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Corresponding author:

¹*Shrabony Akter Kotha
Department of Fashion Design &
Technology,
Shanto-Mariam University of
Creative Technology
Dhaka, Bangladesh
E-mail: siam3930@gmail.com

²Department of Business
Administration
Faculty of Business
Shanto-Mariam University of
Creative Technology
Dhaka, Bangladesh

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Qualitative Insights into Talent Development and Retention in Fashion Technology Departments

¹*Shrabony Akter Kotha; ¹Kamimunnahar Korobi ²Kazi Abdul Mannan

Abstract: The increasing convergence of fashion and digital technologies has transformed the structure and skill requirements of fashion technology departments, making talent development and retention a strategic priority. This study explores qualitative insights into how organisations cultivate and sustain talent in such dynamic environments. Adopting a qualitative research design based on secondary data analysis, the study synthesises findings from academic literature, industry reports, and case-based evidence. The analysis is guided by Human Capital Theory, the Resource-Based View (RBV), and Social Exchange Theory to provide a multidimensional understanding of talent management practices. The findings reveal that continuous learning, cross-functional collaboration, leadership support, and a strong organisational culture are critical drivers of talent development. Simultaneously, challenges such as skill gaps, high employee turnover, and the pressures of digital transformation significantly affect retention. The study further highlights that organisations integrating technological advancement with human-centric management strategies are more successful in maintaining workforce stability. This research contributes to the growing discourse on talent management in creative-tech industries and offers practical implications for enhancing organisational resilience and competitiveness.

Keywords: talent development, talent retention, fashion technology, digital transformation, organisational culture, human capital, employee engagement.

1. Introduction

The fashion industry has undergone a profound transformation over the past two decades, driven by the rapid integration of digital technologies into traditional design, production, and distribution processes. This convergence has given rise to the domain of fashion technology, where creativity intersects with innovation in areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), 3D prototyping, virtual fashion, digital supply chains, and e-commerce ecosystems. As a result, fashion technology departments have emerged as critical organisational units responsible for bridging artistic design and technological advancement. Within this evolving landscape, the development and retention of skilled talent have become central strategic priorities for organisations seeking to sustain competitive advantage.

Talent in fashion technology departments is inherently multidisciplinary, encompassing expertise in design, engineering, data analytics, user experience, and business strategy. Unlike traditional fashion roles, employees in this domain are required to continuously adapt to technological disruptions and evolving consumer expectations. Consequently, organisations must invest not only in acquiring such talent but also in nurturing and retaining it through effective human resource practices. The inability to do so can result in skill shortages, decreased innovation capacity, and loss of organisational knowledge (Allen et al., 2010).

The concept of talent development has gained increasing attention in organisational research, particularly in knowledge-intensive industries where human capital serves as a primary driver of value creation (Garavan et al., 2012). Talent development encompasses structured learning opportunities, mentoring, career progression pathways, and the cultivation of competencies aligned with organisational goals. In fashion technology departments, this process is further complicated by the need to integrate both creative and technical skill sets. Employees must be proficient in emerging technologies such as computer-aided design (CAD), machine learning, and digital merchandising while maintaining strong aesthetic sensibilities.

At the same time, employee retention has become a significant challenge across the fashion and technology sectors. High turnover rates are often attributed to factors such as limited career growth opportunities, lack of recognition, work-related stress, and competitive job markets (Hausknecht et al., 2009). In the context of fashion technology, these challenges are exacerbated by the fast-paced nature of the industry, tight production timelines, and constant pressure to innovate. Moreover, the global demand for digital talent has intensified competition among organisations, making retention strategies more critical than ever.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated digital transformation in the fashion industry, highlighting the importance of resilient and adaptable workforces. Remote work, digital collaboration tools, and virtual design processes have become

integral components of organisational operations (McKinsey & Company, 2021). These changes have reshaped employee expectations regarding flexibility, work-life balance, and organisational support, thereby influencing both talent development and retention dynamics.

Despite the growing importance of these issues, there remains a notable gap in the literature concerning talent management specifically within fashion technology departments. Existing studies often focus on either traditional fashion management or the broader technology sector, without adequately addressing the unique challenges arising from their intersection. This study aims to bridge this gap by providing a comprehensive qualitative analysis of talent development and retention practices in fashion technology contexts.

Drawing upon secondary data sources, including academic literature, industry reports, and case studies, this research seeks to explore the underlying factors that influence talent management in fashion technology departments. The study is guided by established theoretical frameworks, including Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), and the Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991), which collectively provide a robust lens for analysing organisational strategies and employee behaviours.

The objectives of this study are fourfold. First, it aims to identify the key factors that contribute to effective talent development in fashion technology departments. Second, it seeks to examine the determinants of employee retention within this context.

Third, it analyses these dynamics through relevant theoretical perspectives to provide a deeper understanding of organisational practices. Finally, the study offers practical recommendations for managers, policymakers, and educators to enhance talent management strategies in the fashion technology sector.

By addressing these objectives, this research contributes to both academic and practical discourse. It extends the application of established organisational theories to a relatively underexplored sector and provides actionable insights for improving workforce management. In doing so, it underscores the critical role of human capital in driving innovation and sustainability in fashion technology departments.

2. Literature Review

Talent development has evolved into a strategic function within organisations, particularly in industries characterised by rapid technological change, such as fashion technology. Traditionally, talent development focused on enhancing domain-specific skills; however, in the current era, it encompasses interdisciplinary competencies including digital literacy, innovation management, and data-driven decision-making (Garavan et al., 2020). In fashion technology departments, this transformation is particularly evident as employees are expected to integrate creative design with technological proficiency.

The emergence of Industry 4.0 technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), 3D prototyping, and blockchain, has significantly reshaped skill requirements (Jin

& Shin, 2021). These technologies demand not only technical expertise but also adaptability and continuous learning. According to McKinsey and Company (2022), organisations that invest in digital skill development are more likely to achieve a competitive advantage in the fashion sector. Consequently, talent development strategies increasingly emphasise lifelong learning, reskilling, and upskilling initiatives.

Moreover, experiential learning approaches, such as project-based training and cross-functional assignments, have gained prominence. These approaches enable employees to apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts, thereby enhancing learning outcomes (Kolb, 1984). In fashion technology departments, such experiential learning is often facilitated through collaborative projects involving design, engineering, and marketing teams.

2.1 Changing Workforce Demographics and Expectations

The workforce in fashion technology departments is predominantly composed of Millennials and Generation Z, who exhibit distinct expectations regarding career development and workplace culture. These cohorts prioritise continuous learning opportunities, meaningful work, and work-life balance (Deloitte, 2021). Unlike previous generations, they are less likely to remain loyal to organisations that fail to meet these expectations.

Research indicates that younger employees value organisations that provide clear career progression pathways and opportunities for skill development (Schroth, 2019). In the

context of fashion technology, this translates into the need for structured training programs, mentorship initiatives, and access to cutting-edge tools and technologies. Organisations that fail to address these expectations often experience higher turnover rates.

Additionally, the gig economy and freelance work have gained traction in the fashion industry, offering professionals greater flexibility but posing challenges for talent retention (Wood et al., 2019). This trend underscores the importance of developing innovative retention strategies that align with evolving workforce preferences.

2.2 Talent Retention: Determinants and Challenges

Talent retention is a critical concern for organisations seeking to maintain stability and continuity in their operations. In fashion technology departments, retention challenges are exacerbated by the scarcity of skilled professionals and intense competition among firms (Hausknecht & Holwerda, 2013).

Several factors influence employee retention, including job satisfaction, organisational commitment, compensation, and career development opportunities. Among these, career development has been identified as a key determinant of retention (De Vos & Meganck, 2009). Employees are more likely to remain with organisations that invest in their professional growth.

Workplace culture also plays a significant role. A supportive and inclusive culture fosters employee engagement and reduces turnover intentions (Schein, 2017). Conversely, toxic work environments

characterised by high stress and poor communication can lead to burnout and attrition.

Another challenge is the rapid pace of technological change, which can create skill mismatches and increase job insecurity (Autor, 2015). Employees may feel overwhelmed by the need to continuously update their skills, leading to dissatisfaction and eventual turnover.

2.3 Organisational Culture and Leadership Influence

Organisational culture and leadership are central to talent development and retention. Schein (2017) defines organisational culture as a set of shared assumptions that guide behaviour within an organisation. In fashion technology departments, a culture that promotes innovation, collaboration, and inclusivity is essential for fostering creativity and engagement.

Leadership styles significantly influence employee outcomes. Transformational leadership, characterised by inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration, has been associated with higher levels of employee motivation and commitment (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Leaders who prioritise employee development and well-being create a positive work environment that enhances retention.

Furthermore, participative leadership, which involves employees in decision-making processes, has been shown to increase job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Yukl, 2013). In the context of fashion technology, where creativity and innovation are critical, participative leadership can

facilitate the exchange of ideas and foster a sense of ownership among employees.

2.4 Digital Transformation and Talent Management

Digital transformation has fundamentally altered the nature of work in the fashion industry. Technologies such as AI, big data analytics, and virtual reality have created new opportunities for innovation but also introduced challenges related to talent management (Westerman et al., 2014).

One of the key implications of digital transformation is the need for continuous learning. Employees must constantly update their skills to remain relevant in a rapidly changing environment. Organisations that fail to provide adequate training and development opportunities risk losing their competitive edge.

Additionally, digital transformation has enabled remote work and flexible work arrangements, which can enhance employee satisfaction and retention (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020). However, it also requires organisations to adopt new management practices to ensure effective communication and collaboration.

The literature highlights several key themes relevant to talent development and retention in fashion technology departments:

- The importance of continuous learning and skill development
- The influence of organisational culture and leadership
- The impact of digital transformation on workforce dynamics

- The role of employee expectations in shaping retention outcomes

These themes underscore the need for integrated talent management strategies that address both organisational and individual factors. The next section presents the theoretical framework that underpins this study.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in three complementary theoretical perspectives: Human Capital Theory, Resource-Based View (RBV), and Social Exchange Theory. Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive lens for understanding talent development and retention in fashion technology departments.

3.1 Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory posits that individuals' skills, knowledge, and abilities constitute valuable assets that contribute to organisational performance (Becker, 1993). Investments in education and training enhance employees' productivity and, consequently, organisational competitiveness.

In fashion technology departments, human capital is particularly valuable due to the interdisciplinary nature of the work. Employees must possess both creative and technical skills, making talent development a critical organisational priority. Training programs, workshops, and continuous learning initiatives are essential for enhancing human capital.

Moreover, Human Capital Theory emphasises the importance of aligning individual capabilities with organisational goals. In the context of fashion technology, this alignment ensures that employees can effectively contribute to innovation and digital transformation efforts.

3.2 Resource-Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View (RBV) asserts that organisations achieve sustained competitive advantage by leveraging resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991). Human resources, particularly skilled employees, are considered strategic assets within this framework.

In fashion technology departments, talent represents a critical resource that drives innovation and differentiation. Organisations that successfully attract, develop, and retain skilled employees are better positioned to compete in the market.

RBV also highlights the importance of organisational capabilities, such as learning and innovation, which are closely linked to talent management practices. By investing in employee development, organisations can enhance their capabilities and achieve long-term success.

3.3 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory focuses on the reciprocal relationship between employees and organisations (Blau, 1964). According to this theory, employees are more likely to demonstrate commitment and loyalty when they perceive that their organisation values and supports them.

In fashion technology departments, this relationship is particularly due to the high demand for skilled professionals. Organisations that invest in employee development, provide supportive work environments, and recognise employee contributions are more likely to retain talent.

Perceived organisational support plays a crucial role in this process. Employees who feel valued and appreciated are more likely to reciprocate with increased engagement and commitment (Eisenberger et al., 2002).

3.4 Integration of Theoretical Perspectives

The integration of these three theories provides a holistic understanding of talent development and retention:

- **Human Capital Theory** explains the importance of investing in employee skills and knowledge
- **RBV** highlights the strategic value of talent as a competitive resource
- **Social Exchange Theory** emphasises the relational dynamics that influence employee behaviour

Together, these frameworks suggest that effective talent management requires both strategic investment and relational engagement. Organisations must not only develop employees' skills but also create supportive environments that foster commitment and loyalty.

4. Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design grounded in the interpretivist paradigm, which seeks to understand social

phenomena through the interpretation of meanings, experiences, and contextual dynamics (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Given the complex and evolving nature of talent development and retention in fashion technology departments, a qualitative approach is appropriate for capturing nuanced insights that may not be accessible through quantitative methods.

Specifically, this research employs a secondary data analysis strategy, which involves the systematic review and synthesis of existing literature, industry reports, and documented case studies. Secondary qualitative research is particularly valuable in areas where extensive primary data already exists but requires integration and reinterpretation to generate new theoretical and practical insights (Johnston, 2017).

4.1 Data Sources and Collection

The data for this study were collected from multiple credible and authoritative sources to ensure comprehensiveness and reliability. These sources include:

- **Peer-reviewed academic journals** accessed through databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar
- **Industry reports** from globally recognised organisations such as McKinsey & Company, Deloitte, and the Business of Fashion (BoF)
- **Books and scholarly monographs** focusing on talent management, organisational behaviour, and digital transformation

- **Case studies and white papers** related to fashion technology and human resource practices

The selection of sources followed a purposive sampling strategy, where materials were chosen based on their relevance to the research objectives, recency (primarily publications from 2010 onward), and academic credibility. Keywords used in the search process included “talent development,” “talent retention,” “fashion technology,” “digital transformation,” and “human capital.”

4.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To maintain the quality and focus of the study, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied:

Inclusion Criteria

- Publications addressing talent development or retention in technology-driven or creative industries
- Studies with clear theoretical or empirical contributions
- Reports and articles published in reputable academic journals or by recognised institutions

Exclusion Criteria

- Non-scholarly sources lacking credibility
- Studies unrelated to organisational or workforce dynamics
- Outdated publications that do not reflect current industry trends

This rigorous selection process ensured that the data used in the study were both relevant and reliable.

4.3 Data Analysis Technique

The study employs thematic analysis, a widely used qualitative method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis followed a structured six-phase process:

- **Familiarisation with the data:** Extensive reading and re-reading of selected sources
- **Initial coding:** Identification of meaningful units related to talent development and retention
- **Theme generation:** Grouping codes into broader themes such as learning, leadership, and organisational culture
- **Theme review:** Refining themes to ensure coherence and relevance
- **Theme definition:** Clearly defining and naming each theme
- **Interpretation:** Linking themes to theoretical frameworks and research questions

This approach allowed for a systematic and transparent analysis of qualitative data, enabling the identification of recurring patterns and insights.

4.4 Theoretical Integration

The analysis was guided by the theoretical frameworks outlined earlier: Human Capital Theory, Resource-Based View (RBV), and Social Exchange Theory. These frameworks served as analytical lenses for interpreting the data and understanding the relationships

between talent development practices and retention outcomes.

By integrating theory with empirical findings, the study enhances its explanatory power and contributes to the broader academic discourse on talent management.

4.5 Reliability and Validity

Ensuring the rigour of qualitative research is essential. This study adopts several strategies to enhance reliability and validity:

- **Triangulation:** Use of multiple data sources to cross-verify findings (Denzin, 1978)
- **Transparency:** Clear documentation of data collection and analysis procedures
- **Theoretical consistency:** Alignment of findings with established theories

Additionally, the use of peer-reviewed sources and reputable industry reports strengthens the credibility of the study.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

As this study relies on secondary data, it does not involve direct interaction with human participants. However, ethical considerations were maintained by Mannan & Farhana (2026):

- Properly citing all sources in accordance with APA (7th edition) guidelines
- Avoiding plagiarism and ensuring academic integrity
- Using data responsibly and accurately

4.7 Limitations of the Methodology

Despite its strengths, the methodology has certain limitations:

- **Lack of primary data:** The study does not capture firsthand experiences of employees or managers
- **Contextual constraints:** Findings may not fully reflect specific organisational contexts
- **Potential bias in secondary sources:** Published materials may reflect particular perspectives or agendas

Future research could address these limitations by incorporating primary data collection methods such as interviews and surveys.

5. Findings and Analysis

The analysis reveals that continuous learning is a central component of talent development in fashion technology departments. Organisations increasingly adopt digital learning platforms, online courses, and internal training programs to enhance employee skills.

Employees are encouraged to engage in lifelong learning to keep pace with technological advancements. This aligns with Human Capital Theory, which emphasises the importance of skill development for organisational performance (Becker, 1993).

However, the effectiveness of these initiatives depends on organisational support and employee motivation. Without adequate

resources and incentives, learning programs may fail to achieve desired outcomes.

5.1 Cross-Functional Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing

Cross-functional collaboration emerges as a key driver of innovation and talent development. By working across departments, employees gain exposure to diverse perspectives and develop interdisciplinary skills.

This finding is consistent with RBV, which highlights the importance of organisational capabilities in achieving competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Collaboration enhances knowledge sharing and fosters innovation, contributing to organisational success.

5.2 Leadership and Talent Retention

Leadership plays a critical role in shaping employee experiences and retention outcomes. Transformational leaders who inspire and support employees are more likely to foster engagement and commitment (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

The analysis indicates that leadership practices such as mentoring, feedback, and recognition are essential for retaining talent. These practices align with Social Exchange Theory, which emphasises reciprocal relationships between employees and organisations (Blau, 1964).

5.3 Organisational Culture and Employee Engagement

A positive organisational culture is a significant determinant of employee engagement and retention. Organisations that

promote inclusivity, innovation, and collaboration create environments where employees feel valued and motivated.

Conversely, negative work environments characterised by high stress and poor communication can lead to burnout and turnover. This highlights the importance of cultural alignment in talent management.

5.4 Challenges in Talent Retention

Skill Gaps and Technological Change:

Rapid technological advancements create skill gaps that organisations struggle to address. Employees may find it challenging to keep up with new technologies, leading to dissatisfaction and attrition.

Competitive Labour Markets: The demand for skilled professionals in fashion technology is high, resulting in intense competition among organisations. Employees often receive multiple job offers, increasing turnover rates.

Work-Life Balance Issues: High workloads and tight deadlines contribute to work-life imbalance, leading to burnout. Organisations must adopt flexible work arrangements to address this issue.

5.5 Digital Transformation and Employee Experience

Digital transformation has both positive and negative implications for employees. While it enables innovation and efficiency, it also requires continuous adaptation and learning.

Organisations that effectively manage this transition by providing training and support are more likely to retain talent. This

underscores the importance of integrating technology and human resource strategies.

The findings highlight the interconnected nature of talent development and retention. Continuous learning, leadership support, organisational culture, and digital transformation collectively influence employee outcomes. These insights reinforce the theoretical framework, demonstrating the relevance of Human Capital Theory, RBV, and Social Exchange Theory in explaining talent management practices.

6. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that talent development and retention in fashion technology departments are influenced by a complex interplay of organisational, technological, and individual factors. Continuous learning, leadership support, organisational culture, and digital transformation emerge as central themes shaping workforce dynamics.

This section discusses these findings in relation to the theoretical frameworks and existing literature, providing deeper insights into their implications.

6.1 Talent Development Through the Lens of Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory emphasises the importance of investing in employee skills and knowledge to enhance organisational performance (Becker, 1993). The findings strongly support this perspective, highlighting continuous learning as a critical driver of talent development.

Fashion technology departments operate in an environment characterised by rapid technological change. As a result, employees must continuously update their skills to remain relevant. Organisations that invest in training programs, digital learning platforms, and skill development initiatives are better positioned to adapt to these changes.

However, the study also reveals challenges associated with continuous learning. Employees may experience “learning fatigue” due to the constant need to acquire new skills. This suggests that organisations must adopt balanced and sustainable approaches to talent development, ensuring that learning initiatives are both effective and manageable.

6.2 Strategic Importance of Talent: Insights from RBV

The Resource-Based View (RBV) provides a strategic perspective on talent management, emphasising the role of human resources as a source of competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). The findings align with this view, demonstrating that skilled employees in fashion technology departments are valuable, rare, and difficult to imitate.

Organisations that successfully develop and retain talent gain a significant competitive edge. For example, employees with expertise in AI-driven design or digital supply chain management contribute to innovation and efficiency, enhancing organisational performance.

However, the study also highlights the vulnerability of this competitive advantage. High turnover rates can lead to the loss of critical knowledge and skills, undermining

organisational capabilities. This underscores the importance of effective retention strategies.

6.3 Social Exchange Theory and Employee Retention

Social Exchange Theory provides a relational perspective on talent retention, emphasising reciprocal relationships between employees and organisations (Blau, 1964). The findings indicate that employees are more likely to remain with organisations that invest in their development, recognise their contributions, and provide supportive work environments.

Perceived organisational support plays a crucial role in this process. Employees who feel valued and appreciated are more likely to demonstrate commitment and loyalty (Eisenberger et al., 2002). Conversely, a lack of support can lead to disengagement and turnover.

The study also highlights the importance of leadership in shaping these relationships. Transformational leaders who inspire and support employees foster positive social exchanges, enhancing retention outcomes.

6.4 Organisational Culture as a Mediating Factor

Organisational culture emerges as a key factor influencing both talent development and retention. A culture that promotes innovation, collaboration, and inclusivity creates an environment where employees feel motivated and engaged (Schein, 2017).

The findings suggest that culture acts as a mediating variable, influencing the effectiveness of talent management practices. For example, training programs are more

effective in organisations with supportive cultures that encourage learning and experimentation.

Conversely, negative cultures characterised by high stress and poor communication can undermine talent management efforts. Employees in such environments are more likely to experience burnout and seek opportunities elsewhere.

6.5 Digital Transformation and Workforce Implications

Digital transformation has profound implications for talent management in fashion technology departments. While it creates opportunities for innovation and efficiency, it also introduces challenges related to skill development and employee well-being (Westerman et al., 2014).

The findings indicate that digital transformation requires employees to continuously adapt to new technologies. This can be both motivating and stressful. Organisations must therefore provide adequate support, including training and resources, to help employees navigate these changes.

Additionally, digital transformation has enabled flexible work arrangements, such as remote work. These arrangements can enhance employee satisfaction and retention, particularly among younger workers who value flexibility (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020).

6.6 Addressing Retention Challenges

The study identifies several challenges affecting talent retention, including skill gaps, competitive labour markets, and work-life balance issues. Addressing these

challenges requires a holistic approach that integrates multiple strategies.

Bridging Skill Gaps: Organisations must invest in targeted training programs to address skill gaps. Collaboration with educational institutions and industry partners can also help develop relevant skills.

Enhancing Employee Engagement: Engagement can be improved through recognition, career development opportunities, and supportive leadership. Engaged employees are more likely to remain with organisations.

Promoting Work-Life Balance: Flexible work arrangements and wellness initiatives can help reduce burnout and improve retention.

6.7 Integration of Findings and Theoretical Framework

The findings reinforce the relevance of the theoretical framework:

- **Human Capital Theory** explains the importance of continuous learning
- **RBV** highlights the strategic value of talent
- **Social Exchange Theory** emphasises relational dynamics

Together, these theories provide a comprehensive understanding of talent development and retention in fashion technology departments.

6.8 Implications for Practice

The study offers several practical implications:

- Organisations should adopt integrated talent management strategies
- Leadership development programs should be prioritised
- Organisational culture should be aligned with innovation and inclusivity
- Digital transformation initiatives should be accompanied by employee support mechanisms

7. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive qualitative exploration of talent development and retention within fashion technology departments, a domain increasingly shaped by rapid digital transformation and evolving workforce expectations. Drawing on secondary data and grounded in established theoretical frameworks, the research highlights the multifaceted nature of talent management in this context.

The findings underscore that talent development is no longer limited to traditional training but requires continuous, adaptive learning systems that integrate technical and creative competencies. Organisations that invest strategically in upskilling and reskilling initiatives are better positioned to respond to technological disruptions and maintain a competitive advantage. In line with Human Capital Theory, such investments enhance employee capabilities, thereby contributing to organisational performance and innovation.

From a strategic perspective, the Resource-Based View (RBV) reinforces the notion that skilled talent in fashion technology departments constitutes a critical organisational asset. However, the study also reveals that the sustainability of this

advantage depends heavily on effective retention strategies. High turnover rates, driven by competitive labour markets and evolving employee expectations, pose significant challenges to maintaining institutional knowledge and operational continuity.

The application of Social Exchange Theory further highlights the importance of relational dynamics in shaping employee retention. Organisations that foster supportive work environments, recognise employee contributions, and provide meaningful career development opportunities are more likely to cultivate loyalty and long-term commitment. Leadership and organisational culture play pivotal roles in this process, acting as enablers of engagement and satisfaction.

Moreover, the study emphasises the dual impact of digital transformation. While it creates opportunities for innovation and flexibility, it also introduces challenges related to skill obsolescence and employee stress. Therefore, organisations must adopt a balanced approach that integrates technological advancement with employee well-being and support systems.

In conclusion, effective talent development and retention in fashion technology departments require a holistic and integrated approach that combines strategic investment, supportive leadership, and adaptive organisational practices. Future research should build on these findings by incorporating primary data and exploring context-specific dynamics, particularly in emerging markets such as Bangladesh's ready-made garment (RMG) sector.

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