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Article

Employee Organisational Commitment and the Mediating Role of Work Locus of Control and Employee Job Satisfaction: The Perspective of SME Workers

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Abstract: In Southern Africa, employees play a critical role in the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). As a result, SMEs' effectiveness depends on the presence of virtuous workplace spirituality and procedural justice, which affects work locus of control, employee job satisfaction, and employee organisational commitment. The researchers looked at how work locus of control, employee job satisfaction, and employee organisational commitment were influenced by workplace spirituality and procedural justice among SME employees in Harare, Zimbabwe. The study data was quantitatively analysed. According to the results, workplace spirituality, procedural justice, and work locus of control all play a role in enhancing employee job satisfaction and commitment. The relationship between workplace spirituality, procedural justice, and employee organisational commitment was positively influenced by work locus of control and employee job satisfaction. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights into the unique key determinants affecting work locus of control, employee job satisfaction, and employee commitment to the organisation.

Keywords: workplace spirituality; procedural justice; work locus of control; employee job satisfaction; employee organisational commitment



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1. Introduction

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are key drivers of economic growth and job creation as they introduce innovations to tap new markets, boost competition and efficiency across the economy, and reduce poverty and inequality (Maziriri and Chivandi 2020). In Zimbabwe, the SME sector contributes over 60% to the country's GDP and employs about 5.8 million people (Majoni et al. 2016). Thus, SMEs are expected to be at the forefront in the recovery of the Zimbabwean economy. Nevertheless, these SMEs are confronted by endless challenges, including economic emigration that has led to brain drain amidst the increased demand for productivity to improve the economy (Mupunga 2018). The need for committed employees is nowhere more evident than in SMEs of deteriorating economies such as Zimbabwe (Mclaggan et al. 2013). In today's increasing pressure on organisations to perform due to competitive macro business environment which has become fiercer than before, this raises the question of how employees are coping and whether they are staying committed to their organisations. Zimbabwe's SME sector is under increasing pressure to produce goods and services.

Consequently, the present debate that provokes whether the employees are satisfied to remain committed to their organisations cannot be ignored. The organisational commitment in the people management literature has garnered a lot of attention in recent years. Organisational commitment describes the degree to which an employee member considers and accepts the enterprise's goals and desire to remain with the organisation

(Bell and Mjoli 2014). For this paper, work spirituality, work locus of control, procedural justice and employee job satisfaction shall be considered as predictors of employee organisational commitment.

Given the preceding context, it is vital to highlight international SME studies that have been conducted in different contexts, focusing on employee organisational commitment. The majority of global studies have been carried out in countries like, inter alia, Malaysia, Turkey, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Spain and Mexico. For example, Abdullah et al. (2007) studied the connection between commitment and job satisfaction in the manufacturing SMEs of Kuala, Terengganu, Malaysia. In addition, Tan (2016) investigated the relationship between work alienation and commitment to the organisation, and the function of work centrality in the SMEs of Turkey. Furthermore, Rao and Zaidi (2020) investigated how different leadership styles are viewed in Pakistani tourism SMEs and how they affect organisational engagement. Also, Shabnam and Sarker (2012) conducted a study on effect of business social responsibility and internal marketing on workforce job satisfaction and organisational engagement in Bangladesh's export-oriented SMEs. Additionally, Anggraeni et al. (2017) looked at the impact of psychological contracts on employee engagement and organisational citizenship behaviour among young Indonesian entrepreneurs. Moreover, Ayuso and Navarrete-Báez (2018) examined the role of entrepreneurial and international orientation in SMEs' contribution to sustainable development in Spain and Mexico.

It is important to note that, even in Zimbabwe, there is a lack of scholarly research that has explicitly studied the influence of workplace spirituality and procedural justice on work locus of control, employee job satisfaction, and employee organisational commitment among SME employees. In the Zimbabwean context, prior research on SME employees has been conducted in a variety of contexts. For example, Maziriri et al. (2018) conducted a study in Zimbabwe on prognosticators of business performance. In Zimbabwe's SME sector, Chinomona and Chinomona (2013) investigated the impact of employees' perceptions of organisational politics on turnover intentions. Stanislaus and Mornay (2012) investigated the effect of human capital on the output of SMEs in Harare in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector.

Furthermore, Chinomona and Dhurup (2014) investigated the impact of quality of work-life on employee job satisfaction, job engagement, and tenure intention in Harare's small and medium enterprise market. Chinomona (2012) also looked at organisational support on work spirituality, organisational citizenship behaviour, and Zimbabwean SMEs. Furthermore, Chinomona and Mofokeng (2016) investigated the impact of organisational politics on employee job dissatisfaction and turnover intentions in Zimbabwean SMEs. Furthermore, Mapuranga et al. (2020) investigated the impact of occupational noise on attitudes toward occupational noise exposure, susceptibility to hearing loss, and job performance among manufacturing (SME) employees in Magaba, Mbare, Zimbabwe.

Therefore, it can be inferred from the studies mentioned that there is scant evidence of research that has addressed and examined work spirituality and procedural justice as antecedents of work locus control, ultimately resulting in employee job satisfaction employee organisational commitment. This lacuna is, therefore, subject to confirmation and also deserves to be addressed on its own. Besides, the mediating role of impact of work locus of control and employee job satisfaction still needs further clarification as there is still limited empirical research in the literature. It is expected that work locus of control can be a mechanism through which workplace spirituality and procedural justice can positively and significantly impact employee job satisfaction. Also, considering employee job satisfaction as a mediator, it is inferred that it would cause a mediating effect on the relationship between work locus of control and employee-organisational commitment. These are two critical empirical contributions of this study. They offer a more nuanced explanation of the essence of the work locus of control and employee job satisfaction as mediating variables.

Very few (if any) researchers have used structural equation modelling (SEM) to test the relationships of workplace spirituality, procedural justice, work locus of control, employee job satisfaction, and work locus of control. Therefore, this is a methodological gap, and part of this study aims to fill such a gap in terms of the conceptual model proposed.

To achieve the purpose of the study, the division of this paper is as follows: the literature applicable to the variables under review is discussed in the following section. The discussion would then shift to the logical model and the formulation of the hypothesis. After that, there will be a section on research methodology, followed by the findings and their discussion. The final pieces of the report will be made up of a contribution to the existing literature by putting the proposed model to the test in a less-developed context. It would be reckless and foolish to assume a priori that studies from the developed world can be applied pro-rata in emerging countries like Zimbabwe. with assumptions, shortcomings, and consequences for future studies, respectively.

2. Contextualisation of the Study

2.1. Background of the Study Area

Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe, was used as the study site. According to [Marondedze and Schütt \(2019\)](#), Harare is the capital city and Metropolitan province of Zimbabwe lying between 17°49'39.79" south latitude and 31°03'12.13" east longitude. Harare has an area of 960.6 km² with an estimated population of 2,123,132 ([ZIMSTAT \(2019\)](#)). The city has experienced a high rate of rural to urban migration precipitated by seeking employment from dotted industries, particularly SMEs. According to [Bomani \(2015\)](#), Harare is Zimbabwe's commercial capital, with SMEs operating in the primary, secondary, and tertiary industries. Harare's population, high- and low-density suburbs, and light industrial areas are all included in the research field. Harare was selected because the economy's primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors all have SMEs. The primary sector is made up of SMEs engaged in mining, agriculture, forestry, and raw material extraction. The secondary sector comprises manufacturing and processing SMEs, while the tertiary sector is made up of the economy's services sector.

2.2. Rationale and Importance of Selecting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Their Workers

According to the Small Enterprise Development Cooperation ([SEDCO 2011](#)), SMEs in Zimbabwe have less than 100 full-time employees. On the one hand, small businesses are described as those with less than 50 full-time employees and are registered with the government. On the other hand, medium entities are described as registered business entities with a staff portion of less than 100 full-time employees. SEDCO no longer uses the capital and turnover method to describe SMEs, according to [Sibanda et al. \(2018\)](#), due to valuation problems caused by the introduction of a multi-currency scheme. On the other hand, SMEs are described as registered business entities with a staff portion of less than 100 full-time employees. SEDCO no longer uses the capital and turnover method to describe SMEs, according to [Sibanda et al. \(2018\)](#), due to valuation problems caused by introducing a multi-currency scheme. Therefore, the term SME is defined by the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI) in this study. Since small and medium enterprises play such an important role in the country's economic development, this study focuses on SMEs in Zimbabwe. They are an essential component of the Zimbabwean economy, guiding development and building jobs ([Chirume and Kaseke 2020](#)).

3. Empirical Literature

The previous evidence on the five research constructs used for this paper is described in this article.

3.1. Workplace Spirituality

According to [Chinomona \(2017\)](#), workplace spirituality or spirituality in the workplace is about recognising the importance of productive work and a sense of community for employees' spiritual development. Individuals and organisations that see work as a spiritual journey, as an opportunity to develop and contribute meaningfully to society, are said to be practising spirituality in the workplace ([Chinomona 2017](#)). Furthermore, workplace spirituality, according to [Hassan et al. \(2016\)](#), instills past interconnectivity practices and a sense of confidence among people who are involved in a particular job process, which then promotes collaborative emotions and contributes to a general organisational culture motivated by inspiration, exemplified by favorable reactions and unanimity. According to [Van der Walt and De Klerk \(2014\)](#), workplace spirituality is the appreciation of an inner existence nourished and nourished through meaningful work in the sense of culture.

3.2. Procedural Justice

Participants' assessments of the fairness of the rules and procedures that govern a process are referred to as procedural justice ([Al-Zu'bi 2010](#)). [Cropanzano et al. \(2007\)](#) also point out that procedural justice relates to how outcomes are distributed rather than the outcomes themselves. [Tyler \(2011\)](#) defines procedural justice as analysing people's subjective assessments of the legitimacy of procedures, such as whether they are reasonable or unfair, ethical or immoral, and otherwise conform to people's expectations of fair mechanisms for social interaction decision-making. However, according to [Van Prooijen \(2009\)](#), procedural justice is the degree to which people feel they are treated fairly by authorities during decision-making. Furthermore, according to [Muzumdar \(2012\)](#), procedural justice is the organisational framework from which members receive knowledge about changes that affect them, allowing them to comprehend, embrace, and negotiate new laws. Furthermore, this study uses [Coetzee and Vermeulen's \(2003\)](#) definition of procedural justice, which defines procedural justice as "the degree to which equal procedures and processes are in place and adhered to, and to which individuals perceive their representatives as being fair, genuine, and rational".

3.3. Work Locus of Control

The degree to which people feel they have power over events that affect them is referred to as locus of control ([Shannak and Al-Taher 2012](#)). The concept of work locus of control is a personality trait. Since Rotter's Social Learning Theory conceptualised the general locus of influence, it has been regarded as an essential organisational variable ([Rotter 1966](#)). The degree to which workers feel they have power over their fate at work is referred to as work locus of control ([Ng et al. 2006](#)). Furthermore, [Shaik and Buitendach \(2015\)](#) identify work locus of control as a personality trait, and work locus of control is described as the belief that one can influence outcomes personally. The belief that a person has authority over the working environment for stimuli and outcomes is known as the work locus of control ([Elena et al. 2015](#)).

Furthermore, work locus of control is described as "a widespread belief in one's ability to control events in the workplace" ([Ahluwalia and Preet 2016](#), p. 75). Work locus of control is linked explicitly to incentives or results in the workplace, such as promotions, bonuses, pay raises, and job benefits ([Ntsebeza 2011](#)). Furthermore, according to [Shaik and Buitendach \(2015\)](#), work locus of control is linked to several critical work-related outcomes, including psychological wealth, happiness, job satisfaction, organisational citizenship behaviour, turnover intentions, and job efficiency.

3.4. Employee Job Satisfaction

According to [Al-Zu'bi \(2010\)](#), employee job satisfaction includes basic dimensions of satisfaction related to compensation, benefits, promotion, work conditions, supervision, organisational procedures, and coworker relationships. Employee job satisfaction (EJS) refers to how employees feel and think about their jobs and workplace ([Rizwan et al.](#)

2012). Employee work satisfaction has also been linked to how people think, feel, and experience their jobs, according to [Javed et al. \(2014\)](#). According to [Rahman et al. \(2017\)](#), job satisfaction can be achieved by inspiring and allowing people enough responsibility to improve their mental level rationally; work contentment is good; or promoting expressive condition within work skills. Furthermore, [Davis and Newstrom \(1989\)](#) described job satisfaction as a collection of positive or negative feelings about their jobs.

3.5. Employee Organisational Commitment

According to [Khan et al. \(2016\)](#), employee organisation commitment is characterised as an employee's emotional attachment to identification with and participation in a specific organisation focusing on affective commitment, which is one of the organisation's commitments. According to a standard concept, individuals loyal to an organisation believe in and support its goals and ideals ([Chinomona and Moloji 2014](#)). Individuals are willing to stay with their organisations and put in significant effort in their support ([Cater and Zabkar 2009](#)). Employee organisational commitment was described by [Singh et al. \(2008\)](#) as a term encompassing an employee's desire to remain in an organisation, willingness to exert effort on its behalf, and confidence in and recognition of the organisation's values and goals. As a result, a dedicated employee is described as someone who remains with the company through thick and thin, attends work regularly, works a full day, protects the company's properties, shares the company's goals, and so on.

4. Theoretical Lens

The justice judgment theory and the social exchange theory are the foundations of this research. The following sections go through each of them in detail.

4.1. Justice Judgement Theory

Justice judgement theory claims that an individual's sense of fairness is founded on justice laws, according to several studies of organisational justice ([Colquitt et al. 2001](#); [Chinomona and Moloji 2014](#)). "A justice rule is characterised as a person's conviction that a distribution of outcome, or process for distribution of outcomes, is fair and proper if it meets certain criteria" ([Chinomona and Moloji 2014](#), p. 303). As a result, procedural justice will be recognised as a component of organisational justice. According to [Hagan and Hans \(2017\)](#), procedural justice is a concept that advocates for equity in the resolution of existing disputes and resource distribution. Procedural justice is an essential aspect of organisational justice that focuses on communication within the company. According to [Dunham et al. \(2018\)](#), procedural fairness gives workers a voice in organisational decision-making.

Additionally, procedural justice promotes the principle of treating workers fairly and giving them a voice in the performance assessment process. The critical elements of procedural justice, according to [Hagan and Hans \(2017\)](#) and [Dunham et al. \(2018\)](#), are: (i) fairness, (ii) openness, (iii) employee voice, and (iv) objective decision making. Employee perceptions of procedural justice can be studied using the justice judgment theory, which influences employee work satisfaction and organisational engagement in Zimbabwe's SMEs.

4.2. Social Exchange Theory

The basic principle of social exchange theory is that participants in exchanges willingly offer benefits, eliciting a reciprocal commitment from the other party to reciprocate by offering some benefit in return ([Yoon and Lawler 2005](#)). The returned benefits may be monetary compensation or social benefits ([Yoon and Suh 2003](#)). As a result, social exchange is described as "voluntary behaviour of individuals motivated by the expected returns they are expected to bring, which they usually do bring from others" ([Blau 1964](#)).

According to the social exchange theory, an attempt by SME owners or managers to provide procedural justice is likely to stimulate a positive sense of fairness in their workers,

according to the current study. In addition, as a result of this perceived equal treatment, and in compliance with social exchange theory, SME employees' workplace spirituality will be enhanced, and employee organisational loyalty will be enhanced in return. As a result, workplace spirituality and procedural justice among SME employees would inevitably lead to work locus of control, happiness, and commitment to the organisation. In the long run, this would increase the completeness, viability, and profitability of SMEs.

5. Theoretical Model and Hypothesis Formulation

Following previous discussions in the literature, the theoretical model depicted in Figure 1 was established. The antecedent variables are workplace spirituality and procedural justice, the mediators are work locus of control and employee job satisfaction, and the outcome variable is employee organisational commitment. The hypotheses that were developed explain the relationships among the constructs in detail.

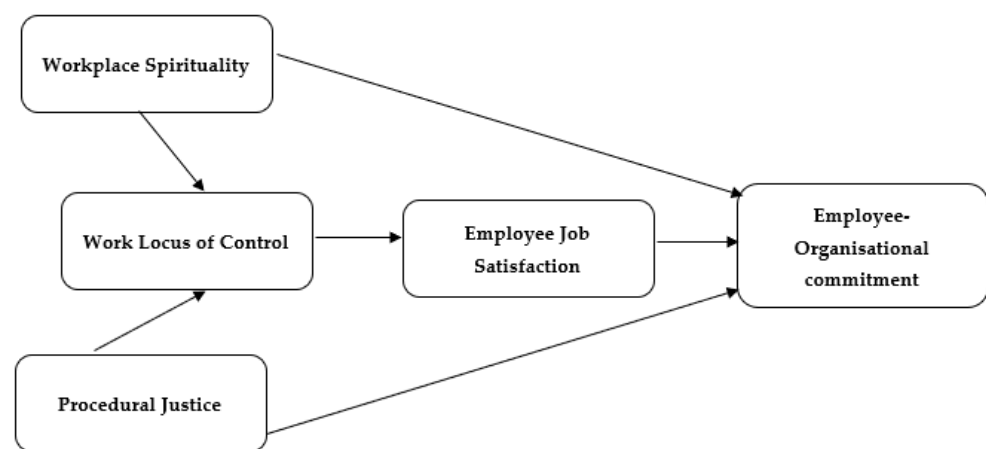


Figure 1. Theoretical model. Source: authors' own formulation.

5.1. Workplace Spirituality and Work Locus of Control

Business organisations that promote the values of honesty, loyalty, respect, obligation, and integrity will achieve success, self-actualisation growth, and employee satisfaction by promoting the values of honesty, trust, respect, responsibility, and integrity (Janfeshan et al. 2011). Individuals with a positive attitude at work have been shown to have a positive impact on their well-being, interpersonal relationships, consumer relationships, and productivity (Kinjerski and Skrypnek 2006). Organisations that place a higher value on employee compensation programs have higher organisational efficiency (Rotter 1966). Literature suggests that work spirituality and meeting employees' incentive needs are positively linked (Johnson et al. 2009). Existing research has found evidence for a positive relationship between work spirituality and work locus of control (Arnold et al. 2007). The following hypothesis is proposed based on these findings:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *There is a positive relationship between workplace spirituality and work locus of control.*

5.2. Procedural Justice and Work Locus of Control

The relationship between procedural justice and work locus of control must be clarified. The belief that equals processes are used to arrive at conclusions is referred to as procedural justice (fairness) (Cropanzano et al. 2007). On the other hand, work locus of control is defined by what occurs in the workplace, according to Fitzgerald and Clark (2013). Perceived procedural justice has been shown to affect survivor reactions, and it has been found that when procedural justice is low, then job attitudes, and behaviours are seen to be more negative (Abasimi et al. 2014). Therefore, deducing from the aforementioned literature we postulate the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *There is a positive relationship between procedural justice and work locus of control.*

5.3. Workplace Spirituality and Job Satisfaction

It is essential to understand the relationship between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction. According to [Adawiyah et al. \(2020\)](#) spirituality in the workplace has a positive impact on employee satisfaction. According to [Van der Walt and De Klerk \(2014\)](#), there is a connection between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction. In addition, [Fairbrother and Warn \(2003\)](#) discovered that workplace spirituality directly affects job satisfaction. Furthermore, [Chawla and Guda \(2010\)](#) demonstrated that the results between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction were overwhelmingly positive. As a result of the preceding debate, it is hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *There is a positive relationship between workplace spirituality and employee job satisfaction.*

5.4. Procedural Justice and Employee Job Satisfaction

The majority of studies have found strong links between procedural justice and job satisfaction ([Fernandes and Awamleh 2006](#); [Mossholder et al. 1998](#); [Wesolowski and Mossholder 1997](#)). [Al-Zu'bi \(2010\)](#) looked at the relationship between job satisfaction and workers' perceptions of workplace justice, including three components (distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice). The study's empirical findings showed a positive relationship between procedural justice and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4 (H4). *There is a positive relationship between procedural justice and employee job satisfaction.*

5.5. Work Locus of Control and Employee Job Satisfaction

According to [Chen and Silverthorne \(2008\)](#), locus of control is a major predictor of job satisfaction. There is a positive link between internal locus of control and job satisfaction, according to [Vijayashree and Jagdishchandra \(2011\)](#), as well as external (other) locus of control and job satisfaction. According to [Omari and Kidombo \(2013\)](#), people who feel in charge are happier than those who do not. Work locus of control was a significant predictor of job satisfaction by [Muhonen and Torkelson \(2004\)](#). As a result, based on the literature and empirical evidence presented above, it is hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 5 (H5). *There is a positive relationship between work locus of control and employee job satisfaction.*

5.6. Employee Job Satisfaction and Employee Organisational Commitment

A great deal of empirical research has been undertaken on the relationship between employee job satisfaction and organisational commitment, but there is little consensus on the causal relationships between these terms ([Ntisa 2015](#); [Rayton 2006](#)). According to [Govender and Grobler \(2017\)](#), job satisfaction is a predictor of organisational commitment, while commitment is a more global response to an organisation. In contrast, job satisfaction is a response to a particular job or aspect of the job. "A good correlation has been identified empirically between job satisfaction and organisational commitment, yielding a positive association" ([Kotze and Roodt 2005](#), p. 50). Since there is a statistically significant connection between job satisfaction and organisational commitment, the assumption is that if employees' levels of satisfaction increase, so will their levels of organisational commitment ([Azeem 2010](#)). As a result of the above, it is possible to hypothesise that:

Hypothesis 6 (H6). *There is a positive relationship between employee job satisfaction and employee organisational commitment.*

5.7. The Mediating Role of Work Locus of Control

Direct and indirect relationships between the variables under investigation are plausible, in addition to the posited relationships depicted in conceptual model 1 (Figure 1). This research also included alternative hypothesis claims that included work locus of control as a mediating variable. Work locus of control as a mediating variable between workplace spirituality and employee job satisfaction and the relationship between procedural justice and employee job satisfaction must be demonstrated empirically. However, it is important to note that empirical studies that focus on work locus of control as a mediating variable have flaws. Nonetheless, studies like that conducted by Ng et al. (2014, p. 207) found that work locus of control mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence, organisational citizenship behaviours, and mental health among nurses. Johnson et al. (2009, p. 470) statistically proved that work locus of control is a mediator of the paths between the 'Big Five' personality traits and general health in a sample of university students in their study, which aimed to investigate the roles of trait emotional intelligence and work locus of control as mediators of the paths between the Big Five personality traits and general health. According to Singh et al. (2019), locus of control mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee acceptance of the change.

Since there is still little empirical research in the literature, the mediating impact of work locus of control needs to be clarified further based on this hypothesis. Workplace spirituality and procedural justice are projected to positively affect employee job satisfaction through work locus of control. This is one of the study's most significant empirical contributions because it provides a more nuanced interpretation of the work locus of control function as a mediator variable. Due to limited availability of clear empirically demonstrated findings, it is considered appropriate to propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 7 (H7). *Work locus of control positively mediates the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee job satisfaction.*

Hypothesis 8 (H8). *Work locus of control positively mediates the relationship between procedural justice and employee job satisfaction.*

5.8. The Mediating Role of Employee Job Satisfaction

Employee job satisfaction must be shown to be a mediating variable between work locus of control and employee organisational commitment, according to empirical evidence. However, studies examining employee job satisfaction as a mediating variable between work locus of control and employee organisational commitment have found little evidence. As a result, the current investigation is justified. Closely related studies, such as Yaty's (2013) work in the Malaysia Childcare Sector, have looked at the mediating role of employee job satisfaction in the relationship between internal market orientation and employee organisational commitment. Furthermore, Miao et al. (2020) looked at employee job satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between management characteristics (such as supervisor modesty and coercive supervision) and employee creativity. Furthermore, Chaudhry et al. (2017) discovered that employee job satisfaction can mediate between the workplace, training and growth, and organisational success. As a result, the following hypothesis was put to the test in this research:

Hypothesis 9 (H9). *Employee job satisfaction positively mediates the relationship between work locus of control and employee-organisational commitment.*

6. Research Methodology

This investigation is based on a positivist paradigm, as it seeks to discover a connection between the variables. Since statistical analysis achieves outcome exactness, a quantitative approach was used. The data for this study was gathered from small business owners in Harare, Zimbabwe. Representatives from both the manufacturing and service industries

were included in the survey. After obtaining consent from the SME proprietors or directors, Harare Polytechnic students were recruited to distribute and collect the surveys. The questionnaires made it clear that the respondents' identity would be protected and that the inquiry would be kept confidential and was conducted solely for academic purposes. From 180 surveys that were circulated and completed by the respondents, 150 completed surveys (or 83.3%) were used for data processing. In contrast, the remaining 30 questionnaires (16.7%) were discarded from the investigation because they contained errors. As a result, they were deemed invalid.

7. Measurement Instruments

A questionnaire was chosen as a measuring instrument. Research scales were designed based on previous works done. Proper changes were made in order to fit the current research context and purpose. Workplace spirituality was measured using a 19-item scale developed by Kolodinsky et al. (2008), and procedural justice was measured using 8-item scale developed by Tyler and Blader (2003). In addition, workplace spirituality was measured using a 16-item scale developed by Bosman et al. (2005). Employee job satisfaction used a five-item scale measure adapted from Ntisa (2015). Organisation commitment scale adapted from Mowday et al. (1979) used a six-item scale measure adapted from Mowday et al. (1979). All measurement items were measured on a five-point Likert-scale and the scale indicators were affixed to a strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) Likert-scale continuum.

8. Sample Demographic Characteristics

The gender distribution of the sample is illustrated in Table 1. Females made up the majority of the respondents ($n = 87$; 58%). The respondents' median age group was less than 30 years old ($n = 82$; 54.6%). According to Table 1, The majority of respondents ($n = 90$; 60%) stated that they were married, while the remaining ($n = 60$; 40%) stated that they were single. Almost half of the participants ($n = 71$; 47.3%) had less than 5 years of work experience, more than a quarter had 5–10 years of work experience ($n = 59$; 39.3%), and less than a quarter had more than 10 years of work experience ($n = 18$; 12.1%).

Table 1. Sample demographic characteristics.

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Male | 63 | 42% |
| Female | 87 | 58% |
| Total | 150 | 100% |
| Age | Frequency | Percentage |
| ≤30 | 82 | 54.7% |
| 31–60 | 50 | 33.3% |
| ≥60 | 18 | 12.0% |
| Total | 150 | 100% |
| Marital Status | Frequency | Percentage |
| Married | 90 | 60% |
| Single | 60 | 40% |
| Total | 150 | 100% |
| Participants Working Experience | Frequency | Percentage |
| ≤5 years | 73 | 48.7% |
| 5–10 years | 59 | 39.3% |
| ≥10 years | 18 | 12.0% |
| Total | 150 | 100% |

Source: author' own calculations.

9. Data Analysis

To capture the obtained data, an excel spreadsheet was used. The data were encoded and statistical analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and the Smart PLS program for structural equation modeling (SEM). Smart PLS has evolved into a powerful tool for investigating random models with multiple constructs and indicators (Chinomona and Dubihlela 2014). According to Hsia and Tseng (2015), PLS is better suited to research areas where Linear Structural Relations (LISREL) does not improve the theory. Smart PLS is suitable for small sample sizes and facilitates both exploratory and confirmatory testing. It is robust to deviations for multivariate normal distributions (Hair et al. 2013). Smart PLS was more suitable and befitting the current study’s intent because the current study sample size is relatively limited. The sample size for this study is 150, which is higher than the required minimum sample size of 80 when using PLS in this study (Chinje and Chinomona 2015).

10. Reliability Analysis

The various methods used to evaluate the reliability and validity of the study’s variables are described by the statistical measures of accuracy tests shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Accuracy analysis statistics.

| Research Constructs | Descriptive Statistics | | Cronbach’s Test | | C.R. | AVE | Measurement Item Loadings | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|------|-----------------|----------------------|-------|-------|---------------------------|-------|
| | Mean | SD | Item-Total | Cronbach Alpha Value | | | | |
| Workplace spirituality (WPS) | | | 0.800 | | | | 0.547 | |
| | | | 0.810 | | | | 0.590 | |
| | | | 0.811 | | | | 0.545 | |
| | | | 0.824 | | | | 0.667 | |
| | | | 0.733 | | | | 0.760 | |
| | | | 0.746 | | | | 0.689 | |
| | | | 0.607 | | | | 0.796 | |
| | | 3.88 | 1.188 | 0.800 | 0.933 | 0.942 | 0.507 | 0.808 |
| | | | | 0.780 | | | | 0.828 |
| | | | | 0.771 | | | | 0.830 |
| | | | | 0.751 | | | | 0.740 |
| | | | | 0.793 | | | | 0.712 |
| | | | | 0.728 | | | | 0.763 |
| | | | | 0.730 | | | | 0.722 |
| | | | 0.709 | | | | 0.625 | |
| | | | 0.773 | | | | 0.682 | |
| Procedural justice (PJ) | | | 0.659 | | | | 0.837 | |
| | | | 0.782 | | | | 0.819 | |
| | | | 0.852 | | | | 0.780 | |
| | | 3.78 | 1.668 | 0.816 | 0.909 | 0.926 | 0.612 | 0.814 |
| | | | | 0.876 | | | | 0.742 |
| | | | | 0.780 | | | | 0.775 |
| | | | | 0.871 | | | | 0.682 |
| | | | | 0.651 | | | | 0.798 |
| Work locus of control (WLC) | | | 0.726 | | | | 0.573 | |
| | | | 0.724 | | | | 0.617 | |
| | | | 0.779 | | | | 0.564 | |
| | | | 0.731 | | | | 0.674 | |
| | | | 0.707 | | | | 0.747 | |
| | | | 0.743 | | | | 0.669 | |
| | | 3.89 | 1.133 | 0.782 | 0.920 | 0.930 | 0.515 | 0.822 |
| | | | | 0.780 | | | | 0.826 |
| | | | | 0.771 | | | | 0.866 |
| | | | | 0.751 | | | | 0.796 |
| | | | | 0.793 | | | | 0.708 |
| | | | | 0.728 | | | | 0.672 |
| | | | 0.730 | | | | 0.719 | |

Table 2. Cont.

| Research Constructs | Descriptive Statistics | | Cronbach's Test | | C.R. | AVE | Measurement Item Loadings | |
|--|------------------------|------|-----------------|----------------------|-------|-------|---------------------------|-------|
| | Mean | SD | Item-Total | Cronbach Alpha Value | | | | |
| Employee job satisfaction (EJS) | EJS 1 | | 0.713 | | | | 0.774 | |
| | EJS 2 | | 0.743 | | | | 0.687 | |
| | EJS 3 | 3.03 | 1.300 | 0.793 | 0.833 | 0.883 | 0.602 | 0.822 |
| | EJS4 | | | 0.748 | | | | 0.804 |
| | EJS 5 | | | 0.638 | | | | 0.785 |
| Employee organisational commitment (EOC) | EOC1 | | 0.780 | | | | 0.756 | |
| | EOC2 | | 0.771 | | | | 0.780 | |
| | EOC3 | 3.10 | 1.655 | 0.751 | 0.854 | 0.891 | 0.578 | 0.780 |
| | EOC4 | | | 0.793 | | | | 0.734 |
| | EOC5 | | | 0.728 | | | | 0.752 |
| | EOC6 | | | 0.730 | | | | 0.757 |

Source: Calculated from survey results. C.R. = Composite reliability; A.V.E. = Average variance extracted.

Table 2 indicates that the article’s item to total correlations is greater than 0.5 (0.607 to 0.824), as recommended by, [Anderson and Gerbing \(1988\)](#). The higher the correlation between the items, the closer the measured items are to each other. The internal consistency of each variable in the analysis was also assessed using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. “The higher the internal consistency of the scale’s items, the closer the coefficient is to 1.00”. ([Malhotra 2010](#), p. 724). All of the alpha values were above the recommended threshold of 0.7, ranging from 0.833 to 0.933. This means that all of the variables were reliable ([Hair et al. 2013](#)).

The findings yielded CR indices ranging from 0.883 to 0.930. The CR amount shown exceeds the evaluation criterion by more than 0.70, which is adequate for the internal consistency ([Nunnally 1978](#), p. 247; [Chin 1998](#), p. 320), indicating that the scales are compositely reliable. Furthermore, the study’s convergent validity was determined by computing AVE values. In a reflective model, AVE is the average of communalities for each latent factor. The AVE values should be at least 0.50, according to [Malhotra \(2010\)](#), which means that the construct explains at least half of the variance in the observed variables. AVE values below 0.50, according to [Chin \(1998\)](#), suggest error variance levels that exceed the explained variance. As a result, the AVE values identified in this analysis were within the appropriate range ($0.507 \leq AVE \leq 0.602$), meaning that each indicator variable shared more variance with its respective construct.

Despite previous studies’ recommendations ([Henseler et al. 2016](#); [Verkijika and De Wet 2018](#)), discriminant validity was evaluated using the hetero-trait–monotrait ratio (HTMT) criterion (Table 2), suggesting that HTMT is more appropriate for evaluating discriminant validity than Fornell–Larcker’s widely used criteria. Discriminant validity is achieved when the HTMT value is less than 0.9 or 0.85 when taking a more conservative stance ([Neneh 2019](#); [Verkijika and De Wet 2018](#)). The maximum HTMT value obtained was 0.588, which was lower than the conservative value of 0.85, as shown in Table 3. As a result, all of the constructs passed the discriminant validity test.

Table 3. Discriminant validity (hetero-trait–monotrait-ratio).

| Research Construct | Workplace Spirituality | Procedural Justice | Work Locus of Control | Employee Job Satisfaction | Employee Organisational Commitment |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Workplace spirituality | 1.000 | | | | |
| Procedural Justice | 0.460 | 1.000 | | | |
| Work locus of control | 0.353 | 0.374 | 1.000 | | |
| Employee job satisfaction | 0.414 | 0.422 | 0.419 | 1.000 | |
| Employee organisational commitment | 0.374 | 0.513 | 0.439 | 0.588 | 1.000 |

Source: Calculated from survey results.

10.1. Assessment of the Goodness of Fit (GoF)

The research model describes 46.5%, 79.4%, and 81.9% of the variance in the endogenous variables, respectively, as per R² for work locus of control, employee job satisfaction, and employee organisational commitment in Figure 2. The global goodness-of-fit (GoF) statistic for the research model was calculated using the equation proposed by Tenenhaus et al. (2005). The formulae is explained as follows.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Goodness of Fit} &= \sqrt[2]{(\text{average of all AVEs values} \times \text{average of all } R^2)} \\ &= \sqrt[2]{0.563 \times 0.416} \\ &= 0.483 \end{aligned}$$

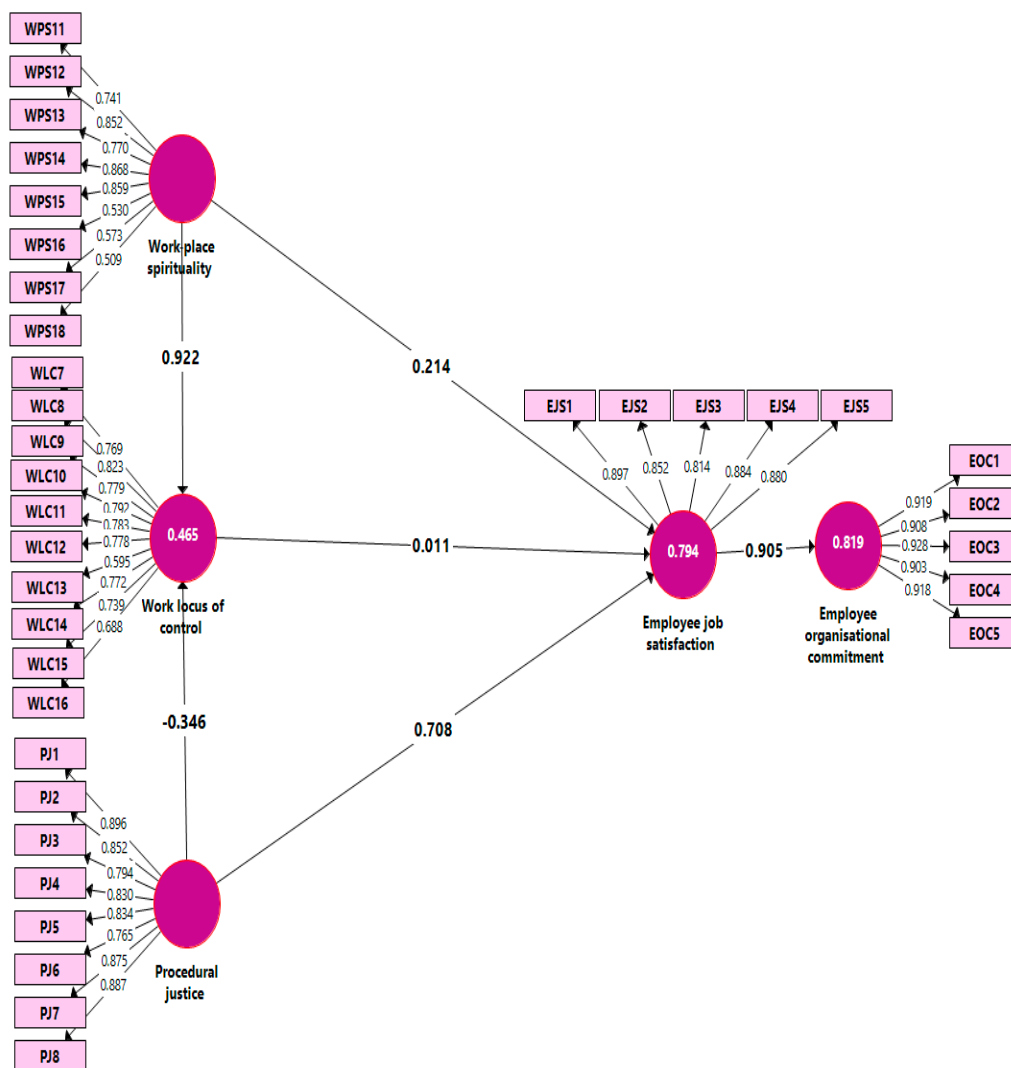


Figure 2. Structural-model.

The global GoF for this analysis is 0.483, which is higher than the acceptable ‘threshold of 0.36’ indicated by Wetzels et al. (2009). As a result, the study model can be inferred to provide an overall GoF.

10.2. Path Model Results and Factor Loadings

Figure 2 depicts the structural model’s PLS estimation results and the item loadings for the study constructs.

10.3. Outcome of Hypotheses Testing

The path coefficient values and the t -values for the structural model obtained from the bootstrapping algorithm and the t -values for the structural model obtained from the bootstrapping algorithm will be used to evaluate the hypothesis in this analysis. T -values indicate whether a significant relationship exists between variables within the model, and path coefficients reflect the strength of the relationships in the model, according to [Beneke and Blampied \(2012\)](#). At the 5% significance level, two-tailed t -tests were performed.

10.4. Outcome of Hypotheses Testing Hypothesis 1

The PLS model revealed that, at the 5% level of significance (t -value = 15.287), there was a strong positive relationship between workplace spirituality and work locus of control, as hypothesised. The Beta value of this effect was 0.922, indicating a positive relationship between workplace spirituality and work locus of control. At the 5% level of significance, H1 was accepted, indicating that workplace spirituality had a significant positive relationship with work locus of control.

10.5. Outcome of Hypotheses Testing 2

Hypothesis 2 proposed that procedural justice and work locus of control have a positive relationship. That being said, the survey results in Figure shows that procedural justice and work locus of control had a negative ($=-0.346$) but insignificant ($t = 1.691$) relationship. Since the relationship between procedural justice and work locus of control was negative and insignificant, H2 was rejected.

10.6. Outcome of Hypotheses Testing 3

The third hypothesis proposed a connection between workplace spirituality and employee job satisfaction. In line with the other hypothesis, higher levels of workplace spirituality were associated with higher levels of employee job satisfaction ($=0.214$; $t = 2.713$). As a result, H3 was accepted because there was a positive and significant relationship between workplace spirituality and employee job satisfaction. These findings were backed up by empirical evidence. For example, [Gupta et al. \(2013\)](#) conducted a study in which they checked out the effect of WPS on company products; these products included job satisfaction. They found that a significant impact exists between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction ([Gupta et al. 2013](#)).

10.7. Outcome of Hypotheses Testing 4

This hypothesis was confirmed in this study. Procedural justice had a positive effect ($\beta = 0.708$) and was statistically significant ($t = 7.476$) in predicting employee job satisfaction, as seen in Figure 2 and Table 4. This finding indicates that procedural justice positively impacted employee job satisfaction and the degree of significance was high. It is also worth noting that these findings corroborate the findings of [Zainalipour et al. \(2010\)](#), who found that procedural justice has a significant impact on job satisfaction.

10.8. Outcome of Hypotheses Testing 5

Figure 2 and Table 4 above, indicate that H5 was supported by the findings ($\beta = 0.011$) and was insignificant at t -statistics 1.510. Again, the strength of the association was indicated by a path coefficient of 0.011. This means that employee job satisfaction was positively linked to work locus of control, although in a limited fashion. These findings were consistent with [Muhonen and Torkelson's \(2004\)](#) research, which looked into the role of work locus of control (WLC) in job satisfaction and health in the context of occupational stress. Their hierarchical multiple regression studies revealed that WLC has a positive impact on job satisfaction.

Table 4. Results of structural equation model analysis.

| Path | Hypothesis | Path Coefficients (β) | T-Statistics | Decision |
|--|------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| Workplace spirituality → Work locus of control | H1(+) | 0.922 | 15.287 | Positive and significant |
| Procedural Justice → Work locus of control | H2(+) | −0.346 | 1.691 | Negative but insignificant |
| Workplace spirituality → Employee job satisfaction | H3(+) | 0.214 | 2.713 | Positive and significant |
| Procedural Justice → Employee job satisfaction | H4(+) | 0.708 | 7.476 | Positive and significant |
| Work locus of control → Employee job satisfaction | H5(+) | 0.011 | 1.510 | Positive and insignificant |
| Employee job satisfaction → Employee organisational commitment | H6(+) | 0.905 | 11.424 | Positive and significant |
| Mediation analysis results/specific indirect effects | | | | |
| Workplace spirituality → Work locus of control → Employee job satisfaction | H7(+) | 0.347 | 2.431 | Positive and significant |
| Procedural justice → Work locus of control → Employee job satisfaction | H8(+) | 0.437 | 3.971 | Positive and significant |
| Work locus of control → Employee job satisfaction → Employee organisational commitment | H8(+) | 0.501 | 4.238 | Positive and significant |

Source: Calculated from survey results.

10.9. Outcome of Hypotheses Testing 6

H6 was shown to be substantially endorsed in Figure 2 and Table 4. It is important to note that 11.424 was the *t*-statistic. The path coefficient of 0.905 indicated the relationship’s strength. This result implies that job satisfaction had a clear and strong positive impact on employee organisational commitment. As a result, the happier workers are with their employers, the more dedicated they are to them. These findings are consistent with Mitonga-Monga et al. (2018), who investigated the essence of the relationship between job satisfaction (JS) and organisational commitment (OC). Their findings showed that employee work satisfaction was high.

10.10. Outcome of Hypotheses Testing 7

The path coefficient for this relationship was 0.347, and the *t*-statistic was 2.431, indicating that the relationship was both supported and significant at *p* 0.05. This means that the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee job satisfaction was mediated by work locus of control positively and significantly.

10.11. Outcome of Hypotheses Testing 8

The path coefficient for this relationship was 0.437, and the *t*-statistic was 3.971, indicating that the relationship was both supported and significant at *p* 0.05. This means that locus of control mediated the relationship between procedural justice and employee job satisfaction positively and significantly.

10.12. Outcome of Hypotheses Testing 9

The path coefficient for this relationship was 0.501, and the *t*-statistic was 4.238, indicating that the relationship was both supported and significant at *p* 0.05. This means that employee job satisfaction mediated the relationship between work locus of control and employee organisational commitment positively and significantly. These findings were consistent with Yaty’s (2013) results in the Malaysian Childcare Sector, which found that employee job satisfaction mediates the relationship between internal business orientation and employee organisational engagement.

10.13. Study’s Contributions

This research has contributions for academics. Compared to other research constructs, the results suggest that workplace spirituality and work locus of control have the greatest

effect on each other, as indicated by the path coefficient of (0.922). As a result, researchers in human resource management can better understand the relationship between workplace spirituality and work locus control due to this finding, which is a valuable addition to the literature about these two variables. The role of work locus of control and employee job satisfaction as mediating variables is also explored in greater depth in this study.

On the practitioners' side, this study argues that SME managers can benefit from the implications of these results. For example, given the strong relationship between employee job satisfaction and employee organisational commitment (0.905), SME managers should pay more attention or focus more on finding ways to keep their employees satisfied. Another example is the positive and significant relationship between procedural justice and employee job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.708$; 7.476). This means that when there is procedural justice in an SME, employees will perceive fairness of decision-making processes and this will ultimately stimulate their satisfaction.

Furthermore, the findings of this study can be used by policymakers to create strategies that keep workers satisfied and focused on their jobs. Specifically, policies in various SMEs can be tweaked to improve employee satisfaction and commitment. Consequently, the findings of this research may be used to develop new policies or update current ones.

10.14. Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

While this study contributes significantly to both academics and practitioners, it does have drawbacks, but offers a starting point for future studies. To begin with, the study's data were all gathered quantitatively, resulting in a general methodological bias in quantitative methods. To avoid this bias, future studies will attempt to rely on mixed methods. Future researchers could investigate other factors that influence SME employees' satisfaction and commitment to their jobs. These considerations could include strategies such as training and remuneration for SME workers, for example. The other limiting factor is the influence of local factors (laws, institutions, trade unions, etc.) which may not be replicable in other countries. In the future, comparative studies of the findings of this research with those obtained from other non-business ventures or by meta-analyses may be considered. This may lead to additional thought-provoking observations not captured in this study.

11. Conclusions

This research aimed to test the relationships of workplace spirituality, procedural justice, work locus of control, employee job satisfaction, and work locus of control. Justice judgement and social exchange theories were utilised to provide a theoretical grounding and, thereafter, a conceptualised framework. Of note, eight hypotheses were positively significant. To assess the hypotheses, data were gathered from Zimbabwe SMEs employees. Drawing from the empirical findings of this research study, eight of the postulated research hypotheses were supported significantly except the relationship between procedural justice and work locus of control, which was negative (-0.346).

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