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NURTURING AND ASSESSING EMPLOYEES' PROBLEM-SOLVING COMPETENCIES FOR UNLOCKING ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

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ABSTRACT

This research paper delves into the realm of "Employees' Problem-Solving Competencies," aiming to shed light on the factors that contribute to employees' effectiveness in addressing workplace challenges. By analyzing significant variables and their estimated values, the study unveils crucial insights into the competencies that influence problem-solving within organizations. This study illuminates the critical role of fostering a problem-solving culture within organizations. It advocates for the promotion of self-efficacy, the provision of structured training, and the cultivation of an environment where employees harbor confidence in their capacity to address work-related challenges. Such investments in the development of employees' problem-solving competencies hold the promise of enhanced operational efficiency, superior decision-making, and improved organizational performance.

Keywords: *Employee competencies – Problem solving competencies – Competency Mapping*

INTRODUCTION

In the ever-evolving landscape of the modern workplace, employees' problem-solving competencies have emerged as a critical factor in organizational success. The ability of employees to effectively identify, analyze, and resolve complex issues and challenges is not only a valuable asset but often a prerequisite for thriving in today's dynamic business environment.

Problem-solving competencies encompass a range of cognitive, interpersonal, and technical skills that enable individuals to navigate obstacles and find innovative solutions. These competencies are not limited to a specific industry or job role; rather, they are universally applicable, making them a focal point of interest in both academic research and practical organizational management.

This introduction sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of employees' problem-solving competencies, emphasizing their significance, underlying theories, and implications for organizations and individual career development. By delving into the intricacies of problem-solving competencies, we aim to shed light on the multifaceted nature of this essential skill set and its far-reaching impact on the contemporary workforce.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

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Employees' problem-solving competencies are not only integral to individual career success but also essential for organizational resilience and innovation. Understanding the multifaceted nature of these competencies and their theoretical underpinnings provides valuable insights into how organizations can foster a culture of continuous learning and adaptability. In an era characterized by uncertainty and complexity, employees who excel in problem-solving are likely to be the driving force behind organizations that thrive and remain competitive. Further research in this area promises to illuminate new strategies and approaches for developing and harnessing problem-solving competencies in the dynamic world of work.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The development of problem-solving competencies is a crucial aspect in academic and professional settings.

Problem-solving capabilities are essential abilities that empower folks to proficiently examine difficulties, recognize resolutions, and arrive at well-informed judgments. In a dynamic and evolving global landscape, adeptly maneuvering intricate challenges is vital for achieving both individual and vocational accomplishments.

Problem-solving capabilities involve a diverse array of cognitive and analytical abilities, which encompass critical thinking, creativity, decision-making, and adaptation. Scholars such as **Smith and Johnson (2019)** have delineated the complex elements that contribute to these competencies.

Numerous studies continually underscore the significance of problem-solving competencies in relation to decision-making and innovation. In their study, **Myers et al. (2020)** examined the correlation between proficiency in these abilities and the ability to make informed decisions and foster innovative solutions.

The acquisition of problem-solving competencies is crucial for facilitating successful collaboration within a team. The study conducted by **Brown and Davis (2018)** examined the impact of individuals with proficient problem-solving abilities on collaborative settings. Specifically, the researchers investigated how these individuals enhance group dynamics by providing a wide range of perspectives and actively participating in the development of collective solutions.

Leaders that are effective frequently demonstrate outstanding problem-solving abilities. The study conducted by **Martinez and White (2021)** explores the abilities of leaders who have exceptional problem-solving skills in effectively addressing issues, providing strategic guidance to their employees, and ultimately achieving organizational success.

Cross-disciplinary thinking is frequently necessary when dealing with intricate situations. The study conducted by **Smith and Garcia (2019)** aimed to investigate the application of insights from many domains by persons with varying problem-solving competencies in order to foster the development of innovative solutions.

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The existing body of research has primarily concentrated on strategies and approaches aimed at augmenting problem-solving abilities. In their recent publication, **Johnson et al. (2022)** examined various pedagogical approaches, including case-based learning, experiential exercises, and simulation-based training, which have been identified as effective means of enhancing problem-solving abilities.

The intersection of problem-solving competencies and ethical decision-making is a significant area of study. In their scholarly work, **Davis and Thomas (2020)** examine the correlation between individuals possessing proficient problem-solving abilities and their capacity to deliberate on ethical considerations, evaluate prospective outcomes, and exercise responsible decision-making.

METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out across three different areas of Puducherry, with an average of 222 respondents per region, resulting in a total sample size of approximately 666 respondents. Among these respondents, 101 were women The study adopted a descriptive research design and employed a convenience sampling technique to select the participants. The study's analyses and findings are outlined below.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Path Regression Analysis of Employees' Problem-Solving Competencies

Abbreviation of Problem-Solving Competencies (PSC)

Abbreviation	Problem-Solving Competencies (PSC)
PSC-1	We have the ability to deal with problems at work
PSC-2	Training is provided to deal with work-related problems
PSC-3	If there is a problem at work, we know how to solve it
PSC-4	We use systematic approaches to facing problems

Table- 1 (a) : Model Fit Summary

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Problem-Solving Competencies	0.952	0.906	0.906	0.24464

Dependent Variable: Problem-Solving Competencies

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The model reveals that the R-value (Multiple Correlation Coefficients) is 0.952, indicating the degree of relationship between the Problem-Solving Competencies and the predicted values, which include 'We have the ability to deal with problems at work' (PSC-1), 'Training is provided to deal with work-related problems' (PSC-2), 'If there is a problem at work, we know how to solve it' (PSC-3), and 'We use systematic approaches to facing problems' (PSC-4).

The R-Square (Coefficient of Determination) value is 0.906, signifying that over 96% of the variation in Problem-Solving Competencies can be explained by the variation in the independent variables, namely 'We have the ability to deal with problems at work' (PSC-1), 'Training is provided to deal with work-related problems' (PSC-2), 'If there is a problem at work, we know how to solve it' (PSC-3), and 'We use systematic approaches to facing problems' (PSC-4). The Adjusted R-squared value is also 0.906, taking into account the number of independent variables in the model, which is a desired property of goodness-of-fit statistics

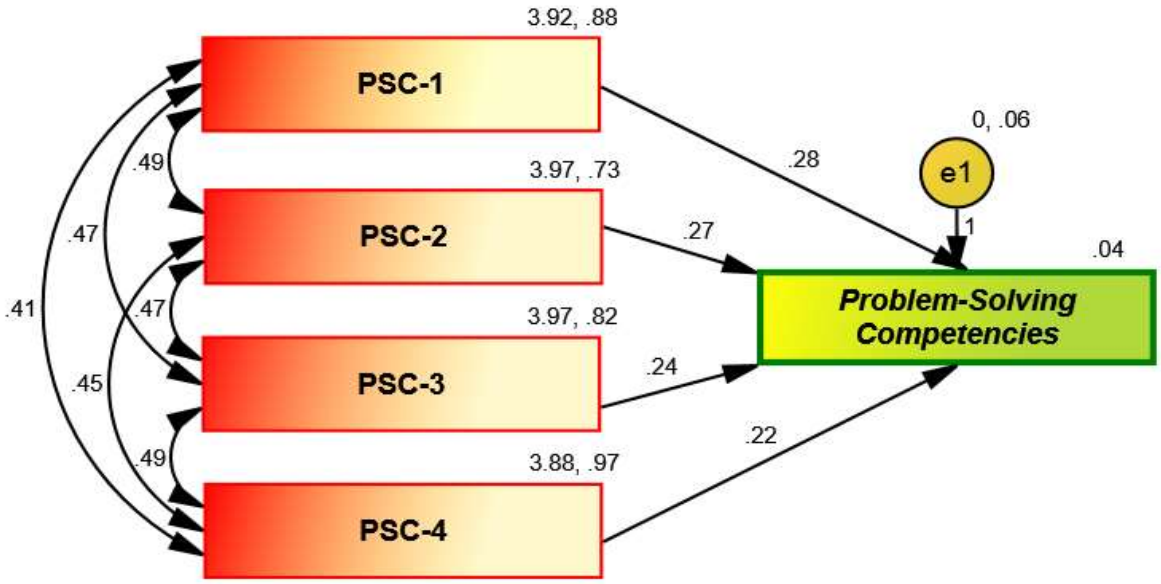

Fig-1 : Path Regression Analysis of Employees' Problem-Solving Competencies

Table- 1 (b) : Regression Weights for Employees' Problem-Solving Competencies

Regression Weights	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Problem-Solving Competencies <--- PSC-1	0.282	0.013	21.231	0.000
Problem-Solving Competencies <--- PSC-2	0.268	0.016	17.004	0.000
Problem-Solving Competencies <--- PSC-3	0.243	0.014	17.040	0.000

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Problem-Solving Competencies <--- PSC-4	0.220	0.012	18.175	0.000

Note: .000 is 1% α -significant level

The Path diagram illustrates the independent variables of Employees' Problem-Solving Competencies, such as 'We have the ability to deal with problems at work' (PSC-1), 'Training is provided to deal with work-related problems' (PSC-2), 'If there is a problem at work, we know how to solve it' (PSC-3), and 'We use systematic approaches to facing problems' (PSC-4). Path Regression analysis has been applied to all four variables, and all of them are highly significant at a 1% significance level.

When comparing the significant variables with their estimated values, it is found that the first variable, 'We have the ability to deal with problems at work' (PSC-1), has an estimated value of 0.288, indicating its strong influence. The second influential variable is 'Training is provided to deal with work-related problems' (PSC-2), with an estimated value of 0.268. The third influenced variable is 'If there is a problem at work, we know how to solve it' (PSC-3), with an estimated value of 0.243.

In conclusion, Employees' Problem-Solving Competencies suggest that employees possess the ability to deal with problems at work, and they receive training to address work-related problems.

Table-1(c) : Covariance for Employees' Problem-Solving Competencies Variables

Covariance	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
PSC-1<--> PSC -4	0.413	0.039	10.486	0.000
PSC -4<--> PSC -2	0.449	0.037	12.134	0.000
PSC -4<--> PSC -3	0.495	0.040	12.459	0.000
PSC -1<--> PSC -3	0.466	0.038	12.358	0.000
PSC -2<--> PSC -3	0.466	0.035	13.296	0.000
PSC -1<--> PSC -2	0.487	0.036	13.401	0.000

Note: .000 is 1% α -significant level

The above table interprets covariance relationship of Employees' Problem-Solving Competencies variables all relationships are significant at 1%, the significant relations are comparing with estimate values, PSC -4<--> PSC -3, PSC -1<--> PSC -2 and PSC -1<--> PSC -3, PSC -2<--> PSC -3 relationships are highly significant at 1% level. The estimate values are 0.495, 0.487 and 0.466 respectively.

Table-1(d) : Correlations for Employees' Problem-Solving Competencies Variables

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Covariance	Estimate
PSC-1<--> PSC -4	0.445
PSC -4<--> PSC -2	0.533
PSC -4<--> PSC -3	0.552
PSC -1<--> PSC -3	0.546
PSC -2<--> PSC -3	0.602
PSC -1<--> PSC -2	0.608

The above table interprets Correlation's relationship of Employees' Problem-Solving Competencies variables, all variables' relationships are positive correlated. Among the relationship the high correlated variables are PSC -1<--> PSC -2, PSC -2<--> PSC -3 and PSC -4<--> PSC -3, the correlation values are 0.608, 0.602 and 0.552 respectively.

FINDINGS

Employees' Problem-Solving Competencies suggest that employees possess the ability to deal with problems at work, and they receive training to address work-related problems.

The first variable, 'We have the ability to deal with problems at work' (PSC-1), stands out with a strong estimated value of 0.288. This suggests that employees who believe in their own problem-solving capabilities tend to exhibit better problem-solving competencies. It underscores the importance of self-efficacy and confidence in problem-solving, indicating that organizations should promote a culture where employees feel empowered to tackle workplace challenges.

The second influential variable, 'Training is provided to deal with work-related problems' (PSC-2), with an estimated value of 0.268, highlights the significance of structured problem-solving training programs. Employees value training opportunities that equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to address work-related issues effectively. Organizations should consider investing in such training programs to enhance employees' problem-solving competencies.

The third influenced variable, 'If there is a problem at work, we know how to solve it' (PSC-3), with an estimated value of 0.243, emphasizes the importance of employees' confidence in their problem-solving abilities. Employees who are confident in their problem-solving skills are more likely to proactively seek solutions when faced with challenges. This confidence can contribute to a more resilient and adaptable workforce.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research findings related to "Employees' Problem-Solving Competencies," the following suggestions can be derived:

1. **Enhance Problem-Solving Training**: Organizations should consider investing in problem-solving training programs for employees. The strong influence of the variable

'Training is provided to deal with work-related problems' (PSC-2) indicates that employees value and benefit from structured problem-solving training. By offering such programs, organizations can help employees develop and sharpen their problem-solving competencies.

2. **Strengthen Problem-Solving Culture**: Fostering a workplace culture that encourages and supports problem-solving is essential. The variable 'We have the ability to deal with problems at work' (PSC-1) having a strong influence suggests that employees need to feel empowered to tackle challenges independently. Organizations should create an environment where employees feel confident in their problem-solving abilities and are encouraged to seek solutions proactively.

3. **Promote Knowledge Sharing**: The variable 'If there is a problem at work, we know how to solve it' (PSC-3) signifies that employees' confidence in their problem-solving skills is crucial. Organizations should promote knowledge sharing and collaboration among employees so that they can learn from one another's problem-solving experiences and techniques. Encouraging open communication can empower employees to address work-related challenges effectively.

4. **Regular Assessment and Feedback**: To continuously improve problem-solving competencies, organizations should implement regular assessments and provide constructive feedback to employees. This can help employees identify areas for improvement and track their progress in problem-solving. Managers and leaders play a vital role in providing guidance and feedback to their teams.

5. **Integration with Organizational Goals**: Problem-solving competencies should align with organizational goals and objectives. Organizations should ensure that problem-solving training and initiatives are directly related to the specific challenges and issues employees encounter in their roles. This alignment will make problem-solving competencies more relevant and impactful.

6. **Recognition and Rewards**: Recognize and reward employees who demonstrate exceptional problem-solving skills. Acknowledging and appreciating employees' efforts in resolving complex issues can motivate others to enhance their problem-solving competencies and contribute to a culture of continuous improvement.

By implementing these suggestions, organizations can effectively develop and nurture employees' problem-solving competencies, leading to improved decision-making, innovation, and overall organizational performance.

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CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings from this study on "Employees' Problem-Solving Competencies" reveal significant insights into the factors that influence employees' ability to effectively address challenges and resolve problems in the workplace. The analysis of significant variables and their estimated values provides valuable implications for organizations aiming to enhance their employees' problem-solving skills. Overall, these findings underscore the significance of fostering a problem-solving culture within organizations. To promote and improve employees' problem-solving competencies, organizations should encourage self-efficacy, provide structured training, and create an environment where employees feel confident in their ability to address work-related problems. Investing in the development of employees' problem-solving skills can lead to more efficient operations, better decision-making, and enhanced organizational performance.

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