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Employee Benefits, Job Satisfaction, and Retention: The Role of Career Growth and Workplace Environment

Arjit Srivastava[1] and Prof. (Dr.) Sameer A. Kulkarni[2]
[1]Student, MBA – Human Resource, Amity Business School, Amity University Mumbai
[2]Faculty Guide, Amity Business School, Amity University Mumbai

Abstract : *Employee benefits are an important part of the employment proposition, but employees' evaluations of benefits may not, by themselves, explain job satisfaction or their willingness to remain with an organisation. This exploratory study examines employee perceptions of benefits, job satisfaction and retention-related attitudes in a speciality-chemicals manufacturing setting, using survey findings collected during a Summer Internship Programme (SIP). A structured questionnaire was distributed to 50 permanent employees with HR support; 27 completed responses were received (54% response rate). Convenience sampling was used, and participation was voluntary. Descriptive statistics and Spearman correlations reported in the SIP are presented. Respondents reported favourable section means for benefits (4.02/5), job satisfaction (3.98/5) and retention-related perceptions (3.93/5). Career growth and a positive work environment were selected most frequently among factors associated with staying. The reported benefits–job satisfaction association was positive (ρ=0.387, p=0.046), while the benefits–retention-related association was positive but not statistically significant (ρ=0.264, p=0.184). Because respondent-level data were unavailable for independent verification, these statistics are treated as reported exploratory findings. The study recommends a proportionate HR response: validate benefit access and communication, pilot career-development visibility, strengthen fair recognition, diagnose work-life balance concerns, and evaluate any intervention before scaling.*

Keywords: Employee benefits, job satisfaction, and retention: The role of career growth and workplace environment

I. INTRODUCTION

Employee benefits are a meaningful component of total rewards. They can help employees manage health, financial security, leave and other work–life needs, while also shaping how employees perceive the organisation's care and fairness. Yet a favourable assessment of benefits does not necessarily translate into the same level of job satisfaction or an intention to stay. Employees may also consider career development, day-to-day work environment, workload, recognition, supervisor support and opportunities available elsewhere.

This study is based on an HR Summer Internship Programme at Mavryntel Speciality Chemicals, a pseudonym used in the associated teaching case because permission to identify the organisation by its real name has not been obtained. The SIP involved exposure to recruitment support, onboarding, employee documentation, attendance and leave records, and employee-file maintenance. A short employee questionnaire provided a practical opportunity to explore perceptions of benefits, satisfaction and retention-related attitudes within the organisation.

The central question is therefore not whether benefits matter, but how employees' benefit perceptions sit alongside other aspects of their work experience—and what HR can reasonably prioritise based on a small exploratory survey.

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1.1 Problem statement

The SIP survey summary indicates generally favourable perceptions of employee benefits and job satisfaction. However, career growth and positive work environment were selected more frequently than benefits as factors associated with staying, while work-life balance and the statement "I rarely think about leaving" received comparatively lower mean scores. These findings provide a useful HR diagnostic, but the small, non-random sample cannot establish the causes of satisfaction or actual employee turnover.

1.2 Objectives and research questions

Objectives

- Describe respondents' perceptions of employee benefits.
- Summarise job satisfaction and retention-related perceptions.
- Report the associations between benefit perceptions and job satisfaction and retention-related perceptions, as recorded in the SIP.
- Identify employee-selected priorities and develop evidence-aligned HR recommendations.

Research questions

- **RQ1:** How did respondents evaluate employee benefits?
- **RQ2:** What levels of job satisfaction and retention-related perceptions were reported?
- **RQ3:** What factors did respondents select as important for staying, and what areas did they identify for improvement?
- **RQ4:** What associations between benefits and the two attitudinal constructs were reported in the SIP?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMING

2.1 Employee Benefits and Employee Attitudes

Employee benefits form part of the broader employment proposition, alongside pay, work conditions, development and the day-to-day experience of being treated fairly. Earlier reviews describe benefits as a varied area of HR practice, with questions extending beyond the type of benefit offered to its design, administration and perceived value (Dulebohn et al., 2009). In practice, employees may not evaluate benefits only by whether a policy exists. They may also consider whether eligibility is clear, whether access is fair, whether the benefit is useful for their circumstances and whether the organisation communicates it consistently. This distinction matters in interpreting the present survey: the questionnaire captures employee perceptions, rather than an audit of benefit availability or utilisation.

Recent evidence strengthens this distinction. Hong, Ford, and Jong (2024), in a meta-analysis of 134 studies and 260,604 participants, found that benefit availability and employees' subjective evaluations were related to several work attitudes and well-being outcomes, with perceived organisational support partly accounting for these relationships. Their synthesis also suggests that benefit types may relate differently to outcomes. The implication for this study is not that the same effects can be assumed in a small speciality-chemicals workplace, but that employee evaluations of benefits are worth examining alongside satisfaction and retention-related attitudes. Benefit perceptions should therefore be interpreted as one part of the employee experience, not as a complete measure of it.

2.2 Social Exchange Theory and Organisational Support

Social Exchange Theory (SET) provides one way to understand why employees may respond positively to benefits and other HR practices. In an employment relationship, employees may interpret valued resources and fair treatment as evidence that the organisation recognises their contribution; favourable attitudes can, in turn, reflect a reciprocal response. Ko and Hur (2014) examine benefits together with procedural justice and managerial trustworthiness, reinforcing that benefit experiences sit within a wider exchange relationship. Organisational Support Theory complements this explanation by focusing on employees' general beliefs about whether the organisation values their contribution and cares about their well-being. Reviews identify fairness, leadership and HR practices as important

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sources of perceived organisational support (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Eisenberger et al., 2020). In the current context, benefit communication, fair implementation and HR support may be relevant signals—but the available survey cannot directly test perceived organisational support as a mediator.

2.3 Job Satisfaction and Why Employees Stay

Retention is also more complex than job satisfaction alone. Job Embeddedness Theory focuses on why employees stay, including their links with people and groups, perceived fit with their work and community, and the sacrifices associated with leaving (Mitchell et al., 2001). A review by Lee, Burch, and Mitchell (2014) discusses embeddedness as a broader explanation of staying that complements satisfaction and commitment. This lens is relevant to the survey's emphasis on career growth and a positive work environment, which were selected more frequently than benefits among the reported stay factors. However, the questionnaire does not measure job embeddedness as a validated construct; the theory is used here to interpret the pattern cautiously, not to claim that embeddedness was tested.

2.4 Applied Research Gap and Contribution

The applied gap addressed here is modest and specific. The paper brings together employees' evaluations of benefits, job satisfaction and retention-related perceptions in one internship-based survey within a speciality-chemicals organisation. The framing draws on Social Exchange Theory and Organisational Support Theory to consider benefits as possible signals of organisational care and fair treatment, while Job Embeddedness Theory helps situate career growth and workplace relationships among reasons employees may stay. The study does not test a full theoretical model, measure perceived organisational support or job embeddedness as validated constructs, or establish a causal relationship. Its contribution is a context-specific employee snapshot that can inform HR diagnosis and follow-up measurement, rather than a new theory or a generalizable estimate.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design and setting

A descriptive, cross-sectional quantitative design was used in the SIP. The survey was conducted at Mavryntel Speciality Chemicals, the pseudonym used in this paper and the associated case study. Data collection took place over three days during the internship, with HR support. Employees were invited to complete the questionnaire voluntarily during their available free time; participation was not described as mandatory.

3.2 Population, sampling and response

The SIP recorded 83 permanent employees: 33 at Head Office and 50 at the Factory. Fifty questionnaires were distributed and 27 completed responses were received, resulting in a response rate of 54%. Convenience sampling was used, based on employee availability and willingness to participate. The sample included 16 Head Office respondents (59.3%) and 11 Factory respondents (40.7%). This distribution differs from the reported workforce distribution, and Factory employees are underrepresented in the sample. Only one respondent was recorded at worker level, limiting representation of operational employees.

3.3 Instrument and measurement

The structured questionnaire included a respondent profile, Section B (employee benefits: 13 statements), Section C (job satisfaction: 10 statements), Section D (retention-related perceptions: 7 statements), and Section E (multiple-choice priorities and suggestions). The Likert statements used a five-point scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The SIP summary reports section means and item means. The original questionnaire and response-level file were not available during this revision; consequently, item wording, composite construction, missing-data handling and reliability cannot be independently checked.

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3.4 Data analysis

Frequencies, percentages, weighted means and Spearman rank correlations were reported in the SIP. The correlations in this paper are transcribed from the SIP summary and are not recalculated. Multiple-response questions are reported as counts and percentages of the 27 respondents; because respondents could select more than one option, their percentages do not sum to 100%.

3.5 Ethics, confidentiality and data provenance

The SIP describes voluntary participation and HR-supported distribution. The available materials do not document formal ethics approval or publication consent. The real organisation's name is not used in this manuscript because approval to identify it has not been obtained. Mavryntel Speciality Chemicals is a pseudonym, consistent with the associated teaching case. The survey, case and paper draw on the same SIP context and same survey evidence; they are not separate or independent datasets. No respondent names or personally identifying responses are presented.

IV. RESULTS

4.1 Respondent profile

The respondent profile indicates that the sample was concentrated among employees aged 25–35, employees with less than two years' service, and executive-level respondents. These characteristics should be considered when interpreting the results.

Profile	Category	n	%
Age	Below 25	7	25.9%
Age	25–35	14	51.9%
Age	36–45	4	14.8%
Age	Above 45	2	7.4%
Tenure	Below 2 years	18	66.7%
Tenure	2–5 years	7	25.9%
Tenure	Above 5 years	2	7.4%
Job level	Executive	20	74.1%
Job level	Management	6	22.2%
Job level	Worker	1	3.7%
Location	Head Office	16	59.3%
Location	Factory	11	40.7%

Location	Workforce n	Workforce %	Sample n	Sample %
Head Office	33	39.8%	16	59.3%
Factory	50	60.2%	11	40.7%
Total	83	100.0%	27	100.0%

Table 2. Workforce and respondent distribution comparison. Sample distribution is not proportionate to reported workforce composition.

4.2 Overall section means

The reported section means were favourable and relatively close to one another. Benefits had the highest section mean, followed by job satisfaction and retention-related perceptions. The differences are small and should not be interpreted as statistically tested differences between constructs.

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Construct	Reported mean (out of 5)
Employee benefits (Section B)	4.02
Job satisfaction (Section C)	3.98
Retention-related perceptions (Section D)	3.93

Table 3. Reported section mean scores. Source: SIP summary; not independently recalculated.

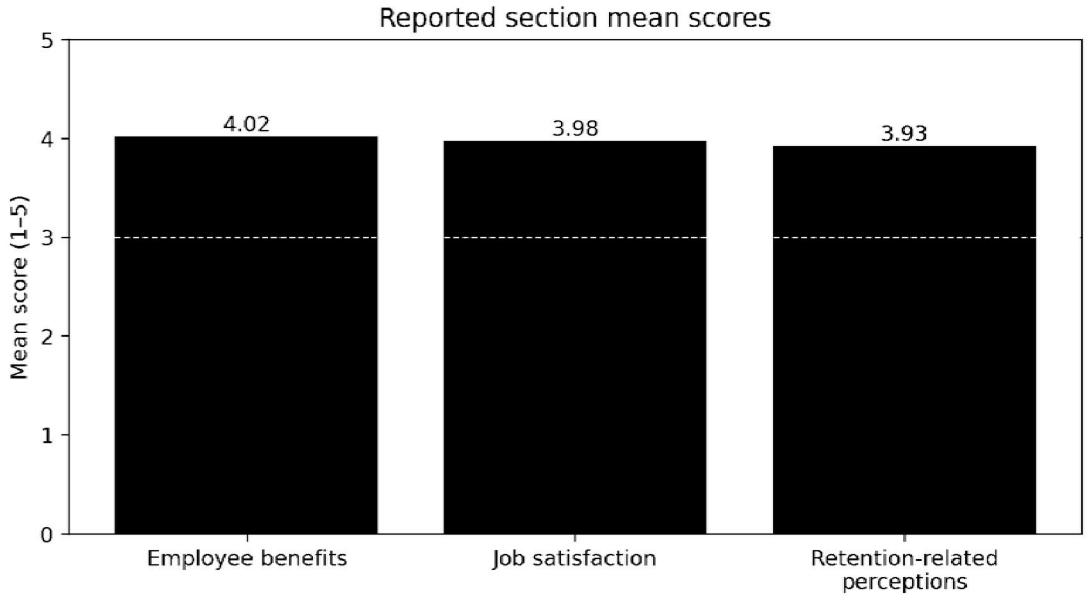


Figure 1. Reported section mean scores.

4.3 Employee benefits

The benefits section mean was 4.02/5. Benefit awareness recorded the highest reported item mean (4.26), while adequacy of statutory benefits was 4.19. Items concerning fairness/transparency, leave, recognition/rewards and benefit-related satisfaction were also generally positive, although the section summary indicates scope for continued listening and review.

The categorical satisfaction response showed 6 respondents (22.2%) very satisfied, 18 (66.7%) satisfied and 3 (11.1%) neutral; no dissatisfied responses were reported. Thus, 24 of 27 respondents (88.9%) were satisfied or very satisfied. This is a respondent-level descriptive result, not an estimate of all employees' satisfaction.

Satisfaction category	n	%
Very satisfied	6	22.2%
Satisfied	18	66.7%
Neutral	3	11.1%
Dissatisfied	0	0.0%
Very dissatisfied	0	0.0%
Total	27	100.0%

Table 4. Overall categorical satisfaction with benefits.

Across the 13 benefit statements, awareness of benefits was the highest reported item mean. Communication, eligibility understanding, statutory benefits and welfare/HR support were also rated positively. Lower item means were recorded for leave, fairness/transparency, recognition/rewards and overall satisfaction, although these remained generally favourable.

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Benefits item	Mean / 5
Awareness of benefits	4.26
Adequacy of statutory benefits	4.19
Understanding eligibility criteria	4.07
Alternate Saturday leave policy	4.07
Communication of benefit policies	4.04
Welfare facilities	4.04
HR Department support	4.04
Fair implementation	4.04
Training and development	3.93
Leave benefits	3.89
Fairness and transparency	3.89
Recognition and rewards	3.89
Overall benefit satisfaction item	3.96

Table 5. Reported item means for employee benefits (Section B).

When asked which benefits were most important, respondents selected financial benefits most frequently, followed by medical benefits. Leave, welfare facilities and training/development were also selected by six respondents each.

Benefit selected as important	Selections	% of respondents
Financial benefits	15	55.6%
Medical benefits	10	37.0%
Leave benefits	6	22.2%
Welfare facilities	6	22.2%
Training and development	6	22.2%
Other safety activities	1	3.7%

Table 6. Benefits selected as important (multiple response).

4.4 Job satisfaction

The job-satisfaction section mean was 3.98/5. Satisfaction with the current job recorded the highest reported item mean (4.19), followed by support to perform the job efficiently (4.11) and the working environment (4.04). The work-life balance item recorded 3.81, while recognition/appreciation recorded 3.89. These relatively lower item means can guide follow-up questions, but they do not identify the cause of any concern.

Job-satisfaction item	Mean / 5
Satisfaction with current job	4.19
Support to perform job efficiently	4.11
Working environment	4.04
Overall HR practices	4.00
Feeling valued and respected	3.96
Achievement and fulfilment	3.93
Benefits and job satisfaction	3.93
Benefits and motivation	3.93
Recognition and appreciation	3.89
Work-life balance	3.81

Table 7. Reported item means for job satisfaction (Section C).

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4.5 Retention-related perceptions and factors associated with staying

The retention-related section mean was 3.93/5. The item concerning benefits strengthening organisational commitment recorded 4.26; willingness to recommend the organisation and willingness to continue working each recorded 4.19. The statement "I rarely think about leaving" had a lower mean of 3.30. It should not be read as evidence of actual turnover or a retention crisis.

Retention-related item	Mean / 5
Benefits strengthen organisational commitment	4.26
Willingness to recommend organisation	4.19
Willingness to continue working	4.19
Benefits encourage employees to stay	4.00
Preference for long-term career	3.93
Better benefits and reduced intention to leave	3.63
Rarely thinking about leaving	3.30

Table 8. Reported item means for retention-related perceptions (Section D).

Factor selected	Selections	% of respondents
Career growth opportunities	10	37.0%
Positive work environment	9	33.3%
Competitive salary	6	22.2%
Employee benefits	5	18.5%
Job security	5	18.5%
Recognition and appreciation	4	14.8%

Table 9. Factors associated with staying (multiple response).

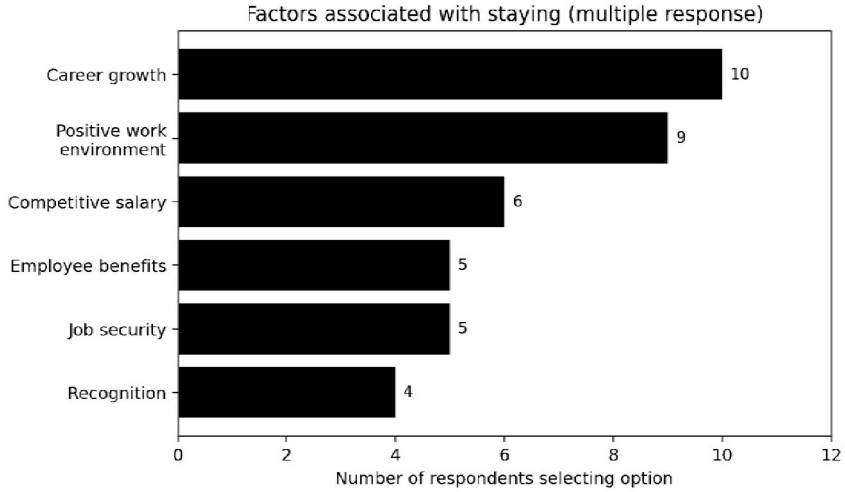


Figure 2. Employee-selected factors associated with staying.

4.6 Areas identified for improvement

Area	Selections	% of respondents
Medical benefits	8	29.6%
Financial benefits	7	25.9%
Training and development	7	25.9%
Leave benefits	5	18.5%

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Welfare facilities	4	14.8%
Benefit communication	3	11.1%
Awards/picnic	1	3.7%

Table 10. Areas selected for improvement (multiple response).

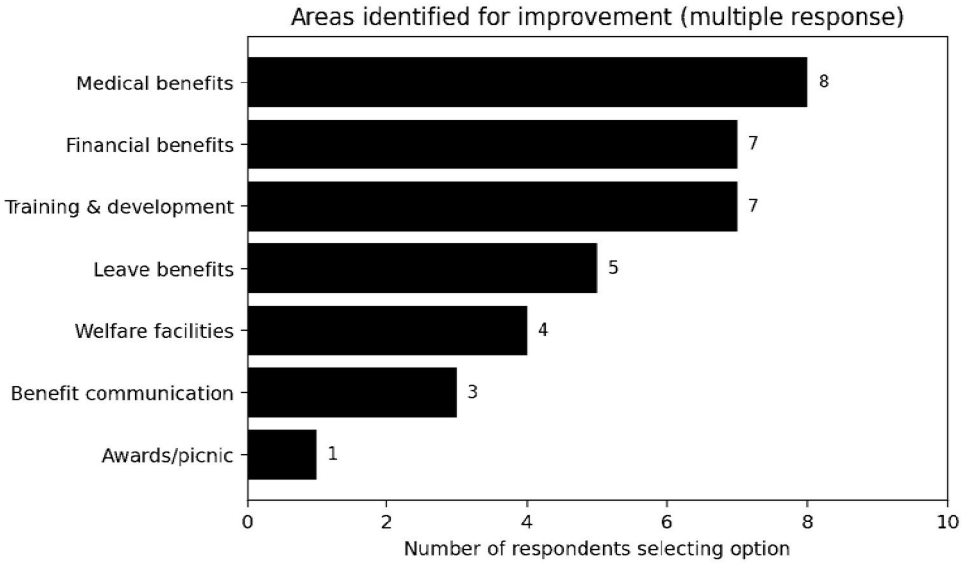


Figure 3. Areas respondents identified for improvement.

4.7 Reported associations

The SIP reported positive associations between benefits and both job satisfaction and retention-related perceptions. Only the benefits–job satisfaction relationship was reported as statistically significant at the 5% level. The p-value is close to the threshold, and the result should be treated cautiously. The absence of respondent-level data prevents independent calculation, confirmation of scoring and assessment of reliability or sensitivity.

Relationship	N	Spearman ρ	p	Reported interpretation
Benefits ↔ Job satisfaction	27	0.387	0.046	Positive; significant at reported 5% threshold
Benefits ↔ Retention-related perceptions	27	0.264	0.184	Positive; not significant at reported 5% threshold

Table 11. Correlations as reported in the SIP (not independently recalculated).

V. DISCUSSION

5.1 Benefits and job satisfaction: a positive pattern, interpreted cautiously

Respondents generally evaluated benefits favourably, and the reported benefits–job satisfaction association was positive. This pattern is broadly consistent with Social Exchange Theory and Organisational Support Theory: employees may view useful benefits and fair administration as signs that the organisation values them. Prior research supports the relevance of employees' benefit evaluations and perceived organisational support to work attitudes (Ko & Hur, 2014; Hong et al., 2024). However, those studies provide a broader evidence base, while the present survey is small and exploratory. The reported p-value (0.046) is close to the conventional threshold, and the original response data were unavailable for verification. The finding should therefore not be presented as definitive evidence that benefits cause job satisfaction or as confirmation of a mediation process.

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5.2 Satisfaction and retention-related attitudes are not interchangeable

The 88.9% categorical benefit satisfaction result and the comparatively lower mean for "I rarely think about leaving" (3.30) do not necessarily contradict each other. Employees can appreciate current benefits and still consider career opportunities, work environment, workload, personal circumstances or external options. Because the analysis is aggregated and respondent-level data are unavailable, it is not possible to determine whether the same employees reported both favourable benefits and thoughts of leaving. This is a group-level pattern, not an individual-level paradox.

5.3 Career growth and work environment emerge as practical priorities

Career growth and positive work environment were selected most frequently among the reported stay factors, while work-life balance and recognition were comparatively lower satisfaction dimensions. This pattern is compatible with a broader view of retention: employees' reasons for staying may involve relationships, fit, development and the perceived costs or benefits of leaving, not only their satisfaction with benefits (Mitchell et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2014). HR should therefore avoid treating benefit enhancement as the only possible response. The results support follow-up diagnosis of development visibility, role-specific learning, recognition fairness and work-life constraints. They do not establish which intervention would be most effective or whether the selected factors predict actual retention.

5.4 Context and representation matter

Head Office respondents represented 59.3% of the sample, compared with 39.8% of the reported workforce; Factory respondents represented 40.7% of the sample compared with 60.2% of the workforce. Worker-level participation was limited to one respondent. HR initiatives should therefore be designed for different roles, locations and shifts, and a more representative follow-up is needed before conclusions are drawn for the whole organisation.

VI. HR RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey supports a measured, employee-experience response rather than a broad programme launched on the strength of a small sample. The following actions are proposed—not reported as implemented—and should be validated with HR and employees before commitment.

Proposed action	What HR could test	Suggested indicators
1. Validate benefit access and communication	Review eligibility, awareness, utilisation and recurring employee questions. Conduct brief listening sessions at Head Office and Factory and use shift-accessible communication.	Benefit awareness; utilisation by benefit; queries resolved; reach by location/role.
2. Pilot career-growth visibility	Use role-based skill maps, short development conversations and accessible learning options; pilot with a defined group before scaling.	Development plans completed; training participation/completion; skills identified; internal opportunities surfaced.
3. Strengthen fair recognition	Set transparent criteria and simple, regular appreciation practices that can include office and factory teams and all shifts.	Recognition reach; participation across work groups; fairness pulse score.
4. Diagnose work-life balance	Review workload, leave access, shift/coverage constraints and employee-reported barriers before changing policy.	Leave patterns; pulse feedback; issues resolved; comparison by location/role where appropriate.
5. Evaluate before expanding	Establish a baseline and follow-up pulse survey. If authorised and available, monitor voluntary exits and exit reasons alongside employee perceptions.	Baseline/follow-up satisfaction; retention intention; verified voluntary exits; exit reasons; cost and feasibility.

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VII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

- The sample was small (n=27) and convenience-based; representativeness and statistical power are limited.
- Only 54% of distributed questionnaires were completed. Nonresponse reasons and patterns were not recorded, so nonresponse bias cannot be assessed.
- The sample underrepresents Factory employees and includes only one worker-level respondent relative to the reported workforce.
- The cross-sectional self-report design does not establish causality or measure actual turnover.
- The original questionnaire and respondent-level data were unavailable; composite scoring, missing-data handling, reported correlations and reliability could not be independently verified.
- Multiple-response selections indicate options chosen by respondents; they are not rankings and do not establish causal effects.
- The available SIP materials do not document formal ethics approval or publication permission. The real organisation is therefore anonymised in this manuscript.

Future research could use a larger, stratified sample across location and job level; provide the questionnaire and scoring protocol; retain anonymised respondent-level data; assess internal consistency where constructs are suitable for scale analysis; report confidence intervals and appropriate statistical tests; and combine employee perceptions with benefit utilisation, verified turnover, exit reasons and follow-up measurements where authorised. These improvements would allow stronger, more reproducible conclusions.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The SIP survey presents a generally favourable picture of employee benefit perceptions and job satisfaction among the 27 respondents at Mavryntel Speciality Chemicals. The reported benefit satisfaction level was 88.9%, with section means of 4.02 for benefits, 3.98 for job satisfaction and 3.93 for retention-related perceptions. Career growth and positive work environment were selected more frequently than benefits among factors associated with staying, while work-life balance, recognition and the statement about rarely thinking of leaving received comparatively lower scores. The reported benefits–job satisfaction association was positive and statistically significant at the stated threshold, whereas the benefits–retention-related association was positive but not significant. Because raw response records were unavailable, these findings should be treated as exploratory reported evidence. A proportionate HR response is to validate employee priorities, improve communication and access, pilot career-development and recognition practices, diagnose work-life balance, and evaluate any intervention before scaling. The study offers a practical starting point for HR planning—not proof of a retention problem or of the effectiveness of a specific programme.

RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPANY ANONYMISATION STATEMENT

All survey numbers and reported statistics are drawn from the completed SIP report and its survey summary. The research paper and associated teaching case use the same SIP context and survey evidence and do not constitute separate datasets. Mavryntel Speciality Chemicals is a pseudonym used because organisational approval to identify the real company has not been obtained. Respondent-level data and original questionnaire forms were unavailable for independent verification at the time of revision. External publication should proceed only after confirming institutional requirements for consent, ethics and organisational confidentiality.