

Tell it like it is in SME teams: Adverse Working Conditions, Citizenship Behaviour, and the role of Team Information Sharing in a Turbulent Economy

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Abstract:	<p>This article examines the relationship between the deterioration of working conditions concomitant to macroeconomic turbulence and employees' citizenship, i.e. discretionary effort, towards the organisation. In particular, this study focuses on teams and how to redress the employee backlash against the increasing experienced adversity. Having collected data from 151 employees in 23 Cypriot Small and Medium Enterprise teams during a macroeconomic crisis, the findings demonstrate that adverse working conditions relate negatively to discretionary effort only for those teams with low and moderate levels of information sharing. The study highlights the vital role of team information sharing in dampening the negative workplace repercussions of a deeply recessionary economy.</p>

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19 **effort, towards the organisation. In particular, this study focuses on teams and how to**
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22
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40 **Keywords:**
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42 OCB, crisis, working conditions, teams, **SMEs**, Cyprus
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3 **Tell it like it is in SME teams: Adverse Working Conditions, Citizenship Behaviour,**
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5 **and the role of Team Information Sharing in a Turbulent Economy**
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12 *“If I give you all of my knowledge..., I still have all of my knowledge left”*
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15 *(Mooji, 2010: 8)*
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21 **Introduction**
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23 Employees exhibiting organisational citizenship behaviour directed towards the organisation
24 (OCBO) exceed voluntarily their assigned duties and ‘go the extra mile’ with the intention to
25 benefit their organisation by displaying civic virtue, loyalty and dedication (Lee and Allen,
26 2002; Organ et al., 2006; Podsakoff et al., 2009). OCBO relates to a number of employee and
27 team outcomes, including individual and team task performance (e.g. Organ et al., 2006;
28 Podsakoff et al., 2014; Podsakoff et al., 2009; Podsakoff et al., 2000) and has been
29 recognised as an important coping mechanism to “workplace contingencies and change”
30 (Mossholder et al., 2011: 45). In the context of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs),
31 OCBO is particularly important due to the paucity of resources relative to that of larger firms
32 (Psychogios et al. 2019; Uçanok and Karabati, 2013) and hence, the imperative need for
33 labour flexibility (Mesu et al., 2012; Helfen and Schuessler, 2009).
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49 **Macroeconomic turbulence heightens the vulnerability of SMEs**
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51 **(Theodorakopoulos and Arslan, 2016; Prouska and Psychogios, 2018a; Psillaki and**
52 **Eleftheriou, 2015) and may lead to adverse working conditions (AWCs), defined as the**
53 **concurrent increase of workload, job insecurity and negative employer/manager**
54 **behaviours (Psychogios et al., 2019). Although AWCs have been discussed substantively**
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3 in extant **studies** (e.g. Kroon et al., 2013; Naude et al., 2012; Kranz and Steger, 2013), **the**
4 **literature on how AWCs influence OCBO in SMEs operating amid a national economic**
5 **crisis is still in its infancy (Uçanok and Karabati, 2013). Indeed, our knowledge in crisis**
6 **management literature of employee rather than manager or owner-related factors that**
7 **may play an important role in the relationship between AWCs and OCBO remains**
8 **limited (Psychogios et al., 2019). Furthermore, despite the acknowledgement that not all**
9 **SMEs (and the teams within them) are equally exposed to a turbulent wider context**
10 **(Låstad et al., 2016), there is a paucity of research accounting for differences among**
11 **SMEs and their teams.**

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24 The aim of this study is to address the abovementioned gaps by examining the role of
25 team information sharing in the relationship between AWCs and OCBO in SME teams
26 operating under a **macroeconomic** crisis. **In particular, this article** sheds light on
27 information as a **highly valuable** interpersonal resource, the exchange of which entails little
28 risk for both the giver and the receiver (Foa and Foa, 1974; Wilson et al., 2010). Although the
29 exchange of other resources, such as goods or services, is accompanied by a loss or a gain,
30 sharing information even under a turbulent and insecure climate is a neutral action, as the
31 giver maintains the same amount of the resource exchanged and thus, is neither impaired nor
32 enriched (Foa and Foa, 2012). We are particularly interested in team information sharing, i.e.
33 the exchange of “advice, opinions, instruction, or enlightenment” (Foa and Foa, 2012: 15)
34 among the members of a team (Hu et al., 2018), as not only it relates to teams’ cohesion,
35 shared understanding and performance (e.g. Mesmer-Magnus and Mitchell, 2009) but also it
36 helps build and sustain psychological safety and trust among the team members (Mesmer-
37 Magnus, DeChurch, Jimenez-Rodriguez, Wildman and Shuffler, 2011); even in highly
38 turbulent situations (Uitdewilligen and Waller, 2018). **We focus on teams and team**
39 **members’ experienced intensity of AWCs concomitant to external economic turbulence,**
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3 **as opposed to targeting SMEs under pressure per se; firstly, because teams are key**
4 **contributory work units (Tu et al., 2019) and secondly, in view of the fact that even**
5 **within the same firm different teams experience contrasting working conditions**
6 **(Amabile et al., 1996).** Our core argument is that although it is likely for team members in a
7 buoyant economy to exhibit discretionary behaviour towards the SME, in times of national
8 economic turbulence where working conditions have worsened significantly, they may be
9 less willing to do so. Moreover, we hypothesise and find empirical support that team
10 information sharing buffers the negative relationship between AWCs and OCBO, as it helps
11 alleviate the risk involved with exhibiting OCBO and thus, disadvantaging oneself against
12 other team members. **Figure 1 depicts the conceptual model of the study.**

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27 **[insert Figure 1]**
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30 The study intends to make three contributions to the literature. First, in terms of
31 context by focusing on the way in which a national economic crisis has unfolded for team
32 members in SMEs, we offer an employee-centric approach to complement a wealth of
33 literature that mainly focuses on SME crisis management from a management or owner
34 perspective (e.g. Doern, 2016; Williams and Vorley, 2015). We do so by conducting our
35 study with SME teams in Cyprus during the country's most recent significant economic
36 recession, which is a pertinent research setting. Second, our study extends recent work on
37 AWCs that has focused solely on a single hierarchical level (Conway et al., 2014; Psychogios
38 et al., 2019). In particular, we employ naturally nested data and multilevel modelling to
39 account for variances in the experience of adversity and hardship among employees in
40 different teams and hence, conduct a more rigorous examination of the relationship between
41 AWCs and OCBO. Third, we contribute to **theory on different resource exchange rules**
42 (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005) by identifying team information sharing as an alleviating
43 resource to the employee backlash over the deterioration of working conditions. In so doing,
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3 we provide an explanation for previous inconsistent findings in terms of the relationship
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5 between AWCs and OCBO (Psychogios et al., 2019).
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8 The rest of the paper is organised as follows: first, we provide the theoretical
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10 background of the study and set out our hypotheses. Thereupon, we delineate the adopted
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12 methodology and present the findings. Finally, we discuss the theoretical and practical
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14 implications of the study, as well as **the** limitations and avenues for future research.
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21 **Theoretical Context and Hypotheses Development**

22 *Adverse Working Conditions*

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25 Responding to financial pressures, as a consequence of operating within an economy under
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27 turbulence, organisations often develop short-range, defensive policies and drastic measures
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29 that lead to a severe deterioration of working conditions (Gialis et al., 2017; Markovits et al.,
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31 2014; Roche et al., 2011). Such survival strategies are even more pronounced in SMEs
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33 (Wymen et al., 2012; Prouska and Psychogios, 2018a), whereby workforce adjustments,
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35 salary cuts and wage freezes tend to be the most commonly used methods to deal with the
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37 challenges of a nationwide economic turbulence (Guthrie and Datta, 2008; Antonioli et al.,
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39 2009; Iverson and Zatzick, 2011). Psychogios et al. (2019) identified three main elements of
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41 adverse working conditions (AWCs) in the workplace: cost reduction strategies that lead to
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43 increased workload, negative employer attitudes and job insecurity. The increased workload
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45 can mainly be explained by the downsizing of staff in combination with an effort to maintain
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47 the volume of operations as close as possible to pre-crisis levels (Mohrman and Worley,
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49 2009; Datta et al., 2010). Conversely, the expectations for the SME employees are increased
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51 substantially due to pressures imposed by a national economic crisis or severe recession
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53 (Kroon et al., 2013). In particular, employees face pressures to meet shorter deadlines and
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3 work longer, often unpaid hours (Shah et al., 2011; Kroon et al., 2013). Moreover, they may
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5 encounter destructive supervisory behaviours that may take many forms, including verbal and
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7 physical assaults, or psychological abuse (Bartlett and Bartlett, 2011; Bible, 2012; Giorgi,
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9 Shoss and Leon-Perez, 2015). Furthermore, during an economic crisis job insecurity prevails
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11 (Wynen and Op de Beeck, 2014; Berntson et al., 2006), as employees increasingly witness
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13 lay-offs (Arghyrou and Tsoukalas, 2010) and the prospects of finding alternative employment
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15 decrease sharply (De Cuyper, Mäkikangas, Kinnunen, Mauno, and De Witte, 2012). All in
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17 all, AWCs render employees deprived of both financial resources (e.g. unpaid hours and
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19 salary cuts) and status-related ones (e.g. being subject to abusive supervision and job
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21 insecurity; Foa and Foa, 2012).
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26 27 *Adverse Working Conditions and OCBO*

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29 The literature suggests that affiliation and informality in SMEs play a crucial role in
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31 employees exhibiting OCBO (Bacon and Hoque, 2005; Edwards and Ram, 2009; Marlow et
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33 al., 2010). It is perhaps this informality along with close social and spatial proximity among
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35 individuals (employees and owner/managers) that create a close-knit work community, or a
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37 ‘family’ as it has often been portrayed, which strongly identifies with the organisation
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39 (Gilman et al., 2015; Mallett and Wapshott, 2014) and is willing to go the extra mile (Molm,
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41 2003). However, it is less clear whether loyalty and discretionary effort remain prevalent in
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43 SMEs when heightened AWCs concomitant to a national economic crisis prevail. Increased
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45 workload and pressure to perform have been linked to decreased job engagement (Nahrgang
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47 et al., 2011), while role overload, abusive supervision and job insecurity have been found to
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49 relate negatively to OCBO (Ahmad et al., 2019; Kuvaas and Dysvik, 2011; Stynen et al.,
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51 2013). Indeed, OCBO entails a certain risk from the helper’s point of view, in that the
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53 beneficiary is offered an advantage in relation to the benefactor (Shen and Benson, 2016).
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59 While in a buoyant economy employees may be willing to undertake such risk-taking in view
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3 of the long-term gains of loyalty and civic virtue, resource deprivation and redundancy
4 prospects influence the different types of exchange in the workplace (Wilson et al., 2010).

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7 **Under a macroeconomic turbulence, employees may be more likely to select a rational**
8 **course of action that is based on carefully encountering the foreseen consequences**
9 **(Meeker, 1971).**

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15 **In particular,** in an economic recession, expectations increase (Kroon et al., 2013),
16 while the working conditions worsen (Mohrman and Worley, 2009; Datta et al, 2010;
17 Psychogios et al., 2019). Moreover, given the typically informal nature of HR practices and
18 the paucity of resources in SMEs in contrast to their large counterparts (Theodorakopoulos
19 and Arslan, 2016), the adversity of working conditions may even be further exacerbated
20 (Wymen et al., 2012; Psychogios et al., 2014). Arguably then, under external turbulence,
21 employees may be less willing to get involved in risky exchanges (such as OCBO), because
22 they may not only be insecure or uncertain of the long term gains of such behaviour (Wong et
23 al., 2005) but also disadvantage themselves in the short-term vis-à-vis their colleagues by
24 focusing on behaviours not directly related to their performance appraisal (König et al.,
25 2010). Indeed, **Wong et al. (2005) demonstrated that during adversity employees tend to**
26 **operate more rationally and adopt a short-term perspective. Thus,** it is possible that amid
27 redundancies and lay-offs employees may focus on those tasks and activities that are more
28 likely to increase their chances of keeping their jobs rather than on extra-role performance.
29 Further still, the deteriorated working conditions that emerge during and remain for a period
30 of time after an economic crisis make employees feel less loyal and less willing to embrace
31 citizenship behaviours (Furåker, 2009; Markoczy et al., 2009; Psychogios et al., 2019), since
32 “mutually beneficial interchanges are less likely to be engendered when people are
33 transacting in harm” (Cropanzano et al., 2017: 480). Therefore, based on the premise that not
34 only the OCBO-related risk would be accentuated but also employees’ allegiance to the
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3 organisation would be attenuated in SMEs operating under economic crisis conditions, we
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5 advance the following hypothesis:
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9 *Hypothesis 1. Adverse Working Conditions are negatively related to Organisational*
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11 *Citizenship Behaviour directed to the SME.*
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13 14 ***The moderating role of Team Information Sharing*** 15

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17 Team information sharing is a social exchange “involving the introduction of
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19 members’ individual held knowledge into the team’s public space” (Uitdewilligen and
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21 Waller, 2018: 732). It derives through the network of relationships and the links among team
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23 members (Leana and Pil, 2006; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998) and varies among teams within
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25 the same organisation (Schreus et al., 2013). According to Mesmer-Magnus and DeChurch
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27 (2009: 541), greater volumes of information sharing within a team enable greater “collective
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29 processing”. Team information sharing flows from a sense of “we-ness”, that is a feeling of
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31 belongingness and common purpose (Lee and Markham, 2013: 188), and helps build and
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33 sustain psychological safety and trust among the team members (Mesmer-Magnus et al.,
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35 2011). Employees feel they are significant contributors in contexts where information is
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37 shared freely (Pfeffer, 1998), while they are in a better position to select the right course of
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39 action in comparison to others, who work in contexts with impaired information sharing
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41 (Kuvaas and Dysvik, 2010; Chiaburu and Harrison, 2008). Team information sharing has
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43 been consistently linked to effective teamwork (DeChruch and Mesmer-Magnus, 2010) and
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45 in particular, to work outcomes such as team performance (Mesmer-Magnus and DeChurch,
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47 2009), team creativity (Hu et al., 2018) and learning (De Dreu, 2007). Notably, different
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49 streams of literature have highlighted the importance of team information sharing for team
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51 effectiveness in highly uncertain and critical contexts (e.g. Ley et al., 2014; Katakam et al.,
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53 2012; Uitdewilligen and Waller, 2018).
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3 The **above** attributes may render team information sharing particularly instrumental in
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5 times of national economic turbulence, insecurity and resource scarcity. In line with social
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7 exchange theory, not only the value of a resource increases the less likely it is to access it
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9 from different sources, but also employees under hardship may benefit to a greater extent
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11 from access to a resource that improves their working conditions (Anand et al., 2010), such
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13 as team information sharing. Indeed, the sense of “we-ness” and collective processing may
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15 help ease the risk involved with exhibiting OCBO, including disadvantaging oneself against
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17 his or her team members. In addition, gaining more information offers team members a
18
19 greater sense of control and thus, may counterbalance fears of losing one’s job (König et al.,
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21 2010). In other words, the negative relationship between AWCs and OCBO may be less acute
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23 in teams with high rather than low information sharing. For example, it is less likely for
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25 employees to be keen to go the extra mile for their employer who has recently reduced their
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27 salary. However, those in teams with high information sharing may find out from their team
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29 members that they all received a similar reduction, thus resulting in their behaviour towards
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31 their employer being less influenced by the increase of AWCs.
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37 Based on the above, we hypothesise that in SME teams operating under an economic
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39 crisis:
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43 ***Hypothesis 2. The higher the level of Team Information Sharing the weaker the***
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45 ***relationship between Adverse Working Conditions and Organisational Citizenship***
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47 ***Behaviour.***
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51 **Methods**

52 *Survey context*

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55 Cyprus entered a severe economic crisis, starting in 2012, as a result of the Eurozone
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57 financial crisis and particularly the Greek crisis that provoked around €4 billion in losses for
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3 Cypriot banks, i.e. approximately 22% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP;
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5 Demetriades, 2017). During this crisis, the public finances also deteriorated and the debt-to-
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7 GDP ratio rose to 108% in 2015 (Eurostat, 2019). Overall, in the period 2011-2014, the
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9 economy shrank by 11% and unemployment rates peaked at 17% (Panayi and Zenios, 2015).
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11 In SMEs, in particular, employment fell by 14.1% in 2014 alone (Muller et al., 2015), while
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13 the number of business bankruptcies and involuntary cessations remained high in comparison
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15 to pre-crisis levels (Muller et al., 2016).
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20 Notably, the majority of SMEs in Cyprus is family-owned with a long tradition of
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22 paternalism and little legislative enforcement. They tend to rely on a quasi-formal system
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24 with voluntary HR practices, significant wage informalisation and limited structures for
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26 social dialogue (Stavrou-Costea et al., 2005). This is a common feature among Southern
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28 European countries (Psychogios et al., 2014). In that regard, Cyprus represents an
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30 instrumental setting or a case of what may be (Stake, 1995) due to not only the profound
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32 impact of the economic crisis in Cyprus for SMEs but also the paramount importance of
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34 SMEs for the national economy. It is noteworthy that 99.8% of organisations in Cyprus are
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36 categorised as SMEs; they represent 73% of the added value to the economy and account for
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38 more than 80% of jobs in the country (Muller et al., 2015).
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44 *Sample*

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46 As our hypotheses proposed an individual-level relation and a cross-level interaction,
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48 we adopted a survey research design that would allow the analysis of the two levels, i.e.
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50 employees within teams. In doing so, we administered a questionnaire to 220 employees in
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52 33 teams, each in a different Cypriot SME operating in Manufacturing, Professional Services,
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54 and Retail. The data were collected from December 2015 to January 2016, while Cyprus was
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56 still under the European Union/International Monetary Fund bailout program. Overall, we
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58 received back 151 fully completed questionnaires from 23 Cypriot firms. In three occasions,
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3 we collected data from all the employees, because the firms were so small (i.e. $n < 5$) that all
4 the members were working together as a team. Almost half of the sample was comprised of
5 female participants (49.7%), with 62.3% of the sample coming from the Services Industry,
6 23.8% from the Manufacturing Industry, and 21% from the Retail Industry. 42.4% of the
7 participants were employed in micro-enterprises of less than 20 employees, 39.1% were
8 above 45 years old, and 29.1% indicated an organisation tenure of more than 10 years. The
9 number of participants per team ranged from two to 24 with an average number of 6.56
10 participants per team.
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22 *Measurement variables*

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25 We used already validated measures and Brislin's (1980) translation-back-translation
26 technique for the administration of the questionnaires in the Greek language. All variables,
27 unless otherwise stated, were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (from 1 = Totally Disagree
28 to 7 = Totally Agree).
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35 Employees' perceptions of AWCs were measured using Psychogios et al. (2019) four-
36 item scale. The participant employees were asked whether they have experienced certain
37 adverse conditions in their workplace in the past two years and their answers could range
38 from 1=Not at all to 7=Almost every day. Sample items included "Cuts in financial resources
39 (salaries, bonuses, resources for training and development)" and "Fear of losing your job".
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46 The scale achieved a Cronbach's alpha reliability of $\alpha=.83$.
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50 We used the eight-item scale developed by Lee and Allen (2002) to measure
51 employees' OCBO. Sample items included: "Take action to protect the organisation from
52 potential problems" and "Attend functions that are not required but that help the
53 organisational image". The alpha reliability for our sample was $\alpha=.89$.
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3 Team Information Sharing was measured using Hyatt and Rudy's (1997) six-item
4 scale, which achieved an alpha reliability of $\alpha=.82$. Sample items contained: "Employees in
5 my work group engage in open and honest communication with one another" and
6 "Employees in my work group keep each other informed at all times". We also calculated
7 $rwg_{(j)} = 0.84$, $ICC(1) = 0.16$ and $ICC(2) = 0.55$, which denoted strong within-team agreement,
8 and adequate between-team variance and within-team consistency respectively.
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11 We controlled for firm size, age, and tenure, as they have been found to play a
12 significant role in employees' OCB (e.g. Kidder, 2002; Williams et al., 2002), as well as for
13 industry type to avoid any confounding effects. This approach has been adopted in many
14 studies undertaking hierarchical linear modelling (e.g. Cruz and Pil, 2011; Judge and Cable,
15 2011; Wu and Chaturvedi, 2009).
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17
18 We also conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the validity of the
19 factor structure. In particular, we examined whether the hypothesised three-factor structure is
20 a better fit than a two-factor structure (where team information sharing and OCBO are
21 considered as a single factor) and a one-factor structure (where all three variables are
22 considered as a single factor). In this regard, we employed the technique of item parcelling
23 (e.g. Little et al., 2002) and examined the chi-square differences between each model and
24 also the Goodness of Fit Indices (root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA),
25 standardised root mean square residual (SRMR), comparative fit (CFI), and the Akaike
26 information criterion (AIC). As Table 1 demonstrates, the hypothesised three-factor model
27 achieved a very good fit to the data ($\chi^2(11) = 16.22$, $p < .001$, $RMSEA = 0.056$; $SRMR =$
28 0.024 ; $CFI = 0.990$) and was significantly better than a two-factor ($\chi^2(13) = 119.58$, $p < .001$,
29 $RMSEA = 0.233$; $SRMR = 0.124$; $CFI = 0.792$) and one-factor model ($\chi^2(14) = 1569.27$, p
30 $< .001$, $RMSEA = 0.259$; $SRMR = 0.122$; $CFI = 0.723$).
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Table 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results for the Hypothesised Variables

	χ^2	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	AIC
Three-factor model	16.22	11	-	.990	.056	.024	3001.730
Two-factor model	119.58	13	103.36***	.792	.233	.124	3101.086
One-factor model	156.27	14	140.05***	.723	.259	.122	3135.777

Note: df = degrees of Freedom, CFI: comparative fit index, RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation, SRMR = standardized root mean square residual, AIC = Akaike information criterion.

Data analytic method

We adopted hierarchical linear modelling and the HLM 7 software (Raudenbush et al., 2016) to test our hypotheses. Overall, our model comprised level-1 constructs (i.e. referring to individual members) and level-2 constructs (i.e. referring to the team as a whole). In particular, following recommendations by Hofman (1997) and Aguinis et al. (2013), we tested our first hypothesis employing the random coefficient model (after we have conducted a one-way analysis of variance). Thereafter, we examined our second hypothesis (cross-level interaction effect of team information sharing) by employing both the intercept and the slope-as-outcome models. AWCs was group-mean centred and team information sharing was grand mean-centred.

Analysis and Results

Table 3. Hierarchical Linear Modelling Analysis for OCBO

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
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Level 1 (n=153)

Table 2 demonstrates the means, standard deviations and correlations of the variables of the study.

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations

	Mean	SD	1	2	3
<i>Individual Level (n=151)</i>					
1. Age	0.58	0.50	-		
2. Tenure	0.38	0.49	.46***	-	
3. AWCs	2.68	1.49	-.26**	.15	-
4. OCBO	5.64	0.99	.21**	.21*	-.39***
<i>Team Level (N=23)</i>					
1. Size	0.22	0.42	-		
2. Manuf	0.17	0.39	.04	-	
3. Retail	0.17	0.39	-.24	-.21	-
4. IS	5.20	0.66	.02	.25	.01

Notes: 1. 1-tailed tests, 2.: * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$, 3. SD= Standard Deviation, Manuf = Dummy Variable for manufacturing, Retail= Dummy Variable for retail, Size = Dummy Variable for organisational size (0= firms comprising less than 100 employees, 1= firms comprising from 100 to 249 employees), Age = Dummy Variable for participants' age (0= participants less than 35 years old, 1= participants 35 years old and above), Tenure = Dummy Variable for participants' organisational tenure (0= participants with less than 8 years of tenure, 1= participants with 8 or more years of tenure), AWCs = Adverse Working Conditions, OCBO = Organisational Citizenship Behaviour directed towards the Organisation

Intercept	5.57***(.17)	5.65*** (.16)	5.67*** (.16)	5.71*** (.16)
Age	.18 (.19)	.10 (.19)	.14 (.20)	.07 (.22)
Tenure	.29 (.19)	.34 (.19)	.29 (.20)	.28 (.20)
AWCs		-.25** (.08)	-.26** (.08)	-.19* (.09)
<i>Level 2 (n=23)</i>				
Size	-.41 (.21)	-.42 (.21)	-.47* (.20)	-.48* (.18)
Manuf	.24 (.24)	.09 (.24)	.09 (.23)	.13 (.22)
Retail	-.26 (.26)	-.27 (.25)	-.32 (.25)	-.31 (.24)
IS			.19 (.15)	.19 (.14)
IS x AWCs				.48* (.19)
Pseudo R ² within	0.08	0.14	0.15	0.17
Pseudo R ² between	0.26	0.27	0.32	0.32
ΔR^2 within	-	0.06	0.01	0.02
ΔR^2 between	-	0.01	0.05	0.00
Deviance	404.73	392.74	390.64	385.13
Number of parameters	13	18	19	20

Note: 1. 1-tailed tests, 2.: * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$, 3. Manuf = Dummy Variable (DV) for manufacturing, Retail= DV for retail, Size = DV for organisational size (0= up to 99 employees, 1= 100-249 employees), Age = DV for participants' age (0= up to 34 years old, 1= above 34 years old), Tenure = DV for organisational tenure (0= participants with up to 7 years of tenure, 1= participants with more than 7 years of tenure), IS = Team Information Sharing, AWCs = Adverse Working Conditions, OCBO = Organisational Citizenship Behaviour towards the Organisation, 4. Pseudo R² was calculated based on Snijders and Bosker's (2012) formula.

Our first hypothesis, which stated that AWCs are negatively related to OCBO, was supported by the findings ($\beta = -0.25, p < .001$) as per Table 3 (Model 2). We then tested our second hypothesis, according to which team information sharing plays a moderating role in

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2
3 the abovementioned negative relationship. As Table 3 illustrates (Model 4), the interaction
4 between team information sharing and AWCs was significant ($\beta = 0.48, p < .05$). Simple
5 slope analysis revealed that the negative relationship between AWCs and OCBO is
6 significant only for low ($\beta = -0.51, p < 0.001$) and moderate ($\beta = -0.19, p < 0.05$) levels of
7 team information sharing. High levels of team information sharing render the relationship
8 between AWCs and OCBO insignificant ($\beta = 0.13, p > 0.05$). Figure 2, depicts the
9 relationship between AWCs and OCBO for different levels of team information sharing.

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20 [insert Figure 2]
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23 Discussion

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27 The aim of this study was to investigate the role of team information sharing in the
28 relationship between AWCs and OCBO in SME teams operating within the context of a
29 national economic crisis. In line with our hypotheses, the findings reveal that the more
30 adverse the working conditions are in a team, the less likely it is for **the** team members to
31 engage in discretionary behaviour towards the firm. Yet, the findings also demonstrate that
32 this negative relationship between AWCs and OCBO is weaker the higher the information
33 sharing within a team. In particular, in teams where employees reported low levels of
34 information sharing, AWCs were severely and negatively related to discretionary behaviour
35 towards the firm. In teams with moderate levels of information sharing, AWCs were still
36 negatively but less severely related to discretionary behaviour. Finally, in teams with high
37 levels of information sharing, the relationship between AWCs and OCBO was positive but
38 insignificant. In other words, in teams with high levels of information sharing, members'
39 involvement in OCBO was not related to the prevailing AWCs.

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57 The study makes a significant contribution to the SME crisis management literature
58 (e.g. Doern, 2016; Williams and Vorley, 2015) by adopting an employee-centric approach in
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3 extending our knowledge on the impact of a national economic crisis in the workplace.
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5 Specifically, while the majority of past studies elaborated on SME crisis management at a
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7 firm level (e.g. Irvine and Anderson, 2004; Runyan, 2006; Williams and Vorley, 2015) or
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9 from an owner/manager perspective (Cardon et al., 2011; Doern, 2016), our study focuses on
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11 employees, and in particular on their OCBO. In this respect, the study challenges the received
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13 view of SMEs in the extant literature, which portrays a family-like, close-knit environment
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15 (e.g. Gilman et al., 2015; Mallett and Wapshott, 2014; Mesu et al., 2012). Indeed, the
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17 findings highlight that hardship and adversity are related to decreased citizenship behaviour
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19 directed towards the firm.
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25 In addition, we contribute to the literature on AWCs by turning the attention to team-
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27 related resources and responding to calls for research at different organisational levels
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29 (Prouska and Psychogios, 2018b; Låstad et al., 2016). Previous studies have largely ignored
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31 team membership and team-level factors that may play a significant role in achieving work-
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33 related outcomes under adversity. Furthermore, teams within an SME experience dissimilar
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35 working conditions and levels of information sharing (Amabile et al., 1996; Schreus et al.,
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37 2013), rendering the individual observations non-independent (Wieseke et al., 2008; Låstad
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39 et al., 2016). By employing multilevel analysis and accounting for the variance attributed to
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41 the different experience of members in different teams, our study contributes to a more robust
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43 examination of the way in which AWCs relate to citizenship behaviour in SMEs.
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49 Moreover, our study heeds calls for additional studies on resource exchanges
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51 (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Wilson et al., 2010; Chambel and Alcover, 2011). In this
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53 regard, we expand this stream of research into recessionary contexts and examine the role of
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55 information sharing as an important team resource in SMEs. In line with studies that highlight
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57 the significance of sharing business-related information among employees for the
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59 competitiveness of SMEs (e.g. Richbell et al., 2010), our work explicates the way in which
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3 team information sharing attenuates the backlash in employees' discretionary effort due to
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5 the deterioration of working conditions. Indeed, our findings could be used to shed light over
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7 the non-significant direct relationship between AWCs and OCBO found in Psychogios et
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9 al.'s (2019) study, as it is possible that the majority of the participants in that research were
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11 part of teams with high information sharing.
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16 Furthermore, our findings have strong practical implications. In particular, SME
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18 owners/managers and Human Resource (HR) practitioners in larger SMEs are encouraged to
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20 facilitate information sharing among team members as a way to alleviate the repercussions of
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22 AWCs stemming from a turbulent economic environment. While the end game for SMEs is
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24 financial performance, employees having a productive and pleasant atmosphere should not be
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26 underestimated (Collins and Smith, 2006). A way in which SMEs may encourage team
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28 information sharing and exchange is through the establishment of people-oriented HR
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30 initiatives that highlight mutual gains through long-term exchanges (Collins and Smith,
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32 2006). However, given that not many SMEs establish HR departments (Theodorakopoulos
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34 and Arslan, 2016), in times of turbulence when resources are scant, promotion of information
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36 sharing within teams may be more attainable through informal and ad hoc routes, such as role
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38 modelling and mentoring. On this note, information sharing may be emphasised through the
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40 design of meaningful, challenging, and diverse tasks, which empower team members by
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42 giving them a range of choices in exchanging information, as well as recognition of effort
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44 and progress (Nerstad et al., 2018).
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50 51 *Limitations and future research*

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53 Notwithstanding the abovementioned contributions of the study, it is important to
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55 acknowledge certain limitations and avenues for future research. Firstly, the study adopts a
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57 cross-sectional research design and therefore inferences on causality are limited. Whether one
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59 can cogently justify OCBO as an antecedent of AWCs is a moot point; yet, several studies
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3 have used working conditions as an antecedent in the literature (e.g. Sayin et al., 2019;
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5 Seidler et al, 2014; Sora et al., 2018). Future research may opt to follow a longitudinal
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7 design, in which team members report on working conditions at Time 1, on team information
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9 sharing at Time 2 and on their OCBO at Time 3, to increase confidence over the direction of
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11 the hypothesised relationship.
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16 Secondly, since we relied on self-reported measures for all study variables, we cannot
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18 rule out the influence of common method bias on our findings (Podsakoff et al., 2012).
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20 Future studies would benefit from collecting data using multiple sources and/or at multiple
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22 time points in order to address this caveat. That said, we undertook several approaches to
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24 remedy this potential shortcoming of our study. In particular, we separated the scales under
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26 examination in the survey questionnaire by adding additional scales in between them and
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28 highlighting the confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary character of the study.
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30 Furthermore, the scales employed in our study use a different reference point. Participants
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32 were asked to rate their workplace in terms of AWCs, their team members in terms of
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34 information sharing and themselves in terms of OCBO. Finally, we conducted a CFA that
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36 supported the hypothesised factor structure of the model.
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42 Thirdly, although we are not aware of any job guarantees provided to the team
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44 members by the participant firms and while close relatives or owners were excluded from the
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46 study, it is possible that there may be some other policies or practices that influence both
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48 information sharing among team members and OCBO. As these initiatives are likely to be
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50 informal and ad hoc (Mallett and Wappshot, 2014; Marlow et al., 2010), future studies may
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52 choose to examine them by adopting a diary study research design that enables the
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54 identification of influences from short-term processes and procedures (Ohly, Sonnentag,
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56 Niessen, and Zapf, 2010).
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3 Another avenue for future research is the identification of factors alternative to team
4 information sharing that may help counteract the backlash in employees' OCBO due to the
5 deterioration of working conditions. For example, triggering employees state learning goal
6 orientation (Dragoni, 2005) could help employees perceive the various challenges as an
7 opportunity to further learn and grow and thus, be more willing to go the extra mile for their
8 employer due to being less concerned about antagonistic behaviours. In addition, the
9 owner/manager's support could play a significant role in the way in which employees
10 perceive AWCs in the workplace. Indeed, research has demonstrated that although highly
11 challenging working conditions (including a hazardous environment and high frequency of
12 critical incidents) are positively related to employees' absenteeism when peer norms are
13 present, the relationship is rendered insignificant when employees report high levels of
14 supervisor support (Biron and Bamberger, 2012). Hence, future studies may focus on the
15 support provided by the SME owner/manager as an alternative potential moderator that could
16 lessen the negative impact of AWCs in the workplace.
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36 **Conclusion**

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39 The aim of this paper was to enhance our limited knowledge of the relationship between
40 AWCs and OCBO by examining how the relationship may be ameliorated. **In this respect,**
41 we hypothesised team information sharing as an alleviating factor **and** tested our hypotheses
42 in SME teams in Cyprus, operating within a turbulent economy. **The findings revealed** that
43 the higher the information sharing that takes place among team members, the weaker the
44 negative relationship between AWCs and OCBO. All in all, the contribution of our study is
45 threefold. First, it contributes to the SME crisis literature by identifying remedial employee-
46 centric responses. Second, it applies a more robust investigation of the relationship between
47 AWCs and OCBO by employing multilevel modelling and thus, taking into account the
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3 variance across different SME teams. Third, it extends our understanding of resource
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5 exchange rules highlighting the importance of team information sharing as an assuaging
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7 practice that moderates the negative OCBO repercussions of a national economic crisis.
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For Peer Review

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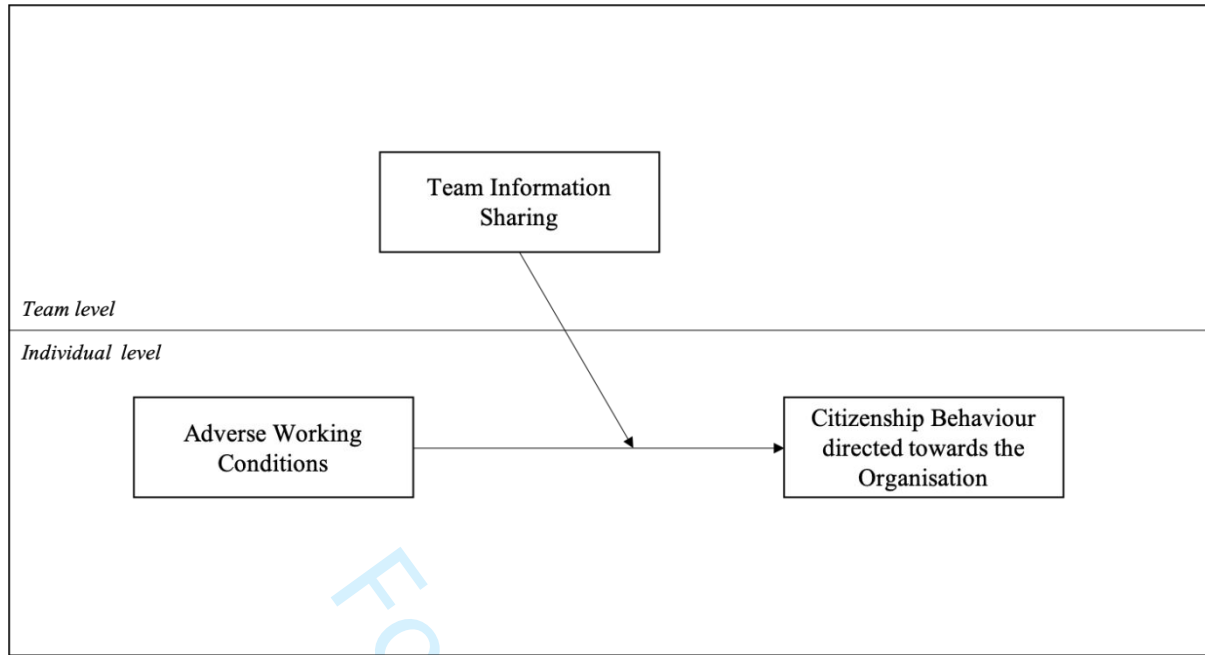
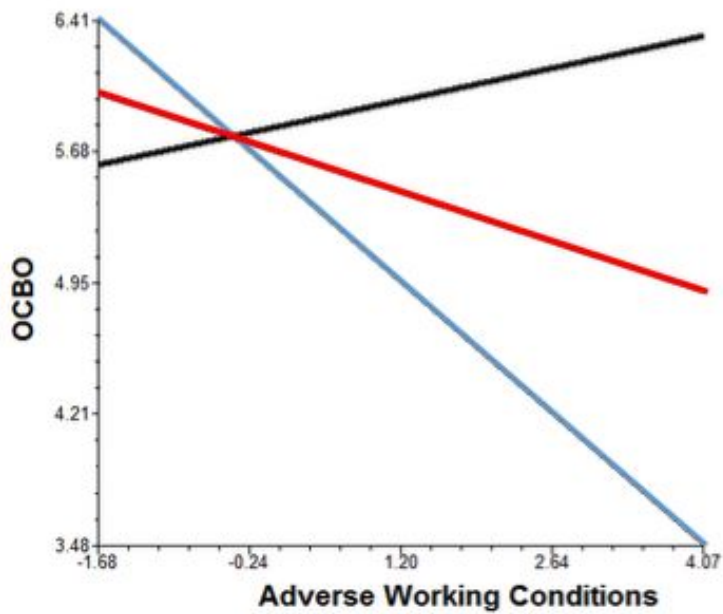


FIGURE 1. Conceptual model of the hypothesised relationship between AWCs, OCBO and Team Information Sharing



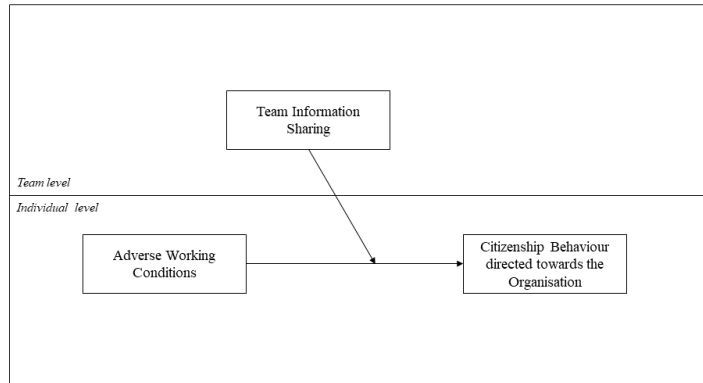
Values of Information Sharing: — = -1 SD, — = Mean, — = +1 SD

FIGURE 2. The moderating role of Team Information Sharing in the relationship between AWCs and OCBO

We would like to thank the reviewer for the time and effort spent in helping us improve our work. The comments we have received helped us produce an enhanced version of the manuscript. We endeavoured to address all the comments diligently and below we provide a point-by-point response to them. We have used **bold** font type to indicate the revisions in the actual manuscript.

Number	Reviewer's Comment
Reviewer: 1	
1.	The paper has improved a lot based on the comments of the reviewers. There are in my opinion two parts of the paper that need further revision: the abstract and the introduction. One of the comments I make based on the introduction also has consequences for the other sections.
	Thank you very much for your comment. We have endeavoured to address all the points you raised and make the relevant changes in the abstract and the introduction, as well as in the theory section and conclusion.
2.	Abstract: The abstract need to focus more on the contribution of the paper. Adverse working conditions and OBHC during a severe economic crisis. OBHC is now only mentioned at the end of the abstract. For the reader it is not clear (based on the abstract) what is meant with citizenship behaviour. The structure of the abstract is also not in line with how the introduction and the conclusion is structured. In the introduction, for instance, do the authors start with explaining in detail OBHC, and thereafter link it with adverse working conditions.
	Thank you very much for your comment. We have now highlighted the contribution of the paper at the beginning of the abstract. In this way, it is now in line with the introduction and the conclusion. In addition, we have clarified what we mean by employees' citizenship behaviour. Thank you for helping us make our position more intelligible.
3.	Introduction: A. The second paragraph of the introduction should be structured differently. a. The authors repeat themselves several times. Is 'the literature on the subject is still in its infancy' the same as 'there is paucity of research accounting for differences among SMEs and their teams'? b. It is not clear how the information on SMEs in Europe links with the sentence on how the literature is still in its infancy? B. The introduction ends with a figure, but the figure is not mentioned in the text. C. In the first sentence of the abstract is mentioned that there is a lot of research on SMEs in turbulent economic environments but that they cover managers instead of employees. In the introduction is mentioned that there is a lot of research on large organization and in the absence of turbulent economic environments. Both arguments are used to outline the importance of the study. It would be more simple when the arguments on how the papers adds to the literature would be streamlined within the study. Is the paper innovative because of both aspects or because of one of the two, it is for the reader to decide. D. Just like reviewer 1 (comment 1), I am struggling with the social exchange theory used in the paper. The authors mention 'exchange rule of rationality' and 'rule of reciprocity' without explaining it. I am convinced that the authors make the paper to complex by using this theory, instead of just referring to the literature on team information sharing or giving

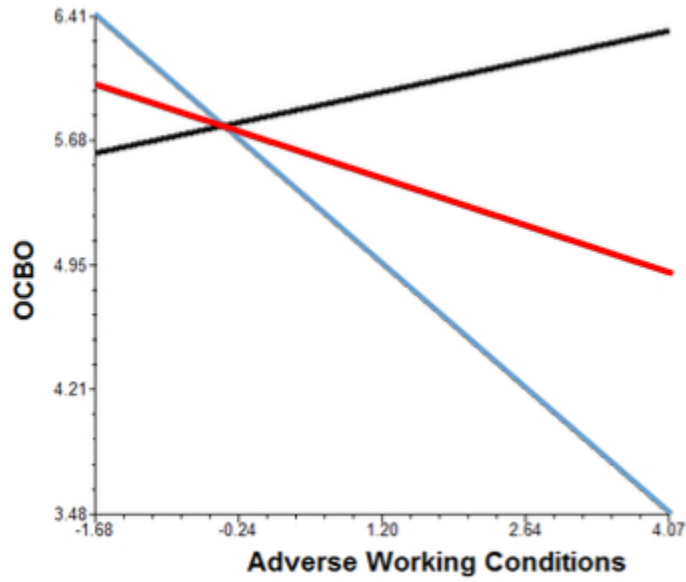
	<p>social exchange theory a less central place in the paper. This comment relates to paragraph 3 of the introduction which is difficult to follow, but is also relevant as a general comment for the theory section and the conclusion section.</p>
	<p>A. Many thanks for your comments. We have now restructured the second paragraph (pp.2-3) in order to make it more concise and clear. In particular:</p> <p>a. We have deleted the parts in which we repeated ourselves. We now discuss the gaps within only three sentences. In the first sentence, we introduce the main research area (i.e. AWCs and OCBO in SMEs under a macroeconomic crisis) and in the latter two we identify the specific literature gaps (i.e. that we know little about employee-related factors that may influence the AWCs and OCBO relationship and that previous studies did not take into consideration differences among SME teams).</p> <p>b. We have deleted the information on SMEs in Europe</p> <p>B. Thank you for pointing this out. The figure was mentioned in the text at the end of the third paragraph. We have made the sentence in question bold that it becomes more evident and we have positioned the figure in the text right after that paragraph.</p> <p>C. Many thanks for your comment. In revising parts of the abstract, according to the word count limit, we removed that section in question (i.e. that there is a lot of research on SMEs in turbulent economic environments but that they cover managers instead of employees). In addition, in restructuring the second paragraph of the introduction (pp. 2-3), we also removed the claim that there is a lot of research on large organizations and in the absence of turbulent economic environments. In our restructured version, we place emphasis on the fact that this paper focuses on employee-related factors (rather than on manager or owner-initiatives), as we believe this is the main innovation of the paper. In doing so, we have aligned this section with the section discussing the theoretical contribution of the paper in the introduction (p. 4) and the discussion (p. 17).</p> <p>D. Thank you for your comment. As per your suggestion, we have deleted the discussion on social exchange theory in the introduction (pp.3-4) and conclusion (pp.20-21), while we have toned down the discussion in the theory section (p.6-7).</p> <p>Finally, we are genuinely grateful to you for taking the time to review our paper and provide us with such constructive and helpful comments. We have earnestly endeavoured to address the points you raised. We believe that our revised manuscript has been improved substantially as a result of this process and we hope that it meets your standards.</p>



25 Conceptual model of the hypothesised relationship between AWCs, OCBO and Team Information Sharing

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The moderating role of Team Information Sharing in the relationship between AWCs and OCBO