

# Organizational Career Development and Employee Retention: Role of Career Adaptability

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## Abstract

The study aims to examine the relationship between organizational career development and employee retention. It attempts to identify the moderating role of career adaptability to establish the above relationship. Data from a total of 383 respondents, who are employees working in information technology company in India, were collected and subjected to analysis through structural equations modelling (SEM). The results show a positive relationship between organizational career development and employee retention, where career adaptability acts as a moderating variable. The contribution of the study comes from establishing the role played by career adaptability in the relationship between organizational career development and employee retention.

**Keywords:** Organizational career development, career adaptability, employee retention

## Introduction

Human resource managers have significant issues due to attrition in the service business in general and the IT industry in particular, which calls for steps to stop turnover, particularly among organizations in developing countries like India. According to Pallathadka et al. (2021), the average rate of voluntary attrition among IT employees has increased to 18%. Thus, it is urgently necessary to retain employees in the IT sector in developing countries like India (Pallathadka et al., 2021). The necessity of researching antecedents for employee retention has been proposed by several academics (Ahmed Qayed Al-Emadi et al., 2015; Oprea et al., 2022; Jena and Nayak, 2024). According to Hausknecht et al. (2009), an organization's job in employee retention (ER) is to motivate and inspire its staff to perform at their highest level by remaining with the company for an extended length of time. The employees in the millennial category, who make up roughly 25% of the world's population and 50% of India's overall population, which is a further source of concern because they frequently change jobs or hop jobs (Ertas, 2015). Therefore, in order to improve organizational outcomes, it is imperative that immediate action be taken to increase millennial retention (Pasko *et al.*, 2021). This generation is techno-savvy and highly ambitious (Jena and Nayak, 2023; Rajesh and Ekambaram, 2014) and demands opportunities having long-term career development prospects (Pant and Venkateswaran, 2019). Organizational career development (OCD) prospects, particularly when provided within an establishment, is found to be a notable influencer of ER, probably because it makes the workforce feel that they are being valued, which they reciprocate as per the social exchange theory (SET) (Blau, 1964), by sticking to their existing organizations, thus building up a durable bond between employer and employees (Wang *et al.*, 2014). Long *et al.* (2014)

demarcated “Career development is not purely about getting promoted or moving up the corporate ladder, but rather about getting to be the best an individual can be and finding a place in an organization where they can express excellence and contribute to the goals of the organization (p.87).”

Moreover, the increasing risks of job insecurity and career uncertainties in the career world require employees to explore and seize favourable opportunities in their current organizations. According to Kim and Hyun (2017), the high rate of employee turnover intention is widely acknowledged as a detrimental workplace phenomenon that should be avoided from an HRM standpoint. People are recognized as a major source of competitive advantage, and companies implement a variety of policies and practices to keep their skilled workers for extended periods of time. As a result, along with cutting back on wasteful spending and enhancing workers' motivation and skills, employee retention has become one of the main factors influencing organizational performance (Aman-Ullah, et al., 2020). Retaining skilled employees is a continuous and dynamic endeavour (Ohunakin, et al., 2020; Dwesini, 2019). Employee retention is increased by HR procedures that support workers' personal and professional development. Additionally, it lowers employee turnover, boosts productivity, enhances job satisfaction, boosts employee performance, and improves overall organizational performance (Pattnaik and Sahoo, 2020). Employee retention has become a global concern for industries such as the hotel sector, as the rate of employee turnover is rising globally. Furthermore, existing research suggests that there should be intervening variables between OCD and ER, particularly those related to employees (Jena et al., 2024; Al-Ali et al., 2019; Sakr et al., 2019). Career adaptability was therefore considered in the study as the moderating variable in the connection between ER and OCD.

## **Development of hypotheses**

### ***Organizational career development and employee retention***

OCD helps employees succeed professionally by determining where they can best contribute to the organization's objective (Long et al., 2014). It has been demonstrated that when workers are given various chances to grow professionally and advance within a company, they become more devoted to their current employer because they comprehend the breadth and depth of their line of work, which also promotes retention (Pattnaik and Sahoo, 2023; Yarbrough et al., 2017). It has been demonstrated that helping people advance their careers is beneficial because it encourages high-potential employees to strive for excellence by achieving their own objectives, which inspires them to stay with their current company (Wushe and Shenje, 2019). SET, in which an employee cultivates a voluntarily reciprocal behavior toward the organization, also supports this association (Blau, 1964). Many researchers have confirmed that OCD has a significant effect on emergency rooms because it promotes employee connection and constructive work behavior toward organizations, which helps both the individual and the organization (Lu et al., 2016). According to Davis (2015), the provision of professional development possibilities is advantageous from an organizational perspective as, should an employee leave, they would be forfeiting these internal developing prospects. However, there wouldn't be much to lose when quitting if it wasn't available (Gao et al., 2020). This occurs as a result of OCD's positive effects on a person's life, which guarantee steady, long-term growth and act as a useful retention tactic (George, 2015). According to several academics, OCD strengthens the relationship between an employee and their company by enhancing the employee's dedication, work experience, and organizational attachment (Mamun and Hasan, 2017). On the basis of the above theoretical support, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

H1: Organizational career development is positively associated with employee retention

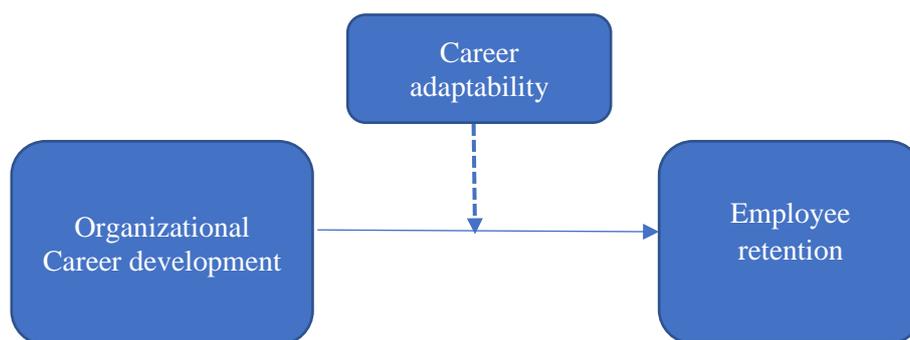
**Organizational career development, career adaptability and employee retention**

The foundation of Super's professional development theory, career maturity, and career adaptability got its start. Researchers have been updating and revising this notion continuously (Super & Knasel, 1981). The capacity to effortlessly adjust to changes and balance one's professional responsibilities while managing the transition of one's own career roles is known as career adaptability. It has been investigated that career adaptability enables workers to increase their professional resilience in order to handle unforeseen circumstances and make the necessary modifications (Savickas, 2005). Their job advancement is aided by this. It promotes career advancement and acts as a personal resource for effectively managing people planned and on-going career changes.

According to research, career adaptability enables workers to become more resilient in the face of unforeseen circumstances and make the necessary adjustments (Savickas, 2005). It promotes career advancement and acts as a personal resource for effectively managing people planned and on-going career changes. According to Super and Knasel (1981), career adaptability is a state of preparedness that aids in adjusting to erratic work or changes in the workplace, engaging in career exploration behaviours, and coping with present or future employment position, which stabilizes professional growth and career development and guarantees job happiness (Guan et al., 2018). Adaptable workers have better career prospects, more delegation from supervisors and higher chances of promotion. According to Zhou and Lin (2016), career adaptability is a crucial component of life design and fulfilment. It makes it possible for workers to have constructive social interactions in their present workplaces, which frequently results in high affective commitment and a low intention to quit. So, career adaptability and career development can together improve employee retention. Based on the literature support the following hypothesis has been framed:

H2: Career adaptability acts as a moderating variable in the relationship between career development and employee retention.

**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework**



**Methods**

**Sample and procedure**

An empirical research of millennial employed in India's IT sector was conducted in order to examine the aforementioned theories. Only one service industry—IT—was included in the study's population, which consisted of Fortune 500 Indian businesses. The research study included white-collar workers who are millennial, defined as those born between 1980 and 2000 (Pasko et al., 2021). Data was gathered using a descriptive study design and an existing questionnaire. To reduce bias, all participants were informed in

advance of the study's goal and were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. The information is shown in aggregate form, and neither the respondents' identities nor those of their organizations were revealed.

Using a convenience sampling technique, only 383 questions were found usable. There were 42.2% females and 57.8% males in the final sample. Regarding experience, 22.3% of participants have between 0 and 3 years of work experience. The percentage of participants with 3–7 years, 7–10 years, and more than 10 years of work experience is 47.6%, 20.9%, and 9.2%, respectively. Likewise, 64.5% of the sample had a bachelor's degree, 26.5% had a master's degree, and 9% had a doctorate. Junior level responders made up 20.9% of the sample. Likewise, middle- and senior-level responders made up 41% and 38.20% of the sample, respectively.

### ***Measures***

Pre-existing questionnaires were adopted to measure OCD, CA and ER. All the scales used for the survey were 5-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The details of all the measures used are mentioned below.

Organizational career development- It was measured using the scale developed by Sturges et al. (2002) consisting of 6 items. Example of one item is: “I have been given training to help develop my career”.

Career adaptability- It was measured using the scale developed by Maggiori et al. (2017) consisting of 12 items. One example of the item is: “I think about what my future will be like.”

Employee retention- A 3-item scale used by Kundu and Lata (2017) was used for measuring the variable. One example item is: “I am likely to stay in this organization for next five years.”

### ***Controlling common method bias***

Although we will never be totally sure that common method bias (CMB) is not present, we have taken steps to lessen it in the study by implementing several strategies that were suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003). In light of this, every participant received assurances about the anonymity of their answers and was made aware that the information gathered would only be utilized for scholarly research. In order to enable a temporal separation strategy to decrease CMB, the data were then gathered by following a 7-day time lag between any two variables. After that, exploratory factor analysis was conducted using Harman's single factor technique without any rotation. The variance of one factor that was recovered was 38.522%, which is below the suggested 50%, indicating that the data are unlikely to have any major problem associated with CMB. Although, appropriate steps had been taken to decrease the likelihood of CMB by following the necessary procedures, conducting the test once again statistically indicates absence of any major problem of CMB.

### **Results**

Evaluation of the measurement model was done using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), followed by hypotheses testing through structural equation modelling (SEM) using AMOS 24.0 version. Then the mediating effect was evaluated through direct and indirect effects of job satisfaction and job engagement was verified. Table 1 represents the mean, standard deviation, correlation matrix and square root value of average variance extracted (AVE) [for assessment of discriminant validity] for all the three constructs. The mean values were between 2.00 and 3.00 and values of standard deviation were about 1.00 for each of the variables. The positive relationship of between the variables is identified by the values of correlation coefficients.

**Table 1. Mean, standard deviation and correlation matrix (along with square root of average variance explained- AVE)**

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	OCD	ER	CA
OCD	422	2.935	0.521	0.766#		
ER	422	3.650	0.687	0.468**	0.756#	
CA	422	3.333	0.637		0.488**	0.742#

Notes: # Square root of AVE; \*p-value <0.05; \*\*p-value<0.01; OCD= Organizational career development support; ER= Employee retention; CA= Career adaptability

**Measurement model assessment**

The measurement model consists of four latent constructs, namely, OCD, CA and ER, where the factor loadings of all the indicators are above 0.70 (Comrey and Lee, 1992). All of the indicators' factor loadings are more than 0.70. The model fit index values are within Hair et al. (2010)'s recommended acceptable ranges. [RMSEA = 0.041 (<0.07), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = 0.962 (>0.90), comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.965 (>0.90), goodness of fit index (GFI) = 0.910 (>0.90), normed fit index (NFI) = 0.921 (>0.90), and df = 1.721 (<3)]. To prove construct validity, convergent and discriminant validities were investigated. Cronbach's alpha and construct reliability (CR) were used to assess each construct's reliability. Convergent and discriminant validities were examined to establish construct validity. The reliability of all the constructs was examined using Cronbach's alpha and construct reliability (CR). The values of AVE, CR and Cronbach's alpha for all the variables along with factor loadings of the indicators are displayed in Table 2. The AVE values are greater than the acceptable value of 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), CR values greater than AVE, signifying convergent validity and Cronbach's alpha values are greater than 0.70 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Nunnally, 1978). Hence, the validity and reliability of all our constructs are assessed and the measurement model has been evaluated.

**Table 2: Results for convergent validity and construct reliability (CR)**

Factors and items	Standardized factor loadings*	Cronbach's $\alpha$	AVE	CR
Organizational career development	0.881	0.743	0.587	0.738
FS1: I have been given training to help develop my career.	0.708			
FS2: My boss has made sure I get the training I need for my career	0.745			
FS3: I have been taught things I need to know to get on in this organization	0.779			
FS4: I have been given a personal development plan.	0.752			
FS5: I have been given work which has developed my skills for the future.	0.761			
FS6: My boss has given me clear feedback on my performance.	0.847			

Career adaptability		0.932	0.572	0.940
CA1: I think about what my future will be like.	0.881			
CA2: I prepare for the future.	0.708			
CA3: I am aware of the educational and vocational choices that I must take.	0.694			
CA4: I make decisions by myself.	0.672			
CA5: I take responsibility for my actions.	0.752			
CA6: I count on myself.	0.761			
CA7: I look for opportunities to grow.	0.678			
CA8: I investigate options before making a choice.	0.738			
CA9: I observe different ways of doing things from people around.	0.855			
CA10: I take care to do things well.	0.708			
CA11: I learn new skills.	0.842			
CA12: I develop my ability step by step.	0.755			
Employee retention		0.783	0.552	0.787
ER1: I am likely to stay in this organization for next five years.	0.774			
ER2: I will not change this organization easily.	0.741			
ER3: For me, this organization is the best of all possible organization to work for.	0.713			

**Testing of Hypotheses**

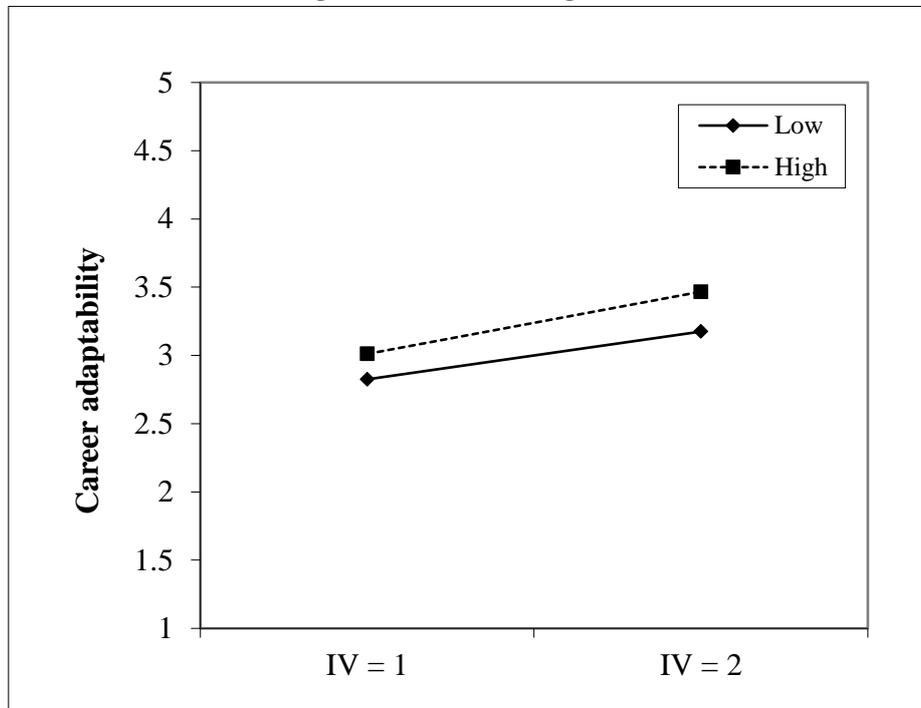
Table 3 displays the results of the structural model's evaluation using SEM with 5,000 bootstrap replicates and a 95% confidence level. OCD and ER were found to have substantial positive ( $\beta = 0.364$ ;  $p$ -value  $< 0.01$ ), supporting H1. Similarly, it was discovered that the moderating effect of interaction CA\*OCD significantly impact on ER ( $\beta = 0.128$ ;  $p$ -value  $< 0.01$ ), thus confirming H2.

**Table 3. Path analysis**

Path	Direct effect	Remarks
OCD->ER	0.364**	H1 Supported
CA->ER	0.336**	
Interaction->ER	0.128*	H2 Supported

Notes: # Square root of AVE; \*p-value <0.05; \*\*p-value<0.01; OCD= Organizational career development support; CA= Career adaptability; ER= Employee retention

**Figure 2. Moderating effect**



The effect of interaction (CA\*OCD) on ER can be clearly recognized in the visual representation of Jeremy Dawson 2-way moderating graph as given in Figure 2. As the value of moderator increases, the association between OCD and ER gets strengthened.

### Discussion

With the support of social exchange theory, the study aims to broaden our understanding by learning more about millennial employed in the IT sector, particularly in the Indian organizational context, and establishing the connection between OCD and ER by using CA as the moderating variable. Numerous academics have called for more research on human resource practices such as OCD prospects and highlighted it as a topic of inquiry (Vande Griek et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2021). The study's findings support the favourable relationship between OCD and ER and add to the body of existing literature. Other researchers that have carried out related investigations (Wushe and Shenje, 2019) also corroborate the results of our investigation.

### *Implications for theory and practice*

The study contributes to the body of existing literature in a number of ways. The study addresses the need for more research on the relationship between OCD and ER, particularly in the IT sector that is struggling with significant employee attrition (Al-Ali et al., 2019; Sakr et al., 2019). Through the use of mediating variables and Blau's (1964) social exchange theory, the study attempts to explain the mechanism of the association between OCD and ER. By applying the measurements employed in Western nations to the Indian setting, the study has firmly proved their validity and reliability, which leads to another theoretical inference. In other words, the measurements' generalizability is further stimulated. Our study has also extended the applicability of social exchange theoretical framework hitherto used in developed nations to

developing countries (Yen and Niehoff, 2004), such as India. Moreover, the study can enable managers to have a better understanding of the nuances of employee retention. HR managers should ensure that organizations must facilitate fair human resource practices like internal career development prospects in its human resource policy (Pattnaik and Sahoo, 2021). In addition to helping an organization accomplish its own objectives, this would help employees fulfil their own ambitions, which would promote a stronger organizational culture. Because career development opportunities that appear appropriate for one type of employee may not be appropriate for other types of employees, such as millennial, it is important to provide career development opportunities that align with their needs and desires in order to foster an exchange relationship (Houssein et al., 2020). Moreover, when employees find good opportunities for their personal development, they get dedicated towards their work that enhances organizational productivity (Hamzah et al., 2020).

### **Limitations and future research**

The research's conclusions may have the following drawbacks. First, the research that was done was cross-sectional. Because longitudinal data with an experimental research design allows for the control of extraneous variables, it is necessary to develop a strong conclusion regarding the causal relationship between the variables in order to obtain an accurate and more dependable causal conclusion. The aforementioned requirements should be taken into account in future research. Second, because the study uses self-reported data, it is susceptible to response bias. Therefore, managerial reports can be used to do additional study. Third, the same source was used to get the data. Although Harman's single factor method indicates that CMB is not present in our study, future researchers could use alternative risk-avoidance techniques as recommended by Podsakoff et al. (2003). Fourth, the data have been collected from employees of only a few IT organizations. So, further research should be done with data collected for a large number of organizations in the industry to enhance generalizability. Fifth, the study has been done on white collar employees, and future research can be done on other employees such as part-timers or blue-collar. Finally, some more moderating or mediating variables can be added by the future researchers to have a more broad-based study.

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