

# Constructing Executive-level Health Manager's Competency Model—A Case Study of the Health Examination Center at a Teaching Hospital in Central Taiwan

Yen-Ju Lin<sup>1</sup>, Pei-Shan Chiang<sup>1</sup>, Yu-Wen Liao<sup>1</sup>, Sheng-Jo Wang<sup>1</sup> and Ai-Tzu Li<sup>2+</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Graduate Student, Graduate Institute of Adult and Continuing Education

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Graduate Institute of Adult and Continuing Education  
National Chung Cheng University

**<sup>1</sup>Abstract.** The purpose of the research was to construct executive-level health manager's competency model, then using it as the basis for recruiting health manager executives in the future. The research interviewed two executives in the health management center at a teaching hospital in central Taiwan, and combines with the competency dictionary issued by the Ministry of Interior to carry out the exploration. The results showed that: management and marketing were the most important parts of the competency, and also were the seldom noticed competency gap in the past. The research suggested that executive-level health managers should improve their abilities of team management and program marketing, thereby enhancing the performance of administrative management. In this way, it benefits the organization's team work and leadership.

**Keywords :** Competency; Competency Construction; Competency Map; Staff Recruitment

## 1. Introduction

The function of the competency model is to construct the competency components, thus can create the competency model. The ultimate function of the competency model is to set up benchmark and model for competent staff through the process and result of constructing the model. It can promote high performance of the workers to follow, in order to enhance the ability and performance of general staff, and to create a high quality environment and culture of the workplace; thereby strengthening the competitive advantage of the business or organization.

In the last decade, as people's living standards gradually being improved, topics such as "health" and "longevity" gradually being valued by everyone, therefore, disease prevention has become one of the issues increasingly valued by modern people. In view of this, health examination centers of the Medicine field have been established one by one. The quality of health examination and the continuity of health promotion issues has become the most valued issue of health examination centers at this stage. Health managers play a very important role in the operating of the center, being the driving force behind health examination projects. Therefore, development of their ability has become the center's key to success of operation.

Since currently for related literature reviews done at home and abroad, there is no further research particularly done for the executive level of the position of health manager, therefore, based on this knowledge gap, the research designs a primary investigation type of research. Through the way of interview, we could establish the competency model of executive-level health managers and aim at their competency gap, then using it as the basis for recruiting health manager executives in the future, and as principle for designing education and training courses.

## 2. Literature Review

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<sup>1</sup> + Corresponding author. Tel.: + 886- 5-2721182; Fax: +886- 5-2721192.  
E-mail address: irisli1102@gmail.com

Since National Health Insurance was established, people began to gradually value the health care resources of preventive health care. While the National Health Insurance Bureau can pay only part of the burden of adult health examination, many hospitals began to introduce packaged physical examination, hoping to attract future potential examination subjects with the quality of service. Health examination centers have been established one after another, thus public praise of health care workers' services has become one of the selection criteria for people to choose the health examination center (Shieh, 2002).

In his study, Chen (2004) mentioned that medical institution with high competitiveness must have great health care workers, and to enhance the organization's competitiveness must start from the staff recruitment. Therefore, recruiting staff is also one of the keys to enhance the organization's performance. Besides, executives also have quite an impact on the staff. The main role of a midlevel executive is to be responsible for coordinating the work in the organization, thus he or she is a core figure connecting between the higher and the lower level. Only by motivating staff's performance can a successful executive have positive impact on the organization (McClelland & Burnham 1976), thereby enhancing the overall work performance.

### **3. Competency**

The term "competency" was first proposed by McClelland. McClelland (1973) used to mention that "Intelligence is not the only way to determine whether one's work is good or bad, the ability actually affecting the learning performance (Competency) should be valued." That is competency. In other words, it is finding the key ability to enhance their performance development from the high-performance workers. Therefore, competency means the individual's characteristics such as knowledge, skills and ability, which are sufficient to affect the individual's ability to generate excellent performance (Fang, 2007).

Mclagan (1980) then defined "competency" as "a series of knowledge, skills and abilities sufficient to complete the main working results." Through the construction of competency, it can help executives or employees to find the key ability in high-performance workers which precisely affecting reaching high performance of knowledge, skills or behavior (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). In summary, the definition of competency in the research is one's basic characteristics for their work such as knowledge, skills and abilities, which are sufficient to help workers achieve excellent work performance.

### **4. Competency Model**

According to Lin (2010) and Wu (2010), competency model can be divided into soft and hard competency these two types; Spencer & Spencer (1993) proposed "Iceberg Model" in their work. According to the content of competency, it can be divided into explicit behaviors and tacit qualities these two parts. The nature of explicit behaviors are just as hard competency, which is easy to be changed by acquired impacts; and tacit qualities are more of basic characteristics born with the individual (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). Combing the characteristics above, competency model not only helps to understand the work itself, but also can be used as tools to predict behavior, performance management, and staff recruiting or work tasks; all these behaviors are related to work performance. Application of the competency should also pay attention to combining the vision and goal of the organization, so that can achieve the desired effect.

In his study, Liu.(2007) mentioned that competency mid and high level executives could be divided into the following six dimensions: problem resolution, resources integration, goal implementation and execution, subordinates cultivation, caring and motivation, leading by example. Especially the part of "problem resolution" had a significant impact on the performance of midlevel executives.

### **5. Research Method**

The purpose of the research was to construct executive-level health manager's competency model. The research took an example of two executives in the subsidiary health examination center at a teaching hospital in central Taiwan to conduct a profound interview, then combined with the competency dictionary issued by the Ministry of Interior, constructing executive-level health manager's competency model.

#### **5.1. Indepth Interview**

Through the way of interview, interviewees were two midlevel executives in the health examination center at a teaching hospital in central Taiwan, and the interview duration was about one hour. The interview focused on the health manager's work, and aimed at their work content, organizational leadership,

administrative management and team performance. The interview transcript and record provided basis of reference for constructing the competency model.

### 5.2. Competency Dictionary

The Ministry of Interior issued a set of competency dictionary, providing enterprises basis of reference for constructing competency-oriented human resources development. The research consulted this competency dictionary, based on brief introduction, work content and management principle provided by the health center, and analysis results of the interview, constructed four competency items of different dimensions, while listing definition of each competency and behavior indicators fitting the health managers.

## 6. Research Results

The research had two major findings: first, the competency of executive-level health managers mainly included four dimensions: personal characteristics, interpersonal relationship, management and marketing. Second, from the four dimensions, they could be subdivided into 50 competency indicators, including 23 competencies of personal characteristics, 11 competencies of interpersonal relationship, 12 competencies of management, and 4 competencies of marketing (Table I). Among these, the part of management and marketing was the most important. It was found during the interviews that lack of management competency was the reason for the team to reach a consensus in cooperation and communication. In the administrative management, it could not enhance the overall work performance when promoting or implementing projects. And lack of marketing competency caused the health center had ineffective performance when promoting new programs. Therefore, the results showed that management and marketing competency was the core competency to take on executive positions, which would help to integrate the team's human resources and enhance the overall team performance, it was the seldom noticed competency gap in the past.

The research found that professional attending knowledge should be necessary ability for every health manager, therefore, when constructing the competency model (Figure 1), the research regarded the professional attending knowledge as the basic ability of this model, placing it on the bottom of the model. Moreover, health manager was different from the general medical system position; its professionalism was more of the service industry. Therefore, in the part of personal characteristics, considering the suitability of worker's personality and attitude in this field, the researchers placed it on the second layer of the model. According to Ootaki Reiji (1996), the competency he emphasized was the "soft skills" of high performers. The important factors affecting the performance level mainly came from the part of "soft skills". Therefore, the research placed the interpersonal relationship on the third layer of the model. Finally, since the target subjects of this competency model was the health manager's "executive level position", the "management and marketing" these two hard competency could be obtained by acquired learning were placed on top of the model, regarding it as the key core competency of executive level position.



Figure. 1: Executive-level Health Manager's Competency Model Source of Data: sorted by the researchers

Competen cy Dimension s	Competency Items
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Personal Characteristics	proactive, sincere, innovative, flexible, courtesy, foreign language, cautious, humorous, patient, professional ability, cost concept, strategic thinking, presentation ability, self-realization, self-management, self-confidence, stress adjustment, EQ management, decision making, organizational promise, organizational consciousness, analysis reasoning, career planning
Interpersonal Relationship	establishing social connections, interpersonal relationship, teaching others, communication, negotiation, team cooperation, affecting others, organizational atmosphere, customer-oriented, ability of public relations, counseling skills
Management Competency	priority distinguishing, position assignment, administrative management procedure, authorization, organizational development, leadership, conflict management, risk management, time management, finance management, project execution, quality-oriented
Marketing Competency	market segmentation, product packaging, market opportunity identification, market penetration

Table. 1: Constructing Executive-level Health Manager's Competency Source of Data: sorted by the researchers

## 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of the research was to construct the case health examination center's management competency model. With the indepth interviews with the midlevel executives and the application of the competency dictionary, the competency models and behavior indicators fitted the executive-level health managers, served as the basis of reference for staff recruitment, training development and performance evaluation.

According to the findings, the research proposed the competency map, which can develop the appropriate competency test. Based on the test results, it can plan out short, medium, and long term courses suitable for the whole team's education and training, while providing the organization competency basis for staff recruiting.

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