

A Systematic Literature Review on Career Commitment, job Insecurity, and Turnover Intentions in the Tourism Industry

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Abstract: The tourism industry is well-known in the services sector. However, unstable jobs and insecure careers have impacts on career commitment, which are major concerns for the relevant stakeholders. The recent experience of the global pandemic COVID-19 has also exacerbated the jobs situation and reiterated the prevailing uncertainty in the tourism industry. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to carry out a systematic literature review (SLR) for exploring and analyzing the published scientific studies on the specific issue and highlight areas for further research. The systematic literature review based on PRISMA framework was follows, considering criteria of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. Initially, 200 records were identified, ended with 32 included records for detailed review. Results indicates the use of unethical pro-organization behavior (UPoB), anti-social activities, working conditions, relationship between worker and supervisor, and some controllable and uncontrollable factors significantly impact turnover intentions of employees, requires mitigation through certain staff retention policies, particularly under uncertain and crises driven situations. The study provides further research directions for researchers, related to the theoretical and practical aspects. Limitations of the study are discussed in the concluding part of the article.

Keywords: Career commitment, Job insecurity, Turnover intentions, Tourism industry, Systematic literature review

1. Introduction

The tourism industry has played crucial role in the development of economies around the world. The tourism industry was showing impressive growth before the global pandemic of COVID-19 with 1.5 billion tourist arrivals in the year 2019 (UNWTO, 2020). However, the spread of the pandemic put all segments of life at standstill and impacted global economies in an unprecedented way (McKibbin & Fernando, 2020). In particular, the pandemic of COVID-19 impacted significantly the travel and tourism industry due to a sharp decline in demand (Gössling et al., 2020). After the massive devastations of the pandemic, the world recovered from the disease and governments loosen the restrictions and opened their economies in stages. However, still, the world is under an economic crisis in the post-covid era with increasing inflation at the global level (Schmitt-Grohé & Uribe, 2022).

Such uncertainties and crises impact the employees in their career development and commitment, instability and uncertainty of jobs, commitment with their organizations, and resulting turnover intentions. Importantly, the travel and tourism industry is notorious for high turnover (Zhang & Wu, 2004; Lam, 2003). Before the COVID-19 situation, uncertainties were prevailing due to technological change, political crisis, and economic downturns, which keep employees in the tourism industry at risk of job loss and layoff. However, the uncertainty that arose due to COVID-19 particularly exacerbated the unstable jobs situation and reiterated the prevailing uncertainty in the tourism industry. Such uncertainty and instability impact commitment toward career and organization with a negative influence on productivity. Hence, job insecurities act as a stressor for employees, and result negatively in their job-related attitude and psychological health (De Witte et al., 2015; Tian et al., 2014).

Career commitment can be defined as the attitude of employees towards their career with emotional attachment to develop further. The concept of career commitment is of special interest during times of crisis and economic downturn. During such times, employees are more conscious of the development of their careers to have experiences and well-developed careers, so that in case of a layoff, they might be able to find better substitute jobs. The concepts are interrelated with the uncertainty and situation of crisis, such as uncertain situation also enhances the feeling of job insecurity. The feeling of job insecurity reduces the employees' productivity related to customer service and organisational effectiveness (Lee et al., 2008). Some employees may regard job insecurity as an internal factor and leave the job for better employment options. However, such insecurities need to be attributed to external factors due to the economic crisis. Consequently, instead of leaving the organization, employees' commitment to their careers will be enhanced to overcome the risks of job loss (Carson & Bedeian, 1994).

In light of this, the role of career commitment, the nature of unstable jobs, and insecure careers require investigation and exploration, which deems important during crises such as the world is facing due to unstable economies and rising inflation in the current post-covid scenario. The present study aims to analyze the published research on the topic of career commitment, job insecurity, and turnover intentions, particularly in the travel and tourism industry. The first aspect analyzes the basic concepts of career commitment, unstable jobs, insecure careers, job insecurities, and turnover intentions. The second aspect attempts to explore the relationships among the above-mentioned constructs. The third aspect mapped the current literature and offers possible future scenarios and provides future research agenda.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Career Commitment

Career commitment pertains to the idea of the emotional attachment of employees to their careers, as well as an occupational commitment or professional commitment (Meyer et al., 1993). In the contemporary era, where organisations do not give guarantees about jobs, career commitment has become very important for employees to select their jobs. Career commitment impacts the attitude of employees, which may lead to a change in the organization. More importantly, an uncertain economic situation influences a higher level of a career commitment to survive in a difficult situation. Such a situation entices employees to focus more on their internal career goals than external organizational goals (Carson & Bedeian, 1994).

2.2 Job Insecurity

Job insecurity is related to the threat of job loss and feeling of powerlessness at the employee's level (Ashford-Susan et al., 1989). Under such a prevailing situation, an employee remains under continuous threat that his or her job will be lost (Sverke et al., 2002). Job insecurity also breaches the psychological contract between employees and the organisation due to the threatened emotional attachment to the organisation (Sora et al., 2009). Hence, when employees find that they cannot rely on their organization and feel job insecurity, their commitment to the organisation decreases. Under this situation, employees also start to search for jobs outside of their organization.

2.3 Turnover Intentions

Turnover intentions refer to the intent of an employee to leave his or her job due to fewer growth opportunities (Griffeth et al., 2000). The bitter irony of higher turnover intentions is increased costs for the organization as well as lower quality of services. The travel and tourism industry is notorious for high turnover (Zhang & Wu, 2004; Lam, 2003), which leads to lower career development. In the literature, the relationship between career commitment and turnover intentions is mixed. Such as Lee et al. (2008) pointed out that a negative relationship is probably due to the requirements and extra effort for settling into the new job. Whilst Carbery et al. (2003) found a positive relationship between career commitment and turnover intention. However, this relation mostly prevails in the case of low opportunities for career growth.

3. Methodology

The present theme of the research is based on the execution of a systematic literature review (SLR). Systematic literature reviews were developed for the medical science field to synthesize the research findings in a systematically transparent and reproducible fashion. Although the advantages of systematic literature reviews are obvious due to their scientific rigor, in business research their use is not prevalent, however, rising now (Snyder et al., 2016; Witell et al., 2016). A systematic literature review is a research method for identifying, appraising, and relevant research, subsequently collecting and analyzing research data (Liberati et al., 2009). Importantly, a systematic literature review identifies empirical evidence based on the pre-specified criteria of exclusion and inclusion to address the research questions and study objectives. The minimisation of bias is the main advantage of explicit and systematic methods to review research corpus, which helps us to obtain reliable findings and logically rational conclusions for decisions regarding future research directions (Moher et al., 2009).

In light of this, a systematic literature review (SLR) was carried out to probe into the available research articles. Precisely, to select scientific articles and research articles SCOPUS database was used, which is a famous database to search scientific articles from the corpus of a big research repository. The well-known PRISMA (preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analysis) framework was used, including their criteria of identification, screening, eligibility, and included. The graphical representation in the PRISMA

framework shows the total number of articles searched related to the topic, the scrutiny process, and the final number of articles included for data extraction. The PRISMA framework is defined graphically (see Figure 1).

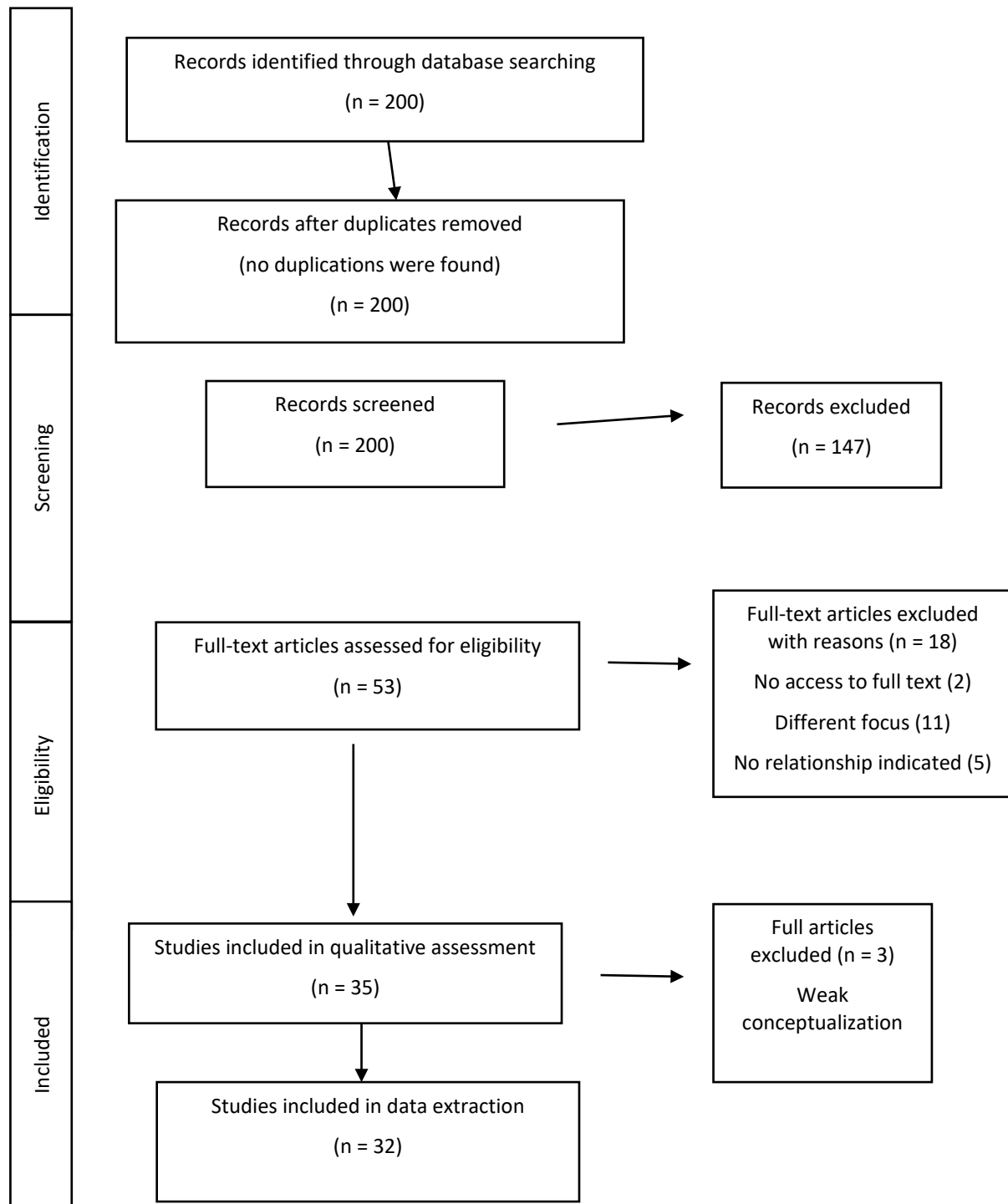


Figure 1: Systematic Literature Review by PRISMA Framework

Each step followed has the details below.

Search Strategy

First, the records were identified through the SCOPUS database search. In the search strategy, the main keywords were used to search the database in the Title-Abs-Key option in the SCOPUS database as search criteria. Precisely, the keywords used were, “career commitment”, “job insecurity”, “career insecurity”, “organizational commitment”, “turnover intentions”, “tourism”, and “travel”. As a result, 200 scientific records

are identified. Before proceeding to the next step, duplicate records are removed. However, we used only one database search engine. Therefore, we did not find any duplicate records.

Selection Criteria

Second, the screening process is based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. In this step, we rationally decide about the articles, either only quantitative papers or also review papers, conference proceedings, book chapters, number of years selected, countries, and the language of articles. We included all the scientific publications from the SCOPUS, published in all countries, and published in the English language only. We screened the title, abstract, and keywords to decide, whether to exclude or include the article for the next stage. In light of this, out of the 200 documents screened, 147 are excluded.

Quality Assessment

Quality assessment of the process of eligibility criteria. In this step, we assess whether the scope/area of the paper belongs to the main theme of the research being carried out. As specific issues desired to be addressed, so, all irrelevant papers will be excluded at this stage after considering the full-text scientific publications. Hence, at this stage, 53 full-text publications are assessed for eligibility. Consequently, 18 full-text articles are excluded. For two documents, full texts were not available. The focus of 11 publications was different, whilst, in 5 publications, no relationship was found.

Data Extraction

Data extraction is the last step of the PRISMA framework. At this stage, data is extracted for reading the downloaded publications in detail. At this stage, 35 studies were included for qualitative assessment. Three full-text articles were excluded due to weak conceptualization. Hence, 32 articles were included for data extraction. The paper selected through the scientifically rigorous method is very important to provide deep insights to answer the research problem and question of the study.

4. Results and Interpretations

The analyses of the identified records of the SCOPUS database have given interesting results. It has been identified that over the years, the number of publications over the years has increased significantly on the theme under study. Figure 2 below shows that there was just one published paper in the year 1997, whilst the current number of published articles in the year 2022 reached 44. We observed a rising trend over the years, which indicates the rising importance of the theme searched under keywords of career commitment, job insecurity, turnover intention, travel, and tourism.

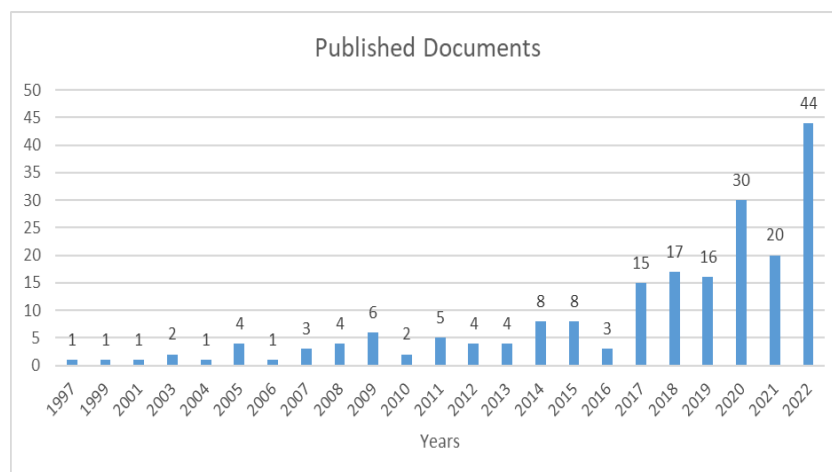


Figure 2: Distribution of Publications by Year

Similarly, the analysis of publications in different journals indicates that the frequency of publications in different top-tier journals is on a rising trend. Table 1 shows that “*International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*” is the journal, where the highest number of articles has been published during the stipulated time, proceeding to “*International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*” with 9 published articles, “*Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism*” with 8 published articles, and so on, including some top-tier journals such as, “*Tourism Management*”, “*Current Issues in Tourism*”, “*Tourism Review*” and “*Journal of Travel Research*”.

Table 1: Distribution of Publications by Source

Journal Source	No. of Publications	ABS Ranking
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	15	3
Tourism Management	6	4
Journal Of Human Resources In Hospitality And Tourism	8	1
Current Issues In Tourism	5	2
Tourism Review	5	1
International Journal Of Hospitality Management	4	3
Asia Pacific Journal Of Tourism Research	3	1
International Journal Of Tourism Research	3	2
Journal Of Travel Research	2	4
African Journal Of Hospitality Tourism And Leisure	6	-
International Journal Of Environmental Research And Public Health	9	-
Sustainability Switzerland	7	-

Moreover, Figure 3 shows the number of scientific publications from different countries. On the said topic of career commitment, job insecurity, and turnover intention, the papers have been published mostly in developed countries, except Egypt. In this vein, the highest number of scientific publications has been published in the United States (i.e., 31 publications), followed by Turkey (i.e., 25 publications), and Egypt with 21 publications.

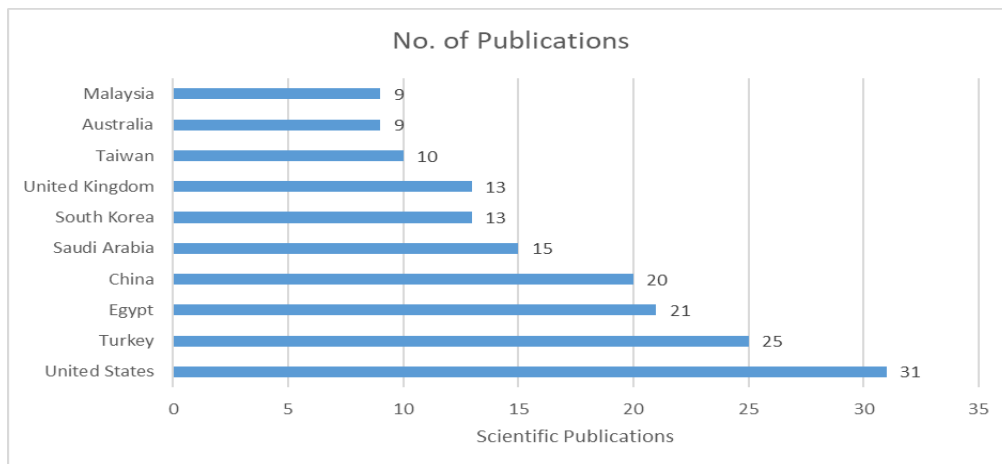


Figure 3: Distribution of Publications by Countries

On the theme under research, authors from all over the world published scientific publications. Figure 4 shows the frequency of publications by different authors. Interestingly, the author Elshaer, I.A. from Egypt has published most 8 publications. Then, Azazz. A.M.S and Saad, S.K. published 4 scientific documents, followed by Kong, H. published 3, and Alferaih, A., who published only 2 in SCOPUS-indexed journals (see Figure 4).

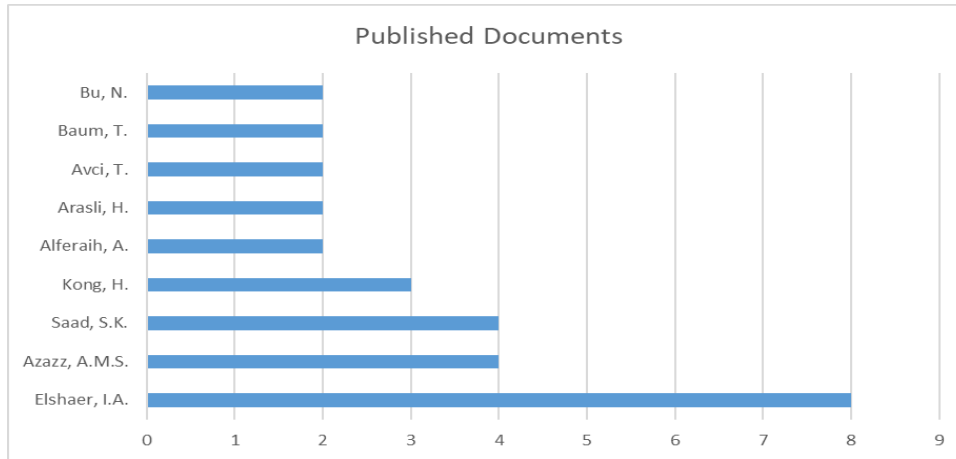


Figure 4: Distribution of Publications by Authors

Proceeding ahead, most documents published in the journals indexed in the SCOPUS database are articles. Of the journals indexed in SCOPUS, 85 percent are articles, 6 percent are conference papers, and 3 percent are conference reviews and reviews, followed by book chapters and book 2 percent and 1 percent, respectively (see Figure 5).

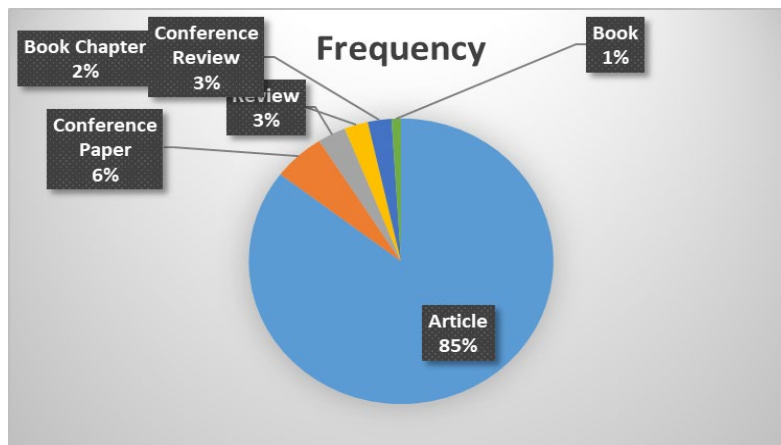


Figure 5: Distribution of Publications by Type

It is also worthwhile to examine the percentage of scientific documents published in different subject areas. Figure 6 shows this percentage of each subject area. As per the expectations, the statistics show that about 40 percent of the scientific documents are published in the subject area of Business, Management, and Accounting. About 24 percent were published on the subject of Social Sciences, followed by approximately 8 percent in the subject area of Environmental Science. Whilst, all other subject categories are having single-digit percentages.

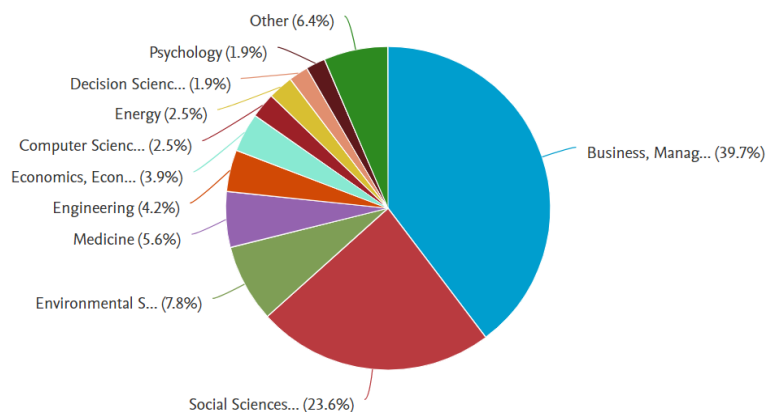


Figure 6: Distribution of Publications by Subject Area

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to carry out a systematic literature review to explore and analyse the published scientific studies indexed in the SCOPUS database. In this regard, an SLR method was used for investigation as a rigorous scientific inquiry. The uncertain situations have a lot of implications in almost all spheres of life, the recent periods of the pandemic COVID-19 is an important context that requires investigation. Some clear implications of uncertainty, such as career commitment, and personal goals of employees, are impacted due to higher levels of job insecurity. Some industries are more prone to such crises, such as Travel and Tourism industry, which is already notorious for high turnovers. Therefore, this study attempted to look deeply into the issue by considering the context of the travel and tourism industry to know the current state of knowledge and formulate future research agenda.

The literature indicates that different aspects get impacted by uncertainty. The tourism industry, such as hotels directly gets impacted in periods of uncertainty and crisis. In this regard, due to job insecurity and distributive injustice, employees were found to observe unethical pro-organization behaviour (UPoB) to protect their jobs, as evidenced by Aliedan et al., (2022). Similarly, another study highlighted that during uncertain times, such as COVID-19, the perceptions of people change about the stability of jobs. In such situations, employees are more concerned about the stability of their jobs and are involved in unethical pro-organization behaviour. Moreover, family financial pressure and disruptive injustice also play a role in exercising such anti-social activities, which harms in the long run (Elshaer et al., 2022).

Likewise, a study by Chen & Chen (2021), examined the context of uncertainty and crisis of COVID-19, by investigating the relationship between job insecurity, organizational identification, and intentions to stay in the job of hospitality employees. Their findings supported the significant relationship with turnover intentions. However, the role of organizational identification came up as an important factor to stay in the job. Hence, companies can promote organizational identification among employees to retain them even during tough and uncertain times. Similarly, career commitment plays an important role in turnover intentions. Taylor et al., (2022) examined the role of career commitment, gender, and job position on turnover intentions, through the moderated mediation model. It was found that higher levels of career commitment lead to low turnover of jobs despite the existence of an overwork climate, which indicates that industry-wide overwork culture is being accepted.

Generally, there can be many factors, which play role in the stabilizing and destabilizing of jobs. In this vein, a qualitative study was carried out about employee retention in the travel agency industry of Hong Kong. Some factors, which contributed to high turnovers, include high customer contact, anti-social working hours, condition of the working environment, office location, relationship between workers and supervisors, salaries and remunerations, as well as future career perspectives. Hence, such gaps in turnover intentions can be reduced by formulating staff retention policies (Choy & Kamoche, 2021).

In light of this, a healthy work environment can play its role to decrease turnover. A study by Ali et al. (2022), explored that career competencies of the employee, job involvement, and organizational commitment are negatively associated with turnover intentions. These findings are consistent with the ones of Kuruüzüm et al., (2009). Hence, organizations can play their role by providing a good environment to the employees, and by formulating appropriate policies during uncertain times. In addition, employees' different personal characteristics are also important, when discussing turnover intentions, which are often overlooked in the tourism industry. A study by Tsaousoglou et al., (2022), examined the role of big-five personality traits, and the commitment of employees to turnover intentions. It was found that the emotional stability of an employee and organizational commitment are the main predictors of turnover intentional behaviour.

Some factors although different, have strong relations with the main theme of the study. One study by Gunlu et al., (2010) analysed the role of job satisfaction on the organizational commitment by taking the case of Turkish hotel managers. Importantly, they included the three levels of job satisfaction; that is, extrinsic, intrinsic, and general job satisfaction as well as levels of organizational commitment; that is, normative commitment, affective commitment, and continuance commitment. In another similar study, authors included different job characteristics, in addition to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Ozturk et al., 2014). The role of different job characteristics appeared as an important factor to explore. Different job characteristics, such as variety, autonomy, task identity, feedback, and interaction have a significant impact, subsequently influencing the commitments of employees. These factors have the potential to further investigate the main theme, particularly in an uncertain situation.

Turnover intentions as the main theme of investigation get impacted by not only controllable factors but also uncontrollable factors. In this regard, an important study published in the *“International Journal of Tourism Research”* included controllable and uncontrollable factors towards turnover intentions has significant importance (Pang et al., 2015). Out of the controllable factors, general satisfaction, promotion opportunity, job security, and training opportunity influenced turnover intention significantly, whilst only one uncontrollable factor, job-hopping significantly affected the turnover intentions.

6. Future Research Agenda

This systematic literature review attempted to highlight the current state of knowledge. Based on the discussion of the current state of knowledge, some areas provide agenda for future research.

Firstly, uncertain and crisis-driven situation needs particular attention from the researchers and policymakers to tackle the situations because the factors related to organizations, namely career commitment, job involvements, insecurity of jobs, satisfaction, and turnover have different response than normal scenarios. Therefore, different frameworks are required to adopt. Future researchers should address the issues based on the particular situations and their severity.

Secondly, the insecurity of jobs increases during times of crisis. Some authors reported the use of unethical pro-organization behaviour to protect their jobs. Such anti-social activities have significant harm in the long run. Further research can look into the issue deeply to formulate strategies for discouraging such practices with appropriate remedial measures.

Thirdly, a healthy working environment also plays a role to reduce turnover intentions. In crisis-driven situations, synonym to a double-edged sword, organizations not only face highly fluctuating demands and at the employee level, discouraged employees under stressful situations. In such periods, organizations should continue to provide healthy working environments. Researchers should particularly work on healthy working environment models doable and conducive to follow in particular.

Fourthly, the literature still lacks a comprehensive framework to exhaustively capture uncertain situations. The factors such as career commitment, and insecurity of jobs are somehow explored. In some studies, authors explored the role of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions. However, studies lack in the context of an uncertain situation. Moreover, further research should address factors, namely career commitment, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions simultaneously, to have results that would be more meaningful.

Fifthly, the tourism and travel industry is most sensitive to uncertainty and crisis, particularly notorious for higher employee turnover. Future research can introduce a working model with a sensitivity index for the tourism industry. Such an index based on critical factors would work as a gauge to can help to give an appropriate response on time.

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