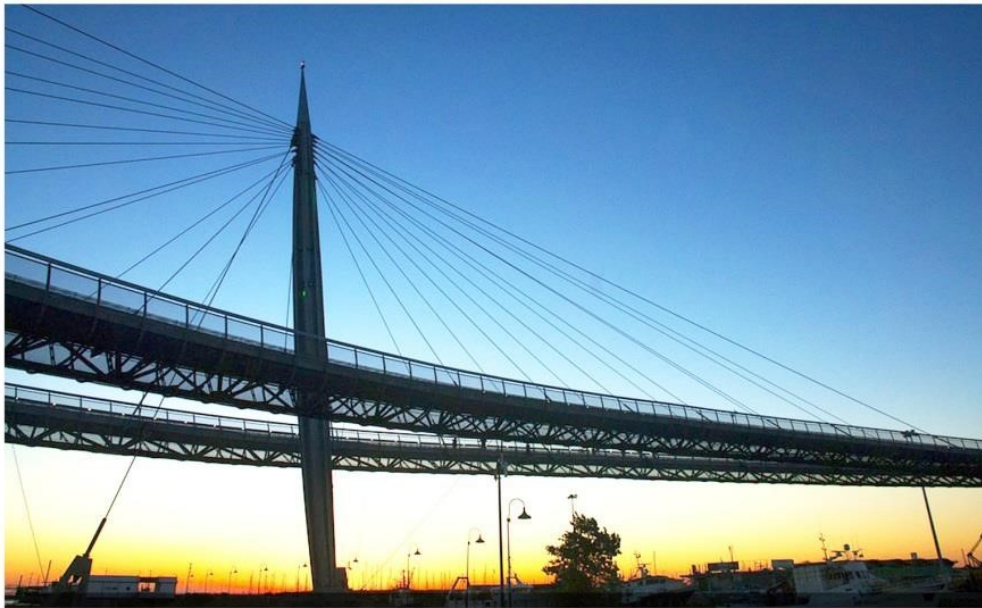


Proceedings of the
10th European Conference on
Intangibles and Intellectual Capital
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23-24 May 2019



Edited by
Prof. Massimo Sargiacomo

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Intellectual Capital in Healthcare, A Social Exchange Approach

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Abstract: Working in healthcare implies being part of work teams where doctors, nurses and other health professionals interact in a collaborative way. Healthcare organizations accumulate formal and informal know-how, distributed across the minds of individuals or even embedded in the culture and routines of organizations themselves. Thus, this study is a preliminary approach to a broader investigation that will be done in the near future. It is, therefore, an exploratory study that sought, under the premise of Organizational Support theory, to examine healthcare worker's perceptions about Intellectual Capital implications on their performance based on social exchange theories. Being an exploratory work, is based on a quantitative literature review which aims to: (1) describe how this field of research is organized in terms of publications, authors and sources; (2) mapping the literature; (3) identify the most cited constructs and (4) identify the relationships established between the main constructs. The documents obtained from Web of Science, Scopus and Proquest databases were subjected to a bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer software. 72 documents peer-reviewed were identified using the following key terms: Intellectual Capital; perceived organizational support and healthcare.

This small sample reflects the recent nature of this theme applied to the healthcare, since a more general search (excluding healthcare keyword) produced 490 documents. This quantitative literature review showed the first attempts to explain the management of Intellectual Capital in healthcare through the theory of social exchanges are recent. The countries with the largest number of publications in the area are USA and Australia and about 60% of the sample publications were from Management, Economics and Finance science fields. The results also present a strong importance of co-worker trust and of organizational culture in order to achieve the best organizational performance. Individuals positively attached to organization are more committed and more unlikely to leave the job. So, it is imperative to Healthcare HR managers to facilitate and engendering trust throughout peers creating a high perceived organizational support, via positive work environment perceptions.

Keywords: Intellectual Capital, Perceived Organizational Support, Co-Worker Trust, Performance, Healthcare

1. Background

Intangible resources, such as knowledge, have been recognised as the power of the organization, rather than its hard assets (Itami 1987; Quinn 1992; Marshall 2009). According to Nahapiet and Ghoshal, (1998, p. 245): "Intellectual Capital represents a valuable resource and a capability for action based in knowledge and knowing" and to manage intangible resources, such as knowledge, is perceived to be an important capability for competition, however, to be considered intellectual capital, knowledge must be an asset able to be used to create wealth (Stewart & Ruckdeschel 1998; Roos 1998). The intellectual capital of an organization represents the wealth of ideas and ability to innovate which will determine the future of the organization (Bontis 1996, p.442).

Due to the specific characteristics of healthcare, a sector where an extensive workforce is required to create a service that is purchased and consumed at the same time (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons 1999; Siddiqui & Kleiner 1998), individual and organizational skills are essential. Healthcare requires real-time knowledge work and all about possessing, managing, building, and protecting a stock of Intellectual Capital can make a huge difference in its performance (Nonaka et al. 1996; Edvinsson 1997; Leal et al. 2016).

Knowing that new Intellectual Capital can be created through individuals interactions and that much valuable knowledge is fundamentally socially embedded—in particular situations and in relationships, we adopt the perspective of Nahapiet and Ghoshal, (1998) who assert that Intellectual Capital should be seen under a social exchange approach, since it constitutes itself a complex social process.

In some social processes researchers have found that employees who report an emotional bond to their organization are more likely to show higher levels of dedication and loyalty (Eisenberger et al. 2001). Under the premise of Organizational Support Theory, employees emotional attached to their workplace creates a general belief that the organization values their contributions (Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002; Rhoades et al. 2001). This belief is designated Perceived Organizational Support (POS).

Considering that organizations rely on employees specific behaviours to enhance efficiency and productivity, which, in turn, guarantees continuous organizational growth, it appears to be important to study factors which favours creation and development of human capital in organizations, effective multitasking procedures, increasing job-related motivation and satisfaction. In this sense, Healthcare sector was chosen due its specific characteristics concerning to human resources management.

Thus, based on the literature, we believe that the analysis of Intellectual Capital from the perspective of the POS may reveal ways to increase its efficiency improving organizational performance, namely through the identification of antecedents and outcomes of the main constructs linked to these two themes. However, it was impossible to find in retrieved databases (Web of Science, Scopus and Proquest) articles that studied those relations.

Consequently, and trying to bridge some of this gap, the aim of this study is to show present understanding regarding the extent to which Intellectual capital is related to POS, under varying conditions. To accomplish this aim, we conducted a quantitative literature review of Intellectual Capital as a social exchange, i.e. from a Perceived Organizational Support perspective. Therefore, we address the following key questions:

- What is the state of art of POS theory applied to Intellectual Capital in healthcare?
- Which are the main constructs that we should use if we want to evaluate how healthcare professionals perceived organizational support in workplace?
- How these constructs are related?

The objective here is to conceptualize and frame the existing literature on POS applied to intellectual capital as a foundation for further study.

According to the analysis undertaken, seventy-two publications were found. Based on the Vosviewer outputs (which is a software tool for constructing and visualizing bibliometric networks including journals, researchers, or individual publications) it was possible to map these researches.

Then, intellectual capital and POS and their factors were extracted from the empirical researches done in healthcare institutions. Three researches related directly to this area and constructs were identified and each factor influencing the intellectual capital, as well respective measurement scale, were scrutinised. Relationships, their strength and direction between variables were also registered.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Intellectual Capital

Following the works of Bontis (1996), Edvinsson (1997), Roos (1998), Bontis *et al.*, (1999) and Serenko *et al.*, (2010), in this paper, Intellectual Capital is defined as encompassing human capital (employee skills and experience), structural capital (efficiency of internal functions), and relational capital (organizations external and internal relationships). Human, structural, and relational capital can be considered separate constructs with their own networks of antecedents, covariates and outcomes (Radaelli et al. 2011); however they are also interdependent and collectively responsible for shaping the stock of knowledge in an organization (Evans et al. 2015).

Based on the Resource-Based View, which argues that an organisation achieves sustainable competitive advantage from integrating its tangible and intangible resources, particularly those that are unique or imperfectly imitable, Evans et al. (2015) argue that variations in the performance of healthcare organizations may be explained, in part, by differing “stocks” of Intellectual Capital, and differing forms of leveraging it. So, since these organisations are highly knowledge-intensive (Hansen et al. 1999) the development of clinical knowledge depends, mostly, on professionals ability to exploit existing knowledge, sharing their knowledge

with others in search for improvements in their practice. In healthcare, the value of the organization is consigned in the expertise, intellect, and wisdom of employees. For healthcare organizations, strategies to create sustainable value involve hiring competent individuals and investing in organizational learning (Weston et al. 2007).

2.2 Trust and culture as intellectual capital drivers

Trust is conceptualized in a variety of ways (Ferres et al. 2004). According to Bontis (1996) trust and organisational culture are the main supporting drivers of Intellectual Capital. Edmondson and Moingeon (1999, p.158) define trust as “the belief that relinquishing some degree of control over a situation to one or more others will not lead to personal loss or harm”. As a cognitive state, is the willingness to place resources at others’ disposal; expecting that they will not be used in an unpredicted way. Organizational group members need to have mutual confidence that tasks can be delegated without close and frequent supervision mainly when organizations become flatter.

Organisational culture is seen by Barney (1986) as a source of sustained competitive advantage. According to this author organizational culture is a complex set of values, beliefs, assumptions, and symbols that define the way in which an organisation conducts its business. An organisational culture defines both who its relevant employees, customers, suppliers, and competitors are, and how to interact with these key actors.

To maximize intellectual capital of individuals, leaders, and teams an (organisational) culture which creates infrastructure that encourages sharing of employee wisdom, fosters new innovation, and embeds best practices throughout the organization, translating this wisdom into intellectual and performance gain for the organization is fundamental (Weston et al. 2007).

In order to deal with both turbulent environments and the desire of many workers for more challenging jobs, organisations should know how motivate employees, providing them an higher degree of independence, and being able to cope with increased delegation, showing this fact as a consequence of the increased value of their intellectual capital to the organization (Bontis 1996). This type of behaviour illustrates how trust may support intellectual capital development.

2.3 Co-worker trust and social capital

According to (Ferres et al. 2004) co-worker trust concerns confidence that one’s colleagues are competent, and will act in a fair, reliable and ethical manner. It assumes that co-workers will have faith in the words and acts of their peers (Cook & Wall 1980).

Social Capital refers to the inherent value found in human relationships within the workplace, the stock of active connections among people based on trust, mutual understanding, and shared values and behaviors that bind the members making cooperative action possible (Cohen & Prusak 2001). So, in this sense, trust can enable effective relationships and attitudes that impact on workforce performance.

2.4 Perceived Organisational Support (POS) and co-worker trust

Working in healthcare implies being part of work teams where doctors, nurses and other health professionals interact in a collaborative way. Well-functioning teams’ processes shape positive employee attitudes by allowing employees to coordinate each other’s work, achieving higher levels of performance and, consequently, promoting patient satisfaction (Doyle et al. 2013).

According to (Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002) employees form general beliefs about the organization based on the extent to which they perceive their employer values and cares about their well-being and their attitudes toward the organization improve when the organization takes positive and supportive actions (Ogbonnaya et al. 2018).

POS can be viewed as a horizontal measure of an organisation’s concern about its employees and employees’ POS contribute to their consequent commitment to organisation (Shore & Tetrick 1991).

3. Method

3.1 Literature search

To identify relevant studies, we searched a number of databases, including Proquest, Web of Science, and Scopus, until the year 2019 using keywords such as “intellectual capital”, “perceived organizational support” and healthcare. This search was limited to articles, dissertations, book chapters, and conference proceedings. As a result we’ve found 72 works, reflecting the authorship of 173 individual authors. The papers selected were analysed with Vosviewer software.

Figure 1 illustrates a Vosviewer output, namely the keywords most cited by researchers from initial sample.

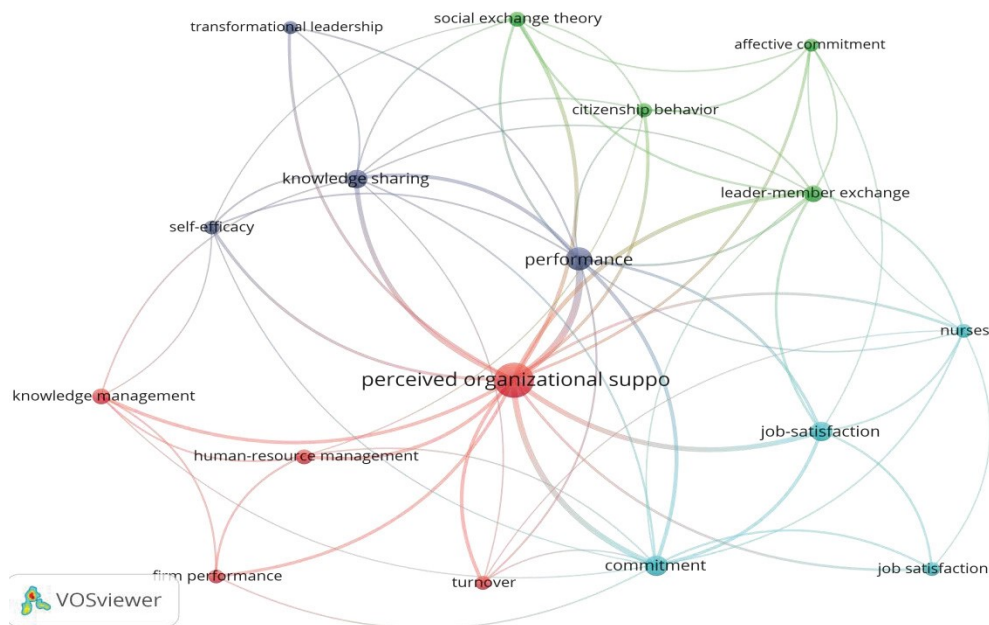


Figure 1: Keywords most cited (initial sample)

Figure 1 illustrates the four groups the keywords were organized, according to the main themes discussed on the papers.

According to Figure 1, Perceived Organizational Support was the keyword most cited of all the keywords and was linked to firm performance, turnover, knowledge management and human resource management.

Another keywords such as job satisfaction, commitment, leadership and social exchange theory were also cited in the initial sample.

3.1.1 Study inclusion criteria and coding

To be included in our final analysis, a study had to meet a number of criteria. First, it had to be an empirical work. Second, the study had to be implemented on healthcare sector and finally, it had to address about intellectual capital and/or POS theory.

Using these criteria, we excluded five unpublished works (i.e., dissertations or conference proceedings) and twenty seven theoretical studies. Rejecting these cases, we have analysed the remaining papers and found that thirty-nine of these empirical publications did not use the constructs we’ve searched. Our final sample was composed of three papers. The studies included in our final sample involved full-time working adults from healthcare sector (public, private and non-profit organizations).

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Mapping the literature

An analysis of the co-authorship by article is presented in Table 1. All the three papers had 2 or more co-authors.

Table 1: Summary of author count by article

Articles	Nº of Authors per publication
Co-worker trust as a social catalyst for constructive employee attitudes (2004)	3
Employment-based social capital, job stress, and employee burnout: A public child welfare employee (2010)	2
Influence of Social Exchange Relationships on Affective Commitment and Innovative Behaviour: Role of Perceived Organizational Support (2018)	4

Using Vosviewer software we're also able to identify the geographic location, the journals and their subject areas, the number of citations and the most frequently mentioned key words. Three tables summarize the empirical articles along these dimensions:

Table 2: Geographic location of final sample

Authors	Countries
Ferres, N.; Connel, J.; Travaglione, A. (2004)	Australia
Rodweel J.; Teo, S. (2008)	Australia
Nazir, S.; Qun, W.; Hui, L.; Shafi, A. (2018)	China

According to Table 2, the final sample is composed by two works from Australia and one publication from China.

Table 3: About Publications

Articles	Publications	Subject Area	Nº of citations
Co-worker trust as a social catalyst for constructive employee attitudes (2004)	Journal of Managerial Psychology	Business, Management and Accounting	88
The influence of strategic HRM and sector on perceived (2008)	The Intern. J. of Human Resource Management	Business, Management and Accounting	76
Influence of Social Exchange Relationships on Affective Commitment and Innovative Behaviour: Role of Perceived Organizational Support (2018)	Sustainability	Socio-economic, scientific and integrated approaches to sustainable development	0

Table 3 reports the journals and respective subject areas, as well the number of citations of each article. It is possible to see that most of works are connected to Business and Management scientific area. The number of citations presented refers to the number of times those papers were cited in the initial sample (n=71). The methodology of all these researches is descriptive and their instrument is the questionnaire.

4.2 Analysing the final sample

The data collection method and the analysis approach of the sample studied enabled the construction of Tables 4 and 5.

In the Table 5 are presented, the sample, the constructs analyzed as well the sources of measures applied by the researches.

Table 4: Type of measures that emerged from the literature

Publication	Sample	Constructs analysed	Sources
Co-worker trust as a social catalyst for constructive employee attitudes (Ferres et al. 2004)	299 professionals from a public healthcare institution	POS Trust Co-worker trust Intention to leave Affective commitment	Eisenberger et al (1986) Costa and MacGrae (1985) Ferres et al (2004) Camman et al (1979) Allen and Meyer (1990)
The influence of strategic HRM and sector on perceived (Rodwell & Teo 2008)	38 professionals for-profit and 32 professionals not-for-	Human capital Firm performance	Snell and Dean (1993) Delaney and Huselid (1996)

Publication	Sample	Constructs analysed	Sources
	profit Healthcare organizations	Strategic HR practices	Huselid (1995)
		Internal marketing	Tansuhaj, Randall & McCullough (1991)
		Organizational commitment	Solinger, Olffen & Roe (2008)
Influence of Social Exchange Relationships on Affective Commitment and Innovative Behavior: Role of Perceived Organizational Support (Nazir et al. 2018)	325 nurses	Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)	Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995)
		POS	Rhoades et al. (2001)
		Tie strength	Levin et al. (2004)
		Innovative organizational culture and employee IB	O'Reilly et al. (1991)
		Affective commitment	Allen et al. (1990)
		Innovative behavior	Scott et al. (1994)

The correlation between variables selected from the researches are presented in Tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3.

Table 5.1: Intercorrelations between variables

Publication	Constructs analysed	1	2	3	4
	1. Co-worker trust				
	2. POS	0.42**			
(Ferres et al. 2004)	3. Intention to leave	-0.37**	-0.48**		
	4. Affective commitment	0.38**	0.61**	-0.48**	
	5. Trust	0.38**	0.24**	-0.11	0.2**

Notes: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5.1 shows that POS has a negative correlation to Intention to leave and has a positive and moderate correlation to affective commitment and to co-worker trust.

Table 5.2: Intercorrelations between variables

Publication	Constructs analysed	1	2
	1. Strategic HRM		
(Rodwell & Teo 2008)	2. Firm Performance	0.31**	
	3. Human Capital Practices	0.40**	0.47***

Notes: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level

The second paper shows (Table 5.2) that Human Capital practices have a moderate and positive correlation to Firm performance.

Table 5.3: Intercorrelations between variables

Publication	Constructs analysed	1	2	3	4
	1. LMX				
	2. POS	0.342**			
(Nazir et al. 2018)	3. Organizational Culture	0.575**	0.405**		
	4. Affective commitment	0.425**	0.044**	0.417**	
	5. Innovative behaviour	0.398**	0.212*	0.324**	0.380**

Notes: * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5.3 shows that POS has a moderate and positive correlation to Organizational Culture, to Innovative Behaviour and to Affective Commitment, however the correlation found in this study is weaker than the one found in (Ferres et al. 2004). (Nazir et al. 2018) present Leader Member Exchange (LMX) as a construct also analysed and have found strong correlations between LMX and Organisational Culture, Affective Commitment and Innovative Behaviour, stronger than the ones found to POS, implying that in Healthcare Sector the vertical ties maybe are the ones that could motivate positive behaviours of workforce leading to better performances.

Based on Table 6 it is possible to find the main antecedents and outcomes obtained from this literature review about the use of social exchange theories with Intellectual Capital practices into Healthcare sector.

Table 6: Antecedents and Outcomes found from researches

Article	Antecedents	Constructs studied	Outcomes
(Ferres et al. 2004)	Co-worker trust (+)	POS	Intention to leave (-) Attachment to organization (+)
(Rodwell & Teo 2008)	Strategic HRM orientation (+) LMX (+)	Human Capital Practices	Firm Performance (+) Affective Commitment (+)
(Nazir et al. 2018)	Organizational Culture (+)	POS	Innovative Behaviour (+)

5. Discussion

During the study, we were able to select three studies, which we considered as the main ones, since, on the one hand, they were applied to the healthcare sector, and on the other hand, they analysed variables related to POS or to Intellectual Capital. Ferres et al. (2004) researched the importance of trust among 299 healthcare employees using POS, Rodwell and Teo (2008) examined a variety of management characteristics (employee commitment, customer demandingness, strategic HRM orientation and the adoption of capital-enhancing human resource practices and perceived overall performance) from 70 senior executives belonging to 50 Australian health organizations. Nazir et al. (2018) from a sample of 325 Chinese nurses and based on social exchange theory and perceived organizational support literature, revealed how POS serves as a mediating process between Leader Membership Exchange, tie strength, and innovative organizational culture.

The results provide empirical support to the importance of establishment of positive relationships at work. In this sense, if managers want to enhance better performances levels, they need to facilitate and engendering trust throughout peers creating a high POS, via positive work perceptions, where individuals positively attached to organization are more committed and more unlikely to leave the job. This kind of professionals, usually, present more innovative behaviours than the average, representing a valuable resource to organization.

6. Conclusion

Recognizing the importance of the health sector, through this work it was possible to understand a peremptory need of empirical studies concerning mechanisms that could, directly or indirectly, enhance the healthcare professional's performance.

It can be concluded that by strengthening the social relationships among the staffs, they will have more positive attitude toward their work.

Few studies have applied exchange theories such POS or LMX to explain behaviours in such workplace, but they have found good results and it is our belief that new studies must be carried out in order to solve this academic gap and in the near future sensitize top managers about the relevance of the establishment of positive relationships at work. The organization has to provide the staff with suitable instruments and communication channels in order to achieve this goal. It is a long way and requires a strong organization support to produce it effectively.

This literature review was a first step to a broader empirical investigation that we intend to conduct in the near future. Through this work it was possible to map the works that have studied these themes and highlight the relationships between the constructs, their antecedents and outcomes. All these outputs will serve as a basis for the construction of information gathering tools for new research work. In this sense, we think that we have contributed to the literature by examining the influence of theoretically relevant moderators on relationship between intellectual capital and POS.

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