

Crafting creativity and its impact on the trajectory of career withdrawal intentions of hospitality employees: A latent growth modeling approach

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of supervisor support in fostering employees' incremental and radical creativity, with employee ambition as a moderating factor. Drawing on conservation of resources theory, it further investigates how these forms of creativity influence changes in the career withdrawal intentions of hospitality employees over time. Utilizing three-wave longitudinal data from a dyadic sample of 204 hospitality workers and their supervisors, results indicate that supervisor support significantly enhances both incremental and radical creativity, with ambition amplifying this effect. Based on three-level latent growth modeling, the findings also reveal that incremental creativity reduces initial withdrawal intentions and slows their progression over time, while radical creativity initially decreases withdrawal intentions but lacks sustained impact. These findings highlight the crucial role of supervisor support and employee ambition in fostering creativity and positively influencing employees' career engagement over time.

1. Introduction

The increasing complexity and dynamism of the hospitality industry make innovation essential, with creativity emerging as a critical driver of success in this constantly evolving sector. Defined as the 'generator of novel and practical ideas' (Amabile), creativity is indispensable in the hospitality industry, given its intensely competitive and service-driven nature (Ouyang et al., 2021). The rapid growth of AI technology, coupled with the surge in mass tourism, has intensified competition and raised customer expectations to unprecedented levels. In response, industry experts and researchers emphasize the need for employees to transcend routine practices and actively pursue innovative solutions (Hou; Kim et al., 2024). The service-oriented focus of hospitality means that employee creativity is integral to not only meeting customer expectations, but to exceeding them.

With the industry's reliance on intangible, experiential services, fostering creative thinking among employees is pivotal in driving guest satisfaction and ensuring operational excellence. Creativity also provides a strong competitive advantage by enabling organizations to respond more effectively to customer demands, retain staff in

emotionally demanding environments, and drive innovation in service delivery. Creativity-driven strategies—ranging from incremental improvements in guest interactions to the adoption of AI-based tools—help hospitality businesses remain adaptive in rapidly changing markets (Kim et al., 2024).

Despite broad agreement on the value of creativity, there remains a notable gap in understanding which specific factors influence employee creativity in the hospitality sector.

Recent research suggests that leadership practices such as entrepreneurial leadership can play a cascading role in fostering employee creativity through mechanisms such as surface acting and work-related flow (Hou). Given the high frequency of workplace interactions between supervisors and employees in the hospitality industry, it is essential to examine the role of supervisors in shaping employee creativity. Organizations that invest in strong supervisor-employee relationships are expected to be better positioned to cultivate both incremental and radical creativity. However, despite the importance of supervisor support, recent meta-analyses reveal a significant gap in understanding its association with creativity in hospitality settings (Zhu et al., 2023). Addressing this gap is crucial for developing strategies that enhance

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creativity and retain talent in this competitive and dynamic field. By prioritizing supervisor support, hospitality organizations can unlock the creative potentials of their employees, leading to improved service delivery and customer satisfaction (see [Truong et al., 2020](#)). Practical application of these insights can guide training programs that emphasize the development of supervisory skills aimed at fostering an innovative and supportive work environment.

In addition to exploring the direct impact of supervisor support on creativity, this study addressed another research gap by examining how ambition works in this relationship, particularly in the high-turnover, high-stress hospitality industry. Ambition is highly relevant in this context because employees driven by career aspirations are more likely to seek opportunities for growth and advancement, despite the challenges posed by demanding work environments ([Ghosh, 2023](#)). In industries like hospitality, where stress and turnover are prevalent, ambitious individuals may be more motivated to further their personal and professional goals. This active engagement enables individuals to leverage available resources and opportunities, ultimately boosting their creativity and problem-solving abilities. The current literature suggests that ambitious individuals often combine intrinsic motivation with extrinsic rewards to excel in performance in their fields ([Jones et al., 2017](#); [Otto et al., 2017](#)). However, the impact of ambition on the support-creativity relationship remains underexplored. This study sought to fill this gap by examining how ambition delineates when, and for whom, supervisor support is more effective in fostering creativity, providing new insights into employee engagement and creative performance. The findings suggest that managerial strategies in the hospitality industry should not only provide support but also align with individual ambitions to cultivate a more creative workforce. By doing so, organizations can better harness the potential of employees, leading to more effective problem-solving and creative outcomes that are crucial for competitive advantage in a high-turnover industry.

Furthermore, this study explored career withdrawal intentions, a topic that has been receiving growing attention in recent hospitality literature ([Santhanam](#)). Unlike job turnover, which involves leaving a specific organization, career withdrawal intentions encompass a deeper disengagement, reflecting an intention to leave the entire industry ([Pinto et al., 2012](#)). In high-stress environments such as hospitality, where continuous guest interaction and job burnout are widespread, employees may not only leave their current roles but also consider abandoning their careers in the industry altogether ([Nguyen et al., 2023](#); [Santhanam et al., 2024](#)). To better understand how career withdrawal intentions develop over time, a longitudinal design was adopted. Unlike cross-sectional studies that offer a one-time snapshot, a longitudinal approach captures the dynamic nature of career withdrawal intentions as they evolve in response to varying levels of creativity. By examining both incremental creativity, which involves continuous, small improvements, and radical creativity, which leads to transformative changes, it was hoped that this study would uncover how these different types of creativity might influence employees' decisions regarding their long-term careers. The longitudinal design allowed the authors to trace patterns and fluctuations in withdrawal intentions, providing valuable insights into how creativity, ambition and support mechanisms interact to affect employee retention in the hospitality sector (see [Xu & Martinez, 2018](#)). Such knowledge enables managers to see the importance of fostering environments that celebrate both minor and major creative achievements, effectively lessening career withdrawal intentions. This proactive approach ensures employees have clear growth and recognition paths, reducing their likelihood of exiting the industry.

This study makes crucial contributions to both theory and practice by examining the relationships between supervisor support, employee creativity, ambition, and career withdrawal intention in the hospitality industry. Theoretically, it extends existing research by highlighting how workplace support and ambition jointly foster creativity and how different types of creativity influence employees' career decisions in a high-turnover environment. Practically, the findings of this study

provide industry leaders with strategies to enhance employee creativity through supportive leadership, develop ambition-driven career pathways, and mitigate career withdrawal intention. These insights offer a foundation for improving talent retention and fostering a more innovative workforce in the hospitality sector.

2. Literature review

2.1. Supervisor support and employee creativity

Supervisor support is defined as the extent to which employees feel valued and cared for by their supervisors ([Arif](#)). This support encompasses mentoring, constructive feedback, emotional backing, and career development, which form the foundation of strong employee-supervisor relationships, and positively influence organizational dynamics ([Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002](#)). Supervisor support also strengthens employees' commitment and willingness to engage in constructive behaviors, through reciprocal relationships built on the leaders' personal attractiveness and reliability ([Kim et al., 2021](#); [Tang & Tsaor, 2016](#)).

Supervisor support plays a significant role in improving employee outcomes and managing challenges in the hospitality industry. [Gu et al. \(2017\)](#), in their study of 23 four- and five-star hotels across 11 Chinese cities, demonstrated that supervisor support enhances employee innovative behavior by strengthening organizational commitment. In the context of Turkish restaurants, [Guchait et al. \(2014\)](#) examined the impact of supervisor and co-worker support for error management on employee engagement in service recovery performance. Their findings revealed that psychological safety mediates the relationship between supervisor support and engagement, showing how supervisors who foster a supportive environment can improve employee performance in handling service recovery challenges.

Supervisor support is also linked to workplace wellbeing and professional development. [Shi and Gordon \(2020\)](#) conducted a scenario-based experiment with hospitality employees and found that lack of supervisor support has a stronger negative impact on work engagement and psychological contract breach compared to lack of organizational support. [El-Said et al. \(2020\)](#), focusing on the transfer of training in hotels in Oman, collected data from 302 employees across 24 four- and five-star hotels. Their study highlights that supervisor support plays a key moderating role in the transfer of training processes by boosting employee motivation and providing opportunities to apply new skills.

Creativity involves generating ideas that challenge traditional approaches to services, products, or operations ([George & Zhou, 2007](#)). [Amabile et al. \(1996\)](#) identified two primary forms of creativity: incremental and radical, both essential for achieving organizational success. Incremental creativity focuses on making small, continuous improvements to existing processes, enhancing operational efficiency and adaptability with minimal investment and risk ([Gilson & Madjar, 2011](#)). In contrast, radical creativity seeks to transform existing practices entirely, often in response to emerging challenges or new market opportunities. Incremental creativity is crucial for maintaining smooth day-to-day operations and fostering long-term stability, ensuring that businesses can consistently meet evolving customer expectations. Meanwhile, radical creativity enables organizations to break away from established norms, driving major innovations that can redefine service standards and shift competitive dynamics ([Shalley](#)).

Creativity in the hospitality industry is essential for the survival of the organization through enhancing organizational competitiveness. [Ouyang et al. \(2021\)](#) highlighted that intrinsic motivation, positive affect, and a climate for creativity are key drivers of creative performance in hospitality and tourism. Their meta-analysis, based on 82 hospitality studies, revealed that creativity is shaped not only by individual factors, but also by broader organizational contexts. The study suggests that fostering employee creativity requires managers to promote ability, motivation, and opportunity.

Supervisors are expected to play a critical role in fostering both incremental and radical creativity by creating a supportive environment and facilitating access to resources. According to organizational support theory (Eisenberger), when employees perceive their supervisors to be caring and resourceful, they are more motivated to contribute beyond their basic job responsibilities, including engaging in creative efforts. This perceived support boosts confidence and creates a climate of psychological safety, which is essential for encouraging employees to take risks for creative works (Dang et al., 2021). In the context of incremental creativity, supervisors help employees focus on continuous improvements by promoting workplace learning and cognitive flexibility. Incremental creativity, which enhances existing processes, is closely linked to knowledge sharing within teams. Dang et al. (2021) found that supervisors who facilitate knowledge-sharing opportunities empower employees to generate small-scale innovations that improve operational workflows. Similarly, Ouyang et al. (2021) and Hassi (2019) emphasized that a climate for innovation motivates employees to refine daily operations and respond to evolving needs, thereby fostering incremental creative contributions. By recognizing and rewarding these improvements, supervisors reinforce positive behavior and encourage further creative performance within existing frameworks.

Radical creativity, on the other hand, requires a different level of supervisory involvement due to its disruptive nature and higher levels of uncertainty. Tuan (2020) highlighted how diversity-oriented human resource practices, supported by supervisors, can promote the sharing of diverse perspectives, which is crucial for generating transformative ideas. From the organizational supervisor support perspective (Eisenberger), supervisors play a key role in facilitating these exchanges and ensuring that diverse inputs are integrated into creative problem-solving. Moreover, a strong diversity climate enhances knowledge sharing, which contributes to the development of radical creativity. This support is particularly valuable in the tourism and hospitality industry, where creativity can lead to the development of entirely new service models and approaches (Kim et al., 2024). Through their ongoing guidance and provision of resources, supervisors can shape employees' perceptions of organizational support and enable them to take risks for creative ideas. Supervisors therefore are not only able to encourage employees to align their creative efforts with organizational goals but also provide a safety net that mitigates the uncertainty inherent in radical creativity. This leads to the following hypothesis.

H1. Supervisor support will be positively related to both incremental (H1a) and radical creativity (H1b).

2.2. The moderating role of ambition

Ambition is broadly defined as a strong desire to achieve success, driven by high achievement motivation and career orientation (Otto et al., 2017). It reflects individuals' aspirations to pursue challenging goals and achieve recognition or advancement in their careers. Unlike traits such as conscientiousness or extraversion, ambition focuses specifically on striving for career-related outcomes, making it a distinct personality construct (Jones et al., 2017). A review of literature reveals that, despite increasing research on ambition in general management (e.g., Hirschi & Spurk, 2021; Sun et al., 2024), particularly its connections to personality traits, career success, and workplace outcomes, it has received little attention in the hospitality and tourism fields.

According to self-determination theory (SDT), human beings have three fundamental psychological needs that must be satisfied for optimal motivation, well-being, and engagement—competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). When these needs are met, individuals experience greater intrinsic motivation and self-regulation. Supervisor support plays a critical role in fulfilling these needs by providing resources, guidance, and encouragement, which create the conditions necessary for employees to thrive. Self-determination theory posits that

individuals are naturally inclined to be proactive and engaged when their environment supports these basic needs. Holstad et al.'s (2014) study of 199 employees from the financial and service sectors demonstrated that the beneficial effect of support from a transformational leader is more pronounced among employees with high professional ambition. In this context, ambition acts as an internal driver that enhances how employees respond to external support, such as supervisor guidance, by motivating them to take full advantage of developmental opportunities to fulfil their psychological needs for competence and autonomy.

Ambitious individuals, characterized by a high desire for achievement and career advancement (Otto et al., 2017), are more likely to view supervisor support as an opportunity to grow and expand their capabilities. In line with SDT, supervisor support satisfies the need for competence by providing employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform tasks successfully. Ambition strengthens this relationship by increasing the employee's motivation to translate this support into creative outcomes. For incremental creativity, where small, continuous improvements are essential, ambition motivates employees to engage in problem-solving and refine existing processes, particularly when they receive supervisor feedback and encouragement (Dang et al., 2021). Hence, employees who receive supervisor support and possess ambition not only feel more competent, but also satisfy their need for autonomy, as they are encouraged to take initiative in daily work improvements, fostering greater engagement in incremental creativity.

In the case of radical creativity, ambition helps employees overcome the uncertainty and risks associated with pursuing novel ideas. Tuan (2020) emphasized that diverse perspectives and knowledge-sharing are crucial for radical creativity. Ambitious individuals are more inclined to seek out these opportunities, particularly in environments where supervisors foster autonomy and competence. Self-determination theory suggests that autonomy-supportive environments encourage employees to explore new ideas and challenge traditional boundaries. Ambition further amplifies this effect, enabling employees to take the creative risks necessary for transformative innovation. Hirschi and Spurk's (2021) three-month time-lagged study involving 194 employees demonstrated that ambitious employees are highly responsive to perceived career opportunities and show greater engagement in supportive environments. In line with SDT, this indicates that ambition intensifies the motivating effects of supervisor support. Supervisor encouragement also fulfils the need for relatedness by creating a sense of trust and psychological safety (Li et al., 2022), essential for employees who wish to experiment with both incremental and radical creative behaviors. Ambition enhances this process by pushing employees to stretch their capabilities and actively seek out opportunities for development. It was thus proposed that.

H2. Ambition will positively moderate the relationship between supervisor support and both incremental (H2a) and radical creativity (H2b).

2.3. Change trajectory of career withdrawal intentions

Studying career withdrawal intentions in the hospitality industry is crucial given the prevalence of challenges such as job dissatisfaction, limited career development, and inadequate compensation (Santhanam). The emotional toll caused by continual guest interaction increases stress, leading some employees to consider leaving their jobs or the industry altogether (Hinkin). The distinction between turnover and career withdrawal lies in the scope and intent of an employee's disengagement from their work. While turnover is defined as the decision to leave a specific organization, career withdrawal encompasses a deeper disengagement that extends beyond job dissatisfaction to include a broader reconsideration of a person's entire career path (Blau; Pinto et al., 2012). Rather than mere dissatisfaction with a single job, career withdrawal signifies a broader loss of connection with the industry as a whole.

Career withdrawal intentions in the hospitality industry remain underexplored, despite rising concerns about high dropout rates among employees. Research on early-career hospitality employees indicates that more than 30 % leave the industry within their first five to six years (Brown et al., 2014). In a recent study by Cheng and Tung (2021), 20 hospitality graduates from hotel and tourism management institutions in Asia and Europe were interviewed, revealing that 15 left the industry within a year of graduation. The hospitality sector presents unique challenges, including unsocial working hours, physically and emotionally demanding tasks, high levels of job stress, and limited opportunities for advancement (Xu et al., 2023). Such conditions increase the risk of burnout and disengagement, particularly when employees feel undervalued. When roles are perceived as lacking social prestige or conflicting with professional identity, employees may experience psychological discomfort, prompting them to reconsider their long-term commitment to the industry.

Drawing on Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll), these hospitality-specific stressors represent a continuous drain on personal and professional resources. COR theory posits that individuals strive to protect and conserve their limited resources, such as emotional resilience, time, and energy, particularly in demanding environments. When employees experience sustained resource loss without sufficient recovery, they engage in self-protective behaviors (e.g., such withdrawal) to preserve what remains. In high-turnover industries such as hospitality, excessive workload, emotional exhaustion, and limited career progression are common sources of resource depletion, leaving employees with fewer resources to cope effectively (Nguyen et al., 2023). Over time, this ongoing resource loss can create a reinforcing cycle where persistent strain accelerates disengagement and career withdrawal. Once employees reach this critical threshold, the likelihood of long-term career disengagement and eventual exit from the industry increases significantly. Therefore, consistent with COR theory and the specific challenges identified in the hospitality sector, the following hypothesis was proposed.

H3. Career withdrawal intention will increase over time.

Drawing on COR theory, a study of 362 hotel employees in Taiwan indicated that creativity provides employees with a way to reframe work challenges as opportunities for growth and innovation, contributing to both immediate gains and sustained engagement (Wang, 2022). Incremental creativity focuses on small, continuous improvements that offer frequent, tangible successes (Janssen et al., 2004). These manageable achievements build employees' confidence and sense of competence, reinforcing their connection to their roles and reducing withdrawal intention by promoting a consistent sense of progress and control. Radical creativity, by contrast, involves generating transformative ideas that bring significant professional rewards, such as recognition and career advancement (Shalley). This type of creativity enables employees to make meaningful contributions and align their work with broader career aspirations. Such high-impact accomplishments foster a strong professional identity and deeper motivation to remain engaged in their careers.

Indeed, from the perspective of COR theory (Hobfoll), creativity functions as a critical resource gain that enhances employees' psychological well-being and career engagement. Incremental creativity replenishes personal resources by providing steady, achievable wins that sustain motivation and reduce stress, while radical creativity offers larger resource surpluses in the form of professional recognition and career growth (Hobfoll). Both forms of creativity contribute to resource spirals, where accumulated success and engagement reinforce long-term career commitment. Conversely, when employees lack opportunities for creative contributions, they may experience resource loss cycles, increasing the risk of disengagement and career withdrawal. Hypothesis 4 (H4) was then proposed.

H4. Incremental (H4a) and radical (H4b) creativity will negatively

predict the initial level of and rate of change in career withdrawal intention.

This study draws on Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger), SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000), and COR theory (Hobfoll) to construct the conceptual model shown in Fig. 1. Organizational Support Theory provides a basis for understanding how supervisor support fosters both incremental and radical creativity. It also helps to explain how ambition moderates the relationship between supervisor support and creativity by enhancing intrinsic motivation. Conservation of resources theory offers perspectives on how career withdrawal intention evolves over time, and how creativity can influence career withdrawal intention by framing resource gain and loss cycles.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data collection

The participants included hotel employees and their supervisors in the central region of China. To enhance the generalizability of the study findings, the research team visited a variety of hotels, encompassing small-to mid-scale and upscale establishments. Aligned with extant hospitality studies (Hai & Park, 2024), the current study did not limit participation to employees from only one or two hotels. This strategy was aimed at diversifying the sample, which in turn enhanced the generalizability of the findings. Consistent with Bhawna et al. (2023), to ensure that participants had basic experience and understanding of a hospitality career, they were required to have been in the hospitality industry for more than one year. With permission from HR/duty managers, the study's purpose and data collection procedures were explained in person to potential participants. To encourage honest responses, participants were assured that their participation was entirely voluntary, and their responses would be treated with confidentiality. Specifically, a total of 320 employees expressed their willingness to participate. Subsequently, they were required to complete a consent form that included their signature and contact details, such as phone numbers and WeChat IDs (a widely used instant messaging app in China). Participants were also instructed to forward an online message to their immediate supervisors and invite them to join the study. The contact details (e.g., WeChat IDs) of those supervisors who consented to participate were collected. Following this, the survey link was distributed to both employees and supervisors based on the provided contact details.

Data collection was conducted in three stages. The Time 1 employee survey measured "perceived supervisory support," "ambition," "career withdrawal intentions," and demographic questions, with 297 employees completing the questionnaire. Their direct supervisors were requested to assess the employees' creativity, specifically incremental and radical creativity. Considering the longitudinal nature of this study, employees were asked to provide the last four digits of their phone numbers in Time 1, to link their responses across different times. Similarly, supervisors were required to provide the last four digits of both their own phone numbers and those of the employees they evaluated, to facilitate the matching of employee and supervisor responses. Following this matching process, a sample of 204 employee-supervisor dyads was obtained.

In order to explore the trajectory of participants' career withdrawal intentions, at Time 2 (three months later), the 204 employees were asked to complete a follow-up survey, which related to career withdrawal intentions; 177 of the 204 participants responded. At Time 3, an additional three months later (6 months since the first survey), of the 204 participants, 156 participants completed the second follow-up survey (also re career withdrawal intentions). To minimize attrition, participants were rewarded with 8 RMB (approximately \$1.1 US) for each follow-up survey completed. The use of a three-month time gap aligned with extant longitudinal research on withdrawal intentions

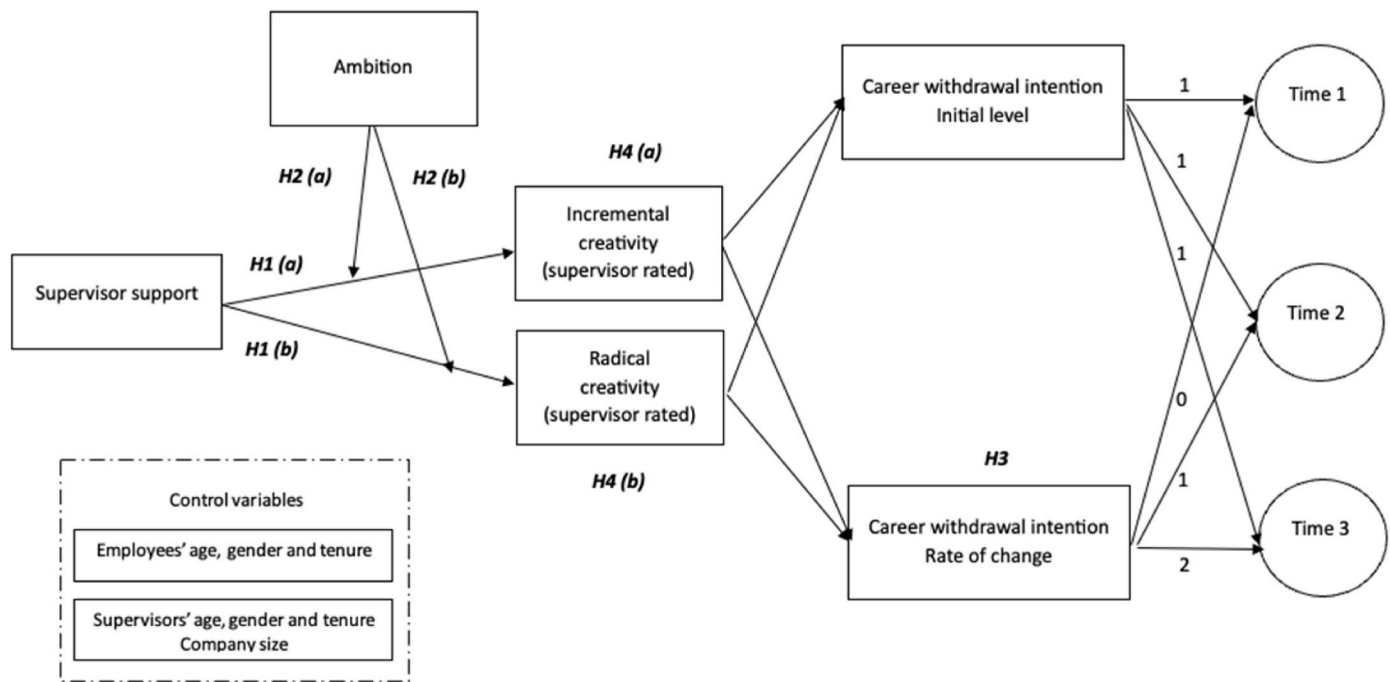


Fig. 1. Conceptual model of the study.

(Vandenberghe). A multi-wave, multi-source data collection approach was employed to mitigate common method bias and avoid spurious causality. The dropout rate from Time-1 to Time-3 was about 25 %, which is considered to be within an acceptable limit (Kristman). The Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test (Little, 1988) produced a normed χ^2/df of 1.15 (<2), suggesting that the data were likely missing at random (see Liang et al., 2023).

Employees from small to medium-scale hotels (fewer than 100 employees) made up 28.9 % of the sample, with 19.1 % working in hotels with fewer than 50 employees, and 9.8 % in those with 50–99 employees. In contrast, 71.1 % were employed in large-scale hotels (100 or more employees). The majority of employee participants were early to mid-career, with an average age of 40 years and a minimum age of 20 years. Females represented 67 % of the sample. Most (72 %) were employed in the accommodation sector, 23 % worked in food and beverage, and 3 % were in the travel/tourism sector. On average, employees had been with their organization for seven years; 9 % had been there less than two years, while the majority (71 %) had tenures ranging from 2 to 10 years. Regarding education, more than half of the participants (55 %) had no qualifications beyond high school, 36 % held a certificate or diploma, and only 9 % possessed a bachelor's degree.

The data also included responses from 171 immediate supervisors of employee participants. These supervisors were slightly older, with an average age of 42 years, and over 60 % were above the age of 40. Sixty percent were female. They had a longer average organizational tenure of eight years, with about 35 % having been with their organization for more than ten years. In terms of education, while a majority (54 %) had no qualifications beyond high school, 14 % held a bachelor's degree, one supervisor had a postgraduate degree, and 32 % possessed a certificate or diploma.

3.2. Measurements

The questionnaire was translated into Chinese by two bilingual researchers utilizing Brislin's (1976) translation-back-translation approach. A pilot test was conducted with 20 Chinese hospitality employees and students to refine the wording. All of the items were responded to using seven-point Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree, 7 =

strongly agree).

In line with prior studies (e.g., Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006), this research utilized six items from the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS) developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986) to measure perceived supervisor support. Originally crafted to measure support from organizations, the SPOS has been adapted in various studies, such as those by Eisenberger et al. (2002) and Shanock and Eisenberger (2006), to evaluate supervisor support. This adaptation involved substituting the term "organization" with "supervisor" in the SPOS items. One sample item is "My supervisor takes pride in my accomplishments at work." The Cronbach's alpha of the scale was 0.95.

Hirschi and Spurk's (2021) five-item scale was utilized to assess ambition, with a sample item being, "For me it is very important to accomplish great things." This scale has been widely used in previous research to measure employees' ambition (Mukherjee & Datta, 2024; Sun et al., 2024) and has been validated in the Chinese context (α 's of 0.88 reported by Kong et al., 2024). The Cronbach's alpha of the scale in the present study was 0.84.

Incremental creativity was rated by supervisors with Madjar et al.'s (2011) measurement scale, with a sample item being, "This employee uses previously existing ideas or works in an appropriate new way." The Cronbach's alphas of the scale was 0.91.

Radical creativity was rated by supervisors. Madjar et al.'s (2011) measurement scale was used, with a sample item being, "This employee is a good source of highly creative ideas." The Cronbach's alpha of the scale was 0.96. The measures of incremental and radical creativity that were adopted above have been validated in the Chinese context and yielded reasonable reliability (e.g., α 's of 0.92 and 0.92 reported by Liu et al., 2018; α 's of 0.84 and 0.84 reported by Zhang et al., 2023).

Consistent with Duffy et al. (2011), career withdrawal intention was measured using a three-item scale originally developed by Blau (1985). A sample item is, "I am actively searching for an alternative to my occupation." The measure has been extensively employed to explore employees' career-related withdrawal cognitions, and extant research has provided evidence of its reliability and significant relations with other work attitudes and behaviors (α 's of 0.92 reported by Duffy et al., 2011; α 's of 0.87 reported by Blau, 2000). The Cronbach's alphas of the scale at Time 1, Time 2 and Time 3 were 0.97, 0.97 and 0.96,

respectively.

In the present study, the ages, sex, and organizational tenures of employees and supervisors were controlled for, as these attributes are known to affect vocational attitudes and career decisions (e.g., Spurk et al., 2020; Vecchio & Bullis, 2001).

3.3. Data analysis

Given the non-independence of the data (e.g., repeated measurements nested within employees and supervisors), multilevel analysis was performed using Mplus 8.3. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using multilevel path analyses with the syntaxes ‘CLUSTER = supervisors’ and ‘TYPE = two level’ employed. This approach effectively captured the variability attributable to differences at the supervisor level, controlling for the potential nesting effects coming from the supervisors (see Byrne, 2013). Hypotheses 3 and 4 were examined based on three-level latent growth modelling (LGM), with the syntaxes ‘CLUSTER = supervisors employees’, and ‘TYPE = three level random’, used. This method was particularly suited for assessing changes over time within the hierarchical data structure. Each level in the model was defined to ensure accurate attribution of variance to the appropriate source—whether individual, supervisor, or time-related changes—and to mitigate the issue related to downward-biased standard errors (MuthenSatorra).

Latent growth modeling was utilized to capture developmental trajectories through estimating a latent intercept and a slope, which can represent growth patterns. In testing H3, the intercept represented the initial value of career withdrawal intention (mean career withdrawal intention at Time 1), while the slope indicated the rate of within-person change (Xu & Martinez, 2018). To investigate H4, employees’ creativity was incorporated into LGM as a between-person predictor of the intercept and slope of the dependent variable, capturing the influence of the predictor on both the initial stage of career withdrawal intention and changes in career withdrawal intention over time.

4. Results

4.1. Measurement model and descriptive statistics

To examine the discriminant validity of the proposed model, a multilevel confirmatory factor analysis (MCFA) was conducted using Mplus 8.3. As presented in Table 1, the results indicated that the

Table 1
Mplus multilevel CFA analysis.

Model	No. of factors	χ^2	d. f.	$\Delta\chi^2$	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Baseline model	5 factors: CWI, SS, AMB, IC, RC	242	160	N/A	0.97	0.96	0.02
Alternative 1	4 factors: CWI, SS, AMB, (IC + RC)	367	164	125	0.94	0.93	0.04
Alternative 2	3 factors: CWI, SS, (AMB + IC + RC)	810	167	568	0.83	0.80	0.07
Alternative 3	2 factors: CWI, (SS + AMB + IC + RC)	1552	169	1310	0.64	0.59	0.09
Alternative 4	1 factor: (CWI + SS + AMB + IC + RC)	1637	170	1395	0.62	0.56	0.10

Note. AMB = Ambition; CFI = comparative fit index; CWI = Career withdrawal intention; d. f. = degrees of freedom; IC = Incremental creativity; RC = Radical creativity; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SS = Supervisor support; TLI = Tucker–Lewis index.

proposed model was a better fit for the data ($\chi^2 [160] = 242$, CFI = 0.97, TLI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.02, SRMR_{between} = 0.04, SRMR_{within} = 0.01) than other alternative models. Table 2 shows that the composite reliability values for each construct were larger than 0.8, demonstrating the reliability of the measures. Additionally, the average variance extracted (AVE) scores for each construct exceeded 0.5 and were greater than the squared correlations among the variables. Table 3 displays the HTMT (heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations) results, indicating that all values are under 0.85 (Henseler), which further demonstrates the discriminant validity of the constructs. Table 4 presents the results of descriptive statistics and correlations. The skewness and kurtosis statistics indicate that all study variables fall within acceptable normality ranges, with skewness values ranging from -2 to 2 and kurtosis values from -7 to 7 (see Hair, 2010).

4.2. Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis 1 suggested that supervisor support would have a positive relationship with both incremental (H1a) and radical (H1b) creativity. As illustrated in Table 5 and Fig. 2, the results indicated that supervisor support was statistically and positively related to both incremental ($\gamma = 0.21$, $p < 0.05$) and radical creativity ($\gamma = 0.23$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, Hypotheses 1a and 1b were supported. Hypothesis 2 suggests that ambition positively moderates the relationship of supervisor support with incremental (H2a) and radical (H2b) creativity. First, it was found that while ambition was not a significant predictor of incremental creativity ($\gamma = 0.17$, $p > 0.05$), it did positively predict radical creativity ($\gamma = 0.25$, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, the results indicated that the interaction term (i.e., ambition x supervisor support) was statistically and positively related to both incremental ($\gamma = 0.18$, $p < 0.05$) and radical creativity ($\gamma = 0.17$, $p < 0.05$).

Simple slope analyses were performed to further examine the nature of the interactional effects. As shown in Fig. 3, supervisor support exerted a stronger effect on the two types of creative behaviors when ambition was high (+1 SD) (incremental creativity: $\beta = 0.41$; $t = 4.67$; $p < 0.001$, radical creativity: $\beta = 0.37$; $t = 4.37$; $p < 0.001$), than when

Table 2
Measurement model evaluation.

Items	Factor Loading	CR	AVE
Within-person level			
• CWI		0.924	0.803
CWI1	0.866		
CWI2	0.908		
CWI3	0.913		
Between-person level			
• AMB		0.864	0.633
AMB1	0.618		
AMB2	0.739		
AMB3	0.789		
AMB4	0.931		
AMB5	0.864		
• SS		0.908	0.782
SS1	0.807		
SS2	0.880		
SS3	0.896		
SS4	0.875		
SS5	0.913		
SS6	0.929		
• IC		0.911	0.773
IC1	0.831		
IC2	0.924		
IC3	0.880		
• RC		0.959	0.887
RC1	0.932		
RC2	0.953		
RC3	0.941		

Note. AMB = Ambition; CWI = Career withdrawal intention; IC = Incremental creativity; RC = Radical creativity; SS = Supervisor support.

Table 3
The heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Supervisor support at T1	1						
2. Ambition at T1	0.49	1					
3. Incremental creativity at T1	0.31	0.20	1				
4. Radical creativity at T1	0.32	0.25	0.77	1			
5. Career withdrawal intention at T1	0.33	0.30	0.15	0.10	1		
6. Career withdrawal intention at T2	0.21	0.25	0.19	0.11	0.60	1	
7. Career withdrawal intention at T3	0.28	0.27	0.22	0.20	0.67	0.53	1

ambition was low (−1 SD) (incremental creativity: $\beta = 0.09$; $t = 0.95$; $p > 0.05$), radical creativity: $\beta = 0.10$; $t = 1.07$; $p > 0.05$). Thus, H2a and H2b were supported.

Hypotheses 3 and 4 were tested based on LGM with multilevel (three-level) analysis to adjust for clustering in data. Hypothesis 3 proposed that the career withdrawal intentions of hospitality employees would increase over time; this was tested by unconditional LGM analysis. As shown in Table 6 and Fig. 2, the results of the LGM demonstrated that both the intercept ($M = 2.60$, $p < 0.001$) and slope ($M = 0.19$, $p < 0.001$) of career withdrawal intentions were significant. This shows that career withdrawal intention from Time 1 to Time 3 exhibited an increasing trajectory (H3 supported).

Hypothesis 4 proposed that hospitality employees' creativity would negatively predict the intercept and slope of their career withdrawal intentions. To demonstrate the impact of creativity on the developmental trajectory of these intentions, conditional LGM was conducted by introducing incremental and radical creativity as the independent variables, and employees' and supervisors' age, gender, and tenure, as well as company size, as control variables. Regarding H4 (see Table 6 and Fig. 2), the results revealed that incremental creativity negatively predicted both the initial level of career withdrawal intention ($\gamma = -0.17$, $p < 0.05$) and changes in career withdrawal intention ($\gamma = -0.08$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that respondents who demonstrated more incremental creativity tended to have lower career withdrawal intention, and incremental creativity flattened the increase in career withdrawal intention over time. Thus, H4a was supported.

With respect to H4b (see Table 5 and Fig. 2), the results showed that while radical creativity was a marginally significant predictor of the initial levels of career withdrawal intention ($\gamma = -0.12$, $p < 0.10$), it did not significantly negatively predict changes in career withdrawal intention ($\gamma = -0.02$, $p > 0.10$). This suggests that respondents who demonstrated more radical creativity tended to have lower career withdrawal intention, yet radical creativity did not significantly flatten the increase in career withdrawal intention over time. Hence, H4b was partially supported.

Table 4
Results of descriptive statistics and correlations.

	M	SD	Skewness		Kurtosis		Correlations								
			Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
1. Supervisor support at T1	5.30	1.13	−1.25	0.17	2.38	0.33	1								
2. Ambition at T1	5.79	0.77	−1.08	0.17	2.59	0.33	0.45**	1							
3. Incremental creativity at T1	5.44	0.98	−1.01	0.18	1.98	0.34	0.29**	0.17*	1						
4. Radical creativity at T1	5.53	1.01	−1.07	0.17	2.55	0.33	0.30**	0.22**	0.70**	1					
5. Career withdrawal intention at T1	2.60	1.24	0.82	0.17	0.10	0.34	−0.31**	−0.27**	−0.14*	−0.08	1				
6. Career withdrawal intention at T2	2.84	1.45	0.68	0.18	−0.25	0.36	−0.21**	−0.23**	−0.17*	−0.10	0.58**	1			
7. Career withdrawal intention at T3	2.90	1.54	0.64	0.19	−0.45	0.39	−0.28**	−0.24**	−0.21*	−0.08	0.65**	0.48**	1		

Note. * $p < 0.05$., ** $p < 0.01$.

5. Discussion

This study is one of the first to use an LGM approach to examine how supervisor support influences incremental and radical creativity, and how these creative behaviors shape the developmental trajectory of career withdrawal intention in the hospitality industry. Drawing on COR and SDT (Hobfoll; Ryan & Deci, 2000), the results show that supervisor support significantly predicts both incremental and radical creativity, with ambition acting as a moderating factor that strengthens these relationships. The findings also indicate that incremental creativity reduces initial levels of career withdrawal intention and flattens its growth over time. In contrast, while radical creativity initially lowers career withdrawal intention, it does not significantly impact the long-term trajectory. Unlike previous studies that have focused on creativity's immediate influences (Dang et al., 2021; Lim et al., 2024; Lim & Lu, 2024), the multi-source and longitudinal design of the current study suggests that creativity, when differentiated into incremental and radical forms, serves as both an immediate resource and a long-term career-shaping tool. These findings have significant implications for hospitality scholars and practitioners, as outlined below.

5.1. Theoretical implications

The findings of this study offer several important theoretical implications for the tourism and hospitality discipline. First, this research advances the literature on creativity by involving two types of creativity (i.e., incremental and radical) and examining their distinct roles in shaping employees' career trajectories. While previous studies have

Table 5
Mplus multilevel analysis results.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	IC	RC	IC	RC
Intercept	5.72***	5.14***	5.22***	4.64***
<i>Level 1</i>				
Employee age	−0.01	−0.01	−0.01	−0.01
Employee gender	−0.03	−0.03	0.08	0.12
Employee tenure	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01*
SS			0.21*	0.23**
Ambition			0.17	0.25*
SS* Ambition			0.18*	0.17*
<i>Level 2</i>				
Supervisor age	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Supervisor gender	0.08	0.39	0.13	0.41
Supervisor tenure	0.01	−0.01	0.01	−0.01
Company size	−0.28	−0.27	−0.23	−0.22
R-square	0.01	0.01	0.14*	0.17**

Note. * $p < 0.05$., ** $p < 0.01$., *** $p < 0.001$.; IC = Incremental creativity; RC = Radical creativity.

SS = Supervisor support. Unstandardized coefficient estimates are reported.

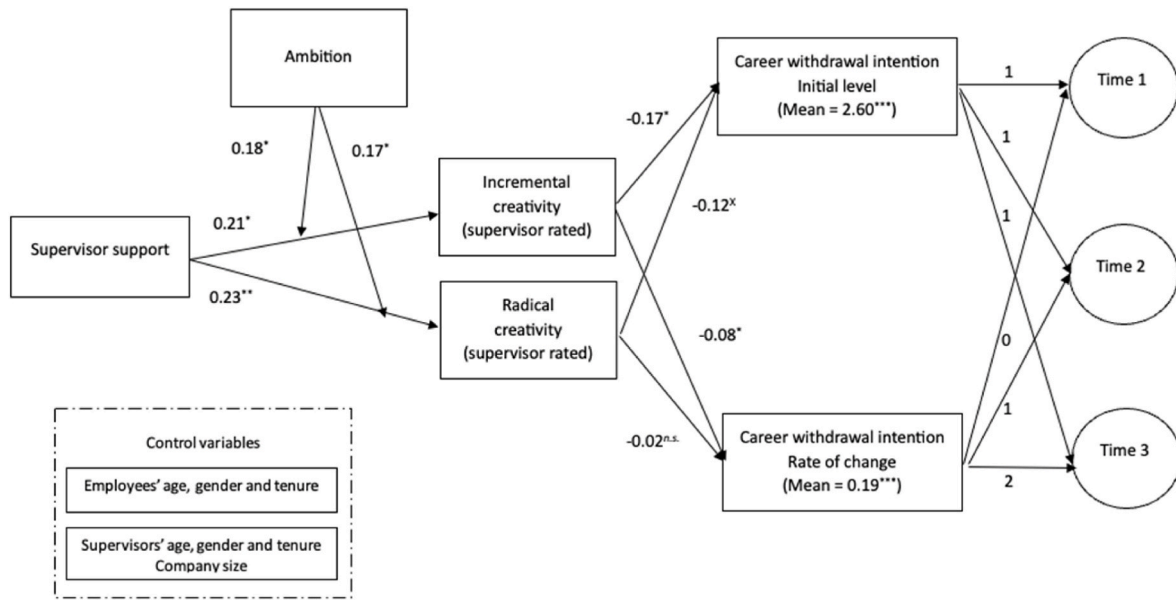


Fig. 2. Findings of the proposed research model.

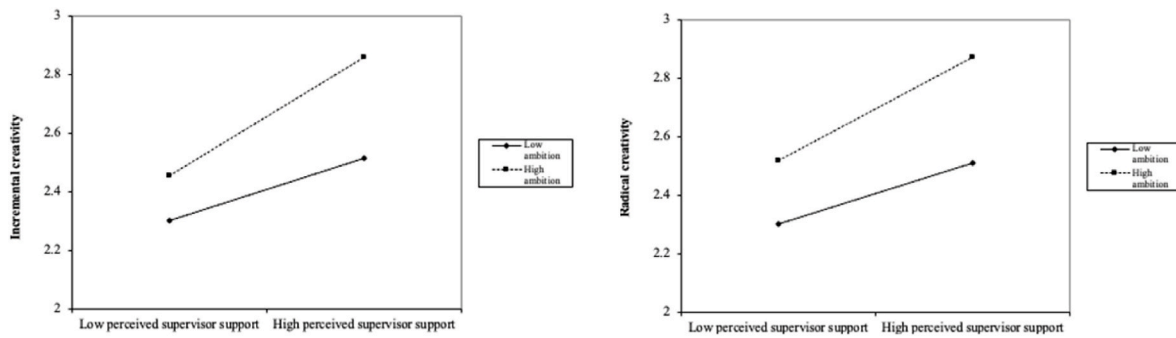


Fig. 3. Interaction between supervisor support and ambition on incremental and radical creativity.

Table 6
Mplus multilevel LGM analysis.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Unconditional LGM		Conditional LGM	
	CWI	CWI	CWI	CWI
Intercept	2.60***	2.84***	2.91***	
Level 1				
Time	0.19***	0.61***	0.32***	
Level 2				
Employee age		-0.01	-0.01	
Employee gender		0.40*	0.25	
Employee tenure		0.01	0.01	
IC on Intercept		-0.17*		
IC on Slope (Time → CWI)		-0.08*		
RC on Intercept			-0.12 ^x	
RC on Slope (Time → CWI)			-0.02	
Level 3				
Supervisor age		0.01	-0.01	
Supervisor gender		0.15	0.19	
Supervisor tenure		0.01	0.01	
Company size		-0.10	-0.11	
Deviance	1744	1606	1723	

Note. ^x $p < .10$, * $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$; CWI = Career withdrawal intention; IC = Incremental creativity; RC = Radical creativity. Unstandardized coefficient estimates are reported.

treated creativity as a single construct and focused on its short-term effects on organizational outcomes, such as job performance and innovation (Dang et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2023), this study reveals the differentiated impacts of these two creativity types on long-term career outcomes. Incremental creativity was found to reduce initial levels of career withdrawal intention and slow its rate of increase over time. In contrast, radical creativity initially reduces withdrawal intention but fails to sustain this effect over time. Conservation of resources theory provides a valuable lens for understanding these dynamics. Both incremental and radical creativity function as resource gains by enhancing job satisfaction and adaptability, enabling employees to replenish depleted resources. However, radical creativity can also have unintended negative consequences, such as burnout. This may occur because employees engaged in transformative innovation often face increased pressure, heightened risk, and fatigue, which can exhaust resources over time if not adequately supported (Shalley). Taken together, this study refines COR by highlighting the temporal and contextual dimensions of resource management in predicting creativity’s impact on career outcomes, contributing to the broader creativity literature in tourism and hospitality (Lim & Lu, 2024; Zhu et al., 2023).

Second, this research extends the literature on supervisor support and creativity by emphasizing the moderating role of individual differences, such as ambition, in shaping the effects of supervisor support on both incremental and radical creativity. Supervisor support, defined as providing feedback, mentoring, and recognition, has been established as a key driver of creativity in tourism and hospitality contexts (Hou;

Ouyang et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2024). Aligning with the literature, this research suggests that ambition significantly influences how employees respond to supervisor support. Highly ambitious employees, motivated by strong desires for career advancement and achievement (Ghosh, 2023), are more likely to leverage supervisor support to enhance both incremental and radical creativity. This finding supports the propositions of SDT, i.e., that employees perceive support as a means to satisfy their intrinsic needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and extends its application by showing that ambition is a key factor in how supportive environments foster employee creative behaviors (HirschiSpurk).

Third, this study shifts the focus from job turnover intention to career withdrawal intention, a broader construct which captures an employee's desire to leave not just their current job, but the entire industry (Chang & Busser, 2020). Prior research in hospitality and tourism, known for their high turnover rates and volatile work environments, have primarily focused on job turnover (Dogru; Nguyen et al., 2023; Park & Min, 2020). In contrast, this study examined how creativity influences *career withdrawal* intention over time, offering a deeper understanding of career disengagement processes. The findings show that incremental creativity acts as a stabilizing force, whereas the influence of radical creativity is limited to the initial stages of career withdrawal. This suggests that hospitality researchers should adopt a balanced approach to fostering creativity, emphasizing incremental creativity for long-term engagement and carefully managing radical creativity to prevent overwhelming employees. These insights extend the body of literature on employee engagement and retention in high-turnover environments, particularly in the context of post-COVID-19 workforce shifts (Chen & Chen, 2021).

Lastly, the use of a multi-wave, multi-source longitudinal design significantly strengthens the theoretical contributions of this study by providing a robust foundation for examining the long-term effects of incremental and radical creativity on career outcomes in the hospitality and tourism field. Collecting data from both employees and supervisors over multiple time points improved the validity of the findings by minimizing common method bias and allowed for the tracking of individual changes over time (Dapp; Podsakoff et al., 2024). This approach is particularly important for capturing the evolving impact of creativity on career withdrawal intention (Xu et al., 2023). Therefore, the findings provide compelling evidence for understanding and predicting how creativity functions as both an immediate and sustained resource, addressing a gap in prior research that relied on cross-sectional designs and overlooked the developmental nature of career intention over time (Akkermans). By integrating this temporal perspective, the study provides new insights into the dynamics of creativity and its influence on career stability, reinforcing the need for context-specific and long-term strategies to manage creativity effectively in high-turnover environments.

5.2. Practical implications

The findings of this study provide valuable insights for hospitality and tourism practitioners. First, the results suggest that incremental creativity, characterized by small, continuous improvements, plays a crucial role in reducing career withdrawal intention and promoting long-term career stability. Given the high turnover rates in the industry (Dogru; Nguyen et al., 2023), managers could implement such initiatives as creativity circles or small-group workshops, where employees regularly discuss minor improvements in service delivery. For example, weekly service enhancement huddles can serve as a forum for front-line staff to share ideas on optimizing guest interactions and improving operational efficiency. Recognizing and rewarding these contributions through 'employee of the month' awards, or instant bonuses for adopted ideas, can help build a culture of continuous improvement and reinforce long-term employee engagement (Liu et al., 2022).

Second, the study shows that while radical creativity initially reduces career withdrawal intention, its effects may not be sustainable

without ongoing supervisory or organizational support. This is particularly relevant in hospitality and tourism, where high-risk innovations are essential for staying competitive, but must be managed to protect employees from becoming overwhelmed (Lim et al., 2024; Van Der Schaft et al., 2024). Radical creativity involves disruptive changes and requires substantial cognitive and emotional resources, making it critical for managers to establish robust support systems. One effective strategy may be to create designated innovation labs or project teams that operate separately from core functions to develop and test radical ideas. For example, a hotel chain introducing AI-driven guest services, may establish a cross-functional team dedicated to refining and implementing this concept, without disrupting routine operations (Kim et al., 2024). This approach would enable hospitality organizations to leverage the potential of radical creativity, while safeguarding employee well-being and ensuring sustained career satisfaction, ultimately reducing career withdrawal intention.

Third, the study's findings indicate that the relationship between supervisor support and creativity is moderated by ambition, suggesting that managers should tailor their support strategies according to the career goals of their employees (HirschiSpurk; Yan et al., 2024). High-ambition employees, who view the hospitality industry as a stepping stone for career growth, may respond more positively to challenging, high-impact projects, such as leading a new restaurant concept, or spearheading a sustainability initiative. Conversely, employees with lower ambition may benefit more from activities that foster incremental creativity, and from supportive feedback that enhances job satisfaction. Furthermore, these insights suggest that organizations should incorporate ambition into their recruitment and selection processes at the HR level. By identifying and hiring candidates with high ambition, HR departments can increase the likelihood of onboarding individuals who are more likely to engage in creative processes at the workplace. This strategic focus can align new hires with roles that leverage their ambition, ultimately fostering both incremental and radical creativity in the organization.

Finally, the distinct impacts of incremental and radical creativity on career withdrawal intention suggest that hospitality organizations should implement a dual-focused retention strategy. Incremental creativity should be nurtured through routine engagement activities, while radical creativity should be reserved for strategic, high-impact projects aligned with the organization's long-term innovation goals (Gilson & Madjar, 2011). To effectively manage these dual pathways, hospitality managers could implement dynamic engagement tracking systems, such as pulse surveys and bi-annual performance reviews, to monitor shifts in employee levels of engagement and job satisfaction (Garg et al., 2021). For example, a hotel chain could conduct quarterly career health checks to assess employees' involvement in creative projects and their career aspirations. Proactive monitoring would allow managers to identify early signs of disengagement and intervene promptly, thereby ensuring sustained creative engagement and career stability. Implementing these strategies could help hospitality organizations to effectively leverage both incremental and radical creativity, reducing career withdrawal intention and fostering long-term career stability in an industry that is known for high turnover and intense competition.

5.3. Limitations and suggestions for future research

This study has limitations that deserve consideration for future research. First, the data were collected exclusively from hotel employees, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other hospitality and tourism sectors, such as restaurants, casinos, and cruise lines. Although hotels are an important component of the hospitality industry, different sectors may operate under distinct organizational norms, work demands, and employee expectations, potentially influencing how supervisor support and creativity impact career withdrawal intention. For example, restaurant employees typically work in fast-paced, high-pressure environments where the focus of creativity may

shift more toward operational efficiency than disruptive innovation (Khan, 2020). Besides, the findings are more representative of larger hotel operations, potentially limiting their applicability to smaller establishments where varying management structures may affect employee dynamics in distinct ways. For instance, in smaller hotels, the closer, more informal relationships between staff and management could lead to more direct and frequent interactions, possibly enhancing the immediate impact of supervisory support on creativity and career development (Gong et al., 2013). Future research could replicate this study across diverse hotel sizes and hospitality contexts to assess the generalizability of the findings and explore how various operational settings shape the dynamics between incremental and radical creativity, and career intentions.

Second, the study's data were also collected exclusively from Chinese employees, which may restrict the applicability of the findings to other cultural contexts. Cultural factors, such as collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance, could shape employees' perceptions of supervisor support and the effectiveness of creativity initiatives (Hofstede, 2011). In China, where collectivist values and high-power distance are prevalent, employees may respond more positively to supervisor support, amplifying its influences on creativity and career intentions (Ma et al., 2020). Conversely, in more individualistic cultures, employees may prioritize autonomy and self-expression, potentially altering the ways in which ambition and incremental/radical creativity interact. Future research could conduct similar studies in other cultural contexts to explore how cultural dimensions, such as individualism versus collectivism, and power distance, moderate these relationships.

Third, this study focused solely on the relationship between supervisor support for incremental and radical creativity, with ambition as the moderator, without considering potential mediators or other moderators that might further predict these relationships. Variables such as psychological safety, perceived organizational support, and job autonomy might serve as mediating factors that could influence how supervisor support translates into creative behaviors (Slåtten). Psychological safety, in particular, could enhance employees' willingness to take creative risks, thereby strengthening the impact of supervisor support on radical creativity. The study is also limited by not detailing specific job roles and departments, which can be potential moderators that influence employee experiences. For instance, isolated housekeeping staff may need more direct supervisory support to foster creativity, while food service staff benefit from autonomy and public recognition to stimulate innovation (YehHuan). Future research could explore these potential mediating mechanisms and moderators to better understand and predict how supervisor support influences creative behaviors and career outcomes, offering more targeted strategies for hospitality managers.

Fourth, the study employed a three-wave longitudinal design, which, while valuable for capturing changes over time, may not provide a complete picture of the long-term developmental trajectory of career withdrawal intention. A more extended longitudinal study with additional waves of data collection might reveal more complex growth patterns, such as quadratic or curvilinear trends, where career withdrawal intention might initially decrease and then might increase due to changes in job satisfaction, career opportunities, or organizational support (Katz et al., 2019; Kibatta & Samuel, 2022). For example, radical creativity could exhibit a honeymoon-hangover effect, where initial enthusiasm is followed by a decline in engagement if ongoing support is not provided (Xiong). With extended data collection phases, future studies could also examine the direct impacts of creativity on more concrete career-related outcomes, such as career success or actual career change. This would allow researchers to observe actual changes in these outcomes, potentially linking creativity more directly to career progression and retention over time (see Zhou & Rouse, 2021). Future research could employ longer time frames and additional waves to capture these nuanced dynamics and provide a comprehensive understanding of how creativity evolves over time in shaping career intentions.

Fifth, while this study provides insights into the impact of supervisor support on employee creativity, it is important to note that the influence of broader organizational characteristics, such as corporate culture—including aspects like corporate social responsibility (CSR)—was not directly assessed. Organizational culture can influence employee behavior by shaping their perceptions of support and significantly impact creative work. For instance, a culture that promotes CSR could enhance employee engagement by fostering a sense of purpose and alignment with organizational values (Ahmad et al., 2024). Future research could consider these variables to fully understand how they interact with supervisor support to affect employee creativity and career outcomes.

Sixth, the study did not address the potential dark side of creativity, where high levels of creativity might lead to negative outcomes, such as increased stress, role conflict, or counterproductive work behaviors (Lua; Xie & Li, 2024). Radical creativity, in particular, could provoke resistance from colleagues, or disrupt established workflows, creating role ambiguity and tension (Pemer and Werr, 2023). Future research could examine both the positive and negative impacts of creativity, incorporating variables such as workplace conflict, burnout, or job dissatisfaction, to better understand and when incremental and radical creativity contribute differently to career stability. By doing so, researchers can offer more holistic strategies for managing creativity in ways that maximize its benefits while mitigating potential drawbacks.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Dan Zhu: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Validation, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Pola Q. Wang:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Investigation, Conceptualization. **Seontaik Kim:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Investigation, Conceptualization. **In-Jo Park:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Validation, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Peter B. Kim:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Validation, Supervision, Methodology, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.

Impact statement

This research highlights the crucial role of supervisor support in fostering both incremental and radical creativity among hospitality employees and how these creative behaviors shape career withdrawal intentions over time. Using longitudinal data and latent growth modeling, the study provides actionable insights into reducing industry-wide disengagement. Incremental creativity is identified as a key factor in lowering initial withdrawal intentions and slowing their progression, thereby contributing to a sustainable workforce pathway. Conversely, radical creativity offers an initial reduction in withdrawal intentions but requires ongoing organizational support to sustain its benefits. The study also demonstrates the moderating role of employee ambition, which enhances the effectiveness of supervisor support in driving creative behaviors. The findings advocate for targeted strategies to enhance employee ambition and support systems, enabling organizations to drive innovation while retaining a dedicated workforce, ultimately addressing high turnover rates and fostering sustainable growth in the hospitality sector.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2025.105189>.

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