

Enhancing innovative work behaviour in higher institutions of learning: the role of hope

Influence of
hope on
innovative
work behaviour

Rehema Namono

*Department of Business Administration and Entrepreneurship,
School of Management and Entrepreneurship, Kyambogo University,
Kampala, Uganda and*

*Department of Economics and Management,
Faculty of Management Sciences, Busitema University, Pallisa, Uganda*

Ambrose Kemboi

*Department of Management Science and Entrepreneurship,
School of Business and Economics, Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya, and*

Joel Chepkwony

*Department of Marketing and Logistics,
School of Business and Economics, Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya*

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Abstract

Purpose – Despite the current dynamism in the education sector that was manifested in new approaches to work that require innovative workforce, little empirical studies have been conducted on how to influence innovativeness in higher education institutions. Moreover, though studies have established a link between hope and innovative work behaviour, no study has established how hope and its two components of agency and pathways influence innovative work behaviour. The purpose of this study is to establish the influence of hope and its two components of agency and pathways on innovative work behaviour.

Design/methodology/approach – A quantitative cross-sectional research design was adopted in this study. The study employed hierarchical regression to test the hypothesised relationship between hope and its components of agency and pathways on innovative work behaviour using a sample drawn from public universities in Uganda in the two categories of academic and administrative staff.

Findings – The findings reveal that pathways and agency influence innovative work behaviour. The Findings also revealed that hope significantly influences innovative work behaviour over and above its individual components of agency and pathways.

Research limitations/implications – The study was cross-sectional in nature and the findings may not portray a true picture of the relationship between the study variables over time as behaviour is ever changing. Further studies could carry out a longitudinal study to establish the effect established in this study at different time intervals. The results provide a more complex understanding of how hope and its two components of agency and pathways enhance innovative work behaviour.

Practical implications – The findings of the study provide insightful direction to managers in public universities in Uganda to consider different avenues of increasing employee hope so as to enhance innovative work behaviour. This can be done through targeted interventions like involving employees in goal setting and setting alternative means to achieve goals.

Originality/value – The value of this study is both empirical and theoretical. Empirically, this study is the first to establish the influence of hope and its two components of agency and pathways on innovative work behaviour in Uganda's university setting. Theoretically, the study extends veracity of the conservation of resources theory (COR) by clarifying those employees who possess the psychological characteristics of hope exhibit innovative work behaviour. The study also extends on the theory of hope by revealing that agency and pathways influence innovative work behaviour.

Keywords Innovative work behaviour, Higher institutions, Hope, Conservation of resources theory

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1. Introduction

The current dynamism in the education sector requires universities as knowledge institutions to enhance the innovative work behaviour of employees to thrive (Dehning *et al.*, 2020). A case