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Bridging Research Gaps in Employee Relationship Management (ERM) and Retention in IT/ITES Organizations: A Review and Future Directions

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Review Article

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Abstract

ERM is an important factor in determining the retention of employees within IT and ITES companies. Although extensive literature has addressed the ERM practices, there are still several gaps, such as the absence of longitudinal studies, scarce knowledge about AI and automation in ERM, inadequate cross-cultural comparisons, and absence of quantitative models connecting ERM KPIs with retention metrics. This review methodically focuses on these gaps and gives future research directions, which focus on the idea of mixed-method methods, global comparisons, and the use of technology in enhancing ERM. Moreover, the managerial implications are presented, and recommendations are provided on what HR leaders, policymakers, and HR technology vendors can and should do to create effective, evidence-based, and sustainable retention strategies. The paper highlights that leadership development, employee engagement, and analytics-based decision-making are important elements of modern ERM systems.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Context

The Information Technology (IT) industry and Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) have emerged as key economic growth, digitalization, and innovative drivers in the world economy. In the cases of India and other emerging economies the industry is not only a major contributor to the GDP but also offers the highly skilled workforce a job opportunity. Nevertheless, intense competition, fast technological changes as well as dynamic global working opportunities are also typical of the same area. Such circumstances have resulted in the unstable labor market where talented professionals can easily change employers to find improved payment, career growth, and work-life balance. As a result, employee attrition levels in the IT and ITES corporations are still one of the highest in comparison with other knowledge-based industries. Such high turnover poses threats on the stability of the organization, retaining knowledge, client satisfaction, and sustainability of business in the long run (Tripathi & Jain, 2024), (Soundarapandiyan & Ganesh, 2015), (Ritesh & Mehrotra, 2017), (Suganthi, n.d.).

1.2. Problem Statement

In the last ten years, organizations have spent a lot of money on human resource (HR) interventions, including talent management systems, training, reorganising compensation, and rewards based on performance, to cut turnover rates and improve employee engagement. Although these measures have provided steady gains, retention still remains a thorn in the flesh of IT and ITES companies especially with the dynamic global talent pool

and the emergence of remote and hybrid work environments. Employee Relationship Management (ERM) is one of the possible areas of the traction and under-exploration. As the legacy of the concept of customer relationship management (CRM), ERM dwells upon the constructive and productive relationships between employers and employees through the prism of trust, information exchange, and evidence based information. The ERM literature about the direct and mediated effects of ERM practices on employee retention in the IT and ITES setting is incomplete and unstructured. The paper is relevant to industry and academia as it explores the topic of inadequate housing and the ways to address it.

1.3. Industry and Academic Relevance

The paper is relevant to the industry and academia because it discusses the issue of poor housing and how this issue can be resolved.

It is hard to overestimate the strategic value of keeping talented professionals in IT and ITES companies. High turnover will add to the cost of recruitment, longer onboarding, knowledge loss, and decreased customer satisfaction which can all kill competitive advantage. To HR managers and organization leaders, the insights on making the effective use of ERM makes it a data-driven and relationship-based strategy to increase employee commitment and minimize the voluntary turnover. Academically, ERM is at the crossroads of human capital theory, social exchange theory, and psychological contract theory, which offers a fine conceptual framework to research retention. However, the disjointed character of the literature, as well as the sparse incorporation of the new trends, including digital HR analytics, AI-based employee engagement systems, and remote workforce relationship management, should be subject to a systematic and critical assessment.

1.4. Purpose and Scope of the Review.

This review is aimed at synthesizing and critically reviewing the current body of literature on Employee Relationship Management and its effect on employee retention with a specific interest on the IT and ITES organizations. Through the review of theoretical frameworks, research studies, and technology trends, the paper is expected to determine major ERM practices that determine the results of retention, investigate the intervening and moderating variables, and indicate gaps that can be addressed in the future. The review also aims at incorporating the knowledge of the conventional HR processes and the contemporary technology-based ERM systems that offer a holistic perspective of the knowledge that may be of interest to scholars, practitioners, and policy makers in the IT/ITES field.

1.5. Research Questions

In order to direct this review, the following research questions are suggested:

RQ1: Which are the main elements and practices of Employee Relationship Management (ERM) that determine the retention of employees in IT and ITES companies?

RQ2: Does the relationship between ERM and employee retention in IT and ITES firms depend on the mediation and/or moderation of organizational culture, style of leadership and HR technologies?

RQ3: What are the gaps in the existing literature on ERM strategies to enhance retention in the dynamic IT & ITES sector and what research directions are possible in the future?

2. Review Methodology (Prolonged to RQ1-RQ3)

The research questions (RQ1-RQ3) were carefully addressed in the literature review methodology that is described as a structured literature review (SLR) to consider the rigor needed in a journal that is indexed in Scopus. All the stages, such as search strategy, data synthesis, and so forth, have been adjusted to retrieve the evidence that can be directly mapped to the dimensions of Employee Relationship Management (ERM), its impact on employee retention, and finding gaps in the research in the context of IT/ITES organizations (BE, 2015), (Shanmugapriya & Venkatramaju, 2025).

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2.1. Search Strategy

The search strategy was well formulated to find out the literature pertinent to all three research questions. The keywords were Employee Relationship Management, Engagement, Recognition, Career Development and Hr technology in order to retrieve studies that define the dimensions and practices of ERM and influence retention to address RQ1. In the case of RQ 2, which addresses the question of the mediators and the moderators of the relationship between ERM and employee retention, the Boolean operators were used, including the terms Leadership, Organizational Culture, and Digital HR, to include literature that examines factors that can influence or enhance the relationship between ERM and employee retention. Related to RQ3, which is concerned with research gaps and future directions, more broad terms, like Review, Framework, and Strategy, were explored, which allowed identifying conceptual and critical studies discussing restrictions and offering directions on further research. This way of building a specific and inclusive search strategy ensured that the search was as comprehensive as possible to cover all three research questions; empirical, conceptual, and review papers (MISRA, 2015), (Bhatt & Sharma, 2019).

Current researches highlight the critical role of human resource and employee relations management in dealing with workforce stability and organizational effectiveness in service based industries. As (Bhattacharya et al., n.d.), irregular HR application and a lack of individualized employee interactions are key factors that lead to increased turnover intentions in the hotel industry of Kolkata and that proactive HR practices enhance the employer-employee relations and decrease the turnover. To reinforce this point of view, (Jog et al., 2025) has shown that the positive impact of Employee Relations Management(ERM) practices on employee satisfaction, engagement, and performance have a positive effect on productivity and organizational success in the long term. On a more general conceptual level, (Negt & Haunschild, 2025) develops a research-practice gap in HRM, which is due to the barriers of communication, the tension between methodological rigour and relevance, or the impossibility of making research results available to practitioners.

2.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were well-designed to make sure that the studies which were chosen fitted in the three research questions (RQ1-RQ3) that have guided this review. Regarding RQ1, only papers offering specific information regarding the employee relationship management (ERM) practices, strategies, or dimensions and investigated their direct relationship with employee retention were included. In the case of RQ2, the studies that explored mediating or moderating variables that affect the ERM-retention relationship (such as leadership styles, organizational culture, HR digital tools, and the work environment) were of priority. In order to answer RQ3 conceptual papers, systematic reviews, and research gaps in the current body of research were particularly retained to guide future research. Through these criteria, the review was in a position to capture literature comprehensively, not just in terms of what ERM is (RQ1) but how it can work in particular organizational settings (RQ2) and where the current knowledge is scarce or understudied (RQ3) (Park et al., 2019), (Das et al., 2019).

2.3. Screening and Selection Process.

The screening and selection procedure was also thoroughly made in such a way that the studies reviewed were directly related to the research questions (RQ1-RQ3). First, all the articles that were retrieved were screened in terms of title and abstract where each article was evaluated as regards its relevance to the specific research questions. The studies were flagged on relevance: those that described ERM practices or dimensions were included under RQ1; studies that assumed mediating/moderating factors that impacted the relationship between ERM and employee retention were included under RQ2; and studies indicating the research gaps, limitations or research agendas were included under RQ3 (Chaudhary & Anand, 2025), (Tseole & Ngulube, 2022).

After this the shortlisted articles were reviewed on a full text basis. The annotation of each of the studies was based on its relevance to the respective research questions. As an example, the papers that investigated leadership style or HR technology as mediators were identified using RQ2, whereas the papers that critically examined ERM frameworks but offered little empirical evidence were identified using RQ3. This was the step that made sure every article added value to the answer of the research questions and would have made the synthesis in the following sections more structured (Ritesh & Mehrotra, 2015), (Mathew & Venkatesh, 2024).

Lastly, the PRISMA framework was applied together with the screening process involved. The PRISMA flow diagram was further expanded in order to classify the excluded articles based on their ability to contribute to the research questions. In the case of example, papers were categorized in accordance with RQ1 that did not contain ERM and those that did not talk about mediators or moderators were classified in accordance with RQ2. The methodology gave a clear and methodical summary of the selection process, which increased the reproducibility and plausibility of the review.

2.4. Data Extraction and Alignment with RQ1-RQ3.

Data extraction matrix was improved, and it included the items that were relevant to each research question:

Table 1. Data extraction matrix

Column	RQ Alignment	Description
Author, Year, Country	All RQs	Basic bibliographic details
Study Objective	RQ1, RQ2	Explicit aim, e.g., identifying ERM practices or mediators
ERM Dimensions Investigated	RQ1	Communication, recognition, engagement, career growth, HR technology
Retention Outcomes Measured	RQ1	Turnover intention, actual turnover, satisfaction, loyalty
Mediators/Moderators	RQ2	Leadership, organizational culture, technology, work environment
Methodology	All RQs	Quantitative, qualitative, mixed-method, survey, case study
Research Gaps / Future Directions	RQ3	Explicitly highlighted gaps or recommended research

This design allowed all the extracted data to be analyzed in a manner that would directly answer each research question.

2.5. Data Synthesis Approach

This review had its data synthesis done using a thematic approach that was clearly stated to be congruent to the three research questions (RQ1-RQ3). The review addressed RQ1 by looking at the most reported practices of Employee Relationship Management (ERM) that affected employee retention in IT and ITES firms. In the chosen research articles, the use of HR technology platforms, communication strategies, career development initiatives, recognition mechanisms, and the use of the latter turned out to be the most common dimensions that determined the employee retention outcomes. The practices were compared in a systematic manner with a view of having their relative effects and situational effectiveness in IT/ITES organizations (Haque, 2024), (Kandasamy et al., 2025).

In the case of RQ2, a cross-study design was used in studying the relationship between ERM and retention on the role of contextual factors and moderating variables. The effectiveness of ERM strategies has been observed to be enhanced or undermined by organizational culture

and leadership styles, practices of employee engagement, and integration of digital HR tools. The given analysis has revealed the significance of addressing both human and technological mediators in measuring the role of ERM in retention and it has been noted that the same practices can have varying impacts based on the situation of an organization and the way they have been implemented by managers (Imna & Hassan, 2015), (Goyal, 2023), (Dinakin & Oluseyi, 2021).

Regarding RQ3, conceptual, review, and empirical research was reviewed to find out the gaps in the existing research and subsequent directions. Among the major gaps were the lack of longitudinal studies that determined the long-term impacts of ERM on retention, lack of sector-specific studies that solely examined IT and ITES, underresearched uses of AI-driven ERM systems, and cross-cultural comparisons due to the presence of multinational organizations in the IT/ITES sector. It is through the synthesis of these insights that the review was able to make structured, actionable conclusions that could be useful in both academic research and managerial practice, to act as a road map to future research and application of ERM strategies in the IT/ITES field (Ambrosius, 2018), (Elalwani & Çalışkan, 2024).

2.6. Summary

The systematic approach adopted in this review is reproducible because it is clear on each step taken and it adds more credibility to the entire study. All stages of the review process, including the search strategy, data extraction and synthesis, were clearly oriented at the three research questions (RQ1-RQ3), therefore, making sure that the results are closely applicable and consistent with the study goals. Moreover, the combination of the PRISMA model and thematic data extraction methods allowed obtaining an evidence synthesis of high quality, which provided the opportunity to identify the main patterns, relationships, and literature gaps. This methodology establishes the validity of the review, as well as offers a solid basis of informing future research and practical implementation of the topic of Employee Relationship Management and employee retention in IT and ITES organizations.

In order to make the new research directions found in this review more specific and practical, the direction of future research is clearly based on a set of empirical patterns of the investigations that were analyzed in this paper. The appeal of longitudinal designs is justified by the repeated cross-sectional constraints mentioned in ERM-retention studies, whereas the focus on AI-enhanced ERM systems can be justified by the new evidence regarding the effectiveness of digital HR practices in IT/ITES settings. The thematic synthesis approach, in its methodological sense, ensures that there is consistency in the gaps between the research, empirical evidence, and suggested directions so that there is less abstraction. Practically, these evidence-based guidelines would be transformed into practical guidelines to HR professionals and organizational leaders such as analytics-driven decision-making, contextualized ERM implementation, and leadership practices that are congruent with technological integration. This connection adds to the value that the review adds to academic research and practice.

3. Theoretical Rationale of ERM and Retention.

3.1. Introduction to Employee Relationship Management (ERM)

Employee Relationship Management (ERM) has been implemented as a strategic model in the human resource management discipline with an intention of developing a long term and mutually beneficial relationship between an organization and its employees. ERM was developed out of Customer Relationship Management (CRM), which at first was aimed at developing and sustaining strong and value-based relationships with customers. Scholars and practitioners realized that the employees are key stakeholders in the success of any organization and therefore, CRM concepts were modified to suit the internal organizational environment which led to ERM. ERM is a broad concept, which incorporates good communication practices, recognition rewards programs, career growth, employee participation programs, and technology-based Human Resource systems, which provide feedback, performance management, and individualized development (Gope et al., 2018), (Krishna et al., 2019), (Aktuna & Eskici, 2024).

EMR plays a special role in the context of IT and IT-enabled service (ITES) organizations that are characterized by high turnover, stiff competition of talents on a global level, and dependence on knowledge-based workforce. Strong ERM practices can be implemented to enhance employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, and eventually increase the rate of retention. This theoretical background of ERM directly responds to RQ1 that attempts to establish the major elements and practices of ERM that promote employee retention (Ahmad, 2018), (Kalidass & Bahron, 2015).

3.2 Theoretical Relations between ERM and Retention.

Various well-founded theories of organizational behavior and human resource management are the foundation of the connection between ERM and employee retention. These theories can explain as well as make predictions on how the practices of ERM can affect the decisions of employees to continue working in an organization.

3.2.1 Social Exchange Theory

According to the Social Exchange Theory (SET), relationships are formed on the basis of reciprocal exchanges during which parties involved in a relationship are predisposed to favourable treatment or support by the opposite party, which prompts the feeling of obligation in the other party. When applied to ERM, this theory would propose that in case companies give employee meaningful recognition, career development prospects, or enabling work conditions, employees would be obliged to recompensate with loyalty and decreased turnover. The perceived benefits and support offered by ERM in IT/ITES organisations, in which staff are likely to be highly specialized, has the potential to reinforce social exchanges, which directly affect

retention. SET is also quite consistent with RQ2 because it will help to understand how middle variables, including organizational support and leadership behavior, can improve the relationship between the ERM and retention (Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021), (Khalid & Nawab, 2018).

3.2.2 Psychological Contract Theory.

Psychological Contract Theory focuses on the perceived, unwritten relations between employers and employees. Psychological contracts of the employees are fulfilled as a result of the practice of ERM, which may be open communication, equitable reward mechanisms, and career advancement. The greater the expectation is met, the more the employees tend to build trust and commitment with the organization and hence reduced turnover intention. On the other hand, non-compliance with these perceived contracts may result in dissatisfaction and turnover. Connected, this theory allows relating ERM practices to the preservation of psychological contracts that may help to answer RQ1 and RQ2, identifying particular ERM dimensions that determine retention (Yu et al., 2019), (Arasanmi & Krishna, 2019), (Jaroun & Günal, 2022).

3.2.3 The Organizational Support Theory.

The Organization Support Theory (OST) is an idea that states that workers develop generalized beliefs about the degree to which the organization appreciates their efforts and takes care of their lives. Organizational support is operationalized through ERM initiatives like mentorship programs, well-being programs, and employee engagement surveys, which support the affective commitment of the employees and decrease turnover. Perceived organizational support by ERM can be a defining factor of retention in high-pressure IT/ITES work environments when burnout and work overload are prevalent. OST, therefore, gives a theoretical and practical framework through which the mediating use of organizational culture and HR support mechanisms can be evaluated, and this will be directly informative on RQ2 (Kundu & Lata, 2017), (Dhanpat et al., 2018), (Uysal, 2025).

3.2.4 Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital Theory emphasizes on the need to invest in skills, knowledge and abilities of the employees as a way of increasing the performance of the organization (Becker, 1964). The practice of ERM aimed at training, career development and knowledge sharing programs raise the human capital of employees and, at the same time, indicate that the organization attaches importance to their professional development. These investments create mutual loyalty causing the employees to have a higher chance of staying within the organization. This theoretical approach is of special relevance to IT/ITES companies, where extremely skilled staff is an important asset. The Human Capital Theory also fits in the RQ3 since it emphasizes on the necessity of conducting research to determine the effects of ERM-oriented skill development and knowledge management practices on long-term retention.

3.3 Applicability to the IT/ITES Work Environment

The importance of ERM and its theoretical framework in the framework of IT and ITES organizations is complemented by high rates of technological and technological changes, the project-oriented work system, and the stiffest competition within the specific talent pool. There is high facility of movement and Global employment of employees in these areas. Hence, it is important to note that ERM practices based on social exchange, psychological contracts, organizational support, and human capital development will not only help to address the expectations of employees but also help to develop a sustainable retention strategy.

In addition, digital HR tools and analytics incorporated into ERM enable IT/ITES firms to track the engagement, forecast the risk of attrition and tailor interventions. These technology-based practices can play the role of mediators as well as intensifiers of the ERM results, thus satisfying RQ2, as well as opening up potential future research as suggested by RQ3.

The synthesis of these theoretical views combined gives this review a solid base through which the mechanisms by which ERM influences employee retention can be understood, and it is a conceptual framework that can inform both empirical research and managerial practice in the IT/ITES firms.

4. Employee Relationship Management Dimensions

Employee Relationship Management (ERM) has become one of the key human resource strategies in IT and ITES companies, which focused on creating positive employee experience, increasing commitment, and minimising the turnover. Within the framework of this review, ERM is defined as a collective assembly of practices, policies, and technologies that aim at controlling, sustaining, and empowering the organizational connections amid the organizational workforce. To answer RQ1, i.e. finding the main elements and practices of ERM that have impact on retention, the literature was examined to elicit the most frequently reported aspects of ERM. The dimensions give the base on which the method of how organizations can organize improvement of retention results becomes possible.

4.1 The company maintains effective communication and transparency

Good communication and transparency within the organization are always brought out as the leading ERM practices. Free flow of communication, feedback, and unambiguous sharing of organizational objectives and policies foster a feeling of trust and psychological safety among the employees. IT and ITES are settings where teams can be geographically or remotely located, and, in those circumstances, the lack of transparency increases uncertainty, against which open communication acts as a buffer to foster employee emotional engagement towards the company. The reviewed studies suggest that such frequent, clear, and two-way communication is positively related to employee retention, which responds to RQ1 by establishing a key element of ERM and RQ2 by demonstrating that the effectiveness of communication

is commonly mediated by the leadership style and organizational culture (Ashton, 2018), (Bibi et al., 2018).

Career development and learning opportunities are provided to the employee, and they must be notified in writing of their eligibility to these opportunities. Career development and learning opportunities are offered to the employee, and the employee should be informed about their entitlement to these opportunities in writing. Another critical ERM dimension is career growth and the opportunity of continuous learning. Literature shows that structured professional development programs, mentoring and access of resources that develop skills are very significant to IT and ITES employees. These programs do not only enhance the competencies of the employees but also reinforce their sense of organizational support. There are indications that there exists a high degree of association between career development opportunities and retention amongst both mid- and senior-level employees, thus answering RQ1. Moreover, organizational culture and managerial support tends to moderate the efficacy of such programs, which connects this aspect to RQ2 (Nie et al., 2018), (Jang & Kandampully, 2018).

4.2 Recognition and Rewards Systems.

ERM is based on recognition and reward systems, both monetary and non-monetary. Research has indicated that recognition programs that are formally structured, bonuses depending on performance, and unofficial appreciation practices contribute to a great deal of satisfaction and devotion among the employees. Mediating practice in the relationship between ERM and retention is also referred to as recognition practices as indicated in numerous empirical studies in the IT/ITES sector. This dimension speaks directly to RQ1, as it establishes one of the important ERM practices; it answers RQ2 as it shows how reward systems can affect retention outcomes in interaction with leadership and HR policies (Sun & Wang, 2017), (Mathieu et al., 2016).

4.3 Employee Engagement Programs.

Another key ERM dimension is employee engagement efforts, including team building programs, socializing and formal feedback processes. The engaged employees will tend to be more committed to the organization and will tend to work harder discretionally and have less intention to turnover. Records in the IT/ITES industry show that long term engagement programs are successful in boosting retention especially where it is in tandem with intrinsic motivations of the employee. This dimension answers RQ1 by emphasizing engagement as one of the key ERM practices and RQ2 by showing how it relies on the managers and the organization and digital tools to track the engagement (Lin & Huang, 2021), (Tian et al., 2020), (Lenk et al., 2019).

4.4 Leadership and Managerial Support.

This is because leadership behavior and managerial support are a vital relational aspect of ERM. Supportive and transformational leadership forms breed trust, empowerment, and well-being of employees, which affect the retention decision. Research indicates that leadership is a direct precursor of employee retention, as well as a moderator of other ERM activities (e.g. engagement programs, career development). This goes directly in line with RQ2, since it establishes contextual variables that amplify or diminish the effects of ERM, and serves to inform RQ1, by defining leadership support as a significant component of ERM (Ahammad et al., 2016), (Aburumman et al., 2020).

4.5 Technology-based HR Platforms

ERM implementation in IT and ITES organizations has been revolutionized by the emergence of HR technology, such as AI chatbots, real-time feedback applications, learning management systems, and analytics platforms. With digital tools, the personalized engagement is possible, performance monitoring is feasible, and predictive retention analytics is developed, which makes ERM more responsive and data-driven. It has been theorized in literature that those organizations that take advantage of such technologies have increased retention rates, especially among the tech-savvy employees of an organization. This dimension answers RQ1 by determining technology as an important enabler of ERM, RQ2 by demonstrating its moderating impact on the relationship between ERM and retentions, and RQ3 by finding that there is a gap in the existing literature on the long-term effectiveness of AI-driven ERM interventions (Anam, 2024), (Roul et al., 2024).

4.6 Work-Life Balance and Wellness Programs.

Lastly, ERM consists of those practices that promote employee well-being and work-life balance such as flexible work schedules, wellness programs and mental health. Such programs are essential in IT and ITES industries where workload, deadlines, and distance work are a constant stress, and employee and job satisfaction have to maintain high levels to endure the stresses of these jobs. It has been shown in literature that work-life balance practices improve retention by reducing burnout and increasing organizational climate, which decreases in direct relation to RQ1. Moreover, the organizational culture and leadership support are notable mediating factors, which respond to RQ2, whereas there is a gap in the research on the most effective combinations of wellness and flexibility programs to retain employees in the long term, which is the response to RQ3 (Florkowski, 2018), (Islam, 2016), (Papaevangelou et al., 2023).

4.7 Synthesis and Implications

All these seven dimensions together, including communication and transparency, career building, recognition and rewards, engagement program, leadership support, HR technology platform and work-life balanced initiatives are the pillars of ERM in IT and ITES companies. They offer both empirical and theoretical support regarding RQ1, demonstrate contextual and moderating variables in regard to RQ2, and display areas of future analysis that are needed concerning RQ3, e.g., the longitudinal effect of AI-based ERM tools and industry-specific engagement strategies. Arranging the literature based on these dimensions, this review provides a systematic structure that does not only provide a synthesis of the available knowledge but also guides the practical approaches to be applied in

management in order to maximize employee retention in the fast changing IT and ITES environment (Adel & Younis, 2023), (Tworek et al., 2020), (Alam & Islam, 2021).

5. The influence of Employee Relationship Management on Employee Retention in the IT and ITES.

The connection between Employee Relationship Management (ERM) and employee retention has been an area of increasing interest in the research in the IT and ITES sphere since the turnover rates are very high, and talent sustainability becomes more and more crucial in the industries. This paragraph summarizes the empirical results of the 52 studies that were identified in order to conduct this review, bringing out the most important ERM practices, the comparison between other HR practices and the impact of mediating or moderating variables, distinguishing between quantitative and qualitative results. The discourse is clearly consistent with the research questions put (RQ1-RQ3) (Sanjeev et al., 2024).

5.1 ERM Practices and their direct effect on Retention (RQ1)

A common aspect in several studies is that ERM practices when done in a systematic manner have a significant impact on employee retention within IT/ITES organizations. Some of the identified key practices are organized channels of communication, recognition and rewards schemes, career development programs, employee engagement interventions, and the utilization of HR technology platforms to support feedback and performance monitoring. In particular, it was found out that IT corporations which spent on the employment of continuous employee feedback programs had reported a decrease in voluntary turnover by 15-20% which confirms that ERM directly impacted retention performance. In the same manner, research in ITES companies found that extensive engagement programs, that is, mentorship and team-building programs, improved the overall organizational commitment and intent of employees to remain (Tursunbayeva, 2018), (Ammupriya et al., 2025). These results directly respond to RQ1, since they determine the most important elements and practices of ERM that have a direct impact on retention. Moreover, the fact is that there is evidence that holistic ERM framework (integrating technological tools with human-centered initiatives) is more efficient than the separate HR interventions.

5.2 Comparison to other HR Strategies.

ERM does not work alone, its viability is frequently contrasted with conventional HR approaches like talent management, performance management and compensation plans. Empirical research is always pointing to the fact that ERM can supplement these strategies in their relationship-building and employee experience, being not merely transactional or output-oriented. As an example, whereas performance management systems are efficient in the evaluation and compensation of output, ERM practices positively affect the perceived organizational support which is highly related with retention. Research on multinational IT companies has also demonstrated that the synergistic impact of ERM and structured talent management programs is associated with lowering turnover among highly promising employees. This comparative observation supports the importance of ERM as a strategic retention mechanism and not an operational HR activity, and it makes a direct contribution to RQ1 and RQ2 (Alhalboosi et al., 2021), (Rana & Kaur, 2024), (Shakeel & Siddiqui, 2021).

5.3 focuses on the mediating and moderating factors.

The relationship between ERM and retention has been studied using a critical body of research in the areas of mediating and moderating factors. Organizational culture has become one of the major moderators; the research has shown that ERM practices work better in the context of such cultures that prioritize collaboration, transparency, and employee-focused principles. Correspondingly, leadership style is important as a mediator. Transformational and participative leadership styles add positive effects to ERM initiatives since employees feel more supported and motivated towards organizational intentions. This relationship is further tempered by the current digital transformation in the IT/ITES. Companies that use HR analytics, AI-based feedback systems, and electronic communication channels have higher engagement and retention rates than the companies that use the traditional ERM process. The results of these findings support RQ2 and prove that the influence of ERM on retention depends on situational, technological, and human factors and requires the use of combined strategies that would unite ERM with leadership and digital infrastructure (Shilenge & Telukdarie, 2021), (Alrawashdeh et al., 2021).

5.4 Quantitative versus Qualitative Findings.

The literature that was reviewed contains both quantitative studies (surveys and regression analysis), as well as qualitative studies (case studies and interviews). Quantitative research also tends to document such quantifiable results as lower turnover rates, higher retention rates, and improved engagement scores after ERM interventions. Qualitative studies can give more information about the perceptions of employees, including such nuances as trust, psychological safety, and emotional commitment, which are not readily measurable. The combination of these complementary methods provides a multi-dimensional perception of the effects of ERM which supports the strength of the results and evidences all the three research questions (RQ1-RQ3) (Ziebell et al., 2019), (Sachitra & Wimalasena, 2024), (Yousifi, 2024).

5.5 Research Implications and Summary (RQ3)

Altogether, the empirical results indicate that ERM is a valuable human resource strategy in IT and ITES companies during employee retention, particularly in combination with other HR guidelines, positive organizational culture, and with the help of digital tools. Nonetheless, there are a number of gaps in research, which are consistent with RQ3. As an example,

longitudinal research regarding the long-term impact of ERM on retention has not been conducted extensively, and cross-cultural comparisons in multinational IT companies have not been developed. Moreover, further studies on the objective effects of AI-based ERM platforms and the contribution of remote or hybrid work patterns to the development of retention outcomes are required. Addressing these gaps would offer practical implications to researchers and practitioners to inform the design of ERM framework in the dynamic IT and ITES environment.

6. Industry Trends & Challenges

The fast changes in the IT and IT-enabled services (ITES) sector have been witnessed in the recent ten years and this has happened mainly because of technological changes, the changing workforce requirements, and the international competitive forces. These changes have far reaching consequences to the Employee Relationship Management (ERM) practices and their effectiveness in the retention of employees, which coincides well with the research questions (RQ1-RQ3) of this review. The awareness of the existing trends in the industry and the problems they introduce is the key to determining which aspects of ERM have a most significant influence, what are the circumstances under which these impacts transpire, and what gaps exist in academic literature.

6.1 Digital HR and Analytics in Retention Forecasting addresses the topic of forecasting retention

The adoption of digital HR systems and intelligent analytics as a new trend to boost staff engagement and retention is one of the most prominent changes in IT/ITES organizations. Machines like Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS), predictive analytics, and people analytics enable organizations to keep track of how the employees feel, determine the probability of them leaving their jobs as well as crafting specific retention intervention. This trend directly feeds into RQ1 since it identifies particular ERM practices, i.e., data-based performance feedback, individualized career development and recognition systems that enhance employee relationships. Moreover, the analytical implementation can answer RQ2 by showing that the relationship between the ERM initiatives and employee retention results is mediated by technological infrastructure. Although this has been made, there remains a challenge of data privacy and ethical use of information about employees, which may be problematic in terms of trust and engagement should it not be addressed properly (Afriyie, 2017), (Elugbaju et al., 2024), (John & Hajam, 2024).

6.2. Remote and Hybrid Work Culture

The transition to remote and hybrid work models which have been accelerated by world events like the COVID-19 pandemic has radically changed how the IT/ITES firms deal with employee relationships. Although flexible work arrangements may improve the work-life balance and satisfaction rates among the employees, they also present the problem of preserving strong organizational relationships, mentoring and informal communication. This tendency is very applicable to RQ1, as it indicates the necessity of ERM strategies that would support interaction within virtual locations, including internet-based team-building, online recognition programs, and organized digital feedback dissemination. As far as RQ2 is concerned, remote work is both a moderator and contextual variable which has an impact on the conversion of ERM practices into retention outcomes. Companies that cannot adjust ERM to virtual environments run risks of losing more employees, especially the younger generations who places more emphasis on connectivity and support during work in digital environments (Shinde, 2025), (Patil et al., 2024), (Kalahasthi, n.d.).

6.3 Generational Differences: Millennials and Gen Z Expectations.

The other major trend that is influential towards ERM and retention is the generational change in workforce of IT/ITES. The millennials and the Gen Z workers have their own expectations of continuous learning opportunities, career progression, meaningful work, and a good fit with organizational values. Such inclinations feed directly into RQ1 in that ERM practices have to be shaped to appeal to the motivation impetus of a multigenerational workforce. Also, here, the RQ2 is fulfilled, since the generational differences are the moderators of ERM-retention relationship- what works with one age group, might not have the same effect on another age group. The organizations should therefore formulate adaptable ERM plans that take into account various engagement inclinations using mentorship schemes, game-based learning, and digital reward systems to ensure retention amongst cohorts (Bulinska-Stangrecka & Naim, 2021), (Dieguez et al., 2024), (Pózner & Kozák, 2025).

6.4 Competition and Employee Stealing in the World.

The IT /ITES business is associated with a high level of competition in the labor market of the global arena, in which competent workers are often the subjects of interest of multinational companies (MNCs) and start-ups. This competition environment is a significant challenge to the retention, and the strategic significance of ERM is essential in the accomplishment of loyalty and organizational commitment. In the case of RQ1, this tendency supports the idea that proactive ERM measures, including career growth strategies, open communication, and rewarding systems, are needed to stimulate the perceived organizational support. Concerning RQ2, global competition is opposing the ERM implementation because the external opportunities can undermine the impact of the retention of even the best designed ERM initiatives, and it is essential to focus on implementing competitive benchmarking and external labor market analysis as the part of HR strategies. Regarding the research perspective (RQ3), the empirical studies on the use of ERM to reduce external poaching-induced attrition are limited, which is a major gap that can be explored in future research (Reid, 2018), (Kumar et al., 2015), (Shanmugapriya & Venkatramaju, 2025).

6.5 The eighth step entails the implementation of AI tools in relationship building

Lastly, the trend toward the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning tools in HR practices becomes both an opportunity and a challenge to ERM. Chatbots, sentiment analysis, and automated recognition systems powered by AI can strengthen the engagement of the employees and deliver a one-on-one support with large scale. This trend is especially important to RQ1, as the innovative ERM practices that had not been possible in large organizations are discovered. In terms of RQ2, AI tools can be mediating tools, so more timely, accurate, and customised ERM interventions will be applied that can positively affect retention. Nevertheless, excessive dependency on AI can also become problematic, such as decreased human touch, the possibility of algorithmic biases in decision-making, and employee distrust, which is why the idea of automation-human relationships management would be more effective. This tendency also leads to RQ3, which implies that there is a gap in the literature on the long-term effect of AI-mediated ERM on retention, especially regarding the presence of a diverse and distributed workforce in IT/ITES organizations (Basnet, 2024), (Sachan et al., 2024), (Mhaskey, 2024).

6.6 Synthesis and Implications to RQ1-RQ3.

On the whole, these trends and challenges in the industry highlight the dynamics and situational quality of ERM in the IT/ITES firms. RQ1 is answered with the fact that digital HR, AI tools, remote-based interaction, and generational-specific retention practices will evolve, RQ2 is clarified by the situational moderators (remote work, generational differences, global competition), and RQ3 is identified as gaps in research that need to be closed in the future (longitudinal studies on AI-mediated ERM, sector-specific retention strategies, multigenerational engagement models). Collectively, these lessons offer some useful pieces of advice to HR managers as well as a path to further scholarly research that will maintain ERM strategies relevant in a more competitive and complex industry environment.

7. Gaps in the Research and Future.

Although the Employee Relationship Management (ERM) concept has gained extensive literature as a concept affecting employee retention within the IT and ITES organizations, various gaps still exist in the literature. It is important to fill these gaps to gain more theoretical knowledge and offer practical advice to practitioners. These limitations are addressed below and have direct links to the research questions of this paper (RQ1-RQ3).

7.1 Longitudinal evidence of the correlations between ERM and retention is limited (RQ1 and RQ2)

One of the obvious gaps in existing literature is absence of longitudinal studies investigating the cause and effect relationship between ERM practices and retention outcomes. The majority of the empirical studies are based on cross-sectional survey design which measures the perception of employees at one point in time. Although these studies are useful in generating insights about the correlation, it is not possible to determine the causal mechanisms and temporal variations in employee attitudes and behaviors. In the case of RQ1, this weakness limits our information on what ERM elements (recognition, engagement, career development) have a consistent effect on retention in the long-term. In the case of RQ2, it limits information on how mediating or moderating variables, such as leadership style or the organizational culture, change and have an impact on the ERM-retention relationship over time. The future studies will be required to implement panel studies or longitudinal surveys to measure such dynamics and have strong evidence on the effective retention strategies.

7.2 Role of AI and Automation in ERM (RQ1, RQ2) that are not studied thoroughly.

Employee management practices have changed rapidly due to the rapid application of digital HR tools, artificial intelligence, and automation in IT and ITES companies. Nevertheless, the adoption of AI and automation in ERM is still a research gap in the literature. In the case of RQ1, this gap restricts the knowledge on how technology-based ERM initiatives, including AI-based employee feedbacks, predictive retention tools, or automated employee engagement tools, can lead to employee retention. In the case of RQ2, the literature is very weak concerning the whether or not these technologies mediate or augment the effectiveness of traditional ERM practices in various organizational settings. Further research ought to examine the complementary impacts of AI and human-centric ERM by researching how technology may be utilized to complement communication, recognition, and engagement to retain talented employees.

7.3 Cultural and Contextual differences in IT/ITES Organizations (RQ2 and RQ3)

The other significant gap is the area of cultural differences between domestic and multinational IT/ITES organizations. Most of the current literature is usually specific to one particular country or workplace setting and therefore limits the level of generalization of the results. In the case of RQ2, this is a problem of interpretation in the moderating effect of cultural factors, leadership expectations, employee autonomy, and communication norms on the influence of ERM on retention. To the RQ3, it brings out the necessity of cross-cultural and cross country comparative studies in order to establish context-specific ERM practices that are most effective within various organizational conditions. To examine these cultural peculiarities, multi-country surveys or case studies should be used in the future to generate universally applicable ERM models.

7.4 Quantitative Models of ERM KPIs to Retention Metrics (RQ1 and RQ3) Are Necessary.

Though various researches talk about the elements of ERM and their possible advantages, there is no quantitative model between particular ERM practices and retention outcomes which could be measured. In the case of RQ1, this gap constrains the scope of determining

the ERM dimensions, i.e. career development programs, or employee engagement programs, that have the most predictive power regarding retention. In the case of RQ3, the lack of these models limits evidence-based decision-making and implementation. The future research direction is to come up with predictive frameworks/ structural equation models to measure the correlations between the ERM key performance indicators (KPIs) and the retention measures, which will offer actionable insights to the HR leaders in the IT/ITES organizations.

7.5 Invitation to Mixed-Method Research and International Comparisons (RQ1-RQ3)

Lastly, literature displays a gap in the mixed-method research methods that would be able to utilize the richness of qualitative data with the external validity of quantitative one. In the case of RQ1, the qualitative methodology will help to reveal the perceptions of employees and the subtle practices of ERM that surveys will not reveal. In the case of RQ2, they enable the investigation of complicated mediating and moderating variables in various organizational settings. In the case of RQ3, mixed-method studies allow identifying gaps in research and contributing to the possible future directions. Also, cross-country comparisons have to be conducted to assess the applicability of ERM models worldwide and determine region-specific issues related to employee retention strategies.

7.6 Summary

To conclude, although considerable advances have been achieved so far in comprehending the role of ERM in employee retention of IT and ITES organizations, there are gaps in the field in terms of methodology, technology, and context. The longitudinal research designs, AI-based ERM research, cross-cultural studies, quantitative modeling, and mixed-method research will not only deepen the theory but also offer solid, practical solutions to the HR professionals. By simply aligning future research with RQ1-RQ3, the future research will be able to systemically clarify what is vital in the ERM practices (RQ1), how the practices work in different organizational settings (RQ2), and what is still unknown (RQ3).

8. Implications at the Managerial and Practical Level.

This review has serious managerial and practical implications on HR leaders, organizational policymakers and HR technology providers in the IT and IT-enabled services (ITES) industry. By integrating all the evidence, 52 studies in total, this section transforms the theory about Employee Relationship Management (ERM) and employee retention into a series of recommendations that directly respond to the research questions laid out in this paper.

8.1 Designing ERM Systems to Reduce Turnover (Connection to RQ1)

The main implication on the HR leaders is the design and implementation of ERM systems that are effective in improving retention. Consistent with RQ1, the review found the main dimensions of ERM, including communication strategies, career development initiatives, recognition mechanisms, employee engagement initiatives, and the introduction of HR technology platforms, which are closely linked with the decrease of turnover intentions. These dimensions are suggested to be integrated by managers to build a supportive, transparent and rewarding work environment based on a comprehensive ERM framework. As an illustration, systematic career advancement strategies and timely appreciation of the contribution of employees can instill organizational commitment, whereas ERM modules with communication orientation could help build trust and alignment between the employees and the management. IT/ITES companies can directly solve the retention problems and improve the overall employees satisfaction by customizing ERM systems that fit the needs of an organization and its workforce.

8.2 Capitalising on Employee Feedback and Analytics (Relates to RQ2)

The review emphasizes the increased significance of employee feedback analytics as the tool to comprehend and address retention risks. To answer RQ2, some of the studies show that mediating variables, including organizational culture, leadership behavior, and digital HR tools, are significant in determining the success of the ERM practices. HR managers are able to use real-time feedback systems, employee sentiment analysis, and predictive analytics to determine when certain employees are disengaged or are prone to leave. Managers can also act proactively by examining the trends in the responses of the employees and introducing retention strategies, including customized career development plans, specific recognition programs, and work-life balance intervention strategies. The strategic management of data does not only enhance the connection between ERM and retention but it also enables evidence-based decision-making, which organizations can use to devote resources effectively and improve employee experience.

8.3 Training and Developing Relationship-Centered Leadership (Connection to RQ2)

The other vital implication is on the competencies of leadership that will facilitate relationship-based management. The role of leaders and managers is the main point of contact with employees and building relationships therefore, their actions may enhance or diminish the impact of the ERM practices on retention. Managers can be empowered to have strong, trust-based relationships with their teams by initiating such training programs in areas of emotional intelligence, communication, conflict management, and supportive leadership. Organizations respond to RQ2 by matching leadership growth efforts to ERM principles by making sure that situational conditions such as leadership style positively mediate the success of ERM practices which enhances the retention performance of IT/ITES firms.

8.4 Policy Implications and Implications on HR technology Vendors (Relates to RQ3)

In addition to internal HR strategies, the review has implications of policy makers and HR technology

vendors which suggest that enabling policies, tools, and frameworks are required to support ERM initiatives. According to RQ3, the research literature demonstrates the gaps in the adoption of digital HR solutions and longitudinal follow-up on the effectiveness of ERM and context-specific retention strategies. The policy makers can foster norms and principles on employee relationship management that would foster transparency, equity, and ethical conduct in the IT/ITES industry. At the same time, the vendors of the HR technologies can create specifically tailored ERM platforms which combine employee feedback, employee engagement monitoring, and predictive retention analytics, which can be specifically applied to the dynamic, dispersed across the geographical areas working force that is typical of the IT/ITES organizations. These interventions seal loopholes in research and offer realistic solutions to improve retention and evidence-based HR management.

8.5 Integrative Perspective

Collectively, the managerial and the practical implication highlight a multi-level perspective of retention in IT/ITES firms. RQ1 helps managers to recognize and apply important ERM practices, RQ2 highlights the need to mediate leadership and technology to enhance retention results, and RQ3 attracts emerging gaps and innovation opportunities in ERM systems and policy interventions. Using a strategically orientated ERM framework based on evidence on the literature, organizations will be able to develop sustainable retention strategies, enhance the satisfaction of employees, and have a competitive edge in an industry where turnover and talent mobility are high.

9. Empirical constraints and Future Research.

Although the current review offers a holistic conceptual synthesis of ERM practices, key performance indicators (KPIs), and the increased role of AI-enabled HRs, it has very little practicality to it. Studies reviewed refer mostly to qualitative insights, cross-sectional surveys, or conceptual frameworks, thus these studies cannot be used to empirically measure the direct effect of ERM KPIs and acceptance of AI tools on employee retention results. This leads to the fact that the hypothesized relationships between ERM dimensions, technological interventions, and workforce stability are largely conjectural and are not validated using organizational data or standardized measures models.

In turn, this review results should be viewed as hypothetically based propositions as opposed to causally proven relationships. The generalizability and external validity of the conclusions are limited by the lack of empirical testing on validated HR measures, especially in a very dynamic environment of IT and ITES. This shows that the future research should not focus on the conceptual arguments but include objective organizational measures like attrition rates, engagement scores, absenteeism, productivity indices, and ERM KPI dashboards. Such quantifiable HR outcomes would facilitate researcher ability to test empirically the strength, direction and importance of the relationships put forward in this review.

Particular attention of future research should be paid to longitudinal research designs to identify the temporal impact of ERM practice and AI adoption on employee retention. Longitudinal HR analytics can provide further answers on the dynamics of the evolving interventions of the ERM over time and whether the effect they have on retention is persistent, magnified, or even reduced. It is particularly applicable in the post-COVID environment, where the changes in work organization, the usage of digital HR, and the expectations of the employees have changed the nature of talent management in IT and ITES companies irreversibly.

Talent retention practices ought to be viewed as a quantifiable and strategy relevant avenue of extending the existing body of work in this respect. Time-series analyses can be used to compare pre-COVID and post-COVID retention, engagement and turnover rates, pre-implementation and post-implementation of AI-driven HR technologies AI-based recruitment, employee-support chatbots, sentiment-analysis systems and predictive attrition systems. Such comparisons would give the opportunity to make more refined assessments of the interaction between technological interventions and ERM practices in different organizational and environmental conditions.

Besides, combination of longitudinal HR measures with indicators of AI usage intensity and acceptance, including system utilization rates, perceived usefulness, ease of use and trust in AI systems, have the power to provide strong empirical data on the effectiveness of AI-enabled ERM interventions. Future research can take a step to evidence-based confirming the impact of AI in enhancing workforce stability by connecting the behavioral acceptance models with objective retention and engagement outcomes. This empirical extension would not only fill the gaps identified in the given review, but also contribute extensively to the field of HRM scholarship since it would base ERM-AI-retention relations on the quantifiable results of the organization.

10.Conclusions

Conclusively, although major developments have been achieved in the exploration of the Employee Relationship Management (ERM) in improving employee retention in IT and ITES organizations, there are still numerous gaps in the literature. There is a paucity of longitudinal studies on the causal connection between ERM practices and retention, and the modification of new technologies, including AI and automation, on ERM has not been well studied. In addition, the cultural and contextual disparities between organizations, the absence of quantitative models of relationships between ERM KPIs and retention measures, and the uncommon application of mixed-method research limit the development of theories and practice. By filling in these gaps with longitudinal research, cross-cultural research, quantitative modelling and integrated qualitative-

quantitative designs, it will yield more information about the most effective practices of ERM, how it operates within different organizational settings and additional innovation will be required. As a manager, the results highlight the need to create holistic ERM systems, use employee feedback and analytics, build relationship-based leadership, and adopt supportive policies and HR technologies. Together, these strategies can be a multi-level solution to not only enhancing retention but also employee satisfaction and achieving sustainable competitive advantage in a high-turnover and unstable workforce industry.

Practically, the recommendations provide practical advice to HR professionals, policymakers and organizational leaders in the IT and ITES industries. The focus of HR managers must be on the adoption of analytics-based ERM frameworks, ongoing employee feedback systems, and the relationship-based leadership practices, which are expected to assist them proactively in dealing with the problem of retention. Policymakers can contribute to such initiatives through the promotion of such practices as ethical use of AI, governance structures, and workforce development programs that resonate with changes in the digital world. The HR technology suppliers and organizational leaders must also work together to develop evidence-based ERM tools to match the performance indicators with retention outcomes. A combination of these can transform ERM knowledge into sustainable talent management strategies and enhanced organizational resilience.

Declarations

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript. There are no financial or personal relationships that could inappropriately influence the work presented in this paper.

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Ethical Approval

As this study is a literature review, it did not involve human participants or animals, and therefore, ethical approval was not required.

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