

Does employee perceptions of fit to job, fit to organisation and fit to community influence job performance? The case of Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector

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Dates:

Received: 16 Apr. 2012

Accepted: 08 May 2013

Published: 26 Aug. 2013

How to cite this article:

Chinomona, R., Dhurup, M.,
& Elizabeth Chinomona,
E. (2013). Does employee
perceptions of fit to job,
fit to organization and fit
to community influence
job performance? The
case of Zimbabwe's
manufacturing sector. *SA
Journal of Human Resource
Management/SA Tydskrif vir
Menslikehulpbronbestuur*,
11(1), Art. #475, 10 pages.
[http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/
sajhrm.v11i1.475](http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v11i1.475)

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Orientation: The influence of the fit components of job embeddedness (fit to job, fit to organization and fit to community) on job performance has not been extensively researched and the relationship is largely unknown.

Research purpose: This study investigated the influence of the fit components of job embeddedness (employee fit to job, fit to organization and fit to community) on employees' job performance.

Motivation for the study: There is a dearth of studies on the fit components of job embeddedness and the relationship with job performance in developing countries especially in Southern Africa.

Research design, approach and method: This cross-sectional study made use of a quantitative survey design. The target population comprised employees working in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector ($n = 452$).

Main findings: The results revealed that employee fit to job, fit to organization and fit to community positively influences employees' job performance.

Practical/managerial implications: The findings have implications for human resource managers in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector, who are encouraged to consider the three fit factors of job embeddedness during the job applicants interviewing process as they have a significant potential to influence job performance.

Contribution/value-addition: The research is one of the primary research papers to investigate the direct effects of the fit components of job embeddedness on employee job performance within the Zimbabwean context. It provides a rich platform for further studies and replication in other industry sectors especially within the African context.

Introduction

The term, job embeddedness, is relatively new within the realms of human resource management (HRM) literature (Chuang & Sackett, 2005). Increasing attention has been paid to identify what characteristics are vital to job embeddedness and how they exert their influence on organizational outcomes. Literature identifies three critical aspects of job embeddedness (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski & Erez, 2001b). Firstly, job embeddedness involves the extent to which people have links to other people or activities. Secondly, it entails the extent to which their jobs and communities are similar to or fit with the other aspects in their life spaces. Finally, job embeddedness refers to sacrifice or the ease with which links can be broken – what employees would give up if they left, especially if they had to physically move to other cities or homes. The conventional wisdom is that job embeddedness constitutes one of the non-monetary motivators that potentially influence organizational outcomes such as tenure intention and organizational commitment or performance (Gregory & Albritton, 2010). A considerable number of researches have investigated the effects of fit, links and sacrifice dimensions of job embeddedness on numerous organizational outcomes (Holtom & Inderrieden, 2006; Holtom & O'Neil, 2004; Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b; Mitchell & Lee, 2001). However, what is lacking in existing literature, though, is an understanding of the influence of the fit components of job embeddedness (fit to job, fit to organization and fit to community) on job performance. Job performance constitutes an important organizational outcome because of its impact on the performance and growth of firms (Kahya, 2009). Notably, because of this ostensible importance, research on job performance in HRM literature is extensive (Kahya, 2007; Werner, 2000; Witt, Kacmar, Carlson & Zivnuska, 2002).

Whilst there has been a large volume of studies that examined job performance (Ang, Van Dyne & Begley, 2003; Chiang & Hsein, 2011; Daft, 1995; Hochwarter, Witt, Treadway & Ferris, 2006; Islam, Khan, Ahmad & Ahmed, 2012; Kahya, 2009; Kahya, 2009), most of these studies have focused on employee training, job redesigning and organizational support amongst others, as antecedents of job performance (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003; Borman, 2004; Kahya, 2007; Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff & Blume, 2009; Stamper & Van Dyne, 2003). Since the concept of job embeddedness is fairly new in the HRM literature, the researchers could scarcely find a study that investigated the impact of the fit components of job embeddedness on job performance. Except for the study by Mitchell, *et al.* (2001a), that first introduced the concept of job embeddedness, research on the dimensions of job embeddedness have remained scant. Even so, the study by Mitchell *et al.* (2001b), focused on the influence of job embeddedness (fit, links and sacrifice) on employee turnover intention. A cross survey of literature by the authors reveal that there is barely a study that has particularly investigated the influence of the fit components of job embeddedness on job performance. According to the job embeddedness theory, an employee's personal values, career goals, and plans for the future must fit with the demands of his or her immediate job, that is, job knowledge, skills, and abilities, the larger corporate culture and the community environment (Holtom & Inderrieden, 2006). Fit describes an employee's perceived compatibility or comfort with a community, an organization and job (Holtom & Inderrieden, 2006; Mitchell *et al.*, 2001a); therefore, the greater the fit the more tied to the job, organization and community the employee becomes. Given the professed importance of the fit components of job embeddedness as a potential motivator to for instance, employees' organizational commitment and intention to stay at work, perhaps it is also imperative to examine its influence on job performance. Furthermore, a cross examination of the extant literature on job embeddedness and job performance relationship indicates that most of these studies were done in developed countries such as the USA and UK (c.f. Chiang & Hsein, 2011; Chinomona & Pretorius, 2011). There is a dearth of studies on job embeddedness that focus on developing countries especially in the African continent. This observed phenomenon is surprising and therefore warrants empirical investigation.

In view of the identified research gap, the objectives of this study are to:

- Examine the effects of the employee fit to job on job performance.
- Explore the effects of employee fit to organization on job performance.
- Investigate the effects of employee fit to community on job performance.

In particular, this study utilized data collected from Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector in order to investigate the influence of employees' fit to job, fit to organization and fit to community on their job performance. Furthermore, in order

to provide a theoretical grounding to the study, the Field theory developed from within the sociological domain was exploited.

The remainder of the article is organized as follows. A review of the literature and a conceptual framework and hypotheses are provided. These are followed by the discussion of the research design, the results and discussion of the results. Finally, managerial implications, limitations and implications for future research directions are provided.

Literature review

The Field theory

The Field theory was presented by Lewin (1951). This theory proposes that individuals maintain several interrelated roles that represent different aspects of their lives, that is, at work and home. The vision of field theory is that people have a perceptual life space in which their lives are represented and connected. For instance, employees may derive more meaning in their lives when they fit and connect well with their job requirements, organizational culture and the community environment they reside in. Drawing from Lewin's (1951) Field theory, this research submits that employees in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector will likely be motivated to achieve a higher level of performance when they perceive themselves to fit well to their jobs and organizations they work for and community they reside in (Gregory & Albritton, 2010).

Fit to job

The desirability of fit to job has long been a research interest in organizational behaviour, industrial psychology and human resource practice (Chuang & Sackett, 2005). Fit to job reflects the compatibility between an individual's knowledge, skill, and abilities with the demands of the job or the needs or desires of an individual and what is provided by the job (Carless, 2005; Edwards, 1991; O'Reilly, Chatman & Caldwell, 1991). Personal job fit exists as workers' desires (needs, goals, values, interests, and preferences) are fulfilled by what the job supplies (occupational characteristics and job attributes) and/or as the demands of the job (performance requirements) are met by the employees' abilities (Holtom & Inderrieden, 2006). It is posited by researchers that organizational members are more successful in their jobs when the jobs are compatible with their interests, values, and abilities (Chuang & Sackett, 2005; Edwards, 1991; Gregory & Albritton, 2010; Kahya, 2009). It is conceived that when employees feel adequate on their jobs their psychological burden will be released; therefore, they will be more confident when they are capable of performing higher work achievement. Empirically, personal job fit (PJF) was mostly studied in relation to job stress, job performance, and promotion at the workplace. PJF was found to be positively related to performance (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1990), and job satisfaction (Saks & Ashforth, 1997; Silverhart & Hinchliffe, 1996), and negatively related to job stress (Cable & Judge 1996; Chatman & Barsade, 1995).

Fit to organisation

Fit to organization can be viewed as the compatibility between the unique qualities of the individual worker and those of the overall organization in which the employee works (Gregory & Albritton, 2010). This means that an employee's personal values, career goals, and plans for the future must fit with the larger corporate culture (Carless, 2005). Specifically, individuals estimate the match or congruity between their personality, attitudes and values and the organization's values, goals, structures, processes, and culture (Schneider, Goldstein & Smith, 1995). Conceptualized fit to organization as the compatibility of attributes between the individual and the organization which includes beliefs, values, interests, and dispositional traits of the individual, was also highlighted by Chan (1996). Cable and Judge (1996), Cable and Parsons (2001), and Werbel and Gilliland (1999) reported that people select jobs based on value congruence. Thus, a fit to organization relates to attachments to the organization. In this study, fit to organization is defined as an employee's perceived compatibility or comfort with an organization (Holtom & Inderrieden, 2006).

Fit to community

People will consider how well they fit to the community and their surrounding environment (Holtom & Inderrieden, 2006). According to Mitchell and Lee (2001), employees consider issues such as the weather, amenities, and general culture of the location in which they reside in addition to outdoor activities, political and religious climates, and entertainment activities (Lee, Mitchell, Sablynski, Burton & Holtom, 2004). Therefore, the better the fit to the community, the higher the likelihood that an employee will feel professionally and personally tied to an organization. In this study, 'fit to community' is defined as how well an employee perceives he or she fits the community and surrounding environment in which he or she resides (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b).

Job performance

According to Kahya (2009), one of the most important dependent variables in industrial and organizational psychology is perhaps job performance. Job performance in this study refers to job related behavioural outcomes, employees' productivity and the achievement of a company's expectations and requirements such as efficiency and awareness (Babin & Boles, 1996). Whilst a review of organizational behaviour literature indicates that job performance is sometimes conceptualized to have two distinct dimensions namely, task performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Van Scotter, 2000; Witt *et al.*, 2002) and contextual performance (Borman, 2004; Werner, 2000), the study treats it as a uni-dimensional variable. This is in line with numerous prior studies such as the recent research work by Chiang and Hsein (2011).

Conceptual Model and hypothesis development

Drawing from the Field theory, the extant literature from Human Resources (HR), industrial psychology and

organizational behaviour aforementioned, a conceptual model was developed as illustrated in Figure 1. The model consists of four constructs, that is, three predictors – fit to job, fit to organization and fit to community and one outcome variable – job performance. Conceivably, the employees' fit to job, fit to organization and fit to community consequently lead to their improved job performance. Detailed explanations of the associations between these constructs are provided in the hypothesis developed hereafter.

The conceptual model and the proposed relationships are reported in Figure 1.

Fit to job and job performance relationship

An employee perceives to fit to a job when his or her knowledge, skills, and abilities meet the demands of the job. Consequently, it is expected for example, that a match between employee skills to the job requirements reflects an employee's potential capability to perform a specific job task. More so, according to the Field theory, employees derive meaning and life from their job if they perceive to fit well and are connected to the job. Such perceptions are likely to motivate them to perform their job tasks better. It can be; therefore, posited that the higher the fit to job, the higher the expected job performance. Prior empirical evidence has found a positive relationship between a person's job fit and performance and hence employee fit to jobs in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector can be expected to lead to high job performance (Carless, 2005; Chuang & Sackett, 2005) and; therefore, it can be postulated that:

H1: Employee fit to the job is positively and significantly related to job performance.

Fit to organization and job performance relationship

The congruence between an employee's values and that of an organization he or she works for is a paramount motivator to excel in a job task (Borman, 2004). This is so because a misfit between the values of the employee and that of the organization creates tension in the employee and might dampen the employee's morale to surpass at the workplace. Conversely and in line with the Field theory –

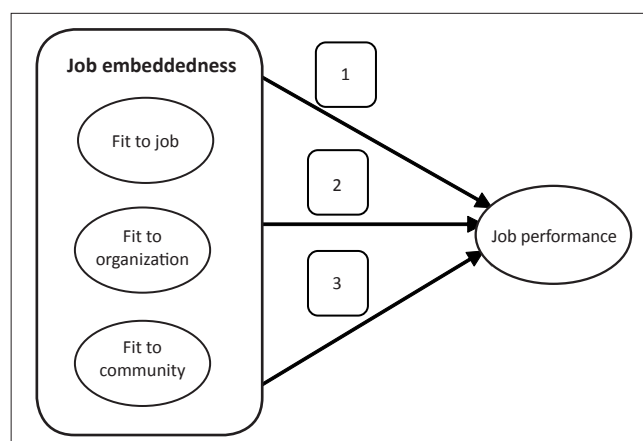


FIGURE 1: Conceptual model.

when the employees' perceptual life space in which their lives are represented and connected, for instance, – their beliefs and values coincide with those of the organization they work for, the likely resultant behaviour is increased job performance (Chiang & Hsein, 2011). Previous studies have also found a positive linkage between fit to organization, job performance and accordingly, the same can be posited of the fit to organization, and job performance in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector (Gregory & Albritton, 2010; Holtom & Inderrieden, 2006). Drawing from the foregoing arguments, this study hypothesizes that:

H2: Employee fit to the organization is positively and significantly related to job performance.

Fit to community and job performance relationship

Field theory reinforces the importance of an after work life style to an employee when considering a favourable working environment. Thus, for example, the availability of recreational amenities of interest to an employee or favourable weather in the community where an employee resides provides comfort whilst factors such as political stability and religious climate might provide a sense of security to an employee (Holtom & Inderrieden, 2006). It is proposed; therefore, that the greater the fit to community an employee perceives, the higher the sense of comfort and security an employee feels. Such a sense of comfort and security is likely to generate a positive attitude towards the employee's job and consequently enhance job performance. Prior studies have also found a positive relationship between fit to community and job performance and accordingly, it is hypothesized of the fit to community and job performance in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector (Holtom & Inderrieden, 2006; Lee, *et al.*, 2004) is positive. Deducing from the Field theory and the aforementioned discussion, this study posits that:

H3: Employee fit to the community is positively and significantly related to job performance.

Research design

The study utilised a quantitative research design using a questionnaire. A survey consisted of a predetermined set of questions was given to a sample (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). Through the use of survey research methods, researchers can use techniques of statistical inference applied to data gathered (Baruch & Holtom, 2008). In this study, a selected sample was extracted from the target population. A good sample selection is important as it allows one to generalize the findings from the sample to the population, which is the whole purpose of a survey research (Gall, Gall & Brog, 2007).

Research approach

In this research a quantitative survey design has been used. Primary data were collected from respondents using an adapted structured questionnaire. The design was suitable to solicit the required information relating to employee fit to job, fit to organization, fit to community and job performance.

Research strategy

A survey method to collect the data was used as a strategy in the study. Research scales were operationalized mainly on the basis of previous work. Proper modifications were made in order to fit the current research context and purpose. The adapted questionnaires were distributed to the sample selected from the population.

Research method

Research participants

Employees from various companies from the manufacturing sector in Harare and Chitungwiza were invited to participate in the study. The two cities are respectively the largest and third largest in Zimbabwe. The sample contained consumable and non-consumable manufacturing companies obtained from the Department of Trade and Commerce in Zimbabwe (Gono, 2006). A simple random probability sampling technique was used to draw a sample from the sampling frame (list of manufacturing firms). This sampling technique was used because it is expedient and more so, it is one of the probability sampling techniques that are recommended for quantitative survey studies. Of the 600 employees that were approached for the study, 460 participated in the survey. Eight questionnaires were discarded because of incomplete responses. A total of 452 questionnaires were used for the final data analysis and therefore yielding a response rate of 73.3%.

Measurement instruments

Fit to job: Five-item scales adapted from Lauver and Kristof-Brown's (2001) previous work were used to measure fit to job. All the measurement items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale that was anchored by 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree to express the degree of agreement or disagreement. Examples of some of the five measurement items are:

- My abilities fit the demands of this job.
- I have the right skills and abilities for doing this job.

The reliability of these measurement instruments was found to be 0.874 for the Chronbach's alpha value and 0.913 for the Composite reliability value. Detailed statistics are provided in Table 1.

Fit to organization: Four-item scales adapted from previous work of Mitchell *et al.*, (2001b) were used to measure fit to job. All the measurement items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale that was anchored by 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree to express the degree of agreement or disagreement. Examples of some of the four measurement items are:

- I fit with the organization's culture.
- My values are compatible with the organization's values.

The reliability of these measurement instruments was found to be 0.882 for the Chronbach's alpha value and 0.852 for the Composite reliability value. Detailed statistics are provided in Table 1.

Fit to community: Five-item scales adapted from previous work of Mitchell *et al.*, (2001b) were used to measure fit to job. All the measurement items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale that was anchored by 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree to express the degree of agreement or disagreement. Examples of some of the five measurement items are:

- I really love the place where I live.
- The weather where I live is suitable for me.

The reliability of these measurement instruments was found to be 0.870 for the Chronbach's alpha value and 0.878 for the Composite reliability value. Detailed statistics are provided in Table 1.

Job performance: Six-item scales adapted from Chiang and Hsein's (2011) previous work were used to measure fit to job. All the measurement items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale that was anchored by 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree to express the degree of agreement or disagreement. Examples of some of the six measurement items are:

- I fulfil specific job responsibilities.
- I meet performance standards and expectations.

The reliability of these measurement instruments was found to be 0.882 for the Chronbach's alpha value and 0.910 for the Composite reliability value. Detailed statistics are provided in Table 1.

Research procedure

Research assistants were recruited to directly distribute and collect the questionnaires from the research participants in an ethical manner after appointments and permission were

secured from the manufacturing enterprises' management and their employees. The research participants and their management were respectively assured that their responses would be kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

Ethical considerations

The Higher Degrees Committee's codes of research ethics at the Vaal University of Technology and Faculty of Management Sciences were adhered to.

Potential benefits and hazards

In this study there were no benefits accruing to or hazards incurred by the research participants who took part in the survey research.

Data collection procedure

An appointment with the companies' management was made telephonically. After being granted permission, the questionnaires were then distributed to the employees. The employees were then asked to participate in the research by filling in the questionnaires to the best of their understanding and ability.

Informed consent

Participation in the study was voluntary and the final sample of respondents was randomly selected from the pool of these volunteers. The respondents were assured that the data collected would be used for research purposes. Each questionnaire contained a covering letter outlining the purpose of the study and the approximate time to be taken to complete the questionnaire was provided.

TABLE 1: Accuracy analysis statistics.

Research Construct	Mean Value*	Cronbach's Test		C.R. Value	AVE Value	Shared Variance	Factor Loading
		Item-total	α value				
FJ	4.734	-	0.874	0.913	0.625	0.540	-
FJ1	4.816	0.828	-	-	-	-	0.902
FJ2	4.684	0.804	-	-	-	-	0.851
FJ3	4.730	0.808	-	-	-	-	0.851
FJ4	4.686	0.746	-	-	-	-	0.758
FJ5	4.752	0.735	-	-	-	-	0.747
FO	4.717	-	0.882	0.852	0.590	0.540	-
FO1	4.748	0.652	-	-	-	-	0.707
FO2	4.781	0.748	-	-	-	-	0.787
FO3	4.670	0.759	-	-	-	-	0.800
FO4	4.668	0.661	-	-	-	-	0.776
FC	4.951	-	0.870	0.878	0.591	0.540	-
FC1	4.739	0.627	-	-	-	-	0.733
FC2	4.854	0.752	-	-	-	-	0.780
FC3	4.925	0.780	-	-	-	-	0.780
FC4	5.111	0.782	-	-	-	-	0.783
FC5	5.128	0.749	-	-	-	-	0.766
JP	4.704	-	0.882	0.910	0.628	0.530	-
JP1	4.717	0.747	-	-	-	-	0.805
JP2	4.690	0.766	-	-	-	-	0.845
JP3	4.748	0.789	-	-	-	-	0.829
JP4	4.639	0.763	-	-	-	-	0.779
JP5	4.732	0.753	-	-	-	-	0.735
JP6	4.697	0.744	-	-	-	-	0.758

FJ, Fit to job; FO, Fit to organization; FC, Fit to community; JP, Job performance; C.R., Composite reliability; AVE, Average variance reliability.

Scores: 1 = Strongly disagree; 4 = Neutral; 7 = Strongly agree.

* $p < 0.01$

Measurement CFA model fits: $\chi^2/(df) = 2.950$; GFI = 0.910; AGFI = 0.879; NFI = 0.910; RFI = 0.922; IFI = 0.957; TLI = 0.947; CFI = 0.956; RMSEA = 0.066

Data protection

Ten trained students from tertiary institutions in Harare and Chitungwiza were recruited to distribute and collect the questionnaires from the respondents under the strict guidance of the researchers. The research assistants were given strict instructions to observe and ensure the research participants' confidentiality and anonymity in this research.

Trustworthiness

Reliability

The reliability of the measurement instruments is indicated by the Chronbach's alpha value and Composite Reliability value, which is provided in Table 1 and described in the Results section.

Validity

The validity of the measurement instruments is indicated by the 'Item to total' values, item loadings, average variance extracted (AVE) values, shared variance and inter-construct correlation matrix, which is provided in Table 1 and Table 3.

Statistical tools used

To analyse the profile data and to obtain descriptive statistics, the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 17.0) was used. However, to perform structural equation modelling (SEM), the analysis of moment structures (AMOS 7) statistical software was used. Structural equation modelling with AMOS statistical software is a two stage procedure that commence with 'confirmatory factor analysis' (CFA) and ends with 'path modelling'. In the study AMOS 7 statistical software was particularly used to assess the model fit to the data, to check the reliability and validity of measurement instruments (confirmatory factor analysis) and to test the proposed hypotheses (path modelling). The results for profile data and descriptive statistics using SPSS are provided in Table 2 and Table 3, whilst the results for CFA and path modelling (structural equation modelling) using AMOS 7 are provided in Table 1 and Table 4 or Figure 2 respectively.

Results

Table 2 presents the profile of the participants. Table 2 show that males dominate the manufacturing sector and constitute 66.8% of the workforce. Employees who are single occupy 54% of the workforce and the remainder is married. The profile indicates that 98.9% of the respondents were Black people and the remainder was Indian people. The profile indicates that more than 62% of the participating manufacturers employ 20 or fewer workers, whilst the remainder employs more than twenty workers. About 66% of the participants have less than 10 years of work experience, whilst the remainder has more than eleven years of work experience. About 59% of the participating manufacturers earn revenues between US\$50 thousand and US\$350 thousand, and the remainder more than US\$350 thousand per annum. The

TABLE 2: Sample demographic characteristics.

Demographic characteristics		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	302	66.80
	Female	150	33.20
Total		452	100.0
Race	Black people	447	98.90
	Indian people	005	01.10
	White people	0	100.0
Total		452	100.0
Number of employees	≤ 5	095	21.00
	6–10	073	16.10
	11–20	115	25.50
	21–50	095	21.00
	≥ 51	074	16.40
Total		452	100.0
Participants work experience	≤ 2 years	051	11.20
	3–5 years	114	25.30
	6–10 years	132	29.30
	11–20 years	100	22.10
	≥ 21 years	055	12.10
Total		452	100.0
Marital status	Married	208	46.00
	Single	244	54.00
Total		452	100.0
Industries	Consumables manufacturing	242	53.50
	Non-consumables manufacturing	210	46.50
Total		452	100.0
Annual revenue performance	≤ US\$50,000	65	14.30
	US\$50,001–US\$150,000	102	22.60
	US\$150,001–US\$350,000	100	22.10
	US\$350,001–US\$650,000	109	24.20
	≥ US\$650,001	76	16.80
Total		452	100.0

TABLE 3: Descriptive statistics and correlations between constructs.

Construct	Descriptive statistics					
	Mean	SD	FJ	FO	FC	JP
FJ	3.5956	0.89521	1.000	-	-	-
FO	3.6697	0.74638	0.673*	1.000	-	-
FC	3.5011	0.80667	0.736*	0.732*	1.000	-
JP	3.7275	0.80574	0.725*	0.679*	0.685*	1.00

FJ, Fit to job; FO, Fit to organization; FC, Fit to community; JP, Job performance.
Scores: 1 = Strongly disagree; 4 = Neutral; 7 = Strongly agree
* $p < 0.01$

analysis also indicated that consumable and non-consumable goods manufacturers occupy almost equal proportions of the research sample, although the former had a slightly higher share.

Model fit, measurement reliability and validity

The study utilized AMOS 7 statistical approach to perform confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM) to check the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments and to test the posited hypotheses.

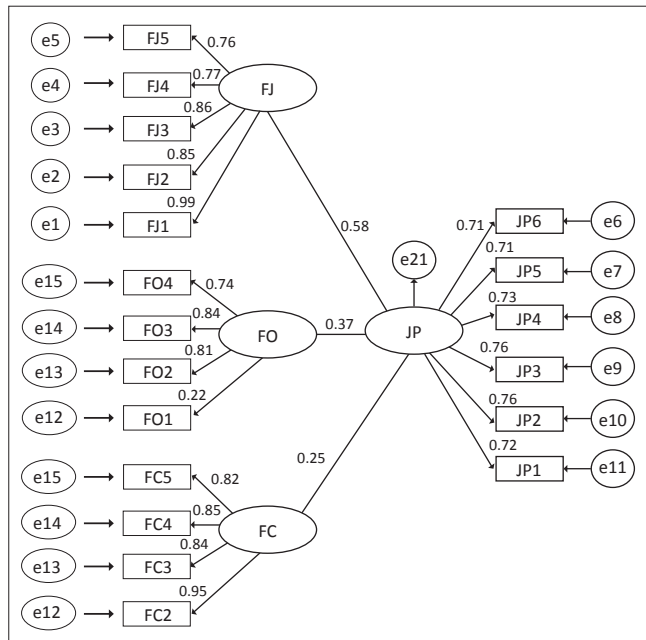
In accordance with the two-step procedure suggested by Byrne (2001), prior to testing the hypotheses, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to examine reliability, convergent and discriminant validity of the multi-item construct measures using AMOS 7. Overall acceptable model fit are indicated by goodness-of-fit index (GFI)

TABLE 4: Results of structural equation model analysis.

Proposed hypotheses	Hypothesis	Path coefficients	Rejected or supported
Fit to job → Job performance	H1	0.575*	Supported
Fit to organisation → Job performance	H2	0.367*	Supported
Fit to community → Job performance	H3	0.248*	Supported

 $\chi^2 (df) = 2.833$

AGFI = 0.902; IFI = 0.939; TLI = 0.937; CFI = 0.949; RMSEA = 0.072

 * $p < 0.01$
**FIGURE 2:** Path modelling results.

≥ 0.800 ; adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) ≥ 0.800 ; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) values ≤ 0.080 ; incremental fit index (IFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) and comparative fit index (CFI) values ≥ 0.900 ; and chi-square degrees of freedom ratio (CMIN/DF) value < 3.000 . Recommended statistics for the final overall-model assessment show acceptable fit of the measurement model to the data: Chi-square value over degrees = 460.271 (156), CMIN/DF = 2.950; RMR = 0.480; GFI = 0.910; AGFI = 0.879; NFI = 0.910; RFI = 0.922; IFI = 0.957; TLI = 0.947; CFI = 0.956; RMSEA = 0.066. Loadings of individual items on their respective constructs are shown in Table 1 which provides the measurement accuracy statistics, whilst Table 3 shows the inter-construct correlations.

The individual item loadings are all above the recommended 0.500 (Byrne, 2001). In particular, the lowest item factor loading is 0.707. This indicates an acceptable individual item reliability as more than 70% of each item's variance is shared with its respective construct. Thus, all items converged well on their respective constructs. This study also computed the composite reliabilities (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct using the formulas proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The formulas are as follows:

$$CR_{\eta} = (\sum \lambda_i)^2 / [(\sum \lambda_i)^2 + (\sum \epsilon_i)] \quad [\text{Eqn 1}]$$

Where CR_{η} = Composite reliability, $(\sum \lambda_i)^2$ = Square the sum of the factor loadings; $(\sum \epsilon_i)$ = Sum of error variances.

$$V_{\eta} = \sum \lambda_i^2 / (\sum \lambda_i^2 + \sum \epsilon_i) \quad [\text{Eqn 2}]$$

Where V_{η} = Average Variance Extracted (AVE); $\sum \lambda_i^2$ = Sum of the squared factor loadings; $\sum \epsilon_i$ = Sum of error variances.

The results of the CR and AVE computations are presented in Table 1. All the CR values are above 0.852, therefore surpassing the recommended threshold of value 0.700 suggested by Hulland (1999). This confirms the internal consistency and reliability of the respective measures used by this study. In addition, the AVE values are above the recommended threshold value of 0.500 (Byrne, 2001). The results presented in Table 1 indicate that the minimum AVE value is 0.590. This further confirms acceptable levels of research scale reliability. To assess discriminant validity two approaches were used. Firstly, the study checked if the lowest AVE values for each multi-item construct were greater than the highest paired shared variance between constructs (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The lowest AVE value of 0.590 is greater than the highest shared variance value between constructs of 0.540. As such, all pairs of constructs reveal an adequate level of discriminant validity (see Table 1). Secondly, the study checked if the correlations between research constructs were below a unit value (1.000). The maximum correlation value between constructs is 0.736, and therefore; is lower than the value of 0.800 that was recommended by Fraering and Minor (2006), as evidence of discriminant validity. Overall the study provides sufficient evidence that the measurement scales used were reliable and valid.

Structural model assessment

In order to test the direct effects of fit to job, fit to organization and fit to community on job performance, structural equation modelling (SEM) was performed. Following a two-step model building approach recommended by Byrne (2001), the measurement model was assessed prior to testing the structural model. The maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) method was used because it has desirable asymptotic properties (e.g. minimum variance and unbiasedness). The results for the model fit are reported in Table 4. The model was found to be acceptable in terms of overall goodness of fit measures. Acceptable model fit are indicated by CMIN/DF value < 3.00 ; RMSEA values ≤ 0.080 ; GFI, TLI and CFI values ≥ 0.90 . The results indicate acceptable values of CMIN/DF (2.833); AGFI (0.902); IFI (0.939), TLI (0.937), CFI (0.949), and RMSEA (0.072) which achieved the suggested acceptable thresholds (Bentler, 1990; Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Marsh, Balla & Hau, 1996). This suggests that the model converged well and could be a plausible representation of underlying empirical data structures collected in Zimbabwe.

After the structural model fit assessment achieved acceptable thresholds, the study proceeded to test the structural paths of the conceptualized research model. Figure 2 provides the results for path modelling.

The hypotheses testing results, significance levels and hypotheses decision criteria are summarized in Table 4.

Discussion

Outline of the results

Fit to job – job performance relationship testing

The first postulated hypothesis was the relationship between employee fit to job and employee job performance in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector. A positive association was posited in this relationship. Table 4 shows a positive and significant standardized coefficient of 0.575 for the fit to job and job performance relationships. This is consistent with hypothesis one (H1), which indicates that the greater the employee's fit to job, the higher the levels of job performance in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector; therefore, employee fit to job is positively associated with job performance and is significant in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector. On the relationship between job fit and job performance, previous studies found moderate to strong relationships (June & Mahmood, 2011; Kristof-Brown, 2000; Li & Hung, 2010). For example, Li and Hung (2010) found that when fit exists between employees and the job that they are doing, they tend to exert more effort in carrying out their duties, which lead to greater job performance.

Fit to organization – job performance relationship testing

The second posited hypothesis was the relationship between employee fit to organization and employee job performance in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector. Again, a positive relationship between employee fit to organization and employee job performance was postulated. The empirical result of this relationship in Table 4 indicates a positive and significant path coefficient of 0.367. Also in support of hypothesis two (H2), this result indicates that higher levels of employee fit to organization are associated with higher levels of employee job performance. Hence, this study submits that employee fit to organization is positively related to job performance and is significant in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector. A study undertaken by Ng and Sarris (2009) found that an employee fit to an organization correlated positively to commitment to an organization and their core task performance. The higher the fit of an employee to an organization, the more an employee become embedded in their jobs and more likely that they will go an extra mile in their duties, work activities are done thoroughly, and as a result, become more productive in terms of performance (Ng & Feldman, 2009).

Fit to community – job performance relationship testing

The last hypothesized relationship is that between employee fit to community and employee job performance. A positive association was posited in this relationship. Again as

illustrated in Table 4, the current study's empirical results (0.248-path coefficient) are in line with the proposed hypothesis three (H3) and supports the reasoning that higher levels of employee fit to community are associated with higher levels of employee job performance in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector. It can; therefore, be concluded that employee fit to community is positively linked to employee job performance and is significant in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector. Through the job embeddedness construct some researchers (Holton & Inderrieden, 2006; Lyons & O'Brien, 2006; Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b; Vogel & Feldman, 2009) tested the extent to which employees have links to the community (life spaces) through non-work friends, relatives and the community in which they live and their intention to stay and found a positive relationship between the constructs. However, the direct relationship between fit to community and job performance was barely tested in previous research. A closely related finding was undertaken in a study by Kieffer, Schinka and Curtis (2004) that investigated the relationship between person-environment fit, job performance and work quality and they found the person-environment construct to be a predictor of job performance.

Interesting to note from the current study findings is that employee fit to job has a stronger direct effects on job performance compared to employee fit to organization and fit to the community. Perhaps this can be explained by the notion that when seeking employment, employees might consider first if they fit well to the job requirements before they consider their fit to the organization or fit to community. Moreover, employees' fit to job is an indication that employees' job skills, knowledge or abilities match that of the job requirements. Consequently, fit to job may be a plausible reason for the strong relationship to job performance compared to employee fit to organization and fit to community.

Another important observation from the findings is that employee fit to organization has a stronger direct effect on employee job performance than employee fit to community does. This implies that employees in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector consider their fit to organization to have a stronger influence on their job performance than their fit to community. Perhaps too this could be explained by the notion that the organizational environment, for example, the organizational culture, might have more immediate direct effects on employees' job performance when compared to the influence of the community environment.

This study is the first attempt at evaluating the direct effects of employee fit to job, fit to organization and fit to community in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector. Because Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector plays a crucial contribution to the country's economic growth (Chinomona, Lin, Wang & Cheng, 2010), the findings of this study provide fruitful implications for both HR practitioners and academics alike. On the academic front, this study makes a significant contribution to the HR management literature related to the manufacturing sectors

in developing countries of Africa. Managerial implications within the context of the study findings are elucidated.

Managerial implications

The findings have implications for Human Resource Managers in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector. In particular, the implications relate to employee selection processes. Since this study revealed that fit to job, fit to organization and fit to community significantly (positively) influence job performance, HR practitioners are encouraged to consider all three factors during the job applicants interviewing process. However, in the event that more than needed job applicants' skills or abilities match the job requirements, the HR practitioners might consider selecting the best applicants on the basis or strength of the fit to organization before considering the fit to community. Perhaps too, manufacturing firms should consider providing or sponsoring after work recreational activities such as gymnasiums or any sport favoured by their employees. This might potentially motivate the employees and consequently enhance their job performance at the workplace. Based on the relationship between person-job fit and performance, it is necessary for owners and managers of manufacturing companies in Zimbabwe to consider person-job-fit in their attempt to hire employees. Managers and owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Zimbabwe can increase off-the job embeddedness (fit to community) by recruiting potential employees with local roots and by providing people with information about the community and social networks (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b).

Limitations and implications for future research

Although this study makes significant contributions to both academia and practice, there are some limitations, which open up avenues for further research. Firstly, the current study was limited to a sample from the manufacturing industry in Zimbabwe. Subsequent researchers could replicate the study in broader sampling contexts that include the service industry as well. Extending this research to other African countries and testing the conceptualized model might be a valuable future research direction. Furthermore, future studies can also extend the current conceptual framework by studying the effects of a larger set of variables. For instance, the influence of other job embeddedness components such as sacrifice or links in organization and community could be investigated. In addition, this study may provide added insights and contribute new knowledge to the existing body of HRM literature in Southern Africa.

Conclusion

This academic inquiry highlighted the important contribution of employees' fit to job, fit to organization and fit to community on their job performance. HR practitioners are therefore encouraged to consider all three factors during the job applicants interviewing process.

Acknowledgements

Competing interests

The authors declare that they had no financial or personal relationships which may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors' contributions

R.C. (Vaal University of Technology), M.D. (Vaal University of Technology) and E.C. (Vaal University of Technology) wrote this article in equal parts.

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