

The Antecedents Affecting Employee Retention at Shopping Malls: An Analysis of Compensation and Benefits, Training and Development, Working Environment, Reward and Recognition

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Abstract: Employee retention is an important factor that any organization must consider if it hopes to stay relevant in the market. This paper seeks to examine the effect that compensation and benefits, training and development, working environment, and reward and recognition have on the retention of employees. The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between these independent variables with employee retention with the view to providing more insight into human resource management (HRM) practices. The measures of reliability analysis, descriptive analysis, correlational analysis, and regression analysis will be used as measures of strength and direction of these relationships. Questionnaires were distributed to employees working in selected shopping malls in Klang Valley using a quantitative approach, with a convenience sampling technique that ensures representativeness of data. Multiple regression analysis is performed using SPSS version 29. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory and Alderfer's Theory provided a theoretical foundation for examining the relationship between compensation and benefits, training and development, working environment, and reward and recognition. The findings show that the working environment is the factor that most influences employee retention, followed by compensation and benefits, training, and development. However, the relationship between reward and recognition with employee retention is not significant. This study fills a gap in the existing literature by focusing on the Malaysian context and providing practical advice to Human Resource Management (HRM) practitioners. It underlines that strategic HRM practices are very important in promoting compensation and benefits, training and development, working environment, and reward and recognition. Overall, this study represents actionable ways in which organizations can design successful retention programs that facilitate modest turnover while allowing the corporation to grow.

Keywords: *Employee Retention, Compensation and Benefits, Training and Development, Working Environment, Reward and Recognition*

1. Introduction

Background of the Study

One of the top responsibilities for human resource departments is to keep good employees motivated and pleased. They always work to ensure that their best employees are involved and dedicated to the business (Goswami, 2021). Employee retention, according to Anilkumar (2024), is the capacity of the business to retain its staff over an extended period of time. This technique helps the business stay strong and stable by encouraging and motivating its employees to stay. Developing measures to retain valuable personnel and maintain a competitive edge requires an understanding of the aspects that affect employee retention (Vijayakumar, 2020). There are a number of factors that affect employee retention, according to another study by Hussein et al. (2021).

Economic swings have an impact on other organizational procedures as well as staff retention rates. Employee engagement, communication, leadership, pay, training and development, career advancement, job happiness, flexibility, and performance reviews are among the main outcomes of good employee retention (Darmayanti, 2024). A number of factors, including incentives, supervisor support, training, development opportunities, job features, and work-family conflict, have been found to have an impact on employee retention (Nadeem & Malik, 2021). This study also noted that the length of time employees stay with a firm and the frequency with which the organization must acquire new employees to replace departing employees can be used to explain employee retention. Globally, employee retention has an impact on an organization's performance, profitability, and capacity to hold onto valuable personnel in the face of intense international competition (Suraihi et al., 2021).

It feels like machines are intruding in today's world, where technology has a bigger impact on enterprises than ever before. However, because they are the ones who ensure that all of that technology functions properly,

businesses still require people. Therefore, having quality employees remains essential for all businesses. But in addition to attracting exceptional individuals, staff retention is crucial for guaranteeing their sustained dedication to the company. In order to address this problem, businesses can begin looking at ways to maintain employee satisfaction by increasing pay, providing rewards and recognition, and creating a welcoming work environment (Prakash and Philimis, 2022).

Previous research conducted in Malaysia has examined employee retention in a range of sectors, such as manufacturing, services, and construction (Zainal et al., 2022). The aforementioned studies underscored the need to examine staff retention and determine their top priorities. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between employee retention and pay and benefits, training and development, work environment, reward, and recognition. The impact of each of these factors on staff retention will be established by this study. A poll of staff members at a few Klang Valley retail centers served as the study's data collection approach. By emphasizing each of these elements, businesses may be able to identify the ones that have the biggest impact on employee retention.

Research Objectives:

- RO1:** To determine the relationship between training and development and employee retention.
- RO2:** To determine the relationship between training and development and employee retention.
- RO3:** To examine the relationship between the working environment and employee retention.
- RO4:** To identify the relationship between reward and recognition and employee retention.
- RO5:** To determine which factor has the most influence on employee retention.

Research Questions

- RQ 1:** Is there a relationship between compensation and benefits and employee retention?
- RQ 2:** Is there a relationship between training and development and employee retention?
- RQ 3:** Is there a relationship between the working environment and employee retention?
- RQ 4:** Is there a relationship between reward and recognition and employee retention?
- RQ 5:** Which factor has the most influence on employee retention?

2. Literature Review

Dependent Variable

Employee Retention: The problem of employee retention has grown in significance, and scholars have attempted to identify retention tactics. Biason (2020) asserts that in order to sustain staff retention, businesses must concentrate on job satisfaction and motivating aspects. According to studies, factors that affect how long employees stay with a company include things like job happiness, dedication to the organization, and a good work-life balance. Several important elements that affect employee retention in Cambodian private enterprises were identified by a survey conducted among 420 employees. According to Nor et al. (2024), the researchers discovered that pay and a healthy work-life balance both greatly increase job satisfaction and aid in employee retention.

Subsequently, in a survey by Ahmed and Vijayakumar (2024), factors influencing employee retention included work-life balance, stress, turnover, organizational culture, job satisfaction, career advancement, compensation, interesting tasks, training and development opportunities, and working conditions. According to a different study, employee retention is an organizational endeavor to develop and retain skilled workers in order to satisfy the demands of an effective workforce. Strategic retention is also used to ensure that human capital aligns with organizational objectives (Elangkumaran et al., 2023).

Thompson and Muda (2021) highlighted that the employee retention relationship with organizational success is multifaceted. Organizations must maintain competitiveness, achieve long-term goals, and sustain operational productivity and retention is pivotal to that. However, both internal and external factors—such as job satisfaction, personal growth, and leadership quality—have an impact on employee retention. External factors include pay, benefits, and job security. The retention of Generation Y employees will be based on their unique traits, which include their appreciation of demanding work, preference for work-life balance, and need for

acknowledgment. This study emphasizes that managers are the problem and that in order to lower turnover and improve employee retention, they must implement tactics that include training, development, and equitable organizational practices. In addition to assisting the business in meeting the organizational expenses associated with the high level of employee mobility, it also helps people achieve their goals, grow both personally and professionally, and align their goals with those of the company.

Independent Variables

Compensation and Benefits: In today's fast-paced and competitive work environment, compensation plays a vital role in the workplace because it has a direct impact on job satisfaction. Pay is a critical factor in today's fast-paced and competitive workplace. Paying workers well recognizes the importance of their labor and helps them maintain more financial stability (Suryadi et al., 2022). Compensation satisfaction is a frequently disregarded element that has a big influence on employee retention (Fitri, 2024). Organizations seeking to retain competent workers must comprehend how compensation affects employee retention (Samosir et al., 2021). These elements are essential to job satisfaction and have a big impact on employee engagement and retention (Nor et al., 2024).

Any additional benefit that an employee receives in exchange for their valuable services to a business is referred to in this context as compensation (Prakash and Philimis, 2022). Sorn et al. (2023), who similarly defined pay as all the benefits that employees receive in exchange for their labor, support this as well. These include their base income (wage/salary), insurance, retirement, and other benefits/emoluments, as well as different types of leave, performance-based incentives, and other perks that the employer provides, such as lunches or promotions. According to some sources, compensation is any kind of payment made by an employer to its workers in exchange for their labor; this can include cash and non-cash benefits, salaries, allowances, incentives, and paid time off (Hanai & Pallangyo, 2020).

Nor et al. (2024) highlighted that compensation became one of the core determinants of job satisfaction. Where an employee's performance has been quantified in terms of work accomplished, he or she is likely to feel valued and appreciated in equal measure to the financial remuneration offered. According to Watkins and Fusch (2022), employees at Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) feel they are being treated fairly when they understand that their pay and promotions are commensurate with their work, experience, and results. As a result, workers who give their all at work and receive the recognition they deserve from their employers will stick with them. According to Macaraig et al. (2024), employers report that employees in Cambodia submit resignation letters for a variety of reasons, including a lack of prospects for advancement, increased compensation, and better salaries.

This statement agrees with previous research that highlights how important it is to offer competitive compensation to keep employees from leaving. According to a Kenyan survey including 64 teachers, 87.5 percent of them claimed their pay was insufficient to keep them employed at private secondary schools. Of those surveyed, 76.8% believed they were not being paid enough. Merely 12% of respondents expressed satisfaction with their pay. The overall results of the study demonstrate how important pay is for keeping employees on board (Kariuki, 2020). Bason (2020) asserts that compensation and other elements that are positively associated with employee retention are key determinants of work satisfaction. Employee retention increases a company's chances of long-term success and competitiveness when workers are satisfied with their compensation and general job satisfaction.

Employee retention is positively correlated with salary and promotions. By finding that 64.9 percent of the respondents thought their pay was fair in comparison to their counterparts in similar jobs in other firms, the researchers Alshamrani et al. (2023) showed that this factor had a positive effect on employee retention. Compensation, which includes both monetary and non-monetary advantages that improve workers' mental and physical capacities, is a significant component of the overall rewards system that businesses utilize to draw in, keep and inspire employees.

Although there is ample evidence linking remuneration to employee retention, other studies contend that remuneration may not have an impact on retention. Employee retention and compensation are not positively

correlated. Taking everything into account, research will be done to find out if pay affects employee retention (Ojediran and Adebayo, 2023).

Training and Development: It has also been discovered that factors like training and development affect retention rates. Research indicates that staff retention is favorably correlated with training and development initiatives (Kumari, 2022). Employees' abilities, expertise, and work ethic are always fostered by proper training and development, which improves performance (Fabian, 2024).

Training and development programs are referred to as an educational upgrade for employees, whether they are in public service or the private sector. They are designed to help people level up in their jobs by teaching them new skills and knowledge and giving them a boost of motivation. These initiatives are crucial for guaranteeing that workers give their best efforts and feel equipped to thrive in their positions (Prakash and Philimis, 2022). This claim is in line with recent research that indicates providing employees with training and development is essential to retaining them. According to other studies, training and development is the methodical, planned process of enhancing employees' knowledge, abilities, and competencies to enable them to carry out their tasks more successfully. According to studies, organizations that provide quality training and development programs have a higher retention rate among younger workers because they give them the opportunity to grow in their professions and pick up new skills (Nguyen and Duong, 2021).

Employees of all ages benefit from training since it helps them develop their abilities and work habits. Ensuring that everyone has access to training programs is crucial for the company's growth, particularly in terms of enhancing employee performance and utilizing new technologies (Ojediran & Adebayo, 2023). According to one definition, training is a process that improves workers' abilities and knowledge, which in turn increases their job satisfaction and retention and eventually helps the business reach its goals. Training helps employees grow personally and enhance their jobs, which eventually helps the business (Alharthy and Marni, 2020).

Apart from that, development entails more extensive learning experiences that equip people for future roles and growth prospects, whereas training is similar to a targeted program where you learn new things and acquire skills to perform certain jobs better (Murtiningsih, 2020). Research has indicated that one of the primary determinants of employee retention is training initiatives. For instance, a study by Calinao et al. (2020) demonstrated that businesses may retain staff by investing in their training and development. Some employees may quit without proper training, which could cost the business money and resources.

Working Environment: The actual location where an employee works is one example of the social and physical aspects that make up the working environment. In addition to providing a comfortable working environment and sufficient resources, a good workplace is also thought to have a significant role in keeping clients. According to a study by Alshamrani et al. (2023), employee retention is correlated with a positive work environment. Employee retention is higher when they are satisfied with their working environment. In summary, firms can reduce turnover rates and retain employees by fostering a favorable work environment.

The working environment, according to Xuecheng et al. (2022), is the degree to which workers feel safe in their workplace and are able to express their thoughts on their surroundings to the organization. It was determined that employee retention in the workplace is influenced by the working environment. In their study on the definition of the term "working environment," Prakash and Philimis (2022) defined it as the setting and circumstances in which an individual carries out their responsibilities, engages with coworkers, and functions in a physical setting.

Employee satisfaction, meetings, communications with coworkers, group cohesion, performance ratings, and even their well-being are all directly impacted by these factors. For instance, a study that evaluated the working circumstances of 366 workers in Saudi pharmaceutical companies found that 68% of respondents said they were satisfied enough with the working conditions provided by their employers to stay employed by the company. Just 2% of those who expressed dissatisfaction with their workplaces said they would like to leave. These findings suggest that employee retention in Saudi Arabian pharmaceutical enterprises is directly positively impacted by the target organizations' work environments (Alshamrani et al., 2023).

In the Philippines, in the case of the Filipino seafarers' decision to remain on international cruise ships, one common determinant is the work environment. Other studies have shown that while the workplace environment plays a part in keeping employees, it is not the sole influence. To keep Filipinos on cruise ships, further considerations include pay parity and remunerated wages, training and development, and job stability. Accordingly, it was said that Filipino workers are still highly valued for their ability to work hard and interact with guests in a courteous manner most of the time, which enhances their stay (Calinao et al., 2023). Given the research of Noordin et al. (2021), which indicates that one of the important factors influencing employment retention in the e-commerce logistics industry is the work environment, the study further supports this claim.

Positive work environments not only improve employee performance but also help retain employees. These settings include polite behavior, appropriate communication, opportunities for growth, incentives for diligence, and support. Higher levels of commitment, motivation, and job satisfaction result from this, while the company gains from lower costs associated with hiring and onboarding new staff. The level of job satisfaction among Generation Y employees in the hospitality sector is significantly influenced by their work environment. Their level of commitment to remaining in that industry is subsequently influenced by their level of satisfaction. In the hotel industry, maintaining a positive work atmosphere is crucial for staff retention as found by Naz et al. (2020).

Reward and Recognition: In order to maintain employee motivation and guarantee retention, rewards and recognition are crucial. It's critical for businesses to comprehend how these factors impact employee behavior to increase productivity and maintain a competitive edge. Prakash and Philimis (2022) define reward and recognition as methods of expressing gratitude for workers' efforts. There are numerous tangible and intangible ways to accomplish this. Fairly and quickly recognizing and appreciating workers' accomplishments is the aim to create a positive and encouraging work environment. Incentives serve as a way to recognize someone for their efforts and contributions.

According to Kryscynski et al. (2020), incentives, including prizes, public recognition, and material services are examples of rewards and recognition that are important for employee motivation. This is further corroborated by research by Nor et al. (2024), which found that people are more motivated to keep up their best work when they receive praise or rewards for their efforts. Therefore, rewarding and recognizing exceptional work can be a very effective strategy to maintain employee motivation and engagement. According to earlier research, scholars have been concentrating on figuring out what keeps workers in their professions, especially in relation to incentives and recognition. According to Kršlak and Ljevo (2021), incentives directly encourage staff members to strive toward the organization's objectives.

The literature has emphasized the close connection between employee retention and rewards and recognition. Rewards increase employee engagement, loyalty, and willingness to stick with the organization, according to recent studies. They motivate employees to stay by making them feel appreciated and valued (Noordin et al., 2021). Fairly designed awards make workers feel valued for their efforts and abilities, which increases employee retention. This result is consistent with that of Calinao et al. (2020), who discovered that one of the elements influencing employee retention is incentive and recognition.

Thompson and Muda (2021) studied the relationship between reward and recognition with how retention affects Generation Y personnel in the financial services industry. Reward and recognition were one of the most important contributors to retention, managers found. When employees are rewarded, like bonuses, appreciation, or some sort of acknowledgment for a job well done, it enhances employee retention. On the flip side, if employees do not get recognized, they often look for more opportunities. This reinforces the space tangible rewards and acknowledgment strategies occupy in reducing high turnover and nurturing employee retention and should be taken seriously when trying to retain talent.

The Relationship Between Independent Variables and Dependent Variables

The Relationship between Compensation and Benefits and Employee Retention: Saputra and Riana (2021) demonstrated that one of the key ways of maintaining employees in the organization is through the provision of an attractive remuneration package. The position is that when such bonuses and other forms of

compensation are paid on time, they provide a sense of security to the employees; hence, they will contribute to employee retention. The relationship between remuneration and employee retention was predicted and verified in a study examining the relationship between human resource practices, placement tactics, and compensation practices and corporate outcomes (Samosir et al., 2021). Compensation and employee retention are strongly positively correlated, according to a different study done among workers at three-star hotels in Ghana's New Juaben North Municipality. The study discovered that one of the key elements influencing employee retention is remuneration. Fairly compensated jobs, financial bonus plans, and incentive schemes help to retain employees, which lowers employee turnover (Siaw et al., 2022).

Shrestha and Prajapati (2024) investigated employee retention through survey data from 240 senior leaders, including CEOs, DCEOs, general managers, operation in-charges, Human Resource (HR) managers, and branch managers who worked in six commercial banks and six insurance organizations in Nepal. Pay and benefits have been demonstrated to have a significant and positive effect on employee retention. Pay and recognition are important factors that positively impact employee retention in other countries, per a study done in the Egyptian construction industry (Mohamed et al., 2023). Other research indicates that compensation is one of the main factors affecting employee retention (Zainal et al., 2022). Employees would choose to stay with organizations that offer attractive compensation packages. Effective compensation was found to have a substantial impact on staff retention and top talent retention. It has been shown that there is a considerable correlation between pay and staff retention.

In addition, a study by Kiran et al. (2024) noted that as pay is a major factor in determining employee retention, it has a positive relationship with employee retention. Workers are more likely to view their employer as one that values and values them if they feel that their efforts and salary are appreciated. It follows that a favorable wage relationship not only draws in talent but also improves employee retention, which lowers turnover and increases organizational stability. Alajlani and Yesufu (2022), who noted that pay and perks aid in employee retention and reduce staff turnover, lend credence to this study. Fair compensation expresses the organization's value for employees, which leads to higher employee retention and intention to remain with the organization. It shows that compensation and benefits have a positive relationship with employee retention. Moreover, according to Jiang (2023), retention of employees in the food manufacturing industry is dependent on compensation and benefits, which have a positive effect on employee retention, and thus organizations that engage in formulating strategic benefits and compensation packages are likely to record few changes in the Human Resource (HR) staff.

The Relationship between Training and Development and Employee Retention: According to Siaw et al. (2022), the researchers showed that employee decisions to stay with a company or leave are strongly influenced by training and development. Higher staff retention has also been positively correlated with providing training and development opportunities (Nazeem and Malik, 2021). According to another study, training and development for Indian workers and employee retention are strongly positively correlated (Kumari et al., 2022). In addition, a study by Alsakarneh et al. (2023) showed that staff retention is positively correlated with training and development. The results demonstrate that providing frequent training and development opportunities greatly improves employee retention by equipping workers with the necessary skill set and fostering their professional development.

According to a study on employee retention in the hotel industry, training and development are crucial for keeping employees (Ghani et al., 2022). The results of a second study that looked at the relationship between training and development and staff retention in a subset of Malaysian airline companies showed a strong positive association (Merican et al., 2022). A study conducted on employees at a private commercial bank in Nairobi, Kenya, found a strong correlation between training and development and employee retention. Additionally, the bank demonstrated that its staff members were satisfied with the training courses it provided (Kiragu and Marwa, 2022).

Another study by Alajlani and Yesufu (2022) mentioned that training and development are correlated with employee retention. It has been proven that continuous learning opportunities lead to boosting employees' feelings of being valued and of them being engaged, thus increasing the loyalty of employees to the organization and causing them to be more willing to stay with the organization. In order to perform and become faster, more

self-assured, and more competent on the job, employees teach what is new to them. The company encourages them to stay; therefore, they want to stay. This study was noteworthy since it discovered that training initiatives, empowerment, and performance reviews were important factors influencing employee retention in UAE higher education institutions. Workers believed that prospects for job advancement and frequent employee feedback were more energizing and integrated into their company. The overall conclusion was that effective training and development are the key to retaining team members and building their loyalty over a longer time frame.

However, Jiang's (2023) study found no correlation between staff retention and training and development in the Philippines' food manufacturing sector. It has been discovered that training has no direct impact on how long employees remain with their company, in contrast to many other HR procedures including pay, job security, and performance reviews. According to the survey, providing training programs alone is insufficient to keep staff members on board. Depending on the employee's desire to stay or leave, training decisions may be made based on factors like recognition, job security, and financial incentives. Additionally, there is no interaction between training and the workplace; hence, there is no moderating effect on the relationship between training and employee retention.

The Relationship between Working Environment and Employee Retention: The researchers discovered that the work environment significantly affects employee retention (Islam et al., 2022). Their findings demonstrated a direct correlation between the work environment and employee retention, emphasizing the need to foster a healthy work environment in retaining millennial employees. In a similar vein, a research of 400 workers in the service sector revealed that a supportive work environment is crucial for employee retention since it improves employee performance and increases retention rates (Zainal et al., 2022). The study found that organizations that provide a modern, safe, and comfortable work environment have greater employee retention rates. This is consistent with other research showing that a well-organized workplace encourages job satisfaction and staff retention.

Apart from that, Chatzoudes and Chatzoglou (2022) discovered that, aside from salary, level of empowerment, and management interactions, the work environment is the most important element influencing employee retention. This illustrates the necessity of a suitable workplace culture to retain personnel. Similarly, a study conducted at PT Carana Bunga Persada in Indonesia found that a favorable work environment helps retain employees, confirming the notion that a positive work environment is essential (Rahmani and Prayoga, 2023). In a similar vein, Noordin et al.'s (2021) study of Malaysian e-commerce logistics workers revealed that employee retention rates are influenced by the workplace.

In a similar vein, Jiang's (2023) study found that employee retention in the food manufacturing sector is positively correlated with the work environment. A supportive work environment (both physical and nonphysical) is found to increase employee retention and decrease turnover when compared to non-supportive ones. This is consistent with a study by Kiran et al. (2024) that found that an employee's job satisfaction and working circumstances affect their retention. A supportive Human Resource Management (HRM) strategy creates a pleasant work atmosphere that boosts employee retention and job satisfaction, according to the study.

In addition, a different study by Lasanov et al. (2023) discovered that there is a positive correlation between the work environment and employee retention. This indicates that employees' willingness to remain with a company is quite important and is reliant on a safe, comfortable, and organized work environment. According to the author, a supportive work environment in terms of amenities, communication, and organizational culture will increase employee satisfaction and retention since they will want to work for the company longer. The working environment has a very strong and favorable link with millennial employee retention in state-owned firms, according to another study by Andriani et al. (2022).

The Relationship between Reward and Recognition and Employee Retention: Employee retention and incentive and recognition programs are positively correlated, according to numerous studies. Robertson (2024) claims to have shown that staff retention is significantly impacted by rewards and recognition. This research is corroborated by Al-Suraihi et al. (2021), who found that incentives, benefits, and competitive pay

packages—both internal and external—are essential for increasing organizational commitment and improving employee retention.

Moreover, in a study among employees in the e-commerce logistics industry in Malaysia, it was shown that reward and recognition have a strong relationship with employee retention. With an emphasis on both monetary and non-monetary incentives, the study emphasizes the importance of a thorough rewards program in retaining employees. Employee retention rates are frequently higher in companies with comprehensive reward systems that include competitive compensation, bonuses, opportunities for career progression, and workplace recognition (Noordin et al., 2021). Furthermore, a study conducted among staff members at PT Addis Citra, a digital communication firm located in Jakarta, Indonesia, found a significant relationship between employee retention and the way in which workers are paid and rewarded (Masputra et al., 2023). Employee retention is significantly impacted by rewards and recognition, according to Caredo et al. (2022), who studied workers at a department store in the Samar-Leyte region of the Philippines.

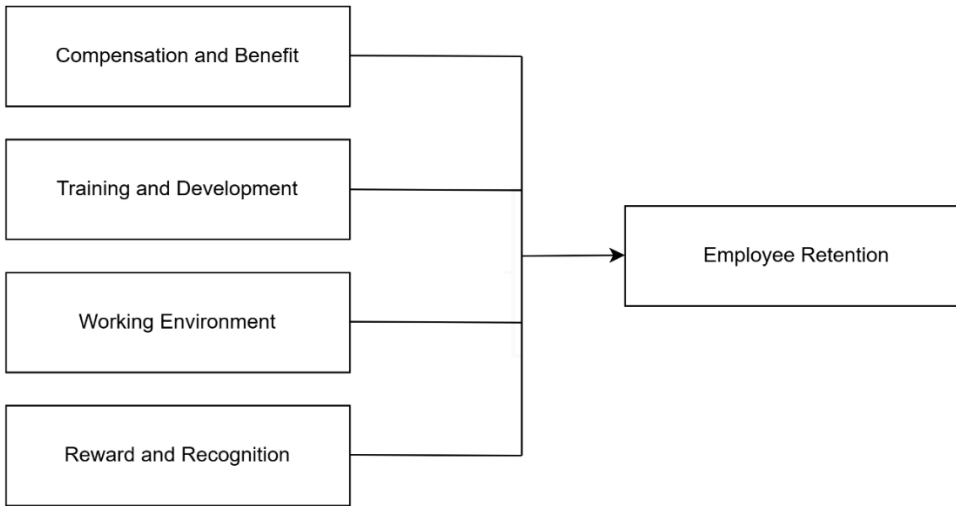
A study in the Malaysian service industry showed that reward has strong positive effects on employee retention. The study proved that when companies offer fair and motivating rewards, employees stay committed to the company and work hard. They are attracting both non-monetary (recognition or professional development chances) and monetary (wage, bonus, and fringe benefits). A well-designed reward system will guarantee that employee retention proceeds easily because the staff will feel valued and appreciated, claim Zainal et al. (2022). Rewards and recognition have a good and significant link with staff retention in Malaysian pharmaceutical companies, according to another study by Saedin et al. (2023), and this finding is corroborated. Employee retention is greatly influenced by rewards, both monetary and non-monetary, which makes them essential for retaining employees.

The study from Tirta and Enrika (2020) emphasizes the huge link between employee retention and reward and recognition through job satisfaction as the crucial mediating factor. Reward and recognition are influenced directly by employee retention, which makes employees feel they are valued and recognized for their contributions. On the one hand, material items like bonuses and pay are nice; on the other, intangible examples are beneficial, such as public recognition and praise, which makes them feel better about themselves in that company. Furthermore, rewards and recognition increase job happiness, which fortifies an employee's will to stick around. This is particularly crucial for today's Millennials, who are less concerned with monetary gains than their older, more discerning colleagues. By fostering a more positive work environment, organizations may also cultivate a culture of recognition, which eventually benefits the company by increasing retention rates and lowering turnover expenses.

Similarly, Geetha and Muthukumaravel (2022) explained that rewards and recognition are an important part of employee retention as a way of making them feel more valued and appreciated. According to the study's findings, 54% of respondents said they were extremely satisfied with organized rewards and recognition programs at work, indicating that these programs produced the highest level of job satisfaction. Employee retention is improved and their likelihood of leaving the company is decreased when you thank them for their contributions. Furthermore, the positive relationship between employee retention and rewards and recognition demonstrates that these practices create an environment where workers are motivated to continue in their careers. Emphasizing employee efforts will improve relationships with staff, which will increase organizational stability and continuity. It is more proof that rewards and recognition should be included in retention strategies.

However, Shah et al. (2021) looked into the connection between rewards and recognition in a study on staff retention at Khyber Medical College (KMC). It was discovered that there was no connection between staff retention and awards or recognition. It's possible that the current system of rewards does not meet the needs of the employees. In order to improve staff retention, the researchers recommend that KMC redesign its compensation programs. This is significant because different companies receive different returns, and tactics should be tailored to meet their unique requirements.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework



Hypotheses:

- H₁:** There is a relationship between compensation and benefits and employee retention.
H₂: There is a relationship between training and development and employee retention.
H₃: There is a relationship between the working environment and employee retention.
H₄: There is a relationship between reward and recognition and employee retention.

3. Methodology

This study applies the quantitative approach to determine the factors affecting employee retention in shopping malls. The target population for this study is individuals with working experience within the retail sector. Melawati Mall, Mytown Cheras, KL East Mall and Wangsa Walk Mall were chosen because of their strategic locations in the Klang Valley, which offer a variety of mid-range and busy shopping centers with a range of retail settings. The sample for the study is 85 employees using G*Power software. Selected respondents are chosen by the Convenience Sampling Technique. The data collection of this research is via Questionnaires, which are thought to provide first-hand variables of interest suitable for the study. The research tests the hypotheses through Multiple Regression Analysis. Below is the summary of the data in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Data Analysis

Items		Details	
1.	Design	Quantitative Method	
2.	Population and Sample	Population: Respondents selected from employees working at selected shopping malls in Klang Valley Sample: Sample size is 85 according to G*Power Software Sampling Technique: Non-probability (Convenience Sampling)	
3.	Data Collection Procedure	Structured questionnaires distributed at four shopping malls with high foot traffic in Klang Valley. (Melawati mall, Mytown mall, KL East mall, Wanga Walk mall)	
4.	Instrument and Measurement Design		
	Variables	No. of Items (Questions)	Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)
	Compensation and Benefit	4	0.67
	Training and Development	6	0.84
	Working Environment	6	0.85
	Reward and Recognition	5	0.86
		6	0.89
5.	Data Analysis	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 29)	

Pilot Study

A pilot study was first done to obtain a deeper understanding of the challenges in using the existing model and it was used to vary the instruments to meet specific needs to establish a dependable study. For this research, the pilot study comprised 30 voluntarily participated in filling in questionnaires through a link provided on the Google form. This was widely shared with employees at selected shopping malls in the Klang Valley. The pilot study confirms the reliability of all scales, with most internal consistency good and the Compensation and Benefit scale acceptable reliability, which gives us confidence in their use for the main study.

4. Results and Discussion

The analysis was based on a total of 111 usable questionnaires. Thus, the Response rate for this study is 99.11%. Moreover, this response rate can be seen as excellent because the researcher was able to get more responses than needed in a total of 112 responses, which is above the minimum sample size of 85.

Means and Standard Deviations after Factor Analysis

Table 2 shows the Means and Standard Deviations for independent and dependent variables. This study included five main variables: the dependent variable, employee retention, and the independent variables (compensation and benefits, training and development, working environment, reward and recognition).

Table 2: The Means and Standard Deviations after Factor Analysis

Statistics	Mean Compensation and Benefit	Mean Training and Development	Mean Working Environment	Mean Reward and Recognition	Mean Employee Retention
N Valid	111	111	111	111	111
Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3.61	3.74	3.87	3.89	3.19
Std. Deviation	0.77	0.87	0.77	0.83	0.98
Minimum	1.25	1.33	1.33	1.60	1.71
Maximum	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

Participants had high levels of compensation and benefits ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 0.77$), training and development ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 0.87$), working environment ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.77$) and reward and recognition ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.83$). Employee retention was classified as moderate ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 0.98$) since the value of the mean score is between 2.5 and 3.5, but it is still acceptable. Overall, the findings indicate that participants experience high compensation and benefits, training and development, working environment, reward, and recognition.

Normality after Factor Analysis

Table 3 summarizes the results of the Factor Analysis. It provides the normality score for each variable. The findings indicate that all variables followed a normal distribution, with the skewness ranging between the scale of -2 to +2, and the kurtosis between -7 to +7.

Table 3: Normality score for all variables after Factor Analysis

	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Employee Retention	111	-0.27	0.23	-0.57	0.46
Compensation and Benefit	111	-0.59	0.23	0.25	0.46
Training and Development	111	-0.57	0.23	-0.07	0.46
Working Environment	111	-0.40	0.23	-0.13	0.46
Reward and Recognition	111	-0.48	0.23	-0.23	0.46
Valid N (listwise)	111				

Reliability after Factor Analysis

Reliability analysis aids in determining the consistency and stability of data, as well as testing the connection between various scale components (Suhartini et al., 2021).

Table 4: Summary of Reliability Analysis after Factor Analysis (n=111)

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Consistency/Strength
Dependent Variable		
Employee Retention	0.88	Very Good
Independent Variables		
Compensation and Benefit	0.69	Moderate
Training and Development	0.88	Very Good
Working Environment	0.88	Very Good
Reward and Recognition	0.88	Very Good

Reliability analysis shows that the dependent variable Employee Retention has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.88, which happened to be very good reliability and strong internal consistency among the measurement items. Training and Development, Working Environment, and Reward and Recognition also display very good reliability, as Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.88 demonstrate strong consistency in data collected for these independent variables. Consequently, Compensation and Benefits shows a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.69; thus, it can be said that, although acceptable, its items measured for this variable have a moderate reliability. All in all, most variables showed high reliability to enable regression analysis to find out the relationships between Employee Retention and the independent variables. The results of this analysis can tell whether certain elements like compensation, training, working environment, and recognition affect employee retention outcomes.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

The correlation coefficient is a statistical tool that is usually used in research to show the relationship between the variables, or for the evaluation of the consistency between two methods (Rony et al., 2023). For this study, the Pearson Correlation analysis was used to determine the linear relationship of the variables in terms of direction and strength. The correlation analysis explores the relationships between Employee Retention (ER), as the dependent variable, and four independent variables: Working Environment (WE), Training and Development (TD), Compensation and Benefits (CB) and Reward and Recognition (RR).

Table 5: Correlation Analysis

		Correlations				
		ER	CB	TD	WE	RR
ER	Pearson Correlation	1	.478**	.543**	.614**	.612**
	Sig. (2 tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	111	111	111	111	111

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

A Pearson correlation was calculated examining the relationship between Compensation and Benefit and Employee Retention. A medium positive correlation was found ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$), indicating a significant relationship between the two variables. On the same level, the results demonstrated a medium positive correlation between Training and Development and Employee Retention ($r = 0.54$, $p < 0.01$), indicating a significant positive relationship between the two variables. It reflected that employees value work that provides them opportunities for skill enrichment and career growth and so that aspect too has an important role in keeping employees engaged and loyal.

In addition, medium positive correlations are found between Working Environment and Employee Retention ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$), and between Reward and Recognition ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.01$), which suggests that a healthy work environment characterized by a positive working culture and reward and recognition of individual employees is are vital elements in helping to achieve employee retention. Therefore, organizations should consider these aspects highly important and focus on them so that their employees can be loyal and less likely to get out of the organization.

Consequently, the analysis concludes that under the control of the dependent variable, employee retention is almost impacted by compensation, training opportunities, working environment, and recognition practices. This provides knowledge that organizations can use in developing strategies to increase retention rates.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis is a statistical method employed to investigate the relationship between a dependent variable and several independent variables (Adhikari, 2022). This study can utilize multiple linear regression analysis to identify the factors influencing employee retention in the industry. The technique can help identify which factors have the most significant impact on employee retention and how they interact with each other.

Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.71 ^a	0.50	0.48	0.70

Multiple Regression Analysis is used to study how Reward and Recognition, Compensation and Benefit, Training and Development, and Working Environment affect the outcome, and the model summary gives a general idea about the overall performance of the model. An R-value of .71 indicates that there is a strong relationship between these predictors and the measure of outcome.

The researcher can determine the R Square of 0.50, meaning 50% of the variation in the outcome is explained by the model. These factors explain half of what influences the outcome, and the other half comes from factors that are not included in the model. However, with the adjusted number of factors included in the model, the Adjusted R Square of 0.48 is slightly lower, which means this model is solid, but if the researcher could add more factors that would be relevant to this problem, it could be even better.

Lastly, there is Standard Error of the Estimate is 0.70, which tells us how far off the model's predictions are from the real values. The error here is small, so that means the predictions are more accurate and the error is lower. To summarize, this model suggests that the chosen factors do have a real effect on the result, but further progress is required to make predictions more accurate.

Summary of Hypotheses

The analysis has supported three of the hypotheses (H1, H2, and H3) that compensation and benefits, training and development, and the working environment were significant in employee retention. Nevertheless, H4 was not supported, suggesting that the reward and recognition may not be of as much importance for the employees' retention decisions in the studied context.

Table 7: Summary of Hypotheses

	Hypotheses	Results
H1	Compensation and Benefits have a significant relationship with Employee Retention.	Supported
H2	Training and Development have a significant relationship with Employee Retention.	Supported
H3	Working Environment has a significant relationship with Employee Retention.	Supported
H4	Reward and Recognition have a significant relationship with Employee Retention.	Not Supported

The first research question inquired if compensation and benefits had any relationship with employee retention. To deal with it, multiple regression was done to give a relationship between the two variables and a hypothesis testing for Research Question 1. In this study, compensation and benefits are the independent variables. This research found that $p = 0.05$ for compensation and benefits, which indicated a significant relationship between compensation and benefits and employee retention ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, it has been proven that H1 is supported, indicating a significant positive relationship between compensation and benefits and employee retention. The result is consistent with the literature review that showed that a study conducted on employees at three-star hotels in the New Juaben North Municipality of Ghana shows that compensation has a strong positive correlation with employee retention (Siaw et al., 2022). This study is in agreement with Mohamed et al. (2023), who have conducted a study in the Egyptian construction industry, exploring that compensation and recognition are the factors that positively affect employee retention across varied countries.

According to the study findings, there is a strong correlation between training and development and the retention of employees. By having a ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.05$), which indicated a positive relationship between training and development and employee retention. This indicates that the relationship is statistically significant. So, it has been proven that H2 is supported and that more likely employees will stay with their organization if they receive enough training and development opportunities. These results were also consistent with the findings of Kumari et al. (2022), who also demonstrated a very strong positive relationship between training and development and employee retention. The study showed that returning to training in an organization can decrease employee turnover as employees feel valued and are more likely to stay loyal.

According to the hypothesis, the third research question explored whether the working environment influences employee retention. To address this, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between these two variables and to test the hypothesis for Research Question 3. Another independent variable included the working environment. The study found a strong positive relationship between $p\text{-value}=0.00$ for working environment and employee retention ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.05$). As a result, they found in this instance that H3 was upheld, suggesting a significant positive connection between employee retention and the working environment. This is in line with the literature review that found that a study on service industry employees indicated that a positive work environment creates a positive based on performance employee environment to retain employees, which then fosters higher retention rates, thus the significance of work environment in the retention (Zainal et al., 2022).

The result of this research was that reward and recognition did not have a significant relationship with employee retention. That's because $\beta=0.13$, $t=0.05$, $p=0.30$, so the relationship between variables is weak and

insignificant. The findings of this study discovered that there was no relationship between reward and recognition and employee retention; thus, the hypothesis (H4) was rejected. This result was in sync with a study among Khyber Medical College (KMC) employees that reported that there was no linkage between reward and recognition and retention of employees (Shah et al., 2021). Such a result would suggest that the respondents (working employees in Klang Valley) may not consider reward and recognition as an important factor in developing employee retention.

To answer Research Question 5, employee retention is most heavily influenced by the working environment. The results showed that the working environment has the greatest impact on employee retention since it presents the largest standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.34). The strength of influence on employee retention increases in direct proportion to the Beta value of the variables being studied. The statistical significance of the working environment is proven by the significance value of Sig. = 0.00. The factors of training and development and compensation and benefits show significant effects on employee retention (Beta = 0.24, 0.17 Sig = 0.00, 0.05), though they remain lower than the working environment. Results for the reward and recognition variable produce a Beta of 0.13 but a significance value of 0.30, which indicates that this variable has minimal influence on employee retention rates. The working environment has proven to impact employee retention at its highest level compared to training development and compensation benefits. Organizations should focus on enhancing the workplace atmosphere because it creates a positive working environment that helps retain employees.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the previous chapter of this research described the objectives, which were to identify the factors on employee retention among workers at selected shopping malls in Klang Valley, Malaysia. Specifically, the study aimed to assess the relationships between four key variables: working environment, compensation and benefits, reward and recognition, training and development, and how these affect retaining employees. There was a total of 111 respondents, with one questionnaire that could not be used, ensuring that sure data was accurately processed.

Three out of the four variables had significant relationships with employee retention. Compensation and benefits, training and development, and working environment variables were also statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), and these variables were compensation and benefits, training and development, and working environment. This provides evidence that these factors matter a lot in shaping employees' decisions on whether to stick to their present jobs or to quit. However, based on collected data, it was found that the fourth variable, reward and recognition, does not have any relation to employee retention. Thus, this implies that other than as a reward or recognition, reward and recognition do not seem to be an important trigger for employee retention in this specific case. Based on the analysis, reward and recognition do not have a significant impact on employee retention in this study. They may motivate the employee, but they are not the critical factor for employees to remain with the same organization. This means that employees may be willing to sacrifice rewards and recognition for long-term employment for other aspects such as compensation, training, and work environment.

The results of the performed multiple regression analysis claimed that the working environment factor was the most determinant in employee retention. The conclusion was based on the standardized coefficients of beta, $\beta=0.34$ for working environment, then $\beta=0.24$ for training and development, and $\beta=0.17$ for compensation and benefits. Working employees in Klang Valley must know that compensation and benefits, training and development, and work environment are some of the factors affecting the level of employee retention. In addition to these factors, leaders should also emphasize them to promote employee retention. Though several different kinds of literature provide documentation of employee retention and its significance to organizations and employees, it is undeniable that to gain more insights, it is essential to explore the fabric of mechanisms that pave the way for the development of employee retention.

Recommendations

The retail industry can retain its workforce better by offering compensation packages that match the market standards. The delivery of fair compensation, together with bonus systems and full employee benefits such as

health coverage and retirement plans, will enhance both staff satisfaction and lower staff turnover. Employees who have work arrangements with flexible options, such as remote work opportunities and shift adjustments, perform better in their personal and professional lives. Businesses need to reassess salaries at regular intervals to verify the competitive position of their payment levels against industrial benchmarks in the marketplace.

The retail industry needs positive workplace support to keep employees from leaving their positions. The workplace environment should be designed to deliver both physical safety and structural organization and comfort to employees. Employee morale grows substantially when organizations give enough rest space, together with clear communication systems and effective leadership backing. When an organization creates environments that promote teamwork together with inclusion, it leads to higher employee satisfaction and extends employee loyalty within the company structure. Employers need to focus on solving issues related to workplace concerns, which include fair scheduling in addition to job security and necessary resource accessibility for employees.

Employee training investments allow staff members to improve their abilities, which results in better job stability rates. Businesses operating through retail outlets must deliver continuous training programs that build employee customer service abilities, product expertise, and leadership capabilities. Employee engagement grows when employees receive career development paths through mentorship programs. Organizational programs should develop individual learning experiences for each job position to maintain employee engagement and career prospects at the company.

Organizations must recognize their employees through rewards because this activity boosts both their motivation and their willingness to stay. Retail organizations need to establish reward frameworks that combine monetary awards through bonuses and commissions with employee-of-the-month recognition programs and recognition through public appreciation, along with career promotion opportunities. The process of celebrating work anniversaries, along with acknowledging outstanding achievements, helps employees recognize their value within the organization. Having transparent reward systems helps employers maintain employee trust as well as satisfaction.

Future research should emphasize generational and demographic differences in the workforce, and organizations can build retention strategies that are customized to a diverse workforce. But it does not just boost employee retention; it massively improves satisfaction, loyalty, and employee productivity. Mediating and moderating factors have also helped us understand under what circumstances certain variables affect employee retention. A mediator tells us “why” one thing affects other things, while a moderator changes when or how strongly one thing influences another. Expanding the study scope is necessary to gain and better understanding of employee retention.

Future research should extend beyond the Klang Valley, a highly urbanized area, to examine whether the retention factors it has identified apply to other areas. Each place may have unique economics, culture, and work habits to decide whether employees are remaining or going from the job. Furthermore, if future researchers studied a lot more industries instead of only one shopping mall, they would have a better idea. Therefore, researchers can investigate multiple industries to find common factors and specific factors for retention.

Future research might look at other factors to get a better understanding of what makes employees stay committed to their jobs. This study has focused on compensation, benefits, training, work environment, and recognition, but indeed other factors are equally important. For instance, career advancement opportunities can encourage employees to remain if they can see how quickly they can move up the ranks, so to speak, at the company.

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