

Impact of Competency Variables on the Performance of Highly Effective Employees at Supervisor Level in Indian Telecom Industry: Empirical Evidence

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Abstract

Competency and performance are considered as synonym because only a competent person can be effective and performer. The research has been conducted with the aim to know the relationship between the competency variable and performance of the highly effective employees at supervisor level in Indian telecom industry. For the purpose of the research, data has been collected from the private telecom companies' employees. There were 8 competency variable and five indicators of highly effective performance. For the purpose of research, correlation has been applied and the result shows that there is a significant relationship between competency variables and performance of highly effective employees at supervisory level in various Indian telecom companies.

Key words: Telecom Sector, Competency variable, highly effective performance, supervisor.

1.0 Introduction

Human resource department of any organization is the back bone of the organization, the way finance is the blood of every organization. Among the factor of production land, labor, enterprise and capital, labor or man is one of the most important factor without which production of any commodity or delivery of services is not possible. Hence, it becomes very important to have quality and skilled man power deployed at work. The task of human resource department

becomes tough in such cases because among the pool of talent it becomes very critical to select the best one who will be the performer and becomes an asset for the organization. As a responsible employee of an organization, human resource manager tries to recruit the best employee for the organization based on the skill set and competencies which are prevailing and considered good for the organization. For such purpose, the human resource department recruits the best people out of the available choice through a series of steps involved in selection process to find out competent pool of candidates for any organization. There are lots of factors in an organization which impact the performance of an employees and it is not so easy or guaranteed that if a person is performer in one organization will be successful in the other organization too. But, on the other hand, if a person has acquired and developed competencies over a period of time, this will help him to sail through in different organization's cultures also and contribute to the overall business objectives of an organization.

Therefore, this paper attempts to find that does competencies of an individual need to be identified at various levels of an organization especially with reference to Supervisory level in a telecom industry? Also, this research is an attempt to understand that whether the competency variables which are essential for any candidate has any relationship with the performance or not. The research is conducted with the special focus on telecom sector employees. Being a part of the service sector of the economy, the sector has a major share in driving our economy and moreover, it has really helped in accelerating the economy especially in Covid period also. In nutshell, it can be concluded that human resources and its management plays a pivotal role in driving organizational success.

2.0 Review of Literature

In the contemporary world the study of behavioral or personal qualities on the performance and success of a company is rated very high. Keeping in view the studies around management, competencies are either organizational or personal [1]. Competencies are the gate ways to future opportunities; it is a bunch of abilities & technical abilities which enables an organization to serve the customer in a better way [2]. Core competencies as firm's specific skills applied to attain highest possible level of customer satisfaction. The literature around human resource management primarily focuses on the individual competencies [3]. Competency as a term was used by [4] as a choice for a different method to test conventional intellect. Accordingly, competency is a distinguishing attribute of an individual which is required in delivering greater

performance and is a representation of the application of specific talent and required knowledge in action to complete a task. Competencies are defined as motives, traits, skills, opinion about one own self, societal role, specific knowledge on the subject which he or she uses to perform a job [5]. These characteristics are shown in noticeable and distinguishable forms of behavior linked with performance at work and usually include know-how, expertise and aptitudes. Competencies are also defined as an enabler to perform an assigned work to a decided and well-defined norm in the context of actual work situations. Competencies are also referred as a pool of critical enabling factors required to achieve essential outcomes in a particular assignment in a business. These enablers are found in combinations of knowledge, skills and attitudes which help an individual to demonstrate a specific behavior and deliver higher performance at work. These qualities could be the individual values, own character, personal qualities, motivation or the ways an individual thinks and collectively creates an impact on the behavior at work. However, it is crucial that the required functional skills are clearly stated in advance while performing or carrying out work. It is needed not only to help the individuals to identify the similar skills for completing the assignment but also to acquire desired skills to become successful at work. However, mostly to do better, it is not enough to have knowledge only, skills and attitudes play a complementary role to deliver superior performance. The required knowledge helps an individual to use the right skills and the positive attitude inspires him to render his best performance at work. In simple terms, the right combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes which are necessary to do an assignment is collectively known as competency. One of the researchers [6] studied the competencies dimension of Indian manufacturing firms and how competencies impact the performance of the companies. Manufacturing sector also needs competent managers especially at senior levels to drive effective performance. Using primary data which was collected from 100 selected manufacturing firms in India, the researcher used structured questionnaire. Factor analysis and regression analysis were performed for the analyzing the data. The findings indicated several factors, out of which firm competencies were shown by six factors and one factor represented performance of the firm. The identified competencies included quality focus, market orientation, logistics and manufacturing excellence. Steven Covey (1889) [7] in his book 7 Habits of Highly Effective People mentions seven habits of highly effective people at work. To become effective, a three stage process has been advocated at first stage. One has to work first on his independence, the second stage is the

stage interdependence and the third stage is to keep learning and improving. All the seven habits are related to behavioral competencies summarized as under:

Seven Habits of Highly Effective People		
Stages	Habits	Actions
Manage yourself	1-Be Proactive (TheHabit of Choice)	Take Initiatives Be Proactive, Manage Change, Respond Proactively, Keep Commitments, Take Responsibility With Accountability, And Ensure Positive Influence On Results.
	2-Begin With The End (TheHabit of Vision)	Define Vision And Values, Create A Mission Statement, Set Measurable Team And Personal Goals, Start Projects Successfully, Align Goals To Priorities, And Focus On Desired Outcomes.
	3-Put First Thing First (The Habit of Integrity And Execution)	Execute Strategy, Apply Effective Delegation Skills, Focus On Important Activities, Apply Effective Planning And Prioritization Skills, Balance Key Priorities, Eliminate Low Priorities And Time Wasters, Use Planning Tools Effectively, And Use Effective Time-Management Skills.
Lead Others	4-Think Win-Win (The Habit of Mutual Benefit)	Build High-Trust Relationships, Build Effective Teams, Apply Successful Negotiation Skills, Use Effective Collaboration, And Build Productive Business Relationships.
	5-Seek First To Understand Than To Understood (The Habit of Mutual Understanding)	Apply Effective Interpersonal Communication, Overcome Communication Pitfalls, Apply Effective Listening Skills, Understand Others, Reach Mutual Understanding, Communicate Viewpoints Effectively, Apply Productive Input And Feedback, And Apply Effective Persuasion Techniques.
	6-Synergise (The Habit Of Creative Cooperation)	Leverage Diversity, Apply Effective Problem-Solving Techniques, Rely On Collaborative Decision-Making, Identify Value Differences, Build On Divergent Strengths, Leverage Creative Collaboration, And Embrace Innovation.
Unleash Potential	7-Sharpen The Saw-(The Habit Of Renewal)	Achieve Work-Life Balance, Apply Continuous Improvement, AndPursue Continuous Learning.

Table 2.1 - Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (Covey, 1989)

If these seven habits are well developed, these will help in delivering superior performance in any organization.

Employee's performance does not occur in vacuum, we have to take system perspective, not only to look at employees and its competence but also the environment in which he is expected to perform. It is important to note that the base and foundation of any successful organization is built on employee performance because collective employee performance leads to organizational performance and success. Managing performance at work has always been treated as a critical element in managing employees. For successful companies, employees' job performance is treated as an important source of competitive advantage and they put lots of efforts in improving them to achieve overall organizational effectiveness. Performance at work cannot have a uniform or standard definition as it varies in view of different opinions or and perception. Mostly performance is defined as a work done by a person at the work place. Usually job performance is not similar for all the jobs, in fact the nature and difficulty and complex nature of work defines performance. As per business dictionary performance is "The completion of an assigned duty evaluated against predetermined criteria of precision, fullness, price, and speed." As per Cambridge dictionary a performance is defined as how well a task or job is completed. Another researcher [8] describes performance as synonymous to behavior. Performance is what an individual actually does and observed. Performance [9] is an act for which someone is hired to do and to do it well. Though there are lot of attempts made to introduce various framework for performance, Campbell's definition is most acceptable as the basic definition of performance [10]; [11]; [12].

It was elaborated and well defined those skill competencies for job role which encourages job incumbents to work more effectively [13]. In another paper, [14], finding relationship between competency and performance was done and it was found the relationship between knowledge, skills and attitudes, and employee performance exists. Another research [15] also found a correlation between competencies and individual performance; in fact core competencies create more significant effect on individual competencies in service sector. The result was analyzed in two ways. It was done firstly for individual competencies and individual performance and thereafter, the impact of individual competencies was checked on organizational performance.

Individual competencies and individual performance have positive relationship, further it was also found that managerial competencies have profound impact on organizational performance. Another study [16] found that workers competencies had substantial impact on their performance. As per [17], managers' characteristics and attitude have much more impact on employees' productivity than managerial skills. As per [18], performance on the job can be enhanced by improving the knowledge and competencies of employee working in an organization. It was also suggested that successful organization consider employee's job satisfaction as critical for delivery of work performance along with right competencies [18]. As per [19], the competencies are critical tool to deliver superior performance, few of the common competencies are taking initiative, being innovative, having good interpersonal skills, motivation at work, personal credibility, teamwork, having technical skills, being creative, thinking ability, being ethical at work, being tech savvy. Another study also [20] suggests employees who do not possess interpersonal skill sets for the job; they fail to provide the satisfactory service to the customer. Managerial competency was divided into following four categories [21] as

- i) General integrative competency such as integrity and honesty, having interpersonal skill, ability to become accountable, ability to communicate, having positive attitude and ability to role model.
- ii) Competencies related to planning and control like goal setting, vision & mission, ability to work under pressure, ability to delegate authority, ability to organize & control.
- iii) Leading Competency such as ability to lead, team building, being creative & innovative, ability to empower others, ability to judge and take decision, supervise and motivate others.
- iv) Other competencies like ability to manage conflicts such as being flexibility, resilient, and have political understanding.

The study of available literature, the competency frameworks of several of major telecom operators and study of competency clusters suggested by Spencer and Spencer following eight competencies are suggested to be studied having an impact on the performance of highly effective employees at supervisory level with reference to telecom companies of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. For this study, Customer focus, Analytical thinking, Team work

and Collaboration, Innovation & Improvement, Communication skills, Interpersonal skills, Ability to Learn and Development, Art of negotiation competencies are being taken.

3.0 Research Methodology

Research methodology includes the data and the statistical evidence to support the purpose of the research and the hypotheses formulated for such research. The research is an empirical research, the data has been collected in the form of structured questionnaire from the employees of Indian telecom industries working as supervisory level. The data was collected from eight telecom operators of India. The sample size is of 92 employees of telecom companies that includes Idea, Vodafone, Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio.

3.1 Objective of the Study

- To identify the relative importance of various behavioral competencies on the performance of highly effective employees at supervisory level.

3.2 Hypotheses of the Study

Following hypotheses are formulated to carry out this research piece.

Hypothesis, H1. There is no significant correlation between highly effective performance and competency variables at supervisory level.

Further for detailed analysis, eight more hypotheses are formulated as listed below. The above hypothesis is tested with all eight competencies taken in this study.

Hypothesis, H1a- There is no significant correlation between customer focus and highly effective performance at supervisory level.

Hypothesis, H1b- There is no significant correlation between analytical thinking and highly effective performance at supervisory level.

Hypothesis, H1c- There is no significant correlation between team work & collaboration and highly effective performance at supervisory level.

Hypothesis, H1d There is no significant correlation between innovation & improvement and highly effective performance at supervisory level.

Hypothesis, H1e - There is no significant correlation between communication skills and highly effective Performance at supervisory level.

Hypothesis, H1f - There is no significant correlation between interpersonal skills and highly effective performance at supervisory level.

Hypothesis, H1g - There is no significant correlation between ability to learn & develop and highly effective performance at supervisory level.

Hypothesis, H1h - There is no significant correlation between art of negotiation and highly effective performance at supervisory level.

4. Findings and Discussions

To find the relationship between performance of highly effective employees and behavioral competencies, Pearson correlation is calculated. All the hypotheses were tested and the results are presented as under according to the hypotheses.

Hypothesis, H1 which says that there is no significant correlation between competency variable and highly effective performance at supervisory level has been rejected. The statistical result shows that there is a strong correlation (Pearson correlation=.651) between competency variables and highly effective performance, not only this but the relationship is significant ($p=.000$) also.

		PerAVG	CVAVG
PerAVG	P Correlation	1	.651**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	92	92
CVAVG	P Correlation	.651**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	92	92

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table No. 4.1 Correlation between Behavioral Competency and Highly Effective Employees

Further for detail analysis few more hypotheses were tested based on the all 8 competency variables.

Hypothesis, H1a-There is no significant correlation between customer focus and highly effective performance at supervisory level has been rejected. The statistical result shows that there is a strong correlation (Pearson correlation=.549) between customer focus and highly effective performance, not only this but the relationship is significant ($p=.000$) also.

	PerAVG	CustFocus
P Correlation	1	.549**
PerAVG Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	92	92
P Correlation	.549**	1
CustFocus Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	92	92

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table No. 4.2 Correlation between Customer Focus and Highly Effective Employees

Hypothesis, H1b- There is no significant correlation between analytical thinking and highly effective performance at supervisory level has been rejected. The statistical result shows that there is a moderate correlation (Pearson correlation=.481) between customer focus and highly effective performance, not only this but the relationship is significant ($p=.000$) also.

	PerAVG	Analythink
P Correlation	1	.481**
PerAVG Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	92	92
P Correlation	.481**	1
Analythin k Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	92	92

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table No. 4.3 Correlation between Analytical Thinking and Highly Effective Employees

Hypothesis, H1c- There is no significant correlation between teamwork & collaboration and highly effective performance at supervisory level has been rejected. The statistical result shows that there is a moderate correlation (Pearson correlation=.480) between teamwork & collaboration and highly effective performance, not only this but the relationship is significant ($p=.000$) also.

		PerAVG	Teamwork
PerAVG	P Correlation	1	.480**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	92	92
Teamwork	P Correlation	.480**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	92	92

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table No. 4.4 Correlation between Teamwork & Collaboration and Highly Effective Employees

Hypothesis, H1d-There is no significant correlation between innovation & improvement and highly effective performance at supervisory level has been rejected. The statistical result shows that there is a moderate correlation (Pearson correlation=.526) between innovation & improvement and highly effective performance, not only this but the relationship is significant (p=.000) also.

		PerAVG	Innovation
PerAVG	P Correlation	1	.526**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	92	92
Innovation	P Correlation	.526**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	92	92

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table No. 4.5 Correlation between Innovation and Improvement and Highly Effective Employees

Hypothesis, H1e-There is no significant correlation between communication skills and highly effective performance at supervisory level has been rejected. The statistical result shows that there is a strong correlation (Pearson correlation=.525) between communication skills and highly effective performance, not only this but the relationship is significant (p=.000) also.

		PerAVG	Communication Skills
PerAVG	P Correlation	1	.525**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000

	N	92	92
Communication Skills	P Correlation	.525**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	92	92

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table No. 4.6 Correlation between Communication Skills and Highly Effective Employees

Hypothesis, H1f- There is no significant correlation between interpersonal skills and highly effective performance at supervisory level has been rejected. The statistical result shows that there is a moderate correlation (Pearson correlation=.530) between interpersonal skills and highly effective performance, not only this but the relationship is significant (p=.000) also.

		PerAVG	Interpersonal Skills
PerAVG	P Correlation	1	.530**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	92	92
Interpersonal Skills	P Correlation	.530**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	92	92

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table No. 4.7 Correlation between Interpersonal Skills and Highly Effective Employees

Hypothesis, H1g- There is no significant correlation between ability to learn & develop and highly effective performance at supervisory level has been rejected. The statistical result shows that there is a moderate correlation (Pearson correlation=.535) between ability to learn & develop and highly effective performance, not only this but the relationship is significant (p=.000) also.

		PerAVG	Ability to learn & develop
PerAVG	P Correlation	1	.535**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	92	92
Ability to learn and develop	P Correlation	.535**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	92	92

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table No. 4.8 Correlation between Ability to Learn & Develop and Highly Effective Employees

Hypothesis, H1h- There is no significant correlation between art of negotiation and highly effective performance at supervisory level has been rejected. The statistical result shows that there is a weak correlation (Pearson correlation=.341) between art of negotiation and highly effective performance, not only this but the relationship is significant ($p=.000$) also.

		PerAVG	Art of Nego
PerAVG	P Correlation	1	.341**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	92	92
Art of Nego	P Correlation	.341**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	92	92

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table No. 4.9 Correlation between Art of Negotiation and Highly Effective Employees

Basis above, further analysis has been done to identify the order of importance of competency at supervisory level which can be applied to telecom sector. The result is presented below in the form of matrix.

Rank (Supervisory Level)	Competency Variables
1	Ability to Learn & Develop
1	Team Work & Collaboration
2	Communication Skills
3	Interpersonal Skills
4	Art of Negotiation
5	Analytical Thinking
6	Customer Focus
7	Innovation & Improvement

Table 4.10: Relative Importance of Behavioral Competencies at Supervisory Level

The study suggests that two most important competency variable that drives higher performance at supervisory level are ability to learn and develop and team work and collaboration, as both

these competencies are important to drive team's performance. The results also highlights that a supervisor with effective communication skills, interpersonal skills can create huge difference at work and drive higher performance at work , further competencies related to negotiations, analytical thinking, customer focus and innovation also have impact on his performance. As a manager at supervisory level, an adequate balance of all these eight competencies helps him to drive superior performance at work

5.0 Managerial Implications

The study has given an insight on the competencies contributing to highly effective performance at the supervisory level. This will help in driving high performance culture by building developmental tools for various variable of competencies. The findings will also help to create the ecosystem leading to highly effective performance by a larger employee base resulting into positive organizational level changes. It will help broad basing and building talent pipeline and will be linked with career management, talent acquisition, performance management and reward management processes of the organization at supervisory level.

6. Conclusion

Telecommunications industry the service based industry and in such type of organizations, the product is intangible because service is the product and it is delivered by the employees and customer centric services becomes the key performance indicator. The role of supervisors become more important in an organization. Also, while recruiting an employees at supervisory level becomes more important to check the competency skills so that the high performance can be assured.

From the statistical analysis of data related to the supervisor level employees, it can be concluded that among the eight competency variables, customer focus, communication skills and team work & collaboration have very strong correlation with highly effective performance, innovation & improvement and analytical thinking have strong correlation with highly effective performance. Interpersonal skills and ability to learn & develop has moderate correlation and art of negotiation has week correlation.

Further analysis of competency variable reveals one important result which shows that all the competency variables are not equally important at supervisory level, for example team work and ability to learn & develop is most important variable as against innovation and improvement. Therefore, the researcher can say that the order of importance may vary due to nature of work

and various organizational situations at supervisory level, however it's more important to ensure that a supervisor displays these competencies at work and drive superior performance at work as a leader to drive business growth.

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