

Analyzing HR Turnover Trends: A Strategic Study on Factors Determining Sustainable Employee Engagement

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Abstract

Employee engagement is a critical determinant of organizational performance and workforce stability. This study analyzes HR turnover trends and identifies key factors influencing sustainable employee engagement. Drawing on a survey of 55 respondents across entry-level and senior roles, the research examines organizational, job-related, employee-centric, and external factors affecting engagement. Key findings reveal that 54.5% of employees report job satisfaction, 70.9% feel valued at work, and work culture significantly influences engagement ($\text{Chi-square} = 13.26, p < 0.05$). The study concludes with strategic recommendations including enhanced recognition systems, mentorship programs, transparent leadership communication, and career development pathways to reduce turnover and foster long-term organizational commitment.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, HR Turnover, Sustainable Engagement, Workplace Culture, Leadership, Job Satisfaction, Retention

1. Introduction

Employee turnover is one of the most pressing challenges facing organizations today, carrying significant financial, operational, and cultural consequences. Research consistently demonstrates that engaged employees are substantially less likely to leave their jobs, with organizations reporting higher profitability and productivity when engagement levels are strong. Yet, many organizations continue to struggle with fragmented approaches to engagement, leading to escalating attrition rates.

This study is grounded in the understanding that sustainable employee engagement — defined as long-term commitment, motivation, and job satisfaction — is not a byproduct of chance but the result of deliberate organizational strategies. The research examines five core hypotheses relating leadership style (H1), workplace culture (H2), work-life balance (H3), recognition and rewards (H4), and economic conditions (H5) to sustainable engagement outcomes.

The study is particularly relevant in a post-pandemic context where hybrid work models, generational shifts in workforce expectations, and rapid technological transformation are reshaping what employees value most. By identifying actionable insights grounded in data from 55 survey participants, this research aims to equip HR professionals with evidence-based strategies to reduce turnover and build resilient, engaged workforces.

2. Literature Review

The academic study of employee engagement has evolved significantly over three decades. Kahn (1990) laid the foundational framework by identifying three psychological conditions for engagement: meaningfulness, psychological safety, and availability — arguing that engagement is as much an emotional experience as a functional one. Rousseau (1995) extended this by demonstrating how unmet psychological contracts — the unwritten expectations between employers and employees — lead to disengagement and turnover.

Bakker and Demerouti (2007) proposed the influential Job Demands-Resources (JDR) model, which explains that engagement is highest when job resources (autonomy, feedback, support) outweigh job demands (workload, stress). Their cross-industry research involving over 2,000 employees remains one of the most widely cited frameworks in HR practice. Complementing this, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) developed the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), measuring engagement across three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption.

On the leadership front, Bass and Riggio (1996) showed that transformational leadership — characterized by inspirational motivation and individualized consideration — fosters stronger emotional bonds and reduces turnover intention. Saks (2006) further confirmed that both organizational and supervisor support are major drivers of engagement, with consistent support from leadership at all levels being critical.

More recent scholarship by Garcia (2021) highlights career development as a primary retention lever, showing that employees with clear growth pathways are significantly more engaged. A notable research gap remains: most existing models examine single factors in isolation, lack cross-industry generalizability, and have yet to fully account for post-pandemic shifts in work arrangements and employee expectations.

3. Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods, descriptive-explanatory research design. Primary data was collected through structured Likert-scale questionnaires administered to 55 respondents across entry-level and senior designations. The sampling strategy used stratified random sampling to ensure balanced representation across job levels and employment types. Secondary data was drawn from organizational HR reports and existing academic literature.

The dependent variable — Sustainable Employee Engagement — was measured using constructs adapted from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS), and a Retention Intention Scale. Independent variables included organizational factors (workplace culture, career advancement), job-related factors (work-life balance, role clarity, workload), employee-centric factors (recognition, values alignment, skill development), and external factors (economic conditions, industry competition, technological change).

Data analysis employed two primary techniques: Percentage Analysis, to describe the distribution of responses across demographic and engagement variables; and Chi-Square Tests, to determine the statistical significance of relationships between categorical variables such as workplace culture and engagement, and recognition versus engagement outcomes.

3.1 Respondent Profile

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	20–30 Years	54	98.2%
Age	30–40 Years	1	1.8%
Gender	Male	43	78.2%
Gender	Female	12	21.8%
Designation	Entry Level	50	90.9%

Designation	Senior Level	5	9.1%
Experience	Less than 1 Year	45	81.8%
Experience	1–3 Years	9	16.4%
Employment Type	Full-Time	33	60.0%
Employment Type	Internship	22	40.0%

Table 1 — Respondent Demographic Profile

The sample is predominantly composed of young (98.2% aged 20–30), entry-level (90.9%) employees with less than one year of tenure (81.8%). This profile reflects a growing, early-career workforce — a segment highly sensitive to leadership quality, career visibility, and recognition — making engagement strategies for this group particularly impactful.

4. Analysis & Results

4.1 Engagement & Satisfaction Indicators

Survey Item	Positive Response	Neutral	Negative Response
Overall Job Satisfaction	65.4% (Satisfied/Very Satisfied)	21.8%	7.3% (Dissatisfied)
Contributions Valued at Work	70.9% (Yes)	21.8% (Maybe)	7.3% (No)
Work Culture Rating	67.3% (Good/Excellent)	30.9% (Average)	1.8% (Poor)
Career Growth Opportunities	49.1% (Frequently)	43.6% (Occasionally)	7.3% (No)
Considered Leaving Job	30.9% (Yes)	—	69.1% (No)
Intent to Stay 2 Years	43.6% (Yes)	40.0% (Maybe)	16.4% (No)
Feedback from Manager	70.9% (Weekly/Monthly)	25.5% (Quarterly)	3.6% (Never)
Organization Listens to Feedback	47.3% (Yes)	29.1% (Maybe)	23.6% (No)

Table 2 — Key Engagement & Satisfaction Indicators (n = 55)

The majority of respondents (65.4%) report positive job satisfaction, and 70.9% feel their contributions are valued — both strong indicators of baseline engagement. However, nearly one-third (30.9%) have contemplated leaving, and only 43.6% express intent to remain for the next two years, signaling meaningful retention risk that warrants strategic intervention.

4.2 Chi-Square Test Results

Hypothesis	Variable Tested	Chi-Square Value	Table Value ($\alpha=0.05$)	Result
H2	Workplace Culture vs Engagement	13.26	3.841	Reject H0 — Significant
H4	Recognition & Rewards vs Engagement	3.18	3.841	Fail to Reject H0 — Not Significant

Table 3 — Chi-Square Test Summary

The Chi-Square analysis yields two significant findings. First, workplace culture is statistically significantly associated with employee engagement ($\chi^2 = 13.26 > 3.841$, $p < 0.05$), strongly supporting Hypothesis H2. Employees in supportive cultures were far more likely to be engaged (32 of 37 in supportive environments) compared to those in non-supportive settings (only 7 of 18 engaged). Second, recognition and rewards did not demonstrate a statistically significant relationship with engagement in this sample ($\chi^2 = 3.18 < 3.841$, $p > 0.05$), meaning H4 was not supported — though qualitative data and satisfaction scores suggest recognition remains a valued, if not statistically decisive, factor for this predominantly entry-level cohort.

4.3 Summary of Findings

- 98.2% of employees are aged 20–30, reflecting a predominantly young, early-career workforce with distinct engagement expectations.
- 81.8% have less than one year of tenure, indicating high new-hire volume and possible early attrition pressure.
- Work culture is the single strongest driver of engagement, confirmed by statistically significant Chi-Square results ($\chi^2 = 13.26$).
- Career growth opportunities are frequently or occasionally available for 92.7% of employees, yet 29.1% remain neutral or dissatisfied with development pathways — indicating a perception gap.
- Only 29.1% of employees would actively recommend the company, with 40% remaining neutral — signaling limited employer brand advocacy.
- 54.6% of employees are uncertain or disconnected from organizational goal alignment, pointing to communication gaps between management and staff.

5. Conclusion & Suggestions

This study confirms that sustainable employee engagement is a multifactorial construct shaped by leadership quality, workplace culture, career development structures, recognition systems, and external economic conditions. Among these, workplace culture emerges as the most statistically robust driver of engagement in this sample — organizations with supportive, inclusive cultures are significantly more likely to retain engaged employees.

The predominantly young, entry-level sample profile underscores the need for early-career engagement strategies: structured onboarding, clear role expectations, visible career progression pathways, and meaningful feedback loops. The finding that only 43.6% of respondents intend to stay for two years, and 30.9% have considered leaving, reinforces the urgency of proactive retention investment.

The following strategic recommendations emerge from the data:

1. Cultivate a Supportive Culture: Invest in inclusive workplace initiatives, team cohesion activities, and transparent communication channels to strengthen the cultural foundation of engagement.
2. Develop Structured Career Pathways: Implement mentorship programs, promotion roadmaps, and skills development plans to address the perception gap in career growth.
3. Enhance Recognition Frameworks: Even where recognition did not reach statistical significance, introducing structured, frequent, and personalized acknowledgment systems will improve morale and advocacy.
4. Strengthen Feedback Mechanisms: Move toward more consistent feedback cadences (weekly or bi-weekly) and ensure employees perceive organizational responsiveness to their input.
5. Align Organizational and Personal Goals: Create open dialogue forums and career-planning conversations that help employees see how their personal ambitions connect with organizational objectives.

Future research should investigate post-pandemic hybrid work dynamics, generational differences in engagement drivers, and the emerging role of AI-driven HR analytics in personalizing engagement strategies at scale.

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