Examining the effect of workplace friendships and Job Embeddedness on Turnover Intention (The Case of Mashhad as a Tourist Destination in Iran)

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ABSTRACT: In our contemporary times, most corporate organizations have put more importance on the role of human resource in underscoring the success of the organization. They have come to appreciate the significance of human resources to having potential impact of the organization's performance and its vital factor used as a vehicle towards potential success in the midst of competition. This study review theory and research on workplace friendships, job embeddedness, and then combines them into a model of turnover intention for hospitality industry in (Mashhad) Iran. The qualitative method design used for this study to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The study used the qualitative method approach that consists of semi-structured interviews. Each participant answered the research questions that assesses his/her perception towards friendships. According to the qualitative method, a portion of the participants were randomly selected to complete the interview process where more information is collected.

KEYWORDS: *workplace friendships, jobembeddedness, turnover intention,frontline employees, hotels, Iran*

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of amiability, more specifically friendship in the workplace is recognized as a necessary factor in terms of social relations integral to any organization. Despite the fact that there are several organizations which have established workplaces that are naturally conducive to friendship, some conventional organizations resist the notion of workplace friendships for fear that friendships will create unnecessary problems in the organization's work environment. Usually, friendships are developed which stems from structurally formal relationships in the workplace and are sustained within organizations (Morrison, 2004).

It is a general impression that the workplaces become the foci for building friendship because of the weakening of social ties in neighborhoods and larger communities (Shellenbarger, 2000). Rath (2006) indicated that people who have best friends at work who are engaged with their clienteles, has the tendency to get more done in a short period of time, have fun in their work, have a safe workplace with lesser accidents, are more innovative, and easily share new ideas. On the contrary, Berman et al. (2002) stated that numerous organizations resist the notion of friendships in the workplace for fear that these friendships will lead to the dilemma (Berman, West & Richter, 2002). Nevertheless, there are some organizations that embrace the idea of workers making friendship in the workplace, although there are others who still adhere in the old adage where "familiarity breeds contempt" (Rath, 2006, p. 48).

Workplace friendship is theorized to have a negative relationship with turnover (Morrison, 2004). If a person experiences a personal crisis or has a very stressful job, workplace friends can provide support and therefore decrease the chances of turnover. According to Winstead et al., (1995), strong friendships at work might only increase retention up to a point. Labor turnover mostly resulted in increased expenditures in many aspects of the operational side of the organizations such as increased cost of recruitment and training of new employees (Batra and Tan, 2003). The cost of replacing an employee can reach or even exceed a worker's annual salary (Hillmer, Hillmer & McRoberts, 2004). To move for success in a competitive world of the service industry, hotel managers should know that it is important to have a good grasp of how their employees feel at work and what they need (Lam, et al., 2001).

Mitchell et al., (2001) argued that job embeddedness is the combined material, financial, and psychological factors that keep a person from leaving his or her job. Theoretically, workplacefriendships could increase job embeddedness by creating social links, perceptions of fitand greater sacrifice of having to leave work friends if a new job opportunity was present (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski, & Erez, 2001). According to Milam (2012), workplace friendships will naturally occur at work, and canhave benefits or risks associated with them. Job embeddedness is a potential positive outcome of workplace friendship. Workplace friendships create links betweenindividuals and their organization, which is one factor of job embeddedness. Anotherway

workplace friendship creates job embeddedness is through the potential sacrifice(leaving a friend) employees would have to make if they decided to leave anorganization.

Frontline employees in service units are more important than others because they are in direct contact with consumers. The mostimportant reason for selecting this population is the lack of studies are conducted on frontlineemployees, especially within the hotel industry (Yonn, et al., 2001; Arasli, H., 2012). Retention of frontlineemployees is of great importance to service firms (Rust, Stewart, Miller, & Pielack, 1996). Specifically, frontline employees play a pivotal role in delivering superior quality to customers (Babakus, Yavas, Karatepe, & Avci, 2003).

Many studies have been conducted analyzing turnover among employees, and examine the importance of job facets perceived by employees. On the other hand, there are several studies have conducted in Iran to review factorsassociated with employee turnover. In spite of those studies, limited or even no empirical research exist relating workplace friendships, job embeddedness and turnover intention among full-time frontline hotel employees in Iran.

Overall, for contributing to the further understanding of these related terms, the task of this study is to examine the effect of workplace friendships on turnover intention and job embeddedness and to test the impact of job embeddedness on turnover intention among full-time frontline employees of the hotel industry in Iran.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Workplace Friendships:

Friendship is defined as being a voluntary act of establishing a relationship that is likewise reciprocal and equal (Wright, 1985). It is viewed as unique and extraordinary, and most of the time it increases the sense of self-worth of a person while providing a more understanding attitude to the other individual. Since the definition of friendship is being a voluntary relationship, it is regarded therefore that friendships are inherently unique relationship that takes place within the workplace. Basically, a person in the workplace can choose whom to make friends with, although a co-worker, superiors or subordinates are not necessarily chosen. Moreover, according to Sias & Cahill (1998) friendships that were established within the workplace eventually grow out of that context and eventually the members no longer see each other's workmates. Kram and Isabella (1985) have categorized friendship into three classifications: (a) informational peer, (b) collegial peer, and (c) special peer. In the workplace, an informational peer is considered to possess some motivational character being the one who shares information contributory to successful job performance. Meanwhile, the one that offers career strategizing and job-related feedback is categorized as collegial peer. The special peer, on the other hand, provides confirmation, emotional support and personal feedback. Under the special peer category, Kram & Isabella (1985) stated that this form of friendship has the highest level of personal commitment, intensity, trust and self-disclosure. These categories of friendships enumerated above are in general providing differing magnitudes of career-enhancing and psychological roles for the involved individuals at the workplace.

For people in search for this voluntary and equal relationship, they find for people having similar attitudes to them within or outside of the workplace milieu (Byrne & Nelson, 1965; Jellison & Oliver, 1983), including common interests (Davis, 1981; Whyte, 1956) and comparable personality (Antill, 1983). Contrary to non-friends, friends have typically similar educational backgrounds, usually live close to one another, commonly delight identical hobbies, and are generally well-mannered and friendly; although they may not have similar sports interests, or levels of income (Johnson, 1988). Another affirmative effect of friendship is its inherent character to be a career-boosting relationship which offers work more fun, and enhances the person's creativeness (Sias & Cahill, 1998).

Individuals having higher qualities of friendships at workplaces are usually the people who are more satisfied with their jobs; this is significantly a characteristic important to the productivity of both the individual and the organization (Winstead, Derlega, Montgomery, and Pilkington, 1995). Some authors have likewise found that friendships are truly an integral part of the corporate life and culture of organizations. For their part, Krackhardt and Stern (1988) have proven in their study that crises that arise among work groups are better dealt with when there are ties of friendship between the two warring groups. Thus, friendships among themselves may benefit an organization in better dealing with crises and other unanticipated events.

Friendships develop in many different ways and provide many different benefits to individuals, teams/groups, organizations, and society. On the other hand, relationships also take effort to maintain, and without the appropriate maintenance, relationships can deteriorate. When this happens, it can create strain, which can potentially negate the benefits of friendship.

Although few empirical studies have been conducted on workplace friendship, there is some evidence that they are related to positive outcomes such as information sharing (Kram& Isabella, 1985), increased job satisfaction (Winstead et al., 1995), job performance (Ross, 1997), reduced turnover intention (Morrison, 2004), and organizational commitment (Nielsen et al., 2000). However, most of these studies havenot been replicated. Of these studies, only one (Winstead et al., 1995) examined possible mediating or moderating variables.

Workplace friendship is theorized to have a negative relationship with turnover (Morrison, 2004). If a person experiences a personal crisis or has a very stressful job, workplace friends can provide support and therefore decrease the chances of turnover. Workplace friends are usually people that the person works closely with and therefore may have had similar experiences and can provide advice. Winstead et al., (1995) cautioned that strong friendships at work might only increase retention up to a point. Eventually, if the job is very demanding or there are someother stressors present, these may push the employee out of the organization, especially if there are other alternatives available (Hom& Griffeth, 1991).

2.2 Job Embeddedness:
Job embeddedness involves numerous options that influence the policy on employee retention. Working on the model of Steers and Mowday (1982), Mitchell and Lee (2001) have furthered their model by adding a fresh breadth to fully appreciate the turnover occurrence - a counterintuitive concept that one might opt to leave an organization for reasons other aside from dissatisfaction in the worksite. The concept of job embeddedness has multidimensional elements that focus on the factors that motivate a person to stay in the job, such as work and social factors, and non-work connections that are established for over a period of time.

Mitchell et al. (2001b) stated that "embeddedness suggests that there are numerous strands that connect an employee and his or her family in a social, psychological, and financial web that includes work and non-work friends, groups, then on-work, and the physical environment in which he or she lives" (p. 104). Evidently, the model of Mitchell et al. (2001b) tries to include the entirety of the elements that would encourage a worker to stay in a job or encourage not leaving, despite the person's idea about leaving the job due to some particular circumstances, such as getting another employment offer or the relocation of the company to a non-preferred location). Usually, persons with high job embeddedness level would probably choose to stay even if the conditions are less than ideal. Moreover, Mitchell and Lee (2001) indicated that a decision of a person leaving an organization is not ordinarily thought of in isolation; it is actually molded by the existing environment in both work and non-work paradigms where the individual is deeply embedded.

Literature have it that job embeddedness have numerous features; these are (a) work or organizational options by way of choosing your clients, (b) empowerment, or mentoring activities, and (c) non-worker social embeddedness (Van Emmerik & Sanders, 2004) which includes direct links to family, non-work activities, off-the-job interests, and job and embeddedness in the organization (Mitchell et al., 2001b).

2.2.1 Various Dimensions of Job Embeddedness
A) *Work and Non-work Links Dimension:* This defines the magnitude in the person's relationship to individuals and the various activities in the work and non-work setting. The relationship links both the for mal and informal connections that the person has with other individuals. Work linkage can be illustrated through a strong connection with an employee's immediate supervisor/manager or workmates. An illustration of non-working link is the personal bond to a group of friends spending weekends together, or with family relatives residing in the same neighborhood (Mallol, Holtom, & Lee, 2007). The higher the frequency of connections between the individual and the work, the more that the person is bound to the job and the organization (Mitchell et al., 2001a, 2001b). Correspondingly, the higher frequency of connections of the individual with the non-work environment, thus the person is more bounded to the organization.

B) *Work and Non-work Fit Dimension:* These dimensions describe the magnitude where both the work and n on-work environments are apparently viewed as a good fit with the person's interests inside and outside of the organization. The 'fit' takes into account the person's compatibility with work and non-work situations. A high work fit, for instance is when the person values being environmental- friendly and engaged in an organization supporting waste recycling, or if the person feels having a good fit with the job. A high non-work fit is exemplified through enjoying listening to music, have an opportunity to watch live bands or concerts or to be with adults, recreational sports tournament playing a favorite sport. Under the context of better the fit, the feeling of professionalism in the workplace would tend the person to be personally tied to the organization. Meanwhile, the better the fit between the employee's personal values (e.g. Career goals and future plans) and the workplace, the less likely that the employee will have the intention to leave the organization (Mitchell et al., 2001a, 2001b). Holtom & O'Neill (2004) mentioned that the better the fit with the non-work environment, the less likely that the employee will leave the organization.

C) *Work and Non-work Sacrifice Dimension:* These dimensions cover the entire benefits that an employee must relinquish when leaving the job. It is an apparent loss of physical or psychological remunerations that are currently given or will be given in the future. Opportunity loss for promotion is a classic illustration of work sacrifice if the person is bound for a promotion or perhaps the loss of child care services if it is one of the benefits extended by the employer to its employees. Another example of non-work sacrifice of a person

is to leave from the neighborhood where all people in the community look for each other's welfare or leaving a neighborhood school with a good reputation. The more a person would have to give up when leaving, the more difficult it is to leave the organization and the neighborhood community where that person belongs (Mitchell et al., 2001a, 2001b).

2.3 Turnover Intention:

Turnover is defined as the "individual movement across the membership boundary of an organization" (Price, 2001: p. 600). Turnover intention is not explicit since intentions are accounts about a specific behavior of interest (Berndt, 1981: p. 636). According to Sousa-Poza & Henneberger (2002: p. 1), turnover intent is basically defined as the reflection of "the (subjective) probability that an individual will change his or her job within a certain time period" and is considered to be an instantaneous predecessor to an actual employee turnover. Numerous literatures investigating the correlation of turnover intent and actual turnover (e. g. Mobley, 1977; Hom & Griffeth 1991) are in existence. Both the actual and turnover intentions were measured in separate dimensions; thus actual turnover is usually expected to increase as the mode on intention increases. Some studies show support for the high significance of turnover intention when investigating the person's turnover behavior. For Mobley et al. (1979) the turnover intention basically captures the person's perception and evaluation of various job alternatives.

2.3.1 Reference Theories on Voluntary Turnover Intent Behavior

A) **Social Exchange Theory:** This theory is basically anchored in the concept that social conduct is the product of the process of exchange which is to maximize benefits and consequently minimize costs. This theory has its beginnings from the works of Thibaut and Kelley, Homans and Blau (Brinkmann&Stapf, 2005: p. 24). Homans (1961: p. 12) emphasized that the exchange can only be understood through the material and non-material goods (e.g. Symbols of approval or prestige). This theory suggests that individuals consider potential reward and the risks linked to social relationships.

B) **Human Capital Theory:** Central to this theory is man's learning functions which are comparable with other natural resources involved in the production process (Becker, 1993). The origin of this theory can be found in the works of Adam Smith's "The Wealth of Nation" and William Petty; however the development and utilization of the human capital theory was extensively developed by Gary Becker in 1964. Becker (1993) categorically stated that human capital provides that not all work is equal and that the quality of manpower can be augmented by providing investments in them. Further, Becker (1993) has indicated that all-encompassing education and on-work trainings are a vital investment in the development of human capital. An individual's capacity to absorb knowledge is closely linked to higher earning level.

C) **Search Theory:** The analysis on how consumers or producers secure information as an investment can be traced back to this theory that was developed by George Stigler. The theory claims that a consumer or a producer who wants to determine the most advantageous price of goods or services must canvass various the producers or consumers (Stigler, 1961: p. 213). The focus of his study is the worker's optimal strategy when choosing from various potential opportunities in the labor market confronting the individual. Morrell et al. (2001: p. 23) claimed that the person's imperfect knowledge of labor market requires the use of a so-called "reservation price" in searching for various employment alternatives. For employees, job search creates alternative positions or workplaces outside the present organization, which can eventually lead to actual turnover. Thus, the search for employment was perceived to be a significant precursor to quitting as shown in numerous studies (e.g. Mobley et al., 1979). Moreover, Morrell et al., (2001: p. 24) indicated that job searches can likewise lead to the appreciation of a person's present job when compared with the alternatives.

D) **Matching Theory:** This theory is a description of a natural progression where humans or other organism "distributes their behavior in relation to the rate of reinforcement for response alternatives" (Mace, 1990: p. 197). It is further noted that this theory provides an understanding regarding the advent and the termination of a contract of work under the pressure of uncertainty. Relatively, employees make every effort for those positions in organization which match best with their capabilities correlated with appropriate wages. Consequently, employers tend to fill those vacant positions which could redound to the maximization of their benefit (Henneberger & Sousa-Poza, 2002: p. 28).

E) **Equity Theory:** Also known as "justice theory," can be categorized in job motivational theory which was developed by John Stacey Adams in 1963. Brinkmann & Stapf (2005: p. 26) has pointed out that this theory proposes that individuals should determine whether the distribution of resources is fair to both relational

partners. The equity theory of employee motivation in an organization defines the rational balance to be considered between employee inputs (i.e. hard work, skill level, tolerance or enthusiasm) and an employee's outputs (i.e. salary, benefits or intangible issues). According to this theory, if an employee perceives that the distribution of resources as unfair to him/her, consequently an occurrence of turnover intent will likely emerge.

F) ***Organizational Equilibrium Theory:*** Barnard (1938: p. 37) offered a theory for a systematic framework known as the organizational equilibrium where it features human motivations involved in the decision to belonging. He contended in his theory that "the equilibrium of an organization means the capacity to maintain efficiency of an organization" (Mano, 1994: p. 17). He further argued that an organization is highly dependent on the stability of the contributions of the workers, and organizations have to offer equitable inducements in order to maintain this stability. Thus, Barnard's precise development is the decision to similarly participate, hence "balancing of burdens by satisfactions which results in continence" (Barnard, 1938: p. 57). It is regarded than when the personal sacrifice is higher than the present incentives the employee receives, and then an eventuality could possibly take place where the person will withdraw his contributions and will leave the organization (Barnard, 1938: p. 57).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For performing this research has been used for qualitative method and interview tool survey system. In a qualitative method of research the aim is describing conditions or reviewed phenomena and the survey method is used as one of interview methods and face to face communication of qualitative method for reviewing the distribution of features of the statistical community. Also in this study, the researcher deals to describing, Examining the effect of workplace friendships and job embeddedness on turnover intention.

This study is basically an applied research. In terms of survey approach, it is analytical, and in addition to the use of previous researches and their positive aspects, this approach has been tried in some innovative and further aspects to be motivated. The hospitality industry experts and those members of the frontline employees of Mashhad of Iran will be the statistical population. It is fundamental for employees to probably stay with the organization when those employees feel that there is a link between them and the organization, when they are certain that they have a personal fit with respect to the culture and values of the organization, and when they recognize that any cost of organizational benefits that would be sacrificed, if the employee decides to leave, would be greater than the gain of leaving the company.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND PROPOSED RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The central research question was: What is the experience of frontline employeesconcerning workplace friendships in their workplace?The initial question endeavored to determine the study participants'perceptions of workplace friendships as a phenomenon in the hospitality industry in Iran.Another interview question sought to discover the role of having friendships at work place infrontlineemployees'decisions to stay or leave the organization in the hospitality industry.The question sought to determine if the factors that influenced thedecisions to leave were related to workplace friendships. The twointerview questions were as follows: How workplace friendships can affect your decision to leave or stay with the organization? How vital friend would motivate you to stay in a job?The last question sought to determine if the workplace friendships that as one of the forces that embeds people and keeps them from leaving their job.This interview question was what is the effect of employees' having friendship on increasing their job embeddedness?

Figure 1 presents the proposed model of the current study. As described above, the purpose of the qualitative study is to examine the perceived workplace friendships among frontline employees of five star hotels and determine the effect of workplace friendships on turnover intention and job embeddedness.
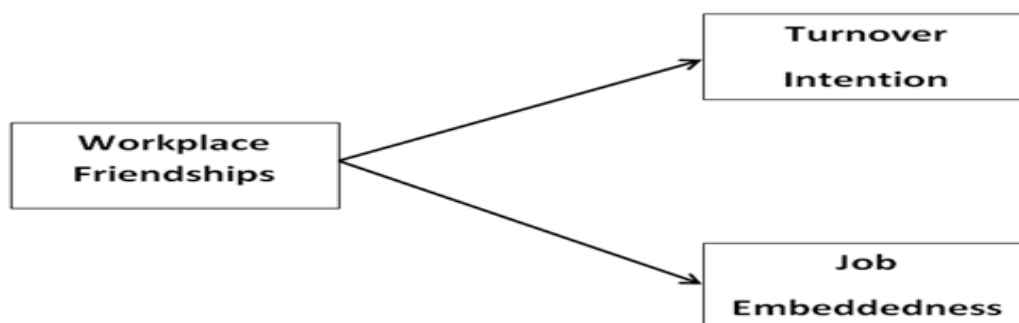

Figure 1: Proposed model of the study

V. POPULATION AND SAMPLE OF THE STUDY:

The population under investigation was frontline employees, who work in 5 star hotels in the Mashhad city in Iran. Mashhad was the geographic location of the study.The population of five stars fronline employees in all over of Iran as at the end of2012wasmore than 2,500. Because of logistical constraints, the sample was drawn from Mashhad, one of the first three tourism destinations in Iran.

Collis and Hussey (2009) defined a sampling frame as "a record of the population from which a sample can be drawn" (p. 209). Participants for this study were recruited through the use of snowball sampling methods. Snowball sampling is identified as a valid sampling strategy used in qualitative inquiry (Kuzel, 1992). Interview participants consisted of20 frontlineemployees from doorman to reception staff drawn from the five star hotels of the Mashhad city in Iran.Because the study method was qualitative, a representative sample was appropriate todiscern the reasons for the perceived workplace friendships in the hospitality industry.

VI. DATA GATHERING METHODS

The method of data collection was the next step in the process. Semi-structured interviews were the method for eliciting information from the participants. Interview and observation protocols were the format for structuring the data collected and recording the information. Audiotaping the interviews assisted in capturing the entire conversation ensuring accuracy.The questions were open-ended, general, and broad to elicit the lived experiences of the participants.Patton (2002) informed that the qualitative researcher communicates with individuals about personal experiences and perceptions.

The verbal script or the interview protocol guided the interview process. Data collection evolved during the interview sessions and further questions emerged as the researcher probed the interviewees to understand the phenomenon. The data gathered was in the form of words. The interviewer developed protocols for recording the information and recorded each interview using an audio tape. The interview protocol illustrated the broad questions and the observation protocol contained the record of the notes taken during the interview.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS

Following data collection, interviews were transcribed verbatim. He transcripts were then analyzed using a qualitative content analysis method. Qualitative content analysis focuses on using a consistent set of codes to sort the text into categories, thereby helping to identify major themes or patterns within the interview data (Downe- Wamboldt, 1992; Miles &Huberman, 1994; Morgan, 1993; Rossman& Rallis, 1998; Sandelowski, 2000). First, all transcripts were read and coded according to the broad thematic areas. The purpose of this coding was to become familiar with and assess the richness of the data in terms of variety of topics, or thematic areas, discussed by interview respondents.

Broad coding revealed a rich qualitative data set with many interesting themes and research avenues to pursue on friendship among frontline employees. However, this study focuses specifically on exploring outcomes such as turnover intention and job embeddedness related to workplace friendship; therefore, to move forward with analysis, the qualitative data were condensed into interview excerpts related to the focus of this study.

The interview transcripts were then reanalyzed to identify responses relating to two specific domains of interest: (1) the meaning of workplace friendship and difference from non-workplace friendship; (2) outcomes including turnover intention and job embeddedness that associated with the existence of workplace friendship. These domains were selected because they provide general insight into workplace friendship construct and correspond to the research questions under study.

In the next step, the interview data were reanalyzed at a more descriptive level of detail (Miles &Huberman, 1994), and an initial codebook was created using six condensed interview transcripts (three male and three female). The code generated in this codebook were different and more descriptive than those generated when coding for broad thematic areas. This difference occurred because these codes were explicitly related to the study focus whereas the broad codes highlighted the general content of the qualitative data. This initial codebook contained 50 unique codes grouped into four main categories.

VIII. DISCUSSION

This study explored workplace friendships among a particular frontlineemployees, associates working in five star hotels in the Mashhad city as one of the first three tourism destinations in Iran. This research was organized asthe qualitative methodology that used interview data to identify two essential outcomes associated with the existence of workplace friendships. Qualitative findings showed that workplace friendships associate with the outcomes of turnover intention and job embeddedness.

Sixty-five percent of respondents suggested a link between workplace friendships and their turnover intention. More specifically, respondents indicated that they would consider leaving the firm if they no longer

had friendships in the workplace. They also commented that they have stayed at their jobs longer than anticipated due to the friendships they have made with other job members. As one female associate emphatically commented, "I mean I literally couldn't survive without having friends at work, could not survive here… I would have quit. Yep, it's that dramatic… I really would have quit if I didn't have friends here."

Another male associate spoke about how having workplace friends has caused him to remain at the hotel longer than anticipated: "I think that if my group at the firm was different… the two partners that I work for, the senior partner and the one who's recently become a partner… I think if those two people were not as friendly as they are and were not people that I would consider my friends, I wouldn't be here. I actually came to Mashhad with no intention of staying at the firm… and I stayed purely because of these two partners."

Thirty-five percent of respondents suggested a link between workplace friendships and their job embeddedness. The more links a person has within their organization, the more embedded they will become (Mitchell et al., 2001). Respondents were ardent in their claim having friends at work makes work better and may contribute to job embeddedness by creating and strengthening the interpersonal links a person has within their organization. As one female associate described: "I do think that friendships… do help. Friendships and a sort of relationship generallyreally helps me feel connected to my job."

Indeed, when employees feel linked to their organizations, when they believe that they have a personal fit with the culture and values of the organization, and when they perceive that any cost of organizational benefits that would be sacrificed if the employee left would be greater than the gain of leaving the company (the three components of work embeddedness), then those employees are more likely to stay with the organization. Lastly, the more friendships one has, and the stronger those friendships are, the greater the perceived sacrifice of leaving the organization will be, thus increasing job embeddedness.
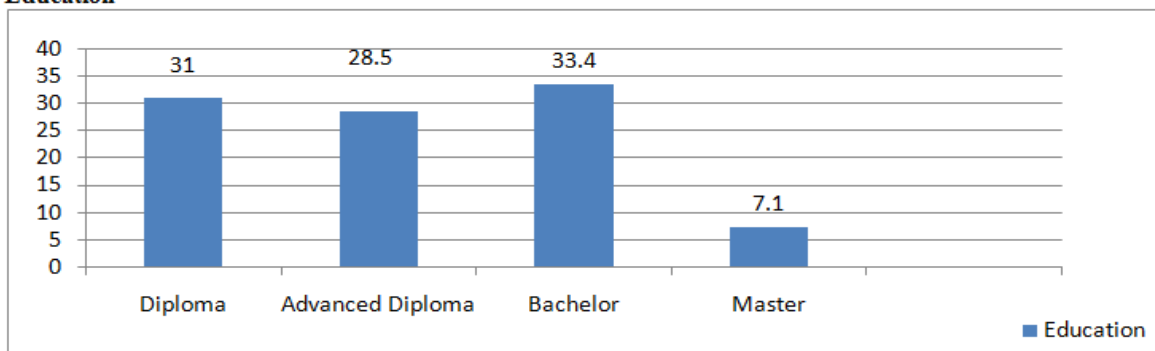
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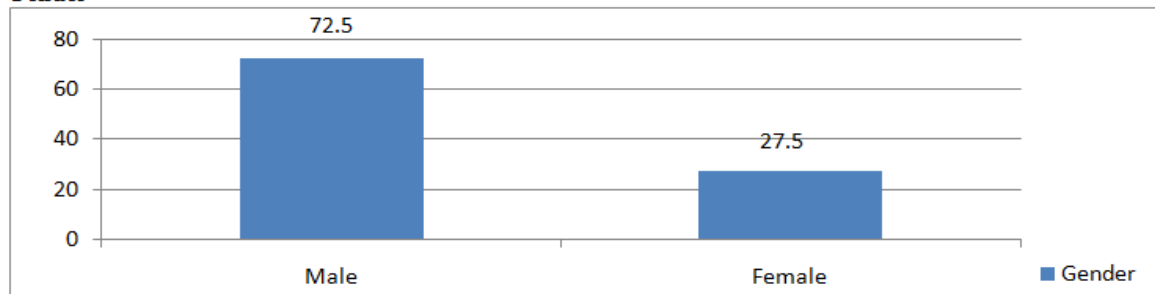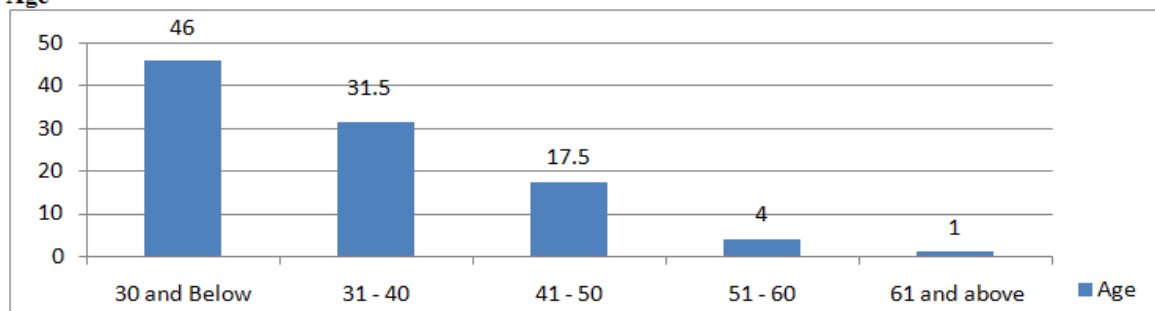
IX. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

In today's world the importance of the service sector and related markets to some extent that the developing countries have allocated a vast volume of their business operations on that. Based on international financial researches more than 60 percent of employment in industrialized countries has formed in the service sector. Significant economic changes taking place in the economy in the past two decades indicated that the greatest changes occurred in the area of services. Essentially, the human capital takes a significant role in the growth and success of the hospitality industry. This is importantly recognized since the hotel industry is particularly engaging as service provider and people-oriented enterprise. So knowing how to properly deal with employees in order to prevent voluntary turnover is necessary for managers.

Taking into consideration the increasing amount of time individuals spend at work, the importance of context in friendship research, and the scholarly call for a more comprehensive understanding of workplace relationships, exploration of friendship at work presents a research agenda of both critical and timely importance. This study represents an initial investigation into workplace friendships and serves as a catalyst for future studies in this area.

According to Statistical Center of Iran (2011), the service sector employs the largest share of the workforce in Iran (%48.3). The hotel industry is a service and people-oriented business that plays a significant role to help the Iranian government develop sustainable tourism. Hotels in Iran should provide excellent customer service that comes from a quality workforce. This study examined two potential outcomes of workplace friendships; job embeddedness and turnover intention. The findings of this study confirmed previous researches that there is a high degree of turnover(67%)among frontline employees in five star hotels in Iran. In addition, findings asserted that there is a direct relationship among the significant factors that transpires within the hospitality industry such as workplace friendships, job embeddedness, and turnover intention among the full-time employees in the front-line segment of the hotel industry in Iran.

X. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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