

# Employee Retention Strategies for Generation Z in the Workforce

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## ABSTRACT

Currently, the world of work is experiencing major changes in the demographic composition of its workforce. Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, is starting to enter the professional world and take on important roles in various sectors. The main objective of this research is to identify and map scientific publication trends related to employee retention strategies, especially those focused on Gen Z. The research method used in this article is a quantitative approach with bibliometric methods. This research aims to analyze trends and patterns of scientific publications related to the topic of employee engagement among Generation Z in the context of organizational work culture. It can be concluded that Generation Z employee retention strategies demand a more adaptive, personal and technology-based approach. Recent studies show that work flexibility, sustainable career development, and two-way communication are key factors in retaining young talent in the world of work. Policy makers in the field of human resources are advised to start designing data-driven HR policies that are able to capture Gen Z's work preferences and behavior more accurately

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, the world of work is experiencing major changes in the demographic composition of its workforce. Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, is starting to enter the professional world and take on important roles in various sectors. Gen Z, which is different from previous generations, grew up in the digital era and has a unique perspective on work. They are known as digital natives who adapt very quickly to technology, but also have high expectations for work-life balance and also meaning in what they do [1]. Another characteristic is that they tend to get bored

easily and do not hesitate to change jobs if they feel dissatisfied. Based on data from the 2023 LinkedIn report, the Gen Z turnover rate was recorded to be higher than other generations with more than 70% of them considering changing jobs in less than two years [2].

The high turnover rate among Gen Z is a big challenge for companies. Too rapid employee turnover causes various losses such as increased recruitment and training costs for new employees and also the loss of experience and knowledge that could have been developed within the organization. This also has an impact on the productivity and

stability of teams within the company. So based on this, companies need to develop retention strategies that are not only effective in general, but also suit the specific characteristics and needs of Gen Z. The one-size-fits-all approach is no longer relevant in the current era of multigenerational work.

While the topic of employee retention is not new, research specifically addressing retention strategies for Gen Z is limited. Most previous studies focused more on the millennial generation (Gen Y) or Gen X. However, a deep and data-based understanding of Gen Z's behavior and preferences in the workplace is really needed so that companies can create a work environment that is able to retain them for longer. This research is here to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive picture of how the academic and practitioner communities respond to this issue through scientific publications. The results of this mapping can later become the basis for further research and policy development in the world of work.

To answer these needs, the bibliometric approach was chosen as the main method in this research. Bibliometric methods allow researchers to analyze scientific publications quantitatively, such as looking at trends in the number of publications from year to year, identifying the most influential authors and journals, keywords that frequently appear, and collaboration patterns between researchers or institutions. This approach, in other words, helps build a big picture of how the topic of Gen Z employee retention is developing in academic literature. Bibliometric analysis is also useful for discussing gaps or topics that have not been widely researched so that it can serve as a guide for future researchers or be taken into consideration in creating HR policies that are more targeted.

The main objective of this research is to identify and map scientific publication trends related to employee retention strategies, especially those focused on Gen Z. This research also aims to find the dominant keywords used, influential authors and journals in this field, and also the research directions that have been pursued so far. So it

is hoped that this research can provide a real contribution in the form of recommendations that are useful for both academics and human resource practitioners. Through a more comprehensive understanding of what has been researched and what has not, more effective and sustainable Gen Z employee retention strategies can be developed more precisely.

## 2. LITERATUR REVIEW

### 2.1 *Employee Retention*

Employee retention is a term that refers to an organization's efforts to keep their workforce employed over the long term. According to Chaminade in [4], retention is a strategic process that aims to keep high-value employees from leaving the organization. More than just numbers or statistics of employees who remain, retention also concerns the extent to which employees are committed to their work, feel satisfied with their role and work environment and also have a genuine desire to continue developing within the organization. This is different from the concept of turnover which refers to the level of employee turnover in a company, whether voluntarily or not. If turnover emphasizes the number of employees who leave, then retention emphasizes the quality and efforts to retain the best talent in the long term.

In an organizational context, maintaining a high employee retention rate is very important because it is directly related to operational efficiency and effectiveness. When employees stay longer, companies can reduce costs arising from re-recruitment, training new employees, and work adaptation. Apart from that, team continuity and a consistent work culture also play a big role in creating a productive work environment. High turnover can actually have negative consequences, such as loss of knowledge and skills that have been built, decreased team

spirit and also increased workload for remaining employees. A study conducted by Gallup in [5], shows that companies with high retention rates tend to have better financial performance and productivity than companies with high turnover rates.

The factors that influence an employee's decision to stay or leave a company are very diverse and interrelated. Several main factors that are often mentioned in various literature include job satisfaction, competitive compensation and benefits, healthy relationships with superiors, and a supportive work environment [6]. Opportunities to develop and obtain training are also important considerations for the younger generation who are more ambitious and hungry to improve their skills. An inclusive organizational culture and values that align with employees' personalities also contribute greatly to the desire to stay. For Gen Z, factors such as transparency, flexibility in working hours, and meaning in work tend to be more dominant aspects than just financial stability.

Companies in responding to retention challenges need to design effective and adaptive strategies. Some approaches that are commonly used include providing ongoing training and development programs, creating work flexibility such as remote working or flexible working hours, providing rewards according to achievements and also building an active and sustainable employee involvement system. Many companies are also starting to adopt approaches based on motivation theories such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs or Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory which helps in understanding the needs and expectations of employees from various backgrounds. An effective retention strategy can retain employees within the company

and increase their morale and productivity [7].

Especially for generation Z, retention strategies need to be made more relevant and personal. This generation grew up in the digital era, is accustomed to instant access to information, and tends not to hesitate to change jobs if they do not feel appreciated or developed. So companies must be more flexible in work patterns, build open and transparent communication and also create a work environment that has meaningful values and goals. Gen Z is more responsive to workplaces that support mental health, provide space for innovation, and consistently recognize achievements.

## 2.2 Characteristics of Generation Z

Generation Z or often referred to as Gen Z is a generation group born between 1997 and 2012. They grew up in a very different era compared to previous generations, namely Gen Y (Millennials) and Gen X [8]. If Millennials witnessed the transition from an analog to digital world, then Gen Z was born and raised in an environment that is completely digital. They are familiar with fast internet, social media, smartphones and advanced technology such as artificial intelligence (AI) from an early age. These factors shape their way of thinking, interacting and preferences in the world of work and everyday life.

Gen Z in the work environment shows very distinctive characteristics and differentiates them from previous generations. They are known as digital natives because they are very fluent in using technology and quickly master new digital tools. They also have a tendency to look for meaning in work that is not just about salary but also social and personal contributions.

They really value work-life balance and do not hesitate to refuse excessive working hours in order to maintain life balance. But because they have the desire to continue to develop, they also easily get bored if the work is monotonous. Gen Z is also known to be independent and open to diversity, and prefers to work in an autonomous style [9].

Regarding work expectations and preferences, Gen Z tends to choose leaders or bosses who are supportive and communicative and not authoritarian. They like fast, honest and constructive feedback so they can immediately improve performance or learn from mistakes. They really value an inclusive, open and value-based work culture [9]. Companies that have strong employer branding and a social or sustainability vision are attractive to Gen Z. They want to be part of a workplace that not only employs them but also aligns with their personal values.

These characteristics also bring their own challenges for companies in the retention aspect. Gen Z tends to have a higher turnover rate because they don't hesitate to leave jobs that they feel don't align with their expectations or values. The job-hopping phenomenon also occurs more often if they feel underappreciated or do not have room to develop. However, if approached with the right strategy, Gen Z can actually be a valuable asset in the long term. They are fast learners, creative, adaptive to change and very comfortable working with technology.

This makes retention strategies for Gen Z need to be designed flexibly and adaptively with an approach that cannot be equated with previous generations. The main focus must be directed at improving employee experience, arranging

personal and relevant benefits and also sustainable training and development programs. A work environment that supports values, transparency and personal growth is very important to attract and retain Gen Z. Employer branding also needs to be built with a narrative that illustrates that the company has goals that are aligned with Gen Z's life values such as sustainability, inclusivity and social innovation.

### 2.3 Workplace Culture

Workplace culture is a set of values, norms, beliefs and practices that develop within an organization and influence the way employees interact, make decisions and carry out their daily work. According to Robbins and Judge in [10], organizational culture is a system of shared meaning that is shared by members of an organization and that differentiates the organization from others. Schein in [11] added that organizational culture is formed from basic assumptions learned by groups in solving external problems and internal integration. Work culture cannot be equated with written rules such as SOPs because culture is more informal but powerful in shaping employee behavior. One example is that in cultures that emphasize collaboration, employees tend to be more open to sharing ideas than in competitive cultures.

In practice, workplace culture consists of various interrelated elements. The company's core values become the foundation that shapes collective thought patterns and actions within the organization, such as integrity, innovation or diversity. Leadership style and communication patterns between superiors and subordinates are also a strong reflection of organizational culture. Reward systems, valued work ethics, and how the company responds to

achievements and failures also become part of a living culture. Even seemingly simple elements such as a dress code, weekly meeting traditions, or how to welcome new employees can become symbols of a company's distinctive culture.

Work culture has a direct impact on employee behavior and feelings in carrying out their work [12]. When company culture supports openness, cooperation, and fairness, employees tend to feel more motivated, satisfied, and loyal. A healthy culture can also create a sense of belonging and increase engagement, which ultimately affects work productivity and efficiency. On the other hand, a toxic and stressful or discriminatory culture will make employees feel isolated and tend to leave the organization. In many cases, a positive culture is the main reason why someone chooses to stay at a company even though there are other offers that are higher in terms of salary.

There are various types of work culture that develop in organizations and each type has characteristics and suitability for certain types of industries. Hierarchical cultures, for example, tend to be found in government agencies or the financial sector which emphasize structure, formality and control. Meanwhile, an adhocracy culture is more suitable in creative or technology industries because it emphasizes innovation and flexibility. A collegial culture emphasizes cooperation and a sense of togetherness which is suitable in companies that rely on strong teamwork, while a competitive culture may grow in sales or corporate environments that pursue high targets. Understanding this type of culture is important so that companies can adapt managerial strategies to their internal values.

For generation Z who is now starting to dominate the world of work, organizational culture plays a significant role in determining their loyalty and involvement. Gen Z really values an inclusive, open and flexible work culture. They are looking for not only stable employment but also a workplace that allows them to grow personally, be valued as individuals, and feel heard. The values of diversity, transparency and space to give and receive feedback are things they really uphold. If the workplace culture feels rigid, authoritarian or does not reflect the values they believe in, Gen Z will not hesitate to look for opportunities elsewhere that better align with their principles and expectations.

Building a healthy work culture is a shared responsibility, but the biggest role remains in the hands of leaders and the HR division. To create a strong and positive culture, organizations must start from consistent internal communication, leaders who are role models and together with cultural activities that strengthen a sense of togetherness. Practices such as mentoring, wellness programs and training that support a company's core values can help strengthen a desired work culture. What is no less important is that organizational culture must always be relevant and in line with the company's vision and mission so that it not only becomes a symbol but also becomes part of the life of every individual in the organization.

## 2.4 Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is an important concept in human resource management that describes the extent to which an employee is involved emotionally, cognitively and behaviorally in his work and in the organization where he works. According to Kahn in [13]

engagement arises when individuals feel safe, meaningful, and have energy in carrying out their work roles. Meanwhile, Gallup in [14] defines engagement as the active involvement and enthusiasm of employees towards their work and the place they work. This is different from job satisfaction which focuses more on comfort or pleasure in the workplace, and is also different from organizational commitment which is more concerned with the willingness to remain in the organization. Employee engagement involves more than just feelings of satisfaction because it includes active participation, dedication, and passion in achieving common goals.

There are several main factors that play a big role in shaping the level of employee engagement in an organization. A positive and supportive work environment is an important initial foundation because it provides a sense of security and comfort for employees [15]. Leadership style also has a big influence when managers are able to build open communication and provide inspirational direction. Personal and career development opportunities also determine whether an employee feels appreciated and given the opportunity to grow. Recognition of contributions is also no less important, where employees who feel appreciated tend to be more involved in their work. Another influencing factor is the balance between personal and work life, which is an important value, especially in the current modern work era.

For Generation Z, engagement in the workplace has a slightly different feel compared to previous generations. Gen Z values workplaces that provide space for personal and professional growth. They tend to look for work that has

meaning and has a positive social impact. Growing up in the era of social media and digital technology makes their expectations for engagement higher where they want a workplace that is responsive, responsive and provides regular feedback. This generation also quickly gets bored if they are not given challenges or space to innovate, so organizations need to continue to provide stimulus in the form of new projects or additional responsibilities that are relevant to their interests.

High levels of employee engagement have been proven to have a significant impact on organizational performance. Engaged employees demonstrate higher productivity and quality of work because they feel emotionally connected to their work. Apart from that, strong engagement also reduces absenteeism and turnover rates because employees tend to feel satisfied and want to stay longer in the organization. Engagement also encourages individual creativity and initiative to solve problems proactively. Equally important, engaged employees create a positive, collaborative and enthusiastic work culture, which ultimately strengthens overall team performance.

To increase engagement, organizations can implement several targeted and relevant strategies. One of the most effective ways is to build open, two-way communication between leaders and employees. Managers should regularly provide constructive feedback and create discussion space to hear the team's aspirations. Employee recognition programs, whether in the form of formal awards or simple appreciation, can be very influential in increasing feelings of appreciation. It is also important to build a work culture that is flexible, supports diversity, and is able to adapt to

employees' personal needs [15]. Lastly, providing training, coaching, and career development pathways is a form of long-term investment in employee potential that can increase their attachment to the organization.

The role of technology in employee engagement is increasingly inevitable in this digital era. Companies can utilize various digital platforms to strengthen internal communication and real-time team collaboration, especially in remote or hybrid work contexts. Apart from that, various HR applications now provide engagement survey features, employee recognition systems, and anonymous problem reporting. Technology also allows organizations to collect and analyze engagement data more systematically, so leaders can make data-based decisions to improve employee work experiences. With the right technology integration, the process of building engagement can become more personal, efficient and impactful.

### 3. METHODS

The research method used in this article is a quantitative approach with bibliometric methods. This research aims to analyze trends and patterns of scientific publications related to the topic of employee engagement among Generation Z in the context of organizational work culture. The subjects of this research are scientific articles

that have been published and can be accessed via databases such as Google Scholar, while the research object is bibliographic information from the article such as title, author's name, keywords, year of publication, name of journal and institution of origin of the author. This research was conducted in April 2025 online, with the research location being non-physical because the data was collected through digital access to scientific journals.

The sampling technique used in this research was purposive sampling [16]. This technique is carried out by selecting relevant articles based on certain criteria, such as articles published within the last five years (2019–2024), using English or Indonesian, and focusing on the topic of employee engagement and Generation Z.

Data was collected through an article search process with keywords such as “employee engagement”, “Gen Z”, “workplace culture”, and “organizational behavior”. Articles that meet the criteria are then selected and analyzed based on available bibliometric information. The data analysis stage was carried out through the process of identifying frequently appearing keywords, co-authorship analysis and visual mapping of dominant topic trends based on year of publication using the help of VOSviewer software. It is hoped that the results of this analysis will provide a general overview of the direction of research developments and scientific contributions that have been made in the realm of employee engagement studies related to the younger generation in the world of work today.





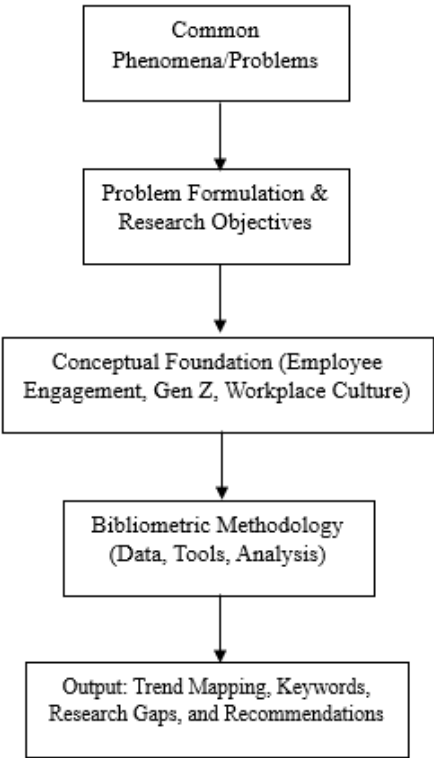


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 General Description of Research Publications



Analysis of publication trends regarding Employee Retention Strategies and Generation Z in the workplace from 2021 to 2024 shows a significant increase. This reflects the growing attention from academics and practitioners to the importance of retaining employees from Generation Z. This increase

in the number of publications is likely influenced by changing work dynamics including the adoption of remote work and the need to adapt retention strategies to the unique preferences of Generation Z. For example, research by [17] reveals that work-

life balance influences employee retention and intention to change jobs among Generation Z.

Countries with the highest research activity in this field include Indonesia, India and European countries. Institutions such as the PGRI Adi Buana University Surabaya and the National Development University "Veteran" East Java in Indonesia have contributed significantly to this literature. For example, research by [18] explored the role of work-life balance, organizational support, and job satisfaction in increasing the retention of Generation Z employees at Bogasari Flour Mills Surabaya. The concentration of research in these areas may be related to digital transformation and rapid technology adoption, which are influencing Generation Z's work preferences.

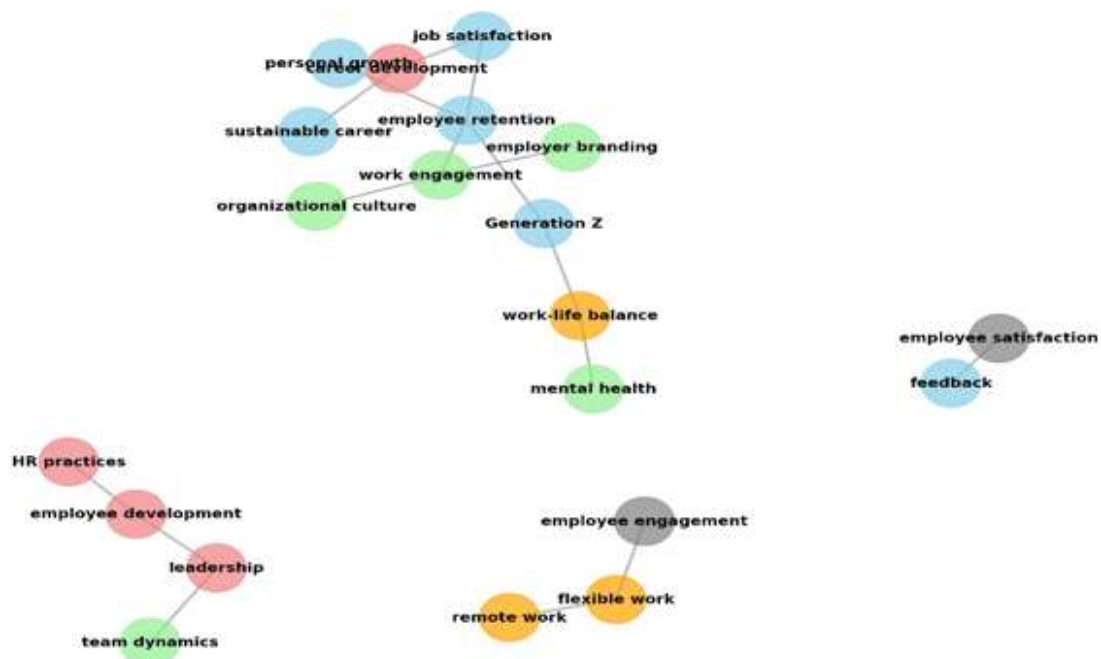
The dominant language in this publication is English reflecting an effort to reach a global audience. But there are also significant publications in Indonesian and other European languages that demonstrate a strong regional contribution. For example, an

article by [19] entitled "The Role of Employer Branding in Work-life Balance and Employee Retention Relationship among Generation Z Workers: Mediation or Moderation?" published in English. The dominance of English can facilitate the international dissemination of research findings and increase cross-border collaboration.

Although specific data regarding the number of citations and citation trends are not available in existing sources but it is important to note that articles discussing the relationship between personal growth initiatives and Generation employee retention such as the study by [20], have provided valuable insights. These articles are frequently cited in related literature indicating their relevance in this research field. The increasing citation trends may indicate that this topic continues to gain attention and that the research findings have a practical impact in the development of Generation Z employee retention strategies.

#### 4.2 Thematic Analysis and Keyword Research

Network Visualization: Thematic Clusters and Keyword Relationships (Employee Retention Strategies for Gen Z)



Bibliometric analysis of publications regarding Generation Z employee retention strategies from 2021 to 2024 shows that keywords such as employee retention, Generation Z, work engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational culture often

appear in the literature. The high frequency of these keywords reflects the research focus on challenges and strategies in retaining young employees in the modern work era. For example, employee retention and Generation Z are often linked to highlight the need for

organizations to understand the unique preferences and values of this generation. The use of word clouds and keyword frequency tables can help visualize the dominance of these terms in the literature.

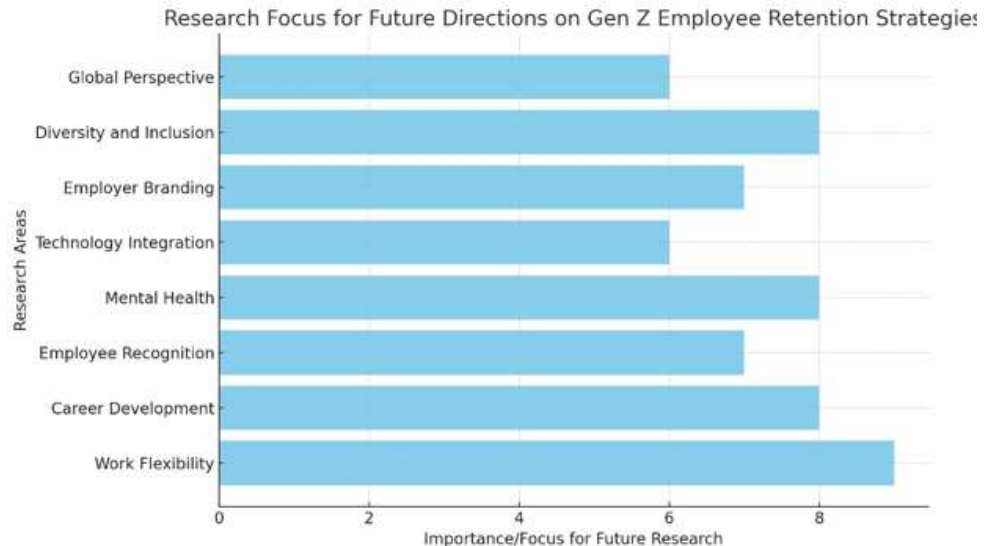
Thematic cluster mapping using VOSviewer reveals relationships between frequently occurring keywords. The first cluster covers topics such as HR practices and leadership, which shows the important role of management in employee retention. The second cluster focuses on work-life balance and flexibility, reflecting Generation Z's need for balance between personal and professional life. The third cluster highlights Gen Z characteristics and values, which reflect this generation's unique values and expectations for the work environment. Colored network map visualization from VOSviewer can show how these keywords are interconnected in the literature.

In recent years, especially since 2023, the emergence of new topics such as remote work, digital transformation, and mental health shows a shift in research focus. This

change was most likely triggered by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the accelerated adoption of technology in the world of work. Generation Z, who grew up in the digital era shows a preference for work flexibility and attention to mental health. Overlay visualization from VOSviewer can be used to show when these keywords start to appear and become the focus of research.

The relationship between employee engagement and work characteristics of Generation Z is a topic that is increasingly discussed in the literature. This generation is known to value flexibility, meaning in work, and opportunities for personal development. Research by [19] highlight the role of employer branding in improving work-life balance and retention of Generation Z employees. However, there is still room for further exploration regarding how employee engagement strategies can be tailored to the unique values and expectations of Generation Z.

#### 4.3 Implications, Research Gaps, and Future Research Directions



First, research findings show that work flexibility, such as remote work options and flexible working hours, is highly valued by Gen Z employees. The study by [21] revealed that flexible work policies increase job satisfaction and intention to stay at the company. Apart from that, clear career development and effective two-way communication are also important factors in increasing the retention of these young

employees. The use of digital technology to support collaboration and training also contributes positively to their engagement in the workplace.

Second, organizations need to adapt their traditional approaches to employee management to attract and retain Gen Z. The concept of Employee Value Proposition (EVP) which includes the values of sustainability, inclusivity and self-development

opportunities is becoming increasingly important. Research by [19] show that strong employer branding can mediate the relationship between work-life balance and retention of Gen Z employees. This means that organizations must build a positive and authentic image to attract this generation.

Third, from a social and economic perspective, retention of Gen Z employees can reduce turnover costs and increase organizational stability. This generation is known to have high loyalty to companies that meet their needs and values. Research by [22] shows that employee recognition and flexible work arrangements contribute significantly to Gen Z talent retention. By retaining talented young employees, organizations can ensure long-term continuity and growth.

Fourth, digital transformation plays an important role in a more personalized and adaptive retention strategy. The use of AI and big data makes it possible to predict turnover and identify individual employee needs. This allows organizations to design timely and relevant interventions. Additionally, digital platforms can be used to provide customized training and support effective communication between management and employees.

Fifth, there is a gap in the literature related to the lack of empirical research in developing countries. Most studies still focus on North America and Europe, while the contexts of Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America are less explored. Research by [23] in Indonesia shows the importance of organizational support and work-life balance in increasing the retention of Gen Z

employees, highlighting the need for further studies in local contexts.

Sixth, methodological approaches in Gen Z employee retention research are still limited. Many studies use qualitative approaches, while exploration of longitudinal quantitative models is lacking. A mixed methods approach can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence retention. Additionally, the integration of interdisciplinary perspectives, such as work psychology and technology, can enrich the analysis.

Seventh, the limited research focus on internal organizational factors ignores the influence of external factors such as national culture, labor market trends, and global crises. The study by [24] in China show that a supportive work environment and effective training significantly influence the retention of Gen Z employees, emphasizing the importance of considering the broader cultural and economic context.

Eighth, future research directions should include cross-cultural and country studies to understand the differences in perceptions and needs of Gen Z employees. Exploration of the impact of technology on retention, longitudinal studies of changing expectations, and intervention research in the field can provide deeper insights. In addition, the integration of ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) issues and micro and macro approaches in analysis can help organizations design more effective and sustainable retention strategies.

Topic	Key Findings	Research Gaps	Future Directions
Work Flexibility	Highly valued by Gen Z for retention.	Impact on retention in diverse industries is unclear.	Study long-term effects across sectors.
Career Development	Gen Z seeks continuous growth opportunities.	Lack of studies on tailored programs in non-tech industries.	Focus on personalized career growth strategies.
Employee Recognition	Recognition improves retention and morale.	Insufficient research on its effect on Gen Z.	Compare recognition across generations.
Mental Health	Mental health is crucial for engagement and retention.	Limited studies linking mental health programs to retention.	Investigate mental health initiatives' direct impact.
Technology Integration	Digital tools enhance work engagement for Gen Z.	Few studies on specific tools' effects in various environments.	Assess the effectiveness of digital tools for engagement.
Employer Branding	Strong branding can improve retention.	Lack of focus on how branding influences Gen Z.	Research the role of employer branding in Gen Z retention.
Diversity & Inclusion	Gen Z values inclusive work environments.	More research needed in non-Western contexts.	Explore the impact of diversity on retention globally.
Global Perspective	Research mainly focuses on North America and Europe.	Limited studies from developing countries.	Comparative studies between regions and cultural contexts.

5. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that Generation Z employee retention strategies demand a more adaptive, personal and technology-based approach. Recent studies show that work flexibility, sustainable career development, and two-way communication are key factors in retaining young talent in the world of work. Organizations that are able to integrate the values of sustainability, life balance, and digital engagement in their employee value proposition (EVP) have a greater chance of retaining the loyalty of Gen Z. The implications of these findings are not only important from a managerial perspective, but also have a significant impact on

organizational efficiency economically and socially.

Policy makers in the field of human resources are advised to start designing data-driven HR policies that are able to capture Gen Z's work preferences and behavior more accurately. In addition, future researchers need to expand the geographical scope of studies to developing countries and adopt a more interdisciplinary mixed methods approach. Collaboration between academics, HR practitioners and technology experts is also critical to creating retention solutions that are not only innovative, but also inclusive and sustainable. That way, organizations can build a strong foundation to face the increasingly complex dynamics of the future workforce.

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