

Self-Efficacy and Innovation Performance in The Contemporary Workplace: A Systematic Literature Review and Future Research Agenda

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Keywords:	Abstract
Self-Efficacy; Proactive Change Behavior; Innovation Performance; Employee Innovation; Organizational Behavior; Systematic Literature Review	Innovation performance has become a critical factor for organisational sustainability in an era of rapid digital transformation and global competition. However, the extent to which employees translate psychological resources into innovative outcomes remains insufficiently understood. This study aims to examine the relationships among self-efficacy, proactive change behaviour, and innovation performance through a systematic synthesis of existing literature. The study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach guided by the PRISMA 2020 framework to identify, screen, and analyse relevant peer-reviewed articles published between 2015 and 2025. Data were collected from Scopus-indexed journals and analysed using thematic synthesis to explore theoretical foundations, empirical findings, and research gaps. The results indicate that self-efficacy consistently plays a significant role in enhancing employees' confidence, motivation, and persistence in performing work tasks. However, self-efficacy alone does not directly lead to innovation performance. Instead, proactive change behaviour emerges as a crucial mediating mechanism that translates psychological resources into innovation-related actions. The discussion further highlights that most existing studies focus on direct relationships, while limited attention has been given to behavioural pathways and contextual factors. In conclusion, innovation performance is optimally achieved when self-efficacy is supported by proactive employee behaviour within enabling organisational environments. This study contributes by integrating fragmented literature and offering a conceptual foundation for future empirical research and managerial practices aimed at enhancing employee-driven innovation.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary business environment is increasingly characterised by rapid technological change, digital transformation, and intense global competition (Agustian, Mubarok, Zen, Wiwin, & Malik, 2023; Barreto, Hadikusumo, & Ruswandi, 2025; Tebenko, Kutsai, Shashyna, Omelianenko, & Bakushevyh, 2024). Organisations are required not only to maintain operational efficiency but also to innovate continuously in order to sustain competitiveness and adapt to changing market conditions. In this context, innovation performance has become one of the most

important indicators of organisational success, as it reflects the ability of employees and organisations to generate, develop, and implement new ideas that create value and improve organisational outcomes. Recent literature emphasises that innovation is no longer confined to research and development departments but has become an essential responsibility of employees across all organisational levels (Li & Liu, 2021; Suto & Takehara, 2022; Tsai & Yen, 2020).

Employee-driven innovation has consequently attracted increasing scholarly attention. Modern organisations expect employees to actively contribute ideas, initiate improvements, and participate in organisational change processes (Gechbaia, Tchilaia, Goletiani, & Muskudiani, 2020). Such expectations are particularly relevant in knowledge-intensive and service-oriented industries, where employee creativity and initiative directly influence organisational performance. Research on innovative work behaviour and employee innovation performance has therefore expanded significantly over the past decade, highlighting the importance of understanding the psychological and behavioural factors that encourage employees to engage in innovation-related activities (AlEssa & Durugbo, 2022).

Among the individual factors influencing innovation performance, self-efficacy has emerged as one of the most extensively studied constructs in organisational behaviour research. Derived from Social Cognitive Theory developed by Albert Bandura (2001), self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capability to successfully perform specific tasks and achieve desired outcomes (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Employees with strong self-efficacy tend to demonstrate greater persistence, adaptability, confidence, and willingness to face challenges (Lyons & Bandura, 2019). Numerous studies have reported positive relationships between self-efficacy and various organisational outcomes, including job performance, creativity, innovative behaviour, entrepreneurial performance, and technology adoption.

Despite the growing body of literature supporting the importance of self-efficacy, scholars increasingly argue that confidence alone may not automatically translate into innovation performance (Amelia, Syukmayettil, & Zuripal, 2021). Employees may possess the necessary confidence and capabilities yet still fail to engage in behaviours that promote innovation. Researchers have consequently begun to investigate the behavioural mechanisms through which self-efficacy contributes to innovation-related outcomes. One behavioural construct that has attracted considerable attention is proactive change behaviour, which refers to self-initiated efforts aimed at improving work processes, introducing new ideas, and facilitating organisational change (Strauss, Griffin, Parker, & Mason, 2015).

Proactive change behaviour is particularly important in contemporary workplaces, as organisations increasingly rely on employees who can anticipate challenges, identify opportunities for improvement, and actively contribute to organisational transformation. Unlike reactive employees who merely respond to change, proactive employees take initiative to influence their work environment and drive positive change. Emerging empirical evidence suggests that proactive behaviour plays a significant role in enhancing innovation-related outcomes and employee performance. For example, recent studies in the hospitality sector demonstrate that employee

proactivity contributes positively to innovative work behaviour and overall performance (Presbitero & Teng-Calleja, 2017).

Although self-efficacy, proactive behaviour, and innovation performance have each received considerable academic attention, the existing literature remains fragmented. Previous studies have often examined the direct relationship between self-efficacy and performance outcomes, or focused on innovative behaviour without adequately explaining the underlying behavioural processes involved. Furthermore, systematic reviews addressing the integration of self-efficacy, proactive change behaviour, and innovation performance remain relatively limited. Existing review studies have generally focused on self-efficacy and performance, self-efficacy and innovation, or innovation performance in isolation, leaving an important gap in understanding how these constructs interact within contemporary organisational settings.

In the current era of rapid digital transformation and globalisation, organisations worldwide face unprecedented pressure to innovate continuously in order to maintain competitiveness and sustainability. Technological disruption, shifting market demands, and the accelerating adoption of artificial intelligence have fundamentally changed how organisations operate and compete. As a result, innovation performance has become a critical determinant of organisational survival, requiring not only structural and technological readiness but also strong human capital capable of driving continuous improvement and change.

According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO, 2024) Global Innovation Index report, global innovation investment continues to grow, with more than 3.4% of global GDP allocated to research and development activities; yet innovation output remains uneven across countries and organisations. In addition, the World Economic Forum (2023) reports that over 50% of employees globally will require significant reskilling by 2027 due to evolving job roles driven by automation and digitalisation. These figures highlight that despite increasing investment in innovation, the ability of employees to adapt and contribute to innovation remains a persistent global challenge.

At the organisational level, one of the central challenges lies in understanding how employees translate psychological resources into innovative outcomes. Although organisations increasingly emphasise employee-driven innovation, many employees still struggle to actively engage in change-oriented behaviours. The gap between possessing capability and demonstrating proactive innovation behaviour remains significant, indicating that psychological factors alone may not be sufficient to ensure innovation performance.

Previous studies have consistently identified self-efficacy as an important predictor of innovative behaviour and job performance. Research by Newman et al. (2018) and Wei et al. (2020) demonstrates that employees with higher self-efficacy tend to exhibit greater creativity, persistence, and willingness to engage in innovation-related tasks. Similarly, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory provides a strong foundation for explaining how belief in personal capability influences motivation and performance outcomes in organisational settings.

In addition to self-efficacy, recent studies have highlighted the importance of proactive behaviour in driving innovation performance. Strauss et al. (2015) and Parker et al. (2010)

emphasise that proactive change behaviour enables employees to initiate improvements, challenge existing routines, and contribute to organisational transformation. However, empirical findings across studies remain inconsistent, with some research reporting weak or indirect relationships between self-efficacy and innovation performance, suggesting the presence of mediating mechanisms.

Despite the growing body of literature, existing research remains fragmented and lacks integration across psychological and behavioural dimensions. Many studies examine self-efficacy, proactive behaviour, or innovation performance in isolation, without systematically explaining how these constructs interact. Furthermore, limited systematic reviews have attempted to consolidate empirical findings across different industries, methodologies, and cultural contexts, resulting in incomplete theoretical development in this field.

This study is therefore timely, given the increasing demand for innovation-driven performance in both developed and developing economies. Organisations currently face rapid environmental changes that require employees who are not only capable but also proactive in initiating change. Without a clear understanding of the mechanisms that drive innovation behaviour, organisations risk investing in psychological development programmes that do not effectively translate into innovation outcomes.

The novelty of this research lies in its integrative synthesis of self-efficacy, proactive change behaviour, and innovation performance within a unified conceptual framework. Unlike previous studies that focus on isolated relationships, this study emphasises the behavioural mechanism that connects psychological resources to innovation outcomes. By positioning proactive change behaviour as a key mediating construct, this review offers a more comprehensive understanding of how innovation is generated at the employee level.

The primary purpose of this study is to systematically review and synthesise existing literature on the relationship between self-efficacy, proactive change behaviour, and innovation performance. Specifically, the study aims to identify dominant theoretical perspectives, evaluate empirical findings, and develop an integrated understanding of how psychological and behavioural factors jointly influence employee innovation. The main objective is accordingly to construct a conceptual synthesis and future research agenda that addresses existing gaps in the literature.

The contribution of this study lies in its ability to bridge fragmented research streams and provide a consolidated framework linking psychological capability with behavioural execution and innovation outcomes. Practically, the findings offer insights for organisational leaders and human resource practitioners in designing interventions that enhance both employee confidence and proactive behaviour. The benefits of this study extend to academia and practice by supporting the development of more effective innovation strategies, improving employee development programmes, and strengthening organisational competitiveness in dynamic global environments.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to synthesize and evaluate the existing body of knowledge regarding the relationships among self-efficacy, proactive change behavior, and innovation performance Ritterbusch & Teichmann, (2023). Unlike traditional narrative reviews, a systematic literature review follows a structured, transparent, and replicable process for identifying, selecting, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant studies (Xiao & Watson, 2019). This approach enables researchers to minimize selection bias while providing a comprehensive understanding of the current state of knowledge within a specific research domain.

The review process was guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) framework developed by Page et al. (2021). PRISMA provides a rigorous methodological guideline for conducting and reporting systematic reviews through four major stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion (Nazir & Das, 2025).

Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted using the Scopus database, which is recognized as one of the largest and most comprehensive repositories of peer-reviewed scientific literature. Scopus was selected because it provides extensive coverage of high-quality journals in the fields of organizational behavior, human resource management, psychology, management, and innovation studies.

The search process was conducted using combinations of keywords related to the three focal constructs of this study. The search strings included:

- “self-efficacy” AND “innovation performance”
- “self-efficacy” AND “innovative work behavior”
- “self-efficacy” AND “proactive behavior”
- “self-efficacy” AND “proactive change behavior”
- “proactive behavior” AND “innovation performance”
- “proactive change behavior” AND “innovation”
- “employee innovation performance”
- “employee innovation” AND “self-efficacy”

Boolean operators (AND, OR) were used to maximize search sensitivity while maintaining relevance. The search was limited to articles published in English-language peer-reviewed journals.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure consistency and relevance, predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria were established before the screening process.

Inclusion Criteria

Studies were included if they met the following criteria:

1. Published in peer-reviewed journals.
2. Written in English.

3. Published between 2015 and 2025.
4. Examined at least one of the following constructs:
 - o self-efficacy,
 - o proactive change behavior,
 - o proactive behavior,
 - o innovation performance,
 - o innovative work behavior.
5. Conducted within organizational or workplace settings.
6. Available in full-text format.

Exclusion Criteria

Studies were excluded if they:

1. Were conference papers, book chapters, dissertations, editorials, or review notes.
2. Focused exclusively on educational, clinical, or non-organizational contexts.
3. Did not provide sufficient empirical or theoretical discussion relevant to the review objectives.
4. Were duplicate records retrieved from multiple searches.
5. Were unavailable in full text.

Study Selection Process

The study selection process followed the PRISMA 2020 framework.

In the identification stage, all articles retrieved from the database search were exported into a reference management software for organization and duplicate removal. Duplicate records were identified and eliminated prior to screening.

During the screening stage, titles and abstracts were reviewed to determine their relevance to the study objectives. Articles that clearly did not address self-efficacy, proactive behavior, or innovation-related outcomes within organizational settings were excluded.

In the eligibility stage, the full texts of the remaining articles were examined against the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Studies failing to meet the criteria were removed from the final dataset.

The remaining studies were included in the final review and subjected to detailed analysis and synthesis.

Data Extraction

A structured data extraction form was developed to ensure consistency across studies. For each selected article, the following information was recorded:

- Author(s)
- Publication year
- Journal name
- Country of study
- Industry or organizational context
- Research objectives
- Theoretical foundation

- Research methodology
- Sample characteristics
- Key variables
- Main findings
- Implications for future research

The extracted information enabled systematic comparison and synthesis of findings across different studies.

Data Analysis

The selected articles were analyzed using thematic synthesis. This method allows researchers to identify recurring patterns, themes, and relationships within the literature.

The analysis was conducted in three stages (Trifu, Smîdu, Badea, Bulboacă, & Haralambie, (2022)).

First, descriptive analysis was performed to map publication trends, research contexts, geographical distribution, and methodological approaches.

Second, thematic analysis was undertaken to identify major themes related to self-efficacy, proactive change behavior, and innovation performance.

Third, integrative analysis was conducted to synthesize the relationships among the three constructs, identify theoretical perspectives employed by previous researchers, and highlight inconsistencies and research gaps.

The final stage involved developing a future research agenda based on the identified gaps and emerging themes.

Quality Assessment

To ensure the credibility and rigor of the review findings, the methodological quality of the selected studies was evaluated. Assessment criteria included clarity of research objectives, appropriateness of research design, adequacy of sample size, validity and reliability of measurement instruments, and transparency of data analysis procedures.

Only studies demonstrating acceptable methodological quality were retained for final synthesis. This process enhanced the reliability of conclusions derived from the review.

Ethical Considerations

As this study relied exclusively on secondary data obtained from published literature, no human participants were involved. Therefore, ethical approval was not required. Nevertheless, all sources were appropriately acknowledged and cited to ensure academic integrity and compliance with scholarly standards.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Publication Trends and Research Development

The review reveals a growing scholarly interest in the relationships among self-efficacy, proactive change behavior, and innovation-related outcomes. Over the past decade, research on employee innovation has expanded substantially due to increasing organizational demands for

adaptability, creativity, and continuous improvement. This trend has been further accelerated by digital transformation, technological disruption, and the emergence of knowledge-based economies.

The literature demonstrates that self-efficacy has evolved from being primarily studied as a predictor of job performance to becoming an important antecedent of innovation-related outcomes. Similarly, proactive behavior has shifted from a peripheral concept in organizational behavior to a central mechanism explaining how employees contribute to organizational change and innovation.

A notable observation is that while studies on self-efficacy and innovation performance have increased significantly, research explicitly integrating proactive change behavior as an explanatory mechanism remains relatively limited. Most studies continue to examine direct relationships between psychological resources and innovation outcomes, leaving important behavioral processes insufficiently explored.

This pattern suggests that the field is transitioning from identifying whether self-efficacy influences innovation toward understanding how and why such influence occurs.

Dominant Theoretical Perspectives

The literature is dominated by three major theoretical perspectives: Social Cognitive Theory, Proactive Motivation Theory, and Conservation of Resources Theory.

Social Cognitive Theory provides the primary foundation for understanding the role of self-efficacy. According to this perspective, individuals' beliefs about their capabilities influence their choices, effort, persistence, and performance. Employees with stronger self-efficacy are more likely to embrace challenges, persist through difficulties, and engage in complex tasks associated with innovation.

Proactive Motivation Theory complements this perspective by explaining how confidence translates into proactive action. The theory proposes that proactive behavior is driven by motivational states related to future-oriented thinking and perceived capability. Self-efficacy functions as a motivational resource that encourages employees to initiate change rather than merely react to environmental demands.

Meanwhile, Conservation of Resources Theory suggests that individuals who possess valuable psychological resources are more willing to invest those resources in challenging activities. Self-efficacy can therefore be viewed as a personal resource that enables employees to engage in proactive change efforts and innovation-related activities despite uncertainty and potential risks.

Collectively, these theories indicate that self-efficacy alone is insufficient to produce innovation. Instead, confidence serves as a psychological resource that must be translated into proactive behaviors before innovative outcomes can emerge.

Self-Efficacy as a Driver of Innovation Performance

Across the reviewed studies, self-efficacy consistently emerges as one of the strongest individual predictors of innovation-related outcomes (Ren & Shen, 2024). Employees with high

self-efficacy demonstrate greater willingness to experiment with new ideas, challenge conventional approaches, and engage in problem-solving activities.

Several explanations account for this relationship.

First, self-efficacious employees perceive challenging situations as opportunities rather than threats. This perspective encourages experimentation and risk-taking, both of which are essential for innovation.

Second, self-efficacy increases resilience when innovation attempts encounter obstacles or failures. Because innovation often involves uncertainty, employees who maintain confidence in their abilities are more likely to persist despite setbacks.

Third, self-efficacy enhances learning behavior. Confident employees are more willing to acquire new knowledge, explore emerging technologies, and develop competencies that support innovation.

However, the review also reveals that the direct relationship between self-efficacy and innovation performance is often weaker than expected. Several studies suggest that additional behavioral and contextual factors are necessary to transform psychological confidence into observable innovative outcomes.

This finding indicates that self-efficacy may function more effectively as an enabling condition than as a direct determinant of innovation performance.

The Critical Role of Proactive Change Behavior

One of the most significant findings of this review is the growing recognition of proactive change behavior as a bridge connecting psychological resources and innovation outcomes.

Innovation rarely occurs through passive compliance. Instead, innovation requires employees to identify opportunities, challenge existing routines, and initiate improvements. These actions reflect the essence of proactive change behavior.

The literature suggests that employees with strong self-efficacy are more likely to engage in proactive change behavior because they possess the confidence necessary to influence their work environment (Bozbayindir & Alev, 2018). Such employees are more willing to propose new ideas, advocate for improvements, and participate in organizational transformation initiatives.

Importantly, proactive change behavior serves as a mechanism through which self-efficacy becomes translated into innovation performance (Mumtaz & Parahoo, 2020). Employees may possess high confidence, but unless they actively initiate change, their confidence may not contribute meaningfully to innovation outcomes.

This finding highlights the importance of moving beyond traditional direct-effect models. Understanding employee innovation requires examining the behavioral pathways that connect psychological resources with innovation performance.

The review therefore supports the argument that proactive change behavior functions as a critical mediating mechanism linking self-efficacy and innovation performance.

Emerging Research Gaps

Despite significant progress, several important gaps remain in the literature.

Gap 1: Overemphasis on Direct Relationships

Most studies continue to focus on direct relationships between self-efficacy and innovation-related outcomes. Comparatively fewer studies investigate the behavioral processes that explain how self-efficacy contributes to innovation.

Future research should therefore focus on mediation models involving proactive change behavior, innovative work behavior, learning behavior, and knowledge-sharing behavior.

Gap 2: Limited Attention to Service Industries

The majority of existing studies have been conducted in manufacturing, technology, engineering, and knowledge-intensive sectors.

In contrast, research in hospitality, tourism, healthcare, and other service industries remains relatively limited.

This represents a significant gap because innovation in service contexts often depends heavily on employee initiative, customer interaction, and experiential service delivery.

Gap 3: Insufficient Generational Perspectives

Although Millennials and Generation Z constitute an increasingly large proportion of the workforce, relatively few studies explicitly investigate generational differences in the self-efficacy–innovation relationship.

Given the unique characteristics of younger generations, including technological fluency, desire for autonomy, and preference for meaningful work, future studies should examine whether generational factors influence proactive change behavior and innovation performance.

Gap 4: Lack of Cross-Cultural Evidence

Most empirical evidence originates from China, Europe, and North America.

Research conducted in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, remains comparatively scarce.

This limitation raises important questions regarding the generalizability of existing findings across cultural contexts characterized by different values, leadership styles, and organizational norms.

Gap 5: Neglect of Mindfulness and Human-Centered Perspectives

Current studies predominantly emphasize psychological capability and behavioral initiative.

However, relatively little attention has been given to mindfulness-related constructs such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, mindful attention, and meaningful work.

As organizations increasingly prioritize employee well-being and sustainable performance, integrating mindfulness perspectives may offer new insights into how self-efficacy contributes to proactive behavior and innovation.

Proposed Future Research Agenda

Based on the synthesis of existing literature, this review proposes a future research framework in which proactive change behavior functions as a central mechanism linking self-efficacy and innovation performance.

The proposed framework suggests that employees with strong self-efficacy are more likely to engage in proactive change behavior, which subsequently enhances innovation performance. Furthermore, contextual factors such as psychological safety, leadership support, organizational culture, and learning climate may strengthen or weaken these relationships.

Future research should prioritize testing this framework within service-intensive industries, particularly hospitality and tourism, where employee initiative and innovation play a critical role in customer experience and organizational competitiveness.

In addition, researchers are encouraged to explore emerging constructs such as mindfulness, meaningful work, employee well-being, and human-centered leadership as complementary factors that may enhance the effectiveness of self-efficacy in promoting proactive change behavior and innovation performance.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review synthesises contemporary evidence on the relationships among self-efficacy, proactive change behaviour, and innovation performance in organisational contexts. The findings indicate that self-efficacy consistently functions as a critical psychological resource that strengthens employees' confidence, persistence, adaptability, and readiness to engage in complex and challenging work. However, the review confirms that self-efficacy does not automatically translate into innovation performance. Instead, innovation is more effectively achieved when self-efficacy is channelled through proactive change behaviour, which serves as a key behavioural mechanism enabling employees to initiate improvements, challenge existing practices, and actively contribute to organisational transformation. The integration of Social Cognitive Theory, Proactive Motivation Theory, and Conservation of Resources Theory further supports the conclusion that innovation performance emerges from the interaction between psychological capability and proactive behavioural execution, rather than from psychological factors alone.

For future research, several directions are recommended to advance the literature. First, empirical studies should further examine the mediating role of proactive change behaviour and explore additional behavioural mechanisms — such as knowledge sharing, learning agility, and innovative work behaviour — to strengthen explanatory models. Second, future research should expand into underexplored contexts, particularly service industries such as hospitality, healthcare, and tourism, as well as developing economies where evidence remains limited. Third, cross-cultural and generational analyses are needed to understand how self-efficacy and proactive behaviour operate among Millennials and Generation Z in diverse organisational settings. Finally, future studies are encouraged to incorporate emerging perspectives such as psychological safety, mindfulness, leadership style, and employee well-being, as well as to employ longitudinal and mixed-method designs to capture dynamic relationships over time. These directions will help build a more comprehensive and context-sensitive understanding of how employees' psychological resources translate into sustained innovation performance.

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