

## Article

# Age and Educational Diversification of Hotel Employees and Its Impact on Turnover

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the increasing turnover in the hotel industry, which has a negative influence on the quality of services provided, as well as customer satisfaction. Hotel managers are forced to hire new employees in order to secure smooth hotel operations as well as replace those employees who have left for their competitors. Newly hired employees need to be instructed and trained, which has a negative influence on hotel costs. We assume that both an employee's age and the level of education determines the quality of their performance at work, as well as their personal stability, thus having an influence on business sustainability. This paper analyzes the age and education diversification of employees in four-star and five-star hotels in Slovakia, and its impact on employee turnover. The research was undertaken in 2019, with a research sample comprising 1085 individuals employed in selected chain and independent hotels. We examined the opinions of employees from different ages and education levels about their retention and changes of employment. Statistical testing confirmed the relation between turnover and the educational level of the employees. However, the correlation between turnover and age was rejected. We analyze the different perceptions of retention and job change of employees from different age groups. The revelation of the causes as to why employees might leave a hotel could help managers change their philosophy and the processes of human resources management in favor of developing a sustainable company.

**Keywords:** age; education; employee; employee turnover; hotel industry

## 1. Introduction

The ever-changing business world is confronting new challenges with respect to its operational activities; therefore, business organizations are beginning to recognize that addressing sustainability issues will deliver benefits to society, the environment, and to the companies themselves. From a business perspective, sustainability has been defined as a company's ability to achieve its business goals, which may include reducing the costs and risks of doing business, increasing brand reputation, increasing their attractiveness to talent, and increasing their competitiveness [1]. However, achieving these business goals would be impossible without quality staff.

One example of an industry that would not be sustainable in the long-term without adequate and stable staff is the hospitality industry, which is one of the largest and fastest-growing industries in the 21st century [2]. The global hospitality industry generates 8.8 billion USD in gross domestic product (GDP), and supports 319 million jobs, representing 10.4% of total employment in 2018 [3]. While the overall employment in manufacturing is decreasing, it is increasing in the hospitality industry. The share of global employment in tourism is higher than in the automotive and chemical industries combined. The employment growth forecast for tourism over the next two decades is 1.9% on a year-to-year basis, which is 0.7% more than the growth forecast for the global economy. These facts indicate that work in the hospitality industry is attracting an increasing number of people. An important task for managers is to ensure the continuous development and stability of human

resources by properly coordinating their activities, thereby enhancing the quality of the tourism services provided [3], while also taking sustainability into account.

The job opportunities on offer in the hospitality industry do not have a positive reputation in the labor market. The lack of a qualified workforce is a result of decreasing population development and growing opportunities for employment abroad. Employment in the hospitality industry is challenging, and what is required of employees in terms of service provision is constantly increasing. The final effect for customers is the result of a combination of performances of various employees, and is dependent on the performance and behavior of each one of them. The robotization option is of minimal benefit, and the service provided cannot be rectified afterwards.

Domestic and foreign guests stay at hotels, with each guest having specific requirements and individual expectations of the same basic service. The scope and quality of the services provided also depend on the category and type of hotel, seasonality, clientele, and the external environment. It is assumed that qualified employees trained to work in the hospitality industry are able to meet customer's needs [4]. We understand employee professionalism to be a combination of vocational training, practical experience, relationship to work, a disciplined approach to customers, and taking responsibility for guest satisfaction. Employees achieve high performance when they anticipate, understand, and meet customers' needs. The required qualifications for potential employees are also adapted in accordance with the nature of the work [5]. A specific feature of the hospitality industry is that almost 45% of jobs do not require professional qualifications. Thus, individuals with a lower degree of vocational education and training for performing simple work tasks are given an opportunity to obtain employment [6,7]. Employees with a high level of professional competence, who are qualified, and theoretically and practically prepared for socially demanding work, are also needed in hotels. On the other hand, not all hospitality industry graduates from secondary schools and universities meet the prerequisites for management work in this challenging environment: organizing working times and maintaining quality personal contact with different customers at a relatively low rate of pay [8].

The work behavior and loyalty of employees belonging to different age groups and with different levels of education have been the focus of a number of scientific discussions [9–11]. We defer to experts' conclusions that qualifications are obtained between the age of 20–30 years of age; the age 31–49 is when most activities and achievements are carried out; and the age of 50+ is the most advantageous time in terms of social capital and experience [12]. Davis and Haltiwanger [13], in examining the impact of age and educational diversification on employee departures, found that there was a higher rate of turnover among young and low-skilled employees, while gender differences were not so significant.

In the hospitality industry, employees are the most valuable resource of each hotel in terms of ensuring its strength and sustainability. As Tarkang Mary and Ozturen [14] claim, employee conduct affects the effectiveness and productivity of the whole organization. Therefore, the task of hotel management is not to verbally declare the need for and importance of employees, but rather to be aware of their work, needs, and expectations, to take an interest in their opinions, and to create an appropriate working environment and a common corporate culture in the workplace. Satisfied and motivated employees achieve quality performance, and are interested in providing quality service because they feel supported by hotel management.

According to Stamolampros et al. [15], leadership and cultural values are better predictors of high employee satisfaction, while career progression is a critical reason for employee turnover. Work dissatisfaction is the primary reason for leaving employment.

According to a previous analysis of staff turnover in Slovak hotels [16], employee turnover may significantly affect hotel operation, and therefore business sustainability. High turnover is characterized by cost intensification related to employee dismissals, as well as the selection and recruitment of a new member of staff, and their adaptation and performance development. More than 52% of the total cost related to the employee's departure is related to a decrease in performance, and 14% is related to the training [16]. Therefore, it is crucial to monitor, prevent, and accordingly respond to employee turnover.

The subject of our research is the examination of the current state of employment and the reasons for employee turnover in independent and chain hotels in Slovakia based on age category and level of education. The intention is to compare our research results with foreign research studies and apply age management in order to achieve a competitive advantage and the use of human potential with respect to different age groups.

## 2. Theoretical Knowledge

The hospitality industry is an important part of the tourism sector as by providing accommodation, food and drink services, and complementary services, it satisfies the needs of customers and tourism visitors [17]. In terms of the nature of work, it is a product based on service [18]. In the hospitality industry, the services are provided by hotels, which in addition to accommodation, also provide food and drink services related to the stay and active leisure [19–21]. In the hospitality industry, consumers react immediately to the quality of the product, the service offered, and all other factors influencing their experience [22]. If the customer is satisfied, he/she generates more demand and thus additional revenue for the hotel. The consumer's reaction is communicated through the chains of production and delivery, often requiring analysis and possibly changes [23]. Hotel employees affect each point of this chain, and based on the interaction with a customer, they modify the development and provision of the products. Therefore, the quality of human potential plays an important role and is a key factor that affects the running of a company, its prosperity, and its sustainable development [24]. A personal approach to customers and the quality of work performed are attributes that enter into the performance and image of the hotel. Professionalism and ethics are essential for employees who come into contact with customers. Reliability, trust, and empathy are the main factors in assessing customer service quality [25]. Maylett and Wride [26] suggested that employees personalize the hotel brand. The brand affects customers' behavior searching for hotels with qualified staff. The longer employees work at a hotel, the better they know customers, their motives, wishes, problems, and unique factors that motivate them to stay loyal. When competent employees leave, there is no guarantee that the quality of services will remain the same.

Employee turnover is an indicator of problems that need to be addressed [27] regarding the company's sustainability on the market, but also an indicator of the stability of efficient and reliable employees. Voluntary turnover results from an employee's decision. Turnover is caused by work dissatisfaction or the need for change caused by organizational, managerial, or personal reasons. Family reasons are another motive for employment change, such as following the partner, health issues, or family member care. We believe that hotel turnover is mainly due to the nature of the work [28], and high turnover is caused by seasonality [29], low qualifications, low wages, working time, and low job satisfaction. Dipietro and Condly [30] made it clear that in the hospitality industry, the entire workforce is being replaced every two years. Most hotels are forced to hire temporary staff in addition to regular employees during the season, which affects job security [31] and causes high employee turnover [32]. The hospitality industry is the largest employer of students and trainees. Different requirements for employees according to the size of the hotel represent another risk factor for employment in the hotel industry. Employers in small and medium-sized hotels require universal skills, instead of specialists who are in demand in large hotels [33].

From a conceptual point of view, it is necessary to follow the so-called potential turnover, which means a possible departure of an employee. Potential turnover is the result of employees' dissatisfaction with the workplace or working conditions. Understanding potential turnover and employee satisfaction will reduce the risk of real turnover. While voluntary turnover is induced by the employee, involuntary but desirable turnover arises from the decision of the hotel management. This is due to organizational changes associated with restructuring and reducing the number of employees, but also poor job performance, employee misconduct [34] or having an inappropriate attitude toward hotel values and standards, disrespect of established rules, and improper ways of conduct [35]. Such a decision strengthens the working atmosphere and positively stimulates the remaining employees. By

recruiting a new employee with a high level of knowledge and practical experience, the hotel gains the knowledge that brings the possible development and stability of current employees [36].

The revelation of turnover causes and understanding of all employees' satisfaction, not just those leaving the hotel, may help management find opportunities to stabilize those employees who contribute positively to the performance and reputation of the hotel. The competitive advantage of the hotel lies in capable and loyal employees, and the negative consequences of their departure endanger all hotel processes.

The structure of workplaces in the hospitality industry is characterized by different educational requirements and job performances of employees [37]. In each hotel, we can observe simple but also more demanding work in terms of the preparation, knowledge, skills, and performance of the employee. The road to hotel management begins with an educational background in hospitality management. In general, higher professional education is required for a hotel managerial career, while it includes a bachelor's or masters degree or significant work experience and special hospitality or business courses [22]. Vocational secondary or higher vocational education combined with practical experience is welcomed to fill jobs requiring specific abilities or skills, and that have personal contact with customers. According to the survey results of satisfaction with the work of employees in the hospitality industry in the U.S., where 197 hotel employees over the age of 18 with various education levels were surveyed, 42.1% of the employees had a bachelor's degree, and 82.2% of the participants were 18 to 39 years of age [38].

Several authors [39–41] focused on the values and differences between the generations of hotel industry employees. The way of life, success, and relationship to superiors were the most appreciated values for all groups, while altruism, intellectual stimulation, safety, independence, and economic return differed among the generations. The baby boom generation, born after World War Two, ranked altruism and intellectual stimulation the highest when compared to other generations. The values of generation X are based on independence and safety, while the generation Y finds economic assessment more important. Similar research was undertaken by Solnet and Hood [42], who predominantly examined generation Y in hotels and concluded that representatives of this generation make social contacts easy, which may be prosperous for the hotel industry. Generation Z was the research subject of Goh and Lee [43]. Research findings confirmed the positive attitude of this generation toward the hospitality industry regarding its characteristics as an exciting sector where one works with people and which offers travel possibilities.

The loss of external customers is a negative signal for a hotel [44–46]. By losing the internal customer of the hotel—the employee himself—the hotel can lose not only external customers but also the competitive advantage that the high performing employee brings. The departure of employees linked to the outflow of long-term customers negatively affects the hotel, as customers may have ties to the employee. Predominantly those employees whom the employer wishes to retain will most likely leave [47]. According to Vasquez [48] and Harter [49], the secret of stabilization is in the appreciation of employees' opinions and the results of their work by management. Mohammad [50] emphasized a personal approach to employees, focusing on their engagement and respect. We understand employees' retention as a long-term and multidimensional process in which the objectives, interests, needs, and values of the employee (1), the level of working life and corporate culture of the hotel (2), and the labor market situation (3) are decisive.

The acquisition and retention of quality employees, resulting from brand attractiveness, represent an important part of hotel strategy. Employer branding accentuates a strong brand for potential and current employees [51–53]. Hotels, which over the years have built their brands through attractive products, possess better prerequisites for gaining quality workforce and talented individuals. Chhabra, Sharma [54], and Matzsin [55] identified the common organizational attributes of a strong brand, such as employee benefits, career development, clear workplace profile, vision, corporate culture, strengthening of the employee position, training and development, supporting and encouraging colleagues, innovative employer workflows, human relationships at the workplace, work organization, safety, respect and

recognition, good relationships with managers, customer orientation, and self-identification with work and co-workers. While the result of employer branding is to attract and retain capable and talented employees, the role of human resource management (HRM) is to fill a concrete workplace with appropriate candidates for work in the hotel industry [56].

### 3. Materials and Methods

An increase of achieved education level, life expectancy, and income per inhabitant represent a positive trend of population development in Slovakia. Slovakia ranks 38<sup>th</sup> according to the Human Development Index (0.855) when comparing 189 countries [57]. As a result of globalization and economics transformation after 1989, it belongs to the transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). In the TOP 500 organisation's evaluation, Slovakia ranked fifth out of 12 Central or Eastern Europe countries. The criteria for assessing and selecting the largest companies were turnover and its growth or decline compared to the previous year, profit, employment, and unemployment. The results of economic development and employment are closely linked to the education level and the standard of living in the country. When comparing the data, including the age and education of the economically active population in 2018 and 2009 (Table 1), the number of employees increased in all age groups, while mostly among employed people aged over 60 (+4%). The level of educational achievement among employed people continued to rise mostly due to the number of employees with university education (+8%). The largest fall, by 7%, was among employees with lower secondary education.

**Table 1.** Age and education of employed people.

	Indicators	Total		Age Groups				
		Education	%	15–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60+
Education 2019	Basic	99.8	3.86	18.3	24.7	23.4	24.6	8.8
	Lower Secondary	618.2	23.87	64	124.5	201.4	182.6	45.7
	Upper Secondary	1182.9	45.68	244.6	301.5	317.8	257.6	61
	Bachelor Degree	84.4	3.26	26	31.4	17.9	7.2	2
	Master Degree	575.8	22.24	99.3	192.2	142.5	102.6	39.2
	PhD Degree	28.2	1.09	1.1	15.9	6.7	2.3	2.1
	Total	2589.3	100	453.3	690.2	709.7	577.3	158.8
Education 2009	Basic	88.1	3.78	12.1	11.9	20	41	3.1
	Lower Secondary	715.3	30.71	100.9	203.8	203.6	195.9	15.7
	Upper Secondary	1112.2	37.74	284.2	333.6	281.6	188.6	19.7
	Bachelor Degree	39.6	1.70	17.5	12.9	6.9	2.1	0.2
	Master Degree	366.5	15.73	86.2	102.9	88.8	74.3	14.2
	PhD Degree	7.9	0.34	0.2	2.4	2	1.8	1.5
	Total	2329.6	100	501.1	667.5	602.9	503.7	54.4

Source: Own processing according to Statistical office of Slovak Republic [58].

This paper analyzes the age and educational diversification of employees in four-star and five-star hotels in Slovakia and its impact on employees' turnover. Independent hotels prevail in the Slovak hotel market. According to statistics [59], 651 hotels are registered in Slovakia, from which 57 are a part of hotel companies and hotel groups. Hotels with the highest standard and quality of provided services were a part of the research. These were hotels with four or five stars (overall 183 hotels, where 144 were independent hotels equivalent to 78.69% and 39 were chain hotels, equivalent to 21.31%). Hotels of national and multinational hotel companies made up part of the chain hotels.

The method of sociological inquiry was used for data collection. Questionnaires were sent to accessible e-mail addresses of all the hotels, and namely to the hotel managers, who closely cooperated with us. Of these, 128 hotels (from which 32 are chain hotels and 25% of total) were willing to cooperate. Each hotel is represented by one respondent from top hotel management or the chief of the hotel department. Besides managers, other employees were included in the sociological inquiry. From the total number of 1085 respondents, 48 were top managers, 80 were chiefs of different hotel operation

departments, and 957 were other employees. The questionnaire was designed for two groups of hotels, namely independent and chain operations.

Collected data were re-coded and processed into a data matrix in Microsoft Excel. Following, we used selected mathematical and statistical methods in PASW SPSS 19 (software sourced from IBM, New York, United States) with a 95% reliability, where  $\alpha = 0.05$ . We used absolute and relative frequency, the Spearman correlation coefficient, Levene's test, the Friedman test, and the Wilcoxon test.

The Spearman correlation coefficient is used to prove the existence of a dependence of employees' turnover on age and education. Levene's test is used to examine the difference between the two groups of employees (of chain and independent hotels) in one measured characteristic (evaluation of potential turnover factors). The Friedman test is used when examining the order of reasons for potential turnover. It is a non-parametric test that is commonly used to test the difference among several related samples, and it generalizes the results. The Wilcoxon test measures the equality of means, and was used to determine statistically significant differences in the order of the reasons for fluctuation (multiple-scaled question).

#### 4. Empirical Results

1085 employees of four- and five- star hotels in Slovakia participated in the research. Their diversity is explained in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Research sample.

Identification Data		Absolute (Count)				Relative (%)			
		Top Managers	Chiefs	Employees	$\Sigma$	Top Managers	Chiefs	Employees	$\Sigma$
Gender	Men	36	35	288	359	75	43.75	30.09	33.09
	Women	12	45	669	726	25	56.25	69.91	66.91
Age	up to 29	0	15	368	383	0	18.75	38.45	35.29
	30–39	30	20	212	262	62.5	25.00	22.15	24.15
	40–49	6	25	184	215	12.5	31.25	19.23	19.82
	50–59	6	16	140	162	12.5	2.00	14.63	14.93
	60+	6	4	53	63	12.5	5.00	5.54	5.81
Education	Basic	0	0	40	40	0	0	4.18	3.69
	Lower Secondary	0	5	248	253	0	6.25	25.91	23.32
	Upper Secondary	0	50	443	493	0	62.5	46.29	45.44
	Bachelor	4	15	66	85	8.33	18.75	6.90	7.83
	Master	40	10	159	209	83.33	12.5	16.62	19.26
	PhD	4	0	1	5	8.33	0	0.10	0.46

From the total number of chiefs of departments, 23 were food service managers, 20 were front office and lodging managers, 12 were human resource managers, 8 were sale managers, 7 were public relations and fundraising managers, 4 were financial managers, 3 were event managers, and 3 were marketing managers. The employees participating into the research are waiters (25%), front office assistants (22%), cooks (11%), hotel maids (10%), human resources referents (7%), wellness centre employees (6%), events assistants (5%), concierges (4%), hotel housekeepers (4%), bartenders (4%), and director assistants (2%). According to the educational structure, most of the employed respondents achieved upper secondary education (45.44%), while 92% of the questioned top managers, 12.5% of the chiefs, and 16.72% of the other employees accomplished university studies—either a Masters or PhD. The share of employed women was 66.91%. A total of 59.44% of respondents were employees who were not older than 40 years, while 34.75% of respondents were between 40–59 years, and the least numerous age group concerned respondents over 60 years, where 5.81% of respondents were employed. A total of 749 of respondents (representing 69%) were employed in independent hotels, while 336 were employed (31%) in chain hotels.

A total of 47.06% of the examined hotels follow the rate of turnover among employees. Between 20–30% of managers use only an estimation. Voluntary turnover varies between 17–63.5%.

We focus on respondents' turnover, taking into account their age. We assume that generation Y (born between the early 1980s and the end of the millennium) change their employment more often than the older and more experienced generations of employees. As Kampf et al. [60] stressed, in the early stages of working life, employees preferred a highly competitive environment. They need to feel appreciated and recognized in their workplace, and they are willing to learn and grow as well. However, if their work environment does not offer these options, they will leave without hesitation.

The interdependence between the age and turnover of individuals employed in hotels was tested on  $\alpha = 0.05$  by the Spearman correlation coefficient. The examined relationship proved to be statistically insignificant ( $\text{Sig} = 0.342 > 0.05$ ).

The age group of 15–40 years employees includes 645 respondents, which represents 59.44% of the total. In order of occurrence, 38% of these employees had changed employers 3 times during their working life, followed by 26% who had changed employers 4 times, 21% who had changed employers 2 times, 13% who had just changed employers once, and only 2% who had changed employers five times in their career. The respondents representing the age group 40 years and younger changed employers on average 2.83 times. Half (50%) of respondents over 40 had changed employment five times, 25% had changed employment four times, and 2% had changed employment three times. On average, they changed employers 4.25 times. According to these results, the millennials do not tend to fluctuate any more significantly than the older generation. On average, younger respondents changed employers 1.42 times less during their working life than the older respondents. Thus, the development of millennials' future turnover, according to the number of years in an active age ahead, is questionable.

When comparing the younger generation (up to 40) and the older generation (40 years old and more), looking at the number of years employed and the number of employment changes during their career, we find that the respondents over 40 are more stable. These respondents have changed their employment on average every 6.65 years, while the younger ones changed their employment every 3.68 years on average. Based on these results, it is obvious that older respondents are more stable (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Turnover of respondents according to age.

Number of Employers	Number of Respondents' Changes of Employers					
	Up to 29 Years		30–39 Years		41–50 Years	
	%	2 Groups	%	2 Groups	%	2 Groups
1	14	1–2—35%	11	1–2—32%	-	
2	21	2–3—68%	21	2–3—47%	-	
3	47	3–4—61%	26	3–4—68%	25	2–3—25%
4	14	4–5—18%	42		25	3–4—50%
5	4		-		50	4–5—75%
Total	100		100		100	

According to the research findings, it is not possible to assume that the respondent's age significantly affects the possibility of obtaining employment, nor it is possible to assume that age negatively influences work performance. On the contrary, 79% of questioned top managers and chiefs welcome the presence of different age categories in hotels, as it eases mutual education, sharing of knowledge, capabilities, and experiences. However, the acquisition and retention of qualified employees is challenging. As confirmed by managers involved in the research, the requirements for employees' acquisition are changing. In the past, they were looking for people who were capable of meeting specific and often very strict requirements, either in education or in working experiences, professionalism, and language competencies. Nowadays, they are more open-minded when seeking and hiring new employees, and they are rather looking for soft skills rather than education, language

competencies, and everything else that can be taught directly in the hotel. They are predominantly looking for personalities they can continually work with on their development, and those who find employment in the hotel industry satisfying and fulfilling. Top managers and chiefs conclude that branding is crucial, and find it important for all hotels to start the changes from the inside, among themselves. Employees create hotel products and offer a complex experience to the guests. It is to their benefit if the guest returns.

We examined whether a statistically significant relationship between the highest educational achievement of individuals working in the surveyed hotels and their turnover exist. Spearman's correlation coefficient at a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  proved indirect dependence ( $r_s = -0.172$ ;  $\text{Sig} = 0.001$ ). This means that with the increasing education level of employees, turnover slightly decreases. Therefore, the sentence of Davis and Haltiwanger [13] was proved right that a higher turnover rate might be observed with low qualified employees. Workplaces with the highest turnover are typically those with the lowest education level such as waiters, maids, kitchen staff, cleaners, front office assistants, and bartenders. The most stable workplace roles are the chef, sous-chef, and all managerial posts.

For each employer, it is necessary to understand the origins of employees' potential turnover, in order to prevent it. Respondents evaluated the importance of factors that caused the termination of employment on the Likert scale (1–5). Research results based on Levene's test ( $\text{Sig} = 0.001$ ) suggest that the origins of potential turnover differ in the chain and independent hotels. The causes of employee turnover were examined separately for chain and independent hotels.

When calculating the arithmetic mean, we understood all Likert scale values (1–5) having the same importance. The arithmetic mean has a more significant impact on the potential termination of employment the closer it is to 1. Vice versa, if the arithmetic mean is higher than 3, the analyzed factor is not significant. While the key reason of potential turnover in chain hotels is a better job offer, in independent hotels, it is insufficient wages (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Causes of potential turnover.

Causes	Chain Hotels			Independent Hotels		
	Average Value	Rank by Average	Rank by Wilcoxon Test	Average Value	Rank by Average	Rank by Wilcoxon Test
Career and education development	2.67	11	4	1.80	2	2
Wage	1.92	3	2	1.61	1	1
Employee benefits	2.25	4	2	3.11	14	4
The work place does not meet expectations	1.90	2	2	2.20	8	2
Management work style, uniformity	2.41	6	3	2.91	13	4
Atmosphere at the workplace	2.43	7	3	1.98	5	2
Possibility of self-realization	2.53	10	4	2.13	7	2
Dissatisfaction with working conditions	2.49	8	4	2.09	6	2
Work–life imbalance	2.51	9	4	2.21	9	2
Long working hours/ shift work	2.38	5	3	2.23	10	3
Job security	3.10	13	5	2.34	12	3
Better job offer	1.65	1	1	1.92	4	2
I do not feel like I'm part of the hotel	3.12	14	5	2.28	11	3
Demanding work	2.79	12	5	1.82	3	2

Note: 1—agree, 5—disagree.

The results were processed by the Friedman test and Wilcoxon test. In the case of chain hotels, the Friedman test ( $\text{Sig} = 0.001$ ) ranked the motifs in a similar order based on the average. Following, the Wilcoxon test of statistically significant differences confirmed this alignment at only five levels ( $p < 0.05$ ). We assume that a better job offer is the main reason for the potential leaving of employment in chain hotels. Other important factors include wages, employee benefits, and unmet expectations.

On the other hand, the relatively least important factors are demanding work, job security, and a lack of identification with the chain hotel brand.

In the case of independent hotels, the Friedman test ( $\text{Sig} = 0.001$ ) confirmed the alignment of factors according to average values. The Wilcoxon test ( $p = 0.001$ ) showed that a statistically significant difference between the four groups of reasons for potential termination of employment (Table 4) exists. Wages (1) seem to be the most important cause, followed by reasons such as (2) career and education development, demanding work, a better job offer, inadequate atmosphere at the workplace, inappropriate work conditions, (im)-possibility of self-realization, unmet expectations related to the workplace, and work–life imbalance. The least relevant factors are management work style (uniformity) and employee benefits.

One of the contemporary chain hotel managers explained the turnover causes in the chain and independent hotels as follows: “I experienced a small family hotel in which employees worked for a long time and were satisfied, similarly as in a top chain hotel. It is always about people. I think that remuneration, appreciation of abilities, the possibility of promotion, and the way of communication with managers can be applied without differences. Transparency, clearer communication, planning, and a feeling of security may be expected in chain hotels. On the other hand, better personal relationships, working time, and salary flexibility may be typical of independent hotels. ”

Looking at the potential stability of respondents' employment, the independent hotels seem to be in a more challenging situation. More than half of respondents (52%) are rather or almost certainly considering leaving the hotel as a result of their dissatisfaction at work. A minority (13%) of respondents said they would leave definitely. The situation is more stable in chain hotels, where only 108 (32%) of respondents are considering leaving the hotel, while 68% are satisfied with their work. Almost 7% of respondents are more seriously considering leaving the hotel. To sum up, we assume that 480 respondents are not thinking about leaving the hotel, which is almost 44.24% of the total, while 44.36% are considering leaving, with 11.4% of this group stating they would most probably or surely leave.

Employees of chain hotels are more flexible and loyal from the point of view of employment in one hotel. They find the length of employment of up to one year to be the most suitable for verifying their skills for the work they do (30%). Employment lasting one to 10 years is appropriate in terms of gaining work experience and career development (57%), and 13% of chain hotels' employees find it right to change the employment after 10 years or more. According to 68% of respondents, the ideal time for an employment change in independent hotels is up to five years, so that the work remains a challenge and they do not think about working in the same hotel over 10 years.

## 5. Conclusions and Discussion

Employee turnover jeopardizes a company's sustainability in the market; therefore, it should be addressed. In Slovakia, it has been recently studied nationwide [61], but also partially in hotels [16]. However, previous research did not focus on the employee structure in terms of their age and education as an essential feature.

This paper analyzed age and education diversification in four- and five- star hotels in Slovakia. Statistical tests confirmed the link between employee turnover and the educational level of employees, similarly to Davis and Haltiwanger [13], who attributed higher turnover to low-qualified employees. On the contrary, the correlation between turnover and age was rejected.

The decisive reason for potentially leaving employment in chain hotels is a better job offer, which may be related to wages, a better work position, development conditions, better working conditions, or other factors, while wages are the most important factor in independent hotels. The research results of employee turnover in four- and five-star hotels in Slovakia correspond with the conclusions of the 2018 national survey [61], which encompassed 11,713 respondents. The main motivating factors for employment change and leaving include: (1) low wages (37%), (2) insufficient conditions of development and self-realization (23%), (3) managers' work style (15%), (4) poor working conditions

(13%), and (5) lack of free time (12%). Stress situations do not sustain the feeling of satisfaction, either. Up to 49% of respondents said they experience stress at work at least several times per week.

The employee turnover rate may—but does not have to—differ in the chain and independent hotels. There are many family-run, independent hotels with a well-developed system that can stabilize staff. It is important to set up the system to meet specific and local needs, whether it is a chain or an independent hotel. The differences lie in turnover causes. Employees from hotels with up to 50 staff members leave because of non-existing possibilities of career development, cumulative work, shift work, and work–life imbalance. The same findings may be observed in the works of Younsoo, Dickson [62], and Burns [63]. The main reason for turnover in independent hotels is non-transparency, low wages, and a lack of career development opportunities. A high share of labor cost is typical for the hospitality industry: equivalent to 40–50% of the total hotel costs. The gross monthly wage of respondents is low, and varies between 700–1000 EUR; the average wage of top managers and chiefs is about 1300–1600 EUR. We assume that it is important to openly discuss the wages, content, and demands of the work performed, as well as provided employee benefits and opportunities for professional growth when recruiting hotel employees. The quality of the employee selection system has been identified as one of the most important factors in the stabilization of competent employees, as similarly outlined in the study of Davidson and Wang [64]. Employee satisfaction represents the basic prerequisite for retention. Only 31% of examined hotels regularly assess job satisfaction and the reasons for potential turnover.

According to research conducted abroad [65–67], it is obvious that employees working in a hotel for an extended time are more aligned with its policy and guidelines, and thus can adapt faster to changes and perform better than those who change employment often. As confirmed by the results of our research, the younger generation belongs to those employees. We support the conclusions of the study of Baum et al. [68] that in the context of the sustainable management of the younger generations in the hospitality industry, the biggest challenges are related to the management of the turnover culture. The desires of young people for an exciting and challenging career include objectives that the hospitality industry can do more to meet. Another option, which complies with Wood [69], is the cooperation of hotels with local authorities and residents living near the hotel. Individuals are looking for employment near their homes and are trying to balance work and personal life, and in doing so, they remain loyal to one employer for longer. Another possibility is to employ older and high-performing employees who are over 50. The arguments supporting this decision include higher loyalty, work experience, professional customer care, responsibility, and work ethics. In general, these are employees who usually have a family and thus need to settle down. The disadvantages include decreasing motivation, distrust in further education, declining self-confidence, speed of work tasks solution, and declining perception and reasoning abilities. As proved by undertaken research [70], age discrimination may be observed in some hotels. Managers also believe that employees over 50+ are less productive and cannot understand the needs of younger guests. On the contrary, the trend of increasing life expectancy and extension of retirement age supports the decision of balanced age management, where younger and older employees have equal conditions for self-fulfillment.

Hospitality industry turnover is challenging not only for independent hotels but chain hotels as well. It is recommended to all managers to understand the factors of potential turnover and to create a stabilizing environment at the workplace, where all employees feel motivated and supported [71]. According to a global survey [72], employees' satisfaction is directly proportional to the level of engagement and positive perception of the brand of a responsible employer. Quality employees need to be appreciated and get the opportunity to learn and grow. Meeting these conditions is difficult for independent hotels with a lean organizational structure and a high degree of job accumulation, but it is not unrealistic. Therefore, internal motivation and personal dedication to work at the hotel is required. Education is important too, but when the relationship to the work done is missing, it becomes secondary. In this context, Shao et al. [73] highlighted the need for socially responsible human

resource management, whose application, inter alia, gradually transforms employee responsibility awareness into organizational competitiveness and sustainable development.

The role of the hotel manager when managing the work of employees is changing and extends to the level of psychologists and human relations managers. A chain hotel's advantage is that it bears the well-known name and operates under a brand with built-in brand awareness, and thus is ahead of an independent hotel in the context of image and reputation. An identification of the advantages and disadvantages of employment in independent and chain hotels in Slovakia and abroad represents the subject of further research. It emerges from the assumptions of the chain hotels' top managers. Even as hotel chains organize online job training courses and created job portals with an overview of job offers around the world, interest in the hotel industry employment is still slightly decreasing. Hotel school graduates prefer employment abroad, where at the same workplaces they get paid double the wage. Another possible option is to employ residents of Third World countries. However, as Štefko [74] claimed, the process of employing residents of Third World countries is administratively unresolved due to inflexible foreign policies of governments.

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