

Predicting Employees' Intention to stay in the Hotel Industry: A Cross-national Comparison between China and Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the factors influencing employees' intention to stay in the hotel industry through a cross-national comparison between China and Malaysia. By analyzing survey data from 190 employees in China and 181 in Malaysia, the research explores the effects of pay and compensation, career advancement, and performance appraisal on retention intentions and how these effects are moderated by nationality. The results indicate that all three factors significantly influence employees' intention to stay in both countries. However, the impact of pay and compensation, and performance appraisal is notably moderated by nationality, with significant variations observed between the two countries. Specifically, while pay and compensation and performance appraisal are crucial for retention in both China and Malaysia, career advancement opportunities are more critical for employees in Malaysia. These findings highlight the necessity for hotel management to tailor their human resource practices to fit the cultural and economic contexts of each country. In China, improving compensation and performance appraisal systems is essential for enhancing retention, whereas in Malaysia, offering robust career advancement opportunities is key. The study extends Herzberg's two-factor theory by demonstrating how motivational and hygiene factors' significance varies with cultural and economic contexts, contributing valuable insights into how nationality influences employee retention strategies. Limitations of this research include its cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported data. Future research should consider longitudinal studies and include a broader range of countries to validate and extend these findings. Exploring additional factors such as job satisfaction and work-life balance could further enrich understanding of employee retention dynamics in the hospitality industry.

KEYWORDS

Intention to stay; Pay and compensation; Career advancement; Performance appraisal

1. INTRODUCTION

Increased globalization has significantly transformed the business landscape, including the hospitality industry (Cheng & Chen, 2017). The demands placed on hospitality businesses have intensified, requiring employees to perform their tasks with exceptional precision and efficiency (Wang et al., 2020). However, the industry is currently grappling with high employee turnover rates, which impose substantial costs on hotels (Le et al., 2023). Recognizing the critical role of human capital in achieving business success, most hotels understand the importance of their workforce (Slavković et al., 2023). From a human capital management perspective, employees possess skills, abilities, and experiences that provide economic value to hotels (Fang & Liou, 2024). Consequently, hotels may struggle to achieve their strategic goals without the requisite human capital capabilities (Lam et al., 2022).

Engaging and retaining a talented workforce in the hospitality sector is thus a crucial and challenging endeavor (Ghani et al., 2022; Le et al., 2023; Slavković et al., 2023).

Voluntary employee turnover is a critical issue in the hotel industry, as it can severely undermine a hotel's competitiveness in the marketplace. Current statistics indicate that the employee turnover rate in the hospitality industry ranges from 30% to 73% globally (Michael & Fotiadis, 2022), which is significantly higher than the average turnover rate in other sectors (Cicerale, 2020). This issue is particularly pronounced when high turnover rates are prevalent among key groups of employees (Timsina, 2024). Managers, in particular, are considered vital assets to organizations due to their role in ensuring smooth operations and contributing to significant organizational success (Abualoush et al., 2018). The managerial role inherently involves responsibilities related to both operational and managerial functions. Kindström et al. (2022) found that a lack of valuable employees could limit their companies' growth. Employees may choose to leave their current employment if they are dissatisfied with factors related to their organization or job (Ramlawati et al., 2021). Bellamkonda and Pattusamy (2022) emphasized the importance of investigating employees' intentions to stay, noting that termination of employment is not always a reliable indicator of true motivations, as employees may provide misleading information for various reasons. Efforts to retain employees who have already decided to leave are often too late (Monique et al., 2022; Kroczeck, 2023). Singh et al. (2024) further highlighted that current employees can provide valuable insights into their reasons for staying, which can inform retention strategies.

China and Malaysia present distinct cultural and economic contexts, with their hospitality industries at different stages of development (Sangaran & Selvanayagam, 2021; Cui & Salmuni, 2024). China's hospitality sector is characterized by rapid growth and a large-scale market, whereas Malaysia's industry is more mature and operates on a smaller scale. A comparative study enables an examination of how these cultural differences and economic conditions influence employees' motivations and intentions to stay (Mehta et al., 2023). Although extensive research has been conducted on employee retention in the hospitality industry, there is a paucity of comparative studies focusing on specific regions, such as China and Malaysia.

This study investigates the impacts of pay and compensation, career advancement, and performance appraisal on employee's intention to stay in the hotel industry. Furthermore, this study considers the moderation of nationality on the relationships between pay and compensation, career advancement, and performance appraisal and intention to stay. In China despite the hotel employment demand has been increasing along with the rapid growth in accommodation numbers (Tuan, 2017), hospitality jobs are not entitled to a high social status and are not attractive to qualified workers like other industries (i.e., technology, banking) (Fernandes Guzzo et al., 2023; Tarik et al., 2024). In Malaysia, the hospitality sector is the 3rd GDP contributor where the hotel industry made a significant aspect in the hospitality industry (Ministry of Tourism Industry, 2018). Unfortunately, from the beginning of Malaysia's hotel industry until the recent time there are lots of HR problems are facing by hotel industry namely; shortage of talented people, high turnover rate, lack of employee motivation, lack of employee adequate training, lack of quality service (Ahmad & Scott, 2022; Patwary et al., 2023; Chandran et al., 2023). Therefore, in the hotel industry of Malaysia cannot retain their staff for a long time. Likewise, in Malaysia, the Malaysian Employers Federation (2021) reported that the turnover rate in the hotel industry is 65.7% (Halim et al., 2021). These research findings provide insights into employees' elements in the hotel context from a multicultural view and suggestions for human resources management practices. This study begins with a review of the relevant literature related to the study constructs. It then discusses the methodological aspects of the research, followed by an analysis of the findings and a discussion. Finally, the paper concludes with implications for future research and practical applications (Kindström et al., 2022).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Herzberg's Two-factor Theory

Herzberg's two-factor theory, also known as the motivation-hygiene theory or dual-factor theory (Herzberg, 1968), provides a foundational framework for understanding workplace motivation. According to this theory, job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are influenced by two distinct sets of factors: hygiene factors and motivator factors. Herzberg's research revealed a notable divergence in employees' responses regarding their job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, suggesting that these responses stem from different underlying causes (Zeng & Paphawasit, 2024). Hygiene factors, such as salary, are essential for preventing job dissatisfaction but do not necessarily enhance job satisfaction. In contrast, motivator factors, including achievement, recognition, advancement, and personal growth, are pivotal for fostering job satisfaction and are directly linked to an employee's intention to remain with an organization (Zhou et al., 2024). Within the context of this study, these factors—pay and compensation, career advancement, and performance appraisal—are categorized as organizational-related factors, reflecting their significant role in influencing employees' intention to stay with their current employer. This categorization underscores the importance of understanding how these factors can be strategically managed to enhance employee retention (Jun et al., 2024).

2.2. Intention to Stay

Employee intention to stay refers to an individual's commitment to remain with their current employer over the long term, which is the opposite of turnover intention or the likelihood of leaving the organization (Hur & Abner, 2023). While turnover intention predicts an employee's probability of leaving, the issue of voluntary attrition—where valued employees depart for other opportunities—can be even more problematic than corporate layoffs (Peter & Kiazad, 2024). As competition for talent intensifies, it becomes crucial for organizations to ensure employees feel valued and integral to the company (Tunio et al., 2023). This sense of belonging and recognition is essential for retaining employees. Intention to stay is a reflection of employees' willingness to continue their employment after careful consideration (Lim et al., 2024) and is closely tied to their tenure with the organization (Weng et al., 2023). High employee retention demonstrates the organization's effectiveness in fostering a strong intention to stay, meeting employees' interests and needs.

2.3. Pay and Compensation

Compensation encompasses both financial and non-financial rewards provided to employees in exchange for their services (Ahmad & Scott, 2022). It is based on job value, personal contributions, and performance (Fulmer et al., 2023). At the organizational level, effective compensation is essential for attracting, retaining, and motivating employees, as it influences their decision to join or stay with the company (Sorn et al., 2023). Beyond rewarding and recognizing efforts, compensation serves as a motivational tool to enhance productivity, reduce turnover intentions, and increase career satisfaction (Alkandi et al., 2023). Historically, compensation systems have been designed to both attract and retain talent and to encourage employees to align their efforts with organizational goals (Sorn et al., 2023). Compensation is a significant business cost and a key factor in aligning employee interests with organizational objectives. Research shows that salary growth and non-salary benefits significantly impact employees' intention to quit (Katolik Kovačević et al., 2024). Chang et al. (2021) also found that comprehensive compensation packages significantly affect employees' intention to stay. Additionally, high-performing individuals often seek competitive pay, and organizations offering attractive compensation packages are better positioned to retain talent (Elsahoryi et al., 2022; Fransinatra & Asyik, 2023). On the other hand, inadequate compensation can lead to negative attitudes and increased turnover. Compensation is directly tied to employees' ability to meet living expenses and personal needs, making it a vital factor in their overall job satisfaction and intention to

stay (Amanda et al., 2021; Chang et al., 2021; Fransinatra & Asyik, 2023). Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Ha1: Pay and compensation has a significant influence on employees' intention to stay in the hotel industry.

2.4. Career Advancement

Career advancement is a continuous process that begins early in life and evolves through adulthood, involving ongoing assessment, exploration, goal-setting, and action (Keith et al., 2021). Agus and Selvaraj (2020) describe it as a lifelong journey of understanding, exploring, and experiencing various factors that influence personal and professional growth. This evolving process of acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes enables effective career planning and decision-making. Career advancement, as part of lifelong learning, adapts to career changes and emerging opportunities (Škerháková et al., 2022). Organizations benefit from this approach by ensuring they have qualified personnel available and avoiding an outdated workforce (Halid et al., 2020). Albrecht et al. (2021) highlight that employees' intention to stay is significantly influenced by meaningful work and promotion opportunities. Aburumman et al. (2020) found that promotion criteria and reward systems impact employees' turnover intentions. Employees who perceive opportunities for advancement and feel valued are more likely to remain with their organization. Kragt and Day (2020) link advancement to tangible changes in position and promotion likelihood, while Okolie et al. (2020) emphasizes that career growth involves opportunities beyond immediate positions. Providing growth opportunities enhances employee commitment and retention by fostering ongoing learning and skill development (Younas & Bari, 2020; Halid et al., 2020; Keith et al., 2021; Dachner et al., 2021; Ghani et al., 2022). Therefore, this study hypothesizes that:

Ha2: Career advancement has a significant influence on employees' intention to stay in the hotel industry.

2.5. Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal is a process used to identify, measure, evaluate, improve, encourage, and reward employees for their performance (Alsuwaidi et al., 2020). It involves a formal system that periodically reviews and assesses employees' performance against set standards or organizational expectations (Gravina et al., 2021). Beyond evaluating job performance, performance appraisals serve to develop and motivate employees by providing feedback and guidance for improvement (Al-Jedaia & Mehrez, 2020). This process is crucial for human capital development and informs decisions related to compensation, promotions, terminations, transfers, recognition awards, and training opportunities, all of which can affect employee satisfaction and career advancement (Khatun et al., 2023). Performance appraisals contribute to effective human resource management by enhancing planning, recruitment, compensation, and training practices (Kalyanamitra et al., 2020). Bayo-Moriones et al. (2020) highlight two approaches to performance appraisal: the behavior-oriented view, which focuses on employee conduct, and the results-oriented view, which emphasizes outcomes. Regular performance evaluations should be part of an employee's permanent record and are intended to improve performance and productivity (Gravina et al., 2021). Effective performance appraisals, supported by additional HR practices like formal training and incentive pay, can enhance employee commitment, productivity, and intention to stay (Gravina et al., 2021). Perceptions of fairness in the appraisal process, where employees are accurately rated and fair actions are taken, influence their intention to remain with the organization (Taneja et al., 2023). Achievement, defined as feelings of success or failure related to task accomplishment, and recognition for performance are integral to this process (Pekrun et al., 2023). Effective appraisals that acknowledge achievements and provide fair evaluations can lead to higher perceived fairness and positively impact employees' intention to stay

(Siahaan & Gatari, 2020; Mok & Leong, 2021; Uraon & Kumarasamy, 2024). In this connection, this study hypothesized that:

H3a: Performance appraisal has a significant influence on employees' intention to stay in the hotel industry.

2.6. Nationality

Prior literature indicated there is a significant relationship between nationality and intention to stay. It also suggest that the variation in tenure between nationalities was partly mediated by the firms' use of a human resource practices (Köllen et al., 2019). These cross-national comparisons illustrate that the moderating effect of the different nationalities of employees' intention to stay (Chiu et al., 2021). This study assumed that some differences exist in the national role that moderates these determinants' influence on intention to stay. Therefore, the following hypotheses were tested:

H4a: The influence of pay and compensation on intention to stay in hotel industry will be different between Chinese and Malaysian employees.

H5a: The influence of career advancement on intention to stay in hotel industry will be different between Chinese and Malaysian employees.

H6a: The influence of performance appraisal on intention to stay in hotel industry will be different between Chinese and Malaysian employees.

2.7. Research Model

Based on the literature review, the research framework is developed as shown in Figure 1. The framework shows that the adoption factors, such as pay and compensation, career advancement and performance appraisal, have a significant influence on on employees' intention to stay in the hotel industry. Additionally, the framework incorporates moderating variables related to nationality.

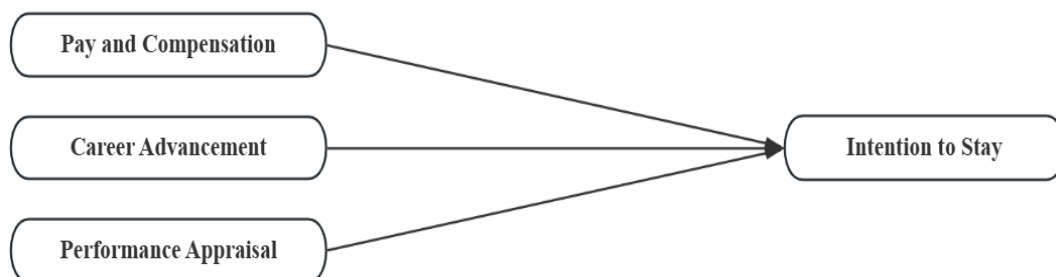


Figure 1. Research Framework.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Data Collection

This study employed a non-probability sampling method due to the challenges of obtaining an accurate sampling frame from organizations and identifying suitable respondents for social science research (Rahman, 2023). Non-probability sampling allows researchers to select samples based on their subjective judgment rather than random selection. Specifically, we used purposive sampling, which enables researchers to choose respondents who best meet the study's criteria and can provide relevant answers to the research questions (Hair et al., 2017).

The target population of this study was hotel employees working in China and Malaysia. Data were collected through online surveys administered separately in each country. For China, the survey was distributed via the Wenjuanxing platform, known for its high reliability, robust response rate, minimal

incomplete submissions, and a diverse respondent pool (Su et al., 2024). To ensure the accuracy of our sample, we utilized Wenjuanxing's custom pre-screening feature, which restricted access to the survey to individuals currently employed in the hotel industry in China. In Malaysia, used google forms for data collection, selected for its widespread use and familiarity within the country (Mohamed et al., 2021).

The data collection for both studies took place from June 1 to August 15, 2024. To ensure the reliability of the responses, we excluded participants who completed the survey in significantly less than the average time of five minutes or in more than the maximum time of 25 minutes. Consequently, we retained a total of 371 valid responses: 190 out of 213 from China and 181 out of 207 from Malaysia. These responses were deemed suitable for further analysis.

3.2. Research Instrument

To identify qualified participants, the survey included a screening question: "Do you work in the hotel industry?" Only those who answered "Yes" proceeded to complete the survey, which included questions about their current jobs and the study's key constructs—such as pay and compensation, career advancement, performance appraisal, and intention to stay. The survey was identical for both China and Malaysia, ensuring consistency in the questions across the two countries.

A pre-test involving 30 respondents was conducted to refine the survey instrument. The questionnaires were provided in bilingual versions: first translated from English to Chinese and Malay, and then back-translated to verify accuracy and clarity. Additionally, the translations were reviewed by scholars fluent in both English and Chinese, as well as English and Malay, to ensure consistency and quality.

The study scales were adapted from prior studies. Pay and compensation were assessed using a 19-item scale from Abeysekera (2007). Career advancement was measured with a 4-item scale adapted from Liu (2004). Performance appraisal was evaluated using a 7-item scale based on Meyer and Smith (2000). The intention to stay was assessed with an 11-item scale adapted from Kyndt, Dochy, Michielsen, and Moeyaert (2009). All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 represents "strongly disagree" and 5 represents "strongly agree."

3.3. Statistical Analysis

The data analysis commenced with descriptive statistics to assess the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments. We then employed structural equation modeling (SEM) to evaluate the proposed structural paths. To examine the moderating effect of nationality on these relationships, we conducted a multi group SEM after confirming the measurement invariance across the groups. The data analysis was carried out using SPSS 27.0 and SmartPLS 4.0 software.

4. RESULT

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents. This study involved 179 male respondents (48.25%) and 192 female respondents (51.75%). The majority of respondents were aged 30-39 years, comprising 186 individuals (50.13%). The next largest age group was 20-29 years, with 96 respondents (25.88%). Respondents aged 40-49 years and 50-59 years were fewer, representing 54 (14.56%) and 35 (9.43%) respectively. Respondents primarily held bachelor's degrees, with 156 individuals (42.05%). A significant portion had completed diploma-level education (92 respondents, 24.8%) or master's degrees (82 respondents, 22.1%). Fewer respondents held high school diplomas or below (19 respondents, 5.12%) or PhDs (22 respondents, 5.93%). The sample was nearly evenly

split between respondents working in China (190 respondents, 51.21%) and Malaysia (181 respondents, 48.79%). Most respondents had 6-10 years of experience, accounting for 92 individuals (24.8%). Those with less than 5 years of experience and 11-15 years of experience were almost equally represented, with 96 respondents (25.88%) and 94 respondents (25.34%) respectively. Respondents with over 15 years of experience made up 23.99% of the sample (89 respondents). A significant portion of respondents had been with their current hotel for 1-3 years, comprising 112 individuals (30.19%). Respondents with less than 1 year of service were also notable, with 96 individuals (25.88%). Fewer respondents had been with the organization for 4-6 years (63 respondents, 16.98%), 7-9 years (64 respondents, 17.25%), or more than 10 years (36 respondents, 9.7%).

Table 1. Respondents’ demographic profile

Demographic characteristics	Segments	Frequency	Percentage%
Gender	Male	179	48.25%
	Female	192	51.75%
Age	20-29 years	96	25.88%
	30-39 years	186	50.13%
	40-49 years	54	14.56%
	50-59 years	35	9.43%
Education background	High School and below	19	5.12%
	Diploma	92	24.8%
	Bachelor	156	42.05%
	Master	82	22.1%
	PhD	22	5.93%
Current work place	China	190	51.21%
	Malaysia	181	48.79%
Length of work work experiences in hotel industry	<5 years	96	25.88%
	6-10 years	92	24.8%
	11-15 years	94	25.34%
	>15 years	89	23.99%
Length of service with this hotel	<1 year	96	25.88%
	1-3 years	112	30.19%
	4-6 years	63	16.98%
	7-9 years	64	17.25%
	>10 years	36	9.7%

4.2. Measurement Model Analysis

Before testing the hypotheses, this study evaluated the validity and reliability of their measurements. Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of a measuring instrument (Hair et al., 2019). To gauge internal consistency, the authors used composite reliability scores and Cronbach’s alpha. The internal consistency reliability ranged from 0.876 to 0.973, surpassing the acceptable threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019). Similarly, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients varied between 0.874 and 0.971, also exceeding the 0.7 threshold. For indicator reliability, this study assessed factor loadings, which are presented in Table 2. The factor loadings were all above 0.708, indicating that the model is reliably satisfactory.

Table 2. Result of reliability and validity

Construct	Items	Outer loading	VIF	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_C	AVE
Pay and Compensation (PC)	PC1	0.781	3.134	0.971	0.973	0.656
	PC2	0.800	2.851			
	PC3	0.804	3.170			
	PC4	0.838	3.907			
	PC5	0.821	3.478			
	PC6	0.804	3.153			
	PC7	0.816	3.507			
	PC8	0.784	2.932			
	PC9	0.820	3.634			
	PC10	0.830	4.091			
	PC11	0.804	3.458			
	PC12	0.815	3.128			
	PC13	0.823	3.333			
	PC14	0.795	2.808			
	PC15	0.803	3.536			
	PC16	0.794	2.839			
	PC17	0.804	3.585			
	PC18	0.803	3.039			
	PC19	0.848	4.108			
Career Advancement (CA)	CA1	0.884	2.738	0.874	0.914	0.726
	CA2	0.849	2.242			
	CA3	0.843	2.247			
	CA4	0.832	2.079			
Performance Appraisal (PA)	PA1	0.851	2.588	0.880	0.913	0.676
	PA2	0.848	2.642			
	PA3	0.823	2.148			
	PA4	0.783	2.087			
	PA5	0.805	2.214			
Intention to Stay (ITS)	ITS1	0.800	2.803	0.944	0.952	0.642
	ITS2	0.763	2.622			
	ITS3	0.765	2.463			
	ITS4	0.827	3.123			
	ITS5	0.832	3.003			
	ITS6	0.821	2.88			
	ITS7	0.811	2.796			
	ITS8	0.823	3.141			
	ITS9	0.771	2.296			
	ITS10	0.812	2.796			
	ITS11	0.785	2.575			

Next, the study evaluated validity by examining both convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All AVE values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.5, ranging from 0.642 to 0.726, as shown in Table 2 (Hair et al., 2019). For discriminant validity, the study employed the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) (Henseler et al., 2015). Table 3 demonstrates that the correlation coefficients between any pair of constructs were lower than the square root of the corresponding AVE, confirming discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker, 1981). Additionally, Table 4 shows that the

HTMT ratio was below the 0.85 threshold, further supporting discriminant validity. Overall, the model is deemed satisfactory, demonstrating adequate reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

Table 3. Discriminant validity - Fornell-Larcker criterion

	PC	CA	PA	ITS
Pay and Compensation	0.810			
Career Advancement	0.466	0.852		
Performance Appraisal	0.410	0.441	0.822	
Intention to Stay	0.469	0.469	0.518	0.801

Table 4. Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)

	PC	CA	PA	ITS
Pay and Compensation				
Career Advancement	0.505			
Performance Appraisal	0.442	0.501		
Intention to Stay	0.486	0.513	0.563	

4.3. Structural Model Analysis

To evaluate the structural model, (Hair et al., 2019) recommend analyzing R^2 , beta (β) values, and corresponding t-values using a bootstrapping procedure with 10,000 resamples. Sullivan and Feinn (2012) emphasize that while p-values indicate whether an effect exists, they do not measure the effect's size. Therefore, both effect size and statistical significance are crucial for reporting and interpreting study results. Prior to hypothesis testing, the study also checked that the variance inflation factor (VIF) values were below 5. The results, shown in Table 2, indicated VIF values ranging from 2.079 to 4.108, suggesting no issues with multicollinearity among the latent variables (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 5 summarizes the results of the path model analysis. The findings indicate that pay and compensation significantly influences employees' intention to stay in the hotel industry ($\beta=0.058$, $p=0.000$, $t=4.046$). Career advancement also significantly influences employees' intention to stay ($\beta=0.057$, $p=0.000$, $t=3.783$). Additionally, performance appraisal significantly influences employees' intention to stay ($\beta=0.057$, $p=0.000$, $t=5.707$). Consequently, hypotheses Ha1, Ha2, and Ha3 are supported.

Table 5. Construct hypotheses.

Hypotheses	Relationship	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T-Value	P-Value	Decision
Ha1	PC ---> ITS	0.234	0.058	4.046	0.000	Supported
Ha2	CA ---> ITS	0.217	0.057	3.783	0.000	Supported
Ha3	PA ---> ITS	0.327	0.057	5.707	0.000	Supported

4.4. Moderation Analysis

To examine the moderating effect of nationality, we categorized the generation variable into two groups: employees from China and employees from Malaysia (Cheah et al., 2020). The results from step 2 showed that the correlation of composite scores for one measurement model was 1.000 (subjective norm), exceeding the 5th percentile of the distribution of composite score correlations (pay and compensation, career advancement, performance appraisal, intention to stay). With permutation p-values above 0.05, this indicates insignificance, confirming compositional invariance

and partial measurement invariance. This allowed for comparisons of path coefficients between Chinese and Malaysian employees using multi-group analysis. Step 3 further validated measurement invariance for both mean (step 3a) and variance (step 3b), with mean and variance values within the 2.5% to 97.5% confidence intervals. Permutation p-values for pay and compensation, career advancement, performance appraisal, and intention to stay remained insignificant ($p > 0.05$), indicating full measurement invariance. This supports the analysis of nationality as a moderator through multi-group analysis.

It was hypothesized in this study that generation would moderate the relationship between the attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, perceived value and trust constructs and purchase intention. A moderator is a third variable that influences the connection between independent and dependent variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Several methods can be used to examine the moderating effect in structural models. In this study, multi group analysis was applied for assessing the moderating effect.

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In the context of nationality serving as a moderator between pay and compensation and intention to stay in China and Malaysia, yielding results of ($p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$) and ($p\text{-value} = 0.018 < 0.05$), respectively. The same conclusion applies to the absence of moderating effects between performance appraisal and purchase intention for China and Malaysia, with results of ($p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$) and ($p\text{-value} = 0.001 < 0.05$). As a result, both H4a and H6a receive empirical support. However, regarding the moderation of nationality between career advancement and intention to stay, Malaysia exhibits moderating effects ($p\text{-value} = 0.001 < 0.05$), whereas China does not ($p\text{-value} = 0.091 > 0.05$). The relationship between career advancement and employees' intention to stay in hotel industry were not moderated by nationality (refer to Table. 7).

Table 6. Results of Permutation for Moderating Effect of Nationality

Constructs	Configurational Invariance (Step 1)	Compositional Invariance (Step 2)		Partial Measurement Invariance	Equal Mean Assessment (Step 3a)		Equal Variance Assessment (Step 3b)		Full Measurement Invariance
		Original Correlation	5.00 %		Original Differences	Confidence Interval	Original Differences	Confidence Interval	
PC	Yes	1.000	0.999	Yes	-0.007	{-0.202; 0.193}	-0.046	{-0.264; 0.262}	Yes/Yes
CA	Yes	1.000	0.997	Yes	0.100	{-0.199; 0.186}	0.074	{-0.271; 0.296}	Yes/Yes
PA	Yes	1.000	0.998	Yes	0.098	{-0.213; 0.206}	0.035	{-0.298; 0.324}	Yes/Yes
ITS	Yes	1.000	0.999	Yes	0.003	{-0.200; 0.198}	0.060	{-0.295; 0.295}	Yes/Yes

Table 7. Path coefficients of Permutation for Moderating Effect of Nationality

	Original (China)	Original (Malaysia)	STDEV (China)	STDEV (Malaysia)	t value (China)	t value (Malaysia)	p value (China)	p value (Malaysia)
PC- --> ITS	0.335	0.157	0.094	0.067	3.563	2.362	0.000	0.018
CA- --> ITS	0.138	0.289	0.082	0.085	1.692	3.41	0.091	0.001
PA- --> ITS	0.296	0.336	0.087	0.078	3.404	4.302	0.001	0.000

5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Conclusions

This study explores the factors influencing employees' intention to stay in the hotel industry, comparing insights between China and Malaysia. The results underscore that pay and compensation, career advancement, and performance appraisal significantly impact employees' intention to stay in the hotel sector. Specifically, all three factors were found to have a positive influence, supporting the hypotheses that these elements play crucial roles in employee retention.

Notably, the study reveals significant differences in how nationality moderates these relationships. While nationality does not significantly affect the relationship between career advancement and intention to stay in China, it does in Malaysia. Conversely, pay and compensation and performance appraisal exhibit consistent moderating effects across both countries, highlighting the universal importance of these factors in employee retention.

5.2. Theoretical Implications

The findings contribute to the theoretical understanding of employee retention in the hotel industry by validating Herzberg's two-factor theory within a cross-national context. The study reinforces that hygiene factors such as pay and compensation and motivator factors such as career advancement and performance appraisal are critical in shaping employees' intention to stay. Additionally, the research highlights the role of nationality as a moderating factor, extending the theory's applicability to diverse cultural settings. This adds nuance to the understanding of how cultural and economic contexts influence the retention factors identified by Herzberg.

5.3. Managerial Implications

For hotel industry managers, the results provide actionable insights into improving employee retention. Managers should focus on offering competitive pay and comprehensive compensation packages to retain staff, as these factors significantly impact employees' intention to stay. Career advancement opportunities and fair performance appraisals are also crucial, suggesting that investing in professional development and transparent evaluation processes can enhance retention.

Furthermore, the study's findings suggest that managers in Malaysia may need to tailor career advancement strategies to align with national expectations and employee preferences. In contrast, Chinese hotel managers might focus on strengthening universal factors such as pay and performance appraisal systems. Recognizing and addressing the distinct motivational factors across different national contexts can help tailor retention strategies more effectively.

5.4. Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study offers valuable insights, several limitations warrant consideration. The research relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to response biases. The cross-sectional nature of the study limits the ability to draw causal conclusions about the relationships between the variables. Additionally, the focus on only two countries may not fully capture the global variations in employee retention factors.

Future research could address these limitations by employing longitudinal designs to track changes over time and validate causal relationships. Expanding the study to include more diverse geographical regions and sectors within the hospitality industry could provide a broader understanding of employee retention dynamics. Additionally, incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups could offer deeper insights into the reasons behind employees' intentions to stay or leave.

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