

Abstract

Purpose

This paper examines the interplay between self-efficacy and career inheritance, and its influence on career commitment in the hospitality sector. High labour turnover, unclear career paths and the transient nature of the work available in hospitality render it a suitable industry context that allows us to explore career commitment patterns.

Design/methodology/approach

Drawing on life history methodology, semi-structured interviews were conducted with hospitality professionals holding a relevant degree but no longer employed in the hospitality industry.

Findings

The findings revealed the interplay between self-efficacy, career inheritance and career commitment as well as the speed of decline of career commitment, visualised as patterns of the leaving process. Although an infinite number of variations are possible, data unveiled the three main patterns.

Research limitations

The schematic illustrations of the patterns of the leaving process are not representative. The purposive sample comprises only of ex-hospitality professionals and generalisations can be considered in future studies.

Practical implications

This newly conceptualised understanding of career commitment enables researchers to reconsider the fundamental reasons why individuals leave the hospitality industry, whilst also offering hospitality managers deeper insights into how the three identified patterns could inform recruitment and selection.

Originality/value

Conceptualising patterns of career commitment: the leaving process in hospitality Research Paper

This paper contributes to the literature through its meaningful theoretical extension in the context of career development studies. The unique concept of the leaving process addresses the prevalent issue of turnover and generates important implications.

Keywords

career development, hospitality, life history, career commitment, self-efficacy, career inheritance

1. Introduction

Career requirements have shifted for a 21st century employee, who now works toward becoming a lifelong learner, can use sophisticated information technologies, and more importantly, self-manages their career and adapts to changes caused by increased globalisation, pressure for productivity, or changing and blurring of industries and jobs (Amundson, 2005; Sullivan and Baruch, 2009). Such career complexities have recently become evident in the rapidly changing work environment of the hospitality industry (WTTC, 2017). A leading generator of income, hospitality employs 3.2 million people, and is the third largest private sector employer representing 10% of the United Kingdom's (UK) employment (UK Hospitality, 2018). The industry plays a significant role in creating new jobs both, in a region and within minority groups as revealed by Casado-Díaz and Simón (2016) and Salihoğlu and Gezici (2018). However, the hospitality and tourism sector in the UK needs to recruit 1.3 million staff by 2024 as a quarter of hospitality and tourism businesses have vacancies of which 38% are considered hard-to-fill (People 1st, 2017). Inconvenient hours, low pay and benefits, the transient nature of work, unclear career paths and a perceived lack of career progression continue to be cited as reasons for low retention rate in this industry in the UK (Baum, 2015; Hawkins, 2018). Fourth Analytics 2017 found that 86% of employees in the UK are paid by hour due to the nature of the business (Daly, 2017). Largely due to seasonality, the industry also requires businesses to "operate on a small skeleton permanent workforce and employ additional casual staff during peak periods" (Goh and Lee, 2018: 20). Yet, not surprisingly, in 2015 18% of hospitality and tourism businesses stated staff lacked the necessary skills to meet the business needs (Kent, 2017). The dominant labour supply strategy based on casual contracts (Davidson *et al.*, 2010) means that individuals have little protection in law, are paid the national minimum wage and, as a result, are less likely to be committed to the organisation or the industry altogether. The Workforce Commission 2030 put forward three recommendations to help hospitality and tourism businesses improve productivity with one of the three recommendations being a national campaign to eliminate negative perceptions of hospitality careers (UK Hospitality, 2018).

As Brown *et al.* (2016) state, finding the reasons why people leave the industry is important, as increased levels of turnover lead to increased costs to an organisation. Recently, it was reported that turnover costs the sector £1.1 billion annually with an average cost of recruitment and training of £750 per person (Kent, 2017). Existing research provides some

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3 answers related to the reasons why hospitality management graduates leave or never enter
4 the hospitality industry, such as change of interest; better opportunities elsewhere; low pay;
5 little opportunity for job progression; long hours; incompatibility with family/social life; the
6 negative view of the industry; potential workforce health and safety issues (cf. O'Leary and
7 Deegan, 2005; Barron *et al.*, 2007; Richardson, 2009; Goh and Lee, 2018). High retention rates
8 of Generation Y hospitality graduates can be attributed to enjoyable work and an exciting and
9 challenging career, whereas long hours and poor compensation as reasons for leaving (Brown
10 *et al.*, 2015). Although there is much research on turnover as a critical problem facing the
11 hospitality industry (cf. Brown *et al.*, 2016; Rehman and Mubashar, 2017; Afsar *et al.*, 2018;
12 Sharma and Gursoy, 2018; Akgunduz and Eryilmaz, 2018), Baum *et al.* (2016: 18) has called
13 for future research on hospitality and tourism workforce to "extend beyond a 'problem
14 solving' managerial perspective on workforce research and seek to engage with explanation
15 as a starting point in seeking change". Whilst Bloome *et al.* (2010) have urged for more in-
16 depth research on psychological contract and employee's intentions to leave the hospitality
17 industry, Akkermans and Kubasch (2017) have argued for research on specific career paths of
18 certain target groups. Therefore, to echo Brown *et al.* (2016), it is proposed that further
19 insights on this topic are of paramount importance to retain an educated hospitality
20 workforce and to help with a reduction in hospitality graduate turnover. The sources cited in
21 the reviewed literature have been largely based on quantitative methodology employing
22 empirical survey as a method for data collection (O'Leary and Deegan, 2005; Barron *et al.*,
23 2007; Richardson, 2009; Goh and Lee, 2018). A considerable lack of research employing
24 qualitative methodology to understand the reasons for high turnover in the hospitality
25 industry was recently highlighted by Peters and Kallmuenzer (2018).

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This paper aims to gain insights into career trajectories of ex-hospitality professionals with a
view of understanding why they left the hospitality industry by drawing on three
interdisciplinary concepts - career commitment, career inheritance and self-efficacy, explored
in detail in the next section of this paper. Current review of literature in the field of hospitality
management revealed no research that combines the three aforementioned concepts, using
a life history methodology within the field of hospitality management to understand why
hospitality graduates left the hospitality industry. Given this gap in the academic literature, it
is critical to shed light on this issue and to provide suitable recommendations.

2. Theoretical Background

It is important to understand why people leave the hospitality industry, even though some do return. As such this research focuses on those no longer employed in the industry, which is an under-researched population group (cf. Brown *et al.*, 2016). The following sections examine separately the concepts of career commitment, career inheritance and self-efficacy. Consequently, the proposed interaction between these concepts forms the theoretical framework of the complexities of career-decision making in the hospitality industry.

Career commitment

Commitment is a complex and multifaceted construct, widely conceptualised as multidimensional (Meyer *et al.*, 2002) and lacking in an agreed definition which, as explained by Brien *et al.* (2015), stems largely from the concept of commitment being extensively researched and explored in many theoretical fields. Despite significant research attention on the subject of commitment (cf. Meyer *et al.*, 1993; Brien *et al.*, 2015), historically the work on career commitment has received the least consideration (Goulet and Singh, 2002). In this research, career commitment is considered “an affective concept which represents identification with a series of related jobs in a specific field of work and is behaviourally expressed in an ability to cope with disappointments in the pursuit of career goals” (Aryee and Tan, 1992: 289). It is proposed that the ability to cope with disappointments whilst pursuing career goals allows the linking of career commitment with self-efficacy. Originally, commitment was conceptualised in relation to organisations as the three-component model of commitment (Meyer *et al.*, 1993). In this paper the model is applied to understanding career commitment. According to Meyer *et al.* (2002), affective commitment is the strongest dimension of commitment which derives from a satisfying career experience. Continuance commitment arises under two conditions: when investment made is greater than the possibility of leaving; or when continuing in the chosen career is unavoidable. Normative commitment develops through the socialisation of norms (Meyer *et al.*, 2002). Challenging work experience, positive professional development experiences, supportive organisational environment (Sullivan *et al.*, 1998), and the inner characteristics of an individual, such as self-worth and resilience (Goulet and Singh, 2002) enhance the levels of career commitment.

Career inheritance

Having a family with a long career history can contribute to the normative commitment, which is linked to career inheritance, a multi-faceted concept (Inkson, 2004). According to Inkson (2004) careers are inherited from the family into which one is born, and family occupations and socio-economic status shape pre-career childhood experiences and expectations. The conceptual basis of career inheritance is drawn from a study by Goodale and Hall (1976), where parents played a significant role for students who were deciding about their college and career plans. The theoretical foundations of this concept are based on the Gottfredson's (2002) theory of circumscription, compromise and self-creation. As explained by Gottfredson (1996), choosing a career is a developmental process which commences in childhood. As children grow in awareness of themselves and their social place, vocational options are eliminated if incompatible with their evolving self-image (Swanson and Fouad, 2010). Furthermore, career inheritance considers an individual's past and the influence of significant others, and how they have shaped one's life and career (Fouad *et al.*, 2016). Recognising the structure and agency dichotomy, Inkson (2007) argues that a lack of equality within society means people's choices are often inhibited by structural constraints, and they struggle to become proactive agents of their career choices. Yet, knowledge of one's career inheritance should empower the decision-maker to either accept or reject this legacy (Inkson, 2004), which will promote a more proactive career behaviour.

Self-efficacy

As career inheritance resembles the structure, self-efficacy is a more powerful factor to structure in guiding people's actions according to Bandura (1995). Assuming a significant ability and freedom to overcome the constraints of one's career inheritance, having strong beliefs in one's capabilities will help to persist in chosen pursuits (Sewell, 1992). Perceived self-efficacy "refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (Bandura, 1995: 2), and is central to the social cognitive theory (SCT), which favours the emergent form of agency (Bandura, 1986). High self-efficacy is likely to lead to increased performance and productivity (Cherian and Jacob, 2013), higher levels of career commitment (Niu, 2010), employees becoming more motivated to pursue self-realisation and learn voluntarily (Bandura, 1997; Niu, 2010), and is critical to understanding career commitment (Betz and Hackett, 2006). Self-efficacy can be

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3 developed and modified through four sources (Bandura, 1977; 1998). Previous
4 accomplishments are the most influential source of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1998), because
5 success achieved on one's own is the most meaningful (Usher and Pajares, 2008). Observing
6 and modelling one's own behaviour on successful others, and encouragement and verbal
7 persuasion also increase self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; 1995; 1998), whereas mentoring and
8 coaching help to develop positive attitudes and career capital (Akkermans and Kubasch,
9 2017). Finally, physical and emotional states enable people to judge their capabilities and
10 learn how to act on them to achieve the most desired outcomes (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy
11 has a wide application across many disciplines, but its power to influence life paths is most
12 visible in career choice and development studies (Lent *et al.*, 1994) strongly supported in the
13 literature (cf. Betz and Hackett, 1997; 2006; Betz, 2000).

24 25 *Career commitment, career inheritance and self-efficacy in hospitality management* 26 *research*

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28 Sharma and Gursoy (2018) suggest that the subjects of employee turnover and employee
29 retention and intention to stay or leave have been the dominant focus of past human
30 resources (HR) research in the hospitality and tourism industry. Rehman and Mubashar (2017)
31 identified factors which influence turnover and these are individual and organisational
32 variables, such as pay and promotion, external environment, and attitudinal variables such as
33 organisational commitment. Better training and development programmes and encouraging
34 work-life balance are necessary factors to ensuring high employee retention in the hospitality
35 industry (Deery and Jago, 2015). Appropriate levels of pay and career opportunities have also
36 been cited, alongside empowerment and rewards (Karatepe, 2013) and better employment
37 conditions (Yang *et al.*, 2012). The perceived negative image of the industry has been also an
38 issue for staff retention (cf. Hausknecht, *et al.* 2009; Deery and Jago, 2015). However, as
39 argued by Baum *et al.* (2016), HR in tourism and hospitality continues to be under-researched
40 and fragmented at topic, analytical, theoretical and methods levels.

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42 There is much research on organisational commitment in the hospitality industry, for example
43 in relation to turnover intentions (cf. Kang *et al.*, 2014; Akgunduz and Eryilmaz, 2018), or
44 career expectations of hospitality management graduates (Brown *et al.*, 2016). It is striking to
45 find that the concept of career commitment is employed less often, and yet the concept of
46 career has shifted towards agency and career self-management (Akkermans and Kubasch,
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2017) offering opportunities for professional development beyond the boundaries of an employing organisation. Self-efficacy was found to be negatively related with job stress which, in turn, is positively related with the turnover intentions (Choi and Kim, 2013; Rehman and Mubashar, 2017). Chuang and Dellmann-Jenkins (2010) found self-efficacy as one of the factors that influences hospitality management students' career intentions in the hospitality industry. High levels of self-efficacy, task value, and task importance could also increase employee motivation (DiPietro and Condly, 2007). Whilst there is sufficient research on self-efficacy in the hospitality industry and career decision-making, job stress, turnover intentions, and more recently playing sport and self-efficacy development (Choi and Kim, 2013; Rehman and Mubashar, 2017; Williams *et al.*, 2018), there is limited amount of research using both, self-efficacy and career commitment in the hospitality industry. Research by Niu (2010) investigated the effects of self-efficacy on foodservice industry employees' career commitment and found that high self-efficacy indicates higher levels of career commitment. There is very limited research on career inheritance in the hospitality industry, because this concept has not been theorised or operationalised. Getz and Petersen (2004) took a business view of inheritance and explored barriers to inheritance among family businesses in tourism and hospitality, such as location or viability of business, which all point to very low rates of inheritance. Peters and Kallmuenzer's (2018) research found that family firms develop a strong emotional attachment to the family business. It is also known that this industry is dominated by small and medium-sized family firms (Getz and Carlsen, 2000; Peters and Kallmuenzer, 2018). Therefore, it is proposed that career inheritance may help to shed light on reasons behind high turnover in the industry. The authors did not find any other examples of research on inheriting a career in the hospitality industry. Neither did the authors find research bringing together the concepts of career commitment, self-efficacy and career inheritance within the context of the hospitality industry, or in the social sciences literature. In the literature examined the three interdisciplinary concepts are individually likely to be influential on one's decision to leave the hospitality industry. However, the literature does not consider how these three concepts interact with each other, if at all. This paper aims to illuminate this interaction by analysing rich interview data provided by hospitality management graduates, no longer employed in the hospitality industry.

3. Research Design

A flexible approach to data collection is adopted, to bring out themes related to career commitment, career inheritance and self-efficacy, and to standardise the interview process (Miller, 2000). This research draws on principles of life history- the historical categorisation of individuals' events and career stories (Goodson and Phillimore, 2004), which involves analysing one's 'life as a whole' (Atkinson, 2002; Ladkin, 2004). Individual retrospective memories became "a window onto broader social and societal conditions" (Cole and Knowles, 2001: 12). To best capture participants' responses related to the three concepts, semi-structured interviews were chosen due to a lack of qualitative research on understanding turnover in the hospitality industry.

To achieve a complete picture of each participant's life history, interview questions were designed to reveal information that covered the totality of participants' career choices. The interview questions also focused on different periods in participants' lives, and were not asked in the same order during each interview. According to May (1991), a qualitative study must balance flexibility and consistency in the interviews, and whilst open-ended questions were asked to make sure each participant was able to give personal and precise answers, they were also able to comment and expand on their answers without restrictions from close-ended questions and from a rigid interview schedule.

Three interviews were conducted in person, mainly in participants' workplaces; one interview was conducted over the phone, as requested by the participant; the remaining thirteen were conducted using Skype or FaceTime. Although face-to-face interviews offer several advantages, such as allowing the interviewer to witness social cues (Lavrakas, 2008) which can give additional information to the verbal answer (Morris, 2015), Skype or other Internet-based methods of interviewing are equally beneficial as they also ensure that "a neutral yet personal location is maintained for both parties throughout the process" (Hanna, 2012: 241).

Selection of Participants

Data collection took place during the summer of 2015 and was concluded in 2016. Purposive sampling was used to select individuals who could purposefully inform the research problem as recommended by Warren (2002). To bound the sample and to provide insights relevant for the hospitality industry in the United Kingdom, hospitality management graduates, no longer employed by the hospitality industry, form the chosen population. This population is

identified as under researched; the focus so far has been on understanding hospitality students' and graduates' career expectations and paths (McKercher *et al.*, 1995; King *et al.*, 2003; O'Leary and Deegan, 2005; Barron *et al.*, 2007; Richardson, 2009; Chuang and Dellmann-Jenkins, 2010; Harkison *et al.*, 2011).

Participants were recruited through personal contacts of the researcher, posts on social media sites, the Council for Hospitality Management Education network, as well as through the alumni departments of the University of Brighton and the Dublin Institute of Technology. Seventeen life histories were collected. Out of seventeen participants, fourteen completed an undergraduate degree in hospitality management, two an undergraduate degree in tourism management, and one an undergraduate degree in communication arts. Those same three participants also completed a postgraduate degree in hotel and restaurant management. There was a clear disparity between the number of years spent working in the hospitality industry- from one year up to eighteen years, including part-time and full-time employment. Placement year and work experience in the industry during the degree were also counted into the total number of years of employment in the hospitality industry. Only four participants had not worked in the industry before enrolling on a degree course. The detailed profiles of participants can be found in Appendix 1.

Data analysis

Semi-structured interviews were transcribed verbatim and anonymised, and analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis. Attride-Stirling's (2001) thematic network analytic tool was used to identify global, organising and basic themes. Each global theme, pre-assigned in accordance with the three key concepts, consisted of further organising and basic themes. These emerged directly from the data. As suggested by Ryan and Bernard (2003), the initial stage of coding the pre-assigned themes was driven by the researcher's prior theoretical understanding of the three concepts. The qualitative data analysis computer software, NVivo, was used to organise and code all the interview data into the appropriate themes (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013). The basic and organising themes were continually reviewed; the coded sentences were either assigned to the existing themes or reconsidered. Once each interview had been coded, the basic and organising themes were reviewed again. At the point where no new information was revealed from the interviews, it was concluded that data saturation was reached as per Saunders *et al.* (2018).

Limitations of the Research Design

Retelling career stories is highly subjective, and retrospective accounts employed in this research pose a number of biases, such as difficulty of recalling stories, the possibility of forgetting important events or adding new facts, and the question of trustworthiness. The fallibility of human memory contributes to the criticism of life history methodology as stated by Ladkin (2004). Therefore, each interview was recorded to counteract that and to capture each interview dialogue. Only one interview with each participant was conducted, so there was no opportunity to collect further details or to clarify aspects of participants' life histories. The purposive sampling was not representative of the entire population of the hospitality management graduates, and the qualitative methodology employed means the results are not generalisable.

4. Results

Career commitment: a developmental process

Informing the process of leaving the hospitality industry is career commitment, the psychological contract between the individual and a chosen career. The findings confirmed that commitment is maintained reciprocally as previously stated by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) in their research employing the social exchange theory. In other words career commitment needs to bring desired benefits, whether economic, social, psychological or emotional:

"if the company I am working for recognises that I do a really good job and they are willing to move me up and keep me motivated, that is what I appreciate" (Milly, 26)

Lack of any repayment for the act of committing contributes to the intention to leave:

"lack of appreciation for the experience and the degree that really got me frustrated (...)" (Paul, 27)

The strength of commitment to the hospitality industry is influenced by the completion of a hospitality management degree and, in particular, at what point in participants' hospitality journey the degree was undertaken. Participants were motivated by different reasons to complete the degree. Those with some years of industry experience wanted to improve their future career prospects, and those with little or no prior experience were motivated by the

possibility of establishing themselves in the industry, because the degree was believed to open doors to professional growth opportunities:

“if I wanted to get any kind of success within the industry, the high levels of management, you need to have at least a minimum of a bachelor degree” (Mark, 43)

“I loved the whole experience of university, I loved the whole learning experience, all the opportunities that came from University as well, all the different people we got to meet” (Louise, 27)

Therefore completing a degree was considered as a necessary step to improving their career prospects, or as explained by Sarah (31) *“the next stepping stone”*.

Contributing to the decline in career commitment was also the lack of reciprocation for a completed hospitality management degree. Because of the high opportunity costs associated with undertaking the degree, graduates expected high returns on that investment in the form of better career opportunities and higher salary, as evidenced by the data. Participants talked about insufficient career opportunities, whether reflected in poor remuneration or working conditions, for the time and effort they spent acquiring a degree:

“there were days I was there 8 days a week... I can't do this any more hence one of the reasons why I left, I've got 2:1 hotel degree, I am not putting up with this” (Joanna, 24)

“my father paid so much money for me to invest into my undergrad, why did I want to work for 20,000 a year at that time, I think I had too many aspirations and ambitions” (Anna, 30)

With the exception of two participants, all other participants gave direct reasons for exiting the industry, such as low monetary rewards, demanding and unsociable working hours and difficulties planning ahead due to shift work, confirming the research findings of Duncan *et al.* (2013). Career turning points, also referred to as critical organisational leverage points (Hall, 2004) are important triggers that guide individuals' career decision-making processes and are critical to making the decision to leave. The data revealed that a career turning point, or a string of events that precede it, has significantly influenced all participant's careers:

“a day centre manager went behind my back and wanted to go back to the five day week rotational menu (...) he just made my life extremely difficult; he was the final nail on a coffin” (Monica, 40)

“it's a combination of major things (...) I just realised I was already tired of this...you don't have a life...plus the job was not getting gratifying” (Jane, 22)

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"I wanna have a career, I love the hospitality industry, but not at the cost of friends, family, health, but that just happened" (Claudia, 26)

"when I realised that the guy washing dishes was earning more money than me, I was an F&B manager" (Mark, 43)

These career turning points are categorised as self-initiated (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997) and contribute to career identity transformation. A person undergoing such an experience is likely to change a job within the same career, develop coping strategies when leaving is not an option, or make a career change. The latter was an option chosen by participants, who could not cope with the disappointments of a career in the hospitality industry. Also called 'career leavers' (Blau, 1989), they left the hospitality industry in search of better employment opportunities in non-hospitality sectors.

Career inheritance: the legacy of hospitality

Data revealed that career inheritance is expressed as the legacy of hospitality. Participants, who showed high levels of career inheritance, were born into a family directly linked with the hospitality industry. Participants were prepared to work in the industry for longer, before they made the decision to leave:

"my father was a hotelier, my grandfather, great-grandfather so it's family tradition (...) I was born in the hotel, grew up in the hotel, never really envisaged doing anything else" (Mark, 43)

"when she (mother) managed pubs, everyone just looked like they were having fun and relaxing, it was a nice environment to be in" (Louise, 27)

Such individuals also experienced a strong emotional attachment to the all-encompassing philosophy of hospitality (Telfer, 2000), identified in this research as taking care of other people to the extent that they feel relaxed physically, mentally and/or emotionally. As hospitality can be experienced in different social settings, it is not bound to a specific work environment, but is universally applicable in other social settings:

"when I have friends over I'm providing hospitality; you don't just go to a hotel and get it, it's everywhere" (Louise, 27)

"making people feel that they're welcome within a certain space, albeit in your home or in a canteen or in a café, I think hospitality happens wherever you go" (Monica, 40)

Understood as an affective commitment (cf. Meyer *et al.*, 1993), the legacy of hospitality means that despite leaving the hospitality industry, individuals desire to implement the

philosophy of hospitality in non-hospitality roles. For example, welcoming attitude and environment, and meeting guests' needs, are the key characteristics of an organisation wide philosophy of hospitality in hospital settings according to Severt *et al.* (2008). Thus hospitality values are being applied outside of the hospitality industry.

The philosophy of hospitality allows individuals to practise hospitality and fulfil their passion for being hospitable – a characteristic which Telfer (2000) considers part of the term hospitableness. Participants, who self- identify as hospitality people, share their homes with others in an act of hospitableness, because hospitality is their life:

“once you’ve been in the industry, you never leave, because it’s always a part of you, you’re a hospitality person” (Sarah, 31)

The difference between commitment to the philosophy of hospitality and commitment to the hospitality industry is seen in Jane’s career change, showing also that the legacy of hospitality is boundaryless:

“in the navy they will offer me the true hospitality, without the money; I would get to cook and serve food for people who would not ask for money” (Jane, 22)

Career manager: a self-efficacious agent of change

Career inheritance and self-efficacy influence the process of leaving the hospitality industry, informed by career commitment. Self-efficacy allows for a better understanding of the nature and characteristics of a career manager, a self-efficacious agent of change responsible for career self-development. The decision to leave the hospitality industry is based on feeling capable to find better employment opportunities elsewhere by capitalising on already mastered skills. Thus, self-efficacy is the foundation for making self-determined career decisions:

“You’re to be a problem solver, and decide what you gonna do; always been a confident person (Jack, 29)

“I asked myself what do you wanna change in your life, so at 39 I finished with this hotel catering business and I quit” (John, 56)

Individuals with powerful self-efficacy relied on themselves to achieve desired careers, had confidence in their own capabilities, took control of their career choices, and focused on self-development. These capabilities were developed from four sources of self-efficacy (cf. Bandura, 1977): successful past performance:

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"I knew that doing a simple cafe or a restaurant job is similar to what I used to do before, so this kind of experience gave me all this confidence" (Claudia, 26)

"I believed in myself a lot more; if I could finish a degree, I could finish everything" (Louise, 27)

Positive feedback and words of encouragement were also a source of self-efficacy:

"I sit in my comfort zone, I need someone to say 'you can do that position, look at your skills, you can do it'" (Sarah, 31)

Physical and emotional states enabled a career manager to embrace change and to turn negative experiences into challenges and tasks to be overcome:

"every day is a various challenge in life; be aware they are coming, as you have to deal with them" (Anna, 30)

"you learn by trial and error (...) if I fail, I fail and I learn from it" (Joanna, 24)

"I'm getting stressed about something I can change [job] (...) time to move on" (Sarah, 31)

A career manager took charge of their career decisions by recognising changing career preferences and remaining informed about available career choices.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

Results illustrate how each of the three overarching concepts provides insights into the process that led hospitality professionals to exiting the hospitality industry. It is the aim of this final section to demonstrate the unique interaction between these three concepts, which forms the basis for the concept of the leaving process.

The findings revealed that the initial decline in commitment begins with an intention to leave, influenced by the poor working conditions in the hospitality industry or a lack of reciprocation for a hospitality degree. The impact of a career turning point transforms the intention to leave to a decision to leave, represented as the speed of decline in commitment. The duration of this decline is dependent on the interaction between career inheritance and self-efficacy. This interaction can be visualised as patterns of the leaving process, and although an infinite number of variations is possible, three main patterns are proposed and discussed. Each of the patterns is founded on the premise that individuals with high self-efficacy and low career

inheritance would leave the industry sooner than those with low self-efficacy and higher career inheritance.

Discussion: The leaving process

The leaving process PATTERN 1, Figure 1. shows that leaving the hospitality industry is not based on an impulse but is a dynamic process punctuated by career turning point(s). Once the decision to leave is made, the speed of decline in commitment, influenced by high self-efficacy and low career inheritance, is rapid. Professionals who fall into this category exhibit characteristics of a career manager, informed by principles of self-efficacy. Such individuals make self-determined career decisions and prioritise career opportunities over job commitment.

Figure 1. The leaving process PATTERN 1

The leaving process PATTERN 2, Figure 2. demonstrates that although the initial decline in commitment is rapid, it is followed by a steady decrease which concludes with a professional leaving the industry. The individual experiences an affective commitment to the philosophy of hospitality founded on the concept of career inheritance, but the level of self-efficacy remains low. As a result, the level of career inheritance is higher than that of self-efficacy, which delays the decline in commitment.

Figure 2. The leaving process PATTERN 2

Professionals represented by the leaving process PATTERN 3, Figure 3. experience a steady decline in commitment and exhibit characteristics of a career manager. The duration of employment and the level of job commitment are strongly dependent on the career growth potential and overall employability prospects. Therefore, the decision to leave the hospitality industry is a process represented by shifting away from core hospitality roles into more generic ones. When all the perceived benefits are gained, such professionals leave to further

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10 Figure 3. The leaving process PATTERN 3
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15 As previously stated, there is an infinite number of variations of the leaving process as
16 demonstrated in Figure 4. by adding a red linear line, the shape of which helps to explain that
17 the decision to leave can be based on an impulse. An individual experiences a career turning
18 point, which results in a very rapid decline in commitment caused by, for example, a negative
19 placement experience. This can have a negative impact on choosing not to pursue a career in
20 the industry or to leave after a very short period of employment.
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29 Figure 4. The Leaving Process
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34 Conclusions

35 This paper provides new insights into career trajectories of hospitality professionals through
36 the unique interaction between career inheritance (cf. Inkson, 2004; 2007) and self-efficacy
37 (cf. Bandura, 1977), and their influence on career commitment (cf. Meyer *et al.*, 2002),
38 represented as the concept of the leaving process, the original contribution of this research.
39 Firstly, the findings revealed that career commitment is a developmental process and informs
40 the concept of the leaving process, further underpinned by a unique interaction between self-
41 efficacy and career inheritance. The decision to leave the hospitality industry, which is often
42 preceded by a string of events, begins with a waning of job commitment, in the form of an
43 intention to leave, followed by a decrease in career commitment to hospitality. Secondly, the
44 critical career turning points, which are important moments in individuals' careers, transform
45 the intention to leave into the decision to leave. The dynamic, flexible and non-linear nature
46 of career paths (Collin and Young, 2000) contributes to making this decision. No longer do
47 professionals feel bound to an organisation or an industry for a specific period of time (cf.
48 Weber and Ladkin, 2008; Sullivan and Baruch, 2009). Instead they develop commitment to
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3 their careers, because the decline in commitment to the industry is in exchange for growing
4 commitment to one's career.
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7 The leaving process model does not reflect organisational procedures when leaving a job,
8 such as handing in a letter of resignation. Neither does it imply that individuals have no choice
9 in the matter of leaving. Instead, completing this process requires commitment to the self,
10 evident in one's commitment to a career, and clarity about future career goals. The predictive
11 potential of this model can help researchers to advance this area of study whilst also enable
12 practitioners to deliver better results aiding in staff retention.
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20 Theoretical Implications

21 This paper contributes a meaningful theoretical extension in the context of career
22 development studies. The unique concept of the leaving process addresses the prevalent
23 issue of turnover and generates important academic and practical implications. This paper
24 introduces the theoretical development of the interplay between self-efficacy and career
25 inheritance, and its influence on career commitment. Although these concepts have been
26 examined in the literature individually or in pairs, there has been no significant theoretical
27 contribution in the understanding of how all three may influence career decisions.
28 Furthermore, there has been no such contribution in the context of hospitality management.
29 A clear model that can be utilised by future researchers delivers a newly conceptualised
30 understanding of career commitment. This enables researchers to reconsider the
31 fundamental reasons why individuals leave the hospitality industry.
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43 Practical Implications

44 To utilise the concept of the leaving process, a self-help tool is proposed, which will allow
45 career managers to map out career steps and goals, and alert them when a career decision
46 needs to be made. This tool will incorporate career turning points and the sources of self-
47 efficacy, and enable career managers to reflect on their past experiences with a view to
48 incorporating them into future career planning. This will also enable hospitality businesses to
49 ensure that employees' are committed to their careers and their career needs are met. This
50 employee-driven approach to career management can be further collaborated with the
51 organisational objectives, and provide mutual benefits for hospitality employees and
52 businesses.
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Industry implications include the potential of the leaving process model as a tool for recruitment and selection, and exit interviews. By adopting the model to establish protocols used in quarterly or annual development reviews of the staff, managers have the potential to identify staff who may be reaching the point of leaving the organisation and proactively assist them in their decision-making. Enabling HR managers to better understand the thought processes of employees and an early detection of patterns that may lead to an employee resignation can not only help reduce staff turnover, but also maintain a happier and thus more productive workforce.

The paper contributes to the larger society by enabling individuals to better understand their own thought processes and judge their career commitment. This can lead to more informed career decisions that enable them to live happier, professional lives.

Limitations and Future Research

Although current research provides theoretical and practical implications, there are some limitations to note which provide suggestions for future research. The schematic illustrations of the patterns of the leaving process are only visual representations of the research findings and are not representative. To standardise the leaving process, future research could employ a quantitative research design with the same conceptual framework using a larger sample population. Due to lack of current research on the possible relationship between the three concepts, future exploratory research should employ causal hypotheses, for example *high self-efficacy and low career inheritance increases the decline in career commitment*. Each of the concepts could be measured separately using either current scales, for example the Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy scale by Betz and Hackett (2006) or the Career Commitment Scale by Farmer (1985) or devising new ones. Gaining generalizable results will allow for exploration and replication of the proposed framework in other service sectors. A social database could be used to conduct a network analysis to research individuals' entire career paths, including number of employers and types of jobs performed. This may provide a more detailed analysis of factors that impact on the duration of the leaving process such as the working environment or the lack of a degree. This will validate the leaving process as a conceptual tool applicable in other settings. Future studies could also focus on factors that impact the intention to leave. Due to the uniqueness and originality of the concept of the leaving process, further research is required to shed light on adequate managerial tools that

could help to slow down or prevent the leaving process. Within the HRM literature, the focus has been directed towards collective turnover (Hancock *et al.*, 2017) and how individuals' career decisions impact on their colleagues and the overall organisation performance, which is considered another avenue for future research. Finally, this research focused on the individual's perspective of career management and career decision-making. Future research should consider organisational needs and societal trends, such as talent management or employment shortages.

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Appendix 1. Participants' Profiles

Figure 1. The leaving process PATTERN 2

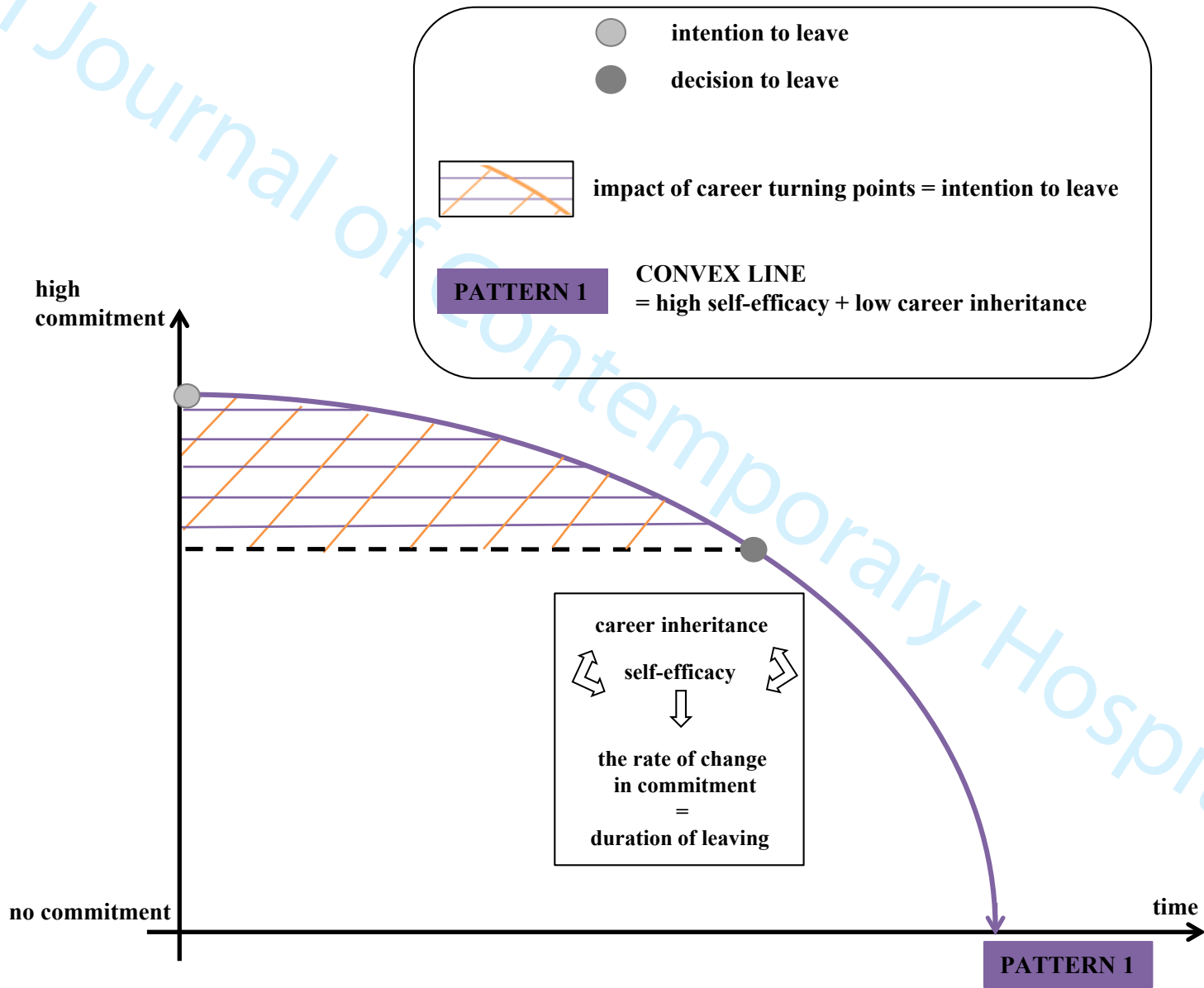


Figure 2. The leaving process PATTERN 2

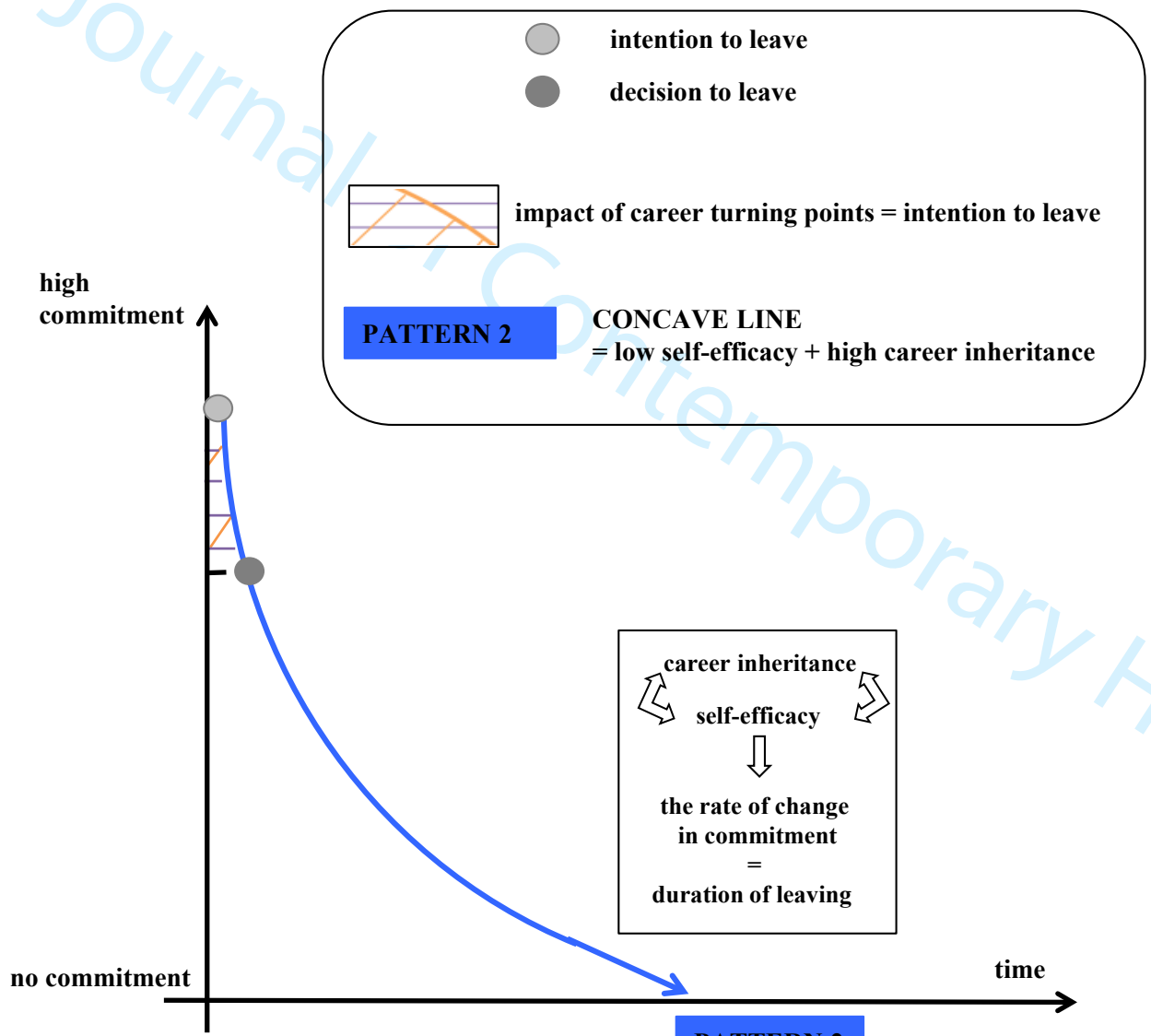


Figure 3. The leaving process PATTERN 3

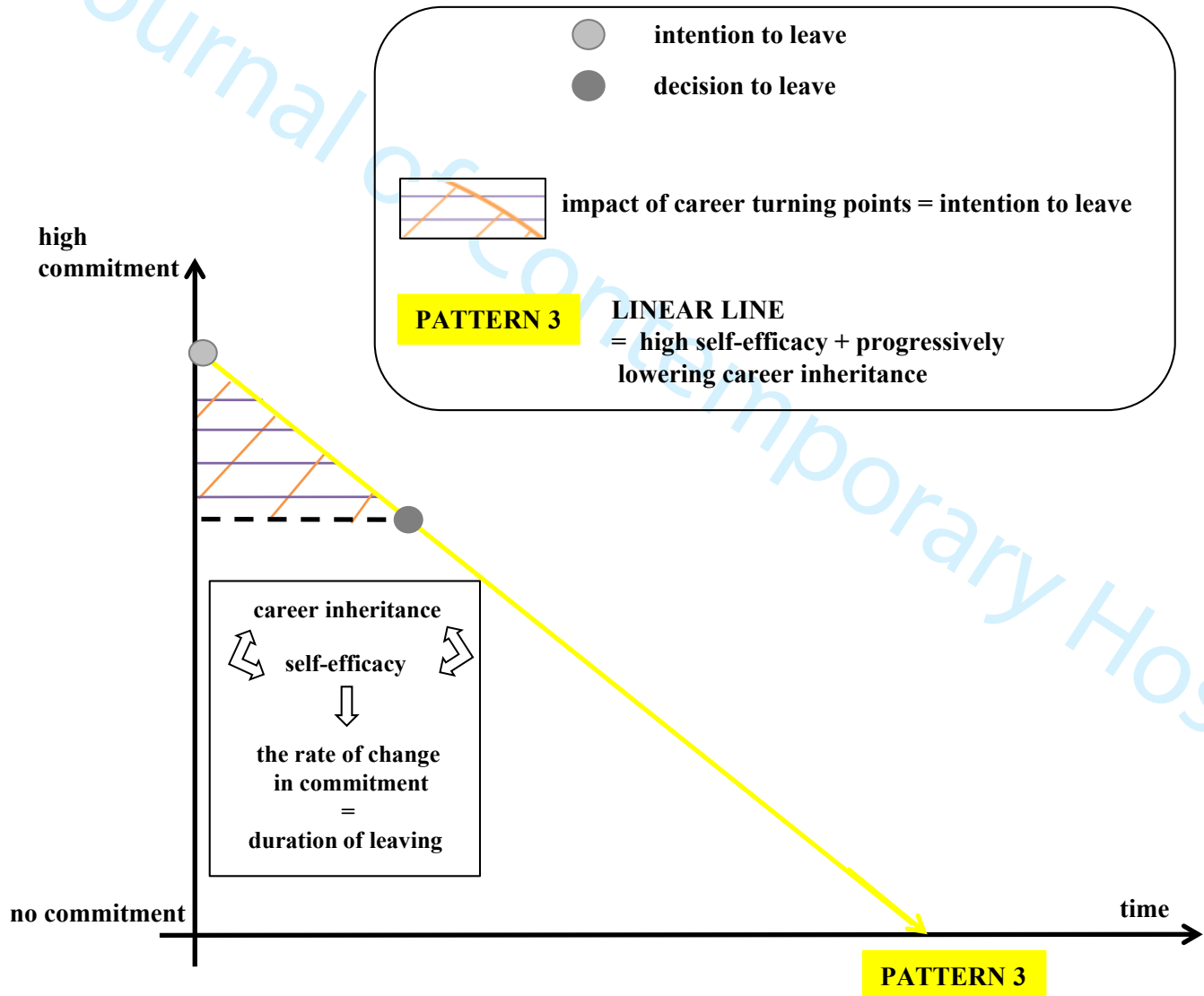
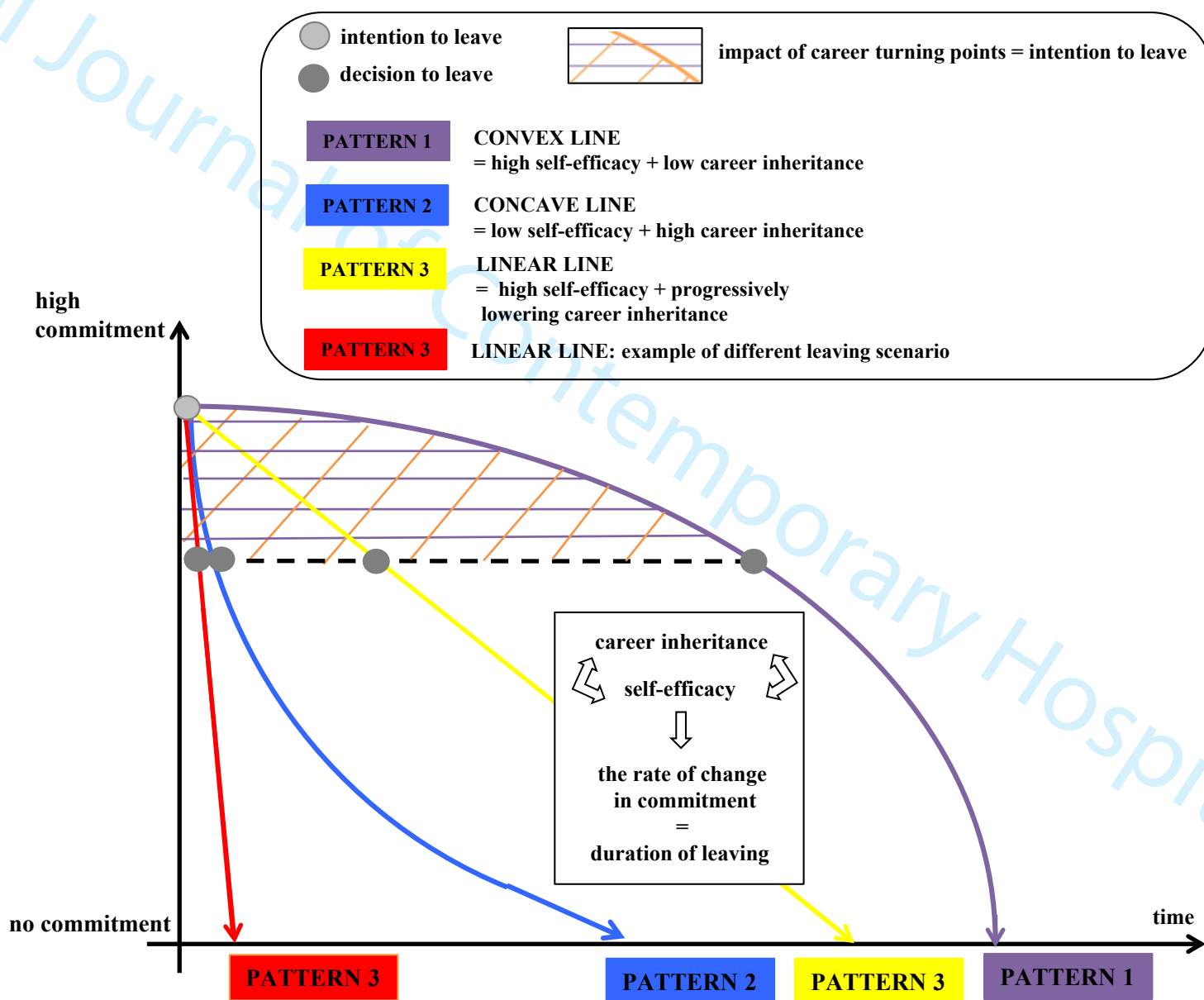


Figure 4. The Leaving Process



Participant (P.)	Gender	Age	Nationality	Degree	Placement Year	Work Experience in the Industry Prior to Degree	Total Number of Years in Hospitality	Types of Jobs	Years out of Hosp.	Current Career
P.1 Peter	M	35	Non UK	BA(Hons) International Hospitality Management	Yes	No	3 years	Front of house assistant	9 years	Media publishing
P.2 Monica	F	40	UK	BA(Hons) International Hospitality Management	No	Yes	20 years	Kitchen assistant, chef, sous chef, head chef; catering manager (chef)	2 years	Commissioning officer (social services)
				MSc Food Policy and Nutrition						
P.3 Mark	M	43	UK	BA(Hons) International Hospitality Management	Yes	Yes	15 years	Food & Beverage manager	13 years	Lecturer
P.4 John	M	56	Irish	BSc in Management and HDip in Hotel and Catering Management	No	Yes	19 years	Wide range of operational roles: trainee manager in a hotel, operations manager, chef	18 years	Mainstream wealth management of private clients
P.5 Milly	F	26	Non UK	BA(Hons) Tourism Management with Marketing and 1 year BA Tourism Mng with Marketing, Hospitality Admin/Mng in Canada	No	No	1 year	Hotel receptionist	2 years	Insurance adviser
				MSc International Hotel and Restaurant Management						
P.6 Chris	M	37	UK	BSc in Hospitality Management	Yes	Yes	12 years	Operations manager, chef, Food & Beverage manager	7 years	Entrepreneur: sports and leisure business
P.7 Louise	F	27	UK	Hospitality Business Mng HND Hospitality Admin/Mng HNDip; BA(Hons) Managing International Hospitality	Yes	Yes	10 years	Supervisor: Food & Beverage and events	1 year	Customer Relations Manager in a high street bank

P.8 Anna	F.	30	Non UK	BSc International Hospitality Management	Yes	Yes	5.5 years	Conference & Banqueting	6 years	Asset Manager/Property Advisor-Corporate Asset Services
				MSc Corporate Real Estate Finance						
P.9 Sarah	F.	31	UK	HDip Hospitality Management; BA Hospitality Business Management	No	Yes	11 years	Front of house assistant, duty manager, conference & events manager	7 years	Head of Higher Education Development Hospitality College
				MA Hospitality and Tourism Management						
P.10 Martin	M.	39	Irish	BSc in Hotel and Catering Management	No	Yes	10 years	Assistant front office manager to head of IT	13 years	Project manager: building material company
				MBs in Travel and Tourism						
P.11 Joanna	F.	24	Irish	BSc International Hospitality Management	Yes	Yes	4 years	Hotel reservations and front office	Under a year	Delivery Analyst at FDM Group
P.12 Paul	M.	27	Non UK	Hospitality Management	Yes	No	5 years	Front and back of house, sales office, social media marketing	4 years	Assistant to the Dean
				BA(Hons) International Hospitality Management (third year only)						
				MSc International Event Management						
P.13 Claudia	F.	26	Non UK	BA Tourism Management	Yes	Yes	9 years	Front of house operations: hostess and team leader	6 months	Administrative assistant at a law firm
				MSc International Hotel and Restaurant Mng.						
P.14 Jack	M.	29	UK	BSc International Hospitality Management	Yes	Yes	7 years	Bar supervisor, consultant, sport leisure centre manager	4 years	Area Manager at Aldi
P.15 Jane	F.	21	Non UK	BA(Hons) International Hospitality Management (EuroBA)	No	No	3 years	Various waitressing jobs, mainly seasonal or part-time	6 months	Navy officer
P.16 Naomi	F.	35	Non UK	MSc International Hotel and Restaurant Management	No	Yes	5 years	Hotel receptionist, VIP host, worked in business operations departments	1 year	Working for family business in auto parts
P.17 Daniel	M.	30	Non UK	BA(Hons) International Hospitality Management	No	Yes	10 years	Front office, hotel receptionist, duty manager	3 years	Accountant

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