



**What makes employees retain? Employee career planning vs
employer career development in star-grade hotels in Colombo, Sri
Lanka**

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Abstract

Developing and retaining a competent and professional workforce is of utmost importance in service-oriented firms, and it is even more crucial in the hotel industry as the entire industry relies on treating and caring for guests for their maximum comfort. Perfect career management practices can significantly aid employee retention. This study examined the career management prospects of front-line hotel workers from two different viewpoints; employee career planning and employer career management. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire from a randomly selected sample size of 150 from star grade hotels in Colombo. Hierarchical PLS-SEM analysis revealed that employer career management initiatives are more important than employee career planning behaviours in hotel employee retention. Employee willingness to participate in development activities and manager support were the main factors in employee retention. The two hierarchical constructs of employee career planning and employer career management were also developed based on six conceptions commonly cited in the literature as one of the major contributions of this research to the theories.

Keywords: Career management, career planning, employee retention, hotels, Sri Lanka.

1. Introduction

The hotel sector is a well-off industry and one of the best industries contributing to the economy's Gross Domestic Products (GDP) in many tourism-oriented countries. It is generally recognized that the development of hotels is responsible for significant peripheral infrastructure development. The hotel sector in Sri Lanka is also a crucial driver of the island nation's economic prosperity. Moreover, the hospitality industry is a service-oriented sector with high labour involvement. Therefore, the hotel employees are expected to be well trained, professional, and have good attitudes towards their jobs. Furthermore, the challenge the management always faces is how to retain this valuable employee within the organization.

The financial benefits in good level alone never bring the working serenity. The employee will leave the company as he gets an opportunity if he cannot predict his career within the current company. Hence the firm should find the ways and means to retain the employees within the organization. Alongside work challenges, professional development can help individuals build up their extensive experience and take on leading roles, positively influencing employee retention (Chew & Chan, 2008). Although the individual is responsible for building their careers, the management also has a similar responsibility of developing their employees. Given that, it has been highly recognized that a proper career management practice can help employee retention.

Career management is considered one of the primary and essential functions in human resource management, and many organizations today consider the career planning and development of employees as crucial (Baruch, 2004). According to Applebaum and Shapiro (2003), career management is the process of designing and implementing goals, plans and strategies that enable human resource professionals and managers to satisfy workforce needs and allow individuals to achieve their career objectives. This conception compels the organization's ownership and management to develop a career development path to achieve organizational goals.

Given that, many of the organizations today have introduced career development systems for their workers. The tourism and hospitality industry sector should also consider career management programs as it finds that human resources are more crucial than the other industries. The possession of the necessary personal qualities is focused on successful career management, so career competency has become increasingly crucial from employees' standpoint (Kong, Cheung, & Song, 2012). A cooperative relationship between hotel managers and hotel employees is required to improve employees' professional competency. According to Kong et al. (2012), the career competencies of employees have become a crucial factor in a successful career management practice in the hotel sector, and hotels can provide career management activities like training, mentoring performance appraisal, and development programs.

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However, the hospitality sector faces many challenges and issues concerning human resources. According to Safavi and Karatepe (2018), recruiting and maintaining good workers is a challenge as many employees are unprepared to make career-related adjustments and obligations. Even though employee retention in hotels is crucial as it assures a professional and competent workforce and renders a standard service to its customers, the hotel industry finds it difficult to maintain a lower employee turnover figure (Hefny, 2021; Walsh & Taylor, 2007).

In the workplace, it appears that poor career management is a widespread concern. Professional career management is critical for the industry to keep employees happier, stress-free, satisfied, and strong in their personal and professional lives, which will assist the company in achieving its objectives (Meliou & Maroudas, 2011). This observation will be enough to highlight the importance of career management in ensuring that employees are engaged and competent with their jobs. Thus, understanding the influence of career management on employee retention is critical.

Career planning and career development are two major concepts in career management, whereas career planning is individual-driven and career development is organizational-driven (Crawshaw & Game, 2015; Meliou & Maroudas, 2011). This research aims to study the influence of career planning and career management on employee retention by evaluating the dimension of each construct with their influence on employee turnover intention in the hotel sector. Moreover, the dimensionality of career planning and career development was also studied and tested using a hierarchical component model.

2. Literature review and hypotheses development

2.1 Employee retention

The major issue involved with employee turnover is that employees who leave the organization carry their talents, knowledge, and competencies to another organization: maybe a competitor (Singh & Dixit, 2011). Low employee retention is not a new challenge for organizations since scholars and psychologists identified it in the early 1900s. Retention is defined as an effort that employers make to develop and implement effective policies to retain a talented workforce worth to the organization (Nagarathanam, 2018). Another definition explains employee retention as a process through which employees are encouraged to stay in the organization for a longer time (Bibi, Ahmad, & Majid, 2019). They further state that employee retention can be either high or low where the level of interest of the employee gets affected by different reasons. Various strategies and practices that urge employees to adhere to an organization for a long time can be referred to as employee retention (Singh & Dixit, 2011). Proper career management practice can improve employee retention in an organization (Hlanganipai & Mazanai, 2014). The tourism and hospitality sector also has this issue much more than in any other industry (Kong et al., 2012).

Yang, Wan, and Fu (2012) found that the hotel sector generally experiences a high rate of employee turnover, and the expectation gap can be one of the reasons behind it. Further, they propose that the employee career enhancement initiatives would help in improving the retention ratio. Moreover, career adaptability and employee-job compatibility also enhance employee retention in the hospitality sector (Rasheed, Okumus, Weng, Hameed, & Nawaz, 2020). Providing career enhancement within the organization also has to lead the employees to retain in the hospitality organizations (Santhanam, Kamalanabhan, Dyaram, & Ziegler, 2015). Given these research conclusions, it is important to note that employee career-related initiatives can increase employee retention within hospitality sector organizations.

2.2 Defining career and career management

The conceptualization of careers defines as a sequence of related experiences and activities which a person passes during a lifetime (Pazy, 1988). A career is more than just executing a job or a load of work; and it is a process, an attitude, a behaviour, and a scenario in a person's work-life that focuses on achieving established career goals (Adekola, 2011). The individual and organizational factors influence one's career dynamics to a large extent. Moreover, it is argued that individuals are responsible for attending to and building their careers rather than leaving it exclusively to the firm's management (Baruch, 2004). However, it is worth understanding that the career planning of employees and the career development practices of organizations are vital factors in employee career management that will help employee retention.

Literature provides ambiguous conceptions in the field of career planning and development. The terms career planning, career management, and career development are used interchangeably. However, this research study takes career management into two aspects; career planning done by the employees and career management done by the employer or the organization. Therefore, career planning is identified as the initiatives and actions taken by the employee and career management is identified as the initiative an organization take to improve employees' careers to help the career path of the employees. The subsequent sections review the related literature concerning employee career planning and organization career development initiatives with their theoretical dimensions to develop the hypotheses for the study.

2.3 Career planning and employee retention

Job satisfaction is more connected with the inner feeling of happiness of the employee (Yahya, 2018). Satisfied employees regarding their careers remain within the organization and are less likely to leave the job. Career exploration has embedded to career planning activities (Noe, 1996). Chang (2002) has stated that career planning is a composite concept consisting of career strategy, professional enhancement, and career satisfaction. Career planning is closely related to employee retention. The retention rate can be maximized by ensuring career satisfaction via career planning (Barnett & Bradley,

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2007). This point is also validated by finding that high career satisfaction leads to a persistent career path that guarantees employee retention, whereas lowly satisfied employees formulate new career plans (King, 2004). At the same time, it is argued that when career strategies are taken, such as obtaining a degree, the individual may tend to move up in the current organization, change the organization or even change the occupation to achieve their career goals. With that, it is said that the career planning behaviour of employees can determine retention (Seibert, Kraimer, Holtom, & Pierotti, 2012; Nunn, 2000).

With the conception that career planning can determine employee retention intention, the next section will evaluate the dimensions of career planning. Three dimensions are identified to describe career planning; career exploration, career goal characteristics, and career strategies. The relevant hypotheses for each dimension will also be given under each subsection.

2.3.1 Career exploration

Career exploration is an essential concept in career management and growth considered by the person (Stumpf, Colarelli, & Hartman, 1982). Behaviours that yield new information about qualities, such as employment, occupations, or organizations, are classified as career exploration. Career exploration is vital in deciding on a career path because it impacts job security and employee retention (Esters, 2008). Individuals often seek information on their own vocational/ occupational interests and their knowledge, skills, and talents in the relevant field, according to Storme and Celik (2018). Individuals are also said to engage in two types of explorations: environmental exploration and self-exploration. Environmental exploration seeks information on the vocational aspects (salaries, duties, and other requirements), while self-exploration seeks information on self-interest, values, and personality (Xu & Tracey, 2014). Career exploration has been viewed as a prerequisite to making a career decision. It has been discovered that the higher the level of career exploration behaviours, the less difficult it is to make a professional selection (Xu, Hou, & Tracey, 2014; Gallo, 2017; Lau, Chung & Wang, 2021). In addition, career exploration has been studied as a factor in determining career certainty (Esters, 2008).

H₁: Hotel employees' career exploration determines employee retention

2.3.2 Career goal characteristics

Locke and Latham (1991) stated that the goal-setting theory is a cognitive theory of motivation that embraces the human behaviour that follows the goals self-determined. According to the goal-setting theory, people's behaviour is influenced by goals to set the direction, mobilize the effort and maintain the persistence of effort over a long period to achieve the goal (Noe, 1996; Chong & Leung, 2003). A career goal can be defined as a career-related outcome, including promotion, salary increment, or a skill acquisition that

a particular employee is willing to accomplish (Noe, 1996; Seibert et al., 2012). A career goal targets a specific job or symbolizes the attainment of particular work completion. Typical individuals formulate their career goals focusing on attributes like hierarchical positions, power of influence, income, job security, skills development, meaningfulness towards the society and willingness to experience challenges or risks (Seibert et al., 2012). These attributes can be divided into two categories: (1) Intrinsic career goals include the extent to which the career goals consist of internally motivating attributes, including meaningfulness towards society and willingness to experience challenges or risks. (2) Extrinsic career goals include the extent to which career goals consist of externally motivating attributes, including hierarchical positions, power of influence, income, job security, and skills development (Seibert et al., 2012).

H₂: Hotel employees' career goals determine employee retention.

2.3.3 Career strategies

The directions of career strategies are two-fold in the literature. On one side, career strategies are described as initiatives taken by the employees (Kim & Lee, 2021), and some other literature explains that career strategies as organizational initiatives (Fee, Tan & Yahya, 2011). This research posits that career strategies are initiatives taken by the employee to enhance their career path.

A career strategy can be defined as an activity or behavior that strengthens goal attainment (Noe, 1996). Career strategies refer to individuals' actions to decrease the time for career goal achievement (Gould & Penley, 1984). Career strategies include interpersonal career strategies: mentoring a relationship, making connections inside the organization, networking, self-nomination, and intrapersonal career strategies: expertise development (Noe, 1996). Career strategies are taken when individuals attempt to reach career satisfaction. Moreover, career strategies include competence in the present job, extended work environment, skills development, training, opportunity development, favourable organizational politics, and supportive relationships with mentors, sponsors, and peers (Barnett & Bradley, 2007; Shaito, 2019). Career strategies encourage individual development behaviour (Kim & Lee, 2021). It has been found that career strategy helps gain professional advancement, thereby career satisfaction (Chang, 2002).

H₃: Hotel employees' career strategies determine employee retention.

2.4 Career development and employee retention

In this study, career development is defined as the initiatives taken by the organization to help people advance their careers. According to research, employees who receive more manager support are less likely to leave (Bibi et al., 2018). Career advancement directly influences employee retention, as assessed by career goals, progress, professional development, promotion speed, and salary rise (Putri & Handoyo, 2020). According to

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Presbitero, Roxas, and Chadee (2016), employee turnover is linked to career growth possibilities. According to the theory of social exchange, employees who feel valued through promotions and appreciations repay the organization with their maximum contribution and commitment, and as a result, employees are less inclined to leave their jobs (Suhaimi & Panatik, 2016). According to research, employee engagement rises when career advancement is favourable, and turnover intentions are hindered (Putri & Handoyo, 2020). Managerial assistance has substantial implications on pursuing career success and employee retention, according to a study undertaken to evaluate the impact of managerial support on professional turnover in India in terms of intrinsic reward, personal dedication, perceived career success, and retention. Furthermore, it has been stated that employee career success is predicted by supervisor assistance (Quigley & Tymon 2006).

Three dimensions of career development are identified; willingness to participate in development activities, management support for development, and development behaviour. The subsequent sections will explain the dimensions separately and posit the relevant hypotheses.

2.4.1 Development behaviour

Development is a lifelong process involving incremental improvements; thereby, the person creates new avenues to see, choose, view, interpret, and react (Antonacopoulou, 2000). Development behaviours are called career-enhancing strategies (Nabi, 2003). Employee development refers to the overall growth of the employee where they show skill growth, independent learning and developmental attitudes (Hameed & Abdul, 2011). Development behaviours can be referred to as a set of behaviours to enhance performance, career success or career satisfaction initiated by the organization (Rasdi, Garavan, & Ismail, 2011). The study conducted by Guthrie, Charles and Catherine (2006) found that the more extroverted individuals' involvement in career-enhancing behaviours is greater than introverted people. They are more ambitious and work for promotions and title changes in the career, emphasizing development behaviour. It is emphasized that development involves self-development behaviours called self-directed or self-directed learning. As per the study of Noe (1996), development behaviours refer to the extent to which an employee asks for new projects. Special assignments, committee work to improve or acquire new knowledge, skills and abilities.

H4: Hotel of employees' development behaviour determine employee retention.

2.4.2 Manager's support for development

Manager's support is how employees feel that they are given the needed support by leading them effectively to perform job duties and responsibilities (Quigley & Tymon 2006). Manager's support can also be known as organization support. Organizational support for employee career development is called "organizational career management" or "organizational sponsorship". It refers to the assistance provided by organizations to

enhance the career success of employees in the organization (Barnett & Bradley, 2007). Noe (1996) stated that employees are likely motivated when their manager discusses career issues and ways to identify resources that assist the employee in reaching their career goals. He further termed the manager as an adviser, appraiser and referral agent of the employee. Organizational support for career development comprises formal strategies, namely programs, training, assessment centres, and informal strategies, including coaching, mentoring, networking, and employee relations (Shaito, 2019; Sturges, Guest, Conway, & Davey 2002).

H₅: Manager's support determines employee retention.

2.4.3 Willingness to participate in development activities

The term willingness is related to readiness, preparedness, the norm of self-interest, desire, motivation, personal valence, self-efficacy, belief, self-determination, and self-development (Noe, 1996; Antonacopoulou, 2000; Raza, Binti, & Fareed, 2020; Eisele, Grohnert, Beausaert, & Segers, 2013; Faris & Kadiyono, 2019). Readiness can be defined as a cognitive precursor or a cognitive antecedent to supportive or resistant behaviours (Shah & Shah, 2010). It generates with the belief and desire toward the development objective. As per Bandura's (1986,1997) social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is the extent to which an individual is intrinsically motivated to perform if they feel a sense of confidence in the task (Shah & Shah, 2010). It highlights a. Intrinsic motivation enables employees to be self-managing and self-leading to acquire new knowledge, skills and abilities play a major role to participate in development activities (Seibert et al., 2012). Self-development is a self-initiated process in which self-control and self-directed decision-making dominate (Antonacopoulou, 2000). To control the self and direct toward career development, inner urge or the desire becomes vital (Shah & Shah, 2010). Hence, emerging concepts such as career self-management, psychological success, and protean career are mostly related to intrinsic motivation. Self-interest and Self-directedness uplift the protean individuals. Strong self-efficacy, outcome expectation, perceived value of career outcome, goal orientation and career actions to accomplish career goals are viewed as individual-related factors which emphasize the willingness or the preparedness for career development (Chin & Rasdi, 2014).

H₆: Employee willingness to participate determines employee retention.

2.5 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework is developed based on the literature review. According to the literature review, career planning and career development were identified as the primary independent constructs of the study. The dimensions of career planning concentrate on employees' intrinsic orientation regarding their careers, whereas career development focuses on how the employee perceives the organizational support and atmosphere in

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their career development. Figure 01 show the concept relationships and the hypothetical relations between the concepts.

According to Figure 1, the two variables identified have three dimensions each. However, it is worth evaluating whether the dimensions can adequately build up their primary variable: the higher-order variable of the respective lower-order variables. Therefore, this study assesses career planning and development dimensionality using the hierarchical variable analysis. In particular, the viability of the dimensions as the measurements of the respective higher-order constructs will be evaluated by testing the following two hypotheses.

H_{7a}: Career planning is a higher-order construct that can be significantly formulated by career exploration, career goals, and career strategies.

H_{7b}: Career development is a higher-order construct that can be significantly formulated by development behavior, manager support, willingness to participate.

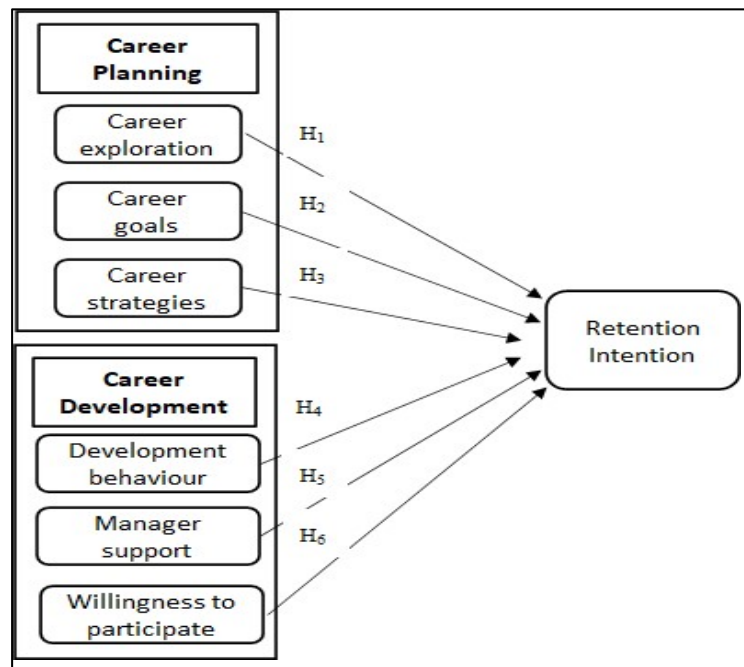


Figure 1 Theoretical framework

Source: Authors compiled.

3. Methodology

3.1 Population, sample, and data collection

Colombo is Sri Lanka's central commercial and administrative city, and 8289 hotel rooms operate in different capacities in the region (Tourism Industry Report, 2019). The city is a famous destination among leisure and business travelers, and a range of accommodation establishments are operating in the region, including about fifteen 3-5 star-grade hotels. The research population includes the operational level staff of four operational departments (front office, housekeeping, kitchen, and food & beverages) of all the 3-5 star-grade hotels in the Colombo district. The operational level employees generally include receptionists, bell boys, concierges, drivers, room boys, cooks, stewards, captains, bartenders, and waiters. Data collection was carried out at the hotel premises with the prior permission of the human resource manager/head of the human resources division of the hotel. One hundred sixty-five structured questionnaires were distributed among the respondents at the staff cafeteria and restrooms with verbal consent to participate in the survey. The respondent was selected randomly and systematically, as one employee in every three who came to the staff cafeteria and restroom was chosen. Respondents had the complete freedom to go through the questionnaire and fill it without disturbances. Finally, the completed questionnaires were collected, and 150 filled questionnaires were used in the analysis.

3.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of two main parts; part A and part B. Part A gathered personal and job-related demographic information using categorical variables such as gender, age, marital status, educational qualifications, work experience, and working department, whereas part B gathered construct-specific data. Multi-item reflective indicators were used to operationalize the independent and dependent constructs on a five-point Likert scale (1= "strongly disagree" and 5= "strongly agree"). Eleven questionnaire items were used to measure career planning (four items each for career goals and career strategies, and three items for career exploration) espoused from previous research (Gould & Penley, 1984; Hirschi, Nagy, Baumeler, Johnston, & Spurk, 2018; Noe, 1996). Initially, the career goals had five items, and one was removed due to low factor loadings. Career development was measured using twelve items (four items each for willingness to participate, manager support, and development behaviour) also adopted from previous

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research (Gould & Penley, 1984; Hirschi et al., 2018; Noe, 1996). Finally, four questionnaire items were used to measure retention intention based on Iqbal and Hashmi (2015) (Table 1). The questionnaire was initially developed in English and was translated into Sinhalese, the primary language in Sri Lanka, to avoid language barriers in data collection. However, the respondents were allowed to select the most preferred language from Sinhalese and English.

Procedural design and post-hoc analysis were used to evaluate the questionnaire's common methods bias (CMB) (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012). In procedural design, the questionnaire was assessed by university academics experts in human resources management and the human resource professionals identified from the hospitality sector. Required adjustments were made accordingly. The questionnaire was not included any personal identification questions to maintain the anonymity of the respondents. Moreover, as previously mentioned, all the questionnaire items were developed adopting from previous well-tested instruments, the questionnaire was translated into the native language, and the length of the questionnaire was also limited to twenty-seven items for research constructs to avoid possible common methods bias (MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012). Variance inflation factors (VIF) were used as a post-hoc test to test for common method bias. Out of 27 questionnaire items, the VIF values of 21 items were found below 3.3, and the rest of the six items were within the threshold of 5, indicating no potential collinearity issues of the measurements (Kock & Lynn, 2012).

Table 1
Measurements with mean values and SD values

	Construct	Item's Label	Questionnaire Item	Mean	Std. dev.	
Career Planning	Career Exploration (CE)	CE1	I have reflected on how my past experiences can be integrated into my future career	4.18	0.56	
		CE2	I have tried new work roles to see if I liked them	3.88	0.62	
		CE3	I am sure about the type of job that suits me	4.16	0.54	
	Career Goals (CG)	CG1	I am sure about my career goals	4.13	0.61	
		CG3	I have met my career goals	3.90	0.72	
		CG4	I have tried to develop skills that may be needed to attain my career goal	4.27	0.55	
		CG5	I am satisfied with my Job benefits	3.73	0.75	
	Career Strategies (CS)	CS1	I have built a network of friendships in the division, which could help further my career progression	4.20	0.72	
		CS2	I have built a network of contacts within the division to obtain information about events, changes, or activities	4.11	0.81	
		CS3	I have taken leadership in work areas where there appeared to be no leadership	3.97	0.88	
Career Development	Development Behavior (DB)	CS4	I get career guidance from supervisors and other experienced people in the organization	4.13	0.79	
		DB1	I have exciting work and challenges	4.06	0.65	
		DB2	In my organization, there are opportunities for career growth, learning, and development	3.80	0.67	
		DB3	In my organization, there is a chance to work with great people and relationships	4.02	0.62	
	Manager Support for Development (MS)	DB4	I am knowledgeable about my works and duties, and it is making me a different and contributive	4.10	0.73	
		MS1	I have satisfied with supportive management/ great boss	4.02	0.59	
		MS2	My boss gives me feedback about my performance	3.98	0.54	
		MS3	My supervisor appreciates the extra effort from me	4.02	0.76	
		MS4	My supervisor cares about my wellbeing	3.78	0.70	
		Willingness to Participate in Development (WP)	WP1	I am interested in attending meetings and seminars on new work methods	3.80	0.60
			WP2	I am keen on projects, committee work, or special assignments to improve or acquire new skills	3.84	0.64
			WP3	I co-operate with the arrangements of development activities	3.92	0.53
	WP4		I will be participating in the training programs, seminars	3.90	0.64	
	Retention Intention (R)	R1	My organization recognizes, values, and respects employees	4.28	0.63	
R2		I am proud of the organization, mission & service	4.08	0.66		
R3		I am searching for new career opportunities (Re-coded)	3.66	0.98		
R4		I will leave this organization if I get a better job (Re-coded)	3.54	0.92		

Scale: 1= strongly disagree; 2= disagree; 3= neutral; 4= agree; 5= strongly agree

Source: Authors compiled based on survey data.

3.3 Data analysis

Partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) is a variance-based statistical modelling technique alternative to co-variance-based structural equation modelling (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017). PLS-SEM is unique and tolerant in required sample size and data distribution (Hair et al., 2017; Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011; Richter, Sinkovics, Ringle, & Schlaegel 2016). The normality of the data set was assessed by calculating skewness and kurtosis statistics, with a majority of the items irreverent for a normal distribution, hence justifying the application of PLS-SEM in analyzing the data. Smart PLS version 3.3.3 was used to analyze data.

The sample size was validated through two different approaches. First, the rule of "10 times the largest number of structural paths directed at a particular latent construct in the structural model" (Hair et al., 2011, p. 144) was adopted. The retention intention variable has six arrows pointing to it, suggesting that the sample size of 60 (6×10) would be sufficient to run the model. Second, the sample size recommendation table for PLS-SEM was applied (Hair et al., 2017, p. 26). According to the table, as the current study is having six paths leading to retention intention, 130 sample size is required, which is smaller than the sample size of this study (150), under the conditions of statistical power 80%, a significance level of 5%, and minimum R2 value of 0.10.

4. Findings

4.1 Sample characteristics

Table 2 shows the sample demographics. The sample comprised more males (66%) than females (44%). The majority of the respondents are front-office workers (33.3%), followed by housekeeping (26.7%) and food & beverage (24%), respectively. In terms of their marital status, the majority is from the married group (56.7%) while many of the participants were from the age group 26-35 (43.3%), followed by age groups 18-25 (26.7%) and 46-55 (18%) respectively. Concerning the work experience of the respondents, the majority was reported from the group 1-4 (33.3%) years of experience whereas the group of 5-9 (30%) years of experience was the second-highest. The majority of the respondents have passed GCE (O/L) and GCE (A/L) (78.7%).

Table 2
Demographics

Demographics	Number	Percentage	Demographics	Number	Percentage
Gender			Marital Status		
Male	99	66.0	Married	85	56.7
Female	51	34.0	Single	65	43.3
Department			Age (Years)		
Front Office	50	33.3	18-25	40	26.7
Housekeeping	40	26.7	26-35	65	43.3
Food & Beverage	36	24.0	36-45	18	12.0
Kitchen	24	16.0	46-55	27	18.0
Work Experience (Years)			Edu. Qual.		
1-4	50	33.3	GCE (O/L)	54	36.0%
5-9	45	30.0	GCE (A/L)	64	42.7%
10-15	27	18.0	Diploma	21	14.0%
More than 15	28	18.7	Other	11	7.3%

Source: Survey data

4.2 Measurement model evaluation

Four criteria are suggested to assess the reflective measurement models; internal consistency, indicator reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017). Both Cronbach's alpha values and composite reliability values are found greater than the threshold of 0.7 (Table 2), thereby confirm the internal consistency (Hair et al., 2017). The outer loadings of all the measurement items were assessed for the threshold of 0.7 and found consistent except for two indicators, confirming the indicator reliability. The two indicators were also used in the model as the loadings are greater than 0.4 (0.675 and 0.543) and showed no significant increases in composite reliability and AVE after deletion (Hair et al., 2017). The convergent validity is also assured as all the AVE values are greater than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 3
Measurement model and structural model evaluation parameters

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	VIF
Career Exploration	0.833	0.899	0.748	2.851
Career Goals	0.749	0.839	0.567	2.937
Career Strategies	0.804	0.876	0.647	1.981
Development Behavior	0.854	0.901	0.696	3.070
Manager Support	0.874	0.904	0.727	2.549
Willingness To Participate	0.884	0.900	0.743	2.335
Retention Intention	0.897	0.908	0.763	-

Source: Survey data.

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The Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) and item cross-loadings were used to check the discriminant validity. The Smartpls analysis output of HTMT suggested that all the variable relationship has HTMT ratio of less than 0.8, and the HTMT confidence intervals generated through the bootstrapping procedure did not include 0, confirming the discriminant validity of the constructs (Hair et al., 2017). The cross-loadings of the measurement items into the research constructs were also evaluated and found that the outer loadings on each construct are higher than all its cross-loading on the remaining constructs, confirming discriminant validity of the constructs.

4.3 Structural model evaluation

The structural model was assessed for the explanatory power and predictive relevance of the proposed model (Figure 2).

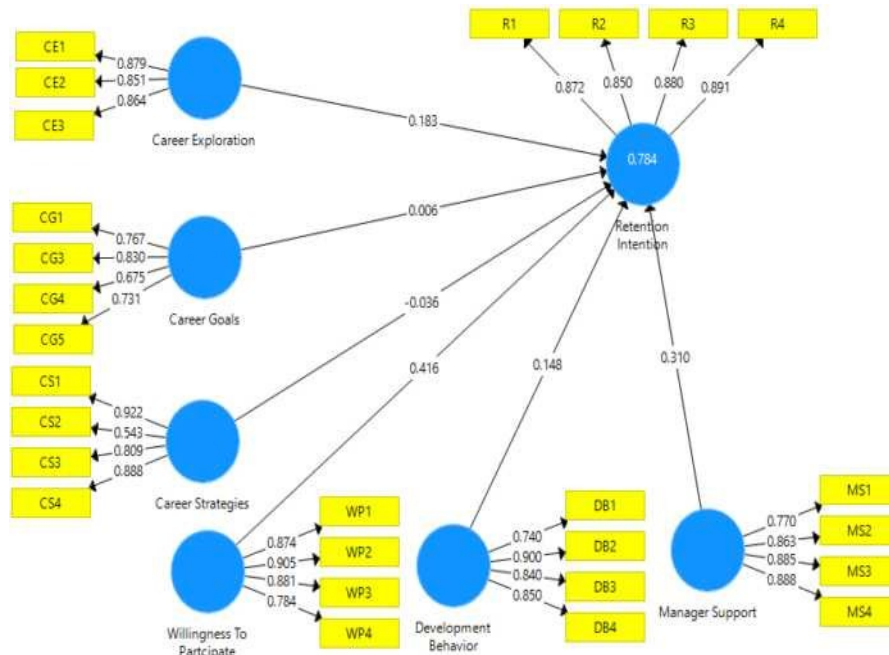


Figure 2 Stage one Structural Model

Source: Survey data.

First, the set of predictors in the structural model was assessed for collinearity using predictor constructs' tolerance (VIF) and found all the VIF values satisfy the threshold of less than 5 (Table 3), confirming no collinearity issues. Second, bootstrapping with 5000 samples was used to assess the significance of path coefficients and found four relationships satisfy the threshold of greater than 1.96 of the T values (Table 4). Third, the R2 value of the endogenous variable of retention intention was examined (R2=0.784) and found substantial (>0.75) (Hair et al., 2017). Fourth, the f2 effect sizes were calculated (Table 4) to separately assess the exogenous constructs' contribution to the

endogenous variable's R2 and found that two variables have small effects (>0.02) and two variables have medium effects (>0.15) on the endogenous variable. However, the effect of the construct willingness to participate is very close to the threshold of the large effect (0.35).

Fifth, the Q2 effect size for predictive relevance was calculated using the blindfolding method and found that exogenous constructs have the Q2 value of 0.583, which is above the threshold of 0, confirming the predictive relevance of all exogenous variables on the endogenous variable.

Table 4
Path evaluation parameters

Variable Relationships	Path Coefficient	T Statistics	P values	f ² Effect Size	q ² Effect Size	Hypotheses
Career Exploration -> Retention Intention	0.183	2.061	0.039	0.051	0.014	H ₁ :Partially supported
Career Goals -> Retention Intention	0.006	0.073	0.942	0.000	-0.007	H ₂ : Not supported
Career Strategies -> Retention Intention	-0.036	0.978	0.328	0.004	-0.002	H ₃ : Not supported
Development Behavior -> Retention Intention	0.148	2.307	0.021	0.028	0.005	H ₄ :Partially supported
Manager Support -> Retention Intention	0.31	5.407	0.000	0.171	0.065	H ₅ : Supported
Willingness To Participate -> Retention Intention	0.416	8.115	0.000	0.338	0.137	H ₆ : Supported

Source: Survey data.

Finally, the q² effect sizes were calculated (Table 4) to separately assess the exogenous constructs' predictive relevance for the endogenous variable and found that two variables have small predictive relevance (>0.02) for the endogenous variable.

4.4 Modeling the higher-order constructs

A reflective-reflective higher-order construct model was developed for the second-order variables career planning and career development, adopting a two-stage approach.

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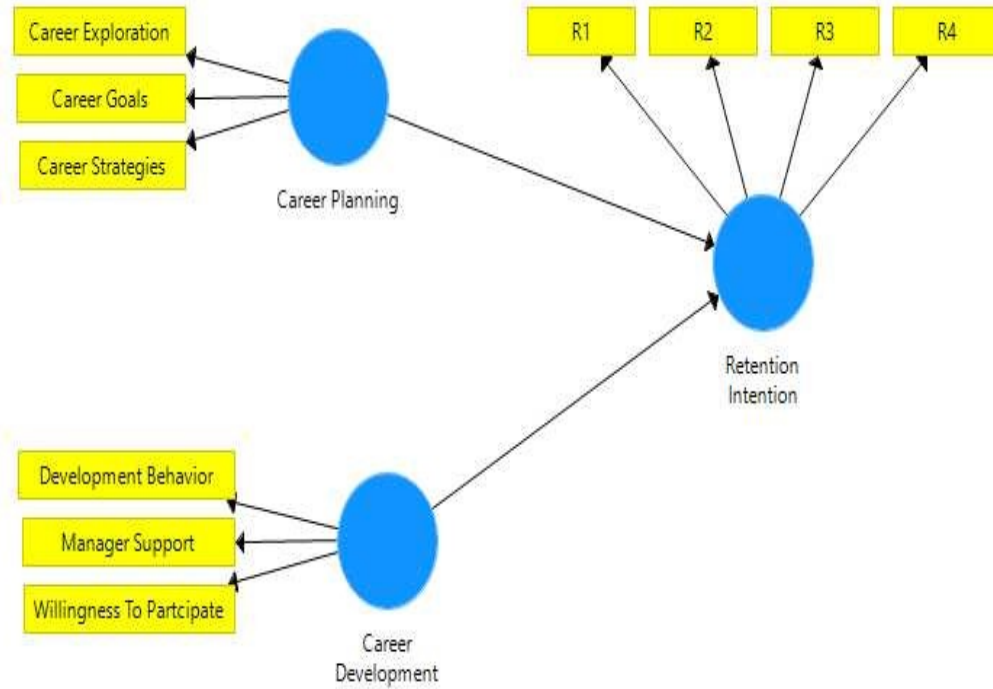


Figure 3 Stage Two Structural Model

Source: Survey data

Career exploration, career goals, and career strategies were the first-order constructs of career planning, whereas development behavior, manager support, and willingness to participate were the first-order constructs of career development. The reflective-reflective option was selected to demonstrate a reflective relationship between lower-order and higher-order constructs, in which the higher-order constructs represent the common factor of several lower-order constructs (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Gudergan, 2018). For instance, the first-order constructs of career exploration, career goals, and career strategies can collectively construct the second-order variable of career management rather than affecting career management, confirming the conceptual dimensionality of career management. The two-stage approach was selected as the research intends to measure the effects of first-order variables on the dependent variable rather than measuring the effects of second-order variables on the dependent variable.

Table 5
Parameter statistics

Measures	Loadings	Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	Hypotheses
Career exploration	0.918	Career Planning	0.755	0.859	0.678	H _{7a} : Supported
Career goals	0.909					
Career strategies	0.603					
Development behavior	0.931	Career Development	0.868	0.910	0.791	H _{7b} : Supported
Manager support	0.863					
Willingness to participate	0.873					

Source: Survey data.

Table 5 shows the parameter statistics used to test the measurement model of the hierarchical component model. Accordingly, the measurement loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and AVE values satisfy the respected threshold values, thereby converging the measurements of the hierarchical model. The structural model was not evaluated as the objective of the hierarchical component model was to test the dimensionality of career management and career development. However, the SRMR (model fit) value of 0.072 is found within the threshold (<0.08) requirement, providing a good level of model fit for the structural model.

5. Discussion and implications

This study evaluates the contribution of employee career planning and organizational career development activities to employee retention in star grade hotels in Sri Lanka. The findings confirm, in general, that employee career planning and employer career management initiatives can predict employee retention intention in Sri Lankan hotels. However, in particular, the predictive power and relevancy of the dimensions of career development are much higher than that of employee career development. These findings have both theoretical and managerial implications.

5.1 Theoretical implications

This research argues that career management-related factors are also important in predicting employee retention among the various factors. Meliou and Maroudas (2011) argued that the intrinsic values of employee careers are important factors to consider in the process of effective career development. The current research findings emphasize that these intrinsic characters are two-fold; employee-driven career planning consideration and employee response to employer-driven career management initiatives. Similar to previous studies, the current research findings show the different but interrelated aspects of career management directly associated with employee retention. Moreover, these intrinsically driven career management initiatives can ultimately affect the employee interest in the job. In particular, the argument posits by Bibi et al. (2018) claims that the level of interest of employees in the job can determine employee retention as per the

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relationships of different career management and career development dimensions with employee retention explained by the current study findings. Rasheed et al. (2020) and Santhanam et al. (2015) argue that hotel employees' career adaptability and career enhancement initiatives can increase employee retention. Surprisingly, the current research almost rejected the hypotheses associated with career planning dimensions and employee retention. However, these findings can argue that most operational level hotel employees are loyal to their employer in the Sri Lankan setting and not much inclined to change their organizations for their career prospects.

Literature suggests that career planning can increase employee retention (Barnett & Bardley, 2007). However, career planning in this research was found to be less influencing on employee retention. The dimension of career exploration shows somewhat a positive association with retention. Interestingly, career exploration deals with how the employee sees his career through himself. Particularly individuals often evaluate their knowledge and skills concerning their job in the process of career exploration (Storme & Celik, 2018). As the results suggest, if the employee sees his career positively, they might not change the employer. The reason can be that the employees look for career certainty in their career exploration process (Esters, 2008). However, the dimensions of career goals and career strategies show no influence on employee retention, compelling one to reflect that employee retention is mainly a matter of career development rather than career management. However, literature provides some contradictory claims about career goals and career development concerning employee retention, whereas these two dimensions show causality between employee retention (Sheraz, Batool, & Adnan, 2019).

Career development initiatives are the responsibility of the management or the employee. It is suggested that the management create avenues to support employee career advancement, and different strategies also are highlighted frequently (Puri & Handoya, 2020). All the dimensions of career development are positively associated with employee retention, convincing that the organization-oriented factors are much more important than the individual-driven factors both in a good career management practice and high level of employee retention. Particularly, getting employee participation in something higher than their job capacity has been a major employee motivation and satisfaction strategy (Jurburg, Viles, Tanco, Mateo, & Lleó, 2019; Tennakoon, Dassanayake, & Dahanayake, 2016; Wohlgemuth et al., 2019). Employees should be prepared to exploit such opportunities creating by the management time-to-time. The employee willingness to engage in development activities is the prominent factor in positively associating with employee career enhancement. Employee always looks for the manager's support in almost all the endeavours, perhaps beyond the job scope (Quigley & Tymon 2006). The current research findings are also congruent with that conception and strengthen the theory that continuous employee engagement in development activities can increase their career prospects, positively influencing retention. Finally, employee development behaviour encouraged by the management is another prospect of career management that can control employee turnover. Employees are always keen to develop skills, attitudes, and growth through what the management has provided to them (Rasdi, Garavan, & Ismail, 2011). Therefore, employees assess their development compared to the working atmosphere created by the organization. This scenario is further proven with these research findings as the employees who are satisfied with their development with the support of what the organization has created for them are likely to remain at the hotel.

Finally, this research study confirms two hierarchical components in the employee career management context; career planning and career management. The three dimensions of career exploration, career goals, and career strategies effectively generate the higher-order constructs of employee career planning. Development behaviour, manager support, and willingness to participate collectively generate the higher-order construct of career development. Therefore, the six abstract conceptions in employee career development are statistically grouped into two meaningful higher-order constructs, which can eventually help similar future research.

5.2 Managerial implications

Human resource managers in general and Hotel managers, in particular, would find the findings of this useful. Importantly, the two aspects of career management initiatives are pragmatic concepts that can be applied directly into the practice. The career planning prospects of the employees and the career management initiatives of the hotel are equally important in employee retention. Employees have their own career planning orientations and considerations. On the one hand, the hotel management's responsibility and duty are to understand their employee career planning prospects and formulate human resource strategies accordingly. On the other hand, the career development initiatives of the hotel should target what the employees mostly prefer to engage in. Employee willingness to participate in development activities and manager support for employee career enhancement is of utmost importance in this scenario.

6. Limitations and future research

This research is limited to two aspects of career management practices in Human Resources Management; career planning and career development. The factors like performance appraisal, reward management, leadership behaviours are not included in the current research. However, it has been able to cover both the employee and employer initiatives which eventually examine the employee career prospects in the hotel industry. Methodologically, the current research sample size and the population have been limited to a particular city of the country. Future research can study a complete theoretical model covering all the aspects of career management and their associations with employee retention in the hospitality sector. Moreover, a larger sample drawn from a few cities would cover a greater scope of the population in future research.

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