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## Retail Workers' Job Preferences: Uncovering the Drivers of Attraction, Retention, and Attrition

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**Retail Workers' Job Preferences:  
Uncovering the Drivers of Attraction, Retention, and Attrition**

A Dissertation

Presented in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology

By

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May 2023

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## **Biography**

Alyssa Sue Meyers Green was born in Springfield, IL, on July 26, 1996. She graduated from North Mac High School as Valedictorian in Virden, IL, in May 2014. She graduated summa cum laude with her Bachelor of Arts degree from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale in May 2018, where she was a Chancellor's Scholar and majored in Psychology with minors in Management and Business Administration. Alyssa received her Master of Arts degree in Industrial Organization Psychology from DePaul University.

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## **Abstract**

Retail workers face unique job pressures and the industry itself has always been plagued with turnover rates much higher than other industries. The COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbated issues, causing employers to struggle even more with attraction and retention. The goal of this study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of what retail workers value in their job by determining the job characteristics that drive attraction, retention, and attrition. Current retail workers were asked to rate the importance of multiple different job attributes that impacted recent job decisions. Multinomial logistic regression was used to analyze responses and found different job characteristics were predictive of quitting, considering quitting, and remaining with their current job. Among the most predictive factors for intentions to stay were finding the job enjoyable, liking co-workers, and perceiving job stability. For intentions to quit and turnover, top predictors were lack of education benefits, disliking management, stress and exhaustion from physical demands, and low pay. To understand drivers of joining decisions, a conjoint analysis was conducted in which realistic job decisions were simulated, asking participants to select between two job packages based on which is most attractive. Results found that top drivers of attractive job packages were health benefits, pay level, and promotion and career opportunities. Implications are provided for retail employers in creating and shaping an employee value proposition that will better attract, engage, and motivate employees.

## **Retail Workers' Job Preferences: Uncovering the Drivers of Attraction, Retention, and Attrition**

The COVID-19 pandemic changed much about everyone's day-to-day lives, but for nearly all types of workers, it enabled them to redefine their relationships with their work. After the pandemic slowed and people had a taste of what life was like when only "essential workers" were conducting their jobs in-person, they started to re-evaluate their work lives and what they wanted and needed from their jobs. Thus, the "Great Resignation" commenced. People were leaving jobs in nearly every industry in search of changes at work, whether it was better treatment, more meaningful work, or better pay (De Smet et al., 2021). What used to matter to a typical job candidate or worker seemed to be less relevant in today's economic and social environment. Talent pipelines were "dried up," employers were having difficulties finding and retaining enough workers to keep their companies running at rates they did before the pandemic (Fuller et al., 2022). Organizations started competing for a limited pool of candidates that were available or willing to work, and it seemed that "Now Hiring" or "Help Wanted" signs were everywhere. The Great Resignation made it clear that it is not only important to recruit new talent, but to "re-recruit" their existing employees to make sure they are happy and retained (De Smet et al., 2021). One industry that has especially been affected by the pandemic and Great Resignation is the retail industry.

The retail industry includes establishments that offer sales of goods and services to consumers in any form (e.g., online, in-store, e-commerce). The National Retail Federation considers anyone whose job results in the sale of a consumer product as a retail worker (2022). This includes workers in grocery stores, big box stores, luxury

goods, and fast-food establishments, to name a few. According to the National Retail Federation, retail supports one in four American jobs, directly employs 32 million Americans, and represents \$3.9 trillion of annual GDP in the U.S. (2022). In Illinois alone, for example, 25 percent of jobs are supported by the retail industry. Working in retail is a commonly shared experience among many Americans as nearly 60 percent have worked a retail job in the past and nearly 32 percent of all first jobs are in retail, with the average age for a first job in retail being just 16 (NRF, 2022). Whether it is acknowledged or not, the retail industry and its workers have an immense impact on our economy and the ease with which we receive and consume everyday products.

Industries that felt the greatest social and economic pressures from the pandemic were consumer and retail, healthcare, and education sectors (De Smet et al., 2021). Retail workers face unique challenges, especially as of late during the global pandemic. They have cited feeling unstable in their work, fearful of getting sick, unappreciated, and mistreated by customers (Elnahla & Neilson, 2021). In fact, one report found that an alarming 64% of retail workers noticed an increase in confrontational or verbally aggressive customers since the start of the pandemic (Zipline, 2022). The pay is often below a living wage and hours are inconsistent or insufficient, and the pandemic and prevailing economy have only exacerbated those issues (Bhattarai, 2021; Coulter, 2013). During the pandemic, the re-structuring of retail work to comply with social distancing added many different activities to frontline employees' workloads, such as curbside delivery, fulfilling online orders, and order pick-ups. Since the pandemic has subsided and customers are now back in stores at pre-pandemic levels, employees are still doing these pandemic-related tasks as well as their original activities associated with in-person

shopping, which is causing increased burnout and decreased levels of job satisfaction (Fuller et al., 2022). Retail workers generally only have basic protections and low wage levels mandated by law, while large retail companies have pursued multifaceted union avoidance strategies to prevent workers from organizing and voicing concerns (Coulter, 2013). Recently, there has been an increase in efforts to organize retail workers and improve retail work given the challenges pervasive to retail careers.

These experiences have triggered negative perceptions among those that do not work in the retail industry. For example, a 2003 study found three of the top five attributes associated with retail careers among undergraduate students were “poor salary,” “limited advancement,” and “poor working hours,” and only 36 percent of respondents found these jobs appealing in any way (Broadbridge, 2003). This study found that college students’ negative perceptions about retail careers had not improved in 20 years (Broadbridge, 2003). Negative perceptions from both inside and outside of retail organizations are ever present, especially since retail workers were some of the only workers forced to remain working close-to-normal in very changed and not-normal conditions during the pandemic. It is possible that negative perceptions of the retail industry were more vastly realized during the pandemic compared to times before, given the media and news coverage of frontline workers. The general public learned more about what retail workers experienced beyond their quick interactions they had while shopping, which could have prompted future retail employees to look elsewhere for jobs.

The industry that was most affected by the Great Resignation was retail, however the retail industry has always struggled with turnover (Fuller et al., 2022). In 2018, the National Retail Federation reported that the retail industry’s average turnover rate was

just above 60 percent whereas the U.S. average turnover rate across all industries was 19 percent (Aneja, 2021). Just three years later, in 2021, during the height of the Great Resignation, the retail industry faced their highest turnover rate in five years at 69 percent whereas the U.S. average annual turnover rate was 57 percent across all industries (Ariella, 2022). Turnover is especially high at the store (i.e., frontline level), due in part to long and inconsistent hours, low pay, and low commitment to stay long-term (Rhoads et al., 2002). Turnover within retail establishments not only disrupts day-to-day tasks within a store, personnel assignments, and training needs, but it also has implications on the bottom line. One study found a negative relationship between turnover and results: retailers with lower frontline turnover rates had higher store sales (Fuller et al., 2022).

Though always a high priority in retail given such high turnover rates, recruitment is becoming even more crucial due to the increased competition with other industries for talented frontline employees (Sever et al., 2022). When asked what they will be doing to curb turnover, retailers often cite “better communicating the company’s employee value proposition,” “career pathing,” and “changes to compensation plans” as their top focus areas (Korn Ferry, 2019). It is evident that retail employers are searching for ways to better sell retail careers by focusing on what they believe will be more attractive to prospective workers. For example, recruitment and hiring strategies have recently expanded by including sign-on bonuses, emphasizing a commitment to flexibility, and investing in corporate social responsibility. These improvements seem to target the employee experience overall, progression and career opportunities, and pay, but it is unknown whether these interventions have followed any thorough investigation of employee needs and wants. If retailers were aware of how employees think about their



jobs and what factors are most influential when making job decisions, they could better shape those employees' experiences and offer more fulfilling rewards and benefits.

To enhance retail workers' desire to stay with their job and decrease perpetual turnover rates, it is imperative employers understand what their employees value. Some labor experts believe retailers are not doing enough to address structural problems in the industry, such as unstable schedules, unsafe working conditions, and a lack of benefits such as vacation time and paid sick leave (Bhattarai, 2021). One-time sign-on bonuses may be influential in getting people to start at a job, but it seems that to really improve employee experiences and retention rates, a solid understanding of how different job attributes affect retail workers is required. Then, employers can make changes that show employees they are cared for and that their wishes and concerns are being heard. This may require re-evaluating and re-defining the offerings for retail workers.

Given the challenges, strains, and conditions retail workers face as well as the pervasive turnover rates and the need to enhance recruitment efforts within the industry, this study's goal is to gain a more comprehensive view of what retail workers value when making job decisions. Several recruitment and motivation theories may lend piece-meal clues and fragmented frameworks to what is most valued, but this study aims to blend those theories and frameworks together to get a comprehensive view of what retail workers look for in a job and how different aspects of the job impact job decisions, such as joining a new job, staying with a current job, considering leaving their job, or quitting.

### **Employee Value Proposition and its Benefits**

The "package" of reward features or employment advantages and benefits offered to employees as well as the expression of organizational values, characteristics,

and attributes is known as the employee value proposition (Edwards, 2010). It takes the employment experience and packages it as the employment offering, which includes financial rewards, intrinsic rewards, and intangible experiences. Employee value propositions (EVP) assist with attracting, engaging, retaining, and managing expectations of workers. Research has shown that both applicants and employees contemplate their workplace's value proposition, and that the EVP impacts their commitment and performance (Ledford et al., 2000).

Companies can better create and portray their EVP if they are more aware of which factors of the job are most important or attractive to retail workers. Companies can shape their employee experience to prioritize the aspects their workers value, and they can portray it by communicating their priority to the aspects the external market finds valuable. Understanding the desires of workers allows organizations to change employment conditions, where possible, or emphasize certain organizational information to improve their reputation and attracting power (Cable & Graham, 2000). Additionally, knowing what to include in an EVP will not only attract people from the industry that have left a job and are looking for a different retail job, but also "latent" talent, or workers who are not currently looking to rejoin the labor market but who might come back if they get the right offer (De Smet et al., 2021).

On the other hand, having an EVP gives employers an opportunity to grant employees a voice in what is important to them, which could lead to better engagement, more job satisfaction, and better performance. EVPs can serve as a resource to define and strengthen psychological contracts between employers and employees. Psychological contracts are mutual expectations of both employers and employees in which they may

not be consciously aware of, but which regulate the employment relationship (Levinson et al., 1962). They can be met or broken based on whether the worker's pre-hire expectations match their post-hire reality. By clearly communicating the EVP, the employer informs potential employees of the experiences they are likely to have before they are on the job, so they can accurately conceive expectations that are more likely to be met once on the job. Portraying a realistic job preview, which could be done through portraying an EVP, can lead to several positive outcomes, such as perceived honesty, role clarity, ability to cope with demands, lower turnover, and higher job satisfaction (Breugh, 2013). When a psychological contract is "broken," however, it can lead to disengagement and turnover (Breugh, 2013). In fact, a study found that as there was increased congruence between desired job attributes and the perception that the company could provide those attributes, turnover was less likely (Fields & Nkomo, 1991). In other words, if a worker believes the company will deliver the desired attributes they joined the job for, they are less likely to quit. This highlights the importance of not only having an EVP but substantiating it and ensuring the offering is truthful and realistic.

### ***Employer Branding and Recruitment Literature***

Employee value propositions are often portrayed through employer branding (Knox & Bickerton, 2003). Employer branding is known as a practice at the intersection of human resources and marketing in which the identity of the organization as an employer is made known. It includes both the tangible and intangible attributes (e.g., values, systems, policies, and behaviors) that create value and influence in attracting, motivating, and retaining employees (Edwards, 2010). Employer branding, therefore, is the process of differentiating an organization's characteristics from other organizations,

highlighting unique aspects of the employment offerings or environment (i.e., the EVP), and managing an organization's image as perceived by current and future employees (Martin & Beaumont, 2003).

Employer branding, as the practice of projecting and illustrating what an employer offers, is very often included in recruitment strategies to attract then select talent. Recruitment is very important because it is the first step in developing competitive human capital through attraction and selection (Backhaus, 2004). Psychologically, recruitment is the process that serves to form attitudes and impressions of what working for an organization would be like and is grounded in persuasion research (Breugh, 2013). External recruitment is defined as:

An employer's actions that are intended to 1) bring a job opening to the attention of potential job candidates who do not currently work for the organization, 2) influence whether these individuals apply for the opening, 3) affect whether they maintain interest in the position until a job offer is extended, and 4) influence whether a job offer is accepted (Breugh, 2008, p. 103-104).

According to Breugh's (2013) discussion of recruitment, the first topic recruitment scholars studied was which type of individuals to target with recruiting efforts. Targeted recruitment is defined as actions designed to generate a particular type of job applicant (e.g., seniors, veterans, former employees). Targeted recruitment can be achieved by understanding how the EVP differs for different types of individuals and subsequently altering messaging to target specific audiences to influence their perceptions of the job.

There are multiple avenues in which a well-informed EVP can harness a recruitment strategy's power. The way a recruitment message is worded is important in how attractive it is (Wanous, 1992). It is believed that deeper cognitive processing of job-related messages occurs when the job-related information presented is of personal

relevance to the recipient, so it is important to understand candidates' desires in order to harness more attracting power through recruitment messages (Allen et al., 2007).

Additionally, when more information is given, the message is viewed as more attractive and more credible (Allen et al., 2007). The more detailed the information is leads to reductions in unqualified applicants, higher interest and more attention paid to the message, and perceptions of better person-organization fit (Barber & Roehling, 1993; Mason & Belt, 1986; Roberson, Collins, & Oreg, 2005). A Gartner Study (2022) found that when an EVP was effectively activated during recruitment, it reduced turnover because it gave candidates realistic expectations and made them more informed. That same study found that 75 percent of candidates considered the organization's EVP before even applying (Gartner, 2022). Knowledge of employees' desires can bolster recruitment messages if the organization incorporates that knowledge into recruitment messages to make them more relevant, information-rich, detailed, and realistic.

There are various job and organizational attributes that serve as key factors in determining a job's attractiveness (e.g., reputation, expectancy of receiving an offer, alternative opportunities, accurate job information; Chapman et al., 2005). Signaling theory was first conceptualized by Spence (1973) who described signaling as the prevalence of something in the market. The theory states that when decisions need to be made without a full understanding or all data, individuals make inferences about any perceived missing information (Spence, 1973). If that theory is applied to recruitment, it would suggest that attraction and job decisions are based on inferences made from the available information candidates have about the job and the organization. Applicants often lack information about important attributes of the job, such as organizational

culture, competitiveness of benefits offered, and whether they will enjoy the work, so they rely on information they come across during recruitment to inform their understanding of otherwise ambiguous attributes. Having evidence of what workers want out of a job will allow retailers to present their jobs in more attractive ways and control how potential applicants perceive them by presenting favorable signals via their EVP about important attributes of the job and organization during recruitment. It is worth noting, however, that the recruitment literature does not contain many studies to represent EVP, and there is not much data on different packages and how certain elements might compensate for others.

Though EVPs can offer multiple benefits to an employer by shaping prospective and current employees understanding and experiences, they can also clarify many things for an applicant during recruitment. EVPs provide information on the package of the job, including what it offers and what the experience will entail. Further, they can answer the candidates' question of "what's in it for me" and what they can expect in exchange for the work they do. Candidates, especially external to the organization, can therefore assess whether there is "fit" with the role before applying.

### ***Motivation & Job Satisfaction Theories to Inform EVP***

Although most motivation theories do not view multiple attributes of a job in tandem, they provide partial models of what people may look for in their jobs or what engages them. For example, several studies have found that the most important attribute of a job is the nature of the work itself followed by pay (Dalal, 2012). Others posit that meaningful work is most important for engagement as it gives people a sense of belonging, trust, and relationships.

Classic theories of motivation offer frameworks of what early researchers thought were the most important aspects of the job. Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs suggest that physiological needs, such as satisfactory pay and benefits, safety needs, such as working conditions and job security, social needs, such as relationships with co-workers and bosses, and esteem needs, such as job reputation and status of job must be met in hierarchical order to reach self-actualization, which could include interest in a job and advancement opportunities. Alderfer's (1969) "ERG" Model modifies Maslow's hierarchy and suggests that people have existence, relatedness, and growth needs that must all be met (Wahba & Bridwell, 1976). A job can meet these needs by providing job security and access to an income, social interaction and others' respect, and opportunities for professional development. Self-Determination Theory suggests humans have psychological needs for autonomy, competence, relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Jobs can offer autonomy through the decision-making rights and power they give to workers, competence by preparing them with the knowledge and resources needed to do the job, and relatedness by providing social opportunities to make connections with bosses, coworkers, and customers. Moreover, in 1961, McClelland's Achievement Motivation Theory stated employees had needs for achievement, power and authority, and affiliation. In a job, these needs may be met through providing career advancement opportunities and tools to excel in their performance, leadership and decision-making opportunities, and relationships with co-workers.

Other aspects of the job, such as perceptions of equity, may also matter. Process theories of motivation, such as Adam's Equity Theory (1963) posit that individuals are more engaged and motivated to perform and remain with an organization when they feel

they are fairly treated. Reactions to outcomes received depend on how those outcomes are valued in an absolute sense and on the circumstances surrounding their receipt (Adams, 1963). Therefore, perceptions of fairness for aspects such as pay or growth opportunities may be an aspect employees judge when evaluating their satisfaction or intent to stay with a job.

Financial rewards receive conflicting views in the literature when determining whether and how they are valued by workers. Pay, as a tangible reward, is often thought to undermine cooperation and harm intrinsic motivation if one is already interested in their work (Deci et al., 1999). Proponents of Adaptation Level Theory would argue that pay can never fully satisfy a worker and that it undermines long-term satisfaction due to escalating materialism, or the change in frame of reference when pay increases (Sachau, 2007). It is unknown, however, whether financial rewards matter more to certain populations of workers or in certain contexts (e.g., those in their first jobs, those with financial needs). Financial rewards may also matter more during recession-like times. Though certain levels of pay may have negative effects on motivation, this study will investigate whether monetary rewards and perceptions of fairness around pay have an impact on attraction and retention.

Oftentimes, individuals will consider how well they “fit” with their organizations, or how their unique needs interact with the context, which can impact attitudes and behaviors. Person-Organization fit was originally defined as the compatibility between people and organizations when a) at least one entity provides what the others needs, or b) they share similar fundamental characteristics, or c) both (Kristof, 1996, p 4-5). A worker’s behavior is thought to result from the interaction between themselves and their



organization, where some incongruence may be motivating but too much may lead to disengagement (Argyris, 1964). Meta-analytic results show that having an optimal alignment of person-organization fit is positively associated with organizational commitment and negatively associated with intent to turnover (Verquer, Beehr, & Wagner, 2002). It is important for employers to evaluate their own work conditions and workers' preference since potential workers and current employees are likely continuously evaluating their own "fit" and consequently changing job attitudes based on their valuation.

Motivation theories often hit on different factors that people find valuable, but there is no comprehensive theory that tests multiple factors against each other. For instance, has autonomy ever been compared to meaningfulness of the job with respect to their relationships with valued work outcomes? Does one matter more than the other for retail workers in particular that transcend idiosyncratic individual preferences? Do any factors reduce in importance when compared to another? This study will aim to view multiple aspects from various theories, such as enjoyment of the work, pay, meaningfulness of work, social connections, job reputation, and autonomy, to determine the relative importance of different job attributes and move toward a more comprehensive understanding of what retail workers, in particular, find attractive and motivating about their jobs. The job attributes examined in the present study are informed by what many researchers have considered to be the aspects of jobs that lead to attraction and engagement. Though there are likely not universal truths about this population of workers given the interaction between the worker and the context matter, there may be general principles that characterize retail workers in meaningful ways.

## **Retail Workers' Job Preferences**

Not many studies examine what specific job characteristics drive job decisions, though there are some that have explored what job characteristics retail workers like and dislike. For example, one of the earliest studies, done by Field and Nkomo in 1991, asked newly hired, entry-level store personnel to rate the importance of 24 different aspects of a job to determine what was valued by retail workers. The top six highest rated aspects were tuition waiver opportunities, freedom to do job their own way, a prestigious job title, availability of training programs, and medical benefits. The next six most important aspects were rapid advancement opportunities, variety of activities, good career paths, good fringe benefits, job-lifestyle fit, and job security. The lowest rated aspects of importance were having a boss they can work with, pleasant work environment, enjoyable work, opportunities to learn, and flexible scheduling (Field & Nkomo, 1991). While Field and Nkomo found that a flexible schedule was the lowest rated in importance, a recent study found that flexibility was the number-one driver of attrition (Fuller et al., 2022). After flexibility, other aspects that were predictive of people leaving their retail jobs were a lack of professional development opportunities, a lack of focus on health and well-being of employees, unsatisfactory compensation, and feeling the work was not meaningful (Fuller et al., 2022).

Another study conducted on retail workers explored which overarching factors were most motivating, and found working conditions, recognition, company policy, and salary to be most motivating, in that order (Tan & Waheed, 2011). Arnolds and Venter (2007) explored which motivational rewards work best for lower-level employees in the retail and manufacturing industries. Fringe benefits, including paid holidays, sick leave,

and housing loans, were the most important reward category for both the industries combined. When looking at just retail employees, however, retirement plans became the most motivating reward (Arnolds & Venter, 2007). Lee and Ha-Brookshire found that for U.S.-based fashion retailers, as the ethical climate becomes stronger, turnover intentions decrease and sustainability performance increases, indicating retail workers value ethics and corporate social responsibility from their employer (2017).

On the other hand, Pandey, Singh, and Pathak did a study on retail workers in India using grounded theory and factor analysis to determine factors of dissatisfaction. The most dissatisfying job attributes they found were aggressive customers, abusive supervisors, perceived poor job image, perceived unethical climate, lack of autonomy, work exhaustion, and inter-role conflict (2021). Based on the research conducted within the retail industry, there are trends indicating autonomy, supervisor support, job and company reputation, career development, and benefits are largely important to retail workers, but Oh, Weitz, and Lim say the one common denominator among numerous studies is the influence of pay and promotional opportunity (2016). These factors plus many more will be studied to give a comprehensive idea of what aspects of the job retail workers find most attractive and influential on job decisions.

However, does the knowledge of what retail workers want in a job really make a difference or is it more complicated than offering a certain aspect to all retail workers and expecting them to be satisfied? Could it be that there are varying aspects of the job that matter more or less at different phases of an employee's life cycle? More specifically, are the aspects that drive workers to *join* a job the same as the aspects that drive them to *stay* at a job or to *leave* a job? Just as a product life cycle contains different phases of growth,

maturity, and decline, Smither illustrates the employee life cycle as being similar with phases of attraction, deciding to join, hiring, engaging, and retaining (2003). As an employee goes from one phase to another, these phases must be managed differently (Smither, 2003). If there are aspects that matter differently based on life cycle phases, employers could manage expectations for current employees and communicate the offerings accordingly for prospective employees.

In 2010, James, McKechnie, and Swanberg explored whether there were fluctuations in the importance of an attribute on engagement at different times in a person's retail career. They measured engagement through cognitive, emotional, and behavioral questions, such as their desire to work there in the future, how much they enjoyed working there, whether they cared about the future of the company, and their willingness to expend extra effort (James et al., 2010). They found that across all career stages, the top three predictors of engagement (supervisor support and recognition, schedule satisfaction, and job clarity) were the same for the retail workers, no matter the stage of their career. However, another aspect that was important for all groups except retirement-eligible employees was career development opportunities. It is possible that retail workers have distinct "employee life cycle" stages in which different job attributes become more or less important depending on whether they are being recruited by a job, currently on the job and planning to stay, planning to quit, or if they actually quit a job.

This study's first research objective is to understand whether job attributes vary in importance given an employee's position in their career and which aspects are most important at each stage. Specifically, which attributes are the most important and do they

vary between the stages of 1) planning to stay (i.e., engaged or satisfied), 2) considering leaving their job (i.e., disengaged or dissatisfied), or 3) having recently quit their job.

**Research Question I.** What job attributes are most predictive of retail workers' decisions to stay with a job, consider leaving a job, and quit a job?

**Hypothesis I.** There will be differing sets of job attributes that characterize retail workers' stage in the employment life cycle (i.e., planning to stay, considering quitting, and quitting).

Literature searches reveal there are very few comprehensive studies or models showing what is most important to retail employees and only test specific hypotheses or limited attributes. Job attributes and preferences are often viewed individually instead of as a “package” as they would in a real job experience to understand their relative importance among each other. Most studies contain two detriments in their methodology – student samples and asking for ratings of importance – which this study plans to address by using a sample of actual retail workers as well as using a conjoint analysis in addition to asking for importance ratings to determine the importance of job factors.

When making job choice decisions, people may follow compensatory or non-compensatory models (Oh et al., 2016; Ronda et al., 2020). In compensatory strategies, based on Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory, decision makers aim to maximize the expected utility of their job choice by combining the desirability of outcomes in a multiplicative manner by determining the importance of multiple factors on their own. On the other hand, non-compensatory strategies base decisions on one or two critical attributes to make trade-offs and judge the relative attractiveness between two choices. It is believed that non-compensatory strategies are used for decisions between conflicting

choices that involve trade-offs, so some believe it is most likely job applicants use this strategy to arrive at job choices (Oh et al., 2016).

Researchers have criticized that social desirability bias is likely to affect choices when people are asked to rate how important attributes are to them, which would be the case when using a compensatory strategy (Rynes, 1991). Individual ratings of importance often look like asking respondents to rate multiple individual items on a scale of one to five – one being “not at all important” and five being “extremely important.” Judging components in this way makes most situations artificial and unrealistic, which may lead to random responses (Baum & Kabst, 2013). There is also a tendency to rate all attributes as important when asked to rate items in this way (Oh et al., 2016). Yasim, Mahmud, and Afrin argue that isolating attributes then rating them is not realistic of an actual employment decision and that bundled options that require tradeoffs need to be considered (2016). In addition to asking respondents about the stand-alone importance of multiple job attributes, this study will include a conjoint analysis that allows an understanding of a non-compensatory strategy to decision making to find the relative importance between different attributes.

### **Conjoint Analysis**

Conjoint analysis originated in mathematical psychology and psychometrics and is a methodology that was originally used in marketing research to understand how altering multiple elements of a single product impacted the way the product was viewed as a whole (Yasmin et al., 2016). One metaphor used to describe its methodology is to consider a brick wall both as a whole and as a compilation of multiple individual bricks. Each individual brick may be rated differently based on size, color, texture, or cost. Brick

walls, when made up of multiple different bricks, however, may be desired differently based on the individual bricks that make up the wall. One brick wall may use only red bricks and be viewed differently than another wall using both white and black bricks. Conjoint analysis allows an understanding of not only knowing which combination of bricks (or which wall) is most attractive but also the relative importance of the different features of the brick wall (i.e., size, color, texture, cost) when making the decision.

In conjoint analysis, “packages” are created by combining varying levels of different attributes being studied. For instance, in the brick wall example above, the attributes would be size, color, texture and cost of the bricks, and each attribute would have varying levels. The color attribute, for example, could have three levels: red, black and white. Table 1 provides an example of the brick wall attributes and their levels for use in a conjoint analysis. Then, packages are created by combining different attributes’ levels and respondents are forced to choose their preferred package. An example of a choice between two packages (e.g., brick walls) can be seen in Table 2. By having a respondent choose between several sets of packages, the optimal package, relative importance of attributes and attributes’ levels can be obtained.

**Table 1**

*Example attributes and attribute levels for use in conjoint analysis*

Attribute	Levels
Size	1. Medium 2. Large
Color	1. Red 2. White and Black 3. White
Texture	1. Smooth 2. Rough
Cost	1. \$1,000 2. \$1,500

**Table 2**

*Example packages to choose between in a conjoint analysis*

Choice 1	Choice 2
Size: Medium Wall	Size: Medium Wall
Color: Red	Color: Black and White
Texture: Rough	Texture: Smooth
Cost: \$1,000	Cost: \$1,000

Conjoint analysis allows the estimation of psychological tradeoffs made when evaluating multiple parts of a job at once (Oh et al., 2016). It can often reveal subconscious drivers that the respondents may not even be aware of that are affecting their decisions. In the context of this study, conjoint analysis will measure the relative importance of different job attributes but also give an understanding of the optimal “package” that most respondents find desirable when combining those different job attributes into a hypothetical offering. This method forges an understanding of how valuable job attributes are when considered together without being vulnerable to biases like self-insight and social desirability (Oh et al., 2016). The result will offer a more realistic judgement of job preferences by simulating realistic job choice decisions.

This method also has the capability of deciphering which attributes of the job are negotiable and nonnegotiable. If a factor of the job is nonnegotiable, nothing can make up for an unsatisfactory level of that factor, but if a factor is negotiable, it could be traded off with another equally valued attribute (Ronda et al., 2020). For example, if receiving a sign-on bonus as part of joining a job is nonnegotiable, then no other attribute could make up for a low or non-existent sign-on bonus. If a sign-on bonus is negotiable when making a joining decision, other factors like benefits or time off may make up for the lack of a sign-on bonus.

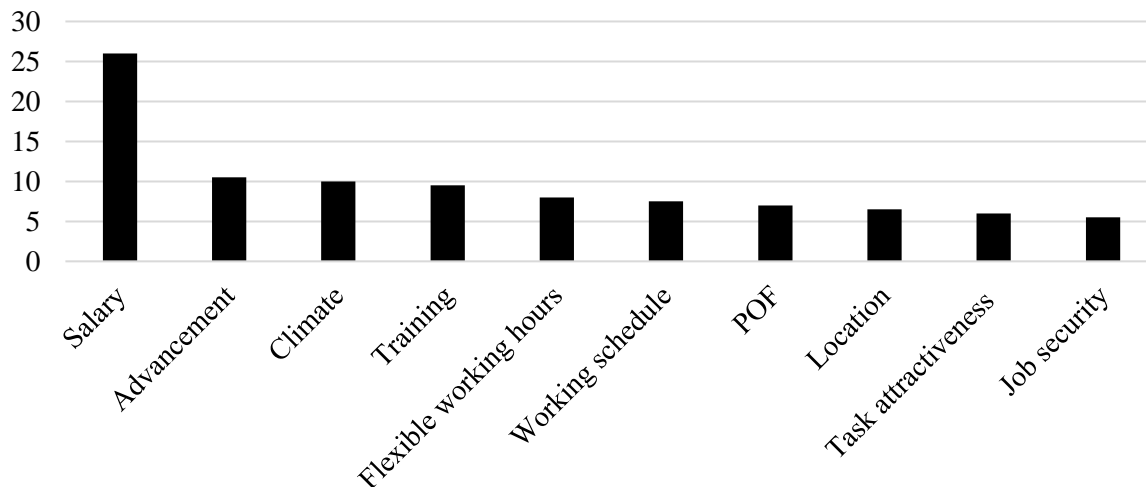


There are very few peer-reviewed studies that utilize conjoint analysis in the context of understanding job decisions as this methodology has been used prominently in product research and marketing studies. Baum and Kabst (2013) studied whether job preferences differed based on the involvement of a respondent in their job search. Their study sampled students in Germany and used both methods of evaluating importance of job attributes that were previously discussed: rating importance of individual attributes and filtering those top-rated factors through a conjoint analysis. By using both methods, they found that ratings of importance were different when they were rated alone compared to when they were viewed in tandem with other attributes via conjoint analysis. Their conjoint analysis included 16 different job profiles that were made up varying levels of 10 attributes: salary, advancement opportunities, work climate, training, flexible working hours, working schedule, person-organization fit, location, task attractiveness, and job security. Figure 1 shows the resulting importance weights of each of these attributes. Salary had twice as high of an importance weight than any other factor, and all other factors were similar in weight (Baum & Kabst, 2013). This may indicate that salary is nonnegotiable for this sample of respondents. When the person was more involved in the job-seeking process, however, importance weights varied slightly. For those actively looking for a job, there was more emphasis on work climate, person-organization fit, job security, and flexible working hours. On the other hand, for those not actively looking for a job, more attention was paid to the attributes of salary and advancement opportunities (Baum & Kabst, 2013).

**Figure 1**

*Relative importance for job attributes in Baum & Kabst (2013)*

### Importance Weights



Another study conducted on business students looked at six attributes, each with three levels, across 27 different job profiles (Oh et al., 2016). Attributes were selected after conducting focus groups and interviews of potential job seekers, career coordinators, and recruiters to make the job profiles as relevant and realistic as possible. Because one of the job attributes was industry type, to control for variation in the attributes that would differ across different industries, those attributes' levels (i.e., benefits, work-life balance, training) were worded relatively. Table 3 shows the six attributes with the levels included.

**Table 3**

*Job Attributes and Levels used by Oh, Weitz, & Lim (2016)*

Attribute	Levels
Industry Type	1. Banking 2. Sales 3. Retail
Starting Salary	1. \$30,000 2. \$36,000 3. \$42,000

Five-year Salary	1. \$42,000 2. \$65,000 3. \$80,000
Benefits	1. Below average 2. Industry average 3. Among best
Work-Life Balance	1. Below average 2. Industry average 3. Among best
Training	1. Basic skill development 2. Basic skill + leadership development 3. Basic skill + leadership development + support for MBA/Master's Degree

Of the attributes, five-year salary had the highest relative importance, followed by industry type, work-life balance, training, benefits, then starting salary (Oh et al., 2016). They also found evidence that conjoint analysis can uncover unknown drivers of choice. When asked to rate attributes individually, respondents preferred banking as the top choice of industry, however, retail became the preferred industry when it was considered along with other attributes (Oh et al., 2016). This suggests retail can counter negative perceptions associated with the industry by offering opportunities that are competitive within those of other industries.

Yasmin, Mahmud, and Afrin viewed job preferences of executives in Bangladesh by comparing eight attributes across 16 different profiles (2016). Job attributes included salary and benefits (i.e., high, medium, and low), job security (i.e., high and low), work hours per week (i.e., 45 hours, 45-55 hours, above 55 hours), opportunities for growth (i.e., high and low), work environment (i.e., semi-formal/causal or strictly formal), person-job match (i.e., no match, somewhat match, perfect match), corporate reputation (i.e., reputed, somewhat reputed, and not reputed), and involvement in decision making (i.e., high and low). The most important rating was salary and benefits followed by

person-job match; the least important attributes were work environment and company reputation (Yasmin et al., 2016). They also tested to see if there were differences in preferences among differing demographics, including marital status, number of dependents, years of experience, and current job level. They found that those that were married highly valued work hours in addition to salary, and those with children highly valued job security in addition to salary and work hours (Yasmin et al., 2016).

Finally, in 2020, Ronda, Abril, and Valor studied eight different attributes with levels of “best” and “worst” to discover which attributes were nonnegotiable and which were tradeoffs. Participants were working adults from various industries. The attributes included salary, flexibility and work-life balance, international exposure, ethics and corporate social responsibility (CSR), fit with the culture, teamwork, training and learning, and advancement opportunities. They found the attributes that could be traded off in decision making (i.e., negotiable) were advancement opportunities, fit with the culture, and training and learning (Ronda et al., 2020). In other words, even if these attributes were offered at their “worst” levels, they were not important enough to turn the job seeker away as long as a different attribute made up for them. On the other hand, the nonnegotiable attributes were salary, flexibility, and ethics and CSR (Ronda et al., 2020). This corresponds with Baum and Kabst’s finding that salary’s importance weight was twice as high as the next most important attribute, indicating it is most likely nonnegotiable compared to the other attributes (2013). Salary acted as a cutoff 44% of the time, so when the level of salary was unsatisfactory, no other attribute could compensate (Ronda et al., 2020). Understanding which attributes are tradeoffs gives

employers opportunities to devise strategies to provide different attributes when they are unable to provide certain highly valued attributes.

All in all, conjoint analysis is a powerful research tool that can provide useful information beyond that provided by simply asking about how important individual job attributes are. By using conjoint analysis in this study, retail-specific information about the desired employee experience will be discovered by having retail workers make simulated decisions based on characteristics of real jobs to understand how job characteristics interact with each other to impact decisions on job choice. The use of conjoint analysis lends way to another research question: what the relative importance is between varying factors when considering a new job.

**Research Question II.** What is the relative importance of sign-on bonuses, pay level, health benefits, education benefits, schedule flexibility, career opportunities, physical demands, and job interest alignment when deciding to join a new job?

**Hypothesis II.** The utility of attributes' levels will increase as the attribute itself improves.

**Hypothesis III.** Pay level will be the attribute with the most influence on decisions between job packages.

### **Method**

In light of a worldwide pandemic causing the retail industry to struggle with hiring and retaining employees, this study aimed to discover what retail workers truly value in a job and what drives their decisions to join, stay, and quit. By collecting similar

data using two very different methods, this study provides insights in differences in retail workers' job preferences at various stages in their employment.

Data were collected as part a marketing study done at a private consulting firm located in Chicago, Illinois, to understand more about the retail population post-pandemic, specifically quitting behaviors and intentions, job preferences, union relations, and changes in attitudes over time. Data were collected in two separate phases during April 2022 and October 2022. The first study collected data on quit intentions and asked retail workers to rate the importance of multiple job attributes on their decisions to stay with or quit their current jobs. The second study was an expansion of the first study to include a conjoint analysis that asked about preferences when joining a new job.

## **Participants**

### ***Data Set 1: Rating Importance of Job Attributes.***

The first part of the study, which asked participants to rate multiple job attributes, contained 2,014 participants across two separate collection times. Of the total participants that completed both parts of the survey, the majority (64.5%) identified as women and most (70%) were between the ages of 25 and 54. Participant's gender and age breakdown can be seen in Table 4.

**Table 4.***Demographics of Participants in Data Set 1 (Importance Ratings, n = 2,014)*

Demographic Variable	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	
Women	64.5%
Men	33.6%
Non-Binary	1.0%
Did not disclose	0.9%
<b>Age</b>	
Ages 18-24	12.3%
Ages 25-34	27.0%
Ages 35-44	25.1%
Ages 45-54	17.9%
Ages 55-64	13.7%
Over 65	3.3%
Did not disclose	0.7%

Participants were also asked some retail-specific questions, such as what type of retail environment they most recently or currently worked in and how long they have worked in retail. For retail types, they were given ten options to select from and could indicate “Other” if their retail type was not listed. Percentages of which participants were from which type of retail setting as well as their tenure in retail jobs can be found in Table 5.

**Table 5.**

*Retail Demographics of Participants in Data Set 1 (Importance Ratings, n = 2,014)*

Retail-Specific Variable	Percentage
<b>Retail Type</b>	
Grocery	18.2%
Big Box	16.6%
Apparel and Accessories	15.4%
Specialty (e.g., gifts, books, beauty)	10.2%
Convenience	7.8%
Home Goods	6.4%
Fast Casual Dining	6.3%
Electronics	3.3%
Luxury Apparel and Goods	3.2%
Other	12.6%
<b>Retail Tenure</b>	
Less than 1 year	6.9%
1-2 years	15.8%
3-5 years	23.5%
6-8 years	14.2%
Over 9 years	38.3%
Did not disclose	1.3%

### ***Data Set 2: Conjoint Analysis***

Of the 2,014 total participants from both the April and October samples, 1,006 completed the conjoint portion of the survey, which was collected only during the second phase of data collection in October. The second data collection round asked for additional demographic information, race and highest education achieved, in addition to those in the



first round (i.e., gender and age). For the participants only in the second round of data collection, details of their gender, age, race, and education can be found in Table 6.

**Table 6.**

*Demographics of Participants in Data Set 2 (Conjoint Survey, n = 1,006)*

Demographic Variable	Percentage
Gender	
Women	64.6%
Men	34.1%
Non-Binary	0.6%
Did not disclose	0.7%
Age	
Ages 18-24	10.5%
Ages 25-34	28.5%
Ages 35-44	27.4%
Ages 45-54	19.5%
Ages 55-64	13.0%
Over 65	0.8%
Did not disclose	0.3%
Race	
White	72.9%
Black or African American	15.0%
Asian	2.3%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.6%
Two or more races	3.1%
Did not disclose	5.0%
Education	
Some High School	2.0%
High School or GED	33.2%

Some College	29.9%
Associate degree	12.6%
Bachelor's Degree	17.3%
Postgrad or Professional Degree	4.0%
Did not disclose	1.0%

In addition to the retail-specific questions from the first round of data collection (i.e., retail type and tenure), the second collection included questions about how many hours a week they worked, the location of their work, and their time to commute to work. All retail-related demographics can be seen in Table 7.

**Table 7.**

*Retail Demographics of Participants in Data Set 2 (Conjoint Survey, n = 1,006)*

Retail-Specific Variable	Percentage
<b>Retail Type</b>	
Grocery	21.0%
Big Box	17.5%
Apparel and Accessories	14.2%
Specialty (e.g., gifts, books, beauty)	10.4%
Convenience	7.9%
Home Goods	6.6%
Fast Casual Dining	1.0%
Electronics	3.7%
Luxury Apparel and Goods	3.0%
Other	14.7%
<b>Retail Tenure</b>	
Less than 1 year	4.9%
1-2 years	14.4%
3-5 years	23.6%

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	6-8 years	15.2%
	Over 9 years	41.2%
	Did not disclose	0.7%
Weekly Hours		
	10 hours or less	3.4%
	11-20 hours	7.3%
	21-30 hours	17.3%
	31-40 hours	44.4%
	More than 40 hours	27.6%
Work Location	Rural or Small Town	19.6%
	Suburban	35.9%
	Urban or City Center	43.8%
	Did not disclose	0.7%
Commute Time		
	15 minutes or less	52.6%
	16-30 minutes	30.3%
	31-60 minutes	13.4%
	1-2 hours	2.3%
	Over 2 hours	1.4%

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## Materials

### *Job Characteristics for Rating*

The model used for this study was adapted from one originally created for the Rewards of Work research studies conducted through 1998 to 2000 in the U.S. and Canada (LeBlanc & Mulvey, 1998; Ledford et al., 2000). The original model consisted of five dimensions that encompassed major components of total rewards strategies and was used as a diagnostic framework for assessing an organization's EVP. The five dimensions included Affiliation (i.e., "the feeling of belonging to an admirable organization that shares your values"), Work Content (i.e., "the satisfaction that comes from the work you

do”), Career (i.e., “your long-term opportunities for development and advancement in the organization”), Indirect Financial (i.e., “your benefits”), and Direct Financial (i.e., “all the monetary rewards you receive”; Ledford, Mulvey, & LeBlanc, 2000). Figure 2 shows example rewards that were considered within each dimension. This original Rewards of Work Model was developed in 1993 by Sibson & Company and used within various consulting projects (Ledford et al., 2000). Later, this model was updated to include additional examples within each dimension and tested for internal consistency with client data ( $n = 353$ ) for a consulting project. Within the culture dimension, 15 items were included and internal consistency was  $\alpha = 0.90$ ; within the career dimension, 9 items were included with an internal consistency of  $\alpha = 0.86$ ; 13 items were included within the work content and had an internal consistency of  $\alpha = 0.90$ ; the direct financial dimension contained 6 items and showed an internal consistency of  $\alpha = 0.78$ ; and finally, the indirect financial dimension contained 4 items and had an internal consistency of  $\alpha = 0.69$  (Sorensen, 2012).

For the current study, the model was refined further to be more relevant to the retail industry and was used to guide the study’s design. The model was used as a framework for the employee value proposition (EVP) or the “offering” given to workers from their employers in exchange for the work they do. A sixth dimension was added to incorporate the company-level attributes considered when workers join a job (e.g., location, values, job stability). The EVP framework’s six overarching dimensions are Company, Leadership and Culture (derived from the original model’s “Culture” dimension), Compensation (derived from the original model’s “Direct Financial” dimension), Benefits (derived from the original model’s “Indirect Financial” dimension),

Job (derived from the original model's "Work Content" dimension), and Career (derived from the original model's "Career" dimension). Within each dimension are elements that outline specific pieces that could be included in an organization's EVP. Figure 3 shows the model and its elements. The dimensions in the model are considered to be mutually exclusive yet collectively exhaustive. The model also showed convergence among how other human capital consulting firms conceive the constructs within each dimension.

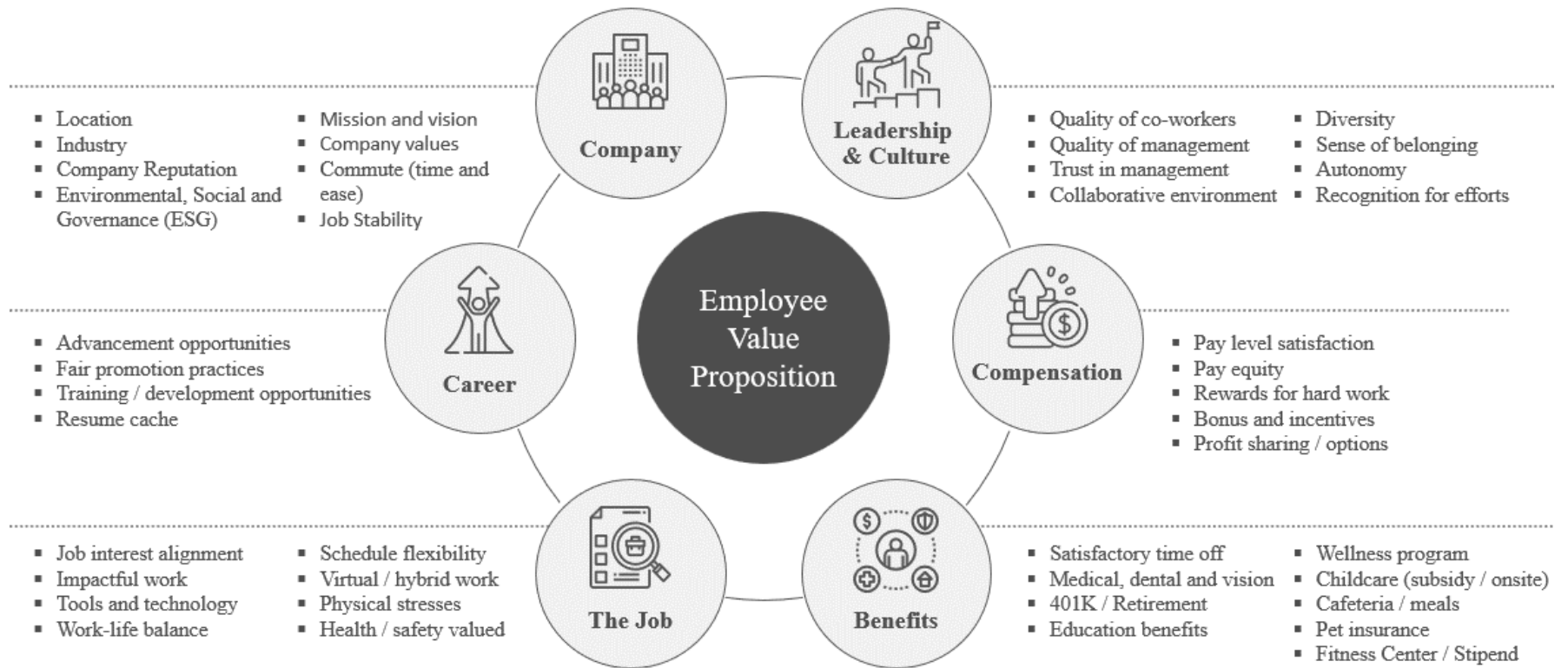
**Figure 2**

*Original Rewards at Work Model from Ledford, Mulvey, & LeBlanc (2000)*



**Figure 3**

*Retail-specific EVP framework for current study*

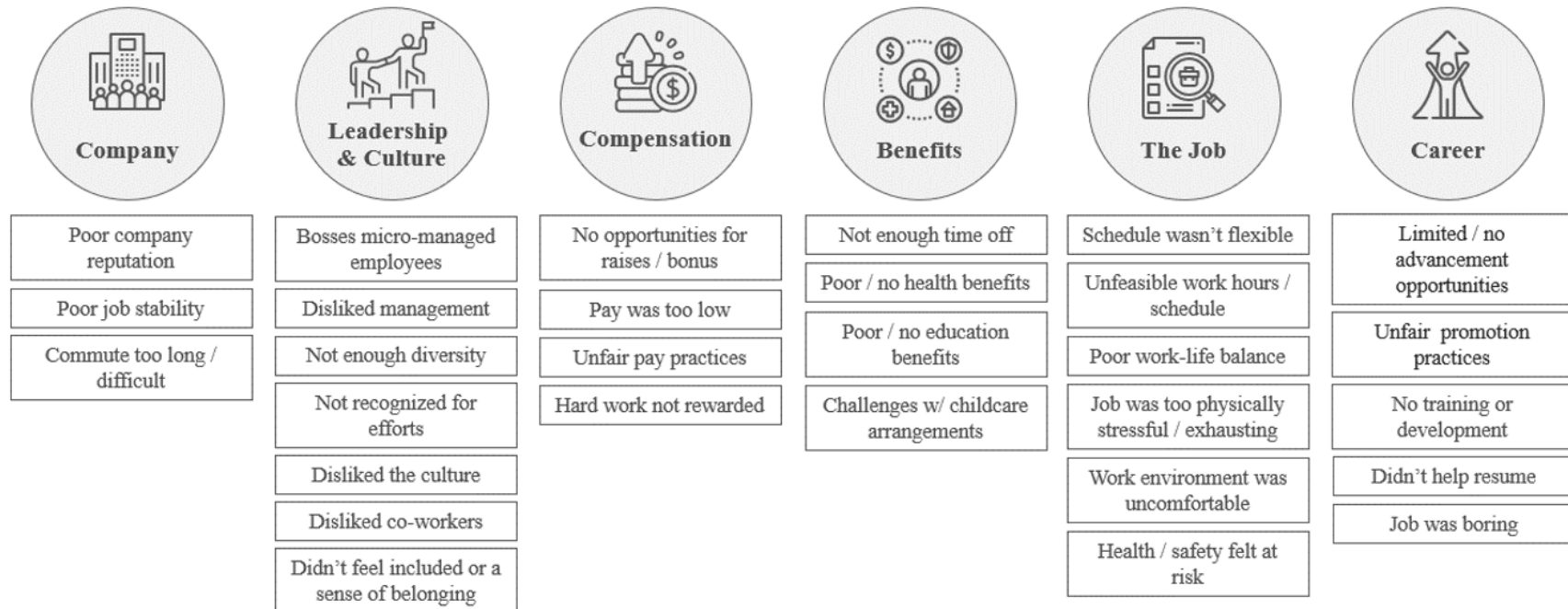


Using this EVP model, 30 retail-specific job characteristics were curated for use in this survey, organized by the model's six dimensions. Figure 4 shows the 30 retail job attributes that participants rated on importance. Elements that comprised the "Company" dimension included company reputation, job stability, and commute length and difficulty. "Leadership and Culture" attributes included whether bosses micro-manage, satisfaction with management, diversity, recognition for efforts, culture, satisfaction with co-workers, and whether one felt included or a sense of belonging. The "Compensation" dimension included opportunities for raises and bonuses, satisfaction with pay level, perceptions of pay equity, and whether hard work was rewarded. Elements within the "Benefits" dimension included time off, health benefits, education benefits, and childcare arrangements. "The Job" is a dimension that represented the work itself and included elements of flexible schedule, feasible work hours, work-life balance, physical demands of the job, whether the work environment is comfortable, and whether health or safety is valued. Elements that comprised the "Career" dimension included advancement opportunities, fairness of promotion practices, training or development opportunities, whether it helped a resume, and whether the job was enjoyable.



**Figure 4**

*EVP Model dimensions and the corresponding job attributes used in the survey's importance ratings*



### *Conjoint Study Design*

The conjoint portion of the survey included a collection of attributes with varying levels that were combined to create different job “packages.” Though it is recommended to study as many variables as is practical to determine relative effects and provide specific details on the sample being evaluated, conjoint analysis is limited by its methodology in how many variables can be included (Chapman et al., 2005). When selecting attributes for conjoint, it is best practice to have five to eight attributes with two to three levels each (Yasmin et al., 2016).

The goal was to select attributes that encompassed a full “suite” of job factors that retail workers may consider when joining a new job, contain all potentially important attributes relevant to job choice to avoid biased estimates, appropriately differentiate job choices, and produce a reasonable number of profiles while also considering participant fatigue (Aiman-Smith et al., 2002; Slaughter et al., 2006). Input from subject matter experts and results from importance ratings from the first round of data collection were considered to determine eight attributes for the conjoint analysis: schedule flexibility, job interest, physical demands, promotions and career, pay, sign-on bonus, health benefits, and education benefits. The levels for each attribute can be seen in Table 8. These attributes were chosen because they are common offerings that are realistically considered for retail workers and because of their prevalence in actual job postings posted in the U.S. within the last year (Lightcast™, 2022).

**Table 8**

*Attributes and levels used in the survey's Conjoint Study*

Attribute	Levels
Schedule Flexibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ability to work a pre-determined schedule, including nights, weekends, and holidays</li> <li>2. Set schedule with flexibility around nights, weekends, and holidays</li> <li>3. Fully flexible and customizable schedule</li> </ol>
Job Interest	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Job is always repetitive and boring</li> <li>2. Some days are repetitive and boring</li> <li>3. Job has a lot of variety and is interesting</li> </ol>
Physical Demands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Job is not physically demanding</li> <li>2. Job is sometimes physically demanding</li> <li>3. Job is frequently physically demanding</li> </ol>
Promotions and Career	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No promotion opportunities</li> <li>2. Promotions with more responsibility and pay after 1 year</li> <li>3. Frequent promotions with more responsibility and pay in 6 months or less</li> </ol>
Pay	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Same hourly pay as your most recent/current job</li> <li>2. \$2.50 more than your most recent/current hourly pay</li> <li>3. \$5.00 more than your most recent/current hourly pay</li> </ol>
Sign-On Bonus	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No sign-on bonus offered</li> <li>2. \$500 sign-on bonus after 3 months of work</li> <li>3. \$1,000 sign-on bonus after 3 months of work</li> </ol>
Health Benefits	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No health insurance offered</li> <li>2. Health insurance including major medical</li> <li>3. Health insurance including major medical, dental, and vision</li> </ol>
Education Benefits	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No education benefits offered</li> <li>2. Stipends offered to offset some tuition</li> <li>3. Full tuition reimbursement</li> </ol>

Attribute levels were chosen based on common language used and specific offerings seen in multiple job postings in the retail industry (Lightcast™, 2022). For example, the language that differentiates the varying levels of “schedule flexibility” was taken from job postings that illustrate no flexibility (i.e., fully pre-determined schedule), some flexibility (i.e., some choice around specific days off), and full flexibility (i.e., fully

customizable schedule). Job interest is illustrated by three levels: never, sometimes, always. Physical demands range from none, some, and frequent physical demands. Promotions and career represent levels illustrating no promotion or advancement opportunities, some opportunities after a full year, and more frequent advancement opportunities starting after six months. In order to reduce bias around pay comparisons, the intention was to force participants to think about pay options relative to their current pay (or their most recent pay if they had quit a job recently). The increases of \$2.50 and \$5.00 were chosen to represent about 15% and 30% increases from the national average hourly wage for retail workers at the time, which was \$16.50 (Lightcast™, 2022). For the sign-on bonus attribute, \$500 and \$1,000 were used to create some distance between the levels but also because they are realistic amounts that had commonly and recently been offered for retail positions (Lightcast™, 2022). Health benefits illustrated three advancing levels: no benefits, just major medical benefits, then major medical plus dental and vision benefits. Similarly, education benefit levels were meant to illustrate three advancing levels: none, some (i.e., stipends to offset some tuition), and full benefits (i.e., full reimbursement).

### **Procedure**

For both data collection rounds, participants were recruited via Qualtrics research panels, which is a service that recruits panels of various types of survey takers. Survey takers were filtered into panels based on the following criteria to participate in this research: employed in the U.S., English-speaking, and works in retail. To ensure participants had experience in retail, they were asked to confirm if they were currently working in retail or had recently worked in retail in the last six months. If they answered

“No” to this question, they were not allowed to continue the survey. Each participant cost \$20, which included compensation to the participant and fees associated with using the service.

First, to get an understanding of participants’ intentions for their job in the near future, they were asked if they had quit a retail job in the last 90 days. If they answered “No,” they were asked if they quit in the last six months. If they answered “Yes” to either of those, they were asked to rate the importance of 29 different reasons (30 reasons in second data collection) on their decision to quit. The reasons are outlined in Table 9 and were rated on a 5-point Likert scale with one being “Not at all important” and five being “Extremely important.” When presented reasons, they were grouped based on their dimension of the EVP model (i.e., compensation, career, benefits), but titles of the dimensions were not present. Page breaks were included after every five to eight reasons to ensure there were not too many questions per page. If more than five reasons appeared on a single page, the scale anchors were repeated. An example illustration of the survey format can be seen in Figure 5.

If respondents had not quit a retail job in the last 90 days or six months, they were asked about their likelihood of quitting their retail job in the next six months using a four-point scale including options of “Extremely likely,” “Somewhat likely,” “Somewhat unlikely,” and “Extremely unlikely.” If they selected “Extremely likely” or “Somewhat likely” to quit in the next six months, they were asked to rate the same set of reasons outlined in Table 9. The difference between the presentation of these reasons were that they were written in present tense instead of past tense for those that had already quit. If they selected they were “Extremely unlikely” or “Somewhat unlikely” to quit in the next

six months, they were asked to rate the importance of the same set of reasons, but the reasons were worded positively and in present tense. Examples of how the wording of each reason changed based on whether they had quit, intended to quit, or did not intend to quit can be found in Table 9. This first portion of the survey took participants an average of 4.8 minutes and a median of 3.4 minutes to complete. A process map outlining the survey flow for this section of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

**Table 9***Reasons used for importance ratings*

Reason	Negative, past tense (i.e., participant had quit)	Negative, present tense (i.e., participant was considering quitting)	Positive, present tense (i.e. participant was not considering quitting)
Company Reputation	Poor company reputation	Poor company reputation	Company reputation
Job Stability	Poor job stability	Poor job stability	Job stability
Commute	Long and/or difficult commute	Long and/or difficult commute	Commute time or ease
Autonomy	Micromanaged by boss/manager	Micromanaged by boss/manager	Bosses/Managers give employees space to work independently
Management	Disliked management	Dislike management	Like working for management
Diversity	Not enough diversity	Not enough diversity	Diversity
Recognition	Not recognized for efforts	Not recognized for efforts	Recognized for efforts
Culture	Disliked the culture	Dislike the culture	Like the culture
Co-Workers	Disliked co-workers	Dislike co-workers	Like working with co-workers
Inclusion / Belonging	Did not feel included or a sense of belonging	Do not feel included or a sense of belonging	Feel included or a sense of belonging
Raises and Bonuses	No opportunities for raises/bonuses	No opportunities for raises/bonuses	Opportunities for raises/bonuses
Pay	Pay was too low	Pay is too low	Pay is satisfactory
Pay Fairness	Unfair pay practices	Unfair pay practices	Fair pay practices
Rewarded for Hard Work	Hard work was not rewarded	Hard work is not rewarded	Hard work is rewarded
Time Off	Not enough time off	Not enough time off	Ability to take time off
Health Benefits	Poor or no health benefits	Poor or no health benefits	Health benefits
Education Benefits	Poor or no education benefits	Poor or no education benefits	Education benefits
Childcare	Challenges with childcare arrangements	Challenges with childcare arrangements	Childcare arrangements
Schedule Flexibility	Schedule was not flexible	Schedule is not flexible	Schedule is flexible
Feasible Work Hours	Unfeasible work hours or schedule	Unfeasible work hours or schedule	Feasible work hours or schedule
Work-Life Balance	Poor work-life balance	Poor work-life balance	Work-life balance

Physical Demands	Job was too physically stressful/exhausting	Job is too physically stressful/exhausting	Job is not physically stressful/exhausting
Comfort of Environment	Uncomfortable work environment	Uncomfortable work environment	Comfortable work environment
Health and Safety	Felt health or safety was at risk	Feel health or safety is at risk	Feel health or safety is valued
Advancement	Limited or no advancement opportunities	Limited or no advancement opportunities	Advancement opportunities
Promotion Fairness	Unfair promotion practices	Unfair promotion practices	Fair promotion practices
Training or Development	Limited or no training or development	Limited or no training or development	Training or development opportunities
Resume Builder	Did not help resume	Does not help resume	Helps resume
Enjoyable	Job was boring	Job is boring	Job is enjoyable



**Figure 5.***Format of reasons' importance ratings***How important were each of the following reasons on your decision to quit your job?**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Bosses micro- managed employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disliked management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not enough diversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not recognized for efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disliked the culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disliked co-workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Didn't feel included or a sense of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

At this point in the survey, participants from the first round of data collection were led to retail-related questions and demographic questions, which will be described later. The participants included in the second round of data collection, however, were led

into the portion of the survey containing the conjoint study. After rating reasons, they were informed there would be another section with the following instructions: “You will be asked to consider offerings associated with two different retail jobs. Imagine you are selecting between those two potential jobs based on which one is most attractive to you. You will be asked to do this 5 times. Please pay attention as aspects of the jobs to choose from will change each time.” The survey software utilized choice-based conjoint analysis, which simulated realistic decisions by presenting two full-package options and having the respondent choose one of the two based on all attributes presented (Qualtrics, 2023).

Participants were presented with two job choices that varied in eight attributes: schedule flexibility, job interest, physical demands, promotions and career, pay, sign-on bonus, health benefits, and education benefits (attributes’ varying levels are presented in Table 8). An example of a set of job packages presented to participants to choose from can be found in Figure 6. Note that among the eight attributes, some job packages present the same level among the two options (e.g., job interest, pay) while others force respondents to consider differing levels (e.g., schedule flexibility, sign-on bonus). Since there were eight features with three levels each, there were 6,561 possible job packages that could be presented. The software uses a randomized balanced experimental design to select five different sets of job packages to maximize data points while minimizing the number of choices respondents must make. It ensures choice sets have balance across the attributes’ levels – each level is included in a similar number of packages presented so that they are properly represented for evaluation (Qualtrics, 2023). For each set of job

choices, respondents were forced to select the one that was most attractive to them. They were asked to do this five times.

### Figure 6

*Example presentation of job choice packages in conjoint methodology.*

	Job 1	Job 2
Schedule Flexibility	Ability to work a pre-determined schedule, including nights, weekends, and holidays	Set schedule with flexibility around nights, weekends, and holidays
Job Interest	Some days are repetitive and boring	Some days are repetitive and boring
Physical Demands	Job is not physically demanding	Job is frequently physically demanding
Promotions and Career	Frequent promotions with more responsibility and pay in 6 months or less	No promotion opportunities
Pay	Same hourly pay as your most recent/current job	Same hourly pay as your most recent/current job
Sign-On Bonus	\$1,000 sign-on bonus after 3 months of work	No sign-on bonus offered
Health Benefits	Health insurance including major medical	Health insurance including major medical, dental, and vision
Education Benefits	Full tuition reimbursement	Stipends offered to offset some tuition
	○	○

To conclude the survey, participants were asked about information pertaining to their retail experience and demographics. All questions in these sections were optional. For both rounds of data collection, participants were asked which type of retail best described the environment they most recently or currently worked in and how long they have worked in retail. In the first round of collection, participants were asked if their role

was customer-facing, but this question was expanded in the second round of collection to ask broadly about the primary responsibilities of their job, one responsibility of which included “interacting with customers.” Additional retail-related questions in the second round of data collection included how many hours a week they worked, the location of their work, and how long their commute was.

For demographics, all participants in both rounds of data collections were asked about their gender identity and age. Additional questions asked in the second round of data collection included race and highest education achieved. Appendix B contains all retail and demographic questions as well as their answer options. The full-length survey used in the second round of data collection (i.e., rating importance of job attributes and conjoint study) took an average of 13.6 minutes and a median length of 7.2 minutes. A full illustration of the survey for those that had quit their job can be found in Appendix C, the survey for those that had not quit but were considering in Appendix D, and the survey for those that had not quit and were not considering in Appendix E.

## **Results**

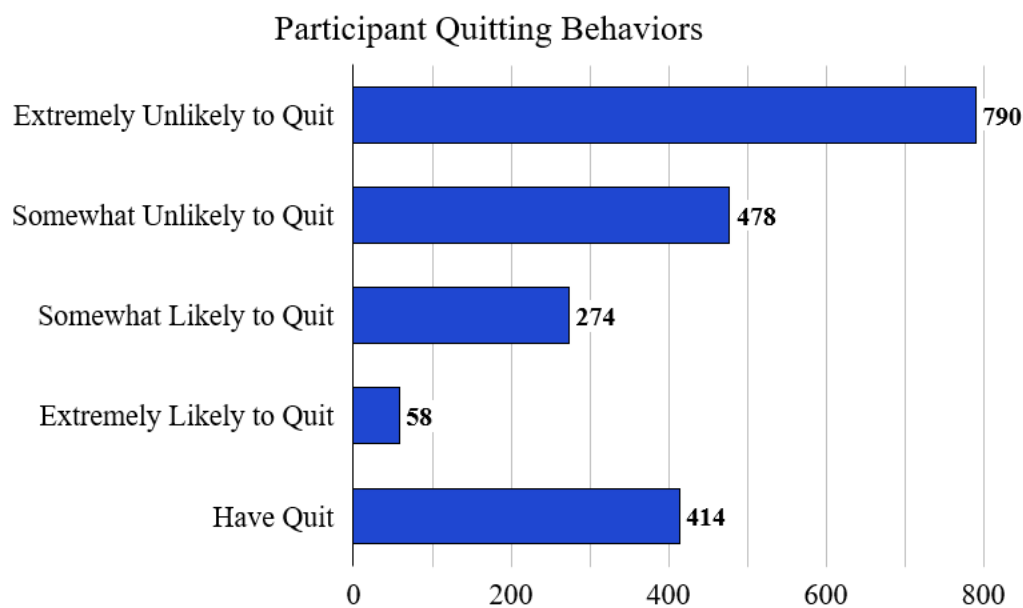
First, data were cleaned and wrangled. Respondents that spent less than 45 seconds in the survey and those that showed no variance across their importance ratings were excluded from analysis due to assumed carelessness in responses; however, they were still compensated for taking the survey. Data were wrangled so that all respondents were classified into a single decision category based on whether they had already quit, were considering quitting, or were not considering quitting their job, which was asked in the first section of the survey. These decisions served as the dependent variables for the first research question and first hypothesis.

## Intentions to Quit

Of the 2,014 total participants, 414 had quit in the six months prior to taking the survey, leaving 1,600 participants that had not recently quit a job in retail. For those that had not quit, 58 said they were extremely likely to quit and 274 said they were somewhat likely to quit in the next six months, putting 332 participants into the outcome category of considering quitting. On the other hand, 790 participants said they were extremely unlikely to quit and another 478 said they were somewhat unlikely to quit, giving the category of planning to stay a total of 1,268 participants. Figure 7 shows a breakdown of the decisions participants had made regarding their retail jobs.

**Figure 7**

*Quitting Behaviors among Participants (n = 2,014)*



## **Importance Ratings**

### ***Research Question I***

The first research question asked, “What job attributes are most predictive of retail workers’ decisions to stay with a job, consider leaving a job, and quit a job?” To find the predictors of the three outcome variables: had quit, considering quitting, and considering staying, a multinomial logistic regression was run. Rather than calculating the average ratings of each job characteristic to determine which are most important, all 29 characteristics were modeled together through multinomial logistic regression to determine the relative predictive ability of the job characteristics for each of the job outcomes participants selected, thereby answering Research Question I. Because the outcomes (i.e., quit, consider quit, or stay decision) can naturally be made in a hierarchical order, they were sequenced through a set of binary choices using two separate logistic regressions (“Multinomial logistic regression models,” 2023). The outcome was sequenced into the first model as whether someone had recently quit or not, and included all participants to derive predictors of quitting. The second model included only participants that had not quit and separated them based on whether they were considering quitting or not considering quitting, thus providing predictors of considering quitting versus not considering quitting. The two logistic regression models are illustrated in Table 10.

**Table 10**

*Logistic regression models to isolate the three employee life cycle outcomes*

Model	Dependent Variables	Responses Included	Will provide predictors of:
1	DV of 0 = intend to quit & intend to stay DV of 1 = have quit	All participants	Quitting
2	DV of 1 = intend to quit DV of 0 = intend to stay	Those that have not quit in last 6 months	Intend to quit vs Intend to stay

The assumptions that must be met for multinomial logistic regressions include a) dependent variables should be either nominal or ordinal, b) independent variables can be continuous, ordinal, or nominal, c) observations and dependent variables must be mutually exclusive and exhaustive, d) there are no outliers in data points, and e) there is no multicollinearity between independent variables (Menard, 2001). To test for multicollinearity between independent variables a variance inflation factor (VIF) was calculated for each. VIFs ranged between 1.57 and 2.81. VIFs greater than five are said to be cause for concern, and those over 10 indicate a serious collinearity problem, so there is no multicollinearity within these data (Menard, 2001). Thus, all assumptions were met to conduct multinomial logistic regression.

For the multinomial logistic regression, the first model was run to ascertain the effects of the job attributes on the likelihood that participants had quit their jobs in the last six months versus had not quit their jobs. The logistic regression model was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(30, 2,014) = 531.5, p < .001$ . Table 11 shows the coefficients and corresponding odds ratios obtained from the first model, which included 2,014 participants.

**Table 11***Logistic regression model with dependent variables of Quit versus Had not Quit*

<b>Predictor</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b><i>SE</i> <math>\beta</math></b>	<b>Wald's <math>\chi^2</math></b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b><math>e^\beta</math> (odds ratio)</b>
Intercept	1.1459	0.3243	3.5336	0.0004	-
Education Benefits	0.4223	0.0706	5.9853	0.0000	1.53
Management	0.3301	0.0743	4.4404	0.0000	1.39
Schedule Flexibility	0.2292	0.0847	2.7041	0.0069	1.26
Recognition	0.1968	0.0784	2.5093	0.0121	1.22
Physical Demands	0.1817	0.0668	2.7199	0.0065	1.20
Company Reputation	0.1785	0.0670	2.6647	0.0077	1.20
Advancement	0.1366	0.0800	1.7072	0.0878	1.15
Inclusion/Belonging	0.1241	0.0721	1.7201	0.0854	1.13
Training or Development	0.1136	0.0779	1.4576	0.1449	1.12
Childcare	0.1041	0.0532	1.9586	0.0502	1.11
Comfort of Environment	0.0770	0.0843	0.9129	0.3613	1.08
Work-Life Balance	0.0649	0.0792	0.8186	0.4130	1.07
Resume Builder	0.0647	0.0680	0.9510	0.3416	1.07
Culture	0.0427	0.0702	0.6082	0.5431	1.04
Promotion Fairness	-0.0017	0.0847	-0.0195	0.9844	1.00
Rewarded for Hard Work	-0.0167	0.0878	-0.1901	0.8492	0.98
Raises and Bonuses	-0.0216	0.0866	-0.2496	0.8029	0.98
Commute	-0.0347	0.0623	-0.5565	0.5779	0.97
Autonomy	-0.0547	0.0729	-0.7507	0.4528	0.95
Health Benefits	-0.0765	0.0671	-1.1399	0.2543	0.93
Feasible Work Hours	-0.1975	0.0851	-2.3209	0.0203	0.82
Health and Safety	-0.2158	0.0745	-2.8960	0.0038	0.81
Pay	-0.2237	0.0811	-2.7581	0.0058	0.80
Pay Fairness	-0.2328	0.0832	-2.7983	0.0051	0.79
Time Off	-0.2410	0.0734	-3.2829	0.0010	0.79



Job Stability	-0.2954	0.0752	-3.9297	0.0001	0.74
Diversity	-0.3660	0.0682	-5.3675	0.0000	0.69
Co-Workers	-0.3713	0.0708	-5.2452	0.0000	0.69
Enjoyable	-0.5602	0.0644	-8.6960	0.0000	0.57

Multiple tests were run to determine the performance of this first logistic regression model. The model explained 26.0% (McFadden  $R^2$ ) of the variance in quitting behaviors. It had a classification rate of 80.1% when trained on 70% of the data set and tested on 30%. Another measure of classifier performance, receiving operator characteristic (ROC), was calculated by computing the rate at which it correctly predicted quitting compared to the rate of incorrectly predicting quitting. The area under the ROC curve was .82, indicating this model did well in discriminating between the categories of those that had quit versus not.

To understand the impact of the independent variables on the outcomes, variable importance scores were obtained to assess the relative importance of each based on their coefficient weights from the regression model. When modeling the behaviors of quitting versus not quitting, the top five job characteristics that were most important in this prediction were having a boring job, lacking education benefits, lacking diversity, disliking co-workers, and disliking management. Variable importance scores can be seen in Table 12.

**Table 12**

*Variable Importance Scores on Decisions to Quit versus Not Quit*

<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>Importance</b>
Enjoyable	8.70
Education Benefits	5.99

Diversity	5.37
Co-Workers	5.25
Management	4.44
Job Stability	3.93
Time Off	3.28
Health and Safety	2.90
Pay Fairness	2.80
Pay	2.76
Physical Demands	2.72
Schedule Flexibility	2.70
Company Reputation	2.66
Recognition	2.51
Feasible Work Hours	2.32
Childcare	1.96
Inclusion/Belonging	1.72
Advancement	1.71
Training or Development	1.46
Health Benefits	1.14
Resume Builder	0.95
Comfort of Environment	0.91
Work-Life Balance	0.82
Autonomy	0.75
Culture	0.61
Commute	0.56
Raises and Bonuses	0.25
Rewarded for Hard Work	0.19
Promotion Fairness	0.02

Based on odds ratios, it can be assumed that when holding all other variables constant, retail workers were, on average, one and a half times more likely to quit for

every one-unit increase in the importance of education benefits being poor (OR = 1.53), making education benefits the strongest predictor of quitting. In addition, other job characteristics and experiences that were significantly associated with an increase in the likelihood of quitting were disliking management (OR = 1.39), inflexible schedule (OR = 1.26), lack of recognition for efforts (OR = 1.22), high physical stress and exhaustion from job (OR = 1.20), and poor company reputation (OR = 1.20). These job characteristics are the most predictive of quitting one's job, thereby providing a partial answer to the first research question.

The second logistic regression model included just the participants that had not quit their jobs in the last six months and derived the effects of the job attributes on the likelihood that participants intend to quit or intend to stay at their jobs in the next six months. The logistic regression model was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(30, 1,600) = 710.13, p < .001$ . Table 13 shows the coefficients and corresponding odds ratios obtained from the second model, which included 1,600 participants.

**Table 13**

*Logistic regression model with dependent variables of Likely to Quit (considering quitting = 1) versus Not Likely to Quit (not considering quitting = 0)*

Predictor	$\beta$	SE $\beta$	Wald's $\chi^2$	<i>p</i>	$e^\beta$ (odds ratio)
Intercept	2.6395	0.4840	5.4529	0.0000	-
Physical Demands	0.5456	0.1038	5.2547	0.0000	1.73
Education Benefits	0.4876	0.0994	4.9064	0.0000	1.63
Pay	0.4159	0.1268	3.2807	0.0010	1.52
Advancement	0.3892	0.1156	3.3686	0.0008	1.48
Company Reputation	0.3463	0.0928	3.7309	0.0002	1.41
Management	0.2762	0.1062	2.6007	0.0093	1.32

Autonomy	0.2655	0.1048	2.5344	0.0113	1.30
Recognition	0.2217	0.1084	2.0455	0.0408	1.25
Work-Life Balance	0.1774	0.1146	1.5481	0.1216	1.19
Childcare	0.1267	0.0724	1.7506	0.0800	1.14
Rewarded for Hard Work	0.1077	0.1249	0.8623	0.3885	1.11
Promotion Fairness	0.0787	0.1234	0.6378	0.5236	1.08
Training or Development	0.0649	0.1124	0.5775	0.5636	1.07
Inclusion/Belonging	0.0413	0.1072	0.3852	0.7001	1.04
Resume Builder	0.0075	0.0950	0.0792	0.9369	1.01
Raises and Bonuses	-0.0111	0.1259	-0.0881	0.9298	0.99
Comfort of Environment	-0.0997	0.1255	-0.7947	0.4268	0.91
Health Benefits	-0.1291	0.0884	-1.4598	0.1443	0.88
Culture	-0.1563	0.1001	-1.5608	0.1186	0.86
Commute	-0.1488	0.0882	-1.6861	0.0918	0.86
Feasible Work Hours	-0.1600	0.1207	-1.3257	0.1849	0.85
Time Off	-0.2549	0.1047	-2.4343	0.0149	0.78
Pay Fairness	-0.2670	0.1214	-2.1993	0.0279	0.77
Schedule Flexibility	-0.2962	0.1111	-2.6675	0.0076	0.74
Diversity	-0.3596	0.0920	-3.9076	0.0001	0.70
Health and Safety	-0.4195	0.1132	-3.7070	0.0002	0.66
Job Stability	-0.6794	0.1084	-6.2705	0.0000	0.51
Co-Workers	-0.7763	0.1024	-7.5778	0.0000	0.46
Enjoyable	-0.8086	0.0980	-8.2525	0.0000	0.45

The model explained 43.5% (McFadden  $R^2$ ) of the variance in quitting behaviors and correctly classified 86.7% of cases when trained on 70% of the data set and tested on 30%. Variable importance scores for each independent variable show the relative importance of each and can be seen in Table 14. When modeling the behaviors of considering quitting versus considering staying, the top five job characteristics that were

most important were having an enjoyable job, liking co-workers, perceiving job stability, not feeling physically stressed and exhausted from work, and having good education benefits.

**Table 14**

*Variable Importance Scores on Decisions to Consider Quitting versus Considering Staying*

<b>Independent Variable</b>	<b>Importance</b>
Enjoyable	8.25
Co-Workers	7.58
Job Stability	6.27
Physical Demands	5.25
Education Benefits	4.91
Diversity	3.91
Company Reputation	3.73
Health and Safety	3.71
Advancement	3.37
Pay	3.28
Schedule Flexibility	2.67
Management	2.60
Autonomy	2.53
Time Off	2.43
Pay Fairness	2.20
Recognition	2.05
Childcare	1.75
Commute	1.69
Culture	1.56
Work-Life Balance	1.55
Health Benefits	1.46
Feasible Work Hours	1.33

Rewarded for Hard Work	0.86
Comfort of Environment	0.79
Promotion Fairness	0.64
Training or Development	0.58
Inclusion/Belonging	0.39
Raises and Bonuses	0.09
Resume Builder	0.08

When holding all other job characteristics constant, for every one-unit increase in the importance of physical stress and exhaustion on their decision, retail workers were 1.73 times, on average, more likely to consider quitting. In addition to physical demands, other job characteristics and experiences that were significantly associated with an increase in the likelihood of considering quitting were poor education benefits (OR = 1.63), low pay (OR = 1.52), lack of advancement opportunities (OR = 1.48), poor company reputation (OR = 1.41), disliking management (OR = 1.32), being micromanaged by bosses (OR = 1.30), and not being recognized for efforts (OR = 1.25). These job characteristics are predictive of decisions to consider quitting a retail job and provide an additional part of the answer to research question I.

Because this model also separated respondents into the third outcome category of not considering quitting, the job features that predict likelihood to stay can also be obtained from this model by calculating the odds ratio of the inverse of the estimates from the second model in Table 13. On average, retail workers were over two times more likely to not consider quitting for every one-unit increase in the importance of finding the job enjoyable when all other variables were held constant (OR = 2.24). In addition, other statistically significant job characteristics associated with having no intention of quitting

were liking coworkers (OR = 2.17), perceiving job stability (OR = 1.97), feeling health and safety were valued (OR = 1.52), perceiving diversity at work (OR = 1.43), having a flexible schedule (OR = 1.34), perceiving equity in pay (OR = 1.31), and having an ability to take time off (OR = 1.29). These job characteristics provide the final part to the first research question by providing the job attributes that are most predictive of staying with a job.

### ***Hypothesis I***

Hypothesis I predicted that for each of the three stages (i.e., intending to stay, intending to quit, and had quit), there will be differing sets of job attributes that characterize the stage. Predictors that were significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level were extracted from Tables 11 and 13 and considered as the top significant predictors for each outcome. The significant predictors of each category (i.e., those that have quit, those considering quitting, and those considering staying) can be seen in Tables 15-17 along with their odds ratio of belonging to that category compared to the category it was modeled against in the logistic regressions. For example, those that had quit were compared to all those that had not quit in the logistic regression, so the odds ratios shown for that group can be considered the odds one had quit versus not quit. Further, the second logistic regression only considered those that had not quit, so the odds ratios shown for those considering staying are the odds one was considering quitting versus considering staying.

**Table 15***Top Significant Predictors of Quitting vs Not Quitting*

<b>Predictor</b>	<b>Odds of Quitting vs Not Quitting</b>
Education Benefits	1.53***
Management	1.39***
Schedule Flexibility	1.26**
Recognition	1.22**
Physical Demands	1.20**
Company Reputation	1.20**
<i>Note. * <math>p &lt; 0.10</math>, ** <math>p &lt; 0.05</math>, *** <math>p &lt; 0.001</math></i>	

**Table 16***Top Significant Predictors of Considering Quitting vs Considering Staying*

<b>Predictor</b>	<b>Odds of Considering Quitting vs Considering Staying</b>
Physical Demands	1.73***
Education Benefits	1.63***
Pay	1.52**
Advancement	1.48***
Company Reputation	1.41***
Management	1.32**
Autonomy	1.30**
Recognition	1.25*
<i>Note. * <math>p &lt; 0.10</math>, ** <math>p &lt; 0.05</math>, *** <math>p &lt; 0.001</math></i>	



**Table 17***Top Significant Predictors of Considering Staying vs Considering Quitting*

<b>Predictor</b>	<b>Odds of Considering Staying vs Considering Quitting</b>
Enjoyable	2.24***
Co-Workers	2.17***
Job Stability	1.97***
Health and Safety	1.52***
Diversity	1.43***
Schedule Flexibility	1.34**
Pay Fairness	1.31*
Time Off	1.29*
<i>Note. * <math>p &lt; 0.10</math>, ** <math>p &lt; 0.05</math>, *** <math>p &lt; 0.001</math></i>	

Table 18 shows a summary of the statistically significant predictors for each category. Findings from comparing these predictors provide partial support for the first hypothesis. There are many shared predictors of quitting and considering quitting, including poor education benefits, disliking management, high physical demands, low recognition, poor company reputation. Some predictors were unique to considering quitting, such as low pay, lack of advancement, and lack of autonomy. The predictors for those planning to stay, however, were almost all unique compared to the predictors of considering quitting and quitting. These predictors were finding the job enjoyable, liking co-workers, perceiving job stability, feeling health and safety is valued, experiencing diversity, having a flexible schedule, perceiving pay equity, and being able to take time off. Interestingly, there was one shared predictor for both quitting and staying: schedule flexibility. Hypothesis 1 is partially supported because there were unique predictors

amongst the stages of quitting and staying; however, predictions were very similar for the stages of quitting and considering quitting.

**Table 18**

*Statistically Significant Predictors of Quitting, Considering Quitting, and Considering Staying*

<b>Quitting</b>	<b>Considering Quitting</b>	<b>Considering Staying</b>
Education Benefits*	Physical Demands*	Enjoyable
Management*	Education Benefits*	Co-Workers
Schedule Flexibility**	Pay Level	Job Stability
Recognition*	Advancement	Health and Safety
Physical Demands*	Company Reputation*	Diversity
Company Reputation*	Management*	Schedule Flexibility**
	Autonomy	Pay Fairness
	Recognition*	Time Off
* Significant predictor for both quitting and considering quitting		
** Significant predictor for both quitting and considering staying		

### *Supplemental Analysis*

In an attempt to use a more parsimonious regression model, factors were derived from the 29 job characteristics. An exploratory factor analysis using promax rotation was run to test the structure of the Retail EVP Model, illustrated in Figure 4. Based on interpretability and a parallel analysis scree plot, seven factors were derived. Reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) and factor loadings on the seven factors can be seen in Table 19 with loading over 0.30 shown in bold. The item of "coworkers" had loadings over 0.30 for three factors, but it was kept with the items that it was originally hypothesized to be with in the original model (Culture and Leadership). The item of "work rewarded" also loaded onto two factors but was kept with Compensation, the factor it was originally

hypothesized to be with, instead of Leadership and Culture. Factor loadings and variances can be seen in Table 20, and correlations amongst factors can be seen in Table 21.

Factor 1 represents a new factor called “Environment” which was split from the old factor called “The Job.” Factor 2 represents “Leadership and Culture,” Factor 3 represents “Company,” and Factor 4 represents “Career.” Factor 5 represents the new “Schedule” factor, which was split from the old factor of “The Job.” Factor 6 represents “Benefits,” and finally, Factor 7 represents “Compensation.” The items within the seven factors remained largely similar to the original model. The item “Enjoyable” under the original dimension of “Career” was moved to “Environment;” the item “Time Off” was moved from the “Benefits” dimension in the original model to “Schedule”; the item “Diversity” originally under “Leadership and Culture” was moved to “Company.” A complete look at which items loaded to which factor can be seen in Figure 8.

**Table 19**

*Factor Loadings for Promax Rotated Seven-Factor Solution for 29 Job Characteristic Items (n = 2,014)*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Factor 1</b>	<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>Factor 3</b>	<b>Factor 4</b>	<b>Factor 5</b>	<b>Factor 6</b>	<b>Factor 7</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>
	Environment	Leadership and Culture	Company	Career	Schedule	Benefits	Compensation	
Physical Demands	<b>0.68</b>	-0.05	-0.22	0.00	0.13	0.08	-0.01	0.80
Environment	<b>0.82</b>	0.20	-0.12	0.03	0.03	-0.08	0.03	
Health & Safety	<b>0.80</b>	-0.09	0.08	-0.02	0.03	-0.03	0.09	
Enjoyable	<b>0.40</b>	0.12	0.21	0.02	0.00	-0.06	0.02	
Management	-0.06	<b>0.67</b>	0.04	0.05	0.05	-0.06	-0.03	0.81
Recognition	-0.10	<b>0.76</b>	-0.12	0.05	-0.02	0.04	0.13	
Inclusion	0.18	<b>0.59</b>	0.13	-0.11	-0.11	0.05	0.02	
Autonomy	-0.14	<b>0.47</b>	0.21	0.07	0.19	-0.06	-0.08	
Culture	0.24	<b>0.42</b>	0.23	-0.06	-0.02	-0.01	-0.06	
Coworkers	<b>0.36</b>	<b>0.32</b>	<b>0.33</b>	-0.17	-0.07	-0.02	-0.04	
Reputation	-0.12	0.11	<b>0.61</b>	0.08	-0.06	0.00	0.02	0.78
Stability	-0.11	-0.04	<b>0.77</b>	0.04	0.07	-0.17	0.17	
Commute	-0.09	-0.08	<b>0.69</b>	-0.05	0.19	0.00	-0.01	
Diversity	0.10	0.27	<b>0.38</b>	-0.04	-0.08	0.19	-0.07	
Advancement	-0.13	-0.01	-0.03	<b>0.90</b>	0.02	-0.04	0.06	0.81

Promotion Equity	0.11	0.00	0.02	<b>0.75</b>	-0.02	-0.12	0.13	
Training & Dev.	0.12	0.06	0.05	<b>0.61</b>	-0.04	0.04	0.00	
Resume	0.17	0.00	0.07	<b>0.40</b>	-0.03	0.25	-0.10	
Flexible Schedule	-0.07	0.02	0.06	0.00	<b>0.82</b>	0.03	-0.05	0.77
Feasible Hours	0.11	-0.09	0.14	-0.03	<b>0.76</b>	-0.02	0.01	
Work-Life Balance	0.24	0.05	-0.01	0.10	<b>0.55</b>	-0.08	-0.04	
Time Off	0.07	0.11	-0.02	-0.07	<b>0.48</b>	0.16	0.14	
Education Benefits	-0.07	0.04	-0.14	-0.12	0.00	<b>1.06</b>	0.01	0.65
Childcare	-0.01	-0.08	0.07	0.09	0.04	<b>0.56</b>	-0.10	
Health Benefits	-0.04	-0.06	0.11	0.05	-0.02	<b>0.49</b>	0.19	
Pay	0.00	-0.08	0.17	-0.02	0.00	0.00	<b>0.72</b>	0.76
Pay Equity	0.21	-0.10	0.25	-0.04	-0.03	-0.02	<b>0.67</b>	
Raises & Bonuses	0.01	0.14	0.00	0.20	-0.03	0.00	<b>0.59</b>	
Work Rewarded	-0.06	<b>0.47</b>	-0.22	0.03	0.02	0.08	<b>0.55</b>	

---

**Table 20**

*SS Loadings, Percentages of Variance and Cumulative Percentages  
for Factors of 29 Job Items*

<b>Factor</b>	<b>SS Loading</b>	<b>% of Variance</b>	<b>Cumulative %</b>
1	2.44	0.08	0.08
2	2.31	0.08	0.16
3	2.15	0.07	0.24
4	2.07	0.07	0.31
5	1.92	0.07	0.38
6	1.89	0.07	0.44
7	1.80	0.06	0.50

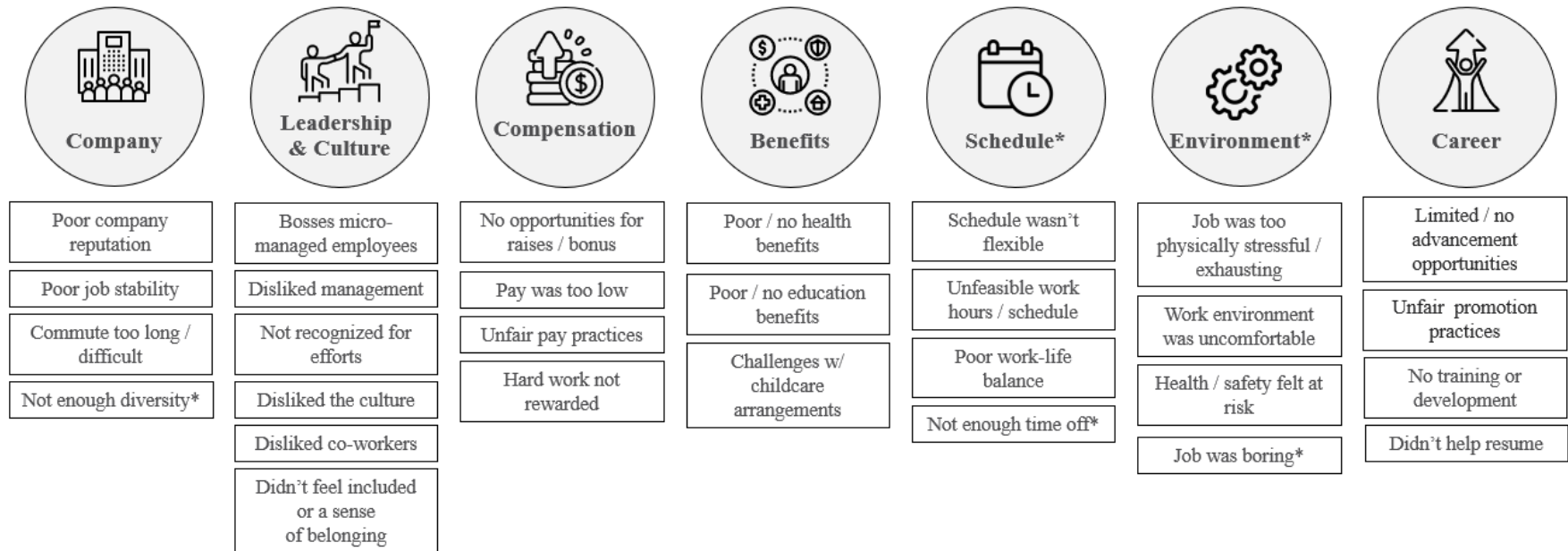
**Table 21**

*Correlations among Extracted Factors after Promax Rotation*

<b>Factor</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Factor 1	-						
Factor 2	-0.50	-					
Factor 3	0.43	-0.38	-				
Factor 4	-0.68	0.37	-0.45	-			
Factor 5	-0.58	0.67	-0.61	0.45	-		
Factor 6	-0.70	0.46	-0.49	0.56	0.61	-	
Factor 7	-0.72	0.51	-0.41	0.57	0.53	0.70	-

Figure 8

*Updated Model based on Extracted Factors*



\* Denotes change from the original model

Using the seven-factor model, the same multinomial logistic regression was run using the factors as independent variables instead of the 29 job characteristics. The logistic regression model was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(7, 2,014) = 268.97, p < .001$ . The model explained 13.1% (McFadden  $R^2$ ) of the variance in quitting behaviors. The following factors were significantly predictive of belonging to the category of those that had quit: Benefits, Career, and Leadership and Culture. Results of the first logistic regression using all data to predict those that quit versus did not can be seen in Table 22.

The results of the second logistic regression, which predicted those considering quitting versus not considering quitting, can be seen in Table 23. The logistic regression model was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(7, 1,600) = 355.60, p < .001$ . The model explained 21.8% (McFadden  $R^2$ ) of the variance in consideration behaviors. The factors that were significantly predictive of belonging to the category of considering quitting were Career, Benefits, and Compensation. On the other hand, the factors significantly predictive of considering staying were Company, Environment, Schedule, and Leadership and Culture.



**Table 22**

*Logistic regression model using the new 7-factors to predict DVs of Quit versus Had not Quit*

<b>Predictor</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b><i>SE</i> <math>\beta</math></b>	<b>Wald's <math>\chi^2</math></b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b><math>e^\beta</math> (odds ratio)</b>
Intercept	1.6734	0.2754	6.076	0.0000	-
Company	-0.6401	0.0879	-7.281	0.0000	0.53
Leadership/Culture	0.2329	0.1046	2.227	0.0260	1.26
Compensation	-0.4423	0.0888	-4.979	0.0000	0.64
Benefits	0.4276	0.0695	6.155	0.0000	1.53
Work Environment	-0.5538	0.0895	-6.191	0.0000	0.57
Schedule	-0.1025	0.0842	-1.218	0.2233	0.90
Career	0.3043	0.0923	3.298	0.0010	1.36

**Table 23**

*Logistic regression model using the new 7-factors to predict DVs of Considering Quitting versus Not Considering Quitting*

<b>Predictor</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b><i>SE</i> <math>\beta</math></b>	<b>Wald's <math>\chi^2</math></b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b><math>e^\beta</math> (odds ratio)</b>
Intercept	2.7424	0.3917	7.001	0.0000	-
Company	-0.7800	0.1100	-7.092	0.0000	0.46
Leadership/Culture	-0.3812	0.1266	-3.011	0.0026	0.68
Compensation	0.3193	0.1171	2.727	0.0064	1.38
Benefits	0.4064	0.0844	4.816	0.0000	1.50
Work Environment	-0.6239	0.1159	-5.381	0.0000	0.54
Schedule	-0.4867	0.1100	-4.423	0.0000	0.61
Career	0.4457	0.1188	3.752	0.0002	1.56

To compare how results from regressions using just the seven factors compared to results using all 29 job characteristics, significant predictors from Table 18 were combined with the significant predictors of the regressions using seven factors to produce Table 24.

Predictors from the model including all 29 job characteristics are organized based on their corresponding factor from the factor analysis.

**Table 24**

*Predictors of Quitting, Considering Quitting, and Considering Staying amongst both Regressions*

	<b>Quitting</b>	<b>Considering Quitting</b>	<b>Considering Staying</b>
Predictors when 29 characteristics modeled:	Benefits	Education*	Education*
	Leadership & Culture	Management* Recognition*	Management* Autonomy Recognition* Co-Workers
	Schedule	Flexibility**	Flexibility** Time Off
	Work Env.	Phys. Demands*	Phys. Demands* Health & Safety Enjoyable
	Company	Reputation*	Reputation* Diversity Job Stability
	Compensation		Pay Pay Fairness
	Career		Advancement
Predictors when 7 factors modeled:	Benefits* Career* Culture**	Benefits* Career* Compensation	Culture** Schedule Work Env. Company
* Significant predictor for both quitting and considering quitting			
** Significant predictor for both quitting and considering staying			

Given the theoretical nuance and more explained variance that using the model with all 29 job characteristics provides, that model will be used for interpretation instead of the model that analyzes the characteristics compiled into seven factors. For example, when using the factors as predictors, “Leadership and Culture” was predictive of staying and quitting, but when looking at the predictors individually within the Culture factor, the characteristics of Management, Autonomy, and Recognition were predictive of considering staying, which is not apparent when looking at the model including just the seven factors as predictors. Similarly, the factor of “Compensation” only shows to be predictive of considering quitting, but when considering the model including all characteristics, the insight that pay fairness is predictive of considering staying is lost. Further, results using the original Rewards of Work model (from Figure 2) found that of the five rewards categories, no single category was more or less important than another (Ledford, Mulvey, & LeBlanc, 2000). This provides further support for viewing the model with all individual attributes instead of its higher-level factors.

### **Conjoint Analysis**

A conjoint analysis was conducted using Qualtrics’ Conjoint Analysis software on the conjoint survey data collected only in the second round of data collection. This software mathematically deduced the importance of attributes and levels from the trade-offs made when selecting between the job packages presented. The core of the analysis estimated the utility participants assigned to each level of an attribute using a multinomial logistic regression model, and these utilities are then used to calculate average utility scores and feature importance scores (Qualtrics, 2023). Preferences for each respondent were derived using Hierarchical Bayes estimation to probabilistically derive the relative

importance of each attribute level tested (Qualtrics, 2023). Hierarchical Bayes estimation used an iterative process that incorporated a lower-level model to estimate the participants' relative utility for the attributes in the job decision through determining how different each respondent was from the distribution of a higher-level model that determined the average attribute utilities of all participants. The higher- and lower-level models worked together until the analysis converged on the coefficients that represent the value of each level for each participant. This process repeated for 1,000 iterations four separate times to derive each participant's utility score for each level of every attribute. Hierarchical Bayes estimation allowed for utilities of every level to be derived by borrowing information from the individual's five job choices and making assumptions about the levels that were not directly compared, thus avoiding requiring participants to choose between every possible combination.

A small segment ( $n = 10$ ) of individual-level utility scores can be seen in Table 25. These scores represent the utility attached to each level of the eight attributes. They show the preference for each level, with higher scores enhancing job packages when that corresponding level is present in the package, and lower scores weakening the attractiveness of a job package when present. The individual-level utilities are ordinal and tell the rank order of each level tested and were zero-centered.

**Table 25**

*Individual Utility Scores of 10 participants for Each Level of Every Attribute Derived from Conjoint Analysis*

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>P1</b>	<b>P2</b>	<b>P3</b>	<b>P4</b>	<b>P5</b>	<b>P6</b>	<b>P7</b>	<b>P8</b>	<b>P9</b>	<b>P10</b>
Schedule Flexibility	No flexibility	-3.60	0.48	5.96	1.67	-6.92	3.64	3.77	-1.82	-7.97	-1.61
	Some flexibility	0.28	-0.12	-0.53	0.13	0.67	-0.13	-0.03	0.05	0.25	0.02
	Fully flexible	3.32	-0.36	-5.44	-1.79	6.25	-3.51	-3.74	1.76	7.72	1.59
Job Interest	Always boring	-1.44	-6.43	-1.77	-6.11	-3.37	0.52	-4.42	-5.84	-0.74	-1.49
	Sometimes boring	0.39	0.33	-1.05	-0.05	0.92	0.24	-0.59	0.74	0.03	-0.57
	Always interesting	1.06	6.10	2.82	6.15	2.44	-0.76	5.00	5.10	0.71	2.06
Physical Demands	No physical demands	0.61	-2.68	-0.46	0.74	-2.15	1.67	3.81	1.16	3.62	3.50
	Some physical demands	-0.58	0.69	1.56	1.33	1.31	0.84	-0.16	-1.04	-0.33	-0.91
	Frequent physical demands	-0.02	2.00	-1.10	-2.07	0.84	-2.51	-3.66	-0.11	-3.29	-2.59
Promotions and Career	No promotion opportunities	-2.07	-2.73	-0.77	-4.69	-5.53	-5.08	-6.92	-0.98	-4.79	-1.99
	Promotions available	1.20	1.84	0.84	1.49	0.54	1.40	2.22	1.03	0.38	1.48
	Frequent promotions available	0.87	0.88	-0.07	3.20	5.00	3.68	4.70	-0.04	4.41	0.51
Pay	Same hourly pay	-5.64	-3.96	1.96	-3.36	-4.52	-2.43	-2.53	-7.25	-5.65	-8.33
	\$2.50 more/hour	0.62	0.52	-2.67	-1.84	1.08	-1.25	-1.15	-0.08	-0.03	1.08
	\$5.00 more/hour	5.02	3.44	0.72	5.19	3.43	3.68	3.69	7.33	5.68	7.25
Sign-On Bonus	No sign-on bonus offered	-2.74	-5.82	-2.24	-3.84	-1.26	-1.00	-2.79	-3.47	-0.81	-2.68
	\$500 sign-on bonus	0.88	2.71	-0.38	3.35	0.93	-0.44	0.46	0.87	-0.65	-0.25
	\$1,000 sign-on bonus	1.85	3.11	2.62	0.49	0.33	1.45	2.33	2.60	1.47	2.93
Health Benefits	No health insurance offered	-12.89	-1.70	-5.25	-3.59	-7.13	1.08	-2.68	0.90	0.15	-8.07
	Major medical insurance	1.87	1.56	2.64	0.34	2.01	-1.61	0.84	0.22	-0.19	2.58
	Major medical, dental, & vision	11.02	0.15	2.61	3.25	5.11	0.53	1.84	-1.12	0.03	5.49
Education Benefits	No education benefits offered	-0.87	-0.58	0.85	0.27	-2.80	3.44	1.75	-1.86	-2.42	-3.71
	Some stipends offered	1.20	1.08	-0.69	-0.13	0.19	-1.38	-0.81	0.86	0.16	1.00
	Full tuition reimbursement	-0.33	-0.50	-0.16	-0.14	2.61	-2.06	-0.95	1.00	2.26	2.71

## *Hypothesis II*

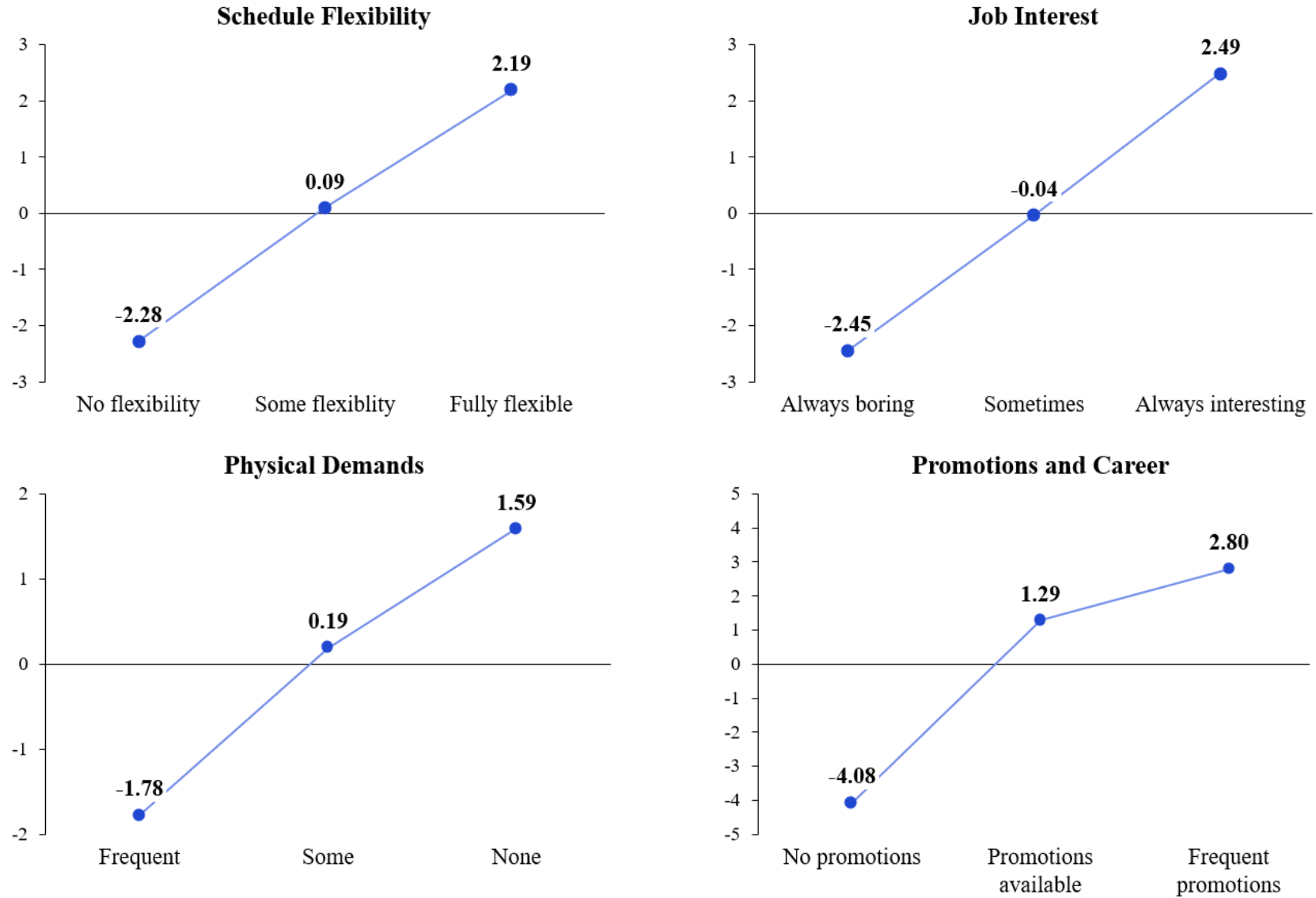
Average utility scores were calculated for all 24 levels possible in the job packages across the eight attributes using the individual-level utility scores. Summary statistics of the utility scores for each level can be found in Table 26. Average utility scores show the preferences for each level of the attributes across all participants tested and are illustrated in Figure 9. These average utility scores allow for the comparison of levels within a single attribute. As attribute levels improved in their description in the job packages, the utility score increased, thus lending support for Hypothesis II.

**Table 26**

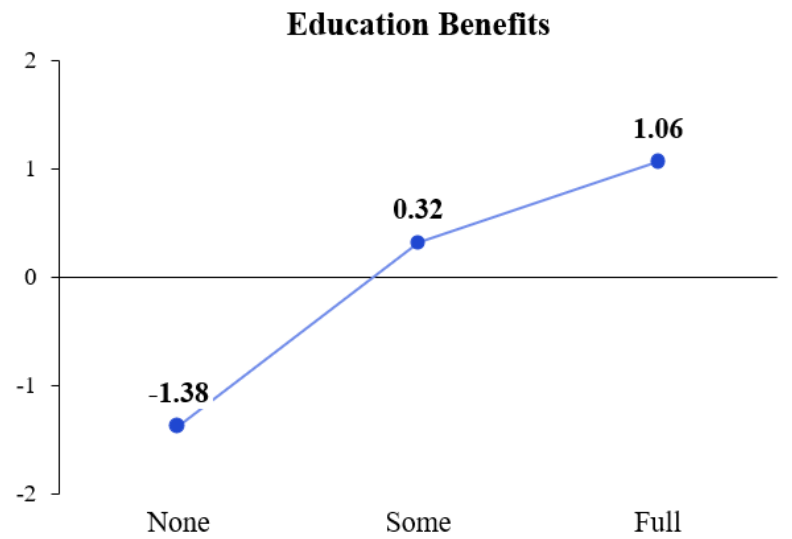
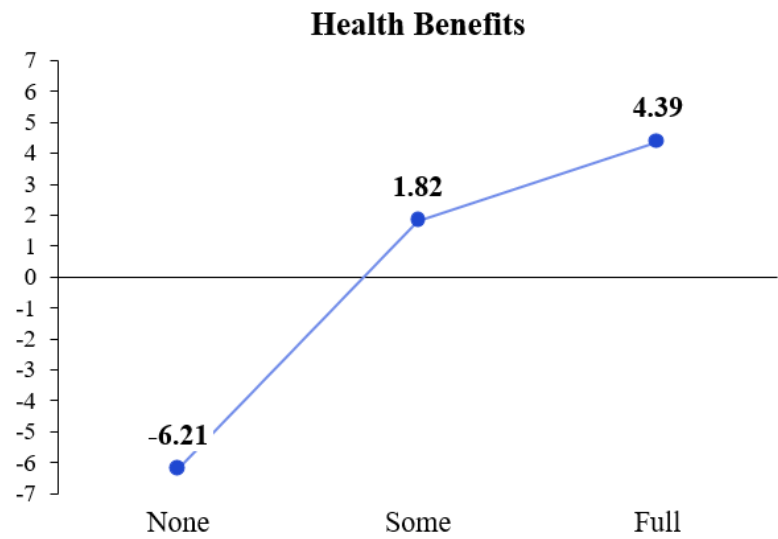
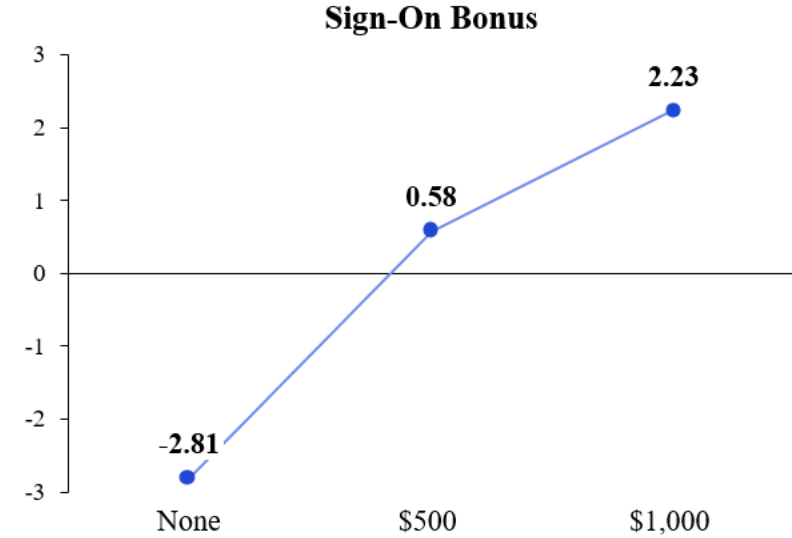
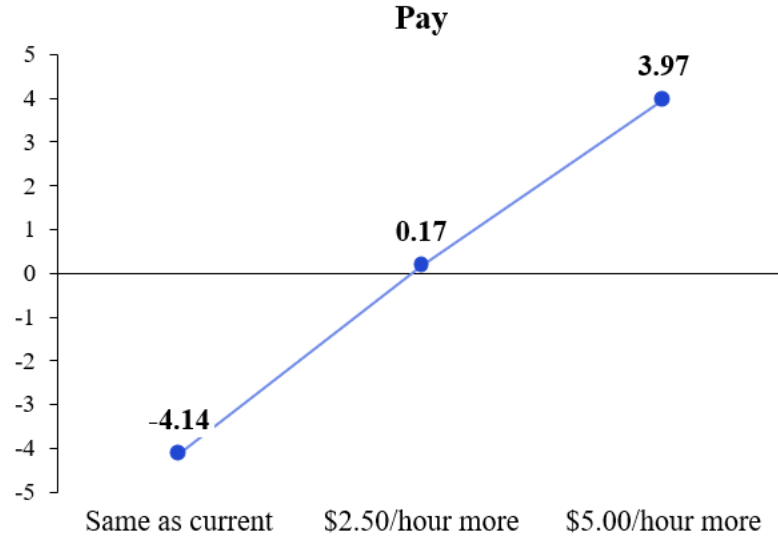
*Summary Statistics for Each Levels' Utility Scores*

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Min</b>
Schedule Flexibility	No Flexibility	-2.28	2.95	6.90	-2.35	-9.23
	Some flexibility	0.09	0.27	0.86	0.09	-0.83
	Fully flexible	2.19	2.76	8.95	2.23	-6.58
Job Interest	Always boring	-2.45	2.38	5.09	-2.56	-8.94
	Sometimes boring	-0.04	0.87	3.01	-0.06	-2.94
	Always interesting	2.49	2.32	8.47	2.55	-3.99
Physical Demands	No physical demands	1.59	1.93	7.36	1.67	-4.70
	Some physical demands	0.19	0.74	2.52	0.17	-2.20
	Frequent physical demands	-1.78	1.63	3.28	-1.82	-6.84
Promotions and Career	No promotion opportunities	-4.08	2.71	4.83	-4.48	-10.24
	Promotions available	1.29	0.87	3.40	1.38	-2.09
	Frequent promotions available	2.80	2.41	8.88	2.96	-4.48
Pay	Same hourly pay	-4.14	2.66	4.53	-4.41	-9.73
	\$2.50 more/hour	0.17	1.01	2.71	0.23	-4.13
	\$5.00 more/hour	3.97	2.28	9.00	4.14	-3.38
	No sign-on bonus offered	-2.81	1.76	3.33	-2.95	-7.85

Sign-On	\$500 sign-on bonus	0.58	1.44	5.07	0.65	-4.55
Bonus	\$1,000 sign-on bonus	2.23	1.11	4.78	2.36	-2.76
Health Benefits	No health insurance offered	-6.21	4.65	9.51	-6.76	-14.94
	Major medical insurance	1.82	1.50	6.53	1.99	-3.60
	Major medical, dental, & vision	4.39	3.85	11.74	4.88	-7.98
Education Benefits	No education benefits offered	-1.38	1.96	4.26	-1.35	-6.66
	Some stipends offered	0.32	1.02	3.28	0.31	-3.36
	Full tuition reimbursement	1.06	1.60	6.56	1.02	-3.51

**Figure 9***Average Utility Scores for Each Level of Every Attribute*



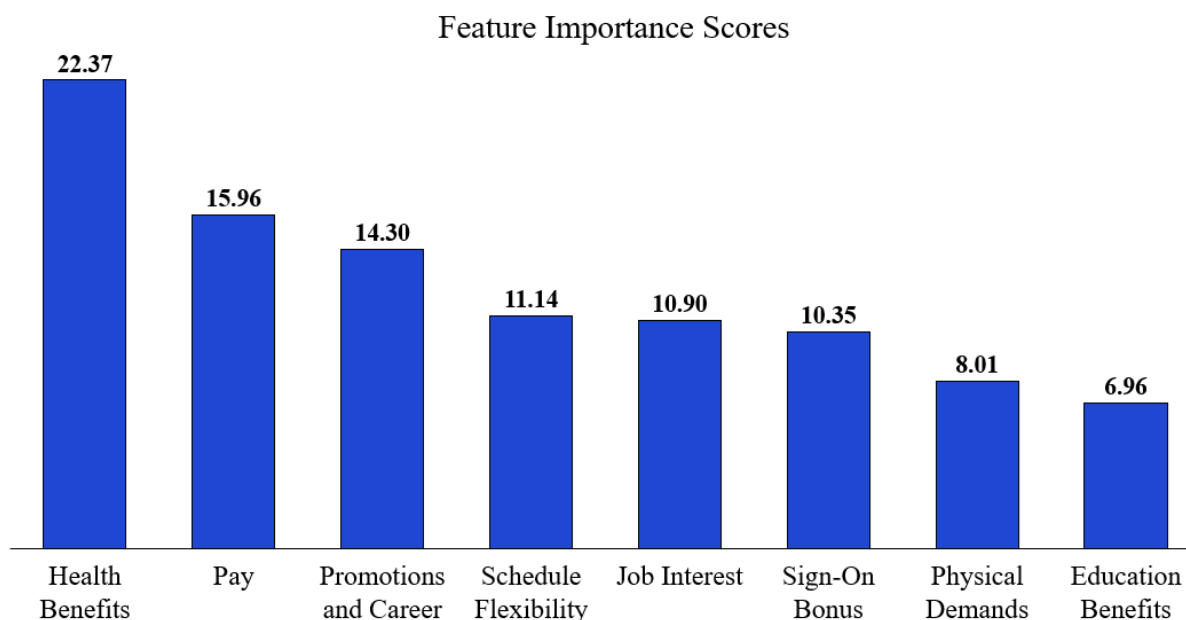


### ***Research Question II***

Individuals' utility scores can also be used to derive feature importance scores for each of the eight attributes presented in the job packages. These scores represent the amount of influence or impact an attribute has in the decision-making process amongst job packages. This was calculated by taking the distance between the best and worst levels within an attribute. Larger distances between the best and worst levels equate to a higher feature importance, which means that attribute had more weight in decision making and thus more control in what constitutes a favorable job package. Each attributes' feature importance score is illustrated in Figure 10.

**Figure 10**

*Feature Importance Scores for Attributes in the Conjoint Analysis*



These feature importance scores allow comparison among the attributes within the job packages presented, thus providing insight to Research Question II (i.e., What is the relative importance of sign-on bonuses, pay level, health benefits, education benefits,

schedule flexibility, career opportunities, physical demands, and job interest alignment when deciding to join a new job?). The attribute with the highest feature importance of 22.37 was health benefits, and thus had the largest impact on overall job choice decisions, followed by pay (feature importance of 15.96), then promotions and career (feature importance of 14.30). Schedule flexibility (11.14), job interest (10.90), sign-on bonus (10.35), physical demands (8.01), and education benefits (6.96) were each less than half as important as health benefits were in choosing between new jobs.

### ***Hypothesis III***

Hypothesis III predicted that pay will be the feature with the most influence on decisions out of the eight job attributes presented in the job packages, but this was not supported as pay did not have the highest feature importance score. The feature importance score was 22.37 for health benefits and 15.96 for pay, so pay had less influence than health benefits on decisions. Pay level was, however, the attribute with the second highest feature importance score, meaning it had more influence than the other six attributes tested.

### **Discussion**

This study's goal was to gain a more comprehensive view of what retail workers value when making job decisions. These results will hopefully aid employers in enhancing retail workers' desire to stay with their job and decreasing turnover rates within the industry by providing general principles that characterize retail workers. Using two different data collection methods (i.e., asking respondents to rate the importance of various elements on their intentions to quit or stay and to choose their most desirable job

package via a conjoint survey), analyses were able to identify the top predictive drivers of attraction, retention, and attrition across a sample of current retail workers in the U.S.

### **Predicting Retention and Attrition**

The first research question asked which job attributes were predictive of decisions to 1) quit a retail job, 2) consider leaving a retail job, and 3) stay with a retail job. First, the aspects of the job that, when considered important to the worker, were significantly related to having quit a retail job were poor education benefits, disliking management, inflexible schedules, lack of recognition, high physical stress and exhaustion, and poor company reputation. In fact, when all other variables are held constant, for every one-unit increase in the importance of education benefits to the worker, they were 1.53 times, on average, more likely to quit than not. In other words, every one-unit increase in the importance of education benefits will result in a 53% increase in the odds of quitting. The second highest predictor of attrition, disliking management, suggests when all other attributes are held constant, workers were, on average, 1.39 times more likely to quit their job as they rated this attribute as more important.

Next, the job characteristics that were significant predictors of a worker considering quitting their job, but not actually quitting, were physical demands, poor education benefits, low pay, lack of advancement opportunities, poor company reputation, disliking management, being micromanaged by bosses, and lack of recognition. There are many shared predictors between quitting and considering quitting, including poor education benefits, disliking management, lack of recognition, physical demands, and poor company reputation. There are a few exceptions between the two, such as not having a flexible schedule predicting quitting but not considering quitting,

and lack of autonomy, low pay level, and lack of advancement opportunities predicting considering quitting but not quitting. The top predictor of considering quitting was physical stress and exhaustion from the job, so when all other variables are held constant, participants were 1.73 times, on average, more likely to intend to quit than intend to stay if this attribute was rated as important. In other words, for every one unit increase in the importance of physical stress and exhaustion, the odds of considering quitting increases by 73%. Like its effect on quitting, holding all other variables constant, as one rated education benefits as more important, they were on average 1.63 times more likely to consider quitting than staying. In other works, no or poor education benefits increased the odds of considering quitting by 63%.

Results suggest that while there are more predictors of considering quitting, not all of those are predictive of actual quit decisions. In particular, low pay, lack of advancement opportunities, and low levels of autonomy are likely to make a worker consider quitting but are not enough to drive them further to make them actually quit, which may have implications with the current workforce problem of “quiet quitting.” Quiet quitting is described as not outright quitting, but becoming more disengaged and doing less at work, sometimes doing even the minimal amount of effort (Vengapally, 2022). Why might these job characteristics make a worker consider quitting or become more disengaged but not actually quit? Low pay, lack of advancement opportunities, and lack of autonomy could all be considered more malleable than other attributes predictive of considering quitting and quitting, such as reputation, physical demands, education benefits, and management quality. It is possible that workers perceiving low levels of

pay, lack of advancement opportunities, and lack of autonomy may anticipate that those conditions can change before it gets bad enough that they decide to quit the job.

On the other hand, out of the 29 job characteristics tested, those that were significantly related to retail workers' intentions to stay with their job were finding the job enjoyable, liking their coworkers, perceiving job stability, feeling their health and safety were valued, perceiving a diverse workforce, having a flexible schedule, perceiving their pay as fair, and having an ability to take time off. The only shared predictor with the other outcome variables was schedule flexibility, which was also a predictor of quitting. The top predictor of retention was enjoying the job, and for every one-unit increase in the importance of this rating, workers were, on average, 2.24 times more likely to stay with the job than intend to quit. Having good co-workers was the next highest predictor of staying in a retail job; employees were 2.17 times more likely to stay with the job for every one-unit increase in its importance. It is possible that these top two predictors interact with each other to bolster their effects on retention as enjoying your co-workers is likely to make the overall job more enjoyable and if one finds the job enjoyable, it may mean there are more like-minded co-workers who make it more enjoyable. In fact, a recent study found that 48% of retail workers cited that their largest contributor to workplace happiness was their co-workers (Zipline, 2022). Schneider's attraction-selection-attrition model would support the notion that enjoying one's coworkers would predict staying with a job (1987). This theory states organizations are functions of the kinds of people they contain (giving the paper's title "the people make the place") and will help the individual determine whether they fit in with the social

makeup and feel a sense of homogeneity, thus determining whether they want to stay with the organization (Schneider, 1987).

Hypothesis I stated that for each stage of quitting, considering quitting, and planning to stay, there would be a different set of job attributes predictive of each phase, and it was partially supported by results of this study. Most of the predictors of quitting shared predictors with considering quitting, so these stages did not have completely different predictors. The predictors of staying with a job, however, were largely unique with the exception of schedule flexibility, which was also a predictor of quitting. Given the job attitudes between considering quitting and actually quitting are likely more similar in their negative connotations compared to job attitudes for those considering staying and because considering quitting is likely the logical step before quitting, it makes sense that considering quitting and quitting have shared predictors among the three outcomes. Interestingly, though, the predictors for those with no intention to quit were largely unique compared to predictors of quitting.

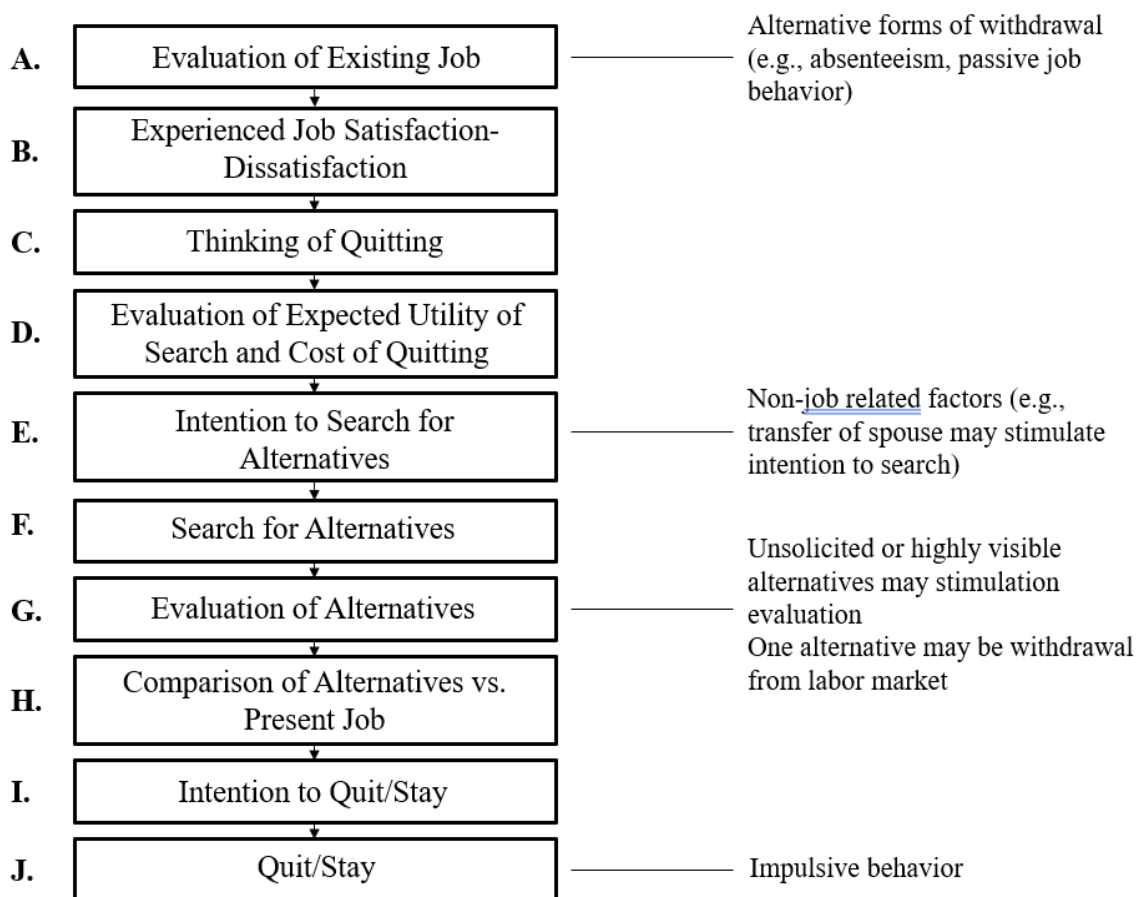
The unique predictors per outcome category may be supported by Mobley's (1977) Model of Turnover. This model posits that although there is a consistent negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover, there are likely many mediating steps between the two that provide a more comprehensive understanding of the withdrawal decision process (Mobley, 1977). Figure 11 shows the model's original sequence of possible mediating steps that lead to final decisions of staying with or quitting a job. In relating the current study's findings to this model, when evaluating the existing job (step A), the factors that would predict dissatisfaction may be similar to those that predict considering quitting (i.e., high physical demands, poor education benefits, low pay,

limited advancement opportunities, poor company reputation, disliking management, limited autonomy, and low recognition) whereas the factors that would predict satisfaction may be more in line with those that predict staying (i.e., job is enjoyable, enjoy coworkers, job stability, health and safety valued, good diversity, flexible schedule, pay equity, and time off). Then, if dissatisfaction is perceived, additional steps happen before the person makes a final quit decision, such as evaluation of additional factors predictive of quitting (i.e., education benefits, management, schedule flexibility, recognition, physical demands, and company reputation; step C). Though results of this study cannot provide explanation to steps D through H in the model, searching for and evaluating alternatives would likely happen after one starts considering quitting, which results of this study provide predictors of. All in all, varying job attributes' valuations on job satisfaction matter at different points in time in the sequence of decisions leading up to a quitting behavior.



**Figure 11**

*Mobley's (1977) Model of the Employee Turnover Decision Process*



Related, results provide support for the idea that there are varying employee life cycles where attributes matter differently to the worker, so these variations in life cycles must be considered (Smither, 2003). For example, when dealing with a worker that is considering quitting, an employer could either a) work to remove the negative aspects, such as reducing some physical demands or providing more recognition, or b) improve parts of the job that when viewed positively, predict intentions to stay, such as valuing health and safety or providing more time off. There are, however, many different parts of the job that would be out of an employer's control to alter in the immediate future, such

as company reputation, so in these cases, the employer should recruit employees by highlighting the aspects of the job that are valued and retain employees by improving those they can control that are deemed important.

In addition, the differences between job attributes that predict negative outcomes (i.e., quitting and considering quitting) versus positive outcomes (i.e., intending to stay) may be explained by a pattern in the nature of the predictors themselves. For example, many predictors of considering quitting and actual quitting are largely extrinsic and tangible, such as education benefits, physical demands, pay level, and treatment from management, including low autonomy. On the other hand, the predictors of intentions to stay are largely intrinsic, such as enjoying the job, liking coworkers, perceiving job stability, feeling health and safety are valued, and perceiving fairness in pay. Although not all the significant predictors follow this pattern (e.g., receiving little recognition, a predictor of quitting, would not be considered tangible), it may clarify which intrinsic attributes serve more as a job resource to help offset the strain experienced by more extrinsic attributes or job demands.

The Job-Demands Resource Model posits that high job demands lead to job strain, disengagement, and ultimately, burnout, whereas job resources can mediate this process and help deter the negative consequences of demands (Demerouti et al., 2001). One assumption behind the theory is that every occupation may have its own specific risk factors associated with job stress, classified as either job demands or job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). These predictors of quitting and staying found in this study may provide indication for what the most impactful job demands and job resources are amongst retail roles. For instance, job demands that may cause stress and ultimately may

lead to workers considering leaving their job could include poor treatment from management, high physical demands, and low pay. Job resources for retail workers may include having an enjoyable work environment, support from co-workers, job stability, equity in pay, and resources that secure their health and safety.

Furthermore, although Vijayakumar and Saxena (2015) found no validity or support for Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1964), some of the theoretical underpinning and ideas about the construct of job satisfaction are supported by the present study's findings. In this study, the notion that different factors cause job satisfaction versus dissatisfaction was supported by the uniqueness between predictors of quitting and staying, if one assumes that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are related to staying and quitting intentions, respectively. Herzberg posited that job dissatisfaction and job satisfaction are different constructs, not opposite ends of a single dichotomy (2003). In other words, the opposite of job satisfaction is not dissatisfaction but rather no job satisfaction. Therefore, if viewing intentions to quit and stay similarly to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, if the presence of something causes someone to stay with their job (e.g., enjoyable coworkers), it does not mean that the absence of that same thing will cause them to quit their job. This pattern was true for 28 of the 29 job attributes tested. For example, the job being enjoyable was a predictor of staying, but the job being boring was not a predictor of quitting. Additionally, poor education benefits was the top predictor of quitting but good education benefits did not predict staying. These findings provide support that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are two separate constructs, as Herzberg posited (2003).

Moreover, there was one job attribute that did not follow the pattern of other predictors by predicting either quitting or staying: schedule flexibility. This attribute was a significant predictor for those that had quit as well as those that intended to stay, highlighting its importance to retail workers across the entire life cycle. Results would also suggest it is so important to retail workers that an unsatisfactory level of schedule flexibility is enough to essentially “by-pass” the consideration of quitting phase and lead to quitting, perhaps more impulsively. Schedule flexibility is definitely not new to these types of workers and clearly has impacts on job decisions. The retail industry is known for its use of nonstandard scheduling, perhaps due to extended hours to meet the growing demands of customers and its use of hourly employees who are expected to fill scheduling gaps when needed (Presser, 2003). Among U.S. hourly workers across all industries, 40% reported being aware of their work schedule only a week or less in advance, 55% reported they are rarely, if ever, allowed to change the schedule’s set starting or ending times, and only 6.5% reported having any control over the timing of their schedules (Lambert et al., 2019). Inflexible and unpredictable schedules are associated with several negative outcomes that have potential to cause substantial levels of distress for retail workers, such as experiences of job and income insecurity and clashes with childcare, social activities, education, or second jobs (Wood, 2018). A recent study found retail to be the only industry in which schedule flexibility ranked as the top driver of attrition (Fuller, Logan, & Valkova, 2022). The authors note that schedule inflexibility has always been an issue, but it is possible the pandemic instilled a higher willingness to speak up about the issue. The pandemic may have also given more workers the experience of working more flexibly through remote work and the exposure to more

possibilities of gig work, which may have driven a higher desire for flexibility. Though the nonstandard, inflexible schedule may not be avoidable as workers have to physically be in stores and interacting with customers, this study would suggest that efforts to improve schedule flexibility would both improve retention and reduce attrition.

Another interesting finding from this first set of results is the differing predictive power of compensation-related attributes, specifically pay level and pay equity. Like schedule flexibility, these attributes were predictive of both positive and negative outcomes (i.e., intending to stay and intending to quit). Pay level was significantly predictive of quitting intentions, but satisfactory pay levels did not predict staying. This may be supported by adaptation level theory, which states the subjective gain from earning more will become less and less as the objective level increases. In other words, once earning a certain level of pay, the satisfaction from earning more will be in smaller and smaller increments making the worker more likely to consider leaving. Low pay predicting intentions to quit may also be due to the current elevated inflation rate in the U.S. Inflation, at the time of data collection, was between 7.7% and 8.3%. For context, the U.S. has not seen inflation rates over 7% since 1982. It is possible that what felt like a “satisfactory” pay level still may not have been enough to keep someone at their job if that pay level did not feel like it compared to the rising costs of goods.

On the other hand, pay fairness was predictive of staying intentions. No matter the pay level, perceiving that one’s pay is fair compared to external market standards or internal comparisons at the same job may be enough to keep them from considering quitting their job. This idea is supported by Adam’s Equity Theory (1963), which states

that if employees feel they are fairly treated, they are more likely to perform well and stay with their organization.

### **Predicting Attraction**

The second research question asked about the relative importance of the eight attributes tested through conjoint analysis: sign-on bonuses, pay level, health benefits, education benefits, schedule flexibility, career opportunities, physical demands, and job interest alignment. This would provide indication of the most important attributes on job attraction for retail workers. Relative importance of each attribute is shown through feature importance scores given to each attribute (see Figure 10) and illustrates the level of influence that attribute had in the decision-making process when choosing job packages. Feature importance scores ranged from 6.96 (for education benefits) and 22.37 (for health benefits), making education benefits the least influential and health benefits the most influential when choosing a new job. After health benefits, the most influential attributes, in order, were pay, promotions and career, schedule flexibility, and job interest. The three least influential attributes were sign-on bonuses, physical demands, and education benefits. The high impact of health benefits aligns with the Society of Human Resources Management's 2020 benefits report that found health benefits was the most important benefit to employees, with 90% of respondents ranking it as "extremely" or "very" important (Smith, 2021). Studies have found that health benefits are not only desired by employees, but they provide organizational benefits as well, such as improved employee morale, health, productivity, and improved attraction and retention (Reddick, 2009). These results were true across various types of health benefits plans and was especially important in low-income workforces (Reddick, 2009).

Health benefits' high feature importance would indicate it is a nonnegotiable attribute for retail workers as no other attribute could singlehandedly serve as a tradeoff for health benefits. Interestingly, past research using conjoint analysis has only found pay level to be a nonnegotiable attribute, though one study combined "salary and benefits" and found it to be the most important (Baum & Kabst, 2013; Yasmin et al., 2016). On the other hand, feature importance scores can be "combined" to compensate for less desirable attributes. When offered together, if the sum of feature importance scores is higher than another attribute, that combination of offerings may have a similar or higher influence than the single attribute with the higher feature importance score. For example, if an employer could not offer health benefits, they could consider combining other features to sum feature importance scores higher than health benefits' score of 22.37. In this instance, offering a high level of pay alongside fully covered education benefits would add to 22.92, which may compensate for or at least offset a lack of health benefits in the offering.

Furthermore, results provided support for Hypothesis II, which stated attribute level's utility scores would increase as the attribute itself improved. For each attribute tested in the conjoint analysis, average utility scores increased for each of the three levels as the level improved in its description (see Figure 9). This is to be expected and provides confidence that the attribute levels were described in a way that showed balance in the difference of their offerings. This balance is quite apparent in almost all attributes as the utility value for the middle-level of each attribute is between zero and one, which should be expected since individual-level utilities were zero-centered before averaging. There were a few exceptions to this pattern, though. First, Job Interest was the only attribute to

have a negative middle-level utility score (-0.04) for the level of “some days are repetitive and boring” (see Table 8 for the wording of differing levels used in conjoint analysis). This negative value may suggest that workers would prefer much more than just slight amounts of “interest” to be impactful on decisions; however, it could also be due to the phrasing of the level. For example, if this middle level was instead described as “some days have variety and interest” to be more in line with the highest-level of “job has a lot of variety and is interested” it may have been perceived more positively and thus had more of an impact on package choice. On the other hand, there were two attributes whose mid-tier level had average utilities greater than one. The Career Opportunity attribute’s middle level was described as “promotions with more responsibility and pay after 1 year” and its average utility was 1.29, and the middle level of the Health Benefits attribute was “health insurance offered including major medical” and its average utility was 1.82. For each of these attributes, this implies that even having *some* level of the attribute is very impactful to job seekers in the retail industry compared to having none of that level present at all.

Hypothesis III, which predicted that pay would be the attribute with the most influence on job package decisions, was not supported. Pay level had the second highest feature importance score at 15.96 after health benefits. Results suggest pay may not be the most important job attribute for retail workers looking for new jobs. This could be explained by compensating wage differentials. The theory of compensating wage differentials provides an ideology behind pay differences, explaining that jobs with more undesirable characteristics or benefits compensate with higher wages compared to jobs that are more desirable or have better benefits (Smith, 1937). This theory would predict



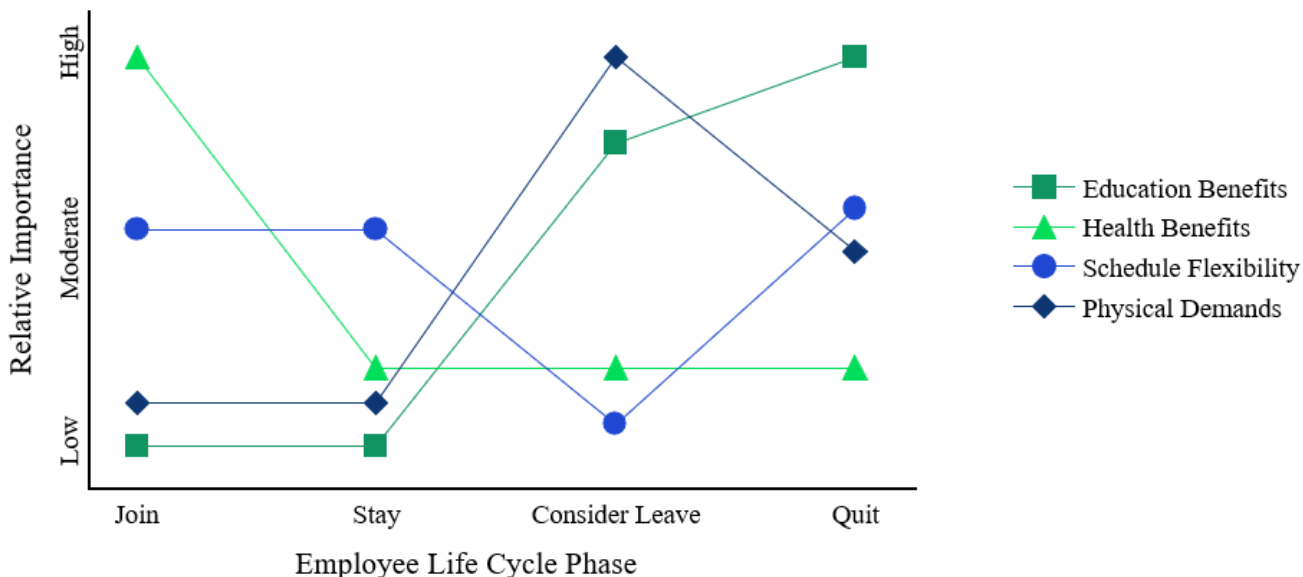
that workers preferring more generous fringe benefits (e.g., health benefits) are willing to accept lower pay compared to those that would take fewer benefits. Olson (2002) tested this theory of the tradeoff between pay and health benefits by asking about differences between pay for women with employer-provided health insurance versus those working a job without benefits. This study found support for the compensating wage differential theory and the negative trade-off between wages and health insurance as the average women accepted a 20% wage reduction when going from a job without health insurance to a job that did provide it (Olson, 2002). It is likely that workers consider their total cash compensation (i.e., total rewards) instead of viewing their pay level in isolation. When viewing them together, health benefits became more important, and workers were less impacted by pay level on their joining decision.

### **Findings Across Studies**

Since results of the first part of the study showed that attributes matter differently at different points in an employee's life cycle, it is important to view these results from both data collection methods alongside each other to understand what is valued and when. Though the attributes tested across studies cannot be directly compared due to different collection methods and units of measurement, one can get an idea of the relative importance for each phase. If one was to consider "joining" as another phase of the employee life cycle alongside "satisfied and intending to stay," "disengaged and planning to quit," and "quitting," one could predict relative importance of features tested in both data sets. See Figure 12 for a prediction of how health benefits, education benefits, schedule flexibility, and physical demands may fluctuate in importance across life cycles based on results from this study.

**Figure 12**

*Theoretical Predictions of Job Attribute Importance Across Life Cycle Phases*



Because poor education benefits were highly predictive of quitting intentions and actual quitting behaviors from the first part of the study, it was surprising that education benefits had such a low influence on joining decisions and did not predict intentions to stay with a job. This trend could be due to the common demographics of retail workers. For instance, in this survey, the majority of participants' highest education level attained was high school or some college. It could be that since retail jobs are easy to obtain without a college degree, these workers may not be considering continuing their education if they are needing income; therefore, their lives may need to stabilize on the job first before they consider going back to school and utilizing education benefits. On the other hand, this trend could be due to the recent popularity of employers offering tuition assistance programs and more employees learning about the option of earning this benefit elsewhere, causing them to consider job alternatives to gain this benefit.

Education benefits may therefore be an “after thought” that is only really considered once on a job. The 2020 Employee Benefits report from the Society for Human Resource Management found that in 2019, 56% of employers were offering undergraduate or graduate tuition assistance, which was the highest relative to previous years (Miller, 2021). However, in 2020, this percentage dropped to 47%, likely due to tightened budgets and reduced employee demand during the pandemic (Miller, 2021). If employees are aware of education benefits they could be gaining elsewhere, it is likely they will consider leaving or leave jobs where none are being offered. Future research should track whether or not this job attribute will become more predictive of staying with a job or even joining as more employers start offering it and it becomes more evident in the industry.

Another unexpected finding was that health benefits was the most influential attribute on joining decisions but it was not significantly predictive of any of the other three stages: considering staying, considering quitting, or quitting. Health benefits may be part of a job that is not considered much or re-evaluated once on a job, unless of course, a major event happened that made medical benefits more relevant. This would make sense as health benefits are not directly related to any aspect of job responsibilities or performance; it is a benefit provided no matter what you do on the job. Therefore, though very important to the attraction of retail jobs, it is likely retail workers do not allow their valuation of their health benefits to dictate other job decisions, such as deciding to stay with or leave their job.

Conversely, low physical demands were among the least influential in joining decision but was the top predictor of intentions to quit and amongst the top predictors of

quitting when physical demands were high. It is likely this is an attribute that is not thought of often before being on the job or that workers anticipate they can handle whatever the physical demands of the job are. It may not be until they are on the job and experiencing the physical demands that the stress or exhaustion causes them to reconsider how they feel about the job, therefore allowing the physical demands to impact their decisions to stay with or leave their job.

Even though schedule flexibility was predictive of both staying and quitting, it was only moderately influential on joining decisions. Because retail work is known for nonstandard schedules, prospective employees probably expect some level of inflexibility when joining a retail job, making other aspects of the job more relevant when choosing a new job. (Presser, 2003). Yet, this finding may highlight the importance of understanding preferences by asking respondents to choose amongst job packages instead of individually rating aspects of a job. From individual ratings, it would seem that schedule flexibility is highly important to retail workers, however, that is less so the case when it is viewed in tandem with other parts of the job.

Additionally, another unexpected finding was the low influence that sign-on bonuses had on joining decisions. This job attribute ranked sixth out of eight and its feature importance score was 10.35. When rated on its own, it is likely sign-on bonuses may seem way more attractive. In any case, who would rate additional dollars as not important on a decision? However, when viewing this one benefit alongside all the others a job offers, it seems to become less influential. Therefore, sign-on bonuses may be a good tactic for convincing a recruit if they are deciding between equally valued jobs. It is also possible that this attribute was less influential in the overall decision because of the

caveat that the bonus is only paid out after six months on the job. Sign-on bonuses may be more desirable if the bonus provides instant rather than delayed gratification. This finding would suggest that investing in an employee's longer-term compensation will be more impactful on a joining decision than a one-time sign-on bonus, which was supported by findings in a conjoint analysis that found five-year salary amount was more influential than starting salary amount (Oh, Weitz, & Lim, 2016).

### **Limitations**

One limitation of the present study regards the sample selection. There were no exclusion criteria for who participated based on the underlying reasons they quit their job. If participants were put into the "quitting" category, the intent was that they would have recently voluntarily quit their job. If someone had been let go from their job, for instance, they would have been forced to answer questions as if they were still on the job because they likely would have answered "No" to the question of whether they had recently quit. This limitation may have caused some to be taken through the survey without having fit the behaviors of the outcome group they were put into (i.e., considering staying, considering quitting, had quit).

When asked about their reasons for quitting or staying, only factors related to the job itself were considered, but there could have been factors unrelated to the job that made them quit, such as moving, switching industries, caretaking, or going back to school, just to name a few. In other words, quitting behaviors may not have been a result of dissatisfaction, but of a "pull" decision (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). The Unfolding Model of Voluntary Turnover posits that there are both "push" and "pull" decisions that should be considered simultaneously (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). When workers are making

turnover decisions, there is oftentimes a “shock” event that causes them to evaluate their current job, resulting in feelings of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, which then may lead to searching for alternatives. When these decisions are based on constructs internal to the employee, such as job-related perceptions and attitudes, it is considered a “push” decisions, and when the constructs driving the decision to quit are external to the employee, such as job alternatives, it is considered a “pull” decision (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Because this study only asked about the job constructs that factored into quit decisions, it is likely the study missed important “pull” decisions and the factors that drive those.

Another limitation may have been the clarity behind the constructs tested. When given the list of 29 job attributes to rate in the first portion of the survey, only a brief description of each attribute was given (see Table 9 for example of how attributes were worded in the survey). It may have been beneficial to provide more clarity to participants by providing definitions or more thorough descriptions of what we were intending to capture with each attribute as some may have been confusing or thought to be very similar. For example, both the job characteristics “recognized for hard work” and “hard work is rewarded” were tested. To some, these may feel like they are referring to the same aspect of the job. When designing the survey, however, “recognized by efforts” was meant to be an aspect of leadership and work culture and encompass the nature of receiving overall recognition for work, whereas the aspect of “hard work is rewarded” was an aspect of compensation and meant to encompass receiving rewards outside of base salary. Another potentially confusing set of job attributes could be “schedule is flexible” versus “feasible work hours or schedule.” Though they may be interrelated,

schedule flexibility was meant to uncover how workers felt about their control over when they worked and whether schedules were consistent whereas feasibility was meant to cover whether someone was given hours they actually could work and if they were given enough hours to support themselves. Additionally, there may have been some job attributes that were relevant to job decisions but not tested. Although participants had the option to type in one additional reason for their behaviors, these were not included as predictors within the multinomial logistic regression. Moreover, one job attribute was added for the second round of the survey, sustainability efforts, but was not included in the analysis to avoid losing data points due to missingness.

Furthermore, although the formation of job attitudes and the turnover process includes several dynamic considerations, this study did not test any dynamics at play but only static relationships between job attributes and outcome variables. It is possible that multiple considerations, unrelated to job attributes, happen in between the time of feeling dissatisfied or a lack of fit with a job and actually making a decision to quit or stay at a job. The job attributes tested were also only presented as positive or negative, whereas the survey could have instead asked how satisfied they were with the attributes then analyzed the level of satisfaction with their future intentions to stay or quit. Because actual job attitudes were not measured, it cannot be assumed that someone quitting meant they were disengaged or dissatisfied because of the related attributes. The study only provides insight into which attributes are important to overall decisions but not how the attributes affected job attitudes and the overall process of decision making.

## **Practical Applications**

Despite its limitations, this study does provide value and implications for both research and practice. First, this study is valuable because it used retail workers based in the U.S. as participants. Therefore, it gives a realistic understanding of what retail employees want in today's market, thus providing an addition to the body of knowledge regarding human resource management in the retail industry. The sample for this study also was representative of behaviors that other studies have captured about quitting rates and quitting intentions. A Zipline study from the year before this data were collected found that 42% of retail associates reported they were either considering or have already decided to quit their retail jobs (Zipline 2021). In the present study, 37% were either considering quitting or had already quit. This study also took a scientist-practitioner focus when creating its methodology by combining research and theoretical applications with current practitioners' thoughts and feedback on what is important to retail workers that literature may not encompass.

The goal of this study was to provide an understanding of what workers within the retail industry prefer in a job at different stages and translate those findings into implementable actions for retail employers to improve both 1) experiences for retail workers and 2) performance of retail establishments through improving engagement and reducing turnover rates. These insights could inform actions for various aspects of the talent management process, such as during recruitment and attracting prospective employees, through providing benefits and conditions that are motivating and keep current employees engaged, or by shaping the employee experience to curb turnover and retain employees. Given that the study found that different elements of the job were



influential on decisions at different points in time, retailers should treat different phases in the employee life cycle separately instead of using a single across-the-board strategy that applies to all employees. While an EVP should encompass all aspects of the job that make up the offering, employers should communicate the offering strategically and work to substantiate the offering to provide the most meaningful employee experiences.

Psychological contracts are the frameworks employers use to manage the employment relationship (Guest & Conway, 2002). When creating an EVP unique to one's organization, it is important that it is attractive but also substantiated and that employees will receive what they expect based on messages received before being on the job.

There are several practical implications for recruitment and attraction strategies. When selecting a new job, this study shows that retail employees are considering more than just the level of pay being offered. Instead of solely advertising pay and sign-on bonuses, it will be important to keep the focus on total rewards with the objective of hiring an employee with potential to remain engaged and with the organization for longer-terms (Sever et al., 2022). When focusing on pay, however, it is important to remember the value that retail employees may place on the fairness around pay and pay practices. Therefore, research should always go into making sure one is offering equitable and competitive wages compared to the local market and within the industry.

Additionally, it would be beneficial for employers to invest in providing healthcare benefits that are comprehensive and reasonable for retail workers. Then, highlighting this part of the offering through an EVP will enhance the attractiveness of the overall job offering. Offerings should provide clear information for prospective

workers to understand what the health benefits provided are as well as any other health-related benefits, such as wellness initiatives and activities, gym and fitness programs, etc.

Beyond the top aspects that are often sought-after during recruitment, employers should also emphasize the long-term benefits of working with the organization, such as opportunities for education benefits, advancement opportunities, pay increases, and schedule flexibility. This will prompt prospective employees to think about possibilities of on-the-job experiences instead of just what the immediate benefit of selecting the job will be.

In terms of actions that could be taken to improve retention and attrition, there is nuance in the predictors between keeping someone engaged and wanting to stay versus preventing someone from becoming disengaged and leaving. Most organizations in the hospitality industry expect high turnover and dissatisfaction to occur because of the nature of the business and the demographics of the typical employee (Sasser et al., 1997). While employers should always expect *some* turnover, it is good to understand what may be driving turnover in order to reduce it as much as is within their control to influence.

There were various job characteristics found to be important to staying and quitting decisions that are within the control of the employer. For example, given it was highly predictive of both considering quitting and leaving a job, it would be worthwhile for retail employers to explore the interest among their current employees in receiving education benefits. Then, they could invest in tuition assistant programs or provide funds for continuing education.

Further, there are many ways employers could increase the quality of management to help employees enjoy their work. First, management could be enhanced

by providing leadership training on giving feedback including frequently recognizing and showing appreciation for efforts. Moreover, managers should learn ways in which they could provide additional autonomy and responsibility to employees instead of micro-managing. Managers should also be educated on the problems current employees are facing and be provided with ideas on how to alleviate current demands, such as communicating the value of the employees' health and safety and providing the necessary support and resources need to make sure they are taken care of.

Based on the findings, it is clear retail workers prioritize and are influenced by their career opportunities. Retailers should increase advancement and internal movement by setting up a performance management system that outlines clear career paths, opportunities for development, and criteria for advancement. Leaders should also provide interested employees in "flex" opportunities to develop leadership skills or get more of a comprehensive understanding of what responsibilities at the next level will entail to prepare them and assess their readiness and desire to grow.

Furthermore, though it may not be possible to provide total flexibility, there are ways in which flexibility could be enhanced, which results would suggest would make a substantial impact on joining, staying, and leaving decisions. Employers can work harder to give schedules further in advance, provide more predictability or consistency in terms of shifts or hours worked, give employees the ability to choose days when they work or start times, and avoid last-minute changes to posted schedules. Similarly, it would not be possible to eliminate all physical demands of the job, but they could be improved by distributing physically demanding tasks across more roles or providing more support or resources for physical demands that may be causing high levels of stress and exhaustion.

## **Future Research**

Given the industry's high turnover rates, it is important for research to uncover factors that affect retention and attrition on an ongoing basis. Researchers believe job satisfaction is the dynamic result of an adaptive psychological process in which individuals assess their job and work environment in terms of whether they fit with basic values, needs, and goals (Seashore, 1974). The fluctuation of satisfaction and dissatisfaction should be expected, and longitudinal studies thus become important. Longitudinal studies would be able to determine whether any aspects of the job are more or less important due to changing aspirations or changes in the economic environment. For example, if education benefits become more prevalent for retail workers, it may increase in its importance on joining decisions. It is also possible that health benefits were the most influential factor on joining decisions given the pervasiveness of the global pandemic and the light shed on inequities in the healthcare system. Similarly, the reason of "feeling health and safety are valued" was the fourth highest predictor of staying with a job, but this aspect may not be considered as important when not in a global pandemic. As unemployment within the industry fluctuates, job stability may become more or less important. Currently, it does not seem like job stability impacts decisions to quit, but this could be due to the vast amount of job openings available in the industry, and once it becomes more difficult to find and secure a job, job security may be perceived as much more important.

On the other hand, additional research that could be done on this sample of data is exploring individual differences on drivers of job decisions. Data could be clustered on demographic and retail-related information to inform more targeted recruitment and

engagement tactics for various types of individuals. It is also possible that there are other individual attributes that impact job decisions that were not collected in the present study, such as how long they have been in their current job and whether they work more than one job for additional sources of income. In fact, 31% of full-time retail employees report having an additional source of income (Zipline, 2022).

Moreover, to test the difference between the data collection methods (i.e., importance ratings and conjoint survey), responses from the current study could be viewed across each participant. Importance ratings for the job characteristics that align with the eight attributes tested in the conjoint analysis could be compared, which would uncover whether there truly are subconscious drivers of job choice that is only apparent when asking someone to consider an entire package of job features instead of rating them individually.

## **Conclusion**

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of what is valued by retail workers across the employee life cycle stages of attraction, retention, disengagement, and attrition. Based on current retail workers' ratings of importance of job characteristics on different job decisions, there was a different set of predictive job features across decisions to stay, consider leaving, and quit a retail job. Decisions to quit were most impacted by receiving poor or no education benefits, disliking management, lacking schedule flexibility, and not receiving recognition. Workers were more likely to consider quitting their job in the near future if they felt stress and exhaustion from the job, received poor or no education benefits, felt their pay was too low, or if they lacked opportunities for advancement. On the other hand, decisions to stay with a job were most impacted by

finding the job enjoyable, liking one's co-workers, and perceiving job stability. A conjoint analysis was conducted to determine job features that, when combined with others in an overall job package, impact decisions to join a new retail job. The most influential aspect of job packages were health benefits, followed by pay level and opportunities for promotions. It is important retail employers understand the nuance behind the controllable components that affect job attitudes and strive to create employee value propositions that effectively attract and retain their workers.

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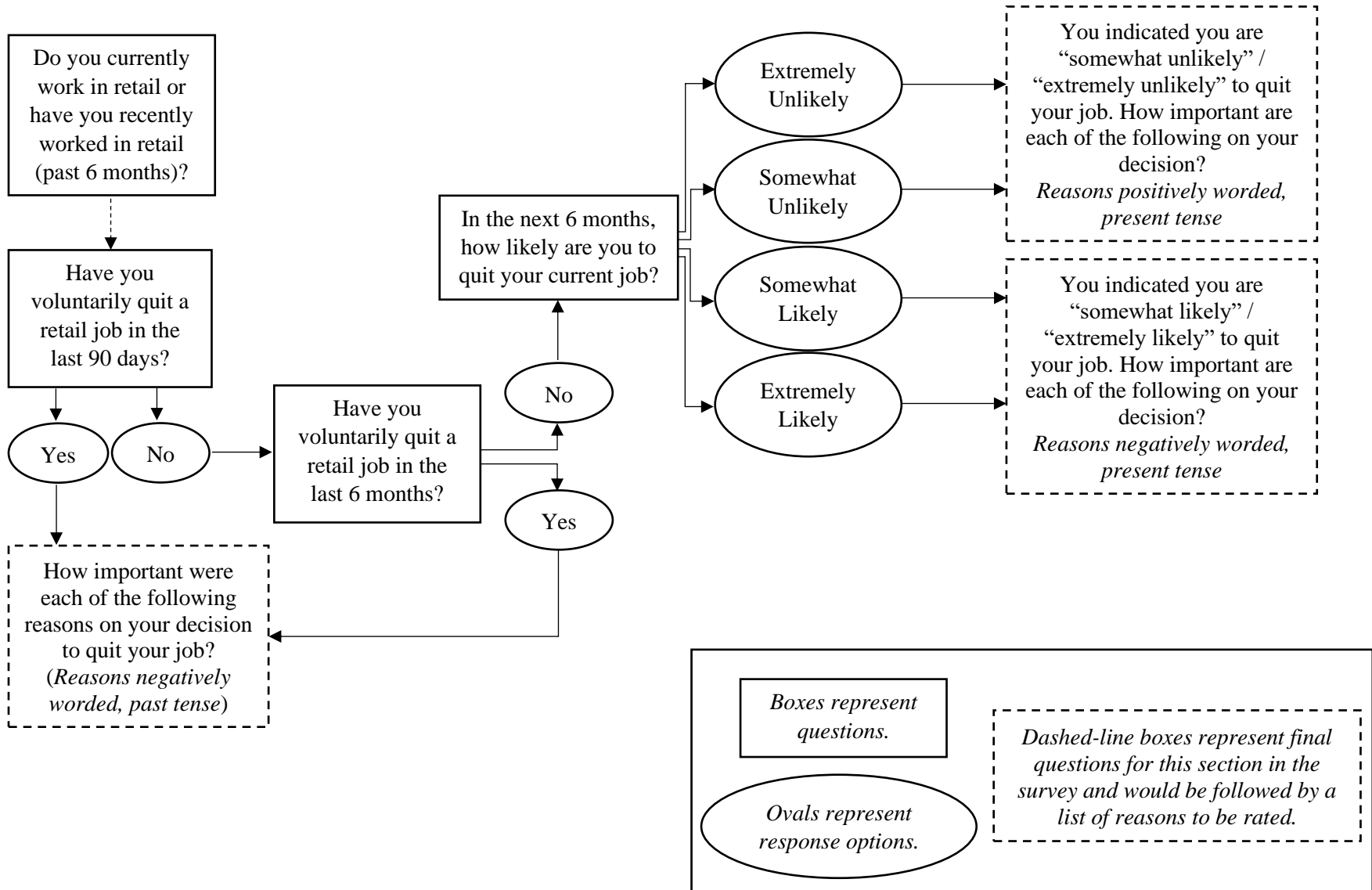
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### Appendix A: Survey Flow for Importance Ratings Section



**Appendix B: Retail-Related and Demographic Questions**

**Which best describes the retail environment you most recently worked / currently work in?      How long have you worked in retail? (optional)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Big Box Store                           | <input type="radio"/> Less than 1 year  |
| <input type="radio"/> Apparel & Accessories                   | <input type="radio"/> 1 or 2 years      |
| <input type="radio"/> Luxury Apparel & Goods                  | <input type="radio"/> 3-5 years         |
| <input type="radio"/> Fast Casual Dining                      | <input type="radio"/> 6-8 years         |
| <input type="radio"/> Convenience Store                       | <input type="radio"/> More than 9 years |
| <input type="radio"/> Home Goods                              |   |
| <input type="radio"/> Electronics                             |   |
| <input type="radio"/> Grocery                                 |   |
| <input type="radio"/> Specialty (e.g., gifts, books, beauty)  |   |
| <input type="radio"/> Other (please specify in the box below) |   |

*These questions were asked in both rounds of data*

**Approximately how many hours a week do you work in your current (or most recent) retail role?**

- 10 hours or less
- 11-20 hours
- 21-30 hours
- 31-40 hours
- More than 40 hours

**How long was / is your commute (in minutes)?**

- 15 minutes or less
- 16-30 minutes
- 31-60 minutes
- 1-2 hours
- More than 2 hours

**How would you describe the location of your current (or most recent) workplace? (optional)**

- Urban or city-center
- Suburb
- Rural area or small town

*These questions were asked only in the second round of data*

**What is your gender identity? (optional)**

- Man
- Woman
- Non-binary
- Prefer to self-describe (please type in box below)
- Prefer not to disclose

**What is your age? (optional)**

- Under 18 years
- 18-24 years
- 25-34 years
- 35-44 years
- 45-54 years
- 55-64 years
- 65 years or over

*These questions were asked in both rounds of data collection.*

**How would you describe your race? (optional)**

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or more races
- Some other race, ethnicity, or origin
- Prefer to self-describe
- Prefer not to say

**What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received? (optional)**

- Some high school
- High school graduate (diploma or GED certificate)
- Some college
- Two-year associate degree from a college or university
- Four year college or university degree / Bachelor's degree
- Some postgraduate or professional schooling
- Postgraduate or professional degree, including master's, doctorate, medical or law degree

*These questions were asked only in the second round of data*

### **Appendix C: Full Survey for Participants that Had Quit**

**Thank you for participating in this research study. This study is intended for current employees (or those recently employed) in the retail industry.**

**Please read each question carefully and answer to the best of your ability.**

**Do you currently work in retail or have you recently worked in retail (past 6 months)?**

No

Yes

**Have you voluntarily quit a retail job in the last 90 days?**

No

Yes

**Have you voluntarily quit a retail job in the last 6 months?**

No

Yes

*Participants would be considered part of the “Quit” group if they answered yes to either of the two prior questions.*

**How important were each of the following reasons on your decision to quit your job?**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Poor company reputation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor job stability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Long and/or difficult commute	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**How important were each of the following reasons on your decision to quit your job?**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Bosses micro- managed employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disliked management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not enough diversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not recognized for efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disliked the culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disliked co- workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Didn't feel included or a sense of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**How important were each of the following reasons on your decision to quit your job?**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Pay was too low	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unfair pay practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No opportunities for raises/bonuses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hard work was not rewarded	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Please use this row to select "Not at all important"</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**How important were each of the following reasons on your decision to quit your job?**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Poor or no health benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor or no education benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not enough time off	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Challenges with childcare arrangements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**How important were each of the following reasons on your decision to quit your job?**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Schedule wasn't flexible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unfeasible work hours or schedule	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor work-life balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job was too physically stressful/exhausting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uncomfortable work environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Felt health or safety was at risk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**How important were each of the following reasons on your decision to quit your job?**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Limited or no advancement opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unfair promotion practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limited or no training or development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Didn't help resume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job was boring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Was there any other reason that factored into your decision to quit? Please list it in the box below and rate its importance in your decision.**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Next, you will be asked to consider offerings associated with two different retail jobs. Imagine you are selecting between those two potential jobs based on which one is most attractive to you.**

**You will be asked to do this 5 times. Please pay attention as aspects of the jobs to choose from will change each time.**

*At this point, participants were presented five randomized sets of conjoint choices. Please refer to Figure 6 for an example of this question.*

*After the conjoint survey, participants were given the demographic questions shown in Appendix B.*

### **Appendix D: Full Survey for Participants that were Likely to Quit**

**Thank you for participating in this research study. This study is intended for current employees (or those recently employed) in the retail industry.**

**Please read each question carefully and answer to the best of your ability.**

**Do you currently work in retail or have you recently worked in retail (past 6 months)?**

- No
- Yes

**Have you voluntarily quit a retail job in the last 90 days?**

- No
- Yes

**Have you voluntarily quit a retail job in the last 6 months?**

- No
- Yes

*Participants would be considered part of the “Not Quit” group if they answered no to both of the two prior questions.*

**In the next 6 months, how likely are you to quit your current job?**

- Extremely unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Extremely likely

*Participants would be considered part of the “Likely to Quit” group if they answered either somewhat likely or extremely likely in the prior question..*

**You indicated you are “somewhat likely” or “extremely likely” to quit your job. How important are each of the following reasons to your decision?**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Poor company reputation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor job stability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Long/difficult commute	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor sustainability practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**You indicated you are “somewhat likely” or “extremely likely” to quit your job. How important are each of the following reasons to your decision?**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Micromanaged by boss/manager	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dislike management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not enough diversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not recognized for efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dislike the culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dislike co-workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Don't feel included or a sense of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**You indicated you are “somewhat likely” or “extremely likely” to quit your job. How important are each of the following reasons to your decision?**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Pay is too low	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unfair pay practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No opportunities for raises/bonuses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hard work is not rewarded	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Please use this row to select "Not at all important"</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**You indicated you are “somewhat likely” or “extremely likely” to quit your job. How important are each of the following reasons to your decision?**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Poor or no health benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor or no education benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not enough time off	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Challenges with childcare arrangements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**You indicated you are “somewhat likely” or “extremely likely” to quit your job. How important are each of the following reasons to your decision?**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Schedule isn't flexible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unfeasible work hours or schedule	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor work-life balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job is too physically stressful/exhausting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uncomfortable work environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel health or safety is at risk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**You indicated you are “somewhat likely” or “extremely likely” to quit your job. How important are each of the following reasons to your decision?**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Limited or no advancement opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unfair promotion practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limited or no training or development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Doesn't help resume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job is boring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Is there is any other reason that would play a factor in your decision? If yes, please list it in the box below and rate its importance.**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Next, you will be asked to consider offerings associated with two different retail jobs. Imagine you are selecting between those two potential jobs based on which one is most attractive to you.**

**You will be asked to do this 5 times. Please pay attention as aspects of the jobs to choose from will change each time.**

*At this point, participants were presented five randomized sets of conjoint choices. Please refer to Figure 6 for an example of this question.*

*After the conjoint survey, participants were given the demographic questions shown in Appendix B.*

### **Appendix E: Full Survey for Participants that were Unlikely to Quit**

**Thank you for participating in this research study. This study is intended for current employees (or those recently employed) in the retail industry.**

**Please read each question carefully and answer to the best of your ability.**

**Do you currently work in retail or have you recently worked in retail (past 6 months)?**

- No
- Yes

**Have you voluntarily quit a retail job in the last 90 days?**

- No
- Yes

**Have you voluntarily quit a retail job in the last 6 months?**

- No
- Yes

*Participants would be considered part of the “Not Quit” group if they answered no to both of the two prior questions.*

**In the next 6 months, how likely are you to quit your current job?**

- Extremely unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Extremely likely

*Participants would be considered part of the “Unlikely to Quit” group if they answered either somewhat unlikely or extremely unlikely in the prior question..*

**You indicated you are “somewhat unlikely” or “extremely unlikely” to quit your current job in the next 6 months. How long are you likely to stay with your current employer?**

- 6-12 months

- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5 years or more

**You indicated you are “somewhat unlikely” or “extremely unlikely” to quit your job. How important are each of the following reasons to your decision?**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Company reputation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job stability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Commute time or ease	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good sustainability practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**You indicated you are “somewhat unlikely” or “extremely unlikely” to quit your job. How important are each of the following reasons to your decision?**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Bosses/Managers give employees space to work independently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Like working for management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recognized for efforts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Like the culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Like working with co-workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel included or a sense of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**You indicated you are “somewhat unlikely” or “extremely unlikely” to quit your job. How important are each of the following reasons to your decision?**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Pay is satisfactory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fair pay practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities for raises/bonuses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hard work is rewarded	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Please use this row to select "Not at all important"</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**You indicated you are “somewhat unlikely” or “extremely unlikely” to quit your job. How important are each of the following reasons to your decision?**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Health benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ability to take time off	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Childcare arrangements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**You indicated you are “somewhat unlikely” or “extremely unlikely” to quit your job. How important are each of the following reasons to your decision?**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Schedule is flexible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feasible work hours or schedule	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work-life balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job isn't physically stressful/exhausting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comfortable work environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel health or safety is valued	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**You indicated you are “somewhat unlikely” or “extremely unlikely” to quit your job. How important are each of the following reasons to your decision?**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Advancement opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fair promotion practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training or development opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helps resume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job is enjoyable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Is there is any other reason that would play a factor in your decision? If yes, please list it in the box below and rate its importance.**

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Other (19)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Next, you will be asked to consider offerings associated with two different retail jobs. Imagine you are selecting between those two potential jobs based on which one is most attractive to you.**

**You will be asked to do this 5 times. Please pay attention as aspects of the jobs to choose from will change each time.**

*At this point, participants were presented five randomized sets of conjoint choices. Please refer to Figure 6 for an example of this question.*

*After the conjoint survey, participants were given the demographic questions shown in Appendix B.*