

Working and staying in retail: how working conditions shape industry loyalty in the war for talent

Sophie Weidinger, Kathrin Mayr, Christoph Teller and Ernst Gittenberger

*JKU Business School, Institute for Retailing, Sales and Marketing,
Johannes Kepler University Linz, Linz, Austria*

International
Journal of Retail &
Distribution
Management

Received 30 August 2025
Revised 25 February 2026
18 May 2026
Accepted 29 May 2026

Abstract

Purpose – The retail industry faces above-average turnover, partly due to its working conditions and poor reputation as an employer. However, skilled and loyal employees are crucial, as retail competes for talent and requires evolving skills to meet store-based retail challenges amid online and low-cost competitors. While research examines employee retention and loyalty at the organisational level, industry-level effects remain unexplored. This paper investigates how working conditions affect employees' loyalty to the whole retail industry.

Design/methodology/approach – The study draws on data from a web-based survey of 1,006 frontline retail employees aged 16+ and employs variance-based SEM to test the proposed research model.

Findings – The findings reveal that salary and growth opportunities have the strongest impact on industry loyalty. However, customer interactions also play a key role, followed by tasks, team and work-life balance. Results highlight clear distinctions between loyalty to the employer and to the industry, as well as the influence of personal- and work-related moderators.

Practical implications – As this study explores how retail working conditions influence industry loyalty, it offers insights into employee priorities in making a long-term commitment. These insights support the implementation of tailored strategies that address employees' needs, helping retail compete with other industries while fostering a stable, dedicated workforce.

Originality/value – This research is among the first to investigate employee loyalty from an industry-wide perspective in retail, offering insights that go beyond individual employers and guiding strategies that could strengthen retention and loyalty across the sector.

Keywords Employee loyalty, Employee intention to stay, Industry loyalty, Retail employment conditions, Frontline retail employees

Paper type Research article

1. Introduction

At around 60.5%, the turnover rate in retail and wholesale is the highest across service industries (Team Stage, 2024). Workforce shortage, the war for talent with other industries and lack of employee loyalty are major issues the retail sector faces (Karkkainen, 2024). A key problem is the shortage of employees, especially of qualified staff (Fuller et al., 2022). Due to poor working conditions, inflexible hours, stress, customer deviance, limited career prospects and low salaries, retail has a rather negative reputation as an employer (Waldman, 2024; Mayr and Teller, 2023). Consequently, employee loyalty is comparatively low (Sainato, 2024). However, loyal employees are essential, as they provide stability, reduce labour shortages and improve customer interactions, which is crucial for sales performance (Otto et al., 2020). To address these challenges and ensure employee loyalty within the retail sector, it is essential to create attractive working conditions across the whole industry.

© Sophie Weidinger, Kathrin Mayr, Christoph Teller and Ernst Gittenberger. Published by Emerald Publishing Limited. This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) licence. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this licence may be seen at <http://creativecommons.org/licences/by/4.0/>



International Journal of Retail &
Distribution Management
Emerald Publishing Limited
e-ISSN: 1758-6690
p-ISSN: 0959-0552
DOI 10.1108/IJRDM-08-2025-0659

Research on employee loyalty and employer attractiveness is extensive, with numerous studies examining antecedents (Nilsen *et al.*, 2026) and consequences (Benraïss-Noailles and Viot, 2021). However, despite the wealth of research in broader contexts, there is a notable research gap in studies specifically addressing these issues within the retail sector (Chandra *et al.*, 2023). Furthermore, most existing research examines loyalty and retention in relation to a specific employer. Only a few studies examine loyalty and retention at the industry level rather than at the organisational level (Davies *et al.*, 2025). We conceptualise the industry level as a group of companies primarily engaged in B2C trade. Such a perspective is essential for understanding employee loyalty in an environment shaped by inter-industry competition and evolving skill demands.

This study contributes towards closing these research gaps and aims at examining the factors influencing employees' retention intentions and loyalty to the retail industry. Therefore, we address the following research question: Which retail-specific working conditions shape employees' intention to stay and their loyalty to the retail industry? By shifting the focus from the organisational to the industry level, it offers three main contributions. First, it provides one of the earliest industry-wide perspectives on employee loyalty in retail, second, it identifies retail-specific working conditions shaping retention and loyalty and third, it highlights how personal- and work-related factors moderate these relationships, thereby adding a new layer to existing research on long-term retention and competitive advantages in the industry.

The findings indicate that retail conditions such as salary, growth, task, team, work-life balance and customer interactions influence employee loyalty towards the industry, with differences regarding retention intentions. Further, the results demonstrate the impact of personal- and work-related moderators.

Practically, we contribute clear guidance for improving employee retention in retail. The industry should strengthen its working conditions while considering individual needs. Tailored strategies reflecting different employee profiles can enhance retention and loyalty. This can reduce turnover, lower staffing costs, improve internal stability and make the sector more attractive, while strengthening retail's position in the competition for talent across industries.

2. Conceptual frame

2.1 Literature review

Berthon *et al.* (2005) suggest that employer attractiveness is strongly linked to working conditions. Furthermore, job characteristics affect employee retentions in retail (Masters *et al.*, 2025). Research identifies key factors including culture and values (Machova *et al.*, 2022), workplace environment (Kearney *et al.*, 2023), tasks (Ek Styvén *et al.*, 2022), teamwork and leadership (Chandra *et al.*, 2023; Park *et al.*, 2021), career development opportunities (Nilsen *et al.*, 2026), work-life balance (Tanwar and Prasad, 2017), image and reputation (Davies *et al.*, 2025), salary (Davies *et al.*, 2025) and customer interactions (Mayr and Teller, 2024). Building on these factors and drawing on the grouping logic of Aboul-Ela (2016), the identified aspects are re-aggregated into four dimensions of retail working conditions: work-life balance, task and team, salary and growth and customer interactions. Employee-based brand equity benefits organisations, as employees aligned with the brand show greater retention (King and Grace, 2010), while emotional brand identification enhances customer interactions and performance (Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020). Closely related to employer attractiveness and a consequence thereof are employee retention and loyalty. Retention refers to the intention to remain with an organisation (Singh, 2019), while loyalty implies a deeper emotional commitment and identification (Allen and Meyer, 1990), including the willingness to stay long-term (Schrag, 2001). Table A1 summarises an overview of the literature discussed here.

Despite widespread interest in employer attractiveness, retention and loyalty, retail-specific research remains limited (research gap 1). Most studies examine these concepts in organisational contexts, while retail-specific insights are scarce (Messini, 2022). This is

notable given retail's challenging working conditions, including customer interactions (Mayr and Teller, 2024), low salaries, limited career opportunities (Hosie et al., 2013) and inflexible working hours (Henly and Lambert, 2014). These sector-specific conditions make it crucial to examine their impact on retention and loyalty in retail.

Many studies focus on retention and loyalty toward individual employers rather than the industry (Gelencsér et al., 2025), although industry-level loyalty may be crucial for long-term workforce stability (research gap 2). Burmann et al. (2008) examine industry image's effect on employer image but omit working conditions and retention outside retail. Davies et al. (2025) focus on industry image and recruitment, excluding retention and working conditions, also beyond retail. Foster et al. (2008) appears to be the only retail-focused study that differentiates between loyalty to the store, the retailer and the industry, yet does not consider retail-specific working conditions. By integrating retail-specific working conditions into the analysis of employee retention and industry loyalty, this study advances existing literature.

Previous research emphasises personal and job-related factors in explaining retention and loyalty. Employee loyalty tends to increase with age (Murali et al., 2017) and full-time employees show stronger involvement and turnover intentions, whereas part-time workers report higher satisfaction due to flexibility and lower emotional investment (Doğan Al and Aml, 2016). In retail, work experience and satisfaction also influence retention (Knight et al., 2006). However, integrating personal and work-related moderators in retail studies remains limited (research gap 3).

Against this backdrop, this study examines which retail-specific working conditions shape employees' retention intentions and industry loyalty. Given limited research on industry-level loyalty in retail, this study takes an exploratory approach. By adopting an industry-level perspective and incorporating personal- and work-related moderators, it offers a differentiated contribution to research on employee loyalty in retail.

2.2 Theoretical underpinning

2.2.1 Job embeddedness theory. The job embeddedness theory (Mitchell et al., 2001) explains why employees stay through three components: links (social connections), fit (compatibility between personal values and job) and sacrifice (perceived losses if leaving). These elements account for retention despite dissatisfaction or alternatives (Holtom and Darabi, 2018). The theory has been widely applied, showing links, fit and sacrifice influence turnover intentions in hospitality (Obeng et al., 2024) and retail pharmacy (Leupold et al., 2013). Career development, job security, leadership (Peltokorpi and Allen, 2024), sector stability and reputation (Burrows et al., 2022) are key drivers of embeddedness. In this study, these components are used to structure retail working conditions: fit relates to work-life balance and tasks, links refer to team and customer relationships and sacrifice is connected to salary and growth opportunities. Retail employees and managers are often embedded in broader service networks through interactions with customers, colleagues and retail ecosystems, reinforcing organisational and sectoral attachment (Alexander et al., 2016). The broader model, including factors outside the workplace, is not considered, as the focus lies on industry-level attachment. Therefore, the job embeddedness theory provides a framework to examine how retail-specific working conditions shape employees' intention to stay and industry loyalty.

2.2.2 Social identity theory. The social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) states that people define themselves through group membership, fostering belonging and loyalty, with organisational and occupational identification closely linked (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Strong brand love increases employee loyalty and positive word-of-mouth (Wang and Omar, 2023), and subsequently reduces turnover and strengthens commitment (Avanzi et al., 2014). We focus on industry-level identification, reflected in employees' sense of belonging and attachment to the retail sector. Organisational identification and identity formation processes are not examined in detail, as the theory is used to explain how perceived belonging translates into loyalty beyond individual employers. Therefore, his theory supports examining retail

industry loyalty by showing how identification and belonging help retain employees beyond individual employers.

2.2.3 Spillover concept. The spillover concept (Staines, 1980) suggests that attitudes and intentions formed in one domain transfer to related domains. For instance, entrepreneurial knowledge acquired at universities positively influences regional startup formation (Audretsch and Lehmann, 2005). Different types of engagement, such as job engagement, are interconnected and influence retail store performance (Suhartanto and Brien, 2018). We apply the concept to examine how organisational-level experiences transfer to industry-level attitudes, particularly retail industry retention and loyalty. Different forms or directions of spillover are not differentiated, as the focus lies on the transfer from organisational experiences to sectoral commitment. This concept highlights how experiences and feelings in one area can affect others, supporting its application to explore employee loyalty beyond the organisational level to the retail industry.

2.3 Research model and hypotheses

Previous research identifies working conditions as key factors in employee retention within organisations (Singh, 2019). This study extends the analysis to the industry level by examining how retail-specific working conditions influence frontline employees' intention to stay with their employer, remain in retail and maintain industry loyalty. Furthermore, the model analyses how personal and work-related moderators shape these relationships. Figure 1 depicts the proposed research model.

2.3.1 Effects of retail working conditions. Retail working conditions capture key aspects of frontline employees' work environment, reflected in the four dimensions work-life balance, task and team, salary and growth and customers (Aboul-Ela, 2016), measured through employee satisfaction. Employee intention to stay refers to retention intentions toward the current organisation or industry (Mowday et al., 1979), while industry loyalty reflects broader affective attachment and long-term commitment to the industry (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Drawing on job embeddedness theory (Mitchell et al., 2001), favourable evaluations of these

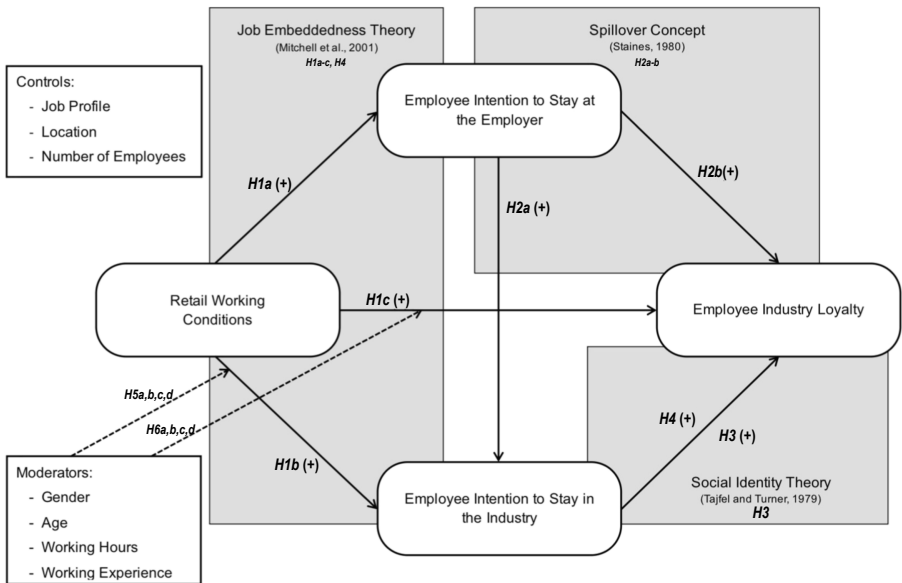


Figure 1. Conceptual model

dimensions increase employees' embeddedness, making them likelier to remain with their employer and within the industry, thereby strengthening industry loyalty. Research shows that favourable working conditions reduce turnover intentions and enhance retention. [Nguyen et al. \(2023\)](#) demonstrate that job embeddedness is negatively associated with turnover intentions. Similarly, work environment, pay, career opportunities, rewards and intrinsic motivation drive retention and loyalty ([Wularsih and Octafian, 2024](#)). Thus, we propose:

H1a-c. Retail working conditions have a direct effect on (a) employee intention to stay at the employer, (b) employee intention to stay in the industry and (c) employee industry loyalty.

2.3.2 Effects of employee intention to stay at the employer. Based on the spillover concept ([Staines, 1980](#)), positive experiences in an organisation not only reflect satisfaction with that company but also shape general views of the sector. Affective organisational commitment links to stronger professional attachment ([Meyer et al., 1993](#)) and positive organisational experiences increase retention intentions and loyalty ([Blau, 2001](#)). Although loyalty toward employer and industry share similarities, differences exist ([Foster et al., 2008](#)). Therefore, we conclude that:

H2a-b. Employee intention to stay at the employer directly affects (a) employee intention to stay in the industry and (b) employee industry loyalty.

2.3.3 Effects of employee intention to stay in the industry. According to social identity theory ([Tajfel and Turner, 1979](#)), intention to stay in an industry is linked to commitment and identification with that sector, reflecting deeper social and emotional connections. [Meyer et al. \(1993\)](#) found that intentions to remain are associated with strong commitment. Moreover, organisational commitment relates positively to retention ([Allen et al., 2010](#)) and retention is closely connected to loyalty ([Costen and Salazar, 2011](#)). Therefore, we conclude:

H3. Employee intention to stay in the industry has a direct effect on employee industry loyalty.

2.3.4 Mediation of employee industry loyalty. In line with job embeddedness theory ([Mitchell et al., 2001](#)), employee loyalty is shaped by multiple factors, with working conditions playing a central role. Retail working conditions affect retention and loyalty ([Wularsih and Octafian, 2024](#)), both toward the employer and the industry ([Foster et al., 2008](#)). Research shows that intention to stay mediates the relationship between working conditions and employee outcomes, including retention and loyalty ([Kearney et al., 2023](#)). Hence, we assume a mediating effect:

H4. Employee intention to stay at the employer and employee intention to stay in the industry mediate the relationship between retail working conditions and employee industry loyalty.

2.3.5 Moderating role of personal- and work-related factors. Personal- and work-related resources play a moderating role in human resources research. In particular, gender, age, working hours and work experience may shape employees' responses to retail working conditions. Prior research highlights the moderating role of gender ([Francioni et al., 2022](#)) and work experience ([Gupta and Shaheen, 2017](#)). Older employees tend to show higher loyalty than younger ones ([Murali et al., 2017](#)), while women generally report greater loyalty than men ([Foster et al., 2008](#)). Similarly, more experienced employees are likelier to form long-term attachments to the sector ([Knight et al., 2006](#)), whereas full-time employees often show stronger emotional involvement and part-time employees report higher satisfaction due to flexibility ([Doğan Al and Anıl, 2016](#)). Therefore, this study examines whether these personal- and work-related factors moderate the relationships between retail working conditions, retention intentions and industry loyalty.

- H5a-d.* (a) Gender, (b) age, (c) working hours and (d) working experience moderate the effects of retail working conditions on employee intention to stay in the industry.
- H6a-d.* (a) Gender, (b) age, (c) working hours and (d) working experience moderate the effects of retail working conditions on employee industry loyalty.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample characteristics

For data collection, representative data from Austria, reflecting the characteristics of mature Central European retail labour markets, were used. This market reflects key structural characteristics typical of mature Western retail economies, including increasing online penetration, strong concentration and consolidation tendencies, and service-intensive store operations (Gittenberger and Teller, 2025). Such conditions mirror the institutional and operational environment of many developed retail sectors, supporting the broader relevance of the findings. The population comprised frontline retail employees across major retail segments. The sample reflects key demographic and job-related characteristics of the retail workforce, stratified by age, gender, and sector. Data were collected via a web-based survey. The sample ($n = 1,006$) includes frontline retail employees aged 16+ with at least six months in retail, in various positions (store or department manager, salesperson, cashier, shelf supervisor, apprentice). Before we fully launched the survey, we pretested the same to reveal any inaccuracies. The average response time was 17 min. Only fully completed questionnaires that passed the attention check were retained. Of the 1,049 completed surveys, 38 were excluded due to failed attention checks and five due to monotonous response patterns, resulting in finally 1,006 respondents. The sample comprised 73.8% female, 25.9% male and 0.3% diverse participants, mostly aged 25–64 (15.1–20.8% per age group). Salespersons formed the largest occupational group (48.1%). Full demographics are provided in [Table A2](#).

3.2 Measures

Constructs were measured based on established scales, which were adapted where necessary, with all items rated on 6-point Likert scales. Retail working conditions (Aboul-Ela, 2016) were operationalised as a multidimensional construct reflecting four retail-specific dimensions identified in the conceptual framework. Items were adapted to the retail context and aggregated based on exploratory factor analysis and verbal validation among the researchers (Watkins, 2018). The EFA aimed to reduce items where necessary, explore the underlying structure among variables, assess construct unidimensionality and detect potential multicollinearity among latent variables (Yong and Pearce, 2013). We conducted the EFA using principal component analysis (Yong and Pearce, 2013) and evaluated assumptions with Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < 0.001$) and the KMO measure of sampling adequacy ($KMO > 0.80$). Communalities after varimax rotation were examined (communalities > 0.50) and factor loadings for each construct were assessed (loadings > 0.50). Only items without cross-loadings and falling within the threshold values were retained. Following the EFA, the research team discussed item reduction decisions and assessed the reliability of the scale. Both employee intention to stay constructs were measured using Du Preez and Bendixen's (2015) scale as a common basis, with the items applied either at the organisational or industry level. For reasons of face validity and consistency with the study context, the two reverse-coded items of the original four-item scale were excluded. Industry loyalty was assessed via a scale adapted from Homburg and Stock (2000). Measures finally used in the model are provided in [Table A3](#).

3.3 Common method variance

As a self-administered, web-based survey was used, the risk of common method bias (CMB) was considered, as it can compromise the validity of findings through systematic error and data

distortion (Richardson *et al.*, 2009). We implemented several measures to control CMB effects, including an unrelated marker variable and testing its correspondences with other constructs (Kock *et al.*, 2021).

To reduce common method bias, the questionnaire design followed established best practices (MacKenzie and Podsakoff, 2012; Richardson *et al.*, 2009). Dependent and independent variables were separated, with the dependent variables presented first. Anonymity and confidentiality help mitigate social desirability effects, while balanced item order reduces proximity bias (Weijters *et al.*, 2009). Ambiguity, complex wording and double-barrelled questions were avoided and all measures were adapted from validated scales. Data quality was further ensured through attention checks and a pre-test.

To assess potential common method bias, Harman's single-factor test (Harman, 1976) was applied through an unrotated exploratory factor analysis with all items loaded onto a single latent factor. The first factor explained 48.60% of total variance, below the commonly cited 50% threshold (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986). Since the first factor's variance did not exceed this limit, CMB is not considered a major concern. Correlations between the marker variable and the other constructs were insignificant ($p > 0.05$).

3.4 Control variables

We control for job profile, location and firm size. Job profiles differ in responsibility, autonomy and career prospects, affecting turnover attitudes (Mbane and Ezeuduji, 2016). Location matters due to commuting, mobility and local job alternatives, with rural areas facing greater retention challenges (Slagle, 2013). Firm size can shape human resource practices, support and development, with smaller firms fostering closeness and larger ones offering structured systems (Gelencsér *et al.*, 2025).

4. Analysis

4.1 Variance-based structural equation modelling

To evaluate the proposed research model, variance-based SEM was applied, as it is particularly suitable for analysing and predicting complex relations in multifaceted models (Hair *et al.*, 2021). This approach treats latent constructs as weighted composites of their indicators (Cho and Choi, 2020) and assesses the magnitude and direction of structural paths using significance tests (Tenenhaus *et al.*, 2005).

4.2 Measurement model assessment

Following established methodological practices (Hair *et al.*, 2021), the measurement model was evaluated for convergent and discriminant validity. Confirmatory composite analysis indicated that all factor loadings were highly significant ($p < 0.001$) and above the 0.70 threshold (Hulland, 1999). Composite reliability (CR) values exceeded the 0.70 threshold for all multi-item constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), confirming internal consistency. For the initial four-item intention to stay scale, reliability values did not meet the required threshold, indicating insufficient measurement quality, which necessitated scale reduction. To ensure discriminant validity, we removed cross-loading items for intention to stay, resulting in single-item measures for both retention constructs, see Table A3. As intention to stay is a direct attitudinal construct, single-item measures are consistent with prior research (Cho *et al.*, 2009). Average variance extracted (AVE) surpassed 0.50 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988), supporting convergent validity. Discriminant validity was confirmed for all items by comparing the squared AVE values with the correlations (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) and through the heterotrait-monotrait test (HTMT), in which all variables fell below the 0.90 threshold, as can be seen in Table 1.

4.3 Model robustness and endogeneity test

To test model robustness, the direct effects of control variables on the main endogenous constructs were examined (Robson *et al.*, 2008), revealing only one significant effect: firm size

Table 1. Discriminant validity assessment (HTMT)

Customers (C)	C	EITSE	EITSI	EIL	SG	TT	WLB
Employee Intention to Stay at the Employer (EITSE)	0.384						
Employee Intention to Stay in the Industry (EITSI)	0.415	0.513					
Employee Industry Loyalty (EIL)	0.623	0.594	0.714				
Salary and Growth (SG)	0.623	0.540	0.557	0.750			
Task and Team (TT)	0.704	0.505	0.515	0.697	0.798		
Work-Life Balance (WLB)	0.681	0.501	0.515	0.703	0.826	0.873	

Note(s): HTMT < 0.90

Source(s): Authors' own work

on industry loyalty ($t = 3.709$; $p < 0.001$). Structural consistency was assessed by estimating the model with and without controls, showing minor changes and confirming that core relationships remain unaffected. Endogeneity was tested via a Gaussian copula approach, with all effects insignificant ($p > 0.05$) (Becker *et al.*, 2022), indicating a robust model without endogeneity concerns.

5. Results

5.1 Direct effects

The direct effects reveal that the majority of our hypotheses are supported, following bootstrapping with a minimum of 1,000 subsamples (Chin, 1998). Since retail working conditions are modelled as an aggregated construct, this section reports the direct effects of its components work-life balance, task and team, salary and growth and customers. The effect of retail working conditions on the intention to stay with the employer (H1a) is supported for work-life balance ($t = 2.398$; $p < 0.05$), task and team ($t = 3.284$; $p < 0.005$) and salary and growth ($t = 5.986$; $p < 0.001$). Regarding H1b, the effects of task and team ($t = 2.328$; $p < 0.05$) and salary and growth ($t = 4.593$; $p < 0.001$) are supported. Regarding H1c, significant effects can be confirmed for all four working conditions: work-life balance ($t = 3.232$; $p < 0.005$), task and team ($t = 2.101$; $p < 0.05$), salary and growth ($t = 5.756$; $p < 0.001$) and customers ($t = 4.966$; $p < 0.001$). H2a is clearly supported, confirming the effect of intention to stay with the employer on intention to stay in the industry ($t = 7.920$; $p < 0.001$). The same applies to H2b, with a significant effect of intention to stay with the employer on industry loyalty ($t = 5.712$; $p < 0.001$). H3 is also strongly supported, with a highly significant effect of intention to stay in the industry on industry loyalty ($t = 12.920$; $p < 0.001$). Effect sizes are reported in Table A4.

5.2 Mediation effects

Following Hair *et al.* (2021), the effect of retail working conditions on industry loyalty is mediated by both intentions to stay for three working conditions. No mediation occurs for customer interactions. Significant support for H4 is found for work-life balance ($t = 2.227$; $p < 0.05$), task and team ($t = 2.875$; $p < 0.005$) and salary and growth ($t = 4.293$; $p < 0.001$).

5.3 Moderation effects

To establish moderation effects, the analysis applies multi-group analysis (Henseler, 2012). Effects are considered present if the p -value of the path coefficients in the group comparison is smaller than 0.05 or greater than 0.95 (Hair *et al.*, 2021). The results support H5a for work-life balance ($\Delta = -0.432$; $p < 0.005$) and task and team ($\Delta = 0.336$; $p < 0.005$). H5b receives

support for salary and growth ($\Delta = 0.355$; $p < 0.05$), while H5c is supported for work-life balance ($\Delta = -0.359$; $p < 0.005$). Customer interactions provide support for H5d ($\Delta = 0.003$; $p > 0.95$). In contrast, the analysis does not support H6a. The results support H6b for customer effects ($\Delta = -0.232$; $p < 0.05$), while support for H6c and H6d emerges for work-life balance ($\Delta = 0.003$; $p > 0.95$; $\Delta = 0.199$; $p < 0.05$).

6. Discussion

6.1 Theoretical implications

Extending theoretical frameworks: Our study contributes to three theoretical frameworks: job embeddedness theory (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001), social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) and spillover concept (Staines, 1980). For job embeddedness theory, findings show that retail working conditions map onto links, fit and sacrifice, shaping employees' embeddedness as reflected in their loyalty and intention to stay. This demonstrates that embeddedness mechanisms extend beyond organisational boundaries to industry-level loyalty and retention in retail. For social identity theory, identification with retail fosters belonging and attachment beyond individual employers, strengthening industry-level loyalty. By focussing on industry-level identification, the study extends the theory by highlighting a less examined level of analysis compared to organisational identification and emphasising sector-wide identity rather than organisation-specific identification. Regarding the spillover concept, attitudes and experiences formed at the organisational level transfer to the industry level, influencing broader sectoral commitment. The findings provide evidence for cross-level spillover, demonstrating attitude transfer across organisational and sectoral boundaries in a new context and thereby broadening the concept. This complements prior retail research on boundary-spanning and service-network relationships, which highlights how frontline actors connect organisational and broader retail-system experiences (Alexander *et al.*, 2016).

Focus from organisational-to industry-level loyalty: By shifting the focus from organisational-to industry-level loyalty in retail, this study extends industry-level views. Prior research considers industry-level perspectives in non-retail contexts (Davies *et al.*, 2025), while Foster *et al.* (2008) analyse industry-level loyalty in retail without incorporating retail-specific working conditions. By linking retail working conditions to both intentions to stay and industry-level loyalty, this study provides a differentiated understanding of how working conditions shape retention and loyalty at both organisational and industry levels. Overall, these contributions highlight the value of an industry-level perspective for understanding career choices, talent competition and evolving skill needs in retail.

Financial and career incentives for retention and loyalty: Salary and growth opportunities remain the strongest predictors of all three working conditions, confirming the central role of financial and career incentives in retail (Masters *et al.*, 2025). Notably, they represent the only factor stabilising employees at both organisational and industry levels simultaneously. Unlike other working conditions that primarily shape attachment or identification, financial and career prospects influence whether retail is perceived as a viable long-term career.

Differences in binding to employer/industry through task and team: Contrasting claims that task variety outweighs salary (Ineson *et al.*, 2013), task and team factors are the second-most important driver of staying with an employer and have a weaker but significant effect on industry loyalty, supporting research on meaningful work and team cohesion (Masters *et al.*, 2025; Ek Styvén *et al.*, 2022). This suggests that task and team factors foster workplace attachment and industry commitment but not long-term sector retention.

Creation of attachment without preventing exit through work-life balance: Work-life balance influences intention to stay with the employer and industry loyalty but not sector retention, similar to task and team factors, likely because it enhances satisfaction and emotional attachment to the current job and sector without affecting broader career or industry exit decisions (Qi *et al.*, 2024).

Occupational identification through customer interactions: Notably, customer interactions do not influence retention intentions but strongly predict industry loyalty. This counterintuitive

finding suggests that customer interactions strengthen identification with retail as an occupation rather than with a specific employer (Mayr and Teller, 2023), making them more relevant for industry-level attachment while remaining too ambivalent to directly drive firm-level retention.

Employee characteristics determine how working conditions matter: This study shows that the effects of retail working conditions are moderated by employee characteristics. Work-life balance has stronger effects for full-time and less experienced employees, consistent with findings that full-timers value balance more (Lyonette, 2015) and younger employees struggle more with work-life boundaries (Sturges and Guest, 2006). Customer interactions influence retention for younger employees, while salary and growth drive industry retention, likely due to financial dependence (Lee et al., 2025). Gender-specific patterns reveal that task and team factors affect industry retention more for women (Rogelberg and Rumery, 1996), whereas work-life balance impacts men more, challenging prior assumptions (Pace and Sciotto, 2022). Older employees are more influenced by customer experiences in industry loyalty, suggesting emotional attachment grows with experience. These moderation effects show that personal and job-related factors shape how working conditions translate into retention and loyalty.

6.2 Practical implications

This study provides practical insights for the retail sector, including chambers of commerce and labour market institutions. Identifying work conditions that shape retention and industry loyalty can help reduce turnover, stabilise the workforce and address the war for talent in retail.

6.2.1 Improving particular retail working conditions. Salary and career development are critical for retaining employees and building long-term loyalty in retail. Retail should ensure fair pay, clear promotion paths and visible development programs. Meaningful tasks, autonomy and supportive teams with effective leadership strengthen workplace and sector attachment. This can be achieved through clear responsibilities, skill development, collaboration and leadership training. Promoting work-life balance through flexible scheduling and respect for personal time further enhances commitment, well-being, and workforce stability.

6.2.2 Enhancing customer interactions. Customer interactions strongly influence employees' loyalty to the retail sector by fostering emotional and professional identification with work. Retail can strengthen this through training for challenging situations, coaching in positive engagement and promoting respectful customer relationships. Recognising and rewarding excellent service can further enhance pride for working in retail, professional identity and long-term sector commitment.

6.2.3 Tailoring human resource strategies. Moderation results highlight the value of personalised approaches. Age-specific interventions, as financial support for younger staff or engagement initiatives for older employees, gender-sensitive policies ensuring fair task distribution and well-being, and flexible work models adapted to hours and experience all enhance loyalty. These strategies help retailers address individual needs, making workplaces more attractive, inclusive and supportive.

6.2.4 Preparing the future of retail. Retail should use insights on working conditions, loyalty and retention to anticipate future sector needs. Investing in skills, career development and customer interactions strengthens workforce stability, supports adaptation to technological change and keeps the sector competitive.

6.3 Limitations and future research

This study has several limitations. Its quantitative, cross-sectional design restricts causal inferences and leaves underlying mechanisms unexplored compared to qualitative approaches. Focussing on Western-European retail may not capture insights from other cultural or institutional settings. The rise of online and omnichannel retail adds challenges beyond traditional working conditions, which may also affect industry loyalty. Future research should address these limitations using longitudinal, cross-cultural and mixed-methods designs to gain more nuanced insights into mechanisms shaping retention and industry loyalty.

Table A1. Overview of key literature

Author(s)	Year	Retail setting	Extension to industry-level analysis	Working conditions	Employee retention intentions	Employee loyalty	Key findings
Berthon, P., Ewing, M. and Hah, L.L.	2005	No	No	x			The study develops the EmpAt scale to measure potential employees' perceptions of employer attractiveness, naming working conditions like team, career opportunities and above-average salary
Burmann, C., Schaefer, K. and Maloney, P.	2008	No	Yes	x			The study shows that industry image has a strong influence on employer brand image
Chandra, S., Ghosh, P. and Sinha, S.	2023	Yes	No	x	x		The study finds that transformational leadership increase retail employees' intention to stay, with this effect occurring through stronger organizational identification
Davies, S., Nguyen, T., Stoermer, S., Froese, F.J. and Budhwar, P.	2025	No	Yes	x			The study finds that key industry image dimensions (pay, sincerity, innovativeness, and prestige) significantly influence organizational attractiveness
Ek Styvén, M., Näppä, A., Mariani, M. and Natarajan, R.	2022	No	No	x	x		The study shows that opportunities for creativity and innovation, along with competitive compensation, strongly enhance employees' intention to stay
Foster, C., Whysall, P. and Harris, L.	2008	Yes	Yes	x		x	The study finds employee loyalty in retail to be multi-dimensional, involving commitment to the industry, the organization and the store
Gelencsér, M., Kömüves, Z.S., Hollósy-Vadász, G. and Szabó-Szentgróti, G.	2025	No	No	x	x		The study shows that nature of work, benefits and co-worker relationships significantly influence employee retention, with normative and organizational commitment being key retention drivers
Kearney, T., Coughlan, J. and Kennedy, A.	2023	Yes	No	x		x	The study says that the physical work environment influences employee loyalty by enhancing satisfaction and positive emotional experiences at work

(continued)

Table A1. Continued

Author(s)	Year	Retail setting	Extension to industry-level analysis	Working conditions	Employee retention intentions	Employee loyalty	Key findings
King, C. and Grace, D.	2010	No	No	x		x	The study validates a model of employee-based brand equity, showing that strong internal branding significantly enhances employee behavior and fosters organizational benefits linked to loyalty and commitment
Machova, R., Zsigmond, T., Zsigmondova, A. and Seben, Z.	2022	Yes	No	x	x	x	The study finds financial incentives as key motivators, but poor communication, lack of decision-making power, job insecurity and high work pace negatively affect employee loyalty and retention
Masters, T., Swenson, M. and Rhoads, G.K.	2025	Yes	No	x	x	x	The study shows that job characteristics, psychological factors, organisational and family support strongly influence retail employee job satisfaction, making strategic retention efforts essential in competitive retail
Park, J., Ahn, J., Hyun, H. and Rutherford, B.N.	2021	Yes	No	x	x	x	The study finds that perceived organisational support increases employees' affective commitment and reduces emotional exhaustion, which in turn lowers their propensity to leave
Singh, D.	2019	No	No	x	x	x	The study highlights that a combination of traditional and modern retention methods, including leadership style, autonomy, career opportunities and flexible work, are key drivers of employee retention and loyalty
Own work	2026	Yes	Yes	x	x	x	Our study shows that salary and growth, task and team, work-life balance and customers influence retail employees' industry loyalty, while retention intentions mediate relationships between organizational and industry levels

Source(s): Authors' own work

Table A2. Sample description

Demographics	Frequency (<i>n</i> = 1,006)	Percentage
Gender		
Female	742	73.76%
Male	261	25.94%
Diverse	3	0.30%
Age in years		
16–24	62	11.7%
25–34	103	19.5%
35–44	107	20.2%
45–54	110	20.8%
55–64	80	15.1%
65–74	59	11.2%
Main residence		
In a city	437	43.4%
In a smaller city or suburb	219	21.8%
In a rural community or area	350	34.8%
Household size		
1 person	166	16.5%
2 people	356	35.4%
3 people	236	23.5%
4 people	166	16.5%
5 or more people	82	8.2%
Job profile		
Store manager	156	15.5%
Department manager	157	15.6%
Salesperson	484	48.1%
Cashier	135	13.4%
Shelf supervisor	58	5.8%
Apprentice	16	1.6%
Working hours		
Part-time	518	51.49%
Full-time	488	48.51%
Retail area		
Food	492	48.90%
Non-food	514	51.10%
Household income per month		
0–500 €	7	0.7%
501–1,000 €	46	4.6%
1,001–2,000 €	222	22.1%
2,001–3,000 €	228	22.7%
3,001–4,000 €	230	22.9%
4,001–5,000 €	89	8.8%
5,000+ €	77	7.7%
No information	107	10.6%

Source(s): Authors' own work

Table A3. Measurement model assessment

Items	Construct (references)	λ	Factor loading	t-value	CR	AVE	Scale
Retail Working Conditions (RWC) (Aboul-Ela, 2016) adapted							
Work-life balance							
WLB 1	How satisfied are you with the flexibility you have in managing your time at work?	0.895	0.795	49.795	0.917	0.614	1 = completely dissatisfied 6 = completely satisfied
WLB 2	How satisfied are you with compliance with the assigned duties?		0.724	33.078			
WLB 3	How satisfied are you with the flexibility of vacation planning in your job?		0.764	38.368			
WLB 4	How satisfied are you with your relationship with your supervisor and the support they provide you in your job?		0.750	40.826			
WLB 5	How satisfied are you with the interesting nature of the tasks in your job?		0.789	90.876			
WLB 6	How satisfied are you with the work-life balance in your job?		0.818	62.979			
WLB 7	How satisfied are you with the family-friendliness of your job?		0.837	74.468			
Task and team							
TT 1	How satisfied are you with the relationship with your colleagues and the support they provide you in your job?	0.873	0.718	31.292	0.908	0.665	1 = completely dissatisfied 6 = completely satisfied
TT 2	How satisfied are you with the atmosphere at work?		0.750	41.158			
TT 3	How satisfied are you with the workload in your job?		0.872	55.048			
TT 4	How satisfied are you with the variety of tasks in your job?		0.881	108.682			
TT 5	How satisfied are you with the meaningfulness of the tasks in your job?		0.843	69.539			
Salary and growth							
SG 1	How satisfied are you with the training opportunities in your job?	0.866	0.823	66.891	0.903	0.651	1 = completely dissatisfied 6 = completely satisfied
SG 2	How satisfied are you with the career advancement opportunities offered to you in your job?		0.832	69.380			
SG 3	How satisfied are you with the salary in your job?		0.792	52.377			
SG 4	How satisfied are you with the compensation packages offered to you in your job?		0.806	62.572			
SG 5	How satisfied are you with the health care measures in your job?		0.778	45.648			

(continued)

Table A3. Continued

Items	Construct (references)	λ	Factor loading	t-value	CR	AVE	Scale
<i>Customer interactions</i>							
C 1	How satisfied are you with your customers' behaviour in the store?	0.845	0.854	68.120	0.906	0.763	1 = completely dissatisfied 6 = completely satisfied
C 2	How satisfied are you with customer contact in your job?		0.890	94.819			
C 3	How satisfied are you with the relationship with your customers in your job?		0.876	71.767			
<i>Employee Intention to Stay at the Employer (EITSE) (Du Preez and Bendixen, 2015) adapted</i>							
EITSE	I rarely think about leaving my job.	1.000	1.000	/	1.000	1.000	1 = completely disagree 6 = completely agree
<i>Employee Intention to Stay in the Industry (EITSI) (Du Preez and Bendixen, 2015) adapted</i>							
EITSI	I plan to still be working in this industry in retail in five years' time.	1.000	1.000	/	1.000	1.000	1 = completely disagree 6 = completely agree
<i>Employee Industry Loyalty (EIL) (Homburg and Stock, 2000) adapted</i>							
EIL 1	I tell other people positive things about the retail industry I work in	0.928	0.874	83.542	0.946	0.777	1 = completely disagree 6 = completely agree
EIL 2	I recommend the retail industry to anyone who asks for my opinion		0.895	108.201			
EIL 3	For me, the retail industry is my first choice of workplace		0.905	119.581			
EIL 4	I intend to remain in the retail industry for a longer period of time		0.870	91.574			
EIL 5	I would not move away from the retail industry, even if another industry offered better compensation		0.861	76.507			

Note(s): All factor loadings were significant at $p < 0.001$; λ stands for Cronbach's alpha; CR stands for composite reliability; AVE stands for average variance extracted

Source(s): Authors' own work

Table A4. Effect sizes

Path	f-square
Work-Life Balance → Employee Intention to Stay at the Employer	0.008
Work-Life Balance → Employee Intention to Stay in the Industry	0.003
Work-Life Balance → Employee Industry Loyalty	0.011
Task and Team → Employee Intention to Stay at the Employer	0.013
Task and Team → Employee Intention to Stay in the Industry	0.006
Task and Team → Employee Industry Loyalty	0.005
Salary and Growth → Employee Intention to Stay at the Employer	0.046
Salary and Growth → Employee Intention to Stay in the Industry	0.027
Salary and Growth → Employee Industry Loyalty	0.048
Customers → Employee Intention to Stay at the Employer	0.001
Customers → Employee Intention to Stay in the Industry	0.002
Customers → Employee Industry Loyalty	0.036
Employee Intention to Stay at the Employer → Employee Intention to Stay in the Industry	0.103
Employee Intention to Stay at the Employer → Employee Industry Loyalty	0.041
Employee Intention to Stay in the Industry → Employee Industry Loyalty	0.249

Source(s): Authors' own work

References

- Aboul-Ela, G.M.B.E.D. (2016), "Employer branding: what constitutes an employer of choice?", *Journal of Business and Retail Management Research*, Vol. 11 No. 1, pp. 154-166.
- Alexander, A., Teller, C. and Roggeveen, A.L. (2016), "The boundary spanning of managers within service networks", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 69 No. 12, pp. 6031-6039, doi: [10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.05.018](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.05.018).
- Allen, N.J. and Meyer, J.P. (1990), "The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization", *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, Vol. 63 No. 1, pp. 1-18, doi: [10.1111/j.2044-8325.1990.tb00506.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8325.1990.tb00506.x).
- Allen, D.G., Bryant, P.C. and Vardaman, J.M. (2010), "Retaining talent: replacing misconceptions with evidence-based strategies", *Academy of Management Perspectives*, Vol. 24 No. 2, pp. 48-64, doi: [10.5465/amp.2010.51827775](https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2010.51827775).
- Ashforth, B.E. and Mael, F. (1989), "Social identity theory and the organization", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 20-39, doi: [10.2307/258189](https://doi.org/10.2307/258189).
- Audretsch, D.B. and Lehmann, E.E. (2005), "Does the knowledge spillover theory of entrepreneurship hold for regions?", *Research Policy*, Vol. 34 No. 8, pp. 1191-1202, doi: [10.1016/j.respol.2005.03.012](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2005.03.012).
- Avanzi, L., Fraccaroli, F., Sarchielli, G., Ullrich, J. and van Dick, R. (2014), "Staying or leaving: a combined social identity and social exchange approach to predicting employee turnover intentions", *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, Vol. 63 No. 3, pp. 272-289, doi: [10.1108/ijppm-02-2013-0028](https://doi.org/10.1108/ijppm-02-2013-0028).
- Bagozzi, R.P. and Yi, Y. (1988), "On the evaluation of structural equation models", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 64 No. 1, pp. 74-94, doi: [10.1007/bf02723327](https://doi.org/10.1007/bf02723327).
- Becker, J.M., Proksch, D. and Ringle, C.M. (2022), "Revisiting Gaussian copulas to handle endogenous regressors", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 50 No. 1, pp. 46-66, doi: [10.1007/s11747-021-00805-y](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-021-00805-y).
- Benraïss-Noailles, L. and Viot, C. (2021), "Employer brand equity effects on employees well-being and loyalty", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 126 No. 3, pp. 605-613, doi: [10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.02.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.02.002).
- Berthon, P., Ewing, M. and Hah, L.L. (2005), "Captivating company: dimensions of attractiveness in employer branding", *International Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 24 No. 2, pp. 151-172, doi: [10.1080/02650487.2005.11072912](https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2005.11072912).

- Blau, G. (2001), "On assessing the construct validity of two multidimensional constructs: occupational commitment and occupational entrenchment", *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 11 No. 3, pp. 279-298, doi: [10.1016/s1053-4822\(00\)00052-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/s1053-4822(00)00052-8).
- Boukis, A. and Christodoulides, G. (2020), "Investigating key antecedents and outcomes of employee-based brand equity", *European Management Review*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 41-55, doi: [10.1111/emre.12327](https://doi.org/10.1111/emre.12327).
- Burmann, C., Schaefer, K. and Maloney, P. (2008), "Industry image: its impact on the brand image of potential employees", *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 157-176, doi: [10.1057/palgrave.bm.2550112](https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.bm.2550112).
- Burrows, D.N., Porter, C.O.L.H. and Amber, B. (2022), "Beyond choosing to leave: the interactive effects of on- and off-the-job embeddedness on involuntary turnover", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 107 No. 1, pp. 130-141, doi: [10.1037/apl0000881](https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000881).
- Chandra, S., Ghosh, P. and Sinha, S. (2023), "Addressing employee turnover in retail through CSR and transformational leadership", *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, Vol. 51 No. 5, pp. 690-710, doi: [10.1108/ijrdm-07-2022-0237](https://doi.org/10.1108/ijrdm-07-2022-0237).
- Chin, W.W. (1998), "The partial least squares approach to structural equation modeling", *Modern Methods for Business Research*, No. 8, pp. 295-336.
- Cho, G. and Choi, J.Y. (2020), "An empirical comparison of generalized structured component analysis and partial least squares path modeling under variance-based structural equation models", *Behaviormetrika*, Vol. 47 No. 1, pp. 243-272, doi: [10.1007/s41237-019-00098-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s41237-019-00098-0).
- Cho, S., Johanson, M.M. and Guchait, P. (2009), "Employees intent to leave: a comparison of determinants of intent to leave versus intent to stay", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 374-381, doi: [10.1016/j.ijhm.2008.10.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2008.10.007).
- Costen, W.M. and Salazar, J. (2011), "The impact of training and development on employee job satisfaction, loyalty, and intent to stay in the lodging industry", *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism*, Vol. 10 No. 3, pp. 273-284, doi: [10.1080/15332845.2011.555734](https://doi.org/10.1080/15332845.2011.555734).
- Davies, S., Nguyen, T., Stoermer, S., Froese, F.J. and Budhwar, P. (2025), "Industry image perceptions and organizational attractiveness: results of an international survey", *Human Resource Management Journal*, Vol. 35 No. 3, pp. 613-634, doi: [10.1111/1748-8583.12582](https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12582).
- Doğan Al, A. and Aml, I. (2016), "The comparison of the individual performance levels between full-time and part-time employees: the role of job satisfaction", *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 235, pp. 382-391, doi: [10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.11.048](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.11.048).
- Du Preez, R. and Bendixen, M.T. (2015), "The impact of internal brand management on employee job satisfaction, brand commitment and intention to stay", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. 78-91, doi: [10.1108/ijbm-02-2014-0031](https://doi.org/10.1108/ijbm-02-2014-0031).
- Ek Styvén, M., Näppä, A., Mariani, M. and Natarajan, R. (2022), "Employee perceptions of employers' creativity and innovation: implications for employer attractiveness and branding in tourism and hospitality", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 141, pp. 290-298, doi: [10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.12.038](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.12.038).
- Fornell, C. and Larcker, D.F. (1981), "Structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error: algebra and statistics", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 382-388, doi: [10.1177/002224378101800313](https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378101800313).
- Foster, C., Whysall, P. and Harris, L. (2008), "Employee loyalty: an exploration of staff commitment levels towards retailing, the retailer and the store", *International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, Vol. 18 No. 4, pp. 423-435, doi: [10.1080/09593960802299494](https://doi.org/10.1080/09593960802299494).
- Francioni, B., Curina, I., Hegner, S.M. and Cioppi, M. (2022), "Predictors of continuance intention of online food delivery services: gender as moderator", *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, Vol. 50 No. 12, pp. 1437-1457, doi: [10.1108/ijrdm-11-2021-0537](https://doi.org/10.1108/ijrdm-11-2021-0537).
- Fuller, D., Logan, B., Suarez, P. and Valkova, A. (2022), "How retailers can attract and retain frontline talent amid the Great Attrition", available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/how-retailers-can-attract-and-retain-frontline-talent-amid-the-great-attrition> (accessed 2 December 2024).

- Gelencsér, M., Kömüves, Z.S., Hollósy-Vadász, G. and Szabó-Szentgróti, G. (2025), "Modelling employee retention in small and medium-sized enterprises and large enterprises in a dynamically changing business environment", *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, Vol. 33 No. 5, pp. 1006-1038, doi: [10.1108/ijoa-09-2023-3961](https://doi.org/10.1108/ijoa-09-2023-3961).
- Gittenberger, E. and Teller, C. (2025), *Online-Shopping Report 2024 – Zwischen Globaler Dynamik Und Lokalen Herausforderungen*, JKU Institute for Retailing, Sales and Marketing, Linz/ Vienna.
- Gupta, M. and Shaheen, M. (2017), "The relationship between psychological capital and turnover intention: work engagement as mediator and work experience as moderator", *Jurnal Pengurusan*, Vol. 49, pp. 117-126, doi: [10.17576/pengurusan-2017-49-10](https://doi.org/10.17576/pengurusan-2017-49-10).
- Hair, J.F., Hult, G., Ringle, C.M. and Sarstedt, M. (2021), *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)*, SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Harman, H.H. (1976), *Modern Factor Analysis*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.
- Henly, J.R. and Lambert, S.J. (2014), "Unpredictable work timing in retail jobs: implications for employee work-life conflict", *ILR Review*, Vol. 67 No. 3, pp. 986-1016, doi: [10.1177/0019793914537458](https://doi.org/10.1177/0019793914537458).
- Henseler, J. (2012), "PLS-MGA: a non-parametric approach to partial least squares-based multi-group analysis", in *Challenges at the Interface of Data Analysis, Computer Science, and Optimization*, Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg, pp. 495-501.
- Holtom, B.C. and Darabi, T. (2018), "Job embeddedness as a tool for improving employee retention", in Coetzee, M., Potgieter, I. and Ferreira, N. (Eds), *Psychology of Retention*, Springer, Cham, pp. 95-117.
- Homburg, C. and Stock, R. (2000), *Der Kundenorientierte Mitarbeiter*, Gabler, Wiesbaden.
- Hosie, P., Jayashree, P., Tchantchane, A. and Lee, B.S. (2013), "The effect of autonomy, training opportunities, age and salaries on job satisfaction in the South East Asian retail petroleum industry", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 24 No. 21, pp. 3980-4007, doi: [10.1080/09585192.2013.829517](https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2013.829517).
- Hulland, J. (1999), "Use of partial least squares (PLS) in strategic management research: a review of four recent studies", *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 195-204, doi: [10.1002/\(sici\)1097-0266\(199902\)20:2<195::aid-smj13>3.0.co;2-7](https://doi.org/10.1002/(sici)1097-0266(199902)20:2<195::aid-smj13>3.0.co;2-7).
- Ineson, E.M., Benke, E. and László, J. (2013), "Employee loyalty in Hungarian hotels", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 32, pp. 31-39, doi: [10.1016/j.ijhm.2012.04.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2012.04.001).
- Karkkainen, M. (2024), "AI in the retail enterprise: two truths and one myth", available at: <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbestechcouncil/2024/06/28/ai-in-the-retail-enterprise-two-truths-and-one-myth/> (accessed 3 December 2024).
- Kearney, T., Coughlan, J. and Kennedy, A. (2023), "The influence of the physical work environment on retail employees", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 37 No. 6, pp. 719-731, doi: [10.1108/jsm-04-2022-0130](https://doi.org/10.1108/jsm-04-2022-0130).
- King, C. and Grace, D. (2010), "Building and measuring employee-based brand equity", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 44 Nos 7-8, pp. 938-961, doi: [10.1108/03090561011047472](https://doi.org/10.1108/03090561011047472).
- Knight, D.K., Crustinger, C. and Kim, H. (2006), "The impact of retail work experience, career expectation, and job satisfaction on retail career intention", *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 1-14, doi: [10.1177/0887302x0602400101](https://doi.org/10.1177/0887302x0602400101).
- Kock, F., Berbekova, A. and Assaf, A.G. (2021), "Understanding and managing the threat of common method bias: detection, prevention and control", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 86, pp. 1-10, doi: [10.1016/j.tourman.2021.104330](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2021.104330).
- Lee, M., Oh, K. and Kim, H. (2025), "Effects of organizational culture and pay levels on employee retention: focused on generational difference", *Administrative Sciences*, Vol. 15 No. 4, pp. 1-19, doi: [10.3390/admsci15040125](https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci15040125).
- Leupold, C.R., Ellis, L.E. and Valle, M. (2013), "Job embeddedness and retail pharmacists' intention to leave", *Psychologist-Manager Journal*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 197-216, doi: [10.1037/mgr0000006](https://doi.org/10.1037/mgr0000006).

- Lyonette, C. (2015), "Part-time work, work-life balance and gender equality", *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, Vol. 37 No. 3, pp. 321-333, doi: [10.1080/09649069.2015.1081225](https://doi.org/10.1080/09649069.2015.1081225).
- Machova, R., Zsigmond, T., Zsigmondova, A. and Seben, Z. (2022), "Employee satisfaction and motivation of retail store employees", *Marketing and Management of Innovations*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 67-83, doi: [10.21272/mmi.2022.1-05](https://doi.org/10.21272/mmi.2022.1-05).
- MacKenzie, S.B. and Podsakoff, P.M. (2012), "Common method bias in marketing: causes, mechanisms, and procedural remedies", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 88 No. 4, pp. 542-555, doi: [10.1016/j.jretai.2012.08.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2012.08.001).
- Masters, T., Swenson, M. and Rhoads, G.K. (2025), "Help wanted: attracting and keeping retail employees in today's competitive market", *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, Vol. 53 No. 4, pp. 347-363, doi: [10.1108/ijrdm-10-2023-0621](https://doi.org/10.1108/ijrdm-10-2023-0621).
- Mayr, K. and Teller, C. (2023), "Customer deviance in retailing: managers' emotional support and employees' affective wellbeing", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 72, pp. 1-12, doi: [10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103291](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103291).
- Mayr, K. and Teller, C. (2024), "Channel-switching behaviour and customer deviance", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. 52 Nos 10-11, pp. 1073-1091, doi: [10.1108/ijrdm-11-2023-0634](https://doi.org/10.1108/ijrdm-11-2023-0634).
- Mbane, T.L. and Ezeuduji, I.O. (2016), "Hotel employee profile and employee retention statements: the case of hotels in Cape Town, South Africa", *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 1-11.
- Messini, V. (2022), "Employer branding in the retail industry: a systems approach", *International Journal of Applied Systemic Studies*, Vol. 9 No. 4, pp. 366-380, doi: [10.1504/ijass.2022.10051565](https://doi.org/10.1504/ijass.2022.10051565).
- Meyer, J.P., Allen, N.J. and Smith, C.A. (1993), "Commitment to organizations and occupations: extension and test of a three-component conceptualization", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 78 No. 4, pp. 538-551, doi: [10.1037/0021-9010.78.4.538](https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.78.4.538).
- Mitchell, T.R., Holtom, B.C., Lee, T.W., Sablinski, C.J. and Erez, M. (2001), "Why people stay: using job embeddedness to predict voluntary turnover", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 44 No. 6, pp. 1102-1121, doi: [10.2307/3069391](https://doi.org/10.2307/3069391).
- Mowday, R.T., Porter, L.W. and Steers, R.M. (1979), "The measurement of organizational commitment", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 224-247, doi: [10.1016/0001-8791\(79\)90072-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791(79)90072-1).
- Murali, S., Poddar, A. and Seema, A. (2017), "Employee loyalty, organizational performance and performance evaluation – a critical survey", *Journal of Business and Management*, Vol. 19 No. 8, pp. 62-74.
- Nguyen, T.D., Nguyen, T.T. and Nguyen, P.C. (2023), "Job embeddedness and turnover intention in the public sector: the role of life satisfaction and ethical leadership", *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, Vol. 36 Nos 4-5, pp. 463-479, doi: [10.1108/ijpsm-03-2023-0070](https://doi.org/10.1108/ijpsm-03-2023-0070).
- Nilsen, E.R., Olafsen, A.H. and Nadeau, J. (2026), "Rethinking employer attractiveness: a qualitative exploration of potential employees' perception of employer attractiveness attributes", *Corporate Reputation Review*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 91-103, doi: [10.1057/s41299-024-00207-0](https://doi.org/10.1057/s41299-024-00207-0).
- Obeng, A.F., Azinga, S.A., Bentil, J., Ellis, F.Y.A. and Boateng Coffie, R. (2024), "Investigating the effects of off-the-job embeddedness on turnover intentions: does affective commitment play a role?", *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, Vol. 32 No. 10, pp. 2610-2631, doi: [10.1108/ijoa-10-2023-4044](https://doi.org/10.1108/ijoa-10-2023-4044).
- Otto, A.S., Szymanski, D.M. and Varadarajan, R. (2020), "Customer satisfaction and firm performance: insights from over a quarter century of empirical research", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 48 No. 3, pp. 543-564, doi: [10.1007/s11747-019-00657-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-019-00657-7).
- Pace, F. and Sciotto, G. (2022), "Gender differences in the relationship between work-life balance, career opportunities and general health perception", *Sustainability*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 1-10, doi: [10.3390/su14010357](https://doi.org/10.3390/su14010357).

- Park, J., Ahn, J., Hyun, H. and Rutherford, B.N. (2021), "Examining antecedents of retail employees' propensity to leave", *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, Vol. 49 No. 6, pp. 795-812, doi: [10.1108/ijrdm-02-2019-0035](https://doi.org/10.1108/ijrdm-02-2019-0035).
- Peltokorpi, V. and Allen, D.G. (2024), "Job embeddedness and voluntary turnover in the face of job insecurity", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 45 No. 3, pp. 416-433, doi: [10.1002/job.2728](https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2728).
- Podsakoff, P.M. and Organ, D.W. (1986), "Self-reports in organizational research: problems and prospects", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 531-544, doi: [10.1177/014920638601200408](https://doi.org/10.1177/014920638601200408).
- Qi, L., Yee, C.M. and Fah, B.C.Y. (2024), "The role of work-life balance in enhancing employee loyalty", *Accounting and Corporate Management*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 1-5.
- Richardson, H.A., Simmering, M.J. and Sturman, M.C. (2009), "A tale of three perspectives", *Organizational Research Methods*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 762-800, doi: [10.1177/1094428109332834](https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428109332834).
- Robson, M.J., Katsikeas, C.S. and Bello, D.C. (2008), "Drivers and performance outcomes of trust in international strategic alliances: the role of organizational complexity", *Organization Science*, Vol. 19 No. 4, pp. 647-665, doi: [10.1287/orsc.1070.0329](https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1070.0329).
- Rogelberg, S.G. and Rumery, S.M. (1996), "Gender diversity, team decision quality, time on task, and interpersonal cohesion", *Small Group Research*, Vol. 27 No. 1, pp. 79-90, doi: [10.1177/1046496496271004](https://doi.org/10.1177/1046496496271004).
- Sainato, M. (2024), "'People forget their manners': US retail workers brace for Black Friday shopping rush", available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2024/nov/29/black-friday-retail-workers> (accessed 2 December 2024).
- Schrag, B. (2001), "The moral significance of employee loyalty", *Business Ethics Quarterly*, Vol. 11 No. 1, pp. 41-66, doi: [10.5840/10.2307/3857868](https://doi.org/10.5840/10.2307/3857868).
- Singh, D. (2019), "A literature review on employee retention with focus on recent trends", *International Journal of Scientific Research in Science Engineering and Technology*, Vol. 6, pp. 425-431, doi: [10.32628/ijrst195463](https://doi.org/10.32628/ijrst195463).
- Slagle, D.R. (2013), "Recruitment and retention strategies for hospital laboratory personnel in urban and rural settings", *Clinical Laboratory Science*, Vol. 26 No. 1, pp. 10-14, doi: [10.29074/ascls.26.1.10](https://doi.org/10.29074/ascls.26.1.10).
- Staines, G.L. (1980), "Spillover versus compensation: a review of the literature on the relationships between work and nonwork", *Human Relations*, Vol. 33 No. 2, pp. 111-129, doi: [10.1177/001872678003300203](https://doi.org/10.1177/001872678003300203).
- Sturges, J. and Guest, D. (2006), "Working to live or living to work? Work/life balance early in the career", *Human Resource Management Journal*, Vol. 14 No. 4, pp. 5-20, doi: [10.1111/j.1748-8583.2004.tb00130.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1748-8583.2004.tb00130.x).
- Suhartanto, D. and Brien, A. (2018), "Multidimensional engagement and store performance: the perspective of frontline retail employees", *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, Vol. 67 No. 5, pp. 809-824, doi: [10.1108/ijppm-03-2017-0065](https://doi.org/10.1108/ijppm-03-2017-0065).
- Tajfel, H. and Turner, J.C. (1979), "An integrative theory of intergroup conflict", in Austin, W.G. and Worchel, S. (Eds), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, Brooks/Cole, Monterey, CA, pp. 33-37.
- Tanwar, K. and Prasad, A. (2017), "Employer brand scale development and validation: a second-order factor approach", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 46 No. 2, pp. 389-409, doi: [10.1108/pr-03-2015-0065](https://doi.org/10.1108/pr-03-2015-0065).
- Team Stage (2024), "Employee turnover statistics: causes and solutions in 2024", available at: <https://teamstage.io/employee-turnover-statistics/> (accessed 1 December 2024).
- Tenenhaus, M., Vinzi, V.E., Chatelin, Y.M. and Lauro, C. (2005), "PLS path modeling", *Computational Statistics and Data Analysis*, Vol. 48 No. 1, pp. 159-205, doi: [10.1016/j.csda.2004.03.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.csda.2004.03.005).

- Waldman, A. (2024), "It's not just wages. Retailers are mistreating workers in a more insidious way", available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/19/opinion/part-time-workers-usa.html> (accessed 2 December 2024).
- Wang, X. and Omar, N.A.B. (2023), "Nexus between brand love, loyalty, affective commitment and positive word of mouth: in the context of social identity theory", *Sustainability*, Vol. 15 No. 4, pp. 1-12.
- Watkins, M.W. (2018), "Exploratory factor analysis: a guide to best practice", *Journal of Black Psychology*, Vol. 44 No. 3, pp. 219-246, doi: [10.1177/0095798418771807](https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798418771807).
- Weijters, B., Geuens, M. and Schillewaert, N. (2009), "The proximity effect: the role of inter-item distance on reverse-item bias", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, Vol. 26 No. 1, pp. 2-12, doi: [10.1016/j.ijresmar.2008.09.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2008.09.003).
- Wularsih, E.A. and Octafian, R. (2024), "The impact of work environment and job satisfaction on employee loyalty", *International Journal of Economics, Business Management and Accounting*, Vol. 6 No. 2, pp. 99-108, doi: [10.59890/ijebma.v6i2.2218](https://doi.org/10.59890/ijebma.v6i2.2218).
- Yong, A.G. and Pearce, S. (2013), "A beginner's guide to factor analysis: focusing on exploratory factor analysis", *Tutorials in Quantitative Methods for Psychology*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 79-94, doi: [10.20982/tqmp.09.2.p079](https://doi.org/10.20982/tqmp.09.2.p079).

Corresponding author

Sophie Weidinger can be contacted at: sophie.weidinger@jku.at