Dudovskiy Methodology Audit

Sample report · Flexible working arrangements and employee retention in UK hospitality SMEs

About this sample. This is a complete, unedited DMA report on a fictional methodology chapter written for demonstration (no real student or study). The chapter was written with problems examiners commonly raise, so it has more findings than many real chapters: stronger chapters get shorter reports, but every report covers all nine dimensions. The full chapter is reproduced at the end so you can check every quote.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Substantial revision

FINDINGS

2 critical 6 major 4 minor

FIX THESE FIRST

1. Reword RQ2 to cover employees, or add manager interviews (F1) — Rethink
2. Reframe RQ3 and the related claims as association, not effect (F2) — Rethink
3. Rewrite the philosophy section to be consistently pragmatist (F3) — About an hour

Report at a glance

Dimension	Status	Findings
Alignment	Needs revision	F1
Philosophy, approach and design	Needs revision	F2, F3
Sampling	Needs revision	F5, F10, F11
Data collection	Needs revision	F7
Analysis	Needs revision	F9
Integration	Needs revision	F4, F8
Quality	Adequate	none
Ethics	Needs revision	F6, F12
Feasibility	Adequate	none

No.	Severity	Finding
F1	Critical	Interview sample cannot answer the question about managers
F2	Critical	A cross-sectional design is claimed to show cause
F3	Major	The philosophy section combines pragmatism with objectivist assumptions
F4	Major	The design is labelled convergent but described as sequential
F5	Major	Generalisation is claimed from a convenience sample
F6	Major	Recruiting colleagues at your own workplace is not addressed ethically
F7	Major	Intention to leave is used as a proxy for retention without justification
F8	Major	The point and method of combining the strands are not described
F9	Minor	Contract type appears in the regression but is not described in the questionnaire
F10	Minor	The number of interviews is justified only by study level
F11	Minor	The number of survey responses received is not stated
F12	Minor	Data storage on a personal laptop is not explained

How to read this report. Your chapter is split into numbered paragraphs (P1, P2…), so you can find every quoted sentence. Findings (F1, F2…) are ordered by severity. **Critical** means the study as written could not answer its questions, poses a real ethical risk, or contains a core contradiction; **Major** means a supervisor or examiner would very likely ask for revision; **Minor** means a clarity or completeness point. A *contradiction* means two parts of your chapter conflict; a *missing justification* means a choice may be fine but is not explained.

How this audit works. Your chapter is checked against nine fixed dimensions, from alignment to feasibility. Severity follows written rules, not impressions. Every quote is copied character for character from your text, and every research question is traced through design, data and analysis in the alignment table. The report ends with likely examiner questions and a revision plan that shows the effort each fix needs.

Overall assessment

Substantial revision. There are two critical findings. The interviews include no managers, so RQ2 cannot be answered as written (F1). The cross-sectional survey is claimed to show cause, which it cannot do (F2). Six major findings add to this.

Scope statement

- **What was audited:** the title, three research questions and the methodology draft. The draft is about 1,700 words and has 51 paragraphs (P1 to P51). Headings count as separate paragraphs.
- **Study type:** mixed methods. There is a quantitative survey strand and a qualitative interview strand (P12, P13). Integration applies.
- **Missing or disregarded:** nothing. All three inputs were received. The draft contains no text addressed to the reviewer.
- This audit assesses the methodology as written in the submitted extract. It does not check results, the literature review or formatting, and it does not judge whether the topic is worthwhile.

Summary

Your chapter has a clear structure. Your survey measures for RQ1 are concrete, and your ethics procedures for consent and approval are clearly stated. The most important problem is that the methods do not match two of your three research questions. RQ2 asks about managers, but you interviewed only front-line staff. RQ3 asks about effect, but you used a cross-sectional design that cannot show cause. There are also inconsistencies between your stated philosophy, your mixed-methods design label and your sampling claims. Start by deciding how to handle RQ2 and RQ3, because those decisions may change Chapters 1, 4 and 5. Some further minor points were left out, such as how participants could withdraw from an anonymous survey.

Evidenced strengths

1. Your survey measures for access to flexible working are concrete and match RQ1: "Section B measured access to flexible working arrangements, asking respondents whether they had access to each of six arrangements" (P27).
2. You justify your minimum survey sample with a stated rule: "With five independent variables, the minimum required sample is 90, so a target of 150 provides a comfortable margin." (P23)
3. Your quantitative analysis is clearly linked to RQ1: "Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, were used to describe the sample and to show the extent of access to flexible working arrangements, addressing RQ1." (P35)
4. Your scale reliability check has an explicit threshold: "The reliability of the intention to leave scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with a value of 0.70 or above considered acceptable." (P42)
5. You state that ethical approval came before fieldwork: "Ethical approval for the study was granted by the university's research ethics committee before data collection began." (P45)

Findings

F1. Interview sample cannot answer the question about managers

- **Dimension:** Alignment
- **Severity:** Critical
- **Type:** Contradiction
- **Evidence:** "How do managers in UK hospitality SMEs perceive the role of flexible working arrangements in retaining staff?" (P18); "All eight interviewees were front-line employees, including waiting staff, bar staff, housekeepers and kitchen porters." (P32)
- **Paragraph reference:** P18, P32
- **Issue and explanation:** RQ2 asks for managers' perceptions. The only qualitative data you collected came from front-line employees, and your thematic analysis is the source you give for answering RQ2 (P38). As written, the study collects no evidence from the group RQ2 is about.
- **Correction:** Do one of two things. You could reword RQ2 to ask about employees' perceptions and update Chapter 1 to match. Or, if you can still collect data, add interviews with SME managers and explain how you recruited them.
- **Unresolved context:** If manager interviews were carried out but are not described here, this finding would change to a missing-description issue.

F2. A cross-sectional design is claimed to show cause

- **Dimension:** Philosophy, approach and design
- **Severity:** Critical
- **Type:** Contradiction
- **Evidence:** "The research is cross-sectional, as data were collected at a single point in time." (P14); "The regression results are used to answer RQ3 by showing whether flexible working arrangements cause lower intention to leave." (P36)
- **Paragraph reference:** P14, P36
- **Issue and explanation:** Regression on data from one point in time can show association. It cannot show that flexible working causes lower intention to leave. P14 also states that the design can determine the effect, as RQ3 requires. Your own main hypothesis in P9 is framed as an association. Because RQ3 is a central question, this conflict sits at the core of the study.
- **Correction:** Reword RQ3 and P14 and P36 in terms of relationship or association. Remove the causal claims and add the limitation to section 3.11. *Example: What is the relationship between access to flexible working arrangements and intention to leave among employees in UK hospitality SMEs?*
- **Unresolved context:** None.

F3. The philosophy section combines pragmatism with objectivist assumptions

- **Dimension:** Philosophy, approach and design
- **Severity:** Major
- **Type:** Contradiction
- **Evidence:** "Pragmatism holds that the research question should determine the methods used, rather than a commitment to a single view of reality" (P6); "the study assumes that employee retention is an objective phenomenon that exists independently of the perceptions of the people involved" (P7)
- **Paragraph reference:** P6, P7
- **Issue and explanation:** P7 commits you to a single objectivist view of reality and a detached researcher. That conflicts with the pragmatism you state in P6. It also conflicts with your inductive interviews about experience (P10, P31). P7 further says retention can be measured without bias, but P49 accepts that self-report may bring social desirability bias.

- **Correction:** Rewrite P7 so it explains how a pragmatist stance treats the survey and interview strands, for example different assumptions serving different questions. Remove the claims of complete detachment and bias-free measurement.
- **Unresolved context:** None.

F4. The design is labelled convergent but described as sequential

- **Dimension:** Integration
- **Severity:** Major
- **Type:** Contradiction
- **Evidence:** "quantitative and qualitative data are collected during the same phase, analysed separately, and then compared" (P12); "the interview questions were developed after the initial survey results had been reviewed" (P13)
- **Paragraph reference:** P12, P13
- **Issue and explanation:** P13 describes interviews that were shaped by survey results and drew participants from survey respondents. That matches an explanatory sequential design, not a convergent parallel one. The label affects how an examiner reads the order, priority and point of integration of your two strands.
- **Correction:** Choose the label that matches what you actually did and cite it. Then revise P12 and the summary in P51 to match.
- **Unresolved context:** None.

F5. Generalisation is claimed from a convenience sample

- **Dimension:** Sampling
- **Severity:** Major
- **Type:** Contradiction
- **Evidence:** "A non-probability convenience sampling method was used instead." (P22); "Because the sample is large, it can be considered representative of hospitality SME employees across the UK, and the findings can be generalised to this population." (P23)
- **Paragraph reference:** P22, P23
- **Issue and explanation:** Sample size does not make a convenience sample representative. Your recruitment came from three Facebook groups and your own workplace, which limits who could take part. This affects RQ1 in particular, because RQ1 asks about the extent of access across the population.
- **Correction:** Remove the claim of representativeness and generalisation. Add a limitation on who your recruitment routes could reach, and describe RQ1 findings as applying to the sample.
- **Unresolved context:** None.

F6. Recruiting colleagues at your own workplace is not addressed ethically

- **Dimension:** Ethics
- **Severity:** Major
- **Type:** Missing justification
- **Evidence:** "shared with colleagues at the hotel where the researcher works as a duty manager" (P22)
- **Paragraph reference:** P22, P45 to P47
- **Issue and explanation:** You asked colleagues, possibly people you supervise, about their intention to leave your shared employer. The draft does not state how you managed the power relationship, pressure to take part, or the risk that answers could be traced back to individuals. The eight interviewees were also drawn from survey respondents and may include colleagues.
- **Correction:** Add a paragraph on insider research. State whether direct reports were excluded, how you avoided pressure to participate, how identifiable answers were protected from the employer, and whether the ethics committee approved this recruitment route.
- **Unresolved context:** The ethics application may already cover this. If so, summarise it here.

F7. Intention to leave is used as a proxy for retention without justification

- **Dimension:** Data collection
- **Severity:** Major
- **Type:** Missing justification
- **Evidence:** "Employee retention was measured through respondents' stated intention to leave their current employer within the next twelve months." (P28)
- **Paragraph reference:** P28
- **Issue and explanation:** Your title and RQ3 refer to retention, but what you measured is turnover intention. That choice may be suitable, but the draft does not explain why intention is an acceptable proxy or how far it predicts actual leaving.
- **Correction:** Add a sentence or two that justifies the proxy with a source. Note the gap between intention and behaviour in section 3.11.
- **Unresolved context:** None.

F8. The point and method of combining the strands are not described

- **Dimension:** Integration
- **Severity:** Major
- **Type:** Missing justification
- **Evidence:** "The findings from the two strands are discussed together in Chapter 5." (P40)
- **Paragraph reference:** P40
- **Issue and explanation:** The draft does not state how the survey and interview results will be brought together, for example through side-by-side comparison, a joint display, or using interview themes to explain survey patterns. It also does not say which strand has priority. Without this, an examiner cannot see how the mixed-methods design adds value.
- **Correction:** Expand section 3.8.3 to state the integration point, the technique, the priority of each strand and how you will handle results that disagree.
- **Unresolved context:** None.

F9. Contract type appears in the regression but is not described in the questionnaire

- **Dimension:** Analysis
- **Severity:** Minor
- **Type:** Missing justification
- **Evidence:** Evidence missing: the draft does not state that contract type was collected in the questionnaire, although it is listed as an independent variable in P36.
- **Paragraph reference:** P27
- **Issue and explanation:** Section A lists age, gender, job role, length of service and type of employer. Contract type is one of your five regression predictors, but it is not mentioned there. A reader cannot tell where that variable came from.
- **Correction:** Add contract type to the description of Section A, or correct the list of predictors in P36.
- **Unresolved context:** P27 says "including", so contract type may have been collected and simply left out of the list.

F10. The number of interviews is justified only by study level

- **Dimension:** Sampling
- **Severity:** Minor
- **Type:** Missing justification
- **Evidence:** "Eight participants is considered sufficient for a master's level study." (P24)
- **Paragraph reference:** P24

- **Issue and explanation:** Eight interviews may well be enough. However, the draft gives no source and no reason linked to the aims of the analysis, such as information power or how varied the participants are.
- **Correction:** Add a sourced justification linked to the aim and depth of your thematic analysis.
- **Unresolved context:** None.

F11. The number of survey responses received is not stated

- **Dimension:** Sampling
- **Severity:** Minor
- **Type:** Missing justification
- **Evidence:** "A total of 150 completed responses were targeted." (P23)
- **Paragraph reference:** P23
- **Issue and explanation:** The draft gives the target but not the number of usable responses actually received. The summary in P51 refers to a survey of 150 employees, but it is unclear whether that is the target or the result.
- **Correction:** State the number of responses received and the number of usable responses after exclusions, or point to where these figures are reported.
- **Unresolved context:** The achieved number may be reported in Chapter 4.

F12. Data storage on a personal laptop is not explained

- **Dimension:** Ethics
- **Severity:** Minor
- **Type:** Missing justification
- **Evidence:** "The survey responses, interview recordings and transcripts were stored on the researcher's personal laptop." (P47)
- **Paragraph reference:** P47
- **Issue and explanation:** The draft does not state whether the laptop or files were encrypted or password-protected. It also does not say how long data will be kept, or whether this storage meets UK GDPR and your university's data policy.
- **Correction:** Add the security measures, the retention period and the policy the storage complies with.
- **Unresolved context:** None.

Dimension	Status	Findings	Note
Alignment	Needs revision	F1	RQ2 has no matching data source.
Philosophy, approach and design	Needs revision	F2, F3	Causal claim and inconsistent philosophy.
Sampling	Needs revision	F5, F10, F11	Generalisation claim and missing numbers.
Data collection	Needs revision	F7	Retention measured by a proxy.
Analysis	Needs revision	F9	Source of one predictor is unclear.
Integration	Needs revision	F4, F8	Design label and integration point.
Quality	Adequate	none	Criteria are matched to each strand.
Ethics	Needs revision	F6, F12	Insider recruitment and data storage.
Feasibility	Adequate	none	Fieldwork scope and timing are stated and realistic.

Alignment review

Research question	Design	Data collected	Analysis	Aligned?
RQ1: access to flexible working	Cross-sectional online survey	Yes/no access to six arrangements (Section B)	Descriptive statistics	Partly
RQ2: managers' perceptions	Semi-structured interviews	Interviews with eight front-line employees	Thematic analysis	No

RQ3: effect on retention	Cross-sectional online survey	Number of arrangements available; intention-to-leave scale	Multiple linear regression	Partly

RQ1 is well served, but the convenience sample limits claims about the population (F5). RQ2 has no data from managers (F1). RQ3 can be answered as a question about association, not effect, and only through an intention proxy (F2, F7).

Examiner questions

1. **(F1)** Your second research question is about managers, but all your interviewees were front-line staff. How can your findings answer it?

   A strong answer would cover:
   - whether RQ2 will be reworded to cover employees, or manager interviews added
   - how the wording in Chapters 1, 4 and 5 will be made consistent with that choice
   - if managers are added, how they would be recruited and how many

2. **(F2)** With data from a single point in time, how can you claim that flexible working causes lower intention to leave?

   A strong answer would cover:
   - why cross-sectional regression shows association, not cause
   - how RQ3, P14 and P36 will be reworded
   - which other explanations of the association, such as job role or length of service, the design cannot rule out

3. **(F3)** You say you are a pragmatist, yet you treat retention as fully objective and yourself as detached while conducting inductive interviews. Which position are you taking?

   A strong answer would cover:
   - how pragmatism accommodates both the survey and interview strands in this study
   - why the claims of detachment and bias-free measurement are being removed or qualified

4. **(F4)** Your interviews were designed after you reviewed the survey results. Why do you call this a convergent parallel design?

   A strong answer would cover:
   - the actual order and dependency between the two strands
   - which named design matches that order, with a source
   - what this means for when and how the strands are combined

5. **(F5)** How can a convenience sample recruited through Facebook groups and your own hotel be representative of UK hospitality SME employees?

   A strong answer would cover:
   - why sample size does not overcome selection bias
   - which groups these recruitment routes may have missed
   - how RQ1 findings will be framed instead

6. **(F6)** You recruited colleagues at the hotel where you are a duty manager and asked about their intention to leave. How did you protect them?

   A strong answer would cover:
   - whether any participants reported to you, and how pressure to take part was avoided
   - how answers were kept from being identifiable to the employer
   - whether the ethics committee reviewed this recruitment route

Revision plan

#	Action	Findings	Paragraphs	Effort
1	Reword RQ2 to cover employees, or add manager interviews	F1	P18, P24, P31, P32, P38	Rethink

2	Reframe RQ3 and the related claims as association, not effect	F2	P14, P19, P36, P49	Rethink
3	Rewrite the philosophy section to be consistently pragmatist	F3	P6, P7	About an hour
4	Relabel the design to match the actual sequence and cite it	F4	P12, P13, P51	About an hour
5	Describe the integration point, technique and strand priority	F8	P40	About an hour
6	Remove the generalisation claim and add a sampling limitation	F5	P23, P49	Quick fix
7	Add a paragraph on insider recruitment and power relations	F6	P22, P45	About an hour
8	Justify intention to leave as a proxy for retention, with a source	F7	P28, P49	About an hour
9	Make the list of questionnaire variables match the regression predictors	F9	P27, P36	Quick fix
10	Add a sourced justification for eight interviews	F10	P24	About an hour
11	State how many usable survey responses you received	F11	P23, P51	Quick fix
12	Add data security and retention details	F12	P47	Quick fix

There are 2 Rethink actions, 6 About an hour actions and 4 Quick fix actions.

Summary for your supervisor

I am revising my methodology because my methods do not yet match two of my research questions: my interviews include no managers, and my cross-sectional survey cannot show cause. I plan to reword or extend the second and third questions so the data can answer them. I will also make my philosophy, the mixed-methods design label and the way I combine the two strands consistent with what I actually did. Finally, I will remove the claim that my convenience sample is representative and explain how I handled recruiting colleagues at my own workplace.

Appendix: the chapter audited

Flexible working arrangements and employee retention in UK hospitality SMEs. Fictional text written for this sample.

P1 Chapter 3: Research Methodology

P2 3.1 Introduction

P3 This chapter explains how the research was designed and carried out in order to answer the research questions set out in Chapter 1. It describes the research philosophy, approach and design, followed by the sampling strategy, the methods of data collection and the techniques used to analyse the data. The chapter then discusses how the quality of the research was ensured, the ethical considerations that guided the study, and its limitations. The structure follows the research onion proposed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), moving from the outer layers of philosophy and approach to the inner layers of techniques and procedures.

P4 3.2 Research philosophy

P5 Research philosophy refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). The main philosophies in business research are positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism and pragmatism. Each holds different assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology), what counts as acceptable knowledge (epistemology) and the role of values in research (axiology).

P6 This study adopts a pragmatist philosophy. Pragmatism holds that the research question should determine the methods used, rather than a commitment to a single view of reality, and it allows the researcher to combine quantitative and qualitative methods within one study. This makes it well suited to the present research, which seeks both to measure the relationship between flexible working and retention and to understand how employees experience flexible working.

P7 At the same time, the study assumes that employee retention is an objective phenomenon that exists independently of the perceptions of the people involved, and that it can be measured precisely and without bias. The researcher therefore remains detached from the participants throughout the study, so that the findings reflect reality as it is rather than the researcher's own interpretation.

P8 3.3 Research approach

P9 The study follows a deductive approach. Hypotheses were developed from the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, in particular from social exchange theory, which suggests that employees who receive valued benefits from their employer reciprocate with greater loyalty. These hypotheses are then tested using survey data. The main hypothesis is that access to flexible working arrangements is associated with lower intention to leave among hospitality employees.

P10 The qualitative part of the study uses an inductive approach, in which themes are allowed to emerge from the interview data rather than being imposed in advance. Combining the two approaches is consistent with the pragmatist philosophy described above.

P11 3.4 Research design

P12 The study uses a mixed-methods design, specifically a convergent parallel design (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). In this design, quantitative and qualitative data are collected during the same phase, analysed separately, and then compared to see whether they confirm or contradict each other.

P13 The quantitative strand consists of an online survey of hospitality employees. The qualitative strand consists of semi-structured interviews. Interview participants were selected from survey respondents who indicated on the questionnaire that they would be willing to take part in a follow-up interview, and the interview questions were developed after the initial survey results had been reviewed, so that the interviews could explore the patterns found in the survey in more depth.

P14 The research is cross-sectional, as data were collected at a single point in time. The time horizon of a master's dissertation does not allow a longitudinal study. Nevertheless, the design allows the study to determine the effect of flexible working arrangements on employee retention, as required by the third research question.

P15 3.5 Research questions

P16 The study addresses three research questions:

P17 RQ1: To what extent do employees in UK hospitality SMEs have access to flexible working arrangements?

P18 RQ2: How do managers in UK hospitality SMEs perceive the role of flexible working arrangements in retaining staff?

P19 RQ3: What is the effect of flexible working arrangements on employee retention in UK hospitality SMEs?

P20 3.6 Population and sampling

P21 The target population is employees of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the UK hospitality sector, including hotels, restaurants, cafes and bars. SMEs are defined as businesses with fewer than 250 employees. The hospitality sector was chosen because it has some of the highest staff turnover rates in the UK economy, which makes retention a pressing concern for employers.

P22 Because no complete list of hospitality SME employees exists, probability sampling was not possible. A non-probability convenience sampling method was used instead. The survey link was posted in three Facebook groups for hospitality workers and shared with colleagues at the hotel where the researcher works as a duty manager. Participants had to be at least 18 years old and currently employed in a hospitality SME in the UK.

P23 A total of 150 completed responses were targeted. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2019), a regression analysis requires a minimum sample of 50 + 8m, where m is the number of independent variables. With five independent variables, the minimum required sample is 90, so a target of 150 provides a comfortable margin. Because the sample is large, it can be considered representative of hospitality SME employees across the UK, and the findings can be generalised to this population.

P24 For the qualitative strand, eight interview participants were selected from the survey respondents who agreed to be contacted. Eight participants is considered sufficient for a master's level study.

P25 3.7 Data collection

P26 3.7.1 Questionnaire

P27 The questionnaire was administered through Microsoft Forms and consisted of three sections. Section A collected demographic information, including age, gender, job role, length of service and type of employer. Section B measured access to flexible working arrangements, asking respondents whether they had access to each of six arrangements: flexible start and finish times, compressed hours, shift swapping, part-time hours, annualised hours and remote working for administrative tasks. Section C measured intention to leave using a three-item scale adapted from an established turnover intention scale, rated on a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

P28 Employee retention was measured through respondents' stated intention to leave their current employer within the next twelve months. The questionnaire was designed to take no more than ten minutes to complete, in order to encourage participation among employees with limited free time.

P29 The questionnaire was open for three weeks in June 2024. A reminder was posted in the Facebook groups after ten days.

P30 3.7.2 Semi-structured interviews

P31 Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they allow the researcher to explore participants' experiences in depth while ensuring that the main topics are covered in every interview (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). An interview guide was developed with open questions on participants' experiences of flexible working, their reasons for staying with or leaving previous employers, and their views on what employers could do to retain staff.

P32 The interviews were conducted on Microsoft Teams, lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, and were recorded with the participants' permission. All eight interviewees were front-line employees, including waiting staff, bar staff, housekeepers and kitchen porters.

P33 3.8 Data analysis

P34 3.8.1 Quantitative analysis

P35 Survey data were exported from Microsoft Forms to SPSS. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, were used to describe the sample and to show the extent of access to

flexible working arrangements, addressing RQ1.

P36 Multiple linear regression was used to test the relationship between access to flexible working arrangements and intention to leave. The independent variables were the number of flexible arrangements available to the respondent, age, length of service, job role and contract type. The dependent variable was the mean score on the intention to leave scale. The regression results are used to answer RQ3 by showing whether flexible working arrangements cause lower intention to leave.

P37 3.8.2 Qualitative analysis

P38 The interview recordings were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis, following the six phases described by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Coding was carried out manually in Microsoft Word. The themes identified are presented in Chapter 4 and used to answer RQ2.

P39 3.8.3 Combining the findings

P40 The findings from the two strands are discussed together in Chapter 5.

P41 3.9 Research quality

P42 The reliability of the intention to leave scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with a value of 0.70 or above considered acceptable. Content validity was supported by adapting the items from an established scale that has been used in previous studies of employee turnover.

P43 For the qualitative strand, the study followed the trustworthiness criteria of Lincoln and Guba (1985): credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility was ensured through member checking, in which each participant was sent a copy of their transcript to confirm its accuracy. Transferability was supported by providing a description of the participants' roles. Dependability and confirmability were supported by keeping a record of the main decisions made during the analysis.

P44 3.10 Ethical considerations

P45 Ethical approval for the study was granted by the university's research ethics committee before data collection began. All participants received a participant information sheet explaining the purpose of the study, what participation involved, and how their data would be used.

P46 Survey participants gave consent by ticking a box at the start of the questionnaire, and interview participants signed a consent form before the interview. Participants were told that they could withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.

P47 The survey did not collect names, and interview participants were given pseudonyms in the transcripts. The survey responses, interview recordings and transcripts were stored on the researcher's personal laptop. The interview recordings were deleted immediately after transcription to protect participants' anonymity.

P48 3.11 Limitations

P49 The study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design captures intention to leave at a single point in time, and intentions may change. Second, the use of self-reported data may introduce social desirability bias, as respondents may not wish to admit that they are planning to leave. Third, the study was limited to SMEs, so its findings may not apply to large hospitality chains. Despite these limitations, the methodology provides a sound basis for answering the research questions.

P50 3.12 Summary

P51 This chapter has explained the methodology used in the study. A pragmatist philosophy and a convergent parallel mixed-methods design were adopted, combining an online survey of 150 hospitality employees with eight semi-structured interviews. The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression, and the qualitative data using thematic analysis. The next chapter presents the findings.