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# A Study on Employee Turnover in Shanghai's Fine Dining Restaurants

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A STUDY ON EMPLOYEE TURNOVER IN SHANGHAI'S FINE DINING  
RESTAURANTS

by

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## **PART ONE**

### **Introduction**

In China, restaurant industry has developed rapidly at an average rate of 19.3 percent over a four-year period from 2006 to 2009 (Deloitte Report, 2011). However, while the number of restaurants increased by 1.3 percent in 2012, the supply of labor decreased by 18 percent, suggesting potential labor shortage (Ministry of Commerce of China, 2012). Deloitte's report further states that events such as the Beijing Olympics, Shanghai Expo and Guangzhou Asian games generated a huge demand on qualified restaurant employees who can speak English and have experience, which exacerbated the shortage of labor supply and made the issue more pressing. In Shanghai, the EXPO 2010 created a lack of 500,000 employees for the hospitality industry (Zhu, 2010). The massive demand for qualified restaurant staff provided enormous opportunities for experienced food and beverage professionals, causing an increase in turnover.

The negative effects of employee turnover include decrease in productivity, loss in profit and revenue, and increase in costs (Tracey & Hinkin, 2008). Over the past 50 years, organizational researchers have devoted a great deal of attention to the study of employee turnover (Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003; March & Simon, 1958; Mobley, 1977). In the US, turnover rate for employees in the restaurants-and-accommodations sector was 62.6 percent in 2013, compared to a 42.2 percent turnover rate in the overall private sector (National Restaurant Association, 2014). In China's big cities such as Beijing, Guangzhou and Shanghai, the turnover rate is about 30 percent-45 percent, much higher than the national level of 5 percent to 10 percent (Deloitte Report 2011).

Shanghai is home to the largest restaurant industry in China. Total sales of mid-to-high end restaurants in China went up 13 percent to \$10.3 billion (US Department of Agriculture). The demand for fine dining experiences in Shanghai is strong because of two reasons: First, Shanghai has the highest income per capital among all cities in China (Shanghai Year book, 2013); and second, Shanghai has the second largest international population, who have a much higher income than most Chinese and can afford fine dining restaurants, especially western restaurants (Shanghai Facts 2013). Therefore, it is worthwhile to study the turnover phenomenon of the fine dining restaurants segment in Shanghai and attempt to determine the reasons why people leave the company.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to help fine-dining restaurant managers understand the major causes of employee turnover for better human resources practices and decision making in an effort to reduce turnover rate.

### **Problem Statement**

The problem addressed in this study focuses on identifying factors that contribute to voluntary employee turnover in fine-dining restaurants in Shanghai. Reviewing the importance of individual factors has the potential to provide tools for management to find solutions to the problem.

The main problem has three research objectives: first, to find out what factors influence the employee turnover rate; second, whether internal or external factors play a more important role in the phenomenon, and third, among these factors, which ones have a more significant impact on people's decision of leaving the organization. By answering these questions, restaurant managers can make better decision on employee recruitment, training

and retention, so as to achieve the goals of quality and consistent customer service, which is crucial for the profit and reputation of fine-dining restaurants.

### **Justification**

The product and service quality in fine dining restaurants can be hard to maintain if the turnover rate is high since there is a higher requirement for skills and knowledge in this specific segment. These requirements are: first, adequate English skill; second, food, wine and beverage knowledge; third, an outgoing personality and good social skills. These qualities are not easy to find in people from rural area, who constitute 80 percent of the supply for the hospitality industry (Ministry of Commerce of China, 2012). Restaurant managers understand the importance of maintaining the current staff team, so they try hard to determine why people decide to leave. Many restaurants put a good amount of time, effort, and money in training their staff to achieve the above requirements, but turnover can compromise these investments.

By reviewing the current literature, this research will provide restaurant managers insight into factors that contribute to employee turnover and the retention programs that have been used in that past.

### **Rationale**

There is a paucity of research on restaurant employee turnover in the fine-dining restaurant segment in Shanghai, which is a gap that this research paper attempts to fill.

### **Constraints**

The biggest constraint of this research is inadequate information about the fine-dining segment in Shanghai. However, because of the nature of a professional paper, the researcher is not collecting primary data. The research will be highly relied upon the current western

literature under the assumption that the analysis and practices could be generalized to the research target under certain circumstances.



## **PART TWO**

### **Literature Review**

The literature review of this study consists of three parts. The first part will set a background of the study by reviewing the definition of fine dining restaurant, as well as the restaurant industry and labor market in Shanghai. The second part will examine the negative effects and costs of employee turnover, as well as the theories on turnover models and factors. The third part will discuss the theories and past practices on employee retention to give insights on possible retention practices in Shanghai.

#### **Fine Dining Restaurants and Shanghai**

This section will firstly discuss the definition of fine dining restaurants and why they need more competent staff, secondly the development of the hospitality industry in Shanghai, and finally the market demand for fine dining experiences, as well as the labor market supply for fine dining establishments.

#### **Definition of Fine Dining Restaurants**

The Culinary Institute of America (2009) defined fine dining restaurants as “Establishments which offer luxurious and comfortable surroundings, usually including tabletop silver, china, linen, and crystal. A typical menu usually offers many choices as well as specials. The wine list is appropriately extensive and well paired to the food. A sommelier may be on hand to help guests. The service staff attends to every detail of the guests’ experience in a fine dining restaurant. The pace of service is leisurely, which befits the elegance of a meal that may last three hours or more” (p.40).

This definition implies that besides the physical environment and luxury décor, it is the quality of food and beverage (F&B), as well as the service that separates fine dining

restaurants from other segments of the restaurant industry, such as mid-scale, casual dining and fast food. The quality of both F&B products and service is determined by human factors, which suggests the quality of employees is crucial to any restaurants.

Clark and Wood (1999) contended that food quality is the primary determinant of customer loyalty. Also, Koo, Tao and Yeung (1999) reported that food plays the most important decision driver in customer's restaurant selection process. While food is the most important factor for first-time customers' intention to recommend, the service factor is the only significant variable influencing repurchases intention in the repeat customer group (Kwun & Oh, 2007). Maintaining the service standard is very important to customer satisfaction. Kivelat, Inbakaran, and Reece (2000) stated that the variables having significant impact on intentions (return and recommend) are: first and last impressions, service excellence, food excellence, ambiance excellence, and reservation. Employees play an important part in taking reservations, forming impressions, providing service, making food, and creating part of the ambiance. A well-trained staff team is essential to the excellence of these critical variables.

Kwun and Oh (2007) confirmed that enhanced performance in service and product quality and physical environments increases the customer's perceptions of overall restaurant performance and customer behavioral intentions. Employee competence is the most important brand association in fine dining. Njite (2008) stated that in fine dining establishments, customers and servers interact for an extended period of time and customers expect a high level of personalization and employee competence. Customer relation is perceived as the most important attribute for restaurant performance, which implies that it is a

primary criterion when a patron selects a fine dining restaurant (Njite, 2008). Njite also stated that employee competence is the knowledge and skill that restaurant employees possess in order to present adequate service for the guests and it is ranked the second important attributes in customer intentions. Customer relations and employee competence weighted 63% among all the returning and recommending decision drivers, which implies fine dining restaurant managers should carefully manage the interaction between customers and employees and implement sufficient training to increase job competence.

Kwun and Oh (2007) claimed that although the fine dining share in the restaurant segment is considered small, it's important because it leads in trends of service and food. And as the client base of fine dining restaurant is smaller, repeat business is more important.

### **Fine Dining in Shanghai**

There are a substantial number of fine dining restaurants in Shanghai. It has China's largest restaurant industry with total sales of \$10.3 billion for mid-to-high end restaurants, increased by 13% in 2010 compared to 2009 (US Department of Agriculture, 2010). There are several reasons for adequate demand for fine dining options. First, the per capital income of Shanghai is \$7308.5, the highest among all cities in China (Shanghai Statistics Bureau, 2013). Second, there are 172,551 people from other countries in Shanghai, the second largest international population in China (Shanghai Statistics Bureau, 2013). This group has a much higher disposable income and very different palate from normal Chinese people, and constitutes a huge percentage of the demand for fine dining restaurants. *City Weekend* and *Timeout Shanghai* are two magazines only targeting high income foreigners in Shanghai and feeding them information on high-end dining, retail, housing, and so on. Third, the MICE

(Meeting, Incentives, Conference and Exhibition) market in Shanghai continues to grow at a double digit rate, which brings in more and more business travelers, boosting the demand on fine dining offers (Shanghai Statistics Bureau, 2014). Also, Chadha and Husband (2006) stated that China has entered a stage of “show-off” in which people are eager to display their wealth by purchasing luxury items and experiences. Fine dining experiences are clearly among one of them.

There is a lack of empirical research on employee turnover causes for Shanghai’s fine dining restaurants, but we can explore and attempt to understand this phenomenon by reviewing the literatures on similar topics. Under certain circumstances, the existing findings might be cautiously generalized to the Shanghai context.

### **Shanghai Labor Market**

In his research on employee turnover in U.S. private clubs, Gustafson (2002) stated that private clubs offer a high level of service, resulting in a need of more staff to fulfill the guests’ expectations. In fine dining restaurants, a server can attend fewer tables because they need to walk more times from the table to their station to serve food and wine, and spend more time to interact with their guests. All food from sauce, appetizers to entrée to dessert is made from scratch so the kitchen requires more staff too.

The Food Industry Statistical Analysis Report suggested a labor shortage due to an increased number of restaurants and decrease of labor supply (Minister of commerce of People’s Republic of China [PRC], 2012). Deloitte’s report further stated that cities like Shanghai hosting events like the World EXPO 2010 have great demand for qualified restaurant staff who can speak English. Zhang and Wu (2004) stated that the labor shortage is

attributable to the rapid increase in numbers of hotels, which creates a great demand to qualified employees, while young graduates are resistant to enter the industry due to its low social image and pay.

Shanghai has a two-tier labor market consisting of urban residents and rural immigrants (Meng and Zhang, 2001), while rural immigrants constitute 80% of the supply for the hospitality industry (Ministry of Commerce of PRC, 2012). Meng and Zhang stated that the two tiers of labor are subject to different treatments in terms of occupational opportunities and wages, wherein urban citizens are favored and rural immigrants are discriminated especially in pay. Zhan and Huang (2013) argued that the supply of rural labor force has decreased because of the pro-rural policies adapted by the Chinese government after 2000, which enabled rural people to pursue a better life by engaging in rural employments, instead of migrating to big cities for jobs.

The rapidly developing hospitality industry in Shanghai offers enormous opportunities for hotel professionals. It is easy for them to find new jobs with higher pay or a better position. The research by Thatcher, Stepina and Boyle (2003) suggested that when employees believe they can easily get a similar position in other companies, they tend to be less satisfied with their job and have higher intention to quit. Rainayee (2013) proposed that perceived external opportunities can significantly increase turnover intention so management should provide more opportunities within the organization to increase the opportunity cost of changing jobs.

### **Negative Effects and Cost of Turnover**

Brandmeir and Baloglu (2005) asserted that there is a correlation between employee

turnover and perceived restaurant performance, including product and service quality, value, and overall performance. The authors reported that both front-of-house and back-of-house employee turnover could result in a negative impact on the guests' perceived performance. Moreover, employee turnover has worse negative effects on customer experience in fine dining restaurants than mid-scale and limited service restaurants.

Ton and Huckman (2007) found that employee turnover has a bigger negative impact on retail stores that have an inadequate compliance of service standards. One other interesting finding is that performance of stores that have low turnover rate is affected more by turnover than stores that already have high turnover rate.

Kacmar, Andrewws, Rooy, Steilberg and Cerrone (2006) investigated the influence of employee and managerial turnover on unit-level performance in fast food establishments. Their results showed that even if the job does not require significant skills, turnover still results in increased waiting time and food waste. In a second item, they reported that the turnover rate of management has a positive correlation with employee turnover.

Hinkin and Tracey (2000) stated that there are five categories (predeparture, recruitment, selection, training, and lost productivity) of 35 turnover costs, but many are miscalculated by management, which leads to an underestimation of the costs of turnover, resulting in the common cutting labor cost practices. Using a modified model proposed in the study, they calculated the turnover cost for different positions and reached the conclusion that the more complicated the work is, the higher the turnover cost. This finding was reconfirmed by Simons and Hinkin (2001). Even for front-line employees, the cost is substantial. For example, the turnover cost for a front desk clerk could be one-third of the position's annual

salary. They contend that poor supervision, lack of training and job related authorization, and poor working conditions are the primary reasons for turnover.

The previous literature citations could be used to provoke questions concerning Kitchen employees in fine dining restaurant having to prepare more complicated dishes and insure a high level of quality at all time, while front of house staff need to have substantial food and beverage knowledge and excellent people skills to maintain the service quality. The complexity of jobs in fine dining facilities is on a much higher level than other segments in the restaurant industry, which means the cost of turnover could be substantially higher. Also as the expectation of fine dining restaurants' target guests are high in both food and service, customer satisfaction is easier to be damaged/lowered by below standard experience.

Lashley (2001) divided turnover costs into two categories: direct costs which link to replacement of former employees; indirect costs which are associated with lost customers and revenue. Training could be considered both direct and indirect since it can be courses that company pay for or the time managers devoted. The notion that "turnover is just the way things are in the industry" is questioned because the results show that the level of turnover is between 12% and 700% in different companies. The difficult part is to measure indirect cost because it's hard to quantify manager opportunity cost, customer dissatisfaction and loss of business due to turnover.

Simons and Hinkin (2001) made an attempt to establish the relationship between turnover phenomenon and loss of profit. Results showed that large hotels with high ADRs have lower level of employee turnover; however the unit level cost for turnover is substantially higher than smaller properties. The reason behind this is that the financial

investment in training and salary for higher end hotels is much more not only because they need more skilled employees to perform more complex tasks and satisfy sophisticated customers, but also because they usually have a more complicated system. The researchers also alleged that employee retention programs for high-rate hotels are more effective and are likely to pay for themselves.

Tracey and Hinkin (2008) compared the turnover costs of the five categories that they proposed in their research in 2000 and find out that productivity loss constitute 52% of total cost in average, the biggest part of turnover cost. Besides reconfirming the findings by Simons and Hinkin (2001) that turnover is more damaging for GOP for large, high tier hotels requiring more skilled employees, this research also discover that independent properties and high-occupancy properties are bearing higher cost of turnover. However, the potential revenue loss from dissatisfied customers who choose not to return was not calculated.

### **Turnover Factors**

Turnover phenomenon is a long studied problem in which some researcher proposed models of turnover factors (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Iverson and Deery, 1997; Mobley, 1977). The negative correlation between employee satisfaction and turnover intention is well established. (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Tian-Foreman, 2009; Griffeth et al., 2000; Hayes et al., 2006; Iverson & Deer, 1997; Chen, Chu, Wang & Lin, 2008; and Duraisingam, Pidd, and Roche, 2009). Employee satisfaction is usually viewed as an intervening variable in a turnover model (Tian-Foreman, 2009).

### **Job Satisfaction Factors**

Tian-Foreman (2009) investigated the correlation between job satisfaction and turnover intention in a chain retail store in China and results showed negative correlations in different



levels. Satisfaction with the job itself, pay, and internal opportunities is strongly correlated with turnover intention, while satisfaction with work conditions, fringe benefits, co-worker relationship are weakly correlated with turnover intention. By comparing the previous western and Chinese literature on job satisfaction and turnover, Tian-Foreman (2009) asserted that job dissatisfaction has negative effects on turnover intention, regardless of cultural differences. Lam, Baum and Pine (2001) reported that managers of restaurants tend to lower their expectations to achieve greater job satisfaction.

#### **Hospitality job image.**

Brien (2004) reported that some employees in the hotel industry viewed their position as “a temporary job until they get a real job” and the industry as “for the inexperienced, funky, and not professional”. In China, there is a similar mind-set discrediting hospitality jobs because Chinese consider serving people as “losing face”. Therefore, well-educated young people are discouraged by the society to pursue a hospitality career (Qiu & Lam, 2004). Moreover, Chinese customers usually show no appreciation to waiters, which could create a hostile working environment (Cohen 2004). The poor image of hospitality jobs prevents young people from entering the industry and creates pressure for the existing professionals, resulting in a higher dropout rate of hospitality jobs.

#### **Pay.**

Lam, Zhang and Baum (2001) argued that pay is the most important fact for employee satisfaction in their study of job satisfaction in Honk Kong’s Chinese restaurants. In a research investigating turnover intention in a retail chain store in China, Tian-Foreman (2009) contended a strong correlation between pay satisfaction and turnover intention. Her research

also showed that the survey subjects were less satisfied with pay than other attributes (Job itself, promotional opportunities, and relationship with supervisor and co-worker). In a website survey that has a sample size of 1260 people, 48% reported a monthly salary between \$500-650 (Shanghai Restaurant Salary Report, 2014) , while the monthly living expense in shanghai is \$444USD (Shanghai Statistics Bureau, 2014). Tipping is not a common practice in China because there is a lack of historical foundation and tip is not listed as a source of income by Chinese law (Gong, 2007). Tipping is more common in fine dining restaurants, but the amount is not substantial. In the hotel restaurants and most of the high-end restaurants, there is a certain percentage of service charge (usually 10 to 15%), which will be kept by the restaurant as part of the revenue. Chung and Heung (2007) reported that this charge might stop people from tipping or tip significantly less.

While the average pay for Shanghainese is substantially lower than most of the developed countries, the cost of living in Shanghai is ranked 21<sup>th</sup> by Economist in its Worldwide Cost of Living Index, more expensive than New York, ranked 20<sup>th</sup> (Economist, 2013). With the amount that restaurant employees are making, it's challenging to live a good life and save up money for their future, which could result in a low pay satisfaction.

### **Occupational group.**

Price (2001) suggested that higher pay, better access to information and higher level of authorization could be the reasons why there is a lower turnover rate among managers than front-line employees. Employees reported the “boredom” of their job more frequently, indicating a lower level of satisfaction with work itself, while managers more often described their job as “meaningful” and had “feeling of accomplishment” (Tian-Foreman, 2009).

Tian-Foreman (2009) also stated a higher turnover intention among front line employees than office workers.

**Relationship with supervisor / co-worker.**

Lam et al. (2001) stated that a harmonious workplace is essential for the satisfaction of Chinese employees. Sims (2007) and Milman (2002) reported that working with nice people is perceived to be the most importance factor when employees evaluate their working experience. Gustafson (2002) pointed out that turnover rate is higher in clubs where managers are not flexible in scheduling and where the working hours are long.

Chen, Tjosvold, and Fang (2005) conducted research in Shanghai and interviewed 111 Chinese employees who worked under expatriate managers to investigate the best way to enhance their relationship and increase productivity. The results showed that when both sides have a cooperative attitude, a problem is easier to solve and their work relationship will be strengthened. This study also showed that language is not the main barrier between Chinese employees and foreign managers. The most frequently identified barriers include way of work, values, and norms.

Most employees of Shanghai's restaurant industry are from rural areas (Minister of Commerce of PRC, 2012). They are not immediately accepted by the host community because of language barriers and cultural differences, which could lead to difficulties at the work place. For example, local employees only help outsiders with minor issues on which they don't need to spend much time or effort (Kwok, 2012).

### **Training and hospitality education.**

Harel and Tzafir (1999) stated that training can increase the competency of employees, as well as their satisfaction with the job itself and the working environment. Choi and Dickson (2009) conducted a case study in two hotels in North America and reported that their manager training programs have a significant positive effect on reducing the turnover rate. Chan and Wyatt (2007) stated that proper training to improve skills that are work-related is essential to job satisfaction for Shanghainese. However, Chen and Waldenberger (2013) reported that many organizations in China haven't started to link the result of training to promotion or pay raise, which increases turnover intention as employees who obtain more skills and knowledge tend to believe that they are in a better position in the job market. Zhang and Wu (2004) stated that hotels in China are unwilling to train employees because well-trained supervisors and managers are in high demand from competitors and companies of other industries. The concern is that they will lose their training investment to a competitor if the employee leaves soon after training. The researchers also pointed out that hotels are not paying attention to newly graduated hotel major students in terms of training and career development, creating pressure for young professionals and lowering their commitment to the company and the industry.

Zhang and Wu (2004) reported that hospitality major students in China have high expectations when they entered the program, however many of them experience a "reality shock" as they learn more about the industry and start working in hotels and restaurants. They also stated that both the degree-seeking and non-degree-seeking hospitality programs don't

equip students with hands-on experience and the faculty also lack of experience and connections in the industry, only teaching according to out dated text books.

### **Promotion and career development.**

Liu (2008) illustrated the significant negative correlation between promotion (consists of promotion intention, opportunity, frequency and policy) and turnover intention in international hotels in China. Benson, Finegold and Mohrman (2004) reported that employees expect pay raises and promotions after they obtain certain skills or a degree, and when the employers fail to meet these expectations, voluntary turnover increased dramatically. Employees who are promoted after completion of the training program showed a reduced turnover intention.

In international hotels in China, top level managerial positions are occupied by expatriate managers, and local managers are facing a glass ceiling in their career (Zhang & Wu, 2004). In the research on satisfaction of restaurant managers, Lam et al. (2001) reported an all-man management built on the “old boy network” within the restaurant industry, which greatly limits the career development opportunities for women.

### **Work life balance.**

Spector et al. (2004) conducted a comparative study of work-life balance in China, Latin America, and some western countries, which established significant correlation between work-family pressure and job satisfaction and well-being. Among all countries, the Chinese reported the highest work and family conflict stress level and the lowest job satisfaction and well-being. Yang, Chen, Choi, and Zou (2000) suggested that demand from work has a greater influence on work-family conflicts in China than in the U.S. because Chinese

consider giving up family life for work a necessary evil in the long term. The restaurant industry is known for having long working hours and a high demand of physical and emotional investment. The most common solution for work-family conflicts is support from extended family (Spector et al., 2004), which is hard to gain in Shanghai because of the limited living space caused by an expensive housing market (Guo & Wu, 2013), and poor parents from villages who cannot provide financial support (Kwok, 2012). Although the studies above indicate that the work life balance is not so good in Shanghai, Chan and Wyatt (2007) found that work life quality has significant positive influence on organizational commitment among Shanghainese, and organizational commitment is known to be an important factor to predict turnover intention (Williams & Hazer, 1986).

### **Hygiene Factors**

Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory stated that if "hygiene factors" such as work conditions, salary, good relationship with supervisors and peers are not achieved, motivating factors such as recognition, achievement, and development opportunities would have no effects on employee's appreciation on the benefits of motivators.

Milman (2002) asserted that working conditions have the greatest impact on turnover intention. However, the hospitality industry is known for poor working conditions such as poor pay, lack of training (Poulston 2005), long hours, high pressure, and difficult customers (Sims, 2007). Poulston (2009) stated that work conditions is a factor that can be fixed the easiest, compared to turnover factor such as the industry's image or abundant external opportunities. A way to improve work conditions is to offer consistent working hours,

implement flexible schedules, conduct orientation and recruit nice people (Ricci & Milman, 2002).

The majority of employees in Shanghai's restaurant industry are from rural areas with limited work experience and education, which leaves them limited choice when they look for a job (Kwok, 2012). Many employers take advantage of this limited choice issue and provide them poor working conditions for the purpose of cost control. Even though the fine dining segment is understaffed, employers still believe rural employees don't deserve good working conditions as basic as decent staff meals and clean toilets. The unfriendly attitudes of local community (Kwok, 2012) and lack of appreciation from customers (Cohen, 2004) could constitute as a hostile working environment and a reduced sense of self-fulfillment (Ricci and Milman, 2002).

### **Job Embeddedness Factors**

Bambacas and Kulik (2013) investigated the relationship between the three variables of job embeddedness and turnover intention. Job embeddedness theory concentrates on three dimensions: first, fit (the level of how comfortable employees feel in their working environment); second, links (the level of how well employees connect with other people within the organization); third, sacrifice (the opportunity cost when an employee leaves the company). They discovered a negative correlation between fit and turnover, which means the more employees feel they fit in the organization, the less the turnover intention. A positive correlation was found between sacrifice and turnover, meaning that the more benefits employees have to give up if they leave, the less likely they would like to leave the organization. In Shanghai, there is a two tier labor market, constituted by people from rural

areas and the city of Shanghai, which results in discriminations such as wage differences and occupational segregation, which means most city residents have white collar jobs while most of rural immigrants can only obtain blue-collar jobs (Meng & Zhang, 2001). Without tips, the salary and benefits in restaurants in China are very limited; therefore, employees don't have to make much financial sacrifice when they decide to leave their job.

### **Individual Factors**

Lam et al. (2001) evaluated employee job satisfaction levels in hotels in Hong Kong and found out that the higher level of education the employee possess, the more likely for them to be dissatisfied and have a bigger intention to leave the company. In Shanghai, restaurant employees with higher education do not get commensurate compensation. For example, people with a college degree can speak better English, which is a requirement for fine dining restaurants, but they have the same pay as other employees holding the same position. This situation might result in higher level dissatisfaction compared to other employees. Multiple studies reported that age, job security, being married, having multiple kids is negatively related to turnover intention (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Deer, 2008; Mobley, 1982; Sims 2007; Tian-foreman, 2009). On the other hand, being a woman, having higher education, being more intelligent, and being more capable is positively related to turnover intention (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Meisler, 2013; Noguerras, 2005; Ramsey, 2007; Jo, 2008; Wren, Berkowitz & Grant, 2011).

### **Employee Retention**

Scholars have discovered and confirmed a significant negative relationship between employee satisfaction and turnover intention (Chen, Chu, Wang & Lin, 2008; Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Duraisingam, Pidd & Roche, 2009; Griffeth et al., 2000; Hayes et al., 2006; Iverson &



Deer, 1997; Tian-Foreman, 2009), which implies that increasing employee satisfaction is the main way to decrease turnover intention.

Herzberg's "two-factors" theory informed that unless the "dissatisfiers" such as working conditions, good relationship with supervisors and peers are eliminated, "motivators" such as cognition, achievement, and development opportunities would not increase employees satisfaction. This theory requires restaurant managers to identify "dissatisfiers" before they implement any motivational policies.

Dipietro and Milman (2004) examined the factors that influence people's decision to stay in quick service restaurants and concluded that working with nice people and being treated humanely have a bigger impact on increasing employees satisfaction and lowering the intention to leave the company. The results are consistent with the study by Milman (2002), which asserted that working conditions such as harmonious workplace, consistent working hours, and clear job responsibilities play a bigger role in people's decision to stay than monetary rewards. In research about job satisfaction among employees of joint venture hotels in Shanghai, Leung and Smith (1996) stated that fairness of pay greatly contributes to employee's job satisfaction so managers should closely monitor the industry's pay level to make employees feel that they are paid fairly. Ricci and Milman (2002) confirmed the findings above and made some suggestions on how to increase the sense of fulfillment and create a better working environment. They contended that managers are responsible to create a more energetic and encouraging workplace to make employees feel more fulfilled. Also, management should focus more on treating employees humanely by showing appreciation,

caring their needs, arranging consistent working hours, and implementing a flexible working schedule.

When the hygiene factors are achieved, the motivators can have proper effects on employee retention. Moncarz and Zhao (2008) proposed a model of employee retention based on the previous studies (Chew, Girardi & Entrekkin, 2005; Kim, Leong & Lee, 2005; US Department of Labor, 1993), and tested the retention factors in the empirical study. The results showed that among the five most identified retention initiatives: corporate culture and communication, work environment and job design, hires and promotions, customer centeredness, and recognition / rewards and compensation, only well communicated culture and organizational mission, and hire and promotion are effective in decreasing employee turnover. According to the findings, researchers advised hotels and restaurants to communicate the company's culture, mission, and direction on their website, at orientation, and through mentor programs. Also, training and reward systems designed to achieve the organizational goals should be implemented to encourage behaviors that add value to the company mission. Bambacas and Kulik (2013) suggested performance appraisals, reward programs, and career development opportunities based on job embeddedness theory.

Deery (2008) studied stress and burnouts caused by work and family conflicts, which plays a significant role in turnover and suggested implementation of work-life balance policies which include flexible working hours, better training and work supports such as day care center for work parents.

Yang, Wan, and Fu (2012) conducted qualitative research on causes of employee turnover and perceived important retention strategies in Taiwan. They suggested career

development that includes promotional opportunities, job enrichment and enlargement, and cross training. They also suggested corporate retention strategies such as understanding employees career ambition, arranging of social activities, and optimizing the working environment. The research by Chan and Wyatt (2007) conducted in Shanghai suggested that companies should implement training programs that could meet people's need to improve work-related skills and knowledge to enhance their job satisfaction and reduce the turnover rate. This research implied that being able to do their job well can earn employees recognition and appreciation from management and customers, which is reported as a significant factor for job satisfaction.

### **Summary**

By reviewing the situation of fine dining restaurants in Shanghai and the city's labor market, we can see there is a gap between labor supply and demand, which contributes to employee's perceived external opportunities and causes high intention to leave. Past literature shows that turnover is costly and loss such as low performance, loss of reputation and loss of revenue are hard to quantify, so management may underestimate the negative effects of employee turnover. This section also reviews the factors that cause employee turnover and how they fit in the Shanghai context. At the end of the section we discuss the past retention practices. Chapter three will propose employee retention strategies based on the discussion of chapter two.

## **PART THREE**

### **Introduction**

Part three consists of two parts. The first part is a summary of the findings generated from the literature review. It will give recommendations on employee retention for restaurant owners and managers according to the findings. The second part is an internal research design that helps managers to find out their employees' job satisfaction level and identify the most significant turnover factors for their organization. The research has three parts: first, to calculate the turnover rate over the last three year period; second, to hold a focus group discussion to get a better understanding of the employees' concerns and some of the possible causes for turnover; third, to conduct a short survey using the method of "Importance and performance analysis" to identify factors that contribute the most to employee turnover intention in specific restaurants.

### **Results and Recommendations**

The fine dining restaurants in Shanghai are facing difficulties in recruiting and keeping employees due to the insufficient supply of qualified employees and the rapid development of the hospitality industry. New hotels and restaurants offer higher pay to attract employees and managers, which leads to a highly competitive environment for talent in Shanghai. Fine dining restaurants should pay more attention to employee retention than recruitment because there is a longer learning curve for servers and cooks and a higher requirement from guests. The loss of an experienced employee means losing the money and time invested in recruiting, selecting, and training. Also, there is a potential loss of customers, revenue, and reputation. Although there are experienced restaurant professionals in the job market who do not require

much time and effort for training, they require a very high salary, which most of the owners simply can't afford. Sometimes when they hire new comers at a high price, old staff will feel disgruntled because they are not making as much as the new staff. Their sense of pay fairness will decrease and turnover intention will increase as they know that switching jobs can bring them much more income.

Here are some recommendations for managers and owners of fine dining restaurants in Shanghai.

### **Increase the Opportunity Cost of Leaving**

According to job embeddedness theory, the more people have to give up when they leave the company, the less likely they are to quit. Some of the restaurant owners are complaining about the loyalty of young people because as soon as they are trained, they leave for a higher paying job. The employer thinks that because they put in a lot of effort in training, employees should show their appreciation and accept the much lower salary. The employees think that they put in a lot of effort learning knowledge and skills to perform the job for their boss, so when they have the ability to perform to the standards, they should have a pay raise that reflects their competence. When they know how much people make at the same position in other restaurants, they will feel unhappy. When other restaurants offer 50% more on the same job, they will feel tempted and start to evaluate the opportunity costs for quitting the job. When they find out there is nothing to “sacrifice”, there is nothing stopping them from leaving the original organization.

### **Increase Job Satisfaction by Humanely Treating Employees**

As stated in the literature review, multiple research studies established the significant

correlation between job satisfaction and turnover intention, which is the happier the employees are, the less likely they quit their job. However, most restaurants in Shanghai don't take employee satisfaction seriously or consider it an important management issue. Many managers believe that it is the employee's responsibility to perform well or stay in the company because they get paid and trained, which means the employees owe the company a favor and should repay with service. It is a wake-up call for management when the turnover rate is too high and the understaffed situation adversely affects the operations and even forces the restaurant to take fewer reservations. The two most common explanations for turnover is first, employees are unhappy with their job, and second, other places offer higher pay and benefits. Managers tend to choose the second one because it is generally considered a uncontrollable factor. When the owner asks them why they can't keep employees, they can use "uncontrollable" as an excuse. However, the literature review informed us that employee satisfaction is the main factor to look at when it comes to employee turnover. The following paragraphs give recommendations to improve employee satisfaction and how to treat employees humanely.

#### **Review pay and benefits.**

Pay for servers in fine dining restaurants is between \$500-650 a month, not enough to live a decent life in Shanghai. The research by Tian-foreman (2009) in the retail industry in China indicated that employees are less satisfied with pay than other factors such as relationship with supervisors and coworkers, promotion opportunities, and the job itself. This result can be applied to restaurant industry as the labor supply for the two is the same – young, uneducated people from rural areas. The reason for less satisfaction for pay might be the high

living expense in cities which makes employees constantly experience financial difficulties. Managers should take the living expense into consideration when reviewing the salary level for their staff.

Many fine dining restaurants have a 10-15% service charge on top of the final check and this charge is kept by the company. The service charge substantially decreases the amount of tips because many customers assume that this charge goes to the servers. Restaurants should return at least part of it to their employees to increase their income, or call it something else to indicate that it is not going directly to the staff.

Managers should consider a pay strategy that is based on both seniority and merits. While most restaurants are doing well at paying more for staff with higher seniority, they usually don't have a merits-based salary strategy. Knowledge and skills should be reflected in terms of salary and benefits. For example, speaking better English or knowing about wine should be compensated as they are among some requirements to serve customers in fine dining establishments. Educated young people have better language skills, but they are paid the same as other employees who have the same job, which could lead to dissatisfaction. This compensation standard should be a part of the job performance evaluation so employees know what they should work on to get a higher salary.

### **Improve working conditions.**

The "two factor theory" advises employers to take care of the "dissatisfiers" before they move on to "motivators" because employees won't be motivated unless "dissatisfiers" are solved. Employers should set the goal to create a good working environment. Front of the house (FOH) working environment includes customer attitudes, as well as facilities and

technology supports for employees to work more efficiently and endure less frustration. Examples for better FOH working conditions could be well-organized working stations, enough tableware and table cloths, and a properly-functioning point of sale (POS) system. Customer attitude is uncontrollable, but managers should protect employees from getting physically or emotionally hurt by unreasonable guests. Back of the house (BOH) working conditions are known to be terrible for a developing country like China. Even big cities like Shanghai have poor working conditions. BOH working conditions include staff room, bathroom, locker room and staff meal. When restaurants seek to cut costs to increase profits, the budget of these will be cut first. The thinking is that owners and managers consider employees as costs, but not revenue generators. To them, “happy employees, happy customers” is just an out-of-date phrase. However, good BOH working conditions can make employees feel that they are treated humanely. And it is not very expensive to make improvements. Also, it is easy enough for managers to find out whether employees are happy with BOH conditions just simply by using the staff break room, bathroom, locker room and having the staff meal. If managers cannot accept them, they shouldn’t expect their employees to.

**Cultivate good relationship between employees, managers and co-workers.**

Many fine dining restaurants in Shanghai have foreign managers at the top level and Chinese managers at the mid-level. The literature reported that counterintuitively, language is not the main barrier between local employees and foreign managers since it is not the only way to communicate and there is always someone to translate. Whether these managers are nice, have an acceptable working style, and can understand the norms and values among



locals contributes more to good employee and supervisor relationship than the language ability itself. Foreign managers should put more emphasis on showing a nice attitude, caring for the employees' needs, giving proper feedback, and being open for conversations, instead of trying to learn the language, which some of them think would improve the relationship.

Because of the high turnover rate, understaffed situations are quite common in these restaurants. Managers need to do the server's job to keep the restaurant running, which leaves them not enough time to perform managerial tasks such as training, evaluating, and responding to employees' needs. Some restaurant owners are happy to see managers waiting tables and making customers happy, but they might overlook that fact that managers are also supposed to make employees happy. For example, if a manager in an understaffed restaurant is working as both a manager and a waiter, they might forget the promised pay raise for a certain employee just because they are too preoccupied to remember. As an example, staff in many American hotels are treated as "internal clients" by the organization when they have an issue or request, rather than a "burden". This concept is not adapted in Shanghai yet, because employee satisfaction is not valued.

While language is not a communication barrier between Chinese and foreigner managers, it is a barrier between Shanghainese and people from other parts of China who speak different dialects. The reason is that Chinese managers can be the bridge of communication in the first situation, but they will not be in the second. Local Shanghainese are more used to speaking Shanghainese to each other, which might isolate the other people and make them feel unwelcome. Management should encourage people to speak Mandarin in the workplace so everyone can understand each other.

**Try to improve the work and life balance for your employees.**

The nature of restaurant jobs requires night time work hours and weekend work days, which makes it harder for restaurant employees to enjoy life with their family and friends. Management should try to address the situation by arranging a weekend off or day shift from time to time so people can have a life. A flexible schedule is mentioned in multiple studies as a very important factor to the relationship between employees and supervisors, as well as employee job satisfaction. Managers should spend more time on responding to employees' requests for off days and availability to better assist them with their social life.

**Provide proper training and enable promotion and pay raise after completion.**

Training is essential for fine dining restaurants since they have higher standards on both food and service. It is not easy to remember a menu that changes every season for dinner and monthly for lunch, as well as a wine list that could contain more than 200 kinds of wine. Also, for servers who don't have service experience in fine dining restaurants and who are not capable or comfortable to speak and understand English, this job could be very stressful. New employees are under great pressure even when they are well trained, not to mention restaurants which do not offer the necessary training. The difference is that the former will be less and less nervous as they practice more, while the latter will be more and more nervous because they just do not know what they are doing and what their customers are talking about. As days go by, the former will develop a sense of fulfillment, which is very important for job satisfaction, while the latter will be more and more frustrated.

Previous research reported that turnover increases when employees don't get a pay raise or promotion after they finish a certain training process. An example could be a training program which teaches skills and knowledge for a runner to become a waiter. Many

managers believe that the newly promoted waiter would accept a lower than market salary because they are grateful for the company which trains them. This expectation of loyalty is naïve because employees know the purpose of training is just to turn them into better working machines. The turnover in this category could be higher because they can easily find a junior waiter job that pays 50% more, compared to the 10 to 20% pay raise within the old organization.

Managers should be very clear on the training results. If training equips an employee with knowledge and skills that make them more marketable, managers should offer a competitive salary after the employee successfully completed the training in order to keep them. Restaurants could pay them a temporary lower training salary during the training period and then raise it to the competitive rate when they pass a competency evaluation.

### **Create Internal Opportunities to Resist External Opportunities**

Shanghai has a fast developing restaurant industry which generates many opportunities for food and beverage professionals. New restaurants are always trying to steal talents from their competitors. To cope with this situation, existing restaurants should provide cross section training, transfer opportunities and promotions to encourage career development within the organization. Of course new restaurants always offer the highest salary, but pay is not the only factor that influences people's turnover intention. Managers should know that it is also very important for Chinese to work with friends and nice bosses in a familiar environment, which they can utilize to retain valuable employees.

### **Internal Research Design**

This section provides a research design that could help restaurants to evaluate the

turnover cost, and identify turnover factors that affect them the most.

### **Calculate Turnover Rate**

The calculation method of a yearly turnover rate is to divide the number of new staff hired over a period of a year by the number of jobs on the company's payroll. Restaurants can also calculate the turnover rate for FOH (front of the house) and BOH (back of the house), employees and managers respectively. The calculation of turnover rate for different years, different time of the year can also help management to adjust the influence of external situation.

### **Focus Group Discussion**

According to Zikmund, Babin, Carr, and Griffin (2012), when designing an employee focus group, several things should be kept in mind: first, employees prefer to talk about the company more than themselves, so the organizer should let them know the purpose is to improve the operations of the company. This doesn't mean that the moderator can't get any information about the employees' perceived causes of turnover intention. The solution is to simply switch the question "What will make you quit your job" to "What do you think will make people quit their job?" The focus group discussion should be conducted in the third person to avoid awkwardness. Second, the moderator should be someone who is not on the company's payroll and there should be confidentiality protections. A professor or a graduate student from a local hospitality program could be a proper moderator. Third, the direct supervisor of an employee should not be in the same group.

### **IPA Survey**

IPA (importance and performance analysis) is a research method that compares the

respondents' perception of the importance and performance of key attributes (Martilla & James, 1977). This method has proven to be very useful in helping decision makers to understand the problem and adapt new policies to address it because the method integrates the interpretation of data and the suggestion for making strategic decisions. (Matzler et al., 2003; Kitcharoen, 2004; O'Neill & Palmer, 2004). In this case, attributes that influence people's intention to leave an organization are identified into two functions: the importance of the factors to employees and the performance of restaurants in providing or preventing them. The factors in the test will be selected according to the previous literature review and the results of employee focus group. The survey questionnaire will be set as an online program which staff can answer with their computer or smart phone to insure anonymity and increase honesty.

Factors to be tested are: Monthly Salary, Bonus, tipping policy, employee welfare, supervisor support, co-worker support, training, promotional opportunities, career development, work life balance, FOH working environment, BOH working environment, and overall job satisfaction. Hospitality job image and occupational group are not included in the survey because they are untestable. Individual factors are demographic information that the company could choose to include or not. The concern is that since most fine dining restaurants do not have a large staff team, giving out demographic information could be equivalent to giving up anonymity, which might discourage employees from participating in the survey or providing honest answers.

Respondents will be asked to use a 7-point Likert scale to rate the importance of the variables related to turnover, ranging from "Not important" (1) to "Very Important" (7).

They will be also asked to evaluate the performance of the restaurant in terms of the same variables on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “Very bad” (1) to “Very Good” (7).

**Sample questionnaire.**

Thank you for participating in this survey. Please let us know what issues are important for you to remain working at the restaurant and whether we are doing well enough to meet your needs. Your response is very important to us so that we can implement future policies that could improve you overall job satisfaction.

You are asked to grade each of the turnover factors on its importance to you, and the performance of our company in providing the factor. Please rate the importance of the variables, ranging from “Not important” (1) to “Very Important” (7), and the performance of our company, ranging from “Very bad” (1) to “Very Good” (7). The survey is anonymous, so please feel free to provide your honest answer.

1. **Monthly salary:** It is competitive among other fine dining restaurants.

Importance (1-not important; 7-Very important)	Performance (1-Very bad; 7-Very good)

2. **Bonus:** It is competitive among other fine dining restaurants.

Importance (1-not important; 7-Very important)	Performance (1-Very bad; 7-Very good)

3. **Tipping policy:** The distribution of tips or service charge reflects your performance at serving customers.

Importance (1-not important; 7-Very important)	Performance (1-Very bad; 7-Very good)

4. **Employee welfare:** Annual vacation, team building activities, staff discount and other non-monetary benefits.

Importance (1-not important; 7-Very important)	Performance (1-Very bad; 7-Very good)

5. **Supervisor support:** Degree to which management cares for your needs.

Importance (1-not important; 7-Very important)	Performance (1-Very bad; 7-Very good)

6. **Co-worker support:** Degree to which co-workers help you out.

Importance (1-not important; 7-Very important)	Performance (1-Very bad; 7-Very good)

7. **Training quality:** Company provides quality training sessions which equip you to do a better job.

Importance (1-not important; 7-Very important)	Performance (1-Very bad; 7-Very good)

8. **Training evaluation:** Degree to which the result of training links to promotional opportunities and pay raise.

Importance (1-not important; 7-Very important)	Performance (1-Very bad; 7-Very good)

9. **Promotional opportunities:** There are sufficient promotional opportunities within the organization for you to work for.

Importance (1-not important; 7-Very important)	Performance (1-Very bad; 7-Very good)

10. **Career development:** Company provides resources for you to develop skills and knowledge which could lead to pay raise and promotions beyond the specific training session.

Importance (1-not important; 7-Very important)	Performance (1-Very bad; 7-Very good)

11. **Work life balance:** Company makes an effort to promote better work life balance by implementing policies such as flexible scheduling.

Importance (1-not important; 7-Very important)	Performance (1-Very bad; 7-Very good)

12. **Front of the house working environment:** Company provides tools and equipment such as a well-organized working station and proper-functioning POS system to make you work life easier.

Importance (1-not important; 7-Very important)	Performance (1-Very bad; 7-Very good)

13. **Back of the house working environment:** The conditions of staff meal, staff room and staff bathrooms meet or exceed your expectation.

Importance (1-not important; 7-Very important)	Performance (1-Very bad; 7-Very good)

14. **Overall job satisfaction:** Degree to which you like your job.

Importance (1-not important; 7-Very important)	Performance (1-Very bad; 7-Very good)

15. What suggestions do you have for us to improve job satisfaction and keep valuable



team members like yourself to stay with us? (Open ended question)

**Data Analysis.**

Table 1

*The dummy table of the data gathered from the survey.*

	Importance Mean	Performance mean	Ranking of mean (Importance)	Ranking of mean (Performance)	Quadrant
1.Co-worker	3.74	2.52	HIGH	LOW	A
2.Supervisor	3.21	3.67	LOW	HIGH	D
3.training					
4. Resource					
5. salary					
6. Career					
7. Promotion					
8. tipping					
9. – 14. Others					
Grant Mean	3.44	2.78			

Note: The numbers given in this table provide only an example of what the results might be; none of them are real numbers or rankings.

Below is the process to generate the numbers for the table:

1. One grand mean for importance and one grand mean for performance will be calculated based on the score that respondents grade for all the variables. These two means are the standard of comparison and ranking.

2. For each of the factors, a mean of importance and a mean of performance will be calculated respectively. Therefore, if there are 14 factors in total, there will be 14 attribute

means for importance, and 14 attribute means for performance. The results will be filled in columns two and three.

3. The attribute mean of importance will be compared to the grant mean of importance and a ranking of “HIGH” or “LOW” will be filled in column four. For performance, the same method applies.

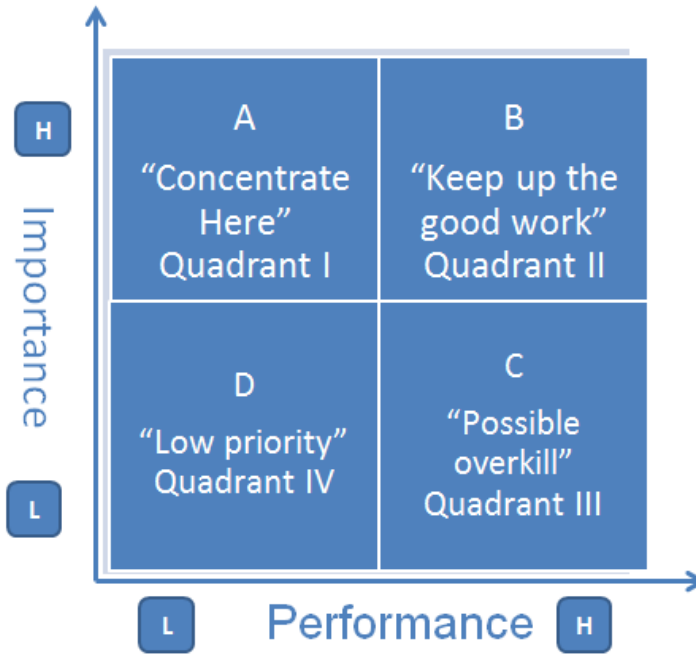
4. Based on the ranking of importance and performance for each factors, factors will be placed in a different quadrant in the IPA matrix. For example, a factor that is ranked as high in importance but low in performance will fall into Quadrant A.

Data analysis for IPA does not require specific data analysis skills. It is simple but useful, therefore a good tool for managers to find out the most significant problems, which could be reasons for turnover in this case. No change needs to be made for factors that fall in quadrant B and D because the organization is doing well at factors in quadrant B, and factors in quadrant D do not matter. Future actions should be implemented on factors that are in quadrant A and C. Quadrant A indicates the most urgent turnover factors that need to be dealt with right away because employees consider them very important, but the company is doing poorly on providing the factor to the employees' expectation. Quadrant C indicates that the company is wasting too much effort on something that the employees do not care about, which means management should relocate the resources from quadrant C to quadrant A.

### **Conclusion**

Under the background of a fast developing restaurant industry and a short supply labor market in Shanghai, this paper thoroughly discussed the factors that contribute to employee turnover in fine dining restaurants. Although there is a lack of research that has calculated the

**Figure 1: IPA Matrix**



*Figure 1.* The four quadrants in IPA are characterized as:

Quadrant A: Concentrate here – high importance, low performance: requires immediate attention for improvement and are major weaknesses.

Quadrant B: Keep up with the good work – high importance, high performance: Indicates opportunities for achieving or maintaining competitive advantage and are major strengths.

Quadrant C: Possible overkill – low importance, high performance: Indicates that business resources committed to these attributes would be overkill and should be deployed elsewhere.

Quadrant D: Low priority – low importance, low performance: These are minor weaknesses and do not require additional effort.

Adapted from "Importance-performance analysis," by J.A. Martilla and J.C. James, 1977, *The Journal of Marketing*, 41(1), p. 77-79.

actual turnover rate for the fine dining segment, the previous literature and government data implied a high turnover rate in this fine dining segment. Also, as previously stated, because fine dining restaurants requires their employees to perform more complicated tasks, turnover could have worse effects on their financial performance and reputation. By reviewing both western and Chinese literature, this paper identified almost twenty factors (pay, relationship

with supervisors / co-workers, career development, training, and work-life balance etc.) under three categories (job satisfaction factors, hygiene factors, job embeddedness factors).

Fourteen of them were used in the final questionnaire. Based on the literature review, the author of this paper made recommendations for managers and fine dining restaurant owners.

This paper presented an IPA survey to help individual restaurant identify turnover factors that matter the most to their employees on their turnover intention so that managements can allocate resources accordingly.

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# Amanda Liu

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## EDUCATION

*University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV)* *Las Vegas, NV*

Master of Science in Hotel Administration (GPA 3.97) Expected graduation in December 2014

- Key classes include Marketing, Research Methods, Law, Finance, Statistics, Casino management
- Gained experience by shadowing with the Executive Director of Market Research at Las Vegas Sands Corp on a weekly basis, learning about market research methods, brand strategy, survey design, and report writing.

*East China University of Political Science and Law* *Shanghai, China*

Bachelor of Science in Management (GPA: 3.44) July 2009

- Key classes include Management Theories, Micro and Macro Economics, Human Resource, Law

## EXPERIENCE

*The Venetian/ The Palazzo – largest hotel resort in North America* *Las Vegas, NV*  
**Front Desk Agent** June, 2014 - September, 2014

- Processed guest arrivals and departures; assigned and upgraded guests to suites according to their needs.
- Encouraged guests to join the Grazie loyalty program.
- Found proper solutions for guests' challenges within the range of employee empowerment.
- Made suggestions and recommendations according to guests' travel plan.

*M on the Bund – one of the earliest and most famous fine dining restaurants in Shanghai*  
*China*

**Assistant Manager** August 2011 - September 2012

- Managed front house operations in a busy environment serving over 250 people per night; held daily staff briefing to specify details to attend to for lunch and dinner service.
- Coordinated and executed banquet functions and events; communicated with travel agencies and hotel concierges to promote the restaurant and its bar.
- Conducted job interviews and made hiring decisions for servers and supervisors; designed, organized, and implemented training programs and materials.
- Won a trip to Champagne region through a contest with the best performance among 26 competitors.

**Server promoted to Supervisor** August 2009 - July 2011

- Trained new hires and developed a relationship of trust among all staff.
- Engaged in management training program and experienced different positions in the restaurant.
- Passed WSET intermediate level test with distinction at a high score of 92/100.
- Served food and beverage and ensured customers had a great experience.

## SKILLS & CERTIFICATIONS

- Fluent in Cantonese, Mandarin and English; Conversational in French and Japanese
- WSET (Wine and Spirit Education Trust, Intermediate Level)
- Chinese National Certificate of Cooking (Intermediate Level)
- Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Minitab

## INVOLVEMENT

UNLV Hotel Alliance Fall, 2013 - Present

- Toured Mandarin Oriental led with its general manager  
Hospitality Financial and Technology Professionals (HFTP), Fall, 2013 - Present



- Met with the corporate HR director and VP supervising revenue management of Caesars Entertainment
- UNLV Hotel College Mentor Program Fall, 2013 - Present
- Connected with the Assistant Director of Luxury Services in Las Vegas Sands Corp as a mentee
  - Connected with VP of Revenue Optimization, corporate manager of Media Communication, corporate manager of Brand Strategy at Las Vegas Sands Corp; Director of Market Research in YWS