

Employee Retention in the Era of Generation Z: A Bibliometric Study

Muhammad Nur Ilham Wijaya ^{1✉}, Praptini Yulianti²

^{1,2} *Sains Manajemen, Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia*

Abstract

This study analyzes Generation Z retention using a bibliometric approach. Data were obtained from Scopus, selecting 41 articles related to Generation Z and Retention. The findings indicate a growing trend in publications over the past few years. Network analysis reveals strong connections between Employee Retention, Psychology, Sustainability, and Talent Management, emphasizing the need for a multidisciplinary approach. Density visualization highlights a primary focus on employee management, while sustainability and the creative industry remain underexplored. This study concludes that Generation Z retention strategies should incorporate flexibility, work-life balance, values, and technology to align with the characteristics of this generation.

Keywords: Employee Retention; Generation Z; Bibliometric Analysis.

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✉ Corresponding author :

Email Address: muhammad.nur.ilham-2024@feb.unair.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

Each generation in the workforce has unique characteristics, influenced by the social and technological developments of its time. Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, are known for their high loyalty to companies and a tendency to seek stability and structured work environments. (Becton et al., 2014). They prefer long-term employment and less mobility, but struggle to adapt to new technologies. (Widger et al., 2007). Meanwhile, Generation X (born 1965-1980) values independence and flexibility more, and possesses better technological skills, although they still prefer face-to-face communication over digital communication. (Keif, 2006; Shangraw & Whitten, 2007)

Millennials (born 1981-2000), as the digital native generation, are highly skilled in technology and prefer jobs that offer high flexibility and career development opportunities. (Aleksić & Ranguis, 2020; Reyes & Norona, 2019). They prioritize meaning and contribution in work and tend to change jobs for better career advancement. (Reyes & Norona, 2019). However, the most significant difference lies with Generation Z (1997-2012), who grew up with digital technology and consider it a part of their lives. They want flexible work arrangements, better work-life balance, and recognition of their contributions through regular feedback. (Osorio & Madero, 2025; Sinha & Dhar, 2025).

The urgency of understanding Generation Z in the workforce is critical, given that they are expected to make up 27% of the total global workforce by 2025 (Marie & Kaur, 2020). Unlike previous generations, they want a workplace that provides opportunities to grow and contribute to larger social causes (Seyfi et al., 2024). Therefore, companies need to adjust their

work policies and culture to meet Generation Z's expectations, such as flexibility, skill development opportunities, and an open feedback culture (Choudhury et al., 2024). By doing so, companies can create a productive and sustainable work environment, thereby optimizing the potential of this generation.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses articles related to the theme of Generation Z retention. The data was collected through Scopus-indexed databases. Scopus was chosen because it is a trusted publication source used by researchers worldwide. Bibliometrics was employed in this study, which combines quantitative (for evaluation and interpretation) and qualitative (for further interpretation) approaches. The data was analyzed with the help of the VosViewer application for cluster analysis. The complete steps are illustrated in Figure 1.

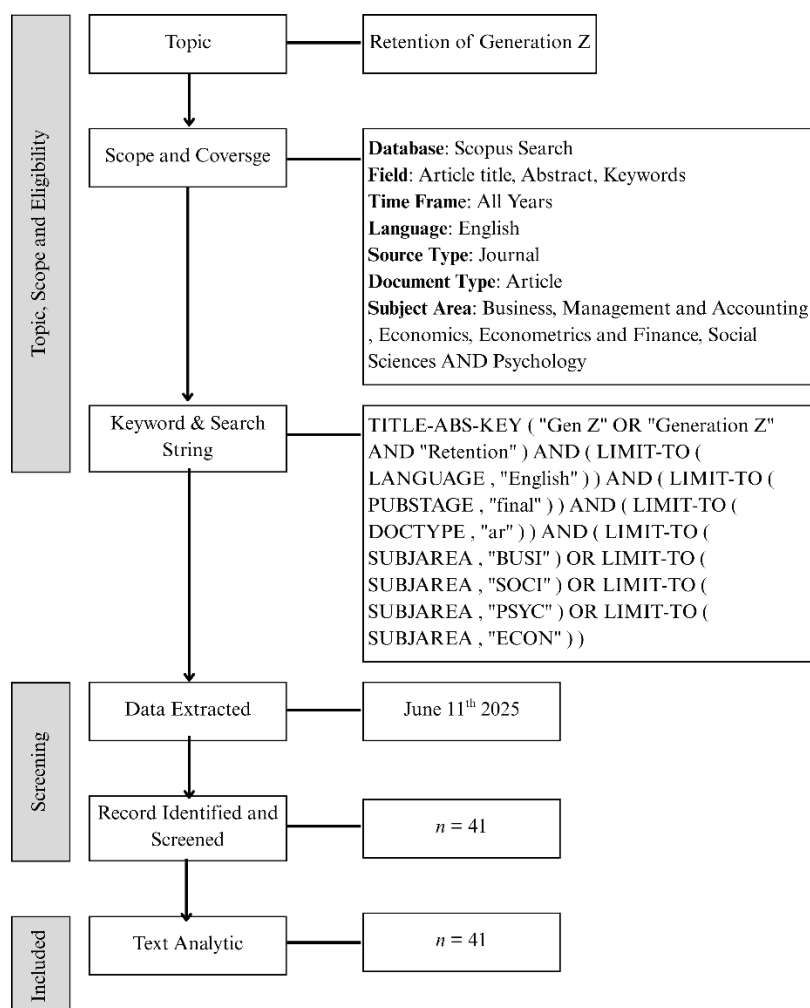


Figure 1. Data collection process using PRISMA

Source: Author's Analysis

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Scopus database publication

In 2020, the number of documents addressing Generation Z retention was still relatively small, but the graph shows a gradual increase until 2024. The most significant spike

occurred in 2025, with the number of publications reaching the highest level compared to previous years. This pattern suggests a growing interest in Generation Z retention issues, which may be driven by factors such as the changing preferences of younger generations in the workforce, the evolution of organizational policies, or technological advancements that are increasingly influencing retention strategies.

From the data distribution in Figure 2, it is evident that the growth trend of these publications has not stagnated, but has continued to increase in recent years. The change from year to year indicates that attention to this topic is growing and gaining more space in academic research. If necessary, further analysis can be conducted to examine how specific keywords in these publications interconnect and contribute to the broader discussion on Generation Z retention.

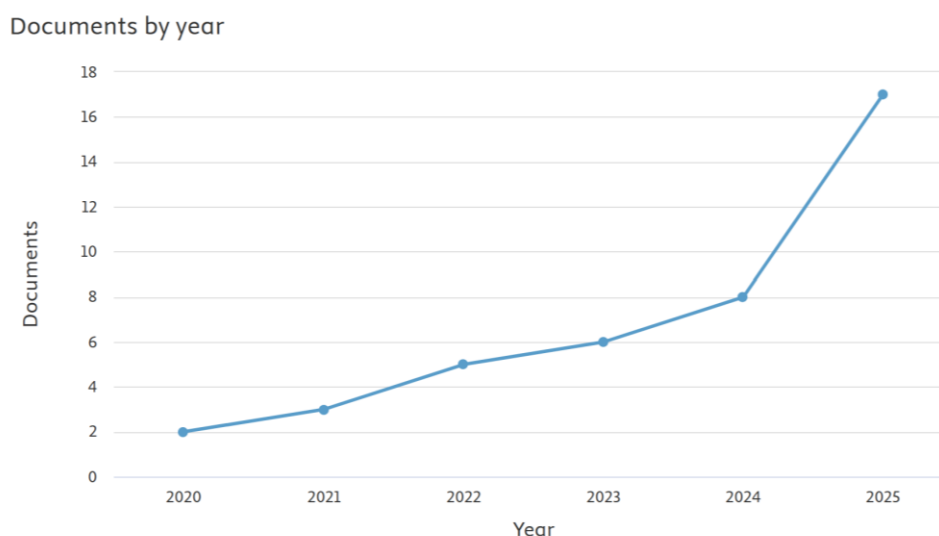


Figure 2. Document by Year

Source: Database Scopus, 2025

The United States is the country with the highest number of publications on research related to Generation Z retention, with a total of 10 documents. India came second with eight documents, while China, Indonesia, and Vietnam each had three documents. Malaysia, the Philippines, South Africa, and Thailand have fewer publications, with two documents each.

This distribution shows that more research on Generation Z retention has been conducted in the United States and India compared to other countries. The dominance of these two countries could be due to factors such as faster industrial development and changing workforce dynamics, which differ from those in other countries. Meanwhile, the number of publications starting to appear in countries like China and Indonesia indicates that there is an increasing attention to this topic in the Asian region.

This publication pattern can serve as an indicator of how Generation Z retention issues are evolving in different geographical contexts. Differences in the number of papers between countries also indicate variations in academic attention to this phenomenon, which may be influenced by social, cultural, and labor policy conditions in each country. As research increases across regions, this trend has the potential to provide greater insight into effective retention strategies and approaches for Generation Z in a global context.

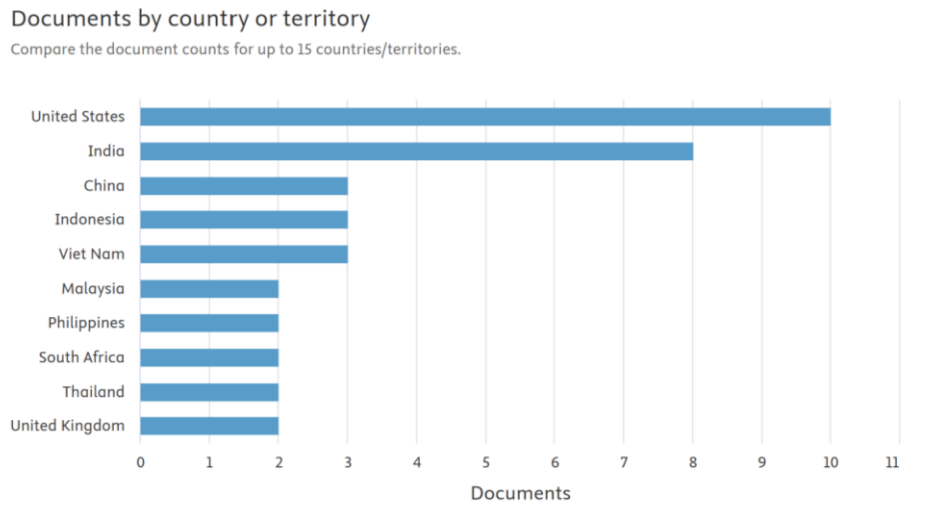


Figure 3. Document by Country

Source: Database Scopus, 2025

VOSViewer Keyword Co-occurrence Result

Figure 4 shows a bibliometric network with various terms related to Generation Z retention, visualized using VOSviewer. Each node represents a concept, while the lines connecting them show the relationships between terms. Different colors reflect the change in research focus from 2023 to 2025.

In this network, Generation Z and Employee Retention are at the center, connected to other concepts such as Psychology, Employee Engagement, and Sustainability. The close relationship between Employee Engagement and psychology suggests that engagement and emotional well-being play a crucial role in retaining employees from this generation. In addition, the presence of Sustainability suggests that the value of sustainability is increasingly being factored into Generation Z's retention strategy. The visible shift in terms also indicates that research is constantly evolving in response to the changing workforce dynamics and preferences of this generation. This network provides deeper insights into the key factors influencing the retention of Generation Z in various academic and professional settings.

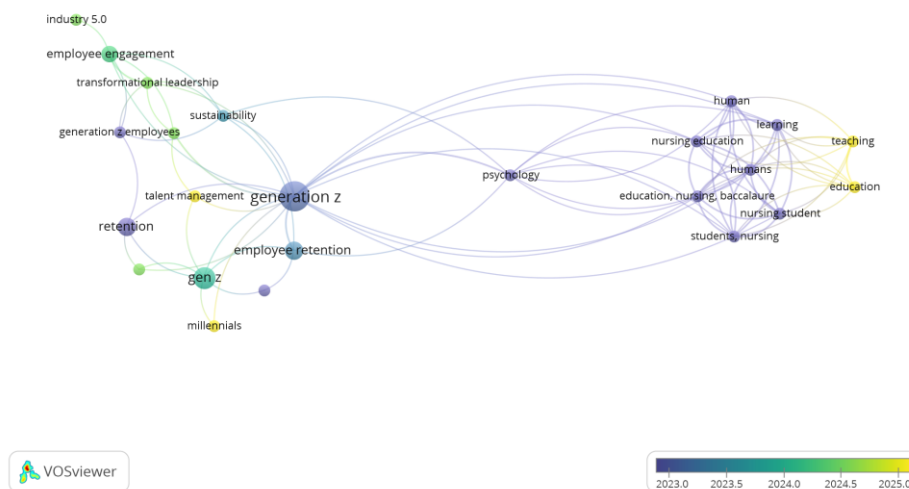


Figure 4. Keyword Co-occurrence VOSViewer

Source: Output VosViewer, 2025

VOSViewer Network Visualization Results

This bibliometric network illustrates the relationships between concepts in Generation Z retention research, with three main groups discernible.

The green group centers on Generation Z and is linked to terms such as Employee Engagement, Sustainability, and Industry 5.0, indicating a research focus on aspects of employee management and industry innovation in retaining this generation's workforce. The red group relates to Nursing Education and Teaching, highlighting the relevance of Generation Z in the field of education and nursing, especially in the context of students and educators. Meanwhile, the yellow group, centered on Psychology, indicates that psychological factors play a significant role in workforce retention, particularly in terms of work motivation and employee well-being.

This network illustrates a multidisciplinary approach to understanding Generation Z retention, where aspects of management, education, and psychology interact in academic research. The close relationship between concepts indicates that the retention of this generation is not only determined by organizational structural factors, but also by psychological well-being, education, and the value of sustainability, which is increasingly taken into account in retention strategies. This pattern of interconnectedness offers insight into how a more holistic approach can be developed to retain the workforce of this generation.

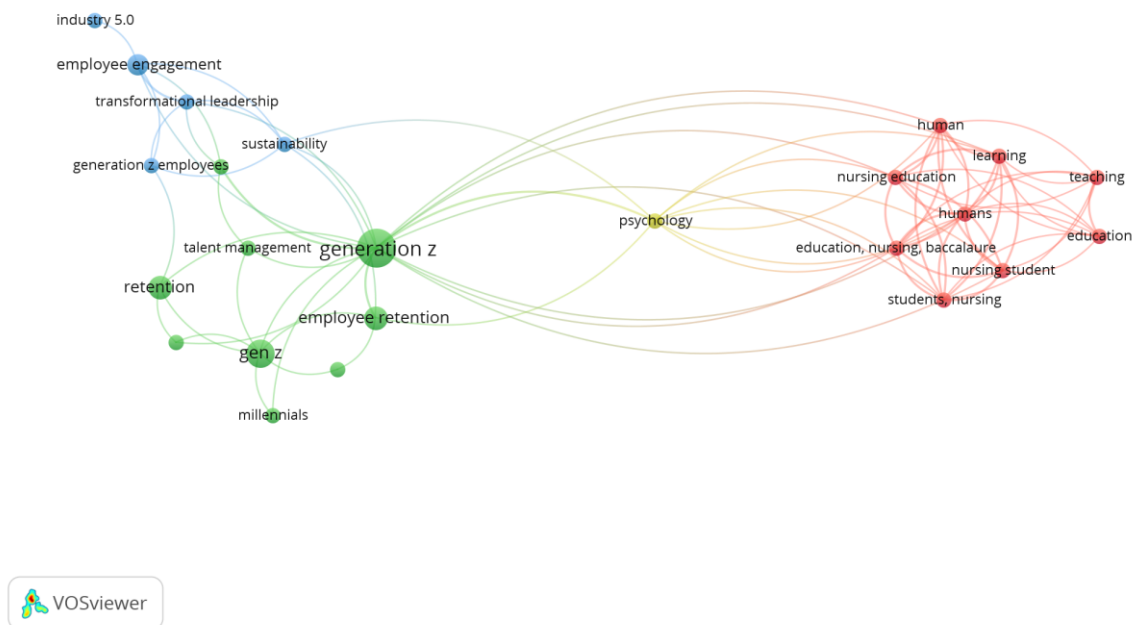


Figure 5. Network Visualization VOSViewer

Source: Output VosViewer, 2025

VOSViewer Density Visualization Results

Density visualization reveals that Generation Z, Employee Retention, and Talent Management have the highest density, indicating the prevalence of research in these areas of employee management and engagement. Meanwhile, terms related to Nursing Education and Psychology have a lower density, indicating that these two fields are still evolving in the context of Generation Z retention.

The density distribution also indicates that the main topics in this research center on workforce management and sustainability. Terms such as Sustainability and Industry 5.0 started to appear with lower density, which could indicate that the relationship between sustainability, industrial innovation and Generation Z retention is still not a major focus in academic research.

The density patterns shown in this visualization can help identify the most developed aspects of research and those that still have potential for further exploration. Researchers can use it as a reference to understand how research trends related to Generation Z retention have changed and which areas require greater attention.

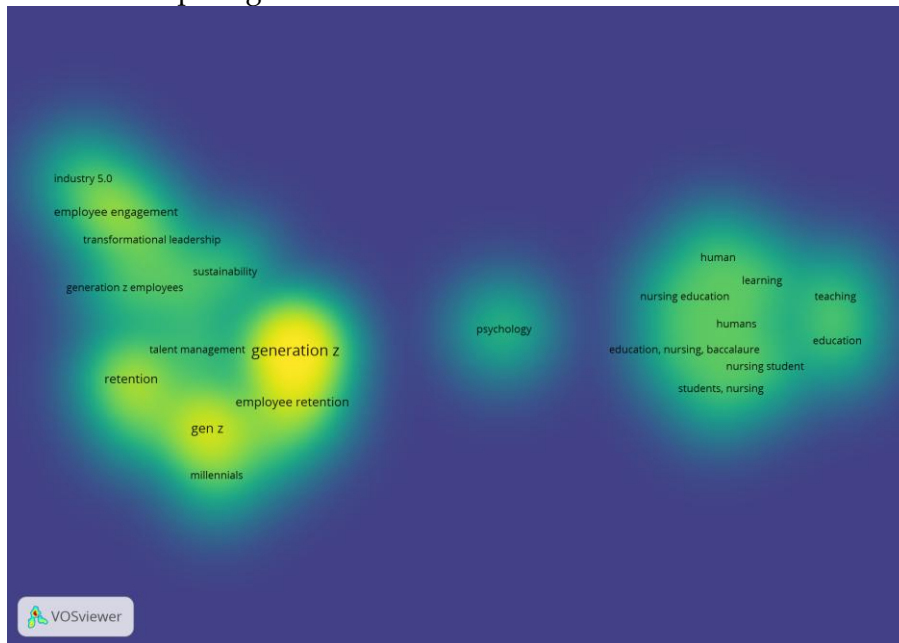


Figure 6. Density Visualization VOSViewer

Source: Output VosViewer, 2025

Retention in Generation Z

A review of several studies reveals that a combination of structural, psychological, and generational factors influences the retention of Generation Z. In general, Generation Z shows a tendency to stay in organizations that can offer work flexibility, recognition of their contributions, and an environment that supports work-life balance (Kgarimetsa & Naidoo, 2024; Zhou et al., 2025). Flexibility and personal recognition are considered more important than formal career development opportunities, which, in some studies, have no significant effect on retention.

A supportive work environment, practical training, and role clarity have also been shown to increase Gen Z's loyalty, particularly when supported by strong interpersonal relationships and a clear psychological contract between the individual and the organization. (Ali et al., 2024; Sailaxmi & Ranjithsingh, 2025). On the other hand, transformational leadership emerges as a key factor that builds emotional attachment and drives Gen Z's desire to stay, mainly when supported by egalitarian, fair, and sustainable organizational values. (Das & Malik, 2025).

In addition, job security and psychological empowerment play a crucial role in creating affective commitment, which in turn enhances Generation Z's staying power. (Oraibi et al., 2025). Gen Z also shows a high need for value congruence between themselves and the organizations they work for. Values such as fairness, achievement, work meaning, and emotional stability are key considerations in determining loyalty. (Krishna & Agrawal, 2025; Sakdiyakorn et al., 2021).

Even in the context of learning and engagement, participatory, interactive approaches that allow for collaboration have been shown to increase Gen Z retention, suggesting that

active engagement and a sense of belonging are critical in retaining this generation (Chandel et al., 2025; DiMattio & Hudacek, 2020). Moreover, studies on Gen Z's experiences as customers suggest that digital engagement and collaborative technology approaches can be practical ways to build loyalty in the workplace (Choubey & Gautam, 2024).

Overall, Generation Z retention strategies cannot rely solely on financial compensation or career paths; instead, they must integrate approaches that are flexible, humanized, and aligned with their expectations and values as a new generation that prioritizes meaning, fairness, and emotional connection at work.

CONCLUSION

Research on Generation Z retention shows that structural, psychological factors, and generational values play a role in determining their loyalty to organizations. This generation is more likely to stay in flexible work environments, recognize their contributions, and support work-life balance. Factors such as transformational leadership, employee engagement, and values alignment with the organization are increasingly proving to be key elements in improving retention.

In addition, bibliometric analysis revealed patterns and trends in research related to this topic. The year-on-year increase in the number of publications shows that Generation Z retention is becoming an increasingly relevant issue in the academic and professional world. The network visualization illustrates how key concepts, including Employee Retention, Psychology, Sustainability, and Talent Management, are interconnected, suggesting that a multidisciplinary approach is necessary to understand better how to retain this generation in the workplace.

Generation Z retention strategies cannot simply focus on financial aspects or career paths, but must reflect a more flexible, values-based approach that considers psychological and technological factors. With a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence their retention, organizations can design more effective strategies that match the expectations and characteristics of this generation.

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