

Talent Development Practices Predict the Employee Engagement of Human Resource Professionals

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Abstract

There is little evidence to indicate the association between talent development practices and the employee engagement of human resource (HR) professionals. The aim of this study was to examine if talent development practices predict the employee engagement levels of HR professionals. The study was conducted by means of a quantitative survey research design based on a sample of 354 HR professionals. A stratified random sampling technique was applied and data were collected by means of the Survey Monkey internet tool and analysed by means of multiple regression analysis. The results indicate that self-development behaviour is not a significant predictor of organisational engagement, while developmental relationships and support as well as development assignments are significant predictors. These results suggest that managers should provide developmental support and assignments to enhance employee engagement.

Keywords: employee engagement; human resource professionals; inclusive and exclusive approach; job engagement; organisational engagement; talent development

Introduction

In today's knowledge-driven economy, no organisation is spared from the unsettling effects of rapid technological innovations, prolonged talent shortages and demographic changes. All these trends have made talent a burning corporate priority for organisations



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globally. Talent is scarce and organisations view talented employees as unique resources that are central to achieving sustained competitive advantage (De Boeck, Meyers, and Dries 2018). Serban and Andanut (2014) assert that competitiveness had previously been linked to natural resources and labour; however, in today's knowledge economy, competitiveness is rooted in having superior talent. Many organisations survive by acquiring talent that is externally available in the labour market. This approach is deemed too expensive; consequently, the best way to compromise for a talent shortage is to grow your own talent (Caplan 2014). Developing talent from within has been the most sustainable approach for most organisations. Organisations which invest in developing talent from within are more likely to build long-term and stable relationships with their employees (Dhanabhakym and Kokilambal 2014). The knowledge era has made talent the engine of a business and has transformed the ways in which talent is to be developed (Miller 2015). The scarcity of talent continues to fuel the endless battle for talent among organisations. Global talent shortages have been intensified by rapid globalisation, the digitalisation of business as well as by technological advancements (Dalal and Akdere 2018). Consequently, both academics and practitioners have directed much of their attention to the understanding of what this talent implies and how it can be acquired, developed and retained. Hejase et al. (2016) aver that an organisation's success is directly associated with the talent force it possesses. Talent development has become one vital strategy that many organisations can utilise to ensure continuous availability of talent.

Highly engaged employees create a competitive advantage for their organisations (Zhong, Wayne, and Liden 2016). Organisations that seek to gain a competitive advantage need to develop talent, while simultaneously keeping talent actively engaged. Sangé (2015) indicates that in the current business environment, organisational success is strongly tied to the dwells of innovation and engagement levels of employees. Al Mehrzi and Singh (2016) confirm that employee engagement is an imperative element in the success of any organisation; as a result, organisations are in search of strategies aimed at improving employee engagement.

Ingham and Ulrich (2016) point out that in building successful organisations, human resource (HR) professionals should focus on delivering talent, leadership and capability that enable the business to win in this turbulent environment. The major challenges facing HR professionals are to ensure continuous availability of talent, and to find ways to enhance levels of employee engagement (Tladinyane and Van der Merwe 2016). HR professionals have always been considered custodians of organisations' employee development; they are expected to implement the organisations' HR policies and practices, while being subjects of those practices as employees (Pereira and Fontinha 2016). Before addressing this challenge, the question arises whether HR professionals themselves are engaged. As the levels of employee engagement globally continue to deteriorate, all eyes rest upon HR professionals to come to the rescue. It is thus crucial to understand if talent development practices contribute to employee engagement.

Literature Review

An overview of the literature related to talent development practices and its approaches, key developmental methods, developmental practices, employee engagement and the HR profession will be reviewed.

Talent Development Practices

The global competition for talent has intensified, which brings about an unprecedented challenge for organisations to find ways to manage and develop talent (Pant and Venkateswaran 2019). The availability of superior talent has become the main source of competitive advantage in a knowledge-based economy. It is thus imperative for organisations to create developmental opportunities to foster individual development by identifying and implementing effective talent development practices. Dalal and Akdere (2018) posit that the major benefits of talent development include successful achievement of business strategy, competitive advantage and revenue, and it further enhances employees' self-motivation and self-organisation. Talented employees become extremely pleased to be associated with an organisation that values their contribution and provides opportunities for development (Hejase et al. 2016). Garavan, Carbery, and Rock (2012, 6) define talent development as "the planning, selection and implementation of developmental strategies for the entire pool to ensure that the organisation has both a current and future supply of talent to meet strategic objectives and development activities that are aligned with talent management processes." Talent development practices involve all available strategic interventions in the organisation for developing employees in a more unified and tactical way to ensure continuous availability of talent (Caplan 2014).

There are two approaches to address the question of who constitutes talent, namely the exclusive and the inclusive approach. According to Thunnisen and Van Arensbergen (2015), the exclusive view relates to the human capital approach, which believes that the relative contribution of a certain group's talent justifies disproportional investment of time and money in this select group. De Boeck, Meyers, and Dries (2018) debate that the exclusive approach could be detrimental to the non-talented employees by excluding them from the HR processes. According to Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen (2016), an inclusive approach entails making development opportunities available to all employees, irrespective of their level or positions in the organisation. Bratton (2018) claims that talent can be found more widely in the organisation since every employee has talent and potential. The inclusive approach guarantees impartial distribution of developmental opportunities for all employees, thus avoiding a dip in the morale of employees (Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries, and Gonzalez-Cruz 2013). For the purpose of this study, an inclusive approach was adopted. Hejase et al. (2016) mention that keeping pace with competitors requires organisations to conserve and develop employee competencies through the use of strategies that go beyond remuneration. Rezaei and Beyerlein (2017) put forward developmental practices which contain developmental interventions relevant to the development of talent, namely developmental relationships,

developmental assignments, formal programmes, feedback processes and self-development activities.

In their studies, Golik and Blanco (2014), Garavan, Carbery, and Rock (2012), Bussin (2014) and Rezaei and Beyerlein (2017) identified developmental interventions which are crucial to the development of talent. These include mentoring, coaching, individual work projects, 360° assessments, higher qualifications, guided reading, international assignments, social identity networks, job rotations, job moves, action learning projects, work shadowing, career courses, networking, skills training, assessment centres, conferences, feedback programmes and peer partnerships. Talent development practices are further discussed under three headings: development relationships, development assignments and self-development.

Developmental relationships: In today's world of work, the current generation of employees operates in teams which formulate relationships with peers, industry experts and supervisors. Al Mehrzi and Singh (2016) posit that the supervisor-subordinate relationship has an effect on the quality of teamwork, and that teamwork has a positive impact on employee engagement. According to Bratton (2018), developing talent is a collective activity based on the existence of relationships, networks and teamwork. Developmental relationships seem to play a significant role in ensuring that employees' developmental needs are realised. Various organisations have realised that they need to find development strategies that support employee developmental needs through relationships (Ross 2013). Mentoring and coaching are the two widely used developmental relationship practices.

Developmental assignments: Since individual knowledge and skills can be directly developed through developmental relationships, other skills can be learned through performing a job in a different work environment and geographic area. According to Rezaei and Beyerlein (2017), developmental assignments include action learning, job rotation, job moves, international assignments and expanded work responsibilities. Jobs are a major source of development (Lindenhall and Hammoura 2015). Park, Abbott, and Werner (2014) point out that the purpose of developmental assignments is to assist the incumbents in growing in their professional area of expertise when working in different cultural settings. Additionally, job assignments tend to present an ambiguous situation, which provides exposure to different business units and people, thereby forcing the incumbent to test new ways of thinking.

Self-development activities: Unlike the past, where an employer's responsibility included taking care of employee development, today's world of work requires individual employees to take control of their own development. According to Reichard et al. (2017), most of today's organisations value self-driven and proactive individuals as there are raised organisational agility and adaptability. Mihiotis and Argirou (2016) opine that by taking responsibility and ownership of personal decisions, individual employees have an opportunity to learn and develop, which increases their engagement

in personal and organisational goals. Self-development activities include networking, guided reading and professional conferences. Self-development echoes individual voluntary participation in developmental activities while contributing to organisational goals.

Employee Engagement

Global competition, technological changes and the apparent desire to have a highly engaged workforce have forced many organisations to seek resources that reinforce employee engagement (Eldor and Harpaz 2016). Saks (2006, 601) defines employee engagement as “the degree to which an individual is attentive to and absorbed in the performance of the assigned roles.” Engaged employees generally feel involved, loyal, enthusiastic and empowered, and exhibit those feelings in their work behaviour (Al Mehrzi and Singh, 2016). Organisations that capture the hearts and minds of their top talent will be able to deliver value and remain sustainable over both the short- and long-term period as the cost of replacing talent is excessive (Hejase et al. 2016). Given the possibility to reap such positive outcomes, it comes as no surprise that organisations focus strongly on finding effective strategies relevant to enhancing the levels of employee engagement in its talent. Albrecht et al. (2015) contend that, to deliver its claimed benefits, employee engagement should be embedded within the organisation’s human resource systems and practices. In his study, Saks (2019) makes a distinction between job and organisation engagement, observing that engagement is specific to the role that an individual is performing, which is the work role and the role as a member of the organisation. Employee engagement is further discussed under job engagement and organisational engagement.

Job engagement: Many organisations worldwide are continually in need of employees who are emotionally bonded to their jobs and willing to do anything they can to boost their job performance. To be fully engaged in the job, employees have to fully apply their personal self in terms of their physical, cognitive and emotional energy in performing their jobs (Akingbola and Van den Berg 2019). According to Albdour and Altarawneh (2014), job engagement refers to “the extent to which an individual is actually absorbed in the performance of his or her individual job role.” People feel their roles are meaningful when they perceive to gain value from undertaking the work and feel a sense of return from investing themselves in the role (Ford, Myrden, and Kelloway 2016).

Organisational engagement: The current global work environment is characterised by uncertainty, business instability and the development of new attitudes towards an organisation rather than one’s specific job, which highlights the value of studying engagement from an organisational view. According to Albdour and Altarawneh (2014), organisational engagement reflects “the extent to which an individual is psychologically present as a member of an organisation.” More importantly, Akingbola and Van den Berg (2019) posit that organisational engagement involves greater investment of the self for higher performance in response to organisational factors.

Organisational engagement is considered to be a key factor that affects organisational efficacy, innovation and competitiveness (Saleem, Us Saqib, and Zahra 2015). Employees vary in the range according to which they invest their complete selves in their organisation. Engaged workers stay with the business longer, and frequently find strategic, innovative and more effective avenues to increase the value of the organisation.

Human Resource Professionals

The unpredictability of today's knowledge economy has brought drastic changes and challenges for HR professionals. HR professionals are forced to enhance their competencies and knowledge to be able to cope with the talent war challenges brought by the changes in the world of work (Mamman et al. 2018). One major development in HR is that HR professionals are now regarded as strategic partners, which means that they should make a significant contribution to the organisation's strategic goals and build credibility with top managers to influence HR-related organisational decisions (Cohen 2015). To influence organisational business decisions, HR professionals should first develop a strategic understanding of how talent contributes to the business success of their organisation.

According to Ingham and Ulrich (2016), HR professionals need to turn individual talent into human assets, as talent is not enough to yield competitive advantage. Kryscynski et al. (2018) posit that HR professionals have to make better decisions, have greater influence, generate new insights and communicate better with business leaders. All these require HR professionals to be developed as part of an organisation's talent. Due to a lack of barriers to entry, the HR profession has attracted people from other professions, thereby hampering the credibility of the profession. However, many have begun to realise that HR is a technical profession that requires specific knowledge, education and professional ethos (Cohen 2015). As seen in the above literature review, it has become important to understand whether talent development practices predict the employee engagement of HR professionals. This research gap will be addressed by investigating the following hypotheses.

H₀=Talent development practices do not predict the employee engagement of HR professionals.

H₁= Talent development practices predict the employee engagement of HR professionals.

Method

This section presents a detailed discussion of the research approach and design, measurement instrument, population, sampling method and procedure, and statistical analysis.

Research Design

The study applied a quantitative research method and adopted descriptive and exploratory approaches, as the variables were still emerging. A survey design was employed since it provides quantitative or numeric descriptions of trends, attitudes and opinions of a population. Stratified random sampling was utilised as the researcher wanted to ensure that all HR professional categories were represented in the sample and in the study.

Participants

The target population consisted of 4 403 HR professionals who were registered members within the five professional categories of the South African Board of People Practices (SABPP). Stratified random sampling was used to determine a sample of 354 HR professionals. The sample size ($n = 354$) was found sufficient for the sample determination of the study (Krejcie and Morgan 1970). From the 354 electronic questionnaires that were distributed through the internet-based Survey Monkey tool, a total of 181 usable responses were received, yielding a response rate of 51%. The data showed that 63.5% of the respondents were female while 36.5% were male. In terms of age, the participants had an average age of 40 years and 12 years' experience in the HR profession. Participants also had an average tenure of 7 years.

Measuring Instruments

The employee engagement scale developed by Saks (2006) was utilised to measure HR professionals' levels of employee engagement in a 10 itemised scale, comprised of job engagement and organisational engagement subscales. The job engagement subscale consists of four items while the organisational engagement subscale consists of six items, both measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). The job engagement Cronbach's alpha score was .79, and organisational engagement had a Cronbach's alpha score of .84, both showing good reliability.

Van Velsor, McCauley, and Ruderman (2010) identified the five developmental methods and 23 practices. Based on the five developmental methods, talent development practices were assessed using a 23 items questionnaire with three subscales (self-development behaviour, developmental assignments, and developmental relationship and support) all measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = never; 5 = always). The self-development behaviour subscale comprised 10 items with a Cronbach's alpha score of .90. The developmental assignments subscale consisted of seven items and achieved a Cronbach's alpha score of .78. Lastly, the developmental relationship and support subscale had six items, with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .84. The internal consistency of the talent development practices subscales ranged between .78 and .90, which indicates high internal reliability. A Cronbach's alpha score of .70 is considered to denote a good level of internal consistency reliability (Bless, Higson-Smith, and Sithole 2013). In ensuring appropriateness of the measuring instrument, the construct validity was determined, whereby a number of subject experts

were consulted to determine construct validity of the questionnaire, and the necessary adjustments were made. To measure the face validity, a pre-test was conducted with the seven Limpopo-based HR professionals. Their feedback, which deliberated on the structure of questions, was incorporated in the development of the questionnaire distributed. The pre-testing participants were not included in the final sample of the study.

Data Collection Procedure

Approval to conduct the study was obtained from the SABPP. Ethical clearance was obtained from the institution's Research Ethics Committee. Survey-Monkey questionnaires were distributed through an email-based web link to the 354 HR professionals, as per the sample size determination. All the participants were sent an electronic information leaflet informing them about the purpose of the study, confidentiality, ethical procedure and voluntary participation. A consent message was included in the email. Participants' confidentiality and anonymity were assured. Respondents completed the questionnaire electronically.

Statistical Analysis

A Microsoft Excel program was employed to capture all the raw data, which were coded and exported to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 24) for analysis of all numeric data. Descriptive statistics were comprised of means, standard deviations and Cronbach's alpha. Pearson product moment correlations were employed to determine the existence of relationships between biographic variables and between different variables. The significance value was set at 95% confidence interval, which is ($p < .05$). The factor analysis was conducted by employing the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of Sphericity to measure the common bias variance and to determine if the majority of variances could be rationalised by a single factor. Kaiser (1970) declares that a KMO should be .60 or greater to embark on factor analysis. An exploratory factor analysis was used to determine the factorial structure of the scales. Cronbach's alphas were applied to determine the reliability of the scales and its items, and a cut-off point of .70 was used as guideline for acceptable reliabilities. A Cronbach's alpha score of .70 is considered a good level of internal reliability (Bless, Higson-Smith, and Sithole 2013). A multiple regression was conducted to assess whether the talent development practices significantly and positively predicted the employee engagement of HR professionals. The value of the adjusted R^2 was used to interpret results, as numerous independent variables had to be considered. The significance value was set at ($p < .05$).

Results

Table 1 indicates the means, standard deviations and correlations of all variables. The results indicate the total average mean score for job engagement ($M = 4.05$; $SD = .72$), showing a relatively higher level of job engagement than organisational engagement, which had a total average mean score of ($M = 3.74$; $SD = .77$). Overall, the results

indicate that South African HR professionals, as part of the country's workforce, are actively engaged in both their organisations and their jobs. Regarding talent development practices, the results present the total average score of self-development behaviour ($M = 3.39$; $SD = .90$), developmental relationships and support ($M = 3.28$; $SD = .94$) and of developmental assignments ($M = 3.28$; $SD = .76$). In general, the results suggest that HR professionals are making an effort to take control of their own development as professionals and they are exposed to a variety of talent development practices.

Age, tenure and experience in the HR profession were correlated with the talent development factors and the employee engagement factors. The results in Table 1 show that age and talent development practices correlated positively and significantly with age and self-development behaviour ($r = .199$, $p < .001$) and with age and developmental assignments ($r = .196$, $p < .001$). There is a statistically non-significant correlation between age and development relationships and support ($r = .017$, $p > .005$). Significant positive correlations were observed between age and employee engagement with organisational engagement ($r = .197$, $p < .001$), as well as job engagement ($r = .197$, $p < .001$). There is no significant relationship between tenure and all talent development practices with self-development behaviour ($r = .095$), developmental relationships and support ($r = .071$) as well as developmental assignments ($r = .113$) for all with a ($p > .05$) level of significance. Tenure positively correlated with organisational engagement with a coefficient of ($r = .170$, $p < .05$). Furthermore, there were non-significant correlations between tenure and job engagement, which could be observed with a ($r = .084$, $p > .05$) level of significance. There is a positive relationship between experience in the HR profession and self-development behaviour with a coefficient of ($r = .222$, $p < .01$), and developmental assignments with a coefficient of ($r = .222$, $p < .01$). However, there is a non-significant relationship between the experience in the HR profession and developmental relationships and support ($r = .028$, $p > .05$). There is a positive and significant correlation between experience in the HR profession and employee engagement with organisational engagement coefficient of ($r = .202$, $p < .01$) and job engagement with ($r = .239$, $p < .01$).

Table 1: Means, standard deviations, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients and inter-correlations of variables.

| | | Mean | SD | α | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|-------|------|----------|--------|------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|
| 1 | Age | 40.05 | 9.37 | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Tenure | 7.52 | 6.80 | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Experience in years in HR environment | 12.67 | 7.78 | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Organisational engagement | 3.74 | .77 | .84 | .20*** | .17* | .20** | - | | | | |
| 5 | Job engagement | 4.05 | .72 | .79 | .20*** | .08 | .24** | .41 | - | | | |
| 6 | Self-development behaviour | 3.39 | .90 | .90 | .20*** | .10 | .22** | .26 | .24 | - | | |
| 7 | Development assignment | 3.28 | .76 | .78 | .20*** | .11 | .22** | .36 | .25 | .59 | - | |
| 8 | Developmental relationships and support | 3.28 | .94 | .84 | .02 | .07 | .03 | .36 | .21 | .65 | .55 | - |

Note: N=181. *** $p < .001$ = statistically significant; ** $p < .01$ = statistically significant; * $p < .05$ = statistically significant.

Factor analysis

The factorial structure of the questionnaire and reliability were examined, where after the results were provided.

Employee Engagement Scale: Table 2 reports on the results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of adequacy and Bartlett’s test of Sphericity for Employee Engagement Scale. The Employee Engagement Scale had two expected factors, namely job engagement and organisational engagement. The 11 items of this scale were subjected to the Principal Components Analysis method to determine the underlying factorial structure. The scale obtained an acceptable Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of .84 and Bartlett’s test of Sphericity was significant ($p < .000$). As a result, sampling adequacy could thus be presumed.

Table 2: Results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of adequacy and Bartlett’s test of Sphericity on Employee Engagement Scale

| KMO and Bartlett's Test | | |
|--|--------------------|---------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | | .836 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 840.582 |
| | Df | 55 |
| | Sig. | .000 |

There were three factors with Eigenvalues above 1. The first factor showed a total variance of 40.89%, while the second factor showed a further 16.12%. The third factor displayed a 9.73% and showed no meaningful loadings. Horne’s parallel analysis, however, suggests only two factors. The two-factor solution was explored using Principal Axis extraction and a direct oblimin rotation. The factor loadings are reported in Table 3.

Table 3: Pattern matrix for employee engagement scale

| Items | Factor | |
|---|---------------|----------|
| | 1 | 2 |
| Q16 – Being a member of this organisation makes me come “alive.” | .833 | |
| Q17 – Being a member of this organisation is exciting for me. | .826 | |
| Q18 – I am highly engaged in this organisation. | .754 | |
| Q13 – Being a member of this organisation is appealing. | .665 | |
| Q14 – One of the most exciting things for me is getting involved with things happening in this organisation | .649 | |
| Q15 – I am really not into the “going on” in this organisation. | .375 | |
| Q08 – I really throw myself into my job. | | .761 |
| Q10 – This job is consuming; I am totally into it. | | .747 |
| Q09 – Sometimes I lose track of time. | | .721 |
| Q12 – I am highly engaged in this job. | .416 | .465 |
| Q11 – My mind wanders and I think of other things when doing my job. | | |
| Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalisation. ^A Rotation converged in five iterations. | | |

The results showed two clear factors. For the purpose of this study, the factors were labelled as Factor 1: Organisational engagement; and Factor 2: Job engagement. The item loadings of Factor 1 ranged from .375 to .833, while the second factor’s item loadings ranged from .465 to .761. The cut-off point to include items in the factor loading was .3 (Field 2005). The Cronbach’s alphas in this study ranged from .79 to .84, which suggests that the factors were reliable.

Table 4: Results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of adequacy and Bartlett’s test of Sphericity on Talent Development Practices Scale

| KMO and Bartlett's Test | | |
|--|--------------------|----------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy. | | .897 |
| Bartlett's test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 2139.101 |
| | df | 253 |
| | Sig. | .000 |

Talent Development Practices Scale: Table 4 presents the results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of adequacy and Bartlett’s test of Sphericity. The Talent Development Practices Scale had five expected factors, namely developmental relationships, developmental assignments, feedback processes, formal learning programmes, and self-development activities. The 23-item Talent Development Practices Scale was subjected to an exploratory factor analysis using the Principal Component Analysis to determine the factorial structure. The scale obtained an acceptable KMO measure of .897 and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity was significant with $p < .000$. As a result, sampling adequacy could thus be assumed.

The total variance results indicated that there are five Eigenvalues above one. The first factor showed a total variance of 38.08%, the second factor 8.55%, the third factor 7.41%, the fourth 5.58% and the last factor 4.91%. Horne’s parallel analysis was also performed to produce another guideline on how many factors to extract. Table 5 reports the Pattern Matrix for Talent Development Practices Scale.

Table 5: Pattern matrix for talent development practices scale

| Items | Factor | | |
|--|--------|--------|------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Q40: I attend conferences and workshops relating to my profession. | .786 | | |
| Q41: I exchange information with others in my profession. | .782 | | |
| Q24: I meet with other professionals whom we share common goals. | .743 | | |
| Q39: In my organisation, I get opportunities to attend sessions with industry experts. | .650 | | |
| Q35: I have sufficient opportunities to attend training programmes that are aligned to my job. | .587 | -0.378 | |
| Q37: I have access to attend programmes that interest me. | .556 | | |
| Q23: I share my knowledge with everyone doing a similar job to the one I am doing. | .544 | | |
| Q22: I participate in discussions with my peers about our development in the jobs. | .529 | | |
| Q36: I attend feedback session on courses I attended. | .479 | | |
| Q38: I read materials about my job recommended by my supervisor. | .418 | | |
| Q20: My supervisor gives me guidance and support to achieve specific goals. | | -.864 | |
| Q19: My supervisor takes personal interest in my life and professional development. | | -.823 | |
| Q31: My supervisor gives me feedback on my performance. | | -.621 | |
| Q21: I have someone with advanced knowledge to assist me with my growth and development. | | -.528 | |
| Q34: My organisation gives me opportunities to access higher education. | | -.480 | |
| Q33: In my job, I get assessed on my suitability for higher positions. | | -.341 | |
| Q28: I am assigned to handle other job projects in my department. | | | .645 |
| Q30: Others see me as someone who takes the lead easily. | | | .641 |
| Q26: I can move to other jobs besides the one I am hired to do. | | | .631 |
| Q27: I find myself capable to perform my supervisor's role. | | | .503 |
| Q29: In my organisation, we team up to resolve complex organisational problems. | | | .485 |
| Q25: My organisation gives me opportunities to change from one job to another. | | | .378 |
| Q32: I get feedback from my peers, supervisor and clients. | | | .336 |
| Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. | | | |
| Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalisation. | | | |
| a. Rotation converged in 9 iterations. | | | |

A comparison of the Eigenvalues created by the parallel analysis procedure suggests that three factors may be more appropriate. The factors were labelled Factor 1: Self-

development behaviour with loadings ranging from .418 to .786; Factor 2: Developmental relationships and support items with loadings ranging from -.341 to -.864; and Factor 3: Developmental assignments, which had item loadings ranging from .336 to .645. The cut-off point to include items in the factor loading was .3. Cronbach's alphas for talent development practices factors in this study ranged from .776 to .899, which implies that all contributed well to the total reliability. Table 6 shows the multiple regression results between different variables.

Table 6: Multiple regression results

| Predictor | Organisational engagement | | | Job engagement | | |
|--|---------------------------|------|---------|----------------|------|---------|
| | β | t | p-value | β | t | p-value |
| Self-development behaviour | -.054 | -.56 | .576 | .129 | 1.27 | .206 |
| Developmental relationship and support | .255 | 2.47 | .005 | .044 | .445 | .657 |
| Developmental assignment | .252 | 2.86 | .005 | .148 | 1.60 | .111 |
| R | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| R ² | | | | | | |
| Adjusted R ² | | | | | | |
| F Change | | | | | | |

Table 6 shows that the overall regression model for organisational engagement as a dependent variable is significant with $F(3.177=11.916, p=.000)$; R^2 of .168. Taking into account all the talent development practices (independent variables), the results show that self-development behaviour with ($\beta = -.054, p=.576$) is not a significant predictor of organisational engagement, whilst developmental relationships and support ($\beta = .255, p=.005$) and developmental assignments ($\beta = .252, p<.005$) are significant predictors. Higher scores on the developmental relationships and support and on developmental assignments can be associated with higher organisational engagement. Therefore, these results confirm that both developmental relationships and support ($t = 2.740$) and developmental opportunities ($t = 2.860$) are the most positive and significant predictors of organisational engagement at ($p=.005$) level of significance.

In terms of job engagement, Table 6 indicates that the overall regression model was significant with job engagement as dependent variable $F(3.177=4.953, p=.003)$, with an R^2 of .077. Considering all the independent variables, the results show that self-development behaviours ($\beta = .129, p=.206$), developmental relationships and support ($\beta = .044, p=.657$), and developmental assignments ($\beta = 0.148, p=.111$) were all non-significant predictors of job engagement. This suggests that the three talent development practices independently have no significant effect on job engagement. Overall, the results show that talent development practices had a partial contribution in predicting the HR professionals' levels of employee engagement.

Discussion

The study was aimed at identifying the talent development practices that enhance employee engagement of HR professionals. The findings indicate that the organisational engagement level of HR professionals improved each time they were afforded an opportunity to be involved in developmental relationships and received support, and also incremented each time they were afforded an opportunity to engage in developmental assignments. These findings confirm that both developmental relationships and support as well as developmental opportunities are positive and significant predictors of organisational engagement. Additionally, the findings depict that self-development behaviour makes no positive or significant contribution to the HR professionals' organisational engagement. As a result, self-development behaviour is a non-significant predictor of organisational engagement. With regard to job engagement, the findings indicate that that all talent development practices are non-significant predictors of job engagement. This reflects that talent development practices make a partial contribution to employee engagement of HR professionals. Despite these findings, Maleka et al. (2017) have found talent development to be a significant contributor to employee engagement of low-income earners. Sangé (2015) has also found that the availability of developmental opportunities contributes significantly to employee engagement levels of sale and marketing professionals.

The widely cited study conducted by Gallup (2013) found that only 13% of the global workforce is engaged. In South Africa, the Gallup survey produced much more alarming findings, with 9% of the workforce being actively engaged. From the 91% of those who were disengaged, 45% were actively disengaged, meaning that they were extremely negative about their jobs and organisations, and were likely to instil that negativity in their co-workers (Staff 2018). The survey by Staff (2018) found that only the most highly educated South Africans as well as those in professional job categories reported balanced levels of engagement, namely about 50% engaged and 50% disengaged. Contrary to Gallup's (2013) findings, the results of this study show that 81% of HR professionals were actively engaged in their jobs while 66% were engaged in the organisation. The high level of job engagement could have been due to other factors, as talent development practices make no significant contribution to job engagement. These findings confirm the notion of Saks (2006) and Fardale et al. (2014) that an individual can be engaged in both the job and organisation or in either one of the two.

Limitations and Recommendations

Theoretically, a considerable body of research has been sought to understand talent development as a new emerging concept emanating from talent management, and a burning concept for research and practice. This study was devoted to understanding the concept of talent development and its contribution to employee engagement. However, like most studies, this study also has its own limitations. The first limitation of this study is that other factors which could contribute to employee engagement were not investigated. It is recommended that since talent is currently a burning concept and

priority in both practice and research, it becomes vital that these factors be explored further in terms of talent approaches, as there is still disagreement among scholars on which talent approach is sustainable to yield positive results in the development of talent. Besides the useful insights about talent development, there is still a need to develop a more valid, reliable and generalisable scale for measuring the concept. Furthermore, future research is needed to examine talent retention strategies, as there is no guarantee that the developed talent will stay. The second limitation is that the study focused only on HR professionals who are members of one professional body as a sample. Future studies have to be conducted on a large and more heterogeneous population, which could produce more representative and rigorous results. Based on the findings, it is recommended that since not all talent development practices contribute to employee engagement, organisations and employees alike can focus their attention on this study to prevent wasteful efforts and disappointments of investing their efforts in interventions with less contribution to employee engagement levels.

Conclusion

Not all developmental interventions impact the employee engagement level of HR professionals; some have positive consequences for engagement at organisational level but negative consequences at individual level. HR professionals' organisational engagement can be enhanced if an organisation and managers continuously expose employees to practices such as developmental relationships and support, and developmental assignment. Exposure to these two talent development interventions shape and direct how engaged an HR professional will be in the organisation. Organisations should continue to invest in more inclusive talent development programmes to address the shortage of talent and use their own developed talent to achieve their strategic goals and competitive advantage. Supervisors and line managers should play an active role in their organisational talent development activities; they should understand the value of developing their subordinates and how it affects organisational talent requirements and overall organisational efficacy. Organisations and employees can make better choices regarding which development interventions to participate in to achieve the objective of the intervention as well as both individual and organisations goals.

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