

MOTIVATIONAL DRIVERS BEHIND HOTEL EMPLOYEES’ INTENTION TO STAY IN THE INDUSTRY: AN EXPECTANCY THEORY PERSPECTIVE WITH TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT AS A MODERATOR

**Feri FERDIAN^{a,e}, Mohd Salehuddin Mohd ZAHARI^b, Vanica SERLY^c, Hijriyantomi
SUYUTHIE^{a,e}, Hendri AZWAR^{a,e}, Agariadne Dwinggo SAMALA^d, Yudha Aditya
FIANDRA^d**

^aFaculty of Tourism and Hospitality, Universitas Negeri Padang, Jl. Prof. Dr. Hamka Air Tawar, Padang 25131, Indonesia, feri_ferdian@fpp.unp.ac.id (corresponding author), hsuyuthie@fpp.unp.ac.id, hendriazwar@fpp.unp.ac.id

^bFaculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management, UCSI University, 1 Jalan UCSI, UCSI Heights (Taman Connaught), Cheras 56000, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, salehuddinm@ucsiuniversity.edu.my

^cFaculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Padang, Jl. Prof. Dr. Hamka Air Tawar, Padang 25131, Indonesia, vanica.serly@fe.unp.ac.id

^dFaculty of Engineering, Universitas Negeri Padang, Jl. Prof. Dr. Hamka Air Tawar, Padang 25131, Indonesia, agariadne@ft.unp.ac.id, yudhaaditya@unp.ac.id

^eResearch Center for Sustainable Tourism Development, Universitas Negeri Padang, Jl. Prof. Dr. Hamka Air Tawar, Padang 25131, Indonesia, feri_ferdian@fpp.unp.ac.id (corresponding author), hsuyuthie@fpp.unp.ac.id, hendriazwar@fpp.unp.ac.id

* corresponding author

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Abstract

Anchored in Expectancy Theory of Motivation, this study investigates how expectancy, instrumentality, and valence influence hotel employees’ intention to stay in the industry, while assessing the moderating role of technology support. The research was conducted among operational employees of four- and five-star hotels across fourteen provinces in Indonesia, yielding 388 valid responses through purposive sampling. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire via online and analyzed via Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings demonstrate that all three motivational components; expectancy, instrumentality, and valence exert significant positive effects on employees’ intention to remain, reaffirming the robustness of expectancy theory within contemporary hospitality settings. These results suggest that employees are more inclined to stay when they perceive a clear link between effort and performance, trust that performance will lead to valued rewards and assign meaningful value to those outcomes. However, technology negatively moderates the relationship between expectancy and intention to stay, as well as between valence and intention to stay, indicating that technology-intensive environments may weaken certain motivational perceptions. In contrast, no significant moderating effect was observed in the instrumentality retention relationship. Collectively, the findings contribute theoretically by contextualizing expectancy theory in technology-driven workplaces and offer practical insights for hotel managers seeking to design balanced, human-centered retention strategies.

Keywords: Hospitality, Technology, Expectancy Theory, Motivation, Intention to Stay Working

INTRODUCTION

Employee retention remains a key strategic issue in the hotel sector, where turnover not only inflates hiring costs but also disrupts service consistency and guest satisfaction (Dangaiso & Mukucha, 2024; Rabiul et al., 2025). Victor Vroom's expectancy theory offers a valuable framework for examining this challenge: it posits that motivation depends on three interrelated perceptions expectancy, instrumentality, and valence which guide behavioral choices and commitment (V. Vroom et al., 2015). Expectancy reflects an employee's belief that their effort will lead to successful performance (Khan et al., 2021). In the hotel context, where staff often face irregular schedules and multitasking demands, sustaining that belief is critical. When employees trust that working the extra shift or learning a new system will boost their performance, their motivation and job attachment strengthen. Instrumentality captures the perceived link between performance and outcome whether excelling at one's job leads to tangible benefits like bonuses, promotions, or recognition (Joshi, 2025; Rai et al., 2025). Evidence from hotel-based models indicates that when staff perceive this link as clear and credible, their motivation stays high. Valence represents how much employees value the outcomes tied to their performance (Kalogiannidis et al., 2025). Research by Chiang and Jang (2008) demonstrated that valence carries both intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions, with intrinsic rewards such as self-worth and personal growth often exerting a stronger pull for hotel employees.

Chiang and Jang (2008) modified expectancy theory model, tested with 289 hotel employees, confirmed that both intrinsic instrumentality and intrinsic valence significantly shape work motivation suggesting that financial perks alone cannot sustain retention. Given these insights, hoteliers are urged to foster meaningful rewards like career development paths and recognition programs that align with staff values, thereby fueling deeper emotional investment in the organization (Ali et al., 2025; Ferdian et al., 2022; Urme, 2023). Overloaded schedules, insufficient training, and minimal feedback can erode the belief that effort translates to good performance, weakening motivational dynamics (Baquero et al., 2025; Ferdian, 2021).

Similarly, unclear evaluation processes and opaque promotion criteria can shatter instrumentality. When employees doubt that hard work will be rewarded, their drive and intention to stay can diminish (Xu et al., 2022). Valence, being deeply personal, varies widely some employees may prioritize pay, while others seek skill development or flexible work (Younies & Al-Tawil, 2021). Organizations must therefore tailor incentives and recognition

systems to align with individual motivations (Ginting et al., 2024). Beyond these motivational drivers, technology has emerged as a pivotal context in modern hospitality settings (H. Park et al., 2023). Tools like mobile check-in systems, digital scheduling platforms, and guest-service apps are increasingly integrated into daily workflows across hotels (Talukder, 2025).

Although substantial research explores employees' attitudes toward technology, far fewer studies examine how technology interacts with expectancy, instrumentality, and valence to shape retention. Technology support indicates that systems perceived as useful and easy to use enhance user engagement (Tavitiyaman et al., 2024). When applied to hotel employees, this implies that well-designed tools could reinforce their sense that effort produces results (Kirillova et al., 2020). Digital platforms also create opportunities to strengthen instrumentality (Kabadayi et al., 2022). If performance metrics like guest satisfaction ratings are tracked, made transparent, and directly linked to rewards, employees perceive a stronger performance outcome connection (Prentice et al., 2019). Moreover, digital tools can elevate valence by freeing employees from administrative burdens, enabling them to engage more with guests or enhance their skills activities may find more intrinsically rewarding (Hua et al., 2020). Thus, technology support may act as a moderator: amplifying the influence of expectancy, instrumentality, and valence on employees' intention to stay. When tech is accessible and supportive, the motivational chain may grow stronger.

Evidence in hotel literature supports similar moderating relationships. For instance, Chiang and Jang (2008) demonstrated how communication satisfaction strengthens expectancy effects on motivation, providing conceptual support for exploring technology moderation. However, empirical studies that explicitly model technology support as a moderator in expectancy driven retention remain scarce (Bakir et al., 2025). Most treat tech simply as an additional predictor rather than a catalyst that intensifies core motivational dynamics. Industry reports note productivity and efficiency gains from hotel technology yet rarely connect these to staff retention or motivational beliefs (Špindler, 2024). The individual psychological impact of tech solutions is still underexplored.

With hospitality increasingly embracing AI chatbots, automated housekeeping systems, and real-time performance dashboards, it becomes urgent to assess how these tools affect employee psychology in particular, whether they bolster or erode motivational components (Dasgupta & Jamader, 2024). Tailoring technology to reinforce employees' core motivational beliefs may offer managers a twofold win: operational efficiency and enhanced retention (Tavitiyaman et al., 2022). To address this gap, this article investigates how expectancy, instrumentality, and valence influence employees' intention to stay, and how technology

support modifies those relationships. We draw on expectancy theory foundation (V. Vroom et al., 2015), the applied hotel model by Chiang and Jang (2008) and technology insights regarding technology usability.

Through surveys capturing employees' perceptions of digital tools, motivational beliefs, and staying intent, we aim to offer a nuanced model where technology support acts as a situational amplifier of motivational forces. In doing so, we seek to refine expectancy theory's applicability in modern service settings and provide actionable guidance for hospitality managers investing in digital systems. If technology is implemented without regard for motivational dynamics, its benefits may be curtailed. Ultimately, understanding how technology support interacts with expectancy, instrumentality, and valence offers a path toward integrated retention strategies where psychological engagement and operational design work hand-in-hand.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Intention to Stay Working in the Hotel Industry and Expectancy Theory Perspective

Employee turnover remains a persistent issue in the hospitality field, particularly in hotels, where workforce instability frequently disrupts service consistency and operational efficiency (Chiang & Jang, 2008). Given this context, uncovering the key motivational elements that encourage employees to stay working in the hotel industry is essential. Expectancy Theory by Vroom (1964) offers a useful lens to explore this matter, presenting three interrelated concepts: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence that explain how individuals make decisions about their work effort based on expected outcomes.

Expectancy pertains to the belief that one's effort will result in successful job performance. In hotel environments, where roles often demand high levels of interaction, physical exertion, and multitasking, this belief becomes a critical factor. Employees are more likely to stay if they trust that their hard work will lead to effective performance and recognition. Clack (2021) noted that when employees perceive no relationship between their input and performance success, they become disengaged. Thus, fostering skill development through training and providing clear performance standards are strategies that enhance this belief and encourage retention. Kuslivan et al. (2010) further emphasize that employees who feel competent and prepared through training tend to remain longer in their roles. A study by Ford et al. (2023) also showed that when employees are supported by their organization and feel capable of performing their duties well, they are more likely to develop loyalty and stay in

their jobs. These findings lend empirical backing to the first hypothesis, which proposes that employees who perceive a strong link between effort and performance are more motivated to stay. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Expectancy has a positive impact on the employee intention to stay working in the hotel industry

Instrumentality refers to the perceived connection between performance outcomes and rewards. In the hospitality sector, where career advancement opportunities may be limited due to organizational hierarchies, this linkage is often ambiguous. When employees feel that their efforts will not result in tangible rewards like promotions or job stability, their motivation to remain diminishes (Chiang & Jang, 2008). Therefore, clarity in how rewards are tied to performance is essential. Research by Chen et al. (2023) illustrates that when hotels communicate reward systems transparently and outline clear career pathways, employee perceptions of instrumentality improve. Employees are more committed when they believe their performance will be fairly rewarded. These insights validate Hypothesis 2, reinforcing the idea that perceived performance-reward connections contribute significantly to an employee's decision to stay. Choi et al. (2024) also argue that the absence of clear instrumentality can lead to emotional burnout. When high performers see little reward for their effort, dissatisfaction rises, leading to higher turnover rates. This underlines the need for performance evaluation systems that not only acknowledge employee contributions but also reward them in a consistent and meaningful way. Thus, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H2: Instrumentality has a positive impact on the employee intention to stay working in the hotel industry

Valence reflects the personal value an employee places on the expected outcomes of their work. In hotel jobs, where compensation may not always match effort, the nature and attractiveness of rewards such as appreciation, growth prospects, or flexible hours play a pivotal role in shaping retention decisions (Zhu & Xie, 2023). Employees are more likely to stay if the benefits they receive align with what they personally value (Binu Raj, 2020). For example, while one employee may prioritize career growth, another may value flexible scheduling or recognition. Park and Hai (2024) suggest that when organizations fail to align rewards with what employees truly care about, the risk of turnover increases. Massingham and Tam (2015) provide further evidence by showing that personalized rewards those that

resonate with individual values have a significant impact on job satisfaction and employee commitment. Thus, Hypothesis 3 suggesting that when rewards are viewed as desirable, employees are more likely to remain. Demographic factors such as age, life stage, and cultural background also influence valence. Ayoobzadeh et al. (2024) observed that generational differences shape what rewards employees deem important while younger staff might pursue career progression, older employees may look for retirement benefits or work-life balance. Understanding these differences allows hotel managers to design reward structures that cater to diverse needs and improve retention. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Valence has a positive impact on the employee intention to stay working in the hotel industry

In conclusion, Expectancy Theory provides a compelling theoretical foundation for understanding why hotel employees choose to stay or leave. Each component expectancy, instrumentality, and valence offer unique insight into motivational forces driving employee behaviour. Organizations that recognize and nurture these dimensions are more likely to foster a loyal and engaged workforce. By creating a workplace environment where effort is supported, achievements are rewarded, and rewards align with employee values, hotels can address turnover more effectively. Expectancy Theory, therefore, serves not only as a theoretical guide but also as a practical tool for human resource management within the hospitality industry.

The Role of Technology Support as Moderator

Employee retention remains a persistent challenge in the hotel industry, where frequent staff turnover and shifting work expectations continue to affect workforce stability (Chiang & Jang, 2008). Organizations in this sector are increasingly focused on identifying factors that motivate employees to stay. Vroom's Expectancy Theory by Vroom (1964) has been extensively applied to understand workplace motivation, emphasizing three core elements: expectancy (the belief that effort leads to performance), instrumentality (the belief that performance leads to outcomes), and valence (the value placed on outcomes). As hotel operations become more digitized, technology emerges as a key factor that may influence these motivational dynamics particularly by strengthening or moderating the link between motivation and employees' intent to remain.

Expectancy reflects an individual's perception that exerting effort will result in competent performance. In the fast-paced hotel environment, achieving performance targets is often

dependent on the availability of adequate tools and resources. Digital tools such as property management systems, scheduling software, and mobile applications can ease task execution and improve operational clarity, thereby increasing employee confidence (Yağmur et al., 2024). In this context, technological support may serve as a moderator that reinforces the relationship between effort and performance, potentially strengthening employees' intention to stay. Organizations that provide intuitive and supportive technology foster a more competent workforce. Hossain et al. (2025) reported that hospitality staff working with user-friendly systems felt more capable of meeting job demands, reinforcing their sense of control and efficiency. These observations support Hypothesis 4, which posits that when employees perceive high levels of technological support, the positive impact of expectancy on their retention intentions becomes more pronounced. Thus, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H4: Technology support moderate significantly the influence of expectancy toward employee intention to stay working in the hotel industry

Instrumentality is concerned with how strongly employees believe that successful performance will be recognized and rewarded. In modern hotel operations, this belief is often shaped by digital performance tracking and reward systems. Transparent digital platforms can clearly communicate how effort is linked to outcomes such as bonuses, promotions, or recognition, thereby enhancing instrumentality (Ma & Chen, 2025). Thus, technology has the potential to moderate this connection, improving its influence on employee commitment. Further support comes from Burnett and Lisk (2021), who found that digital appraisal tools that monitor performance in real time helped employees visualize the link between their contributions and rewards. When staff members trust that their efforts are being accurately tracked and fairly acknowledged, their motivation to remain with the organization improves. These findings back Hypothesis 5, suggesting that technology positively moderates the relationship between instrumentality and intention to stay. On the contrary, when organizations lack digital systems or rely on opaque evaluation processes, employees may struggle to see how their performance influences outcomes. This disconnect can lead to dissatisfaction or disengagement. Transparent, tech-based systems not only streamline HR practices but also promote fairness and accountability key components in retaining talent. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5: Technology supports moderate significantly the influence of instrumentality toward employee intention to stay working in the hotel industry

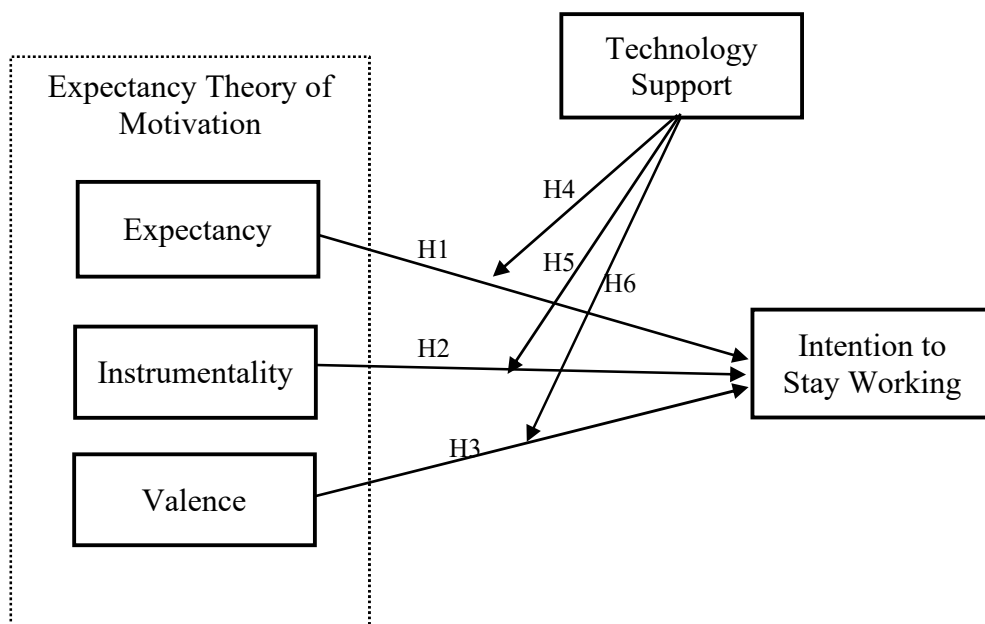
Valence refers to the perceived desirability of job-related outcomes. In hotel settings, technological tools can increase the attractiveness of these outcomes by offering customized rewards, digital learning paths, and flexible scheduling systems. Employees are more likely to remain in organizations that provide access to meaningful personal benefits and development opportunities through technology (Nguyen et al., 2023). In this sense, technology can enhance the perceived value of rewards, moderating the influence of valence on retention. Digital HR platforms also empower employees to manage their own career progress and access personalized benefits, which strengthens their perception of organizational support. Dhankhar and Singh (2023) found that when employees can interact with technology to chart their career development, they are more likely to view rewards as valuable and aligned with personal goals. This lends support to Hypothesis 6, affirming that technology enhances the connection between valence and the decision to stay employed. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H6: Technology supports moderate significantly the influence of valence toward employee intention to stay working in the hotel industry

In addition, generational preferences play a role in how technology influences motivation. Younger workers, particularly Millennials and Generation Z, expect seamless digital integration in the workplace. When hospitality organizations meet these expectations through modern technology, employees are more likely to feel engaged and satisfied with their work environment (Sofi et al., 2025). This alignment between personal values and organizational offerings contributes significantly to retention. Overall, technology has transformed not only how hotels operate but also how they manage and support their workforce. As outlined by Expectancy Theory, the intention to remain employed is shaped by how employees perceive the connection between effort, performance, and rewards. When those perceptions are supported by appropriate technological tools, the resulting motivational effect can be significantly amplified. Understanding the role of technology as a moderator is crucial for hotel managers seeking to retain valuable employees in an increasingly digital workplace. By integrating systems that enhance clarity, fairness, and personalization, organizations can strengthen the motivational drivers of expectancy, instrumentality, and valence ultimately improving employee retention and long-term organizational performance.

Fig. 1 shows the conceptual model of the research.

Figure 1 Research Model



Source: Authors.

DATA AND METHODS

Aligned with the stated research objectives and questions, this study adopts a causal-associative research design to examine the predictive relationships among key motivational constructs. The primary dependent variable is employees' intention to remain in the hotel industry. The independent variables comprise the three core components of Expectancy Theory of Motivation: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence, each conceptualized as antecedents influencing retention intention. In addition, technology support is incorporated as a moderating variable to assess its conditional effect on the strength and direction of the relationships between the motivational constructs and employees' intention to stay. A quantitative cross-sectional design and purposive sampling was adopted with unit of analysis comprises operational employees from both front-of-the-house and back-of-the-house departments located in fourteen selected provinces. The inclusion of these provinces was strategically justified by regional variations in tourism intensity, levels of hotel development, labor market structures, and the extent of technological adoption within hotel operations. This approach enhances the contextual diversity and generalizability of the study's findings across Indonesia's heterogeneous hospitality landscape. Four- and five-star hotels were selected because they operate in highly standardized, performance-driven environments characterized by formalized human resource systems, structured reward mechanisms, and advanced technological integration. These upscale properties also experience intense service demands and competitive labor markets, making employee retention a critical managerial concern and

an appropriate context for testing expectancy theory and technology-related moderating effects.

The survey instrument was systematically structured into four distinct sections to ensure comprehensive and coherent data collection. All measurement items representing the constructs of interest were adapted from established prior studies to maintain theoretical consistency and content validity. Responses were captured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). Prior to the main data collection, a pilot study was undertaken to evaluate the instrument’s reliability and construct validity. Human resource managers from eight four-star and eight five-star hotels across selected Indonesian provinces were contacted via telephone to obtain formal permission to survey operational employees. The managers were briefed regarding the study’s objectives and the purpose of the survey. Data were collected via online questionnaire administered through Google Forms. A total of 388 valid responses were obtained. The majority of respondents were male (217; 55.93%) and aged between 26 and 30 years (205; 52.84%). Most participants possessed higher education qualifications (293; 75.52%) and reported three to four years of work experience (184; 47.42%).

To examine the interrelationships among the research variables, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed, consistent with the recommendations of Hair et al. (2021). Following the procedural guidelines of Ramayah et al. (2016) and Hair et al. (2021), the analysis was conducted using SmartPLS version 3.1.1. The evaluation proceeded in two stages: assessment of the measurement model to establish reliability and validity of the latent constructs, followed by examination of the structural model to test the hypothesized relationships between exogenous and endogenous variables.

RESULTS

Measurement Model

The internal consistency, reliability, and convergent validity of the research model were examined using Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). As presented in Table 1, all indicators demonstrated strong and statistically acceptable loadings, ranging from 0.714 to 0.939, onto their respective constructs, supporting the reliability of the measurement items. Furthermore, the AVE values confirmed that the model possessed adequate convergent validity. Specifically, Expectancy (0.664), Instrumentality (0.621), Valence (0.834), Technology Support (0.834), and Employee Intention to Stay (0.813) all

exceeded the commonly accepted threshold of 0.50. The structure of the measurement model is illustrated in Fig. 2, while Table 1 provides detailed factor loading information.

Figure 2 Measurement Model

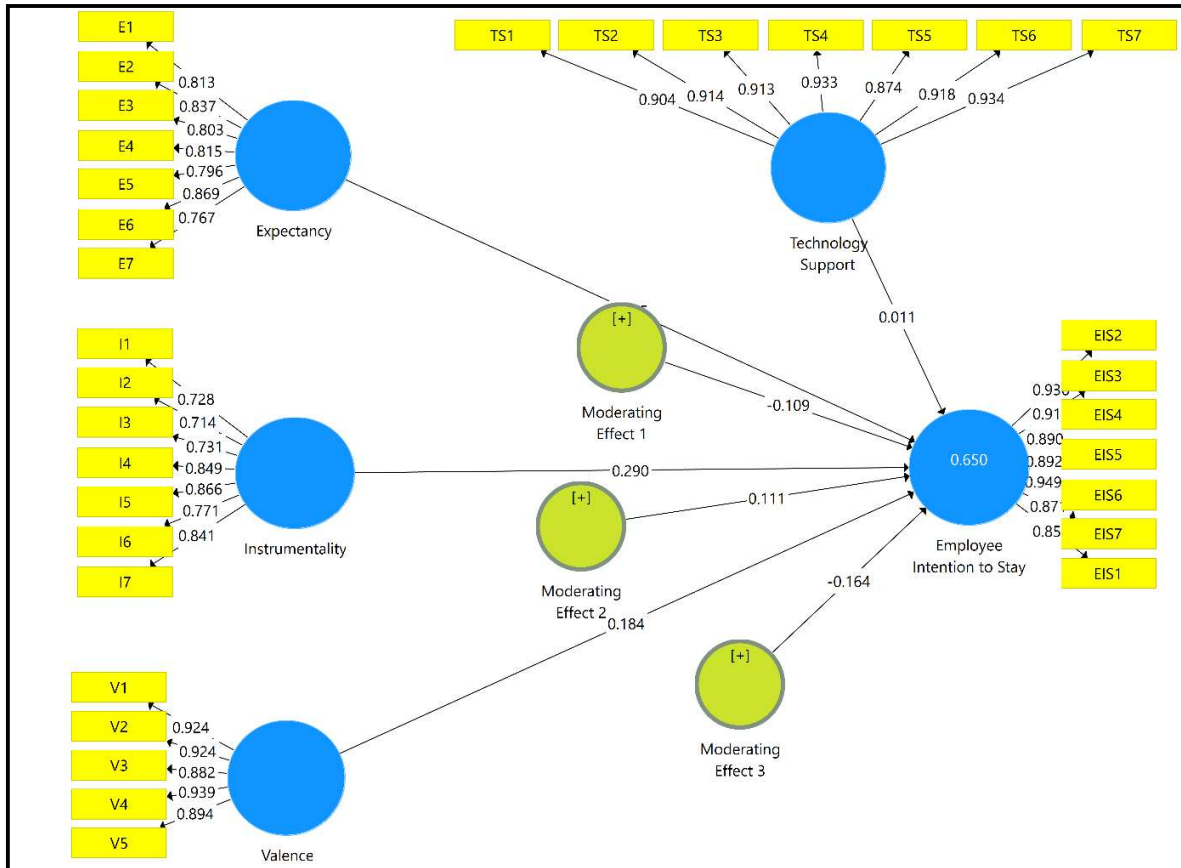


Table 1 Measurement model assessment

Code	Item	Mean	S. D	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Employee Intention to Stay					0.961	0.968	0.813
EIS1	I feel a strong sense of fulfillment in my career within the hotel sector and intend to continue pursuing opportunities in this industry.	3.858	1.054	0.859			
EIS2	My professional plans include remaining in the hospitality field for the foreseeable future.	3.655	1.119	0.936			
EIS3	The career potential in the hotel industry	3.647	1.167	0.910			

Code	Item	Mean	S. D	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
EIS4	appears promising, which positively influences my decision to stay. The fast-paced and stimulating nature of the hospitality environment motivates me to remain in this line of work.	3.948	0.946	0.890			
EIS5	Positive interactions and supportive relationships with team members and management enhance my desire to stay in the industry.	3.861	1.158	0.892			
EIS6	I recognize clear pathways for career development and advancement, which strengthen my commitment to staying in the hotel sector.	3.920	1.087	0.949			
EIS7	I choose to continue working in hospitality because I feel that its culture and values resonate with my own.	3.869	1.036	0.871			
Technology Support					0.967	0.972	0.834
TS1	The technology available at my workplace helps me complete tasks more efficiently.	3.675	1.083	0.904			
TS2	The hotel's technology systems support me in reaching my work goals.	3.912	0.962	0.914			
TS3	I feel well-trained and adequately prepared to operate the technology used in my workplace.	3.773	0.977	0.913			
TS4	Using technology at work has boosted my confidence in doing my job.	3.858	0.913	0.933			
TS5	I believe the technology support provided by	3.866	0.854	0.874			

Code	Item	Mean	S. D	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
TS6	management has enhanced my job performance. Whenever I encounter technical issues, I receive prompt and effective assistance.	3.943	0.835	0.918			
TS7	The technology offered in my workplace encourages me to remain with the company for a longer period.	3.822	1.011	0.934			
Expectancy					0.916	0.932	0.664
E1	I'm confident that with full dedication, I can successfully complete the tasks assigned to me.	3.907	0.926	0.813			
E2	I trust that enhancing my skills and gaining more knowledge will support me in meeting work expectations.	4.026	0.876	0.837			
E3	I feel the company offers adequate support and resources that enable me to perform well.	4.178	0.778	0.803			
E4	I believe that consistent effort and hard work will lead to rewarding outcomes.	3.884	0.799	0.815			
E5	I'm confident that the training I receive from the company contributes positively to my job performance.	3.680	1.036	0.796			
E6	I feel that staying focused on my responsibilities allows me to meet the required standards.	3.778	1.014	0.869			
E7	I believe that when I seek assistance or direction, I will receive the help I need to complete my work efficiently.	4.026	0.799	0.767			

Code	Item	Mean	S. D	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Instrumentality					0.900	0.919	0.621
I1	I trust that strong performance is acknowledged and valued by the management.	4.034	0.764	0.728			
I2	I believe achieving my work goals can lead to receiving bonuses or other forms of reward.	3.946	0.790	0.714			
I3	I sense a clear link between how well I perform and the chances of being promoted.	4.039	0.838	0.731			
I4	I'm convinced that improving the quality of my work can contribute to greater job stability.	3.858	0.907	0.849			
I5	I believe consistent performance will be noticed through formal evaluations or official recognition.	3.879	0.866	0.866			
I6	I feel that the extra effort I put in will be met with fair and appropriate appreciation.	3.781	1.023	0.771			
I7	I'm confident that the contributions I make to the company will support my professional growth over time.	3.696	1.138	0.841			
Valence					0.950	0.962	0.834
V1	I truly appreciate the financial benefits, such as bonuses and salary raises, that reflect my performance.	3.809	1.112	0.924			
V2	Being acknowledged by management for the work I do means a great deal to me.	3.866	1.027	0.924			
V3	I see career advancement as a meaningful form of motivation.	3.923	0.949	0.882			
V4	I value the chance to	4.018	1.141	0.939			

Code	Item	Mean	S. D	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
V5	learn and grow through the training opportunities provided by the company. Knowing that strong performance can lead to greater job security is one of my main drivers to give my best.	4.008	1.047	0.894			
V6, V7 Item Removed							
N=388							

According to Hair et al. (2021), outer loading values in this study were found to exceed the recommended minimum of 0.5, while composite reliability (CR) scores were all above the 0.7 benchmark. Similarly, the average variance extracted (AVE) values also surpassed the suggested threshold of 0.5, aligning with the standards set by (Hair et al., 2021). These findings indicate that the constructs demonstrate adequate convergent validity and internal consistency. Furthermore, to establish discriminant validity, Henseler et al. (2015) recommend that the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) should remain below 0.90. As shown in Table 2, the HTMT values for all constructs fall within this acceptable range, confirming that the model satisfies the requirements for discriminant validity.

Table 2 HTMT value

	Expectancy	Instrumentality	Valence	Technology Support	Employee Intention to Stay
Expectancy					
Instrumentality	0.885				
Valence	0.677	0.860			
Technology Support	0.778	0.887	0.83		
Employee Intention to Stay	0.732	0.795	0.73	0.721	

Structural Model Assessment

The structural model was tested to evaluate the hypothesized relationships between the constructs through the analysis of path coefficients (β values) and their statistical significance (p-values). The results of this analysis are detailed in Table 3. As outlined by Hair et al. (2021), the model demonstrates a strong explanatory power, with an R^2 value of 0.650,

indicating a substantial portion of the variance in employee’s intention to stay working in the hotel industry is explained by the model. A visual representation of the path analysis can be found in Fig. 2.

Table 3 Path analysis

Hy pothes is	Path	Beta	Std Deviation	T Statisti cs	P Value s
H ₁	Expectancy -> Employee Intention to Stay	0.255	0.063	4.051	0.000
H ₂	Instrumentality -> Employee Intention to Stay	0.306	0.099	2.921	0.004
H ₃	Valence -> Employee Intention to Stay	0.175	0.064	2.860	0.004

Notes: R²=0.650 (Employee Intention to Stay Working), Q²=0.507 (Employee Intention to Stay Working),

Concerning the results table above, the path coefficient results show that expectancy ($\beta=0.255$, $T=4.051$), instrumentality ($\beta=0.306$, $T=2.921$), and valence ($\beta=0.175$, $T=2.860$) show a significant influence on employee intention to stay working in the hotel industry. These statistical results indicate that each element within the expectancy theory plays a meaningful role in shaping workers' motivation to continue their employment. The T-values for each variable surpass the conventional threshold, confirming the strength and reliability of these relationships. From these findings, it can be inferred that the motivational factors described in expectancy theory are crucial in retaining hotel employees. When employees believe that their efforts will lead to good performance (expectancy), that good performance will result in desirable outcomes (instrumentality), and that those outcomes are personally valuable (valence), they are more likely to remain with the organization. This suggests that hotels aiming to improve employee retention should pay close attention to how these psychological drivers are addressed in their management practices.

Moderating Effects

The fourth, fifth, and sixth hypotheses (H₄, H₅ and H₆) explore whether technology support serves as a moderating variable in the relationship between expectancy, instrumentality, and valence, and employees’ intention to remain employed in the hotel sector. This inquiry is grounded in the theoretical perspective that technology support may influence how these motivational factors affect retention intentions. To assess the moderating role, the analysis utilized the SmartPLS moderation tool, applying the product indicator method as suggested by Hair et al. (2021). The moderation is considered significant if the interaction term shows a statistically meaningful path coefficient. The findings of this analysis are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Moderating effect of the technology support

Hypothesis	Path analysis	Beta	T Statistics	P Values	Result
H ₄	Expectancy + <i>Technology Support</i> -> Employee Intention to Stay Working in The Hotel Industry	-0.105	1.969	0.048	Significant
H ₅	Instrumentality + <i>Technology Support</i> -> Employee Intention to Stay Working in The Hotel Industry	0.095	1.116	0.265	Not Significant
H ₆	Valence + <i>Technology Support</i> -> Employee Intention to Stay Working in The Hotel Industry	-0.159	2.792	0.005	Significant

Notes: ***p<0.05

The findings indicate that technology support significantly weakens the relationship between expectancy and employees' intention to remain in the hotel industry ($\beta = -0.105$), as well as the relationship between valence and intention to stay ($\beta = -0.159$). These negative moderating effects suggest that, contrary to expectations, the presence of technology support may reduce the strength of the influence that expectancy and valence have on an employee's decision to stay. In other words, when technology support is perceived as high, the motivational impact of employees' expectations and the value they place on outcomes appears to diminish. On the other hand, the interaction between technology support and instrumentality did not yield a significant effect ($\beta = 0.095$), indicating that technology support does not moderate the relationship between perceived outcome performance linkages and employees' intention to stay. This implies that, regardless of the level of technology support available, employees' belief that their performance will lead to specific outcomes remains unchanged in its influence on their retention intentions. Overall, the results highlight a nuanced role of technology support, which may not always enhance motivation as traditionally assumed.

DISCUSSION

This study advances Expectancy Theory within the hospitality retention context by empirically examining the direct effects of expectancy, instrumentality, and valence on hotel employees' intention to stay, as well as the moderating role of technology support. The first hypothesis examined the influence of expectancy toward employee willingness to stay working in the hotel industry. Expectancy has a significant influence on employees' intention to stay working in the hotel industry, as it shapes their belief that their efforts will lead to

desired outcomes, such as career growth or job satisfaction. Expectancy theory suggests that when employees believe their hard work and performance will result in positive outcomes, whether in the form of promotions, recognition, or skill development, they are more likely to remain committed to their jobs. This is aligned with Doan et al. (2025) that hotel employees with high expectancy, meaning they believed their efforts would lead to tangible rewards, were more inclined to stay with their employer's long term. This is because a clear connection between effort and reward enhances job satisfaction, loyalty, and engagement, reducing turnover. Therefore, ensuring that employees perceive a strong link between their contributions and future success can significantly increase retention in the hotel industry.

On the second hypothesis, instrumentality has a significant influence on employees' willingness to stay working in the hotel industry, as it affects their perception of whether their performance leads to desirable outcomes such as rewards, promotions, or job security. In this sense, when employees believe that their efforts will result in meaningful rewards, they are more likely to remain committed to the organization. This finding strengthens Koo et al. (2020) study which found that hotel employees who perceived a strong link between their performance and tangible rewards such as bonuses, career advancement, or recognition, exhibited higher levels of job satisfaction and were less likely to consider leaving their jobs. This suggests that when instrumentality is clear and well-communicated, employees feel more valued and motivated, which enhances their willingness to stay with the company. Hence, fostering a performance-based reward system where employees can clearly see the benefits of their work plays a crucial role in retention.

The third hypothesis is supported when valence has a significant influence on employees' intention to stay working in the hotel industry, as it reflects the value employees place on the rewards they receive for their performance. This clearly denotes that employees perceive rewards such as promotions, bonuses, job satisfaction, or career development are highly desirable and align with their personal goals and values, they are more likely to remain with their employer. This finding corroborated well with Akgunduz et al. (2020) that hotel employees who attached high valence to both intrinsic rewards (e.g., meaningful work, job satisfaction) and extrinsic rewards (e.g., salary increases, promotions) demonstrated a stronger commitment to their organization and were less likely to seek employment elsewhere. This indicates that when rewards are perceived as valuable, employees can significantly increase job satisfaction and loyalty, leading to higher retention rates. Therefore, enhancing the perceived value of both financial and non-financial rewards is crucial in retaining employees in the hotel industry.

The fourth hypothesis shows that technology support negative significantly moderates the relationship between expectancy on employee intention to stay working in the hotel industry. Technology support serves as a negative moderator factor in the influence of expectancy on employees' intention to stay working in the hotel industry, as it shapes employees' perceptions of the likelihood that their efforts will lead to desirable outcomes. The finding provides an interesting contrast to much of the existing literature. Previous studies, such as those by Vroom (1964) and further supported by Chiang and Jang (2008) have emphasized that expectancy an individual's belief that effort will lead to performance is generally strengthened by organizational resources, including technology. However, the present study suggests that in certain contexts, particularly within the hotel industry, an overreliance on or the presence of technology systems may weaken the perceived link between effort and outcomes. This result may reflect a shift in how employees interpret technology support. As highlighted by Tavitiyaman et al. (2024), the success of technology implementation is not only determined by availability but also by user perception and integration into daily work processes. If employees feel that technology dominates or automates tasks to the point of reducing their individual contribution, it could undermine their sense of agency and personal efficacy. This aligns with findings of Rasool et al. (2022), who noted that technology overload can lead to stress and reduced motivation. Therefore, while technology support is often introduced with the intention of empowering employees, this study reveals that, without thoughtful implementation, it may unintentionally diminish the motivational power of expectancy.

The fifth hypothesis shows that technology insignificantly moderate the relationship between instrumentality on employee intention to stay working in the hotel industry. This finding implies that employees' belief performance will lead to specific rewards (instrumentality) operating independently of the level of technology support provided by the organization. While instrumentality has been widely recognized as a key predictor of employee motivation and retention (Chiang & Jang, 2008; Vroom, 1964), the lack of a moderating effect from technology support aligns with prior research suggesting that instrumental beliefs are shaped more by organizational fairness, clarity of reward systems, and trust in management than by tools or systems alone (Sharma et al., 2025). In hospitality settings, where interpersonal interactions and managerial recognition often carry more weight than system-driven outcomes, employees may rely more on personal assessments of performance-reward linkages than on technology enablers. Therefore, while technology may facilitate work processes, it may not significantly influence how employees perceive the

connection between their efforts and tangible outcomes reinforcing the idea that motivation tied to rewards is more relational than operational in nature.

The last hypotheses revealed that technology support serves as a moderating factor in the relationship between valence and the employees' intention to stay working in the hotel industry. The findings reveal a significant negative moderating effect, indicating that higher levels of technology support may weaken the influence of valence employees perceived value of outcomes on their intention to stay. This result suggests that when technology becomes a dominant part of the work environment, it may unintentionally reduce the motivational impact of desired rewards or outcomes. This finding diverges from the assumptions in classical expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), where valence is expected to be strengthened when supported by adequate organizational tools and systems. However, study by Khlifat et al. (2025), have shown that excessive or poorly integrated technology can lead to feelings of frustration, overload, or depersonalization, which may reduce the perceived value of rewards. In the context of the hotel industry, where personal recognition, team dynamics, and human interaction often contribute significantly to the perceived worth of outcomes, the presence of impersonal systems or automation may reduce emotional engagement with rewards. This aligns with findings by Debnath et al. (2025), who noted that technological environments could alter the emotional perception of job-related incentives, especially when they disrupt traditional human-centered work processes. Thus, while technology support is essential for operational efficiency, it must be balanced with strategies that maintain the personal and emotional relevance of workplace rewards.

STUDY IMPLICATION

This study offers several important academic and theoretical implications for the advancement of Expectancy Theory within contemporary hospitality scholarship. First, the findings reaffirm the robustness and explanatory power of expectancy, instrumentality, and valence in predicting employees' intention to stay, thereby extending classical motivational theory into a high contact, service intensive context. By empirically validating these core components within four- and five-star hotel environments, the study strengthens the external validity of Expectancy Theory framework and substantiates its continued relevance in emerging Asian hospitality markets. More importantly, the identification of significant negative moderating effects of technology support on the expectancy retention and valence retention relationships introduces critical theoretical refinement. In technology, intensive hotel contexts such as AI

driven revenue management systems in sales and marketing departments, automated inventory control systems in kitchen operations, robotics-assisted room delivery services, and biometric attendance tracking in HR, the presence of advanced digital infrastructure may alter employees' perceptions of effort performance linkages. Contrary to traditional assumptions that organizational resources uniformly enhance motivational dynamics, the findings suggest boundary conditions under which technological infrastructure may attenuate, rather than amplify, core expectancy mechanisms. For instance, when housekeeping productivity is algorithmically monitored through real-time tracking dashboards, employees may perceive reduced personal discretion over performance outcomes. Similarly, automated guest-feedback analytics in front office operations may shift recognition from interpersonal acknowledgment to system generated ratings, weakening the valence of rewards. This challenges linear interpretations of resource-based reinforcement within expectancy theory and calls for a more nuanced, context sensitive conceptualization that incorporates socio technical complexity. Additionally, the non-significant moderation effect on instrumentality implies that performance reward contingencies remain fundamentally relational and justice driven, relatively insulated from technological intensity. Collectively, these findings contribute to motivational theory by integrating digitalization into a contingent structural force, thereby repositioning expectancy theory within technologically mediated service ecosystems and opening new avenues for theorizing employee cognition in AI augmented workplaces.

These empirical findings generate substantive managerial implications for operational hotel employees, hotel managers, and HR professionals operating in technology intensive hospitality environments. First, the significant positive effects of expectancy, instrumentality, and valence on employees' intention to stay signal that retention strategies must be operationally embedded rather than rhetorically communicated. For operational employees, particularly those in front of house and back of house departments, clarity of task expectations, access to structured training, and consistent supervisory feedback are critical levers. When employees perceive that effort reliably enhances performance, their psychological attachment to the organization strengthens. Thus, managers should institutionalize continuous skills upgrading, mentoring systems, and daily performance briefings that reinforce the effort performance linkage in tangible ways. Second, the strong role of instrumentality underscores the necessity for transparent performance contingent reward systems. For hotel managers, this implies moving beyond informal recognition toward data-informed yet human centered appraisal systems. Clear promotion pathways, visible criteria for bonuses, and structured career mapping should be communicated explicitly to

operational staff. HR professionals must ensure that evaluation mechanisms are perceived as procedurally fair and consistently applied across departments. In upscale hotels where hierarchies are pronounced, ambiguity regarding advancement opportunities may rapidly erode trust. Therefore, integrating structured succession planning and internal mobility programs can enhance employees' confidence that high performance yields meaningful returns. Third, the importance of valence indicates that reward systems must be differentiated rather than standardized. Operational employees vary in what they value financial incentives, flexible scheduling, professional development, or interpersonal recognition. HR practitioners should conduct periodic preference audits and deploy flexible benefits frameworks that align incentives with diverse workforce expectations. Tailored recognition initiatives, such as personalized development plans or cross-training opportunities, may enhance the perceived meaningfulness of organizational rewards.

Most critically, the negative moderating role of technology support demands strategic caution. While digital systems such as AI powered guest service chatbots, automated housekeeping dispatch systems, robotics assisted delivery, and real-time revenue optimization platforms enhance efficiency, excessive technological reliance may dilute employees' sense of personal agency and diminish the motivational salience of rewards. For managers, this necessitates a balanced digitalization strategy: technology in front office operations should augment guest interaction rather than replace interpersonal service recovery; kitchen automation should support chefs' craftsmanship rather than over standardize production; HR analytics should inform, but not substitute, relational leadership practices. HR professionals must complement system-based monitoring with human-centered supervision, ensuring that automation does not erode interpersonal engagement in departments such as F&B service teams or housekeeping units. User centered technology training, participatory implementation processes when introducing new PMS upgrades or robotics systems, and ongoing technical support are essential to prevent technology-induced disengagement. In sum, these findings suggest that sustainable retention in modern hotels requires an integrated approach where motivational architecture, relational management, and technological infrastructure are aligned to preserve human-centered service cultures while advancing operational excellence.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the present study demonstrates that expectancy, instrumentality, and valence constitute significant determinants of employees' intention to remain within the hotel

industry. Consistent with motivational theory, employees are more inclined to sustain organizational commitment when they perceive a credible linkage between effort and performance, performance and rewards, and when those rewards are personally meaningful. However, technology support does not uniformly amplify these motivational pathways. Empirical evidence indicates that technology negatively moderates the relationships between expectancy and retention intention, as well as between valence and retention intention, suggesting that higher levels of technological support may attenuate the motivational salience of effort performance beliefs and the perceived desirability of outcomes. In contrast, technology support does not exert a significant moderating effect on the instrumentality retention relationship, implying that performance reward contingencies remain largely unaffected by technological intensity. Collectively, these findings underscore the nuanced and context dependent role of technology in shaping employee motivation and retention within contemporary hospitality environments. They suggest that technological resources, while operationally beneficial, must be strategically configured to reinforce rather than inadvertently dilute core motivational drivers

The findings of this study should be interpreted in light of several limitations. First, cross-sectional design restricts the ability to draw causal inferences regarding the relationships between expectancy, instrumentality, valence, technology support, and intention to stay. Future research could employ longitudinal or experimental designs to examine changes in motivational perceptions over time. Second, the study relied on purposive sampling of operational employees from four- and five-star hotels in Indonesia, which may limit generalizability to other hospitality segments, such as budget hotels or different cultural contexts. Comparative studies across countries or hotel categories are therefore recommended. Third, the exclusive use of self-reported survey data may introduce common method bias. Subsequent studies could incorporate multi source data, including supervisor assessments or objective retention records. Finally, future research may explore additional moderators, such as leadership style or organizational culture, to deepen understanding of motivational dynamics in technology driven hotel environments.

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