

Chapter 14

A Comparative Analysis of Two Developing Countries

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ABSTRACT

Most of the studies on IT personnel turnover intentions were carried out in the developed countries. Only a few researchers have focused on developing countries. The authors' study makes a comparative study of IT personnel turnover intentions in two sub-Saharan African countries (Botswana and Nigeria) using the Igarria and Greenhaus turnover model. The intent was to find out if the same model elements affect turnover intentions in the two countries. The results show that demographic variables (age and length of service), the role stressors (role ambiguity and role conflict), the career related variables (growth opportunity, supervisor support and external career opportunities), job satisfaction and career satisfaction have direct effect on turnover intentions in these two developing countries, while other affectors in the research model do not hold equally for the two countries, except for growth opportunity.

INTRODUCTION

With virtually every business and government in the world being dependent on ICT, the IT profession is a significant component that drives global ICT development in industries and governments. Thus, organisations must compete and aim to retain the best of the IT profession (Colomo-Palacios, Casado-Lumbreras, Misra & Soto-Acosta, 2014; Okpara, 2004). To be able to compete globally in business,

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-3917-9.ch014

government and community development, the calibre of IT professionals is exceptionally important. Extant literature has dealt with turnover intentions by studying organisational characteristics on the IT personnel that include career anchors, organisational commitment, organisational support, job satisfaction, culture and some demographic factors (e.g. Chhetri, Afshan & Chatterjee, 2014; Ninh, 2014; Igbaria and Greenhaus, 1992; Colomo-Palacios, Casado-Lumbreras, Misra, & Soto-Acosta, 2014). However, comparative studies on turnover intentions of IT personnel in different cultures are still few as noted by Felfe and Yan (2009), and Ramesh and Gelfand (2010); and the dearth of this in developing country contexts is clearly evident.

The paucity of comparative studies on turnover intentions in developing countries necessitates the study in two developing countries, Botswana and Nigeria. The two countries are in sub-sahara Africa although they contrast sharply in terms of population demographics. Botswana has a population of 1.84 million people (Internet World Stats, 2008) whereas Nigeria has over 160 million inhabitants (WEF, 2012-2013). A study by Uzoka, Mgaya, Shemi, Akinnuwesi, & Kitindi (2011) to examine the turnover intentions of IS personnel in Botswana had found that employees who work in the parastatal organisations showed the least satisfaction (38.8%) with the career development support given by their employers. Government employees, in particular, expressed deep dissatisfaction with all aspects of supervisory support, thus forcing them to want to quit their current jobs. In Nigeria, literature on turnover intentions of IT personnel has not surfaced much. However, a related study by Okpara (2004) on job satisfaction found that IT managers 'were satisfied with their job, co-workers, and supervision, whereas they were dissatisfied with their pay and the promotion system.'

This study aims to compare the turnover intentions of IT personnel in these geographically similar contexts to gain insight on the most significant resource in the ICT industry of these developing countries. According to the African Development Bank (2012) Botswana's economy remains one of Africa's success stories, having transformed itself from a Least Developed Country at the time of independence in 1966 to a Middle Income Country within three decades, although it is still challenged by high unemployment rate of 17.6%, poverty level of 20.7% and high income inequality. The characteristics of the Botswana IT environment take on the government of Botswana as the main employer of most IT personnel in the country. The National ICT policy (NICT Policy, 2007) stipulates very high demand for ICT, and various other projects have been streamlined to meet the demand in the country. These developments so far underscore the need for IT personnel both in private and public sectors of the economy. This is in contrast with Nigeria that is vast and grandly populated by such huge margins of IT personnel. Economically, the country is endowed with various resources in agriculture, oil production and services exports although the overall benefits are constrained due to corruption, inadequate supply of infrastructure and lack of funding for business entrepreneurship (GITR, 2012).

This study examines the turnover intentions of IT personnel in Botswana and Nigeria by employing Igbaria's model of IS employee turnover intentions (Igbaria & Greenhaus, 1992). A comparative study is therefore critical as it provides lessons on how the IT personnel can be retained. Furthermore, such lessons would be valuable to managers in these countries and other similar regions - to provide guidance on how to retain and support qualified IT personnel in these contexts. The rest of the paper is organised as follows: Section 2 examines related literature in the area of IS/IT personnel turnover intentions. Section 3 outlines the methodology of the study. The results of the data analyses are presented in Section 4, and are discussed in Section 5, while some conclusions are drawn in Section 6.

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