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Predicting Intention to Quit Through Supervisor Support and Growth Opportunities: Evidence from South African Hotels in Bloemfontein

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Abstract

High employee turnover persists, particularly in the hospitality industry, and more specifically in food and beverage departments, where elevated attrition rates negatively impact the standard of service and the effectiveness of operations. This study examines the impact of supervisory support and growth opportunities on employees' intention to quit (ITQ) within graded hotels. Data were collected from 92 food and beverage employees in Bloemfontein using structured questionnaires within a quantitative research framework. The results demonstrated a statistically significant negative correlation between ITQ and supervisory support ($r = -0.366$, $p < 0.001$), as well as between ITQ and growth opportunities ($r = -0.355$, $p = 0.001$). Managerial empathy and constructive feedback are identified as components of supervisory support that contribute to employee retention. Enhancing supportive leadership and clearly defining professional development pathways could significantly decrease turnover intention. These findings recommend that hotel managers incorporate tailored supervisory support and career development strategies within broader employee retention frameworks, particularly in operationally intensive departments such as Food & Beverage (F&B).

Keywords: Intention to quit; supervisory support; growth opportunities; hospitality industry; food and beverage

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Introduction

High attrition of employees is one of the devastating problems that precariously threatens service quality and continuity of operations in the South African hospitality industry. A pain point for hotels in Bloemfontein is their inability to retain skilled staff due to long working hours on a constrained budget and at high guest expectations. Recent empirical studies in African hotels have identified key organisational factors that affect turnover intention. Deri et al. (2021) indicated that the most important factor for hotel employees in Accra to stay or quit is whether they have growth opportunities. Supervisor support and promotion opportunities were reported by Bello et al. (2021) as factors that significantly reduce turnover intentions among employees in the Lagos hotel industry. This implies that supportive leadership and career development opportunities are perceived as more effective strategies for improving employee retention across these African hotel settings. The other African regions' studies provide insight, yet a general lack of localised data continues to pose challenges for this hotel ecosystem, located in Bloemfontein, the capital city of the Free State Province. Dwesini's (2019) study has provided reasons for high turnover in South African hotels, but did not undertake a parametric analysis of local management factors, i.e., supervisor support or internal career development programs. Ferreira & Potgieter's (2021) study pointed out the importance of organisational commitment and employee fit for employee retention; however, they did not specifically trace the effect of supervisor direct influence in a hotel setting. There is a distinct gap in understanding how supportive supervisors and perceived growth opportunities collectively influence intentions to quit among hospitality workers in hotels located in Bloemfontein. This study investigates the combined effects of perceived supervisor support and growth opportunities on the intention to quit among hospitality employees in Bloemfontein hotels. A structured survey method collected real-time sentiment from frontline employees of different categories of hotels on management support, transparency in promotion opportunities, and intention to quit the organisation. The anticipated contribution consists of two major aspects: first, the study provides local data to inform hotel managers and human resources professionals in Bloemfontein about targeted retention strategies; second, it helps fill a gap in the literature on the African hotel industry by offering detailed insights into how organisational support mechanisms impact employee retention decisions.This research also contributes to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, which emphasises the promotion of decent work (United Nations, 2015), a key priority for South Africa as a United Nations (UN) member, as highlighted in the National Planning Commission (2012) through the National Development Plan 2030. The following section places the study within a broader scholarly conversation by reviewing relevant empirical and theoretical works on turnover intention, supervisory support and growth opportunities.

Literature review

Recent studies in the African hospitality context have removed any doubt that supervisory support and growth opportunities are the major factors influencing employees' intention to stay. Literature attests to the fact that though different, these two elements are highly and closely related in forming employee attitudes and retention outcomes. The critical role of supportive supervision is already known. Suitable supervisor's support and provision of a friendly workplace environment significantly

reduce turnover intentions, as found in Ghana by Mensa & Boateng (2023). Dwesini (2019) also supports this fact whose study reviewed causes of hotel employee turnover in South Africa and identified unsupportive supervisory practices as the main reason for staff shortages after inadequate opportunities for advancement. This can be directly supported by evidence through managerial engagement itself. Mosikatsana et al. (2024) undertook research within the housekeeping departments of graded hotels in Bloemfontein and found that participants were very clear on many expectations that management was not meeting regarding support. Their research has statistical significance to prove perceptions of support from management being deficient, hence requiring improved supervisory engagement. The mechanism is explained by the findings of Kokt & Mphirime (2022), in which it was revealed that supervisory relationships significantly contribute to organisational commitment through rational psychological contracts, hence making employees committed. This has been supported by Maulana & Anindita's (2017) finding that ethical leadership-supportive and fair supervision directly fosters organisational commitment while reducing intentions to quit among hotel workers in South Africa. More support comes from a recent major study conducted in South Africa's game lodge sector, which discovered that servant leadership-supportive, empowering leadership would directly enhance job embeddedness. In other words: the more supportive management is, the more at home workers feel they are with an organisation, and consequently less likely to want to quit it. Therefore, in essence, supportive supervision and favourable managerial relationships are what pin hospitality employees. Though the direct effect is apparent, scant empirical study has investigated how supervisory support interacts with another very critical factor, growth opportunities- in reducing the turnover intention of employees in hotels in Bloemfontein. Thus, a huge research gap.

Growth opportunities have continuously surfaced as the major factors that influence employee retention in the hospitality industry. Better staff promotion opportunities were noted as a key strategy to retain staff at hotels in Ghana by Mensa & Boateng (2023). Limited growth opportunities have also been correlated with turnover by employees in the hospitality industry of another African country by Dwesini (2019). The importance of this factor is also very great for potential entrants. Growth opportunities were the strongest parameter of willingness by hospitality students to join the industry, as revealed by Zhang & Eringa's (2022) study, thereby underscoring the fact that the provision of career development can decisively influence recruitment offers and long-term retention. In this context, it is critical since new talent acquisition has everything to do with existing talent retention. Results from Bhebhe & Muchenje's (2023) study involving frontline employees in Zimbabwe recently validated what has always been postulated: Career growth prospects strongly buffer frontline workers from burnout and turnover intentions. Thus, development opportunities are not mere incentives but rather an imperative prescription for any organisation desiring a healthy workforce. At the macro level, Daniel et al. (2025) argues that the sustainability of competitive advantage in the African hotel sector depends on human capital investment through defined career paths; thus, growth opportunities reposition such an issue from being a strategic imperative to just an operational concern. Mosikatsana et al. (2024) found that workers at hotels in Bloemfontein identified large gaps in factors normally associated with growth opportunities such as support, reliability and training. While these scholars advocate a career growth path as very important, empirically no study has discovered how perceived opportunities for advancement work with supervisory help either synergistically or mediating to keep employees from making decisions to quit. This provides a synthesis and therefore a critical nexus. Although supervisory support and growth opportunities have been identified independently as major factors, their relationship has not yet been clearly established, especially in the context of Bloemfontein. Studies emerging now are beginning to establish such a connection. For example, Khosa & Lebese (2023) developed a conceptual model in which supervisors were depicted as gatekeepers to growth opportunities within an organisation because supervisor support is often viewed as a prerequisite for training, mentoring, and promotional activities to employees. It draws on the work of Ayoun et al. (2022) who found in their study of luxury lodges that while the psychological contract between employee and employer is most often enacted and upheld- or broken-by direct supervisors, this acts to influence perceptions regarding future career advancement within the organisation. The gap that exists is not about these factors being present but rather how they interrelate. This explains how critically important a study meant to assess the combined effects of perceived opportunities for advancement and supervisory support on intentions to quit is since it is highly probable that their interactive effect can better fully account for the dynamics of employee retention in the hotel sector of Bloemfontein. The next section discusses the trend of quitting intention within the hospitality field and looks at its wider effects.

Intention to quit the hospitality industry

"Quit intention" defines as the employee's willingness to voluntarily depart from their employment position (Asimah, 2018; Parent-Lamarche, 2022). In such an environment marked by high attrition rates and where talented employees keep leaving, hospitality management faces a grave challenge (Darmawan & Bagis, 2024). Work time, workload and supervisory support are normally reported as main factors affecting workers' decisions to quit in the hospitality industry. Extended working hours, characterised by a lack of fixed schedules and minimal breaks, contribute to physical and mental exhaustion, thereby elevating employees' intentions to resign (Queiri & Dwaikat, 2016). The workload constitutes a significant factor; employees face demanding assignments and elevated performance expectations without sufficient resources. This increases stress levels and contributes to burnout, subsequently raising the likelihood of quitting (Baquero, 2022). The quality of supervisory relationships also influences turnover intentions. Supportive and equitable supervision enhances stress management and job satisfaction. Inadequate managerial support can increase employees' intention to quit the organisation (Kang et al., 2014). Decreased job satisfaction, reduced organisational commitment, and an increased desire to seek alternative employment are indicators that can disrupt hotel operations and productivity (Zhang et al., 2024). The hospitality industry also suffers from high recruitment and training costs, alongside a decline in service quality and customer satisfaction, due to personnel turnover. Reasonable working hours, balanced workloads, and supportive supervisory relationships may mitigate the impact of these challenges on

hotel performance (Darmawan & Bagis, 2024). Among the various influencing factors, supervisory support emerges as a significant determinant of quit intention. This is examined in greater detail in the following section.

The role of supervisory support

Supervisory support is the extent to which employees believe their supervisors value their efforts and concern for their wellbeing (Eisenberger et al., 2002). Hospitality employees have a lot of work to do and are regularly under high pressure; this necessitates supportive leadership to promote resilience and long-term commitment to the organisation. Empirical evidence supports the idea that positive supervisory relationships reduce stress and increase job satisfaction, which in turn leads to a decrease in the intention to quit the company (Gordon et al., 2019). Astuti & Helmi (2021) conducted a meta-analysis of the association between perceived supervisor support and employee intention to quit the hospitality sector. The results indicate a consistent, significant negative association between these variables. This is largely due to the numerous roles supervisors play not only as emotional anchors for employees but also as providers of work resources such as recognition, empathy and guidance of which define the employee experience. As Kokt & Mphirime (2022) noted, psychological contracts between supervisors and subordinates significantly influence commitment levels among workers in the hotels of South Africa. When an employee feels unsupported, the employee will become disengaged with work and will start considering leaving the position. The reason for explaining the effect of supervisory support on turnover intention is well documented in the literature: supportive supervisors reduce employees' turnover intention by providing a good working environment and enhancing organisational commitment.

In hospitality, high-stress supervisory support frontline employees have positively correlated organisational commitment career satisfaction turning off intention (Kang et al., 2014). In the same way, supervisory safety leadership has been proven to reduce bad mindful organisation effects on healthcare workers' intentions to quit; this has very plausible implications within hospitality environment too (Zaheer et al., 2019). On the other hand, inadequate or negative supervisory behaviours can drastically erode employee retention. For instance, Yin et al. (2022) revealed that incivility at the supervision level causes turnover intentions through ego depletion among hospitality employees in China. In another, Zafar et al. (2021) demonstrated that punitive supervision leads to increased turnover intention; workplace mobbing played a mediating role here as well. These findings bring forward the fact that the contributing factor is not only a good supervisory environment but also an environment free from toxic supervisory behaviour. The influence of supervisory support on the employees' intention to quit the hospitality sector seems multidirectional. While it is positive, it enhances commitment and career satisfaction; negative supervisory behaviours also do the opposite. This, therefore, calls for the organisations to focus on supervising employees who will make junior employees feel psychologically safe with superior interpersonal skills as an effort to reduce this very high rate of turnover in the hospitality industry (Suleiman Albattat & Mat Som, 2013; Zaheer et al., 2019). This involves creating a working environment that discourages bullying because employees will only stay where employees see fairness and respect at work (Srivastava & Agarwal, 2020). Supervisor Support has been documented as one of the leading factors in employee retention. The following section will unilaterally prove that it should be viewed collectively with aspects of professional development and opportunities for growth as part of a holistic approach to staff retention within the hospitality industry.

Influence of growth opportunities on intention to quit

Growth opportunities have a very high level of leverage on what keeps employees within the hospitality industry. Lee & Jo (2023) stated that limited career mobility increases the turnover rate because these workers are left in positions of stagnation, seeking opportunities for better advancement outside the organisation. This is a major problem facing the hotel business because most of these employees are young, starting their careers and believing there is little advancement available to them; hence, attrition is high. Serrano Archimi et al. (2018) research also indicated that insufficient promotion avenues cause employee departures in the hospitality field since they feel their current position is limiting them professionally. In the same manner, Codling et al. (2023) found that the F&B sector is particularly hit by high turnover; staff perceive the job as short-term and do not contemplate any long-term career opportunities. Lee & Jo (2023) stated that inadequate career growth is a major that leads to employee turnover. Hence, growth opportunities are essential in improving employee engagement and deterring their intentions to quit the organisation. This may include structured training programmes, clear career development paths, and promotion opportunities. An employee who believes that an organisation is committed to staff development will most likely perceive a positive psychological attachment to the organisation and project a long-term future with the same company. Deery & Jago (2015) argued that orderly, structured advancement opportunities very much decreased turnover in the hospitality industry when offered, especially to young employees who are more motivated in pursuit of professional advancement. Mensa & Boateng (2023) discovered that upgrading career advancement opportunities considerably reduced turnover intentions. The finding is of relevance to several African situations where hospitality jobs depict low skill upgrading and upward mobility. Development opportunities, while inspired, can be a strong retention tool to fully strengthen the psychological contracts of employees with the organisation. Well-defined and achievable professional growth paths will prevent workers from seeking alternative employment opportunities. The review in this paper hereby validates the inclusion of growth opportunities and supervisory support as major variables in the conceptual model, which serves as a basis for empirical investigation.

Conceptual framework

This study's conceptual model reveals how supervisory support, growth opportunities, and ITQ influence hospitality employees. This study rests on Job Demands-Resources Theory and the Theory of Reasoned Action. These theories posit that organisational resources (e.g., supervisory support and development opportunities) are important antecedents of employee attitudes and behaviour. Hypothesis 1 (H1): Perceived supervisory support (consisting of supervision, recognition and emotional support) will be negatively related to the intention to quit. Hypothesis 2: The organisation's realistic growth opportunities, such as

training, promotion, and advancement, will have a negative correlation with employee intentions to quit. Both are believed to be negatively correlating with turnover intention. The fundamental idea is that support and opportunities for long-term development within the organisation enhance commitment and reduce turnover. This hypothesis directed the empirical investigation of these constructs within graded hotels located in Bloemfontein, South Africa. The next section explains the methodological approach employed in this study.

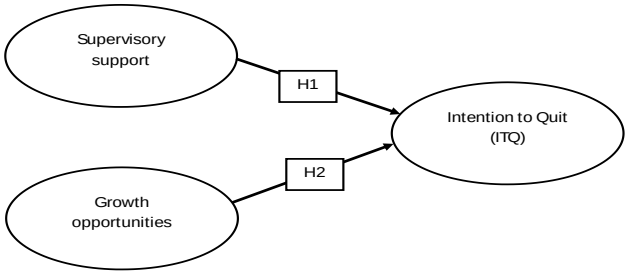

Figure 1. Conceptual framework
Source: Author's own

Methodology

This study used a quantitative, cross-sectional methodology to examine the influence of supervisor support and growth opportunities on the intentions of employees in the food and beverage industry to reside in classified hotels located in Bloemfontein, South Africa. A quantitative methodology was considered suitable as it facilitates the statistical analysis of relationships between quantifiable constructs and offers empirical data to assess proposed associations. (Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). The cross-sectional design facilitated the collection of data at a single point in time to capture employees' current perceptions of their work environment. The study population consisted of food and beverage employees from 16 star-rated hotels that are part of the Federated Hospitality Association of South Africa, FEDHASA, 2023. Simple random sampling was applied to hotel staff so that every employee would have an equal chance of being selected, thereby minimising the selection bias (Saunders et al., 2019). In total, 92 eligible replies were received. While the sample size is relatively small, it is deemed adequate for exploratory regression analysis in organisational studies of limited scale; nevertheless, the interpretation of the results should be conducted with consideration for this constraint. A structured, self-completed questionnaire was used to collect the data. The four sections were 1) supervisor support, 2) growth opportunities, 3) intention to quit, and 4) respondents' profile. The items on supervisor support include sensitivity, recognition, and support for professional development; opportunities for growth comprise related statements on resources available and opportunity for skill enhancement. Items on quitting intention were adopted from validated turnover intent scales widely known among scholars. All structures were rated on a five-point Likert scale rating where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree. This ensured content and construct validity since the instrument was based on previous hospitality and organisational studies. A pilot test among ten food and beverage staff elicited the clarity that resulted in minor linguistic changes. Validation of face validity was also checked with two hospitality experts. The study collected data over a period of four weeks in 2024. The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to the staff members after receiving approval from the general managers of the hotels. Participation was voluntary, keeping all participants' identities and details safe and anonymous. All surveys carried informed consent forms. Most of the frequent technique bias was avoided by simply asking respondents to be honest without their supervisors watching, keeping participation confidential, and switching up the sequence of items inside the constructs.

IBM SPSS Statistics version 29 was used. The first stage in data analysis considered missing values, anomalies, and normality of distributions. Descriptive statistics, comprising means, standard deviations and frequencies, were used to summarise the sample characteristics. Pearson's correlation described the relationship existing between pairs of variables, while hierarchical multiple regression described the effect of supervisor support and growth opportunities on the intention to quit, controlling for demographics such as gender and tenure. Linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity assumptions were tested for and found to satisfy requirements. Cronbach's alpha coefficients surpass the value of 0.70, which proves scale consistency and points towards internal consistency for supervisor support. Zakariya (2022) found the intention to quit and professional advancement prospects motivating factors for departure from Central University, with α values of 0.837 and 0.806, respectively. Human Research Ethics Technology at Free State University (CUT). The Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) granted ethical clearance to conduct this study. All ethical considerations, more particularly informed consent, were duly observed. The study fully adopted the voluntary participation and confidentiality principles advocated by Leedy and Ormrod (2019).

Findings

Demographics

The demographic profile of the 92 respondents presents us an idea of what the hotel workers in Bloemfontein are like, as seen in Table 1. There is a very even split between men and women, with women making up 50% and men making up 45.7%. Only

4.3% of the people who answered said they were LGBTQ+. Most of the people who work there are young. 84.8% of them are under 40, with 44.6% between the ages of 20 and 30 and 40.2% between the ages of 31 and 40. There are just 15.2% of people who are older than 40. 44.6% of them have a diploma, 42.4% have qualifications below the diploma level, and 13.0% have a bachelor's degree or higher. 66.3% of respondents have worked at their current hotel for up to five years. This could mean that the hotel sector is growing quickly or that employees are leaving quickly. In terms of overall industry experience, 56.5% have worked in hotels for up to five years, while 43.5% have worked in hotels for more than five years. This means that even if a lot of the employees are new to their jobs, a lot of them have worked in other parts of the sector before. According to the employment status statistics, half of the respondents work full-time and permanently, while the other half work full-time on renewable contracts (23.9%) and part-time on contracts (26.1%). This statistic shows that job security levels vary in the industry. When it comes to hotel size, 42.4% of the sample works at medium-sized or big hotels, and 15.2% works at small hotels. Furthermore, 67.4% of the people who answered work in hotels that have been open for more than ten years, while 32.6% work at hotels that have been open for less than ten years.

Table 1: Demographic details (n=92)

Variables	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	42	45.7
Female	46	50.0
LGBQT+	4	4.3
Age (years)		
20-30	41	44.6
31-40	37	40.2
41-50	8	8.7
Above 50	6	6.5
Highest education		
PhD	4	4.3
Master's	1	1.1
Honours/ PGDip	1	1.1
Bachelor's/ Advanced Diploma	6	6.5
Diploma	41	44.6
Below Diploma	39	42.4
Length of service in current 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	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
Primary job status		
Full-time permanent	46	50.0
Full-time contract (renewable)	22	23.9
Part-time contract	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	62	67.4

Supervisory support on intention to quit

Table 2 shows how supervisor support can change employee turnover intention in hotels around the Bloemfontein area. Results brought out the very important fact that effective leadership has a role to play when it comes to retaining employees. A moderate inverse relationship between aggregate supervisor support and turnover intention was established as statistically significant ($r = -0.366$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, the more employees perceive support from their supervisors, the lesser their intentions to quit the organisation. Specifically, empathy and understanding of employee issues by supervisors had a high negative effect on turnover intention ($r = -0.350$, $p = 0.001$). The more employees feel empathy from their supervisors, the less likely they will be to think about leaving. This result is consistent with that of Hall et al. (2024), which also pointed out that consideration of empathetic leadership would create a positive working environment that minimises worker turnover.

Table 2: Supervisory support and intention to quit (n=92)

Supervisor support items	Correlation coefficient with intention to quit	*p*-value
My supervisor encourages my professional development and growth	–0.244	0.019*
My supervisor recognises and appreciates my contributions to the team	–0.233	0.026*
My supervisor shows empathy and understanding towards my challenges	–0.350	0.001*
My supervisor creates a positive work environment that fosters employee engagement	–0.303	0.003*
Average supervisor support	**–0.366**	**<0.001***

*Correlation is significant at the ≤0.05 level (2-tailed)

The study found that supervisors who create a positive work environment have a significant negative relationship with employee turnover intention ($r = -0.303$, $p = 0.003$). Supervisors who support and actively promote employee retention also reduce employee turnover. This is consistent with the findings of Sinisterra et al. (2024), in which it was articulated that good talent management practice through fostering a positive workplace culture would enhance employee retention and reduce the level of employee turnover. Furthermore, support from supervisors for employee career development and promotion has a negative relationship with lower turnover ($r = -0.244$, $p = 0.019$). This validates the fact that promoting career development is essential to retaining employees. Similarly, appreciation and recognition of employees' achievements also had a significant negative relationship with the intention to quit the organisation, although this relationship was slightly weaker ($r = -0.233$, $p = 0.026$).

This finding puts forward that recognition leads to employee retention. Tennakoon & Herat (2017) highlighted that perceived supervisory support is negatively associated with turnover intentions.

Growth opportunities and the intention to quit

In the correlation analysis, the relationship between growth opportunities and turnover intentions was examined. The results revealed a significant correlation between growth opportunities and turnover intention in graded hotels in Bloemfontein. The findings show that career development was a vital factor in staff exit. There was a moderately negative correlation between turnover intention and employees perceived average career advancement opportunities, and it was statistically significant ($r = -0.355$, $p = 0.001$). This implied that when the respondents felt improved growth opportunities, they were less likely to express turnover intention. Based on growth opportunities and features, the analysis reported a significant negative correlation between the amount of constructive performance feedback and turnover intention, $r = -0.417$, $p < 0.001$. When employees received more constructive feedback, the possibility of them leaving the organisation decreased. Advancement opportunities in the current position were the second-ranked factor with $r = -0.266$, $p = 0.010$. When employees perceived development opportunities, they were more likely to remain in the organisation. A survey of career growth opportunities and turnover intention among Bloemfontein luxury hotel workers produced the output in Table 3. The outcomes of the trial supported the hypothesis that career advancement had a strong influence on employee attrition. A significant negative correlation was observed between turnover intention and perceived promotion opportunities. $r = -0.355$, $p = 0.001$. If employees believed they had growth opportunities, they were less likely to quit. As far as development opportunities are concerned, the second most significant variable was a negative one, the frequency of being subjected to constructive performance feedback. On the correlation level with turnover intention, the variable was equal to $r = -0.417$, and the p-value was less than 0.001. Consequently, the more often an employee receives constructive feedback, the less he or she is willing to quit. The second variable used as a part of the second-factor group was promotion opportunities in the current position, which was also negative ($r = -0.266$; $p = 0.010$). Active organisational support for competency development was also significantly negatively correlated with turnover intention ($r = -0.249$, $p = 0.017$), highlighting the value of investing in human resource development. Although the correlation with access to personal development resources and support systems was weak ($r = -0.197$, $p = 0.060$), this still suggests that improving access to resources helps reduce turnover, even if this result is not significant at the 0.05 level. These results are consistent with the findings of Codling et al. (2023), who found that poor interpersonal relationships within the organisation hinder career development, and with the findings of Milka et al. (2017), emphasised that the failure of employers to provide growth opportunities increases the likelihood of employees' turnover intentions.

Table 3: Growth opportunities and intention to quit (n=92)

Growth opportunities items	Correlation coefficient with intention to quit	*p*-value
I have access to resources and support systems that aid in my personal growth	–0.197	0.060
I feel that my current role provides me with opportunities for growth	–0.266	0.010*
My organisation actively supports and encourages skill development	–0.249	0.017*
I receive constructive feedback on my performance that helps me grow	–0.417	<0.0001*
Average growth opportunities	**–0.355**	**0.001***

*Correlation is significant at the ≤0.05 level (2-tailed)

To examine the unique predictive contribution of supervisory support and growth opportunities above demographic factors, hierarchical multiple regression was employed. As it has been indicated in Table 4, Model 1 which contains only demographic variables explained 25.8% of the variance in turnover intention ($R^2 = .258$, $F(7,84) = 4.180$, $p = .001$). When supervisory support and growth opportunities were entered into the model in Model2, the explained variance increased to 32.3%, with an all-nonsignificant increase of 6.5% (R^2Change= .065, $F(8,76) = .907$, $p = .516$). The above results show that even though demographic variables collectively predicted turnover intention the main study variables added to these were not statistically significant.

Table 4: Hierarchical multiple regression model summary (n=92)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.508	.258	.197	1.0650	.258	4.180	7	84	.001
2	.568	.323	.189	1.0697	.065	.907	8	76	.516

Discussion

The findings address significant gaps in understanding the relationship between supervisory support, growth opportunities, and the intention to quit among food and beverage employees in hotels located in Bloemfontein. Despite robust support for significant associations between these variables and turnover intention via bivariate correlations, hierarchical regression analysis indicated that their net predictive power, beyond the influence of demographic factors, was not statistically significant in this sample. This is most likely due to the small sample size rather than any true effect of the high variance shared by demographic variables and predictors. The results are substantial at the correlation level, consistent with theoretical frameworks and earlier research effort, offering practically useful knowledge that deserves extensive debate. This is also supported theoretically under the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model; resources, including leadership support and career development, can normally function as buffers against job strain leading to negative effects such as intention to quit (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). These results served to reaffirm that such organisational resources would be imperative in creating employee stability within the highly demanding context of South African hotels. A deeper look at supervisory support results proves that empathy and understanding by the supervisor shares the highest negative correlation with turnover intention. The above discussion is strongly supported in existing literature because, as Hall et al. (2024) noted, empathetic leadership is essential to a positive

organisational climate and supports the psychological contracts advanced by Kokt & Mphirime (2022). Therefore, this result also validates the reverse argument advanced in literature that when supervisory behaviour is negative, for example, supervisory incivility as advanced by Yin et al. (2022) or punitive supervision by Zafar et al. (2021), it is a strong determinant of turnover. Hence, supportive supervisory practice and specifically in terms of empathy is not just advantageous but rather a prerequisite for retention.

Results about opportunities for growth show that feedback about performance is the strongest negative predictor of intention to quit (r = -0.417). This supports the conceptual link established by Khosa & Lebese (2023) in their diagrammatic illustration where supervisors were depicted as gatekeepers to growth. The high signalling role played by feedback indicates that growth does not only emanate from formal promotions but also exists in continuous, constructive conversations about performance and development. Literature isolates stagnant career mobility as a major push factor (Lee & Jo, 2023; Dwesini, 2019). This validates Daniel et al. (2025) argument that, within the context of human capital investment in Africa's hospitality industry, obvious career development paths are a strategic necessity rather than just an option. Supervisory support and growth opportunities are not independent factors but indispensable pillars of employee retention. This finding contradicts the economic incentive's view and, therefore, promotes a holistic approach to employee retention. This is where the Theory of Reasoned Action by Ajzen (1991) comes in: perceived support by employees and subjective perception of the organisation's role in fostering upward career mobility play a role in their willingness to stay. Targeted leadership development programmes that integrate empathetic leadership and mentorship with clear practical career development paths can help address psychological as well as structural factors which may lead hotel staff members to become potential quits, thus reducing them.

Conclusion

The research's results suggest that the two most important factors behind the inclination of hospitality employees to quit are lack of growth opportunities and supervisory support. As a result of the steps taken to foster sufficient managerial support and clarify professional development opportunities for hospitality employees, a desire to quit may be dramatically reduced. Rather than only using policies designed to maintain retention more generally, the provided study argues that both qualitative and quantitative aspects of adequate support from a supervisor and true growth opportunities are equally necessary for ensuring that the individual retains the employee. Therefore, hotels should provide actual support systems and individualised development programmes that meet their workers' real needs and aspirations. In Bloemfontein, hotels may offer empathy leadership training for all managers and monitor clear pathways with feedback instead of cash. This discovery can be argued to be quite solid, but at the same time, the study has certain restrictions. The study presents the identified limitations and provides learnt recommendations for future research. However, the findings are not applicable to the rest of South Africa because the study environment consisted solely of hotels in Bloemfontein. Using exclusively food and beverage personnel eventually led to the omission of crucial replies from other departments such as maintenance, housekeeping, front office and others. A more varied workforce would have provided more insight into what motivates people to work harder or not work at all. Furthermore, the difficulties encountered in data collection limited the extent and demographics of the study. Some hotel managers may have influenced the procedure, decreasing the sample size by excluding their employees from participating. This undermined the research findings since an insufficient and non-representative sample remained. Despite assurances of anonymity and confidentiality, some responders may have feared repercussions from their superiors. This would have been a basis for non-invigilation, as some people elected to stop filling out the questionnaire even after they had begun. As a result, future study should include gathering data from bigger geographical areas and covering numerous hotel departments, with intentions to discourage such behaviours by management and encourage employee participation.

The study recommends that future research investigate other parts of South Africa rather than focusing it on Bloemfontein. Future research should consider the degree to which the link between supervisor support, career advancement opportunities, and turnover is contingent on various economic conditions, cultural aspects, or even tourism trends that might affect them. The research should also evaluate how various departments in a hotel, including housekeeping, front office and maintenance, affect supervisory support and an individual's growth opportunities. An analysis can produce retention strategies tailored to the context, thereby rendering the conclusions of this study more comprehensive than merely concerning food and beverage. The best way is through longitudinal studies with follow-up for one to three years. This would provide a much more factual account of what happens to growth and turnover, rather than just measuring intentions. Further qualitative probing would help surface how workers construe important concepts such as "support" (emotional versus instrumental) and "growth" (promotion versus acquiring skills). Such approaches are likely to bring up unmet expectations that standardised quantitative tools have failed to capture. Future studies should also try other organisational-level factors, for example, hotel star ratings, the level of unionisation, and corporate human resource (HR) policies to discover the structural factors that constrain or enable supervisors in support and professional development provision.

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