Abstract

Prior studies of employee turnover have inherently included employees who depart due to dissatisfaction with the locality of their employment, though the search for factors contributing to turnover generally ignores locality. We introduce the construct of “locality turnover” defined as an employee’s voluntary departure from the region or district. In a field study of 244 workers, we examined the effect of organizational embeddedness and community embeddedness on intention to leave the locality. Results indicate community embeddedness fit, sacrifice, and links explain variance in locality turnover intention above and beyond the variance explained by organizational turnover intention.

1. Introduction

Employee turnover continues to be an area of concern for organizations in general, and IT organizations in particular [1] as the demand for IT professionals is expected to accelerate rapidly over the next decade [2]. Turnover can lead to lost productivity while positions are vacant, lower productivity from those who remain and take on additional work, a loss of important knowledge or skills, hiring and training costs for replacement employees and, ultimately, decreased customer satisfaction due to the company having fewer personnel to handle requests [3, 4].

But turnover is not only a concern of individual organizations; employee turnover also is a concern of the broader localities in which organizations are situated. To achieve and maintain economic vibrancy, localities (for example, the St. Louis metropolitan area) need companies to want to locate and stay in the community. A diverse, skilled and stable workforce is vital for attracting and retaining employing companies in a locality, and necessary for those companies to be successful.

At the locality level, a common objective of chambers of commerce and similar organizations is to keep workers from leaving the area. For example, Tech Valley Connect serves the Capital Region of New York State and seeks to “provide local employers with infrastructure to increase employee retention” [5]. This non-profit organization contends that workers do not leave the area because they are not satisfied with their salaries; rather, they leave because of dual career (trailing spouse) challenges and difficulties integrating into their new community. Tech Valley Connect seeks to help remedy this. Such observations are backed up by IS research. A meta-analysis by Joseph et al. [6] regarding IT workforce turnover found no significant bivariate correlation between pay and IT workers’ turnover intention.

The traditional focus of researchers has been organizational turnover, which can be voluntary or involuntary. Discharges and layoffs are involuntary separations initiated by the employing company, whereas voluntary turnover is a separation initiated by the employee. Our focus is voluntary turnover. Just as the wide-angle lens of a camera allows more of a scene to be included in a photograph, applying a wide-angle lens to voluntary turnover brings an employee’s decision to leave the locality into the picture of employee turnover. From this wider perspective, we focus our research on locality turnover, which we define as an employee’s voluntary departure from a geographic region or district.

The relationship between organizational turnover and locality turnover is tricky. For both, our focus is voluntary turnover (initiated by the employee). Sometimes a decision to leave a company is, at the same time, a decision to leave the locality. And sometimes a decision to leave the locality is, at the same time, a decision to leave the company. But an employee can leave the locality without leaving an organization, as in the case of a job transfer to a different location of the company. And an employee can leave a company and stay in the locality, taking a
position with a different local company. Thus, locality turnover, though expected to be associated with organizational turnover, is a distinct construct.

Prior research examining organizational turnover reflexively includes employees who departed because they were not satisfied with the locality of their employment. Yet, researchers have not considered factors that contribute to locality turnover when investigating organizational turnover. Our research seeks to identify major contributors to locality turnover. In doing so, we expect to illuminate new facets of the voluntary turnover picture that heretofore were left in the shadows.

Insights gained will be of interest to organizations seeking to retain valuable personnel, as well as communities seeking to retain a diverse, skilled workforce. Cities and states are increasingly investing in marketing campaigns and financial incentives to attract employers to locate in their region, but such efforts and funding are wasted if the community is unable to retain the employer and the necessary workforce. Given the current global trend in geographic mobility of labor [7], retention of workers in a locality is of increasing concern both in the U.S. and abroad.

In the sections that follow, we first apply theory and research from the management and IS literatures to develop our research model. Next, we describe our research methods and share the results of our study. From this work, we draw implications for practice and directions for future research.

2. Theoretical foundation

Foundational to our study is the idea that employee turnover can vary by locality. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) tracks voluntary turnover (quit rates), though not at a locality or even state level. But the BLS statistics indicate that voluntary turnover does vary by geographic area (Northeast, South, Midwest, West). For example, in March 2014, the quit rate (number of quits as a percent of total employment) was 2.1 in the South and 1.3 in the Northeast [8]. This supports our contention that employee turnover does vary by locality.

A stream of research in HR management—job embeddedness—offers a promising framework for examining potential antecedents to locality turnover.

2.1. Job embeddedness theory and research

Mitchell et al. [9] formulated the concept of job embeddedness as a predictor of turnover intention and voluntary turnover. Job embeddedness is disaggregated into two major constructs: organizational embeddedness, also referred to as on-the-job embeddedness; and, community embeddedness, also referred to as off-the-job embeddedness [9].

A recent meta-analysis determined that both forms of embeddedness (on-the-job and off-the-job) negatively related to turnover intention and actual turnover, after controlling for job satisfaction, affective commitment, and job alternatives [10]. However, an issue in this stream of research is inconsistency in the unique effects of the two forms of embeddedness on turnover. Jiang and his colleagues [10] note that wide variability exists in the magnitudes of correlations between the embeddedness constructs and turnover across individual studies [e.g., 11]. This recalls a caveat stated by Mitchell et al. [9] in their initial work: relationships between job embeddedness and turnover may vary by context. By focusing on our dependent variable of locality turnover, we seek to illuminate a logically related, yet unexplored, aspect of the employee turnover context: one’s desire to leave a geographic region.

Given the relationship between embeddedness constructs and organizational turnover that has emerged from the management literature [9, 12], Joseph and his colleagues [6] identified job embeddedness as a contemporary turnover theory that IS researchers should employ in future studies to provide new understanding of IT workforce turnover. Following this direction, Zhang et al. [13] studied job embeddedness in a sample of 1,777 IT workers in a large technology organization. They found that job embeddedness explained significant incremental variance in the turnover intentions of these IT workers, beyond the variance explained by job satisfaction and perceived job alternatives. However, the contextual model of IT workforce turnover spawned by the Joseph et al. [6] meta-analytic study does not take into account the community embeddedness construct; Joseph and his colleagues discuss only on-the-job embeddedness and make no reference to community (off-the-job) embeddedness. Likewise, the Zhang et al. [13] empirical study investigated only organizational embeddedness and did not consider community embeddedness. On the whole, the IT workforce turnover research literature recognizes the relevance of job embeddedness theory but, to date, has not explored the community embeddedness construct. In our investigation of locality turnover, we apply the full job embeddedness theory.
2.2. The research model

As our initial investigation into potential predictors of locality turnover, we focus on the job embeddedness constructs. Each of the constructs (organizational embeddedness and community embeddedness) has three dimensions: fit, sacrifice, and links. In their original work, Mitchell and his colleagues [9] defined the dimensions of fit, sacrifice, and links, but did not provide separate definitions of these dimensions for organizational embeddedness and community embeddedness; however, subsequent research has furthered the original conceptual development. Drawing upon this stream of research and a recent review of the conceptualization of the embeddedness constructs by Zhang et al. [14], we arrive at construct definitions for the six dimensions of embeddedness.

**Organizational Embeddedness Fit (OE-Fit)** is defined as the employee’s perceived compatibility or comfort with the organization. The OE-Fit construct includes, for example, an employee’s perceived compatibility or comfort with the culture of the organization and with his or her manager.

**Organizational Embeddedness Sacrifice (OE-Sac)** is defined as the employee’s perceived cost of material benefits that may be forfeited by leaving their position. The OE-Sac construct includes promotional opportunities as well as compensation and benefits that would be forfeited.

**Organizational Embeddedness Links (OE-Links)** is defined as formal or informal connections between a person and institutions or other people on-the-job. The OE-Links construct includes length of time in the job and organization, as well as number of coworkers.

**Community Embeddedness Fit (CE-Fit)** is defined as an employee’s perceived compatibility or comfort with the surrounding community. The construct of CE-Fit includes comfort with the political orientation of the community, as well as with the climate.

**Community Embeddedness Sacrifice (CE-Sac)** is defined as an employee’s perceived cost of material benefits that may be forfeited by leaving their community. The construct of CE-Sac captures features of a home/apartment/neighborhood the person would miss as well as other material costs that would be incurred by leaving the community.

**Community Embeddedness Links (CE-Links)** is defined as formal or informal connections between a person and institutions or other people off-the-job. The CE-Links construct includes the number of close friends living nearby as well as family roots in the community.

Distinct from prior embeddedness research investigating organizational turnover, our focus is locality turnover. While no research has been published on our new construct of locality turnover, a few studies in expatriate turnover are found to apply. In an early study of expatriate retention in international assignments, Gregersen and Black [15] found that cultural adjustments correlated positively with intent to stay in the international assignment, whereas work adjustments were not associated with intent to stay. Extrapolated to general employee retention, this suggests that multiple facets of adjustment can affect retention.

In further research on Americans in foreign assignments, Birdseye and Hill [16] broke the traditional dependent variable of turnover intention into three dependent variables: Intent-to-leave Job, Intent-to-leave Organization, Intent-to-leave Location. Correlations among the types of turnover were notable, though statistical testing of the means of the three types of turnover intention indicated that they were significantly different. These results provide empirical evidence that locality turnover intention (L-TOI) is distinct from organizational turnover intention (O-TOI).

The basic premise of our exploratory study is that an employee’s organizational embeddedness and community embeddedness will influence L-TOI. In other words, we predict that the extent to which an employee is fused in his or her job and bonded with the community will explain significant variance in intention to voluntarily depart a region. Our research model is shown in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Locality turnover research model](image-url)
We ground our reasoning for a relationship between organizational embeddedness (OE-Fit, OE-Sac, and OE-Links) and locality turnover in the research on organizational turnover [10]. Mitchell et al. [9] describe embeddedness as stickiness that tends to hold the employee in the position. We argue that higher embeddedness in a job and organization can be expected to constrain an employee’s choice of locality. Hence, we posit the following:

**H1:** Organizational embeddedness fit (a), sacrifice (b), and links (c) will negatively influence locality turnover intention.

Similarly, the empirical relationship between community embeddedness (CE-Fit, CE-Sac, and CE-Links) and organizational turnover [see 10 for a meta-analysis] supports our argument that community embeddedness fit, sacrifice, and links will negatively influence L-TOI. That is, the more enmeshed an employee is in his or her community, the less likely he/she is to voluntarily leave the locality. Therefore, we posit:

**H2:** Community embeddedness fit (a), sacrifice (b), and links (c) will negatively influence locality turnover intention.

By including both organizational embeddedness and community embeddedness in our model, we can examine competing effects on locality turnover. For example, what if an employee is embedded in the job but not the community? or embedded in the community but not the workplace? We look to discern the relative contributions of the forms of embeddedness on an employee’s decision to leave the locality.

Further, our research model examines the individual dimensions (fit, sacrifice, links) of both of the embeddedness constructs. Jiang and his colleagues [10] note that very little research has explored how the dimensions of embeddedness influence turnover, often because of insufficient sample size to support the analysis. They encourage research at the dimension level to further refine job embeddedness theory. We therefore capitalize on our sample size by investigating the effect of individual dimensions of organizational embeddedness and community embeddedness on locality turnover. This enables a richer understanding of ways in which embeddedness influences employee decisions to depart the locality.

Finally, in this initial exploratory study, we investigate L-TOI rather than actual locality turnover. Empirical research consistently finds O-TOI to be the strongest cognitive precursor to actual organizational turnover [e.g., 17, 18, 19], and we see no reason to expect the relationship between L-TOI and actual locality turnover to behave differently. In their own right, turnover intentions are a variable of interest because they can alert managers to the need for interventions to prevent or reduce actual turnover.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

To test our research model, we partnered with a metropolitan chamber of commerce in the midwest United States. The population of the metropolitan region is about 2 million people and the chamber serves nearly 5,000 organizations in the region. The chamber published a link to our online survey in their monthly newsletter. Follow-up calls encouraging participation and internal support of the survey were made to representatives in about 30 organizations with which this chamber has a strong partnership. A total of 268 responses to the survey were received, and 244 provided usable data. Non-response bias was assessed by comparing incomplete surveys to complete surveys and by comparing early responses (before follow-up email) to late responses (after follow-up email). No systematic differences were observed, suggesting an absence of response bias.

Because our channel to respondents was the regional chamber of commerce, our sample is representative of the type of people and organizations that this chamber of commerce actively engages. These organizations tend to employ knowledge workers in industries such as educational services, finance/insurance, healthcare services, and professional/scientific/technical services. On average, respondents are more educated than the general public (40.0% had a master’s degree or higher), with an average household income above $100,000. Of the complete responses, 50.4% were female, with an average age of 41.9 (S.D = 11.8) and average locality tenure of 24.0 years (S.D. = 16.3). The sample was 73.0% White, 7.8% Asian/Pacific Islander/Indian, 7.8% Black/Non-Hispanic, 7.4% Hispanic, and 3.7% were of another ethnicity.

3.2. Measures

3.2.1. Embeddedness. Community and organizational embeddedness measures were adapted from the scales developed by Mitchell et al. [9] and further refined by Lee et al. [12]. As previously stated, each measure consists of three dimensions—fit, sacrifice, and links. All items are measured on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ (1) to ‘strongly agree’ (7), with the exception of the links dimensions. Most of the items for community
links and organizational links were open-ended questions that asked for numerical values.

Recent research on the embeddedness concept had led to calls for further refinement of its measurement [14]. While scale development is not the focus of this research, we pulled in several items that other researchers have included when studying the embeddedness concepts, and we developed some new items in an effort to more fully capture the domain of construct definitions. All scale items are provided in the appendix.

3.2.2. Turnover Intention. The measure for locality turnover intention was adapted from a previously validated measure of O-TOI [20]. References to organization or job were changed to refer to the region or city. Because the survey was administered in a single metropolitan area, the specific locality was named in the scale items. The measure consists of three items (provided in the appendix) that assess whether the respondent intends to move away from the locality in the near future. A 7-point Likert scale was used, ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ (1) to ‘strongly agree’ (7), and Cronbach’s alpha was .83.

Organizational turnover intention was included as a control variable. Conceptually, an intention to leave a position of employment may trigger an intention to leave the locality. Our goal was to examine the variance in L-TOI that can be accounted for by embeddedness above and beyond that which can be accounted for by O-TOI. By controlling for O-TOI, we inherently control for factors highly correlated with organizational turnover, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and perceived job alternatives [19]. The measure for O-TOI was taken from Konovsky and Cropanzano [20] and Grandey and Cropanzano [21]. This scale consists of three items measured on a 7-point Likert agreement scale, ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ (1) to ‘strongly agree’ (7), and Cronbach’s alpha was .83.

Formsative measures are distinguished from reflective constructs on the basis of four criteria: (1) the direction of causality is from the items to the construct; (2) the items for the construct are not interchangeable; (3) the covariance between measures is not necessary; and (4) measures need not share common antecedents and consequences. Community and organizational embeddedness meet these criteria and thus were modeled formatively, consistent with prior research [11, 12]. L-TOI and O-TOI did not meet these criteria and were modeled reflectively, consistent with prior research [20].

We first examined the measurement model to assess the reliability and validity of the reflective scales. To assess reliability we examined the internal consistency reliability (ICR) values. Consistent with guidelines for acceptable reliability of reflective constructs [26, 27], ICR values of L-TOI and O-TOI were both greater than .90. To assess convergent validity, we examined the item loadings and crossloadings. Convergent validity is upheld when items load higher than .70 on their intended factor and this was the case. The lowest item loading was .83, supporting convergent validity. Discriminant validity was assessed by examining the crossloadings and by comparing the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) to the correlations among constructs [28]. Crossloadings below .40 indicate that respondents were able to discriminate between constructs [27]. The largest crossloading was .36, providing support for discriminant validity. The square root of the AVEs are shown on the diagonal in Table 2. These values are larger than any of the inter-construct correlations, providing additional support for discriminant validity.

Formative measures are not required to exhibit reliability [25], but they can be assessed for parsimony and checked for stability by assessing multicollinearity. Care should be taken with item paring in a formative construct. Because the items form the construct, dropping items could change the meaning and nature of the construct [25]. Some researchers thus suggest retaining non-significant items to preserve content validity [29]. More recent research on formative constructs suggests that if item weightings are non-significant, it is appropriate to eliminate them (one at a time) until all paths are significant and a good fit is obtained [30]. It is recommended, however, that removal of items does not compromise the domain and that the items remaining be examined to ensure they still reflect the construct definition.

4. Results

4.1. Measurement model

We analyzed the data using a partial least squares structural equation modeling approach (PLS-SEM; SmartPLS version 2.0). PLS-SEM is well-suited to examination of models that contain both formative and reflective indicators [22] and for an exploratory study [23], as is the case with our model. To determine whether the construct should be modeled formatively or reflectively, we applied guidelines suggested in prior research [24, 25].
Table 2. Descriptive statistics and correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>CE-Fit</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>CE-Sac</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.53**</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>CE-Links</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>OE-Fit</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>OE-Sac</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.60**</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>OE-Links-to-Coworkers</td>
<td>15.61</td>
<td>12.49</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>L-TOI</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>-.56**</td>
<td>-.53**</td>
<td>-.40**</td>
<td>-.28**</td>
<td>-.29**</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>O-TOI</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.60**</td>
<td>-.66**</td>
<td>-.17**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Square root of the AVE is shown in bold along the diagonal; CE=Community Embeddedness; OE=Organizational Embeddedness; Sac=Sacrifice; L-TOI=Locality Turnover Intention; O-TOI=Organizational Turnover Intention; NA=Not applicable; *p < .05; **p < .01.

Given the lengthy scales for job and community embeddedness, as well as the number of indicators that were non-significant, we report our results using reduced scales. However, we also examined an alternative measurement model with non-significant items retained. The general pattern of results and variance explained were highly similar to the model shown in the results section, with the exception of the impact of OE-Links on L-TOI, which was non-significant in the alternative model.

Following Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer’s [30] advice and starting with the smallest item weight, we eliminated non-significant items one at a time until we arrived at a model with only significant item weights. We then assessed our construct definitions in light of the remaining items and determined that they adequately reflected the construct definitions, with the exception of OE-Links. This scale contains three items that reflect tenure (in one’s job position, organization, and industry) and four items that reflect interaction and responsibilities related to coworkers. Step-wise eliminating non-significant items resulted in only one item remaining for this construct. The remaining item asks, “How many coworkers do you interact with regularly?” We felt this single item did not adequately reflect the construct definition of OE-Links, which includes links to institutions (e.g., organization, industry) as well as people. In the analysis reported below, we retained the single item, but we label it “OE-Links-to-Coworkers” to show that this dimension only accounts for links related to coworkers but not institutions.

The presence of multicollinearity suggests that items are tapping into the same aspects of the construct, which can lead to instability of the model [30]. Given high correlations between aspects of job, organizational, and industry tenure and between interaction and responsibilities related to coworkers, multicollinearity was a likely culprit in the instability of OE-Links. Eliminating the correlated items addressed this issue. To assess multicollinearity in the rest of the model, we examined the variance inflation factors (VIF). The largest VIF was 2.02, which is below the suggested cutoff of 3.0 [30], and suggests that multicollinearity was not an issue in the remaining measures.

Assessment of validity of formative measures involves examination of item weights [25]. Though there is no recommended threshold for the weights, significant weights can be assessed for insight into the importance of each indicator in the context of the nomology. Moreover, when formative indicators explain all of the variance in a construct, their maximum average weight is $\sqrt{(1/n)}$, where n is the number of indicators [31]. This value can be compared to the observed average weight of the indicators to shed light on how well the indicators reflect the construct. Table 3 shows the theoretical maximum average weight based on the number of indicators and the observed average weight of the indicators. These results show that the observed average weights for the constructs are favorable.

Table 3. Average weight of formative constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th># Items</th>
<th>Maximum Average Weight</th>
<th>Observed Average Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CE-Fit</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE-Sac</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE-Links</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OE-Fit</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OE-Sac</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: OE-Links-to-Coworkers is not included due to having a single item.

Finally, to assess the discriminant validity of the formative constructs, we compared the item-to-item and item-to-construct correlations [25]. Item-to-item
correlations were higher than item-to-construct correlations and the items had higher correlations with their composite construct scores than with the scores of other constructs, supporting discriminant validity. Thus, we conclude that the model demonstrates acceptable validity and reliability.

4.2. Structural model

Figure 2 presents the results of the structural model test. We employed a bootstrap procedure, using 1,000 iterations, to generate the t-statistics used to estimate p-values. As expected, O-TOI positively contributes to L-TOI. Community embeddedness, in particular, was found to explain variance in L-TOI above and beyond that explained by O-TOI. Furthermore, 47% of the variance in L-TOI was explained by the model.

The results show that L-TOI is primarily driven by community embeddedness, with CE-Fit having the strongest negative effect, followed by CE-Sac. Those who report higher fit and sacrifice related to their community are less likely to intend to leave the locality. The data provide support for Hypothesis 2a, 2b, and 2c. However, there was no support for Hypothesis 1a, 1b, or 1c. Of the organizational embeddedness dimensions, only OE-Links-to-Coworkers is significant, and contrary to expectations, this coefficient is positive.

5. Discussion

The purpose of this research was to identify primary contributors to locality turnover. This study used an at-large workforce in a metropolitan area as the population of interest. The area had organizations from a wide variety of industries that participated in the survey. This study offers a first step in exploring and testing potential antecedents to L-TOI above and beyond O-TOI. Similar to Birdseye and Hill [16], this study supports the delineation of turnover intention into more than a single dependent variable. Additional variance in L-TOI was explained beyond the variance accounted for by O-TOI.

This study extends the findings regarding community embeddedness from the Jiang et al.’s [10] meta-analysis to the new dependent variable of locality turnover intention (L-TOI). As hypothesized, community embeddedness fit, sacrifice, and links all contributed negatively to L-TOI. This finding emphasizes the importance of this research to communities and regions. Organizations, chambers of commerce, and community leaders need to be aware of a diverse workforce and be proactive in supporting community embeddedness in order to retain employees in their region. Programs and activities should be offered to facilitate employees’ embeddedness in the community in order to minimize turnover.

While Zhang et al. [13] found organizational embeddedness influencing O-TOI, we did not find support for organizational embeddedness influencing L-TOI. The only significant dimension of organizational embeddedness was the OE-Links-to-Coworkers construct which had a positive influence on L-TOI instead of the negative influence hypothesized. Perhaps the participants had a strong and extensive network with coworkers reflecting social capital that can be leveraged to secure a job in another locality, thus a positive influence.

5.1. Implications for practice

According to Johns [32, p. 389], “Managers and other potential consumers of (organizational behavior) research care about context”; context refers to those situational occasions and limitations that impact organizational behavior. Concern for context emphasizes the importance of locality attributes to managers, organizations, and communities concerned with employee retention. Forward thinking organizations should work with community leaders to facilitate and create opportunities for employees to be involved off-the-job, so that employees may...
experience a level of ownership and commitment to the community in which they reside.

Some practical examples for increasing the CE-Links of employees include giving employees time away from work to participate in a golf tournament to support United Way, or sponsoring company teams to participate in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure or other prosocial initiatives [33]. Organizations could provide both financial and workforce support to Habitat for Humanity, or raise money for a local orphanage. Additionally, employees might be given time from work to participate in a weekly reading program at a local elementary school, or an organization could sponsor city sports leagues and encourage employee participation. ConocoPhillips' Alaska employees volunteer over 7000 hours annually to non-profit organizations [34]. These practical interventions to increase CE-Links are extremely important to retain employees in areas where retention may be most challenging (e.g., extreme climate in Anchorage, AK or economic depression in Detroit, MI).

Mitchell et al. [33] recommend two areas where managers can increase CE-Sacrifice. First, organizations can promote their workers locally or support telecommuting, to eliminate the sacrifices associated with relocation. Additionally, they can offer employees assistance with purchasing a home. Recently, Quicken Loans created partnerships with DTE Energy, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, and several other firms to promote home purchases and housing rentals within the city of Detroit [35].

In the area of CE-Fit, recruiting within the local area is one suggestion offered by Mitchell et al. [33]. This strategy has worked for ConocoPhillips Alaska who employs over 1200 people with 88% of them from Alaska [34]. Additionally, the use of job sharing, flextime, and work-from-home days may increase employees’ CE-Fit. The next section addresses the limitations of this study and offers suggestions for future research.

5.2. Directions for future research

Just as our findings stimulate future research directions, so do the limitations of this study. For example, we collected additional data on how individuals defined themselves in their workplace and in their community, specifically whether they viewed themselves as a minority in either of those environments. We were hopeful that the sample size would be large enough for us to explore comparisons across and between the four groups resulting from these classifications. However, due to sample size limitations regarding some of the demographic variables, it was not possible to perform all of the statistical analyses that we would have liked. We urge further research to explicate nuances related to locality turnover that may pertain to workers perceiving themselves as minorities in their workplace and/or community. Another lens with which to conduct future research on organizational and community embeddedness might include an examination of occupational types [10].

A second limitation of this study relates to measurement issues, in particular non-significant weights for the formative indicators across dimensions of organizational embeddedness. From a scientific research perspective, more research is needed to refine an instrument to better measure the organizational embeddedness and community embeddedness constructs. In particular the OE-Links construct was modeled as a formative construct, as done in extant research. We recommend exploring the possibility of modeling this construct as reflective in future research in light of our findings and Zhang et al.’s [14] recommendation.

As an extension of our work, we encourage researchers to investigate the role communication technology plays in employee decisions to change locality. As IS researchers, we recognize that advances in communication technologies may affect locality turnover in opposing ways. It is possible that technology enables telecommuting in some instances, freeing an employee to take a new position without changing locality. On the other hand, advances in communication technologies provide improved connectivity with friends and family from a distance, which for some may relax the community embeddedness net and provide greater freedom to relocate.

Future research should explore if and how the findings of this research relate to the IT workforce in particular. For example, future studies could glean if there are peculiar or unique aspects about the IT workforce that are similar to or different from the workforce at large. What role does community embeddedness play in attracting IT workers to Silicon Valley, Boston, central Arkansas, or rural Nebraska? Is community embeddedness more or less important to retaining workers in a metropolitan area versus a rural area? Additionally, future research should gather data from several different geographic regions in the U.S. to ascertain if there are indeed differences based on regions of the U.S. Data could also be collected from multiple countries and varying cultures to provide insight into turnover differences across countries and cultures to better understand the antecedents of L-TOI using a global lens. Such a study could provide potential insight for
organizations engaging in offshoring, nearshoring, and outsourcing—both from a provider and a client perspective.

6. Conclusion

We encourage researchers, managers, and regional economic organizations to adopt our wide-angle view of employee turnover. Doing so brings into focus locality-related factors, such as community embeddedness, that can be managed to improve retention.

7. References

APPENDIX: Survey Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality Turnover Intention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I intend to remain in [LOCALITY] indefinitely.†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I intend to move away from [LOCALITY] in the next 1-3 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I often think about leaving [LOCALITY].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Embeddedness (CE) Fit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am comfortable with the political views expressed in my community.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I have relatives in my community who are important to me.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I like the people in my community.*†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My neighbors are similar to me.*†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel liked in my community.*†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I really love the place where I live.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. This community I live in is a good match for me.†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I think of the community where I live as home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The area where I live offers the leisure activities that I like (e.g., sports, outdoors, cultural, arts).†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The weather where I live is suitable for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. My neighborhood is safe.†</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 1 recommended by Mitchell et al. [9].
Item 2 on recommendation of Zhang et al. [14].
Items 3, 4, 5 as “community” counterpart to OE-Fit items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Embeddedness (CE) Sacrifice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. There are features of my house or apartment that I would miss if I moved.†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If I were to leave this community, there are things I would miss about where I live.†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I would sacrifice a lot if I left this community.†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I would incur very few costs if I moved away from this community.†</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Organizational Embeddedness (OE) Links

1. How many years have you been in your present position?†
2. How many years have you worked for this organization?†
3. How many years have you worked in this industry?†
4. How many coworkers do you interact with regularly?*
5. How many coworkers are highly dependent on you?†
6. How many work teams are you on?†
7. How many work committees are you on?†

### Organizational Turnover Intention

1. I intend to remain with my company indefinitely. R
2. I intend to look for a job outside of my company in the next year.
3. I often think about quitting my job at my company.

Notes: Items marked with an * represent new items not from original scales, notes in italics show their source. Items marked with † represent items that were dropped from the final model due to non-significance.