


## Employee Loyalty: Systematic Literature Review

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<b>Keywords:</b> Employee loyalty, Competitive edge, High employee turnover, Systematic literature review, Bibliometric data.	Employee loyalty is a critical factor in the success of the service and manufacturing sectors, with profound effects on both customer satisfaction and profitability. It is crucial to perpetually enhance employee loyalty to significantly boost competitive edge especially by minimizing the detrimental effects of high employee turnover. This research provides a detailed review of the methods and variables discussed in 38 peer-reviewed articles on employee loyalty, spanning from 2017 to 2023. It highlights the shortcomings in current empirical research, suggesting new pathways for future studies and identifying cultural disparities. Through the quantitative analysis, organization, and graphical representation of bibliometric data, including publication frequency and citation counts, derived from a thorough examination of the literature on in-depth analysis. Our results contribute essential insights and guidance for both practitioners and scholars, aiming to navigate the primary achievements and hurdles in contemporary empirical investigations into employee loyalty.
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### INTRODUCTION

The significance of empirical studies and research on employee loyalty in today's digital corporate landscape is a central focus of this paper. Through an exhaustive review of over 800 research papers, we delve into the intricacies of employee loyalty, exploring its relevance amidst various influencing factors. Employing contemporary statistical methodologies, we establish meaningful connections drawn from a comprehensive analysis of existing literature. Furthermore, we illuminate the evolving research landscape surrounding employee loyalty by providing statistical insights into the volume of research papers and their respective citations. Additionally, we pinpoint seminal works within this domain, elucidating their methodologies and areas of investigation, thus enriching our understanding of this critical subject matter.

Meschke (Meschke, 2021), has brought up and delved into the central theme of employee loyalty, a subject that might appear antiquated amid the rapid industrial revolution and global uncertainties of our time. In an era marked by a growing workforce lacking essential skills and an intensely competitive market demanding exceptional service quality, the conventional approach of gradual improvement faces significant challenges. The need for adaptability and innovation in the face of evolving dynamics in the employment landscape

and market demands calls for a re-evaluation of strategies beyond the traditional continuous improvement model.

Undoubtedly, employee loyalty remains essential across various sectors, including service and manufacturing industries (Meschke, 2021). It plays a significant role in shaping the relationships between industries and their customers, impacting satisfaction levels, and stands as a crucial element in Total Quality Management (TQM) (Jun et al., 2006; Singh et al., 2018), contributing to overall profitability. The presence of loyal employees can markedly improve a company's competitiveness, notably by mitigating losses associated with high employee turnover (Murali et al., 2017). Numerous studies on employee loyalty, underpinned by robust theoretical foundations, offer practical implications that can be readily adopted (Meschke, 2021).

This paper endeavors to reveal the outcomes of a meticulous literature review focused on employee loyalty. The objectives include analyzing research trends related to the subject through the examination of selected bibliometric data, such as keyword co-occurrence and citation counts. Additionally, the paper aims to pinpoint the theories, methodologies, and factors that influence employee loyalty, offering a comprehensive overview of the current state of the literature. The goal is to distill the key substantive findings and, in turn, identify potential avenues for future research. Furthermore, the paper seeks to formulate practical guidelines aimed at enhancing employee loyalty within organizational settings.

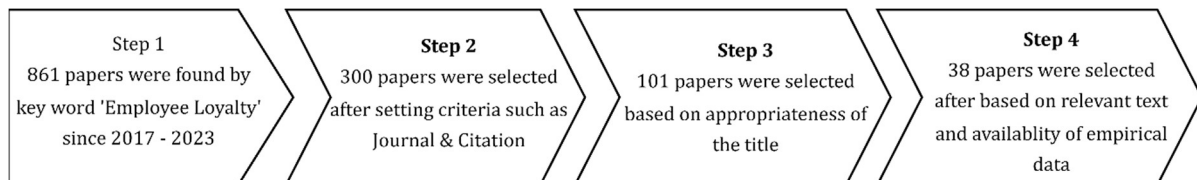
The manuscript follows a structured format outlined as follows. Section 2 details the process of identifying and selecting pertinent references from research papers published in academic journals. In Section 3, we identify the evolving trends in employee loyalty research, spotlighting key journals instrumental in disseminating relevant publications, and identifying associated keywords. This section also focuses on the countries included in the sampling, elucidates the research methodology employed, and outlines the considered factors. Moving to Section 4, we present the main findings, succinctly summarize the limitations, engage in a discussion on potential future research directions and furnishes insights and implications derived from this review for both manufacturers and policymakers alike.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The materials utilized in this systematic literature review consist of the research papers under scrutiny, along with pertinent bibliometric data, encompassing metrics such as publication frequency over time and across various journals, citation counts, and keyword co-occurrence analysis. The selection process of research papers related to employee loyalty and the highly cited relevant manuscripts is presented in Figure 1.

The first step involved selecting research papers focusing on the issue of employee loyalty from extensive bibliographic databases such as Google Scholar. This study encompassed papers from 2017 to 2023 using keywords including 'Employee Loyalty,' 'Job Satisfaction,' 'Employee Engagement,' 'Job Performance,' 'Service Industry,' and 'Manufacturing Industry,' resulting in the identification of 861 articles. Subsequently, this large pool of research papers was further screened to 561 articles by excluding book chapters, editorials, discussions, mini-reviews, and conference abstracts. This process yielded a group of high-quality, peer-reviewed research papers. However, the number was deemed

too large to allow for a detailed assessment. Therefore, for the research, the number of manuscripts was reduced by a few hundred by limiting the subject areas of publications within the scope of social science, economics, Total Quality Management, environmental science, business management, and psychology. In the end, 38 highly cited papers were isolated for thorough examination, wherein the research methods and objects of studies were identified.



**Figure 1.** The Procedure of selecting the Most Relevant Research Paper for In-depth Analysis.

Significant volumes of scientific data can be explored and analyzed through bibliometric analysis. Although its utilization in business studies remains somewhat limited, it empowers researchers to discern growth-related variations within a research field (Donthu et al., 2021; Ferreira, 2018; Goyal & Kumar, 2021). The methodologies employed in bibliometric analysis encompass performance analysis (e.g., quantity of publications and citations) and scientific mapping (e.g., identification of seminal works, co-word analysis, including keyword co-occurrence maps). According to Donthu et al. (Donthu et al., 2021), systematic and meta-analysis are distinct types of literature reviews from bibliometric analysis. In the present study, we integrate various bibliometric analytical elements into our methodical literature review because we are convinced that this approach enhances the comprehensiveness of the review.

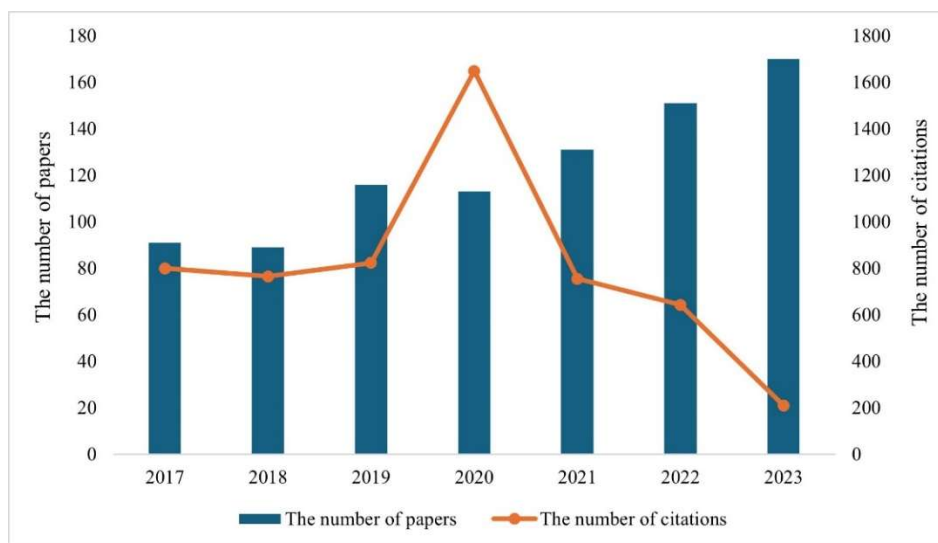
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, we review the issue of employee loyalty through a literature review to understand related research trends and influential factors and their interrelationships. Research trends on employee loyalty are established based on an analysis of over 800 academic papers published during the last five years. Additionally, we also examine trends for papers with high citation counts, presenting their citation numbers. Moreover, the term "employee loyalty" is also presented with other keywords with a high prevalence of occurrence, including the strength of the connection between employee loyalty and these keywords. Furthermore, we also review the number of papers related to employee loyalty and the countries where the research is conducted, indicating each country's concern regarding the issue. We also delve into the research methods used by each researcher. We begin with the primary focus on research trends related to employee loyalty.

We begin the bibliometric study of the number of publications and citations, where the data and supporting statistics for both indicators are displayed in Figure 2. The trends emerging for both indicators are quite surprising. The figure shows the number of academic papers published in the last five years related to employee loyalty. Overall, we observe a significant increase in the number of papers during this period from 2017 until 2023. The growth seems to follow an exponential trend. Indeed, within this timeframe, we witness the

number of publications increased by 200%. During this period, the number of papers doubled from over 800 papers per year in 2017 to over 1600 papers in 2023.

In terms of citation count, we focus on the number of papers categorized as having high citation counts. The list of these papers will be provided below. For papers with high citation counts, there is a tendency for decline, especially after the year 2021. It should be noted that there was a drastic increase in citations in the year 2020. Regarding the decrease in citation counts of popular papers, this can be understood due to the increase in the number of published papers, which provides researchers with more options in selecting reference sources. From all the available facts, we conclude that papers related to employee loyalty have seen a remarkable increase in both quantity and interest.



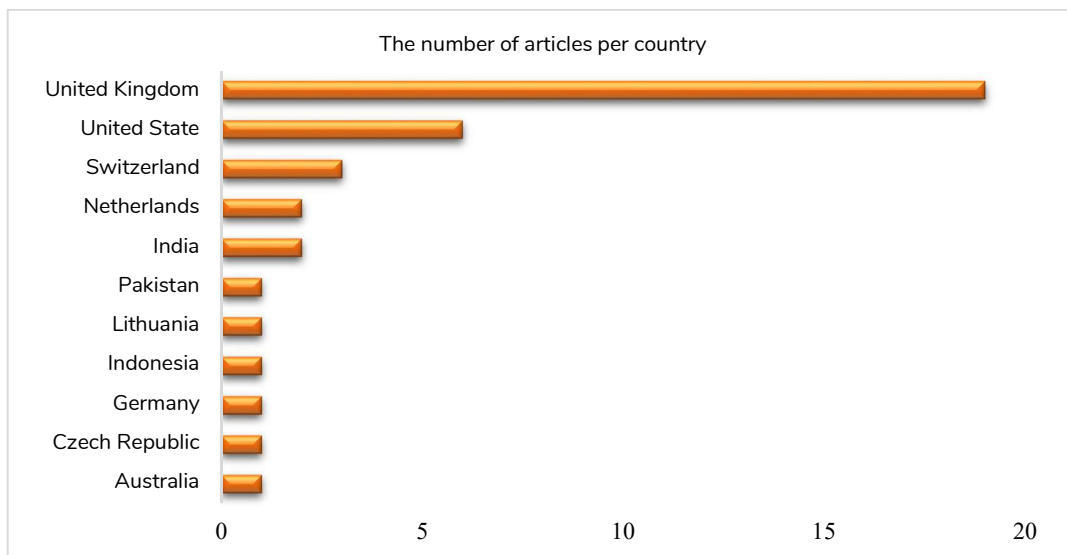
**Figure 2.** The number of research papers about employee loyalty during the last five years including those highly cited manuscripts.

Textual analysis is also conducted to identify the emergence of the term ‘employee loyalty’ alongside other terms. This textual analysis examines the relationship between the keyword ‘employee loyalty’ and those terms. For the initial study, the word cloud is used as a tool to display other terms that have a high co-occurrence with the term ‘employee loyalty’. The results of this study are shown in Figure 3. which demonstrates that the term ‘employee loyalty’ frequently appears alongside keywords, such as, ‘satisfaction’, ‘job’, ‘performance’, and ‘study’. Other frequently appearing terms include ‘mediating’ and ‘industry’, followed by several words with lower frequencies, including ‘leadership’, ‘influence’, ‘engagement’, ‘management’, and ‘organizational’. The presence of these keywords, along with the term ‘employee loyalty’, is easily understandable as many theories regarding employee loyalty often involve these terms as influential factors.



other aspects, namely the research methods applied and the countries where the research is conducted.

The findings reveal that the United Kingdom serves as a focal point for research on Employee Loyalty, as evidenced by its contribution to 38 reviewed articles, representing nearly 50% of the studies eligible for this review. This underscores the United Kingdom's dominant position in shaping trends within the field of employee loyalty research. The United States follows as the second-largest contributor to this study (6 studies, approximately 16% of the reviewed studies), with Asia contributing 4 studies (11% of the total), and Switzerland contributing 3 studies (8% of the total). Additionally, the Netherlands accounts for 2 studies (5% of the total), while Lithuania, Germany, the Czech Republic, and Australia each contribute 1 study (3% of the total). This study also suggests opportunities for future researchers to explore the emerging Latin American culture. Furthermore, conducting cross-country comparisons of Employee Loyalty studies across selected regions in Africa and Latin America would offer a valuable approach (see Figure 5. and Table 1.).



**Figure 5.** The number of highly cited manuscripts ordered according to the research location.

**Table 1.** The detail sites of the articles per country.

Country	Total	Cites
United Kingdom	19	(Al-Hawari et al., 2021; Salameh et al., 2023)(Abd-El-Salam, 2023; Agyeiwaah et al., 2022; Albtoosh et al., 2022; Aristana et al., 2022; Cachón-Rodríguez et al., 2021, 2022; S. Chen et al., 2022; Dhir et al., 2020; Fan et al., 2021; Jahanbazi Goujani et al., 2019; Kazemi & Elfstrand Corlin, 2022; Llach et al., 2023; Rahimpour et al., 2020; Rice et al., 2017; Tomic et al., 2018; Tseng & Wu, 2017; Yao et al., 2019)
United State	5	(Benraïss-Noailles & Viot, 2021; Book et al., 2019; Gül et al., 2023; Khuong & Linh, 2020; Rahimi, 2020; Shafique & Ahmad, 2022)
India	2	(Dutta & Dhir, 2021; Onsardi et al., 2017)
Switzerland	3	(Abdullah et al., 2021; Gorgenyi-Hegyes et al., 2021; Strenitzerová & Achimský, 2019)
Australia	1	(Darmawan et al., 2020)
Germany	1	(Al Qudah et al., 2019)
Netherlands	2	(Lamberti, 2023; Zanabazar & Jigjiddorj, 2021)
Pakistan	2	(Phuong & Vinh, 2020)
Czech Republic	1	(Stojanovic et al., 2020)
Indonesia	1	(Saputra & Mahaputra, 2022)
Lithuania	1	(Capnary et al., 2018)

Another important aspect of bibliometric analysis (Koseoglu et al., 2016; Mulet-Forteza et al., 2019) is highly cited research work, which serves as a statistical indicator for scrutinizing and outlining information in specific areas of academic interest. This factor allows us to identify the most influential research papers, those with the highest number of citations. In this study, research papers that have contributed to the topic of 'Employee Loyalty,' including the number of citations from the Scopus database, Google Scholar Rank, publication year, journal of publication, and publication status, are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** The most highly cited research paper about 'employee loyalty' for the last five years.

Ref.	Source	Publisher	Citations	GS Rank
(Book et al., 2019)	Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism	Taylor & Francis	133	29
(Dhir et al., 2020)	Personnel Review	Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.	114	11
(Gorgenyi-Hegyes et al., 2021)	Economies	MDPI AG	111	455
(Tomic et al., 2018)	Economic Research-Ekonomiska Istraživanja	Taylor and Francis Ltd.	108	31
(Stojanovic et al., 2020)	Journal of Competitiveness	Tomas Bata University in Zlin	104	12
(Strenitzerová & Achimský, 2019)	Sustainability	MDPI AG	103	349

(Phuong & Vinh, 2020)	Asian Economic and Financial Review	Asian Economic and Social Society	94	44
(Capnary et al., 2018)	Business: Theory and Practice	Vilnius Gediminas Technical University	70	443
(Tseng & Wu, 2017)	Leadership & Organization Development Journal	Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.	64	123
(Khuong & Linh, 2020)	Management Science Letters	INFORMS	52	21

Finally, we elaborate on the reviewed articles, focusing on the research approaches and analytical techniques utilized to emphasize the correlation between Employee Loyalty and Job Performance. Table 2 demonstrates the techniques employed for collecting sample data and the analytical methods utilized in studies on Employee Loyalty. Surveys emerge as the predominant quantitative method, while other approaches include in-depth interviews and content analysis.

**Table 3.** Methods, samples, and software utilized in Incorporated Articles.

Ref.	Sample	Approach	Method
(Stojanovic et al., 2020)	411 employees in Europe	CFA, SEM, LIS-REL	Quantitative
(Strenitzerová & Achimský, 2019)	1,775 employees at the Slovak Post company	Regression correlation, EFA	Quantitative
(Fan et al., 2021)	234 hotel employees in Southeast China	CFA	Quantitative
(Jahanbazi Goujani et al., 2019)	212 employees of Isfahan Provincial Gas Company (IPGC)	PLS-SEM	Quantitative
(Rice et al., 2017)	316 employees of a public health service in the south-eastern most corner of Queensland (Australia)	Hierarchical multiple regression approach	Quantitative
(Agyeiwaah et al., 2022)	664 customers who visited hotels and tourist attractions in Hong Kong, Macau, and Zhuhai	CFA, SEM	Quantitative
(Lamberti, 2023)	2000 Employees in Spanish Bank-University Statistics Collaboration	PLS-SEM	Quantitative
(Aristana et al., 2022)	206 employees from 97 hotels in Bali, Indonesia.	PLS-SEM	Quantitative
(Gül et al., 2023)	30 respondents for validity and reliability testing.		
(Gül et al., 2023)	402 people in Afyonkarahisar province in the Aegean Region of Turkey.	EFA, SEM	Quantitative
(Tseng & Wu, 2017)	412 financial professionals in Taiwan	PLS	Quantitative
(Khuong & Linh, 2020)	595 employees in the hospitality industry in Vietnam	PLS-SEM	Quantitative
(Shafique & Ahmad, 2022)	100 respondents to assess its reliability and validity, 310 employees Bank in Pakistan	CFA, SEM	Quantitative

(S. Chen et al., 2022)	500 questionnaires in China	CFA and SEM	Quantitative
(Dhir et al., 2020)	220 managerial executives from India	CB-SEM, SEM, CFA	Quantitative
(Kazemi & Elfstrand Corlin, 2022)	1,342 valid responses in Swedish municipalities	SEM	Quantitative
(Gorgenyi-Hegyes et al., 2021)	537 employees in Hongaria	PLS-SEM	Quantitative
(Abd-El-Salam, 2023)	15 employees from various managerial levels at EZDK Company in Egypt	Qualitative approach	Qualitative
(Cachón-Rodríguez et al., 2021)	529 professors in the field of business from 47 public universities in Spain	PLS-SEM	Quantitative
(Tomic et al., 2018)	317 questionnaire surveys conducted in 100 service companies in the Republic of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina	SEM	Quantitative
(Rahimpour et al., 2020)	38 employees of field of automotive battery production	PCA-DEA	Quantitative
(Book et al., 2019)	373 responded in large hotel and casino resort in the Southwestern United States	CFA, SEM	Quantitative
(Abdullah et al., 2021)	270 nurses of different private hospitals of Punjab province	CFA, SEM	Quantitative
(Dutta & Dhir, 2021)	23 Indian Executives interview and 219 experienced executives.	Mix method	Qualitative and Quantitative
(Cachón-Rodríguez et al., 2021)	535 respondents from the Spanish public universities	PLS-SEM	Quantitative
(Albtoosh et al., 2022)	354 respondents from the governmental sector participated	PLS-SEM	Quantitative
(Phuong & Vinh, 2020)	315 employees in the Danang hospitality industry	EFA, CFA, MGA, SEM	Quantitative
(Onsardi et al., 2017)	109 employees of Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu Indonesia	Path Analysis	Quantitative
(Rahimi, 2020)	62 employees of public organizations in South Korea	Multiple Regression Analysis	Quantitative
(Al Qudah et al., 2019)	625 university employees in private Jordanian universities in the capital, Amman	SEM	Quantitative
(Darmawan et al., 2020)	113 employees in West Java	Path Analysis	Quantitative
(Zanabazar & Jigjiddorj, 2021)	356 employees of Mongolian banks	PLS-SEM	Quantitative

(Benraïss-Noailles & Viot, 2021)	604 employees in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Nouvelle Aquitaine	SEM	Quantitative
(Llach et al., 2023)	159 family firms	PLS-SEM	Quantitative
(Yao et al., 2019)	102 employees in hotel sector	SEM	Quantitative

Based on the article reviews, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) has emerged as the dominant method. Hair & Shmueli explained (Hair et al., 2019; Shmueli et al., 2019) elucidated that PLS-SEM, an analytical method derived from Covariant-based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM), witnessed a significant increase in usage across numerous published articles in 2015. Over time, several articles have integrated analysis (Rahman et al., 2024) By using PLS-SEM with fsQCA, in the article of Llach, et al. (Benraïss-Noailles & Viot, 2021). Integrated of these both analysis is used by now (Andrés-Sánchez & Puchades, 2023; M. Chen et al., 2023; Sukhov et al., 2023). The most software used is SmartPLS software (Cachón-Rodríguez et al., 2022; Dhir et al., 2020; Gorgenyi-Hegyessy et al., 2021; Jahanbazi Goujani et al., 2019; Khuong & Linh, 2020; Lamberti, 2023), with the same total articles using SPSS and AMOS software which is 6 articles, then followed by 2 articles using LISREL software and 1 article using XLSTAT software.

### CONCLUSION, LIMITATION, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research review has specific constraints. Firstly, only 38 highly-cited manuscripts were selected from peer-reviewed journals for in-depth analysis. Stringent exclusion criteria were applied to filter out conference papers and other research endeavors, including dissertations. Consequently, there is a possibility that we overlooked some valuable papers published outside of journals, and those available in languages other than English may have offered valuable insights into employee loyalty. Secondly, the research papers examined suffer from a methodological constraint whereby most survey participants had not yet embraced employee loyalty. Consequently, typical issues associated with self-reported data arise, particularly concerning the intention-behavior disparity and the absence of respondents' exposure to real-world decision-making experiences. Thirdly, this study lacks a clearly outlined conceptual framework, as the data were obtained from secondary sources, predominantly through the analysis of other researchers' findings on employee loyalty. Singh et al. (Singh et al., 2020) proposed that considering a future directive is crucial in any systematic review. Through our examination of research findings on employee loyalty, we identified significant avenues that we strongly advocate for future exploration. Noteworthy advancements have been made by researchers in comprehending the factors pivotal to the concept of employee loyalty. Nonetheless, additional studies could be embraced to illuminate further directives such as:

In addition to continuous improvement and fixed measurement, more specific work limitations indicate future research opportunities. The application of measurements and adjustments enhances the validity of the concept. Future research can also combine mixed methods (Llach et al., 2023) or (Dhir et al., 2020), a qualitative approach (Abd-El-Salam, 2023). How do We know if the concept of loyalty exists in a situational context? In addition, considering the moderator and mediator effects in employee loyalty relationships becomes a new insight

(Agyeiwaah et al., 2022; Albitoosh et al., 2022; Aristana et al., 2022; Fan et al., 2021; Kazemi & Elfstrand Corlin, 2022; Lamberti, 2023; Shafique & Ahmad, 2022; Tseng & Wu, 2017; Zanabazar & Jigjiddorj, 2021) also combining the commitment concept approach. But overall, there are still questions about how culture affects employee loyalty in general, which remains an unanswered question.

This study attempts to review the circumstances and environments conducive to fostering employee loyalty. We posit that this study will motivate the academic community to initiate and undertake pertinent research in this crucial and emerging field of study. We aim to examine the factors affecting employee loyalty. First, the validity of the concept that is accurate and robust in directly being used as a practical application. As stated by Meschke, it is important to understand a newer and deeper concept of Employee Loyalty. It is evident that the primary concept of employee loyalty varies depending on the focus, whether it pertains to loyalty towards colleagues and superiors within the organization. With 3 standard levels of Non-Loyal, Loyal, Hyper-Loyal (Meschke, 2021). Second, little negative results were found (Jahanbazi Goujani et al., 2019), which is in line with Meschke (Meschke, 2021) who stated that negative results have the potential to be a threat to the organization. There is a tendency to show resistance to change, a willingness to go and withdraw when even an excessive level of loyalty is discouraged or justified. Third, there are cultural differences in the concept of loyalty depending on the cultural background of the employees. In Meschke's presentation there is a concept of Tripartite Employee Loyalty from Europe and Bipartite from Asia which is found in the loyalty of Chinese Employees.

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