



Original Article (Qualitative)

Analyzing the dimensions and components of managers' competence in government organizations based on the iceberg model

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to analyze the dimensions and components of managers' competence in government organizations based on the iceberg model. The present research is applicable in terms of its purpose. This research was conducted using a descriptive-survey and qualitative two-stage method in terms of the method of data collection. Initially, 37 articles were examined using a systematic review of theoretical foundations and the initial dimensions and components of managers' competence in government organizations were identified. Then, to confirm and complete the factors identified in the first stage, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 8 academic and professional experts in the field of managers' competence selected by snowball sampling. To analyze the findings, dimensions and components were first identified using the meta-synthesis method, and then the content analysis method and Nvivo software were used. The results showed that after merging, 30 different components were identified as competency components of government organization managers and were classified into 5 main dimensions of the competency iceberg model, namely knowledge (with 4 components), skills (11 components), self-concept (3 components), personality traits (9 components), and motivators (3 components). Using an appropriate competency model and framework to select, develop, and evaluate government organization managers paves the way for development at the organizational and national levels.

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Extended abstract

Introduction

The foundation of any organization is its human resources, and for organizations to succeed, the most competent people must be used in the most appropriate job positions (Shum et al, 2018). Having competent human resources, especially managers, is one of the most important aspirations of most organizations and companies around the world because the dynamism and alignment of organizations and the dramatic and increasing changes in the business world depend on efficient employees, or more precisely, competent employees (Shirley, 2012). Given today's dynamic and increasing changes and developments, the competencies of managers have received more attention than ever before, as they are considered the main elements of creating a sustainable competitive advantage (Neumeyer & Liu, 2021). Accordingly, in recent years, an important part of the efforts and studies of organizational scholars and researchers has been focused on identifying those characteristics of managers that provide superior performance, referred to as managerial competencies in management literature (Derakhshan & Zandi, 2016).

Today, developing and selecting competent managers with special capabilities has become one of the most key concepts and challenges in the field of management, and designing and applying competency models and patterns is recognized as one of the most effective and common methods for developing, hiring, investing in, and excelling superior human capital and competency selection in most developed countries of the world. Therefore, the criterion for selecting suitable people for managerial jobs is basically designing and applying competency models, and past methods such as job analysis and other methods are used less. Focusing on the role of managers' and human resources' competencies can lead to organizational dynamism and excellence, and at the national level, more income generation and economic growth and development of the country. Lack of attention and ignoring the selection and appointment of competent managers in various fields can also lead to loss of opportunities, waste of resources, and failure of organizations in the competitive arena (Abdul Ali et al, 2022). Therefore, this research seeks to answer the question: what are the dimensions and components of managers' competence in government organizations based on the iceberg model?

Theoretical Framework

The Concept of Competence

Hwang & Kuo (2018) define competence as a combination of skills, knowledge, and attitudes required to performing a role effectively. Triana et al, (2021) consider competence as a tool for increasing human resource efficiency, and finally, Matić (2022) considers competence as a term generally used for people who demonstrate their professional ability in real-world tasks.

Managerial Competencies

Managerial competencies refer to the skills and ability to perform a set of tasks that contribute to the excellent performance of a managerial role (Birknerová, 2022). Managerial competencies have become a vital tool for achieving higher levels of performance, creating better results, and promoting and securing the job of managers (Alabri et al, 2022). Managerial competencies are considered as the actual skills, knowledge, and experience of a manager who should use them as much as possible to achieve goals (Gächter & Renner, 2018).

Samadi et al, (2024) examined the presentation of a model of women's managerial competencies in industry (case study: Sabah Food Company). Based on the results of the qualitative analysis, six main categories of factors including contextual factors, causal



conditions, pivotal phenomena, intervening factors, strategies, and consequences were identified as the main components of women's competency development. In this study, the establishment of a women's management culture has been reported as the most important prerequisite for the development of women's competence. Based on the results obtained, it was determined that the "glass ceiling" phenomenon is the most important interfering factor in the development of women's managerial competence; women's empowerment is the most important strategy for the development of women's managerial competence; and gender equality and women's career advancement are the most important outcomes of the development of women's managerial competence, which is of great importance in terms of organizational management.

Kabii & Kinyua (2023) studied managerial competences and business continuity. They concluded that key managerial competences include communication, leadership, teamwork, and planning, which affect business continuity.

Research Methodology

The present study is applicable in terms of purpose, and was conducted descriptive-survey in terms of the method of data collection, with a two-stage qualitative method. Initially, 37 articles were examined using a systematic review of theoretical foundations, and the dimensions and initial components of the competence of managers of government organizations were identified. Then, to confirm and complete the factors identified in the first stage, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 8 academic and professional experts in the field of managers' competencies who were selected by snowball sampling.

Research findings

To analyze the findings; dimensions and components were first identified using the meta-synthesis method, and then the content analysis method and Nvivo software were used. The results showed that after integration, 30 different components were identified as the competence components of managers of government organizations and were classified into 5 main dimensions of the competency iceberg model, namely knowledge (with 4 components), skills (11 components), self-concept (3 components), personality traits (9 components), and motivators (3 components). Using an appropriate competency model and framework for selecting, developing, and evaluating managers in government organizations paves the way for development at the organizational and national levels.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to explore the dimensions and components of manager competency in government organizations based on the iceberg model. The results of this study are consistent with the results of Samadi et al, (2024), Kabii & Kinyua (2023), Castaño et al, (2023), Abedi Ardakani et al, (2022), Abdul Ali et al, (2022), Ghirtmand & Amiri Moghadam (2021), Rahmati Kohroodi et al, (2021), and Khajeh Ali Jahanteghi & abdollahi (2020). Samadi et al, (2024) showed that the "glass ceiling" phenomenon is the most important interfering factor in the development of female managers' competencies; women's empowerment is the most important strategy for developing women's managerial competencies; and gender equality and women's career advancement are the most important outcomes of developing female managers' competencies, which is of great importance in terms of organizational management.

The iceberg model shows that, contrary to common practices that focus on obvious dimensions of competencies such as knowledge and skills in management processes, more hidden dimensions such as values, personality traits, and motivations have a more important



and effective role in the performance of individuals, especially managers of government organizations; and special attention should be paid to these categories of competencies in relevant activities such as selection, election, development program formulation, and evaluation of managers.