

# Application of Competency Model in Modern Human Resource Management in University

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**Abstract:** As the new starting point and important foundation in modern human resource management system, the competency model has drawn a great attention recently. Introducing the competency model into university human resource management is regarded as the transformation from traditional to modern human resources management. In this work, the significances of introducing of competency model in university were discussed. The applications of competency model in position analysis, staff recruiting, training, staff career planning and achievement management in university were introduced.

**Keywords:** university, competency model, human resource management

## 1 Introduction

With the fast development of economic and society, there has been more intense competition between the organizations, which embodies the competition for resources of human talent. As the base of high-quality people training and knowledge innovation, universities have to inevitably join to the trend of competing for talent. The desire for "master" talents has reached unprecedented levels. In order to recruit, cultivating and keeping talents, series changes have taken place in university personnel management, such as having established teacher assessment system, appointment system, and quality evaluation system and so on, which in some ways have improved the management level and teaching staff. But it does not break the original pattern of the personnel management. The traditional management concepts still restrict the development of the higher education. The way to solve the problems is finding an effective breakthrough, which can transfer the focus of university personnel management from events-oriented to human-oriented, and activate the most active part of the productivity factors. Only in this way, the transformation from traditional personnel management to the overall human resources development in University would be realized.

In recent years, either the theoretical study or the actual operation of the organization, people have focused perspective on a new human resources management tool-competency model. A number of well-known enterprises and organizations successfully apply competency models to human resource management, and then bring more benefits and enhance the core competitiveness for the organizations. Therefore applying the competency model to personnel management, as the starting point of university human resources development and management, will explore a new management model in university.

## 2 Competency model and its application

### 2.1 Competency model

The concept of competency was first proposed in 1973 by psychologist David · C · McClelland, a professor of Harvard University, in the article "Testing for Competency rather Than Intelligence". Competency refers to deep-seated characteristics which distinguish the achievements from the mediocrities. It is a collection of motivations, traits, attitudes, and personality characteristics of self-cognition, knowledge or skills. He described competency as "iceberg" vividly. Knowledge and skills are the parts of the "iceberg" above the surface. They are easy to be seen and are necessary features to complete the work. Motivations, traits, attitudes, self-perception are hidden under the water. They are difficult to be discovered and measured. However it is precisely parts beneath the water surface that drives employees to provide outstanding performance or ordinary performance.

Competency model is the combination of a series of different quality elements to complete a job, or reach a certain performance objective, including appropriate occupational moral norms, motivations, personality characteristics and quality requirements, self-image, and related knowledge and skill. Competency model is a dynamic, open system. The competency model changes with the enterprises backgrounds, organization structure, work contents, or even different periods. Competency model is an auxiliary tool in human resource management. It is impossible to function separately. It provides a new method for human resources management, and widely used in personnel recruitment, achievement management, training and development, etc. It has been the core content of human resource development in business and industry.

## **2.2 Current application research of the competency model**

Along McClelland' thoughts on competency, many psychologists and managers have made more further studies, and then summarized and enriched the concept of competency model. With the deeply and widely research, the concept of competency model gradually penetrated into the human resource management of public sector and large enterprises abroad, especially in United States, and Canada and the United Kingdom and Australia. It is mainly used in staff selection and configuration, training, development, and other fields. In 1990s, competency model began to be applied widely. A large number of western enterprises, such as Pepsi, McDonald's, IBM, etc, competency model had been introduced in the personnel management of the firms. Gradually, in various industries, such as lawyers, doctors are trying to construct their own competency model.

In China, the concern in the competency model was started only in recent years. Some experts, scholars and entrepreneurs had made a number of studies on competency model. The researches focused on competency model of senior management position. The ability quality was refined by job analysis, questionnaire investigation, expert interviews, and then the competency model was constructed. Some enterprises that have advanced management idea, such as Haier, Lenovo, Huawei, ZTE, China Telecom, began to research on the position competency model, construct human resource management system based on the competency model in order to improve organizational efficiency and reach the company's strategic goals.

## **3 Competency model-the new starting point of modern human resource management in university**

### **3.1 Significance of introducing competency model human resource management in University**

Although competency model had been widely applied in the world, most of the studies were about the leadership competency model in enterprise and organization. While in the field of the education, especially in the field of the higher education, the research and practice of competency model were very few. As the main body of teaching, research, and management activities, university teachers are typical knowledge human resources. They have wide professional knowledge and good scientific literacy. Compared with other organizations in the community, university staffs are scarce resources. In fact, those who have similar education background got very different achievement after a few years, even when they were in the same professional direction or have the same supervisor. So the motivation, self-cognition and personality characteristic and other hidden character on an individual significantly affect the performance. Therefore it is necessary to practice the human resources management based on the competency model in university.

Usually staff competency model is reflected as different level combinations of various quality elements. It represents the qualities required by the position. Also it provides an effective guide for the employees. The study about competency model in the human resource management has application value for university, university teachers and university's management department. In the position of the university, competency model reflects the requirements of employees engaged in different jobs and the performance objective differences. The research results of competency model can be applied to the

competency assessment, selection, recruitment, promotion, diagnostics team competency, and so on. In terms of university staff, the competency model provides them a basis and reference to select the suitable job, as well as their career planning. Teachers can choose their development direction according to their own quality conditions. Also according to the ideal of position competency model, university staff will participate in continuous learning, in order to facilitate personal development. By evaluating each position competency model, education administration department can find out the qualities required for university teachers, the current strengths and the areas need to be improved. Therefore the administration department can design training project plan, the teachers' qualification standards, the future direction of training, and so on. So the construction of competency model becomes the starting point for human resources management in universities. It also provides a new thought for university personnel management.

### **3.2 The comparison between traditional personnel management and human resource management based on the competency model in university**

Regardless of the management conception, management methods, management content or management means, there are big differences between traditional personnel management and human resource management based on the competency model in university. The differences are mainly in the following aspects.

3.2.1 Personnel planning. Traditional personnel management in university is limited to transactional work. According to the experience, the personnel planning are made based on existing resources and students' status. The human resources management based on the competency model in university makes the long-term human resource planning according to the development strategy and school target in the future. This planning includes the scale of teachers, discipline and team building. This will provide talent guarantee for the rapid development of university.

3.2.2 Talent identification and evaluation standard. The traditional definition of talent is primarily on the basis of academic credentials, professional background, experience and skills, ignoring potential motivations, traits, self-cognition, and other intrinsic potential's affection on the development of a person. However, the talent identification based on the competency model not only detect the experience, knowledge, skills and professional accomplishment, but also pay more attention to staff's attitudes, motivation, self-cognition and other drives, especially on some key positions.

3.2.3 Teacher training and development. The traditional teacher training lacks strategic, systematic, one-sided pursues form and quantity. And the training content focuses on the skills and knowledge. The teacher training based on competency model is omni-bearing, systematic. The training is carried out according to the job requirements and the existing personnel quality. The training contents include knowledge and skills, as well as the potential mining and developing. These will arouse the work enthusiasm of staff.

### **3.3 Specific applications of competency model in human resource management in university**

In university, constructing competency model is an important part of human resource management system. It provides a strong theoretical basis for position analysis, personnel selection, staff training and development, performance management.

#### **3.3.1 Applications in university position analysis**

Position competency model provides references for university position analysis. The quality elements are confirmed by studying the key behavior of excellent performance staff in corresponding position. Combining the duties of the post we can develop the position analysis. The position analysis stresses the key characters and behavior of outstanding employees, the close contacts of the university's strategic goals and the focus of work. As the results, the effective prediction for performance and reference standards for staff selection, training, and career planning, salary design can be achieved.

#### **3.3.2 Applications in respect of staff recruitment and appointment**

In addition to the knowledge and skills, the staff recruitment and employment based on the competency model pay more attention to the evaluation of the hidden characters. According to the different quality requirements of different levels of position, the corresponding program of recruitment interviews was determined and the targeted interview questions could be carefully designed, especially in the selection of some of the critical or important posts such as academic leaders, senior managers and technicians. The evaluation tools, based on the position competency model, combining with the expertise, professional skills, education background, can increase the evaluation effectiveness.

#### 3.3.3 Applications in staff training and development in university

Competency model is the basis for staff training and development. It is the effective tool to identify training needs, design training programs, develop training courses, and evaluate training effect. University position competency model describes the combination of excellent quality characteristics of employees. Combining with the university's strategic objectives and development plans, the targeted training programs and training content are developed. It will benefit the improving of knowledge and skills, strengthening the professionalism and personality of university teachers. The trainees will find out their current level of ability by evaluate the training effect and track the follow-up. And also the training developer will get the basis for the next developing. All of these links form a complete training system in university, and provide the security for university human resources sustainable development.

#### 3.3.4 Application in university staff career planning

The position competency model provides employee the reference of career planning. The employee will understand the degree of the match between his personal behavior characteristics and the post requirements and then adjust his career planning, take full advantage of his own core expertise. Or he will strengthen the knowledge and skills, improve behavior in the future work and study, and then improve his performance, coordinate individual goals with organizational strategy, develop and grow with the university together.

#### 3.3.5 Applications in achievement management

The construction of competency model is based on the difference between the average employees and excellent employees. So the performance assessment indicators based on the competency model can measure the performance of the employee more accurately, not only measure the results of the work, but also include the behavior and the potential they played. This method can comprehensively assess employees' performance, and improve their enthusiasm for work. Those poor performance employees improve their performance through training based on competency model. Or they can adjust their post in order to improve the degree of match with the job.

### **3.4 Notes for constructing a competency model in university**

3.4.1 The premise of building a competency model is to define the standard for performance excellence. In the university, teachers are the subject of teaching and research activities. But usually the economic benefits and social benefits of their work are unable to be detected in the short term. So the definition for the standard of teachers' excellent performance must accord with the rule of teaching, research, and management activities in university. It is necessary to focus on not only the short-term results, but also to focus on long-term benefits.

3.4.2 Constructing competency model should be focused on the proper break through points in university. The activities show diversification in university, including teaching, research, management, moral education and logistic service, etc. Different positions are divided into different levels. Constructing competency model should not carry out in all posts. The model should be studied in some key positions or important positions. And then gradually expand to other jobs. On the other hand some people at universities play multiple rules. They may engaged in teaching, and research, and sometimes perform administrative duties. Therefore the study of competency model in university should carry out according to the specific conditions.

3.4.3 The competency model is not static. The post work duty or work character will change along with the adjustment of university strategy, social environment and the degree of campus culture construction. And constantly the post competency model will adjust and improved.

3.4.4 In order to construct competency model, the human resources managers must have professional knowledge and operation ability. Because most of universities personnel management still continue the traditional management model, there is a big gap between the theoretical knowledge or experience of present managers and the requirements of the modern human resources management. Therefore the personnel managers in university should change their manage idea, at the same time they should strengthen the theoretical knowledge and skills training first.

## **4 Conclusion**

With the university personnel management system reforming gradually, the transformation from traditional personal management to human resources management has become a necessity. Introducing the concept of competency model into human resources management in university will contribute to the development of appropriate mechanisms for talent selection and assessment, and also will promote the personnel management reformation. Human resources management based on the competency model guides the personnel management from an administrative job into a kind of management work containing research. The purpose is to mine and measure someone's potential characteristic and ability, thus improve organizational efficiency, and promote the coordinated development of universities.

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