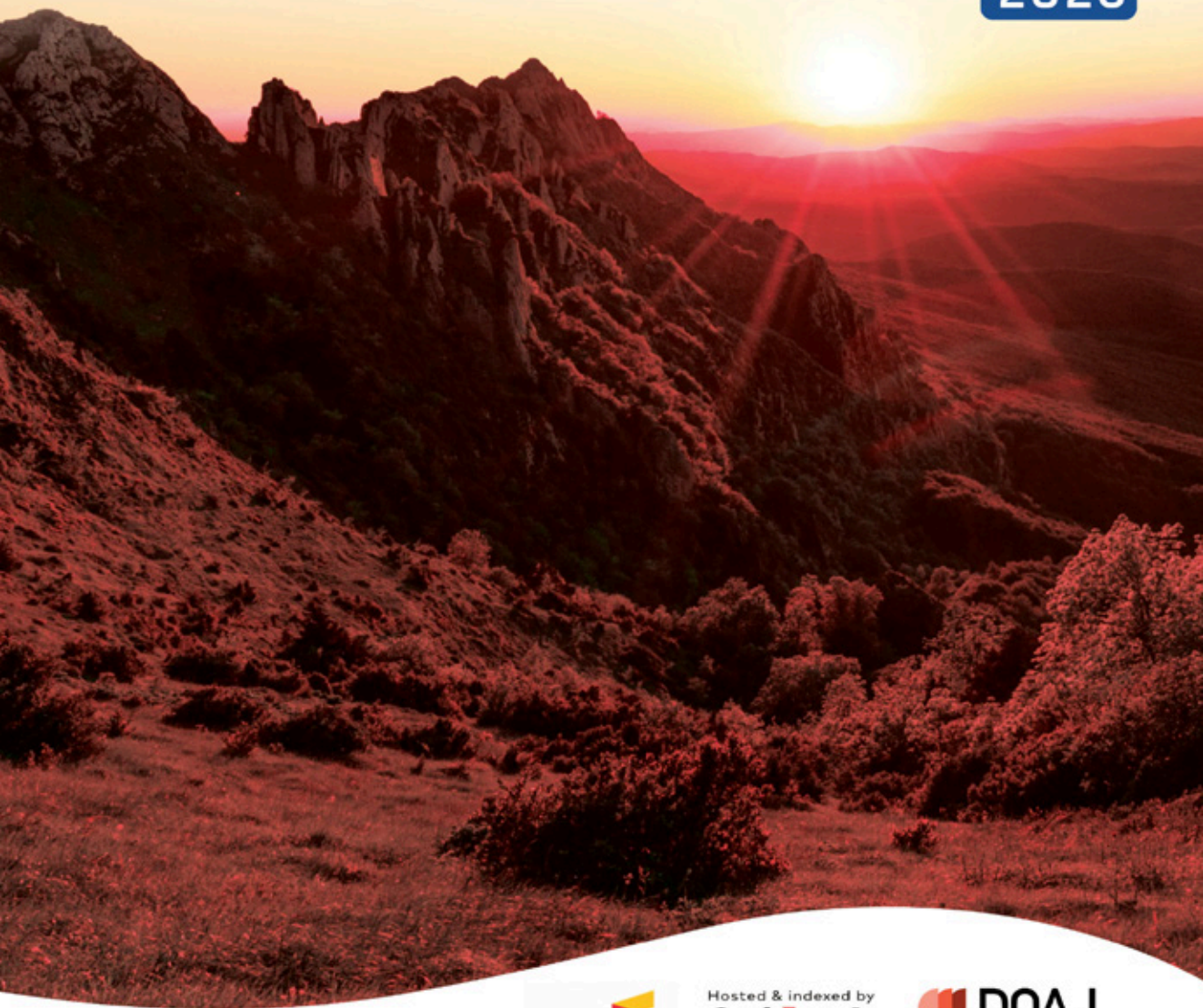


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The influence of altruism on employee helping behavior in public telecommunication firms in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

This study investigated the effects of altruism on employee helping behaviour and organisational loyalty in Zimbabwe's public telecommunication sector. Grounded in organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) theory, the study employed a mixed-methods research design integrating quantitative survey data from 350 employees and qualitative insights from six managers at Telone and Netone. The quantitative findings revealed that altruism had no significant relationship with individual job performance ($\beta = 0.039$, $p = 0.796$). The influence of altruism on organisational loyalty was tested using regression analysis. The R-squared was found to be 0.403. This means 40.3 % of the variance in organisational loyalty is explained by altruism, the independent variable. Qualitative results highlighted that although altruism fosters team cohesion, interpersonal trust and organisational climate, its impact on individual productivity is constrained by resource limitations, bureaucratic inefficiencies and role overload. Managers noted that altruistic acts often supported workplace harmony, but sometimes distracted employees from core responsibilities. The study recommends integrating recognition mechanisms and revising performance appraisals to better accommodate prosocial behaviours without undermining task performance.

Keywords: Altruism, Civic virtue, Organisational citizenship behaviour, Employee performance

Introduction

Public telecommunication companies like TelOne and NetOne are in a strategically significant position in the socio-economic development of Zimbabwe, but as a state-owned enterprise (SOE), they are subject to institutional environments that are characterised by chronic resource shortage, bureaucratic inflexibility and a poor performance management system. In this regard, organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) has largely been expected to offset structural inefficiencies by boosting cooperation, loyalty and eventually performance of employees. Specifically, the role of altruism as an unambiguously beneficial contributor to individual and organisational performance has been theorised in the context of mainstream OCB literature, as discretionary helping behaviour towards colleagues.

Nevertheless, this assumption has not been adequately challenged in the context of the public sector, which evidences institutional frailty, where prosocial actions can have the effect of producing unforeseen outcomes, including role overload, lack of focus on core services, and adverse alignment with formal performance indicators. Using the altruism variable and the organisational citizenship behaviour theory, this research aims to determine how altruism impacts employee helping behaviour, organisational loyalty and job performance in Zimbabwean state-owned telecommunication companies through a mixed-methods study design. The study contributes to OCB theory by proving that altruism is contingent in context, by promoting social cohesion and organisational loyalty, yet showing no notable correlation with individual job performance. In particular, the results re-conceptualise how altruism plays out in bureaucratic SOEs to be a social stabiliser that maintains rather than drives individual productivity. By doing this, the study transcends the contextual replication and forms part of contingency-based views of OCB theory, by discovering institutionalised conditions where prosocial behaviours contribute to organisational stability without necessarily leading to an increase in task performance.

Organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) in public telecommunication firms

Organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) describes the voluntary employee actions that cannot be stipulated legally in job specifications or in a reward system but have an impact on organisational performance (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 2018). Historically, OCB has been theorised as always positive,

and voluminous empirical evidence has been associated with such behaviours and enhancing cooperation, organisational loyalty, quality of services provided, and performance results. OCB has core dimensions, such as altruism, civic virtue, and conscientiousness, sportsmanship and courtesy, which imply voluntary contributions that go beyond role obligations. In the general theory of organisational behaviour, these behaviours are usually presumed to contribute to the performance of individuals and organisations in the sense that they create favourable social environments.

Increasing academic doubt has been cast over the relevance of these assumptions, especially in the environments of public-sector and state-owned enterprise (SOE). Public telecommunication companies are institutionally situated in ways that contrast significantly with those of organisations in the private sector, such as bureaucratic modes of governance, lack of managerial discretion, hard performance appraisal and persistent lack of resources. The correlation between the performance and OCB in these settings can be a bit more complicated and contingent than initial theoretical explanations might presume. Instead of increasing productivity directly, OCB can also play a compensatory role that helps organisations to absorb structural inefficiencies and institutional weaknesses.

This ambivalence is increasingly evidenced in empirical studies of African and other public sectors in the developing world. Although abundant evidence has linked OCB to enhanced work-based harmony and commitment to an organisation, the effects it has on official performance are inconsistent. As Mlambo and Dube (2023) note, even though OCB can help to maintain service continuity within a public telecommunication company, the effect of the same is frequently mediated by organisational culture and leadership practice. Likewise, Chikasha et al. (2024) maintain that positive impacts of discretionary behaviours may be suppressed by the overpowering influence of bureaucracy and its lack of resources or redirect such efforts of employees away from the main task duties. However, other researchers argue that where institutional settings are highly constrained, there is a risk that employees will engage in more OCB as a coping mechanism to maintain operational viability. Simango and Moyo (2023) argue that voluntary behaviours like helping colleagues and informal problem-solving can partially nullify the procedural delays and skill shortages in SOEs. Nonetheless, this compensatory purpose of OCB can be costly. When discretionary contributions are not acknowledged or even expressly endorsed by systems within organisations, employees can experience role overload,

burnout, and conflict between helping behaviours and performance standards. This view is consistent with novel emerging dark side OCB literature, which warns of the potential debilitating effects that prosocial behaviours may have on individual task performance when institutional terms and conditions are imbalanced (Bolino et al., 2021).

In the Zimbabwean public telecommunication industry, these tensions are more acute. The persistence of political interference, economic unpredictability, and a lack of technological investment subsequently puts sustained pressure on the employees to sustain service delivery through informal cooperation. Consequently, OCB can be better explained as a mechanism to stabilise collectivism at an organisational level rather than individual productivity. This implies that the OCB theory needs to be contextual to explain institutionalised settings in which discretionary behaviours contribute to organisational survival and social cohesion, but may not be directly translated into calculable performance benefits.

It is on this basis that this research assumes a contingency-based view of organisational citizenship behaviour, acknowledging that the consequences of OCB are conditioned by organisational environment, organisational governance and access to resources. By placing OCB in the context of the realities of the public telecommunication firms in Zimbabwe, the study addresses calls to develop a theory that does not rely on the universalistic assumptions but rather defines the boundary conditions to which the discretionary behaviours can be said to lead to the various organisational outcomes. Such framing gives conceptual leverage to understand altruism as a situation-specific dimension of OCB whose impacts are contingent in the institutional context.

Altruism and employee helping behaviour

Altruism is one of the key aspects of organisational citizenship behaviour, which means voluntary and unofficial actions when the workers help with work-related difficulties without any official responsibility and direct personal benefit (Podsakoff et al., 2018). In general OCB theory, altruism is usually presupposed to produce positive organisational effects through establishing cooperation, trust and helping interpersonal relations. These self-sacrificial acts are generally manifested by way of employee helping behaviour, which may involve guidance, experience transfer, or help to overworked staff. Consequently, in many cases, the available literature implicitly addresses the

notion of helping behaviour as a behavioural channel through which altruism can boost organisational performance and job performance at the individual level.

But empirical evidence is growing to indicate that the interaction between altruism and performance is not universal and linear, especially in the context of the public sector and state-owned enterprises. Whereas altruistic helping behaviour always leads to positive social and relational outcomes, including team cohesiveness, inter-personal trust, and a supportive work climate, its impact on the task-based job performance seems to be at best ambivalent and highly context-specific. Helping behaviours in resource-constrained and bureaucratic organisations can make role demands, act as a distractor and lead to a conflict between discretionary effort and formal performance requirements. As a result, altruism might serve to hold collective operations and workforce peace intact without an obvious or quantifiable contribution to individual product output increases.

This difference proves to be particularly acute in the government-owned telecommunication companies in Zimbabwe, where workers work under constant institutional demands, scarcity of resources, and strict performance management policies. Altruism in these settings might not serve so much as an instrument to support individual performance, but rather serve as a social buffering force to maintain organisational resilience and continuity. Notably, this means that the effects of altruism are inconsistent along lines: whereas helping behaviour can enhance organisational loyalty and overall morale, the effects of altruism on individual job performance can be weak or insignificant. This study adds to the organisational citizenship behaviour theory by explicitly distinguishing behavioural, attitudinal, and performance consequences of altruism and establishing boundary conditions according to which the prosocial behaviours are helpful in organisational stability, as opposed to productivity.

Methodology

The mixed methods research was employed to comprehensively examine the influence of altruism on employee helping behaviour in Zimbabwean public telecommunication firms. This design integrated quantitative and qualitative approaches to ensure both breadth and depth in understanding the phenomenon.

Quantitative phase

A survey of 350 employees was conducted targeting staff from the head offices of TelOne and NetOne. This included both management and non-management employees across technical, administrative and customer services departments. Stratified random sampling was applied to ensure balanced representation of organisational hierarchies and job functions. Standardised instruments were used to collect data. Altruism and Civic virtue sub-scales from the OCB scale (Podsakoff et al., 1990; updated and validated by Wang et al., 2021). Helping behaviour scale (Organ et al., 2006; modified for public sector contexts by Lee & Chen, 2023). Employee loyalty scale adapted from Allen and Meyers (1990) organisational commitment framework (recently applied in SOE settings by Mutasa & Nyamurera, 2022). Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”. Quantitative data were analysed using regression analysis and structured equation modelling (SEM) in AMOS 25 to test the relationship between OCB dimensions and employee performance indicators (Zhou et al 2022).

Qualitative phase

To complement and contextualise quantitative findings, six senior managers from TelOne and NetOne were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews. Participants were chosen based on their extensive experience in organisational leadership and human resources management. The interviews explored themes such as the role of altruism in fostering employee collaboration, organisational loyalty and workplace productivity. Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and triangulate findings from the survey data (Braun & Clarke, 2021). This approach enabled the study to capture nuanced perspectives on how OCB manifests within Zimbabwean public telecommunication firms.

Ethical clearance for the study was obtained from the Midlands State University Research Ethics Committee. Informed consent was secured from all participants before data collection. Participation was strictly voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity throughout the process. Data were securely stored and used exclusively for academic purposes, adhering to ethical standards outlined by the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) (Moyo & Chikondo, 2023).

Results

The structural model was used to evaluate the direct correlation between altruism and work performance of the employees in the Zimbabwe state telecommunications companies. These findings reveal that altruism cannot play a statistically significant role in employee job performance ($\beta = 0.039$, $p = 0.796$). The value of the standardised coefficient ($\beta = 0.039$) is very small and is near the value of 0, which implies that it has a very insignificant practical impact. Besides, the p-value is much greater than the traditional significance level (0.05), which proves the existence of a statistically insignificant observed relationship.

Substantively, this result points out that discretionary behaviours like helping the colleagues, volunteering to take on extra tasks and also providing informal support are not directly correlated with the measurement of such things on individual task performance in the sampled organisations. Practically, employees who gave more positive reports of altruistic behaviour were not rated systematically as higher in their official job deliverables. Its lack of statistical significance indicates that the concept of altruism, in this institutional context, has no connection with formal performance indicators.

Notably, this outcome does not mean that the value of altruism is not organisational. Instead, it leads to the notion that the influence of altruistic behaviour on quantifiable productivity could be indirect, situational, or mediated by other organisational factors not featured in the current structural model. The result undermines the implicit belief of the classical OCB model that helping behaviour is self-evident and improves the outcomes of individual productivity.

Table 1: R-square and adjusted R-square.

Outcome Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted
Employee Job Performance	0.403	0.388

Source: (Primary data 2025)

Table 1 shows the coefficient of determination (R^2) and adjusted R^2 of Employee Job Performance (EJP), based on the analysis done with the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) using Smart-PLS 4.

It is represented in the R^2 value of 0.403, which shows that the variance in employee job performance can be explained by the collectivity of the predictors, which form the structural model, up to 40.3%. R^2 values in behavioural and organisational research are not very often high because of the characteristics of human performance, as it is multi-determined and complex. Hair et al. (2017) state that R^2 equalities of 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75 can be characterised as weak, moderate and substantial, respectively, in the context of the PLS-SEM. Thus, the R^2 is 0.403, which has a moderate explanatory power.

Correction of the sample size and number of predictors gives the adjusted R^2 value of 0.388, giving a more conservative estimate. The fact that R^2 (0.403) is very similar to adjusted R^2 (0.388) indicates that overfitting is not a big problem in the model. That is, it is not the artificial overstating of the empty predictors that produces the explanatory power, but a consistent inferential estimation of the unexplained variance of the work performance.

These values reveal that whilst it appears that the overall model accounts for a significant amount of performance variance, it is altruism itself that accounts for a relatively small part of this performance variation. The middle-range R^2 indicates that other OCB single dimensions or organisational attributes that are in the larger model explain a significant proportion of variability, but altruism as a single dimension does not stand out as a predictor.

Interpretation of Non-Significant Path

The strategy of having both a moderate R^2 (0.403) with a non-significant path coefficient on altruism (0.039) is of interest to be studied more closely. The trend shows that despite the overall relevance of the structural model, in this case, the concept of altruism in particular fails to play an important role in influencing the job performance of employees.

This difference is imperative. When the R^2 is meaningfully large, it does not indicate that all the predictor variables are of substantial importance. It rather indicates the cumulative explanatory value of all exogenous constructs contained in the model. The low standardised coefficient on altruism indicates that this predictive power of employee job performance is also attributable to other variables in the structural framework and not altruism as such. Methodologically, the non-significant finding represents that the confidence interval of the altruism coefficient probably includes the value of zero, which strongly supports the point that the relationship is not statistically strong.

Theoretically informative findings can be made using PLS-SEM analysis, where the findings indicate possible boundary conditions and contend theories in a universalistic way.

Table 2: Standardised PLS-SEM regression coefficients

Paths	Coefficients	Sample mean	Std. dev	T-statistics	P-values
ALT -> EJP	0.039	0.071	0.152	0.258	0.796

Note: ALT = Altruism.

Source: (Primary data 2025)

Table 2 shows the bootstrapped Standardised Regression estimates of the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) analysis of the relationship between altruism (ALT) and employee job performance (EJP). In PLS-SEM, there are standardised beta coefficients (0) that show the anticipated change in the dependent variable in case of a one standard deviation change in the predictor variable, the rest of the relationships being held constant. The coefficient of the path ALT → EJP is reported to be 0.039, which indicates a very weak positive relationship. Substantively, it translates to the fact that each one standard deviation increment in altruistic behaviour is only linked with a 0.039 standard deviation increment in job performance. This level is insignificant in a real-world context and suggests that altruism plays a small part in the reasons for differences in the performance of individuals in the sampled organisations.

These relationships were tested using bootstrapping procedures in PLS-SEM to assess the stability and statistical significance of the path coefficients. The resulting t-statistic of 0.258 is substantially below the critical value of 1.96 required for significance at the 5% level (two-tailed test). Consistent with this, the p-value of 0.796 is far greater than the 0.05 threshold. Therefore, the relationship between altruism and employee job performance is not statistically significant, and the null hypothesis of no relationship cannot be rejected.

Comparison of the original estimation of the sample 0.039 with the bootstrapped sample mean 0.071 indicates that there is a slight variation, but the conclusion does not change. The path is weak across the resampling iterations, and the finding is statistically insignificant, which reflects the strength of the non-significant observation. The size of the coefficient would still indicate a

minor practical effect even in the case that statistical significance had been obtained. Coefficients that are less than 0.10 are normally regarded as very small in behaviour research and organisational research unless there is a strong theoretical explanation. The statistical and practical significance are not present in this instance.

Even if effect size statistics (f^2) are not reported directly, with the beta coefficient being very small, the effect size contribution of altruism to the job performance of employees is insignificant. Effect size discrete levels in PLS-SEM normally denote small, medium, and large effects at 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35, respectively. With such a large value of the coefficient, the small contribution of altruism to variance in performance may well not be even as large as the small effect level. This implies that altruistic behaviour does not play a substantive role in influencing the result of performance in this structural model.

The lack of a statistically significant relation suggests that discretionary helping behaviours, including mentoring colleagues, volunteering to help colleagues facing workload pressures, transfer of expertise, and or provision of informal assistance, do not have a systematic process of translating into quantifiable performances at individual levels of tasks in the Zimbabwean telecommunications companies. Practically, those employees who submit increased altruistic engagement rates are not the ones who have a larger normative performance rating or achievement on the basis of output. This result is more interesting, bearing in mind that the organisational citizenship behaviour theory traditionally assumes that altruistic actions will increase productivity by increasing cooperation and cutting inefficiency in coordination.

Qualitative insights gathered from interviews with managers suggested that altruism played a crucial role in promoting team cohesion and interpersonal trust. Employees were often seen supporting overburdened colleagues, offering mentorship and fostering a positive workplace climate. However, several managers cautioned that excessive engagement, which sometimes led to role overload, where employees neglected their core responsibilities in favour of assisting others. As one manager noted:

We value staff helping each other, but sometimes it comes at the cost of their own targets and deadlines.

This observation is consistent with Eisenberger (2021), who warned that high levels of altruistic behaviour could result in employee burnout and decreased

individual task focus. Despite these challenges, altruism was still regarded as an essential driver of morale and reduced turnover intentions in the organisations studied (Groyal & Chauhan, 2023).

Discussion

This study investigated the impact of altruism on employee helping behaviour, organisational loyalty and job performance in the Zimbabwean public telecommunication companies with a view to the theoretical reinforcement of organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB). The results indicate a very clear and theoretically significant trend: whereas altruism has a positive influence on social cohesion, interpersonal trust, and organisational loyalty, its impact on individual job performance is statistically insignificant. Instead of diminishing the relevance of altruism, these findings reveal the situational contingency of OCB and reject the predominant belief that discretionary helping behaviours will benefit performance evenly across organisations.

Altruism, Helping Behaviour, and the Limits of Performance Enhancement

Regarding OCB theory, the fact that the relationship between altruism and job performance is not significant suggests that altruism is treated in a highly universalistic way in the literature. Classical and modern OCB models often assume that altruistic helping behaviour promotes productivity through supporting cooperation and lowering coordination costs. Nevertheless, the recent scholarship has started to focus more on the idea that these effects are contingent on organisational context (Bolino et al., 2021; Huang and Hammer, 2022). The altruistic behaviour in the form of creating unnecessary time and energy expenditure in place of core job work in the public telecommunication firms in Zimbabwe (as typified by bureaucratic rigidity, resource limitations and poor performance) may simply limit the ability of these firms to support measurable improvements in their performance outcomes.

This interpretation is supported by the qualitative results. Managers recognised that altruistic helping behaviour played a critical role in ensuring continued teamwork and continued operation, but they also reported that employees who engaged highly in helping behaviour tended to have their role overloaded and an inability to accomplish individual performance targets. This two-fold influence conforms with current empirical evidence in the studies of the public-sector organisations, which indicate altruism can both maintain collective functioning but also blunts individual task focus in the case where institutional

systems fail to support or recognise discretionary effort (Rahim and Mahmood, 2022; Chikasha et al., 2024).

Divergent Outcomes of Altruism: Loyalty versus Performance

One of the pivotal empirical findings in this study is the distinction between attitudinal and performance outcomes of altruism. While altruism does not significantly predict employee job performance ($\beta = 0.039$, $p = 0.796$), the structural model demonstrates moderate explanatory power for organisational loyalty ($R^2 = 0.403$). This suggests that the overall model accounts for a meaningful proportion of variance in loyalty outcomes. However, the explanatory power cannot be attributed to altruism alone without considering other predictors included in the model.

In particular, altruistic helping behaviour consolidates emotional attachment, norms of reciprocity and organisational commitment, although it does not correspond to quantifiable positive impacts on the productivity of individual tasks. This inconsistency confirms current literature that is pushing scholars to deconstruct OCB outcomes instead of assuming that their performance benefits are homogenous (Bolino et al., 2021; Lee and Chen, 2023). This study empirically validates the hypothesis that prosocial behaviours work under different mechanisms: social and psychological mechanisms contribute to loyalty, and the results of productivity are dependent on structural and institutional requirements.

Formal performance systems that presume task delivery over relation contributions are pivotal in the Zimbabwean context of state-owned telecommunication businesses in which bureaucratic fixities and resource scarcity dominate organisational operations. Stated differently, altruistic behaviour helps to increase organisational cohesion and workforce stability but is structurally decoupled from performance appraisal measures. It can thus be shown that altruism is, in fact, more of an organisational solidarity mechanism than an individual productivity driver. The development of this divergence empirically allows the study to contribute to the contingency-based explanation of OCB theory. The positive impacts of altruism are no longer consistent across all performance environments, but instead are institutional design and performance management architecture. The result disputes the common sense of universalistic beliefs about OCBs as a field of research and demonstrates that situational boundary conditions are critical to interpreting discretionary behaviours.

Contextual Boundary Conditions of Altruism in SOEs

Despite the fact that the quantitative model took no direct test of the institutional variables as a moderator, the qualitative evidence offers significant contextual information on how altruism is facilitated in state-owned telecommunication companies in Zimbabwe. Structural constraints, such as bureaucratic rigidity, small technology investment, skills shortage, and a small amount of resources, were always identified by managers as prevailing elements of the organisational environment. These situational circumstances are the reasons why altruism never led to objective enhancements in the individual's job performance. Instead of boosting the productivity of tasks, the altruistic behaviours emerged to serve as an adaptive strategy, which maintained the continuity of operations and social unity within limited conditions. Specifically, the buttressing of service delivery through procedural delays and shortages through helping behaviours allowed teams to offset systemic inefficiencies and sustain service delivery. But since formal systems of performance management focus on individual targets of output, these relational contributions were not in material performance results.

These qualitative observations indicate the possible reliance of the efficiency of altruism with institutional compatibility of discretionary behaviours with formal evaluation systems. Although this research did not statistically model the institutional factors as boundary conditions, the results are comparable with the previous research stating that the boundary context (between structural and governance) is aware of the performance effects linked to organisational citizenship behaviour (Simango and Moyo, 2023; Wang and Xu, 2022). In line with that, this paper proceeds with a context-relevant definition of altruism: in resource-limited SOEs, altruism is more about stabilising collective performance and not directly increasing an individual's productivity. The institutional moderators need to be empirically tested through formal testing of institutional moderators in future studies.

Theoretical Implications for Organisational Citizenship Behaviour Theory

The given study presents three empirical contributions to the organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) theory. The results contradict the universalistic assumption that altruism produces a consistent effect on the result of individual performance. The structural model shows that altruism has no statistically significant impact on the job performance of employees ($0.039, p = 0.796$). The outcome gives straightforward empirical data that the positive performance

augmenting impacts of altruism are non-occurring and could rely on the organisational setting. The study can be relevant to ongoing debates on the conditionality of OCB-performance relationships by demonstrating that it is not a significant relationship in a public-sector SOE setting.

SSecond, the research specifically identifies the differences in attitudinal and performance outcomes of altruism in an empirical manner. Even though altruism was not likely to indicate job performance in a great way, it indicated a significant share of variation in organisational loyalty ($R^2 = 0.430$). This deviation justifies the fact that the results of OCB are multidimensional and are not to be used interchangeably. The results, hence, substantiate theoretical postulations that propose the segregation of behavioural manifestations of OCB, attitudinal reactions like loyalty and commitment, and performance results and indicators that are objective. A functional equivalence approach to these outcomes runs the danger of throwing together the various mechanisms by which prosocial behaviours take effect.

TThird, the institutional variables were not explicitly modelled into the quantitative model as moderating variables; however, the qualitative data indicate that structural constraints influence the manner in which altruism is converted into organisational performance. The organisational traits that were expressed by managers included bureaucratic inflexibility, resource constraints and rigid performance management bureaucracies. These situational factors seem to restrict the degree to which the altruistic behaviours are depicted as official performance indices. To this end, the paper contributes to a context-specific interpretation of the OCB theory where altruism does not generate productivity gains, which will be determined by the extent to which the OCB discretionary behaviours are matched to the evaluation systems.

The overall outcome of these investigations favours a contingency-based modification of an OCB theory. Instead of presupposing that altruistic helping behaviour is linked in itself to individual productivity, it is shown that altruism can also be more of a process of social cohesion and stabilisation of organisations operating in resource-limited contexts of the public sector. By basing these deductions on structural modelling, as well as qualitative evidence, the research paper adds to the more refined view of the functioning of OCB at the institutional levels.

Conclusion

The current study aimed at investigating the role of altruism in employee helping behaviour and organisational loyalty and job performance in the Zimbabwean public telecommunication companies, with the express purpose of elucidating the role of these relationships in the organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) theory. The results prove that altruism has a substantial contribution to enhancing social cohesion, interpersonal trust, and organisational loyalty, though the effect of altruism on personal job performance is not statistically significant. Instead of it being a limitation, it offers a significant theoretical contribution since that pattern shows that altruism is context-dependent and disproves the major assumption that prosocial behaviours are performance-enhancing, which prevails in the OCB theory.

The placement of altruism in a resource-restricted and bureaucratic environment of state-owned enterprises, in which the study is more or less situated, contributes to the development of OCB theory in a number of ways. To begin with, it re-theorises altruism as a social stabiliser ensuring collective functioning and resilience in organisational activity as opposed to a cause of individual productivity. Second, it emphasises the necessity of identifying the differences between behavioural expressions of OCB, the attitudinal performance outcomes, such as organisational loyalty, and task-related performance measures. The bulky handling of these outcomes, like a fungible, enables the blurring of the differentiated routes by which prosocial behaviours are effected. Third, institutional conditions are also known to be key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of altruism: the study attributes them to institutional factors like inflexible performance management, lack of resources, and bureaucratic controls. By so doing, the study will add to a contingency-based extension of the OCB theory beyond universalistic assumptions.

Practically, the results imply that managers of organisations in the public sector should not ignore the social and stabilisation benefit of altruistic behaviour, but at the same time be conscious of its role in producing role overload and performance trade-offs. Integrating the prosocial behaviours within performance management systems, attribution mechanisms to discretionary contributions and leadership practices that enhance cooperation with role accountability can contribute towards organisations reaping the rewards of altruism without affecting individual performance.

Lastly, the research presents a number of research opportunities in the future. Longitudinal designs would be able to study changes in the impact of altruism on performance and loyalty over a period of time, and comparative studies across sectors and institutional settings would shed more light on the boundary conditions of OCB. It is also possible that in future research, moderating variables like leadership style, organisational support and reward structures will be investigated with the aim of enhancing knowledge with regard to the conditions in which and how altruism leads to various organisational results. This research paper prepares the footing for the development of a theory that would represent the conditions of global-south organisations in the sector of publics.

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