SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE AND EMPLOYEE INTENTION TO STAY

(A Study of Selected Hotel Workers in Port Harcourt City, Nigeria)

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Abstract: This study examines the relationship between social intelligence and employee intention to stay among workers in the hospitality industry. The study utilizes a cross-sectional survey. A total of 142 usable questionnaires were administered to 10 selected hotels in Port Harcourt from 159 registered hotels with the Rivers State Ministry of Industry and Commerce. The results indicate that; there is a positive relationship between social intelligence and employee intention to stay. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made. Hotel owners should encourage employees by sending them for training, seminars, conferences and workshops to avoid turnover, hotel workers should be encouraged by a way of recognizing talented employees and rewarding them for a job well done and supervisors should be up and doing in their assignment by helping other new employees to carry out their functions effectively.

Keywords: Social intelligence, intention to stay, social information processing, social skills, social awareness, training and development, supervisor support.

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee intention to stay has been a major discourse in the field of management and requires urgent attention on how best to make talented employees to remain as employees in a given organization. The super-ordinate goal of every business is to render service and make profit which the hospitality industry is no exception. This goal cannot be successfully achieved without the contributions and support of qualified talented employees. Without employees, organizations will not be able to produce business results, achieve organization goals, or meet its financial objectives (Johanim et al, 2012).

Thus, employee intention to stay or remain with an organization is very significant for the progress and success of the organization. From modern human resource perspective, human capital is the most valuable assets for the organizations (Mello, 2011; Honore, 2009). The managers need to recognize the value of their employees by encouraging them to remain for their resource talent to be used, and also discourage them from looking elsewhere for better opportunities. This cannot be argued as a result of other resource no matter their significance depends on the knowledge of employee in a very extent.

However, studies on employee intention to stay have been carried out by several scholars at different sectors, countries and cultures using different variables. Johanim et al, (2012) examined the importance of compensation and benefits in promoting intention to stay among employees in manufacturing companies in the Northern Region of Peninsular Malaysia and found that only compensation and benefits had a positive impact on respondents' intention to stay. Sanjeevkumar (2012) carried out a study on the impact of 5 HRM practices (compensation, work life balance, organizational commitment, and career opportunities and supervisor support) and employees" intention to stay in public

companies in Kedah, Malaysia and found that the 5 HRM practices have positive correlation to the employees" retention intention. Noraani et al (2010) examined the mediating effects of work-family facilitation and family satisfaction on the relationship between job characteristics, and intention to stay among 240 single mother employees in Malaysia and found out the importance of the job characteristic through job demand and job autonomy and provide actionable elements to alter to increase facilitation and satisfaction between work and family. Muhammad and Umar (2012) in their work examined the influence of job burnout on intention to stay in the organization: mediating role of affective commitment among workers in Lahore city, Pakistan and found that; emotional exhaustion have significant effects on employees' intent to stay in the organization directly and through the mediation of affective commitment. Kumar et al (2012) examine the influence of organizational culture, organizational commitment and person organization fit towards turnover intention in fast food industries of Malaysia. Their findings revealed that organizational culture and organizational commitment, organization person fit has an impact on turnover intention in fast food Industry.

From the studies conducted above, it would interest us to know that none of the scholars had examined the relationship between social intelligence and employee intention to stay. None of these studies was conducted in the Nigeria hospitality industry environment. This has created a literature gap.

Therefore, the knowledge gap for this study is to examine the relationship between social intelligence and employee intention to stay: a study of workers in the hospitality industry in Port Harcourt city, Nigeria. The conceptualization of social intelligence is drawn from the works of Rasuli et al (2013), Eshghi et al (2013), Moghaddam et al (2013) and Hou (2011). The dimensions of social intelligence in this study are social information processing, social skills and social awareness. The measures of intention to stay are conceptualized from the works of Madiha et al (2009) and Johanim (2012). They include training and development, reward, and supervisor support.

1.1   Problem definition:

The twenty-first century managers are faced with several challenges as a result of the instability in the business environment and one of such is employee retention; this has a direct bearing on intention to stay. The major reasons why employees' quit their jobs are inadequate monetary or non-monetary motivation, inadequate support from their senior colleague, unconducive work environment, lack of training and development, absent of rewards for job well done, lack of leadership style, culture of the organisation, climate of the organisation, wrongful job design, inadequate compensation plans, non-availability of work life balance (Johanim, et al, 2012; Kumar, et al, 2012; Sanjeevkumar, 2012). Therefore, this study tends to proffer solution to these challenges by looking at the relationship between social intelligence employees' intention to stay with adequate training and development, adequate supervisor support, adequate financial rewards.

1.2   Objective of the study:

The purpose of the study is to ascertain the relationship between social intelligence and employee intention to stay. The specific objective is to; *examine the relationship between social information processing and training; examine the relationship between social skills and rewards; examine the relationship between social awareness and supervisor support.*

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Social intelligence construct:

Over the years, the concept of social intelligence has generated a lot of argument amongst scholars in social and management sciences. The psychometric view of social intelligence was originated from Thorndike (1920). In his work, he divided intelligent into three forms namely; abstract intelligent, mechanical intelligence and social intelligence. Thorndike defined abstract intelligence as the ability to understand and management of concepts and abstract ideas. Mechanical intelligence refers to the ability to understand and manage concrete targets (objects) within personal environments. Moss and Hunt (1927) defined social intelligence as the "ability to get along with others". Vernon (1933) in his work, viewed social intelligence as the person's "ability to get along with people in general, social technique or ease in society, knowledge of social matters, susceptibility to stimuli from other members of a group, as well as insight into

the temporary moods or underlying personality traits of strangers". Wechsler (1958) argue that; social intelligence is just general intelligence applied to social situations". Social intelligence refers to the ability to understand and manage people, as well as intelligence demonstrated in interpersonal relationships. Tsai and Wu, (2011) contended that until recent years social intelligence had been reestablished by Goleman (2006) and Albrecht (2006) with more multifaceted extensions. Albrecht (2006) argued that social intelligence can be characterize as a combination of a basic understanding of people - a kind of strategic social awareness - and a set of skills for interacting successfully with them. A simple definition of social intelligence by Albrecht is the ability to get along well with others and to get them to cooperate with you.

However one of the problems faced by scholars over the years is how social intelligence construct can be scaled. Moghaddam, et al (2013) in their recent work, argue that; due to lack of consensus in definition of social intelligence and possibility of bias in reports high correlation between the different measures are not observed. Furthermore, some of these methodologies are time-consuming and hard to carry out. For this reason Silvera, et al. (2001) developed Tromso Social Intelligence Scale (TSIS) in Moghaddam, et al (2013) to overcome these limitations. This scale measures three different aspects of social intelligence: social information processing, social skills and social awareness. The Tromso Social Intelligence Scale is a self-report instrument and this questionnaire consists of 21 items, respondents are asked to specify their opinions about each item on a 7-point scale (Moghaddam, et al (2013). This scale measures social intelligence based on three subscales which include social information processing, social awareness and social skills. Below are the highlights of the dimensions of social intelligence construct.

Social Information Processing: This describes social interaction within current cognitive processes: the awareness and acceptance of social situations, the defining and setting of targets, the searching of feedback or social solutions, the taking of optimal decisions, the implementation of chosen action, while at the same time observing its effectiveness (Silvera et al., 2001; Friborg et al., 2005; Gini, 2006) in (Sudraba et al, 2014).

Social Awareness: This refers to the ability to listen to others, understand fully what was not said or partially expressed thoughts and feelings; the ability of the individual to be part of a group or a team; the ability to take decisions; to recognize culture and value aspects and how these aspects influence an individual`s actions and behavior; a desire to help others in order to satisfy his or her needs as well as to comprehend other people's needs before they are defined (Silvera et al., 2001; Friborg et al., 2005; Gini, 2006) in (Sudraba et al, 2014) .

Social Skills: According to Sudraba et al, (2014) social skills encompass responsibility, self-control, persistence, and cooperation. A high social intelligence has to do with interest of social issues with a necessity to work with others and often is involved with developed organizational skills (Sudraba et al, 2014).

2.2 The concept of Intention to stay:

Intention to stay is defined as employees' intention to stay in the present employment relationship with their current employer on long term basis (Johanim 2012; Muhammad and Umar 2012). On the other hand, turnover intention refers to as when individual thinks, plan and wish to leave the job (Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, and Meglino, (1979). However, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) in Ghazali (2010) described the definition of intention in detail where they refer to an intention approach as "a theory of reasoned action". According to this theory, a person's intention is a function of two basic determinants: one personal in nature and the other reflecting social influence (Ghazali, 2010). In terms of personal factor, it is the individual's positive and negative evaluation of performing the behaviour which can be termed as attitude towards the behavior and it also refers to the person's action to exhibit good or bad behavior (Ghazali, 2010). The second determinant of the intention is a personal perception of the social pressure to perform or not perform the behaviour in question (Ghazali, 2010).

Intention to stay mirrors the employee's level of commitment to his organization and the willingness to remain employed (Hewitt, 2004) in (Noraani et al, 2010). It refers to as the propensity to leave, intent to quit, intent to stay, behavioral commitment and attachment (Halaby, 1986; Mueller et al., 1999). According to Noraani et al, (2010) several studies have revealed that this concept whether it was called 'intent to stay' or 'propensity to leave', it was clearly the most important determinant of turnover (Tett and Meyer, 1993; Igharia and Greenhaus, 1992). According to Steel and Ovalle (1984), Carsten and Spector (1987) and Iverson (1996) intention to stay had a strong negative relationship with turnover respectively. Dalessio, Silverman and Shuck (1986) have emphasized that more concern should be given on intention to

stay rather than turnover, as whenever an employee exit, an organization has to incur the cost of recruiting and maintaining another employee.

Intention to stay has its base on social exchange theory. Social exchange theory was developed by Thibaut and Kelley (1959). The theory explained the reasons why individuals had personal relationships with others. The theory also specified the appropriate time when the relationships started and ended. It also emphasized on personal relationships, its costs and benefits (Noraani et al 2010). Blau, (1964) contend that; social exchange theory posited that good deeds should be reciprocated. Mossholder, Settoon and Henagan (2005) had pointed to Social exchange theory which proposed that individuals who felt that they had received benefits from others would later feel an obligation and then compensate through effort and loyalty. Effort and loyalty usually could be seen from a shear commitment to their job and strong intention to remain with the present employer (Noraani et al 2010). Employee's loyalty clearly fit within the framework of social exchange theory since it focused on citizenship behaviour whereby employees stop looking for a new job elsewhere since they felt obligated to stay and repay the organization for support they had received (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). Social exchange theory provides an avenue of transaction between sense of obligation that had led to the sense of feeling responsibility in compensating what had been given by another party which in turn would motivate positive psychological responses as suggested by several researchers (e.g. Bunderson, 2001; Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000) as cited in (Noraani et al, (2010). Through this positive psychological responses employees would tend to be more committed and loyal to the organization and stop looking for a job elsewhere (Bunderson, 2001; Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000) in (Noraani et al, (2010).

Ans et al., (2003) found employee's staying in decision has found some positive effects on the job content, social atmosphere, work-life balance, career development. Janet (2004) in her PhD thesis for retention of core employee in SMEs in Australia, argued that core employees retention higher if they get high human commitment: with human resource practice and organization factors such as selection (organization fit), remuneration and rewards. Training and career development, challenging work and opportunities and organization commitment such as leadership, team work, organizational culture and policies, work environment; Prateek et al., (2011) said organization commitment (ownership, loyalty, attachment), career advancement (career needs, career path, career planning and management), quality of work life (fair compensation, working condition, job Involvement) has some direct and independent effects organizational commitment and intention to stay of core employee. Bhavna and Swati (2012) researched on the quality of working relationships, workplace leadership, having a say, clear values, being safe, the built environment, recruitment, pay and conditions, getting feedback, autonomy and uniqueness, a sense of ownership and identity, learning, passion, having fun, community connections, that can influence organizational commitment and intention to stay of core employee in the organization.

Drawing from the above studies; it is obvious that most of these findings were domiciled in the western countries which are totally different from the Nigerian business environment. The study objective therefore is to examine the relationship between social intelligence and employee intention to stay among workers in the hospitality industry in Port Harcourt City, Nigeria.

2.2.1   Training and Development:

Nwachukwu (2006) distinguished between training and development as thus: Training is organizational effort aimed at helping an employee to acquire basic skills required for efficient execution of the activities functions for which he or she is hired. Development deals with the activities undertaken to expose an employee to perform additional duties and assume positions of importance in the organizational hierarchy. Noe et al (2004) contended that; training consists of organisation's planned efforts to help employees acquire job-related knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviours, with the goal of applying these on the job. Stoner et al (1995) elucidates that; training is directed toward maintaining and improving current job performance, while developmental programs seek to develop skills for future jobs. Training of employees in an organization can be in the form of on-the-job or off-the-job. Noe et al, (2004) defined on-the-job training as 'training methods in which a person with job experience and skill guides trainees in practicing job skills at the workplace'. Off-the-job training remove individuals from the stresses and ongoing demands of the workplace, enabling them to focus fully on the learning experience (Stoner et al, 1995).

2.2.2   Supervisor support:

The relationship between supervisor and worker play significant role in employee turnover intention paradigm. The human face of every organization is seen in their supervisors. This is because; leaders are the human face of the enterprise. Eisenberger and associates (1990) suggested that an employee view regarding organization is strongly concerned to their relationship with supervisor. If supervisor support open communication and have good relationship with employees, the employees turnover intention are likely less and more engaged with organization (Greenhaus, 1994; Muhammad, 2011).

3.   RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE AND INTENTION TO STAY

Managers need to develop their social intelligence so that they can be able to get along well with their employees and make them cooperate with them. Managers with high social intelligence will be highly effective than the one whose social intelligence is low. Managers represent the image of the organization, and therefore the employees' attitude to work depends on the impression they perceive from their superiors. Employee intention to remain on their job is directly proportional to the behavior and intelligent their managers display in the workplace. Hotel managers that exhibit presence potentials like confidence, self-respect and self-worth while carrying out assignment tend to be imitated by their subordinate and seen as a role model. Hotel managers must be socially aware of every situation in the organization by understanding the social context that influences behavior, and choose the best behavioral strategies that are most likely to be successful. To have a good situational awareness in the workplace managers need to respect employees' interest.

Hotel managers must develop their ability to express themselves clearly, use language effectively, explain concepts clearly and persuade their subordinates with good ideas that will encourage them to stay on their job instead of using harsh words that will drive employees' away from the organisation. The introduction of employees' into the hotel industry will not make them to be effective without a proper induction that will help them to understand the philosophies, policies and culture of the organization. Managers need to be socially intelligent about the benefits of induction and training. Because when induction process is completed, the employee's are likely to be effective in their various jobs and this in effect will have a positive influence on the organizational success. Induction is followed by continous training which can either be on-the-job or off-the-job training. On-the-job training occurs when employees' are trained while they are on their jobs in the organization; while off-the-job training refers to when they are taken outside their organisation for seminars, conferences, and workshops that will develop their skills and abilities to be efficient and effective. These will have a positive remark in the lives of the employees' and thus; they will not think of quitting their present jobs to look for another elsewhere but remain with their organization.

A social intelligent manager having trained his employees needs to reward them with monetary and non-monetary materials. An increased in salary for achievement will increase employee attachment to the organization. Hotel managers should encourage their employees by a way of recognizing the best employee of the month, or year, punctuality staff of the year or month, best dressed employee of the year or month. When this is done, it will be difficult for employees to quit for another job. Social intelligent hotel managers also need to coach the supervisors to be supportive to the employees in any area they find their job difficult or confusing. When an employee is stuck at the middle of a particular task, supervisor should be able to instruct the employee on how best the task can be done. When supervisors are up and doing in terms of giving a helping hand to the subordinate, it will create a harmonious relationship between the organization and the employee. And this will make the employee not to look for another job elsewhere but remain with their present organization.

4.   METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey which is one aspect of quasi-experimental research design. Sample size was determine using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table which yielded 256 workers drawn from 10 selected hotels located in Port Harcourt city, Nigeria. A total number of 154 questionnaires were administered to managers, front desk officers, housekeepers, waiters and supervisors' in the 10 selected hotels. After data cleaning, a total of 85 useful questionnaires were used for the analysis. The study units for the data generation were individual

organizational members, at the micro-level of analysis. Social intelligence was measured with a 21-items instrument adapted from Tromso Social Intelligence Scale (TSIS) prepared by Silvera, et al (2001). These scales were consistent with the works of Moghaddam, et al, 2013; Eshghi et al, 2013; Soleiman et al, 2012; and Birknerová, (2011). Intention to stay was measured with a 14-item instrument. The Likert type scale ranging from strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, to strongly agree. These were used to indicate agreement on each of the items. The instrument validity was achieved through professional agreement, while the reliability was achieved through Cronbatch Alpha test. Nunnally (1978, p. 245) recommends that instruments used in basic research have reliability of about .70 or better. In this test, we recorded a minimum of 0.8 points which are higher.

Table 1.0 Test of Hypotheses for dimensions of social intelligence and measures of intention to stay

Social intelligence variables			Training & Devt	Rewards	Supervisor Suport
Spearman's rho	Social Info processing 1	Correlation Coefficient	.435	.425	.328
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.004	.000
		N	85	85	85
	Social Skills 1	Correlation Coefficient	.435	.352	.526
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.003	.000
		N	85	85	85
	Social awareness 1	Correlation Coefficient	.336	.538	.352
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.000	.005
		N	85	85	85

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
Source: Research survey data (SPSS Output) 2014

Table 1 above shows the test of hypotheses on the aspect of social intelligence dimensions and measures of intention to stay using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) with the aid of SPSS version 20.0. The results on the table above show that all the null hypotheses were rejected on the basis of the insignificant correlation values ($p < 0.05$). Having rejected the null hypotheses, we therefore accept the alternate hypotheses as thus;

Ha_1: there is a significant relationship between social information processing and training & development; Ha_2: there is a significant relationship between social information processing and rewards; Ha_3: there is a significant relationship between social information processing and supervisor support; Ha_4: there is a significant relationship between social skills and training & development; Ha_5: there is a significant relationship between social skills and rewards; Ha_6: there is a significant relationship between social skills and supervisor support; Ha_7: there is a significant relationship between social awareness and training & development; Ha_8: there is a significant relationship between social awareness and rewards; Ha_9: there is a significant relationship between social awareness and supervisor support

5. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on the summary of findings, we arrived at the following conclusions. Our study revealed that social information processing increases as training and development, rewards and supervisor support also increases among workers in the hospitality sector. Social skills increases as training and development, rewards and supervisor support also increases among workers in the hospitality sector. Our study also revealed that social awareness increases as training behavior, rewards as well as the support from the supervisor also increases among workers in the hospitality sector.

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations were made: Hotel owners should encourage employees by sending them for training, seminars, conferences and workshops to avoid turnover. Hotel workers should be encouraged by a way of recognizing talented employees and rewarding them for a job well done. Hotel supervisors should be up and doing in their assignment by helping other new employees to carry out their functions efficiently and effectively. Hotel managers should use the findings of this study to enable them have more insight on how they can get along well with their subordinates.

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