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EMPLOYEE RETENTION STRATEGIES FOR BLUE-COLLAR WORKERS IN
ESTONIAN PRODUCTION COMPANIES

Bachelor Thesis

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I have written this Bachelor Thesis independently. Any ideas or data taken from other authors or other sources have been fully referenced.

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Introduction

Keeping skilled workers is a key issue for production companies, especially those heavily reliant on blue-collar labor. Effective retention is vital for keeping operations smooth and productive in industries like manufacturing and construction (Latha, 2013; Swamy, P & Nanjundeswaraswamy, 2019). When turnover rates are high, it disrupts production and increases the costs of hiring and training new workers (Satpal & Dhillon, 2016). Research shows that the cost of replacing an employee can vary widely depending on the role and industry, often ranging from 50% to 200% of the employee's annual salary. For example, replacing a worker earning 40 000\$ per year may cost between 20 000\$ and 80 000\$ (Boushey & Glynn, 2012). However, more specific data from California businesses indicates that blue-collar replacement costs tend to be much lower, averaging around 2000\$ per worker (Dube, Freeman, & Reich, 2010). These figures highlight the broader economic implications of employee turnover and underline the necessity of effective retention strategies.

In Estonia, where the labor market is both competitive and integrated within the European Union, local production companies face unique challenges. These include the attraction of better pay and working conditions abroad, which often drives talented blue-collar workers to look for opportunities abroad. Estonia has historically been a sending country, and labour emigration has included manual and low-skilled workers, particularly to countries like Finland, which has been a major destination for Estonian emigrants (MPF, 2022). Resolving these issues is essential to preserve operational effectiveness as well as workforce stability in sectors like manufacturing and construction, which are significant employers in Estonia and are currently facing challenges like labor shortages and skill mismatches. (Leoma & Ungro, 2020; European Construction Sector Observatory, 2021)

This study is important because there is a significant gap in the research regarding specific retention strategies tailored for blue-collar workers in production companies. While employee retention in general has been studied, there has been less focus on the specific strategies that work for workers in labor-intensive environments. This gap is even more significant given the fact that blue-collar workers face unique challenges in terms of physical labor demands and career progression, which may increase their likelihood of job dissatisfaction and lead to higher turnover rates (Bibi, Ahmad, & Majid, 2018).

This research aims to identify retention strategies for blue-collar workers in Estonian production companies by examining current management practices and employee perceptions, with the goal of providing informed recommendations.

The research tasks to achieve the aim are:

- To develop a comprehensive theoretical framework on employee retention, focusing on the unique challenges faced by blue-collar workers in the production sector.
- To conduct literature review to map out existing retention strategies that have been proven effective.
- To examine the economic, cultural, and operational contexts of Estonia that influence labor dynamics and employee turnover, providing a backdrop for targeted retention strategies
- To conduct empirical research to gather insights into the perceived effectiveness of different retention strategies.
- To analyze the collected data and identify key factors influencing employee retention among blue-collar workers.
- To formulate practical recommendations for Estonian production companies to improve employee retention based on theoretical insights and empirical evidence.

The thesis is structured to support the achievement of its main aim. Chapter 1 establishes the theoretical framework for understanding employee retention, focusing on blue-collar workers and relevant strategies both globally and in the Estonian context. Chapter 2 presents the methodology of the study, followed by the empirical part, which includes data collection from HR managers and blue-collar workers in Estonian production companies. The chapter also presents and analyzes the findings, which form the basis for drawing conclusions and developing practical recommendations.

Keywords: employee retention, blue-collar workers, production companies, Estonia, workforce stability.

1. Theoretical framework on employee retention for blue-collar workers in production companies

1.1 Overview of employee retention and its importance in production companies

Employee retention is an essential part of organisational success, especially in the manufacturing industry, where a lack of skilled blue-collar workers has a direct impact on operational stability and efficiency (Khan, 2021). This subchapter delves into the topic of employee retention and how it relates to several other organizational theories.

To start the discussion of retention, it is necessary to review how various authors have defined employee retention. A table summarizing these definitions is provided to illustrate the range of perspectives found in academic literature. Table 1 shows the author's collection of four definitions from various authors.

Table 1

“Employee retention” definitions

Author(s)	Year and page	Definition
Kossivi, Xu & Kalgora	2016 p. 262	“Employee retention is concerned with keeping or encouraging employees to remain in an organization for a maximum period of time “
Akila	2012, p. 18	“Employee retention is a process in which the employees are encouraged to remain with the organization for the maximum period of time or until the completion of the project.”
Salve & Iyer	2018, p. 19	“The term employee retention means retaining the quality and essential employees to work in the organization for a longer period of time and proper utilization of their skills, attitudes and values for the organization.”
Sinha, Momaya & Kamleshkumar	2022, p. 126	“Employee retention is a systematic effort by employers to build and maintain an atmosphere that encourages current workers to stay employed by following policies and procedures that adapt to their diverse needs.”

Sources: Compiled by the author, using the sources listed in the table

Kossivi, Xu and Kalgora (2016) expand on this topic by stating that retention involves keeping workers for as long as possible within the organization. They stick to a more traditional view of retention, focusing on creating a stable and secure work environment that supports long-term employment. This approach is about building loyalty and reducing the costs associated with high turnover, which includes recruiting and training new employees.

Akila (2012), for instance, discusses retaining staff members until a project is completed. That highlights the temporary yet crucial need to maintain a stable workforce, especially in project-based sectors like construction. This perspective is particularly important where the continuity of skilled workers directly influences project success and overall company productivity.

Salve and Iyer (2018) define employee retention as retaining key personnel for an extended period of time. They emphasize the importance of aligning employee capabilities with business requirements, suggesting that retention strategies should not only keep employees but also ensure they contribute effectively to organizational goals. This strategy emphasizes making effective use of employees' skills, which is crucial for maintaining high productivity and operational efficiency within the company.

However, a broader definition is provided by Sinha, Momaya and Kamleshkumar (2022). They describe retention as employers making systematic efforts to establish a positive work environment that encourages employees to stay. This approach extends beyond individual capabilities, considering the entire workplace atmosphere and the conditions that influence an employee's decision to stay or leave, thus emphasizing a holistic approach to employee retention.

The discussion over these definitions demonstrates a variety of viewpoints, ranging from emphasising personal advantages to considering the overall strategy of the business. Every definition offers a different perspective on retention strategies, demonstrating the need for an effective approach to address the various needs of blue-collar workers in production industries. The differences in these definitions also show how hard it is to use one single strategy for everyone. The type of business, the kind of work, and the kinds of workers all affect how well different retention strategies work (Jaganjac, Gavrić & Obhodaš, 2020).

It is crucial to choose a working definition that best suits the context of this research. For this study, the definition by Sinha, Momaya & Kamleshkumar (2022) is particularly appropriate. It states that "Employee retention is a systematic effort by employers to build and maintain an atmosphere that encourages current workers to stay employed by following policies and procedures that adapt to their diverse needs." This definition is selected because it encompasses a holistic approach to retention, emphasizing not only the need to keep employees within an organization but also the importance of creating a supportive environment that aligns with their varied needs. This approach is crucial for production companies, where different roles and the physical demands of blue-collar work require flexible and responsive retention strategies.

Employee retention has multiple impacts on organizations. While it brings numerous benefits, it also presents several challenges that can affect the organization's adaptability and innovation. Table 2 illustrates both the positive and negative aspects of employee retention.

Table 2

Positive and negative aspects of employee retention

Aspect of retention	Positive impact	Negative impact
Innovation	Maintains institutional knowledge	Stifles new ideas and perspectives
Productivity	Enhances consistency and efficiency	Leads to complacency and reduced motivation
Skill Adaptability	Encourages deep expertise	Results in skill obsolescence and resistance to change
Cultural diversity	Fosters a stable organizational culture	Limits diversity and fresh cultural insights
Engagement	Increases employee loyalty	Can reduce drive and engagement over time

Source: Compiled by the author based on Banerjee (2019), De Winne et al. (2018), Aljofan et al. (2024), Inspirus (2023), and Miller (2019).

According to a study by Banerjee (2019), while employee retention is critical for maintaining organizational knowledge and efficiency, there are also significant downsides to high retention rates. Prolonged retention can lead to organizational stagnation where fresh ideas and innovations are stifled due to a lack of new perspectives entering the workforce. Additionally, a very high retention rate might encourage complacency among employees, who might feel too secure in their positions, potentially leading to reduced productivity and engagement. It can also make adapting to new technologies and processes more difficult, as long-standing employees may resist changes that disrupt their familiar routines (De Winne, Marescaux, Sels, Van Beveren & Vanormelingen, 2018).

Skill adaptability encourages deep expertise but also brings challenges. Over time, skill obsolescence can become a significant issue, particularly if employees do not feel the urgency or receive the necessary encouragement to update their skills or adapt to new methods. Resistance to change can further exacerbate this issue, hindering an organization's ability to stay competitive in rapidly changing industries. (Aljofan, Faleh & Alrofai, 2024)

Furthermore, excessive retention may limit the diversity of the workforce, as fewer opportunities arise for hiring individuals from varied backgrounds, potentially affecting the

organization's innovation capacity and cultural inclusivity. High levels of employee engagement can lead to increased loyalty among workers. However, over time, prolonged retention may result in a decrease in their drive and overall engagement. This decline often occurs because employees become too accustomed to their routines, which may lessen their enthusiasm and motivation. (*The Advantages and Disadvantages of Employee Retention* | *Inspirus*, 2023; Miller, 2019)

Employee retention is deeply intertwined with several key organizational concepts, each playing a significant role in shaping the workplace dynamics. Table 3 shows how employee retention is connected to various organizational concepts.

Table 3

Relationship of employee retention to related organizational concepts

Author(s) & year	Concept	Description	Relation to employee retention
Vakira et al., 2023	Employee turnover	Rate at which employees leave the organization	High turnover can signal poor retention
Noori, 2024	Employee Attrition	Reduction in workforce without immediate replacement	Similar to turnover, affects overall retention stability
Smith, 2015	Employee Loyalty	Emotional commitment and allegiance towards the organization	Enhances retention through increased engagement and tenure
Holtom & Darabi, 2018	Job Embeddedness	Extent to which employees feel connected to their job and community	Directly influences retention by increasing job satisfaction
Molloy, Smith & Wozniak, 2024	Workforce Stability	Consistency and reliability of the employee base	Stability often results from effective retention strategies

Source: Compiled by the author, based on sources in the table

Employee turnover and attrition are key signs of how well retention strategies are working in a company. When these rates are high, it often points to problems with how satisfied employees are with their jobs or how well the organization meets their needs (Vakira et al., 2023; Noori, 2024). On the other hand, employee loyalty and commitment to the organization play a crucial role in improving retention. It deepens the emotional and

psychological connections that employees have with the company, leading to longer stays and greater job satisfaction (Smith, 2015).

Job embeddedness highlights the importance of employees feeling deeply integrated into both their roles and their community. When employees are well-connected, they are less likely to leave, which suggests that effective retention involves making employees feel like part of the organization (Holtom & Darabi, 2018).

Lastly, workforce stability is often seen as a result of strong retention practices. A stable and reliable workforce helps maintain consistent performance and growth within the company. This stability comes from implementing strategies that not only reduce turnover but also ensure that employees are engaged and committed. (Molloy, Smith & Wozniak, 2024)

1.2 Retention strategies for blue-collar workers in production companies

In this subchapter, the focus shifts to specific retention strategies tailored for blue-collar workers in production companies. In this context, a *strategy* refers to a planned and coordinated set of actions designed to help retain employees over the long term. These actions are not isolated; they are interconnected and meant to reinforce each other to build a stable, motivated, and committed workforce (Hussein, Taher & Hameed, 2021).

It is important to clarify that a strategy does not consist of just one single factor, such as fair pay or employee recognition. While each of these elements may have a positive influence on retention, none of them alone constitutes a complete strategy. A strategy forms when several important components are thoughtfully combined and aligned with a shared objective — in this case, keeping skilled workers in the company. These components must be applied consistently and function as part of a broader system, where each element supports and strengthens the others. Only then do they form a true retention strategy capable of producing long-term results.

To better understand this, Table 4 presents an overview of the main strategic areas and focus elements that together form an integrated retention strategy for blue-collar workers in production companies.

Table 4

Main elements of blue-collar employee retention

Strategic Area	Focus elements
Compensation & benefits	Fair pay, bonuses, insurance, retirement plans
Work environment	Safety, ergonomics, flexibility, work-life balance
Recognition & support	Supervisor support, employee recognition
Career development	Training, upskilling, promotion opportunities
Organizational culture	Positive, inclusive values and job embeddedness
Job design & motivation	Autonomy, skill use, meaningful tasks

Source: Compiled by the author, based on Iqbal et al. (2017) Bibi et al. (2018), Kossek et al. (2011), Aman-Ullah et al. (2022), Tessema et al. (2013), Eisenberger et al. (2002), Hassan et al. (2013), Hamed et al. (2024), Holtom & Darabi (2018), Hackman & Oldham (1976), Soenanta et al. (2021)

Compensation is often the initial factor considered in retention strategies, given its direct impact on employee satisfaction and loyalty (Iqbal, Guohao & Akhtar, 2017). Satisfactory compensation influences both normative and affective commitment, where normative commitment refers to an employee's perceived obligation to remain with the company, and affective commitment refers to their emotional attachment to the organization (Nawab & Bhatti, 2011). Long-term retention depends heavily on employees feeling that their financial rewards are in line with their abilities and efforts. According to Kossivi, Xu and Kalgora (2016), when workers feel fairly compensated, their alignment with the company's goals strengthens, enhancing their desire to stay. Study by Chew & Entrekin (2011) on retention management of critical employees, highlights equity of compensation and benefits as a crucial factor. It suggests that organizations need to provide pay packages that are perceived as fair and competitive within the market to retain key talent. This includes not only base salary but also bonuses and other performance-related rewards that reflect the employees' contributions and support their financial well-being.

Production companies, recognizing the importance of competitive wages, often structure their compensation packages to make them appealing, especially in industries like manufacturing where blue-collar work is common (Devine, 2019).

Furthermore, benefits like health insurance, retirement savings plans, and paid time off are also essential for retaining blue-collar workers, who often engage in physically demanding tasks (Renders & Sheykhi, 2024). Comprehensive health benefits are particularly crucial, as they ensure workers are taken care of regardless of illnesses or injuries related to their jobs. Bibi, Ahmad and Majid (2018) note that such benefits are essential components of an effective retention strategy, as they enhance employees' sense of security and appreciation, leading to increased loyalty and a lower turnover rate.

Another crucial retention strategy is employee recognition. Recognizing workers for their efforts can take many forms, from formal awards and informal praise to non-monetary incentives like extra vacation days. Such recognition helps build loyalty and appreciation, which in turn contributes to job satisfaction. (Tessema, Ready & Embaye, 2013)

In addition to recognition, the support provided by supervisors is fundamental, especially in environments that demand physical labor. Eisenberg, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski and Rhoades (2002) found that when supervisors are supportive, it not only boosts employees' morale but also strengthens their commitment to the organization, thereby increasing their intention to stay. This type of supportive supervision promotes a positive working relationship by making sure that staff members feel their efforts are valued and that they have a trustworthy person to turn to with any issues or recommendations.

Additionally, using a different HR system as part of the talent management plan helps keep employees by making sure HR practices are tailored to the specific needs of important positions and high-potential employees. This method helps fill these key roles with capable people and supports their ongoing commitment and performance in the company, aligning HR strategy with the organization's success. (Narayanan, Rajithakumar & Menon, 2018)

Furthermore, the overall culture of the organization plays a significant role in employee retention. A positive organizational culture, which is characterized by mutual respect, inclusivity, and teamwork, fosters an environment where employees feel comfortable and supported (Hamed, Hussain, Jani, Sabri & Rusli, 2024). Study by Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2006) indicates that companies with strong and positive cultures experience lower turnover rates. Such cultures not only support the professional growth of employees but also ensure that their personal values align with those of the company, making the workplace a more satisfying environment for everyone involved.

Job characteristics also play a significant role in employee retention. When jobs are designed to allow for variety, autonomy, and the utilization of skills, they greatly enhance job satisfaction (Soenanta, Akbar & Sariwulan, 2021). According to Hackman and Oldham's Job

Characteristics Model, jobs which offer these elements boost intrinsic motivation, leading to higher productivity and reduced turnover. Intrinsic motivation is fueled by employees feeling that their work is meaningful, that they have some control over it, and that they can see how their skills are being utilized effectively. (Hackman & Oldham, 1976)

In physically demanding industries, maintaining a work-life balance is crucial. Flexible scheduling, sufficient rest periods, and family-friendly policies contribute significantly to job satisfaction and retention. These policies are vital for ensuring employees' physical and mental health, which is essential for their continued employment and overall well-being. According to Kossek, Pichler, Bodner and Hammer (2011), these work-life balance measures help reduce job stress and prevent burnout, making them critical components of a supportive work environment.

Creating a safe and ergonomically sound work environment is also key to retaining employees. Investing in safety training and appropriate equipment helps prevent workplace injuries and demonstrates the company's commitment to its workers' welfare (Aman-Ullah, Ibrahim, Aziz & Mehmood, 2022). This commitment is essential for employee retention because it builds trust between employees and the company, showing that the company cares about their safety and health. Such investments not only enhance safety but also improve employee morale and job satisfaction, further contributing to lower turnover rates.

Lastly, providing opportunities for career development can significantly influence employee retention. Companies that invest in training and development programs show their workforce that they are valued and that there are opportunities for advancement within the organization. This investment helps reduce turnover by allowing employees to advance their skills and take on more complex roles, which can be incredibly motivating and rewarding. These opportunities are seen by employees as a sign that the company is committed to their career growth and professional development, which strengthens their loyalty to the company. (Hassan, Razi, Qamar, Jaffir & Suhail, 2013)

In conclusion, retaining blue-collar workers in production companies requires a mixed approach that involves competitive pay, recognition, career development opportunities, health and safety measures, and a supportive workplace culture. These strategies are essential for creating an environment where workers feel valued, safe, and connected to the company. By focusing on these areas, production companies can significantly reduce turnover rates and maintain a stable, productive workforce.

1.3 Challenges influencing employee retention in Estonian production companies

This subchapter aims to explore various factors such as local regulations, economic policies, and cultural aspects that influence retention strategies and outcomes that affect the ability of companies in Estonia to retain blue-collar workers.

In Estonia's evolving economy, the competition for skilled labor significantly influences retention strategies within production companies. As Estonia is geographically and economically close to other European countries, local companies often find themselves in a challenging position. They must compete with higher wages and potentially better employment conditions offered abroad, particularly in nearby Nordic countries, which are known for their strong economies and competitive pay scales (Anniste, Pukkonen & Paas, 2017).

The fact that Estonia is a member of the European Union makes it easier for workers to migrate across borders, which makes the situation worse and increases the turnover rates (Kahanec, 2012). According to recent statistics, Estonia had 9071 job vacancies in the fourth quarter of 2024, which is 1.4% fewer than during the same period in 2023. During this period, 6705 persons left their job at the initiative of the employer, showing a slight improvement compared to the previous year. In the manufacturing sector specifically, labour turnover remains high, with over 10 921 employees either entering or leaving positions, despite a small decrease compared to the previous year. This reflects an ongoing challenge in achieving workforce stability in industries reliant on blue-collar labour. While manufacturing does not have the highest turnover rate in Estonia, it still ranks among the top sectors in terms of employee flows, pointing to continued concerns with employee retention and organisational continuity. (Statistics Estonia, 2025)

Figure 1, based on Statistics Estonia (2025) shows the comparative turnover rates across several industries, pointing out that, while manufacturing may not have the highest turnover, it is still very high, indicating underlying concerns that may impair productivity and continuity.

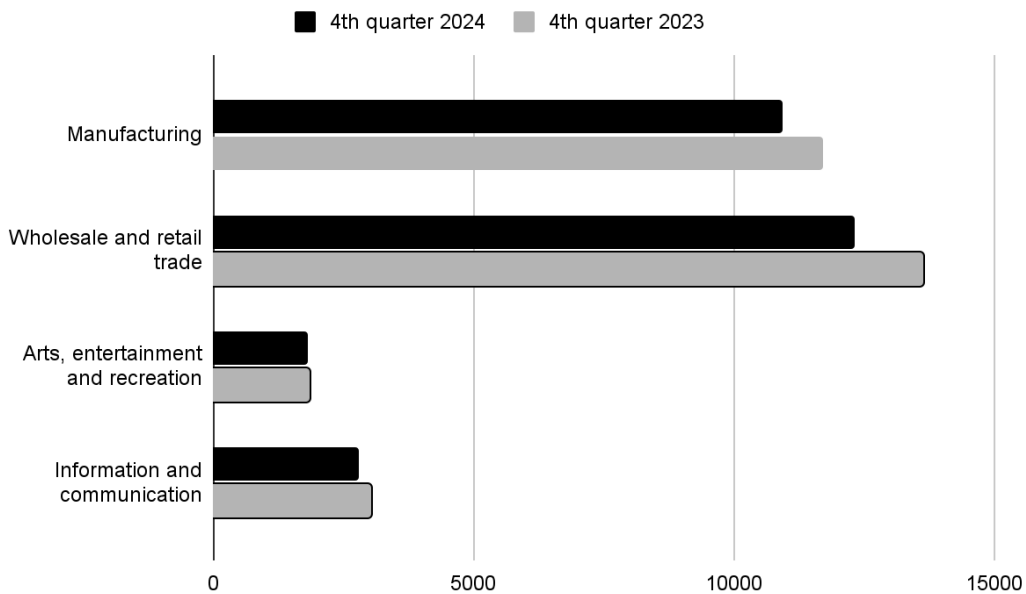


Figure 1. Labour turnover, 4th quarter 2024 and 4th quarter 2023 (number of individuals)

Source: Compiled by the author, based on data from Statistics Estonia (2025)

Amidst these challenges, the demand for skilled labor in the manufacturing sector remains notably high. As of May 2025, an examination of job ads on CVKeskus, a leading job portal, reveals that out of 6432 job ads overall, 600 are for manufacturing/production roles, constituting about 9.2% of all listings. This makes manufacturing/production the third most listed category, following customer service and sales/retail which lead with 1073 and 615 job adverts, respectively. This high number of listings in manufacturing not only underscores the sector's critical need for skilled workers but also reflects its substantial role within Estonia's job market. (*CV Keskus Job Offers*, n.d.)

Furthermore, technological advancements significantly impact the labor market, especially in industries like production where technology is rapidly changing. As new technologies are introduced, there is an increasing need for workers who are not just skilled but also capable of adapting to these new tools and processes. This shift means that workers must continuously update their skills to remain relevant in their jobs. (Ross, McGregor & Swales, 2024)

Moreover, as technology changes, some jobs may be altered or become obsolete, which can be unsettling for workers. Companies that help employees navigate these changes by offering support and training in new skills can maintain a more stable and committed workforce.

Economic stability plays a significant role in the retention of workers. In Estonia, which has a small and open economy that is sensitive to global changes, fluctuations in employment and sector performance are common. According to Eesti Pank (2024), employment declined moderately during the first half of 2024, with some labour market indicators showing a drop of up to 2.5% in the number of waged employees. At the same time, Statistics Estonia (2024) reported a 7.8% decline in manufacturing output in July compared to the same month the previous year. These trends reflect the challenges faced by employers in maintaining job security during economic slowdowns. When companies are forced to cut costs or reduce production, job insecurity increases, which often leads to higher employee turnover as workers look for more stable opportunities. These dynamics highlight the importance of retention strategies that can help buffer the effects of economic instability and maintain workforce continuity. (Vösa, 2010)

In Estonia, the regulatory frameworks and labor laws have a big impact on how companies manage their employees. These regulations control the legal aspects of employment, including contracts, working conditions, safety requirements, and employee rights. They are essential in establishing working conditions, job security, and benefits to which workers are entitled. (Joamets & Luukas, 2016)

Estonian labor laws aim to protect workers while allowing businesses to run smoothly. However, production companies may find it difficult to adjust to these laws, since they have to manage the challenges of legal compliance while trying to maintain operational effectiveness and employee satisfaction (Widjaja, 2024). For example, regulations about overtime pay and work hours can affect how flexible a company can be with shift schedules, which therefore impacts worker satisfaction and retention.

Additionally, strict safety regulations in Estonia mean companies need to invest in proper safety measures (*Occupational Health and Safety*, 2024). While these rules make workplaces safer, they also raise operational costs. It can be challenging for employers to find a balance between these expenses and the requirement to provide competitive pay and benefits. By offering a secure and fulfilling work environment, companies that successfully manage this balance are better positioned to retain their employees. (Ikpe, Hammond & Proverbs, 2008)

To adapt to these regulations, companies need proactive human resources strategies. They should develop policies that comply with the law and align with their goals and employee expectations. This approach can boost job satisfaction and loyalty, reducing turnover and strengthening the team.

Lastly, the retention landscape in Estonia is significantly shaped by cultural factors, such as work values and employee expectations. Work-life balance, job security, and professional development opportunities are all highly valued by Estonian employees. Their decisions to remain with or leave an employer are greatly influenced by these priorities.

Work-life balance, in particular, is a crucial cultural value. In Estonia, as in many European countries, balancing work and personal life is not just preferred but expected. Employees often judge potential employers on their ability to offer flexible working conditions, such as flexible hours, telecommuting options, and enough vacation time. Companies that don't meet these expectations might find it hard to attract and keep top talent. (Anttila, Oinas, Tammelin & Nätti, 2015)

Another important cultural factor is job security. Because of Estonia's small economy and exposure to international changes, job stability becomes an important factor for workers when deciding where to work. Employees are more likely to stick with organisations that provide stable work, even if doing so requires giving up possibly higher pay elsewhere. This preference emphasises how crucial job security is in comparison to immediate financial gain.

In conclusion, in order to overcome these obstacles, Estonian businesses need to go beyond offering competitive pay in their retention strategies. To avoid the attraction of greater compensation elsewhere, they must improve working conditions and provide more flexible scheduling options. Companies that want to retain a dedicated and competent workforce must address these factors.

2. Empirical research on blue-collar employee retention practices in Estonian production companies

2.1 Methodology and sample

This subchapter explains the methodology used to assess the effectiveness of employee retention strategies in Estonian production companies. The research includes both management's and blue-collar workers' perspectives. The study follows a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods to provide a broad and in-depth understanding of the challenges and solutions related to employee retention.

The methodology is divided into six main steps: literature review, survey development, data collection, data coding, data analysis and interpretation. Each step followed the previous one in a logical way.

To provide a clear overview of the research steps, Figure 2 shows the process of the research. This structure helped the research stay organised, clear and focused on the research goals.

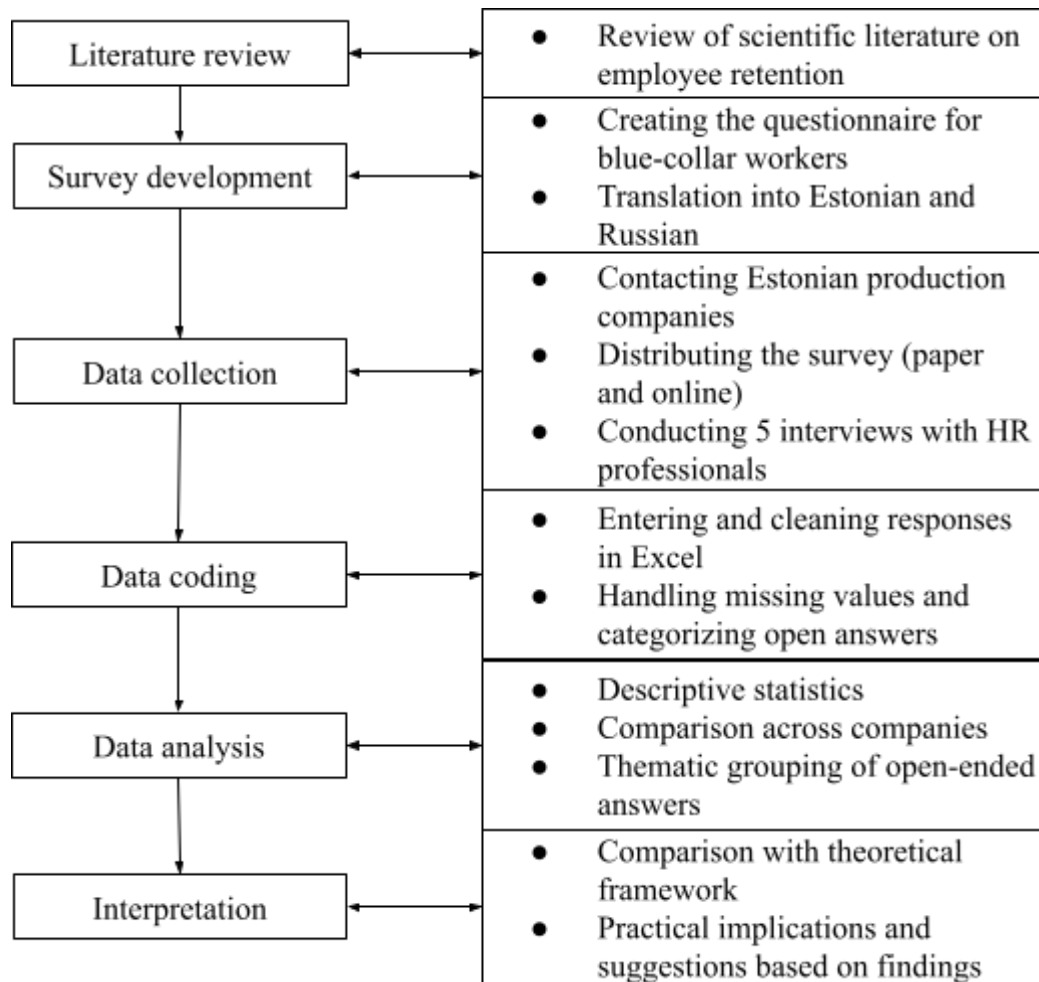


Figure 2. Methodology of the study

Source: compiled by the author

From 31st March - 6th May 2025, the empirical research was conducted in 5 Estonian production companies. The companies were selected based on their industry relevance, size, and willingness to participate. They represent a cross-section of the Estonian manufacturing sector, where retention of blue-collar workers is an ongoing concern. The qualitative part consists of semi-structured interviews with an HR manager or personnel specialist from each of the production companies.

Interviews were conducted either in person or via a phone call and they followed 8 thematic sections outlined in Appendix A. Covering topics such as background information on the company, recruitment challenges, existing retention strategies, strategy effectiveness, costs, challenges and adaptations, employee feedback systems and future improvements.

Example questions included: "What are the key employee retention strategies your company currently implements for blue-collar workers?", "What are the biggest challenges you face in retaining skilled blue-collar workers?", and "Do you use exit interviews, and if so, what are the most common reasons employees leave?". Interviews lasted between 20 and 35 minutes.

All participants gave informed consent to record and transcribe the conversation. Of the 5 interviews conducted, 3 were held in Estonian and 2 in English, depending on the preferred language of the participants. All interviews were transcribed, resulting in 42 pages of transcription. The interview results were analysed using thematic coding to identify repeating categories and patterns, which were later interpreted in the context of the theoretical literature. Table 5 gives an overview of the interview participants.

Table 5

Overview of interview participants

Company	Sector	HR position	Length of employment	Interview duration	Interview date
A	Metal processing and manufacturing	HR manager	10 years	25 minutes	02.04.2025
B	Trailer and component production	HR manager	10+ years	30 minutes	24.04.2025
C	Electronics assembly	HR specialist	5 years	21 minutes	18.04.2025
D	Construction material manufacturing	HR head	15+ years	34 minutes	13.04.2025
E	Electronics manufacturing	HR head	20+ years	29 minutes	02.05.2025

Source: compiled by the author

The quantitative part includes a structured survey distributed to blue-collar employees working in the same companies and it was developed by the author based on themes identified in the literature review on employee retention. The survey was distributed by the HR representatives within each company, either in paper or digital format.

For the questionnaire, a total of 132 responses were collected during 3rd April 2025 - 5th May 2025. While the aim was to gather at least 20 responses per company, actual participation varied based on company size and employee availability. The sample includes a

mix of genders, shift types, and employment lengths, offering valuable insight into the views of blue-collar workers in different organisations. Table 6 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the survey sample.

Table 6

Survey sample characteristics

Sample characteristic	Variable	N	% of distribution
Company	A	13	9,8
	B	30	22,7
	C	24	18,2
	D	27	20,5
	E	38	28,8
Age	Under 25	10	7,6
	25-34	23	17,4
	35-44	47	35,6
	45-54	28	21,2
	55 or older	24	18,2
Gender	Female	80	60,6
	Male	50	37,9
	Prefer not to say	2	1,5
Shift type	Day	83	62,9
	Night	0	0
	Rotating	49	37,1
Work experience	Less than 1 year	13	9,8
	1-5 years	40	30,3
	More than 5 years	79	59,9

Note. N=132

Source: compiled by the author

The survey included five sections, described in Appendix B: background information, job satisfaction and retention, retention factors, company performance, suggestions and additional feedback. Likert-scale items measured how important various retention factors are

to workers (e.g., fair salary, work-life balance, recognition, supervisor support) and how well these needs are currently met in their workplace. Open-ended questions allowed participants to share what changes they believe would make them stay longer or feel more satisfied at work. One such question asked, "What should change for you to want to work longer at this company?" Another asked, "If you were offered a similar job at another company, would you consider leaving? Why or why not?".

The original questionnaire was written in Estonian and then translated into Russian by the author. The goal was to make sure that Russian-speaking employees could also understand and answer the questions clearly, since a significant portion of the blue-collar workforce in the participating companies are native Russian speakers. Special attention was given to using simple and neutral language to avoid misunderstandings. The author took full responsibility for the translation and adapted some terms to better fit the language commonly used in the workplace. All responses were anonymous to ensure honesty and reduce response bias.

Survey results were analysed using descriptive statistics (e.g., averages, frequency counts) to summarise responses. Open-ended answers are reviewed qualitatively to identify additional insights not captured by the closed questions.

This research is exploratory and includes a small number of companies, so the results cannot be fully generalised. However, the mixed-methods approach gives useful insight into employee retention in the Estonian industrial sector. By using both interviews and surveys, the findings become more reliable and practical, especially for HR professionals who want to improve how they retain blue-collar workers.

2.2 Survey Results and Comparison with Interview Findings

With both quantitative and open-ended questions, the survey offered a comprehensive view of what matters most to workers, how satisfied they are in key areas such as supervisor support, communication, and career opportunities, and whether they would recommend their employer to others. The results presented in this section are analyzed both statistically and thematically and are compared directly with the themes that emerged from the interviews.

To understand what blue-collar employees value most in their workplace, the survey included a section where respondents rated the importance of various employment-related factors. These factors ranged from basic needs, like safety and salary, to psychological and developmental aspects, such as recognition, communication, and learning opportunities.

Table 7 presents the average importance and satisfaction scores (on a 1–5 Likert scale) for each workplace retention factor, based on responses from all participants. The accompanying standard deviations show how much individual responses varied around the average. Larger values indicate greater differences in how respondents rated a particular factor.

Table 7

Importance ratings of workplace retention factors

Retention factor	M (importance)	SD	M (satisfaction)	SD
Safe and healthy environment	4.6	0.7	3.4	1.3
Work-life balance	4.6	0.7	3.8	1.1
Competitive salary	4.6	0.8	3.1	0.9
Meaningful and interesting work	4.4	0.8	3.2	1.1
Health and other benefits	4.4	0.9	3.6	1.1
Support from management	4.3	0.7	3.6	1.2
Opportunity to learn new skills	4.3	0.9	3.3	1.1
Sense of significance and respect	4.3	0.8	3.3	1.3
Communication with management	4.1	1.1	3.4	1.2
Training and development	4.1	1.1	3.3	1.2
Opportunity of internal advancement	3.9	1.2	3.1	1.3

Note: M = Mean (average); SD = Standard deviation.

Source: Compiled by author based on survey results.

The survey revealed that a safe and healthy environment and work-life balance are among the most important factors for blue-collar workers. However, satisfaction with

work-life balance was lower. This gap suggests that while employees highly value balance and well-being, their actual experiences do not always meet these expectations.

In the open-ended questions, respondents often mentioned shift schedules, long hours, and physical exhaustion as reasons for dissatisfaction. Several comments highlighted the lack of flexibility, particularly in rotating shifts, which many workers found tiring or difficult to manage alongside personal responsibilities.

These concerns were confirmed by the HR managers. All five interviewees acknowledged that work-life balance is increasingly important, especially for older employees and workers with families. Companies B and D have taken steps to address this. For example, Company B avoids night shifts altogether and offers early evening shifts for those with caregiving responsibilities. Company C's HR head said:

"We try to keep schedules stable and predictable. That's what helps people stay."
(Interview C)

Company D shared a similar approach. They rarely use full night shifts and aim to maintain consistent daytime hours. However, the HR manager also noted that younger workers are often unwilling to work rotating or evening shifts, making it harder to fill certain roles.

Another important point was the physical environment of the workplace. Employees mentioned modern break areas, free coffee, and ergonomic equipment as small but meaningful factors that helped make their daily routine easier. For example, Company B has invested in clean and comfortable break rooms, and Company E offers access to a gym and swimming pool.

Some HR managers also mentioned transportation difficulties, especially for evening shifts or workers living outside urban areas. While companies tried to help by compensating fuel or offering flexible start times, poor public transport remained a problem in certain regions.

Despite efforts, production work still has limitations. Manual labor, machinery, and output targets reduce how much flexibility can be offered. However, a few HR managers mentioned automation and cross-training as potential ways to ease these limits. Allowing employees to switch between tasks could reduce both physical tension and mental tiredness.

Salary and benefits were among the next most important topics raised by both blue-collar workers and HR managers. In the survey, competitive salary was rated extremely important and health and other benefits followed closely. However, actual satisfaction levels with these factors were much lower. This reveals a significant gap between expectations and

reality. In open-ended responses, employees frequently expressed frustration with low wages, lack of raises, and unclear or inconsistent bonus policies. Many respondents stated that low pay was the main reason they had considered leaving their jobs.

The HR interviews reflected similar concerns. All five HR managers agreed that fair compensation is essential, even if it alone cannot guarantee employee loyalty. Company C's HR manager explained:

"Salary is always the first thing they compare when deciding whether to stay. If it doesn't meet expectations, no benefit will make up for it." (Interview C)

Some companies have already taken steps to improve their compensation strategies. For example, Company B provides a comprehensive wellness package worth over 6000€ per year, including mental health support, physiotherapy, and vision care. Company C uses a performance-based bonus system, which employees said was clear and predictable. This company also had the lowest turnover intention in the survey.

Another recurring theme was the lack of awareness among employees about the benefits available to them. Although companies offered perks like sports compensation, paid family leave, or access to gyms, many workers said they weren't aware of these options or didn't know how to use them. Company B's representative said:

"We try to do a lot for our people, but it's useless if they don't know about it." (Interview B)

Therefore, this brings up a critical issue. Just offering benefits is not enough, meaning that they must also be clearly explained, easily accessible and seen as valuable by employees.

Leadership and communication are important relational aspects of the workplace. In the survey, support from management received a high importance rating, as well as communication with management. However, satisfaction scores were notably lower.

Interview findings support this. Most HR managers agreed that visibility, openness, and trust are essential for retention. In Company B, the HR manager described how they regularly walk through the production floor to talk with workers and answer small concerns. This kind of informal interaction helps build relationships and makes employees feel seen. The HR manager of the same company noted:

"If they don't know who you are, they won't come to you when problems appear." (Interview B)

In Company C, monthly team meetings are held where managers share business updates and KPIs with employees. These meetings allow for two-way communication and

give workers a clearer picture of the company's direction. The HR specialist there explained that these sessions also allow employees to give feedback and suggest improvements.

Trust and fairness were also recurring themes. Respondents in both the survey and interviews emphasized the need for transparent communication, especially about bonuses, promotions, and scheduling. Several workers noted that rumours spread quickly when there is no clear information from management.

Feeling recognized and valued at work plays a crucial role in keeping employees motivated and committed. In the survey, the average importance score for feeling valued and respected was quite high, showing that employees see this as a core need. However, satisfaction with recognition for good work was much lower.

This difference between how important and how satisfied workers feel shows a common problem for blue-collar workers, they think their hard work is often ignored or not valued. In the survey comments, workers said that recognition is rare, only connected to meeting production goals or not given in a personal or meaningful way.

In the interviews, most HR managers agreed that recognition is essential for motivation. Several described formal recognition systems. For example, Company D has biannual awards where employees are nominated by colleagues and recognized in company-wide meetings. Company C offers performance-based bonuses that reward not just output but also teamwork and quality.

At the same time, poorly designed recognition systems can cause problems. For example, Company A's former bonus system focused too much on individual performance, which created competition instead of collaboration and was eventually removed. The HR manager explained that employees became discouraged when their contributions were ignored unless they directly increased output. Some companies have shifted toward team-based recognition, combining both performance and behavior indicators. In Company D bonuses are tied to productivity, safety, and teamwork, which makes the reward system more balanced.

While production work is often perceived as repetitive or routine, employees still seek meaning and variety in their daily tasks. The survey showed that meaningful and interesting work is rated highly. This result places it among the top five most valued aspects of work, above even some tangible benefits.

Company A tackled repetition by offering task rotation, which allowed workers to move between different machines or roles. This gave employees a sense of control and helped reduce physical and mental tiredness.

Company D asked workers for ideas to improve processes, letting them have a say in how things are done. Some of these ideas were used, and workers were praised for their suggestions, making them feel more involved and respected.

Learning and skill development are key elements of long-term employee engagement, even in production roles. The survey data confirms that workers place a high value on development opportunities. The importance of learning new skills and training opportunities was rated relatively high by respondents. Despite this, satisfaction with actual training and development was noticeably lower.

This gap suggests that employees are eager to develop professionally, but often feel that current training systems are limited. In open-ended survey comments, employees mentioned that training was often repetitive or focused only on new hires.

A few of the company's interviewees also mentioned plans to expand their internal training options, but admitted that limited time and production pressure make it difficult to release workers from work for learning sessions. Some companies have explored cross-training, allowing employees to rotate between different roles or machines.

However, not all employees feel the same way. One HR specialist pointed out that older workers often prefer stability over learning, while younger workers want clear and fast development paths. This means training programs should be adjusted for different age groups and learning needs.

Career growth and the chance to move into more responsible roles is a complex issue in blue-collar positions. Survey responses indicated that while internal advancement is considered moderately important, satisfaction with career opportunities within the company was among the lowest. This suggests that many workers are interested in professional growth but feel that their current employer does not offer clear or accessible paths to achieve it.

HR managers also acknowledged that opportunities for career growth are limited in production work. Company D described a situation, where some blue-collar employees were promoted to supervisory roles, but not always with good results. The HR manager admitted that technically skilled workers were sometimes promoted without enough leadership training, which led to frustration:

“They were good workers, but not ready to be managers. We need to be more careful before promoting.” (Interview D)

In general, HR managers said that promotions to high-level office jobs are rare. Most often, people move one step up, like from operator to team leader and there are only a few examples of blue-collar workers moving to higher-level positions.

Workers of different ages and backgrounds often want different things from their jobs. In the survey, most employees were aged 35 or older. Only a few were under 25. This helps explain why things like job stability, health, and balance were so important to many respondents. HR managers said in interviews that older employees usually stay longer and are more loyal. For example, all of the blue-collar workers, who were over 55+, had been working in the companies for over 5 years.

Younger workers, however, were more likely to leave. HR managers said that younger employees often want quick growth or better pay. If they don't see a clear future in the company, they leave. Some younger survey respondents also said they didn't feel like they had chances to develop or move up.

There were also differences between cultural and language groups. Many teams had Estonian, Russian, and Ukrainian workers. This made teamwork harder in some places, especially when people didn't speak the same language.

Both the survey and interviews showed that blue-collar workers value safety, fairness, recognition, and the chance to grow. While many companies have taken steps to improve these areas, there are still clear gaps between what employees need and what they currently experience.

2.3 Discussion

This chapter discusses the main findings of the empirical research in detail and compares them to previous studies introduced in the theoretical framework. It also develops concrete recommendations based on both the survey and the interviews.

To better understand where the biggest mismatches between employee expectations and experiences occur, a gap analysis was conducted. This analysis compared the average importance and satisfaction scores for each workplace retention factor, based on survey data.

The results are presented in Table X, which visualises the size of the gap between how important a factor is to employees and how satisfied they are with it in practice. A larger gap indicates a more significant shortfall and suggests that the current company practices may not be meeting employee needs in that area.

Table 8

Importance-satisfaction gap

Retention Factor	Gap
Safe and healthy environment	1.2
Work-life balance	0.8
Competitive salary	1.5
Meaningful and interesting work	1.2
Health and other benefits	0.8
Support from management	0.7
Opportunity to learn new skills	1
Sense of significance and respect	1
Communication with management	0.7
Training and development	0.8
Opportunity of internal advancement	0.8

Note: All retention factors listed show a higher average importance rating compared to satisfaction, indicating a gap in meeting employee expectations.

Colour scale: green = low gap; yellow = moderate gap; red = high gap.

Source: Compiled by author based on survey results.

Survey results and interviews showed that a safe and healthy work environment is one of the most important factors for blue-collar workers. This supports the findings of Aman-Ullah et al. (2022), who found that safety at work strongly affects employees' decision to stay. In this study, safety received high importance ratings, and while satisfaction levels were fairly good, employees still noted issues such as outdated equipment, poor ergonomics, and a lack of regular health check-ups.

Most HR managers saw safety as a legal responsibility and said that the necessary standards are already in place. However, the findings suggest that companies could go further by offering more visible and proactive safety efforts. Employees appreciate actions such as regular training, ergonomic improvements, and on-site health initiatives. One manager noted that including workers in risk assessments increases their engagement and sense of responsibility.

To better meet employee needs, companies should regularly review working conditions with employee input, invest in ergonomic improvements, and provide training for supervisors to spot early signs of fatigue or injury.

Compensation was identified as one of the most important retention factors. This is in line with studies by Nawab and Bhatti (2011) and Kossivi et al. (2016), who found that fair and competitive salaries improve employee commitment. In this study, many workers said their current pay did not reflect the physical demands or responsibilities of their jobs.

HR managers acknowledged the importance of salary but explained that wages are often restricted by collective agreements or budget limitations. Nevertheless, dissatisfaction with pay was high, particularly among older employees with long experience. Benefits, such as health insurance and paid leave, were also valued by workers. However, awareness of available benefits was sometimes low, indicating a need for clearer communication.

To improve retention, companies should regularly assess their pay structures and consider offering bonuses or extra days off as signs of appreciation. They should also communicate benefit packages more clearly and offer flexible or personalised options when possible.

Work-life balance was another area where there was a clear gap between what employees consider important and how satisfied they are. This supports earlier findings by Kossek et al. (2011), who showed that work-life balance reduces stress and turnover. In this study, workers were concerned about long shifts, unpredictable scheduling, and overtime. Although HR managers recognised the importance of balance, they said it was difficult to implement in continuous production environments. Despite this, some had introduced flexible practices like shift swaps or more predictable schedules, which were positively received by workers.

These findings suggest that even small adjustments in scheduling and respecting employees' time can make a significant difference. Companies should also offer support for mental well-being and promote a culture where personal time is respected.

Employees in the study rated recognition and supervisor support as very important. Although the gap between importance and satisfaction was smaller compared to other factors, satisfaction with these aspects was still relatively low. This confirms the research by Eisenberger et al. (2002) and Tessema et al. (2013), which found that feeling appreciated and supported increases employee retention.

Although many companies have some formal recognition programs, such as employee awards or bonus systems, these were not always seen as personal or fair. HR managers admitted that supervisors do not always provide enough feedback due to time pressure or lack of training.

To improve this area, companies should train supervisors in people management and communication. Recognition should be regular and personalised, not only based on performance metrics. Even simple feedback and involvement in team decisions can improve motivation and job satisfaction.

This study also found that job characteristics such as variety, autonomy, and skill use are linked to higher motivation and retention. This supports the Job Characteristics Model by Hackman and Oldham (1976) and the findings by Soenanta et al. (2021), who showed that good job design increases engagement.

Employees appreciated opportunities for task rotation, involvement in improvements, or making small decisions in their daily work. These options were often not difficult to implement but had a clear positive impact on motivation. HR managers said that even though production work is often repetitive, small changes can make a big difference.

To support motivation, companies should give employees more opportunities to use their skills, provide variety in tasks, and include them in decisions related to their work.

Opportunities for development and growth were rated moderately important, but satisfaction was low. This confirms the findings of Hassan et al. (2013), who stated that training opportunities support employee loyalty. Younger employees in particular wanted learning and advancement, while older employees focused more on job stability and security, which supports the findings of Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2006).

HR managers said that training is difficult to organise due to time constraints and workload. Some companies offer promotions or skill-based rewards, but these are not always well known by workers. Employees often said they were not aware of training or did not feel encouraged to participate.

To improve this, companies should develop small-scale learning opportunities like mentoring or short internal training. They should also communicate clearly about career paths and adapt their retention strategies to different generations within the workforce.

The findings of this study highlight that while many Estonian production companies have implemented various retention strategies, there are still significant gaps between what employees value and how they perceive the current practices. Key areas such as safety, fair compensation, work-life balance, recognition etc. all play an important role in employee retention, but the effectiveness of these strategies depends heavily on how well they are communicated and adapted to workers' needs. The results show that employees appreciate visible efforts and personalised approaches, while also expecting fairness and clarity. To retain blue-collar workers more effectively, companies must adopt a more employee-centred

approach, which means listening actively, adapting flexibly and evaluating the impact of their practices.

Conclusion

This research aimed to identify retention strategies for blue-collar workers in Estonian production companies by examining current management practices and employee perceptions, with the goal of providing informed recommendations.

In the theoretical part, the thesis explained that employee retention is influenced by many different factors that work together. These include fair salary, good working conditions, support from supervisors, recognition, work-life balance, job variety, and chances to learn and grow. These factors are not separate. They need to be part of a bigger strategy where one supports the other. The theory also pointed out that employees stay longer in companies when they feel safe, respected, and valued. In addition, the importance of company culture, personal motivation, and clear communication were highlighted as key elements in successful retention.

The empirical part of the study used a mixed-methods approach. It included five interviews with HR managers and a survey answered by 132 blue-collar workers. The interviews showed that companies are aware of the importance of retention and have many strategies in place—such as safety programs, reward systems, and training. However, the survey revealed that employees are not always satisfied with these areas. In fact, the average satisfaction level was lower than the importance rating for every factor measured.

The biggest gap was in competitive salary. Workers felt that their pay does not reflect the hard and physical work they do. Other big gaps were in meaningful work and physical working conditions. These results show that even if companies offer certain benefits or programs, they are not always enough or are not communicated clearly. Employees need to see and feel the value of these efforts. Some other areas—like support from supervisors and internal communication—also had gaps, but they were smaller. This means that these areas are working better, but still need some improvement.

It also became clear that not all employees want the same things. Younger workers are more interested in training and future career options, while older employees focus more on job security and fair treatment. This means that companies should not use one single solution for everyone. Retention strategies need to be flexible and take into account different needs.

Although this research was limited to a small number of companies and participants, it still gives a helpful overview of what matters most to blue-collar workers in Estonia. It shows that successful retention strategies are not only about offering good conditions, but also about listening to employees, explaining things clearly, and making sure that company policies match workers' everyday needs.

In summary, the study shows that companies can reduce turnover and improve satisfaction by using a clear, well-communicated, and employee-centred approach. When workers feel heard, respected, and supported, they are more likely to stay and contribute to a stable and motivated workforce.

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Appendix A

Interview questions for HR

Background Information:

- Could you briefly describe your company's blue-collar workforce? For example, how many employees are there, what is the approximate age distribution, and how would you describe turnover in general?
- Could you briefly describe your role within the company?
- How long have you been in this position?

Recruitment and Retention Challenges:

- What are the main challenges your company faces in recruiting blue-collar workers?
- How do these recruitment challenges affect retention or turnover?

Current Retention Strategies:

- What are the key employee retention strategies your company currently implements for blue-collar workers?
- How have these strategies evolved over time?

Effectiveness of Strategies:

- In your opinion, which retention strategies have been most effective, and why?
- Have there been any strategies that did not work as anticipated?
- How do you assess employee satisfaction with these strategies - formally (surveys etc.) or informally (e.g. conversations, observations)?
- How do you measure the effectiveness of your retention strategies (e.g., turnover rates, employee feedback, performance)?

Cost:

- Do you have an estimate for how much it costs to recruit, train and onboard one blue-collar employee?

Challenges and Adaptations:

- What are the biggest challenges you face in retaining skilled blue-collar workers?
- How has your approach to retention changed in response to these challenges?
- Are there differences in turnover or satisfaction based on age groups, shifts, or departments?

Feedback and Improvement:

- Do you use exit interviews to learn why employees leave? If yes, then are there any common themes that have come up?
- Are there any improvements or changes planned based on recent feedback?

Future Directions:

- What changes or innovations in retention strategies are you considering for the future?
- How do you see the role of HR evolving in relation to retaining blue-collar staff?

Appendix B

Questionnaire for blue-collar workers

Hello!

I am Triinu Veider, a third-year student of Business Administration at the University of Tartu School of Economics. In my bachelor's thesis, I am researching which employee retention strategies help manufacturing companies in Estonia better maintain employee satisfaction and loyalty. The goal is to understand which HR practices – such as mentoring, recognition, flexibility, and internal development – influence employees' desire to stay with the company long-term.

I am seeking responses from production and warehouse workers employed in manufacturing companies. Your opinion is very important because only by considering employees' own experiences can we assess how effective or lacking the current strategies really are.

The questionnaire is anonymous, and the responses will be used solely for my thesis. It takes about 10 minutes to complete. By answering, you consent to participate in the study and allow your data to be used in analytical form.

Thank you for taking the time to respond!

1. Age

- Under 25
- 25–34
- 35–44
- 45–54
- 55 or older

2. Gender

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

3. Shift type

- Day
- Night
- Rotating

4. Work experience

- Less than 1 year
- 1–5 years
- More than 5 years

5. How satisfied are you with the employer's efforts to retain employees?

(1 = Not at all satisfied, 5 = Very satisfied)

- 1 2 3 4 5

6. Have you thought about leaving your job?

Yes

No

If yes, what were the main reasons?

(open answer)

6. What is the main reason you work at this company?

(open answer)

8. How important are the following factors for you to want to stay at the company?

(Rate on a scale: 1 = Not important at all, 5 = Very important)

Fair salary

Health and other benefits

Supervisor support

Recognition and feeling valued

Opportunities for internal promotion

Training and development opportunities

Communication with management

Work-life balance

Safe and healthy working conditions

Meaningful and interesting work

Opportunity to learn new job skills

9. How well do the following areas function in your company?

(Rate on a scale: 1 = Not functioning at all, 5 = Functioning very well)

Salary level

Employee benefits (e.g., health insurance, meals, transport)

Training and retraining

Work-life balance

Recognition for good work

Opportunity to learn new job skills

Supervisor support

Career opportunities within the company

Communication with management

Meaningful and interesting work

Safe and healthy working conditions

10. What should change for you to want to work longer at this company?

11. If you were offered a similar job at another company, would you consider leaving?

Why or why not?

12. How likely are you to recommend this company as a good workplace to a friend or family member?

(0 = Definitely would not recommend, 10 = Definitely would recommend)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

13. Is there anything else you would like to share about your work experience at this company?

Resüme

TÖÖTAJATE HOIDMISE STRATEEGIAD TOOTMISTÖÖTAJATELE EESTI TÖÖSTUSETTEVÕTETES

Triinu Veider

Käesoleva bakalaureusetöö eesmärk oli tuvastada töötajate hoidmise strateegiaid lihttöölise jaoks Eesti tööstusettevõtetes, uurides juhtimispraktikaid ja töötajate hinnanguid, et teha teadlikke ja praktilisi soovitusi. Töö ühendab teoreetilise raamistiku ja empiirilised andmed, et pakkuda mitmetahuline ülevaade personalistrateegiast tööstusettevõtetes. Töö teoreetilises osas analüüsiti erinevaid töötajate hoidmisega seotud tegureid, nagu konkurentsivõimeline palk, ohutud ja tervislikud töötingimused, juhtide toetus ja tunnustamine, arenguvõimalused, töö- ja eraelu tasakaal ning töö sisu ja tähenduslikkus. Lisaks käsitleti Eesti tööturu konteksti ja selle eripärasid, mis võivad mõjutada lihttöölise püsimist organisatsioonis.

Empiirilises osas viidi läbi 5 intervjuud Eesti tööstusettevõtete personalijuhtidega ja küsitlus 132 lihttöölise seas. Intervjuude eesmärk oli mõista juhtide vaatenurka ja olemasolevaid praktikaid, samal ajal kui küsitlus aitas koguda andmeid töötajate tegelike kogemuste ja hinnangute kohta. Tulemused näitasid, et töötajate jaoks on kõige olulisemad tööohutus, õiglane ja motiveeriv tasustamine, stabiilne tööaeg, arenguvõimalused ning positiivne ja toetav töökeskkond.

Kuigi paljud ettevõtted rakendavad erinevaid hoidmise strateegiaid, ilmnes uuringust, et nende tõhusus sõltub suuresti sellest, kuidas töötajad neid tajuvad ja kas nad tunnevad, et neid väärtustatakse. Eriti suur oli erinevus ootuste ja rahulolu vahel näiteks arenguvõimaluste ja tunnustamise puhul. Seetõttu on oluline, et hoidmise strateegiad oleksid töötajakesksed, paindlikud ja hästi kommuniqueeritud.

Töö lõpus esitati praktilised soovitusid Eesti tööstusettevõtetele töötajate hoidmise parandamiseks. Need hõlmasid muu hulgas töötasude ja soodustuste ülevaatamist, juhendajate koolitamist, arenguvõimaluste kättesaadavuse parandamist ning erinevate töötajagruppide (noored vs kogenud töötajad) vajadustega arvestamist.

Kokkuvõttes näitab töö, et töötajate hoidmine on keeruline, kuid hallatav protsess, mis nõuab süsteemset ja töötajate ootustele vastavat lähenemist.

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