



**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB  
EMBEDDEDNESS, EMPLOYEE INTENTION TO STAY  
AND WILLINGNESS TO UNDERTAKE TRAINING:  
THE MODERATING ROLE OF CULTURAL  
ORIENTATION AMONG NIGERIAN BASED ICT  
MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES.**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Transformative digital technologies and innovation have lead to an upsurge in demand for highly skilled specialists both within the ICT sector as well as other sectors of the digital economy. In particular, as technology is making it increasingly feasible to decentralize task from companies directly to freelancers that put up performance on gig platforms, there has been a significant surge in the competition for attracting, retaining, and optimizing productivity for highly-skilled ICT professionals among multinational ICT companies. Having this in mind, this study examines how job embeddedness may translate into intention to stay and willingness to undertake training. In addition, it explores the moderating influence of cultural orientation in this relationship. To achieve this aim in an empirical atmosphere, survey data would be elicited from employees of (4) multinational ICT companies that are presently operating in Nigeria, by making use of a three wave cross lagged technique. The three steps moderated mediated regression analysis would be utilized as an instrument of data analysis. The practical implication of the study is that that its findings stands a chance to be utilized by human resource departments, human resource consultants in designing embeddedness programs to foster manpower retention particularly in multinational ICT companies. In addition, it would assist those multinational companies being characterized by culturally diversified workforce in making use of cultural orientations to explore varied retention techniques that can be adapted to the*

*preferences of relevant individual with the view of achieving an optimal level of employee retention and employee training outcomes.*

**Keyword:** *Job Embeddedness, Retention, Training, Culture, ICT, Multinational*

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## **Introduction**

Transformative digital technologies and innovation have resulted into an upsurge in demand for highly skilled specialists, both within the ICT sector as well as in other sectors of the digital economy (International Labor Organization, 2019) This means that there is a global shortage of skilled ICT workers which may negatively impact economic growth and limit job creation (Manpower Group, 2016). Based on a report released by OECD (2018), around 3.5 million people were employed as ICT professionals in 2018. Thus while the growth in employment grew by over 29 per cent between 2006 and 2018, the same growth is projected to be as high as 11 per cent over the period 2018 to 2030 (OECD, 2018); thus meaning that in real term, an additional 395,000 new jobs will be created. Furthermore, since an estimated 1.2 million people are expected to leave the occupation as a result reasons bordering on retirement and illness, the total number of ICT vacant position that will need to be filled between 2018 and 2030 would amount to 1.6 million making it clear there will be a substantial demand for people to work in the occupation. As had been envisaged, the availability of highly-skilled ICT specialists is increasingly turning to an important competitive factor for local companies whose area of specialty is the provision of IT services to industry 4.02 and within ICT, and for innovative industries and services that are currently being developed (African Development Bank, 2018). Thus based on this trend, there has been a significant surge in the competition for attracting highly-skilled ICT professionals most especially among multinational ICT companies (Devi, 2016). In particular, 39 percent of multinational companies that recruited or tried to recruit ICT specialists in 2014 reported difficulties in filling the vacancies. Thus, talent recruitment and retention has become a major challenge for IT leaders: 50 percent are currently struggling in the area, while only seven percent of IT decision-makers say that hiring has been easy (Zainuddin & Noor, 2019). Thus as a result of the intense competition for this

type of skilled workforce, a major challenge faced by companies is being able to adopt a retention strategy that is capable of fending off this inter-organizational competition for skilled personnel. According to a report by Gallup, employee retention has continued to be a major challenge among global companies: of a 142-country study on the global workforce, only 13 percent are committed to their jobs.

Additionally, as technology is making it increasingly feasible for freelancers to offer skills through gig platforms, and the immense opportunities for flexibility, independence, autonomy, higher happiness and satisfaction that this business model is creating ((Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2017); it means that multinational ICT based companies are even likely to face more difficulties and challenges in terms of achieving success with retention strategies. This is even moreso as Ai Group Workforce Development declared that leading companies must attract and retain the best talent as well as implement systems to manage them and address the challenges of this emerging work model. For instance, 1 out of 6 workers that are fully employed by ICT companies would like to become a primary independent earner (McKinsey, 2019); while 60 percent of gig-dependent workers lack alternative employment because they don't want or need one (IBA Global Employment Institute, 2017).

Going forward, a highly competitive ICT multinational company must be such that is aware that it's not just enough simply to recruit able staff but to also make sure that the employees are committed, productive, and do not leave after a short period, incurring substantial turnover costs and wasting all previous training invested in them. In this regard, these companies will have to adapt their incentives, benefits policies, and retention strategies for workers that are not just driven by financial compensation (IBA Global Employment Institute, 2017). Put in another way, it has become imperative for these organizations to take stride in exploring varied retention strategies while also adapting them to the preferences of individual employees.

Job embeddedness is the degree to which an employee is stuck or enmeshed within a larger social system, as a result of numerous external or contextual forces which are labeled links, fit, and sacrifice in the organization and community that operate on a focal employee (Lee, Burch & Mitchell, 2014). While striving to be more detailed about these factors, Ghosh and Gurunathan (2015) indentified (1) the extent to which people has links to other people or

activities in their organization or communities (2) the extent to which their jobs and communities are similar to or fit with the other aspects in their life spaces, and (3) the ease with which employee would lose what if they left their job. In the opinion of Chena and Shaffer (2017) the higher the links that an employee has to the workplace or community, the more embedded such individuals will become. On the job link can be years of service, professional association, work groups, supervisors, and the organization as a whole while off the job link can be in form of religious organizations/activities, community association, marital status, or spouse occupation (Coetzer et al., 2019).

Concerning the fit dimension of embeddedness, it is assumed that "the closer one's personal views, values, and goals are aligned with those of the organization and/or community cultures, the higher the likelihood that an employee will feel professionally and personally embedded" (Mitchell et al., 2001, p. 9). On the job fit may include flexible work schedule, employee empowerment, job design, career development initiatives, skills, knowledge and competence while off the job fit could be weather, entertainment, community culture, neighbors and religion and political activities.

Lastly, it has been pronounced that the higher the sacrifice that would be made by an individual if he decides to leave, the less likely that such individual would leave (Young, Stone Aliaga & Shuck, 2013). Here, on the job perceived cost of leaving could be loss of health and retirement benefits, sports tickets, coworker relationships, educational benefits, advancement opportunities, convenience and proximity to the work location, and loss of security while off the job sacrifice may exist in the form of perceived loss of desirable community attributes such as school quality, neighborhood safety and belongingness (Ghosh & Gurunathan, 2015). In the opinion of Holtom, Mitchell, Lee and Tidd (2006) and Ma et al. (2018) these heterogeneous factors forms the basis of explanation for the variation in voluntary turnover of employees across diverse population, after controlling for the effect of popular drivers such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

While, numerous researches have been theoretically and empirically used to provide evidence of a positive relationship between employee embeddedness and their intention to stay (see; Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010; Harris, Wheeler, Kacmar, 2011; Jiang, Liu, McKay, Lee, Mitchell, 2012; Holmes, Baghurst, &

Chapman; 2013; Nicholas, Abigail, & Nicodemus, 2016; Khan, Azis, Afsar & Latif, 2018; Zainuddin & Noor, 2019); and the job embeddedness/turnover intention model has been linked with job performance and citizenship behavior (Sun et al, 2011; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008); organizational trust and commitment (Li, & Jintao, 2007); turnover and entrepreneurship activities of hi-tech employees (Yi-Yuan & Xue-Na, 2009), the effectiveness of knowledge work teams (Chen et al, 2010), innovative behavior (Ng & Feldman, 2010), job satisfaction (Harris et al., 2011), repatriated employees' individual identity level (Kraimer, et al., 2012); and co-worker staying intention (Felps, Hekman, Mitchell, Lee, Harman & Holtom, 2009); some contending issues that have come to the attention of this researcher is that there is lack of study and clear explanation by previous researcher on how intention to stay as an outcome of job embeddedness may exert influence on the willingness of employee to undertake career related training despite the fact that this willingness determines the intensity and persistence with which employees would apply efforts before, during and after the frequency of training programs (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001); and the suggestion by Lee, Burch, and Mitchell (2014) that embedded employees are likely to demonstrate impact in other key behaviors such as performance and citizenship behaviors, as well as the accrual of social and human capital (see; spill-over theory Edwards & Rothbard, 2000).

Additionally, considering the fact that both training and job embeddedness has been linked to improved performance outcome (see; Aragon & Valle, 2012; Razouk, 2011; Shanahan, Garavan & Carbery, 2016); and previous researchers have in particular been largely silent as to the theoretical rationale for why job embeddedness would lead to improved performance outcome (Lee, Burch, & Mitchell, 2014); we are as a consequence obliged to suggest that much less is known about the possible mechanism linking the job embeddedness and performance variables. Therefore, the current study intends to address these important gaps by introducing employee willingness to undertake training as one of the possible reason why an embedded employee, who has intention to stay would achieve higher performance. In sum by so doing, it intend to answer the call by Khan, Aziz, Afsar and Latif (2018) who emphasized the criticality of developing job embeddedness beyond the passive

concept of getting employees to remain, into an active concept of raising human capital and corporate performance.

While an essential element for training participation is the willingness to undertake training, which is the wish to be involved and a valuable first step toward subsequent involvement (Kyndt & Baert, 2013; Maurer, Weiss, & Barbeite, 2003) and a signal of taking responsibility over own development (Kyndt, Onghena, Smet, & Dochy, 2014). Training in itself refers to any activity being planned, systematic, which results in enhanced level of skill, knowledge and competency that enable employees to perform work effectively (Gordon, 1992). It is one of the most critical human resource practices that allow employees to learn and adopt new mindsets, skills, and attitudes (Hale, 1995). It can be understood as an important human or organizational factor pertaining to the recent literature (Park, Kang & Kim, 2018); which focuses on integrating aspects and practices of human resource management with the goals and objectives of organizations (Thevanes & Dirojan, 2018). In the opinion of Thvanes and Dirojan (2018) training is vitally associated with improved performance and the ability of putting organization in the best position to face competition and stay at the top.

Thus, training generates benefits for the employee as well as for the organization by positively influencing employee performance through the development of employee knowledge, skills, ability, competencies and behavior (Appiah, 2010). According to Kyndt and Baert (2013) employees with a fixed-term contract are less likely to participate in training activities compared with permanent employees. Also, the higher the involvement in paid work, the higher the payback time and the more the perceived profitability that employee and employers attached to the training (Leuven & Oosterbeek, 1999). By implication, this means that employees who have an intention to stay as a result of high level of job embeddedness are more likely to participate in workplace training due to their beliefs that such gesture would enhance their career growth and sustainability within the organization (see; the field theory, Lewin, 1951).

Furthermore, with regard to suggestion by some studies (e.g; Jiang et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2012; Chana, Hob, Sambasivan & Ng, 2019; Feng, Zhou, Li & Li, 2019) that future researchers should consider exploring the influence of cultural factors on the reaction of employees towards embeddedness, this

research also incorporate three major cultural orientations: collectivism/individualism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance (see; Hofstede, 1980) theory on cultural dimension, as potential moderator of the relationship between job embeddedness, intention to stay and willingness to participate in training exercise. Thus by so doing, it provides answers to the call by (see; Khan, Aziz, Afsar & Latif, 2018; Feng, Zhou, Li & Li, 2019; Chana, Hob, Sambasivanc, & Ng, 2019) on the need to extend the research on job embeddedness across different orientations and cultural backgrounds.

Accordingly, Hayton and Cacciotti (2014) affirmed culture as the values, beliefs and expected behaviors that are sufficiently common across people within a given geographic region as to be considered as shared. In the view of Hofstede (1980) culture guides and shapes behaviors and attitudes of people in addition to providing adaptability, focus, direction and guidance (Jumba, 2015). Based on Hofstede theory, since individualistic societies have loose ties that focuses on individual to his/her immediate family while collectivism, describes a society in which tightly-integrated relationships tie extended families and others into in-groups that are laced with undoubted loyalty and support for each other when a conflict arises with another in-group, it is expected in this research that collectivist oriented employees would react more to the effect of link factors due to the high level of premium that these set of people placed on group and association, as against their individualist oriented counterparts. Moreso, since high power distance emphasized structure, hierarchy and un-equality, it is also expected that in the context of fit factors high power distant employees would exhibit less willingness to undertake job training due to their lower beliefs in empowerment, autonomy, and personal control (Hofstede, 2001). Finally, it is expected that the relationship between on the job sacrifice and off the job sacrifice on one side, and intention to stay on the other side would be stronger among employees who are high in uncertainty avoidance as a result of their high intolerance for uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1991).

Theoretically, this study contributes since it is the first time to the knowledge of this researcher that an attempt would be made to examine a research model that link job embeddedness to outcome variable such as the propensity of employees to participate in workplace training. In the same vein, it also contributes by taking a more comprehensive approach in examining the

potentiality of different national cultural dimensions as a determinant of the boundary condition for this relationship which is the first time that such would be done to the knowledge of this researcher.

Contextually, this study also contributes by following the recommendations of (see; Khan, Aziz, the need to extend the research on job embeddedness to other cultures and industries. In this regard, this research would focus on different ICT multinational companies, to elicit data from employees who are recruited from different parts of the world, with a view of coming up with respondents who are characterized by a robust and diversified cultural

### **BACKGROUNDS.**

Methodologically, since almost all the studies on job embeddedness attend to the on-the-job component, while only a handful examined the separate dimensions of links, fit, and sacrifice both on and off the job (Lee, Burch & Mitchell, 2014); thus, as much can be learned from studying these components together especially given that researchers often find different relationships across these dimensions and across samples, this study makes contribution by examining both on the job and off the job components of embeddedness from the perspective of link, fit and sacrifice factors. Additionally, it answers the calls by previous researchers (see; Narayanan, 2016; Ferreira & Coetzee, 2013; Susie, & Bennett, 2016); on the need to make use of a more scientific research design, by introducing a three wave longitudinally designed technique.

Practically, the research makes contribution in that its findings stands a chance to be utilized by human resource departments, human resource consultants in designing embeddedness programs to foster manpower retention particularly in multinational ICT companies. In addition, it would assist those multinational companies being characterized by culturally diversified workforce in making use of cultural orientations to explore varied retention techniques that can be adapted to the preferences of relevant individual with the view of achieving an optimal level of employee retention and employee training outcomes.



## **THEORY AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### **On the Job Embeddedness and Intention to Stay**

Accordingly, the classification by Mitchell et al. (2001) identified three facets of on-the job embeddedness (on-the job fit, on-the job link and on-the job sacrifice). The perception of compatibility and comfort that employees have with their employing organization is described as fit (Marasi, Cox, & Bennett, 2016). It is the match between the personality of the individual and the characteristics of the organization (McCulloch & Turban, 2007), or the congruence between the norms and values of organizations and that of an employee (Chatman, 1989). Employees who have perception of fit should have their self-value plans and career goals in compatibility with that of the organization, in addition, to having their knowledge, abilities, skills, in tandem with job and organizational demands (Gerard, 2019). Thus, employees who have strong fit to their organization are deemed as being more professionally and personally attached to such organization (Zainuddin & Noor, 2019). In sum, an employee whose cultural value aligns with social interaction who tends to have strong fit with an organization if the organization emphasizes open door policy, flat organizational structure and open office space that discourages isolation.

On-the job link on the other hand focus on both the informal and formal connections that employees have developed over time, or presently in their possession within their organizations (Kiazad, Holtom, Hom, & Newman, 2015). Mitchell and Lee (2001) present it as a connection that exists between a worker and his team members, group, superiors and other co-workers. Accordingly, the longer an employee spends with an organization, the more such employee develops a deep-rooted relationship with significant others both in terms of quality and number, and the stronger link is developed (Fong et al, 2017); and the more likely such employee will become more embedded to the organization (Young, Stone, Aliaga & Shuck, 2013). Thus, larger number and higher magnitude of links reduces the probability of choosing to leave the organization, which may lead to severance of such links (Kooij, Tims, & Akkermans, 2017). On the other hand, the failure to develop meaningful work relationships could indicate that employees are less likely to stay with their present work situation (Mitchell, et al., 2001). Links can be social, psychological, or financial and associated with age, marital status,

number of children and their ages, years of service (Young, Stone, Aliaga & Shuck, 2013).

Furthermore, the term on-the job sacrifice as been coined by Marasi et al. (2016) as the psychological and material losses employees perceive they will experience if they break links with their organizations. For instance, employee may likely make a sacrifice of long term relationship, job related benefits, promotional opportunities, health and retirement benefits, sports tickets, coworker relationships, educational benefits, proximity to workplace, pension, job security and relocation expenses if they leave their current job (Marasi et al. 2016). Thus, when employee have a clear knowledge of this potential loss in the event that he leaves, it is likely that he would become more embedded and not want to quit the organization (Holtom, Tidd, Mitchell, & Lee, 2013). Thus in sum, the more employees perceives that they must give up as a result of quitting the job; the harder it becomes for that individual to translate their quitting intention into action (Allen, Peltokorpi, & Rubenstein, 2016).

### **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ON-THE-JOB EMBEDDEDNESS AND INTENTION TO STAY**

Accordingly, the three facets of on-the job embeddedness which comprises of fit, link and sacrifice has been described as having the capacity to equip satisfied employees with the intention to stay more with the organization because employees draw more positive energy from being satisfied with their high level of embeddedness which keeps them away from leaving their organization (Zainuddin & Noor, 2019). According to Mitchell et al.'s (2001) job embeddedness theory, deeply embedded employees have multiple, close connections at workplace, goal and value congruence with the organization which makes it quite likely for them to remain in their current position than those who are less in these attributes. This view has been largely supported by the commitment literature (see; Brockner 1992) which indicates that employees who have high level of workplace embeddedness will continue to exert efforts, increase efforts to cement relationship with the organization, tend to set goals within their organizations; and are motivated to stay and work in their organizations higher degree of interconnectedness with their peers, and more social capital leading to increase in focus on opportunities (Feng, Zhou, Li & Li, 2019).

From the perspective of Conservation of Resource Theory (Hobfoll, 1989); individuals strive to retain, protect, and build resources they value. Thus, in the event there is a threat to these valued resources, employees may protect them by engaging in proactive coping (Hobfoll, 2001). Based on the submission by Halbesleben and Wheeler (2008) the three components of organizational embeddedness (link, fit and sacrifice) can be termed as valued resources which have been accumulated over time within the organization, and in the intention of the employees to protect (Feng, Zhou, Li & Li, 2019). For instance employees with more connections with colleagues ( high links) have better access to advice and receive supports on the job while those who holds particular skills that match with their current organizations ( high fit) have intrinsic motivation to fulfill tasks (Feng, Zhou, Li & Li, 2019) and those with high sacrifice have access to health and retirement benefits, advancement opportunities. Hence these employees have the urge to protect these vital resources because they are difficult to obtain and unique to their current organization and position (Kiazad et al., 2015). By the virtue of the awareness that they would not take away the links with colleagues, fit with the organization and the sacrifice they may have to make by leaving (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008); their desire to remain with the current job and preserve these resources becomes highly motivated (Feng et al, 2019). Conversely, some empirical studies have lent support to this line of reasoning by uncovering a negative relationship between this facet of job embeddedness and employee turnover intention (see; Crossley et al., 2007; Halbesleben & Wheeler 2008; Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010); in such a way that employees characterized by high link, fit and sacrifice are found to be more committed in their intention to stay put with the organization. Thus on the basis of these, the following hypotheses are proposed.

- 1a) there is a significant relationship between on-the job link and intention to stay among employees in Multinational ICT companies.
- 1b) there is a significant relationship between on-the job fit and intention to stay among employees in Multinational ICT companies.
- 1c) there is a significant relationship between on-the job sacrifice and intention to stay among employees in Multinational ICT companies.

### **Off-the Job Embeddedness and Intention to Stay**

This facet of job embeddedness has also been presented by Mitchell et al., (2001) as workplace external constraint that makes persons remain wherever they resides, and can include institutional resources, transportation, the contiguous natural settings, neighbors' and demographic profiles, professional network services, and social support systems (Gonzalez, Ragins, Ehrhardt, & Singh, 2018). It is defined as the extent to which an individual is enmeshed in the non-work spaces where he/she has a deep psychological and emotional relationship, such as relationships with family/friends, involvements in hobbies or social activities, and any other important aspects in the non-work spaces (Feldman et al., 2012).

More specifically, the fit aspect of off-the job embeddedness refers to the physically powerful bond among members of a close extended family or community. It is regarded as the perceived compatibility or comfort with the non-work spaces which may range from activity of personal interest to the environment at large (Chan, Ho, Sambasivanc, & Ng, 2019). For instance the more an employee is of the perception that his values coincides with the religious organization, national language, amenities, political and religious climates, the arts and culture, educational institutions, climate, beaches, wild-life of the environment where he resides (Nguyen, Taylor, & Bergiel, 2017); the more the employee is likely to become more embedded (Lee et al., 2014); because leaving his current job for another one in another environment would translate into a forfeiture of these fit attributes.

Furthermore, off-the job link, like on-the job link represents individuals' formal and informal relationships with the significant others in the community (Zainuddin & Noor, 2019). It is a strand in the community that ties an employee and his family members in the financial, psychological and social web. This type of link factor includes non-work friends, groups, and association which aid in facilitating job embeddedness in that any increase in the number of relationship between employees and the web makes such employee to become more tied to his organization (Mitchell et al, 2001).

Off-the-job sacrifice indicates the perceived cost of material, social or psychological benefits that may be forfeited by leaving the non-work spaces (Chan, Ho, Sambasivanc, & Ng, 2019). In the opinion of Holtom and Inderrieden (2006) those attributes can exist in the form of membership of an

association, involvement in outdoor activities that the employee likes, safe neighborhood, public transportation system and good elementary schools. For instance, if an employee has a membership of a local professional community which imbibe employees with the opportunity to garner career support, gain specialized knowledge, or is an active and important member of community organization such as the church, or has a working partner or schooling children (Kiazad et al, 2015); this can bind him/her and family members to such community and hence, leading to workplace staying intention (Hom et al, 2012).

### **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OFF-THE-JOB EMBEDDEDNESS AND INTENTION TO STAY**

Since the three non-work dimensions of link, fit, and sacrifice usually influences both the work and family life of an employee, it is therefore deducible that the high level of attachment which emanates out of this type of embeddedness will act to lessen employees chance of quitting their job (Zainuddin & Noor, 2019). Based on Conservation of Resource theory (Hobfoll, 1989) communities that supply abundant resources are likely to bind workers or their families to their residential locales (Feldman et al., 2012). For instance, it has been highlighted that employee who are duly satisfied with their job and at the same time enmeshed in non-work factors in their community would be more prone to embracing staying intention because of not having reasons for leaving ((Lee et al., 2014) which means that in the presence of highly satisfied work-force, the extent to which a company creates positive community environments can have tremendous influence on employees stay intention (Lee et al., 2014). In this regard, it has been advised by Lee et al (2014) that organizations should foster staying intention by providing office locations near high-quality schools and in cities with pleasant weather; facilitating access to community attractions; and providing opportunities for staff to become involved in the local community.

Meanwhile, it has argued by some authors (see; Allen, 2006; Wheeler et al., 2012; Halbesleben et al., 2014; Feldman et al., 2012) that organizations must embrace an in-depth strategic stance in making use of this type of retention strategy, as a result of some critical reasons. For instance, off-the-job embedding forces tends to exercise little impact on staying intention when the

residential location is such that employee can easily find alternative employment. Under such circumstance, a job switch can be readily made for better fit or greater benefits without any plan of location change or being made to forfeit communal attributes in the form of fit, link or sacrifice factors which means that organizations may only achieve optimization of non-work embedding factor if they place emphasis on offering a superior and competitive on-the job factors. Nevertheless, the following hypotheses are also presented.

2a) there is a significant relationship between off-the job link and intention to stay among employees in Multinational ICT companies.

2b) there is a significant relationship between off-the job fit and intention to stay among employees in Multinational ICT companies.

2c) there is a significant relationship between off-the job sacrifice and intention to stay among employees in Multinational ICT companies.

### **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE INTENTION TO STAY AND WILLINGNESS TO UNDERTAKE TRAINING**

Training is considered to be a fundamental component of any human resource management (HRM) function as it contributes to the cultivation and development of human knowledge, skills, behaviors and attitudes (Shanahan, Garavan & Carbery, 2015). Therefore, organizations who wish to survive and compete in the present-day knowledge-based global economy have to acquire and develop world-class human resource as well as facilitating a conducive atmosphere for employee self-development (Aradhana & Anuradha, 2005; Moideenkutty, Al-Lamki, & Murthy, 2011). Thus, the tendency to delegate responsibility for one's own development from the organization to the individual employee is becoming more and more apparent (Willyerd & Mistick, 2016); due to the fact that participating in training opportunities has emerged as one of the most important ways for employees to respond to societal and industrial changes and to keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date (Kyndt, Govaerts, Dochy, & Baert, 2011). This unwavering attestation has lead contemporary researchers to the need for investigating proven antecedents of employee willingness to participate in career related training with the view that the applicability of such knowledge would aid in fostering training motivation and training benefits (Shweiki, Martin, Beekley, Jenoff,

Koenig, Kaulback, Lindenbaum, Patel, Rosen, Weinstein, Zubair, & Cohen, 2015).

Aside from personality, some other factors that have been identified as source of employee training motivation are job involvement, career commitment, and organizational commitment (Le-pine & Noe, 2000; Brown, 1996; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; (Mathieu et al., 1993). Though, the intentional strive of employee to maintain a continuous stay with the organization was not the main object of focus by these authors, the fact that both psychological and cognitive identification of employee with the organization on one side, and career planning goals on the other have been identified as the key reasons why these variables have pressing effect on employee willingness to undertake training should serve as a clear pointer as to why the intention to stay variable would propel employee to undertake career related training. This is predicated on the fact that embedded employees who have a corresponding staying intention should aside from having cognitive and psychological identification with the organization, should also have the drive to create and update clear, specific, plans for achieving career goals (Kyndt & Baert, 2013; Kiazad, Holtom, Hom, & Newman, 2015; Nafei, 2015).

For instance, it is expected that employees who are highly involved and committed to their job and organization as a result of their intention for continuous stay would be more likely motivated for training participation because this can increase skill levels, improve job performance, and increase feelings of self-worth (Martineau, 1995). Similarly, employees who have plan for long term stay with the organization should engage in a long term career plan, and therefore sees career related training as a veritable tool for the achievement of those goals that are enshrined in the plan (Van Hootegem, De-Witte, De-Cuyper, & Vander-Elst, 2018). For embedded employees who have intention to stay, it is expected that the perceived benefits associated with training participation both on their job, career, and personal development objectives would imbibe them with the willingness and motivation to participate (Bulut & Culha, 2010). Thus, employees with long term career plans within organizations are expected to take more responsibility for enhancing current skills and adding new ones to meet up with current job demands, prepare for leadership opportunities, while also ensuring their own employability both within and across organizational sphere (Molloy & Noe,

2010). This view has been corroborated by Feng, Zhou, Li and Li (2019) who noted that highly embedded individuals are motivated to stay, tend to set goals within their organizations, and are motivated to deploy skills that could help them stay

Following the Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1975) and proactive personality theory by Bateman and Crant (1991) in which the criticality of training related investment which could be in terms of time, energy, and money were emphasized to typically manifest in years of education, amount of experience, grade or level achieved, or hierarchical position (see; Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005; Ng & Feldman, 2010); then it may not be farfetched to suggest that if embedded employees with staying intention sees this investment as a means of self-accomplishment and self-affirmation, then they are likely to be proactively involved in these practices. In line with the expectancy theory (Vroom (1964); people choose to become member of particular organizations and environment bringing some expectations and desires with them. These expectations could be termed as link, fit and sacrifice which they believe would either determine their quitting or staying decisions. Thus in as much as these expectations are duly met by the organizations and community, they become enmeshed and commit themselves in terms of future plans and career anticipation. In sum, if participation in training exercise is viewed as a means of achieving these plans and career anticipation, this gives insight to suggest that they would channel their effort towards this end (Shweiki et al, 2015). This is even more so as Feng, Zhou, Li & Li (2019) found in their study that the relationship between internal social capital occupational future time perspectives is only significant when organizational embeddedness was high. Having it in mind that occupational future time perspective was conceptualized in their study as long term career planning, then it gives reasons to suggest that job embeddedness would act to exercise an effect on both staying intention as well as the intention to make use of training as a developmental strategy. Arising from these arguments, the following hypotheses are also proposed.

3a) there is a relationship between on-the job link and employee willingness to undertake training and this relationship is mediated by employee intention to stay.



3b) there is a relationship between on-the job fit and employee willingness to undertake training and this relationship is mediated by employee intention to stay.

3c) there is a relationship between on-the job sacrifice and employee willingness to undertake training and this relationship is mediated by employee intention to stay.

4a) there is a relationship between off-the job link and employee willingness to undertake training and this relationship is mediated by employee intention to stay.

4b) there is a relationship between off-the job fit and employee willingness to undertake training and this relationship is mediated by employee intention to stay.

4c) there is a relationship between off-the job sacrifice and employee willingness to undertake training and this relationship is mediated by employee intention to stay.

### **THE MODERATING INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL VALUES**

Based on Hofstede cultural dimensions, three cultural orientations: collectivism/individualism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance shall be considered in this study based on their potential ability to serve as a boundary condition under which job embeddedness factors may exercise effect on employee to stay and their willingness to undertake training.

In individualistic cultures, for instance, “an individual is perceived as an independent entity whilst in collectivistic cultures he/she is perceived as an “interdependent entity” (Twumasi, Emeto, Lindsay, Tsey & Malau-Aduli, 2019 pp. 2). Individuals from collectivist culture takes decisions based on the perception of the significant others around them and are willing to compromise their personal interest (Guan et al, 2015). This gives reasons to suggest that embedded employees, who have a collectivist orientation, would be more independent minded, be more willing to exploit different adventures in terms of occupation and environment, and thus employ more creativity in opportunity recognition and exploration. Also, the staying intention of significant others in an individual, s network (link factor) both within the organization and the community may have more influence on employees with a collectivist cultural value compared with others from individualistic

background. This owns to the fact that collectivist oriented individuals are programmed to conform to familial and societal standard while individualistic cultures are oriented around independence, self-reliance, freedom and individual autonomy (Oettingen & Zosuls, 2006; Sinha, 2014). Thus as a result of the extra pressure that may be exercised on individuals from family or group members, an embedded employee from this culture should have a staying intention that is higher compared to an individualistic oriented individuals who are deemed to be less under this type of influence (Darrat, Amyx, & Bennett, 2017). In consistent with this view, The empirical studies of Wüst and Leko Šimić, (2017), and Polenova et al., (2018) among bicultural Asian American youths in the United States showed clearly that opinions of significant others matter significantly to youths from collectivist cultural settings as against youths in individualistic cultures where youths tend to focus on satisfying their personal interests.

Power distance defines the degree of acceptance of disparity in position and authority between people in an organization or society and a measure of the interpersonal power or influence between superiors and their subordinate (Hofstede 2001). Highly power distance cultures exhibit an unequal distribution of power, strong hierarchies and also, control mechanisms are present (Kreiser et al, 2001); while emphasis is placed on subordinates being respectful to those in positions of power (Yeboah, 2014). According to Shane (2002) the greater a society stresses a social hierarchy, the less the innate inventiveness that would tend to characterize such society. Also, and as innovation is change and hierarchies tend to minimize change (Paul & Steve, 1998); then a high power distance oriented employee who have intention to stay as a result of both components of embeddedness may have less initiative for undertaking training but would rather prefer to continuously depend on instructions from superiors and high-ups for day to day organizational problem solving. In a similar vein, Mead (2003) noted that in low power distance cultures, employees tend to have zero tolerance for close supervision and that technical education and competence are used to acquire expert power rather than to signal social status.

Accordingly, Hofstede et al. (2010) argue that schools in high power-distant cultures are teacher-centered where teachers are viewed as having monopoly over knowledge as compared to low power-distance cultures where schooling

is learner-centered, students take learning initiative and learning gains are attributed to the effective interaction between the student and the teacher, with both sides sharing responsibility for successful learning. This view has been corroborated in the empirical research by MacMillan (1992) who report that entrepreneurs in low power distance culture were more likely to believe in taking the initiative and control of their destiny, were willing to take charge and direct others, and were positively oriented toward adaptation and change. Last, uncertainty avoidance specifies the preference for certainty and uneasiness with unstructured or ambiguous situations (Yeboah, 2014). Furthermore, it explains a society's lack of tolerance for uncertain, unknown, or unstructured situation and a preference for certainty and conformity (Hofstede (2001). According to Hofstede (2010) individuals high in uncertainty avoidance tend to minimize risk and are prone to find out ways for its avoidance. Additionally, researchers have found that perceived risk affects people's risk attitudes, which in turn determines their behavioral intentions toward that risk (Brewer, Chapman, Gibbons, Gerrard, McCaul, & Weinstein, 2007). For instance these individuals in high uncertain culture tend to be suspicious of new products and view new products less favorably than those in low uncertainty avoidance cultures in addition to having fewer tendencies to make a purchase of these products (Lee, Garbarino, & Lerman, 2007). Thus in the context of this study, it is contended that regardless of the psychological and material losses employees perceive they will experience if they break links with their organizations, a highly embedded employee who have low level of uncertainty avoidance should be more willing to take risk and go out of its comfort zone to exploit opportunities in other organizations or geographical environment despite the perceived ambiguity that is associated with the outcome from this action and vice versa. This is in line with the argument by Chew and Putti (1995) who pointed that because of the need to avoid risk associated with the unknown, individuals who score high on uncertainty avoidance tend to have long tenure with their organizations; by becoming committed to organizational goals and values and continuing in their relationship with the organization because of the potential loss in leaving (Clugston, Howell, & Dorfman, 2000). On the basis of these arguments, the following hypotheses are also presented

5a) the relationship between on-the job link and employee willingness to undertake training through intention to stay would be moderated by collectivism/individualism

5b) the relationship between off-the job link and employee willingness to undertake training through intention to stay would be moderated by collectivism/individualism

5c) the relationship between on-the job fit and employee willingness to undertake training through intention to stay would be moderated by high power distance/low power distance

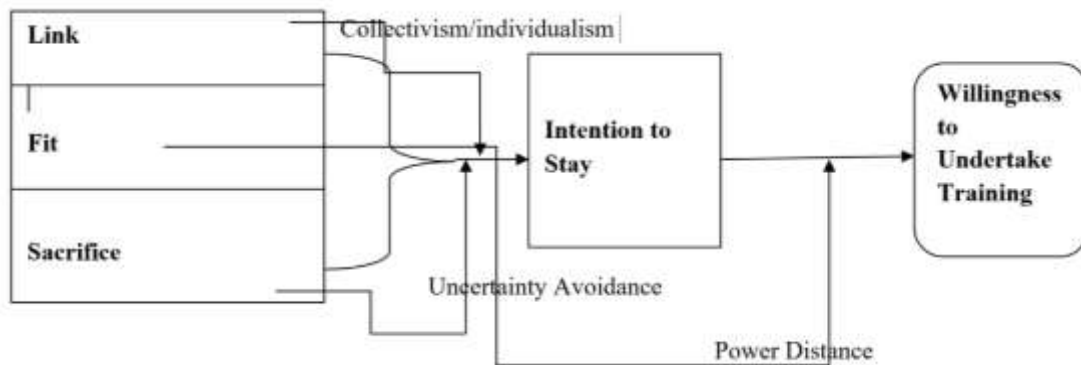
5d) the relationship between off the job fit and employee willingness to undertake training through intention to stay would be moderated by high power distance/low power distance

5e) the relationship between on the job sacrifice and employee willingness to undertake training through intention to stay moderated by high uncertainty avoidance/low uncertainty avoidance

5f) the relationship between off the job sacrifice and employee willingness to undertake training through intention to stay would be moderated by high uncertainty avoidance/low uncertainty avoidance.

## **PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Based on the literature review above, this study extend on the Conservation of Resource theory, Hofstede theory of cultural differences and expectancy theory to propose a conceptual framework which argued that there is a relationship between the three components of job embeddedness and willingness to undertake training and that this willing is mediated by their intention to stay with the organization. In addition, it is also proposed that this relationship is moderated by collectivism/individualism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance. See table 2.1 below.



## CONCLUSION

On one hand, taking into account the crucial importance of training and skill acquisition to organizational competitiveness and survival, the effect that job embeddedness and staying intention may have on this willingness and the potential moderating power of cultural values in these relationship on the other hand, it is clear that any result that emanate from the research model proposed in this study would aid in enriching the job embeddedness literature while also aiding in crafting an embeddedness strategy that will lead to an optimal staying intention and training outcome especially among employees in ICT multinational Companies. In this regard, the model recommended in an empirical settings.

## PROPOSED METHODS

### Design

A three wave cross lagged longitudinal descriptive survey design would be employed. During the first wave (time 1) self administered and structured questionnaires that measures all main variables and control variables would be distributed to sample elements from the four ICT multinational companies. Based on the number of those that returned the questionnaires, another round of questionnaires measuring the same set of constructs would be distributed 3 months later in a second round of survey after matching (time 2). In the third round of survey (time 3) after 3 months, the same set of items would be circulated while the total number of employees that returned questionnaire would make up the final sample.

## **POPULATION**

The population of the study is the employees of four (4) ICT multinational companies: Hewlet Parkard, Microsoft, IBM, InterSwitch Limited. These companies are selected as a result of their core business competencies which focus on the manufacture of Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure and the delivery of ICT related services. Besides this fact, the researcher is of the opinion that picking multinational companies would provide a platform of eliciting data from employees who are recruited from different parts of the world, and are thereby characterized by a robust and diversified cultural orientation. The management of these companies would be approached with a letter of introduction, stating the purpose and intention of the study. In addition, an ethical approval in form of a letter would be sought and obtained from the organizations, welcoming the researcher and stating their maximum cooperation.

## **PROPOSED ITEMS OF DATA COLLECTION**

For the measurement of the three components of job embeddedness, the 21 item Scale by Holtom, Mitchell, Lee, and Tidd (2006); which was adapted from the original 41 item scale by Mitchell et al. (2001) would be utilized. It is a self-rating instrument and consists of 21 items that captures all six sub dimensions of job embeddedness. In their development of measure study, a strong correlation ( $r = .92$ ) was uncovered between the original long form and the revised short form. Also, after job satisfaction was controlled for, both versions significantly predicted voluntary turnover ( $p = .001$ ), which gives evidence of predictive validity for this shorter measure (Felps, Mitchell, Hekman, Lee, Holtom and Harman, 2009).

For the measurement of employee intention to stay, the 5 item Mobley et al (1978) employee retention questions would be utilized. In previous study, a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .90 was found for employee retention by Mobley et al. (1978). Another study by Yin-Fah, Foon, Chee-Leong, and Osman (2010) indicated similar results with a score of .90, which fell above the general accepted level of .70 value as recommended by Hair et al. (2006). Also, employee willingness to undertake training would be measured by a 4 item scale, adopted by Van- Hootegem, De-Witte, De Cuyper and Vander Elst (2018) from the original version by Forrier, Sels, Van Hootegem, De Witte,

and Vander Steene (2003). This scale has a cronbach Alpha internal coefficient reliability of .78, and ask questions on employee willingness to undertake training to strengthen to strengthen their position within the organization.

Finally, the three components of cultural dimensions would be measured by a 16 item scale, based on Hofstede cultural dimensions (individualism/collectivism (6 items) uncertainty avoidance (6 items) and power distance (5 items). In their attempt to conduct an individual level validation of these items, Yoo, Donthu and Lenartowicz (2011); concluded that these items possess adequate reliability, validity, and across-sample and across-national generalizability. Specifically, it was found among 1,530 American, Korean-American, and South Korean undergraduate students by Yoo, Donthu and Lenartowicz (2011); that the reliability of these items ranged from .91 and .79 (power distance) for Americans and Koreans, .85, .89 (collectivism) for American and Koreans and .88, .79 (uncertainty avoidance) for American and Korean.

All these items would be presented on a response scale ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” to (5) “strongly agree”.

## **PROPOSED METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS**

First, all the retrieved copies of the questionnaire distributed would be double checked for accuracy and completeness after which they will be serially numbered before entering them in the computer program for analysis. Also, efforts will be made to check for missing data and outliers using dots plots while also checking for normality by using normality plot and histogram (Kirkwood & Sterne, 2003) before computing the statistics on mean and standard deviation. Next, a confirmatory factor analysis would be performed on the main variables to further enhance their validity while a correlation analysis would also be performed to determine the extent of association among the main variables.

Further, in order to make the data set to be more suitable for regression analysis, the assumptions of linearity, Homoscedasticity and multicollinearity would be satisfied (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Concerning the mediation hypothesis that was earlier proposed, the main effect of both the predictor variable (job embeddedness) and the proposed mediating variable

(intention to stay) on training in addition to the indirect effect of the former on training would be determined through a three model analysis by employing the “Process” macro script, and a bias-corrected confidence interval 5,000 bootstrap samples. Though, tests of mediation have traditionally followed the “3-step” approach put forward by Baron and Kenny’s (1986) in their seminal paper, this approach is now recognized as problematic on multiple grounds (see for instance Hayes, 2013). Hence, bearing in mind that the former process has the required flexibility as well as the ability to provide tests of statistical inference of the actual indirect effect, it was considered more appropriate in this study.

Concerning the moderation hypothesis, the hierarchical moderated regression analysis would be utilized (Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken, 2003). In this regard, the control variables would be entered in the first step. In the second step and third step, the predictor variable (job embeddedness) and the proposed moderating variables (cultural values) would be entered respectively while the interaction terms, which is the product of cultural orientations and job embeddedness as a function of employee willingness to undertake training through their intention to stay would be calculated in the fourth step by following the centering procedure as recommended by (Hayes, 2013).

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