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## Female Employees' Retention in Hospitality Sectors

**Ashmita Dahal Chhetri, Ph.D. Scholar**

Asst. Professor, Birendra Multiple Campus, Tribhuvan University  
email: [ashmitadahalchhetri@gmail.com](mailto:ashmitadahalchhetri@gmail.com)  
<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-3868-1271>

**Pratima Thapa**

Balkumari College, Tribhuvan University  
email: [prithapasth79@gmail.com](mailto:prithapasth79@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the critical role of employee retention in the hospitality industry, with a specific focus on retaining female employees. As a key contributor to global and local economies, including Nepal, the hospitality sector depends on a skilled workforce to maintain service quality and operational efficiency. Retaining female employees is crucial for sustaining these standards and enhancing brand reputation. The study highlights the importance of targeted retention strategies addressing both organizational and socio-cultural factors to increase female participation in Nepal's hospitality sector. Based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire with 300 respondents in Chitwan district, the study used convenience sampling to gather quantitative data. Independent variables included work-life balance policies, compensation and benefits, career development opportunities, social norms, and cultural expectations, while the dependent variable was female employee retention. Findings reveal that work-life balance policies, compensation and benefits, social norms, and cultural expectations positively influence female employee retention. Conversely, career development opportunities show a negative impact. Work-life balance policies, followed by compensation and benefits, emerged as the most significant factors affecting retention. The study recommends adopting flexible work schedules, enhancing family-friendly initiatives, revising compensation packages, fostering inclusivity, and addressing cultural barriers to improve retention. Regular evaluation of these strategies through surveys and retention analysis is essential for sustained progress.

**Keywords:** Work life Balance, Career Development Opportunities, Compensation and Benefits, Social norms and Cultural Expectation

### Introduction

Employee retention, particularly for female staff, is a critical challenge for organizations aiming to maintain a stable and diverse workforce in the hospitality sector. Female employee retention refers to the strategies and practices that encourage long-term employment among women by addressing their unique needs and challenges (Kafle, 2023). The hospitality industry, encompassing services like accommodation, food and beverages, and travel and tourism, is one of the fastest-growing sectors globally, significantly contributing to regional and national economies (Harwood et al., 2022). However, this industry is heavily reliant on its workforce, making employee retention a key factor in maintaining service quality, reducing operational costs, and ensuring customer satisfaction (Gorde, 2019; Sultana & Bushra, 2013). Retaining female employees in this sector is particularly important for fostering diversity, enhancing workplace culture, and strengthening the organization's reputation (Pant, 2020). Yet, the hospitality sector in Nepal, particularly in districts like Chitwan, faces challenges in retaining female employees due to socio-cultural norms, inadequate organizational policies, and limited career growth opportunities (Sharma & Bhattarai, 2019; Chaourasia & Kalita, 2022).

The retention of female employees in the hospitality sector is influenced by multiple factors, including work-life balance policies, career development opportunities, compensation and benefits, social norms, and cultural expectations (Deery & Jago, 2015; Haider et al., 2015). For instance, research shows that flexible work arrangements and family-friendly policies enhance work-life balance, leading to higher retention rates among women (Lakhera & Lakhera, 2019; Gupta et al., 2023). Career advancement opportunities are equally crucial, as clear progression paths and training programs foster job satisfaction and loyalty (Moyo & Ndlovu, 2020; Wanjohi et al., 2022). Additionally, competitive compensation packages and comprehensive benefits serve as significant motivators for employee retention, especially for female staff (Nagaprakash et al., 2022; Pragalata, 2019). Social

norms and cultural expectations, however, pose unique challenges in Nepal, where traditional gender roles often hinder women's career growth and limit their participation in the workforce (Adhikari, 2021; Chaourasia & Kalita, 2022). These challenges are further exacerbated in rural districts like Chitwan, where deep-rooted societal biases and limited workplace support mechanisms impact female employees' decisions to stay or leave their jobs (Sharma & Bhattarai, 2019).

Given the critical role of female employees in the hospitality sector, this study seeks to address the factors affecting their retention in Nepal, focusing on Chitwan district, a culturally significant tourist destination known as the birthplace of Lord Buddha (Nepal Tourism Statistics, 2022). Despite the sector's potential for growth and its contribution to the national GDP, the high turnover rate among female employees remains a pressing issue (Mooney et al., 2017). This research explores the relationship between factors such as work-life balance, career development opportunities, compensation and benefits, social norms, and cultural expectations, and their impact on female retention. By addressing these challenges, the study aims to provide actionable insights for organizations to develop targeted retention strategies, reduce turnover costs, and foster an inclusive workplace (Sthapit & Shrestha, 2021). Moreover, the findings can guide policymakers in crafting supportive workplace policies, such as flexible hours and maternity leave, which are essential for addressing gender disparities and promoting economic development in the region (Karki & Joshi, 2021).

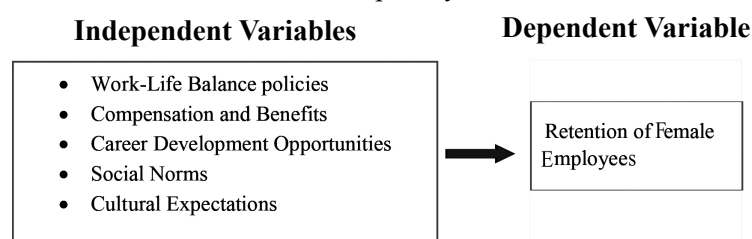
This research is significant as it enriches the academic literature on employee retention, particularly concerning the female workforce in Nepal, and provides a foundation for future studies (Bhaswani & Hymavathi, 2022). While the study focuses on the Chitwan district, its findings can be extrapolated to similar rural contexts, offering insights into addressing socio-cultural and organizational barriers to female retention. However, the study is limited in scope, as it examines a specific geographic area and does not account for all potential factors influencing retention. Furthermore, it focuses primarily on certain types of hospitality organizations, such as hotels, restaurants, and resorts. Despite these limitations, the study contributes to understanding the complex interplay of organizational, societal, and cultural factors affecting female employee retention, providing a roadmap for achieving a more equitable and sustainable hospitality workforce in Nepal.

## Literature Review

Several studies have explored factors affecting female employee retention. Ferdiana et al. (2023) found that career development, organizational commitment, and support significantly enhance retention. Liang (2023) emphasized work environment, work-life balance, and compensation, while Nagaprakash et al. (2022) highlighted the positive impact of compensation and benefits. Bhaswani and Hymavathi (2022) revealed the importance of retention strategies in hotel housekeeping for service quality. Wanjohi et al. (2022) demonstrated that HR policies and career development significantly influence retention. Goh and Okumus (2020) noted the effect of positive workplace norms, while Hashim et al. (2016) stressed work-life balance. Yousaf et al. (2014) identified social, family, organizational, and supervisory factors as key contributors.

Expectancy Theory explains that individuals are motivated to act when they believe their efforts will lead to success (expectancy), success will bring rewards (instrumentality), and the rewards align with their values (valence) (Kim & Lee, 2010). Social Exchange Theory suggests that relationships involve maximizing benefits and minimizing costs, with retention influenced by rewards (e.g., compensation, empowerment) and costs (e.g., toxic work environments) (Cook, 2015; Nickerson, 2023).

Despite research on retention in the hospitality sector, limited studies focus on factors affecting female retention in Nepal, particularly in Chitwan district. Existing research predominantly addresses general factors like compensation and work-life balance but overlooks unique socio-cultural and organizational challenges. Studies by Rijal (2022) and Hakuduwal (2021) provide insights into Nepalese hospitality but lack focus on female-specific retention factors. This study addresses these gaps by examining organizational and socio-cultural factors, offering strategies to enhance female retention in Chitwan's hospitality sector.



Work-life balance policies, such as flexible working hours, help employees manage professional and personal responsibilities effectively, reducing work-family conflict and enhancing job satisfaction and retention (Hill et al.,

2001; Zainal, 2022). Compensation and benefits, including salaries, bonuses, and non-monetary perks like health insurance and paid leave, attract and retain employees by addressing financial and personal needs (Milkovich et al., 2014; Newman, 2021). Career development opportunities, such as training and advancement programs, foster skill enhancement and growth, keeping employees engaged and reducing turnover (Noe, 2017). Social norms, the unwritten rules governing behavior, influence women's retention, with norms supporting gender equality linked to higher retention rates (Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Eagly & Carli, 2007). Cultural expectations, shaped by shared beliefs and values, impact workplace experiences, where gender-inclusive cultures support female retention (Hofstede, 2001; Minkov, 2010). Retention of female employees refers to strategies addressing job satisfaction, work-life balance, and career growth to foster long-term commitment (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; McGinnity et al., 2011).

### Research Methods

This study utilized a descriptive and causal-comparative research design to examine factors influencing female employees retention in Nepal's hospitality sector. A sample of 300 female employees from Chitwan's hospitality industry was selected using purposive sampling method. Data were collected through structured questionnaires employing a 5-point Likert scale, measuring organizational factors (work-life balance, career development, compensation) and socio-cultural factors (social norms, cultural expectations). The instrument's reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, with most variables meeting acceptable thresholds. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation to assess relationships, and multiple linear regression to evaluate the impact of independent variables on retention. The study adhered to rigorous methods, ensuring clarity, validity, and robust insights for international relevance.

### Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of a questionnaire survey conducted among a diverse group of employees of the hospitality sectors. The aim of the survey was to gather insights into their opinions about the factors affecting female's employee retention in hospitality sector of Chitwan district.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

Demographic Variables		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Work in the Hospitality Sector	Yes	300	95.54
	No	14	4.46
Age	18-30	200	66.7
	31-45	93	31
	Above 46	7	2.3
Marital Status	Single	152	50.7
	Married	148	49.3
	Divorced	0	0
	Others	0	0
Monthly Income	Less than Rs. 18500	29	9.7
	Rs. 18501- Rs. 35000	102	34
	Rs. 35001- Rs. 60000	147	49
	Above Rs. 60001	22	7.3
Academic Qualification	Upto 10+2	19	6.3
	Bachelor degree	53	17.7
	Master degree or above	228	76
Experienced in the Hospitality Industry	Less than 3 years	76	25.3
	4-7 years	208	69.3
	More than 8 years	16	5.3
Current Job Position	Entry level	40	13.3
	Mid-level	199	66.3
	Senior level	61	20.3

Source: Survey Data

Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of 300 female respondents, 95.54% employed in the hospitality sector. Most are aged 18-30 (66.7%), with a nearly even split between single (50.7%) and married (49.3%). Monthly

income ranges primarily between Rs. 35,001–60,000 (49%), and 76% hold a master's degree or higher. Experience is concentrated in 4-7 years (69.3%), and 66.3% work in mid-level positions, reflecting a highly educated and experienced workforce in the hospitality sector.

**Table 2: Summary of the Factors**

Variables	Overall Mean	Rank
Work-life balance policy	4.15	3
Career development opportunities	4.07	4
Compensation and benefits	4.16	2
Social norms	4.04	5
Cultural expectation	4.17	1

Cultural expectations rank highest (mean = 4.17), indicating their significant influence, followed by compensation and benefits (mean = 4.16), highlighting the importance of adequate remuneration. Work-life balance policies rank third (mean = 4.15), showing their critical role in retention. Career development opportunities rank fourth (mean = 4.07), and social norms rank fifth (mean = 4.04), with less impact. These findings identify priority areas for improving female retention in the hospitality sector.

**Table 3: Correlation Coefficient**

	WLBP	CDO	CB	SN	CE	ER
WLBP	1					
CDO	.717**	1				
CB	.591**	.752**	1			
SN	.505**	.570**	.607**	1		
CE	.519**	.654**	.696**	.496**	1	
ER	.650**	.600**	.649**	.555**	.511**	1

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Table 3 presents Karl Pearson's correlation coefficients between Employee Retention (ER) and independent variables based on 300 observations. ER shows significant positive correlations with all variables. Work-Life Balance Policy (WLBP,  $r = 0.650$ ) strongly influences retention, highlighting the importance of supporting employees' needs. Career Development Opportunities (CDO,  $r = 0.600$ ) and Compensation and Benefits (CB,  $r = 0.649$ ) also significantly impact retention, emphasizing professional growth and fair remuneration. Social Norms (SN,  $r = 0.555$ ) and Cultural Expectations (CE,  $r = 0.511$ ) positively contribute, indicating the value of workplace culture and alignment with organizational values. All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level, showcasing the multi-faceted nature of employee retention.

**Table 4: Regression Analysis**

Variable	Beta	T-value	P-Value	VIF
(Constant)	0.588	2.808	0.005	
Work-Life Balance Policy	0.380	6.643	<0.001	2.129
Career Development Opportunities	-0.029	0.430	0.667	3.307
Compensation And Benefits	0.340	4.868	<0.001	3.004
Social Norms	0.138	3.331	0.001	1.703
Cultural Expectations	0.023	0.347	0.729	2.112
R Square	0.548			
F value	71.177			
P value	<0.001			

Table 4 presents the regression analysis assessing the impact of independent variables on employee retention. The model demonstrates a good fit ( $R^2 = 0.548$ ), indicating that 54.8% of the variance in employee retention is explained by the independent variables, with an overall significance ( $F = 71.177$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Work-life balance policy ( $\beta = 0.380$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and compensation and benefits ( $\beta = 0.340$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) show strong positive and significant relationships with retention, highlighting their critical roles. Social norms ( $\beta = 0.138$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) also

positively influence retention, albeit to a lesser extent.

Conversely, career development opportunities ( $\beta = -0.029$ ,  $p = 0.667$ ) and cultural expectations ( $\beta = 0.023$ ,  $p = 0.729$ ) exhibit no significant relationships, suggesting limited impact. Multicollinearity is not a concern, as all VIF values are below 5. These findings underscore the importance of work-life balance, competitive compensation, and supportive social norms in fostering female employee retention.

**Table 5: Hypothesis Testing**

Hypothesis	T-value	P-value	Decision
H <sub>1</sub> : There is significant relationship between work-life balance policies with female retention.	6.643	<0.001	Supported
H <sub>2</sub> : There is significant relationship between career development opportunities with female retention.	0.430	0.667	Not Supported
H <sub>3</sub> : There is significant relationship between compensation and benefits with female retention.	4.868	<0.001	Supported
H <sub>4</sub> : There is significant relationship between social norms and female retention.	3.331	0.001	Supported
H <sub>5</sub> : There is significant relationship between cultural expectations with female retention.	0.347	0.729	Not Supported

The hypothesis testing results provide critical insights into factors influencing female employee retention in the hospitality sector. A significant positive relationship exists between work-life balance policies and retention ( $T = 6.643$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), underscoring the importance of supporting employees' personal and professional needs. Similarly, compensation and benefits exhibit a strong positive effect ( $T = 4.868$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), emphasizing fair remuneration as a key driver of retention. Social norms also significantly impact retention ( $T = 3.331$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), highlighting the role of workplace culture and societal expectations. Conversely, career development opportunities ( $T = 0.430$ ,  $p = 0.667$ ) and cultural expectations ( $T = 0.347$ ,  $p = 0.729$ ) show no significant relationships, suggesting limited influence on retention in this context.

### Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated factors influencing female employee retention in Nepal's hospitality sector, focusing on work-life balance policies, career development opportunities, compensation and benefits, social norms, and cultural expectations. The findings highlight that work-life balance policies and compensation and benefits are the most significant determinants of retention, showing strong positive impacts. These findings are consistent with studies by Hashim et al. (2016) and Nagaprakash et al. (2022), which emphasize the universal importance of fostering work-life integration and providing competitive compensation structures to enhance job satisfaction and loyalty. Social norms also significantly influence retention, reflecting the collectivist culture prevalent in Nepal, aligning with Goh and Okumus (2020). However, cultural expectations and career development opportunities showed minimal impact, diverging from Rijal (2022) and Ferdiana et al. (2023), respectively. This may be attributed to shifting employee priorities, with greater emphasis on financial stability and work-life factors, or the limited career advancement opportunities within Nepal's hospitality industry. These findings suggest that organizations should reassess how they implement career development initiatives and address cultural factors. Overall, the study call attention to the importance of prioritizing work-life balance and competitive compensation to create a supportive environment, enhancing retention rates and fostering commitment and engagement among female employees in the hospitality sector.

### Implications

The study highlights several implications for enhancing female employee retention in Nepal's hospitality sector. Organizations should focus on developing comprehensive work-life balance policies, offering competitive compensation and benefits, fostering positive workplace culture, and addressing cultural expectations to create an inclusive environment. While career development opportunities showed minimal impact, prioritizing training, professional development, and clear progression paths can still improve engagement. Regular monitoring of retention strategies through surveys and analyses is essential. Future research should explore additional factors like work environment, leadership styles, and job satisfaction, and expand geographic scope beyond the Chitwan district. Incorporating secondary data and studying diverse hospitality sectors can provide broader insights. Additionally, investigating the role of technology in enhancing employee experiences could further inform effective



retention strategies in the evolving hospitality industry.

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