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**ENHANCING EMPLOYEE RETENTION THROUGH TRAINING
AND DEVELOPMENT AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT:
A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK BASED ON SOCIAL
EXCHANGE THEORY**

Yusmawati Hussain^{1*}, Mohd Nazri Zakaria², Muhammad Zulfaris Mohd Salleh³, Hasannuddiin Hassan⁴

¹ Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Business, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia
Email: yusmawatie55@gmail.com

² Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Business, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia
Email: mnazri.z@umk.edu.my

³ Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Business, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia
Email: zulfaris.ms@umk.edu.my

⁴ Faculty of Entrepreneurship and Business, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia
Email: hasann@umk.edu.my

* Corresponding Author

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Abstract:

Employee retention is a vital component of effective human resource management where organizations face persistently high turnover rates across various sectors. This ongoing issue negatively impacts productivity, elevates operational costs, and undermines workforce stability. This conceptual paper explores two essential determinants of employee retention such as training and development and the working environment within the Malaysian organizational landscape. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory, the study introduces an integrative conceptual framework that demonstrates how organizational support in the form of skill development and a positive work atmosphere promotes reciprocal employee commitment and retention. Drawing on recent empirical research, the model emphasizes that employees who perceive ongoing developmental support and a healthy work environment are more likely to stay with their employer. This paper enriches the human resource management discourse by offering a specific theoretical model and suggests avenues for future empirical testing of the proposed framework.

Keywords:

Employee Retention, Human Resource Management, Social Exchange Theory Training and Development, Working Environment.



Introduction

Retaining employees involves motivating and engaging employee to maintain long-term commitment to the organization. According by Ivana (2020);Khan (2020) mentioned that employee retention refers to the efforts made to keep skilled and high-performing employees within an organization over time. As mentioned by Malik et al. (2020) emphasized that employee retention is a critical factor in achieving organizational success. Employee retention remains a major concern for organizations in Malaysia, affecting both the public and private sectors. The issue is especially pronounced in industries such as manufacturing, hospitality, healthcare, and information technology, where high turnover rates are common. Employee retention remains a major challenge for organizations in Malaysia, spanning both public and private sectors. Persistent attrition not only inflates recruitment and onboarding costs but also interrupts knowledge continuity, reduces morale, and undermines organizational culture (Zainal, Sivalingam, & Subramaniam, 2022). The issue of keeping employees is becoming more important as the turnover rate in Malaysia which is from 35% in 2021 to 38% in 2022. The cost of replacing employees is estimated to be between 30% and 200% of their annual salary. This has significant implications for organizations (Hosen, 2022). Despite concerted organizational efforts, employee turnover continues to pose a significant issue that warrants deeper academic investigation and practical intervention.

High employee turnover carries substantial financial burdens that including costs related to recruitment, onboarding, and the loss of critical organizational expertise. In addition to these tangible costs, turnover also leads to intangible drawbacks such as diminished employee morale, lower productivity, and a weakened organizational culture (Lim, Aziz, & Roslan, 2024). When retention levels are low, organizations must frequently invest additional time and resources in hiring and training new personnel resources that could otherwise be allocated to enhancing employee performance or supporting career advancement initiatives (Jamaludin et al., 2022). Worldwide, training can improve employee retention by up to 14% and can reach 18% when provided by respected external institutions (Rahman et al., 2024). One of the principal factors driving turnover is the limited availability of career development opportunities. Many employees identify inadequate training and development initiatives as a key reason for leaving, often citing restricted prospects for long-term career growth within their organizations. This points to a broader concern, as organizations frequently fail to establish structured learning pathways that enhance skills and support career advancement, thereby weakening employee retention outcomes (Ismail, Khalid, & Tan, 2022).

High turnover rates that affect costs, knowledge continuity, and organizational culture. Besides that, key factors that cause a lack of training and career development opportunities drive employees to lose motivation and look for other job options (Gunawan et al., 2024). Higher levels of voluntary turnover also contribute to skill shortages across multiple sectors (Jamaludin et al., 2022). According by Hashim, Jamaludin, and Zaini (2022) stated, organizations that fail to effectively manage employee retention are often perceived as lacking in organizational strength. According to Nikola (2023), training and development is valued as important organizational policy by 68% of workers, and 76% report that career advancement opportunities are a primary factor influencing their retention decisions. Therefore, to remain

competitive in the global marketplace, it is essential for employers to implement effective retention strategies (Joy, Pikitda, & Iliya, 2021).

The working environment is a crucial factor influencing employee retention. A positive and supportive setting characterized by psychological safety, strong interpersonal relationships, and a balanced work life dynamic significantly contributes to fostering employee loyalty (Van, Ten, & Mabona, 2022). Nevertheless, many organizations in Malaysia continue to face difficulties in creating conditions that effectively promote employee well-being, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic, where flexible work arrangements and emotional support have become increasingly important (Nordin, Omar, & Hassan, 2023). Moreover, a work environment that is not supportive of employee well-being increases the likelihood of quitting. This tendency has grown in the post-pandemic era, which demands flexibility and psychological safety (Pradina & FaradibaME, 2021). This study also highlights the importance of Social Exchange Theory (SET). It explains that organizational support, investment in employee development, and a positive work environment will lead to employee loyalty, commitment, and a desire to stay.

In the current competitive labour market, retaining qualified and experienced employees has emerged as a strategic imperative for organizations. Employee retention is increasingly recognized not merely as a function of human resource management but as a fundamental element of sustained organizational success. Modern employees now prioritize not only financial rewards but also career development, supportive work environments and meaningful engagement in their roles. According to Dewi & Dewi (2020); Samat et al. (2020); Tam and Nguyet (2021) mentioned that, providing a conducive and well-structured work environment reflects the organization's commitment to employee well-being and plays a vital role in retaining top employee. Based on the training and development, recent findings indicate that approximately 50% of employees who voluntarily exited their organizations cited limited opportunities for career advancement as a primary reason for leaving (Paul et al., 2023). These findings emphasize the pressing necessity to enhance the effectiveness of training and development program as a strategic approach to improving employee retention.

This study examines two critical determinants of employee retention such as training and development, as well as the working environment. Recent empirical research has consistently identified these variables as pivotal in influencing employees' intentions to remain with their organizations. By integrating theoretical perspectives with current empirical evidence, this paper proposes a conceptual framework intended to inform both academic inquiry and practical implementation of effective employee retention strategies

Table 1: Issues Related to Training and Development and Working Environment on Employee Retention

Issues	Sources
Many industries face talent gaps due to high voluntary turnover, leading to shortages of essential skills.	Jamaludin et al., (2022)
Training and development, recent findings indicate that approximately 50% of employees who voluntarily exited their organizations cited limited opportunities for career advancement as a primary reason for leaving	Paul et al., (2023).

Poor employee retention rates result in increases organizational costs, diverting resources away from performance and career development efforts.	Jamaludin et al., (2022)
Inadequate training and development a reason for employees leave when opportunities are insufficient, limiting long-term career prospects.	Ismail, Khalid, & Tan, (2022).
Lack of training and career development opportunities drive employees to lose motivation and look for other job options.	Gunawan et al., (2024)
Face difficulties in creating conditions that effectively promote employee well-being	Nordin, Omar, & Hassan, (2023)
A poor working environment lacking well-being support raises quit intentions which demands flexibility and psychological safety	Pradina & FaradibaME, (2021)

This objective of this study to focuses at how training and development and working environment can increase employee retention using a framework based on Social Exchange Theory. Besides that, this study also aims to seeks to assess the impact of the training and development and working environment in enhancing retention outcomes. In addition, it endeavours to develop a conceptual framework that integrates training and development and the working environment as key determinants of employee retention within the SET perspective. The scope of study focuses on employee retention strategies by examining training and development and the working environment as the main determinants with employee retention as the outcome variable. Guided by Social Exchange Theory, it adopts a conceptual approach that emphasizes theory building rather than empirical testing with specific relevance to organizations in Malaysia that highlights training and development and working environment from the organization as key factors that drive employee retention. This research matters because high turnover rates can lead to significant costs. Better training strategies and a supportive work environment can help reduce turnover intentions and improve an organization's competitiveness.

Literature Review

Training and Development

Training and development refer to a structured and systematic approach through which employees acquire technical knowledge and job-specific skills. This strategic human resource function aims not only to enhance existing competencies but also to cultivate new capabilities essential for sustaining organizational growth. According to Bhawna et al. (2021), training and development encompass a series of initiatives designed to improve employee efficiency and effectiveness by fostering relevant skills, knowledge and attitudes. Besides that, according by Laing (2021) further emphasizes that training and development are foundational to organizational success. In the Malaysian context, this function has gained prominence as a key determinant of employee retention, particularly within the manufacturing, service, and healthcare sectors.

The overarching objective of employee training and development is to enhance a wide spectrum of workforce competencies, retain skilled and experienced personnel, and minimize employee turnover (Khan, 2020; Malik, Baig, & Manzoor, 2020). This view is further reinforced within the manufacturing sector, where Venkat (2023) underscores the critical role

of such initiatives in promoting job satisfaction and fostering long-term employee commitment. Supporting this notion, Chikove's (2023) study in Zimbabwe's gold mining industry highlights the importance of well-structured training programs in attracting and retaining talent for specialized roles. The human resource management literature also provides substantial evidence of a positive relationship between training and development initiatives and employee retention (Bhawna et al., 2021; Dede & Oluoch, 2021; Aleem & Bowra, 2020).

Social Exchange Theory suggests that the employment relationship is grounded in mutual exchanges between employers and employees (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). When organizations invest in meaningful training and career development opportunities, employees interpret these efforts as indicators of trust and organizational support. Consequently, they are inclined to reciprocate with increased loyalty, lower intentions to leave, and improved job performance. This reciprocal dynamic underpins the psychological contract that fosters and sustains long-term employment relationships.

Numerous studies have investigated the impact of training and development on employee retention in different contexts. For instance, a study conducted by (Paul & Kazaara, 2023) found that organizations with comprehensive training programs experienced significantly lower turnover rates compared to those with limited training initiatives. The study also emphasized that the perception of growth opportunities, rather than the mere availability of training, had a greater impact on retention outcomes. Furthermore, training and development programs instill innovation in employees, which benefits both organizations and individuals. Employee retention improves when employees believe they are talented. In addition, it helps the company retain its employees and improves the market. Education and training can increase employee retention and increase job satisfaction. Staff effectiveness is greatly improved after training (Nguyen & Duong, 2021).

Similarly, Lim, Aziz, and Roslan (2024) reported that training opportunities were positively correlated with job satisfaction and retention in Malaysian contact centers. Employees felt more engaged and valued when their employers actively supported skill development initiatives, such as mentorship, upskilling, and job rotation. These findings align with SET principles, as the perceived organizational investment fosters a sense of obligation and emotional attachment. In manufacturing settings, Ahmad et al. (2021) observed that career development programs that particularly those involving internal promotion, cross-training, and leadership development, were among the most influential factors in retaining technical and operational employees.

When employees perceive long-term career prospects within an organization, their likelihood of seeking employment elsewhere diminishes. Training and development efforts contribute to this by enhancing job embeddedness, as they strengthen interpersonal connections among colleagues, reinforce alignment between employees and organizational values, and elevate the perceived costs of leaving. These initiatives thus play an indirect yet significant role in improving retention by fostering stronger social and professional ties within the workplace. Furthermore, employees who choose to remain often associate their continued tenure with the availability of training and development opportunities. Additionally, longer service within an organization may lead to higher salary expectations, which can further incentivize employee retention (Nguyen & Duong, 2021).

In summary, training and development function both as a strategic intervention and a relational mechanism for enhancing employee retention. Based on the Social Exchange Theory, these initiatives represent a form of organizational support that strengthens employee commitment while reducing turnover intentions. Empirical research in the Malaysian context consistently demonstrates that employees are more likely to stay with organizations that actively invest in their personal and professional advancement. Consequently, such investments not only improve retention outcomes but also contribute to a more capable, engaged, and loyal workforce, ultimately enhancing organizational effectiveness.

Working Environment

The work environment encompassing factors such as workplace atmosphere, work-life balance, health and safety measures, and employee autonomy that plays a vital role in influencing an individual's intention to remain within an organization. Supportive and positive working environment are frequently associated with higher levels of job satisfaction, reduced turnover intentions, and increased employee engagement. Conversely, adverse working environments often result in job dissatisfaction, heightened stress, and a greater propensity for employees to seek alternative employment opportunities. A favourable working environment marked by a supportive atmosphere, balanced work-life integration, strong health and safety practices, and appropriate levels of employee autonomy are fundamental to promoting job satisfaction and fostering organizational loyalty.

The work environment represents a critical factor in promoting employee retention. It encompasses a wide range of components, including the physical workspace, organizational climate, interpersonal relationships, leadership practices, and the integration of work-life balance. A supportive work environment conveys a sense of organizational care and investment key principles underpinning Social Exchange Theory. According to Social Exchange Theory, when employees perceive their work environment as respectful, supportive, and conducive to well-being, they are more inclined to reciprocate with increased organizational commitment and lower turnover intentions (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In contrast, adverse workplace conditions may result in perceived breaches of the psychological contract, prompting disengagement or voluntary exit from the organization. Therefore, organizations must prioritize both work environment and career development initiatives to ensure that policies are effectively implemented to foster employee satisfaction (Intan et al., 2023).

Besides that, providing a safe and supportive working environment is a core responsibility of organizational leadership. As noted by Lim, Aziz, and Roslan (2024), employees in Malaysian contact centers who experienced collaborative, respectful, and psychologically safe environments reported higher job satisfaction and a stronger intention to remain with their employers, despite the high-pressure nature of their roles. Moreover, psychological safety is where individuals feel empowered to voice opinions, acknowledge mistakes, and take interpersonal risks without fear of negative consequences which has emerged as a critical determinant of employee retention. Organizations that cultivate such environments tend to retain more engaged and motivated employees compared to those with less supportive workplace conditions (Torsabo & Ezekiel, 2021). Therefore, an organization that offers a highly conducive work environment, where the employees feel more driven, has a higher level of employee retention than those who have a less conducive work environment.

According by Ahmad Azam et al. (2022) characterized the work environment as encompassing all surrounding factors that can influence an employee's capacity to effectively perform their duties. A positive and healthy work environment contributes to increased employee satisfaction and comfort, which in turn enhances job performance and encourages long-term organizational commitment. According by Sears (2019) also asserted that fostering a supportive work atmosphere not only enhances employee well-being but also facilitates personal and professional growth. Furthermore, Ahmad Azam et al. (2021) highlighted that a pleasant work setting can elevate employee morale, stimulate improved performance, and strengthen retention. Conversely, a stressful and demotivating work environment can deteriorate interpersonal relationships, reduce productivity, and drive employees with alternative opportunities to exit the organization promptly.

From the perspective of Social Exchange Theory, organizational investments in creating a positive work environment are interpreted by employees as expressions of goodwill and support. In response, employees are likely to reciprocate with enhanced loyalty, reduced intentions to leave, and increased levels of engagement. As noted by Yee (2023), Social Exchange Theory posits that when employees perceive their work environment as satisfying and supportive, they are more inclined to remain with the organization and invest greater effort in their roles. In essence, when individuals feel valued, motivated, and supported within the organization, they are more committed to contributing meaningfully to their work.

In conclusion, the work environment functions as a multifaceted determinant of employee retention. Organizations that foster environments characterized by physical safety, emotional well-being, social inclusivity, and psychological empowerment are more successful in nurturing employee commitment. Aligned with the principles of Social Exchange Theory, such supportive environments cultivate a reciprocal relationship between employer and employee, thereby enhancing organizational cohesion and reducing staff turnover.

Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework integrates two key organizational factors such as training and development and the working environment as antecedents of employee retention, underpinned by Social Exchange Theory as the guiding theoretical foundation. The framework suggests that employees perceive these organizational initiatives as expressions of support and appreciation, which in turn promote reciprocal responses such as increased loyalty, organizational commitment, and reduced intention to leave.

Based on this, Social Exchange Theory serves as the primary theoretical foundation for this paper, offering a comprehensive explanation of how organizational practices that particularly in relation to training and development and the working environment which is influence employee retention within the Malaysian context. Social Exchange Theory emphasizes the importance of mutual obligations, perceived equity, and trust in shaping long-term employment relationships (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

In the context of training and development, training and development posits that when organizations actively invest in enhancing employees' skills and facilitating their career advancement, such efforts are interpreted as a long-term organizational commitment to the individual's growth. These developmental investments cultivate a relational psychological contract, wherein employees feel recognized and supported, leading to greater emotional attachment and organizational loyalty (Cheong & Lee, 2023). Conversely, a lack of

development opportunities may be construed as a disregard for employee potential, thereby undermining the perceived quality of the exchange relationship.

The work environment similarly functions as a channel through which employees assess organizational support and fairness. Elements such as supportive leadership, psychological safety, collaborative culture, and work-life balance are viewed as non-monetary resources that significantly enhance employee well-being. In alignment with training and development, these positive environmental environments bolster employees' sense of belonging and trust in the organization, thereby reinforcing reciprocal obligations that discourage voluntary turnover (Lim, Aziz, & Roslan, 2024).

According to Social Exchange Theory, when employees perceive fairness, organizational support, and investment in their growth, they are more likely to reciprocate with behaviours that benefit the organization. These behaviours include enhanced job performance, increased engagement, and a stronger intention to remain with the employer. The proposed framework highlights that these organizational practices influence retention primarily through the mediating role of perceived organizational support, thereby reinforcing the reciprocal nature of the employee and employer relationship. In summary, Social Exchange Theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how organizational practices in training and development and the working environment influence employee retention. By highlighting the role of perceived reciprocity and mutual obligation, Social Exchange Theory provides both a theoretical and practical basis for designing human resource strategies aimed at fostering long-term employee commitment in the Malaysian context.

This conceptual framework adopts Social Exchange Theory to explain how employees engage in reciprocal exchanges based on their perception of organizational support. When organizations invest in training and development, and positive environments, employees are motivated to respond with increased commitment and retention. This conceptual framework thus offers both theoretical insight and practical guidance for researchers and human resource practitioners seeking to develop effective retention strategies within the Malaysian employment landscape.

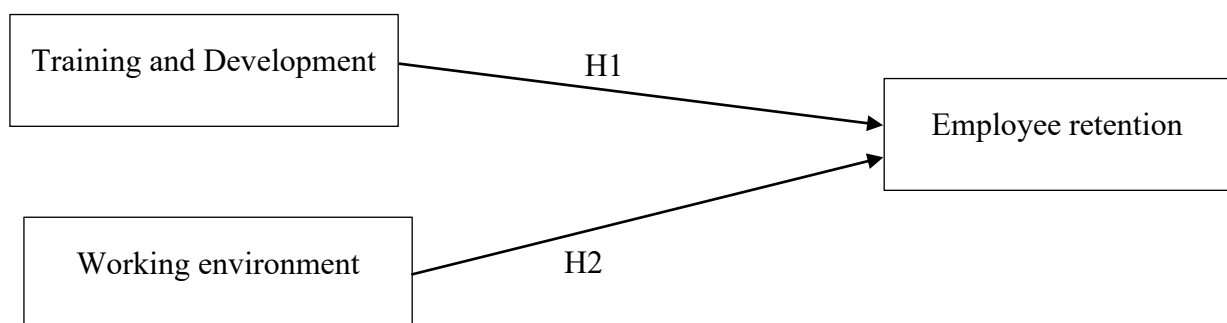


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework

Based on figure 1 showed that, in the training and development, organizational investment in employee learning and career advancement communicates a long-term commitment to individual growth. As a result, employees are more likely to reciprocate with loyalty and continued service (Cheong & Lee, 2023). In term of working environment explain a safe,

inclusive, and supportive working environment enhances emotional bonds between employees and the organization. When employees feel valued and psychologically secure, their intention to remain with the organization increases (Ismail & Tan, 2023; Lim et al., 2024).

Hypotheses

Relationship Between Training and Development and Employee Retention

Based on previous study by Musaibah et al., (2023); Nicholas et al., (2024) highlighted that training and development have a positive impact on employee retention. It was supported by Nguyen & Duong, (2021) mentioned that, positive correlation between training and development with employee retention. Besides that, according by Patil & Singh Patel, (2022) revealed that, there is a relationship between training and development on employee retention which is employee retention can be achieved through training and development which have a direct and positive impact on employee retention. The management must retain employees by paying more attention to human resource practices regarding training and development factors to improve job performance, increasing employee job satisfaction (Nguyen & Duong, 2021).

H1: Training and development positively influence employee retention.

Relationship Between Working Environment and Employee Retention

According by Yusliza et al., (2021); Intan et al., (2023); Ahmad Azam et al., (2022) as demonstrated that the working environment positively influences employee retention. Positive employee perceptions of the work environment can reduce turnover intentions and even encourage employees to stay longer with a company. Improving the work environment is typically a primary focus within companies (Bibi et al., 2018). According by Andriani & Sulistyarini, (2022) found a positive relationship between a working environment and employee retention in state-owned enterprises. Others support by Torsabo & Ezekiel, (2021) mentioned that, the direction of the effect is positive (work environment positively affect employees retention), meaning that these variables tend to increase together (greater work environment is associated with greater employees retention). Based on these statements, the hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

H2: Working environment positively influences employee retention.

Table 2: Summary Result of Past Finding

Factors	Authors	Finding
Training and Development	Musaibah et al., (2023)	Training and development have a positive impact on employee retention.
	Nicholas et al., (2024)	Training and development have a positive impact on employee retention.
	Nguyen & Duong, (2021)	Positive correlation between training and development with employee retention.
	Patil & Singh Patel, (2022)	Training and development which have a direct and positive impact on employee retention.

Working environment	Yusliza et al., (2021)	Working environment positively influences employee retention
	Intan et al., (2023)	Working environment positively influences employee retention
	Ahmad Azam et al., (2022)	Working environment positively influences employee retention
	Andriani & Sulistyarini, (2022)	Positive relationship between a working environment and employee retention in state-owned enterprises
	Torsabo & Ezekiel, (2021)	The direction of the effect is positively (working environment) affects employee retention.

Methodology

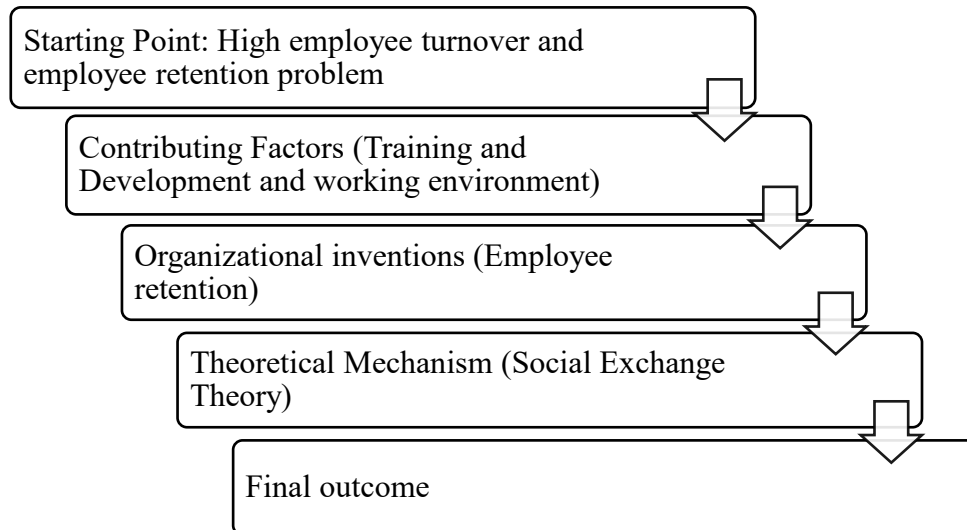
This study adopts a conceptual research design, emphasizing theory building rather than empirical testing. The objective is to develop a framework that explains the influence of training and development and the working environment on employee retention, grounded in Social Exchange Theory. This study uses a quantitative design with a cross-sectional survey approach to examine the link between training and development, work environment, and employee retention based on Social Exchange Theory. In addition, this study employed quantitative survey-based analysis including collecting and analyzing the secondary and primary data to complete this research. The collected primary data through structured questionnaires given to employees in several organizations in Malaysia that are in sectors at hospitality, call centers, and manufacturing. Besides that, obtained secondary data from company reports and previous studies.

This data collection of this study based on the questionnaire was distributed to the target employees through WhatsApp using the Google Form as that is the most convenient way to reach the respondents. In addition, the study has self-administered the questionnaires to all employees. The instrument of questionnaire consists of 4 section such as Section A (Demographic questions), Section B (Training and Development), Section C (Working environment) and Section D (Employee retention). A 5-Likert scale is being used in this study that included demographic information, training and development, working environment and employee retention with the organization.

For data analysis, this study used descriptive statistics, reliability tests (Cronbach's Alpha), correlation and multiple regression analysis, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the relationships effects between the variables A reliability test was administered to determine the reliability of the items used to measure each variable using Cronbach Alpha value. A multivariate statistical analysis using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software was carried out to analyze the data collected. All the data collected were compiled through the administration of questionnaires, coded and analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 29 to answer the research question and hypothesis. A

regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between work environment and employee retention. The findings in this study reported through analyses of descriptive statistics, frequency, Pearson correlation, and multiple regressions analysis and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Table 3: The Flow of The Process



Expected Outcome

In this study, the main goal is to determine whether training and development and working environment affect employee retention in the Malaysia organization. Besides that, all the hypotheses are accepted which is training and development and working environment the strong indicator of employee retention in employee retention. By using the quantitative method, the result show that, the important of training and development and working environment in the Malaysian organization. Not only that, using social exchange theory will support this relationship.

Overall, this study achieved its objectives by creating a framework based on Social Exchange Theory. This framework explains how training and development and the work environment affect employee retention in Malaysian organizations. The study highlights that effective training and supportive work environments can boost employee loyalty and satisfaction while lowering turnover rates. While the study fulfills its main goals by adding to the existing literature and offering practical advice, it also points out the need for future research to test the proposed framework in actual organizational settings.

Table 4: The Current Result Study Finding

Factors	Finding
Training and development	The result show that, training and development positively influences employee retention. Training in the workplace improves job efficiency, job interest, satisfaction and strengthens organization commitment which lead to the increase employee retention. Then choosing the right talents can increase competitive advantage through employees and reduce the employee leaving (Ahmad et al., 2022).

Working environment	The result show that, working environment positively influences employee retention. A supportive working environment fosters employee motivation and commitment, which enhances performance and ultimately leads to higher retention (Naz et al., 2020).
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Contribution

Theoretical Contribution

This study advances the human resource management literature by developing a conceptual framework grounded in Social Exchange Theory. The framework positions training and development and the working environment as critical drivers of employee retention. This contribution is important as it both reinforces established theoretical perspectives and opens avenues for future empirical research across diverse organizational contexts. By highlighting the reciprocal nature of the employer and employee relationship, the study offers a novel lens through which employee retention can be understood in the Malaysian context, thereby expanding current knowledge of the factors that shape employee loyalty.

Practical Contribution

From a practical standpoint, the study offers valuable insights for organizations seeking to strengthen their employee retention strategies. It emphasizes the dual importance of providing robust training and development opportunities and fostering a supportive working environment. These findings are particularly relevant for Malaysia, where high turnover rates persist in key industries such as hospitality, healthcare, and information technology. By addressing these issues, organizations can reduce recruitment and training costs, enhance workforce stability, and improve productivity. At a broader level, effective retention strategies also contribute to strengthening Malaysia's global competitiveness and promoting long-term economic sustainability.

Conclusion

Employee retention has emerged as a strategic priority for organizations operating within Malaysia's dynamic and competitive labour market. This conceptual paper presents a framework grounded in Social Exchange Theory, emphasizing the significant influence of training and development, as well as the working environment, on employees' decisions to remain with their organizations. By synthesizing theoretical perspectives and recent empirical evidence, the framework highlights the reciprocal nature of the employer and employee relationship, wherein perceived organizational support engenders employee loyalty and mitigates turnover intentions.

Training and development initiatives are conceptualized as long-term organizational investments aimed at enhancing employees' personal and professional capacities. The provision of structured learning opportunities signals a commitment to employee growth, fosters skill enhancement, and facilitates career advancement. These perceptions of support and value cultivate trust and reinforce employee commitment, ultimately reducing the likelihood of voluntary turnover. The working environment, encompassing physical workspace conditions, interpersonal dynamics, leadership practices, and organizational culture, plays a pivotal role in shaping employee experiences. A supportive and inclusive environment fosters psychological safety, job satisfaction, and overall well-being is the factors that are essential in promoting employee retention.

By applying the principles of Social Exchange Theory, this framework elucidates how organizational practices influence employee behaviour through perceptions of mutual obligation and fairness. The study contributes to both theoretical discourse and practical application by offering a comprehensive perspective on employee retention. For organizations in Malaysia, addressing training and development, along with the work environment in a holistic and integrated manner, is critical to cultivating a committed and resilient workforce amid ongoing labour market transformations.

Future Research and Recommendations

In this study, there are several avenues for future research and practical enhancement. First, future empirical studies should validate the proposed framework across diverse sectors such as healthcare, education, and ICT to assess the consistency of these variables in different organizational contexts. Quantitative and qualitative methods can be used to explore how training and development, and working environments interact over time to influence retention outcomes. Second, the researchers may examine the moderating or mediating roles of demographic factors such as age, gender, and job tenure to understand individual differences in retention behaviours. This would help tailor retention strategies to different workforce segments. Last, incorporating other emerging factors such as remote work flexibility, psychological well-being, and leadership style may enrich the framework and make it more relevant to post-pandemic workforce trends.

In term of the practical perspective, organizations should continuously evaluate the effectiveness of training and development, and workplace strategies using employee feedback and retention metrics. Policy makers and HR leaders must also ensure alignment between national labour policies and workplace practices to support long-term employee engagement and satisfaction. Overall, continuous innovation in human resource practices and a deeper understanding of employee expectations are essential to sustaining employee's stability in Malaysia's evolving employment landscape.

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