MANAGERIAL COMPETENCIES AND IMPACT ON MANAGEMENT LEVELS

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Abstract: *Only in the last couple of decades the importance of managerial competencies were realized and researchers started studying the required competencies to be successful and effective managers. There are only a few empirical studies on this subject and those are mostly in the fields of education and engineering.*

The managerial competencies and their effect on management skills on different management levels may vary across sectors and businesses, but this paper aims to draw a general outline for the competencies required to be an effective manager. It also aims to outline the impact of those competencies on different management levels.

Keywords: Competency, Impact on Management Levels, Managerial Competencies

INTRODUCTION

With the emergence of the Information Technology era and thanks to the Internet, regardless of their size, companies may enter the global market without facing any problems. These new technologies and the internet transformed even very small local markets into global markets and local players into global players. This reality caused all the bricks to fall down, and changed the rules of the business life. In this fast paced global market, therefore, every businessman who wants to establish a sustainable business or just wants to survive in global business jungle must think, calculate, and act globally.

Just within the last two decades, multi billion US Dollar companies like Circuit City, General Motors, Compaq, Kodak, SAAB, Enron and many more that no one thought could go out of business, found themselves in financial struggle. Finally the companies either filed for bankruptcy or were acquired by competitors for the fraction of the value that they were worth just a couple of months or years ago. This new business world proved to be not only fast pacing but also fatal. It also proved that only the organizations that were managed efficiently and effectively may survive or reach their goals (Abbaszadeh at al., 2012:811, Bhardwaj and Punia 2013:71).

Today, almost all companies use competency based human resources management to some extent (Boyatzis, 2007:5). But employing managers who possess required competencies is not an easy task to accomplish. Not only employing the right person to the right position solves the problems, because the competencies required for a specific position may change in time, and also management and or operational blindness occurs after a while (Altinay *at al.*, 2012:15, Aslan, M., 2016:171). The real challenge lies on to keep the competencies sharpened all the time.

WHAT IS COMPETENCE?

The term competence has been research subject of several researchers, and almost all researchers have defined competency more or less as Spencer & Spencer did in 1993: "a competency is an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to criterion-referenced effective and/or superior performance in a job or situation" (Spencer & Spencer, 1993:9) or as Boyatsiz said in 1982 "the underlying characteristics of a person that lead to or cause effective and outstanding performance."

The terms "Skill" and "Competence" are used interchangeably. And the definitions of both terms are close enough to confuse: in Oxford online dictionary **skill** defined as *"the ability to do something well; expertise"* and **competency** defined as *"the ability to do something successfully or efficiently"*.

But, in fact, both terms point out different things. Let's take an IT context example to clarify the confusion: in order to code a computer program, i.e. software, one needs good analytical, logical, and interpretive ability and skill to write the program in a specific language. So, knowing how to code in a computer programming language like Java, C++, C#, etc. is a *Skill*, but the underlying ability to use that skill effectively depends on analytical, logical, and interpretive ability and those are Competencies (Sturgess).

In short, the competency is *"the ability to turn/transform knowledge into action effectively"* (Aslan, 2016:13)

Identifying competencies required for managers has been the subject of several types of research. After extensive review of research papers, various articles, books, and web links etc., Bhardwaj and Punia listed the common competencies that researchers have emphasized on as: communication, team-working, proactiveness, vision, self-management,

result-orientation, strategic-orientation, ambition, persistence, decision making, risk taking, and creativity (Bhardwaj and Punia 2013:70).

Cripe defines 31 competencies and puts them in three categories: Competencies Dealing with People, Competencies Dealing with Business, and Competencies Dealing with Self-Management (Cripe at al. 2001).

The list of 31 competencies defined by Cripe listed below:

Table 1. List of Conpetencies defined by Cripe

Competencies Dealing with People	Competencies Dealing with Business	Competencies Dealing with Self-Management
• Establishing Focus • Providing Motivational Support • Fostering Teamwork • Empowering Others • Managing Change • Developing Others • Managing Performance • Attention to Communication • Oral Communication • Written Communication • Persuasive Communication • Interpersonal Awareness • Influencing Others • Building Collaborative Relationships • Customer Orientation	• Diagnostic Information Gathering • Analytical Thinking • Forward Thinking • Conceptual Thinking • Strategic Thinking • Technical Expertise • Initiative • Entrepreneurial Orientation • Fostering Innovation • Results Orientation • Thoroughness • Decisiveness	• Self Confidence • Stress Management • Personal Credibility • Flexibility

Smart defines a total 50 competencies and groups them by the ease of changeability – as "*Relatively Easy to Change, Harder but Doable*, and *Very Difficult to Change*"- (Smart 1998:255-256). These competencies are: Risk Taking, Judgment, Intelligence, Leading Edge, Strategic Skills, Analysis Skills, Education, Pragmatism, Creativity, Experience, Track Record, Conceptual Ability, Organization / Planning, Resourcefulness, Integrity, Self-Awareness, Excellence Standards, Assertiveness, Communications – Oral, Communications – Written, Independence, Inspiring Followership, Stress Management, Energy, First Impression, Adaptability, Passion, Customer Focus, Likability, Ambition, Political Savvy, Listening, Tenacity, Selecting A Players, Redeploying B/C Players, Team Player, Negotiation Skills,

Coaching / Training, Persuasiveness, Goal Setting, Team Builder, Empowerment, Change Leadership, Performance Management, Diversity, Running Meetings, Conflict Management, Compatibility of Needs, Credible Vision, Balance in Life.

In addition to these competencies are Emotional Intelligence (Dulewicz and Higgs 2000:341, Jensen *at al.* 2007:81), Empathy (Demirbolat 1992:82), Budgeting (HBE 2015:245), Knowledge to Read and Prepare Financial Tables (HBE 2015:275), Authenticity (Yeloglu 2004:116) and Media Literacy (Aslan 2016:96).

If we allowed summing up all these competencies to get a better picture we will end up with the following list:

- Adaptability
- Ambition
- Analysis Skills
- Analytical Thinking
- Assertiveness
- Attention to Communication
- Authenticity
- Balance in Life
- Budgeting
- Building Collaborative Relationships
- Compatibility of Needs
- Conceptual Ability
- Conceptual Thinking
- Conflict Management
- Creativity
- Credible Vision
- Customer Orientation
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Diagnostic Information Gathering
- Diversity
- Education
- Emotional Intelligence

- Empathy
- Empowering Others
- Energy
- Entrepreneurial Orientation
- Establishing Focus
- Excellence Standards
- Experience
- First Impression
- Flexibility
- Forward Thinking
- Fostering Innovation
- Fostering Teamwork
- Goal Setting
- Independence
- Influencing Others
- Initiative
- Integrity
- Intelligence
- Interpersonal Awareness
- Judgment
- Knowledge to Read and Prepare Financial Tables
- Leading Edge
- Likability
- Managing Change
- Managing Performance
- Media Literacy
- Negotiation

- Oral Communication
- Organization / Planning
- Passion
- Personal Credibility
- Persuasive Communication
- Persuasiveness
- Political Savvy
- Pragmatism
- Providing Motivational Support
- Resourcefulness
- Results Orientation
- Risk Taking
- Running Meetings
- Self Confidence
- Self-Awareness
- Strategic Skills
- Strategic Thinking
- Stress Management
- Team Builder
- Team Player
- Technical Expertise
- Tenacity
- Thoroughness
- Track Record
- Written Communication

In addition to above list the global mindset, cross-cultural competence, intercultural sensitivity, cultural intelligence (Bücker and Poutsma, 2010:829) and many more competencies are related with the global or specific type of management but in this list, we tried to get the most common competencies that are required for managers.

Explaining competencies one by one is not within the scope of this paper. For that reason, commenting on competencies, how they can be developed, how or why they are important for each management level or skill, and how they impact or play a role when exercising management functionalities are not included. Each of these topics can be research subjects of their own.

In this paper, we tried a conceptual approach for each competency and estimated the impact on skills and management levels.

IMPACT OF COMPETENCIES ON SKILLS

As mentioned before, using skills effectively depends on the competencies possessed. In some literature, the skills required for managers are defined as Human Skills, Conceptual Skills, and Technical Skills (Katz, 2009:6, Luthans 1981:4, Kocel 2011:62).

Katz describes Human Skills as "… the executive's ability to work effectively as a group member and to build cooperative effort within the team he leads. As technical skill is primarily concerned with working with "things" (processes or physical objects), so human skill is primarily concerned with working with people. This skill is demonstrated in the way the individual perceives (and recognizes the perceptions of) his superiors, equals, and subordinates, and in the way he behaves subsequently. The person with highly developed human skill is aware of his own attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs about other individuals and groups; he is able to see the usefulness and limitations of these feelings. By accepting the existence of viewpoints, perceptions, and beliefs which are different from his own, he is skilled in understanding what others really mean by their words and behavior. He is equally skillful in communicating to others, in their own contexts, what he means by his behavior" (Katz, 2009:8).

This means that the Human Skills involve two different sets of skills: self-management skills, and interpersonal skills.

Self-Management Skills: the skills that shape the manager's personality, perspective on life and the way the manager handles the things happening in his/her own life.

Interpersonal Skills: the skills that shape the relationship of the manager with colleagues, customers, suppliers, rivals, family, society etc.

As per Katz "… conceptual skill involves the ability to see the enterprise as a whole; it includes recognizing how the various functions of the organization depend on one another, and how changes in any one part affect all the others; and it extends to visualizing the relationship of the individual business to the industry, the community, and the political, social, and economic forces of the nation as a whole. Recognizing these relationships and perceiving the significant elements in any situation, the administrator should then be able to act in a way which advances the overall welfare of the total organization" (Katz, 2009:18).

We will name Conceptual Skill as *Administrative Skill* since the notion "Administrative" has a broader meaning and also in order not to be confused with the "conceptual ability" and "conceptual thinking" competencies listed above.

And the skills a manager uses to run the business may be defined as Self-Management Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Technical Skills, and finally Administrative Skills.

Technical Skills: the skills that shape the performance of the manager as technical staff. This implies an understanding of, and proficiency in, a specific kind of activity, particularly one involving methods, processes, procedures, or techniques (Katz 2009:7) of the position that the manager holds.

Hence, we have four distinct skills that a manager uses while performing management and other duties he/she may have: Self-Management, Interpersonal, Technical and Administrative Skills.

All the competencies listed above shape the effective usage of these four skills at different levels. The levels of impact of the competencies on each skill are represented by different dot sizes as shown below.
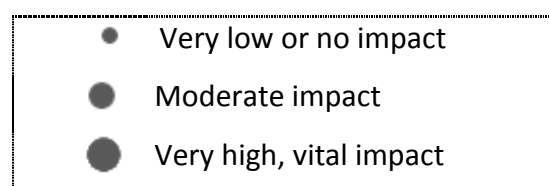
•	Very low or no impact
●	Moderate impact
⬤	Very high, vital impact

Table 2. Impact of Competencies on Skills

Competence	Skills			
	Self-Management	Inter-personal	Technical	Administrative
Adaptability	●	●	●	●
Ambition	●	●	●	●
Analysis Skills	●	●	●	●
Analytical Thinking	●	●	●	●
Assertiveness	●	●	•	●
Attention to Communication	•	●	●	●
Authenticity	•	●	•	●
Balance in Life	●	●	•	●
Budgeting	●	•	●	●
Building Collaborative Relationships	•	●	●	●
Compatibility of Needs	●	●	●	●
Conceptual Ability	●	●	●	●
Conceptual Thinking	●	●	●	●
Conflict Management	●	●	•	●
Creativity	●	●	●	●
Credible Vision	•	●	•	●
Customer Orientation	•	●	●	●
Decisiveness	●	●	●	●
Developing Others	•	●	•	●
Diagnostic Information Gathering	●	●	●	●
Diversity	•	●	•	●
Education	●	●	●	●
Emotional Intelligence	●	●	•	●
Empathy	●	●	•	●
Empowering Others	●	●	•	●
Energy	●	●	●	●
Entrepreneurial Orientation	●	●	•	●
Establishing Focus	●	●	●	●
Excellence Standards	●	●	●	●
Experience	●	●	●	●
First Impression	•	●	•	●
Flexibility	●	●	●	●
Forward Thinking	●	●	●	●
Fostering Innovation	•	●	●	●
Fostering Teamwork	•	●	●	●
Goal Setting	●	●	●	●
Independence	●	●	●	●
Influencing Others	●	●	●	
Initiative	●	●	●	●

Competency				
Integrity	●	●	●	●
Intelligence	●	●	●	●
Interpersonal Awareness	●	●	●	●
Judgment	●	●	●	●
Knowledge to Read and Prepare Financial Tables	●	·	·	●
Leading Edge	●	●	●	●
Likability	●	●	·	●
Managing Change	●	●	●	●
Managing Performance	·	●	●	●
Media Literacy	●	●	·	●
Negotiation	●	●	·	●
Oral Communication	●	●	●	●
Organization / Planning	●	●	●	●
Passion	●	●	●	●
Personal Credibility	●	●	·	●
Persuasive Communication	●	●	●	●
Persuasiveness	●	●	●	●
Political Savvy	●	●	·	●
Pragmatism	●	●	●	●
Providing Motivational Support	●	●	·	●
Resourcefulness	●	●	●	●
Results Orientation	●	●	●	●
Risk Taking	●	●	●	●
Running Meetings	●	●	●	●
Self Confidence	●	●	●	●
Self-Awareness	●	●	●	●
Strategic Skills	●	●	●	●
Strategic Thinking	●	●	●	●
Stress Management	●	●	●	●
Team Builder	●	●	●	●
Team Player	●	●	●	●
Technical Expertise	●	●	●	●
Tenacity	●	●	●	●
Thoroughness	●	●	●	●
Track Record	●	●	●	●
Written Communication	●	●	●	●

IMPACT OF COMPETENCIES ON MANAGEMENT LEVELS

All the competencies listed above required almost at all management levels at different degrees. We considered three different levels of management: entry level, mid-level, and senior level.

The management levels are decided by the level of impact and contribution of each position to the whole organization and organizational strategy.

Foremen, supervisors, deputy department managers, project managers etc. are considered entry level managers.

Department managers, deputy general managers are considered mid-level managers.

General Managers and above are considered senior level managers.

Table 1. Requirement of Competencies in Three Management Levels

Competence	Management Levels		
	Entry Level	Mid-Level	Senior Level
Adaptability	●	●	●
Ambition	●	●	●
Analysis Skills	●	●	●
Analytical Thinking	●	●	●
Assertiveness	·	●	●
Attention to Communication	●	●	●
Authenticity	·	●	●
Balance in Life	·	●	●
Budgeting	·	●	●
Building Collaborative Relationships	·	●	●
Compatibility of Needs	●	●	●
Conceptual Ability	·	●	●
Conceptual Thinking	·	●	●
Conflict Management	●	●	●
Creativity	●	●	●
Credible Vision	●	●	●
Customer Orientation	●	●	●
Decisiveness	●	●	●
Developing Others	●	●	●
Diagnostic Information Gathering	●	●	●
Diversity	·	●	●
Education	●	●	●
Emotional Intelligence	●	●	●
Empathy	●	●	●
Empowering Others	●	●	●
Energy	●	●	●
Entrepreneurial Orientation	·	·	●
Establishing Focus	●	●	●
Excellence Standards	●	●	●
Experience	●	●	●
First Impression	●	●	●
Flexibility	●	●	●

Forward Thinking	●	●	●
Fostering Innovation	●	●	●
Fostering Teamwork	●	●	●
Goal Setting	●	•	●
Independence	●	●	●
Influencing Others	●	●	●
Initiative	●	●	●
Integrity	●	●	●
Intelligence	●	●	●
Interpersonal Awareness	●	●	●
Judgment	●	●	●
Knowledge to Read and Prepare Financial Tables	•	●	●
Leading Edge	●	●	●
Likability	●	●	●
Managing Change	●	●	●
Managing Performance	●	●	●
Media Literacy	•	●	●
Negotiation	•	●	●
Oral Communication	●	●	●
Organization / Planning	•	●	●
Passion	●	●	●
Personal Credibility	●	●	●
Persuasive Communication	●	●	●
Persuasiveness	●	●	●
Political Savvy	•	●	●
Pragmatism	●	●	●
Providing Motivational Support	●	●	●
Resourcefulness	●	●	●
Results Orientation	●	●	●
Risk Taking	●	●	●
Running Meetings	●	●	●
Self Confidence	●	●	●
Self-Awareness	●	●	•
Strategic Skills	●	●	●
Strategic Thinking	●	●	●
Stress Management	●	●	●
Team Builder	●	●	●
Team Player	●	●	●
Technical Expertise	●	●	•
Tenacity	●	●	●
Thoroughness	●	●	●
Track Record	●	●	●
Written Communication	●	●	●

The table above considers only organizational wide management. Goal setting should be at its full range for mid-level management when it comes to department based goal setting.

IMPACT OF SKILLS ON MANAGEMENT LEVELS

Effects of these four skills on management levels are presented by dots in below matrixes. The size of dots should be considered relative and only valid within the respective matrix.

Giving full descriptions, duties, or functions of each management level is not within the scope of this paper. All the descriptions, functions, or duties of the management levels are given below just to show on what basis the sizes of the dots, i.e. impacts of each skill, are estimated.

Impact of Skills on Entry Level Management

Entry level managers work closely with blue-collar workers more than any other managerial level. They act like a bridge between mid-level manager and blue-collar workers. Their main duty is to ensure smooth department operations. They face and solve technical problems and conflicts on daily basis. They prepare basic operational reports of the teams, groups, projects, or functions that they are responsible for.

They use oral communication more than any other type. They are expected to be an example to other blue-collar workers with their passion, personality, attitude towards work, and technical knowledge.

Therefore, they should be the best in their group in Self-Management, Interpersonal, and Technical Skills.

They don't require highly developed administrative skills, since their main duty is not related with administering the department. They just require a limited level of administrative skills to accomplish the tasks.
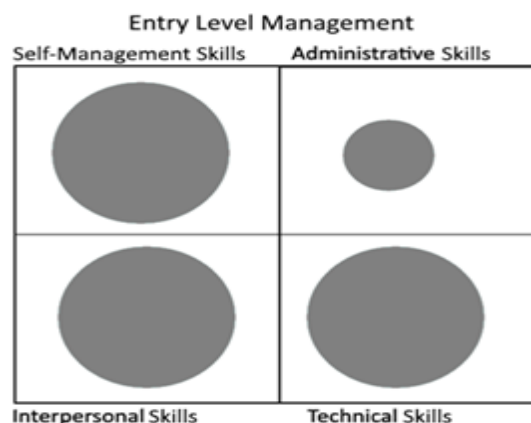

Figure 1. Effect of Skills on Entry Level Management

Impact of Skills on Mid-Level Management

Mid- level managers work closely and mostly with entry and senior level managers. They act as a bridge between senior and entry level management. Their main duty is to ensure that departmental vision, goals, and strategies comply with those of the company' and that department operations are running smoothly.

They don't face technical problems and conflicts on a daily basis like subordinate managers do, but rather face those that cannot be solved by subordinate managers.

They prepare operational and financial reports of their departments.

They use both oral and written types of communication at the same level. They are expected to be an example to subordinate managers with their passion, personality, attitude towards work, and knowledge.

They are expected to be leading edge in their area of expertise and build collaborative relationships with suppliers, key customers, and partner organizations. They are also expected to contribute to the organization's strategic planning and implementation of the decisions made by the senior management level.

Since their duty includes administering the department they are responsible for, they must have administrative skills as well.

Hence, as far as concerning Technical Skills, they have to be the best not only in their own department but also in their field.

Most of the company's relations with outside are carried out with these mid-level managers, so, their Interpersonal Skills have to be kept sharpened at all times.

Self-Management Skills and Administrative Skills don't require to be as good as their Technical and Interpersonal Skills.
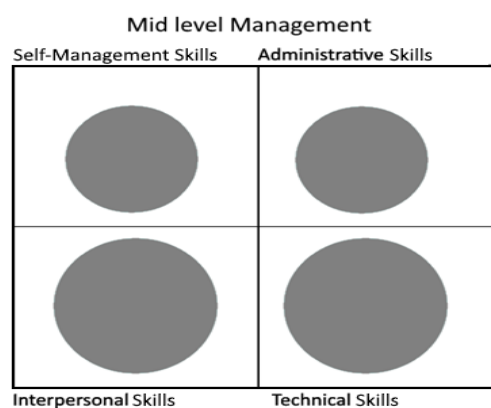

Figure 2. Effect of Skills on Mid-Level Management

Impact of Skills on Senior Level Management

Senior managers work closely and mostly with business owners and mid-level managers. Their main duty is to ensure organizational goals, vision, strategies are being followed, yielded, and implemented organization wide.

They don't face technical problems and conflicts as subordinate managers do. The problems and conflicts they face have a bigger, if not vital impact on the organization.

They prepare operational and financial reports regularly for the whole organization.

They use written communication more than any other type but are also good in oral communication. They are expected to be an example to the whole organization, society, and other organizations they are in relation with in every aspect.

They are expected to be leading edge in administration, financial literacy, and conceptual abilities. They are expected to build a collaborative relationship with governmental bodies, society and partner organizations. They also are expected to carry out organization's strategic planning and make organization wide decisions whenever necessary.

They are expected to perform all management functions, i.e. planning, organizing, coordinating, and controlling.

In short, Senior Managers must have the ability to see the enterprise as a whole. This includes recognizing how the various functions of the organization depend on one another, and how changes in any one part affect all the others. This extends to visualizing the relationship of the individual business to the industry, the community, and the political, social, and economic forces of the nation as a whole. Recognizing these relationships and perceiving the significant elements in any situation, the Senior Manager should then be able to act in a way that advances the overall welfare of the total organization (Katz, 2009:18).

So, the Administrative Skills and Interpersonal Skills should be at a level that is recognized by everyone. Self-Management Skills should stand as an example for the whole organization if not for the sector. Since being Senior Level managers don't require involvement in daily operations they almost never face technical problems. Technical Skills are almost never vital.
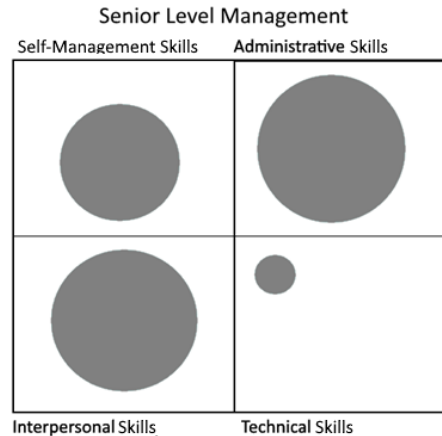
Figure 3. Effect of Skills on Senior Level Management

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article has been to show the impact of the competencies on skills and three different management levels.

Most of the organizations in the world today are having problems with employing competent managers at all management levels. If they conduct proper research and find out the necessary competencies for each position and management level then potential candidates may be selected within the organization and taken into necessary development programs to improve their competencies.

By doing this, organizations may have a very good source of skilled, competent managers.

For researchers; empirical studies on the impact of the competencies on skills have not been done extensively. This research field is still untouched and needs the attention of researchers of all disciplines.

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