Perceived Organizational Support as a Predictor of Self-Efficacy of Generations in the Independent Pharmacy Sector

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to determine whether perceived organizational support is a significant predictor of self-efficacy across generations in the independent pharmacy sector. This study followed a descriptive, quantitative, non-experimental design with cross-sectional survey approach. Data was collected across the independent pharmacy sector in South Africa (N=525). The Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS) and the New General Self-efficacy Scale (NGSE) were administered. Perceived Organizational Support is a significant predictor of Self-efficacy for the Baby Boomer Generation and Generation X.

Keywords: Generations, Perceived organizational support, Pharmacy sector, Self-efficacy.

1. Introduction

The Independent Pharmacy Sector in South Africa is experiencing numerous challenges, ranging from competition from the retail pharmacy sector to government legislation changes. The historical composition of the pharmacy sector presents further challenges. This is a sector where leaders and owners are predominantly from the Traditionalist and Baby Boomer generation and find themselves needing to manage Generation X, Y and even Z employees. In other words, the employee compliment in a typical pharmacy is literally made up of five

generations. For the first time in history people work alongside each other that are both as young as their children and as old as their parents, and more interestingly, competing for the same leadership roles that were historically designated to veteran employees due to job descriptions and hierarchy (Gursoy, Maier & Chi, 2008).

Research indicates that what one generation sees as a positive move might appear threatening to another generation because upbringing varies by age bracket, shaping not only personality but also job performance, relations to co-workers and dealings with superiors. Research findings indicate for example that while Generation X employees will respect the Baby Boomer employees; the Baby Boomer Employees do not have a very high opinion of the younger generations (Gursoy *et al.*, 2008). Generations furthermore also differ in terms of work values.

The objective of this research is therefore to determine the impact of perceived organisational support on the self-efficacy across different generations in the independent pharmacy sector. Currently there are five generations working in organisations: Traditionalist, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z. Traditionalists (born between 1928 and 1945) are characterized by dedication, respect for authority, loyalty and sacrifice (Weingarten, 2009). Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) are characterized as being goal oriented (which could lead to tension between younger workers due to them not sharing similar work ethics), optimism, team-orientation with the experience of post-war stress and prosperity as well as being part of radical social changes (Srinivasan, 2012; Gursoy, Chi & Karadag, 2013; Weingarten, 2009). Generation X (born between 1965-1985) display behaviours such independence, scepticism, cynicism, resilience and adaptability, economic prosperity, high divorce rates of parents, constant change, diversity, social liberalism and environmentalism (Srinivasan, 2012; Gursoy, *et al.,* 2013; Weingarten, 2009). Generation Y (born between 1978-1990) is characterized by confidence, demanding nature, impatience, collective action, teamwork and optimism (Srinivasan, 2012; Weingarten, 2009). Finally Generation Z (born from from 1990 to 2010) appear to be the most tech-savvy group of consumers yet; digital natives growing up in the age of technology with direct access to information at an unprecedented scale (Birkner, 2013).

This research is motivated from the fact that failure to acknowledge and adjust to different generations in the workplace could have an impact on employee productivity, corporate citizenship and innovation that may lead to higher turnover (Jokela, 2012).

To date, most of the research conducted on multi-generations has been done in the USA, UK, Canada and India (Srinivasan, 2012), making this research in an African context valuable.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) refers to employees' perception concerning the extent to which the organization values their contribution and cares about their wellbeing. Research further shows that *"people perceive their organization as supportive when rewards are deemed fair, when employees have a voice in decisions, and when their supervisors are seen as supportive"* (Robbins & Judge, 2009, p. 115). Therefore high organisational support should strengthen employees' beliefs that the organization recognizes and rewards increased performance and therefore should have favourable outcomes both for employees and for the organization (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

2.2. Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy originated from the ground breaking work of (Bandura, 88). Perceived self-efficacy was explained by (Bandura, 1988, p. 279) as:

> *"Success requires not only skills but also strong self-belief in one's capabilities to exercise control over events to accomplish desired goals. People with the same skills may, therefore perform poorly, adequately, or extraordinarily, depending on whether their self-beliefs or efficacy enhance or impair their motivation and problem-solving efforts."*

Self-efficacy (also referred to as social cognitive theory or social learning theory) is thus an individual's belief that they are capable of performing a specific task, *"The higher your self-efficacy, the more confidence you have in your ability to succeed in a task"* (Robbins & Judge, 2009, p. 222).

For the purpose of this study the focus will lie on general self-efficacy that originated from the concept of self-efficacy above. General self-efficacy (GSE), according to (Chen, Gully & Eden, 2004) is distinguishable from the concept of self-efficacy because, whereas self-efficacy is a relatively malleable, task specific belief, GSE is a relatively stable, trait-like, generalized competence belief (Chen, Gully & Eden, 2001). Eden (2001, p. 75) defines general self-efficacy as *"one's belief in one's overall competence to effect requisite performance across a wide variety of achievement situations"*

2.3. Relating Perceived Organizational Support and Self-Efficacy

According to Bandura (2009, p. 179) *"self-efficacy theory provides a conceptual framework within which to study the determinants of effective work design and the mechanisms through which they enhance organizational functioning"*. Perceived self-efficacy affects subsequent organisational attainments both directly and indirectly through its influence on personal goal challenges. Locke and Latham (2006) states that goals (in conjunction with self-efficacy) can mediate the effects of potentially organisational support motivating variables such feedback, participation in decision making, job autonomy, and monetary incentives (Locke & Latham, 2006).

A study by Eze (2014) found that high organisational support will increase the self-efficacy of nurses and lower their levels of burnout. The results of a study by Ucar and Ötken (2010) showed that high levels of perceived organisational support enhance the self-efficacy and subsequent organizational commitment of employees.

H 1: No significant relationship exists between perceived organisational support and self-efficacy based on the age of employees in the independent pharmacy sector.

3. Research Design

A quantitative research approach was followed in this study to achieve the research objectives. A cross-sectional research approach was followed which is ideal to test cause and effect relationship between the variables (Field, 2009).

3.1 Sampling

The sample for this study was derived from various pharmacies within the independent pharmacy sector. Employees participated voluntarily and had the ability to retract their participation at any stage during the research time span. Questionnaires were distributed

electronically to the participants and ethical approval was obtained after the research proposal was approved.

The expected sample size was around 1 000, but a representative sample of 581 was secured in the end. This represents a response rate of 58.1%. Most of the respondents in this sample were female (58.9%), Afrikaans speaking (59.6%) representative of the white ethnic group (70.770.7%) and Generation X (40%). Respondents were primarily semi-skilled non-managerial (29.3%), in possession of a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education (35.4%), employed in the Gauteng province (57.3%) and in the Dispensary department (55.6%).

3.2. Measuring Instruments

A shortened version of the SPOS measure (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) and 8 - Item New General Self-efficacy Scale (Chen *et al*., 2001) were used in this study.

The 8-item SPOS measure (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) was used to measure Perceived organisations support. Factor analysis of the original SPOS measure is supportive of the original finding that the SPOS is unidimensional and correlations among factor scores and the SPOS scale scores suggest that either 8-item or 16-itme versions can be just as effectively used as the 36-item version, but with more efficiency (Worley, *et al,* 2009). Responses are measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (0) strongly disagree to strongly agree (6). The measure obtained acceptable reliabilities in the South African context (Du Plessis, 2010).

The 8 - Item New General Self-efficacy Scale - NGSE (Chen *et al*., 2001) were used in this study to assess the self-efficacy of generations. The NGSE *"captures differences among individuals in their tendency to view themselves as capable of meeting task demands in a broad array of contexts"* (Chen, *et al,* 2001:63). The NGSE also gave the researcher a short and reliable tool for harvesting the potential benefits of general self-efficacy to organisational research (Chen, *et al,* 2001). The NGSE is self-administered or administered through an interview, items are rated on a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The reliability of the NGSE was confirmed in previous studies (Chen et al., 2001).

3.3. Statistical Analyses

The statistical analyses were carried out with the SPSS program (SPSS, 2014). Exploratory factor analyses were used to uncover the underlying factor structure for the SPOS and NGSE (Field, 2009). Linear regression analyses were done to determine the interactive relationship between perceived organisational support, self-efficacy and the different generations.

4. Results

4.1. Factor and Reliability Analyses

The Sample Adequacy and Sphericity of the inter-item correlation matrix was determined by applying the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity to the inter-item correlation matrix of the SPOS and NGSE. The results of the KMO and Bartlett's The SPOS measure and NGSE measure obtained a KMO of 0.846 and 0.926 respectively which according to Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010) is acceptable for factor analyses.

A principal components factor analyses was done on the eight items of the SPOS measure. The factor analyses revealed one underlying factor for SPOS which explained 46.361% of the

variance. The factor was labelled perceived organisational support. All items showed acceptable loadings.

A principal components factor analyses was done on the eight items of the NGSE measure. The factor analyses revealed one underlying factor for NGSE which explained 62.495% of the variance. The factor was labelled self-efficacy. All items showed acceptable loadings. The mean scores for the generations per measurement are displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Measurements

Generations	Perceived Organisational Support	Rank	Self-Efficacy	Rank
Traditionalist	4.4000	1	4.4167	1
Baby Boomers	4.2784	2	4.2692	3
Generation X	4.0780	4	4.2643	4
Generation Y	4.0917	3	4.3028	2
Generation Z	3.8803	5	4.1862	5

The results in Table 1 show that Traditionalist perceived the highest level of perceived organisational support and displayed the highest level of self-efficacy. Generation Z perceived the lowest level of perceived organisational support and displayed the lowest level of self-efficacy.

Simple linear regression analysis was carried out on the data to assess if SPOS is a significant predictor of SE across each of the 5 generational groups, i.e. Traditionalist, Baby Boomer, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z. The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 2: Regression Analyses: POS, SE and Generations

Model	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	R	R^2
	B	SE	Beta				
Traditionalist						.007[b]	.000
(Constant)	35.436	4.390		8.073	.000		
Perceived Organisational Support	-.023	.963	-.007	-.024	.981		
Baby Boomers						.325[b]	.106
(Constant)	27.693	1.526		18.151	.000		
Perceived Organisational Support	1.510	.346	.325	4.366	**.000***		
Generation X						.305[b]	.093
(Constant)	28.759	1.195		24.061	.000		
Perceived Organisational Support	1.510	.346	.325	4.366	**.000***		
Generation Y						.121[b]	.015
(Constant)	32.189	2.011		16.005	.000		
Perceived Organisational Support	.098	.566	.026	.174	.863		

The results in Table 2 showed significant results for the Baby Boomers and Generation X in terms of the relationship between perceived organisational support and self-efficacy.

It can be derived from Table 1. above that Perceived Organisational Support (POS) is a significant predictor of the Self-efficacy (SE) dimension of the Baby Boomer Generation (r (df=525; p≤.005) = 0.000, small effect).

- The prediction model for Perceived Organizational Support and Self-Efficacy is statistically significant for the Baby Boomer generation (r (df = 525; p≤.005) = 0.000, small effect) and accounted for approximately 32.5% of the variance of happiness (R^2= .106, Adjusted R^2 = .100). The relationship was positive which implies that talent acquisition and development towards talent will increase the happiness of employees. The effect was small.
- The prediction model for Perceived Organizational Support and Self-Efficacy is statistically significant for Generation X (r (df = 525; p≤.005) = 0.000, small effect) and accounted for approximately 30.5% of the variance of happiness (R^2 = .093, Adjusted R^2 = .089). The relationship was positive which implies that talent acquisition and development towards talent will increase the happiness of employees. The effect was small.

3. Conclusion

The objective of this research was to determine the interactive relationship between the perceived organisational support and self-efficacy for different Generation in the independent pharmacy sector in South Africa. Perceived organisational support had a significant impact on the self-efficacy for Baby Boomers and Generation X. These results contradict the study of Onyishi and Ogbobo (2012) who found no significant results for the relationship between perceived organisational support and self-efficacy based on age. These results furthermore highlighted the importance of taking cognisance of different generations in the workplace and manage them effectively to counteract negative work related outcomes such as poor performance and turnover (Jokela, 2012). In line with the findings of Du Plessis (2010) the results of this study also indicated that perceived organisational support is of particular interest for younger generations. Although not significant younger generations such as Generation Z that perceived the lowest level of organisational support and displayed the lowest level of self-efficacy.

From a theoretical perspective this research added to the limited research that currently exist on the interactive relationship between perceived organisational support and self-efficacy for different generations in the workplace. This research further proved the utility of the SPOS measure and NGSE as reliable measures for perceived organisational support and self-efficacy in the South African context. From a practical perspective this research highlighted the importance of perceived organisational support for the enhancement of the self-efficacy of employees in the workplace. More attention should be paid by management to enhance organisational support as it yields positive outcomes for the individuals involved.

This study had some limitations. First a cross-sectional research approach was followed that limited the research in terms of cause and effect relationships over the long-terms. More longitudinal research should be conducted to determine the impact of perceived organisational support over the long-terms on the self-efficacy of employees. Secondly this research was conducted in one sector only which implies that the results cannot be generalised to other occupations. Future research should be expanded to include other organisations as well. Finally limited research currently exists on the relationship between perceived organisational support and self-efficacy for different generations which made the interpretation of results difficult.

In conclusion the study also aimed to provide insights into the generational composition of the Independent Pharmacy Sector of South Africa that could potentially assist in cross-

generational understandings and addressing critical skills shortages and training gaps within the Independent Pharmacy Sector of South Africa. The results of this research should encourage managers to take stock of the current support that they are giving employees and the subsequent outcomes thereof.

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