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# A Study on the Effect of Hotel Staff's Burnout on Retention Intention - Based on Social Support

Hui ZHANG<sup>1</sup>, Ming TANG<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

With changing social environment and fiercely distinct job competition, competitors in global hotel industry still increase in the bad overall economic conditions, fighting in existing red sea. However, it is gradually rejuvenating in past years. In the fierce industry competition, the retention and accumulation of human capital is an important indicator for the sustainable operation of enterprises as well as the winning key in future market competition. Effective promotion of employees' retention intention, especially the retention intention of talents, is the primary issue for enterprises and human resource departments. Aiming at employees in hotel industry in Quanzhou, Fujian Province, total 500 copies of questionnaire are distributed, and 362 valid copies are retrieved, with the retrieval rate 72%. According to the results, suggestions are proposed, expecting to help hotel industry effectively release employees' burnout, retain talents in hotel industry, strengthen hotel industry, and reinforce the organizational competitiveness of hotel industry.

*Keywords:* hotel industry, social support, burnout, retention intention, job satisfaction, career planning.

## Introduction

Along with changes in social environment and attacks of financial crises, distinct job competition becomes fierce. To satisfy customers' various demands, employees' pace of life becomes tight and rapid to enhance employees' workload and pressure. When facing distinct pressure, an individual could easily change the life and even appear burnout. Once burnout appears, successive effects would follow to result in emotional exhaustion, show the idea to leave workplace, and

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even affect the physical and mental health to cause diseases. Employees are important assets of an enterprise. An enterprise with happy employees could create the performance. How to create harmonious working atmosphere, enhance employees' morale, and further create high-efficiency productivity becomes the interesting issues for organizational researchers. In the fierce industry competition, the retention and accumulation of human capital is the primary indicator for the sustainable operation of enterprises as well as the winning key in future market competition. How to effectively enhance employees' retention intention, especially the retention intention of critical talents, is no doubt the most important issue for enterprises and human resource departments.

Hotel industry, as an important sub-industry of tourism and service industry, grows with the boom and development of economy in the business size and business model. The operation therefore requires long-term and precise planning. Competitors in global hotel industry are increasing even under bad overall economic conditions to fight in existing red sea. However, it is gradually rejuvenating in past years. Since the products and service in hotel industry cannot be protected by patent right, it is easily copied and imitated by other same businesses to result in homogeneous products in the market. Furthermore, due to constant changes in consumer needs and preference, hotel industry is facing the impact and pressure to continuously and innovatively create business opportunities in order to cope with consumers' changing consumption patterns and highly competitive environment in the market. A lot of technologies and experiences are passed down by people that talents are the most important asset for enterprises. How to retain talents becomes the guarantee of retaining competitiveness and having employees present positive benefits on the organization. Based on social support, the effect of hotel staff's burnout on retention intention is therefore discussed in this study, expecting to help hotel industry effectively release employees' burnout, retain talents in hotel industry, strengthen hotel industry, and reinforce the organizational competitiveness of hotel industry.

## Literature review

### *The relations between social support and burnout*

Tuna & Aslan (2018) pointed out social support as the pressure buffer mechanism to reduce individual pressure through others' support or the guarantee of social network or the resource exchange among two and more individuals to have acceptors perceive that the givers were strengthening the well-being or physical and mental health. Gerçeker (2018) regarded social support as the dependence among individuals or between individuals and groups. An individual, when facing pressure or challenge, could enhance the adaptability through social support. Yarbrough *et al.* (2017) mentioned that the generation of social support should

have organizational members believe in being concerned, respected, and agreed, perceive the existence value, and feel the belongingness to an individual with relative obligation or organizational communication network. Van Osch *et al.* (2018) indicated that social support stressed on the interaction among people which was related to individual interpersonal relationship and personality traits. Social support provided individuals with emotional, informational, and essential assistance and satisfied individual needs to release the pressure and help individuals reduce the physiological pressure, psychological pressure, and burnout. Berta *et al.* (2018) found out the less social support acquired, the more serious burnout and the more social support acquired, the less serious burnout. Saito *et al.* (2018) pointed out positive correlations between teachers' acquired administrative support and burnout. Dorociak *et al.* (2017) studied kindergarten teachers and considered that social support, especially administrative support and family support, could help individuals face pressure and reduce burnout. Mattioli *et al.* (2018) mentioned that social support provided positive prevention and moderation functions for people's pressure and burnout in life and allowed individuals feeling being emphasized and presenting value. It promoted individual self-esteem and safety, assisted individuals in resolving crises, showed interference and buffer effects when facing pressure, and could release burnout. According to above literatures, the following hypothesis is inferred.

H1: Social support presents negative relations with burnout.

### *The relations between burnout and retention intention*

Shafique *et al.* (2017) pointed out burnout as physiological, emotional, and psychological exhaustion to have people appear psychological weakness, helpless and hopeless feeling, emotional exhaustion, and negative self-concept and work attitude; it was caused by frequent or repeated psychological pressure and long-term nervousness. Wessels & Wood (2019) regarded burnout as working pressure and negative emotion caused by overload of ego role after an individual pursuing highly ideal goals and expected goals to enhance negative changes in individual physiology, psychology, behavior, and attitude and result in individual performance far away from original behaviors. Brouskeli *et al.* (2018) discussed the correlations between social affair staff's role conflict, burnout, organizational changes and retention intention. Taking Social Affairs Bureau, Tainan City Government, and social affair staff of the domestic violence prevention center and long term care management center as the research objects, it revealed significantly negative correlations between burnout and retention intention. Maxwell & Riley (2017) studied the effects of senior-junior relationship in accounting firms, organizational commitment, role pressure, and burnout on auditors retention intention and revealed remarkably negative correlations between auditors' organizational

commitment and the role pressure, burnout, and retention intention. In the study on the relationship between work-family conflict, burnout, and retention intention of female professionals in high-tech companies, Eltaybani *et al.* (2018) found out notably negative correlations between female professionals' burnout and retention intention, while emotional exhaustion and taunt attitude in burnout showed negative and significant effects on retention intention. In the research on the effect of family conflict, burnout, and job satisfaction on retention intention, Grant *et al.* (2019) proposed negative and remarkable effects of burnout on retention intention. From above literatures, the following hypothesis is inferred.

H2: Burnout shows negative relations with retention intention.

### *The relations between social support and retention intention*

Kelley *et al.* (2017) explained retention as remaining, keeping, and avoiding separation, while intention as the direction of mind. According to the definition, retention intention could be regarded as a worker's intention to continuously remain the current job. Wilcox & Lawson (2018) explained retention willingness, or retention intention, that willingness and intention generally revealed individual voluntary and agreeing attitude, and retention intention stood for an individual being willing to continuously stay in the current working unit. Fiorilli *et al.* (2017) regarded retention willingness and turnover intention as two sides of a body, where the difference lied in retention willingness concerning about remaining critical human capital in the organization and promoting organizational members' positive working behavior, e.g. organizational identification, performance, and organizational citizenship behavior. Ouellette *et al.* (2018) pointed out the importance of support from supervisors at work, friends, family, subordinates, and dependents in working environment. The research revealed that social support could slow down negative impact caused by pressure events and different events required distinct social support. Dimunova *et al.* (2018) discovered the positive and negative relationship of social support generally involving in company staff, teachers, police, military education instructors, and national army, including working pressure, organizational commitment, professional commitment, burnout, emotional intelligence, job characteristics, self-efficacy, and resilience. Skaalvik & Skaalvik (2017) indicated that being able to present negative correlations between perceived pressure and turnover intention revealed that the existence of social support might indirectly or directly enhance organizational members' retention intention due to buffering or reducing pressure on individuals to continuously retain in the organization. The following hypothesis is therefore inferred based on above literatures.

H3: Social support reveals positive relations with retention intention.

### *Operational definition*

*Social support.* Referring to Li *et al.* (2018), social support network is divided into instrumental support, emotional support, and informational support in this study: (1) *Instrumental support*: referring to help others solving problems by directly offering materials or specific service, e.g. money giving, household assistance, or dealing with difficult affairs for others; (2) *Emotional support*: including self-confidence, affirmation, empathy, concern, listening, positive encourage, and comfort to have people feel being respected; (3) *Informational support*: referring to help supported people distinguish and understand problems and assist in the changes, e.g. providing information, knowledge, advice, giving suggestions, and offering proper feedback.

*Burnout.* Referring to Chang *et al.* (2017), burnout is performed on dehumanization, personal accomplishment, and emotional exhaustion: (1) *Dehumanization*: referring to treat the served object with gradually cold or negative attitudes. Such loss of ambition and improper service attitude are related to emotional exhaustion; (2) *Personal accomplishment*: measuring personal job performance, presenting accomplishment on the performance at workplace, and perceiving interpersonal relationship. Such accomplishment perception would notably affect the quality of work; (3) *Emotional exhaustion*: referring to an individual feeling the loss of trust, concern, and interests after long-term engagement in high affection and not being able to apply emotional resources. In other words, the person subjectively considers the fatigue of contributing self and the psychological and emotional exhaustion.

*Retention Intention.* Referring to Wong *et al.* (2017), Retention Intention contains three dimensions in this study: (1) *Organizational identification*: Organizational identification refers to organizational members' behaviors and concepts presenting consistency to the joined organization; (2) *Job satisfaction*: The psychological state of an individual showing benign perception of the work in the working process in the organization; (3) *Career planning*: Comprehensive analyses and measurement of individual interests, favor, ability, and features combining with time features and confirming the best occupational goal, according to personal occupational tendency, to make effective arrangement for fulfilling the goal.

## **Methodology**

### *Conceptual structure of this study*

Summing up above literatures, the conceptual structure of this study is drawn (*Figure 1*) to discuss the relationship among social support, burnout, and retention intention.

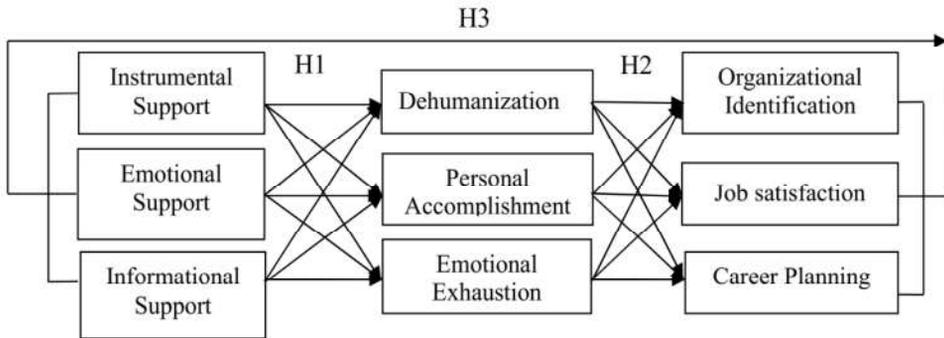


Figure 1. Conceptual Structure

### Research sample and object

Quanzhou, Fujian Province, with long history, is the first historical and cultural city and the city of East Asia culture first designated by State Council as well as the beginning of “ocean silk road” recognized by United Nations. With the cultivation in more than a decade, the hotel brands in Quanzhou win good evaluation by domestic and international visitors to become an important window for the openness to economy and trade as well as science and culture exchange. Hotels in Quanzhou become the pearl to light up Quanzhou. Aiming at employees in hotel industry in Quanzhou, Fujian Province, total 500 copies of questionnaire are distributed and 362 valid copies are retrieved, with the retrieval rate 72%.

## Results and discussion

LISREL (linear structural relation) model combines factor analysis and path analysis in traditional statistics and adds simultaneous equations in econometrics. It could simultaneously calculate multiple factors and multiple causal paths. The model fit could be evaluated from preliminary fit criteria; overall model fit, and fit of internal structure of model.

The preliminary fit, internal fit, and overall fit of the model are explained as below. From *Table 1*, three dimensions of social support (instrumental support, emotional support, informational support) could significantly explain social support ( $t > 1.96$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), three dimensions of burnout (dehumanization, personal accomplishment, emotional exhaustion) could remarkably explain burnout ( $t > 1.96$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and three dimensions of retention intention (organizational identification, job satisfaction, career planning) could notably explain retention intention ( $t > 1.96$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Apparently, the overall model presents good preliminary fit.

Table 1. Preliminary fit analysis

Evaluation Item		parameter/evaluation standard	result	t
preliminary fit	Social Support	Instrumental Support	0.675	8.19*
	Emotional Support	0.694	9.86*	
	Informational Support	0.702	10.38**	
	Burnout	Dehumanization	0.683	9.22*
	Personal Accomplishment	0.724	11.46**	
	Emotional Exhaustion	0.716	10.79**	
	Retention Intention	Organizational Identification	0.751	14.33**
	Job Satisfaction	0.736	12.57**	
	Career Planning	0.744	13.18**	

Note: \* stands for  $p < 0.05$ , \*\* for  $p < 0.01$

From Table 2, regarding internal fit, social support shows positive and significant correlations with burnout (0.851,  $p < 0.01$ ), burnout reveals positive and remarkable correlations with retention intention (0.824,  $p < 0.01$ ), and social support also appears positive and notable correlations with retention intention (0.836,  $p < 0.01$ ) that H1, H2, and H3 are supported.

Table 2. Internal fit analysis

Evaluation Item		parameter/evaluation standard	result	t
Internal fit	Social Support → Burnout		-0.847	26.15**
	Burnout → Retention Intention		-0.856	34.13**
	Social Support → Retention Intention		0.878	38.72**

Note: \* stands for  $p < 0.05$ , \*\* for  $p < 0.01$

From Table 3, the overall model fit standards  $\chi^2/Df=1.386$ , smaller than the standard 3, and  $RMR=0.003$  reveal proper results of  $\chi^2/Df$  and  $RMR$ . Chi-square is sensitive to sample size that it is not suitable for directly judging the fit. The overall model fit standards  $GFI=0.982$  and  $AGFI=0.925$  are higher than the standard 0.9 (the closer  $GFI$  and  $AGFI$  to 1 showing the better model fit) that this model presents good fit.

Table 3. Overall linear structural model analysis

evaluation item	parameter/evaluation standard	result
overall fit	$\chi^2/Df$	1.577
	GFI	0.964
	AGFI	0.903
	RMR	0.005

Figure 2 shows the overall research result. The path coefficients of the research variables achieve the significance, revealing that such path coefficients reach convergent validity, conforming to the basic requirement for the analysis model. The research model fit is therefore verified, i.e. the research model conforming to the theory and presenting validity.

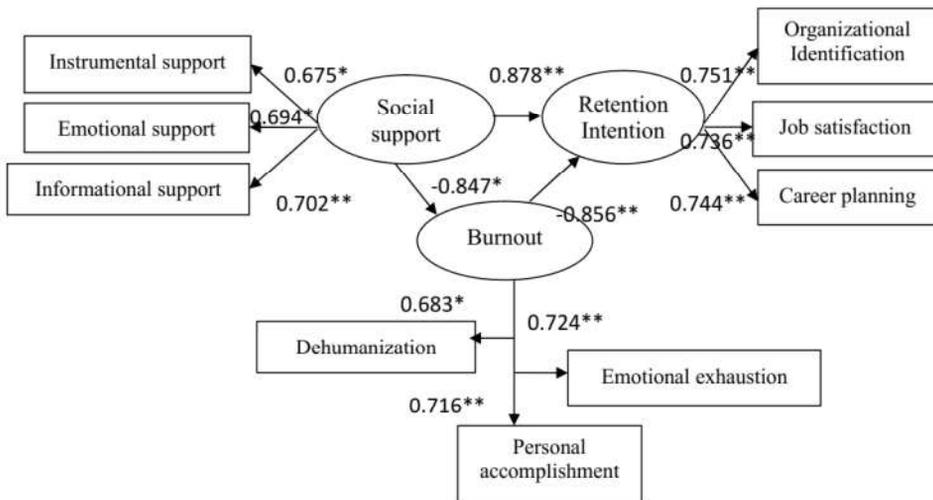


Figure 2. Path Analysis

## Conclusion

The research results reveal that burnout would reduce retention willingness of hotel employees with higher social support. For this reason, hotel industry should reinforce the provision of pressure release and relax channels for employees. In addition to pressure release and concern training, outdoor or leisure activities should be increased for employees precipitating the busy and chaotic thoughts and being able to have temporary rest; it would positively slow down burnout. Moreover, the basic concept of and emphasis on social support in working environment should be constructed; work social support network, family social

support network, and employees' individual support network should be integrated and applied to comprehensively provide support. It could more effectively develop the effect of social support system on pressure, release burnout perception, and further promote healthy physical and mental conditions and retention willingness of employees in hotel industry. Furthermore, counseling, encouragement, comfort, participation, and various support and assistance for employees should be reinforced to strengthen the social support and timely give advice and concern so that they would concentrate on the work without any worries. Besides, employees in hotel industry should cultivate the positive and healthy mind; positively seek for good and healthy social support systems, from supervisors, colleagues, and relatives & friends, so as to acquire such social support when facing pressure to further release burnout.

### *Recommendations*

From the research results and findings, the following practical suggestions are proposed in this study.

- 1) Hotel industry is suggested to stress on employees' work by taking specific measures, e.g. enriching equipment, increasing budgets, and offering encouragement for the actual task outcome. It is believed that it could enhance job morale of employees in hotel industry and have them feel the work being affirmed. What is more, supervisors' affirmation to employees is also important. It is therefore suggested that hotel industry should give more affirmation to employees, e.g. supervisors being familiar with professional knowledge of counseling, often offering employees with support and encouragement, participating in relevant meetings, and inviting employees to participate in hotel industry related meetings.
- 2) Colleague support in hotel industry could slow down the effect of burnout and the activity among employees could cultivate the affection among colleagues to enhance effective communication channels for mutual support and assistance among colleagues, enhance the coherence of work team, learn professional knowledge to enhance self-growth, and mutual support and encourage through affection. It allows employees presenting senses of belongingness and identification and positively enhancing the business promotion. For this reason, it is important that hotel industry could hold employee activities and provide proper places, activities, and measures for leisure activity.
- 3) Employees in hotel industry should build personal support network so that they have proper support systems to face and solve problems in working pressure and burnout. Moreover, employees in hotel industry should properly affirm the work ability and work outcome to reduce burnout and encourage themselves at work. Besides, they should learn to set practicable goals, from the easiest beginning. It allows them easily make success to give themselves more successful experiences.

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