THE IMPACT OF WORK RELATIONSHIPS AND CERTAIN JOB FACTORS ON THE WORK ENGAGEMENT AND OTHER POSITIVE WORK OUTCOMES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS IN NAMIBIA

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to investigate whether certain job factors (work relationships, rewards/recognition, organisational support) can enhance positive job outcomes (work engagement, organisational commitment, lower turnover intention) whilst all of these factors can be regarded as job resources that can help educators cope with stressors. A convenience sample (N = 826) of primary school educators of 14 educational regions in Namibia was utilized in this study. The Antecedents Scale, Work Engagement Scale, Rewards/Recognition Scale, Affective Commitment Scale, Turnover Intention Scale and Survey of Perceived Organisational Support were administered. The results confirmed that positive co-worker and supervisor relationships, appropriate rewarding and recognition of educators and strong organisational support will enhance educator work engagement and organisational commitment and whilst seeing for lower turnover intention. Good co-worker relations contribute the most to engagement levels of educators. Co-worker relations, supervisor relations and organisational support contribute significantly to educators' organisational commitment. Furthermore, good supervisor relations and organisational support were found to be crucial to prevent educators from resigning. Finally, work engagement has a partial mediating effect between job factors (work relationships, organisational support, rewards/recognition), on the one hand, and organisational commitment, on the other hand. However, work engagement does not have a mediating effect between job factors and turnover intention.

INTRODUCTION

The success of any organisation is, amongst others, based on the quality of its human resources as, in the end, human beings remain the heartbeat of any organisation. Employees cope better with job demands if the job resources overshadow the demands in numbers and/or intensity. This study aims at investigating whether healthy interpersonal relationships (between co-workers and between co-workers and supervisors) at work, appropriate rewarding/recognition of employees and support from the organisation act as job resources that encourage employees towards higher levels of work engagement, organisational commitment and a lower intention to quit. The participants of this study are primary school educators of the 13 educational regions of Namibia. In this study, "organisation" will refer to primary schools and "employees" will be the educators. "Supervisors" will be Heads of Departments and Principals.

EDUCATION SYSTEM IN NAMIBIA

The Namibian education system is struggling. "To say that Namibia has been a perennial underachiever in the education sector is to state the obvious. Prevailing attitudes among industry and general citizen opinion confirm perceptions about the decay of our education sector" (Hengari, 2011:3). According to former Minister of Education, Nangolo Mbumba: "…at the current level of performance in education, we (Namibians) will not be producing citizens who are capable of making Namibia a knowledge-based economy as is expected of us in Vision 2030" (ETSIP, 2007:V). The Education and Training Sector Improvement Program (ETSIP) guide also indicates that Namibia's education system is regarded as a "very weak tool for supporting the realisation of national development goals, especially the intended transition to knowledge-driven growth and equitable social development" (ETSIP, 2007:2). Namibia struggles with a serious shortage of educators. The problem is so prominent, that Prof. Charmaine Villet, Dean of the Faculty of Education of the University of Namibia (UNAM), expressed her concern that the quality of the new curriculum for the junior primary phase in Namibia, that should be rolled out during 2015, could be compromised. According to Prof. Villet about 4000 educators in Namibia are not appropriately qualified to teach. She also indicated that about 3126 teaching posts will be vacant at the start of 2015 (Tjihenuna, 2014:3). According to the National Association of Namibian Teachers Union (NANTU), many of the country's estimated 23 000 educators want to leave the profession owing to high job demands, negative job conditions and few incentives to retain qualified educators (Mseyamwa, 2007). According to NANTU, about 2000 educators in Namibia leave the profession annually, whilst local colleges and universities can produce only 1200 replacements per year (Mseyamwa, 2007).

EDUCATOR STRESS

Occupations that focus primarily on other human beings are generally regarded as high stress occupations (George, Louw, & Badenhorst, 2008; Pisanti, Gagliardi, Razzino, & Bertini, 2003; Schamer & Jackson, 1996; Vanderberghe & Hubermann, 1999; Van Zyl & Pietersen, 1999). According to Näring, Briët, and Brouwers (2006), education is a human-oriented profession, and is marked by a high level of stress and a subsequent high level of burnout, owing to, amongst other factors, high job demands (Dalgard, Mykletum, Rognerud, Johansen, & Zahl, 2007; Raschke, Dedrick, Strathe, & Hawkes, 1985). High work stress is often linked to poor general well-being for educators, which might prompt a higher intention to leave the teaching profession (Chaplin, 2008). Rieg, Paquette, and Chen (2007) found that in the United States of America, 25% to 50% of new educators resign during the first three years of teaching owing to their inability to handle the high levels of distress in the profession. Johnson et al. (2005) found the education profession to be one of the six most stressful occupations out of a comparison of 26 occupations. It was also found that educators with high levels of distress experience low job satisfaction, less commitment to teaching and a stronger desire to resign (Jepson & Forrest, 2006).

Scarce teaching resources can also contribute to educator stress. In order to address the problem of scarce resources in the education system, the education budget of Namibia increased from N$1.86 billion in 2001/2002 (SACMEQ, 2005) to N$11.32 billion in 2010/2011 (Nunuhe, 2015). With donor funding that contributes 3.3% and the private sector and parents contributing 3.7%, the government has to settle 93% of the education bill of Namibia (Kisting, 2011), which leaves little space for sufficiently providing the much needed educational resources and salary increases for educators in the country. If adequate financing cannot be regarded as a job resource for educators in Namibia, other possible resources need to be investigated and effected, so that educators can cope well with their high work demands and distress. Therefore, this study aims at looking, within a positive psychological framework, whether increased focus on positive work relationships, effective rewarding/recognition of educators and organisational support can enhance positive work outcomes such as engagement and organisational commitment of educators in Namibia, whilst lowering intention to quit.

RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK

The workplace is, besides other things, a combination of relationships. The general idea is held that unity makes strength and, therefore, dysfunctional interpersonal relationships at work could affect the general functioning of any organization negatively. Meaningful relationships at work create a pro-social environment within which workers are able to experience meaningfulness (Frost, Dutton, Worline, & Wilson, 2000) and safety (Alderfer, 1972; Frost et al., 2000; Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004). If workers feel safe in their work and experience meaningfulness in what they are doing, they will be fully available at and for the workplace. The climate of the workplace seems to play a crucial role in the enhancement of the productivity of workers (Baer & Frese, 2003). Vinarski-Peretz and Carmeli (2011) maintain that caring relationships at work will contribute significantly towards a positive work climate, which will increase employee engagement (Baer & Frese, 2003). The experience of being cared-for is an emotional reward that is highly meaningful in terms of relatedness and belonging (Alderfer, 1972). Vinarski-Peretz and Carmeli (2011) also explain that employees who feel cared-for by their co-workers will be better able to fully focus on their work tasks (engaged), thus not being easily distracted and, therefore, being totally available at their work. According to Kahn (1990), positive co-worker relations are of particular importance in times of stressful circumstances at work, because these safe relationships serve as a secure basis from where employees can address difficult circumstances (Cohen and Wills, 1985). Healthy co-worker relationships can thus be regarded as a resource for educators.

In addition, the relationship between worker and supervisor is crucial for the overall well-being of the organization. For example, when supervisors treat employees with respect, dignity and gratitude for their contributions to the organization, and employees are not just expected to complete the job, these employees find a deep sense of meaning in their job and in life in general (Kahn, 1990). Blau (1964) developed the social exchange theory (SET), which emphasises the rules that regulate social interaction. According to SET, interpersonal relationships evolve over time into loyal, trusting and committed connections, but also with a certain set of conditions (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). One of the important conditions of social exchange is reciprocity. A prerequisite for reciprocity is interdependence (Gouldner, 1960). Thus, the interdependence between supervisor(s) and employee(s) that is necessary for reciprocity to prosper should be a mutual commitment towards the other (Molm, 1994). In this way, a supportive attitude from the supervisor will most probably cause a return of the same type of behaviour from the employee. The supervisor can thus not play god in the relationship with the employee, but has to realize the value of the supplementary relationship rather than the dominating relationship. According to SET one individual's action follows the behaviour of the other spontaneously so that risk is reduced and cooperation is encouraged (Molm, 1994). Therefore, one can conclude that a supportive and respectful relationship between employee and supervisor can act as a resource against work stress and is not only crucial for the productivity of any organisation, but also a necessity for healthy functioning.

REWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Numerous advantages are attached to the organization that values and invests into a well-defined rewards and recognition system. In fact, Bau and Dowling (2007) define the organization as a system of incentives and rewards. Engagement, organizational commitment, empowerment and improved retention are amongst the products of an effective rewards and recognition system of an organization (De Villiers-Scheepers, 2011; Saunderson, 2004). According to Spreitzer (1995), a critical variable that influences employees' experience of empowerment is rewards. Bau and Dowling (2007) also link the rewards and recognition system of an organization to employee motivation saying that rewards and recognition is partially responsible for the individual's decision to join the organization, staying with the organization and being an asset to the organization. Also, expectancy theory builds on reinforcement and explains employee's sustained motivation to engage in positive organizational behaviour (Lawler, 1978). Expectancy theory holds that motivation is sustained by effort-reward probability as well as the perceived value of the reward that is on offer (Lawler, 1978). Fair and appropriate rewarding and recognising of educator efforts can thus act as a great resource for educators.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa (1986) conceptualise organizational support as the exchange relationship between the employee and the organization. Organizational support centres on how grateful the employer is about the employee's contribution and how much the employer cares for the well-being of the employee. Organizational support is very much about the commitment of the organization towards the employee (Shore & Tetrick, 1991). The perception that the organization cares for the employee encourages the employee to incorporate work-role status and membership to the organization into his/her self-identity (Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990). In this way, organizational support commits the employee in an indirect way towards the organization.

Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetrick (2002) draw on social exchange theory when they postulate that organizational support contains an element of reciprocity in terms of which fair treatment obligates the employee to return the favourable treatment in the one or other way. In this regard, equity theory stipulates that people attempt to find a balance between what they invest in a relationship (time, effort) and what they gain out of it (status, salary, organizational support) (Taris, Horn, Schaufeli, & Schreurs,

2004). A disturbance in this balance can lead to negative organizational outcomes like low levels of work engagement, low organizational commitment, poor health and a high turnover intention (Wayne et al., 2002; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Also, Eisenberger et al. (1986) regarded perceived organizational support as an antecedent of organizational commitment. Visible support can thus be an important resource to educators.

ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Organizational commitment is an indication of a person's identification with and involvement in a certain organization (Gallie & White, 1993; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979). In general, organizational commitment can be seen as the binding force between the employee and the organization. Much of the literature in this field is in agreement about the incorporation of identification with the organization, personal involvement and internalization of the organization's values as part of the conceptualization of organizational commitment (Jaros, Jermier, Koehler, & Sincich, 1993; Kell & Motowidlo, 2012; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Reichers, 1985). From this definition of organizational commitment, it can be derived that if an employee identifies strongly with the organization and has an innate need to be deeply involved in it, such an employee accepts the organization's goals, is willing to work hard for the organization and wants to stay with the organization for a considerable time (Siu, 2002). Siu (2002) explains that if employees are committed towards their organization, they will have a sense of healthy direction in reaching work goals and see meaning in their work, which will diminish the negative experience of stress in the workplace. Buys and Rothmann (2010) also indicate that organizational commitment has important moderating effects on workers who experience stressful work situations in that committed employees are positively tuned towards their work, which prevents them from experiencing unhealthy work stress levels (Begley & Cazjka, 1993). As organisational commitment acts as a buffer against stress, employees are physically healthier which leads to lower absenteeism from work, increased work productivity and decreased turnover rate (Siu, 2002). Organisational commitment thus acts as a resource, but also a positive work outcome.

WORK ENGAGEMENT

Engaged employees are energetic, dedicated (Leiter & Bakker, 2012), and enthusiastically involved in their work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Rothbard, 2001). According to Leiter and Bakker (2012), engaged individuals are oriented towards a challenging work goal, thus transcending the now and going beyond the immediate situation. This means that engaged individuals are totally absorbed by their work, paying full attention to what they are busy with at work. Roberts and Davenport (2002) describe work engagement as the personal involvement in the job and the motivation that the individual obtains from the work. Engaged employees are essential to the successful organization. Growing evidence suggests a positive relationship between the engagement level of the employee and positive organizational outcomes (Harter, 2001; Simpson, 2008) like job satisfaction, motivation and lower turnover intention (May et al., 2004). Engaged individuals show higher levels of personal initiative, willingness to learn (Sonnentag, 2003) and commitment towards their organizations (Blizzard, 2002). Engaged employees cause organizational profitability to increase (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Highly motivated, engaged and less stressed employees can cause a significant increase in organizational productivity, whilst negative emotions, stress, burnout and disengagement are associated with impaired health of the employee and increased costs for the organization (Brief & Weiss, 2002; Salanova, Agut, & Peiro, 2005). Thus, engagement can be regarded as a crucial work outcome.

TURNOVER INTENTION

Organizations usually attempt to retain employees as employee turnover can inflict a great deal of costs on the organization. The costs are created owing to the loss of human capital with the departure of the employee, need for temporary staffing and the recruitment, selection and training of a new worker (Holtom, Mitchell, Lee, & Eberly, 2008). Chow, Ng, and Gong (2012) found that several reasons could play a role in why people decide to leave an organization such as lack of organizational support (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000), poor remuneration, poor co-worker cohesion and low quality of leadership.

AIM AND HYPOTHESES

Based on the review of the literature, it is postulated that specific job factors such as co-worker elations, co-worker and supervisor relations, rewards/recognition and organisational support can act as resources that contribute to positive work outcomes such as the level of work engagement, organisational commitment and turnover intention of primary school educators in Namibia. The following hypotheses were set for this study:

H1: Co-worker relations, supervisor relations, rewards/recognition and organisational support are positively related to work engagement of primary school educators in Namibia.

H2: Co-worker relations, supervisor relations, rewards/recognition and organisational support are positively related to organisational commitment of primary school educators in Namibia.

H3: Co-worker relations, supervisor relations, rewards/recognition and organisational support are negatively related to turnover intention of primary school educators in Namibia.

H4: Co-worker relations, supervisor relations, rewards/recognition and organisational support have a direct positive effect on work engagement of primary school educators in Namibia.

H5: Co-worker relations, supervisor relations, rewards/recognition and organisational support have a direct positive effect on organisational commitment of primary school educators in Namibia.

H6: Co-worker relations, supervisor relations, rewards/recognition and organisational support have a direct negative effect on turnover intention of primary school educators in Namibia.

H7: Co-worker relations, supervisor relations, rewards/recognition and organisational support indirectly affect educators' level of organisational commitment via work engagement.

H8: Co-worker relations, supervisor relations, rewards/recognition and organisational support indirectly affect educators' level of turnover intention via work engagement.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

A quantitative and descriptive research approach was followed. More specifically, a cross-sectional survey was used to gather data and analyse relations between variables (Creswell, 2009).

Participants

Primary school educators of all the government schools of the Khomas, Otjozondjupa, Omaheke, Erongo, Hardap, Karas, Kunene, Omusati, Oshana, Ohangwena, Oshikoto, Kavango and Zambezi educational regions in Namibia were invited to participate in this research study on a voluntary basis and thus formed the target population. Ninety four primary schools across the educational regions agreed to participate in this study. At commencement of the research, about 1823 educators were employed at the schools that agreed to participate in the study. Of these educators, 826 (45%) participated in a convenience sample and participants were selected on the basis of availability and willingness to participate (Gravetter & Forzano, 2006). The sample included educators as well as members of school management such as heads of department and principals. Table 1 outlines the characteristics of the participants.

Table 1

Characteristics of the Participants (n = 826)

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	173	20.90
	Female	653	79.10
Age	19-24	29	3.51
	25-29	113	13.68
	30-34	137	16.58
	35-39	121	14.66
	40-44	117	14.17
	45-49	109	13.19
	50-54	113	13.68
	55-59	74	8.95
	60 +	13	1.58
Marital Status	Single	308	37.30
	Divorced	49	5.90
	Widowed	29	3.50
	Married	416	50.40
	Living with partner	24	2.90
Qualifications	Grade 12	74	9.0
	Diploma	388	47.00
	Postgraduate Diploma	161	19.50
	Degree	125	15.09
	Honours Degree	69	8.40
	Master's Degree	8	1.00
	Doctoral Degree	1	.10
Job Tenure	Up to 1 year	62	7.50
	Up to 2 years	67	8.11
	Up to 3 years	53	6.41
	Up to 4 years	46	5.57
	5 to 6 years	105	12.70
	7 to 8 years	78	9.40
	9 to 10 years	62	7.50
	11 to 15 years	107	13.00
	16 to 20 years	48	5.83
	21 + years	198	23.98
Job Position	Student Teacher (in full-time training)	52	6.30
	Junior Teacher (two years or less in full-time teaching)	86	10.40
	Senior Teacher (more than two years in full-time teaching)	593	71.80
	Head of Department	76	9.20

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
	Principal	19	2.30
Type of School	Government	769	93.10
	Private	57	6.90
Years at the School	Up to 2 years	213	25.80
	3 to 4 years	149	18.00
	5 to 9 years	210	25.50
	10 to 15 years	125	15.20
	16 + years	129	15.50
Years in Teaching	Up to 2 years	60	7.30
	3 to 5 years	126	15.20
	6 to 10 years	169	20.50
	11 to 20 years	187	22.60
	21 + years	284	34.40
Nationality	Namibian	818	99.00
	Non-Namibian	8	1.00
Home Language	Afrikaans	205	24.80
	English	18	2.20
	Oshiwambo	177	21.40
	Herero	150	18.20
	Damara	108	13.10
	Nama	54	6.50
	Tswana	11	1.30
	German	8	1.00
	Others	95	11.50
Educational Region	Khomas	491	59.40
	Otjozondjupa	36	4.40
	Omaheke	19	2.30
	Erongo	24	2.90
	Hardap	27	3.30
	Karas	99	12.00
	Kunene	15	1.80
	Omusati	16	1.90
	Oshana	29	3.50
	Oshikoto	27	3.30
	Kavango	5	.60
	Zambezi	38	4.60
	Ohangwena	0	0

Table 1 indicates that more female than male educators participated in the study. The age category of 30-34 had the highest number of participants. Most participants were married. Approximately 47% of the participants indicated that they were in possession of a teaching diploma as their highest professional qualification. Of all the participants, about 91% had an academic qualification higher than grade 12. About 28% of the participants had been in the teaching profession for less than five years. Approximately 43% have been teaching for longer than ten years. Most of the participating educators (83%) were teaching fulltime for more than two years. With regard to home language, 24% of participants indicated that they were Afrikaans-speaking whilst 21% were Oshiwambo-speaking and 18% were Herero-speaking. The Khomas region had the most participants (59%), whilst no educator of the Ohangwena region participated.

Measuring instruments

The Antecedents Scale (AS) as developed by May et al. (2004) has been utilized to measure quality of co-worker and supervisor relationships. Co-worker relationships were measured by means of 10 items (e.g. "My co-workers value my input") whilst supervisor relationships were measured by ten items (e.g. "My supervisor helps me solve work-related problems"). Each item requires the respondent to answer on a scale which varies from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). May et al. (2004) confirmed Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0.95 for the AS.

The Work Engagement Scale (WES) as developed by May et al. (2004) has been utilized in this study to collect data about Namibian secondary school educators' level of enagement (e.g., "I am very absorbed in my work"). The items used a 7-point never-always scale varying from 1 (never or almost never) to 7 (almost always or always). The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the WES was found to be .82 (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2010).

The Rewards and Recognitions Scale (RRS) as developed by Saks (2006) has been utilized to measure subjective experience of the rewards and recognition. The scale consists of 10 items (e.g., "Indicate the extent to which you receive the following outcomes for performing your job well: 'more freedom and opportunities' "). Participants had to indicate the extent to which they received certain outcomes for performing their job well on a 7-point little – much scale varying from 1 (very little) to 7 (very much). Saks (2006) found the rewards and recognitions scale to be valid and reliable (α = .80).

The Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS), as developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986, 1990), has been used to measure educators' subjective experience of organizational support. A version with 10 items of the SPOS was used in this study. Ten little – much items (e.g., "My organization cares about my opinions") are scaled from 1 (very little) to 7 (very much). Eisenberger et al. (1990) indicated a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .93 for the SPOS.

The Affective Commitment Scale (ACS) has been used to measure organisational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The affective commitment scale with five items, as used by Rhoades, Eisenberger, and Armeli (2001), was utilized (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). The items (e.g., I feel personally attached to my work organization) use a 7-point agreement   disagreement scale varying from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Allen and Meyer (1990) found that reliability and validity scores for the ACS were acceptable (α = .90).

The Turnover Intention Scale (TIS; Saks, 2006) has been utilised to measure intention to leave. The items (e.g. "I am planning to search for a new job during the next 12 months") are anchored from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Saks (2006) reported an internal consistency of 0.82 for the TIS. Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis was carried out with the SPSS 22.0 programme (SPSS, 2015). The construct validity and the reliability of the measurement instruments were assessed by means of Cronbach alpha coefficients (Everitt & Hay, 1992) and exploratory factor analyses. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) were also computed to describe the data. Pearson product-momentum correlation coefficients were used in order to specify relationships between the variables. The cut-off point for statistical significance was set at $p \leq 0.05$. In order to make decisions regarding practical significance, effect sizes were used (Steyn, 1999). A cut-off point of 0.30 (medium effect) was used to indicate the practical significance of correlation coefficients (Cohen, 1992). Multiple regression analyses were conducted in order to determine the percentage of the variance in the dependent variables (engagement, organisational commitment and turnover intention) that is predicted by the independent variables (co-worker relations, supervisor relations, rewards/recognition and organizational support) (Klem, 2005). The mediation effect of work engagement was tested with regression analysis (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Results

Exploratory factor analyses

In order to determine the underlying factor structure of the measuring instruments, exploratory factor analyses were conducted. As an initial step, principal component analyses were used to determine the factorability of the items of the scales used as well as to determine the number of factors in each scale. In order to determine the number of factors in each scale, eigenvalues (≥ 1) and the scree plot were used. Also, principal factor analysis with a direct oblimin rotation was used in cases where the scale had two or more factors.

A principal component analysis was conducted on the 10 items that measured co-worker relationships. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy revealed a value of 0.95, which indicated that the items were factorable. Bartlett's test of sphericity showed to be highly significant (χ^2 (45) = 7386.15; $p \leq 0.05$). All the communalities of the scale were higher than the suggested 0.30. A principal component analysis showed that one factor (eigenvalue = 7.10) could be extracted. The component loadings ranged from .89 to .76. The factor (labelled co-worker relations) explained 70.95% of the total variance of the scale.

A principal component analysis was conducted on the 10 items that measured supervisor relationships. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy revealed a value of 0.93, which indicated that the items were factorable. Bartlett's test of sphericity showed to be highly significant (χ^2 (45) = 6149.34; $p \leq 0.05$). All the communalities of the scale were higher than the suggested 0.30. A principal component analysis showed that two factors (eigenvalues of 6.31 and 1.09 respectively) could be extracted. Factor 1 (37.58%) and Factor 2 (36.36%) explained 73.94% of the total variance of the scale. Factor 1 represented supervisor support, whereas Factor 2 represented supervisor trust.

A principal component analysis was conducted on the 10 items that measured rewards and recognition. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy revealed a value of 0.88, which indicated that the items were factorable. Bartlett's test of sphericity showed to be highly significant (χ^2 (45) = 3298.78; $p \leq 0.05$). All the communalities of the scale were higher than the suggested 0.30. A principal component analysis showed that two factors (eigenvalue = 4.68 and 1.12 respectively) could be extracted. Factor 1 (32.27%) and Factor 2 (25.77) explained 58.04% of the total variance of the scale.

A principal component analysis was conducted on the 10 items that measured organisational support. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy revealed a value of 0.84, which indicated that the items were factorable. Bartlett's test of sphericity showed to be highly significant (χ^2 (45) = 2801.28; $p \leq 0.05$). All the communalities of the scale were higher than the suggested 0.30. A principal component analysis showed that three factors (eigenvalue = 3.97, 1.29 and 1.08) could be extracted. Factor 1 (25.30%), Factor 2 (24.40) and Factor 3 (13.91) explained 63.61% of the total variance of the scale.

A principal component analysis was conducted on the 13 items that measured work engagement. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy revealed a value of 0.90, which indicated that the items were factorable. Bartlett's test of sphericity showed to be highly significant (χ^2 (45) = 7121.24; p $<$ 0.05). All the communalities of the scale were higher than the suggested 0.30. A principal component analysis showed that two factors (eigenvalue = 6.07 and 2.34) could be extracted. Factor 1 (44.06%) and Factor 2 (20.64) explained 64.70% of the total variance of the scale.

A principal component analysis was conducted on the 3 items that measured turnover intention. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy revealed a value of 0.62, which indicated that the items were factorable. Bartlett's test of sphericity showed to be highly significant (χ^2 (3) = 451.63; p $<$ 0.05). All the communalities of the scale were higher than the suggested 0.30. A principal component analysis showed that one factor (eigenvalue = 1.84) could be extracted. The component loadings ranged from .85 to .67. The factor explained 61.25% of the total variance of the scale.

A principal component analysis was conducted on the 5 items that measured organisational commitment. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy revealed a value of 0.85, which indicated that the items were factorable. Bartlett's test of sphericity showed to be highly significant (χ^2 (10) = 2465.43; p $<$ 0.05). All the communalities of the scale were higher than the suggested 0.30. A principal component analysis showed that one factor (eigenvalue = 3.53) could be extracted. The component loadings ranged from .87 to .78. The factor explained 70.54% of the total variance of the scale.

Descriptive statistics and correlations

The descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations and Cronbach alpha coefficients) and Pearson's correlations are reported in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics, alpha coefficients and Pearson correlations of co-worker relations, supervisor relations, rewards/recognition, organisational support, work engagement, turnover intention and organisational commitment.

Item	Mean	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Co-worker relations	4.97	13.65	0.95	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Supervisor relations	4.89	14.26	0.93	0.59**	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Rewards and recognition	3.91	13.18	0.87	0.43**	0.40**	-	-	-	-	-
4. Organisational support	4.20	8.26	0.82	0.52**	0.56**	0.62**	-	-	-	-
5. Work engagement	5.08	12.67	0.88	0.35**	0.27**	0.28**	0.30**	-	-	-
6. Turnover intention	3.25	3.93	0.72	- 0.17**	- 0.21**	-0.35	- 0.15**	-0.88*	-	-
7. Organisational commitment	5.37	6.50	0.89	0.49**	0.49**	0.33**	0.44**	0.62**	- 0.24**	-

* r $\geq$ 0.30 – practically significant (medium effect); ** r $\geq$ 0.50 – practically significant (large effect)

According to Table 2, all seven scales are reliable (α ⬚ 0.70) (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). According to the obtained mean scores, primary school educators are not satisfied with their rewards/recognition packages. A relatively high turnover intention was also recorded. Highest mean scores were found for work engagement and organisational commitment, indicating that primary school educators in Namibia value engagement and organisational commitment.

Concerning correlations, Table 2 shows that co-worker relations is practically significantly positively related to work engagement (r = .35, p   .01, medium effect) and organisational commitment (r = .49, p < .01, medium effect) and practicially significantly negatively related to turnover intention (r = -.17, p < .01, small effect). Furthermore, supervisor relations is practically significantly positively related to work engagement (r = .27, p < .01, small effect) and organisational commitment (r = .49, p < .01, medium effect) and practically significantly negatively related to turnover intention (r = -.21, p < .01, small effect). Rewards and recognition practically significantly positively related to work engagement (r = .28, p < .01, medium effect) and organisational commitment (r = .33, p < .01, medium effect) and negatively related to turnover intention, but not significantly. Organizational support is practically significantly positively related to work engagement (r = .30, p < .01, medium effect) and organisational commitment (r = .44, p < .01, medium effect) and practically significantly negatively related to turnover intention (r = -.15, p < .01, small effect). Work engagement is practically significantly positively related to organisational commitment (r = .62, p < .01, large effect) and practically significantly negatively related to turnover intention (r = -.88, p < .01, large effect). Pearson correlations indicate that co-worker relations, supervisor relations, rewards/recognition and organisational support relate positively to work engagement and organisational commitment, although in varying intensities. Esspecially work engagement has a large positive effect on organisational commitment. Hypotheses 1 and 2 are thus confirmed. All these variables relate significantly negative to turnover intention. This makes sense as educators that experience good co-worker relations, conducive supervisor relations, fair reward/recognition packages and vivid organisational support, whilst feeling engaged in their work, will most probably not have the intention to leave their school. Interestingly, good rewards and recognition seem to be a factor that will make educators hesitate to quit (negative relationship in the correlation), however, the correlation between rewards/recognition and turnover intention is not significant. Hypothesis 3 is thus partially supported.

Next, four steps were used (in a four-step hierarchical multiple regression procedure) to test the direct effect of independent variables (co-worker relations, supervisor relations, organisational support, rewards/recognition) on the dependent variable (engagement, organisational commitment and turnover intention respectively).

Table 3

Regression analysis with Antecedents as the Independent Variables and Total Engagement as the Dependent Variable.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	*t*	*P*	*F*	*R*	*R²*	*ΔR²*
		B	SE	Beta						
							119.60*	0.36	0.13	0.13
1	(Constant)	49.60	1.56		31.76	0.00*				
	Co-worker relations	0.33	0.03	0.36	10.94	0.00*				
							63.40*	0.37	0.13	0.01
2	(Constant)	47.95	1.69		28.42	0.00*				
	Co-worker relations	0.28	0.04	0.30	7.35	0.00*				

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	P	F	R	R^2	ΔR^2
		B	SE	Beta						
	Supervisor relations	0.09	0.04	0.10	2.53	0.01*				
							48.20*	0.39	0.15	0.02
3	(Constant)	45.96	1.75		26.30	0.00*				
	Co-worker relations	0.23	0.04	0.25	6.06	0.00*				
	Supervisor relations	0.06	0.04	0.05	1.74	0.08				
	Organisational support	0.14	0.04	0.15	3.94	0.00*				
							37.22*	0.39	0.15	0.00
4	(Constant)	45.78	1.75		26.20	0.00*				
	Co-worker relations	0.22	0.04	0.24	5.61	0.00*				
	Supervisor relations	0.04	0.04	0.04	1.04	0.30				
	Organisational support	0.14	0.07	0.09	1.95	0.05				
	Rewards/recognition	0.10	0.04	0.10	2.49	0.01*				

$p \Box 0.05$

The results in Table 3 show that co-worker relations explains 13% ($R^2 = 0.13$) of the variance in total engagement of primary school educators in Namibia (F = 119.60, p $\Box$ 0.05). The standardised beta value also indicates that co-worker relations ($\beta = 0.36$, p $\Box$ 0.05) contributes significantly towards educators' experience of total engagement. In a second step, supervisor relations was added as a predictor of total engagement. Change was found in the variance of the experience of total engagement ($\Delta R^2 = 0.01$), which means that supervisor relations plays a statistically significant role in educators' experience of total engagement ($\Delta F = 6.41$, p $\Box$ 0.05). The standardised beta value ($\beta = 0.10$, p $\Box$ 0.05) indicates that supervisor relations contributes significantly to total engagement of primary school educators. In a third step, organisational support was added as an independent variable. These independent variables explain 15% ($R^2 = 0.15$) of the variance of total engagement of primary school educators ($\Delta F = 15.55$, p $\Box$ 0.05). The standardised beta value of organisational support indicates that, amongst these predictors in model three, organisational support ($\beta = 0.14$, p $\Box$ 0.05) contributes significantly towards primary school educators' experience of total engagement. In a fourth step, rewards and recognition was added to co-worker relations, supervisor relations, organisational support as a predictor of total engagement. Change was found in the variance of the experience of total engagement ($\Delta R^2 = 0.01$), which means that rewards and recognition plays a statistically significant role in educators' experience of total engagement ($\Delta F = 3.79$, p $\Box$ 0.05). The standardised beta value ($\beta = 0.09$, p $\Box$ 0.05) indicates that rewards and recognition contributes significantly to total engagement of primary school educators. When all four these job factors are present, co-worker and supervisor relations and organisational support have a direct effect on experienced level of engagement. Hypothesis 4 is thus partially confirmed.

Table 4

Regression analysis with Antecedents as the Independent Variables and Total Organisational Commitment as the Dependent Variable

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	P	F	R	R^2	ΔR^2
		B	SE	Beta						
							262.25*	0.49	0.24	0.24
1	(Constant)	15.19	0.75		20.35	0.00*				
	Co-worker relations	0.23	0.01	0.49	16.19	0.00*				
							182.22*	0.55	0.31	0.07
2	(Constant)	12.55	0.77		16.22	0.00*				
	Co-worker relations	0.14	0.02	0.30	8.45	0.00*				
	Supervisor relations	0.14	0.02	0.32	8.82	0.00*				
							130.99*	0.57	0.32	0.02
3	(Constant)	11.88	0.78		15.24	0.00*				
	Co-worker relations	0.12	0.02	0.26	6.85	0.00*				
	Supervisor relations	0.12	0.02	0.26	6.67	0.00*				
	Organisational support	0.13	0.03	0.16	4.48	0.00*				
							98.35*	0.57	0.32	0.00
4	(Constant)	11.74	0.80		14.67	0.00*				
	Co-worker relations	0.12	0.02	0.25	6.66	0.00*				
	Supervisor relations	0.12	0.02	0.26	6.66	0.00*				
	Organisational support	0.12	0.03	0.15	3.53	0.00*				
	Rewards/recognition	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.77	0.44				

* p □ .05

The results in Table 4 show that co-worker relations explains 24% ($R^2 = 0.24$) of the variance in organisational commitment of primary school educators in Namibia (F = 262.25, p □ 0.05). The standardised beta value also indicates that co-worker relations ($\beta = 0.49$, p □ 0.05) contributes significantly towards educators' experience of organisational commitment. In a second step, supervisor relations was added as a predictor of organisational commitment. Change was found in the variance of organisational commitment ($\Delta R^2 = 0.07$), which means that supervisor relations plays a statistically significant role in educators' experience of organisational commitment ($\Delta F = 77.75$, p □ 0.05). The standardised beta value ($\beta = 0.32$, p □ 0.05) indicates that supervisor relations contributes significantly to organisational commitment of primary school educators. In a third step, organisational support was added as an independent variable. These independent variables explain 32% of

the variance of organisational support of primary school educators ($\Delta F = 20.08$, p $\square$ 0.05). Standardised beta value indicates that, amongst these predictors in model three, organisational support ($\beta = 0.16$, p $\square$ 0.05) contributes significantly towards primary school educators' experience of organisational commitment. In a fourth step, rewards and recognition was added to co-worker relations, supervisor relations and organisational support as a predictor of organisational commitment. No change was found in the variance of the experience of organisational commitment ($\Delta R^2 = 0.00$), which means that rewards and recognition does not play a statistically significant role in educators' experience of organisational commitment ($\Delta F = 0.60$, p $\square$ 0.05). The standardised beta value ($\beta = 0.03$, p $\square$ 0.05) indicates that rewards and recognition does not contribute significantly to the organisational commitment of primary school educators. Co-worker relations, supervisor relations and organisational support contribute significantly to educators' organisational commitment, whilst rewards and recognition does not render a contribution. Hypothesis 5 is thus partially supported by the findings.

Table 5

Regression analysis with Antecedents as the Independent Variables and Total Turnover Intention as the Dependent Variable

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	P	F	R	R^2	ΔR^2
		B	SE	Beta						
							24.42*	0.17	0.03	0.03
1	(Constant)	8.93	0.51		17.48	0.00*				
	Co-worker relations	-0.05	0.01	-0.17	-4.94	0.00*				
							21.34*	0.22	0.05	0.02
2	(Constant)	9.82	0.55		17.92	0.00*				
	Co-worker relations	-0.02	0.01	-0.07	-1.53	0.13				
	Supervisor relations	-0.05	0.01	-0.18	-4.22	0.00*				
							14.39*	0.22	0.05	0.00
3	(Constant)	9.90	0.56		17.10	0.00*				
	Co-worker relations	-0.02	0.01	-0.06	-1.26	0.21				
	Supervisor relations	-0.05	0.01	-0.17	-3.67	0.00*				
	Organisational support	-0.01	0.02	-0.03	-0.70	0.48				
							12.98*	0.24	0.06	0.01
4	(Constant)	9.53	0.57		16.68	0.00*				
	Co-worker relations	-0.02	0.01	-0.07	-1.67	0.10				
	Supervisor relations	-0.05	0.01	-0.17	-3.71	0.00*				
	Organisational	-0.05	0.02	-0.10	-2.03	0.04*				

support					
Rewards/recognition	0.04	0.01	0.12	2.89	0.00*

* p ⬜ .05

The results in Table 5 show that co-worker relations explains 3% ($R^2 = 0.03$) of the variance in intention to quit of primary school educators in Namibia (F = 24.42, p ⬜ 0.05). The standardised beta value also indicates that co-worker relations ($\beta = -0.17$, p ⬜ 0.05) contributes significantly towards educators' intention to quit. In a second step, supervisor relations was added as a predictor of intention to quit. Change was found in the variance of intention to quit ($\Delta R^2 = 0.02$), which means that supervisor relations plays a statistically significant role in educators' intention to quit ($\Delta F = 17.77$, p ⬜ 0.05). The standardised beta value ($\beta = -0.18$, p ⬜ 0.05) indicates that supervisor relations contributes significantly to intention to quit of primary school educators. In a third step, organisational support was added as an independent variable. No change was found in the variance of intention to quit ($\Delta R^2 = 0.00$). The standardised beta value also indicates that, amongst these predictors in model three, organisational support ($\beta = -0.03$, p ⬜ 0.05) does not significantly prevent primary school educators from quitting. In a fourth step, rewards and recognition was added to co-worker relations, supervisor relations and organisational support as a predictor of intention to quit. Change was found in the variance of intention to quit ($\Delta R^2 = 0.01$), which means that rewards and recognition plays a statistically significant role in educators' intention to quit ($\Delta F = 8.38$ p ⬜ 0.05). The standardised beta value ($\beta = 0.12$, p ⬜ 0.05) indicates that rewards and recognition contributes significantly to intention to quit of primary school educators. Hypothesis 6 is partially supported by these findings.

Indirect effects

To determine whether any relations in the model were indirectly affected by work engagement, the procedure explained by Baron and Kenny (1986) was used. These authors propose four steps of simple regression analysis with examination of the significance of coefficients after every step.

Table 6

Simple Regression Analysis with Antecedents as the Independent Variables and Organisational Commitment as the Dependent Variable

	Pearson Correlation	R² Square	Anova Significance	Beta	Beta Significance
Co-worker relations	0.49	0.24	0.00	0.49	0.00
Supervisor relations	0.50	0.25	0.00	0.50	0.00
Rewards/recognition	0.33	0.11	0.00	0.33	0.00
Organisational support	0.44	0.19	0.00	0.44	0.00

Table 6 indicates significant positive relationships between all the independent variables (co-worker relations, supervisor relations, rewards/recognition and organisational support) and the dependent variable (organisational commitment). Possible mediation effect of variable total engagement between the independent variables and the dependent variable can thus be tested for by adding engagement to every variable and repeating the regression analysis.

Table 7

Indirect Effect of Independent Variables on Organisational Commitment via Total Engagement.

	Pearson Correlation	R^2 Square	Anova Significance	Beta	Beta Significance
Co-worker relations	0.49	0.47	0.00	0.31	0.00
Total engagement	0.62	0.47	0.00	0.51	0.00
Supervisor relations	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.35	0.00
Total engagement	0.62	0.50	0.00	0.52	0.00
Rewards/recognition	0.33	0.41	0.00	0.17	0.00
Total engagement	0.62	0.41	0.00	0.57	0.00
Organisational commitment	0.44	0.45	0.00	0.28	0.00
Engagement	0.62	0.45	0.00	0.54	0.00

Table 7 shows that the independent variables remain significant after total engagement was added to the relationship. The effect of total engagement also remains significant. This means that total engagement has a partial mediating effect on the relationship between the independent variables and organisational commitment (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Hypothesis 7 is thus partially supported.

Table 8

Simple Regression Analysis with Antecedents as the Independent Variables and Turnover Intention as the Dependent Variable.

	Pearson Correlation	R² Square	Anova Significance	Beta	Beta Significance
Co-worker relations	-0.17	0.03	0.00	-0.17	0.00
Supervisor relations	-0.22	0.05	0.00	-0.22	0.00
Rewards/recognition	-0.04	0.00	0.32	-0.04	0.32
Organisational support	-0.15	0.02	0.00	-0.15	0.00

Table 8 indicates significant negative relationships between three independent variables (co-worker relations, supervisor relations and organisational support) and the dependent variable (turnover intention). Possible mediation effect of variable total engagement between three independent variables and the dependent variable can thus be tested for.

Table 9

Indirect Effect of Independent Variables on Turnover Intention via Total Engagement.

	Pearson Correlation	R² Square	Anova Significance	Beta	Beta Significance
Co-worker relations	-0.17	0.03	0.00	-0.16	0.00
Total engagement	-0.09	0.03	0.00	-0.03	0.40
Supervisor relations	-0.22	0.05	0.00	-0.21	0.00
Total engagement	-0.09	0.05	0.00	-0.03	0.39

Organisational commitment	-0.15	0.03	0.00	-0.14	0.00
Engagement	-0.09	0.03	0.00	-0.05	0.21

Table 9 shows that the independent variables remain significant after total engagement was added to the relationship. However, the effect of total engagement is not significant. This means that total engagement has no mediating effect on the relationship between the independent variables (co-worker relations, supervisor relations and organisational support) and turnover intention (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Hypothesis 8 is thus rejected.

DISCUSSION

From the findings of this study it is clear that positive relationships between primary school educators in Namibia as well as between the educators and their supervisors assists educators to be engaged in their work. This is in agreement with earlier findings by Baer and Frese (2003) and Vinarski-Peretz and Carmeli (2011) who found that positive relationships at work increase engagement. Furthermore, this study found that when educators perceive support from their school community and school authorities, they will be more engaged in their work. This is in agreement with the finding of Kou (2012) who found organisational support to be an antecedent of work engagement. This study also found that fair rewards and recognition packages for educators will motivate them to be more engaged in their work. De Villiers-cheepers (2011) state in this regard that the willingness of employees to become deeply engaged in their work depends largely on how their organisation rewards and recognises their work efforts.

This study also found that positive co-worker and supervisor relationships, organisational support and appropriate rewards/recognition leads to increased levels of organisational commitment of employees. Wang (2008) conducted a study on the relationship between co-worker and supervisor relationships and organisational commitment in China's foreign-invested companies. They found that positive work relationships increase organisational commitment of employees. Saunderson (2004) found in a previous study that when employees feel they are rewarded appropriately by their organisation, it leads to increased organisational commitment. Wayne et al. (2002) postulate that organisational support contains an element of reciprocity. If the organisation clearly supports the employee, chances are strong that the employee will feel compelled to deliver back to the organisation. This idea of reciprocity is very much based on the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). Eisenberger et al. (1986) regard organisational support to be an antecedent of organisational commitment.

Findings in this study also indicate that a negative relationship exists between positive co-worker/supervisor relationships, organisational support and appropriate rewards/recognition, on the one hand, and turnover intention on the other hand. Especially good work relationships and organisational support seem to form a strong barrier between employees and their turnover intention. In this regard, Leondard and Levine (2006) also found a negative correlation between good work relationships and turnover intention. Chow et al. (2012) also confirmed a negative correlation between good remuneration and turnover intention. Taris et al. (2004) also indicate that a balance should exist between how much employees put into the organisation and what they get out. If this balance is disturbed and the employee feels he/she do not get support from the organisation, turnover rates will escalate.

Co-worker relationships, organisational support and rewards/recognition seem to be the main, direct, contributors to Namibian primary school educators' work engagement. Co-worker relationships, supervisor relationships and organisational support are the main contributors to organisational commitment. Supervisor relations, organisational support and rewards/recognition are the main factors that prevent educators from quitting.

With regard to the mediating effect of work engagement between independent variables (co-worker and supervisor relationships, organisational support, rewards/recognition) and organisational commitment, it was found that engagement has a partial mediating effect. However, no mediating effect was found for work engagement between the independent variables and turnover intention of primary school educators in Namibia.

Recommendations

Ways should be found for informing and guiding relevant education authorities regarding the effects of relational context, organisational support and rewards/recognition on the work engagement and organisational commitment of educators as well as on their turnover intention. It is crucial that education authorities have access to and understand these industrial psychological concepts and how to utilize and apply them in order to establish a highly motivated, effective and productive education corps in Namibia. Interventions should be implemented to inform school managements about the importance of good interpersonal relationships between colleagues and between supervisors and educators. Organisational support should be clearly signalled to all educators in the country, as this shows to be a positive contributor to work engagement and organisational commitment. It is, therefore, imperative that education authorities are visible and that they interact with principals and schools in order to assure schools and educators of support. In the same sense, principals and heads of departments are also regarded as authorities by educators, and should do everything possible to signal clear support to educators. It is crucial that the Namibian Ministry of Education (or control boards of private schools) is well-informed about the impact of good rewarding and recognition strategies of its educators. Rewarding and recognition does not always have to be in monetary terms. Annual reward ceremonies in all the education regions, for example, will definitely increase educators' work engagement and organisational commitment and prevent quitting.

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