Employees' Emotional Hardiness and Intentions to Quit in the Public-Sector Organization in Nigeria

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Abstract
We examined employees' emotional hardiness and intentions to quit employment in Nigeria. Data were generated from 118 respondents. The Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was utilized as test statistic in assessing the hypothesized relationship. Results indicated that the psychological resources of commitment, control, and challenge dimensions of employee emotional hardiness had significant (albeit) negative relationships with intentions to quit. The study found that an increase in the dimensions of employee emotional hardiness moderates the intentions of employees to quit. We recommend management should encourage regular training of employees in hardiness, enhance good social support in work relationships, and encourage the use of effective stress management strategies to mitigate intentions to quit, arising from such distressful circumstances.
Keywords: Employee Emotional Hardiness, Commitment, Control, Challenge, Intention to quit, Thinking of quitting, Searching for alternative career, Desire to leave or stay.
DOI: 10.7176/PPAR/12-2-02
Publication date: April 30th 2022

INTRODUCTION

The mantra chanted by organisational scholars and practitioners concerning employee retention, has attracted profound attention over the years (Lumely *et al*., 2010; Gqubule; 2006; Vand de Merwe, 2005; Ramakrishna & Patosky, 2003). Regardless of their structural configurations and sizes, organizations are becoming more conversant that, one critical and lasting source of their strategic potentials lies in their adroitness to maintain and retain talented and prolific workforce, towards goals accomplishing, (Becker, 2007). Interestingly, one rudimental factor that has unceasingly mitigated against this element of management function, is the intentions of employees to quit their employment relationships (Halawi, 2014). According to Kim *et al.* (1996), and Bothma & Roodt (2012), intention to quit pertains to an employee's cognizant and deliberate willingness to exit the organization. Mxenge *et al.* (2011) posited that, intention to quit is the terminal phase of the sequence of an employee's intent to quit, having a proven efficacy of manifesting and predicting real turnover beheavour (Rizwan *et al.,* 2013; Cohen & Golan, 2007), when examined in the context of Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned actions. This is so because, the intention of an employee to quit, reflects the person's thought and attendant resolve to do so (Park & Kim, 2009).

As a multi-dimensional construct, intention to quit is perceived to be influenced by a gamut of individual, organizational and external factors (Gurpreet, 2007; Halawi, 2014). While the individual factors involve: stress (Ahmad, *et al*., 2012); demographic factors encompassing gender, tenure, academic qualifications and age (Jonathan *et al*., 2013, as cited in Mxenge *et al*. 2014), work as family conflict (Frone, 2003); locus of control and self-efficacy (Firth *et al.,* 2003); the Organizational factors include: role ambiguity and role conflict (Menon & Aknilesh, 1994); career anchors (Lambert, 2006); human resource practices and organizational culture (Park & Kim, 2009; Carmeli, 2005); social support and organizational support (Moore, 2002); satisfaction with pay and supervision, organizational commitment and procedural justice. The external factors then include: family structure, perceived community support (Vincent & Thompson, 2002); demoralization amongst peers (Staw, 1989); performance orientation (Harrison *et al.,* 1996). This connotes that the intentions of employees to quit their employment relationships is predicated on a wide expanse of antecedental and triggering factors.

A volume of scholars acknowledge that the quitting intentions of employees predict their turnover behaivours (Tuzun & Kalemci 2012; Mxenge *et al*., 2014). This implies that intention to quit is significantly associated with actual turnover or exit behaviour (Brigham *et al.* 2007). Consequently, this nexus, may have accounted for why a volume of scholars research the quitting intentions of employees as basis for addressing the challenging problems of voluntary employees' turnover organizations face. On the one hand, while turnover accompanies healthy and positive outcomes such as the infusion of novel ideas and talents for competitive advantage (Rehma *et al*., 2012), on the other hand, it is perceived to be toxic and costly for organizations

(Hellman, 1997). Voluntary turnover exposes the management of organizations to incure costs emanating from administrative, temporary replacement, recruitment and selection, as well as decreased productivity from exiting members, and social interactional gains (Frank *et al*., 2004). This is why it has become imperative for organizations to identify factors that can mediate the intentions of employees to quit their employment relationships and their actual turnover behaviours.

Recently, one personality characteristic that has been brought to the fore by organizational scholars, as a protective mechanism in coping with stressors adversarial work situation, is "emotional hardiness" (Garrosa *et al*., 2010; Rasouli *et al*., 2012; Eschleman & Bowling, 2012). Hardiness elucidates the resilience of an individual's predisposition to the toxic effects of strains and the ability to adapt and cope with strenuous environments (Kobasa *et al*., 1982; Hull *et al*., 1987). Individuals that are emotionally hardy, possess the capacity to control their lives, because they are committed to goals, change challenged and are also flexible to acclimatize in adverse conditions (Reece & Brandt, 2005). Similarly, hardiness is said to reduces the negative effects of stress (Kobasa – Quellete & Di Placido, 2001). This means that individuals that are emotionally hardy, have compatibility with their environments, comprehend themselves and what they do, and find meanings in them (Rasouli *et al*., 2012).

Since the "emotional hardiness" construct came to limelight through the works of Kobasa (1979), as a medium to comprehend an individual's relations with others, goals and problems, it has been extensively researched with a vista of positive correlates. Examples are: significant relationship between hardiness and job satisfaction among staff (Rasouli *et al.,* 2012); significant relationship with performance (Maddi *et al*., 2006); positive relationship with nursing success, stress and burnout (Hiseih *et al*., 2004); significant relationship with active coping and negative association with regressive coping (Maddi, 1999; Subramanian & Vinothkumar, 2009). What is aptly amplified is that, emotional hardiness of employees, is associated with an avalanche of positive outcomes.

However, a dearth of studies associating emotional hardiness and the intentions of employees to quit in organizations exist in extant literature. Consequently, this study addresses this gap by exploring the relationship between employee emotional hardiness and their intentions to quit in the Nigerian public-sector organisations, as the main research purpose. The operationalised empirical referents of emotional hardiness are commitment, control, and challenge. Thus the specific objectives of the study are:

a. To examine the relationship between the commitment dimension of employee emotional hardiness and intentions to quit in public-sector organization Nigerian

b. To examine the relationship between the control dimension of employee emotional hardiness and intentions to quit in public-sector organizations in Nigerian

c. To examine the relationship between the challenge dimension of employee emotional hardiness and intentions to quit in public-sector organizations in Nigeria

LITERATURE REVIEW
Person – Environment Fit Model
This study utilizes theoretical insight from the person-environment fit model that explains how a person is compatible, or fits into a specific workplace domain. Essentially, the theoretical thrust of the model dwells on the factors that underpin the relationship between an individual and the environment where he or she works (Mxenge *et al*., 2014). These factors embrace an array of determining factors, including motivation and ability (Caplan & Harrison, 1993). According to Gatchel & Schultz (2012), the person-environment fit model had existed and given rise to various approaches of well-being and stress. They further opined that the interaction between an individual with his or her environment appears a good medium to comprehend the person's reactions on cognition, emotions and behaviours. They also held that the effective functioning of an individual at work is a function of the fit between the person and the work environment. The point of emphasis, is the compatibility the individual have with the work environment. The model also impresses that the fitness between the individual and the environment should encapsulate the demands of the job and other associated realities. Consequently, a mismatch between the individual and the environment could result to a conflict in job performance, stress and eroded productivity (Edwards, 1992).

According to Gatchel & Schultz (2012), the person – environment fit model is an amalgam of two distinct facets of demands namely: (a) the extent of congruence between the demands of the job people get confronted with, and the abilities to meet those demands categorized as demand –ability fit; and (b) the congruence between the person's needs; physical and psychological needs inclusive, and the resources at the disposal of the person, called needs – supplies fit. What this means is that, should there be a mis-match between the individual and these two sets of demands, the stress level and the well-being of the person will be adversely compromised. Mxenge *et al*. (2014) also posited that a strong relationship exist between the person-environment fit model and organizational stress. The purport of this argument is that, a misfit between an employee and the work environment could result to stress, ultimately could make an employee experience burn-out, when prolonged

(Edwards, 1992). Consequently, when employees experience burn-out, (extreme case of stress), it will reduce their level of job satisfaction, organizational commitment and trigger their propensity to quit.

The relevance of the person – environment fit model to this study is underpinned by the premium it places on employee compatibility with the work environment. Silverthorne (2004) found that a proper fit between an employee and the organization, would lead to higher levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment and reduced turnover rates. Conversely, a misfit between the employee and the organization, would adversely result to reduced levels of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and increased rate of turnover.

Employee Emotional Hardiness

Since the emergence and popularization of the emotional hardness construct in medical literature through Kobasa (1982), it has attracted various terminologies and enormous attention from scholars, with acronyms such as hardiness (Escheman & Bowling, 2010), "hardy personality"(Garrosa *et al.*, 2000) and hardiness personality (Subramanian & Vinothkumar, 2009), and personality hardiness (Nelson & Quick, 2010). Hardiness is defined as "the use of ego resources necessary to appraise, interpret and respond to healthy stressors (Subramanian & Vinothkumar, 2009:49). Rasouli *et al*. (2012) also defined hardiness as a combination of individual and universal beliefs, which renders a person safe from the actions of internal and external pressures. The foregoing definitions, thus connote that hardiness is uniquely a health promoting factor that gives an individual the enablement to be emotionally and physically strong, regardless of stressors from situational confrontations (Maddi & Kobasa, 1984; Maddi, *et al*.,2006a).

According to Kobasa-Quellete & Di Placido (2001), hardiness depletes the adversarial potentials of stress in people. Employees who possess and show traits of hardiness have the tenacity to cope with circumstances that are stressful by repelling and turning the catastrophic postures of such situations to opportunities as well as resolving conflicts emanating from them, other than avoiding them. Two major mechanical propositions offer explanations for the efficacy of hardiness in this regard: (a) a perception of events based on optimism (Wiebe, 1991), and (b) utilization of specific coping strategies (William *et al*., 1992). A hardy personality transforms stressful circumstances through coping, by either changing the challenging events or perceiving them optimistically (Ford- Giboe & Cohen, 2000). Furthermore, individuals that are hardy, have the courage and motivation to participate in different tasks of socially supportive interactions (Subramanian & Vinothkumar, 2009). Therefore, we are thus inclined to define emotional hardiness as the set of personality resources that characterize the resilience and coping of individuals in distress conditions.

Generally, the concept of hardiness has been conceptualized as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, consisting of three unique empirical referents namely: (a) Commitment (b)control and (c) challenge (Kobasa *et al*.,1992; Maddi *et al*., 2002). We shall examine these dimensions in detailed sequence as follows:

(a) Commitment: This dimension involves the extent to which an individual is engaged in diverse life perspectives, encompassing family, friends, and work (Eschleman *et al.,* 2010). The commitment dimension of hardiness, affords the individual benefits, because of the person's ability to have a sense of purpose, and developing social relationships from it, that mediates between the person and stressful situations. Kobasa (1982) also noted that although commitment to all forms of life characteristic are necessary for individuals that are hardy, but the most deserving of them, is the strong sense of commitment one shows regarding him or herself. Therefore, those that are self-committed, appraise their commitments to things that attract curiosity and appear meaningful (Maddi, 1990). In essence, the commitment of a hardy personality refers to the person's engagement in any life domain (Garossa *et al*., 2010).

(b) Control: The control dimension of hardiness elucidates to the extent to which an individual believes that he or she has control over events that occur in the person's life. Scholars have since realized that people have an in-born desire for control, which ultimately benefits them intrinsically (Bouling *et al*., 1984; Bowley *et al*., 2010). The perceptions of control people ha, enable them to effectively manage their environments and envisage future threats that can affect their well being. This implies that, those that are deficient of its control mechanism of hardiness, are easily susceptible to stressful situations in their environments (Vander Doef & Maes, 1999). While those who are ardent in the control dimension, believe that they possess the ability to predict and control life occurrences around them (Rasouli *et al*., 2012).

(c) Challenge: The challenge dimension of hardiness involves the extent to which individuals generally perceive difficult domains as challenges, other than perceiving them as threats. In the circumstance, two individuals faced with the same situation converging a job, may perceive their prevailing situation distinctly. On the one hand, while one of them could perceive it as an opportunity for growth, and an avenue for learning novel things, the other may perceive it as unhealthy and threatening, on the other hand. Hence this dimension of hardiness benefits individuals by enabling them to be flexible, while adapting to situations that are potentially stressful (Eschleman *et al.,* 2010; Rasouli *et al*., 2012). Consequently, individuals that are emotionally hardy are usually committed and engaged in various life perspectives, have control of events that occur in their environments, and perceive difficult and strenuous life circumstances as challenges, other than threats (Nelson & Quick, 2010). The next

segment of this discourse, examines the theoretical contour of employees' intention to quit.

Intention to Quit

The intentions of employees to quit their employment relationships, is one sphere of human resource management studies that has attracted considerable attention from an array of scholars, as a result of the constraining effect it poses managing the retention of employees in organizations. Many authors and researchers have christened the construct differently. While some refer to it as "turnover intentions" (Kaur *et al.,* 2013), and others as intention to quit", (Mxenge *et al.,* 2013), some still refer to it as "intention to leave" (Halawi, 2014). Consequently, it has attracted a galaxy of definitions. Bothma & Roodt (2012) defined employee quitting intention as the conscious and thoughtful willingness of an employee to exit an organization. Moore *et al.,* (2001) also defined the construct as an employee's conscious and reasoned willfulness to leave, an organization. Similarly, Kim *et al*. (1996), and Kaur *et al*., (2013), defined intention to leave as the extent to which an organizational member contemplates to exit an existing relationship with a current community or employer.

The foregoing definitions indicate that, the intention of an employee to quit an existing employment relationship is fundamentally a product of the person's conscious and deliberate resolve in the withdrawal continuum (Bothma & Roodt, 2012). According to Kaur *et al*. (2013), an employee's intention to quit involves an expressional mind-set of the person to change his or her present job within a specified period of time that eventually results to an actual exit from the organization. This takes the form of either a thought to leave, or a plan to remain or leave, or even a contemplation to change one's career, or a search for another, as may be prompted by a constellation of factors.

Researchers have since acknowledged that a positive relationship exist between the intentions of employees to leave, and their actual turnover behaviours. According to Schwepker (2001), a dozen of studies have indicated positive and significant relationships in this direction. In line with this position, turnover intentions of employees could stand as a proxy or precursor to employee turnover (Lambert *et al*., 2001; Halawi, 2014). The underlying presumption is that, an intention or reasoned action leads to the manifestation of an actual turnover behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). What this implies is that when employees willfully contemplate to quit their existing work relationships, it increases their propensities to exit the system they are members, or the profession.

Rizwan *et al.* (2014) posited that an employee's intention to quit can be compartmentalized into unpreventable or avoidable turnover, desired turnover, and undesirable turnover. While unpreventable turnover is usually triggered by family issues, personal ailments or retirement age; desired turnover resulting from the inability of the employee to perform; undesirable turnover encompasses the exit of skilled and trained workers due to organizational factors such as poor support, role ambiguity and conflicts, and poor supervision. They further opined that if these factors are allowed to play out, they could adversely affect customer services, product quality and corporate effectiveness. Similarly, Muellar & Price (1990), have also distinguished between voluntary turnover and involuntary turnover. While voluntary turnover pertains to the decision and choices made by employees to leave their organizations; involuntary turnover involves a decision made by an employer to terminate an employer's appointment. As it applies to undesirable turnover, voluntary turnover is associated with an array of antecedental reasons including: employee satisfaction with the job, search for better job opportunities, and resentment for organizational change.

An evaluation of the foregoing views signifies that, employee turnover intention has a proven relationship with real turnover behaviour, in which case, the turnover intentions of employees can predict their ultimate exit behaviours. Furthermore, it is argued that employee turnover is usually triggered by various antecedental factors that could be subsumed under personality, organizational and external aiges (Halawi, 2010). Finally, while involuntary turnover is healthy, voluntary turnover is found to be associated with consequences that can negatively affect organisational effectiveness and competitive advantage. Each of the measures of employee quitting intention is examined in detail, in the next segment of this discourse.

According to Mobley *et al*. (1979), turnover intention or intent has four cognitive parts, that engird the following: (a) Thinking of Quitting: As acknowledged by Park & Kim (2009), the intent of employees to quit their employment relationship is a reflection of their thoughts, that would lead to their resolve to actually leave. This implies that when employees think about exiting their employment relationships, it relates with their actual turnover behaviour. Apparently, this shows a rhymery between intention and the attendant behaviour resulting from such reasoning (Ajzen, 1991).

(b) Planning to Stay or Leave: Another premise that could be used to determine employees intention to quit is their planned consideration to either stay or leave their present employment relationships, as could be warranted by a multitude of reasons (Mobley *et al*., 1979). This means that the moment employees think between the two extremes of either changing or exiting an employment relationship, it reflects a consideration to quit. This could eventually lead to an actual exit, depending on the rigorousness of the instigating factor.

(c) Searching for an Alternative Career: The quest for an alternative career by employees, is another basis for determining their quitting intentions regarding their employment relationships (Halawi, 2014; Mobley *et al*.,

1979). For certain obvious reasons, organizational members may be inclined to search for alternative career options; if there is no compatibility between their current internal career anchors and their jobs. A harmony between internal career anchors and the jobs performed by employees, leads to a lesser intention to leave (Jiang & Klein, 2000).

(d) A desire to leave current Career: The desire by employees to leave their present career is another index for measuring their turnover intentions (Mobley *et al*., 1979; Halawi, 2014). According to Hsu *et al*. (2003), organizations are desirous to incentivize their (Jiang & Klein, 2000). Therefore, what is of primary concern is the regard, is the question of compatibility between organizational career anchors and the demands of the job employees perform that propel their intentions to quit.

From the foregoing, it thus appears apparent that, intention to quit reflects the perceptions employees have concerning their jobs in relation to other alternatives These could either be a search for other promising and fulfilling job or career opportunities. Past studies affirm that intention to quit, is one of the key predictors and indicators of employees' turnover (Griffeth *et al*., 2003; Rizwan *et al*., 2013). In the present study, what is of prime concern to us, is the relationship between emotional hardiness of employees and their intentions to quit which the next segment of this review examines, as we attempt to develop our hypothesized relationships.

Employee Emotional Hardiness and Intentions to Quit
Hardiness is an alloy of personality characteristics identified by Suzzane Kobasa (1984), as a resistance factor possessed by certain individuals, having the efficacy of neutralizing stress. Hardiness involves the capacity to cognitively or behaviourally, transform negative stressors into enterprising opportunities. According to Maddi & Kobasa (1984), & Maddi *et al*. (2000), employees that are emotionally hardy, exhibit active dispositions of coping with stressful situations. Hardy personalities employ a combination of three dimensions of commitment; the extent to which individuals get immersed in what they do, locus of control; the abilities of individuals to influence the events that appear stressful to them, and challenge; the belief of individuals that make them perceive change as part of existence. Accordingly, individuals that are emotionally hardy, build relationships with their significant others, with emphasis on mutual assistance and encouragements (Subramanian & Vinothkumar, 2013). Hence, such individuals perceive and interpret stressors in their domains positively, and equally explore control mechanisms to cope with them.

Kreitner & Kinicki (2004) posited that, potential stressors span across individual, group, organizational and extra organizational lines; usually prompted by specific circumstances, and are cognitively appraised by individuals in the work environment. Depending on the nature and tenacity of the stressor, negative or positive outcomes could emerge across cognitive, psychological/attitudinal, behavioural and physical stress dimensions, hinging on if the employee is able to cope or otherwise. One of the specific behavioural outcomes associated with negative stressors is turnover, which is an alloy of turnover intention. Others are: absenteeism, accidents, substance abuse and violence (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004). Previous studies support that such stressful circumstances erode the compatibility or fitness of the individual with the work environment in terms of psychological well being (Gatchel & Schultz, 2012). This means that a fit between the individual (resources, skills and abilities) and the work environment is a critical factor, as regards role expectations and performance (Katz & Khan, 1978; Nelson & Quick, 2010). Conversely, the inability of employees to cope with their stressful situations, could adversely result dysfunctional consequences, stimulate, and propel their propensity to quit.

A couple of studies have provided support for the usefulness of hardiness of employees in distress situations. Maddi et al. (2006) found performance benefits that are associated with employee emotional hardiness in task situations that are stress-ladden. Hardiness has also been proven to be associated with an individual's employment of active and problem-focused coping strategies for arresting stressful events (Gentry & Kobasa, 1984; Kobasa, 1984). Furthermore, hardiness is said to be positively associated with what is referred to as 'transformational coping' by individuals when confronted with stressful domains and events, through the alteration of the courses and outcomes into things that are less stressful and enterprising (Nelson & Quick, 2010). The foregoing, thus indicate that hardiness reduces the vulnerability of individuals in distress situations. To sum up, emotional hardiness is associated with a wide spectrum of benefits when employees experience stressful situations or events. In the light of the foregoing, the following hypothesized relationships are examined:

HA$_1$:   There is a significant relationship between the commitment dimension of employees' emotional and intentions to quit.

HA$_2$:   There is a significant relationship between the control dimension of employees' emotional hardiness and intentions to quit.

HA$_3$:   There is a significant relationship between the challenge dimension of employees emotional hardiness and intentions to quit.

METHODS
This correlational study utilized a cross-sectional survey design, with a view to testing the hypothesized

relationships and addressing the research objectives. A total of 200 employees drawn from the public sector in Rivers State, constituted the study population, out of which a sample size of 136 respondents was derived, using the Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) table for sample distribution. A stratified sampling technique was utilized to identify employees at the various strata. A modified instrument was used for data collection based on the following measurements of the key study variables namely: employee emotional hardiness (predictor variable) using three dimensions having: commitment, control and challenge, adapted from Maddi & Kobasa (1984) with 3 indicators. Intention to quit (criterion variable) was measured with 4 indicators from Mobley *et* al. (1979), involving: thinking of quitting, planning to stay or leave, searching for alternative career, and desire to leave current career. A five-point Likert-scale was used for data collection ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree) at both ends respectively. The research instrument was personally administered to respondents. A total of 116 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved from 118 sets of questionnaire and found usable for analyses, representing 85%. The modified instrument yielded Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0.918, 0.0904 and 0.992 for commitment, control and challenge respectively, as dimensions of emotional hardiness, and 0.973 for intentions to quit, surpassing the threshold of 0.7 (Hare *et al*; 2010; Nunally, 1970).

Data Analysis and Results
Frequencies and percentages were utilized to examine the characteristics of the sample, while univariate analysis was done using descriptive statistics to assess mean scores. The Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to examine the hypothesized bivariate relationships. Table 1 presents the demographics on the characteristics of the study sample. Specifically, emphasis in this regard, was placed on the gender, educational qualifications, and the ages of respondents.

The results shown in table 1, indicated a dominance of male (76) to female respondents (40). Also, majority of the respondents were found to possess a minimum educational qualification of a first degree. On the age distribution of the respondents, those within the bracket of 31-35years (66), dominated the participation followed by those in the bracket of 36-40years (20), followed by respondents within the age bracket of 26-30years (16), and those above 40years of age (12), and those within 21-25years of age (2) respectively. As indicated in table 1, it follows that a greater male participation in this study reflects a patriarchal system that is typical of most African societies, regarding industrial work. Furthermore, the demographics also indicated that the respondents are well educated and are of age to respond to questions posed to them reasonably, concerning the variables investigated.

Univarite Analysis
Table 2, present the result of the univariate analysis on the study variables. Employees' emotional hardiness (predictor variable), measured by the psychological resources of commitment, control and challenge, and intentions to quit (criterion variable) indicated high mean scores (4,1875, 4.4.165, 4.1573, and respectively), where $X > (3.0)$. This affirms a consensus on the opinion of respondents that employees in the public-sector organisations in Nigeria show proofs that they possess emotional hardiness, in line with the attributes mentioned above. Accordingly, respondents are also in agreement that they experience moderations in their intentions to quit their existing employments relationships, based on their hardy personalities.

Bivariate Analysis
The three hypothesized relationships were examined using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation , with the degree of significance set at 95% confidence interval as indicated in table 3.

Employee Emotional Hardiness and Intention to Quit
Firstly, the result affirms the existence of a significant but negative association between the commitment dimension of employee emotional hardiness, and intentions to quit existing employment relationships with rho = -0.551, where p = 0.00 (two tailed), hence the alternate hypothesis is accepted that there is a significant relationship between the of commitment dimension of emotional hardiness in employees, and their intentions to quit existing employment relationships. Secondly, the result also indicated the existence of a significant but negative association between the control dimensions of employees' emotional hardiness, and intentions to quit their existing employment relationships with rho = -0.416, where p = 0.00 (two tailed), hence the alternate hypothesis is accepted that there is a significant relationship between the dimensions of control of the emotional hardiness of employees and their intentions to quit existing employment relationships. Thirdly, the result also shows the existence of a significant but weak association between the challenge dimension of employee emotional hardiness, and intention to quit existing employment relationship with rho = -0.422, where p = 0.00 (two tailed), hence the alternate hypothesis is accepted that there is a significant relationship between challenge of dimension of the emotional hardiness of employees, and their intentions to quit existing employment relationships.

Findings

From the analyses and results, the following findings emerged.

(a)　Employees in the public-sector s in Nigeria possess the psychological resources of commitment, control and challenges that enable them to be emotionally hardy in moderating their intentions to quit their existing employment relationships triggered by stressors and other related factors in their work environments.

(b)　Howbeit, an increase in the commitment levels of the emotional hardiness of employees in the public-sector organisations in Nigeria further empowers them to be immersed in what they do, with a sense of purpose that moderate their intention to quit their employment relationships.

©　Similarly, an increase in the control levels of the emotional hardiness of employees in the public-sector organisational further renders them ardent to be able to influence occurrences around them with control, thereby experiencing moderations in their intention to quit their employment relationships.

(d)　Finally, an increase in the challenge levels of the emotional hardiness of employees in the public-sector organizations in Nigeria empowers them to perceive change as a part of life, by necessarily perceiving stressors as opportunities for growth and development, which moderates their intentions to quit existing employment relationships.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study which examined the relationship between employees' emotional hardiness and their intentions to quit existing employment relationships in the Nigerian public-sector organizations, found negatively significant relationships between the empirical referents of emotional hardiness (predictor variable) encompassing: commitment, control and challenge, and intentions to quit (criterion variable). The inverse relationships indentified between the study variables indicate that, as the levels of commitment, control and challenge resources of employees in the focal organizations increase incrementally, so their intentions to quit will attendantly decrease. A myriad of scholarly opinions support that, employees who are emotionally hardy, possess the psychological resources to cope with stressors in their work environments, by actively perceiving such situations positively (Nelson & Quick, 2010; Maddi *et al*., 2006; Hellriegel & Stooxiv 2010). Stress is viewed to be one of the major factors that triggers the turnover intentions of employees at work, at the individual level (Ahmad *et al*., 2012; Halawi; 2014).

However, while the findings of this study appear consistent with that of some similar studies previously conducted in other climes, using the same empirical referents of emotional hardiness, in relation with other employee dispositional variables, the findings of some other studies as well, appear partly in contrast, regarding the efficacies of the commitment, control and challenge resources in measuring overall hardiness. For instance, Harrison, Laviselle, Duquette & Semanle (2002) in their study of Quebec nursing assistants (NAS) and registered nurses (RNs), found negative relationships between hardiness, work support, and psychological distress. Similarly, Subtramanian & Vinothkuma (2009) in a study of IT professionals of BPO-Computer Software Organisations in Coimbatore (India) found a negative (albeit) significant correlation between hardiness, self-esteem and occupational stress. Furthermore, Eschlemen, Bowling & Alarcon (2010) also in a meta-analysis, found hardiness to be negatively correlated with stressors, strains, and regressive coping on the one hand, and a positive correlation between hardiness and personality traits that protect people from stress, social support, active coping and performance, on the other hand.

In slight contrast with our findings and that of other studies which we have cited in reference, while Judkins & Rind (2005) in a study of Texan nurses found negatively significant relationship between stress and hardiness with those high in commitment experiencing less stress, and a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and hardiness (for those with commitment and control), Garrosa, Rainho, Moreno-Jimerez & Monteiro (2010) in their study of nurses, identified challenge and control appraisals (not commitment) to be negatively related with exhaustion, depersonalization and emotion-focused coping, and positive correlation with accomplishment. Nonetheless, the relevance of the commitment, control and challenge psychological resources in determining overall hardiness of employees in coping with stressors, cannot be over-emphasized, as they share complimentary relationships (Eschlemen, Bowling, & Alarcom, 2010).

To sum up, the foregoing empirical evidences have logically indicated that employee emotional hardiness has proven potentials to mitigate the turnover intentions of employees in work environments that are stress-laden, as we have found in this study. Hardiness enables individuals to positively perceive their work situations that characterized by stressors, and also coping with them. The theoretical thrust of the person-environment fit model clearly elucidates the realities associated with the outcomes of this study. The model places premium on the factors that underpin the compatible relationships between employees and their work environments (Mxenge *et al.* 2014). In essence, when employees are both psychologically and physically compatible with the demands of their work environments, they will be made to experience higher levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and reduced turnover rates (Silverthorne, 2004). Conversely, a mis-match between employees and

their work environments will adversely render them gullible to all shades of dysfunctional dispositions, including withdrawal behaviours and eroded performance rates. This in turn, will negatively affect the achievements of pre-determined organizational goals.

CONCLUSION

Mainly, this study examined the relationship between employees' emotional hardiness and their intentions to quit existing employment relationships in the Nigerian public sector organisations, and found negatively significant relationship between commitment, control (or locus of control), and challenge, as empirical referents of emotional hardiness and the intentions of employees to quit their employment engagements in the said organizations. The results of the significant (albeit negative) relationships thus suggest that an incremental increase in the psychological or emotional resources of commitment, control and challenge levels of employees will accordingly deplete their intentions to quit. On this fortress of reasoning, it then follows that emotional hardiness in employees, possess the efficacy of mitigating the turnover intentions of such employees, that are usually propelled by the compelling demands of stressors, burnouts and other related factors that are integral to the workplace. A galaxy of research attempts and scholarly opinions hold that employees who are emotionally hardy are endowed with the psychological resources that enable them perceive stressors in their work environments positively, and also cope actively with such circumstances, then those who are less emotionally hardy (Kreitner, Kinicki & Cole, 2006; Hellriegel & Slocum. Jnr, 2010; Maddi *et al*., 2006).

In line with the findings of this study, however, we recommend that managers and other chieftains in the Nigeria public sector organisations should encourage their employees to imbibe and develop resources of emotional hardiness that will enable them perceive stressors positively in their work domains, thought social support, enrichment and timely rewards. Managers should also map out strategies to embark on organisational training and development programmes that will perforce the acquisition and utilization of the hardiness resources of commitment, control and challenge by their employees. Furthermore, managers at the various organisational strata, should have the dexterity to identify those of their employees that are easily amenable to stress, redesign and enrich their jobs, which on the long run, will enable them acquire the hardiness components of commitment, control and challenge. Finally, management should utilize the hardiness concept as a diagnostic strategy to identify employees who score low in that regard and encourage regular programmes that will reduce stress. When these are religiously accomplished, the hardiness resources of commitment, control, and challenge in employees who are hardly would have been reinforced, while those employees who score low in these resources, will be enabled to develop and imbibe them, and resultantly, perceive stressors in their environments positively, and become compatible with the demands of their work environments.

It is acknowledged that, employees who are psychologically and physically compatible with the raging demands of their work domains, will experience higher ratings of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and reduced turnover rates anteceded by turnover intentions, triggered by stressors (Silverthorne, 2004). This is so because, hardy individuals have been found to experience less stressors, burnouts and psychological distresses in the workplace (Kreitner, Kinicki, & Cole, 2006).

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Appendix 1
Table 1: Sample Description and Distribution

Gender			Educational Qualification			Age		
Set	Freq.	%	Set	Freq.	%	Set	Freq.	%
Male	76		First degree	19	16	21-25 years	2	2
Female	40		Masters degree	63	54	26-30years	16	14
						31-35years		
			Professionals	25	22	36-49years	66	57
			Others	9	8	40years and above	20	17
Total	116		Total	116	100	Total	12	100

Source: Research Data, 2017

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistics	Statistic	Statistic	Statistics	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Commitment	116	1.25	5.00	4.1875	.91121	-1.814	.225	2.565	.446
Control	116	1.25	5.00	4.1659	.79259	-2.242	.225	5.161	.446
Challenge	116	1.00	5.00	4.1573	.80726	-2.305	.225	6.059	.446
Valid N (listwise)	116								

Source: Research Data, 2017

Table 3: Tests for Hypotheses

		Commitment	Control	Challenge	Quit
Commitment	Pearson Correlation	1	.830	.80066	-551
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	116	.000	.000	.000
	Pearson Correlation	.830	116	116	116
			1	.917	-416
Control	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	116	116	116	116
	Pearson Correlation	.806	.917	1	-422
Challenge	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	116	116	116	116
	Pearson Correlation	-551	-416	-422	1
Quit	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	116	166	116	116

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
Source: Research Data 2017