A Proposed Improvement Plan on Competencies and Skills Using Generative Analysis Approach: A Case of the Staff of the Office of Graduate Studies Assumption University of Thailand

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Abstract

The employees' success at the workplace depends on their competence and skills to match job needs and make significant achievements to the institutional goals. The competency of employees within institutions depends on the knowledge, skills, and experience. The study focused on the identification of an improvement program on employee competency and skills within the office of graduate studies. The study demonstrated that the graduate school of business management plays an essential role in ensuring the employees attain the right competency and skills. The study employed a phenomenology approach as a part of qualitative research, using in-depth interviews for data collection, contents analysis, and interpretation. The key variable of the study included abilities on problem-solving, decision making, communication, teamwork, adaptability, and customer focus. The data analysis demonstrated varied results on the components depending on the measured variables. The findings indicated require action to improve employee competency, skills, and job performance. The office of the graduate studies improvement plan (OGSIP) focused on each analyzed component and was essential to improve the competence and skills of the employees within the institution. The framework of the improvement plan includes preparation and assessment, planning, implementing, and monitoring. Further studies recommended comprise the research on advancing performance improvement plans and the involved challenges.

Keywords: human resource, competency, skills, communication, problem-solving, decision making

Introduction

Competencies and skills have been instrumental in developing a framework to help focus employee behavior on the things that matter most to the university and subsequently drive the university to success. There is a great need to improve skills and competencies among university employees to develop talent and cultivate a culture of excellence and efficiency (Liikamaa, 2015). By developing skills and competencies within the university administration, the organization represents a broader combination of abilities, skills, and knowledge that help offer superior performance within the

university (Ellinger, & Ellinger, 2014). Developing skills is also fundamental among employees to ensure that they demonstrate specific, learning activities that are relevant to a particular position.

The focus of the study is the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) in the Assumption University of Thailand. It supports all faculties of the University in Hua Mak campus. The employees in the university, including lecturers, staff, and students are the clients and customers of the office of Graduate Studies. The competence and skills of the employees and how HRD can be applied to develop their skills and make them more productive?

The study focuses on exploring the competencies and skills needed by employees in an education institution industry and how the employees meet the expectations of university and clients. Such implication sought in-depth research on what ought to be done to enhance the skills and the know-how of the employees to improve their efficiency and ensure that they contribute to the success of the university.

Statement of the Problem
The purpose of this research is to propose an improvement plan on the competency and skills of the staff of the graduate studies.

Research Objectives
1. To explore the commonality of key competencies and skills for an effective job task and better service quality.
2. To propose an improvement program on the employee's competency and skills.

Research Questions
1. What competency and skills are in common for an effective employee in the educational institution industry?
2. What can further improvement in existed employee's competency and skills be proposed?

Review of Literature

Competencies Required for Employees
Organizational communication always has preset objectives. Therefore, competency often lacks only on the effectiveness of communication, which is how well employees get to understand the communicator. Effective communication depends on the style of communication. Starc, Neuberg & Erjavec (2017) reiterated that individuals and organizations have the freedom to choose from different communication styles in

their communication and conversation with one another. However, they need to know that the style they choose influences the effectiveness of their communication, especially within business settings. The four styles of communication include passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, and assertive styles (Starc, Neuberg & Erjavec, 2017). Passive communication can be detrimental, especially when used by managers in charge of personnel. Those who choose to use passive communication to avoid conflict because they lack the courage to air their views openly.

Jia Si and Wang (2018) observed that the communication strategy puts communicators under a difficult position because the lack of self-expression leads to a build-up of anger. These kinds of communicators choose to yield to others' opinions. Aggressive style, unlike the passive one, ignores what others think and say (Starc, Neuberg & Erjavec, 2017). They could choose to yell at people and shut down whatever ideas others have. Therefore, making receivers of communication angry with communicators and leading them to abandon communication midway is common. In the view of DeLellisand Sauer (2015), passive-aggressive communicators choose not outwardly express their opinions, but one can get what they mean after analyzing the content of the conversation. They hurt but secretly (Starc, Neuberg & Erjavec, 2017). In other words, the characteristics of passive and aggressive styles are fused in this style. A person using the assertive communication style is open but refuses to be overbearing.

Kronrod, Grinstein, and Wathieu (2014) observed that assertive communicator communicates what is in his mind without angering the recipient of the communication. Communication competency requires an assertive communication style because it makes the speaker opening in the choice of words, and the communicator does not hide regarding his feelings (Brandi and Iannone, 2017). However, assertive people often refuse to hurt feelings of the recipients of their messages, and therefore bring out modesty.

According to Bole, Fink, and Prašnikar (2016), customer focus competency looks at behaviors from the staff and customers. For example, the staff must ensure that clients are satisfied. For the clients to be satisfied, they not only look at the extent to which the good or service meet their needs but also how the staff served them. Such expectation also implies that customer focus competency must ensure a timely response, believing that customers are always right and therefore avoiding arguments with them (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). The staff should know that clients need to see them smile all the time as they serve. The smile goes a long way in informing the clients that the staff is happy people, and as usual, everyone desires to be served by a happy person. Bole, Fink and Prašnikar (2016) concluded, therefore, that the first illustrative behavior from the staff with customer focus is to proactively tend to customer concerns as well as

needs. Many companies know that their staff members need to address the needs of their customers, but often, they wait until the customers complain or 'raise a finger' for them to correct it. Therefore, the main difference is that the customer focus competent staff would get right what the customers require without such customers having to complain. This is the reason it must be proactive. Follow-up is also a common illustrative behavior. It is to ensure that the clients are satisfied especially with the consideration that they have already consumed or started the consumption of the product (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Moreno-Munoz et al. (2016) observed that follow-up also helps the staff to know if the customer desires further assistance. Overall, the customer focus competency views things from the customer's perspective.

Adaptability is a desirable competency as it determines the extent to which an employee fits into his job descriptions (Hogan, Knez and Kahng, 2015). While the management often assesses an employee's ability to adapt to the organizational culture during recruitment, new studies suggest that the level of adaptation also depends on the effort that the management is doing to make the employees become open to new ideas and flexible (Rahimi & Gunlu, 2016; Sony & Mekoth, 2016). This can mainly be done through coaching (Guan et al., 2014). Coaching is effective in ensuring adaptability of the employees because it often emphasizes the strengths of the employees. Guan et al. (2014) argue that the employees often get repelled when they feel unwelcome, and even if they stay their performance is likely to be below par. They therefore need a concerned manager who would follow up on the inherent capabilities that the employees can use to adapt. One of the behavioral indicators that can enable an employee to adapt includes having function and technical skills. An employee must be gifted and knowledgeable enough in the area of profession to be accepted in an organization (Hogan, Knez, Kahng, 2015). This means that he can solve problems, as he was hired to do. The second behavioral indicator is interpersonal skills. This implies that no matter how effective an employee is in solving technical and functional issues, they must have the ability to relate warmly with their counterparts (Guan et al., 2014). For example, the employee must be seen to be empathetic with the situations others are facing at the workplace. The personal skills are also needed to be effective. When an employee understands himself, he is able to resist any bad influence that often makes adapting quite difficult (Hogan, Knez and Kahng, 2015).

According to Bertram, Blasé and Fixsen (2015), problem-solving is very essential for all employees in any given institution. This is because it is a great factor which will determine how workers are able to solve factors which may hinder a company from attaining its set goals. This does not necessarily refer to a scientist solving very complex issue, but rather evaluating the undesirable situation and finding a positive resolution to it. A worker, for example in an education system, needs to ensure

that he/she can settle disputes within the institution, either with the co-workers or the students (Kozar, 2017).

When working in a university or any other service industry, teamwork is very crucial for competence (Brandi and Iannone, 2017). Without teamwork, companies tend to fail. Even if one's role seems independent, there is still a need for communicating and understanding different roles of others in the organizations, to integrate them and work together towards attaining the objectives of the company or institution. Without teamwork when working in the university, then it is highly likely that one will fail since he/she will need to collaborate skills, and also get along with others, to ensure that there is a positive and energetic working environment.

Employers are interested in individuals who can work amicably with their fellow employees in any kind of situation and work with empathy. By working as a team, it does require not only individuals with skills but also having a sense of maturity; this permits individuals to think beyond petty misunderstandings and conflicts which are likely to happen. Teamwork also entails assisting other members of the team or the same department or school to attain a common goal quickly and efficiently (Storey, 2007).

Decision making is another key skill needed for employees working at the university, which entails making the best choices in the shortest time possible and being able to show reasons supporting the decision, which becomes key skill required before employers allocate a job to an individual since it is a key determinant for the success of the institution. The decision-making skills are not only confined to a managerial role but relate to every role of the job at any given level. Making good decisions is a very vital element of day to day business of an institution (Bertram, Blasé, and Fixsen, 2015).

The competencies discussed above require a way in which they can be modeled and improved. Companies have HRD units because their employee competencies need ongoing development as they evolve. For effective development of employee competencies, communication must be appropriate. Even though the use of word of mouth has remained largely the same, other ways of communication have changed. Employees can use company websites and social media platforms. Human resource managers should supervise this, as they are the people mandated with employee competency development.

Human Resource Development

In an institution such as a University, HRD, commences upon the hiring of an employee and then continues throughout the tenure of the worker within the university (Zukowska, 2016). HRD is vital because most employees come to work in the institution with only basic level skills and experience. They hence ought to receive training for them to

undertake their jobs effectively. Others, however, may be conversant with what is required of them and have the skills, but may lack crucial knowledge concerning the institution (Brewster, Chung, & Sparrow, 2016). HRD is developed in a way that enables all employees to acquire necessary information concerning the firm, and what they need to adapt to the culture of the institution and hence undertake their jobs effectively. It also is in place to strengthen the skills and abilities of the workers and make them even perform better. The key goal of HRD is to make better employees, who will assist the company in attaining its set goals and objectives. It also has a goal of providing coaching, which is needed for strengthening and enhancing the critical knowledge, skills, and abilities and make employee even better at what they do (Brewster, Chung, & Sparrow, 2016).

Effects of HRD in Service Delivery

HRD plays a huge role in any given institution or company. In this case, a university setting greatly needs human resource development in all its departments. One of the main effects of HRD is that it assists in attracting and keeping great and best employees. Employee retention has become a huge challenge and also a great expense for employers. The hiring process is quite expensive and costs much money for a firm (Brewster, Chung, & Sparrow, 2016).

Therefore, the greatest advantage of a university is ensuring that they have a solid employee development program to assist in making it less of a burden. Retention is a benefit since it also gives an institution a competitive advantage over other similar jobs and wages. An effective HRD that ensures a high retention rate for an employee increases its reputation since most employees continue serving the institution without leaving for greener pastures, this also brings in good people who are looking to better themselves and consequently assist in attaining the institution's goals (Brewster, Chung, & Sparrow, 2016).

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 *Conceptual Framework of Graduate Studies Employee's Competency and Skills Model*

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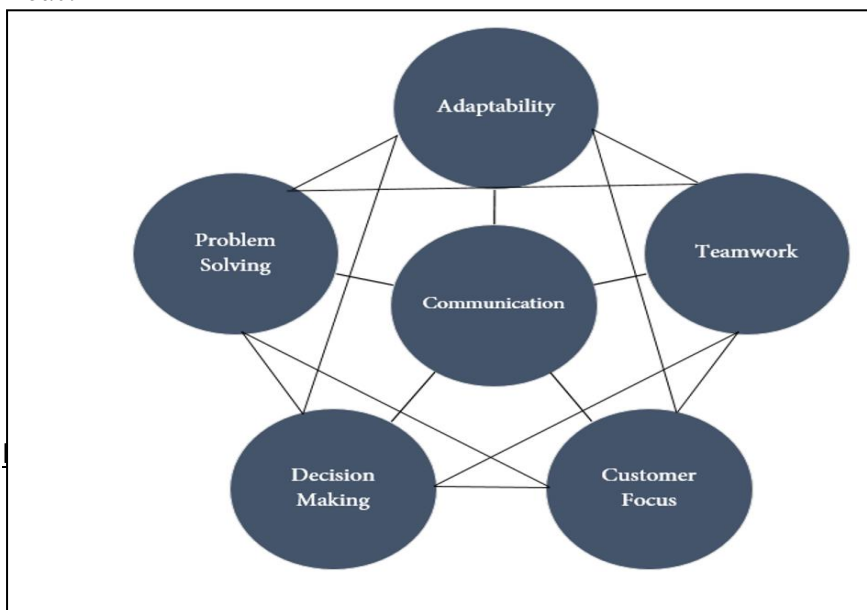
The model discusses several aspects of effective job performance that guide employee behavior and development at the workplace. The model remains vital in achieving the professional success of an individual and an organization. Highly productive employees understand their strengths and weaknesses, and it is the employer's responsibility to maintain effective communication with them to improve their weak areas. The process involves collaboration in teamwork, decision making, problem-solving, adaptability, and customer focus. The aspects focus on enhancing the technical and functional expertise of the employees in their respective positions of work. Through communication, both employees and employers have the opportunity for the employees to develop and improve their work skills through education, training, and workshops. Teamwork enhances the decision-making process, which leads to appropriate problem-solving. Proper communication in the organizations makes employees adapt in different situations and still maintain the customer focus.

Research Methods

The research was qualitative, aiming at exploring and cultivating collective experiences…the experiences concerning the competencies and skills necessary for employees to be good at their roles. The in-depth analysis helped in exploring the personal experiences of employees about competency demands and the best ways they feel such competencies can be improved. The researcher used purposive sampling to choose the sample to participate in answering the interview questions. This purposive sampling engaged 8 participants out of the 29 staff members. This research used an in-depth interview technique. The in-depth interview was involved in the use of communication media such as Skype and video calls. The researcher used six appreciative questions for interviews based on the Appreciative Inquiry model covering the main six competencies and skills, including Communication, Problem Solving, Teamwork, Customer Focus, Decision making, adaptability.

Key Findings from Qualitative Analysis

The communication element produced different themes after coding that included preferences and issues, an ideal action plan, and the tools to measure success. Under each central theme, through focused coding, other sub-categories occurred and were classified through emergent coding. Under each central theme, sub-themes emerged, which had different frequencies and relative frequencies. The subject of preferences and issues produced four supporting themes that included clear communication, ethical behavior, language barrier, and written communication. Clear and written communication showed high frequency and relative frequency when compared to ethical conduct and the language barrier.

The supporting themes of the ideal action plan generated included professional communication class, training workshops, language classes, and increase project tasks. Communication and training workshop demonstrated the high frequency and relative frequency when compared to the other support themes. The tools to measure success indicated three themes that included staff observation, pre, and post-assessment, as well as the experts' evaluation. The staff observation aspect showed a high frequency of 3 and a relative frequency of 37% while the others had a frequency of 2 and 25% relative frequency.

The problem-solving variable indicated one theme; improvement solution as compared to the communication variable that demonstrated three themes. The emergent code indicated four supporting themes with different frequencies and relative frequencies. The support themes consisted of senior supervisory, education opportunity, observe senior staff, and gain more experience. Education opportunity and observe senior staff both had a low frequency of 2 and a relative frequency of 25% while senior supervisory had a frequency of 3 and 37% relative frequency. The supporting theme of gaining more experience indicated a high frequency of 4 and 50% relative frequency. The support themes of both communication and problem-solving variables occurred through similar levels despite demonstrating little variance.

The teamwork variable indicated two main themes, unlike the problem-solving component that exhibited one theme. The themes included the motivation strategy and the maintenance of team spirit. Each theme demonstrated four different support themes that had different frequencies a relative frequency through the emergent codes. The support themes of the motivation strategy consisted of rewarding, entertainment activity, perceived outcome, and cultivating a happy workplace. Rewarding and entertainment support themes indicated the high frequency and relative frequency when compared to the other two support themes. The sub-categories of maintaining team spirit included recreation activity, positive environment, outdoor activities, recognition, and an appreciation of team player. The support themes indicated different frequencies and relative frequency ratings. The support themes of teamwork variable recorded high coding when compared to the problem-solving variable. However, the highest frequency and relative frequency recorded were at 4 and 50%, as indicated in different variables.

The adaptability variable demonstrates two themes that include issues that impair staff adaptability and practical solutions. The two themes yielded four support themes under each category that were characterized by different frequencies and relative frequency. The support themes under the issues impair staff adaptability included lack of willingness, limit role changes, afraid of taking unfamiliar tasks, and negative mindset. The support themes indicated high frequencies whereby the lack of desire indicated the

frequency of four and 50% relative frequency while the negative mindset had five and 62%. The supporting theme limit role changes had a low frequency of two and 25% relative frequency. Effective solutions demonstrated four different support themes that consisted of support staff for the experiment, learn from adaptable staff, positive attitude, and environment, and providing training and simulation.

The supporting theme on support staff for experiment indicated a frequency of 5 and a relative frequency of 62% while the others exhibited two and three frequencies. Employee adaptability at the workplace does not occur easily and incorporates several aspects that should be accomplished for the process to become successful. From the interview, a hostile environment and the existence of the support staff have a crucial role in determining whether the employees adapt well to the working environment. Learning from the adaptable staff, limiting the changes, and providing simulation have a low impact on employee adaptability, as demonstrated by the coded interviews.

Customer focus demonstrated one theme customer focus improvement that comprised of four support themes that included expand knowledge, increase deadline awareness, an internal database for staff, and the satisfaction survey report analysis. The support themes exhibited different frequencies and relative frequencies. The supporting theme on knowledge expansion had a high frequency of four, while the support theme on increasing deadline awareness had one. The coding did not show much difference from other variables apart from the 12% relative frequency recorded on the support theme of increasing deadline awareness. For an institution to achieve customer focus, it must consider all the factors indicated within the emergent code.

Successful institutions always have a sufficient customer focus that enables them to meet client needs and expectations. For the employees to achieve the aspect, they need to have adequate knowledge of customer preferences and expectations. Proper customer survey analysis enables the employees to understand customer trends and to settle fast at the workplace. Organizations always work on improving customer focus improvement, which allows them to meet customer needs and expectations.

The decision-making variable demonstrated two themes that included barriers to making decisions and decision-making methods. The two themes were supported by different sub-categories, as shown by the coded interviews. The theme of the barriers of making decisions consisted of different sub-categories, such as the time limitation, inadequate documents, system error, and various client perspectives.

The supporting themes identified under the decision-making methods included the pros and cons of evaluation, role play, manager advice, and implementing complex
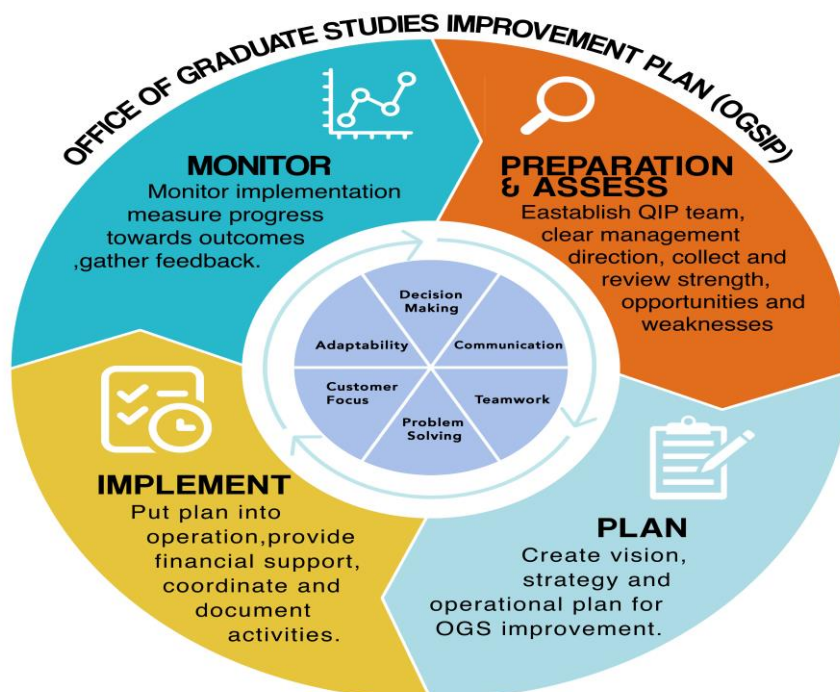
issues into training. The sub-category of senior/manager advice indicated a high frequency of six and an equal relative frequency of 75%. The other aspects reported a frequency of two and a relative frequency of 25%. From the coding, manager advice plays an essential role in determining the decision-making methods, which lead to the formulation of the right decisions.

A Proposed Framework for OGS Improvement Process Plan

The OGS improvement plan involves different steps that include preparation and assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring. During preparation and evaluation, the institutions engage in various activities that include the establishment of QIP team, state proper management direction, collect and review strength as well as determine the opportunities and weaknesses. The planning segment involves vision creation, strategy, and operation plan for the OGS improvement. The implementation process requires financial support to make it attainable. During implementation, the management puts the plan into operation, ensure proper financial aid, and document the activities. After implementation, adequate monitoring is needed to examine the progress towards the outcomes and later gather the feedback.

Figure 2

A Process Framework for OGS staff Competency and Skills Improvement and Development

OGS Improvement Action Plan

Table 1

Communication Action Plan

Focus area: Communication					
Goal: To effectively Communicate with Management, Colleagues, and Clients					
Action	Expected Performance Standards	Target Participants	Responsible for arranging	Potential Barrier	Priority
Conduct Professional Communication and Interpersonal Skills Classes/ Workshop	It is expected that staff understand and adopt basic oral and written communication skills	Admission officers	Individual or institutional contract	Experts & class materials expenses	H
Conduct business English Training related to service industry focused on office administration	It is expected that the staff knows English workplace terminology and improve their writing skills. They can effectively communicate with others in English confidentially	Service desk employees	Individual or institutional contract	Training expenses	L
Create and Assign more group tasks for daily duties	Staff involve more in team tasks and learn from each other. by their interaction with members, it is expected to improve communication skills level	Operational level employees	Management	Lack of employees commitme nt toward team roles/ employees avoid to take responsibili ty in the team format	L

According to Clokie and Fourie (2016), communication remains an essential component for organizations to achieve proper performances. The OGS improvement plan focuses on different aspects under communication to ensure the employees feel comfortable when communicating with colleagues and upper management. The process involves actions such as workshops on professional communication and interpersonal skills, training focused on office administration, and assigning group tasks for daily

activities. The expected standards of the OGS improvement plan during workshops on professional communication and interpersonal skills require the admission officers to understand the necessary oral and written communication skills. The people responsible for conducting the process include individuals or through contracts made by the institution. The aspect is ranked high, and the potential barrier that undermines it includes the expenses of experts and the materials.

The English business training based on the service industry on office administration forms part of the communication improvement plan of the OGS. The aspect of training focuses on service desk employees and aims to improve language proficiency among the employees within the employees. Individual and institution contracts shall be responsible for achieving the aspects, and some of the barriers include the training expenses. The activity is low rated in the decision-making process. The other key component in decision making is the creation and assigning more group tasks for daily duties. The aspect of training focuses on operation level employees, and the expected performance standards include engaging in team tasks, learning from one another to improve the communication levels. The management remains responsible for overseeing the process and the challenges that may include the lack of employee commitment on team roles. However, the aspect is ranked low in the OGS improvement plan.

Table 2

Decision Making Action Plan

Focus area: Decision Making					
Goal: To improve the ability to make competent decisions out of alternative solutions within the proper time which has a positive effect on the services					
Action	Expected Performance Standards	Target Participants	Potential Barrier	Responsible for arranging	Priority
Employ Pros & Cons Evaluation method to approach decisions effectively	It is expected that staff will have a wider look at the situation from different angles, identify and evaluate the pros and cons of each solution, consider appropriate solutions, and make a confident choice among alternatives	Operational level employees	Less staff commitment to employ method over time	Individual or institutional contract	L
Conduct Role Play/ Scenario with focus on	By understanding the risks and accuracy of sample cases decisions, it is	Operational level employees	Less taken seriously by employees	Individual or institutional contract	L

experience a variety of perspectives and simulating real work decision making situations. This role-play session can be merged with complex issues training or run separately inside the office.	expected that staff decision making speed will be increased significantly				
Consistently seeking Senior/Manager feedback and Advise to add value to the tasks. One on one daily discussion is recommended	It is expected that staff improve their decision-making skill by positively accepting senior/manager constructive feedback and increase the performance level	Freshly hired employees	The negative attitude from feedback provider/ Deliver emotional, irrelevant feedback	Staff	H
Implement complex Issues for decision-making process into Training each quarter	It is expected that staff understand the strategy, they can evaluate factors involved, select appropriate action that best fits the issue	Freshly hired employees	Cost of Training/ Time & availability of participants	Individual or institutional contract	L

Decisions are made daily at the workplace, and the management needs to consider making competent decisions from the alternative solutions made (Joshi, Singh and Sharma, 2018). The ability to make relevant decisions involves several actions, such as the use of pros-and-cons evaluation methods, role-play scenarios, seeking feedback, and implementing complex issues for decision making. Through the use of the pros and cons evaluation method, it is believed that the staff will have a broader evaluation of the situations before making the final decisions. The target participants include the operational level employees, and the potential barrier includes less commitment from those involved. The role scenario will help the operational level employees to understand the risks and accuracy of the sampled decisions. The potential barrier consists of the staff taking the aspect less seriously. The people responsible for the

implementation include individuals and institution contracts. Both the evaluation method and role scenario are lowly ranked.

Manager feedback in institutions helps freshly hired employees to make the right decisions (Clokie and Fourie, 2016). Staff improves their decision-making process by consulting and accepting managers' constructive feedback to improve their performance. The barrier involved in the process includes the negative attitude, emotional and irrelevant feedback from the provider that undermines the process. The process is highly ranked within the improvement plan, and the people responsible include the staff. Implementing complex issues for decision making by training fresh employees remains vital. The employees are expected to understand the strategy, evaluate factors before making the decisions. The barriers that undermine the process involve the training cost, time, and participant availability. The aspect is ranked low, and an Individual or institution contract is responsible for the process.

Table 3

Problem Solving Action Plan

Focus area: Problem Solving					
Goal: To support and improve problem-solving skills among all OGS staff to benefit the university					
Action	Expected Performance Standards	Target Participants	Potential Barriers	Responsible for arranging	Priority
Staff uses the five w's and one how to approach (what, who, when, where, and how much the problem has affected the business) to exactly understanding and analyze the problem for improvement. Senior Staff supervising and monitoring the situation and the	It is expected that staff will have greater awareness and understanding of problems in the workplace and solve basic workplace problems confidentially.	Program Coordinators	Less staff commitment to employ method over time	Quality Improvement Team	M

outcomes					
Internal Employee Development and Training with OGS customized program	It is expected that staff is updated with the service industry trends, new methods to improve productivity, and highly motivated to take on challenges and responsibilities.	Operational level employees	Cost of Training/ Time & availability of participants	Management / QIT	L
Temporary switch employees job position twice a month for one working day every time. Support Staff Experiment and allow them to deal with various service industry concerns to improve problem-solving skills	With management fully support, It is expected that staff gradually improve their problem-solving skill over time by action learning without repetitive mistakes. They experience a variety of problems in a new temporary role.	Service desk & admission officers	Lack of staff's willingness to accept a temporary role	Management / QIT	H

The problem-solving skills of the OGS staff shall be improved through different actions that include the use of the five W's and how to understand and evaluate the problem for improvement. Through the process, the program coordinators will have awareness and a greater understanding of issues affecting the institution. Less commitment of the staff to employ the method overtime may undermine the process. The aspect is ranked medium, and the quality improvement team is responsible for the process. Training the staff with customized OGS program and establishing internal employee development will enable the staff to get current service industry trends, new methods to improve productivity, and get the motivation to take on the challenges and responsibilities. The process shall involve the operational level employees, and the barriers include the cost and time of training. The aspect is ranked low and consists of the quality improvement team that is responsible for the process.

According to Joshi, Singh, and Sharma (2018), the momentary switch on the employees' job positions to engage in various works enables them to develop and improve problem-solving skills. The aspect focuses on the service desk and the admission officers who should gain problem-solving skills by being exposed to different

challenges at the workplace. Through action learning, the staff acquires the necessary skills and competence in implementing tasks. The problem of switching the staff to temporary job positions to improve their problem-solving skills include the lack of willingness to accept the temporary role. The aspect is highly ranked, and the management is responsible for its implementation.

Table 4

Teamwork Motivation Action Plan

Focus area: Teamwork					
Goal: To motivate and encourage staff for teamwork activities					
Action	Expected Performance Standards	Target Participants	Potential Barrier	Responsible for arranging	Priority
Design and Implement a rewarding Strategy program offering a standard bonus or gift package and rewarding people for outstanding teamwork skill and participation	It is expected that staff know that their contributions are valued, and they are more motivated to grow on the job and maximize their work performance	Operational level employees	budget restriction/ threats of creating high inappropriate expectations for employees	Management	H
Set up Karaoke night in some special events before the holiday begins. Karaoke helps members show off their talent or funny side that may not be obvious in the traditional office setting	It is expected that the staff understands their co-worker's personalities in order to build a strong friendship. It creates a strong, happy culture where employees are engaged and gives their best effort	Operational level employees	Budget restriction / availability of participant	Quality Improvement Team	H
Establish common goals, clarify values and facilitate weekly meetings to follow up with the	It is expected that each team should know what they are working toward including what goals they need to be hitting and when	Operational level employees	Refreshment costs	Management/ QIT	L

teamwork progress and improve collaboration					
In the OGS staff meeting, people from the team stand up and talk about the extraordinary work they had seen somebody else did. The staff vote and decide which team deserve the award every month.*This action aim is to cultivate a happy workplace and maintain teamwork spirit	It is expected that staff productivity and motivation will be improved by consistently receive praise and recognition for their effort and joy for working in a happy workplace	Operational level employees	Budget restriction / refreshment costs	Management/ QIT	M

Improving teamwork performance involves different actions, and the OGS improvement plan incorporates the implementation of the employee reward program, setting up karaoke night, establishing common goals, and OGS staff meeting to build the institution cohesion. The reward program shall target the operational level employees by identifying their contribution to the institution and motivating them to improve their performance. The management shall be involved in the process, and the potential barrier to implementing the aspect includes budget restrictions and threats of creating high inappropriate expectations of the employees. The karaoke night helps employees to showcase their talents and funny skills so that their colleagues could know them and build more friendships. The institution believes that karaoke shall establish a happy culture that promotes teamwork among the employees. The barriers to the aspect include budget restrictions and the unavailability of the participants. The element is highly ranked, and the QIT management team is responsible for its implementation.

Evaluating the teamwork progress and establishing collaboration remains an essential aspect of building the OGS staff teamwork. The element focuses on the operational team employees, and it is expected that each team within the institution should understand its goals and how initiating teamwork makes it easy to achieve them. The management is responsible for the process, and the barriers involved include the refreshment costs. Evaluating the achievement of each teamwork within the institution

shall also play an essential role in promoting collaboration (Joshi, Singh, and Sharma, 2018). Through praise and recognition, the employees shall work extra harder at the workplace. The aspect shall contribute to a happy workplace within the institution, which shall improve productivity. The management shall be responsible for the aspect, and the barriers involved in budget restrictions and refreshment costs. The action on establishing goals is ranked low while evaluating teamwork achievement is medium ranked.

Table 5

Maintain Teamwork Spirit Action Plan

Focus area: Teamwork					
Goal: To maintain Teamwork spirit among OGS Staff					
Action	Expected Performance Standards	Target Participants	Potential Barrier	Responsible for arranging	Priority
Celebrate OGS small/big wins, achievements, or employee's top life events such as marriage, the birth of a child, preparing a cake, refreshment, decoration or special speech would be highly recommended	After the required actions, It is expected that employees feel valued and supported. staff Positive attitudes and positive actions will lead to boost positive workplace culture	Operational level employees	Workplace culture/ Budget restriction	Quality Improvement Team/Staff	H
Every Friday early working hour for 15 minutes, conduct a Recreation Activity to improve group dynamics.	Creating a recreational area helps in icebreaking and making the work fun to build a strong workforce. It is expected that employee	Operational level employees	Workplace culture/ service hour policy restriction	Quality Improvement Team	L

Games and activities such as Human Knot, Pass the Message to another without adding to or subtracting from it.	interpersonal relationships will be improved and higher quality work with less stress level				
Facilitate physical activity. Conduct a survey among staff on what type of sport is most interesting. It is strongly recommended to give options for team-based activities	Overall higher performance is expected through physical wellness; team bonding and friendly work environment; improved creativity; improved concentration; work-life balance	Operational level employees	Cost of Venue/ Time & availability of participant/Physical restriction of employees	Quality Improvement Team	M
Give points to top and hardworking team players for Recognition & Appreciation of their success and passion. Team players can redeem bonus points for a wide variety of gift cards or prizes at University bookstore	It is expected that staff become more committed to their team roles, put extra effort with a positively improved confidence in their ability to perform well in their position	Operational level employees	Budget restrictions	Management/ QIT	M

Employee teamwork depends on the institution's culture and team spirit. Institutions have the responsibility to maintain teamwork at the workplace through different techniques. For the OGS staff, the institution has to celebrate small and big wins of the employees at both social life and the workplace, promote recreation activities among the staff, promote physical activity, recognize and appreciate the hardworking team player. Through celebrating the small and big wins of the OGS staff, the aspect will make the employees feel valued and supported. The element shall also promote the working culture. Creating recreational time during Fridays shall allow employees to break the workplace monotony and improve interpersonal relationships in the workplace. The two actions shall involve the operational level employees, and QIT shall be responsible. The expected barriers in implementing the aspects affect workplace culture and budget restrictions.

The engagement in physical activities shall build the relationship between the staff and strengthen the workplace culture. The overall high performance of an institution is achieved through improved employee creativity and workplace balance that leads to staff productivity (Abas and Imam, 2016). Recognizing and appreciating hardworking team players makes them more committed to their work roles. Building employee confidence in the workplace remains essential and helps the employees achieve high performance at the workplace. The two aspects involve the quality management team and include potential barriers to the venue and budget allocation, respectively. Moreover, the issues are medium ranked by the QIT to maintain teamwork spirit.

Table 6

Customer Focus Action Plan

Focus area: Customer Focus					
Goal: To improve the quality, efficiency, and reliability of service and overall customer experience					
Action	Expected Performance Standards	Target Participants	Potential Barrier	Responsible for arranging	Priority
Support and provide materials and information related to job Knowledge, concept, and processes publicly visible in the office	It is expected that staff put efforts to enhance skills and knowledge and to stay current with changes impacting the job.	Operational level employees	Cost of material design and publishing	Individual or institutional contract/ QIT	H

Diagnose the potential causes of slipped deadlines, conduct common meetings each month and Increase Deadline Awareness	It is expected that staff understand the importance of time and meet a deadline while performing a task	Operational level employees	Refreshment costs	Quality improvemen t team	L
Establish Internal knowledge base system for staff with regular updates on policy and regulation	It is expected that staff can easily follow up with the client, check their track, come up with appropriate action for relevant issues to improve service quality	Program Coordinators	IT expenses	QIT/ OGS IT team	L
Present the client satisfaction's Survey Report Analysis to employees for better understanding of the service's strength, weakness, threats, and opportunities	Based on the client satisfaction survey result, it is expected that change or requires action takes place. Staff is expected to know the strength and weakness of customer representative performances.	Operational level employees	Employee's misundersta nding of results/ threats of ignoring criticize in public from employee	QIT/ Individual contract	M

The institution seeks to take different actions on customer focus to improve on the quality and efficiency of the overall customer service. The activities include initiating support and job knowledge to the OGS staff, focus on deadlines, establish an internal base knowledge system, and present client satisfaction survey analysis. Through job knowledge, the staff shall have the relevant skills and knowledge that impact their job (Abas and Imam, 2016). The set of deadlines shall ensure that the staff will understand the importance of meeting deadlines when performing the assigned tasks. The two components involve operational level employees, and the QIT management shall be responsible for its implementation. Material design and publishing costs shall undermine action on job knowledge, while refreshment costs shall undermine the deadline aspect.

Establishing the internal knowledge system will make the staff follow the client easily, meet their needs, and improve their service quality. Policy and regulation play an essential role in the process and helps in making the clients satisfied (Clokie and Fourie, 2016). The aspect involves program coordinators, and the expected barriers include IT expenses. The institution also focuses on the report analysis to determine the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities that shall help employees understand the customers. The aspect will concentrate on the operational level employees, and the anticipated barriers include misunderstanding of risks and threats of ignoring criticism from the employees. The two elements are ranked low and medium, respectively, and the QIT is responsible for arranging.

Table 7

Adaptability Action Plan

Focus area: Adaptability					
Goal: To improve Adaptability skills by adopting and accepting new roles, responsibilities, and regulation confidentially					
Action	Expected Performance Standards	Target Participants	Potential Barrier	Responsible for arranging	Priority
Introduce a new process of doing a particular customer related task in office (issuing academic transcript as an example). Once they start feeling more comfortable with it, start to introduce another change. Support Staff for Experiment new changes gradually	Staff are expected to demonstrate the ability to be adaptive, to learn from experiences and get better through deliberate efforts	Operational level employees	Employee's confusion of new process/employee's resistance to new changes	Management/ QIT	H
Set monthly challenges for staff to let them step out of their comfort zone. Challenges can	individuals are expected to show confidence of public speaking in the workplace, take more responsibility,	Operational level employees	Unmotivated employees at start point	Quality Improvement Team	L

be speaking up and sharing funny memories with others or presenting an entertainment group show or any other trend challenges.	responding to situations with flexibility and creativity				
Change how daily tasks get done, change where meeting runs, and change the office facilities arrangement in the order that employees prefer with director approval. Organize small changes to make workplace fun, interactive and energy-charged	It is expected that staff show willingness to leave their comfort zone, adopt new changes with a positive attitude and without making pre-conceived judgments in a supportive workplace environment	Operational level employees	Budget restriction/ Policy restriction	Management/ QIT	M
Facilitate knowledge sharing sessions at the office, which focuses on new role challenges in a changing industry and environment. Staff with high adaptability may require to lead the session which may be held individually or in a group format	It is expected that staff can respond effectively to changes in their job roles	Operational level employees with less adaptability skill	Lack of positive attitudes towards knowledge sharing in employees	Staff / QIT	L

Institutions engage in different techniques to ensure their staffs have adaptive skills in their areas of work. For the OGS staff, the management hopes to take various actions such as providing news processes of the customer-related task, setting monthly challenges, changing daily tasks, and facilitating knowledge sharing sessions at the office. Through establishing a new customer related task, the OGS staff will demonstrate the ability to adapt quickly to the new functions. The action shall involve the operational level employees, and management shall be responsible for its implementation. The potential barrier includes employee confusion and resistance to new changes. The set on the monthly challenges shall enable the OGS staff to improve public speaking at the workplace and also to build creativity and flexibility. The aspect is ranked low, and the unmotivated employees create a barrier at the start point.

Changing the daily routine at the workplace shall make the OGS staff develop adaptive skills that will make them adapt quickly to the workplace. Through this aspect, the staff will be able to leave their comfort zone and develop positive attitudes while working in a new environment (Abas and Imam, 2016). The knowledge sharing sessions at the office shall expose the staff to the new challenges and different environments. Though the changes, the staff can respondent effectively to the changing and new environment at the workplace. The aspect focus on the operational level employees and the QIT is responsible for the implementation. The action of changes in daily tasks involves budget and policy restrictions, while the issue of sharing knowledge sharing sessions encounters barriers on the lack of positive attitudes towards knowledge sharing among the employees. The two aspects are ranked medium and low, respectively.

Conclusion

Improving competency and skills of employees remains vital in improving performance and establishing a good reputation of an institution. The study has explored the competencies and skills needed by employees in an education institution industry such as communication, decision making, problem-solving, and adaptability, which enable the employees to meet the expectations of university and clients. The employers in the institutions of higher learning want to have capable employees, regardless of the position they hold in the company. The aspect is attained through the assessment of the staff competency and skills about the tasks assigned. However, due to the changes in the workplace, the management needs to develop employee development techniques such as training and re-evaluation to make them fit their job positions.

The human resource department has the responsibility to generate that improvement plan that aims at improving the competence and skills of the organization staff. The OGS improvement plan focused on the study identifies several actions that

should be taken by the institution management and the quality improvement team on components such as communication, decision making, teamwork problem solving, adaptability, and customer focus to improve employee competencies and skills. When such aspects are accomplished to the latter, the education institution believes that it can improve its performance and achieve proper service delivery to its clients. Implementation of the improvement plan requires financial support and other resources that are needed in all the stages.

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