

The Role of Self-Efficacy and Innovative Work Behaviour in Civil Servants' Work Performance: A Conceptual Paper

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Abstract

This study contributes to the literature on work performance of civil servants by examining the relationship between self-efficacy, work innovative behaviour and its impact on work performance. Social Cognitive Theory was used to as the underpinning theory and a set of hypotheses was formed to test the relationship between self-efficacy and work performance, with work innovative behaviour as a mediator. Research articles, reports and dissertations related to self-efficacy, innovative work behaviour, work performance were reviewed to develop the conceptual model. This study is important in presenting a better insight into how human factors affect work performance as only handful studies have examined the mediating role of innovative work behaviour on the relationship between self-efficacy and work performance within civil servant context.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy, Innovative Work Behaviour, Innovation, Work Performance, Civil Servant.

Introduction

Civil servants need to be competitive and reliable in delivering their services for the social and economic development of a country (Johari and Yahya, 2016). Various factors are noted to mould excellent and competitive civil servants who usually measured in the aspects of skills, knowledge, behaviour, and attitude (Borman, 2004; Borman and Motowidlo, 1997; Organ, 1997; Johari and Yahya, 2016). On the same note, Houston (2000) stated that motivation, leadership style, learner autonomy, and personality traits need to be aligned effectively with work performance for better achievement (Ciobanu and Androniceanu, 2015). Syamsuddin, Kadir and Alam (2020) have also agreed on the aspect of leadership, motivation, and competence as predictors for civil servants' performance. According to Self Cognitive Theory, people can be directed through inner strengths and the environment or by moulding themselves, which all lead to their own motivation, behaviour, and progress (Bandura, 1989).

As such, this theory is aligned with the concept of self-efficacy which will be a key motivator for better performance at the workplace.

In the same context, innovative behaviour among employees is also an essential aspect for an organisation to stay competitive (Agarwal, 2014), especially in the public sector. Civil servants become a vital asset to the sector and nation when they can generate solutions and ideas and implement them accordingly. Altaf and Atif (2011) expressed that certain skills such as innovativeness can be developed when peacefulness and happiness are internally attained. Work innovative behaviour can be elevated when employees internally motivated, which eventually lead a to better work performance (Afsar and Badir, 2017). Adil, Hamid and Waqas (2020) have further added that intrinsic motivation is more crucial than extrinsic motivation especially in boosting creativity and this showed the importance of embedding self-efficacy in civil servants. Moreover, Self Cognitive Theory has also stated that employees can organise and execute the desired act despite the environment and this act is coined under the concept of this theory (Bandura, 1997; Hamid, Rahid, and Hamid, 2020). Thus, when employees boost inner strengths toward work, better work attributes will be formed including innovative behaviour. Therefore, the existence of the relationship between self-efficacy and work innovative behaviour can be further explored in many areas.

Na-Nan and Sanamthong (2019) emphasized to develop high self-efficacy level among employees in order to high standard of performance. Besides, self-efficacy lead to self-confidence in the ability to execute certain tasks (Achyar, Nasir, and Musnadi, 2020) and it is important overcome obstacles during the innovation process. Hence, factors like self-efficacy and innovative work behaviour are needed to study civil servants in order to elevate work performance. Many studies have been conducted on the scope of work performance (Eliyana and Sridadi, 2020; Ahmed and Ramzan, 2013; Alessandri, Borgogni, Schaufeli, Caprara and Consiglio, 2015; Jalali and Heidari, 2015; Hamid and Mostafa, 2016; Cao, Guo, Vogel and Zhang, 2016; Moon, Hur and Hyun, 2017; Taba, 2018; Kuvaas, 2008), but there are still limited studies related to the work performance of civil servants.

Considering the amount of effort to improve the work performance of civil servants, many issues arisen from their performance have been highlighted. Table I summarises several findings from past studies related to work performance of civil servants.

Table I

Summary of Studies Related to Civil Servants' Work Performance

Researchers	Key Dimension
Yozgat, Yurtkoru and Bilginoğlu (2013)	Job stress and job performance among employees in public sector in Istanbul: examining the moderating role of emotional intelligence
Ciobanu and Androniceanu (2015)	Civil servants motivation and work performance in Romanian public institutions
Naim, Krasniqi and Ermira (2015)	Motivation factors impacting the civil servant performance in local public administration in Kosovo
Johari and Yahya (2016)	Job characteristics, work involvement, and job performance of public servants
Mustapa and Mahmood (2016)	Knowledge management and job performance in the public sector: the moderating role of organizational commitment
Habba, Modding, Bima and Bijang (2017)	The effect of leadership, organisational culture and work motivation on job satisfaction and job performance among civil servants in Maros District technical working unit
Sulaiman, Othman and Mahboob (2017)	The relationship between organizational culture with job performance among executive staff in public sector
Yuliantini, Lukertina and Kurniawan (2019)	The influence of physical environment, competence, verbal communication has influence on employee's performance
Syamsuddin et al. (2020)	The effect of leadership, work motivation and competence on performance of civil servants
Bayram and Zoubi (2020)	Servant leadership, public service motivation and employee performance among staff in the context of Jordanian civil servants.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development**Work Performance of Civil Servants**

As organisations are progressing for better profitability and productivity, performance is becoming the vital key marker to remain pertinent in the worldwide market. However, literatures on improving organisational performance through civil servants' performance are still insufficient (Asif and Rathore, 2021). As indicated by Campbell (1990), conduct or activities that are significant to the objectives of an organisation are defining the concept of work performance. Many scholars have referenced that work performance can be categorised into task performance and contextual performance in many research diaries. Referencing an article composed by Mustapa and Mahmood (2016), Borman and Motowidlo (1993) have characterised task performance as "the proficiency with which job incumbents perform activities that are formally recognised as part of their job, activities that are contributing to the organisation's technical core either directly by implementing a part of its technological process, or indirectly by providing it with needed materials or services" (Borman and Motowidlo, 1993, p.73). Then again, contextual performance is clarified as "discretionary behaviours that apply across all jobs are not necessarily role prescribed and that contribute to the social and psychological environment of the organisation" (Borman and Motowidlo, 1993, p.73). Both task performance and contextual performance are essential to attaining the organisation's desired goal (Black and Porter, 1991; Jahangir, Akbar and Haq, 2004; Johari and Yahya, 2016) especially at the public sectors.

Various issues related to performance of civil servants have been mentioned by many researchers worldwide. Striteska and Sein (2021) stated that fear of change among civil servants lead to ineffectiveness and lack of efficiency in the civil sectors. Ciobanu and Androniceanu (2015) have reported that several European countries are experiencing issues in retaining professionals from public sectors and also facing stiff competition with the private sectors. Yozgat et al. (2013) mentioned that deadlines and time factors are causing high stress level among civil servants. Siti Saraswati (2017) has also stated the demand for better performance and service delivery are elevating the pressure among civil servants. Yuliantini et al. (2019) have also identified on the issues of communication, career development, and work environment among civil servants in Jakarta. High suicide rate was reported among civil servants in China compared to other professions which is attributed to pressure (Kong, Yang and Zhang, 2020). In the same context, civil servants in Malaysia are also under pressure with the community demand for better performance and accountability. Their weakness have been highlighted by various sources (Hamdan and Norudin, 2010; Mustapa and Mahmood, 2016). Hence, these issues are affecting the performance of civil servants in Malaysia.

Human factors such as capability, drive of employees, and organisational factors including job characteristics and culture need to be evaluated accordingly to elevate performance level (Campbell, 1990; Williams, 2002; Johari and Yahya, 2016). Ciobanu and Androniceanu (2015) have also reiterated that civil servants are motivated by work environment and level of freedom or joy in executing the task. In conjunction, several aspects relating to organisational factors like organisational culture (Sulaiman et al., 2017; Habba et al., 2017), job characteristics (Johari and Yahya, 2016), and knowledge management (Mustapa and Mahmood, 2016) were studied by several scholars. Human factors such as job stress (Yozgat et al., 2013), motivation (Ciobanu and Androniceanu, 2015; Habba et al., 2017), and personality trait (Zahari, 2016) were also examined in relation to work performance of civil servants. For example, Sulaiman et al. (2017) studied the relationship between work performance of civil servants and organisational culture in Putrajaya, Malaysia. The study concluded that the job performance of civil servants is significant and positive with three aspects of organisational culture. On the other hand, study conducted by Habba et al. (2017) showed that organisational culture has a positive but non-significant impact on performance.

The Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Work Performance

Self-efficacy is defined as “people’s judgements of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986, p.391). Social Cognitive Theory explains one’s ability to organise and execute the desired behaviour, regardless of the environment (Bandura, 1997; Hamid et al., 2020). As such, this fundamental assumption of the Social Cognitive Theory shows the impact of self-efficacy on work performance. Self-efficacy is a crucial determinant of performance as individuals with a high level of self-efficacy will have a higher degree of tolerance to hurdles from the stress at the workplace (Cherian and Jacob, 2013; Keskin, 2020). Employees with high level of self-efficacy will be able to reduce their levels of stress and anxiety (Liu, Cho and Putra, 2017; Nair and Sivakumar, 2020) and perform at higher expectation level (Na-Nan and Sanamthong, 2019), which eventually lead to better work performance.

In the same note, self-efficacy impacted work performance and it is an ascending determinant to encourage employees for high work performance (Keskin, 2020). In contrast, Beck and Shmidt (2015) argued the non-significant relationship between self-efficacy and performance.

Similarly, Manasseh (2015) also stated that there is no direct relationship between self-efficacy and work performance based on the reviewed studies. Manasseh (2015) reiterated that self-efficacy may not directly connected to performance based on Social Cognitive Theory. Besides, inducing self-efficacy at the workplace will lead to stress (Lunenbourg, 2011) and overconfidence (Vancouver, Thompson, Tischner, and Putka, 2002; Tian, Wang, Zhang, and Wen, 2019)

Thus, self-efficacy may not be a strong factor of efficacy-performance relationship (Bandura, 1986; Bandura, 1990; Proios Fotiadou, Doganis, Batsiou, and Proios, 2020) and the condition on which self-efficacy affects work attitudes and behaviours is important (Hur, Moon and Lee, 2020). Furthermore, only a handful studies examined the direct impact of self-efficacy on the performance of employees although self-efficacy is identified as a crucial predictor of performance (Cherian and Jacob, 2013) and varies across different contexts (Hur et al., 2020).

Work Innovative Behaviour as a Mediator

Innovative work behaviour was explained by Janssen (2000, p.288) as “the intentional creation, introduction, and application of new ideas within a work role, group, or organisation to benefit role performance, the group, or the organisation”. This behaviour enhances employees performance at workplace (Suryani et al., 2019). Researchers have also agreed that innovative work behaviour has affected effectiveness and survival of organisations which are main factors for better performance (Oldham and Cummings, 1996; Scott and Bruce, 1994; Pradhan and Jena, 2019). In the same token, innovation has been proven to improve effectiveness and service delivery in the public sector administrations (Salge and Vera, 2012; Miao, Newman, Schwarz and Cooper, 2018), but only limited studies have been done on the predictors that instigate innovative behaviour in the public sector (Bysted and Hansen, 2015). Besides, Wen, Wu and Long (2021) reiterated that factors that boost worker’s innovative behaviour are still the aim of the theoretical and practical areas.

Self-efficacy behaved as a catalyst of innovative behaviour, similar to the behaviour in predicting creativity (Tierney and Farmer, 2011; Mielniczuk and Laguna, 2020). Self-efficacy is also known as a predictor of motivation to be creative and innovative (Bandura, 1977; Tran, Nguyen and Nguyen, 2018). Employees will show innovative behaviour when they know this act leads to positive results at the workplace (van Zyl, van Oort, Rispens and Olckers 2019). However, innovative actions will also lead to significant stress due to obstacles, effort, risks and uncertainty (Wojtczuk-Turek and Turek, 2015). Nonetheless, relatively limited attention has been directed towards understanding the relationship between self-efficacy and work performance with work innovative behaviour as a mediator, especially among the Malaysian civil servants.

Mielniczuk and Laguna (2020) also justified that innovative work behaviour can be rather challenging due to the presence of high failure risk. Thus, Hosseini and Haghighi Shirazi (2021) mentioned that engaging employees will stimulate innovative behaviour. As such, individuals who embrace higher self-efficacy are more likely to try challenging tasks compared to those with lower self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Mielniczuk and Laguna, 2020). Besides, Bandura (1999) stated that human mind react and displays creativity, and such act involves strategic behaviour based on the selected desires. Thus, innovative work behaviour is needed in each work execution, which subsequently contributes to one’s work performance. This convincingly provides justifications on the mediating role of innovative work behaviour with respect to the Social Cognitive Theory. With that, the Social Cognitive Theory was adapted as the underpinning theory to explore innovative work behaviour in the current study.

Besides, Ali and Buang (2016) stated work innovative behaviour is not strongly correlated to innovation compared to innovation climate and participative leadership in their study as civil servants need impactful internal booster to innovate. Mutonyi, Slatten and Lien (2020) have also studied innovative behaviour of public servants in Norway but in the aspects of empowering leadership, work group cohesiveness, individual learning orientation. Similarly, Carlucci, Mura and Schiuma (2020) have studied organisational climate, organisation's openness to innovation with work innovative behaviour on civil servants. However, minimal research connected spirituality as an influencer for civil servants' work innovative behaviour. In fact, Bos-Nehles, Renkema and Janssen (2017) have mentioned that research on work innovative behaviour has demonstrated inconsistent findings. Ali and Buang (2011) also revealed that research on work innovative behaviour are mostly limited to organisational, leader, and innovation process. Hence, exploring work innovative behaviour with performance and spirituality is crucial as it is still under-researched.

The Proposed Model

This paper proposed a conceptual framework to analyse the effect of self-efficacy on work performance (see Figure I). Although many studies have examined the link between self-efficacy and work performance, there are still inconsistencies in the findings and hypothesis was developed based on these studies. In the same context, the role of innovative work behaviour as a mediator in order to enhance the relationship between self-efficacy and work performance is under-researched. Social Cognitive Theory will be applied in order to conceptualise these relationships.

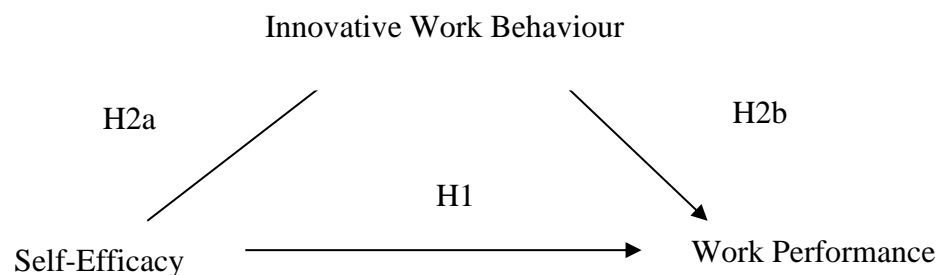


Figure I. Conceptual model with factors that influence work performance

Prepositions

Based on the above preceding discussions, the following prepositions will be addressed such as:

H1. There is a relationship between self-efficacy and work performance.

H2. Work innovative behaviour mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and work performance.

Conclusions

Self-efficacy and work innovative behavior can be used as a predictor to elevate work performance of civil servants and these findings provide a clearer picture on the internal needs of civil servants as a booster to cultivate a more competitive work force among them. When an individual is able to handle their task efficiently, the performance level can be

elevated especially in the government sectors. In the same context, self-efficacy will lead individual to organise and execute their task in the workplace. Thus, civil servants have better vision and goals in their career and contribute to better performance at the workplace. This internal booster will motivate civil servants to overcome hurdles in the workplace and perform their task in an efficient manner. Besides that, civil servants should develop an internal motivator through self-efficacy in order to mould innovative behaviour which enhances work performance. Apart from, human factor plays an important role in order to effectively progress in attaining success. This serves to be a wakeup call for practitioners in focusing human factors especially among civil servants. Not only that, work performances of civil servants still a mildly explored area by researchers. This capability and skills can be seen as an innovative behaviour for better personal enhancement among civil servants. Conclusively, self-efficacy influences the work performance of civil servants though innovative behaviour. The findings from this study are crucial as limited studies have investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and work performance with work innovative behaviour as a mediator.

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