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Employee Experience 2.0: Global Bibliometric Mapping

Loso Judijanto
IPOSS Jakarta, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Employee Experience (EX) has emerged as a strategic priority in modern organizations as technological transformation reshapes the nature of work, employee expectations, and organizational culture. This study conducts a global bibliometric mapping of Employee Experience 2.0 using Scopus-indexed publications and VOSviewer visualization techniques to understand the intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and collaboration networks in this domain. The results reveal strong research clusters centered on workplace well-being, job satisfaction, organizational management, risk factors, and human–technology interaction. Collaboration maps indicate that the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, China, and Japan lead global research productivity and cross-country partnerships. Author networks highlight influential scholars such as Kivimäki, Stansfeld, and Kawakami, whose work anchors the psychosocial and occupational health dimensions of EX. The top-cited publications emphasize employee mental health, burnout, resilience, and the impact of digital service environments, reflecting the core foundations of EX 2.0. Overall, this study demonstrates that Employee Experience research is increasingly interdisciplinary, technologically driven, and globally collaborative. The findings offer valuable insights for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to design more adaptive, human-centered, and digitally aligned workplace strategies.

Corresponding Author:

Name: Loso Judijanto
Institution: IPOSS Jakarta, Indonesia
Email: losojudijantobumn@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee experience (EX) has evolved into a central strategic dimension within modern human resource management as organizations worldwide navigate rapid digital transformation. In today's technology-driven workplace, employees interact with digital tools, automated systems, and hybrid work models that reshape the nature of work and professional relationships [1]–[3]. This shift marks the transition toward Employee Experience 2.0, where the employee journey is not simply defined by administrative processes but by a holistic ecosystem shaped by technology, organizational culture, and the growing expectations of a diverse workforce [4], [5]. Companies recognize that a well-designed employee experience can enhance retention, productivity, and engagement, ultimately contributing to sustained organizational performance [6], [7].

The global context amplifies the urgency of this transformation. Post-pandemic work arrangements, talent

mobility, changing workforce demographics, and the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) have pushed organizations to rethink how they support the physical, emotional, and digital well-being of employees [8], [9]. Research on employee experience increasingly emphasizes psychological safety, workplace empowerment, professional development, and human–technology interaction. Landmark studies such as [10], [11] highlight that contemporary service ecosystems are mediated by technology, demanding new roles from employees in creating value alongside customers and digital tools. Similarly, earlier foundational works by [12]–[14] show that poor workplace experiences—such as burnout, bullying, and lack of empowerment—have far-reaching effects on mental health, retention, and organizational outcomes.

Over the past decade, scholarly interest in employee experience has expanded significantly across disciplines such as organizational behavior, human resource management, occupational health, and service science. Emerging themes include digital well-being, remote work effectiveness, human–AI collaboration, inclusive workplace design, and resilience. Journals have increasingly published studies exploring how technology and human factors interact to shape the modern employee lifecycle. However, despite this growth, there remains a lack of comprehensive bibliometric mapping that synthesizes global research trends, influential works, collaboration networks, and evolving thematic clusters in EX research. A systematic mapping of this kind is essential to understand how the field is transforming and where future research directions may lie.

Bibliometric analysis provides a methodological foundation for examining the intellectual structure and development of a research domain. By analyzing publication patterns, citation networks, keyword co-occurrence, and cross-country collaboration, this approach enables researchers to uncover hidden patterns, influential authors, and emerging themes within the literature. For the topic of Employee Experience 2.0, bibliometric mapping not only identifies dominant research clusters—such as workplace well-being, employee empowerment, human-centered technology design, and organizational culture—but also reveals how these clusters interact and evolve over time.

Therefore, this study conducts a global bibliometric mapping of Employee Experience 2.0 to provide a comprehensive overview of the knowledge landscape. Using advanced visualization techniques—including network, overlay, and density maps—this research identifies the most cited works, core thematic structures, and major collaboration networks across authors, institutions, and countries. The findings aim to offer meaningful insights for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers, highlighting how employee experience has transformed in response to technological advancements and shifting workforce expectations. Ultimately, this study contributes to strengthening the conceptual foundations of EX and supporting organizations in designing more impactful, human-centered, and future-ready employee experience strategies.

2. METHODS

2.1 Design

This study employs a bibliometric research design to systematically map the global development of scholarly work on Employee Experience 2.0. Bibliometric analysis is widely used to identify publication trends, influential authors, thematic structures, and collaboration networks within a specific research domain. By integrating quantitative performance indicators with science-mapping visualization techniques, this study provides an evidence-based understanding of how employee experience has evolved across countries, institutions, and subject areas.

2.2 Data Source and Search Strategy

The data for this study were extracted from the Scopus database, which is widely recognized for its extensive coverage of peer-

reviewed journals in the social sciences, management, and behavioral sciences. Scopus was selected due to its indexing quality, citation accuracy, and suitability for bibliometric mapping. A comprehensive search query was developed to capture literature related to employee experience, digital employee journey, workplace well-being, and technology-enabled HR practices, using keywords such as "employee experience," "EX," "employee journey," "digital workplace," "employee well-being," and "workplace empowerment" individually and in combination. The search was limited to journal articles, conference papers, and reviews published up to 2025, after which duplicates, non-English publications, and documents not directly aligned with the employee experience theme were removed during the data cleaning stage. The final dataset was then exported in RIS and CSV formats for citation extraction and visualization.

2.3 Data Cleaning and Standardization

To enhance analytical accuracy, a rigorous data cleaning procedure was conducted prior to visualization. Variations in author names, inconsistent institutional affiliations, and duplicated entries were standardized. Synonymous keywords were merged to avoid fragmentation in thematic analyses (e.g., "employee wellbeing" and "employee well-being"; "digital workplace" and "workplace digitalization"). Institutional names with multiple abbreviations were harmonized into a single form to ensure the reliability of co-authorship and affiliation network mapping. This cleaning process strengthened the consistency of the dataset and reduced analytical bias across the bibliometric outputs.

2.4 Bibliometric Techniques and Visualization Tools

The bibliometric procedures in this study involved two complementary analytical techniques: performance analysis and science mapping. Performance analysis was used to identify publication volume, top-cited studies, influential authors, and dominant journals in the employee experience literature, with citation counts and publication frequencies serving as indicators of scholarly impact and research development. Science-mapping techniques were then applied to visualize the intellectual structure and thematic linkages within the field using VOSviewer, which generated keyword co-occurrence networks to highlight major thematic clusters, overlay visualizations to show the temporal evolution of topics, density maps to indicate the concentration of influential keywords, and co-authorship maps to reveal global collaboration patterns among authors, institutions, and countries. Together, these visualizations provided a comprehensive understanding of how research themes in Employee Experience 2.0 have formed, expanded, and converged over time.

2.5 Analytical Procedures

After importing the cleaned dataset into VOSviewer, several analyses were conducted.

First, the keyword co-occurrence analysis identified conceptual clusters that reflect dominant and emerging themes. Thresholds were applied to ensure that only keywords with a minimum frequency of appearance were included in the network. Second, co-authorship analysis examined collaboration patterns at the author, institutional, and national levels. Third, overlay visualization highlighted the chronological shift in topics, indicating how interest in specific areas—such as digital workplace, mental well-being, or human–AI interaction—has evolved. Lastly, density visualization provided insight into the intensity of research focus across themes.

The findings from all analyses were triangulated to strengthen the interpretation. The combination of network patterns, citation influence, and thematic structures allowed the study to build a comprehensive understanding of the global EX research landscape.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Institutional Collaboration Network

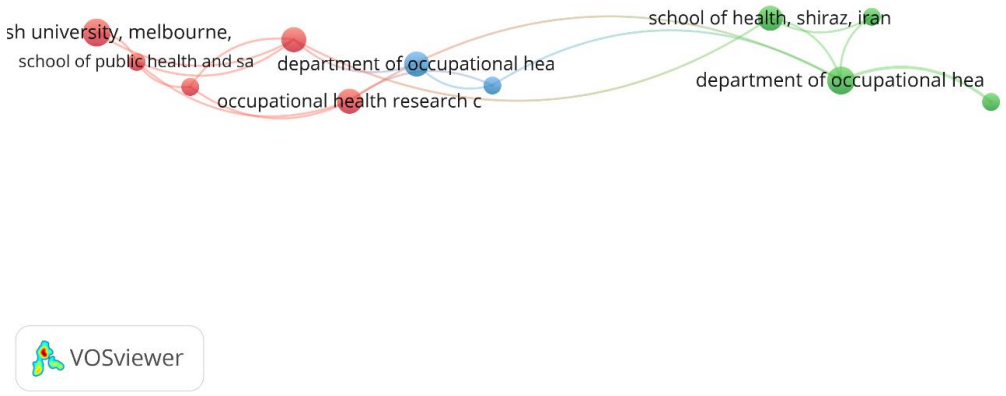

Figure 1. Affiliation Collaboration Visualization
Source: Data Analysis Result, 2025

Figure 1 illustrates the affiliation collaboration network, revealing several institutional clusters engaged in research on occupational health, work experience, and workplace well-being. Institutions from Australia—such as Monash University and its School of Public Health and Safety—form a dense red cluster that reflects strong research activity and internal collaboration among occupational health departments. A second cluster, shown in green, features institutions like the School of Health at Shiraz University in Iran, indicating increasing contributions from Middle Eastern scholars and the growing global scope of employee experience research. The bridging connections between Western and Asian institutions highlight emerging cross-regional partnerships, while the overall distribution of nodes and link strengths suggests a moderate level of international collaboration, with certain institutions acting as key connectors linking geographically distant research groups. This pattern underscores the interdisciplinary nature of employee experience studies and their expanding relevance across public health, psychology, and organizational research.

3.2 Author Collaboration Network

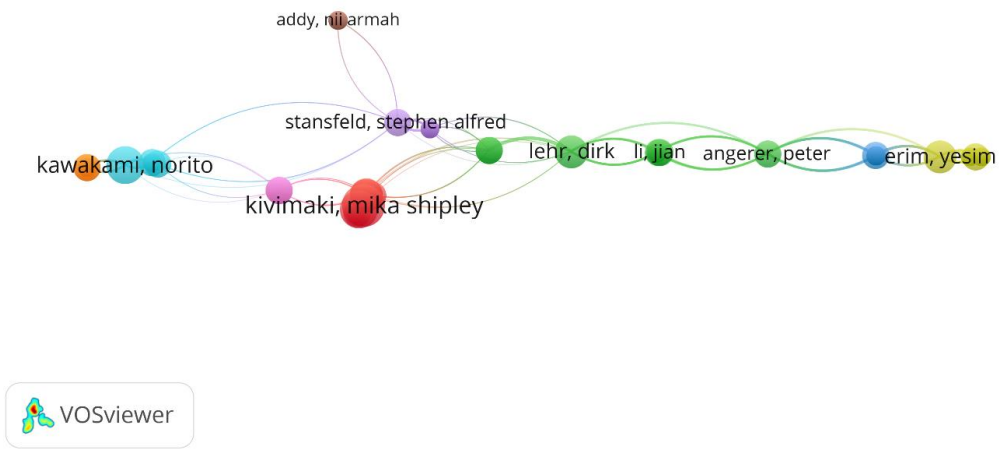

Figure 2. Author Collaboration Visualization
Source: Data Analysis, 2025

Figure 2 presents the overlay visualization illustrating the temporal evolution of research themes in green finance. Earlier Figure 2 presents the author collaboration network, which demonstrates a strong central structure dominated by Mika Kivimäki as the most influential and collaborative scholar, supported by long-term research partnerships with Shipley, Stansfeld, Kawakami, Li Jian, and Angerer that together form a large, interconnected cluster specializing in workplace health, stress, and organizational psychology. This main cluster is complemented by additional networks, such as the collaborative group involving Lehr, Angerer, and Erim, indicating continued scholarly attention to psychosocial risk factors and employee well-being. Strong link strengths from authors like Norito Kawakami and Stephen Stansfeld further highlight their prominent roles in occupational health and employee stress research. Overall, the multi-cluster structure reflects that employee experience research is rooted in well-established scientific communities focused on work-related stress, burnout, bullying, and organizational behavior, with these collaborations collectively strengthening the conceptual foundations of Employee Experience 2.0.

3.3 Country Collaboration Network

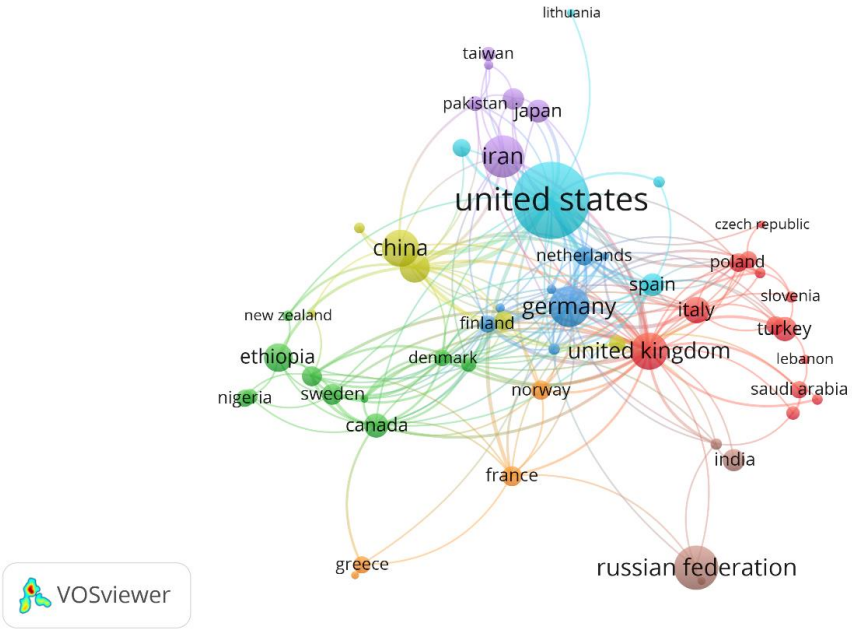

Figure 3. Country Collaboration Visualization
Source: Data Analysis, 2025

Figure 3 illustrates a highly connected global country collaboration network dominated by the United States, which appears as the largest node, indicating its leading role in publication output and collaboration intensity, with extensive connections to China, Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain, Canada, and Japan that position it as the central hub of global Employee Experience (EX) research. European countries—including Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, France, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden—form dense collaborative clusters, reflecting the region's longstanding focus on occupational health, labor policies, and workplace satisfaction, while Asian countries such as Japan, China, Pakistan, and Taiwan show increasing prominence in studies on work experience, mental health, and organizational management. The inclusion of Middle Eastern and African countries like Iran, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, and Nigeria further demonstrates the expanding geographic reach of EX research and growing recognition of employee-related issues across diverse economic and cultural contexts. Overall, the visualization confirms that Employee Experience 2.0 is a multidisciplinary and international field sustained by strong cross-national collaborations.

3.4 Keyword Co-Occurrence and Thematic Structure

1. Network Visualization

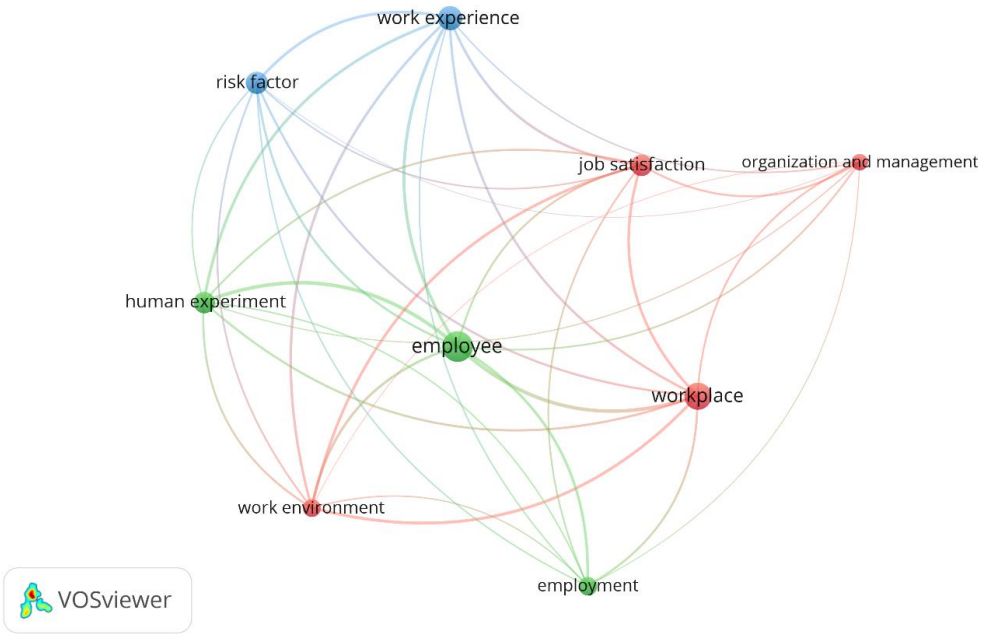

Figure 4. Network Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2025

Figure 4 presents the keyword co-occurrence network that maps the conceptual structure of Employee Experience 2.0 research, highlighting several interconnected clusters that collectively represent the dominant themes and intellectual foundations of the field. At the center of the visualization, "employee" appears as the most prominent node, emphasizing its central role as the anchor concept around which other themes are organized. Surrounding this core is a major red cluster consisting of "workplace," "job satisfaction," "work environment," and "organization and management," illustrating how employee experiences are shaped by organizational culture, leadership practices, and the physical and social characteristics of the work setting. A blue cluster anchored by "work experience" and "risk factor" reflects strong scholarly attention to psychosocial dimensions such as stress, burnout, workload, and safety, while a green cluster featuring "human experiment" and "employment" demonstrates methodological diversity and broader considerations related to labor market conditions and job structures. The strong interconnections across all clusters indicate that employee experience is inherently multidimensional, combining psychological, organizational, managerial, and occupational health perspectives, and the network as a whole suggests that Employee Experience 2.0 is a deeply integrated thematic ecosystem where human well-being, workplace design, managerial practices, and risk management are closely intertwined. These cohesive linkages underscore an ongoing scholarly shift toward more human-centered, holistic, and technology-enhanced approaches to understanding and improving workplace experiences.

2. Density Visualization

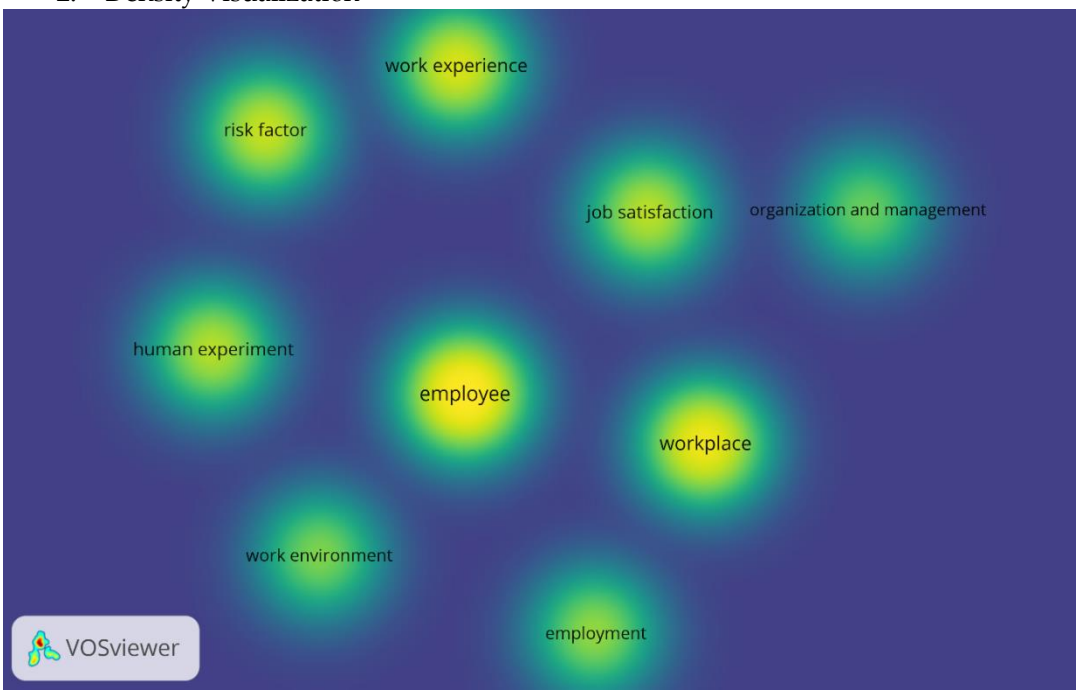

Figure 5. Density Visualization

Source: Data Analysis, 2025

The institutional collaboration network indicates that universities in China, Russia, and Europe dominate research in The density map shows that the highest concentrations of research attention fall on the keywords employee, workplace, work experience, and job satisfaction. These hotspots represent the conceptual core of the field, confirming that Employee Experience 2.0 is strongly driven by themes of employee well-being, organizational management, and work conditions. Peripheral yet important themes such as risk factor, work environment, and employment indicate emerging areas related to occupational health and policy-level interventions.

3. Overlay Visualization (Temporal Trends)

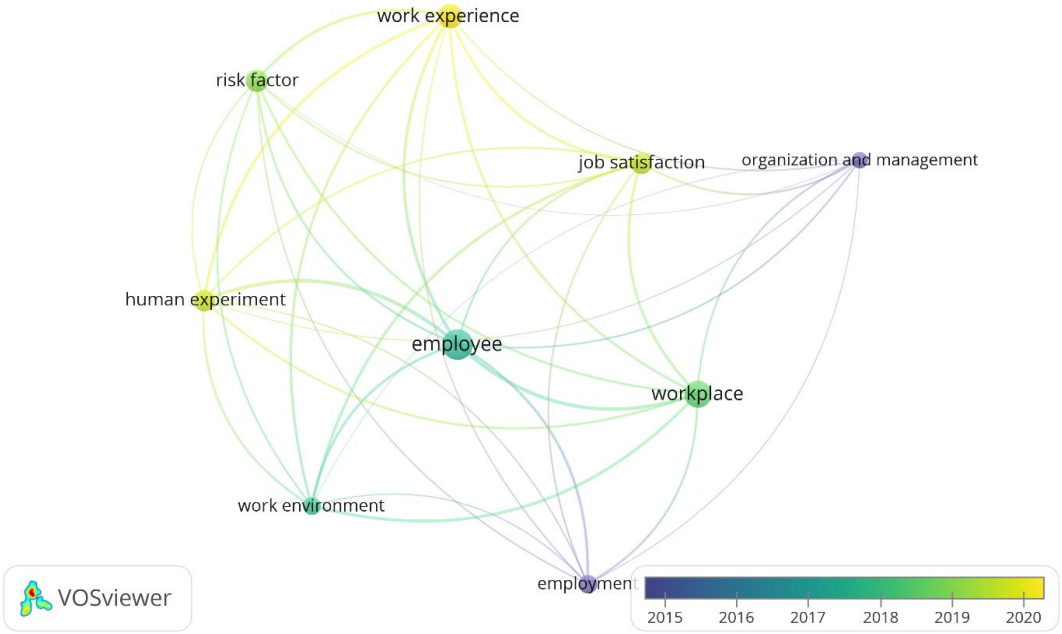

Figure 6. Overlay Visualization
Source: Data Analysis Result, 2025

The overlay visualization illustrates a clear temporal gradient from 2015 to 2020, showing that earlier research in 2015–2016 primarily focused on employment and the work environment, followed by increasing attention in 2017–2018 to organizational management and job satisfaction, while studies from 2019–2020 shifted toward themes of work experience and risk factors, reflecting heightened interest in employee well-being amid digital transformation and post-pandemic changes in the workplace. These chronological patterns indicate that the field is steadily evolving from structural and organizational concerns toward more psychological, experiential, and human-centered approaches, aligning closely with the conceptual progression of Employee Experience 2.0.

3.5 Citation Analysis (Top Cited Publications)

Table 1. Top Cited Research

Citations	Authors & Year	Title
585	Larivière, B., Bowen, D., Andreassen, T.W., ... Wünderlich, N.V., De Keyser, A. (2017)	"Service Encounter 2.0": An investigation into the roles of technology, employees and customers
461	Spence Laschinger, H.K., Leiter, M., Day, A., Gilin, D. (2009)	Workplace empowerment, incivility, and burnout: Impact on staff nurse recruitment and retention outcomes
456	Kivimäki, M., Virtanen, M., Vartia, M., ... Vahtera, J., Keltikangas-Järvinen, L. (2003)	Workplace bullying and the risk of cardiovascular disease and depression
326	Wang, P.S., Simon, G.E., Avorn, J., ... Petukhova, M.Z., Kessler, R.C. (2007)	Telephone screening, outreach, and care management for depressed workers and impact on clinical and work productivity outcomes: A randomized controlled trial
256	Sgarbossa, F., Grosse, E.H., Neumann, W.P., Battini, D., Glock, C.H. (2020)	Human factors in production and logistics systems of the future

239	Fisher, C.D. (2003)	Why do lay people believe that satisfaction and performance are correlated? Possible sources of a commonsense theory
196	Song, Z., Rose, S., Safran, D.G., ... Day, M.P., Chernew, M.E. (2014)	Changes in health care spending and quality 4 years into global payment
188	Lyu, H., Wick, E.C., Housman, M., Freischlag, J.A., Makary, M.A. (2013)	Patient satisfaction as a possible indicator of quality surgical care

Source: Scopus, 2025

Table 1 presents the top-cited studies that form the intellectual foundations of Employee Experience 2.0 research, beginning with Larivière et al. (2017) with 585 citations, whose concept of "Service Encounter 2.0" provides the theoretical backbone for understanding how technology reshapes interactions among employees, customers, and service systems. Spence Laschinger et al. (2009), cited 461 times, highlight the impact of workplace empowerment, incivility, and burnout on nurse retention, linking organizational climate with employee well-being. Kivimäki et al. (2003) contribute significant insights into the mental and physical health risks associated with workplace bullying, while Wang et al. (2007) emphasize the importance of depression management and employee support systems in improving productivity. Sgarbossa et al. (2020) add to the discussion by examining human factors in production and logistics within digitally transforming environments, whereas Fisher (2003) explores the psychological foundations of why satisfaction and performance are perceived as correlated. Song et al. (2014) connect healthcare spending to workforce quality, and Lyu et al. (2013) illustrate how patient satisfaction reflects employee-driven service quality. Sterling et al. (2020) provide critical insights into home health workers' experiences during COVID-19, underscoring EX in crisis contexts, while Basim and Çetin (2011) validate a resilience scale essential for psychological measurement in EX studies. Collectively, these highly cited works underscore three central intellectual roots of Employee Experience research—digital transformation and employee–technology interaction, psychosocial well-being and empowerment, and organizational behavior, resilience, and satisfaction—which align closely with the evolution toward Employee Experience 2.0, where technology, culture, and human factors converge.

Discussion

Overall, the results reveal that Employee Experience 2.0 is shaped by the convergence of technological shifts—such as AI, digital workplace systems, and automation—with human-centric concerns including burnout, mental health, and work environment, supported by extensive global collaboration across North America, Europe, Asia, and emerging regions, as well as expanding interdisciplinary links involving occupational health, management, public health, and psychology. Research in this field increasingly integrates digital tools, behavioral insights, and organizational strategies to create more meaningful and adaptive work experiences, while the prominence of health-oriented keywords and influential authors underscores the centrality of employee well-being. Overlay trends further show a growing scholarly emphasis on experiential and psychological dimensions of work, confirming that Employee Experience 2.0 is not merely an HR initiative but a multidisciplinary research domain shaped by technological innovation, global scientific collaboration, and evolving workplace expectations.

4. CONCLUSION

This bibliometric study provides a comprehensive overview of the global research landscape surrounding Employee Experience 2.0, revealing a rapidly expanding and increasingly interdisciplinary field strongly shaped by technological change. The

findings indicate that employee well-being, job satisfaction, risk factors, and organizational management form the conceptual core of the discipline, while emerging themes such as digital workplace design, human–technology interaction, and resilience reflect the evolving nature of work in the digital era. Collaboration networks show that EX research is predominantly driven by contributions from leading countries including the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, China, and Japan, with growing participation from Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Influential authors and institutions contribute to cohesive scientific communities rooted in occupational health, organizational psychology, and service innovation, and the top-cited publications emphasize the importance of psychosocial factors, empowerment, burnout, and digital service environments in shaping employee experiences.

Overall, the results highlight that Employee Experience 2.0 is far more than an extension of traditional HR practices; it represents a complex, multidimensional domain where technology, human behavior, and organizational design intersect. As workplaces continue to undergo digital and cultural transformation, this study offers a strong empirical foundation for future research and provides meaningful insights to guide practitioners in creating more adaptive, human-centered, and strategically aligned work environments.

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