

---

## WORKPLACE INFORMAL RELATIONSHIPS AND EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION OF HOTELS IN RIVERS STATE

**FUBARA Boma Judith**

Doctoral Student

Department of Management,

University of Port Harcourt,

Nigeria.

08060398494

bomafuby@gmail.com

**B. Chima Onuoha (PhD)**

Professor of Management

Department of Management,

University of Port Harcourt,

Nigeria.

Chimaonuoha2005@yahoo.co.uk

### Abstract

*This study examined the relationship between workplace informal relationships and job satisfaction of the Nigeria hospitality industry in Port Harcourt. Cross sectional research design was adopted in studying one hundred and three (103) employees from a total number of one hundred and thirty-nine employees from 12 selected hotels in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Out of the 103 questionnaires distributed, 94 copies of were retrieved from the respondents and analyzed using spearman rank order correlation coefficient statistical tool to examine the relationship that exist between the variables under review. The result of the study revealed that there exists a significant relationship between workplace informal relationships and employee satisfaction in the hospitality industry. The study then concluded that though informal relationship has its own shortcomings, there should be conducive environment for informal relationships in the workplace as it helps in the level of employee engagement and also brings about innovative behaviour from the employees. The study recommended that managers of hotels should give some room for informal relationships in the workplace as it helps in developing a high level of cohesiveness among employees. Also, it brings about friendship and socialization with coworkers in the workplace. If properly managed, informal relationship will result in high level of employee engagement and innovative behaviour of employees.*

**Keywords:** Workplace, Informal Relationships, Employee Job Satisfaction, employee engagement.

## **Introduction**

The satisfaction of employees in the Nigerian hospitality industry is highly hinged on the relationships in the workplace. The relationships in the workplace either formal or informal can make or mar the success and satisfaction of employees in the workplace especially in the hospitality industry. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to give their best to the course of the job and the organization while employees who are not satisfied are withdrawn from their duties thereby affecting negatively the success of the organization. Many studies have revealed that the success of organizations is directly related to the satisfaction of its employees towards their job. Ozturk, Hancer & Im (2014) noted that employees are part of the product in delivering services to customers in the hospitality industry. They therefore noted that employee's dissatisfaction can negatively reflect on the organization's customer service and performance. The recruitment of employees through contracts and outsourcing have not helped in job satisfaction in the hospitality industry as most employees are less likely to be attached to the organization because of the high level of job insecurity. This has greatly metamorphosed into labour shortage, shortage of skilled workers, shortage of experienced workers etc. (Osman & Ronate, 2012).

Employee job satisfaction, in the words of Newstrom and Keith (2011), is "a set of unfavorable and favorable emotions and feelings which employees view with their work." According to Parvin and Kabir (2011), "work is a key aspect in people's lives in the competitive environment of today, and since most of the time is spent at work, their satisfaction with the jobs they undertake is of essence." Job satisfaction is defined as a collection of individual interactions, job factors, organizational variables and environmental elements. Experts have provided various definitions of the concept of job satisfaction (AliAbadi, AliAkbar & Fathi, 2014). Job satisfaction stems from employees' perception of certain aspects of the job and the relationship between their expectations or needs and the perceptions they have when carrying out the job (Ozturk, Hancer & Im, 2014). Job satisfaction has been discussed in the hospitality industry as a significant construct. A study model that examined job satisfaction as a mediator of the impacts of inter-role conflicts, work environment, and affectivity on career fulfillment and life satisfaction, for instance, was designed and tested by Yavas, Karatepe, and Babakus in 2012. Results showed that views of organizational politics exhibited strong negative consequences on career and life satisfaction, which were mediated by job satisfaction, although inter-role conflicts and work overload do not have significant impacts on any of the satisfaction dimensions.

Satisfaction at work is one of the most studied topics in the management literature (Dixit and Dean, 2018; Jung and Takeuchi, 2018; Lee and Chelladurai, 2018). Job satisfaction not only affects the productivity and performance of workers, it also influences how a company's goals are achieved in terms of improving customer satisfaction, perceived service quality, customer loyalty and satisfaction, and brand image (O'Donoghue and Tsui, 2013). This is especially relevant in the service industry since an adequate quality of service involves employee attitudes and behaviors that affect customers' experiences and expectations (Oliver, 1980). Despite its importance of hospitality industry, the industry is characterized by underpaid jobs and high work-related stress (Jovanović, Mijatov, Dragin, Simat & Majstorovic, 2019; Lillo-Banuls, Casado-Diaz & Simon, 2018). This is due to the characteristics of jobs in this industry, where limited career opportunities and broad work schedules exist (Hofmann and Stokburger-Sauer, 2017; Stamolampros, Korfiatis, Chavatzis & Buhalis, 2019).

It is however worthy of note that while several studies have examined various factors that may contribute to job satisfaction, informal relationship in the workplace is often neglected in the general discourse of employee job satisfaction. According to Amjad, Sabri, Ilyas, and Hameed (2015), informal relationships are usually viewed as an encouraging feature of organizational culture, but at the same time, they can also be the cause of inefficiency and inconvenience. Gillespie (1991) defines an informal relation as the network of social or personal and social relations which are not defined or prescribed by the formal organization.

According to Draper (2006), informal relations depend on human whims and personal conduct. It is a contact between two or more persons, whether working in the same formal organization or in different formal organizations, for certain ends. Such contacts may be entirely informal in nature and have nothing to do with the aims and objectives of the formal organization in question. On the other hand, such contacts although informal may be made with the purpose of meeting the aims or objectives of the formal organization (Sarkwa, 2011). Draper (2006) further explained that informal relations have neither a formal chain of command nor a span of control and management-subordinate relationship in the informal organization is due primarily to personal admiration, respect and appreciation that exist between them. Informal relationships in the workplace are very necessary to bring in a sense of happiness and well-being to employees. Although informal relationship may mean different things to different people from various cultures and societies, there are some types of informal relationships that are prevalent only at a workplace (Akila & Priyadarshini, 2018).

Workplace informal relationships enhance the job involvement and organizational involvement which in turn enhances the job performance (Ting & Ho, 2017). According to a study done by Gallup organization, employees who have good relationships at work are seen to be seven times more engaged in their work. There are some characteristics in a relationship like trust, mutual respect, open communication, and mindfulness that make it a healthy and good relationship. Some close workplace relationship may even be destructive or be more sinister than bringing any positive behaviour. These kinds of behaviours are unacceptable as it would lead to degradation of culture, growth and productivity of the organization. Nevertheless, positive informal relationship helps the employees to buy into the culture emotionally (Akila & Priyadarshini, 2018).

Driskell and Salas (1992) argued that groups can solve problems faster and improve efficiency. Therefore, the attention of management to formal groups has increased rapidly. Controversially, informal groups are formed within formal systems and they rise spontaneously as people work together. Unmanaged relationships and shared interests serve as the foundation for informal gatherings. Although informal groups play an essential role in businesses, managers occasionally are unaware of the informal group influences that frequently exist inside each firm and that shape and control employee behavior (Farveh, 2012). It is important not to overstate the significance of informal networks, according to certain research. According to Reif and Monczka (2004), informal networks do not have as much of an impact on people as is sometimes believed. According to Gillespie (1993), an informal relationship is a network of social, personal, and interpersonal ties that are not outlined or required by a formal organization. It is on the basis of the above importance of informal relationship that this study examines the relationship between workplace informal relationship and employee satisfaction of hotels in Rivers State.

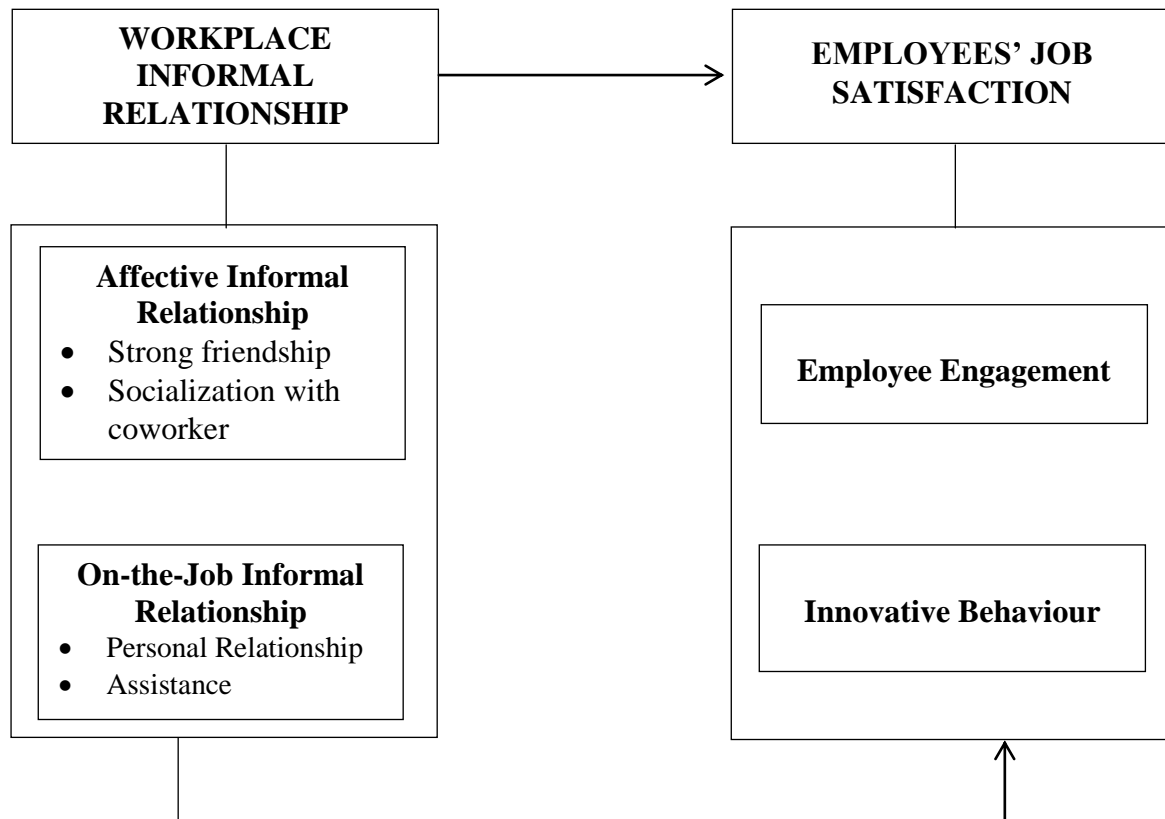
### **Statement of Problem**

Workplace informal relationship is essential to job engagement and job involvement which results in employee job satisfaction. However, there are some informal relationships that are not only beneficial to the organization but are also detrimental to the success of the organizational activities. Many studies have been done demonstrating that informal relations have a strong effect on organizational effectiveness by influencing on both employees and superiors' functions. However, there are notable gaps in literature on the empirical examination of whether or not informal relations would affect organizational performance positively (Farveh, 2012). For instance, studies by Reif and Monczka (2004) showed that informal relations and networks do not exert as big an influence on organizations as other literature suggests and therefore the controversy of whether informal groups are positive entities in organizations remains unidentified wholly. It is worthy of note that ill-informed employees can use informal workplace relationship to communicate unverified and untrue information that can have devastating effects on other employees and the organization at large (William, Attoh & Frank, 2016). This form of negative informal relationship in the workplace can undermine morale and self-confidence, establish bad attitudes, and often result in deviant or, even violent behaviors which eventually decrease employees' performance on the job (Sarkwa, 2011).

Researchers have shown that the nature of informal relationship in the workplace can lead to resistance to change and adversely affect the general wellbeing of an organization and bring about strife in the workplace among employees. Sarkwa (2011) noted that for the continuous existence of values and lifestyles, informal groups may become overly defensive of their culture and therefore resist management and organizational change. According to Waldstrom (2001), the norms of informal groups are often very strong despite or precisely because of their implicit nature and therefore endeavors to resist any form of change. Employees' aspiration to execute the obligations and services of both the informal group and management results in role conflict. Members may stray from official corporate goals and objectives in their desire for informal group happiness. Role conflict may be lessened by deliberately striving to combine the objectives, strategies, and assessment systems of both informal and formal organizations, which will increase everyone's output and satisfaction (Draper, 2006).

Despite several studies showing the negative impacts of informal interactions at work, these studies are insufficient in that they do not clearly explain why, where, or under what circumstances informal relationships have these effects. Even with these negative impacts of work place informal relationship, it is very crucial to pay attention towards its valuable importance (Song, 2005). To date, academicians and practitioners have not examined or put forward any suggestions to describe the various effects of workplace informal relationships in the hospitality industry and this dynamic is still unknown. It is in the light of the above knowledge gap that this study seeks to study the relationship between informal workplace relationship and employee performance of hotels in Rivers state.

### Operational Framework



**Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework showing the relationship between workplace informal relationship and employee job satisfaction**

### Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the correlates of workplace informal relationship with employees' job satisfaction in the Nigerian hospitality industry. Specifically, the objectives are:

1. To examine relationship between affective informal relationship and employee engagement of employees in Nigerian hospitality industry.
2. To ascertain relationship between affective informal relationship and innovative behaviour of employees in Nigerian hospitality industry.
3. To examine relationship between on-the-job informal relationship and employee engagement of employees in Nigerian hospitality industry.
4. To ascertain relationship between on-the-job informal relationship and innovative behaviour of employees in Nigerian hospitality industry.

### Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated for the study,

- Ho<sub>1</sub> There is no significant relationship between affective informal relationship and employee engagement of employees in the Nigerian hospitality industry.
- Ho<sub>2</sub> There is no significant relationship between affective informal relationship and innovative behaviour of employees in the Nigerian hospitality industry.
- Ho<sub>3</sub> There is no significant relationship between on-the-job informal relationship and employee engagement of employees in the Nigerian hospitality industry.
- Ho<sub>4</sub> There is no significant relationship between on-the-job informal relationship and innovative behaviour of employees in the Nigerian hospitality industry.

## **Review Of Related Literature**

### **Theoretical Framework: Social Exchange Theory**

Social exchange theory started within family sciences mostly towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This theory in the word of Staffelbach (2008) depends on opinion that social behaviours are the outcome of the exchange process which is geared at minimizing cost and maximizing benefits. Social exchange theory describes whether we like somebody, or want to engage in a friendship with him or her, is determined by the cost-reward ratio (Rook, 1984). Social exchange theory holds that people enter into relationships because of the rewards (benefits, fulfilled needs and other privileges) that such relations are expected to bring. This theory is related to this study because it holds that the social relationship that exists in the workplace determines the behaviour of the individuals in the workplace and thereby influences their level of satisfaction.

### **Workplace Informal Relationship**

The workplace relationships which have received the most research attention are those of superior-subordinate and mentor-protage. Since they are dictated by the institution, these connections lack the voluntary nature of friendships. Since they constitute an illustration of formal ties, the current research does not specifically address them. The informal organizational interactions that are not regulated by the organization are the subject of this study (Morrison & Wright, 2009). Strong informal ties make it more difficult for employees to quit an organization, but they do have an impact on intention to leave because the existence of bad relationships is a reason why people wish to leave their company. Social participation may be defined as interactions and connections with other group members. This involvement is intrinsically rewarding so that the decision to leave the organization is made more difficult (Morrison, 2004).

Informal workplace interactions constitute the foundation of a company, according to Thibaut (2017). Collaboration between all institution's stakeholders serves as the foundation for growth inside the company in today's dynamic institutions, and it also assures that the management framework can build a foundation for greater performance. The importance of an employee network as a tool cannot be understated (Kukenberger, Mathieu, & Ruddy, 2015). In decision making, employee participation determines whether the business succeeds or not by ensuring proper motivation and coordination of activities across the organizational structure. To keep standards and maintain efficiency, it is necessary for managers to look keenly, understand and appreciate teams and groupings within the firm which includes informal workplace relationship. Harris & Sherblom (2018) noted that being affiliated with one group or another is quite critical especially when dealing with management of employee attitude. The many characteristics of an employee's working capacities are determined by the non-official organizations with which they are affiliated in an organization (Marsick & Watkins, 2015). These go beyond motivation and skill development to include the idea of adhering to company norms and workplace protocols.

Informal workplace relationships are as real as the official affiliations in every organization and they normally act independently. It forms a basis for cohesion and support for one another within and without the firm (Abbas, 2018). According to Locke (2015), informal organizations create their own code of ethics or unwritten set of rules. As a result, they might serve as the catalyst for all of the company's official rules, processes, and strategies. Without proper utilization of informal workplace relationships, many organizations fail despite having trained workforce, modern equipment and huge financial muscles. It therefore goes without

say that human resource management is as vital as the management of other resources who carry out the day to day running of the institution (Hall, Frink, & Buckley, 2017).

An informal relation is caused by certain drives and forces inherent in man himself. These may be psychological or social. They may also be a hindrance as well as help to the functioning of a formal organization. An informal relation is viewed as the network of social or personal and social relations which are not defined or prescribed by the formal organization (Gillespie, 1991). An informal relation is of fluid character. That is to say, it does not manifest itself in any formal organizational structure. Rather, it depends on human whims and personal conduct. It may therefore be said that an informal organization possesses structural identity of its own principal characteristics (Draper, 2006).

Informal relationship in the first place, is a contact between two or more persons, whether working in the same formal organization or in different formal organizations, for certain ends. Moreover, such contacts may be entirely informal in nature and have nothing to do with the objectives of the formal organization in question. On the other hand, such contacts although informal may be made with the purpose of meeting the objectives of the formal organization. In addition, informal relations do not conform to any set of relationship inherent in the chain of command. Rather it is based on personal friendship and acquaintance or administrative norms. Also, such relationship in an informal organization generally accrues either from compatibility or a conflict of personality or interest of the person involved. Draper (2006) continues to explain that as informality is a keynote in relationship. The informal relation has neither a formal chain of command nor a span of control. The management-subordinate relationship in the informal organization is due primarily to personal respect and appreciation that exist between them. Lastly, one usually finds in an informal organization the following people: kinship, friendship, cliques and subcliques. To administer a social organization according to purely technical criteria of rationality is irrationality, because it ignores the nonrational aspects of social conduct.

### **On-The-Job Informal Relationship**

On-the-job informal relationship refers to workplace informal relationship that exists within the workplace. Song (2005) observed that workplace informal relationship that happens in the workplace. Informal relationship at the workplace refers to individuals' friendship with their peers, subordinates, and superiors (Austin, 2009; Mao & Hsieh, 2012). Informal relationship is a voluntary, personal relationship, typically providing intimacy and assistance, in which the two parties like each other and seek each other's company. Workplace informal relationship is non-exclusive voluntary workplace relations that involve mutual trust, commitment, reciprocal liking and shared interests and values (Berman, West, Maurice & Richter, 2002).

Workplace informal relationship is a phenomenon that is beyond mere behaviors engaged in friendly manner among people in an organization, it connotes trust, liking, and shared interests or values rather than being only mutual acquaintances (Berman et al., 2002). According to Fine (1986), having informal relationships at work might make people feel less stressed out about their jobs and have more energy. According to Hamilton's (2007) research, when employees interact informally at work, they may feel more at ease and their emotions of nervousness and uncertainty are reduced. Jehn and Shah (1997) added that employees who interact informally provide words of support, assurance, trust, respect, and constructive criticism, which may boost zeal and a positive outlook. When employees have trustful friends

at work, they can get help or advice from their friend co-workers and, therefore, gain feelings of security, comfort, and satisfaction with their job at work (Dotan, 2007).

Compared to individuals who do not have access to informal ties, studies have shown that workers with strong informal relationships work with enthusiasm and have a strong connection to the firm. Additionally, compared to those who did not have access to such interactions, individuals with access to informal relationships at work expected to stay with the company for at least another year (Roth, 2006). Good informal interactions at work are always present among those who are happy in their jobs (Winstead, Derlega, Montgomery, & Pilkington, 1995). When there is a good relationship at the workplace, there is some evidence that there are positive outcomes, good communication (Kram & Isabella, 1985), increased job satisfaction (Winstead et al. 1995), job performance (Ross, 1997), reduced turnover intention, high retention (Morrison, 2004), and organizational commitment (Nielsen, Jex, & Adams, 2000).

### **Affective Informal Relationship**

Affective informal relationship is mutually desired relationships involving romantic attraction between two employees of the same organization (Pierce & Aguinis, 2001). Romantic relationships at the workplace are consensual and mutually welcomed (Clarke, 2006). Ariani (2011) explained that workplace romances are characterized by desiring to be with the other person and feelings of emotional and physical attraction, which may lead to a sharing of personal information, mutual caring and respect, and quite likely sexual behavior such as touching, kissing and hugging, and sexual intercourse (Pierce et al, 1996). Lickey (2009) described workplace romance as working together allows people to get to know each other and as familiarity grows, workplace romances may be more likely to occur. These relationships may form between peer co-workers, supervisors, subordinates, or even with company clients (Rabin-Margaloith, 2006).

Only two types of the workplace affective are identified in the literature, lateral and hierarchical (Karl & Sutton, 2000; Pierce & Aguinis 1997). An equal-status workplace relationship is referred to as a lateral romance. When a boss develops an emotional connection with one or more of his or her subordinates, this is an example of a hierarchical romance. Workplace romances that feature power imbalances between the couples are more common, more troublesome, and frequently a cause of antagonism than lateral relationship (Powell, 2001). Quinn (1977) drawing on a survey asking about romance among co-workers, found that most employees cite negative consequences from workplace romance and say that organizations generally do not take effective action. Job productivity can be negatively affected by romance due to long lunches, extended discussions behind closed doors, missed meetings, late arrivals and early departures (Quinn & Judge 1978). Negative effects also include co-worker disapproval, cynicism, and hostility (Anderson & Fisher, 1991), as well as concerns that there will be favoritism and employment benefits given to one party in the relationship by the other (Anderson & Hunsaker, 1985). Negative outcomes include conflicts of interest, flawed or biased decision-making and other workplace inequities that have a negative impact on both individual and organizational performance as well as the career of one or both partners in the relationship (Powell, 1993).

In opposition to the above perspective several researches have shown that employees involved in a workplace romance can be more productive at work (Quinn & Lees, 1984; Dillard, 1987; Dillard & Broetzmann, 1989; Pierce, 1998). Levels of productivity may be lower at the start of the relationship as large amounts of time and energy are invested in it.



Once the initial excitement of the new romance lessens, productivity tends to rise steadily (Pierce, Byrne & Aguinis, 1996). The positive outcomes of organizational romance for instance is that workplace romance can increase workplace morale and motivate other employees, encourage creativity and innovation. It can create more relaxed and happier work environments (Biggs, Mathewman & Fullz, 2012) and can soften personality conflicts because the workplace romance partners are more content and easier to get along with. It can improve teamwork, communication, and cooperation (Cole, 2009). In addition, some organizations experience lower turnover, because married employees who work in the same company tend to stay with the company (Wilson, Filosa, & Fennel, 2003). Despite the aforementioned positive effects of informal relationships in the workplace, the interaction between individuals with a negative relationship is characterized by disrespect, disagreement, dislike, conflict and/or animosity. Individuals may interact with each other on a fairly regular basis but would definitely not continue the relationship if they did not work together (Priyasad & Weerasinghe, 2017).

### **Employee Job Satisfaction**

Employee job satisfaction is the feelings and thoughts of employees about their work and place of work. In result, job satisfaction is all about to satisfy the one's needs in working place (Togia, Koustelios & Tsigilis, 2004). According to Bodur (2002), there are a few variables that affect job happiness, including work-related drugs, age, sex, educational attainment, work environment, location, coworkers, money, and time of work. According to Ivancevich & Matteson (2002) job satisfaction is an attitude people have about their jobs. It results from their perception of their jobs and the degree to which there is a good fit between individual and organization.

Job satisfaction is considered to be the measure of an employee satisfaction or contention with their work. A number of factors tend to affect a person's level of job satisfaction. A few of these factors are the salary and the nature of the job, the environment, working conditions and leadership. Concerned with job satisfaction is job design and job enrichment, job rotation and job enlargement are all performance methods. The management style, culture, employee participation, empowerment, and work groups with the freedom to operate independently are other factors that affect job happiness. Using scales that capture employees' responses to their jobs is the most common and easiest technique to gauge job satisfaction. This suggests that achieving job satisfaction is necessary to gain the organization's commitment to methods that may be effective, but that each organization should decide whether to choose employee contentment or employee dissatisfaction with their work (Islam & Hossain, 2018).

In contrast, job dissatisfaction effects organization in negative ways. Dissatisfaction in turn will lead to stress, which drives employees' feeling of unhappiness with their job. A study by Branham (2005) found 25% to 50% workers feel some level of dysfunction due to stress. As a result to this feeling, employees attitudes suggest negative effects, such low productivity and quitting the company. The causes of stress may come from lack of facilities, equipment and tools to produce or work efficiently on the job. All these resulted in lower productivity and higher turnover. In this sense, employers are more concern to the revenue, profit and productivity rather than employees' wellbeing who are working for them. This will definitely lead to job dissatisfaction and resulted in employees to resign and jumping to other company that offer better benefit and advantages (Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2000). Another cause is lack in communication at workplaces, contribute to high rate of job dissatisfaction. According to Branham (2005), ineffective communication at work places may result in employees' feeling being disconnected from organizations' general and mutual feeling. Thus, communication in

between employers and employees are equally important in ensuring the stability and harmonization at workplaces.

### **Employee Engagement**

William Kahn coined the phrase "employee engagement" in 1990. This condition is based on Kahn's findings that people may choose how much of themselves to put into their employment. Employee engagement, according to Kahn (1990), is "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people use and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances." The cognitive component of employee engagement focuses on how employees perceive the company, its executives, and working circumstances. Thus, Kahn (1990) defined engagement as being both physically and psychologically present while carrying out an organizational task.

Employee commitment to the company is frequently characterized as an emotional and intellectual commitment (Baumruk, 2004). Engagement can affect employees' attitudes, absence and turnover levels and various studies have demonstrated links with productivity, increasingly pointing to a high correlation with individual, group and organizational performance, a success measured through the quality of customer experience and customer loyalty (Fraser, 2008). According to Perrin's research from 2007, businesses with the greatest levels of employee engagement boosted their operational revenue by 19% and their earnings per share by 28% year over year. Because they are employers of choice who draw and keep the greatest individuals, highly engaging organizational cultures may also have an alluring employer brand (Martin & Hetrick, 2006). Organizations may gain from staffs that are prepared to go above and beyond and achieve greater financial performance by creating a culture that encourages people to engage in their job (Baumruk, 2006).

### **Innovative Behaviour**

The word innovation is often interchangeably used with the word creativity. Amabile (1996) differentiated these two terms by defining creativity and innovation. He defined creativity as production of useful and novel ideas in domain while Innovation refers to implementation of creative ideas in organization so creativity is the first stage of innovation. This study is considering innovative behavior of employees as a fall out of their satisfaction with their job. Innovative behavior was defined by Carmeli, Meitar, and Weisberg (2006) as a multi-stage process in which a person identifies a problem, generates new (novel or adopted) ideas and solutions, works to advance and build support for them, and creates a workable prototype or model for the organization or parts of it. Many of the researchers have more or less the same idea about the innovative behavior. Shi (2012) sees behaviour that is innovative as those that is concerned with the development, adoption and implementation of innovative ideas in terms of production is organizational methods. Employee's innovative behavior can be applied to as well incremental as radical innovation. Individual innovation does not necessarily have to result in a minor change which can be applied in the existing infrastructure, but can also have a direct profound effect on the organization (Åmo, 2005). Therefore, innovative work behavior includes all the elements of innovation: product, technology, market and organization.

### **Empirical Review**

Priyasad and Weerasinghe (2017) carried out a review study on the study between informal relationships at work and employee retention in Sri Lanka. The study explored aspects of informal relationships at work which include friendship, romance and negative relationships and using the Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. The findings of the study revealed that

friendship in the workplace is positively related with employee retention whereas negative relationship at the workplace inversely effect on employee retention. The study also revealed that romance as an aspect of informal relationship is not clear enough to draw a conclusion and therefore requires further investigation in future researches.

Amjad, Sabri, Ilyas and Hameed (2015) conducted a study on informal relationships at workplace and employee performance of employees in private higher education sector in Punjab, Pakistan. The objective of the study was to determine the impact of workplace friendship on employee task and contextual performance, job satisfaction and turnover intentions in university employees of higher education institutes. The study collected data from 500 teachers in private sector higher education institute. The step wise regression analysis and principal component analyses were used to confirm the hypotheses. The result of the study showed that workplace friendship has variety of positive and significant functions for individual performance and job satisfaction.

Sarkwa (2011) conducted a research study on informal relations and its effect on industrial organizations using Coca-Cola Bottling Company and Ghana Breweries Limited as case study. The objective of the study was to identify the possible effect of informal relations on organizations. The study utilized the social survey design and it sampled a total of 200 workers from the population of 520 workers, while both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analyses were used. The findings of the study revealed that informal relations is a natural, social and psychological need of workers and managers needs to study the group in order to blend the interest of the informal group with that of the formal organization for higher productivity.

The influence of workplace friendliness on organizational commitment and desire to leave among educators in tourism and hospitality was examined by Salem and El-Said (2014). The study's goal was to determine how workplace friendliness, job commitment, and turnover intentions interacted. All staff members working in various departments at Egypt's government-run hotels and tourism colleges made up the study's population. The study's conclusions showed that workplace friendliness has a favorable effect on organizational commitment and turnover intentions of tourism and hospitality degrees.

Samuel and Ikemefuna (2012) found that greater the job satisfaction less likely is the turnover intention, thus confirming previous literature that a person with a high level of job satisfaction holds positive attitude toward the job and conversely the person who is dissatisfied with the job holds negative attitude about the job. It means that employees who are satisfied on their job will retain their jobs and not quit. The adoption of a standard pay structure, an environment that is favorable to work, and effective supervision not only function as tactics to minimize employee turnover but also as a firm retention strategy, it was shown that job satisfaction particularly lowers employees' intention to quit. Rohani (2012) provided empirical support that satisfaction with salary, promotion, superior, and the work itself has a significant influence on turnover intention. Interestingly though, satisfaction with the co-workers was found not to be associated with turnover intention.

Ahmad, Shahid, Zill-e-Huma and Haider (2012) concluded that job satisfaction is significantly and negatively correlated with turnover intention. Also, job stress has significant negative relationship to turnover intention. It has been evidenced that; employees experienced more job stress has more intention to quit. Dua'a, Fais and Hamid (2013) showed that there is significant low negative relationship between pay, supervision and promotion satisfaction and

turnover intentions and significant very low relationship between coworkers and satisfaction with the work itself and turnover intentions. It was also found that pay satisfaction was the dominant dimension.

### Methodology

The study adopted a non-experimental research design. Accordingly, from the available non-experimental options, the study chose a cross-sectional research design. The population of the study covers employees of all the hotels in Port Harcourt. However, for the sake of accessibility, the researcher used 139 staff drawn from 12 hotels selected for the study. The selection of these hotels is as a result of convenience in accessing the employees of these hotels and their willingness to partake in the study.

The convenience sampling technique was used on each of the hotels in this study. The choice of this technique is because the respondents are readily and easily available and accessible and they are willing to be a part of the study. The Yamene (1968) formula was used in determining the sample size. The formula is given as;

$$\pi = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where, n = Sample size

N = Population size

e = the error of sample.

$$\pi = \frac{139}{1 + 139 (0.05)^2}$$
$$n = \frac{139}{1 + 139 (0.0025)}$$

$\pi = 103$ . Therefore, the sample size is of the study is 103.

The data for this research was obtained from primary through the use of a well-structured questionnaire instrument. This questionnaire is designed to elicit the respondents' idea regarding the variables under study. The face and content validity was employed in this work. The reliability of the instrument was done using the cronbach alpha test in testing the reliability of the research instrument with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 only items with alpha values equal or more than 0.7 will be used. The data analysis was done using Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient in analyzing the stated hypotheses through the use of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). This statistical tool was used because the variables are on ordinal scale and the research is aimed at investigating the relationship between the predictor and criterion variable.

### Results and Discussion

In this section, data results for the analysis and tests for the hypotheses are presented. The section examines the relationship between the dimensions of workplace informal relationships and measures of employee satisfaction, four null hypotheses are tested in this section using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient statistical tool at a 95% confidence interval. The decision rule is set at a critical region of  $p > 0.05$  for acceptance of the null hypothesis and  $p < 0.05$  for rejection of the null hypothesis.

**Table 1: Affective Informal Relationship and Work Engagement Correlations**

			Affective Informal Relationship	Work Engagement
Spearman's rho	Affecting Informal Relationship	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.718**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	94	94
	Work Engagement	Correlation Coefficient	.718**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	94	94

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above hypothesis result indicates that; positive relationship exists between affective informal relationship and work engagement of employees in the hotels. The p-value of .000 indicated that there is a significant relationship between the variables. However, the rho value of 0.718 implies that there is a high significant relationship between affective informal relationship and work engagement. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis.

**Table 2: Affective Informal Relationship and Innovative Behaviour Correlations**

			Affective Informal Relationship	Innovative Behaviour
Spearman's rho	Affective Informal Relationship	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.825**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	94	94
	Innovative Behaviour	Correlation Coefficient	.825**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	94	94

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The hypothesis result in table 2 indicates that a significant relationship exists between affective informal relationship and innovative behaviour given the p-value of .000 and the rho value of .825. This implies that affective informal relationship has a high and direct correlation with innovative behaviour. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. The higher the level of affecting informal relationship, the higher the innovative behaviour employees exhibit.

**Table 3: On-The-Job Informal Relationship and Work Engagement Correlations**

			On-The-Job Informal Relationship	Work Engagement
Spearman's rho	On-The-Job Informal Relationship	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.821**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	94	94
	Work Engagement	Correlation Coefficient	.821**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	94	94

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Based on the analysis of table 3, the result revealed that there is a positive correlation between on-the-job informal relationship and work engagement in the selected hotels. The P-value of 0.000 indicates a significant level of correlation between the two variables. ( $.000 < .05$ ). Furthermore, the rho value of .821 shows that on-the-job informal relationship relates to a high extent with work engagement, based on the result of the hypothesis, we thus reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis.

**Table 4: On-The-Job Informal Relationship and Innovative Behaviour Correlations**

			On-The-Job Informal Relationship	Innovative Behaviour
Spearman's rho	On-The-Job Informal Relationship	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.719**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	94	94
	Innovative Behaviour	Correlation Coefficient	.719**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	94	94

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Based on the informal on table 4, the result of the hypothesis test indicates that a significant relationship exists between on-the-job informal relationship and innovative behaviour given the P-value of 0.000 and a rho value of 0.719 which revealed a high positive significant relationship between on-the-job informal relationship and innovative behaviour. Based on this, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

### Discussion of Findings

On the basis of the hypotheses tested, the results are discussed within the context of existing literature of informal relationships and job satisfaction. The first hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between affective informal relationship and work engagement. The bivariate analysis revealed that there is a relationship between affective informal relationship

and work engagement. The calculated P-value of 0.000 revealed that there is a significant relationship between affective informal relationship and work engagement because the P-value was less than 0.05 ( $P\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, the rho value ( $r$ ) value of 0.718 revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between affective informal relationship and work engagement. On the other hand, the  $r^2$  was 0.515. This shows that 52% total variation in work engagement of employees in the hotel is accounted for by affective informal relationship in the organization. This finding supports that of Priyasad and Weerasinghe (2017), which revealed that there is a relationship between informal relationship and employee job satisfaction and retention. Therefore, this implies that an improvement on the level of affective informal relationship improves the level of employee engagement which is a measure of employee job satisfaction in hotels.

The second hypothesis states that; there is no significant relationship between affective informal relationship and innovative behaviour. The bivariate analysis output revealed that; there is a relationship between affective informal relationship and innovative behaviour this is based on the fact that the P-value which is the significant value was less than the level of significance ( $P\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, the  $r$  value of 0.825 implies that there is a positive high correlation between affective informal relationship and innovative behaviour. The  $r^2$  was 0.680. This indicated that 68% total variation in innovative behaviour of hotel workers can be accounted for by affective informal relationship in the organization. This finding flows with that of Morison (2004), who found a significant relationship between informal relationship and the level of job satisfaction.

The third hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between on-the-job informal relationship and work engagement. The bivariate analysis output shows that there is a relationship between on-the-job informal relationship and work engagement. The P-value of 0.000 implies that there is a significant relationship between on-the-job informal relationship and work engagement given that the significant value was level that the level of significant. Again, the  $r$  value of 0.821 shows that there is a significant positive relationship between on-the-job informal relationship and work engagement. This implies that when on-the-job informal relationship increases in the organization, work engagement increases drastically. The  $r^2$  was 0.674. This implies that 67% in the total variation in work engagement among the workers in hotels can be accounted for by on-the-job informal relationships in the organization. This finding supports that of Priyasad and Weerasinghe (2017), which revealed that there is a relationship between informal relationship and employee job satisfaction and retention.

The fourth hypothesis states that there is no relationship between on-the-job informal relationship and innovative behaviour. The bivariate analysis output shows that there is a relationship between on-the-job informal relationship and innovative behaviour based on the fact that the P-value of 0.000 was less than the level of significance ( $P\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, the  $r$  value of 0.719 shows that there is a high positive relationship between on-the-job informal relationship and innovative behaviour. This indicates that when social awareness increases, team interdependency also increases. Again, the  $r^2$  was 0.517. This implies that 52% total variation in innovative behaviour among employees in hotels is accounted for by on-the-job informal relationship in the organization. The finding flows with that of Morison (2004), who found a significant relationship between informal relationship and the level of job satisfaction.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings above, we arrived at the following conclusions. The study concludes that affective informal relationship is significantly related to employee work engagement in the Nigerian hospitality industry. This shows that when there is affective informal relationship in the workplace, it enhances the level of work engagement and also enhances retention. As such, hotels that encourage affective informal relationship among employees' team will eventually have employees who exhibit high level of work engagement. Affective informal relationship has a significant relationship with innovative behaviour. Furthermore, On-the-job informal relationship is significantly related to work engagement of employees in the hospitality industry. Lastly, on the job informal relationship enhances the level of employee innovative behaviour in the workplace. Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

1. Management of hotels should encourage affective informal relationships as it helps in the level of employee engagement. Although, it is not without its negative aspect but the overall positive is greater to the organization.
2. Owners and management of hospitality firms such as hotels should give room for informal relationship because when employees are engaged in such relationships, it breeds friendships and therefore enhances innovative behaviour.
3. The employees of the hotels should be encouraged to engage in on the job informal relationship to promote work engagement.
4. Hotel managers should create avenue for informal relationships in the workplace by promoting social events which improve the level of innovative behaviour of employees and generally enhance the level of service.

### **References**

- Abbas, A.A. (2018). Influence of Informal Groups on Productivity: A Case Study of Philadelphia Pharmaceuticals Company. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 8(7), 421 – 435.
- Ahmad, B., Shahid, M. Zill-e-Huma, & Haider, S. (2012). Turnover Intention: An HRM Issue in Textile Sector. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 3(12), 15 – 25.
- Akila, A. & Priyadarshini, R.G. (2018). The Impact of Workplace Friendships on Organizational Commitment and Intention to Leave. *The 3rd International Conference on Materials and Manufacturing Engineering*. 1 – 6.
- AliAbadi, S.M.G., AliAkbar, S.M.S. & Fathi, K. (2014). A Study to Determine the Dimensions of Job Satisfaction, Job Turnover Tendency, Individual Personalities and Psychological Well-being in Tehran City Hall. *Management Science Letters*, 4, 1153 – 1160.
- Amabile, T.M. (1996) Creativity and Innovation in Organizations. *Harvard Business School Background Note*, 396-239
- Amjad, Z., Sabri, P.S.U., Ilyas, M. and Hameed, A. (2015). Informal Relationships at Workplace and Employee Performance: A Study of Employees in Private Higher Education Sector. *Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences (PJCSS)*, Johar Education Society, Pakistan (JESPK), Lahore, 9(1), 303-321.



- Anderson, C., & Hunsaker, P. (1985). Why there's romancing at the office and why it's everybody's problem. 57–63.
- Austin, C. (2009). *An investigation of workplace friendships and how it influences career advancement and job satisfaction: A qualitative case study*. Unpublished PhD's Thesis, Capella University.
- Baumruk, Ray. (2004). The missing link: The role of employee engagement in business success. *Workspan*, 47. 48-52.
- Berman, E. M., West, J. P., Maurice, W., & Richter, N. (2002). Workplace relations: Friendship patterns and consequences (According to managers). *Public Administration Review*, 62(2), 217-230.
- Biggs, D., Mathewman, L., & Fulz, C. (2012). Romantic relationships in organizational settings: Attitudes on workplace romance in the UK and USA. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 27, 271-285.
- Bodur, S. (2002). Job satisfaction of health care staff employed at health centers in Turkey. *Occupational Medline*, 52(6), 353-5.
- Branham, L., (2005). *The 7 hidden reasons employees leave: How to recognize the subtle signs and act before it's too late*. New York, NY: Amacom.
- Carmeli, A., Meitar, R. & Weisberg, J. (2006). Self-leadership skills and innovative behavior at work. *International Journal of Manpower*, 27(1), 75-90.
- Dillard, J. (1987). Close relationships at work: Perceptions of the motives and performance of relational participants. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 4, 179–193.
- Dillard, J., & Broetzmann, S. (1989). Romantic relationships at work: Perceived changes in job-related behaviours as a function of participant's motive, partner's motive and gender. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 19, 93–110.
- Dixit, S., & Dean, A., (2018). The impact of talent management on job satisfaction and employee performance in public sector banks of Rajasthan. *Int. J. Creative Res. Thoughts*, 6 (1), 425–435.
- Draper, S. (2006). *Finding: The Hawthorne, Pygmalion, Placebo and Other Effects of Expectation*. University of Glasgow: UK.
- Driskell JE, Salas E. (1992). Collective behavior and team performance. *Human Factors: The Journal of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society*, 34(3):277-288.
- Farveh F. (2012). The effects of informal groups on organizational performance. Institute of Interdisciplinary Business Research: Malaysia.
- Fine (1986), Hamilton, E.A. (2007). Firm friendship: Examining functions and outcomes of workplace Friendship among law firm associates (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Boston College. Boston, MA.

- Gillespie R. (1993). *Manufacturing Knowledge: A History of the Hawthorne Experiments*. Cambridge University Press: UK.
- Gillespie, R. (1991). *Manufacturing Knowledge: A History of the Hawthorne Experiments*. Cambridge University Press: New York.
- Hall, A. T., Frink, D. D., & Buckley, M. R. (2017). An accountability account: A review and synthesis of the theoretical and empirical research on felt accountability. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 38(2), 204-224.
- Harris, T. E., & Sherblom, J. C. (2018). *Small group and team communication*. Waveland Press.
- Hofmann, V., & Stokburger-Sauer, N.E., (2017). The impact of emotional labor on employees' work-life balance perception and commitment: a study in the hospitality industry. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 65, 47–58.
- Islam, R. & Hossain, M. (2018). Job Satisfaction of Academic Staff; An Empirical Research Study on Selected Private Educational Institute at Dhaka City Corporation. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research: A Administration and Management*, 18(5), 9 – 15.
- Ivancevich, J., & Matteson, M. (2002). *Organizational Behaviour and Management* (6th edition), New York: McGraw–Hill.
- Jovanović, T., Mijatov, M., Dragin, A.S., Simat, K., Majstorović, N., (2019). Identification of predictors' effects on perceiving the ethical climate and job satisfaction within Serbian tourism industry. *J. Manag. Organ.* 1–29.
- Jung, Y., Takeuchi, N., 2018. A lifespan perspective for understanding career self-management and satisfaction: the role of developmental human resource practices and organizational support. *Human Relations*, 71 (1), 73–102.
- Kahn, A. W. (1990). Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33(4), 692–724.
- Karl, K., & Sutton, C. (2000). An examination of the perceived fairness of romance policies. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 14, 429–442.
- Kaye, B., & Jordan-Evans, S., (2000). Retention: tag, you're it!. *Training And Development-Alexandria-American Society For Training And Development*, 54(4), 29-39.
- Lee, Y.H., Chelladurai, P., (2018). Emotional intelligence, emotional labor, coach burnout, job satisfaction, and turnover intention in sport leadership. *European Sport Management*, 18 (4), 393–412.
- Lickey, N., Berry, G., & Whelan-Berry, K. (2009). Responding to workplace romance: A proactive and pragmatic approach. *Journal of Business Inquiry: Research, Education & Application*, 8(1), 100-119.
- Lillo-Banuls, A., Casado-Diaz, J.M., Simon, H., (2018). Examining the determinants of job satisfaction among tourism workers. *Tourism Economics*, 24 (8), 980–997.

- Locke, E. A. (2015). Theory building, replication, and behavioral priming: Where do we need to go from here?. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 10(3), 408-414.
- Mao, H., Hsieh, A., & Chen, C. (2012). The relationship between workplace friendship and perceived job significance. *Journal of Management and Organization*, 18(2), 247-262.
- Martin, G., & Hetrick, S. (2006). *Corporate Reputations, Branding and People Management: A Strategic Approach to HR*. Butterworth-Heinemann. <http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/38753/>
- Morrison, R. (2004). Informal relationships in the workplace: Associations with job satisfaction, Organisational commitment and turnover intentions. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 33, 114-128
- Morrison, R., & Wright, S. (2009). *Friends and enemies in organization*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Newstrom, J. W. & Keith, D. (2011). *Organizational behavior, Human behavior at work*. 13th edition. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.
- Nielsen, J., Jex, S., & Adams, G. (2000). Development and validation of scores on a two dimensional workplace friendship scale. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 60, 628-643.
- O'Donoghue, K., Tsui, M., 2013. Social work supervision research (1970–2010): the way we were and the way ahead. *Br. J. Soc. Work* 45 (2), 616–633.
- Oliver, R.L., 1980. A cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 17(4), 460–469.
- Osman, M. K., & Ronate, N. N. (2012). Does job embeddedness mediate the effect of work engagement on job outcomes? A study of hotel employees in Cameroon. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 21(4), 440–461.
- Ozturk, A.B. Hancer, M. & Im J.Y. (2014). Job Characteristics, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment for Hotel Workers in Turkey. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*. 23(3), 294 – 313.
- Parvin, M.M. & Kabir, N. (2011). Factors affecting employee job satisfaction of pharmaceutical sector, *Australian Journal of Business and Management Research*, 1(9), 113-123.
- Pierce, C., & Aguinis, H. (2001). A framework for investigating the link between workplace romance and sexual harassment. *Group and Organization Management*, 26, 206–229.
- Pierce, C., Byrne, D., & Aguinis, H. (1996). Attraction in organizations: A model of workplace romance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 5-32.
- Priyasad, K.P.M, & Weerasinghe, T.D. (2017). The Nexus between Informal Relationships at Work and Employee Retention: A Review. *Kelaniya Journal of Human Resource Management*, 12(1), 48 – 71.

- Quinn, R. (1977). Coping with Cupid: The formation, impact and management of romantic relationships in organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 22.
- Rabin-Margalioth, S. (2006). Love at Work. *Journal of Gender Law & Policy*, 237-254.
- Reif WE, & Monczka RMEA (2004). Perceptions of the formal and the informal organizations: Objective measurement through the semantic differential technique. *Academy of Management Journal*, 16(3):389-403.
- Rook, K. S. (1984). The negative side of social interaction: impact on psychological well-being. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 46(5), 1097.
- Samuel, E.M. & C. O. Ikemefuna (2012). Job Satisfaction and Employees' Turnover Intentions in total Nigeria plc. in Lagos State. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(14), 56 – 65.
- Sarkwa, J. (2011). Informal Relation and its Effect on Industrial Organizations (A Study of the Coca-Cola Bottling Company and Ghana Breweries Limited). Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.
- Song, S. (2005). Workplace friendship and its impact on employees' positive work attitudes: A comparative study of Seoul City and New Jersey State government public officials (unpublished doctoral dissertation). Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Newark, NJ
- Staffelbach (2008) Rook, K. (1984). The negative side of social interaction: Impact on psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46.
- Stamolampros, P., Korfiatis, N., Chalvatzis, K., Buhalis, D., 2019. Job satisfaction and employee turnover determinants in high contact services: insights from employees' online reviews. *Tourism Management*, 75, 130–147.
- Ting, S. C., & Ho, M. H. (2017). The Influence of Workplace Friendship, Job Involvement, and Organizational Identification on Job Performance: Administrative Staffs of Private Science and Technology Universities in South Taiwan as an Example. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 9(6), 46-57.
- Togia, A., Koustelios, A. & Tsigilis, N. (2004). Job satisfaction among Greek academic librarians. *Library & Information Science Research*, 26, 373-83.
- Waldstrom C. (2001). Informal networks in organizations: A literature review.
- Wilson, R., Filosa, C., & Fennel, A. (2003). Romantic Relationships at Work: Does Privacy Trump the Dating Police? *Defense Counsel Journal*.
- Yavas, U., Karatepe, M. O., & Babakus, E. (2012). Correlates of non-work and work satisfaction among hotel employees: Implications for managers. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*, 22(4), 375–406.