FUTURES

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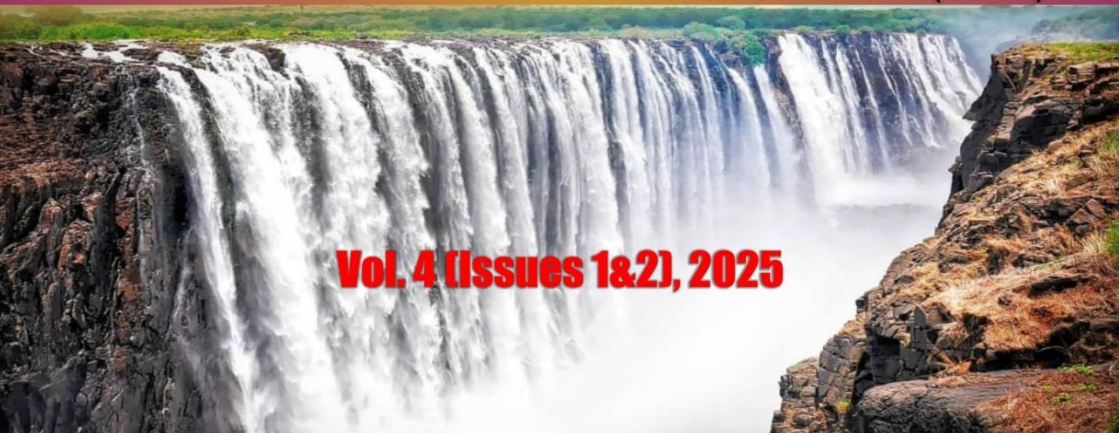
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Dr Ledwin Chimwai, Great Zimbabwe University, Zimbabwe (Bsc. Econs (UZ), Grad CE (UZ),. MCom. Ban. & Fin. (MSu),. MBA (Zou), DPhil Mgt. (CU-India).

Dr Vincent Chakunda, Midlands State University, Zimbabwe (PhD in Public Administration (UFH), Master of Commerce in Strategic Management and Corporate Governance (MSU), BSc Local Governance Studies (MSU), Post Graduate Diploma in Tertiary Education (MSU).

Dr Clemenciana Mukenge, University of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe (DPhil (UZ), MA Language for Specific Purposes (UZ), MA English (UZ), BA Special Honours in English (UZ), BA English and Linguistics (UZ).

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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI) AND EMPLOYEE TURNOVER INTENTIONS IN FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESSES IN HARARE METROPOLITAN PROVINCE, ZIMBABWE

MELODY VARAIDZO JHAMBA[1] AND COLLEN, KAJONGWE[2]

Abstract

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a psychological factor which can increase employee's ability and performance. Highly Emotional Intelligent employees are able to produce good quality products and services at their work environment. There is a dearth of information on EI and turnover intentions (TI) of employees in family-owned business in Zimbabwe which this qualitative study seeks to address. However, the purpose of this research is to analyse the relationship of EI and TIs of employees in small businesses. Through purposive sampling, 20 participants were scheduled to be interviewed to solicit data. However, of the selected participants, only 10 interviews were successfully conducted. Conversely, data was analysed and presented thematically. Findings indicate that employees with high EI may properly balance the relationship between work and family and reduce job burnout, thus resulting in less TI. The findings show that EI improves employee engagement, leading to lower absenteeism, higher productivity and a decrease in employee turnover. The study also has some theoretical implications regarding employees' perception of EI. Further study needs to be done on EI and leadership commitment in small businesses in Zimbabwe.

Keywords: Commitment, impact, performance, organisation, behaviour,

INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

Turnover intention (TI) is a condition where someone wants to leave his job or the organisation he owns to get a better job (Soelton *et al.*, 2021). Turnover intention is a problem for businesses, but if controlled appropriately and logically, it can be a good thing (Castro-González *et al.*, 2021). Turnover intention refers to the conscious and deliberate desire of

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[1]Department of Business Management and Entrepreneurship, Chinhoyi University of Technology (ORCID: 0009-003-8372-5110, melojhamba@gmail.com).

[2]Department of Applied Psychology, Manicaland State University of Applied Sciences (ORCID: 0009-003-8372- 5110, collen.kajongwe@staff.msuas.ac.zw).

individuals to leave the organisation (Abdalla *et al.*, 2018), and this problem has a negative impact on the organisation (Maningsih, 2022). A high TI rate will have a negative impact on the organisation because it can create instability (Soelton *et al.*, 2021). The high rate of TI can be caused by several different factors, both from each individual, company or environment (Chiat and Panatik, 2019). Several studies show several factors that can influence TI behaviour, such as EI (Surahman, 2023).

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Previous studies have shown that employees with high levels of EI have lower TIs (Hattab *et al.*, 2022; Nonehkaran *et al.*, 2023; Jantjies and Botha, 2024;). Researchers have attributed EI as the ability to monitor and control one's own and others' feelings, and use those feelings to guide thoughts and actions (Drigas *et al.*, 2021). The ability to think affects emotions, and vice versa. Emotional intelligence allows an employee to work together with others to achieve common goals (Mindeguia *et al.*,2021). Nevertheless, low EI will have an impact on individual satisfaction, because the ability to understand and manage emotions plays an important role in job satisfaction and TI (Giao *et al.*, 2020). So, it can be said that in addition to EI, job satisfaction is also one of the main factors in TI (Dewi, 2020).

Researchers have postulated that EI has a negative influence on employee TI behaviour in an organisation (Back *et al.*,2020). This proclamation is also supported by other studies which also show that EI has a significant negative influence on TI (Yaseen, 2020). In contrast to several previous studies that say high EI will actually increase the TI rate (Zeidan, 2020). That way, it means that EI has a positive relationship with TI. Surahman (2023) also shows a positive relationship between EI and TI.

Results of previous studies stated that job satisfaction had a negative and significant effect on TI (Giao, *et al.*, 2020). In addition, EI will increase employees' emotions accordingly in meeting customer expectations which helps to form a positive image of the organisation (Zunaidah, Nengyanti, and Ichsan Hadjri, 2019). Various factors influencing the employees' desire to leave the organisation (TI) include high work stress in the company, low satisfaction felt by employees, and lack of commitment to employees to give all their abilities for the progress of the company (Arianto, 2019). Yuda and Ardana (2019) state that work stress has a significant positive effect on TI. Poeh and Soehari (2017) also state that work stress has a significant positive

effect on TI. Kurniawaty, Ramly and Ramlawati (2019) aver that job satisfaction has a negative and significant effect on TI. Zunaidah, Nengyanti, and Hadjri (2019) affirm that job satisfaction has a negative and significant effect on TI.

Furthermore, researchers have postulated that EI has a negative and significant effect on employee TI (Kurniawaty, Ramly and Ramlawati, 2019). This implies that better employees can control themselves well and can deal with problems that occur in the company and motivate themselves to increase work efficiency and effectiveness. This can reduce TI. Emotional intelligence is an emotional ability that includes =control of oneself, endurance when facing a problem, being able to control impulses, motivating oneself, being able to regulate moods and empathizing and building relationships with others (Arianto, 2019). Conversely, Waheed *et al.* (2017) argue that EI has a negative and significant effect on TI. Additionally, Giao *et al.* (2020) assert that EI has a negative and significant effect on TI. Hong and Lee (2020) also state that EI has a negative and significant effect on TI.

There is a high employment ratio in the family-owned business (FOB) regarding the one-man key mentality of owner/managers who manage business without following strategic orientation (Orianto, 2019). This considerable amount of employment fluctuations causes high turnover ratios. It has been stated that this high ratio is the expected result of the seasonal working system in the FOB industry where they sometimes hire employees based on seasonal demands (Nukhu and Singh, 2020). Furthermore, Guchait (2019) argues that due to lack of proper management structure and orientation in FOBs, Turkish FOB witnessed high employee turnover ratio.

Many academicians conducting studies in the field of FOB, have been highlighting the importance integrating EI (self-awareness, empathy, emotional regulation and motivation) as contributing in the reduction of employee TIs (Sok *et al.*, 2019; Mohsin *et al.*, 2022). It has been stated in several studies that the reasons such as job security, earnings, organisational enthusiasm, job stimulation, irregular working hours, work-family conflict, job-stress of the employees increase TI directly or indirectly (Sok *et al.*, 2023; Mohsin *et al.*, 2023). The poor quality of the service as compared to specific standards, decrease in customer satisfaction, loss of skilled human resources,

increase in costs in new recruitment processes, wasting time and effort, are among the essential effects of the TI in the tourism industry (Kim *et al.*, 2022). However, considering the high rate of turnover in the FOB industry, it is a worrying problem that needs to be searched well to be able to understand the reasons and consequences for managers and organisations (Rasheed *et al.*, 2020).

Additionally, it has been pointed out that employees with high EI have lower absenteeism from work, better psychological health, higher commitment to the organisation, clearer role boundaries, higher levels of responsibility for the activities and work performance of direct reports, generally more satisfied at work, more regularly seek support when coping with stressful situations at work (Mohsin *et al.*, 2023; Sok *et al.*, 2023). Although the job on which employees in FOB are currently working provides support for being motivated or having high self-esteem, individuals may lose interest in those jobs. Thus, employees may feel indifferent towards all the aspects of the organisation in time by the familiar work environment (Jiang and Chen, 2017). In this case, the Attitude Theory suggests that employees' low motivation can be reinforced with positive behaviours or attitudes, thus reducing negative behaviours (Olson and Zanna, 2019).

However, it has been stated that individuals with high EI also have a high level of intentions to quit the job, and the level of commitment has a negative relationship with the EI (Saeed *et al.*, 2024). According to the studies conducted to reveal this effect, it has been pointed out that EI plays a mediating role in the effect of EI on turnover intentions in the FOB as well, apart from large companies (Da Camara *et al.*, 2015; Akhtar *et al.*, 2017; Bryson, 2019; Zeidan, 2020). Depression, burnout or pessimism may result from dissatisfaction with the available sources of the people. Most people are in pursuit of having more and more. Thus, minor changes which add happiness to employee lives become unimportant. With the help of EI, a lot more values and meanings can be found in understanding the self and others (Ogunola, 2019). EI increases participative, active and successful employees (Aghdasi *et al.*, 2019). For this reason, it is essential to focus on the individual and organisational reasons which prevent the employees' turnover. Among these factors, the skill to understand the attitudes and behaviours of the individuals, recognise and comprehend the emotions plays an essential role. This skill has been stated as EI (Hanib and Abdullah, 2020). Therefore, many studies have supported the same results that EI also

decreases TIs of employees in family business (Trivellas *et al.*, 2013; Mohammad *et al.*, 2014; Lee and Woo, 2015; Park and Lee, 2015; Giao *et al.*, 2020).

Furthermore, the emotional events of the employees that they experience in the organisation now or in the past, affect the relationships, behaviours and work outcomes (Weiss and Cropanzano, 2018). It is indicated that adverse events affect the employee's psychology more than positive events, and the negative effect is reflected in the employee behaviour (Shin and Hur, 2020). EI of individuals affects individual and organisational success. Individuals should be able to recognise their own emotions, predict what kind of reactions they will show towards the events or, in other words, what strategies they will set (Genç *et al.*, 2016). The individuals equipped with these skills have high EI. Higher EI has been positively associated with higher job satisfaction (Wolfe and Kim, 2013; Nayak *et al.*, 2020), higher job performance (Kim and Lee, 2017; Prentice, 2019), higher work engagement (Liu and Cho, 2018). Besides, EI has been negatively associated with individual and organisational work outcomes such as counterproductive behaviour (Jung and Yoon, 2012), estrangement (Kaur and Singh, 2015), burnout and job stress (Choi *et al.*, 2019). The limited number of research results show that EI harms performance output, which is considered among the adverse work outcomes (Mollaabbasi *et al.*, 2013; Ahmadi and Rafiee, 2015).

Researchers pointed out that EI plays a mediating role in the effect of EI on TIs of employees (Da Camara *et al.*, 2015; Akhtar *et al.*, 2017; Bryson, 2019; Zeidan, 2020). Besides, the literature supports a negative relationship between EI and TIs (Mollaabbasi *et al.*, 2013; Ahmadi and Rafiee, 2015). As the basic sign of loyalty towards the organisation has been called "commitment", employees are expected to devote effort (Khan *et al.*, 2014). This effort is obtained when employees are emotionally intelligent, positively affecting TIs (Asnawi *et al.*, 2024). Consistent with previous research, individuals' commitments towards the organisations make them experience positive behaviours and emotions, resulting in higher performance.

In Zimbabwe, FOBs, particularly SMEs, area significant part of the economy, contributing to employment and the domestic product (GDP), with an estimated 80% of businesses falling into this category (Mashavira, 2020). SMEs, including FOBs, are a major driver of the Zimbabwean economy,

employing a large portion of the workforce and contributing significantly to the country's GDP. The FinScope MSME Survey (2012) reveals that 2.8 million business owners, comprising different business types, employed 2.9 million people in their business. The recent FinScope survey discovered that the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are key to the growth of Zimbabwe's economy as they now contribute up to US$8. 6 billion to the national GDP.

Family-owned businesses in Zimbabwe face challenges, including capital shortages, a challenging economic environment and stiff competition (Manuere, 2019). Some early family businesses have struggled to survive beyond the founding owners, highlighting the importance of succession planning and expertise (Gwangwava, 2019). Some scholars also assert that FOBs in Zimbabwe lack preparedness of the successor, lack of expertise, poor education background or lack of funding for continuity are some of the reasons some family businesses fail to move to the next generation (Gwangwava, 2019; Manuere, 2019; Mashavira, 2019). Success in FOBs often hinges on effective succession planning, strong family ties and the ability to balance family and business interests (Mashavira, 2020). Family businesses can be a source of strength, providing stability and a strong sense of community, but also require careful management to avoid conflicts and ensure long-term sustainability (Gwangwava, 2019). However, in Zimbabwean FOBs, EI is crucial for effective leadership, building strong relationships and navigating complex family dynamics, ultimately impacting business success and sustainability (Masamba, 2020). The sustainability of FOBes is a key area of focus, with research exploring how EI impact on TIs of employees in this dynamic volatile business environment.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
In the contemporary world, the economy is developing rapidly, competition in the area of business tends to grow, and the performance of an organisation is based on the efforts put in place by their employees. Studies also have shown that EI is an important determinant of employees' dedication to their workplace and also improve an organisation's capability to reach its goals because today's job needs the emotion of an organisation to ensure successful operational efficiency (Poornima and Sijatha, 2020). There are many psychological problems and experiences from the workplace because of the high level of labour pressures and lack of the ability to manage them effectively. Therefore, it is up to every business and its

stakeholders, to work on this weakening issue and improve it, as it is important in the growth of any business. Family-owned businesses in Zimbabwe are not sustainable and innovative as hoped by United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UNDP, 2020). Despite the fact that FOBs contribute significantly to job creation, they fail to attract competitive employees, leading to poor performance and closure in the first five years of establishment (Finscope SMEs Survey, 2022). However, there is a dearth of information on moderating effect of EI on TIs of employees in FOB which this study seeks to assess in the context of Zimbabwe.

The Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Turnover Intentions of Employees in Family-Owned Businesses in Harare Metropolitan Province, Zimbabwe

Researchers have advanced that EI is a general assessment of a person's abilities to control emotion and to sense, understand and respond to others' emotions while managing complex people and relationships (Bradberry and Greaves, 2019; Chastukhina, 2020; Kumari and Pandey, 2022). Other scholarly evidence refined the EI construct to encompass the abilities to perceive emotion, to integrate emotion, to facilitate thought, to understand emotion and to regulate emotion to promote personal growth (Illifeand Marthoppe, 2019; Cui, 2021; DeCosta, 2022; Helmic, 2022; VanderPal, 2022: Vuong, 2022;). Emotional intelligence, then, became a skill set that included the components of empathy, the ability to solve problems, optimism and self-awareness (Arinze, 2018; Palliterri, 2019; Parshiadis, 2019). Given the cross-cutting nature of the impacts, EI may be characterised as the capability to identify, persist and control driving forces, communicate clearly, make incredible decisions, tackle issues and perform with other individuals in a way that makes companions and achievement (DeCosta, 2022; VanderPal, 2022: Vuong, 2022). Such behaviour generally translates into better decision-making, richer relationships and higher long-term job satisfaction (Murtza, 2021, Winardi, 2022). Conversely, EIhas been measured as a theoretical construct which has mass appeal and applicable in the medicinal domain (Lui, 2019; White and Grason, 2020; Lawson, 2022).

Predominantly, as a fairly new phenomenon, the lenses of researchers in Europe view EI through self-regulation, self-management and social skills as equipping employees with practical tools to manage stress, make sound decisions and connect with patients which enhance their job satisfaction, subsequently harnessing quality service delivery and innovation and, above

all, reduce TIs (Illifeand Marthoppe, 2019; Cui, 2021; DeCosta, 2022 and Helmic, 2022; VanderPal, 2022: Vuong, 2022). Jordi and Hansenne (2019) investigated the relationships between EI, job satisfaction, and cohesiveness in small business teams in Finland. The results suggested that EI and, more specifically, emotional regulation, provided an interesting new way of augmenting employees cohesion, reducing job burnout and increasing motivation to complete given tasks.

In another research development on EI variables and how they affect job satisfaction, Anand and Suriyam (2019) surveyed EI (self-awareness, self-regulation and empathy) and its relationship with employees' job satisfaction in Syria and found out that job satisfaction was an influential variable to affect the level of EI. Anand and Suriyam (*ibid.*) conclude that self-awareness and self-regulation enable employees in SMEs to cope with stress management related to long working hours and, at the same time, act as a catalyst to motivate them to carry out their duties. However, even though EI research is considered to be still in its suckling stages in SMEs studies. Integrating it with job satisfaction and TIs warrants investigation to come up with EI work schedule strategies so as to improve on-job satisfaction and quality service delivery in FOBs (White and Grason, 2020; Helmic, 2022; Lawson, 2022).

In addition, Humpeland Caputi (2020) have also found a significant relationship between EI (self-regulation and empathy) and employee's TIs in Egypt and found that employees with EI makes them empathic, acknowledge problems and are concerned, are good listeners, makes them full of patience and are satisfied with their jobs as they are motivated and committed to execute desirable tasks. This view gives employees exercises and simulations for handling challenging situations with emotional adeptness for the best interest of all stakeholders in public health sector purview (Lui, 2019; White and Grason, 2020; Lawson, 2022). Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in influencing the job satisfaction of employees in any kind of job setting. Studies have shown a significant positive correlation between EI and job satisfaction and intentions to quit (Anand and Suriyam; Lui, 2019; Illifeand Marthoppe, 2019; White and Grason, 2020; Humpel and Caputi; Jordi and Hansenne; Cui, 2021; DeCosta, 2022; Helmic, 2022; Lawson, 2022; VanderPal, 2022: Vuong, 2022;).

Furthermore, as reflected in other studies done in South Africa, EI (self-awareness and motivation) has been seen as fostering a positive work attitude and enhancing overall job satisfaction among employees in small business settings (Murtza, 2021, Winardi, 2022). Chery (2018) demonstrates that employees who are motivated and exercise self-regulation and self-awareness seem to be more satisfied with their jobs, and this positive relation is moderated and partially mediated by supportive work environment in the discharge of duties ethically.

Moreover, evidence from a similar research study conducted by DeCosta (2022) in Taazania, recommends the pertinent need to have research on how EI impacts on-job satisfaction of employees as it motivates them to execute complex tasks. The study findings however, reveal a significant positive relationship between EI (self-regulation) and job satisfaction among medical doctors, as indicated by high low labour turnover, motivation and low absenteeism rate. Researchers established that employees who can regulate their moods and their own emotional states, makes it easier for them to regulate the emotions of others in the workplace because they can better handle conflicts and any work stressful situations, creating a positive work environment which leads to better job satisfaction (White and Grason, 2020; DeCosta, 2022; Helmic, 2022; Vuong, 2022; Lawson, 2022). These findings from literature opens a research gap on the effect of EI on TIs of employees in FOBs which this study seeks to establish focusing in Zimbabwe.

Moreover, researchers argue that TI is an outcome of an attitude towards job characteristics and a subjective concept affected by physiological, psychological and situational factors that contribute to fulfillment and affirmative to facets of employees in small business sector (White and Grason, 2020; DeCosta, 2022; Helmic, 2022; Vuong, 2022;). Emotionally intelligent employees seem to be more satisfied with their jobs and this positive relation is moderated and partially mediated by strong association component of emotional labour. Additionally, the more employees display an appropriate but not felt emotion in their interpersonal relationships with colleagues and patients, the less satisfied with their job they are (Lui, 2019; Illifeand Marthoppe, 2019; White and Grason, 2020; Humpel *et al.* 2021).

Alfonso *et al.* (2018) state that employees' EI not only decreases frustration and stress in the workplace, but also helps others to have less intention to quit. Optimistic emotions are influential from an individual perception and

are indicative of cooperation and fairness within the organisation (Chen *et al.* 2018). Pessimistic emotions have negative effects on the organisation as well as individuals. Those individuals who are upset have difficulty in assessing others' emotions accurately (*ibid.*). Emotional stress results in a lack of confidence, self-esteem or motivation to reflect these limits. Employees tend to focus more on these negative emotions than they do their work and become disconnected physically and mentally, which results in underperformance and high TI (Afonso, 2016). Emotional intelligence is a key component to keep employees in FOBs engaged and understand the emotional reasons for leaving decisions. Employees may use their EI to better assess and understand the situation. Thus, EI is considered a significant factor in predicting the TI of employees which leads towards actual turnover (Bande, 2015).

Khanzada (2020) found that there was a substantial positive relationship between EI and job satisfaction and TIs of the employees. The mediation outcomes reveal that job satisfaction moderately mediates between employees' EI and their job performance and reinforce the relationship. Rahman and Haleem also (2020) found that EI had a considerable positive influence on job satisfaction. Similarly, Khan (2020) concludes that all the dimensions of EI significantly predict job satisfaction and intentions to quit the job. Additionally, Khan (*ibid.*) indicates that among the indicators, self-assessment was found to be the most powerful predictor, whereas optimism was found to be the weakest predictor of TIs.

Chonene's (2020) study, exploring the prevalence of EI on compassion, fatigue, and burnout of employees in small business sector found out that workload, stress levels negatively impact on empathy and subsequently affecting productivity measured against work output. The decline in empathy has been attributed to, among other factors, fear of making mistakes, negative interactions with other and time pressure (Chirasha, 2020). Chirasha (2020) concludes that amongst employees in small business, empathy is limited due to daily stress, which is a risk factor for burnout and compassion fatigue. Therefore, researchers have asserted that EI is closely linked with the provision of quality psychological, emotional, and physiological care to patients by healthcare professionals (White and Grason, 2020; DeCosta, 2022; Helmic, 2022; Vuong, 2022).

The research findings of Chonene (2020) and Chirasha (2020) and Munyanyi (2024) in Zimbabwe concur with literature in other research settings where it has been established that higher levels of EI have also been linked to self-compassion (Senyuva, 2020) and job satisfaction (Lobert, 2021), whilst lower EI levels are linked to increased stress (Naidoo, 2022). The implication of high EI skill levels is more positive outcomes in the client-professional interaction. EI is valued in executing given task because of its relevance to interactions and leveraging customer needs (Mackay and Hogg, 2022). Therefore, it is pertinent to have survey research on EI and how it impacts on job level of intentions to quit and subsequently performance outcome.

However, even though EI research in small business environments in Zimbabwe is still fairly in its infant stages, it serves as a catalyst for other paramount factors such as empathy and communicative satisfaction which, in turn, influence work well-being. Research has indicated that in Zimbabwe small business sector where employees encounter a broad spectrum of emotional experiences, EI becomes vital in balancing professional objectivity with empathy and care (Munyanyi, 2024). Based on other researches, findings also demonstrate that employees in Zimbabwe FOBs are not satisfied with work conditions, thereby leading to job burnout, stress, which subsequently affects commitment and quality service (Chirasha, 2018, Chonene, 2020). Such research outcomes in some research conducted by Chirasha (2018) and Chonene (2020), EI also serve as a stress-relieving buffer for employees, resulting in higher work satisfaction. It has also been established that EI not only elevates overall medical job satisfaction, but can also be instrumental in retaining professionals within the doctors' domain. Therefore, this submission seeks to evaluate the relationship between EI and TIs of employees in the FOB sector in Zimbabwe.

However, conflicting literature shows that EI, as a fairly new concept, could not validate social competence due to non-causal factors that play a vital role in work satisfaction for medical doctors (Herkenhoff, 2019; Villagran, 2019; Jofri, 2020; Law, 2020). Henceforth EI, as an assortment of non-intellectual components that impacted general intelligence was accounted for to predict work related outcomes such as job satisfaction and TIs because it was deemed the only measurement construct. The connection between EI and TIs of employees in FOBs is relatively new and necessitates more exploration in order to get a broad understanding on the construct.

Conversely, components of EI, such as awareness of emotions, regulation of emotions and managing emotions, have not been fully addressed as key factors that enhance job satisfaction and TIs in FOBs (Illifeand Marthoppe, 2019; Cui, 2021; DeCosta, 2022; Helmic, 2022; VanderPal, 2022: Vuong, 2022;).However, despite this gulf in literature, it is also interesting to note that there is increasing research evidence that employee's EI (EI) influences their ability to execute their given task and achieve desirable objectives.

Employees in FOBs interact with people and are often required to take on complex issues, albeit not always harmonised with their true experienced emotions, roles. This study provides evidence on the interactions between emotion-related constructs, presenting an integrative model with job satisfaction variables to harness quality service delivery. However apart from the positive reflection of EI on TIs of employees in FOBs, research to date has not yet reflected EI model to harness job satisfaction of employees in small to medium enterprises, primarily focusing on the FOBs sector in Zimbabwe which this study seeks to establish.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH APPROACH
This study employs an exploratory qualitative methodology. The qualitative technique is suitable for this study since it aims to gather respondents' perspectives regarding the efficacy of gender analytics solutions at Zimbabwean public universities. Consequently, qualitative researchers seek to investigate and elucidate phenomena as they manifest in their natural contexts.

RESEARCH DESIGN
The study is underpinned by explanatory research design. An explanatory design sets out to explain and account for the descriptive information (Creswell and Clark, 2007). So, while descriptive studies may ask 'what' kinds of questions, explanatory studies seek to ask 'why' and 'how' questions (Grey, 2014). It builds on exploratory and descriptive research and goes on to identify actual reasons a phenomenon occurs. Explanatory research looks for causes and reasons and provides evidence to support or refute an explanation or prediction. It is conducted to discover and report some relationships among different aspects of the phenomenon under study. Explanatory research is a method that explores why something occurs when

limited information is available (Saunders *et al.*, 2007). It can help the researcher to increase understanding of a given phenomenon, ascertain how or why a particular phenomenon is occurring, and predict future occurrences. It can also be explained as a "cause and effect" model, investigating patterns and trends in existing data that have not been previously investigated. For this reason, it is often considered a type of causal research. Explanatory research is used to investigate how or why a phenomenon takes place (Singh, 2007). While there is often data available about atopic, it is possible the particular causal relationship has not been robustly studied. Explanatory research helps the researcher analyse these patterns, formulating hypotheses that can guide future endeavors (Creswell and Clark, 2007). If the researcher is seeking a more complete understanding of a relationship between variables, explanatory research is a great place to start, hence caused this study to employ it (Saunders *et al.*, 2007).

POPULATION

The research population comprises all important administrative personnel in all registered FOBs who have been in operation in the same detergent manufacturing sector in the Harare Metropolitan Province. According to Ministry off Women Affairs, Community, Small Medium Development (2023) data base, there are 60 FOBs fitting the above category. Therefore, the population of the study were all 60-operating FOBs in the Harare Metropolitan Province.

SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Given the qualitative nature of the study, non-probability sampling was employed to choose participants for the qualitative data collection. The purposive sampling approach was employed to choose participants based on their provision of valuable information. Purposive sampling offers advantages like focusing on specific relevant participants, yielding rich, in-depth data, and being more efficient in terms of time and resources, compared to other methods, especially for qualitative research (Saunders *et al.*, 2007). In this study purposive sampling is integrated because it allows researchers to select participants most likely to provide valuable insights into the research question, ensuring that the data collected are directly pertinent to the study's objectives. By focusing on specific individuals or groups, researchers can gather detailed information and explore nuances and subtleties that might be missed with a more generalised approach (*ibid.*).

SAMPLE SIZE

A purposive sampling method was employed to choose 20 principal participants for this investigation who have been in operation in the same detergent manufacturing sector in Harare Metropolitan Province for a period exceeding 25 years.

DATA COLLECTION

Research in this area made use of a structured interview guide. The research recorded the conversations on tape for the purpose of subsequently transcribing them word for word. Using one-and-a-half line spacing and broad margins, the research was able to add written comments and notes to the data acquired from the interviews. It was from the transcripts that the research derived key concepts and recurrent themes and ideas. Information about the individuals' background and expertise was gleaned through one-on-one interviews.

DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis was used to display the interview data. Researches can discover, assess and report meaning patterns in qualitative data through the use of theme analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). One benefit of this approach is that it can produce more detailed information on the individual's experience and their conscious actions. The study took a phenomenological stance, as espoused by scholars like Fouche and Pichurink (2011), who contend that context-specific analysis of meanings and broad descriptions of experiences should follow data-systematic determination. Participant meaning-making is the jumping-off point for the phenomenological approach. Subjectivity and the routines of a participant's life are the starting points. It provides a wealth of information and opens the door to new interpretations and connections.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is underpinned by the Ability Model (Salovey and Mayer, 1990). This model views emotions and thoughts as working hand in hand in adaptive ways, as well as identifies that emotions convey information about relationships which can and ought to be processed. At the most basic level, this ability enables one to identify emotions accurately in physical states (including bodily expressions), feelings and thoughts. The Ability Model is relevant and applicable to underpin this study as it explicitly outlines how individuals utilise emotions to facilitate thinking or regulate emotions to

focus on important information. Furthermore, the model articulates how individuals embrace the ability to harness emotional information to facilitate various cognitive activities, such as reasoning, problem-solving and interpersonal communication through expending emotions to prioritise thinking by directing attention to important information about the surroundings or other people.

RESULTS

The study results are derived from the research objective which seeks to analyse the relationship between EI and TIs of employees in FOBs in the Harare Metropolitan Province, Zimbabwe.

RESPONSE RATE

In this study, 20 structured interviews were scheduled to be conducted focusing on owner/managers of FOBs in the Harare Metropolitan Province. However, only 10 were successfully conducted, translating to 50%. The response rate was attributed to the importance of the matter to participants in revamping their organisation to match dynamic global standards on the aspect of understanding EI aspect and how it impacts on employee TIs. The responses from participants indicated various themes.

THEME 1: UTILITY OF EI ON TURNOVER INTENTIONS OF EMPLOYEES

Participants gave varied responses on issues of EI and employee TIs in FOBs. Participants 1, 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 underscored the fact that EI plays a crucial role in preserving employees from quitting the organisation, as they are able to leverage stressful working scenarios into a meaningful motivational aspect so as to be satisfied with their jobs.

Therefore, Participant 1 said that:

> Optimal self-regulation contributes to a sense of well-being, a sense of self-efficacy or confidence, and a sense of connectedness to others. The goal is for a self-regulating individual to be able to take his or her emotional responses as cues for both action and coping effectively in relationships. It is important to have an understanding of self-awareness first in order for this to be possible and through these employees are able to be satisfied with their job[s] and find no time to think of quitting it.

Participant 2 also postulated that EI of employees, especially self-regulation, is triggered by work stress and, therefore, stated that:

> An employee's emotional level is related to his emotional intelligence, so it will affect turnover intention. Work stress has a significant positive effect on turnover intention. This shows that the higher the job stress, the higher the turnover

intention. Turnover intention is triggered by work stress experienced by employees. The high work stress felt by employees will affect the level of employee desire to leave the company where they work…emotional intelligence will increase employees' emotions accordingly in meeting customer expectations which helps to form a positive image of the organisation.

Participant 3 asserted that EI, especially empathy, needs to be improved for all employees so as to motivate them to do their task and forget looking for other alternatives for work. Therefore, Participant 3 affirmed that:

Emotional intelligence has a negative influence on employee turnover intention behaviour in an organisation. Turnover intention will be better if emotional intelligence is mediated by job satisfaction, meaning that in an effort to reduce the occurrence of turnover intention, emotional intelligence needs to be improved without forgetting job satisfaction.

Participant 5 avers that EI is only successful where employees have the support of the administration embedded in an organisational culture. Therefore, Participant 5 avowed that:

Employees who are motivated and exercise self-regulation and self-awareness seem to be more satisfied with their job and this positive relation is moderated and partially mediated by supportive work environment in the discharge of duties ethically.

Participant 9 professed that emotionally intelligent employees, who have self-regulation, are in a position to manoeuvre in any stressful working environment which helps them mediate team-building to execute given tasks. Consequently, Participant 9 indicated that:

…that emotional intelligence and, more specifically, emotional regulation, provided an interesting new way of augmenting employees teams cohesion and client outcomes. This has resulted in motivating employees to conduct and discharge their duties which subsequently reduces job burnout but catalyses quality service delivery.

Participant 10 concurred that emotionally intelligent employees with empathy are problem-solvers and, as such, are good performers in a given task, which reduces their intentions to quit work if they face a challenging scenario. Participant 10 said:

Emotional intelligence thus supports the employees to inaugurate an imprudent relationship and elicit gratification in the stakeholder interaction. Emotional intelligent employees are able to solve problems… communicate clearly; make incredible decisions; tackle issues; and perform with other individuals in such a way that makes companions and achievement.

THEME 2: EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL SKILL EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND TURNOVER INTENTIONS

The effects of social skill EI and TIs of employees in FOBs emerged as an important theme in this study where participants provided various responses. However, Participants 2, 4, 6, 7 and 9 highlighted that social skills among employees in FOBs promote talent and trust, innovation, customer satisfaction. Participant 2 claimed that:

> … as the owner/manager, I have discovered that social skill harness performance and retention, reputation, creativity and motivation, quality of work and employer branding and employee satisfaction and engagement.

Participant 4 alluded that EI harnesses resilience among employees as they remain motivated to execute given tasks. The participant said:

> …social skill emotional intelligence promotes creativity, motivation, and attracts/retains talented and experienced employees in our organisation. Employees with high self-motivation are more resilient because they are able to understand the causes of stress and develop strategies and perseverance to deal with the negative consequences.

Participant 6 concurred that employees need to self-control and be positive to contain workplace adverse pressure so much that they remain satisfied with their job and reduces their intentions to quit. Participant 6 mantained that:

> …employee mentoring sessions on emotional intelligence, especially self-management, can be considered as an effective talent retention tool, as a measure to control employee turnover…employees with high self-regulation excel in understanding oneself and are capable of managing …[their]emotions and display better coping attitudes in the work environment. They tend to promote well-being, self-control, emotionality and sociability. Thus, they tend to stay longer with the company.

Participant 9 postulated that the importance of EI is based on creating and maintaining effective relationships in the workplace, thereby achieving higher levels of satisfaction at work which is an enabler of turnover ratio. Participant 9 commented:

> Low levels of EI can predict increased relationship divergence and the inability or failure to meet social or cultural expectations and as such, managers who rate superior in EI are in an enhanced position to develop effective and long-lasting relationships with other employees. So, emotional intelligence is one of the key determinants of success in leading people in business and minimises a high turnover rate in a family-owned business. Excessive turnover is a sign of organisational problems that should be addressed and solved.

Participant 10 avers that employees need job security and once their psychological contract is not threatened, their intentions to quit are forgotten, indicating that:

> In respect of employees and organisation association, employees with a high level of EI and employees who perceive high levels of organisational support, allow employees to utilise their abilities to the best without feeling endangered about their self-esteem, social status or profession. When employees experience psychological safety, they feel better about their job.

DISCUSSION

Responses highlighted were in line with literature. Researchers argue that the importance of EI is its dominant role, as it is considered a key factor in creating and maintaining effective relationships in the workplace, thereby achieving higher levels of satisfaction at work (Shahhosseini *et al.*, 2012; Narayan and Narasimhan, 2016; Montana and Charnov, 2018;). There is a positive relationship between aspects of EI of employees and the satisfaction they feel from their work. Job positions held by the employees seem to affect the levels of EI in any business setup (*ibid.*). Korunka (2015) found a considerable negative alliance between job satisfaction and intent to leave. If employees are satisfied with their salary, environment of the job, future promotions and behaviour of fellow workers, they will be more committed to their work and reduce job TI. EI is found to have a positive relation with overall job satisfaction. In most cases, employee dissatisfaction, either on job or the job environment, is the core reason for deciding to quit. Hence, EI is a very significant aspect in the current business scenario. In a study conducted among employees of Manganese Ore India Ltd. (MOIL), results reveal the relation between low EI score and poor job satisfaction that eventually resulted in poor performance and forcing the employee to quit (Shahu, 2010). The essence of EI lies in increased coping levels and better communication among peer groups. Team work is the most accepted mode for reaping success in any organisation. Coherent team work is possible only when one has a better ability to understand, manage and adapt positively within a team environment. A recent study indicates that the combined EI of team members had a significant influence on team task performance. The study also showed that EI level of a person can be increased through training (Murphy, 2009). Any employee of an organisation strives to succeed in his/her career. Career success too is linked to EI. Though the term 'career success' is perceived differently by each person, a generally accepted understanding is that a career keeps a person satisfied financially and emotionally with a drive and passion to continue serving the organisation. A

person with a successful career finds happiness in his/her work and looks forward to go to his/her work environment each day. However, in any industry, employees are susceptible to organisational politics, where some employees effectively tackle and move on, whereas others fall prey to such situations, leading to stress and dissatisfaction. Emotional Intelligence is proved to be the effective ingredient here to overcome such a situation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis, conclusions drawn were that EI has a negative and significant effect on TI, it has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. The results of this study can be interpreted to mean that the higher the level of EI of employees, the lower the level of TI. Turnover intention will be better if EI is mediated by job satisfaction, meaning that in an effort to reduce the occurrence of TI, emotional intelligence needs to be improved but not ignoring job satisfaction. However, the findings show that Improves employee engagement and these improvements can lead to lower absenteeism, higher productivity, and a decrease in employee turnover. However, based on these results, to improve self-awareness, EI and subsequently job satisfaction and reduction of TIs among employees in FOBs, there is need for management to incorporate EI training, foster a supportive work environment that encourages open communication, provide regular feedback mechanisms, promote self-reflection practices, and offer access to mental health resources to help employees better understand and manage their own emotions, leading to improved customer interactions and overall job fulfillment. Additionally, there is need to encourage collaborative decision-making and team support among colleagues, provide flexible work schedules to improve work-life balance, implement clear communication channels and address concerns promptly and offer leadership training to empower employees to take on greater responsibilities. Further research is recommended to expand the scope and population of research, replace data analysis techniques if needed and enrich research references.

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