

IMPACT OF JOB SATISFACTION, JOB BENEFIT AND JOB STRESS ON THE HOTEL EMPLOYEES' INTENTION TO TURNOVER IN PULAU PINANG

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Abstract: *This study explores how job stress, job benefits, and job satisfaction influence hotel employees' decisions to stay or leave their jobs in Pulau Pinang. With the hotel industry being a key player in Malaysia's economy, employee turnover remains a major concern, affecting both service quality and operational stability. Despite efforts to improve working conditions, high levels of stress, limited job benefits, and job dissatisfaction continue to push many employees toward leaving their positions. The questionnaire was distributed to 109 respondents involving four and five-star hotel employees across different departments in Pulau Pinang. The findings indicate a significant relationship between turnover intention and three variables' studies, job satisfaction, job benefits and job stress ($p=0.001$), ($p < 0.01$) and ($p=0.002$). Both Job satisfaction and job benefits show negatively significant impact respectively, while job stress shows positively significant impact. Therefore, among four and five hotel employees today, job satisfaction, job benefits and job stress are viewed as three variables that influence the turnover. Thus, this study highlights how crucial it is for hotel managers and legislators to develop policies that promote a happy workplace by providing job benefits that can raise job satisfaction and lower attrition rates, which will ultimately benefit both workers and the hospitality sector.*

Keywords: *Job Stress, Turnover Intention, Job Benefits, Job Satisfaction, Hotel Industry, Hospitality Sector*

Introduction

In a tropical nation like Malaysia with a rich cultural legacy and geography, tourism is one of the most significant industries. Over 81 billion Malaysian ringgits were directly contributed to the GDP of the nation in 2023 by the tourism industry (Statista, 2024). Thus, the hotel industry remains the main pillar in supporting the tourism sector. Hotels offer intriguing, endless professional growth opportunities, both within the hotel department and throughout the industry, to guarantee staff retention. Researchers exploring hospitality have identified similar strategies for high-performance labour, such as incentives and benefits (Sharma & Gursoy, 2018). Subsequently, Michael and Fodiatis (2022) added that hotel employees did get extra perks such as paid lodging, meals, and commuting transportation. In addition, intangibles for instance social status, a meaningful job design, and work-life balance, as well as tangibles like bonuses, salaries, and stock options, also can be regarded as employee benefits (Yoopetch et al., 2021).

Generally, an employee who is satisfied with their job will feel happy and therefore more enthusiastic about improving the quality of work. It has been discovered that highly satisfied employees exhibit strong job performance, a strong sense of affection for their jobs, and a low intention to quit (Suttikun, Chang, & Bicksler, 2018). It has been discovered that both employee and company performance are impacted by employee satisfaction (Riyanto et al., 2021). Prior studies have shown that various workplace factors, such as managers, professionals, working hours, pay, professional development, leadership, management, and the actual work and infrastructure, contribute to employees' job satisfaction (Heimerl et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, global hotel industry including in Malaysia is renowned for its difficult and unpredictable work environment, which contributes to high turnover rates, despite the excellent career opportunities and development afforded (Qadri et al., 2022). Setting the primary objective of creating a positive customer experience a crucial component of customer satisfaction puts nearly every employee under constant observation and monitoring, raising stress levels. Excessive stress levels at work negatively affect employees and decrease their sense of connection to their work, affecting turnover intention (Salama et al., 2022). As the consequences, Walundari and Hafidz (2023) indicated that fewer engaged workers will also impact job satisfaction, increasing the likelihood of turnover. Furthermore, Walundari and Hafidz (2023) suggest that low job satisfaction, exacerbated by stress and work overload in the hospitality industry, leads to increased turnover, highlighting the need for improved employee satisfaction.

Employee turnover is still a major problem in the hospitality sector, despite several attempts to keep workers satisfied and retain them well. Another significant issue facing the hospitality sector is high turnover (Micheal & Fotiadis, 2022). According to Buchman et al. (2020), staff turnover has an adverse effect on corporate performance, leads to overworked and stressed personnel, and negatively affects their attitude (Dickerson, 2009). According to recent data, staff churn in the hospitality sector varies between 30% and 73% globally (Malyarov, 2020). Compared to other industries, the hotel sector has a far higher average turnover rate (Cicerale, 2020). It was reported that the hotel business in Malaysia has an annual turnover rate of up to 66% (Halim et al., 2021).

Based on this occurrence, the purpose of this study is to present statistical evidence on the present impact of job stress, benefits, and job satisfaction on the intention of hotel employees in Pulau Pinang to leave their jobs. Thus, additional data regarding the factors among hotel

employees following the pandemic is required. In addition, Pulau Pinang is selected as the research location because this city is one of the famous local and international tourist attractions in Malaysia consisting of a hundred hotels at various ranges and accommodating around 5.58 million tourists in 2022 (Buletin Mutiara, 2024).

Moreover, this study focuses on employees of 4- and 5-star hotels, as these establishments uphold high standards of service and guest experience. Employees in luxury hotels often face unique pressures to consistently deliver exceptional service, leading to heightened job stress. Investigating these dynamics is crucial not only for improving employee well-being but also for enhancing service quality, which directly impacts customer satisfaction and loyalty in a highly competitive market. By providing statistical evidence about the current influence of job satisfaction, benefits, and job stress on turnover intention, this study can offer actionable insights for the sustainable development of the hotel industry.

Literature Review

This Literature Review will discuss five main points, which collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Each point will highlight different perspectives, and findings from previous research that are relevant to this study.

Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention

Within organizational settings, turnover intentions and behavior have long been found to be significantly influenced by the complex construction of job satisfaction, which encompasses an individual's attitudes and feelings about their work (Sija, 2021). Companies with high work satisfaction have higher levels of commitment, attachment, love, job performance, self-efficacy, and lower turnover (Suttikun et al., 2018). Understanding the complex relationship between work satisfaction and turnover is essential for developing successful retention strategies in the hotel business, where staff turnover rates frequently surpass those of other sectors (Onyebu & Omotayo., 2017). Hence further study is needed to investigate further. Thus, the following hypothesis is put forth.

H1: Job satisfaction significantly impacts turnover intention among hotel employees.

Job Benefit Influences Turnover Intention

Examining the benefits and incentive programs available to hotel employees stands out as an essential component. Understanding the effect of job benefit systems on turnover is crucial for organizational success in the hospitality industry, where staff turnover rates frequently surpass those of other industries (Satish & Eugene, 2021). In addition to pay and job benefits, compensation can also include non-cash incentives, including opportunities for professional growth and recognition (Muhati, 2023). According to Stan De Spiegelaere's (2018) analysis, benefits have a major role in determining employee turnover in the hotel industry. Attractive compensation packages are essential for attracting and keeping people in the hospitality industry, possibly because these positions typically involve lengthy work hours, weekend shifts, and dealing with demanding clients (Noor et al., 2023). Workers may quit if they feel their pay is inadequate for the position's responsibilities or if they think there are better opportunities for income and advancement elsewhere. Additionally, facilities like healthcare, retirement plans, and employee discounts might affect retention rates since workers choose to work for companies that provide comprehensive and enticing benefit packages (Naidoo & Pearce, 2018). Thus, the following hypothesis is presented considering the position of literature.

H2: There is a significant impact of job benefit on turnover intention among hotels employees.

Job stress within hotel industry

According to Kang et al. (2021), stress is characterized by unanticipated events or situations that present a threat in particular ways and cause difficult-to-manage anxiety and worry on a psychological and physical level. Job stress can result from any occurrence that happens or is expected to happen at work, and job stress can have several negative repercussions on an individual's well-being and the organization (Rehatta et al., 2022). Everyone experiences stress, but people in customer service roles such as airline attendants, hotel employees, restaurant workers, resort staff, and medical professionals are more likely to experience it (Koo et al., 2020). Research has shown that employees in the hospitality sector work in a highly stressful environment (Park et al., 2020; Cheng et al., 2022). Furthermore, Koo et al. (2020) suggest that workplace stress may lower job satisfaction and raise the likelihood of resignation. Consequently, job stress is one of the main factors determining turnover intention, meaning that higher job stress levels are likely to translate into higher turnover intention (Park et al., 2020). After discussing the literature, the following hypothesis is put forth.

H3: Job stress significantly impacts turnover intention among hotel employees.

Social Exchange as Underpinning theory

The sociologist George Homans created the social exchange theory in 1958. According to him, social exchange is sharing any kind of activity tangible or intangible, expensive or benefiting among at least two individuals. Two additional theorists, Peter Blau, and Richard Emerson wrote about the theory after Homans had created it. Perceived organizational support is supposed to produce sentiments of duty and affective attachment to the employee, which will lessen the intention to leave the company, according to Blau (1964) (Cook & Emerson, 1987). Thus, this theory was selected as the basis for the research framework, keeping in mind that job satisfaction, benefits, and stress are elements that might support the work engagement of people in the organization.

The proposed research framework for this study was adopted and adapted based on Social Exchange Theory, the research framework for this study is as shown in Figure 1.

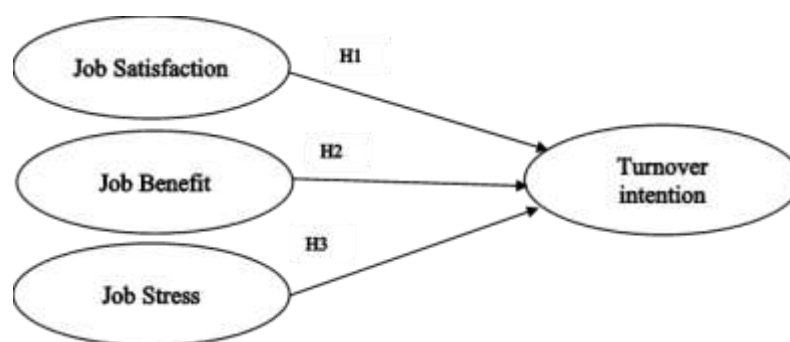


Figure 1: The proposed research framework

Methodology

The process of research design involves identifying a solution to the problem faced by the research endeavour. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) define a research project as a plan for evaluating data and obtaining measures pertinent to research topics. The present investigation will employ a quantitative approach.

To obtain the data, primary data collection will be used, comprising an online survey conducted via Google Forms. A web-based survey will be conducted in this regard, targeting employees of 4- and 5-star hotels in Penang. These employees are regarded as trustworthy respondents for answering online questionnaires. The questionnaire link will be shared through WhatsApp, one of the social media platforms utilized for online surveys. The questionnaire will be adopted and adapted from previous studies and will include five sections: Part A measuring Job Satisfaction (5 items; Arniedyantie, A.H., 2023), Part B measuring Benefits (4 items; Choon, O.H., 2023. Hashim, A., 2018), Part C measuring Job Stress (4 items; Arniedyantie, A.H., 2023), Part D measuring Turnover Intention (4 items; Lee, C.C Huang, S.H., Zhao, C.Y. 2010) and lastly, Part E measuring of Demographic (7 items; Arniedyantie, A.H., 2023).

Before distributing the questionnaire, the researcher will obtain consent from respondents to participate in the study. Research ethics, particularly regarding the confidentiality of respondent information, will be explicitly stated. Once consent is obtained, the questionnaire link will be provided to respondents. Additionally, permission will be sought from respondents to recommend the next respondent. To ensure only the correct respondents answered the survey questions, a filter question will be included at the beginning of the questionnaire. The content of the questionnaire was reviewed by two experts, including an academician with an industrial background, to ensure validity. Reliability testing (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.7, Perry et al., 2004) will be conducted through a pilot test involving at least 30 respondents. This step ensures the instrument's reliability before full-scale data collection.

This study involved 109 respondents comprised of four and five-star hotel employees from various departments in Pulau Pinang. Since the total populations unknown, the sample size was obtained using G-Power Software with alpha of 0.15. Employees of 4- star and 5- star hotels in five-star hotels in five districts in Penang, including Southwest District, East Timor District, Seberang Perai Selatan District, Seberang Perai Tengah District, and Seberang Perai Utara District. Purposive sampling is a form of study sample selection that discovers and chooses sample participants based on their knowledge or experience with an interesting phenomenon. Since the objectives of this study have been done on the impact of job satisfaction, benefits and job stress on turnover intention, all data analysed using SPSS Version 23 involving descriptive, correlation and regression analysis.

Result and Finding

Reliability analysis.

Based on the analysis, Cronbach's Alpha values for job satisfaction are 0.905, benefits are 0.936, job stress is 0.798, and turnover intention is 0.869. This shows that every item of each variable indicates a high level of reliability. Thus, a reliability score of each value is higher than 0.7 (Perry et al., 2004), which shows that the survey questions in each part are valid.

Respondent's Demographic Profile.

Table 1: Respondent demographic profiles

Demographic Profiles		Total (n)	Percent (%)
Age	20 years old and below	8	7.3
	21-30 years old	89	81.7
	31-40 years old	19	9.2
	41-55 years old	2	1.8
Gender	Male	75	68.8
	Female	34	31.2
Races	Malay	98	89.9
	Chinese	8	7.3
	Indian	2	1.8
	Other	1	0.9
Marital status	Single	83	76.1
	Married	24	22
	Divorced	2	1.8
Level of education	Primary Education	10	9.2
	Secondary Education	15	13.8
	Post-secondary Education	50	45.9
	Tertiary Education	34	31.2
Declare monthly income	RM1,000-RM1,500	13	11.9
	RM1,600-2RM2,100	53	48.6
	RM2,200-RM3,100	27	24.8
	RM3,200-RM4,100	8	7.3
	RM4,200-Above	8	7.3
Working Department	Front Office Department	7	6.4
	Housekeeping Department	6	5.5
	Management Department	10	9.2
	Food & Beverages Department	20	18.3
	Kitchen and Food Production Department	57	52.3
	Maintenance Department	3	2.8
	Accounts and Finance Department	4	3.7
	Security Department	2	1.8

Based on Table 1, the demographic profile indicates that most respondents are young adults, with 89 (81.7%) aged between 21 to 30 years old followed by 10 (9.2%) aged 31 to 40 years old, 8 respondents (7.3%) aged 20 years old or younger, and only 2 (1.8%) aged between 41 to 55 years old. In terms of gender, 75 or 68.8% of the respondents are male while 34 respondents (31.2%) are female. Additionally, most respondents are Malay, comprising 98 (99.9%) of the sample, with a smaller proportion of 8 Chinese respondents (7.3%), 2 respondents of Indian (1.8%) and other ethnicities are also 1 respondent (0.9%).

Furthermore, the marital status data shows that 83 respondents are single (76.1%), 24 of 109 participants are married (22%) and only 2 respondents are divorced (1.8%). However, 46% of the respondents (42.2%) have post-secondary qualifications while 33 out of 109 participants

(30.3%) hold tertiary degrees. Fewer respondents have secondary education which is 13.8% or 15 respondents, and 10 respondents (9.2%) have primary education.

Regarding the monthly income part from Table 1, nearly half of the respondents, which is 53 (48.6%) earn between RM1,600 and RM2,100, while 27 of them (24.8%) earn between RM2,200 and RM3,100. Smaller groups report incomes of Rm1,000 to RM1,500 which 13 participants (11.9%), 8 respondents (7.3%) earn between RM3,200 to Rm4,100 and the last group earn RM4,200 or more about 8 respondents (7.3%).

Finally, in terms of the department working more than half of the respondents which is 57 (52.3%) work in the Kitchen and Food production Departments, followed by 20 participants (18.3%) in the Food & Beverage Department. The remaining respondents are spread across the Management Department, which is 10 participants (9.2%), 7 from the Front Office Department (6.4%) 6 from the Housekeeping Department (5.5%) while the Maintenance Department 2.8% (3 respondents), 4 from the Account and Finance Department (3.7%) and the last one from Security Department which is 2 participants (1.8%). Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the respondents' demographic background, forming the basis for further analysis.

Table 2: Correlation analysis

Correlations		Turnover intention	Job satisfaction	Benefits	Job stress
Turnover intention	Pearson	1	-.455**	-.519**	.031
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	.748
	N	109	109	109	109
Job satisfaction	Pearson	-.455**	1	.597**	.440**
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	109	109	109	109
Job Benefits	Pearson	-.519**	.597**	1	.249**
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		.009
	N	109	109	109	109
Job stress	Pearson	.031	.440**	.249**	1
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.748	<.001	.009	
	N	109	109	109	109

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

Based on Table 2, the Pearson correlation analysis indicates several important relationships among turnover intention, job satisfaction, benefits, and job stress. A negative correlation of $r = -0.455$ ($p < 0.01$) between turnover intention and job satisfaction indicates that as employees become more satisfied with their jobs, their intention to leave decreases. This is a moderately strong relationship. Similarly, the relationship between turnover intention and job benefits also shows a negative correlation of $r = -0.519$ ($p < 0.01$). This suggests that better benefits offered are associated with a lower desire to leave. Thus, the relationship is moderately strong. In contrast, the correlation between turnover intention and job stress is very weak where $r = 0.031$

($p < 0.01$), indicating there is no significant relationship. Overall, the analysis shows that turnover intention is negatively correlated with job satisfaction and job benefits. This indicates that higher job satisfaction and better job benefits reduce turnover intention. However, there is no significant relationship between turnover intention and job stress.

Multiple regression analysis was used to examine the impact of job satisfaction, job benefits, and job stress on the dependent variable, turnover intention. Table 3 shows the constant value of 4.828 which means that if all these factors were zero, the predicted value of turnover intention would be 4.828. Job satisfaction (-0.394 , $p = 0.01$) and job benefits (-0.393 , $p < 0.01$) both have a negative impact on turnover intention. This shows that as job satisfaction and job benefits increase, turnover tends to decrease. On the other hand, job stress (0.411 , $p = 0.002$) has a positive effect, meaning it contributes to an increase in turnover intention. Among these, job benefits (-0.379) have the strongest impact, followed by job satisfaction (-0.352) and job stress (0.281).

Table 3: Coefficient table

Coefficients^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	4.828	.490		9.845	<.001
Job Satisfaction	-.394	.117	-.352	-3.369	.001
Job Benefits	-.393	.101	-.379	-3.906	<.001
Job Stress	.411	.127	.281	3.241	.002

a. Dependent Variable: Turnover Intention

Table 4: Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis	Result	Supported
H1: Job satisfaction significantly impacts turnover intention among hotel employees.	B = -0.394 ($p < 0.01$)	Supported
H2: There is a significant impact between job benefits on turnover intention among hotel employees.	B = -0.393 ($p < 0.01$)	Supported
H3: Job stress significantly impacts turnover intention among hotel employees.	B = 0.411 ($p = 0.002$)	Supported

Table 4 shows that all the hypotheses are supported based on regression analysis. Higher job satisfaction and better job benefits help lower turnover intention, while higher job stress increases turnover intention. This analysis indicates the importance of improving job satisfaction and benefits while managing job stress to lower the turnover intention.

Discussion

The primary goal of this study is to examine the variables that affect hotel workers' intentions to leave, with a particular emphasis on workplace stress, job benefits, and job satisfaction. These goals are meant to help us better understand how these factors impact employee turnover in the hospitality industry, after the pandemic era.

The study revealed three main findings. Firstly, job satisfaction showed a significant negative effect on turnover intention ($B = -0.394, p = 0.01$), meaning employees who are more satisfied with their jobs are less likely to leave. Secondly, job benefits had similarly significant negative effects on turnover intention ($B = -0.393, p < 0.01$), indicating that better job benefits offered reduce employee turnover. Lastly, job stress has a positive significant effect on turnover intention ($B = 0.411, p = 0.002$), suggesting that stress levels increase, the turnover intention is higher. Thus, in terms of relatives, job benefits have the strongest impact followed by job satisfaction and job stress.

These findings align with existing research highlighting the significance of job satisfaction and job benefits in maintaining employees. For instance, Suttikun et al. (2018) and Koo et al. (2020) highlighted the strong link between satisfaction and reduced turnover intention. The result shows that hotel employees who derive greater satisfaction from their roles are less likely to turnover, this also highlighted the need for management to prioritize enhancing job satisfaction through meaningful work design and recognition initiatives. Similarly, job benefits have been shown to significantly influence turnover as mentioned by Muhati (2023) and Naidoo & Pearce (2018). The negative significant impact indicates that comprehensive job benefits packages, including competitive salaries and non-cash incentives, can significantly reduce the turnover intention of employees. However, the positive significant effect between job stress and turnover intention is quite related with findings by Park et al. (2020) and Wulandari & Hafidz (2023), who identified stress as a statistically proven factor in turnover. This finding is important in the hotel industry, where employees often face heavy workloads, long hours and high customer demands leading to stress. If not managed well, this stress can cause burnout, dissatisfaction and leads the employees to turnover.

The research shows both academic and practical contributions. Academically, it enhances the understanding of the relation between job satisfaction, benefits and job stress in the hospitality industry. By analysing these factors, the study provides knowledge into how organizational practices can directly influence employee retention. Additionally, this also creates opportunities for collaboration between universities and the hospitality industry and enhancing courses with current and real-world case studies. Moreover, the Social Exchange Theory (SET) shows how job satisfaction, job benefits and job stress impact employees' decision to turnover. It finds that higher job satisfaction and job benefits reduce turnover, supporting the idea that when employees feel valued, they are more likely to retention. By applying SET to the fast-paced hotel industry, this study highlights the importance of balancing good job benefits and a positive work environment with stress management strategies to improve employee retention. In terms of practicality, the results suggest hotel managers and relevant authorities give priority to enhancing benefits and job satisfaction while tackling job stress through mental health initiatives. As stated by Heirmerl et al. (2020) highlights how targeted recognition and rewards systems can increase job satisfaction while Koo et al. (2020) indicates the role of stress management programs in reducing burnout and promoting staying in the hospitality sector.

Focusing on 4 and 5-star hotels in Pulau Pinang, one of the main tourism hubs in Malaysia, the study provides localized insights that are especially relevant for high-pressure hospitality environments. These results are aligned with Qadri et al. (2022), who emphasized how important it is to Malaysia's tourism industry to use sustainable Human Resources (HR) practices. Managers can encourage a more dedicated team by addressing job satisfaction and job benefits, which will eventually enhance organizational performance, employee turnover and guest satisfaction.

Future Recommendations

Work stress is one of the aspects that straight impacting an employee's intention to leave their occupation. When workers undergo excessive degrees of strain, it could result in depletion, decreased enthusiasm, and emotional tiredness, finally thrusting them in the direction of resignation. Extensive experience of strain without strengthened devices could cause staff participants to sense an overrun and undervalued, expanding their probability of searching for various employment alternatives. Enterprises need to proactively deal with office strain through selling painting-lifestyles stability, providing strain control programs, and ensuring manageable workloads. Through mitigating strain, corporations can enhance worker properly-being and decrease turnover charges.

Job satisfaction played the most critical role in reducing employee agitation based on the findings. A moderately strong relationship was shown, so management must recognize satisfied staff are more committed and less prone to resign. To cultivate this, companies should foster a supportive, engaging environment where people feel valued. For example, providing training and promotion opportunities for career growth, recognizing contributions, and maintaining open communication between leadership and employees. Likewise, transparent, fair policies can give workers a sense of security and respect, further boosting job satisfaction. Addressing such areas builds strong belonging and loyalty, lessening the urge to depart.

The report also significantly linked job benefits to intention to leave, underscoring the value of competitive, meaningful benefits for retention. Beyond basic pay, firms should craft holistic packages addressing diverse needs such as salaries, bonuses, health coverage, retirement funds, time off, and flexible schedules. Additionally, wellness perks like mental health programs, gym memberships or childcare help portray the organization as a caring, supportive place to work. Ensuring staff feel appropriately compensated for their work cuts dissatisfaction and bolsters their security and motivation to stay. Investing in attractive job benefits reduces churn while uplifting morale and the desirability of the workplace.

Conclusion

The study's findings underscore the critical role of turnover intention among employees working in 4- and 5-star hotels in Pulau Pinang. Specifically, the research explored various factors that contribute to an employee's intention to leave their job, including job satisfaction, employee job benefits, workplace stress, and the employees' perceptions of what influences their desire to stay or resign. The results reveal a strong relationship between these variables and turnover intention. In particular, high levels of job-related stress were found to significantly increase the likelihood of employees considering leaving their current positions. Conversely, when employees reported satisfaction with their jobs and perceived their benefits as fair and adequate, their intention to remain with the organization was notably higher. These findings suggest that addressing job stress, offering competitive and meaningful job benefits, and fostering overall job satisfaction are essential strategies for hotel management aiming to reduce employee turnover. By recognizing and acting on these factors, hotel operators can not only improve employee retention but also enhance organizational stability and service quality in the hospitality sector.

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