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Identifying the Future-Ready Human Skills towards the Effectiveness of Good Governance Practices: A Conceptual Framework

Zawiyah Mahmood & Shathees Baskaran

Azman Hashim International Business School, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia

Abstract

Public servants' quality of service delivery and administration is manifested through the effectiveness of good governance practices. The public servants ought to develop the applicable future-ready human skills since the public servant is closely connected with citizens, creates trust and is aware of others' perspectives on issues. This article reviews works to distinctly determine the future-ready human skills towards the effectiveness of good governance practices. The relevant papers are obtained and scrutinized for relevance that primarily relates to the effectiveness of good governance practices, followed by a literature review to describe the underpinning theory; Katz's Three-Skill Approach describes human skills as one of the three different skills for a successful management process. This article has developed a conceptual framework concerning leadership and social influence, emotional intelligence, and adaptability as future-ready human skills that enable public servants to occupy engagement roles with citizens. The public servant human skills will improve performance and embrace the sustainability of public service environments for better good governance practices, especially for future endurance. This finding assists academics and practitioners in adopting methods for identifying the future-ready skills that improve management actions, organizational performance and human resource development initiatives.

Keywords: Katz's Three-Skill Approach, Future-Ready Human Skills, Leadership and Social Influence, Emotional Intelligence, Adaptability, Good Governance Practices

Introduction

Public servants are government representatives in performing administrative functions while maintaining credibility and being held accountable for their actions. Although the public servants have an important task in realizing government visions into effective service delivery, the public sector is pressured with transformation agenda that need to be accomplished (Mfikwe & Pelsler, 2017). The fast pace of digitalization, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Fifth Industrial Revolution (IR5.0) and other transformations to emerging 21st-century demands radical shift for the public servant to perform any tasks. With various corruption issues, misconduct and power abuse are among the challenges that confront the public servant. Government need to ensure that the skills that exist amongst public servants

are proven efficient in implementing good governance practices while delivering services. Accountability is a critical element in ensuring effective government (Said, Alam & Johari, 2018) toward a better public organizational performance (Jauhari et al., 2020).

Good governance is a critical component of public policy reforms in Malaysia (Jamaiudin, 2019). All policies aimed at enhancing the performance of public organizations should emphasize the development of good governance practices (Jauhari et al., 2020). It will increase the satisfaction and trust of citizens in service delivery, which will avoid crises in the public sector (Duguma & Kompuok, 2021). However, little consideration has been given to the human skills among public servants, although it is essential in dealing with conflict, promote good behaviour and is primarily concerned with working with people cooperatively. Thus, this article explores the concept of human skills by Katz's Three-Skill Approach with the following objective; to determine the future-ready human skills associated with the effectiveness of good governance practices being met. The area of this article in the context of public service also increased the understanding of good governance practices.

Literature Review

Effectiveness of Good Governance Practices

Public services are expected to be clean of corruption and practice good governance principles (Bincof, 2020). Past literature has stressed that good governance should include excellent implementation and compliance by integrating good ideals into the practice, based on good governance practice (Ibrahim, Kok & Lokman, 2020). Good governance is defined as government accountability, transparency in decision-making, implementation of the rule of law and regulations, early response to citizens' needs, equity and integration among interest groups, and efficiency in using resources in the delivery of services approach (Duguma & Kompuok, 2021). Because it implies public organisations that handle public issues, accountability is constantly linked to and has become one of the requirements for good governance (Said et al., 2018). Furthermore, Hendrik et al (2018) combined accountability and transparency as an indicator for good governance. Overall, good governance is a people-centric approach since it will benefit society by improving public service delivery and administrative accountability and openness (Jamaiudin, 2019). Good governance has arisen as a solution to the public sector's continuing management problem, and the function of good governance was defined, and then how good governance developed in the empowering activity was clarified (i.e., public administration).

Good governance practices make the process easier by ensuring that appropriate management techniques are used while focusing on the efficiency of services, in this instance, public services (Ibrahim et al., 2020). The primary objective of implementing good governance practices was to make service delivery efficient and effective within the government (Bincof, 2020). However, Skowronek and Orren (2020) found that the concept of transparency, which is promoted as a lifeline for effective governance, is in crisis. Therefore, the government should increase its employee's performance and identify the skills required for public servants to positively impact good governance in achieving a competent civil service management system (Bincof, 2020). It has been shown that good governance practices help ensure high employee accomplishment levels (Ibrahim et al., 2020). The public servant's skills closely represent their roles towards good administration, which will be reflected through the effectiveness of good governance practices. Hence, it is essential to restore and rebuild public servant's skills to enhance public trust towards the government, especially in the future contributing better public organizational performance.

Future-Ready Human Skills

In his foundational work, Katz (1955) proposed a three-skill approach of leadership skills that he believed were necessary to be a successful administrator: technical, human, and conceptual skills (Muthueloo et al., 2017). Katz initially focused on the triple skills and suggested that managers at every organisational level must have all three skill sets, although their relative importance varies to fulfil their responsibilities (Ghorbanparast & Moradi, 2014). According to Katz's model, a manager's capacity to connect, work, or engage successfully with people is reflected in their human or interpersonal skills. Human skills relate to a person's capacity to engage with people who make some people excellent as managers, as the qualities separate successful managers from failures (Labrador & Alderite, 2020). Human skills allow managers to maximise human potential in the workplace and inspire workers to achieve more remarkable outcomes (Aleksoski et al., 2020).

All managers at all levels of management must have human relations skills (Batra & Sharma, 2017). Ghorbanparast and Moradi (2014) agreed that human skills (i.e., people skills) enable a leader to help a group accomplish a common vision by adapting their ideas to others and considering the needs of others in decision-making. In fact, Ozdemir, Coban and Bozkurt (2020) suggest that through political talents, the leader increases interpersonal communication and fosters cooperation inside the organisation, and the leader aims to set rules and create strategies to guarantee the organisation performs well. This article found few future-ready human skills listed in the World Economic Forums 'Future of Jobs' (World Economic Forum, 2020) that are useful in proactively shaping skills in the direction of a fast-paced future working environment. As a result, this article emphasised Leadership and Social Influence, Emotional Intelligence, and Adaptability as future-ready human skills as a possible route for public servant growth.

Public servants or public administrators work as "people centricity", which implies considering people's needs and voices when developing, providing, applying, and assessing public policies and services (OECD, 2019). The administrator position emphasises the strategic decision-making and information role, and it is critical to communicate the work and activities carried out inside the company with the workers (Ozdemir et al., 2020). Senior managers in government and public service managers have the critical job of translating the government's strategic vision, aims, and objectives into effective service delivery (Mfikwe & Pelsner, 2017). Human skills can assist the leader in creating an organisational environment of respect and trust (O'Brien, 2017). This will lead the subordinates to devote themselves to their job and try to perform it well when they feel good at work, trust the leader, and understand what is required (Aleksoski et al., 2020). As a result, this article hypothesised that such an effect of human skills, including a wide variety of competencies, might aid organisations in fostering good governance practice:

H1: Future-ready human skill is positively associated with the effectiveness of good governance practices.

Leadership and Social Influence

Many characteristics may assist individuals in improving the efficacy of their leadership. People with excellent social skills offer leadership and aid in an efficient organisation (Morandini et al., 2020). To be a successful leader, they must develop a unique leadership style that maximises the strengths while minimising the shortcomings (Guo, 2018). Efficient leadership is a crucial element that impacts local public's operation and success, the basis for building strong relationships with stakeholders and utilising social opportunities (Springer,

Walkowiak & Bernaciak, 2020). Hence, leadership is the “influencing” process (i.e., the process of social influence) through which leaders and followers work together to accomplish corporate goals via transformation or change (Guo, 2018; Ruben & Gigliotti, 2021; Steffens et al., 2018).

Through setting social and cultural expectations, such influence affects the governance of exchange relationships and collaborations (Chakkol et al., 2018). If leader power has a corrupting effect, they will have chances to breach normative standards and fail to fulfil the legal and moral obligations as a leader in an authority position (Ng & VanDuinkerken, 2020). In contrast, leaders must persuade their followers to embrace a goal and strive toward its realisation to share their vision (Docekalova, Vaculik & Prochazka, 2016). More precisely, participating in social influence activity will help leaders achieve particular objectives, and they will select whether or not to pursue the social influence opportunity and assess whether they can benefit from it (McAllister et al., 2016). In evaluating the impact of leadership, Hendrik et al (2018) found strong influences between a leader’s vision in terms of transparency on good governance in a new autonomous area. Thus, the following hypothesis established in this article:

H1a: Leadership and social influence are positively associated with the effectiveness of good governance practices.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence indicates an individual skill that accurately perceives and understands one’s own emotions (Lee, 2021). It develops a person’s ability to detect, understand, express, comprehend, utilise, and regulate emotions in themselves and others (Kanesan, 2019; Levitats et al., 2019). Sharing experiences in utilising emotional intelligence skills can lead to team activities, which motivate the workers more creative as they begin to understand and connect the points about the current context and accessible facts (Kaur, 2020). Nevertheless, Paik, Seo and Jin (2019) emphasised the impact of team emotional intelligence environment on conflict and team members’ responses to conflict. People with high emotional intelligence will have less severe emotional responses to stressful situations, assisting them in dealing with the event (Dasborough, 2019). Lu et al (2020) indicated that high emotional intelligence has a strong sense of the effects of different emotive tactics; recognising workers’ actions and procedures by emotional intelligence may help cross-cultural understandings and minimise conflicts. Moreover, those with high emotional intelligence prefer to emphasise pleasant or good feelings rather than focussing on negative ones (Dasborough, 2019; Kanesan, 2019).

In public administration, the concept of emotional intelligence is obtaining extremely academic attention and fosters an organisational culture that inspires emotionally intelligent behaviours (Levitats & Vigoda-gadot, 2019). Leaders with a strong emotional capacity also do better in dealing with workplace politics (Hanafi & Daud, 2021). Emotional intelligence allows ideas to be integrated at the team and organisational levels (Kaur, 2020). An increase in emotional intelligence is likely to improve project management skills and improve via training or policies, which assist them in becoming more excellent (Doan et al., 2020). Furthermore, Ugoani (2020) discovered that emotional intelligence is a preventive method for reducing corruption and minimises irresponsible behaviours, influencing good governance practices and improving governance integrity. Therefore, the proposed hypothesis is:

H1b: Emotional intelligence is positively associated with the effectiveness of good governance practices.

Adaptability

The adaptive performance demonstrates skills in response to expected or ongoing changes (Açikgöz & Latham, 2020). Adaptability refers to being sensitive to different circumstances and utilising skills to improve the beneficial effect (Ugoani, 2020). Career adaptability or adaptive performance also refers to modifying one's behaviour in response to the demands of change in the workplace (Abukhait, Bani-Melhem & Shamsudin, 2020). Working in today's flexible and unstable labour market requires employees to embrace adaptive and proactive habits that will help them move between jobs and adjust to changing conditions inside the same job (Federici, Boon & Den Hartog et al., 2021). Al-Ghazali (2020) stated that if workers are highly adaptable, they are more likely to have more control and trust in the possibilities arising in shifting situations. Moreover, Abukhait et al (2020) predicted that employee adaptability would positively impact innovative work behaviour.

The capacity to deal with uncertainty, change, and flexibility is crucial (Mittal, 2020). In addition, Wolff and Ladi (2020) stated that according to Tommasi, Scartascini, and Stein (2014), adaptability is classified as "the ability of governments to change policy when such policy change is deemed necessary" (p. 223). As a result, adaptable workers are more likely to remain and deal with their jobs' obstacles and problems, thus offering better service although in such a scenario (Bouzari & Safavi, 2021). Skowronek and Orren (2020) expected a robust organisational structure to evolve, balance obligations, produce new norms and practices that adapt to changing conditions, restore consistency, and resolve conflicts following reasonably stable norms. It is aligned with Abukhait et al (2020), which also predicted that employee adaptability would positively impact innovative work behaviour. In addition, it means that public administrations must constantly evolve and adapt to become more transparent, responsible, cost-effective, and responsive forms of governance (Bala, 2017). Due to its importance, it is hypothesised that:

H1c: Adaptability is positively associated with the effectiveness of good governance practices.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature discussed above, this paper proposes a conceptual framework (refer to Figure 1) to determine the future-ready human skills (i.e., leadership and social influence, emotional intelligence and adaptability) associated with the effectiveness of good governance practices being met.

FUTURE-READY HUMAN SKILLS

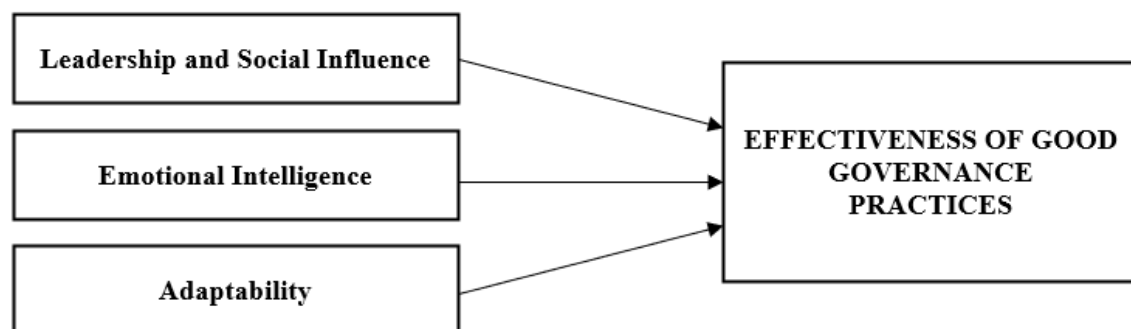


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Conclusion

Duguma and Kompuok (2021) stated that poor service delivery procedures were caused by a lack of skills and the absence of skilled staff. Realizing the human skills in people management, public servants need to develop the skills to remain competitive continually, interact and work with others. The proposed conceptual framework suggested that future-ready human skills (i.e., leadership and social influence, emotional intelligence and adaptability) should be adopted towards the effectiveness of good governance practices. Moreover, the management style with human skills may better suit to motivate the people and create better teamwork, which is desirable to achieve organisational performance. With the underpinning theory of Katz's Three-Skill Approach, a review and agenda for the future consist of future-ready technical and conceptual skills that can be established to achieve the organisational objectives.

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Corresponding Author

Zawiyah Mahmood

Azman Hashim International Business School (AHIBS), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)

Email: zawiyah@graduate.utm.my

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