




Promoting talent through managing mental health: The role of decent work and organisational citizenship behaviour



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Orientation: Calls exist to understand how talent can be managed especially within the public service.

Research purpose: The research sought to determine the determinants of employee mental health accounting for the role of decent work and organisational citizenship behaviours within the South African public service environment.

Motivation for the study: Talent management within the public service has become a crucial focus area. Further, there is a need to explore how such efforts of talent management relate with the promotion of employee well-being.

Research approach/design and method: A survey approach utilising a convenience sample was used with the South African public service employees with a sample of 289 respondents. The location of the study was Bisho, in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used for the purpose of analysis with multiple regression and partial least squares (PLS) also utilised.

Main findings: The results do not show support for the influence of organisational citizenship behaviour on employee mental health. Further, decent work predicted employee mental health and also had a full mediation on the relationship between organisational citizenship behaviours and mental health.

Practical/managerial implications: Managers, particularly in the public service, where work engagement is so intense, should prioritise decent work and organisational citizenship behaviour when promoting employee mental health. Managers should also take a closer look at how these two constructs influence talent promotion. A focus on these constructs will not only nurture talent but will also produce a highly engaged and committed workforce that will provide the sector with a competitive advantage.

Contribution/value-add: The findings inform an important conversation around addressing the challenges of employee mental health within the organisation. The theoretical and practitioner press could potentially benefit from these findings in addressing such a challenge.

Keywords: public service; South Africa; mental health; decent work; organisational citizenship behaviour.

Introduction

The prevailing socio-historical nature of poverty, unemployment and inequality poses challenges to employee mental health. This state of affairs is noted as worrisome especially within the South African public sector (Nyabvudzi & Chinyamurindi, 2019). This has undoubtedly limited opportunities for promoting talent within the sector. Calls exist arguing for the need to pay close attention to the public service as a context of study with reference to aspects such as that of intra-organisational behaviours such as decent work and also health outcomes such as mental health (Chinyamurindi, 2019; Chinyamurindi & Shava, 2022; Maredza & Chola, 2016; Mathibe & Chinyamurindi, 2021). The focus on decent work emerges as an important avenue of inquiry and needing continued prioritisation (Blustein et al., 2019a; Khan et al., 2020). This study therefore seeks to answer such calls and the growing body of work exploring the role of intra-organisational behaviours and health outcomes especially in organisations.

Attention in this study is being given to employee mental health. This has been a topic placed as a priority especially with the contemporary workplace (Hasin et al., 2018) including the South African work psychology space (Chinyamurindi, 2019). Ultimately, links are being shown between the promotion of employee mental health with outcomes such as productivity (De Vries et al., 2015). The call is heightened by the failure of the workplace to address adequately challenges related to employee mental health. All this leads to continued stigma and stereotyping (Elraz, 2018; Follmer & Jones, 2017).

The study further focuses on organisational citizenship behaviour as an important intra-organisational issue. Organisational citizenship behaviour is viewed as those behaviours not formally recognised by the reward systems of the organisation whose purpose is to promote the effective functioning of the organisation (Organ, 1988). Scholars have devoted attention to understanding organisational citizenship behaviour internationally (e.g. Idris et al., 2021) and in South Africa (e.g. Hennicks et al., 2022). Despite praise for these studies, some concerns are flagged. For instance, the link between organisational citizenship behaviour and health outcomes remains tenuous (Colquitt et al., 2013). Further, there is a need to extend the understanding of organisational citizenship behaviour across different contexts and units of analysis (Akbari et al., 2020).

The final issue of focus for this study is decent work. The call for decent work research appears to be actuated by the challenges being faced by employees within organisations. An argument here is that the presence of challenges merely stifles the meaning and fulfilment employees can attain from the experience of work (Di Fabio & Blustein, 2016). A need exists to ascertain the link that decent work can have on positive, healthy behaviours within the workplace (Bawuro et al., 2019). Research on decent work has been mostly centred in making links with organisational outcomes (Ferraro et al., 2020; Graça et al., 2021). Calls therefore exist for further research to extend the understanding of the impact of decent work on employee-related outcomes, especially those that encourage well-being (Argote et al., 2021).

Research purpose and objectives

The overall purpose of this research was to determine the determinants of employee mental health accounting for the role of decent work and organisational citizenship behaviour. The specific objectives were to ascertain: (1) the relationship between organisational citizenship behaviour and employee mental health, (2) the relationship between decent work and employee mental health and finally (3) the mediating role of decent work on the relationship between organisational citizenship behaviour and employee mental health.

The rest of the paper follows a structure. The next section begins by setting the context of the study. This is then followed by a review of the literature through a demarcation between the theoretical and empirical literature. This is

followed by the discussion on the methodology and data collection procedure. Thereafter, the results and discussion are presented in relation to the presented theoretical and empirical literature. Finally, the study focuses on the practical interventions that can be drawn from this study to the field of work psychology.

Literature review

Context of the study

The study is located within the South African public service context. For the general public, such a context becomes crucial in realising service delivery outcomes (Ncemane et al., 2021). Despite this noted importance, there is acknowledgement of the public service to be characterised by rigid structures that limit their operations (Ngoepe-Ntsoane, 2021). The presence of such rigid structures is attributed to challenges happening in the South African public service. These include challenges such as: (1) high employee turn-over (Shibiti, 2019; Zondo, 2018), (2) mental health challenges (Chinyamurindi, 2019, 2021) and (3) poor work outcomes (Khamisa et al., 2017; Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2021a). Such rigid structures also have ramifications on how talent is managed within the South African public service (Mello, 2021). A leadership response is needed to assist in addressing such challenges especially within the public service. This is a type of leadership that makes a balance between getting the task done while also having a concern for people (Mazantsana et al., 2021).

The role of intra-organisational activities and processes becomes crucial to leadership responses in managing talent. For the public service in South Africa, the desire here is to make sure that there is willpower in the organisation for the promotion of well-being (Dlamini & Nzimakwe, 2021). Such efforts potentially may aid in improving not just the performance but also talent management efforts within the South African public service (Mello & Makamu, 2021). Calls exist for studies that respond to the varied challenges faced within the South African public service (Chinyamurindi & Shava, 2022).

Theoretical literature

The study focuses on two theories in view of the proposed research aims and objectives. Firstly, the work of Organ (1988) is brought into focus with regard to the concept of organisational citizenship behaviour. Considering organisational citizenship behaviour, there is a dual nature between the individual effort and environmental context (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). This dual nature, coupled with the presence of a psychological drive, informs the additional role behaviour employees may engage in (Benuyenah, 2021). Through its transformation and extending the work of Organ, organisational citizenship behaviour was deemed to consist of behaviours that show (1) *altruism*, (2) *conscientiousness*, (3) *courtesy*, (4) *sportsmanship* and (5) *civic virtue* (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Organ, 1998). These behaviours have been found to have links with employee mental health (Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2021a). The research model can be seen in Figure 1.

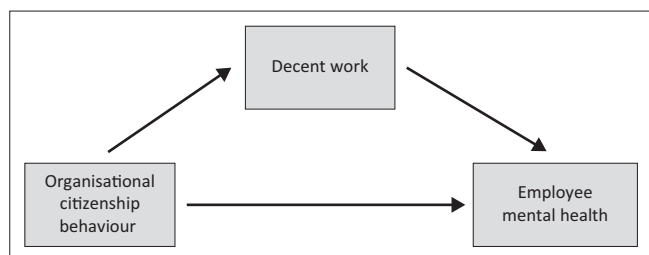


FIGURE 1: Research model.

The second theoretical consideration is the psychology of work theory (PWT), which assumes that work has an important meaning in the life of the individual (Blustein, 2001; Duffy et al., 2016). Therefore, there is a need to promote positive work experiences that are also consistent with mental health promotion (Blustein et al., 2019a). Achieving this requires attention to those factors that encourage individuals to enjoy meaningful work experiences (Blustein et al., 2019b). The core tenets of such factors can be summarised as follows: (1) *the presence of a physically and interpersonally safe working environment*, (2) *access to health care*, (3) *adequate compensation*, (4) *hours that allow free time and rest* and finally, (5) *organisational values that complement family and social values* (Duffy et al., 2017). Promoting a conducive organisational culture can serve as an aid for all stakeholders in organisations (Andersson et al., 2020). This potentially can include extra in-role behaviours that employees are engaged in. All this can happen in response to pressing job demands and available resources within the organisation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Organisational citizenship behaviour and employee mental health

The promotion of mental health emerges as an important priority for contemporary organisations (Hasin et al., 2018). Organisations must be responsive to the challenges posed by mental health (Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2021a). In so doing, especially in the public service, responsive strategies are needed (Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2021a). The lack of such strategies can be a source for poor work outcomes (Lebina et al., 2020). All this place a need to prioritise work and health outcomes (Joubert & Hay, 2019).

Organisational citizenship behaviour potentially offers employees the opportunity to assist others within the confines of the workplace especially with the public service (Abdelmotaleb & Saha, 2018). Through extra in-role behaviours, employees potentially aid their skills in their activity base in relation to their work (Khan et al., 2020). The lack of citizenship behaviour has been potentially linked to challenges such as burnout, absenteeism and a high turnover (Akbari et al., 2020). This places importance on the role of encouraging organisational citizenship behaviour (De Geus et al., 2020). Based on the presented literature, it can be expected that:

Hypothesis 1: Organisational citizenship behaviour has a direct and positive association with employee mental health.

Decent work and employee mental health

The presence of decent working conditions can be linked to positive work behaviours (Duffy et al., 2016, 2017). Ultimately, such a presence assists individuals and the organisations that they work for (Duffy et al., 2022). When addressed, the context of work can potentially address the mental challenges employees face (Ward & Scott, 2018). This creates for the employee a sense of confidence, the experience of freedom and perceptions of safety (Kazimna et al., 2020).

In countries like South Africa, the role of decent work is argued for. Because of the growing levels of inequality, the promotion of decent work can address prevailing social inequality (Di Fabio & Maree, 2016). The opposite can also be true. In stifling decent work efforts, this may create social and health strain (Han & Hyun, 2019). This places importance on decent work as a construct of study (Masdonati et al., 2019). Ultimately, the lack of decent work potentially creates a disempowering environment for employees (Ferreira et al., 2019). Based on the presented literature, it can be expected that:

Hypothesis 2: Decent work has a direct and positive association with employee mental health.

The mediation of decent work on organisational citizenship behaviour and employee mental health

The presence of organisational citizenship behaviour can only thrive when a conducive work environment is in place. Empirical evidence exists showing the necessity of an organisational climate that allows employees to flourish (Chinyamurindi & Shava, 2022). Such an organisational climate can also potentially be one that promotes decent working conditions (Blustein et al., 2016; Di Fabio & Maree, 2016). In the promotion of mental health, there is also evidence showing the role that organisational citizenship behaviour can play (Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2021a). However, the link with decent work remains unexplored, especially within the South African public service. This research therefore seeks to fill this gap, advancing the ongoing research on employee mental health within the public service (Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2021a, Chinyamurindi & Shava, 2022; Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2021b).

The lack of a culture that promotes citizenship behaviour can be detrimental and potentially affecting free expression in the workplace (Akbari et al., 2020). The presence of decent working conditions assists both the realisation of an environment suitable for work (Blustein et al., 2019a) and achieving employee and organisation outcomes (Adams et al., 2022). This can include even those extra in-role behaviours that employees engage as manifest in organisational citizenship (Benuyenah, 2021). The presented literature appears to heighten need and focus. Based on the presented literature, it can be expected that:

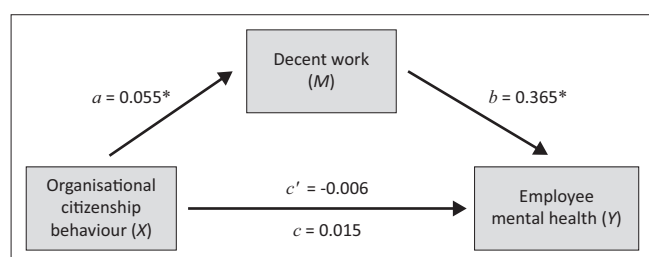
Hypothesis 3: Decent work mediates the relationship between organisational citizenship behaviours and employee mental health.

Research approach and design

The study followed a quantitative descriptive survey design to describe and interpret attitudes, experiences, current status of employees in the South African public service sector (Mertler, 2014; Saunders et al., 2009). To establish the possibility of a causal relationship among decent work and organisational citizenship behaviour in promoting talent through managing employee mental health in the South African public service sector, a multiple regression with partial least squares (PLS) was utilised. Such an approach and technique are useful when working with small samples, estimating complex models and making predictions and explanations (Hair et al., 2019). There is an observation of the suitability of such approaches and techniques when seeking to ascertain success factor research or when exploring the source of a competitive advantage (Hair, 2016).

Measures

Three main measures were used for this study. Firstly, organisational citizenship behaviour was measured using a 15-item shortened scale developed by Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1989) and tested by several South African and international researchers (Hennicks et al., 2022; Idris et al., 2021). Secondly, decent work was measured using a 15-item scale developed by Duffy and colleagues (Duffy et al., 2017) with five dimensions. These five dimensions are: (1) *safe working conditions*, (2) *access to health care*, (3) *adequate compensation*, (4) *free time and rest* and (5) *complementary values*. The final measure was employee mental health. This was measured through the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6), a six-item scale (Furukawa et al., 2003). Respondents for the K6 were asked to indicate how they had felt during the past 30 days: (1) nervous, (2) hopeless, (3) restless or fidgety, (4) so depressed that nothing could cheer you up, (5) that everything was an effort and (6) worthless. All three scales were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Concerning reliability, the Cronbach alpha coefficients from the study all met the required threshold as stipulated by Nunnally (1978).



Note: a is the direct effect of organisational citizenship behaviour on decent work; b is the direct effect of decent work on employee mental health; c' is the direct effect of organisational citizenship behaviour on employee mental health; c is the total effect of organisational citizenship behaviour on employee mental health. All effects are unstandardised.

* $p < 0.05$.

FIGURE 2: Simple mediation conceptual model for the mediating effect of decent work on the relationship between organisational citizenship behaviour and employee mental health.

Sample

The study employed a convenience sampling approach (Saunders et al., 2009). This is because the approach was deemed simple, efficient and made it easy to collect data in a short space of time (Saunders et al., 2009). The research team solicited participation from five government departments located in Bisho. A total of 100 questionnaires were sent to each of the five public service organisations that cited availability in the research. From the total of 500 questionnaires distributed to the total five government departments (100 for each department), a total of 289 were deemed usable for data analysis. A response rate of 58% was achieved.

Ethical clearance

Ethical clearance was granted at the University of Fort Hare with ethical clearance number: CHI028 (No. REC-270710-028-RA). The research was also funded through the South African Medical Research Council.

Data analysis steps

The researchers utilised the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27, AMOS version 22 and the Hayes PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2013) for the data analysis. Firstly, it was imperative to establish the validity and reliability of the measurement tools. To achieve this, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (using AMOS) and a reliability analysis (using Cronbach alpha and Joreskog rho) were conducted. Having established the validity and reliability of the measurement tools, a simple mediation analysis was then conducted using the Hayes process macro. The underlying premise was the use of a regression-based approach to mediation as a basis for the analyses.

A Likert-type scale was used to measure all the variables under consideration (i.e. decent work, organisational citizenship behaviour and employee mental health). All necessary assumptions (i.e. linearity, homoscedasticity, normality of estimation error and independence of observations) were assessed to see whether the data were suitable for mediation analysis. After assessing all the necessary assumptions, a descriptive analysis was then used to describe the study's demographic features and theoretical variables. The Hayes PROCESS macro was then used to address the hypothesised frameworks. Following MacKinnon et al. (2007), the strength of the indirect and the direct effects were used to determine the result of the mediation analysis. The next section presents the results of the study.

Results

Confirmatory factor analysis and reliability analysis

A CFA followed by a reliability analysis was conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the study's measurement scales. Literature was used as a guide on the empirical factors for these tools. For the CFA, some model fit indices and their

criteria were used to examine the goodness-of-fit of the measurement models. These model fit indices include the chi-square value degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2 divided by df, abbreviated as CMIN/DF), the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). The criteria for a good fit were CFI and TLI values ≥ 0.95 (Hu & Bentler, 1998; West et al., 2012); CMIN/DF values ≤ 3 (Kline, 1998) and SRMR as well as RMSEA values ≤ 0.05 (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000; MacCallum et al., 1996). In case the model does not meet the criteria for a good fit, we used the criteria for an acceptable model fit. Thus, the criteria for acceptable model fit were CFI and TLI values $0.90 \leq \text{CFI}$ or $\text{TLI} < 0.95$ (Hooper et al., 2008; West et al., 2012); CMIN/DF values $3 < \text{CMIN/DF} \leq 5$ (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985); SRMR values $0.05 < \text{SRMR} \leq 0.09$ (Hu & Bentler, 1998) and RMSEA values $0.05 < \text{RMSEA} \leq 0.10$ (Schermelleh et al., 2003).

In terms of reliability, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient larger than 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) indicated acceptable internal consistency, and according to Pallant (2001), an alpha Cronbach's value above 0.6 is considered an acceptable index. To measure composite or construct reliability (CR), the Joreskog rho coefficient (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Jöreskog, 1971) was utilised and according to Hair et al. (2014) the minimum composite reliability value should exceed 0.70. Convergent validity was assessed by the average variance extracted (AVE) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), where $\text{AVE} > 0.50$ was considered a good convergent validity (Schumacker & Lomax, 2016). A minimum cut-off point of 0.50 is recommended, but < 0.50 can be accepted provided the composite reliability is higher than 0.60. Some studies in literature indicated that the AVE values < 0.50 are acceptable provided the CR values are > 0.60 (Qin et al., 2022; Raines-Eudy, 2000; Schumacker & Lomax, 2016).

Firstly, CFA and reliability analysis were conducted on the 15-item organisational citizenship behaviour scale. The most parsimonious model was achieved with only six items loading on two factors. All factor loadings were above 0.70, and the established factor structure shows three items loading for sportsmanship (Factor 1) and three items loading for conscientiousness (Factor 2). Because of poor item loading, other factors (i.e. altruism, courtesy and civic virtue) were eliminated. Thus, for this setting, only sportsmanship and conscientiousness are required to measure organisational citizenship behaviour. The value of the AVE for the constructs or factors is greater than the required minimum of 0.50; thus, the convergent validity for these factors is deemed adequate. The internal consistency of these factors is also statistically acceptable as all the values are more than 0.70 for all the constructs with an overall Cronbach alpha of 0.948. Further, assessing the Joreskog rho for measuring composite reliability, the values of CR are also more than 0.70 for all the established factors. These results show that the reliability

and composite reliability are adequate for the established measurement model, for the organisational citizenship behaviour measurement tool.

Examining the fitness of the established measurement model, the fit indices indicate that the organisational citizenship behaviour model had a perfect fit. In Table 1, CMIN/DF is 0.474, which is < 3 , and SRMR is 0.008, which is < 0.05 ; both are regarded as a good fit. On the other hand, CFI is 1.000, while TLI is also 1.000, indicating a perfect model fit for the organisational citizenship behaviour measurement model.

The employee mental health CFA and internal consistency output are presented in Table 2. The CFA and reliability analysis were conducted on the six-item mental health measurement tool, and the most parsimonious model was achieved with four items. The factor loadings were all above 0.55 for the retained items. The AVE was 0.434, which indicated an acceptable level of convergent reliability as the composite reliability (CR = 0.752) is greater than 0.60. The internal consistency shows a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.750, which reveals a statistically acceptable level of reliability for the mental health tool. In Table 2, the fit indices indicate that the mental health measurement model had a good fit for the data. Thus, CMIN/DF is 2.359, which is < 3 , and SRMR is 0.024, which is < 0.05 ; both are regarded as a good fit. In addition, CFI is 0.989, which is > 0.95 and TLI is 0.968, which is also > 0.95 , indicating a good model fit for the mental health measurement model.

TABLE 1: The organisational citizenship behaviour confirmatory factor analysis and internal consistency output.

Factors and respective items	CFA loadings	Alpha if item deleted
Factor 1. Sportsmanship†		
I always require frequent doses of motivation to get the work done.	0.790	0.952
I usually find fault with what my organization is doing.	0.913	0.865
I usually focus on what is wrong rather than positive side of situation	0.994	0.897
Factor 2. Conscientiousness‡		
I obey organisational rules even when no one is watching.	0.981	0.909
I don't take extra or long breaks while on duty.	0.863	0.841
My attendance at work is above the norm	0.747	0.917

Note: Overall Cronbach Alpha = **0.948**.

CFA, confirmatory factor analysis.

†. Cronbach's Alpha = **0.937**; Joreskog rho = **0.929**; Average Variance Extracted (AVE) = **0.815**;

‡. Cronbach's Alpha = **0.924**; Joreskog rho = **0.901**; and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) = **0.755**.

TABLE 2: The employee mental health confirmatory factor analysis and internal consistency output.

Factors and respective items	CFA loadings	Alpha if item deleted
Factor 1. Mental health		
During the past 30 days, I have often felt nervous.	0.568	0.726
During the past 30 days, I have often felt restless or fidgety.	0.653	0.699
During the past 30 days, I have often felt so depressed that nothing...	0.661	0.682
During the past 30 days, I have often felt that everything was an...	0.740	0.659

Note: Cronbach's Alpha = **0.750**; Joreskog rho = **0.752**; Average Variance Extracted (AVE) = **0.434**.

CFA, confirmatory factor analysis.

TABLE 3: The decent work confirmatory factor analysis and internal consistency output.

Factors and respective items	CFA loadings	Alpha if item deleted
Factor 1. Safe working conditions†		
I feel emotionally safe interacting with people at work.	0.808	0.610
At work, I feel safe from emotional or verbal abuse of any kind.	0.698	0.684
I feel physically safe interacting with people at work.	0.663	0.740
Factor 2. Access to health care‡		
I get good healthcare benefits from my job.	0.861	0.592
I have a good healthcare plan at work.	0.589	0.740
My employer provides acceptable options for healthcare.	0.680	0.662
Factor 3. Adequate compensation§		
I do not feel I am paid enough based on my qualifications and...	0.980	n/a
I am rewarded adequately for my work.	0.889	n/a
Factor 4. Free time and rest¶		
I do not have enough time for non-work activities.	0.693	0.758
I have no time to rest during the work week.	0.843	0.669
I have free time during the work week.	0.727	0.740
Factor 5. Complementary values††		
The values of my organization match my family values.	0.880	0.830
My organisation's values align with my family values.	0.789	0.914
The values of my organisation match the values within my...	0.974	0.735

Note: Overall Cronbach Alpha = **0.713**.

CFA, confirmatory factor analysis.

†, Cronbach's Alpha = **0.763**; Joreskog rho = **0.768**; Average Variance Extracted (AVE) = **0.527**;

‡, Cronbach's Alpha = **0.749**; Joreskog rho = **0.758**; Average Variance Extracted (AVE) = **0.517**;

§, Cronbach's Alpha = **0.931**; Joreskog rho = **0.933**; Average Variance Extracted (AVE) = **0.875**;

¶, Cronbach's Alpha = **0.796**; Joreskog rho = **0.800**; Average Variance Extracted (AVE) = **0.573**;

††, Cronbach's Alpha = **0.869**; Joreskog rho = **0.914**; Average Variance Extracted (AVE) = **0.782**.

Lastly, CFA and reliability analysis were conducted on the 15-item decent work scale. The most parsimonious model was achieved with 14 items loading on five factors with all loadings above 0.55 (see Table 3).

Assessing the items for each factor as shown in Table 3, the established factors were named safe working conditions (Factor 1), access to health care (Factor 2), adequate compensation (Factor 3), free time and rest (Factor 4) and complementary values (Factor 5). The AVE for all the factors is greater than the required minimum of 0.50; thus, the convergent validity for the established factors is deemed adequate. The internal consistency of these factors is statistically acceptable as all the values are more than 0.70 for all the constructs with an overall Cronbach alpha of 0.713. Further, assessing the Joreskog rho for measuring composite reliability, the values of CR are also more than 0.70 for all the constructs. These results show that the reliability and composite reliability are adequate for the established measurement model, for the decent work measurement tool.

Examining the fitness of the established measurement model (see Table 4), the fit indices indicate that the decent work measurement model had a reasonably good fit for the data.

TABLE 4: Model fitness indices for the established measurement models.

Measurement model	CMIN/DF	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA [90% CI]
Organisational citizenship behaviour	0.474	1.000	1.000	0.008	0.000 [0.000 – 0.046]
Employee mental health	2.359	0.989	0.968	0.024	0.069 [0.000 – 0.152]
Decent work	2.321	0.955	0.939	0.047	0.068 [0.054 – 0.082]

CMIN/DF, Discrepancy/Chi-square divided by degree of freedom; CFI, The Comparative Fit Index; TLI, The Tucker Lewis index; SRMR, The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA, The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; CI, confidence interval.

TABLE 5: Descriptive summary of main theoretical variables ($N = 289$).

Variables	Mean	s.d.
Organisational citizenship behaviour	2.865	0.840
Employee mental health	2.580	0.511
Decent work	3.337	0.405

Note: Organisational citizenship behaviour and Decent work were measure on a 5-point Likert scale (1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree and 5 – Strongly Agree). Employee Mental health were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 – All the time, 2 – Most of the time, 3 – Some of the time, 4 – A little of the time, 5 – None of the time). SD, standard deviation.

Thus, based on Table 4, CMIN/DF is 2.321, which is < 3 ; SRMR is 0.047, which is < 0.05 ; and CFI is 0.955, which is > 0.95 ; all are regarded as a good fit. On the other hand, TLI is 0.939, which is just below 0.95 and RMSEA of 0.068 with 90% CI [0.054 – 0.082], indicating an acceptable model fit for the decent work measurement model. In conclusion, all the measurement models have fulfilled all the model fit requirements; thus are suitable for building linkage between factors and determining contribution of constructs in measuring organisational citizenship behaviour, mental health and decent work within the sampled organisation. Thus, the results for the fitness indexes assessment for the measurement models of the CFA show that the established measurement models are adequate. These established variables were then used for further analysis.

Descriptive and reliability analysis

Table 5 shows the results for the descriptive summary of the variables used in this study. Measured on a five-point Likert scale, all variables reported moderate mean levels. Decent work was the most highly rated scale (Mean = 3.337, standard deviation [s.d.] = 0.405), while employee mental health was the least rated (mean = 2.580, SD = 0.511) from the sampled participants.

Simple mediation analysis

A simple mediation analysis was conducted to investigate the hypothesis that decent work mediates the relationship between organisational citizenship behaviour and employee mental health. Table 6 reports on the findings of this.

Based on hypothesis 1, the organisational citizenship behaviour to employee mental health path was examined in order to determine whether organisational citizenship behaviour has a significant, direct and positive association with employee mental health. From Table 6, it is evident that, while controlling for decent work (mediator), the results indicated that organisational citizenship behaviour was not

TABLE 6: Mediation analysis to determine the mediating effect of decent work on the relationship between organisational citizenship behaviour and employee mental health.

Effects	Unstandardised beta coefficients		95% confidence interval		Significance of beta coefficients	
	Beta	s.e.	LLCI	ULCI	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Direct effect(s)						
a) OCB (X) → DW (M)	0.055*	0.027	0.001	0.109	2.010	0.045
b) DW (M) → MH (Y)	0.365*	0.067	0.233	0.497	5.456	< 0.0001
c) OCB (X) → MH (Y)	-0.006	0.034	-0.072	0.061	-0.166	0.868
Total effect of X on Y	0.015	0.035	-0.054	0.083	0.417	0.677
Indirect effect of X on Y	0.020*	0.011	0.001	0.043	-	-

Note: The predictor or independent variable (X) is organisational citizenship behaviour and the outcome dependent variable (Y) is employee mental health.

s.e., standard error; LLCI, lower limit confidence interval; ULCI, upper limit confidence interval; OCB, organisational citizenship behaviour; MH, employee mental health; M, mediator variable; DC, decent work.

*Significant effect at Alpha = 0.05. Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals: 5000.

a significant predictor of employee mental health ($\beta = -0.006$, $t = -0.166$, $p = 0.868$). Thus, there is sufficient evidence at 5% level of significance not to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that organisational citizenship behaviour does not have a significant, direct and positive association with employee mental health. Put differently, organisational citizenship behaviour is not a significant predictor of employee mental health after controlling for the mediator, decent work. This result is consistent with full mediation. Further, the total effect of organisational citizenship behaviour on employee mental health is also not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.015$, $t = 0.417$, $p = 0.677$). This result suggests that, without controlling for the mediator variable (decent work), organisational citizenship behaviour still does not have a significant, direct and positive association with employee mental health.

Based on hypothesis 2, in order to determine whether decent work has a direct and positive association with employee mental health, the decent work to employee mental health path was examined. Based on Table 6, the results show that decent work has a statistically significant, direct and positive effect on employee mental health ($\beta = 0.365$, $t = 5.456$, $p \leq 0.0001$). As our beta estimate is positive and significant, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected, and we can conclude that decent work has a significant, direct and positive association with employee mental health. The results also indicate that organisational citizenship behaviour has a significant, direct and positive effect on the mediator variable decent work ($\beta = 0.055$, $t = 2.010$, $p = 0.045$). Thus, higher levels of reported organisational citizenship behaviour were related to higher mean ratings of decent work. These results further support the mediational hypothesis.

Finally, based on hypothesis 3, the indirect effect was examined in order to establish whether decent work mediates the relationship between organisational citizenship behaviour and employee mental health. A 95% bias-corrected confidence interval based on 5000 bootstrap samples indicated that the

indirect effect ($\beta = 0.02$) was statistically significant (95% CI: [0.001 to 0.043]). Thus, employees reported greater employee mental health even after taking into account organisational citizenship behaviour's indirect effect through decent work. These findings are consistent with full mediation. In summary, higher levels of organisational citizenship behaviour were associated with employee mental health scores that were approximately 0.020 points higher as mediated by decent work. In conclusion, decent work mediates the relationship between organisational citizenship behaviour and employee mental health.

Figure 2 presents the summarised model with the resultant test results.

Discussion

The research sought to determine the determinants of employee mental health accounting for decent work and organisational citizenship behaviour. The findings show support between intra-organisational behaviours such as decent work on employee mental health. This finding contributes to the ongoing understanding around the role of decent work on workplace outcomes (Blustein et al., 2019b; Ferreira et al., 2019). In essence, the presence of decent work as found in previous research served an empowerment and improvement role for employees to work better (Kazimna et al., 2020). This research extends to show how decent work links with health outcomes such as employee mental health. The focus of decent work becomes important not just with specific inference to how the job is done but the ensuing health experiences thereafter (Khan et al., 2020).

The findings from the study further emphasise the importance of the prioritising employee mental health (Hasin et al., 2018). Paying attention to the support of decent working conditions gives cue to those aspects that can promote well-being. This becomes an important finding, particularly within the South African public service, which has been noted to be with challenges that impede the functioning of individuals (Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2021a; Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2021b). In addition, the findings of this study highlight the weak relationship between organisational citizenship behaviour and health outcomes (Colquitt et al., 2013) such as employee mental health (Shava & Chinyamurindi, 2021a). In seeking to promote aspects related to talent management, paying attention to the promotion of decent work can assist in employee development with regard to their mental health.

Contribution

The study makes an important contribution through its findings in using a developing nation perspective such as South Africa including using the public service as a unit of analysis (Akbari et al., 2020). The focus of decent work becomes an important contribution also of this study. There is growing acknowledgement that decent work should be prioritised, especially given the challenges faced within the

contemporary workspace. The contribution here is that decent work can be linked to healthy behaviours within the workplace (Bawuro et al., 2019). Further, based on finding three, the full mediation support of the relationship between organisational citizenship behaviours and employee mental health potentially proffer a contribution to growing scholarly inquiry (Argote et al., 2021; Ferraro et al., 2020; Graça et al., 2021).

Implications for human resource development practice

Some practical implications can be drawn based on the findings of the study. Firstly, there is need to prioritise the tenets related to decent work. This becomes important especially within the South African public service and a basis for improving talent management (Ncemane et al., 2021). The findings of this study can also be linked to aspects related to the management of talent within the same public service. A context noted to be not only rigid but often suffering from the failure to implement strategies that can be attributed to the workforce in place (Ngope-Ntsoane, 2021). With the argument of Mello (2021), his call for linkages between working conditions and work outcomes in promoting talent management, considering decent work, while prioritising employee needs (Mazantsana et al., 2021), becomes important. This research illuminates the role, not just of employee mental health but also the role of intra-organisational activities and processes is also deemed critical in making sure the South Africa public service performs at its peak (Dlamini & Nzimakwe, 2021).

Limitations and future research

Some limitations can be cited with this work. Firstly, the study was based on responses from five government departments in Bisho in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. Caution must be exercised especially when attempting to make generalisations to other government departments. Secondly, a challenge can also be noted especially when working (as did this research) with a cross-sectional study. These issues can include aspects related to common method bias. Future research could incorporate a qualitative study, understanding better the subjective experiences of employee mental health. Further, the study only relied on employees as informants to the study. Future research could also seek to understand the mental health issues experienced by different tiers of management. Another angle of focus for future research could also be to understand how different public service entities are responding to the mental health challenges faced within their organisations. This can also include exploring the range of strategies that promote decent work as pre-cursor to interventions.

Conclusion

This research gives focus to the important role that intra-organisational behaviours play in supporting employee mental health. The mechanism through which this can

happen is through the support and promotion of decent working conditions. There is a need for organisations to be more proactive a conducive environment that supports not only employee development but also conditions of work. In turn, this could influence aspects related to talent management. This research ignited interest especially around the development theme within organisations. The prioritisation of employee mental health development should be chief amongst such organisational efforts. The findings give impetus to address employee mental health issues especially within the South African public service. Given the presented challenges, the public service is best to improve through the development and promotion of a workplace culture that promotes intra-organisational behaviours and conditions such as decent work.

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W.C. and M.M. jointly shared responsibility in writing this article. C.S.M. assisted with the data analysis of the article.

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Data availability

The data used were obtained via interviews; the data are represented in the manuscript in the presented tables.

Disclaimer

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