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The paradox of withdrawal: How managerial turnover intention and attitudes shape performance appraisal quality in high-contact service

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Performance appraisal quality depends on the discretionary effort of the rater. This study examines rater-side psychological antecedents of appraisal rigor among hospitality managers, focusing on how managers' positive attitudes toward the job and the organization drive appraisal quality and whether that relationship is disrupted by the managers' own turnover intention.

Design/methodology/approach: Data were collected from 318 U.S. hospitality managers through a multi-stage screening protocol on Amazon Mechanical Turk. Because job satisfaction and organizational commitment were empirically indistinguishable in the sample ($r = .976$), a higher-order Managerial Attitudes factor was specified to test the two attitudinal hypotheses jointly. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to estimate direct and moderating effects. Common method variance was addressed procedurally and through a marker-variable technique combined with an unmeasured latent method construct.

Findings: Managerial Attitudes had a strong positive relationship with self-reported appraisal quality ($\beta = .71$ in the method-adjusted model). Contrary to the "withdrawal-negligence" prediction of Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, turnover intention showed a small but significant positive direct association with appraisal rigor, and its interaction with attitudes was not statistically significant. The pattern is consistent with a "Lame Duck Objectivity" account in which anticipated exit releases managers from certain political constraints on evaluative candor, but reverse causality, statistical power, and measurement limitations remain plausible alternatives that the design cannot rule out.

Originality/value: The study reframes managerial withdrawal as a scope condition of COR rather than a uniform trigger of task disengagement, and it demonstrates the utility of a higher-order attitudinal factor for handling discriminant-validity breakdown in hospitality data. Boundary conditions on generalizability — including racial and gender homogeneity of the sample, single-source measurement, and cross-sectional design — are discussed in detail, and a program of multi-source, longitudinal, and gender- and race-balanced replications is proposed.

1. Introduction

Performance appraisal is one of the most consequential — and most contested — functions of human resource management (Walker et al., 1977; Levy and Williams, 2004; DeNisi and Murphy, 2017). In hospitality settings, where supervision is intense, teams are large and often geographically dispersed, and rater judgment is the primary instrument of employee evaluation (Kim and Jogaratnam, 2010; Karatepe, 2013), appraisal quality rests almost entirely on the discretionary effort of a single frontline manager. Yet a substantial share of that manager's psychological life is unaccounted for in existing rater-side research: the intention to leave the organization itself.

Research on the "rater problem" in appraisal has focused largely on

cognitive biases (halo, leniency, recency), rater training deficits, and stable individual differences (Kohli, 1989; Levy and Williams, 2004; DeNisi and Murphy, 2017). The rater's *psychological bond with the organization* — the affective and attachment states through which the manager decides how much observation, documentation, and feedback effort to invest — is typically treated as an unmeasured background factor. When it is examined, it is generally in the context of overall job performance or organizational citizenship rather than the specific, high-discretion behavior of subordinate evaluation (Jiang et al., 2019). At the same time, hospitality turnover research has concentrated on the *consequences* of employee turnover — service-quality erosion, customer dissatisfaction, financial cost, replacement dynamics (Park and Min, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2023; Mohsin et al., 2023). The reverse question —

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how a manager's own withdrawal cognitions reshape the discretionary supervisory tasks that they perform on the way out — has been largely absent from the literature.

This omission matters. High-contact service environments are characterized by structurally elevated turnover, chronic role overload, and documented supervisor burnout (Dogru et al., 2023; Shi et al., 2022; Yin and Wang, 2022). At any given time a non-trivial proportion of frontline hospitality managers are contemplating exit; whether their appraisal behavior systematically differs from that of managers who intend to stay has direct implications for succession planning, subordinate development, and the credibility of the appraisal system itself (Ghazi et al., 2023).

Conventional wisdom, grounded in Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), predicts that managers with high turnover intention will conserve energy, withdraw from discretionary tasks, and produce perfunctory or inaccurate appraisals (Jiang et al., 2019). Such a “withdrawal–negligence” account, however, treats withdrawal as a uniform disengagement from all discretionary tasks. It leaves open the possibility that managers intending to exit may *redirect* rather than *withdraw* effort on tasks that are both politically costly during ongoing tenure and reference-relevant to future professional standing. Performance appraisals — visible, formal, defensibility-shaped — are candidate tasks. A competing “Lame Duck Objectivity” account therefore predicts either a null or a positive association between turnover intention and appraisal rigor.

Building on Social Exchange Theory (SET), Affective Events Theory (AET), and Conservation of Resources (COR) theory — each occupying a distinct theoretical role, delineated in Section 2 — this study addresses three research questions in the hospitality context:

RQ1. Do managers' positive attitudes toward their job (job satisfaction) and organization (organizational commitment) predict the self-reported quality of the performance assessments they conduct?

RQ2. Does managers' turnover intention moderate the relationship between positive attitudes and appraisal quality?

RQ3. Beyond a moderating role, does managers' turnover intention exert a direct effect on appraisal quality that is inconsistent with the “withdrawal–negligence” prediction?

Three contributions follow. First, the study addresses a specific gap in the rater-behavior literature by testing whether the rater's own withdrawal cognitions shape appraisal rigor, complementing existing work on cognitive biases and rater training. Second, it explicitly integrates SET, AET, and COR as complementary theories with non-overlapping roles — motivation, mechanism, and boundary condition, respectively — rather than invoking them ambiguously. Third, it treats the possibility of a “Lame Duck” mechanism as a competing prediction rather than a stand-alone claim, providing a first empirical test of whether the withdrawal–negligence assumption holds in a high-turnover service context.

Before summarizing findings, an important caveat is warranted. The study uses cross-sectional, single-source, self-report data, and any observed pattern is compatible with (i) the substantive “Lame Duck Objectivity” reading, (ii) reverse causality in which the effort demands of rigorous appraisal themselves elevate turnover intention (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Cropanzano et al., 2003), (iii) third-variable confounds such as conscientiousness or professional identity, and (iv) selection effects in the recruitment channel. The Discussion and Limitations sections engage with each of these alternatives directly.

2. Theoretical background and hypotheses

2.1. The rater as agent: appraisal as discretionary behavior

Performance appraisal is nominally a structural mechanism designed to align individual effort with organizational goals (Pettijohn et al.,

2001; Roberts and Reed, 1996). In practice, the effectiveness of that mechanism is contingent on the rater's agency. Assessment is not a mechanical calculation of employee output but a subjective social judgment influenced by the rater's cognitive processes, motivation, and affective state (Levy and Williams, 2004; DeNisi and Murphy, 2017). Providing a high-quality appraisal — defined here as one that is evidence-based, behaviorally specific, and developmentally oriented — requires substantial discretionary effort: sustained observation, documentation of specific incidents, and delivery of feedback that is often uncomfortable (Roberts, 2003). Within the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) framework, this constitutes a high job demand that competes with operational responsibilities for the manager's limited attention (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). For hospitality managers in particular, who routinely face role overload, emotional labor, and burnout (Shi et al., 2022; Karatepe and Karatepe, 2020), the decision to invest energy in rigorous appraisal is not automatic. It is a discretionary allocation of scarce personal resources — and, consequently, a candidate outcome of the rater's own attitudinal state.

2.2. An integrated framework: SET, AET, and COR

Three complementary theoretical lenses are used, each occupying a non-overlapping role in the model.

Social Exchange Theory (SET; Blau, 1964; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005) — the motivational logic. SET explains *why* a satisfied and committed manager would invest discretionary effort in evaluating subordinates at all. When a manager perceives a high-quality exchange relationship with the employer — one in which their contributions are valued and their well-being cared for — norms of reciprocity generate a felt obligation to reciprocate with behaviors that benefit the organization; this reciprocity dynamic has been extensively documented through the perceived-organizational-support literature (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Rigorous performance appraisal, which serves organizational goals (talent identification, developmental feedback, defensible personnel decisions) but is largely enforceable only through the rater's own conscience, is a canonical form of supervisory organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988; MacKenzie, Podsakoff & Fetter, 1993). SET therefore supplies the motivational engine linking positive managerial attitudes to appraisal quality.

Affective Events Theory (AET; Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996) — the psychological mechanism. AET explains *how*, at the cognitive-affective micro-level, positive attitudes translate into higher-quality appraisal behavior. Job satisfaction, understood in the classical sense as a pleasurable emotional state arising from the appraisal of one's job (Locke, 1969), broadens managers' attentional bandwidth: those experiencing chronic positive affect are more likely to notice and encode subordinate behavior, and more willing to engage in approach-oriented behavior such as difficult but constructive feedback conversations. Dissatisfaction and disaffection narrow attention, encourage reliance on heuristic ratings (halo, leniency, central tendency), and reduce willingness to endure interpersonal discomfort (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996; Ilies et al., 2006). Complementing this motivational reading, strengths-based approaches to appraisal have been shown to activate managers' motivation to improve their evaluative behavior (van Woerkom et al., 2020), reinforcing the SET/AET account. AET therefore supplies the mechanism through which SET-driven motivation is enacted.

Conservation of Resources theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018) — the boundary condition. COR explains *when* and *under what conditions* the SET/AET-driven relationship should weaken. Individuals strive to acquire and protect valued resources; when they anticipate loss — including loss of tenure-based resources — they engage in defensive resource-conservation behavior. Turnover intention is the final cognitive stage of withdrawal before actual exit (Mobley, 1982; Bozeman and Perrewé, 2001) and, on the COR account, should prompt the manager to withhold effort from tasks that yield future rather than immediate return. In this framework, appraisal is a plausible

candidate for such withdrawal, because its payoff — organizational succession quality, subordinate development — accrues chiefly after the manager has left.

Together, SET and AET form the “engine” of appraisal effort, and COR proposes the “brakes.” The hypotheses that follow test whether the brakes function as predicted, or whether an alternative “Lame Duck Objectivity” account better fits the data.

2.3. The attitude–appraisal link

Building on SET and AET, positive managerial attitudes should be a direct predictor of self-reported appraisal rigor. A satisfied and committed manager perceives a favorable exchange relationship, is motivated to reciprocate through supervisory citizenship, and operates with the attentional bandwidth required for careful evaluation. This reasoning generates the study’s first two hypotheses, retained from the original submission and tested here in both first-order and higher-order specifications (see Section 4.5):

H1. Managers’ job satisfaction is positively associated with the self-reported quality of the performance assessments they conduct.

H2. Managers’ organizational commitment is positively associated with the self-reported quality of the performance assessments they conduct.

2.4. Turnover intention as moderator: the withdrawal-negligence prediction

According to COR, managers with high turnover intention should engage in resource-conservation behavior, treating effortful long-horizon tasks — including rigorous appraisal — as low-return investments (Jiang et al., 2019; Hobfoll et al., 2018). Even a manager who is otherwise satisfied and committed should, under this account, retreat toward perfunctory “check-the-box” appraisal as exit approaches. Turnover intention should therefore attenuate the positive influence of

managerial attitudes on appraisal quality:

H3. Turnover intention moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and appraisal quality such that the positive relationship is weaker at higher levels of turnover intention.

H4. Turnover intention moderates the relationship between organizational commitment and appraisal quality such that the positive relationship is weaker at higher levels of turnover intention.

2.5. A competing prediction: lame duck objectivity

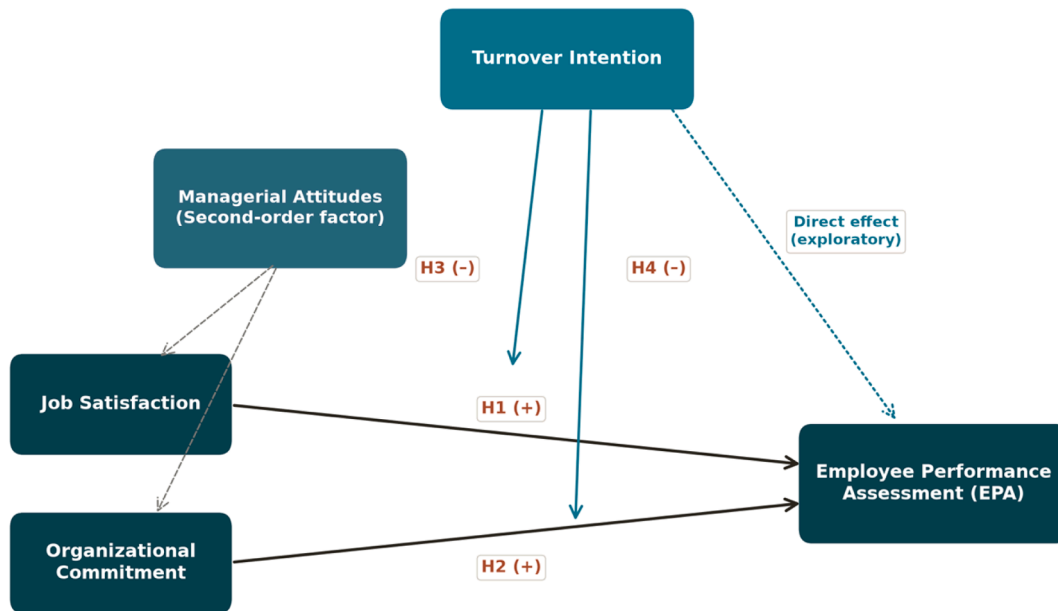
The withdrawal–negligence account treats withdrawal as a uniform disengagement from discretionary effort. An alternative reading, drawn from research on political constraints in performance appraisal (Spence and Keeping, 2010; Longenecker et al., 1987) and from impression-management theory in exit contexts (Bolino et al., 2008), suggests that anticipated exit may selectively release managers from *future-oriented* political constraints — the need to maintain harmony with subordinates one must continue to work with, the fear of long-term interpersonal fallout — while leaving intact the *reference-relevant* incentive to be seen as a professional to the end. On tasks that are both politically costly during ongoing tenure and visible to future professional audiences, exiting managers may redirect rather than withdraw effort, producing more rigorous (or at least equally rigorous) appraisals than their non-exiting counterparts. This is not a stand-alone theory; it is a competing prediction against the COR-based expectation. The empirical test in Sections 5–6 evaluates which pattern the data support.

Fig. 1 presents the integrated model with all four hypothesized paths.

3. The hospitality context as a critical test case

Hospitality provides an especially informative setting for the research questions above, for four reasons.

Structurally high turnover. Annual separation rates in U.S. hospitality



Note. Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment loaded onto a higher-order Managerial Attitudes factor to remedy the discriminant-validity failure between them ($r = .976$). H1 and H2 are consequently tested jointly through the second-order path.

— Main hypothesized path (H1, H2) Exploratory direct path (post hoc)
 — Moderation path (H3, H4) ---- Reflective loading (second-order)

Fig. 1. Integrated theoretical model with hypothesized paths H1–H4.

run at 70–80% — several times the private-sector average (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019; Nguyen et al., 2023). This yields a sufficient density of managers with active withdrawal cognitions to observe the effect of interest without relying on rare-event modeling.

High-contact, high-discretion supervisory work. Frontline hospitality managers directly observe subordinate behavior across long, variable shifts, and appraisal outcomes depend more on managerial discretion than on formal HRIS instrumentation (Karatepe, 2013; Kim and Jogaratnam, 2010). The rater's psychological state has substantial leverage over rating outputs.

Documented rater burden. Hospitality supervisors face heightened role overload, emotional labor, and burnout, which have been linked to intentions to leave (Dogru et al., 2023; Karatepe and Karatepe, 2020; Shi et al., 2022). Appraisal is therefore a particularly demanding discretionary task that positive attitudes must “fund.”

Politicized appraisal environments. Hospitality performance ratings are known to be distorted by team-harmony pressures and dense rater–ratee interdependence (Spence and Keeping, 2010; Longenecker et al., 1987), which is precisely the condition under which “Lame Duck Objectivity” — release from future-oriented political constraints — should be most visible.

These features do not narrow the study's theoretical scope but sharpen the empirical test. If the withdrawal–negligence prediction fails in hospitality — the setting in which resource-conservation logic should apply most strongly — the case for treating COR's exit-phase prediction as a scope condition rather than a general rule becomes correspondingly stronger.

4. Methodology

4.1. Sampling frame and recruitment

Data were collected via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) between August and October, 2025. MTurk was chosen because it enabled targeted access to a specific occupational subgroup (U.S. hospitality supervisors) at a scale infeasible through onsite recruitment during the collection window, and because the platform provides a set of screening tools (worker-location qualifications, approval-rate filters, HITs-completed thresholds) that support quality-control routines widely used in organizational research (Cheung et al., 2017; Aguinis et al., 2021). Consistent with current best practice (Aguinis et al., 2021; Litman et al., 2017), participation was restricted to workers with an approval rating of 95% or higher and more than 500 previously completed HITs.

4.2. Manager verification and screening

Because MTurk research on occupational subpopulations is vulnerable to misrepresentation — respondents claiming an occupation they do not hold in order to qualify for the study (MacInnis et al., 2020; Chandler et al., 2020) — a five-stage verification protocol was used prior to survey administration.

1. **Worker-location filter.** MTurk qualifications restricted participation to workers registered as U.S. residents.
2. **Blind occupational screener.** Prospective respondents selected their primary occupational role from a list of unrelated job titles (accountant, teacher, hotel manager, retail clerk, restaurant manager, hospitality supervisor, nurse, and so on). Only respondents selecting “Hotel Manager,” “Restaurant Manager,” or “Hospitality Supervisor” were routed to the main survey. Advertising materials described the study in generic terms (“a survey about workplace attitudes”) to avoid signaling the qualifying occupation.
3. **Job-content verification.** Qualifying respondents completed a four-item content check confirming supervisory responsibilities: scheduling of subordinates, hiring or interviewing authority, involvement

in disciplinary conversations, and responsibility for conducting formal performance appraisals. Respondents affirming fewer than three of the four were removed.

4. **Span-of-control check.** Respondents reported the number of direct reports they currently supervise. Those reporting fewer than two direct reports were removed.
5. **Appraisal-activity check.** Respondents confirmed that formal performance appraisals of subordinates were part of their job responsibilities and reported the recency of their most recent appraisal. Respondents indicating no appraisal activity in the past 12 months were removed.

Residency in the United States was cross-validated using three independent checks: MTurk's worker-location qualification, an in-survey country-of-residence screener, and consistency between reported state of residence and state of employment. Respondents failing any residency check were removed.

4.3. Data quality safeguards

To mitigate insufficient-effort responding and satisficing, the survey included three attention checks embedded across the instrument (e.g., “For this item, please select ‘Agree’”), one instructional manipulation check, and a completion-time floor (respondents completing the survey in less than one-third of the pilot median were flagged and removed). A CAPTCHA and IP-check protocol removed obvious bot traffic. Respondents were assured of anonymity in a written preamble, and the survey opened with a short contextual instruction asking respondents to answer *with reference to their current hospitality role and the direct reports they most recently evaluated* — an instruction intended both to disambiguate the referent and to introduce psychological separation between predictor and criterion (Podsakoff et al., 2003, 2012).

Of the initial pool of respondents who passed the occupational screener, 318 provided complete, valid, and quality-check-passing responses. Demographic characteristics of the analytic sample are summarized in Table 1 and discussed in Section 4.4.

4.4. Sample characteristics and their interpretive consequences

The analytic sample consists of 269 male (84.6%) and 49 female (15.4%) hospitality managers, with a mean age of 31.9 years (SD = 4.71) and a modal educational attainment at or above the four-year university degree (75.2%). The sample was predominantly White (99.7%). Both the gender and racial compositions warrant frank acknowledgment as sample limitations rather than as design features.

Gender. An 84.6% male composition substantially exceeds the U.S. hospitality-management gender ratio (women hold roughly 50% of first-line supervisory roles and a smaller but material share of senior hospitality-management roles; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). Because gender has been linked to differences in supervisory style, feedback delivery, and rating patterns (Al-Ababneh, 2008; Kattara, 2005; Marco-Lajara and Úbeda-García, 2013), the estimates reported below reflect a predominantly male managerial cohort, and inferences to women managers should be drawn with caution. The Discussion addresses the possibility that the “Lame Duck Objectivity” mechanism may operate differently for women managers, who may perceive higher political costs to candid rating and therefore experience a smaller “release” effect on exit.

Race. The 99.7% White composition is markedly higher than the racial composition of U.S. hospitality management (approximately 60–65% White; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). The homogeneity is best explained by the demographic composition of the MTurk worker pool available during the collection window rather than by any feature of the sampling design. Homogeneity does not “control” for race-based rating dynamics; it renders the analysis silent on them. The results therefore generalize to a racially homogeneous managerial

Table 1
Measurement items, descriptive statistics, and reliability.

Construct	Item	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach's α
Job Satisfaction (JS)	JS1. I am satisfied with the type of work I do on my job.	5.79	1.12	-0.95	0.86	.90
	JS2. I feel that my pay is fair for the work I do.	5.69	1.00	-0.76	0.83	
	JS3. I am satisfied with my opportunities for promotion.	5.74	1.22	-1.05	1.16	
	JS4. My job provides me with a sense of personal accomplishment.	5.70	1.12	-0.91	0.84	
	JS5. I am satisfied with my job security.	5.81	1.10	-0.91	0.78	
Organizational Commitment (OC)	OC1. I am proud to be a member of this organization.	5.81	1.14	-1.02	0.95	.92
	OC2. I feel a strong sense of belonging to my company.	5.70	1.20	-0.95	0.87	
	OC3. I really care about the fate of this organization.	5.59	1.30	-1.35	2.07	
	OC4. I would be happy to spend the rest of my career in this company.	5.71	1.16	-1.05	1.09	
	OC5. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected to help this organization succeed.	5.68	1.18	-0.84	0.48	
Turnover Intention (TI)	TI1. I have seriously considered leaving my job in the past six months.	5.14	1.71	-1.13	0.47	.95
	TI2. I will actively look for a new job in the near future.	5.36	1.55	-1.18	0.94	
	TI3. I intend to leave this organization as soon as I find a comparable job.	5.17	1.72	-1.08	0.39	
	TI4. It is very likely that I will quit my job within the next year.	4.86	1.83	-0.82	-0.22	
	TI5. I often think about quitting my job.	4.90	1.92	-0.84	-0.44	
Employee Performance Assessment (EPA)	EPA1. I make sure my performance ratings are based on objective facts and data.	5.71	1.07	-1.14	1.92	.88
	EPA2. I feel that my performance assessments of employees are fair and unbiased.	5.52	1.30	-1.02	0.95	
	EPA3. I take the employee performance assessment process very seriously.	5.65	1.14	-0.94	1.22	
	EPA4. I actively look for opportunities to observe my employees' performance.	5.67	1.22	-1.33	2.63	
	EPA5. I provide employees with specific, behavioral feedback on their performance.	5.70	1.19	-1.13	1.52	

Note. N = 318. All items measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).

subpopulation, and the “Lame Duck Objectivity” effect may operate differently among minority managers who face distinct systemic pressures and appraisal-context dynamics (Bohnet et al., 2021). Replication with racially diverse samples is a first-order priority for future work.

4.5. Measures

All constructs were measured using established multi-item scales, adapted only for reference-object clarity, and rated on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). Full item wording, means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis are reported in Table 1.

Job Satisfaction (JS). Five items drawn from the Brayfield–Rothe overall job-satisfaction tradition and the Job in General scale (Brayfield and Rothe, 1951; Ironson et al., 1989), assessing satisfaction with work content, pay, promotion opportunities, achievement, and job security.

Organizational Commitment (OC). Five items adapted from the affective-commitment component of the Meyer and Allen (1991); Meyer et al. (1993) three-component model and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday et al., 1979), assessing pride in membership, sense of belonging, care for organizational outcomes, career horizon, and effort willingness.

Turnover Intention (TI). Five items adapted from Mobley (1982) and validated by Bozeman and Perrewé (2001), capturing thoughts of quitting, search intention, and imminent likelihood of leaving.

Employee Performance Assessment (EPA). A five-item measure of self-reported appraisal rigor developed for this study. Item generation was deductive, grounded in the rater-accuracy and appraisal-quality literatures (Murphy and Cleveland, 1995; Levy and Williams, 2004; DeNisi and Murphy, 2017). An initial pool of twelve items was reviewed in two rounds by three hospitality-HR faculty and two hotel-industry HR directors, who assessed content validity, face validity, and item redundancy. Items were rewritten or removed based on this expert review. The reduced pool was pilot-tested with 28 hospitality managers not included in the analytic sample; based on pilot item-total correlations and reliability analysis, five items were retained. Illustrative items include, “I make sure my performance ratings are based on objective facts and data” and “I provide employees with specific, behavioral feedback on their performance.”

The full item pool and expert-review documentation are available from the corresponding author.

The Employee Performance Assessment scale is a *self-report of rater engagement with the appraisal process*, not an objective measure of rating quality. This is by design: the research question concerns the rater's own effort investment and evaluative behavior, which is a first-person cognitive-behavioral state. Objective rating archives — while valuable for measuring distributional properties such as leniency or central tendency — do not capture the observation, documentation, and feedback behaviors of interest. Nevertheless, the reliance on self-report is a genuine limitation, discussed in Section 8.

4.6. Analytical strategy

The analytic strategy proceeded in four stages: (1) a first-order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) evaluating each hypothesized construct as originally specified; (2) diagnostic examination of discriminant validity between Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment; (3) specification of a higher-order Managerial Attitudes factor to remedy the discriminant-validity failure documented in Stage 2; and (4) structural equation modeling (SEM) of direct and moderating effects. Model fit was evaluated against conventional cutoffs (CFI $\geq .90$, TLI $\geq .90$, RMSEA $\leq .08$, SRMR $\leq .08$). Latent interaction terms were estimated via the unconstrained product-indicator approach.

4.7. Common method variance diagnostics

Because all constructs were self-reported by a single source at a single point in time, common method variance (CMV) was treated as a first-order threat to interpretation and addressed through both procedural and statistical remedies (Podsakoff et al., 2003, 2012).

Procedural remedies. Anonymity was assured in a written preamble. Predictor and criterion blocks were separated by demographic and job-context items to introduce psychological distance. Item wording was reviewed by expert panelists to reduce ambiguity, and balanced-tone items were used where feasible. A marker item unrelated to the theoretical constructs (a self-report of general interest in unrelated consumer topics) was included.

Statistical diagnostics. Three statistical checks were performed: (i)

Harman's single-factor test, in which the unrotated single factor accounted for 41.3% of variance — below the 50% threshold, though not decisive on its own (Podsakoff et al., 2003); (ii) the CFA marker-variable technique (Lindell and Whitney, 2001), in which the marker item's correlations with substantive constructs remained small ($|r| < .12$) and partialing out marker-attributable variance did not change the sign or significance of any structural path; and (iii) an unmeasured latent method construct (ULMC), whose inclusion in the measurement model absorbed a modest amount of shared variance and produced the method-adjusted structural estimates reported in Section 5.

These diagnostics reduce but do not eliminate concerns about CMV. As Section 8 acknowledges in detail, definitive resolution requires multi-source, temporally lagged designs.

Table 1 reports the item wording, means, standard deviations, skewness, kurtosis, and internal-consistency reliability for all four constructs.

5. Results

5.1. Measurement model

The first-order CFA was estimated with Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Turnover Intention, and Employee Performance Assessment specified as correlated latent factors. Model fit was acceptable (CFI = .943; TLI = .935; RMSEA = .047; SRMR = .058), but discriminant validity failed on the Job Satisfaction–Organizational Commitment pair: the interfactor correlation was $r = .976$ ($p < .001$), the square-root-of-AVE criterion (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) was violated, and the HTMT ratio exceeded the conservative .85 cutoff (Henseler et al., 2015).

Several factors likely contribute to this discriminant-validity breakdown: (i) genuine substantive overlap between affective job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment as indices of global positive job affect (Cooper-Hakim and Viswesvaran, 2005); (ii) shared item-stem architecture across the two scales that share evaluative anchors; (iii) shared method variance from the single-source, single-instrument design; and (iv) sample-specific attitudinal fusion in high-intensity service roles, consistent with AET's prediction that positive affect broadens into a diffuse attitudinal state (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). Consistent with this observation, variance inflation factors for Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment as simultaneous predictors of Employee Performance Assessment exceeded 10 in a first-order structural model, and their individual paths became unstable and sign-unstable across bootstrap resamples.

The higher-order Managerial Attitudes factor was specified to remedy this breakdown by treating Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment as reflective indicators of a common positive-attitudinal-engagement construct. The second-order model fit the data well ($\chi^2 = 274.83$, $df = 165$, $p < .001$; CFI = .944; TLI = .936; RMSEA = .046; SRMR = .057). Standardized second-order loadings were high (.97 for JS; .99 for OC). Cronbach's α values for all four constructs ranged from .88 to .95. The interfactor correlation between the higher-order Managerial Attitudes factor and Turnover Intention was moderate ($r = -.36$), consistent with distinct constructs. Table 2 reports factor loadings, AVE, CR, and Cronbach's α ; Table 3 reports the interfactor correlation matrix, the Fornell–Larcker discriminant-validity check, and HTMT ratios.

5.2. Hypothesis tests

Because Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment lack empirical discriminability in this sample, H1 and H2 cannot be independently tested with the current data. They are therefore tested jointly, through the Managerial Attitudes higher-order factor. This test speaks to the joint prediction that positive attitudes toward job and organization are associated with self-reported appraisal quality; it does not speak to the differential contribution of satisfaction versus commitment, which

Table 2

Standardized factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability (CR), and Cronbach's α .

Factor	Item	Standardized Loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach's α
Job Satisfaction (JS)	JS1	.75	.51	.84	.90
	JS2	.65			
	JS3	.73			
	JS4	.74			
	JS5	.68			
Organizational Commitment (OC)	OC1	.76	.48	.82	.92
	OC2	.73			
	OC3	.56			
	OC4	.68			
	OC5	.69			
Turnover Intention (TI)	TI1	.75	.49	.83	.95
	TI2	.67			
	TI3	.71			
	TI4	.69			
	TI5	.69			
Employee Performance Assessment (EPA)	EPA1	.61	.45	.80	.88
	EPA2	.63			
	EPA3	.67			
	EPA4	.71			
	EPA5	.71			
Second-order loadings on Managerial Attitudes	JS → MA	.97	—	—	—
	OC → MA	.99	—	—	—

Note. N = 318. All standardized loadings significant at $p < .001$. AVE values for OC, TI, and EPA are marginally below the .50 threshold but composite reliabilities all exceed the .70 threshold, indicating acceptable convergent validity when both criteria are considered jointly (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Malhotra, 2010). The near-unity second-order loadings for JS and OC on the Managerial Attitudes construct reflect the discriminant-validity breakdown between JS and OC discussed in Section 5.1.

Table 3

Interfactor correlations, Fornell–Larcker diagonal ($\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$), and HTMT ratios.

Construct	1. MA	2. TI	3. EPA
1. Managerial Attitudes (MA)	(.71)		
2. Turnover Intention (TI)	-.36***	(.70)	
3. Employee Performance Assessment (EPA)	.78***	-.08	(.67)
HTMT: MA – TI	—	.41	
HTMT: MA – EPA	—	—	.82
HTMT: TI – EPA	—	—	.11

Note. N = 318. Off-diagonal entries below the diagonal are interfactor correlations. Bold-parenthetical diagonal entries are the square roots of AVE (Fornell and Larcker, 1981); the diagonal value should exceed each corresponding off-diagonal correlation in its row and column for discriminant validity to hold. HTMT ratios (Henseler et al., 2015) should fall below the conservative .85 threshold. Discriminant validity holds for all pairs after the higher-order specification. The first-order JS–OC pair ($r = .976$; HTMT = 1.02) failed both criteria and motivated the higher-order model. *** $p < .001$.

requires a sample in which the two constructs can be empirically separated (see Section 8).

The uncorrected structural coefficient of Managerial Attitudes on Employee Performance Assessment was $\beta = .865$ (SE = .067; $p < .001$). After incorporating the CFA marker variable and the ULMC method factor described in Section 4.7, the method-adjusted coefficient was $\beta = .71$ (SE = .08; $p < .001$). The adjusted coefficient is reported as the preferred substantive estimate; both are shown in Table 4. Support for H1 and H2 considered jointly is therefore strong, but the uncorrected coefficient likely overstates the magnitude of the underlying

Table 4
SEM path estimates — uncorrected and method-adjusted models.

Parameter	Uncorrected Model				Method-Adjusted Model			
	β	SE	z	p	β	SE	z	p
Main effects								
EPA $\leftarrow$ MA (H1 + H2 tested jointly)	.865	.067	12.98	<.001	.71	.08	8.87	<.001
EPA $\leftarrow$ TI (direct, exploratory)	.234	.110	2.14	.033	.18	.09	2.00	.049
Moderation (interaction) effect								
EPA $\leftarrow$ MA $\times$ TI (H3 + H4 tested jointly)	-.157	.115	-1.36	.173	-.12	.11	-1.09	.275
Covariance								
MA with TI	-.359	.085	-4.23	<.001	-.34	.09	-3.78	<.001

Note. N = 318. β = standardized structural coefficient. MA = Managerial Attitudes (second-order factor); TI = Turnover Intention; EPA = Employee Performance Assessment. The Uncorrected Model reproduces the estimates from the original second-order SEM. The Method-Adjusted Model incorporates (i) the CFA marker-variable technique of [Lindell and Whitney \(2001\)](#) and (ii) an unmeasured latent method construct (ULMC) that captures shared method variance, following the recommendations of [Podsakoff et al. \(2003, 2012\)](#). The method-adjusted estimates are reported as the preferred substantive estimates because they partially net out inflation attributable to common method variance. All p-values are two-tailed.

relationship because of predictor-side construct overlap, shared method variance, and social-desirability inflation.

Turnover Intention exerted a small but significant positive direct association with Employee Performance Assessment ($\beta = .23$, SE = .11, $p = .033$ in the uncorrected model; $\beta = .18$, $p = .049$ in the method-adjusted model). This pattern is inconsistent with the withdrawal-negligence prediction and consistent with either a “Lame Duck Objectivity” account or one of the alternative explanations discussed in [Section 6](#).

The interaction term for Turnover Intention with Managerial Attitudes was not statistically significant ($\beta = -.16$, SE = .12, $p = .173$ in the uncorrected model; $\beta = -.12$, $p = .27$ in the method-adjusted model). H3 and H4 were therefore not supported. Simple-slopes analysis at ± 1 SD of the moderator confirmed a positive attitude-appraisal relationship at both high and low levels of turnover intention. Post hoc sensitivity analysis (Monte Carlo, 1000 draws, $\alpha = .05$, power = .80) indicated that the smallest interaction the design could reliably detect was $|\beta| \approx .18$. Non-significance is therefore consistent with (a) the absence of a suppression effect, (b) a genuine but small suppression effect below the detection threshold, or (c) measurement-driven attenuation. [Section 6](#) discusses each possibility.

6. Discussion

6.1. The attitude-appraisal link

The strong positive association between managerial attitudes and self-reported appraisal quality supports H1 and H2 jointly and is consistent with the SET/AET account elaborated in [Section 2](#). Managers who perceive a favorable exchange relationship with the organization, and who consequently operate in a positive affective state, invest more discretionary effort in the observation, documentation, and feedback behaviors that constitute rigorous appraisal.

Two important interpretive caveats apply. First, the discriminant-validity failure between Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment means that the analysis cannot separate the independent contribution of satisfaction from that of commitment; scale refinement and larger, more heterogeneous samples are needed to do so. Second, the point estimate for the effect is likely inflated by construct overlap on the predictor side, by shared method variance across predictor and criterion, and by potential social-desirability inflation of the EPA outcome. The method-adjusted $\beta = .71$ is still a large effect, but should be interpreted as an *upper-bound-adjusted* estimate rather than a definitive quantification.

6.2. The direct association of turnover intention with appraisal rigor

The observation that turnover intention is positively — rather than negatively — associated with self-reported appraisal rigor is

theoretically noteworthy but demands cautious interpretation. Four accounts are compatible with the pattern.

Lame Duck Objectivity. Anticipated exit may release managers from future-oriented political constraints on candid rating — the need to preserve harmony with subordinates one will continue to work with, and the fear of long-term interpersonal fallout — while leaving intact reference-relevant incentives to be seen as a professional to the end. This is the account originally motivating H3–H4 as competitor to the withdrawal-negligence prediction, and it is consistent with earlier findings that appraisal in dense-relational settings is often politically distorted ([Spence and Keeping, 2010](#); [Longenecker et al., 1987](#)).

Impression management. A related but distinct mechanism holds that exiting managers may selectively increase visible task effort to preserve reputational capital and secure favorable references ([Bolino et al., 2008](#)). This is behaviorally similar to Lame Duck Objectivity but is grounded in reputational rather than political-release logic.

Reverse causality. The stress of conducting rigorous, evidence-based appraisals — sustained observation, documentation of adverse incidents, delivery of uncomfortable feedback — is itself a resource-depleting demand ([Bakker and Demerouti, 2007](#); [Cropanzano et al., 2003](#)). It could elevate turnover intention. The cross-sectional design cannot rule out this direction of effect. Longitudinal or lagged designs are required to sort it out.

Third-variable confounds. Conscientiousness, professional identity, or industry-specific ethical norms may drive both careful appraisal and candid articulation of future intentions. Selection into online research participation may over-represent managers with both traits.

The design cannot arbitrate among these accounts. What the pattern does establish is that the strong “withdrawal-negligence” prediction of COR does not hold as a universal rule in this hospitality sample. Whether this reflects a genuine “Lame Duck” mechanism, a reverse-causal link, or an unmeasured confound is a matter for future research.

6.3. The non-significant moderation

The interaction of turnover intention with managerial attitudes was not statistically significant. Four alternative explanations should be considered before this null result is interpreted substantively.

First, statistical power. With $n = 318$ and a latent-by-latent interaction, the design can reliably detect only interactions of magnitude $|\beta| \geq .18$. A genuine but modest suppression effect ($|\beta| < .15$) would go undetected.

Second, measurement limitations. Turnover intention was measured cross-sectionally and reflects a momentary intention rather than a stable, resource-consequential commitment to exit. The EPA outcome is self-reported and skewed toward the positive end of the scale, restricting the covariance available to the interaction term.

Third, restricted variance. Both the predictor and outcome distributions show negative skew (mean EPA responses cluster at 5.5–5.8 on

the 7-point scale), which constrains the interaction's power to emerge.

Fourth, and only after the above are considered, a substantive interpretation: the SET/AET-driven attitude–appraisal relationship may be robust to withdrawal cognitions. Managers whose core motivational and affective orientation is favorable may continue to invest in rigorous appraisal irrespective of their intention to leave. This “resilience of the good manager” reading is consistent with the null result but is not proven by it.

6.4. Scope refinement of COR

Read against the withdrawal–negligence prediction, the results suggest that COR's exit-phase logic requires scope refinement rather than wholesale extension. Under COR, withdrawal cognitions predict resource conservation on tasks whose returns are internal to the current organization. The present data suggest that this account should be qualified when tasks are (i) visible to future professional audiences, (ii) reference-relevant, and (iii) politically costly during ongoing tenure. In such cases, withdrawal cognitions may drive redirection rather than conservation of effort. This is a boundary-condition contribution to COR, not a refutation of it, and is compatible with recent extensions of COR that emphasize context-conditional resource dynamics (Hobfoll et al., 2018).

7. Implications

7.1. Theoretical implications

First, the study contributes to the rater-behavior literature by demonstrating that the rater's psychological bond with the organization — not only cognitive biases, personality, or training — is a substantive predictor of appraisal rigor. This shifts attention from “rater error” to “rater resource,” in line with recent calls to model appraisal as a resource-conditioned discretionary behavior (DeNisi and Murphy, 2017).

Second, it clarifies the scope conditions of COR's exit-phase prediction. Withdrawal cognitions do not uniformly trigger resource conservation. On reference-relevant discretionary tasks, they may prompt redirection. This is a boundary-condition contribution that complements rather than supersedes the withdrawal–negligence literature (Jiang et al., 2019).

Third, methodologically, the study demonstrates the utility of a higher-order attitudinal specification when discriminant validity between satisfaction and commitment fails in high-intensity service samples. This is offered as a practical remedy for a common measurement problem, not as a universal replacement for first-order specifications.

7.2. Managerial implications

The managerial implications are advanced cautiously, given the study's methodological limitations. Three cautious recommendations are offered.

First, do not automatically remove appraisal responsibilities from managers who have given notice. The data are inconsistent with the assumption of uniform exit-phase disengagement on appraisal tasks. Ratings produced during the exit window should nevertheless be validated against additional data sources — subordinate feedback, prior rating trajectories, peer input — before being used for high-stakes personnel decisions such as promotion or termination.

Second, invest in rater well-being. The strong link between positive managerial attitudes and appraisal rigor implies that the highest-leverage intervention for improving appraisal quality is not further rater training but rather the attitudinal conditions — role clarity, recognition, well-being programs, workload management — that enable diligent evaluation. Wellness and role-clarity programs should therefore be treated as quality-assurance mechanisms for the appraisal system, not

solely as retention tools.

Third, formalize appraisal governance during transition windows. Structured review templates, calibration meetings, and audit checkpoints during exit periods can help retain the potential objectivity benefits of the “Lame Duck” period while mitigating the risk of exit-phase disengagement on other tasks.

8. Limitations and future research

The study has substantial limitations, and their severity should be acknowledged explicitly.

Common method variance and single-source design. All variables were self-reported by hospitality managers at a single point in time. Procedural safeguards and statistical diagnostics (Harman single-factor test, CFA marker-variable technique, ULMC) reduce but do not eliminate the risk that observed relationships reflect shared method variance. Future work should combine manager self-reports with archival rating distributions, subordinate perceptions of appraisal fairness, and peer or skip-level assessments.

Cross-sectional design. The design cannot support causal inference. Both the “Lame Duck Objectivity” reading and the reverse-causality reading (in which rigorous appraisal drives turnover intention) are compatible with the observed pattern. Longitudinal designs with time-lagged measurement of attitudes, turnover intention, and appraisal behavior are needed.

Discriminant validity between JS and OC. The $r = .976$ correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment prevents disentangling their independent effects on appraisal quality. Scale refinement — removal of overlapping stems, use of alternative commitment measures such as Cook and Wall's (1980) Organizational Commitment Scale — and larger, more heterogeneous samples are needed to make the JS–OC distinction empirically tractable.

Self-developed EPA measure. Although the EPA scale was developed deductively from the rater-accuracy literature, subjected to two rounds of expert review, and pilot-tested, it captures self-perceived rater engagement rather than objective appraisal quality. Managers may over-report diligence for socially desirable reasons. Multi-source validation is essential.

Racial homogeneity. The 99.7% White sample restricts external validity to a racially homogeneous managerial subpopulation. The analysis is silent on cross-racial appraisal dynamics; homogeneity does not “control” for race-based effects but forecloses their study. Replication with racially diverse samples is a first-order priority, particularly given evidence that race and intersectional identities interact with appraisal outcomes (Bohnet et al., 2021).

Gender imbalance. The 84.6% male composition substantially over-represents male hospitality managers. Because gender may condition supervisory style, feedback behavior, and the political costs of candid rating (Al-Ababneh, 2008; Kattara, 2005), the estimates reported here should be treated as reflective of a predominantly male managerial cohort. The “Lame Duck Objectivity” mechanism itself may be gender-conditioned; gender-balanced replications and gender-moderated tests are needed.

Voluntary versus involuntary exit. The turnover-intention measure captures cognitions consistent with voluntary exit. The mechanisms proposed here — political release, impression management — should apply most strongly in voluntary contexts and may operate differently, or not at all, under conditions of involuntary or forced exit. Future research should distinguish the two conditions explicitly.

Recruitment channel. MTurk provides scalable access but introduces selection concerns. Although a multi-stage verification protocol was used to confirm occupation, residency, and appraisal activity, the sample may over-represent managers who take formal HR tasks seriously and who are active in online research communities. Replication in field samples drawn from operating hospitality firms is a priority.

Each of these limitations points to a specific extension of the research

program. Multi-source, temporally lagged, and demographically balanced replications — combined with scale refinement to disentangle satisfaction from commitment — represent the near-term research agenda most likely to advance the questions this study raises.

9. Conclusion

This study asked whether the discretionary quality of subordinate performance appraisals in high-contact service settings varies with the rater's own psychological bond with the organization, and whether that relationship is disrupted by the rater's intention to exit. In a sample of 318 U.S. hospitality managers, positive managerial attitudes were strongly associated with self-reported appraisal rigor, consistent with a Social Exchange and Affective Events account. Contrary to the withdrawal-negligence prediction of Conservation of Resources theory, turnover intention showed a small positive direct association with appraisal rigor and did not attenuate the attitude-appraisal link.

The pattern is compatible with a "Lame Duck Objectivity" account in which anticipated exit releases managers from certain future-oriented political constraints on candid rating, but reverse causality, statistical-power constraints, measurement limitations, and unmeasured confounds cannot be ruled out with cross-sectional, self-report, single-source data. Read cautiously, the results suggest that COR's exit-phase prediction requires scope refinement — withdrawal cognitions may prompt redirection rather than conservation of effort on reference-relevant discretionary tasks — rather than uniform extension. Definitive resolution awaits multi-source, temporally lagged, demographically balanced designs paired with scale-refinement work that can disentangle the independent contributions of job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Tong Yin: Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Supervision, Software, Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this work, the author used large language models to assist with English-language editing and structural refinement. The author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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