

Job Flexibility and Career Shift Intentions Among Hotel Employees: A Moderated Analysis by Employment Type and Gender

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Abstract: The hospitality industry faces substantial challenges regarding employee retention. Career shift intentions serve as key predictors of employee turnover. This study examines the influence of job flexibility on career change intentions among hotel employees, while testing gender and employment type as moderating variables. A cross-sectional study (N = 92), analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), revealed that job flexibility significantly reduced career shift intentions ($\beta = -0.270$, $p < 0.05$). However, neither gender nor employment type, nor their interactions with flexibility, were found to be significant moderators. Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) indicated that although gender and employment type were rated as highly important factors, their direct effects were not statistically significant, suggesting that job flexibility, while effective, is secondary to structural employment factors in career decisions. This indicates that although employees prioritise flexibility, it is subordinated to fundamental demographic and contractual factors in career choices. These findings underscore the necessity of theoretically clarifying the role of employment flexibility within retention models. Furthermore, these findings provide managers with evidence to prioritise gender-sensitive policies and stable employment structures over isolated flexibility

initiatives aimed at mitigating talent losses. Future research should investigate additional predictors, such as job security and career advancement, employing longitudinal designs to enhance model robustness.

Keywords: Job flexibility, moderated analysis, employment, gender, shift careers.

1. Introduction

Flexibility in the workplace is a critical factor in maintaining stability within the hospitality workforce; conversely, inflexible schedules and poor working conditions continue to drive employees away from the industry or into alternative sectors (Han, 2022; Giousmpasoglou et al., 2024). While some studies indicate that the implementation of flexible work arrangements mitigates work-life conflict and enhances job satisfaction – thereby reducing employees' intentions to resign – other research highlights the potential for a “flexibility backlash.” This backlash occurs when employees perceive that flexible arrangements hinder their career advancement or limit access to equitable opportunities (Adebayo, 2023; Lee, 2024). Moreover, reviews within the hospitality literature underscore that structural challenges, such as low wages, underemployment, and the underutilisation of skills, significantly influence employees' decisions to pursue new career paths rather than make lateral moves within the industry (Giousmpasoglou et al., 2024; Han, 2022). Consequently, the extent to which job flexibility diminishes an individual's intention to exit a career depends on how such flexibility is designed, implemented, and equitably distributed by hospitality employers (Zhu, 2024; Lee, 2024).

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To better understand this complexity, it is essential to examine employment types, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and gender-related work experience. Previous research indicates that employment type influences the likelihood of unstable working hours and the opportunity to obtain optimal flexible work arrangements, with part-time and temporary workers more frequently expressing higher turnover intentions (Ambrož et al., 2022; Saleem, 2021). Gender also plays a significant role in shaping social roles, and resource-based perspectives predict differences in how men and women assess flexibility (Petrović, 2014; Wahyudi et al., 2022). Therefore, a moderated analytical framework is required to examine the interactions and their implications for retention strategies within hospitality organisations.

This study addresses this gap by exploring the relationship between job flexibility and career shift intention among hotel employees, while also testing gender and employment type as moderating variables. Employing partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) and Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA), this research transcends traditional turnover models by distinguishing between job exit and career shift intentions. The findings reveal that job flexibility reduces career shift intentions but does not interact significantly with gender or employment type. This study thus provides a comprehensive examination of the relationship between job flexibility and career shift intention among hotel employees, incorporating gender and employment type as moderators.

1.1 Problem statement

The hospitality industry continues to experience significant levels of workforce instability, characterised by a substantial number of employees departing not only from their organisations but from the profession as a whole. While existing literature indicates that job flexibility may mitigate turnover intentions, it remains uncertain whether this flexibility effectively diminishes employees' intentions to leave the hospitality industry entirely. Moreover, there is a scarcity of empirical evidence regarding whether this relationship varies by gender or employment type. This lack of clarity hinders both theoretical advancement and the development of effective retention strategies within the hospitality sector. In light of this, the following questions and hypotheses have been formulated.

1.1.1 Research Question

The following research questions were developed to guide the study.

- Does job flexibility influence employees' desire to shift careers in the hospitality industry?
- Does gender moderate the relationship between job flexibility and career shift intention?
- Does employment type moderate the relationship between job flexibility and career shift intention?

1.1.2 Research Hypotheses

- H₁: Job flexibility has a significant negative influence on career shift intention among hotel employees.
- H₂: Gender significantly moderates the relation between job flexibility and career shift intention.
- H₃: Employment type moderates the relationship between job flexibility and career shift intention.

2. Literature Review

This section reviews the key literature on job flexibility and career shift intentions in the hospitality industry. It discusses career shift intentions, job flexibility as a workplace resource, employment type as a moderating factor, and the conceptual framework guiding the study.

2.1 Career shift intentions in the hospitality industry

Career advancement is a significant driver of the intention to pursue career transitions among employees in the hospitality industry (Nguyen et al., 2023). Empirical studies utilising large-scale cohorts of hospitality students demonstrate that perceptions of career advancement opportunities, in conjunction with perceived organisational fit, significantly influence intentions to remain in the industry after graduation. Senior students, in particular, place greater emphasis on advancement prospects than on any other factor (Anthony et al., 2021; Zhang & Eringa, 2022). While research has primarily focused on students, studies employing Career Construction Theory have also identified structural barriers as the strongest predictors of hospitality employees exiting the industry (Lee et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2025; Kashkari et al., 2024).

Furthermore, a meta-analysis of 34 studies found that self-perception and social identity exert the strongest influence on career transition intentions, while work conditions and education have smaller, albeit still meaningful, effects on career shift decisions (Liu et al., 2022). Longitudinal data further support the negative associations between career adaptability and turnover intentions (Horst et al., 2021). Employees who adapt well to changing career environments tend to prioritise their well-being; however, this relationship is moderated by employees' perceptions of available career advancement opportunities. This suggests that psychological resources alone are insufficient; they require institutional support and accessible career progression pathways to effectively promote long-term retention (Rasheed et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the hospitality industry (Nguyen et al., 2023). Consequently, concerns regarding mental health and job security have escalated, heightening the urgency to address the pervasive issue of industry-wide retention. Studies indicate that various barriers to entering the hospitality industry – such as social, personal, and interactional challenges – can deter individuals from pursuing a career in this field (Carvalho & Raimundo, 2025). Research by Kashkari et al. (2024) suggests that career optimism mediates the relationship between career obstacles and career intentions. Furthermore, systematic review literature provides evidence that addressing structural barriers within the hospitality industry, including scheduling stability, fair compensation, and internal motivational barriers such as flexibility and recovery from stressors, necessitates a multi-faceted approach. Gong and Jia (2022) contend that employing multiple strategies is essential to combat the trend of employee turnover in the hospitality sector.

It is increasingly apparent that career choices within the hospitality industry are influenced by both structural and psychological factors (Brandão et al., 2025). On one hand, extreme labour demands, fluctuating demand, and seasonal employment instability contribute to an unappealing workplace; on the other hand, evidence indicates that interventions aimed at increasing identity, optimism, and adaptability can reduce career shift intentions among employees in organisations that prioritise employee development (Anthony et al., 2021; Gong & Jia, 2022; Liu et al., 2022). Therefore, the existing body of literature provides a foundation for the development of theoretical frameworks that elucidate causal relationships across multiple levels. For instance, frameworks linking organisational practices and employee arrangements to individual resources can enhance understanding and assist in mitigating career transition behaviour within the hospitality industry.

2.2 Job flexibility

The flexibility of working in hospitality is illustrated through flexible scheduling, predictable scheduling, and the ability to swap shifts (Brandão et al., 2025). In corporate functions, flexibility encompasses remote and hybrid work arrangements. Literature indicates that flexible work arrangements positively impact employee performance. These arrangements also benefit employees by enhancing productivity, increasing job satisfaction, reducing stress, improving work-life balance, and boosting commitment to employers (Çivilidağ & Durmaz, 2024). Furthermore, flexible work

arrangements have become such a significant factor in today's labour market that some employees would prefer flexible work arrangements over pay increases (Andrade et al., 2023).

However, evidence from the hospitality industry reveals considerable variation in how flexibility is experienced by employees, indicating a gap between theoretical benefits and practical implementation. The operational demands characteristic of the industry often constrain flexibility. For instance, an industry report by EHL Hospitality Business School and HoteliersGuild Leading Hôtelières (2022) found that most hotels offer only low to medium levels of flexibility and identified discrepancies between employee and Human Resource (HR) staff perceptions of work flexibility. This suggests that flexibility is not only structurally limited but also subjectively experienced. Moreover, organisational factors such as a family-friendly culture and supervisory support play a crucial role in determining whether employees can access flexible work arrangements (EHL Hospitality Business School and Hoteliers Guild Leading Hôtelières, 2022).

At the same time, efforts to increase flexibility through non-standard employment arrangements present additional challenges. Studies on precarious employment indicate that forms such as zero-hour contracts, agency contracts, and temporary contracts, although intended to enhance flexibility, can negatively affect employee well-being (Farina et al., 2023). In some cases, these arrangements may even reduce organisational flexibility and resilience, particularly when employees operate under strict controls over processes and outputs (Bonner et al., 2024). This highlights a critical tension between organisational flexibility and employee security.

Recent research, therefore, emphasises the need for a more balanced and strategic approach to flexibility in the hospitality industry. Organisations are encouraged to develop flexibility initiatives that maintain clear boundaries while supporting employee well-being (Boccoli et al., 2024). Based on qualitative interviews with Human Resource (HR) leaders in the hospitality industry, Bansal et al. (2025) found that workplace flexibility can be achieved through a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches, including the active incorporation of employee input. These dual approaches are associated with improved well-being and higher retention rates. Additionally, flexibility should be aligned with specific job characteristics such as task significance, feedback, and autonomy to minimise the risk of employee overload (Bansal et al., 2025).

Overall, literature portrays flexibility as a conditional resource. While flexibility offers many positive outcomes for employees, these benefits depend on various organisational and individual factors, including organisational culture, supervisor support, and the nature of the contract structure used to provide flexibility. Such conditions enable employees to exercise discretion without facing uncertainty or income loss (Çivilidağ & Durmaz, 2024).

2.3 Employment types as a moderator

Employment type typically refers to the classification of workers based on their contractual arrangements, such as permanent (full-time) or contingent (part-time, temporary, or agency) contracts (Symeonaki et al., 2023). This distinction plays a critical role in moderating how individual-level psychological resources influence work outcomes. Research indicates that career adaptability serves as a stronger protective factor against turnover for permanent employees compared to contingent workers (Plomb et al., 2019). According to Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, originally developed by Demerouti et al. (2001) and subsequently advanced by Bakker and Demerouti (2007), employees with stable contracts are better positioned to convert adaptability into job satisfaction rather than anxiety. While contingent labour is often perceived as flexible and cost-effective, it frequently results in unstable and generally negative outcomes for both flexibility and productivity.

The imposition of formal processes and output controls further restricts employees' capacity to exercise discretion and achieve psychological safety, exacerbating these effects (Bonner et al., 2024).

These findings underscore the necessity of distinguishing between work flexibility, which pertains to employees' control over how they manage their time, and labour flexibility, which concerns employers' capacity to alter contractual terms such as working hours. The differing impacts of these types of flexibility are closely linked to employee retention. To mitigate unintended turnover and inequalities, organisations should adopt flexibility strategies tailored to employment status. For example, providing predictability and income security for contingent workers, alongside autonomy and development opportunities for permanent employees, can enhance retention and well-being.

2.4 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this research study (referenced in Figure 1 below) examines job flexibility as a direct factor affecting an employee's intent to transition to a new career. In addition to exploring the relationship between job flexibility and an employee's intent to change careers, the framework illustrates the moderating effects of gender and type of employment on this relationship. Understanding these moderating factors is essential for determining when and under what employment conditions flexibility will have the greatest impact. By examining how employees' characteristics and their contracts with their employers influence workplace programmes that can affect employees' career choices, this study offers both theoretical and practical insights for the hospitality industry.

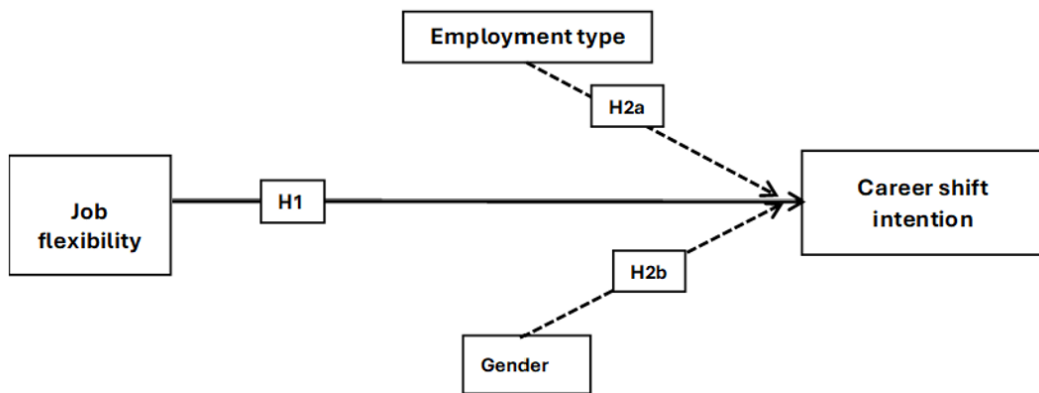


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

3. Research Methodology

A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was employed to test the proposed theoretical model. This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Central University of Technology, Free State, prior to the commencement of data collection. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire comprising two sections. The first section captured demographic and employment-related information, while the second section included multi-item Likert-scale measures assessing job flexibility and career shift intention. The sample population consisted of hotel employees in Bloemfontein, Free State Province. Convenience sampling was utilised due to access constraints within the hospitality industry, resulting in a final sample of 92 respondents. PLS-SEM was selected as it is suitable for exploratory and theory-testing models, and is frequently used in research contexts with non-normal data and comparatively smaller samples; however, sample adequacy depends on model complexity and statistical power rather than a single universal threshold. The study meets commonly used heuristic benchmarks for estimating the main effects structural model, but tests of moderation typically require larger samples as interaction effects are often small. Therefore, moderation findings are interpreted cautiously as exploratory, indicating the need for replication with larger samples to confirm conditional effects.

Data were analysed using PLS-SEM with Smart PLS version 4. The analysis followed a two-step procedure, involving the assessment of the measurement model followed by the evaluation of the structural model (Hair et al., 2020). The first step focused on validating the reliability and validity of the measurement model (Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVEs) values, and heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) ratios). The second step concentrated on assessing the structural models. To evaluate the structural model, the statistical significance of the relationships between variables (path coefficients) was assessed through bootstrapping subsamples of 5000, while the predictive capability of the model (R^2) and predictive relevance of the model (Q^2_{predict}) were also examined. In addition to these assessments, the researchers employed an additional analytical tool, Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA), to further explore the strategic implications of the findings (Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016). All participants provided informed consent to partake in the study. Participant responses were anonymous and remained confidential, as outlined in the ethical approval. All data were securely stored in password-protected electronic files accessible only to the researchers and were preserved solely for research purposes. The following section presents the empirical findings of the study. The results are organised according to the analytical sequence followed in the study, beginning with the demographic characteristics of the respondents, followed by the assessment of the measurement model, structural model, predictive relevance, and Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA).

4. Presentation of Results

This section starts by presenting the demographic profile of the respondents. These characteristics provide context for interpreting the study findings. The findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics

Variable	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	42	45.7%
	Female	46	50.0%
	LGBTQ+	4	4.3%
Age range	20-30 years	41	44.6%
	31-40 years	37	40.2%
	41-50 years	8	8.7%
	Above 50 years	5	5.4%
	Missing	1	1.1%
Highest education	PhD	4	4.3%
	Masters	1	1.1%
	Honours/PGDp	1	1.1%
	Bachelor's/Adv Dip	6	6.5%
	Diploma	41	44.6%
	Below Diploma	39	42.4%
Length of service in this specific hotel	Up to 5 years	61	66.3%
	6-10 years	16	17.4%
	11-15 years	9	9.8%
	16-20 years	4	4.3%
	21 years and above	2	2.2%
Total number of years in the hotel industry	Up to 5 years	52	56.5%
	6-10 years	19	20.7%

	11-15 years	16	17.4%
	16-20 years	5	5.4%
	21 years and above	-	-
Primary job status	Fulltime permanent	46	50.0%
	Full-time contract renewable	22	23.9%
	Part-time	24	26.1%
Hotel size	Small	14	15.2%
	Medium	39	42.4%
	Large	39	42.4%
Hotel years of existence	1-5 years	14	15.2%
	6-10 years	16	17.4%
	More than 10 years	59	64.1%
	Missing	3	3.3%

The demographics of the hotel staff who participated in this study are presented in Table 1, alongside developing trends in the hospitality workforce reported by other researchers in their recent studies. For example, the largest proportion of participants employed at hotels fell into the 20-30 and 31-40 age ranges (44.6% and 40.2%, respectively), clearly reflecting the impact of Millennials and Gen Z, who collectively comprise over 40% of the world’s workforce. Their perspectives emphasise work-life balance, career advancement, and environmentally-friendly workplaces (Seyfi et al., 2024). In terms of gender, respondents were nearly equally divided between male and female participants (45.7% male, 50% female); this reflects the various diversity initiatives established within the hospitality industry, although significant disparities persist regarding hotel leadership positions (Ozdemir, 2021). Concerning educational background, most participants who responded to the survey held a diploma (44.6%), while only 6.5% possessed a bachelor’s degree or higher. These results corroborate prior research findings highlighting the limited accessibility of post-secondary education qualifications that inhibit career advancement opportunities for hotel staff, underscoring the need for employers to provide employee-driven upskilling and professional development programmes (Almeida, 2025).

Regarding employment type, the majority of hotel staff surveyed (66.3%) indicated that they have worked for less than six years with their current employer. Consistent with previous findings across various hospitality sectors, the high level of employee turnover documented in the hospitality industry is reflected in this study, with certain sectors experiencing annual employee turnover rates exceeding 70% (Dean et al., 2025). Similarly, most hotel staff surveyed (56.5%) reported having less than five years of industry experience; these results illustrate that many hospitality employees are new to the field and that the industry faces challenges in retaining employees beyond the initial employment period (Grigoryan, 2024).

The job status among the hotel staff surveyed indicates that 50% are employed on a full-time permanent basis, 23.9% have renewable contract agreements, and 26.1% are employed on a part-time basis. These results reflect a global trend towards non-traditional employment arrangements. While flexible employment arrangements may provide various benefits to employees, they can also correlate with increased job insecurity and turnover intentions (Ompong & Cudjoe-Mensah, 2025). Finally, a review of data concerning hotel size and longevity suggests that hotel organisations have reached a mature organisational stage (42.4% medium-sized; 42.4% large-sized; 64.1% have operated for over 10 years). However, recent research emphasises that even the longest-established hotel organisations must adapt to the changing expectations of multigenerational workforces and implement technology-based HR strategies to remain competitive (Bansal et al., 2025; Näppä et al.,

2025). The study then assessed the research model using established evaluation criteria. Table 2 presents the criteria used to determine the model adequacy.

Table 2: Model evaluation criteria

Quality dimension	Criteria	Source
Reliability-Cronbach's alpha	≥ 0.7	Becker, et al., (2012)
Reliability-Rho_a	≥ 0.7	
Composite reliability-Rho_c	≥ 0.7	
Convergent validity-Average variance extracted [AVE]	> 0.5	
Discriminant validity-Heterotrait-monotrait ratio [HTMT ratio]	< 1	Franke, (2019)
Common method bias-Inner VIF	< 5	
Multi-collinearity-Outer VIF	< 5	
Structural model	Indices	
Indicator reliability	Indicator loading > 0.7 ; $p \leq 0.05$	Benitez, et al., (2020)
Coefficients and effect size	Unstandardized beta	Benitez, et al., (2020)
	F^2 : effect size values above 0.35, 0.15, and 0.02 are interpreted as strong, moderate, and weak, respectively	
Coefficient of determination	R^2 : results above 0.67 (substantial), 0.33 (moderate) and 0.19 (weak)	Benitez, et al., (2020)
Test of robustness		
Predictive relevance	Plsq ² predict (> 0)	Shmueli, et al., (2019)
Predict power	RMSE; MAE	
Importance-Performance Map Analysis	Priority based on quadrant	Sever, (2015); Lai & Hitchcock, (2019)
	Quadratic equation ($p > 0.05$)	

Table 2 summarises the criteria utilised to evaluate the structural equation modelling, with reflection as a criterion for the hypothesis-specific hypotheses tested within the study. The measurement model was evaluated initially, followed by the structural model, with results obtained after the iterative process. Finally, the outcomes concerning the significant testing of the structural model were presented. Based on the evaluation criteria outlined above, the measurement model was first assessed for reliability and validity. Table 3 presents the construct validity and reliability results.

Table 3: Construct validity and reliability

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Career shift intention	0.637	1.456	0.807	0.685
Job flexibility	0.783	0.828	0.869	0.689

The psychometric properties of career shift intentions and job flexibility, as presented in Table 3, were found to be acceptable, although discrepancies were noted in one measure of job flexibility. Job flexibility demonstrated strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha at .783, Composite Reliability ($\rho_a = .828$; $\rho_c = .869$), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) at .689, indicating good convergent validity, in accordance with the recommendations of Hair et al. (2020) and Sarstedt et al. (2022). Career shift intentions also exhibited sufficient convergent validity, with composite reliability ($\rho_c = .807$) and AVE (.685), consistent with Benitez et al. (2020). However, the Cronbach's Alpha of .637 was below the conventional threshold of .70, indicating moderate internal reliability. This concern has been noted in the literature, which advises against relying solely on alpha and

encourages multi-indicator reliability checks in small-sample PLS-SEM studies (Becker et al., 2012; Franke & Sarstedt, 2019).

A significant issue was the unusually high rho_a value (1.456) compared to Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability, suggesting potential multicollinearity or model overfitting. This observation aligns with discussions regarding the limitations of rho_a in complex models and the necessity for additional diagnostics, such as HTMT ratios and VIF assessments, to ensure discriminant validity (Benitez et al., 2020; Kock, 2015). Despite these anomalies, the satisfactory composite reliability and AVE values suggest that the constructs can be cautiously regarded as valid, although refinement is recommended. After confirming construct reliability and validity, discriminant validity was assessed to ensure that the constructs were distinct from one another. Table 4 presents the HTMT results.

Table 4: Discriminant validity

	HTMT Ratio
Employment type <-> Career shift intention	0.168
Gender <-> Career shift intention	0.122
Gender <-> Employment type	0.156
Job flexibility <-> Career shift intention	0.306
Job flexibility <-> Employment type	0.171
Job flexibility <-> Gender	0.049

The discriminant validity for the HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait) ratio presented in Table 4 indicates that all constructs in the model have valid discrimination. The results confirm that all HTMT ratios are less than .85, with the highest being between Job Flexibility and Career Shift Intention (.306). These findings support the assertion that all constructs – Job Flexibility, Career Shift Intentions, Employment Type, and Gender – are empirically different and do not represent redundancy based on their inter-relationships. Low HTMT values (i.e., .049 for Job Flexibility/Gender and .122 for Gender/Career Shift Intentions) further illustrate the clear distinction among the constructs. Therefore, the model demonstrates strong discriminative validity, providing evidence of the respondents' ability to distinguish among the measured variables.. Following the discriminant validity assessment, collinearity was examined to ensure that the indicators were not highly correlated. Table 5 presents the outer VIF results.

Table 5: Collinearity statistics

	Outer VIF
Gender	1.000
JF2	1.892
JF3	2.315
JF4	1.450
Pjob	1.000
QT1	1.279
QT3	1.279
Gender x Job flexibility	1.000
Employment type x Job flexibility	1.000

The presence of multicollinearity was assessed through an external analysis employing the variance inflation factor (VIF), as delineated in Table 5. It was found that none of the VIF values exceeded the generally accepted thresholds of five and three point three. Consequently, the indicators of job flexibility (JF2 = 1.892, JF3 = 2.315, JF4 = 1.450) are not significantly correlated and thus constitute valid measures of the construct. Similarly, the indicators of career shift intention (QT1 and QT3; both VIF = 1.279), as well as the observed variables of gender and employment type (p-job; both VIF = 1.000), were devoid of collinearity. Moreover, the interaction terms (gender × job flexibility and p-

job $\times$ job flexibility) exhibited VIFs of one, thereby affirming the reliability and validity of the measurement model. Collectively, these results demonstrated the reliability and validity of the indicators and indicated that neither the structural nor measurement models of the present study exhibited evidence of multicollinearity. The model was further examined for predictor collinearity and potential common method bias. Table 6 presents the inner VIF results.

Table 6: Inner VIF

	Inner VIF
Employment type -> Career shift intention	1.098
Gender -> Career shift intention	1.084
Job flexibility -> Career shift intention	1.099
Gender $\times$ Job flexibility -> Career shift intention	1.056
Employment type $\times$ Job flexibility -> Career shift intention	1.118

The analysis of common-method bias (CMB) in the context of SMART PLS is facilitated by the use of inner Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values as a diagnostic tool, as presented in Table 6. According to Kock (2015), if all the inner VIF values are less than 3.3, there is little likelihood that CMB will present a significant issue within the model. The inner VIF values for the predictors of Career Shift Intention—employment type (1.098), gender (1.084), job flexibility (1.099), and their interaction terms—gender $\times$ job flexibility (1.056) and employment type $\times$ job flexibility (1.118)—are significantly lower than the conservative benchmark of 3.3. This indicates that the predictors do not have an excessive amount of variance due to the measurement method and lack multicollinearity. Therefore, it has been determined that the model has little to no common method bias; thus, the results of the study are reliable and not biased. After assessing collinearity and common method bias, indicator reliability was examined to confirm whether the items adequately represented their constructs. Table 7 presents the indicator loadings, t-statistics, and p-values.

Table 7. Indicator reliability

	Loading	T statistics	P values
JF2 <- Job flexibility	0.759	3.546	0.000
JF3 <- Job flexibility	0.882	4.016	0.000
JF4 <- Job flexibility	0.845	3.784	0.000
QT1 <- Career shift intention	0.977	7.957	0.000
QT3 <- Career shift intention	0.645	2.644	0.004

Table 7 presents the results for indicator reliability. All the factors in the measurement model are statistically significant and provide meaningful contributions to their respective constructs. The three parameters for job flexibility – JF2 (0.759; $t=3.546$; $p=0.000$), JF3 (0.882; $t=4.016$; $p=0.000$), and JF4 (0.845; $t=3.784$; $p=0.000$) – have satisfactory loadings above the 0.70 threshold, thereby supporting both reliability and relevance as measures of this concept. For career shift intention, QT1 has a strong loading (0.977; $t=7.957$; $p=0.000$), indicating it is highly indicative of this construct. Although QT3 has a smaller loading (0.645; $t=2.644$; $p=0.004$) than QT1, it still meets the minimum required loading standard (0.60) and is also statistically significant. These results support the assertion that the measurement model has considerable indicator reliability and that the constructs are sufficiently represented by their measurable items. After confirming the reliability of the measurement items, the structural model was examined to test the study's hypotheses. Table 8 presents the path coefficients, effect sizes, t-statistics, and p-values.

Table 8: Path coefficient

	Std. Beta	f-square	T statistics	P values
Employment type -> Career shift intention	0.114	0.013	0.981	0.163
Gender -> Career shift intention	0.072	0.005	0.602	0.274

Job flexibility -> Career shift intention	-0.270	0.074	2.109	0.017
Gender x Job flexibility -> Career shift intention	-0.058	0.005	0.607	0.272
Employment type x Job flexibility -> Career shift intention	0.064	0.005	0.594	0.276

Table 8 presents the path coefficient. The results derived from the hypothesis examination illustrate that job flexibility creates a statistically significant negative effect on the intention to switch professions ($\beta = -0.270$, $t = 2.109$, $p = 0.017$), highlighting a moderate effect size ($f^2 = 0.074$). This finding implies that an increase in perceived job flexibility correlates with a decrease in the intention to transition between careers. Conversely, the implications tied to the realm of work ($\beta = 0.114$, $t = 0.981$, $p = 0.163$), sex ($\beta = 0.072$, $t = 0.602$, $p = 0.274$), along with their specific interaction influences with job adaptability – sex $\times$ job flexibility ($\beta = -0.058$, $t = 0.607$, $p = 0.272$) and employment category $\times$ job flexibility ($\beta = 0.064$, $t = 0.594$, $p = 0.276$) – were shown to be statistically minimal, revealing small effect sizes ($f^2 \leq 0.013$). These findings suggest that job flexibility remains the sole significant predictor of career shift intention within the model, while demographic variables and their interaction effects appear to exert no considerable influence on the resultant outcome. These findings align with the conclusions of previous studies (Han, 2022; Giousmpasoglou et al., 2024). The model's explanatory power was further evaluated using the coefficient of determination. Table 9 presents the R-square and adjusted R-square values for career shift intention.

Table 9: Coefficient of determination

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Career shift intention	0.105	0.053

Table 9 presents the coefficient of determination. The changes in job flexibility, amid the purported moderating effects of gender and employment type, account for a weak variance in career shift intention (10.5%). Figure 2 below provides a visual representation of the final estimated structural model.

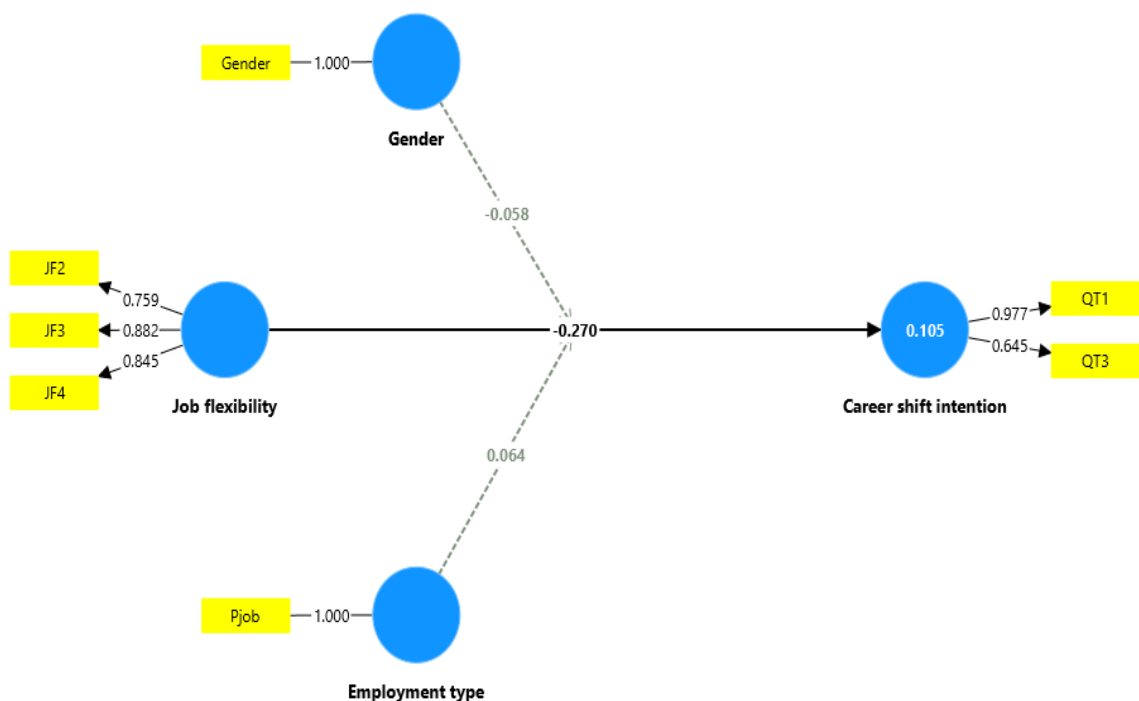
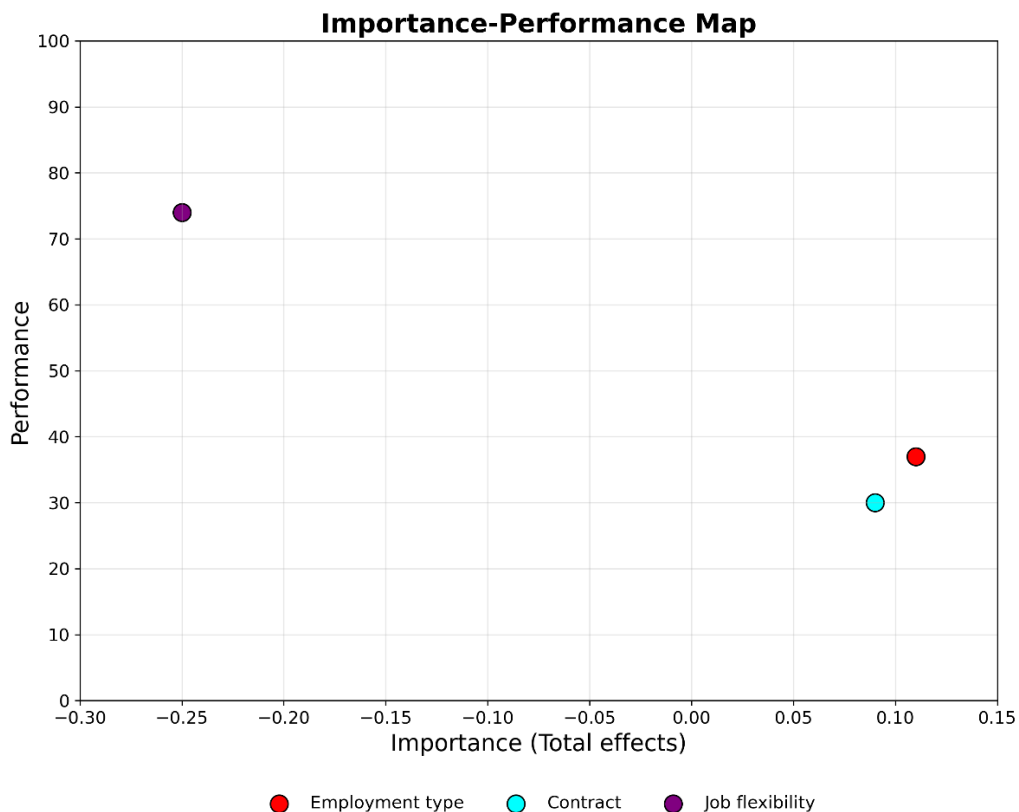


Figure 2: Structural image

Table 10: Predictive relevance and power

	Q ² predict	PLS-SEM_RMSE	PLS-SEM_MAE	LM_RMSE	LM_MAE
QT1	0.022	1.554	1.333	1.559	1.326
QT3	-0.069	1.705	1.445	1.739	1.448

Table 10 presents the predictive power of the model. The results from the Q2 predict analysis reveal low levels of predictability regarding career shift intention across all three latent constructs. For QT1, $Q^2 = .022$, which, while slightly above zero, suggests that the model has a limited ability to predict this construct. However, as indicated by the negative value of $Q^2 = -.069$ for QT3, the model performs worse than a simple mean-based forecast for predicting this construct. The comparison of prediction error between the PLS-SEM and the Linear Model (LM) also shows little to no difference in error measures for both models, particularly for RMSE and MAE, for QT1 (PLS-SEM: RMSE = 1.554; MAE = 1.333; LM: RMSE = 1.559; MAE = 1.326) and QT3 (PLS-SEM: RMSE = 1.705; MAE = 1.445; LM: RMSE = 1.739; MAE = 1.448), suggesting minimal difference between the two models. Overall, these findings indicate that the model exhibits very little strong predictive power across all three latent constructs, showing only a slight ability to predict QT1 and virtually none to predict QT3. Therefore, the implications of these findings suggest that the model could benefit from enhancement, either by adding new predictor variables or adjusting the existing ones to improve its accuracy in making out-of-sample predictions.

**Figure 3:** Importance performance map analysis

The Importance Performance Map Analysis (IPMA), as illustrated in Figure 3, indicates that employee gender and type of employment were identified as two of the most significant determinants of an employee's desire to remain in a hotel job position. These factors represent two of the primary reasons why hotel employees wish to retain their current job roles. These survey

findings corroborate previous studies that have examined the relationships between employee demographics, contractual arrangements, and turnover intentions (Ambrož et al., 2022; Saleem, 2021). Additionally, they align with social role and resource-based theoretical frameworks that elucidate gender differences in the assessment of workplace resources (Petrović, 2014; Wahyudi et al., 2022), as both gender equality and employment structure fall within the "Keep up the good work" quadrant. Thus, it can be concluded that the organisational practices of hotel employers that promote gender equality and employment structure are effective and consistent with existing literature that provides evidence of the efficacy of Human Resource strategies employing equity principles to retain employees (Ompong & Cudjoe-Mensah, 2025; Ozdemir, 2021).

In terms of the practical implications of the study results, these findings furnish hotel employers with valuable information for the maintenance and enhancement of programmes that promote gender equality and stable employment contracts, both of which are structural resources critical for employee retention (Bansal et al., 2025). The study results establish a foundation for future research regarding employee retention, given the strong association between employee gender, type of employment, and employee retention. This allows researchers to investigate mediators of this relationship, including perceived fairness, work-life balance, and job security, all of which have been shown to be influential factors in prior research (Giousmpasoglou et al., 2024; Kashkari et al., 2024).

Employee flexibility was rated highly for its influence on career transition intent but was rated low in terms of importance. Previous research has demonstrated a positive correlation between flexibility and job satisfaction, as well as lower turnover rates (Çivilidağ & Durmaz, 2024). However, the low predictive value of flexibility suggests that hotel employees prioritise structural aspects of employment, such as job security and career development, over discretionary aspects like flexibility. The literature indicates that flexibility is a conditional resource whose effectiveness depends on organisational culture and contract stability (EHL Hospitality Business School & HoteliersGuild LeadingHôtelières, 2022; Bonner et al., 2024). Consequently, hotel employers may wish to refrain from making significant investments in flexibility programmes until fundamental employment conditions are adequately addressed. Hotel managers should, therefore, prioritise the development and implementation of strategic initiatives that ensure job security and provide opportunities for professional growth, as previously recommended in the literature concerning employee retention in the hospitality industry (Grigoryan, 2024; Näppä et al., 2025).

5. Discussion of Findings

This study examined the effects of job flexibility on hotel employees' desires to switch careers within the hospitality industry. Based on the findings of this study, job flexibility has a significant negative effect on employee career intentions, as stated in prior research (Çivilidağ & Durmaz, 2024). Consistent with earlier studies by Çivilidağ and Durmaz (2024), the results indicate that greater job flexibility is associated with lower intentions to switch careers. This aligns with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, where flexibility is viewed as a resource that can help mitigate the negative impacts of job demands and enhance employee retention.

However, in comparison to previous research investigating how employees perceive flexibility based on gender (Petrović, 2014) and employment status (Bonner et al., 2024; Lee et al., 2022), this study did not find that either gender or employment status acted as statistically significant moderators for the relationship between flexibility and career intentions. The lack of significant moderation may suggest that flexibility is perceived as a universally valued resource across demographic and contractual groups, consistent with the resource-based logic of JD-R theory, rather than being interpreted differently based on social role expectations. These findings imply that job flexibility may be regarded as a resource that applies universally, regardless of demographic characteristics or employment arrangements, and that adaptability is a common trait among all employees and job types, as emphasised in Career Construction Theory (CCT) (Savickas, 2005).

An additional method used in this study, Importance–Performance Map Analysis (IPMA), provides a better understanding of the differences between the findings of this study and prior research on workplace heterogeneity. While IPMA results indicated that both gender and employment status are important factors in determining employee career intentions, the results also revealed that job flexibility is a low-importance but high-performance predictor of career shift intentions. This hierarchical pattern suggests that, according to JD-R, employees prioritise structural resources (e.g., job security, fairness) before considering discretionary resources such as flexibility. Therefore, this study expands upon existing models by providing evidence that flexibility functions as a conditional resource, rather than a primary driver of career decisions.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

It can be concluded that although flexible work arrangements are an attractive and effective benefit in reducing an employee's desire to transition to another career path, they are secondary to other, more influential demographic and contractually based factors in determining whether an employee intends to make such a transition. While the primary finding confirmed that flexibility had a negative relationship with career shift intentions, the fact that it did not interact significantly with either gender or employment type, along with the IPMA results, clearly indicates a hierarchical structure to the employee decision-making process. Gender-based identity and job security based on employment type are the two highest-priority, high-importance factors influencing how employees shape their careers; therefore, flexible work arrangements are low-priority, supporting factors. Thus, flexible work arrangements could be framed as complementary resource retention models. However, the modest explained variance (R^2) and the sample size constrain the strength of this inference; accordingly, this proposition should be interpreted cautiously and subjected to further testing and replication in future research (Hair et al., 2020).

Based on these conclusions, the study provides the following suggestions for hotel management. It is recommended that hotel managers place greater emphasis and investment into developing gender-sensitive HR practices and establishing stable employment structures, rather than implementing independent flexible work arrangement programs. Investment should be made to ensure equity, clarity, and stability in career advancement opportunities and employment contracts before flexible work arrangements can be implemented as an additive benefit to enhance an employee's overall work experience and support an already stable and equitable employment base. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to establish causality, use larger samples to increase statistical power, and incorporate additional predictors such as career advancement opportunities and organisational justice to improve model explanatory power. Additionally, researchers should examine the underlying mechanisms through which gender and employment type primarily impact career shift intentions, such as perceived organisational justice and job embeddedness, to further develop and enhance retention models for the hospitality industry.

7. Declarations

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