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Reference: Chinyerere, Ernest/Sandada, Maxwell (2018). Job related outcomes in relation to servant leadership. In: EuroEconomica 37 (1), S. 138 - 150.

This Version is available at:

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Job Related Outcomes in Relation to Servant Leadership

Ernest Chinyerere¹, Maxwell Sandada²

Abstract: The study seeks to ascertain the impact of servant leadership on teamwork, work spirituality, organisational citizenship behaviour and organisational commitment among retail employees in Zimbabwe. The results reveal that servant leadership positively predicts the retail employees' teamwork spirit, work spirituality, citizenship behaviour and organisational commitment. The academic contribution of the study is the development of a servant leadership model for the retail sector in Zimbabwe. The study provides invaluable insights to retailers on how servant leadership could be utilised in order to ensure positive job outcomes among their employees.

Keywords: servant leadership; teamwork; work spirituality; organisational citizenship behaviour

JEL Classification: J62

1. Introduction

The retail sector is critical to the global economy because of the way it provides essential products and services to citizens and its significant contribution to employment creation. In Zimbabwe, the retail sector's contribution to Gross Domestic Product increased from 10.6 percent in 2010 to about 26 percent in 2012. (Com of Trade and Commerce, 2013) However, retail sector in Zimbabwe as is the case in most African countries has been faced with numerous challenges. One of the challenges pertain to human resources management issues which include lack of employee morale, lack of commitment, lack of motivation and teamwork (Raes, Bruch, and Jong (2013). The problems have led to low quality work output and high turn-over of professional staff. (Bosco & Melchar, 2010) Parris and Peachey (2013) assert that most organisations in retail sector face challenges of mismanagement, bureaucracy, wastage, incompetence and irresponsibility by management and employees. The stated challenges are an indication of human factor element which perhaps need a new leadership style to manage. (Bambale, 2014; Sabeen, 2012; Stoten, 2012; Spears, 2010) The current study was designed to answer the research question: Could servant leadership help to address these labour problems?

Servant leadership is a relatively new paradigm in leadership studies. (Spears, 2010; Schneider & George, 2011; Ngambi, 2011) Research studies have indicated that servant leadership positively leads to employee teamwork behaviour, employee commitment to the organisation and employee organisational citizenship behaviour. (Dixit & Bhati, 2012; Ghorbanhosseini, 2012; Odoch & Nangoli, 2013) However the majority of studies on this phenomenon were done in developed countries for example Pawar (2009) India; Ghorbanhosseini (2012) Iran; Bhunia & Das (2010) India; (Bosco & Melchar (2010) India; and Barbuto (2011) in United States of America. It would be incorrect to assume that the results that were conducted

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in developed economies are applicable here given different conditions. In that regard research studies on this relatively new concept is warranted in developing countries like.

The study can provide a substantial contribution to the body of knowledge regarding leadership theories and predominantly to the servant leadership theory (Ullah & Park, 2013), by providing much-needed empirical evidence that will help leaders in employing servant leadership in their organisations so as to improve business performance. On the other hand the empirical data that came from undertaking this research will have a potential to contribute in determining solutions to inadequate research in the area of servant leadership. Savage & Honeycutt (2011) asserts that the area of servant leadership is imperative to all categories of organisations as it offers the possibility to mend organisational leadership. Lastly the study will be published in order to help in contribution to both practitioners and academicians through its contribution to the rationality of servant leadership as an effective leadership style to be practiced in different sectors and various organisations within Zimbabwe and other countries that may benefit from the outcomes of the research. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to investigate the influence of servant leadership on job outcomes namely employee team work, employee workplace spirituality, employee citizenship behaviour, and employee commitment to the organisation in Zimbabwe.

The specific objectives were:

- To establish the effects of servant leadership on employee teamwork;
- To determine the influence of servant leadership on employee workplace spirituality;
- To examine the impact of servant leadership on organisational citizenship behaviour;
- To assess the influence of servant leadership on organisational commitment.

The rest of the paper is presented as follows: Literature review and the theoretical framework will be presented. This will be followed by a presentation of the methodology used to achieve the research objectives. Thereafter, the results of the study will be presented and analysed. The managerial implications, limitations and avenues for future research form the last part of the study.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Servant Leadership

A servant leader listens, appreciates, heal, understands, persuades and solves problems. (Savage & Honeycutt, 2011) The model of servant leadership entails a change in the approach of the leader that involves letting go the egos and assume that followers will perform best in an environment of freedom and empowerment must be embraced by all the leaders. (Voon, Lo, Ngui & Ayob, 2011) Beck (2010) maintains that the five characteristics of servant leadership are altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping and organisational stewardship. Altruistic calling is an embedded aspiration to make a positive influence in others, emotional healing refers to an obligation to and ability in nurturing divine recovery from adversity or distress in fellow workers and wisdom involves being aware of the environment and consequences of decisions. While persuasive mapping is the capacity to encourage followers on greater prospects, organisational stewardship is the principle of assuming responsibility for the welfare of the organisation and the community. (Beck, 2010)

2.2. Employee Team Work

A team is predominantly a clear working group that contains all the necessary conditions required in a team and its members are entirely dedicated and committed to other employee's promotion and success. (Chatbury et al., 2011; Chinomona et al., 2013) Team work culture has an impact on achievement of stable essential capabilities in the competitive environment that employees are working in. (Reed et al., 2011) Bambale (2014) concurs that teamwork is a considerable supportive process that allows organisations to achieve desired results. For Chen et al. (2013), a team has common goal or purpose that involves team members which in turn help in the development of effective and mutual relationships to achieve team goals. Teamwork relies upon individuals working together in a cooperative environment to achieve common team goals through sharing knowledge and skills. (Olesia et al., 2013; Chinomona et al., 2013) Sharing similar sentiments, Schneider & George (2011) highlight that, teams are a fundamental part of various organisations which should be integrated to the process of achieving organisational objectives, hence it relies upon synergism among teammates that aid in the achievement of an encouraging team environment.

2.3. Employee Workplace Spirituality

Kazemipour & Amin (2012) view workplace spirituality as the ability of an individual to develop a sense of purpose in life, establishing a strong relationship with workmates whilst achieving uniformity between the individual core beliefs and the organisation's core values. It is noted that workplace spirituality in practise has an effect that positively influences an individual employee's organisational commitment and organisational outcome in turn. (Sabeen, 2012; Chegini & Nezhad, 2012; Bambale, 2014) On the other hand researchers such as Kazemipour & Amin (2012) came up with a theoretical framework that analysed workplace spirituality involving the sense of community, the association with organisational values which empirically tested how work place spirituality influences organisational citizenship behaviour and organisational commitment.

However other studies that indicated the benefits of workplace spirituality on organisational outcome have indicated that spirituality improves human wholeness, leading to employee happiness and satisfaction. (Chatbury et al. 2011; Chinomona et al. 2013; Sabeen, 2012; Bambale, 2014) To this extend, workplace spirituality is seen as an important factor that encourages employees to be happy. (Kazemipour & Amin, 2012) A study by Bhunia & Das (2012) provides that workplace spirituality as a factor it reveals employee capabilities that involves, the sense of meaning, tenacity, openness and greatness at workplace. Other researchers, such as, Pawar (2009), Bhunia & Mukhuti (2011), and Roberts (2013) highlighted the effects of workplace spirituality which involves work attitudes, organisational productivity and work unit performance.

2.4. Employee Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

Organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) as described by Odoch & Nangoli (2013) is the bundle of optional behaviours that an employee can display and these behaviours will ultimately exceed employee job requirements. Moreover the behaviour can be expected to go beyond the call of duty. Naqshbandi & Kaur (2011) note organisational citizenship by employees contributes significantly to the smooth functioning of the organisations in which the employees are working. In their study Mohammad, Habib & Alias (2011) assert that it will be difficult for organisations to survive and prosper if their employees are

not behaving as good citizens. Organisational citizenship behaviour is the mostly valuable resource for the survival of the organisation. (Ahmed, Rasheed & Jehanzed, 2012)

There are five categories of employee organisational citizenship behaviours that were modelled by Organ in 1988 that provides the employee behaviours and how these behaviours affect positively the performance of their organisations. In his theories he came up with behaviours such as; Altruism, Conscientiousness, Sportsmanship, Courtesy and Civic Virtue. In the altruism behaviour an employee will be inclined towards other workmates that involves helping new employees and having enough time to help others on the other hand contributing to group efficiency whilst improving the employee's performance. (Alias, 2011; Ahmed et al., 2012; Odoch & Nangoli, 2013) In the same vein, Tsai & Wu (2011) maintain that, an employee who exhibits the sportsmanship behaviour is the one who can take much of the time in productive activities at the workplace while such an employee will circumvent complaining. On the other hand those employees who are able to avoid problems by giving notices in advance and issuing out appropriate information during communication while assisting in the constructive use of time are said be exhibiting the courtesy behaviour. (Naqshbandi & Kaur, 2011)

2.5. Employee Organisational Commitment

Employee organisational commitment has been well defined as the power that an employee is identified with an association in the organisation. (Wahid & Mustamil, 2014) Chinomona et al. (2013) suggest that organisational commitment consists of three basic components. These components are affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Affective commitment comprises an emotional attachment and affection to the organisation whilst continuance commitment involves recognising the costs related with an employee leaving the organisation and normative commitment concerns feelings of commitment towards the organisation. (Nasina & Doris, 2011; Dixit & Bhati, 2012) The researchers further state that employees with a strong affective commitment will remain with the organisation because they are willing to stay, whilst those employees that exudes high levels of continuance commitment will remain within the organisation mostly because they have a feeling that they have to be with that organisation. Lastly employee that has a high level of normative commitment will remain because they have a feeling that they ought to be with the organisation. (Nasina & Doris, 2011)

3. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

In order to empirically test the influence of servant leadership on employees in the retail sector in Zimbabwe, a conceptual model is developed based on the literature reviewed as shown in figure 1. The conceptual model is grounded on the leader-member exchange theory which offers a strong underpinning for the current study. The conceptualised model provides one predictor variable which is servant leadership with four resulting variables which are (employee teamwork, employee workplace spirituality, employee citizenship behaviour, and employee organisational commitment).

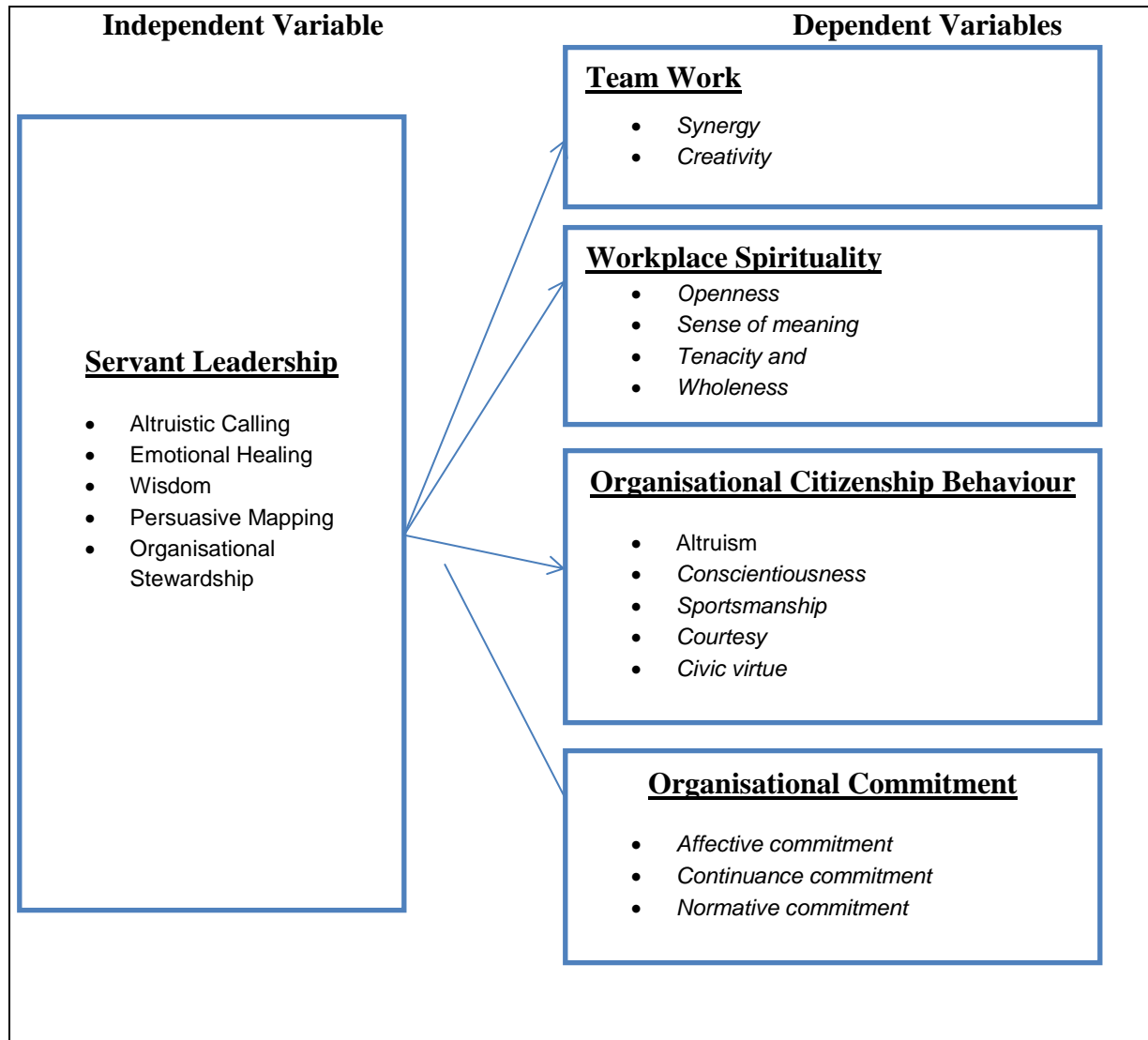


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

3.1. Servant Leadership and Employee Team Work

Servant leadership enables employees to work towards a shared vision and respect collective commitments in the workplace and has great potential to improve the entire organisation operations. (Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2014) On the other hand servant leadership has the prospective to bring up an environment that is favourable to effective organisational team functioning. Since servant leadership involves the development and empowerment of subordinates and junior employees it is evident from the literature that servant leadership is highly influential on employee team work behaviour within an organisation. (Afolabi et al. 2009; Ghorbanhosseini, 2012)

Based on the foregoing, the study formulated the hypothesis:

H1: Servant leadership positively influences employee teamwork behaviour

3.2. Servant Leadership and Employee Workplace Spirituality

The theory of servant leadership and its relevance on employee workplace spirituality has been associated with the outcomes that involve calling and membership of an employee within an organisation. (Roberts, 2013) These outcomes are in agreement with the study carried out by Pawar (2009) who asserts that individual spirituality and workplace spirituality are more significantly influenced by the type of leadership within the organisation as such servant leadership has more impact in predicting the behaviour that will lead to employee workplace spirituality. Servant leaders have a greater ability to trigger their followers' workplace spirituality which is an important factor that encourages employees to be happy. (Kazemipour & Amin, 2012) In line with the literature review and leader-member exchange theory, it was hypothesised that:

H2: Servant leadership is positively associated with employee workplace spirituality.

3.3. Servant Leadership and Employee Citizenship Behaviour

Servant leadership is a crucial determinant of organisational citizenship behaviour by employees. (Lee et al., 2013) Scholars generally agree that there is a positive relationship between servant leadership and employee organisational citizenship behaviour (Ahmed et al. 2012, Lee et al. 2013, and Barbuto, 2011). These results are in consistent with the findings of Mohammad et al. (2011) whose study reveals that a servant leader has the potential to influence other employees that can create behaviour which reciprocate that of their leader.

Based on the foregoing discussion, the study postulated that:

H3: Servant leadership has a positive influence on employee citizenship behaviour (Ahmed, 2012)

3.4. Servant Leadership and Employee Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment reveals how an individual is psychologically identified and participates within the organisation activities in line with the goals of the organisation. (Mat, Romli, Mat & Noor, 2012) Geigle (2012), the accomplishment and recognition of employee spiritual needs by the leaders is certainly associated with the employee commitment to the organisation. In line with the above argument Roberts (2013) found that servant leadership has a positive correlation with employee commitment to the organisation. The study therefore proposed that:

H4: Servant leadership has a positive effect on employee organisational commitment.

4. Methodology

The sample of this quantitative cross sectional study consisted of randomly selected 345 employees of retail outlets operating in Harare, Zimbabwe's capital city. The instruments that were used in the study were the servant leadership scale, the teamwork scale, organizational commitment scale, citizenship behavior scale, and work spirituality scale. To develop the servant leadership scale, the study adapted the scales developed by Chinomona et al. (2013) and Mehta & Pillay (2011). Chatbury et al's. (2011) and

Ullah & Park's (2013) questionnaires were also used to develop the teamwork scale for the current study while the scales developed by Sabeen (2012) and Pawar (2009) were used in developing the work spirituality scale. While scales developed by Naqshbandi & Kaur (2011) and Tsai & Wu (2011) were used to develop the citizenship behavior scale, the organizational commitment scale was developed by adapting those developed by Ghorbanhosseini (2012) and Wahid & Mustamil (2014). In all the scales, the respondents' responses were measured on a 5 point likert scale as 1 for "strongly disagree", 2 for "disagree", 3 for "unsure", 4 for "agree" and 5 for "strongly agree". A high score indicates high level of servant leadership, teamwork, citizenship behavior, work spirituality and commitment.

4.1. Procedure

Informed consent along with the questionnaire comprising of the respondents' general background information, servant leadership, teamwork, work spirituality, citizenship behavior and commitment scales were provided to the respondents of the study. Data were collected from different retail outlets in Harare. The respondents were provided with a brief introduction of the study and were requested to participate in the study. All the respondents were assured that their responses and demographic information would be strictly confidential and only for the academic purpose. The questionnaires were distributed in person by the researchers. The majority of the questionnaires were collected by the researchers after a few days of giving them to respondents. A few of the questionnaires were collected at the spot and some after three or four visits. After collecting the questionnaires, data were captured on SPSS version 23 and the Structural Equation Modeling with Amos was then used to analyse data.

5. Results

5.1. Structural Equation Modelling

To analyse the psychometric properties of the measurement scales and test the hypothesised causal relationships, the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) procedure suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) was used. According to procedure, a measurement model was established before the structural model. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was utilised to estimate the measurement model and to ascertain data quality that include the verification of reliability and construct validity. (Ali, Dey & Filieri, 2015) Structural equation modeling was used to test the overall fit of the model and to test the hypothesised causal relationships among constructs under investigation.

5.2. Measurement Model

In order to evaluate the convergent validity and discriminant validity, a CFA was carried out. The results indicate a good model fit as advised by Hair et al. (2010) because the chi-square = 15.634; df = 5; p = 0.000; NF1 = 0.933; CFI = 0.911; GF1 = 0.918 and RMSEA = 0.058. The model was therefore used for further analysis. To ensure convergent validity, the factor loadings of each item, the average variance extracted (AVE) and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient were analysed. The results show high factor loadings ranging between 0.778 and 0.875 which surpassed the minimum threshold of 0.5 (Har et al., 2010) thereby providing evidence of convergence of the indicators with suitable underlying factors. Both the

Cronbach alpha coefficients and Composite reliability values were above 0.7 as suggested by Nunnally (1978). Additionally, the AVE values for individual constructs were all above 0.50. The general indication is that there is evidence to demonstrate uni-dimensionality, reliability and validity of the measures. (Ali et al., 2015)

5.3. Structural Model Results

In order to test the parameters, a structural model of servant leadership, teamwork, work spirituality, organisational citizenship behaviour and organisational commitment was constructed. The reason of developing a structural model was to ascertain the extent to which servant leadership has a significant impact on teamwork, work spirituality, organisational citizenship behaviour and organisational commitment. The chi-square = 15.167; df = 5; p = 0.000; NF1 = 0.907; CFI = 0.975; GF1 = 0.942 and RMSEA = 0.054 all show that the model was significant. The results of the structural model are shown in figure 2.

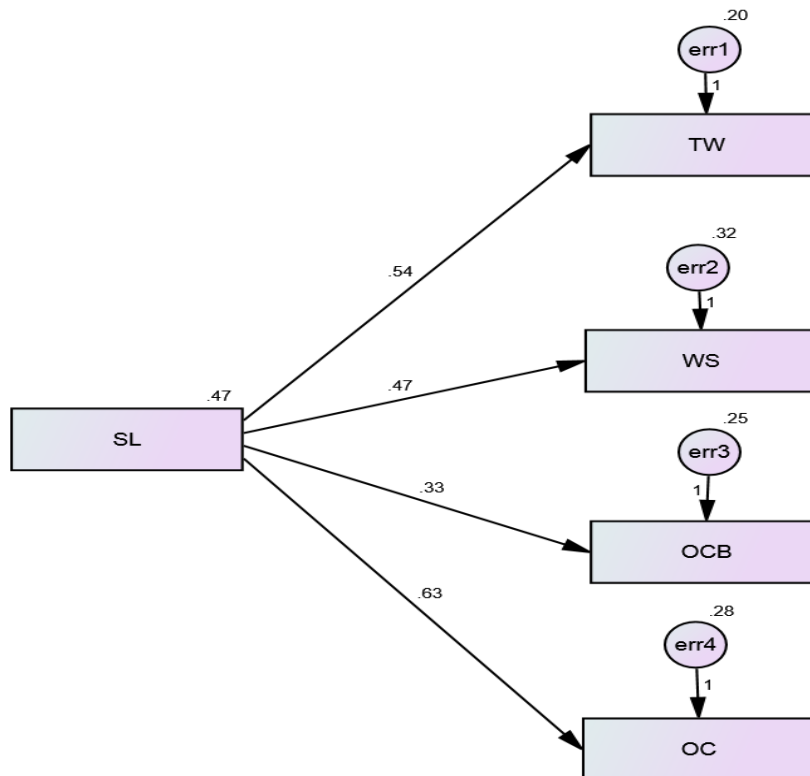


Figure 2. Path coefficients

With regards to the structural equations, the findings show servant leadership is a significant and positive predictor of teamwork ($\beta = 0.54^*$), work spirituality ($\beta = 0.47^*$), organisational citizenship behaviour ($\beta = 0.33^*$) and organisational commitment ($\beta = 0.63^*$). The results and hypotheses testing are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Results of structural model

Hypothesis	Standardised coefficients	p-value	Decision
H1 servant leadership \rightarrow teamwork	0.54	0.000	Supported
H2 servant leadership \rightarrow work spirituality	0.47	0.000	Supported
H3 servant leadership \rightarrow citizenship behaviour	0.33	0.000	Supported
H4 servant leadership \rightarrow organisational commitment	0.63	0.000	Supported

The first hypothesis (H1) predicted a positive relationship between servant leadership and employees' team work behaviour. When the influence of servant leadership on employee team work behaviour was tested, the findings indicated a significant positive influence ($\beta=0.538$, $t=12.040$, $p=0.000$). The result was supported by a positive and significant correlation ($r=0.624^{**}$, $p<0.01$). Thus, accordingly, as supervisors and leaders in the organisation continue to serve their followers and team members without assuming authority whilst performing their responsibilities, trust and satisfaction for the team leader is stimulated among the followers. These results are consistent with those of Mahembe & Engelbrecht (2014), Chinomona et al. (2013), Afolabi et al (2009) and Ghorbanhosseini (2012) who concluded that servant leadership have an influence on team effectiveness as the leaders will increase work creativity which in turn improves team work. Therefore, this study concludes that servant leadership has a significant and strong positive influence on employee team work behaviour.

The second hypothesis (H2) forecasted a positive association between servant leadership and employee workplace spirituality. The influence of servant leadership on employee workplace spirituality was tested as using the correlation and regression analysis which supported the hypothesis. The findings indicated a positive and significant influence between the variables ($\beta=0.466$, $t= 8.367$, $p=0.000$), supported by a positive correlation ($r=0.386^{**}$, $p<0.01$). It is evident that servant leadership has proved to be of great significance in improving employee wholeness at workplace and results in the sense of community. The findings confirm the previous works of Chatbury *et al.* (2011), Sabeen (2012), Chegini & Nezhad (2012), and Bambale (2014) who qualified that individual employee spirituality and workplace spirituality are significantly influenced by the type of leadership within each organisation, hence servant leaders have the ability to activate followers' workplace spirituality which in turn makes the followers happy. As such, this study submits that servant leadership has a strong and significant positive influence on employee workplace spirituality.

The third hypothesis (H3) predicted a positive relationship between servant leadership and employee organisational citizenship behaviour. This hypothesis was supported ($\beta=0.333$, $t=6.768$, $p=0.000$). The results were supported by a significant and positive correlation ($r=0.386^{**}$, $p<0.01$). It is understood that attributes such as consideration behaviour by the leaders will make followers to be involved in the organisational activities. (Tsai & Wu, 2011) These findings are also in line with those of Zehiri *et al.*

(2013), Lee et al. (2013), and Odoch & Nangoli (2013) who assert that leadership in various organisations is now evolving towards responsibility rather than authority as the leader's work is not about commanding, but persuasion. Moreover the role of influence played by leaders through humbleness, empathy and empowerment is an important in affirming employee organisational citizenship behaviour. Hence, based on these findings, this study confirms that servant leadership has an impact on employee organisational citizenship behaviour.

The fourth hypothesis (H4) assumed that servant leadership has a positive influence on employee organisational commitment. The influence of servant leadership on employee commitment to the organisation was tested, the findings indicated a strong positive and significant influence ($\beta=0.634$, $t=12.082$, $p=0.000$). This result was supported by a positive correlation ($r=0.631^{**}$, $p<0.01$). From the results it can be drawn that for employees to be more committed to their organisations, leaders must be available to influence and provide support rather than authority. These results are consistent with those of the studies carried out by Bhunia & Mukhuti (2011), Mat et al. (2012), and Mahembe & Engelbrecht (2014) who asserts that perceptions of social support from the leader in the workplace have also been shown to be positively associated with organizational commitment. Moreover employees' happiness is positively and significantly affected by trust and identification with one's ability to be emotionally attached with the organisation. (Bosco & Melchar, 2010) Also, based on these findings, this study deduces that servant leadership has a strong and significant influence on employee commitment to the organisation. Conceivably this could be a result of the fact that employees in the retail sector are highly committed when they are supported by suitable styles of leadership within their organisations.

6. Managerial Implications and Policy Recommendations

The cumulative significance of servant leadership on employees' teamwork behaviour, workplace spirituality, citizenship behaviour and commitment in Zimbabwean retail sector cannot be overstressed. For instance, the effectiveness of the retail sector might be difficult to accomplish without the right leadership style. The current study was an endeavour to undertake a servant leadership research in a profit making setting which is often neglected as the aspect of servant leadership is mostly associated with non-profit making organisations. Consequently, the outcomes of this empirical study are anticipated to offer rewarding implications to both practitioners and academicians.

To the practitioners, the significant influential role of servant leadership on employee team work behaviour, workplace spirituality, organisational citizenship behaviour and employee commitment to the retail sector organisation is highlighted. The study therefore postulates that leaders in organisations should contemplate implementing servant leadership style when managing employees in order to obtain increased team work behaviour, employee workplace spirituality, citizenship behaviour and increased employees' commitment to the organisations. The position is that, leaders are the ones who set the impetus that influences the way their followers feel about their fellow workmates and consequently, the way the followers will execute their duties. Servant leadership is about the leader integrity and serving which includes fellow workmates, customers and the community around your organisation. Whilst, not taking away confidence from other leadership styles, interest should be increased towards the

development of leaders who have furtherance of followers and organisation as priority whilst setting aside self-interest.

On the academic side, this study provides a substantial input to the leadership and organisational behaviour literature by methodically exploring servant leadership and its impact on employee team work behaviour, workplace spirituality, organisational citizenship behaviour and commitment to the organisation in a profit oriented setup. In particular, the current study findings offer a cautious backing to the proposition that servant leadership should be acknowledged as substantial antecedent and instrument to nurture employee team work behaviour, workplace spirituality, citizenship behaviour and commitment to the retail sector organisations.

The conceptual framework in the current study contributes to the retail sector in Zimbabwe by providing to the body of knowledge on organisational behaviour and leadership style that must be followed for the success of the organisations. The conceptual framework also stands as a guide to the retail sector and other sectors across the country which are profit oriented. To the academic side, the conceptual frame has closed the identified gap which is mainly the application of servant leadership in the profit making organisations and no services sector. This research has managed to model the influence of servant leadership to employee teamwork behaviour, organisational citizenship behaviour and workplace spirituality and organisational commitment in the profit making setup. Moreover the research gap was closed by modelling the keystone for future researches to be conducted in the retail sector in area of organisational behaviour.

7. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Though the current study makes substantial contributions to the academicians and the practitioners, it has limitations in several ways; hence, some directions for the future research are postulated. First, the data were collected from only retailers in Harare Zimbabwe, possibly, the results would be more enlightening if data from all industries and other areas of the country are encompassed in the study. For further development of this current conceptual framework, more study is needed in a large data set for all employees in different sectors in order to carry out industry wide analysis. Hence, future studies may be done by using data from all provinces and different industries across the country. Second, the current study was restricted to the retail sector in Zimbabwe. Subsequent research should envisage replicating this study in other similar and developing countries in the Africa to allow for comparisons of results. Future studies can also extend the current conceptual framework studying the outcomes of servant leadership on a larger set of variables other than intrinsic variables only. Above and beyond, the study will immensely contribute substantial knowledge to the existing body of servant leadership literature on different sectors and organisations in other developing countries, an area which occurs to be snubbed in research perspectives in the academics.

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