UNDERSTANDING PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS COMPETENCY: LITERATURE SURVEY AND RESEARCH AGENDA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to understand the personal effectiveness competency exhibited by individuals and why it is so important for each individual to advance their career. The study basically discusses the Social Cognitive Theory and the Advanced Manufacturing Competency Model, 2010 (AMCM, 2010), to understand the concept of personal effectiveness competency. This competency framework is adopted from AMCM, 2010, and consists of six competencies: Interpersonal skills, Integrity, professionalism, initiative, dependability & reliability, and lifelong learning. The study provides three important futuristic research agendas: firstly, the competency framework should be empirically validated; secondly, the relationship between personal effectiveness competency and competency-related outcomes such as work performance and organizational performance should be examined; and thirdly, examining the applicability of the personal effectiveness competency framework to various research contexts, including non-manufacturing jobs, is crucial due to its fundamental role in enabling individuals to acquire new knowledge and develop both technical and non-technical competencies.

1. Introduction

Employees are compensated for their effectiveness, regardless of whether they serve as managers overseeing the performance of others or as individual contributors responsible solely for their own performance (Drucker, 1967). The advancement of the organization, whether it be a

business, government agency, or any other non-profit entity, is closely tied to the self-development of its employees (Drucker, 1967).

Prior studies conceptualized competency as core traits or personal attributes of individuals, encompassing abilities, knowledge, and skills that play a significant role in achieving effective and/or outstanding job performance (Boyatzis, 1982; Spencer & Spencer, 1993; McClelland, 1973). McClelland (1973) considers these competencies, which are actually personal characteristics rather than intelligence, as significant predictors of successful performance. Personal characteristics encompass mental, intellectual, cognitive, social, emotional, attitudinal, and physical attributes, all of which are essential for performing the job(Dubois, 1993; Lucia &Lepsinger, 1999). McClelland (1973) did not specifically use the term "personal effectiveness competency," but his research laid the groundwork for later discussions on individual effectiveness and competency-based management practices.

2. Review of literature

The rise of management literature centred on personal growth, efficiency, and effectiveness, exemplified in "The Effective Executive" (Drucker, 1967), and "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People"(Covey, 1989), probably played a significant role in spreading awareness about the concept of personal effectiveness competency. These influential publications underscore the significance of individual competencies, behaviors, and mindsets in attaining success across personal and professional realms.

According to (Drucker, 1967)"*effectiveness can be learned*". This encapsulates the idea that being effective in one's role, whether as an executive, manager, or individual contributor, is not an innate trait but rather a skill that can be acquired through deliberate effort and learning. In other words, it underscores the importance of intentional learning and development in achieving success and making a meaningful impact, both at the individual and organizational levels. Drucker (1967) suggested five steps by which an individual can enhance their effectiveness: Firstly, "*Procedure: recording where the time goes*" involves the analysis of an individual's time to effectively manage their time, avoid time-wasting activities, and delegate tasks when appropriate; Secondly, "*focus his vision on contribution*" entails directing one's attention and efforts towards making meaningful and valuable contributions to others, the organization, or society as a whole; Thirdly, "*Making strengths productive*" emphasizes an attitude of focusing on one's strengths and those of their organization through "learning by doing" and self-development through practice; Fourthly, "*First Things First*" shifts the focus from managing time as a resource to prioritizing tasks and actions based on their importance in achieving organizational and executive performance. It emphasizes the end product – the performance of the organization and the executive – rather than the resource itself (time), and cultivating character traits essential

for effective leadership. These include foresight, self-reliance, courage, dedication, determination, and serious purpose; and lastly, "*effective decision-making*" is concerned with responsible judgment.

Covey (1989) introduced the concept of the seven habits of effective people, categorizing the first three habits as pertaining to 'independence', aimed at fostering self-mastery, while the remaining four habits fall under the second category of 'interdependence', focusing on collaborative efforts with others. These habits encompass: firstly, "*Be Proactive*," which entails recognizing individuals' power to choose their responses to circumstances and taking initiative to shape their destiny; secondly, "*Begin with the End in Mind*," which encourages individuals to clarify their values, principles, and long-term goals, guiding them to align their actions with their deepest values and priorities by envisioning desired outcomes; thirdly, "*Put First Things First*," based on prioritization and time management, urging individuals to focus on important but not necessarily urgent activities, rather than simply reacting to immediate demands; fourthly, "*Think Win-Win*," promoting a mindset of mutual benefit and cooperation, prompting individuals to seek mutually beneficial solutions and cultivate relationships built on trust, respect, and collaboration; fifthly, "*Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood*," emphasizing effective communication as essential for strong relationships and conflict resolution, signifies the importance of empathetic listening and understanding others before seeking to be understood; sixthly, "*Synergize*," highlighting the power of collaboration and teamwork, where individuals value others' strengths and perspectives, creating synergy—the combined effect of working together greater than individual efforts; and finally, "*Sharpen the Saw*," emphasizing self-care and personal renewal, encouraging individuals to engage regularly in activities enhancing their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

3. Understanding personal effectiveness competencies

Personal effectiveness is primarily grounded in "social cognitive theory" (Bandura, 1989, 1991), which suggests that an individual's success, performance, and motivation hinge on their level of personal effectiveness. This concept revolves around an individual's assessment of their ability to apply their knowledge in a given situation. It is the confidence in one's capability to effectively execute a specific task (Bandura, 1989). It represents an individual's evaluation of their ability to handle the demands of a specific situation or to reach a goal. As a result, it does not necessarily reflect the actual possession of skills; rather, it mirrors the individual's perceptions of their capabilities, regardless of their skill set (Bandura, 1977, 1989, 1991). This assessment is shaped by the individual's comparison of their abilities with those of their reference group based on their distinct skills. This concept of personal effectiveness is closely tied to his theory of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their own ability to successfully accomplish tasks and achieve goals. Bandura (1977) proposes that self-efficacy beliefs play a

central role in determining how people think, feel, motivate themselves, and behave. In addition, people with high self-efficacy are more likely to approach challenges with confidence, persistence, and resilience. They tend to set challenging goals and are motivated to put in the effort required to attain them (Bandura, 1977). On the other hand, individuals with low self-efficacy may doubt their capabilities, avoid challenges, and give up easily in the face of obstacles. By fostering beliefs in one's own capabilities and addressing the sources of self-efficacy, individuals can enhance their motivation, performance, and overall well-being (Bandura, 1977).

The Advanced Manufacturing Competency Model, 2010 (AMCM, 2010) (U.S. DOL ETA, 2010) defines Personal Effectiveness Competencies as the personal traits and qualities crucial for success in various life roles. These competencies, classified as "tier-1," are considered indispensable across diverse roles, positions, occupations, and industries(Doggett & Jahan, 2016; U.S. DOL ETA, 2010). Commonly known as soft skills, they are typically developed through experiences in home, school, or the workplace (U.S. DOL ETA, 2010). These competencies encompass six key areas: "interpersonal skills", "integrity", "professionalism", "initiative", "dependability & reliability", and "lifelong learning"(Doggett & Jahan, 2016; U.S. DOL ETA, 2010). They are viewed as fundamental competencies, laying the groundwork for acquiring other skills and abilities. Moreover, we assert that this framework is applicable across different job sectors, including manufacturing, non-manufacturing, and service industries.

4. Conceptual Framework of Personal Effectiveness Competency

Personal effectiveness competencies are defined in various ways, including personal competencies(Schoonover, 2003), personal credibility (Brockbank& Ulrich, 2003), interpersonal skills (Chen et al., 2005; Ulrich et al., 2012), integrity (Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Schoonover, 2003), area of professional expertise (Bernthal et al., 2004), initiative (Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Ulrich et al., 2012), and workplace learning (Bernthal et al., 2004; Ulrich et al., 2012).

In the present study, the personal effectiveness competencies framework of Advanced Manufacturing Competency Model, 2010, (U.S. DOL ETA, 2010) is adopted. Thus this study focuses on six competencies: interpersonal skills, integrity, professionalism, initiative, dependability & reliability, and lifelong learning(Doggett & Jahan, 2016).

4.1. Interpersonal skills

Prior research studies interpersonal skills through various conceptual frameworks, including interpersonal understanding (Spencer & Spencer, 1993); interpersonal sensitivity (Lawson &Limbrick, 1996); interpersonal effectiveness (Wayne et al., 1997); interpersonal competencies

(Bernthal et al., 2004; Chen et al., 2005; McLagan &Suhadolnik, 1989); and effective relationship (Brockbank& Ulrich, 2003; Ulrich et al., 1995, 2012).

According to AMCM 2010, interpersonal skills is the ability to work effectively together with others(Doggett & Jahan, 2016; U.S. DOL ETA, 2010). It entail the capacity to collaborate proficiently and respectfully with others, acknowledging and valuing diverse opinions, perspectives, customs, contributions, and individual variances. It involves employing suitable strategies and resolutions to address conflicts and disparities constructively, ensuring the continuity of operations. Being adaptable and receptive when engaging with diverse individuals, as well as actively listening to and contemplating others' perspectives, are also key components(U.S. DOL ETA, 2010).

Interpersonal skills relies on effective communication, including verbal and non-verbal skills such as active listening, clear articulation, appropriate body language, and empathy. Empathy involves understanding others' emotions and perspectives, enabling compassionate responses. Conflict resolution is crucial, involving listening and finding respectful solutions. Leadership demands strong interpersonal skills, like delegating tasks and fostering a positive environment. Managing conflicts means identifying causes and finding mutually beneficial resolutions.

4.2. Integrity

As per the AMCM 2010, Integrity involves demonstrating acknowledged societal and professional conduct, treating others with respect, fairness, and honesty, upholding ethical standards relevant to your profession, taking ownership of meeting work objectives within agreed-upon timeframes, embracing accountability for one's decisions and actions, and consistently producing high-quality work (U.S. DOL ETA, 2010).

Positive psychology regards integrity as a character asset and a universally valued principle that has garnered respect across different cultures and time periods(Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Príhodová et al., 2021). Occasionally, alternative terms like honesty, credibility, reliability, conscientiousness, or persistence are used interchangeably with integrity (Preiss et al., 2014 as cited in Príhodová et al., 2021), whereas the dominant perspective views integrity as comprising conscientiousness, friendliness, and emotional stability, recognized as higher-order attributes (Ones et al., 1993; Príhodová et al., 2021; van der Linden et al., 2010).

Integrity is a fundamental ethical principle and trait characterized by honesty, sincerity, fairness, and adherence to moral and ethical principles. It involves consistency between one's actions, beliefs, and values, as well as a commitment to doing what is right, even when it's difficult or inconvenient. Individuals with integrity demonstrate reliability, trustworthiness, and accountability in their words and actions, consistently upholding principles of honesty,

transparency, and fairness (Príhodová et al., 2021). Organizations often prioritize the integrity competency when recruiting and developing employees, as it is closely linked to ethical conduct, trustworthiness, and organizational reputation. Employees with strong integrity contribute to a positive organizational culture, enhance teamwork and collaboration, and mitigate risks associated with unethical behavior. Therefore, fostering and reinforcing integrity as a competency within an organization is essential for long-term success and sustainability.

4.3. Professionalism

Professionalism competency primarily revolves around exhibiting self-control and composed behavior in the workplace, being open to constructive criticism, striving to learn from errors, maintaining a positive work attitude, adhering to workplace policies and regulations, and refraining from substance abuse (U.S. DOL ETA, 2010). It refers to a set of behaviors, attitudes, and attributes that reflect an individual's commitment to high standards of conduct, ethics, and excellence in their professional role. In other words, professional competence involves the consistent and thoughtful application of communication, expertise, technical abilities, clinical judgment, emotions, principles, and self-reflection in daily activities, ultimately benefiting both the individual and the community being served(Epstein &Hundert, 2002). Self-control competency involves the capacity to regulate one's actions suitably for a particular circumstance and to abstain from impulsive actions or instant gratification in favour of achieving superior outcomes in the future (Lee KN, 2000).

The professionalism competency is essential in various professions and industries, including business, healthcare, education, and public service. It contributes to organizational success by fostering a culture of trust, respect, and excellence, and it enhances individual career success by building credibility, reputation, and opportunities for advancement. Therefore, organizations often prioritize the development and evaluation of professionalism competency in their employees through training, mentoring, and performance management processes. In addition, professionals prioritize integrity, abiding by ethical standards and legal regulations while upholding confidentiality. They maintain a positive image by presenting themselves professionally, communicating effectively, and adapting to various contexts. Additionally, they demonstrate flexibility, embracing change, learning from challenges, and adjusting strategies to achieve success.

4.4. Initiative

As per the AMCM, 2010, initiative denotes a readiness to engage in work tasks, proactively seek out new responsibilities and challenges, approach tasks with vigor, determination, and diligence to achieve objectives, persevere in tasks until fulfilment, even in the face of interruptions,

obstacles, or setbacks, set and uphold personally ambitious yet attainable work objectives, and endeavour to surpass standards and expectations (U.S. DOL ETA, 2010).

Frese& Fay (2001) defined personal effectiveness in relation to personal initiative, identifying it as a proactive approach to work performance. Personal initiative involves individuals' proactive and self-driven actions aimed at overcoming obstacles to reach specific objectives. Moreover, personal initiative plays an active role in helping individuals effectively tackle diverse job-related difficulties, such as career transitions, job demands, stressors, or periods of unemployment (Frese& Fay, 2001). In other words, the initiative competency refers to an individual's ability to take proactive action and demonstrate a proactive approach to problem-solving, decision-making, and achieving goals without needing to be prompted or supervised. Individuals with a strong initiative competency exhibit a sense of ownership and responsibility for their work, actively seeking opportunities to improve processes, generate ideas, and drive positive change.

4.5. Dependability & reliability

According to the AMCM 2010 guidelines, Dependability and Reliability involve demonstrating responsible behaviours in the workplace, such as consistent, predictable, and reliable conduct, fulfilling obligations, completing assignments, and meeting deadlines, following written and verbal instructions, and adhering to organizational regulations, protocols, and guidelines(U.S. DOL ETA, 2010).

Previous studies regarded reliability and predictability as an important elements of trust, focusing on behavioural consistency (Butler, 1991; Whitener et al., 1998). Trust signifies the readiness to expose oneself to the actions of another party and to undertake risks(Johnson-George & Swap, 1982; Mayer et al., 1995). When an individual displays consistent behaviour over time and across different situations, others can better predict the individual's future actions, increasing their confidence in their ability to make such predictions (Whitener et al., 1998). Moreover, others become more willing to take risks in their work or in their relationship with the individual. Predictable and positive behaviour additionally reinforces the level of trust in the relationship (Graen&Uhl-Bien, 1995).

These qualities are highly valued in both personal and professional contexts because they contribute to trust, stability, and efficiency in relationships and organization. Dependable individuals exhibit consistent behaviour marked by reliability and stability. They unfailingly meet deadlines, honour commitments, and produce desired outcomes. By embodying reliability and stability, dependable individuals foster trust and confidence in others. They are regarded as

trustworthy partners, colleagues, or team members who reliably fulfil their promises. Drucker (1967) stated "self-reliance" as an important element of individual's effectiveness.

In other words, individuals who are reliable consistently generate work of superior quality and attain desired objectives. They exhibit a dedication to excellence and derive satisfaction from delivering dependable outcomes. These individuals meticulously attend to details to guarantee the accuracy and precision of their work, employing measures to reduce errors and uphold the reliability of their outputs. Even amid difficult or adverse situations, reliable individuals maintain their performance and effectiveness, showcasing resilience and adaptability when confronted with challenges or setbacks. They place a premium on punctuality and timeliness in their work, meeting deadlines, adhering to schedules, and ensuring the prompt delivery of their contributions.

4.6. Lifelong Learning

According to AMCM, 2010 Lifelong learning encompasses a readiness to acquire and utilize fresh knowledge and skills, including displaying enthusiasm for ongoing personal and professional growth, regarding unexpected situations as chances to acquire new methods, actively seeking feedback to refine and enhance performance, expanding expertise through activities like job shadowing and pursuing further education, applying newly acquired knowledge and skills to enhance job performance and refine work methodologies, assuming responsibility for personal career advancement by identifying individual interests and potential career trajectories, actively participating in professional associations, staying informed about industry advancements through technical publications, and upholding certifications and continuing education requirements (U.S. DOL ETA, 2010).

In other words, lifelong learning involves engaging in activities initiated by oneself and acquiring skills for seeking knowledge, driven by sustained motivation to learn and the capacity to identify one's own learning requirements (Hojat et al., 2003). It is a continuous and self-directed process that extends beyond formal education and encompasses various forms of learning, including formal education, informal learning experiences, self-study, and professional development activities. It emphasizes that knowledge acquisition extends beyond formal education and throughout adulthood. Learners drive their own development by actively seeking growth opportunities and pursuing interests. Various methods, including traditional classrooms and online platforms, facilitate this ongoing process. Lifelong learning enhances personal growth, critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving, ensuring individuals remain competitive in evolving job markets. It also boosts mental well-being, cognitive function, and overall life satisfaction, fostering a sense of purpose and engagement. Therefore, lifelong learning has been acknowledged as a marker of professionalism, competence, and an

indispensable element of ongoing professional development(Duffy &Holmboe, 2006; Murdoch-Eaton & Whittle, 2012).

5. Conclusion

Present study discusses the concept of personal effectiveness and its competency framework competencies on the basis of the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989) and the Advanced Manufacturing Competency Model, 2010(U.S. DOL ETA, 2010).Drawing from the insights gleaned from the studies mentioned earlier, Personal effectiveness involves the process of developing oneself, whether by enhancing individual capacities or contributing to the development of the organization then one can find a better roles and become more effective in one's current roles. Personal effectiveness primarily revolves around an individual's personal attributes. What is the individual known for? When considering an individual's personal qualities, three key aspects come into play: Firstly, there is an ability to take initiative; secondly, there is a level of self-control or self-discipline the individual possesses; and finally, it involves assessing the individual's personal growth and improvements. Personal effectiveness competency relates more to how efficiently and productively an individual applies their skills, knowledge, and abilities to achieve their goals. It involves not just having the necessary skills but also knowing how to use them effectively to accomplish tasks, solve problems, and achieve objectives. One can be highly competent in various areas but may not necessarily be effective in applying those skills to achieve their goals. Therefore, personal effectiveness is about maximizing the impact of one's personal competencies in real-world situations.

On the basis of above concepts, personal effectiveness competencies may be defined as "the innate qualities within an individual that drive them to pursue self-improvement and integrate it into their conduct and demeanor".

6. Limitation and Future Research Agenda

This study aims to comprehend the concept of personal effectiveness competencies and its framework. However, it does not empirically validate this framework. The study provides three important research agenda: firstly, future researches should focus on empirically validating these competency frameworks; secondly, the relationship between personal effectiveness competency and competency-related outcomes such as work performance and organizational performance should be examined; and thirdly, future researches should focus on investigating the applicability of this framework to other professionals and non-manufacturing roles. According to AMCM, 2010 (U.S. DOL ETA, 2010), personal effectiveness competency serves as the tier-1 foundational competency. It is clear that these competencies form the basic requirement for acquiring other functional, industrial, and occupational competencies. Therefore, we assume that

the personal effectiveness competency framework applies not only to manufacturing employees but also to individuals in various professions including non-manufacturing jobs.

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