



The Mediating Role of Affective Commitment in the Relationship between Perceived Employability and Intention to Quit in the Hospitality Industry

O Papel Mediador do Compromisso Afetivo na Relação entre a Empregabilidade Percebida e a Intenção de Despedimento na Indústria Hoteleira

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Abstract

This study explores the mediating role of affective commitment in the relationship between perceived employability and the intention to quit, focusing on the tourism sector—a field often marked by high employee turnover. Data were collected from 615 employees working in 4- and 5-star hotels in Antalya and Muğla, Türkiye. The relationships among perceived employability, affective commitment, and intention to quit were analysed using SPSS and AMOS. The results revealed that affective commitment significantly mediates the link between perceived employability and turnover intentions. While high perceived employability generally increases employees' intentions to leave their jobs, strong affective commitment was shown to offset this effect, thereby reducing the likelihood of turnover. These findings highlight the need for HR strategies that prioritise building and maintaining affective commitment among employees, particularly in high-mobility industries like hospitality, to retain highly employable staff. By offering a deeper understanding of how affective commitment can buffer the turnover risks associated with high employability, this study provides practical insights for HR practitioners in industries facing labour retention challenges.

Keywords: Perceived employability, intention to quit, affective commitment, tourism establishments.

Resumo

Este estudo examina o papel mediador do compromisso afetivo na ligação entre a empregabilidade percebida e a intenção de se despedir no sector do turismo, uma questão crucial em indústrias de elevada rotatividade. Foram recolhidos dados quantitativos de 615 empregados em hotéis de 4 e 5 estrelas em Antalya e Muğla, Türkiye. Foram analisadas as relações entre a empregabilidade percebida, o compromisso afetivo e a intenção de desistir. Os resultados mostraram que o compromisso afetivo mediou significativamente a relação entre a empregabilidade percebida e a intenção de desistir. Uma elevada perceção de empregabilidade aumenta as intenções de rotação, mas um forte empenhamento afetivo atenuou este efeito. Estes resultados sublinham a necessidade de criar um empenhamento efetivo, especialmente em sectores de elevada mobilidade como a hotelaria, o que pode reduzir o risco de rotatividade entre os trabalhadores com elevada empregabilidade. Este estudo oferece novas perspetivas sobre a forma como o compromisso afetivo pode atenuar os riscos de rotatividade associados à elevada empregabilidade, fornecendo orientações valiosas para o planeamento de RH em indústrias que enfrentam desafios laborais.

Palavras-chave: Empregabilidade percebida, intenção de desistir, empenhamento afetivo, estabelecimentos turísticos.

1. Introduction

In today's highly competitive global environment, organisations recognise human capital as their most valuable asset, essential for ensuring sustainability and gaining a competitive edge. Employers prioritise hiring qualified individuals who can contribute significantly to organisational success (Becker, 1964; Plaikner et al., 2023). At the same time, job seekers strive to secure positions offering optimal working conditions, reflecting a dynamic employment market where both parties seek mutual benefit (Forrier & Sels, 2003; Khan et al., 2024). For both current employees and job seekers, maintaining and enhancing employability is a crucial strategy for career development and stability (Van Der Heijden & Bakker, 2011).

Perceived employability refers to an individual's self-assessment of their ability to secure employment within their current organisation or in the external job market (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). This perception is shaped by personal skills and qualifications, organisational support, and coordinated teamwork. When employees perceive high levels of employability, it often boosts their overall productivity and strengthens their emotional connection to the organisation (Fugate et al., 2004). This emotional connection, referred to as affective commitment, has been shown to significantly improve job satisfaction and align individual goals with organisational objectives (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Topsakal et al., 2024). Consequently, employees with strong affective commitment are less likely to leave their jobs, thereby contributing to organisational stability (Solinger et al., 2008).

Given the substantial link between perceived employability, affective commitment, and turnover intentions, examining this relationship is crucial, particularly in labour-intensive sectors such as tourism. The tourism industry is characterised by its heavy



reliance on human labour, which often exposes workers to heightened psychological and physiological stress (Baum, 2007). This underscores the importance of tourism organisations fostering a strong sense of affective commitment among their employees, as this can help mitigate the adverse effects of job stress and reduce turnover intentions (Wong & Ko, 2009). Additionally, enhancing employees' perceptions of employability within the organisation is critical, as it improves their psychological well-being and strengthens their overall job satisfaction (De Cuyper et al., 2011). Employees who feel secure and valued are more likely to remain with the organisation, thereby reducing turnover and ensuring greater organisational cohesion.

Additionally, the tourism industry offers a unique context for this research due to its labour-intensive nature and high employee turnover rates (Davidson & Wang, 2011). Workers in this sector frequently encounter significant physical and emotional demands, which can intensify stress and adversely affect job satisfaction (Pizam & Thornburg, 2000). Strengthening employees' affective commitment is, therefore, crucial for enhancing their resilience and productivity, ultimately reducing their intention to quit (Kim et al., 2016). Furthermore, as employees acquire new skills and competencies, often driven by technological advancements, their perception of employability improves, which positively impacts their job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Thijssen et al., 2008).

The present study aims to examine the mediating role of affective commitment in the relationship between perceived employability and intention to quit among employees in the tourism sector. Specifically, it seeks to address the research question: "To what extent does affective commitment mediate the relationship between employees' perceived employability and their intention to quit in the hospitality industry?" By focusing on this sector, which is heavily reliant on human capital and prone to high turnover, this study contributes to understanding how emotional and cognitive factors shape retention strategies.

2. Literature review, hypotheses development, and research framework

2.1 Perceived employability

Perceived employability is a concept that has emerged from the integration of various disciplines, including business economics, management sciences, and psychology, reflecting a comprehensive perspective. According to Recommendation 195 of the ILO's Human Resources Development (2004), employability is defined as the possession of skills and transferable abilities that enhance an individual's capacity to benefit from educational and training opportunities (Manjavacas et al., 2020). Perceived employability refers to an individual's assessment of their compatibility with different roles or job opportunities outside the organisation. In other words, it represents an individual's capacity to act autonomously and realise their potential through sustainable employment in the labour market (Hillage & Pollard, 1998).

Perceived employability can be described as a form of subjective evaluation because individuals interpret for themselves whether they have the potential to find a job, based on their behavioural and technical competencies. It is considered subjective because individuals rely heavily on their own thoughts, act on their feelings, and incorporate personal interpretation in their self-assessment. As a result, it is impossible to speak of an absolute reality, as an individual's honesty towards themselves may be limited.

The word "perception" is central to the concept of perceived employability. Perception refers to becoming conscious of something by directing attention to it and recognising it (Turkish Language Society, 2022). Within this definitional framework, perceived employability focuses on individual perception, leading to various interpretations of the concept. From this perspective, perceived employability encompasses an individual's thoughts about their likelihood of securing a new job based on their self-perception (Berntson et al., 2006). In other words, it refers to an individual's ability to perceive their potential to find a job compatible with their characteristics (Rothwell et al., 2008). Additionally, perceptions regarding current job opportunities offer another distinct definition of the concept (Broeck et al., 2014).

The definition of perceived employability, considering various interpretations, is significant due to five distinct factors. The first is that perceived employability is a subjective assessment and a concept closely linked to psychology. Individual differences, such as personal connections, participation in employment-enhancing activities, or the lack thereof, contribute to variations in each individual's understanding of the labour market (Vanhercke et al., 2014).

The second factor is the anxiety that perceived employability generates in an individual's mind regarding job opportunities (Berntson & Marklund, 2007). This perception is influenced by both personal and situational factors (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005). Personal factors, such as attitude, knowledge, tendencies, self-awareness, and openness to change, interact with situational factors, including the level of development of the organisation or society (Forrier et al., 2009).

The third factor is the association of perception with different groups in the labour market, such as students, employees, and the unemployed, emphasising an individual's ability to obtain and retain a job (Vanhercke et al., 2014). The fourth factor highlights an individual's employment possibilities, either to continue their job within the domestic labour market or to start a job in an external labour market (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2010). The fifth factor focuses on perceived employability, considering both the quantity of job options available and the quality, defined as the type of job alternatives accessible (Vanhercke et al., 2014).



The concept of perceived employability is also referred to as an individual's perception of the options available in the internal and external labour markets (Erdem et al., 2016). The internal employability dimension of perceived employability, which is divided into internal and external dimensions, reflects an individual's perception of their in-organisation employability, arising from career opportunities they may encounter within the organisation. This dimension is grounded in the relationship between employees and employers (Vanhercke et al., 2014). It is exemplified when employees effectively utilise the opportunities provided by employers—such as training, career advancement, and self-development—by leveraging their skills and knowledge related to their job (Caricati et al., 2016).

The external employability dimension focuses on an individual's perception of their potential to attract job opportunities outside the organisation (Forrier et al., 2015). This dimension is grounded in the employee's general knowledge and skills and is influenced by factors that are relatively beyond the employee's direct control (Broeck et al., 2014).

The internally perceived employability dimension is used more frequently than the externally perceived employability dimension, as it is closely tied to the conditions of the organisation, while the externally perceived employability dimension relates to the broader conditions of the market (Kirves et al., 2014). In this context, internal employability refers to an individual's perception of how employable they consider themselves within their current organisation. In contrast, external employability reflects their perception of the likelihood of being employed by other organisations in the market (Gerçek & Elmas Atay, 2017). The external employability dimension comprises four initial levels requiring development: (1) I do not want to do it, and I cannot do it; (2) I can do it, but I do not want to do it; (3) I want to do it, but I cannot do it; and (4) I want to do it, and I am doing it (Dolgun, 2019).

Employees in the first dimension lack the technical and behavioural competencies required by the external market. Consequently, they are reluctant to change, and their employability level is low. Employees in the second dimension possess the technical and behavioural competencies expected by the external market, which is reflected in their attitudes and behaviours. While they may evaluate high-paying job offers if received, they do not actively search for new employment opportunities. Employees in the third dimension lack the technical and behavioural competencies expected by the external market but are willing to change and participate in training programmes to improve their employability. Finally, employees in the fourth dimension possess the technical and behavioural competencies required by the external market and voluntarily seek change. For these employees, practices such as job enrichment and expansion of responsibilities can be implemented (Dolgun, 2019).

Factors influencing perceived employability are categorised into three groups: individual factors, labour market conditions, and human resources policies. Individual factors include an individual's abilities, skills, attitude, knowledge, behaviours, belief in finding a new job, determination to continue their current job, social environment, adaptability, awareness, human capital, education, talent development, openness to learning, adaptability to change, awareness of career identity, ability to use career self-management, demographic characteristics, and flexibility (Wittekind et al., 2010).

Since labour market factors are shaped by an individual's characteristics and professional skills, as well as the supply and demand within the labour market, these factors contribute to its dynamism. They influence the perception of job insecurity (high or low), organisational changes, the general socio-economic climate, the focus on working in permanent jobs, and the national employment rate (Berglund & Wallinder, 2015). Studies conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated that disasters significantly impact the economy, labour market, and service sector (Ruppenthal & Rückert-John, 2024; Strouhal et al., 2024). In this context, numerous new practices and changes aimed at reducing human interaction were implemented in the retail, healthcare, education, transportation, tourism, and finance sectors during the pandemic. Service consumers generally developed a positive attitude toward these new practices, which focused on minimising human interaction (Barrantes-Aguilar et al., 2023; İbrahimagaoglu & Erdoğan Yazar, 2021; Silva-Oliveira & Avelar, 2024), largely due to the rapid spread of COVID-19 compared to other epidemics. The most distinguishing feature of COVID-19 was its quick transmission, and because the infection process and treatment remained uncertain, the pandemic directly and suddenly impacted the tourism sector (Çetin & Göktepe, 2020; Elshaer et al., 2024).

Factors related to human resources policies are categorised as employee employability, being a preferred employee, self-improvement, willingness to participate in training, and intention to leave the job (Van der Vaart et al., 2015).

Having more opportunities to find employment is one of the most significant outcomes of perceived employability, and increasing these opportunities can promote self-development. In turn, individuals are likely to benefit the organisation they work for through their talent and existing knowledge (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011). In this context, when an individual is not actively seeking other employment but still makes a concerted effort in their role, it indicates a high likelihood of strong performance (Kinnunen et al., 2011).

The perception of employability can vary from one individual to another. When opportunities arise from other organisations, individuals with a high perception of employability may sometimes choose to remain in their current job. This can lead to increased performance, as these individuals recognise and value the opportunities provided by their organisation, such as being appreciated



and fostering positive relationships. Consequently, individuals with a high perception of employability are less likely to intend to leave their job.

In this research, Hypothesis 1 (H1) proposes that perceived employability positively predicts the intention to leave a job. This hypothesis is supported by several previous studies. One study found a weak relationship between perceived employability and job departure, emphasising that perceived employability positively correlates with the decision to leave when job control is lacking. Conversely, it correlates negatively with the availability of job resources and the intention to leave (De Cuyper et al., 2011).

A separate study identified a significant negative correlation between perceived intrinsic employability and the intention to leave. This study also established that the combination of perceived internal employability and affective commitment mediates the impact of organisational competence development practices on turnover intentions, demonstrating a comprehensive serial mediation effect (Moreira et al., 2020). Additionally, another investigation found no notable link between perceived employability and the intention to leave, highlighting that employees did not leverage their employability to seek better opportunities elsewhere. It was observed, however, that employees who consider themselves highly employable are more inclined to consider leaving if they feel little emotional attachment to their job, believe their job security is strong, or are short-term employees (Açıkgöz et al., 2016). Conversely, another study reported that internal employability tends to discourage employees from leaving (Manjavacas et al., 2020), while yet another found a positive association between perceived employability and turnover intentions (Virga et al., 2017). These findings form the basis for Hypothesis 1 (H1) in this study, which is as follows:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Perceived employability positively predicts the intention to leave the job (C PATH)

Hypothesis 2 (H2) was developed in this study based on the premise that perceived employability negatively predicts affective commitment. One study found that affective commitment was positively associated with quantitatively perceived employability but negatively associated with qualitatively perceived employability (Philippaers et al., 2019). Another study revealed that perceived employability might indirectly reduce employee performance by decreasing affective commitment and exerting a negative cross-lagged effect on commitment (Philippaers et al., 2016). Similarly, another investigation found a low and negative relationship between affective commitment and perceived employability among employees who see themselves as highly employable, particularly for short-term employees (Açıkgöz et al., 2016). Based on these findings, Hypothesis 2 (H2) in this study is as follows:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Perceived employability negatively predicts affective commitment (A Path)

2.2 Emotional commitment

Emotional commitment is a concept closely tied to an employee's emotional response within the work environment. It reflects the satisfaction derived from integrating with their job and continuing in their role. Beyond this satisfaction, individuals with high emotional commitment remain in their organisations because they want to. As a result, these individuals willingly contribute to the advancement of their organisation's interests. Emotional commitment is one of the most critical factors that employers seek to foster within their organisations.

Emotional commitment is one of the three dimensions of organisational commitment, alongside continuance commitment and normative commitment. Among these, emotional commitment is theoretically the strongest and most significant dimension (Gürbüz & Bekmezci, 2012). This is because individuals with high emotional commitment identify themselves with organisational goals, fully embracing and adopting these goals as their own.

Emotional commitment describes the emotional interest of the individual towards the organisation, the individual's involvement in the organisation, his/her or her emotional attachment to the organisation, his/her or her identification with the organisation, and the desire to continue working in the organisation as a result of the high level of emotional commitment in the individual (Meyer & Allen, 1991). This type of commitment is related to emotional thinking and the expression of reactions in the work environment, and it reveals work integration. In this context, emotional commitment is associated with the satisfaction that occurs when the individual respects the goals and rules of the organisation, loves the managers, shares the mission and vision of the organisation (Tutar, 2007) and continues to his/her colleagues, work and profession (Balay, 2000). As a result of the positive thoughts that the individual feels towards his/her organisation, it is expected that he/she will spend additional effort for his/her organisation when necessary.

Job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and organisational trust foster positive attitudes among employees and can, therefore, be regarded as effective internal dynamics or indicators of internal relationship quality. The findings also confirm that job satisfaction directly influences organisational commitment, which, in turn, has a direct impact on organisational trust. A study by Rodrigues et al. demonstrated that positive attitudes among employees can be enhanced through increased job satisfaction and commitment. Furthermore, the study substantiated that job satisfaction directly affects organisational commitment, which



subsequently influences organisational trust (Rodrigues et al., 2023). Additionally, psychological capital, as an individual trait, positively impacts emotional commitment and enhances performance (Cizrelioğulları & Babayiğit, 2022).

Individuals with a high level of emotional commitment remain in the organisation not out of necessity but because they genuinely want to, perceiving their work as fulfilling and enjoyable. As a result, they develop an emotional attachment to their organisation (Ağca & Ertan, 2008). This type of commitment fosters positive organisational behaviours such as loyalty, dedication, self-sacrifice, and honesty. It is rooted in individuals' willingness to support organisational goals and is influenced by personality traits and work-related factors, making it an attitudinal phenomenon (Mir et al., 2002).

The determinants of emotional commitment are categorised into three groups: individual characteristics, work experience, and organisational structure. Individual characteristics relate to an individual's demographic attributes, such as age, tenure, gender, and education, as well as their personal orientations, including needs for achievement, integration, and autonomy. Work experience is considered the most significant determinant, encompassing an individual's sense of comfort within the organisation, both physically and psychologically. In contrast, the organisational structure involves the formalisation of procedures and the relationships between the individual and their employer (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Several factors contribute to fostering emotional commitment among individuals working in an organisation. These factors include the attractiveness of the work, which refers to the excitement and engagement derived from tasks within the organisation, and open roles, which involve clearly defined organisational expectations and responsibilities. Clear purpose relates to employees' understanding of the organisation's objectives and tasks, while necessity of purpose highlights clarifying the requirements needed to complete tasks effectively. Openness to suggestions reflects management's willingness to consider employees' thoughts and ideas, and harmony among employees emphasises maintaining close and sincere relationships among team members. Organisational reliability is the belief that the organisation will uphold its promises, and equality ensures all employees have equal rights and opportunities. Importance to the individual refers to employees' belief that their work contributes meaningfully to organisational goals, while feedback involves providing constructive and regular information on performance. Finally, participation enables employees to have a say in decisions regarding their workload and performance. These factors collectively play a crucial role in strengthening emotional commitment within organisations (Meyer et al., 1990).

Individuals with high emotional commitment tend to increase their contributions to their organisations and find it easier to remain loyal to their work while putting in greater effort. This situation highlights the outcomes of emotional commitment. One of the most significant results of emotional commitment is that it arises not from external pressure or other factors but from the individual's genuine desire to remain loyal to the organisation (Öztürk, 2008).

It is thought that with the high emotional commitment of the individual towards the organisation, the importance given to the individual by the organisation will increase, it will respond to individual needs and expectations more clearly by making him feel that he/she is more valuable and it will help the organisation to realise its individual goals as well as its goals. Thus, it becomes easier for the individual to realise himself with satisfaction and to increase the organisation's efficiency. In addition, since the individual's emotional commitment is high, it becomes possible to improve work efficiency and job satisfaction and to decrease the intention to be absent from work, to be late for work, and to quit the job.

Hypothesis 3 (H3) was developed in this study, considering that emotional commitment negatively predicts the intention to leave. A study by Lee and Bruvold (2003) concluded that when employers invest in improving employees' skills and competencies, employees experience greater job satisfaction, develop stronger emotional attachment to the organisation, and exhibit a reduced intention to leave. These findings suggest that emotional commitment plays a critical role in decreasing employees' turnover intentions. Based on these findings, Hypothesis 3 (H3) in this study is as follows:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Emotional commitment negatively predicts the intention to leave work (B PATH)

2.3 Intention to leave the job

Both employees and employers view the intention to leave a job as an important issue, drawing significant attention in management and organisational psychology. Job departure remains a consistently relevant concept. A change in an individual's current position occurs when they leave their job due to various reasons, such as demographic characteristics or business conditions, or when they leave involuntarily due to external circumstances (Bluedorn, 1978). The intention to leave a job is a motivational concept closely related to job satisfaction. It is defined as the consideration of leaving an organisation to seek alternative employment, make decisions about new job opportunities, or respond to declining motivation caused by an organisation's perceived lack of future success, leading to an increased likelihood of departure (Şenel, 2021).

The concept of job departure is divided into voluntary and non-voluntary leaves. Voluntary leave occurs when an employee departs from the organisation as a result of their own decision. This decision may be influenced by factors such as better wages, more



favourable working conditions, issues with management or a manager, relocation due to spousal circumstances, career changes, illness, caregiving responsibilities, or specific family situations (Abelson, 1987). In contrast, non-voluntary leave involves the employee leaving the organisation due to decisions made by the employer, rather than the employee. This type of separation may result from situations such as dismissal, mandatory retirement, physical disabilities, or death (Shaw et al., 1998; Tai et al., 1998).

In general, factors such as an employee's inability to perform adequately, poor communication between managers and employees, the organisation's management policies, unclear boundaries of responsibilities and authority, incomplete or absent job descriptions, and unfair practices within the organisation significantly contribute to the formation of the intention to leave a job (Özdevecioğlu, 2004).

The intention to leave a job is a critical concept when evaluated in terms of its significance. It is regarded as a costly and time-consuming challenge for organisations. When an employee leaves their position, the resulting vacancy necessitates a swift solution from the organisation. Therefore, preventing employees from considering leaving their roles, discouraging turnover, and encouraging them to remain within the organisation are crucial for maintaining organisational effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

When job departures occur frequently, organisations face challenges such as information gaps, loss of organisational culture and talent, extended adaptation and orientation processes, increased training costs, and reduced productivity from new members (Polat & Meydan, 2010). These issues disrupt the organisation's income-expenditure balance and lead to a decline in profit margins. Notably, the loss of a qualified workforce exacerbates these challenges, resulting in even more significant losses for the organisation.

Although the stages of the intention to leave a job may vary for each employee, the overall cycle remains consistent. Progressing through these stages involves navigating a complex decision-making process. These stages can be described in a specific sequence (Telman & Ünsal, 2004).

- The employee evaluates his/her current job.
- Determines there is a lack of job satisfaction.
- Is considering resigning.
- Calculate the cost of leaving and evaluate opportunities to find alternative jobs.
- Seeks alternative employment opportunities.
- Compares the current job with other job opportunities.
- Compares existing jobs with alternative employment opportunities.
- Intends to stay or leave their current job.
- Leaves the current job.

Several factors influence employees' intention to leave their jobs. These factors are categorised into three groups: individual, environmental, and organisational factors (Örücü & Özafşarlıoğlu, 2013). Individual factors include changes in family circumstances (such as marriage and death), interest in another job, unmet expectations, the personal need for education and training, changes in physical and psychological health, changes in living conditions, and age-related requirements. Environmental factors encompass the overall economic situation and its impact on the labour market, improvements in financial and well-being conditions, increased job opportunities, market changes due to raw material shortages or order deficits, changes in professions and development opportunities, seasonal work sectors, easier adaptation to job changes due to automation and mechanisation, and cost increases due to severance pay. Organisational factors involve difficulties arising from excessive workload, inadequate training, organisation location, poor working conditions, the type and difficulty of work, dissatisfaction with management policies, organisational conditions, insufficient social services, transport issues, and a dysfunctional pay system (Hwang & Kuo, 2006).

Individual factors include job satisfaction, which significantly influences the employee's decision to leave the job. When employees are dissatisfied, they are more likely to act on the desire to quit. Environmental factors impact both the intention to leave the job and the employee's sense of job satisfaction. These factors can shape an employee's perception of their work environment, influencing their decision to stay or leave. Organisational factors, on the other hand, refer to the employee's voluntary decision to leave the job, driven by the transformation of thought into behaviour. This leads the employee to actively seek alternative employment (Mobley, 1977). Each of these factors contains various elements that can contribute to the intention to leave the job. These elements highlight the complex reasons behind employees' decisions to separate from their organisation.

Reasons for the intention to leave a job include a lack of organisational commitment, loyalty, and job satisfaction, as well as a lack of professional excitement. Other contributing factors are deficiencies in organisational justice, inadequate professional development, insufficient administrative support, and job insecurity. Additionally, unclear job roles, dissatisfaction with job content, physical job difficulties, poor working conditions, long working hours, high work pressure, and elevated stress levels can



all play a role. Other factors include weak management, strained relations between subordinates and superiors, low quality of life within the organisation, low family status, and the potential for better opportunities in other jobs (Şimşek, 2014).

Studies have shown that boredom contributes to an increased intention to leave a job, with senior and more experienced professionals experiencing less boredom at work compared to their younger and less experienced counterparts (Lee & Wetzel, 2023).

Zeytinoglu et al. (2012) illustrated that job security and insecurity are shaped by employees' assessments of their current work conditions and their perceptions of future prospects, viewed both positively and negatively. The studies cited indicate that job security has a positive impact on overall job satisfaction. While job satisfaction is related to short-term workplace conditions, job security is linked to long-term job factors that enhance employment benefits (Altınay et al., 2019). It was also observed that low job satisfaction and a lack of additional benefits significantly influence employees' intentions to leave their jobs. Furthermore, employee satisfaction with compensation is affected by work motivation and engagement. In general, organisational support enhances employees' confidence in their employers, reducing the likelihood of leaving the organisation (Mohsin, 2022). The intention to leave a job brings various consequences for both the organisation and the employees, including those who leave. These outcomes can be both positive and negative.

Employees who experience poor performance are more likely to leave their jobs. Providing new information and technologies to new hires, along with changes in organisational policies, results in positive outcomes for the organisation. For employees, increases in opportunities for variety, organisational commitment, harmony between the organisation and employees, and greater satisfaction with the organisation are positive results. For those who leave, the positive outcomes include increased earnings from new job opportunities, the exploration of new career prospects, the phenomenon of renewal in a new role, and access to better development opportunities.

Negative consequences for the organisation include increased costs due to new recruitment, expenses associated with new employees, out-of-process costs, decreased productivity, the loss of high-performing employees, deterioration of the social structure, and communication failures. For employees, the negative outcomes include the loss of colleagues, low satisfaction with remaining team members, increased workload due to staff shortages, and decreased organisational commitment. For those who leave, the negative consequences include the loss of seniority, the forfeiture of existing opportunities, stress caused by a job change, regression in their career path, and deterioration in family and social systems (Şimşek et al., 2008).

Organisations can employ several methods to mitigate these negative outcomes and costs, helping employees remain in their roles. The findings from these studies suggest that integrating family values and qualities with the organisation's identity and value-based branding strategies plays a crucial role in attracting and retaining employees (Plaikner et al., 2023).

In this study, Hypothesis 4 (H4) was formulated based on the premise that perceived employability negatively predicts emotional commitment. One study found that employees who perceived themselves as highly employable were more likely to intend to leave their jobs when their emotional commitment was low and their perceived job security was high. The relationship between perceived employability and intention to leave was found to be negative for shorter-term employees (Açıkgöz et al., 2016). Another study concluded that perceived employability has a negative cross-lagged effect on engagement, suggesting that perceived employability can indirectly reduce employee performance by decreasing emotional organisational commitment (Philippaers et al., 2016). Based on the studies mentioned, Hypothesis 4 (H4) in this study is as follows:

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Emotional Commitment in the model tested has a mediating effect between predictive (perceived employability) and predictive (intention to leave the job) variables.

3. Methodology

3.1 Method and design

Using the cross-sectional quantitative research method, the results obtained in this study were analysed using SPSS and AMOS.

3.2 Population sample

The research population consisted of employees working in 4–5-star accommodation hotels affiliated with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Antalya and Muğla, Türkiye. Fifty hotels were selected to participate in the study. Online questionnaires were distributed to all hotel employees who agreed to participate, as the total number of seasonal employees was unknown (the entire population was considered the sample). A total of 615 online questionnaires were completed and included in the analysis. The 4–5-star accommodation hotels were chosen because they provide year-round service and likely employ more qualified personnel. Ethics committee approval (E-2104220002) was obtained from the Hasan Kalyoncu University Ethics Committee on April 22, 2021. Data collection took place between May 15, 2021, and September 30, 2021. Participation was voluntary, and employees consented



by approving the online consent form. This study investigates the mediating effect of affective commitment on self-perceived employability concerning employees' intention to quit.

3.3 Data collection and scales used

The quantitative research method was employed in this study, with a convenience sampling method used to select participants. Data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of four sections. The first section included questions about the participants' personal information; the second section contained the "Self-perceived Employability Scale"; the third section focused on the "Affective Commitment Scale"; and the fourth section included the "Intention to Quit Scale."

Self-perceived Employability Scale: The "Self-perceived Employability Scale" was originally developed by Rothwell & Arnold (2007) and later adapted into Turkish by Gerçek & Elmas Atay (2017). Reliability and content validity were assessed for the Turkish version, and the external employability dimension, consisting of six items, was used in this study.

Affective Commitment Scale: The "Organisational Commitment Scale," developed by Meyer, Allen & Smith (1993), was adapted into Turkish by Han et al. (2018). The Turkish version was tested for reliability and content validity, and the Affective Commitment dimension, consisting of six items, was used in this study.

Intention to Quit Scale: The "Intention to Quit Scale," originally developed by Wayne et al. (1997), was adapted into Turkish by Küçükusta (2007). The Turkish version of the scale, consisting of three items, was tested for reliability and content validity and used in this study.

All three scales were administered using a 5-point Likert scale.

3.4 Detailed statistics related to survey participants

Upon examining the demographic data of employees in tourism accommodation establishments, 59.8% of the participants were female, and 40.2% were male. The majority (29.6%) were aged 30 or younger, followed by employees aged 21-30 (22.3%), 31-40 (15.3%), 41-50 (17.3%), and those aged 51 and above (15%). Regarding educational background, most participants held either an associate degree (34%) or had graduated from secondary school (32.7%). As for income, 23.6% of the participants reported a monthly income of 0-3000 TL, 34.3% earned between 3001-6000 TL, 19.8% earned between 6001-9000 TL, and 22.3% had a monthly income of 9001 TL or more. At the time of data collection, the minimum wage had recently increased from 2825 TL to 5500 TL per month.

4. Findings

4.1 Self-perceived employability

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to validate the data obtained from a 6-item scale measuring participants' views on external employability. For evaluating the fit of the CFA model, several indices were used as criteria: root mean square error (RMSEA), chi-square divided by degrees of freedom (χ^2/df), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), general fit index (GFI), incremental fit index (IFI), and comparative fit index (CFI) (Kline, 2011). In the CFA analysis, theoretically supported error modifications were made between the variables to improve the fit indices of the relevant model.

The one-dimensional structure of the scale was tested by applying CFA. The CFA results were consistent with those obtained from the original scale. The fit indices were deemed both perfect and acceptable ($\chi^2 = 30.036$, $df = 7$, $p < 0.01$, $\chi^2/df = 4.291$, RMSEA = 0.07, GFI = 0.98, IFI = 0.99, SRMR = 0.00, CFI = 0.99). The fit indices used to assess the adequacy of the theoretical model, along with the CFA model's fit values, are provided in Table 1.

Table 1 - Model fit indices of Self-perceived employability scale

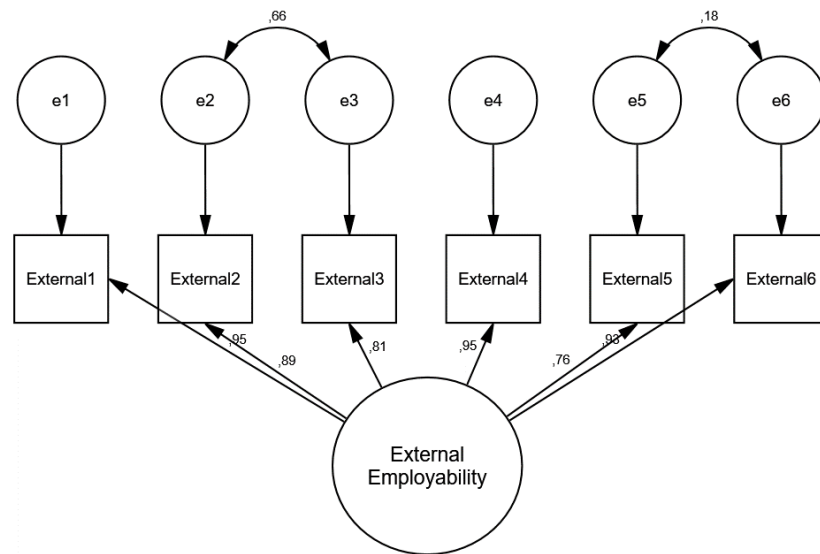
Fit Indices	Perfect Fit Criteria	Acceptable Fit Criteria	Fit Indices of the Model	Findings
χ^2/df	$0 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 2$	$2 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 5$	4,291	Acceptable Fit
RMSEA	$.00 \leq RMSEA \leq .05$	$.05 \leq RMSEA \leq .08$	.07	Acceptable Fit
CFI	$.95 \leq CFI \leq 1.00$	$.90 \leq CFI \leq .95$	.99	Perfect Fit
GFI	$.95 \leq GFI \leq 1.00$	$.90 \leq GFI \leq .95$	.98	Perfect Fit
IFI	$.95 \leq IFI \leq 1.00$	$.90 \leq IFI \leq .95$	.99	Perfect Fit
SRMR	$0 \leq SRMR \leq .05$	$.05 \leq IFI \leq 1$	.00	Perfect Fit

Table 1 shows that the theoretical model we tested is consistent with the data set, and the model fit indices were at an acceptable level. A value of χ^2/df fewer than 5 is the first indicator that the model is compatible with the data at an acceptable level (Kline, 2011). The RMSEA value, another measure of fit, is at the level of .08, indicating an acceptable fit of the model with the data set.



The other fit indices also indicated that the tested model generally fit well with the data. Figure 1 illustrates the CFA applied to the external employability sub-dimension.

Figure 1. External employment CFA model



For the reliability calculations of the external employability scale, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated and found to be 0.95. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the external employability scale demonstrates excellent reliability.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for Affective Commitment Scale

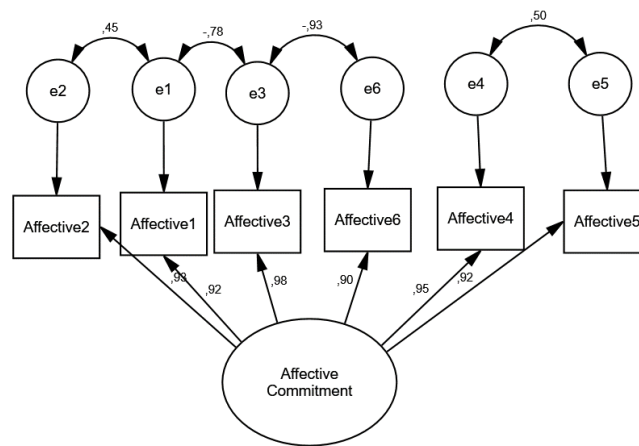
CFA was conducted for the Affective Commitment scale used in this study, and the resulting fit indices were both excellent and acceptable ($\chi^2 = 19.139$, $df = 5$, $p < 0.01$, $\chi^2/df = 3.828$, $RMSEA = 0.06$, $GFI = 0.99$, $IFI = 0.99$, $SRMR = 0.00$, $CFI = 0.99$). The fit values of the CFA model are provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Model fit indices of affective commitment scale

Fit Indices	Perfect Fit Criteria	Acceptable Fit Criteria	Fit Indices of the Model	Findings
χ^2/df	$0 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 2$	$2 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 5$	3,828	Acceptable Fit
RMSEA	$.00 \leq RMSEA \leq .05$	$.05 \leq RMSEA \leq .08$	.06	Acceptable Fit
CFI	$.95 \leq CFI \leq 1.00$	$.90 \leq CFI \leq .95$	.99	Perfect Fit
GFI	$.95 \leq GFI \leq 1.00$	$.90 \leq GFI \leq .95$	.99	Perfect Fit
IFI	$.95 \leq IFI \leq 1.00$	$.90 \leq IFI \leq .95$	.99	Perfect Fit
SRMR	$0 \leq SRMR \leq .05$	$.05 \leq IFI \leq 1$	.00	Perfect Fit

The tested theoretical model is well-aligned with the data set, and the model fit indices are at an acceptable level. Figure 2 illustrates the CFA applied to the Affective Commitment sub-dimension.

Figure 2. Affective commitment CFA model



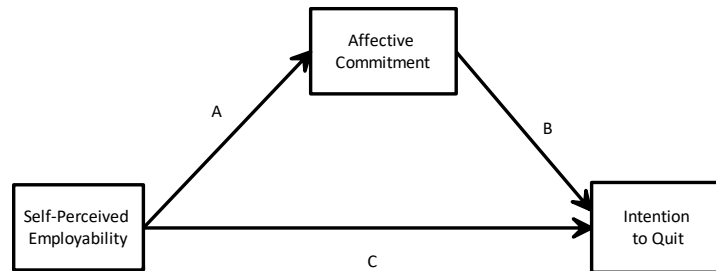
For the reliability calculations of the Affective Commitment Scale, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated and found to be 0.97. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the Affective Commitment scale demonstrates excellent reliability.

4.2 Intention to Quit scale

As the Intention to Quit scale consists of three items, the computation of fit indices could not be executed in the AMOS and LISREL programs, despite the factor loadings being very high in the CFA results. However, the alpha reliability coefficient for this scale was calculated to be 0.95, indicating excellent reliability.

4.3 Mediating variable analysis

Figure 3. The relationship between Self-perceived employability, affective commitment, and intention to quit variables



In line with the hypothetical model presented in Figure 3, the following research question was addressed, and the corresponding hypotheses were tested:

Research question: What is the nature and direction of the relationship between participants' self-perceived employability, affective commitment, and intention to quit?

1. Hypothesis 1 (H1): Self-perceived Employability positively predicts the Intention to Quit. PATH C
2. Hypothesis 2 (H2): Self-perceived Employability negatively predicts Affective commitment. PATH A
3. Hypothesis 3 (H3): Affective Commitment negatively predicts the Intention to Quit. PATH B
4. Hypothesis 4 (H4): Affective Commitment to the tested model has a partial mediation effect between the predictor (Self-me and correlation values for sub-dimensions are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients (N: 615)

Variable	\bar{X}	S	1	2	3
Self-perceived Employability	3,91	.55	1	,844**	-,806**
Intention to Quit	4,15	.90		1	-,779**
Affective Commitment	1,87	.85			1

** $p < .01$

As shown in Table 3, there was a strong positive significant relationship between self-perceived employability and intention to quit, a strong negative significant relationship between self-perceived employability and affective commitment, and a strong negative significant relationship between intention to quit and affective commitment.



4.4 Mediation analysis

To address the research question, this study examined the mediating role of affective commitment between the predictor variable (self-perceived employability) and the outcome variable (intention to quit). For a mediation analysis to be valid, three conditions outlined by MacKinnon et al. (2007) must be satisfied:

- The predictor variable must directly and significantly predict the outcome variable.
- The predictor variable must be a significant determinant (predictor) of the mediating variable, with a linear regression relationship between the predictor and mediating variables.
- The mediating variable must be a significant determinant (predictor) of the outcome variable.

A significant relationship must exist between the mediating variable and the outcome variable.

The mediating variable may fully or partially explain the relationship between the predictor and outcome variables. This relationship is termed full mediation when the mediating variable entirely accounts for the relationship, and partial mediation when it only explains part of the relationship. In full mediation, the inclusion of the mediating variable (affective commitment) typically results in a significantly weakened and statistically insignificant relationship between the independent variable (self-perceived employability) and the dependent variable (intention to quit). Conversely, in partial mediation, the mediating variable does not completely account for the relationship between the predictor and outcome variables. The link between the independent and dependent variables remains significant, but both the effect size and significance level are reduced (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Yılmaz & Dalbudak, 2018).

To evaluate the statistical significance of the indirect effect of self-perceived employability on turnover intention through affective commitment, hierarchical regression analysis and the bias-corrected bootstrapping method developed by Preacher and Hayes (2008) were used. The sample size was increased to 5000 to achieve a 95% confidence interval. For the mediation effect to be considered significant, the confidence interval—representing the lower and upper limits—must not include zero (Frazier et al., 2004; Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

A three-stage hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the mediating role of affective commitment in the relationship between self-perceived employability and intention to quit. In the first stage, the dependent variable (intention to quit) was regressed on the independent variable (self-perceived employability). In the second stage, the mediating variable (affective commitment) was regressed on the independent variable (self-perceived employability). Finally, in the third stage, the dependent variable (intention to quit) was regressed on both the independent and mediating variables. The results of the three-stage hierarchical regression analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Hierarchical regression analysis predicting intention to quit

Regression Equation	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B	β	t	r^2	Δr^2	ΔF
1	Intention to Quit	Self-perceived Employability	1,386	.844	38,897***	.712	.712	1512,966
2	Affective Commitment	Self-perceived Employability	1,2412	-.805	-33,6811***	.649	.649	1134,4194
3	Intention to Quit	Self-perceived Employability	1,0125	-.616	17,6995***	.739	.027	869,7945
		Affective Commitment	-,3005	-.281	-8,0919***			

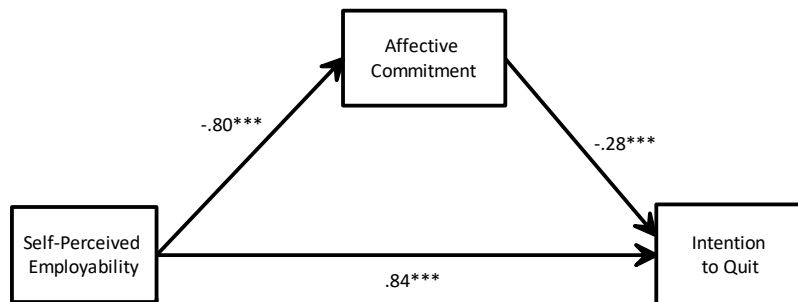
***= $p < .001$,

As shown in Table 4, the first stage of regression (Regression Equation 1) established a direct path from self-perceived employability to intention to quit (H1), fulfilling the first condition for mediation analysis set by Baron and Kenny (1986). In this stage, the independent variable (self-perceived employability) significantly and positively predicted the dependent variable (intention to quit) with a coefficient of $\beta = 0.84$, $t = 38.897$, $p < 0.001$. These results confirmed H1, indicating that self-perceived employability accounted for 71% of the variance in turnover intention. In the second stage (Regression Equation 2), self-perceived employability was found to significantly and negatively predict affective commitment, leading to the acceptance of H2 ($\beta = -0.80$, $t = 33.6811$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 80% of the variation in affective commitment. Additionally, affective commitment negatively predicted intention to quit, confirming H3 ($\beta = -0.28$, $t = -8.0919$, $p < 0.001$).

In the final stage (Regression Equation 3), although the inclusion of the mediating variable (affective commitment) in the model still showed a significant prediction of intention to quit by self-perceived employability, there was a notable reduction in the effect size of

self-perceived employability ($\beta = 0.61$, $t = 17.6995$, $p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that affective commitment partially mediated the relationship between self-perceived employability and intention to quit. The mediation analysis is illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Standardised beta coefficients for the mediating effect of affective commitment on the relationship between Self-perceived employability and intention to quit, N = 615, *= $p < .001$**



As shown in Figure 4, the indirect effect of self-perceived employability on intention to quit through affective commitment ($-0.80 \times -0.28 = 0.22$) accounted for 20% ($0.22 / 1.06 = 0.20$) of the total effect ($0.84 + 0.22 = 1.06$). With the inclusion of the mediating variable in the model, there was an increase of 0.02 in the explained variance of the dependent variable. Additionally, 74% of the variance in turnover intention (dependent variable) was explained by self-perceived employability (independent variable) and affective commitment. When the mediating variable (affective commitment) was excluded from the model, this rate dropped to 71%.

To test the significance of the mediating effect of affective commitment, Hayes (2018) recommended using the "bias-corrected bootstrapping" method with the "SPSS Process Macro" plugin. Direct and indirect effect coefficients, along with 95% confidence intervals, are provided in Table 5.

Table 5. Boot test results for the partial mediation model (N = 615)

	Model Path	SPC	SE	%95 Confidence Interval	
				Upper	Lower
Standardised Direct Effect	SPE→ITQ	.84***	.03	1,3156	1,4555
	OC →ITQ	-.28	.03	-.3734	-.2276
	SPE→OC	-.80	.03	-1,3136	-1,1688
Standardised Indirect Effect	SPE→OC→ITQ	-.22	.04	,1641	,2824

SPE =Self-perceived Employability, ITQ= Intention to Quit, OC= Affective Commitment, SPC= Standardized Path Coefficient, SE = Standard Error, ** $p < .01$,

Based on the results from Table 5, it was found that all direct path coefficients were statistically significant. The indirect path coefficient was also significant after performing 5000 bootstraps, with no zeros between the confidence intervals (bootstrap coefficient = -0.22, 95% Confidence Interval = 0.1641, 0.2824). These findings confirm hypothesis H4, which proposed that affective commitment mediates the relationship between self-perceived employability and intention to quit.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to explore the mediating role of affective commitment in the relationship between employees' perceptions of their employability and their intention to quit in the hospitality sector. The analysis confirmed all the hypotheses and revealed significant relationships between perceived employability, affective commitment, and turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 1 (H1) proposed that perceived employability positively predicts the intention to quit. This hypothesis was confirmed, as the results showed that employees with higher perceived employability were more likely to have an intention to leave their jobs. These findings are in line with previous studies (De Cuyper et al., 2011; Açıkgöz et al., 2016; Virga et al., 2017), which suggest that employees who perceive themselves as employable are more inclined to seek other job opportunities. This could be attributed to the perceived ease with which employees can transition to other positions, which often reinforces their turnover intention (Baruch, 2001; De Cuyper et al., 2012).

Hypothesis 2 (H2), which examined the negative relationship between perceived employability and affective commitment, was also supported. The study found that employees who perceived themselves as highly employable had lower emotional attachment to their organisation. This result is consistent with previous studies (Philippaers et al., 2019; Philippaers et al., 2016; Açıkgöz et al.,



2016), which highlight the challenge of fostering emotional bonds with employees who see themselves as easily employable in the job market.

Hypothesis 3 (H3), proposing that affective commitment negatively predicts turnover intention, was confirmed. Employees with a higher emotional attachment to their organisation were less likely to intend to leave. These findings align with Lee & Bruvold (2003), who found that emotional commitment serves as a protective factor against turnover intentions. This relationship underscores the importance of creating a work environment where employees feel emotionally connected and valued, thus reducing the likelihood of them seeking employment elsewhere.

Hypothesis 4 (H4), suggesting that affective commitment mediates the relationship between perceived employability and intention to quit, was also supported. The mediation analysis showed that when affective commitment was included in the model, the effect of perceived employability on turnover intention decreased, indicating partial mediation. This result is consistent with earlier studies (Açıkgöz et al., 2016; Philippaers et al., 2016), which suggest that while perceived employability influences turnover intention, affective commitment plays a critical role in buffering this effect. Employees with high perceived employability, when coupled with low emotional commitment, are more likely to increase their turnover intentions. However, fostering a stronger emotional attachment can mitigate this tendency.

The findings also highlight the role of the gig workforce, which has increased notably during the COVID-19 pandemic. This workforce tends to perceive high employability but is less likely to remain long-term in organisations, as they often seek more flexible employment opportunities. While the gig economy offers advantages such as cost reduction for employers and income flexibility for employees, it also presents challenges, including job insecurity and limited benefits.

6. Conclusions

This study examined the mediating role of affective commitment in the relationship between employees' perceptions of their employability and their intention to quit in the tourism sector, particularly within the hospitality industry. The study found that affective commitment significantly mediates this relationship, emphasizing the importance of emotional attachment in shaping employees' intentions to leave.

The results indicate that employees with higher perceived employability are more likely to consider leaving their jobs. However, the emotional bond they develop with their organisation can reduce this tendency. This finding underscores the importance of fostering affective commitment to mitigate turnover intentions, particularly in high-turnover industries such as hospitality. By understanding how emotional and cognitive factors, such as perceived employability and affective commitment, interact, this study offers practical insights for HR strategies aimed at improving retention and reducing turnover in the tourism and hospitality sector.

6.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of turnover intention by demonstrating how affective commitment mediates the relationship between perceived employability and turnover intentions. It provides empirical evidence supporting the dual role of perceived employability as both a predictor of turnover intention and a factor influencing emotional attachment to the organisation. This study extends the theoretical framework of organisational commitment by highlighting the importance of emotional commitment in retaining employees, particularly in industries characterised by high employee mobility.

Additionally, the findings contribute to the employability literature by showcasing how the perceptions of employability influence employees' organisational commitment. This study's results extend existing theories by identifying affective commitment as a key factor in mitigating the negative impact of high perceived employability on turnover intentions.

6.2 Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer several practical implications for managers and HR practitioners, particularly in the hospitality industry. Given the high employee turnover rates in the tourism and hospitality sector, organisations need to develop HR strategies that foster emotional commitment among employees. As perceived employability is linked to increased turnover intention, organisations must focus on cultivating a positive and emotionally supportive work environment to offset the potential negative effects of high employability.

To retain skilled employees, hotel managers should prioritise initiatives that enhance employees' emotional connection to their work and the organisation. These include practices such as regular communication, recognition, and support for employees' career development, which can increase their sense of being valued and reduce their likelihood of leaving. Moreover, transparent communication regarding job expectations, career opportunities, and organisational goals helps create an environment where employees feel aligned with the organisation's mission and goals, fostering stronger emotional attachment.



Additionally, hotel managers should implement retention strategies that address the work-life balance and job satisfaction of employees. This may include providing opportunities for flexible work arrangements, career progression, and training programs that help employees feel that their employability is nurtured. When employees perceive that the organisation is invested in their growth, they are more likely to develop affective commitment, thus reducing their intention to quit.

6.3 Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights into the mediating role of affective commitment in the relationship between perceived employability and intention to quit, there are several limitations that should be considered.

One limitation of this study is that the data were collected through an online survey, and responses were based on self-reported measures. Self-reports may introduce biases, such as social desirability bias or memory recall errors. Future research could consider using multiple methods, such as interviews or observational data, to validate the findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships studied.

Another limitation is the focus on external employability, which might not capture the full range of employability perceptions. Future studies could examine both internal and external employability dimensions to gain a more nuanced understanding of how employees' perceptions of their job opportunities within the organisation and in the external job market influence their intention to quit.

The research was also limited to 4- and 5-star hotels in specific regions in Turkey, which may not fully represent the broader hospitality industry or other sectors. Future studies should consider expanding the sample to include employees from different types of hotels, such as budget or boutique hotels, and in other geographical regions. A cross-sector comparison, including other industries with similar labour dynamics, could also provide more generalisable insights into the role of affective commitment and perceived employability in reducing turnover intention.

Additionally, as the gig economy continues to grow, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, future research could explore the dynamics of the gig workforce within the hospitality industry. It would be valuable to understand how perceived employability and affective commitment influence the turnover intentions of gig workers and how organisations can better retain these workers.

Finally, longitudinal studies are needed to track changes in employees' perceptions over time and to investigate the causal relationships between perceived employability, affective commitment, and turnover intentions. Long-term studies would provide a more dynamic view of how these variables evolve and interact, offering deeper insights into how HR practices can influence employee retention over extended periods

Credit author statement

All authors have contributed equally. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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