

## Embedding Sustainability in Employee Outcomes: A Mediation–Moderation Examination of Work Engagement and Turnover Intentions in The Malaysian Hospitality Industry

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between turnover intentions and work engagement in the Malaysian hospitality industry, with a focus on career construction theory (CCT). The research investigates how factors such as work engagement, orientation to happiness (OTH), and perceived organizational support (POS) influence employees' intentions to leave their jobs. The study, conducted with 476 hotel staff members across 5-star hotels in southern Malaysia, uses a time-lagged approach to collect data on work engagement, OTH, and turnover intentions over three months. The results reveal that work engagement negatively correlates with turnover intentions, suggesting that higher engagement leads to lower intentions to leave. OTH, which represents an employee's positive outlook and life satisfaction, acts as a mediator in this relationship. Furthermore, POS plays a significant moderating role, strengthening the connection between work engagement and turnover intentions when perceived organizational support is high. Conversely, when POS is low, the relationship weakens, making employees more likely to seek other job opportunities. The findings contribute to both theoretical and practical understanding of turnover dynamics in the hospitality sector. By emphasizing the importance of work engagement and POS, the study provides actionable insights for hospitality managers seeking to reduce turnover and improve employee retention. It also highlights the need for organizations to foster a supportive work environment that promotes career development and personal well-being. This research extends existing literature on turnover intentions and engagement by incorporating OTH as a key variable and exploring its impact in the hospitality industry context. the hospitality field, retention of workers becomes an important issue.

**Keywords:** Perceived Organizational Support, Work Engagement, Turnover Intentions, Employee Retention, Psychological Well-Being.

### INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry is undergoing major changes due to evolving labour demands and diverse workforce demographics. Issues such as low pay, irregular working hours, weekend and holiday shifts, job insecurity, and limited career advancement have significantly affected workers (Cullen et al., 2014). At the same time, hospitality employees are expected to be creative and adaptive in responding to continuous changes in their work

environment. Given these challenges, researchers have increasingly focused on employment flexibility, especially in retail and service roles (Jiang et al., 2016).

Career Construction Theory (CCT), proposed by Savickas (2005), provides a useful framework for understanding how employees navigate organisational changes and maintain career stability. CCT describes adaptability as a person's readiness to deal with both routine job tasks and unexpected changes in the work environment. In the hospitality sector, where staff turnover is particularly high, understanding the drivers of attrition is critical (Savickas, 2013).

Adaptability helps employees adjust to job changes, potentially reducing turnover. Past research has linked factors such as job satisfaction, work-family conflict, organisational justice, and emotional attachment to turnover intentions (Safavi & Bouzari, 2019). However, few studies have explored how work engagement predicts turnover intentions specifically within the hotel sector. This study addresses that gap by examining the relationship between work involvement and the intention to leave. It also explores the role of Orientation to Happiness (OTH) and Perceived Organisational Support (POS) in shaping that relationship. We argue that low POS can increase the likelihood of employees leaving, even when they are otherwise engaged at work.

This study contributes to both academic and practical understanding by exploring how work engagement affects employee retention in the hospitality sector. While job flexibility has long been seen as beneficial, less is known about the underlying mechanisms that increase engagement and reduce turnover (Atitsogbe et al., 2019). This study examines how OTH influences work engagement and turnover intentions and how career adaptability can reduce the likelihood of resignation. Our findings show that the positive impact of work engagement is weakened when employees perceive limited career opportunities in their current organizations.

This research extends Career Construction Theory by introducing OTH, a construct representing purpose, enjoyment, and dedication as a psychological pathway that links engagement to reduced turnover. It also highlights how POS moderates this relationship: even engaged employees may leave if they perceive few opportunities for growth. These insights refine our understanding of CCT and offer practical strategies for reducing turnover in service-driven sectors.

The goal of this research is to explore the relationship between work engagement and turnover intentions in the hospitality industry in Malaysia. The study aims to understand how work involvement and an individual's orientation to happiness influence their intention to leave the organization, with perceived organizational support acting as a factor that may influence this relationship.

1. To analyze how work engagement affects the likelihood of turnover among hospitality employees in Malaysia.
2. To explore the role of orientation to happiness (OTH) in mediating the link between work engagement and turnover intentions.
3. To investigate the moderating effect of perceived organizational support (POS) on the relationship between work engagement and turnover intentions.
4. To assess how employees' happiness orientation influences their decision to stay or leave the organization.
5. To identify key drivers of turnover in Malaysia's hospitality sector, focusing on employee engagement and support from the organization.
6. To provide actionable recommendations for improving employee retention in the hospitality industry through enhanced work engagement and organizational support.
7. To contribute to the academic understanding of the factors influencing turnover intentions, with an emphasis on career involvement and organizational factors in service industries.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Staff Enthusiasm and Inclinations to Resign

Creed et al. (2008) introduced the idea of adaptability as an individual's readiness to adjust to career and work-related changes. According to Savickas (2005), work engagement reflects an employee's ability to manage their career effectively, particularly in adapting to challenges. In the service sector, adaptability is increasingly valued due to rapid social, business, and technological changes.

Maggiori et al. (2013) describe four key components of career engagement:

- Innovation (adopting forward-thinking strategies),
- Responsibility (taking charge of one's own development),
- Curiosity (exploring new roles and opportunities), and
- Confidence (overcoming obstacles and achieving career goals).

These elements, often seen as self-regulation strategies, help employees cope with change.

Previous research has linked higher career engagement to better outcomes such as positive emotions, job satisfaction, career success, and commitment. Schaufeli et al. (2006) validated this concept using the UWES-9 scale, which treats work engagement as a unified construct. Johnston et al. (2013) found that engaged individuals have higher psychological resources. Work engagement is also associated with reduced stress and improved job search behaviour. Since turnover intentions are a strong predictor of actual resignations, examining the link between engagement and intent to leave is essential (Maggiori et al., 2015). However, more research is needed on how work engagement influences resilience and turnover in service settings like hospitality.

### The Contribution of Orientation to Happiness

Happiness generally refers to a sense of satisfaction, joy, or purpose. According to Grimm et al. (2014), people who experience happiness often pursue it through pleasure, meaning, and engagement. OTH reflects an individual's personal fulfilment and life perspective. Durón-Ramos and García-Vázquez (2018) found that employees with higher OTH are more motivated to achieve their goals.

According to CCT, workplace participation enhances psychological strengths (Savickas, 1997). Coetzee and Harry (2013) suggest that this improves employee satisfaction and resilience in the face of organisational challenges. OTH has been linked to positive workplace behaviour. Rasheed et al. (2020) showed that happiness boosts morale, reduces absenteeism, and increases organisational commitment. Satisfied workers tend to be more productive and engaged.

Past studies have found a positive relationship between work engagement and OTH, and a negative relationship between OTH and turnover intentions (Ogbonna & Harris, 2002). Frontline service workers, who regularly interact with customers, especially need high levels of engagement and satisfaction. This suggests that OTH could influence an employee's decision to remain with their employer or pursue other opportunities.

### POS As a Border Criterion

POS refers to employees' perceptions of how much their organisation supports their career goals and values their contributions. Research shows that employees' behaviours are shaped more by perceived support and workplace norms than formal HR policies (Caesens et al., 2017).

In today's dynamic job market, POS is more relevant than ever. Employees are likely to leave if they feel their current organisation does not support their growth or align with their ambitions (Li et al., 2019). In service sector, POS is particularly important for frontline staff, as it helps them gain skills and develop their careers (Guchait et al., 2015). Hospitality companies that foster supportive environments tend to attract and retain more committed employees.

While work engagement builds psychological resources such as satisfaction and resilience, POS remains a key factor in reducing turnover. Zagenczyk et al. (2020) describe POS as a tool for shaping employee attitudes and behaviours. Recent studies show that when employees believe their organisation offers future opportunities, they are less likely to leave. However, even highly engaged employees may look elsewhere if they perceive limited career advancement.

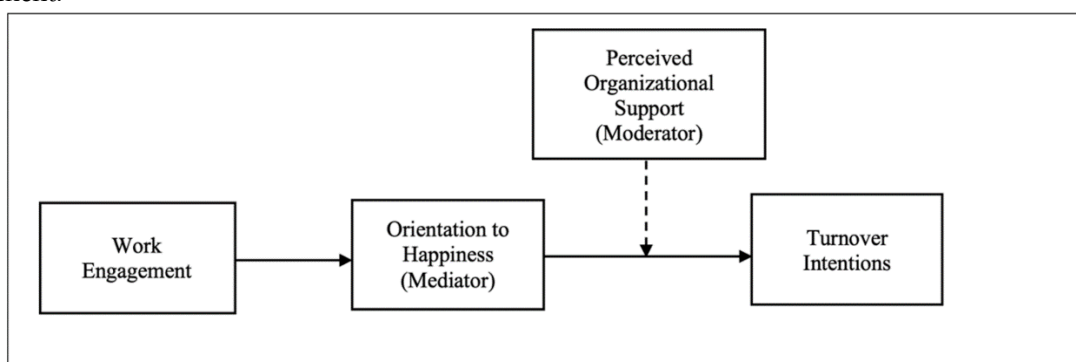


Figure 1. The conceptual basis

## METHODOLOGY

### Methodology and Attendees

The objective of the inquiry is to engage in dialogue with those employed on the frontline of the hospitality business. We partnered with a Malaysian International Tourism and Hospitality Management College that educates catering experts along with reached out to the responders. From January to July 2019, we solicited participation in our study from around 4,100 resort administration personnel in Malaysia via email and Telegram, aided by college

trainers. The guests included supervisors and assistants from various locales and multinational 5-star lodging establishments, mostly located in southern Malaysia. As frontline workers in the hotel sector who engage directly with guests, we deliberated on our superiors and subordinates. We communicated the objective of our study and affirmed our credibility. To motivate participants to finish all assessments, we announced that those who complete one would be placed into an auction for the opportunity to win RM1000 (\$250 USD) in rewards. The selection process involved collaboration with a Malaysian International Tourism and Hospitality Management College, which trains hospitality professionals. The college assisted in reaching out to the participants via email and Telegram to request their participation in the study. The selection of participants has been non-random, relying instead on the involvement of the college trainers and direct outreach to hotel staff. The sampling was convenience-based rather than fully random. However, it was likely designed to ensure that the sample was relevant and representative of frontline employees in the hospitality sector.

Regarding screening criteria, the study specifically targeted frontline workers in the hotel industry. The participants included both managers and subordinates working directly with clients. However, the study did not mention additional explicit screening criteria for selection, such as specific qualifications or experience levels, beyond their role as frontline employees in the hotel sector. Therefore, the criteria for inclusion were based on their position within the organization rather than specific demographic or professional qualifications.

Data was collected in three waves between April and July of 2019. "Considering that professional advancement theory posits workplace involvement as a synthesis of persons' psychological strengths that promote excellent professional along with professional experiences, we chose to gather time-lagged findings in order in order to test our investigation simulation." (Savickas, 2005). Moreover, time-lagged sample designs, in contrast to basic longitudinal assessments, reduce the likelihood for prevalent technique bias (Aiken et al., 2012). As indicated by prior time-lag analyses conducted in Malaysia, we established a four-week delay for gathering evidence at each stage. In April 2019, we commenced the inaugural internet-based poll (T1), encompassing queries regarding dedication to work, career possibilities, and statistics on demographics (i.e., age, sex, higher education, and expertise). We acquired estimates of OTH during the four weeks following the very initial program (T2) and gathered evaluations of the variable of dependency, changeover strategies, within four weeks subsequently (T3).

In this study, several steps were taken to address and mitigate potential non-response bias. A time-lagged data collection method was employed, spanning three waves with a four-week gap between each, which allowed for tracking changes over time and reducing the impact of common method bias. Additionally, Harman's single-factor test was conducted, revealing that only 20.18% of the variance was explained by a single factor, suggesting that common method bias was not a significant issue. However, a formal non-response bias test comparing the characteristics of early and late respondents was not performed, which constitutes a limitation of the study. Nevertheless, the use of the time-lagged approach and statistical checks for common method variance helped minimize non-response bias and strengthened the robustness of the findings.

The initial information gathering phase produced 476 valid assessments, resulting in an acceptance rate of 11.6 percent, deemed satisfactory for this type of inquiry. The identical 476 individuals were asked to reassess their emotions regarding OTH after a month had passed. Despite the low initial response rate of 11.6%, the study's design, which includes a time-lagged, three-wave data collection from a well-defined sample of frontline workers in 36 star-rated hotels across Peninsular Malaysia, justifies the adequacy of generalization. The longitudinal approach reduces common method bias and ensures that the findings are not based on a single point of data, while the sophisticated statistical techniques, such as path analysis and bootstrapping, enhance the reliability of the results. Moreover, the response rate, though modest, aligns with typical rates for online surveys in large, distributed populations, making the study's conclusions relevant for the broader hospitality industry in Malaysia. In the following session for information collecting, 336 valid responses were obtained, yielding a 70.5 % answer rate. During the final survey, 212 of the 336 respondents (63.09 percent) expressed a desire to change employment. Female participants comprised 63% among the 212 answers in the most recent poll. The respondent's mean age was 31 years (SD 9.02 years), and their mean tenure in current roles was 1.41 years (SD 0.79 years).

## Measures

Two multilingual experts used the standard back-translation approach to render the elements on the English-language magnitude (Douglas & Craig, 2007). Six multilingual PhD students in business administration subsequently evaluated the items, providing input on the clarity and comprehensibility of the enquiries in Malay for the people involved.

## Work Engagement

The scale for workplace engagement in Utrecht, which was designed (UWES-9), invented and verified by Schaufeli et al. (2006), was engaged in evaluating the intermediary factor that influences work enthusiasm. This instrument comprises three enquiries pertaining to each of the three dimensions of commitment delineated by

Schaufeli et al. (2006): vigor (e.g., "I experience energetic and vibrant at the career"); dedication (e.g., "my own career excites me"); along with concentration (e.g., "the moment passes whenever I am operating"). Every single aspect was assessed via a ranking system of five (1 = hardly 5 = frequently). Schaufeli et al. (2006) established that their involvement assessments had remarkable dependability and significant validity of construction assistance. The Cronbach's coefficient of accuracy for this study's score was 0.92.

### **Orientation to Happiness (OTH)**

The current investigation employed the 18-question assessment developed by Park et al. (2009) to evaluate OTH. We regard OTH as an overall cohesive architecture to improve the cohesiveness of our investigation paradigm. "I am rarely disturbed by my environment," "the optimal livelihood is one of enjoyment," and "my life has a greater significance" are nevertheless a few instances. Individuals were instructed to assess the pertinence of each statement to themselves utilizing a scale of five stars (1 = very opposed to 5 = extremely approve). The corresponding coefficient alpha associated with the OTH spectrum in the tests we conducted was 0.86.

### **Intentions to Resign**

A magnitude consisting of four different elements created by Schwegler (1999) was utilized to evaluate departure intentions. The inquiry is: "To what point would you wish for cooperation alongside an entirely fresh company?" "How often have you considered leaving the firm since starting your position right now?" "Would you foresee yourself continuing alongside this firm three years from now?" "What timeframe do you expect to stay with this particular company?" "The first pair of enquiries employed a scale of five, with comments varying from 1 = inadequate to 5 = optimal. The following inquiry utilized a scale with five level responses ranging from 1 = vehemently dissent to 5 = fully concur, and the final query was evaluated on a 5-demonstrate Question spectrum spanning 1 = 0 to 1 year, 5 = over five years. The ratio of alpha coefficient over this rating system in our evaluation was 0.82.

### **Perceived Organizational Support (POS)**

Eisenberger et al. (2002) developed a scale with three different items prospectus Measurement of Perceived Organizational Support (POS). Expressions such as "I have concerns about work chances inside this firm." "This company presents appealing job opportunities," and "This company provides different employment possibilities that correlate with my career objectives" were featured. Respondents used a scale with 5 level of responses was used to assess contentment with the assertions, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 5 signifying substantial concurrence. The coefficient for this measure in our study was 0.80.

### **Control Variables**

Consistent with other studies on job engagement, we assessed and adjusted for demographic variables like age, race, experience, and organizational tenure.

### **Analytical Approach**

We used path-analytic techniques and scaling analysis to gauge the relevance of indirect consequences and corroborate our presumption. The SPSS PROCESS macro model 14 has been utilized to estimate mediation and moderating mediation frameworks. Path analysis obviates the necessity for distinct hypothesis tests on the elements of the model to validate a mediation debate, since it just depends on understanding about the results of circuits via unforeseen consequences (Hayes, 2012; Preacher et al., 2007). On top of that, we opt for our ramping methodology in preference to alternative methodologies for assessing interaction (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Recent social science research suggests granulation is a more refined and precise method for evaluating effects that are indirect compared to additional mediation assessment methodologies; hence, we utilized contributory assessment of actions (Lothgren & Tambour, 1999).

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND STUDY RESULTS**

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) test was carried out to ascertain if the findings had a typical pattern across every single factor. When the measurements of dependent and independent variables are evaluated by an extra inconsistent an arrangement of common variation arises (Goodman, 1954; Lilliefors, 1969; Massey, 1951). Thus, we employed Harman's single-factor test, which revealed that a single factor contributed 20.18 percent of the aggregate variance. This implies the following standard operational variability does not influence our outputs.

We used Stöber (2001) and Cable and DeRue (2002) to assess both the discriminatory and commonality of all measures in. They contend that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) must exceed 0.50, the Composite Reliability (CR) must exceed 0.70, along with both the Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) and Average Shared

Variance (ASV) values should be inferior to the AVE value to confirm validity converged. Discriminant validity is significant when the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) metrics that each of the investigated constructs surpasses their correlations with each other. Table 1 implies how all utilized measurements are accurate and dependable, in accordance with the specified criteria. Table 1 demonstrates that both variables exhibit AVE values over 0.50, indicating robust validity that diverges; CR values extend from 0.93 to 0.96, denoting high reliability; and MSV and ASV are lower than AVE, establishing appropriate validity for discrimination.

**Table 1.** Dependability and accuracy

Variable	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	Cronbach Alpha
Work Engagement	0.95	0.63	0.12	0.09	0.93
Orientation to Happiness	0.93	0.62	0.14	0.11	0.89
Turnover Intentions	0.97	0.88	0.17	0.12	0.84
Perceived Organizational Support	0.96	0.83	0.15	0.08	0.81

Note: N=476. Cronbach Alpha Coefficients of Constructs; CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted; MSV = Maximum Shared Variance; ASV = Average Shared Variance

Likewise, all squared component values for AVE surpass the inter-construct commonalities shown in our study, as seen in Table 2. On top of that, AMOS 21 along with validated factor assessment have been employed to ascertain legitimacy (CFA). We used the index of relative fit (CFI), CMIN/df, the root mean square deviation of estimation (RMSEA), and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) to figure out the model's level of goodness of fit (Hosmer et al., 1997). CFI and TLI values over 0.90, along with an RMSEA rating below 0.08, reveal an adequate fitting of the model (Black & Babin, 2019; Hair et al., 2016). The coefficients of fit for the prior model (CMIN/df = 1.46, CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.05) were considered satisfactory.

### Statistical Description

Table 2 presents detailed statistics including interpersonal connections. Engagement in the workplace had a positive correlation with OTH ( $r = 0.36, p < 0.01$ ) and a negative correlation with attrition aspirations ( $r = -0.39, p < 0.01$ ), so offering initial encouragement for the hypothesis we propose. The inclination towards happiness had a negative correlation with turnover intentions ( $r = -0.31, p < 0.01$ ). A strong favorable relation ( $r = 0.43, p < 0.01$ ) was seen between perceived support from organizations and desire to turnover.

**Table 2.** Interaction correlations and descriptive metrics

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Age	2.23	0.49	-	-						
Gender	3.10	4.82	-	-						
Tenure	1.41	0.79	1.00	-0.05	0.03					
Education	1.94	0.99	0.01	-0.06	-	-				
Work Engagement	3.17	0.77	0.04	-0.08	0.98	-0.05	<b>0.81</b>			
OTH	3.38	1.08	0.07	0.02	0.13	0.12	0.36**	<b>0.79</b>		
Turnover Intentions	2.98	1.36	0.14	-0.03	0.06	-0.02	-0.39**	0.17	<b>0.97</b>	
POS	3.41	1.39	0.08	0.04	-0.13	0.14	-0.21	0.31**	0.43**	<b>0.92</b>

Notes: N=476. \* $p < .05$  and \*\* $p < .01$ , Gender 1=Female, 2=Male; age and Tenure in Actual Number of Years; Education: 1= High School, 2= College, 3= Bachelor Degree, 4= Master Degree, 5= Other Diploma. Figures in bold are the square root of AVE of each construct.

### Evaluation of Hypotheses

Each of the parameters were centered around their mean prior to analysis. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, T1 work involvement had an adverse connection with T3 plans for turnover ( $\beta = -0.56, t = -4.21, p < .01$ ) (see Table 4). T1 employment engagement exhibited a positive association with T2 enjoyment orientation ( $\beta = 0.49, t = 5.37, p < .01$ ),

whereas T2 contentment direction revealed a negative correlation regarding T3 desires for turnover ( $\beta = -0.23$ ,  $t = -2.61$ ,  $p < .01$ ), therefore establishing assumptions 2 and 3. We investigated the subsequent effects of T1 workplace participation on T3 desire to quit via T2 satisfaction orientated. Consistent with Hypothesis 4, the outcomes shown in Table 3 reveal that workplace participation has an immense adverse indirect influence upon the intention to leave via attitude towards contentment (estimated effect =  $-0.16$ , 95 percent CI  $[-0.25, -0.08]$ ). The review of the mediator indicates that career engagement has significant adverse effects on desire to quit ( $\beta = -0.56$ ,  $t = -2.61$ ,  $p < .01$ ; see Table 4), revealing that OTH functions as a deficient mediator in our concept.

**Table 3.** Facilitating influence of workplace participation

Path	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	SE	LL 95% CI	UL 95%CI
WE → OTH → TI	-0.09**	-0.16**	0.03	[0.05, -0.25]	[0.04, -0.08]

Note: N=476, WE = Work Engagement, OTH = Orientation to Happiness, TI = Turnover Intentions, SE = Standard Error, CI = Confidence Interval. \*\* $p < 0.01$

We conducted OTH to evaluate the anticipated effects of job involvement on intended conversion at different levels of our facilitator (at -1 SD as well as +1 SD) (i.e., POS). Table 4 illustrates that the minimal inadvertent impact caused by job participation on intentions to quit via OTH diminished beneath minimal POS (consequence forecast =  $-0.03$ , ns, 95 percent CI  $[-0.211, 0.149]$ ) compared to substantial POS (consequence assessment =  $-0.18$ , 95 percent CI  $[-0.287, -0.335]$ ), thereby supporting adjusted conciliation the assumption 5.

**Table 4.** Regression assessment and controlled mediation effects

Mediator						Dependent Variable				
OTH-T2						T1-T3				
Antecedents	$\beta$	SE	t	p	R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	SE	t	p	R <sup>2</sup>
		0.13					0.34			
Constant		1.21	0.57	-2.12**	0.03		2.62	0.56	4.80**	0.00
WE-T1		0.49	0.09	5.37**	0.00		-0.56	0.11	-4.21**	0.00
Age		0.01	0.01	0.76	0.45		-0.01	0.01	-0.88	0.36
Gender		0.14	0.13	1.05	0.29		0.12	0.15	1.89	0.08
Education		0.88	0.06	1.38	0.16		-0.09	0.07	-1.27	0.22
Tenure		0.15	0.08	1.76	0.08		-0.04	0.07	0.63	0.83
OTH-T2		-	-	-			-0.23	0.08	-2.61**	0.02
Moderated Mediation Effect										
Moderator: POS			Indirect Effect			SE		LLCI		ULCI
+1 SD			-0.18			0.08		-0.287		-0.335
- 1 SD			-0.03			0.10		-0.211		0.149

Notes: N=476, WE = Work Engagement, OTH = Orientation to Happiness, TI = Turnover Intentions, Significant at \*\* $p < 0.01$  and \* $p < 0.05$ , ULCI = 95% Confidence Interval, Bootstrap Sample Size = 10,000; results were reported after controlling gender, age, tenure and education

**Disclosure**

This study sought to investigate how work engagement in the hospitality business reduces turnover among staff members. Professional job involvement is seen as an essential attribute that allows individuals to navigate complex transformations in their work environment (Nilforooshan & Salimi, 2016). Notwithstanding its increasing importance, occupational commitment in the travel and tourism sector has been examined little. To clarify the effect of staff engagement on reducing potential turnover in the advantageous hospitality businesses sector, we formulated and substantiated a proposed framework that looked at the associations among four builds: staff engagement, positioning to happiness, desire to leave, and the impression of institutional backing (Fasbender et al., 2018). Our study indicates a direct correlation between job participation and intentions to quit among frontline

hospitality staff, underscoring the importance of OTH as a mediating variable in this context. Moreover, we ascertained how perceived organizational support (POS) has an ameliorating effect, wherein strong POS minimizes the interaction among confidence in the organization (OTH) and intentions of turnover.

## CONCLUSION

### Theoretical Repercussions

This research contributes to both empirical and theoretical literature on job satisfaction that is an area that, despite its significance, remains relatively underexplored within the tourism and hospitality sectors. Our primary objective is to highlight the importance of this issue for hospitality scholars, particularly in the context of dynamic organisations characterised by frequent employee turnover (Duffy et al., 2015; Jiang, 2016). To this end, our computational model not only investigates the influence of job involvement on turnover intentions but also incorporates Occupational Thinking Habits (OTH) as a potential mediating mechanism. A review of existing literature reveals that while recent studies have focused on the outcomes of job responsiveness, there is a notable gap in understanding the fundamental mechanisms linking organisational flexibility to job satisfaction (Kašpárková et al., 2018).

By positioning OTH as a key mediator, we examine how job adaptability relates to turnover intentions within the lodging segment of the tourism industry. This relationship, we find, is inverse. Our findings further show that Perceived Organisational Support (POS) acts as a significant moderating factor in the relationship between operational flexibility and employee outcomes. Notably, job adaptability is negatively associated with turnover intentions when employees perceive fewer opportunities for career advancement within their current organisations (Wolfe & Kim, 2013).

To our knowledge, this is the first study to directly link work engagement with turnover intentions within the hotel industry. Given the high global turnover rates in hospitality organisations, our study underscores the urgent need for further investigation and practical solutions. Our results, consistent with previous studies, affirm that work engagement is a key predictor of employees' intentions to stay or leave (Marques-Quinteiro et al., 2018). These findings are especially relevant to service-driven industries where frontline employees frequently face dynamic work conditions. Engagement at work, we argue, is vital for enabling such employees to adapt to ongoing changes and pressures within hospitality organizations, thereby reinforcing the importance of frontline work commitment.

We further establish that OTH not only has a negative association with turnover intentions but also acts as a mediating factor between job flexibility and employee departure expectations. As a relatively new construct, OTH comprising enjoyment, purpose, and devotion remains underexplored within the hotel sector (Marques-Quinteiro et al., 2018). Our research confirms that OTH is strongly associated with work engagement and helps professionals in the industry achieve optimal performance. Prior work has not adequately examined the mechanisms that link work engagement to broader organisational outcomes (Norbu & Wetprasit, 2020; Reizer, 2014). In response, we propose OTH as a novel conduit through which work engagement influences turnover intentions, thus offering a more nuanced understanding of the psychological processes underlying employee behavior in hospitality.

Moreover, our research demonstrates that job flexibility affects turnover intentions both directly and indirectly through OTH, consistent with the findings of Berglund et al. (2015). Here, we explicitly draw on Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 1997) to extend prior research. According to CCT, job involvement fosters psychological development and influences employees' perceptions of their career trajectories. Our study builds on this by showing that job involvement cultivates Occupational Thinking Habits (OTH) is a key psychological competency which in turn prepares employees to pursue future opportunities within their current organizations (Fasbender et al., 2018; Kašpárková et al., 2018). Thus, our findings provide a theoretical extension of CCT by identifying OTH as a concrete manifestation of the adaptability and future-oriented mindset that CCT posits as essential for career progression. This reinforces previous research linking work engagement with employee well-being and job satisfaction and suggests that factors such as occupational stress and prior intentions to quit may also interact with OTH in influencing turnover behavior.

Finally, our study underscores the pivotal role of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) in retaining hospitality employees. We find that even those with high adaptability may still consider leaving if they perceive limited internal career growth opportunities. This highlights POS as a critical influence on employee retention, aligning with prior work on its impact in the hospitality sector (Choi, 2019; Nilforooshan & Salimi, 2016). A key insight is that employees' adaptability declines when they lack clarity about their career path within the organization. These findings affirm the importance of offering clear and compelling career advancement prospects, not only to boost retention but also to sustain motivation and commitment. As such, the role of POS emphasized in our study likely applies broadly across service industries beyond hospitality (Gallie et al., 2016; Kim, 2016; Su et al., 2009).

## Practical Repercussions

The insights generated from this study hold valuable implications for hospitality sector leaders, recruitment specialists, and the broader service economy. The findings highlight that employee adaptability plays a crucial role in shaping their intention to resign, either on its own or through the influence of occupational thinking habits (OTH). To address this, human resource professionals and frontline managers are encouraged to implement focused development strategies that cater specifically to the roles and challenges faced by their staff. Tailored training initiatives and role-specific learning experiences can equip employees with the tools needed to thrive in the high-pressure environment of the hospitality industry, while simultaneously advancing their professional growth. Such capacity-building efforts can significantly enhance organisational resilience and competitiveness. In parallel, hiring practices in this sector should prioritise individuals who exhibit strong career adaptability traits, as recommended by Crucke et al. (2021). Specific HR strategies, such as mentorship programs, flexible scheduling, and wellness initiatives, should also be incorporated to further support employee well-being and professional growth.

Furthermore, the identification of OTH as a mediating factor strengthens the ability of managerial staff to formulate interventions that minimise the negative impact of low adaptability on employee retention. Employers must consider the full range of variables that contribute to higher levels of OTH and simultaneously work on boosting employee engagement and motivation. Previous research shows that attributes such as self-discipline and personality dynamics are strongly linked to the development of OTH (Ekrot et al., 2016). HR departments should focus on fostering these attributes through personalized development plans and performance-based incentives, ensuring that employees feel valued and supported in their growth.

In addition, our study underscores the importance of transparent career opportunities in attracting capable workers to the hospitality field. When perceived organizational support (POS) is lacking, employees may become more susceptible to external job offers. Therefore, it is vital for organizations to nurture a culture of optimism regarding internal mobility and advancement. HR departments should develop structured career progression frameworks, offer training that helps employees envision future roles within the company, and promote internal job vacancies to make sure career pathways are visible and accessible to employees (Kim et al., 2013). POS, as a subjective perception, acts as a conditional factor that moderates the association involving OTH along with desire to depart, particularly among frontline staff. Nonetheless, all these efforts hinge on the fundamental step of ensuring internal job vacancies and career pathways are clearly advertised and accessible to employees.

## Constraints and Alternatives for Subsequent Investigation

Although our approach provides a stronger foundation for causal interpretation, it is essential to interpret the results within the context of certain limitations. Firstly, the data collection window of two months may not have been sufficient for evaluating the relationships in our model. Scholars such as Hair et al. (2016) and Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1997) suggest that a longer temporal separation is more suitable for such research. Future investigations are encouraged to adopt extended intervals between data collection points to better capture temporal dynamics (Hair et al., 2017). Secondly, since the study sample was exclusively drawn from Malaysian participants, the generalisability of our findings may be limited. Although some earlier studies suggest that cultural differences may not significantly affect outcomes related to job adaptability, we recommend replicating this model in diverse cultural settings to verify its broader applicability.

Third, considering the negative association observed between occupational thinking habits (OTH) and turnover intentions, future research should explore how employee satisfaction interacts within this dynamic, especially in the context of hospitality. Our model only examined one precursor and one outcome of OTH, which suggests the need for further studies to identify additional influencing factors, such as organisational support structures, and to explore outcomes like job involvement and enhanced performance. Fourth, while our results confirm the relevance of career development opportunities in the hospitality industry, further studies might consider how perceived organisational support (POS) operates in different sectors or when examined alongside alternative variables. Lastly, we recognise that employees' perspectives on career growth can differ based on employment type and working conditions. A more detailed exploration of individual differences such as distinctions between part-time and full-time roles, access to flexible scheduling, and the influence of sustained workplace relationships that would offer richer insights into the interplay between OTH and POS.

Although this study collected data between 2019 and 2020, it is important to acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged after the data collection period, may have significantly reshaped employee perspectives on job engagement, turnover intentions, and organizational support. The pandemic likely heightened concerns about job security, altered perceptions of work-life balance, and introduced new factors influencing turnover intentions. As such, while the study provides valuable insights based on pre-pandemic conditions, the results may not fully reflect the changing dynamics and challenges that have emerged in the wake of the pandemic. Future research could explore how the pandemic has impacted these variables in the hospitality sector.

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