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## ASSESSING COMMUNICATION COMPETENCY OF ASPIRING MANAGERS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Purpose-** *Objective of this research paper is to assess communication competency of Aspiring Managers.*

**Research Methodology-** *525 Respondents were selected by using random sampling method from various universities and institutes of Haryana and NCR. Structured questionnaire was designed to assess communication competency of aspiring managers. Statistical tools like mean, t-test, F-test (ANOVA) were applied on the data using SPSS.*

**Findings:** *From the results it is evident that demographic variables like age, gender, place of schooling, nature of present institution are not found to be significantly differentiating the various groups of respondents while assessing communication competency of Aspiring Managers. The communication competency of aspiring managers differs significantly for demographic variable Birth place.*

**Implications-** *It is obvious that aspiring managers from Haryana-NCR are at the average level for communication competency, which indicates some limitation with the current system of education. It focuses more on theoretical learning rather than practical learning. This limitation may be overcome by focusing on developing soft skills, role playing, making the professional education more industry oriented, mentoring, etc.*

**Keywords:** Managerial Competencies, Communication Competency, Assessing, Aspiring Managers.

## **INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Human resource is the most vital resource for an organization. Irrespective of size and nature of the organization, effective and efficient managers are essential for any organization's success. To be a successful manager one needs several competencies that enable him to perform capably at different managerial positions (Bhardwaj and Punia, 2013). Competencies may be defined as the set of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes that a person needs to be efficient and successful in one's job (Hellriegel et. al., (2005).

According to Hellriegel et. al. (2005), Managerial competencies are “a set of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes that a person needs to be effective in a wide range of positions and various types of organizations.” They also recommended that to be a successful manager one needs to develop six core managerial competencies namely: Communication Competency, Planning and Administration Competency, Teamwork Competency, Strategic Action Competency, Global Awareness Competency, and Self-Management Competency. Current study primarily focuses on Communication Competency of aspiring managers.

Communication is the most imperative aspect in human relationships. It is the primary need of all human beings. Effective communication is necessary for the well functioning of the organizations. Communication means transfer of information along with understanding (Singla, 2014). Kelly (2000) described organizational communication as the process of exchanging information between two or more people with the aim of either motivating them or influencing their behavior. According to Hellriegel et al. (2005) the term communication competency refers to “the effective transfer and exchange of information that leads to understanding between oneself and others.” Communication competency is essential for effective managerial performance as the managers are required to direct other people in order to get the work done from them.

Communication competency has the following sub-dimensions:

- Informal Communication
- Formal Communication

- Negotiation

Different studies across the world highlighted that communication skill is one of the most essential and desirable competency of successful and highly rated managers. Abraham et. al. (2001) in their study recognized that leadership skills, communication skills, customer focus, result orientation, problem solver, and team leader are the six most important competencies of effective managers. Rao (2007) identified that Job knowledge, effective communication skills, team skills, calmness and hard work as the most important skills of good managers. In their study, Shirazi and Mortazavi (2009) found that effective communication, responsiveness, team building, proactiveness, negotiation, and decisiveness are the main characteristics of an effective manager.

Boyatzis (2009) asserted that competencies are behavioral and these can be developed. Organizations should assess competencies of their managers and should develop effective programs to overcome the shortcomings.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology designed and followed in the current study has been discussed under the following sub-heads:

### *Objectives of the Study*

The main objective of this paper is to assess the communication competency of aspiring managers. The specific sub-objectives of the study are as following:

1. To assess communication competency of aspiring managers.
2. To suggest workable guidelines for improving the communication of aspiring managers.

### *Hypothesis of the Study*

1. There is no significant difference in communication competency across various age categories of aspiring managers.
2. There is no significant difference between aspiring managers of different gender for communication competency.

3. There is no significant difference in communication competency of aspiring managers on the basis of Birth Place
4. There is no significant difference between aspiring managers of different nature of present institution for communication competency.
5. There is no significant difference in communication competency of aspiring managers from different place of Schooling.

### *Research Design*

The exploratory cum descriptive research design has been used in the current study.

### *Sampling Design and data collection*

In the current study, random sampling method is used to collect data from 525 aspiring managers (final year management students) from different universities and institutions of Haryana and NCR.

### *Data Analysis and Interpretation*

Statistical tools like mean, t-test, F-test (ANOVA) were applied on the data using SPSS. Test of significance has been used to check the significance of hypothesis assumed.

**Table 1: Communication Competency on the basis of Age of Aspiring Managers**

Particulars	Mean values comparison						ANOVA test statistics	
	20 years	21 years	22 years	23 years	24 years	25 years and above	F-value	Sig.
<b>N (Number of respondents)</b>	36	157	174	91	45	22		
<b>Informal Communication</b>	3.4056	3.4904	3.3690	3.5407	3.4222	3.6273	1.089	.366
<b>Formal Communication</b>	3.4056	3.4777	3.3529	3.4374	3.4089	3.4818	.581	.715
<b>Negotiation</b>	3.4500	3.4204	3.3713	3.4703	3.4222	3.5000	.310	.907
<b>Communication competency</b>	3.4204	3.4628	3.3644	3.4828	3.4178	3.5364	.741	.593

Source: Primary data

Table 1 examines the association between age and communication competency of aspiring managers. Communication competency has three sub-dimensions ‘informal communication’, ‘formal communication’, and ‘negotiation’. Comparison of mean values across different age groups indicates that competency level of aspiring managers does not differ much, which means that aspiring managers of different age groups possess similar level of communication competency.

F-statistics also indicates that competency level of aspiring managers does not have a significant difference among different age groups. This difference is also not significant for the sub-dimensions of communication competency. So the table 5.1 reveals that age does not bring any significant variation in competency levels of aspiring managers from different age groups.

**Table 2: Communication Competency on the basis of Gender of Aspiring Managers**

Particulars	Mean values		Mean Difference	t-test for Equality of Means	
	Male	Female		t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
N (Number of respondents)	252	273			
Informal Communication	3.4548	3.4513	.00348	.054	.957
Formal Communication	3.3786	3.4557	-.07711	-1.261	.208
Negotiation	3.3913	3.4432	-.05195	-.822	.412
Communication Competency	3.4082	3.4501	-.04186	-.772	.441

Source: Primary data

Table 2 indicates that whether gender brings any significant variation in competency level of aspiring managers for communication competency and its sub-dimensions. Comparison of mean values between male and female aspiring managers depicts that competency level of male and female aspiring managers for all the dimensions of communication competency does not differ much, which means that aspiring managers of both genders possess similar level of communication competency. The t-statistics also indicates that competency level of aspiring managers does not have a significant difference between male and female aspiring managers for communication competency.

**Table 3: Communication Competency on the basis of Birth Place of Aspiring Managers**

Particulars	Mean values		Mean Difference	t-test for Equality of Means	
	Urban	Rural		t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
N (Number of respondents)	309	216			
Informal Communication	3.5333	3.3440	.18933	2.267	.024*

<b>Formal Communication</b>	3.4841	3.2620	.22214	2.788	.006*
<b>Negotiation</b>	3.4602	3.2760	.18419	2.216	.027*
<b>Communication Competency</b>	3.4926	3.2940	.19856	2.784	.006*

Source: Primary data

\*significant at .05 level of significance

Table 3 examines the association between birth place and communication competency of the aspiring managers. Mean values comparison between urban and rural birth place aspiring managers indicates that competency level of aspiring managers varies very much for all the dimensions of communication competency, which means that aspiring managers having different birth place possess different level of communication competency. Comparison of mean values also indicates that aspiring managers from urban areas are more competent than aspiring managers from rural areas for all the dimensions of communication competency.

T statistics also indicates that competency level of aspiring managers has a significant difference between urban and rural birth place aspiring managers for communication competency. So the table 3 reveals that difference in birth place of the aspiring managers contributes significant variation in communication competency levels of aspiring managers.

**Table 4: Communication Competency on the basis of Place of Schooling of Aspiring Managers**

Particulars	Mean values		Mean Difference	t-test for Equality of Means	
	Urban	Rural		t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
<b>N (Number of respondents)</b>	374	151			
<b>Informal Communication</b>	3.4642	3.4220	.04219	.492	.623
<b>Formal Communication</b>	3.4390	3.3165	.12255	1.509	.132
<b>Negotiation</b>	3.4289	3.3319	.09701	1.137	.256
<b>Communication Competency</b>	3.4440	3.3568	.08725	1.192	.234

Source: Primary data

Table.4 shows the relationship between place of schooling and communication competency of the aspiring managers. Mean values comparison between urban and rural place of schooling aspiring managers indicates that competency level of aspiring managers does not vary much for all the dimensions of communication competency, which means that aspiring managers having different place of schooling possess similar level of communication competency. Further t-statistics also indicates that competency level of aspiring managers does not have a significant

difference between urban and rural place of schooling aspiring managers for communication competency. So the table 4 shows that changes in place of schooling of the aspiring managers do not contribute significant variation in communication competency levels of aspiring managers.

Table 5 depicts that whether nature of present institution of the aspiring managers brings any significant variation in competency level of aspiring managers for communication competency. Comparison of mean values indicates that competency level of aspiring managers studying in university teaching departments and private institutions does not vary much for all the dimensions of communication competency, which means that aspiring managers from different academic institutions possess similar level of communication competency.

**Table 5: Communication Competency on the basis of Nature of Present Institution of Aspiring Managers**

Particulars	Mean values		Mean Difference	t-test for Equality of Means	
	University Teaching Department	Private Institution		t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
N (Number of respondents)	332	193			
Informal Communication	3.4355	3.4829	-.04736	-.711	.477
Formal Communication	3.3904	3.4674	-.07700	-1.215	.225
Negotiation	3.4078	3.4363	-.02844	-.434	.665
Communication Competency	3.4112	3.4622	-.05093	-.906	.365

Source: Primary data

The t-statistics also indicates that competency level of aspiring managers does not have a significant difference between university teaching departments and private institutions aspiring managers for communication competency. So the results from table 5 show that nature of present institution does not contribute significant variation in communication competency levels of aspiring managers.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION**

Data analysis has revealed that birth place has emerged as a significant differentiator for communication competency for aspiring managers. The communication competency of aspiring

managers doesn't differ significantly for demographic variables like age, gender, place of schooling, nature of present institution etc. It means that the aspiring managers possess similarly levels of communication competency. It can also be seen from the findings that the aspiring managers possess average level competencies.

## **MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Communication competency is the most fundamental of managerial competencies. One needs to be effective on this competency in order to be a good and successful manager. But from the findings it is quite evident that aspiring managers are not very competent in communication competency, which indicates some limitation with the current education system and industrial training programs. Educational institutes must emphasize on developing communication and soft skills in the aspiring managers in order to make them competent future managers. Policy makers are also advised, to develop better curriculum which should focus on development of soft skills and practical learning.

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