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Job satisfaction and turnover: The role of creativity, engagement, and decent work amongst employees

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Orientation: The South African public service faces the challenge of a high labour turnover among its employees. There is a need for strategies to not only keep employees happy at work but also to retain them.

Research purpose: The study investigates the determinants of job satisfaction and turnover intention accounting for the role of employee creativity, engagement and decent work.

Motivation for the study: There is a need for strategies to not only retain employees within the public service but also to ensure the employees are satisfied with their jobs.

Research approach/design and method: A cross-sectional survey was conducted with a convenience sample of 304 employees working within the South African public service in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (version 25) and the Linear Structural Relations (LISREL) software packages were used to analyse data.

Main findings: It was established that higher ratings of decent work experience relate positively to employee ratings of engagement in the work and that they also influenced outcomes such as job satisfaction and employee turnover intentions.

Practical/managerial implications: The findings are a useful precursor in improving not just the work experience for employees but also work related outcomes such as job satisfaction and turnover intention.

Contribution/value-add: The study findings give practical interventions to address the challenge of high turnover and the dearth of job satisfaction among public service employees.

Keywords: employee creativity; decent work; engagement; public service; job satisfaction; turnover intentions; South Africa.

Introduction

Organisations must constantly be engaged in a process of encouraging creativity and innovation, especially among their employees (Sanhokwe et al., 2023). This call potentially becomes more important in those organisational contexts that are seen to be rigid (Calic et al., 2020; Yahiaoui et al., 2021). One such context being the South African public service (Mabizela & Matsiliza, 2020; Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2021). The need to address organisational challenges within the public service in South Africa (Chinyamurindi et al., 2023) bearing in mind the links such challenges have on service delivery (Gasela, 2021) is generally recognised.

Challenges related to the South African public service are widely documented. Saliently, these include (1) a lack of capacity; (2) ineffective organisational processes and (3) a lack of professionalisation (Gasela, 2021). Others attribute the challenges to be managerial in nature (Hoeyi & Mukgari, 2021) and these are evident in poor human resource management processes (Fihla & Chinyamurindi, 2018). The impact of such challenges has been attributed to two issues (Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2021). Firstly, a poor experience of work that often results in mental and physical health challenges and secondly, such challenges result in negative outcomes of work (Mathibe & Chinyamurindi, 2021; Mle & Ngumbela, 2020).

All these presented challenges within the South African public service call for a re-think, necessitating the need for this study. There is need for interventions specific to the entire public service as an organisation as well as specific attention to the experience of employees (Mabizela & Matsiliza, 2020). The idea here could be to create a context that allows employees within the public service to thrive (Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2021) while also enhancing organisational processes (Mathibe & Chinyamurindi, 2021). This places importance on paying attention to the individual practices of work and the conditions of work (Mle & Ngumbela, 2020). This study focusses on understanding this dual interaction of employee-organisational factors and how these influence work outcomes within the South African public service.

Within contemporary society, organisations are being encouraged to embrace aspects related to creativity. Such efforts have been linked to positive individual and organisational outcomes (Sol'e et al., 2020). Employee creativity is viewed as the emergence of novel contributions that assist the organisation (Boden, 2005). In African organisations, for employees, this can be three aspects (Coetzee & Mbiko, 2023). Firstly, the need to encourage employees to be adaptive in their work and career plans. Secondly, the necessity to strike a balance between being goal oriented and being adaptive to change. Thirdly, seeking for continuous improvement and growth in embracing possibility for the new. At the core of managing such efforts of employee creativity is the need to embrace and respond to change especially within the public service in South Africa (Mvuyana, 2023). A need exists to continually understand the complex and dynamic interplay that can exist affecting employee dimensions such as creativity especially within the public service (Haricharan, 2023).

Furthermore, there is a need to understand how employee creativity potentially links with other organisational factors and processes in enhancing the experience of work (Pollok et al., 2021). Within the South African context, the role of decent work is being argued as crucial (Chinyamurindi et al., 2023). The focus here being on those factors and conditions that affect the experience and the outcome of work (Chada et al., 2023).

Decent work is defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as encompassing people's 'aspirations for opportunity and income; rights, voice and recognition; family stability and personal development; and fairness and gender equality' (ILO, 1999, p. 3). The link between employee creativity and decent work remains unexplored especially from the vantage of the South African public service. In addition, how this link influences other work factors becomes an important avenue of inquiry.

The study also focusses on the crucial role of job and organisational engagement (OE) as potentially influencing outcomes of work (Kahn, 1990). The former has been viewed as an investment of an emotional and cognitive nature by employees through their job tasks and roles (Schaufeli et al., 2006). The latter refers to a broader perspective of employee commitment to the organisation's values, mission and goals (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Theorising around the two forms of engagement affirms their links to the loyalty, motivation and retention issues faced by employees (Saks, 2006). This has been somewhat supported in recent studies also (Bakker & Demerouti, 2020; Kular et al., 2021).

Primary objectives of the study

Based on the above-stated, this study investigates the determinants of job satisfaction and turnover intention accounting for the role of employee creativity, engagement and decent work.

Secondary objectives of the study

A set of secondary objectives as proposed are: (1) to investigate the relationship between employee creativity and engagement (job engagement [JE] and OE); (2) investigate the relationship between engagement (JE and OE) and decent work; (3) to investigate the relationship between decent work and job satisfaction, and finally (4) to investigate the relationship between decent work and turnover intention.

Structure of the study

The study was structured as follows: Firstly, the theoretical lens on which this study is based is presented. Secondly, the empirical literature against the proposed model to the study is presented. Thirdly, the research procedure followed to collect data is presented. Fourthly, the results of the study are presented. Finally, the discussion and implications from the study including proposing avenues for future research are made.

Theoretical framework

The study adopts a dual focus in theories. Firstly, related to employee creativity, consideration is given to the componential theory of individual creativity (Amabile, 1997). Creativity was defined as the production by employee of novel and useful ideas (Amabile, 1996). Through creativity, capabilities can be developed that assist employees to be able to initiate creative efforts (Ogbeibu et al., 2020). In allowing for this, there is the need to pay attention to the development of three types of employee skills as potential enhancers of creativity as argued by Amabile (1997). These include (1) expertise, (2) creativity and (3) task motivation.

This can be a useful outlet through which novel and useful ideas, products and service can emerge (Amabile, 1997). The absence of such efforts of creativity merely stifles the organisation and its workforce (Verwaeren & Nijstad, 2022). Scholars appeal for continued research in understanding how creativity not only manifests but can

be improved considering different organisational contexts (Scott et al., 2020). Ehlers et al. (2019) also make a call to understand how employee creativity features with individual outcomes of work and those of the organisation (Schutte & Malouff, 2020).

Secondly, focus is also given to the Psychology of Working Theory (PWT) (Duffy et al., 2016). The underlying idea behind the PWT is that there is need to promote dignified work as a fundamental human right (Blustein et al., 2019). Ultimately, promoting decent work, affects well-being and meaning (Duffy et al., 2016). The advocacy for decent work is seen as needed given the challenges facing the labour market (Ferraro et al., 2016) and inequalities from society (ILO, 2001). In essence, for positive experiences of well-being and meaning to be experienced within the work context, there needs to be decent work. A growing body of work is emerging within the South African context seeking to understand further issues related to decent work within organisations (Chinyamurindi et al., 2023).

Three other organisational factors are also given focus within this study in addition to creativity and decent work. The first of these is JE, viewed as a positive mindset and sense of self-fulfilment of the job (Demirtas et al., 2017). It would be expected that both employee creativity and decent work would affect JE. The former being a useful precursor for employees that are creative as they are engaged in their jobs. The latter being a useful condition that allows employees to be engaged in their jobs. The second organisational factor is OE. Applying the same logic as JE but in the context of organisational issues.

The third organisational factor is job satisfaction. The literature defines job satisfaction as the overall liking or disliking of the various aspects of their jobs by employees (Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021). Potentially, the promotion of decent working conditions can affect employee creativity and job satisfaction (McIlveen, 2020).

The outcome variable in this study is turnover intention. This is defined as an employees' willingness or intention to quit their current job and leave an organisation (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2020; Hom et al., 2017). It would be expected that contextually where an employee does not experience aspects related to creativity, it would potentially influence turnover intention negatively. Furthermore, obstructive decent work experiences would also influence turnover intentions negatively. In essence, encouraging a context of work where employees are respected and valued, enhances the propensity for employees to stay and not leave.

Literature review

Employee creativity and job engagement

The three elements of employee creativity have been shown to be related to employee performance (Al-Ajlouni, 2020). In essence, the scenarios that encourage the development of skills such as (1) expertise, (2) creativity and (2) task motivation, potentially leads to outcomes that enhance the experience of work (Amabile, 1997). There is support to show to the link of such a relationship between employee creativity and JE within a non-public sector context (Ter Wal et al., 2022). The thinking here is that employee creativity is an important activity that could enhance service and product delivery (Fonseca et al., 2019).

A failure to create a context and culture that enhances employee creativity potentially can result in failure with organisational ramifications (Verwaeren & Nijstad, 2022). Priority is therefore given on the skills and the competencies that encourage employee creativity (Ciarli et al., 2021). This could also entail incorporating strategies and activities within the organisation that encourage creativity (Fritzsche et al., 2020). Engagements in the aspects of work can exist because of a context that encourages creativity (Jalowski et al., 2019). It can therefore be hypothesised that:

H1: Employee creativity is positively associated with employee JE.

Employee creativity and organisational engagement

According to Shuck and Wollard (2021), OE consists of a focus on the emotional, cognitive and behavioural components of an individual's relationship with the organisation they work for. The growing impetus on OE seems to be driven by the growing pressure for a globalised work environment able to withstand rivalry. This quest places for the need of organisations that have structures that enhance and support ideals of superior performance (Glasze et al., 2022). Potentially managing aspects related to employee creativity can be a source through which innovations that affect the organisation can emerge (Mariani et al., 2023). This places importance in having some form of organisational fit that encourages aspects related to employee creativity (Gonlepa et al., 2023).

Fostering a context of creativity potentially affects an organisation's way of life. This can be through the emergence within the organisation of forms of working together among employees that foster collaboration and solidarity (Wickström et al., 2021). From all this can emerge strategies and management practices that are impactful in solving not only organisational but societal challenges (Jarzabkowski et al., 2021). Employee creativity potentially can result in new organisational structures and potentially new ways of working (Kossek & Lautsch, 2018). This potentially can result in aspects related to OE as response (Van den Groenendaal et al., 2023). It can therefore be hypothesised that:

H2: Employee creativity is positively associated with organisation engagement.

Engagement and decent work

According to Di Fabio (2017), decent work conditions have the potential to improve business outcomes through JE. Saliently, within a South African public service context, the promotion of

decent work becomes crucial in assisting the realisation of experiences and outcomes of work (Chinyamurindi et al., 2023). There is a need therefore to improve aspects related to decent work especially through identifying the precursors for decent work (Ferraro et al., 2020). Potentially, this can also affect both job and OE (Lesener et al., 2019).

Emphasis is also placed on decent work as an important factor in influencing activities, practices and strategies related to work (Mathibe & Chinyamurindi, 2021). This gives impetus to paying attention to those human resource issues that potentially can encourage both job and OE. In essence, responding to such issues is embedded in also understanding the organisational culture (Yahiaoui et al., 2021). Such responsiveness assists in aspects related to resilience (Lee et al., 2022) and eventually the need to promote decent working conditions (Hughes et al., 2021). It can therefore be hypothesised that:

H3: Job engagement is positively associated with decent work.

H4: Organisational engagement is positively associated with decent work.

Decent work, job satisfaction and turnover intentions

The promotion of decent working conditions can potentially effect workplace outcomes. Within the South African context, findings show that the presence of stressful working conditions affects job satisfaction among public service employees (Mathibe & Chinyamurindi, 2021). The presence of conditions that can potentially cause employees to be insecure about their work will likely result in negative work experiences and outcomes (Chinyamurindi et al., 2023). These negative work experiences ultimately impede work outcomes for the employee and the organisation (Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2021). Chigbu et al. (2024) defined turnover intention as an employee's desire to leave the organisation because of factors related to the job and the organisation. In terms of decent work and turnover intentions, it can be expected that decent work negatively predicts turnover intentions (Buyukgoze-Kavas & Autin, 2019). Poor working conditions potentially impede the experience of work and may result in negative turnover intentions (Mahand & Caldwell, 2023). It can therefore be hypothesised that:

H5: Decent work is positively associated with job satisfaction.

H6: Decent work is negatively associated with turnover intentions.

Job satisfaction and turnover intentions

Job satisfaction is a well-researched construct within organisational and management studies. Generally, findings show job satisfaction to negatively influence turnover intentions (Qu et al., 2023). The thinking being the lack of satisfaction would likely drive employees to consider leaving the organisation (Mathibe & Chinyamurindi, 2021). The opposite is also true; favourable conditions of work including experiences of being satisfied potentially can influence reasons for employees to stay in their organisations (Wang et al., 2020). This finding has also been confirmed within the South African public service context (Mazantsana et al., 2021). It can thus be hypothesised that:

H7: Job satisfaction is negatively associated with turnover intention.

The study sought to test a model that factors into consideration the interaction between employee creativity, decent work and other human resource management constructs within the South African public service context. Considering employee creativity enables seeing interactions between the two dimensions of engagement more accurately, it also shows how engagement relates to the various dimensions of decent work.

Given the presented theoretical literature, the study proposes a model to be tested as shown in Figure 1.

Methodology

Research design

The study focussed on public service employees in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The study employed the positivist paradigm in a bid to test the relationships between variables and generate objective data (Howell, 2013).

Research method

The quantitative approach was adopted following the positivist paradigm. The quantitative approach has the advantages of objectivity, precision and capacity to extrapolate results to bigger populations (Munther et al., 2024). The use of such an approach and paradigm follows similar pattern as previous research of the same kind done in a South African setting (Chinyamurindi et al., 2023). A survey technique was used to collect data from the sample group.

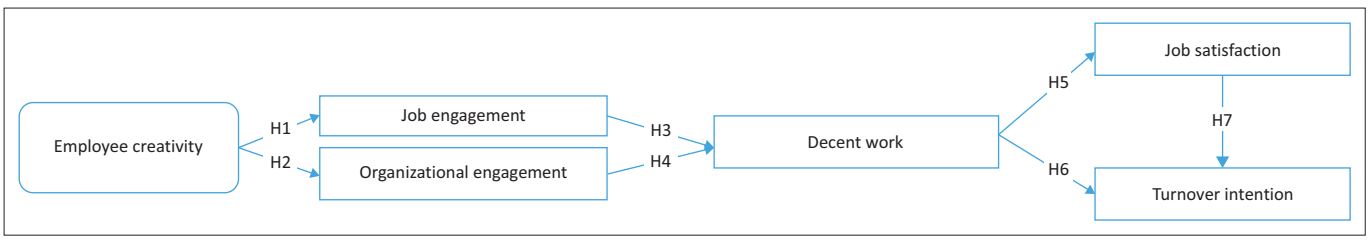


FIGURE 1: Conceptual model.

TABLE 1: Demographic data of participants (N = 304).

Demographic variable	*n*	%
Gender		
Male	103	33.9
Female	201	66.1
Prefer not to mention	0	0.0
Age (years)		
Below 18	0	0.0
19–25	36	11.8
26–32	78	25.7
33 and above	190	62.5
Years in public service		
Less than 5 years	28	9.2
5 to 10 years	55	18.1
11 to 15 years	110	36.2
16 and Above	111	36.5
Position		
Admin person	103	33.9
Supervisor/lower management	52	17.1
Middle management	106	34.9
Upper management/director	43	14.1
Employment status		
Contract	13	4.3
Permanent	291	95.7

Research respondents

Most of the respondents (66.1%) were females. The study had a majority of respondents who were aged 33 years and above (62.5%) and respondents aged 19–25 years (11.8%) were the least represented. A total of 34.9% of the participants held middle management positions and 33.9% held administrative positions. Experience-wise, 36.5% of the participants had 16 years and above of experience in public service while 36.2% had 11–15 years of experience. The majority of the participants were permanent employees (95.7%) in comparison to contract employees. Table 1 shows the demographic data of the respondents.

Research instrument

A structured questionnaire whose items were adapted from previous standardised scales was used to collect data. Section A of the questionnaire dealt with the respondents' demographic data such as their age, gender, nature of contract, experience and designation. The rest of the instrument dealt with the model's six constructs, measured by way of a five-point Likert scale.

Employee creativity was measured by a 5-item scale developed by Ganesan and Weitz (1996) existing as a unitary construct. The reliability of the scale as measured by the Cronbach alpha coefficient in a study of the banking sector in Pakistan by Ul Hassan et al. (2013) was found to be 0.745 compared to the reliability of 0.75 in the original scale. An example item of the employee creativity scale read: 'I am always on the lookout for new ideas to apply in my job'.

Job engagement was measured by a scale designed by Rich et al. (2010). An example item includes 'I work with intensity on my job'. Organisational engagement was measured using a 6-item scale (Saks, 2006). An example item here includes: 'I am highly engaged in this organisation'. Decent work was measured using a 15-item scale (Duffy et al., 2017). An example item here was 'I feel emotionally safe interacting with people at work'. The decent work scale tested within the context of a developing nation was found to have valid psychometric properties hence its usage (Sanhokwe & Takawira, 2022; Authors).

The last two scales were job satisfaction and turnover intention. Job satisfaction was measured using a 5-item scale (Andrews & Withey, 1976). Each of the items assesses satisfaction with specific facets of the job, and their coefficient alpha values range from 0.79 to 0.81 (McFarlin & Rice, 1992; Rentsch & Steel, 1992). An example item measured general satisfaction to the work environment in which the employee ranked this on a 5-point Likert scale. Turnover intention was measured by a 3-item scale (Mobley et al., 1978). Salman et al. (2016) confirmed the reliability of the three-item questionnaire by Mobley et al. (1978) for turnover intention to be 0.91. using Cronbach's alpha. An example item here was: 'I often think of leaving the organisation'.

Sampling method and data collection procedure

A convenience sampling technique was used to collect data. Convenience sampling has the advantages that it requires less effort to select research participants and also that it is a very low-cost and time-saving alternative. The researchers made use of the sampling frame that was most accessible to them. Data collection took place over an 18-month period (from January 2022 to June 2023). The researchers used a combination of paper-based and online surveys with public service employees in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. A total of 567 questionnaires were distributed to government employees. Out of which, a total of 304 questionnaires were deemed usable. This yielded a response rate of 53.6%. The convenience sampling technique addresses the challenges of the lack of a reliable population frame among public service entities in the Eastern Cape province. Furthermore, some of the public service entities were not comfortable in taking part in the research. In essence, only those public service entities most available to take part in research took part in the study.

Data analysis

Because of the government's mandated lockdown to contain the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the researchers had to rely on both paper-based and online surveys to collect information from the employees that had been conveniently sampled. While online surveys offered cheaper and agile solutions to the data collection process, convenience sampling was chosen because it is not only efficient, but cheap and easy to implement. The research employed descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed in the study. The Cronbach's alpha

test was used for reliability testing. The average variance extracted (AVE) and cross-loadings were used for convergent and discriminant validity assessment. A structural equation modelling (SEM) test, a powerful tool for hypothesis testing, was used.

Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance was applied for from the participating institution the University of Fort Hare Research Ethics Committee (REC-270710-028-RA-Level 01) Project (CHI001-22). Guidelines around issues related to ethics were applied to protect the information of the respondents and safeguard their participation. Because informed consent can either be given verbally or through signing a consent form (Cacciattolo, 2015), the researcher's made sure consent was granted before proceeding with data collection. Efforts were also made to provide participants with honest and transparent accounts of all stages involved in the data collection and publication processes. The research team also made efforts to clean the data as a way of removing any information such as names that identify the respondents.

Results

Confirmatory factor analysis

Reliability for all the constructs was examined using the Cronbach's alpha test. The Cronbach alpha values for the constructs ranged from 0.522 to 0.821. The AVE values were all above 0.5 as they ranged from 0.503 to 0.744. The composite reliability and AVE results suggest that the measurement constructs were reliable. Discriminant validity existed on all the measurement items as evidenced by the square root of each and every factor's AVE which was above its corresponding correlation coefficient with other calculated factors. Regarding convergent validity, cross-loadings for all the exhibited items except decent work exceeded the threshold value of 0.5 at the 1% significance level. This suggests a good convergent validity on the measurement items. Indicator items with small values which were below 0.5 were removed from the model (see Table 2 for results).

Cross-loadings were used in examining multiple items with high loadings on the same construct and those that load highly on multiple constructs. Table 3 provides a summary of the cross-loading results.

According to the results displayed in Table 3, the cross-loadings for all the exhibited items except decent work (DW) exceed the threshold value of 0.6 at the 1% significance level. These results suggest a good convergent validity on the measurement items. Indicator items with small values which are below 0.5 were removed from the model. The removed indicator items include OE4, JS2, EC3, DW2, DW3, DW7, DW14 and DW15.

Descriptive statistics

After reliability tests are met, the descriptive statistics for all variables are presented in Table 4.

The descriptive statistical results show that the mean of each research variable in this study falls between 3.308 and 4.177. While there are no strict guidelines for skewness or kurtosis values indicating non-normality, Hair et al. (2010) and Byrne (2010) suggest that data can be considered normally distributed if skewness ranges from –2 to +2 and kurtosis ranges from –7 to +7. Based on this, the data for the variables (Table 4) appear to be approximately normally distributed, as their skewness and kurtosis values fall within these recommended ranges.

TABLE 2: Descriptive statistics and inter-construct correlations.

Items	CR	Cronbach's alpha	AVE	DW	EC	JE	JS	OE	TI
DW	0.861	0.821	0.586	-	-	-	-	-	-
EC	0.825	0.611	0.705	0.232	-	-	-	-	-
JE	0.803	0.647	0.583	0.423	0.583	-	-	-	-
JS	0.858	0.685	0.753	0.102	0.068	0.124	-	-	-
OE	0.827	0.712	0.645	0.436	0.302	0.528	0.119	-	-
TI	0.741	0.522	0.503	0.263	0.499	0.561	0.077	0.345	-

EC, Employee Creativity; JE, Job Engagement; OE, Organisational Engagement; DW, Decent Work; JS, Job Satisfaction; TI, Turnover Intentions; AVE, average extracted variance; CR, composite reliability.

TABLE 3: Cross-loadings of the scales.

Constructs	DW	EC	JE	JS	OE	TI
DW1	**0.644**	0.157	0.232	0.103	0.284	0.100
DW10	**0.722**	0.184	0.265	0.060	0.255	0.178
DW11	**0.687**	0.187	0.352	0.104	0.285	0.243
DW12	**0.626**	0.075	0.160	0.076	0.282	0.135
DW13	**0.550**	0.139	0.264	0.081	0.279	0.197
DW4	**0.531**	0.060	0.158	0.052	0.198	0.118
DW5	**0.550**	0.117	0.259	-0.046	0.202	0.149
DW6	**0.506**	0.087	0.201	0.105	0.202	0.151
DW8	**0.665**	0.157	0.360	0.039	0.339	0.172
DW9	**0.684**	0.214	0.265	0.052	0.329	0.154
EC1	0.108	**0.738**	0.322	0.114	0.171	0.350
EC2	0.250	**0.931**	0.598	0.028	0.309	0.475
JE1	0.436	0.596	**0.894**	0.079	0.462	0.528
JE2	0.171	0.350	**0.700**	0.122	0.207	0.383
JE3	0.289	0.304	**0.672**	0.108	0.522	0.339
JS1	0.049	0.044	0.087	**0.805**	0.114	0.072
JS3	0.116	0.069	0.123	**0.926**	0.098	0.055
OE1	0.389	0.323	0.528	0.116	**0.858**	0.323
OE2	0.240	0.054	0.182	0.072	**0.602**	0.076
OE3	0.375	0.257	0.446	0.087	**0.872**	0.325
T1	0.146	0.187	0.253	0.056	0.131	**0.648**
T2	0.245	0.448	0.539	0.058	0.347	**0.827**
T3	0.141	0.390	0.330	0.031	0.189	**0.610**

Note: Bold values emphasizes factor loadings with the highest significance.

DW, Decent Work; EC, Employee Creativity; JE, Job Engagement; OE, Organisational Engagement; DW, Decent Work; JS, Job Satisfaction; TI, Turnover Intentions.

TABLE 4: Structural model's Partial Least Squares results.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Coefficient				Decision
		Std Beta	SE	*T*	*P*-values	
H1	EC -> JE	0.581	0.031	18.773	0.000	Supported
H2	EC -> OE	0.301	0.049	6.14	0.000	Supported
H3	JE -> DW	0.268	0.058	4.519	0.000	Supported
H4	OE -> DW	0.301	0.059	5.014	0.000	Supported
H5	DW -> JS	0.111	0.061	1.694	0.091	Not Supported
H6	DW -> TI	0.273	0.047	5.579	0.000	Supported
H7	JS -> TI	0.049	0.065	0.67	0.503	Not Supported

EC, Employee Creativity; JE, Job Engagement; OE, Organisational Engagement; DW, Decent Work; JS, Job Satisfaction; TI, Turnover Intentions; Std. standard; SE, standard error.

Structural model analysis

A structural equation model was fitted, and the model's standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) value of 0.078 is lower than the 0.08 threshold value, indicating that the model is acceptable. Additionally, as it is higher than the advised value of 0.90, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) value of 0.911 is acceptable. The structural model's Partial Least Squares (PLS) results are displayed in Figure 3.

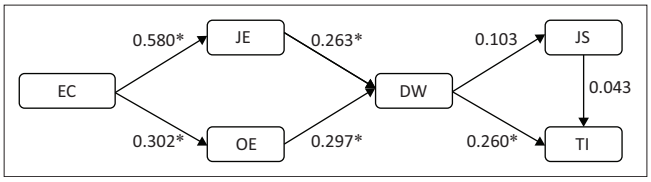
According to the results shown in Figure 3, employee creativity had a positive effect on JE (β = 0.580, t = 17.856, p < 0.001) and on OE (β = 0.302, t = 5.853, p < 0.001). Job engagement had a positive effect on decent work (β = 0.237, t = 3.444, p = 0.001), and OE had a positive effect on decent work (β = 0.257, t = 4.674, p < 0.001. Decent work had a positive effect on turnover intentions (β = 0.232, t = 5.025, p < 0.001). These results suggest that H1, H2, H3, H4 and H6 are supported. However, H5 and H7 which suggest that decent work had a positive effect on job satisfaction (β = 0.097, t = 1.372, p = 0.171) and job satisfaction had a positive effect on turnover intentions (β = 0.046, t = 0.685, p = 0.494) are not supported.

Figure 2 presents a summary of the fitted model containing coefficients and factor loadings. All the factor loadings displayed are above 0.5.

According to Figure 3, the coefficients with double asterisks (**) are statistically significant at 1% level of significance while those without stars mean the relationship is not statistically significant.

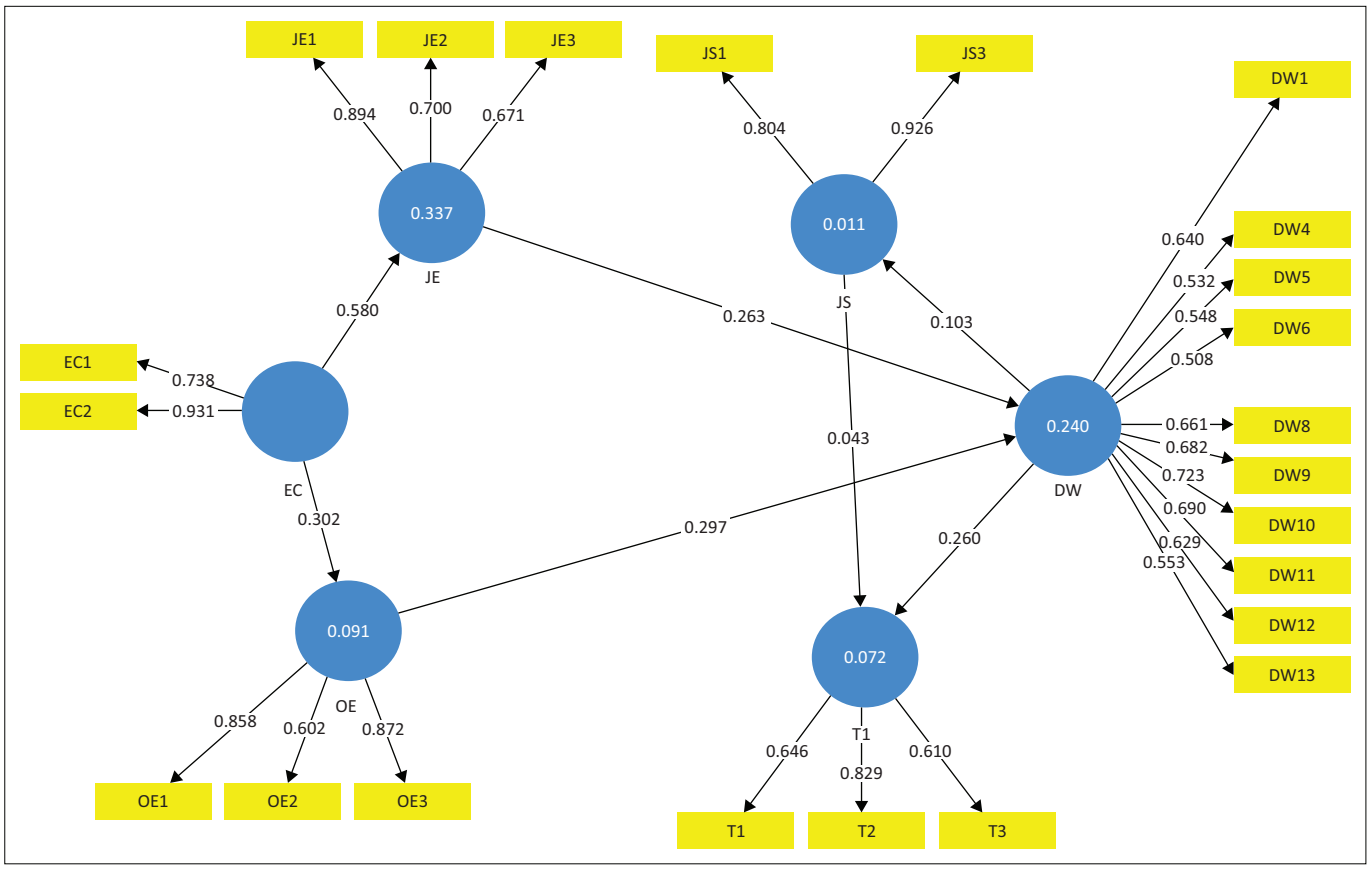
Discussion

The study investigates the determinants of job satisfaction and turnover intention accounting for the role of employee creativity, engagement and decent work. Both alternative hypotheses, H1 and H2, which suggest that employee creativity is positively associated with JE and OE were accepted. Although Saks (2006) suggests that OE and JE are distinct constructs with dissimilar antecedents and consequences, the current study found that employee creativity is positively associated with both OE and JE. These findings are in agreement with those from a study conducted by Asif et al. (2019) which found that employees' creativity was positively impacted when employees were properly engaged with their work.



EC, Employee Creativity; JE, Job Engagement; OE, Organisational Engagement; DW, Decent Work; JS, Job Satisfaction; TI, Turnover Intentions.

FIGURE 3: Summarised relationships.



EC, Employee Creativity; JE, Job Engagement; OE, Organisational Engagement; DW, Decent Work; JS, Job Satisfaction; TI, Turnover Intentions

FIGURE 2: The fitted model.

The two alternative hypotheses, H3 and H4, which suggest that JE and OE are positively associated with decent work, were accepted. These findings concur with the seminal work by Saks (2006) who established that only when employees receive economic and socio-emotional resources from the employer as enshrined in the decent work concept, would they feel compelled to pay back what they perceive to be owing to their organisations. They would feel obliged to repay their organisations with increased engagement levels (Saks, 2006). This study's findings support extant literature (Lesener et al., 2019) which holds that adequate resources for the job (e.g. recognition, psychological climate, rewards and time for recovery) are positively related to engagement. It has also been established that employees who feel safe and secure at their places of work are more likely to experience higher work engagement levels (Tao et al., 2016). If employees consider their jobs to be indecent, they are likely to face numerous stressors which would negatively influence their psychological well-being, and subsequently their levels of work engagement (García-Sierra et al., 2016). Navajas-Romero et al. (2019) established that because decent working conditions allow employees to balance personal and work life, develop professionally and personally, they contribute to improving work and life quality and were found to be an important factor in organisational performance through the mediating role of work engagement (Navajas-Romero et al., 2019). Interestingly, this study's findings are contrary to Saks's (2006) other finding that employees with high perceptions of procedural justice (a component in the decent work framework) were found more likely to experience organisation rather than work engagement.

The alternative hypothesis, H5, which suggests that decent work has a positive effect on job satisfaction was rejected. This means that decent work did not affect job satisfaction. Regarding access to health (a sub-dimension of decent work), it was found that it could not predict withdrawal intentions and job satisfaction in the United Kingdom, although it did in South Korea (Dodd et al., 2019; Nam & Kim, 2019). A study by Zulfiqar et al. (2013) indicated that personal stress (another sub-dimension of indecent work) was a strong predictor of job satisfaction, while Khamisa et al. (2019) showed that staff issues and staff shortages led to higher workloads, which in turn affected job satisfaction. Regarding remuneration (a sub-dimension of decent work) and contrary to this study's findings, an inquiry by Mabaso and Dlamini (2017) found that organisational rewards and salary were a predictor that contributes significantly to employee job satisfaction. As could be deduced from the preceding discussion, the relationship between decent work and job satisfaction appears to be influenced by various job and organisational factors.

Hypothesis 6 (H6) which suggests that decent work has a negative effect on turnover intentions was supported. Burakova et al. (2014) purport that work conditions have the potential to affect turnover intentions. As observed by Cottini et al. (2011), and true to the current study's findings, employees in hazardous conditions (a sub-dimension of indecent work) are likely to voluntarily leave their current employers. In a related study, Amponsah-Tawiah et al. (2016) observed that safety leadership was key in administering occupational health and safety and in reducing employee turnover intentions.

The hypothesis that job satisfaction is negatively associated with turnover intentions was not supported. These findings are contrary to those from a study by Lee et al. (2017), who established a significantly negative effect of job satisfaction on turnover intentions among early-career employees. The reason established was that the early-career employees tended to focus more on growth and personal development space. The current study's findings also disagree with those from a study by Ibrahim et al. (2016) that revealed a significant but negative relationship between job satisfaction and employees' intention to quit in the banking sector in Nigeria. In fact, this study's findings contradict those from a study by Gebregziabher et al. (2020) which tend to converge on the notion that the higher the employees' job satisfaction levels, the lower their turnover intention. This disparity can be attributed partly to the three interacting challenges that South Africa faces, viz., the abnormally high rates of poverty, the highest global rate of inequality and the highest global rate of unemployment (Shah, 2022). The aforesaid challenges can enlist grit among employees despite plummeting job satisfaction levels.

Implications

Managerial implications can be deduced from the study. Firstly, through the interaction established between job and organisational factors, managers can incorporate employee retention strategies that enhance job satisfaction while lowering turnover intentions. This can be done through implementing policies that promote decent working conditions. Secondly, with the distinction between job and OE being made, interventions can be proposed related to this. Again, a priority on promoting decent working conditions has the potential to also foster and encourage employee job satisfaction and a platform for retention.

Limitations and future research

The cross-sectional survey was limited to employees working within the South African public service based within the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. Future studies could focus on national investigations for more robust results because a larger population would be involved. One other limitation of this study is that it was purely quantitative. A mixed methods survey which provides for a combination of two dominant research genres has the potential to undo the inadequacies of one single method and therefore, offers more reliability and validity to the research findings (Hafsa, 2019). Furthermore, the current study focussed on how decent work relates to selected constructs while constructs such as employee commitment, grit and employee experience, among others which are equally relevant to employees were left out in

the nexus. Future studies could explore how such other constructs would relate to decent work as well as dissect to some considerable depth the extent to which the gender divide plays out.

Conclusion

The South African public sector should seek to leverage the creativity of its employees as it enhances creative problem-solving and helps develop the workforce. The promotion of decent work should remain a priority albeit the challenges being experienced. The role of managers becomes important in driving this agenda.

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The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article. The author, W.T.C., serves as an editorial board member of this journal. The peer review process for this submission was handled independently, and the author had no involvement in the editorial decision-making process for this manuscript. The authors have no other competing interests to declare.

Authors' contributions

W.T.C. and N.M. contributed equally to the writing of this research article.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval to conduct this study was obtained from the University of Fort Hare Research Ethics Committee (REC-270710-028-RA-Level 01) Project (CHI001-22).

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Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, W.T.C., upon reasonable request.

Disclaimer

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