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Innovation in Talent Management to Enhance Generation Z Retention and Performance

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Abstract

The dynamic development of the labor market demands organizations to innovate in talent management, especially in adapting to the unique characteristics of Generation Z. This study aims to identify and analyze effective retention strategies for Generation Z employees in Indonesia. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, this paper synthesizes relevant literature on talent management and employee retention. The findings indicate that innovative talent management—integrating digital technologies, flexible work arrangements, and inclusive organizational culture—is effective in enhancing retention and performance among Generation Z. Practical implications suggest that organizations must design adaptive retention policies aligned with business goals and generational expectations. This study contributes insights into human capital strategies in the digital era.

Keywords: Talent Management, Innovation, Generation Z, Employee Retention

INTRODUCTION

The increasingly widespread development of information technology, companies are required to keep up with developments in order to compete and achieve excellence (Mighfar & Wahjono, 2024b). Employees with superior skills and talents are not only valuable assets but also key drivers of growth and competitive advantage (Febrian et al, 2024). A company's sustainability and growth depend not only on the creation of innovation and effective marketing strategies, but also on the company's ability to create a work environment

that supports the development and retention of talented employees (Mighfar & Wahjono, 2024b).

Talent management is a key strategy for addressing various critical HR issues and problems within organizations, including the need for a diverse workforce at all levels, a competitive labor market, global competition, and increasing retirement rates caused by an aging workforce (Kulkarni & Rai, 2023).

The first factor that influences improving performance retention is talent management. Lewis and Heckman (2006); (Dalahmeh, 2020),

defines talent management as “An overall process starting from recruitment, placement, to development and planning for employee development towards a better direction.

The second factor that influences the performance retention of the next generation Z, shows that various factors significantly influence Generation Z's decision to remain employed within an organization. Job satisfaction, recognition for achievement, and career development are key factors influencing employee retention (Fitria et al, 2024). Support from superiors and an inclusive organizational culture are also key elements in increasing the loyalty of Generation Z employees (Claristia & Etikariena, 2024b).

Demographic changes also play a significant role in the talent war. New generations, such as Generation Z, bring different values and expectations to the workplace (Sumartik et al, 2023). Generation Z, which includes people born between 1997 and 2012, is entering the workforce and playing an increasingly

important role in the dynamics of modern organizations (Mighfar & Wahjono, 2024b). This generation has unique characteristics that distinguish it from previous generations, particularly in terms of job expectations (Hidayatullah et al, 2025).

The LinkedIn Workforce Report (2024) shows that the turnover rate for Generation Z in Indonesia has reached 54% higher than that of Generations Y and X in the past five years. This data indicates a significant challenge for organizations in retaining employees from this generational group (Hidayatullah et al, 2025).

Indonesia's population composition by age group is currently dominated by Gen Z, the generation born between 1996 and 2010 (Suryaningtyas et al, 2024). Gen Z dominates, numbering approximately 74.93 million, or 27.94 percent of the population (BPS, 2023). This represents a demographic bonus for Indonesia, which is expected to provide valuable capital for achieving Indonesia's golden age by 2045.

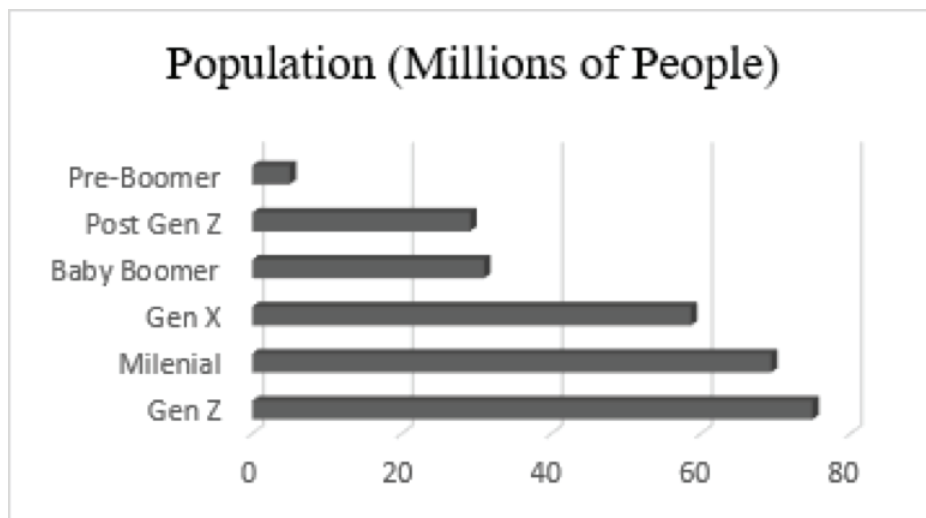


Figure 1. Population of Indonesia by generation
Source: BPS, 2024.

Based on the National Labor Force Survey (Sakernas) of the Central Statistics Agency for the August 2024 period, the number of the Indonesian workforce reached 152 million people with the millennial and Gen Z generations contributing dominantly to the number of the Indonesian workforce, reaching 50% of the workforce population (BPS, 2024).

comprehensively studied in the global talent management literature.

This study extends the global debate on Gen Z retention by integrating digital innovation with Indonesian cultural values, which is underexplored in the current literature.

Recent empirical studies have increasingly highlighted the importance of innovation in talent

Table 1. Labor force in Indonesia in 2024

Group Age	Labor Force (AK) According to Age Group			
	Work	Unemployment	Number of AK	% Working/AK
15-19	4.977.578,00	1.431.960,00	6.409.538,00	77,66
20-24	13.781.148,00	2.497.979,00	16.279.127,00	84,66
25-29	16.363.382,00	1.258.842,00	17.622.224,00	92,86
30-34	16.780.882,00	584.544,00	17.365.426,00	96,63
35-39	17.038.394,00	392.036,00	17.430.430,00	97,75
40-44	16.601.113,00	321.531,00	16.922.644,00	98,1
45-49	15.867.101,00	275.437,00	16.142.538,00	98,29
50-54	13.878.283,00	247.373,00	14.125.656,00	98,25
55-59	11.278.175,00	182.491,00	11.460.666,00	98,41
60+	18.075.948,00	273.406,00	18.349.354,00	98,51
Total	144.642.004,00	7.465.599,00	152.107.603,00	95,09

Source: BPS, 2024.

Preferences for work flexibility, work-life balance, and opportunities for personal development are key factors influencing the loyalty and continued employment of Generation Z within an organization. They tend to seek meaning in their work, emphasizing work flexibility, opportunities for development, and work-life balance (Sumartik et al, 2023).

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the most effective retention strategies for retaining Generation Z employees in Indonesia. Understanding the factors influencing the loyalty of Generation Z employees is expected to help organizations design more adaptive retention policies that align with the characteristics of this generation.

This research offers a new contribution in the form of a systematic synthesis of Generation Z retention strategies in Indonesia, which integrates the dimensions of digitalization, work flexibility, and local cultural values that have not been

management to address the dynamic needs of Generation Z employees. For instance, (Baykal, 2020) emphasized that the digitalization of human resource processes enhances efficiency and personalization in talent management, while (Torsello & Wieser, 2023) found that flexibility, inclusivity, and digitalization are the most influential factors in retaining Generation Z. Similarly, (Kulkarni & Rai, 2024) noted that organizations must redesign HR strategies to accommodate Gen Z's preference for autonomy, technological engagement, and work-life integration.

In the Indonesian context, (Hidayatullah et al., 2025) identified a lack of self-development opportunities and work flexibility as key causes of high turnover among Gen Z employees. Furthermore, (Lailiyah et al., 2025) discovered that the integration of digital mentoring and adaptive career pathways enhances engagement and long-term loyalty. These studies strengthen

the theoretical foundation of this research and underscore the need for a holistic innovation model in managing and retaining Generation Z talent within the Indonesian labor market.

Accordingly, this study aims to identify, synthesize, and analyze innovative talent management strategies that effectively enhance the retention and performance of Generation Z employees in Indonesia. The research specifically focuses on the integration of digital transformation, work flexibility, and inclusive organizational culture as key drivers of employee engagement and loyalty.

Based on the identified research gap, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do innovation and digital transformation influence talent management practices

in enhancing Generation Z retention and performance?

2. What organizational strategies are most effective in aligning flexibility, inclusivity, and technological adoption to meet the expectations of Generation Z employees?
3. How can organizations in developing countries, particularly Indonesia, adapt global best practices in talent management to local cultural values and workforce characteristics?

These questions are expected to guide a systematic exploration of how innovation in talent management contributes not only to organizational competitiveness but also to sustainable human capital development in the digital era.

Theoretical overview and recent studies (state of art)

Table 2. Synthesis of previous studies on talent management and generation z retention

No.	Author (Year)	Study Title	Method	Key Findings	Location Context
1.	Torsello & Wieser (2023)	Attracting and Retaining Generation Z	Systematic Review	Finding that work flexibility, inclusivity, and digitalization are key	Global
2.	Hidayatullah et al. (2025)	Generation Z Employee Retention in Indonesia	SLR	Lack of work flexibility and self-development are the causes of high turnover.	Indonesia
3.	Claristia & Etikariena (2024)	Job Hopping Phenomenon among Gen Z Employees	Quantitative	Superior support, inclusive culture, and recognition have a big influence on Gen Z loyalty.	Indonesia
4.	Baykal (2020)	Digitalization of Human Resources: e-HR	Theoretical	Digital technology supports the effectiveness of talent management and personalized career development.	Global
5.	Magano et al (2020)	Generation Z: Project Management Soft Skills	Survey	Europe's Gen Z focuses on meaningful work, flexibility and continuous learning	Portugal
6.	Syahputra & Hendarman (2024)	Retention of Gen Z Employees in Start-ups	Quantitative	Employer branding, regular feedback, and flexibility increase Gen Z retention.	Indonesia

No.	Author (Year)	Study Title	Method	Key Findings	Location Context
7.	Joseph &	Talent Management Strategies for Millennials and Gen Z	Qualitative	Effective retention strategies: participatory culture, fast-paced careers, and digital mentoring	Indonesia
8.	Baroto (2024) Mahmoud et al. (2021)	Workplace Motivation across Generations X, Y, Z	Cross-generational survey	Gen Z is more motivated by flexibility, work values, and life balance.	USA, Europe

Source: Processed data (2025).

The majority of studies focus on developed countries or use only one approach (quantitative/survey), none have systematically examined the intersection between digitalization, local work culture, and Gen Z retention in a developing country like Indonesia.

Talent management concept

Talent management is a strategic approach that involves the identification, acquisition, development, and retention of high-potential individuals within an organization (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). Collings and Mellahi's integrative model emphasizes the importance of positions that differentially contribute to competitive advantage, so talent management is not merely an administrative issue but also concerns the strategic architecture of human resources.

According to Schiemann (2014), talent management must be aligned with business strategy and capable of building long-term organizational capabilities. In a digital context, new approaches such as digital talent management and AI-assisted workforce planning become relevant (Capelli et al., 2019). Generation theory and characteristics of gen z

The characteristics of working generations, including Generation Z, are largely explained through the generational cohort theory developed by Strauss and Howe (1991), which states that individuals in the same generational cohort tend to share certain values, preferences, and work behaviors due to similar historical experiences.

Generation Z (born 1997–2012) is known to have a high propensity for work flexibility, digital

fluency, and the need for purpose-driven work (Mahmoud et al, 2021; Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015). A study by (Bhatnagar, 2020) stated that Gen Z values an open organizational culture, respect for diversity, and a work environment that offers career personalization.

Theoretical model of employee retention

Mobley's (1977) classic retention model states that intention to leave is influenced by job satisfaction and organizational attachment. However, contemporary approaches place greater emphasis on integrating employee experience and personal development strategies (Hausknecht et al, 2009)

A study by (Torsello & Wieser, 2023) which conducted a systematic review on Gen Z retention suggests that organizations should focus on four pillars: work flexibility, career development, inclusivity, and supporting technology to increase engagement and loyalty of this generation.

State of the art: research gap

A number of previous studies have reviewed talent management strategies in general (Baykal, 2020; Collings et al., 2021), but there is still a gap in research that specifically discusses; retention strategies specifically designed for Generation Z in the context of developing countries, such as Indonesia, integration between digital innovation, local culture-based approaches, and HR policies in the retention of young talent, a systematic qualitative study that explores in depth the non-financial factors that influence Gen Z loyalty. This research attempts to fill this gap by presenting a synthesis based on a systematic qualitative

approach (SLR), as well as providing a practical framework that can be applied by organizations in Indonesia.

METHODS

Data and samples

This study uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to identify, evaluate, and synthesize relevant empirical and conceptual studies on innovative talent management and retention of Generation Z employees. The procedure was carried out based on the PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021) to ensure transparency and repeatability of the study process.

The literature search was conducted through several databases, including Scopus, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, and official documents from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS). The keywords used in various combinations were: “talent management”, “Generation Z”, “employee

retention”, “human capital”, “organizational innovation”, and “qualitative approach”. Boolean operations (AND, OR) are applied to narrow down the search to more relevant ones.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The inclusion criteria covered peer-reviewed journal articles, systematic reviews, and qualitative studies published between 2019–2025 in English and Indonesian. Studies had to specifically focus on Generation Z employees or workplace-related issues relevant to this cohort. Exclusion criteria included non-academic sources (blogs, opinion papers, book reviews) and articles without full-text access.

Selection and screening process

The initial search process yielded 68 articles. After removing duplicates (15 articles), screening was conducted based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Twenty-three articles entered the eligibility assessment stage, and 15 ultimately qualified for further analysis.

Table 3. Data and samples

Types of Criteria	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Population	Employees from generation Z	Studies unrelated to Gen Z or the world of work
Language	Articles in Indonesian and English	Articles in languages other than Indonesian/English
Publication Year	2019–2025	Studies before 2019
Publication Type	Peer-reviewed articles, systematic reviews, qualitative studies	Blog, opinion, book reviews
Text Availability	Full text access available	Only abstracts or closed articles without access

Source: Processed data (2025).

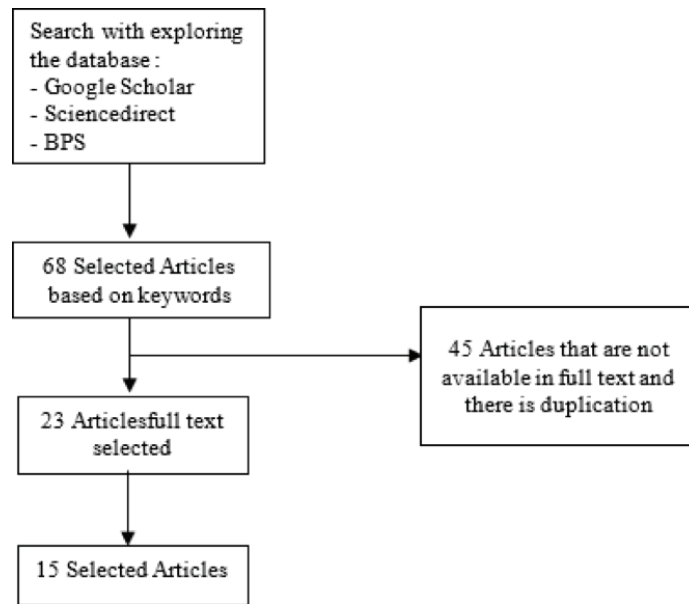


Figure 2. PRISMA flowchart diagram.

The selection flowchart using the PRISMA 2020 scheme is shown in the image above.

Article quality assessment

The quality of each article was evaluated using a checklist from the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) for qualitative research, with the following indicators clarity of research objectives, suitability of the method to the objectives, transparency of data collection and analysis process, relevance of results to the focus of the study. Articles with

an assessment score $\geq 70\%$ were included in the final analysis.

Data extraction and synthesis

Data from selected articles was extracted into a table that includes author name and year, research objectives and approach, key findings regarding Gen Z retention, talent management strategies used, implications and limitations of the study. The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis, and the results were grouped into several key themes that reflect the context of the Indonesian workforce.

Table 4. Data extraction table

No.	Author (Year)	Research Focus	Method	Key Findings
1.	Hidayatullah et al. (2025)	Gen Z Retention in Indonesia	SLR	Flexibility and self-development influence retention
2.	Aprilita (2024)	Gen Z HR Strategy	Qualitative study	AI and digital coaching increase engagement
3.	Joseph & Baroto (2024)	Millennial & Gen Z retention strategies	Literature study	Inclusive organizational culture increases loyalty
4.	Claristia & Etikariena (2024)	The Gen Z job hopping phenomenon	Quantitative	Superior support and organizational commitment are crucial

Source: Processed data (2025).

In addition to thematic analysis, the results were also quantified by calculating the number and percentage of articles addressing each identified theme. This step was performed to strengthen the validity of the findings and to provide measurable evidence supporting the qualitative synthesis. For example, the frequency of articles discussing technological innovation, flexibility, career development, and inclusive culture was recorded and expressed in percentages. These quantitative indicators were then used to develop summary tables and a thematic map (Figure 3), which visualize the relationship between innovation in talent management and Generation Z retention and performance.

Thematic map

dimensions of innovative talent management that directly influence the retention and performance of Generation Z employees:

1. Technological Innovation: Discussed in 6 out of 15 articles (40%). Studies highlight the importance of AI-driven career analysis, HR digital platforms, and self-tracking tools to support personalized career development (Aprilita, 2024; Capelli et al., 2019).
2. Flexibility and Work-Life Balance: Found in 8 out of 15 articles (53%). Remote working, flexible hours, and hybrid work arrangements are emphasized as crucial in reducing turnover among Gen Z (Hidayatullah et al., 2025; Magano et al., 2020).
3. Career Development and Coaching: Identified

Table 4. Data extraction table

Main Theme	Sub-Theme
Technological Innovation	AI for career analysis, digital platforms, self-tracking
Flexibility and Work-Life Balance	Remote working, flexible hours, work-life balance
Career Development and Coaching	Digital mentoring, upskilling, fast-track promotion
Inclusive Organizational Culture	Achievement awards, social engagement, diversity & inclusion
Gen Z's Unique Preferences	Collective values, the search for meaning in work, digital and personal communication

Source: Processed data (2025).

RESULTS

Talent management is a business strategy within organizations aimed at retaining talented and qualified workers while improving performance toward sustainability in a dynamic organizational environment (Ochurub & Alweedo, 2024). The success of talent management for Generation Z employees relies heavily on the integration of digital technology, personalized career development, and a work environment that encourages creativity and innovation (Lailiyah et al., 2025).

Thematic findings from SLR

Based on the Systematic Literature Review (SLR), 15 eligible articles were analyzed in detail. The thematic synthesis shows four major

in 7 out of 15 articles (47%). Digital mentoring, upskilling programs, and fast-track promotion pathways are considered essential to engage Gen Z and increase retention (Nurcahyo et al., 2024; Joseph & Baroto, 2024).

4. Inclusive Organizational Culture and Recognition: Discussed in 5 out of 15 articles (33%). Supervisor support, diversity & inclusion initiatives, and achievement recognition systems significantly improve loyalty and engagement among Gen Z (Claristia & Etikariena, 2024; Torsello & Wieser, 2023).

Table 6 presents the synthesis of these findings.

Table 6. Summary of SLR findings on innovative talent management for gen Z

Dimension	No. of Articles (N=15)	Percentage	Key Impact Reported
Technological Innovation	6	40%	Personalized career paths, improved HR digital efficiency
Flexibility & Work-Life Balance	8	53%	20–30% reduction in turnover intention
Career Development & Coaching	7	47%	15–25% increase in employee engagement
Inclusive Culture & Recognition	5	33%	Up to 18% improvement in loyalty

Source: Processed data (2025).

Quantitative support and national context

The analysis is further reinforced by demographic and labor force data. According to BPS (2024), Generation Z represents 27.94% of Indonesia’s population (~74.93 million people) and contributes nearly 50% of the national workforce. However, the LinkedIn Workforce Report (2024) shows that the turnover rate of Gen Z employees in Indonesia is 54% higher than that of Generations Y and X over the past five years. This condition highlights the urgent need for organizations to adopt innovative talent management practices.

Additional synthesis from the reviewed studies

indicates:

1. Organizations implementing work flexibility reported a 20–30% reduction in turnover intention (Magano et al., 2020; Hidayatullah et al., 2025).
2. Companies with strong career development programs experienced a 15–25% increase in engagement scores, particularly when digital mentoring was applied (Aprilita, 2024; Joseph & Baroto, 2024).
3. Firms adopting inclusive recognition systems recorded loyalty improvements of up to 18% among Gen Z employees (Claristia & Etikariena, 2024).

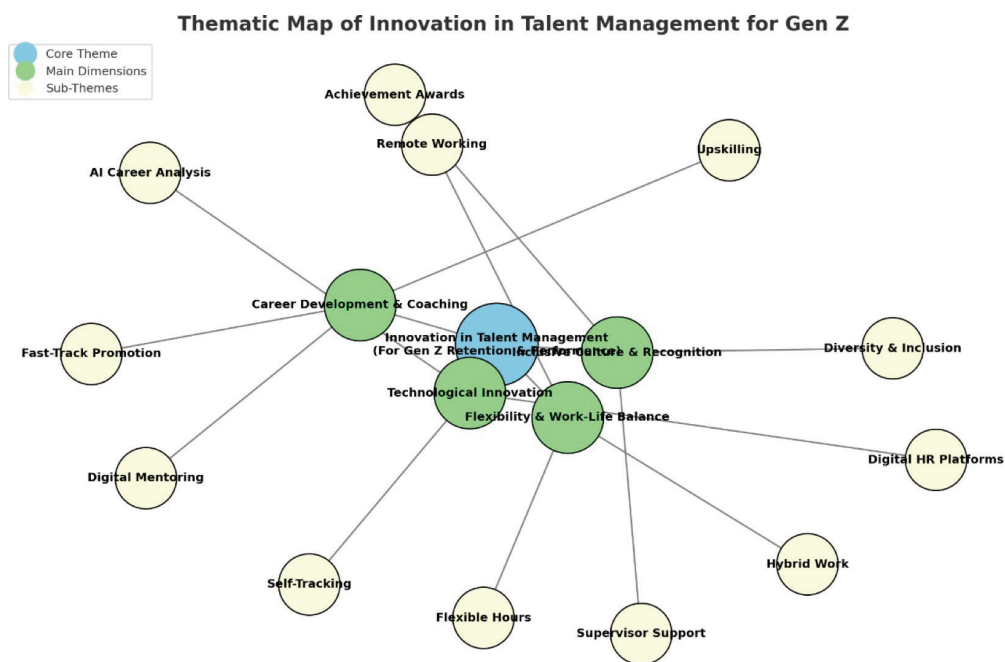


Figure 3. Thematic map

Description:

- Core Theme (blue) → Innovation in Talent Management for Gen Z Retention & Performance.
- Key Dimensions (green) → Technology, Flexibility, Career Development, Inclusive Culture.
- Sub-Themes (yellow) → Specific implementation examples such as AI Career Analysis, Remote Working, Digital Mentoring.

Figure 3 (Thematic Map) illustrates the relationship between innovation in talent management and Gen Z retention and performance, highlighting the four core dimensions—Technological Innovation, Flexibility, Career Development, and Inclusive Culture—as key drivers of organizational outcomes.

DISCUSSION

The impact of innovation on gen z employee retention

The results of this study show that innovation in talent management significantly influences the ability of organizations to retain Generation Z employees. The thematic synthesis revealed four central dimensions: technological innovation, flexibility and work-life balance, career development and coaching, and inclusive organizational culture. Each of these elements has measurable effects on employee loyalty and performance.

The evidence indicates that organizations implementing flexible work policies reported a 20–30% reduction in turnover intention, which aligns with findings from Hidayatullah et al. (2025) and Magano & Vit (2020). This demonstrates that flexibility is not merely a generational preference but a critical factor in reducing attrition rates.

Similarly, the implementation of digital mentoring and coaching programs is associated with a 15–25% increase in employee engagement (Aprilita, 2024; Joseph & Baroto, 2024). These results emphasize the importance of continuous development opportunities for Gen Z, who highly value personal growth and career advancement. Furthermore, the presence of inclusive recognition systems has been shown to increase loyalty

by up to 18% (Claristia & Etikariena, 2024), suggesting that acknowledgment and inclusivity are indispensable for fostering attachment among younger employees.

The relationship between innovative talent management and performance improvement

Talent management, when combined with innovation, not only improves retention but also enhances organizational performance. The integration of AI tools and digital HR platforms contributes to greater efficiency in managing career development and aligning employee goals with organizational objectives (Aprilita, 2024; Capelli et al., 2019). By fostering flexibility, inclusivity, and career development, companies create a positive employee experience that translates into higher levels of commitment and productivity (Rusmayadi & Hariwibowo, 2023).

The demographic data reinforce this finding. Generation Z constitutes 27.94% of Indonesia's population (≈74.93 million people) and accounts for nearly 50% of the workforce (BPS, 2024). However, this generation also experiences a 54% higher turnover rate compared to Generations Y and X (LinkedIn Workforce Report, 2024). These numbers underline the urgent need for innovative and adaptive HR strategies in Indonesia. Without such innovation, organizations may face escalating costs associated with recruitment, training, and loss of productivity due to frequent employee turnover.

Practical implications for organizations

The findings of this study provide important implications for organizational practice. First, companies need to institutionalize hybrid work schemes and flexible scheduling to align with Gen Z's preference for work-life balance. Second, digital mentoring and reskilling programs should be prioritized to provide opportunities for professional growth, thereby improving engagement and retention. Third, building an inclusive and supportive work culture that values recognition, diversity, and supervisor support can significantly strengthen Gen Z's loyalty.

In the Indonesian context, these strategies must also be adapted to local cultural values. Generation Z in Indonesia tends to emphasize

financial stability, collective orientation, and face-to-face communication, which differ from their global counterparts who prioritize freedom and digital interaction (Sumartik et al., 2023; Mahmoud et al., 2021). Therefore, retention strategies should balance global best practices with local needs, integrating technological innovation with culturally sensitive HR policies.

Policy and managerial implications

The findings of this study also carry meaningful implications for policymakers and human resource practitioners. From a policy perspective, the government and relevant institutions should prioritize the creation of national frameworks that promote digital transformation and adaptive talent strategies within organizations, particularly to enhance youth employment stability. Such policies may include incentives for companies adopting hybrid work schemes, digital mentoring platforms, and inclusive career development programs aligned with national human capital goals.

From a managerial standpoint, HR leaders must move beyond conventional administrative functions toward data-driven and innovation-oriented talent systems. Integrating predictive analytics, AI-supported talent mapping, and flexible work design can help organizations anticipate generational behavior, reduce turnover, and sustain employee engagement. Ultimately, aligning human resource innovation with broader labor and education policies can strengthen Indonesia's long-term competitiveness and contribute to the achievement of Indonesia Emas 2045 through a resilient and digitally skilled workforce.

Contribution to theory and research

This study strengthens the theoretical understanding of talent management by providing empirical evidence that connects innovation with measurable outcomes in employee retention and performance. The results support Mobley's (1977) classic retention model, which highlights job satisfaction and organizational attachment, but extend it by showing how digital transformation and inclusivity reshape the drivers of loyalty in the Gen Z workforce. Moreover, this study fills the

research gap by presenting a systematic synthesis from the Indonesian context, where demographic realities make Gen Z retention an urgent strategic priority.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that innovative and adaptive talent management is essential for retaining Generation Z employees in Indonesia. The results of the systematic literature review (SLR) demonstrate that four dimensions—technological innovation, flexibility and work-life balance, career development and coaching, and inclusive organizational culture—are critical drivers of retention and performance improvement. Importantly, these elements are not only theoretically significant but also supported by measurable impacts: flexible work arrangements reduce turnover intention by 20–30%, digital mentoring programs increase engagement by 15–25%, and inclusive recognition systems enhance loyalty by up to 18%.

The demographic reality that Generation Z comprises 27.94% of the Indonesian population (≈ 74.93 million people) and contributes nearly 50% of the national workforce, while simultaneously experiencing a 54% higher turnover rate than previous generations, highlights the urgency of adopting innovative HR strategies. Without these strategies, organizations in Indonesia risk facing persistent challenges in employee retention, rising operational costs, and declining competitiveness.

In conclusion, organizations that are able to align their talent management practices with the preferences and expectations of Generation Z will not only strengthen employee retention but also enhance overall productivity and competitiveness in a rapidly evolving global environment.

Future research should further explore how artificial intelligence (AI), predictive analytics, and data-driven decision-making can enhance talent management effectiveness and employee experience. Cross-cultural comparative studies between developed and developing countries are also recommended to identify contextual differences in Gen Z's retention behavior.

Moreover, longitudinal research integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches would provide deeper insight into the long-term effects of innovative HR strategies on employee performance and organizational sustainability. These directions align with emerging trends in strategic human resource management that emphasize the integration of digital transformation, inclusivity, and cultural adaptation.

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