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Impact of Workload Manageability on Vehicle Repair Workers' Morale and Happiness in Queenstown, South Africa

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Abstract:

The vehicle repair businesses are bedevilled by perennial conflict between employers and employees on issues relating to work overload and other contentious general working conditions. This study assessed the impact of workload manageability on the morale and happiness of employees in the vehicle repair businesses in Queenstown, South Africa. This quantitative study used convenience sampling to select both male and female participants. The elements were drawn from purposively designated vehicle repair businesses. The research applied non-parametric statistical analyses, and structural modelling was engaged to confirm data reliability and validity. After a rigorous hypothesis testing, the result of the study revealed that workload manageability had a significant impact on the morale and happiness of employees. Also, workload manageability is being aggravated by work overload, lack of appropriate equipment and machinery, lack of relevant skills, and unfair distribution of work among employees. In conclusion, the study recommends that employee workload must be scientifically determined and there should be a reasonable match between the employees' skills, experience and pay grade to the volume of work allocated. Lastly, proper equipment and machinery is needed to reduce employee workload and enhance their safety and productivity.

Keywords:

Vehicle Repair Businesses, Employees, Workload Manageability, Morale and Happiness

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Introduction

The study was instigated by observation of employees' performance in the sector through interaction with them as a visitor and as a client. In support of this concern, Milkman (2023) discerns that employees in the vehicle repair businesses (VRBs) have numerous workplace issues that are negatively impacting on their morale and happiness at work. This notion is supported by Fisher (2010), Baxter et al. (2021), and Virtual (2024). Perennial study on the topic enriches the sector with accurate knowledge of issues bedevilling the sector and how those issues can be addressed.

The automotive industry is wrought with labour shortage challenges (Covarrubias et al., 2025) due to a myriad of factors such as lack of skills and high wage bills that characterize the industry globally. In South Africa, the employees in that sector even face a grimmer plight due to imported motor vehicles that require complex manufacturing and servicing processes associated with intricate quality standards and cutting-edge technology. The employees generally operate under tight schedules to fix single car ownership drivers' jobs, forcing them to get subjected to extreme work overload. Another challenge exacerbating their plight is the migration of skilled workers to other countries in search of greener pastures. This study aims to devise ways to make the workers in VRBs cope with their workloads and uphold their levels of morale and happiness, as it helps in sustaining their work productivity and longevity in the sector.

On a global perspective, accidents and injuries of employees remain a menace such that the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated that 7,600 people die every day due to workplace injuries and ailments (Fateme et al., 2022). To improve employee safety, VRBs should be manned by employees who are well motivated and engaged, since the bulk of accidents are directly linked to human factors such as fatigue, lack of skills and wanton negligence. Furthermore, VRBs should reduce employee stress levels to prevent human errors that lead to injuries. They must address both psychological and physical factors at work that compromise employee wellbeing.

VRB employees endure several work-related injuries and ailments due to work overload and limited tools and inappropriate machinery needed in their work operations (Fateme et al., 2022). Although the country boasts of high-end labour laws to protect employees, many employers in this industry are slow to comply with them, partly due to the cost, complexity and limited enforcement of the regulatory framework governing small businesses (Nieuwenhuizen, 2019). Consequently, comparatively few resources are directed to employees, as most are channelled towards profit maximisation.

It is essential to obtain appropriate academic definitions of morale, happiness and workload management, since these constructs anchor the focus of this study. Primarily, workload manageability describes how effectively or poorly an employee carries the volume of work and responsibilities that their superiors strategically delegate to them (MacDonald, 2003). Morale refers to an employee's attitude

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toward the job, employer and colleagues; it is the psychological state of satisfaction, confidence and resolve that reflects how positively or negatively a worker regards the organisation, working conditions and management (Mallik, Mallik, & Keerthi, 2019). Happiness at work, in turn, denotes the positive evaluations and feelings that employees hold about their jobs, encompassing both a moment-to-moment affective sense of wellbeing and a broader cognitive satisfaction with work (Fisher, 2010). Although closely related to motivation, which concerns the drive to expend effort on assigned tasks, morale and happiness are conceptually distinct in that they reflect employees' affective and attitudinal state rather than their willingness to perform (Fisher, 2010). Additionally, the employee's knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) affect how easily they perform their given job responsibilities, which in turn affects their ability to cope with the workload. It has long been known that workers who have extensive training, expertise, and experience are better equipped to perform demanding work in both good and compromised work environments (Brown et al., 2004).

In a nutshell, it has been theorised in many industries that excessive workload and high stress levels are significant causes of low morale and happiness. When employees are overwhelmed by work overload, their mental health and overall satisfaction drop, leading to diminished productivity and employee engagement. Consequently, ensuring a scientifically manageable workload is essential to reduce the undesirable loss of morale and happiness. Also, provision of support on stress management is fundamental for maintaining employee happiness (Subramaniam et al., 2024).

Problem Statement

The technological intricacies and heavy metal object-lifting nature of the motor vehicle repair environment makes the job dangerous to employees, who risk getting injured each day they report for duty. The technological sophistication and variety of new motor vehicle models aggravates the challenging nature of the job and causes involved employees to be overstretched as they try to cope with the new technology and models being introduced into the market (Covarrubias et al., 2025). The vehicles are becoming more computerised (Hakkala & Heimo, 2019) and more electrical components are being added, thus making the job more complex for an average skilled mechanic. Most mechanics find this new terrain in the motor industry challenging, putting pressure on them to focus on streamlined or specialised repair work, such as gearbox repairs or engine overhaul tasks for specific models, in a bid to minimise complexity. It is evident that workload manageability issues in the VRB have arisen due to the proliferation of new models and the rising cost of hiring personnel in that sector over recent years. At the end of a working day, the employees of VRBs are emotionally and physically drained to the core due to shortage of staff and lifting of heavy vehicle parts (Milkman, 2023). Even though machines such as forklifts and robots are used to lighten the burden, most VRBs cannot afford to buy such machines, which makes them use mechanical tools and human labour. The purpose of this article is to analyse the workload manageability challenges affecting the VRBs and provide potential solutions to the challenges

to improve the working conditions of the employees, motivate them and attain high employee morale in the sector.

Research Question

What is the influence of workload manageability on the morale and happiness of employees in the vehicle repair businesses in Queenstown, South Africa?

Research Objective

To investigate the influence of workload manageability on the morale and happiness of employees in the vehicle repair business in Queenstown, South Africa.

Research Hypothesis

The researchers based the investigation on the null hypothesis (H0) stated below.

H0: Manageable workload does not enhance employee morale and happiness in the vehicle repair businesses.

H1: Manageable workload enhances employee morale and happiness in the vehicle repair businesses.

Literature Review

The research used Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Tohid, 2024) to premise the impact of workload manageability on the morale and happiness of employees in the vehicle repair workplace. According to Maslow, a person is more likely to be motivated when there is fulfilment of five levels of human needs, namely physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualization needs (Mustofa, 2022). Maslow suggested that a person grapples to gratify lower or deficiency needs before shifting attention to the higher or growth needs. In his analogy, physiological needs are more prevalent and pressing before the fewer safety needs become a priority. He advised that managers should start by satisfying lower needs on the pyramid of needs to make their employees motivated and happy. Since VRBs' workload involves working in a physical environment using tools such as spanners and car parts, it appeals more as a physiological factor (Sobaih & Hasanein, 2020). Employers should provide a safe, clean and comfortable work environment to promote employee satisfaction. To satisfy the social needs of employees, employees must be made to feel that they are wanted and are part of a team. On the esteem front, training of employees to enhance their performance skills is crucial. Self-actualization makes employees realise their optimal potential and achieve self-fulfilment. In Maslow's view, unbearable workloads tend to interfere with the fulfilment of each of the needs mentioned in varying proportions, warranting the need to carry out continuing surveys to check how it affects employees in different organisations and at different times. In this framework, motivation is treated as the underlying

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drive generated by need fulfilment, while morale and happiness represent the resulting affective states that this study measures (Fisher, 2010).

Literature on Workload Manageability, Morale and Happiness

Employee morale and happiness are undermined by an insurmountable workload, which in turn also hinders job performance (Sobaih & Hasanein, 2020). The most frequent work-related ailments suffered by employees that occur due to unmanageable workloads include anxiety, burnout and depression (Jacobs, 2024). Additionally, one of the main reasons for workplace stress is lack of work structure and unpredictable work assignments given at odd working hours (Gandini & Garavaglia, 2023).

Therefore, firms that are dedicated to fostering workplace employee well-being must examine the problem of workload management in greater detail and devise appropriate strategies to reduce employee stress and improve employee motivation and morale (Çelik & Köse, 2022).

Furthermore, the drivers of employee workload manageability include giving attention to clients or customer needs and wants, providing goods and services to buyers, and taking care of after-sales needs of the customers and clients. The employees in vehicle repair businesses also must deal with sundry non-standard duties assigned to them at the discretion of their superiors (Cho, 2002).

In a nutshell, the numerous tasks listed above have the potential to overwhelm the VRBs' employees to the extent that their morale and happiness may decrease vehemently if little or nothing is done to curb the challenge from escalating. The management of these crucial service businesses must seek ways of harnessing the condition so that it does not influence how these employees serve their clients. If they do not do their jobs happily, they may do shoddy work, thus jeopardising the clients' lives, who may be involved in avoidable accidents due to poor workmanship on their vehicles. Human error and vehicle malfunction top the list of accident causes in South Africa and many other countries (Stats SA, 2024). VRB managers must shift their focus to the tasks carried out by their employees and improve the workload so that it is manageable and allows individuals to rest when they feel overwhelmed by work during the day (Çelik & Köse, 2022). Managers and supervisors must know that inundating an employee with chores does not bring better productivity but instead undermines the employee's potential to perform (Barpanda & Saraswathy, 2023). The level of morale and happiness has a connection with the quality and perfection of work done by the employee. Happy employees are more likely to be productive and have longevity of tenure with the organisation (Wright et al., 2002). Consequently, customers and clients who are served by happy employees are more likely to enjoy the product and service as well. The line of communication between the customer and the employee is more likely to be fluent and devoid of tension (Wagenheim & Rood, 2010).

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Managers in the VRBs may adopt various theories of motivation to ensure that they keep their employees motivated and have high morale. These theories include prominent extant ones, such as the expectancy theory by Vroom, self-determination theory, need theory by McClelland, two-factor theory by Herzberg, and hierarchy of needs by Maslow (Nguyen, 2017). In the view of Sobaih and Hasanein (2020), workload manageability is vital in keeping peace between the employer and the employee. Employees become irate and disquiet in situations wherein they feel manipulated and overworked (Ruchi, 2022). They normally respond to this perceived ill-treatment by deliberately underperforming, destroying equipment and machinery, and, worst of all, ill-treating customers and clients (Hyken, 2015). Managers must avoid this undesirable outcome by ensuring that they allocate duties appropriately, following the scientific methods known to work in the industry for decades. Managers should create a culture of trust so that employees feel valued and recognised for their achievements. They must be allowed to grow in their profession, and they must be empowered through training to make them content with higher volumes of work.

Methods and Data

The study was a non-experimental correlational study in which a quantitative research approach (Ugwuanyi, 2022) was utilised to probe the influence of workload manageability on the morale and happiness of VRB employees. A positivist perspective was applied to determine the causal relationship between the independent variable and its attendant dependent variable (Wolhuter et al., 2012). The study tested the hypothesis stating that manageable workload does not enhance employee morale and happiness in the vehicle repair businesses (H0).

A significant methodological limitation of this quantitative study is that it used pre-determined factors or variables, which prevented in-depth debate of the observed phenomena during the research. To mitigate this shortcoming, an interpretive discussion of the quantitative results was undertaken with a view to contextualising the observed data within existing literature. One empirical limitation of the study is that only people who were readily accessible to the researchers were investigated, due to lack of time and financial resources to widen the pool of respondents. This resulted in a sampling bias, which could only be mitigated by acknowledging that the data may not be applicable to other environments unlike the one investigated.

A questionnaire was designed to collect survey data over three months and was distributed to respondents in person and via electronic devices, to amass enough numerical data to meet the appropriate sample size. Convenience sampling of respondents was used to reduce the time spent chasing specific respondents in each category. The questionnaire was tested for both content and face validity, and it was found to be valid in both instances. All research ethical issues were considered, and gatekeepers permitted the study to proceed. All respondents who participated in the study did so

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voluntarily, and their privacy, confidentiality and anonymity were maintained. The data were coded and quantitatively analysed using SPSS and AMOS to test the hypothesis and the validity and reliability of the study.

Results

Validity and Reliability Analysis

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure (Kaiser, 1974) was established to determine the sampling adequacy of the 130 respondents who participated in the survey. Furthermore, the KMO figure helped to test the suitability of the data for factor analysis and to determine whether the model variables are correlated. In addition, Bartlett's test of sphericity was used to test the sphericity for the exploratory factor analysis. The results for the two tests are given in Table 1 below.

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.837
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1097.999
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	55
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	p-value	<0.001

Table 1: The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity for the exploratory factor analysis.
Source: Compiled by author.
df = degrees of freedom.

In Table 1 above, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO = 0.837) measure of sampling adequacy is above the commonly recommended value of 0.60, and Bartlett's test of sphericity, which returned a p-value of 0.001, is statistically significant.

By statistical interpretation, the KMO measure of 0.837 is meritorious and highly acceptable, indicating that the sample responses are statistically adequate for factor analysis. According to Trujillo-Ortiz, Hernandez-Walls, Castro-Perez, Barba-Rojo, & Otero-Limon (2006), a KMO of ≥0.90 is marvellous and a KMO less than 0.50 is unacceptable. Any KMO between 0.6 and 0.7 is considered mediocre, and 0.7 to 0.8 is considered middling.

On the other hand, Bartlett's test of sphericity tested whether the correlation matrix of the data is significantly different from the identity matrix. This test is sensitive to departure from normality and tests whether the correlation coefficients are all zero, which is a necessity for factor analysis (Marshall & Boggis, 2016). If Bartlett's test returns a p-value less than 0.05, it suggests that the variables in the

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dataset do not form an identity matrix and are suitable for factor analysis. In this study, the p-value is 0.001, which is far below the cut-off p-value of 0.05, confirming that the variables in the dataset do not form an identity matrix and are therefore appropriate for factor analysis.

In Table 2 below, initial eigenvalues were used to measure the amount of variance in the dataset explained by each factor in the initial factor solution (Intellectus Consulting, 2025). These values determine the number of factors that need to be extracted without losing too much information. Furthermore, the eigenvalues indicate the total amount of variance explained by each of the factors. In essence, the first factor will account for the highest variance, the second factor will have the next highest variance, and so on.

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.585	50.770	50.770	5.585	50.770	50.770
2	2.318	21.069	71.839	2.318	21.069	71.839
3	0.781	7.100	78.939			
4	0.567	5.156	84.095			

Table 2: Total variance explained for the exploratory factor analysis.
Source: Compiled by author.
Note: Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis.

Eigenvalues are always positive, since no variance is negative, and eigenvalues greater than zero are considered good, while those near zero demonstrate multicollinearity (UCLA, 2025). In this study, the cumulative variance accounted for by the established factors was 71.839%, as shown in Table 2 above. Given these overall indicators, exploratory factor analysis was deemed to be sufficient and adequate.

Factor Analysis and Internal Consistency Output

Table 3 below was used to determine Cronbach's alpha, Joreskog rho and the average variance extracted.

Factors and Respective Items	Code	EFA Loadings	CFA Loadings
Factor 1. Employee Morale and Happiness			

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Factors and Respective Items	Code	EFA Loadings	CFA Loadings
The work you do is appropriate for your age.	EMH4	0.858	0.821
The work you do is appropriate for your level of education and skills.	EMH5	0.884	0.869
You get decent meals during lunch breaks.	EMH6	0.910	0.881
The organisation's internal environment is pleasant to you.	EMH7	0.875	0.868
You are given adequate working resources to do your work well.	EMH8	0.897	0.899
You have pride in being identified as an employee of your organisation.	EMH9	0.854	0.821
You do not often suffer from emotional exhaustion at work.	EMH10	0.834	0.833
Cronbach's Alpha = 0.950; Joreskog rho = 0.951; Average Variance Extracted (AVE) = 0.734			
Factor 2. Workload Manageability			

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Factors and Respective Items	Code	EFA Loadings	CFA Loadings
The workload is shared fairly among departmental employees.	WLM1	0.767	0.672
You have enough time to give care for customers.	WLM3	0.798	0.791
You have sufficient time to complete all your responsibilities.	WLM5	0.771	0.632
Your work is not difficult but challenging enough.	WLM7	0.794	0.708
Cronbach's Alpha = 0.795; Joreskog rho = 0.795; Average Variance Extracted (AVE) = 0.494			

Table 3: Factor (exploratory and confirmatory) analysis and internal consistency output.
Source: Compiled by author.

In Table 3 above, the average variance extracted (AVE) for employee morale and happiness is greater than the required minimum of 0.50; therefore, the convergent validity for this factor is deemed adequate. Workload manageability had an AVE below 0.50 but can be accepted because the composite reliability (CR) is higher than 0.60; thus, the convergent validity is deemed adequate for the workload manageability factor. Further, for measuring internal consistency of these factors, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used. Assessing this coefficient, the value is more than 0.70 for all the factors, i.e., employee morale and happiness ($\alpha = 0.950$) and workload manageability ($\alpha = 0.795$). A minimum of 0.70 is a recommended cut-off for good reliability. With these results, the reliability of the established factors is suggestive of good reliability. For measuring composite reliability (CR), the values of the Joreskog rho are also greater than 0.70 for all the established factors in the measurement model; thus, composite reliability is adequate for the established measurement model.

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Measuring Discriminant Validity

The Fornell-Larcker criterion was applied to measure discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2013), and the outcome of the test is shown in Table 4 below.

Construct/Factor	Employee Morale & Happiness	Workload Manageability
Employee morale and happiness	0.857	
Workload manageability	0.206	0.703

Table 4: Discriminant validity — Fornell-Larcker criterion.
Source: Compiled by author.

In Table 4 above, all square root values of AVE (diagonal values in bold) are greater than the correlation value, hence discriminant validity is established (Hamid et al., 2017).

The Fornell-Larcker criterion result confirms that each construct is unique and not merely a reflection of another construct used in the study questionnaire.

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The Path Diagram for the Full Measurement Model

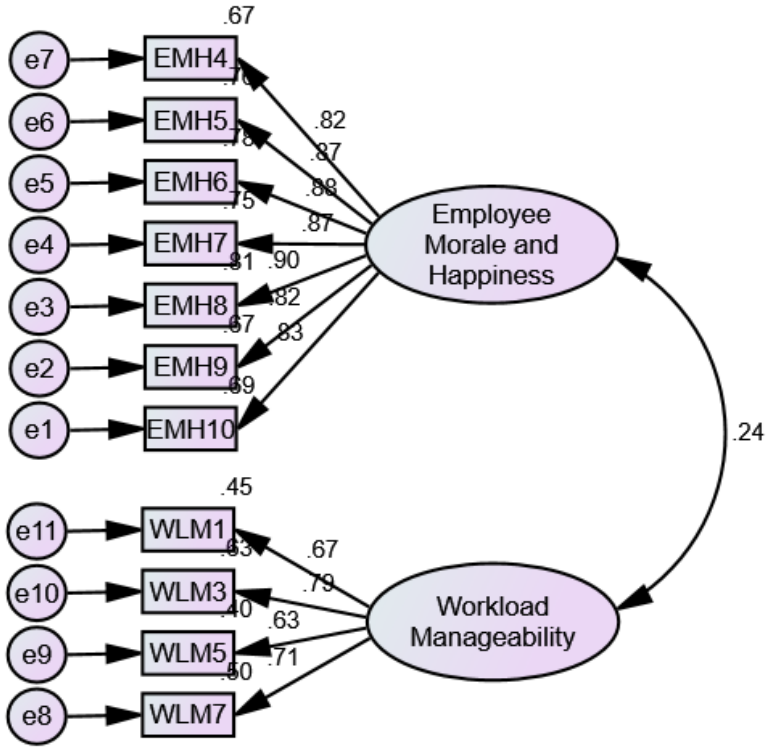

Figure 1: The path diagram for the full measurement model.
Source: Compiled by author.

Figure 1 above indicates the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) measurement model for the two factors, workload manageability and employee morale and happiness. The established factor analysis structure reveals four items loading for workload manageability and seven items loading for employee morale and happiness. The model exhibited an acceptable model fit.

The goodness of fit assessment was conducted for the measurement model to establish its relevance and applicability. Table 5 below shows the results of the assessment.

The Goodness of Fit Assessment

Name of Index	Index Value	Cut-off Points	Comments
SRMR	0.053	0.05 < SRMR ≤ 0.09	Acceptable
GFI	0.990	≥ 0.95	Good fit
AGFI	0.985	≥ 0.95	Good fit

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Name of Index	Index Value	Cut-off Points	Comments
NFI	0.986	≥ 0.95	Good fit
RFI	0.982	≥ 0.95	Good fit

Table 5: The goodness of fit assessment for the full measurement model.
Source: Compiled by author.
SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual. GFI/AGFI = (Adjusted) Goodness of Fit Index. NFI = Normed Fit Index. RFI = Relative Fit Index (also known as RHO1).

In Table 5, the results showed that SRMR = 0.053, which falls between the cut-off points of 0.05 and 0.09, thus suggesting an acceptable model fit. Further, the GFI index is 0.990 and the AGFI index is 0.985, indicating a good model fit, since both are greater than 0.95. These indicators were complemented by an assessment of the normed fit index and the relative fit index. Assessing these measures, both exceeded 0.95, which is the minimum recommended for a good fit. In summary, all these fit indices confirm the goodness of fit of the established measurement model.

The next statistical table summarises the descriptive statistics of the main theoretical variables under investigation, namely workload manageability and employee morale and happiness. Table 6 below summarises the correlation between the two variables.

Summary of the Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlation Coefficient

Variable	Mean	SD	WLM	EMH
Workload manageability (WLM)	2.815	0.704	1.00	
Employee morale and happiness (EMH)	2.965	0.708	r = 0.206	1.00

Table 6: Summary of descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation coefficient for the relationship between the main theoretical variables.
Source: Compiled by author.
Note: The variables were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. SD = Standard Deviation. WLM = Workload manageability. EMH = Employee morale and happiness.

The result in Table 6 above shows a Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of 0.206. By interpretation, the correlation coefficient indicates that there is a weak, positive and significant correlation between workload manageability (WLM) and employee morale and happiness (EMH).

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Hypothesis Testing Using Structural Equation Modelling

The study started with a null hypothesis, which was stated as below:

H0: Manageable workload does not enhance employee morale and happiness in the vehicle repair businesses.

The following path diagram visually represents the connection between the two variables under investigation.

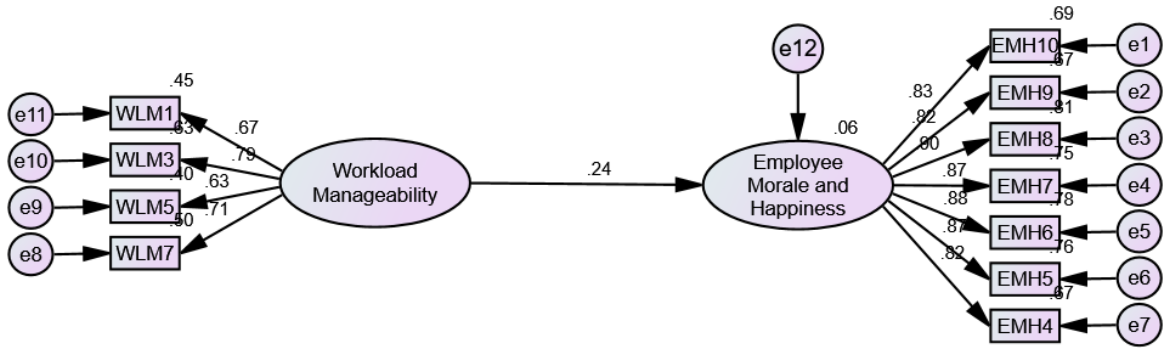

Figure 2: The path diagram for the workload manageability on employee morale and happiness structural model.
Source: Compiled by author.

In the Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) path diagram in Figure 2 above, four exogenous latent variables and seven endogenous latent variables are indicated, visually representing the linear regression relationship between workload manageability and employee morale and happiness. The path diagram reveals the predictive effect of workload manageability on employee morale and happiness. The model shows a good fit, as revealed earlier by the confirmatory factor analysis.

The Bootstrapped R-Square Estimate

The bootstrapped R-square estimate was used to determine the percentage of variation in employee morale and happiness explained by workload manageability.

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Estimate	Bootstrap SE		Bootstrapped 95% CI		p-value
	SE	Bias	LLCI	ULCI	
0.057	0.060	0.04	0.001	0.224	0.004*

Table 7: Bootstrapped R-squared estimate and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals for the default structural model.
Source: Compiled by author.
(*) Statistically significant effect. SE and Bias are the standard error and estimated bias for the bootstrapped R-squared estimate, respectively. LLCI = Lower limit confidence interval. ULCI = Upper limit confidence interval. Bias-corrected confidence intervals (CI) using 10,000 replications are presented.

In Table 7, the bootstrapped R-squared estimate (R^2 = 0.057; 95% CI [0.001 – 0.224]; p = 0.004) for the default structural model shows that workload manageability explains approximately 5.7% of the variation in levels of employee morale and happiness.

Path			Standardized Estimates		95% CI	p-value
			Estimate	SE	[LL – UL]	
EMH	←	Workload manageability	0.238	0.120	[0.010 – 0.473]	0.043*
EMH4	←	EMH	0.821	0.051	[0.693 – 0.908]	0.005*
EMH5	←	EMH	0.869	0.031	[0.801 – 0.922]	0.004*
EMH6	←	EMH	0.881	0.027	[0.824 – 0.926]	0.004
EMH7	←	EMH	0.868	0.042	[0.784 – 0.931]	0.003*
EMH8	←	EMH	0.899	0.023	[0.846 – 0.935]	0.005*
EMH9	←	EMH	0.821	0.049	[0.712 – 0.896]	0.004*
EMH10	←	EMH	0.833	0.042	[0.740 – 0.904]	0.004*
WLM1	←	Workload manageability	0.672	0.089	[0.481 – 0.842]	0.005*
WLM3	←	Workload manageability	0.791	0.077	[0.635 – 0.936]	0.004*
WLM5	←	Workload manageability	0.632	0.116	[0.408 – 0.852]	0.005*

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Path			Standardized Estimates		95% CI	p-value
			Estimate	SE	[LL – UL]	
WLM7	←	Workload manageability	0.708	0.085	[0.523 – 0.857]	0.003*

Table 8: Standardized estimates and bootstrapped 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals for the regression weights for the structural model.
Source: Compiled by author.
(*) Statistically significant effects. SE is the standard error for the standardized estimates. Bias-corrected confidence intervals (CI) using 10,000 replications are presented. WLM = Workload manageability. EMH = Employee morale and happiness.

Table 8 presents the standardized estimates and respective bootstrapped 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals for the regression weights of the structural model. The results reveal a positive and statistically significant predictive effect of workload manageability on employee morale and happiness ($\beta = 0.238$; SE = 0.120; 95% CI = [0.010 – 0.473]; $p = 0.043$).

In summary, the results of the analysis unequivocally allow rejection of the null hypothesis, which stated that workload manageability does not influence employee morale and happiness, since a p-value of 0.043 is lower than the 5% significance level set for this hypothesis test.

Discussion

The aim of the paper was to determine the influence of workload manageability on the morale and happiness of employees in the motor vehicle repair businesses. As a recap, the study started with a null hypothesis, and data was then collected and analysed to determine whether or not empirical evidence exists to support or disprove the hypothesis in a deductively logical manner (Ugwuanyi, 2022). This statistical analysis permitted the execution of logical analysis and meaningful conclusions on the existing relationship between the two variables. The study sought to answer the research question: to what extent does workload manageability predict employee morale and happiness in VRBs? In answering the research question, the null hypothesis was used, and this allowed theory to be aligned with the research question (Gangadhar & Seethi, 2024). The researchers tested the hypothesis that the independent factor does not predict the dependent variable, in a bid to respond to the research question. A null hypothesis was posed and then significance testing was applied to try to reject it.

In view of the above testing, the null hypothesis, H0: workload manageability does not influence employee morale and happiness, was rejected by the findings. The study concluded that workload manageability had a significant and positive predictive effect on employees' morale and happiness. It has been shown through confirmatory analysis that there are several factors that facilitate employee

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morale and happiness if they are guaranteed by employers in the VRBs. The first factor is the appropriateness of employee age and experience to the work undertaken by the employee. According to Hauslbauer et al. (2025), older employees cannot deal with technologically advanced machinery and equipment as competently as younger, technologically-inclined employees. Undoubtedly, the present VRB environment now calls for a multifaceted employee with diverse talent, knowledge and interests who can combine technological prowess with digital data analytics to match the technological advancements in that sector. In addition, the employee must demonstrate exceptional creativity and cutting-edge managerial abilities. In a study conducted by Oosthuizen (2019), it was found that employees perceive technological innovations in conjunction with their own jobs and careers, and their societal challenges. Consequently, strategies should be devised to attract young people to the automotive sector, which is a technologically vibrant and challenging environment. Therefore, managers in the VRBs must assign technologically advanced tasks to younger employees who are comfortable and happy to work in such an environment. In contrast, older employees are slower to master new technology (McIntosh, 2020), so they become discouraged from working in such unstable and sophisticated workspaces. Morris and Venkatesh (2000) suggest that age is a significant factor in determining how employees adopt technology in a fast-changing work environment. In the VRBs, technological change is rampant and overwhelming for older employees. Morris and Venkatesh (2000) investigated age differences in the adoption and sustained usage of technology in the workplace using the theory of planned behaviour, following 118 workers introduced to a new software system over a five-month, two-point longitudinal study. Their findings showed that younger workers' technology usage decisions were more strongly influenced by attitude toward the technology, whereas older workers were more strongly influenced by subjective norm and perceived behavioural control, although the effect of subjective norm diminished over time; these patterns remained robust after controlling for income, occupation and education. This finding affirms the present study's finding that age is a significant factor influencing workload manageability and technology mastery.

Another factor considered is the level of education and skills. Employees who lack education tend to struggle with the management of workloads, and their morale and happiness are low as they battle to perform their functions due to lack of knowledge and skills (Vandeplas & Thum-Thysen, 2019). To enable employees to manage their workloads better, training is a prerequisite, and it must be ongoing to accommodate the new knowledge and skills required in current motor repair shops. Ostin (2025) proposes that one of the contemporary pillars of employee development is workforce training, as it boosts working proficiency and employee morale.

Drawing on Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Mustofa, 2022), most employees, especially those at the lower end, are motivated by basic physiological needs such as food, clothes and shelter. Where employees' wages are modest, the quality and quantity of meals they can afford may be limited, which can create

dissatisfaction and reduce their enjoyment of the work environment. Poor nutrition can also compromise employees' mental and physical health, and unhealthy employees tend to be demotivated, unhappy and disengaged (Tivazo, 2024).

Unsafe work environments that are cramped or unhygienic, including inadequate ablution facilities and infrequent health and safety inspections, can put employees' health at risk and leave employers to exercise wide personal discretion over workplace health standards. This is consistent with Hamed et al. (2023), who assert that the physical working environment impacts on employees' productivity and wellness. This means that employers should prioritise making the workplace conducive and habitable for all workers.

Inadequate machinery and equipment is a further constraint. Employees who operate with insufficient resources struggle to do quality work (Chigara & Moyo, 2014) for their clients, which leaves both employees and clients dissatisfied. Consequently, employers in the motor industry must provide proper equipment and machinery to protect employees from injuries and to enable them to work professionally and comfortably. All employees take pride in being associated with an organisation that provides state-of-the-art resources. There is injury risk mitigation when hydraulic machines and pneumatic ergonomic tools are used to lift heavy objects and perform tasks. Workers in the VRBs usually suffer from severe accidents and muscle strain injuries, so these tools and equipment reduce such injuries (Akintoye et al., 2025). Moreover, state-of-the-art tools and equipment promote operational efficiency by allowing technicians to diagnose and fix vehicles promptly and accurately, which minimises wastage and re-working of jobs. Competent technicians are often attracted to shops that use the latest technology, which encourages staff recruitment and retention.

Furthermore, employees are happy to note when they are not physically and emotionally drained at the end of their working day (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). In addition, supervisors in VRBs must allocate a reasonable amount of work to each employee according to their ability and expertise. It is known that incongruence between allocated work and employee skills is a source of employee frustration and unhappiness (Vandeplas & Thum-Thysen, 2019).

One other factor that sustains employee morale and happiness is a manager's ability to tolerate employee errors or mistakes. Faults by employees must be tolerated where no one is in danger of being injured or killed, as this promotes the employee's emotional health (Levy, 2005). Undoubtedly, the emotional health of the employee is necessary to prevent human errors and preventable accidents in the VRB workplace (Zhang, 2022).

Employees must have ample time to complete their assigned work and to serve their customers if their morale and happiness are to be sustained. Consequently, overly tight schedules put employees under a lot of psychological and physical pressure, preventing them from enjoying their daily chores at work.

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To make workers happy, challenging but not overly difficult work and responsibilities must be given to them (Fisher, 2010).

Conclusion

The above research results depict that workload management is important in ensuring that employees' morale and happiness are maintained. Personal experience with VRBs as a client prompted the desire to investigate the issue of workload manageability in this economic sector, with a view to improving the morale and happiness of employees. Involvement in the human resources management field and participation in the training of personnel provided the impetus to formalise this investigation in a critical sector that drives the country's economic activity. In line with the evidence from the study, this research is capable of addressing some of the drawbacks in workload management in the VRBs, locally and abroad. This kind of study has not previously been conducted in the areas involved and with this level of intensity. It is anticipated that management in the sector will use these findings and the model to assign manageable workloads to their employees without undermining their morale and happiness. However, the findings of this study are not a universal representation of what is traditionally happening in VRBs locally and internationally, as the study was restricted to Queenstown and the surrounding areas.

Recommendations

This study recommends that employers in VRBs ensure that employees are properly trained to do their jobs, because skilled workers manage their workload more easily and are more innovative when executing their tasks. Another recommendation is that employees must be given proper meals at work so that they are healthy enough to cope with the heavy workload usually associated with the motor industry.

Furthermore, employers of VRBs must provide appropriate machinery and equipment to their employees so that the latter can do their work with ease. With proper tools and equipment, work processes are completed faster and better, which reduces the workload of the employee.

The last recommendation is that supervisors must distribute work fairly among their subordinates so that few employees are overloaded with unbearable workloads. More workload management surveys must be undertaken frequently to determine the workload suitable for each employee, considering various factors such as employee skills, age and health status.

Limitations

The findings of this study were drawn from the available research data, which may not reflect what is happening in VRBs in other regions and locations and under varying circumstances. Furthermore, the

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study was conducted and confined to Queenstown and the surrounding areas to minimise the duration and cost of conducting the research. The data obtained from this area may not be transferable to other areas that may have unique circumstances and conditions. However, despite these few limitations, the study is very important for managers and supervisors in VRBs who may want to improve their employees' morale and happiness through efficient workload management.

Recommendations for Future Research

The science of workload management is intricate, in that there is no clear barometer to determine the amount of workload that is reasonably fair for each employee. This gap necessitates an investigation into the morale and happiness of employees from time to time, as their ability to cope with workloads tends to vary based on experience, age, training, and many other intervening factors. Since this study used a quantitative methodology, a mixed-methods approach should be applied in future to investigate the appropriate level of workload to be allocated to employees in VRBs, applying the science of working posture and manual and mental dexterity in workplaces to guide the study. The scope of the study may also be increased in future to cover the entire province, in order to obtain more representative data.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no known conflict of interest.

Data Availability Statement

Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement

The author obtained and maintained informed consent from all subjects involved in the study.

List of Abbreviations

VRB — Vehicle repair business.

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