

Full Length Research Paper

Job embeddedness and employee performance in selected oil and gas companies in Bayelsa state of Nigeria

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Despite the relatively high pay employees receive in oil and gas companies in Bayelsa State, some seem not to be happy about the uncertainty in their work environment. This is possibly the reason why the employees in this industry do not look back when they get job offers outside the community. This problem prompted this study on the extent to which job embeddedness correlates with performance of employee in selected oil and gas firms in Bayelsa State. The specific objective of the study is to address the extent to which community fit relates to employee retention. The research question and hypothesis were drafted considering the specific objective of the study. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Two hundred and fifty three was derived as the population, and complete enumeration was used. Data were analyzed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The result revealed that there is a significant correlation between community fit and employee retention in the studied oil and gas firms. The study concluded that high job embeddedness which was measured by community fit can help to keep the employees from leaving the organization (employee retention) which was also used to measure employee performance. The study recommends that oil and gas firms in Bayelsa State should focus on community fit as an effective strategy in improving relations between workers and the community to guarantee the retention of the employees.

Key words: Job embeddedness, employee performance, community fit and employee retention.

INTRODUCTION

In a dynamic and competitive environment, keeping employees with high performance in oil and gas sub-sector is among the major strategies for developing and retaining core competencies as a source of competitive

advantage. This is not surprising, because frontline employees are the image of an oil company, play an important role in service delivery, can improve customers satisfaction through service recovery, and influence how

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customers perceive brand image (Cinjarevic et al., 2010; Ivankovic et al., 2010; Karatepe and Sokmen, 2006; Lajh and Dosen, 2009).

Keeping employees committed to the organizational objectives seems to have become a top priority for many oil and gas firms in Bayelsa State. To adapt and cope with the ongoing militancy in the Niger Delta of Nigeria, oil and gas firms in Bayelsa State seem to be struggling to employ and retain employees who can fit into the host communities.

As an employee retention strategy, job embeddedness seems to be a latent motivator in this process. Job embeddedness refers to the combined driving motivators that keep a person from leaving his or her job (Yao et al., 2004). Links, fit and sacrifice are the three essential factors of job embeddedness (Yao et al., 2004). Links are defined as formal or informal connections between a person and institutions or other people, and sacrifice referred to as the psychological and material gains that an employee would lose at any given time if he/she chooses to leave an organization (Yao et al., 2004). Fit refers to an employee's perceived compatibility or comfort with an organization and with his or her environment (Mitchell et al., 2001). These dimensions are linked to on-the- job embeddedness and off-the- job embeddedness (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Most times, the oil and gas firms in Bayelsa State seem to prefer young employees who know the terrain of the environment and who can cope with the current challenges in this area. It is therefore imperative that these oil and gas companies create employee retention practices and adopt them so as to increase employee's performance. These companies face a lot of problems when they have a high turnover rate due to employees leaving the company for reasons such as militant attacks and poor working conditions. However, most of the companies are exploring avenues to make their employees adapt and perfect their community fit in the host communities.

As expected, employees in oil and gas firms in Bayelsa State view the rate of militant attacks they experience within their companies with great concern. Despite the relatively high pay level employees receive, some appear unhappy about the incessant attacks and high rate of uncertainty in their work environment. This is possibly the reason why the employees in this industry do not look back when they get job offers outside the Niger Delta region because they have no friendships or relationships to maintain in the host community. It is a truism that the oil companies train their employees to be capable in handling all types of assignments and jobs, but they seem to ignore the need for employees to fit into the community and surrounding environment (Mitchell et al., 2001). This has made the oil workers to behave as if they have little or nothing to give up when they have a better job offer and they seek employment even when they are still working for the company. This tends not to

improve the employee performance affecting the achievement of organizational goals and objectives.

The aforementioned problem prompted this research work to determine the extent of the relationship that exists between job embeddedness using community fit as an indicator and employee performance adopting employee retention as an indicator in studied oil and gas firms Bayelsa State. The general objective of the paper is to ascertain the extent of the relationship that exists between job embeddedness; community fit as an indicator and employee performance; employee retention as an indicator in selected oil and gas companies in Bayelsa State. The specific objective of the study is to identify the extent of correlation that exists between community fit and employee retention in selected oil and gas firms in Bayelsa State.

Research question of the study

To what extent does community fit relates to employee retention in selected oil and gas firms in Bayelsa State.

Research hypothesis

H_a: There is a significant correlation between community fit and employee retention in selected oil and gas companies in Bayelsa State.

Scope of the study

The study was limited to the oil and gas companies operating in Bayelsa State. They include; Conoil, Nigeria Agip Oil Company, AITEO Eastern and Western Exploration, Chevron/ Texaco Oil and Gas, Bfax Oil and Gas Company and Sodacorf Oil and Gas Company.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job embeddedness

Job embeddedness (JE) is the collection of forces that affect employee retention (Mitchell et al., 2001). It can be differentiated from turnover in that it stresses on all of the factors that keep an employee on the job, rather than the psychological process one goes through when quitting (Reitz and Anderson, 2011).

Job embeddedness is conceived as a major mediating construct between specific on-the- job and off-the- job factors and employee retention. It shows a focus on the accumulated, generally non-affective reasons why an employee would not leave a job, which comprises a sort of stuckness, inertia, or bias toward the status quo. Each of the three dimensions –fit, links, and sacrifice has an

organizational and a community component. Though both organization and community are abstractions that are socially constructed, they capture domains in which people can be embedded. That is, job embeddedness can be divided into two major components: on-the-job embeddedness (that is, organizational fit, links and sacrifice) and the off-the-job embeddedness (that is, community fit, links and sacrifice) (Mitchell et al., 2001).

The study will focus on the off-the-job embeddedness. The concept of embeddedness was used by Grenovelt (1985) for the first time and he describes how social relationships affect the economic activities in sociology literature. He examined the factors (on-the-job and off-the-job) from broader perspective to determine why employees continue to remain in their workplace.

Job embeddedness is a new construct developed to conceptualize a more comprehensive view of the employee-employer relationship then is typically shown by attitudinal measures such as satisfaction or commitment (Wageeh, 2015). Job embeddedness is a collection of forces which enmesh or embed people within organizations. Consequently, the embedded employee neither finds it more difficult to leave or not to leave the organization to which they have become a part. It is a collection of psychological, social and financial factors that determine employee retention (Wageeh, 2015).

Job embeddedness is the combination of material, financial and psychological influences that keep an employee from quitting his or her job (Mitchell et al., 2001). Theoretically, work place friendships could increase job embeddedness by creating social relationships, perceptions of fit and greater sacrifice of having to quit work friends if a better job opportunity was present (Wageeh, 2015). Job embeddedness is conceptualized as influencing the decision to remain through the level of links a person has to other people or activities, the extent that the person's job and community are congruent with the other aspects of their life and the sacrifices a person would make in the process of leaving their employment (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Dimensions of job embeddedness

The three component factors of job embeddedness include links, fit and sacrifice (Mitchell et al., 2001). Job embeddedness explains why employees remain in an organization based on a number of influences rather than solely on positive job attitudes. Job embeddedness suggests that people remain in organizations based on three criteria which are influenced by elements both on the job and in the community. The criteria according to Mitchell et al. (2001) are:

(1) The level to which they relate to other people and activities

(2) The level to which they feel they suit in their work place and host communities

(3) What they would have to sacrifice if they quit the organization (Mitchell et al., 2001).

The links aspect of embeddedness posit that employees have formal and informal links with other stakeholders on the job end, as the number of those links increases, embeddedness also increases (Holtom et al., 2008). Fit is an employees perceived compatibility or comfort with an organization and with his or her environment. Sacrifice concerns the perceived costs of leaving the organization, both financial and social. The higher the perceived costs, the greater the embeddedness (Lee and Eberty, 2003). The greater the extent of fit, the higher number of links and level of sacrifice, the more embedded an individual will be in his or her job (Sekiguchi et al., 2008).

Links

Link indicates the extent of the relationship between the employees to and others within and outside the work place. Links means that each individual is linked to stakeholders in the organizations officially or unofficially (Wang and Ye, 2013). This reflects the formal and informal relationship between a person and institutions or other people. The higher the number of these links, the more the employee is committed to job and organization (Wang and Ye, 2013). Some organizations furnish their employees with relevant information on how to relate to the local community. These strategies of the organizations are useful to strengthen the employees' link between organizations and local community (Dong-Hwan and Jong-Min, 2012). The employees are more attached to the work place when they have tight links with their community. An increase in this type of social links creates a normative pressure to remain in the organization (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Fit

Fit can be defined as perceived comfort the employee has with an organization or his or her environment (Snow, 2002). For managers to reduce turnover in the organization, employees must be made to fit well in the organization's environment (Snow, 2002). An employee perceives to fit to a job when there is match between the employees' knowledge, skills and interest with the demand of the environment (Chinomona et al., 2013).

Employee performance

Employee performance is a defined as the employee's ability to achieve his/her goals (Miller and Broamiley,

1990). It is a combination of employee's skills, resources and capabilities that are being used efficiently and effectively in order to achieve his/her objectives. Employee performance is measured as the level of the outputs of the employee after conducting operations on his/her inputs. Individual performance has become a major issue in today's business environment, so much that organizations adopt every strategy to appraise and manage it (Armstrong and Baron, 1998). Employee performance is a function of knowledge, skills, abilities, and motivation directed at the prescribed behavior or such as a formal job responsibilities (Campbell and Kennedy, 1999). Employee performance refers to the effectiveness of individual behaviours that contribute to organizational objectives (McCloy et al., 1994).

Employee retention

Employee retention is one of the key indicators for measuring employee performance. It is conceptualized as the ability of an organization to keep their employees (Allen, 2008). A pay is not a critical indicator in inducing turnover as it is typically believed (Allen, 2008). An employee may begin to search for other opportunities if he/she perceives poor satisfaction and commitment in the organization. Employers need to retain their high performers who have knowledge and skills that are critical for the organization to maintain a competitive advantage. Employee retention strategies are initiatives taken by management to keep employees from leaving the organization such as ensuring harmonious working relations between employees and management; employees and the community and maintaining a safe, healthy environment (Cascio, 2003). Employee retention can be defined as the ability of the organization to keep its employees. It also relates to the efforts by which employees adopt to keep employees in their workplace (Allen, 2008). Employee retention in this sense, is a strategy rather than an outcome. Employee retention can be used to draw a distinction low performing employees and top performers in the organization. Employee seems to withdraw and begin to look for other opportunities when they perceive lack of satisfaction and commitment (Allen, 2008).

Theoretical framework

The paper is anchored on the; person – environment fit theory. This theory was propounded by French et al. (1974). This is propounded as a method for comprehending the process of alignment of organizational members with their work place and environment. This theory argues that stress arises due to the mismatch between the employee's skills, knowledge, resources and abilities on the one hand and the demand

of the work environment, on the other hand. It explains the link between the employee and the environment in shaping their attitude to work and actions, but also stresses the need for employee's perception of the environment, and the interaction between them. The importance of the theory to the study is that the employees in the oil and gas companies in Bayelsa State seem to perceive their work not properly fitted and aligned to the activities in the host community they operate in, and this could reduce their morale to continue to stay in the company.

Empirical review

Karatepe (2013) carried out a study on inking perceived ethical climate to performance outcomes: the mediating role of job embeddedness. A conceptual model examining job embeddedness as a mediator of the impact of perceived ethical climate on job performance and extra-role customer service is developed and tested. Data obtained from frontline hotel supervisors in Nigeria through the use of questionnaire. 143 copies of questionnaires returned from a possible 200 respondents, representing 71% response rate. Structural equation modeling was used to analyze the data. The findings showed that job embeddedness fully mediates the effect of perceived ethical climate on frontline employee's performance outcomes.

Wageeh (2015) carried out a research work on the relationship among job embeddedness, organizational cynicism and employee performance in Sedat City University, Egypt. A total of 400 copies of questionnaires were returned representing 58% response rate for the study and hypothesis tested. The study adopted regression analysis. The findings revealed that fit, links and sacrifice significantly relate with organization cynicism and employee performance Van Dyk et al. (2013) conducted a study on satisfaction with retention factors as predictors of the job embeddedness of medical and information technology services in South Africa. Primary method of data was used and quantitative cross-sectional survey design was adopted. Sample size of 206 was used; Multiple Regression Analysis was adopted for the study. The findings revealed that retention factors were shown to be predictors of the participant's sense of job embeddedness.

Onyeizugbe and Asiegbu (2017) in their study on job embeddedness and employee performance in selected commercial banks in Anambra state adopted correlational survey design and multiple regression was used to analyze the data. The results revealed that 94% variation in employee satisfaction was explained by changes in job fit. Hakan (2016) in his study determined the relationship between job embeddedness and burnout levels of academics working at a State University in Turkey. Pearson Product Moment Correlation technique was

adopted to analyze the data and questionnaire was used to collect data. A population of 120 academics was used for the study and findings reveal that there is a positive relationship between community-related sacrifice (off the job embeddedness) and performance.

A study was carried out by Nicholas et al. (2016) on job embeddedness and to explain turn over intention among hotel staff in Ghana. Cross sectional quantitative design was conducted on a probability multi-stage sampling of 309 staff in the hotel industry of Sekondi-Takoradi metropolis. A binary logit regression model was used for analysis. The findings revealed that job embeddedness correlates positively with turnover intentions.

Ferreira and Coetzee (2013) carried out a study on how job embeddedness influences black employees. A cross-sectional quantitative survey was conducted on a non-probability sample of 355 employees in South Africa. Canonical correlation analysis and structural equation modeling were used to analyze the data. Results revealed that organizational commitment relates significantly with job embeddedness.

Obi-Nwosu et al. (2013) did a study on job characteristics as predictors of organizational commitment among private sector workers in Anambra State of Nigeria. 232 respondents participated in the study. Two instruments were used: Job Characteristics Scale (Hackman and Oldham, 1975), and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire. The study revealed that job characteristics and embeddedness are indicators of employee's commitment.

Irefin and Mohammed (2014) carried out a study on job embeddedness and employee commitment in Coca Cola Nigeria limited. The Stratified Random Sampling Technique was adopted and a total of 100 copies of questionnaire were retrieved out of 120. Pearson Product Moment correlation was used and the study revealed that there is a strong correlation between job embeddedness, employee commitment and employee turnover. Angga et al. (2015) carried out a study on influence of job embeddedness on job performance and job satisfaction through mediator's job involvement in pharmaceutical firms in Indonesia. The study adopted survey research. Structural equation modeling was also adopted in analyzing the data. The result revealed that job embeddedness relates directly to job performance.

Cojocar (2011) developed and tested a conceptual model that determines the relationship among management commitment to service quality, job embeddedness, and performance outcomes. The aforementioned relationships were tested via data generated from employees in the four and five-star hotels in the Poiana Brasov region in Romania using hierarchical multiple regression analysis. The findings showed significant relationship among management commitment to service quality, job embeddedness and performance outcomes. Nwagbara (2017) study was on impact of social media on stakeholder interaction on

sustainability in Nigerian oil and gas industry. The objective of the study was to find out how information dissemination and retrieval could help to manage corporate-stakeholder relations, engagement, and communication. The study hoped to stress the need that democratization of stakeholder engagement will effectively manage conflict in oil companies in Niger-Delta region.

Jegede et al. (2013) carried out a study on knowledge sharing and innovation on the local content in the Nigeria's petroleum sector. Descriptive statistical tools were used to analyze the data collected. The study found out that high costs, lack of skilled human resources are the problems of innovation. The study concluded that there should be increased indigenous participation to enhance desired local content status. Musa et al. (2013) in their study on corporate social responsibility in Petroleum sector in Nigeria. The study specifically looked at the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in resolving conflicts in Niger -Delta region of Nigeria. The small and medium enterprises trading in the sector were included in the study. The study concludes that CSR is a form of social license to enhance acceptability in the host communities.

The empirical literature reviewed showed that job embeddedness is the collection of forces that influence employee retention. Job embeddedness is conceived as a key-mediating construct between specific on-the-job and off-the-job factors and employee retention. They focused on the accumulated, general non-affective reasons why an employee would not leave a job, which comprise of a sort of stuckness, inertia, or bias towards the status quo, and they pointed that each of the three dimensions of job embeddedness –fit, links, and sacrifice has an organizational component.

Karatepe (2013), Wagee (2015), Van Dyk et al. (2013), Obi-Nwosu et al. (2013), Irefin and Mohammed (2014), Hakan (2016), Ferreira and Coetzee (2013) and Okpoku et al. (2016) focused only on the organizational component of job embeddedness, they did not look at the community aspect which is a critical factor in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria. Yusuf et al. (2013) only looked at corporate social responsibility and indigenous participation to enhance local content status.

None of the studies reviewed has a model that depicts the interconnectivity between community fit and job retention, hence this study is set out to address this gap, which is very critical in the oil and gas industry in the Niger Delta of Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study used correlational survey design because it is best suited to ascertain the extent of relationship that exists between the independent variable (community fit which was used to measure job embeddedness) and dependent variable (employee retention which was used to measure employee performance).

Table 1. Total population of oil and gas firms in Bayelsa State.

S/N	Name of company	No. of staff
1	Conoil	46
2	Nigeria Agip Company	55
3	AITEO Eastern and Western	38
4	Chevron /Texaco Oil and Gas	52
5	Sodacorf Oil and Gas	34
6	Bfax Oil and Gas Company	28
	Total	253

Field survey (2016).

Table 2. Reliability result.

Cronbach's Alpha	Part 1	Value N of items	0.875
	Part 2	Value N of items	0.841 5 ^b
Total number of items			10
Correlation between forms			0.859
Spear-brown equal length			0.924
Coefficient unequal length			0.924
Guttman Split –half Coefficient			0.884

Source: Field survey (2016).

Computation: SPSS Ver 20.

The study adopted total population of the oil and gas companies operating in Bayelsa State. This consists of two hundred and fifty three staff. Simple random sampling technique using table of random numbers was adopted in the selection process. In this process, each unit in the population was given equal opportunity of being selected. No sample size was determined because of complete enumeration that was adopted. The total population is shown in Table 1.

The study made use of a structured questionnaire which was structured on a 5-point likert scale (Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1), which helped in transforming the hitherto qualitative responses into quantitative values for easy analysis. The instrument was validated using content, construct and face validities. This was achieved by sending draft copies of the questionnaire alongside objective of the study to an expert in measurement and evaluation. After adjusting and changing the languages in some of the items in the questionnaire, the instrument was certified valid (Appendix 1).

The study adopted split-half reliability technique to test the level of consistency of the research instrument. Spearman –Brown split half statistical tool with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20 was employed. The coefficient obtained was 0.924 as it is shown in Table 2. The computation is shown below:

$$R_{SB} = \frac{2r_{hh}}{1 + r_{hh}}$$

r_{hh} = Pearson correlation of scores in the two half tests

$$R_{SB} = \frac{2 \times 0.859}{1 + 0.859}$$

$$R_{SB} = \frac{1.718}{1.859}$$

$$r_{SB} = 0.9242$$

The strong correlation showed that the instrument was reliable. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used in testing the hypothesis formulated and Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20 was used in running the analysis.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Questionnaire allocations and retrieval

Two hundred and fifty three copies of questionnaire were distributed and two hundred and eleven copies were returned. This showed 83% response rate (Table 3). The table shows the descriptive statistic. The mean values were used to present the data and the acceptance region is 3 and above while the rejection region is below 3.

Table 3. Analysis of research questions.

S/N	Questionnaire items	SA	A	SD	D	UN	N	\bar{x}
	To what extent does community fit relate to employee retention	5	4	3	2	1	-	
Community fit (CF)								
1	I relate with indigenes of the community where my company is located	11	13	76	111	1	211	2.6
2	I attend social functions organized by members of the community	9	23	29	145	5	211	2.5
3	My family live with me in the community	7	17	123	64	-	211	2.8
4	My children go to school in the community	12	14	67	118	-	211	2.6
5	Members of the community are not hostile to employees of my company	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Employee retention (ER)								
6	I will not leave my company for another one	23	23	56	87	22	211	2.7
7	I am not looking for another job	54	15	63	77	2	211	3.2
8	I am in this company because this is what I want in my career	77	89	-	19	26	211	3.8
9	I feel a sense of belonging and am comfortable with my company	43	59	22	78	9	211	3.2
10	If I am offered a job outside this community, I will not accept it	12	29	87	80	3	211	2.8

Field survey (2016).

Table 4. Correlation result.

Correlations		CF	ER
CF	Pearson correlation	1	0.891**
	Sig. (2- tailed)		000
	N	211	0.211
ER	Pearson correlation	0.891**	1
	Sig. (2- tailed)	0.000	-
	N	211	211

**Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 – tailed).

Source: Field survey (2016).

Computation, SPSS Ver. 20.

Test of hypothesis

Table 4 shows the correlation result from field survey.

DISCUSSION

The finding revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between community fit and employee retention. The implication of the finding is that if the employees fit properly in the host community of their company, there is likelihood for them to continue to work in the company but if the reverse is the case, turnover intentions will be high. This also shows that community fit of the employees in these companies with groups and individuals outside the organization will make them to be more committed in their jobs. This is because the more employees build links, it will be difficult for them to leave

those links they have built in within and outside the organization for a new organization where they are not sure about the kind of friends they will have and whether they can relate well with them. This supports the view of Karatepe (2013), Wagee (2015), Van Dyk et al. (2013), Hakan (2016), Ferreira and Coetzee (2013) and Okpoku et al. (2016). They affirmed that job embeddedness which community fit is a component that relates positively with employee retention which is an indicator of employee performance. The findings are in agreement with person-environment fit theory which explains the interaction between the employee and the environment in shaping their attitude to work and actions, and also stress the need for employee's perception of the environment and the interactions between them. From Table 4, there is a significant relationship between community fit and employee retention with a correlation coefficient of 0.891.

It is also significant as the P – value is less than 0.05 at 2-tailed test (P – value < 0.05). Community fit which is one of the indicators of job embeddedness determines how satisfied employees will be with their jobs. Retention rate of employees in these companies are also predicted from looking at how embedded employees are to the companies in terms of how fitted they are in the work environment.

Conclusion

The study concludes that job embeddedness (community fit) would result to more organizational success, and more collective efficacy. There is a direct exponential impact relationship between community fit and employee retention. Workers in the oil and gas companies in Bayelsa State with high community fit enjoy working in the company.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. There is a need for oil and gas firms in Bayelsa State to focus on community fit as an effective strategy to improve relations between employees and the community. The greater the extent of fit, the more embedded an individual will be in his or her job.
2. There is a need for the oil and gas firms to develop organization culture that will support and encourage community fit as part of job embeddedness, this will enhance mutual trust between the host community and the employees.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire

Instruction: Tick (√) in the space provided

Section A

Personal data

Please tick () in the box where appropriate

(1) Sex

(a) Male () (b) Female ()

(2) Age

(a) 20 – 30years () (b) 31 – 40years ()
 (c) 41 – 50years () (d) 51 – 60years ()

(3) Educational qualification

(a) WAEC/SSCE () (b) OND/NCE ()
 (c) HND, BSc () (d) MSc, MBA, PhD ()

(4) Marital status

(a) Single () (b) Married ()
 (c) Widowed () (d) Divorced ()

(5) Name of organization: _____

Section B

Note: SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, U - Undecided, D- Disagree, SA-Strongly Disagree.

S/N	Questionnaire items	SA	A	SD	D	UN	N	\bar{x}
	To what extent does community fit relate to employee retention							
Community fit (CF)								
1	I relate with indigenes of the community where my company is located							
2	I attend social functions organized by members of the community							
3	My family live with me in the community							
4	My children attend schools located in the community							
5	Members of the community have not been hostile to employees of my company							
Employee retention (ER)								
6	I will not leave my company for another one							
7	I am not looking for another job							
8	I am in this company because this is what I want in my career							
9	I feel a sense of belonging and am comfortable with my company							
10	If I am offered a job outside this community, I will not accept it							