

GLOBAL TREND OF TALENT RETENTION FROM 1993 TO 2023: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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Article history

Received date : 20-6-2024
Revised date : 21-6-2024
Accepted date : 11-9-2024
Published date : 15-10-2024

To cite this document:

Kamal., U., A, Razali., R, & Arifin., M., A. (2024). Global trend of talent retention from 1993 to 2023: A bibliometric analysis. *International Journal of Accounting, Finance and Business (IJAFB)*, 9 (56), 129 - 142.

Abstract: *The past several years have seen a rise in academic research on talent retention (TR). Nevertheless, a comprehensive review of TR research using bibliometric analysis has not been published. TR has evolved tremendously since 1993. This document attempts a description of TR in terms of its status in general, trends, and how research into TR has evolved in various fields around the world in the last 30 years. Data from the Web of Science database was analysed by utilising VOS viewer, bibliometric R-package and Map Chart software to evaluate TR-related publications. We investigated studies into TR from the lens of productivity, partnership, and knowledge structure patterns. The analysis involved several indicators, including research pattern, relevant journals, influential and proactive authors, collaboration networks and authors' production. Bibliometric analysis of 691 articles revealed that current studies into TR are focused on innovation, mediating role and leadership. As one of the pioneering bibliometric studies on TR, this analysis provides insights to existing scholars, future researchers, and practitioners into TR developments, while suggesting potential areas like innovation, mediating role and leadership for future research advancement.*

Keywords: *Talent, Talent Retention, WoS, Bibliometric Analysis, VoS viewer, R-Package*

Introductin

Retaining talented people in an organization is the foundation of talent management (TM) success. In order to retain talent, organizations can employ variables such as attractive work, a good work setting, having a robust culture, and rewards in monetary or non-monetary aspects (Savov et al., 2022). Talent retention (TR) is described as what employers do to retain appropriate employees so they can meet their business targets (Frank et al., 2004). As attested by Kontoghiorghes and Frangou (2009) the preservation of skilled talents within an organization is also an outcome of both employee and employer attaining mutual gratification. This is because employers seek out suitable employees whose skills are aligned with the needs of the organization, while the employees desire to stay and work at a workplace that fulfills their requirements (Savov et al., 2022). Thus, to ensure the satisfaction of both the employees and employers, companies need to consistently enhance employee potential through ongoing education and strive to fulfill their various needs (Lančarič et al., 2015). Retention has become a challenging issue for many organizations as the demand for skilled talent has grown faster than the supply of talent capabilities (Biswas & Suar, 2013).

In order to retain more talent in organizations, a TM system should be in place (Hughes & Rog, 2008) because TM is the planned process of identifying, selecting, onboarding, developing, and retaining a skilled workforce that is in line with the objectives of the company and has the requisite abilities (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Skuza et al., 2022; Stuss, 2020). Nevertheless, some problems regarding TM have been identified by Schuler et al. (2011) which are the allocation of time by senior executives, the configuration of organizational frameworks, insufficient engagement by mid-level managers, and a reluctance to recognise performance variances among staff or an absence of awareness regarding TM. These aspects could factor in the low level of TR within organizations. Horváthová (2010) stated that work attractiveness, along with a proper evaluation, are significant factors for employees' willingness to stay at the company. Employers should also give talents the chance for education, career growth, and exciting challenges, which would give them a sense of recognition and respect.

To retain talent, it is vital to first discover what causes employees to leave a company. Sirková et al. (2016) listed major reasons that include communication breakdown, higher salaries at other workplaces, limited career growth, and poor leadership system. These factors can be categorized as internal and external environments. The primary causes for talent to quit a company are better earnings prospects at other organizations, lack of career advancement chances, job role dissatisfaction, inequitable compensation system, excessive workloads, work-life balance issues, clashes with management, under utilisation of skills, absence of self-development and educational opportunities, and limited involvement in decision making (Scott et al., 2012). Scott et al. (2012) also outlined the most frequently used methods in TR as identifying key employees, outlining and identifying what their future holds in the organization, offering compensation exceeding market norms, creating succession plans, providing talent development and training, and allowing flexible working hours.

Remaining current with published scholarly articles on TR has become increasingly challenging due to the growing number of publications each year (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). As a result, it can be challenging to observe certain data implied by the research from a comprehensive standpoint, including research trend, collaborator network, citations, and many more. Bibliometric analysis employs statistics, providing a complete quantitative summation of study areas, topics, or concerns, which allows us to highlight the knowledge structures, evolution, and overview of a certain research topic (Daim et al., 2006). Therefore, this paper aims to

systematically analyze the trends in TR by examining its research patterns, key journals, influential and active authors, collaboration networks, and publication output, based on an analysis of 691 articles.

Literature Review

Bibliometric Analysis

Bibliometric analysis is a way to outline scientific studies for the identification of the major areas of research in terms of time span, contexts, and fields (Van Eck & Waltman, 2007). By examining trends in productivity, influence, and collaboration on a research subject, bibliometric analysis also helps in our understanding of how a field is structured and evolves through time (Donthu et al., 2021). Bibliometric studies are deemed beneficial for various objectives that include to determine the most noteworthy displays to measure the bibliographic material (Singh et al., 2022). The analysis includes recognising productive researchers and contributions made by them to the field, identifying themes prominently used in publications, assessing cooperation between institutions, countries and regions, and citations (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

Previous TM scholars have also employed this tool in analysing publication trends. For instance, Parra-Martinez and Wai's article "Talent Identification Research: A Bibliometric Study from Multidisciplinary and Global Perspectives" aimed to analyse the contributions made over the course of 80 years in talent identification research. Two more notable examples in the field of bibliometric analysis include "Fifty years of the European Journal of Marketing: A bibliometric analysis" by Martínez-López et al. (2018) and "A Bibliometric Analysis of IJQR Journal (2002-2022)" by Singh et al. (2022).

Methodology

Bibliometrics is commonly used in various disciplines, including management (Podsakoff et al., 2008), accounting (Merigó et al., 2019) and entrepreneurship (Landström et al., 2012) with a selection of standard software, such as VOS Viewer (Munir et al., 2022), Bibliometric R-package (Saravanan et al., 2023), and Map Chart. By using these software to analyse data, researchers will have access to a network for data visualisation and clear data presentation (Markscheffel & Schröter, 2021).

As far as we could determine, this study represents the pioneering bibliometric analysis of TR. These questions as follows are grappled with in the present study:

RQ1. What is the research development pattern up to 2023 in TR?

RQ2. What is the most relevant journal in TR research?

RQ3. Who are the relevant authors, the collaboration network and authors' production over time?

Data Collection

Data were collected through retrieval of published studies in the Web of Science (WoS) core collection by Clarivate. This database is a highly recommended and reliable international bibliometric database. The following search strategy was employed: TS (topic search) = ("talent retention) OR (talent AND retention). The flow is shown in Figure 1

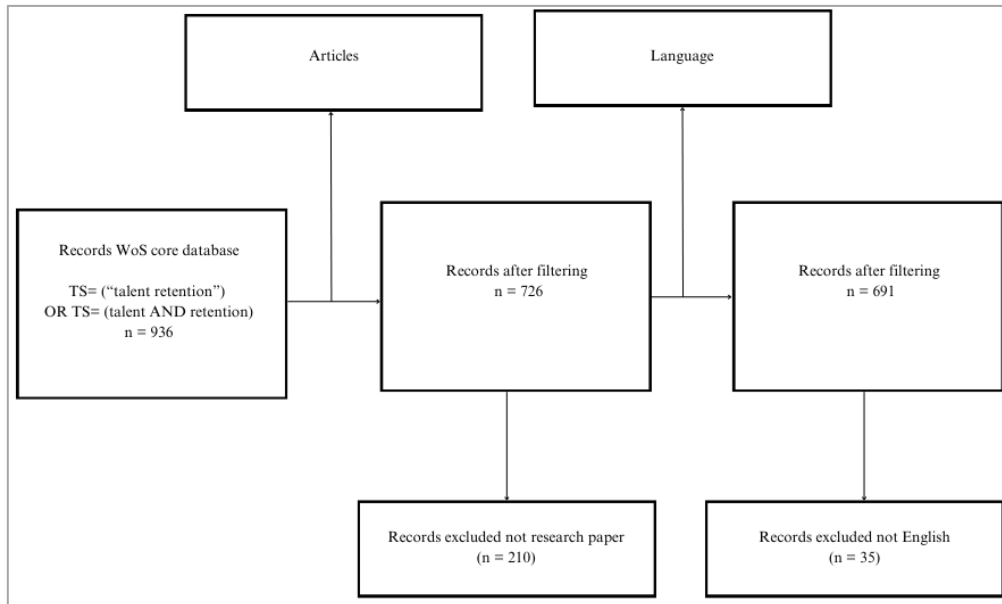


Figure 1: Data Collection Flow Diagram

(Source: Author's Own Illustration)

Results and Discussion

Research development pattern

Our analysis of scientific output on TR from 1993 to 2023 revealed that the field expanded significantly, with a notable rise in publications over the past ten years. This demonstrates the growing significance of TR and momentum in research. Based on the scientific production associated with TR from 1993 until 2023 (Figure 2), the first decade (1993-2002) was quite modest with fewer than six articles per year. The next decade (2003-2012) shows a significant growth of publications with more published journal articles compared to the preceding decade with the highest in 2011 (26 articles). Starting from 2013 until recent years, the number of publications shows an excellent improvement which indicates researchers have started to gain momentum in publication. However, it also shows a fluctuation in those years, specifically in 2014 (23 articles). Overall, the maximum number of production was recorded in 2022 with 106 articles. This indicates publication on TR is rapidly rising and a relevant topic to be discussed.

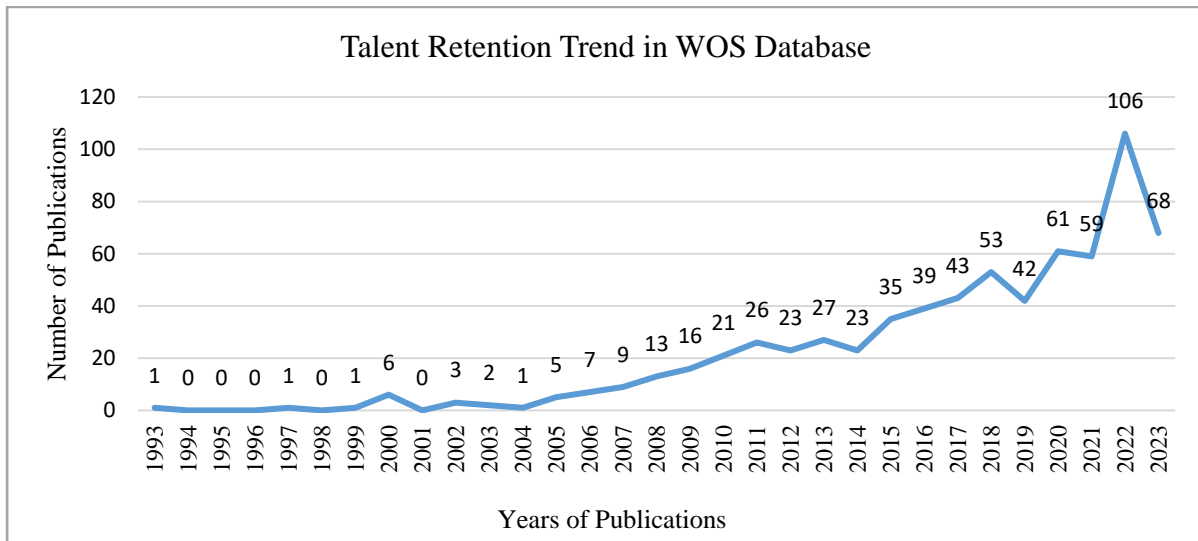


Figure 2: Growth in Production

(Source: Author's Own Illustration from WoS Database)

Most relevant journal in TR research

Academicians who attempt to publish their work and get it peer-reviewed, as well as others who are interested in keeping up with current research would benefit from being able to identify the trailblazing peer-reviewed journals in a particular area of research (Mohamed & Marzouk, 2023). In this work, journals with the highest relevancy that published articles in TR were ranked using local h-index. Table 1 shows the top 10 ranked journals by TR publication h-index. The list is a combination of journals in business, management and accounting (n = 9), and psychology (n = 1) fields. The journal with the highest prominence in TR studies is the International Journal of Human Resource Management (local h-index = 13), with 21 publications and more than 540 citations in total. This is in line with the top authors' list which is dominated by business management-centered publications. Other than that, non-business management-related journals in TR can be seen in the field of psychology where SA Journal of Industrial Psychology leads with an h-index of 7, 8 publications and 216 citations.

Table 1: Most Relevant Journal in TR Research

Rank	Journal	h-index	TC	TP	Quartile	Field
1.	International Journal of Human Resource Management	13	543	21	Q1	Business, Management and Accounting
2.	SA Journal of Human Resource Management	10	322	37	Q2	Business, Management and Accounting
3.	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	8	434	13	Q1	Business, Management and Accounting
4.	Employee Relations	7	251	14	Q1	Business, Management and Accounting
5.	SA Journal of Industrial Psychology	7	216	8	Q3	Psychology

6.	Human Resource Development International	5	160	6	Q1	Business, Management and Accounting
7.	International Journal of Organizational Analysis	5	80	9	Q2	Business, Management and Accounting
8.	Journal of Management Development	5	139	6	Q2	Business, Management and Accounting
9.	Advances in Developing Human Resources	4	188	5	Q2	Business, Management and Accounting
10.	Equality Diversity and Inclusion	4	95	5	Q1	Business, Management and Accounting

(Source: Journal/field details generated from the Web of Science database)

TC = Total citations; TP = Total production

Authors

When examining the analysis at the author level, we present the findings in three manners: first, the most significant authors along with relevant bibliometric attributes are presented in Table 2; second, the authors' output trends over the time span is depicted in Figure 3; and lastly, Figure 4 illustrates the authors' country collaboration network.

As can be observed in Table 2, the total publication number indicates how prolific an author is. In this work, the fractionalized publication count was applied to take into account how many co-authors are included in individual publications. A consistency is demonstrated when we look at how many publications each author produces and the results of fractionalized frequency. However, some variations are observed in the numbers if we compare total publications and total citations. Bussin M. is ranked third in the top 20 authors, but this author has low citation among the top 5 authors in the list with 96 citations. In contrast, Cappeli P. has a publication count of two, but this author has the largest number of citations among all listed authors at 355 citations.

Additionally, in terms of h-index, Cappeli P. scored only 2 points lower than the third author. This can be an indication that this author produced high quality articles in TR scholarship and prioritized quality over quantity. Applying this metric, we also listed authors in multiple fields in a ranking list. The authors in the top 20 are shown to be continuous contributors to TR scholarly work by the values of their h-index, publications, and total citation count in whole. This fact tallies with the rapid increase in article output in all the research areas. In general, the field of business and economics is well presented with a majority of authors (n = 14) followed by multidisciplinary (n = 3), psychology (n = 2) and education (n = 1).

The productivity of top authors over a time span is effectively reflected by how their articles are distributed over this time span and the number of articles produced. The top author, Coetzee M. has shown both productivity and consistency, maintaining an annual output of papers from 2012 to 2023 and maintaining a high level of overall production, as shown in Figure 3. Cappelli P. only became involved in the TR field from 2000 and his next publication was in 2014; however, he performed the best when considering total citations. The citation count explains

that he has the highest quality work, but he does not rank in the list of productive authors over time.

Table 2: Most Significant Authors

Rank	Author	TP	h-Index	Fractionalized	TC	First Publication	Main Field
1.	Coetzee M	13	8	5.33	201	2006	Psychology
2.	Scullion H	5	5	2.82	238	2013	Business & Economics
3.	Bussin M	5	4	2.83	96	2011	Business & Economics
4.	Allen Dg	4	3	1.67	336	2010	Business & Economics
5.	Bhatnagar J	3	3	1.58	106	2006	Business & Economics
6.	Ferreira N	7	3	1.37	40	2017	Psychology
7.	Festing M	3	3	1.83	254	2013	Business & Economics
8.	Lenka U	3	3	1.83	113	2017	Business & Economics
9.	Naim Mf	3	3	1.5	113	2017	Business & Economics
10.	Aguinis H	2	2	1.83	103	2012	Business & Economics
11.	Alagaraja M	2	2	1.33	43	2013	Business & Economics
12.	Barkhuizen Ne	2	2	1.08	12	2018	Business & Economics
13.	Baum T	2	2	0.91	56	2019	Multidisciplinary
14.	Brown J	2	2	1.5	25	2015	Multidisciplinary
15.	Brundrett M	3	2	1.08	49	2006	Education
16.	Cappelli P	2	2	1.5	355	2000	Business & Economics
17.	Cerdin JI	2	2	1.33	21	2014	Business & Economics
18.	Coculova J	2	2	1.5	4	2020	Business & Economics
19.	De Angelis D	2	2	1	20	2020	Business & Economics
20.	De Bosscher V	2	2	1.17	47	2015	Multidisciplinary

(Source: Authors details generated from the Web of Science database)

TC = Total citations; TP = Total production

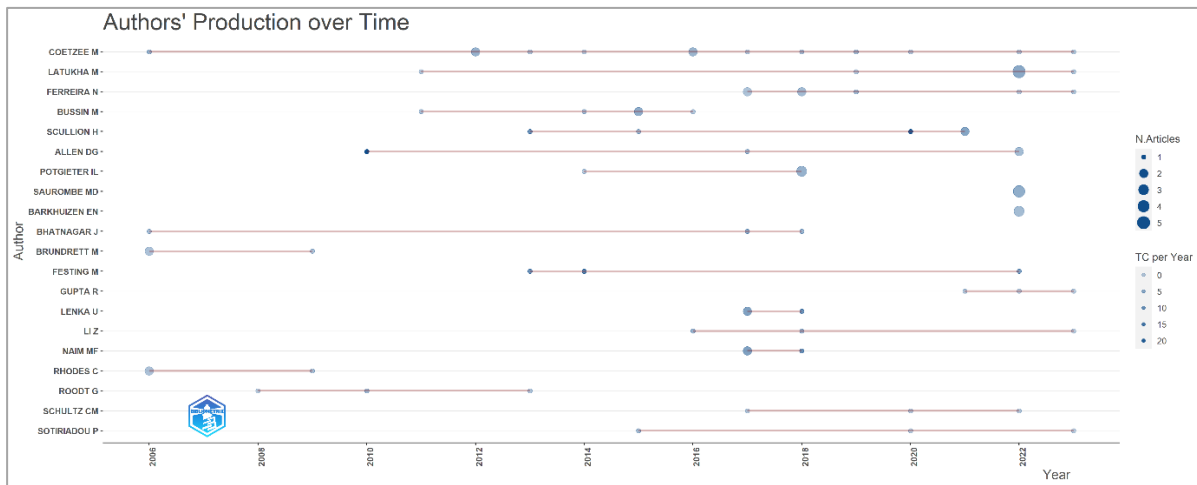


Figure 3: Top Authors' Production Over Time

(Source: Illustration using R-Package from WoS Database)

Country collaboration, production, and citation

The social networks of countries, as well as collaborations at the national and international levels, plus productivity and citation networks, were all analysed to determine the countries that produced the most work based on the author's country of origin.

Figure 4 shows the top countries' network of collaborations. The node size indicates the extent of collaboration; bigger nodes show more collaboration. Linkage thickness indicates the number of collaborations; thicker linkages mean a higher number of collaborations. Countries that show the highest collaboration extent with other countries the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK). USA and UK also have strong collaborations with Australia. Among Asian countries, the United States appears to have established robust collaborations with China, indicative of their strong partnership.

Table 3 shows the countries with the most citations. By this metric, the USA and the UK again demonstrate superiority. The largest number of citations is held by the USA at 6368, the UK follows in second at 1672. South Africa, India and Australia are in the third, fourth and fifth places, respectively. However, their total numbers are considerably lower than the two dominant nations. Interestingly, in terms of average citations per year (ACP), Austria, Switzerland and Belgium appear in the top 3. This belies the fact that their total citations are below the total recorded by dominant citation countries. In fact, total citations from all these three countries (n = 626) are much lower than the figure recorded in the USA (n = 6368). The ACP of the USA and the UK only rank at fifth and seventh, respectively.

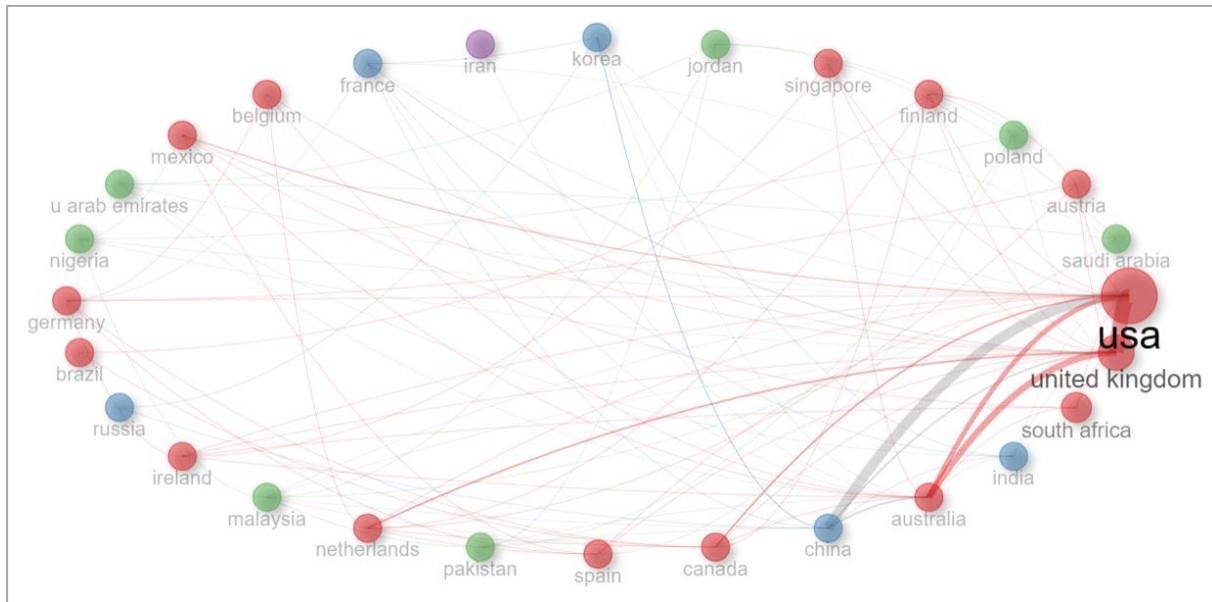


Figure 4: Authors' Country Collaboration Network

(Source: Illustration using VoS viewer from WoS Database)

Table 3: Most Cited Countries

Rank	Country	TC	Country	ACP
1.	USA	6368	Austria	71.5
2.	UK	1672	Switzerland	61
3.	South Africa	763	Belgium	54.5
4.	India	676	Israel	44
5.	Australia	543	USA	38.8
6.	China	431	Germany	38.6
7.	Germany	347	New Zealand	37
8.	Austria	286	United Kingdom	28.3
9.	Canada	267	Korea	28.3
10.	Spain	256	Turkey	27
11.	Belgium	218	Italy	22.3
12.	Ireland	192	Cyprus	19.8
13.	Switzerland	122	Ireland	19.2
14.	Netherlands	111	Sweden	17.7
15.	Cyprus	99	France	17
16.	Malaysia	88	Denmark	16
17.	Pakistan	86	Netherlands	15.9
18.	Korea	85	Australia	15.1
19.	France	68	Canada	14.1
20.	Italy	67	Argentina	14

(Source: Authors details generated from the Web of Science database)

TC = Total citations; ACP = Average citation per year

Discussion

As far as we can ascertain, this is the first time a bibliometric analysis has been conducted on the topic of TR. This analysis depicted trends across three decades of research in TR comprising over 600 articles and over 1700 authors. This present study adds to the existing literature on TR research which has been growing (Chopra et al., 2023; Fisher et al., 2022; Rawshdeh et al.,

2023; Talukder & Wang, 2023). Additionally, it enhances the body of work on TR by incorporating bibliometric analysis to create a more systematic and thorough understanding of the study field and to pinpoint the dominant themes, prolific authors, and keywords. Based on our extensive systematic review of literature pertaining to TR, this study (a) highlights the TR research pattern across various fields, (b) identifies the most significant author and sources in TR research, and (c) analyses the development of TR, hence highlighting gaps and potential future areas for TR research exploration.

TR started to gain a higher momentum after 2015; out of 619 articles, 525 articles were published after 2015. The results indicate that researchers in this field are moving forward to produce an influential body of studies. As shown in Table 1, with regard to the most relevant journals in TR, our analysis found that the business, management and accounting related field forms the majority. The top three journals namely International Journal of Human Resource Management, SA Journal of Human Resource Management, and International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management belong to this field and the earliest article that came from these journals is from 2006 (see Dockel et al., 2006).

In Table 2, the analysis shows that Coetzee M. produced the highest number of articles (13 articles with 201 citations) compared to Cappelli P. who produced only two articles but received the highest citation count of 355. This indicates that having the highest productivity does not also reflect the highest number of publications. In other words, a small number of publications could also produce a high impact as measured by the number of citations (see example: Nobanee & Ullah, 2023; V. Singh et al., 2023). Moreover, it can be seen that authors from the field of business and economics dominated in TR. However, as shown in Table 2 and Figure 3, the leading author in the list is an author from a psychology background who is also a productive and consistent author over time.

Authors from the USA and the UK turned out to be the most collaborative researchers and the two countries the most cited ones. Authors from these two countries also have a strong network with authors in Australia. Continent-wise, it seems that US authors located in North America have built a strong connection with China, an Asian country. While the USA and the UK are the most popular countries for collaboration, in terms of average citation per year (ACP), Austria is on top followed by Switzerland and Belgium. The majority of the most cited publications are from Ireland, notably "Strategic Talent Management: A Review and Research Agenda," which was written by Collings and Mellahi in 2009. The majority of the top articles were written by people in the USA.

Theoretical implications

By applying a bibliometric analysis of published publications to determine the development of TR, this study fills a knowledge gap. It adds significant new perspectives to the ongoing TR discussions. The study's conclusions offer important knowledge that helps scholars comprehend the direction in this field of study.

The study particularly emphasizes themes, influential scholars, and important journals contributing to TR. It also suggests emerging areas for further investigation in the TR field. These conclusions present important subjects and can serve as a reference for future TR scholars, authorities, and practitioners. The research outlines four main research directions that hold potential for further investigation.

1. Exploring the connection between TR and innovation, the role it plays in mediation, leadership aspects, future considerations, and employee involvement.
2. Investigating TR within the context of performance, management, and its impacts.
3. Focusing on TR research that specifically centers around knowledge and migration themes.
4. Examining TR concepts that revolve around the firm, choices, and market.

Practical implications

The study results enhance TR development. Researchers, academics, and professionals can use this information as important assistance to deepen their understanding of TR and to better align with present and future trends. This is important to improve the practical application and execution of TR methods. Utilising this information can help people stay on the cutting edge of TR advancements and innovation.

Limitation and future directions

While this study enhances our understanding, particularly in acknowledging the contributions of scholars to TR, there are certain limitations to be acknowledged. Firstly, our focus on a single database, Web of Science (WoS), for data collection, thus, analysis might have limited the comprehensiveness of our insights. Incorporating additional databases or a mix of different ones could offer a more holistic perspective. Secondly, the exclusion of document types like unpublished working papers, theses, textbooks, and conference proceedings might have restricted our analysis. Subsequent research could explore these document types for a more comprehensive view of TR development. Additionally, this study solely covers English-language articles, overlooking contributions in other languages. Lastly, our study examines the entire 1993-present timeframe; a promising avenue for future research could involve categorizing years into distinct developmental phases to offer fresh insights into the topic's evolution.

Conclusion

The bibliometric analysis conducted in this study provides a comprehensive overview of the research on global TR. The analysis reveals several key findings, including identifying the research trend, relevant journals, prolific authors, country collaborations, and top TR articles, keywords. The article contributes in several ways, including updating previous studies and outlining future directions for researchers. By reviewing the previous literature and synthesizing the findings, researchers can identify the areas receiving limited or much attention. This insight is valuable for policymakers, companies, employers, employees and researchers when dealing with specific areas where future research is warranted.

In order to properly and quickly comprehend research trends, a limited number of research subjects in this research area are suggested based on this study. The following research scope and questions can be referred to as priorities in future research processes. It is recommended that future studies consider the following questions:

1. What kind of TR innovation can be utilised to retain talent?
2. How can we create an advanced leadership model or framework in an organization to ensure TR in the organization?
3. How can companies improve employee satisfaction, loyalty, and sustainable performance through TR management?
4. What is the impact of TR in a particular sector or industry?

This study is anticipated to assist other researchers in understanding the current research trends related to TR. Additionally, the above suggestions and research direction recommendations can serve as a source of new inspiration for future research for researchers who wish to specialize in the same field.

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