

## TALENT RETENTION: CURRENT PRACTICES IN THE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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### **Abstract**

*In an increasingly competitive and globalized labor market, talent retention has emerged as a critical challenge for modern organizations. This study aims to identify effective talent retention strategies and their impact on organizational success by analyzing international research through a bibliometric approach. The analysis is based on seminal studies from 1990 to 2024, using Scopus data and advanced visualization tools such as RStudio bibliometrics package and VOSviewer. Our research focuses on key strategies, including organizational culture, work-life balance, employee recognition, and the role of digitalization in human capital management.*

*The study reveals that interest in talent retention research increased significantly in the 1990s and maintained steady momentum, with fluctuations driven by major global events such as the 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. The United States leads global contributions to this field, followed by the United Kingdom and India. Keyword analysis identified five key thematic clusters, with a focus on employee satisfaction, job satisfaction, talent development, and emotional intelligence. Results suggest that employee well-being, professional development, and organizational transparency are essential for achieving high levels of employee commitment. Additionally, factors such as anxiety, work-life balance, and job stress are critical in fostering employee satisfaction. While employee recognition and the integration of technology in human resource management remain underrepresented in the literature, these aspects present opportunities for future research.*

*This paper concludes that adopting a holistic approach to employee well-being and development, alongside embracing technological advancements, is vital for fostering long-term talent retention and enhancing organizational performance.*

**Keywords:** talent retention, employee satisfaction, organizational culture, work-life balance, human capital management.

**Clasificare JEL :** M12, M21, M52

### **1. Introduction**

In an increasingly globalized and dynamic world, where competition in the labor market is fierce, talent retention has become one of the biggest challenges for modern organizations (Dessler, 2018). Human capital is one of a company's most valuable assets, and the loss of talent can have significant negative effects on organizational efficiency and productivity. Given the critical role of human capital in sustaining organizational competitiveness, identify effective talent retention strategies is not just beneficial but essential for long-term success and growth (Nur, 2023).

The purpose of this paper is to identify talent retention strategies and their impact on organizational success, by referring to international studies. We will also explore the importance of strategies such as „organizational culture”, „work-life balance”, „employee recognition and reward”, as well as „digitalization and the use of technology in human capital management”, as key factors in talent retention, as these factors have been identified in some studies as having a major impact on increasing the retention rates and reducing turnover (Rathi & Kumar, 2023).

In our approach, we based our research on seminal works, such as those by Ganesh, Arockiam, and Murali (2024), whose studies offer a foundational understanding of talent retention

in workplaces. Additionally, key insights from (Arthur, 2020), (Mathias, Jackson, Valentine, & Meglich, 2015) have been instrumental in shaping our approach. We also considered the myths surrounding human resource management, which, according to Oppong (2023), can complicate management of human capital.

We will use bibliometric analysis as our research method to trace the evolution of knowledge in the field of talent retention and examine how theories and practices have developed over time (De Bellis, 2009). The objectives of this bibliometric study, based on Scopus data, include mapping the knowledge structure in the field of talent retention, analyzing the main themes, trends, and evolution of research topics over time, and identifying clusters of keywords associated with the concepts of talent retention and job satisfaction.

The data will be analyzed using RStudio, with the help of the bibliometrics package, and for an integrated view of the topics of interest, VOSviewer will also be used (Kronthaler & Zöllner, 2021). Through RStudio, we aim to examine the authors' concerns in relation to this topic, identify the period in which the studies were published, analyze their fluctuations and the factors influencing them, and determine the regions with extensive research and the measures taken to address talent retention issues.

VOSviewer is a valuable tool for generating maps from large bibliometric data sets, facilitating the identification of emerging trends and dominant themes in the literature. This is crucial for understanding the evolution of the field and for identifying research gaps relevant to this paper.

## 2. Research methodology

The research methodology adopted in this article is the bibliometric analysis, which allows a systematic and detailed examination of the specialized literature. To carry out this analysis, we used the R language, the RStudio development environment, together with the Bibliometrics package, which facilitates this type of analysis by using a database that includes works from various sources, such as Scopus and Web of Science (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

In addition to bibliometric analysis, we utilized VOSviewer to further explore the interconnections between scientific articles on talent retention. This program allows the generation of network-like visualizations, illustrating the relationships between keywords in selected articles, as well as the correlations between the main ideas which were discussed. These visualizations also allow us to identify keyword groupings in clusters.

Database selection for this analysis was based on several key criteria. Keywords used in the search included „talent retention”, „employee retention”, „staff retention”, and „employee satisfaction”, combined by using the Boolean OR operator. Only articles, books, and book chapters published in the fields of „Business, Management and Accounting”, „Social Sciences” and „Economics, Econometrics and Finance”, exclusively in English, for the period 1952-2024 were included. These criteria were applied to ensure the relevance of the selected papers to the subject of the analysis.

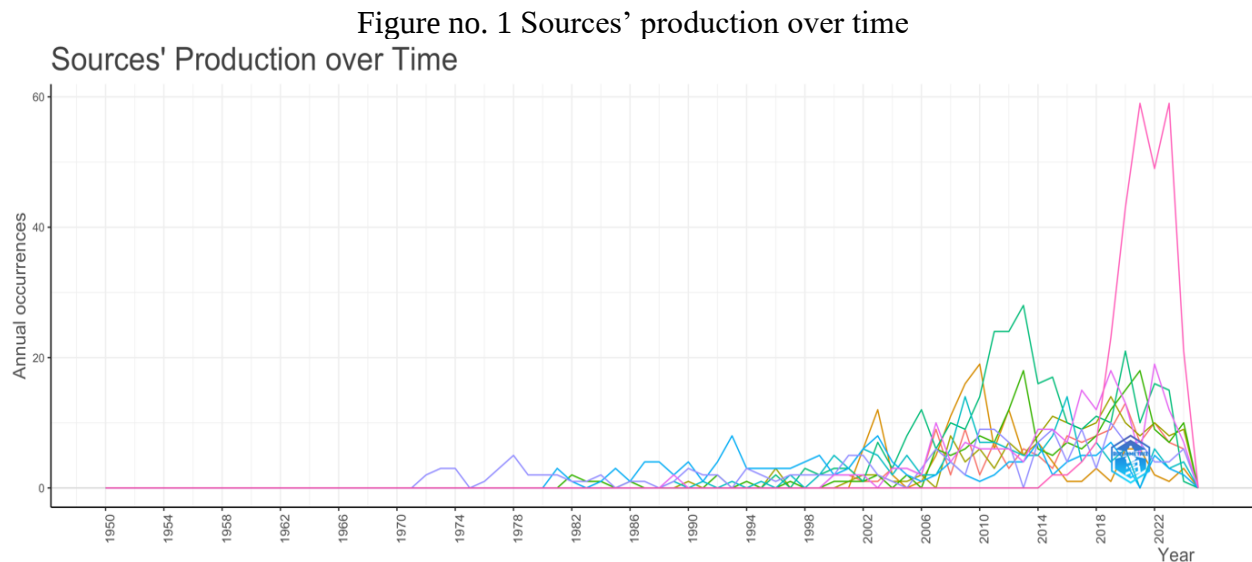
Following the application of these filters, 19,654 documents from 3,707 sources resulted, of which 19,365 papers were selected for analysis. The exclusion was determined by various problems, such as the appearance of the phrase „n.a” in the author field or the consideration that the treated subject did not fit into the area of interest.

The research focuses on the period 1990-2024, even though the database selection began of 1952. We chose 1952 as the starting year to assess interest in the topic prior to the study period.

## 3. Data analysis

Figure 1 represents the annual number of papers published on employee retention and satisfaction research domain. There is an increase in interest in this topic with the year 1990 when

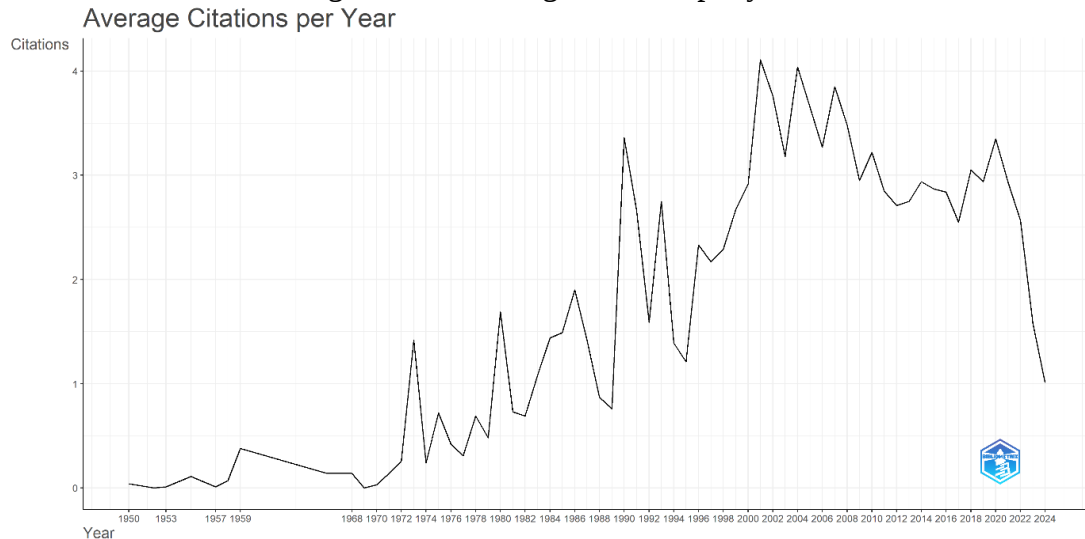
more articles start to appear on different journals. The journal with the most articles is Sustainability (Switzerland) with 59 in 2023 and 21 in 2024. Calculating the average over the last 8 years of the first 10 journals that appeared on this topic, we observe a constant increase, in 2016 the average of the articles would have been 6.70, and in 2023 11.90. The highest threshold reached was 13.80 in 2020, one reason would be the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and new approaches to the work style, but especially the evaluation of employees and the dismissal of many of them (Liang, Zhang, Paulet, & Zheng, 2022).



The data in Figure 2 shows a steady interest and continued concern in the field of talent retention research. Fluctuations in the graph are only caused by major global events that have drawn research attention in other directions. For example, we notice that after 2008 the values decreased and we can attribute this to the economic crisis of 2008 which had a delayed effect felt in the years 2009, 2010, 2011, and even until 2018. A second example is constituted by the COVID-19 pandemic that started in 2019 with effects even until 2024.

However, over entire intervals of years the values are constant: 1996 - 2000 between 2 and 3, 2001 - 2010 the values are between 3 and 4, then they will return to the interval 2 3 in the period 2011 - 2024. On the other hand, the decrease of some values in Figure 2 can also be explained by the passage of time, as some works are no longer in the public interest.

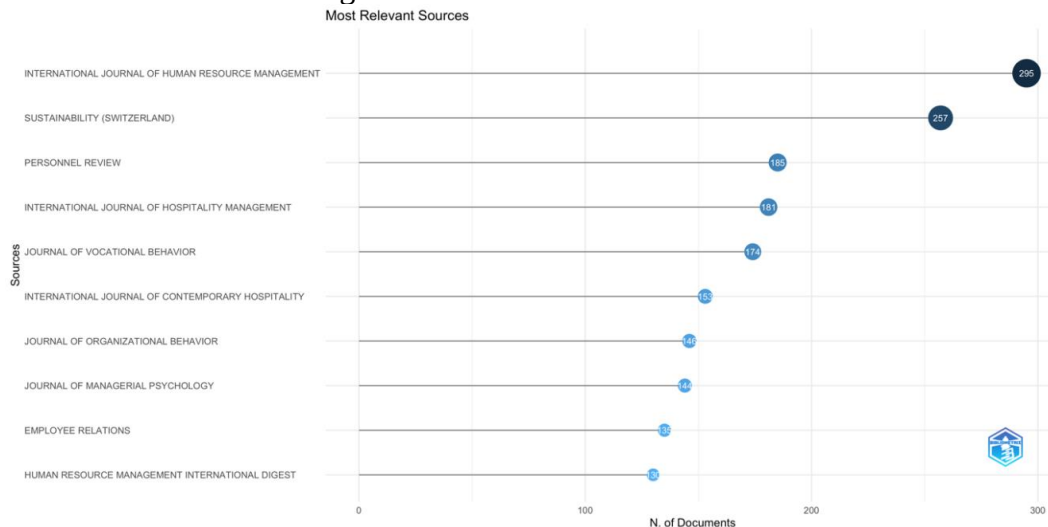
Figure no. 2 Average citations per year



Source: RStudio bibliometrics package

Figure 3 shows the most relevant journals for talent retention articles. In the "International Journal of Human Resource Management" the most articles were published, 295 to be exact, followed by "Sustainability(Switzerland)" with 257 documents. Other important sources are Personnel Review (185), Journal of Managerial Psychology (144), and Employee Relations (135).

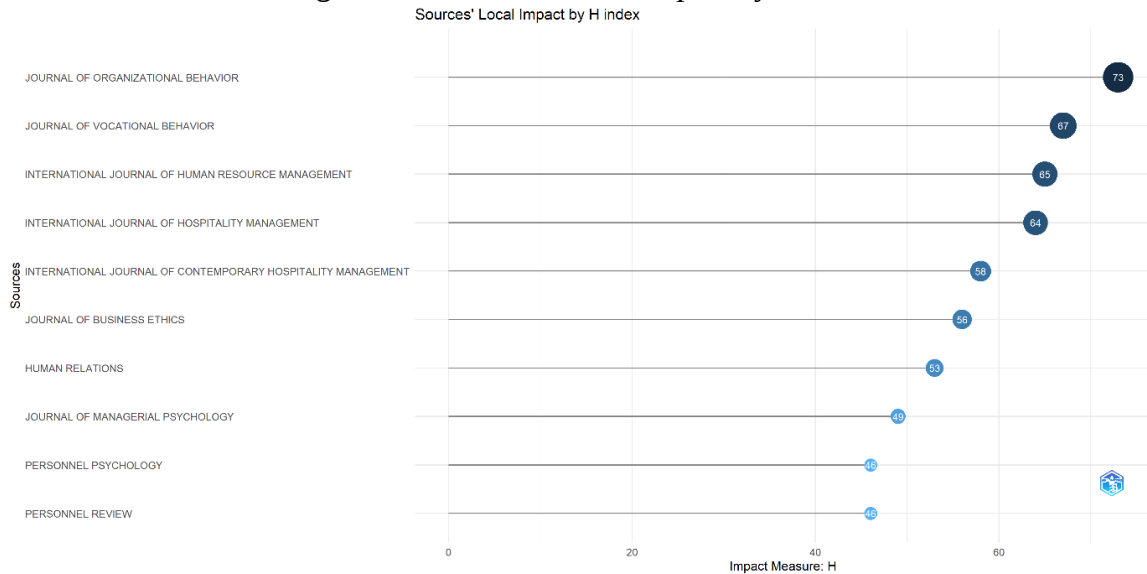
Figure no. 3 Most relevant sources



Source: RStudio bibliometrics package

In Figure 4 we note that the most important sources in the specified field are „Journal of Organizational Behavior” followed by „Journal of Vocational Behavior” and „International Journal of Human Resource Management”. The diversity of the area of interest of these journals shows us that the studied problem is a generalized one regardless of the field of activity we are talking about.

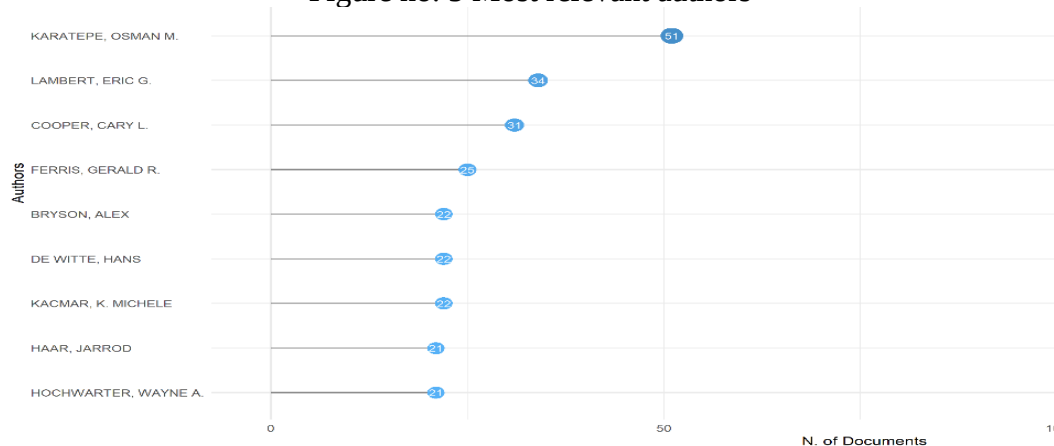
Figure no. 4 Sources' local impact by h index



Source: RStudio bibliometrics package

The list of authors most concerned with the topic of retention and satisfaction of employees with potential talent can be found in Figure 5. The most articles written for this topic were by Karatepe, Osman M. with 51 documents, followed by Lambert, Eric G, and Cooper, Cary L with 34 and 31 articles written respectively.

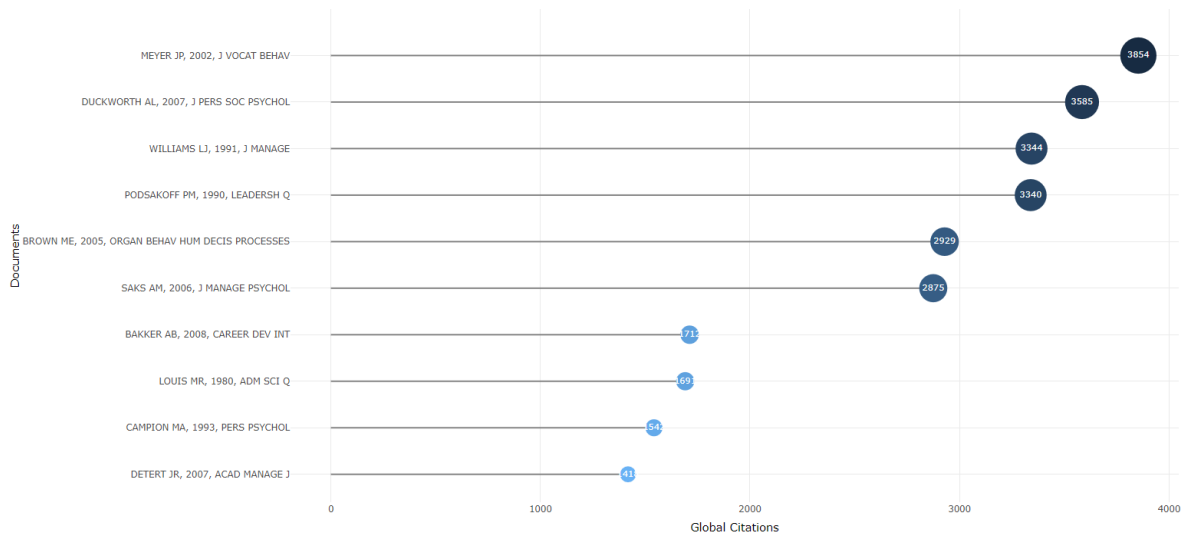
Figure no. 5 Most relevant authors



Source: RStudio bibliometrics package

In Figure 6 we can see that globally the citations with talent retention as a common topic are made from various journals, magazines, and books. Following the bibliometric analysis, the journals with the most citations are in the fields of psychology and business, each field having approximately 7000 citations worldwide.

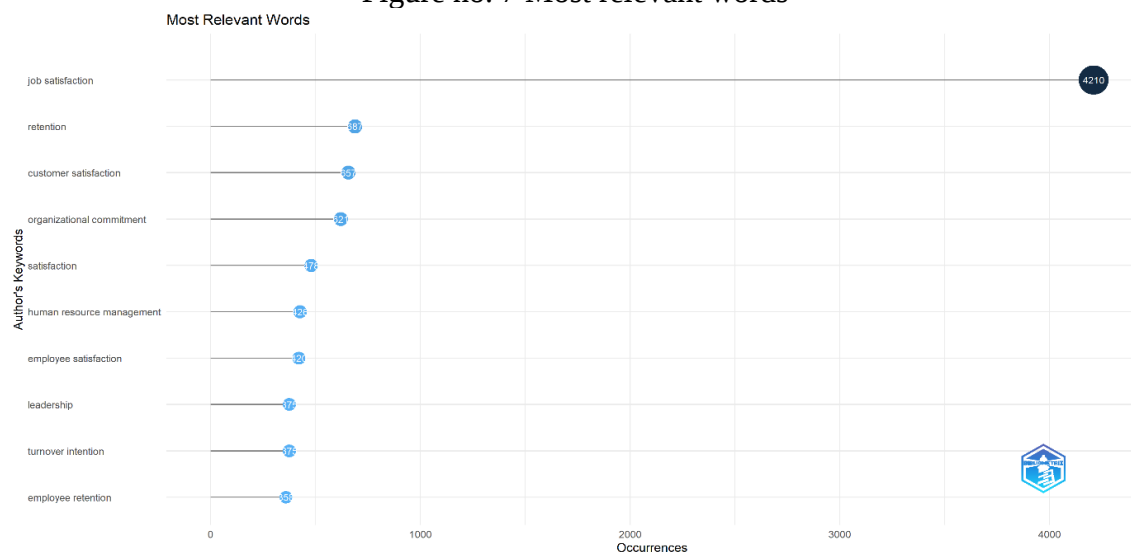
Figure no. 6 Most global cited documents



Source: RStudio bibliometrics package

From Figure 7 we conclude that the most used phrase is by far „job satisfaction” with 4210 occurrences, and terms such as „retention”, „customer satisfaction” and „organizational commitment” have approximately 650 occurrences. An interesting relation is the appearance of „Customers Satisfaction” in the most used keywords, this is showing us that there is a strong relationship between the subjects of employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction.

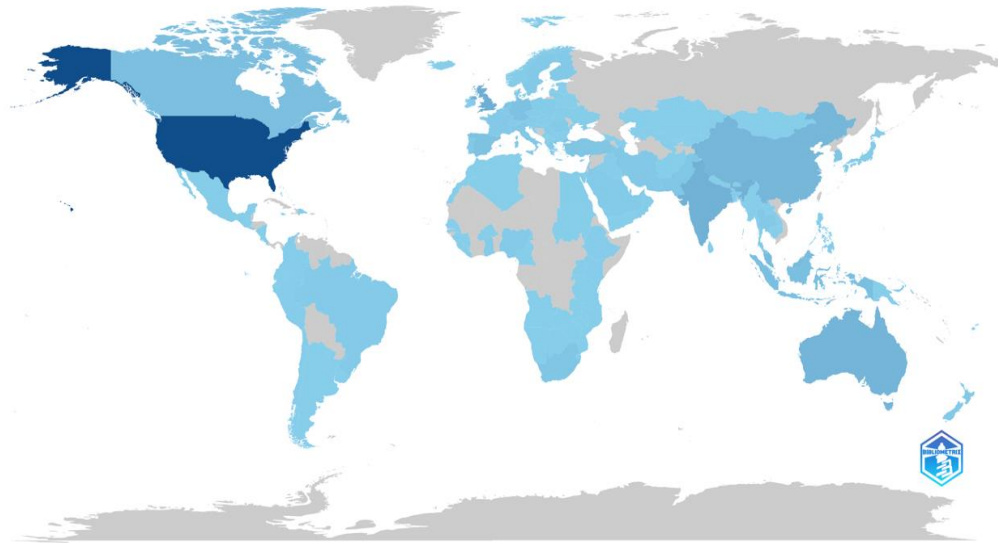
Figure no. 7 Most relevant words



Source: RStudio bibliometrics package

The map representation of the entire globe in Figure 8 represents the number of articles published in each country. In first place is the USA where there were the most publications based on this domain 14,470. But there are also many articles published in the UK and India, 3249 and 2989 documents respectively come from these countries.

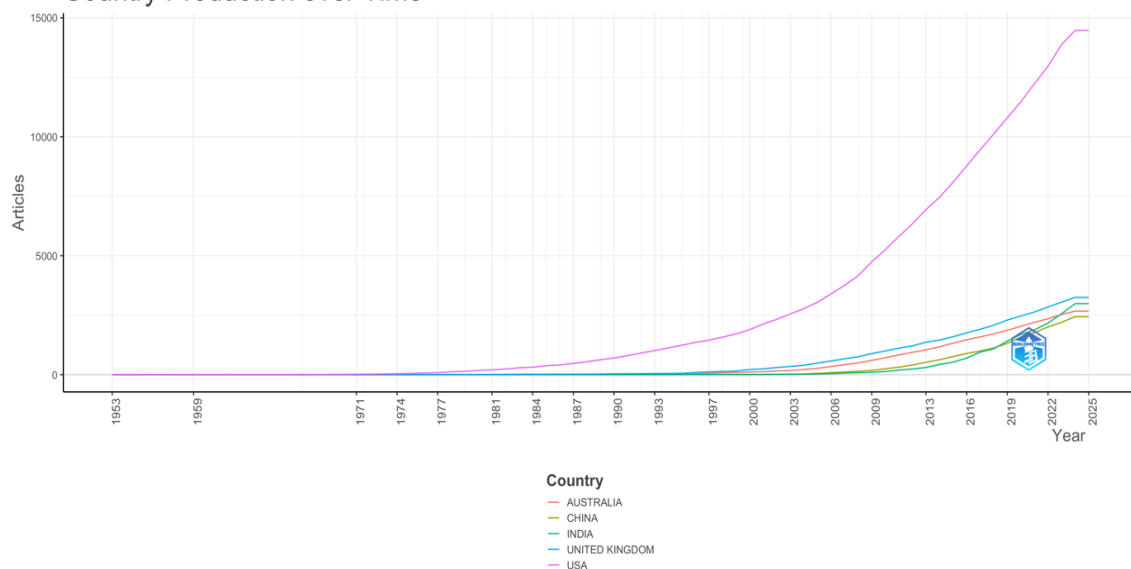
Figure no. 8 Country scientific production  
Country Scientific Production



Source: RStudio bibliometrics package

The chart in Figure 9 shows how US authors have an advantage in understanding this field, talent retention, and employee satisfaction. It can be seen that their interest in this business challenge started earlier and the topic was very important because, in the 1990s in the USA, there were already about 700 articles, while in the UK there were 39, and in Australia 20. Today, in 2024 USA remains in 1st place among the countries that provide the necessary documentation in this field, having 14,470 articles.

Figure no. 9 Country production over time  
Country Production over Time



Source: RStudio bibliometrics package

#### 4. Keywords visualization

In conducting this bibliometric analysis, we utilized both RStudio and VOSviewer for database analysis and data visualization (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). For the association between the concepts of „talent retention” and „job satisfaction”, VOSviewer returned 501 keywords from the same database. Two filtering processes were applied: the first involved cleaning the data to remove duplicates and standardize abbreviations (e.g., „HRM” was expanded to „human resource management”), and adopting consistent U.S. English spelling (e.g., „organizational” instead of „organizational”). The second filter focused on selecting clusters with a minimum of 10 terms for analysis. After applying these filters, 455 terms were grouped into five clusters, as shown in Figure 10, which presents a map of the keywords employed.

Figure no. 10 Network vizualization of co-occurrence based on keywords



Source: VOSviewer

The first cluster, which contains 155 terms (Figure 11), centers around „customer satisfaction”, with 656 occurrences and 1,129 connections to other terms. This cluster also includes „satisfaction”, which appears 478 times, along with other employee-related terms such as „employee attitudes”, „employee satisfaction”, and „employee loyalty”. Countries associated with these keywords include Greece, Egypt, and Australia, among others. Notably, this cluster connects with the other four, suggesting that customer satisfaction is intrinsically linked to human resource management, employee job satisfaction, and overall workplace culture (Oludayo, Akanbi, Obot, Popoola, & Atayero, 2018). Thus, a well-structured organizational culture can enhance both employee and customer satisfaction, ultimately elevating the firm's performance.

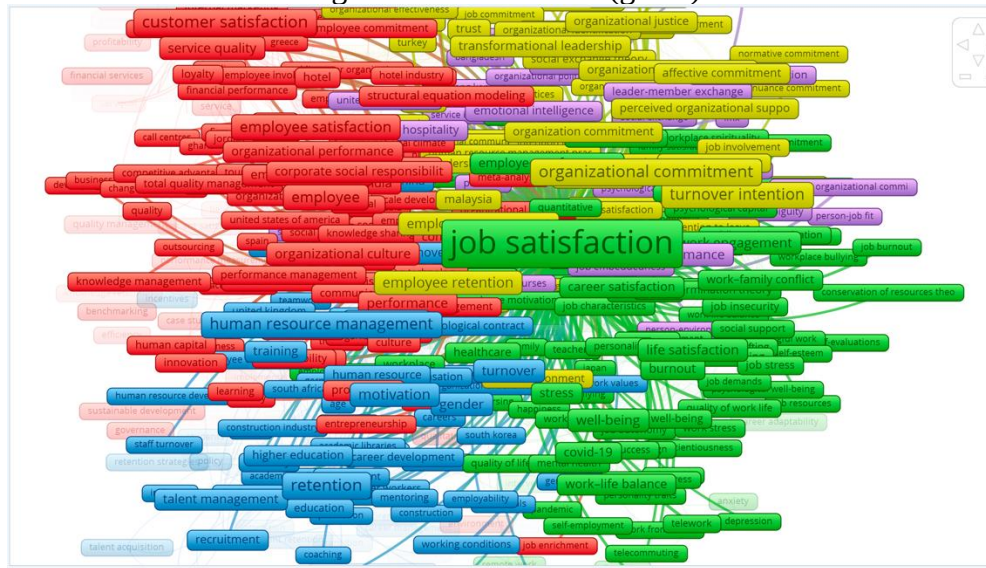
Figure no. 11 Cluster 1 (red)



Source: VOSviewer

The second cluster comprises 102 terms, with „job satisfaction” being the most frequent, appearing approximately 4,205 times and having 9,031 connections, making it the most interconnected term across clusters. „Job satisfaction” forms the foundation for talent retention strategies within organizations. This cluster also highlights terms related to personal well-being, such as „anxiety”, „depression”, and „COVID-19”, and emphasizes the importance of balancing personal and professional life, with terms like „work-life balance”, „telework”, „life satisfaction”, and „work stress” emerging prominently. From this cluster, we can conclude that contemporary employees place increasing value on achieving a balance between their work and personal lives.

Figure no. 12 Cluster 2 (green)



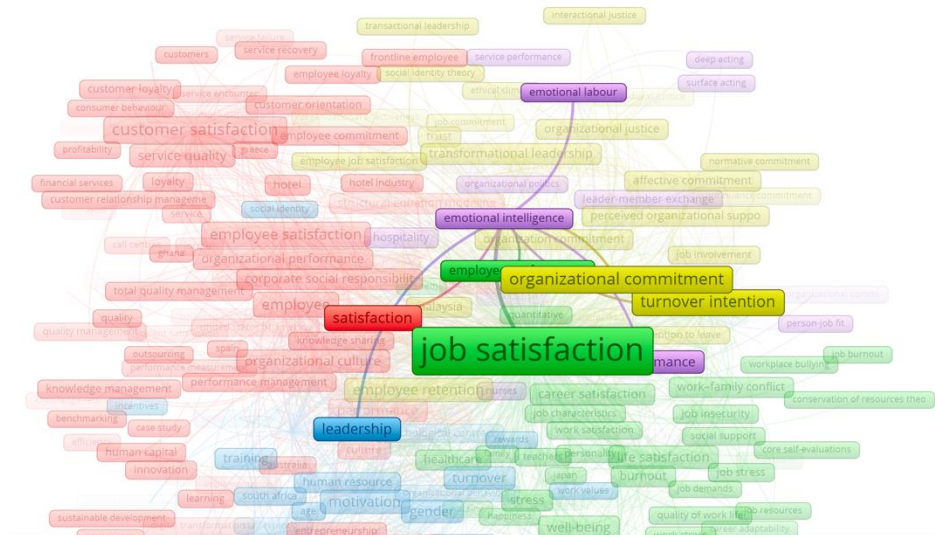
Source: VOSviewer

The third cluster focuses on 102 terms related to talent retention, the primary subject of this article. Closely tied to „retention”, which appears 686 times and has 1,477 connections, are terms such as „talent retention”, „talent management”, „talent development”, „human resource



The fifth and final cluster contains 35 terms, with „emotional intelligence” being the most prominent. This subject has garnered more attention in recent years, as there were relatively few studies on it prior to 2000. Figure 15 illustrates the connections between this cluster and the others, with „job satisfaction” being a common link. Moreover, „emotional intelligence” is closely related to „turnover intention”, „satisfaction”, and „leadership”, underscoring its importance in employee retention and organizational effectiveness.

Figure no. 15 Cluster 5 (purple)



Source: VOSviewer

From the analysis of these five clusters, it is evident that there is a strong focus on identifying innovative strategies for talent retention, particularly in relation to organizational culture and the balance between work and personal life. However, the strategies related to employee recognition and rewards appear underrepresented, and the integration of technology in talent management is not a prominent theme in the analyzed literature, despite the increasing emphasis on digitalization and automation in modern workforce management.

## 5. Conclusions

This bibliometric analysis, conducted through RStudio and VOSviewer, provides important insights into the key themes and concepts surrounding talent retention and job satisfaction. The analysis of 19,365 documents with 501 keywords extracted from the Scopus database revealed a great and steady interest about the subject in the analyzed literature, containing five major clusters of keywords, each cluster offering a distinct perspective on the interrelationships between talent management, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

In the third section, we noticed that the scholarly interest in this field began to gain significant momentum around 1990, marked by an increase in the number of articles published across a variety of academic journals. This growth reflects both a diversification of research themes and an expansion of academic platforms that enabled broader dissemination. Also, we have shown that, over the years, research in talent retention has maintained a steady level of interest, although fluctuations in output have occurred, largely due to major global events that temporarily shifted scholarly focus. For example, following the 2008 global financial crisis, research activity in this field declined, with a delayed impact persisting through 2009, 2010, 2011, and, in some cases, as late as 2018. A similar trend was observed during the COVID-19 pandemic, which began in 2019 and continued to affect research output up to 2024. From a geographical point of view, we discovered that the United States leads in the number of publications, with 14,470 documents,

while the United Kingdom and India follow as other major contributors, with 3,249 and 2,989 publications respectively, highlighting the global distribution and engagement in this area of study.

In the fourth section we analyzed the keywords clusters and relations among them. The first cluster highlighted the significant connection between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction, suggesting that a well-structured organizational culture can drive both employee loyalty and customer retention. The second cluster emphasized the growing importance of work-life balance, with terms related to employee well-being, such as „anxiety”, „depression”, and „work stress”, emerging prominently. These findings align with contemporary research that highlights the increasing value employees place on achieving a balance between personal and professional life.

The third cluster focused specifically on talent retention strategies, revealing that terms such as „talent development”, „training”, and „mentoring” are central to retaining talent within an organization. Professional development and career growth opportunities were found to be key factors influencing employees' decisions to stay with a company. The fourth cluster underscored the importance of organizational commitment and leadership in fostering employee loyalty, while the fifth cluster highlighted the role of emotional intelligence in talent retention, particularly in relation to leadership and turnover intention.

When synthesizing these findings, it becomes evident that achieving any form of employee commitment requires companies to focus on several key factors: „employee satisfaction” or „job satisfaction”, „leadership”, „distributive justice”, and „organizational transparency”. In particular, fostering employee or job satisfaction necessitates addressing various psychological and work-related dimensions, such as „anxiety”, „depression”, „work-life balance”, „telework”, „life satisfaction”, and „work-related stress”. Moreover, to ensure effective talent retention, organizations must incorporate additional strategies, including „training”, „mentoring”, „coaching”, and „education”, which are vital for employee development and long-term engagement. These components are interrelated and together form a comprehensive framework that can significantly enhance organizational commitment, customer satisfaction and reduce turnover rates.

A notable finding is the underrepresentation of strategies related to employee recognition, rewards, and the integration of technology in the analyzed literature. In the first case, the underrepresentation of strategies related to employee recognition, rewards should be attributed to a shift from this type of strategies towards more advanced ones with a greater impact. In the second case, despite the growing emphasis on digitalization and automation in modern organizations, themes like the integration of technology in human resources management did not emerge as central in the clusters. This presents an opportunity for further research and the development of strategies that better align technological innovation with human capital management.

In conclusion, organizations seeking to enhance talent retention must adopt a holistic approach that addresses both organizational culture and employee well-being. The findings suggest that work-life balance, professional development, and emotional intelligence are critical factors in shaping effective talent retention strategies. As companies continue to navigate the challenges of a rapidly evolving labor market, integrating recognition systems and technological advancements will be essential in fostering long-term employee loyalty and organizational success.

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