

Employee Retention of Internship Management Trainees for Hospitality Corp.X: A Research Based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

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Abstract: In response to the persistent issue of internship management trainees at Hospitality Corp.X being reluctant to remain employed after completing their internships in recent years. This study investigates the underlying causes through questionnaire surveys, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (hygiene factors and motivational factors), and factor analysis. The findings reveal that trainees' overall job satisfaction score averages merely 2.53 ± 0.68 (on a 5-point scale), with key influencing factors including: compensation and benefits (lowest score, mean=2.3579), career development (unclear promotion pathways), work content (repetitive and monotonous tasks), psychosocial environment (ineffective communication and psychological stress), and organizational management (rigid processes and unfair performance evaluations). Comparative analysis demonstrates that the hotel's intern compensation and benefits significantly lag behind local industry peers. To address these issues, recommendations are proposed, such as optimizing compensation structures, restructuring career development frameworks, diversifying job responsibilities, enhancing psychological support systems, and streamlining management processes. These measures aim to improve trainees' retention willingness while ensuring the stability of service quality and competitive advantage for the hotel.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction; Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory; Hospitality Industry; Compensation and Benefits; Organizational Management

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1.Introduction

Established in 1996 as the successor to the Southwest Timber Market Guesthouse, Hospitality Corp.X has evolved over nearly three decades into Yunnan Province's largest independent hotel by scale. Specializing in conference services, the hotel boasts 1,677 guest rooms, 36 conference facilities, and a staff of over 2,200 employees. With a capacity to host 6,000 guests simultaneously for conferences, dining, and accommodation, it is renowned as the "Conference Capital of Southwest China." In recent years, alongside its expanding business operations, Hospitality Corp.X has experienced rapid growth in employee numbers. However, this workforce expansion has been accompanied by high turnover rates among grassroots employees. The hotel's HR department faces daily inflows and outflows of employees, resulting in a heavy workload that leaves little capacity to address critical issues such as skills training and the implementation of employee benefits. As a quintessential service-oriented industry, the hospitality sector evaluates excellence not only through physical infrastructure but also through

service quality. Under modern industry standards, the provision of attentive and personalized service is a key determinant of a hotel's service reputation. However, frequent turnover among grassroots employees leads to inconsistent service delivery, ultimately undermining the hotel's service quality, brand reputation, and operational stability.

While contemporary research in corporate human resource management suggests that a moderate level of employee turnover can reflect natural merit-based attrition, which may benefit organizational health, excessive short-term turnover and an inability to retain talent introduce significant operational instability. Such issues not only escalate training and management costs but also inflate labor replacement costs. Furthermore, they risk eroding morale among remaining staff, potentially triggering a "domino effect" of resignations that destabilizes workforce cohesion. Consequently, organizations must proactively monitor grassroots employee retention and implement targeted strategies to reduce attrition rates, thereby ensuring workforce stability and sustained employee engagement.

To address this challenge, the hotel has established university-industry collaboration agreements with local multiple higher education institutions. Through these partnerships, it recruits final-year students majoring in hospitality management as management trainees for internships, with the expectation of transitioning them into full-time roles post-graduation. This strategy serves three purposes:

The first, mitigating grassroots staffing gaps caused by high turnover through immediate workforce supplementation. The second, developing a leadership pipeline by grooming trainees for future managerial positions. The third, addressing graduate employment pressures for participating universities, creating a tripartite benefit structure for the hotel, higher education institutions, and students.

Per the collaboration agreements, trainees are required to sign employment contracts with the hotel prior to completing their internships to formalize their post-graduation employment. However, all current trainees have declined to enter into such agreements, explicitly reserving the right to pursue alternative career paths after their internships conclude.

To address this issue, we integrate human resource management theories with Hospitality Corp.X's operational context to identify the underlying causes of management trainees' reluctance to remain employed post-internship. Based on this analysis, targeted recommendations and practical solutions are proposed to enhance management trainees' retention willingness.

2.Theoretical Foundation and Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

A review of the literature reveals that Hospitality Corp.X's challenge in retaining management trainees post-internship aligns with broader workforce attrition patterns across industries. Job dissatisfaction, driven by unmet needs—whether material (e.g., compensation), psychological (e.g., recognition), or a combination of both—emerges as the primary determinant of turnover. This phenomenon is strongly supported by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which distinguishes between hygiene factors (e.g., salary, working conditions) that prevent dissatisfaction and motivators (e.g., career growth, responsibility) that foster engagement. When either category fails to meet employee expectations, attrition risks escalate.

A seminal framework in human resource management, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (also known as the Motivation-Hygiene Theory), proposed by American management scholar Frederick Herzberg in the 1950s, provides a robust explanation for the observed phenomenon. This theory posits that employees' job satisfaction is influenced by two distinct categories of factors—hygiene factors and motivators—each fulfilling divergent functional roles. The definition of hygiene factors is basic environmental and contextual elements such as salary, benefits, working conditions, and peer relationships. The function of these factors address employees' fundamental needs for financial security and workplace stability. Their absence directly triggers job dissatisfaction, potentially leading to resentment or disengagement. While adequate hygiene factors prevent dissatisfaction, they alone cannot foster long-term commitment or motivation. The definition of motivators is intrinsic drivers including achievement, recognition, professional growth opportunities, challenging responsibilities, and a sense of purpose. The function of these factors fulfill higher-order psychological needs, cultivating job satisfaction, intrinsic motivation, and loyalty. The motivators elevate performance and retention by enabling employees to derive meaning and pride from their work.

The Herzberg's theory underscores the dual necessity of addressing both hygiene factors and motivators to retain employees

effectively. Neglecting either category jeopardizes retention: poor hygiene factors drive dissatisfaction, while insufficient motivators fail to inspire sustained engagement. This dual framework aligns with Hospitality Corp.X's challenge, where management trainees' reluctance to stay may stem from deficiencies in compensation (hygiene) and career development prospects (motivators).

2.2 Literature Review

Scholarly research on employee turnover has proliferated since the emergence of modern enterprises, with a substantial body of research emerging across disciplines. Investigative efforts have primarily focused on three core dimensions: work environment (encompassing physical conditions, managerial practices, and organizational culture), alternative employment opportunities (influenced by labor market fluidity and industry competitiveness), and job satisfaction (encompassing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors). These studies collectively underscore the multifaceted nature of attrition, where dissatisfaction in any single dimension may catalyze turnover intentions, while systemic improvements across these domains can significantly enhance retention outcomes. Regarding the application of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory in hospitality human resource management, the study by Tsai et al. (2010) empirically validated this framework through a survey of hotel employees in Taipei City. Their findings demonstrated that compensation (representing a hygiene factor) and promotion opportunities (a motivator) significantly influence employee retention or turnover. Building on this precedent, the present research narrows its focus to job satisfaction as a critical mediator between these dual factors and retention outcomes. Prior studies in this domain consistently highlight how deficiencies in either hygiene factors (e.g., inadequate pay) or motivators (e.g., stagnant career paths) disproportionately affect service industry employees, whose job performance is tightly coupled with emotional and psychological engagement. As evidenced in prior discussions, employees' job satisfaction directly influences turnover rates. Furthermore, within the service industry, job satisfaction significantly impacts service quality and organizational competitiveness. To this end, we have conducted a focused review of literature pertaining to hospitality employees' job satisfaction, synthesizing existing findings through two lenses, include driving factors and organizational impacts.

2.2.1 Drivers of Job Satisfaction

The synthesis of the literature identifies three primary drivers of employee job satisfaction, include job-related factors, organizational management practices, and reward systems.

Regarding job-related elements, compensation and promotion emerge as critical determinants. Wen et al. (2022) found that pay satisfaction and advancement opportunities significantly enhance employee engagement while reducing turnover intentions. Similarly, Tian and Pu's (2008) study on China's hospitality industry confirmed career development prospects as a pivotal predictor of satisfaction. Leadership and peer relationships further amplify these effects: Matzler and Renzl (2006) demonstrated that trust in management and colleagues indirectly strengthens employee loyalty through satisfaction, while Cai et al. (2010) revealed that leadership quality and internal marketing (e.g., communication support) positively correlate with satisfaction, whereas job stress exerts a counteractive influence.

Regarding organizational management factors, in terms of institutionalized management, Tao et al. (2013) developed a model demonstrating that standardized management practices in hotels—through regulating managerial behaviors and strengthening organizational culture—indirectly enhance employee job satisfaction. Additionally, professional competency and training play a critical role: Mekoth et al. (2023) emphasized that professional skill development programs improve work continuity among hospitality staff, with job satisfaction acting as a mediating variable in this relationship.

Regarding incentive systems, Mazlan et al. (2021) found that financial rewards (e.g., performance-based bonuses) directly enhance hotel employees' satisfaction, thereby fostering loyalty. However, non-financial rewards—such as work environment enhancements or recognition programs—require integration with complementary strategies (e.g., career development initiatives) to achieve comparable effectiveness.

2.2.2 Organizational Impacts of Job Satisfaction

The organizational implications of employee job satisfaction are multifaceted. Firstly, it reduces turnover rates: multiple studies confirm that satisfaction curbs turnover intentions by enhancing engagement (Wen et al., 2022) or loyalty (Mazlan

et al., 2021). Secondly, it elevates service performance: Fang et al. (2021) noted that highly satisfied employees are more inclined to deliver quality services, creating a virtuous cycle of “satisfaction-service quality-organizational competitiveness”. Liu and Yang (2009) further demonstrated that employee satisfaction indirectly influences corporate profitability through customer satisfaction. Thirdly, it fosters organizational commitment: Cai et al.’s (2010) integrated model revealed significant positive correlations among job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance, highlighting satisfaction’s role as a linchpin for sustained workforce alignment and productivity.

2.2.3 Literature Synthesis

The review of existing literature reveals that most studies employ structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze path relationships among variables (Matzler & Renzl, 2006; Wen et al., 2022), while some integrate artificial neural networks (ANNs) to predict dynamic satisfaction patterns (Tian & Pu, 2008). The findings consistently recommend that organizations enhance job satisfaction through institutionalized management practices (Tao et al., 2013), financial incentives (Mazlan et al., 2021), and career development support (Tian & Pu, 2008), thereby reducing employee turnover and strengthening organizational competitiveness. These methodological approaches and conclusions provide critical guidance for the design and execution of the present investigation.

Factor Analysis is a statistical method used to identify latent structures among variables, categorized into Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) (Fabrigar et al., 1999). EFA is applied in hypothesis-free contexts to extract common factors through dimension reduction, explaining variable correlations (Costello & Osborne, 2005), and it serves as a robust tool for uncovering latent drivers of satisfaction. Fabrigar et al. (1999) emphasized that EFA simplifies variable structures via rotated factor loadings matrices, making it particularly suited for exploratory research. In hospitality human resource management, Liu and Yang (2009) utilized EFA to extract factors such as “work environment” and “management support”, providing empirical foundations for targeted satisfaction interventions.

While both Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and EFA are dimension reduction techniques, but PCA focuses on variance maximization, whereas EFA explains underlying relationships among variables (Jolliffe & Cadima, 2016). Given the objectives of this study is identify factors influencing internship management trainees’ job satisfaction at the hotel and propose Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory-informed optimizations. EFA is methodologically appropriate for its capacity to reveal latent constructs in exploratory settings.

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a questionnaire survey method to investigate the reasons behind internship management trainees’ reluctance to accept post-internship employment at Hospitality Corp.X. A structured questionnaire was administered to all internship management trainees from partnered universities currently working at the hotel.

3.1 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was structured based on Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory and tailored to the practical work experiences of the internship management trainees. A widely validated instrument for assessing general job satisfaction named The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) has served as the foundational framework. The MSQ includes 20 items spanning diverse dimensions of workplace interactions, with demonstrated high reliability (Cronbach’s alpha coefficients ranging from 0.85 to 0.91). To align with the hotel’s operational context, adaptations were made to incorporate factors specific to hospitality trainees, such as career development pathways and psychosocial support systems. The final questionnaire utilized a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly dissatisfied; 5 = strongly satisfied) for quantitative analysis.

The questionnaires were administered in paper format and targeting all internship management trainees at the hotel. A total of 228 questionnaires were distributed, with 228 returned and 227 deemed valid, the valid response rate is 99.56%.

3.2 Reliability and Validity Analysis of Questionnaire Results

Reliability analysis of the collected questionnaire data, measured via Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, yielded a value of 0.943. According to established psychometric standards (Nunnally, 1978), Cronbach’s alpha ranges from 0 to 1, with values above 0.7 indicating high internal consistency. The coefficient of 0.943 in this study demonstrates excellent reliability, confirming that the questionnaire design is logically structured and the collected data are highly consistent and reliable.

Following reliability and validity analyses, the suitability of the questionnaire data for information extraction was further assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure, a standard validity assessment tool for evaluating the appropriateness of exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The KMO statistic ranges from 0 to 1, reflecting the ratio of partial correlations to total correlations among all variables. A value closer to 1 indicates stronger validity and greater suitability for extracting latent factors (Kaiser, 1974).

Table 1. KMO Measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Measurement Tool	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure	0.852
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
Chi-Square (χ^2)	5185.462
Degrees of Freedom (<i>df</i>)	610
Significance (<i>p</i> -value)	<i>p</i> <0.001

As evidenced in Table 1, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of 0.852 exceeds the conventional threshold of 0.8, indicating excellent sampling adequacy and validating the dataset's suitability for information extraction through factor analysis. Furthermore, Bartlett's test of sphericity yielded a statistically significant result ($\chi^2=5185.462, p<0.001$), robustly rejecting the null hypothesis of variable independence. These outcomes collectively confirm the dataset's structural validity and appropriateness for Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Consequently, EFA will be employed to identify latent constructs underlying management trainees' job satisfaction, aligning with the study's objective to derive actionable insights for retention strategy optimization.

3.3 Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire Items

Descriptive statistics for responses to individual questionnaire items are summarized to highlight the central tendency and variability of trainees' satisfaction ratings. For conciseness, minimum (Min), maximum (Max), and mean (M) values are reported (see Table 2). This streamlined presentation focuses on identifying critical areas of dissatisfaction, such as low mean scores in compensation or career development.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire Item Scores

Item	N	Min	Max	Mean
My salary and benefits are highly reasonable	227	1.00	5.00	2.3579
The hotel has provided clear career development planning	227	1.00	5.00	3.1148
My work is valuable and meaningful	227	1.00	5.00	3.0145
My job performance is evaluated fairly	227	1.00	5.00	3.1106
Leadership maintains open communication with grassroots staff	227	1.00	5.00	3.1357
Leaders make sound decisions	227	1.00	5.00	3.5986
I am not required to engage in unethical practices at work	227	1.00	5.00	3.7493
My job responsibilities are stable	227	1.00	5.00	3.6873
Leaders provide timely recognition for good performance	227	1.00	5.00	3.6254
The hotel provides adequate tools/resources to ensure work efficiency	227	1.00	5.00	3.8524
Opportunities for cross-departmental skill development are available	227	1.00	5.00	3.9385
I understand the hotel's operational goals and related measures	227	1.00	5.00	3.5432

Item	N	Min	Max	Mean
I have opportunities to mentor colleagues	227	1.00	5.00	3.4845
I am granted sufficient autonomy in my work	227	1.00	5.00	3.5641
Certain tasks allow independent decision-making without reporting to leaders	227	1.00	5.00	3.5726
I can complete my tasks independently without interruptions	227	1.00	5.00	3.8573
My working environment is satisfactory	227	1.00	5.00	3.7241
Strong teamwork exists among colleagues	227	1.00	5.00	3.8372
Interdepartmental collaboration is efficient	227	1.00	5.00	3.8567
I frequently receive/give help during work	227	1.00	5.00	4.1975

Notes:

N = 227 (valid responses).

Likert scale: 1 = strongly dissatisfied; 5 = strongly satisfied.

As shown in Table 2, the items with relatively low scores in terms of job satisfaction are: “My salary and benefits are highly reasonable”; “My work is valuable and meaningful”; “My job performance is evaluated fairly”; “I am granted sufficient autonomy in my work”; and “Leadership maintains open communication with grassroots staff”.

3.4 Factor Analysis of Variables

To identify the latent factor structure influencing internship management trainees’ job satisfaction, we conducted Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) on the questionnaire variables. As established in prior sections, the dataset’s suitability for EFA was confirmed by a KMO measure of 0.852 and a significant Bartlett’s test of sphericity ($\chi^2=5185.462, p<0.001$).

Table 3. Factorial Variance Analysis of Questionnaire Data

Item	Initial	Extraction
My salary and benefits are highly reasonable	1.000	0.648
The hotel has provided clear career development planning	1.000	0.821
My work is valuable and meaningful	1.000	0.749
My job performance is evaluated fairly	1.000	0.721
Leadership maintains open communication with grassroots staff	1.000	0.824
Leaders make sound decisions	1.000	0.831
I am not required to engage in unethical practices at work	1.000	0.734
My job responsibilities are stable	1.000	0.835
Leaders provide timely recognition for good performance	1.000	0.861
The hotel provides adequate tools/resources to ensure work efficiency	1.000	0.731
Opportunities for cross-departmental skill development are available	1.000	0.769
I understand the hotel’s operational goals and related measures	1.000	0.828
I have opportunities to mentor colleagues	1.000	0.789
I am granted sufficient autonomy in my work	1.000	0.751
Certain tasks allow independent decision-making without reporting to leaders	1.000	0.819

Item	Initial	Extraction
I can complete my tasks independently without interruptions	1.000	0.812
My working environment is satisfactory	1.000	0.724
Strong teamwork exists among colleagues	1.000	0.732
Interdepartmental collaboration is efficient	1.000	0.711
I frequently receive/give help during work	1.000	0.613

Extraction Method: Principal Factor Analysis.

Communalities represent the extent to which the original variance of each variable can be explained by the extracted common factors. As shown in Table 3, the minimum communality extraction value across all items is 0.613, with most exceeding 0.7. This indicates that the extracted common factors account for over 60% of the variance in the original variables, with minimal loss of explanatory information. Consequently, the derived factors exhibit robust explanatory power in interpreting trainees' job satisfaction, validating the effectiveness of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) in capturing the latent structure of satisfaction dynamics.

After extracting the communalities, we further introduce the total variance explained to demonstrate the number of factors extracted through the analysis, and the cumulative variance contribution rate of the extracted factors to the total variance of all original variables.

Table 4. Total Variance Explained Analysis of Questionnaire Data

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loading			Rotation Sums of Squared Loading		
	Total	% of Variance	% of Cumulative	Total	% of Variance	% of Cumulative	Total	% of Variance	% of Cumulative
1	9.001	45.007	45.012	9.001	45.007	45.012	4.158	20.789	20.789
2	2.011	10.048	55.485	2.011	10.048	55.485	3.739	18.693	39.482
3	1.527	7.634	62.696	1.527	7.634	62.696	3.492	17.458	56.940
4	1.452	7.250	69.938	1.452	7.250	69.938	2.169	10.844	67.784
5	1.278	6.388	75.647	1.278	6.388	6.326	1.708	8.541	76.326
6	0.615	3.074	79.463						
7	0.514	2.571	81.961						
8	0.468	2.339	84.315						
9	0.403	2.013	86.357						
10	0.376	1.879	88.241						
11	0.358	1.788	89.978						
12	0.339	1.694	91.673						
13	0.299	1.497	93.182						
14	0.273	1.367	94.546						
15	0.252	1.259	95.845						
16	0.231	1.153	96.946						
17	0.187	0.933	97.895						
18	0.155	0.776	98.458						
19	0.141	0.706	99.376						
20	0.125	0.627	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Factor Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

As shown in Table 4, the initial eigenvalues of the first five components exceed 1.0, indicating that these five common factors adequately explain the variance in job satisfaction determinants. In other words, these five factors essentially represent all original influencing variables, allowing the consolidation of the initial 20 variables into five comprehensive dimensions. Consequently, only these five factors were retained for our analysis. Notably, their cumulative variance contribution rate reaches 75.647%, demonstrating robust explanatory power for the underlying constructs of job satisfaction.

After extracting five common factors through Principal Factor Analysis, it is necessary to define these factors rationally based on practical contexts to enable reasonable interpretation of their influence on job satisfaction. Following comprehensive consideration of practical circumstances and empirical insights, the five factors are defined as: compensation and benefits, career development, work content, psychosocial environment, and organizational management.

Table 5. Unrotated Factor Loading Matrix

Item	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
My salary and benefits are highly reasonable	0.731	-0.224	0.163	0.052	0.171
The hotel has provided clear career development planning	0.784	-0.179	0.173	-0.082	-0.197
My work is valuable and meaningful	0.721	-0.339	0.281	0.189	-0.086
My job performance is evaluated fairly	0.732	0.079	-0.071	-0.331	0.258
Leadership maintains open communication with grassroots staff	0.771	0.098	-0.109	-0.429	-0.189
Leaders make sound decisions	0.009	0.631	0.681	-0.005	0.069
I am not required to engage in unethical practices at work	0.691	0.298	-0.159	0.371	0.091
My job responsibilities are stable	-0.006	0.587	0.689	-0.071	0.039
Leaders provide timely recognition for good performance	0.697	-0.428	0.247	0.177	-0.161
The hotel provides adequate tools/resources to ensure work efficiency	0.719	0.162	-0.161	-0.381	0.127
Opportunities for cross-departmental skill development are available	0.637	-0.088	0.001	0.011	0.589
I understand the hotel's operational goals and related measures	0.731	-0.389	0.287	0.189	-0.135
I have opportunities to mentor colleagues	0.757	0.122	-0.168	-0.409	-0.067
I am granted sufficient autonomy in my work	0.552	-0.128	0.038	0.051	0.702
Certain tasks allow independent decision-making without reporting to leaders	0.778	-0.278	0.239	-0.066	-0.262
I can complete my tasks independently without interruptions	0.729	0.223	-0.047	-0.422	-0.208
My working environment is satisfactory	0.621	0.367	-0.248	0.348	-0.065
Strong teamwork exists among colleagues	0.681	0.268	-0.188	0.387	0.047
Interdepartmental collaboration is efficient	0.685	0.267	-0.159	0.311	-0.190
I frequently receive/give help during work	0.600	0.357	-0.162	0.223	-0.175

Extraction Method: Principal Factor Analysis.

As illustrated in Table 5, the unrotated factor loading matrix reveals that the majority of variables exhibit significantly higher loading on Component 1 compared to other components. This pattern indicates that all variables correlate more strongly with the first common factor, underscoring its predominant influence on job satisfaction relative to the remaining factors.

After observing the factor loading matrix obtained from the questionnaire data, we identified the need to simplify the factor structure and enhance the interpretability of each common factor. Currently, the most commonly used method is the Varimax orthogonal rotation method. In simple terms, this method rotates the initial loading matrix, essentially reorienting the coordinate system in a geometric sense. This approach allows the common factors to better explain the corresponding influencing factors. We subsequently applied this method to process the questionnaire component matrix data.

Table 6. Rotated Factor Loading Matrix

Item	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
My salary and benefits are highly reasonable	0.582	0.2496	0.232	0.418	-0.023
The hotel has provided clear career development planning	0.679	0.461	0.227	0.089	0.008
My work is valuable and meaningful	0.789	0.123	0.221	0.218	-0.009
My job performance is evaluated fairly	0.188	0.651	0.202	0.482	0.025
Leadership maintains open communication with grassroots staff	0.312	0.831	0.241	0.061	-0.019
Leaders make sound decisions	-0.051	-0.008	0.069	0.021	0.922
I am not required to engage in unethical practices at work	0.213	0.175	0.759	0.279	0.043
My job responsibilities are stable	-0.029	0.028	0.016	-0.024	0.921
Leaders provide timely recognition for good performance	0.868	0.152	0.188	0.165	-0.091
The hotel provides adequate tools/resources to ensure work efficiency	0.152	0.719	0.263	0.351	-0.002
Opportunities for cross-departmental skill development are available	0.258	0.241	0.205	0.783	-0.032
I understand the hotel's operational goals and related measures	0.857	0.147	0.189	0.192	-0.028
I have opportunities to mentor colleagues	0.229	0.811	0.257	0.168	-0.046
I am granted sufficient autonomy in my work	0.218	0.132	0.141	0.843	-0.005
Certain tasks allow independent decision-making without reporting to leaders	0.779	0.431	0.161	0.057	0.004
I can complete my tasks independently without interruptions	0.249	0.812	0.268	0.021	0.089
My working environment is satisfactory	0.122	0.214	0.813	0.111	0.014
Strong teamwork exists among colleagues	0.223	0.141	0.784	0.252	0.003
Interdepartmental collaboration is efficient	0.278	0.259	0.739	0.027	0.021
I frequently receive/give help during work	0.162	0.286	0.687	-0.012	0.075

Extraction Method: Principal Factor Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

The data results in Table 6 represent the rotated factor loading matrix after applying the Varimax orthogonal rotation method, with convergence achieved after 5 iterations.

Next, the questionnaire data scores must be calculated to draw relevant conclusions. The component score coefficient matrix is presented in Table 7. Calculations revealed that the questionnaire's mean score is 2.53 ± 0.68 (on a 5-point scale).

Table 7. Component Score Coefficient Distribution

Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
0.65–1.97	44	19.38%
2.01–2.99	133	58.59%
3.04–3.90	50	22.03%

4. Research Findings and Discussion

4.1 Research Findings

By administering a job satisfaction survey to internship management trainees at the hotel and conducting exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the study revealed an overall job satisfaction score of 2.53 ± 0.68 (on a 5-point scale). Among the five primary factors extracted from the 20 questionnaire items—compensation and benefits, career development, work content, psychosocial environment, and organizational management—the compensation and benefits factor contributed most significantly to job satisfaction, accounting for over 45% of the variance, followed by career development at over 10%.

An analysis of individual item scores identified the following lowest-ranked dimensions (ascending order of dissatisfaction): “My salary and benefits are highly reasonable” (lowest mean score); “My work is valuable and meaningful”; “My job performance is evaluated fairly”; “The hotel has provided clear career development planning”; “Leadership maintains open communication with grassroots staff”.

The analysis of questionnaire data reveals that internship management trainees' reluctance to remain employed at Hospitality Corp.X post-internship is strongly linked to five dimensions: compensation, work content, career development, psychosocial environment, and organizational management. Under Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), compensation and psychosocial environment are categorized as hygiene factors, while work content, career development, and organizational management are fall under motivators. Next, we need to conduct a detailed assessment of the hotel's current practices in these key areas to formulate effective solutions.

4.2 Discussion

In order to contextualize the dissatisfaction with compensation at Hospitality Corp.X, we compared its salary and benefits structure with another local two peer hotels that share similar operational scales and also recruit management trainees from universities. The comparative findings are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8. Compensation and Benefits for Internship Management Trainees in Local Hotels

Category	Hospitality Corp.X	Luxury Hospitality Group A	Boutique Hotel Alliance B
Internship Salary	1,800 RMB/month	2,100 RMB/month	2,000 RMB/month
Employee Starting Salary	3,400 RMB/month	3,400 RMB/month	3,500 RMB/month
Staff Dormitory	4-person room, private bath-room	4-person room, private bath-room	4–6-person room, private bath-room
Accommodation Fee	Free	80 RMB/month/person	50 RMB/month/person
Utilities (Water, Electricity, etc.)	20 RMB/month/person	20 RMB/month/person	50 RMB/month/person
Staff Canteen	3 meals/day	4 meals/day	3 meals/day

Category	Hospitality Corp.X	Luxury Hospitality Group A	Boutique Hotel Alliance B
Meal Subsidy	Free	Free	10 RMB/day/person
Canteen Meal Standards	Basic Chinese meals	Chinese/Western buffet	Chinese buffet
Work Uniform	Spring/Autumn, Summer, Winter attire	Summer, Winter attire	Summer, Winter attire
Commute Shuttle	Not provided	Free	Free
Internship Insurance	Employer's Liability Insurance	Employer's Liability Insurance	Employer's Liability Insurance
Employee Insurance	Social Insurances	Social Insurances and Housing Fund	Social Insurances
Rest Days Policy	4 days/month (irregular)	6 days/month (irregular)	4 days/month (fixed)
Additional Benefits	Birthday allowances; team-building activities; holiday overtime pay	Birthday allowances; team-building activities; holiday overtime pay and allowances	Birthday allowances; team-building activities; holiday overtime pay and allowances

As evidenced in Table 8, Hospitality Corp.X lags behind its competitors (Luxury Hospitality Group A and Boutique Hotel Alliance B) across multiple dimensions of compensation and benefits for internship trainees. It directly contributes to trainees' dissatisfaction and attrition risks.

Grassroots roles at each hotel are characterized by highly repetitive and monotonous tasks across key operational departments, it contribute to trainee dissatisfaction and psychological strain. In the Housekeeping Department, daily responsibilities such as bed linen replacement, room cleaning, and amenity replenishment involve cyclical routines—staff often clean 15–20 rooms per shift under strict time constraints (e.g., 20 minutes per room), leading to physical fatigue and diminished engagement. Similarly, the Conference Services Department requires repetitive tasks like venue setup (table arrangement, signage placement) and material logistics management, which offer minimal cognitive engagement and exacerbate tedium. The Food & Beverage Department amplifies these challenges through standardized front-desk protocols: employees execute identical service routines (e.g., greeting guests, taking orders, clearing tables) over 50 times daily while adhering to stringent quality metrics (e.g., mandatory smile adherence, response times under 2 minutes), creating a high-pressure environment that compounds mental stress. This lack of task variety and intellectual challenge fails to align with these young trainees' expectations of skill development and role.

Regarding career development, it has been identified that while Hospitality Corp.X offers job rotation opportunities, it lacks clear promotion criteria post-rotation. Management trainees remain in entry-level roles for extended periods after their internships, with limited opportunities to advance to managerial positions. In terms of professional training, the hotel provides only basic operational training with monotonous content that is not linked to professional certifications. Additionally, there are no advanced courses focused on managerial competencies. During the internship period, trainees receive sporadic guidance from on-duty department supervisors or team leaders rather than having dedicated mentors. Given the hotel's high workload, supervisors are primarily occupied with their own responsibilities, leaving little time to mentor trainees, effectively relegating them to a "temporary labor force."

The Hospitality Corp.X's psychosocial environment exhibits significant deficiencies in management and crisis responsiveness. For instance, during peak conference seasons, internship management trainees in the Conference Services Department face erratic scheduling, including frequent mandatory overtime and last-minute shift extensions. However, these extended working hours are not compensated with overtime pay or compensatory time-off, fostering perceptions of exploitation and inequity.

Additionally, as a service-oriented industry, each hotel inevitably encounters unplanned urgent tasks and unjustified customer complaints, both of which impose substantial psychological stress on trainees. Despite these challenges, Hospitality Corp.X provides no formal psychological support mechanisms (e.g., counseling services), leaving employees to cope through

informal peer complaints, it makes that exacerbates disengagement and resentment.

Regarding organizational management, investigations reveal that Hospitality Corp.X suffers from cumbersome administrative processes, such as the requisitioning of low-value supplies in the Housekeeping Department and employee leave applications, both requiring three-tier leadership approvals that incur prolonged processing times and hinder operational efficiency. Additionally, while certain departments periodically collect employee feedback on work and living conditions, improvements are rarely implemented promptly. For instance, the unstable hot water supply in trainee dormitories, this is an issue reported by management trainees upon their entry, but it remained unresolved for three months. Such systemic inefficiencies and unaddressed grievances erode trust in managerial responsiveness.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings from the aforementioned questionnaire survey and corresponding analysis of operational realities, the reluctance of Hospitality Corp.X's management trainees to remain employed post-internship primarily stems from the failure to synergize hygiene factors and motivators effectively. To improve trainees' retention rates, targeted and practical improvement measures should be formulated through the lens of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, addressing the five critical dimensions identified (compensation and benefits, career development, work content, psychosocial environment, and organizational management). These interventions aim to elevate trainees' job satisfaction and, consequently, their retention willingness. Specific recommendations include five points.

5.1 Compensation and Benefits

To address compensation and benefits, Hospitality Corp.X should first raise internship salaries from the current 1,800 RMB/month to 2,000 RMB/month, closing the gap with industry peers (e.g., Luxury Hospitality Group A at 2,100 RMB/month). To offset the increased labor costs, the hotel could moderately adjust accommodation fees (e.g., introducing a nominal 50 RMB/month dormitory charge) and utilities contributions (e.g., increasing from 20 RMB/month to 30 RMB/month), thereby alleviating the psychological disparity caused by salary inequity. Second, enriching employee benefits is critical: beyond existing holiday overtime pay, incentive-based perks such as post-internship education subsidies (e.g., 500 RMB/month for degree holders) could be introduced to boost retention willingness. Additionally, upgrading the staff canteen to a buffet format with diverse options (e.g., adding healthy meal stations and international cuisines) would enhance young trainees' daily living experience, aligning with their preferences for modern workplace amenities.

5.2 Work Content

Hospitality Corp.X can add some creative work tasks in addition to the daily work tasks of the trainees, such as letting the trainees participate in the hotel's wedding ceremony design, banquet scene layout, meeting process optimization and other tasks that need to think or put forward creativity, in order to stimulate their initiative and creativity, and at the same time can also provide them with a platform to show their knowledge and skills learned in school, enrich their work content and increase their sense of accomplishment. At the same time, it can also provide them with a platform to show their knowledge and skills learned in school, enrich their work content and increase their sense of accomplishment, and get rid of their stereotype that work is boring and tedious.

5.3 Career Development Perspective

While management trainees are provided with extensive rotational opportunities within the hotel, the absence of systematic career planning remains a structural deficiency. To address this, Hospitality Corp.X should implement a double master worker framework like, operational mentors from departmental units (e.g., front office, food & beverage) focus on skill-based coaching, while dedicated HR career consultants conduct quarterly developmental dialogues to align individual career aspirations with organizational talent strategies. A tiered career progression framework should be institutionalized, delineating clear benchmarks from the internship phase to supervisory roles (e.g., Intern → Team Leader → Department Supervisor), with each stage requiring competency validation through industry-recognized certifications such as the Golden Key Service Professional (hospitality service standards). This structure should be complemented by transparent promotion timelines (18-24 months for role transitions) and competency matrices specifying skill requirements at each tier (e.g., crisis resolution for team leaders, budget optimization for supervisors).

5.4 Psychological environment

As management trainees are essentially students transitioning into the workforce, their psychological resilience is generally weaker compared to full-time employees. In view of the mental pressure they suffer at work, Hospitality Corp.X can make targeted use of the lawn of the hotel, the gym and other places to organize some pressure-reducing activities, such as yoga classes, themed group building activities, candlelight concerts, book sharing sessions, etc., to relieve their mental pressure and enhance team cohesion. In addition, through the regular organization of symposiums between management and trainees, the establishment of the “General Manager Open Day”, the anonymous message board of WeChat, etc., so that the management can directly know their problems or demands, and then respond in a timely manner.

5.5 Organizational Management

The application of digital management tools can reduce operational costs and enhance efficiency in corporate organizational management. Hospitality Corp.X may utilize digital platforms such as Enterprise WeChat and DingTalk to optimize existing challenges, including streamlining requisition processes for guestroom department spare parts or low-value consumables, automating approval workflows for employee leave requests, shift adjustments, and temporary overtime work, thereby shortening procedural timelines. These tools also enable work hour verification for unplanned overtime, providing HR departments with auditable records for compensatory time allocation or subsidy disbursement. Furthermore, incorporating a “departmental management trainee retention rate” metric into KPI evaluations could incentivize organizational units to prioritize talent retention initiatives.

Conclusion

The reluctance of Hospitality Corp.X’s management trainees to transition into regular employees after post-internship, it fundamentally stems from a “demand-supply misalignment”. This problem means young employees’ aspirations for professional growth and value-driven work experiences remain unmet under the hotel’s existing human resource management framework. By systematically optimizing compensation and benefits (e.g., competitive salaries, education subsidies), career development pathways (e.g., dual-track advancement, mentor programs), job design (e.g., task rotation, autonomy enhancement), and organizational culture (e.g., transparent communication, psychological support), the hotel can achieve three synergistic outcomes: elevating trainees’ job satisfaction, improving post-internship retention rates, and ensuring grassroots team stability. This approach not only addresses immediate attrition risks but also strengthens service quality consistency, thereby reinforcing the Hospitality Corp.X’s brand identity as the “Conference Capital of Southwest China” through a motivated, skilled workforce capable of sustaining long-term competitiveness.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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