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Literature Review on Competency and its Future Research

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Abstract: By referring to covering literature, this study gives a survey on competency from the perspective of its concept, models and so on. There are lots of research achievements in defining “competency” and exploring its models which promotes the wider application of competency, also with some limitations. Its future research lies in building its theoretical models and carrying out its empirical research, especially the empirical research on the relationship between competency and performance.

Key words: Competency, development, research

INTRODUCTION

With the passage of time, the competition among enterprises is increasingly intense. The very essence of competition lies in the employment of talents. As for the enterprises, what should be given top priority to is recruit qualified talents with high competency because of their good performance. The competitiveness, thus enhanced, enables the enterprises to remain invincible. Researchers and administrators attach great importance to the research on competency. It is of great significance to understand the current research and the future research tendency on competency.

ABOUT THE DEFINITIONS OF COMPETENCY

From what have been discussed above (Table 1), the definitions of competency vary, yet enrich the connotation of competency, leading to the development of the theory. In this study, I define competency as the individual qualities consisting of knowledge, skills, attitudes and traits and at the same time relating to work performance.

ON THE COMPETENCY MODELS

To sum up, all the researches (Table 2) play a positive and significant role in the promotion and application of the competency models. However, the researches focus mainly on the theoretical construction of the competency models within a certain field, few of which are tested empirically.

FUTURE RESEARCH ON COMPETENCY

An increasing number of people are and will be involved in the research of competency because of its charm and the needs of development. Competency is worth researching in terms of the development of nations and individuals.

Theoretical construction and empirical research on competency models: The social development needs and the increasingly intense competition among enterprises of every profession urge the enterprises to apply relevant theories which have been tested empirically, to the recruitment of employees and to be more cautious when

Table 1: Definitions of Competency

Researcher	Research results
McClelland (1973)	Whether one can achieve success in job depends not only on the required knowledge and skills, but, most important, on the dispositions, values and motive that are deeply hidden in the brain. These potential factors can help better predict the performance in a given job or role.
Boyatzis (1982)	To define competency, what should be identified includes the activities, role in the system, sequence of behavior, outcomes and impact, the purposes and methods of behavior. Only by such definition can job-specific competency reflect capability.
Spencer and Spencer (1993)	The potentials one has that can be found in the deepest of one's personality and exist steadily; in any given circumstance that are used to predict one's possible thoughts and behaviors.
Shippman <i>et al.</i> (2000)	The “successful” performance in a task or activity and the “sufficient” knowledge in a certain field
Eunis (2008)	The ability one has to do a job successfully, function well, or undertake any given role or position by using knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors and individual traits.
Koeppen <i>et al.</i> (2008)	The cognitive tendency one has or should have to deal with a situation or fulfill a job in a given circumstance within a given field.

Table 2: Researches on competency models

Researcher	Research Results
Spencer and Spencer (1993)	Competence consists of five factors: motive, traits, self-concept, knowledge and skills
Marquardt and Engel (1993)	They have identified 16 competencies arranged within the areas of attitudes, skills and knowledge that will contribute to the success of HRD practitioners in cross-cultural settings
Young <i>et al.</i> (1994)	Build HRD competency models for practitioners
Ulrich <i>et al.</i> (1995)	Propose HRD competency models comprising business knowledge, HR implementation and change management, etc.
Wang and Chen (2002)	Competency characteristics consist of two dimensions: management quality and management skills. There are significant differences among positions in terms of essentials and criticality of the dimensions which lays new theoretical foundation for the evaluation and promotion of managerial position.
Shi <i>et al.</i> (2002)	The competency model for the top management in Chinese communication enterprises includes influence, organizational commitment, information seeking, achievement orientation, leadership, interpersonal understanding, initiative, customer service orientation, self-confidence and staff development.
Peng and Xing (2003)	The book, Building Competency Models for Effective HR Management, systematically introduces the procedure and the method for building competency models and the application of the models.
Bbdullah <i>et al.</i> (2011)	The empirically tested HR Practitioner Competency Models which are developed in the USA and Europe, was derived in a local Malaysian cultural setting and it will benefit the HR practitioners, HR consultants, HR communities of practice, the academia, organizations and other related individuals.
Tutu and Constantin (2012)	Two studies tested the predicting model of job performance. And Results showed that job competency matching index proved a low predictive power for the job performance while two persistence factors (long term purposes pursuing-LTPP, current purposes pursuing-CPP) seemed to be high predictive. The findings enabled them to question the practice-relying on competency test-which is widely accepted by HRM. There are positive correlations between job performance and current job competency level, standard required job competency level and competency matching index. However, the fact that the competency matching indices have not any prediction power suggests that this relationship is not a linear one. This finding brought to our attention the idea that, if an employee's abilities, skills and knowledge are matching to the job requirements, this fact does not guarantee that this person will become a high performer.

it comes to decision-making. So there is a tendency to develop the theoretical construction of competency model, conduct empirical researches and eventually build rational competency models in every profession.

Research on the relationship between competency and performance:

In the future, Behavioral Event Interview which used to be adopted to screen competency and build competency model, seems to be insufficient with the social development. The correlation and regression analysis based on the complete performance data and competency data will help precisely define and derive the competencies for a specific position in the organization. Environmental variables or other intermediary non-competency variables should be taken into further consideration in the research on the Relationship between Competency and Performance.

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