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FACTORS INFLUENCING INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOR AND ITS IMPACT ON  
INDIVIDUAL WORK PERFORMANCE OF BUSINESS EXECUTIVES

Nu Nu Lwin<sup>1</sup>

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to examine the influencing factors on innovative work behavior and its impacts on work performance of Myanmar business executives. The results of study highlight the importance of job-related factors, organizational factors, and individual factors for developing and enhancing innovative work behavior in the organization. Among them, job-related factors have the largest impact on innovative work behavior, followed by organizational factors, and individual factors. In addition, the results indicate that innovative work behavior of organization member is a prerequisite for improvement of individual work performance through their job-related knowledge, working efficiency and work quality. Thus, improving organizational competency through developing and enhancing innovative behavior of individual members can be used as the means to strengthen organizational competitiveness in intensely competing business environment.

**Keywords:** Innovative work behavior, individual work performance, task performance, individual factor, organizational fact, job factor

I. INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic environment characterized with rapidly changing technologies, shortening product lifecycles, shifting customer demands, and fierce competition, the means to sustain the competitive advantage has become the most important agenda for business organizations today. Under such condition, sustaining competitive advantages of a business critically depends upon the continuous improvement of organizational performance through innovation capability of organization members.

**Rationale of the Study**

*Under the context of highly competitive environment, highly performing organization members are critical assets to the organization to develop and sustain their competitive advantages, highly performing individuals are critical and organizations are paying attention to develop and implement the strategies and practices to improve the job performance of every individual in the organization. Individual work performance (IWP) is regarded as individuals' actions and behaviors that contribute to achieving organizational goals (Rotundo & Sackett 2002). Several studies supposed the antecedents of IWP including leadership, analytical skills, interpersonal skills, self-development, creativity and innovation, organizational expertise, and among others.*

Wynen et al. (2014) asserted that high performance can be achieved through innovation.

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Demircioglu and Audretsch (2017) proved that the performance of organization members can be improved through creating organizational environment for enhancing innovative work behavior of individual organization members. Thus, it can be supposed that innovative work behavior is an important determinant of individual performance of organizational members.

Although organizational performance can be regarded as the outcome of individual innovativeness and organizational innovation, organizational innovation is, in turn, the collective result of the innovativeness of individual organization members. Therefore, this study focuses on the innovative behavior of individuals at the workplace as a conceptualization of individual innovation.

Innovative work behavior (IWB) is considered as the behavior of an individual that is intended to generate, promote, and apply novel ideas at the workplace (Janssen, de Vliert, & West, 2004). Moreover, in order to gain an understanding of how to enhance innovativeness of individual organization members, it is necessary to investigate what stimulates innovative behavior. Hence, this paper aims to examine the determinants of innovative work behavior and its impacts on individual work performance of organization members through empirical study on Myanmar business executives.

### **Objectives of the Study**

To achieve the aims of this paper, the following objectives are specified as the framework of analysis.

- (1) To identify the influencing factors on *innovative work behavior*; and
- (2) To examine the impact of *innovative work behavior* on individual work performance of Myanmar business executives.

In this study business executive is defined as the executive level organization member who is responsible for management of an organization, a functional area or an operation and exercises wide latitude in decision making. Since executive level organization members have the extent of discretionary authority to utilize the innovative idea and proactive innovative work behavior at their work, this paper focus on innovative work behavior of Myanmar business executives. This study is expected to shed more light on the ways to create and promote innovative behaviors in the organization and how to maximize the effects of innovative behavior on individual work performance and eventually aid organizations in achieving competitive advantages.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In today business world, the survival and growth of a company is determined by the innovation capability of the firm and the extent of innovativeness, in turn, is linked to the innovative behavior of organization members.

## **Innovative Work Behavior**

Innovative work behavior (IWB) is recognized as a voluntary willingness by employees to perform on-the-job innovation and it leads to increase individual job performance and thereby, ensure organizational effectiveness (Dorenbosch et al., 2005; Janssen, et al., 2004). Thus, IWB can be defined as individual's behavior of intentional generation, promotion and realization of new ideas at the workplace (West & Farr, 1990; Janssen et al., 2004). Scholars identified two main components of IWB: employee creativity, i.e., the generation of new and useful ideas and the implementation of the created ideas (Amabile, 1988; Anderson, de Dreu, & Nijstad 2004; Axtell, Holman, Unsworth, & Wall, 2000). IWB can be within the range from incremental improvements to the development of radically new ideas that affect the performance of the organization.

IWB is a multidimensional construct for which various scholars developed several dimensions. Scott & Bruce (1994) proposed three dimensions of IWB: idea generation, idea championing, and idea application. Idea generation refers to searching and recognizing new ideas for solving existing problems or realizing an opportunity. Idea championing aims to promote new ideas to get the support and collaboration. Idea application means making the ideas to reality through developing, testing, adapting, and commercialization. Krause (2004) and Dorenbosch, et al., (2005) combined them into two-dimension as idea generation and idea implementation.

## **Determinants of Innovative Work Behavior**

Several researchers examined and explored the determinants of IWB. The widely used measures include individual factors, organization factors, and job-related factors, among others (Kimberly & Evanisko, 1981; Amabile, 1988; Hammond, Neff, Farr, Schwall, & Zhao, 2011).

### **(a) Individual Factors**

Empirical investigations of IWB were based on the premise that individuals vary with regard to their potential to creativity and innovativeness. A number of influencing individual factors have been found including personal characteristics, such as creativity, adaptability, and openness, demographic variables such as education and job tenure, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy (Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Zhou & Oldham, 2001, McCrae, 1987; George & Zhou, 2002; Taggar, 2002; Axtell et al., 2000; Carmeli & Schaubroeck, 2007). Based on the results of empirical studies and considering the context of business environment in Myanmar, this study assumes that four individual variables: creative personality, openness, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy would be examined as the antecedents of IWB.

### **(b) Organizational Factors**

A number of researches focused on the influencing organization factors on innovative work behavior that generally consists of structures, cultures, and contextual factors of

organization. Their findings include organizational climate, supporting resources, managerial skill, leadership behavior, supervisor support, leader-member exchange, and formal and informal communication channels (Amabile, 1988; Tomatzky & Fleischer, 1990; Scott & Bruce, 1994; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Axtell et al., 2000). This study proposes three organizational variables i.e. organizational climate, organizational resources, and the quality of leader-member exchange (LMX) as the antecedents of IWB.

### **(c) Job Factors**

Several studies approved that apart from individual and organizational factors, job-related factors also have the significant impact on innovative work behavior. These studies identified the factors such as job complexity, autonomy, time pressure, creativity requirements, and role obligations (Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Krause, 2004; Axtell et al., 2000; Carmeli & Schaubroeck, 2007) as the determining job-related factors on IWB. Based on the results of previous studies, this paper applies three job-related variables, namely job autonomy, job complexity, and role obligations to examine their impact on IWB.

### **Individual Work Performance**

Individual work performance (IWP) is considered as the most important determinant of organizational performance. Individual work performance is defined as the behaviors or actions of individual organization member that are relevant to the goals of the organization (Campbell, 1990). IWP focuses on behaviors or actions, rather than the results of these actions. The notion is that behaviors should be under the control of the individual, thus it should exclude the results that are subjected to the environmental factors. (Koopmans, et al., 2014).

IWP is considered as a multidimensional construct. Murphy (1989) identified four dimensions of work performance: 1) task behaviors, 2) interpersonal behaviors, 3) downtime behaviors, and 4) destructive/ hazardous behaviors. Borman and Motowidlo (1993) supposed two comprehensive dimensions as task performance and contextual performance. Task performance refers to the behaviors that directly or indirectly contribute to the organization's technical core whereas contextual performance indicates the behaviors that support the organizational, social and psychological environment in which the technical core must function (Borman and Motowidlo, 1993).

Viswesvaran & Ones (2000) and Rotundo & Sackett (2002) identified three broad dimensions of IWP: task performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and counterproductive work behavior. Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is originally defined as individual behavior contributed to sustain and improve the social and psychological situation at work supporting to task performance (Organ, 1988). However, LePine, Erez, Johnson (2002) and others pointed out that the concept of OCB is greatly overlap with the definition of contextual performance of Borman and Motowidlo (1993). Counterproductive work behavior refers to the behavior that harms the well-being of the organization (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002).

Other dimensions are also found in literature such as proactive, creative, and adaptive performance.

### **Previous Studies on Innovative Work Behavior and Individual Work Performance**

Several researches constructed IWB as multi-dimensional measures. Janssen (2000) developed three dimensions that include idea generation, idea promotion and idea implementation. Recent studies have examined IWB from four interrelated sets of behavioral activities namely problem recognition, idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization, could enhance the employees' ability to innovate (de Jong and Hartog, 2010). In fact, the first two activities can be recognized as creativity-orientated work behaviour while the last two activities can be considered as the implementation-oriented work behaviour. In this study, the dimensions of IWB are generalized as idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization.

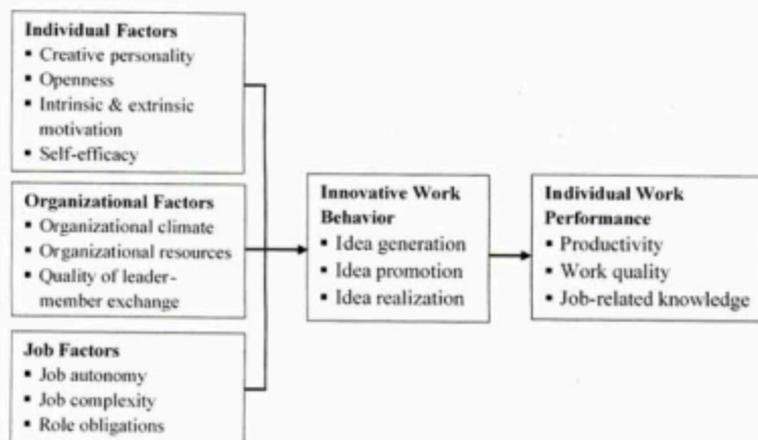
Janssen et al., (2004) stated that innovative work behavior reflects the individual's ability to adapt effectively to the job by modifying themselves or the work environment through innovation. They suggested that IWB helps employees adapt to the job effectively, thus leading to the enhancement of their task performance. Hammer and Stanton (1999) and Benner and Tushman (2003) also proved the direct effect of IWB on efficiency and effectiveness of the employees. In addition, the study of Dörner (2012) highlighted that IWB is an ability factor that enhances employees' task performance.

Task performance indicates the individual proficiency with which he or she performs the core substantive or technical tasks central to his or her job (Campbell, 1990). The task performance is a multidimensional construct for which various scholars developed several dimensions. Campbell (1990) supposed two dimensions of task performance: job-specific task proficiency (core job tasks) and non-job-specific task proficiency (tasks not specific to a given job, but expected of all employees). Viswesvaran & Ones (2000) developed three dimensions of task performance: productivity, quality and job knowledge. In the study of Renn and Fedor (2001), they measured the task performance with work quantity and quality. In this paper, IWP is uniquely measured with task performance with three dimensions – productivity, work quality and job knowledge with the assumption that task performance can be largely and directly enhanced with the innovative work behavior.

### **Conceptual Framework**

To reach the research objectives, based on the reviews of several literatures including previous studies, this study develops a holistic framework, incorporating innovative work behavior and its antecedents and individual work performance of business executives (Figure-1). The model illustrates the influence of individual factors, organizational factors, and job factors on innovative work behavior and its effect on tasks performance of individual organizational members.

Figure-1 Conceptual Framework of the Study



Source: Adapted from previous studies

### III. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

#### Methodology and Data

In this study, the participants of Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) programme are specified as the study unit due to the strong reasons that EMBA Programme of Yangon University of Economics is the only one recognized Executive level MBA Programme in Myanmar and the participants are unquestionably working at the executive level in business organizations.\* In 2019-20 academic year, there are 180 participants registered in EMBA Programme (17<sup>th</sup> Batch and 18<sup>th</sup> Batch of EMBA) and all participants are included in this survey. The questionnaire is prepared with Google-Form and distributed through the online platform. Focus group discussion with key business executives has been conducted to explore the innovative work behavior and individual work performance in their organizations through Zoom application during June, 2020.

The questionnaire for IWB is measured with 10-item scale adapted from de Jong & Den Hartog (2010) covering idea generation, promotion and realization stage. The questionnaire for IWP is designed with 10-item scale adopted from Koopmans, et al. (2014) covering productivity,

\* The requirements for attending Executive MBA Programme are specified as the graduated person who is not younger than 30 years old and minimum 8-year working experience at the executive level.

work quality and job-related knowledge. Both questionnaire for IWB and IWP are designed as self-administered questionnaire with a 5-point Never-Always response choice (never, rarely, sometimes, often & always). For the antecedents of IWB, the questionnaires for individual factors, organization factors, and tasks factors are developed based on the Meta-Analysis of Hammond, Neff, Farr, Schwall, & Zhao (2011). Individual factors are measured with creative personality, openness, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy while organizational factors are measured with organizational climate, organizational resources, and the quality of leader-member exchange. Task factors includes job autonomy, job complexity, and role obligations. This part of questionnaire is designed as self-administered questionnaire with 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

### Data Analysis

The analysis is performed by using IBM SPSS Statistics 22.0. The reliability of the variables is examined with Cronbach's  $\alpha$ . Simple linear regression and multiple liner regression analyses are conducted to achieve the research objectives.

### Empirical Results

Out of 172 questionnaires fully filled in Google Form, 168 valid questionnaires are used for the analysis. To highlight their role as the business executive, the profile and work role of respondents in their respective organizations are surveyed and presented in Appendix-A.

As presented in Table-1, the variables measuring of the antecedents of IWB, IWB, and IWP can be considered reliable as the value of Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is greater than 0.70 criterion. According to the mean values, it can be concluded that the respondents have frequently behaved and/or involved in innovative behavior at the work and they have habitually behaved for the improvement of their task performance. Although individual factors are relatively weak, organizational environment and job-related situation have created the atmosphere to spur innovative behavior at work.

**Table-1: Reliability Test & Descriptive Statistics**

Variables	Mean	Std. Div.	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Antecedents of IWB:			
▪ Individual Factors	3.66	.64	.760
▪ Organizational Factors	3.91	.63	.830
▪ Job Factors	3.83	.67	.753
Innovative Work Behavior	3.66	.71	.794
Individual Work Performance	3.87	.48	.770

Source: Survey Data (June, 2020)

To determine the influencing factors on innovative work behavior (IWB), the mean value of IWB is regressed with the mean values of individual factors, organizational factors, and job

factors. To identify the effect of IWB on individual work performance (IWP), the mean value of IWP is regressed with the mean value of IWB. The results are presented in Table-2.

**Table-2: The Influencing Factors on Innovative Work Behavior & Its Impacts on Individual Work Performance**

	Innovative Work Behavior				Individual Work Performance		
	B	SE	$\beta$	VIF	B	SE	$\beta$
Individual Factor	.186*	.102	.169	2.125			
Organizational	.183**	.077	.162	1.143			
Job Factor	.394***	.097	.370	2.064			
Innovative Work Behavior					.322***	.047	.473
R <sup>2</sup>	.336				.224		
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	.324				.219		
F-Statistics	27.705***				47.829**		

Source: Survey Data (June, 2020)

Note: \*\*\* Significant at 1% level, \*\* Significant at 5% level, \* Significant at 10% level

Since the value of adjusted R-squares are more than 30 percent and 20 percent respectively, both regression models can moderately explain about the variation of dependent variables.<sup>1</sup> The significant values of F-Statistics at 1 percent level indicate the valid of the models.

The results highlight that innovative behavior at the work is mainly related with the nature of the job while organizational environment and individual factors are also necessary for developing and enhancing innovative behavior of the organization members. The results also prove that their behavior of generating, promoting, and developing new idea has the impact on their work performance through improvement in productivity, work quality and job-related knowledge.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This study mainly intends to identify the influencing factors on innovative work behavior and to examine whether it, in turn, affect individual work performance through empirical study on Myanmar business executives.

#### Summary of Findings

The mean scores of descriptive analyses demonstrate that executives habitually behave and/or involve in generating new ideas, promoting those ideas to get the support in the work, and implementing those ideas to really work out. Moreover, the results also imply that they

<sup>1</sup> In social science predicting human behavior, according to Gary (1986), the low R-square value does not imply that the model is not fit and conclusions can be done based on the significance of coefficient regardless of R-square value.

habitually apply their proficiency in performing their central job tasks. The results of regression analysis indicate that job-related factors including job autonomy, job complexity, and the obligations of a job role and position are major determinants of innovative work behavior of business executives. Organizational factors like organizational climate, availability of resources, and leader-member relationship also influence on innovative work behavior. To the lesser extent, individual characteristics such as creative personality, openness, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and self-efficacy of respective person also affect the innovative behavior of organization members. The results of this study also demonstrate that three consecutive steps of IWB: idea generation, promoting, and application at work have resulted in improving individual performance of business executives through their proficiency and capability in core task activities.

### **Implications**

The findings of this studies contribute to the literature related to innovative work behavior and individual work performance of organization members. This study offers the better understanding on antecedents of IWB and provides an empirical evidence for the influence of IWB on individual work performance of organization members, more specifically at the executive level.

Moreover, the results of this study provide an important implication for the business. It implies that when organization designs the job appropriately and creates the work environment for supporting creativity and innovation, even the person who is individually weak in innovative capability can be stimulated to change their mindset and to improve their behavior in such conducive environment. Thus, innovative work behavior of every individuals can be spurred in the organization. This innovative behavior can enhance the competence and capability of organization members, that, in turn, effectively contribute to the advancement of their work performance, and eventually improvement in organizational performance. Therefore, augmenting organizational competency through developing and enhancing innovative behavior of individual members is the means to strengthen organizational competitiveness in intensely competing business environment.

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**APPENDIX – A**

**Profile and Work Role of Respondents**

Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender: Male	94	55.95
	Female	74	44.05
2	Age: 31 – 40 years	114	67.86
	41 – 50 years	47	27.98
	50 – 60 years	6	3.57
	Older than 60 years	1	0.60
3	Education: Bachelor's Degree	92	54.76
	Master's Degree	71	42.26
	Doctorate	4	2.38
	Post-Graduate Diploma	1	0.60
4	Job Tenure: Less than 10 year	31	18.45
	10 to 14 years	63	37.50
	15 to 19 years	53	31.55
	More than 20 years	21	12.50
5	Position: Team Member	10	5.95
	First Line Manager	19	11.31
	Functional Manager	45	26.79
	Head of Department	46	27.38
	Senior Executive/ Director	37	22.02
	CEO/ MD	11	6.55
6	Size of Organization (No. of Employees)		
	Less than 25	39	23.21
	25 - 49	30	17.86
	50 - 74	17	10.12
	75 - 99	4	2.38
100 & above	78	46.43	

Source: Survey Data (June, 2020)

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