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CAREER ADAPTABILITY DURING COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many hospitality organisations are trying to find ways to help their employees manage various challenges. *Career adaptability* has proven to be useful in helping employees handle the challenges, and proactive personality is considered a critical factor affecting the formation of career adaptability. However, career adaptability can be a double-edged sword during the COVID-19 pandemic. Why? **Dr Tracy Xu** shares findings from her recent collaborative research on this issue.

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IS CAREER ADAPTABILITY A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD DURING COVID-19?

DR TRACY XU

While career adaptability is generally perceived as a positive characteristic, it is not always beneficial to employers. Considering the major impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hotel labour market, highly adaptable employees may indeed seek opportunities outside their current companies. In other words, highly adaptable individuals may be less dependent on their current employers and exhibit higher turnover intentions.

The findings based on data collected from hotel employees in the U.S. suggest that when employees receive strong work social support from supervisors and coworkers, they are more committed to the organization and consequently are more likely to be adaptable within the company. On the contrary, when employees receive weak work social support, they feel less obligated to stay with their current employer. Those highly adaptable employees may seek opportunities outside the company, resulting in higher voluntary turnover.

FURTHER READING:

Lee, P., Xu, S., Yang, W. (2021). Is career adaptability a double-edged sword? The impact of work social support and career adaptability on turnover intentions during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*. Link: **bit.ly/3aS6s86**

Consequently, when helping employees enhance career adaptability, it is vital to provide strong work social support to avoid triggering higher turnover intentions. More specifically, during a crisis, supervisors and managers need to provide career support in order to recoup investments in developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of their subordinates to reduce highly adaptable employees' intentions to leave. Furthermore, it is necessary to re-establish connections amongst members of the workforce who are furloughed, laid off, or on unpaid leave. By maintaining relationships among coworkers, employees can strengthen their connections within the organization and reinforce their sense of worth. It is critically important for employers to establish a friendly workplace climate for their employees.