



# The Causes and Remedies for High Employee Turnover in the United States Hospitality Industry

Ajmal Hamam | Columbia Southern University, Orange Beach, Alabama

Robert Goldwasser | Columbia Southern University, Orange Beach, Alabama

## Abstract

This study analyzed the causes and remedies for high employee turnover in the United States hospitality sector. The labor turnover rate increased, especially during the COVID-19 period, which indicates the unsustainable operations of the hospitality industry. This study applied a qualitative design to gather information from a population of workers in the hospitality industry regarding the causes of high labor turnover and strategies that may be used to reduce the turnover. A sample of 20 workers from the U.S. hospitality industry was extracted from LinkedIn for the research. The researcher paid Survey Monkey to collect a relevant sample and provide it with an open-ended questionnaire. The response rate was 90%. After collecting the filled-up questionnaires, the researcher applied thematic analysis to synthesize the results. The factors that affected turnover were income, non-adherence to workplace ethical standards, quality of services, and the effects of COVID-19. The leadership system influenced the employee perceptions of labor turnover. The management strategies that could be applied to improve employee retention included sustainable finance allocation, employee appreciation, and a conducive working environment. Health crisis management was the key theme for optimizing employee turnover during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** *COVID-19, Employee motivation, Employee turnover, Ethical standards, Income, Leadership system, Sustainable finance allocation.*

## Introduction

This research analyzes the causes and remedies for the high employee turnover in the United States hospitality industry. This study provides substantial information for formulating policies to enhance the sustainability of operations of the hospitality sector in the USA. Also, the policies can be adopted by hospitality players in the global hospitality industry, hence enabling the efficiency of corporate dealings in the international market. Unlike similar research, this analysis provides first-hand and robust information that reflects the actual nature of operations of the United States hospitality sector before, during, and after the pandemic.

Labor turnover is a crucial issue in human resource management. The specific business problem is the high labor turnover rates in the hospitality industry. However, the study will critically analyze the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the turnover rates in the hospitality industry by comparing data before and after the pandemic. The subject is worth studying because the hospitality industry has had a higher labor turnover in recent years. Therefore, it will help the researcher and other interested stakeholders understand the motivators promoting employee retention and the hygiene factors that cause high labor turnover (Michael & Fotiadis, 2022). According to Dogru et al. (2023), high employee turnover results from poor economic performance; for example, the economic recession caused by the Covid-19 pandemic period reduced the ability of most firms to pay the workers, hence retrenchments as a cost-cutting strategy, and temporary replacements of workers, which caused a high employee turnover in the hospitality industry.

The leisure and hospitality industry are critical because it depends on the availability of disposal income, leisure time, and customer satisfaction to thrive (Mim & Ferdous, 2021). Some of the segments of this industry include travel and tourism, food and beverages, recreation, lodging, and other related fields. This multi-billion-dollar industry is essential to the United States economy because of the revenue it generates and the numerous job opportunities it provides. Statista Research Department (2022) states that the leisure and hospitality industry is the third largest by employment in the USA, with about 15.8 million workers in October 2022. Despite the industry being one of the biggest employers in the United States, it also has some of the highest labor turnover rates in the country.

The study utilized Herzberg's two-factor theory to understand the factors leading to hospitality industry labor turnover. The theory was proposed by Frederick Herzberg in 1966 and sought to understand the motivation-hygiene relationship. This theory suggests that two factors affect employee motivation: job satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Holston-Okae & Mushi, 2018). In this theory, motivators are factors that cause job satisfaction, while hygiene factors are characteristics that cause job dissatisfaction. This theoretical knowledge supports this research because motivation and job satisfaction are critical variables in this study; therefore, it helped identify and classify the various variables of this research as either motivators or hygiene factors to determine how they contribute to labor turnover or retention.

Resource-based theory was also adopted for this research. The theory explains the competition for resources between firms in the same market. Firms in the hospitality sector strive to control the supply of resources and acquire the most efficient production factors for the highest output (Barney et al., 2011). Companies may introduce competitive strategies to attract employees, such as providing enhanced salary packages compared to rival firms. Providing comparatively high salaries compels workers in rival firms to quit and search for employment opportunities in companies that provide enhanced salaries, increasing employee turnover rates in firms that offer relatively low salaries (Sciarelli et al., 2012). Also, the theory is related to the strategic human resource management strategies that a company may adopt to ensure sustainable operations of human resource activities, which may aid in reducing employee turnover to an optimal level.

## Literature Review

Ghani et al. (2022) note that equity, job characteristics, expectancy, social exchange, and Maslow's theories explain job retention in the hospitality sector. Equity theory relates to retention strategies such as training, salary improvement, involvement in decision-making, and promotion (Hatfield et al., 2016). Lloyd and Mertens (2018) explain that the expectancy theory dictates workers' behavior based on expectations at work, while the social exchange theory explains the relationship between the company's offer and employees' behavior. However, Dar and Sakthivel (2022) state that Maslow's theory relates to the difference in employees' wants, which dictates their willingness to stay in a company. The articles identify elements related to the theories, forming a framework for analyzing how the concepts modeled labor turnover in the hospitality sector during the pandemic.

The critical sections of this chapter include the definition of elements of the hospitality sector, a critical analysis of labor turnover, an explanation of voluntary turnover, the drivers of high voluntary turnover in the U.S. hospitality industry, and the influence of employee perceptions regarding labor turnover in the sector. Also, the review displays the rate of employee turnover in the U.S. hospitality industry during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, the sustainable administrative practices that may be applied to ensure employee retention and the strategies that may have been adopted to optimize employee turnover rates during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, this chapter critically analyzes employee turnover rates in the global hospitality sector before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, which will form a framework for comparing the performance of the U.S. and international hospitality industries. Moreover, this chapter identifies the theories related to labor turnover in the hospitality sector, explains the conceptual framework adopted in the study, and identifies the research gap that necessitated this study.

### *The Definition and Elements of the Hospitality Industry*

According to Hemmington (2007), the hospitality sector consists of restaurants and bars established for economic purposes. The International Labor Organization (2010) similarly identifies hotels, catering activities, and the tourism sector as elements of the hospitality industry. Also, it incorporates boarding houses, motels, and centers for holidays as providers of hospitality services. Moreover, pubs, nightclubs, travel agencies, conference centers, and any place established to provide meals constitute the hospitality industry. Mim and Ferdous identify the provision of accommodation services as a crucial element of the hospitality industry, which should include providing entertainment activities to the guests. Anderson et al. (2008) identifies the importance of providing innovative catering services as a strategy for improving the sustainability of the hospitality sector, which confirms the validity of incorporating hotels as part of the hospitality industry. EHL Insights (2023) lists food trucks, travel and tourism agencies, and recreational facilities, such as sports complexes, as elements of the tourism industry. Additionally, Langvinienė and Daunoravičiūtė (2015) list bars, buffets, independent travel agencies, spas, wellness service providers, clubs, cafeterias, and camping agencies as elements of the hospitality sector.

### *Labor Turnover*

Akinyomi (2016) states that labor turnover can also be referred to as employee turnover, which is the rate at which employees terminate their contracts with a company. Bhardwaj and Singh (2023) clarify that the average number of employees can be calculated by considering the average number of workers available at the start and the number of employees employed in the company at the end of the analysis period. Xu et al. (2023) also state the need to identify the population of workers at the start and end of an analysis period and the number of workers who left during the same period as the critical variables for calculating the labor turnover ratio. However, The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2021) claims there is a difference between employee turnover and turnover ratio – the former is a raw quantity of the workers who have left an organization, while the latter is an expression of the turnover as a percentage of the retained workers. Domurath et al. (2022) similarly note the

differences between the two variables and clarify that the final output of the calculation can be applied to determine the employee retention capacity.

### ***The Causes of High Employee Turnover***

Various factors may stir the workers' interest in terminating their contracts with a company, either because of the firm's decision or the individual staff. Suraihi et al. (2021) note that factors related to the work environment, personal reasons, and external factors are the fundamental causes of employee turnover. The work-related factors may include job satisfaction, salary levels, the performance of a company and the individual worker, and the company's commitment to ensuring workers' welfare. Bhardwaj and Singh (2023) list a lack of growth at the workplace, the failure of organizations to appraise workers, and poor compensation as factors for voluntary labor turnover. Similarly, Magove and Mukanzi (2018) explain that poor compensation and lack of growth compel workers to identify opportunities that may offer better remunerations and work environments than the current employer. The business cycle also determines the rates of labor turnover; for example, periods of economic boom may be characterized by high turnover because of the availability of several options for job opportunities, while a relatively high retention may characterize the low seasons because of limited opportunities (Ghani et al., 2022).

Mrope (2022) introduces poor recruitment strategies and biased treatment of workers as factors that promote labor turnover. De-Smet et al. (2022) share the same sentiments and explain the rising competition for talent as a driver of high employee turnover. Mwakaswaya (2023) clarifies that other than remuneration levels, employee turnover rate varies with gender – females display a higher turnover rate than males.

### ***The Employee Turnover in the U.S. Hospitality Industry during the Covid-19 Pandemic***

Labor turnover in the USA hospitality sector may have increased during the pandemic because of the reduced corporate activities of most hospitality companies worldwide. According to Abdou et al. (2022), the number of voluntary and involuntary quits in the U.S. hospitality sector was 3,500,000 during the pandemic, which was 33% of the total unemployed population in the country. Dogru et al. (2023) specify that the turnover rate in the hospitality sector was 65% for the general hospitality sector, 70% for the accommodations and meals companies, and 43% for the arts and entertainment organizations. Croes et al. (2021) also note that more than 50% of the workforce in the hospitality industry lost their jobs. Still, the author cited does not provide an exact rate of turnover and a breakdown of employee turnover for every sub-sector of the hospitality industry.

### ***Administrative Strategies for Enhancing Employee Retention***

Hospitality companies can apply sustainable management strategies to reduce labor turnover. Andrews and Mohammed (2020) analyzed the strategies for reducing employees' intent to quit. They established the issuance of rewards, incentives, recognition, promotion, and bonuses as the fundamental techniques for increasing worker retention. Walden University (2022) also identifies rewarding staff. It provides an early explanation of the company's mission. It aims at the beginning of their contracts so that they understand the styles of operations expected while working with a company. Grandison (2017) similarly states that enhancing employee work-life balance and ensuring workers' contribution to the decision-making activities of a company, recognition, training, and offering optimal payments based on workload are sustainable approaches for reducing labor turnover. Deighan (2016) also lists providing care, emotional support, and an assurance of future benefits to the company as administrative strategies for decreasing employee turnover. Besides, Suraihi et al. (2021) identify skills development, aligning the workers' principles to the company goals, creating robust social relations at the workplace, and improving the mental health impact of the work environment as efficient strategies for reducing workers' intent to quit.

### ***Schemes for Reducing Employee Turnover in the Hospitality Sector During the COVID-19 Pandemic***

According to Le et al. (2023), encouraging employees to stay within their jobs was an efficient strategy for reducing employee turnover, while Ghani et al. (2022) explain that sustainable recruitment involves employing only workers who ensure the sustainable operations of a company. However, Ghani does not clarify how the strategy aided in reducing labor turnover in the hospitality sector. Lam and Solovyeva (2023) identified a job retention scheme, which included utilizing the company's financial reserves to pay employee's salaries during the pandemic to reduce layoffs. Lam and Solovyeva (2023) do not show how the job retention strategy reduced employee turnover in the hospitality industry during the pandemic. Yin et al. (2022) explain that most hospitality companies reduced the hours worked per employee as a job retention strategy.

The literature review discussed aspects of the hospitality industry, such as elements, the definition and formulation of labor turnover, the causes before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, strategies for reducing employee turnover, and theories related to employees' intention to quit. However, the review did not identify robust information on the causes of high labor turnover in the U.S. hospitality sector.

## **Methods**

The problem this study analyzed is the causes of and remedies for high employee turnover in the United States hospitality industry. A low labor turnover is one of the indicators of sustainable operations in the hospitality sector. Over the last decade, the issue of high labor turnover has become a key issue in business administration, especially in the hospitality industry in the United States (Dogru et al., 2023).

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the landscape of the hospitality industry, especially on matters such as labor turnover, primarily due to the massive job losses from the lockdowns and restriction of movements (Bajrami et al., 2020). At an organizational level, a high employee turnover reduces a company's productivity because of the frequent exchange of workers, which causes interruptions of services and inconsistency in the quality of services. The repeated replacement of workers at close intervals also increases the expenditure on recruitment; for example, an airline sources employees and provides additional training and orientation to the activities, which may involve significant expenditure (Surji, 2013). Therefore, this research sought to bridge the gap between research before and after the pandemic. This research helped to fill this research gap and determine the factors influencing the high labor turnover rates in the hospitality industry in the United States.

This research study aimed to explore the factors and possible solutions to the problem of high labor turnover rates in the hospitality industry in the United States. It also helped understand the impact of external environmental factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, on voluntary turnover rates in the hospitality industry. Even post-COVID-19 pandemic, the turnover rate in the hospitality sector remained high. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the hospitality sector turnover rate was closer to 70-80 percent. The study utilized a qualitative approach to find more information on the research topic and answer why and how the phenomenon happened. This approach was subjective and suitable for this research question because it explored multiple variables (Basias & Pollalis, 2018). This study adopted a descriptive research design because many variables are involved, allowing the research to describe the phenomenon without any causal relationships or hypotheses (Siedlecki, 2020). The researcher used an online interview to collect data from hotel managers who will be sourced from LinkedIn. The study sample consisted of 20 hoteliers from the United States hospitality industry.

## **Research Questions**

1. What factors affect the hospitality industry's high voluntary labor turnover rates?
2. How have the employees' perceptions affected labor turnover in the hospitality industry?
3. What sustainable employee management strategies are the most beneficial to employee retention?

4. Which strategies did the hospitality companies adopt to optimize employee turnover rates during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The fundamental goal of this analysis was to investigate the cause of and remedies for high employee turnover in the U.S. hospitality sector. The research focused on employee turnover in the industry before, during, and after COVID-19 by collecting information from human resource managers in the sector. This chapter explains the procedures adopted to conduct this study. It comprises sections including the problem statement, research questions, research philosophy, research approach, research design, the study population, data analysis, and reporting procedures.

The descriptive design displays simple numerical data on the characteristics of the study population, which can be fundamental for decision-making to improve the corporate sustainability of the hospitality sector (Dudovskiy, 2022). This study collected information on the age, duration of employment, average salary, preferred salary, and average number of workers who may have quit within a specific duration (Einola & Alvesson, 2020). Phenomenology aids in understanding respondents' sentiments based on their real-life experience with the phenomena under study. Phenomenology includes collecting primary data through direct interaction with the respondents (Kabir, 2016).

This study targeted United States hospitality sector workers to provide primary information regarding the industry's operations. This research involved 20 participants randomly selected from LinkedIn to represent the hospitality industry based in the USA. The population of participants was sufficient to provide a response rate that produced valid results, even with a response rate of 50%. Ten respondents were enough to deliver adequate information on employee turnover in the United States hospitality industry. However, if the respondents from LinkedIn were rejected for participation in the study or failed to submit their responses, a backup sample of 20 could be obtained from Survey Monkey.

Open-ended interview questions were used to collect data from the respondents. The interview questions provided the employees with a flexible platform for responding to inquiries based on their personal experiences in the industry, using their own words (Shukla, 2020). Hence, an open-ended interview question enhanced the results' robustness and applicability in formulating sustainable decisions.

## Results and Discussion

The researcher applied descriptive analysis for the demographic information captured for Section A of the data collection instrument. Descriptive analysis identified the frequency distribution and measures of central tendencies for age, gender, and duration of employment in the hospitality industry. The audio and video responses were transcribed to create written responses – one copy for each participant. Thematic analysis was applied to interpret the results. The strategy displays the theories related to the respondents' sentiments regarding high labor turnover in the United States hospitality sector.

This section displays the qualitative results of the research. The results show the themes extracted from the responses and their relation to high labor turnover in the U.S. hospitality sector. The study considered a sample of 20 respondents, but only 18 interviewees returned the filled data collection instruments. Hence, the response rate 18/20 (90%) was sufficient to provide valid data for the final analysis procedures.

### The Demographic Characteristics of the Study Sample

The descriptive statistics for age, duration of contract, and gender are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1***Descriptives for Age, Duration of Contract, and Gender*

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Age (years)	18	79	59.94
Duration of contract (years)	1	61	-
Gender	Male = 55.6%	Female = 44.4%	

Most respondents (35.3%) earned annual income above \$75,000. However, the minority earned below \$25,000 annually, while the respondents who earned between \$25,000 and \$50,000 and between \$50,000 and \$75,000 were equal (23.5%).

## Results

This section explains the responses of the sample population to the research questions. The main sub-sections include the factors affecting high turnover rates in the hospitality industry, the impact of employee perceptions on labor turnover in the hospitality sector, and the sustainable management strategies that improve employee retention. Also, the results section explains the strategies that hospitality companies adopted to optimize employee turnover during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Theme 1: Factors Affect High Labor Turnover Rates in the Hospitality Industry**

The main themes related to the factors affecting high labor turnover rates in the hospitality industry included income-related factors, non-adherence to the ethical standards at the workplace, quality services, the effects of COVID-19, and the leadership system.

#### ***Income-Related Factors***

The respondents indicated that some factors that cause the high labor turnover rates in the hospitality industry include low minimum wage and no benefits. Candidate 004 stated that high employee turnover may cause low quality of service and relatively high costs, even though the respondent did not comprehensively clarify the relationship between high employee turnover and increased costs. Respondent 007 stated that low pay resulted from high employee turnover and a cause of the turnover. The low payment discouraged people from working in the sector. Candidate 011 also stated low pay, while respondent 12 indicated that loss of goods drives high employee turnover. Respondent 12 stated that high turnover also causes workers to shift workplaces in hospitality.

#### ***Non-Adherence to the Ethical Standards at Workplace***

Respondent 001 stated that some clients are abusive to the workers, discouraging them from working in the hospitality industry. Candidate 002 also stated that disrespect among the clients discourages employees in the hospitality sector, while respondent 004 listed age discrimination as a factor that demotivates workers in the industry. Additionally, the fifth respondent stated that nasty clients demoralize workers, while the seventh candidate stated lack of respect is a factor that discourages employees from working in the hospitality sector. Candidate 011 explained that some customers feel entitled and are abusive, while Respondent 013 claimed that some employees use any excuse to be absent from work unofficially and never come back. Respondent 013 also stated that the public,

presumably the guests, feel entitled to the hospitality services and hence abuse workers, which, in turn, discourages the employees from performing their duties. Respondent 016 listed the employer's attitude as a demotivating factor.

### *Quality Services*

The respondents noted poor services that demotivated workers and caused a high employee turnover. Respondent 004 stated that the services were of low quality, like those of Respondent 009.

### *The Effects of Covid-19*

The first respondent stated the restrictions during the pandemic did not make sense in the hospitality environment. Respondent 002 confirmed that the occurrence of the pandemic improved the attitude towards working in the sector. The third respondent also stated that the pandemic has had minimal impact on their company's operations but admitted that it severely affected the United States hospitality industry. Similarly, the fourth respondent confirmed that the pandemic negatively affected the performance of the hospitality sector and caused many layoffs and early retirements. The 13<sup>th</sup> interviewee explained that the failure of people to obey the sanitation rules was the reason for the adverse effects of the pandemic on the hospitality sector. The 17<sup>th</sup> respondent explained that the pandemic enhanced their cautiousness and reduced the number of working hours. Still, implementing strategies for reducing the spread of the virus caused the consequent adverse effects on the operations of the hospitality sector.

## **Theme 2: The Impact of Employee Perceptions on Labor Turnover in the Hospitality Sector**

### *Leadership System*

Respondent 001 mentioned a 99% employee retention for 18 months, even though the participant did not mention and explain the leadership strategy adopted in their organization. The third respondent stated that experience caused longevity of the duration of employment, which indicated that the employer may have emphasized employees' experience during the selection process. However, the fifth interviewee mentioned the distinct levels of management and moving to the next level required an employee to pass the practical steps. The sixth interviewee mentioned the subordinate system of management. Respondent 007 explained that their company had one good leader and bad administrators – the good manager cared. The eighth candidate stated that their organization applied the self-initiated leadership style where the employees focused on the mission statement, even though the individual. The ninth respondent argued that the bosses should include other employees in decision-making. The 11<sup>th</sup> respondent explained that the management was not keen to retain employees and tolerated customer abuse. The 13<sup>th</sup> respondent clarified that their management did not wait for the junior employees to execute duties that the top administrators could do.

## **Theme 3: The Sustainable Management Strategies that Improve Employee Retention**

### *Sustainable Operational Finance Allocation*

The first respondent stated the need for less involvement of corporate bean counters who apply strategies to ensure minimal financial expenditure in the companies. The third respondent stated that the companies should not raise the minimum wage. Contrary to Respondent 003, the seventh respondent stated that hospitality companies should improve employee payments and benefits but did not state the possible financial implications of the additional financial allocations toward paying salaries and benefits to the workers. The eighth respondent also identified

compensation improvement as a strategy for enhancing employee commitment to work, while the 13<sup>th</sup> interviewee noted the need for reasonable wages. The 15<sup>th</sup> respondent also noted good money as a motivational factor, and the 16<sup>th</sup> interviewee stated improved pay rates.

### ***Employee Appreciation and Motivation***

The first respondent stated that appreciation can improve employee retention. The fourth respondent also stated the need to recognize good performance since recognition makes workers proud of their efforts. The eighth respondent similarly stated appreciation as a strategy for motivating employees, while the 12<sup>th</sup> interviewee stated moralization as a motivational factor. The 17<sup>th</sup> respondent mentioned recognition, as did the 18<sup>th</sup> candidate.

### ***Creating a Conducive Working Environment***

Respondent 003 explained that respecting workers, treating them right, and understanding their needs, for example, optimizing the working hours to care for the workers' schedule, can encourage employee retention. The fifth respondent stated that accommodating availability, caring for, and showing concern for the employee's needs also improve worker retention in the hospitality industry. The ninth interviewee mentioned the respect an employee received from the management as a factor in improving employee retention. In contrast, the 11<sup>th</sup> candidate mentioned respect and avoiding worker abuse as strategies for enhancing worker retention rates. The 12<sup>th</sup> interviewee stated the need for a good working environment.

The 15<sup>th</sup> interviewee noted that an environment of competent co-workers encourages the employees to retain their jobs. At the same time, the 16<sup>th</sup> respondent stated that how employees are treated encourages them to perform their duties, even though the candidate did not identify the employee treatment strategies that promote employee retention. Similarly, the 17<sup>th</sup> candidate identified fair treatment but did not list the associated administrative measures for fair treatment concerning the operations of the hospitality sector. The 18<sup>th</sup> respondent also mentioned creating an enjoyable environment.

## **Theme 4: The Strategies that Hospitality Companies Adopted to Optimize Employee**

### ***Turnover During the Covid-19 Pandemic***

Health crisis management is the key theme associated with the study sample's responses. The first respondent stated sanitation strategies, such as wearing masks and gloves and utilizing single-use containers. Respondents 002, 003, and 004 mentioned the same ideas. The sixth interviewee suggested taking a break from corporate activities to manage the pandemic, even though this would temporarily shut down the sector. The ninth interviewee mentioned the need for support from the stakeholders. Respondent 13 explained that their company continued to serve the public. Respondent 15 stated that reducing the number of workers and focusing on takeout orders would ensure sustainable operations in the hospitality industry.

## **Recommendations and Implications**

The study aimed to establish the causes and possible solutions to high labor turnover in the United States hospitality sector. The responses of the study sample identified different factors determining high employee turnover rates. The thematic analysis produced income-related factors, consistent with the explanations of Suraihi et al. (2021), identifying salary levels as a critical factor. Magove and Mukanzi (2018) also identified poor compensation as a factor that causes turnover intention, like the findings of Kusi (2013), which identify the inability of a company to provide pensions to workers as a critical driver to high employee turnover. The theme of non-adherence to ethical

standards was identified as a factor that caused high employee turnover in the hospitality sector. The findings were like the explanations of Mwansa and Hapompwe (2023), who also state unhealthy working conditions as promoters of voluntary turnover. Mrope (2022) also noted that the poor relationship between workers and management, which indicates an unhealthy work environment, also increased employee turnover. Quality of services was a critical factor in explaining the drivers of high employee turnover. The explanations by the respondents may be related to the findings of Suraihi et al. (2021), which identified job satisfaction as an element of employee retention. The quality of services may be poor because of workers' low experience levels, especially with tasks requiring special skills (Mwansa & Hapompwe, 2023). Additionally, poor-quality services may result from demotivation due to poor remuneration or a generally unhealthy environment (Magove & Mukanzi, 2018).

The analysis established the effects of COVID-19 as one of the leading causes of employee turnover in the hospitality sector. The results align with the explanations of Abdou et al. (2022), who also identify the extensive staff layoffs because of the pandemic. Yin et al. (2022) also note that high employee turnover is due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The respondents stated terrible leadership is a factor that promotes high employee turnover, in addition to the failure of the top management to involve junior employees in formulating critical decisions. The aspects of leadership that influence employee turnover were also mentioned by Suraihi et al. (2021), who stated the failure of a company's management to improve workers' welfare. Mwansa and Hapompwe (2023) also list unsustainable relations between the management and junior workers, which is an element of the leadership system.

Sustainable finance allocation was one of the themes developed to enhance employee retention. The explanations are like those of Wang (2022), who also notes that the reliability of financial allocations can increase the efficiency of operations of the hospitality sector and enhance the interest of employees to work in the sector. Mukumbuta et al. (2019) also state that providing financial incentives is a critical factor in encouraging employee performance, while Grandison (2017) stated that the provision of salaries based on the scope of duties is a factor in encouraging employee retention.

A thematic synthesis of the responses identified health crisis management as the central concept. Pausing or terminating the hospitality activities reduced the spread of the virus and decreased expenditure on workers who were otherwise redundant during the pandemic. The strategies mentioned by the respondents are similar to the explanations by Abdou et al. (2022), who state that the involuntary turnover rate was high during the pandemic because of the closure of most hospitality companies.

## **Implications**

This research is crucial for both scholarly works and practical operations to improve the efficacy of the hospitality industry. The academic sector performs additional studies to establish areas requiring sustainable operations adjustments. At the same time, professional practices are the practical aspects that involve pragmatic decision-making for the sustainability of the hospitality sector.

### ***Theoretical Implications***

The study identified various causes and remedies for the high employee turnover in the United States hospitality sector. The responses could be explained using the existing theoretical frameworks. Ghani et al. (2022) clarify that the equity theory can be applied to justify the involvement of workers in decision-making as a strategy for improving their commitment to work. The expectancy theory identified by Lloyd and Mertens (2018) can aid in establishing the needs of workers and adjusting the nature of the association between junior workers and the top management, which also aids in creating a conducive work environment. Le et al. (2023) and Lam and Solovyeva (2023) indicate that some firms enacted job retention schemes to ensure that not all workers were retrenched during

the COVID-19 pandemic. The job retention strategies can be explained using Maslow's theory, which identifies the continual involvement of workers in decision-making.

### ***Implications for Practice***

The research aided in establishing various sentiments of the managers regarding the operations of the sector – the sentiments can be a framework for identifying the areas of inefficiencies that should be improved to attain maximum operational efficacy. The responses displayed information that can be adapted to adjust the operations of different sections of the hospitality industry to ensure minimal labor turnover. For example, formulating policies for improving the relationship between employees and managers can improve the efficiency of internal corporate operations, which boosts the quality of services. The primary information from the managers provides a solid and reliable foundation for conducting additional studies on the role of managerial efficiency, or the knowledge of top to devise sustainable management systems for efficient human resource management operations, administrators regarding sustainable human resource functions, in the efficacy of corporate operations of hospitality companies. The information also provides a ground for formulating strategic human resource practices to ensure an insignificant increase in labor turnover during pandemics or even during an economic recession.

### **Recommendations**

The research extracted information that can be applied in future research and practice. The research activities may be conducted regarding the hospitality sector, accounting, or general human resource management operations. The information can be utilized financial management policies, and human resource administration frameworks.

#### ***Recommendations for Future Research***

Extensive research can be conducted regarding the hospitality sector to establish the most effective strategy for reducing employee turnover. The analysis described information that can be applied to formulate research questions regarding the accounting elements of the hospitality sector. For example, an additional study can be conducted to investigate the role of developing a professional working environment in reducing employee turnover and the impact on the revenue generation capacity of the hospitality sector. This research also provided a foundation for conducting additional research on the general aspects of human resource management in the hospitality industry. For example, an extensive study can be conducted on the management styles adopted in the industry and the related effectiveness of employee turnover.

#### ***Recommendations for Practice***

The study can be a foundation for formulating administrative policies that focus on the interests of workers, for example, formulating and enacting policies that improve the working relationships between junior employees and management to improve the quality of services and enhance employee retention. Policies can be formulated to regulate the mode of interaction between clients and workers in the hospitality industry, for example, regulating the kind of language of interaction between the client and workers, which improves the professionalism of the environment of corporate operations in the hospitality sector. This investigation showed aspects of human resource management that can be improved for the sustainability of the hospitality sector. For example, the lack of a standard procedure for handling a pandemic may reduce the efficacy of commercial operations in the hospitality sector. The policies are necessary to handle the problem of high employee turnover during the COVID-19 pandemic or periods of economic recession. Also, the results can be the foundation for formulating an optimal strategy for allocating salaries to workers based on their nature of work and level of experience, motivating employees to work in their respective firms, which may significantly reduce the rate of employee turnover.

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