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Age and Psychological Contract: Unlocking Insights Amongst Tourism and Hospitality Professionals

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Abstract

The study aims to examine the effect of age on Psychological Contract Breach and employee outcomes amongst Tourism and Hospitality workers in India. Data for the study was collected from 356 participants working in four and five start hotels in India. One-way ANOVA, and Hierarchical Multiple Regression were used to analyse the data. The findings reveal that age significantly affects job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, perceived organizational support, turnover intention and Psychological Contract Breach. Additionally, age moderate the relationship between turnover intention and psychological contract breach with a buffering effect. This indicates that, as the employee age increases the negative effect of Psychological Contract Breach decreases. The findings can be made use of when developing age-friendly workplace policies for the Indian tourism and hospitality sector

Keywords Age, psychological contract, human resource, Tourism, hospitality, India

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Introduction

In today's dynamic global economy, the tourism and hospitality industry play a pivotal role in driving economic growth, generating employment, and enhancing international competitiveness (Bahar & Kozak, 2006). This sector, known for its openness to innovation and change, remains heavily reliant on attracting and retaining a skilled workforce to fill diverse career roles (Barron et al., 2014). However, one of the most persistent challenges faced by hospitality organisations is high employee turnover, often driven by factors such as low wages, seasonal employment, monotonous tasks, adverse working conditions, and irregular hours (Richardson, 2009; Solnet & Kralj, 2011). These factors contribute to a widespread perception of hospitality roles as low-status occupations, further complicating recruitment and retention efforts (Gursoy et al., 2008). Quality employees form the backbone of organisational success, and retaining them is critical to sustaining service excellence and competitive advantage (Branham, 2005). In this context, human resource practitioners especially in international and culturally diverse settings must deeply understand employee expectations and workplace perceptions to design effective performance, reward, and career development systems (Bae et al., 2011). Employees' reactions to their work environments, and ultimately their decisions to stay or leave, are shaped by individual differences such as personality, values, leadership roles, and demographics, particularly age (Franek & Vecera, 2008; Khairy et al., 2024) Among the many frameworks that provide insight into the employee-employer relationship, the Psychological Contract (PC) has gained prominence as a powerful tool for understanding the implicit, unwritten expectations that shape workplace dynamics. Rooted in social exchange theory, the psychological contract reflects reciprocal obligations and perceptions between employees and employers (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000). While the construct gained notable attention with Rousseau's seminal work in 1989, its resurgence in the 1990s and 2000s has been closely linked to shifts in employment relationships driven by globalisation, restructuring, and evolving workforce values (Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, 2007). The psychological contract is largely subjective (McDonald & Makin, 2000), and is often categorised into two broad types: Transactional Psychological Contract (TPC) and Relational Psychological Contract (RPC). TPCs are short-term, economically driven, and emotionally neutral exchanges, while RPCs are characterised by long-term commitments based on mutual trust, loyalty, and emotional involvement. Breaches of these contracts (PCB) can result in significant negative outcomes, including reduced job satisfaction, organisational trust, and increased turnover intentions (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Turnley & Feldman, 1999). In industries such as hospitality, where working conditions are less than ideal and turnover is high, understanding the dynamics of the psychological contract is especially critical (Chiang et al., 2008).

Emerging research emphasises that employee age plays a crucial role in shaping both the formation and response to psychological contracts. As demographic shifts lead to older individuals remaining in the workforce longer (Zhong & Hertzman, 2014), organisations must navigate generational differences in work values, expectations, and reactions to contract fulfilment or breach. Older workers are often perceived as more emotionally regulated and resilient to breaches of contract (Carstensen et al., 2006; Bal et al., 2012), whereas younger employees may exhibit stronger reactions due to higher expectations and differing value systems (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005; Twenge et al., 2010). Additionally, the value of age-diverse workforces is increasingly recognised in hospitality research. Studies have suggested that multigenerational teams offer a competitive advantage in service delivery, as older workers bring experience and maturity to guest interactions (Jeffries & Hunte, 2004; Rego et al., 2020; Braun & Peus, 2018). It is true even to the extent that tourist experience varies considering their age (Twumasi et al., 2022). Nonetheless, age-related discrimination and generational tensions persist, with negative

stereotypes of older workers particularly amplified during events like the COVID-19 pandemic (Jenkins, 2018; Ayalon, 2020). Despite growing interest in this area, there remains a lack of empirical research examining age as a moderating factor in the psychological contract literature within the Indian hospitality context (Hertzman & Zhong, 2016; Kalargyrou & Costen, 2017). Given India's expanding tourism and hospitality industry characterised by a diverse and multi-generational workforce, this research addresses a critical gap by examining the role of employee age in the relationship between Psychological Contract Breach (PCB) and job outcomes. By exploring this relationship, the study seeks to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how age influences employee attitudes and behaviours in a labour-intensive, service-driven environment and offers insights for developing age-sensitive retention and engagement strategies.

Literature review and research hypothesis

The tourism and hospitality industry plays a vital role in the economic development of many countries with high growth potential. These countries actively compete in the global market to expand their economic share and generate employment opportunities (Bahar & Kozak, 2006). Characterised by rapid innovation and change, the industry remains highly competitive and largely dependent on attracting and retaining skilled talent to fulfil its diverse employment needs (Barron et al., 2014). However, the sector continues to face significant human resource challenges due to perceptions of poor working conditions, including low wages, seasonal employment, monotonous tasks, and irregular or anti-social working hours (Richardson, 2009; Solnet & Kralj, 2011). These negative attributes often clash with the values and expectations of employees across generations (Gursoy et al., 2008; Solnet & Hood, 2008). For instance, Richardson (2009) found that nearly one-third of Generation Y students pursuing tourism-related qualifications were discouraged from entering the industry after their internship experiences. Over recent years, there has been growing interest in examining the role of demographic variables, particularly age in employment relationships and psychological contracts (Bal et al., 2008; Bellou, 2009; Bal et al., 2010). However, age as a moderating factor remains underexplored within the tourism and hospitality industry, especially in the Indian context. The role of age in employment relationships is increasingly recognised in broader organisational research (Leroy et al., 2012; Braun & Peus, 2018; Rego et al., 2020; Miao et al., 2023). Wang & Hsieh (2013) identified age as a significant factor in shaping the relationship between authentic leadership, trust, and employee engagement, while Azanza et al. (2013) found age to be influential in determining self-efficacy levels. Similarly, Jeffries & Hunte (2004) emphasised that employees of different age groups are motivated by varying values and thus respond differently to organisational strategies. Older employees, for instance, prefer structured schedules and participative decision-making, while younger workers favour flexibility, autonomy, and quicker task execution.

Age has also been shown to significantly influence responses to Psychological Contract Breach (PCB). Research suggests that the impact of PCB on job attitudes and behaviours weakens as employees age (Bal et al., 2012; Ng & Feldman, 2009). Older employees tend to have greater emotional regulation and resilience, making them less reactive to perceived contract violations (Carstensen et al., 2006; Kooij et al., 2011; Davis et al., 2017). Although older and younger employees may initially experience similar emotional responses to PCB, the attitudinal and behavioural consequences are generally less severe among older individuals (Kunzmann & Thomas, 2014). Cohen (1993) also noted that the relationship between organisational commitment and turnover intention is stronger among younger workers. Kanfer & Ackerman (2004) further suggested that organisational strategies aligned with normative adult development can enhance older employees' motivation. In contrast, younger generations tend to prioritise work-life balance and are more likely to express dissatisfaction when organisational expectations are unmet (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005; Bellou, 2009; Yu et al., 2017). Studies also indicate that younger workers are more critical of employers and display higher expectations, whereas older workers often demonstrate stronger loyalty and commitment (Twenge et al., 2010), despite some evidence suggesting a negative correlation between age and motivation (Kooij et al., 2011). Generational differences also affect workplace dynamics and collaboration. For example, Zhong & Hertzman (2014) observed that Asian students are generally less open to working alongside senior employees compared to their American counterparts. Furuness & Mykletun (2005) reported that age-diverse teams could benefit the hospitality industry when generational differences are managed effectively. However, disparities in work styles and expectations can also lead to inter-generational conflict (Patel et al., 2018). Some younger workers appreciate learning from older colleagues, while others find their differing approaches to be sources of friction. Despite the growing number of older employees in the hospitality workforce, nearly 590,000 in the hotel and leisure sector, are over 65 years of age (Jenkins, 2018; Sotiris Hji-Avgoustis & Yen, 2023), age-related biases persist. Older workers are frequently subjected to negative stereotypes and discrimination, often intensified during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, where media depictions portrayed them as vulnerable and fragile (Ayalon, 2020). This further deepened inter-generational tensions and increased ageism in professional settings. Unfortunately, there remains a limited body of research focused specifically on age-related discrimination within the tourism and hospitality sectors (Kalargyrou & Costen, 2017; Sayed & Elsaid, 2021). Compared to other forms of workplace bias, age discrimination appears to be more prevalent and often overlooked.

As workforce demographics continue to evolve in industrialised nations, it becomes increasingly important to understand organisational attitudes and practices related to age. Although awareness of the value that older workers bring to the industry has grown over the past decade, empirical research addressing ageism in tourism and hospitality remains scarce. Given these gaps, the present study seeks to examine the role of age as a moderating factor in the relationship between Psychological Contract Breach and job outcomes among employees in India's tourism and hospitality industry. This exploration contributes to both theoretical advancement and practical understanding of how age shapes employment relationships in one of India's most dynamic and demanding sectors. Hence, we posit that:

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between employees' Age and their opinion concerning the Type of PCB and job outcomes.
Hypothesis 2: Age moderates the relationship between PCB and job satisfaction.
Hypothesis 3: Age moderates the relationship between PCB and organisational citizenship Behaviour.
Hypothesis 4: Age moderates the relationship between PCB and perceived organisational support.
Hypothesis 5: Age moderates the relationship between PCB and turnover intention.

Research methodology

This study focused on employees with a minimum of one year of work experience employed in four- and five-star tourism and hospitality establishments across India. A list of potential respondents was developed, and participants were approached through both personal contacts and email communication. To improve the response rate, follow-up reminders were regularly sent via email and phone calls. Significant support in this process was provided by student interns, particularly in outreach and data collection efforts. A total of 356 valid responses were collected using a convenience sampling technique. The data collection period extended from September 2023 to April 2024. To examine the influence of age on the relationship between Psychological Contract Breach (PCB) and job outcomes, the study employed inferential statistical analyses. Specifically, a One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the differences in PCB and job outcomes across various age groups. Furthermore, hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to test for moderation and interaction effects, following the procedures recommended by Aiken et al. (1991). This analytical approach allowed for an in-depth examination of both direct and moderating effects of age on the association between PCB and key job outcomes such as job satisfaction, organisational citizenship behaviour, perceived organisational support, and turnover intention. The research model shown in Figure 1 shows how age moderates the relationship between psychological contract breach and job outcomes.

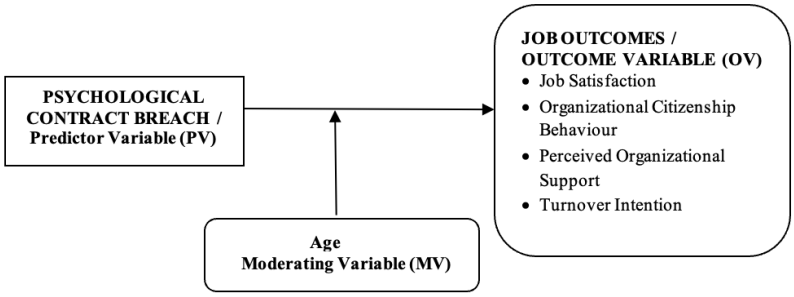

Figure 1: Proposed research model

The researcher assessed the psychological contract using items adopted from the psychological contract questionnaire (Rousseau, 1995; Millward & Hopkins, 1998). To ensure the instrument's appropriateness for the Indian Tourism and Hospitality sector, it underwent a content validity process using the Item-wise Content Validity Index (I-CVI) by Polit & Beck (2006). The instrument employed a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 5, to measure expectations. All items were then reverse-coded to reflect PCB rather than fulfilment (Ballou, 2013).

The measurement of job outcomes

To measure Job Satisfaction (JS), a shortened version of the Minnesota satisfaction questionnaire (Weiss et al., 1967) was utilized. This instrument includes 19 statements and employs a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied). The reliability of the scale is 0.959. Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) was measured on a 16-item scale developed by Smith et al. (1983). This scale utilises a five-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability of the scale is 0.928. Perceived Organisational Support (POS) was measured using a 17-item short version scale adapted from Eisenberger et al. (1986), which evaluated whether participants felt their organisation valued their contributions and cared about their well-being. Participants rated their agreement with each statement on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability of the scale is 0.863. Turnover Intentions (TI) refer to the subjective probability that an employee will leave his organisation within a certain period and measured on three items of Meyer et al. (1993). Participants indicated the degree to which they agreed with each statement on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from; strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 5. The scale reliability is 0.750.

Data analysis and discussion

Skewness and Kurtosis value ranged from -1.084 to 2.246. Values ranging between -3 to +3 signify the normal distribution of the data (De Carlo 1997; Stuart & Ord, 2019). Result shows that 66% of the respondents are in the age group between 30-45 years, giving a clear picture that the young adults are employed in tourism and hospitality sector in India. Similarly, male employees are 76%, more than female employees. The majority are married and almost 78% of the respondents have working experience of close to 10 years in the Tourism and Hospitality industry sector.

Table 1: One-way ANOVA, Age and opinion about Type of PCB and job outcomes

Factors/ Variables	Age group in years					F value	P value	Partial eta squared
	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45			
RPCB	4.13 c (1.31)	4.03 b (1.49)	3.85 a (1.47)	3.76 a (1.42)	3.73 a (1.57)	8.098	0.000**	0.075
TPCB	3.73 a (1.17)	3.64 a (1.45)	3.68 a (1.46)	3.89 b (1.42)	3.83 b (1.43)	4.159	0.003**	0.040
JS	3.15 c (0.64)	2.99 c (0.74)	2.74 a (0.70)	2.85 b (0.90)	2.81 b (1.02)	2.889	0.022**	0.020
OCB	3.66 c (1.52)	3.37 b (1.56)	3.30 b (1.69)	3.38 b (0.86)	3.19 a (1.01)	2.970	0.019**	0.029
POS	3.15 b (1.46)	2.95 a (1.59)	2.99 a (1.54)	2.97 a (0.74)	2.95 a (0.72)	8.014	0.004**	0.010
TI	3.15 a (0.79)	3.49 b (0.98)	3.58 b (1.01)	3.54 b (1.18)	3.12 a (1.34)	7.192	0.039**	0.021

(**RPCB**: Relational Psychological Contract Breach, **TPCB**: Transactional Psychological Contract Breach, **JS**: Job Satisfaction, **OCB**: Organizational Citizenship Behaviour, **POS**: Perceived Organizational Support, **TI**: Turnover Intention)

Notes: 1. value within the brackets refers to SD
2. ** denotes significance at 5 % level
3. Different alphabet between the age groups denotes similarity and significance at 5 % level using Tukey HSD Test.

Table 1 presents that there is a statistically significant effect of Age on RPCB, F= 8.098 (4,401), P = 0.000. Tukey HSD post hoc comparison indicates that the mean score of the age group of 21-25 (M= 4.13, SD= 1.31) and 26-30 (M= 4.03, SD= 1.49), is significantly different from all other age groups. These employees belong to the young population and have started their careers in the tourism and hospitality sector. Their reaction to a breach of RPCB is different from one another. The other three categories of age groups, age between 31-35 years, 36-40 years and 41-45 years are similar in their opinion towards RPCB. Considering the nature of RPC, these are the matured, experienced employees, and their behaviour and attitude are regulated by various factors such as commitment (Twenge et al., 2010), motivation (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004), affecting employment relationship. The different age groups account for 7.5% of the variance. This is the effect size indicated by the partial eta squared. Age also has a significant effect on TPCB, F= 4.195 (4,401), P = 0.003. A post hoc comparison using Tukey HSD test indicates that the mean score of age group of 21-25 (M= 3.73, SD= 1.47), 26-30 (M= 3.64, SD= 1.45) and 31-35 (M= 3.68, SD= 1.46) are significantly not different from each other. This shows that the employees between the age group of 21-35 years are similar in their reactions to TPCB. The other two groups of age 36-40 years (M= 3.89, SD= 1.42) and 41-45 years (M= 3.83, SD= 1.43) are similar in terms of their mean value. Here, considering the nature of TPC, the behaviour and attitude of young employees is focused more on the short-term benefits and give-receive like relationship. They do not bother about their long-term employment relationship, considering the work stress (Solnet & Hood, 2008), working conditions (Gursoy et al., 2008). The different age groups account for 4% of the variance in the TPCB as indicated by the partial eta squared. JS is significantly affected by Age, F= 2.889 (4,401), P = 0.022. A Tukey HSD post hoc comparison indicates that the mean score of the age group of 21-25 years (M= 3.15, SD= 0.64) and 26-30 years (M= 2.99, SD= 0.74) are significantly similar. The other two groups of age 36-40 years (M= 2.85, SD= 0.90) and 41-45 years (M= 2.81, SD= 1.02) are similar in terms of their mean value. Factors affecting JS such as recognition and work itself (Ann & Blum, 2019), are proof for the senior employees. Only one age group of 31-35 (M= 2.74, SD=0.70) is significantly different from all age groups. The different age groups account for 2.8 % of the variance. This is the effect size indicated by the partial eta squared.

Age significantly affects on employee OCB, F= 2.970, (4,401), P = 0.019. A post hoc comparison using the Tukey HSD test indicates that the mean scores of the age group of 21-25 years (M= 3.66, SD= 1.52) and 41-46 years (M= 3.19, SD= 1.01) are significantly different from each other as well as different from all other age groups. This is an interesting finding as the entry level age group and the senior/older employees have similar opinions towards their OCB. The other groups of age 26-30 years (M= 3.37, SD= 1.56), 31-35 years (M= 3.30, SD= 1.69) and 36-40 years (M= 3.38, SD= 0.86) are similar in terms of their mean value. It means employees between the age group of 26-40 have similar reactions towards OCB. Given the nature of OCB, employee between the age group of 26-40 will either deny or help the organisation by going out of their way. The different age groups account for 2.9 % of the variance. This is the effect size indicated by the partial eta squared. Age has a significant effect on employee POS, F= 8.014, (4,401), P = 0.004. A post hoc comparison using the Tukey HSD test indicates that the mean score of the age group of 21-25 years (M= 3.15, SD= 1.46) is significantly different from all other age groups. The employees between the age 26-45 are significantly not different. These employees perceive that their organisation will provide sympathetic personal help and support them directly or indirectly, as concluded by Hekman & Lashley (2017). The different age groups account for 1 % of the variance in Employee POS. This is the effect size indicated by the partial eta squared. The table draws our attention to the significant effect of Age on employee TI, F= 7.192 (4,401), P = 0.039. A Tukey HSD post hoc comparison indicates that the mean score of the age group of 21-25 (M= 3.15, SD= 0.79) and age group 41-45 (3.12, SD= 1.34) are similar but significantly different from all other age groups. The employees between age of 26-40 are similar. Interestingly, age group from 26-40 belongs to young adults. Their reactions to PCB will be similar and are the determinants of TI. Similar were the findings of Emiroğlua et al. (2015). The different age groups account for 2.1 % of the variance in the TI, which is the effect size as indicated by the partial eta squared. Overall, based on the result of one-way ANOVA, the researcher fails to reject the hypothesis 1 and concludes that there is a significant relationship between employee age and its relationship with RPCB, TPCB, JS, OCB, and TI.

Table 2: Hierarchical multiple regression, Age, PCB and JS

Model 1			R	R^2	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
			.691	.478	.308	122.940	3.000	402.000	.000
Model 2				**R^2-change**		**F**	**df1**	**df2**	**p**
Int_1	:PCB	x Age		.001		.759	1.000	402.000	.384

As observed from Table 2, in the first model, two variables PCB and Age were included. These variables accounted for a significant amount of variance in Employees JS, $R^2 = 0.478$, F (3,402) = 122.940, p< 0.05. Further, to check the moderating effect, the interaction variable was entered in the second model, which did not account for a significant variance, $\Delta R^2 = 0.001$, F change (1, 402) = 0.759, p = 0.384, b= 0.023, t (402) = 0.871, p > 0.05. Hence, we can say that Age does not moderate the relationship between PCB and JS. Hence, hypothesis no 2 is rejected.

Table 3: Hierarchical multiple regression, Age, PCB and OCB

Model 1	R	R^2	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	.478	.229	.369	39.866	3.000	402.000	.000
Model 2		**R^2-change**		**F**	**df1**	**df2**	**p**
Int_1 :PCB x Age		.005		2.689	1.000	402.000	.101

Source: Andrew Hayes process

Table 3 presents the output generated by Andrew Hayes process. The first model consists of two variables, Age and PCB. These variables accounted for a significant amount of variance on employees' OCB, $R^2 = 0.229$, F (3, 402) = 39.866, p< 0.05.
Further to check the moderating effect, the interaction variable was included, which did not account for a significant variance, $\Delta R^2 = 0.005$, change in F (1, 402) = 2.68, p = 0.101, b= 0.049, t (402) = 1.640, p > 0.05. Therefore, we can conclude that Age does not moderate the relationship between PCB and OCB and we fail to accept Hypothesis 3.

Table 4: Hierarchical multiple regression, Age, PCB and POS

Model 1	R	R^2	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	.533	.284	.254	53.322	3.000	402.000	.000
Model 2		**R^2-change**		**F**	**df1**	**df2**	**p**
Int_1 :PCB x Age		.001		.895	1.000	402.000	.344

Source: Andrew Hayes process

Table 4 presents the output generated by the Andrew Hayes process. In the first model, two variables PCB and age were included. These variables accounted for a significant amount of variance in employees' POS, $R^2 = 0.284$, F (3, 402) = 53.326, p< 0.05. To check the moderating effect, the interaction variable was included, which did not account for a significant variance, $\Delta R^2 = 0.001$, F change (1,402) = 0.895, p= 0.344, b= -0.023, t (402) = - 0.946, p > 0.05. Therefore, the researcher rejects hypothesis 4, that Age moderates the relationship between PCB and POS.

Table 5: Hierarchical multiple regression, Age, PCB and TI

Model 1	R	R^2	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	.247	.061	1.010	8.715	3.000	402.000	0.000
Model 2		**R^2-change**		**F**	**df1**	**df2**	**p**
Int_1 :PCB x Age		0.058		5.476	1.000	402.000	0.016

Source: Andrew Hayes process

As seen from Table 5, in the first model, two variables PCB and age were entered. These variables accounted for a significant amount of variance in Employees TI, $R^2 = 0.061$, F (3,402) = 8.715, p< 0.05. Further, to check the moderating effect the interaction variable was included in the second model, which did not account for a significant variance, $\Delta R^2 = 0.058$, F (1, 402)= 5.476, p= 0.0164, b= 0.078, t(402)= 1.574, p < 0.05. Therefore, we accept hypothesis no 5, that Age moderates the relationship between PCB and TI. Aiken et al. (1991) suggested plotting the slopes for high (one standard deviation above the mean) and low (one standard deviation below the mean) for a better understanding of the nature of the interaction effect.

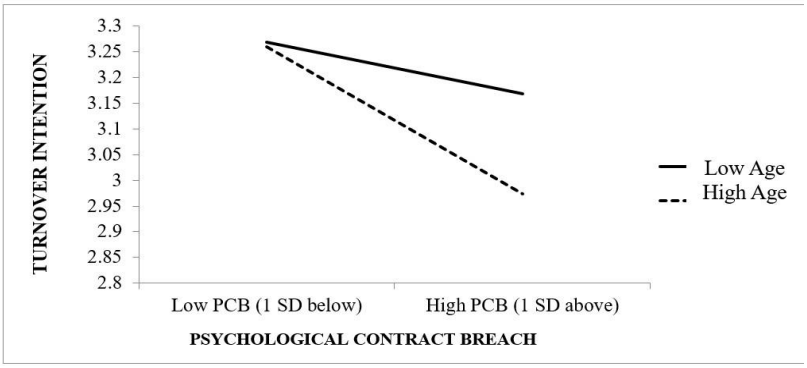

Figure 3: Interaction plot: Age on PCB – TI relationship (Source: Andrew Hayes Process output)

Aiken et al. (1991) proposed visualising the slopes for high and low interaction effects to gain further insight into the nature of the interaction effect (one standard deviation below the mean) with the help of Andrew Hayes process. Although the sample was separated into five categories, they were divided into two categories for plotting the interactions: Low age level (21-35

years) and High age level (36-45 years). A visual examination of the interaction plot in Figure 3 reveals a buffering effect of the moderating variable on the outcome variable. It means, as the age level increases, the effect of PCB on employee TI reduces.

Conclusion

This study underscores the critical role of age in shaping the employment relationship through the lens of the Psychological Contract (PC) within the Indian Tourism and Hospitality sector. The findings reveal that age significantly influences both the type of Psychological Contract Breach (PCB) experienced and key job outcomes. Notably, while age did not moderate the relationship between PCB and job satisfaction (JS), organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), or perceived organisational support (POS), it did act as a buffer in the relationship between PCB and turnover intention (TI). As age increases, the adverse effects of PCB on turnover intention diminish, suggesting that older employees are better equipped to regulate emotional responses and maintain organisational commitment despite breaches. This aligns with Lifespan Development Theory, which posits that ageing enhances emotional regulation and adaptive responses. In contrast, younger employees who form a significant portion of the workforce in this industry demonstrate different expectations and reactions to Psychological Contract dynamics. They may be more adaptable to the evolving nature of employment contracts, but also more likely to seek mobility and higher rewards. The findings highlight that older employees tend to prioritise stability, organisational loyalty, and community integration, viewing their roles as extensions of their social identity. This suggests the need for a dynamic, lifespan-oriented approach to managing Psychological Contracts, considering age-related differences in values, expectations, and behavioural outcomes. Overall, the study contributes to the growing understanding of how age shapes the Psychological Contract and offers valuable insights for HR practitioners and organisational leaders aiming to foster engagement and retention across age groups. These findings support prior research by Cohen (1993), Carstensen et al. (2006), and Kunzmann & Thomas (2014), reinforcing the importance of age as a contextual factor in employment relationships.

This study represents one of the first empirical efforts to investigate ‘age as a moderating variable’ in the relationship between Psychological Contract Breach (PCB) and key organisational outcomes—namely Job Satisfaction (JS), Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB), Perceived Organizational Support (POS), and Turnover Intention (TI)—within Indian hospitality industry. While previous research has primarily focused on the direct effects of PCB, this study introduces a novel dimension by examining how age influences these dynamics, thereby offering a richer, age-sensitive framework for understanding employee behaviour. A key theoretical advancement of this research lies in its ability to demonstrate that age not only influences the formation and execution of the psychological contract but also buffers the adverse effects of PCB, particularly in relation to turnover intentions. This age-moderated model contributes to a deeper understanding of ‘when and why’ employees respond negatively to breaches, and under ‘what’ conditions such negative responses can be mitigated. The findings provide critical insight into the evolving nature of the psychological contract in a complex and dynamic organisational environment. Furthermore, this study broadens the geographic and cultural scope of Psychological Contract theory by situating the research in the ‘Indian tourism and hospitality context’—a setting marked by high workforce diversity and rapid organisational change. It emphasises that employee expectations and behavioural responses are not uniform, but are shaped by contextual variables such as age, industry norms, and societal values. In light of increasing workplace flexibility and individualism, the study also reinforces the relevance of psychological contracts in guiding human resource policy and organisational design. By recognising that the preferred type of psychological contract may vary across age groups, along with the need for differentiated HR strategies that align with age-specific expectations and work attitudes. Finally, the study echoes the arguments made by Rafaeli (1988), Lee & Moreo (2007), and Lee & Way (2010) by emphasising the importance of intergenerational workplace interactions. It suggests that creating structured opportunities for employees of different age groups to interact positively can enhance employee loyalty and reduce turnover intentions. This supports the development of inclusive retention strategies that recognise age as a critical factor in psychological contract dynamics. Overall, this research makes a significant contribution to the theoretical enrichment of the psychological contract framework and offers a practical roadmap for tourism and hospitality organisations seeking to foster engagement and retention across diverse age cohorts.

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