Key Factors in Talent Retention: An Integrated Approach Based on Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract

Managing talent retention is a strategic priority for organizations, given the accelerated dynamics of the labor market and the effects of technological transformations. This study provides a systematic analysis of 108 articles from the literature, using bibliometric techniques with VOSviewer software, to highlight the links between talent retention and four key strategies: organizational culture, work-life balance, employee rewards and the role of digitalization.

A healthy organizational culture and transformational leadership are key to employee retention. Initiatives that support work-life balance reduce intentions to leave the organization. Recognition and professional development programs contribute significantly to increasing employee engagement. Implementing advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence offers new opportunities for talent retention, but requires new managerial skills.

The study provides an analysis on the topic of talent retention over the last 10 years and the highlights the importance of tailoring strategies to the needs of employees and the organizational context.

Key words: talent retention, organizational culture, work-life balance, reward, bibliometric analysis
J.E.L. classification: M12, M52, M54, J24, J53

1. Introduction

Talent retention is a major challenge in contemporary management, especially in a globalized and dynamic economic environment marked by accelerated technological change and a highly competitive labour market. Modern organizations face significant difficulties in attracting and retaining the most valuable employees, with direct implications for organizational performance, innovation and long-term sustainability. Talent is no longer seen as just an organizational resource, but as a key differentiator, influencing both competitive positioning in the marketplace and the organization's ability to meet the challenges of the future.

In a previous article we looked at what are the most common practices when it comes to talent retention and it turned out that strategies around organizational culture and work-life balance were in the researchers' focus, while rewarding employees and the role of technology were not prevalent (Săcuiu & Micu, 2024).

In this context, we have shortened the time period of study in order to find new directions and possible links, and the focus of this paper will be on those terms that did not stand out in the previous article.

Through a systematic literature review, based on 108 relevant articles from the Scopus database and using bibliometric techniques through the VOSviewer software, the interconnections between these strategies will be identified, thus providing an overview of organizational decisions to retain talent and reduce the risk of leaving the job. As the business environment evolves, the integration of these strategies becomes indispensable to ensure not only organizational stability but also long-term competitiveness.

2. Literature review

The literature highlights four major directions of action that influence talent retention: organizational culture, work-life balance, employee development and reward, and the role of digitalization (Mathis, et al., 2017).

Organizational culture, considered at the core of any successful organization, plays a crucial role in employee retention. Shared values, an inclusive environment and transformational leadership are just some of the components that shape employee behaviors and create a sense of belonging. A healthy organizational environment not only encourages innovation and adaptability, but also ensures better retention by creating authentic relationships between employees and the organization.

Work-life balance is another critical dimension of talent retention. In a global context where job stress and burnout have become acute problems, organizations that support flexible working hours, provide mental health support and implement hybrid work policies are more likely to retain a motivated and loyal workforce (Davis, 2021). Recent studies suggest that initiatives that respond to employees' personal needs, directly contribute to a reduction in the intention to leave, thus increasing workforce stability.

Developing and rewarding employees is closely linked to perceptions of fairness and opportunity within the organization. Ongoing training programs, mentoring and recognition of merit are just some of the strategies used to strengthen employee loyalty and motivate employees to reach their full potential (John, et al., 2020). In this sense, reward is not only about the financial aspects, but also includes symbolic recognition, personalized benefits and promotion opportunities that add value to the professional experience.

Digitalization as a cross-cutting phenomenon is redefining all aspects of talent retention. The introduction of advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence and data analytics, enables organizations to personalize employee experiences, streamline talent identification processes and monitor talent satisfaction in real time (Autor, et al., 2021). However, digitization also brings new challenges, in particular in terms of digital skills and the need for continuous adaptation to technological change.

3. Research methodology

This study uses a bibliometric methodology to explore relationships and trends in the literature on talent retention and associated strategies. Bibliometric analysis is a robust approach to identify emerging patterns, key concepts and their relationships. This method was chosen because of its ability to provide a clear and detailed insight into the interconnections between scholarly articles by multiple authors that have talent management in organizations as a common theme.

Thus, the use of the VOSviewer software allowed us to structure the complex domain of talent retention into four major clusters that reflect the link to the key strategies of this study.

For such an analysis we used the Scopus database, the advantage being its extensive coverage and relevance to the social sciences and economics. The key terms underlying the search were: talent retention AND organizational culture OR work-life balance OR employee recognition OR digitalization, combined using both the Boolean AND, and OR operators. To ensure the relevance and timeliness of the results, the following selection criteria were applied:
- Publication period - scientific sources published between 2013 and 2023;
- Language - only documents written in English;
- Type of documents - articles, books and books' chapters;
- Publication stage - only documents in final stage.

Following the search and selection process, 108 relevant articles were identified for our analysis.

After literature selection, the VOSviewer software was used for bibliometric analysis, as it is a tool recognized in the academic community for its ability to visualize complex networks and identify significant clusters in the literature. The analysis included:
- Co-occurrence networks of all keywords: to identify dominant themes in research;
- Keyword processing: to avoid duplication of terms due to abbreviations;

- • Citation analysis: to highlight influential articles and authors in the field;
- • Thematic clustering: to group terms according to their interconnections and identify the four key strategies.

Figure no. 1. Network vizualization of co-occurrence based on all keywords
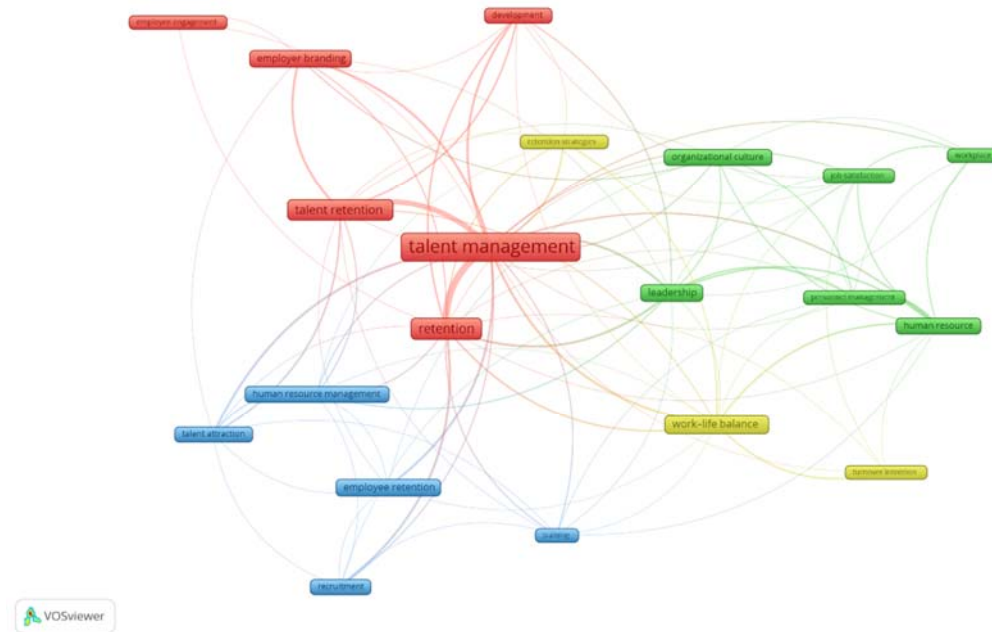
Source: VOSviewer

3.1. Cluster 1 - Talent retention and employee engagement (Figure no. 2)

Professional development plays a critical role and is perceived by employees as an investment in their long-term potential. Mentoring relationships and development programs contribute significantly to employee retention by giving employees a clear vision of their career trajectory within the organization.

The concept of employee engagement is often associated with motivation, job satisfaction and commitment to organizational goals. According to the literature, organizations that promote a sense of belonging and recognition are more likely to retain valuable talent (Schein, 2010).

Employer branding is also a strategy to position your organization as a top employer. A strong employer brand creates a competitive advantage not only in attracting talent but also in retaining employees. Recent studies underline that organizations that align their internal values with their public promises contribute to increased employee trust and loyalty (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Effective talent management and talent retention strategies require a holistic approach. They must include initiatives that address the diverse needs of employees, such as training opportunities, recognition and rewards. Retention is not just a reactive process it is a proactive measure that involves constantly monitoring employee satisfaction and adapting to changes in the organizational environment.

Organizing and implementing effective policies that combine professional development with active employee engagement and consistent employer branding are essential components for talent retention (Reis, et al., 2021).

Thus, it can be seen from Figure no. 2 that the main key term that has close links with all the other terms is talent management. The actions and decisions taken regarding talent management in the firm will influence everything from employees' well-being to their intention to leave the company.

Figure no. 2. Cluster 1 (red)
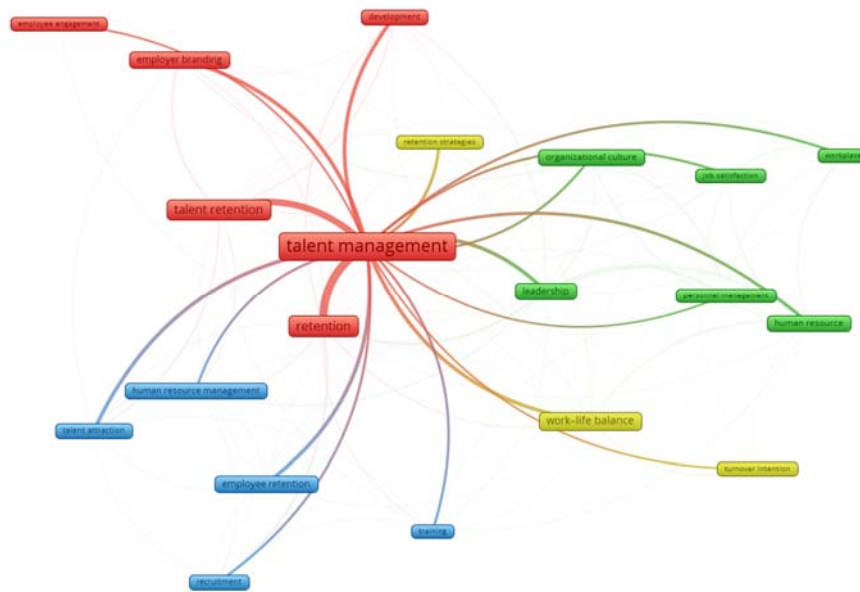
Source: VOSviewer

3.2. Cluster 2 - Organizational culture and the role of leadership (Figure no. 3)

Organizational culture is one of the key pillars for talent retention, influencing both employee satisfaction and engagement. Edgar Schein argues that a healthy organizational culture supports adaptation, innovation and a sense of belonging (Schein, 2010).

Clear organizational values and transformational leadership are critical elements to attract and retain ones talent. Recent studies highlight that inclusive work environments that promote diversity and equality increase the likelihood of employee retention (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Creating a strong culture based on clear values and a positive workplace environment is crucial to improving job satisfaction.

Another fundamental element is leadership. The leadership of the organization plays a decisive role in shaping organizational culture and talent management. Inspirational and transformational leaders are able to create an attractive vision and motivate employees to reach their full potential. Studies show that employees who perceive quality leadership are more engaged and loyal to the organization (Collings, et al., 2019).

Human resource management (HRM) and personnel management (PM) are complementary areas that contribute to talent retention. They include policies and practices that support the recruitment, integration and development of employees, as well as approaches focused on increasing their job satisfaction (Sourabh, 2021).

A supportive work environment combined with a well-defined organizational culture has a positive impact on employee performance and retention. In addition, job satisfaction is influenced by factors such as leadership style, organizational support and perceptions of fairness. Satisfied employees are less likely to leave the organization, which contributes to workforce stability and reduces the costs associated with turnover.

The interconnection between organizational culture, leadership and employee satisfaction underlines the need for an integrated approach to talent management. Leaders play a key role in creating an environment that promotes engagement and supports talent retention.

Figure no. 3. Cluster 2 (green)
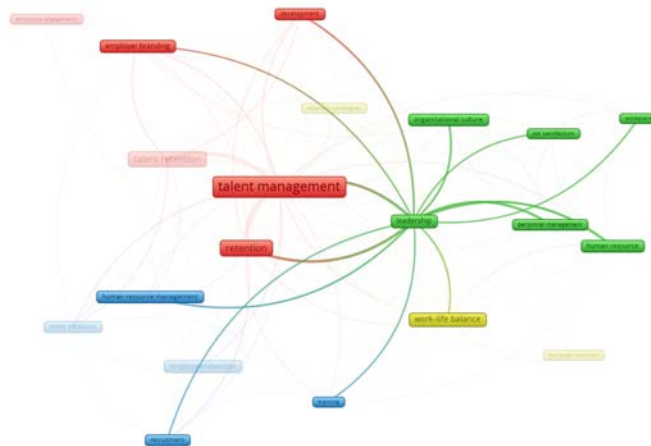
Source: VOSviewer

3.3. Cluster 3 – Professional Development and Recruitment for Employee Retention (Figure no. 4)

Professional development is a central component in the employee retention strategy. Organizations that invest in continuous learning and in creating opportunities for professional growth are more likely to retain more motivated and loyal employees. Training programs contribute not only to the development of technical skills, but also to employees' sense of self-worth, which reduces the intention to leave.

Another crucial aspect is talent attraction, which is the first step in building a stable workforce. Employer branding, coupled with a well-defined recruitment strategy, can position the organization as an attractive place for potential candidates. A solid talent attraction strategy not only brings the best professionals into the organization but also facilitates their long-term retention. Employees who feel they are in an environment that is compatible with their values and aspirations are less likely to seek other opportunities (Schein, 2010).

Human resource management (HRM) plays a key role in integrating these processes, from recruitment to retention. HR needs to implement adaptable policies that support both the attraction and development of talent in the context of dynamic changes in the labor market. For example, organizations that offer mentoring, upskilling and reskilling programs respond to the adaptive needs of employees and the organization, helping to increase retention.

Furthermore, a proactive approach to retention involves continuously analyzing employee needs and integrating them into customized programs. For example, providing constant feedback, recognizing merit and creating clear paths for career advancement are validated retention strategies.

Recruiting and attracting talent are not just entry points, but critical steps in building a stable workforce. Coupled with strong training and professional development initiatives, they become indispensable tools for employee retention.

Figure no. 4 Cluster 3 (Blue)
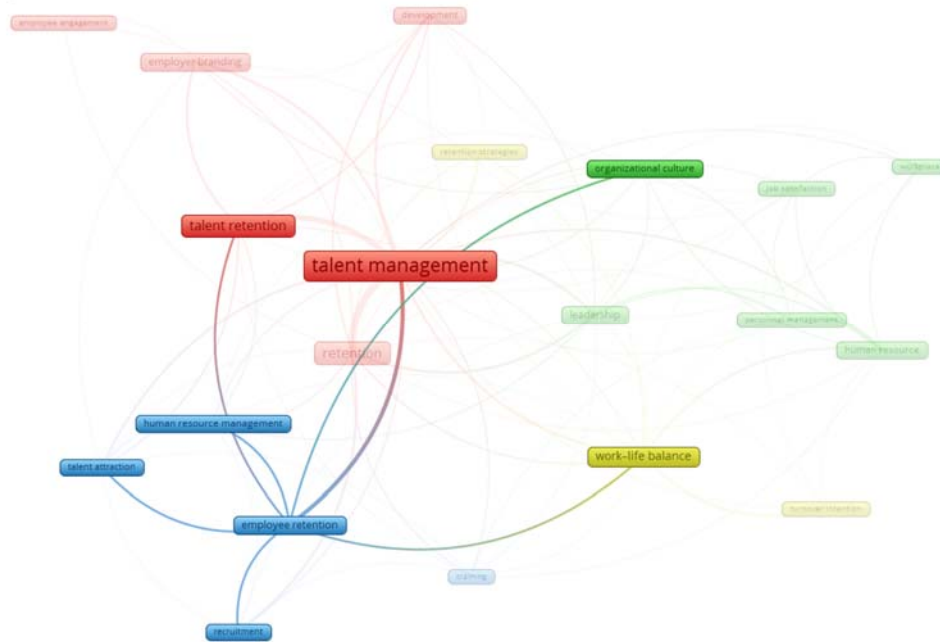
Source: VOSviewer

### 3.4. Cluster 4 – Retention Strategies and Work-Life Balance (Figure no. 5.)

Retention strategies are fundamental to reducing turnover and retaining ones talent within organizations. In the literature, effective strategies focus on meeting the diverse needs of employees, including issues such as organizational culture, professional development, and customized benefits programs. Perceived fairness in treatment and reward is a critical element for the success of these strategies, directly contributing to reduced departure intentions.

Turnover intention is a significant indicator that reflects the level of employee dissatisfaction. Research underlines that a considerable proportion of employees who express a desire to leave are influenced by factors such as stress at work, lack of career advancement prospects or work-life imbalance (John, et al., 2020). A proactive approach to talent retention involves identifying and addressing these factors before the intention materializes.

Central to modern retention strategies is work-life balance. Programs that offer flexibility to employees, such as hybrid work or customized leave, significantly increase satisfaction and loyalty. In addition, implementing policies that support stress management, such as mental health support or wellness initiatives, help to create a more supportive and attractive work environment for talent (Poelmans, et al., 2013).

Work-life balance is a central pillar in modern retention strategies, helping to reduce the intention to leave. Organizing an environment that supports flexibility and mental health is key to creating a loyal and high-performing workforce.

Figure no. 5. Cluster 4 (yellow)
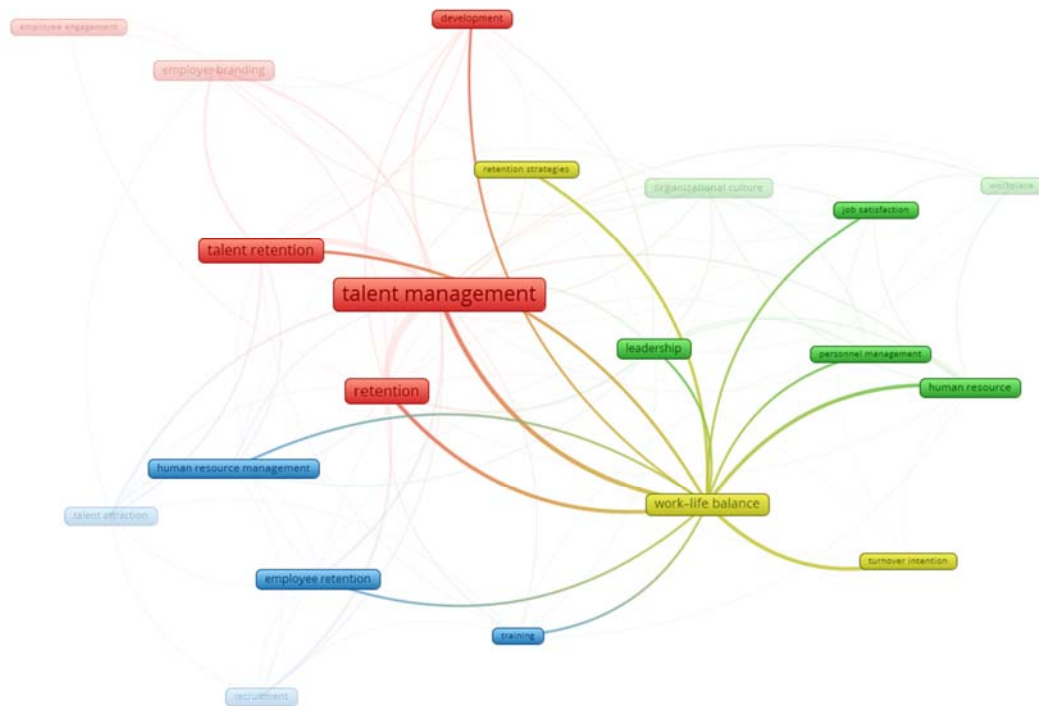
Source: VOSviewer

This clustered approach provides a deep understanding of the literature, highlighting the correlations between different aspects of talent retention. The use of VOSviewer facilitated a clear structuring of the themes, allowing not only the analysis of the terms, but also their integration into a holistic model applicable in practice.

4. Findings

The results of the analysis were graphically represented by concept maps, highlighting the interconnections between the analyzed terms. This method allowed a clear understanding of how talent retention concepts are associated with organizational culture, work-life balance, employee reward and digitalization. The analysis identified four main thematic clusters (Figure no.1):

1. Cluster 1 (Red):

This cluster focuses on developing management decisions related to talent retention, employee engagement and employer branding. It highlights the importance of strategies that enhance employee motivation and loyalty through effective communication of organizational values.

2. Cluster 2 (Green):

Addresses organizational culture, job satisfaction and leadership strategies. The cluster emphasizes the critical role of transformational leadership in creating a supportive organizational environment capable of retaining valuable talent.

3. Cluster 3 (Blue):

Focuses on decisions related to recruitment, talent attraction and professional development. The cluster emphasizes the importance of integrating recruitment and continuous development processes to ensure a stable and competitive workforce.

4. Cluster 4 (Yellow):

Includes retention strategies, intent to leave the organization, and work-life balance. It highlights that meeting individual employee needs through customized programs is key to reducing turnover.

It includes retention strategies, intention to leave the organization and work-life balance. It highlights that meeting individual employee needs through customized programs is key to reducing turnover.

These clusters provide an integrated perspective on the talent retention domain, demonstrating the interdependence between retention strategies and organizational and individual needs. The results underline that a holistic approach that combines the four identified strategies is fundamental to building sustainable and resilient organizations.

It can be seen that cluster 3 also emphasizes recruitment strategies, so retaining talent needs to start from the recruitment of new employees. Further the digitalization strategy is poorly researched. We can assume that by using digitalization we can more easily and efficiently identify the right people for a particular company. Digitization can also help us to possibly work in a hybrid system and thus be able to attract talented employees from outside the geographical area of the place of work.

Of course, the advantages presented by digitalization do not stop here, and the subject is still to be studied in more detail to see the totality of how digitalization can be involved in the human capital management process.

5. Conclusions

Talent retention is a strategic priority for modern organizations and is influenced by a number of interconnected factors. The VOSviewer cluster analysis allows us to identify four major directions that guide organizational efforts: professional development and employee engagement, organizational culture and leadership, talent recruitment and attraction, and work-life balance. The results confirm the complexity of the talent retention process and the need for integrated strategies.

The results show that professional development plays a key role in employee retention. Organizations that invest in training, mentoring and professional growth opportunities succeed in creating an environment in which employees feel valued and motivated to stay for the long term. Employee engagement, a concept closely linked to job satisfaction, is directly influenced by the level of recognition and support offered by the employer. At the same time, employer branding, perceived as a promise between the organization and its employees, contributes to building a relationship based on trust and loyalty. These elements are essential pillars for creating an attractive organizational environment that fosters retention.

Healthy organizational culture and transformational leadership are among the strongest retention factors identified in the study. The results underline that clear organizational values, support for diversity and inclusion, and a positive work environment increase employee satisfaction and reduce departure intentions. Organizational leaders play a central role, with the ability to shape culture and influence employee engagement. Studies show that transformational leadership - based on vision, inspiration and personalized support - creates a motivating work environment that fosters employee loyalty. Therefore, a well-defined organizational culture, combined with a tailored leadership style, becomes essential for talent retention.

Effective recruitment is the first step in the retention process. The results underline the importance of a well-defined recruitment strategy, including employer branding and a clear understanding candidates' needs and aspirations. Integrating them into the organization through effective onboarding programs and offering career growth prospects are key to reducing turnover. Continuous training and upskilling initiatives also respond to the changing demands of the labor market and contribute to long-term employee retention. Through a holistic approach, integrating recruitment and professional development, organizations can create a stable and competitive workforce (Urme, 2023).

Work-life balance is one of the most important factors in modern retention strategies. The results show that employees who take advantage of flexibility programs - such as hybrid work or personalized leave - show higher levels of loyalty and satisfaction. Initiatives that support employees' mental health and general well-being also contribute to a reduction in the intention to leave. Effective retention strategies need to be tailored to the diverse needs of employees and include proactive measures such as constant feedback, recognizing merit and offering opportunities

for advancement. These initiatives not only improve retention, but also help create a healthy organizational culture and an attractive work environment.

Organizations should adopt an integrated approach, combining professional development, organizational culture, strategic recruitment and work-life balance. This combination delivers more consistent talent retention results.

Digitization can accelerate the implementation of retention strategies by providing customized solutions for monitoring employee performance and satisfaction. Advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence, can support the recruitment and development process while reducing the time and costs associated with staff turnover.

In a workplace where multiple generations coexist, it is essential that organizations tailor strategies to meet the specific needs of each demographic. For example, Generation Z places a strong emphasis on flexibility and technology, while Generation X values stability and recognition.

However, through bibliometric analysis we observe that one of the key strategies underlying talent retention is poorly addressed, namely digitization of staff. This topic appears in the context of other strategies such as hybrid working, but the VOSviewer software did not identify a cluster that would have digitization at its core, nor does this term appear in any other cluster.

Thus, we see in this paper that there is a link between rewarding employees and talent retention, through methods such as professional development, a topic discussed in Cluster 3.

In conclusion, talent retention is not just a tactical concern, but a strategic process, essential for organizational competitiveness and sustainability. Effective implementation of the identified strategies can turn retention from a cost into a long-term competitive advantage.

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