

FINDING SYNERGY IN EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS OF EQUITY, JOB SATISFACTION, ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

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—Abstract —

The study of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour have been extensively researched in literature and within various domains. These efforts are welcomed and have also enabled researchers to better distinguish between these variables. However, a review of literature shows that the concept of equity is seldom factored into these relationships. This study builds on the efforts to conceptualise the effects of employee perceptions of equity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour among employees in a public water utility company in South Africa. The study adopted a cross sectional survey and collected data from 219 employees. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test the goodness-of-fit within the proposed framework. Using structural equation modelling (SEM) the hypothesized relationship between employee perceptions of equity, job satisfaction, organisation commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour were tested. Significant positive relationships were found between employee perceptions of equity and job satisfaction; job satisfaction and normative commitment; job satisfaction and continuance commitment; affective commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour, and normative commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour. Negative relationships were observed between job satisfaction and affective commitment, continuance commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour. The findings add new knowledge that can be used to improve human resource practices in the organisation. Limitations and implications for further studies are alluded to.

Key Words: *Perceptions of equity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour*

JEL Classification: L2

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and organisational citizenship behaviour has been extensively researched in literature and within various domains (Organ, 1988; Kipkebut, 2010; Griffin & Moorhead, 2012; Alizadeh, Darvishi, Nazari & Emami, 2012). The essence of these constructs has been operational and conceptual either by identifying the constructs or identifying the relationship among and between these constructs (Mohammed & Eleswed 2013; Altinoz, Cakiroglu & Cop, 2012; Cohen & Keren, 2008). These efforts are welcomed as they have enabled researchers to distinguish among these variables, either as antecedents or outcomes, resulting in a better understanding of their relationships (Runhaar, Konermann & Sanders 2013).

2. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND OF EQUITY, JOB SATISFACTION, ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR

Kreitner and Kinicki (2008) view equity as the employees' perception of being treated fairly in the workplace. The authors consider fair treatment to be the congruence between the efforts expended by employees and the rewards they actually receive. The state of equity could also occur when employees perceive the ratio of the inputs and outputs as comparable to other employees working in the same organisation (Cater & Zabka, 2009). Kanopaske and Werner (2002) classify equity into three types: external, internal and employee equity. The authors' view is that external equity transpires when employees in one organisation compare themselves with others who perform the same job in another organisation. Conversely, internal equity is when employees compare themselves with others who have different jobs and work in the same organisation. Employee equity occurs when employees compare themselves with others who occupy the same job and works for the same organisation (Greenberg, 2009).

Armstrong (2006) considers job satisfaction broadly to be attitudes and feelings employees have about their jobs. Employees could have a positive (job satisfaction) or negative (job dissatisfaction) disposition to their jobs (Statt, 2004). In their study, Radebe and Dhurup (2015) have found sources of job satisfaction to be either intrinsic or extrinsic. In consideration of these sources of job satisfaction Aziri (2011) opines that job satisfaction symbolises an employee's sense of achievement and success on the job; job enjoyment and enthusiasm about the job (*intrinsic sources*); and contentment with equitable rewards and working

conditions (*extrinsic sources*). Organisational commitment is conceived as the degree to which an employee identifies with any particular organisation and exhibits the sense of commitment to that organisation and its goals, let alone the maintenance of an organisation's membership (Allen & Meyer, 1991). Organisational commitment is an important construct because it contributes to the prediction of important outcome variables such as performance and withdrawal behaviours (Döckel, Basson & Coetzee, 2006).

Allen and Meyer (1991), pioneers of the three-component model of organisational commitment, proposed that organisational commitment constitutes three dimensions: affective, normative, and continuance commitment. According to Jaros (2007), affective commitment is essentially an emotional attachment an employee has to an organisation. Continuance commitment is perceived as costs an employee would incur should he/she leave an organisation, whereas continuance commitment is an employee's feeling of moral obligation to retain membership of the current organisation (Jaros, 2007).

Organisational citizenship behaviour is premised by a fair treatment of employees which is induced through social exchange, reciprocity and equity (Van Dijke, Cremer, Mayer & Quaquebeke, 2012). Therefore, organisational citizenship behaviour may be used as a currency of reciprocity by an employee (Jain & Cooper 2012). Yoon and Suh (2003) and Yoon and Lawler (2005) suggested that organisational citizenship behaviour is based on trust which is a fundamental ingredient, lubricant and an unavoidable dimension of social interaction (Ke & Wei 2008).

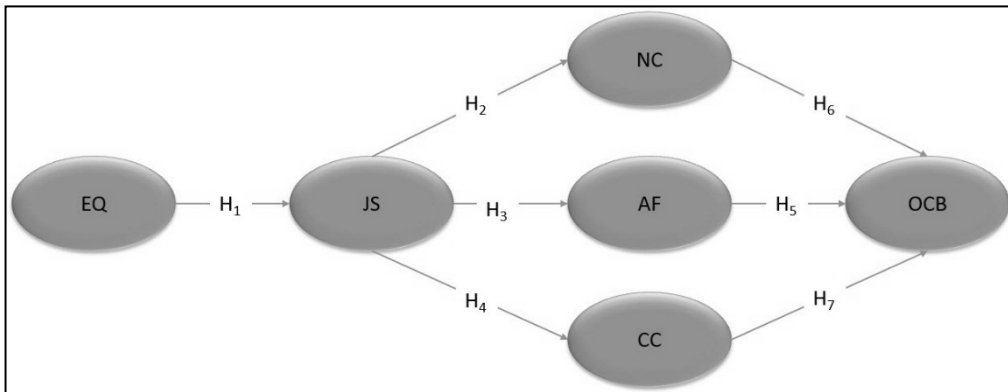
3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The proposed model (Figure 1) is based on the influence of equity, JS, OC and OCB. This model depicts an existence of perception of equity in the workplace which evokes feelings of job satisfaction. It is proposed that employees experiencing job satisfaction become organisationally committed and eventually show organisational citizenship behaviour.

4. PROPOSED RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

The proposed framework is displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Proposed research model



Based on the research model the following hypotheses were postulated:

- H₁: There is a positive relationship between employees' perceptions of equity and job satisfaction.
- H₂: There is a positive relationship between employees' job satisfaction and normative commitment.
- H₃: There is a positive relationship between employees' job satisfaction and affective commitment.
- H₄: There is a positive relationship between employees' job satisfaction and continuance commitment.
- H₅: There is a positive relationship between employees' affective commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour
- H₆: There is a positive relationship between employees' normative commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour
- H₇: There is a positive relationship between employees' continuance commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour.

5. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study examines the relationship between perceptions of equity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour among employees in the water utility company in South Africa.

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1 Sample

The research setting was a water utility company in South Africa, situated in the Southern Gauteng region. A non-probability sampling method, namely a convenience sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 400 from a target population of 3 500 employees at all levels of a water utility company. The participants in the study were required to have been in the employment of the company for at least a year in a permanent. The extraction of the sample size was an adherence to Leedy and Ormrod's (2010) suggestion that for a population around 5 000 and not less than 1 500, the sample size of 400 would be adequate.

6.2 Measurement

A structured questionnaire with various scales was used to glean data from respondents. Section A of the questionnaire was aimed at obtaining participants' biographical information relating to age, gender, race, and years of service in the organisation. Section B, employees' perceptions of equity was measured using Janssen (2001) questionnaire. Section C consisted of the Global Satisfaction Index (GSI) adopted from Agho, Price and Mueller (1992). Organisational commitment in Section D was measured by means of Jaros's (2007) revised organisational commitment scale. In Section E the organisational citizenship behaviour was measured using Jung and Yoon's (2012) OCB questionnaire. For section B to E, items were anchored from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

6.3 Data collection

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from employees. A field worker who was an employee in the water utility company was assigned the task of issuing and retrieving questionnaires. Of the four hundred (400) questionnaires that were distributed to respondents only 219 were fully completed and used for analysis.

7. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Statistical techniques were utilised to analyse the results. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics allows for quantitative description of variables whereas inferential statistics assists in drawing conclusions about the population on the basis of information about a sample that has been drawn from the population (Babbie 2013). The Statistical

Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 23.0 for Windows, and the Analysis of Product Moment Structures (AMOS) version 23.0 for Windows were utilised to process the data.

7.1 Demographics

The majority of respondents were male (62%; n=154), with female participants making up 38 percent (n=96) of the sample. The age group between 31 and 40 years constituted the majority of the sample (39.2%; n=98). A substantial percentage (54%.4; n=136) of respondents had been working for the water utility between 1 to 10 years.

7.2 Exploratory factor analysis

Before exploratory factor analysis was performed, the Kaiser-Meyer Measure (KMO) test and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were computed to determine the suitability of data set for factor analysis for all the constructs, namely equity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and organisational citizenship behaviour. Table 1 shows the results for exploratory factor analysis in order to establish the dimensionality of the scales used. The results revealed that all scales were suitable for factor analysis as the KMO tests reported values >0.50 and the Bartlett's tests of Sphericity were significant at $p < 0.005$ for all the scales (Zhu & Ghodsi, 2006; Hinton, McMurray & Brownlow, 2014).

Table 1: Exploratory factor analysis for the research constructs

Constructs	Sampling ¹ adequacy	Sig ²	Eigen- values ³	% of variance ⁴	No of items	Factors extracted
Perceptions of equity	.837	.000	3.76	62.76	6	1
Job satisfaction	.876	.000	3.88	77.62	5	1
Organisational commitment	.872	.000	1.24	64.01	14	3
Organisational citizenship behaviour	.831	.000	3.11	77.97	4	1

¹Sampling adequacy is measured by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO). ²Sig is measured by the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. ³Eigenvalue is measured by extraction of factors >1 using the Kaiser Criterion. ⁴ % of variance measures the total of extracted variance resulting from factor extraction using the Kaiser Criterion.

7.3 Correlations

Spearman’s rho correlations (non-parametric test) were computed to assess the direction and strength of associations between the constructs in the study with confidence level set at 95% with $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance, since the tests for normality using Kolmogorow-Smirnov statistic showed a significant value of 0.000 suggesting violation of the assumptions of normality which is common with large sample sizes (>200 cases) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Correlation analysis was performed with the following constructs: perceptions of equity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour. These results are reported in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlations between constructs

Variables	EQ	JS	NC	AC	CC	OCB
Perceptions of equity (EQ)	1.000					
Job satisfaction (JS)	.265**	1.000				
Normative commitment (NC)	.199**	.533**	1.000			
Affective commitment (AC)	-.015	.209**	.211**	1.000		
Continuance commitment (CC)	.301**	.476**	.557**	-.132	1.000	
Organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB)	.121	.524**	.370**	.208**	.383**	1.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Moderate correlations were discerned between job satisfaction and employee perceptions of equity ($r=0.265$); between normative commitment and perceptions of equity ($r=0.199$); between affective commitment and job satisfaction ($r=0.209$); between affective commitment and normative commitment ($r=0.211$); between continuance commitment and equity ($r=0.301$); between continuance commitment and job satisfaction ($r=0.476$); between organisational citizenship behaviour and normative commitment ($r=0.370$); between organisational citizenship behaviour and affective commitment ($r=0.208$); between organisational citizenship behaviour and continuance commitment ($r=0.383$). Strong correlations were established between normative commitment and job satisfaction ($r=0.533$); between continuance commitment and normative commitment ($r=0.557$) and organisational citizenship behaviour and job satisfaction ($r=0.524$). However, negative associations were found between affective commitment and employee

perceptions of equity showed negative associations ($r=-0.015$); between continuance commitment and affective commitment ($r=-0.132$).

7.4 Confirmatory factor analysis

Before the hypotheses could be either accepted or rejected, confirmatory factor analysis was performed to assess if the model fits the data. The Analysis of Product moment Structures (AMOS) was utilised to analyse data. The pertinent CFA results can be viewed in Table 3.

Table 3: Results of model comparison-Goodness-of-fit statistics

Fit indices/Path	Acceptable fit indices	Research model	SEM (Structural model)
Chi square/degree of freedom	< 3.0	1.856	1.649
IFI	> 0.90	0.921	0.940
TLI	> 0.90	0.910	0.932
CFI	> 0.90	0.920	0.939
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.063	0.055

For a model fit to be acceptable the chi-square value over the degree of freedom (cmin/df) should be <3. The other values of Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) should be equal or greater than 0.90 whereas the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) should lie between 0.03 and 0.08. The CFA results for the models were as follows: cmin/df =1.856; IFI = 0.921; TLI = 0.910; CFI = 0.920; RMSEA = 0.063. Following the confirmation of the acceptability of CFA measurement model fit the structural model fitness and hypotheses were tested.

7.5 Reliability and validity

Coefficient values >0.70 are considered sufficient to conclude that the proposed dimensions are reliable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Table 4 shows that both the Cronbach alpha and composite reliability values for each construct met the recommended threshold value of >0.70 and rendered the constructs reliable.

Convergent validity was assessed to check if the items loaded highly on their respective factors: perceptions of equity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and organisational citizenship behaviour. Anderson and Gerbing (1988) recommend factor loadings for convergent validity should be > 0.5. As indicated in Table 4, the factor loadings are all above the recommended value ranging from 0.523 to 0.925. This indicates acceptable individual item

convergence in the validity of all scale items. Moreover, convergence was established by examining the correlations between the study constructs. Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the average variance extracted (AVE) values for each construct with the squared correlations between the respective constructs. Since none of the squared correlations exceeded the AVE values (Table 4) for the four constructs, discriminant validity was confirmed (Yoshida & James, 2010). Further, Farell (2010) opines that discriminant validity is ascertained when the correlation measures of constructs are equal or less than 0.6. In Table 4 all the correlation values were <0.6 affirming discriminant validity in the study.

Table 4: Reliability, validity and accuracy statistics

Research construct		Descriptive statistics		Cronbach's test		CR	AVE	Squared correlations	Factor loadings
		Mean	SD	Item-total	α Value				
Equity (EQ)	EQ ₁	3.30	.898	.706	0.880	.84	.52	.09	.705
	EQ ₂			.705					.699
	EQ ₃			.733					.791
	EQ ₄			.555					.598
	EQ ₅			.711					.786
	EQ ₆			.723					.813
Job satisfaction (JS)	JS ₁	3.80	.890	.786	.927	.93	.72	.27	.821
	JS ₂			.792					.829
	JS ₃			.841					.885
	JS ₄			.851					.889
	JS ₅			.780					.823
Normative commitment (NC)	NC ₁	3.65	.967	.661	.782	.79	.55	.31	.786
	NC ₂			.634					.699
	NC ₃			.579					.739
Affective commitment (AF)	AF ₁	2.64	.960	.573	.780	.78	.52	.04	.664
	AF ₂			.627					.747
	AF ₃			.670					.810
	AF ₄			.475					.523
Continuance commitment (CC)	CC ₁	3.58	.829	.569	.885	.89	.53	.31	.602
	CC ₂			.647					.688
	CC ₃			.781					.849
	CC ₄			.651					.668
	CC ₅			.774					.809
	CC ₆			.643					.727
	CC ₇			.677					.742
Organisational	OCB ₁	4.07	.794	.653	.903	.91	.72	.27	.696

citizenship behaviour (OCB)	OCB ₂			.864					.925
	OCB ₃			.787					.847
	OCB ₄			.836					.900

7.6 Structural equation modelling and hypothesis

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was utilised to validate the proposed research model and hypotheses. The goodness of fit indices are reported in Table 3 and the SEM results in Table 5.

Table 5: SEM hypotheses testing results

Paths	p-values	Path coefficients	Standardised estimates	t-values	Hypotheses results
EQ → JS	0.000**	0.255	0.073	3.494	H ₁ : Supported
JS → NC	0.000**	0.715	0.073	9.807	H ₂ : Supported
JS → AF	0.038*	-0.125	0.060	-2.080	H ₃ : Not supported
JS → CC	0.000*	0.454	0.064	7.091	H ₄ : Supported
AF → OCB	0.507	0.039	0.059	0.663	H ₅ : Not supported
NC → OCB	0.000**	0.676	0.137	4.922	H ₆ : Supported
CC → OCB	0.462	-0.085	0.116	-0.736	H ₇ : Not supported

*significant at $p < 0.001$ ** significant at $p < 0.05$.

The first hypothesis postulated that *there is a positive relationship between employees' perceptions of equity and job satisfaction*. The path model signifies a significant relationship between equity and job satisfaction ($p < 0.05$) and the hypothesis is supported (path coefficient = 0.255; t-value = 3.494). By implication, employees who perceived treatment as fair across all employees were satisfied with their jobs. This finding is supported by Deconinck and Bachmann (2007) who found employees to be willing to work hard as a result of equitable pay they received.

The second formulated hypothesis was *there is a positive relationship between employees' job satisfaction and normative commitment to the organisation*. A significant relationship was again observed between job satisfaction and normative commitment ($p < 0.05$), thus supporting the hypothesis (path coefficient = 0.715; t-value = 9.807). In essence, employees who experience job satisfaction felt morally obliged to remain with the water utility company. Past finding indicated that employees who consider themselves to be fairly treated showed

appreciation by reciprocating with normative commitment to the organisation (Park *et al.* 2010:203). In addition, the study of Yang (2010) confirmed that employees who were provided with supportive work environment felt a moral need to reciprocate by retaining membership in an organisation.

The third hypothesis postulated that *there is a positive relationship between employees' job satisfaction and affective commitment to the organisation*. The path model demonstrated a significant negative relationship between job satisfaction and affective commitment ($p < 0.05$) and the hypothesis was not supported (path coefficient = -0.125; t-value = -2.080). The hypothesis is therefore rejected as there was an inverse relationship between job satisfaction and affective commitment. Employees' job satisfaction led to their feelings of not wanting to remain with the water utility company. Contrary to this finding, Anari (2012) echoes the view that the satisfaction of employees with salary, relationship with co-workers and the job itself induce them with a feeling of wanting to remain with their organisation.

The fourth hypothesis posited that *there is a positive relationship between employees' job satisfaction and continuance commitment to the organisation*. The prevalence of a significant relationship between job satisfaction and continuance commitment ($p < 0.001$) was discerned, and the hypothesis was supported (path coefficient = 0.454; t-value = 7.091). Implicit in the finding is that the employees at the water utility company were satisfied with their jobs as a result of the investment the company was making in them, which in turn enhanced their commitment to the company.

The fifth hypothesis postulated that there is a positive relationship between *affective commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour* (path coefficient = 0.039; t-value = 0.663). The hypothesis was rejected as inverse relationship was discerned. Additionally, the hypothesis was rejected as the relationship between affective commitment and organisational behaviour was positive, but not significant. This means that while the relationship exists, it is not strong. Research evidence supports the contention that the emotional bond employees have with their organisation induces them to enact organisational citizenship behaviour to the extent that they make personal sacrifices to ensure its effectiveness (Ibrahim & Aslinda, 2013).

The sixth hypothesis postulated that *there is a positive relationship between normative commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour*. The results in the path model showed a significant relationship between normative commitment

and organisational citizenship behaviour ($p < 0.05$), which indicated that the moral obligation to remain with the company tended to make employees exhibit organisational citizenship behaviour. The hypothesis was supported (path coefficient = 0.676; t -value = 4.922). This finding mirrors the study of Meyer and Parfyonova (2010) which revealed moral obligation and indebtedness of employees as precursors of an enactment of organisational citizenship behaviour.

Finally the seventh hypothesis postulated that there is a positive relationship between continuance commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour among employees in the organisation (path coefficient = -0.085; t -value = -0.736). The hypothesis is therefore rejected as an inverse relationship was discerned. The hypothesis was rejected because no significant relationship between continuance commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour could be found. A plausible reason for this outcome could be that employees (permanent) are always on the lookout for greener pastures and often leave when they have accumulated a substantial amount of experience in a job, especially among African employees in South Africa, based on employment equity legislation, which favours them (RSA, 1988).

8. LIMITATIONS

One of the limitations is that the findings could not be generalised to all sites of delivery since it was conducted on a few sites of delivery in the Southern Gauteng region. A larger sample size than is currently the case could have produced different results. This study was based on a cross-sectional survey design, which measures the variables at a single point in time. Therefore, any changes in the variables under study over time were not covered in the study. A longitudinal study could discern whether the levels of organisational commitment, perceptions of equity, job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviours would possibly change over time.

9. FURTHER RESEARCH

This study focused on the relationship between perceptions of equity, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and organisational behaviour in a water utility company. A similar study could be extended to government departments which have different organisational dynamics. While this study concentrated on a few sites of delivery at a point in time, further research could involve all sites of delivery in the country in order to make comparisons.

10. CONCLUSION

Because employees experienced normative commitment, they tended to display organisational citizenship behaviours. In work domains where employees are treated fairly, get along, understand each other, show respect and work in harmony, research evidence shows that higher levels of organisational commitment eventually result in higher organisational citizenship behaviours.

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