

How to become a Health Care Consultant with High Performance : Establishment and Enlightenment of Competency Model

Yi-Pin Lai¹, Yi-Jyun Chen¹ and , Miao-Xing ke¹ , and Ai-Tzu Li²⁺

¹ Graduate student, National Chung Cheng University, Institute of Adult & Continuing Education, Taiwan

²⁺ Associate Professor, National Chung Cheng University, Institute of Adult & Continuing Education, Taiwan

Abstract. This study aimed to establish the core and functional competency model for the health care consultants, taking nine health care consultants from a health care center affiliated to a teaching hospital in Taiwan as the study subjects. This study was conducted through three stages. First, it conducted behavior event interview to sort out the functional competency model for each group type, so as to understand the functional competencies of each functional competency. Second, constructing the competency scale by questionnaire survey method aimed to verify the importance of the functional competency. Finally, the common competencies were found out based on the functional model of each group type, and the organizational vision was taken into account to analyze the core competencies.

The results of the study summarized nine core competencies and 7 functional competency items of the reporting group, 1 functional competency item of the consulting room group, 6 functional competency items of the endoscope group, 2 functional competency items of the reception group and 5 functional competency items of the guiding group leader group and proposed suggestions for future practice.

Keywords: health care consultant, functional competency, core competency

1. Introduction

Due to longer longevity and increasing occurrence of chronic diseases on humans, the medical care expenses are constantly and dramatically increasing. In order to seek the solution to control the medical care expense and guarantee the demands of individual health benefits, the development of health management is promoted.

However, in this era with the main trend of preventing disease and pursuing health, the professions in traditional medical care field can't satisfy the increasingly developing demands of health guaranty service, which gives rise to Health care consultant. The main working content of this occupation includes collecting and managing individual health information, conducting health consultation and instruction, so as to achieve the goals of disease prevention, disease elimination and anti-aging. According to the global investigation results of WHO, people who are really in the health state only account for 5%, people who are sick and based on the diagnosis of physician only account for 20%, while 75% of the people all over the world are in the sub-health state. Therefore, the service subjects of Health care consultant are far more than that of the general medical institutions, which refer to the mass society that needs health service demands.

As the Health care consultants have different working tasks and service subjects from traditional medical care staff are different, they must have different professional competency. However, recently there are only studies related to the competency model of the traditional medical care staff, but the competency model for Health care consultant hasn't been established yet. Its importance is that it can be taken as the proof for, recruitment and selection of the health care, as well as the design source of the education and the

⁺ Corresponding Author: Ai-Tzu Li. Tel.: +886-5-2720411 ext 36112; fax: +886-5-2721192.
E-mail address: irisli@ccu.edu.tw

development of training course. Finally, it can also be the indicator for the performance evaluation. Thus, competency model can promote the professional ability of the health care consultant. Therefore, the establishment of competency model for health care consultant is quite important and urgent. Specifically speaking, this study mainly aims to investigate the core and functional competency of the health care consultants in that health care center through the methods of behavior event interview and questionnaire survey.

2. Literature review

2.1. Competency

The term competency was first proposed by David McClelland, psychologist of Harvard University, USA (1973), who put forward doubts to the IQ test commonly used to select students in the higher education. He pointed out it should attach more importance to the competency that practically affects the study performance, which could be regarded as the selection proof. Later on, this notion was transformed into the field of enterprise management. The scholars started to discuss the competency that affects the working performance. Knowles(1970) provided a general definition for competency, which included the necessary knowledge, individual value, skills and attitudes for carrying out specific function or work. Hager & Gonczy(1980) pointed out that competency should include three elements, namely, knowledge, skill and attitude, all of which will interact with each other and happen on a specific behavior at the same time. Spencer & Spencer(1993) defined competency as one's potential and essential characteristics, indicating expression power or thinking power. This kind of power can be extended to various situations in personal work or life, moreover, it can stay in the body for a long time. To summarize the above points of view, this study defined the competency as competent items and behavioral presentation, that is, a person must have to achieve the outstanding work performance. It also meant the sum of knowledge, ability and characteristics needed for different occupations and included the potential ability and learning ability to be developed in the future. Competency can affect and predict one's working behavior and performance presentation.

2.2. Competency model

Competency model referred to all competencies that are needed to constitute each job, while knowledge, skills, behavior and individual characteristics were indicated in each competency item(Dalton,1997). Furthermore, competency model was used to define the requirements of training and development for the staff in the work. In the development plan, the staff could clearly understand the competency type needed in current and future work(Raymond,1999).Competency model also provided the staff behaviors expected by the organization(Gatewood & Field,1998).

Competency model could be designed based on the entire organization or specific role, function or work, because the members in the organization have different demands and goals. It could be mainly divided into four types (Darrell& Ellen, 1998):

- Core competency model: It focused on the competency needed by the entire company, and often tightly combines with the organizational vision and value, which were applicable to the staff of all classes and fields.
- Functional competency model: It was established based on different functions of the enterprise and was only applicable to the staff in the same functional class, but not to the staff in the other functional classes.
- Role competency model: It was mainly for a special role played by the individual in the organization, but not the function he/she belongs to, such as, supervisor, engineer, technician, etc.
- Working competency model: It was the narrowest type, only applicable to single working content when many people work on this.

The study subjects were all health care consultants, and the working content design must be distributed to different groups; the working contents were diverse, so each employee has different functional class. Thus, this study chosen to establish the core competency model and functional competency model for that health care center.

3. Method

3.1. Study design

This study adopted the methods of behavior event interview method and questionnaire survey. The behavior event interview aims to collect and understand the working content, as well as that whether there are some failures or successful events in the working place through asking the respondents to describe the important events. We interviewed 4 health care consultants, and each one interviewed nearly an hour. In this way, it analyzes the abilities needed in the work and then preliminarily analyzes the functional competency of health care consultant for each group based on the above interview content. There are 32 competency items in total marked with the definition and behavioral indicators.

The questionnaire survey method mainly aims to construct the competency scale. The main purpose is to verify the importance of the competency proposed by the health care consultants during the interview. It requires selecting the difference of importance degree for each competency item, with the expectation to find out the key ability affecting the working performance presentation, as shown in Table 1.

Moreover, considering that the competency may obtain better credibility with reference from different aspects, we invite the supervisor to fill in the questionnaire. This health care center conducts job rotation at every regular period, and most staff take two groups of work assignments, so each health care consultant fills in two different questionnaires based on different groups. 23 questionnaires are handed out and returned in total, with the returning ratio up to 100%. Finally, the functional competency of each working group type is confirmed based on competency scale, and the common competency is found out as the core competency, so as to confirm the competency model.

Table 1 Competency Scale

Group Type : Endoscopy Group		Absolutely agree	Agree	Disagree	Absolutely disagree
Competency	Behavioral indicators				
Interpersonal relationship	1. Can successfully interpret the motivation, ideas, attitudes or emotions behinds others' behaviors				
	2. Can fully understand others' demands, and maintain good relationship with others.				
	3. Can share information or data with others, and help others understand the current state and available service				

3.2. Study Subjects

The case in the study was the medical care center established by a teaching hospital in Taiwan, with the principle and vision of efficiency and profession. There were 9 health care consultants and a supervisor in this health care center. The supervisor was only in charge of administrative affairs. The internal working responsibilities were divided into five groups, as shown in Table 2. Besides following content, each consultant must conduct business promotion for the health care center in enterprises, communities, schools, and other units

Table 2 Internal working responsibilities

Reception	(1)Computer documentation and administration processing (2)Internal and external communication (3)Statement processing
Guiding group leader	(1)Explain the procedure(2)Assist in customer s' health checkup (3)Provide service for other demands of the customers
Consulting room	(1)Conduct basic checkup according to that department (2)Assist the physician
Endoscope	(1)Check the body inside(2)Clinical preliminary checkup

Report area	(1)Take blood(2)confirm the report content -Comment and suggestions -Send out (4)Orally explain the checking outcomes for the customers
-------------	--

4. Result

4.1. Functional Competency

The case in the study was the medical care center established by a teaching hospital in Taiwan, with the principle and vision of efficiency and profession. There were 9 health care consultants and a supervisor in this health care center. The supervisor was only in charge of administrative affairs. The internal working responsibilities were divided into five groups, as shown in Table 2. Besides following content, each consultant must conduct business promotion for the health care center in enterprises, communities, schools, and other units

Table 3 interview result

Group type	Key events	The abilities that the respondents think are related to the key events.
Report area	1. The patient complained that the blood is drawn too slowly. 2. Heavy workload and time pressure.	Ability of professional caring, self-management, and distinguishing in order of importance and urgency
Consulting room, Endoscope	Relieve the customer's emotion and conduct checking successfully	Customer-oriented ability
Reception	Completely handle the customer's complaint content	Problem-solving ability
Guiding group leader	The patient often complained that it takes a long time to wait for checking.	Problem-solving and communication ability

Therefore, the competency scale questionnaire was designed based on the working content and interview content. The respondents were required to select the degree difference based on the competency of each group type. According to the statistic results of the competency scale, the researchers found out under the same group type, it would be functional competency if those who select "absolutely agree" account for over 66% of the total subjects in the same group type. The following table shows the functional competencies for each of the five group types(as shown in Table 4).

Table 4 functional competency

Report area	Consulting room	Endoscope	Reception	Guiding group leader
1. Diagnosis analysis 2. Honest 3. Outcomes-oriented 4. Self-management 5. flexibility 6. Reading and writing ability 7 Rank the importance of all items	1.Occupational computer instrument application	1. Professional caring ability 2. Mandarin/Taiwanese capability 3. Outcomes-oriented 4. Interpersonal relationship 5. Self-management 6. Customer-oriented	1.Kindness 2.Problem-solving	1. Interpersonal relationship 2. Mandarin/Taiwanese capability 3. Emotion management 4. Problem-solving 5. Communication

4.2. Core Competency

This study considers establishing core competency model from three perspectives, namely, functional competency, marketing work, and organizational principle and goal. Firstly, it lists the competencies that appear for more than twice as the core competencies for the five groups of functional competencies,

including five competency items, namely, outcome-oriented, self-management, interpersonal relationship, mandarin/Taiwanese capability and problem-solving.

The second perspective is that all health care consultants must be responsible for marketing work. Thus, when designing the competency scale questionnaire, this working content was separate and the marketing-related competencies were listed for the respondents to select. The statistics revealed the competency items of market opportunity identification and social ability got the selection ratio of 100%, so they were listed into core competencies.

The third perspective considers the organizational vision and goal. It can be found from the literature that the core competencies must tightly combine with the organizational vision and value. After reviewing the interview content, the researchers found that the respondents also mention the competency of kindness apart from professional caring knowledge. What's special was that both items only appear under the functional competencies of endoscope and reception, but they comply with the profession and caring in the organization goal. Thus, it was suggested that the professional caring knowledge and the kindness shall be listed into the core competencies of the health care consultant.

To sum up, the health care consultants in this case should possess the following nine core competencies, namely, outcome-oriented, self-management, interpersonal relationship, Mandarin/Taiwanese capability, problem-solving, market opportunity identification, social ability, carefulness and professional caring ability.

5. Conclusion

The functional competency and core competency of the health care consultants were analyzed by the methods of behavior event interview and questionnaire survey. There were respectively 7 functional competency items of the reporting group, 1 functional competency item of the consulting room group, 6 functional competency items of the endoscope group, 2 functional competency items of the reception group and 5 functional competency items of the guiding group leader group. Finally, it summarized 9 core competencies that every health care consultant should have.

6. Suggestion

- Inspect the training courses and certification examination courses related to the health care consultant in this industry: Currently, the training and certification examination courses of the health care consultant only cultivate and test the health care knowledge and communication ability, as well as the professional caring ability, interpersonal relationship, Mandarin/Taiwanese capability and social ability related to the core competency. Since there is a lack of relevant training related to outcome orientation, problem-solving, and the opportunity and carefulness for market identification, these can be added in the future.
- Provide the proof of talent recruitment and performance evaluation for health care center: The related recruitment method could be designed based on the core competency. For example, to conduct the analogue test regarding professional caring knowledge through which the careful degree could be understood, to observe the Mandarin/Taiwanese capability or social ability during the interview, or to construct the overall competency appraisal based on the core competency model as the proof of performance evaluation.

7. Reference

- [1] Dalton. Are Competency Model a Waste, *Training & Development*. 1997, 51(10):46-49.
- [2] David McClelland. *Job Competence Assessment Method*. Kansas: American Psychologist, 1973.
- [3] Darrell. J. C. & Ellen. R. B. Competency-based pay: A concept in evolution, *Compensation & Benefit Review*. September/October , 1998
- [4] Gatewood. D. R., & Field, S. H. 1. *Human resource selection*. Orlando. FL: The 32 Dryden Press. 1998
- [5] Hager & Goncz. A. What is competence? , *Medical Teacher* . 1980, 18(10):15-18
- [6] Knowles, M. S. *The Modern Practice of Adult Education, Andragogy vs. Pedagogy*, N.Y: Association Press. 1970

- [7] National Health Organization. Primary Health Care Now More Than Ever. USA: Stylus Publishing LLC. 2008
- [8] Pilzer. P. Z. The New Wellness Revolution. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 2007
- [9] Raymond. A. N. Employee training & development, N.Y.: McGraw.1999
- [10] Spencer. J. L. M. and S. M. Spencer. Competence at work : Models for Superior Performance, New York : John Wiley & Sons, Inc.1993