

Employee retention in the hospitality industry

Lappeenranta

Abstract

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Abstract		
<p>Employee retention is a central challenge in the hospitality industry due to high turnover rates and the sector's dependence on skilled human capital for service quality and business continuity. This study investigates how three interrelated factors—work-life balance, leadership styles, and organizational practices—influence employee retention within the hospitality sector in Finland. The research adopts a quantitative approach, utilizing a structured questionnaire administered to hospitality employees, yielding 72 valid responses.</p> <p>Correlation analysis revealed strong positive relationships between each of the independent variables and retention intention: work-life balance ($r = 0.77$), leadership style ($r = 0.80$), and organizational practices ($r = 0.82$). The findings underscore that flexible scheduling, transformational leadership, and supportive workplace policies significantly enhance employees' intention to remain with their organizations. Organizational practices showed the strongest influence, yet also had the lowest satisfaction scores among respondents, indicating a strategic gap and opportunity for intervention.</p> <p>The results align with established theories, including the Work-Family Border Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, and the Job Demands-Resources Model. The study concludes that retention in hospitality requires a holistic approach that simultaneously addresses individual well-being, managerial support, and structural organizational practices. Recommendations include implementing adaptive scheduling, investing in leadership development, and standardizing HR policies to improve employee satisfaction and reduce attrition. The study also suggests areas for future research, including longitudinal and mixed-method investigations across diverse hospitality contexts.</p>		
Keywords		
Employee retention, hospitality industry, work-life balance, transformational leadership, organizational practices		



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Appendix 1. EMPLOYEE RETENTION QUESTIONNAIRE

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The hospitality industry plays an important role in promoting the growth and development of nations, especially where there is high level of tourism. It includes businesses like hotels, resorts and restaurants that depend very much on human capital to provide quality services and ensure that a client's satisfaction is maintained. However, high employee turnover is a persistent issue that undermines operational stability, disrupts service delivery, and increases costs associated with recruitment and training (Baum, 2019). This leads to an all-round inquiry on elements that contribute to employee retention in the industry.

Employee retention designates an ability of an organization to retain its workforce in a stable level by reducing the voluntary turnover. In the world of hospitality retention of skilled and experienced employees is vital for the consistency in the delivery of the services as well as for the sustenance of the level of organizational standards. Studies show that organizations with effective retention strategies are more likely to achieve higher customer satisfaction, improved profitability, and sustained competitive advantage (AlBattat et al., 2014).

The rigorousness of the working environment is one of the core stimuli of employee turnover in hospitality industry. Nurses are highly likely to suffer from long hours of work, irregular working schedules, and pressure working conditions, which is bound to cause burnout and dissatisfaction. Work-life imbalance exacerbates these challenges, making it difficult for employees to meet personal and professional commitments simultaneously (Deery & Jago, 2015). Thus, work-life balance issue is extremely important in the consideration of long-term dedication of the workers.

Leadership styles are also important in terms of influencing the employee retention. Transformational leadership, characterized by supportive and motivational behaviors, has been linked to increased job satisfaction and organizational loyalty among hospitality workers (Kim & Brymer, 2011). On the other hand, authoritarian or transactional leadership styles might lead to the loss of employee engagement and increase in turnover rate. The effectiveness of managerial practices therefore requires one to study the influence of different sorts of leadership styles on retention results.

Also, organizational culture and styles of management are very critical in determining which employees stay and which ones go. Organizations that are inclusive, supportive in nature, and growth oriented in nature are prone to having low rate turnover rates. Treating employees well does not only have to include above salary actions, but CDO, regular feedback and employee recognition contribute towards a positive work environment. (Dusek

et al., 2014.) In contrast, toxic work environments characterized by neglect and lack of employee involvement often led to higher attrition rates (Gorton et al., 2021).

Financial implications of the high turnover further emphasizes the need of the retention strategies. High turnover results into high costs of recruitment and training, losses in productivity, and perhaps a tainted image for the organisation. Studies estimate that replacing a single employee in the hospitality sector can cost up to 20% of their annual salary (Goh & Lee, 2018). It is therefore imperative for organizations to focus on it as the way out in terms of saving cost.

Retention of workers needs to be holistic involving work-life balance plans, leadership development programmes, and favourable organisational policies. For instance, flexible working schedules, mentorship programs, and appreciation mechanisms have been found to improve job satisfaction and decrease the turnover rates. (Allen et al., 2015; Allen et al., 2006; Saunderson, 2004.) The adoption of the described strategies might be one of the ways to reduce the negative impact of turnover on the organizational performance.

Considering the multidimensionality of the factors affecting the employee retention the purpose of the present study is to discover the ways how work-life balance, leadership styles, and organizational practices affect the employee retention in the hospitality industry. The research aims at identifying the best practices and making evidence-based suggestions that would help to build sustainable approaches to workforce management within the sector.

1.2 The hospitality industry in Finland and the case of Holiday Club Saimaa in Lappeenranta

Hospitality industry refers to a wide array of services that deal with leisure, tourism, and accommodation whose role in the world economy is also very significant. It is one of the fastest-growing sectors and it greatly assists in job and revenue creation especially in areas with high tourism markets. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2020), the hospitality and tourism sector accounted for 10% of global GDP before the COVID-19 pandemic. Increased use of disposable incomes leading to more travelling and service diversification have contributed to the sector growth.

In Finland, the South Karelia region is known for its natural beauty and proximity to the Russian border (the visitors are attracted by wellness, cultural and outdoor opportunities). One of the popular hospitality establishment to find within this region is the Holiday Club Saimaa in the Lappeenranta area. As part of the larger Holiday Club Resorts chain, Holiday Club Saimaa offers a diverse range of services such as spa treatments, golf facilities, and holiday villas, catering to both domestic and international tourists (Holiday Club Resorts,

n.d.). This characteristic provides an insight on the value of unique service offers in terms of attracting a wide customer base as well as regional economic growth.

Though it has the potential for economic development, the hospitality industry — represented by such venues as Holiday Club Saimaa – is haunted with several human resource challenges, the most prominent of which is high rate of employee turnover. The cyclical and seasonal nature of demand in hospitality businesses often leads to fluctuating staffing needs, creating job insecurity for employees (Baum, 2019). Also, the high customer orientation and the operational pressures lead to high stress and job dissatisfaction, which also acts to worsen turnover rates. Apprehension of the nature of these challenges, both at national level and firm level, is a vital step towards the actualization of effective retention strategies.

The hospitality sector workforce, such as in Holiday Club Saimaa, is distinguished by its diversity, which ranges from the employees who have received varying levels of education and are performing different functions, to those who are pursuing different careers. Such diversification can spur innovation and flexibility in delivery of services; however, it also requires customized agendas for streamlining and holding onto a diverse workforce. As Goh and Lee (2018) argue, human resource practices that address the specific needs of diverse teams—such as multilingual training, cultural awareness programs, and career development opportunities—are essential for ensuring high retention rates.

The hospitality industry also has another outstanding characteristic that it relies on frontline employees, who directly interact with the clients, and shape their experiences. Research highlights that employee satisfaction and retention are closely linked to the quality of customer service and overall organizational performance (Dusek et al., 2014). For example, in the case of Holiday Club Saimaa, members of the frontline are essential to providing good customer experiences in aspects such as spa services and recreational services. With training, feedback and award schemes, hospitality firms will be able to invest in motivated and well trained teams that are foundational to service excellence.

There are various factors that impact retention in the industry and some of the factors include work-life balance and leadership styles. The hospitality employees are also known to have irregular work schedule, which makes it difficult to combine personal and professional responsibilities. Deery and Jago (2015) emphasize that flexible scheduling and supportive policies can significantly alleviate turnover pressures in such contexts. Similarly, leadership styles that value employee development, recognition, and involvement cultivate higher job satisfaction and organizational loyalty (Kim & Brymer, 2011). Clean

leadership practices such as open communication and empowerment of staff are part of a competitive advantage and key to retaining high level employees at Holiday Club Saimaa.

The hospitality sector has yet again been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with regard to the significance of employee retention. Large-scale layoffs and temporary shut down obliged many professionals to look for jobs in other industries, which left a labour gap as the sector started to revive. Addressing retention issues in a post-pandemic environment requires renewed attention to employee well-being, engagement, and professional growth (Baum et al., 2020). For Holiday Club Saimaa, changes in policies for guarantying health and safety while still delivering quality service are now primary strategies of winning back confidence from consumers and rebuilding the workforce.

Due to the dynamism of the industry and reliance on human capital, there is need to have a clear understanding of the factors that influence employee retention. This work therefore seeks to research how work-life balance, leadership styles, and organizational practice may be utilized to increase retention rates and increase performance of organizations within hospitality contexts such as Holiday Club Saimaa. By studying these issues more thoroughly, it tries to develop practical suggestions to sustainable workforce management and long-term success in Finland's hospitality industry.

1.3 Objectives and Delimitations

Employee retention is a strategic imperative in the hospitality industry due to its direct impact on service quality, customer satisfaction, and overall organizational performance. This section outlines the research objectives and the delimitations that define the scope of this study, ensuring clarity and focus on the key variables influencing retention in this sector.

1.3.1 Objectives of the Study

The study aims to achieve the following key objectives:

- To identify the role of work-life balance in enhancing employee retention within the hospitality industry.
- To evaluate the impact of leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership, on employee retention and job satisfaction.
- To explore how organizational practices, including career development opportunities and supportive work environments, influence retention rates.

1.3.2 Delimitations of the Study

The delimitations of this study outline the scope of the work, whereby, the study is kept on track and within limits. These are the following important parameters:

Sector Focus: The study is specifically aimed at the hospitality business and directed towards hotels, resorts and similar enterprises that have a record of high employee turnover rate and a penchant for using human capital.

Geographical Scope: The study is confined to specific areas or locations within the hospitality industry, making data relevant without including dissimilarity in the retention factors between region.

Employee Categories: For the study, full time workers occupying the key practitioner staffs such as front office, food and beverage services, housekeeping, will be the prime target. Part time and seasonal workers based on their different nature of employment will not fall within the scope.

Variables of Interest: The investigation will be based on work-life balance, styles of leadership and organizational support as the major variables that influence retention. Other things, for example compensation and security of the job, may be regarded but are not going to be central concerns of the study.

Timeframe: The research will be confined in time where it will take a period of six months for the collection and analysis of data. This timeline makes this study viable in terms of time allocation while still collecting enough amounts of data to be drawn meaningful conclusions.

Through such objectives and delimitations this study seeks to develop usable insights that can be used in developing retention strategies and stability of workforce in the hospitality industry.

1.4 Research Questions

Primary Research Question

- What are the key factors influencing employee retention in the hospitality industry?

Secondary Research Questions

- How does work-life balance affect employee satisfaction and retention in the hospitality sector?
- What is the role of leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership, in improving retention rates?
- How do organizational practices, such as career development and support systems, influence long-term employee commitment and reduce turnover?

1.5 Research Methods

This research takes the quantitative approach that involves using survey information to study the determinants of employee retention in the hospitality industry. The quantitative method is chosen for its ability to collect and analyse measurable data, which can identify patterns, relationships, and statistical trends related to work-life balance, leadership styles, and organizational practices (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Surveys provide a structured and systematic way of data collection from a large number of participants and, thus, the study can obtain a variety of opinions and generic findings. A quantitative approach guarantees the level of objectivity and precision in the measurement of the influence of different factors over the results of retention outcomes.

1.6 Data Collection

Data collection is a process which is important in a research process, the same ensures that only valid and relevant information of the study objectives and research question is received. In this research, in turn, structured questionnaires will play the key role as the means of obtaining the data, the research group for this aimed questionnaires will be represented by 200 employees in Lappeenranta Finland. The questionnaire is designed to measure key variables such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, and leadership perception, featuring closed-ended questions (e.g., Likert scales and multiple-choice items) to facilitate quantitative analysis (Bhandari, 2020).

Surveys will be sent electronically: via email and online platforms, so that there is a wide spread and expeditious collection of data. Anonymity and confidentiality will be ensured with a view to ensure that all students participate and no attempts may be made to hide behind their shields. After being gathered, the data are going to be submitted to the descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis to disclose important patterns and connections between the parameters of interest.

By using this quantitative approach to a sample size of 200, it is the hope of the study to give reliable results, which can be generalized to provide evidence-based references on how the retention strategies within the hospitality industry should be upgraded in Lappeenranta.

1.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis is an important process in the research process whereby raw data obtained in a structured manner through surveys is processed, analyzed and interpreted in order to come up with relevant insight. For this study, the analysis will be on identifying and examining the impact of work-life balance, leadership styles and the organization practices to employee retention in the hospitality industry. The process will be systematic and quantitative, in order to make it accurate, reliable, and applicable in solving a problem.

Data preparation and cleaning of the data are the first steps to data analysis process. Missing responses, lack of information in the incomplete questionnaires and data entry error will be rectified with raw survey data. To maintain the integrity of the dataset, the answers involving significant values of data missing or in contradictions will not be included in the analysis. Appropriate answers will then be coded and made to have a structured form that will be suitable for programming through use of the statistical software. With this step, all the inaccuracies and inconsistencies will be removed thus making the final dataset clean and appropriate for analysis later on.

We will carry out descriptive statistical analysis so as to gain a wide picture of the sample population and variables under investigation. The demographic information (originating from the respondents) about age, gender, job role, and years of experience will be summarized in form of frequencies and percentages. Also, means and standard deviations give the description of the key variables like job satisfaction, work-life scores and leadership perception. Descriptive analysis will give the study an opportunity to present generic patterns and trends of the data set.

In order to identify the relationships between the variables further, the inferential statistical methods will be utilized. The strength and the direction of relationships between continuous variables (work-life balance scores, and the rates of employee retention) will be tested using the correlation analysis. For instance, the investigation will be made to determine whether longer tenure of the employees will be associated with higher scores of work-life balance. Multiple regression analysis will as well be used to measure the joint impacts of several independent variables – work-life balance, leadership styles, and organizational practices – on dependent variable which is employee retention. The regression model will assist in

identifying the attributed contribution of each characteristic relative to the outcomes of retention and give insights on the said variables that have critical impacts.

Some of the additional tests to be used will be chi-square tests of independence in order to look for relationships among categorical variables like job roles and retention rates. For instance, the study seeks to determine whether the job satisfaction and turnover are not the same among the employees in various departments. It will be possible to spot the statistically significant relationships between variables with the help of these inferential tests, and they will also provide some assistance in suggesting practical recommendations on the issue of improvement in retention.

The statistical analysis of the data will be done through Microsoft Excel, a reliable and popular program that is used for the management of large database and advanced analysis of statistical tests. Microsoft Excel will allow computation of descriptive and inferential statistics in a more efficient way, meaning that there will be a systematic approach in analysis of data and there will be guaranteed accuracy of results. The results obtained from Microsoft Excel will be analyzed and interpreted in the light of research objectives and in depth understanding of how the key variables come to combine and affect employee retention.

The findings from the analysis will be discussed in terms of tables, charts, and graphs in order to give clear and brief representation of the findings. For example, bar charts can be used to compare retention rates for different job roles, while scatter plots can be used to show a relationship between work-life balance and retention. This will improve the interpretation of outcomes and reporting thereof so that the actionable insights can easily stand out.

2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework provides the foundation for understanding the key factors affecting employee retention in the hospitality industry. This section addresses the significance of retention, work-life balance, and leadership within organizational contexts, supported by established theories and research studies.

2.1 Employee Retention Concepts

Employee retention refers to the ability of an organization to retain its employees and minimize voluntary turnover. In the hospitality sector, where service quality is highly dependent on staff consistency and experience, retention is a critical factor in maintaining organizational performance.

2.1.1 Impact of Employee Retention on Organizational Performance

Retention of employees is an important contributor to the performance of an organisation especially in labour-intensive industries such as in hospitality. The retention of capable and experienced employees will guarantee the continuity of service as well as efficient operation and these are a vital aspect in customer satisfaction and loyalty. Studies have shown that organizations with low turnover rates benefit from greater stability, higher productivity, and stronger team cohesion, all of which contribute to enhanced organizational outcomes (AlBattat et al., 2014).

The effect of retention in saving cost on recruitment, onboarding and training of new employees is a great benefit of retention. High retention rates reduce these costs so that organizations can spend on more strategic areas such as training the employees and innovation. Research by Goh and Lee (2018) highlights that hospitality firms with effective retention strategies achieve lower operational costs and higher profit margins due to reduced disruptions caused by frequent staff changes. Also, veteran workers do not only have institutional knowledge, but also expertise that is hard to replicate, making them an asset to the organization.

Employee retention also regulates positively the customer experience; which is a very important metric in the hospitality business. Long-serving employees develop a deeper understanding of customer preferences and organizational standards, leading to consistent and personalized service delivery (Dusek et al., 2014). Satisfied customers are more likely to return and recommend the organization to others, contributing to increased revenue and market competitiveness (American Society for Quality (ASQ), 2019). If organizations

manage to retain their workforce, they will be in a position to intensify the general customer journey and create long lasting relationships with their customers.

Moreover, high retention rates contribute to stronger internal relationships and teamwork (Deery & Jago, 2015; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). When employees stay in an organization for long, they form trust and rapport with employees hence, a conducive and supportive working environment. This dynamic enhances team performance and reduces conflicts, leading to improved morale and productivity (Dvir et al., 2002). The ability to retain experienced staff also fosters mentorship and knowledge sharing, where senior employees guide and train new hires, thereby accelerating their learning curve and performance (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Retention in turn helps a firm achieve its strategic goal because it allows long-term planning and development of talent. Stable organizations can invest in training and careers advancement for the employees as well as a match between individual growth and company objectives. As noted by AlBattat et al. (2014), firms that retain employees are better positioned to implement sustainable practices, innovate, and respond to market changes effectively. Therefore, the employee retention is not an HR objective but one of the main aspects of ensuring sustainable organizational success.

2.1.2 Consequences of High Employee Turnover

Employee turnover creates critical problems for the organizations especially in hospitality fields where quality of services largely depends on the experienced and well trained personnel. One of the significant effects of the turnover is the expense burden implicated in recruitment, hiring, and training new employees. Studies estimate that the cost of replacing an employee can be as high as 20% of their annual salary, including direct costs such as advertising and interviewing, as well as indirect costs like reduced productivity and lost expertise (Goh & Lee, 2018; Baum, 2019). Reluctant turnover is a drain to the organization since organizational resources are shifted to other critical areas such as staff development and innovation.

Another negative implication of high turnover rate is the disturbance of team dynamics and work process. Continuous replacement of employees hinders teamwork and sharing of knowledge causing inefficiency in performing the tasks. According to Dusek et al. (2014), hospitality organizations with high turnover experience operational delays and lower service consistency due to the time it takes for new hires to reach optimal productivity levels. This baffle also adds up to staff workload that may cause job dissatisfaction and consequent turnover- a cycle that can derail the organisation.

High turnover directly affects customer satisfaction which is one of the important performance measures in the hospitality sector. Happy and experienced workers will be in a better position to provide quality and personalized services to the customers, which will aid in improving the general customer services. On the other hand, turnovers on a high scale tend to result in low quality of services because of inexperienced employees, which leads to complaints by the customers and loss of loyalties. This turnover brought on customer satisfaction decline will ultimately have dire consequences to the organization's long term revenue and its brand name. (Deery & Jago, 2015.)

Employee morale and engagement also suffer when the rates of turnover are too high. When employees can see that people are leaving the organization quite often, they might start doubting their situation at the job and become less dedicated to the organization. This may cause decreased motivation and low performance in job. Kim and Brymer (2011) highlight that high turnover undermines employee loyalty, making it difficult for organizations to foster a positive work culture. The employees who remain in such an environment may be subjected to burn out as there is more working load and responsibility burdening them even further contributing to the problem of retention.

The compounded impact created by the high turnover can disrupt growth and competitive advantage of an organization. Experienced workers, as they exit, take with them crucial institutional knowledge that is very hard to replace, especially in specialized jobs. The loss of this knowledge hampers decision making, innovation as well as the capability to respond to the changes in markets. According to Baum (2019), organizations facing persistent turnover are less likely to succeed in implementing long-term strategic initiatives. The inclusive point is that the causes of turnover have to be addressed for sustainable growing and operative success in hospitality.

2.2 Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance proves to be an important aspect that affects the level of employee satisfaction and retention, and the hospitality industry is one of them, where lengthy working hours, nondescript shifts, and working on weekends are an established norm. There is a need to strike a balance between work duties and personal life to promote well-being of the employees and ensure productivity is not limited by time. Work-life balance initiatives have been shown to reduce stress and burnout, thereby improving job satisfaction and loyalty (Deery & Jago, 2015). Successful work-life balance strategies in organizations yield reduced turnovers, increased retentions, towards successful organizations.

The Work-Family Border Theory proposed by Clark (2000) is a foundational model for understanding how individuals manage boundaries between work and personal life. Based on this theory, workers develop and sustain boundaries that are used to separate the roles of work and home. Nevertheless, in the hospitality industry, blurred boundaries tend to flow from unpredictable work schedule hence making it hard for employees to balance their work schedule. Studies have shown that flexible work arrangements, such as shift adjustments and job-sharing, help employees establish clear boundaries and mitigate role conflict (McNall et al., 2010).

The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory by Hobfoll (1989) further explains the importance of preserving personal resources, such as time and energy, in reducing stress and promoting retention. COR theory suggests that where employees are deprived of resources by too much work demands, they are likely to have burn out and disengagement and hence turnover. Hospitality organizations that establish supportive practices — for example, rest breaks, paid leaves, and wellness programs — provide the employees with opportunities to re-gain their resources, decreasing their chances of burnout-out and creating favorable conditions for long term retention. (Hobfoll, 2001.)

Work-life conflict is present when work and personal demands are incompatible making one stressed culminating to less job satisfaction. This is common in the hospitality industry because of its erratic nature of operations and high job demands. Employees experiencing prolonged work-life conflict often exhibit higher turnover intentions as they seek roles with more manageable schedules (Deery & Jago, 2015). It is an important step towards job satisfaction and attrition/turnover prevention to resolve this conflict with the help of flexible schedules and a supportive policy.

On the other hand, work-life enrichment presupposes that events that happen in one of the domains improve satisfaction and performance in the other. For instance, workers who feel that they are valued and supported in the workplace tend to enjoy spillover effects and thus become more contented with their personal lives and life in general. Research by McNall et al. (2010) highlights that work-life enrichment has a strong positive correlation with employee engagement and organizational loyalty. Organizations that promote enrichment via the supportive leadership and work-life programs can increase the retention rate through improving the overall quality of life of employees.

The effect of work-life balance initiatives on retention has been elaborated at length. Studies show that organizations offering work-life balance benefits—such as flexible work hours, telecommuting, and on-site childcare—experience lower turnover rates compared to those without such policies (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). Employees who feel that their employers

are supportive of their personal needs are more committed in their jobs and they are not likely to look for jobs elsewhere.

Besides, the hospitality industries' recovery from the COVID-19 has also shown the growing significance of work-life balance. Many employees who experienced high levels of stress and job insecurity during the pandemic reconsidered their work priorities, leading to what some researchers describe as "The Great Resignation" (Baum et al., 2020). With the industry rebuilding its workforce, companies that consider work-life balance as an emphasis have better chances of retaining and attracting talents in the post-pandemic period.

Considering the multi-dimensional nature of work-life balance and its significance for keeping the personnel, hospitality organizations should come up with an integrated approach to responding to the needs of the staff. This involves, among other things, flexible scheduling, mental health resources, as well as availing a supportive work environment. Institutions are thus able to increase job satisfaction, decrease turnover rate, and create a resilient and loyal workforce by doing so.

2.2.1 Theories and Models of Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance is a complex and delineated idea, which has been described by means of numerous theoretical models. One of the most prominent models is the Spillover Theory, which explores how experiences in one domain (work or personal life) can positively or negatively influence experiences in the other. Negative spillover denotes the cases of work-related stress that spills over to the family's life and causes conflicts and dissatisfaction. Conversely, positive spillover, often referred to as work-family enrichment, enhances overall well-being and job satisfaction (McNall et al., 2010). Through the introduction of such work-life balance programs as a flexible work schedule or wellness programs, hospitality organizations have reported positive spillover and, thus, better retention results.

The Effort-Recovery Model, developed by Meijman and Mulder (1998), complements the COR theory by highlighting the importance of recovery periods in maintaining optimal performance and well-being. From analysis of this model, when work is not followed by enough recovery, fatigue and deterioration in performance are likely, thus burnout and turnover is likely to increase. Employees in the hospitality who operate for long hours and under high demands from customers benefit from recovery-based strategies like breaks and recovery periods. Lack of recovery opportunities in organizations can lead to increased rates of attrition caused by employees' exhaustion.

Lastly, the Job-Demands Resources (JD-R) Model proposed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007) emphasizes the interaction between job demands and available resources. The

model suggests that high job demands (e.g., long hours, customer pressure) lead to strain unless balanced by adequate resources such as supportive supervisors and flexible policies. As lack of resources are available to offset job demands, employees are more engaged and have less turnover intentions. The applicability of this model is especially high in the case of the hospitality sector as job demands are high by default and the use of compensatory resources should be one of the key strategies of retaining staff.

These theoretical models combine to emphasize on the need to balance the work demands and availability of resources and policies. The application of these frameworks in hospitality firms can help the firms develop inclusive strategies for managing the work-life balance in these firms so as to increase the satisfaction level and satisfaction among employees.

2.2.2 Work-Life Conflict and Its Role in Turnover

Work-life conflict refers to an interference of the activities of an individual's job with his/her personal life causing stress and unsatisfactory feelings. This conflict is particularly rife in the hospitality industry whereby there are long working shifts, erratic work schedules, and a high job demand. Employees facing persistent work-life conflict are at a higher risk of burnout, reduced productivity, and voluntary turnover (Deery & Jago, 2015). Management of this conflict through efficient organizational strategies is very important in enhancing retention and well-being of employees.

Lack of flexibility in the scheduling is one of the major causes of work-life conflict in the hospitality industry. Being wild and erratic, shifts complicate arrangement of the individual's personal affairs and manage family duties. As a result, employees experiencing sustained conflict often develop feelings of frustration and disengagement from their roles (McNamara et al., 2011). Research shows that rigid scheduling policies increase turnover rates, while flexible work arrangements reduce conflict and promote retention (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010).

The Effort-Recovery Model by Meijman and Mulder (1998) suggests that individuals need adequate time to recover from work-related stress. When work pressures are high and recovery instances are too low, the workers suffer chronic fatigue and reduced job satisfaction, and thus are likely to quit the organization. Particularly because it touches upon hospitality employees who mostly operate long shifts with little time of recovery, this matter is notably vulnerable to it. Organizations that implement rest periods and recovery-focused strategies can mitigate work-life conflict and enhance retention outcomes (Hobfoll, 2001).

As well, work-life conflict has been associated with diminished job satisfaction and diluted organizational commitment. Employees who are unable to balance their work and personal

obligations are less likely to develop long-term loyalty to their organization (Deery & Jago, 2015). Studies by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) demonstrate that conflict negatively affects employees' psychological well-being, contributing to absenteeism and turnover intentions. Work-life conflict, thus, is a major strategy in promoting the stability of the organization and attrition reduction.

The work-life conflict can be minimised by supportive leadership and family-friendly policies in organisations. Transformational leaders, who provide emotional support and promote flexible work options, have been shown to positively influence employees' work-life integration and retention (Kim & Brymer, 2011). Policies like job-sharing, telecommuting, and on-site childcare are physical support for the employees so they can prioritize their duties. According to McNall et al. (2010), companies that implement such policies experience significant reductions in turnover rates.

Work-life enrichment, i.e. the positive cross-classification of resources and satisfaction between the work and personal life can compensate for work-life conflict. Employees who perceive their work as a source of personal growth and accomplishment are more likely to experience reduced conflict and higher job satisfaction (Wayne et al., 2006). Those organizations that encourage this enrichment via programs like mentorship and career development builds environments that are suitable for retention and well-being.

Further, differences based on gender affect the work-life conflict among hospitality sector. Female employees, particularly those with caregiving responsibilities, tend to report higher levels of conflict and turnover intentions due to the dual burden of work and family obligations (Hammer et al., 2005). In order to eliminate these disparities organizations should be able to customize policies to their respective workforce, offer special help to working parents and caregivers.

In conclusion, there is need to effectively manage work-life conflict in order to minimize turnover rate in the hospitality industry. Companies that adopt flexible scheduling, as well as recovery-oriented policies coupled with supportive leadership can help employees to achieve a balance of professional and personal life, thus resulting in a better job satisfaction and retention.

2.3 Leadership and Retention

Leadership is a crucial factor influencing employee retention, particularly in the hospitality industry, where work environments are often demanding and service-oriented. Effective leadership not only drives organizational success but also fosters employee motivation, engagement, and loyalty. Research suggests that leadership styles play a significant role

in shaping job satisfaction, work commitment, and turnover intentions (Kim & Brymer, 2011). In the context of hospitality, leaders who create supportive and inclusive environments contribute to higher retention rates by addressing employees' needs and promoting a sense of belonging.

Transformational leadership is particularly effective in promoting employee retention due to its emphasis on motivation, vision, and individualized support. Transformational leaders inspire employees by setting clear goals, fostering a shared vision, and recognizing individual contributions. According to Bass and Riggio (2006), transformational leaders create positive work experiences by making employees feel valued and connected to organizational objectives. This leadership style enhances job satisfaction and organizational commitment, reducing the likelihood of turnover. In contrast, transactional leaders, who focus primarily on performance-based rewards and penalties, may achieve short-term results but are less effective in retaining employees over the long term (Dvir et al., 2002).

One of the primary mechanisms through which transformational leadership influences retention is through the development of trust and psychological safety. Employees who trust their leaders are more likely to feel secure and supported in their roles, resulting in higher job satisfaction and decreased turnover intentions (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). In the hospitality sector, where job stress and customer demands are prevalent, leaders who foster trust through open communication and empathy can create a resilient and motivated workforce. Studies indicate that organizations with transformational leaders experience lower turnover rates and higher employee engagement (Kim & Brymer, 2011).

Leadership also plays a critical role in promoting employee development and career growth, which are key factors in retention. Transformational leaders actively encourage professional development by providing learning opportunities, mentorship, and career advancement pathways (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Employees who perceive opportunities for growth within an organization are more likely to stay, as they see their future prospects aligned with organizational success. In contrast, the absence of career development initiatives can lead to job dissatisfaction and increased turnover, particularly in industries like hospitality, where job progression is a key motivator for employees (Dusek et al., 2014).

Moreover, leadership influences the overall work environment, including team dynamics, work-life balance, and employee well-being. Supportive leaders create a positive organizational culture by addressing employee concerns, recognizing achievements, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. For example, leaders who implement flexible scheduling policies and wellness programs reduce job stress and enhance employee

satisfaction (Deery & Jago, 2015). Organizations with supportive leadership structures are better equipped to retain talent by fostering a work environment that prioritizes employee well-being and job satisfaction.

The importance of leadership extends to managing organizational change and crisis situations, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. During periods of uncertainty, transformational leaders play a vital role in maintaining employee morale and commitment by providing clear guidance and emotional support (Baum et al., 2020). In the hospitality sector, where businesses faced significant challenges during the pandemic, effective leadership helped organizations retain employees by ensuring job security and offering support mechanisms.

Given the complex and multifaceted nature of employee retention, leadership development programs should be integral to organizational strategies. By investing in leadership training, hospitality organizations can cultivate leaders who are equipped to motivate, develop, and retain their workforce. Transformational leadership, in particular, has proven to be an effective approach in reducing turnover and promoting long-term organizational stability.

2.3.1 Transformational vs. Transactional Leadership in Hospitality

Leadership has become the widely-accepted factor behind organization success as well as keeping employees in the context of dynamic and high-pressure setting of the hospitality industry. Totally two distinct leadership styles i.e., transformational and transactional are commonly investigated as far as their impact on employee outcomes is concerned for example job satisfaction, employee motivation and employee turnover intentions. Although there are benefits attached to both of the leadership styles, transformational leadership is seen by most people as the most appropriate leadership style that helps in promoting long-term employee retention in service-based industries (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Transformational leadership is the capability of the leaders to create vision, charisma, and individualized consideration to lead the employees. In the case of the leaders using this style, they aim at empowering the employees, development of the individuals along with the feeling of purpose that connects the individual aims with the aim of the organization (Kim & Brymer, 2011). In transformational leaders, a supportive and an inclusive working place where the employees feel valued and appreciated is what they are well known for. Consequently, this type of leadership is characterized with the following positive outcomes; high level of job satisfaction, organizational commitment and low rates of turnover (Dvir et al., 2002).

On the other hand, the transactional leadership highlights performance-based exchanges whereby the leaders reward for achieving given goal while punishing for poor performances.

This is transactional in nature and is based on short term success by use of such measures as setting clear tasks, standards and expectations (Bass & Avolio 1993). Despite the effectiveness of transactional leadership in terms of achieving the completion of the task and sustaining operational efficiency, it usually tends to fail in catering to the emotional as well as developmental needs of the employees, that are of paramount importance, especially for the retention of the employees in the hospitality sector (Jiang et al., 2017).

Some of the primary differences between these leadership styles are based on the effect on the motivation and involvement of employees. Transformational leaders increase intrinsic motivation by motivating the employees to do more than what was required through vision and development opportunities (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transformational leaders inspired employees are very much likely to be more creative, innovative and show discretionary effort that bear fruits to the organization. Whereas, Transactional leaders are mostly dependent on the extrinsic motivation which may lead to compliance as opposed to genuine involvement which will reduce the long term retention (Dvir et al., 2002).

Experiential evidence provides the efficacy of using the transformations leadership in the hospitality industry. Transformational leadership has been associated positively with greater job satisfaction within hospitality employees, less burn out and increased commitment to organization among hospitality employees (Kim & Brymer, 2011). By contrast, transactional leadership, although effective for guidance to pursue the tasks, has been associated with an increased turnover rate as a result of its limited orientation to the employees' development and recognition (Jiang et al., 2017). The hospitality industry, where the customers' interaction is high, and emotional labour is involved, will benefit more from the leadership styles that should focus on the well being and growth of employees.

Additionally, transformational leadership is effective in the management of change of organization, which is a common feature in the hospitality industry because of the ever-changing customer needs and the market demand. Leaders that encourage and encourage their members in transition reduce the effects of uncertainty and hence reduce chances of employees departing during uncertain times (Bass & Avolio, 1993). On the contrary, transactional leaders might also encounter difficulties in sustaining level of engagement and morale when implementing change initiatives since their way of focusing on doing things in a usual manner misses the marks on employees' concerns and fears.

Although both leadership styles are viable in organizations, the dynamic nature of hospitality and the intensity of service provided by the hospitality Favors transformational as a better long-term strategic approach towards retention. Transactional leadership can still be effective in dealing with the operational obligations and achieving short-term objectives but

lacks in providing narrow attention on the satisfaction and empowerment of employees where complementary leadership must be applied. It is possible for the organizations within the hospitality industry to benefit from the inclusion of transformational practices in creating a harmonious workplace that will thus improve the level of retention and performance globally.

2.3.2 Impact on Job Satisfaction and Retention Rates

Employees' job satisfaction is a vital component of the criteria for employee retentions in the hospitality industry; therefore leadership has great influence in determining employees' job satisfaction. Leaders who ensure that work environments are healthy, the employees are offered room for developing their careers, and unreserved commitment are leaders who enhance job satisfaction and loyalty to the organization. Studies show that employees who perceive their leaders as supportive and empowering are more likely to be committed to their roles and less likely to leave the organization (Kim & Brymer, 2011). Efficient leadership and most particularly transformational leadership, affect job satisfaction in a positive manner since they consider the needs of the employees both intrinsic and the extrinsic hence promote retention.

Transformational leadership, with its focus on motivating and developing employees, has a profound impact on job satisfaction through mechanisms such as individual consideration and intellectual stimulation (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Additional rewards can be derived from leaders who understand the uniqueness of workers in terms of appreciation and drive towards innovation since this creates the sense of belonging and purpose. This purpose them coupled with emotional support improves job satisfaction in a great way. Since the workers will find gratification in their work, they will no longer desire to look for other forms of employment elsewhere. Conversely, transactional leadership, which primarily focuses on task completion and performance-based rewards, may not adequately meet employees' emotional needs, potentially contributing to dissatisfaction and turnover (Jiang et al., 2017).

Job satisfaction is highly associated with the perception of employees on fairness in terms of recognition in the organization. Leaders who provide regular feedback and recognize employee achievements help create a sense of fairness and reward, both of which contribute to long-term satisfaction (Dusek et al., 2014). In the context of services particularly hospitality wherein workers are usually addressed with emotionally draining responsibilities, the element of recognition and acknowledgment has indeed a principal role on job satisfaction. Research suggests that lack of appreciation from leadership is a significant factor driving employee turnover, highlighting the need for frequent and meaningful recognition (Deery & Jago, 2015).

Leadership also has an effect on job satisfaction with regards to its impact on the organisational culture and the work environment. Transformational leaders establish a culture of trust, teamwork, and mutual respect, which provide grounds for well-being of employees. By fostering open communication, involving employees in decision-making, and addressing workplace conflicts promptly, leaders enhance the overall work environment, thereby promoting job satisfaction and retention (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Staff members in that kind of environment feel valued and supported therefore turnover intentions are mitigated. To the contrary authoritarian or unsupportive leadership style supports hostile work environments thus leaving people disengaged and with increased attrition rate.

Good leadership does not only increase job satisfaction rates but also alleviates the negative impact of job stress and burnout, which are significant issues in the hospitality. Leaders who implement supportive policies, such as flexible work schedules and wellness programs, help alleviate work-related stress, thereby enhancing retention (Baum et al., 2020). Organisations that focus on the well-being of employees by means of proper leadership practices have fewer rates of turn-over and increased productivity levels. On the other hand, the lack of good leadership that disregards the employees' concerns and well-being creates further dissatisfaction and voluntary exit.

3 Research Implementation

3.1 Describing the Research

This research focuses on the problem of employee retention in the hospitality industry, with specific attention to the Finnish context and a case reference to Holiday Club Saimaa in Lappeenranta. Conducted as part of the Bachelor of Tourism and Hospitality Management programme at LAB University of Applied Sciences, the study addresses the persistent issue of high employee turnover, which significantly impacts service consistency and operational efficiency in hospitality businesses. Retaining skilled and experienced staff is vital for ensuring a competitive advantage and sustaining customer satisfaction, both of which are core concerns of this investigation.

The study is built upon a theoretical framework that examines three major factors influencing employee retention: work-life balance, leadership styles, and organizational practices. It adopts a quantitative research methodology using structured questionnaires, with the empirical part comprising primary data collection, survey results, and their interpretation. The practical component presented in this chapter includes the tools and strategies used to obtain the data, how challenges—especially low response rates—were addressed, and the initial findings that serve as the foundation for deeper analysis in Chapter Four.

3.2 Survey and Interview Data Collection

The primary data collection for this study was conducted using a structured, self-administered questionnaire developed in alignment with the research objectives. The instrument was designed to assess employee retention factors in the hospitality industry, specifically focusing on work-life balance, leadership style, and organizational practices. The questionnaire was hosted on Google Forms to ensure accessibility, ease of response collection, and digital traceability. The survey was open to participants between February 2 and March 10, 2025. Initially, the collection period was scheduled for two weeks. However, due to a significantly slow response rate during the early phase, the researcher initiated a series of remedial measures aimed at improving participation and achieving a more robust sample size.

To increase the response rate, the survey window was extended by three additional weeks. This extension was complemented by follow-up strategies such as repeated reminders sent through internal staff communication platforms and professional WhatsApp groups. Reminder messages were personalized and strategically scheduled to avoid peak

operational hours in the hospitality establishments. Beyond digital dissemination, department heads and unit supervisors were engaged to act as facilitators within their teams, encouraging participation through informal conversations and department noticeboards. These supervisors played a critical role in reinforcing the academic importance of the study and reassured employees that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential.

Further efforts to improve access and inclusivity included the placement of QR codes linking directly to the survey form in staff break areas, HR offices, and near staff noticeboards. This was particularly useful for employees who were not active on digital communication channels. Additionally, for employees who had limited digital literacy or lacked access to internet-enabled devices, the Human Resource department provided tablets and laptops for assisted survey completion during break times. This ensured that technical barriers did not exclude any respondent who was otherwise willing to participate.

To build trust and reduce hesitation, the survey introduction emphasized confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the academic purpose of the research. Respondents were assured that their identity would not be traced and that the study was not linked to any performance appraisal or disciplinary action. The framing of the survey as part of an organizational improvement initiative, rather than a management oversight tool, helped in increasing legitimacy and acceptance. Despite these substantial efforts, the final valid sample achieved was 72 responses, resulting in a response rate of 36.0%. While this fell short of the projected target of 200 responses, it is considered methodologically sufficient for quantitative exploratory analysis in workforce studies, especially within high-pressure service sectors like hospitality where staff often work erratic shifts and extended hours.

The questionnaire was structured into three distinct sections. The first section collected demographic information such as age, gender, educational background, department of assignment, employment type, years of service, and previous hospitality experience. The second section comprised 15 closed-ended items distributed across three constructs: Work-Life Balance (5 items), Leadership Style (5 items), and Organizational Practices (5 items). Each item used a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). These items were derived from validated constructs in literature, tailored to the specific context of this study. The third section consisted of an optional open-ended question, inviting respondents to suggest how their organization could improve employee retention. Although only a fraction of respondents provided qualitative input, their feedback yielded valuable themes that informed the discussion in subsequent chapters.

A non-probability convenience sampling method was employed to reach respondents efficiently and maximize participation within the limited time frame and organizational constraints. All ethical considerations were observed. An informed consent statement was included at the beginning of the questionnaire, clearly stating the purpose of the research, voluntary nature of participation, and assurance of anonymity. No personal identifiers were collected, and the dataset was stored securely and used solely for academic analysis.

3.3 Survey Results

A total of 72 questionnaires were returned and deemed valid for analysis out of an intended 200 distributed, yielding a response rate of **36.0%**. While lower than the ideal target, this response rate is considered acceptable for studies involving professional respondents with demanding schedules, such as hospitality employees. The achieved sample size provides a sufficient basis for drawing meaningful insights into the factors affecting employee retention.

The demographic profile of respondents was analyzed based on age, gender, department, employment type, years of service, and educational background. These characteristics provide important context for understanding the workforce composition in the hospitality sector.

Age Distribution

The distribution of respondents across age groups is shown below:

Age Group	Frequency
18–24	25
25–34	17
35–44	17
45–54	5
55+	8

Table 3.1. Age Group Frequency Distribution

The majority of respondents fall within the 18–34 age range, indicating a relatively young workforce in the surveyed hospitality establishments.

Gender Distribution

The gender distribution among respondents was as follows:

Gender	Frequency
Female	53
Male	19

Table 3.2. Gender Distribution Frequency

Females constituted a significantly higher proportion of the sample, reflecting common gender patterns in hospitality employment.

Departmental Distribution

Respondents were drawn from various departments within the hospitality sector:

Department	Frequency
Housekeeping	41
Administration	23
Food & Beverage	4
Healthcare	3
Front Office	1

Table 3.3. Departmental Distribution

The Housekeeping and Administration departments accounted for the highest number of participants.

Employment Type

Employment type among respondents is summarized as follows:

Employment Type	Frequency
Part-time	55
Full-time	9
Contract	8

Table 3.4. Employment Type

A significant portion of respondents were engaged on a part-time basis, which is consistent with flexible staffing practices prevalent in the hospitality industry.

Years of Service

The distribution of respondents by years of service at their institution is presented below:

Years of Service	Frequency
Less than 1 year	38
1–3 years	14
4–6 years	6
7+ years	14

Table 3.5. Years of Service

The data suggest a relatively high turnover rate, with a substantial proportion of respondents having less than one year of tenure.

Educational Background

Respondents' educational qualifications were distributed as follows:

Educational Background	Frequency
Bachelor's Degree	36
High School	17
Master's Degree	11
Doctorate Degree	6
Diploma	2

Table 3.6. Educational Background Frequency

Most respondents reported having at least a Bachelor's degree, indicating a reasonably educated workforce within the sample.

Analysis of Research Questions

Work-Life Balance and Employee Retention

Work-life balance plays a significant role in influencing employee satisfaction and retention. Analysis of survey responses revealed the following trends.

- **Work Schedule Flexibility:**

A majority of respondents (56.94%) either agreed or strongly agreed that their work schedules allowed them to balance personal and professional life. However, 18.06% disagreed or strongly disagreed, suggesting that while flexibility exists for many, improvements are still needed.

- **Rest Between Shifts:**

Over half of the respondents (55.55%) reported having enough time to rest between shifts, although a notable 19.44% expressed disagreement, highlighting potential fatigue risks that could influence turnover.

- **Work Demands Interference:**

52.78% of respondents reported that their job demands interfered with their personal lives, underscoring work-life conflict as a significant stressor.

- **Institutional Flexibility:**

Only 45.84% of employees agreed that flexible scheduling options were available at their institutions, pointing to an organizational weakness needing attention.

- **Work-Life Stress:**

58.33% of respondents agreed that work stress affected their personal lives, indicating high levels of occupational stress among employees.

These results affirm that work-life balance interventions could significantly improve employee retention.

Table 3.7: Work-Life Balance Responses

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
My work schedule allows me to balance my personal and professional life.	20.83	36.11	25.00	12.50	5.56
I have enough time to rest between shifts.	20.83	34.72	25.00	11.11	8.33
My job demands often interfere with my personal	23.61	29.17	22.22	15.28	9.72

life.					
My institution offers flexible scheduling options.	16.67	29.17	30.56	15.28	8.33
I feel stressed due to work-life conflict.	22.22	36.11	19.44	12.50	9.72

Leadership Styles and Retention

Leadership was also found to be a critical determinant of employee retention.

- **Motivation and Support:**

A strong majority (69.45%) agreed that supervisors motivated them to perform well, indicating that leadership encouragement is broadly present.

- **Professional Growth Opportunities:**

65.28% of respondents acknowledged that leadership encouraged their professional growth, a key element in reducing turnover.

- **Constructive Feedback:**

56.95% agreed that they received constructive feedback, though about one-third remained neutral, suggesting room for enhanced communication.

- **Supportiveness and Approachability:**

62.5% perceived leaders as supportive and approachable, although about 13.89% disagreed.

- **Leadership's Impact on Commitment:**

A particularly strong result was observed with 73.61% affirming that good leadership made them more committed to staying in the organization.

Table 3.8. Leadership Style Responses

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
My supervisor motivates me to perform at my best.	30.56	38.89	18.06	8.33	4.17
Leadership at my institution encourages professional growth.	22.22	43.06	20.83	9.72	4.17
I receive constructive feedback on my performance.	16.67	40.28	26.39	9.72	6.94
Leaders in my workplace are approachable and supportive.	26.39	36.11	23.61	9.72	4.17
Good leadership makes me more committed to staying at this organization.	31.94	41.67	18.06	5.56	2.78

Organizational Practices and Employee Commitment

Organizational practices were also examined for their influence on employee retention.

- **Training for Career Progression:**
52.78% of respondents agreed that their employers offered adequate training, while 22.23% expressed dissatisfaction, suggesting a moderate gap.
- **Policy Clarity and Consistency:**
Only 45.84% agreed that workplace policies were clear and consistently applied, leaving a significant number of employees uncertain.
- **Expression of Concerns:**
55.55% of respondents felt comfortable expressing concerns to management, reflecting an organizational culture partially open to feedback.

- Prioritization of Employee Well-being:**
 51.39% indicated that organizational policies prioritize well-being, yet a sizeable minority disagreed or remained neutral.
- Satisfaction with Benefits:**
 Only 47.22% of respondents were satisfied with their benefits, underscoring a notable area for organizational improvement to enhance retention.

Table 3.9. Organizational Practices Responses

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
My employer offers adequate training for career progression.	13.89	38.89	25.00	16.67	5.56
Workplace policies are clear and consistently applied.	15.28	30.56	31.94	15.28	6.94
I feel comfortable expressing concerns to management.	20.83	34.72	26.39	13.89	4.17
Organizational policies prioritize employee well-being.	18.06	33.33	27.78	15.28	5.56
I am satisfied with the benefits	15.28	31.94	29.17	16.67	6.94

offered by my employer.					
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Hypothesis Testing

This section presents the results of the hypothesis testing conducted to determine the strength and direction of relationships among work-life balance, leadership style, organizational practices, and employee retention intentions in the hospitality industry.

Correlation Analysis

To examine the associations between key variables, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated. Work-life balance, leadership style, and organizational practices were treated as independent factors, while employee retention intention was the dependent factor.

The correlation matrix is presented below:

Table 3.10. Correlation Matrix

Variables	Work-Life Balance Score	Leadership Style Score	Organizational Practices Score	Retention Intention Score
Work-Life Balance Score	1.00	0.68	0.71	0.77
Leadership Style Score	0.68	1.00	0.74	0.80
Organizational Practices Score	0.71	0.74	1.00	0.82
Retention Intention Score	0.77	0.80	0.82	1.00

Interpretation of Correlation Results

- **Work-Life Balance and Retention Intention:**

There was a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.77$) between work-life balance and employee retention intentions. This suggests that employees who perceive better work-life balance are significantly more likely to express intentions to remain with their organizations.

- **Leadership Style and Retention Intention:**

Leadership style demonstrated a strong positive correlation with retention intention ($r = 0.80$). This implies that transformational leadership practices—those that emphasize motivation, support, and development—are critically important for fostering long-term employee loyalty in the hospitality sector.

- **Organizational Practices and Retention Intention:**

Organizational practices, including clear policies, supportive work environments, and training opportunities, exhibited the strongest correlation with retention intention ($r = 0.82$). This highlights that institutional structures and employee-focused policies are powerful determinants of employee commitment.

- **Interrelationships Among Independent Variables:**

Positive correlations were also observed among work-life balance, leadership style, and organizational practices themselves, indicating that these factors are interdependent. For example, leadership style correlated positively with organizational practices ($r = 0.74$), suggesting that effective leadership often fosters supportive organizational environments.

Hypothesis Testing Summary

The results strongly support the hypotheses that:

- Improved work-life balance significantly increases employee retention intentions.
- Positive leadership styles are associated with higher employee commitment.
- Supportive organizational practices are critical for reducing turnover intentions.

Thus, addressing these three domains collectively provides a comprehensive strategy for enhancing employee retention in the hospitality industry.

3.4 Research Findings and Discussion

3.4.1 Work-Life Balance and Employee Retention

The findings reveal a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.77$) between work-life balance and employee retention intentions, confirming that work-life balance is a critical determinant of employee commitment in the hospitality sector. While 56.94% of respondents indicated that their work schedules allowed them to balance personal and professional life, a concerning 52.78% reported that job demands interfered with their personal lives. This apparent contradiction suggests that while basic scheduling may accommodate personal needs for many employees, the intensity and nature of work demands nonetheless create significant

strain. The data showing that 58.33% of respondents experience stress due to work-life conflict further reinforces this interpretation. These findings align with the first specific objective of identifying the role of work-life balance in employee retention and indicate that despite some flexibility being present, hospitality establishments must address the fundamental intensity of work demands to improve retention.

The relatively low percentage (45.84%) of employees who agreed that flexible scheduling options were available at their institutions represents a significant opportunity for improvement. Given the predominantly part-time workforce (76.39% of respondents) and the youthful demographic profile (58.33% under age 35), enhancing scheduling flexibility could yield substantial improvements in retention. The high proportion of employees (52.78%) with less than three years of service—particularly the 38 respondents (52.78%) with less than one year—indicates a turnover challenge that could be partially addressed through more adaptive work-life balance policies. This pattern is particularly relevant in departments such as Housekeeping, which constituted 56.94% of respondents and typically experiences high turnover rates due to physically demanding work schedules.

3.4.2 Leadership Styles and Employee Retention

The research findings demonstrate a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.80$) between leadership style and retention intention, underscoring the critical role of effective leadership in fostering employee commitment. The data reveals that 69.45% of respondents felt motivated by their supervisors to perform at their best, suggesting that many leaders in the surveyed establishments employ motivational approaches consistent with transformational leadership principles. This finding directly addresses the second specific objective of evaluating leadership impact on retention and satisfaction. Particularly notable is that 73.61% of respondents affirmed that good leadership increased their commitment to remaining with their organization—the highest positive response rate across all leadership indicators measured.

Despite generally positive leadership assessments, areas for improvement emerged. While 65.28% of respondents acknowledged leadership encouragement for their professional growth, only 56.95% reported receiving constructive feedback. This disconnect suggests that while leaders may express general support for development, more structured feedback mechanisms are needed. Given the educational profile of respondents—with 73.61% holding at least a Bachelor's degree—this professional cohort likely values developmental feedback and career progression opportunities. The leadership findings are particularly significant when considered alongside the organizational hierarchy represented in the sample, with Administration (31.94%) and Housekeeping (56.94%) comprising the majority

of respondents. These departments typically experience different leadership styles and expectations, yet both showed sensitivity to leadership quality in retention decisions.

3.4.3 Organizational Practices and Employee Retention

The analysis revealed that organizational practices exhibited the strongest correlation with retention intention ($r = 0.82$) among all factors studied, highlighting their paramount importance in employee retention strategies. This finding directly addresses the third specific objective regarding organizational practices' influence on retention rates. The data shows that only 52.78% of respondents agreed that their employers offered adequate training for career progression, despite the relatively high educational qualifications of the workforce. This gap between employee capabilities and perceived development opportunities represents a critical area for intervention, particularly considering that 65.28% of respondents held at least a Bachelor's degree.

Policy clarity emerged as a significant concern, with only 45.84% of respondents agreeing that workplace policies were clear and consistently applied. This finding is particularly troubling given the diverse employment arrangements within the sample—76.39% part-time, 12.5% full-time, and 11.11% contract employees—as inconsistent policy application can create perceptions of inequity across different employment statuses. The research also revealed that only 51.39% of respondents believed organizational policies prioritized employee well-being, and a mere 47.22% expressed satisfaction with their benefits. These results suggest fundamental organizational deficiencies that likely contribute to the high proportion of employees with less than one year of service (52.78%). Addressing these organizational practice shortcomings represents the most promising avenue for improving retention rates, given both the strength of correlation and the relatively low baseline satisfaction levels.

3.4.4 Interrelationships Between Key Factors

The study findings reveal substantial interrelationships between work-life balance, leadership style, and organizational practices (with correlations ranging from $r = 0.68$ to $r = 0.74$), suggesting that these factors function as an interconnected system rather than as isolated variables. The strong correlation between leadership style and organizational practices ($r = 0.74$) indicates that effective leaders tend to operate within or help create supportive organizational frameworks. Similarly, the correlation between work-life balance and organizational practices ($r = 0.71$) suggests that formal policies significantly influence employees' ability to achieve balance. These interconnections highlight the need for comprehensive approaches to retention that address all three domains simultaneously.

The demographic profile of respondents provides important context for these interrelationships. The predominantly female workforce (73.61% of respondents) may experience unique work-life balance challenges, particularly in the housekeeping department where physical demands are substantial. The relatively young workforce, with 58.33% under age 35, likely has different expectations regarding organizational support and leadership styles compared to older employees. These demographic factors, combined with the high proportion of part-time workers (76.39%), create a workforce that requires carefully calibrated retention strategies addressing all three key factors identified in this research.

3.4.5 Implications for Hospitality Employee Retention Strategies

The research findings collectively demonstrate that improving employee retention in hospitality establishments requires a multifaceted approach addressing work-life balance, leadership quality, and organizational practices. The strong positive correlations between each factor and retention intentions (ranging from $r = 0.77$ to $r = 0.82$) suggest that even incremental improvements could yield significant retention benefits. Particularly noteworthy is that organizational practices showed the strongest correlation ($r = 0.82$) while also demonstrating the lowest satisfaction levels—only 45.84% to 52.78% of respondents expressed positive views across various organizational practice measures. This combination of high impact potential and low current performance makes organizational practices an especially promising target for intervention.

The demographic and employment characteristics of the sample—predominantly young (58.33% under age 35), female (73.61%), part-time (76.39%) workers with relatively short tenure (52.78% with less than three years of service)—suggest that retention strategies must be tailored to this specific workforce profile. The relatively high educational level of respondents (73.61% with Bachelor's degree or higher) indicates untapped potential that could be leveraged through improved career development pathways. The concentration of respondents in Housekeeping (56.94%) and Administration (31.94%) highlights the need for department-specific approaches that address the unique challenges and opportunities in these areas. Overall, the findings fulfil the general objective of assessing how work-life balance, leadership styles, and organizational practices affect employee retention, providing a robust empirical foundation for developing targeted retention initiatives in hospitality establishments.

4 Summary and Discussion

4.1 Recapping Objectives and Results

This research investigated the complex interplay of factors affecting employee retention in hospitality establishments with the general objective of assessing how work-life balance, leadership styles, and organizational practices influence retention outcomes. The study was guided by three specific objectives:

- (1) to identify the role of work-life balance in enhancing employee retention;
- (2) to evaluate the impact of leadership styles—particularly transformational leadership—on employee retention and job satisfaction; and
- (3) to explore how organizational practices, such as training opportunities and policy clarity, influence retention rates.

The quantitative analysis of 72 responses revealed compelling evidence supporting all hypothesized relationships. Work-life balance demonstrated a strong positive correlation with retention intentions ($r = 0.77$), confirming Clark's (2000) Work-Family Border Theory that effective boundary management enhances organizational commitment. This finding aligns with Deery and Jago's (2015) identification of work-life conflict as a primary turnover predictor in hospitality settings. While 56.94% of respondents reported satisfactory work-life balance, 58.33% experienced stress from work-life conflict, and only 45.84% acknowledged the availability of flexible scheduling options. These results substantiate Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources Theory, highlighting how resource depletion leads to disengagement—particularly relevant given the sample's high percentage (76.39%) of part-time workers who often juggle multiple responsibilities.

Leadership style emerged as a powerful retention determinant ($r = 0.80$), supporting Bass and Riggio's (2006) Transformational Leadership Theory. The finding that 73.61% of respondents confirmed good leadership increased their organizational commitment directly validates Kim and Brymer's (2011) research linking transformational leadership practices to lower turnover in hospitality. However, the discrepancy between general leadership support (69.45% felt motivated by supervisors) and specific developmental feedback (only 56.95% received constructive feedback) suggests a critical implementation gap. This gap is particularly significant given the sample's educational profile (73.61% with at least a Bachelor's degree)—a workforce likely to value growth opportunities and meaningful feedback.

Organizational practices demonstrated the strongest correlation with retention ($r = 0.82$), yet showed the lowest satisfaction levels across all factors studied. Only 52.78% received adequate training for career progression, 45.84% experienced clear and consistent policies, and just 47.22% were satisfied with their benefits. These findings powerfully reinforce AlBattat et al.'s (2014) and Dusek et al.'s (2014) conclusions that structured organizational support mechanisms significantly reduce hospitality turnover. The results also exemplify Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) Job-Demands Resources Model, where organizational resources buffer job demands and enhance engagement. The significant correlation between organizational practices and retention intentions, coupled with low satisfaction scores, presents both the greatest challenge and the most promising intervention opportunity.

The substantial interrelationships between all three factors ($r = 0.68$ to $r = 0.74$) confirm Goh and Lee's (2018) argument that hospitality firms must address both extrinsic and intrinsic needs simultaneously. The particularly strong correlation between leadership and organizational practices ($r = 0.74$) suggests that transformational leaders facilitate supportive organizational environments—creating a virtuous cycle of retention enhancement.

These findings must be interpreted within the demographic context: a predominantly female (73.61%), young (58.33% under 35), well-educated workforce with high short-tenure representation (52.78% with less than one year of service). This profile reflects typical hospitality workforce challenges but also indicates untapped potential. The concentration in Housekeeping (56.94%) and Administration (31.94%) highlights department-specific retention concerns deserving targeted interventions.

The research methodically addressed all three specific objectives, demonstrating that work-life balance significantly enhances retention through stress reduction and boundary management; transformational leadership practices substantially increase commitment through motivation and development; and organizational practices most powerfully influence retention through training opportunities and policy clarity. These findings collectively offer a comprehensive empirical foundation for developing targeted retention initiatives that address the interconnected nature of these factors, rather than treating them as isolated variables. By implementing balanced interventions across all three domains, hospitality establishments can significantly reduce turnover rates and cultivate stable, committed workforces that deliver consistent guest experiences.

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study contribute significantly to both theoretical understanding and practical management of employee retention in the hospitality industry. The strong correlations between all three independent variables and retention intentions provide robust empirical support for established theoretical frameworks while offering nuanced insights into their application in contemporary hospitality settings.

Work-Life Balance and Theoretical Frameworks

The strong correlation between work-life balance and retention intentions ($r = 0.77$) provides compelling evidence supporting Clark's (2000) Work-Family Border Theory. The theory's emphasis on boundary management is particularly relevant given that 52.78% of respondents reported job demands interfering with personal life. This interference reflects what Clark describes as "border permeability," where work responsibilities frequently penetrate personal domains. The findings extend Clark's theoretical framework by demonstrating that this permeability is especially problematic in hospitality contexts characterized by irregular hours and high-pressure environments.

Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources Theory gains further validation through our observation that 58.33% of respondents experienced stress from work-life conflict. This supports Hobfoll's contention that resource depletion—in this case, emotional and temporal resources—leads to disengagement and eventual withdrawal. The particularly strong work-life balance concerns among the predominantly female workforce (73.61%) align with Deery and Jago's (2015) findings that work-family conflict disproportionately affects women in hospitality roles, who often bear greater domestic responsibilities alongside professional duties.

Leadership and Transformational Theory

The strong leadership-retention correlation ($r = 0.80$) provides substantial evidence for Bass and Riggio's (2006) Transformational Leadership Theory in hospitality contexts. The finding that 73.61% of respondents indicated good leadership increased their commitment to remain with their organization directly supports the theory's proposition that transformational leaders enhance follower loyalty through inspirational motivation and individualized consideration. However, the lower percentage (56.95%) reporting constructive feedback suggests incomplete implementation of the "intellectual stimulation" component of transformational leadership.

These findings extend Kim and Brymer's (2011) research by highlighting specific transformational practices most valued by hospitality employees—particularly motivation and growth encouragement. The strong correlation between leadership style and organizational practices ($r = 0.74$) suggests a mechanism through which transformational leadership influences retention: by creating and implementing supportive organizational systems. This interrelationship deserves further theoretical exploration as it indicates leadership may have both direct and indirect effects on retention outcomes.

Organizational Practices and Job Demands-Resources

The strongest correlation in our study ($r = 0.82$) between organizational practices and retention intentions provides compelling support for Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model. The relatively low satisfaction with organizational practices—only 45.84% perceived clear policies and 47.22% expressed satisfaction with benefits—illustrates what the JD-R model describes as resource deficiency in the face of high job demands. This imbalance appears particularly problematic in the hospitality sector, where demands are inherently high due to customer service pressures and operational intensity.

Our findings extend AlBattat et al.'s (2014) and Dusek et al.'s (2014) work by demonstrating that organizational practice deficiencies may be the most critical yet most neglected factor in hospitality retention strategies. The data supports Goh and Lee's (2018) theoretical framework that both extrinsic factors (policies, benefits) and intrinsic factors (growth opportunities, recognition) must be addressed simultaneously—a challenging proposition in an industry traditionally focused on cost minimization.

Practical Applications and Recommendations

The research findings yield several actionable recommendations for hospitality managers seeking to improve retention rates. For work-life balance, establishments should prioritize implementing more adaptive scheduling systems, particularly important for the predominantly part-time workforce (76.39%) who likely balance multiple commitments. Only 45.84% of respondents reported flexible scheduling options, representing a significant opportunity for improvement through self-scheduling systems, compressed work weeks, clearer boundaries for after-hours communications, and stress management programs specifically targeting work-life conflict.

Leadership development should focus on closing the gap between general motivation (69.45%) and specific feedback provision (56.95%) through targeted training in transformational leadership practices, mentoring programs, leadership accountability

measures tied to retention outcomes, and department-specific approaches addressing unique challenges in Housekeeping and Administration.

Organizational practice enhancement represents the most urgent intervention area, with priority recommendations including clear career progression pathways (particularly important given the highly educated workforce), standardized policy application across different employment types, enhanced benefits packages based on employee input, and transparent recognition systems that consistently acknowledge contributions.

Holistic Retention Strategy

The strong interrelationships between our three independent variables ($r = 0.68$ to $r = 0.74$) suggest that piecemeal interventions are likely to yield limited results. Instead, hospitality establishments should develop comprehensive retention strategies that simultaneously address work-life balance, leadership quality, and organizational practices. Such integrated approaches would create mutually reinforcing improvements across all three domains.

The findings indicate that transformational leaders help create supportive organizational environments, which in turn facilitate better work-life balance. This virtuous cycle offers a promising pathway to significantly improved retention outcomes, particularly relevant given the high proportion of short-tenure employees (52.78% with less than one year of service) identified in our sample.

By addressing the specific deficiencies identified in this research—particularly the organizational practice shortcomings—hospitality establishments can transform their approach to talent management. Rather than accepting high turnover as inevitable in the industry, our findings suggest that properly calibrated interventions across all three domains can create stable, committed workforces capable of delivering exceptional and consistent guest experiences. The results conclusively fulfil all three specific research objectives while providing both theoretical validation and practical guidance for addressing the persistent challenge of employee retention in hospitality settings.

4.3 Suggestions for Further Studies

This research, while providing valuable insights into hospitality employee retention factors, would benefit from expansion through several methodological enhancements. Future studies should widen the sample to include multiple hotel branches across different geographic regions, improving generalizability and accounting for cultural or regional variations in HR practices that may influence retention outcomes. The current study's concentration on predominantly housekeeping and administrative staff from limited

establishments constrains the broader applicability of findings to the diverse hospitality sector. Additionally, adopting a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative surveys with in-depth qualitative interviews would provide richer insights into employee motivations and perceptions, particularly surrounding intangible aspects like organizational identity, loyalty formation, and personal career aspirations—dimensions that cannot be fully captured through survey instruments alone.

Further research should examine additional variables beyond the three primary factors investigated in this study, including compensation structures, job security perceptions, career plateauing effects, and the impact of emotional labour on long-term commitment. These factors likely interact with the identified variables of work-life balance, leadership style, and organizational practices in complex ways that merit deeper exploration. Particularly valuable would-be longitudinal studies comparing workforce attitudes before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic, which has fundamentally transformed priorities around work-life balance, remote work possibilities, and leadership expectations within the hospitality sector. Such temporal comparisons could reveal evolving patterns in employee retention drivers that may require hospitality establishments to adapt their retention strategies to post-pandemic workforce expectations.

Future research would also benefit from segmentation analysis examining whether retention drivers differ significantly between frontline staff and managerial roles, allowing for more tailored interventions based on hierarchical position. The current study's aggregated approach, while providing general insights, may obscure important differences in what motivates retention across various organizational levels. Moreover, investigating the effectiveness of specific interventions targeting the three main factors identified in this study would move the research from descriptive to prescriptive, offering practical guidance on which strategies yield the highest return on investment for hospitality retention efforts. Such intervention-focused research could help establish evidence-based best practices for addressing the persistent challenge of employee turnover that continues to plague the hospitality industry worldwide.

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Appendix

EMPLOYEE RETENTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in this survey as part of a study examining employee retention. The purpose of this research is to understand how work-life balance, leadership styles, and organizational practices influence employee satisfaction and long-term commitment.

Your responses will be completely anonymous and confidential, and the data will be used solely for academic research. The survey will take approximately 10–15 minutes to complete.

There are no right or wrong answers; please respond honestly based on your experiences at your current institution. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time.

If you have any questions, please contact [Researcher's Contact Information].

Thank you for your time and valuable input.

Sincerely,
Sandra Iloejuafor

Section A: Demographic Information

Please tick (✓) or fill in the appropriate response.

Please tick (✓) or fill in the appropriate response.

1. **Age:**
 18–24 25–34 35–44 45–54 55+
2. **Gender:**
 Male Female Prefer not to say
3. **Department:**
 Front Office Food & Beverage Housekeeping Administration Other
 (please specify)
4. **Employment Type:**
 Full-time Part-time Contract
5. **Years of Service at Institution:**
 Less than 1 year 1–3 years 4–6 years 7+ years
6. **Educational Background:**
 High School Diploma Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree Other
7. **Do you have previous experience in the hospitality industry?**
 Yes No

Section B: Work-Life Balance and Employee Satisfaction

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
8. My work schedule allows me to balance my personal and professional life.					
9. I have enough time to rest between shifts.					
10. My job demands often interfere with my personal life.					
11. My institution offers flexible scheduling options.					
12. I feel stressed due to work-life conflict. (Reverse-coded)					
13. I am satisfied with my leave policies and days off.					
14. My supervisor understands and supports work-life balance.					
15. Work-life balance policies at					

my institution are effective.					
16. My work-life balance affects my overall job satisfaction.					
17. Poor work-life balance would make me consider leaving my job.					

Section C: Leadership Styles and Employee Retention

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
18. My supervisor motivates me to perform at my best.					
19. Leadership at my institution encourages professional growth.					
20. I receive constructive feedback on my performance.					
21. Leaders in my workplace are approachable and supportive.					
22. I feel valued by my supervisors.					
23. Decision-making at my institution is transparent and inclusive.					
24. My supervisor recognizes my contributions.					

25. Leadership policies at my institution align with employee needs.					
26. Good leadership makes me more committed to staying at this organization.					
27. I would consider leaving if leadership practices worsened.					

Section D: Organizational Practices and Long-Term Commitment

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
28. I have access to career development opportunities.					
29. My workplace fosters an inclusive and respectful environment.					
30. The recognition and rewards system are fair and motivating.					
31. My employer offers adequate training for career progression.					
32. Workplace policies are clear and consistently applied.					

33. I feel comfortable expressing concerns to management.					
34. Organizational policies prioritize employee well-being.					
35. I am satisfied with the benefits offered by my employer.					
36. Organizational support influences my decision to stay.					
37. I am likely to stay longer if career advancement opportunities increase.					

Section E: Overall Employee Retention

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
38. I see myself working here in the next two years.					
39. I would recommend this job to others.					
40. My workplace invests in employee retention.					