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Exploring the Role of Virtual Collaboration Tools, Remote Working Policies, and Leadership Style in Improving Digital Talent Retention in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Digital talent retention is an important issue for any organization because competition in Indonesia keeps pace with rapid changes brought by digitization. The current paper has researched how virtual collaboration tools, remote work policies, and types of leadership have affected digital talent retention. The total selected participants are 120 working in different industries, and they were requested to complete a structured questionnaire quantitatively through a 1-5 Likert scale. Data analysis was performed using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS 3). The findings have indicated that virtual collaboration tools and remote working policy are positively influential toward digital talent retention, and the style of leadership has a great influence on it, acting as a mediator in these relationships. The study develops an integrative framework on the role of technology and flexible policies along with transformational leadership that advocates for a helpful and engaging environment at work. These insights provide a foundation for organizations seeking to attract and retain digital talent in Indonesia's competitive labor market.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The rapid development of digital technologies has changed organizational dynamics and workforce needs across the globe. In Indonesia, which is also one of the most rapidly digitally transforming countries, digital talent retention has emerged as a major challenge for organizations to maintain their competitive advantage [1]. Digital talent is crucial for driving innovation, enhancing productivity, and helping businesses cope with the pressures of a highly connected and technology-driven marketplace [2].

The competitive landscape for digital talent retention is formed through various areas such as the adoption of virtual collaboration tools, work-from-home policies, and the leadership style displayed by every manager and executive [3]. Virtual collaboration tools are a conduit for productive employees who can communicate with each other in a fashion that is unfettered by place and foster connectedness within a virtual work environment

[4]. Similarly, remote working policies, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, have reshaped traditional work structures and given employees greater flexibility in balancing their work and life [5].

It includes an organizational factor such as leadership style which significantly impacts employee satisfaction, engagement, and retention [6]. It is seen that leaders manifest inclusive, empathetic, and transformational leadership, hence the guarantors of enabling a workplace atmosphere where employees would want to come out and get connected for matching needs and aspirations. In the foregoing sections, various components were explored within the interconnected Indonesian cultural environment [7], [8].

Despite the growing interest in digital talent management, limited research has been conducted on how virtual collaboration tools, remote working policies, and leadership styles interactively play a significant role in improving digital talent retention, especially in emerging economies like Indonesia [9]–[11]. In this era of rapid digital transformation, skilled digital professionals are in high demand, making talent retention one of the critical issues that organizations are facing. Indonesia, as one of the fastest-growing digital economies in Southeast Asia, is facing unique challenges in securing and retaining digital talents amidst the intense global and regional talent competition. Unless addressed, this could potentially impede the growth of organizations and innovations, with a spill-over effect on the development of a nationwide digital economy. As virtual collaboration tools increasingly become the tool of choice, and remote working policies become the new norm, to say the least, organizations have to apply practices that speak to the changing needs and expectations of digital talent. This need for action is even more pressing, considering that leadership itself is dynamic and a core driver of organizational culture and employee engagement in the digital era.

Notwithstanding the proliferation of virtual collaboration tools and the wide acceptance of remote work policies, organizations continue to face problems associated with high turnover rates among digital professionals in Indonesia. Most organizations do not have any kind of structured idea about how these technological and policy-driven interventions interact with leadership styles to influence digital talent retention. Moreover, there is a severe lack of empirical evidence on how these various strategies work in an Indonesian context, where the cultural, economic, and technological factors may create unique challenges and opportunities. This lack of research not only negatively affects the ability of organizations to develop evidence-based retention strategies but also constrains the broader understanding of factors driving digital talent sustainability in emerging economies.

1.2. Research Objective

The research will, therefore, study how virtual collaboration tools, remote working policies, and leadership styles influence the improvement in digital talent retention in Indonesia. Precisely, it seeks to:

1. Determine the direct influence of virtual collaboration tools on digital talent retention.
2. Analyze the impact that remote working policies

have on retaining digital professionals.
3. Investigate how leadership styles act as a mediator in influencing the relationship between the mentioned factors and talent retention.
4. Actionable insights and recommendations on how organizations can implement appropriate strategies, given the unique challenges of digital talent management in Indonesia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Virtual Collaboration Tools and Digital Talent Retention

Virtual collaboration tools form an integral part of today's work environment in facilitating seamless communication and collaboration among geographically dispersed teams. Such tools as Slack, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom contribute not only to greater efficiency but also to nurturing the spirit of connectedness and teamwork [12]–[14]. Research indicates that the availability and effective use of these tools positively influence employee satisfaction and engagement, which are critical for talent retention [15], [16]. For digital talent, who often prioritize flexibility and technological integration, virtual collaboration tools serve as a key enabler of their professional productivity and well-being.

H1: Virtual collaboration tools have a positive and significant impact on digital talent retention.

2.2 Remote Working Policies and Digital Talent Retention

Remote working policies, which involve flexibility in location and working hours, have recently been brought to the fore by the COVID-19 pandemic. These policies respond to the increasing demand of employees for work-life balance and autonomy [17]. Previous research has demonstrated that effective remote working policies can lead to increased job satisfaction, reduced stress levels, and improved employee retention [18]. However, such policies are effective only when supported by the organization and met with expectations from the employees' end, which, for digital talent, basically means flexibility and a technological way of working.

H2: The policy of working remotely influences digital talent to stay with the organization positively and significantly.

2.3 Leadership Style and Digital Talent Retention

The style of leadership is one of the important determinants of employee retention since through style, there is organizational culture, satisfaction, and engagement of employees. Transformational leaders, who inspire and motivate their teams, have been found to foster stronger loyalty and commitment among employees [19], [20]. For digital talent, leadership emphasizing innovation, collaboration, and adaptability is particularly appealing, as it aligns with their professional aspirations and values [21], [22]. Leadership styles also play a mediating role in ensuring that virtual collaboration tools and remote working policies are effectively implemented.

H3: The leadership style significantly and positively influences the retention of digital talents.

2.4 The Mediating Role of Leadership Style

While virtual collaboration tools and policies of working remotely provide the technological

and structural framework that can help improve employee retention, this is often subject to the moderation provided by leadership quality. Leaders who encourage virtual tools and thereby support remote working policies create an atmosphere of trust, engagement, and support that further amplifies their influence on digital talent retention. This underlines the mediating role of leadership in being a catalyst for optimizing technological and policy-driven initiatives.

H4: The leadership style mediates the relationship between virtual collaboration tools and digital talent retention.

H5: The leadership style mediates the relationship between remote working policies and digital talent retention.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The proposed conceptual framework is helmed with the virtual collaboration tool and remote working policies as independent variables, while digital talent retention is the dependent variable; leadership style acts as a mediating variable. This conceptual framework considers theories of employee retention such as Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and the Social Exchange Theory, emphasizing how retention is an interaction between organizational resources, employee satisfaction, and leadership.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach Technique

The present research will try to understand the effects of virtual collaboration tools, remote working policies, and leadership styles on digital talent retention in Indonesia. In this regard, it deals with the relationships among the variables and, therefore, the study has employed the SEM-PLS 3 analysis tool. It contemplates direct and mediated effects but allows complex relationships between the variables.

3.2 Population and Sample

The respondents targeted by this research are digital professionals from various industries in Indonesia. To ensure that the chosen sample includes those actively involved in using digital expertise, experience, or exposure to at least one kind of remote working environment, a non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed. The minimum sample size for using SEM-PLS analysis is taken as 120 respondents.

3.3 Data Collection Technique

Data were collected through an online questionnaire on a Likert scale ranging from 1 for strongly disagreeing to 5 for strongly agreeing. The questionnaires were distributed to various professionals in several industries so that there could be diversity in the organizational settings and in the style of the leadership.

3.4 Data Analysis Technique

The collected data were analyzed with SEM-PLS 3 since it is suited for handling complex models with mediating variables [23]. Major steps involved in the analysis included: descriptive statistics that summarize demographic data and responses of key constructs; the measurement model assessed the reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the constructs; while the analysis of the structural model tested the hypothesized relationships and mediation effect of leadership style. Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was performed to determine the path coefficient significance [24].

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

a. Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics summarize demographic and response data from the 120 respondents who participated in the study. The demographic profile of the respective respondents includes gender, age, industry, and years of experience, while the descriptive data outline the mean and standard deviation for the constructs of interest, namely Virtual Collaboration Tools, Remote Working Policies, Leadership Style, and Digital Talent Retention.

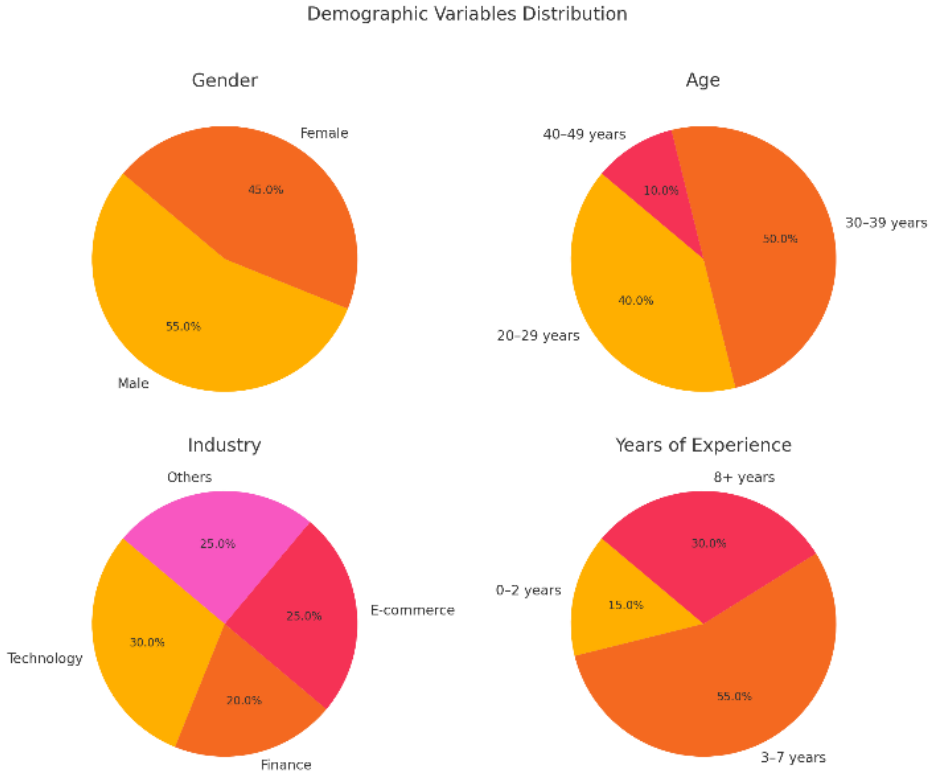

Figure 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents underlines the diversity and relevance of the sample for the objectives of this study. The gender distribution is almost balanced, with 55% male and 45% female, showing an improvement in gender diversity within Indonesia's digital workforce. Most respondents are young and mid-career professionals, with 50% aged 30–39, 40% aged 20–29, and 10% aged 40–49, indicating that the younger generation is driving digital transformation. Industries represented include technology 30%, e-commerce 25%, and finance 20%--all high-growth areas that make Indonesia vital in the modern-day digital economy. Besides, 55% have 3-7 years of experience, 30% have 8+ years, and 15% have 0-2 years, thus showing a workbench heavy in both mid-level and senior talent. These insights really drive home the need for tailored talent retention strategies for this dynamic workforce.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Constructs

Construct	Number of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Virtual Collaboration Tools	5	4.21	0.67
Remote Working Policies	5	4.15	0.72
Leadership Style	5	4.35	0.58
Digital Talent Retention	5	4.28	0.63

Sources: Processed data analysis (2025)

From this data, it would seem that, overall, the constructs are viewed positively by the respondents, as their mean values exceed 4 on the 5-point Likert scale. The highest-rated construct is that of Leadership Style, with a mean of 4.35 and an SD of 0.58, whereas Virtual Collaboration Tools are rated high, with a mean of 4.21 and an SD of 0.67, reflecting its supportive role toward remote work and employee engagement. These results provide a very solid basis for further analysis of the relationships between the constructs.

b. Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was assessed for reliability and validity using several criteria: loading factors (LF), with each indicator expected to exceed 0.70 to demonstrate a strong relationship with its construct; Cronbach's Alpha (CA), where values above 0.70 indicate acceptable internal consistency; Composite Reliability (CR), confirming construct reliability with values exceeding 0.70; and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which ensures sufficient convergent validity with values above 0.50 [25].

Table 2. Measurement Model Evaluation

Construct	Item	LF	CA	CR	AVE
Virtual Collaboration Tools	VCT1	0.793	0.843	0.894	0.629
	VCT2	0.825			
	VCT3	0.808			
	VCT4	0.762			
	VCT5	0.743			
Remote Working Policies	RWP1	0.816	0.868	0.902	0.652
	RWP2	0.839			
	RWP3	0.801			
	RWP4	0.772			
	RWP5	0.756			
Leadership Style	LS1	0.858	0.883	0.918	0.678
	LS2	0.872			
	LS3	0.844			
	LS4	0.799			
	LS5	0.784			
Digital Talent Retention	DTR1	0.837	0.877	0.912	0.664
	DTR2	0.841			
	DTR3	0.818			
	DTR4	0.793			
	DTR5	0.768			

Sources: Processed data analysis (2025)

All indicators showed loading factors above 0.70, thus demonstrating good relations with their respective constructs.

For all constructs, Cronbach's Alpha was above 0.70, showing that their internal consistency was good, at 0.84 for Virtual Collaboration Tools, 0.86 for Remote Working Policies, 0.88 for Leadership Style, and 0.87 for Digital Talent Retention. CR values ranged between 0.89 and 0.91, thus showing that the constructs are reliable. Additionally, the AVE for all the constructs was greater than 0.50, thus meeting convergent validity: for Virtual Collaboration Tools it was 0.62, Remote Working Policies was 0.65, Leadership Style was 0.67, and Digital Talent Retention was 0.66.

c. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity indicates the characteristics that make every construct different from other constructs and it was verified based on the Forbell-Larkar Criterion and also the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT).

a) Fornell - Larcker Criterion

The Fornell-Larcker Criterion puts the square root of the AVE for each construct against its correlations with other constructs. The square root of the AVE should be greater than the correlations with other constructs.

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Construct	VCT	RWP	LS	DTR
Virtual Collaboration Tools	0.792			
Remote Working Policies	0.626	0.811		
Leadership Style	0.578	0.659	0.825	
Digital Talent Retention	0.609	0.633	0.715	0.812

Sources: Processed data analysis (2025)

The values on the diagonal are higher than the correlations with other constructs, confirming discriminant validity.

b) HTMT: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio

HTMT assesses the ratio of correlations between constructs. Values below 0.85 (strict criterion) or 0.90 (lenient criterion) indicate acceptable discriminant validity [25].

Table 4. HTMT Values

Construct Pair	HTMT Value
VCT ↔ RWP	0.724
VCT ↔ LS	0.686
VCT ↔ DTR	0.708
RWP ↔ LS	0.771
RWP ↔ DTR	0.753
LS ↔ DTR	0.848

Sources: Processed data analysis (2025)

All HTMT values are below the conservative threshold of 0.85, thus

discriminant validity is established.

d. Structural Model Evaluation

The hypothesized relationships among the variables were tested about virtual collaboration tools, remote working policies, leadership style, and digital talent retention. The path coefficients were checked, as well as the significance testing of paths by bootstrapping method with 5,000 resamples, and the explanatory power of the model, R^2.

Table 5. Structural Model Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Path	Path Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Result
VCT → DTR	0.357	4.234	0.000	Supported
RWP → DTR	0.292	3.451	0.000	Supported
LS → DTR	0.424	5.673	0.000	Supported
VCT → LS → DTR	0.187	3.127	0.001	Supported (Mediated)
RWP → LS → DTR	0.152	2.894	0.003	Supported (Mediated)

Sources: Processed data analysis (2025)

The findings indicate significant positive relationships between the studied variables and digital talent retention. Virtual Collaboration Tools positively impact retention (β = 0.357, p 0.000), demonstrating that their effective use enhances employee satisfaction and connectivity. Remote Working Policies also show a significant positive effect (β = 0.292, p 0.000), supporting retention by addressing autonomy and work-life balance needs. Thus, leadership style was found to be the strongest direct predictor: β = 0.424, p 0.000, indicating that transformational leadership has a very important role in loyalty and commitment. Furthermore, Leadership Style partially mediated the impact of Virtual Collaboration Tools (β = 0.187, p 0.001) and Remote Working Policies (β = 0.152, p 0.003) on digital talent retention by magnifying the technology and policy impacts to highlight its role as a key enabler in talent management.

e. Model Fit Evaluation

Key indicators from the SEM-PLS analysis were used to evaluate the model fit in ensuring that the proposed structural relationships align with the observed data. The value of SRMR for the Standardized Root Mean Residual is 0.064, which is a good fit since it falls below the threshold recommended at 0.08, indicating minimal discrepancies between observed and predicted correlations. The NFI value is 0.91, above the threshold of 0.90, again indicating that the fit of the model is significantly better than that of the null model. These results provide support for the overall adequacy of the model fit.

The Coefficient of Determination (R^2) shows the explanatory power of the model. In this respect, the leadership style is moderately explained by virtual collaboration tools and remote working policies, with an R^2 of 0.52, while digital talent retention is substantially explained by leadership style, virtual collaboration tools, and remote working policies, with an R^2 of 0.62. Moreover, the Predictive Relevance (Q^2) value of 0.43 for digital talent retention confirms that the model is effective in predicting observed

data, since it is above the threshold of 0.00.

The effect size-f^2-veys information about partial effects of each variable. In the context of digital talent retention, Virtual Collaboration Tools have a medium effect size at $f^2 = 0.18$, while Remote Working Policies have a small effect size at $f^2 = 0.13$. With regard to the Leadership Style influence on digital talent retention, $f^2 = 0.28$ reflects a medium effect size, hence meaning a very critical influence in improving retention outcomes. All of these findings definitely give weight to this model in regard to understanding digital retention dynamics.

4.2 Discussion

The following sections present conclusions based on information obtained from interviewees about different influence factors and mechanisms of digital talent retention in the Indonesian context: rising challenges created by virtual collaboration tool adoption, new work modalities, including remote working policy, and changed leadership styles. The study confirms that virtual collaboration tools significantly influence the retention of digital talents. Virtual collaboration tools ensure smooth communication, teamwork, and productivity and, therefore, become indispensable in the digital era. This agrees with the suggestion of [16], [17], [26], which states that technology is a critical facilitator in providing a supportive work environment. Results revealed that organizations should invest in sophisticated, user-friendly tools to help fulfill digital professionals' expectations of staying connected and empowered in work.

The results highlight that remote working policy significantly has a positive impact on retaining the digital talent in view. Flexibility in work arrangements addresses the needs of digital professionals for autonomy and work-life balance, which are critical factors for job satisfaction and retention [27]–[29]. In Indonesia, where family and community relationships often play a significant role in employee well-being, flexible remote working arrangements are particularly effective. Organizations must ensure that these policies are well-structured and supported by technology to maximize their benefits.

Leadership style emerged to be the most significant determinant of digital talent retention. Indeed, Transformational leadership behaviors like vision, collaboration, and support raise loyalty and, hence engagement among employees. Our finding is supported by the work conducted on the role of leadership in shaping up the culture of an organization by [19], [20]. The leaders of digital organizations should adopt a transformational approach that will align with the values and ideals of the digital employees through innovation, trust, and empowerment.

The paper has discussed the mediating effect of the leadership style in the relationships of virtual collaboration tools and policies of working remotely and retaining digital talents. Finally, leadership style mediates the above factors: the indirect effects of virtual collaboration tools and remote working policies are significant. These results emphasize that even advanced tools and flexible policies require effective leadership to create a friendly and supportive work environment. Leaders should be facilitators to ensure the proper implementation of these strategies in the workplace to guarantee employees' long-term commitment.

This study adds to the increasing knowledge in digital talent management by integrating virtual collaboration tools, remote working policies, and leadership styles into one comprehensive framework. It also points out the importance of leadership as a mediating factor in providing new insights into the interplay between technology, policy, and employee retention. The findings validate the applicability of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and the Social Exchange Theory in understanding digital talent retention in emerging economies like Indonesia.

4.3 Practical Implications

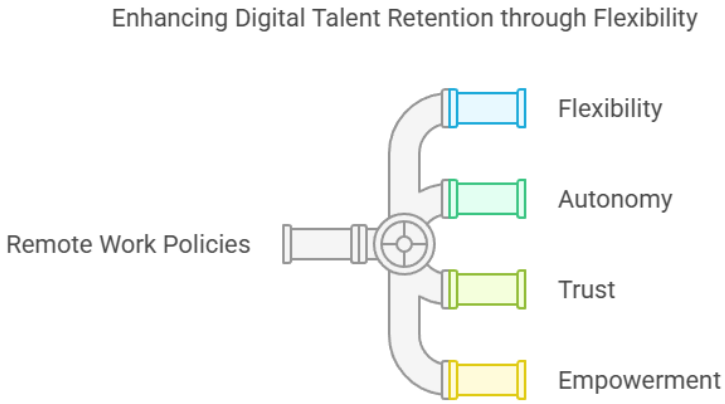

Figure 2. Implications

Organizations in Indonesia aiming to improve their digital talent retention strategy should focus on several practical implications. First, investing in technology is essential, particularly by implementing virtual collaboration tools that enhance communication and teamwork, ensuring they are user-friendly and meet employee needs. Additionally, offering flexibility in work arrangements through clear remote work policies that support employee autonomy and flexibility is crucial. Leadership competencies should also be a priority, with a focus on transformational leadership training to inspire, support, and engage employees. Finally, integrating these strategies—technology, policies, and leadership—will create a conducive work environment that aligns with the expectations of digital talents.

4.4 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Even though this study has contributed to a better understanding of certain issues, it does have its limitations. Reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias, and the cross-sectional design limits any attempts to establish causality. Further research is recommended to adopt a longitudinal approach in examining how these relationships change over time. Increasing the sample size and conducting industry-specific analyses will also improve the generalizability of the results.

5. CONCLUSION

It investigates how virtual collaboration tools, remote working policies, leadership styles, and digital talent retention interrelate in Indonesia. The results show that virtual tools enhance retention by facilitating seamless collaboration, while acceptable remote working policies facilitate work-life balance and therefore have a positive impact on retention. Transformational leadership became the strongest direct factor and a critical mediator in amplifying the impact of virtual tools and policies. Such findings reveal an integrated approach: technology, flexible arrangements, and efficient leadership are

indispensable for building a supportive work environment that satisfies digital professionals. This will also minimize retention problems and contribute to the competitiveness of the organization in the economy's digitalization process. Future research should use longitudinal designs assessing longer-term impacts and extend the sample to other industries that could help organizations develop strategies to retain digital talents in Indonesia and beyond.

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