



Unlocking the Keys to Employee Retention: Insights from Bibliometric Analysis and Systematic Review in the Indian Pharmaceutical Sector

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Abstract. In today's competitive labor market, the significance of employee retention cannot be overstated, as it directly impacts the retention of talented individuals. This study underscores the importance of compensation, job satisfaction, and work-life balance in influencing employee retention via extensive secondary data analysis. It also addresses a gap in HR research by conducting a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of 1,071 research papers published between 1970 and 2022, utilizing the Scopus database. The analysis reveals the increasing prominence of employee retention as a research topic and identifies the top journals in this field. Furthermore, the study provides valuable insights for researchers and practitioners interested in employee retention, including influential journals, authors, and countries. Additionally, employee turnover poses a substantial financial burden for organizations, leading to productivity losses and knowledge management disruptions. While there are systematic reviews of employee retention factors across various sectors, this study focuses on the Indian pharmaceutical industry. Using the PRISMA protocol, the paper identifies vital employee retention factors through an exhaustive review of empirical research. The findings are valuable for future researchers developing their constructs and pharmaceutical sector managers designing effective retention strategies. These two studies collectively enhance our understanding of employee retention, its critical role in achieving business goals, and its specific dynamics in the Indian pharmaceutical sector.

Keywords: employee retention, PRISMA protocol, pharmaceutical industry, retention strategies

1 Introduction

Retention of employees refers to the employer's endeavor to retain desirable employees to achieve specific business objectives (Frank et al., 2004). The turnover of employees is not just the loss of skills but also the loss of values and culture, which the employees take along with them and could potentially be tapped by the competitors [38]. Skilled employees play a central role in the success of any business endeavor. Retention is one factor that is critical to the desired business outcome. The three mainstays for retention are positive employer brands, Appraisal systems that enable employees to develop and maximize their potential, and Innovative HR strategies [7].

Table 1. Employee Retention Definitions

Definition	Source
Retention of employees is a step taken voluntarily by a company to foster a long-term engaging workplace for its employees.	(Samuel & Chipunza, 2009)
Employee retention is the capacity of the business to preserve employees' engagement and job satisfaction while reducing turnover.	(Meyer & Allen, 1991)
The ability of organizations to hold on to employees whom they want to keep for a more extended period than their competitors	(Tian et al., 2020)

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1.1 Factors Determining Employee Retention

Factors of employee retention include a commitment to the organization, satisfaction with the job, compensation, an assignment that are challenging, training and development, environment to work, work-life balance, job stress, and culture of the organization (Ghosh et al., 2013). Previous studies examined the factors that determine employee retention. For example, the impact of corporate social initiatives on employee retention discovered a positive association. (Bode et al., 2015). Work overload, interpersonal tension, and emotional labor were positively correlated to employee turnover intention (Haldorai et al., 2019).

2 Study 1 – Bibliometric Analysis

To analyze a vast amount of scientific data, researchers deploy bibliometric analysis. There are four primary reasons to conduct bibliometric research: it serves as a single-point overview, identifies gaps in knowledge, derives the ideas that are novel for investigation, and positions the contributions toward a specific field [11]. This analytical technique helps to identify emerging trends in a research topic [32]. Bibliometric analysis has a steady interest of researchers not because of its movement but because of its application in business research, enabling the comprehension of vast data. It is the most popular and efficient method to analyze extensive unstructured data sets that run in thousands' review and bibliometric analysis of human resource analytics. [31] found the future research themes, knowledge gaps, and research clusters. [36] conducted a bibliometric study on person-organization fit and identified the leading journals, citation analysis, leading authors, etc. [29] found from the bibliometric research on the domain of management studies - HR in the tourism and hospitality domain that job satisfaction, tourism along with hospitality were the most used keywords. Limited variables are explored in the domain of HR, suggesting little knowledge of the variables. Considering the importance of employee retention in HR, it is essential to identify co-occurring themes.

A bibliometric study on employee retention can help determine the course of future studies and point out areas that still require investigation. This study can also map influential writers and organizations on the subject, which helps scholars' network and locate trustworthy information sources. They also help researchers target suitable publication venues by illuminating which journals publish the most research on employee retention. Furthermore, through the examination of past developments in the field, bibliometric studies can shed light on how and where our knowledge of employee retention has changed over time.

2.1 Methodology

Bibliometric analysis has emerged as one of the few core areas of interdisciplinary research due to its wide application in every single area of research. In the present investigation, we have applied this method to study the importance of employee retention in the available research literature. Some of the most popular databases used for bibliometric analysis are Scopus, PubMed, Dimensions, and Web of Science. Scopus is one of the most credible journal coverage databases and is emerging as one of the primary citation sources. Furthermore, Scopus had more exclusive journals when compared to the Web of Science (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016). This Elsevier endeavor in 2004 became an excellent alternative to the Thomas Reuters journal indexing database [1]. As of October 2023, Scopus has over 44,000 titles in its archives making it one of the most popular and comprehensive journals, books, and conference collections.

Search Strategy The central objective of our research was to discover the research developments in "employee retention." The leading search for the bibliometric study was the articles with the search term "employee retention" in their abstracts, article titles, and keywords. For this reason, we collected the data using the Scopus database by Elsevier. The prelim query was TITLE-ABS-KEY ("employee retention"). This step resulted in 1,440 documents, and on examining the results, we found that the earliest paper was reported to be published in 1970, while 115 research studies were published in 2022. The next step was to limit the search up to 2022, resulting in 1,087 publications. The query for the second step was: TITLE-ABS-KEY("Employee Retention") AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar")) AND (EXCLUDE (PUBYEAR,2023)). The third step included the removal of 35 documents restricting the search to the articles that were published (not in press), in the English language, and are not trade papers or book series.

The search term was: (TITLE-ABS-KEY("Employee Retention")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE,"j")) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE,"final")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE,"ar")) AND (EXCLUDE (PUBYEAR,2023)). (Salam & Senin, 2022) excluded conceptual papers, meta-analyses, and review papers because they usually have high citations, which may interfere with the empirical research work. However, in this work, we opted not to exclude those papers as our aim was broader, and there was no restriction to exclude

these papers [11]. The final database for analysis consisted of 1,052 documents. We exported these documents as a CSV file for further research. The chronological process of data collection is in Figure 1.

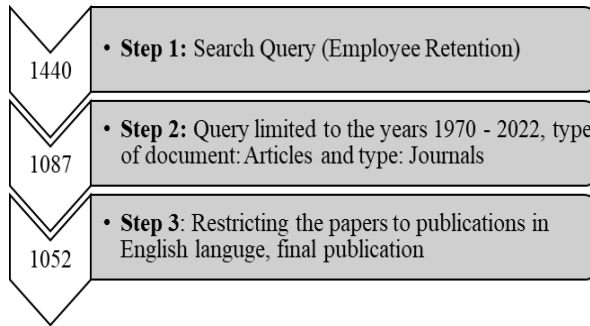


Fig. 1. Process of data collection.

Bibliometric Maps. The first step towards the visualization of data was to clean the exported CSV file. We removed nine entries that had missing authors, years, and journal names. A total of 1043 publications were carried forward for further analysis. VOSviewer (version 1.6.19) was used to generate the bibliographic maps. VOSviewer was considered because it was open source, included recent updates in the field of data visualization, and has gained credibility in the research community.

In the current bibliometric study, we followed a five-step analysis procedure recommended by [21]. The co-authorship analysis was conducted using the visualization software VOSviewer on the Scopus data.

In the co-authorship analysis, we included all 107 countries with affiliation in the 1043 research publications. The total strength indicates the extent of a country's authorship collaboration with other nations. Co-occurrence is the relationship strength among the keywords in the publications. After examining the co-occurrence of author keywords, 44 keywords were identified, with a minimum occurrence of ten.

Publication Analysis. A total of 1071 research papers are on employee retention between 1970 and 2022 (Figure 2). 298 of the 1071 documents were open access. The findings analyzed that the oldest publication on this topic was in 1970. In 1998, the number of publications reached 50; in 2003, the number of publications exceeded the 100 mark. There has been a steady publication of more than 100 documents on this topic each year since 2019. 62% of the publications were done on this topic only after 2015. It is summarized that the growth and interest in employee retention will continue to increase in the coming years.

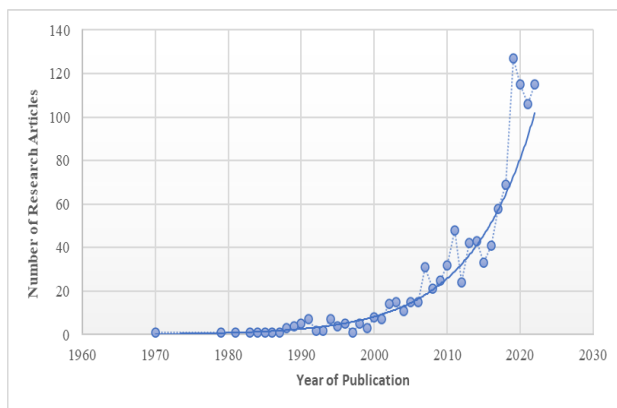


Fig. 2. Year-wise publications on employee retention (1970–2022)

Subject Areas in Employee Retention. We conducted a bibliometric study on all the subject areas, and no exclusion criteria were strictly followed. The aim was to understand which areas are most influential in publishing research on employee retention. Business, Management, and Accounting accounted for 607 documents, followed by 324 in Social Sciences. Economy, Econometrics and Finance, Medicine, Medicine Engineering, and Finance had more than 100 documents, and other areas had less than 100 publications.

Top Journals. The top five journals publishing on the topic of employee retention we identified from the analysis as follows: (1) Human Resource Management International Digest contributing 18 publications; (2) International Journal of Human Resource Management with 18 publications; (3) SA Journal of Human Resource Management 14 articles (4) International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management with 13 articles and (5) International Journal of Hospitality Management with 12 publications. The publisher of the top journal is Emerald Insight, followed by Taylor and Francis at the second spot, AOSIS, Emerald Insight, and Elsevier in subsequent ranks. International Journal of Hospitality Management In 2022, it received the highest number of citations, with 29455 citations. Our research also discovered that the International Journal of Hospitality Management obtained the highest cite score of 12.9 for 2021. Among the top five journals of the selected area, the lowest cite score was 0.5 for Human Resource Management. International Digest. At the same time, it was the leading journal based on the number of documents.

Top Countries. We identified the country-wise analysis contributing to employee retention literature publications. We kept ten as the minimum number of documents from each country for this analysis—16 countries populated during the study based on the country-wise publications identified five clusters. Cluster 1 consists of Pakistan, Portugal, Spain, and China; Cluster 2 consists of South Korea, the United States, and Turkey; and Cluster 3 consists of Saudi Arabia, India, and Malaysia. Cluster 4 comprises the United Kingdom, Bangladesh, and Germany; Cluster 5 has Australia and New Zealand.

Table 2. Year of Publication along with number of articles.

Year of Publication	Number of Research Articles	Percentage
2022	115	11%
2021	106	10%
2020	115	11%
2019	127	12%
2018	69	6%
2017	58	5%
2016	41	4%
2015	33	3%
2014	43	4%
2013	42	4%
2012	24	2%
2011	48	4%
2010	32	3%
2009	25	2%
2008	21	2%
2007	31	3%
2006	15	1%
2005	15	1%
2004	11	1%
2003	15	1%
2002	14	1%
2001	7	1%
2000	8	1%
1999	3	0%
1998	5	0%
1997	1	0%
1996	5	0%

1995	4	0%
1994	7	1%
1993	2	0%
1992	2	0%
1991	7	1%
1990	5	0%
1989	4	0%
1988	3	0%
1987-1970	8	NA

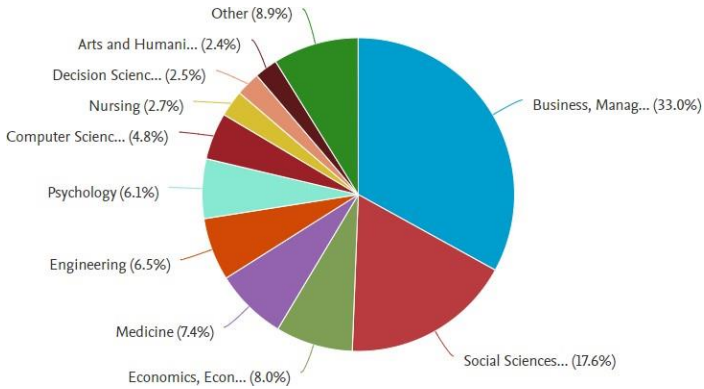


Fig. 3. Subject areas division and their respective percentages

Table 3. Top 5 Journals on Employee Retention.

Rank	Journal	Total Publications (%)	Number of citations	Cite score in 2021	Publisher
1	Human Resource Management International Digest	18 (1.68)	353	0.5	Emerald Insight
2	International Journal of Human Resource Management	18 (1.68)	17351	7.8	Taylor and Francis
3	SA Journal of Human Resource Management	14 (1.31)	372	1.8	AOSIS
4	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	13 (1.21)	18431	11.1	Emerald Insight
5	International Journal of Hospitality Management	12 (1.12)	29455	12.9	Elsevier

Table 4. Top 10 Countries publishing documents on employee retention

Rank	Country	TPe	Citations	Total Link Strength
1	United States	339	10798	37

2	India	177	1448	8
3	Malaysia	75	406	21
4	United Kingdom	50	1592	27
5	Australia	46	1170	19
6	South Africa	46	347	0
7	Canada	36	829	14
8	Pakistan	35	256	21
9	China	27	497	16
10	Germany	25	403	7

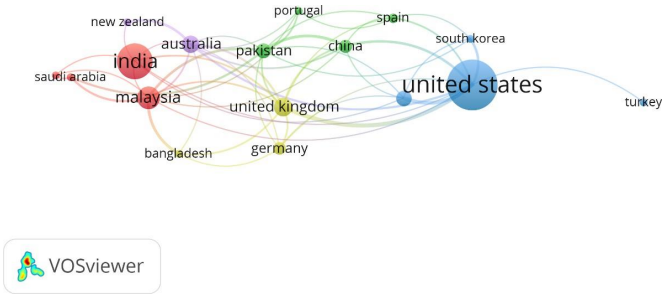


Fig. 4. As shown in the bibliometric map, the co-affiliation of countries can be visualized through the network visualization mode screenshot.

Author Keyword Co-occurrences. We found five clusters in the co-occurrence keyword analysis. Cluster 1 consists of 6 items: compensation, human resource management, job embeddedness, organizational commitment, training, and turnover intention. Cluster 2 consists of 6 items: job satisfaction, leadership, organizational culture, personnel loyalty, personnel turnover, and turnover. Cluster 3 consists of 5 items: employee engagement, employee retention, employee turnover, employee branding, and talent management. Cluster 4 consists of 3 items: motivation, workplace, and work environment. Cluster 5 consists of one item: employee satisfaction. In the tabular analysis, the key- words that are similar or represent the same variable were clubbed to obtain a variable that accurately represents the context of the keywords.

Conclusion. The publication metrics on employee retention from 1970 – 2022 found 1071 articles, of which 2019 was the highest publication year, accounting for 127 documents (11.85%)– suggesting an increasing interest in the chosen study area. The top five journal titles publishing in the selected theme were Human Resource Management International Digest, International Journal Of Human Resource Management, SA Journal Of Human Resource Management, International Journal Of Contemporary Hospitality Management, and International Journal Of Hospitality Management – which re- searchers working in the area of employee retention can target. Country-wise metric resulted in four Clusters – The co-word metric analysis revealed that Cluster 1 comprised eight items, Cluster 2 had three items, and Clusters 3 and 4 each had two items. The most frequently associated words with employee retention were employee retention, job satisfaction, employee turnover, human resource management, and work environment.

Table 5. Top 10 Authors publishing documents on employee retention

Rank	Author	Documents	Citations	Total Link Strength
1	Brindha G.	8	6	0
2	Ellett A.J.	7	435	4
3	Milman A.	6	126	0
4	Ahmad A.	5	63	0
5	Jambulingam M.	5	26	5

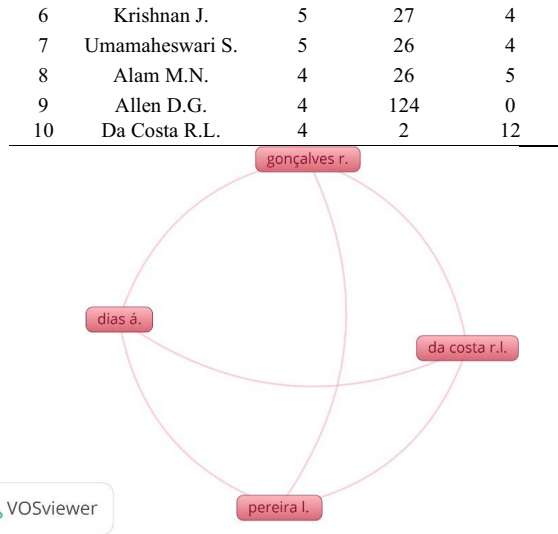


Fig. 5. The bibliometric map screenshot illustrates authors’ co-affiliation using the network visualization mode, with only those authors having strong linkage visible in the picture.

Table 6. Top author keyword co-occurrences on employee retention publications

Keyword	Co-occurrences	Total Link Strength
employee retention	359	323
job satisfaction	179	227
employee turnover	95	128
human resource management	63	67
work environment	62	88
personnel turnover	38	68
employee engagement	36	52
organizational culture	35	59
motivation	33	32
leadership	31	51
organizational commitment	31	46
talent management	30	39
compensation	29	32
personnel loyalty	29	41
turnover intention	28	28
employee satisfaction	24	33
training	23	22
employer branding	22	21
job embeddedness	22	31

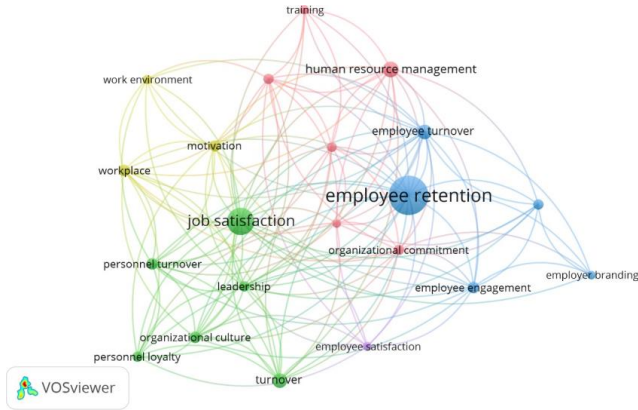


Fig. 6. Using the network visualization mode, the bibliometric map screenshot displays the co-occurrence of authors' keywords, listing only the keywords mentioned more than 22 times.

3 Study 2: Employee Retention in the Indian Pharmaceutical Sector

3.1 Introduction

Employee retention is a process in which the employees are encouraged to remain with the organization for a long time or until the completion of the project [3]. The rotation of workers around the labor market, between firms, jobs, and occupations, and between the states of employment and unemployment is turnover [33] and the willingness of the employee to separate from the organization is called Turnover intention [22]. The average attrition rate across 17 industries in India was 12.1% for 2021 and 15% for the pharmaceutical industry.

A comprehensive literature survey reveals no systematic review using the PRISMA method has been conducted to determine employee retention factors in the pharmaceutical sector. This led to the formulation of the objective: What are the significant factors determined through systematic review that lead to employee retention in the pharmaceutical sector?

3.2 Methodology

Data sources and searches. The search used Preferred Reporting of Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) method statements. Scopus research database libraries were used for the systematic review. The following two strings were used for the literature survey for Scopus: Employee Retention AND Pharma* AND India "Employee Retention".

Study selection. The initial screening step involved the review of abstracts and titles of the potential studies meeting the study's inclusion criteria: 1. the articles are of English Language and studied Indian demographic, 2. the researcher was able to retrieve full article text, 3. Studies used quantitative method 4. They included specific results for the pharmaceutical industry workforce 5. They evaluated the factors related to employee retention.

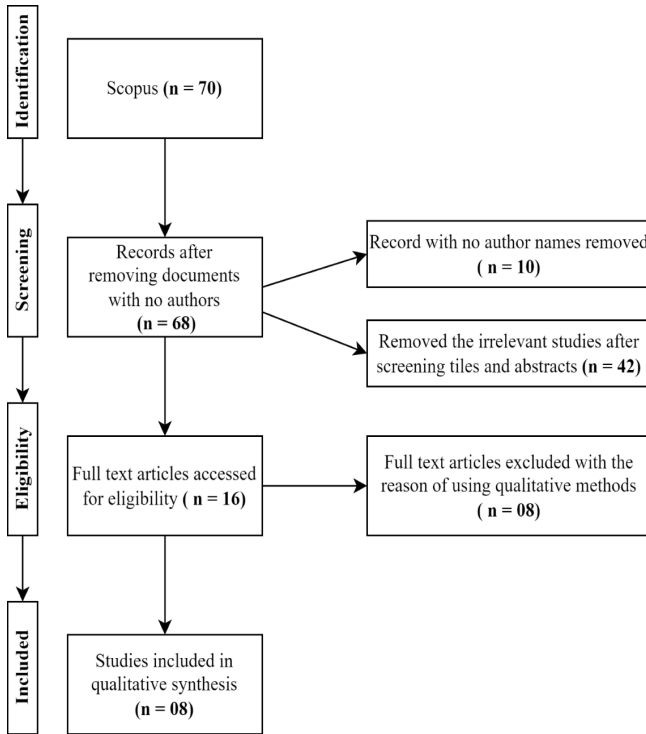


Fig. 7. Stages adopted for systematic review a per PRISMA Protocol

Data extraction and synthesis. The data relating to factors of employee retention were extracted. Other study characteristics such as author names, year of publishing, and sample characteristics such as size and population were extracted. The similarities in the working definition of the factors were also identified. Content and face validity suggested that a pattern of that could be grouped. The grouping created a model for the factors determining employee turnover intention.

Conclusion. The systematic review resulted in 70 studies, as shown in Figure 1. After a thorough screening, 62 research articles were discarded due to one of the following reasons: they were not related to the scope of the study, 10 studies did not have author names or they were qualitative in nature. After this rigorous filtering process, eight studies were selected for further processing.

Table 7. Summary of study characteristics

Author, Year	Study place	Population	Number of participants	Variables significantly related to Employee Retention
(Upadhyaya & Ayari Asma, 2019)	Pan India	Managers working in the Pharmaceutical Industry	150	Compensation (r = 0.829) T&D Opportunity (r = 0.831) Supervisor Support (r = 0.852) Career Opportunities (r = 0.852) Work-life Balance (r = 0.859)
(Anne et al., 2016)	Maharashtra	Employees of pharma companies	40	Employee Retention Practices (r = 0.48)
(H Kara & Engel, 2014)	Gujarat	Employees of pharma companies	60	Fair Compensation (r = 0.529) Retirement Benefits (r = 0.162)

Tian (Rami Reddy et al., 2018)	Sikkim	Employees of pharma companies	53	Healthcare and Benefits (r = 0.212) Salary Higher than IA (r = 0.297) Employee Engagement (r = 0.753) Talent Development (r = 0.807) Employee Value Proposition (r = 0.890)
(Mohanty, 2020)	Pune	Employees of pharma companies	136	Diversity Management Practices (r = 0.665) Job Satisfaction (r = 0.789)
(Khan & Bhagat, 2022)	Pan India	Employees of pharma companies	90	Management-Employee Relationship (r = 0.22) Leadership (r = 0.58) Work Environment (r = 0.29) Career Development (r = 0.25)
(Mule, 2022)	Mumbai	Employees of pharma companies	93	Welfare Amenities (r = 0.70) Opportunity (r = 0.53) Job Satisfaction (r = 0.76)
(Dahiya, 2022)	Delhi NCR	Manufacturing Company Employees	77	Work Stress (r = 0.78) Work-life Balance (r = 0.70) Job Satisfaction (r = 0.77) Job Clarity (r = 0.71) Organizational Culture (r = 0.74) Team work (r = 0.71)

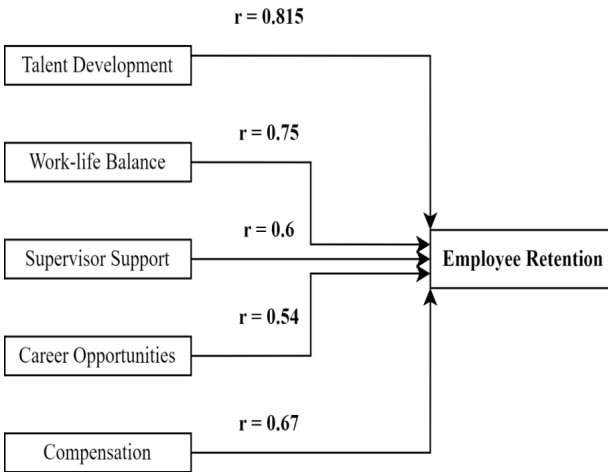


Fig. 8. Conceptual Model Derived from the Systematic Review using PRISMA showing major employee retention factors

4 Theoretical Implications

These studies have important theoretical implications. They underscore the significance of compensation, job satisfaction, and work-life balance in retaining employees, shedding light on the psychological and economic

factors that influence retention decisions. Additionally, they introduce bibliometric analysis as a valuable tool in HR, suggesting new avenues for data-driven exploration in HR-related areas. The studies also reveal the increasing research focus on employee retention, highlighting its evolving nature. Furthermore, they emphasize the need for context-specific research, such as the study on the Indian pharmaceutical industry, to understand industry-specific retention dynamics. Lastly, the studies draw attention to the interconnectedness of knowledge management and employee retention, urging further exploration of theoretical frameworks in this domain and promoting rigorous methods, like the PRISMA protocol, in literature reviews. These implications offer valuable guidance for researchers and practitioners in human resources and management.

5 Limitations and Conclusion

The scope of the study was limited to the employees of the pharmaceutical industry of India, did not encompass the globe, and was limited to the pharmaceutical sector. Only quantitative empirical work was considered, resulting in the rigorous filter of studies for synthesis as only that criterion suited the scope of the current work. At the beginning of the study, there were 70 articles, and filtering through the PRISMA method resulted in nine studies suitable for synthesis; of these studies, 19 factors were studied in detail quantitatively, and five significant factors were identified. The submission with this work is: Talent Development, Work-life balance, Compensation, Supervisor Support, and Career Opportunities are the significant factors of employee retention derived from a comprehensive systematic review using the PRISMA Method.

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