

Competency Profile of Managers in the Singapore Logistics Industry

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Abstract

In this paper, we aim to explore what competencies are essential for logistics managers to be successful in the future by developing a conceptual framework of competency profile of logistics managers based on the existing BLM model and some newly proposed competencies, taking into account changes in the business environment. A survey was conducted in Singapore with logistics managers from 350 firms. A total of 52 returned questionnaires were received, representing a response rate of 14.8%. We found that the proposed framework of 103 business-, logistics- and management-related competencies are essential for logistics managers to be successful, although management-related competencies were perceived as more important than the others. Although being based on the existing BLM framework, this research also proposed and validated new competencies into the existing BLM framework to reflect the necessary response to changes in the business environment. This research also contributes to management practice and serves as another effort to map out the critical competency profile for logistics managers of the future.

Key words : logistics managers, competency profile, BLM framework, logistics education

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I. Introduction

Logistics and supply chain management plays a critical role in the national economy. Like any other economic sector, skilled workforce in logistics and supply chain contributes greatly to the success of the sector. As business environments continue to change rapidly, logistics and supply chain sectors face many challenges, of which the need for well trained and skilled logistics managers is absolutely essential. To reflect this, it was suggested that ‘one of the major challenges to management in the next decade is the scarcity of trained supply chain managers’, and that ‘substantial change in logistics and supply chain education is necessary’ to meet these challenges.¹⁾ Until recently, this perception has been reinforced by Carter and Carter²⁾ who argued that supply management organizations would take on a higher value role in the coming decade, and thus success would hinge on whether they can attract, develop, and retain individuals with the right skills and capabilities to excel in the future. This view is further elaborated by Green³⁾ of the Accenture Supply Chain Academy in that leading companies in recent years have recognized the vital role that people play in driving innovation in their supply chain and improving their ability to produce results, rather than investing only on technology and processes.

Managing the supply chain has become increasingly more complex as logisticians attempt to adapt to turbulent and competitive market environments. Adding to the complexity is managing the paradox of achieving cost efficiencies whilst improving customer service and customer and supplier relationships within the supply chain.⁴⁾ Whereas logistics managers may have focused on managing traditional logistics functions such as logistics information systems, transportation and warehousing, their contemporaries no longer operate in isolation from the organization’s value chain and instead must constantly interact with other functional areas within an organization such as marketing and production, as well as integrate with those of their suppliers and customers. The issue that arises is what knowledge and skills are necessary for logistics managers to be able to meet the broader challenges of their role in a globalised market. Logistics managers must be multi-talented

1) Closs(2000).

2) Carter and Carter(2007).

3) Green(2010).

4) Christopher(1998).

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