ways has staff training helped improve ~~daily tasks~~ or customer service in your business?As a result: Staff know how to talk to customer better [Very Likely Likely Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

TRAINING WELL ALWAYS GIVES GOOD RESULTS

8. Can you describe any new ideas, tools, or changes introduced in your business that made work easier or faster? TRAINING PEOPLE ON WORKABLE MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY

9. What challenges have you faced when trying to learn new skills or adapt to changes at work?

WHEN TRYING TO LEARN NEW SKILLS, LACK OF STANDARDIZED CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY

10. Do you think continuous professional training for employees in the small business is important in the UK? If so, please give your reason below. YES, VERY MUCH. SO MANY CHANGES HAPPENING, THEY NEED TO KEEP UP WITH THAT

Section: Comments or Suggestions

Please write anything else you'd like to share:

WELL TRAINED EMPLOYEES ARE THE ESSENCE TO SUCCESS.

APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

Employee Survey – Small UK Businesses

This survey is designed to understand how training, feedback, motivation, innovation, and workplace culture affect employees in small retail businesses across the UK.

Your answers will help improve working conditions and support better management practices.

All responses are confidential. Please answer honestly.

Instructions for Participants

Please read each statement carefully and tick the box that best describes how likely it is true in your shop.

Use the following scale for your answers:

☑ Very Likely ☑ Likely ☑ Not Sure ☑ Unlikely ☑ Very Unlikely

There is also a section at the end where you can write any comments or suggestions you have.

If you need help understanding any part of the survey, please ask your manager or supervisor.

Section A: Business Information

- Date: 3.9.2025
- Name of the business: G&G Foods Supplies Ltd
- Number of employees: APPROX. 80X
- Nature of the business (e.g., Decorators, health care, salons, clothing, food, electronics): Clothes mending/ dry cleaning. Food Supplements manufacturer

Section B: About You

- Age: ☑ 20–30 ☐ 31–40 ☐ 41–50 ☐ 51–60
- Job role: Delivery manager
- Years of experience in retail: ☐ Less than 1 year ☑ 1–3 years ☐ 4–6 years ☐ More than 6 years

1. Section: Training and Development

Staff learn best by working with experienced team members.

[Very Likely (Likely) Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

2. Short training sessions help staff understand their job better.

- [Very Likely (Likely) Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

3. Section: Performance Monitoring and Feedback

Team meetings help staff understand how to improve.

[Very Likely (Likely) Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

4. Section: Motivation and Engagement

A friendly team makes staff work harder.

[Very Likely (Likely) Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

5. Small rewards like praise or gift cards help staff stay motivated.

[Very Likely (Likely) Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

6. Section: Workplace Culture

Everyone is treated with respect and included.

(Very Likely) Likely Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

Section: Training and Innovation

7. In what ways has staff training helped improve daily tasks ~~or~~ customer service in your business?As a result: Staff know how to talk to customer better. [Very Likely (Likely) Not Sure Unlikely Very Unlikely]

8. Can you describe any new ideas, tools, or changes introduced in your business that made work easier or faster? TEAM COOPERATION WHERE ONE KNOWS HIS/HER ROLE AND ACTS WHEN NEEDED OR ASKED SO THINGS ARE FLOWING AND THEY DON'T GET POSTPONED OR DELAYED.

9. What challenges have you faced when trying to learn new skills or adapt to changes at work?

WORKING AS AN INDIVIDUAL WITHOUT THE TEAM SUPPORT AND SPIRIT.

10. Do you think continuous professional training for employees in the small business is important in the UK? If so, please give your reason below.

100%, THEY BECOME MORE COMPETENT, HENCE MORE VALUABLE FOR THE BUSINESS AND THEN THE BUSINESS CAN EXPAND AND DO EVEN BETTER WITH LONGEVITY.

Section: Comments or Suggestions

Please write anything else you'd like to share:

I LIKE THIS SURVEY. FRIENDLY ATTITUDE AND APPROACH WITH KNOWLEDGE AND CONFIDENCE MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE AND IT'S A KEYNOTE FOR HAPPY STAFF AND CREATI~~VITY~~NG & MAINTAINING REAL TEAM.

ONE CAN RELY ON ANOTHER.