ORGANISATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR, EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS OF EQUITY, ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT AND INTENTION TO STAY OF EMPLOYEES IN ZIMBABWEAN SMES

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─Abstract─

While research constructs such as organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), employee perception of equity (EPE), organisational commitment (OC) and employee intention to stay (ITS) have been researched extensively in developed countries, research on these constructs remains scant in developing countries. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are the stronghold of economies and societies worldwide. In Zimbabwe, as in any other country, there is a realisation that SMEs are innovative, flexible and require low startup capital. This study attempted to investigate the influence of OCB, EPE and OC on ITS in Zimbabwe's SME sector. Structured questionnaires were distributed to SMEs in five major cities. Data were collected from SME employees who do not occupy managerial positions. A quantitative method using confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling was employed to test the relationships among the five hypotheses. The results showed support for the five proposed hypotheses. Implications and future research directions of the study are provided.

Key Words: Equity theory, Organisational Citizenship Behaviour, Equity, Organisational Commitment, Employee Intention to Stay.

JEL Classification: M10

1. INTRODUCTION

Governments in the developing world have become increasingly aware of the role played by SMEs and their contribution to the economy (Chang, Chang, Ho, Yen & Chiang, 2011). The importance of the small business sector is recognised also internationally in terms of its contribution to employment creation, contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) of a country, innovation and social stability (Mambula, 2002). In Zimbabwe, the development of the small business sector is regarded as crucial for the achievement of broader development objectives (Chinomona, 2012). These objectives include poverty alleviation, spreading employment to rural areas, improving the situation of women and increasing indigenous ownership of investment in the economy (Mambula, 2002). Although this sector is important, it has been neglected by researchers, especially in areas around equity, justice, organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), commitment and turnover intention and this paper seeks to address this gap.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

SMEs are often defined by the number of people employed, value of assets, registration status and annual turnover (Ministry of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise Development, 2002). For the purposes of this study, a small and medium enterprise refers to a registered company with a maximum of 100 employees and an annual turnover in sales of a maximum of 830 000 US dollars (Chinomona, 2012). Successful organisations need employees who will do more than their usual job duties and who will provide performance beyond expectations. Employees who engage in good citizenship behaviours (OCB) help others on their team, volunteer for extra work, avoid unnecessary conflicts, respect the spirit as well as the letter of rules and regulations and gracefully tolerate occasional extra work (Cho & Johanson, 2008). OCB has been conceptualised as a multi-dimensional construct (Yildirim, Uzum & Yildirim, 2012). Podaskoff, Whiting, Podsakoff and Blume (2009) point out that, although researchers use different evaluative dimensions, the most common measurement method is the five dimensions first proposed by Organ (1988), namely altruism (thinking of others, selflessness and helpfulness), conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy and civic virtue. Conscientiousness is a discretionary behaviour in which employees carry out their work well beyond the minimum required level (Yoon & Sur, 2003). Courtesy mainly concerns behaviours that determine in advance the issues likely to create problems for other workmates and the proposing of solutions to help them or to prevent pre-emptively such

problems from occurring (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012). Civic virtue (organisational virtue) incorporates supporting the development of the organisation, learning about and exerting efforts to inform oneself about recent developments, business methods and company policies (Yildirim et al., 2012). Sportsmanship consists of actions where employees refrain from complaining about trivial grievances (Rego, Ribeiro, Cunha & Jesuino, 2011; Rubin, Bommer & Bachrach, 2010). The current study will conceptualises OCB as a composite construct, following the recent works of Jung and Yoon (2012), who did not deal with OCB as multidimensional but as a composite construct.

Equity is seen as a determinant of organisational efficiency and effectiveness (Van Dijike, De Cremer, Mayer & Quaquebeke, 2012). Research into employee perceptions of equity has consistently demonstrated that people care about fair treatment and when individuals perceive that they are treated fairly, they express greater satisfaction with social relationships (Park et al., 2010). Kinicki & Kreitner (2008) define equity as the perception of being treated fairly at the workplace. Unfairness results in labour disputes, strikes and high turnover ratio (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Thus, if employees perceive the ratio to be equal to that of others then a state of equity is said to exist and this will consequently result in OC. However, if the ratio is unequal then the employees experience equity tension (Park et al., 2010; Janssen, 2001).

Commitment has been seen as the willingness or intention to continue maintaining the relationship into the future (Yamaguchi, 2013). Committed individuals believe in and accept organisational goals and values. This means that the individuals will be willing to remain with their organisations and devote considerable effort towards the achievement of their organisations' goals (Cater & Zabka, 2009). Researchers have proposed three components involved in OC, namely affective or emotional commitment, continuance, calculative or instrumental commitment and normative or moral commitment (Morrow, Macelroy & Scheibe, 2012). There is increasing concern over how organisations can establish and restore OC among employees, specifically affective OC (AOC), which is a highly valued employee attitude (Morrow et al., 2012). It focuses on an employee's identification with and involvement in an organisation and emphasises the bond between the employee and the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The second component of OC, according to Allen and Meyer (1990), is normative commitment, which is prevalent when partners stay in the relationships because they feel they ought to (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002). The third component of OC is referred to as calculative, instrumental or continuance commitment. Calculative commitment is

the extent to which partners perceive the need to maintain a relationship because of the significant anticipated switching costs or lack of alternatives (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). In this regard, an employee has a motivation to continue the relationship because they cannot easily replace their current organisation and because they cannot obtain the same resources and outcomes outside their current organisation (Ruyter, Moorman & Lemmink, 2001).

The questions that challenge academics and human resource practitioners alike are: Why do people leave their jobs? and Why do they stay in their jobs? Over the years, researchers have developed partial answers to these questions (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski & Erez 2001). It is important to note that intention to stay and intention to leave are opposite sides of the same coin. Most researchers now accept the premise that intention to stay or leave a job with a particular employer is the final cognitive step in the decision making process of voluntary turnover (Ucho, Mkavga & Onyishi, 2012). Perhaps, given alternatives, people stay if they are satisfied with their jobs and committed to their organisations and leave if they are not. However, empirical evidence indicates that work attitudes play only a relatively small role in employee tenure or turnover intentions (Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner, 2000). The current study defines employee intention to stay as the employee's willingness to remain in an organisation. It shows the employee's level of commitment to an organisation and the willingness to remain employed within the same organisation.
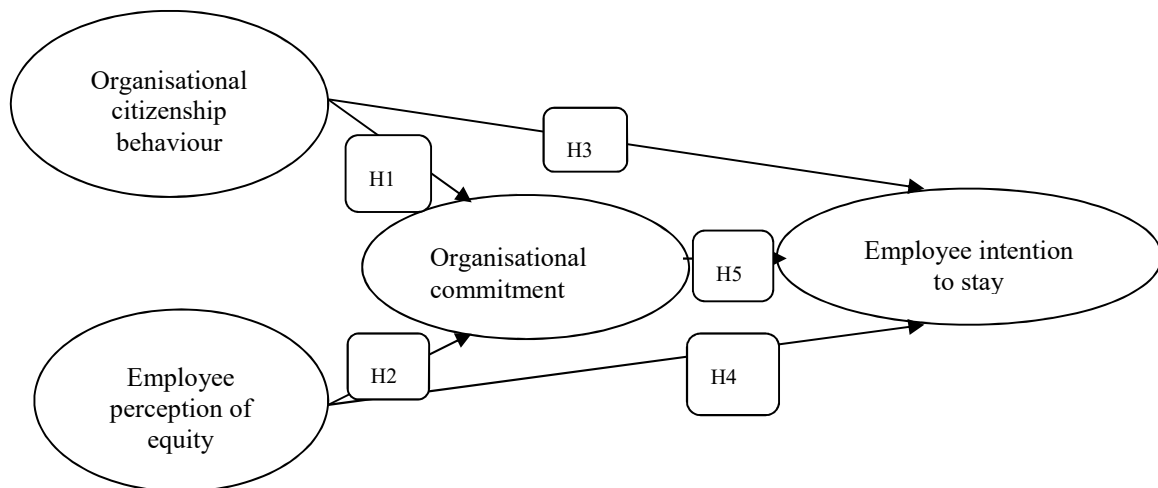
3. Purpose of the study

The study attempted to investigate the influence of OCB, EPE and OC on ITS in Zimbabwe's SME sector.

4. The proposed research model

Drawing from the literature review a research model is conceptualised. In the research model, OCB and employee EPE are proposed to be the predictors of OC and employee ITS. Employee intention to stay is the outcome variable while OC is posited to be a mediating variable. Figure 1 illustrates this conceptual research model.

Figure-1: The research model

H1: There is a strong positive relationship between organisational citizenship behavior and organisational commitment in Zimbabwe's SME sector.

H2: Employees perceptions of equity have a strong positive effect on their organisational commitment in Zimbabwe's SME sector.

H3: There is a strong positive relationship between organisational citizenship behaviour and employee intention to stay in Zimbabwean SMEs.

H4: Employees perceptions of equity have a strong positive effect on their intention to stay in Zimbabwe's SME sector.

H5: Employees organisational commitment has a strong positive effect on their intention to stay in Zimbabwe's SME sector.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1. Sampling design technique

The study made use of a probability sampling method. With stratified sampling, the population was divided into mutually exclusive groups (industry sectors) and random samples were drawn from each group (Hair, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2010). This procedure placed the SMEs into specific industry sectors (manufacturing and service).

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5.2. Target population

The database of the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises was used to collect information from employees in non-managerial positions in SMEs in Zimbabwe. The sample was drawn from the major cities in Zimbabwe (Chitungwiza, Bulawayo, Bindura, Chinhoyi and Harare). Non-managerial employees provided the information that was needed in this study because they are paid least and have many grievances in comparison with those who are in managerial positions, who tend to be secretive, happy and are highly remunerated (Gono, 2009). Two hundred and seventy five SMEs were surveyed of which 464 (84% response rate) usable questionnaires were returned.

5.3. Measures

Research scales were operationalised mainly on the basis of previous work. Seven-item scales, which were adapted from the previous works of Jung and Yoon (2012), were used to measure OCB. Six questions were adapted from Janssen (2001) to measure employee EPE. A nine-item scale adapted from Powell and Meyer (2004) was utilised to determine OC. A five-item scale was adapted from Wayne, Shore and Liden (1997) to measure employee ITS on the job. All the measurement items were measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale that was anchored by 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree, to express the degree of agreement.

6. RESULTS OF TESTS OF MEASURES AND ACCURACY ANALYSIS STATISTICS

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 22.0 and AMOS 22.0 were used to carry out the statistical analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to examine the reliability and convergent and discriminant validity of the multi-item construct measures. All the factor loadings are above 0.5, which shows a high validity of the measurement instruments used. Recommended statistics for the final overall model assessment showed an acceptable fit of the measurement model to the data, namely $\chi^2/(df) = 2.69$; GFI= 0.91; AGFI= 0.86; CFI = 0.98; TLI = 0.97; TLI = 0.97 and RMSEA = 0.061.

6.1 Reliability and validity

Three methods, namely Cronbach alpha test (Cronbach α), composite reliability test (CR) and average value extracted (AVE) test were used in the study to check the

reliability of the research measures. Table 1 shows the results of these three tests. The internal reliability of each construct was assessed using the standardised Cronbach coefficient alpha. The results of scale reliability tests are shown in Table 1. The item-to-total correlation values ranged from 0.939 to 0.980, which were above the cut-off point of 0.5 as recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). Table 1 indicates that the Cronbach alpha coefficients ranged from 0.983 to 0.993which is satisfactory according to Blunch (2008). The internal reliability of each construct also was evaluated using the composite reliability (CR) index test. The CR indexes range from 0.979 to 0.992 which is above the acceptable threshold of 0.7 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 2006).

Table 1: Accuracy analysis statistics

Research constructs	Cronbach's test		C.R.	AVE	Factor loading	Highest S.V
	Item-total	α Value				
OCB-1	0.939				0.946	
OCB-2	0.962				0.967	
OCB-3	0.952	0.983	0.983	0.922	0.963	0.760
OCB-4	0.953				0.966	
OCB-5	0.945				0.960	
EPE-1	0.950				0.960	
EPE-2	0.955				0.961	
EPE-3	0.950				0.962	
EPE-4	0.953	0.987	0.987	0.931	0.959	0.762
EPE-5	0.958				0.961	
EPE-6	0.957				0.974	
OC-1	0.958				0.965	
OC-2	0.960				0.963	
OC-3	0.961				0.966	
OC-4	0.967				0.970	
OC-5	0.965	0.993	0.992	0.937	0.967	0.760
OC-6	0.965				0.969	
OC-7	0.967				0.971	
OC-8	0.966				0.970	
OC-9	0.969				0.974	
ITS-1	0.975				0.981	
ITS-2	0.971				0.976	
ITS-3	0.965	0.991	0.979	0.904	0.971	0.762
ITS-4	0.973				0.980	
ITS-5	0.980				0.840	

Note: OCB=Organisational citizenship behaviour, EPE=Employee perception of equity, OC=Organisational commitment, ITS=Employee intention to stay C.R.=Composite reliability; AVE=Average variance extracted; S.V=Shared variance;

*significance level p<0.05; ** significance level p<0.01; *** significance level p<0.001 Measurement CFA model fits: $\chi^2/(df)$=2.69, GFI=0.91, AGFI=0.86, CFI=0.98, TLI=0.97 and RMSEA=0,061.*

In this study, the average variance extracted estimate reflected that the overall amount of variance in the indicators was accounted for by the latent construct. Higher values for the variance extracted estimate (greater than 0.40) revealed that the indicators represented the latent construct. Overall, all average variance explained (AVE) values were above 0.5 (refer to Table 1), thus accepted according to the literature (Fraering & Minor, 2006). One of the methods used to assess the discriminant validity of the research constructs was the evaluation of whether the correlations among latent constructs were less than or equal to 0.6 (Sin, Tse, Heung & Yim, 2005). In Table 2, the inter-correlation values for all paired latent variables are less than or equal to 0.6, therefore, indicating the existence of discriminant validity. The correlation values of OCB and EPE = 0.600; OC and OCB = 0.572; OC and EPE = 0.586, ITS and OCB = 0.558, ITS and EPE = 0.543 and ITS and OC = 0.592 were less than 0.6 or equal to 0.6, which is within the recommended threshold (Bryman & Bell, 2007), thus affirming discriminant validity.

Table 2: Correlations between constructs

RESEARCH CONSTRUCT	OCB	EPE	OC	ITS
OCB	1.000			
EPE	0.600	1.000		
OC	0.572	0.586	1.000	
ITS	0.558	0.543	0.592	1.000

OCB=Organisational citizenship behaviour, EPE=Employee perception of equity, OC=Organisational commitment, ITS=Employee intention to stay

Discriminant validity was further established by checking if the AVE value was greater than the highest shared variance (SV) value (Sin et al., 2005 Discriminant validity was established by checking and confirming that the AVE values were greater than the highest SV values (Nunnally, 1998). Table 2 affirms that all the AVE values are above the SV values for the research constructs; therefore, further confirming the existence of discriminant validity. Since an acceptable CFA measurement model fit was obtained, the study proceeded to the hypothesis testing stage using structural equation modeling with AMOS 22.0 software programme. Recommended statistics for the final overall-model assessment showed acceptable fit of the measurement model to the data. The ratio of chi-square over degree-of-freedom was 2.80. This value is less than the recommended threshold of less than 3.0 and, therefore, confirms the model fit. Additionally, GFI, AGFI, CFI, TLI and

RMSEA values were 0.89; 0.88; 0.96; 0.98 and 0.060 respectively. All these model fit measures were above recommended accepted threshold value of greater than 0.8 for GFI, AGFI, CFI, TLI and less than 0.8 for RMSEA (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988), which suggested that the proposed conceptual model converged well and could be a plausible representation of the underlying empirical data structure collected in Zimbabwe. Since the model fit is acceptable, the study proceeded to test the research hypotheses. The corresponding coefficients of the research hypotheses that posited the existence of positive relationships between the variables and outcome consequences were then observed.

Table 3: Results of structural equation model analysis

Hypothesis statement	Hypothesis	Path coefficient	C.R	Results
OCB → Organisational commitment	H1	0.819***	6.06	Supported
EPE → Organisational commitment	H2	0.958***	6.15	Supported
OCB →Employee intention to stay	H3	0.888***	4.62	Supported
EPE → Employee intention to stay	H4	0.820***	4.54	Supported
OC →Employee intention to stay	H5	0.865***	4.75	Supported

In Table 3, all the hypotheses are significant and strong because all the path coefficients are greater than 0.5. The highest path coefficient is EPE and OC, which is 0.958, showing statistical significance indicating that in organisations where employees perceptions of equity is high, OC is also high (Almar 2005). The lowest path coefficient is OCB and OC, which is 0.819 slightly lower than the highest path coefficient. This shows that all the path coefficients are significant. In Table 3, the standardised coefficient values of these variables are used when explaining the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The higher the standardised coefficient value, the greater the effect the independent variables have on dependent variables. The critical ratio (CR) values, which represent the t-value, must be higher than 1.96. In this model, all the variables meet this requirement because they are greater than 1.96. The greatest CR value is for EPE and OC, which is 6.15. The lowest CR is between OC and ITS and is 4.54. The p-values are all less than 0.001, which shows a strong relationship between the variables and, therefore, all five hypotheses were supported.

5. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Hypothesis 1 posited that there is a significant positive influence of employee OCB on OC in Zimbabwean SMEs. From the result of the path, there is a strong relationship between these two constructs (p-value <0.001). Robbins and Judge (2011) emphasised that successful organisations need employees who will do more than their usual job duties and who will provide performance beyond expectations, which ultimately leads to OC. Such innovative and spontaneous behaviours by employees can greatly contribute to the cooperation and performance of the SMEs (Yildrim et al., 2012; Yoon & Suh, 2003). Therefore high OCB is associated with high OC. Hypothesis 2, posited that there is a significant strong positive influence of EPE on OC (p-value <0.001). Research consistently finds that people care about fair treatment and when individuals perceive that they are treated fairly, they express greater satisfaction with social relationships and consequently greater commitment (Nicklin et al., 2011). Therefore, the greater the EPE the greater the OC in return. Hypothesis 3 posited that there is a significant positive relationship between employees' OCBs and their intention to stay in Zimbabwe's SME sector. The path p-value shows there is a significant relationship between these two factors (p-value < 0.001). Evidence indicates that organisations that have such employees with strong OCB outperform those that do not have such employees (Jain & Cooper, 2012). Managers need to reduce absenteeism, turnover and deviant workplace behaviors and instill a strong sense of OCB. In this way, employees, in the long run, will feel wanted and a part of the organisation and will opt for staying in an organisation. Hypothesis 4 posited that there is a strong positive significant relationship of EPE with employee ITS (p-value <0.001). It is argued further that perceived inequities at the workplace also impact negatively on job performance (Park et al., 2010), cooperation with co-workers (Kanopaske & Werner, 2002) and work quality (Cardy, Miller & Ellis, 2007). Hypothesis 5 posited that there is a strong positive relationship between employees' OC and employees' intention to stay in Zimbabwean SMEs (p-value < 0.001). Low levels of OC may be dysfunctional to both the organisation and the individual, while high levels may have positive effects that lead to higher performance, greater satisfaction and low turnover (Currivan, 1991). Drawing from the extant literature it is noted that, by and large, committed individuals believe in and accept organisational goals and values. This means that the individuals will be willing to remain with their organisations and provide considerable effort towards the achievement of their organisation's goals (Cater & Zabka, 2009). A study by Currivan (1991) affirms

that OC leads to employees' intention to stay on the job. In summary, the results shows that the five hypotheses are supported in the entire model as hypothesised.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that policy makers and academics assist SME owners/managers through free education and entrepreneurial programs that will equip them to draft plans and strategic policies to position themselves for competitive advantage in the business world. Owners/managers of SMEs seeking to improve their performance, therefore, constantly need to monitor and evaluate the progress in goal achievement. To secure increased employee motivation levels, SMEs need to make use of more diversified incentives that could include salary raises, promotions, titles, trophies, holiday assistance, and house and car purchase assistance. The owners/managers also need to inform and involve many employees in the decision-making process, as their participation leads to motivation and, hence, commitment to goal achievement. The government of Zimbabwe is also encouraged to help SMEs, which are in financial difficulty as their survival contributes to employment and the country's GDP. Finally, the government of Zimbabwe is encouraged to adopt policies that are likely to provide a stable socio-economic stability in the country such that the SMEs may improve their performance.

7. CONCLUSION

This paper sought to investigate the influence of EPE and OCB on employee OC and employee ITS. The equity theory was used to explain the relationships between the four variables in which employee intention to stay is the ultimate variable. Structural equation modelling was used to analyse the data using Amos 22.0. The study showed that there is a positive relationship between all five hypotheses. The results of this study show that there is a strong positive relationship between OCB, EPE, OC and ultimately employee ITS. It, therefore, means that the more SMEs improve their equity perceptions, citizenship behaviours and OC, the more the employee will be satisfied and opt to remain in employment.

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