

The Effect of Employee Well-Being Programs on Employee Retention in the Flexible Work Era : A Systematic Review Using Bibliometric Methods

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Abstract

The development of the modern world of work is characterized by the increasing adoption of flexible work patterns and greater attention to employee welfare. This study aims to analyze trends and research developments related to the influence of work flexibility and employee welfare programs on employee retention in the flexible work era through a bibliometric approach. By analysing 200 articles published in reputable international journals during the period 2019–2024, the study found that work flexibility—such as self-paced scheduling and an independent workplace—as well as comprehensive well-being programs consistently contribute positively to employee satisfaction, loyalty, and retention. These findings are increasingly relevant amid changing preferences of millennials and Gen Z who highly value work-life balance and work autonomy.

The analysis also shows that the integration of flexible work policies and comprehensive welfare programs can reduce stress levels, increase motivation, and create a work environment that supports employees' emotional attachment to the organization. The practical implications of this study emphasize the importance of developing an adaptive and employee-based human resource policy so that organizations can retain the best talent amid the dynamics of changing work patterns. The study also identifies future research agendas to deepen understanding of the relationship between work flexibility, well-being, and employee retention in an ever-evolving work context.

Key words: *work flexibility, employee well-being, and employee retention*

INTRODUCTION

The current development of the world of work is characterized by the increasing implementation of flexible work patterns that give employees the freedom to manage their time and workplace. This change requires organizations to pay more attention to employee well-being through comprehensive employee well-being programs. The program not only focuses on physical and mental aspects, but also includes support for work-life balance which is an important factor in improving employee retention in the flexible working era (Handoko et al., 2024). Changes in work patterns that allow employees to manage their time and workplace more independently require organizations to adopt new approaches to human resource management, particularly through employee well-being programs. The program not only aims to improve employees' physical and mental health, but also strengthens their emotional attachment and commitment to the organization, ultimately contributing to employee retention (Retnowati et al., 2024; Rika Widianita, 2023).

Employee retention is a major challenge for organizations, especially with the Millennial and Gen Z generations having different work preferences compared to previous generations. Research shows that well-being programs that integrate work flexibility and work-life balance significantly improve job satisfaction and employee loyalty, thereby lowering turnover rates (Handoko et al., 2024; Hidayatullah et al., 2025).

In addition, incentives such as health insurance, flexible leave, and additional benefits also play an important role in retaining employees, especially the younger generation who highly value holistic well-being (Hidayatullah et al., 2025).

In this context, bibliometric analysis is an effective method to map research trends and literature developments related to the influence of welfare programs on employee retention in the flexible work era. Previous bibliometric studies revealed that the topic of employee well-being and work flexibility is getting more and more attention, with a focus on the psychological impact, productivity, and organizational dynamics in hybrid work models (Evolution of Hybrid Work Models, 2023; Bibliometric Analysis of Work Flexibility, 2024) (Judijanto, 2025; Yulinda Hardiana, Gawik Setiawan, 2024). The results of this analysis help identify research gaps and provide direction for further research that is more in-depth and contextual.

Various studies show that welfare programs that are integrated with flexible work policies are able to increase employee satisfaction and loyalty. For example, flexibility in work arrangements gives employees the space to balance the demands of work and personal life, thereby lowering stress levels and increasing job happiness. This has a positive impact on employees' intentions to stay in the company, especially among millennials and Gen Z who highly value work-life balance and autonomy at work (Aditya, 2024; Rika Widianita,

2023). With the increasing need for organizations to retain top talent amid changing work patterns, it is important for practitioners and academics to understand the relationship between employee well-being programs and retention in the era of flexible working. This study aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis to examine the development of the literature related to the influence of employee well-being programs on employee retention, as well as provide a comprehensive overview of the themes, authors, and institutions that play a dominant role in this field (Andi Nabila Tenri Lala, Mahlia Muis, Nurjanah Hamid, 2024). So the researchers' requirements are:

- Q1 : What are the development trends and research focus related to the impact of employee well-being programs on employee retention in the context of flexible working over the past few years?
- Q2: What is the relationship between work flexibility, employee well-being, and employee retention revealed through bibliometric analysis, and what are the implications of these findings for HR policy development?
- Q3: What is the future research agenda on work flexibility, employee well-being, and employee retention?

LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the nature of this review, its research methods and the strategies used to answer the research questions. The nature of this research is theoretical and is classified as a bibliographic study that analyzes existing publications on specific subjects, namely work flexibility, employee welfare, and employee retention. This research mainly aims to seek specific information about what is being studied for exploratory purposes. Therefore, following the term bibliometric analysis, data is obtained by searching for publications with titles, abstracts, or keywords that contain the research theme. In this study, the themes studied are work flexibility, employee welfare, and employee retention. The first criterion data was obtained from the Scopus database using the Publish or Perish (PoP) application. The second criterion in this study is to use sources in articles from 2019 to 2024. Third, data was obtained from articles published in reputable international journals indexed by Scopus from 2019 to 2024. This study used quantitative analysis (i.e. a systematic review using a database of 200 articles).

Step 1: search

Data collection The first step involves finding and retrieving themes with transformational leadership variables with worker performance. The key word in doing the mapping on the Publish or Perish and Google Scholar applications is "transformational leadership to worker performance".

Step 2 : Selection

To ensure the quality of the article and the validity of the review, three search criteria are used, namely article universality, publication quality, and relevance. The universality of the article is represented by the use of "language (English)," while the quality of the publication is represented by "index value (e.g. Scimagojr)," "has a good citation index" or "non-predatory journal (beallslst.weebly.com)". With these criteria, 200 articles were selected for further analysis, All articles were published between 2019 and 2024.

Step 3: digitize the article

The digitization process requires the entry and storage of data from 200 articles, which includes information from abstracts, keywords, research objectives, theories, methodologies and research settings (i.e. sector/industry and country of origin). The data is stored in Excel and Access formats.

Step 4: processing and analysis

Data As the current study is an extension of (Eliyana et al., 2019), the way of managing it is by looking at the findings or results-hail from each article, then we identify.

Work flexibility

Work flexibility is an increasingly important concept in the modern world of work, especially with the development of technology and changes in work patterns triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. In general, work flexibility refers to policies and practices that allow employees to manage their time, place, and how they work more independently. Systematic research shows that work flexibility can be in the form of flexible working hours, remote working, and work arrangements that are tailored to individual and organizational needs (Sa'adahSopiah, 2022). Various studies confirm that the implementation of work flexibility has a significant positive impact on employee well-being and productivity. For example, flexibility in hours and locations has been shown to help employees balance work and personal life, reduce stress, and increase motivation and job satisfaction (Anis Malihatin, Eloah Bahiroh, 2023). In addition, work flexibility also contributes to a decrease in employee turnover intention, so that it becomes an effective strategy in retaining talent in the company (Irchamillah & Hendriani, 2023). This challenge needs to be overcome so that work flexibility can run effectively and sustainably. On the other hand, the readiness of organizations and employees greatly determines the success of the implementation of a flexible work system, including technological readiness and adaptive policy support (Syafa Ziyadah Kirana, 2024). This research underscores the importance of comprehensive policy support and human resource readiness to optimize the benefits of work flexibility. Thus,

work flexibility has become a new paradigm in human resource management that is able to improve employee welfare and retention in the modern work era.

Employee Well-Being

Employee well-being is a concept that includes psychological, physical, social, and work environment conditions that support employees to feel comfortable, satisfied, and motivated at work. This welfare is very important because it has a direct effect on employee performance, job satisfaction, and productivity. Employee well-being is not only related to financial aspects, but also includes psychological well-being, mental health, work-life balance, and career development. (Mas'ud, 2024) states that employee well-being is a part of the well-being that individuals derive from work that is influenced by the work environment. Other research identified four main dimensions of employee well-being, namely physical, psychological, social, and work environment (Suryo Prakoso & Author, 2023).

Employee Retention

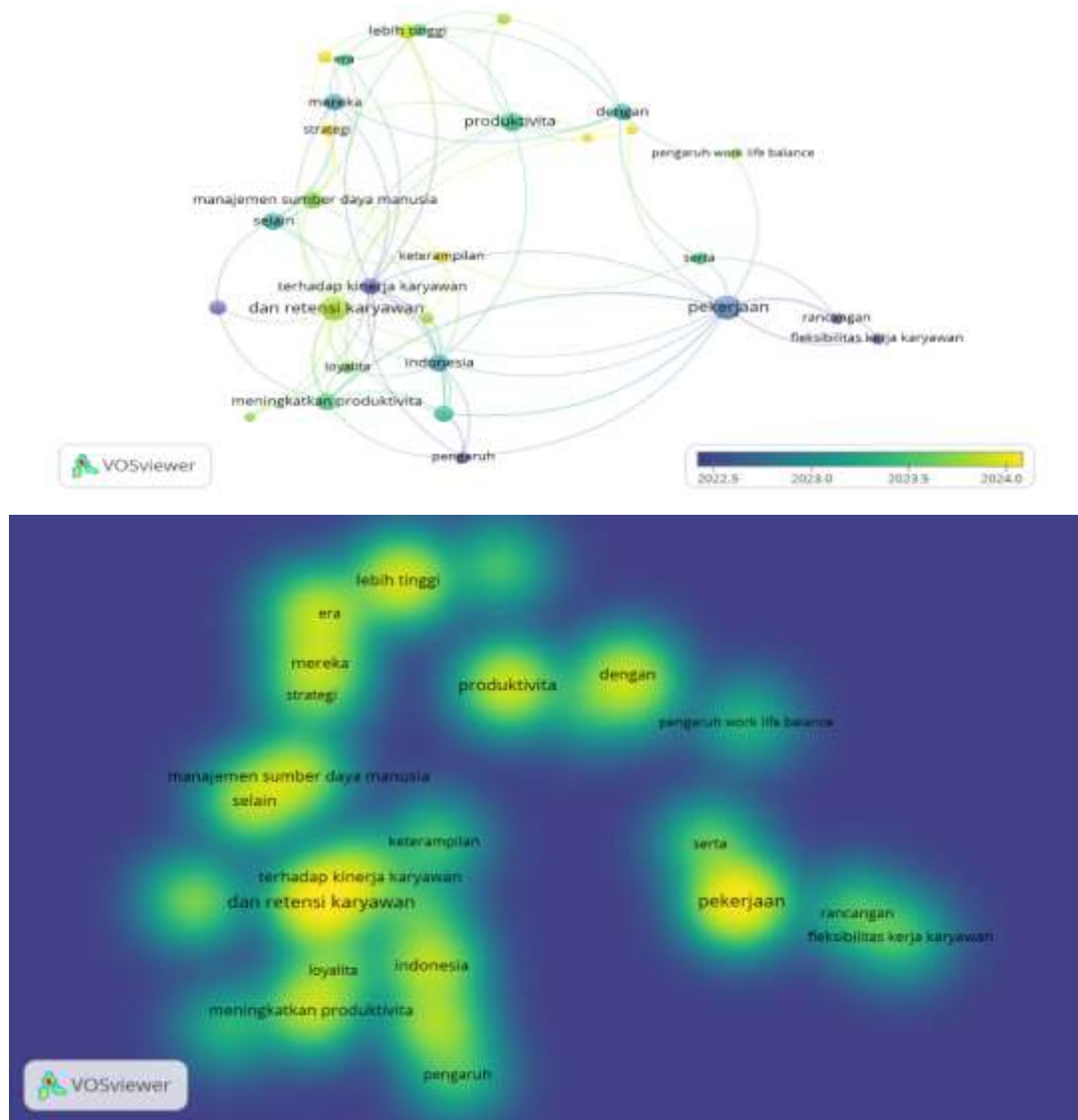
Employee resistance is a reaction of rejection or resistance that arises when an organization makes changes, both in policies, procedures, and work culture. This phenomenon is often considered a major challenge in the organizational change management process. Various studies show that employee resistance is influenced by several key factors, including habits, sense of security, economic factors, fear, and selective perception of change. Habits and fear of future uncertainty are significant causes of resistance because employees tend to be comfortable with old conditions and worry about not being able to adapt to new things (Rinawati, 2010). In addition, perceptions of injustice and policy uncertainty, such as changes in the compensation system that are perceived as unfair and less transparent, also trigger resistance that negatively impacts employee motivation and loyalty (Laoli et al., 2024). Resistance that is not properly managed can lead to decreased productivity, internal conflicts, and even employee turnover. This can hinder the smooth implementation of changes and harm the organization financially and operationally.

RESEARCH AND RESULTS

Basically, of the 200 articles the variables that are often used are employee retention, employee welfare, and work flexibility. With this, from several literature articles used in this study, work flexibility, employee welfare and employee retention (Handoko et al., 2024). Some of the results of the study according to (Handoko et al., 2024) (Sulistiyani, 2010) Mukhtar et al.; 2023) that employee welfare and work flexibility have an effect on

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employee retention. So that the more organizations can provide welfare to their employees, it will have an impact on employee retention.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of bibliometric analysis of 200 articles, it can be concluded that work flexibility and employee welfare are the two main variables that have consistently been proven to have a positive effect on employee retention in the modern work era. The implementation of flexible work policies, such as more independent time management and

workplace, can improve work-life balance, reduce stress, and encourage employee satisfaction and loyalty. On the other hand, a comprehensive employee well-being program—covering physical, psychological, social, and work environment aspects—also plays an important role in creating a supportive work environment, so that employees feel valued and motivated to stay with the company.

These findings are increasingly relevant amid changes in the work patterns and preferences of millennials and Gen Z who highly value work-life balance and work autonomy. Thus, organizations that are able to strategically integrate work flexibility and welfare programs will have an advantage in retaining the best talent and reducing turnover rates. The practical implications of this study emphasize the importance of developing an adaptive and employee-based HR policy, in order to be able to answer retention challenges in the era of flexible and dynamic work.

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