

Retention of Talented Employees in Learning Organizations: A Multi-Level Case Study Approach from Post-Pandemic Perspectives.

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A B S T R A C T

Purpose - COVID-19 not only changes the social life patterns of humans, but it also affects workplace activities. In the post-pandemic era, learning organizations especially face the challenges of retaining talented employees. To find the solution to these challenges, this study explores how organizations can retain talented individuals with them and which type of strategies encourage them to remain with their organizations.

Study Design/methodology/approach- To achieve the objective of this study, a multiple case study method of qualitative research was adopted, and fifty semi-structured interviews were conducted with banking and information technology sector employees using convenience sampling techniques from the major cities of Punjab, Pakistan.

Findings- Results from thirty semi-structured interviews with the managers of banking and information technology organizations reveal that to retain talented employees, organizations can focus on learning, motivation, and human resource policies in learning organizations. Moreover, the findings of this study reveal that if learning organizations provide career structure, flexible working environments, and attractive salary packages, it helps the management to retain a talented workforce.

Research Practical Implications- This study suggests that the pandemic has impacted organizational work environments, highlighting the need to focus on retaining talented employees through modern methods rather than traditional ones. Additionally, human capital in learning organizations, which invest more in workforce development, requires special attention through up-to-date strategies and policies.

Originality/value- The management of talented employees, especially in post-pandemic circumstances, got the attention of researchers and practitioners, and now there is a race between the organizations to deal with these challenges. This study highlights the challenges and provides insight into the opportunities for the organizations that help them retain talented employees. Further, this study provides an in-depth understanding of the emerging economy using the population of two major sectors contributing to the economy of Pakistan.

Keywords: Learning organizations, Talent Retention, Banking Sector, Information technology sector.

JEL Classification Codes: M1, M100

1 | INTRODUCTION

In the current era of a highly competitive environment, every organization struggles with improvement for survival ([Shah et al., 2024](#)). Organizations have been forced by the ongoing struggle for corporate survival and disruptive technologies to function in extremely ambiguous, multifaceted, and uncertain situations in recent years due to the fierce rivalry in the market ([Bouncken et al., 2020](#); [Khan et al., 2024](#)). Fast technological growth and the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic introduced changes in the business world that had never happened before, and these circumstances forced businesses to rapidly change how they approach their work ([Priyono et al., 2020](#)). Likewise, post-pandemic situations forced organizations to produce innovative products and services to attain competitive advantage through strong customer relationships ([Zhao et al., 2022](#); [Zhiqiang et al., 2021](#)). During the pandemic tenure, people became aware of the importance of digital transformation because, due to the lockdown, most of the social and business activities were done using different infrastructures of digital technologies. These circumstances also change the paradigm from traditional working to digital working environments that organizations can adapt with the help of individual and organizational learning ([Balkaş, 2022](#); [Ziadlou, 2021](#)). Likewise, organizational learning arises when individuals working in organizations acquire new knowledge and information and share it with their colleagues ([Chinchilla et al., 2025](#)). When the outside environment of the organizations becomes complex and dramatic, as happened during the pandemic, individuals' preparedness to adapt to new things and learning becomes more perilous.

Post-pandemic situations also influence the employees working in learning organizations, and it becomes a challenge for the management how to retain their talent ([Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020](#)). These challenges cannot met without talented human capital; therefore, these situations force organizations to transform the working environment, and the delay in adoption quickly increases the gap between the market requirement and organizational working structure ([Björkdahl, 2020](#)). For that purpose, organizations need a skilled and talented workforce that meets these challenges; therefore, talent retention has now become an essential strategic tool for the survival of any organization ([Dam et al., 2023](#)). Organizations seek skilled and capable individuals to fulfill organizational goals and maintain human talent for higher organizational performance ([Bihani & Dalal, 2014](#)). Competent and talented employees are intangible assets of any organization as compared to other assets and organizational effectiveness depends upon the talented workforce of any organization ([Bihani & Dalal, 2014](#)). Likewise, hiring and managing talent in any organization plays a vital role in individual and organizational learning ([Afshari & Hadian Nasab, 2021](#)).

The primary goal of every organization is to achieve sustainable performance ([Chughtai et al., 2023](#)), which can be attained through different indicators; a talented workforce is one of them. Likewise, this post-pandemic environment also forces organizations to adopt new technologies, reshape the working structures and processes, and establish new marketing channels to meet the highly competitive market ([Cukier et al., 2021](#)). It has been observed that organizational change processes raise some uncertainty, interruptions, and misperceptions for the employees, and their emotional reaction to accepting change policies, practices, and procedures is imperative ([Ertem & Şentürk, 2021](#)). In contrast, these circumstances also force individuals to re-think their careers in their current organizations due to the rapidly changing environment and higher working pressure and search for new organizations with better working conditions ([De Smet et al., 2021](#)).

These circumstances also make it challenging for organizations to manage hired human capital or acquire new ones.

Successful people management techniques are often seen as one such path, providing stability and longevity to businesses that consistently strive for improvement or to transform into learning organizations ([Hassan et al., 2022](#)). Learning organizations suffer a lot due to these situations. As the founder of the learning organization concept, Senge describes learning organizations as “where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together” ([Senge, 1990, p. 3](#)). According to Osagie et al. ([2022](#)) a learning organization integrates "learning" into its regular activities, assessments, and every feature of its goal, strategy, and aspirations. Some scholars stated that learning organizations are those organizations that continuously develop the organizational and individual capabilities parallel to the rapidly changing environments ([Salabi & Prasetyo, 2022](#)). Moreover, in these organizations, the performance of employees is linked with systematic changes through learning and development at individual and team levels ([Acevedo & Diaz-Molina, 2022](#)). Learning is considered the main component of every process and procedure of the learning organizations ([Törmänen et al., 2022](#)). Likewise, shared organizational vision in learning organizations helps employees put effort into implementing strategies by applying innovative approaches ([Rupcic, 2022](#); [Rupčić, 2022](#)). Further, learning organizations also play a vital role in providing high-quality coaching and expertise, eventually improving each employee's productivity and proficiency ([Kafetzopoulos et al., 2022](#)). A learning organization is also proficient in systematic decision-making for problem-solving procedures; these organizations adopt new techniques and approaches to learning that help them attain competitive advantage and survival.

Management of talented workforce refers to the policies and procedures that organizations use to systematically facilitate the individuals through their development, engagement, and attraction so that they can remain in their current organizations, which alternatively becomes beneficial for the attainment of competitive advantage and survival as well ([Collings et al., 2018](#); [Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020](#); [Mazlan & Jambulingam, 2023](#)). Moreover, Bakker, Albrecht, and Leiter ([2011, pp. 76-77](#)) defined talent management in their words that “facilitate work engagement and to prevent burnout, employers should create an organizational context where employees feel enthusiastic, energized and motivated because their jobs are both ‘active’ and ‘pleasurable’”. Some scholars stated that talent management characterizes as “an effective means through which employers indicate their intention to support talent employees and such signals are perceived as a precondition for employee engagement” ([Zahoor et al., 2024, p. 9](#)). According to Collings and Mellahi ([2009](#)), the term talent management refers to procedures and endeavors that include the methodical authentication of critical areas that significantly enhance the organization's long-term competitive advantage, the creation of a talent pool of highly qualified and productive employees to occupy such positions, and the creation of a unique human resource structure to make it easier to fill these positions with qualified occupants and guarantee their ongoing loyalty to the company ([Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020](#)). Learning at the individual and organizational levels facilitates the organization's innovation process, and it also allows organizations to transform their systems and meet the challenges ([Hansen et al., 2020](#)) that occur, especially in post-pandemic scenarios. Learning organizations use technological developments to develop interactive spaces for learning,

promote the exchange of knowledge, and offer individualized learning activities ([Artüz & Bayraktar, 2021](#); [Fischer & Pöhler, 2018](#)).

Organizations encounter challenges interacting with talented individuals while closely analyzing their talent administration procedures because of the rapidly shifting sociopolitical landscape and increasing industry volatility ([Collings et al., 2018](#)). Moreover, talented employees for every organization are considered a core source for the successful attainment of organizational objectives; in contrast, a shortage of talented and skilled workers leads to a decline in organizational growth and development ([Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020](#); [Shah et al., 2024](#)). A talented workforce not only plays a vital role in attaining competitive advantage but also works for organizational innovativeness by making on-time decisions ([Hıçyılmaz & Sahin, 2024](#)). These employees not only tend to learn new things but also, they can contribute to higher organizational performance. Implementing talent management strategies in organizations, especially in learning organizations, helps employees remain with the organizations and boosts commitment, loyalty, and performance ([Hongal & Kinange, 2020](#)).

It has been found that the organizations of developing countries usually invest more in installing the latest technological equipment for the growth and development of their businesses and save the finance over training and development of their workforce ([Nguyen et al., 2018](#)). Moreover, due to the lack of these training and development programs, individuals from developing countries feel a low level of career development, leading to a career plateau, leaving their organizations ([Škerháková et al., 2022](#)). Likewise, the talent of developing countries leaves the organizations if they are not satisfied with the working environment, or they feel less motivated at the workplace, and they try to join those organizations where they feel relaxed cognitively. Nowadays, talent retention can be considered a more prominent notion that may be characterized as a means to encourage and keep talented individuals since it is vital to ensure that organizations can effectively attract and retain them ([Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020](#)). Scholars of most recent studies asserted that by systematically implementing policies and practices that encourage, attract, retain, and engage the talent to become more attached to their companies and remain with them for longer, businesses could keep their talented employees from leaving ([Mazlan & Jambulingam, 2023](#); [McDonnell & Wiblen, 2021](#); [Ott et al., 2018](#)).

1.1 | Problem Statement and Research Gap

Management of talented employees is a universal challenge for all types of organizations. However, this challenge is crucial for learning organizations as these organizations face rapid systematic organizational changes, and to deal with these changes, these organizations require a skilled, competitive, and talented workforce. Organizations face challenges when working with talented employees, especially in complex circumstances such as unstable market situations and unpredictable political scenarios ([Collings et al., 2018](#)). In contrast, motivated and committed professionals in the form of a talented workforce are the weak points for every organization in attaining organizational goals. Moreover, the circumstances of the post-pandemic appeal to researchers who want to explore the challenges that learning organizations face in terms of retaining their talented workforce. Because pandemic circumstances negatively impact the job market for the workforce worldwide ([Almeida et al., 2020](#); [Radhamani et al., 2021](#)), it becomes challenging for organizations how to hire or retain talented workers. Pandemic circumstances also demand that organizations integrate technology and transformation of organizational structures from the traditional way to scientific and technology-driven

systems to deal with real-world problems ([Radhamani et al., 2021](#); [Zada et al., 2023](#)), which cannot be possible with the help of talented workforce. On the other hand, management of the learning organizations is also in search of which type of opportunities they can avail themselves of that help them overcome retention challenges.

To find the solution to this problem, this study aims to explore why learning organizations face the problem of workforce retention and how these organizations can oversee this issue. Research on talent management in organizations is still prominent in all disciplines because organizations are still searching for how to enhance the effectiveness of organizational policies and practices to meet the challenges of retaining a talented workforce ([Hassan et al., 2022](#)). Retaining talented employees is essential to the organization's financial viability and allows businesses to compete in today's market ([Mazlan & Jambulingam, 2023](#)). In contrast, high employee turnover negatively impacts an organization's performance, resulting in decreased productivity and an impact on the organization's competitiveness ([Claus, 2019](#); [Mazlan & Jambulingam, 2023](#)). The present study answers the call for research by Shah et al. ([2024](#)) and Akbar and Anas ([2024](#)), who stressed that there is a need to find out the motivational, attitudinal, and intentional factors that help organizations for the satisfaction of the employees which leads to the retention of talented workforce. Furthermore, this study used multiple industrial sectors (i.e., information technology and banking) in response to the call for research of Khalil and Samhan ([2024](#)), where they asserted that there is a need to search out the link of organizational structure and knowledge adaptation for the management of talented employees.

1.2 | Research Questions

RQ1. What challenges are the learning organizations facing in retaining their talent in the aftermath of a pandemic?

RQ2. What talent management strategies do these organizations have to retain their talent?

2 | RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 | Sample and Procedure

To accomplish the objectives of this study, the researchers employed a qualitative inquiry methodology, where the researcher used multiple case study logical methods for the comparison and replication of the phenomenon ([Bansal et al., 2018](#)). Qualitative methodological approaches help the researchers explore more rigorous and novel insights ([Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007](#)). This research answers the questions of “why” the talented employees of learning organizations are leaving and “how” these organizations can retain them; therefore, inductive research philosophy and the case study research design are used. The reason for the use of “why” and “how” words in research questions is that earlier researchers recommended this approach, especially in case study method for the exploration of complex phenomena ([Alam, 2021](#); [Ghauri et al., 2020](#)). The use of multiple case studies helps researchers explore social and organizational issues in depth and detail, which is usually overlooked in quantitative studies ([Creswell & Poth, 2016](#); [Yin, 2017](#)). Moreover, case study methods are widely used in different disciplines, i.e., sociology, psychology, business and management, education, social work, nursing, anthropology, and community planning ([Yin, 2017](#)). Researchers can get answers to their research questions through multiple case studies, as this approach is sound and appropriate for understanding complex matters and for complete and comprehensive inquiry of the matter ([Alam, 2021](#)).

The population of this study is learning organizations (i.e., information technology and banking), the reason being the selection of these organizations that these sectors in the current era of high competition are the major contributors to the development of every economy ([Ali et al., 2023](#); [Alzaid & Dukhaykh, 2023](#); [Serhan & Gazzaz, 2019](#)). These traditional organizations, due to their working environment, are considered learning organizations, as in these organizations, sharing of knowledge between the peer and leaders, and subordinates donates as culture, there is a smooth and fast flow of information, empowerment by the organization for the solution of complex problems which separate these organizations from the traditional organizations.

The purpose of using sampling in qualitative study is to gather information to understand a specific phenomenon's complexity, difficulty, and difference, instead of the representation of digits as done in quantitative research ([Alam, 2021](#)). Moreover, the sampling technique in qualitative study is decided based on the nature, purpose, objective, and research questions ([Saunders et al., 2007](#)). The purposeful or purposive sampling technique of probability sampling allows researchers to select the most appropriate participants based on their knowledge, skills, and experience to answer research queries ([Saunders et al., 2012](#)). So, by following these suggestions, we use a purposive sampling technique to select interview participants to inquire about the reasons, opportunities, and strategies. The unit of analysis of this study was the organizations from the private service sector (banking and information technology). The reason for the selection of an equal number of participants for the interview was due to the limitation of time and resources and to inquire about the matter in depth equally. Moreover, numerous scholars suggest that the selection of 15-20 participants for a homogeneous interview might be adequate and satisfactory for a qualitative study ([Crouch & McKenzie, 2006](#); [Green & Thorogood, 2018](#); [Guest et al., 2006](#); [Marshall et al., 2013](#)), so by following these suggestions and recommendations the researchers of this study selected the fifteen participants from each sector (informational technology and banking). For the collection of data, the researcher of this study conducts semi-structured interviews with the participants using open-ended questions. Thirty interviews with participants from both organizations were conducted with an average length of 20-25 minutes; fifteen interviews were from banking sector organizations, and fifteen were from the information technology (software house) sector organizations. Interviews from the banking sector were conducted with the branch/operations managers (informants) and the information technology sector from the software house managers (informants). Moreover, before the start of interviews with the participants, the purpose and objective of this study were shared with them, and it was ensured by the researchers of this study that information collected from them be used only for academic purposes and never be shared with anyone or at any platform.

2.2 | Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Given below is the list of questions that were asked to the informants from both types of organizations (banking and information technology) to get their views and perceptions on which type of challenges and problems they are facing in the retention of talented employees, especially in the view of post-pandemic circumstances.

2.1.1 Can you please explain how important your organization is to talented employees?

2.1.2 Is your organization facing any challenges regarding the retention of talented employees? If yes, can you please explain what type of challenges your organization is facing?

- 2.1.3 Could you please explain why talented employees of your organization who were working before the pandemic circumstances felt any change in their working routine in any aspect?
- 2.1.4 Did you feel or observe any demand (i.e., an increase in salary or other financial & non-financial benefits) by the talented employees of your organizations in post-pandemic circumstances?
- 2.1.5 What type of change in strategies, policies, and practices do you feel in post-pandemic circumstances for the retention of talented employees in your organization by the policymakers of your organization?
- 2.1.6 Can you give any suggestions or recommendations to your policymakers and, generally, to all other organizations for the retention of talented employees?

3 | DATA ANALYSIS

The thematic analysis method was used to generate the themes, according to Braun and Clarke ([2006, p. 6](#)), “a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data”. This technique contributes to research investigation in a positive way using the quality of the data. For that purpose, first, data familiarization was conducted, where all transcripts of the interviews were read and revised; more frequently used words were highlighted and clustered into codes. Further, the researchers of this study categorized all the data collected using semi-structured interviews through common theme coding. These methods were utilized in this study by following the suggestions of Saldana ([2021](#)), who stated that coding works as an intermediate between data collection and data analysis in qualitative studies. Moreover, data coding not only works as a process for data analysis and explanation but also helps researchers link the ideas they extracted from the data ([Alam, 2021](#)). After the coding process, the researchers converted coded transcripts into themes, usually two to three codes supported by the interview text, and in the final phase, all coded transcript categories were grouped for analysis.

For data analysis, researchers of this study use ATLAS.ti statistical software, which is suitable for the qualitative analysis. ATLAS.ti software has already been used widely by researchers of different disciplines, i.e., psychology, nursing, management, criminology, anthropology, education, and engineering ([Frieze, 2019](#)). ATLAS.ti software helps the researchers with content analysis, i.e., categorical or thematic analysis, which is usually conducted in qualitative studies ([Soratto et al., 2020](#)). Moreover, the reason forces the researchers of this study to use ATLAS.ti software, that this software is free for use and famous for the primary data analysis of qualitative complex textual data.

Tables 1 and Figures 1, 2, and 3 of Sankey diagrams show the key concepts extracted from the semi-structured interviews about which type of attraction talented employees feel to join a learning organization and what opportunities these organizations offer to talented individuals. According to the values, the main attraction for individuals who think about joining a learning organization is the career structure of these organizations because continuous and systematic learning at individual and organizational levels enhances employees' skills, abilities, and knowledge, enabling them to advance their careers. Likewise, values show that the career structure of software houses is much more attractive than the banking sector for individuals.

Moreover, **Table 1 and Figures 1, 2, and 3** of Sankey diagrams further show the list of challenges and demands faced by the organizations for the retention of talented individuals, which type of policies/strategies

these organizations are offering, and which policies/strategies may be best for the retention of talented individuals. The primary challenge/demand faced by the learning organizations by talented employees is attractive salary packages; the circumstances of the pandemic may influence this. Because during the pandemic situations, when individuals work directly with clients, especially software houses, it enhances their knowledge about the salary packages in the post-pandemic circumstances, the learning organizations, especially in emerging economies, face the challenges for the retention of their employees with higher demand of attractive salary packages. Regarding this challenge, the researchers of this study discussed in detail with the management of the software houses and banking institutions how much frequency change they found before the pandemic and in post-pandemic situations, and they stated that salary packages are the main demands by talented employees in any era. However, whenever individuals get good salaries by working in their homes, it affects their conveyance expenses; therefore, now they demand higher packages than in the past. Another thing that is reflected by the management of both types of this study's organizations is that employees are now focusing on joining and remaining with organizations with formal career growth and development plans. Especially in the software industry, now the professionals of this sector prioritize their career development instead of starting a career without formal planning. Another thing shared by the management of both organizations is that employees are now much more focused on annual or semiannual bonuses because during the pandemic time, especially in software houses, individuals work directly with the clients, and they get instruction regarding the assignments directly from the foreign clients and during the communication process they become aware of the facilities which provided by the multinational informational technology firms to their employees. So, now Pakistani software houses are in trouble and facing the challenge of retaining talented professionals, especially with higher inflation. In Pakistan, higher electricity and other information technology structures may also influence the income generation process of software houses. Moreover, this tendency of inflation also influences the revenue efficiency of the banking sector, and this also becomes challenging for this sector in the high inflation environment of the Pakistani economy, especially in terms of how to satisfy the employees for retention. Parallel to this, the strategic policies of rivalries also give a tough time to those organizations in both sectors that have weak strategic planning and organizational structure. There is a war between organizations to attain higher profitability and competitive advantage so that this target can be achieved with a talented workforce. In these circumstances, individuals try to fly to those organizations from their parent organizations, where they find better remuneration and other facilities; this situation also becomes challenging for retaining talented individuals. Another challenge Pakistani organizations, especially in the banking and information technology sector, are facing is work-family imbalance. Now, individuals are focusing on joining and remaining with those organizations where they find that their work cannot influence their personal lives, and they have enough time for their families. Because banks and software companies are those institutions where, before the pandemic, employees were working 10-12 hours, and they were unaware of the balance between their professional and personal lives, but during pandemic circumstances, when there was a lockdown, and the majority of the working of every organization was performed using the technique of 'work from home' this situation give awareness to the employees to care about their families parallel to their professional life.

Table 1*Code Document Analysis*

Coding Categories	Interviews (Banks) Gr=28		Interviews (Software Houses) Gr=52		Totals
	Absolute	Column- relative	Absolute	Column- relative	Absolute
● Career Structure (Attraction) Gr=3	2	2.35%	6	2.86%	8
● Attractive Salary Packages (Challenge & Demands) Gr=18	32	37.65%	24	11.43%	56
● Career Growth & Development (Challenge) Gr=8	12	14.12%	11	5.24%	23
● Bonuses (Demands) Gr=3	8	9.41%	11	5.24%	19
● High Inflation (Challenge) Gr=8	4	4.71%	15	7.14%	19
● Policies of Competitor Organizations (Challenge) Gr=4	0	0.00%	18	8.57%	18
● Work-Family Life (Challenge) Gr=3	7	8.24%	10	4.76%	17
● Work from Home (Strategy) Gr=11	3	3.53%	49	23.33%	52
● Flexible Working Environment (Strategy) Gr=3	0	0.00%	15	7.14%	15
● Motivation & Encouragement (Strategy) Gr=5	7	8.24%	8	3.81%	15
● Training & Development (Strategy) Gr=4	0	0.00%	15	7.14%	15
● Learning Opportunities (Strategy) Gr=4	0	0.00%	11	5.24%	11
● Hybrid Working (Strategy) Gr=1	0	0.00%	9	4.29%	9
● Loans (Strategy) Gr=1	8	9.41%	0	0.00%	8
● Misc. Organizational Facilities (Strategy) Gr=1	0	0.00%	6	2.86%	6
● Job Rotation (Strategy) Gr=1	0	0.00%	2	0.95%	2
● Loan Facilities (Strategy) Gr=1	2	2.35%	0	0.00%	2
Totals	85	100.00%	210	100.00%	295

During the interview process, the researchers of this study also asked the management of both organizations selected for this study which type of strategies, policies, or planning were needed for learning organizations to retain their talented workforce. The major thing that the management observes is that now employees give priority to working from home, and it would be better for the management of the learning organizations to make a strategy for how many days employees can work from home and which type of work

would be beneficial for the organization and individuals to be done from their home. This strategy benefits organizations by retaining their talented workers and reducing leaves and absenteeism but also helps individuals meet their personal life demands and fulfill their personal life obligations. The working environment of the software houses is toxic as these organizations usually work with developed countries, and their professional obligations are to meet the target of their clients in a timely; these circumstances put pressure on employees, and they feel stressed and depressed due to which the turnover rate of these institutions is higher than the others and employees fly to those software houses where they feel a flexible working environment.

So, now, to become a successful organization and retain talented intellectual capital, the management of the learning organizations makes strategies for how they make their working environment flexible for their employees. The management of both organizations also highlights the importance of motivation and encouragement in retaining a talented workforce. Parallel to this, software companies require strategies for the training and development of their employees. Managers say that employees now focus on remaining with those organizations that provide training and development facilities along with learning and hybrid working facilities. Employees feel that with training, development, and learning, they become aware of the latest knowledge and trends, which helps them advance their careers and skills. To some extent, management suggested that to minimize the financial pressure on employees, banks, especially software companies, provide short- and long-term loans to their employees. This act by the organizations shows a positive gesture towards their workforce, and it also reflects that management cares about the financial health of the workforce, which enables them to remain with their current organizations.

Figure 1

Sankey Diagram (Banks & Software Houses)

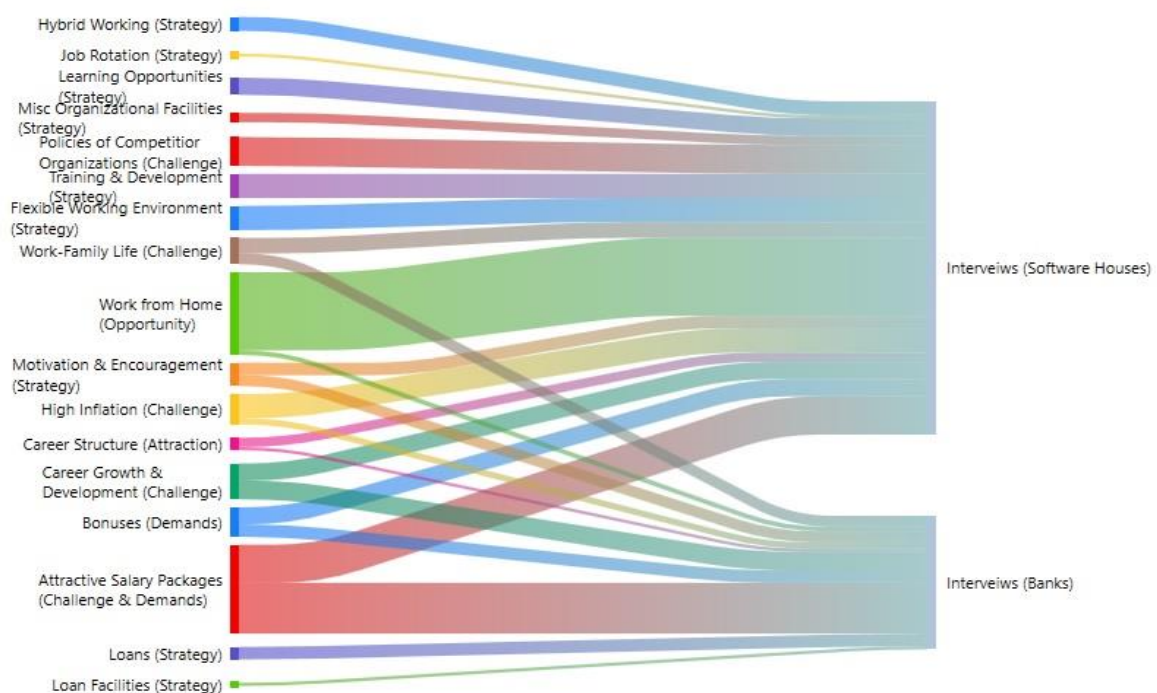


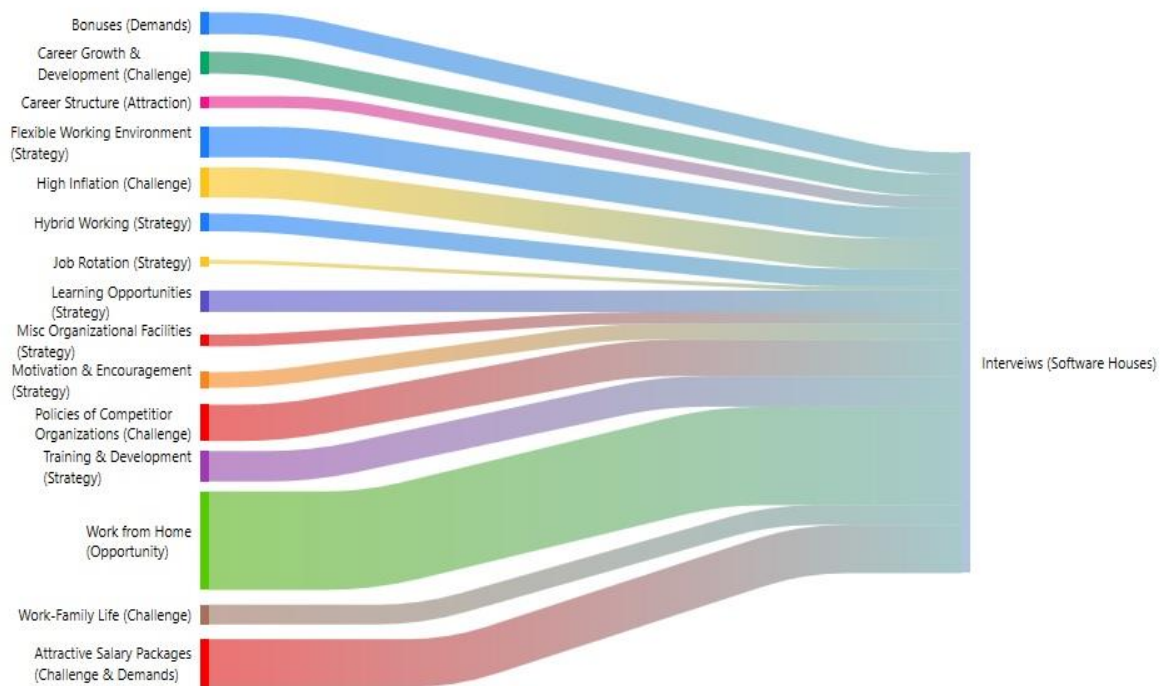
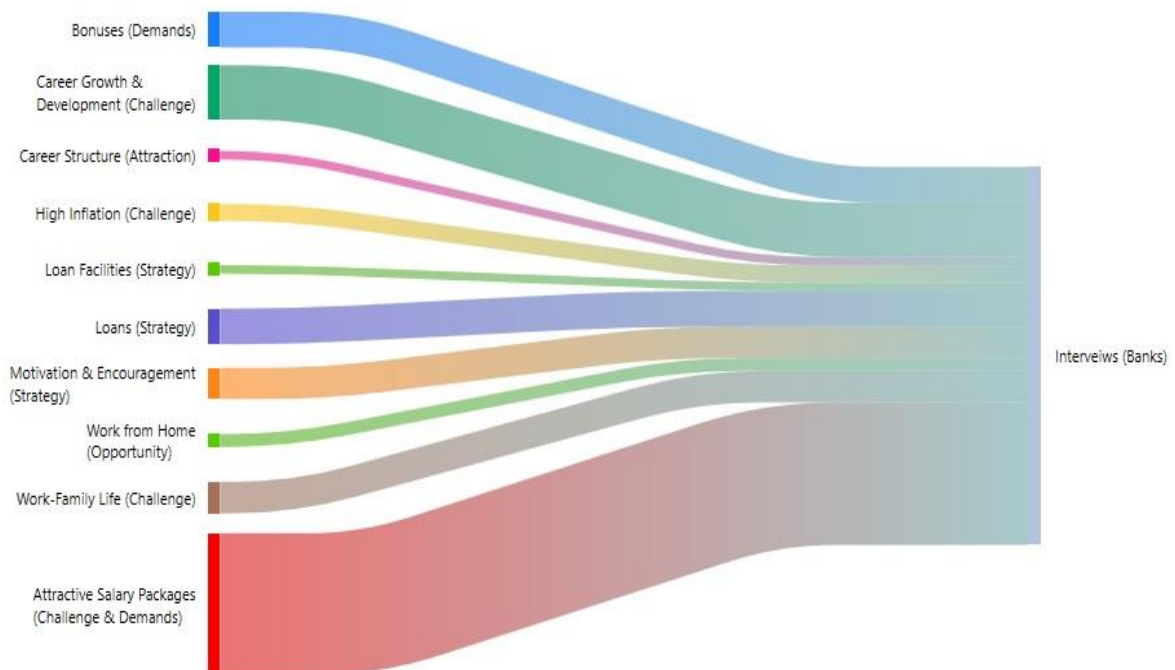
Figure 2*Sankey Diagram (Software Houses)***Figure 3***Figure 1: Sankey Diagram (Banks)*

Figure 4

Concept Tree Map

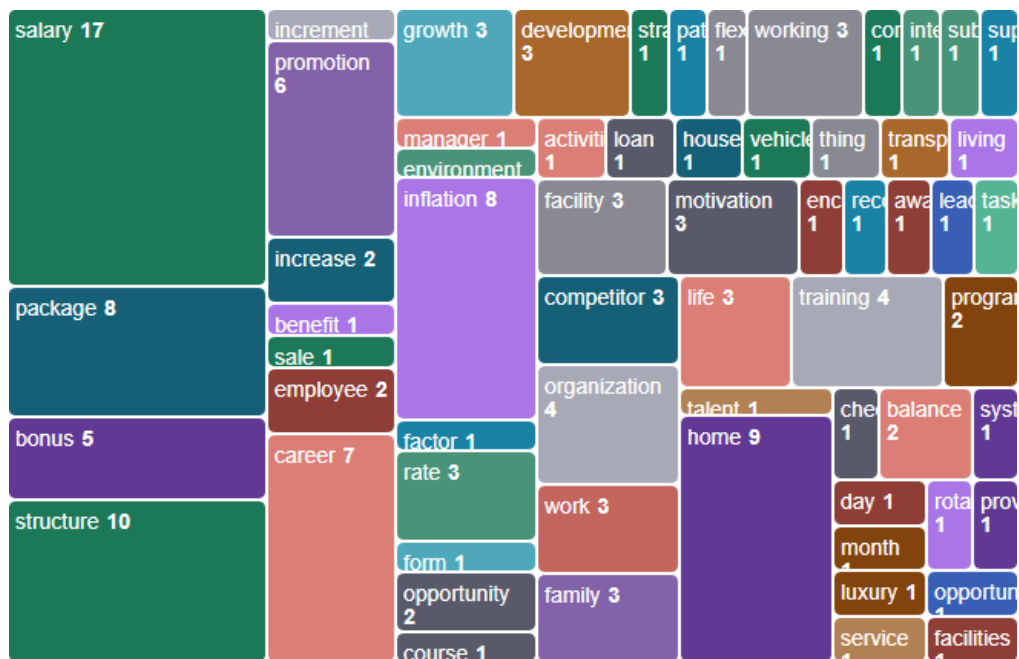


Figure 4 shows the concept tree map, which is based on the interview transcripts and illustrates the major concepts. The figure further illustrates that the central focus of employees working in learning organizations is on their salary packages, and then they give preference to the organizational structure, where they find career development and advancement and flexible working environment. Parallel to this, they also focus career paths with their organizations in the form of promotion because a higher inflation rate also influences the daily lives of professionals from a financial perspective, so they give preference to those organizations where they found a promotion structure with opportunities for learning and growth.

Figure 5

Concept Cloud

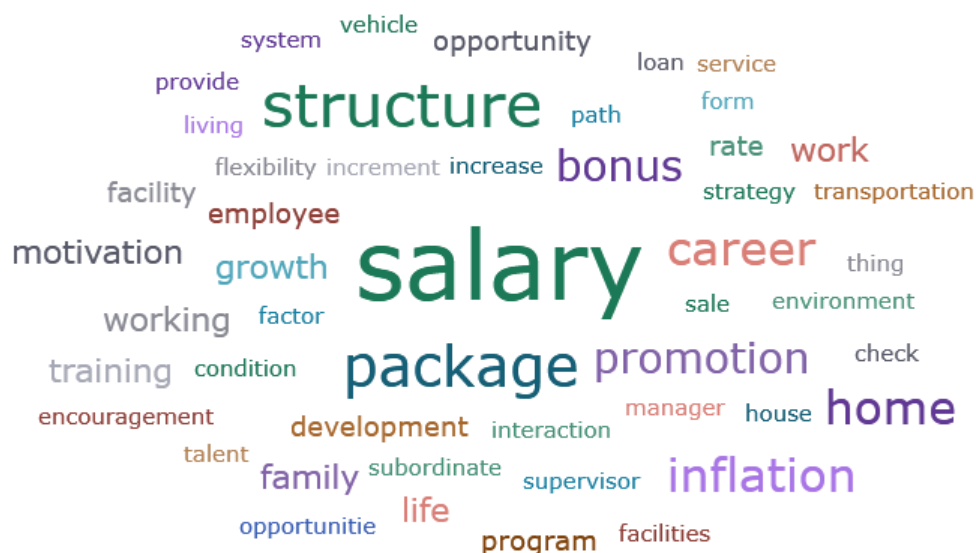
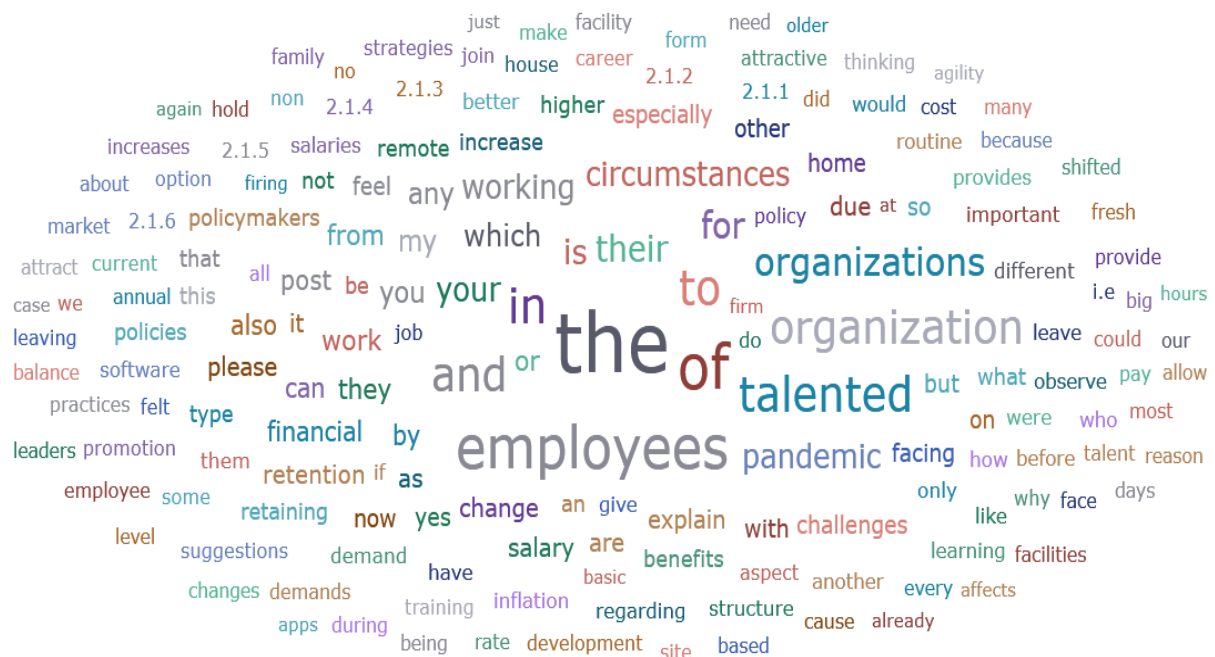


Figure 5 and **Figure 6** represent the concept and word cloud; these clouds show the visualization of contents extracted from the interview transcripts ([Cidell, 2010](#)). According to these figures, the most essential factors that management feels for the retention of talented employees in learning organizations, especially in banks and software houses, salary packages, promotion and increment structure, opportunities for career development, and an environment containing good interaction between managers/supervisors and subordinates, facility of work from home with flexible work environment along with motivation and encouragement. At the same time, some consider financial support in the form of short or long-term loans. Moreover, some of the employees from both types of organizations show their mindset and also give preference to those organizations that have vehicle policies or transportation facilities for the employees.

Figure 6

Word Cloud



4 | DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study is to explore the challenges that learning organizations face in retaining talented employees. Moreover, we further explore what are the attractive policies or procedures in which talented employees prefer to join or leave an organization. Table 1 highlights the major opportunities talented employees feel in the learning organizations, and most observed challenges and suggested policies/strategies. Based on the observation as explored from the semi-structured data, talented employees who want to work in both types of organizations (banks and software houses) prefer those organizations where they find a comprehensive and attractive career structure. Likewise, most recent research shows that organizations that hold career-related features are in a strong position to retain their talented employees ([Bonneton et al., 2022](#)). Also, these features work as talent management practices through which organizations influence their talented employees to remain with them ([Bonneton et al., 2022](#)). These findings also highlight that organizations can win the war on talent by attracting qualified individuals, which has become an essential factor for every

organization in the current era. In contrast, the change in the global environment, especially in the post-pandemic circumstances and the rapid change and use of technology, also forces the organizations to hire talented individuals, enabling the employers for the competitive advantage and sustainability of their businesses in the market.

4.1 | Challenges faced by the learning organizations for the retention of talented employees

The findings of this study explore different challenges that learning organizations face in retaining talented employees. **Table 1** shows that a higher inflation rate creates a challenging situation for retaining talented employees working in banking and information technology organizations (software houses). It has been observed that a higher inflation rate has become a globalized phenomenon, especially in post-pandemic circumstances ([Magaia & Musundire, 2022](#)). Specifically, the talented individuals working in both organizations (banks and software houses) demanded higher salaries and annual bonuses to fulfill the basic needs of life. Individuals working in developing countries especially suffer due to higher inflation rates because the devaluation of local currency in these countries increases the rate of inflation. This higher rate of inflation forces talented employees to choose the options of other organizations where they get the opportunity of an attractive salary. The second challenge that learning organizations face is slow career growth and development activities, due to which talented employees leave their jobs and join others where they find a better career structure. As talented employees due to their experience, expertise, and skills, like to work in a new and challenging situation ([Younas & Waseem Bari, 2020](#)), but the slow promotional channel and career growth give them tiredness, and they try to fly to other organizations, especially of newborn organizational set-up which provides an attractive salary package and career path as well. Another challenge learning organizations face is the policies of competitor organizations that they offer to their employees. Due to globalized work and their services for the developed countries, the information technology sector also has an environment of high competition within an industry. Post-pandemic circumstances create a higher level of competition between organizations at the global level, and every organization wants to hunt for a sustainable position in the long run ([Song & Agarwal, 2023](#)). For that purpose, organizations are keen to use the latest technology for smooth organizational functioning; for that purpose, they need qualified and skilled employees; this requirement can be met when organizations hire and retain talented employees. Moreover, the change in geo-political situations between the countries also creates a war of competition, which causes high-quality products and services so that organizations can capture the other markets. Higher productivity (products and services) with quality increases the workload on employees, and long working hours to meet the organizational strategic objectives create pressure on the employees ([Ashfaq et al., 2020](#)), especially on talented individuals, due to which they feel an imbalance between work and family. Due to these circumstances, talented employees are thinking about leaving the organization and joining another where they feel flexible working hours and environment.

4.2 | Demands by talented employees to stay with the organization in post-pandemic circumstances

The findings of this study, which are illustrated in **Table 1**, also explore different demands that talented employees present to their organizations so that they can stay with them. The values shown in **Table 1** reveal that in both banking and information technology organizations, employees demand higher salaries, especially in post-pandemic circumstances. During interviews with the informants, it was also observed that talented

employees force their organizations to revise their salary structures. Moreover, information technology illustrates that software houses mostly work with developed countries to provide IT products and services, and during pandemic circumstances due to globalized distance policy, the majority of the employees work from their homes, and they were directly in contact with foreign customers and collect wages/salaries in international currency. But in post-pandemic circumstances, they came back to the traditional working environment and received salaries/wages in the local currency, and due to the devaluation of local currency, they are now demanding higher and attractive salaries and bonuses so that they can stay with the organizations.

4.3 | Policies/Strategies by the organizations for the retention of talented employees

Informants from banking and information technology organizations recommend different policies/strategies not only for the learning organizations but also for the traditional organizations to retain talent. First, Table 1 digits illustrate that organizations from the information technology sector can retain their talented employees by employing a flexible working environment. Before and during the pandemic, most of the employees of the information technology section of the organization performed their professional responsibilities from home. This flexibility of working gives them an environment of independence where they can work freely without formal rules and discipline. So, the participants recommend that if the organizations want to retain their talent, then they must offer hybrid working facilities (work from home or work on-site) to their talented employees or offer an option of 4-5 days' remote working (work from home) so that they can fulfill their personal and professional responsibilities easily. Moreover, talented employees like to work in new and challenging situations due to their proactive personality, so when they work in the same situation or perform their professional duties in the same pattern and position, this situation irritates them, and they try to fly to another organization. This thinking of talented employees can be minimized by rotating their jobs into different departments through which they not only feel intrinsically motivated but also get an opportunity to learn new skills and remain with the organization.

From the financial benefits perspectives, the informants from both banking and information technology organizations suggest that learning organization can retain their talent by providing them different financial supports, i.e., facilitating loan advancement, transportation, and medical facilities, and by giving them ownership through profit sharing with the employees, especially of talented through performance evaluation. Another tool suggested by the informants of both organizations (banking and information technology) is that encouragement and motivation of talented employees also gives them a positive gesture that their organizations are caring for them and they think to remain with them. In contrast, learning organizations can retain talent by providing more learning, training, and development opportunities. For that purpose, the informants of both organizations suggested that if organizations provide these opportunities through the reputed institutions that offer the certifications of training and learning, it will not only enhance their expertise and skills but also increase their qualifications.

4.4 | Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

First of all, during the data collection process, the researchers of this study faced negative attitudes from the management of different banks and software houses regarding the conduct of interviews with the workforce. In developing nations, there is no such culture of sharing information with others without the prior permission of seniors, though the researchers show the approval of the ethical committee regarding the

purpose, objectives, and conduction of this research. These are the problems faced by the researchers of this study during the data collection process, but these circumstances cannot affect the whole process. Some participants just gave their suggestions instead of completing the interview or answering the interview questions properly and formally. The chances of bias are also found in qualitative studies, which may be during the sampling process. In this study, the sample was selected using purposive sampling, which may show the bias in the selection of participants, but for this study, the respondents were selected from both banking and software houses based on education, experience, and stay in the current organization and how much number organizations a person shifted before the joining of present organization, so these measures may reduce the chances of biases during the selection of sample by a researcher. Moreover, it would be better if future researchers used snowball sampling in future studies, which also helps the researchers minimize bias and select study-related participants. This study is limited to the banking sector, where only corporate banks were selected as a population, so future researchers may select the public sector banks and find in-depth insights into which the management of these institutions faces the type of challenges. Moreover, this study was conducted in Pakistan and was specific to the major cities of Punjab, so it would be better to replicate the findings and questions of this study in other emerging economies, as these nations are facing the issue of brain drain as compared to the other nations.

5 | CONCLUSION

This study highlights the attraction and demands of talented employees, which they observe before joining learning organizations. Moreover, this study also highlights the challenges which are faced by learning organizations for retaining their talented employees, i.e., career growth, development and advancement and career structure, the requirement of higher salary structures due to globalized higher inflation, competition of organizations within the industry, and imbalance between work and life due to high workload. To stay active in the market, learning organizations need competitive advantages, which they may attain by keeping the most talented staff members. Moreover, organizations can retain their talent by employing different policies/strategies, i.e., flexible working environment, hybrid working atmosphere, job rotation, learning opportunities, loans, transportation and medical facilities, and training and development programs.

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