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**Key Factors Influencing Turnover and Retention Strategies in Budapest  
Hotels Front Offices. A Study of Selected Marriott Hotels.**

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(signature)

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# 1 Introduction

The hotel industry plays a central role in the global tourism sector. They provide the needs of people who are away from their usual residences and looking for temporary places to stay at. Hotels are essential to national infrastructure, providing spaces for business, events, and leisure, and by offering these services, hotels significantly contribute to economic output and social welfare, fostering prosperity in countries and communities (Medlik & Ingram, 2000, p. 4). While the hotel industry often appears glamorous and exciting from the outside, the reality for many hotel employees, especially those in front office positions, can be quite challenging. The physical and mental demands of the job, coupled with factors such as irregular work hours and high-pressure situations, can lead to significant stress and burnout.

As a result, the hotel industry faces a persistent issue of staff loss or with another term employee turnover, with team members often seeking opportunities in other sectors. This “turnover” not only disrupts hotel operations but also impacts the quality of service provided to guests. Understanding the key factors that influence staff loss is crucial for developing effective retention strategies and maintaining a stable, skilled workforce.

This research aims to delve deep into the causes of turnover specifically within hotel front office departments. By identifying these factors, we can pave the way for targeted interventions and policies that enhance job satisfaction, improve working conditions, and ultimately reduce turnover rates. The findings of this study will be invaluable for hotel managers and industry leaders in their efforts to create a more sustainable and fulfilling work environment for their employees." I acknowledge the extensive existing literature and inherent complexity in developing comprehensive solutions to overcome. However, this research seeks to contribute novel insights and practices to reduce turnover rates and enhance workforce stability in the hotel industry.

Additionally, I bring over two years of personal experience working in a hotel Front office department. This experience provides valuable insights from the daily operation, challenges, and realities faced by the front office staff, enriching the perspective of this study and allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the factors influencing turnover in this specific sector of the hotel industry.

## 2 Problem Definition

Frequent turnover in the hotel industry presents major difficulties in delivering outstanding service and preserving a unified work environment, especially in front-office roles where consistent staffing is vital for guest satisfaction and smooth operations. The data from 2021 indicates that the leisure and hospitality industry experienced a turnover rate of 85%—significantly higher than the 47% average across all industries (Hansen, 2025).

This concerning difference sheds light on the particular challenges the hospitality industry faces in keeping skilled staff. The ongoing turnover of employees impacts the entire team, disrupting established dynamics and cohesion, while also diminishing institutional knowledge and lowering service quality standards. The process of getting accustomed to new team members and training replacements is labor-intensive and often detracts from efforts to retain and promote existing employees, leading to a cycle that can be challenging to escape.

To tackle these challenges, a more strategic approach to hiring is essential. By performing in-depth analyses of employee profiles and personality traits, hotels can make better-informed choices in selecting candidates who align well with industry demands. This focused strategy has the potential to significantly lower turnover rates and foster a more stable workforce. Utilizing advanced personality assessments and behavioral interviews can assist in identifying candidates whose attributes correspond with successful long-term employees in the hospitality field. Moreover, taking into account aspects such as prior industry experience, career goals, and flexibility with varying work schedules can enhance hiring outcomes.

Additionally, cultivating a workplace that prioritizes employee retention is crucial for lasting success organizations. This requires the implementation of holistic retention strategies aimed at understanding and fulfilling the needs of valued staff members. Such strategies could include opportunities for career advancement, attractive compensation packages, and initiatives that promote work-life balance. Hotels should also think about establishing mentorship programs, outlining clear paths for career growth, and nurturing a supportive workplace culture that acknowledges and rewards employee contributions. Regular feedback sessions and employee satisfaction surveys can help management stay connected to staff needs and concerns, allowing for timely modifications to retention strategies.

## **2.1 Aim of the research**

By thoroughly examining a range of industry factors, such as front office operations, turnover culture, employee profiles, and retention tactics, this study seeks to address significant hotel turnover issues. In particular, the study will look at properties in the Marriott Hotel Chain portfolio (Autograph Collection, The Ritz Carlton, W Budapest, Marriott, Matild Palace, and Dorothy Hotel), evaluating their operational and human resource aspects.

The study uses a thorough analysis to find practical solutions that can assist hotels in developing and retaining a knowledgeable, content, and devoted workforce. The relationship between employee satisfaction, retention rates, and service quality will be the main focus of this investigation. It will also look at how different management practices affect these variables. The study will look at the direct and indirect costs of employee turnover, such as hiring costs, training expenditures, and possible effects on visitor satisfaction.

The brand's status as the biggest hotel chain in the world, its varied portfolio of properties, and my vast professional experience working at Marriott properties all played a role in my decision to concentrate on Marriott Hotels. Understanding the company's organizational culture, operational processes, and daily challenges is made possible by this insider perspective. A deeper analysis of workplace dynamics and more nuanced and thorough staff interviews are made possible by this familiarity.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods will be used in the research methodology, which will include employee surveys, management interviews that are structured, and an examination of past turnover data. Finding patterns, trends, and connections between the different elements influencing job satisfaction and employee retention will be made easier with the use of this mixed-method approach.

Through investigating the experiences of workers in this well-known brand, the study seeks to create workable and flexible solutions that can help hotels develop and retain a knowledgeable, contented, and devoted workforce. The results could result in increased operational effectiveness, better service quality, and long-term success in the cutthroat hotel industry. They will also advance academic knowledge and practical application in the field.

## **2.2 Research questions**

The questions that follow have been developed to direct the examination of the reasons behind employee attrition and the efficacy of retention tactics in the front desk divisions of Budapest Marriott hotels. The study's overall goal is to investigate the factors that affect employee attrition in upscale hospitality environments and to find solutions that can improve long-term engagement and employee satisfaction. These questions are in line with that goal.

The researcher's practical experience with the Marriott brand and early reviews of the literature on workforce dynamics in the hospitality industry served as the foundation for the development of the research questions. They seek to identify the deeper organizational and behavioral elements that affect employee retention in addition to the more obvious reasons for turnover.

This paper will achieve its objectives by answering the following questions:

1. What are the main causes for turnover in Budapest's five-star Marriott hotels?
2. How effectively are the retention strategies implemented?
3. Who are the right fits for Front Office Departments based on skills, qualifications, and personality traits?

The interview guide, survey structure, and thematic analysis have all been influenced by these research questions. They also influence how the results are presented in Chapter 5, where each of the main themes relates to at least one of the previously mentioned central questions.

### **3 Background of the Study**

This chapter provides a comprehensive theoretical foundation for understanding the key concepts and variables essential to this research investigation. The literature review is structured into several interconnected sections that build upon each other to create a holistic understanding of the research topic. It begins with a detailed examination of the front office department's pivotal role within the hotel industry. This section explores the various functions, responsibilities, and operational dynamics that make the front office a crucial touchpoint for guest satisfaction and hotel success. Special attention is given to the unique challenges and demands faced by front office staff in delivering exceptional service. Following this, the review delves into an in-depth analysis of turnover culture in the hospitality industry. This section examines existing research on turnover patterns, their underlying causes, and their impact on hotel operations. It includes both quantitative data on turnover rates and qualitative insights into the factors that contribute to employee departures.

Subsequently, the chapter explores employee profiles in the hospitality sector and evaluates various retention strategies, and their implications documented in existing research. The final subchapter presents a comprehensive summary of current turnover challenges facing the hotel industry and explores potential solutions based on empirical evidence and industry best practices. This section bridges the gap between theoretical understanding and practical application, setting the stage for the research methodology that follows.

Throughout the chapter, findings from academic literature, and case studies are synthesized to establish a robust theoretical framework that underpins the research objectives. This multi-faceted review of literature not only demonstrates the breadth and depth of existing knowledge but also identifies gaps that this research aims to address.

#### **3.1 Front Office Operations**

Usually, front office is referred as the nerve center of hotels. The front office is typically regarded as the central hub of hotels, where guests are welcomed upon arrival, registered, and assigned accommodations (O'Fallon & Rutherford, 2007). As O'Fallon and Rutherford (2007) emphasize, it functions as the central hub where guests are welcomed, registered, and assigned their accommodations. The department's scope extends beyond the front desk, incorporating telephone

operators, guest communication roles, and bell staff who handle luggage and vehicle services. This comprehensive approach ensures a seamless guest experience from arrival to departure.

Front-line hotel employees have an essential role in creating positive customer experiences, which are key factors of customer satisfaction and appraisal of service quality (Wen, et al., 2020). Their research demonstrates that the quality of these interactions can significantly influence guest loyalty and repeat business. According to Sayin and Karaman (2019, p. 118), recognizing the financial impact of efficient communication on productivity, front office managers in the study concurred that they need to take proactive measures to manage the guest communication process. All 35 front desk managers came to the conclusion that poor communication has a detrimental impact on output, highlighting how important effective front desk communication is to hotel success (2019, p. 188). The front office position is particularly demanding, with strong verbal communication skills being crucial for success (Hai-yan & Baum, 2006). A basic front office structure might be the front office manager, who is the most senior figure in the department, assistant to the FO (front office) manager, with agents, concierge staff, night auditors and some hotels might have guest relation agents for managing guest services (Barten, 2023). This hierarchical structure ensures proper delegation of responsibilities and maintains operational efficiency. The presence of specialized roles like night auditors and guest relation agents demonstrates the department's commitment to providing round-the-clock service and personalized attention to guests.

Young, female employees with a moderate level of general or vocational education and a significant amount of hotel experience make up the majority of front desk staff in Northern Ireland's hotels (Baum & Devine, 2005). According to this profile, front office operations depend on a workforce that is comparatively younger, which emphasizes the necessity of intensive on-the-job training to fulfill the requirements of the position.

However, these roles come with significant challenges. Wirtz and Jerger (2016) point out that frontline positions often involve role conflicts and emotional labor, requiring staff to manage their own emotions while handling diverse guest personalities and expectations. O'Fallon and Rutherford (2007) note that the front office's position as the hotel's hub makes it particularly vulnerable to guest complaints, serving as the primary point for problem resolution.

As Sayin and Karaman (2019, p. 188) describe, all these make the front office a communication-oriented department. According to O'Fallon and Rutherford (2007) further explanation in order to manage complaints becomes one of the most challenging aspects for front office staff,

particularly given the high frequency and sometimes intense nature of guest expectations and grievances. This requires continuous training in conflict resolution, stress management, and customer service excellence to maintain the high standards expected in modern hospitality.

As Hai-yan and Baum (2006) indicate that, ongoing training and continuous professional development are crucial for enhancing and sustaining the skills of front office staff. Developing competencies in this area requires a structured and persistent approach to learning. For instance, although China has invested significantly in pre-employment and initial onboarding training programs, there seems to be a significant gap in the focus and execution of ongoing on-the-job training initiatives (Hai-yan & Baum, 2006). This disparity between preparation before employment and continuous skill development during active work creates an opportunity to enhance staff capabilities throughout their careers.

### **3.2 Turnover culture**

The hospitality sector is often marked by low wages, limited job stability, high employee turnover, and frequently inconsistent or problematic management practices (Deery & Shaw, 1999, p. 387). Employee turnover refers to the movement of individuals within the labor market, including transitions between organizations, job roles, occupational categories, and periods of employment and unemployment (Abbasi & Hollman, 2000).

Sayın and Karaman (2019) point out that front desk employees' communication skills are crucial in labor-intensive hotels, and deficiencies in this area can lower guest satisfaction. This does not specifically address turnover, but it does highlight a culture in which problems in the front office, such as poor communication, can lead to employee stress and turnover if left unchecked (since staff frustration may increase due to productivity losses and guest complaints).

Issues like inadequate and comparatively low wages are widespread challenges in the global hotel industry, contributing significantly to employees' intentions to leave their jobs (Haldoraia, et al., 2019, p. 47). This research specifically examines these challenges within the five-star hotel sector in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, using the Pull-Push-Mooring (PPM) framework to analyze turnover intentions in the short, medium, and long term. By surveying 308 hotel employees, the study identifies key push factors (e.g., work overload, career progression issues, interpersonal tension, emotional labor, and work-life conflict), pull factors (e.g., community fit, social status, and travel opportunities), and a mooring factor (personal life involvement) that influence employees'

decisions to stay or leave. The findings provide valuable insights for hospitality HR managers to develop targeted retention strategies, recognizing that turnover is driven by both workplace conditions and external social factors.

On top of that few employees have a clear career focus on the front office area, despite the study observing a "wide range of employees with diverse backgrounds" in the front office (Baum & Devine, 2005). Because people do not see a long-term path in front office positions and frequently leave for other opportunities, this lack of career focus leads to higher turnover.

Employee turnover can be categorized into voluntary and involuntary types. Voluntary turnover occurs when an employee makes the decision to leave the organization on their own, often due to dissatisfaction, better opportunities, or personal reasons. In contrast, involuntary turnover refers to situations where the organization initiates the departure, typically due to poor performance, restructuring, or failure to meet company standards (Hongvichit, 2015).

The investigations of Deery and Shaw (1999) indicate that the existence of a turnover culture is closely linked to insufficient managerial and organizational support, which in turn heightens employee stress levels and contributes to increased intentions to leave the organization. Employee turnover poses a significant challenge for businesses, as it can affect the overall quality of goods and services while also increasing operational costs related to recruiting, training, and integrating new staff members into the organization (Tiwari, 2015). Especially, turnover has a negative impact on the effectiveness of the learning process (Abo-Murad & AL-Khrabsheh, 2019, p. 11).

The study of Micheal and Fotiadis (2022, p. 42) showed two main types of leaving reasons were related to organisation and personal factors. Haldoraia's (2019, p. 53) findings prove that the 24/7 nature of the hotel industry creates a stressful environment and interpersonal conflicts and they become the main contributors to turnover intention. They also point out the importance of paying attention to demeanor and communication styles of candidates on deciding whether they will be a good fit or not.

### **3.3 Employee Traits and Qualifications**

Research has consistently shown that an employee's personality traits play a crucial role in determining their job performance and success in the workplace. These individual characteristics and behavioral tendencies can significantly influence how employees interact with customers, handle stress, and adapt to changing situations - making personality assessment an invaluable tool

for predicting job performance, particularly in service-oriented roles (Awadh & Ismail, 2012, p. 109). In order to be able to assess what sort of staff are needed in hotel management it is necessary to be dedicated to the analysis of the personality of each employee (Jovičić, et al., 2011, p. 120). Employee personalities are important in hotel management because they influence individual behavior, productivity, and work happiness, thus it is critical to match staff attributes with their unique job needs. Jovičić and others (2011) state that extroversion, conscientiousness, pleasantness, openness to new experiences, and negative affectivity are the five personality traits that are essential for the hospitality industry.

Front-line staff must exhibit professionalism in appearance, voice, and communication style tone (Tsaour & Tang, 2013). Emotional intelligence is a crucial personality dimension in hotel management that enables employees to understand guests' feelings and maintain successful employee-guest relationships (Jovičić, et al., 2011, p. 130). This intelligence comprises two key components: self-management for personal emotional control and cooperation with others for effective team and guest interactions. While both are important, Jovičić and others (2011, p. 130) emphasize that interpersonal skills take precedence in hospitality, though self-control remains fundamental for successful guest interactions. In addition to being necessary for the position, front desk staff members must be affable and skilled communicators. These qualities affect customer satisfaction and employee well-being (Sayin & Karaman, 2019, p. 187).

Referenced in Bello as supporting evidence that extraversion predicts job performance in hospitality-like settings (2021).

The review found that some factors can act as obstacles to work retention for instance, high stress or low support can lead to absenteeism or resignation. However, addressing these psychosocial obstacles (through better support, stress management, etc.) has beneficial effects, reducing pain, disability, and sick leave (Waddell & Burton, 2006, p. 24). Importantly, there is no proof that most people's long-term health is negatively impacted by their jobs; on the contrary, there are numerous advantages to work for social and general well-being. This suggests that the typical employee is unlikely to experience burnout or illness from a well-run job with respectable working conditions. Burnout typically occurs when workplace stress is not managed, not because work is intrinsically harmful. This research backs up the notion that hotels should prioritize raising the quality of their jobs since doing so will improve wellbeing and lower burnout, keeping staff members happy and productive.

The research conducted by Kim et al. (2011) employed factor analysis on various competency-related items and identified seven key domains of competency. These domains are: practical competency, adaptability to the work environment, the ability to make progress in one's career, interpersonal skills, active involvement in social events, flexibility in time management, and proficiency in foreign languages alongside work-related learning. Furthermore, the findings suggest that hotel businesses can significantly enhance both productivity and employee performance through effective competency management. When employees engage in self-assessment and identify any gaps in their competencies or qualifications, they are presented with several options for improvement. They can choose to address these deficiencies by enrolling in specialized training programs designed to bolster their skills or, alternatively, they may opt to transfer to different departments where their interests and competencies are a better fit. This proactive approach not only helps individuals develop their potential but also aligns their skills with the needs of the organization, ultimately contributing to a more productive workplace (Kim, et al., 2011, p. 15). By focusing on these competency domains, organizations can create targeted development plans that foster a culture of continuous learning and adaptation, ensuring that both employees and the business can thrive in an ever-evolving market..

### **3.3.1 Employee Well-Being and Burnout**

Employee well-being has become a key priority for organizations and social groups, as adults spend roughly two-thirds of their lives in the workplace, significantly impacting both their personal lives and society at large (Jayasinghe, 2017). The modern work environment has changed considerably, as companies have come to understand that employee happiness and well-being are crucial elements for achieving lasting business success, rather than just optional perks.

Warden and Burton (2006) consider employee well-being generally to be subjective, multi element state that covers physical, social, material, emotional and developmental activity dimensions. This comprehensive approach to employee wellness demonstrates a greater insight into the fundamental needs of individuals in the workplace. The physical aspect includes considerations for health and safety, the design of ergonomic workspaces, and chances for physical activity. The social component pertains to relationships among colleagues, team dynamics, and fostering a sense of belonging within the organization. Material well-being refers to compensation, benefits, and financial stability, while emotional well-being involves mental health, stress management, and

achieving a work-life balance. The developmental aspect emphasizes career advancement, skill development, and opportunities for personal growth.

Gaining insight into the dynamics of employee well-being is essential for identifying the various factors and workplace conditions that influence individuals' ability to perform effectively in the workplace (Singh & Gautam, 2023). Grasping this concept is especially important in high-pressure settings where staff turnover can greatly affect a company's performance. Studies indicate that organizations that prioritize employee well-being generally see lower absenteeism rates, enhanced productivity, and better customer service quality.

Companies that invest heavily in recruitment, service quality, and customer satisfaction are aware of that employee well-being is crucial for achieving these business objectives (Harter, et al., 2002). Employee well-being can be classified into three main categories: physical, psychological, and social well-being (Adam M. Grant, et al., 2007).

Psychological well-being encompasses mental state, job satisfaction, and overall life satisfaction. As described by Cartwright and Cooper (2001) it consists of two key aspects: hedonic well-being (subjective happiness and positive emotions) and eudaimonic well-being (purpose and meaning in life).

Keyes (2000), in his work introduced social well-being as the assessment of one's societal functioning, comprising five dimensions: social integration, acceptance, contribution, coherence, and actualization. Maslow's hierarchy of needs emphasizes social well-being's importance, placing social needs above physiological and safety needs, highlighting the fundamental human desire for belonging and connection.

According to McCloughen and colleagues (2012), physical well-being relates to physical and mental health. It significantly impacts employee productivity and employment status.

Employee burnout occurs when employees are physically, emotionally, and/or mentally exhausted (Hills, 2019). Burnout can be considered as a long-standing stress reaction of employee that is caused by the continuous exposure to job stress (Jayasinghe, 2017). Burnout's impact on worker well-being is typically explained through the exhaustion of personal resources, which subsequently leads to deterioration in emotional, mental, physical, and behavioral functioning as Lizano (2015) explains.

### **3.3.2 Employee Motivation**

Employee motivation serves as a powerful driving force that not only propels individuals to excel in their roles but also helps organizations achieve their strategic objectives. In the hospitality industry, motivated employees are more likely to deliver exceptional service, maintain positive attitudes during challenging situations, and contribute to the overall success of the establishment. This internal drive shapes how employees approach their daily tasks, interact with guests, and collaborate with colleagues (Shahzadi, et al., 2014). Research by the same authors shows that employee motivation is crucial for organizational success as it enables optimal utilization of human resources. The study found a strong relationship between both intrinsic (e.g., training, challenging work, job security) and extrinsic (e.g., salary, recognition) motivational factors and employee retention (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). Employees are more likely to stay when they feel motivated by development opportunities, meaningful work, and fair rewards. A failure to address these motivational variables often results in high turnover rates, especially when employees feel undervalued or unsupported.

Employee motivation stands as a cornerstone of organizational success, particularly in the hospitality industry. When employees are effectively motivated, it generates a cascade of positive outcomes including increased productivity, reduced operational costs, and enhanced overall efficiency through their heightened willingness to work effectively. This motivation-performance relationship has been extensively documented in hospitality research, showing direct correlations between employee motivation levels and service quality metrics.

The study done by Kingir and Mesci (2010) reveals that most hotel employees lack formal motivation training, indicating a significant gap in employee development. This finding is particularly concerning given the service-intensive nature of the hotel industry, where employee engagement directly impacts guest satisfaction. Their research further demonstrates that material rewards are valued more highly than psychological rewards among hotel staff, suggesting that many employees' basic needs are not yet fully met which is a crucial insight for developing effective retention strategies.

These findings align with both Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, suggesting that hotels must address both basic needs and motivators such as growth needs to create a comprehensive motivation strategy. The emphasis on material rewards over psychological ones indicates that many hotels are still struggling to meet employees' fundamental needs, which must

be addressed before higher-level motivational strategies can be effective. Furthermore, the study highlights the interconnected nature of motivation, job satisfaction, and turnover rates. When employees feel their basic needs are met through fair compensation and reasonable working conditions, they are more likely to remain with their employer and invest in their professional development. This, in turn, leads to improved service quality and guest satisfaction, creating a positive feedback loop that benefits both the organization and its employees.

### **3.4 Retention strategies**

Retention strategy would be defined as an organization's systematic approach to establishing and cultivating a working environment encourages current workers to stay with the business (Shrestha, 2019). Knowledge about turnover predictors has led to hospitality literature identifying effective strategies for employee retention (Michael & Fotiadis, 2022, p. 40). Some hoteliers have undertaken the development of solid retention strategies, such as HRM strategies, internal marketing strategies, and knowledge retention strategies (Yang, et al., 2012, p. 839). Yang and others (2012) mention that the former two strategies serve to enhance employee job satisfaction while the third strategy could reduce the loss of organizational knowledge due to employee turnover. The reason some hotels neglect application of retention strategies is due to accepting the turnover notion as a part of natural hotel operations. Employee retention inside a business is an important factor in determining an organization's success (Sepahvand & Khodashahri, 2021). Employees are much less likely to quit if they are proud to work for their hotel and see the future there (Choi, 2007). This relates to motivation in terms of identifying with the mission and values of the organization, which is a strong retention factor. By acknowledging staff members' contributions and outlining career paths, hotels can promote this.

The established correlation between low qualifications and increased turnover highlights another strategy as Vetráková (2019) states. Hotels should think about funding the upskilling and training of less educated staff members. A hotel can enhance service quality and increase employee retention by offering education opportunities or clear career progression to entry-level staff (such as front desk assistants) as the roles become more rewarding and skilled. In essence, a high-turnover position can be made more stable by using training to transform "low-skill" jobs into skilled roles.

A study demonstrates that reward systems are fundamental to employee retention in the hotel industry, with practices like fair compensation, performance bonuses, competitive salaries, and extended leave benefits playing crucial roles in keeping staff engaged and satisfied (Yeswa & Ombui, 2019). It is also clear that managers sometimes encourage employee loyalty in ways that are self-serving, asking employees to make sacrifices for the organization without offering much in return. On the other hand, some argue that loyalty can also be seen as mutually beneficial, with employees choosing to remain loyal because it brings them rewards or advantages (Faldetta, et al., 2013).

The findings from Ghani and others' (2022, p. 7) study suggest that the retention rate in the hospitality industry is highly contingent on employees' level of satisfaction, which is composed of four factors: sustainable and positive work environment, sustainable growth opportunities, sustainable and effective communication, and sustainable and effective recruitment and selection.

### 3.5 Challenges and Solutions

The unique challenges exist in the hotel industry including demanding work schedules, poor management, internal communication, limited compensations, and restricted or uncertain career advancement opportunities. One of the main operational challenges in front offices is communication. Front office managers recommended that management take proactive measures to detect and address communication breakdowns as a solution (Sayin & Karaman, 2019, p. 188). Hotels can increase productivity and avoid the negative effects (such as employee burnout or turnover) that result from unresolved communication issues by doing this, for instance, by holding regular briefings, holding feedback sessions, and addressing language barriers.



**Figure 1 Challenges of Employment in Hotel Industry**

(Islam & Assiri, 2019, p. 549)

Lack of communication amongst senior, middle management and line staff leaves the employee disgruntled (Islam & Assiri, 2019). Research shows that retaining employees in the hospitality sector is challenging due to fluctuations in demand and job-hopping by a number of employees from time to time (Faldetta & Provenzano, 2013). Internal communication influences how employees perceive your company, which in turn influences their engagement (Parker, 2021). Organisations are interested in achieving high levels of employee engagement because there seem

to be clear links with business profitability, customer service levels, productivity, and innovation in the workplace (Yeomans & FitzPatrick, 2017).

Islam and Assiri (2019, pp. 549-550) state a few challenges that employment in hotel industry experiences in Saudi Arabia such as:

- Work life balance
- Rude and Stern behaviour
- No performance appraisal
- Less Compensation
- No Flexibility

In addition to these challenges the role of stress factor which is followed by burnout in its turn. This theory was introduced by Kahn and others (Kahn, et al., 1965), additionally this perspective that role stress emerges from communication between role senders and receivers, affected by organizational, environmental, and personal factors has been supported by the study of Wen and other researchers (2020).

Employees in the hotel sector frequently leave for rival establishments in search of a marginally better salary or position. As a solution putting an emphasis on organizational commitment and the caliber of internal relationships. Choi (2007) discovered that the influence of other variables is mediated by elements such as organizational commitment and relationship quality (management trust). Therefore, a hotel that has developed strong loyalty and treated its staff well can retain employees even if competitors offer lures. Addressing the issue of turnover from the inside out, the best defense against the lure of external job offers is essentially to create an engaged workforce that feels valued.

A complete elimination of turnover isn't realistic and obviously, saying there is a solution to turnover would be a massive mislead. However, turnover mitigation or turnover reduction efforts might be the correct way of referring as. Adopting effective strategies can significantly decrease its rate and minimize its negative impacts. My practical observations are in line with findings from the academic literature. For example, Stahl (1971) argues that organizations should move beyond viewing turnover as an unavoidable part of operations. Similarly, based on my own experience in the hotel industry, I have observed that many hotels passively accept high turnover rather than actively investing in solutions. Both perspectives suggest the need for proactive and comprehensive retention strategies to reduce employee departures and improve operational

continuity. These should include proper HRM practices and knowledge retention initiatives. Second, hiring practices should prioritize candidates with strong emotional intelligence and the right personality traits for hospitality work (Jovičić, et al., 2011). Finally, hotels need to create supportive work environments with competitive compensation, clear career paths, and better work-life balance to maintain a stable, skilled workforce. Employees put more effort into their tasks when they know they will receive a reward, as the motivation for task accomplishment is influenced by the type or value of the reward they receive (Ghani, et al., 2022)

## **4 Research Methodology**

As reported by Saunders et al. (2018) research methodology involves collecting data and selecting the appropriate method of analysing that data to answer the research question (p. 115).

The subsequent subchapters examine in more detail the qualitative methods that this research employed, specifically focusing on how it implemented semi-structured interviews and also surveys as primary tools that were used to collect data. We chose these methods with care so that they could provide thorough understandings into the research objectives while they could allow structured responses and flexible exploration of emerging themes.

A thorough justification shall be presented in the following subchapter for the selection of these particular research instruments as well as special emphasis on the choice of semi-structured interviews together with the complementary mini survey approach. This explanation will show how these methods align with the study's research targets and theoretical framework.

The methodology section will discuss in detail the research design and include all important elements of the study. This details the particular sampling methodology, specific participant selection criteria, detailed interview protocols, thorough survey design considerations, and appropriate data collection procedures. Furthermore, it does employ a thorough analytical framework so as to interpret all of the gathered data.

### **4.1 Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research seems to be the best method for this study because employers' and employees' views or experiences stand at the core of the issue that is raised. Basically, it is a practice of collecting non-numerical data. These have consisted of texts, voice records, even footage, etc. The key idea behind qualitative research is to learn about the problem or issue from participants and to address the research to obtain that information (Creswell, 2013). According to Creswell (2013, p.177) qualitative research is interpretative research, with the inquirer typically involved in a sustained and intensive experience with participants. Qualitative research is distinguished by its interpretative nature, in addition to its emphasis on acquiring rich and thorough data from participants. This means that the researcher is frequently heavily involved in a long and intense experience with the participants. Qualitative inquiry, by nature, is a customized, inductive, emergent process. It means purposely adopting different lenses, filters, and angles as we view

social life so as to discover new perceptions and cognitions about the facet of the world we're researching (Ponelis, 2015).

However, there are drawbacks to qualitative research as well. Smaller sample sizes are usually used, which makes generalizability more challenging. Subjectivity may also be introduced by the researcher's presence and interpretation. Through ethical research practices, cross-referencing with a short-online survey, and careful thematic analysis, the study overcomes these limitations and offers reliable, pertinent insights into the field of hospitality workforce management.

The ability of qualitative research to reveal profound, genuine insights into employee experiences—insights that are critical for comprehending and resolving the intricate problem of staff turnover in a high-pressure hospitality setting—was the main reason it was selected.

## **4.2 Sampling**

The purposive sampling technique, a well-established method in qualitative research, has been carefully chosen for this research study. This sampling approach is particularly valuable when researchers need to gather in-depth, detailed information about specific phenomena from participants who possess relevant experience and expertise. Unlike random sampling methods, purposive sampling allows researchers to select participants based on predetermined criteria that align with the study's objectives.

The strength of purposive sampling lies in its ability to yield rich, detailed data from participants who have direct experience with the research topic. This approach is especially beneficial in hospitality industry research, where specific operational knowledge and experience are crucial for understanding complex organizational dynamics.

This sample is consisted of 15 people. In this study, interview participants had been chosen according to the given criteria below:

1. Currently employed in Hotel Front Office Departments with over 1 year of experience (managers, supervisors, agents, trainees etc.)
2. Employees from Human Resources with over 2 years of experiences at hotels.

## **4.3 Semi-structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews offer a refined and detailed approach to qualitative research methods. These interviews are defined by the combination of fixed and improvised questions, providing researchers with a versatile means of gathering data. In comparison to structured and unstructured

interviews, semi-structured interviews are generally regarded as more appropriate for qualitative research due to their ability to balance consistency and adaptability. This format allows the researcher to explore predetermined themes while also giving participants the freedom to express deeper insights based on their experiences. In qualitative research, semi-structured interviews are commonly used as a flexible data collection method that allows for both guided questioning and open-ended responses (George, 2022). Semi-structured interviews, according to Bloor et al. (2001 p. 27), provide "an opportunity for the interviewer to ask questions that probe the interviewee's responses and clarify issues that emerge during the interview" (p. 92). Another benefit of semi-structured interviews is that they allow the interviewee to provide their own perspectives and experiences in their own words, without being overly constrained by the researcher's agenda (Patton, 2014, pp. 339-347). The inherent flexibility of semi-structured interviews allows researchers to modify their questioning strategy in response to participants' answers, fostering a more natural and conversational exchange. This adaptability proves especially useful when delving into intricate subjects or when participants introduce unexpected yet pertinent information. The set questions provide a structure to guarantee that essential research goals are met, while the option to pose follow-up questions facilitates a more in-depth investigation of emerging themes. Additionally, semi-structured interviews promote the development of rapport between the researcher and the participant, as the flexible format fosters a more relaxed atmosphere for open conversation. This method is particularly advantageous when exploring delicate subjects or interacting with participants from varied backgrounds, as it accommodates cultural and contextual factors in the interview process.

#### **4.4 Short Online Survey**

To complement the semi-structured interviews and enhance the reliability of the study's findings, a brief online short survey was implemented as an additional data collection method. Although the primary focus of this research is qualitative, the survey served an exploratory purpose, providing broader insights into employee experiences within the front office departments of Marriott hotels in Budapest. This supplementary methodology adheres to the principles of data triangulation, which bolsters the credibility and depth of qualitative research by integrating diverse sources of evidence. The mini-survey was specifically designed to avoid generating statistical generalizations; instead, it aimed to collect supplementary viewpoints from a wider array of

participants. Its objective was to reinforce themes identified in the interviews and to validate patterns concerning employee satisfaction, management support, motivation, and retention factors.

The survey included 12 questions, utilizing a mix of multiple-choice, Likert scale, and open-ended formats to strike a balance between descriptive trends and contextual understanding. The initial question was included to confirm that participants were either currently or recently employed at a Marriott property in Budapest, ensuring that responses were pertinent to the study's target demographic. The following questions examined perceptions of the work environment, motivations for staying or leaving, satisfaction with existing benefits, access to growth opportunities, and views on managerial support. The survey was created using Google Forms and shared digitally with current or former Marriott employees, primarily focusing on those in front office roles. Participation was anonymous and voluntary, with respondents briefed on the academic purpose of the research through a short introductory statement.

Even with a limited sample size, the short survey yielded valuable supplementary insights that aligned with the key findings from the interviews. For instance, trends indicating dissatisfaction with salary, recognition, and work-life balance mirrored themes from the interviews, while open-ended responses provided further perspectives and personal reflections that enriched the overall analysis.

In summary, the short survey significantly contributed to broadening the range of employee perspectives represented in the study. Although it does not function as an independent quantitative method, its role as a supporting qualitative tool enhanced the methodological strength of the research, helping to ensure that the final conclusions reflect a broader and more nuanced understanding of turnover and retention challenges in Marriott's front office departments in Budapest.

#### **4.5 Strengths and Limitations of Methods**

There are many advantages of semi-structured interviews. The combination of both structured and unstructured types makes it the best of them. One of them is getting comparable, reliable data, and having the flexibility to ask follow-up questions.

According to George (2022), the use of a pre-designed thematic framework in semi-structured interviews helps keep both the interviewer and participant focused, minimizing distractions while

promoting meaningful two-way communication. Although methodologically similar to structured interviews, questionnaires, and surveys, semi-structured interviews offer greater depth and nuance, as their open-ended format encourages participants to elaborate more freely and provide richer, more detailed responses. And on top of that, semi-structured interviews give rich data that is detailed and personal, as participants can speak freely about their experiences and perceptions (Hesse-Biber & Nagy Leavy, 2011, p. 102).

Limitations of semi-structured interviews due to the delicate balance of prior planning and spontaneous asides, might be difficult to conduct correctly. Every participant is different in their willingness to share (George, 2022). Additionally, semi-structured interviews do not require asking the same questions to every candidate, thus allowing for inevitable biases such as sexism, racism, and bias based on other discriminatory factors. Semi-structured interviews can be influenced by the interviewer's biases, as they have some control over the direction of the interview (Hesse-Biber & Nagy Leavy, 2011, p. 102). Participants may provide responses that they believe are socially desirable, rather than truthful, which can limit the validity of the data (Platton, 2014, pp. 347-349).

Surveys are usually associated with quantitative research, whilst in this research it was used as an exploratory tool in order to complement the interview results. While the mini survey sample size was modest, the responses enriched the interview data and provided supplementary insights.

#### **4.6 Evaluation and Justification of the Research Method**

The choice of semi-structured interviews as the main research method presents several important advantages for exploring front office communication in hotels. This approach enables researchers to thoroughly investigate the real-life experiences of hotel staff while utilizing a structured yet adaptable framework for data collection.

Semi-structured interviews are especially effective because they blend set questions with the opportunity to explore emerging themes via follow-up questions. This combination allows researchers to systematically address key subjects while being open to unexpected insights or unique viewpoints from participants. This format encourages front office employees to elaborate on their experiences regarding guest interactions, internal communication hurdles, and effective problem-solving techniques.

The method's flexibility is particularly advantageous when interviewing hotel staff from various roles and experience levels. For example, a front desk agent might point out specific difficulties in

managing guest complaints that were not initially anticipated in the interview guide, leading to insightful follow-up discussions about coping strategies and training requirements. Similarly, interviewing managers within this flexible framework allows for a more profound investigation of leadership styles and communication practices across departments.

Moreover, semi-structured interviews promote the identification of innovative solutions and best practices through the input of participants. Staff often share distinctive approaches to widespread issues during these discussions, such as enhancing interdepartmental communication or improving guest satisfaction—insights that may not surface in more rigid research methods.

While it's important to recognize the method's limitations, including possible interviewer bias and the time-consuming nature of data collection and analysis, the advantages of semi-structured interviews substantially outweigh these challenges. This approach yields rich, nuanced data that encapsulates the complexity of front office activities and the human aspects of working in hospitality. Its effectiveness in gathering detailed and context-specific information makes it an ideal method for comprehending the intricacies of hotel front office communication.

In conclusion, the selection of semi-structured interviews as a research method is substantiated by its capacity to deliver in-depth insights, maintain adaptability in data gathering, and capture the natural flow of conversation while ensuring thorough coverage of critical topics. This approach has proven particularly beneficial for understanding the complex dynamics of front office operations and communication within the hospitality sector.

#### **4.7 Data Collection**

As mentioned earlier in the methodology section, this research also incorporated secondary data analysis, including academic literature. While efforts were made to obtain turnover-specific statistics from Marriott hotels in Budapest, such internal data was not publicly accessible. Instead, general industry data on hotel employment and turnover rates, as well as staff estimates for front office departments, were used to provide context and support the findings. The analysis of these secondary sources provided valuable insights into broader industry patterns and enhanced the study's overall perspective. In order to get a better perspective of employees 15 semi-structured interviews in total are conducted. Participants were selected according to the criteria that is stated earlier from people who are currently employed in Hotel Front Office Departments with over 1 year of experience (managers, supervisors, agents, trainees etc.) and employees from Human Resources with over 2 years of experiences at hotels. Additionally, as a supplementary method, a

short online survey was designed to complement the primary data collection and enhance the reliability of the findings. The mini-survey aimed to gather broader insights into employee experiences, motivations, and intentions regarding turnover and retention within front office departments of Marriott hotels in Budapest.

*Figure 2 Interview Participants by author*

Participant	Age	Gender	Date	Duration	Position
P1	22	Male	10.02.2025	45:17 min	Front Desk Agent
P2	23	Male	10.02.2025	47:07 min	Front Office Supervisor
P3	27	Female	11.02.2025	45:13 min	Duty Maneger
P4	34	Male	11.02.2025	47:28 min	Front Office Maneger
P5	29	Female	12.02.2025	39:35 min	Front Desk Agent
P6	32	Female	12.02.2025	35:57 min	HR Specialist
P7	30	Female	13.02.2025	42:39 min	Duty Manager
P8	22	Female	13.02.2025	49:52 min	Junior HR Generalist
P9	33	Male	14.02.2025	40:53 min	Front Desk Maneger
P10	36	Male	14.02.2025	43:39 min	Assistant to FOM
P11	25	Male	16.02.2025	47:19 min	Bellman

P12	35	Female	17.02.2025	44:39 min	Asst. HR Manager
P13	23	Female	18.02.2025	35:53 min	HR Coordinator
P14	39	Female	18.02.2025	42:35 min	HR Manager
P15	41	Female	20.02.2025	41:09 min	Senior Recruiter

#### 4.8 Data Analysis

This section describes the intended methods for analyzing data in the study, which will involve coding, categorizing, and arranging the qualitative information to uncover patterns and themes that align with the research aims. A description of how data reduction and data reconstruction are planned, as well as how data will be kept organized and retrievable, should be given (Klopper, 2008). Through thematic analysis, data is analysed. It is a method usually used in qualitative data. Thematic analysis serves as a valuable qualitative research method for identifying and interpreting patterns related to individuals' attitudes, perceptions, experiences, and understanding within collected data (Caulfield, 2022). After the data collection process, already taken knowledge must be organized to get a decisive response. The mass of words generated by interviews or observational data needs to be described and summarized (Lacey & Luff, 2007, p.6). As mentioned, I collected my data through interviews by recording and taking notes. The first step was transcribing my recordings. Transcribing recorded responses is considered the best possible way during analysis because it helps to avoid inaccuracy and data loss. Not all participants agreed to have their interviews audio recorded, which resulted in fewer recordings than initially planned. This made the transcription process easier in terms of volume but also required me to take more detailed notes during the interviews, which was challenging to manage in real-time. I chose to use clean transcription over verbatim transcription, as it allowed me to eliminate filler words and repetitions, producing more focused and coherent responses for each question. MAXQDA software was used to code, organize, and analyze the data from qualitative interviews. An inductive thematic analysis approach served as the foundation for the coding procedure. Transparency and rigor in the analytical process were ensured by MAXQDA's ability to facilitate the systematic

classification of emerging themes. The coding tree structure is shown graphically below, and the Annex section contains a comprehensive list of all the codes and subcodes.

On top of that as a supportive method, short online survey was also organized to collect data. The final data was complemented by the survey responses. Similar patterns such as job satisfaction, workload, management support, and retention, motivation were also applied in the analysis of the survey results. The survey included both open-ended and close-ended questions. In addition to thematic analysis, descriptive approach was used to highlight the trends from multiple choice and scaled questions. The quantitative elements were not subjected to statistical testing but were used to support qualitative insights.

#### **4.9 Ethics**

In this research, ethical principles were carefully observed. Prior to the interviews, all participants were clearly informed about the purpose of the study, the nature of their involvement, how the data would be used, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Interviewees took part voluntarily in my study and they were not subjected to any form of coercion or deception, as well as they were informed of the nuances mentioned above. Therefore, I had prepared interview information and a consent form, so that they could get acquainted with the process. Participants' privacy and confidentiality have been protected which means their personal information is not reflected in the study. To that aim, I took many precautions to guarantee that no personal information was included in the study. For example, instead of using participants' actual names, I used letters, and all data was kept secret and confidential. By taking these precautions, I was able to ensure that the study was conducted ethically and professionally. It's always necessary to prevent permanent or excessive harm to participants, whether inadvertent or not (Bhandari, 2022).

## 5 Findings and Interpretation of the Results

This chapter looks at and assesses the main conclusions drawn from 15 semi-structured interviews with front office and human resources professionals at several Marriott hotels across Budapest. In addition to the interviews, a quick survey was undertaken to enhance and corroborate the data, providing a more comprehensive view of staff turnover and retention inside the business. The combination of these two

data sources boosts the reliability and depth of the research findings, leading to a more thorough understanding of the issues at hand. The findings are

organized thematically, reflecting the patterns and recurring themes that surfaced during the data analysis process.

These themes are directly tied to the central research questions, which seek to uncover the main causes of employee turnover, evaluate the effectiveness of current retention strategies, and investigate the personality traits and qualifications that support long-term retention in front-office roles. Each subsection concentrates on a crucial theme, supported by direct quotes from interview participants and relevant data from the mini survey. The combination of qualitative narratives with additional survey findings facilitates a thorough discussion of the challenges encountered by Marriott hotel employees and the strategies that could bolster retention.

This chapter aims not only to offer the viewpoints of the participants but also to examine these insights along with the body of current research, the organizational setting, and industrial reality. The practical ramifications of the results receive particular emphasis; they provide hotel management with doable suggestions for enhancing retention, lower turnover, and raise employee satisfaction.

### 5.1 Work Environment Perception

The way Marriott hotel employees perceive their work environment stood out as a key theme in all 15 interviews conducted. Participants frequently depicted their workplaces as organized,

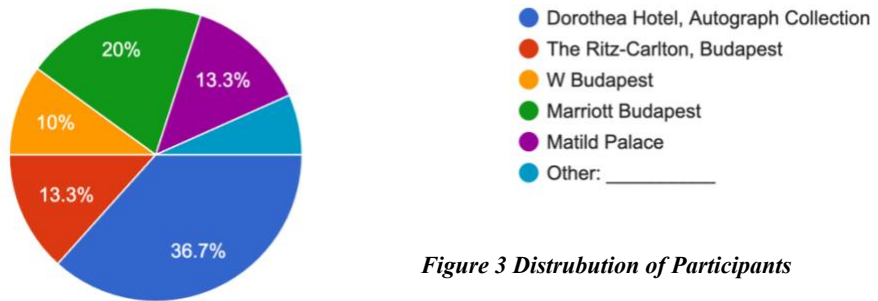


Figure 3 Distribution of Participants

dynamic, and focused on guest service, highlighting the importance of teamwork and adherence to service standards. However, alongside these positive attributes, employees often mentioned the emotional and physical challenges associated with hospitality roles, particularly in the front office department.

Numerous employees expressed pride in being part of a well-known global brand that emphasizes consistency and professionalism. One Front Office Manager (P1) characterized the hotel setting as "high-pressure, high-performance with a strong culture of accountability," while a junior front desk agent (P9) highlighted the "frontline sisterhood" that develops through mutual support during demanding shifts. These expressions capture a collective sense of identity and camaraderie, particularly among the operational staff.

Even with these strengths, several respondents pointed out recurring frustrations related to communication failures between departments, last-minute scheduling issues, and a lack of transparency from management. Employees expressed that although they are expected to uphold high standards, they frequently lack adequate support during peak periods, resulting in feelings of stress and fatigue. One interviewee shared, "Sometimes it feels like the front office bears the weight of other departments' delays or mistakes" (P5), which highlights a broader problem of strain between departments.

The sense of fairness and acknowledgment within the workplace also surfaced as a point of contention. While some participants (e.g., P6, P13) felt valued by their direct managers, others (e.g., P10, P14) indicated that recognition was inconsistent, with one remarking, "It's the small things — a thank you, a schedule that respects your life — that make the work feel worth it" (P12). This indicates that non-monetary forms of appreciation and emotional affirmation significantly influence employees' perception of their work environment.

Importantly, the feedback reveals that employees' experiences of the workplace are heavily shaped by management style, relationships with colleagues, and the extent of support they receive in their operations. Although many value the discipline and prestige linked to Marriott's global standards, their overall satisfaction depends on daily interpersonal interactions and how effectively pressure is managed within departments.

Ultimately, although often feeling weighed down by the demands of the work, Marriott staff members mostly see their workplace as professional and favorable for development. Especially in the front office, where the pressure is especially high, this duality underlines the need of keeping high operational standards while also investing in emotional well-being and efficient communication systems.

The qualitative observations were further supported quantitatively by the survey results, which strongly supported the conclusions drawn from our interviews. Positive peer relationships and productive teamwork were cited by the vast majority of participants as the main reasons they stayed in their current roles when examining the factors that affect employee retention. This finding is particularly consistent with recent studies on workplace dynamics in the hospitality sector, which frequently find that strong social ties are an important retention factor.

The open-ended survey responses provided some very enlightening viewpoints on workplace dynamics. Participants frequently complimented their teammates and the team atmosphere, but they also pointed out a number of areas that needed work. A sizable portion of respondents underlined the necessity of improved lines of communication between employees and management. According to this feedback, there might be chances to improve interpersonal support networks even in Marriott's orderly and disciplined workplace.

Surprisingly, the data showed that although formal organizational structures are well established, there is room for strategic improvement in the informal support systems and communication channels. This observation is especially pertinent to front office operations, where upholding high service standards and employee satisfaction requires strong interpersonal relationships and effective communication. The results imply that closing these communication gaps may increase workplace satisfaction and employee retention rates.

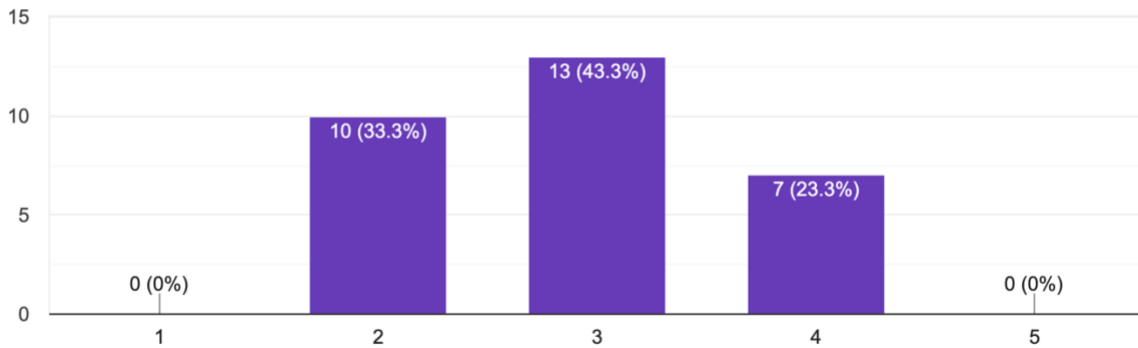
## **5.2 Motivators**

Understanding the factors that motivate employees in the front office department is crucial for creating effective retention strategies. The findings from the interviews revealed a range of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators that impact employees' dedication and satisfaction in their positions. Although salary and financial rewards were mentioned, most respondents highlighted

non-monetary aspects such as team interactions, opportunities for professional growth, recognition, and guest engagement as their main motivators.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with your current salary and benefits? (1 = Not satisfied, 5 = Very satisfied)

30 responses



*Figure 4 Salary and Benefit Satisfaction*

A common theme that emerged from several interviews was the sense of purpose and pride associated with working for a globally recognized brand like Marriott. One participant (P3) remarked, "Knowing that I represent a brand acknowledged worldwide gives me a sense of worth and professionalism." The company's reputation often cultivates a strong sense of identity, making employees feel they are part of something significant and larger than themselves.

Supportive team dynamics and colleagues were consistently identified as important motivators. Many participants (e.g., P6, P11, P13) stressed the significance of peer support during high-stress periods, describing it as a crucial element of their daily experiences. "It's not just the job — it's the people I work with. We support one another through the toughest shifts," shared a front desk associate (P9). This aligns with literature that highlights social belonging as an essential motivational driver in service-oriented industries.

Another crucial motivator was personal and professional growth. Employees (P2, P7, P12) indicated that having opportunities for advancement within the company, such as cross-training or promotions, kept them actively engaged. "Even when the job becomes stressful, the knowledge that there's a next step motivates me," one participant shared (P5). Nonetheless, this motivation was often linked to the presence and clarity of those opportunities, suggesting that effective

communication about development paths is vital for maintaining motivation. Feedback and appreciation from guests also played an important role. Several employees (e.g., P4, P8, P14) expressed that receiving a compliment or positive feedback from a guest was among the most rewarding aspects of their jobs. "When a guest says thank you and smiles — that truly brightens my day," one respondent said (P10), emphasizing the emotional fulfillment associated with guest interactions and service delivery.

The results of the interviews closely matched the survey responses. Survey participants ranked meaningful guest interactions, management appreciation, and a positive team environment as the top three things that motivate them at work. Notably, people consistently rated emotional and interpersonal motivators higher than salary and financial rewards. The interview themes of social belonging and intrinsic motivation were further supported when one respondent stated in the open-ended section that being appreciated for the extra effort I give makes a bigger difference than a bonus.

In summary, while salary is still a fundamental expectation, Marriott employees in Budapest are primarily driven by a strong team environment, opportunities for growth, brand pride, and emotional rewards from guest service. For management, this indicates that employee motivation extends beyond financial incentives and is closely tied to workplace culture, recognition, and career advancement.

### **5.3 Turnover & Retention**

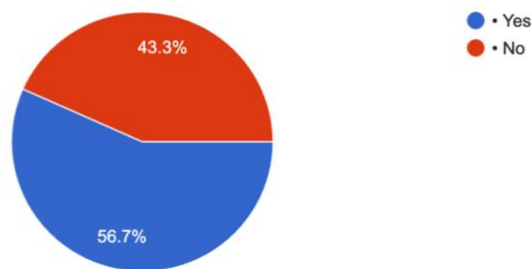
Employee turnover emerged as a major concern in the interviews, with almost all participants noting that the front office department faces high staff turnover and significant pressure, particularly among junior staff. Several recurring factors were highlighted as key reasons for this turnover: inadequate salaries, lack of recognition, heavy workloads, irregular shifts, and limited chances for advancement. A common theme among interviewees was the sentiment of being overworked and unappreciated, especially during busy times. One front office agent (P4) remarked, "People leave because they burn out. The pace is constant, and there's little chance to catch a break."

Others (e.g., P7, P13) pointed out that understaffing heightened stress levels for those who remained, creating a cycle where poor retention further deteriorates working conditions, leading to even more resignations. Salary dissatisfaction was another prevalent issue. While many

participants acknowledged that the pay is typical for the industry, several felt the job's demands exceed the financial rewards. "Considering what we deal with — night shifts, difficult guests, multitasking — it often doesn't feel worthwhile," stated one employee (P2). This indicates that, for many, salary is not merely a financial matter but also a reflection of their value and acknowledgment.

However, many interviewees indicated that retention could be improved with the right support systems in place. They mentioned that feeling appreciated by their supervisors, having flexible schedules, and recognizing genuine opportunities for advancement increased their chances of

Have you ever considered leaving your current job in the past 6 months?  
30 responses



*Figure 5 Considered Leaving*

staying. "I've stayed this long because my manager listens and cares — it makes a big difference," one respondent noted (P10), emphasizing how interpersonal relationships influence turnover choices. The

interviews also revealed inconsistencies in retention strategies across different departments and managers. Some employees (P5, P14) reported regular check-ins and feedback opportunities, while others (P8, P11) felt ignored or undervalued. This inconsistency highlights the need for standardized retention strategies and improved internal communication. In conclusion, turnover in Marriott's front office departments stems from a combination of emotional, financial, and organizational challenges. Yet, retention is possible when employees feel supported, valued, and see opportunities for growth. Addressing these challenges necessitates a comprehensive approach that extends beyond salaries, cultivating a sense of belonging, recognition, and career progression.

The survey results are in line with the concerns expressed during interviews, respondents who were asked what factors most strongly contributed to their thoughts of quitting their job cited high levels of stress, irregular shifts, and inadequate recognition.

Interestingly, 75% of participants said that their decision to leave would be influenced by a lack of clear communication and opportunities for career advancement. Additionally, the majority of respondents gave supportive management and workplace culture top priority, while only one person ranked salary as the most important factor for staying. The sentimental exhaustion and lack of focus that frequently precede turnover decisions are reflected in the statement made by one participant, "There's no long-term vision shown to us; it feels like we're just filling shifts." These answers support the notion that leadership, acknowledgment, and growth clarity are more important retention tactics than remuneration.

#### **5.4 Management & Support**

Management and supervisory support emerged as a key factor shaping employees' experiences and their decisions to remain in or leave their positions. Insights from 15 interviews revealed a variety of views on the quality and consistency of management in Marriott's front office departments, which directly affected morale, motivation, job satisfaction, and long-term loyalty to the company. Many employees highlighted that their relationship with their immediate manager or supervisor was crucial in influencing their daily work environment. Managers who were approachable, communicative, and empathetic received frequent praise. One front office associate (P6) noted, "When a manager listens, checks in after a tough interaction, or assists during busy periods, it fosters trust." Another participant (P10) agreed, stating, "Even in challenging times, knowing your supervisor supports you makes all the difference." These remarks indicate that relational leadership, characterized by empathy and responsiveness, significantly enhances employee morale and resilience.

Conversely, not all participants reported positive interactions. Some interviewees (e.g., P4, P11) described management as rigid, unapproachable, and disconnected from the realities faced by frontline staff. A front desk agent (P3) pointed out, "Some managers just focus on targets without considering how we achieve them." Others (P9, P12) mentioned issues like favoritism, lack of recognition, and authoritarian communication styles that eroded trust and demotivated employees. This varying quality of management highlights discrepancies in leadership training and the standardization of managerial practices.

Human Resources (HR) function emerged as a significant theme during interviews, displaying complex dynamics and diverse employee perspectives. The critique of participant responses highlighted several key scopes of concern and satisfaction regarding HR's role in the organization. Employee perceptions of HR engagement in operational matters showed notable variation. Several participants (P7, P14, P16) expressed frustration with HR's level of involvement in day-to-day operations. For instance, P7 noted, "HR seems disconnected from what actually happens on the floor," while P14 emphasized the need for "more regular presence and understanding of operational challenges." This sentiment was echoed by P16, who described situations where HR's lack of operational knowledge led to misaligned policies.

The topic of conflict resolution and support surfaced as a particularly delicate issue. P8's remark, "If there's a conflict, you aren't sure if HR will support you or side with management," highlighted a wider concern regarding HR's neutrality and advocacy responsibilities. This uncertainty was further explained by P10, who recounted feeling trapped between departmental dynamics and HR processes, stating, "It often feels like navigating a political minefield rather than a straightforward process." Despite facing several challenges, there were some noteworthy aspects of HR's role that participants acknowledged. P2 and P15 specifically praised HR's assistance during key phases of employment, particularly when it came to onboarding and contractual issues. P2 appreciated the comprehensive orientation process, while P15 highlighted how clearly HR explained the terms and benefits of contracts. Additionally, P3 expressed gratitude for HR's efforts in promoting professional development and organizing training programs. Nonetheless, the general feedback indicated that HR isn't entirely fulfilling its potential as a proactive resource for tackling everyday workplace issues. P11 summed up this feeling well by saying, "HR does a great job with administrative tasks, but there's a real opportunity for them to step up as a genuine partner in employee growth and problem-solving at work." This observation suggests that HR may need to undergo a strategic transformation to better serve the organization.

Accessibility and response time posed another major challenge. Participants P5 and P13 reported struggling to connect with HR personnel when necessary, with response times sometimes reaching several days for urgent issues. P13 specifically noted, "The delay in addressing time-sensitive issues creates unnecessary stress and impacts our ability to perform effectively." This communication gap contributed to a broader feeling of disempowerment among staff members and raised concerns about procedural transparency.

Recognition and feedback appeared as recurring themes. Employees appreciated instances when their contributions were acknowledged, whether through formal evaluations or informal praise. A receptionist (P1) shared, "A simple thank you can make a big difference," while another (P12) stated, "Recognition is infrequent, and when absent, you feel overlooked." The lack of consistent feedback or only receiving negative criticism was discouraging for many. These insights indicate that regular, constructive feedback and visible appreciation are vital for effective support but are often neglected in the fast-paced hospitality environment.

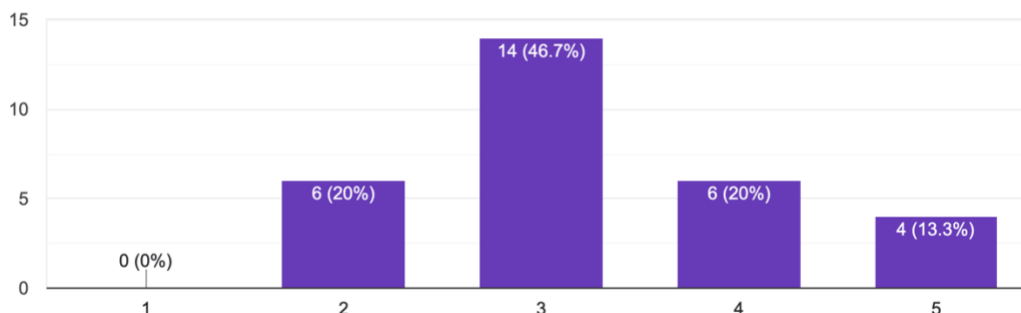
Moreover, employees often criticized the communication style and frequency from management. Many operational decisions regarding scheduling, role changes, or performance expectations were communicated without prior consultation or notice, leading to feelings of exclusion from the decision-making process. "They inform you instead of asking your input," remarked one participant (P9). This top-down method contrasts sharply with the inclusive leadership approach preferred by many employees.

Despite these challenges, some individuals (e.g., P6, P10, P15) recounted experiences of outstanding leadership, where managers acted as mentors, promoted professional development, and supported their teams. These examples demonstrate that effective managerial practices do exist and are greatly valued, although they are not yet consistently integrated into the company culture.

The analysis of the survey provided substantial evidence to support these findings, revealing a complex landscape of employee-management relationships. The survey data, collected from a diverse range of front office staff, showed that satisfaction levels regarding management support were predominantly moderate to low.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how supported do you feel by your supervisor or manager? (1 = Not supported at all, 5 = Fully supported)

30 responses



*Figure 6 Management Support*

When examining specific management interactions, the responses painted a nuanced picture. While some participants praised their managers for being fair and approachable, a significant portion reported systematic issues. These included insufficient follow-up on concerns, limited engagement with day-to-day operations, and a perceived lack of recognition for routine but essential work. The survey highlighted specific instances where improved management involvement could have prevented employee dissatisfaction. This sentiment was powerfully captured by one respondent who stated, "Management is helpful only when it's convenient — otherwise, you're on your own." This quote exemplified a recurring theme throughout the interviews, suggesting a reactive rather than proactive approach to employee support.

Cross-referencing these findings with turnover rates revealed a strong correlation between management support levels and employee retention. Properties with more engaged management teams typically showed lower turnover rates. Despite some examples of effective leadership practices, the data strongly suggests that all Marriott properties in Budapest would benefit from implementing a more standardized and proactive approach to both management practices and HR support systems.

In summary, the interviews and surveys highlighted that the management and support systems within Marriott's front office departments are perceived as significantly influential but applied unevenly. Supportive, communicative, and appreciative leadership correlates with improved employee satisfaction and retention. However, inconsistent management quality, inadequate HR engagement, and insufficient recognition present challenges to employee well-being and trust in

the organization. Enhancing managerial training, reinforcing empathetic leadership practices, and fostering transparent HR involvement could greatly enhance the employee experience.

## **5.5 Recruitment Gaps**

Recruitment practices emerged as a significant theme during the interviews, with various participants pointing out deficiencies in hiring processes, candidate readiness, and job alignment. These recruitment issues were often tied to larger problems like employee dissatisfaction, short tenure, and persistent turnover in front office departments. A common concern was the lack of clarity and realism in the hiring process, particularly regarding the true nature of front office work. Several employees noted that new hires frequently arrive with unrealistic expectations, having only been informed of the job's positive aspects during interviews. One participant commented, "People are often caught off guard by the intensity, the multitasking, and the emotional demands of this role — many aren't prepared for it" (P4). Another front desk staff member stated, "When I started, I envisioned it like the training videos — all smiles and guests. No one mentioned the nonstop check-ins and dealing with upset guests during night shifts" (P9). These discrepancies indicate a communication gap between recruiters or HR and the actual operational realities of the job. Interviewees suggested that more truthful, experience-based insights should be provided during interviews and onboarding to better prepare candidates. They stressed that mismatched expectations often lead to premature resignations, particularly among younger or first-time workers in hospitality (P2, P5, P12).

Additionally, several participants raised concerns about the selection criteria and screening process, noting that sometimes hiring focuses on quickly filling positions rather than carefully ensuring a candidate's personality, emotional resilience, and long-term suitability for the job. One employee remarked, "Some individuals just aren't cut out for this type of work, and it becomes apparent within weeks" (P11). Another added, "Either they struggle with stress or find it tough to interact constantly. Then they leave, and the cycle repeats" (P6). This highlights the need for more behavioral interview methods and personality assessments during the hiring process. A few interviewees also pointed out that language proficiency and cultural fit are often not adequately evaluated. In an international hotel setting where staff must manage varying guest expectations and communication styles, these factors are crucial. As one participant noted, "You can't just hire

someone because they can speak English — they need to be skilled at handling conflict and maintaining a friendly demeanor even when tired" (P13). Another significant issue mentioned was the disconnect between HR recruiters and department managers. Some employees felt that front office leadership had limited say in the hiring process, even though they are responsible for integrating and training new staff. "It would be beneficial if team leaders had a stronger voice — they understand what the department needs" (P7). Despite these challenges, several participants recognized that onboarding and initial training have improved over the years, with Marriott providing effective induction sessions and brand-standard training (P3, P14). However, these initiatives may be compromised if unsuitable candidates are hired initially.

The survey findings provided strong evidence of the challenges faced in hiring. Half of the respondents said they were not sufficiently prepared for the demands of the job, especially in terms of emotional demands and multitasking expectations, when asked if they felt fully informed about the realities of the job before beginning. The concerns expressed in the interviews about hiring and job readiness were reaffirmed by survey responses. Many participants cited the need for more training, better management support, and clearer guidance as ways to lower turnover in their hotel. While one participant called for "closer monitoring of daily operations," another highlighted the significance of "one-to-one trainings with supervisors," highlighting deficiencies in initial preparation and onboarding. Interestingly, no respondent cited recruitment quality as a reason for staying, and none of the open-ended responses mentioned feeling sufficiently informed during the hiring process. These trends highlight the need for more accurate job previews and closer coordination between frontline leadership and recruitment, as many new hires enter the position oblivious to its operational and emotional demands, according to the interview results.

In summary, the findings indicate that gaps in recruitment directly contribute to turnover difficulties in front office departments. Addressing these gaps necessitates clearer job previews, more realistic expectation-setting, enhanced collaboration between HR and department managers, and improved screening for emotional and behavioral fit. Implementing these changes could greatly enhance retention and alleviate pressure on existing teams.

## **5.6 Career Development Paths**

Career development opportunities have emerged as a crucial element influencing employees' perceptions of their long-term potential and job satisfaction within Marriott hotels. While some individuals shared positive experiences regarding promotions and cross-training, others voiced

concerns over unclear pathways, slow progress, and perceived favoritism. These varied experiences indicate an inconsistent application of development programs, impacting both employee motivation and retention.

Many employees lauded the structured nature of Marriott’s internal training initiatives, including online learning platforms and brand-standard modules, along with opportunities for cross-departmental training. One employee noted, “There are chances to learn different roles if you show interest. I was able to spend time in reservations and concierge too” (P3). Others viewed Marriott as supportive of internal mobility, with several participants having successfully advanced from entry-level jobs. “I started as a bellboy and now I’m at the front desk. I know people who moved to supervisor roles from similar beginnings,” shared another participant (P6).

Nevertheless, most respondents expressed concerns regarding the accessibility and clarity of career advancement paths. Many felt uninformed about promotion criteria and available opportunities. “There’s no clear explanation on how to grow here. You just have to hope someone notices you,” stated one employee (P10). This indicates a lack of formal communication regarding internal progression options, which could lead to demotivation, especially among ambitious team members.

Another common theme was the importance of managerial support for career development. Several employees mentioned that those who received mentorship or encouragement from their supervisors were more likely to advance within the company. “It depends a lot on your manager. If they advocate for you, you get a chance. If not, you’re invisible,” remarked a front office agent (P11). This highlights a disparity in equal access to development opportunities, which may foster feelings of favoritism or bias.

A few participants also pointed out structural limitations, such as a scarcity of positions or slow turnover in senior roles. “The problem is, people don’t leave higher positions, so even if you’re ready, there’s nowhere to

Do you feel there are enough opportunities for career growth within your hotel?  
30 responses

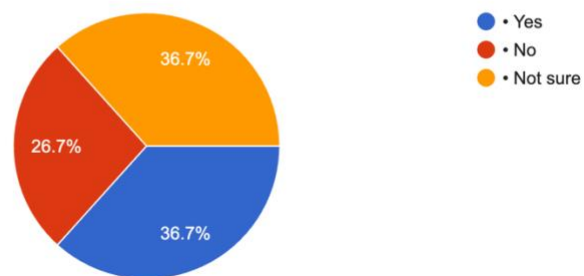


Figure 7 Career Growth Opportunities

move,” explained one respondent (P7). Others noted the lack of long-term planning, mentioning that discussions about development were infrequent unless prompted by the employee. “Nobody talks about where you want to be in two years,” added a receptionist (P12), suggesting a more reactive approach to career planning. Interestingly, some interviewees noted that advancing in hospitality often requires moving to a different hotel or brand rather than progressing internally. “If you want better pay or a higher role, you usually have to change hotels,” remarked one participant (P14). This reflects a broader industry pattern and highlights a challenge for Marriott in retaining ambitious staff who may look for advancement opportunities elsewhere.

This theme was clearly reflected in the survey responses. Three out of four participants stated that unclear advancement paths or a lack of promotion opportunities would be the reason they would think about leaving their current position. Further recommendations for enhancing retention included "a clear roadmap," "regular check-ins," and "more training." These recommendations are consistent with the results of the interviews, which highlight the importance of clear and consistent career development planning. "I'd stay longer if there were growth opportunities," one respondent wrote, highlighting the link between structured career progression and long-term retention. Another participant mentioned that they would feel more motivated and like they belonged in the company if they had regular conversations about their goals with supervisors. The findings confirm that in order to effectively support employees' long-term objectives and lower turnover caused by career stagnation, Marriott's development tools must be combined with proactive direction, customized support, and regular mentoring. Retaining talented and driven front desk employees will depend on making sure that opportunities for advancement are not only accessible but also fairly distributed and communicated.

In completion while Marriott provides tools and opportunities for career development, employees experience them in varied and sometimes unclear ways. The findings indicate a need for improved communication about growth paths, equitable access to mentorship, and visible planning for advancement opportunities. Addressing these areas could enhance employee engagement, motivation, and long-term retention, especially in front office roles where there are higher expectations for growth and a prevalence of career-driven employees.

## 5.7 Employee Suggestions

Employee input provided valuable insights into potential areas for enhancement and strategies aimed at improving retention, job satisfaction, and organizational efficiency within Marriott hotels in Budapest. Throughout the interviews, participants conveyed a strong wish for enhanced communication, more uniform management practices, and clearer career advancement pathways. While the difficulties employees encounter were covered in earlier sections, the suggestions presented here offer actionable recommendations that could nurture a more supportive and engaging work atmosphere. One of the most frequently expressed suggestions was the necessity for better communication between management and staff. Numerous employees pointed out that they often felt excluded from significant decisions impacting their everyday work, including scheduling, staffing levels, and operational changes. "Sometimes it seems like we're kept in the dark about decisions that affect us directly," remarked one participant (P4). Several others echoed similar sentiments, proposing that regular team meetings, feedback mechanisms, and open discussions with management could enhance transparency and build trust. "If management communicated more transparently about changes, we'd feel more valued," remarked a front desk agent (P9).

An additional area of concern was the requirement for more consistent managerial support and training. While some employees commended their managers for being approachable and supportive, others expressed dissatisfaction regarding the unclear expectations, inconsistent feedback, and emotional support during stressful times. "Managers should be more than just taskmasters; they ought to be mentors," noted one participant (P6). Several interviewees suggested that Marriott should invest in leadership development initiatives to ensure that supervisors and managers possess the necessary tools to address interpersonal issues and motivate their teams. "A good leader makes a significant difference. If they show they care, people will stay," stated another employee (P2).

Regarding career development, employees articulated the need for more structured and transparent growth opportunities. Many employees expressed disappointment over the absence of visible career paths within the hotel. "We require more than just basic training — we need a clear roadmap for advancement," stated one employee (P7). Suggestions included more defined promotion criteria, regular career discussions with managers, and mentorship initiatives to assist employees in understanding how they can progress within the organization. This could involve formalizing

the cross-departmental training process to provide staff with exposure to various roles and enhance their skill sets.

Alongside career development, employees also proposed enhancing work-life balance by providing more flexibility in scheduling. "More adaptable shifts and consideration of personal circumstances could significantly reduce burnout," explained one participant (P11). This suggestion was prevalent among employees who felt that the rigid schedules and unpredictable shifts contributed to exhaustion and turnover. Offering more control over shift preferences or introducing rotation systems could aid employees in maintaining their energy and job satisfaction. Finally, employees stressed the importance of recognition and appreciation. While some felt their contributions were acknowledged, many employees expressed disappointment regarding the lack of regular feedback or rewards for their efforts. "A simple thank you or a small gesture of appreciation can make a significant difference," shared one participant (P8). Suggestions for enhancement included formal recognition programs to celebrate outstanding performance, such as employee of the month awards or public acknowledgments during team meetings.

The short survey gave few more recommendations, but those it did offer usually matched the results of the interview. Participants did note the need of more training, clearer promotion paths, and more management presence in daily operations, even while only a few open-ended responses detailed improvement ideas. Another respondent pointed out that flexible scheduling would raise job satisfaction. The limited sample size and detail notwithstanding, the comments received support the interviewees' requests for more individualized support, development possibilities, and acknowledgment. Even in brief responses, the overlap between both data sources gives the themes found throughout this chapter legitimacy.

To sum up, employee suggestions highlighted a shared desire for improved communication, more consistent management practices, and clearer avenues for growth and recognition. By addressing these concerns, Marriott could enhance employee satisfaction and retention, while also fostering a more inclusive and motivating work environment that encourages long-term loyalty and commitment from its front office staff.

## **6 Conclusion**

This study looked at the main elements affecting front office departments of Marriott hotels in Budapest employee retention and turnover. Supported by semi-structured interviews and a short survey, the qualitative study revealed several dimensions influencing employee satisfaction and long-term commitment. Consistent top issues were emotional and physical tiredness, lack of managerial appreciation, irregular scheduling, and limited chances for advancement. These problems were found to directly affect workers' choices to leave, generally surpassing financial considerations. Many of the participants at the same time expressed great drive motivated by supportive teams, personal growth, and pride in working for a globally known brand.

The majority of the interview findings were supported by the survey results, especially when it came to the significance of management presence, career development, and open communication. Despite the small survey sample size, the overlapping insights helped to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issues surrounding staff retention.

All things considered, the study emphasizes how critical it is for the hospitality industry to embrace a more employee-centered approach to human resource management. Hotel companies can increase operational stability, lower employee turnover, and improve employee engagement by strengthening leadership practices, streamlining hiring procedures, and establishing well-defined development pathways. These results have important ramifications for Marriott as well as the larger hotel sector in comparable high-stress situations.

### **6.1 Summary of the Study**

The goal of this thesis was to look into the main causes of employee turnover and retention tactics employed in the front desks of a few Budapest Marriott hotels. The high employee turnover rate in the hospitality sector, which not only jeopardizes operational continuity but also puts a financial and emotional burden on businesses, served as the impetus for the study. Because of its high employee turnover rates and crucial role in determining guest experiences, the front office—the department that interacts with guests the most and requires the most operational resources—was selected as the focal point.

15 semi-structured interviews with front desk and HR staff from a variety of Marriott-branded hotels in Budapest, including The Ritz-Carlton, Dorothea Hotel Autograph Collection, W

Budapest, Matild Palace, and Marriott Budapest, were included in the study's qualitative methodology. In order to strengthen the validity of the data and triangulate findings, a brief survey was also conducted in addition to the interviews. By using a dual-method approach, the study was able to validate emerging themes from a wider perspective while also delving deeply into employee perspectives.

Seven major areas were identified through thematic analysis of the data: perception of the work environment, motivators, retention and turnover, management and support, gaps in recruitment, career development pathways, and employee suggestions. The results showed that a mix of operational, structural, and emotional factors influence employee turnover in Marriott hotels. Emotional exhaustion, lack of acknowledgment, inconsistent management techniques, poor leadership communication, and ambiguous career advancement opportunities were all major factors. Even when working for a prestigious and well-known company, these factors have been shown to demotivate employees and increase their desire to quit.

Conversely, intrinsic motivators like teamwork, emotional support from coworkers, pride in representing a luxury brand, and the chance for professional growth were strongly associated with retention. Workers who were exposed to relational leadership, which is marked by active engagement, empathy, and feedback, expressed more job satisfaction and loyalty. Although it was a factor, compensation was not the most important one. Rather, the most important factors influencing employees' decisions to stay in their positions were their desire for meaningful recognition, personal development, and a positive work environment.

Despite having a small sample size, the survey results supported and mirrored the findings from the interviews. The significance of structured growth pathways, open communication, and team cohesion was underlined by respondents. Inconsistent HR support, little managerial participation in day-to-day duties, and a general lack of readiness among recently hired employees were other issues they raised, attributable to flaws in the hiring and onboarding procedures.

This research adds to the body of knowledge by providing context-specific insights into employee retention and turnover in a globally recognized hotel brand that operates in a significant capital city in Central Europe. The results offer wider implications for HR and operational management in the hospitality industry in addition to reflecting the actual experiences of Marriott employees in Budapest. The findings imply that turnover is not a necessary component of hotel operations.

Instead, it can be lessened with focused, human-centered tactics that put an emphasis on leadership accountability, open communication, emotional health, and practical hiring procedures.

By giving voice to those directly involved in front office operations, this study offers a nuanced understanding of why employees stay, why they leave, and what can be done to improve retention in a high-pressure service environment. The study comes to the conclusion that long-term employee retention in the hospitality sector requires a comprehensive approach that sees employee experience as a strategic asset rather than a disposable expense.

## **6.2 Key Findings and Recommendations**

Several important conclusions about employee retention and turnover in the front desks of Marriott hotels in Budapest were found by this study. Through the combination of qualitative interview data and additional survey responses, the study demonstrated that emotional exhaustion, a lack of recognition, a lack of growth opportunities, and inconsistent management and communication practices are more significant factors that contribute to employee turnover than financial dissatisfaction alone. Employee disengagement frequently results from unmet psychological and professional needs rather than just pay, according to these findings, which are consistent with a larger body of academic research on turnover in the hospitality industry.

According to the data, front desk workers are especially susceptible to burnout because of the emotionally taxing and customer-facing nature of their jobs. Rigid scheduling, little feedback, and a lack of management visibility were common reasons given by participants for wanting to quit. These difficulties were made worse by the lack of a clearly defined career path, particularly for aspirational workers hoping to advance in the organization over the long run.

Nevertheless, the study also found a number of protective factors that raise retention rates. Employee loyalty and job satisfaction were higher among those who had relational leadership, supportive team dynamics, and regular recognition. A lot of participants stressed the value of interpersonal connections and workplace culture over just transactional advantages.

To address these findings, the following suggestions are put forth:

- To guarantee managerial consistency, emotional intelligence, and accountability in front office settings, put in place organized leadership development programs.
- Realistic job previews, behavioral tests, and departmental supervisors' direct participation in candidate evaluation are all ways to improve hiring procedures.

- Increase the transparency of career development by implementing internal promotion mapping, formal mentoring, and customized growth plans that encourage long-term retention.
- Improve departmental and staff-management internal communication channels to promote a more responsive and inclusive workplace culture.
- Create frameworks for formal and informal acknowledgment of team and individual contributions to strengthen a sense of worth and inclusion.

Hotels operated by Marriott and other similar hospitality organizations can transition to a more sustainable staffing model by putting these focused interventions into practice. In this model, employee retention is seen as a strategic investment in service quality and organizational resilience, rather than just an operational objective.

### **6.3 Contribution of the Study**

In the context of employee retention and turnover in hotel front office departments, this study makes both scholarly and practical contributions to the fields of hospitality and human resource management. The study provides a grounded, context-specific understanding of staff experiences in one of the most demanding operational areas in the industry by concentrating on a few chosen Marriott hotels in Budapest and combining survey and interview data.

Academically speaking, the study adds to the small amount of qualitative research on employee voice and lived experiences in hotel front desk positions, which frequently lack representation. This research offers detailed, narrative-driven insights from people who are directly involved in front-line operations, in contrast to many earlier studies that mainly rely on quantitative measures or generalize across entire organizations. It demonstrates how intangible elements can influence retention outcomes just as effectively as monetary incentives. These elements include team culture, leadership style, emotional exhaustion, and unfulfilled development expectations.

The study provides practitioners in the hospitality industry with useful information. It pinpoints particular organizational problems, such as inconsistent management, poor communication, implausible hiring practices, and a lack of use of career planning tools. For HR specialists, general managers, and department heads looking to create more adaptable, employee-centered retention strategies, these findings have important ramifications.

Additionally, the study makes a contribution by showing how low-cost, high-impact interventions—like structured feedback, relational leadership, and recognition—can be beneficial in high-turnover settings like front offices. Rethinking retention as an integrated strategic priority rather than a reactive process is made possible by the emphasis on coordinating daily operational procedures with more general employee well-being priorities.

In summary, by redefining turnover as a controllable and avoidable issue that can be resolved by organizational investment in employee engagement and development, clear communication, and sympathetic leadership, this thesis advances both theoretical understanding and practical application.

## **6.4 Limitations and Further Research**

It is important to acknowledge as well as thoroughly examine, despite its valuable contributions to understanding employee retention and turnover patterns within Budapest's Marriott hotels, the limitations of this research study. The geographic scope that the study has does present the very first limitation that is important. The researchers confined the study to just a single metropolitan area, most specifically only one hotel brand. The findings' broader applicability within other particular contexts is potentially restricted by this narrow focus. Although Marriott is recognized as a prestigious international chain with standardized operational protocols, it's important to note that local operational practices, cultural nuances, and regional market conditions can substantially influence how corporate policies are implemented and interpreted by employees across different locations.

Second, a short online survey was used to support the qualitative methodology used in the study. In addition to a total of 15 in-depth interviews with HR and front office professionals, 31 valid survey responses from Marriott employees were conducted. The survey's scope was still rather constrained, even though it significantly improved the data triangulation process and provided more insight into workplace realities. The open-ended questions in the survey were purposefully short, and respondents' responses differed in their level of detail and in-depthness.

Third, self-selection bias might have been introduced because participant selection was predicated on availability and willingness to participate. The overall representation of staff sentiment may

have been skewed because those with particularly strong opinions—whether positive or negative—may have been more likely to contribute.

Regardless these drawbacks, the study provides a number of avenues for further investigation. To improve generalizability and depth, future research could use a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative interviews with larger, statistically representative surveys. It may be possible to ascertain whether the issues noted are unique to local practices or common to the industry by broadening the geographic scope to include Marriott properties in other cities or contrasting the results with those of other global hotel brands.

Furthermore, a longitudinal approach could be useful for future studies to track changes in employee attitudes over time and determine the best interventions for enhancing retention. To learn more about how these factors affect long-term employee satisfaction and organizational loyalty in the hospitality industry, topics like emotional labor, leadership behavior, and internal communication systems also need more research.

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## Annex 1 [Interview Consent Form]

### Interviewee Information and Consent Form

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Education / Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Kindly review the following statements attentively:**

I understand that I am being invited to participate in an interview and that my participation is voluntary.

I understand that my personal information will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this Interview.

I understand that my responses will be recorded or noted and used for research or other purposes.

**Recording Consent (YES / NOT)** – If it is **NOT**, it means there will be not any voice recording device **HOWEVER** only note taking by interviewer.

I acknowledge that I may decline to answer any question and am free to withdraw from the interview at any point without consequence.

I agree to participate in the interview and understand that I can withdraw from the interview at any time.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your time and participation

## Annex 2 [Interview Protocol]

Interview questions:

### **Section 1: Introduction and Explanation of the Structure**

- Purpose of the research
- Structure and Information about the interview
- Presenting Interview information and a consent form
- Expected duration.

### **Section 2: Background**

- Can you briefly describe your current role and how long you've been working in this hotel?
- Is it your first role or have you worked in different positions before?
- What inspired you to work in the hotel industry, and specifically in the front office department / human resources?

### **Section 3: Job Satisfaction**

- How would you describe your current work environment?
- What do you enjoy most about your job?
- What are the most challenging aspects of your daily responsibilities?
- What would you change to be satisfied more in your work environment?

### **Section 4: Turnover & Retention**

- Have you ever considered leaving your position?
- If yes, what factors influenced your thoughts?
- From your experience, what are the most common reasons colleagues choose to leave the hotel?
- In your opinion, what factors contribute to employees staying longer in the company?
- How does your hotel deal with leaving staff?

### **Section 5: Management**

- How would you assess the support you receive from your supervisors or HR department?

- Do you feel included in decision-making processes that affect your department?
- Are there clear opportunities for promotion or career development within your hotel?

### **Section 6: Compatibility**

- What personality traits do you think are essential for success in front office roles / human resources?
- How do you handle emotional or stressful guest interactions?
- Do you feel prepared or trained for these situations?

### **Section 7: Closure**

- What do you believe the hotel could do better to improve employee retention?
- Do you have any suggestions for improving the hiring or training process to reduce turnover?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share regarding employee satisfaction or staff retention?

## Annex 3 [Short Online Survey]

### Short Survey

**1. Are you currently employed (or were recently employed) at a Marriott hotel in Budapest?**

- Yes, currently employed
- Yes, but not anymore (left within the last 12 months)
- No → *(Thank you for your time, but this survey is only for Marriott hotel employees.)*

**2. Which Marriott hotel property do/did you work at? (Optional)**

- Dorothea Hotel, Autograph Collection
- The Ritz-Carlton, Budapest
- W Budapest
- Marriott Budapest
- Matild Palace
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. How long have you been working in your current hotel?**

- Less than 6 months
- 6–12 months
- 1–2 years
- More than 2 years

**4. Have you ever considered leaving your current job in the past 6 months?**

- Yes
- No

**5. What is the main reason you have considered leaving (or would consider leaving)? (Select one)**

- Low salary
- Lack of career development
- Poor management
- Work-life imbalance
- High workload/stress
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**6. On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with your current salary and benefits?**  
(1 = Not satisfied, 5 = Very satisfied)

**7. On a scale of 1 to 5, how supported do you feel by your supervisor or manager?**  
(1 = Not supported at all, 5 = Fully supported)

**8. Do you feel there are enough opportunities for career growth within your hotel?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

**9. What motivates you to stay in your current role? (Select all that apply)**

- Salary and benefits
- Colleagues and teamwork
- Positive relationship with supervisor
- Learning opportunities
- Job security
- Nothing in particular
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. On a scale of 1 to 5, how likely are you to stay at your current job for the next year?**  
(1 = Very unlikely, 5 = Very likely)

**11. In your opinion, what could be done to reduce employee turnover in your hotel?** (*Open question*)

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**12. Any other comments or suggestions about your work environment?** (*Optional, open question*)

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## Annex [4 Coding Tree Overview MAXQDA]

Code Category	Subcode	Description
Work Environment Perception	Team Dynamics	Relationships, cooperation, and team spirit among front office staff.
	Communication Barriers	Problems in interdepartmental communication and operational clarity.
	Recognition and Fairness	Employee perceptions of fairness, appreciation, and respect.
	Operational Pressure	Stress and emotional toll from high-volume guest interactions and workload.
Motivators	Brand Pride	Sense of identity and prestige from working for a global brand (Marriott).
	Peer Support	Emotional and practical support from colleagues during work shifts.
	Career Growth Opportunities	Availability of promotions, cross-training, and internal career paths.
	Guest Feedback and Emotional Rewards	Motivation derived from guest appreciation and personal fulfillment.
Turnover & Retention	Salary Dissatisfaction	Employee dissatisfaction regarding salary and benefits in relation to job demands.
	Stress and Workload	Excessive workload, irregular shifts, and emotional exhaustion.
	Career Uncertainty	Lack of clear promotion pathways and future career vision.
	Management Recognition	Importance of receiving acknowledgment and encouragement from supervisors.
Management & Support	Managerial Accessibility	Availability, approachability, and communication style of direct managers.
	Conflict Resolution	How workplace conflicts are handled by managers and HR.
	HR Engagement	Perceived presence, involvement, and support from Human Resources.
	Feedback and Appreciation Practices	Formal and informal feedback mechanisms influencing morale.
	Mismatched Expectations	Difference between job interview promises and actual job realities.

Recruitment Gaps	Behavioral Fit	Assessment of emotional resilience and hospitality-oriented personality traits during hiring.
	Operational Readiness	Preparedness of new hires to handle multitasking and guest complaints.
	Communication of Job Demands	Transparency during recruitment about job responsibilities and challenges.
Career Development Paths	Internal Training	Access to skill development programs and brand-standard trainings.
	Mentorship and Supervisor Support	Guidance and career mentoring offered by supervisors.
	Promotion Transparency	Clear communication of promotion criteria and advancement opportunities.
	Cross-Departmental Mobility	Opportunities for working in different departments to gain diverse experience.
Employee Suggestions	Improved Communication	Suggestions for better interdepartmental and vertical communication.
	Better Scheduling	Recommendations for more stable and employee-friendly work schedules.
	Enhanced Recognition Systems	Desire for systematic employee recognition and appreciation programs.
	Mental Health and Well-being Support	Proposals for stress management and mental health initiatives.