An Investigation on The Effects of HRM Drivers, Organizational Citizenship and Innovative Work Behaviors, and Job Satisfaction Toward Systems-Level InnovationOutcomes: A Case of The Thai Civil Service Commission

John Thomas Watson

E-mail: jwatsonthailand@gmail.com

Master of Business Administration Programme in Entrepreneurial Management

(International Programme)

Advisor Tan Chai Ching, Ph.D.

E-mail: drcctan@yahoo.com

School of Management, Mae Fah Luang University

Abstract

Thailand's vast Civil Service Commission (CSC) is tasked with achieving innovative performance results for the benefit of the general public it serves. This study investigates and analyzes how innovation outcomes, which civil servants are meant to achieve at the employee, departmental, and organizational levels, are influenced by Human Resource Management drivers, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, innovative work behaviors, and job satisfaction. Research into the HRM practices of the CSC is generally not made available to the public, but in this study, civil servants from six government ministries participated with permission from relevant authorities. Civil servants from Chiang Rai Province, Thailand, The study finds that for workplace innovation at the organizational level to take effect, innovation at the employee and departmental levels are prerequisite. Employee-level innovation outcomes and job satisfaction feature as the most statistically significant forces for achieving HR innovation outcomes at all levels.

Keywords: Thai Civil Service Commission/HRM/Organizational Citizenship Behavior/ Innovative Work Behaviors/Job Satisfaction; Innovation.

Introduction

Research on HRM practices of Thailand's public service sector by outsiders is currently scarce. Ongoing research is conducted within ministries but findings are rarely released publicly. At the core of civil servants' self-identity – indeed confirmed by an oath which is sworn on a yearly basis – is a strong sense of solemn patriotic and moral duty, which few expect outsiders to entirely or genuinely comprehend. However, the general public has a right to know the extent to which public servants are achieving stated goals with regard to employee behavior, organizational management, and innovation. At the pinnacle of Thailand's vast public service sector sits the Civil Service Commission (CSC), overseen by the Office of Civil Service Commission (OCSC), and employs approximately 1,085,229 (as of 2015) government officials representing nineteen ministries (Office of Civil Service Commission 2015). OCSC is the primary institution for planning and achieving HRM goals and the mouthpiece for informing the public of the extent to which it achieves stated goals.

Fulfilling the many roles and duties of the CSC in Thai society is contingent upon employing the most qualified, motivated, dedicated, and loyal employees possible. Recruitment of civil servants in Thailand is unique in that all those who serve are deemed to be servants to the King and, as such, are expected to serve the Thai people and nation as a whole (Office of the Civil Service Commission 1998). Compared to civil service recruitments in neighboring countries, Thailand stands out because of its principle of fairness, equity, transparency and standardization. For innovation to be achieved in the CSC, the concept of good governance must be enhanced and followed to the letter, as well as rule of law, participation, integrity, transparency, accountability and value for money (Office of the Civil Service Commission 1998), the crucial reason being to achieve innovation in improved service delivery to all citizens. Government policy on the CSC and the ministries its employees serve changes frequently, but an oft-stated goal is that achieving innovation is the duty of all civil servants. Individual ministries are directed to promote innovation at organizational levels, although the extent to which individuals,

work groups, or offices are directed or permitted to innovate is not publicly specified by OCSC.

When examining HRM practices of the CSC, the types of drivers considered effective in producing innovative work behaviors are not well-informed. Behaviors that are public-spirited, adaptive, and meant to improve efficiency have not been widely researched. Additionally, other voluntary behaviors in civil service work that are empathic and altruistic are not well-informed, for instance organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), which has been shown to effectively help organizations face up to the constantly evolving changes of the business environment (Podsakoff, Ahearne & MacKenzie 1997). Based on this research problem background, the purpose of this research is four-fold:

- First, as innovative work behavior is generally considered important to improve organizational performance (Afsar, Badir & Khan 2015), but also considered risky from the employee and organizational perspectives (Anderson, De Dreu & Nijstad 2004), this research aims to determine which HRM drivers most significantly influence higher levels of innovative work behaviors.

- Second, as discussed in (Podsakoff et al. 2000), Organizational Citizenship Behavior – that which exhibits behaviors beyond the job requirements – may also be related with 'innovative and spontaneous behaviors'. However, precisely how the combined roles of OCB and innovative work behaviors factor into innovation outcomes is relatively uninformed. Hence, this research aims to determine key HRM drivers that statistically explain the variance of OCB.

- Third, by surmising that behaviors are obvious at the positive affective state of job satisfaction, this research aims to study statistically significant HRM drivers which predict job satisfaction.

- Based on the first three objectives, this research aims to study how OCB and work innovative behaviors, together with job satisfaction, can statistically explain variance of innovation outcomes, separated into individual, work group/departmental and organizational levels, as well as identify interrelationships of various levels of innovation outcomes.

Research Method

Survey-based research centralizes on use of a questionnaire instrument (Bonds-Raacke & Raacke 2012) and is employed in this research to obtain information regarding behaviors, attitudes, opinions and perceptions of employees at various CSC ministries. The questionnaire is completely closed-ended in nature, with responses following a five Likert scale, and is designed by following validity and reliability guidelines, such as ensuring the universal purpose and meaning of the construct are dutifully followed. While reliability criteria ensure consistency of measures to produce results on different occasions, validity dictates accuracy of measurement (Bonds-Raacke & Raacke 2012). The generalizability aspect – the ability to apply observable conclusions to populations outside the sample – must be cautiously taken. On the basis of voluntary and ethical protocol-compliance, 123 respondents submitted valid questionnaires, although more than 300 questionnaires were provided to potential respondents. Consequently, to ensure that sampling size is adequate for research purposes, the effect size, as shown in Table 1, is taken into consideration at the post-data collection stage. The 123-sample size is shown to be statistically adequate as result of its very high effect size, with the R-squared of key dependent constructs, such as OCB, job satisfaction, innovative work behavior (innovation-driven engagement), employee innovation outcomes, and workplace innovation outcomes (at individual, departmental and organizational levels) are statistically high at, respectively, 43.6%, 45.9%, 47.6%, 55.6%, 41.2%, and 81.4%. The size adequacy guideline is given in Cohen (1992).

Research Design

In this research, a six step-framework as suggested by Privitera (Privitera 2014) is followed:

- A period of preliminary observation and discussion of innovation-related behaviors, attitudes and performance outcomes is conducted at various ministries.

- Based on the preliminary observation, the research problem area is determined and research objectives are tentatively established.

- A thorough literature review is conducted.

- Survey research based on a conformational strategy (Privitera 2014) is used, which is a method of testing a theory or hypothesis in which "a positive result confirms the predictions made by that theory or hypothesis" (p. 44). The survey is conducted following strict ethical directives.

- Statistical analysis is conducted, in which the primary tools used are exploratory factor analysis, correlations analysis and multiple regression. These tools are aimed to explore and confirm a theoretical structure for the variables and constructs studied. The R-squared, which explains the variance of the dependent variable (i.e., innovation outcomes caused by independent variables or predictors), signifies the effect size and the strength of relationships between variables. The latter is demonstrated, for instance, in the correlation coefficient, r = variances shared by X and Y variables (known as the covariance) divided by the total variance measured by taking the variance of X and variance of Y (Tan 2015).

- Results and discussion is provided. As the survey approach is non-experimental in nature (Tan 2015), it is implied that the researcher is not capable of manipulating either the independent or dependent variables and makes no effort to manipulate the control variables. Consequently, there is a limitation of the research finding in that it can only conclude the degree of variance explained, and no causality statement can be confidently made. For the T-Test and ANOVA test, the test statistics indicating F=variability between groups/variability attributed to error for each main effect test and interaction, is identified. These statistics measure the variance of differences between demographic groups divided by the variance of differences attributed to error or individual differences, or known as 'within-group' variance.

Questionnaire Design

Questionnaire items were designed with language to avoid leading questions, questions loaded with social desirability, double-barred questions, long questions, negations, irrelevant questions, poorly worded response options, challenging vocabulary, and/or words and terms that may be misinterpreted (Mitchell & Jolley 2007). To accomplish this goal, pilot-testing the questionnaire with numerous subject experts (CSC employees from various Ministries) was implemented. Revision of the questionnaire design was achieved in three phases:

- First, an initial questionnaire, comprising 70 items, was written in English, expertly translated into Thai language, and distributed to 60 respondents representing two government ministries (Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment and Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives).

- Second, by analyzing successes and failures of the initial survey methods to address research objectives, further revision was undertaken in the literature review, research model, and questionnaire.

- Third, a new questionnaire, comprising 95 items, was written in English, thoroughly vetted, expertly translated into Thai language, and distributed to respondents representing six government ministries:

    Ministry of Finance
    Ministry of Interior
    Ministry of Education
    Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment
    Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
    Ministry of Transport

The resulting ninety-five item questionnaire was distributed to two hundred civil servants representing six government ministries in Chiang Rai Province. The questionnaire was distributed only to employees forty-five years or younger, presumed to be less likely to benefit from maintaining an inefficient workplace status quo. Permission was secured from senior managers, appropriate to each ministry and office, to conduct the survey anonymously. Reliability of questionnaire items, which

ensures consistent meaning, is validated by SPSS analysis, specifically on the Cronbach's Alpha, meeting the "robustly reliable measure" criterion discussed in (Nunnally 1978). The Cronbach's Alpha for all variables is calculated to be beyond 0.80.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Profile

One hundred and twenty-three valid questionnaires were used in the final analysis. Many potential respondents declined to participate, citing various reasons, including: general privacy concerns, disinclination to provide sensitive information, the time-consuming length of the questionnaire, and belief that participation was inappropriate during a national mourning period. The response rate is 61.5%, out of 200 questionnaire sets distributed. Six demographic questions preceded the main items, collecting the following information:

30.9% of respondents were male, 68.3% female and 0.8% reporting as third-gender. According to OCSC, in 2015 46.35% of all civil servants were male and 53.65% female (third-gender not reported) (Office of Civil Service Commission 2015). However, in two of the ministries studied (Education and Agriculture), the proportion of female employees is significantly higher, according to managers assisting with the study, at upwards of 75% female. **Education Level**: 100% of respondents were degree-holders, with 78.9% bachelor's degrees and 21.1% master's degrees. Overall, OCSC reports that 889,189 civil servants, or 81.94% of total employees, hold at least a bachelor's degree, with 73.14% bachelor's degrees, 24.58% master's degrees, and 2.29% doctoral degrees (Office of Civil Service Commission 2015). **Ministry**: One item collected data on the particular ministry at which respondents were currently employed. Not collected was whether or not respondents had worked for multiple ministries. **Years of Service:** Two items collected data on number of years of employment, a range of total years of service at the current ministry as well as years of service in one's specific office. **Management Role**: One item collected data on respondents' self-identified management role.

Descriptive Analysis

Based on the five Likert scale response structure, descriptive statistics given in Table 2 show that only four variables have response slightly beyond 4, namely: 1) EI, 2) OCB, 3) intrinsic motivation, and 4) innovation outcome-workplace (individual level). This result implies that civil servants are willing to accept working beyond job scope requirements while at the same time minimizing time spent on personal affairs. This result is also shown to correlate positively, therefore, with personal desires to seek out new challenges and gain new levels of knowledge and experience in their work. By the fact that the civil servants are innovation motivated, these circumstances also indicate positive strength in EI. The key characteristics of EI perceived to be useful for achieving innovation behaviors are: self-awareness of professional strengths and weaknesses, self-efficacious attitude towards professional goal accomplishment, and strong effort to adapt to changes and unexpected circumstances. Accordingly, higher response scale of OCB has an implied positive relationship to innovation outcomes at the individual level, indicated by how civil servants form attitudes on seeking innovation as a key part of their job performance, boosting of overall competencies, and ability to meet job expectations. However, the civil servants studied have, generally, shown weaknesses in the HRM drivers, innovation-driven work engagement, as well as various innovation outcomes measured at departmental and organizational levels. Innovation-driven engagement has only 3.6691 level of perception, which is 1.3309 from the 'strongly agreed' level.

Inferential Statistical Analysis

Inferential statistical analysis provides support for each of the five hypotheses, but with different variables and key details affecting each hypothesis. The main inferential statistical analysis tools used for corroboration purposes in this research are correlation and multiple-regression analysis. Tables 3-5 present the correlation outcomes of HRM drivers, behaviors and innovation outcomes among the variables themselves. Among HRM drivers, for instance, organizational culture can be nourished and developed through support of innovation resources (0.521**), hierarchy (0.625**), organizational responsiveness (0.555***), competence (0.28*), EI (0.418**), empowerment (0.353**), job role expectations (0.551**), extrinsic motivation (0.46**), and intrinsic motivation (0.349**). Innovation resources,

hierarchy, and organizational responsiveness are the key HRM drivers at the organizational level, with innovation resources as the necessary enabling input to drive innovative work behaviors of the civil servants. The other variables are HRM drivers at the employee level. The combined organizational and individual levels of HRM drivers can be regarded as foundational motivating factors toward innovative work behaviors and innovation outcomes. The supportive role played by other HRM drivers, especially extrinsic motivation, innovation resources, and organizational responsiveness, is also regulatory in nature. In addition, organizational responsiveness (0.555**) and other HRM drivers such as competence (0.28*), and job role expectations (0.551**) are motivational factors that serve important purposes. Accordingly, HRM drivers which are regulatory and purposive can be added to the overall body of knowledge. Table 6 indicates job satisfaction is positively correlated with OCB at 0.499** and innovative work behavior (engagement) at 0.59**, which is significant to 0.01 level (2-tailed). Table 7 indicates the relationships of innovation outcomes at different hierarchical levels, which is a significant contribution to the body of knowledge. The organizational level of workplace innovation outcome, shown in Table 7, indicates that it is positively related to employee-level innovation (0.551**), and workplace innovation outcomes at the individual level (0.85**), and work group/departmental level (0.669**).

Overall multiple regression analyses were performed by incorporating only significant relationships of the correlations matrices shown in the previous section. Specifically, as shown in Figure 2, OCB is manifested by a variety of empathic, altruistic and rule-compliance varieties of behaviors (Tan 2016), which is shown to be explained, statistically and significantly, by both employee-level and organizational-level HRM drivers, specifically: competence, EI, and hierarchy. Competence and EI are HRM drivers at the employee level, expecting not only cognitive and emotional support for OCB. Hierarchy connotes psychological perceptions relating to the hierarchical state of the organization, such as in how hard work is valued, achievement is acknowledged, encouragement is supported, and fair and ethical treatment is rendered. At the employee level, civil servants who possessed knowledge and talents to perform their job duties, have necessary training and experience, and have analytical and intuitive abilities to perform their job duties, as well as possess

high EI capacity, are shown to statistically and significantly explain the variance of OCB. Together, these HRM drivers can explain 43.6% of the variance of OCB, shown in Figure 2.
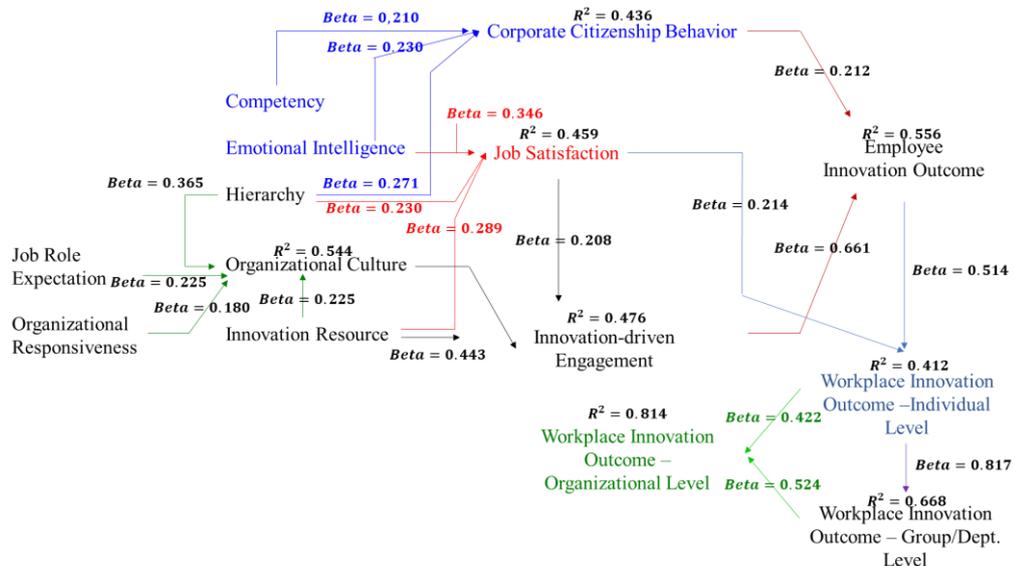
Figure 2. Final Model

Figure 2 also shows that innovation-driven engagement and innovative work behaviors are positive work-relevant experiences and conditions of the mind (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004). This has shown to be predicted by job satisfaction, statistically and significantly, for 47.6% of variance. Innovative work behaviors on the part of civil servants are, for instance, currently making substantial progress in innovating work performances, developing common goals with mangers and superiors regarding innovation, contributing actively to innovation in work teams/departments, increasing cooperation with managers and superiors to implement innovation, and collaborating with managers and superiors to identify new areas in which innovation is needed. Job satisfaction indicates affective states of the civil servants toward the variety of skills demanded and job diversity characteristics, self-determination, and future opportunities. Both job satisfaction and innovation behaviors are important driving forces, shown in Figure 2, explaining variance of innovation outcomes at the employee level. This is represented by progress made toward innovating work

performance, advocacy for more innovation in work teams/departments, willingness to undertake new strategies, implement new ideas, and strive for innovation outcomes. Also shown in Figure 2 is that when innovation outcomes are achieved at the employee level, the impact propagates through workplaces, including at the employee level, work team/departmental level, and organizational level. The flows of influence are sequential and hierarchical in nature, which fills a key knowledge gap that has not been clearly stated in the body of knowledge. Consequently, to influence innovation outcomes at the organizational level, effective efforts must be established at the employee and work team/departmental levels.

Specifically, based on the above discussions, the five Hypotheses (H1 to H5) are supported, with the details shown in Figure 2:

- H1 is supported, and the significant HRM drivers which explain the variance of OCB are competency, emotional intelligence and hierarchy. While the former is individual level of HRM drivers, the latter is organizational level of HRM driver.

- H2 is supported, and the significant HRM drivers are emotional intelligence, hierarchy and innovation resources.

- H3 is supported, and the significant HRM drivers are organizational culture, innovation resource, and job satisfaction.

- H4 is supported with various variants. First, OCB and innovative work behavior, together can statistically, significantly explain employee innovation outcome, at 55.6% of its variance. Second, job satisfaction, together with employee innovation outcome, also explain the variance of workplace innovation outcome at individual level, significantly, statistically, for 41.2% of variance

- H5 is supported in that the variance of workplace innovation outcome at organizational level can be statistically, significantly explained by both workplace innovation outcome at individual and departmental levels.

Conclusion

This research contributes to the existing literature by providing a theoretical structure that interlinks employee- and organizational-level of HRM drivers, innovation-driven behaviors, OCB, job satisfaction, and a hierarchy of various workplace innovation outcomes. The four research objectives are accomplished as summarized below.

Research Objective 1: HRM drivers influencing innovative work behaviors

The final model indicates the regulatory and purposive nature of HRM drivers, and also indicates the job demands and job resources needed to reciprocate employees' innovative work behavior. Job resources at both the employee and organizational levels are important, which include organizational responsiveness and innovation resources. For job demands, competence and EI are important drivers. Job characteristics can also be viewed alongside job role expectations which indicate the nature of job characteristics and responsibilities, as well as expectations expressed by managers and superiors. Furthermore, HRM drivers also depict an environment in which psychological states react to hierarchy and organizational culture. In short, the HRM drivers that play significant roles influencing innovative work behaviors, OCB, and job satisfaction of civil servants involve job demands, job resources, job characteristics and job environments. These are the four distinctive factors of the HRM drivers. Thus, the model can be said to reflect job-organizational supports to the employees to enable success.

Research Objective 2: HRM drivers to explain variance of OCB

The empirical research results show statistical and significant impacts of the HRM drivers on innovation behaviors and OCB, as well as the affective states of civil servants. Organizational culture, innovation resources and job satisfaction are the three most significant variables that can explain variance of innovation behaviors, at 47.6% of the variance.

Research Objective 3: HRM drivers predicting job satisfaction

The psychological states and strengths of employees, indicated by EI, perceptions of hierarchical conditions, and organizational culture, can statistically and significantly explain variance of job satisfaction, at 45.9% of variance. Employee competence, EI, and the psychological state of employees working within a hierarchical environment also play significant roles in explaining variance of OCB, at 43.6%.

Research Objective 4: Impact on innovation outcomes at various organizational levels

Together, these behaviors are important driving forces enabling workplace innovation outcomes at different levels. Yet, for workplace innovation at the organizational level to take effect, both workplace innovation outcomes at the employee and work group/departmental levels are necessary, and, when combined, can explain a statistically significant percentage of variance of workplace innovation outcomes, at 81.4%. In order for all desired workplace innovation outcomes to be achieved, empirical results show it is important that managers focus on employee innovation outcomes and job satisfaction, as both variables explain for 41.2% of workplace innovations at the employee level. Job satisfaction is required for achieving innovative outcomes at the work group/departmental and organizational levels. Workplace innovation outcomes are generally represented by perceived improvements over a number of strategic and operative fronts, such as performance, decision-making, efficiency, diligence, collaboration, mindfulness, goal-setting, professionalism, leadership and motivation. Thus, innovative outcomes are multitudinous in nature. As for innovation outcomes at the employee level, this research presents the perception of employees that they are achieving much innovation in their job roles, as well as the degree to which innovation in job roles can boost overall employee competence.

Limitations, Implications and Further Research

Certainly, an obvious limitation of this study is in terms of generalizability. As discussed in Mitchell and Jolley (2007), two necessary conditions for producing generalizable results are: random sample of a population + statistical significance. While inferential statistical analysis provides the necessary statistical significance,

such as in multiple regression analysis, the coefficient of determination which presents an index of the degree to which knowing participants' scores on one variable helps in predicting what their scores will be on the other variable (ibid, p. 194) (or, as the percentage of variance in the predicted scores that is accounted for by the predictor), the sampling approach is convenience-based in this research.

As for implications on HRM strategies of the Thai CSC, this research provides evidence that in order to achieve innovation outcomes, civil servants must be provided with adequate job resources and job demands. In particular, management should ensure that organizational responsiveness is evident to employees, such as being receptive to new ideas put forth by employees and their points-of-view which might enable innovation. Additionally, employees must be able to perceive the organization as receptive to innovation by affirming the value of innovation behaviors at the employee level, facilitating innovation by providing freedom to do so, and rewarding those who show commitment to innovation no matter their hierarchal status.

Furthermore, in order to achieve innovation outcomes, civil servants need supports which engender greater competence and EI, as well as permitting them to exploit these attributes for innovative purposes at the employee, work team/departmental and organizational levels. The research strongly suggests that innovative behaviors, however small they might seem at the employee level, are truly the driving force for innovation in the entire organization. This reality may conflict with a traditional top-down approach to effecting change in such hierarchical organizations. If organizational culture in CSC ministries can be developed so as to reassure employees that innovative behaviors are truly valued at all organizational levels, it may be possible to increase OCB and overall job satisfaction, which in turn can increase the likelihood of achieving innovation outcomes at all levels.

In sum, careful examination of how each of the main factors studied - HRM drivers, OCB, innovation behaviors, and job satisfaction – can be managed under an integrated innovation strategy should be very informative and useful to the Thai CSC. The good news for those in positions of authority is that civil servants do appear to believe in the importance of innovation, that most believe much useful innovation is already taking place, and that they stand ready to do their part in achieving it. The

main uncertainty, then, is precisely how well prepared or well-equipped are civil servants to design, initiate, implement, and benefit from innovations at the employee level, which this research shows is of greatest statistical significance in driving innovation at broader levels.

Further research is recommended in the following key areas: (1) determining the degree to which innovation readiness is uniform across different government ministries; (2) studying the tangible effects of employee-driven innovation practices on innovation outcomes at the organizational level; and (3) studying the significance of inter-organizational citizenship behaviors among ministry offices in different geographic regions, as well as between different ministries, in driving innovation at each level.

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