When Are Workplace Training-Related Perceptions Associated with Lower Turnover Intention? The Roles of Affective Commitment and Past Temporal Focus

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ABSTRACT

Workplace training may shape employees' relationship with their employer, but favorable perceptions of training do not necessarily translate into stronger affective commitment or lower turnover intention. Drawing on social exchange theory and the temporal focus perspective, this study examines the associations among workplace training-related perceptions, affective commitment and turnover intention, as well as the moderating role of past temporal focus. The training-related measure covers five facets, namely access to learning opportunities, continuous-learning orientation, planned learning, applicability and need fulfillment, and is therefore broader than a conventional training satisfaction scale. Survey data from 415 employees in China were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), a two-stage interaction approach and 10,000 bootstrap resamples. Training-related perceptions were positively associated with affective commitment, and affective commitment was negatively associated with turnover intention. The indirect association between training-related perceptions and turnover intention through affective commitment was negative. Past temporal focus negatively moderated the association between training-related perceptions and affective commitment, although this association remained positive at low, mean and high levels of past temporal focus. The model explained 23.6% of the variance in affective commitment and 26.9% of the variance in turnover intention. These findings indicate an indirect pathway and a small temporal boundary condition rather than causal effects of training on retention, and they should be interpreted in light of the adapted measures, particularly the breadth of the training-related measure and the evaluative item in the past temporal focus measure.

Keywords: workplace training-related perceptions, affective commitment, turnover intention, past temporal focus, conditional indirect association

INTRODUCTION

Rapid changes in technology and work requirements have made training a central concern for employers. As job requirements continue to evolve, employees increasingly need opportunities to update and develop their skills. Organizations therefore face a dual challenge: they must invest in employee development while also recognizing that training alone does not ensure that employees will remain with the organization. Training investment and employee retention have consequently become increasingly interconnected organizational concerns. This issue is also relevant in China, where organizations continue to face changing skill requirements and employee mobility. Remaining in a job does not necessarily reflect strong attachment to the employer, just as receiving workplace training does not necessarily reduce an employee's inclination to leave. It is therefore important to understand how employees evaluate the training they receive, and whether these evaluations are related to their attachment to the organization and their intention to leave.

Workplace training forms an important part of employees' broader organizational experience. Employees may evaluate whether learning opportunities are available, whether training meets their needs, and whether what they have learned can be applied at work; their general orientation toward continued learning may also shape

these responses. These aspects are related but are not identical to satisfaction with a specific training activity. Recent research has linked training to employee attitudes and retention in several ways. Training satisfaction has been associated with stronger affective commitment among Chinese employees in Macao (To & Leung, 2024). Linked employer and employee data have also associated training participation and employer support with affective commitment (Grund & Titz, 2022). Two quasi-field experiments linked listening training to higher relatedness with colleagues, lower burnout and lower turnover intentions (Itzchakov et al., 2023). In addition, panel evidence indicates that training participation is associated with higher retention, although the association is weaker when training content is more portable and more visible to other employers (Dietz & Zwick, 2022). These studies assess different training constructs and designs, and their findings are not interchangeable. The present study therefore asks how a broad set of training-related perceptions is associated with employee attachment and turnover intention, and it distinguishes this predictor from narrow training satisfaction.

Two issues remain insufficiently addressed. The first concerns the attitudinal pathway connecting training-related perceptions to turnover intention. Employer-supported training can signal investment in employees' development, which may be reciprocated through stronger attachment to the organization. Affective commitment is thus a theoretically plausible intervening attitude. Existing evidence addresses related but nonidentical relationships. Training satisfaction has been linked to affective commitment (To & Leung, 2024), while competence development practices have been studied in relation to affective commitment and turnover intentions (Moreira et al., 2024). Studies have also considered loyalty (Albtoosh et al., 2022), work engagement (Memon et al., 2016), and employee engagement (Fulmore et al., 2023). These predictors and intervening attitudes are related but not equivalent. The present study therefore focuses on the indirect association via affective commitment.

The second issue concerns boundary conditions. Employees may report favorable training-related perceptions without equally strong organizational attachment. Temporal focus offers one possible account of heterogeneity in this association. Temporal focus concerns attention to past, present and future experiences (Shipp et al., 2009); attention to these periods need not be mutually exclusive. Prior research has related temporal-focus profiles to affective commitment and turnover intentions (Shipp et al., 2022), and longitudinal research has examined temporal focus in the link between turnover intentions and subsequent voluntary turnover (Peltokorpi et al., 2023). These findings establish the broader relevance of temporal orientation but do not establish how past focus moderates the association between training perceptions and affective commitment. Moreover, attention to the past is not inherently favorable or unfavorable. This ambiguity motivates a theoretically qualified test of the proposed interaction.

To address these issues, the present study draws on social exchange theory and the temporal focus perspective and examines a moderated mediation model with survey data from 415 employees in China. It tests whether a broad measure of training-related perceptions is indirectly associated with turnover intention through affective commitment, and whether past temporal focus conditions the association with affective commitment. By examining this attitudinal pathway and temporal interaction within one model, the study connects research on training, organizational attachment and temporal focus.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Workplace Training-Related Perceptions and Affective Commitment

In this study, workplace training-related perceptions refer to a broad set of responses concerning employer-provided learning opportunities, the planned organization of learning, the applicability of training, the fulfillment of work-related needs, and employees' own continuous-learning orientation. The five adapted items are drawn from different training-related facets discussed by Schmidt (2007).

The abbreviation WTS is used for this measure, but the combined score is not equivalent to Schmidt's original satisfaction subscale. In particular, an item about treating learning as a lifelong pursuit captures individual

learning orientation rather than satisfaction with the employer's provision of training. The predictor is therefore interpreted as a broad training-related measure rather than a unidimensional satisfaction scale.

Affective commitment refers to employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The established three-component framework distinguishes affective attachment from remaining because departure is costly or because membership is felt to be an obligation (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Pahos & Galanaki, 2022). Social exchange theory suggests that beneficial treatment can be reciprocated through favorable attitudes toward the provider (Ahmad et al., 2023). On this account, employees who evaluate the employer's training provision, practical relevance and learning conditions favorably may experience stronger organizational attachment. Evidence connecting training satisfaction to affective commitment (To & Leung, 2024), and training participation or employer support to commitment (Grund & Titz, 2022), is consistent with this rationale, even though the training measures in these studies differ. We therefore propose the following hypothesis.

H1. Workplace training-related perceptions are positively associated with affective commitment.

Affective Commitment and Turnover Intention

Turnover intention concerns employees' inclination to leave their current job and to consider alternative employment. The six-item Turnover Intention Scale was validated by Bothma and Roodt (2013), with more recent validation evidence reported by Németh et al. (2024). Turnover intention reflects a psychological orientation rather than observed departure. Recent longitudinal research shows that temporal focus can condition the relationship between turnover intention and actual turnover, which reinforces the need to distinguish the two outcomes (Peltokorpi et al., 2023). Emotional attachment gives employees a reason to maintain organizational membership. Employees who identify with their employer and experience a sense of belonging are expected to be less inclined to leave. Recent evidence is consistent with this expectation. A meta-analysis identifies affective organizational commitment as a strong predictor of turnover intention among public employees (Hur & Abner, 2024). Employee survey research also examines affective commitment as a mechanism connecting competence development with lower turnover intentions (Moreira et al., 2024). Therefore, employees with stronger affective commitment are expected to report lower turnover intention. We propose the following hypothesis.

H2. Affective commitment is negatively associated with turnover intention.

The Mediating Role of Affective Commitment

Taken together, H1 and H2 suggest an indirect association between workplace training-related perceptions and turnover intention through affective commitment. Favorable training-related perceptions may accompany stronger emotional attachment, which in turn may accompany a weaker inclination to leave. Existing studies support this account, although each examines a different combination of constructs. To and Leung (2024) examine training satisfaction and affective commitment, whereas Moreira et al. (2024) examine affective commitment in the context of broader competence development practices. Albtoosh et al. (2022) consider employee loyalty rather than affective commitment. Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis.

H3. Workplace training-related perceptions have a negative indirect association with turnover intention through affective commitment.

The Moderating Role of Past Temporal Focus

Temporal focus refers to attention directed toward the past, present and future (Shipp et al., 2009). Past temporal focus specifically concerns the frequency or salience of earlier experiences. It should be distinguished from age, organizational tenure, regret, and the emotional valence of memories. Attention to the past does not necessarily displace attention to the present or future, because orientations toward different periods can coexist. Research on temporal-focus profiles has associated these patterns with affective

commitment and work-related withdrawal outcomes (Shipp et al., 2022). A possible implication is that earlier experiences provide reference points when employees evaluate their current relationship with an employer, although the valence and stability of those experiences may be consequential.

Employees with stronger past temporal focus may draw more heavily on earlier experiences when evaluating their current relationship with the employer. If prior experiences are particularly salient, a current training experience may add less new relational information to an already established view of the organization; this would weaken the observed association between current training-related perceptions and affective commitment. An alternative pattern is also plausible. A history of supportive development experiences could reinforce, rather than weaken, the relational meaning of current training. Longitudinal research has also shown that temporal focus conditions the relationship between turnover intention and subsequent turnover, which is a different stage of the withdrawal process (Peltokorpi et al., 2023). Building on the anchoring rationale, we propose the following directional hypothesis.

H4. Past temporal focus negatively moderates the positive association between workplace training-related perceptions and affective commitment, such that the association is weaker at higher levels of past temporal focus.

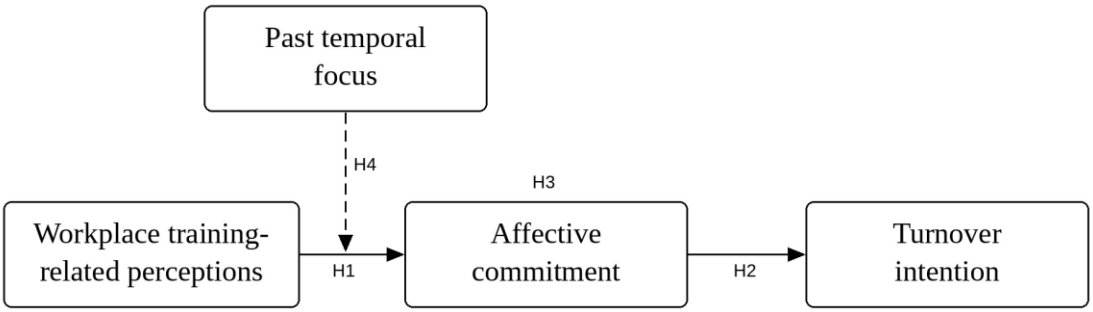

Figure 1. Conceptual framework. H3 refers to the indirect WTS → AC → TI pathway; H4 refers to the WTS × PTF interaction predicting AC.

METHODOLOGY

Participants and Procedure

Data were collected through a self-administered online questionnaire survey of employees in China. The questionnaire was distributed through Wenjuanxing, an online survey platform in China, between March and June 2026. A total of 436 responses were received. After screening, 21 responses were excluded, leaving 415 usable responses for analysis. Thus, 95.2% of the submitted responses were retained. The final sample included employees from different industries, organization types, positions and lengths of organizational tenure.

The final dataset contained no missing values, no duplicate records and no cases with identical answers across all items. A power analysis was conducted to assess the adequacy of the sample size. With an effect size of $f^2 = 0.15$, $\alpha = 0.05$, statistical power of 0.95, and three predictors in the most complex endogenous equation, the minimum required sample size was 119. The final sample of 415 therefore exceeded this minimum under the assumed medium effect size. This calculation does not cover the smaller interaction effect, which is discussed in the limitations section. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Of the respondents, 50.8% were male and 49.2% were female. Most respondents held a bachelor's degree (59.5%) and were general employees (76.9%). Private enterprises accounted for 58.1% of the respondents. The sample covered a range of industries, and the largest groups were information technology or Internet (19.5%), wholesale, retail or e-commerce (19.3%) and manufacturing (15.9%). Nearly half of the respondents had worked in their organization for 1 to 3 years (48.2%).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	211	50.8
	Female	204	49.2
Education	Junior college	106	25.5
	Bachelor's degree	247	59.5
	Master's degree or above	62	14.9
Position	General employee	319	76.9
	First-line manager or supervisor	63	15.2
	Middle manager	28	6.7
	Senior manager	5	1.2
Industry	Manufacturing	66	15.9
	Information technology or Internet	81	19.5
	Wholesale, retail or e-commerce	80	19.3
	Finance	25	6.0
	Education	42	10.1
	Healthcare	30	7.2
	Professional or business services	54	13.0
	Other	37	8.9
Organization type	Private enterprise	241	58.1
	State-owned enterprise	47	11.3
	Foreign-invested enterprise or joint venture	43	10.4
	Public service institution	54	13.0
	Government agency or other public sector	6	1.4
	Other	24	5.8
Monthly income (RMB)	Below 5,000	98	23.6

	5,000–7,999	172	41.4
	8,000–11,999	99	23.9
	12,000–15,999	31	7.5
	16,000 or above	15	3.6
Organization tenure	Less than 1 year	110	26.5
	1–3 years	200	48.2
	4–6 years	78	18.8
	7 years or more	27	6.5

Note. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Measures

The questionnaire contained 21 items covering workplace training-related perceptions, affective commitment, past temporal focus and turnover intention. All items were scored on a five-point Likert agreement scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire contained no reverse-coded items, and all 21 items were retained in the final model. Appendix A provides an item-level English-language inventory and an adaptation register. Because all constructs were collected from a single respondent at one point in time, common method variance and reporting bias remain possible.

Workplace training-related perceptions were measured using five items selected and adapted from different training-related facets discussed by Schmidt (2007). These items do not reproduce a single original five-item satisfaction subscale. WTS1 concerns the availability of learning or training opportunities, WTS2 describes the respondent's own orientation toward lifelong learning, WTS3 concerns whether learning is planned and purposeful, WTS4 addresses job applicability, and WTS5 addresses practical need fulfillment. Thus, WTS1 and WTS3 primarily concern organizational learning conditions, WTS4 and WTS5 concern perceived relevance and usefulness, and WTS2 concerns an employee-level learning orientation. The resulting score should be interpreted as a broad, heterogeneous training-related measure rather than a direct measure of satisfaction alone. Because these indicators do not necessarily reflect interchangeable manifestations of a single latent attribute, conventional reflective-model reliability and AVE statistics cannot by themselves establish content validity or justify the aggregation. Item-level wording and interpretive distinctions are reported in Appendix A.

Affective commitment was measured using five items selected and adapted from the eight-item affective commitment scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1990). The present study does not reproduce the original scale in full. Two of the selected items (AC4 and AC5) correspond to negatively worded items in the original scale and were rephrased in positive form. The five items concern willingness to remain with the organization, enjoyment of discussing the organization, identification with organizational problems, difficulty forming an equivalent emotional attachment elsewhere, and belonging. One item about remaining for an entire career may overlap conceptually with turnover intention. Although the HTMT values suggest empirical separation of the two modeled variables, they do not independently establish that all item content is conceptually distinct. Pahos and Galanaki (2022) provide a recent application of the broader three-component commitment framework. Higher scores indicate stronger affective commitment.

Past temporal focus was assessed using five adapted items based primarily on Shipp et al. (2009). The original past-focus subscale contains four items measured in terms of frequency. In the present study, the four

attention-to-the-past items were presented on a five-point agreement scale, changing the response task from frequency estimation to endorsement. A fifth item asks respondents to consider what could have been done better in the past. This addition contains evaluative or counterfactual reflection, which is not integral to the original temporal-attention construct. Consequently, the five-item score cannot be treated as fully equivalent to the original past-focus scale, and the interaction may partly reflect evaluative reflection rather than attention to the past alone. Future research could test a four-item specification that excludes PTF5.

Turnover intention was measured using six adapted items corresponding to the TIS-6 validated by Bothma and Roodt (2013), with more recent validation evidence provided by Németh et al. (2024). The items assess thoughts of leaving, unmet personal needs, frustration with work goals, imagining an alternative job, willingness to accept an equally paid alternative, and reduced anticipation of a new workday. The study used a five-point agreement scale rather than the exact response format of the original instrument. Some adapted items refer to dissatisfaction or frustration rather than an explicit plan to leave; they therefore warrant content-level scrutiny even when the overall score has good internal consistency. The resulting construct is best understood as an adapted indicator set for turnover-related cognitions and attitudes. Higher scores indicate stronger turnover intention. Respondents also provided gender, education, position, industry, organization type, monthly income and organizational tenure.

Data Analysis

Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to evaluate the prespecified associations, following methodological guidance on measurement and structural-model assessment (Sarstedt et al., 2022). The analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4 (Ringle et al., 2024), and all four variables were specified as reflective. This is an estimation choice rather than evidence that the adapted indicators are theoretically interchangeable, particularly for the heterogeneous training-related predictor. The cross-sectional design supports the analysis of covariation and prediction within the specified model, not a causal interpretation of training or employee retention.

The analysis proceeded in two stages. First, the reflective measurement model was evaluated using indicator loadings, Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, composite reliability (rho_C), average variance extracted (AVE) and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT), consistent with contemporary guidance (Sarstedt et al., 2022). Full collinearity variance inflation factors (VIFs) were examined as supplementary diagnostics against a reference value of 3.3 (Kock, 2015).

Low VIF values were not treated as proof that common method bias was absent, given the limitations of statistical corrections in same-source survey designs (Podsakoff et al., 2024). Second, the structural model was evaluated using path coefficients, structural VIFs, R^2 and f^2, interpreted against conventional benchmarks (Cohen, 1988). For the directional hypotheses, the analysis used 10,000 bootstrap resamples, one-tailed tests at the .05 level and 90% bias-corrected confidence intervals.

A two-stage approach was used to examine moderation by past temporal focus, consistent with guidance for interaction effects in PLS-SEM (Becker et al., 2018; Becker et al., 2023). The interaction term was computed from standardized scores for the training-related predictor and past temporal focus and included in the affective-commitment equation along with both component terms.

Conditional slopes were calculated at one standard deviation below the past-focus mean, at the mean, and at one standard deviation above the mean. The specific indirect association through affective commitment was assessed by bootstrap, and the indirect association of the interaction term was interpreted using the index of moderated mediation (Hayes, 2015; Cheung & Cheung, 2024). Here that index describes the extent to which the specified indirect association varies across levels of past focus. The model did not include a direct path from training-related perceptions to turnover intention, so it does not distinguish full from partial mediation. All findings are treated as statistical associations in view of the cross-sectional and same-source data.

RESULTS

Measurement Model Assessment

As shown in Table 2, the measurement model showed satisfactory internal consistency reliability and convergent validity. Indicator loadings ranged from 0.794 to 0.891, all exceeding 0.70. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.889 to 0.909; rho_A ranged from 0.904 to 0.955; composite reliability (rho_C) ranged from 0.916 to 0.930; and AVE ranged from 0.686 to 0.727, above 0.50. Full collinearity VIF values ranged from 1.017 to 1.534, below the reference value of 3.3. These statistics do not, however, resolve the content-validity concerns noted in the Measures section.

Table 2. Assessment of the measurement model

Constructs	Items	Factor loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Reliability coefficient (rho_A)	Composite reliability (rho_C)	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Full collinearity VIF
Affective Commitment	AC1	0.841	0.903	0.904	0.928	0.720	1.534
	AC2	0.848					
	AC3	0.855					
	AC4	0.850					
	AC5	0.849					
Past Temporal Focus	PTF1	0.794	0.889	0.955	0.916	0.686	1.017
	PTF2	0.801					
	PTF3	0.891					
	PTF4	0.808					
	PTF5	0.845					
Turnover Intention	TI1	0.849	0.909	0.910	0.930	0.688	1.450
	TI2	0.820					
	TI3	0.839					
	TI4	0.820					
	TI5	0.852					
	TI6	0.797					

Training-Related Perceptions (WTS)	WTS 1	0.856	0.906	0.908	0.930	0.727	1.350
	WTS 2	0.834					
	WTS 3	0.877					
	WTS 4	0.844					
	WTS 5	0.851					

Table 3 shows the HTMT results. All HTMT values were below the conservative threshold of 0.85, and the highest value (0.570) was observed between affective commitment and turnover intention. These results are consistent with empirical separation of the modeled scores. However, discriminant validity in the HTMT sense does not resolve whether the individual indicators adequately represent their intended theoretical constructs.

Table 3. Discriminant validity test using the HTMT criterion

Constructs	**Affective Commitment**	**Past Temporal Focus**	**Turnover Intention**	**Training-Related Perceptions (WTS)**
Affective Commitment				
Past Temporal Focus	0.094			
Turnover Intention	0.570	0.050		
Training-Related Perceptions (WTS)	0.504	0.056	0.459	

Note. HTMT values below 0.85 indicate adequate discriminant validity.

Structural Model Assessment

Table 4 presents the structural model estimates. The training-related predictor was positively associated with affective commitment ($\beta = 0.465$, $t = 11.969$, $p < .001$, 90% BCI [0.398, 0.527]), supporting H1. Affective commitment was negatively associated with turnover intention ($\beta = -0.519$, $t = 15.142$, $p < .001$, 90% BCI [−0.570, −0.458]), supporting H2. The structural VIF values ranged from 1.000 to 1.002, suggesting no substantial collinearity among the included predictors.

The model explained 23.6% of the variance in affective commitment ($R^2 = 0.236$) and 26.9% of the variance in turnover intention ($R^2 = 0.269$). The effect sizes were $f^2 = 0.283$ for the training-related predictor in the affective-commitment equation and $f^2 = 0.368$ for affective commitment in the turnover-intention equation.

According to the conventional guidelines of Cohen (1988), these values are approximately medium and large, respectively.

Mediating Role of Affective Commitment

The specified indirect association between workplace training-related perceptions and turnover intention through affective commitment was negative and statistically significant (β = −0.241, t = 8.260, p < .001, 90% BCI [−0.289, −0.192]), supporting H3. Because the model did not include a direct path from training-related perceptions to turnover intention, the result is interpreted as an indirect association, and no conclusion is drawn about full or partial mediation.

Moderating Role of Past Temporal Focus

The interaction between workplace training-related perceptions and past temporal focus was negative and statistically significant (β = −0.117, t = 2.458, p = .007, 90% BCI [−0.194, −0.045]), supporting H4. In this model, the positive association between the training-related predictor and affective commitment was weaker at higher values of past temporal focus. The interaction had an f^2 value of 0.019, below the conventional 0.02 benchmark for a small effect (Cohen, 1988), so its magnitude should not be overstated. The main association of past temporal focus with affective commitment was β = 0.107, with a 90% BCI of [−0.118, 0.154].

The conditional slopes are illustrated in Figure 2. The positive association between the training-related predictor and affective commitment was strongest at low past temporal focus (β = 0.582), intermediate at mean past temporal focus (β = 0.465), and weakest at high past temporal focus (β = 0.348). The association therefore remained positive at all three levels of the moderator, which indicates attenuation rather than disappearance of the association.

The conditional indirect associations between the training-related predictor and turnover intention were −0.302 at low past temporal focus, −0.241 at mean past temporal focus, and −0.181 at high past temporal focus. The index of moderated mediation was 0.061 (t = 2.443, p = .007, 90% BCI [0.023, 0.102]). These estimates indicate that the indirect association weakened as past temporal focus increased. Because confidence intervals for the three conditional indirect estimates are not presented, their individual significance is not interpreted.

Table 4. Assessment of the structural model

Relationship	β	SE	t	p	BCI		VIF	f^2	R^2
					LB	UB			
H1: Training-Related Perceptions (WTS) → Affective Commitment	0.465	0.039	11.969	< .001	0.398	0.527	1.002	0.283	0.236
H2: Affective Commitment → Turnover Intention	−0.519	0.034	15.142	< .001	−0.570	−0.458	1.000	0.368	0.269
H3: Training-Related Perceptions (WTS) → Affective Commitment → Turnover Intention	−0.241	0.029	8.260	< .001	−0.289	−0.192			

H4: Training-Related Perceptions (WTS) × Past Temporal Focus → Affective Commitment	−0.117	0.048	2.458	.007	−0.194	−0.045	1.001	0.019	

Note. β is the standardized path coefficient, SE is the standard error, BCI is the bias-corrected confidence interval, LB is the lower bound and UB is the upper bound. Consistent with the directional hypotheses, the p values are one-tailed and the confidence intervals have nominal 90% coverage, based on 10,000 bootstrap resamples.

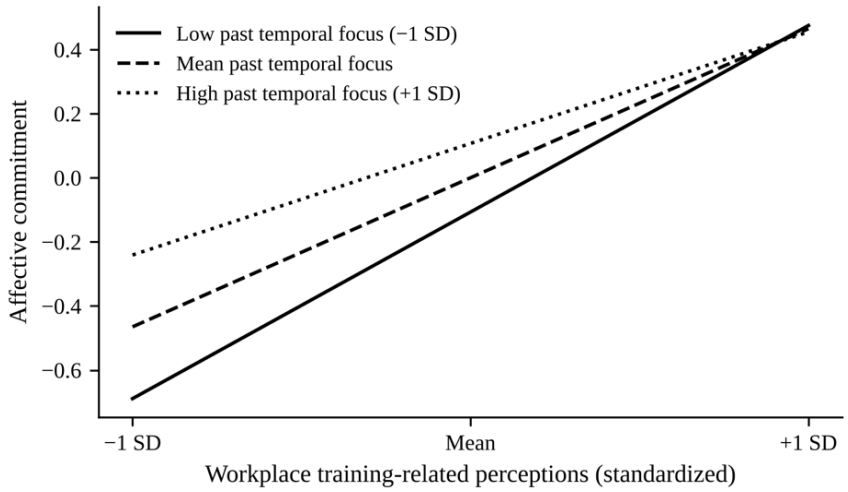

Figure 2. Conditional association between workplace training-related perceptions (WTS) and affective commitment at different levels of past temporal focus

DISCUSSION

This study examined how a broad set of workplace training-related perceptions covaries with turnover intention through affective commitment, and whether the training-related association with affective commitment differs by past temporal focus. The results supported H1 to H4. The indirect association with turnover intention was negative, and the training-related predictor's association with commitment was weaker at higher levels of past focus. Because the training indicator set combines multiple content domains and the data are cross-sectional, the findings should not be interpreted as identifying the causal impact of training satisfaction on employee retention.

First, the positive association between the broad training-related predictor and affective commitment is consistent with, but does not independently verify, a social exchange interpretation. Favorable perceptions of training provision or applicability may be consistent with feeling supported by the organization (Ahmad et al., 2023). Prior evidence linking training satisfaction to affective commitment (To & Leung, 2024), and employer support for training to commitment (Grund & Titz, 2022), provides a related empirical context. However, perceived investment and reciprocal obligation were not measured. The present predictor also combines organizational learning conditions with individual learning orientation, so the coefficient cannot be attributed to satisfaction with the employer's training alone.

Second, affective commitment was negatively associated with turnover intention and formed a significant indirect pathway from training-related perceptions in the specified model. This pattern accords with evidence on organizational commitment as a correlate of turnover intention (Hur & Abner, 2024) and complements research on competence development and affective commitment (Moreira et al., 2024). It should not be interpreted as establishing the direction of influence or the exclusivity of affective commitment as a mediator.

In addition, the model omits the direct path from training-related perceptions to turnover intention, so relative direct and indirect contributions remain unknown. Loyalty, work engagement and employee engagement are plausible alternative intervening attitudes that were not modeled here (Albtoosh et al., 2022; Fulmore et al., 2023; Memon et al., 2016).

Third, higher past temporal focus was associated with a weaker positive relationship between the training-related predictor and affective commitment. The association remained positive across the three moderator levels, and the interaction effect was small. One possible interpretation is that earlier experiences anchor evaluations of the employer, reducing the incremental information provided by present training. Yet the opposite could occur if favorable prior support reinforces current training experiences. The study did not measure the emotional valence of prior experiences, the continuity of training support, attentional allocation, or regret. Moreover, the adapted past-focus measure includes an evaluative-reflection item that may contribute to the observed interaction. The finding also differs in design and dependent variables from the association between temporal focus and the intention-to-turnover link described by Peltokorpi et al. (2023). Thus, the result identifies an interaction but not the psychological mechanism behind it.

Finally, the findings qualify a simple proposition that workplace training uniformly predicts retention. A heterogeneous set of training-related perceptions was associated with employees' reported attachment, and this statistical association varied modestly with past focus. Nevertheless, a single-wave self-report survey cannot establish whether training perceptions precede commitment or turnover intention; reverse ordering and unmeasured factors remain plausible. A prospective design would be needed to test whether within-person changes in training evaluations precede subsequent changes in commitment and, ultimately, verified turnover behavior.

CONCLUSION

Drawing on social exchange theory and the temporal focus perspective, this study examined the associations of workplace training-related perceptions with affective commitment and turnover intention. The broad training-related predictor was positively associated with affective commitment; affective commitment was negatively associated with turnover intention; and the specified indirect association was negative. Past temporal focus attenuated the positive training-related association with commitment, with a small interaction effect. These findings are best understood as cross-sectional associations under adapted measures, rather than evidence that improving a narrow training-satisfaction construct will cause lower turnover.

Theoretical Implications

First, the study places a training-related predictor, affective commitment and turnover intention within a single conditional indirect-association model. Earlier research has separately linked training satisfaction with commitment (To & Leung, 2024) and competence development with attitudes toward leaving (Moreira et al., 2024). The present results show that affective commitment links training-related perceptions to turnover intention within one model, which integrates these previously separate lines of research.

Second, the study documents an attenuating interaction involving past temporal focus. Although the main association of past focus with commitment had a confidence interval including zero, the interaction term was negative. This pattern is consistent with a boundary-condition interpretation, but the interaction was small, the past-focus measure included evaluative reflection, and the proposed anchoring mechanism was not directly observed. Its theoretical implications should therefore remain tentative pending replication with the original four-item past-focus measure.

Third, the study brings temporal focus into the analysis of a training-related attitudinal pathway. Existing temporal-focus research distinguishes attention to the past, present and future (Shipp et al., 2009) and examines temporal profiles in relation to affective commitment and withdrawal-related outcomes (Shipp et al., 2022). The present results concern only the adapted past-focus dimension. They underscore the need to

distinguish temporal attention from evaluative reflection about past events before inferring broad implications for temporal-focus theory.

Practical Implications

First, organizations may gain more useful feedback by separating training availability, planning, work relevance, transfer opportunities, need fulfillment and employees' own learning orientation in their evaluation systems. The study's combined predictor does not isolate which of these dimensions is most closely associated with affective commitment. A practical improvement would be to collect item-level post-training feedback and examine each aspect separately before prioritizing changes to training provision.

Second, employers can evaluate training alongside broader efforts to understand organizational attachment. In the present sample, affective commitment was negatively associated with turnover intention and formed the specified indirect pathway from training-related perceptions. Managers might therefore track training feedback together with repeated assessments of organizational attachment, supervisor support and opportunities to apply newly learned skills. Whether changes in these practices reduce actual turnover requires longitudinal evaluation.

Third, training reviews may include employees' earlier experiences with organizational development support. When interpreting unfavorable training evaluations, organizations could ask whether the difficulty reflects current content, limited opportunities to apply skills, or a longer history of unmet needs. However, the small interaction and the adapted past-focus measure do not support selecting employees, reducing training opportunities, or assigning interventions according to an individual's past-focus score. Prospective evaluation is needed before making such allocation decisions.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional and self-report design limits causal inference, because the data cannot establish temporal ordering and reverse relationships remain possible. In addition, turnover intention rather than actual turnover was measured. Future research could therefore use longitudinal or multi-source designs with actual turnover records to examine how training-related perceptions, affective commitment and turnover develop over time.

Second, the sample included employees from multiple sectors and organizational contexts but cannot be assumed to represent the wider Chinese workforce. Respondent age was not among the demographic variables, and employer identity was not available for assessing organizational clustering. Future work could use probability-based or explicitly documented multi-organization recruitment and assess heterogeneity by age, tenure and industry.

Third, all four instruments were adapted, and the central training-related predictor presents a substantial content-validity limitation. Its five items combine organizational opportunity structures, planned learning, applicability, need fulfillment and personal continuous-learning orientation rather than interchangeable indicators of narrow satisfaction. The affective-commitment measure includes an item about spending an entire career in the organization, which may overlap with turnover intention; several turnover items also capture broader work dissatisfaction or frustration. The past-focus measure changes the source instrument's frequency response scale to agreement and adds an evaluative-reflection item. Although the loadings, internal-consistency statistics and HTMT values describe empirical properties of the fitted model, they cannot eliminate these conceptual differences. Replication using construct-pure, independently validated instruments and item-level sensitivity tests is therefore essential.

Fourth, the interaction was small ($f^2 = 0.019$), whereas the a priori sample-size calculation assumed $f^2 = 0.15$. Therefore, sample adequacy for a small moderation effect is not established by that calculation alone. The model also omits a direct path from training-related perceptions to turnover intention, and confidence intervals for the three conditional indirect estimates are not presented. In addition, unmeasured job alternatives, pay

satisfaction, supervisor support and the valence of past development experiences could contribute to the observed patterns. Future studies should pre-register a targeted power analysis for interactions, test alternative measurement specifications, estimate direct and conditional indirect paths, and measure the proposed temporal anchoring process prospectively.

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APPENDIX A. MEASUREMENT ITEMS AND ADAPTATION INVENTORY

The following English wording reflects the 21-item instrument associated with the variable codes used in this study. It provides an item-level content inventory, not a verbatim reproduction of the original published source scales.

Table A1. English item wording by construct

Item	English rendering of the adapted questionnaire item	Primary content
WTS1	My department provides learning or training opportunities to address changing needs in the work environment.	Organizational provision or availability
WTS2	I regard education at work as a continuous, lifelong pursuit.	Personal continuous-learning orientation

WTS3	In my department, learning is planned and purposeful rather than incidental.	Planned learning conditions
WTS4	The training I receive at work can be directly applied to my job.	Training applicability or transfer
WTS5	The training I receive at work meets my practical needs.	Perceived need fulfillment
AC1	I would very much like to spend my entire career with this organization.	Attachment with retention-related wording
AC2	I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it.	Organizational identification
AC3	I truly feel that this organization's problems are my own.	Identification with organizational problems
AC4	I do not think I could readily develop the same emotional attachment to another organization.	Emotional attachment
AC5	I feel that I am a member of the organizational family.	Belonging
PTF1	I often replay memories of the past in my mind.	Attention to the past
PTF2	I look back on events that have happened in my life.	Attention to the past
PTF3	I think about my past experiences.	Attention to the past
PTF4	I often think back to when I was younger.	Attention to the past
PTF5	I think about what I could have done better in the past.	Added evaluative or counterfactual reflection
TI1	I often think about leaving my current job.	Thoughts of leaving
TI2	I think my current job does not adequately meet my personal needs.	Unmet needs; not explicit leaving plan
TI3	I often feel frustrated when my work goals cannot be achieved.	Work frustration; not explicit leaving plan
TI4	I often imagine finding another job that better meets my personal needs.	Alternative employment
TI5	If another job offered the same salary, I would be likely to accept it.	Willingness to leave
TI6	I do not look forward to starting a new workday.	Work anticipation; not explicit leaving plan

Note. WTS denotes workplace training-related perceptions. AC and TI denote affective commitment and turnover intention; PTF denotes past temporal focus. Item wordings are presented as English renderings of the questionnaire items.

Table A2. Source-scale adaptation register

Construct	Instrument source	Adaptation	Primary validity issue
Training-related perceptions (WTS1–WTS5)	Schmidt (2007)	Five items selected across organizational learning opportunity, individual learning orientation, planning, applicability and needs; not a single source satisfaction subscale.	Construct breadth; WTS2 is not an employer-satisfaction item.
Affective commitment (AC1–AC5)	Allen and Meyer (1990)	Five selected or adapted positive-oriented items from the eight-item affective commitment scale, using five-point agreement responses.	AC1 may overlap with intention to stay. AC4 and AC5 rephrase negatively worded original items in positive form.
Past temporal focus (PTF1–PTF5)	Shipp et al. (2009)	Four past-attention items recast as five-point agreement statements; a fifth evaluative-reflection item was added.	Changing frequency to agreement and including PTF5 broaden the construct.
Turnover intention (TI1–TI6)	Bothma and Roodt (2013)	Six adapted TIS-6 content areas presented using five-point agreement instead of the original response format.	The response format differs from the original, and some items overlap in content with work dissatisfaction.