

## STRENGTHENING EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT THROUGH FLEXIBLE WORK MODELS AND SUSTAINABLE HR PRACTICES IN INDONESIA STARTUPS

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### Abstract

This study examines the role of flexible work models and sustainable HR practices in enhancing employee commitment within Indonesian startups. As startups face increasing challenges in attracting and retaining talent, alternative HR strategies have become essential. Using a quantitative research approach, data were collected from employees across various startup sectors to analyze the relationship between flexible work arrangements, sustainable HR practices, and employee commitment. The findings indicate that flexible work models, such as remote and hybrid arrangements, positively influence work-life balance and autonomy, thereby strengthening affective commitment. Additionally, sustainable HR practices that emphasize employee well-being, fairness, and development further enhance engagement and retention. The study also finds that the combined implementation of flexibility and sustainability yields stronger outcomes than either approach alone. These results contribute to existing literature by integrating flexibility and sustainability within a single framework, particularly in the context of emerging startup ecosystems. The study provides practical implications for startup leaders in designing effective HR strategies. Overall, it highlights the importance of aligning organizational practices with employee expectations to foster long-term commitment and organizational success.

**Keywords:** *Employee commitment, flexible work models, sustainable HR practices, startups, Indonesia, work-life balance*

### INTRODUCTION

The startup ecosystem in Indonesia has experienced rapid growth over the past decade, driven by digital transformation, increasing investment, and a young, tech-savvy population. Cities such as Jakarta, Bandung, and Surabaya have become hubs for innovation, fostering the emergence of numerous startups across sectors such as fintech, e-commerce, and edtech (Syahputra & Hendarman, 2024). This expansion has created new employment opportunities and contributed significantly to economic development. However, the fast-paced and highly competitive nature of startups also introduces unique organizational challenges. Among these, managing human capital effectively has become a critical concern for sustaining growth and innovation (Darmayanti et al., 2024).

One of the most pressing challenges faced by Indonesian startups is retaining talented employees in an increasingly competitive labor market. Startups often compete not only with other startups but also with established corporations that can offer more stable compensation and career paths (Azmy et al., 2023). High employee turnover can disrupt operations, reduce productivity, and increase recruitment costs. Additionally, the demanding work environment typical of startups—characterized by long hours and high uncertainty—can lead to burnout and decreased commitment (Wani et al., 2025). As a result, startups must find innovative ways to enhance employee commitment and retention. In response to these challenges, flexible work models have gained prominence as a strategic approach to improving employee satisfaction and engagement. Remote work, hybrid arrangements, and flexible working hours provide employees with greater autonomy and better work-life balance (Zuhrofi, 2025). These models have become particularly relevant in the post-pandemic era, where digital tools enable seamless virtual

collaboration. At the same time, there is growing recognition of the importance of sustainable HR practices that prioritize long-term employee well-being, fairness, and continuous development (Hendriati et al., 2024). Such practices not only support employee needs but also contribute to organizational resilience and sustainability. Despite the increasing adoption of flexible work models and sustainable HR practices, there remains a limited understanding of how these factors jointly influence employee commitment in the context of Indonesian startups. Existing research often examines these variables in isolation, without considering their combined impact. This study addresses this gap by exploring the relationship between flexible work arrangements, sustainable HR practices, and employee commitment. The purpose of this research is to provide a comprehensive framework that integrates these elements to better understand their role in enhancing commitment. By doing so, the study contributes to both academic literature and practical strategies for managing talent in emerging startup environments.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Employee Commitment

Employee commitment refers to the psychological attachment and loyalty that employees feel toward their organization, influencing their willingness to remain and contribute to its success. It is commonly conceptualized into three dimensions: affective commitment (emotional attachment), continuance commitment (perceived cost of leaving), and normative commitment (sense of obligation to stay). In startup environments, affective commitment is particularly critical, as employees are often driven by passion, shared vision, and organizational culture (Suhendar et al., 2023). Continuance commitment may be lower in startups due to fewer long-term incentives, while normative commitment can be shaped by strong team relationships and shared goals. Together, these dimensions provide a comprehensive understanding of how employees relate to their organization. Understanding these forms of commitment is essential for designing effective HR strategies (Mazlan & Jambulingam, 2023).

Employee commitment plays a vital role in startup performance and talent retention, especially in highly dynamic and resource-constrained environments. High levels of commitment are associated with increased productivity, innovation, and organizational citizenship behaviors. In startups, where teams are often small and interdependent, the loss of even a few key employees can significantly disrupt operations (Kasbuntoro, 2022). Several factors influence commitment, including leadership style, organizational culture, job satisfaction, and opportunities for growth. Work-life balance and perceived organizational support are also increasingly important in shaping commitment. Therefore, fostering employee commitment is a strategic priority for startups aiming to sustain growth and competitiveness (Winasis & Dinariyana, 2024).

### Flexible Work Models

Flexible work models encompass various arrangements that allow employees greater control over when, where, and how they work. Common types include remote work, where employees work entirely outside traditional office settings; hybrid work, which combines remote and on-site work; and flexible scheduling, where employees can adjust their working hours (Winasis & Dinariyana, 2024). These models have become more prevalent with the advancement of digital technologies and changing workforce expectations. In startup contexts, flexibility can be a key differentiator in attracting and retaining talent. It also enables organizations to operate more efficiently across different locations and time zones. As a result, flexible work models are increasingly integrated into modern HR strategies (Fatmawaty, 2025).

The benefits of flexible work models are substantial, particularly in enhancing work-life balance, autonomy, and overall productivity. Employees with flexible arrangements often report higher job satisfaction and reduced stress levels. However, these models also present challenges that must be carefully managed (Setyaningrum et al., 2024). Coordination across teams can become more complex, especially when employees work asynchronously. Communication barriers may arise due to reliance on digital tools, potentially leading to misunderstandings. Additionally, blurred boundaries between work and personal life can result in overwork or burnout. To maximize the benefits, organizations must implement clear policies and support systems that address these challenges effectively (Adi & Sary, 2025).

### Sustainable HR Practices

Sustainable HR practices refer to human resource strategies that prioritize long-term employee well-being, fairness, and continuous development while aligning with organizational and societal goals. These practices emphasize creating a supportive work environment that fosters both individual growth and organizational sustainability (Winasis et al., 2025). Key principles include equitable treatment, employee empowerment, and

investment in learning and development. In the context of startups, sustainable HR practices can help mitigate the pressures of rapid growth and uncertainty. By focusing on long-term outcomes rather than short-term gains, organizations can build a more resilient workforce. This approach also aligns with broader sustainability agendas in business (Budiman et al., 2025). In addition, sustainable HR practices often incorporate elements of Green HRM and socially responsible management. Green HRM focuses on promoting environmentally friendly behaviors within the organization, while socially responsible HR practices emphasize ethical treatment, diversity, and community engagement (Sukajie & Andriani, 2025). These practices contribute to stronger employee engagement by aligning organizational values with employee expectations. Employees are more likely to feel committed when they perceive their organization as responsible and supportive. Furthermore, sustainable HR practices enhance employer branding, making startups more attractive to potential talent. Ultimately, they play a crucial role in improving both employee retention and overall organizational performance (Ginting et al., 2024).

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between flexible work models, sustainable HR practices, and employee commitment within Indonesian startups. Data are collected through a structured survey distributed to employees working in various startup sectors, including technology, e-commerce, and fintech. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, ensuring that respondents have experience with flexible work arrangements and organizational HR practices. The survey instrument incorporates validated measurement scales to assess employee commitment (affective, continuance, and normative), perceived flexibility, and sustainable HR practices. Demographic variables such as age, tenure, and job role are also included to provide contextual insights. This approach enables the study to capture both individual perceptions and organizational practices relevant to the research objectives.

The data analysis employs statistical techniques to test the proposed relationships and hypotheses. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize respondent characteristics and key variables, while reliability and validity tests ensure the robustness of the measurement model. Multiple regression analysis is conducted to examine the direct effects of flexible work models and sustainable HR practices on employee commitment. Additionally, mediation analysis may be applied to explore the role of factors such as job satisfaction and work-life balance. Where appropriate, structural equation modeling (SEM) is used to assess complex relationships within the conceptual framework. This methodological approach provides a rigorous basis for understanding how HR strategies influence employee commitment in startup environments.

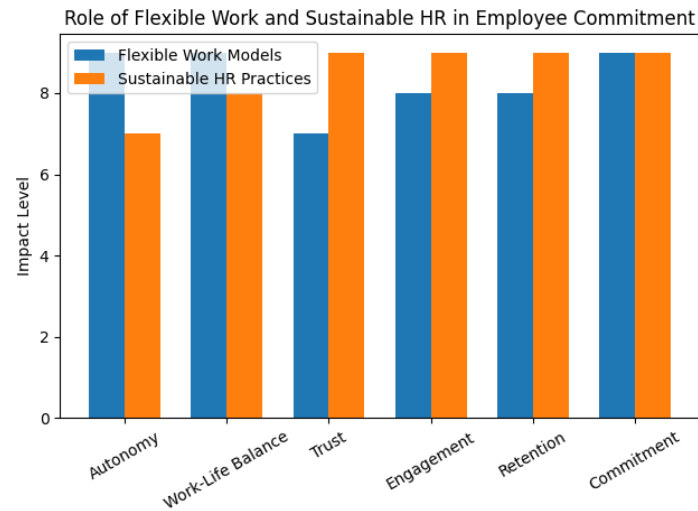
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Significant Role In Strengthening Employee Commitment

The findings of this study indicate that both flexible work models and sustainable HR practices play a significant role in strengthening employee commitment within Indonesian startups. Flexible work arrangements enhance employees' sense of autonomy and work-life balance, which in turn positively influences affective commitment (Mulyadi et al., 2025). At the same time, sustainable HR practices contribute to a supportive organizational environment that fosters trust and long-term engagement. The combined effect of these factors suggests that employee commitment is not driven by a single dimension but by an integrated HR approach. These results highlight that startups can strategically leverage flexibility and sustainability to improve retention outcomes (Judijanto, 2024). Overall, the interpretation underscores the importance of aligning HR practices with employee expectations in dynamic work environments.

When compared with existing literature, the findings are consistent with prior studies emphasizing the positive relationship between flexibility, well-being, and employee commitment. However, this study extends the literature by examining these relationships within the specific context of Indonesian startups, which are characterized by rapid growth and resource constraints (Rohman & Parimita, 2024). Theoretically, the study reinforces frameworks such as Social Exchange Theory and the Job Demands-Resources model, showing how organizational support through HR practices enhances reciprocal commitment. Additionally, it provides contextual insights by highlighting the cultural and institutional factors that shape employee expectations in Indonesia (Contreras et al., 2020). For instance, the value placed on community and support may amplify the impact of sustainable HR practices. Thus, the study contributes to both global theory and local understanding. This chart as shown in Figure 1 compares the impact of flexible work models and sustainable HR practices across key dimensions such as autonomy, work-life balance, trust, engagement, retention, and overall commitment. Flexible work shows stronger influence on autonomy and work-life balance, reflecting its role in enhancing employee independence and well-being (Newman & Ford, 2021).

In contrast, sustainable HR practices demonstrate higher impact on trust, engagement, and retention, highlighting their importance in building a supportive and long-term organizational environment. Both factors converge at high levels of overall commitment, indicating their combined and complementary effect (Newman & Ford, 2021). The visualization reinforces that employee commitment in startups is best achieved through an integrated HR approach that balances flexibility with sustainability (Camp et al., 2022).

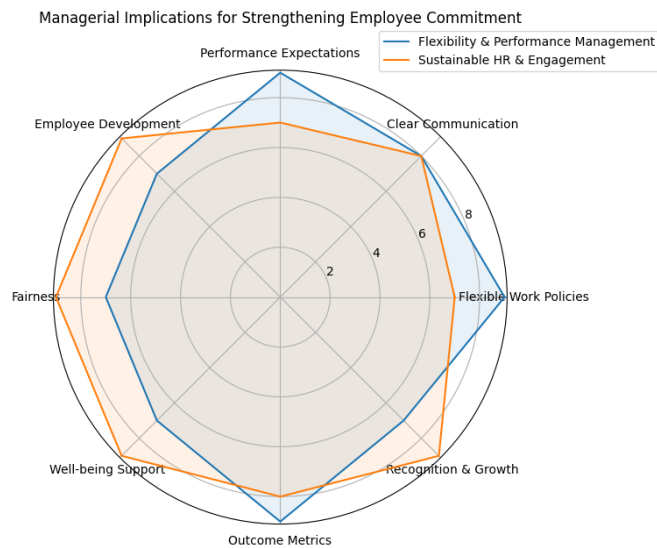


**Figure 1.** Role of Flexible Work and Sustainable HR in Employee Commitment

### Managerial Implications

The results of this study offer practical guidance for startup leaders in designing effective HR strategies. Organizations should prioritize the development of flexible work policies that are clearly defined and aligned with operational needs. This includes establishing guidelines for remote and hybrid work, ensuring clear communication channels, and setting performance expectations (Arunprasad et al., 2022). At the same time, startups should invest in sustainable HR practices that promote employee development, fairness, and long-term well-being. Integrating these elements can create a more supportive and engaging work environment. Managers must also be trained to effectively lead in flexible settings, balancing autonomy with accountability (Spagnoli et al., 2021).

In addition, organizations need to carefully balance flexibility with performance management to avoid potential downsides such as reduced coordination or productivity gaps. Implementing performance metrics that focus on outcomes rather than physical presence can help maintain accountability. Enhancing employee well-being should also be a central focus, with initiatives such as mental health support, flexible benefits, and continuous feedback mechanisms (Han & Hazard, 2022). Engagement can be further strengthened through recognition programs and opportunities for career growth. By adopting a holistic approach, startups can create a work environment that supports both employee needs and organizational goals. This alignment is essential for sustaining commitment and long-term success (Donnelly & Johns, 2020).



**Figure 2.** Figure. Double Radar Chart of Managerial Implications: Flexibility and Sustainable HR Strategies

The radar chart as shown in Figure 2 illustrates how flexibility & performance management and sustainable HR & engagement contribute in complementary ways to strengthening employee commitment. Flexibility-related practices show higher emphasis on areas like flexible work policies, performance expectations, and outcome-based metrics, highlighting the importance of structure and accountability in dynamic work settings (Chafi et al., 2021). In contrast, sustainable HR practices dominate in employee development, fairness, well-being support, and recognition, emphasizing the human-centered aspects of engagement and long-term commitment. Both dimensions align closely in clear communication, indicating it as a shared critical factor across strategies. The chart overall demonstrates that neither approach alone is sufficient; instead, a balanced integration of operational flexibility and employee-focused sustainability is essential for creating a supportive, high-performing work environment in startups (Parker et al., 2020).

### Limitations and Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The use of cross-sectional data limits the ability to establish causal relationships between HR practices and employee commitment. Additionally, the sample is restricted to Indonesian startups, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts or industries (Usama et al., 2025). Self-reported data may also introduce bias, as respondents' perceptions may not fully reflect actual organizational practices. Furthermore, the study does not deeply explore industry-specific variations within the startup ecosystem. These limitations suggest that the findings should be interpreted with caution (Judeu et al., 2025).

Future research can address these limitations by adopting longitudinal designs to better understand how employee commitment evolves over time. Expanding the scope to include cross-cultural comparisons would provide valuable insights into how cultural differences influence the effectiveness of flexible and sustainable HR practices (Pianese et al., 2022). Researchers could also explore industry-specific dynamics to identify variations in HR strategies across different sectors. Additionally, the role of digital tools in enabling flexible work deserves further investigation, particularly in terms of their impact on productivity and employee experience. Examining how technology can support or hinder sustainable HR practices will be increasingly important. Such research will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of workforce management in modern organizations (Chougule et al., 2026).

**Table 1.** The Use of Cross-Sectional Data

Aspect	Key Points	Implications	Future Research Directions
Research Design Sample Scope	Use of cross-sectional data Focus on Indonesian startups only	Limits ability to establish causal relationships Limited generalizability to other contexts and industries	Adopt longitudinal studies to track changes over time Conduct cross-cultural and multi-industry comparative studies
Data Collection	Reliance on self-reported data	Potential bias and mismatch with actual practices	Use mixed methods (qualitative + objective data sources)
Contextual Coverage	Limited exploration of industry-specific differences	May overlook sector-specific HR dynamics	Investigate industry variations and role of digital tools in HR practices

The table as shown in table 1 highlights key limitations of the study while simultaneously pointing toward meaningful avenues for future research. It shows that constraints such as the use of cross-sectional data and a geographically limited sample reduce the ability to generalize findings and establish causality. Additionally, reliance on self-reported data introduces potential bias, while the lack of industry-specific analysis may overlook important contextual differences (Mustajab, 2024). However, these limitations also create clear opportunities for further investigation. Future research is encouraged to adopt longitudinal designs, expand across cultures and industries, and incorporate mixed methods to enhance validity. The table also emphasizes the growing importance of exploring digital tools and their role in shaping HR practices. Overall, it demonstrates that addressing these gaps can lead to a more comprehensive and robust understanding of employee commitment in evolving work environments (Chinyuku & Qutieshat, 2025).

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that flexible work models and sustainable HR practices play a crucial role in strengthening employee commitment within Indonesian startups. By offering autonomy, improving work-life balance, and fostering supportive organizational environments, these practices enhance employees' emotional attachment and engagement with their organizations. The findings highlight that startups, despite their resource constraints and dynamic nature, can strategically leverage flexibility and sustainability to retain talent and improve performance. Importantly, the integration of these approaches creates a more holistic HR strategy that addresses both organizational needs and employee expectations. As startups continue to evolve, aligning HR practices with workforce preferences will be essential for long-term success.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes that employee commitment is not solely driven by financial incentives but by meaningful work experiences and organizational support. Flexible work arrangements must be complemented by sustainable HR initiatives to ensure fairness, development, and well-being. This combined approach enables startups to build resilient and motivated teams capable of navigating uncertainty and growth challenges. While the findings provide valuable insights, they also point to the need for continuous adaptation of HR strategies in response to changing workforce dynamics. Ultimately, organizations that successfully integrate flexibility and sustainability into their HR frameworks will be better positioned to achieve sustainable growth and competitive advantage.

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