

Chapter 3

Augmenting Research Competencies for Management Graduates

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ABSTRACT

Research and research competencies are usually discussed in context. Research is recognised as an important facet of development both social and economic. In fact, the progress of mankind rests heavily on the velocity of research. But the term ‘research’ and competencies to do research are mostly seen in context to science and arts discipline graduates more often and at the most fancifully in social sciences, but much lesser seen in context to management discipline. Hence, this aims to bring out the need to enhance research competencies with focus on management graduates. After all, if organizations have to become sustainable and be governed in a more ethical manner, there is need to shift the thinking from management education is only to create managers but to also thinkers and researchers who will be able to illuminate newer and better ways of organizational growth and thereby the societal development.

INTRODUCTION

“Competency” is “an acquired personal skill that is demonstrated in [one’s] ability to provide a consistently adequate or high level of performance in a specific job function.”¹ However, competency mapping models and theories of human aptitude, intelligence quotient, emotional quotient and in general everything that relates to human behaviour regarding work, logic and emotions dates back to early 16th century. It was during that time, Chanakya, well-known royal adviser and prime minister from Vedic India, penned a famous book known as the Arthashastra, which is probably the first book on competency mapping (Kangle, 1969). Chanakya was a scholar, teacher and guardian of Emperor Chandragupta Maurya at Takshashila (Mabbett, 1964). Arthashastra (Sanskrit: अर्थशास्त्र: Arthasāstra) is an ancient Indian treatise on statecraft, economic policy and military strategy, written in Sanskrit (Boesche, 2002; Siva Kumar and Rao, 1996). According to Boyatzis (1982, competency refers to a capacity that exists in a

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person that leads to behavior that meets the job demands within parameters of organizational environment, and that, in turn brings about desired results. Thus, a competency is an underlying characteristic of an individual that is related to effective performance in a job or situation. For common understanding the terms are defined below:

- **Competency:** A person-related concept that refers to the dimension of behavior lying behind competent performer.
- **Competence:** A set of knowledge, skills and attitudes required to perform a job effectively and efficiently.

Thus, a competency is something that describes how a job might be done excellently and only describes what has to be done, not how. Core competency is something which cannot be copied and it is the pillar upon which individual rest. However, competence or competencies refer to skills, knowledge both explicit and tacit and the capabilities that is inclusive of human and behaviour dimension required for proficiency and excellent performance.

According to Raven & Stephenson (2001), individuals must demonstrate general competence in the following four areas:

- **Meaning Competence:** Understanding the culture of the organization and acting in accordance
- **Relation Competence:** Creating and maintaining connections with stakeholders of the tasks or organization
- **Learning Competence:** Identifying solutions to tasks and reflecting on experiences so that what is learned improves the next task completed
- **Change Competence:** Acting in new ways when the task or situation calls for it

Ashworth and Saxton (1990) explain that framing competencies as an outcome can ignore the mental and personal processes that are utilized in developing and exhibiting skills and utilizing knowledge. Some idiosyncratic competencies that can assist a person in being successful in their job or contributing to the competitiveness of an organization may be overlooked if the competency model solely is used to strategically select only staff that fit this model and do not rely on developmental resources to facilitate acquisition of competencies where a gap exists (Lado & Wilson, 1994; Lado, Boyd, & Wright, 1992).

RESEARCH COMPETENCE

Research competence is regarded by scientists and practitioners from the point of view of its applied nature as the body of knowledge in a particular area, the presence of research skills (see and solve problems on the basis of the nomination and substantiate hypotheses, set a goal and plan activities, collect and analyse the necessary information to choose the most optimal methods to perform an experiment to present the results of research), having the ability to apply this knowledge and skills in a particular activity. However, in a rapidly changing world and living space, a fast-paced innovation economy to the fore such qualities as the ability to adapt to the conditions of professional activity; personally and

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