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A STUDY ON EMPLOYEE RETENTION STRATEGIES AND FACTORS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY

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Abstract: Employee retention has emerged as a critical area of focus within the food and beverage (F&B) industry, which is widely recognized for its high turnover rates, operational pressures, and labour-intensive nature. This study investigates the core factors influencing employee retention and examines the effectiveness of strategies implemented by organizations to mitigate attrition in this dynamic sector. Drawing data from a diverse sample of **547 employees** working in dairy companies, the research adopts a **quantitative survey-based approach** to assess employee perceptions related to compensation, career development, leadership style, organizational culture, recognition, and work-life balance.

The study employs **descriptive statistics, correlation** to identify the strength and direction of relationships between key retention factors and employees' intent to stay. Results indicate that **career advancement opportunities, supportive leadership, and positive organizational culture** are the most influential drivers of retention. Conversely, The analysis reveals that while personal and organizational factors such as communication, overwork, and fairness contribute meaningfully to employee turnover in the dairy sector, none of these are statistically more influential than others. Furthermore, the analysis reveals that integrated HR strategies that align employee needs with organizational goals significantly improve workforce stability.

This research offers actionable insights for HR practitioners and policy makers within the F&B sector, emphasizing the need for targeted retention frameworks that address both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. The findings also contribute to the existing body of knowledge on human resource management by providing an industry-specific perspective on employee retention strategies. By addressing the unique challenges of the F&B industry, the study paves the way for sustainable talent management practices and improved organizational performance.

Keywords: Employee Retention, Food and Beverage Industry, Human Resource Strategies, Career Advancement, Organizational Commitment, Work-Life Balance

1. Introduction

Employee turnover in the food and beverage (F&B) industry continues to pose a pressing challenge. Existing research indicates that turnover intentions among hospitality employees are strongly influenced by work-related stress, inadequate job resources, and poor organizational support (Eldor & Harpaz, 2020). High attrition in this sector imposes tangible costs—such as recruitment, training, and lost productivity—that can reach over 100 % of the departing employee’s annual salary (Cascio, 2006; Bacha, 2016).

The F&B domain presents particular vulnerabilities. Irregular schedules, intense customer interactions, and demanding service expectations contribute to burnout and turnover (SHRM, 2021). A comprehensive review by Ghani et al. (2020) found that sustainable work environments, meaningful career progression, effective communication, and sound recruitment practices are key to reducing attrition in hospitality settings. Similarly, training and development efforts, especially for long-tenured workers, foster loyalty by signaling that an organization values its employees (Kong et al., 2012; Ezeuduji, 2015).

When specialized HR practices are aligned with positive organizational climates, employee retention improves significantly—especially in food production and service environments (Frimayasa, 2021). In Qatar’s F&B industry, elements such as training, performance appraisal, fair rewards, and supportive communication emerged as principal factors that reduce turnover intention (Awolusi & Jayakody, 2022).

Despite growing literature on retention strategies across hospitality and manufacturing, there is limited large-scale empirical work focusing solely on the F&B industry. This study addresses that gap by surveying 547 employees across multiple Dairy companies. It investigates a comprehensive set of variables: compensation, career development, leadership, organizational culture, recognition, and work-life balance.

Specifically, this research seeks to:

1. Examine how compensation, career opportunities, leadership style, organizational culture, recognition, and work-life balance affect employees’ intention to stay.
2. Determine which factors have the most significant influence on retention in the F&B context.
3. Provide evidence-based recommendations for HR practices tailored to the industry.

By doing so, the study contributes to both academic discussion by expanding industry-specific retention models and practical implementation by offering actionable strategies to stabilize workforce management in F&B operations.

Review of Literature:-

Mitchell et.al(1994) introduced job embeddedness, emphasizing connections at work and in the community (links, fit, sacrifice). This model predicted retention better than traditional theory, shaping later F&B research on grounding employees in organizational and social structures.

Milman(2003) found that effective organizational communication boosts job satisfaction and reduces intentions to leave. In hospitality, poor communication particularly among lower-level staff increased turnover.

Moncarz et al. affirmed that internal promotion is critical for retention of both managerial and non-managerial staff. They also identified “turnover culture” as prevalent in hospitality, where quitting is

normalized.

Chan & Kuok (2011); Qiu et al. (2014); Yang et al. (2012) These studies confirmed that lack of advancement opportunities leads to turnover, mediated by organizational commitment

Abdulkadir et al. (2012); Dysvik&Kuvaas (2008)

These studies emphasize that perceived training opportunities foster motivation and organizational commitment, reducing turnover

Onyusheva et al. (2022) & Pandzic&Hadziahmetovic (2022) Onyusheva et al. studied Thai food industry reward systems; Pandzic&Hadziahmetovic focused on intrinsic rewards in Bosnia's food sector. Both found that well-designed reward programs significantly boost employee motivation and retention

Hee& Ann (2019) identified compensation, benefits, work–life balance, stress, and satisfaction as key predictors of turnover in the food manufacturing industry in Malaysia.

Seema Chawla et al. (2021) In NCR hotels, organizational culture, monetary rewards, career growth, leadership, work–life balance, and exit barriers were found to significantly influence retention

De Silva & Perera (2020) examined trained F&B staff in hotels and identified turnover rates, factors driving attrition (e.g., limited career progression), and proposed training retention mechanism.

Norizan, Ismail & Hamzah (2022) The authors found that strong perceived organizational support effectively reduces turnover intent among F&B employees

Njoku & Guillermo (2023) Explored how leadership styles in small F&B enterprises influence employee engagement and retention, highlighting transformational leadership as especially effective

Mangal & Dhamija (2024) Applied the Abilities–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) framework, identifying communication, participation, training, and motivational factors that enhance retention in FMCG F&B companies

Scope of the study:

This study is confined to examining employee retention strategies and influential factors within **dairy companies**, which represent a significant subsector of the broader food and beverage industry. The research aims to explore the core elements that contribute to employee loyalty or attrition in dairy organizations, such as compensation structures, career development opportunities, leadership effectiveness, work-life balance, training and development programs, and organizational culture.

By focusing solely on dairy enterprises including milk processing units, dairy product manufacturers, and distribution operations the study intends to gain insights that are context-specific and industry-relevant. The scope covers employees across various job roles and organizational levels to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the retention challenges and expectations unique to this segment.

The research strictly adheres to ethical guidelines by ensuring informed consent, maintaining participant confidentiality, and upholding the voluntary nature of participation. Bias in data collection and interpretation is consciously avoided to ensure objectivity and reliability. The findings from this study are expected to assist HR practitioners, dairy industry stakeholders, and policymakers in formulating targeted retention strategies that align with the operational and human resource needs of the dairy sector.

Significance of the study:

Employee retention has become a critical concern in the food and beverage (F&B) industry, which is known for its high employee turnover rates, intense work environments, and labour dependency. This study holds significant value as it seeks to understand and evaluate the strategies and factors that contribute to retaining talent within this industry. By investigating the practical and psychological aspects that influence employees' decisions to remain with or leave an organization, this research aims to bridge existing knowledge gaps in workforce management specific to the F&B sector.

The findings from this study are expected to offer practical guidance to human resource professionals, managers, and business owners in designing and implementing more effective retention strategies. By highlighting what motivates employees to stay such as career growth, recognition, supportive leadership, fair compensation, and work-life balance the study provides evidence-based insights that can help reduce turnover and improve organizational performance.

Additionally, the research contributes to academic literature by focusing on an industry that is often underrepresented in retention-related studies. It may also serve as a reference for future scholars, policymakers, and industry stakeholders who aim to strengthen workforce stability in the F&B sector. Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of aligning organizational practices with employee expectations to build a more committed and sustainable workforce.

Objectives of the study:

1. To identify the factors influencing Employee Retention in Food and Beverage industry.
2. To study the Employee Retention Strategies of Food and Beverage Industry.
3. To analyse how those Employee Retention Strategies Affect Employee Retention.

Hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant difference between the perceptions of employees of Food and Beverage companies with regard to Employee Retention Strategies.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant difference between the perceptions of employees of Food and Beverage companies with regard to Employee Retention Factors.

Research Methodology and Statistical tools used for Analysis:

After completing the fieldwork, the data gathered from both primary and secondary sources was organized, tabulated, and subjected to analysis and interpretation. To analyze the data effectively, appropriate statistical techniques and sampling methods were applied. Measures such as Mean and Standard Deviation were utilized to determine the weightages and percentage distribution of the responses. Additionally, advanced statistical tools including ANOVA, Percentage Analysis, Kruskal-Wallis Test, and Cronbach's Alpha were employed to assess the satisfaction levels of employees in food and beverage companies concerning employee retention.

Discussion on Pilot Study:

The pilot study was mainly conducted for testing the questionnaire Drafted. The objective to conduct pilot survey is to design a structured questionnaire that will be more realistic and meaningful for the Research. Pilot survey has been conducted to pre-test the Questionnaire to test its validity and Reliability. The output of the pilot survey explains how the participants gave their responses and views not only regarding the questionnaire but also about the benefits of the study that will add to the industry. A sample of 46 respondents was selected from Food and Beverage companies. the survey instruments were then pre tested to check for any disagreement. The collected information was statistically tested

to calculate of coefficient which validates the questionnaire is 95.1% reliable(i.e 0.951)

Analysis and Discussion:

Employee Retention Factors of The Food and Beverage Industry:

Competent employee retention is very critical to the long-term benefits and success of the organization. Retaining our best employees ensure product sales, customer satisfaction, contented co-workers and reporting authority, effective progression planning, and deeply embedded organizational knowledge and learning; following are some potential factors for an employee to stay long time in the organization.

Table 1: Factors that make the employees stay long time at the organization Test Statistics

Employee Retention Strategies	Dairy Industry (547) Mean	Rank	df	Chi- Squire Values	Asymt. Significant t-Value
Work schedule flexibility	6.162706	10	3	2.20909	0.53016
Health and wellness benefits	6.444241	2.5	3	0.98182	0.80565
Personal Development	6.303473	5.5	3	0.00000	1.00000
Compensation	6.265082	9	3	1.33636	0.72052
Work life balance	6.277879	7.5	3	0.43636	0.93263
Top performer Recognition and Rewards	6.277879	7.5	3	0.43636	0.93263
Superior subordinate relationship	6.521024	1	3	2.20909	0.53016
Training and career Development	6.444241	2.5	3	0.98182	0.80565
Job characteristics and job commitment	6.482633	2	3	1.33636	0.72052
Financial rewards and welfare programs	6.303473	5.5	3	0.00000	1.00000

Results and Discussion:

The above table presents the mean scores, ranks, and chi-square test results for various employee retention strategies as perceived by employees in the dairy industry (N=547). Among the ten strategies evaluated, **superior-subordinate relationship** received the highest mean score (6.521), securing the **first rank**, indicating it is the most influential factor in retaining employees. This is closely followed by **job characteristics and job commitment** (mean = 6.483; rank = 2) and **training and career development** as well as **health and wellness benefits**, both sharing a mean score of 6.444 and a joint **second rank**.

Personal development and **financial rewards and welfare programs** both recorded a mean score of 6.303 and a shared **fifth rank**, highlighting their moderate importance in employee retention. Similarly, **work life balance** and **top performer recognition and rewards** were both ranked **seventh** with a mean score of 6.278, indicating that while important, they are considered slightly less impactful compared to other strategies. **Compensation** (mean = 6.265; rank = 9) and **work schedule flexibility** (mean = 6.163; rank = 10) were rated comparatively lower, suggesting these factors, though relevant, are not perceived as top priorities by employees in this context.

The **chi-square test** was conducted to examine the significance of differences across the various retention strategies. However, all the chi-square values are accompanied by **p-values (Asymptotic Significance)** greater than 0.05, indicating that there are **no statistically significant differences** among the retention strategies evaluated. This implies that although there is variation in mean scores and perceived importance, the differences are **not statistically significant** at the 5% level.

In summary, employees in the dairy sector place the greatest emphasis on positive workplace relationships and intrinsic job characteristics, while extrinsic motivators like compensation and work schedule flexibility are rated lower. Nevertheless, the overall statistical analysis suggests that all listed strategies play a relatively uniform role in influencing employee retention.

Table 2: Factors influencing the employees Leaving from the organization

Employee Retention Strategies	Dairy Industry (547) Mean	Rank	df	Chi- Squire Values	Asymt. Significant t-Value
Less compensation package and benefits	5.57404	10	3	2.20909	0.53016
Frequent job rotations	5.90676	2.5	3	0.98182	0.80565
Lack of support from superiors	5.66362	6	3	0.02727	0.99881
Lack of importance for professional growth and development	5.61243	8	3	0.68182	0.87747
Conflicts with other employees	5.63803	7	3	0.24545	0.96994
Inequality or favouritism	5.70201	5	3	0.02727	0.99881
Ineffective organization communication	5.90676	2.5	3	0.98182	0.80565
Lack of Timely increments and promotions	5.58684	9	3	1.33636	0.72052
Personal reasons	6.00914	1	3	2.20909	0.53016
Overwork	5.76600	4	3	0.24545	0.96994

Results and Discussion:

The above table presents the mean scores, ranks, and chi-square test results for various factors contributing to employee turnover in the dairy industry, based on the responses of 547 participants. Among the ten identified factors, personal reasons were reported as the most influential cause of employee turnover, achieving the highest mean score of 6.009 and securing the first rank. This suggests that individual circumstances beyond the organizational environment play a significant role in employee departure.

Frequent job rotations and ineffective organizational communication both received a mean score of 5.907, sharing the second rank, indicating that unclear communication and frequent positional changes may disrupt job satisfaction. Overwork was ranked fourth with a mean score of 5.766, highlighting workload as a key concern among employees.

Inequality or favoritism (mean = 5.702; rank = 5) and lack of support from superiors (mean = 5.664; rank = 6) also emerged as important contributors to turnover, suggesting that perceived unfair treatment and poor leadership relationships adversely affect retention. Conflicts with other employees (mean = 5.638; rank = 7) and lack of importance for professional growth and development (mean = 5.612; rank = 8) further support the influence of interpersonal and career-related issues on employee dissatisfaction.

Lack of Timely increments and promotions and less compensation package and benefits were ranked ninth and tenth respectively, with the lowest mean scores of 5.587 and 5.574. Although these extrinsic factors are commonly associated with retention, in this case, they appear to be perceived as slightly less critical compared to other intrinsic and relational concerns.

The chi-square test results indicate that all asymptotic significance values (p-values) are greater than 0.05, confirming that there are no statistically significant differences in how respondents rated these factors. Despite varying mean scores and rankings, the differences among the factors are not significant at the 5% level, suggesting a relatively uniform impact of these causes on employee turnover.

The analysis reveals that while personal and organizational factors such as communication, overwork, and fairness contribute meaningfully to employee turnover in the dairy sector, none of these are statistically more influential than others. This underlines the multifaceted nature of retention challenges and the need for holistic HR strategies to address both individual and organizational dimensions.

Employee Retention strategies in Food and Beverage Industry:

1. Employee Reward Programs (Including Gifts)

Reward systems—both financial and non-financial—bolster employee motivation, satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Beqiri and Ariri (2022), Eneh et al. (2022), and Martono et al. (2018) demonstrate that reward systems elevate productivity and reinforce desired behaviors. Moreover, Mabaso et al. (2021) and Mulyaningsih et al. (2022) find that recognizing employee performance enhances morale and raises self-esteem. These findings reinforce the strategic value of recognition in retaining employees.

2. Flexible Working Hours

Flexible arrangements—such as flexitime, compressed schedules, and remote options—

enhance autonomy, alleviate stress, and improve retention by boosting job satisfaction (OECD, 2023; Thompson et al., 2015). In quick-service restaurants in the UK, flexible scheduling ranked as the top valued employment characteristic among hourly employees (DiPietro et al., 2007).

3. Timely Promotions & Performance-Based Bonuses

Effective compensation policy—especially when structured to include performance-linked incentives—dramatically influences employee retention in food-sector organizations. Fitri (2024) finds that fair, competitive packages and timely recognition through bonuses and career advancement reduce turnover.

4. Career Development Programs

Providing clear progression pathways, mentorship, and training opportunities for F&B workers helps transform jobs from temporary positions to long-term careers. Kinsa Group (2024) emphasizes structured development and internal promotions as core retention tools. Bristol Associates (2024) likewise argues that visible career ladders and mentorship reinforce employee loyalty.

5. Employee Engagement

Team-based recognition initiatives yield measurable improvements in engagement and performance. In fast-food settings, a field study (Ashraf et al., 2022) observed that team-oriented acknowledgment correlated with increased productivity and reduced absenteeism.

6. Employee Referral Programs

While direct literature in the F&B space is limited, referral-based hiring is widely validated in HR research as improving retention by attracting culturally fitting and committed candidates; these employees tend to stay longer and perform more effectively.

7. Employee Recreation

Offering recreational or well-being initiatives—even light wellness programs—supports morale and indirectly helps retain employees by reducing burnout and fostering workplace satisfaction (Kinsa Group, 2024; Bristol Associates, 2024).

8. Effective & Accessible Management

Supportive leadership models—such as servant leadership—cultivate ethical work environments and curb burnout. Wiyono et al. (2024) show that servant leadership enhances workplace culture and reduces turnover by nurturing employee well-being.

9. Evidence from Real-World F&B Models

A radical operational model adopted by Kin, a Boise restaurant, underscores that collective decision-making, equitable pay, and well-being-first culture can yield exceptional retention and acclaim—even leading to a James Beard Award (Business Insider, 2025).

Table 3: Satisfaction level of Employee Retention Strategies based on Gender

Employees Retention Strategies	Mean			Standard Deviation		
	Male (351)	Female (196)	Total (547)	Male (351)	Female (196)	Total (547)
Employee Reward program	3.84046	4.10714	3.97380	0.92306	0.77179	0.84743
Flexible working hours	3.90028	4.21429	4.05729	1.09844	0.81754	0.95799
Timely promotions and bonus	3.96011	4.07143	4.01577	1.07476	0.70349	0.88912
Career development program	3.94017	4.25000	4.09509	1.06451	0.68791	0.87621
Performance based bonus	3.98006	4.07143	4.02574	1.02790	0.75255	0.89022
Employee Engagement	3.94017	4.17857	4.05937	1.02635	0.70981	0.86808
Employee referral plans and programs	3.98006	4.17857	4.07931	1.00831	0.75846	0.88338
Gifts at some occasions	3.70085	3.92857	3.81471	1.15172	0.79860	0.97516
Employee Recreation	3.92023	4.14286	4.03154	1.01522	0.74231	0.87876
Making the management effective and easily accessible	4.01994	4.14286	4.08140	1.08455	0.83299	0.95877

Results and Discussion:

The table compares male (n = 351) and female (n = 196) employees’ perceptions of various retention strategies, presenting mean scores and standard deviations for each group, along with the overall values (N = 547). Across most strategies, female respondents reported slightly higher mean scores than males, indicating a comparatively stronger agreement regarding their effectiveness. For example, career development programs received a mean score of 4.25 among females and 3.94 among males, while flexible working hours scored 4.21 for females and 3.90 for males.

The lowest ratings were observed for gifts at some occasions (Mean = 3.81 overall), with males rating it at 3.70 and females at 3.93, suggesting that both groups perceive it as a less impactful retention measure compared to others. On the other hand, strategies such as making the management effective and easily accessible (Mean = 4.08), employee referral plans and programs (Mean = 4.08), and career development programs (Mean = 4.10) were rated higher overall, reflecting their importance in fostering employee commitment.

Standard deviation values indicate moderate variability in responses, with males generally showing slightly higher dispersion than females. This suggests a broader range of opinions among

male respondents, while female responses tended to be more consistent. Overall, the results imply that professional growth opportunities, managerial accessibility, and structured incentive systems are valued by employees of both genders, although the intensity of agreement is somewhat higher among females.

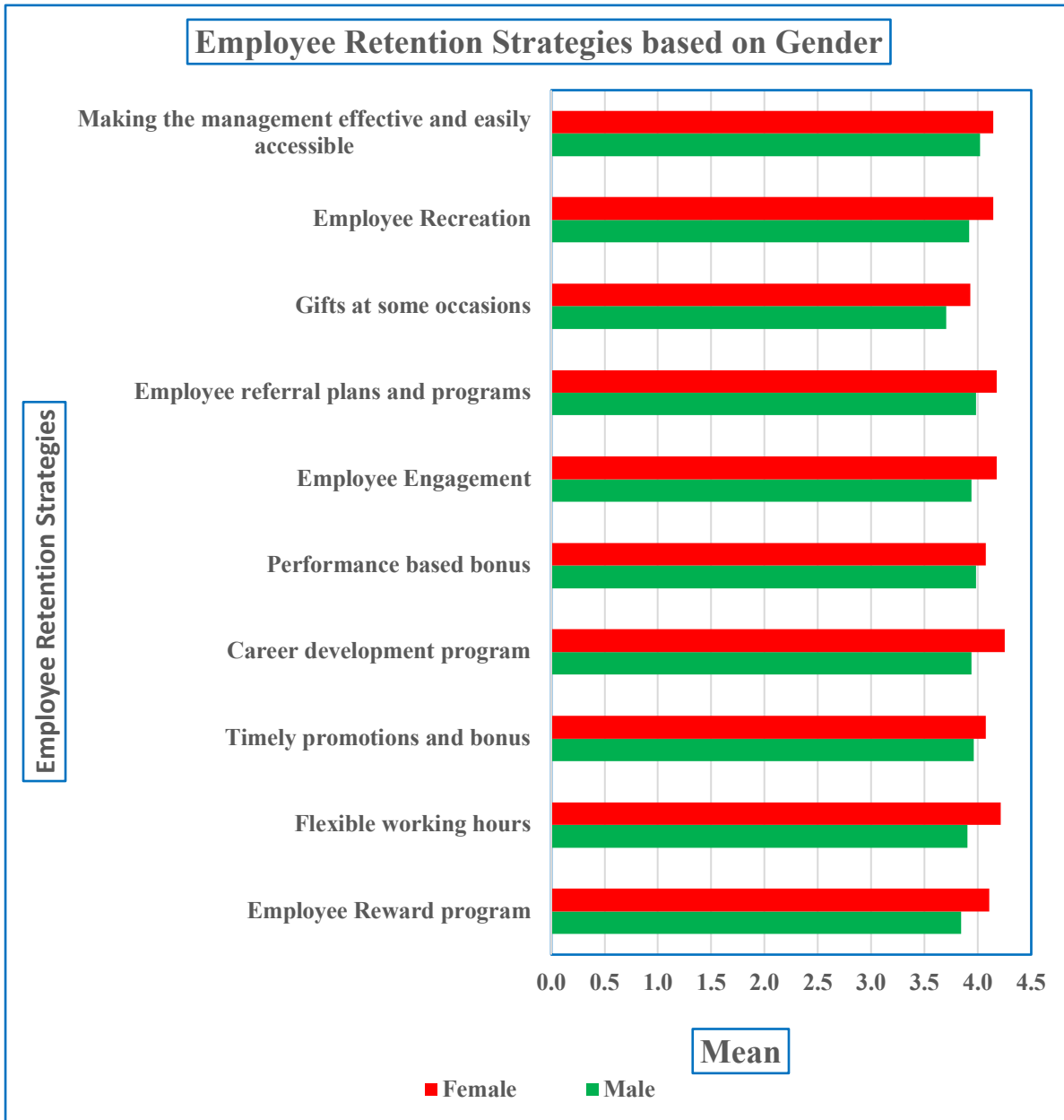


figure1: Satisfaction level of Employee Retention Strategies based on Gender

ANOVA Test

Table 4: Satisfaction level of Employee Retention Strategies based on Gender

Employees Retention Strategies	N=547		F-Value	Significant t-Value
	Mean	S.D		
Employee Reward program	3.97380	0.84743	0.20822	0.99319
Flexible working hours	4.05729	0.95799	0.07604	0.99988
Timely promotions and bonus	4.01577	0.88912	0.00447	1.00000
Career development program	4.09509	0.87621	0.40681	0.93161
Performance based bonus	4.02574	0.89022	0.00042	1.00000
Employee Engagement	4.05937	0.86808	0.10436	0.99956
Employee referral plans and programs	4.07931	0.88338	0.24349	0.98787
Gifts at some occasions	3.81471	0.97516	2.78345	0.00339
Employee Recreation	4.03154	0.87876	0.00522	1.00000
Making the management effective and easily accessible	4.08140	0.95877	0.22242	0.99129

Results ad Discussion:

The data evaluates various employee retention strategies based on respondents’ perceptions (N = 547), using mean scores, standard deviations, F-values, significance levels, and t-values. Among the listed strategies, career development programs (Mean = 4.0951) and making the management effective and easily accessible (Mean = 4.0814) achieved the highest ratings, reflecting employees’ strong agreement on their importance in retaining talent. Other strategies such as employee referral plans and programs (Mean = 4.0793), employee engagement (Mean = 4.0594), and flexible working hours (Mean = 4.0573) were also rated highly, indicating their perceived effectiveness in enhancing employee commitment.

The lowest rating was observed for gifts at some occasions (Mean = 3.8147), suggesting that occasional material incentives may have a relatively weaker influence on retention compared to career growth, managerial accessibility, and engagement-focused initiatives. The significance values indicate that only the “gifts at some occasions” variable showed a statistically significant difference (p = 0.00339), whereas all other strategies had p-values above 0.05, implying consistent perceptions across groups for those factors. Low standard deviations across the strategies demonstrate minimal variation

in responses, signifying general agreement among employees regarding the importance of these retention practices.

Conclusion:

The study concludes that employee retention in the dairy sector of the food and beverage industry is primarily influenced by superior–subordinate relationships, job characteristics, training, and wellness benefits. While compensation and flexible schedules hold some value, employees place greater emphasis on professional growth, supportive leadership, and organizational communication. Turnover is driven largely by personal reasons, ineffective communication, overwork, and limited growth opportunities. Overall, the findings highlight the need for integrated HR strategies that strengthen workplace relationships, ensure fairness, and provide career development to build a stable and committed workforce.

Limitations and Future Scope

which may constrain generalizability. Future research should use longitudinal and mixed-method designs, and include This study was limited to dairy companies and used cross-sectional self-reported data, other F&B sub-sectors for comparative insights.

Practical Implications

The findings offer actionable guidance for HR practitioners: prioritize supportive leadership training, structured career development programs, and improved internal communication systems. Building a positive organizational culture can enhance engagement, reduce attrition, and boost long-term organizational performance.

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