



Managerial Skills Development of Extension Professional

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Management is the process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the efforts of organization members and of using all other organizational resources to achieve stated organizational goals (Stoner and Freeman, 1989). Management is the process of designing and maintaining an environment in which individuals, working together in groups, efficiently accomplish selected aims (Koontz and Wehrich 1990). Luther Gullick and Urwick promoted seven principles of administration and in so, coined the acronym POSDCORB. The POSDCORB stands for seven principles namely Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting and Budgeting, These seven principles have been discussed briefly below:

Planning: The first function proposed was planning based on Fayol's definition "to foretell the future and to prepare for it" i.e. identifying various activities required to reach the target and arranging them in terms of priorities and sequence. In essence, the human and material resources available to the executive are estimated and the ways to reach the targets are discovered so that goals are achieved in a systematic and efficient manner.

Organizing: Organizing is the establishment of formal structure of authority through which work subdivisions are arranged, defined and coordinated for achieving defined objectives. This principle reflects structural traits of the theory and points out that if serious overlapping of functions exists within an organization, there can be no clear-cut system of formal authority.

Staffing: Staffing, as conceived by them, meant 'Personnel Management' i.e. the process of training and retaining competent work force in an organization.

Directing: Directing is the principle according to which the executive should continuously guide the organization i.e. it is the continuous task of making decisions and embodying them in specific and general orders and instructions, and thereby serving as the leader of the organization.

Coordination: It is the most important activity and it inter-relates the various parts of the organization and synchronizes their efforts so that unnecessary duplication is removed. It aims at securing timely cooperation between the various units and employees.

Reporting: According to this principle, the executive should keep those, to whom the executive is responsible, informed as to what is going on in the organization so that timely control can be exercised. It includes keeping himself and his subordinates informed through records and Inspections.

Budgeting: It is the most important principle without which rest of the six principles can achieve nothing. It takes the form of fiscal planning, accounting and financial control. The objective of the present study is to know the managerial skill development of the extension professional.

Management Skills

A manager's job is varied and complex. Hence, managers need certain skills to perform the functions associated with their jobs. During the early 1970s, Robert K. Kalz identified three kinds of skills for administrators. These are technical, human and conceptual skills. A fourth skill – the ability to design solutions – was later added to the above mentioned skills.

Technical skills refer to the ability of a person to carry out a specific activity. In order to do so, one needs to have knowledge of methods, processes and procedures. Engineers, computer specialists, accountants and Agricultural Scientists & Extensionists all need to have necessary technical skills for their specialized field. Technical skills are essential for first-level managers. For example, employees at the operational level work with tools, and their supervisors must be able to teach them how to perform the tasks assigned to them using these tools. First-level managers spend much of their time in training subordinates and clarifying doubts in work related problems.

Human skills or interpersonal skills refer to the ability of a person to work well with other people in a group. It is the ability to lead, motivate, and communicate with people to accomplish certain objectives. Human skills are of paramount importance in the creation of an environment, in which people feel comfortable and are free to voice their opinions. These skills aid employees during interaction with their supervisors, peers and people outside the work unit such as suppliers, customers and the general public. These skills are important for all levels in the organization.

Conceptual skills refer to the ability of a person to think and conceptualize abstract situations. It is the ability to understand and coordinate the full range of corporate objectives and activities. These skills are most important at the top management level, as top-level managers have the greatest need to see the "big picture" to understand how the various parts of the organization relate to one another and associate the organization with the external environment.

Design skills refer to the ability of a person to find solutions to problems in ways that would benefit the organization. Top managers should not only recognize a problem but also suggest ways to overcome them. If they only see the problem, they become mere "problem watchers" and will prove ineffective. Managers at upper organizational levels should be able to design a rational feasible solution to the problem by considering various internal and external factors.

Importance of different skills for a development of a good manager

The relative significance of these skills varies at different levels in organizational hierarchy. First-level managers require more technical skills in order to supervise operational employees. They need to have good human skills for they need to interact with their subordinates on a regular basis. However, conceptual skills are usually not very essential for the managers at the supervisory level. The need for technical skills is lesser at the middle-management level. Here, human skills and conceptual skills are more significant. At the top-management level, conceptual, design and interpersonal skills are of greatest importance; there is little need for technical skills. Managers need to interpersonal skills as well as analytical skills. These interpersonal skills include communication, leadership, teamwork, negotiating and others. Managers not only need the analytical skills but they also need interpersonal skills; they need to know how and be willing to "get along" with others. Managers have the fundamental duty to mobilize and motivate people to achieve collective goals by defining and communicating tasks, organizing the employees according to their tasks, and providing them an appropriate working environment (Moss Kanter, R. Frontierele, 2007). Therefore, a set of individual characteristics specific to managers is needed to influence the achievement of desired performance (Stibli, 2009). Regardless of the type of organization they lead and their hierarchical level, managers must have specific

managerial skills, which influence decisively their level of performance and the achievements of their team. Skill stands for the ability, aptitude, deftness, prowess, or competence to perform certain tasks or activities (Nicolescu, 2004). In other words, managerial skills can be defined as a set of characteristics that help individuals to achieve better results and to be successful. (Mănăilă, 2014). According to Simionescu et al. (2002) in order to successfully fulfill their tasks, managers need four basic types of skills: Professional, interpersonal, conceptual, analysis and diagnosis skills

- Professional (specialized) skills consist of the knowledge necessary for their field of activity (lawyers, economists, teachers, engineers, etc.) and are acquired by attending formal education.
- Interpersonal skills mean the ability to work with people, to communicate with groups or individuals and understand them.
- Conceptual skills depend on the managers' ability of abstracting; they allow them to analyze the organization as a whole, understand the cause-effect relationships in the organization, and think strategically.
- Analysis and diagnosis skills refers to the manager's ability to identify the most appropriate response to a given situation.

These skills help defining the problem and discovering possible causes, analyzing the options of response, choosing the optimal variant, implementing the solution, and monitoring the results. Starting from the idea that a skill implies one competence that can be developed further on, Katz (1974) suggests that the efficient management of an organization is based on three fundamental skills needed by managers:

- A set of characteristics that help individuals to achieve better results and to be successful;
- characteristics needed to carry out the managerial processes necessary to obtain efficient results in the organization;
- characteristic attitudes of managers by means of which they manage to impose their own style, strategies, techniques, and tools in the organization.

According to Pfeffer (1998), managerial and organizational effectiveness is based on seven key practices: Ensuring job security, selective employment of people, encouraging decentralization and self-management of teams, implementing a high performance-based payroll, extensive training, reducing status differences, and exchanging information.

In 2000, Brodbeck *et al.* conducted a study in 22 countries across Europe on 6052 middle-level managers, mainly focused on testing the hypothesis according to which the leadership concepts vary depending on cultural differences, and on determining the dimensions that describe the differences in leadership concepts in these countries. Thus, the aptitudes that differentiate managers are inspiration, spirit of self-sacrifice, diplomatic tact, integrity, self-centeredness, self-awareness, self-criticism, modesty, autonomy, visionary spirit, and administration capacity. The profession of manager is very complex, and the expectations from those who hold these positions are also very high, so the continuous improvement of all the individual characteristics that meet these expectations is an essential condition for an efficient manager, which also influences the sustainable development of SMEs. Developing competent managerial skills is much more complicated than developing other skills because they are based on more complex knowledge than other types of skills and, furthermore, they depend on interaction with other persons. On the other hand, what all the skills have in common is the potential for improvement through practice. Any approach to the development of managerial skills must therefore involve a strong dose of practical application. At the same time, practice without the necessary conceptual knowledge is sterile and ignores the need for flexibility and adaptability to different situations. Therefore, the transformation of theoretical competences in management skills is inherently related to both conceptual learning and behavioral practice (Whetten, 2011).

Conclusion

Managerial skills include efficient communication and a good relationship with all people, from all fields. Without these skills, an entrepreneur would be limited only to interacting with certain people who are compatible with his communication style, thus restricting his ability to convey his vision and goals further. From the study, it is concluded that extension leaders need competence in six leadership skill areas: human, conceptual, technical, communication, emotional intelligence, and industry knowledge skills. Because the administrative heads were provided with a set of example skills based on the literature (Goleman, 1998; Katz, 1955, Robbins, *et al.*, 2001) prior to the interview, it was to be expected that participants would identify leadership competencies within five of the six areas identified. However, in this study, communication skills, a leadership skill area not previously identified in leadership skills literature as a separate, important skill area, also emerged. Although communication skills was not identified as an independent leadership skill in the literature, it has been identified as an important skills set for Extension leaders to possess. Holder (1990) recommended the inclusion of communication and listening skills, as well as visionary and futurism training, and enabling skills, such as empowerment and delegation, in extension leadership training programs for Extension faculty.

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