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RESEARCH ARTICLE

REFRAMING GENERATION Y RETENTION IN THE DIGITAL WORKPLACE: THE BUFFERING ROLE OF IMMERSIVE TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract

This study examines how Generation Y characteristics influence employee retention and whether immersive technology moderates this relationship in technology-oriented organisations. Grounded in generational theory, psychological contract theory, and socio-technical systems theory, the study proposes that immersive technology serves as both a direct predictor and a contextual moderator of retention. Primary data were collected from 404 Generation Y employees working in IT and technology-enabled firms across Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities in India. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the proposed relationships. The findings show that Generation Y characteristics negatively affect retention when organisational systems fail to meet employee expectations, while immersive technology has a significant positive effect on retention. Moreover, immersive technology weakens the negative relationship between Generation Y characteristics and retention, indicating a buffering effect. The study highlights the strategic role of digital workplace transformation in improving Generation Y employee retention.

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Introduction:-

In the last two decades, the global workforce demographics have changed significantly. Generation Y, also known as Millennials, is a group of people born between 1981 and 1996. They are now the largest and most important group in the active labour market, especially in the information technology (IT) and technology-enabled sectors. This generation has different work values, behaviour patterns, and expectations than earlier generations. For human resource management professionals, organisational leaders, and policymakers, figuring out what keeps people at their jobs has become one of the most prominent problems to solve (Parihar & Singh, 2025). Employee retention, which is the ability of a company to keep its employees and reduce voluntary turnover, is widely seen as a key strategic tool for maintaining a competitive edge, retaining organizational knowledge, and lowering the high costs of losing talent. In fields where knowledge is the primary asset, such as information technology, the stakes are high. Studies show that the cost of replacing one employee can be between 50 and 200 percent of that employee's yearly salary when you factor in hiring, onboarding, training, and productivity losses (Allen et al., 2010). Despite increasing research on intergenerational workplace dynamics, significant gaps remain regarding how the specific traits of Generation Y workers, such as their desire for meaningful work, continuous learning, flexibility, autonomy,

innovation, recognition, and social responsibility, affect retention in tech-driven workplaces. Previous research has yielded inconsistent and occasionally contradictory results: certain studies portray Gen-Y employees as inherently mobile and challenging to retain, while others underscore the significance of supportive organizational environments in cultivating their commitment and loyalty (Twenge et al., 2010),(Ng et al., 2010).

At the same time, the rapid proliferation of immersive and advanced digitalisation, including virtual collaboration tools, augmented and virtual reality training programs, gamified education systems, and AI-based feedback systems, has radically changed the dynamics of work, especially in technology-driven companies (Aydın et al., 2024; Leuhery, 2024). These immersive technologies have the capability to transform how employees interact with their jobs, colleagues, and the organisations they represent. Nevertheless, their influence on employee experience, perceived organisational support, and employee retention is under-researched in the current academic literature (Lubis et al., 2025). This research fills this gap by addressing three closely related questions: firstly, do the traits of Generation Y play a significant role in employee retention? Secondly, does the use of immersive technology directly affect retention? In addition, this research examines how immersive technology transforms the correlation between Generation Y traits and employee retention. It presents a new conceptual framework, theoretically underpinned, that positions immersive technology as both a direct predictor and a situational moderator of retention. This paradigm enables comprehension at the crossroads of the generational theory, socio-technical systems theory, and organisational behaviour. The research used primary data gathered from 404 Generation Y employees working in IT and technology-related businesses across Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities in India. Employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), a variance-based method particularly relevant to exploratory and predictive studies involving complex models, the research provided a solid empirical basis for investigating the proposed relations. Therefore, the results have profound theoretical and practical implications for organisations that intend to use digital transformation to not only enjoy the benefits of increased productivity but also strategic workforce retention.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework :-

Generation Y: Characteristics, Work Values, and the Retention Challenge:

The socio-historical formation of Generation Y is unique and differentiates it from previous generations: Baby Boomers born in 1946-1964, and Generation X born in 1965-1980 (Ahmed et al., 2013). Growing up in the age of Internet revolution, the spread of mobile technology, the broadening of global connectivity and the rise of knowledge-based economies, the Generation Y employees possess a completely different range of experiences, expectations and values regarding the employment relationship (Thompson & Muda, 2021). The characteristic cognitive orientations of this generation include digital nativity, ease with technological interfaces, and a sense of immediacy in terms of information access and feedback (Anggraeni et al., 2017).

Among the earliest researchers to explicitly catalogue and empirically examine generational differences in work values was stated by (Smola & Sutton, 2002) in a seminal longitudinal study, proved that Generation X workers emphasized more meaningful engagement, recognition, autonomy, and growth opportunities than their predecessors. (Twenge et al., 2010) then followed up on this line of inquiry, finding that Gen-Y employees exhibit higher extrinsic value orientations, such as increased preferences for flexibility, career advancement, financial gains, and work-life balance, and reduced intrinsic value orientation relative to Baby Boomers. These results imply that Gen-Y workers are entering the employment relationship with high and multidimensional expectations. If these expectations are not met, disengagement and voluntary turnover can be activated (Nelson & Braekkan, 2017).

These characteristics have rigorous theoretical implications, where the application of the psychological contract theory (Holtom et al., 2008) to generational research can help understand their retention implications (Kodden & Roelofs, 2019). Psychological contracts, the unspoken, subjective perceptions that employees have about the two-way exchange of obligations between them and their employing institutions, are especially relevant to Gen-Y workers, who are more likely to start working with pre-established and inflexible expectations related to learning opportunities, professional paths, recognition practices, and organizational values Click or tap here to enter text. When there is a perceived violation or lack of fulfilment of these implicit terms, the ensuing psychological sense of violation leads to disengagement, dissatisfaction, and increased intention to leave (Baran et al., 2024). This conceptual reasoning underlies the claim that the organizational sensitivity to the expectations of Gen-Y can be a stronger predictor of retention than the traits themselves (Li & Zhang, 2021). A study by Ng et al. (2010) also determined that Generation Y workers have significantly higher career mobility expectations and reduced organizational commitment than previous generations, and that job moves are not signs of unfaithfulness but rather a normal means of career advancement. Skelton et al. (2019) evidenced this dynamic in the IT sector, who found turnover intentions of IT professionals to be strongly predicted by the perceived availability of better opportunities

elsewhere, which increases when current organizational environments do not meet the generational expectations. Combined with these studies, it is possible to have a theoretical foundation to anticipate an important and even negative relationship between the work-related traits of Generation Y and retention results when the organizational systems are weak to accommodate the traits (Smith, 2024).

Immersive Technology as an Organizational and Retention Mechanism:

The idea of immersive technology within organizations is a broad and dynamic category of digital technologies specifically aimed at producing engaging, interactive, and experientially rich work, learning, and collaboration environments (Fakhar et al., 2024; Fernandes et al., 2023). The category includes virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) training systems, mixed reality (MR) collaboration platforms, gamified learning management systems, AI-enabled coaching and feedback platforms, operational simulation with digital twins, and next-generation virtual collaboration platforms (Fakhar et al., 2024). The common feature of these technologies is the ability to overcome the restrictions of traditional software and offer a wide range of multi-sensory, real-time, and highly interactive sensory experiences to users (Hofma, 2020; Sehad et al., 2024).

Socio-technical systems theory, which was first formulated to describe the interdependence of the social and technical aspects of work systems, is the most substantive theoretical basis of knowledge about the organizational role of immersive technology (Hofma, 2020). Under this approach, individual attributes or organizational structures do not primarily influence employee attitudes, behaviours, and results, but rather the quality of interaction between people and the technological devices through which they undertake their jobs (Fréour et al., 2021; Torre & Sarti, 2020). When socio-technical alignment is of high quality (in which technology is helpful and empowering human capabilities, teamwork requirements and learning desires) there are much more positive results in terms of engagement, satisfaction, and retention (Fischer et al., 2023). On the other hand, there is friction, frustration, and disengagement brought about by technological inadequacy or misalignment.

Empirical studies have started to record certain routes by which immersive and advanced digital technologies have an impact on retention-relevant outcomes (Moganadas & Goh, 2022). Furthermore, job satisfaction, engagement, and the perception of organizational support are strongly related to employees' perceptions of organizational technological readiness, namely the adoption of smart, AI-driven, and interactive technologies (Trenerry et al., 2021). It is also demonstrated that immersive and AI-enhanced technologies enhance the effectiveness of learning, help learners develop new skills, and identify with the organization (Giannakos et al., 2021). Again, data supports the idea that AR and VR-based work tools lead to the improvement of perceived competence and autonomy which are among the strongest predictors of intrinsic motivation and organizational commitment (Getman et al., 2024). All of these results create a theoretical framework to anticipate a positive and direct correlation between the use of immersive technology and employee retention.

The Moderating Role of Immersive Technology: A Contingency Perspective:

In addition to its direct impact, the current research suggests that immersive technology plays a crucial contextual moderating role in the relationship between Generation Y characteristics and retention. This hypothesis is based on the contingency theory, which states that the interaction between personal qualities and organizational performance is contingent and relies on circumstances and context (Smola & Sutton, 2002). When applied to the current situation, contingency logic implies that the attributes of Generation Y may turn out to be either retention risks or engagement drivers, a phenomenon highly contingent on the organizational and technological environment.

Under the conditions of a rich, immersive, responsiveness of the technological environment to the expectations of learning, growth, autonomy, and engagement that constitute the work value profile of Generation Y, these features can be directed towards positive contributions, as opposed to frustration and turnover intention (Safian et al., 2021). On the other hand, in technology-lacking settings that depend on traditional, non-interactive digital outcomes, the high expectations of Gen-Y workers are bound to face relentless mismatch, worsening discontent and departure desires (Davis & Needham, 2023). The hypothesis therefore gives the theoretically consistent explanation of the conflicting results that have defined the literature of generational retention and places strategic investment in technology as the primary organizational process by which the retention risks associated with Gen-Y features can be alleviated.

Research Methodology:-

Research Design and Philosophical Positioning:

This paper is based on the positivist school of philosophy where social phenomena are considered objective, measurable and subject to research using rigorous empirical approaches (Saunders et al., 2007). Deductive research

design was chosen; hypotheses were based on the existing theoretical frameworks: generational theory, psychological contract theory and socio-technical systems theory and were then tested empirically. A cross-sectional design is appropriate for the study, aiming to determine the magnitude and direction of relationships among constructs at a particular point in time, which aligns with the structural modeling approach employed (Saunders et al., 2019). Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was chosen over covariance-based SEM because it is more suitable for predictive research, complex models with moderation effects, and situations where the key analytical consideration is the explained variance, as opposed to achieving model replication (Hair et al., 2018).

Measurement Instrument Development:

The survey tool was designed based on the earlier tested multi-item scales from existing scholarly sources to provide content validity, conceptual and measurement reliability. There were three latent constructs operationalized, which are Generation Y characteristics, immersive technology usage, and employee retention. Each of them was gauged through ten reflective indicators with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), an organizational research format commonly applied to reliably measure attitudes and perceptions (Saunders et al., 2019).

The items of the generation Y characteristic were modified after (Smola & Sutton, 2002) and (Twenge et al., 2010), and they included the following dimensions: meaningful work engagement, growth and learning opportunities, open communication, workplace flexibility, innovation orientation, recognition and reward preferences, social responsibility and alignment, and career aspiration. Items measuring immersive technology were based on Laiman et al. (2023), which measured the perceptions of the employees on the interactivity of technology, facilitating virtual teamwork, accessing gamified training, providing digital performance feedback, supporting knowledge retention, and integrating immersive work processes. Items that measure employee retention were modified to fit Allen et al. (2010) and Holtom et al. (2008) included intent to remain, perceptions of career advancement, recognition satisfaction, work-life balance, organizational culture alignment, compensation satisfaction, and organizational belonging.

The content validity was determined by a structured review by the subject matter experts who had a specialization in organizational behavior and HRM. A pilot test was then conducted on 30 employees of the Generation Y IT sector who were selected as the target population. The participants responded to the clarity of items, ease of understanding, and the appropriateness of response options. This feedback was used to make minor changes to the wording. The alpha values calculated using pilot data were found to be above 0.70 in all three constructs, indicating that the instrument had acceptable preliminary reliability and could be used in the actual data collection process.

Sample Size Determination and Sampling Procedure:

An appropriate sample size was determined using a triangulated methodology that applied three established methodologies: One, a linear multiple regression power analysis of three predictors at a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$), a significance level (0.05) and a minimum statistical power (0.80) was done with G * Power 3.1 statistical software (Memon et al., 2020). The minimum sample required was found to be around 77 respondents after this analysis. Second, the PLS-SEM 10-times rule, which requires a minimum of 10 times the largest number of structural paths that lead to any of the endogenous constructs of the model, required at least 100 respondents with three incoming structural paths of employee retention. Third, and perhaps most conservatively, Cochran's formula based on a 95% confidence level ($Z = 1.96$), maximum variability ($p = 0.50$), and a 5% margin of error suggested a minimum sample size of 384 respondents (Smith & Cochran, 1964).

The Cochran formula was used as the main criterion due to its strict and conservative nature for survey studies of large and heterogeneous populations. Non-probability purposive sampling was used, which focused on the employees of Generation Y (born 1981-1996) who are currently working in IT and technology-enabled companies in India. Participation was also made conditional upon adequate work experience to give informed answers about retention perceptions and use of technology. Diversity in terms of gender, marital status, organizational designation, years of experience and geographic location (Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities) was systematically sought. A total of 500 questionnaires were sent out; 423 surveys were returned (response rate = 84.6%). After screening data (i.e., removing incomplete and inconsistent questionnaires), 404 valid responses were left to be analyzed, which is more than all three minimum thresholds to perform moderation testing with bootstrapping.

Analytical Framework: PLS-SEM:

Preliminary screening was performed by using SPSS, whereas PLS-SEM was performed using SmartPLS 4.0. Analysis was conducted in a sequential model, as suggested for use in variance-based structural equation modelling (Hair et al., 2018). Some preliminary analysis involved testing of missing data, outliers, and distributional normality analyses using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis). Independent-samples t-tests and one-way ANOVA were carried out to assess the differences of demographics in retention before the structural modelling. The PLS-SEM analysis was conducted in two phases: in the first stage, measurement model evaluation was conducted to assess the reliability of indicators, internal consistency (Cronbach's α , rho A, composite reliability), convergent validity (AVE) and discriminant validity (Fornell Larcker ratio); second, the structural model was tested using bootstrapping (10,000 resamples) to determine path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values and 95% confidence intervals. Multicollinearity was determined through Variance Inflation Factors (VIF). The interaction term (GENY $\times$ IT) was constructed using the two-stage approach to moderation testing and conditional effects analysis was conducted to explain the pattern of moderation. SRMR assessed model fit, and PLS-Predict assessed out-of-sample predictive validity.

Results and Discussion:-**Demographic Profile of Respondents**

The final analytical sample comprised 404 Generation Y employees from technology-oriented organizations across India. The gender distribution was near-balanced, with males representing 52.2% (n = 211) and females 47.8% (n = 193) of the sample, a distribution that mirrors the gradually improving, though still imperfect, gender balance within the Indian IT sector. The near-parity is methodologically advantageous, as gender-balanced samples reduce systematic attitudinal bias in retention research (Kundu & Lata, 2017). A majority of respondents were married (60.9%, n = 246), consistent with the mid-career life-stage characteristics typical of Generation Y in the Indian professional context, where marriage commonly occurs during the late twenties and early thirties. Research suggests that married employees tend to prioritize job security and organizational stability, creating a distinct yet increasingly nuanced retention context (Deery & Jago, 2015).

The experience profile revealed concentration in the 1–5 year bracket (34.2%, n = 138) and the 6–10 year bracket (29.5%, n = 119), with lesser proportions in the 11–15 year (23.3%) and over 15 years (13.1%) categories. This distribution is highly consistent with the demographic characteristics of Generation Y employees and reflects the mid-career placement of the cohort within the IT workforce. In terms of organizational designation, System Engineers (30.0%) and IT Analysts (28.0%) formed the largest occupational groups, followed by Assistant Consultants (20.0%) and Associate Consultants (19.6%). The concentration in technical and analytical roles reflects the structure of the Indian IT industry and strengthens the study's contextual relevance. Table 1 presents a complete breakdown of the demographic profile.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 404)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	211	52.2
	Female	193	47.8
Marital Status	Married	246	60.9
	Unmarried	158	39.1
Experience	1–5 Years	138	34.2
	6–10 Years	119	29.5
	11–15 Years	94	23.3
	> 15 Years	53	13.1
Designation	System Engineer	121	30.0
	IT Analyst	113	28.0
	Associate Consultant	79	19.6
	Assistant Consultant	81	20.0
	Assistant System Engineer	4	1.0
	Others	6	1.5

Source: Primary data collected through questionnaire survey conducted by the researcher

Descriptive Statistics of Study Constructs:

The mean scores on all the items in the study were between 2.948 and 3.396, which is an average level of agreement among the respondents, a trend that is common in attitudinal research on knowledge workers in dynamic and competitive industries. The best scores under the employee retention items were observed for Retention Career Development (RET7; Mean = 3.396), and Retention Training (RET5; Mean = 3.302), which highlight the importance of career development opportunities and structured skills development in influencing retention perception among Gen-Y IT professionals. Intention to Stay (RET10; Mean = 2.948) had the lowest retention mean, indicating a relatively poor long-term organizational attachment, which is in line with the high career mobility tendencies that have been widely recorded among this generational cohort (Twenge et al., 2010).

In the Generation Y construct, the Engagement (GENY7; Mean = 3.121) item showed the strongest score among the items of immersive technology engagement, whereas the Social Responsibility as a value orientation in the Generation Y work expectations also showed a high score (Mean = 3.396 across Gen-Y dimensions). Meaningful Work and Growth Opportunities were also rated higher and this finding reinforced the literature on purpose-orientation of Gen-Y on generational theory (Ng et al., 2010). Interactivity (GENY10; Mean = 3.228) and Engagement (GENY7; Mean = 3.121) were the highest rated items in the immersive technology category; they demonstrated the recognition of employees' recognition of technology's potential to make the working experience interactive and engaging. All items had skew coefficients within the range of ± 1 and kurtosis values less than ± 3 , which confirms the approximate normality and supports the dataset's appropriateness for further advanced PLS-SEM analysis (Sarstedt et al., 2022).

Demographic Differences in Employee Retention:

The independent-samples t-tests and one-way ANOVA were used to evaluate whether there were significant differences in the retention of employees based on demographic groups. The findings consistently showed no statistically significant differences. Gender did not significantly differentiate retention perceptions (Male: $M = -0.015$, $SD = 1.046$; Female: $M = 0.017$, $SD = 0.950$; $t = -0.332$, $p = 0.740$). Marital status similarly yielded non-significant results (Married: $M = 0.018$, $SD = 0.959$; Unmarried: $M = -0.028$, $SD = 1.063$; $t = 0.457$, $p = 0.648$). There were no significant differences in retention based on geographic location (Tier-1 vs. Tier-2 cities) ($t = 1.050$, $p = 0.295$). One-way ANOVA findings supported that there was no significant difference between experience levels ($F = 0.852$, $p = 0.466$) and organizational designation ($F = 0.507$, $p = 0.771$).

These statistically and theoretically significant non-significant results are statistically significant. They indicate that the retention attitude of Generation Y IT professionals is essentially homogenous among demographic subgroups and the primary sources of retention differences are psychological, technological and value-oriented factors as opposed to immutable individual traits. This observation supports the use of the entire sample to conduct the structural modelling without the inclusion of demographic control variables so as to maintain model parsimony while also strengthening the theoretical claim that generational and technological influences and not demographic types, are the significant drivers of retention management (Hair et al., 2018).

Measurement Model Assessment:

Indicator Reliability and Factor Loadings:

The indicator reliability was adequate since all the indicator factor loadings were greater than the accepted minimum of 0.70. Immersive Technology (IT) item loadings were between 0.702 and 0.824, Generation Y (GENY) item loadings between 0.742 and 0.887, and Employee Retention (RET) item loadings between 0.716 and 0.852. More importantly, every indicator loaded more on its intended construct compared to any other construct in the model, thus meeting the cross-loading criterion of discriminant validity at the indicator level (Chin, 1998). The observed negative cross-loadings between GENY indicators and the RET construct are theoretically significant, indicating that generational expectations and retention outcomes are distinct phenomena in the structural model.

Reliability and Convergent Validity:

The complete statistics on reliability and convergent validity are in table 2. Cronbach's alpha of all three constructs was between 0.915 (IT) and 0.933 (GENY), which is significantly above threshold. ρ_A values (which are more accurate as an estimator of reliability in a PLS-SEM setting) ranged between 0.919 and 0.935, also well above threshold. Strong internal consistency was established at 0.929 (IT), 0.936 (RET), and 0.943 (GENY) without reaching the ceiling of 0.95 at which point the indicators are likely to have redundancy (Hair et al., 2017). The hierarchical ranking of α , ρ_A , and ρ_C measurement consistency of measurement throughout all constructs confirms the strength of the measurement model. AVE of 0.567 (IT), 0.596 (RET), and 0.626 (GENY) all surpass the 0.50 level defined by Fornell and Larcker (1981), which confirms satisfactory levels of convergent validity.

Table 2: Reliability and Convergent Validity of Constructs

Construct	Cronbach's α	rho_A	Composite Reliability (pC)	AVE
Immersive Technology (IT)	0.915	0.919	0.929	0.567
Generation Y Characteristics (GENY)	0.933	0.935	0.943	0.626
Employee Retention (RET)	0.924	0.926	0.936	0.596

Source: Author's computation using PLS-SEM (SmartPLS) based on primary survey data.

Discriminant Validity:

The rigorous test of discriminant validity was carried out with the Fornell-Larcker and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios. The Fornell-Larcker criterion is that the square root of the AVE of each construct must be greater than its maximum correlation with another construct. The AVE square roots of 0.753 (IT), 0.791 (GENY), and 0.772 (RET) were all greater than the inter-construct correlations, which met this criterion for all construct pairs. Table 3 shows the Fornell-Larcker matrix and HTMT ratios. HTMT values of 0.500 (IT-GENY), 0.539 (IT-RET) and 0.609 (GENY-RET) were all significantly below the conservative 0.85 and the more liberal 0.90 threshold; this is a strong indicator that the three constructs are empirically different (Henseler et al., 2014). Overall, the analysis of the measurement model indicates that the constructs have high levels of reliability, convergent, and discriminant validity and provide a solid psychometric basis for structural model evaluation.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity: Fornell-Larcker Criterion and HTMT Ratio

Construct	IT	GENY	RET
Fornell-Larcker (diagonal = $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$)			
IT	0.753		
GENY	-0.466	0.791	
RET	0.501	-0.568	0.772
HTMT Ratio			
GENY	0.500		
RET	0.539	0.609	

Note: Diagonal elements (bold) represent the square root of AVE. Off-diagonal elements are inter-construct correlations (Fornell-Larcker) and HTMT ratios respectively.

Structural Model Assessment:**Multicollinearity Assessment:**

Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) were used to assess multicollinearity among predictor constructs prior to hypothesis testing. Generation Y Characteristics (1.562) and Immersive Technology Usage (1.687) VIFs, and the interaction term GENY x IT (1.120), were all significantly less than the conservative PLS-SEM standard of 3.3 and the traditional regression cut-off of 5.0. Thus, problematic multicollinearity is entirely absent (Kock, 2015). The fact that the VIF of the interaction term is low, especially, is quite encouraging since moderation models are often vulnerable to artificially collinearity due to the construction of product terms. The findings validate that the predictors provide unique and non-overlapping explanatory data in the model.

Bootstrapping Results: Direct and Moderating Effect:

Table 4 presents the structural path coefficients, bootstrapping statistics, and hypothesis testing results based on 10,000 resamples. The overall model exhibited an R^2 value of 0.403, indicating that Generation Y characteristics, immersive technology usage, and their interaction term collectively explain 40.3% of the variance in employee retention. This level of explained variance represents a moderate to substantial degree of predictive accuracy in behavioral and organizational research, particularly for models examining attitudinal outcomes subject to numerous unmeasured contextual influences (Hair et al., 2018).

Table 4: Structural Path Analysis and Hypothesis Testing Results

Relationship	Path Coeff. (β)	Bootstrap Mean	T-Statistic	p-Value	Decision
GENY $\rightarrow$ RET	-0.4238	-0.4264	7.7447	0.0000	Supported (H1)
IT $\rightarrow$ RET	0.2804	0.2817	5.9338	0.0000	Supported (H2)
GENY $\times$ IT $\rightarrow$ RET	0.0913	0.0899	2.3902	0.0188	Supported (H3)

Source: PLS-SEM bootstrapping output (SmartPLS, 10,000 resamples). All 95% confidence intervals exclude zero.

H1 hypothesized that the aspects of Generation Y would have a significant impact on employee retention. The structural path coefficient from GENY to RET was -0.4238 (Bootstrap Mean = -0.4264, $t = 7.7447$, $p < 0.001$), with the 95% confidence interval of [-0.5307, -0.3164] excluding zero. H1 was thus supported. The negative sign is theoretically significant: it means that an increase in the intensity of Gen-Y work-related expectations is related to a decrease in the level of employee retention under the conditions of the inadequacy of the organizational systems to support employee retention. This observation is in line with the psychological contract theory, which postulates that discrepancies between employee expectations and what an organization is offering breed dissatisfaction and withdrawal cognitions (Holtom et al., 2008). It further supports the argument by Ng et al. (2010), that high expectations held by Gen-Y employees are retention risk factors in the traditional or the technologically underdeveloped organizational setting.

H2 hypothesized that there would be a significant positive direct effect of immersive technology usage on employee retention. The path coefficient was 0.2804 (Bootstrap Mean = 0.2817, $t = 5.9338$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI: [0.1888, 0.3734]). H2 was supported. The finding suggests that retention intentions are stronger with a greater degree of immersive technology experience employees undergo, which is likely mediated by increased engagement, perceived organizational support, facilitation of learning, and autonomy. The result is consistent with the socio-technical systems theory that postulates that employee performance is influenced by the correspondence between human and technological subsystems (Brougham & Haar, 2018). By implementing immersive technologies, organizations establish work environments that are more inherently resonant with the experience- and growth-oriented expectations of Gen-Y and, as such, have a direct impact on organizational attachment.



Figure -1: PLS-SEM Structural Model with Moderation Effect

Moderating Effect of Immersive Technology

Hypothesis H3: The use of immersive technology would have a significant moderating effect on the connection between Generation Y traits and employee retention and dampen the negative relationship as the usage level rises. The interaction term ($GENY \times IT$) yielded a significant positive path coefficient of 0.0913 (Bootstrap Mean = 0.0899, $t = 2.3902$, $p = 0.0188$, 95% CI: [0.0136, 0.1639]), providing empirical support for H3. Table 5 shows the analysis of the conditional effects at three levels of immersive technology use.

Table 5: Conditional Effects of Generation Y Characteristics on Retention at Varying IT Usage Levels

IT Level	Effect (β)	SE	t-Value	p-Value	95% CI
Low (-1 SD)	-0.5295	0.0596	-8.8902	0.0000	[-0.647, -0.412]
Mean (Avg)	-0.4192	0.0438	-9.5754	0.0000	[-0.505, -0.333]
High (+1 SD)	-0.3322	0.0580	-5.7306	0.0000	[-0.446, -0.218]

Source: Conditional effects analysis based on PLS-SEM moderation testing. LLCI and ULCI denote lower and upper 95% confidence interval limits.

At low levels of immersive technology usage (-1 SD), the negative relationship between Generation Y characteristics and retention was most pronounced ($\beta = -0.5295$, $t = -8.8902$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI: [-0.6466, -0.4124]). This effect weakened substantially at the mean level of technology adoption ($\beta = -0.4192$, $t = -9.5754$, $p < 0.001$) and further attenuated at high adoption levels ($\beta = -0.3322$, $t = -5.7306$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI: [-0.4462, -0.2183]). The fact that the absolute magnitude of the path coefficient decreased statistically significantly in the three conditions is strong evidence of a buffering or dampening type of moderation pattern, exactly the kind of moderation pattern anticipated by the theoretical framework of the study.

The interaction plot, which aligns with a buffering moderation pattern, shows that the slope of the Generation Y–retention relationship is the steepest when there is low technology condition and it flattens as immersive technology use rises. Although the association is still largely negative at all three levels of technology use, the practical implication is that those organizations that are at high levels of immersive technology use can greatly minimize the magnitude of the retention risk linked to high expectations of Generation Y. On average, at the highest observed technology level, the influence of Gen-Y characteristics on retention is less by between 37 percent than in low-technology settings (between 0.5295 and 0.3322), a difference with significant practical meaning.

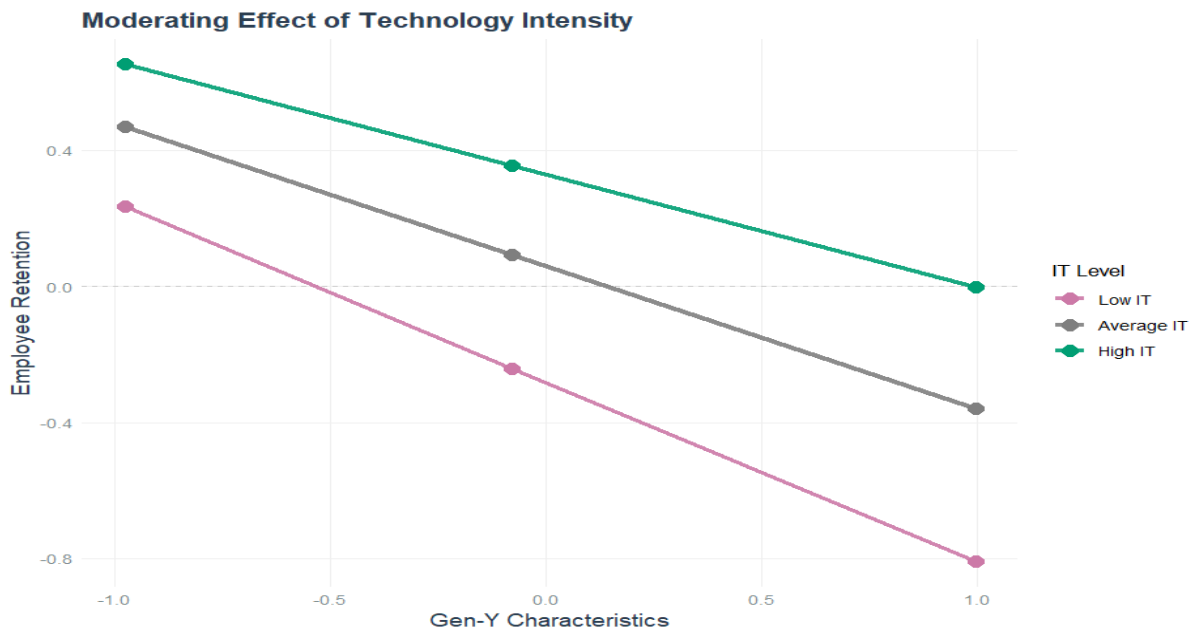


Figure-2: Moderating effect of immersive technology

Such findings significantly elucidate the ambivalent outcomes in the generational retention literature. The discrepancy between the research demonstrating Generation Y's characteristics as serious retention threats and the research demonstrating them as a medium of management or even as beneficial might be attributed to the technological environment within which the studies were performed in the first place. The negative effects would be

more strongly observed in studies conducted in organizations with very little use of immersive technology; those studies in digitally enriched environments would show weaker effects (or possibly neutral effects). In this sense, immersive technology acts as the contextual moderator that fills the gaps in the current literature.

Model Fit and Predictive Performance

The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) of the estimated structural model was 0.059, which is well below the suggested value of 0.08 (Henseler et al., 2014; Hu & Bentler, 1999) and supports the suitability of the global model fit. The PLS-Predict procedure with 10-fold cross-validation and 10 repetitions was used to evaluate out-of-sample predictive performance. Comparisons with the values of the RMSE and MAE between the PLS-SEM model and a linear benchmark model across the ten retention indicators showed a mottled but generally satisfactory predictive performance. In the case of indicators RET6, RET7, RET8, and RET10, the PLS-SEM model was as good or better at prediction than the linear benchmark. In the case of remaining indicators, there was marginal underperformance, as the methodology anticipates in models that have latent variables and nonlinear effects of interaction (Sarstedt et al., 2022). The error distribution of predictions was close to being symmetric and centered around zero in all indicators, which validates that there was no systematic overestimation or underestimation, and that the model generalized well to new observations.

Discussion of Implications:-

Theoretical Contributions:

This paper builds upon the scholarly literature on several levels. First, it adds to the generational theory by offering empirical support that the effects of the Gen Y traits on retention are largely dependent on the technological climate in the organizations. This result operationalizes the long-standing theoretical hypothesis that situational influences mediate the relationship between personal characteristics and organizational performance (Smola & Sutton, 2002), and it is the first to establish immersive technology as a definite and empirically testable boundary condition on the dynamics of retention in Gen Y populations. The research thus provides a theoretically based solution to the contradictions that have continued to exist in the generational retention literature. Second, the paper contributes to the socio-technical systems tradition by adopting a broader context of employee retention, rather than productivity and performance outcomes. The study contributes to the theoretical repertoire of comprehending the role of technology in driving retention outcomes in knowledge-intensive industries by showing that socio-technical resonance is required to transform the work-related expectations of Gen Y into positive organizational attachment. Third, the incorporation of PLS-Predict as an addition to the traditional hypothesis testing method finds its place in the methodological practice of organizational research that has been called upon in the literature to pay increased attention to out-of-sample predictive validity as a marker of both theoretical and practical model quality (Shmueli et al., 2019). The paper shows that models using complex interaction effects may achieve satisfactory predictive performance and explanatory richness.

Managerial and Industry Implications:

To HR professionals and organizational leaders working within the technology industry, the results send a concise and practical message: Generation Y traits are not predetermined organizational liabilities. Instead, they are manifestations of a value orientation, which can be developed into a competitive retention resource when the organizational environment, especially its technological infrastructure, is aligned enough with those values. The most practically relevant conclusion of the study is the buffering moderation effect of immersive technology: strategic investment by an organization in an immersive digital workplace can mitigate risks of retention caused by high expectations of Gen-Y more than 3 times that of organizations poorly equipped technologically.

Specific managerial strategies include focusing investment on virtual collaboration tools, gamified learning management systems, and AI-driven performance feedback tools as essential talent retention infrastructure; to make the adoption of immersive technologies part of explicit career development systems so that employees can have a clear link between the use of technology and their career growth; to foster organizational cultures that value technological innovation and make the adoption of immersive tools a status symbol and a sign of progressive leadership.

The fact that gender, marital status, experience level, and designation do not significantly differ in terms of retention perceptions suggests organizations can implement universal technology-enabled retention approaches instead of investing highly in demographic-based differentiation. This makes the policy environment easier and facilitates the business argument of carrying out organization-wide immersive technology deployment as a retention investment with a wide range of returns.

Policy Implications:

At both national and industry policy level, the results support the strategic value of digital workplace transformation as a sustainability requirement of the workforce beyond productivity or innovation factors. The discovery that the adoption of immersive technologies directly and indirectly stimulates the retention of the largest generation of the workforce has a strong policy aspect in the Indian context, as the IT sector is one of the pillars of economic growth, export revenue, and employment. Immersive technology adoption in the workplace as a priority area of intervention should be specifically included in national digital transformation programs (such as the Digital India initiative in India) as a means to address voluntary turnover, stabilize the talent pool in the IT industry, and make India more competitive as a global technology destination.

Industry bodies and professional associations are needed to come up with sector-wide guidelines and best practice frameworks on the incorporation of immersive technology to HR practices, especially in onboarding, training and development, performance management, and career planning. Government-industry collaborations on subsidizing the use of immersive technology among mid-sized and smaller technology companies, which might not have the capital investment means of large multinational IT companies could democratize access to such retention benefits and lessen the concentration of talent in a few large organizations.

Conclusion:-

This work has offered a theoretically supported and empirically rigorous research into the predictors of employee retention among Generation Y employees in technology-driven organizations, with particular emphasis on the dual role of immersive technology both in predicting retention and as a moderator of the Gen-Y characteristics-retention association. Based on 404 valid survey responses from employees in the IT sector in India and using PLS-SEM with 10,000-resample bootstrapping, the study confirmed all three hypotheses through strong statistical evidence. Specifically, Gen-Y attributes have a strong and negative direct impact on retention ($\beta = -0.4238$, $p < 0.001$). The model explained 40.3 percent of the variation in employee retention, had acceptable global fit (SRMR = 0.059), and had adequate out-of-sample predictive accuracy.

The most significant implication of the study is that it reframes the Generation Y characteristics as fixed demographic liabilities but as contextually adaptive value orientations with retention implications that are crucially dependent on the technological environment. Companies that make strategic investments in immersive digital work ecosystems can turn the generational expectations into positive retention results - turning what would otherwise be perceived as organizational pressure into a competitive edge in the Gen-Y talent war. This understanding places immersive technology not only as a functional or productivity resource, but as a strategic human resource management resource of significant value.

The research gives due credit to a number of limitations that lead to fruitful future research directions. The cross-sectional design is suitable for the analytical aims of the study, but it restricts causal inferences; longitudinal panel designs would be more effective to ensure evidence of temporal dynamics in the Gen-Y-technology-retention relationship. The limitation on generalizability to other industries and national contexts is due to the focus on the Indian IT sector, which offers valuable evidence but is based on a highly specific set of boundary conditions. Cross-industry and cross-national comparative research would contribute to the richer understanding of the contextual boundary conditions. Moreover, the research considers immersive technology as a one-dimensional variable; further studies may break this one-dimensional variable down into particular types of immersive technologies: VR training, AI-assisted feedback, gamified learning, virtual collaboration, etc. to determine which specific types of immersive technologies have the strongest ability to moderate retention relationships. Quantitative and qualitative methods might also shed more light on the experiential and psychological processes by which immersive technologies influence perceptions of retention in Gen-Y employees.

Despite these shortcomings, the study is timely, important, and practical at the intersection of generational theory, technology management, and human resource management. With the ongoing pace of digital transformation and the Generation Y still shaping the overall human resource system within organizations, the strategic adoption of immersive technologies in the context of human resource systems emerges as one of the most promising and empirically based tools in relation to the long-lived issue of talent retention in the twenty-first century.

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