

Full Length Research Paper

The impact of organizational support on work spirituality, organizational citizenship behaviour and job performance: The case of Zimbabwe's small and medium enterprises (SME) sector

Richard Chinomona

Vaal University of Technology, South Africa. E-mail: rchinosa@hotmail.com.

Accepted 14 November, 2011

Notwithstanding the increasing alertness of the importance of organizational support on employees' job performance in large firms, research efforts on the same and the mediating influence of workplace spirituality and organizational citizenship behaviour focused on the SMEs sector context have largely been scarce particularly in developing countries of Southern Africa. Therefore, the principal objective of this study is to fill this void. Five research hypotheses are posited and a sample data of 320 collected from the SME employees in Zimbabwe is used to empirically test the hypotheses. The results of this study show that, organizational support positively influences SME employees' workplace spirituality, citizenship behaviour and consequently their job performance in a significant way. Managerial implications of the findings are discussed and limitations and future research directions are indicated.

Key words: Organizational support, work spirituality, organizational citizenship behaviour, job performance, small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most important asset for a firm is its employees (Witt et al., 2002). Firms have continued to expand very rapidly over the past decades, mainly as a result of the improved employee job performance (Kahya, 2007). As a result of the professed importance of job performance to firms' growth in the organisational behaviour, management literature and human resources (HR) practice in particular, researches on the antecedents of employee job performance have continued to grow substantially (Werner, 2000; Van Scotter et al., 2009). An extensive review of the HR and related disciplines such as industrial and organizational psychology literature reveal several streams of research concentrating on employee training and job redesigning among others, as a way of improving job performance (Borman, 2004; Kahya, 2007). Recently, some researchers have acknowledged organizational support as an important antecedent of job performance (Stamper and Johlke, 2003; Aselage and Eisenberger, 2003; Podsakoff et al., 2009). Supportive organizations are those that take pride in their employees' welfare,

compensating them fairly, and looking after their needs (Fasolo, 1995; Kraimer et al., 2001). It is argued that organizational support can potentially stimulate important employee behavioural outcomes at workplace such as employee satisfaction and organizational commitment among others that might consequently lead to enhanced job performance (Randall et al., 1999). The panorama of organizational support and job performance relationship has been examined in the context of social exchange relationship by some researchers (Aselage and Eisenberger, 2003; Kraimer et al., 2001). This body of research claims that when employees perceive to be fairly treated by their firm, the likely avenue of their reciprocation is ultimately improved performance because a social exchange relationship develops between the employees and the firm (MacKenzie et al., 1993; Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 2009). However, despite the admitted importance of organizational support and job performance by academicians and HR practitioners, the mediating influence of workplace spirituality and organization citizenship behaviour in this

relationship has rarely been investigated. Workplace spirituality involves the effort to find one's ultimate purpose in life, to develop a strong connection to co-workers and other people associated with work and to have consistency or alignment between one's core beliefs and the values of their organization (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2004; Sass, 2000; Gibbons, 2000). As noted by Sheep (2006), the emerging academic literature on workplace spirituality is often characterized as vapid and is still in need of enhanced scientific rigor. Organizational citizenship behaviour refers to employees' willingness to remain with the organization, employee actions that surpass their job description and employee proactive behaviour beyond job responsibilities (Chiang and Hsieh, 2011). Given the aforementioned importance of employee workplace spirituality and citizenship behaviour to firm performance, the dearth of research on the mediating influence of the two on the organizational support and job performance relationship is indeed astonishing and now warrant academic scrutiny and empirical inquiry. Perhaps the most compelling argument for investigating the impact of organizational support on workplace spirituality, organizational citizenship behaviour and job performance by this current study derives from the fact that previous studies on these constructs have mostly focused on large sized firms and therefore little is known about the same in the small-to-medium sized enterprises (SMEs hereafter) context. This is surprising also and very unfortunate given that SMEs are widely regarded as the vehicle for employment generation, economic growth and development in both developed and developing countries (Chinomona and Pretorius, 2011). Furthermore, these prior studies have been largely conducted in developed countries (Chinomona et al., 2010) and therefore, little is known on the same from the developing parts of the world such as African countries – Zimbabwe in particular. Hence, this lacuna deserves empirical inspection in the case of a neglected context of SMEs in the developing countries. In view of the aforementioned research gaps, the purpose of the current research is three-fold. Firstly, from the perspective of employees in the SME sector, this research seeks to investigate the effects of employee perceptions of organizational support on their job performance in Zimbabwe. Secondly, an examination of the mediating influence of employee workplace spirituality and citizenship behaviour in the organizational support and job performance relationship is explored. Thirdly, an attempt is made to utilize the social exchange theory developed in the sociology discipline to provide a theoretical grounding to the current research on SMEs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social exchange theory

The basis of social exchange theory is the exchange

theory. The fundamental premise of social exchange theory is that, parties involved in exchanges voluntarily provide benefits, invoking obligation from the other party to reciprocate and providing some benefit in return (Yoon and Lwaler, 2005). The reciprocated benefits can be in the form of economic rewards or social benefits (Yoon and Sur, 2003). Therefore, social exchange is defined as "voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others" (Blau, 1964). The underlying principle of social exchange theory demonstrates that reciprocated benefactions create social bonds among exchange actors (Konovsky and Pugh, 1994). This is because social exchanges builds up feelings of personal obligation, gratitude, and trust among partners, all of which lay a foundation of social solidarity and micro social order even without binding contracts (Yoon and Sur, 2003; Thye et al., 2002).

Relating the social exchange theory to the current study, this research submits that, an effort by SME owners or managers to create a supportive organizational environment is likely to stimulate a positive perception of fairness in their employees. Furthermore, as a result of this perceived fair treatment and in accordance to social exchange theory, SME employees' workplace spirituality will be raised and citizenship behaviours enhanced in reciprocation. For that reason, the SME employees' workplace spirituality and citizenship behaviour will eventually lead to improved job performance, hence the SMEs' improved competitiveness, viability and profitability in the long term.

Perception of organizational support

Perceived organizational support (POS) is defined in the current study as the extent to which SME employees perceive that their contributions are valued by their organization and that the SME owners care about their well-being and welfare. Perception of organizational support is thought to develop over time through multiple interactions between employees and their employers and to reflect the degree to which employees perceive that their work organizations are committed to them (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Wayne et al., 1997). With regard to social support, Kraimer et al. (2001) argued that POS constitutes a viable source of support for employees since it encompasses their welfare and social support. Therefore, perceived greater organizational support (POS) is expected to result in greater affective attachment and feelings of obligation to the organization (Shore and Wayne, 1993). Besides, the extant literature asserts that, employees' perceptions that their organization supports and cares about them are positively related to work attendance (Eisenberger et al., 1986), job performance (Eisenberger et al., 1990), citizenship behaviours (Shore and Wayne, 1993), job satisfaction (Eisenberger et al., 1997) and affective organizational commitment (Wayne

et al., 1997). Empirically, Jones et al. (1995) also showed that POS is negatively related to levels of work stress, while Babakus et al. (1996) and Stamper and Johlke (2003) found that high levels of POS are negatively associated to role conflict and role ambiguity respectively.

Workplace spirituality

According to Milliman et al. (2003), an important trend in business in the twenty-first century, which focus on employee spirituality in the workplace. Indeed, the topical appearance of workplace spirituality as a subject of interest in many business magazines and many books bear testimony to this. Notably too, the growing body of literature on workplace spirituality by academicians has continued to offer a number of insights (Shellenbarger, 2000; Gunther, 2001).

According to Gibbons (2000), workplace spirituality involves a sense of wholeness, connectedness at work and deeper values. Milliman et al. (2003) conceptualized workplace spirituality to have three core dimensions, that is, purpose in one's work or "meaningful work" (individual level), having a "sense of community" (group level), and being in "alignment with the organization's values" and mission (organization level). From a spirituality viewpoint, meaningful work refers to the employees' ability to search and find deeper meaning and purpose, living their dreams, expressing their inner life needs and contributing to others at their workplace (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000; Neal, 1998). In other words, work is viewed as a vocation and a calling, as a way to create greater meaning and identity (Moore, 1992). Sense of community is concerned with interactions between employees and their co-workers (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000).

The premise is that, employees see themselves as connected to each other and that there is some type of relationship between one's inner self and the inner self of other employees (Neal and Bennett, 2000; Maynard, 1992; Miller, 1992). Alignment with organizational values implies that employees experience a strong sense of alignment between their personal values and their organization's mission and purpose.

The belief is that, an employee's purpose is larger than one's self and as such should contribute to others or society (Mitroff and Denton, 1999; Ashmos and Duchon, 2000). In this study, workplace spirituality is defined as the recognition by SME employers that their employees have an inner life that is nourished by meaningful work, sense of community and alignment with the company's values.

Organizational citizenship behaviour

In the current study organizational citizenship behaviour refers to SME employees' willingness to remain with the

company, their actions that surpass their job description, and their proactive behaviour beyond job responsibilities (Chiang and Hsieh, 2011). Thus SME employees' citizenship behaviour refers to that behavioural motivation to go beyond the normal call of duty through cooperation among colleagues, self-improvement, and creating a positive organizational image (Cho and Johanson, 2008). The extant organizational behaviour literature indicates that, such innovative and spontaneous behaviours by employees can greatly contribute to the operation and performance of an organization (Morrison, 1996; Stamper and Van Dyne, 2003; Williams and Anderson, 1991). Organizational citizenship behaviour has been conceptualized by some researchers as a multi-dimensional construct with five dimensions namely altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy and civic virtue (Yoon and Sur, 2003; Ravichandran and Gilmore, 2007). Altruism is a discretionary behaviour that helps other persons with respect to organizationally relevant tasks or problems, for instance, voluntarily helping less skilled or new employees (Organ, 1990). Conscientiousness is a discretionary behaviour that employees carry out well beyond the minimum required level, for example, working long days and voluntarily doing things besides duties (Yoon and Sur, 2003). Sportsmanship consists of actions that employee refrain from complaining or doing petty grievances (Raub, 2008). Courtesy consists of actions that help prevent work-related problems with others (Walz and Niehoff, 2000). Civic virtue reflects behaviours, in which an employee responsibly engages, that show concern for the organization and employee initiative in recommending how the organization can improve its operations (Koys, 2001). However, despite the noted dimensions of organizational citizenship behaviour, the current study will conceptualize it as a composite construct following the recent works of Jung and Yoon (2011).

Job performance

According to Kahya (2007), the most important dependent variable in industrial and organizational psychology is perhaps job performance. Job performance in the current study refers to job related behavioural outcomes, SME employee's productivity and the achievement of a company's expectations and requirements such as efficiency and awareness (Babin and Boles, 1996). A review of organizational behaviour literature indicates that job performance has two distinct dimensions namely, task performance and contextual performance (Borman, 2004). Task performance is defined as the proficiency with which employees perform activities that are formally recognized as part of their jobs and contribute to the company's technical core (Borman and Motowidlo, 1993). In other words, it is the use of technical skills to achieve specialized tasks for core job

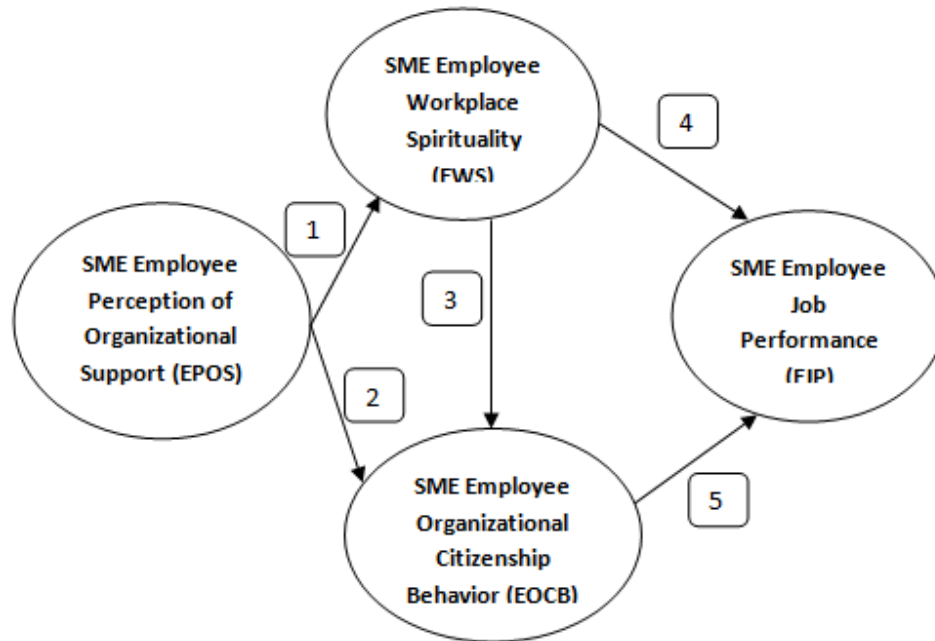


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

responsibilities (Van Scotter, 2000). Contextual performance refers to employees' efforts that are not directly related to their main task function but are important because they shape the organizational, social and psychological context that serves as the critical catalyst for task activities and processes (Werner, 2000). Although task performance traditionally has received more attention than contextual performance, researchers have begun to empirically demonstrate that contextual performance yields a competitive advantage for organizations (Witt et al., 2002).

CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Drawing from the social exchange theory, the extant literature from HR, industrial psychology and organizational behaviour aforementioned, a conceptual model is developed in Figure 1. The model consists of four constructs, that is, one predictor – SME employees' perception of organizational support, two mediators – SME employees' workplace spirituality and SME employees' organizational citizenship behaviour and one outcome variable – SME employees' job performance. Conceivably, the SME employees' perceptions of organizational support in their respective SMEs influence their workplace spirituality, citizenship behaviour and consequently their job performance. Detailed explanations of the associations between these constructs are provided in the hypotheses developed hereafter.

Small and medium enterprises (SME) employees' perception of organisational support and workplace spirituality

For most workers, most of their precious time is spent at work. As a result of this, the quality of working life has become a major phenomenon at the workplace and many companies have responded by becoming more supportive to their employees' plight (Randall et al., 1999). Perhaps organisational support can be expected to be high in SMEs where the majority of the employees might be family members, relatives or acquaintances. The SME employees' level of perception of organisational support reflect their inner most feelings that their company cares about their welfare. When the SME employees perceive that their company is willing to lend a helping hand; they are likely to personally feel respected, cared for, and recognized, and therefore, consequently find deeper meaning and purpose in their work (Pfeffer, 2003). In this regard, the SME employees will view their work as a vocation or a calling, and the workplace as a place where they get greater meaning and identity (Moore, 1992; Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003). In accordance with the social exchange theory, the current study submit that if SMEs employers create a supportive workplace, in reciprocation their employees are likely to respond by displaying a positive work attitude, show appreciation, identify with the company and exhibit diligent performance. Consequently they will find greater meaning in their work and feel a sense of belonging and their values aligned to that of their company. Previous studies have found a positive relationship between

organisational support and workplace spirituality (for example, Morrison, 1996). In view of that, a positive linkage between SME employees' perception of organisational support and their workplace spirituality can safely be deduced. Hence, the following hypothesis is postulated:

H₁: The higher the level of SME employees' perception of organisational support, the higher their level of workplace spirituality.

Small and medium enterprises (SME) employees' perception of organisational support and citizenship behaviour

When SME employees perceive to be treated fairly in their supportive organisation, they might feel that they are recognized as valuable emotional and intellectual beings (Kim and Mauborgne, 1998), and not just "human resources" (Podsakoff et al., 2009). This feeling of recognition will tend to make the SME employees feel important to their company, develop trust with their company and therefore, become more willing to offer concrete suggestions conducive to their company's growth. Such reciprocal behaviours are consistent with self-initiated actions manifest in organisational citizenship behaviours and social exchange theory. The extant organisational behaviour literature also indicate that when organisations are supportive, their employees are likely to develop a sense of duty and are willing to reciprocate with more cooperative and supportive actions, and with greater loyalty, commitment, enthusiasm, work effort and productivity, thus better performing their jobs and contributing to organisational performance (Gouldner, 1960; Settoon et al., 1996; Eisenberger et al., 2001). Therefore, in line with the social exchange theory, the current study put forward that when SME employees perceive their company to be supportive they are likely to transcend beyond their normal call of duty by reciprocating via extra citizenship behaviours. Prior empirical studies have supported a positive relationship between perception of organisational support and organisational citizenship behaviour (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Piercy et al., 2006; Podsakoff et al., 2000; Wayne et al., 2002). Based on the foregoing discussion, this study therefore, posits the following hypothesis:

H₂: The higher the level of SME employees' perception of organisational support, the higher their level of organisational citizenship behaviour.

Small and medium enterprises (SME) employees' workplace spirituality and organisational citizenship behaviour

The opportunity to do meaningful work is also likely to improve the SME employees' self-esteem, hope, health,

happiness and personal growth. As a result of this, the SME employees bring their entire selves (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) to the company, regard their work as a mission and more than as a mere job. Eventually, this in turn will likely make them to become more committed to perform beyond their normal duties and responsibilities in order to facilitate the achievement of their company's goals (Gavin and Mason, 2004). Workplace spirituality is therefore expected to energizes the SME employees and equip them with the enthusiasm to pursue extra citizenship behaviours at work (Moxley, 2000). Such citizenship behaviours might be in the form of creative or innovative thinking that can result in improved company performance. In this regard, the SME employees might be willing to view any self-initiated extra work they do for their company as having a spiritual significance to them (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003; Pfeffer, 2003). Thus an association between SME employees' workplace spirituality and their citizenship behaviour can be conjectured. Previous studies have also provided support for the positive influence of workplace spirituality on organizational citizenship behaviour (Milliman et al., 2003). Therefore, drawing from this deliberation, H3 is proposed as follows:

H₃: The higher the level of SME employees' workplace spirituality, the higher their level of organisational citizenship behaviour.

Small and medium enterprises (SME) employees' workplace spirituality and job performance

Researches on workplace spirituality indicate that, when individuals experience a strong sense of alignment between their personal values and their organisation's mission and purpose, their spirit is nurtured and their identification with the organisation is strengthened (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003). This person-organisation fit characterized by value alignment is noted in the extant organisational behaviour literatures to motivate the employees to increase their job performance (Wrzesniewski, 2003). Furthermore, the spillover effect from workplace spirituality into personal/family life may be expected to enhance satisfaction with family, marriage, leisure activities and social interactions, enabling employees to live an integrated life (Pfeffer, 2003), which in turn may improve their organisational commitment and job performance (Bromet et al., 1990; Jurkiewicz and Giacalone, 2004). Accordingly, SME employees' workplace spirituality will presumably lead to greater enthusiasm, effort, sense of "calling" commitment and improved job performance at their respective companies. Empirical evidences from previous researches have also supported the existence of a positive linkage between workplace spirituality and job performance (Lloyd, 1990; Gavin and Mason, 2004; Jurkiewicz and Giacalone, 2004). Similarly, the current study hypothesizes that:

H₄: The higher the level of SME employees' workplace spirituality, the higher their level of job performance.

Small and medium enterprises (SME) employees' citizenship behaviour and job performance

A cross examination of the management literature reveal that effective organisational operation requires employees to be willing to surpass their job descriptions and be proactive beyond their job responsibilities (Koys, 2001). Such innovative and spontaneous behaviours are essential and can greatly contribute to the employee's job and overall organisational performance (Chiang and Hsieh, 2011).

There are several reasons noted in the extant literatures indicating why organisational citizenship behaviour improves job performance. For instance, aggregate citizenship behaviour is noted to improve overall job performance through employees' proactive cooperation and assistance among coworkers (Williams and Anderson, 1991; Podsakoff et al., 1997). Also when courteous employees, for example, inform each other about non-routine demands, therefore allowing them to take steps to mitigate problems, improved performance might result.

Accordingly, it is anticipated by this study that, the SME employees' citizenship behaviours corresponded with increased cooperation among the employees, their proactive assistance in resolving problems for each other and their willingness to surpass their job descriptions, will most likely lead to their overall improved job performance at their workplace. A positive relationship between organisational citizenship behaviour and job performance has also been supported in the previous studies (Cho and Johanson, 2008; Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1994; Yoon and Suh, 2003; Chiang and Hsieh, 2011). Drawing from the foregoing reflections, this study postulates that:

H₅: The higher the level of SME employees' organisational citizenship behaviour, the higher their level of job performance

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample and data collection

The data used for this study were collected from the SME employees in Chitungwiza – the third largest city in Zimbabwe. The sample included employees in both the manufacturing and service sector. College students in Chitungwiza were recruited to assist with the distribution and collection of the questionnaires after permission was sought from the SME owners or managers.

The questionnaires clearly stated that the anonymity of the participants would be guaranteed and that the study was purely for academic purposes. Of the total of 450 questionnaires which were distributed, 320 of the returned questionnaires were usable, therefore, providing 71.1% response rate.

Measurement instrument development

Research scales were operationalized mainly on the basis of

previous work. Proper modifications were made in order to fit the current research context and purpose. Some five-item scales adapted from Chiang and Hsieh (2011) previous works were used to measure "organizational support". "Workplace spirituality" used a twenty-one item scale measure adopted from Milliman et al. (2003), while "organizational citizenship behaviour" used a five-item scale from Joon and Yoon (2011). Finally, a six-item scale to measure "job performance" was adopted from Chiang and Hsieh (2011). All the measurement items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scales that was anchored by 1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree to express the degree of agreement. Individual scale items are listed in Appendix

Data analysis

Profile

Small and medium enterprises (SME) employees who answered the questionnaires belonged to both service and manufacturing sectors in Zimbabwe – Chitungwiza in particular. The descriptive statistics presented in Table 1 show the gender, age, marital status and the number of employees in the company, respondents working experience, monthly salary, type of industries and the type of products produced.

Table 1, shows that males dominate the SMEs sector and constitute 63.1% of the workforce. The most active age group in the participating SMEs is that between 31 to 60 years which constitute 53.4% of the total workforce, followed by those below 30 years and then above 60 years, constituting 31.6 and 15%, respectively. Employees who are single occupy 64.1% and the remainder is married. The profile indicates that more than half of the participating SMEs employed 20 or fewer workers, while more than a quarter had a workforce between 21 - 50 employees and a minority of them had between 51-100 employees. Participants with less than 5 years work experience constituted 47.2% followed by those with between 6 and 10 years work experience who constituted 32.2% and the remainder had above 10 years work experience. The majority of the participants consisting of 42.2% earned below US\$200 a monthly, while 32.8% earned between US\$200 – US\$400 and the remainder earned above US\$400. The study also indicated that the majority of the participants belonged to the service sector which occupied 59.7%, while the manufacturing sector occupied the remainder.

Descriptive statistics, measure reliability and validity

As Table 2 illustrates SME employees' perceptions of organizational support was above average (Mean=4.748), implying that employee perceived the level of SMEs support to be fairly high. The SME employees had also a fair agreement with the workplace spirituality construct (Mean=4.815), suggesting that employees felt spiritually motivated by the working environment at their SMEs. The SME employees identified their level of organizational citizenship behaviour to be above average too (Mean=4.700), reflecting that employees were committed to working extra hard beyond their call of duties for their respective SMEs. The degree of agreement on job performance was also above average (Mean= 4.707), that is, employees somewhat agreed that individual job performance was good.

The study checked for both convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement instruments. Individual item loadings for the research constructs ranged from 0.69 - 0.89 and therefore, above the recommended 0.5 (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Karatepe, 2006) - indicating acceptable individual item convergent validity as sixty-nine percent or more of each item's variance was shared with

Table 1. Sample demographic characteristics.

Parameter	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	202	63.1
Female	118	36.9
Total	320	100
Age		
≤30	101	31.6
31-60	171	53.4
≥ 60	48	15
Total	320	100
Marital status		
Married	205	64.1
Single	115	35.9
Total	320	100
Number of employees		
≤20	169	52.8
21-50	91	28.4
≥ 51	60	18.8
Total	320	100
Participants working experience		
≤ 5 years	151	47.2
5-10 years	103	32.2
≥ 10 years	66	20.6
Total	320	100
Monthly salary in US dollar		
≤ US\$200	135	42.2
US\$200-US\$400	105	32.8
≥ US\$400	80	25
Total	320	100
Industry		
Manufacturing	129	40.3
Service	191	59.7
Total	320	100

its respective construct. Discriminant validity was established by checking if the AVE value was above the recommended value of 0.5 and greater than the highest shared variance (SV) value (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). In addition, the correlation between research constructs was less than the marginally acceptable value of 0.85 (Hulland, 1999).

As such, all the methods used revealed an adequate level

of discriminant validity. All related results are shown in Tables 2 and 3, respectively.

Reliability of measures was checked by examining item-to-total and Cronbach alpha coefficients, composite reliability values and AVE values. The item-to-total ranged from 0.67 - 0.81 and therefore, were above the recommended 0.5 (Nunnally, 1978) while the Cronbach alpha coefficients were all above 0.9, hence also above

Table 2. Accuracy analysis statistics.

Research constructs		Descriptive statistics*		Cronbach's test		C.R.	AVE	Factor loading	Highest S.V.
		Mean	SD	Item-total	α -Value				
Employee perception of organizational support	EPOS1			0.81				0.89	
	EPOS2			0.80				0.84	
	EPOS3	4.75	1.32	0.80	0.91	0.92	0.69	0.85	0.40
	EPOS4			0.76				0.79	
	EPOS5			0.73				0.77	
Employee work spirituality	EWS1			0.67				0.70	
	EWS2			0.69				0.70	
	EWS3			0.70				0.71	
	EWS4			0.69				0.70	
	EWS5			0.70				0.71	
	EWS6			0.71				0.73	
	EWS7			0.71				0.73	
	EWS8			0.74				0.75	
	EWS9			0.74				0.75	
	EWS10			0.71				0.72	
	EWS11	4.81	1.27	0.72	0.96	0.96	0.52	0.73	0.38
	EWS12			0.74				0.75	
	EWS13			0.74				0.76	
	EWS14			0.70				0.72	
	EWS15			0.72				0.73	
	EWS16			0.67				0.69	
EWS17			0.67				0.69		
EWS18			0.70				0.72		
EWS19			0.68				0.69		
EJP20			0.69				0.70		
EWS21			0.70				0.72		
Employee organizational citizenship behaviour	EOCB1			0.70				0.77	
	EOCB2			0.77				0.81	
	EOCB3	4.70	1.24	0.80	0.90	0.90	0.65	0.84	0.40
	EOCB4			0.77				0.82	
	EOCB5			0.70				0.79	
Employee job performance	EJP1			0.74				0.79	
	EJP2			0.77				0.82	
	EJP3	4.70	1.22	0.80	0.91	0.90	0.69	0.84	0.30
	EJP4			0.76				0.79	
	EJP5			0.76				0.79	
	EJP6			0.73				0.78	

*Scores: 1, Strongly disagree; 4, neutral; 7, strongly agree; C0.R0., composite reliability; AVE, average variance extracted; S0.V0., shared variance; ^a, significance level $p < 0.05$; ^b, significance level $p < 0.01$; ^c, significance level $p < 0.001$; measurement model fits: $\chi^2/df=20.9612$; GFI=0.93; CFI=0.98; IFI=0.98; NFI=0.97; RMR=0.49 and RMSEA=0.800.

the recommended 0.7 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). The AVE values were all above the recommended 0.5 (Fraering and Minor, 2006) while the Composite reliability values were above the recommended 0.7 (Fornell and Lacker, 1981). All these results provided evidence for excellent acceptable levels of research scale reliability and validity.

Confirmatory factor analysis

To validate the research model fitness a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using LISREL version 8.8 statistical software program. Acceptable model fit was indicated by chi-square value over degree of freedom (χ^2/df) of value between 1 and 3, with

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and correlations between constructs⁰.

Research constructs	EPOS	EWS	EOCB	EJP
Employee perceptions of organizational support (EPOS)	10.000			
Employee workplace spirituality (EWS)	00.790	10.000		
Employee organizational citizenship behaviour (EOCB)	00.725	00.817	10.000	
Employee job performance (EJP)	00.730	00.797	00.815	10.000

Table 4. Results of structural equation model analysis.

Path	Hypothesis	Coefficients
Employee perception of organizational support (EPOS) →Employee workplace spirituality (EWS)	H ₁	00.84 ^c
Employee perception of organizational support (EPOS) →Employee organizational citizenship behaviour (EOCB)	H ₂	00.24 ^c
Employee workplace spirituality (EWS) →Employee organizational citizenship behaviour (EOCB)	H ₃	00.67 ^c
Employee workplace spirituality (EWS) →Employee job performance (EJP)	H ₄	00.31 ^c
Employee organizational citizenship behaviour (EOCB) →Employee job performance (EJP)	H ₅	00.62 ^c

Structural model fits: $\chi^2/df=20.9612$; GFI=0.93; CFI=0.98; IFI=0.98; NFI=0.97; RMR=0.49 and RMSEA=0.800; ^a, significance level $p<0.05$; ^b, significance level $p<0.01$; ^c, significance level $p<0.0010$.

the values of goodness-of-fit index (GFI), comparative fit index (CFI), incremental fit index (IFI) and normed fit index (NFI) equal to or greater than 0.90; and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) value to be equal to or less than 0.08 while root mean square residual (RMR) value to be less than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2006). Recommended statistics for the final overall-model assessment showed acceptable fit of the measurement model to the data: χ^2/df was 2.961; GFI=0.93; CFI=0.98; IFI=0.98; NFI=0.97; RMR=0.49 and RMSEA=0.80. Since an acceptable CFA measurement model fit was obtained, the study proceeded to the next stage of checking the structural model fitness and hypothesis testing.

Structural equation modelling

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was conducted to test the validity of the proposed model and the hypotheses also using LISREL 8.8 statistical software program. Table 4 presents the estimated model, illustrating the direction and magnitude of the impact of the standardized path coefficients. Recommended statistics for the overall structural equation model assessment also showed acceptable fit of $\chi^2/df = 2.9612$; GFI=0.93; CFI=0.98; IFI=0.98; NFI=0.97; RMR=0.49 and RMSEA=0.80. The model's fit, as indicated by these indexes, was deemed satisfactory, thereby providing a good basis for testing the hypothesized paths. The parameter estimates of the structural model exhibited the direct effects of one construct on the other. A significant coefficient at a certain level of alpha thus reveals a significant relationship among latent constructs (Table 4).

The results in Table 4 provided support for the entire proposed

five research hypothesis. The path coefficients for H₁, H₂, H₃, H₄ and H₅ are 0.84, 0.24, 0.67, 0.31 and 0.62 respectively. All hypothesis coefficients are significant at a confidence level (p value) of 0.001.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the current research was to examine the influence of SME employees' perception of organizational support on their workplace spirituality, organizational citizenship behaviour and job performance. The social exchange theory was utilized to provide a theoretical grounding for the conceptualized framework. In particular, five hypotheses were posited. To test the hypotheses, data were collected from SME employees in Zimbabwe. The empirical results supported all the postulated research hypotheses in a significant way.

Consistent with Hypotheses 1 and 2, the results indicated that the higher the level of perceived SME supports, the higher the level of the employees' workplace spirituality and citizenship behaviour respectively. Also in support of Hypotheses 3, the results indicated that the higher the level of SME employees' workplace spirituality, the higher their citizenship behaviour. Finally, in concurrence with the proposed hypothesis 4 and 5, the reasoning that higher levels of

SME employees' workplace spirituality and citizenship behaviour highly influence their job performance was significantly confirmed in a positive way.

What is interesting to note from the findings of this study is that, SMEs' support has stronger effects on the SME employees' workplace spirituality (0.84) than it does on their citizenship behaviour (0.24). Paradoxically, the SME employees' citizenship behaviour (0.62) has more significant influence on their job performance than does their workplace spirituality (0.31). This means that the SME employees' citizenship behaviour influenced their job performance more than their workplace spirituality. Perhaps this could be explained by the fact that the SME employees' workplace spirituality appear to have more significant impact on their job performance through their citizenship behaviour (0.67).

Implications

The current study is not without both academic and practical ramifications. Firstly, on the academic fraternity, an attempt was successfully made to apply the social exchange theory in the small business field. This study therefore, submits that social exchange theory can be extended to explain human resources management phenomena – particularly the impact of organizational support on workplace spirituality and organizational citizenship behaviour in the SMEs context. Secondly, this study investigated current topical issues in human resources management and yet often most overlooked by researchers who focus on the SME sector. Therefore, this study is expected to expand further the horizons of our comprehension of HR issues that have been perhaps regarded as taboo to small business research by some academicians in developing countries such as those in Southern Africa.

Some strategic implications are provided as a practical contribution of the current study. First, given the current evidence that small business organizational support has positive significant impact on employees' workplace spirituality, citizenship behaviour and consequently their job performance, it is imperative that the SME owners or managers consistently expand organizational support measures targeted at their employees.

Perhaps such measures might include employee social welfare programs, such as family support in times of crisis or needy circumstances. Welfare support rendered in times of need is likely to make the employees feel that their employer cares about them and in reciprocation are likely to increase their job performance and productivity - therefore consequently accruing more revenue for the SMEs in the process.

Second, SME owners or managers might consider continuously improving the workplace working environment in order to motivate their employees' workplace spirituality and foster their citizenship behaviour.

If the SME employees are satisfied with their working environment, they are likely to cooperate with one another and be committed to their work, hence in the process creating joint synergies and competences that can give the SMEs a competitive edge and the drive to succeed in future.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite the usefulness of this study aforementioned, the research has its limitations. First and most significantly, the present research is conducted from the perspective of SME employees only. Perhaps if data is collected from both the SME employees and their employers; and a comparative study is done, insightful findings about the impact of organizational support on workplace spirituality and citizenship behaviour might be revealed. Second, further research could also investigate the effects of organizational support on employees' job satisfaction and commitment in the context of SMEs sector. Such researches might potentially expand our understanding of these important HR matters largely studied in large firms' context but rarely studies in small business environment. Finally, the present study regards employee workplace spirituality and citizenship behaviour as uni-dimensional. However, many researchers adopt these constructs as a multidimensional. Therefore, future research might investigate the effects of organizational support on different dimensions of organizational citizenship behaviour and workplace spirituality. All in all, these suggested future avenues of study stand to immensely contribute new knowledge to the existing body of organizational behaviour literature on small business management.

REFERENCES

- Anderson JC, Gerbing DW (1988). Structural equation modeling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach. *Psychol. Bull.* 103(3):411–423.
- Aselage J, Eisenberger R (2003). Perceived organizational support and psychological contracts: a theoretical integration. *J. Organ. Behav.* 24:491–509.
- Ashmos DP, Duchon D (2000). 'Spirituality at Work: A Conceptualization and Measure'. *J. Manag. Inquiry*, 9:134–145.
- Babakus E, Cravens DW, Johnson M, Moncrief WC (1996). Examining the role of organizational variables in the salesperson job satisfaction model. *J. Person. Selling Sales Manag.* 16(3):33–46.
- Babin BJ, Boles JS (1996). The effects of perceived co-worker involvement and supervisor support on service provider role stress, performance and job satisfaction. *J. Retailing* 72:57–75.
- Bagozzi R, Yi Y (1988). On the evaluation of structural equation models. *J. Acad. Mark. Sci.* 16:74–94.
- Blau PM (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. New York: Wiley.
- Borman WC, Motowidlo SJ (1993). Expanding the criterion domain to include elements of contextual performance, in N. Schmitt, and W. C. Borman (Eds.), *Personnel selection in organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. pp. 71–98
- Borman WC (2004). The concept of organizational citizenship. *Curr. Dir. Psychol. Sci.* 13:238–241.

- Bromet EJ, Dew A, Parkinson DK (1990). "Spillover between work and family: a study of blue-collar working wives", in Eckenrode, J. and Gore, S. (Eds), *Stress between Work and Family*, Plenum, London, pp. 133-152.
- Chiang CF, Hsieh TS (2011). The impacts of perceived organizational support and psychological empowerment on job performance: The mediating effects of organizational citizenship behaviour. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 31(1):180-190.
- Chinomona R, Lin J, Wang M, Cheng J (2010). Soft power and desirable relationship outcomes in Zimbabwe distribution channels. *Afr. J. Bus.* 11:182-200.
- Chinomona R, Pretorius M (2011). Major dealers' expert power in distribution channels. *South Afr. J. Econ. Manag. Sci.* 14:170-187.
- Cho S, Johanson MM (2008). Organizational citizenship behaviour and employee performance: A moderating effect of work status in restaurant employees. *J. Hosp. Tour. Res.* 32:307-326.
- Eisenberger R, Huntington R, Hutchison S, Sowa D (1986). Perceived organizational support. *J. Appl. Psychol.* 71: 500-507.
- Eisenberger R, Fasolo P, Davis-LaMastro V (1990). Perceived organizational support and employee diligence, commitment, and innovation. *J. Appl. Psychol.* 75:51-59.
- Eisenberger R, Cummings J, Armelo S, Lynch P (1997). Perceived organizational support, discretionary treatment, and job satisfaction. *J. Appl. Psychol.* 82:812-820.
- Eisenberger R, Armeli S, Rexwinkel B, Lynch PD, Rhoades L (2001). Reciprocation of perceived organizational support. *J. Appl. Psychol.* 86:42-51.
- Fasolo P (1995). Procedural justice and perceived organizational support: Hypothesized effects on job performance, in R. Cropanzano and K. Kacmar (Eds.), *Organizational politics, justice, and support*: Westport, CT: Quorum, pp. 185-195.
- Fraering M, Minor MS (2006). "Sense of Community: An Exploratory Study of US Consumers of Financial Services". *Int. J. Bank Mark.* 24:284-306.
- Fornell C, Larcker DF (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *J. Mark. Res.* 18:39-50.
- Gavin JH, Mason RO (2004). "The virtuous organization: the value of happiness in the workplace". *Organ. Dyn.* 33:379-392.
- Gouldner AW (1960). The norm of reciprocity: A preliminary statement. *Am. Sociol. Rev.* 25:161-178.
- Giacalone RA, Jurkiewicz CL (2003). 'Toward a Science of Workplace Spirituality', in R. A. Giacalone and C. L. Jurkiewicz (eds.), *The Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance* (M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, NY).
- Gibbons P (2000). Spirituality at work: Definitions, measures, assumptions, and validity claims. Paper presented at the Academy of Management, Toronto.
- Gunther M (2001). "God and business". *Fortune*, 9:58-80.
- Hair Jr. JF, Black WC, Babin BJ, Anderson RE, Tatham RL (2006). *Multivariate Data Analysis*, 6th ed. Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Hulland J (1999). "Use of Partial Least Squares (PLS) in Strategic Management Research: A Review of Four Recent Studies". *Strateg. Manag. J.* 20: 195-204.
- Jones B, Flynn DM, Kelloway EK (1995). "Perception of support from the organization in relation to work stress, satisfaction, and commitment". In *Organizational risk factors for job stress*, (Ed), Sauter, S.L. & Murphy, L.R.. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, pp. 41-52.
- Jung HS, Yoon HH (2011). The effects of emotional intelligence on counterproductive work behaviours and organizational citizen behaviours among food and beverage employees in a deluxe hotel. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* pp. 369-378.
- Jurkiewicz CL, Giacalone RA (2004). A Values Framework for Measuring the Impact of Workplace Spirituality on Organizational Performance. *J. Bus. Ethics.* 49:129-142.
- Kahya E (2007). The effects of job characteristics and working condition on job performance. *Int. J. Ind. Ergon.* 37:515-523.
- Karatepe OM (2006). Customer complaints and organizational responses: the effects of complainants' perceptions of justice on satisfaction and loyalty. *Inter. J. Hosp. Manag.* 25(1):69-90.
- Kim WC, Mauborgne RE (1998). Procedural Justice, Strategic Decision Making, and the Knowledge Economy. *Strat. Manag. J.* 19: 323-338.
- Konovsky MA, Pugh SD (1994). Citizenship behaviour and social exchange. *Academy Manag. J.* 37:656-669.
- Koys DJ (2001). The effects of employee satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviour, and turnover on organizational effectiveness: A unit-level, longitudinal study. *Personnel Psychol.* 54:101-114.
- Kraimer ML, Wayne SJ, Jaworski RA (2001). Sources of support and expatriate performance: The mediating role of expatriate adjustment. *Pers. Psychol.* 54:71-99.
- Lloyd T (1990). *The Nice Company*. Bloomsbury, London.
- MacKenzie SB, Podsakoff PM, Fetter R (1993). The impact of organizational citizenship behaviour on evaluations of sales performance. *J. Mark.* 57:70-80.
- Maynard HB (1992). "Evolution of human consciousness", in Renesch, J. (Ed.), *New Traditions in Business: Spirit and Leadership in the 21st Century*, Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco, CA, pp. 39-52.
- Miller WC (1992). "How do we put our spiritual values to work?", in Renesch, J. (Ed.), *New Traditions in Business: Spirit and Leadership in the 21st Century*, Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco, CA, pp. 69-80.
- Milliman J, Czaplewski AJ, Ferguson J (2003). "Workplace spirituality and employee work attitudes: an exploratory empirical assessment". *J. Organ. Chang. Manag.* 16:426-447.
- Mitroff IA, Denton EA (1999). *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America: A Hard Look at Spirituality, Religion, and Values in the Workplace*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.
- Moore T (1992). *Care of the Soul*, HarperCollins, New York, NY.
- Morrison EW (1996). Organizational citizenship behaviour as a critical link between HRM practices and service quality. *Hum. Res. Manag.* 35:493-512.
- Moxley R (2000). *Leadership Spirit*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Neal C (1998). 'The Conscious Business Culture'. *Creative Nursing*, 4:5-7.
- Neal JA, Bennett J (2000). "Examining multi-level or holistic spiritual phenomena in the work place", *Management, Spirituality, and Religion Newsletter*, Academy of Management Winter, pp. 1-2.
- Nunnally JC (1978). *Psychometric Theory*, 2nd ed. McGraw-Hill, New York.
- Organ DW (1988). *Organizational Citizenship Behaviour: The Good Soldier Syndrome*. Lexington Books, Lexington, MA.
- Organ DW (1990). The motivational basis of organizational citizenship behaviour. *Res. Organ. Behav.* 12:43-72.
- Pfeffer J (2003). 'Business and Spirit: Management Practices that Sustain Values', in R. A. Giacalone and C. L. Jurkiewicz (eds.), *The Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance* (M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, NY).
- Piercy N, Cravens D, Lane N, Vorhies D (2006). Driving organizational citizenship behaviours and salesperson in-role behaviour performance: the role of management control and perceived organizational support. *J. Acad. Mark. Sci.* 34:244-262.
- Podsakoff NP, Whiting SW, Podsakoff PM, Blume BD (2009). Individual- and organizational-level consequences of organizational citizenship behaviours: A meta-analysis. *J. Appl. Psychol.* 94:122-141.
- Podsakoff PM, Ahearne M, MacKenzie SB (1997). Organizational citizenship behaviour and the quantity and quality of work group performance. *J. Appl. Psychol.* 82:262-270.
- Podsakoff PM, MacKenzie SB (1994). Organizational citizenship behaviours and sales unit effectiveness. *J. Mark. Res.* 31:351-363.
- Podsakoff PM, MacKenzie SB, Paine JB, Bachrach DG (2000). Organizational citizenship behaviours: a critical review of the theoretical and empirical literature and suggestions for future research. *J. Manag.* 26:513-563.
- Raub S (2008). Does bureaucracy kill individual initiative? The impact of structure on organizational citizenship behaviour in the hospitality industry. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* 27:179-186.
- Ravichandran S, Gilmore SA (2007). Formation of organizational citizenship behaviours in students employed in university dining services: impact of manager and co-worker behaviours. *J. Food Serv. Bus. Res.* 10:19-50.
- Randall ML, Cropanzano R, Bormann CA, Birjulin A (1999). Organizational politics and organizational support as predictors of

- work attitudes, job performance, and organizational citizenship behaviour. *J. Organ. Behav.* 20:159-174.
- Sass J (2000). 'Characterizing Organization Spirituality: An Organizational Communication Culture Approach'. *Commun. Stud.* 51:195-217.
- Sheep ML (2006). Nurturing the Whole Person: The Ethics of Workplace Spirituality in a Society of Organizations. *J. Bus. Ethics* 66:357-375.
- Settoon RP, Bennett N, Liden RC (1996). Social exchange in organizations: perceived organizational support, leader-member exchange, and employee reciprocity. *J. Appl. Psychol.* 81:219-227.
- Shellenbarger S (2000). "More relaxed boomers, fewer workplace frills and other job trends", *Wall Street J.*, p. B-1.
- Shore LM, Wayne SJ (1993). Commitment and employee behaviour: Comparison of affective commitment and continuance commitment with perceived organizational support. *J. Appl. Psychol.* 78:774-780.
- Stamper CL, Johlke MC (2003). The Impact of Perceived Organizational Support on the Relationship Between Boundary Spanner Role Stress and Work Outcomes. *J. Manag.* 29:569-588.
- Stamper CL, Van Dyne L (2003). Organizational citizenship: A comparison between part-time and full-time service employees. *Cornell Hotel and Restaur. Admin. Q.* 44:33-42.
- Thye S, Yoon J, Lawler EJ (2002). "Relational Cohesion Theory: Review of a Research Program". *Advances in Group Processes* 19:89-102.
- Van Scotter JR (2000). Relationships of Task Performance and Contextual Performance with Turnover, Job Satisfaction, and Affective Commitment. *Hum. Resour. Manag. Rev.* 10:79-95.
- Van Scotter JR, Motowidlo SJ, Cross TC (2000). Effects of task and contextual performance on systematic rewards. *J. Appl. Psychol.* 85:526-535.
- Walz SM, Niehoff BP (2000). Organizational citizenship behaviours: their relationship to organizational effectiveness. *J. Hosp. Tour. Res.* 24:301-319.
- Wayne SJ, Shore LM, Bommer WH, Tetrick LE (2002). The role of fair treatment and rewards in perceptions of organizational support and leader-member exchange. *J. Appl. Psychol.* 87:590-598.
- Wayne SJ, Shore LM, Liden RC (1997). Perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange: a social exchange perspective. *Acad. Manag. J.* 40:82-111.
- Werner JM (2000). Implications of OCB and contextual performance for human resource management. *Hum. Resour. Manag. Rev.* 10:3-24.
- Williams LJ, Anderson SE (1991). Job satisfaction and organizational commitment as predictors of organizational citizenship and in-role behaviours. *J. Manag.* 17:601-617.
- Witt LA, Kacmar KM, Carlson DS, Zivnuska S (2002). Interactive effects of personality and organizational politics on contextual performance. *J. Organ. Behav.* 23:911-926.
- Wrzesniewski A (2003). "Finding positive meaning in work", in Cameron, K.S., Dutton, J.E. and Quinn, R.E. (Eds), *Positive Organizational Scholarship: Foundations of a New Discipline*, Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco, CA, pp. 296-308.
- Yoon J, Lawler EJ (2005). "The Relational Cohesion Model of Organizational Commitment", in *Relational Perspectives in Organizational Studies: A Research Companion*. Ed. O. Kyriakidou, and M. Ozbilgin. UK: Edward and Eldar Publishing Limited Chetenham. pp. 146-162
- Yoon MH, Suh J (2003). Organizational citizenship behaviours and service quality as external effectiveness of contact employees. *J. Bus. Res.* 56:597-611.