Work Loyalty and Employee Retention from a Human Capital Perspective in the Faculty of Arts and Design at Sebelas Maret University

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	This study aims to understand how employee work loyalty is formed and interpreted as a retention strategy from a human capital perspective at the Faculty of Arts and Design, Sebelas Maret University (FSRD UNS). This study uses a qualitative approach, specifically a transcendental phenomenological method, to explore employees' direct work experiences. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation of four educational staff members selected via purposive sampling. Data analysis was carried out through the stages of organizing data, providing initial codes, developing themes, compiling textural and structural descriptions, and synthesizing the essence of the experience. The results show that employee loyalty is shaped by several interrelated factors: professional responsibility, emotional attachment, psychological comfort, competency development, family work culture, and perceptions of organizational justice. These factors create a supportive work environment and encourage employees to remain in the organization. This study concludes that work loyalty at FSRD UNS functions as a retention mechanism that develops organically through positive work experiences and social relationships within the organization, but has not been fully integrated into a structured human capital management strategy.

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1. Introduction

Human resources (HR) are a strategic asset in an organization because they act as capital. Intellectual capital influences organizational performance and sustainability. From a human capital perspective, employee competence, creativity, and experience add value to an institution, making their management and development crucial (Larasati et al., 2025). Appropriate HR management strategies are therefore crucial. Ways to increase employee loyalty and retention include investing in training and career development, as well as improving the quality of the work environment.

Employee retention remains a challenge for many organizations, including educational institutions. A literature review shows that factors such as job satisfaction, work environment, career opportunities, and reward systems influence employees' decisions to stay or leave an organization (Agung & Wijaya, 2020). Retention is not only about reducing employee turnover but also ensuring the continuity of employee knowledge and competencies so that the organization remains productive and adaptive in the long term. Recent studies have shown that. Affective commitment has the most decisive influence on employee retention because it is rooted in value congruence and a sense of being valued within the organization (Krajcsák, 2022)(Adamovic, 2023).

Job loyalty itself is an important concept closely related to retention. Research shows that loyalty is influenced by career development, compensation, work culture, and employee stress levels (Mahmudah et al., 2020). Furthermore, other research confirms that loyalty and retention can increase when organizations implement supportive HR management practices, including open communication, appreciation, and positive interpersonal relationships (Agustini, 2024). Loyalty stems from good working conditions and is part of a long-term strategy to retain quality employees. Job loyalty is reflected not only in length of service, but also in employees' emotional attachment, rational considerations, and moral obligations to

the organization. Meyer and Allen (1991) proposed three dimensions of loyalty: affective, continuance, and normative commitment, which remain the primary basis for understanding job loyalty (Meyer et al., 1993).

A supportive work environment also influences employee retention in the context of human capital. A supportive work environment has a significant influence on retention, with job satisfaction acting as a mediator (Yoseph Septha Aji Surya Wicaksana, 2021). This finding emphasizes that the work environment is not merely an external factor, but an important part of the employee's psychological experience in building commitment and loyalty to the organization. Arts educational institutions such as the Faculty of Arts and Design (FSRD) at UNS have unique work dynamics. The creative, collaborative, and project-based environment demands the continuous development of human capital. However, research on loyalty and retention in this context is limited, necessitating a phenomenological approach to explore employees' subjective experiences. This approach allows for exploration of the meaning of loyalty, perceptions of the value of human capital, and factors influencing employees' decisions to remain at the institution.

Although loyalty and retention have been widely discussed in human resource management literature, their management in higher education institutions is often informal. It has not been integrated into a systematic human capital strategy. At the Faculty of Arts and Design (FSRD) at UNS, work loyalty tends to be shaped by family culture and relational comfort rather than structured career planning and competency development. This situation demonstrates the existence of relational and contextual loyalty phenomena. If loyalty and retention are not managed strategically, institutions can face long-term consequences, such as stagnation in the career development of teaching staff, dependence on stable interpersonal relationships, and the risk of weakening the sustainability of human capital when leadership or organizational dynamics change. Thus, the issue of loyalty and retention in the Faculty of Arts and Design (FSRD) at UNS has significant implications for the sustainability of human capital management.

Academically, most previous research has used a quantitative approach, focusing on relationships among variables such as job satisfaction, compensation, and organizational commitment (Agung & Wijaya, 2020)(Adamovic, 2023). However, research exploring loyalty as an employee subjective experience from a human capital perspective remains limited, particularly in arts education institutions. Therefore, there are three research gaps in this study: (1) a theoretical gap, in the form of a limited understanding of loyalty as part of human capital; (2) a contextual gap, namely the lack of studies in arts education institutions; and (3) a methodological gap, in the form of the dominance of quantitative approaches compared to phenomenological exploration.

This study offers novelty by examining job loyalty as part of human capital through a phenomenological approach to uncover the subjective meanings and work experiences that shape employee retention decisions. The contribution of this study is divided into two levels: in practice and results. This study aims to inform the formulation of HR management policies grounded in employee experiences and to support more integrated retention strategies in arts education institutions. Theoretically, this study enriches the human capital literature through a phenomenological perspective and broadens the understanding of job loyalty as part of human capital that contributes to organizational sustainability. Based on the background description, the problem formulation for this study is: which factors shape employee job loyalty, and how these factors contribute to retention strategies from a human capital perspective at Faculty of Arts and Design (FSRD).

2. Methods

This study uses a qualitative, phenomenological approach to explore employees' experiences with work loyalty as a retention strategy from a human capital perspective. The phenomenological approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand the subjective meanings individuals construct regarding their work experiences within an

organizational context. Recent studies confirm that qualitative approaches, particularly phenomenology, are relevant for examining personal and emotional HR behaviors, including retention and work experiences (Yoseph Septha Aji Surya Wicaksana, 2021).

This research specifically employs a transcendental phenomenological approach, as developed by Moustakas and described by Creswell & Poth (2018) (Creswell, 2018). This approach emphasizes exploring participants' lived experiences by deferring to the researcher's initial assumptions or judgments about the phenomenon under study. Using this approach, the researcher seeks to understand the essence of the employee's experience of work loyalty without first interpreting it through the researcher's personal perspective.

This research process applies the principle of bracketing (epoch is a researcher's reflective effort to postpone assumptions, personal experiences, and subjective judgments about the phenomenon of work loy, so that the phenomenon can be understood based on participants' authentic experiences. In a phenomenological approach, bracketing aims to maintain the objectivity of interpretation by temporarily suspending the researcher's initial knowledge, thereby keeping the focus on the informant's lived experience (Moustakas, 1994)(Chan et al., 2013). This practice is carried out through continuous self-reflection throughout the research process, reflexive note-taking, and discussions with colleagues to identify and minimize potential interpretation bias. This reflexive approach helps increase the transparency and reliability of interpretation in qualitative phenomenological research (Gearing, 2004).

The research flow includes: determining the research focus, collecting data through in-depth interviews and observations, analyzing data using a thematic process, and drawing phenomenological conclusions. This aligns with recent research findings showing that employee retention is strongly influenced by work experience, competency development, and interpersonal relationships that employees subjectively perceive (Raharjo et al., 2025).

This aligns with the phenomenological method used in research on talent management and job satisfaction (Yoseph Septha Aji Surya Wicaksana, 2021), which

employs phenomenological analysis and in-depth interviews to understand employee perceptions. The researcher's position in this study is as the primary research instrument (human instrument) responsible for collecting, interpreting, and analyzing data. Therefore, the researcher consciously engages in reflexivity to maintain the objectivity of interpretation and ensure that the resulting meaning truly represents the participants' experiences. This approach is relevant to understanding the emotional, moral, and professional identity dimensions that shape retention decisions (Cunningham et al., 2022)(Vagle, 2018).

Data Types and Sources

The data used were primary data obtained through in-depth interviews and observations, as well as secondary in the form of institutional documents, HR reports, and archives related to work culture. The use of phenomenology in HR research has been shown to provide in-depth insights into employees' emotional experiences, interpersonal relationships, and perceptions within an organizational context (Yoseph Septha Aji Surya Wicaksana, 2021). Phenomenology was chosen because it emphasizes lived experience and reflective interpretation of the meanings constructed by participants (Smith & Osborn, 2015). This approach is highly relevant for examining loyalty from a human capital perspective, as it enables researchers to understand how personal values, competencies, and organizational goals shape work loyalty (Krawczyński et al., 2025).

The data sources in this study come from key informants, namely, educational staff at the Faculty of Arts and Design (FSRD) with active work experience and direct involvement in the dynamics of human resource management within the faculty environment. Informants were selected purposively to reflect variations in work period, job function, and involvement in administrative processes and academic services, enabling them to provide rich subjective experiences related to work loyalty and retention decisions. The selection of these informant sources aims to gain an In-depth understanding of employee work experiences (lived experience) in building loyalty and interpreting retention strategies from a human capital

perspective at FSRD UNS. In addition to informants, the research also collected data from locations and events that reflect work activities, social interactions between employees, and the overall organizational climate. Supporting documents such as organizational structures, HR policies, and personnel reports were also used to provide a more comprehensive picture of the work context and internal policies that may influence employee loyalty.

Research Location

This research was conducted at the Faculty of Arts and Design, Sebelas Maret University (FSRD UNS), located at Ir. Sutami Street 36A Kentingan, Jebres, Surakarta, Central Java. This location was chosen because the institution has organizational dynamics relevant to the phenomenon of work loyalty and employee retention in higher Education.

Data collection technique

Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted to capture employees' subjective perceptions and personal experiences regarding job loyalty and retention. Observations were conducted to directly understand the dynamics of interactions, work patterns, and organizational culture. Documentation was used to complement and validate the results of primary data collection. This triangulation technique is recommended in phenomenological research to ensure the data obtained is more valid and meaningful (Fadli, 2021).

Data collection techniques in this study included in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted to comprehensively explore employees' subjective experiences regarding job loyalty and their decision to remain with the organization. Each interview lasted 45–60 minutes and was semi-structured, guided by open-ended questions that allowed participants to reflect on their experiences. In some cases, follow-up interviews were conducted to clarify further information previously obtained. Participatory observation was conducted to directly understand the dynamics of

work interactions, communication patterns between employees, and the organizational situations that shape employees' work experiences. Meanwhile, documentation was used to supplement and verify data obtained through interviews and observations, such as HR policy documents, organizational structures, and personnel reports.

The use of various data collection techniques also aims to triangulate sources and methods, so that the data obtained is richer and more valid. To ensure the quality and validity of research data, this study uses the trustworthiness criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (Lincoln & Guba,1985)(Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, 1985), which cover: a) Credibility; Data validity is maintained through a method triangulation process (interviews, observation, documentation) and member checking, namely asking participants for confirmation regarding the results of the data interpretation obtained from the interview. b) Transferability; The researcher provides a detailed description of the research context to help readers understand the research setting and assess the potential applicability of the findings in other contexts. c) Dependability: The research process was systematically documented through research notes on the data analysis; it can be traced back. d) Confirmability; Researchers maintain objectivity through reflective note-taking, audit trails, and peer debriefing to minimize interpretation bias.

Informant Determination Technique

Research informants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique that deliberately selects informants based on criteria relevant to the research objectives. Purposive selection is commonly used in phenomenological research because what is needed is not a large number, but the depth of meaning from individuals who actually experience the phenomenon (Moleong, 2021). The informant criteria in this study were educational staff who had worked for at least 5 years, ensuring they had sufficient experience to understand the dynamics of organizational work. To expand the scope of information, this study also used a snowball sampling technique, where participants were asked to recommend additional

informants. The informant selection process continued until data saturation was reached (Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, 2021). This is the point at which additional interviews no longer yield new themes or information. Data saturation in research begins to emerge in the fourth interview, when the patterns of experience and themes are repeated and no longer show significant variation in meaning. The informants in the research are as follows:

Table 1. Determination of Informants

Name	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4
Position	General Functional	General Functions	General Functions	General Functional
Age	40	45	38	41
Gender	Woman	Man	Man	Man
Marital status	Marry	Marry	Marry	Marry
Religion	Christian	Christian	Islam	Islam
Education Status	S1	S1	S1	Senior High School
Years of service	2009-Present	2006-Present	2015-Present	2008-Present
Personnel Status	Government employees	Not a Civil Servant	Not a Civil Servant	Not a Civil Servant

Data analysis

Data analysis in this study followed the stages of phenomenological analysis described by Creswell & Poth (2018) (Creswell, 2018) and Moustakas (1994). The analysis process was carried out systematically and iteratively through the following stages: Data Organization, Initial Coding, Theme Reduction and Development, Textural and Structural Description, Essence of Experience.

3. Result

Research result

The research data were obtained through in-depth interviews with educational staff at the Faculty of Arts and Design (FSRD) of Sebelas Maret University (UNS). The data collection process also included observations of the work context and documentation studies of human resource policies within the faculty. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to maintain the integrity of the participants' experiences. Data analysis was conducted using a phenomenological approach through the stages of repeatedly rereading the transcripts, identifying units of meaning, open coding, grouping subthemes, and forming main themes. The data reduction process involved selecting statements relevant to the research problem formulation. At the same time, observational and documentary data were used as a form of triangulation to strengthen the validity of the findings.

Employee Loyalty Findings Structure

This study yielded six main themes that shape the work loyalty of educational staff at the Faculty of Arts and Design (FSRD) at UNS: professional responsibility, emotional attachment, psychological comfort, competency development, a family-like work culture, and perceptions of organizational justice. These six themes emerged consistently across various informants, albeit with varying emphases on their experiences. These findings suggest that work loyalty is not a single concept but rather emerges from the interaction between individual experiences and the organizational context. Several informants described loyalty as a commitment to consistently contribute optimally to the institution's tasks. One informant stated:

"While working here, I feel a sense of responsibility to carry out my duties well, as this is not just a job but also a form of devotion to the institution."

This statement demonstrates that work loyalty is not solely based on a contractual relationship but reflects the psychological connection between an individual and an organization. From a phenomenological perspective, this experience reflects the subjective meaning of loyalty constructed through social interactions and daily work experiences.

Loyalty as a Professional and Affective Commitment

The research results show that work loyalty is primarily defined as a professional commitment to consistently carrying out job responsibilities. Informants emphasized the importance of maintaining the quality of administrative and academic services and maintaining integrity in carrying out duties. One informant stated:

"For me, loyalty is how we continue to carry out our work with full responsibility, even though sometimes there is quite a lot of work."

In addition to the professional dimension, an affective dimension emerges, encompassing a sense of belonging to the institution and an emotional attachment to the work environment. This attachment is formed through long-term work experience, intense social interactions, and involvement in the dynamics of daily organizational activities. In this context, loyalty is understood not merely as a formal obligation but as an emotional connection that develops through collective workplace experiences.

Psychological Comfort as the Foundation of Loyalty

Research findings indicate that psychological comfort in the work environment is a dominant factor supporting the formation of work loyalty. This comfort is related to interpersonal relationships between employees, internal organizational communication, and a relatively harmonious work environment. Informants stated that mutually supportive work relationships create a sense of psychological security when carrying out tasks. One informant stated:

"What keeps me here is actually the comfortable working atmosphere. My relationships with my colleagues are also good, making work feel easier."

This experience demonstrates that loyalty is not only built by structural organizational factors, but also by the quality of social relationships in the workplace. From

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a phenomenological perspective, psychological comfort can be understood as an existential experience that shapes an individual's perception of the meaning of working within an organization.

Competency Development and Organizational Support

Data analysis shows that opportunities to participate in training, gain leaders' trust, and receive support in competency development contribute to strengthening work loyalty. Informants interpreted capacity development as recognition of their contributions to the organization. One informant stated:

"When allowed to participate in training or development activities, I feel valued by the institution."

These findings suggest that organizational investment in competency development not only improves work performance but also strengthens individual engagement with the institution. However, several informants also stated that these development opportunities are not shared equally by all employees. This imbalance in development experiences leads to varying levels of loyalty among individuals, necessitating a more systematic design of human resource development strategies.

Work Culture and Perceptions of Organizational Justice

A family-like work culture emerged as a social factor that strengthened employee loyalty. Informants described relatively egalitarian, less rigidly hierarchical working relationships, which facilitated coordination and collaboration. One informant stated:

"Here, the working relationship feels like family, so communication with management is also relatively open."

In addition to work culture, perceptions of organizational justice also play a role in maintaining stable employee loyalty. Informants reported that as long as tasks are distributed and performance appraisals are conducted proportionally, they remain committed to the

organization. Discomfort is more often related to communication barriers than structural injustice. These findings suggest that perceptions of procedural and interactional justice are important factors in maintaining employee trust in the organization.

4. Discussion

Factors that Shape the Work Loyalty at Faculty of Arts and Design (FSRD) UNS Employees

Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

The results of the study indicate that the work loyalty of FSRD UNS employees is primarily shaped by relational and psychological job satisfaction. Informants emphasized positive work experiences, harmonious interpersonal relationships, and a supportive work environment as the primary reasons for remaining employed at the institution. These findings suggest that loyalty develops through repeated affective experiences within the work context. This finding aligns with research by Adamović (2023), which shows that job satisfaction significantly influences organizational commitment and employee retention (Adamovic, 2023). In the context of the FSRD UNS, loyalty is understood as a normative obligation and rational choice formed through work experiences perceived as fair and meaningful.

Competency Development as an Investment in Human Capital

From a human capital perspective, opportunities for training and competency development can be understood as an organizational investment in employees' human capital. This research shows that when employees have access to capacity development, they demonstrate higher levels of work engagement and a long-term contribution orientation to the organization. This finding aligns with research by Mampuru et al. (2024), which shows that competency development has a positive relationship with employee loyalty and retention

(Mampuru et al., 2017). Within the human capital framework, investment in competencies not only increases individual productivity but also strengthens employee commitment to continue contributing to the organization.

Organizational Culture as Social Capital of Loyalty

Phenomenological analysis shows that a familial work culture serves as social capital, strengthening employees' affective loyalty. Collaborative working relationships and relatively open communication foster a sense of belonging to the organization. This allows employees to maintain work motivation despite facing increased administrative burdens. This finding aligns with Pham's (2024) research, which shows that an inclusive and supportive organizational culture significantly contributes to employee engagement and loyalty (Pham, 2024). Thus, work culture serves not only as a social environment but also, it is a psychological mechanism that strengthens employee engagement with the organization.

Perception of Justice as Loyalty Stability

Research results show that perceptions of fairness in task allocation and performance evaluation play a significant role in maintaining employee loyalty. When employees feel treated fairly and transparently, a sense of security and trust in the organization emerges. This finding is consistent with the literature, which shows that organizational justice is positively correlated with organizational commitment and employee retention (Adamovic, 2023). In the context of the FSRD UNS, organizational justice serves as a stabilizing factor that maintains employee loyalty amid work dynamics.

Loyalty Contribution to Retention Strategy from a Human Capital Perspective

Loyalty as an Organic Retention Mechanism

The research results show that employee loyalty at FSRD UNS serves as a retention mechanism that develops organically through daily work experiences. The decision to remain employed is influenced not only by economic factors but also by a sense of belonging

to the institution and relational comfort in the work environment. From a human capital perspective, loyalty can be understood as a psychological investment that enhances the sustainability of employees' contributions to the organization. This finding aligns with Mampuru et al. (2024), who demonstrated that loyalty formed through organizational support and competency development plays a significant role in reducing employee turnover (Mampuru et al., 2017).

Integration of HR Development in Retention Strategy

From a human capital perspective, competency development not only improves individual performance but also strengthens long-term engagement with the organization. Research shows that employees who receive capacity development opportunities tend to exhibit a stronger retention orientation. An effective retention strategy must integrate organizational culture, competency development, and onal communicatwithin the organization ion (Pham, 2024). In the context of the FSRD UNS, established work loyalty serves as essential social capital for organizational stability. However, this loyalty still needs to be strengthened through more systematic human resource management policies to become a sustainable retention strategy within the human capital management framework.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that employee work loyalty at the Faculty of Arts and Design (FSRD) of Sebelas Maret University is formed through the interaction of several main factors, namely professional responsibility, emotional attachment to the institution, psychological comfort in the work environment, opportunities for competency development, a family-like work culture, and perceptions of organizational justice. These factors build a positive work experience and create an effective bond between employees and the organization. From a human capital perspective, these factors contribute to retention strategies through loyalty mechanisms that develop organically from work experience,

interpersonal relationships, and organizational support. Loyalty is not only interpreted as normative compliance with work, but also as a form of professional and emotional commitment that encourages employees to continue contributing and remain in the organization.

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that the Faculty of Arts and Design (FSRD) develop a more systematic human resource management strategy by integrating competency development, a transparent reward system, and fair and open organizational communication. Strengthening these policies is crucial for optimizing employee loyalty as part of a sustainable retention strategy within the framework of human capital management. Thus, employee loyalty is not only a naturally developing relational phenomenon but can also be strategically managed to support organizational sustainability and performance.

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