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Emotional intelligence: Helping managers ‘turn over’

a new leaf in leadership behaviors

## **Emotional intelligence: Helping managers ‘turn over’ a new leaf in leadership behaviors**

### **Abstract**

The costs of organizational turnover have substantial economic consequences. Accordingly, scholars and practitioners have strategized how to reduce followers’ turnover intentions, potentially saving organizations the direct and indirect costs of turnover. The literature provides evidence that leaders’ behaviors directly impact subordinates’ turnover intentions. This research studied leaders and followers in a healthcare institution based in the Southwest U.S., focusing on the follower’s perceptions of their managers’ leadership behaviors. It specifically examined the effects of leaders’ emotional intelligence on their followers’ turnover intentions. The results indicated that higher levels of leader emotional intelligence had an inverse effect on follower turnover intentions, thereby reducing followers’ inclinations to leave their organizations. This study adds to the streams of literature supporting the positive effects of emotional intelligence in a turnover intentions-based model. The findings can be integrated into human resources strategies to help leaders in all industries develop more holistic leadership programs to reduce organizational turnover.

## **1. Introduction**

Organizational turnover represents a significant challenge for firms. The Towers Watson Global Workforce Study (2014) suggests that the attraction, retention and engagement of employees comprise some of the chief concerns facing human resources (HR) managers today. Experts estimate that it costs more than twice an employee's salary to replace them if they leave a firm (Darmon, 2008). These include both direct and indirect costs, and can number in the millions of dollars. Voluntary and involuntary turnover can have an adverse economic impact on a firm, and can negatively influence employee morale, customer service and work-life balance (Davidson, Timo & Wang, 2009). Some studies have placed turnover costs – including talent acquisition, employee training, and productivity losses – at over five percent of total operating budgets (Waldman, Kelly, Arora & Smith, 2004).

As a result of such economic consequences, it should be no surprise that management consultants, scholars and academic practitioners seek to reduce employee turnover, to increase organizational performance and preserve firm revenues (Hancock, Allen, Bosco, McDaniel, & Pierce, 2013; Jensen, Patel & Messersmith, 2013). Over the last forty-plus years, studies have revealed that factors such as job content, an employee's age, tenure, overall job satisfaction, and organizational commitment affect their propensity to leave a job (Mitchel, 1981; Mobley, Griffeth, Hand & Meglino, 1979; Stahl, Chua, Caligiuri, Cerdin & Taniguchi, 2009). However, existing research hasn't sufficiently examined the factors in leadership models which influence turnover intentions. These are important for human resources (HR) managers to understand as they seek to garner top talent in competitive markets. In addition to investigating the effects of a more holistic leadership model, emotional intelligence (EQ) should be explored for a link

between employee well-being, job satisfaction, engagement and subsequently, turnover intentions (Brunetto, Teo, Shacklock & Farr-Wharton, 2012; Jordan & Troth, 2011).

### **1.1. Organizational Turnover and Turnover Intentions**

Given the high costs of organizational turnover, this portion of the paper explores the psychological construct of turnover intentions. It introduces the paper's research questions, and how emotionally intelligent behaviors could positively influence employees' exit decision-making. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016), turnover is a function of total separations which include layoffs and discharges, voluntary quits and other forms of separation.

In their seminal work on turnover, March and Simon (1958) contend that people tend to leave a job if they are unhappy. Turnover likelihood increases when options to leave the organization exist (March & Simon, 1958). Scholars have linked turnover to antecedent variables such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, age/tenure, and even economic conditions (Mobley, 1977; Porter & Steers, 1973; Vroom, 1964). This is important to consider, because by focusing on attitudes, researchers have concluded that human resource management (HRM) practices including training, development, and selective recruitment methods can stem turnover rates (Davidson *et al.*, 2009; Ongori, 2007).

### **1.2. An Integrative Model of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leadership**

Scandals in Western firms may have increased the turnover tendencies of employees, and consequently, have highlighted the need for leadership perspectives behaviors which emphasize trust, integrity, and humility (Whittington, 2004; Wong, Davey & Church, 2007). This research examines key drivers that strengthen the leader-follower dynamic, and thereby reduce an individual's turnover intentions. Scholars suggest that more integrative and inclusive models of leadership drive firm performance and mitigate follower TOI (Edmondson & Lei, 2014; van

Dierendonck, 2011). This model of leadership emphasizes being in relationship with each other, i.e., the juxtaposition of *all* facets of an individual (Demerouti, Bakker *et al.*, 2001; Spears, 2010).

### **1.3. Research Aim: Emotional Intelligence.**

This paper addresses one fundamental research question. Scholars argue that success factors in a leader's effectiveness consist of emotional self-management and managing the emotions of others (Goleman, 1995; Kerr, Garvin, Heaton & Boyle, 2006). Dimensions of emotional management also correspond to certain servant leader attributes, i.e., empathic listening, awareness, humility and appreciation (Spears, 1995; Russell & Stone, 2002). This juxtaposition of emotional intelligence and other leadership attributes plays a role in this study in demonstrating that a focus on sharpening leader behaviors could mitigate follower turnover intentions, and thereby reduce the economic burden on firms.

**1.3.1. Research Aim:** Leadership effectiveness may reduce turnover. Leadership is one of the most thoroughly studied topics in the behavioral sciences (Parris & Peachy, 2013). This research discusses the effects that emotional intelligence may have on follower TOI. EQ is defined as a type of social intelligence that encompasses the ability to be aware of one's own emotions and feelings, as well as those of others; to self-regulate these emotions, and to be capable of applying this information to shape one's thinking and behavioral outputs (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Thus, the primary research aim is to answer the question, "*To what extent does a leader's EQ mitigate follower turnover intentions?*"

### **1.4. Contributions**

This study adds to the academic and practitioner communities by bringing in a less studied model of EQ, which is Trait Emotional Intelligence as an independent variable, as opposed to ability EQ, as the former represents a sounder model of emotional intelligence than the latter Petrides (2010). The paper also addresses the business problem of turnover faced by a large healthcare organization in the U.S. Although the firm's 2017 turnover rate (approximately 17%) was lower than last year's regional industry turnover rates including all forms of separation (18%), it still represents potentially millions of dollars in direct, indirect and opportunity costs. These costs comprise significant impediments that could affect broader business outcomes (Cho *et al.*, 2006; Sun *et al.*, 2007), including recruitment, training and skill development (Davidson *et al.*, 2009).

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: the next section examines the literature review of the main constructs of this study, summarized in Figure 1 below. Then, the following section outlines the methodology to test the hypotheses, including its participants, advantages and disadvantages. Next, the methodology section outlines the method, participants and the general parameters of the study. Then, the results section provides an analysis of the paper's findings, including the statistical outputs. Finally, the last portion of the paper presents a discussion of the study's findings, and options to extend the study, as well as the academic and practitioner implications that could be beneficial to both communities.

**<INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE>**

## **2. Literature Review**

The previous section discussed the impact of leadership effectiveness on organizational turnover, which in turn influences firm performance factors such as customer satisfaction, organizational commitment, and economic profit. This section examines theories of leadership effectiveness as well as a leader's emotional intelligence, and their impact on follower turnover intentions. Over the past five decades, scholars have scrutinized the merits of a wide range of leadership theories, including such popular styles such as authentic, transformational, transactional, positive, full range and servant leadership.

### **2.1. Leadership Theories**

This study examines how emotional intelligence serves to reduce turnover intentions. Next, it presents a careful examination of turnover (intention) theory along with the psychological variable of turnover intentions, and their origins. Then, I will analyze how turnover theories and the theory of planned behavior (TPB) explain how an intentions-based model can be applied to this study. Finally, a summary of the research is presented, and how EQ is examined in conjunction with TOI. Examining a more holistic style of leadership demonstrates the marked paradigm shift that is taking place within management spheres to a follower-centric model (Chen, Zhu & Zhou, 2015).

This study has examined leader emotional intelligence and its effects on follower turnover intentions. Because turnover intentions are a precursor to turnover itself, they serve to uncover how shaping managers' behaviors could demonstrate one way to curb the organization's turnover rate. As turnover rates constitute an important dimension in the economic fortunes of an organization, they prove as valuable metrics for researchers.

### **2.3. Emotional Intelligence**

Emerging evidence suggests that non-cognitive skills like emotional intelligence and personality play a unique role in employees' job satisfaction and their propensity to leave an organization. This section provides a definition of EQ, addresses the research on emotional intelligence in the workplace, and explores some criticisms of this construct. Scholars have proposed a line of demarcation between the various types of EQ, i.e. ability EQ or cognitive-emotional ability, the trait EQ or emotional self-efficacy model, i.e. "ESE" (Petrides & Furnham, 2001), and the so-called mixed model. Individuals who score higher in trait EQ assessments tend to exhibit lower stress and anxiety levels (Petrides, Mikolajczak *et al.*, 2016).

**2.3.1. Definitions and Origins of EQ.** Despite the fact this study takes advantage of the trait EQ model, which has been utilized less frequently in research, it is important to understand the background and origins of other philosophies surrounding emotional intelligence. The ability model of EQ, for instance, states that it is important to recognize emotions, integrate emotion-related feelings, comprehend the emotional information being conveyed, and finally, manage these emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). One of the central tenets of ability EQ is that emotions are internal happenings that coordinate many psychological subsystems, including physiological reactions, perceptions and conscious awareness, and as such, can play a critical role in leader effectiveness (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

Although Salovey and Mayer (1990) wrote the seminal work on emotional intelligence, other researchers have built upon their work, and have been responsible for its popularity in the practitioner-scholar and management arenas. Other researchers (Petrides & Furnham, 2006, Petrides & Furnham, 2010) have proposed a Trait EQ model that focuses on emotional perceptions rather than abilities. Yet another model, the so-called mixed model originates from Bar-On's work (1997), a methodology that Goleman (1995, 1998) embraced. The main



divergent models of EQ in the literature are outlined below in Table 1: Different Models of Emotional Intelligence (see Appendix).

<INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE>

## **2.4. Turnover Intentions**

Turnover is the rate at which people vacate a position or leave the organization due to separations like being promoted, resigning, retiring, or being dismissed (Cron & De-Carlo 2006). Turnover intentions, on the other hand, denote measurements of whether employees plan to leave their positions (voluntarily) or whether that organization plans to remove (involuntarily) employees from positions (Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997). When employees leave the organization, it presents a significant issue as turnover carries an economic burden (Van Dick, Christ *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore, Steel and Ovalle's (1984) research suggests that turnover intentions and turnover seem to be related, although turnover intentions appear to be more effective predictors of exiting an organization than affective variables like organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

**2.4.1. Why Turnover Intentions Matter.** Scholars have argued that TOI represents the ultimate step before staff members exit an organization (Bester, 2012); Horn, Griffeth & Salaro, 1984; Steers, 1977). Various scales have been developed to explain the psychological activities within an individual prior to leaving his/her employ, for example the TIS-6 (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). This particular scale was developed to differentiate it from the affective and cognitive aspects of psychological events taking place within the individual as theorized by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975).

## **2.5 Theoretical Development**

This research's focus is on Ajzen's (1991) theoretical framework of the theory of planned behavior (TPB), and more traditional models of turnover theory (Hom & Griffeth, 1995; Lee, Mitchell *et al.*, 2004; March & Simon, 1958; Mobley, 1977; Price & Mueller, 1981; Steers & Mowday, 1981). These models serve as the comprehensive lenses through which a thorough examination of turnover intentions can take place. This section provides an overview of the modern turnover and turnover intention theoretical lenses.

**2.5.1. Newer Models of Turnover (Intention) Theory.** Current turnover and turnover intention theories shed light on how researchers' mindsets have shifted to the "why" of organizational turnover. One approach that has emerged over the last twenty-five years is the unfolding model (Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Lee, Mitchell, Holtom, McDaniel & Hill, 1999), which introduces two novel concepts – scripts and shocks – that explain how individuals quit an organization. Other models include the job demands-resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2006; Bakker, Demerouti & Verbeke, 2004). The premise of the JD-R model is that turnover intentions and job demands are indirectly related, such that when high job demands exist in an employment situation, coupled with a lack of resources, the result could be burnout, which causes staff turnover (Bakker & Demerouti, 2006; Bester, 2012; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2000).

**2.5.2. Implications of Turnover Intention Theory.** As the differing turnover theories demonstrate, there are varying perspectives on why individuals choose to leave an organization. Bothma (2011) asserted that various factors influence whether individuals choose to quit an organization. When considering high turnover intentions, and their subsequent negative impact on the organization's ability to perform and provide quality service, it has proven to be beneficial to examine turnover intentions through a proven framework, e.g., the Theory of Planned

Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). By looking at turnover intentions through a theoretical lens, it can confirm the greatest concrete attitude towards a company, explicitly the intention to remain or depart (Van Dick, Christ *et al.*, 2004).

**2.5.3. Theory of Planned Behavior.** Intentions-based models are significant because the academic community can recognize phenomena that trigger employees' turnover intentions, the sources that often trigger employees' leaving an organization (Armitage & Conner, 2001). However, examining the association between factors such as attitudes and behavior has been fraught with difficulty (Wicker 1969). As a result, scholars have sought to ameliorate the predictive capability of attitudes. One such theory that researchers have leveraged in explaining how attitudes could lead to behavioral outcomes is the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which contains three essential elements that are associated with predicting intentions: attitudes, subjective norms (SN), and perceived behavioral control, or PBC (Armitage & Conner, 2001). Scholars believe that PBC affects intention and behavior as pictured in Figure 2b: The Theory of Planned Behavior Model (see Appendix), with the rationale being that by adding PBC, it would account for behavioral predictions *not* under one's control (Armitage & Conner, 2001).

**<INSERT FIGURES 2a and 2b ABOUT HERE>**

## **2.6. Hypotheses Generation**

A key motif in this study is mitigating organizational turnover via influencing turnover intentions. I have stated the hypotheses below, accentuating the positive effects of emotional intelligence on followers' exit decision-making processes. Hypotheses 1 through 4 are grouped into dimensions of trait EQ behaviors, as researched by Petrides and Furnham (2006), consisting

of followers' perceptions of: (H1) leader's self-control; (H2) leader's well-being; (H3) leader's sociability; and (H4) leader's emotionality.

*H1: The leader's ability to exercise self-control should be negatively related to follower TOI, such that an increased ability to manage stress should result in lower levels of TOI.*

*H2: The extent of the leader's well-being should be negatively related to follower TOI, such that an increased well-being in life should result in lower levels of TOI.*

*H3: The leader's sociability should be negatively related to follower TOI, such that an increased ability to influence others' feelings should result in lower levels of TOI.*

*H4: The leader's emotionality should be negatively related to follower TOI, such that increased levels of emotionality should result in lower levels of TOI.*

### **3. Method, Sample and Measures**

#### **3.1. Method**

**3.1.1. Organization and Study Details.** This study focused on a large healthcare organization located in the southwest U.S., consisting of approximately 13,000 employees whose mission it is to serve the indigent, and took place from September 05 to October 2, 2017. The institution is comprised of 20 community-based clinics and several specialty clinics. The healthcare organization has stated in its strategic planning documents that reducing staffing turnover is a system-wide priority, thus driving further organizational support for the study. Seventy-one (71) of a possible one hundred and seventy-eight (178) employees completed the questionnaires, for a good response rate of about 40%. They completed a single survey that was comprised of the following two instruments: 1) A trait emotional intelligence thirty-item, short

form survey (Cooper & Petrides, 2010); and 2) A turnover intentions six-item, short form survey (Bothma & Roodt, 2004).

**3.1.2. Sample Composition.** The sample consisted of direct reports from a large healthcare company in the southwest United States. The reason I opted for followers' perceptions of leader behaviors was that it provided a more realistic picture of turnover intentions, and because there was no certainty that only leader-follower pairs responded to the questionnaires. This aspect of the research will be explained further in the limitations section of the last section. The sample details were listed above, and all participants in the study possessed greater than six months of experience within the healthcare institution being studied.

### **3.2. Measures**

Two specific measures that were chosen for this research include: 1) Petrides and Furnham's (2006, 2010) test of trait emotional intelligence (TEIQue); and 2) Bothma and Roodt's (2013) Turnover Intentions questionnaire, a shortened scale (TIS6). The two instruments were subjected to factor analysis, they have been statistically validated through empirical research, and are well-recognized in the academic literature. The TEIQue represents a 30-item questionnaire designed to measure global trait emotional intelligence (trait EQ). Then, for TOI, the TIS-6 was chosen, because turnover intentions are the best precursors of turnover itself (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). Organizations can address the intent to leave the organization and plan/prepare to ward off negative outcomes rather than wait until staff members leave the company, and deal with the residual economic implications (Bothma & Roodt, 2013).

### **3.3. Validity**

Some common sources of potential threats include both internal and external validity. Without internal validity, there could be an absence of cause and effect relationship. An absence

of external validity could mean that the study is not generalizable to other populations, conditions and environments. A more robust analysis of the internal and external validity concerns is provided in the Discussion/Limitations section of this study.

## **4. Results**

The purpose of this study was to determine if leader emotional intelligence mitigated follower turnover intentions in a large, healthcare institution. The study consisted of four hypotheses which tested followers' perceptions of leader emotional intelligence on their turnover intentions.

### **4.1. Respondent Statistics**

**4.1.1. Respondent Demographics.** In this study, twenty-three participants were male, and forty-eight were female. Eight of them were physicians, sixteen were nurses, twenty-two were in hospital administration, and twenty-five were in other occupations. Overall, there was a good mix of age representation ranging from individuals in their 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s.

### **4.2. Statistical Measures**

All of the study's statistical measures were calculated by using SPSS. These measures include basic descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and Cronbach's Alpha values. In addition, the study utilized a simple linear regression analysis and stepwise multiple linear regression analysis to test the 4 hypotheses via SPSS. There were two scales utilized to complete this study: Trait EQ and the TIS-6, or the shortened form of the Turnover Intentions scale.

**4.2.1. Simple Linear Regression and Individual Hypothesis Testing.** As mentioned previously, to test the individual hypotheses, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted in SPSS. H1 through H4 were all confirmed by the data; however, with varying adjusted R-squared values, which explain the variance in each of the independent variables on follower

turnover intentions. These variances are presented in Table 2: Hypotheses Support and Percent Variance (see Appendix).

<INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE>

**4.2.2. Stepwise Multiple Linear Regression Analysis and Hypotheses Testing.** Once the multicollinearity test was completed, I then proceeded with running a stepwise multiple linear regression analysis. This analysis yielded an Adjusted R Square = .47, which signifies that 47% of the variance in the dependent variable (turnover intentions) can be explained by EMOTIONALITY. This finding is significant, because it confirms previous research involving the global trait factors of Trait EQ and demonstrates that there is greater explanatory power for the study’s model predicting follower turnover intentions in EMOTIONALITY than for any of the other variables.

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.712 <sup>a</sup>	.506	.477	.61501

a. Predictors: (Constant), EMOTIONALITY, SOCIABILITY, SELF CONTROL, WELL BEING

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	25.613	4	6.403	16.929	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	24.963	66	.378		
	Total	50.576	70			

a. Dependent Variable: TURNOVER INTENT

b. Predictors: (Constant), EMOTIONALITY, SOCIABILITY, SELF CONTROL, WELL BEING

## STEPWISE LINEAR REGRESSION

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.691 <sup>a</sup>	.477	.470	.61888

a. Predictors: (Constant), EMOTIONALITY

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	24.148	1	24.148	63.048	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	26.428	69	.383		
	Total	50.576	70			

a. Dependent Variable: TURNOVER INTENT

b. Predictors: (Constant), EMOTIONALITY

**4.2.3. ANOVA.** The analysis of variance (ANOVA) demonstrates that as a stepwise linear regression is performed, by definition, a variable is subtracted (or added) because of weak correlation. In this study's model, EMOTIONALITY remains after other variables have been removed because of weak(er) correlation. In the previous section, I presented data that shows each of the hypotheses was supported by statistical significance. The ANOVA model now confirms that as certain variables are removed, because of stepwise linear regression, Leader Emotionality provides the best explanatory predictors of turnover intentions.

**4.2.4. Coefficients.** Coefficients are valuable for explaining the extent to which a change in the independent variable value could impact the change in the dependent variable value as described in Table 3: Hypotheses Support and Coefficient Values (see Appendix). For this study's model, the B value for Unstandardized Coefficients = -.556. That is, for every increase



of **one unit of measure** in Leader Emotionality, the Follower's TOI is *reduced* by a value = .556.

### **4.3. Summary**

The results of the study summarized previously in Table 2: Hypotheses Support and Variance, followed expectations as scholars have linked a successful leader-follower dynamic to such factors such as the authenticity of managerial behaviors and interpersonal sensitivity (Hon & Chan, 2014; Laschinger, Borgogni & Consiglio, 2015). Followers' perceptions of leader emotionality, leader self-control, leader well-being and leader sociability (H1, H2, H3, and H4) also showed statistically significant support ( $p$  values < .01) in mitigating turnover intentions. For example, in H1, as is consistent with previous studies, higher trait EQ scores among leaders indicate that they can mitigate stress and anxiety levels better and less likely to pass along the negative repercussions to their followers (Petrides, Mikolajczak *et al.*, 2016; Martins *et al.*, 2010). The next section will discuss the implications of the results for practitioners, organizations and for scholars.

## **5. Discussion of Results and Conclusions**

This final section focuses on a discussion of its results, limitations, as well as its managerial/academic implications and possible extensions. The research centered on addressing the business problem of organizational turnover at a large healthcare institution based in the southwest U.S. by investigating the leadership behaviors that might have influenced follower turnover intentions. Even without using scientific methods, most people would believe that it is beneficial for leaders to exhibit higher degrees of emotional intelligence. This study has confirmed through empirical analysis that asserting such leadership behaviors can indeed lower direct reports' turnover intentions; accordingly, the results indicated that all seven hypotheses

were statistically confirmed. Consequently, the findings could spark even further research with respect to the interplay between certain servant leader behaviors – such as altruism, emphasis on building community, emotionality, well-being, and career development – and emotional intelligence behaviors.

**5.1. Contributions.** This study has brought various contributions to the academic, management, and practitioner-scholar communities. First, as prior studies (Goleman, 1998; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Wong, 2004) have focused on alternate EQ models, such as ability EQ (and even the mixed model), this research has concentrated on a trait EQ scale, which marks a different contribution to the emotional intelligence streams of literature. Therefore, this research has presented a new perspective within the emotional intelligence literature that explores how trait EQ, as opposed to ability EQ, influences managerial behaviors, and their impact on follower turnover propensities.

Another contribution of this paper is that raises a question regarding parallels between servant leadership and emotional intelligence, which could spark future investigative research. In fact, some studies have even provided a comparison of EQ and servant leadership (Gregory, 2016; Winston & Hartsfield, 2004). As articulated in previous sections, at the time of this writing, no research has explored the impact of both leader servant leader *and* leader emotional intelligence behaviors on follower turnover intentions in the same study. Consequently, future studies could build on this paper's results in addressing how servant leadership might interact with emotional intelligence to influence positively retention metrics (Anthony, Standing *et al.*, 2005; Jaramillo *et al.*, 2009; Shaw & Newton, 2014).

## 5.2. Findings

**5.2.1. Managerial Implications of the Findings.** The results of this study are pivotal to upcoming research for the manager, practitioner, and scholar. H1 (leader's ability to exercise self-control) was confirmed, indicating that when leaders flex the ability to pull back on negative behaviors, then it has a residual impact on followers' desire to leave the organization. When this phenomenon is examined through the lens of emotional contagion theory (Barsade, 2002), it underscores the importance of leaders being able to control their negative moods or emotions, so they do not spread to their followers/teams. H2 (impact of a leader's well-being) also was confirmed, demonstrating that leaders' ability to take care of themselves mentally, physically, psychologically, and physiologically has a direct influence on followers' exit decision-making strategies (Brunetto *et al.*, 2013; Danna & Griffin, 1999). H3 (leader's sociability) was supported by the empirical data as well, indicating that the leader's ability to exert networking skills as well as being capable of influencing followers' feelings are factors in determining followers' turnover intentions. Finally, H4 (the level of a leader's 'emotionality') was also confirmed, showing that leaders who can communicate their own feelings to their followers, can have enriched relationships, and who are empathetic to others' perspectives also exert influence over followers' turnover intentions.

Because this study took place within the healthcare industry, the findings suggest strategies that could curb dissatisfaction, fatigue, and other factors that lead to turnover (Lu & Gursoy, 2016). One specific type of fatigue noted in the academic literature, occurring in the healthcare sector, is known as compassion fatigue, which describes a condition whereby caregivers suffer from trauma because of their efforts aimed at helping others (Craig & Sprang, 2010; Potter, Deshields *et al.*, 2010). This trauma results from a reduction in caregivers'

capacity to exhibit empathy when dealing with patients. It is a phenomenon that manifests itself primarily in a clinical setting from repeated instances of being required to provide empathic care to traumatized patients, and has affected nurses, physicians and social workers, among other healthcare staff members (Adams, Boscarino & Figley, 2006). Indeed, among the industry benefits of this study is that it demonstrates how organizations could develop better leaders, who exemplify high EQ behaviors, which could serve to reduce compassion fatigue.

The analysis of this study provides several key points with respect to what firms and human resources departments might do with the findings with respect to engagement issues and turnover rates. As such, leaders are looking to altruistic models of leadership (like servant leadership) and emotional intelligence behaviors (Goleman, 1995; van Dierendonck, 2011), rather than the traditional forms of leadership like transformational and charismatic leadership. The research demonstrates that firms' top management teams should devote additional time to engage in training their most valuable, intellectual capital resources (Avolio *et al.*, 2009; Chan & Chan, 2005; Northouse, 2015). Specifically, this study reveals that companies' HR departments should employ more concentrated resources on human capital investment, e.g., soft skills training that includes EQ-based programs. Moreover, the results validate previous research that explored the effects of EQ, for example, on organizational commitment and follower turnover intentions (Brunetto *et al.*, 2012; Jaramillo *et al.*, 2009; Jordan & Troth, 2011).

**5.2.2. Academic Implications of the Findings.** In addition to industry and managerial implications, this research also offers scholarly implications. First, as originally mentioned in the literature review, the study answered the call of prior researchers for continued investigation of the theory of planned behavior's (Ajzen, 1991) explanatory power in predicting intentions and behaviors in varying industries and firms of different sizes (Armitage & Conner, 2001; Sutton,

1998). As the literature pointed out, TPB asserts a model that explains how people's attitudes influence their intentions and behaviors (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In this case, elements of TPB describe how followers' turnover intentions could translate into the behavioral actions of leaving an organization.

The above-mentioned points are important to consider, because by focusing on attitudes/intentions, researchers have concluded that human resource management (HRM) practices including training, development, and selective recruitment methods can stem turnover rates (Davidson *et al.*, 2009; Ongori, 2007). The importance of this study, then, is researching the phenomena of emotional intelligence (EQ) and its effects on turnover intentions (TOI), a key factor with notable economic implications for firms (Mowday *et al.*, 2013).

### **5.3. Limitations**

As with any research design, several factors pose threats to this study's validity. Although this study represents a new stream of value-added research, the specificity of the sample, i.e., healthcare, could limit external validity. Second, studies that rely on perception evaluations of others' behaviors could lead to rater bias, or common source variance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003). Third, this study focuses on turnover *intentions* rather than *turnover*. Although similar constructs in nature (Podsakoff, LePine & LePine, 2007), they need to be validated through additional research based on company archival records on turnover data (Jaramillo *et al.*, 2009). Fourth, the sample size could be a limitation. Because the sample size (71) is smaller, it is recommended that future studies should focus on widening the sample size to include not only more subjects, but also other industries in addition to healthcare. Another limitation could have been the setting, or environmental conditions in which this study took place (Burchett, Umoquit & Dubrow, 2011). In addition, all the survey questions were housed in

one unique questionnaire, thereby raising the issue of single source bias. Furthermore, was the sample representative of more global populations that future academic practitioners could leverage in the field of management? These are all questions that could limit the external validity of this research methodology.

#### **5.4. Extensions of the Study**

The results of this study provide fascinating possibilities that could manifest themselves in future studies. This study's findings supported the fact that subsequent research projects called for repeated validation of the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) as a theoretical framework in intentions-based models. However, in widening the aperture beyond TPB (Ajzen, 1991), future research could explore alternate models such as the job demands-resources model (JD-R) to validate the theoretical framework for future turnover intentions-based research. The JD-R model offers plausible explanations such as the existence of high job demands that lead to follower burnout, and eventually lead to followers exiting the organization (Bakker & Demerouti, 2006; Bakker, Demerouti & Verbeke, 2004).

Next, it is important to note that this research focused on followers' perceptions of their managers. Future papers should investigate managers' self-perceptions of their own emotional intelligence behaviors as a comparison point to this study's results (Černe, Dimovski, Marič, Penger & Škerlavaj, 2014). Other studies ought to examine how leaders who exhibit higher degrees of emotional intelligence could mirror those who exhibit more servant leader behaviors, and minimize, for example, compassion fatigue in caregivers (Craig & Sprang, 2010). By doing so, researchers could further validate that key managerial behaviors help to reduce stress, burnout and fatigue, and help to lower (healthcare) physician dissatisfaction (Weng, Hung *et al.*, 2011), thereby mitigating turnover intentions.

## 5.5. Summary

Over the last several decades, numerous studies have explored the relationships between turnover costs and organizational financial performance (Black & Lynch, 2001; Hancock *et al.*, 2015). Although many studies have focused on the effects of EQ on organizational turnover, less research has examined trait EQ as an independent variable. Darmon (2008) estimates that the cost to replace employees who leave the organization accounts for more than twice their salaries; these costs can be triggered by higher employee turnover intentions. They include the costs associated with finding suitable replacements, training them, and waiting for the so-called “break-even” point, the time when the employees’ value is equivalent to the cost of their hiring, on-boarding and training (Dess & Shaw, 2001). Therefore, this study is valuable to the healthcare organization and its managers, for demonstrating the value of an increased focus on emotional intelligence behaviors, as an avenue to positively influence follower turnover intentions.

Scholars and practitioners have written about leadership behaviors both in the popular press and academic literature. In the past, some leadership research has concentrated on the business rationale for addressing leader/follower outcomes on firm performance including such outcomes as turnover (Ridley-Duff & Bull, 2015; Rothmaerl, 2015). Much of the recent research has sought to find solutions for poor and unethical leadership behaviors (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016; van Dierendonck, 2011; Whittington, 2004). To build a stronger foundation for a new future of interdependent, collaborative partnerships between leaders and followers, top management teams must have the courage to emphasize the needs of followers, before they lose talent to other organizations (Ashton & Morton, 2005; Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2013).

This study underscores the value of renewing managerial interest in previously explored leadership paradigms, particularly that of emotional intelligence. Although scholars have written about turnover, as well as turnover intentions, for well over a half century, the anticipation is that future research will continue the exploration of a more holistic leadership style that encompasses others-centered leadership models, emotional intelligence and investing in the whole employee – mind, body and spirit.

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## **Appendix of Figures & Tables**

### **Figure 1**

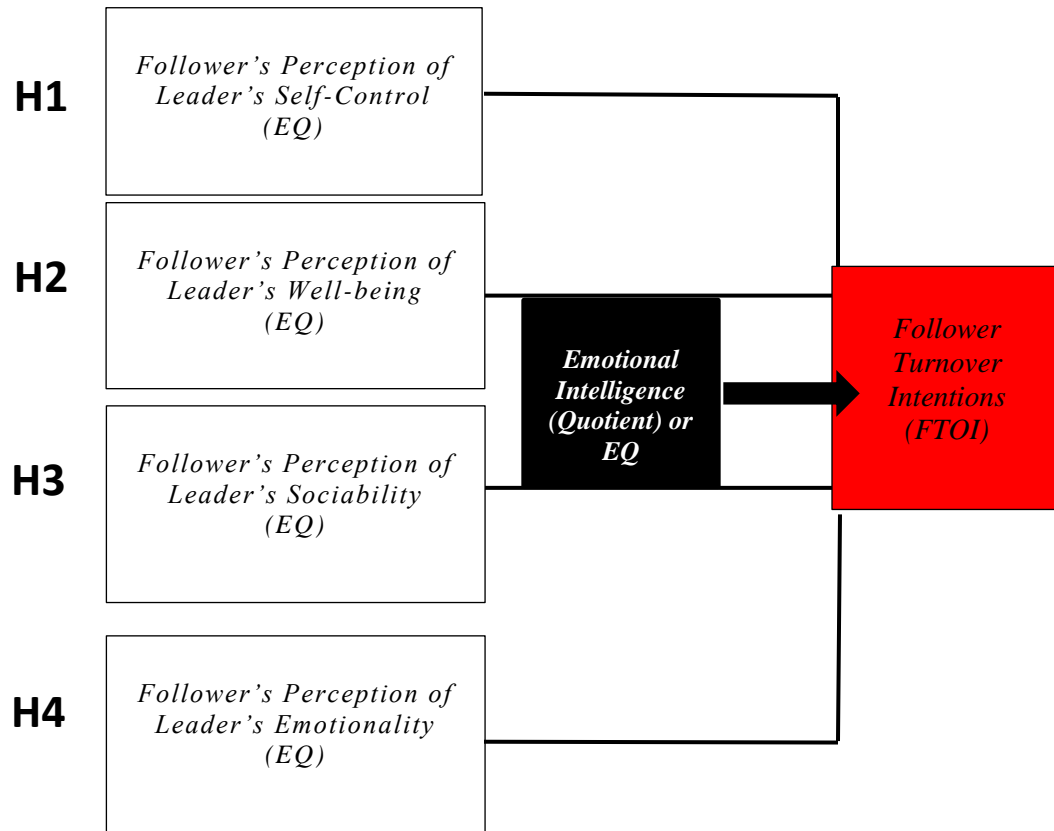
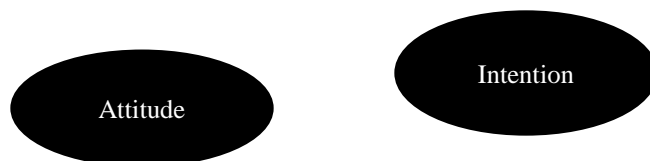


Figure 1. Research Model for Testing Study's Four Hypotheses

## Appendix of Figures & Tables

### Figures 2a & 2b



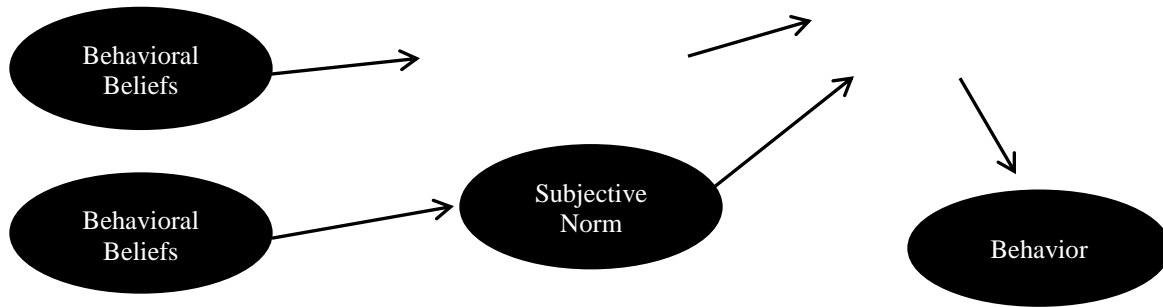


Figure 2a. The theory of reasoned action model (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Armitage & Conner, 2001)

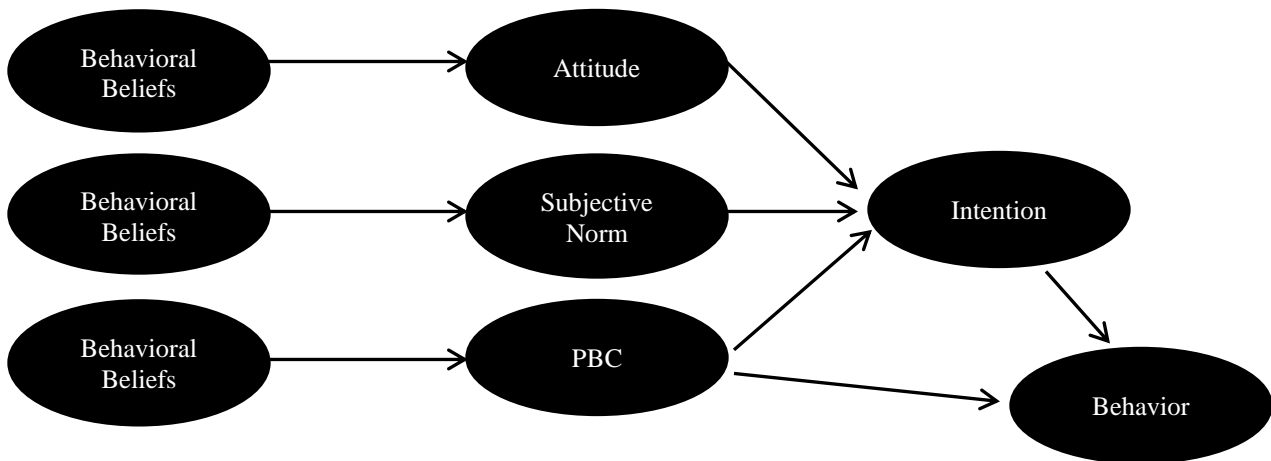


Figure 2b. The theory of planned behavior model (Ajzen, 1991; Armitage & Conner, 2001)

Figures 2a and Figure 2b show a comparison of the theory of reasoned action with the theory of planned behavior, respectively. Ajzen (1991) extended the theory of reasoned action to encompass a measure called “perceived behavioral control” (or PBC) – a variable previously covered in social cognition models that were utilized to predict certain health attributes (Armitage & Conner, 2000; Norman & Conner, 1996).

### Appendix of Figures & Tables

Table 1

Table 1		
<i>Different Models of Emotional Intelligence</i>		
Ability EQ	Trait EQ	Mixed Model of EQ
Ability EQ consists of the	Trait EQ is composed of	The mixed model combines



perceiving emotions branch, the using emotions branch, the understanding emotions branch, and the managing emotions branch (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).	adaptability (being flexible) and assertiveness (being forthright, frank and willing to stand up for one's rights) are two of the prominent characteristics.	elements of both ability and trait EQ. One of the proponents of the mixed model is Goleman (1995, 1998).
The perceiving branch addresses the perceptual skills of self-identification of emotions in thoughts, identifying emotions in other people, accurate expression of emotions	Emotion perception (being clear about one's own and other people's feelings), emotion expression (can communicate one's feelings to others), emotion management-others (capable of influencing others' feelings), and emotion regulation-self are grouped together in the same category (Petrides & Furnham, 2001).	In this model of EQ, Goleman (1995, 1998) included a set of emotional capabilities that do not represent inborn talents or personality traits, but rather capabilities that leaders can learn and develop to further personal and business.
Understanding emotions branch is based on the ability to understand complex emotions and emotional chain, the transition of emotions through stages, the ability to understand relationships among emotions, and interpret the meanings emotions convey	Social awareness (exhibiting characteristics of networkers with excellent social skills), and stress management (capable of withstanding pressure and regulating stress) factor into the trait EQ equation (Petrides & Furnham, 2001).	The model consists of four quadrants: self-awareness; self-regulation; social awareness; and relationship management (Goleman 1995; 1998). It emphasizes that individuals are indeed gifted with abilities in cognitive function, as well as certain personality characteristics
The using emotions branch prioritizes thinking by directing attention to important events/factors, to generate emotions that assist judgment and facilitate decision making, to utilize self-mood swings to change perspective	The traits of empathy, happiness (being cheerful and satisfied with one's life), and optimism (exhibiting confidence and being likely to look on the bright side of life) comprise the list of trait EQ attributes (Petrides & Furnham, 2001).	In the mixed model theory, scholars assert that these natural characteristics, inherent to each individual, could help ascertain the potential success leaders might attain in developing their EQ (Goleman, 1995; Petrides & Furnham, 2001).
The fourth branch, managing emotions, encompasses the ability to monitor emotions reflectively and stay open to them, and the ability to engage or detach from emotions		

### Appendix of Figures & Tables

**Table 2**

Table 2 <i>Hypotheses Support and Variance</i>			
<b>Hypothesis (Follower's Perception of</b>	<b>Support Confirmed?</b>	<b>Percent Variance (R-squared)</b>	<b>p value</b>

<b>Manager)</b>			
H1 (Self-control)	Yes	19.2%	< 0.01
H2 (Well-being)	Yes	36.3%	< 0.01
H3 (Sociability)	Yes	21.1%	< 0.01
H4 (Emotionality)	Yes	47%	< 0.01
<i>Note.</i> All values derived from SPSS computations utilizing simple linear regression analysis			

**Table 3**

Table 3 <i>Hypotheses Support (Confirmation) &amp; Coefficient Values</i>					
<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Constant</b>	<b>Unstandardized <math>\beta</math> Coefficients</b>	<b>Standardized Beta Coefficients</b>	<b><i>p</i> value</b>
H1 (Self-control)	Yes	4.989	-0.553	-0.451	< 0.01
H2 (Well-being)	Yes	6.036	-0.624	-0.610	< 0.01
H3 (Sociability)	Yes	4.717	-0.429	-0.472	< 0.01
H4 (Emotionality)	Yes	5.062	-0.556	-0.691	< 0.01
<i>Note.</i> All values were derived from SPSS computations utilizing simple linear regression analysis.					