



## Exploring Strategies to Retain Key Employees in Star-Rated Hotels

Ida Bagus Purwa Arsha Manuaba<sup>1\*</sup>, Ida Ayu Oka Martini<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Pendidikan Nasional, Jalan Bedugul No. 39, Sidakarya, Denpasar, Bali, 80221, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author email: [tuguspurwa@gmail.com](mailto:tuguspurwa@gmail.com)

### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received September 10, 2025  
Approved October 02, 2025

#### Keywords:

Employee Retention, Key Employees, Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory

#### ABSTRACT

Key employees are often viewed as essential assets that are critical for a company to maintain its edge and competitiveness in the face of competition with other organizations. These employees play a significant role in boosting the organization's knowledge and intellectual capital, as well as ensuring stability and continuity due to their highly specialized skills and experience in their respective fields. This study, guided by the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory, seeks to explore the strategies employed by the management of Hotel Sankara Ubud Bali to retain its key employees. These key employees are characterized by their unique and specialized skills and knowledge, which are crucial for the organization's success. The research employs a qualitative approach and a case study method. Findings from semi-structured interviews with key employees and a general manager reveal the important roles and challenges faced by key employees at Hotel Sankara Bali. These roles include human resource management, maintenance, marketing, and innovation for business advantage. Effective strategies for retaining key employees, as perceived by both managers and the employees themselves, include sufficient social support, employee development programs, a high level of job responsibility, and a transformational leadership style. The study's implications assist hotel management in crafting the most effective strategies to improve performance and retain key employees within the company.

Copyright © 2025, The Author(s).

This is an open access article under the CC-BY-SA license



**How to cite:** Manuaba, I. B. P. A., & Martini, I. A. O. (2025). Exploring Strategies to Retain Key Employees in Star-Rated Hotels. *Jurnal Ilmiah Global Education*, 6(4), 2397–2409. <https://doi.org/10.55681/jige.v6i4.4521>

### INTRODUCTION

The human resources (HR) department encompasses functions such as recruitment, selection, training, performance management, compensation, and employee relations (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin, & Cardy, 2012). HR also plays an important role in employee retention by creating job security and a positive work environment (Stafford, 2018), as well as managing fair compensation to keep employees motivated (Ameen, 2018). Generally, HR is divided into line employees and staff, with staff providing support to line employees (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin, & Cardy, 2012), and is further classified into general employees and key employees (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022; Bengfort, 2023).

Although there is no single definition, key employees are individuals with unique characteristics who contribute significantly to organizational growth and strategy (Ramasubramanian, 2022), as well as those capable of making important decisions and supervising other employees (Horvathova, Velcovska, & Larsen, 2019). They also enhance the organization's intellectual capital and maintain strong relationships with clients and stakeholders (Horvathova, Velcovska, & Larsen, 2019). Due to their vital role, they are often involved in the formulation of strategies and development programs (Ameen, 2018).

In a preliminary study conducted in star-rated hotels in Bali, interviews with HR departments and managers revealed that key employees include positions such as chefs, sales staff, HR personnel, and engineering staff—all considered crucial due to their expertise and influence in decision-making. HR managers added that key employees are involved in important managerial decisions and are continuously evaluated to maintain high performance.

Amid intense competition, companies must strive to retain key employees because of their high mobility in seeking better opportunities or incentives (Stafford, 2018). Losing them creates recruitment and training burdens, as well as significant business risks (Byrka-Kitta, Gola, & Czerwinski, 2020). However, retaining key employees is not easy, due to internal factors such as dissatisfaction with compensation and external factors such as career opportunities in other companies (Ameen, 2018; Stafford, 2018).

Interviews indicated that employee turnover, particularly in sales and HR, often occurs due to challenges in work-life balance and more promising career opportunities. Sales supervisors emphasized that even though the causes are external, their roles are highly important because performance targets must still be met. Therefore, immediate training is required when turnover occurs.

For this reason, companies need to develop effective retention strategies. Managers who foster healthy working relationships can improve employee performance and loyalty (Gomathy, Raghavendra, Charan, & Bhaskar, 2022). Retaining key employees also saves time and resources (Guha & Chakrabarti, 2016). Several factors that influence retention include a supportive work environment, compensation, opportunities for growth, and recognition (Gomathy et al., 2022; Ameen, 2018; Stafford, 2018).

Previous studies have tended to focus on the perspectives of employers. However, it is also important to understand key employees' perceptions of company policies in order to create more effective retention strategies (Ameen, 2018; Horvathova et al., 2019; Stafford, 2018). The aim of this research is to explore the roles and retention strategies of key employees in Bali's star-rated hotels from both their own perspectives and those of management. The findings are expected to provide policy recommendations for hotel management.

## METHODS

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach with a case study method, as described by Moleong (2007). Through case study research, the researcher aims to reveal the distinctiveness or uniqueness of the characteristics found in the case under investigation. As one type of qualitative approach, the case study method involves intensive, detailed, and in-depth research on an organism or individual, institution, or specific phenomenon, with a subject scope that is generally limited.

The participants in this study consisted of one general manager and four (4) key employees of Sankara Hotel, located in Ubud, Bali. The participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that those interviewed met the established respondent criteria. Research data were

collected through semi-structured interviews and secondary data in the form of evidence of activities considered as employee retention efforts within the company.

The data analysis technique employed in this study followed six (6) stages: processing and preparing the data for analysis; reading the entire dataset; conducting more detailed analysis through data coding; applying the coding process to describe the setting, categories, and themes to be analyzed; presenting how these descriptions and themes would be reported in a qualitative narrative or account; and interpreting or making meaning of the data (Cresswell, 2009).

The analysis method and data collection techniques used in this study facilitated the process of exploring strategies to retain key employees, both from the perspective of the manager and from that of the key employees themselves.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Subjects

This study involved the general manager, who is the direct supervisor of key employees, as well as key employees at the Sankara Hotel in Ubud, Bali. Five subjects were involved, with one manager providing information on the company's programs and policies for retaining key employees. Other informants included four key employees representing several divisions or departments within the hotel, including: chef, sales, human resources development (HRD), as well as engineering. The selection of research subjects was carried out based on recommendations from the management at Hotel Sankara, namely key employees who play an important role in implementing job desk in each field.

### The Important Role of Key Employees

Based on the contents of Table 1, it can be seen that the researcher found a major theme which then consisted of sub-categories obtained from the process coding. This theme and subcategory are the result of the author's interpretation regarding the important role of key employees in the company, as well as the challenges faced by key employees at the Sankara Ubud Hotel, Bali.

**Table 1. The Important Role of Key Employees and Their Challenges in the Company**

No	<i>Selective Coding</i>	<i>Axial Coding</i>	<i>Open Coding</i>
1	The important role of key employees	Human Resource Management	Managing employees with different characteristics Maintaining employee salary confidentiality <i>Building</i> employee Maintain employee comfort Be a communication bridge between other employees and the company
		<i>Maintenance</i>	Making a food menu at the hotel Maintaining buildings and public facilities Studying consumer interest and menu availability from competitors
		Marketing	Guard <i>brand awareness</i> Increase the marketing value of the hotel Maintaining the hotel's reputation and existence
		Innovating for Business Profit	Do <i>research</i> about the latest menu Creating local menu innovations Learning new systems related to electronics used in hotels

No	<i>Selective Coding</i>	<i>Axial Coding</i>	<i>Open Coding</i>
2	Challenges faced	Employee diversity	Managing employees with different characters
			Recruiting employees who meet company criteria
			Establish communication with <i>stakeholder</i>
		External competition	Availability of a more diverse and up-to-date competitor menu
			Competition with hotels that offer the same products
		Target achievement	Achieve targets that are always increasing every time
			Achievement targets that prioritize product quality
			Consumers are declining due to the pandemic
			Facing a rapidly changing system

Source: 2025 processed original data

In general, four main codes were identified related to the roles of key employees in HR, chef, engineering, and sales: human resource management (HR), maintenance, marketing, and innovation for business benefit. More specifically, these sub-themes are divided into several subcategories, which will be explained in more detail below.

#### **Human resource management (HRM)**

The informants in this study revealed that their most fundamental role as key employees at the Sankara Hotel is managing other employees at the hotel, especially those from the same division. One form of human resource management behavior is managing other employees with different characteristics, as stated by informant I3. Informant I3 also stated that his role in this company is to manage employees with different characters, so that they can still achieve the set targets optimally.

Another informant stated that a crucial role in HR management is maintaining employee salary confidentiality. In other divisions, key employees play a role in employee development or building. As stated by informant I1, this employee building also encompasses how key employees, particularly those in the HR division, can meet and understand employee needs. Furthermore, the informant also stated that a crucial role for key employees is maintaining employee well-being. In this regard, key employees need to ensure that each employee's needs are met fairly. Another crucial role in HR management is how key employees can bridge communication between other employees and the company. This means key employees also play a role in conveying information, both from managers to other employees and vice versa.

#### **Maintenance**

Both managers and key employees stated that the next important role of key employees is maintenance, specifically how to maintain the quality of every service or product offered at Hotel Sankara. More specifically, one informant, I1, stated that his job as a chef is to create food menus at the hotel, which menus need to guarantee the standardization of raw materials, as well as cleanliness and good presentation. Another role of key employees, especially in the chef division, is to study consumer interests and the availability of menus from competitors. This is important to do so that the hotel has a competitive edge and is always updated with the menu offered at the hotel. This is in accordance with the statement of informant I3. Another key employee in the engineering division stated that his important role at Hotel Sankara is to maintain the building

and public facilities in the hotel. This is done to ensure that consumers remain satisfied after using the hotel's services and to prevent more serious damage in the future.

### **Marketing**

Research findings regarding the role of key employees can also be coded into roles in company marketing. One subcategory of this finding is maintaining brand awareness, increasing the hotel's marketing value, and maintaining the hotel's reputation and existence. This was conveyed by informant I1, who emphasized the key tasks of key employees in the marketing field, which are crucial for hotels. This is because in Bali, Ubud in particular, there are many hotels and villas that offer the same services and services as Hotel Sankara. If the marketing role, whether for products, food, or physical buildings, is not well promoted, it will affect the hotel's sustainability.

### **Innovate for business advantage**

What distinguishes key employees from other employees at Hotel Sankara is that they are allowed to contribute innovation, ideas, and make important decisions regarding product management and marketing at Hotel Sankara. As one form of this innovation, informants conduct research on new menus and create innovative local menus to be served to consumers. Related to this role, also related responsibilities include how to maintain food hygiene, select standardized food ingredients, and ensure food freshness. Another form of innovation provided by key employees to the company is learning new systems related to electronics in the hotel. This is done by key employees in the engineering field as a form of responsibility and a desire to continue learning the latest technology. The goal is to ensure the hotel can always use the latest technology to update its systems, so that consumers and employees also receive maximum satisfaction.

When discussing the roles of key employees in a company, the challenges they face in carrying out these roles are inextricable. Interviews with general managers and HRD revealed that employees entrusted with key positions or with greater responsibility for managing employees and making decisions at work face greater challenges than other employees. Based on the coding process, there are generally three sub-themes or qualitative codes for the challenges key employees frequently face: employee diversity, external competition, and target achievement.

### **Employee diversity**

One of the challenges key employees face is managing employees with different personalities. Informant I3, for example, stated that each employee has a distinct personality and work style. Despite these differences, employees must still achieve the same goal of developing and maintaining product quality. Therefore, it is crucial for key employees to possess the ability to manage other employees.

This communication is not only important with other employees, but also with all stakeholders at Hotel Sankara. Informant I2 specifically noted that key employees sometimes face challenges in communicating with stakeholders. When it comes to employee management, key employees are also required to be able to recruit employees who meet the company's criteria.

### **External competition**

External competition refers to other hotels or accommodations offering similar products to Hotel Sankara. Key employees face external competition, including the availability of more diverse and up-to-date menus. This requires key employees to continually innovate and conduct research to stay competitive with other hotels.

### Target achievement

In addition to facing the challenges of competition with other hotels, key employees also often experience challenges in achieving company targets. Some challenges related to achieving these targets include targets that prioritize product quality, targets that increase over time, and how to deal with rapidly changing systems and technology. This was conveyed by several key employees, especially those holding key positions in the HR, chef, and engineering departments. Similarly, informant I5, a key employee in the marketing division, is required to consistently achieve targets that prioritize not only sales quantity but also quality as evidenced by customer reviews. If sales targets are not achieved, this can certainly lead to feelings of dissatisfaction among key employees. This is further compounded by the constantly changing market conditions, which require key employees to always prioritize innovation in business or marketing hotel products.

### Key Employee Retention Strategies from the SOR Theory

Before discussing the policies and programs provided by management so that key employees at Hotel Sankara remain with the company, the results will be presented. coding regarding the S-O-R theory in examining employee retention at the Sankara Hotel. The research findings can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2. Strategies for Retaining Key Employees from the SOR Theory**

No	Selective Coding	Axial Coding	Open Coding
1	<i>Stimulus</i> (Policies and programs set by the company, or originating from external employees, that stimulate employees to make decisions to contribute and stay in the company)	Social support	A working environment that <i>supportive</i>
			There is a sense of family among employees
		Employee Development Program	Availability of internal and external company training programs
			Program <i>coaching</i> And <i>mentoring</i>
			Implementation <i>reward</i> for employees
		<i>High responsibility</i> towards work	Program <i>gathering/retreat</i>
			Opportunity to develop ideas
2	<i>Organism</i> (Affective and cognitive factors that individuals have related to the stimulus provided by the company)	Key employee perceptions	Authority to make work-related decisions
			Open communication with superiors
			Giving the opportunity to express opinions or suggestions
			Providing motivation that builds enthusiasm
			There is a perceived sense of fairness regarding incentives
			The assumption that salary is in line with responsibility
			Activity <i>coaching</i> make it easier for employees to do new jobs
			Excellent leadership because it encourages teamwork, effective communication, and a sense of

No	<i>Selective Coding</i>	<i>Axial Coding</i>	<i>Open Coding</i>
			family.
		Key employee affective factors	Feeling happy for the support, advice and motivation given
			Feeling comfortable due to a mutually supportive work environment
			Avoid feeling constrained by being given the freedom to express ideas
3	<i>Response</i> (Employee performance that demonstrates commitment to remaining in the company)	Performance or performance displayed	Employees strive to show their best performance so that achievements continue to increase.
		Commitment to the company	Key employees are committed to continuing to contribute by developing ideas and innovations.

Source: 2025 processed original data

Research findings regarding the stimulus within SOR theory associated with employee retention include programs offered by companies to retain key employees. The sub-themes identified include social support, employee development programs, high levels of responsibility for work, and leadership styles implemented by management. These sub-themes fall into several categories, which can be explained as follows.

### **Social Support**

Social support is a positive effort undertaken by superiors and coworkers, intended as a form of support and encouragement for key employees in carrying out their roles and duties at Hotel Sankara. The first form of social support, based on research findings, is a supportive work environment. Both management and key employees stated that providing a supportive work environment is the most fundamental effort taken to ensure key employees feel at home in their jobs.

Another form of social support identified through interviews is a sense of camaraderie among employees. The company strives to foster a family-like atmosphere, so the hotel isn't just seen as a workplace. One key employee also mentioned that the family atmosphere fostered among employees makes the hotel feel like a second home, making employees feel comfortable at work.

### **Employee development program**

Hotel Sankara facilitates various programs to develop key employees, such as training, coaching and mentoring, rewards, and gatherings or retreats. Training programs are conducted periodically, both internally and in collaboration with the Ubud Hotel Association, to provide up-to-date and relevant training for employees. This training is mandatory for all employees, especially key employees, and is held four to five times a month to strengthen their understanding of their duties and prepare them for the dynamics of the field.

In addition to training, Hotel Sankara also regularly hosts coaching and mentoring programs to ensure all activities comply with operational standards and maintain service quality. This coaching, conducted for three hours per month, aims to improve employee motivation and performance. Respondents from the sales division reported that the coaching also discusses market trends and the latest digital marketing strategies.

To boost performance, Hotel Sankara implements reward programs such as employee points rewards that can be exchanged for prizes, as well as awards for best employees. High-performing employees also have the opportunity for promotions. Meanwhile, gathering and retreat programs, such as temu wirasa (a gathering of friends), tirta yatra (a pilgrimage to the holy land), and melukat (a gathering of friends) aim to strengthen relationships between employees and create a harmonious work environment. These activities also include events such as joint birthdays, which are accompanied by motivation and teamwork.

### **High responsibility towards work**

The next strategy pursued by management is to give full responsibility or high responsibility for the work to key employees. In addition to implementing policies set by superiors at Hotel Sankara, key employees are also given several authorities, both in making decisions and expressing their ideas and concepts related to products at the hotel. One form of responsibility given is that key employees are given the opportunity to develop ideas. Respondent I3 in this case stated that key employees feel given the space and freedom to express ideas, and are given adequate support, as long as the decisions are still within the applicable lines or regulations. In addition, key employees in the chef field also stated that the form of freedom to express ideas is by not being rigid in following the hotel's rules or regulations, and the chefs can freely combine Balinese food menus with typical dishes from other countries as long as they get approval from management.

Another finding related to high levels of responsibility for work is the authority to make work-related decisions. The chef stated that the freedom to express ideas or concepts regarding menu items and the authority to make decisions regarding what to serve to customers is sometimes given to key employees. A key sales employee also stated that he felt comfortable working there because management gave key employees, particularly those in marketing, the opportunity to make decisions regarding hotel promotions independently.

### **Transformational leadership style**

The next research finding relates to the factors that keep key employees in the company. Transformational leadership, along with a family-based approach, was also frequently mentioned by key employees. Based on the interview results, almost all respondents stated that the factor that significantly influenced their job satisfaction and motivation was how management strives to lead by prioritizing a sense of family, not just working as a superior and subordinate. Things related to this leadership style include open communication, providing opportunities for key employees to express opinions or suggestions, and providing motivation that builds key employee morale.

One key employee, I2, stated that open communication is characterized by managers or superiors who strive to listen and express opinions without prioritizing their own egos. Similarly, key employee I5 stated that open communication with superiors is something that needs to be continuously developed so that management can understand the circumstances and needs of its employees. This is in accordance with the statement from management that warm, open, and familial communication is attempted to be maintained so that employees always feel comfortable coming to the workplace.

In addition to maintaining open communication, Hotel Sankara management also provides opportunities for key employees to express opinions and suggestions. This was felt by a key employee with the initials I3 who stated that key employees are always given space and freedom to express ideas, and are given adequate support, as long as they remain within the applicable channels and regulations. With this freedom to express ideas, key employees feel free from



feelings of pressure or being bound by rigid rules. This opportunity to express opinions or suggestions is also felt to be important by other key employees so that any problems or obstacles, even small ones, can be handled immediately. This is important to prevent the accumulation of larger problems in the future.

Finally, one of the actualizations or policies reflecting the transformational leadership style that superiors have consistently demonstrated is providing motivation that builds the morale of key employees. Key employee I2 stated that motivation provided by superiors plays a crucial role in supporting key employee performance and developing their skills.

#### Organism

A key employee at the Sankara Hotel stated that every company essentially has programs designed to retain employees. These programs can include self-development programs for employees, rewards, satisfying incentives, and even a supportive work-life balance environment. However, the decision to retain key employees is largely influenced by how employees perceive, feel, and demonstrate their attitudes toward the programs implemented by the company. Not all programs implemented by management are positively received by key employees, so it is necessary to consider the perspectives of key employees to determine which programs are most effective in retaining key employees. This is what is meant by the organizational aspect, which is how key employees view the programs implemented by managers.

A unique research finding based on interviews was the statement that salary issues were not the primary factor influencing key employees' decisions to stay at Hotel Sankara. This was because the salaries and incentives provided by management were very fair, commensurate with each employee's responsibilities. On the other hand, key employees perceived and felt more satisfaction related to the leadership style, freedom to express ideas, and the family-like environment fostered by management. Management's efforts to maintain interpersonal relationships, activities that orientate toward religiosity, and outing programs within the community also contributed to employees' greater satisfaction with their current jobs. These factors were considered to have the greatest influence on key employees' decisions to stay at the company.

#### Response

The programs and strategies outlined above were implemented by the Sankara Hotel management and positively perceived and felt beneficial by key employees. This in turn resulted in employee retention. Two forms of commitment and attitudes demonstrated by key employees are key characteristics of retention within the company, as found in this study. First, key employees strive to deliver their best performance to achieve greater results. This was particularly evident in key employee I3, who believed that commitment to the company stems from intrinsic motivation, which is crucial not only for the company but also for the development of other employees.

The third finding related to key employee retention is a commitment to continued contribution by developing ideas and innovation. Key employee I5 expressed this by stating that he strives to demonstrate his full potential to maintain the trust placed in him by his superiors. This reflects a well-established employee commitment to continued contribution to the company.

## DISCUSSION

### The important role of key employees

The results of this study indicate that the key employees at Hotel Sankara are essentially employees representing each division in the hotel who are considered to have specific abilities to make decisions in the hotel, and are considered to have adequate abilities to carry out the job descriptions in each division. This is in accordance with the definition of key employees from the results of research by Ameen (2018), which states that key employees are identified with employees who have specific ability criteria and are considered rare. This statement is also supported by the findings of Khlaponin et al. (2021) that key employees are individuals in an organization who possess unique knowledge, skills, and competencies that are very important for the company's success and competitiveness. The results of this study also have the same findings regarding the definition of key employees in the company, that Hotel Sankara's key employees are employees appointed by managers to manage important tasks in their respective divisions, because they are considered to have superior abilities and competencies compared to other employees in the division.

According to the Indeed Editorial Team (2022), key employees are typically involved in the operations and infrastructure of a company, and play a role in managing other employees without having to seek approval from managers. In the context of key employees at the Sankara Hotel, Ubud, Bali, each key employee from different divisions has authority in terms of decision-making and operational matters at the hotel. In terms of competency, key employees at the Sankara Hotel are employees who are considered to have adequate skills to perform various tasks, ranging from managing other employees with different characteristics, establishing communication with stakeholders, developing strategies to achieve targets set by the company. These key employees also have the authority to lead coordination or make important decisions within their divisions, as well as being a communication bridge with other employees and the company.

According to Stafford (2018), key employees essentially possess qualities such as the ability to actively participate in the company's strategic future by having a vision that is visible in their ideas and contributions. Key employees at Hotel Sankara in this case also demonstrate active participation and contribute to the company in various ways. The form of active participation given by key employees at Hotel Sankara is innovating for the benefit of the hotel business, both by conducting research on the latest menus that can be served to customers, creating local menu innovations, and learning new systems related to electronics used in the hotel.

### Key Employee Retention Strategy at Sankara Hotel from the SOR Theory

According to organizational behavior and leadership theory, the S-O-R paradigm explains how employees and leaders respond to stimuli such as tasks, rewards, feedback, organizational culture, and development programs. The stimulus (S) can be an intrinsic or extrinsic company strategy, while the organism (O) refers to the employee's psychological state, both affective and cognitive. The response (R) includes outcomes such as innovation and productivity (Kamalaveni et al., 2019). This paradigm helps managers create a conducive work environment, increasing productivity and retention. Sankara Hotel's management strategies, such as social support, employee development, job accountability, and transformational leadership, create positive perceptions that enhance performance and retention commitment from key employees.

The S-O-R theory in the context of organizational culture and leadership stems from the thinking of Mehrabian and Russell (1974; in Hochreiter, Benedetto, & Loesch, 2023), who highlighted two types of retention motivation. This research finding aligns with approach theory

(Gable, in Hochreiter et al., 2023), which states that individuals tend to choose pleasant environments. Key employees stated that social support and family relationships were effective strategies for retention, along with freedom of opinion and expression.

Stafford (2018) and Aamen (2018) cited incentives as a key retention factor. However, Hotel Sankara employees considered salary to be a less significant factor. Social support and opportunities to develop ideas were more important. This aligns with Kamalaveni et al. (2019) who stated that a pleasant teamwork experience is more influential than salary in retaining key employees.

Kazimoto (2016) also emphasized that an organizational culture that aligns with expectations increases engagement and retention. An open culture, effective communication, and a supportive environment foster positive cognitive and affective responses (Stafford, 2018; Aamen, 2018; Kazimoto, 2016). These findings align with Hotel Sankara's strategies, such as open communication, participation in decision-making, and positive motivation, which foster a sense of comfort and engagement.

The S-O-R theoretical framework also states that employee behavior can be shaped through rewards and punishments (Skinner, in Hasan et al., 2021). Rewards include not only material rewards but also employee training and development (Hochreiter et al., 2023). Hotel Sankara implements internal and external training programs, coaching, mentoring, and a points system that can be exchanged for prizes to increase employee contribution.

Leadership style is also an important stimulus for retention. Hasan et al. (2021) stated that leaders can use culture and development to drive performance and retention. Several studies compared transformational and transactional styles with respect to commitment. The S-O-R paradigm helps explain how leadership style influences employee reactions and outcomes. Judge and Piccolo (in Kamalaveni et al., 2019) stated that transformational leadership encourages intrinsic motivation and compliance. According to Kurt Lewin (in Kamalaveni et al., 2019), this style improves performance by changing employee values and goals. The General Manager of Hotel Sankara also demonstrated a transformational style, such as positive motivation and openness to voice opinions. This fostered teamwork, effective communication, and loyalty among key employees, encouraging continued contribution and innovation.

## CONCLUSION

Key employees (key employees) At the Sankara Ubud Bali Hotel, he has a vital role that sets him apart from other employees in the company. In addition to carrying out his duties in accordance with job-desk determined by the company, these key employees also play a role in carrying out human resource management, carrying out maintenance regarding the products and services offered at the hotel, conducting marketing or marketing, and provide innovation or ideas to help the company gain business benefits. With these roles, key employees also face various challenges while carrying out their duties at the company. Challenges often experienced by these key employees include managing employees with diverse characteristics, external competition or competitors offering similar services and products, and ever-increasing targets over time, which require these key employees to continuously innovate for the hotel's progress.

These diverse roles and challenges require companies to implement strategies to retain key employees. In addition to ensuring employees remain motivated and perform at their best in the hotel, management feels the need to implement strategies to ensure key employees remain engaged and stay with the company. This is due to the costs (cost) that the company must pay if a key employee decides to leave the company. Based on the results of the interviews conducted, it

was found that the strategy that was considered most effective in supporting employee retention at Hotel Sankara was the implementation of a transformational leadership style and the existence of positive social support within the company environment. Another strategy that was considered effective in motivating employees to stay in the company was giving key employees the trust to carry out high responsibilities, as well as holding regular employee development programs both inside and outside the company. These programs were then stated to create positive perceptions and feelings, which ultimately were able to encourage the growth of commitment and motivation of employees to continue contributing to Hotel Sankara.

## REFERENCES

- Ameen, S. (2018). Investigating the main factors that influence employee retention at private universities in Kurdistan. *International Journal of Engineering, Business and Management (IJEEM)*, 2(3), 22-30.
- Bengfort, H. (2023). Business Leaders. Retrieved from Investopedia: <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/k/key-employee.asp>
- Byrka-Kitta, K., Gola, R., & Czerwinski, M. (2020). Are the key person in companies also their key assets? Evidence from a transition economy. *Engineering Economics*, 31(5), 536-546.
- Creswell, J. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*, Third edition. United States of America: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Gomathy, C., Raghavendra, Charan, T., & Bhaskar, D. (2022). A study on employee retentions and its strategies. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Engineering and Management (IJSREM)*, 06(04), 1-5.
- Guha, S., & Chakrabarti, S. (2016). Differentials in attitude and employee turnover propensity: A study of information technology professionals. *Global Business and Management Research*, 8, 1-17.
- Gomez-Mejia, L., Balkin, D., & Cardy, R. (2012). *Managing human resources*. United States of America: Pearson.
- Hardianto, A. (2019). Analisis stimulus-organism-response model pada "dove campaign for real beauty" 2004-2017. *Jurnal Transaksi*, 11(1), 65-79.
- Hasan, H., Astuti, E., Afrianty, T., & Iqbal, M. (2021). Impact of Organizational Culture on Employee Engagement and Performance: A Stimuli-Organism-Response Approach. *Wacana Journal of Social and Humanity Studies*, 23(4), 235-247.
- Hochreiter, V., Benedetto, C., & Loesch, M. (2023). The stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) paradigm as a guiding principle in environmental psychology: Comparisons of its usage in consumer behavior and organizational culture and leadership theory. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Business Development*, 3(1), 7-16.
- Horvathova, P., Velcovska, S. K., & Larsen, F. (2019). Evaluation of key positions and employees management level in manufacturing industry: The Czech case. *Sustainability*, 12(242), 1-14.
- Kamalaveni, M., Ramesh, S., & Vetrivel, T. (2019). A review of literature on employee retention. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Management Studies*, 4(4), 1-10.
- Kazimoto, P. (2016). Engagement and Organizational Performance of Retail Enterprises. *American Journal of Industrial and Business Management*, (06), 516–525.
- Khlaponin, Y., Izmailova, O., Qasim, N., Krasvoska, H., & Krasovska, K. (2021). Management risks of dependence on key employees: Identification of personnel. *CEUR Workshop Proceedings*, 295-308.

- Moleong, L. (2007). Metodologi penelitian kualitatif. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Ramasubramanian, G. (2022). The key managerial personnel and their roles and contribution towards good corporate governance. SSRN Paper, 1-13.
- Stafford, K. (2018). Leadership strategies to retain key employees. Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection.
- Team, I. E. (2022, June 25). Key employees: Definition and their Influence. Retrieved from Indeed: Career Guide: <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/key-employees>