Important factors of self-efficacy and its relationship with life satisfaction and self-esteem – with reference to gen y and gen z individuals.

M Kishore Kumar1,2 and Dr. R G Priyadarshini1,3

1 Amrita School of Business, Coimbatore, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, India.
2 kishore8274@gmail.com
3 rg_priyadarshini@cb.amrita.edu

Abstract. Internet applications, social media and sedentary lifestyle followed by individuals put a lot of stress on Gen Y and Gen Z individuals. This study seeks to find out what these individuals think they are capable of which is an individual’s self-efficacy, with respect to gender, age and educational qualification, using subjective evaluation questionnaire which would enable the respondents to evaluate the questions posed and respond according to their perception. This study was done on students who about to become a part of the workforce in the near future. The study was aimed at finding meaningful relationships between students’ overall quality of life and self-esteem with self-efficacy and it was found to be positive. The other factors – age, gender and educational qualification that were considered in the study failed to show considerable significance with self-efficacy, as self-efficacy was found to have negligible variation with respect to those factors.

1. Introduction

In today’s world, people are living in the era of internet and instant gratification. This is enabled by social media and internet applications that are presenting a sedentary life style among individuals (Alejandro Silva Cortés et al, 2016), alongside which students are made to deal with high pressure environments which has adverse effects on them. Today’s youth (Gen Y and Gen Z in this case) live in a highly dynamic environment which is demanding more from them and the society puts a lot of pressure on them. This reduces life satisfaction and causes stress in them. Thus there was a need identified to study the relationship between (i) an individual’s perceived ability to accomplish or succeed at certain tasks. (Bandura 1977, 1982, 1986) which is identified as self-efficacy (ii) the general sense of an individual’s own value or worth as perceived by the individual himself/herself (Makikangas and Kinnunen 2003) which is identified as self-esteem and (iii) the overall life quality of a person (Diener, 1995) which is identified as life satisfaction.

Early work about life satisfaction was mainly concentrated on adults. Only recently, researchers have begun to include children and adolescents in these types of studies. It has been found that there is strong association between life satisfaction and self-esteem in countries that are oriented towards individualism (Heubner, 2004). It was also found that high youth life satisfaction facilitates better self-esteem and self-efficacy (Gilman et al 2006; Gilman et al. 2000, MacDonald et al. 2005, Suldo et al. 2006). Thus a need, has been identified, to study the life satisfaction in today’s young generation that is Gen Z and Gen Y, who have just started to go for jobs or who are going to join the workforce soon.
2. Literature review

Until now, very few evidence is available to show whether self-efficacy has an association with life satisfaction over a period of time and if self-efficacy definitely reduces the negative effects of caused on young people’s life satisfaction by perceived stress (Burger et al. 2016). Though stress is not considered in this study, self-efficacy’s relationship with life satisfaction is being considered in this study, which can give an insight into the lives of today’s youth and their wellbeing, as it was found that higher scores in Life Satisfaction was associated with less depression and less social stress. (Proctor et al. 2009).

2.1. Self-Efficacy and Self Esteem

Self-efficacy is an individual’s perceived ability to accomplish or succeed at certain tasks. (Bandura 1977, 1982, 1986) and Self-esteem is the general sense of an individual’s own value or worth as perceived by the individual himself/herself (Makikangas and Kinnunen 2003).

2.2. Life Satisfaction

Many researchers conceptualize SWB Subjective Wellbeing (SWB) as made up of three interrelated, distinguishable components such as positive affect, global life satisfaction and negative affect (Lucas and Diener, 2000). This study is taking this Global Life Satisfaction for assessing a part of the wellbeing of individuals and the author refers to Global Life Satisfaction while mentioning the phrase “Life Satisfaction”. Life Satisfaction refers to subjective evaluation of overall life quality of a person (Diener, 1995). It refers to a cognitive appraisal of the overall life quality of a person based on subjective evaluation which means the respondent can assume standards while answering the questionnaire (Diener et al., 1999).

In large-scale international research, India is typically among the lower-scoring countries on indicators of life satisfaction and happiness (Biswas-Diener et al. 2012; Diener et al. 1995; Schyns 1998) Life satisfaction is indeed a construct worthy of special attention because it gives a clear understanding of well-being through a global index generated through criteria determined by respondents themselves rather than researchers defining the standards. (Diener, 2000) as the questionnaire is subjective evaluation questionnaire.

2.3. Relationship between Self-Efficacy, Life Satisfaction and Self-Esteem

The association between individuals’ Life Satisfaction and self-efficacy, or between Self-Efficacy and Self-esteem are not causal. Self-esteem is considered to predict satisfaction with life (Diener and Diener, 1995) also, higher life satisfaction is found to bring about feelings better self-esteem (Proctor et al. 2009). Higher levels of self-efficacy is found to reduce negative effects on life satisfaction by factors like stress (Burger et al, 2016), thus individuals scoring high on self-efficacy tend to have high Life satisfaction scores. This study seeks to find meaningful relationships between the three parameters of Life Satisfaction, Self Esteem and Self Efficacy.

3. Factors

A number of demographic factors were identified to have significant relationship with life satisfaction which is the overall life quality of a person. As higher self-efficacy is found to improve the quality life (Burger et al, 2016), the effects of the following factors on self-efficacy is studied.

3.1. Gender

The overall quality of life varies between men and women of the same age group. (Daig, et al. 2009) and also gender is likely to cause differences in level and kind of satisfaction in academic career (Thoreson, 1990)
However, in children of ages 8 to 12 years, the overall quality of life is unrelated to gender (Heubner 2004). None of the surveyed individuals were below 12 years of age which enables us to consider gender as an influencing factor for the whole sample.

3.2. Educational Background

Overall quality of a person’s life varies with education level. Those with higher education qualifications usually tend towards having higher life satisfaction (Feldman, 2010). Studies show modest relationships with Life Satisfaction and demographic variables. (Heubner, 2004). Age and educational level predicted life satisfaction (Chengedzai, et al. 2016). This study’s respondents are students and the sample contains students from two different educational backgrounds such as ones who are currently pursuing their Under Graduation degrees and ones who are currently pursuing their Post-Graduation degrees.

3.3. Age

The overall quality of life varies with different age groups. (Daig, et al. 2009) In a study on people above 60 years of age, it was found that the quality of life decreased as age advanced, and it is related to their life experiences in their early adulthood. (Chaonan Chen, 2000). In this study, respondents are grouped into Generation Y and Generation Z based on their age at the time of the survey. Individuals belonging to the same generation are bound by the kinship within their generation people as they encounter same events which changed everything around them when they were growing up. They would have witnessed the same economic and political changes around them which would set their attitudes in a similar way. What is more important about that to this study is that they share similar expectations for life (Marcie Merriman 2015).

4. Gen Y and Gen Z

Generation Y are individuals who are born between 1981 and 1996 and Generation Z are individuals born after 1997. Though there is no consensus among different publications, on the end year of Generation Z, there are a few evidences for the end year being 2003 and others suggest later years. Since the respondents of this study are Undergraduate and Post Graduate students, none of the respondent was born after 2003 thus all respondents of this study qualify as either Generation Y or Generation Z, based on their age at the time of the survey. (Marcie Merriman 2015).

The novelty of this study is preserved by the fact that this study is done on students who belong to the Generations Y and Z, wherein Generation Z is only now coming of age. Moreover at the time of survey, they were a few years away from entering the workforce. Through this study, those individuals’ ability to accomplish various tasks in their lives can be understood which can be used at the workplace to get the best out of these individuals, by making means to get what they can give at their best.

5. Research Questions

- What are the important factors that affect Self-efficacy in individuals?
- How does Life satisfaction and Self-esteem affect Self-efficacy in individuals?
- Does Self-efficacy in individuals differ pertaining to various generation types?
- Does Self-efficacy in individuals differ pertaining to various age groups?
- Does Self-efficacy in individuals differ pertaining to various educational qualification backgrounds?

6. Hypotheses

H1: Life satisfaction and Self-esteem does not have a significant association on Self efficacy in individuals.
H2: There is no significant variance in scores of self-efficacy in individuals pertaining to various generation types.
H3: There is no significant variance in scores of self-efficacy in individuals pertaining to various age groups.
H4: There is no significant variance in scores of self-efficacy in individuals pertaining to various educational backgrounds.

7. Conceptual Model

![Figure 1. Conceptual model showing the relationship between parameters](image)

8. Methodology
A survey was conducted on Gen Y and Gen Z individuals using a survey questionnaire through online platforms.
The survey questionnaire contained questions in the following pattern:
- Demographics (Age, Gender, Education, Home town)
- BMSLSS: Brief Multidimensional Students’ Life Satisfaction Scale (Seligson et al. 2003) – 6 items
- Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) – 10 items
- General Self Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer et al. 1995) – 10 items.
These questions were subjective evaluation questions which means the response to any question in the questionnaire (except from the 1st section), is based on the respondents’ perceptions of the questions. All items in section 2 were answered in 5-Point Likert Scale, items in section 3 and 4 were answered on 4-Point Likert Scale. Scoring is straight forward, for most items except for five items which were reverse-keyed.
The survey finally yielded a sample size of 145 out of which 79 respondents belong to Generation Y and 66 belong to Generation Z when surveyed. 76 of the respondents were males and 69 were females. When the survey was conducted, 67 students were pursuing their Under Graduation degree and the remaining 78 were pursuing their Post-Graduation.

9. Analysis
The data was analyzed using SPSS and the analysis is as follows:

9.1. Association of Life satisfaction and Self-esteem on Self Efficacy
Self-Efficacy has a significant association (R=-0.658) with self-esteem and life satisfaction as alpha value is less than 0.05 as shown in ‘table 1’.
Self-Efficacy = 0.468 (Life satisfaction) + 0.574 (Self Esteem) -0.18
9.2. Does variation in age groups (Generations) affect Self efficacy?
There is no significant variation in generation types with respect to Self-efficacy since alpha value if greater than 0.05.

| Table 1. Coefficients\(^a\). |
|-----------------------------|
| Model                      | Separation energies | Standardized Coefficients |
|                            | B       | Std. Error | Beta | t     | Sig   |
| 1  (Constant)               | -.018   | 2.854      | .006 | .995  |       |
| Life Satisfaction           | .468    | .092       | .344 | 5.079 | .000  |
| Self-Esteem                 | .574    | .086       | .450 | 6.643 | .000  |

\(^a\) Dependent Variable: Self-Efficacy

9.3. Does variation in gender types affect Self efficacy?
There is no significant variation in gender types affect Self efficacy since alpha value if greater than 0.05

9.4. Does variation in educational qualification affect Self efficacy?
There is no significant variation in educational qualification affect Self efficacy since alpha value if greater than 0.05

10. Results and Discussion
The following are the findings of the analysis:

   Self-Efficacy has a significant association (R\(^2\)=0.658) with self-esteem and life satisfaction as alpha value is less than 0.05. The regression equation is Self-Efficacy = 0.468 (Life satisfaction) + 0.574 (Self Esteem) -0.18. Thus H1 is rejected.

   There is no significant variation in generation types with respect to Self-efficacy since alpha value if greater than 0.05, therefore H2 is not rejected. There is no significant variation in gender types affect Self efficacy since alpha value if greater than 0.05, therefore H3 is not rejected. There is no significant variation in educational qualification affect Self efficacy since alpha value if greater than 0.05, therefore H4 is not rejected.

   The results indicate that life satisfaction and self-esteem are positively related with Self efficacy for both Gen Y and Gen Z individuals. Similarly, both gender and educational qualification does not have a significant impact on self-efficacy with regard to the sample of 145 students.

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