Workforce Sustainability as a Strategic Resource for Retail Enterprises in Emerging Asia: A Systematic Review of Generational Retention and Well-Being Drivers

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Abstract
Workforce sustainability has emerged as a critical strategic resource for retail enterprises operating in emerging Asian economies, where high labour intensity, demographic shifts, and competitive pressures challenge long-term enterprise viability. This study conducts a systematic literature review (SLR) to synthesize empirical evidence on how generational workforce drivers influence employee retention, well-being, and organizational resilience within the retail and service sectors. Guided by the PRISMA 2020 framework, a rigorous screening process identified 15 peer-reviewed studies published between 2010 and 2024 from leading academic databases. The findings reveal that workforce sustainability is shaped by a combination of work environment quality, work–life balance practices, and transparent compensation systems, with notable differences in expectations between Millennials and Generation Z. Flexible scheduling, structured career pathways, equitable reward mechanisms, and resilience-focused well-being initiatives emerge as central drivers of workforce stability and sustainable enterprise performance. The review further highlights that retail enterprises adopting sustainability-oriented human resource strategies are better positioned to enhance employee commitment, reduce turnover, and support long-term growth. From a regional perspective, the findings underscore the importance of workforce skilling, retention-oriented labour policies, and institutional support mechanisms in strengthening service-sector stability across India and emerging Asia. By positioning workforce sustainability within the broader domains of strategic management, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development, this study contributes to advancing theory and practice relevant to sustainable enterprise growth in Asia.

Keywords: Workforce sustainability, Retail enterprises, Generational workforce, Employee retention, Emerging Asia

1. Introduction

The role of retail enterprises in the economy is significant as they are the entrepreneurial and small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME)-driven actors of the economy, which have a significant contribution to the creation of employment, value, and growth of the service sector. In the last twenty years, retailing has experienced tremendous structural and competitive change that has been brought about by globalization, technological change, and changing consumer expectation, which was initially experienced in European and international market but has gradually found its way in emerging economies as well (Burt, 2010). The changes have altered the supply chains of retail, the models of operation, and workforce demands, making the strategic significance of the human resources indispensable to maintain the performance of the enterprise. The further sophistication of the retailing processes, particularly in the fashion and service-based sectors, also underscores the need to have an efficient workforce management that will spur responsiveness and competitiveness (Fernie and Grant, 2019).

The emerging trends in the retail businesses are the emphasis on innovation, customer-conscious approaches and the ability to be flexible in the organizational structure to define the future of the businesses. The works on the evolution of retail offer the notion that not only the technological adoption defines the competitiveness, but the effective use and utilization of the human capital (Grewal et al., 2017). As the globalization of retail service continues to expand, there are mounting demands on the enterprises operating outside their mother countries and at the same time meet the diverse workforces and at the same time maintain quality and uniformities of services offered (Wrigley and Lowe, 2010). Due to the dynamism of the environment, workforce sustainability has become a major issue of the businesses that strive to work in the long term and remain sustainable.

The notion of the sustainability of the workforce is particularly applicable to the emerging Asian economies where the demographic shifts are rapidly redefining the labour market and patterns of employment. The millennial and the generation z make a considerable percentage of the retail workforce today with their own set of expectations related to the work values, flexibility, development opportunities, and organizational support. The

increase in the proportion of younger generations among the labour force in the service sector has dramatic implications on the labour force sustainability, labour force retention and the enterprise sustainability especially in the labour-intensive retail environment where the turnover rate is never zero.

The concept of workforce sustainability has become more accepted as a cornerstone of sustainable enterprise development, and the connection between employee retention, wellness, and resiliency to organizational performance has been established. The literature on sustainable organizations highlights that the long-term competitiveness is conditional on the orientation of human resource practices towards the social and economic sustainability goals, making employees the key players in the value creation process instead of considering them as variable costs (Pfeffer, 2010). This view shows how workforce policies play a strategic role in helping enterprises to be able to adjust to uncertainty and sustainability in unstable markets.

Sustainable human resource management concept goes further to incorporate the principles of respect, openness, and continuity into the workforce practices and thus brings the theoretical perspectives and the managerial practices closer together (De Prins et al., 2014). The collected empirical data in the hospitality and service-industry settings confirms the value of high-performance work practices in enhancing employee engagement and performance, which justifies the relationships between workforce sustainability and business performance (Karatepe, 2013). The meta-analytic studies also support the fact that practices of human resource management have an influence on the organizational outcomes through the mediation of such mechanisms as commitment, motivation and employee attitudes (Jiang et al., 2012). In addition, employee learning and development have been observed to increase flexibility and long-term employability, and there is a strong indication that favourable learning climates have a positive effect on retention and engagement (Kyndt and Baert, 2013). In combination, the findings assist in conceptualizing the workforce as an intangible strategic resource, which is central to sustainable enterprise development.

Even though there has been extensive research on the employee attitudes and human resource practices, there are still gaps in the literature. Most of the current literature on generational differences is bound to the individual facets of values or attitudes in work without sufficient connection of these differences to overall sustainability of enterprises. Generational research reviews indicate that there are still conceptual gray areas and methodological constraints, and more integrative and context-sensitive methodologies are required (Lyons &

Kuron, 2014). Despite the meta-analytic evidence that there is indeed a generational difference in work-related attitudes, the future sustainability of the workforce in the long term with the differences remains to be studied (Costanza et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the original research on generational work values, however, powerful, was carried out in previous economic conditions and might not necessarily reflect the truth of the modern retail and service-based work (Wey Smola and Sutton, 2002). Employee well-being and work-life balance studies have developed insights into the personal-level outcomes but do not always consider the enterprise-level sustainability and strategy (Guest, 2017). Although it is indicated that family-supportive supervision and work-life balance have a positive impact on employee performance, these lessons are seldom integrated in a sustainability or entrepreneurship context (Greenhaus et al., 2012; Haar et al., 2014). Moreover, the absence of systematic reviews that have a particular Asia orientation and focus on the effects of generational workforce dynamics on enterprise sustainability in retail settings is quite significant, as well. Even though comparative studies provide differences in talents management practices among Asian economies, this literature is still fragmented and sector based, which restricts the establishment of cohesive frameworks between generational workforce drivers and sustainable enterprise performance (Cooke et al., 2014).

To fill these gaps, the current research paper will conduct a structural literature review to summarize the empirical research on workforce sustainability as a strategic asset of a retail business in emerging Asia. The research aims to explain the impact of generational workforce drivers on employee retention and well-being, as well as enterprise resilience by combining the findings of the research in the field of human resource management, entrepreneurship, and sustainability. By so doing, the study will be helpful in the literature on sustainable entrepreneurship by placing the issue of workforce sustainability into the wider context of entrepreneurial ecosystems and enterprise development, considering that the ability of firms to mobilize and retain human capital depends on the conditions of institutional and contextual forces (Audretsch and Belitski, 2017). Moreover, the studies of the social role of entrepreneurship emphasize that it is crucial to match the goals of enterprises with the requirements of the society and employees, which supports the topicality of sustainable workforce approaches to the long-term value creation (Zahra and Wright, 2016). This review contributes to the field of strategic management and sustainability by offering an Asia oriented synthesis of the generational dynamics of workforce in the retailing business and offering practical recommendations to business proprietors, managers and policy makers to

achieve resilient and sustainable business enterprises in the retailing sector.

2. Methods

2.1 Study Design

The present study took a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) design to integrate the available empirical data on the issue of workforce sustainability as a strategic resource of the retail businesses in emerging Asia. The review was done in line with PRISMA 2020 guidelines, which offers a systematic approach to establishing transparency, rigor and reproducibility in the synthesis of evidence. SLR approach was selected since the studies concerning the generational workforce sustainability in the retail sector are spread across various fields of study, including human resource management, strategic management, and sustainability studies, which require a systematic and integrative approach to research.

Empirical studies published in the years 2010 to 2024 were reviewed, a time when the retail business model is changing rapidly, there is greater sustainability orientation, and the workforce structure of the emerging Asian economies is changing drastically. This period marks the rise in the involvement of Millennials and Generation Z in the retail workforce and indicates the rise in the value of employee retention, well-being, and resilience to performance by sustainable enterprises and long-term competitiveness.

2.2 Eligibility Criteria

To guarantee consistency, relevancy and methodological rigor, clear eligibility criteria were put in place before the review process. The studies were considered to include those that used empirical research designs and either quantitative or qualitative research or both along with the retail business or any similar service industries. Qualified studies were those that focused on workforce-related drivers that are pertinent to sustainability results (employee retention, job satisfaction, well-being, work-life balance, compensation equity, or workforce resilience), and those that focused on Millennials and/or Generation Z employees specifically. Only the articles were taken into consideration that were published in peer-reviewed journals and were written in English.

The studies were not included when it was a concept paper, narrative review, opinion paper, and commentaries that lacked empirical evidence. The studies that were not conducted within the retail or service-sector setting, studies that did not take a generational workforce perspective, and articles that did not present extractable empirical results in relation to workforce outcomes were also left out of the review.

2.3 Information Sources

The literature search was done through the large academic databases, which have been known to cover high quality research in field of management, entrepreneurship, human resource management, and sustainability. The major databases that were searched were Scopus, Web of science, science direct and springer link because these databases have vast access to peer reviewed journals that are also of interdisciplinary interest to the study.

Manual screening method was also used to make the search more complete. To identify other relevant studies which might not have been identified by database searches only, forward and backward citation tracking of shortlisted articles was made. This methodology combined with the reduction of publication bias and made it possible to cover a wider range of relevant empirical literature.

2.4 Search Strategy

The search strategy was made to ensure that it was systematic in its identification of studies that covered workforce sustainability and generational workforce dynamics in the context of retail enterprises in emerging Asian contexts. The core search terms were based on the research objectives and comprised the notions of workforce sustainability, retail enterprises, employee retention, employee well-being, Millennials, Generation Z, and emerging Asia. These terms were also joined with the help of the Boolean operators to enhance both sensitivity and precision of search.

Search strings were changed to suit the syntax needs of the respective databases so that the best retrieval is achieved. Besides conducting searches in databases, reference lists were screened by hand and citation tracking was also conducted to complement the findings and guarantee the identification of all the relevant studies.

2.5 Study Selection

The selection of studies was done using a PRISMA-based multi-level screening procedure. First, the records that were found on the database searches and manual screenings were consolidated, and duplicate records were eliminated. The rest of the records were then filtered at the title and abstract level to determine their relevance against the preset eligibility requirements.

The studies which passed the initial screening criteria were then tested on full text assessment to measure their empirical rigor, applicability to the retail or service industry, focus on the generation, and the outcomes of workforce sustainability. Articles that failed to meet these requirements were weeded out and the reasons recorded in every step. Studies that had all the inclusion criteria were only retained in the final qualitative synthesis.

2.6 Data Extraction

To ensure the consistency and accuracy of the results across all the studies included, the extraction of the data was done through the standardized extraction matrix. In every study, data about the authorship, the years of publication, and country or regional setting were noted down. The information about the research design, methodological approach, and drivers of workforce sustainability under study were also retrieved.

Moreover, the most important conclusions concerning employee retention, well-being, workforce resilience, and sustainable enterprise performance implications were organized in written form. The obtained data were the basis of thematic synthesis and the possibility of systematic comparison of studies.

2.7 Risk of Bias Assessment

The quality of methodology of the selected studies was evaluated by the help of the developed appraisal instruments that were suitable to their own research designs. The Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklists were used to evaluate qualitative studies, whereas the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) was used to evaluate mixed-method studies. The quantitative studies were evaluated using conditions associated with the sampling adequacy, measurement validity, and analytical rigor.

Overall, the research articles incorporated in the review showed moderate to high quality of the methods. Some of the common limitations that were identified in the literature included the use of cross-sectional research design and self-reported information, both of which can influence causal inference and generalization.

2.8 Data Synthesis

Considering the heterogeneity of the study designs, settings, and outcome measures, narrative thematic synthesis methodology was chosen. The articles selected were systematically categorized into broad areas of workforce sustainability such as work environment and organizational culture, work/life and workforce resilience, and compensation equity and retention strategies.

The synthesis focused on similarities and differences between Millennials and Generation Z across generations and analyzed the effects that these trends have on sustainable performance of retail enterprises in the new Asian economies. The strategy allowed the formation of a combined perspective on the sustainability of workforce as a strategic resource.

2.9 Ethical Considerations

The systematic review relied solely on secondary data, which was acquired in publicly available peer-reviewed sources. Since there was no primary data collection and no human intervention was involved, ethical approval was not necessary. No sources were omitted in the acknowledgment of the sources to guarantee the academic integrity and transparency.

3. Results
3.1 Study Selection

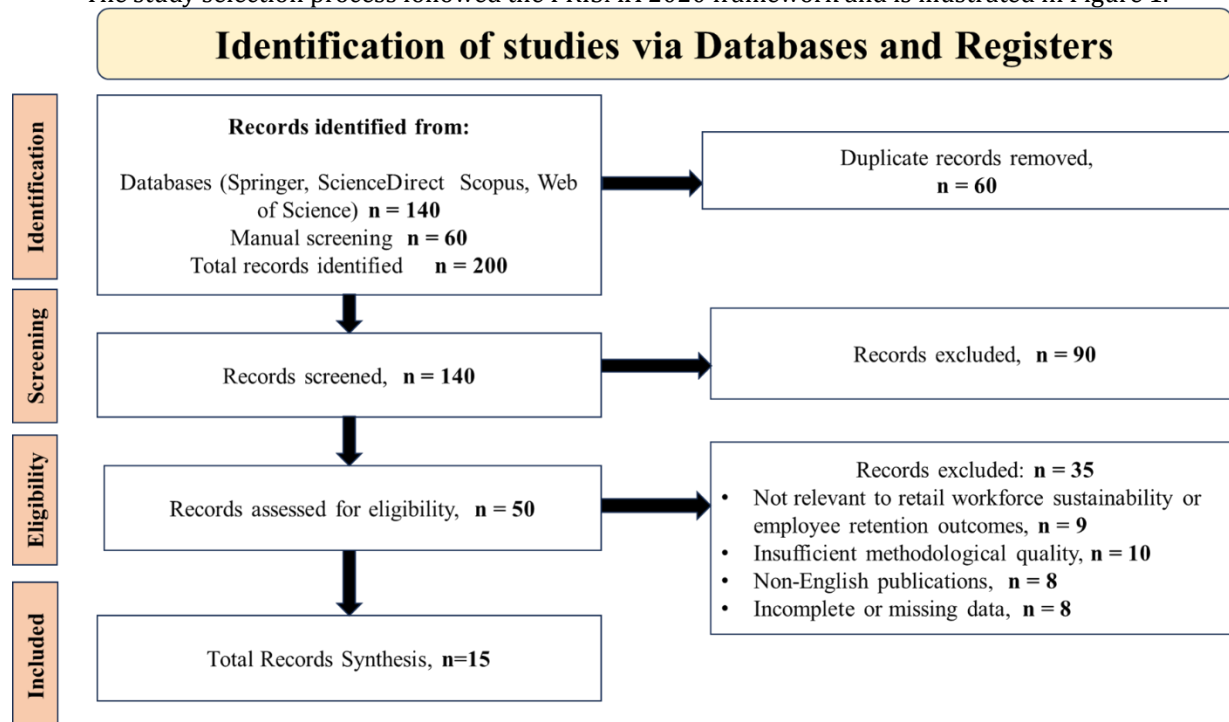The study selection process followed the PRISMA 2020 framework and is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram Showing Identification, Screening, Eligibility, and Inclusion of Studies

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Database searching and manual screening were used to identify 200 records. There were 140 records after eliminating 60 duplicate records to be screened on title and abstract. At this phase, 90 records were filtered out because they were not relevant to retail workforce sustainability and generational workforce outcomes. Eligibility of 50 articles was evaluated and 35 out of them were eliminated due to failure to fit the preset inclusion criterion such as inadequate quality of the methodology, not published in English, incomplete data or irrelevant to the subject of workforce sustainability and employee retention. Finally, 15 studies were found to meet all the eligibility criteria and were incorporated in the final qualitative synthesis.

3.2 Characteristics of Included Studies
The 15 articles used in this review comprise a varied literature review on generational workforce dynamics, employee retention, work values, and outcomes of well-being. Most of the studies were done in both emerging and developed economies and some specifically in Asia and emerging market settings whilst others offered more general theoretical and empirical evidence that can be applied generally. The studies included in the article used various research designs such as cross-sectional surveys, longitudinal cohort studies, meta-analyses, systematic reviews, and mixed-method designs. Even though not every research was in the retail organization only, all of them presented evidence that was directly related to the sustainability of the workforce in the service and enterprise sectors.

Most of the reviewed articles investigated Millennials and generation Z, including work values, retention intention, job satisfaction, generational conflict, and work expectations. Table 1 is a comprehensive overview of the most important features of the included studies.

Table 1. Characteristics of Included Studies

Author(s) & Year	Context / Country	Generational Focus	Key Workforce Outcomes
Ng et al. (2010)	North America	Millennials	Work values, expectations
Kuron et al. (2015)	Canada	Millennials	Work values, transition outcomes
Parry & Urwin (2017)	Global	Multi-generational	Evidence on generational differences
Djabi & Shimada (2017)	Global	Multi-generational	Generational diversity effects
Hom et al. (2017)	Global	All cohorts	Employee turnover theory
Forastero et al. (2018)	Asia	Millennials	Motivation, optimization
Aziz et al. (2018)	Asia	Multi-generational	Work-related attitudes
Appelbaum et al. (2022)	Global	Multi-generational	Generational conflict
Hassan (2022)	Maldives	Mixed workforce	Retention, compensation
Rudolph et al. (2021)	Global	Multi-generational	Generational myths
Xiang et al. (2022)	Australia	Working adults	Flexible work outcomes
Wan & Duffy (2022)	Asia	New generation	Turnover intention
Beck & Jackson (2022)	Global	Individual-level	Person–situation fit
Kinger & Kumar (2023)	Asia	Multi-generational	Work values
Chen et al. (2023)	Emerging economy	Young workforce	Job satisfaction, turnover

3.3 Workforce Sustainability Drivers and Outcomes
In all the studies included, there were three workforce sustainability drivers that were dominant throughout: work environment, work–life balance, and compensation equity. These drivers had close connections with employee retention, job satisfaction, job stability, and organizational resilience. Research on work environment accentuated the value of supportive leadership, meaningful work, psychological safety, and inclusive organizational cultures in maintaining workforce engagement especially among the Millennials and younger generations. Work-life balance was identified as a key factor determining workforce sustainability in the long run, and flexible scheduling, autonomy, and control of worktime were found to decrease turnover intentions and positively affect well-being. Equity in compensation and transparent reward systems were also cited as drivers of it, especially in emerging economies, where financial security was the strongest motivation in retention choices. These results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Workforce Sustainability Drivers and Outcomes

Workforce Driver	Key Variables	Sustainability Outcomes	Supporting Studies
Work environment	Leadership, culture, autonomy	Engagement, retention	Ng et al. (2010); Forastero et al. (2018)

| Work–life balance | Flexibility, job autonomy | Reduced turnover | Xiang et al. (2022); Wan & Duffy (2022) |
| Compensation equity | Fair pay, rewards | Retention, commitment | Hassan (2022); Chen et al. (2023) |

3.4 Generational Differences in Workforce Sustainability

There were distinct differences in generations in the studies reviewed. The Millennials were also discovered to value autonomy, meaningful work, flexibility, and growth prospects whereas Generation Z and younger generations were more concerned with employment stability, systematic career ladder, mental health, and remunerations. These variations determine the way the workforce sustainability strategies need to be developed in the retail and service businesses. Despite these differences, both generations revealed their high tendency to ethical leadership, inclusive cultures, and open organizational practices. Any organization that does not adapt to the generational demands faces the risk of increasing turnover and decreasing workforce resiliency especially in labour-intensive retail premises.

3.5 Emerging Trends in Retail Workforce Sustainability

The trends observed in the studies included represent several emerging trends within the retail and service-based enterprises about the changing workforce expectations. The focus on employee mental health and well-being was also growing, and organizations were supposed to offer psychological assistance and stress management programs. Hybrid and adaptive scheduling models as well as flexible work arrangements were becoming increasingly associated with retention and satisfaction outcomes. The second trend was the increasing need in clear and fair reward systems that were especially in demand by younger employees in the emerging economies. Table 3 is a synthesis of these trends.

Table 3. Emerging Workforce Sustainability Trends

Trend	Description	Enterprise Implications
Mental health focus	Emphasis on well-being support	Improved resilience
Flexible work models	Adaptive scheduling	Reduced attrition
Reward transparency	Clear compensation structures	Trust and retention

3.6 Risk of Bias Assessment

The quality of the methodology of the studies included was determined based on the accepted appraisal criteria which is relevant to the research design. All in all, the research papers showed a moderate to high level of methodology, good theoretical roots, and proper analysis tools. The limitations were usually in the form of cross-sectional survey design, and self-reported data, which could cause limitations in causal inference. Meta-analyses and longitudinal studies had stronger methodological strength, whereas conceptual reviews helped to obtain a better understanding of the theory. The risk of bias evaluation is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Risk of Bias Assessment of Included Studies

Study	Risk Rating	Key Notes
Fortes and Rita (2016)	Low–Moderate	Strong modelling, self-report biases possible
Erkan and Evans (2016)	Low	Clear constructs, robust IAM application

Lim et al. (2016)	Low	Adequate sample, strong theoretical grounding
Juaneda-Ayensa et al. (2016)	Low–Moderate	Well-designed, limited cultural diversity
Pappas (2016)	Low–Moderate	Strong risk–trust modelling
Pantano and Priporas (2016)	Moderate	Experience-based measures subjective
Trivedi et al. (2024)	Low	High analytical rigour (machine learning)
Bucko et al. (2018)	Moderate	Limited geographical scope
Peña-García et al. (2020)	Moderate	Cross-cultural but varied sample sizes
Wang et al. (2015)	Low	Behavioural data improves objectivity
Nepomuceno et al. (2014)	Low	Validated risk constructs
Yusuf et al. (2018)	Low	Strong SEM, clear eWOM pathways
Leong et al. (2021)	Low	High reliability, IAM validation
Quintus et al. (2024)	Moderate	Global sample, varying market maturity
Ngo et al. (2024)	Low–Moderate	Gen Z focus, limited general population applicability

The systematic review demonstrates that the practice of sustainability in the workforce in retail business is mainly influenced by favourable working conditions, work-life balance, and fair pay system with significant differences between generational groups. In new Asian markets, flexibility, career development, and well-being have a high priority among millennials and generation z, which play a major role in employee retention and resilience of the enterprise.

4. Discussion

This systematic review establishes workforce sustainability as one of the strategic instruments, which are essential in terms of the long-term performance of the enterprises belonging to the retail and service-based organizations. The combination of the findings shows that the work values, expectations and the behavioral orientations of the generational variations are significant determinants of the workforce stability and retention. The first indications concerning the Millennials indicate that the younger generations enter the organizations with more expectations on the important work, growth opportunities and organizational support, which directly influence the engagement and commitment (Ng et al., 2010). These findings confirm the perception that workforce sustainability is not the operation of the matter but

rather the strategic need of the enterprises that will expand in the long-term.

The literature reviewed in a strategic manner supports the fact that generationally differentiated work values require adaptive organizational strategies. As the empirical evidence suggests, generational cohorts differ regarding their emphasis on autonomy, security, flexibility, and organizational loyalty that demand human resources strategies depending on the context (Kinger and Kumar, 2023). Failure to recognize these differences may further expand the lack of alignment of the workforce and cripple the performance of the business. Another important point of the Millennials research suggests that job design and managerial practices should be made more efficient to address personal ambitions and organizational goals to enhance retention and productivity (Forastero et al., 2018).

The results are also consistent with the more general discussions regarding the strength of the generational theory in the field of organizational research. Although the generational differences are a common topic of discussion, it has been shown that there are some significant differences in work attitudes that can have practical implications to workforce management in the right context (Parry & Urwin, 2017). The work-related attitude reviews also support the idea that generational diversity influences motivation, job satisfaction, and retention intentions in various organizational settings, which is why subtle workforce practices are necessary (Aziz et al., 2018).

The managerial aspect of generational diversity in organizations is also encountered in the form of intergenerational conflict, which when not addressed properly may dissolve the workforce unity and the ability of the enterprise to withstand. Empirical research demonstrates that the conflicts related to the difference in communication style, values, and expectations can have adverse effects on teamwork and productivity unless resolved by the means of the inclusive leadership style and the adaptive human resource practice (Appelbaum et al., 2022). Longitudinal studies also indicate that the values of work change as a person moves through career stages, which highlights the necessity of transitional support systems that help to maintain engagement at the most critical workforce transition periods (Kuron et al., 2015).

Employee retention is tightly connected to workforce sustainability, which has been one of the key pillars of organizational continuity and strategic strength. The classic studies of employee turnover emphasize that the effect of organizational practices, employee attitudes, and external labor market conditions is complex in determining the level of retention (Hom et al., 2017). The context of emerging economies also proves the point that the issue of fairness of compensation and rewards is a decisive factor in employee retention, especially in service-based industries where substitutes can be easily accessed (Hassan, 2022).

Recent research warns against too simplistic explanations of generational differences, and that there are contextual, institutional, and occupational moderators of the effects of generation. The intellectual developments within the field of organizational science propose the idea of going beyond stereotypes to evidence-based, adaptive workforce approaches to accommodate individual and cohort-level differences at the same time (Rudolph et al., 2021). In this connection, flexible working arrangements become one of the keys to workforce sustainability since the available data indicate that well-designed flexibility increases retention and work-life balance and inadequately planned ones may amplify inequality and strain (Xiang et al., 2022).

The aspect of meaningful and decent work also comes out as an important factor that determines the sustainability of the workforce among younger generations. The existing empirical data show that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between decent working conditions and turnover intentions, and job autonomy is another stimulus strengthening the dedication of a labor force (Wan and Duffy, 2022). The evidence showed in the emerging economies supports these results as it was shown that job satisfaction is a strong predictor of retention intentions among young employees vulnerable to economic and labour market instability (Chen et al., 2023).

The meta-analytic evidence also supports the idea that generational diversity is associated with quantifiable organizational consequences, especially in case it is addressed strategically by the means of inclusive policies and adaptive leadership models (Djabi and Shimada, 2017). On the individual level, behavioral studies have identified person-situation fit as a significant factor influencing workplace, implying that individualized workforce management can improve the results of engagement and sustainability in case it is implemented thoughtfully (Beck and Jackson, 2022).

Expanding such knowledge to the literature of sustainability and entrepreneurship, current research highlights that sustainable human resource practices are directly related to employee retention and organizational resilience through long-term commitment and social legitimacy (Bindhu et al., 2024). Empirical sources also show that sustainable HRM practices enhance organizational agility and durability to allow the enterprises to overcome uncertainty and progress with sustainability goals (Mushtaq and Akhtar, 2024). The HRM is also centralized in conceptual syntheses by the means of which the corporate social responsibility and sustainability objectives can be operationalized at the workforce level (Voegtlin and Greenwood, 2016).

Lastly, the modern discourse of the future of work highlights the necessity to rethink the approach to the workforce in the face of demographic changes, technological change, and changing expectations of the employees. The study of strategic foresight emphasizes the fact that companies that manage to match the sustainability of workforce with the creation of long-term values are more likely to stay competitive in rapidly evolving markets (Lim, 2023). Comparative case evidence also demonstrates how sustainable HRM practices insofar as integrated into organizational strategy promote the stability of the workforce and enterprise resilience in different institutional settings (Järlström et al., 2023). For India and emerging Asian economies, the study highlights the need for workforce-focused policies that promote employee skilling, retention incentives, and well-being initiatives in the service sector. Strengthening institutional support for sustainable HR practices can contribute to long-term employment stability and inclusive economic growth.

5. Conclusion

The present systematic literature review contributes to the knowledge of the workforce sustainability as a strategic resource of the retail enterprises operating in emerging economies in Asia. Evidence synthesis proves that the retention of employees, their well-being, and resilience are not the fringe human resource issues but the necessities of sustainable enterprise performance. The expectations of flexibility, career growth, fairness, and mental health among Millennials and Generation Z are formed by the generational differences, which creates the necessity of context-based and future-oriented workforce planning. Combining the lessons of human resource management, entrepreneurship, and sustainability research concentrate on sustainable development and the sustainability of enterprises. On a managerial level, the results indicate that flexible scheduling arrangements and well-structured and defined career paths should be considered as the priority of sustainable retail HR policies. These strategies help the businesses to maintain the balance between the efficiency of their operations and the emerging work-life expectations of the employees. Open compensation schemes and equity-based reward systems are found to be crucial to trust building, turnover prevention and retention of labour force commitment especially in retailing labour intensive situations. Moreover, proactive mental health support and stress management programs, which are the resilience-oriented well-being programs, are vital in improving employee engagement and stability within the organization in the long term. The findings are very relevant at the policy level, as they are applicable to India and other Asian economies in which retail and service industries are the main sources of employment. To enhance service-sector stability, policymakers need to focus on the workforce skilling programs, labour policies that focus on retention, and institutional reinforcement of sustainable HR practices. These implications point to workforce sustainability as one of the main drivers of entrepreneurship, inclusive growth, and sustainable economic development in Asia.

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