

The impact of self-regulatory skills on employee performance in private businesses in Prizren

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Abstract: Background: Self-regulation skills are an important element for private businesses, this has been proven more and more by numerous empirical studies.

Aim: The aim of this research is to identify the importance of self-regulation skills, more specifically the role of these skills in employee performance and counterproductive behaviors at work.

Methodology: The research was conducted with 100 employees in private businesses in Prizren. To find the results, the self-report questionnaire “The Self-Regulation Questionnaire” (SRQ) was used, which measured self-regulation skills, and the questionnaire “Individual Work Performance Questionnaire” (IWPQ) was used, which measured work performance and counterproductive behaviors at work. Data analysis was done through Pearson correlation and simple linear regression.

Results: The results of this research support the hypotheses that self-regulatory skills are related to work performance, more specifically to general, contextual performance, while no significant result was found regarding the relationship between self-regulatory skills and adaptive performance. The hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between self-regulatory skills and counterproductive behaviors is supported, but with a low positive relationship. The data from this study will serve organizational psychologists in our country for the benefit of organizations and employees.

Keywords: self-regulatory skills, performance, counterproductive behaviors, businesses.

1. INTRODUCTION

The future makes us work for the present. Ideas about the future manifest themselves in different ways, people create beliefs about what they can do, anticipate behaviors that may have consequences, set goals for themselves and plan a variety of behaviors that increase the chances of desired outcomes, so the preconceived events of the future serve as motivators of the present by regulating people's behavior (Bandura, 1991). All these behaviors that serve our good or the goals we have for the future are not always easy to control, and for this it is required to possess certain skills.

The ability to regulate and control our behaviors or reactions is part of what we call self-regulatory skills (Thomson & Jaque, 2017). Self-regulatory skills include more than just controlling behavior; some of the responses that require self-regulation include: controlling thoughts, managing emotions, overcoming unwanted impulses (e.g., not eating sweets when you are on a diet), regulating attention, guiding behavior, decision-making, and many other functions (Baumeister et al., 2007).

So, when we talk about self-regulation, we are also referring to changing the response or suppressing our internal desire, when we change our real response to one that is less pleasant for us, but that is more convenient at that moment, therefore people who lack self-regulation skills may have lower achievements, for example, those people give up more easily, do not cope with failure, have less ability to achieve their goals, try less and in organizational terms have even less ability to choose the effective type of performance (Baumeister et al., 2007).

Research says that self-regulation skills are important for emotional well-being and are those skills that encourage you to rest for long-term interest (Stonsy, 2011). According to the authors Gröpel & Kuhl (2006), these skills have an impact on balancing different areas of life. Such findings are important for emphasizing the importance of research on self-regulatory skills in organizations. According to authors Neal et al. (2017) the importance of research on self-regulatory skills in the workplace has come as a result of observing practical problems that we often encounter in organizations and the undeniable importance of understanding the mechanisms involved in improving and solving problems.

Despite the importance of performance at work and numerous studies on performance, little attention has been paid to its definition, what is difficult to define is whether performance is any behavior that leads to the desired result or only the outcome achieved, or only behaviors relevant to the organization (Sonntag & Frese, 2002-). Various studies also point to factors that may have an impact on job performance, which are: social skills (Hochwarter et al., 2006), job satisfaction (Bakotić, 2016), perceived social influence and work involvement (Castanheira, 2015).

In the literature we find several types of performance at work, such as: contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive behaviors. Contextual performance refers to behaviors that are necessary to support the social structure of the organization, this type of performance is not specific to a particular job, but can be found in all types of jobs (Witt et al., 2002).

Adaptive performance is a new type of performance defined later by researchers, but considering the nature of organizations today. This type of performance plays an important role in increasing the effectiveness and productivity of the organization, but also of the workers and considering the dynamics and constant changes in organizations, adaptive performance is considered to be a very important feature (Naami et al., 2014). Adaptive performance is the type of performance that is needed in the event of changes in the organization, that is, the employee's ability to change his or her behavior based on the new requirements of the organization (Charbonnier-Voirin & Roussel, 2012).

Counterproductive behaviors are related to voluntary behaviors of an employee that harm the organization or even the workers in the organization, recently these behaviors are considered quite widespread and cost organizations a lot of money per year (Zhou, 2018). According to authors Ng & Feldman (2009) counterproductive behaviors are something that no manager wants to see in the organization they lead, but such behaviors are almost present in every organization, so it is in the interest of every workplace to learn how to prevent and eliminate counterproductive behaviors. For organizations, counterproductive behaviors are a source of concern because they threaten the well-being of the organization (Krings & Bollmann, 2011). According to Kelloway et al. (2010) counterproductive behaviors are protests through which employees try to express dissatisfaction or resolve an injustice within the organization, but according to them, not every counterproductive behavior can be considered of such a nature.

So, in a word, we can say that from all this discussion about the role and importance of self-regulatory skills, it has been understood how important these skills are to be taken into account in the organization by leaders, because their treatment contributes to the success and performance of the organization. Based on what we have said so far, we understand that this paper aims to explain the impact of self-regulatory skills on the performance of employees in the workplace of private businesses in Prizren (including: adaptive performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive behaviors).

The main questions of this paper are:

1. How much is the relationship between self-regulatory skills and the overall performance of employees in the workplace of private businesses in Prizren?
2. How much is the relationship between self-regulatory skills and the contextual performance of employees in the workplace of private businesses in Prizren?
3. How much is the relationship between self-regulatory skills and the adaptive performance of employees in the workplace of private businesses in Prizren?
4. How much is the relationship between self-regulatory skills and counterproductive behaviors in the workplace of private businesses in Prizren?

2. REVIEW LITERATURE

In the introduction, we have presented an explanation of the importance of all concepts related to the purpose of the paper and the hypotheses of the study. For all concepts related to self-regulatory skills and performance at work, a more detailed explanation for their understanding is presented in the form of definitions defined by different authors. Initially, we

explained the term self-regulation, then adaptive, contextual performance and counterproductive behaviors. The term “self-regulation” is encountered in various literature and studies. Different researchers also give different meanings to self-regulation depending on the branch they study (Zeidner et al., 2000). However, what is common in almost all areas where self-regulation is mentioned is the importance of this ability from early age to old age, that is, throughout life. There are many definitions of self-regulation, the simplest definition is that “self-regulation is about an individual’s ability to change, adapt, or modify their own behaviors” (Hagger, 2010).

According to Vohs & Baumeister (2004), self-regulation involves multiple processes of the human mind that exert control over the functions, states, and internal processes of the self. According to Zimmerman & Schunk (2011), self-regulation refers to the process by which individuals themselves activate or maintain cognitions, affects, and behaviors that are directed toward their goals. In order to have control, people must exercise self-regulatory skills; failure to exercise self-regulatory skills would allow interference from irrelevant or distracting emotions and cognitions that can reduce the ability to make decisions for effective action (Bobeviski & McLennan, 1998).

According to the authors Forgas et al. (2009) say that the many problems in Western society are essentially the failure of self-regulation: drug use, alcohol, tobacco, obesity, unplanned pregnancies, crime, violence, prejudice, low achievement in school, sexually transmitted diseases, gambling problems, etc., so without self-regulation the individual would not be able to adapt to the demands and difficulties of such a complex social environment. The lack of self-regulation skills can have significant consequences for the individual (Mackey & Perrewé, 2014).

According to Schunk & Ertmer (2000) self-regulation skills also refer to the level of being active and motivated of a student to learn by regulating different dimensions of learning such as the methods they use, the efforts and the resources they use. They can also predict school readiness in young children and academic success in the future (Willis & Dinehart, 2013). Authors Lord et al. (2010) say that self-regulatory skills are very important for success in today's organizations (Cervone et al., 2006).

Performance is an organizational value that individuals in the organization are expected to have (Motowidlo, 2003). According to authors June & Mahmood (2011), employee performance at work is crucial for organizational performance and the individual's compatibility with the work they do increases employee performance, therefore, the individual's adaptation to the role at work is very important for organizations.

Regarding the importance of self-regulatory skills for work performance, research by authors De Stobbeleir et al. (2017) has found that employees who are focused on goals, exhibit self-regulatory skills and thus increase performance especially when creative work is required and according to authors Mulki et al. (2015) employees who have emotional regulation skills have less interpersonal conflicts, experience less stress and have higher performance.

Contextual performance supports the environment where task performance is executed (Penney & Borman, 2017). It is important for organizations because it represents the behavior of the employee that is influenced by his motivation (Griffin et al., 2000). Contextual performance includes behaviors such as helping and cooperating with others, volunteering and doing more than the minimum required, insisting on completing the work, following procedures even if they seem inconvenient, and supporting and defending the organization's objectives (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001). Another positive side of contextual performance is that according to research by Harari et al. (2016) it has a negative correlation with counterproductive behaviors in the workplace.

Authors Jawahar & Ferris (2011) have found that employees who exhibit high levels of contextual performance are more likely to be promoted. The level of contextual performance at work affects the assessment of overall performance by supervisors (Johnson, 2001). Contextual performance is what makes an organization more effective and successful (Reilly & Aronson, 2009).

Another new type of performance is adaptive performance. Adaptive performance reflects an employee’s efforts to acquire new competencies and be able to respond to changes in the organization (Shoss et al., 2011). According to Shoss et al. (2012), adaptive performance is an aspect of performance that reflects the acquisition of improved competencies in response to change. According to Hui et al. (2011), it has been concluded that individuals who have high levels of self-regulatory focus on promotion have better adaptive performance than those who have low levels. As a component of overall employee performance, adaptive performance refers to an individual’s ability to change his or her behavior to meet the demands of a new environment. The concept is important for organizations that face particularly complex and unstable business conditions (Charbonnier-Voirin & Roussel, 2012).

Understanding the existence of counterproductive behaviors is a very important issue for organizations, since these behaviors have always been problematic for employers and are quite widespread, counterproductive behaviors have different forms, regardless of who these behaviors are directed at, they always remain a negative phenomenon and quite determinant for organizations, this is one of the reasons why organizations attach importance to predicting the possibility of the occurrence of counterproductive behaviors although it can be quite difficult (Ramshida & Manikandan, 2013). According to a study, counterproductive behaviors are positively correlated with lack of courtesy, organizational constraints and interpersonal conflicts in the organization (Penney & Spector, 2005).

3. METHODOLOGY

For the realization of this work, literature from various authors was used, through reports, literature and from various scientific journals related to the topic in question. To realize this scientific work, its work was based on the quantitative research method. As a research instrument, we used the questionnaire. As a sample, we took 100 employees of private businesses in Prizren, regarding the impact of self-regulatory skills on the performance of employees of these businesses. All surveyed employees belonged to the Municipality of Prizren.

In order to achieve the answer to the purpose of this research, it is important to test the research hypotheses, which we have presented below.

H1: There is a positive correlation between self-regulatory skills and the general performance of employees in the workplace of private businesses in Prizren.

H2: There is a positive correlation between self-regulatory skills and the contextual performance of employees in the workplace of private businesses in Prizren.

H3: There is a positive relationship between self-regulatory skills and adaptive performance of employees in the workplace of private businesses in Prizren.

H4: There is a positive relationship between self-regulatory skills and counterproductive behaviors in the workplace of private businesses in Prizren.

Research design

The design of this research is descriptive, meaning that questionnaires were used to describe the data later using a statistical analysis program. The independent variable of the study is self-regulatory skills, while the dependent variables are: performance and counterproductive behaviors at work. The study was quantitative and data analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences IBM-SPSS-21.

Research population/sample

In this research, the participants were employees from the Municipality of Prizren who were aged from 18 to over 50. This research was conducted with 100 employees from private businesses in Prizren. In order to conduct the survey, the employees in these businesses were sent questionnaires via a link along with the purpose of the research and the notification that the data would remain confidential. The employees who completed the questionnaires were able to do so at any time and place.

Research measurement instruments

The questionnaire served as the main measurement instrument for the research. The instrument used is a self-report questionnaire: "The Self-Regulation Questionnaire" (SRQ) by the authors Brown, Miller and Lawendowski (1999) this instrument for measuring self-regulation skills. The answers in this questionnaire were expressed through a Likert scale and ranged from 1 ("Strongly disagree"), 2 ("Disagree"), 3 ("Don't know"), 4 ("Agree") and 5 ("Strongly agree"). The internal consistency of the questionnaire is high (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$).

The other questionnaire was for measuring performance: "Individual Work Performance Questionnaire" (IWPQ) by the author Koopmans (2013), this questionnaire also included questions about counterproductive behaviors in the workplace. Depending on the statement, the responses were made through the following scales: 1 ("Insufficient") and 2 ("Very good"), then 1 ("Much worse") and 2 ("Much better") and the other statements with: 1 ("Never") to 5 ("Quite often") also 1 ("Rarely") to 5 ("Always"). The internal consistency of this questionnaire is also high (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$).

4. RESULTS

In this section, we present the research results obtained from the questionnaire survey with respondents. The Spss program was used to conduct all the study analyses. The descriptive analyses on self-regulation skills, work performance and counterproductive behaviors are presented in the first table (table 1).

Table 1: Descriptive analyses of key variables

Variables	N	M	DS	Min	Max	% Missing
Self-regulatory Skills	100	228.5	25.5	103	275	0
Performance	100	123.3	32.4	-11	161	0
C.productiv Behavior	100	41.3	5.3	28	50	0

Legend: N= total number of participants, M= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation

To find the relationship between self-regulatory skills with types of performance and counterproductive behaviors at work, the Pearson coefficient was calculated (Table 2). Correlational analyses showed a moderate positive relationship between self-regulatory skills and general work performance ($r=.33, p<.001$), as well as for the relationship between self-regulatory skills and contextual performance ($r=.32, p<.001$). Self-regulatory skills turned out to have a low positive relationship with counterproductive behaviors ($r=.21, p<.020$). Non-significant results were found for the relationship between self-regulatory skills and adaptive performance ($r=.11, p<.241$).

Table. 2: Analysis of the correlation between self-regulatory skills, performance type and counterproductive behaviors

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Self-regulatory Skills	1	-	-	-	-	-
2. Performance	.33**	1	-	-	-	-
3.Contextual Performance	.32**	.85**	.31**	1	-	-
4. Adaptive Performance	.11	.52**	.10	.15	1	-
5. Counterproductive Behaviors	.21*	.20*	.45**	.06	.05	1

** The correlation is significant at the level 0.01

* The correlation is significant at the level 0.05

The figures (1,2, and 3) presenting below is showing the correlation between self-regulatory skills, overall performance, types of work performance, as well as the correlation between self-regulatory skills and counterproductive behaviors.

Figure 1: The relationship between self-regulatory skills and job performance. $r=.33$

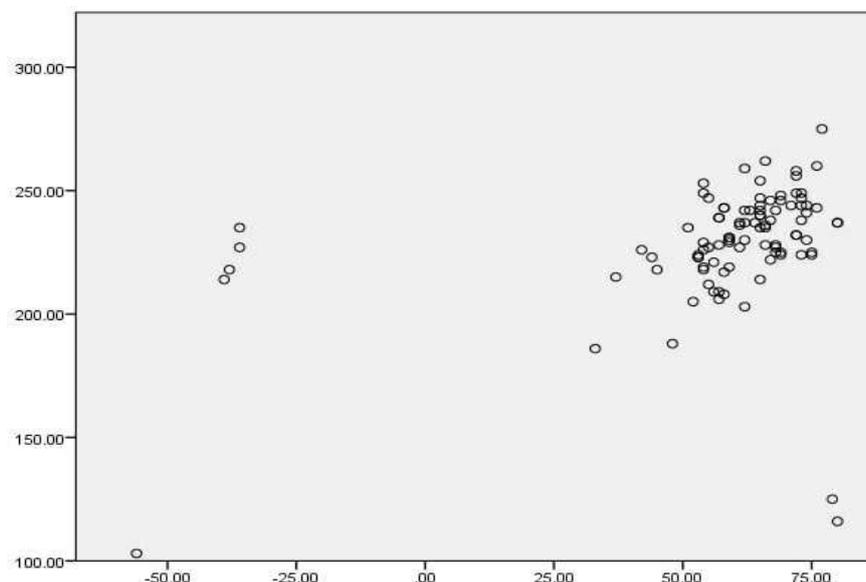


Figure 2: The relationship between self-regulatory skills and contextual performance. $r=.32$

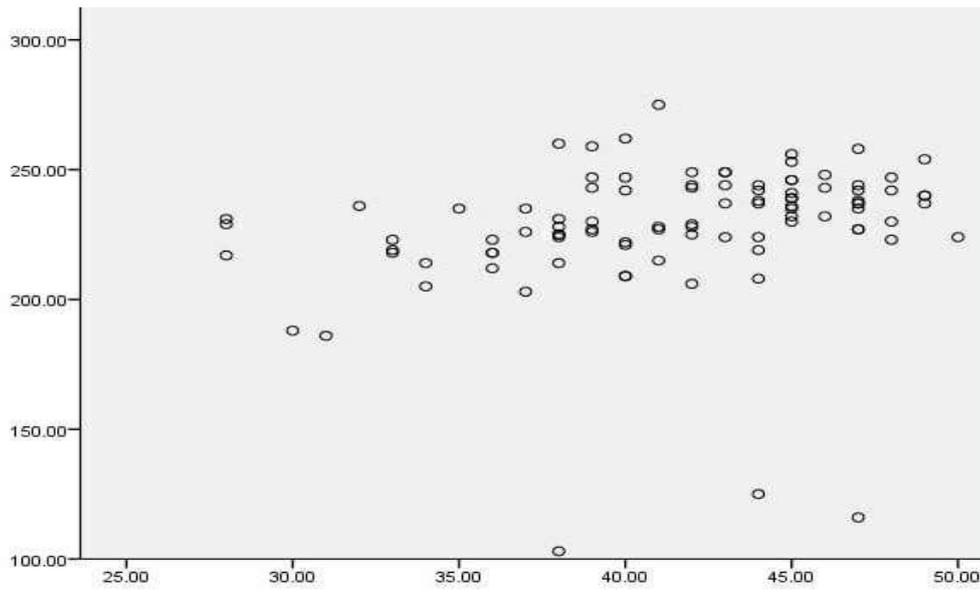


Figure 3: The relationship between self-regulatory skills and counterproductive behaviors. $r=.21$

To predict overall performance along with types of performance and counterproductive behaviors in the workplace based on self-regulatory skills, simple linear regression was calculated (Table 3). For the impact of self-regulatory skills on overall performance at work, a significant regression equation was found ($F=13.613$, $p<.001$) and $R^2=.114$. A significant result was also found for the impact of self-regulatory skills with contextual performance ($F=12.001$, $p<.001$) and $R^2=.109$. Regarding the impact of self-regulatory skills on counterproductive behaviors, it was found ($F=5.689$, $p<.026$) and $R^2=.054$. While, for the impact of self-regulatory skills and adaptive performance, a non-significant regression equation was found ($F=1.265$, $p<.263$) and $R^2=.131$. So, overall job performance is predicted by 13.6% by self-regulatory skills, contextual performance by 12%, and counterproductive behaviors by 5.6% by self-regulatory skills.

Table 3: Summary of simple linear regression analysis

Predictor variables	B	SE (B)	β	t	p	Sig(p)
Performance	.428	.121	.340	3.528		.001
Contextual Performance	.325	.095	.332	3.433		.001
Adaptive Performance	.052	.047	.115	1.127		.260
Counterproductive Behaviors	.047	.020	.231	2.311		.021

5. DISCUSSIONS

The purpose of the research is to identify the role and importance of self-regulatory skills in different types of work performance, including counterproductive behaviors. Based on the reviewed literature, including the research of authors Latham & Locke (1991), according to which employees who orient their behaviors towards goals increase self-regulation and thus performance, we found agreement with the hypothesis of the current research that self-regulatory skills have a significant positive relationship with overall work performance, such a relationship was also found between self-regulatory skills and contextual performance. Although self-regulation is associated with adaptive functioning in various domains (Buckner et al., 2009), in the current study no significant relationship was found between self-regulatory skills and adaptive performance in the workplace. Regarding the relationship between self-regulatory skills and counterproductive behaviors at work, the hypothesis that these variables have a negative relationship was not supported.

To answer the research questions, regarding the relationship between self-regulatory skills and overall performance at work, a significant correlation was found $r=.32$ $p<.001$. A significant correlation was also found between self-regulatory skills and contextual performance $r=.31$, $p<.001$. A non-significant result was found only between self-regulatory skills and adaptive performance, where the result of the correlation analysis was: $r=.11$, $p<.241$. The least expected result was that of the

relationship between self-regulatory skills and counterproductive behaviors at work, where a low but significant positive relationship was found: $r=.21$, $p<.020$.

The impact that regulatory skills have on overall performance and other types of performance, including counterproductive behaviors, was also analyzed through regression analysis. The findings show an impact of self-regulatory skills of 13.6% on overall performance, 12% on contextual performance, 5.6% on counterproductive behaviors. Regarding the impact of self-regulatory skills on adaptive performance, no significant results were found.

A limitation of this research can be considered that only measurement based on self-report questionnaires was used, therefore, as a recommendation for future research, it is necessary to take into account the performance reported by employee supervisors and also to take into account the fact that self-regulatory skills are not always studied only as a whole, but certain elements can be extracted such as: attention control, motivation control, emotion control, etc., which according to the authors Walton & Wood (1992) can be researched in organizational psychology for their effectiveness in various organizational processes.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This research contributes to the organizational psychology literature in our context, where other organizational psychology researchers can build on this research to expand their knowledge on the relevant topics that the research addresses. Given that self-regulation skills can be learned through modeling, through providing opportunities to practice skills, by learning how, why, and when to use skills in complex situations, by structuring an environment where self-regulation becomes manageable, by providing a shield against environmental stressors (this includes eliminating opportunities for risky behavior), by providing positive discipline, and by reducing the intensity of emotions in conflict situations (Murray & Rosanbalm, 2017), it is important that such knowledge about self-regulation be used for the benefit of organizations.

There is considerable research that expresses this. Hertzog & Dunlosky (2011) believe that interventions that promote self-regulation have the potential to improve functional competence in cognitively demanding situations. Research by Muraven et al. (1999) shows that self-control exercises can increase the level of self-regulation skills. The results of research by Leach et al. (2005) suggest that self-regulation training also has a positive impact on the organization because it increases self-regulation skills and performance, while reducing role ambiguity.

This is also supported by Vancouver & Day (2005), according to whom interventions based on self-regulation principles have been shown to influence and increase performance at work. Research by Lin et al. (2016) shows that receiving training by supervisors that serves to increase employees' self-regulatory skills can simultaneously affect the focus of employees on engagement and performance. Training supervisors to take on the role of trainer/coach or instructor of employees is very important because according to Pousa & Mathieu (2015) such a thing can increase the level of self-regulatory skills of employees and increases overall organizational resilience by creating a competitive advantage.

In addition to increasing performance at work through increasing self-regulatory skills, it is important to reduce counterproductive behaviors, since these behaviors are determinative for organizations and their employees because they include both breaking laws and breaking social norms (Czarnota-Bojarska, 2015). According to Chang & Smithikrai (2010), another way to reduce counterproductive behaviors is through the implementation of organizational policies to strengthen justice. These recommendations and the findings of the current research are expected to help organizational psychologists in resolving issues related to job performance.

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