

THE ROLE OF WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY IN ENHANCING EMPLOYEE RETENTION AMONG GENERATION Z: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Generation Z is increasingly dominating the labor market and bringing changes to employee expectations regarding the work environment. One of the factors considered important in retaining Generation Z employees is workplace flexibility. This study aims to analyze the role of workplace flexibility in enhancing employee retention among Generation Z through a qualitative approach using library research. Data were obtained from various academic sources, including books, scientific journal articles, research reports, and other relevant publications discussing workplace flexibility, employee retention, and Generation Z in the workplace. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis to identify patterns, themes, and relationships among the concepts studied. The findings indicate that workplace flexibility, such as flexible working hours, remote working, and hybrid working, plays a significant role in improving employee retention among Generation Z. Furthermore, factors such as work-life balance, job satisfaction, employee well-being, organizational commitment, and employee engagement help explain the relationship between workplace flexibility and employee retention. The study also reveals that the successful implementation of workplace flexibility is influenced by organizational culture, leadership support, and technological readiness. This research contributes to the human resource management literature and provides practical implications for organizations in designing retention strategies that align with the characteristics and expectations of Generation Z.

Keywords: *Workplace Flexibility, Employee Retention, Generation Z, Human Resource Management.*

INTRODUCTION

Changes in the work environment influenced by the development of digital technology, globalization, and post-pandemic organizational transformation have changed employees' expectations of work (Ariel, 2025). In this context, the organization's ability to retain employees (employee retention) is one of the important factors in maintaining the sustainability and competitiveness of the organization. A high rate of employee turnover can have various consequences, such as increased recruitment and training costs, loss of organizational knowledge, and decreased work productivity. Therefore, employee retention is a strategic issue that is getting more and more attention in the study of human resource management.

The urgency of employee retention is increasing as Generation Z enters the labor market (Yulita, 2025). According to the Deloitte Global Gen Z and Millennial Survey, about 31% of Generation Z respondents expressed an intention to switch workplaces in the next two years, indicating that Generation Z employee retention is becoming a significant challenge for modern organizations (Deloitte, 2025). The findings show that organizations face growing challenges in retaining young talent. The high work mobility of Generation Z indicates that the factors that influence their decision to stay in the organization need to receive more serious attention from practitioners and academics.

Generation Z, who were born between 1997 and 2012, is known as the generation that grew up in a digital environment and has different characteristics compared to previous generations. This generation tends to prioritize flexibility, work-life balance, mental health, self-development opportunities, and a work environment that supports autonomy and innovation (Aura & Hutahaean, 2024). Hidayatullah emphasized that Generation Z not only considers the financial aspect in choosing a job, but also pays attention to the

quality of the work experience they get (Hidayatullah et al., 2025). Therefore, organizations are required to develop more adaptive work policies according to the preferences and needs of this generation.

One of the strategies that many organizations are implementing to respond to changing workforce preferences is workplace flexibility. Work flexibility refers to a policy that gives employees the flexibility to determine the time, location, and manner of carrying out work. Common forms of work flexibility include flexible working hours, remote working, hybrid working, and flexibility in task management (Mawabagja et al., 2025). As information and communication technology develops, work flexibility is no longer seen as an additional perk, but has become part of an organization's strategy to increase job satisfaction while retaining employees.

According to Octaviani, workplace flexibility has a relationship with various positive organizational outcomes, such as increasing job satisfaction, employee well-being, employee engagement, and organizational commitment (Octaviani et al., 2025). These factors are believed to contribute to increased employee retention as they help create a better work-life balance. In the context of Generation Z, work flexibility is often seen as one of the main factors in determining their workplace choice and career sustainability in an organization.

Although research on workplace flexibility and employee retention has grown quite rapidly, the findings are still spread across different industry sectors, countries, and organizational contexts. Most previous studies have used a quantitative approach to test the relationship between work flexibility and employee retention (Fitriani & Widhianto, 2024; Nardi & Ginting, 2025; Purnamasari et al., 2025). Meanwhile, studies that specifically integrate and synthesize various research findings with a focus on Generation Z are still relatively limited. In addition, there is no comprehensive understanding of the factors that explain how workplace flexibility plays a role in increasing employee retention in Generation Z. This condition shows the need for a literature review that is able to integrate various research results so as to produce a more systematic and comprehensive understanding of the role of workplace flexibility in increasing employee retention among Generation Z.

In contrast to previous research, this study does not focus on testing the relationship between variables through an empirical approach, but rather synthesizing various results of previous research to identify patterns, trends, and factors that explain the relationship between workplace flexibility and employee retention in Generation Z. Thus, this study offers a contribution in the form of a more comprehensive literature mapping and the presentation of a better understanding about the mechanism of how work flexibility plays a role in increasing Generation Z employee retention.

Based on this background, this study aims to identify the forms of workplace flexibility applied in organizations, analyze the role of workplace flexibility in increasing employee retention in Generation Z, and examine the factors that explain the relationship between the two concepts. Through a qualitative approach with the type of library research, this research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of human resource management literature as well as become a practical reference for organizations in designing more adaptive work policies to retain Generation Z talents in an increasingly dynamic work era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Generation Z in the Workplace

Generation Z is a group of individuals born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s and grew up in an environment heavily influenced by the development of digital technology (Fu et al., 2024). Unlike the previous generation, Generation Z has a high level of technological literacy, is used to fast access to information, and is more adaptive to changes in the work environment. These characteristics affect their expectations of the world of work, including in terms of flexibility, work-life balance (*Work-life balance*), self-development opportunities, and a work environment that supports employee mental health and well-being (Nugroho et al., 2025).

Various studies show that Generation Z not only considers the financial aspect in choosing a job, but also pays attention to the quality of work experience provided by the organization. They tend to want greater autonomy at work, open communication, and the opportunity to develop competencies on an ongoing basis (Mulyaningsih & Kisworo, 2026). Therefore, organizations need to understand the characteristics and preferences of Generation Z in order to be able to attract, develop, and retain young talent effectively in the midst of increasingly dynamic changes in the world of work.

Workplace Flexibility

Workplace flexibility refers to organizational policies and practices that give employees flexibility in determining the time, location, and manner of carrying out work (Rahayu et al., 2025). This concept has developed along with changes in modern work patterns supported by advances in information and communication technology. In practice, work flexibility is not only seen as a facility for employees, but also as an organizational strategy to improve employee productivity, job satisfaction, and well-being.

Pratiwi and Wartini stated that *Workplace Flexibility* can be realized in various forms, such as the flexibility of working time (*flexible working hours*), flexibility of the work site through *Remote Working*. or *Hybrid working*, as well as flexibility in the execution of work (*Job Autonomy*)(Pratiwi & Wartini, 2025). These various forms of flexibility allow employees to have greater control over their work so that they can create a more positive work experience. In the context of Generation Z, work flexibility is one of the most valued aspects because it aligns with their need for freedom, mobility, and life balance.

Employee Retention

Employee retention is the ability of an organization to keep employees employed for a certain period of time (Hidayatullah et al., 2025). Employee retention is one of the important indicators in the effectiveness of human resource management because it relates to workforce stability, organizational productivity, and sustainability of company performance. High turnover rate (*Employee turnover*) can lead to increased recruitment and training costs, loss of organizational knowledge, and disruption of operational processes.

Suci stated that employee retention is influenced by various factors, both from individuals and organizations (Sacred, 2025). These factors include job satisfaction (*Job Satisfaction*), work-life balance (*Work-life balance*), employee welfare (*employee well-being*), employee attachment (*employee engagement*), and organizational commitment (*organizational commitment*). In recent years, work flexibility has also been increasingly studied as one of the factors that has the potential to increase employee retention, especially in Generation Z who have a high preference for flexible work patterns.

Relationship between Workplace Flexibility and Employee Retention

Relationship between *Workplace Flexibility* and *Employee retention* has become one of the topics that has received a lot of attention in human resource management research. According to Aura and

Hutahaean that work flexibility can have a positive impact on employees' decisions to stay in the organization (Aura & Hutahaean, 2024). The flexibility of time, location, and work methods allows employees to achieve a better life balance, increase job satisfaction, and reduce the stress that comes from job demands. This condition ultimately contributes to increased employee loyalty and desire to stay in the organization.

Rahmawati & Wendra states that the relationship between *Workplace Flexibility* and *Employee retention* not always direct (Rahmawati & Wendra, 2025). A number of studies have found that the influence of work flexibility on employee retention is explained through other factors, such as *Work-life balance*, *Job Satisfaction*, *employee well-being*, *employee engagement*, and *organizational commitment*. These findings suggest that work flexibility plays a role as a factor that shapes a positive work experience, which then influences employees' decision to stay in the organization.

In addition, most previous research still focused on employees in general or was conducted in a specific organizational context. Studies that specifically integrate findings on the role of *workplace flexibility* in increasing *employee retention* in Generation Z are still relatively limited. Therefore, this study was conducted to synthesize the results of previous research to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between *workplace flexibility* and *employee retention* in the context of Generation Z.

METHODE

The research method used in this study is a qualitative approach with the type of library research (Scott, 2017). The qualitative descriptive approach was chosen because this study aims to understand and describe in depth the role of workplace flexibility in increasing employee retention in Generation Z based on various relevant literature sources. Qualitative research allows researchers to interpret, study, and understand the phenomenon being studied comprehensively through the analysis of various available written data.

The data sources in this study consist of secondary data obtained from books, scientific journal articles, previous research results, reports from research institutions, and various academic publications that discuss workplace flexibility, employee retention, and the characteristics of Generation Z in the world of work (Arikunto, 2010). Data was collected through documentation techniques by searching various relevant literature and related to the research focus.

Data analysis was carried out using qualitative descriptive analysis techniques. The analysis process begins with collecting and identifying various relevant data sources, then continues with data reduction through information sorting according to the focus of the research. The data that has been selected is then presented systematically to facilitate the interpretation process. The final stage is carried out by drawing conclusions based on patterns, relationships, and findings obtained from the various literature analyzed (Moleong, 2018). Through this approach, the research is expected to be able to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of workplace flexibility in increasing employee retention in Generation Z.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Generation Z in the World of Work

Generation Z is a group of individuals born around 1997-2012 and is currently one of the most significant growth groups in various industrial sectors. Unlike previous generations, Generation Z grew up in an environment characterized by the rapid development of digital technology, the internet, and social media. These conditions shape distinctive characteristics, values, and work preferences that affect the way

they view work, organization, and career development. According to Situmorang and Silalahi, Generation Z no longer views work solely as a means of earning income, but also as a medium to achieve life balance, self-development, and psychological well-being (Stuart & Scott, 2024). This shift in orientation shows that the success of organizations in retaining young talent is not only determined by economic factors, but also by the organization's ability to meet the non-financial needs of employees.

According to Aura and Hutahaean, the characteristics of Generation Z in the world of work can be grouped into three main aspects. The first aspect relates to the high need for work flexibility (Aura & Hutahaean, 2024). Inscription stated that Generation Z prefers a work environment that provides flexibility in managing time, location, and how to carry out work (Stuart et al., 2024). This flexibility is considered to be able to help them achieve work-life balance, while providing greater space to manage activities outside of work. This condition shows that work flexibility is no longer just an additional facility, but has become part of Generation Z's basic expectations of organizations.

The second aspect is a strong orientation towards self-development and continuous learning (Mardianty & Nur Agia, 2025). Generation Z tends to look for organizations that are able to provide opportunities to improve competencies, gain new experience, and develop careers on an ongoing basis. For this generation, learning opportunities are often seen as just as important as the compensation received. Therefore, organizations that are able to provide clear training, skill development, and career paths have a greater chance of attracting and retaining Generation Z talent.

Mawabagja emphasized that Generation Z has a high preference for a collaborative, inclusive, and technology-based work environment (Mawabagja et al., 2025). As a digital generation, they are used to utilizing technology in various activities so they expect organizations to be able to provide a modern work system supported by adequate technology. Generation Z also tends to prefer open, transparent, and less hierarchical communication. A work environment that allows active participation, collaboration between employees, and appreciation for diversity is considered to be more able to increase their comfort and attachment to the organization. Thus, organizational culture is one of the factors that also influences Generation Z's decision to stay in a job.

These various characteristics show that Generation Z has more complex expectations than previous generations. The high need for flexibility, self-development, and a supportive work environment makes this generation more selective in choosing and maintaining a job. Siri states that Generation Z has a relatively high tendency for work mobility if the organization is unable to meet their expectations (Series, 2024). Among the various characteristics found, the need for work flexibility is the most dominant aspect in the literature. Therefore, workplace flexibility can be seen as one of the strategic factors that has the potential to affect employee retention in Generation Z. Understanding these characteristics is an important foundation to explain how work flexibility can be used as an organizational strategy in retaining young talents in the midst of increasingly dynamic changes in the world of work.

Concept and Form of Workplace Flexibility

Workplace flexibility is one of the human resource management strategies that has grown rapidly in recent years (Putri et al., 2025). Although there are variations in definitions in various sources, most of the literature views workplace flexibility as an organization's ability to give employees flexibility in determining when, location, and method of performing work. This concept is developing along with changes in the characteristics of the workforce, advances in digital technology, and increasing demands for work-life balance. In the context of modern organizations, work flexibility is no longer positioned as an additional

perme, but rather as part of an organization's strategy to enhance the employee work experience while strengthening the organization's attractiveness in the labor market.

According to Pratiwi & Wartini, the most discussed forms of workplace flexibility can be grouped into three main categories, namely work time flexibility, workplace flexibility, and flexibility in the execution of work (Pratiwi & Wartini, 2025). All three forms show that work flexibility is not only related to when work is done, but also includes where and how the work is completed. This grouping shows that work flexibility is a multidimensional concept that allows organizations to adjust work policies to the needs of employees and the operational demands of the organization.

Flexible working hours is the most widely discussed form of flexibility in various literatures. This form gives employees the flexibility to set working hours as needed as long as job targets and responsibilities are met. According to Anhar et al, flexibility of working hours contributes to improved work-life balance, job satisfaction, and employee well-being (Anhar et al., 2025). In the context of Generation Z, flexible working hours are seen as one of the most appropriate policies for their preferences because they allow for a more balanced management of professional and personal activities.

The second category is the flexibility of the work site which is generally realized through remote working and hybrid working systems. The development of information technology allows employees to work from various locations without having to be physically present in the office all the time. Sanotoso et al. stated that the flexibility of the workplace is able to increase comfort, autonomy, and work efficiency, especially for generations who have a high level of digital literacy such as Generation Z (Sentosa et al., 2026). In addition to providing greater freedom in managing work, a flexible work system is also considered to be able to increase employees' positive perception of the organization because it shows trust and support for individual needs.

Meanwhile, flexibility in the execution of work or job autonomy refers to the level of freedom that the organization gives to employees in determining the best way to complete their tasks and responsibilities. Hanum & Mulyana emphasizing that work autonomy is related to increased intrinsic motivation, employee engagement, and organizational commitment (Hanum & Mulyana, 2025). For Generation Z, work autonomy provides space to innovate, develop creativity, and show their abilities more optimally. Therefore, the flexibility of work methods is one of the aspects that is increasingly considered in contemporary human resource management practices.

While most of the literature shows a positive impact on workplace flexibility, some studies have also identified a number of challenges in its implementation (Pradana & Putri, 2025). These challenges include reduced social interaction between employees, difficulties in team coordination, the potential for decreased work supervision, and the blurring of boundaries between personal and work life. The results of the analysis show that the effectiveness of work flexibility is not only determined by the policies implemented, but also influenced by the organizational culture, leadership quality, and technological readiness of the organization. Thus, the successful implementation of workplace flexibility requires a balance between employee needs and organizational goals.

Overall, the results of the literature analysis show that work time flexibility, workplace flexibility, and flexibility in work implementation are the most dominant forms of workplace flexibility discussed in various studies. These three forms are closely related to the characteristics of Generation Z who value autonomy, life balance, and the use of technology in work. Therefore, workplace flexibility can be seen as one of the strategic instruments that has the potential to increase job satisfaction, employee attachment, and

retention of young talents in organizations. Understanding the various forms of work flexibility is an important foundation to explain how workplace flexibility contributes to employee retention in Generation Z.

Factors Explaining the Relationship between Workplace Flexibility and Employee Retention

The relationship between workplace flexibility and employee retention does not occur directly, but is influenced by various factors that shape the employee work experience. Hidayat et al explained that work flexibility is able to create a work environment that is more in accordance with individual needs so as to increase employees' desire to stay in the organization (Hidayat et al., 2025). In the context of Generation Z, work flexibility is becoming increasingly important because this generation has high expectations for life balance, work autonomy, and psychological well-being. Based on the results of the literature analysis, the factors that explain the relationship between workplace flexibility and employee retention can be grouped into three main categories, namely individual factors, psychological factors, and organizational factors.

Individual factors are mainly related to the ability of employees to achieve work-life balance and improve employee well-being. Panjaitan & Lestari emphasized that work flexibility provides an opportunity for employees to manage work times and locations according to their needs so as to be able to reduce conflicts between work and personal life. These conditions contribute to improving the physical and psychological well-being of employees (Panjaitan & Lestari, 2025). In the context of Generation Z, the ability to maintain a balance in life is one of the main considerations in choosing and maintaining a job. Therefore, work-life balance and employee well-being are individual factors that play an important role in explaining how work flexibility can improve employee retention.

According to Octaviani, the importance of psychological factors that include job satisfaction and employee engagement (Octaviani et al., 2025). Work flexibility allows employees to have greater control over their work, thus increasing a positive perception of the organization. When employee needs and preferences can be met, job satisfaction levels tend to increase. This condition then encourages the formation of emotional attachment to work and organization. Employees who feel satisfied and engaged in their work tend to have a lower desire to look for work elsewhere. Thus, psychological factors play a role as an important mechanism that links work flexibility to employees' decision to stay in the organization.

Organizational factors are organizational commitment (Afiani & Mulyana, 2022). Work flexibility can increase employees' perception of organizational support because it provides greater space for individuals to manage their work independently. When organizations are considered to be able to understand the needs of employees, trust, loyalty, and attachment to the organization tend to increase. A high organizational commitment then encourages employees to remain a part of the organization in the long run. This shows that the successful implementation of work flexibility depends not only on the benefits felt individually, but also on the organization's ability to build positive relationships with its employees.

According to Tantina et al., work-life balance and job satisfaction are the two most dominant factors in explaining the relationship between workplace flexibility and employee retention (Tantina et al., 2025). These two factors act as a liaison that explains how work flexibility can influence an employee's decision to stay in the organization. Meanwhile, employee well-being, employee engagement, and organizational commitment function as supporting factors that strengthen the influence of work flexibility on employee retention. This condition shows that the benefits of work flexibility are not only felt at the individual level, but also have an impact on the relationship between employees and the organization as a whole.

Although the literature shows a positive effect of workplace flexibility on employee retention, some studies have also identified a number of challenges in its implementation. Work flexibility that is not supported by an effective communication system, strong organizational culture, and clear performance management mechanisms can lead to feelings of isolation, decrease social interaction, and reduce employee attachment to the organization. Therefore, work flexibility cannot be seen as a single solution to improve employee retention. Its effectiveness is greatly influenced by how the organization manages and integrates work flexibility policies with other human resources strategies.

Overall, the results of the literature analysis show that workplace flexibility contributes to employee retention through various interrelated mechanisms. Individual, psychological, and organizational factors work simultaneously in shaping a positive work experience for employees. In the context of Generation Z, these factors are becoming increasingly relevant because they align with the characteristics of a generation that values flexibility, life balance, and work well-being. Therefore, organizations need to view work flexibility as part of an integrated retention strategy, not just an operational policy.

Challenges in Implementing Workplace Flexibility in Generation Z

Although workplace flexibility provides various benefits for organizations and employees, its implementation still faces a number of challenges that can affect its effectiveness in increasing employee retention. Salsabilla and Monica affirm that the success of work flexibility is not only determined by the level of freedom provided by the organization, but also by the organization's readiness to manage changes in work patterns and the ability of employees to make optimal use of this flexibility (Salsabilla & Monica, 2025). In the context of Generation Z, implementation challenges are becoming increasingly important because this generation has high expectations for work flexibility, life balance, and meaningful work experience.

According to Suryawijaya and Adinda Putri, reduced social interaction and blurring of the boundaries between personal and work life are two of the most discussed challenges in the study of workplace flexibility (Suryawijaya & Adinda Putri, 2025). Remote working and hybrid working systems allow employees to work more flexibly, but at the same time can reduce the frequency of direct interactions with colleagues and superiors. For Generation Z who are still in the early stages of career development, these limited interactions have the potential to hinder the learning process, knowledge transfer, and the formation of professional networks within organizations. In addition, high flexibility can also cause the boundaries between work and personal time to become less clear, increasing the risk of burnout and psychological distress if not managed properly.

Januar explained that there are challenges related to the difference in expectations between Generation Z and the organization. Generation Z tends to expect high flexibility, quick feedback, open communication, and ongoing self-development opportunities (January, 2024). However, not all organizations have a work culture, management system, and policies that are able to meet these expectations. The mismatch between employee expectations and organizational practices can lead to job dissatisfaction that ultimately drives increased intention to change jobs. This condition shows that work flexibility alone is not enough to sustain Generation Z if it is not accompanied by a work environment that supports their needs and characteristics.

Another challenge has to do with performance management and work coordination in a flexible environment. Ramadhan et al explained that work flexibility requires organizations to switch from an attendance-based supervision system to a work-outcome-oriented system (Ramadhan et al., 2025). These

changes require adequate technology support, clarity of work targets, and effective communication skills between leaders and employees. If the organization does not have a clear management system, work flexibility has the potential to cause misunderstandings, reduce the effectiveness of team coordination, and reduce employee attachment to the organization. Therefore, the success of the implementation of work flexibility is greatly influenced by the organization's readiness to manage changes in work patterns as a whole.

Although these challenges are widely discussed in the literature, the results of the analysis show that the benefits of workplace flexibility tend to outweigh the risks if applied appropriately. This emphasizes that work flexibility is not just an operational policy, but part of a human resource management strategy that requires the support of organizational culture, adaptive leadership, and effective communication systems. Thus, the success of workplace flexibility is not only determined by the level of flexibility provided by the organization, but also by the organization's ability to create social support, performance management mechanisms, and a work environment that is in accordance with the characteristics of Generation Z. Understanding these challenges is important so that organizations can optimize the benefits of work flexibility while minimizing obstacles that have the potential to reduce their effectiveness in increasing employee retention.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of various literature, workplace flexibility has an important role in increasing employee retention in Generation Z. Characteristics of Generation Z that prioritize life balance, work autonomy, self-development, and the use of technology make work flexibility one of the aspects that are highly considered in choosing and maintaining a job. Work flexibility that is realized through the flexibility of time, location, and work methods is able to create a work experience that is more in line with the needs and preferences of this generation.

Literature analysis also shows that the relationship between workplace flexibility and employee retention is influenced by various factors, such as work-life balance, job satisfaction, employee well-being, employee engagement, and organizational commitment. These factors play a role in shaping a positive work experience that encourages employees to stay in the organization. Among these various factors, work-life balance and job satisfaction are the most dominant aspects in explaining how work flexibility can increase Generation Z employee retention.

Despite providing various benefits, the implementation of workplace flexibility still faces a number of challenges, such as reduced social interaction, blurring of the boundaries between personal and work life, and differences in expectations between Generation Z and organizations. Therefore, the successful implementation of work flexibility requires the support of an adaptive organizational culture, effective leadership, a good communication system, and clear performance management. Thus, workplace flexibility can be one of the effective strategies for organizations in retaining Generation Z talent and increasing organizational competitiveness in the midst of increasingly dynamic changes in the world of work.

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