

**DETERMINANTS OF HUMAN RESOURCE RETENTION IN THE HORECA SECTOR:
THEORETICAL ANALYSIS AND CASE STUDY ON SAMSARA FOOD RESTAURANT**

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ABSTRACT

Human resource retention represents a major challenge in the HoReCa industry, which is characterized by an intense work rhythm, high employee mobility, and continuous pressure on service quality. This article provides an integrated analysis of the key theoretical concepts associated with human resource management and employee turnover, in correlation with contemporary motivation and retention strategies. The applied section focuses on a case study of the Samsara Foodhouse Restaurant, in which the causes of turnover, team dynamics, and the measures implemented by management to increase employee stability were investigated. The research, based on interviews with employees and managers, highlights the essential role of organizational climate, communication, reward systems, and opportunities for professional development.

The results show that retention can be strengthened through coherent and personalized policies that address employees' needs in a differentiated manner, depending on age, experience, and professional aspirations. The conclusions support the importance of adopting integrated strategies oriented toward collaboration, recognition, and a balance between professional and personal life.

KEYWORDS: *employee retention, human resource management, motivation strategies, organizational climate, turnover*

J.E.L. Classifications: J63, J53, M54

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee retention represents one of the major challenges faced by contemporary organizations, particularly in the HoReCa sector, where staff turnover is significant and the intense pace of work results in reduced human resource stability. In a highly competitive environment, where differentiation is achieved through service quality and customer experience, human capital becomes the main source of competitive advantage. The specialized literature highlights that investing in people is essential not only for immediate performance but also for the long-term sustainability of the organization (Armstrong, 2017; Ulrich, 2020). In organizational practice, employee turnover is generated by multiple factors: dissatisfaction with salaries, deficient management, lack of development opportunities, or an improper work climate. In the hospitality industry, these challenges are amplified by the seasonal nature of many positions, increased workload, and high customer expectations. This article analyzes the main theoretical dimensions of employee retention and subsequently builds on the results of a case study conducted at Samsara Foodhouse Restaurant, focusing on the causes of turnover and the strategies that can contribute to employee loyalty. In this way, the research aims to provide an applied perspective on how human resource management tools can support organizational stability and performance.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN RESOURCE RETENTION

2.1. Human Resources and Their Strategic Role

Human resources are viewed as the central element of any organization, being responsible for transforming material and informational resources into economic value. A strong organizational culture, focused on shared values and goals, contributes decisively to team cohesion, employee motivation, and the development of an attractive employer brand. Human resource management, defined as the set of policies and practices regarding the recruitment, development, motivation, and retention of employees, aims to optimize performance by maintaining a balance between organizational objectives and individual goals (Nicolescu & Verboncu, 2017). In the current context, marked by digitalization and high professional mobility, retention strategies are gaining increasing importance.

2.2. Employee Turnover: Causes and Effects

Turnover refers to employees leaving the organization and is influenced by internal factors (management style, workload, lack of recognition, limited advancement opportunities) and external factors (legislative changes, economic trends, labor market opportunities). In the HoReCa sector, turnover is mainly driven by:

- demanding physical working conditions;
- uncompetitive salaries;
- unpredictable schedules;
- tense work climate;
- lack of a professional development strategy.

The effects of turnover are multiple: declining service quality, increasing recruitment and training costs, operational instability, and damage to the company's image.

2.3. Employee Retention Strategies

The literature identifies a series of effective strategies for improving retention:

- fair and performance-based compensation systems;
- provision of non-financial benefits (insurance, wellness programs, flexibility);
- continuous training programs tailored to employee needs;
- real promotion opportunities and career plans;
- recognition of employee contributions, both financial and symbolic;
- improving the organizational climate and manager–employee relationships;
- involving employees in decision-making, which enhances their sense of belonging.

Overall, retention is facilitated by fair leadership oriented toward collaboration, respect, and transparent communication.

3. CASE STUDY: HUMAN RESOURCE RETENTION AT SAMSARA FOODHOUSE RESTAURANT

3.1. Methodology

The applied research aimed to identify the causes that determine employee turnover and to formulate solutions adapted to the specific characteristics of the organization. To collect data, interviews were conducted with employees and managers, focusing on perceptions regarding the work climate, development opportunities, the relationship with management, and salary satisfaction.

The numerical evolution of the staff between 2004–2025 was also monitored, alongside the impact of strategies implemented in recent years on team stability.

3.2. Evolution of Human Resources within the Organization

The restaurant has experienced a gradual increase in the number of employees, especially after 2020, driven by service expansion and a more diverse clientele. While the initial period was characterized by a small team and high turnover, the years 2020–2025 show significant stabilization resulting from investments in recruitment, training, and motivation. In the early years, high turnover had direct consequences on service quality, particularly among waiters and bartenders, where the lack of experience of new employees affected the restaurant's image. Later, through more structured recruitment and retention strategies, a stable core team was formed, capable of integrating and training new members.

3.3. Identified Factors of Turnover

The interviews revealed the following main factors:

- the relationship with management — a decisive element in employees' perception of the work climate;
- salary level and benefits, sometimes perceived as insufficient in relation to workload;
- lack of promotion opportunities in certain periods;
- high stress levels, characteristic of the HoReCa industry;

- insufficient initial training for new employees.

An interesting aspect highlighted by age-group analysis is the difference in preferences: employees under 35 value non-financial recognition and flexibility, while those over 35 prioritize salary stability and predictability.

3.4. Implemented Strategies and Their Effects

Management has implemented several measures to increase retention:

- expanding the benefits package (medical insurance, sports facilities, vacations);
- professionalizing the recruitment process;
- internal training and development programs;
- promoting open communication and fair treatment;
- improving working conditions and scheduling;
- linking rewards to performance.

These interventions have led to a noticeable decrease in the number of resignations and to an increase in employee satisfaction. Additionally, the team has become more cohesive, reflected in greater operational stability and positive customer feedback.

4. DISCUSSIONS

The results of the case study confirm the importance of the directions identified in the specialized literature. Retention is influenced both by extrinsic factors (salary, benefits) and intrinsic factors (recognition, autonomy, work-life balance). A particular aspect revealed by the restaurant analysis is the clear differentiation of motivations depending on age, which highlights the need for personalized human resource policies. Moreover, the relationship between employee and manager proves to be the main pivot of retention — a point supported by numerous recent studies on leadership in the HoReCa sector.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Human resource retention is a complex process that requires strategies adapted to the organizational context and the individual needs of employees. In the case of Samsara Foodhouse Restaurant, the analysis shows that an integrated approach—based on communication, recognition, and professional development—leads to reduced turnover and increased team cohesion.

Organizations in the HoReCa sector can improve retention by:

- building an organizational climate oriented toward fairness and collaboration;
- leveraging each employee's potential through training and continuous feedback;
- diversifying benefits packages and aligning them with performance;
- promoting a healthy balance between professional and personal life.

Creating a “win-win” partnership between employees and employers is the key to achieving real human resource stability and, consequently, sustainable performance.

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