

# AN INSIGHT INTO COMPETENCE AND COMPETENCE BUILDING

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## ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the different concepts of competence and the building of competence. Competence is the abilities or skills of employees to perform the job. Competent employees are what organizations yearn for as the success of any organization depends upon the performance and capability of the human capital. Various methods of competence building have also been discussed in this paper.

Keywords- competence, competence building, training and development programs

## INTRODUCTION

Every individual or employee is expected to perform to the best possible extent to accomplish both the individual and the organizational goals. In this competitive era, one with the right attitude, skills, behaviour, knowledge, and attitude is required. In a nutshell, the need of the hour is competent employees.

This paper focuses on the deep understanding of the word “Competence” and how to build the employees' competency for the organization's benefit. Competence has been defined in a number of ways by different researchers. There is a lot of confusion related to the meaning of competence. This study provides a review of the literature on competence and the building of competence.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines competence as the ability to do something well. Competence is the knowledge, skills, and behaviour the employees possess for doing a particular job or task. David McClelland wrote a paper “Testing for competence rather than intelligence” in 1973 where he suggested that tests should assess competencies including cognitive abilities.

According to Boyatzis (1982), “Competence lies in the individual's capacity which superposes the person's behavior with needed parameters as the results of this adaptation make the organization to hire them.”

According to UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization, 2002), “Competence is a collection of personal skills related to knowledge and personal specifications which can create competence in people without having practice and other specialized knowledge.”

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON COMPETENCE**

**Hager and Gonczi (1996)** competence is a possession of a series of desirable attributes including knowledge, skills, and abilities such as problem-solving, analysis, and communication.

**Epstein and Hundert (2002)** define professional competence as the judicious use of communication, knowledge, technical skills, emotions, and values for both individual and group goals. Competence defines the relation between ability and task. It should also be noted that competence is developmental.

**Bilken and Burke (2006)** competence as presumed competence among students with or without disabilities. Competence is said to be presumed among individuals and teachers do not need to prove its existence.

**Mulder (2006)** competence is the general ability or capability of individuals to perform a task, or activity or to solve a problem. Competency is a part of competence.

**Alexander and The Disciplined Reading and Learning Research Laboratory (2012)** competence is articulated as a dynamic concept and represents the ability to modulate one’s reading knowledge, belief, and abilities. Competence is about continued growth and development.

**Jordan (2004)** competence refers to the mastery of a task, and the capacity to be effective and competitively successful. A type of competence has also been discussed known as relational competence. It is the capacity to move another person, to bring a change in a relationship. It is the ability to participate in growth-fostering relationships.

**Srivastava (2005)** competencies of employees in any organization need to be continuously nurtured and developed. Competencies may be upgraded and new competencies can be built through internal development, inter-firm collaboration, mergers, and acquisitions. Any type of firm needs to have competencies and develop them in order to achieve competitive advantage.

**Mc Mullan et al. (2002)** competence or competences are related to a job that describes an action or behaviour an individual demonstrates in their performance. Competency is person-orientated which means the qualities

or characteristics of the person that resulted in superior performance in a job or task. Competence is dynamic and a relational concept.

**Fernandez et al. (2012)** illustrate various concepts of competence in the field of health science. Competence is composed of knowledge, skills, and other components. It is agreed upon that competence includes a minimum of two components which are knowledge and skills. Competence can be defined as the combination of different components to perform, do something successful, or manage difficult situations. Competence is evident when it is in action or when it is used to achieve and attain an expected performance.

## **COMPETENCE BUILDING**

Competence is a developmental concept. It can be developed by providing training to the employees of an organization to seek command over their skills and knowledge.

The competence development approach is used in many organizations. This approach enhances the productivity and efficiency of the employees in achieving the vision and mission of the organization. Building competence requires the management to adopt strategies and practices that foster the competencies required for performing the job or tasks. Building the competencies motivates the workforce and generates loyalty in the minds of the employees to stay in the company.

Competence building is a strategy to be adopted by the human resource management. Various methods and practices can be followed to acquire the competencies to attain the objectives of the organization.

According to Guallino and Prevot (2008) competency is developed by the organization to achieve competitive advantage. The organization should first identify the required competence and then invest in the process of developing it.

Vanhaverbeke and Peters (2005) formulated that strategic vision gives direction and sense to the development of new competencies. Competence building and corporate venturing are related to corporate strategy making. New competence building refines and drives the cognition of corporate strategy.

Prahalad and Hamel (2003) building core competencies requires investment in needed technologies and infusion of resources throughout the business units. Competence is defined as the glue that binds existing

businesses and is regarded as an engine for new business development. But it is important to nurture develop and protect the competencies as knowledge fades if not used.

Vathanaphas and Thai-ngam (2007) competencies are the basis of human resource management. Effective implementation should include the introduction of competency-building programs for each job as employee's competencies are linked with the job and organizational performance. Improved employee competencies result in better job and organizational productivity. Building the working capability of the employees can be implemented by designing cost-effective training interventions that can develop the competencies required to perform the job or task. Action-learning-based programs can also be carried out to motivate employee competency. Action learning is done by letting job holders perform tasks and share their learning experiences. A competency model can also be developed and used as a framework for various human resource functions.

Brophy and Kiely (2002) competencies are skills, knowledge, behaviours, and attitudes needed to perform effectively. This paper suggested three methods to develop competency, i.e., task analysis and functional interview, critical incident technique, and repertory grid technique. Functional interview and task analysis require participants to rank the tasks according to the time spent and the degree of importance. The critical incident technique is to identify the skills that differentiate between success and failure at critical times. Repertory grid interview is to identify the skills that distinguish between effective and ineffective performers.

It can thus be concluded that competence can be built in the employees of any organization with proper implementation of practices and development programs. Competent and contented employees are the best resource for any company and lead to the attainment of the goals of the organization. Human resources are the most important part of any organization. Developing their skills and competencies is the responsibility of the management. Competency-based approach should be adopted in every function of human resource management as it will eventually result in motivated and satisfied employees. Motivated employees will remain in the organization to achieve their personal goals and the mission of the organization.

Prasad and Manjunath (2020) in their research focus on competencies as a precise way to distinguish superior from average or below-average employees. A competency model defining the standards required and those available should be developed by the organization to develop the competencies of those employees who are expected to perform efficiently.

A competency approach should be adopted right from the recruitment process of identifying candidates for the job. Training and development programs should aim at building and developing the competencies needed for superior performance of the job or task. Building the competencies of the employees should be a strategy for the realization of the organizational goals. The competency approach in the field of human resource development gives a competitive edge to the organization and also motivates and retains the human capital for a long period of time. Competent employees perform efficiently and have a higher degree of job satisfaction and future career prospects. They are the most valuable asset for the organization. The management should integrate the competency approach and the basic human resource practices strategically to produce competent and satisfied employees for the benefit of the individuals and the organization as a whole.

## CONCLUSION

Globalization and technological innovations have raised the level of competition to another level. The rapid changes in the business environment require competent employees for the smooth flow of business in the organization. Human resource management must align the strategies of the organization with the competencies required for achieving the goals and developing the working capability of the employees. Proper practices should be followed and adopted for the training and development of the competencies of the employees. The organization must work towards focussing on the achievement of the mission of the organization through competent and motivated employees. Employees should feel that they are needed by the organization and the development of their career within the organization is focussed upon. Competent employees perform better even in complex situations. Modernization and technological advancement require competent and superior performers. Competency-based processes result in greater efficiency and productivity. Management should take up competency as a strategy toward organizational goals.

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