



**Linnæus University**

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Bachelor Thesis in International Tourism Management

# The Desert of Talent in Hospitality Industry

- A Qualitative Analysis on High Staff Turnover in  
Chinese Hotels



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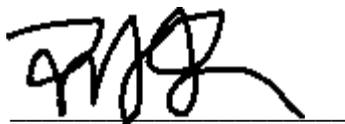
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Time flies quickly, and my study career at Linnaeus University has almost come to an end. Looking back on this period of study, I have too many emotions to express in words. After such a long period of hard work, I deeply feel that all the efforts are rewarded. I also learned a lot of valuable knowledge and gained a lot of experience from the teachers and classmates.

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Kalmar, April 2023



Xiaoxin Xing

## Abstract

*This paper through qualitative research and the author's collection of relevant articles and materials explains the high turnover rate of hotel staff in China. Employee turnover refers to the behaviour of employees voluntarily or involuntarily terminating their labour relationship with an organization. Although employee turnover is considered a common phenomenon in the hotel industry, the hotel industry has experienced unusually high turnover rates over the past years in China's hospitality industries. Turnover is directly linked to rising employee recruitment and training costs, low employee morale, job satisfaction, and customer perceptions of service quality. Therefore, it is of great significance to study this phenomenon for the future development of hotels. This study involved seven participants from different positions who had left the hotel industry but still worked in the hotel industry or permanently left the industry. The semi-structured interview was based on the existing literature on the factors of hotel employee turnover. The result shows that the weak employee benefits and development opportunities in Chinese hotels are the reasons for frequent employee turnover. Other problems were also found in the research, such as the frequent job-hopping of hotel employees for development opportunities.*

## Keywords

*Hotel, Staff, High Turnover, Sustainability, Industry, Tourism, China*

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# 1 Introduction

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As one of the world's largest wealth-creating industries, tourism accounts for approximately 10% of global GDP, generates one in ten global jobs (totalling approximately 277 million people), and is an increasingly important part of developing economies. Tourism generates 15% of employment in economic activity and has a global economic impact of US\$ 1.5 trillion (World Bank Group, 2015).

The backbone of tourism, of which hospitality is a major component, is now considered to be the fastest growing industry and one of the main sources of foreign exchange earnings in the world (Wright et al., 2020). Labour plays an important role in the growth and development of the labour-intensive tourism and hospitality industries. A diverse workforce, including youth, women and immigrant workers is a driver not only of tourism and hospitality, but of the economy and society as a whole. The hotel industry cannot do without a large amount of labour as the basis of its operations. Currently, the consensus in the existing literature is that worker mobility in the tourism and hospitality sector is high and widespread (Ryan et al., 2015). This mobility is largely driven by structural features of the industry, such as low barriers to entry and dissatisfaction with poor working conditions (Basnyat et al., 2021).

Employee turnover is defined as the number of employees who leave an organization and are replaced or rotated by new employees (Codling et al., 2022). Historically, the hospitality industry has had very high employee turnover, averaging 200%-300% per year, although this figure varies by institution (Mohsin et al., 2022). Appropriate turnover of employees is conducive to the hotel to maintain vitality, but excessive turnover will on the other hand bring adverse consequences. As a labour-intensive service industry, its normal operation cannot be separated from the participation of employees. There is ample evidence that employee turnover can significantly reduce a hotel's profitability. There is a strong correlation between lower employee turnover and higher levels of sales, market value, and profitability (Guilding et al., 2014).



Furthermore, the hospitality industry is a special service industry, and in many hotels, employees play a vital role in creating a positive customer experience—a key factor in customer satisfaction and service quality evaluation (Jung et al., 2021). The hotel employees are faced with the contact and communication between people every day. If they are a little slack in their work, they will get negative feedback directly and quickly. As a result, the reputation of the hotel declines (Cheng et al., 2021).

## 1.1 Background to Chinese Hotel Human Resource Issue

The earliest hotels in China were called *kezhan*. They can be traced back to around 1600 BC. In an ancient Chinese poem, *Yi Fu*, it was recorded: The former kings would close the gates every day. Travelers and merchants were not allowed to pass freely. Travelers had to find lodging, and such lodging places were considered safe for their journeys. This means that the ruling power closed the entry and exit gates, restricting the movement of merchants. If a merchant had already left home, they needed to stay in a hotel during their travels. At this time, commercial activities had emerged in China, and the hotel guests were mostly businessmen or people undertaking long journeys. However, overall, the reputation of ancient guesthouses was quite poor. They were often considered a low-level industry where people struggled to make a living (Zònghé lǚxíng, 2018).

Since China successfully bid for the Olympic Games in 2001, it has been recognized as a tourist destination and has garnered increasing attention. Due to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, the number of star-rated hotels in Beijing increased from 422 in 2001 to 824 (according to data from July 2008) (Zhao, 2015). At the same time, the number of hotels nationwide reached its peak in 2009, but the hotel industry's quantity gradually declined after 2009 (CEICdata.com, 2022a).



Figure 1. Number of hotels in China between 2008 and 2019.

Furthermore, the number of employees in the Chinese hotel industry has also decreased along with the reduction in the number of hotels. From 2008 to 2019, which spanned a period of ten years, the lowest number of hotel employees was recorded in 2018 (CEICdata.com, 2022b).

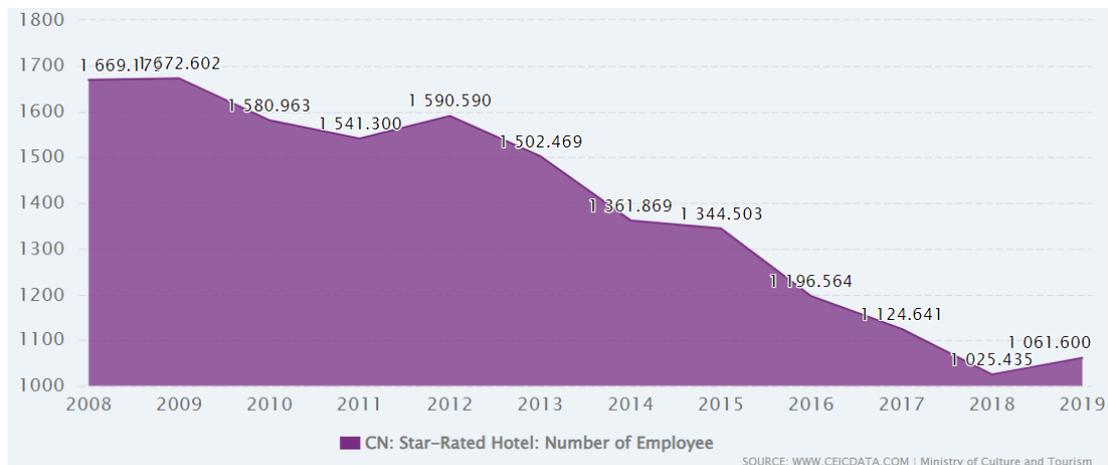


Figure 2. Number of employees in China's star-rated hotels between 2008 and 2019.

From the above graph, it can be observed that the number of hotel employees is positively correlated with the number of hotels. According to research findings, the hotel industry has the highest employee turnover rate among various industries in China. Adjustment released by 51job.com show the overall turnover rate of employees in 2020 from all industry in China is 14.8 %. (Cheng et al., 2021). In more developed



cities or regions such as Beijing and Shanghai, the turnover rate is even higher, reaching 30% to 40% (Qiu et al., 2014).

According to Lv et al. (2012), it is generally believed that the turnover rate of Chinese hotel employees is acceptable between 10% and 15%. But more than 15% will bring many adverse effects, such as increased costs, customer loss, uneven service quality, etc., which is not conducive to the construction of corporate culture and corporate brand. As a result, this high turnover rate can lead to increased dissatisfaction among employees, further triggering more staff mobility and causing greater chaos within the industry (Team, 2022).

Many researchers believe that it is the consequence of both internal and external effects. Some scholars analyse the reasons for the loss of hotel employees from the social environment. For example, due to the continuous improvement of society's requirements for service quality, employees are under increasing pressure from hotel management, which leads to resignation as a reason for social demand (Cheng et al., 2021).

China's hotel industry is undergoing transformation, and more and more scarce talents who are proficient in foreign languages are needed (Frye et al., 2019). Chinese researchers and hotel operators have long recognized the value of career success in facing upcoming competition and maintaining high-quality employees (Lei et al., 2021). Therefore, researchers have conducted analyses from various perspectives, both subjective and objective, focusing on both the enterprises and employees. They have aimed to improve internal mechanisms within hotels and strive to enhance employee satisfaction (Lei et al., 2021). Indeed, due to China's unique circumstances, such a large population and the absence of unions to protect employee interests, the macro-level research has not been effectively implemented within the actual workforce. Consequently, the number of hotel employees in China continues to decline (as mentioned above).



According to Li (2011), employee turnover in the hotel industry is primarily attributed to factors such as low salary, lack of employment opportunities, and inadequate treatment or benefits, etc. Stamolampros et al. (2019) agrees that leadership and cultural values are better predictors of high employee satisfaction, while career development is a key reason for employee turnover. In many cases, corporate mismanagement indirectly affects employee turnover, which is moderated by fairness, psychological safety, and organizational commitment (Mohsin et al., 2022).

Comparing with the high labor force of the hotel industry, the employee's salary is being kept at a low level and hotel employee turnover continues (Hotel Reviews Wu Qiongyao, 2021). The following diagram shows the monthly salary for employees.

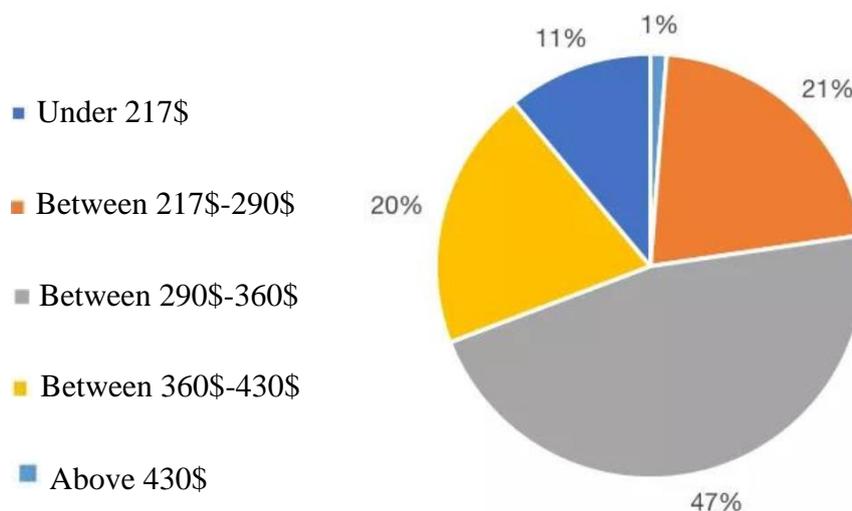


Figure 3. Monthly salaries for hotel employees in China.

*The report is based on the results of a human resource survey of 746 hotels across the whole country (involving 30 provinces, 28 hotel groups and individual hotels, covering different levels and different management models.*

In addition to internal reasons such as low wages in the hotel, there are also employees of the generation Y, people born in the 1980s and 1990s, entering the hotel labour market. They are not very obedient and lack loyalty to the work organization. With China's traditional views on the hotel industry, there are prejudices against the hotel



industry, such as serving people and eating youth meals etc., causing employees to feel inferior and undignified to leave their jobs has made it difficult for the hotel industry to retain employees (Cheng et al., 2021).

In summary, Chinese researchers have made significant contributions in studying employee turnover in the hotel industry. Research from various angles has been relatively comprehensive. However, many studies have not delved deeper into analyzing how research findings can be effectively implemented among the actual workforce. This article will focus on this aspect and draw on theoretical experiences from literature reviews. Additionally, interviews with hotel employees will be conducted to identify practical measures for retaining hotel staff. The aim is to provide more insights for the management of hotel employees in China.

## 1.2 Problem Discussion

### 1.2.1 Theoretical Problematization and Research Gap

Previous studies have elucidated the structural reasons for the high employee turnover in the hospitality industry (Mohsin et al., 2022) to its high mobility. This mobility is largely fuelled by structural features of the industry, such as low barriers to entry and dissatisfaction with poor working conditions, including exhaustion, relationships with colleagues, meeting pre-employment expectations, long and unsociable work hours, and discrimination (Brown et al., 2015). All these factors influence lower job status in the hospitality industry (McGinley, 2018).

But why is staff turnover still high in Chinese hotels? Firstly, most previous studies have focused on OCM (organization culture management) activities carried out in Western countries, and they may not be applicable to China (Cruz Roche et al., 2019). Zhang et al. (2008, p. 222) agree that “successful services marketing in the global market depends on a solid understanding of the uniqueness of specific cultures in which the firm competes”. Therefore, there is a gap in China's theoretical research based on China's research.



Secondly, there are many studies on Chinese websites about the high turnover rate of employees in the hotel industry in China, but most of them are compared with the West (Roche et al., 2019). EU countries spotlights the impact of external variables on efficiency. Companies in Western countries pay more attention to the issue of external influence on efficiency. However, due to the different circumstances in China, employees actually lack opportunities and platforms to voice their concerns. In China, most labor unions are controlled by management rather than workers, so the issue of external influences on efficiency does not exist in practice (Bajaj, 2013). Meanwhile, due to China's rapid development, the age of practitioners has become younger, so further research is needed in the future to fully understand the situation and propose long-term planning measures.

### **1.2.2 Managerial Problematization**

The phenomenon of high hotel staff turnover is generally considered to be one of the salient features of the hotel industry. As a management issue, it is both an important issue and a hot topic because employees are a key factor in increasing consumers' willingness to repurchase and indirectly shape corporate image (Carbery et al., 2003).

Although the phenomenon of high employee turnover in the hotel industry has been discussed for a long time. Staff turnover in the hospitality industry has always been difficult to manage on a practical level as it depends on many factors - some of which are not in the business owner's control (Bryce, 2021).

China's economy has developed rapidly, becoming the world's second largest economy and the world's most populous country. However, the hospitality-based hotel industry in China still belongs to Western companies, and China's hotel management system is still immature, which has led to the fact that Chinese hotels are adopting career management practices from Western countries. Due to the influence of China's unique eastern culture, western management policies are not compatible with China's national conditions to a certain extent (Björkman and Lu, 1999), thus accelerating the departure of hotel employees.



Regardless of whether it is in China or Western societies, research on the causes of employee turnover in the hotel industry has generally reached a consensus, particularly in terms of salary, development opportunities, employee satisfaction, and treatment. However, there is still a need to develop specific management approaches that are more suitable for the Chinese context based on research findings, as well as to provide more effective human resource management policies. This research involves multiple aspects, including individual factors, work environment, and management strategies, all of which collectively influence employees' intention to stay and their decision-making. This study aims to explore whether theoretical findings have been implemented and adopted through interviews and exchanges with employees from their perspective. This article also seeks to provide references for the future development of the hotel industry and contribute to its sustainable development.

### 1.3 Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the reasons for employee turnover in the hotel industry and, based on this, develop management approaches that are more suitable for the Chinese context and provide more effective human resource management policies. While there is consensus on the reasons for employee turnover in the hotel industry, such as salary, development opportunities, employee satisfaction, and treatment, the hotel industry is characterized by continuous transformation (Orfila-Sintes & Mattsson, 2009). Therefore, it is meaningful to study how to formulate applicable management strategies that consider the cultural background, labor market characteristics, and the actual situation of the hotel industry in China. This research aims to gain a deeper understanding of the fundamental reasons for employee turnover in hotels and validate the implementation and application of theoretical findings through employee interviews and exchanges.

The outcomes of this study can provide the hotel industry with a more comprehensive understanding, offer solutions to employee turnover issues, and contribute to innovation and improvement in human resource management. It will serve as a valuable reference for the development of the hotel industry.



## 1.4 Research Question

The main research question and problem statement of this study is:

**What are the reasons behind the high turnover rate of practitioners in China's contemporary hotel industry?**

The 'contemporary' in the question specifically means that after 2015, due to China's continuous transformation, the reasons behind economic development are unpredictable. Therefore, looking before 2015 would not suffice as development of the economy and the improvement of people's living standards has changed. Additionally looking into China's hotel industry from 2019 to 2023 would reduce research objectivity of the problem because of the epidemic's interference. Therefore, the time scope for the research problem will be from 2015 to 2019, with few sources from 2000 to 2015 as it is still relevant according to the author for their historical reference when conducting and writing this study.

## 1.5 Delimitation

This study will only consider the views of the hotel employees themselves, and by taking the employee perspective as a starting point, this study aims to validate the implementation and application of theoretical findings in practical situations through interviews and exchanges with employees, thus disregarding other stakeholders such as employers, the government, or tourism experts. As the author is still in Sweden at the time of this research and the method of building the data will be in the form of a combination of remote telephone interviews and secondary data, there will be certain limitations when looking for raw data. Moreover, since some literature will be in Chinese, there may be translational difficulties in accuracy.

This study focuses primarily on the issue of employee turnover in the hotel industry, with a particular emphasis on exploring the reasons and influencing factors behind it. The research scope includes aspects such as salary, career development opportunities, employee satisfaction, and treatment, as well as relevant individual factors, work environment, and management strategies. The objective is to provide management



approaches tailored to the Chinese context and effective human resource management policies to address employee turnover in the hotel industry. It is important to note that the study's scope is limited to five-star group hotels with Western management practices, as all interviewees come from such foreign-funded establishments. Economy hotels and other types of accommodations are not considered in this study.

The primary timeframe for this study is from 2010 to the present. Consequently, due to China's developmental history, the research findings may differ from previous literature. Prior to 2010, China's level of openness to the outside world was relatively limited, and people's consumption levels were not very high. The stratification of the hotel industry resulted in research primarily focusing on the affluent class, with minimal consideration given to the impact on middle-class families. However, after 2010, people became wealthier, and tourism became more normalized and accessible to the general public. Both domestic and international tourism industries experienced significant development.

Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that the conclusions and recommendations of this study are to some extent limited by the sample selection and research scope. Given the diversity of the hotel industry, different types of hotels may exhibit variations. This study solely focuses on the issue of employee turnover in the hotel industry, while other factors such as industry development and economic influences may also impact employee turnover but are not extensively explored in this research.



## 2 Methodology

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*Methodology deals with how to design and research this thesis to answer the research question.*

### 2.1 Research Approach

#### 2.1.1 Deductive Approach

This thesis started out with the question asking why the turnover rate in China's hotel industry is so high. When data was collected, it was separated into categories aligning to the research question, so that the question can be analysed. This is called a *deductive approach* (Bingham, 2021).

The focus of this research is to study and observe patterns of theoretical findings and empirical results related to relevant topics and their relationships based on the existing literature, and to further refine the theory through analysis. The method chosen for the collection of primary data for this study was a qualitative one and is generally a process of collecting data, identifying key themes and patterns, and then exploring the relationships among these themes (Saunders et al., 2019). It includes a deep understanding of a particular situation and can enable researchers to explain the why and components of what happened. Qualitative data sources often focus on text or visual data. As a qualitative researcher, an author needs to be good at critically analysing situations, identifying and avoiding bias, and thinking abstractly (Bergin, 2018).

#### 2.1.2 Data Analysis

This study focuses on employee turnover in the hospitality industry in the Chinese context and related topics. In research, the collection, understanding and accurately use relevant data, theories and concepts is of paramount importance.

Therefore, specific keywords or phrases were used when searching for relevant information (e.g., what are the common reasons for Chinese hotel employees to leave their jobs?). Statistical data from verified sources (e.g., government websites, websites



of Chinese professional hotel forums, social media, or online forums for sharing life experiences) and interviews were used to gain a detailed understanding of the basis from different perspectives. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore personal experiences and opinions related to the research topic, as they allow both the interviewer and the interviewee to be in a relatively flexible conversation space, and the conversation process could be adjusted in time as the question develops (Bergin, 2018).

When analysing the interview data, a thematic analysis was made (Braun & Clarke, 2012). It helps to easily categorize the interview data. To do that, first an overview of the data was made (regarding job position, education experience etc.), which provided help for the analysis of the material, secondly codes for all data were created, thirdly different codes were grouped together into themes that relate to the research question, lastly the data was analysed according to the themes, identifying the key themes and ideas discussed, as well as any patterns or trends in the responses.

## 2.2 Research Strategy and Design

For the research question, data was collected and analysed by using a deductive approach (Saunders et al., 2019). The data itself was collected by interviewing people that would possess relevant information and experience that for the research question. There has been an effort to collect unbiased data, by making sure the people interviewed being as diverse as possible, e.g., interviewing different age groups, educational backgrounds, etc.

## 2.3 Research Method

As previously mentioned, a qualitative research approach was used, using semi-structured interviews and a desk study data collection method.

The interviews were semi-structured because they were based on the literature review (Saunders et al., 2019). However, it should be noted that it is only an introductory perspective of the phenomenon. Therefore, specific key points were brought up to answer the thesis question which then expanded the literature review into its present



form. By interviewing employees who have worked in Chinese hotels and using a semi-structured approach, this research aims to gain a nuanced understanding of the experiences and perspectives of this specific group. At the same time, the method of desk study was used to determine the key words to search the websites and platforms where Chinese online users are active, to obtain auxiliary data (What is a Desk Study? - Definition from Trenchlesspedia, 2021).

Due to the distance of the author's current location, the interviews in this study were mainly conducted by telephone or online digitally through the program Zoom. The call time of each interview was about 15 minutes to 20 minutes long. Before starting the interview, permission to record was requested with the purpose of reviewing it later.

In this research, seven former hotel employees were selected from different work departments to conduct semi-structured interviews. The interview questions were derived from the existing literature on the reasons for hotel employee turnover, combined with current Chinese situation analysed (hotel employees often need to change jobs in order to obtain higher salaries and greater development opportunities).

### **2.3.1 Sampling**

Snowball sampling was used as it is especially useful for sampling from difficult-to-interview populations, as it allows to first find people who fit the type of survey needed to investigate, and then connect to find more similar respondents (Saunders et al., 2019).

To get the first interviewee, convenient sampling was used, as to get started with the snowball sampling (Saunders et al., 2019). Convenient sampling is when the researcher chooses easy to access data, in this case choosing the first interviewee.

The interviews were with Chinese citizens who had left their jobs in the hotel because they are the focus of this study, considering the problem of employee hopping, so the interviewees' selection criteria were:

- employees who have worked in the hotel for more than half a year and



- employees who have left the industry or have changed to other hotels.

Through the author’s work experience, a previous work colleague was asked first about his willingness to participate. Thankfully, this colleague introduced several other people working in the hotel industry then for a higher data collection. The people interviewed are showed in below table.

Participants' aliases and interview information					
<i>Participants/Alias</i>	<i>Working period (years)</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Hotel stars and location</i>
<b>Respondent 1</b>	12	High school	32	concierge	5 stars hotel in Beijing(current)
<b>Respondent 2</b>	20	Bachelor level	38	Executive Lounge Assistant Manager	5 stars hotel in Beijing(current)
<b>Respondent 3</b>	1	Bachelor level	26	Executive lounge receptionist	5 stars hotel in Beijing (resign)
<b>Respondent 4</b>	5	vocational technical school	24	Cook	5 stars hotel in Beijing (resign)
<b>Respondent 5</b>	1	Bachelor level	28	Reception	5 stars hotel in Beijing (resign)
<b>Respondent 6</b>	0.5	vocational technical school	22	Room waiter	5 stars hotel in Beijing (resign)
<b>Respondent 7</b>	12	Bachelor level	40	Sales Director	5 stars hotel in Wuhan (current)

Figure 4. An overview of the interviewees.



## 2.4 Operationalization

Respondents' questions focused on factors related to hotel employee turnover collected through the literature review in Chapter 3, including their motivation for leaving, career planning, changes in interpersonal relationships, and satisfaction with the hotel. Respondents were asked questions and told that their answers would be based on changes in their tenure at the hotel from 2015 to the present. The interview questions were as follows, relating them to the concepts that will be presented in the literature review:

**Question** Can you tell me about your experience working in the hotel industry?

**Meaning** Understanding the basic information of the interviewees.

**Concept** China's hotel industry

**Question** How long have you been working in the hotel industry?

**Meaning** Understanding the working years of the interviewees.

**Concept** China's hotel industry

**Question** Have you worked in multiple hotels? If yes, can you tell me about your experience working in different hotels?

**Meaning** Finding out if the interviewees have any experience leaving the job.

**Concept** China's hotel industry

**Question** Can you tell me about a time when you decided to leave a hotel? What were the reasons for your decision?

**Meaning** Understanding the personal subjective factors of interviewees leaving the job.

**Concept** Unfair treatment

**Question** How important is job security to you when considering whether to stay or leave a job?

**Meaning** Understand the respective proportions of internal and external factors for employees.

**Concept** Unfair treatment



**Question** How important is work-life balance to you when considering whether to stay or leave a job?

**Meaning** Understand the respective proportions of internal and external factors for employees.

**Concept** Human resource development

**Question** How important is pay and benefits to you when considering whether to stay or leave a job?

**Meaning** Understand the respective proportions of internal and external factors for employees.

**Concept** Talent cultivation in Chinese hotels, unfair treatment

**Question** How important is career advancement opportunities to you when considering whether to stay or leave a job?

**Meaning** Understand the respective proportions of internal and external factors for employees.

**Concept** Employee retention

**Question** How important is job satisfaction to you when considering whether to stay or leave a job?

**Meaning** Understand the respective proportions of internal and external factors for employees.

**Concept** Employee retention

**Question** How satisfied are you with the communication and relationship with your supervisor and co-workers?

**Meaning** The above six questions are based on the cross-sectional investigation of the influence of hotel employees' turnover factors in the literature, to understand the respective proportions of internal and external factors for employees.

**Concept** Social exchange theory

**Question** Can you describe your experience with training and development opportunities in the hotel?

**Meaning** Finding out whether the hotels of the interviewees give employees the opportunity to develop.

**Concept** Human resource development



**Question** Have you ever experienced any unfair treatment or discrimination in the hotel? If yes, please describe.

**Meaning** Finding out if the hotel where the interviewees work is discriminatory or unfair.

**Concept** Unfair treatment

**Question** Can you tell me about a time when you felt particularly satisfied with your job in the hotel?

**Meaning** Find out what interviewees like about working in a hotel.

**Concept** Human resource development, human resource quality, employee retention

**Question** What improvements do you think the hotel can make to increase employee retention and job satisfaction?

**Meaning** Another angle to ask the interviewer about the missing parts of working in the hotel.

**Concept** Human resource development, human resource quality, employee retention

**Question** Have you recommended the hotel as a place to work to others? If no, why not?

**Meaning** Finding out how confident your interviewees are about working in a hotel.

**Concept** Open question

**Question** Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience working in the hotel industry?

**Meaning** Open questions so interviewees can add information.

**Concept** Open question

## 2.5 Type of Data

The main data source consists of the semi-structured interviews raw data collection, plus secondary data as an auxiliary. To ensure the quality of the main data, basic personal situation of the respondent was collected, including the job title, department, marital status, age, and gender, to ensure the authenticity of the people's voices. Another measure was being self-critical by recognizing any bias in which people were chosen to be interviewed (Rme, 2020).



The interviewees were told that their answers should be based on their experience and reasons for leaving the hotel from 2015 to now, as well as their feelings when working in the hotel.

Secondary data sources were used to supplement the current literature, empirical articles, and scientific research, including websites (governments, websites with large user bases) that collected information from reputable sources. It is very important to ensure the universality of data sources. Although these may contain opinions and prejudices, there may be some facts behind these opinions and the possibility of applicability, which can show the real thoughts of Chinese hotel practitioners to a certain extent (Saunders et al., 2019).

## 2.6 Quality of Research

Two factors to assess the quality of a study are reliability and validity.

### 2.6.1 Reliability

Reliability refers to the degree to which results can be reproduced under the same conditions, showing the consistency of results over time and between observers (Smith, 2017). In qualitative research, due to uncontrollable factors affecting data, the research often depends on multiple factors (Bergin, 2018), among them being the researcher's subjectivity, the interviewees' characteristic, and communication dynamics.

To ensure the reliability of the research results, the research problem was clarified, and the research methods and sample selection criteria determined. Triangulation was done using a variety of data collection methods such as interviews, observations, literature analysis, etc. (Saunders et al., 2019).

### 2.6.2 Validity

If a research has high validity, it produces results that correspond to the real properties, characteristics and changes of the physical or social world (Bhandari, 2022). Validity is divided into internal validity and external validity. Internal validity examines whether the research design, analysis, and conduct answer the research question in an



unbiased manner. External validity checks whether the findings of the study can be extended to other articles.

In order to ensure the validity of the research results, the limitations of the research methods in the research should be reflected in the conduct of the research. In this study, the internal validity of the research results was ensured through interviews and literature review, and the research results were linked to the research questions and purposes in order to deeply understand and explain the meaning and value of the results.

## 2.7 Ethical and Sustainable Considerations

Ethical considerations were important in this study for a number of reasons, as the study should be structured in accordance with societal value norms. It is important to analyse data content without prejudice, so data collection methods needed to be ethical and in line with Chinese law, and the wording of questions were chosen carefully, as sensitive topics, including respondents, may arise when answering questions. This is why all personally identifiable information was removed from the data prior to analysis to protect the privacy of respondents (Saunders et al., 2019).

When considering sustainability, the research mainly used the Internet and electronic products instead of paper and pens for recording, and also avoided the carbon emissions of transportation brought by flying to China to interview a larger group of people.



## 3 Literature Review

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*The purpose of this chapter is to examine and analyses the existing literature on topics related to this paper, including the current situation of Chinese hotel practitioners and a series of topics that help to fully understand the phenomenon.*

### 3.1 Employee Turnover

Employee turnover is defined as the voluntary termination of organizational membership by an individual who receives monetary compensation for participating in an organization (Lee et al., 2006).

Over the past 20 years, staff turnover in hotels has been studied in many contexts (Mohsin et al., 2022), and the consensus in the existing literature is that the importance of staffing issues in the hospitality industry is driven by the service orientation and its high staff dependence. Working in the hospitality industry presents challenges including strict deadlines, long hours, unexpected interactions with guests and high emotional demands from poor working conditions and low wages (Codling et al., 2022) as well as treatment issues are one of the many reasons that drive employees to leave (Alexandra, 2022). This high-demand low-resource work pattern and little feedback can lead to high levels of stress and burnout (Wen et al., 2020). Overall, these working conditions lead to poor work attitudes and high turnover, which ultimately leads to poor customer service (Lyon and Bandura, 2019). Especially since the leaving employees are very familiar with the hotel's operations and trade secrets, if these employees leave and work in another hotel, the competitive advantage of these institutions will be reduced (Mohsin et al., 2022).

Employee turnover often affects an organization's performance, productivity, and profitability, and can lead to loss of assets and resources (Codling et al., 2022), and employee turnover can affect an organization's potential benefits and disadvantages. Positive impacts include replacing underperforming employees, infusing new knowledge and technology, reducing labour costs amid increased competition, maintaining connections with departing employees and providing new commercial



ventures, or increasing promotion opportunities for remaining employees. Negative impacts include financial costs, lost productivity, impaired service quality, lost business opportunities, increased administrative burden and demoralized remaining staff (Lee et al., 2006).

That means employee turnover can significantly reduce hotel profitability (Guilding et al., 2014), and when the outflow of employee talent exceeds the talent level of its replacements, organizational turnover can fail (Lyons and Bandura, 2019). The current economic environment has highlighted the importance of providing welfare packages to employees, and companies that offer attractive welfare packages tend to retain talented employees and reduce employee turnover (Lee et al., 2006). As the industry continues to expand and the personal structure becomes more complex, while the number of middle and junior managers has increased. Major key players such as chefs and servers in restaurants, as well as good managers, are being rewarded handsomely as hotels become more aware of the importance of these employees. This is a strategy for hotel owners to achieve human resource development (Boella and Goss-Turner, 2020).

## 3.2 The Hospitality Workforce

### 3.2.1 Human Resource Development

The larger the hotel business, the better the employee benefits. Although hoteliers often use retention techniques to retain capable employees, the turnover rate is still high, thus the phenomenon of high turnover rate remains unchanged (Yang et al., 2012). Most employees leave as they do not have the opportunity to participate in development programs or have conflicts between their personal and professional lives (Ghani et al., 2022).

The hospitality industry is a labour-intensive industry that creates a lot of competition among employees, reducing the possibility of career advancement (Zampoukos and Ioannides, 2011). Currently, China's hotel market is full of vigor and competition pressure is increasing, in China, employees who stay in the hotel industry need to walk a narrow path, which usually takes seven to fifteen years to be promoted to middle



management (Lei et al., 2021). Most front-line employees are young, with more than half under the age of 28. They have not developed a clear career plan (Wen et al., 2020). When many young workers enter the hospitality industry, they view their work as short-term and often see it as a temporary job opportunity, but desire exciting and challenging careers (Vetráková et al., 2019). Thus, many people do not want to be a waiter for a lifetime and need personal development (Yang et al., 2012). People will be more inclined to organizations with more benefits and development, so the impulse to leave the current organization is very high (Codling et al., 2022). Moreover, most companies focus on financial efficiency and forget about the well-being of workers, often diminishing job quality and a desire for a career change (Coelho and Bartolomeu, 2019).

### **3.2.2 Human Resource Quality**

The hospitality industry has experienced drastic, rapid change and high levels of competition that have greatly impacted the career development of employees (Lei et al., 2021). For employees, according to Cesinger (2011), self-improvement responses rely on the actual or perceived achievements that individuals have accumulated because of employment. For hotels owners, in a competency-oriented structure, organizations seek to define talents that are critical to good work outcomes, rather than their titles or roles, and delegate roles to employees based on strengths or qualifications (De Vos et al., 2015). 67% of employers in the hospitality industry still often rely on part-timers to manage fluctuations in demand (Boella and Goss-Turner, 2020), these part time employees usually come from the secondary labor market and may lack the right qualifications to enter the industry. On the other hand, it is difficult for them to obtain qualifications because the company does not offer the necessary trainings, meaning availability is low (Coelho and Bartolomeu, 2019). In addition, many restaurants even include service charges on their menus. However, these service fees often end up in the company's account instead of being evenly distributed among employees (Boella and Goss Turner, 2020). As a result, some seasonal employees with part-time contracts are often excluded from better treatment packages (Zientara et al., 2021).



### **3.2.3 Employee Retention**

The hotel job itself lacks the appeal to most people due to inherent and largely unavoidable challenges within the industry such as having to work different shifts, on weekends and bank holidays, split shifts, unpredictable working hours, the staff reliance on small fees and management (Boella and Goss-Turner, 2019).

According to the law of supply and demand, qualified employees are more eager to join good companies (Yukongdi and Shrestha, 2020). When employees' work quality creates a positive feeling, it may motivate them to stay in ethical organizations for as long as possible, thus reducing their departure intentions (Xu et al., 2022). Therefore, bad relationships have an effect on high turnover in the hospitality industry (Codling et al., 2022). Many graduates with education who work in hospitality feel diminished by their supervisors (who are unlikely to be skilled, on-the-job trainers or inexperienced in motivating their teams) and claim they cannot easily see career paths from hospitality operations to management roles, due to low levels of morale and motivation. These are widely believed to be key factors contributing to high employee turnover (Zhang and Wu, 2004). Thus, working conditions, workplace culture, and work environment play an important role in determining whether an employee leaves or stays in an organization. Low employee retention in the hospitality industry is a result of low satisfaction and low leadership quality (Mohsin et al., 2013).

The concept of a career development program is also closely related to opportunities for advancement and job satisfaction. To achieve career goals, employees are eager to have a career development plan. When they have a clear and actionable long-term career plan, they are less likely to leave an organization (Qiu et al., 2014). Therefore, hotels that promote employee development are more likely to have employees positively identify with the organization (Mohsin et al., 2022).

The foundation of the success of practitioners in an industry is directly proportional to their enthusiasm for work. This enthusiasm is contagious, and the hospitality industry



needs this enthusiasm to infect everyone in the industry, which will lead to a better experience for customers. If practitioners in the service industry have a negative attitude towards the work environment, it can be clearly felt by those around them, which will have adverse effects (Lashley, 2022).

### 3.3 China's Hotel Industry

With the development of China's economy and the continuous opening of the free market, the competition among the hotel industry has become more intense and obvious. The two main factions are luxury hotels based on international chain hotels and Chinese domestic budget hotels. Both occupy a major market share in China's hotel industry, and both attach great importance to market trends and changes in customer demand (Xi da wungluo, 2019). Consequently, the development of China's hotel industry in the past 30 years has attracted people's attention. China's hotel industry is characterized by multiple ownership systems, namely state-owned, collective, private, alliance, joint stock, foreign and Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan-funded hotels (Kong et al., 2011).

This has led to the service industry in China becoming more oriented by paying attention to the preferences of customers. Many companies replace personalized, high-quality, and multi-level services with low-level, common services, causing the service industry to face a crisis of trust (Hu, 2015).

#### 3.3.1 The Emotional Value of Hotel Workers

Hotel service staff, regardless of which country, all have a certain consensus. That is, when front-line service personnel provide services to customers, they often have close face-to-face interactions. In most interactions, no matter what personal feelings or emotions they currently have, they should keep smiling and be cheerful. In service workplaces, it is inevitable for employees to have close contact and communication with customers. However, when the communication is unpleasant, employees are required to put more energy on the customer, that is, to apologize with words or provide more intimate service, which is the service principle of customer first (Pu et al., 2022).



### **3.3.2 The Impact of Traditional Thinking on Hotel Staff**

The social status of the hospitality industry has been eroded by negative publicity and the globalization of new industries such as IT and banking. The one-child generation currently occupies a large part of the labor market, and most of them have trouble adapting to the harsh working environment in hotels. The current reality is that well-educated young people tend to consider jobs in industries that offer better salaries and benefits. The poor financial state of the hospitality industry means that most hotels fail to live up to customer expectations (Zhang and Wu, 2004) and this is a problem that the Chinese hotel industry needs to face.

The Chinese culture also limits the portability of human resource management strategies of western hotels to a certain extent, specifically in “respect for authority and hierarchy, face (self-esteem) and harmony, the collectivist culture, and personal relationships (connection)” (Björkman and Lu, 1999, p. 307). The status of women is usually considered lower than that of men, and even in local economy hotels, the proportion of male managers is slightly higher than that of women (Wu, 2022).

As many poets in ancient China described the Chinese people's requirements for self-esteem in this way, "Bone (self-esteem) as the backbone of a person, and without bones there is no joint", "I cannot destroy the eyebrows and bend the waist to serve the powerful people, which makes me unhappy.", “Thousands of volumes, unwilling to bow their heads in the grass." Most of this means that self-esteem is the backbone of the Chinese culture, it supports people to walk, if bending over is for money, then they won't be happy and cast aside. Due to the far-reaching impact of the traditional cultural ‘imperial examination system’ on the family, many parents still hope that their children can go to official careers, including being admitted to civil servants and working within the system. Otherwise, parents have extremely high expectations for their children, hoping that their children can be doctors, teachers, lawyers, and other glamorous professions, instead of serving others. Additionally, due to China's one-child policy, most people in Generation Y are the only child in the family, so parents don't want their children to be wronged to apologize for others or provide services. Furthermore, as stated earlier, in traditional concept there are prejudices against the hotel industry,



such as serving people and eating youth meals, which make employees feel inferior and unseemly (Cheng et al., 2021).

### **3.3.3 Talent Cultivation in Chinese Hotels**

Hotels need to retain good and valuable employees, otherwise human resource management will cost extra (Ghani et al., 2022). Because of the rapid economic development, more high-quality staff are needed for service work. However, due to the negative views of traditional Chinese perception of the service industry and the emergence of various new occupations, people prefer to do jobs with high wages. Therefore, only low-quality staff are still willing to stick to their posts. The shortage of local human resources therefore forces hotels to recruit staff with lower education from rural areas and other underdeveloped areas, especially in 4-star and 5-star hotels. This often creates a vicious circle by further undermining service standards (Lv et al., 2012).

According to a survey, the main strength of China's front office is composed of graduates of tourism institutes and professional schools. Of the employees surveyed, 49% had a college certificate/diploma level education and 26% graduated from a vocational/technical school. On the other hand, this result also reflects the lack of employees with higher education (such as college and master) in Chinese hotels. Only 17 percent of all respondents had a bachelor's degree, and even fewer, 1 percent, had a master's degree. Many employees, especially those with a college degree or above, are unwilling to stay at the front desk of the hotel for a long time due to reasons such as high work pressure, low wages, and uncertain promotion opportunities. Therefore, the main skill advantages of the front desk are concentrated on the students at professional schools, vocational schools, and even high schools, which will inevitably lead to a relatively low cultural level and quality of employees in this industry (Kong and Baum, 2006).

The China Tourism Academy pointed out that in terms of talent reserves, due to the continuous decline in wages there is a serious loss of human resources which led to a decline in the quality of employees and the increase of labour costs (Cao, 2023). The



government does not pay enough attention to the development of human resources, although the Tourism Bureau has established a talent education department. The department provides annual training programs for department heads and general managers, but most consider these programs superficial and ineffective (Zhang and Wu, 2004).

Furthermore, the salaries of the hotels are not attractive enough. The large turnover of hotel personnel leads to excessive demand and the decline of the professional ability of the applicants. The demand for English majors is increasing with the continuous growth of China's economy where the negative impact of the need in professionalism in human resources cannot be directly proportional to the speed of tourism development (Kong et al., 2006).

### **3.3.4 Unfair Treatment**

According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2009), the average annual salary in the accommodation and food service industry is 9885 RMB (1545 USD; 1 USD = 6.4 RMB), which is 32.5% lower than the national average wage level and is listed as one of the lowest (Shen and Chen, 2012). Faced with heavy workloads, frequent environmental changes, lack of performance feedback, and low wages, they are prone to irritability and burnout, which in turn affects their behaviour and may lead to resignation (Wen et al., 2020). However, although Chinese business organizations have done many studies and proposed many measures for the lack of human resources in the hospitality industry, while management can do everything it can to retain employees, it may not be effective (Lu et al., 2019).

Since many luxury hotels are dominated by international companies, and many people think that hotels belong to the western industry, many employers often think that if they can hire foreigners to manage the hotel, it will provide guests with an advanced feeling. Therefore, foreign managers occupy most of the management positions in China's international hotels. Most bottom or middle employees in China lack opportunities for promotion, although they may be eligible for promotion. But for employers, they may prefer a foreigner's face to appear in the hotel's management, and



even in front-line positions such as serving guests. The wages of foreigners are always higher than those of Chinese people (Qiu et al., 2014).

### **3.3.5 Covid Impact**

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic has had an immeasurable impact on a global scale, but in China, this impact has been even more magnified. China's hotel industry has been hit hard by a series of measures such as country-locking policy, home isolation, and city blockade. To prevent the spread of the pandemic, many cities have required the local service industry to suspend operations, resulting in a sharp decline in the turnover of many service-based companies. In addition, due to China's strict requirements for enterprises to resume work, many workers in the hotel industry cannot return to work, resulting in increased staff turnover costs. Examples of staff turnover costs include recruitment and training costs and reduced productivity (Guilding et al., 2014).

For hotels, operating profit and maintaining basic consumption costs at the same time are the requirements of corporate management (Xue et al., 2022). To subsidize the economic losses caused by the lockdown of many enterprises, many policies allow enterprises to reduce employee salaries or stop paying employee salaries to maintain the survival of enterprises, resulting in more employee turnover (Zheng, 2021). High unemployment makes it difficult for people to find work, which has a direct negative impact on the productivity of firms (Al-Suraihi et al., 2021). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the past three years on the accommodation industry is additionally impacting the talent pool and funds.

## **3.4 Social Exchange Theory**

Social exchange theory is one of the most influential conceptual paradigms for understanding workplace behaviors. When individuals feel respected or cared for in the workplace, their social interactions with certain social entities develop by exhibiting positive work attitudes and reciprocal behaviors (Fan et al., 2021). The social exchange theory describes the process of interaction between people or groups of people in the form of negotiation or communication. The ultimate goal of both



parties is to optimize the benefits gained from the encounter (Suh, West and Shin, 2012). Its logic applies especially to loyalty in a hotel setting, where people often conduct subjective cost-benefit analysis and weigh alternatives before deciding to join, stay or leave their work (Lee et al., 2014). However, the theory does not only involve material ideas, elements such as anger or joy emanating from unseen things need to be also considered. Depending on the fairness of the exchange, each party has varying degrees of satisfaction and fairness, and the resulting dependence or interdependence determines the strength and balance of their relationship (Blau, 2017).

Generally, unless an individuals' security needs are not being met, such as health and well-being, they will not be motivated to pursue higher order needs (Atadil and Lu, 2021). Therefore, when employees feel that organizations are taking positive and beneficial actions towards them, they also reward organizations with positive and beneficial actions (Wright et al., 2020). To achieve interdependence for both, internal and external social exchange processes should be carried out. For example, organizations can exchange goods with employees and are rewarded for their active work. Afterall, employee satisfaction is a measure of perceived rewards minus perceived costs, but each party has expected and deserved rewards. There is a delicate balance of power between the organization and its employees. Once the organization demonstrates control over the transaction and is able to compare the other side's impact on the reward with a cost or penalty structure, employee satisfaction could decline. This can vary due to constraints and emotions which is why organizations do not always act rationally throughout social exchange dynamics (Lee et al., 2014).



## 4 Findings

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*This chapter aims to present in detail the useful data found for this study. It starts by showcasing the problems followed by an analysis of the possible reasons behind them.*

### 4.1 Personal and Professional Development

According to the answers of the seven respondents, it seems that the main reasons for their departure from the hotel are reflected in personal development and work environment, in which personal development is the main factor for almost all of them, and they do not seem to care much about the status of funds and benefits. Personal development in this context does not only refer to promotions within the hotel, but rather a challenge to achieve self-worth and a desire for learning and self-improvement. When individuals establish a good relationship with the organization, they can experience a sense of achievement through career success in terms of developmental positions, promotions, and gaining experience, which in turn brings a sense of fulfilment (Lei et al., 2021).

From the responses of the seven interviewees, it can be observed that their reasons for leaving the hotel industry stem from a desire for higher positions or the belief that the hotel work does not align with their personal development or meet their future expectations. As one interviewee mentioned, "Hotel work is for young people. If you haven't become a manager by the age of 30, you won't have an advantage in hotel work, and the benefits of working in the hotel industry are not that great (Response 3)."

From the examples provided, it appears that, rather than accepting training opportunities within the hotel, achieving personal development in the hotel industry is perceived as a normal path through frequent job hopping. One interviewee pointed out that "based on his work experience, hotels rarely promote employees from entry-level positions to managers. Hotels tend to look for individuals who have completed training to assume managerial roles (Response 1)."



This observation suggests that there may be a perception among employees that career advancement within the hotel industry is more attainable by seeking opportunities outside their current workplace, rather than relying on internal training and development programs. It highlights a potential disconnect between the career progression expectations of employees and the promotion practices within the hotel industry.

The dissatisfaction expressed by the interviewees regarding the lack of sufficient personal development opportunities in hotels can be attributed to several reasons. Firstly, hotels tend to prioritize finding qualified and capable individuals for higher positions. In this context, capability is seen as an abstract concept that is not solely based on material qualities but relies on employees' intelligent behavior. It is not a fixed state but rather a behavior derived from a combination of personal resources such as knowledge, skills, attributes, experience, cognitive abilities, and emotional capabilities. This perspective suggests that hotels may have difficulty identifying employees with the desired capability background internally, leading them to seek external candidates.

Another common response from the interviewees was that one of the downsides of the hotel industry is its low entry barrier. Due to the high demand for labor, there are minimal requirements for employees. This situation further limits the availability of employees within the hotel who can provide the desired capability background, prompting hotels to search for candidates externally. As one interviewee mentioned, "Education is essential for the hotel industry as it can provide better opportunities for promotion. Many individuals working in the hotel industry have years of work experience, but few lack the educational background to be considered for managerial roles within the organization (Response 1)."

Secondly, one interviewee perceived the hotel training programs they participated in as being merely formalistic, where superiors only pretended to explain and were not genuinely interested in developing their frontline employees into managers (Response 4). While this perspective was not explicitly shared by other interviewees, most



responses indicated that hotel employees were eligible to participate in regular training activities, although these trainings often focused on skill development rather than directly addressing personal career advancement.

These factors contribute to a perception among interviewees that hotels do not provide sufficient avenues for personal development, leading to their dissatisfaction and the pursuit of opportunities elsewhere.

Another interviewee provided insights into the differences in hotel training. According to her experience in different hotels, hotels would offer development opportunities, including numerous overseas projects where Chinese candidates may have an advantage. However, she believed that it was difficult for frontline employees to access such opportunities. She perceived an information barrier between frontline staff and managerial staff (Response 7).

This interviewee's response highlights the disparity in development opportunities between frontline employees and managerial staff in hotels. While hotels may provide development positions and overseas projects, these opportunities may be more accessible to higher-level employees rather than frontline staff. The existence of an information barrier suggests a lack of communication and transparency between different levels of employees in the hotel hierarchy.

According to the "China Hotel White Paper Report," it is evident that the hotel industry in China generally lacks a well-established talent training system. Most hotels focus their training on job-specific tasks, neglecting practical training and case-based teaching. Additionally, there is a lack of emphasis on assessing the quality and effectiveness of training and providing follow-up feedback.

This indicates a need for improvement in the training programs implemented by hotels in China. By incorporating more practical training methods and case studies, hotels can enhance the learning experience for employees and better prepare them for various challenges they may face in their roles. Furthermore, establishing mechanisms to



evaluate the outcomes of training and gathering feedback from employees can help identify areas for improvement and ensure the effectiveness of training initiatives in the hotel industry (Minyi & Qiulan, 2019). This leads to the occurrence of the "formalistic training" described by the interviewees above.

## 4.2 Salary and Treatment Level

Although personal development is almost the primary factor for all of them to resign, and during the conversation, all interviewees unanimously agreed that if there are good development opportunities, money is not their main consideration. Therefore, they seem to be less concerned about the financial and welfare conditions. But when asked what hotels can do to reduce employee turnover, almost everyone agreed that improving salary and benefits is the best approach.

One interviewee pointed out, "The hotel's salary is very low, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many hotels only paid basic wages. It's hard to live in a big city with just the basic wage. However, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, he needed a stable job, so he stayed in the hotel where he used to work. After the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, he immediately chose to resign." Although the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is not considered in this study, the above example indirectly reflects that when employees cannot pursue personal development (Response 4), "employees need to consider financial stability and immediate needs. Despite prioritizing personal development, employees may still feel the need for better compensation to ensure financial security." Therefore, ensuring employees' wages and benefits does play a role in retaining employees. However, if this is an effective method, why isn't it widely used in China's hotel human resource management? First, one interviewee pointed out that salaries in the Chinese hotel industry are low, and high-end, large-scale hotels have stricter salary controls. Additionally, she highlighted the differences between the Chinese hotel industry and foreign hotel industry systems. In an environment like China, almost every city has numerous well-known hotel companies such as Hilton, Marriott, and InterContinental. These companies have low recruitment standards, attracting a large number of low-skilled employees, creating a



worse competitive environment. She gave an example of when she worked in China, where she had to respond to superiors' messages constantly, whether during working hours or not, and sometimes even work overtime to meet customer demands. However, when she worked in Hong Kong, colleagues would not reply to any messages outside working hours, and clients understood. She believed that this phenomenon occurred due to the abnormal development of the service industry in China, leading to a deteriorating work environment. Due to the low wages of hotel employees in China, they are more willing to increase their income through job hopping and resignations, resulting in employee attrition (Response 7).

So why are there differences between China and foreign countries in terms of employee benefits and job requirements? Firstly, and most importantly, China has a large population and a high labor force. All interviewees agreed that the entry barriers for hotel work are low, and in many cases, employers can quickly find suitable replacements, making labor very inexpensive.

Secondly, the laws and regulations in China are not yet fully developed, and there is a lack of effective trade unions that can advocate for employee rights and benefits. As mentioned earlier, while trade unions do exist in China, they are often composed of employer representatives, making it difficult for employees to effectively safeguard their own interests. This absence of independent and empowered trade unions limits the ability of employees to negotiate for better wages, working conditions, and overall welfare. Without strong representation and collective bargaining power, employees may face challenges in improving their treatment and gaining access to comprehensive benefits in the workplace (Zhong Kai Law School of Sichuan Academy of Social Sciences, 2006). While the Chinese Labor Law establishes specific rules regarding the rights and obligations of both employees and employers in the process of labor utilization, providing extensive rights to workers in terms of employment, working conditions, remuneration, and social insurance, such as the right to equal employment, resignation, wages, and economic compensation, it is important to note that the implementation and enforcement of labor laws in China face various challenges.



China's labor law may exist on paper, but in practice, there are issues of non-compliance, lax enforcement, and a lack of consequences for violations. Unofficial practices and unwritten rules often prevail over formal regulations. This creates a gap between the intended protections provided by the law and the actual experiences of workers.

Furthermore, the enforcement of labor laws can vary across regions and industries in China. Local factors, such as economic development priorities and the influence of local authorities, may affect the strictness and effectiveness of labor law enforcement. As a result, some employers may exploit loopholes or disregard labor rights without facing significant consequences.

It is important to address these challenges and work towards ensuring that labor laws are effectively enforced to protect the rights and interests of employees in China (Zheng, H., 2022). This has resulted in many hotel employees lacking appropriate methods to safeguard their rights even when faced with unfair wages and treatment levels.

### 4.3 Working Environment

Apart from personal development and salary, the working environment is also a major factor leading to the resignation of the interviewees. This includes night shifts, poor relationships with colleagues or management, and unfair treatment at work, among others.

Three interviewees expressed that working night shifts is an unacceptable working condition, and if they were required to work night shifts, they would choose to resign. Additionally, the interviewees emphasized the importance of work-life balance, stating that if the company demanded overtime or night shifts, they would opt to resign.

Another interviewee enjoyed working in hotels and considered it a great opportunity for young people to develop themselves. However, due to a dislike for night shifts or working late hours, she chose not to continue working in the hotel after her internship



ended (Response 3). The negative working environment in hotels can affect employee retention. When employees realize they can avoid night shifts by switching jobs, they are likely to do so.

In addition, the relationships with colleagues and superiors also contribute to employee turnover. One interviewee stated that in the hotel industry, where there are many employees and fierce competition for limited career opportunities, interpersonal relationships can become strained. There may be suspicions or plots among colleagues that force you to leave. Additionally, this interviewee believed that working in a hotel is only suitable for experienced and qualified individuals (Response 4).

Another interviewee highlighted two situations that prevented him from working in the hotel industry. The first situation involved having a poor relationship with a supervisor, with a sense of class distinction. During particularly busy times, his manager chose not to work alongside him but instead sat aside and directed him, creating a sense of inequality. The second situation involved discrimination in the hotel workplace, including gender, aesthetic labor, and position discrimination. There were also cases of guest harassment, which the higher-level management did not handle promptly. Furthermore, he pointed out that the management of multiple hotels exploited his internship certificate to threaten him into working overtime and night shifts, while managers used their positions to confiscate interns' tips. He believed that the hotel industry is not suitable for many people, especially in entry-level positions (Response 6).

As mentioned earlier, qualified employees are more eager to join good companies (Yukongdi and Shrestha, 2020). When employees have a positive perception of their job quality, it can motivate them to stay in an ethical organization for as long as possible, reducing their intention to quit (Xu et al., 2022). Conversely, if employees do not have a positive perception of their job quality, they are more likely to consider leaving.



## 4.4 Unfair Treatment

Unfair treatment is also reflected in the answers of the interviewees regarding reasons for leaving, and unlike other reasons, when people encounter suitable development opportunities, they may understand the decision to leave. However, when people experience unfair treatment, they often wait for a period of time before resigning. This indicates that unfair treatment is not an immediate cause of employee turnover but rather a progressive process.

One example of unfair treatment is the wage secrecy policy mentioned by an interviewee. They stated, "The reason for implementing this policy is to prevent colleagues from comparing salaries and creating a sense of unfairness, as there are often significant differences in salaries among employees at the same level. Sometimes, the salary of managerial staff is lower than that of new regular employees." Unfair treatment is specifically manifested in the aspect of wages. Due to the aforementioned phenomenon, employees willing to work in hotels often switch jobs for higher salaries and better career opportunities. It seems that hotels use different salary packages to attract talented employees. The existence of different salaries among employees at the same level is why hotels have strict wage secrecy policies. Whether in terms of economics or social aspects, if employees lack motivation to work in the hotel industry, they will not continue their careers (Yang, Wan, and Fu, 2012). When employees seek higher salaries, they choose to change jobs. However, when other colleagues at the same level discover that their coworkers receive higher salaries, they feel a sense of imbalance and may also switch hotels, creating a vicious cycle.

Lastly, many interviewees pointed out the presence of psychological friction. They felt the impact of negative factors in the work environment, whether it came from management, customers, or colleagues. This influence made it difficult for them to continue working. Their confidence in their work decreased, leading to increased work pressure. As one interviewee put it, "The unfairness in the hotel is due to favoritism. Many times, because of this favoritism, the employees' sense of responsibility towards work becomes blurred (Response 2)."



According to the principle of reciprocity in social exchange theory (Hoang, 2021), employees do not feel that the value provided by the organization is worth the trouble. They are unwilling to reciprocate the organization with better job performance. Over time, entry-level employees may experience emotional exhaustion, identity disintegration, and a perception of weakened job-related abilities, which can harm performance and hinder effective customer service, leading to considerations of resignation.

Only when there is a positive cycle in the work environment do employee-manager relationships become closer, encouraging employees to continue working in the hotel. Conversely, if there is a poor relationship between employees and managers, it can lead to a vicious cycle, causing work pressure for employees. Although my interviewees mentioned that their negative emotions at work did not affect their service to customers, over time, they may become more resistant to work, leading to a complete career shift.

## 4.5 Influence of Traditional Ideas

As pointed out above, hotel work in Chinese culture has been considered a dangerous and low-level job since ancient times, because in Chinese culture people have a "backbone" and cannot serve others casually. In addition, hotels in ancient China were places dedicated to serving merchants, and the status of merchants has been very low since ancient times, even lower than that of farmers. This is different from the development of hotels in the Western world. In Western society, hotels originated from the development of leisure travel (Löfgren, 1999). The guests who enter the hotel are gentlemen and ladies belonging to the wealthy class. It is an honor to work in such a place, and it's a decent job too.

China has been deeply influenced by Confucian culture since ancient times, and the Confucian concept of hierarchy and superiority still deeply affects every Chinese until today. Many interviewees believe that the job of a hotel is to serve guests, and one interviewee believes that "working in a hotel requires a sense of service. If the staff's service attitude is good enough and their work is good enough, there will be no



unfairness in the workplace.” or customer discrimination (Response 1)”. Although this sentence does not directly reflect the influence of traditional Chinese culture on hotel work, it reflects that the service-oriented principle of working in Chinese hotels requires Chinese people to abandon this kind of self-esteem to a certain extent. Employees need to serve customers with a sincere and hospitable service attitude. If the service is not good, they will be criticized or treated unfairly. If employees cannot accept this service attitude, then they may resign because their self-esteem is not protected..



## 5 Discussion and Conclusion

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*This chapter aims to discuss and analyse the empirical data and relate it to the rest of the research. Meanwhile, this chapter aims to answer the research question and discusses the possibilities and directions of future research.*

### 5.1 Data Collected

#### 5.1.1 Personal Development and Career Planning

The number of luxury hotels in China is astonishing. In many cases, there will be many luxury hotels in a second-tier or third-tier city. Many hotels require much staff, which is also different from hotels abroad. The interviewees also gave very constructive suggestions to solve the high turnover rate of Chinese hotel employees, the most important of which is to increase the salary and increase the development space of the hotel employees.

Noteworthy information was gained through the interviews behind the high turnover rate of some Chinese hotel workers. The first is that the resources of grass-roots employees (including interns, employees below supervisor level) and management employees are not equal. Many grass-roots employees think that the training given to them by the company is all about formalism. It doesn't help them for promotions. In terms of development opportunities, it is usually difficult for grass-roots employees or front-line employees to get promotion opportunities if they work in a hotel for a long time, because hotels rarely choose to train them, but instead prefer to recruit employees with complete knowledge and experience, so that employees need to resign to obtain a higher job position. For employees, many look forward to more than a salary. Opportunities for job growth or advancement were more important than compensation or benefits to the interviewees. Employees crave jobs that make the most of existing skills and allow them to learn and develop new ones.

#### 5.1.2 Chinese Hotel Turnover Phenomenon

The turnover phenomenon of Chinese hotel employees is manifested in two aspects. The first aspect is job-hopping between different hotels due to the previously



mentioned job and promotion opportunities. Hotel employees leave as soon as they find better opportunities (Mohsin et al., 2022) such as a higher position, or the ability to learn more. The motivation is inherently in more than just tangible rewards, usually in a financial form. It is deeper and more complex. Sound policies are required with an incentive strategy value when retaining employees, which in turn has profound effects on morale and productivity. The second aspect is that interns and outsourcing companies often change employees, and many interns will choose not to return to the hotel to work after the internship period is over. Except for outsourcing companies, most of the reasons why interns leave the hotel is dissatisfaction with the working environment (night shifts), with their superiors, and with the hierarchical relationship between superiors and subordinates in the hotel. Managers working on night shifts need to promote flexible work schedules or teleworking so that employees can find a better balance between their personal and professional lives (Mohsin et al., 2022).

In addition, the number of luxury hotels in China is astonishing. In many cases, there will be many luxury hotels in a second-tier or third-tier city. A large number of hotels require a large number of staff, which is also different from hotels abroad. The interviewees also gave very constructive suggestions to solve the high turnover rate of Chinese hotel employees, the most important of which is to increase the salary and increase the development space of the hotel employees.

### **5.1.3 Chinese Hotel Management Culture Applied to Social Exchange Theory**

Discrimination is seen more from customers against the occupation of employees and from superior employees against interns due to the Chinese cultural values. Unfair treatment is specifically manifested in terms of salary. Due to the above-mentioned phenomenon that employees who are willing to work in hotels often change jobs for higher salaries and better development opportunities, it seems that hotels use different salaries to attract talented employees. Employees at the same level can have different wages, which is why hotels have a strict salary secrecy system. Whether financially or socially, if an employee lacks motivation to work in the hotel industry, the employee will not continue his/her career (Yang, Wan, and Fu, 2012). For higher salaries,



employees choose to change jobs, but when other employees of the same level find that their colleagues' salaries are higher, they will feel it is unbalanced and switch hotels too, thus creating a vicious circle.

Lastly, the mental internal friction was indicated by many respondents. They felt the influence of bad factors in a working environment, no matter whether the influence is from the management, guests or colleagues. This influence prevents them from continuing to work. Confidence in the job decreases, and thus job resistance increases. According to the principle of reciprocity characteristic of the social exchange theory (Hoang, 2021), employees do not feel the value provided by the organization is worth the trouble. Employees are not willing to repay the organization with a better scope of work. Over time, entry-level employees experience emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished perceptions of job-related competence, which undermines performance and prevents effective customer service towards considering resignation.

Only when there is a virtuous cycle in the working environment, the relationship between employees and management will become closer and closer, making employees want to continue working in the hotel. Conversely, if the relationship between employees and their managers is not good, it will enter a vicious circle, and employees will have work resistance, although my interviewees said that the negative emotions that appear at work will not reflect in their service to customers. But, over time, they can become more and more resistant to work, leading to a complete career change.

## 5.2 Answering the Research Question

The research question of this study "What are the reasons behind the high turnover rate of practitioners in China's contemporary hotel industry?" was answered by the research itself together with the correlating secondary research data as the findings supported most literature. This research project focused on the factors behind the phenomenon of high turnover in the hotel industry in China. Employees in the hospitality industry often have temporary contracts and irregular and/or seasonal work patterns and



relatively low wages (Filimonau et al., 2020). From the perspective of sustainability, frequent turnover of hotel staff will not only lead to increased human resource costs, but also reduce service quality and customer satisfaction, thereby threatening the development of enterprises (Fan et al., 2021).

The reasons behind the high turnover rate of employees in the hotel industry in China are very complicated and complex. In addition to the traditional reasons of salary and benefits as well as an imbalance between the work system and personal life, there are other external reasons in China because of the different environment and culture. To sum it up, Chinese employees are forced to change jobs to obtain better development and wages because the wages in Chinese hotels do not increase year by year as well as due to limited promotion opportunities, meanwhile, hotels have strict control over wages.

This is because employee turnover can lead to various organizational disruptions including, but not limited to, financial loss, damage to reputation, loss of knowledge and skills stock (Xu et al., 2022). Instead of focusing on how employees see the future, hotel management should communicate what the organization can offer them if they decide to stay, which will help achieve long-term goals (Mohsin et al., 2022).

The results of this study underscore the importance of understanding the challenges that service industries in tourism face in human resource management issues, as well as identifying employee development in a timely manner. In addition to the high mobility of human resources, talent optimization is a problem faced by the hotel industry internationally, however even more significant in China. The hotel environment continues to be characterized by high occupational stress, high staff turnover, irregular working hours and peak season workload overload. Long-term empiricism tends to make the hotel form an inertial thinking mode, and the hotel's talents need to be optimized urgently. However, important HR practices are sometimes overlooked due to short-lived seasonal employment contractual relationships, and hospitality workers often suffer from lack of training opportunities, low wages, and low recognition (Casado-Díaz and Simón, 2016).



### 5.3 Limitations and Future Research

It is expected that this study will provide insight into the phenomenon of high turnover among hotel professionals in China. The findings may help tourism practitioners and policy makers to develop strategies and interventions to better facilitate hotel transformation and address human resource and management issues. This study mainly focuses on the views of Chinese hotel practitioners, which means that the views of, for example, hotel employers or policy makers are not collected for comparison, which means that this article may only consider employees from the perspective of employee needs but does not take into account hotel employers and the needs of other stakeholders. But it does achieve the purpose of this study, as stated in the introductory chapter, "What are the reasons for the high employee turnover rate in China's contemporary hotel industry and are there solutions". Future research on business perspectives and/or psychology in China or other countries may help to understand different perspectives. To ensure growth, the hospitality industry needs organizational efficiency, which is achieved by improving overall quality and reducing direct and indirect costs of delivering products and services, improving relationships with stakeholders, proposing better practices, fairness and in an ethical and equitable manner Created to achieve what serves their interests.

In addition, this study took gender factors into account as much as possible when sampling, but due to the small sample size, gender differences may not be well displayed in this study. Due to the limitation of the sampling method, most of the interviewees have worked in Beijing, so this sample can be used as a microcosm to observe the human resources situation of Chinese hotels. However, different cities may have different situations. Furthermore, all interviewees worked in 5-stars hotels, which could also have had an impact on the results. Lastly, since this interview was conducted in Chinese, there may be some errors in cultural understanding during the translation process. In future research, the scope of interviewees needs to be expanded to conduct a more comprehensive investigation.



Therefore, it may be very important to understand why hotels do not increase employee wages within the acceptable range of the public, and why hotels allow employees to jump ship. The operational, administrative and financial resources of a hotel company require good planning, but at the same time may be able to secure stakeholder support and legitimacy of interest to equitably facilitate viable and self-sustaining development. Key decision-makers must be involved when discussing the complexity and impact of negative impacts in these areas. Understanding the perspectives of stakeholders such as policy makers and how the development of China's hotel industry can lead to tourism and economic growth may help researchers connect and correlate the data.

In future research, research should continue to refine the contradictions and problems in hotel human resource management, go deep into my country's national conditions, conduct more detailed and comprehensive investigations, such as gender-based research, and analyse Chinese hotels separately, so as to investigate What are the differences in the way hotels of different grades treat human resource management.



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## **Appendix A. Oral Material**

### **Respondent 1**

**Can you tell me about your experience working in the hotel industry?**

I have been working as a doorman since 2013, and I have changed three or four hotels. Because of my love for the concierge industry, I can serve different guests every day, meet different people and learn a lot.

**During the ten years you have worked in a hotel, have you think about your career development plan?**

The highest career development in the concierge department is to become a golden key, or a concierge manager. I wanted to be a golden key from the beginning as a doorman. This is my career development plan. If this plan is divided into ten steps, I We have now reached the eighth step.

**When you worked in different hotels, did all of them give you the same feelings or do you have different work experiences?**

The prices of different hotels are different, so the guests I meet are also different. There are hotels that are more touristy, and then they ask me different questions.

**What are the factors that influence your decision to stay or leave a hotel?**

The reason I left my last hotel was that the career development did not meet my personal expectations, and then I wanted to change jobs to a better place to study. When I first entered this industry, I started from a small place, and when I learned more, I hoped to develop on a better and bigger platform and go to high-end hotels in this industry.

**Can you tell me about a time when you decided to leave the hotel? What were the reasons for your decision?**

Job development is the most important, of course, salary and benefits are secondary parts. The main question is whether you are happy in this hotel environment, because a person stays in one place for a long time, he may be tired of the working atmosphere, so he may want to change to a better A place of freshness to continue to challenge yourself.

**Does live balance important to you when you work in a hotel?**

I'm married and have kids, but I think I'll go to work if it requires me, and my family will support me. For a migrant worker, the shift time is actually not important, what is



important is what can be gained while working. Since I have chosen to work, I will obey the leader's arrangement and do my job well.

**Are career development opportunities most important to you when you think about quite or stay in this hotel?**

Yes, because it can be boring after you start working from one place and never have the opportunity to grow. Learning new things is very important to me. Even if the previous company gave me a higher salary than this company, I still learn the same things, which are useless to me. A worker needs to constantly learn new things before he can improve his position and salary and grow better. Unless you are a very old person, you are not willing to continue to try.

**According to your information, I noticed that you are 34, and have married and have a kid, Chines often say “when you turn to 30 then you have to settle done”, so will you staying in this hotel forever or you will quite when you get better job?**

I will still quit my job and move with my family to where my work needs me. But I live in Beijing, this place is too big and there are many hotels, even if I change jobs, I may not consider changing cities, because Beijing still has many opportunities waiting for me.

**Can you describe your experience with training and development opportunities in the hotel?**

Once, the company would want me to learn the knowledge of the front desk in order to help guests check in. But I have not experienced the training opportunities that can promote promotion, so it is usually very difficult to get those opportunities, and the company will not draw people from the bottom employees for training. They are more inclined to hire people who have already been trained, because it takes a lot of time and experience to train a new manager from the bottom, and most companies will not do this.

**Will you think this is unfair to you? Since you have been working here for such a long time but when there is a good oppnity the company doesn't think about you but thinks about someone who's younger than you just have better education.**

No, I understand that I lack educational background and that I don't have the abilities of others. The hotel industry needs experience, but now there are many experienced people. Because the threshold for entering a hotel is low, someone who has been studying for a few months can be said to have experience. In this case, people with academic backgrounds will stand out, so I have no complaints.

**How satisfied are you with the communication and relationship with your supervisor and co-workers?**



I am very satisfied, they have always treated me very well, no one bullied me in the hotel, and no one had a bossy situation with me.

**Have you ever experienced any unfair treatment or discrimination in the hotel? If yes, please describe ?**

No, since you have chosen the service industry, you must be prepared to face the attitude of the guests. If you serve well there will be no unfair treatment and discrimination.

**Can you tell me about a time when you felt particularly satisfied with your job in the hotel?**

This is more difficult to answer, every day is a new experience.

**What improvements do you think the hotel can make to increase employee retention and job satisfaction?**

Raising salary can only be raising salary. Humans work to earn money, and a salary is something that humans need if the relationship between employees in a department is good.

**Have you recommended the hotel as a place to work to others? If no, why not?**

I recommend it, because the place where I work is in the upper-middle class of the hotel circle, including the location of the hotel and the type of guests are very good. If you want to work in the hotel industry, it will be more comfortable to go to work in other hotels from here.

**Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience working in the hotel industry?**

You have to learn to observe words and expressions, have a sense of service, and there is nothing else.

## **Respondent 2**

**Can you tell me about your experience working in the hotel industry?**

I entered the hotel industry in 2003 and have worked in almost all positions in the hotel, such as front desk, catering, sales, human resources, etc., and the positions have also fluctuated. At the highest level, I was the deputy manager of the hotel, and at the lowest level, I also worked at the grassroots level employees.

**What is your position now and how you feel about working in hotel?**



I am now the deputy manager of the executive lounge. My feeling is that being a hotel is a relatively comfortable industry. You don't have to go out to experience new things every day. People will be younger, and their mentality will be younger.

**Have you worked in multiple hotels? If yes, can you tell me about your experience working in different hotels?**

Different hotels have different experiences, because the guests they encounter will be different, but otherwise they are all the same. However, different groups must have different management methods. Just like the hotel I work in now; it is more traditional, and the pressure will not be too great.

**Do you prefer more work at a hotel with a lot of stress or a hotel that is more traditional ?**

For me, I have no particular likes or dislikes, but different periods and different ages pursue different things. For me, the challenges are different. When I first started working in the hotel, I was only 18 years old, and I liked more challenging things. If I were in my current position at that time, I might not work for a long time and then quit my job. But it is also a challenge for me now because I have just returned to the hotel where I worked before.

**Can you talk about how did your quit this hotel and what makes you come back to the same hotel?**

Because I had been working here for two and a half years when I left the hotel, but there was no room for advancement. I feel like I've been here long enough, but there's no opportunity to grow so I'm leaving. After resigning, I took a break and went to work in another hotel, where I also stayed in the same position for two years. I think even in the same position, if you change the environment, you can learn a lot horizontally, so I challenged myself. Then the reason why I returned to the current hotel was also because of personal development issues. The hotel here invited me to a higher position, and then I came back to work.

**What are the factors that influence your decision to stay or leave a hotel?**

Job development, of course salary, benefits, and job satisfaction are very important, but the most important thing to me is development.

**How important is work-life balance to you when considering whether to stay or leave a job?**

Quality of life and life balance are very important to me. I don't like working night shifts. I have never worked night shifts in my twenty-three years of work. If you offered me a very high position but asked me to work the night shift, I would definitely say no. For me, a position is not the definition of development, it is development that can learn new things and constantly challenge yourself.



**Can you describe your experience with training and development opportunities in the hotel?**

The hotels I have worked in before having been selected through layers of selection, and after the recommendation of each hotel, a dozen people were selected from each hotel group to go to the Lausanne Hotel in Switzerland for off-the-job study. At that time, my manager promised that I would be promoted within one year after studying. Although I didn't get a chance to be promoted in the end, it was still a memorable training experience.

**How satisfied are you with the communication and relationship with your supervisor and co-workers?**

Satisfied, so far. I resigned only because of personal development issues. In fact, I can settle for two to four years in each position. If I am not satisfied, I will not work for that long. But I am not a person who pursues high places, I just like to learn what I like and do my own thing.

**Have you ever experienced any unfair treatment or discrimination in the hotel? If yes, please describe.**

There is no discrimination, but there must be unfairness. For example, a child of a manager's relatives did some extreme or wrong things, and in the end the manager favored him and asked you to bear the fault. These are common things.

**Can you tell me about a time when you felt particularly satisfied with your job in the hotel?**

It was a satisfying experience when I went to Switzerland to study, but every time my service is recognized by the guests, I will be very satisfied.

**What improvements do you think the hotel can make to increase employee retention and job satisfaction?**

Increase the salary, because the threshold of the hotel is also very low, anyone can come to work.

**Have you recommended the hotel as a place to work to others? If no, why not?**

If you are young people, people without much life experience, or people who are very extreme, or people who can't bend down to serve others, I don't recommend it, because hotel work is not suitable for them. But if you are a person who studies hotel management, I think you can try to work in a hotel. I think it is a good thing to apply what you have learned. Everyone's situation is different, so I can't recommend it lightly.

**Respondent 3**



**Can you tell me about your experience working in the hotel industry?**

After I studied hotel management at school, I entered the Marriott Hotel for an internship. I worked in the hotel for half a year, and then I returned to my hometown to pursue other careers. I've only worked at one hotel, and it was the Marriott.

**What are the factors that influence your decision to stay or leave a hotel?**

The reason I left the hotel job was because of my health, I couldn't stay up late. So I chose to leave the hotel industry, but I really like being a hotel because every day is very fresh and I meet different people. I am very happy every day when I work in the hotel, except that it is late during the off-duty period, and everything else is acceptable.

**Expect the health situation, why don't you continue stay at hotel industry when you finished your internship?**

I really don't like staying up late.

**How important is work-life balance to you when considering whether to stay or leave a job?**

It's very important, so I don't want to continue working in the hotel because I don't want to work the night shift.

**How important is job satisfaction to you when considering whether to stay or leave a job?**

The environment is very important to me, followed by salary and benefits. Although development opportunities are also important, the atmosphere between colleagues and subordinates makes me feel very comfortable. If I was working with a co-worker who wasn't very capable and then he was blocking my work, I wouldn't even consider the job.

**Can you describe your experience with training and development opportunities in the hotel?**

I have had induction training, but the opportunity for development is not my turn, because I have not worked in the hotel for a long time, but I saw that my classmates, the classmates who are still working in the hotel are all at the manager level, so I think the hotel will give you the opportunity to develop. But development opportunities are still personal choice and development, not everyone can get development opportunities.

**How satisfied are you with the communication and relationship with your supervisor and co-workers?**



I feel okay, if I work in an environment that I don't like, I won't work there for long. I will choose a salary and environment that suits me and that I can accept to work.

**Have you ever experienced any unfair treatment or discrimination in the hotel? If yes, please describe ?**

There is no unfair treatment, but there must be some professional discrimination from guests. It is not uncommon for some people with quality and education issues to find fault with your work. But I don't have a fresh memory of the experience, because the group I work in, including my department, is in contact with all high-quality elites, and there are very few customers who look down on others.

**Can you tell me about a time when you felt particularly satisfied with your job in the hotel?**

When I received the thank-you letter from the guest, I once served a director of IBM. He and his family liked me very much. When they left the hotel, they wrote me a thank-you letter, which I kept very well. I have always been in touch with that guest, and I think this is a memorable event for me.

**What improvements do you think the hotel can make to increase employee retention and job satisfaction?**

It's hard to say. Career planning, development, salary and benefits must be prepared. This is a very common thing. No matter whether it is a hotel company or not, it needs these to retain employees.

**Have you recommended the hotel as a place to work to others? If no, why not?**

No, because the hotel's treatment is not so good. In addition, this is an industry for young people. If someone in their 30s or 40s comes to work in a hotel, if this person is not particularly capable and not at the management level, it is actually very difficult to continue in the hotel industry.

But if this person has room for development, it is actually a good way to work in a hotel, because major hotel groups will have inter-provincial or transnational job transfers, and these experiences will lay a good foundation for your future.

#### **Respondent 4**

**Can you tell me about your experience working in the hotel industry?**

I started working as a chef in 2017 and continued until 2022. I changed two hotels in the middle and kept working as a chef. Then the second hotel gave me a higher position, so I went to the second hotel.



Have you worked in multiple hotels? If yes, can you tell me about your experience working in different hotels?

Different hotel brands are different, leaders are different, and quarrels between colleagues are also different. I don't feel like my leaders are great, but they are very bad at dealing with people, which makes a lot of things very complicated.

It's been three years since I worked in my second hotel. Because of the new crown epidemic, it is very difficult to find a job, so I can only work in the second hotel. If there was no epidemic, I would have resigned a long time ago.

Why?

Because of the epidemic, all employees are only paid a basic salary, which is only 2,000 RMB a month, and 2,000 RMB is really very little in Beijing. If it is normal, the amount will be more than the amount.

What are the factors that influence your decision to stay or leave a hotel?

Salary and salary increases are modest.

Can you tell me about a time when you decided to leave the hotel? What were the reasons for your decision?

It is because the environment is too bad, and colleagues do not get along very well. When you have a high position, you must bear a lot of responsibilities, and many conflicts among colleagues also arise. The hotel's resources are prioritized, there are many people, and the problem of jealousy among employees is very common. Many times, they will set a trap for you to leave and then vacate the position.

How important is work-life balance to you when considering whether to stay or leave a job?

Compared to my current job, I used to work night shifts in a hotel job, which also affected my life. Of course, if I am given a lot of money, I am also willing to work night shift. But if I get married and have children in the future, I will definitely not work the night shift, because staying up late every day is very uncomfortable.

How important is pay and benefits to you when considering whether to stay or leave a job?

Money is the most important, and work status is also very important. If you give me enough money, I can do whatever I want.

Can you describe your experience with training and development opportunities in the hotel?



There was training, but it was all formalistic and put on airs. No one would care what you really learned. There is no opportunity for development, because it all depends on whether the leader likes you or not. If the leader likes you, promotion is easy.

**How satisfied are you with the communication and relationship with your supervisor and co-workers?**

I'm very satisfied, even if I don't get along well with my colleagues, I won't put my emotions into work.

**Have you ever experienced any unfair treatment or discrimination in the hotel? If yes, please describe.**

No, there will be serious banter between co-workers, but this is not considered discrimination. But there is unfair treatment, because all hotels have set up a confidentiality mechanism and will not disclose the salary of your colleagues. Sometimes the salary of a new employee is higher than mine. If I don't know, forget it. But if I know, there is nothing I can do. I can only feel that it is unfair and unbalanced, but I have no other way.

**Can you tell me about a time when you felt particularly satisfied with your job in the hotel?**

I am very satisfied every day, and I am happy eight out of ten days.

**What improvements do you think the hotel can make to increase employee retention and job satisfaction?**

There are many aspects to consider, and there is nothing that can be solved at once. I think the department manager should do a good job. If the department manager is a good person, other things will be mentioned.

**But based on your previous answers, I realized that you want money mostly, but why do you answer me work involvement on this question?**

If the working environment is not good, I may not accept a lot of money, because it will be very tiring to work every day. For me, depending on the situation, the environment may be more important if they don't give me a lot of money.

**Have you recommended the hotel as a place to work to others? If no, why not?**

It depends on individual needs. There are age groups, and the older the qualifications, the more senior you can work in the hotel. But I still suggest not to work in a hotel if you have poor qualifications.



Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience working in the hotel industry?

Hotel work is generally ok, good and bad, I don't regret my choice, but I wouldn't go back to hotel work either.

### **Respondent 5**

Can you tell me about your experience working in the hotel industry?

I joined the Marriott Group in 2019 as a lounge receptionist, and I left after working for a year.

Why did you choose work in hotel?

Because I had just graduated from university at the time, my family thought I was simple, and a hotel is a place with complicated personnel, so they hoped to give me a year to train myself and learn how to get along with people and understand the world.

Why do you think work in hotel is exercise work?

Because the hotel is open to the public and has all kinds of guests, it is necessary to know what kind of words to say to what kind of people.

What are the factors that influence your decision to stay or leave a hotel?

Because I didn't intend to work in the hotel for a long time, I just hope to exercise in the hotel, and I will leave when the year is up.

How important is work-life balance to you when considering whether to stay or leave a job?

This is also very important to me, because I work for a better life. Before I am thirty years old, I hope that my work can reach a certain level, and the only thing that can be measured is salary. I can only accept hours during working hours, not overtime. If I am off work my time can only belong to me, not work.

How important is career advancement opportunities to you when considering whether to stay or leave a job?

Development space is actually very important to me because it requires long-term development. When I first graduated, money was not very important, if I earned enough salary, I was more concerned about long-term accumulation.

How important is job satisfaction to you when considering whether to stay or leave a job?



This is also very important. If this environment keeps making you very unhappy, you will not have many opportunities. You can and want to move forward only when your surroundings match your own aura.

**Can you describe your experience with training and development opportunities in the hotel?**

I have had induction training, and if there is a chance, when the hotel I worked for went bankrupt and reorganized, the Marriott Group once invited me to transfer to a hotel in another place as a supervisor, but I refused.

**How did they said to you?**

They said that because I have been working here for a year, they can recommend me to other Marriott hotels as a supervisor if I want. But I didn't care because I just wanted to leave.

**Sounds like your company is really good employer.**

Maybe they gave me this opportunity because of my family connections. My relatives know the leaders of the hotel, so when they have the opportunity, they will give me priority.

**How satisfied are you with the communication and relationship with your supervisor and co-workers?**

Be satisfied, I rarely really dislike a person, I am more impatient with additional work, I will be very irritable.

**Have you ever experienced any unfair treatment or discrimination in the hotel? If yes, please describe ?**

Unfair treatment did not appear among my employees in the same position, because my family has connections, and the company takes good care of me in many aspects. It is rare for guests to discriminate against me. It is more discrimination among colleagues. Because of competition, and I can get more and better resources, there will be psychological imbalance among colleagues.

**Can you tell me about a time when you felt particularly satisfied with your job in the hotel?**

I meet colleagues I like very much, and then break the routine of hotel work with them, and sometimes take advantage of the company, that feeling makes me feel very rebellious.



**What improvements do you think the hotel can make to increase employee retention and job satisfaction?**

The resignation you mentioned is actually divided into two types. The first is job hopping. They still work in the hotel industry, but they just change to another place. In this case, they are actually satisfied with the hotel job. Unsatisfactory development.

Another situation is interns and outsourcing companies, because the hotel has very few regular employees, most of them are interns found from schools, and outsourcing companies composed of security and cleaning, their turnover rate is very high, almost half a year will flow once.

In the first case, it is better to increase the salary. If there is a higher salary, it will attract people to stay. The second case is difficult to alleviate, because the school needs students to go out for internships, and the hotel needs a lot of cheap labor. This situation is difficult to change.

**Have you recommended the hotel as a place to work to others? If no, why not?**

Probably not, because the environment is really bad. But the hotel industry also has its own advantages, which is good exercise for young people, so you can go there for two years to exercise, which will be beneficial to your life and work in the future.

**Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience working in the hotel industry?**

I think many hotels are foreign companies, and the management policies used are also foreign management policies. There are not many levels and class systems. Managers and ordinary employees can call each other by name, which makes people feel that everyone is equal.

## **Respondent 6**

**Can you tell me about your experience working in the hotel industry?**

In 2019, I entered Beijing InterContinental Sanlitun Hotel as a room attendant intern for half a year. After the internship, I stopped working.

**Have you worked in multiple hotels? If yes, can you tell me about your experience working in different hotels?**

No, I've only worked in one hotel.

**What are the factors that influence your decision to stay or leave a hotel?**



The working environment, because I hate my job, and it is sexist, because I am a boy, I have been put on the night shift. I have worked for half a year and four months on the night shift, plus me and my manager. The relationship was not good either, they kept threatening me with my internship certificate and forced me to work overtime and night shifts.

**Can you tell me about a time when you decided to leave a hotel? What were the reasons for your decision?**

I left because I was often harassed by guests, and the wages of the hotel were very low and the leadership did not agree with me.

Leadership does not work; some work is only for us to do. In addition, the leader will often collect the tips and distribute the tips to him and some regular workers. Our interns can't get tips, because customers tip by credit card, and I rarely pay in cash.

**How important is work-life balance to you when considering whether to stay or leave a job?**

The balance between work and life is very important to me, because I want to work well when I go to work, and after get off work I want my time to belong to me only, and I don't want my boss to force me to work overtime.

**How important is job satisfaction to you when considering whether to stay or leave a job?**

Job satisfaction is the most important thing for me, followed by job opportunities, because if I am unhappy at work every day and spend time dealing with the relationship with the leader, I will become very negative. The behavior of some leaders makes me feel very resistant to work.

**Can you describe your experience with training and development opportunities in the hotel?**

Having had the onboarding, the rest of the development opportunities or something like that is all about drawing big cakes. When I first started working, I hoped to be a second-tier position, and the leaders promised me, but when I came to the job, they said that I was an intern and not qualified to work in the second tier, and if I resigned, they would not give me a job. My internship certificate.

**How satisfied are you with the communication and relationship with your supervisor and co-workers?**

Satisfied, although the relationship with the manager is not very good and they respect each other, I get along very well with other colleagues.



Have you ever experienced any unfair treatment or discrimination in the hotel? If yes, please describe ?

There are many, the first is gender discrimination, because I am a boy, so I am asked to do the most tedious work, and my classmates also have the same experience, because there are some good-looking people at the front desk, so my classmates often have to do a lot of work and work a lot The night shift, let that good-looking boy go to the morning shift.

Including the experience of being harassed by the guests, because the room attendants often go to the room to deliver food, sometimes there are guests who sexually harass me, or sometimes they will ask girls to deliver food.

How did your leader handle this situation?

They just ignored it and told me that it was a normal thing, and they didn't feel guilty or compensated me at all. Later, I leapfrogged to report to the director, and finally the general manager of the hotel came forward to apologize to me and gave me a voucher as compensation. But my line manager didn't care about the harassment I was experiencing.

Can you tell me about a time when you felt particularly satisfied with your job in the hotel?

I meet colleagues who I can chat with, and it makes me very happy to have colleagues who have a good relationship.

What improvements do you think the hotel can make to increase employee retention and job satisfaction?

Hierarchy and class concepts should be abolished, and managers and employees should be able to work together as much as possible. Instead of employees working desperately when they are very busy, the manager just sits there and directs you.

Another thing is to keep it clean, because the chefs are not very hygienic. Many of them cook without washing their hands after going to the toilet.

Have you recommended the hotel as a place to work to others? If no, why not?

No, because my own experience was really bad, and I don't wish to recommend others to work in hotels. Because when working in a hotel, there are only development opportunities in the second line, but there are very few development opportunities in the first line.

**Respondent 7**



**Can you tell me about your experience working in the hotel industry?**

I started working in 2011. My first job was at the Shangri-La Hotel in Wuhan, which was a very old hotel. Later, I went to the Westin Hotel in Beijing. As a sales manager, I received many VIPs from the hotel, such as Reagan, Obama, and I received them in Kyoto, and then I became the global sales director of Shangri-La Group, connecting global business, then went to the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, and then returned to the Hilton Hotel in Wuhan as the sales director.

**Can you tell me why you have switched so many hotels?**

It's very simple. It's a choice of personal values. Sometimes the platform you work on can't give you more room for development, so you need to change places. Sometimes it is also a manifestation of personal value. Every time I change jobs, another company invites me to work. They have heard about my deeds from various channels, so they want me to go to their company to sell more things.

**What are the factors that influence your decision to stay or leave a hotel?**

The embodiment of personal value and the strength of the platform

**Can you tell me about a time when you decided to leave a hotel? What were the reasons for your decision?**

The reason I left the last hotel I worked at was because I didn't feel like I belonged in Beijing, the weather in Beijing was bad, and I didn't feel like home after staying there for a long time, so I left.

**How important is work-life balance to you when considering whether to stay or leave a job?**

Life balance is very important to me. Although I can work overtime, I prefer to have my own time. Position, salary, and job satisfaction are all important to me, and I can't live without one. Every time I resign, I will consider the comprehensive situation of the new job before confirming the resignation.

**Can you describe your experience with training and development opportunities in the hotel?**

When I was working in Shangri-La, the group gave our sales department the opportunity to stay in hotels around the world for free, so that we can learn from the experience of other hotels and travel every week. The training system including Shangri-La is very rich, basically twice a month, including some leadership training given to me for my future development.



There are many opportunities. For example, when I was working at the Waldorf Astoria, they gave me a chance to work in another country. I could work as a sales director at the Waldorf Astoria in Japan. However, due to the epidemic, I have not been able to go abroad.

**How satisfied are you with the communication and relationship with your supervisor and co-workers?**

I am very satisfied. I am meticulous in my work when I report to my superiors, but I also treat my subordinates with kindness and empathy. Everyone likes me very much, including our weekend gatherings.

**What improvements do you think the hotel can make to increase employee retention and job satisfaction?**

Do a good job in employee benefits and salaries. The disadvantage of the hotel industry is that his salary is still at the level of 20 years ago. The more famous hotels in China, the stricter their work will be controlled. If an employee wants a higher salary, he can only choose to change jobs, because the hotel will not give you a salary increase every year.

**Have you recommended the hotel as a place to work to others? If no, why not?**

I would first ask the person what he wants. Some people do not fit well with the working environment of the hotel. In that case, I do not recommend coming to this industry.

**Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience working in the hotel industry?**

If you want to be in the hotel sales department, this industry can bring you a lot of opportunities, and you can also get a lot of opportunities.