

Effect of Innovative Human Resource Management Strategies on Employee Retention: A Systematic Review of Literature



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Abstract

Aim: A systematic review of the effect of innovative human resource management strategies on employee retention

Methods: This study employed a systematic review approach. Multiple bibliographic databases, including Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, ResearchGate, Sage, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, and Elsevier were systematically searched. Titles, abstracts, and keywords related to innovative human resource management strategies and employee retention were screened. Search terms included innovative human resource, management strategies, employee retention, workforce engagement, employee turnover, and human capital.

Results: Innovative human resource approaches such as flexible working circumstances, digital tools, green efforts, and continual employee development can boost job satisfaction and loyalty, which in turn reduces turnover. Strategic and innovative HRM practices such as training, rewards, flexible work, and clear career paths are key to employee retention by improving satisfaction and commitment. Adapting these strategies to meet the needs of groups like Generation Z, who prioritize technology and autonomy, is increasingly important. Additionally, green HRM and strong workplace relationships foster a positive culture that further supports retention.

Conclusion: Combining traditional methods with green initiatives, digital tools, and personalized development helps deepen loyalty and reduce turnover. However, retention is complex and shaped by factors like culture and workforce diversity, so ongoing research is needed to adapt these strategies effectively.

Recommendations: Organizations should combine innovative and traditional HRM practices, focusing on continuous learning, flexible work, green initiatives, and tailoring strategies to younger employees who value technology and autonomy.

Keywords: *Innovative, human resource management, strategies, employee, retention*

INTRODUCTION

Human resource management strategies are deliberate plans formulated by organizations to achieve sustained competitive advantage through people by developing a coherent and strategic approach to an organization's most valued assets (Ali, 2019). Kareska (2023), defines it as the overall plan for the deployment and development of human capital in a way that supports the organization's long-term objectives and performance outcomes. They are policies and practices designed to align human resource activities with the organization's strategic goals and to ensure the effective use of people to gain a competitive edge (Agustian *et al.*, 2023). These are a set of internally consistent policies and practices designed and implemented to ensure that a firm's human capital contributes to achieving its business objectives (Hamadamin & Atan, 2019).

Ahmed (2023) describes innovative human resource management strategies as forward-thinking approaches that boost employee engagement, productivity, and organizational flexibility by using creativity, technology, and current workplace trends. These strategies are designed not only to support business goals but also to motivate employees and help develop their skills (Susantinah & Krishernawan, 2023). Setiawan *et al.* (2025) add that such innovative HR strategies include data-driven decision-making, flexible work arrangements, the use of artificial intelligence, designing better employee experiences, well-being, and mental health initiatives.

Employee retention refers to the employer's efforts aimed at creating an environment that supports the needs of current employees (Kamalaveni *et al.*, 2019). According to Singh (2019), it is a phenomenon where employees choose to stay on with their current company and don't actively seek other job prospects. Employee retention rate measures the percentage of employees who remain with a company over a specific period, typically calculated by dividing the number of employees who stayed (excluding new hires) by the initial headcount and multiplying by 100. To retain talent, especially high performers, organizations use personalized strategies like performance-based benefits, supportive management, and recognition systems. For average performers, retention efforts may involve identifying causes of underperformance, addressing skill gaps through training, and ensuring accurate job descriptions to align expectations (Piter, 2023).

According to Singh (2019), retaining employees is vital for organizations because reduces costs and boosts efficiency. Hiring and training new staff is costly and time-consuming, so retaining skilled workers allows companies to focus resources elsewhere. Experienced employees also provide better customer service, building stronger client loyalty. Retention supports smooth operations and higher productivity since long-term employees know the workflows and can perform tasks more effectively (Gilchrist-Saunders, 2024).

Saraswathy and Balakrishnan (2019) add that loyal staff help increase revenue by driving better performance and customer engagement, while also strengthening the company culture through their expertise. Kamalaveni *et al.* (2019) note that a stable workforce improves morale, making employees feel valued and connected, which leads to greater job satisfaction and less turnover. These benefits rest on four key factors: competitive pay and benefits, opportunities for career growth, a positive work environment, and regular recognition.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a systematic review approach where multiple bibliographic databases, including Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, Research Gate, Sage, JSTOR, Science Direct,

Emerald Insight, Elsevier, and Science Direct, were systematically searched. Titles, abstracts, and keywords related to innovative human resource management strategies and employee retention were screened. Search terms included innovative human resource, management strategies, employee retention, workforce engagement, employee turnover and human capital. Quantitative and qualitative studies focusing on the relationship between innovative HRM practices and employee retention in organizational settings were eligible for inclusion. Studies were excluded if they addressed non-employee populations, were not published in English, or lacked sufficient methodological detail for thorough evaluation. To ensure relevance, the review was limited to studies published between 2015 and 2025. Figure 1 shows the study selection process.

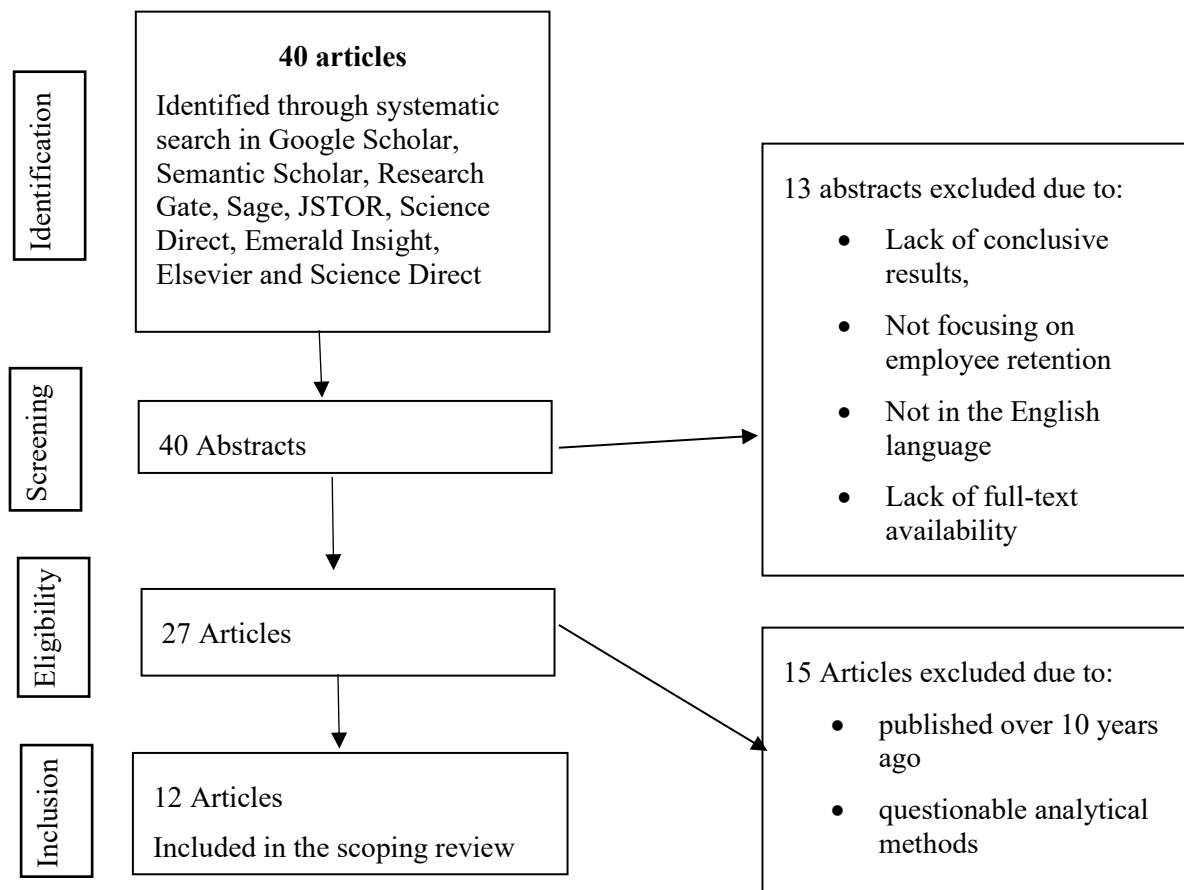


Figure 1: Study Selection Process

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

The theory, introduced by Jay Barney in 1991, suggests that a company can gain long-term success if it has valuable, rare, hard-to-copy, and unique resources. In terms of human resource management (HRM), this means that strategies like employee engagement programs, talent development, and flexible work setups can be powerful tools. These HR practices help improve employee skills, boost motivation, and increase loyalty making it easier for companies to keep their best workers. Researchers like Wright and his team (2001) found that companies using unique

and well-planned HR systems tend to keep employees longer. Boxall and Purcell (2003) also agreed, saying that when HR is used strategically, it adds real value by improving how employees perform and what they can offer the company.

Priem and Butler (2001) criticize the theory by arguing that it lacks clarity in defining resources and overlooks how external environments influence competitive advantage. Others, like Peteraf and Barney (2003), note its static nature and limited attention to dynamic change. However, the theory's strengths lie in its strategic focus and stress on internal capabilities make it relevant for this study. Crook *et al.* (2008) found strong empirical support for RBV in explaining how HR practices impact firm performance. In this review, the RBV offers a solid theoretical lens to examine how innovative HRM strategies function as internal assets that enhance employee retention, contributing to sustained organizational success.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

In 1965, Frederick Herzberg developed this theory. It posits that employee motivation and satisfaction arise from motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators like achievement, recognition, responsibility, and opportunities for growth contribute to job satisfaction and are intrinsic to the work itself. In contrast, hygiene factors including salary, company policies, supervision quality, and working conditions prevent dissatisfaction but do not necessarily enhance satisfaction. The theory implies that organizations must address both categories to improve employee morale and reduce turnover. Scholars such as Robbins and Judge (2009) have applied Herzberg's theory to HR practices, suggesting that innovative strategies like flexible work environments, employee empowerment, and continuous learning address both motivators and hygiene factors, thereby fostering retention.

However, Ewen (1964) argued that job satisfaction is not easily separable from dissatisfaction, while House and Wigdor (1967) questioned the theory's methodological limitations, including its reliance on self-reported data. Nevertheless, its strengths are evident in its clear framework for identifying job elements that enhance satisfaction. Hackman and Oldham (1976) supported the theory's distinction between motivational elements and contextual work factors in designing enriched jobs. The theory is relevant to this study as it provides a psychological foundation for evaluating how innovative HRM strategies like performance recognition, growth opportunities, and wellness initiatives can boost satisfaction and retention. The study uses Herzberg's paradigm to understand and recommend HR practices that have a significant impact on employee retention.

FINDINGS

Mbugua (2015) investigated the relationship between SHRM practices and employee retention, focusing on practices such as performance-based rewards, career development, and employee participation in decision-making. A descriptive survey design involving commercial banks in Kenya. The population included HR managers and employees from selected banks. The results revealed a strong positive relationship between strategic HR practices and retention. Mbugua concluded that organizations that invest in their human capital through long-term HR strategies are more likely to retain skilled employees.

Tonui (2017) used a mixed-methods design focusing on employee retention in Kenyan organizations, particularly within the private sector workforce. Tonui's study involved surveys and interviews with employees and HR managers, revealing that traditional HR practices like

competitive compensation, career development, and employee engagement remain critical for retention. However, Tonui also acknowledged the rising importance of innovative practices such as flexible work schedules and recognition programs to meet evolving employee needs.

Fahim (2018) conducted a qualitative study to explore how strategic human resource management (SHRM) influences employee retention in the public sector in Egypt and the broader Middle East. The research looked at HR practices like employee engagement, training, succession planning, and organizational support. The findings showed that employee commitment and retention improve when HR strategies are closely tied to the organization's goals. Fahim pointed out that clear communication, recognition, and chances for employee development are key factors in lowering turnover, particularly in public institutions where motivation is driven more by personal satisfaction than by high pay.

Atalya and Genga (2019) explored how HR practices influence employee retention in Machakos County, Kenya. They collected data from employees in both public and private sectors using structured questionnaires. The study found that HR activities like training, fair pay, performance reviews, and involving employees in decisions all helped keep staff members. In particular, employees who received regular training and fair compensation were more likely to stay with their organizations. The study concluded that organizations that invest in strategic HRM practices experience reduced turnover and improved employee satisfaction, echoing findings from other regional studies emphasizing the role of supportive HR systems in fostering loyalty.

Papa *et al.* (2020) did a study using survey data from medium and large companies in Europe to see how HRM practices and knowledge sharing affect innovation and employee retention. They focused on knowledge workers and middle managers. The study found that companies with good HRM practices like training, mentoring, and knowledge sharing kept their employees for longer. This helped improve innovation because experienced employees stayed and contributed more. The research also showed that employee retention played an important role in strengthening the link between HRM practices and innovation.

Maureen *et al.* (2020) used a descriptive research design focusing on the medical insurance industry in Kenya. The population included HR officers and other employees working in leading insurance companies. The study aimed to assess the influence of HR strategies such as recruitment practices, training and development, performance management, and compensation on employee retention. The results indicated that HR strategies tailored to employee needs significantly influenced retention. Companies that invested in career development and fair remuneration were more successful in reducing staff turnover.

The study by Sharma *et al.* (2021) explored the association between innovation and employee turnover in biotechnology companies, with a focus on strategic human resource management (SHRM) practices. Using a quantitative research design, the study was conducted in India and targeted HR managers and senior executives from biotechnology firms. Outcomes revealed that organizations that embraced innovative SHRM strategies, such as participative decision-making, continuous learning, and flexibility in HR policies, experienced significantly lower employee turnover rates. The study showed that innovation in HR practices enhances employee commitment and job satisfaction, thus contributing to higher retention.

The study by Cachón-Rodríguez *et al.* (2022) also used a quantitative approach to examine how sustainable human resource management (SHRM) affects employee loyalty and retention, with a focus on the role of social capital. The research, conducted in several organizations across Spain, gathered data through structured questionnaires given to HR professionals and employees. The results showed that SHRM practices like engaging employees, supporting their development, and promoting sustainability had a positive impact on retention. Importantly, the study found that organizations with strong social capital meaning trust, shared values, and good networks were better at keeping employees, showing how strong relationships and a supportive workplace help improve retention.

Hassanein *et al.* (2024) did research to investigate the effect of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) on employee retention in the hotel industry in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The researchers employed a quantitative research design, collecting data from employees working in various hotels across the UAE. Outcomes depicted that GHRM practices including eco-friendly training, green performance appraisals, and sustainable work practices, significantly improved employee retention. The research also identified green innovation as a mediating factor, indicating that organizations that promote environmental sustainability through HR practices tend to foster innovation, which in turn strengthens employee commitment and reduces turnover.

Similarly, Lin *et al.* (2024) adopted a quantitative research design and surveyed employees from environmentally proactive organizations in China and Indonesia to examine how green work-life balance and GHRM practices influence corporate sustainability performance and employee retention. Their target population included employees from both public and private firms. The findings demonstrated that GHRM practices positively impacted employee retention, and this effect was mediated by both green innovation and organizational culture.

Meanwhile, Kess-Momoh *et al.* (2024) carried out a literature review looking at how strategic HRM has evolved in the 21st century, focusing on how innovation is influencing employee retention strategies. Through analyzing various studies from around the world, they identified key trends like digital HR tools, personalized employee experiences, and values-driven leadership. Although it wasn't an empirical study in the traditional sense, their review supported the idea that innovative HR practices such as using data analytics to predict turnover and providing flexible work options are becoming essential for keeping today's workforce engaged and committed.

Usman (2025) carried out a quantitative study focusing on Generation Z employees in Indonesian companies to understand how HR innovation affects talent retention. By surveying young professionals, Usman found that using digital HR platforms, offering ongoing learning opportunities, and providing personalized career paths all helped improve retention among this group. The study showed how important it is for HR strategies to adapt to the unique expectations of younger generations, especially their preference for flexibility and technology.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The reviewed studies collectively highlight that strategic and innovative human resource management (HRM) practices significantly contribute to employee retention across different sectors and regions. A common finding across most studies is that organizations that invest in employee-centered strategies such as training and development, performance-based rewards, flexible working conditions, participative decision-making, and clear career paths tend to retain

their talent more effectively. These practices enhance job satisfaction, engagement, and commitment, reducing turnover.

Several studies also underscore the importance of aligning HR strategies with the needs of specific employee demographics, such as Generation Z, who value technology integration, autonomy, and growth opportunities. For example, Usman (2025) and Tonui (2017) show that while traditional HR practices remain important, integrating digital tools and offering personalized experiences are increasingly necessary to meet modern workforce expectations.

Moreover, green and sustainable HRM practices are emerging as influential factors in retention. Studies conducted in the UAE, China, and Indonesia (Hassanein *et al.*, 2024; Lin *et al.*, 2024) reveal that eco-friendly initiatives and organizational support for sustainability foster a positive work culture that encourages employees to stay. Similarly, social capital and cohesive workplace relationships were found to play a mediating role in enhancing retention, as shown in the Spanish study by Cachón-Rodríguez *et al.* (2022).

IDENTIFIED GAPS IN LITERATURE

The reviewed studies offer important insights into innovative HRM strategies and employee retention but also highlight several gaps. For example, Sharma *et al.* (2021) and Tonui (2017) point out theoretical gaps, as they lack clear frameworks that directly connect innovation to retention. Studies by Papa *et al.* (2020), Fahim (2018), and Maureen *et al.* (2020) reveal empirical and contextual limitations, making it hard to apply their findings broadly across different regions and industries. Hassanein *et al.* (2024) and Usman (2025) show methodological weaknesses, mainly because they rely on cross-sectional surveys without deeper qualitative data. Lin *et al.* (2024) and Atalya and Genga (2019) highlight practical and contextual challenges in applying their results across sectors and in blending traditional HRM with innovative practices. Mbugua (2015) and Kess-Momoh *et al.* (2024) also point to gaps due to limited empirical evidence, while Cachón-Rodríguez *et al.* (2022) note a theoretical gap in how sustainability and social capital are integrated into HRM models.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, these studies clearly show that strategic and innovative HRM practices are key to improving employee retention across different industries and cultures. Combining traditional HR methods with new trends such as green HRM, digital technologies, and personalized career growth helps strengthen employee loyalty and lower turnover. However, the varying contexts and methodologies also suggest that retention is a complex, multifaceted issue influenced by organizational culture, workforce demographics, and sector-specific factors. This shows the need for ongoing exploration to better understand how these dynamic HR strategies interact with different environments to sustain a motivated and stable workforce.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study advises organizations to mix new and traditional HR methods to meet the different needs of their employees. Offering chances to learn, flexible work options, and eco-friendly practices can help workers stay engaged and loyal. It also helps to adjust HR practices for different age groups, especially younger employees who like using technology and having more freedom. Building a supportive and caring work environment can also make employees more likely to stay.

Policymakers should create and support guidelines that encourage the use of smart and modern HR practices in different industries. This could involve giving rewards or support to organizations that use eco-friendly HR methods or adopt digital tools in their HR departments. It's also important for these policies to promote inclusive work environments and continuous learning so that HR practices can keep up with changes in the workforce and the economy.

Future research should adopt longitudinal approaches to better understand how innovative HRM practices affect employee retention over time. There is a need for more qualitative studies that explore the unique contextual and generational factors influencing HR effectiveness. Comparative research across different industries and regions will help validate existing knowledge and expand theoretical models, particularly by investigating how sustainability and social capital intersect with HRM to influence retention in today's workplaces.

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