Workplace Happiness as a Driver of Employee Retention: Evidence from the Organised Retail Sector in West Bengal, India

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Abstract
Workplace happiness is very important for employee retention as an important predictor of long-term work satisfaction and commitment in an organization. In this age of competitive job market, where it is challenging to attract skilled workforce and time-consuming, companies should retain their existing employees. By knowing the reasons of employee turnover and adopting effective strategies for employee retention, organizations can come up with a win-win situation to foster productivity and loyalty. Retaining talented and important workforce is a major challenge that organizations face in a highly competitive workforce of India. There is nothing more important than employee retention. There has been a rise in its significance in modern landscape. The costs related to employee turnover like hiring and loss of productivity, along with tough competition for skilled workforce, make employee retention very important. This study investigates the role of employee happiness in their retention and factors contributing to employee happiness and retention. This study highlights the relation between employee happiness and retention, given that happy employees lead to employee retention in a company. This study discusses the importance of giving priority to employees' happiness and well-being to address the problem of holding valuable talent. Increasing employee happiness is a sustainable retention strategy and also a strategy to achieve competitive edge in the organization. This study investigates the factors in the study to enable organizations of India to improve workplace happiness, employee retention, and gain competitive strength.

Keywords: employee retention, employee happiness, competitive edge, competitive workforce, employee turnover

Introduction

Employee stress has been increased a lot across the world, and only 21% of employees are engaged at work, as per the recent report by Gallup. As per the 2022 research from Boston Consulting Group and Future Forum, even more stressing fact is that 57% of desk-based employees might look for new jobs in future, and 43% of workers who have to be present are more likely to quit. However, Boston Consulting Group has touchable and clear solutions for corporate leaders to attract and retain talent. As per the survey on 27,800 employees in 16 nations, BLISS Index by BCG has observed inclusion as an important factor contributing to workplace happiness, with a sensible effect on retention. When employees feel included, their well-being and happiness lead to the rise in retention rates (Bloomberg, 2023).

Every individual has different identities and priorities. For instance, a female employee might grow up in a poor family and takes care of an elderly parent. Gender is the visible trait in a workplace, but other traits are unknown which could affect her feeling of inclusion. A lot of factors affect employee retention and happiness, i.e., from family situations to career paths and relocation and organizations cannot change them.

Human resources are very important for long-term success in all organizations. Technological advancement and globalization has led to a lot of competitive organizations. Employees have become important assets for all the organizations to compete and survive. Companies focus on job satisfaction as dissatisfied employees leave their jobs or switch to other jobs. Employee retention has become the growing concern for all the corporate firms. The owners and administrative teams notice job retention and satisfaction of employees as serious concerns when it comes to gain sustainable competitive edge. Companies should attract best talents and retain skilled workforce for the long term (Kossivi et al, 2016).

Employees leave their jobs or stay in the organizations for a lot of reasons, such as,

professional and personal issues. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to be devoted for the growth of organization. If employees are satisfied, they will stick to the organization and work for it. Organization satisfaction refers to the combination of negative and positive feelings on their work. Job satisfaction is a degree of comparison of realistic expectations to rewards. Job satisfaction refers to the general attitude of individual for their specific occupation (Robbins & Judge, 2018). Specific job satisfaction has a great impact on work commitment, absenteeism, turnover, accidents, tardiness, and grievances (Htun & Bhaumik, 2022). Dissatisfied employees lead to absenteeism (McAllister & Bigley, 2002). Job satisfaction is an important element of employee retention, that can achieve only by making employees psychologically and physically comfortable. Job satisfaction plays a vital role in success of an organization. There are different factors as follows contributing to employee happiness and retention.

a)Compensation: It includes the bonuses provided to employees to provide financial rewards. The salary turns out to be the important factor for employees' satisfaction and motivation (Anis et al, 2011). The top-paid employees are happy to perform their roles in comparison to low-paid ones.

b)Job satisfaction: Long working hours and complex job roles resulting in job dissatisfaction and high employee turnover. Job autonomy is an important factor contributing to job retention and happiness.

c)Supervision: The relation with the supervisor influences the perception of employees of an organization. Supervision should be consistent and fair. Supervision is a major factor towards absenteeism or presenteeism of employees.

d)Promotion: Lack of training and promotion opportunities forces excellent employees to leave the job (Armstrong, 2001).

e)Friendly environment: Friendly work environment contributes to employee satisfaction and retention (Spence Laschinger et al, 2009). Healthy workplace is the one that has flexible work environment where working is pleasant and has ample resources.

Employee retention includes encouraging and retaining employees to stay in the organization for the long term. As talent pool is highly depleted, employee retention has been more challenging. High employee turnover in the organization leads to higher cost of hiring and declining productivity A company needs to keep the productive, loyal, and qualified workforce to gain competitive edge (Khan & Aleem, 2014). Employee retention is usually considered as a factor resulting in financial health of the company (Raikes & Vernier, 2004). Increased employee turnover leads to added burden on existing employees, reduced morale, and loss of human capital. Hence, this study is aimed to analyze the impact of employee happiness on employee retention in organized retail sector in West Bengal, India.

Literature Review

Retaining talented and skilled employees is a significant challenge that organizations face in a tough corporate environment in India. Employee retention has been significant and it has grown significantly in modern landscape. The costs related to employee turnover like lost productivity and recruitment expenses, combined with tough competition for skilled workforce, make retention of employees a priority. Raj (2023) explored the importance of workplace happiness in retention of employees and defines factors contributing to come up with happy environment. The study has highlighted the relation between employee retention and happiness, emphasizing that happy employees may remain in the company. The study focuses on the importance of superior-subordinate relations, work-life integration, coworker relationships, mindfulness, appreciation, and interviews as vital elements to build workplace happiness. These factors result in engaging and positive work environment to promote long-term employee retention and employee satisfaction. With a comprehensive review of literature, this study underscores the value of happiness and employee well-being to address the problems of retaining skilled talent. Increasing happiness at workplace is more than a sustainable strategy for retention of employees. By investing in the factors, organizations in India can improve workplace happiness, employee retention, and achieve a competitive strength.

Sarwar et al (2023) discussed the factors affecting workplace happiness and its relation with employee retention, work performance, and job satisfaction. Data was collected by completing survey on 500 employees. This study has employed purposeful sampling technique to collect sample from 446 employees. Various data analysis techniques have been followed like "validity and reliability, multiple linear regression, and hypothesis testing like f-test, t-test, and coefficient of determination". Findings of the study suggest that workplace happiness is a very important factor for job satisfaction which affects most on job performance of employees. The study discusses the existing state of satisfaction among management professionals as well as relation between production and satisfaction. When people

are satisfied at work, they feel more engaged, motivated, and productive. It is expected that this study would raise elements of employee perceptions of support and job satisfaction to make people happier.

The term "Great Resignation" has been a shocker to a lot of companies in different industries worldwide. COVID-19 has drastically changed the views of employees on the careers. During the pandemic, companies used flexible arrangements most of the time like "remote work (RW)", "work from home (WFH)", and "hybrid work model (HWM)" to run corporate activities to ensure safety of workforce. The options of hybrid and WFH are transforming the dynamics of work. It has been a key reason for employees, especially females, to keep their jobs as they can also keep providing care to their family and work remotely. They were reportedly leaving their jobs when companies insisted them to be present at the office. Selvi & Madhavkumar (2023) determined the effect of "hybrid" model on employee retention and happiness and to figure out that happiness mediates the relation between employee retention and hybrid work model. They conducted empirical study among employees in IT companies. They collected data from 200 samples and analyzed data using AMOS and SPSS. Hybrid model was known to provide flexibility and space to employees to manage personal and professional life and improve their happiness. Happiness at work was known to affect retention positively and mediates relation between employee retention and hybrid model. In case of lack of skilled workforce, hybrid model can be highly effective to retain and attract skilled workforce, as it affects intention to stay or leave the job. The findings will be helpful to companies to create a modern workplace.

Employee retention and engagement is a promising field in psychology and management. Ashraf & Siddiqui (2020) examined the effects of "employee engagement (EE)" on "employee retention (ER)". They proposed a theoretical "framework modifying" model to define the impact of employee engagement on employee retention. The original model associated engagement with "general wellbeing (GWB)" and "control at work (CAW)" with "psychological capital (PsyCap)". This model is extended by associating GWB and CAW to employee retention. "Job satisfaction (JS)" is further added as a mediator between ER and EE. A survey has been conducted to set empirical validity from 200 employees in various organizations in Pakistan with a "closed-ended Likert scale" questionnaire. They analyzed data with "structural equation modeling (SEM)" and "confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)". It is observed that there is a significant positive relation between "EE and ER. PsyCap, CAW, and JS play a significant mediator role for EE and ER". However, there is no mediating relation between ER and EE by GWB. This study mounts psychological capital and retain employees with development and training. They can perform better and be satisfied when employees will be motivated and happy.

Because of rising competition in businesses, customer happiness has gained a lot of interest in this day and age. Considering customer happiness, workshops are looking forward to provide best services to consumers as they feel satisfied and come back after free services. It is observed that there is a direct relation between customer happiness and company performance. There is a lack of empirical evidence on improving customer retention and sustaining customer happiness after free services. Kumar (2021) identified drivers of customer happiness at authorized workshops and given priorities to them, enabling serving providers to improve services to improve customer retention. Researchers have used "2-phased research methodology" to achieve this objective. First of all, they conducted a comprehensive literature review to list factors contributing to customer happiness and empirically finalizing the drivers. The researchers have used "Fuzzy Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP)" in the second phase to give priority to drivers. "Technology" has been the most sustainable driver for customer happiness before "social" driver. This study would be helpful to service providers to plan resources well and improve customer happiness to improve retention.

Alserhan et al (2021) investigated the mediating role that employee happiness plays in the impact of quality of work-life and their intention to leave the job. The researchers have collected data with a questionnaire developed related to prior studies. It was distributed to a sample having 122 employees from 4 fast-food restaurants in Jordan. They conducted data analysis with "structural equation modeling (SEM)" through "SMART-PLS". It is observed that there is a significant direct impact of quality of life on both employee intention to leave and employee happiness. The first impact was positive and second was negative. There was a significant impact of employee happiness on employee intention to leave. On the other side, employee happiness had a mediating and significant role in impact of quality of life on employee intention to leave. Work-life quality is not sufficient to reduce employee turnover. Hence, companies should focus more on employee happiness to ensure positive impact of life quality and reduce intent to quit.

Employee retention is important for development, long-term stability, and profitability of an organization. It is possible to achieve employee retention by implementing four techniques. First, sound communication. Second, taking measures to engage different team. Third, hiring staff with

needed skills. Finally, providing development and training to staff. Krishna & Garg (2022) discussed these elements as they are associated with employee retention techniques. The company may have vast staff turnover rates if employee retention approaches are not applied well. Employees staying for longer time are better for overall growth of the organization. They presented a lot of suggestions to help managers to improve employee retention.

Gelencsér et al. (2023) explored holistic aspect of employee retention. The labor shortages across the world in developed countries have made companies realize that employee retention and wellbeing are important factors in this age of limited resources. This study has created a model to identify important factors of workforce retention and employee well-being. They applied a "quantitative research methodology" with a questionnaire having 58 valid statements and completed by 406 participants online. Researchers have adopted "PLS-SEM" approach for data analysis and outer and inner modeling. They tested the measurement model for internal reliability of consistency and discriminant and convergent validity. The value of CR and Cronbach's Alpha was above 0.7 for all constructs, showing high internal consistency. The model had 36 significant relations among latent variables. As per the findings, the impact of work commitment was determined on intention of employees to quit. If work commitment changes in an organization, there is a change in employee turnover. Hence, important variables have been identified to affect workforce retention like promotion, benefits, nature of work, communication, normative commitment, and coworkers. Changing the same would affect work commitment. If these factors are perceived by employees adversely, their commitment would decline significantly.

Employee retention is a significant concern for all sizes of businesses. There are different factors resulting in employee retention and compensation is very important. Sorn et al (2023) investigated the research on benefits of compensation when it comes to hold employee retention. This study explores the benefits of compensation when it comes to employee retention. Then, this study discusses the factors of employee retention as well as effect of "compensation on employee retention." The study discusses implications of research for companies. It is found that compensation is a vital factor for retention of employees. Higher-paying employees are more likely to stay in the organization. It is evident that companies should focus on factors ahead of compensation like work-life balance, job satisfaction, career opportunities, recognition, employee engagement, and communication, which plays a vital role in employee retention. In addition, leadership, company culture, and other benefits may also impact employee retention. Companies can boost employee retention by providing attractive packages. Compensation is just one factor affecting retention of employees. Companies looking forward to improve retention must adopt complete approach including attractive compensation and other factors vital for employees.

HRM has been a vital element for the overall success of an organization. Top-performing employees are most valuable assets for any organization and they affect overall performance of an organization. Enthusiastic and potential employees are vital assets in a firm to achieve goals and improve profits. This study is aimed to find out the factors like compensation, job satisfaction, supervision, promotion, and friendly environment improving employee happiness. The first objective is to study the factors contributing to employee happiness and retention. The second is to investigate the impact of employee retention on organizational performance and finally to find out the association between employee happiness and employee retention. The corresponding hypotheses are as follows -

H1 – There is a significant impact of employee retention on organizational performance

H2 – There is a significant association between employee happiness (EH) and employee retention (ER)

H3 – There is a significant association between employee retention (ER) and organizational performance (OP)

Research Methodology

To fulfil the objectives of this study, quantitative research method has been adopted. Target population in this study includes mid-level employees working in organized retail sector in West Bengal. These employees are significant as they work as a mediator between upper level management and low-level employees. Total number of participants who have at least 5 years of experience in this study is 180. The sample is taken with a "simple random sampling method".

When it comes to data collection, self-structured questionnaire is prepared with (1) demographic details of participants and (2) questions related to employees' retention and happiness. Questions related to employee happiness and retention are based on 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The questionnaire is based on previous studies. Employee happiness and retention are dependent variables and factors associated with them are independent variables.

When it comes to data analysis, reliability of questionnaire is initially tested using Cronbach's

Alpha test. A statistical program named "Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 22.0) was used to perform data analysis, interpretation and hypothesis testing. SPSS software is used to perform Pearson's Correlation and one sample T-test.

Results and Discussion

Employees are the valuable assets for every organization. Because of changing nature of work and latest technology, the retention and attraction of qualified and skilled employees has been a greatest challenge for HRM. A sound recruitment practice leads to employee retention (Hascal et al, 1995). Employee retention consists of appealing way to encourage employees to stay in the organization for longer time (Griffeth & Hom, 2001). Every organization spends money and time to groom every employee. After providing training when employee quits, an organization is already at a loss.

An organization cannot sustain if top performing employees resign. Retaining skilled employees is vital for long-term growth along with achievement of the company (Heathfield, 1995). When getting the best resources, organizations keep them content by adopting retention strategies. Employees stay loyal to companies where they feel valued, sense of pride, and can work with their full potential (Cole, 2000). It is vital for employer to retain staff who are the true assets to them. An employee who stays in an organization for longer period knows the rules, policies, and guidelines of the organization and adjusts well. Employees have to stay in the organizations where they feel that their contributions, capabilities and efforts are appreciated (Davies, 2001). Hence, it is vital to understand the role of HR professional to improve employee retention.

HR Practices

The HR team plays a vital role in retention of employees. There are different HRM practices employed by the company to improve retention (Khan et al, 2014).

Recruitment and Selection

Employers usually bear huge costs in terms of hiring, attracting, developing, training, and holding employees back to their company. Hiring is itself a challenging process. For hiring and engaging the right candidate, it is important to keep them engaged to keep them from leaving the organization. When recruitment cost is high, companies are more discriminating and employee turnover will rise up (Chan & Kuok, 2011). Employee loses interest whenever they act out of pressure. HR managers should hire the right candidates who fit into the role. Recruitment and selection is mainly aimed to hire the right quality and number of employees needed at minimal cost to meet HR needs of the company (Armstrong, 2003).

Rewards and Compensation

The HR professionals should start different incentives for top performs to encourage them in context of compensations and rewards to meet staff requirements (Aguenza & Mat Som, 2012). Rewards and compensation are provided to motivate employees to ensure positive behavior and better performance. It is believed that lucrative package and rewards retain potential candidates (Neog & Barua, 2015). The compensation and rewards strategy of the company should attract talented employees, retain potential and important employees, and also sustain equity among employees (Terera & Ngirande, 2014). It is worth noting that compensation and rewards system is established well to upscale their staff. It fulfils material and financial needs of employees and provide a source of increasing power and social status (Narang, 2013).

Training and Development

The need for training and development takes place between desired and actual performance of employees. A proven retention strategy should consist of training. There is a relation between employee retention and training and development programs as they meet employee needs (Montgomery, 2006). A company can develop strong bond with the employees by investing in training and development, which are organized source of skills and knowledge needed by employees to perform task to improve performances (Ng et al, 2012). When an employee suddenly leaves a company, it is a complete waste of money and time. In some jobs which need constant upgrade of skills like IT, employees might quit if they don't find any opportunity to upgrade their skills (Sommer, 2000). Hence, employees need to keep them updated. Managers investing in developing employees to adapt their knowledge and skills related to the business would get increased retention and positivity (Gul et al, 2012).

Work environment

Employees need better working condition along with rewards. Healthy work environment need solid communication and collaborative culture, competent leadership, professional growth, practice environment, and proper staff (Ritter, 2011). Employee spends a lot of time in workplace. Hence, a solid working environment needs friendly relation with colleagues, appreciation for other jobs, and no tolerance for bullying and harassment at work (Tummers et al, 2013). Safe and sound environment encourages employees to stay in the company. Employees expect to use their potential to meet their

basic needs in a working environment (Narang, 2013). There is a need to assess every impact on work environment like availability of equipment, management, and work facilities accordingly to improve performance (Christmas, 2008). A sound working environment is needed to retain employees. People wish to work for the company which appreciates performance, improves opportunities to grow, cooperative and friendly environment, and feeling that organization is another home for workers (Ontario, 2004).

Hence, HR professionals look for the best to encourage employees with a positive and friendly environment to retain employees. Work culture is growing every day with transformation and disruption. From the type of job to where and how is changed. Employee retention is very important in the domain of disruption.

Employee Retention in Disruption

In this age of disruption, hiring and training a new staff is not sufficient to meet immediate needs of the organization. They should also be supported, nurtured, and retained. Hiring right employees is challenging and keeping them can also be more challenging. Companies invest a lot of time hiring new candidates but only a few focus on turnover cost. Human resource is very important for the management and should be used resourcefully. The stability, achievement and growth of the company relies on its potential in utilizing, acquiring, and developing resources for the organization.

In this day and age, a lot of organizations are evolving with latest technology which has totally transformed the nature of work. HRM practices are redefined with this innovation and also getting a new sense. There is no lack of opportunities in modern environment and HR also looks for a change. For any organization, the biggest challenge is looking forward to hold their employees. Digital workplace enables staff to work remotely and manage their professional and personal needs. When some employees enjoy the flexibility of working, some feel disengaged on the other hand. The fear of rising effect of technology is also troubling. Technology has brought office to home and it may also affect personal life. The complete picture of personal life and work life has been blurred. An employer always want their employees to be up-to-date and available. An employee feels exhausted in this hustle of personal and professional life, which may result in high turnover.

Technology has improved the importance of human resources. A company needs highly tech-savvy and skilled employees to operate. Hence, HR managers spend a lot of effort, time, and money to avoid employee turnover and retain skilled team. In this modern work culture, more focus is given to happiness of employees. A lot of employees change their jobs a lot of time as per the changing world of work (Sun & Wang, 2011; Clarke, 2007). A lot of organizations have problems in retaining talented workforce who have great potential to achieve their goals (Kumar & Dhamodaran, 2013; Chaudhry & Shah, 2011). People's aspirations are also rising. Hence, improving happiness is challenging to improve productivity (Chaudhry & Shah, 2011).

Workplace Happiness

It is among the major reasons employees stay in the organization. An organization should focus on retaining employees with proper knowledge and skills and acknowledge them. Here are some of the aspects of workplace happiness to improve employee retention (Figure 2) –

Job Flexibility

Flexible job enables employees to have higher levels of commitment, satisfaction, attention, loyalty, productivity, and mental health (Prenda & Stahl, 2001). Job flexibility relieves workloads, family responsibilities, work responsibilities, and scheduling changes to accommodate working hours better (Pleffer, 2007).

Job Security

Some of the basic needs for happiness in life are decent work environment, safety, allowances, fair salary, and security (Kjerulf, 2007). There is a positive correlation between job security and employee retention (Hassan et al, 2011). Job security is supposed to do better with a satisfied employee than the dissatisfied one. When workplace environment is healthier, employee feels secure (Ruvio & Rosenblatt,1996).

Work-life balance

It plays a vital role in employee retention (Pasewark & Viator, 2006). Work-life balance engages employees equally and satisfies them with their work and family roles (Greenhaus et al, 2003). Employee retention is increased when employees can fulfil their family responsibilities with the job (Loan-Clarke et al, 2010). Employee turnover is increased with work-life conflict and rest of the employees face higher stress levels (Deery & Jago, 2009).

Autonomy

Autonomy affects employee decision to stay in the workforce (Spence Laschinger et al, 2009). It increases job satisfaction and employee motivation. Employees with higher job autonomy may be more satisfied with their job than other employees (Thompson & Prottas, 2006). It is the most important predictor for job satisfaction of employees (Yunki,

1999).

Relationship with other employees

Relationship with coworkers has a significant effect on work attitudes and organizational productivity for their jobs (Song, 2005). Along with affecting employees' happiness, positive friendship also affects productivity (Bader et al, 2013). Maintaining harmony with other employees have a positive impact on job satisfaction at individual level (Ladebo et al, 2008).

Recognition

It refers to the situation where employees are rewarded by various status (Danish & Usman, 2010). It can be provided in different ways like making employees the part of decision-making, increasing responsibility, by providing successful planning, showing empathy to them, and providing opportunities.

Leadership and management

Encouraging, guiding, and participation are known to pursuit positive environment by the management (Varila & Viholainen, 2000). Positive leader behavior is known to cover the wiliness to show support, concern, and respect to employee welfare, listen to employees, and appreciate employees and their work. There is a positive impact of "quality, supportive supervision" and "leadership where employees are valued" on employee retention (Ellett et al, 2007).

Opportunities for career advancement

Perceived career success and advancement opportunities result in employee retention (Hiltrop, 1999). Opportunities for growth and promotion are the major reasons why employees decide to stay or leave in an organization and went further by determining important factors related to growth opportunities, i.e., internal promotion, advancement plans, and accurate career insights. Professional and personal growth are the major factors of retention and promotion to improve employee commitment (Prince, 2005).

All in all, it is worth mentioning that workplace happiness leads to commitment for the organization. Happy employees feel more engaged and connected in their workplace and work to reduce employee turnover.

Table 1. Demographic and Occupational Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	20–24 years	24	13.3
	25–44 years	58	32.2
	45–55 years	70	38.9
	Above 55 years	28	15.6
Gender	Female	33	18.3
	Male	147	81.7
Marital status	Married	129	71.7
	Unmarried	51	28.3
Work experience	0–5 years	69	38.3
	6–10 years	52	28.9
	11–15 years	32	17.8
	16–20 years	22	12.2
	21 years and above	5	2.8
Designation	Cashier	25	13.9
	Customer Service Representative	12	6.7
	HR Manager	96	53.3

	Sales Associate	37	20.6
	Store Manager	10	5.6
Organisation size	Less than 100 employees	108	60
	101–2,000 employees	58	32.2
	2,000+ employees	14	7.8
Total		180	100

Note. Percentages are based on the total sample of 180 respondents. Source: Authors' calculations based on the survey data.
Source: Authors' compilation based on survey responses

Table 1 summarises the demographic and occupational profile of the 180 respondents who participated in the study. The sample was largely male, accounting for 81.7% of the respondents, while females represented 18.3%. In terms of age, respondents aged 45–55 years formed the largest group (38.9%), followed by those in the 25–44 years category (32.2%). A substantial majority of the respondents were married (71.7%). Regarding work experience, 38.3% reported having up to five years of experience, whereas 28.9% had between six and ten years of experience. The occupational profile shows that HR managers constituted the largest respondent group (53.3%), followed by sales associates (20.6%), cashiers (13.9%), customer service representatives (6.7%), and store managers (5.6%). In terms of organisational size, 60.0% of the respondents worked in organisations with fewer than 100 employees, while 32.2% were employed in organisations with 101–2,000 employees and 7.8% in organisations with more than 2,000 employees.
Taken together, the respondent profile reflects a diverse mix of demographic and employment characteristics and provides useful context for understanding the sample examined in this study. Such characteristics are relevant to the study of employee retention, as retention may be influenced by several workplace and employment-related factors, including the work environment, career opportunities, work–life balance, managerial support, and opportunities for employee development (Kossivi et al., 2016; Gelencsér et al., 2023).

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents' Responses to Employee Happiness and Retention-Related Statements (N = 180)

Sl. No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Agree n (%)	Strongly Agree n (%)
1	You are happy with your work–life balance	149 (82.8)	4 (2.2)	4 (2.2)	12 (6.7)	11 (6.1)
2	Your life outside work has been affected by your work stress	47 (26.1)	5 (2.8)	5 (2.8)	74 (41.1)	49 (27.2)
3	You are happy with your manager	47 (26.1)	9 (5.0)	5 (2.8)	12 (6.7)	107 (59.4)
4	Your superior has unrealistic expectations from the staff	105 (58.3)	37 (20.6)	8 (4.4)	11 (6.1)	19 (10.6)
5	You have got ample growth and	151 (83.9)	9 (5.0)	5 (2.8)	6 (3.3)	9 (5.0)

	development opportunities in your organisation					
6	Your feedback is always appreciated and accepted	39 (21.7)	14 (7.8)	3 (1.7)	12 (6.7)	112 (62.2)
7	You get recognised for contributing to the success of the organisation	88 (48.9)	15 (8.3)	4 (2.2)	21 (11.7)	52 (28.9)
8	You are willing to work here for several years from now	21 (11.7)	9 (5.0)	3 (1.7)	26 (14.4)	121 (67.2)
9	You are getting the resources you need to excel in your career	23 (12.8)	8 (4.4)	8 (4.4)	93 (51.7)	48 (26.7)
10	Happy employees resulted in improved organisational performance	4 (2.2)	5 (2.8)	5 (2.8)	73 (40.6)	93 (51.7)
11	Your organisation has successfully retained skilled and knowledgeable employees	47 (26.1)	—	8 (4.4)	84 (46.7)	41 (22.8)
12	You feel more committed towards your organisation's success in the long term	47 (26.1)	—	—	12 (6.7)	121 (67.2)
13	You get a space to raise your voice through one-on-one interactions, meetings and feedback sessions	94 (52.2)	—	—	21 (11.7)	65 (36.1)

Note: Figures represent frequency followed by percentage. "—" indicates that the corresponding response category was not reported in the original frequency table. Percentages may not total exactly 100 due to rounding.
Source: Authors' compilation based on survey responses

The responses indicate that employees experienced both positive and challenging aspects of their

workplace. Work–life balance was one of the most prominent areas of concern, with 149 respondents (82.8%) strongly disagreeing that they were happy with their work–life balance. This concern is further reflected in the finding that 123 respondents (68.3%) agreed or strongly agreed that their lives outside work had been affected by work-related stress. In comparison, employees expressed more favourable views about their relationships with managers. A total of 119 respondents (66.1%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were happy with their manager, while most respondents did not perceive their superiors as having unrealistic expectations of staff.

Career development, however, emerged as another area requiring attention. As many as 160 respondents (88.9%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had adequate opportunities for growth and development within their organisation. Employee feedback received a comparatively positive response, with 124 respondents (68.9%) agreeing or strongly agreeing that their feedback was appreciated and accepted. Nevertheless, perceptions of recognition for individual contributions were less consistent, suggesting that employees may not always feel sufficiently acknowledged for their role in organisational success.

The responses to the retention-related statements were comparatively encouraging. A total of 147 respondents (81.6%) indicated that they were willing to work with their organisation for several more years, while 132 respondents (73.4%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were receiving the resources needed to progress in their careers. The strongest positive response was observed for the statement linking employee happiness with organisational performance: 166 respondents (92.3%) agreed or strongly agreed that happy employees contribute to improved organisational performance. In addition, 125 respondents (69.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that their organisation had successfully retained skilled and knowledgeable employees, and 133 respondents (73.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that they felt committed to their organisation's long-term success.

At the same time, the findings point to a concern regarding employee voice and participation. Although feedback was viewed positively by many respondents, 94 employees (52.2%) strongly disagreed that they had sufficient space to raise their views through one-to-one interactions, meetings, and feedback sessions. This contrast suggests that receiving or appreciating feedback does not necessarily mean that employees perceive themselves as having adequate opportunities to express their concerns and opinions.

Taken together, the findings present a mixed picture of workplace happiness and retention. Employees reported relatively positive experiences in relation to managerial relationships, feedback, willingness to remain with the organisation, access to career-related resources, and the perceived contribution of employee happiness to organisational performance. However, work–life balance, career development, recognition, and opportunities for employee voice remain important areas of concern. These findings broadly correspond with previous research, which has identified work–life balance, career and development opportunities, management and leadership, working conditions, and employee support as important considerations in understanding employee retention (Kossivi et al., 2016). More recent evidence also highlights workplace wellbeing, communication, promotion opportunities, the nature of work, and organisational commitment as relevant factors associated with employees' decisions to remain with an organisation (Gelencsér et al., 2023).

Hypothesis Testing

In order to find out the impact of employee retention (ER) on organizational performance, one sample t-test was conducted using SPSS software. It is observed that value of significance ($p<0.005$) for all the items in the questionnaire. Hence, H1 is approved, i.e., there is a significant impact of employee retention on organizational performance.

Table 3. One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
You are happy with your work-life balance	16.920	179	.000	1.511	1.33	1.69
Your life outside work has been affected by your work stress	29.364	179	.000	3.406	3.18	3.63
You are happy with your manager	28.116	179	.000	3.683	3.42	3.94

Your manager has unrealistic expectations from the staff	18.883	179	.000	1.900	1.70	2.10
You have got ample growth and development opportunities in your organization	17.957	179	.000	1.406	1.25	1.56
You are getting paid fairly	30.055	179	.000	3.450	3.22	3.68
Your feedback is always appreciated and accepted	30.063	179	.000	3.800	3.55	4.05
You get recognized for contributing to the success of an organization	19.767	179	.000	2.633	2.37	2.90
You are willing to work here for several years from now	40.856	179	.000	4.206	4.00	4.41
You are getting the resources you need to excel in your career	39.960	179	.000	3.750	3.56	3.94
Happy employees resulted in improved organizational performance	68.798	179	.000	4.367	4.24	4.49
Your organization has successfully retained skilled and knowledgeable employees	30.244	179	.000	3.400	3.18	3.62
You feel more committed towards your organization's success in the long term	29.990	179	.000	3.889	3.63	4.14
You get a space to raise your voice through one-on-one interactions, meetings and feedback sessions	19.684	179	.000	2.794	2.51	3.07

Source: Authors' compilation based on survey responses

To find out the association between employee happiness and employee retention, Pearson's correlation test was performed using SPSS software. It is observed that correlation is significant between both variables. Hence, H2 is approved, i.e., there is a significant association between employee happiness (EH) and employee retention (ER).

Table 4. Correlation between Employee Happiness (EH) and Employee Retention (ER)

		EH	ER
EH	Pearson Correlation	1	.480**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	180	180
ER	Pearson Correlation	.480**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	180	180
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Source: Authors' compilation based on survey responses			

Source: Authors' compilation based on survey responses

To find out the association between employee retention and organizational performance, again Pearson's correlation test was performed using SPSS software. It is observed that correlation is significant between both variables. Hence, H3 is also approved, i.e., there is a significant association between

employee retention (ER) and organizational performance (OP).

Table 5. Correlation between Employee Retention and Organizational Performance

		ER	OP
ER	Pearson Correlation	1	.631**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	180	180
OP	Pearson Correlation	.631**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	180	180
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Source: Authors' compilation based on survey responses			

Conclusions

When it comes to find out employee happiness and employee retention in retail sector in West Bengal, an online survey was conducted on selected retail enterprises. It is observed that 85% of participants are not happy with their work-life balance, 68% participants feel that their life outside work has been affected by their work stress, 66% employees are happy with their manager, 79% employees have denied that their managers have unrealistic expectations from them, 89% employees haven't got ample growth and development opportunities in their organization, 69% participants feel that their feedback is always appreciated and accepted, 57% employees don't get recognized for their contribution towards success of their organization, 81% employees are willing to work in their organization for the long term, 79% employees are getting resources they need to excel in their career in their organizations, majority 93% employees admit that happy employees resulted in improved organizational performance, 70% employees feel that their organization has successfully retained skilled and knowledgeable employees, 74% employees feel more committed towards organization's success in the long term, and 48% employees get a space to raise their voice through one-on-one interactions, meetings, and feedback sessions (while 52% don't feel so).

It is also observed that there is a there is a significant impact of employee retention on organizational performance ($p<0.005$), there is a significant association between employee happiness (EH) and employee retention (ER) , and there is a significant association between employee retention (ER) and organizational performance (OP).

Employee retention has become one of the critical challenges for workforce management. Leading organizations will be the ones adapting their organizational behavior to existing work environment where success and longevity rely on flexibility and creativity in the near future. Hence, it becomes important to retain talented workforce for the long-term growth and success of an organization. Holding talented workforce ensures customer satisfaction, sales, reporting authority, contented employees, effective planning, and combined organizational learning and knowledge (Dutta & Banerjee, 2014; Ruchi & Surinder, 2014; Shakeel & But, 2015)".

Employee retention is a systematic effort of the management to foster and nurture a workplace which motivates existing employees to stay with the organization to meet their diverse needs (Adegoke, 2013). Retention has been viewed as a procedure with which employees have to stay in the organization for longer time (Das & Baruah, 2013). Employee retention includes processes which include employees have to become the part of organization for longer period, until they get retired or complete the project. Skilled and talented employees are the important assets for the organization and they are very important for long-term success and growth of the business. Hence, it is worth retaining the skilled workforce, not just because of the cost born by employers, but also due to skills and knowledge of talented workforce needed to gain competitive edge in modern world.

Majority of times, employees move to competing organizations with trade secrets and knowledge they have gained from former employers, causing serious situation for the company (Samuel and Chipunza, 2009). Hence, management should understand the reasons behind frequent change of jobs by employees. In addition, there is a lack of research on the factors contributing to employee turnover. There is also a lack of consistency in results, which is partly

because of diversity of employed candidates. Hence, employee turnover is one of the major management problems. It disrupts teams, affects productivity, increases hiring costs, and causes lack of knowledge. It is vital for the management to understand the importance of job retention and satisfaction.

Employee satisfaction increases dedication towards the organization, retention rates, and also increased productivity. Happy employees are more likely to go beyond their call of duty to meet customers' desires and they are more encouraged to perform at their best of their potential. In addition, they remain in the job for longer period, avoid attractive job offers, don't look for other jobs actively, and recommend their workplace to others. In addition, managers can reduce unnecessary employee turnover as they can directly control the factors contributing to employee commitment and satisfaction like regular feedback, recognition, fair pay, etc.

Long-term sustainability and success of any company relies on employee retention because skilled and talented employees are vital assets to gain competitive edge in modern business environment. Hence, it is very important to retain skilled, talented, and satisfied employees who will lead the company to greater heights, while having lack of employees can affect the growth of organization badly. Employee turnover has become a challenge which costs a lot of money, efforts, and energy. In addition, retail organizations should make policies to improve their work environment and morale of employees to retain talented workforce, which leads to higher profits, customer retention, and customer satisfaction. It will also attract new employees to the company while retaining existing ones. HR should also understand major issues related to employee retention and fix them in their existing policies.

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