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# PROMOTING PERFORMANCE THROUGH INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN SOUTH –SOUTH NIGERIA

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***Abstract***

*This study investigated the influence of industrial relations management practices on the performance of manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria. Specifically, it evaluated the effects of employer-employee relations, labour relations, group relations, and public relations on firm performance. To achieve the study's objectives, four research questions were raised and four hypotheses were formulated. Relevant literature was reviewed to provide theoretical and empirical grounding. A descriptive survey design was adopted. The study population comprised 385 employees drawn from four selected manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria. Using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table, a sample of 191 respondents was selected. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed significant relationships between each dimension of industrial relations management (employer-employee relations, labour relations, group relations, and public relations) and the performance of manufacturing firms. The study concluded that sound industrial relations management practices foster employee satisfaction, enhance productivity, support policy development, and create a work environment that promotes motivation, morale, and positive attitudes. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by empirically establishing the multidimensional impact of industrial relations management practices on firm performance within the manufacturing sector in South-South Nigeria—a region with limited prior focus in industrial relations research. The study provides practical insights for managers and policymakers on how specific aspects of industrial relations can drive organizational performance. It also enriches the literature by integrating multiple facets of industrial relations (employer-employee, labour, group, and public relations) into a unified performance framework for manufacturing firms.*

***Keywords****: Industrial Relations Practices, Firms Performance, Labour Unions.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Background to the Study

Industrial Relations arises from the relationships between employees or labour. union& organization management and employers' associations, government and insulations, According to Frank & Jeffry, 2020, the three main parties in industrial relations are: (1) State/Government - "which is a regulator and peacemaker, sets the legal framework within which other actors conduct or relate with each other in industrial relations practice'. (2) Labour/trade Unions "which represent the interest of employees. The trade unions are much interested in economic and noneconomic issues like power-sharing both in the workplace and m the larger society, The unions like the other actors have great responsibilities for good industrial relations and to ensure that the mass power in their hand is channeled to a constructive end". (3) Employers-Employers' Associations-"by which the employers are represented by their industrial employer& associations", Employer& associations protect their members against, excessive demands from powerful unions, negotiate on behalf of their members and render advisory and managerial assistance as the case may be. The role of the employers and the unions often determines the course of events in industrial relations (Ademola, 2021).

Industrial relations management is an organisation's strategic scheme designed to help administer and coordinate business function. The goal is to help organisations manage their workforce in the most efficient and effective manner, in order to achieve set objectives. For this reason, organizations need industrial relations management practice to succeed and achieve organizational goal. Industrial relations management practice includes labour relation, Employer-employee relation, group relation and public relation among others (Ugo & Awulikam, 2020), which is the focus of this study. Industrial relations arise due to interactions between different persons/parties. These parties according to Sholokvu & Uteri, 2016) are: supervisors, workers trade unions, employers' associations. Interactive process rakes place between, supervisors and industrial workers, supervisors and group/team members, management and trade union leaders, employers" federations and workers' unions.

Employee-Employer relation is a broad term that incorporates many issues from collective bargaining, negotiations, employment legislation to more recent considerations such as work life balance, equal opportunities and managing diversity (Armstrong & Stephens, 2016; Works. Osibanjo Ogunnaike Salau & Ighinoba, 2016). It comprises the practice or initiatives for ensuring that Employees arc happy and are productive. Akinbode, Sokefun, Ogunrinade and Ebeloku (2023) reveal, labour relation is more than a static interpretation of contract between an employee and an employer. Employee role in organization has grown over time"; thus, labor relations become a way to jive, to self-development and to obtain recognition. Employers realize that to keep motivated and committed people in an organization, it needs more than a salary. Nunung, Raden, Mohammad and Erna (2017) report, "Group relation is a relationship between groups and their thrmation takes different dimensions in relation to the interplay of several factors in their environment When a good dynamic exists within a group to work toward a common goal, each individual member will perform effectively and achieve goals set by the group". Nwanmuoh, Chi, Oghuka, Ifediora, Charles and Godwin (2023) say, Public relation is a vital pan of any business' communications and reputation-building strategy This is about relationships and reputation which involve gaining trust among publics an organisation tries to reach".

The act of managing and maintaining positive industrial relations within and outside an organization is known as industrial relations management. Qnyeiugbe Aghara. Olohi and Chidiogo (2018) is of the view, "The management of industrial relations play a crucial role in promoting an harmonious work environment by addressing employee concerns, handling labor disputes. and ensuring compliance with labor laws and regulations". Sholokwu and Olori (2016), reveals, 'Industrial relations managers work closely with human resource teams and senior management to develop effective employee engagement strategies and foster a productive and motivated workforce", Expertise in labor relations and conflict resolution contributes to a cohesive and well-functioning organization (Arugu & Wosu, 2020; Ahmad S. & Shahntd, 2021).

Industrial relations system of a firm is influenced by different factors, According to Mirza (2022), these are: "institutional factors, economic factors, social factors, technological factors, psychological factors, political factors, enterprise-related factors and global factors", which determine the texture of industrial relations in any setting, in fact they act interact, and reinforce one another in the course of developing industrial relations. Understanding industrial relations is important for human resources professionals and managers, as it allows positive workplace development relationships. Knowing how to manage these relations effectively can provide companies with methods that foster productivity and success (Abushawish, 2020; Nwunkwo, Nkechi & Adanso, 2023), Employers do not only hire workers hut also start a new relationship. Thus managing relationship becomes a salient factor which determines performance and productivity at workplace. The goal of every organization is to make profit and maximize productivity and the type of relations built in the organization can affect organizational goals either positively or negatively. White strong employee-employer relationship drives high performance, employee's happiness and increase productivity; weak relation leads to poor performance, creates unhealthy tensions and conflicts, leads to inefficiency and unproductivity (Adeleke, Jianguo & Uchechi, 2015).

There are various reasons industrial relations management practice is relevant for businesses. According to Sanne1 (2018). these reasons include employee development, higher engagement levels and reduced workplace conflict. Ana-Maria and Aria (2017) argued. 'Industrial relations are important for employee development because it provides them with the resources they require to be successful in their positions. These resources might include training materials, administrative support or individual meetings; offering employees the ability to continually develop within company might also help increase productivity levels because they can seek ways to develop skills or volunteer for new responsibilities, Firms experience higher employee engagement levels after implementing effective industrial relations because employees who believe their company invests in them may possess more motivation to meet goals. This also help lower firms turnover rates because team members who are engaged may be less likely to seek jobs elsewhere. Higher engagement levels that stem from positive industrial relations are 'also beneficial for increasing company output, which may allow organisanonal growth in its market and eventually expand. Transparent and positive relations between employers and ernplo5ees are also important as they help lessen the amount of workplace conflict, If policies, rules and values are communicated clearly, firms experience fewer instances of miscommunication and there may be less conflict if a problem arises (Lievcns, 2017; Mazici & Gölgeli, 2017). Base on the aforementioned, the seminar work examined industrial relations management practice and manufacturing firms' performance in South-South Nigeria.

## The Problem

Industrial relations are of great importance in industrial life. These relations have great bearing on the economic, social and political spheres of a firm. In an organisation, if relations between labour and management are cordial, there will be industrial peace and interests of both parties will be safeguarded. However, organisations where industrial relations are strained, face lot of problems. The atmosphere of such organisations is always surcharged with industrial unrest leading either to strikes or lockouts. Organisations which ignore the importance of industrial relations face high cost of production, adverse effect on efficiency. low-grade production, negligence in the execution of work, absenteeism among the workers, high rate of labour turnover to mention hut a few.

Poor industrial relations can affects major parties such as: (I) effect on workers: - “include loss of wages, physical injury or death on account of violence during labour unrest, excesses by employers, economic losses, bitterness in relations, adverse effect on career”. (2) Effect on employers / industrialists: - “include less production, less profit, had effect on organisation, bad effect on human relations, damage to machines and equipment adverse effect on development of companies and burden of fixed expenses”. (3) Effect on government:- “include loss of revenue, lack of order in society, blame by different panics”. Other effects include. (a) effect on consumers such as rise in prices, scarcity of goods and bad effect on quality of goods (h) Adverse effect on international trade such as fall in exports and rise in imports, hindrance in economic development of the country and uncertainty in economy.

Almost all sections of the society suffer loss in one way or the other due to poor industrial relations management. In order to maintain peace in industrial units, it is of utmost importance that employers and workers should endeavour to establish cordial human relations and properly manage b stakeholders. Perhaps the main cause of poor industrial relations results from inefficiency and labour unrest: which is a mental laziness on the part of both management and labour, Management is not sufficiently concerned to ascertain the causes of inefficiency and unrest following the laissez-faire policy, until it is faced with strikes and more serious unrest. Even with regard to methods of work, management does not bother to devise the best method but leaves it mainly to the subordinates to work it out for themselves. Contempt on the part of the employers towards the workers is another major cause. Thus, the reasons for this study to evaluate industrial Relations Management Practice and Manufacturing Firms Performance in South-South Nigeria.

**Research Questions**

i. What is the effect of employer-employee relation on manufacturing firms’ performance in South-South Nigeria?

ii. What is the effect of labour relation on manufacturing firms' performance in South-South Nigeria?
iii. What is the effect of group relation on manufacturing firm's performance in South-South Nigeria?
iv. What is the effect of public relation on manufacturing firm's performance in South-South Nigeria?

**Objectives of the Study**

The general objectives of this study are to evaluate industrial relations management practice and manufacturing firms' performance in South-South Nigeria. The specific objectives are to;

i. evaluate the effect of employer-employee relation on manufacturing firms' performance in South-South Nigeria.
ii. assess the effect of labour relation on manufacturing firms' performance in South-South Nigeria
iii. determine the effect of group relation on manufacturing firms' performance in South-South Nigeria.
iv. examine the effect of Public relation on manufacturing firms' performance in South-South Nigeria.

**Hypotheses of the Study**

**Ho1**: There is no significant relationship between employer-employee relation and manufacturing firms' performance in South-South Nigeria.

**Ho2**: The labour relations has no significant relationship with manufacturing firms' performance in South-South Nigeria

**Ho3**: The group relation and manufacturing firms' performance in South-South Nigeria has no significant relationship

**Ho4**: There is no significant relationship between public relation and manufacturing firms4 performance in South-South Nigeria.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Conceptual Review

### Industrial Relation

Industrial Relation is one of the problems that can jeopardize firms' success, The term "industrial Relations (IR)" is also known as a "labour Management Relations" or &ia1ur relations", The term, Industrial Relations" comprises of two terms (Emuchay, 2018): (1). industry - refers to "Any productive activity in which an individual or a group of individuals is are engaged". (2.) Relations - it means "the relationships that exist within the industry between the employer and his workmen", Adagbabiri and Okolie (2017) the term industrial relations refers to "the whole field of relationship that exists because of necessary collaboration in employment process of modem industry". Industrial relations are nothing but "Employment Relationship" in an industrial setting. According to Osah *et al*. (2017), industrial relations includes all "the laws, titles, regulation, and agreements awards of court, customs, traditions, as well as policy framework laid by the government". Oguwa, (2022) define industrial relations as the management of relationship between employer and employees with ultimate objectivity of achieving optimum level of productivity in terms of goods and services. Spector (2018) argued that competition forced industrial relations to perform a strategic role as a business partner instead of adopting industrial relations practices only to take disciplinary actions and advocating employees. Industrial relations managers exercise their expertise to pros ide guidelines to the line managers on how to improve performance and behavior of the employees and provide assistance to the business managers in resolving employee grievances, disputes and legal matters. Thus, Industrial Relation invokes e study of conditions of work, mainly the level of wages, security of employment, social conflict, and cultural interactions legal aspects of disputes under laws etc. international Labour Organization (ILO) in Fatile and Adekanbi (2017) reveals, 'industrial relations deal with either the relationship between the state and employers and workers organizations or the relation between the occupational organizations themselves". According to Spector (2018), -industrial relation is a relationship between management and employees or among employees and their organization that characterizes and grows out of employment". According to Kormene, Seth and Ojiabo (2017), Industrial relations is concerned with the systems and procedures used by unions and employers to determine the reward for effort and other conditions of employment, to protect the interests of the employed and their employers and to regulate the ways in which employers treat their employees', Thus, Industrial relations refer the relationship that exists between the employer and employees in the day-to-day working of an organization (Solanki, 2022).

**Industrial Relation Management**

Employees cannot work together without positive relationships with their colleagues and leadership team, Proper relationship management helps build effective teams where everyone respects each other, collaborates, listens to new ideas, and works together seamlessly. To maintain positive employee relations. Raimi and Adias (2018) revealed that organizations must first new employees as stakeholders and contributors in an organisation. Adopting this perspective encourages management and executives to seek employee feedback, value their input, and consider the employee experience when making business decisions.

Industrial Relations Management is of a paramount importance to ensure a healthy and cooperative work environment, minimizing labor disputes and conflicts, fostering positive employee relations, boost morale, productivity, and employee loyalty, leading to higher retention rates and reduced turnover (Ugbudian. 2017). Expertise in labor law and regulations ensures legal compliance mitigating potential legal risks for organization. Additionally. effective employee engagement strategies developed by Industrial Relations Management practice positively impact organizational culture, fostering a motivated and engaged workforce essential for achieving long-term business success.

Industrial relations management involves (Adejuwon, 2020): (1) Managing relationships with unions & ensuring that the Company's treatment of employees is consistent with its core business values and objectives. (2) Handling complaints, managing grievance procedures, and facilitating counseling in conjunction with other stakeholders. (3) Investigating and resolving complex or critical industrial relations issues in a timely and effective manner. (4) Collating and analyzing employee feedback across all levels on a regular basis and revising people programs and policies to generate more positive outcomes. (5) Participating in and/or leading projects focused on continuous improvement.

The major parties in industrial relations according to Armstrong (2019) include: employer, employees and state/government that plays significant roles in successful management of industrial relation. Industrial relations management practice involves: Employer-employee relations, labour relations, group relations and public relations among. The bargaining power :1 the employers is weakened in comparison to that of trade unions, though they have high bargaining power when compared to that of employees. So, they form into associations to equate their bargaining power with trade union, and these associations protect the employer by putting pressure on government and trade union. Workers play a crucial role in industrial relation. Worker as a whole includes his working age, Educational background, Social and family background, Psychological traits, Talents, Skills, Culture, Attitude towards others work. Workers form into their associations called "Trade Unions" to get their problems solved. The trade unions work for workers economic interest through collective bargaining by bringing the pressure on the management through economic and political strategies. Government plays a balancing role in industrial relations. Government has its influence on industrial relations through industrial relations policy, Labour policy, Labour law implementation, Acting as a mediator in the process of conciliation and adjudication. Government regulates the behaviour of both the employer association and workers organizations (Solaki, 2022; Uzoh 2017).

**Manufacturing Firm**

A manufacturing business is defined as a business that uses components, additional parts, or raw materials to make a finished good (Devon & Aaron, 2023). The product is then either sold directly to other industries, consumers, or to a store that consumers shop at to obtain an item. Many of the products that consumers buy and utilize are the result of manufacturing. They undergo the process of design and assembly before arriving in stores for purchase. According to Devon and Aaron (2023), manufacturing is defined as the conversion of raw materials into finished commodities through the use of tools, labor, and machinery. Raw materials include items such as wood, stone, and ore. They become finished goods including lumber, pillars, or steel for construction. In this study, four manufacturing firm were used selected from the South-South region of Nigeria namely: (1) Brightway Glove located at 3 High Tension Road, Ekorokoro Community, Aleto, Eleme, Port Harcourt Rivers State Nigeria (2) Life Flour Mill Sapele, Delta State (3) Glosa Roofing Benin City, Edo State and (4) Senalux Paint of 6 ,Banusha, Kpansia, Yenagoa, Bayelsa, Nigeria.

**Organizational Performance**

Organizational performance is defined as how well a firm executes her duties and responsibilities. Many companies assess their employees' performance on an annual or quarterly basis to define certain areas that need improvement and to encourage further success in areas that are meeting or exceeding expectations (Vatan, Ardali & Shahin, 2022) in order to determine the overall organizational performance. Performance is a critical factor in organizational success, helping to also improve overall productivity, profitability, and employee morale. By assessing organizational performance regularly, companies can identify areas that need improvement, provide support and training to employees, and ensure that everyone is working towards the same goals (Vatan *et al,* 2022).

**Conceptual Framework**

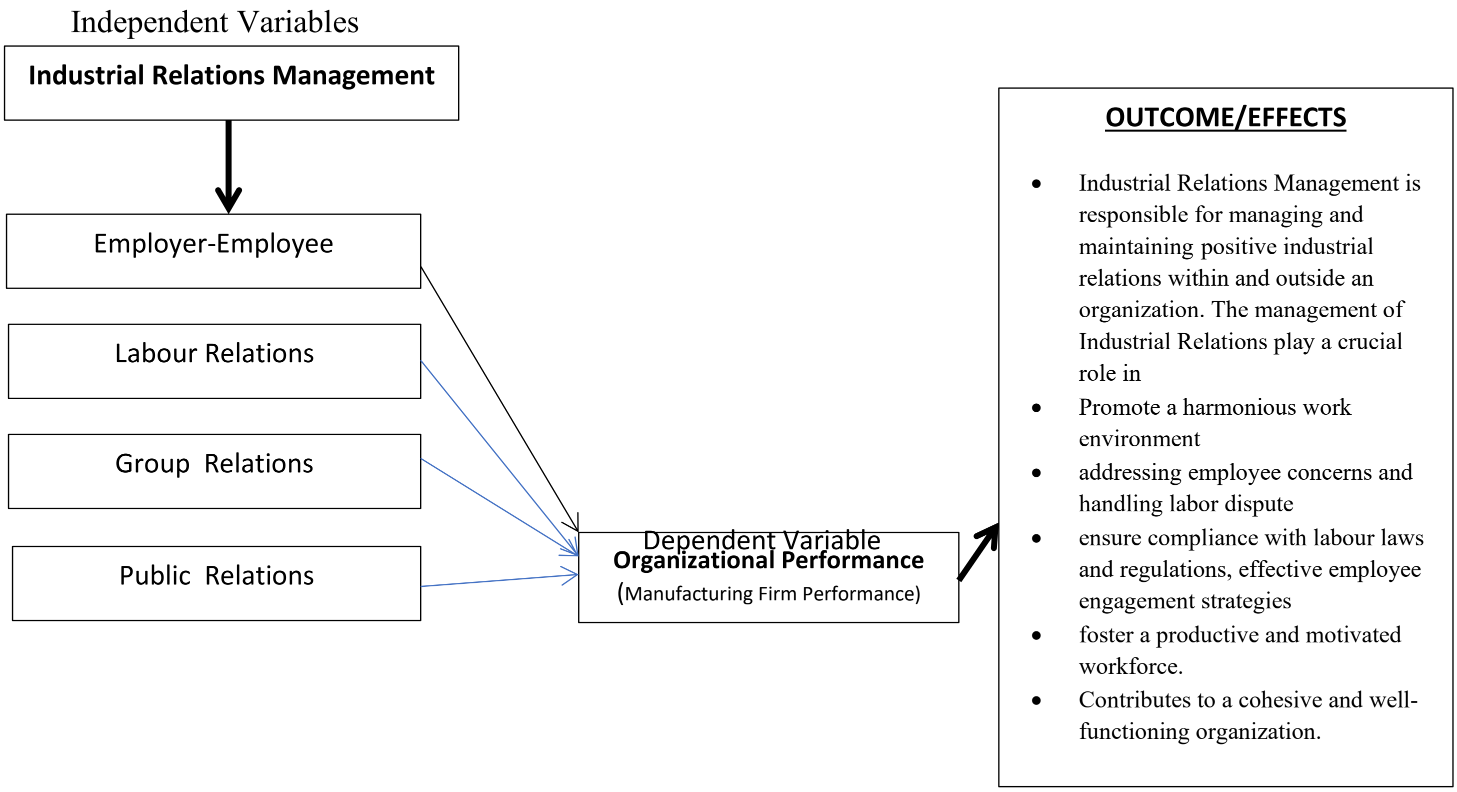


**Fig. 1:** Conceptual Framework of Industrial Relations and Manufacturing Firm Performance
Source: Researcher (2024)

Fig. 1 shows that, the independent variables: employer-employee relations, labour relations, group relations and public relations have significant impacts on manufacturing firms' performance (dependent variable). These impacts are beneficiary to both employers and employees. Organisations that implement good industrial relations maintain positive industrial relations within and outside an organization, promote a harmonious work environment, addressing employee concerns and handling labor dispute, ensure compliance with labor laws and regulations, effective employee engagement strategies, foster a productive and motivated workforce and contributes to a cohesive and well-functioning organization.

**Effect of Employer-employee relation on Organisational Performance**

Employees are among organization's most important resources and coined as most valuable assets. The nature and amount of work performed by them have a direct impact on the productivity of an organization. So, maintaining healthy employee relations in an organization is a pre-requisite for organizational growth and success (Abushawish, 2020). In most countries, manufacturing firms form core of the economy. For these businesses to be successful, the frontline employees play an important role to ensure that the set objective of organization is achieved effectively by maximizing the use of the available limited resources to maximize revenue which depends on employees' attitude toward the organization (Kyasimiire, 2021; Onyango, 2019). The greater their attitudes towards their work, the greater their work will be. Employees' job performance has been defined as how employees fulfill their job duties and execute their required tasks which in-turn affects organizational performance (Oguwa, 2022).

However, employee attitude is significantly influenced by the kind of relationship that employees have with employer. It is the responsibility of management and entire organization to ensure that there is a conducive environment to cultivate positive attitude in the employees. It has been reported that the relationship employees have with their employer (Oguwa, 2022), and their attitude affects the performance of the organization. If the relationship is positive, it fosters a positive attitude among the employees, and in turn they are motivated in their duties. This leads to overall organizational improvement in its efforts to achieve set goals (Spector, 2018; Worlu *et al.,* 2016).

Employer-employee relationship ensure that employees are happy and are productive, offer assistance in a variety of ways including employee recognition, policy development and interpretation, and all types of problem solving and dispute resolution. It involves handling the pay-work bargain, dealing with employment practices, terms and conditions of employment, issues arising from employment, providing employees with a voice and communicating with employees (Frank & Jeffrey, 2020). It also contributes to satisfactory productivity, increase in employee morale and motivation (Ahmad & Shahzad, 2021)

**Effect of Labour relation on Organisational Performance**

Labor relation is a term use to define the process between employers and employees, management and unions in order to make decisions. The decisions taken refer to wages, working conditions, hours of work, and safety at work, security and grievances (Ana-Maria &

Ana, 2017). Wages and benefits received by employees for their work represent the compensation or "the price paid by employers for their workers' services". Wage and salary are considered as most important and difficult collective bargaining issue. In the employment relationships, the collective bargaining process has several implication at individual levels, for the employers, as a determinant of production and labor costs, among employers on the competition market, between employers and employees as a distribution of added value, for employees, as a key factor for their income and sustainability on a dynamic labor market, among employees, expressing the solidarity through the 'wage floors' applying to different group of workers at a given bargaining level (Emuchay, 2018).

Parties could negotiate the total package of wage and benefits in individual terms or in collective terms. The aim of labor relations is that, employee must be paid for their work, and employers must receive qualitative work. Also, the negotiations reflect the interest of all the parties involved such as managers, employees through their representatives and government (Akinbode *et al*, 2023).

**Effect of Group Relation on Organisational Performance**

Groups abound in all human settings and their formation takes different dimensions in relation to the interplay of several factors in their environment. The term, group according to Adeleke (2015), is used for two or more individuals who come together and interact with each other in order to accomplish a certain goal. The group concept is defined diversely in the social psychology and sociology (Monique & Michael, 2015).

When good dynamic exists within a group working toward a common goal, each individual member will perform effectively and achieve goals set by the group. Poor group dynamics can adversely affect performance, leading to a negative outcome on the common goal (Arugu & Wosu, 2020). Group relations can have a significant impact on an organization, both positive and negative. Positively it can (1) increased productivity (2) improved decision-making (3) increased innovation and (4) improved morale (Adeleke, 2015; Williamson, 2016; Arugu & Wosu, 2020).

**Effect of Public Relation on Organisational Performance**

The primary task entrusted upon public relations personnel is to keep a company's image clean and positive and, to steer clear of any negative news. Poor public relations in media are something that every organisation faces off and on. However, Ritu (2024) argues, "companies can regain their footing if handled tactfully, whereas mishandling of the issue may permanently damage the public perception". Bad publicity affects how clients view a business so much so that this could result in financial losses. Zeb-Obipi (2018) says, "People associate different businesses with their brands; bad reputation has the potential to damage brand equity in the tong term which can result in customers having a negative perception of a business". Therefore, it is vital that messaging reflects key priorities and cohesive thinking before being disseminated to the public.

Reputation building and management is extremely crucial. The public relations resource of a brand plays the most important role often, they are the face of company for media, and at times, for public. They are honest and positive about negative reviews. Customers by default will choose a brand they know or feel they trust and public relation can build that trust by creating or building upon a company's reputation so that it becomes much easier to attract and retain customers (Buhmanii, Macnamara & Zerfass, 2019). A good public relations professional will ensure that external communications are well targeted in order to reach the right audiences. By keeping its local audiences well informed, they will have greater trust in the company and in times of crisis the company's reputation won't be so easily harmed. Maintaining goodwill is an important part of how public relation affects a business's success because at a time of negativity a company's value may decrease, its profits and sales may decrease but if its external and internal communication is effective and is maintained, its reputation should stay intact and the company will be able to recover (Yahaya & Abubakar, 2017; Cacciatore & Meng, 2022).

There are other advantages of a 'well-thought-out public relations strategy. These include (Nguru & Ibrahim, 2018; Onsongo, Mberia & Jjuuko, 2017): increasing brand credibility, increasing sales and leads, positive brand image and cost-effectiveness.

## 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### The Pluralist Theory of industrial Relations

The Pluralist Theory of industrial relations was propounded by Dunlop (1958) who says, "The workplace conflict is inevitable". Dunlop's theory basically states, "the industrial relations system is really a social subsystem, and its actions are dependent on three factors: technology, the economy, and the distribution of political power". He further states, "the industrial system is comprised of three distinct parts: management organisations, workers, and government agencies". The theory operates in the basis that business operation are complex social structures that are made of various interest groups. Out of these interest groups, the management and the employee are two. From the nature of the factory system, the management and the employees will always have different values and objectives in mind. As a result, there will be different points of authority in the organization that will always be prone to conflict over the organization tasks and allocation of rewards. When the inevitability of the conflict is identified and accepted, the believers of this perspective regard conflict as healthy organizational activity. This is because, through conflict, the employees are sharing their grievances and bringing to the surface instead of keeping it within. Also, when conflicts arise, the management are given a stir to look for a new way of handling the issue ensuring the best results possible.

In regards to this study, the pluralists believe that when managers acknowledge the existence of competing authoritative source, the industrial issues are better addressed on a collective basis. This theory simply means organizational conflicts are inevitable because of the difference in value that exists between the employees and the employer. But when this conflicts are resolved then the employee and employers can provide a peaceful environment which can enable them to achieve their objectives and goals successfully.

**Empirical Review**

Sholokwu and Olori (2016) investigated management practices and industrial harmony in oil and gas firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study examined the relationship between Management Practices and Industrial Harmony in the Oil and Gas Firms in Rivers State. Sample size of 343 were derived using Taro Yamane formula to from the population of 2400 respondents that consist of managers and employees in twelve oil and gas firms in Rivers State. Descriptive survey method of research was adopted and data were collected through questionnaire. The demographic data were analyzed using simple percentage and Mean score were used in the analysis of items on the questionnaire The Speannans Rank Conelatron statistical method was used to test the seven hypotheses at 0.01 level of significance which was facilitated by Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The results revealed a significant relationship between Management practice and Industrial harmony. It was also found that organizational culture significantly moderates the relationship between managerial practices and industrial harmony in Oil and Gas Companies in Rivers State. Therefore, the study concludes that Management practice affects Industrial harmony in Oil and Gas Companies in Rivers State. Based on the findings, the study recommended that Oil and Gas

Companies should embark on good management practices by implementing collective agreement, reducing casualisation of staff and to develop a promotion policy, to fewer incidences of strike and grievances to attain industrial harmony. However, this research is not exhaustive; hence, it suggests that future research should be carried out on the effect of Staff casualisation practices on industrial harmony in manufacturing firms in Rivers state.

Aria-Maria and Aria (2017) examined the labor relations through the role of trade unions, collective bargaining, wages and benefits across the European Union. We conclude that labor relations have a direct influence on the labor market, designing the lines for taking decisions in organizations, but also, by governments. Our argumentation explains the relationship between employers and employees through legal rights (established by the law), negotiation process, collective bargaining, 'actors' in this process, wage and benefits, social and security protection.

Samwel (2018) examined the effect of employee relations on employee performance and organizational performance and at the same time identify various employee relations practices used by small organizations in Tanzania. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design and used a stratified random sampling technique to select a sample size of 387respondents from selected small organizations in Tanzania. Data was collected using structured questionnaires and interviews and analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis and the results presented using tables. The findings of the study show that small organizations in Tanzania are aware of the benefits of maintaining good employee relations and correct remedial actions taken to minimize poor employee relations in the organization. The findings further indicate a positive significant relationship between employee relations and employee performance as well as between employee relations and organization performance. Moreover, the findings reveal the use of unfair labour practices in small organizations in Tanzania. The study recommends that small organizations in Tanzania should focus more on implementing fair labour practices and building effective and sustainable employee relations that will ensure their growth and survival.

Nwanmuoh (2023) examined the effect of public relations planning on human resources management performance in the Independent National Electoral Commission in Nigeria. Data were collected through a mailed survey-designed questionnaire to the senior and junior staff.

The staff were stratified and randomly selected from a sampling frame of employees. Multiple linear regressions and the Z-test are used for the analysis. The results reveal that public relations planning affect human resources management practice and performance. The Z-critical value suggests a significant difference between the mean ratings of senior staff and junior staff on the strategies for credible performance in the human resource management. The Z-calculated value is greater than the Z-critical value confirming a significant difference between the mean ratings of junior and senior staff on the effectiveness of public relation planning strategies in the human resource management performance. The government is should play a crucial role to guarantee effective public relations planning by employing or deploying qualified personnel, evaluating electoral programs, and staff development programs. The government should provide adequate finding to the Independent National Electoral Commission to build public trust on the information disseminated to the public. The appointment of high-profile staff should be void of biases, prejudices, and unethical practices which will decrease corruption.

These policy implications permit the Independent National Electoral Commission and the government human resource managements to mitigate electoral violence, fraud, corruption, and voters' abstention.

Adeleke *et al.* (2015) investigated the impact of group cohesion on organizational performance using Canon, Widmever, and Brawley group environment questionnaire and Beauchamp, Bray and Canon (2002) role perception and acceptance scale administered to 180 employees in four branches of a commercial bank in Nigeria. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: demographics, role perception, acceptance and group cohesion. Our finding was inconclusive because group cohesion was found to be strong in groups with good performance likewise groups with weak performance. Further examination showed that groups with high cohesion consisting of members with higher organizational tenure outperformed groups made up of employees with lower organizational tenure.

## Gap in Literature

The findings of the various researchers from the empirical study have shown that most of the researchers discussed industrial relations management practice, but not have discussed industrial relations management practice in manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. Here lies the knowledge gap. This study examined critically, the effects of industrial relations management practices such as employer-employee relations, labour relations, group relations and public relations on manufacturing firms performance in the South-South, Nigeria.

## 4. TOOLS AND METHODS

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to investigate **industrial relations management practice and manufacturing firms' performance in South-South Nigeria.** The descriptive survey design was deemed appropriate as it allows for the systematic collection of data from a sample of respondents through the use of a structured questionnaire. This approach facilitated the gathering of relevant and reliable information. By using a questionnaire, the study was able to obtain both quantitative and qualitative insights directly from respondents, ensuring a broad understanding of the subject matter from the perspective of those directly affected.

### Population of the Study

The population for this study consists of 385 employees drawn from four selected manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria. Four selected manufacturing firms were used for the study because the population of all the manufacturing firms in the South-South Nigeria is too large to reach and scatted. So, to be able to confidently, manageably and effectively generalize the results of this study, four randomly selected firms were used namely: Brightway Glove Port Harcourt (145), Life Flow Mill Sapele (59), Glosa Roofing Benin City (96), and Senalux Paint Yenagoa (85)

Fig 3.1: Population Distribution Table

| S/n | Manufacturing Firm | Population |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Brightway Glove Port Harcourt | 145 |
| 2. | Life Flow Mill Sapele | 59 |
| 3. | Glosa Roofing Benin City | 96 |
| 4. | Senalux Paint Yenagoa | 85 |
| | **Total** | **385** |

Source: Researcher's field analysis, 2025.

### Sample Size of the Study

The sample size was 191 which was derived from the total population using Krejcie & Morgan (1970) Table(see appendix A)

**Method of Data Collection**

Data for this study were collected from **primary sources**, specifically through the administration of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to obtain relevant information from civil service employees regarding the impact of fringe benefits on their performance. It was carefully constructed to align with the objectives of the study and to ensure clarity and ease of response. The instrument utilized a **4-point Likert scale** to capture respondents' levels of agreement with various statements. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection, designed in two sections; A and B and constructed based on the modified Likcrt 4-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). The response options and their corresponding weights were as follows:

1. **Strongly Agree (SA)** – 5 points
2. **Agree (A)** – 4 points
3. **Disagree (D)** – 3 points
4. **Strongly Disagree (SD)** – 2 point

This rating scale enabled the quantification of subjective opinions and perceptions, allowing for statistical analysis of the data collected. The structured nature of the questionnaire ensured consistency across responses and facilitated effective data interpretation.

**Reliability of Research Instrument**

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research instrument, the study employed both **content validity** and **Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient**. The reliability of the instrument was established by using the test and retest method. The responses were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha in SPSS 25. The coefficient of reliability obtained was 0.82.

**Content Validity**

The instrument underwent content validation by experts in the field to assess whether the items adequately represented the constructs of interest. This process involved a thorough review by subject matter experts in the academia and industry to ensure that the questionnaire items were relevant and comprehensive in capturing the dimensions of the variable.

Out of the 191 copies of questionnaire distributed, 180 copies were retrieved which showed 94% retrieval rate. The data collected from the administration of the questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The research questions were answered using simple percentage and mean. The hypotheses were tested using multiple regressions in SPSS 25 at a significant level of 0.05.

## 5. DATA AND INTERPRETATION

The number of questionnaire distributed was 191 copies, but 180 copies were retrieved which was used for data analysis. The research questions were answered using simple percentage and mean. The hypotheses were tested using multiple regressions in SPSS 25 at a significant level of 0.05.

**Demographical Data of Respondents**

**Table 1: Demographical Data of Respondents by Sex**

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 85 | 47 |
| Female | 95 | 53 |
| **Total** | **180** | **100** |

**Source**: Field survey, 2025

Table 1 show that, 85(47%) of the respondents were male while 95(53) of the respondents were female,

**Table 2: Demographical Data of Respondents by Age**

| Variable(years) | Frequency | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| Below 26 | 20 | 11 |
| 26-30 | 30 | 17 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 31-35 | 80 | 44 |
| Above 35 | 50 | 28 |
| **Total** | **180** | **100** |

**Source: Field survey, 2025**

Table 2 show that, 20(11%) of the respondents were below 26 years, 30(17%) of the respondents were between 26-30 years, 80(44%) of the respondents were between 31-35 years while 50(28%) of the respondents were above 35 years.

**Tahle.3: Demographical Data of Respondents by Education**

| **Variable** | **Frequency** | **Percentage %** |
|---|---|---|
| FSLC | 30 | 17 |
| NCE/OND | 50 | 28 |
| HND/BSC | 80 | 44 |
| POSTGRADUATE | 20 | 11 |
| **Total** | **180** | **100** |

**Source: Field survey, 2025**

Table 3 indicated that 30(17) of the total respondents were FSLC holder, 50(28%) respondents were NCE/OND holder, 80(44%) of the total respondents were HND/B.Sc. holder while 20(11%) of the total respondents were M.Sc/ Ph.D holder.

**Answering of Research Questions'**

**Research Question 1**

What is the effect of Employer-employee relations on Manufacturing Firms Performance in South-South Nigeria?

**Table 4: Percentage and Mean Responses of Respondents to item 1-4**

| S/N | Statement/Items | SA | A | D | SD | X | SD | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ensure employees happiness and productivity | 78 (43%) | 58 (32%) | 34 (19%) | 10 (6%) | 3.13 | 29.46 | Accepted |
| 2 | Offer assistance in a variety of ways including employee recognition, policy development and interpretation, and all types of problem solving and dispute resolution | 88 (49%) | 78 (43%) | 0 (0%) | 14 (8%) | 3.33 | 44.44 | Accepted |
| 3 | Increase in employee morale and motivation | 76 (42%) | 68 (38%) | 20 (11%) | 16 (9%) | 3.13 | 31.39 | Accepted |
| 4 | Ensure that there is a conducive environment and conditions that cultivate positive attitude in the employees | 70 (39%) | 90 (50%) | 16 (9%) | 4 (2%) | 3.26 | 41.52 | Accepted |
| | **Grand Total** | | | | | **3.21** | **36.70** | **Accepted** |

Field survey (2025)

Table 4 shows the means response of the respondents to items 1-4 as 3.13, 3.33. 3.13 and 3.26 respectively; with a grand mean and standard deviation of 3.2 1±36.70. This implies that, employer-employee relations ensure employees happiness and productivity; offer assistance in a variety of ways including employee recognition, policy development and interpretation; increase in employee morale and motivation; and establish work environment that cultivates positive attitude in the employees.

**Research Question 2**

What is the effect of labour relations on Manufacturing Firma Performance in South-South Nigeria?

**Table 5: Percentage and Mean Responses of Respondents to items 5-8**

| S/N | Statement/Items | SA | A | D | SD | X | SD | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Ensure employees are paid for their work | 84 (47%) | 70 (39%) | 2 (1%) | 24 (13%) | 3.19 | 38.45 | Accepted |
| 6 | Ensure employers receive qualitative work | 68 (38%) | 54 (30%) | 38 (21%) | 20 (11%) | 2.94 | 20.69 | Accepted |
| 7 | Helps management to make proper decisions | 70 (39%) | 72 (40%) | 18 (10%) | 20 (11%) | 3.07 | 30.04 | Accepted |
| 8 | Determinant of production and labour costs | 86 (48%) | 80 (44%) | 4 (2%) | 10 (6%) | 3.34 | 44.02 | Accepted |
| | **Grand Total** | | | | | **3..14** | **33.30** | **Accepted** |

**Field survey (2025)**

Table 5 shows the means response of the respondents to items 5 - 8 as 119, 2.94, 3.07 and 3.34 respectively, with a grand mean and standard deviation of 3.14±36.33.30. This implies that, labour relations ensure employees are paid for their wart ensure employers receive qualitative work; helps management to make proper decisions and determinant of production and labor costs.

**Research Question Three:**

What is the effect of group relations on Manufacturing Firms Performance in South-South Nigeria?

**Table 6: Percentage and Mean Responses of Respondents to item 9-12**

| S/N | Statement/Items | SA | A | D | SD | X | SD | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Increased productivity | 72 (40%) | 58 (32%) | 10 (6%) | 40 (22%) | 2.90 | 26.76 | Accepted |
| 10 | Improved decision-making | 65 (36%) | 75 (42%) | 20 (11%) | 20 (11%) | 3.03 | 29.15 | Accepted |
| 11 | Increased innovation | 98 (54%) | 50 (28%) | 14 (8%) | 18 (10%) | 3.27 | 38.83 | Accepted |
| 12 | Improved morale | 70 (39%) | 82 (46%) | 15 (8%) | 13 (7%) | 3.16 | 36.14 | Accepted |
| | **Grand Total** | | | | | **3..09** | **32.72** | **Accepted** |

Field survey (2025)

Table 6 shows the means response of the respondents to items 9- 12 as: 2.90, 3.03, 3.27 and 3.16 respectively; with a grand mean and standard deviation of 3.09±32.72. This implies that, group relations increased productivity, improved decision-making, increased innovation and improve moral.

**Research Question Four:**

What is the effect of Public relations on Manufacturing Firms Performance in South-South Nigeria?

**Table 7: Percentage and Mean Responses of Respondents to item 13-16**

| S/N | Statement/Items | SA | A | D | SD | X | SD | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | Increasing brand credibility | 60 (33%) | 96 (53%) | 20 (11%) | 4 (2%) | 3.18 | 41.36 | Accepted |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | Increasing sales and leads | 90 (50%) | 60 (33%) | 14 (8%) | 16 (9%) | 3.24 | 36.75 | Accepted |
| 15 | Positive brand image | 80 (44%) | 66 (37%) | 16 (9%) | 18 (10%) | 3.16 | 32.84 | Accepted |
| 16 | Cpst-effectiveness | 88 (49%) | 65 (36%) | 15 (8%) | 12 (7%) | 3.27 | 37.59 | Accepted |
| | **Grand Total** | | | | | **3..21** | **37.14** | **Accepted** |

**Field survey (2025)**

Table 7 shows the means response of the respondents to hems 13-16 as: 3.18, 3.24, 3.16 and 3.27 respectively; with a grand mean and standard deviation or 3.21±37.14. This implies that, public relations, increasing brand credibility, increasing sales and leads, positive brand image and cost-effectiveness.

**Test of Hypotheses**

The hypotheses are tested using multiple regressions in SPSS 25.

$Y= \beta o+\beta_1 X^1+\beta_2 X_2+ \beta_3 X_3............ +\beta_n X_n$

$MP = \beta o + \beta_1 ER + \beta_2 LR+ \beta_3 GR + \beta_4 PR$

MP = Manufacturing Firm's Performance $\longrightarrow$ Dependent Variable

ER = Employer-Employee Relations

LR = Labour Relations

GR Group Relations

PR = Public Relations

**Output Of Multiple Regression Analysts In SPSS 25**

**Table 8: Variables Entered /Removed[a]**

| Model | Variables Entered | Variables Removed | Method |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | PR, LR, ER, GR[b] | | |

**a. Dependent Variable: MP**

**b. All requested variables entered.**

**Table 9: Model Summar9[a]**

| **Model** | **R** | **R Square** | **Adjusted Square** | **R Std. Error of the Estimate** | **Durbin – Watson** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .960[a] | .921 | .919 | .09942 | .253 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), PR, LR, ER, GR

b. Dependent Variable: MP

The R value of 0.960 in the Model Summary Table (Table 9) represents the Pearson correlation. This implies that there is a strong and positive correlation across the variables since the value of r(0.960) tends to 1.

The R Square ($r^2$) value of 0.921 (Table 9) is known as the coefficient of determination, It shows the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables. This implies that 92% of the variation in Manufacturing Firms' Performance can be explained by employer-employee relations, labour relations, group relations and public relations.

**ANOVA[a]**

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Regression | 20.114 | 4 | 5.028 | 508.750 | .000[b] |
| Residual | 1.730 | 175 | .010 | | |
| Total | 21.843 | 179 | | | |

**a. Dependent Variable: MP**

**b. Predictors: (Constant), PR, LR, ER, GR**

The value of Sig (0.00) in Table 10 indicates that, the independent variables (ER, LR, OR and PR) combined has a statistically significant association with the dependent variable (MP).

**Table 11: Coefficients[a]**

| **Model** | **Unstandardized Coefficient** | | **Standardized Coefficient** | | | **Collinearity Statistics** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **B** | **Std. Error** | **Beta** | **T** | **Sig.** | **Tolerance** | **VIF** |
| 1 (Constant) | .574 | .152 | | -3.786 | .000 | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ER | .119 | .070 | .153 | 1.700 | .011 | .056 | 17.907 |
| LR | .104 | .068 | -.139 | -1.528 | .021 | .055 | 18.254 |
| GR | .324 | .115 | .313 | 2.828 | .004 | .037 | 27.043 |
| PR | .815 | .060 | .655 | 13.492 | .000 | .192 | 5.204 |

a. Dependent Variable: MP

**Hypothesis 1:**

**There is no significant relationship between employer-employee relations and manufacturing firms performance in South-South, Nigeria**

The Sig-value (0.011) of Employer-Employee Relations (ER) in Table 11, indicates that, there is a significant association of employer-employee relations and manufacturing firms performance in South-South Nigeria since the Sig-value (0.011) is lesser than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states, "There is no significant relationship between employer-employee relations and manufacturing firms performance in South-South, Nigeria", is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between employer-employee relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South-South, Nigeria

For every additional effort to improve Employer-Employee Relations (ER), Manufacturing Firms' Performance is expected to increase by coefficient of 0.119 (Table 11) assuming other independent variables remain constant.

**Hypothesis 2:**

**There is no significant relationship between labour relations and manufacturing firms performance in South-South, Nigeria**

The Sig-value (0.021) of Labour Relations in Table 11, indicates that there is a significant association of labour relations and manufacturing firms performance in South-South Nigeria since the Sig-value (0.021) is lesser than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states, "There is no significant relationship between labour relations and manufacturing firms performance in South-South, Nigeria", is rejected. This implies that, there is a significant relationship between labour relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South-South, Nigeria

For every additional effort to improve Labour Relations (LR), Manufacturing Firms' Performance is expected to increase by coefficient of 0.104 (fable 11) assuming other independent variables remain constant.

**Hypothesis 3:**

**There is no significant relationship between group relations and manufacturing firms performance in South-South, Nigeria**

The Sig-value (0.004) of Group Relations (GR) in Table 11, indicates that there is a significant association of group relations and manufacturing firms performance in South-South Nigeria since the Sig-value (0.004) is lesser than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states, "There is no significant relationship between group relations and manufacturing firms performance in South-South, Nigeria", is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between group relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South-South, Nigeria

For every additional effort to improve Group Relations (GR), Manufacturing Firms' Performance is expected to increase by coefficient of 0.324 (Table 11) assuming other independent variables remain constant.

**Hypothesis 4:**

**There is no significant relationship between public relations and manufacturing firms performance in South-South, Nigeria**

The Sig-value (0.000) of Public Relations (PR) in Table 11, indicates that, there is a significant association between public relations and manufacturing firms performance in South-South Nigeria since the Sig-value (0.000) is lesser than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states, “There is no significant relationship between public relations and manufacturing finns performance in South-South, Nigeria”, is rejected. This implies that, there is a significant relationship between public relations and manufacturing firms’ performance in South-South, Nigeria

For every additional effort to improve Public Relations (PR), Manufacturing Firms’ Performance is expected to increase by coefficient of 0.815 (Table 11) assuming other independent variables remain constant.

The coefficient for the intercept (Table 11) means the expected Manufacturing Firm Performance (MP) when ER, LR, GR and PR are not improved (at 0 states) is 0.574

The estimated regression equation for the model base on the analysis can be written as:

$MP = \beta o + \beta_1 ER + \beta_2 LR + \beta_3 GR + \beta_4 PR$

Therefore,

MP = 0.574 + 1I9ER + I04LR2+ 324GR + 815PR

## Findings

The findings of the test of hypothesis’ I and the answer to research question 1 (Table 4) reveals, “There is a significant relationship between employer-employee relations and manufacturing firms’ performance in South-South Nigeria”. Employer-employee relations ensure employees happiness, productivity, offer assistance in a variety of ways including employee recognition, policy development and interpretation. Increase employee morale, motivation and establish work environment that cultivates positive attitude in the employees. This finding 9lççals sent scholars such as Frank and Jeffrey (2020) and Ahmad and Shahzad (2021), i1x mesh. “Employer-employee relationship enable employees are happy and are productive, enhance employee recognition, policy development and interpretation, and all types of problem solving and dispute resolution”.

The findings of the test of hypothesis 2 and the answer to research question 2 (Table 5) reveals, "There is a significant relationship between labour relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South-South Nigeria", labour relations ensure employees are paid for their work and employers receive qualitative work. It helps management to make proper decisions, determinant of production and labor costs.. This finding supports Akinbode *et al*. (2023) who ascertain, "The aim of labor relations is that employees must be paid for their work, and the employers must receive qualitative work".

The findings of the test of hypothesis 3 and the answer to research question 3 (Fable 6) reveals, "There is a significant relationship between group relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South-South Nigeria". Group relations increased productivity, improved decision-making, increased innovation and improve moral. This finding supports the findings of Adeleke (2015); Williamson (2016); Arugu and Wosu (2020), who are of the view that group relations can have a significant impact on an organization, that it can increased productivity, improved decision-making, increased innovation and improved morale

The findings of the test of hypothesis 4 and the answer to research question 4 (Fable 7) reveals,

"There is a significant relationship between public relations and manufacturing firms' performance in South-South Nigeria". Public relations increase brand credibility, increase sales, leads, enhances positive brand image and cost-effectiveness. This finding supports findings of Cacciatore and Meng (2022); Nguru and Ibrahim (2018) who are of the view that there are vantages of a well-thought-out public relations strategy, these include increasing brand credibility, increasing sales and leads, positive brand image and cost-effectiveness.

**Conclusion**

Industrial relations management is an organisation's strategic scheme designed to help, administer and coordinate business functions regarding industrial relations. Base on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that industrial relations management practice has a significant relationship with manufacturing firms' performance.

Industrial Relation Management Practice ensures employees happiness, productivity, offer assistance in a variety of ways including employee recognition, policy development and interpretation. Increase employee morale, motivation and establish work environment that cultivates positive attitude in the employees. It ensure employees are paid for their work and employers receive qualitative work. It helps management to make proper decisions and act as determinant of production and labour costs. It also increase productivity, improved decision-making, increased innovation and improve moral. More also, it increases brand credibility, sales and leads. It enhances positive brand image and cost-effectiveness.

**Recommendation**

i. Manufacturing firms should maintain the practices of employer-employee relations to ensure employees are happy, productive, and establish work environment that cultivates positive attitude in the employees.
ii. Management of manufacturing firms should sustain the practices of labour relations to ensure employees are paid for their work and employers receive qualitative work.
iii. Management should maintain the practices of group relations to increased productivity, improved decision-making, increased innovation and improve moral.
iv. Manufacturing firms should maintain the practices of public relations to increase brand credibility, increase sales, leads, enhances positive brand image and cost-effectiveness.

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