



## Review

# A Critical Analysis of the Definition of the new Manager vis-a-vis his or her Managerial Qualities

**Faustina Amanor-Odametey (Mrs.)**

Head of Administration, Office of Research Services and Innovation Ghana Communication Technology University (GCTU).

E-mail: [Fausnat@yahoo.com](mailto:Fausnat@yahoo.com)

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## INTRODUCTION

In his article entitled “Balancing the Company’s Needs and Employee Satisfaction” published in the Harvard Business Review, Ron\_Carucci (2019) posited, “ As a senior leader (manager), doing what is right for your company and doing what will make your employees happiest are not always mutually exclusive. This paradox can make seemingly obvious choices difficult to make. To find a balance, you need to change your mind set by first remembering that supervisors and middle managers have more direct influence over the factors that impact employee satisfaction and are best equipped to address it. You should instead use your power to up employee engagement by creating inclusive work environments in which everyone is given a chance to contribute to their fullest potential and finding ways to provide junior employees with visibility opportunities.”

Ron Carucci (2019) again made this summary in management: “Competent leaders misdiagnose organizational problems all the time. This is largely because recurring performance challenges run deeper than they initially appear. More often, they are symptoms of a larger problem rooted in organization design. Four of the most common problems that arise as a result of this are: competing priorities (caused by poor governance), unwanted turnover (caused by bad role design), inaccessible bosses (caused by excessive spans of control), and cross functional rivalry (caused by misaligned incentives and/or metrics).”

Ron Carruci (2019) again posited this advice for managers who want to succeed:

*“Whether you manage someone who repeatedly asks the same questions, overshares, needs constant affirmation, or struggles*

*receiving criticism, the best way to resolve the issue is to address it head on. Start by scheduling a one-on-one meeting with the employee at hand. Use this time to gauge if they are aware of the impact their behaviour is having on their peers by asking a question like, “I wonder if you realize the extent to which you look for the team’s reassurance? If your first conversation doesn’t go as planned, follow up with another private conversation. Set clear emotional boundaries without being harsh, judgmental, or dismissive. Lastly, treat the needy person as if they are strong, not fragile. If you give in to their behaviour out of fear of hurting their feelings, you will only reinforce it.”*

## Quality in management

The effectiveness of operations and functions of the organization inevitably depends to a very large extent upon the staff that it employs. Managers should recognize the strategic significance of a planned and systematic approach to staffing the organization, and to the recruitment and selection of staff. Managers should understand current models of selection and the qualities these schemes typically seek to identify, and to define the new manager and his or her necessary qualities.

Many managers are faced with the frequent need to recruit and select staff. Effective resourcing of the organization is a central part of human resource management and the personnel function. Whatever the organization of the personnel function, it is important that managers and supervisors have at least some say and agreement in the appointment of their own staff or those staff whose work they have to supervise. Unit managers/supervisors should be expected to consult with the personnel department and seek specialist knowledge and

advice. The recruitment and selection of staff is a specialist activity, and all managers and supervisors should be well informed about the basic procedures and skills involved. Buttressing this point, Akwete (2011) stresses that this is a process at which stage a decision is made whether to employ someone or not. And for that reason, managers should ensure that all sorts of discrimination are eradicated, and the onus should focus on recruiting staff and not rejecting staff (Akwete, 2011).

The manner in which staff members are appointed is a major factor in determining the quality of product produced and/or service offered, and the behavior and performance of the workforce, and in meeting satisfactorily the strategic objectives of the organization, as Laurie J. Mullins (2016), an influential writer on Management and Organizational Behaviour, points out. A recent major study undertaken by the UK Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) confirms that: 'employees' skills are best acquired by effective recruitment and selection.'

Laurie (2016) notes with particular emphasis that executive management has overall control for personnel policies and ultimate responsibility for their success. The style and effectiveness of recruitment and selection are influenced by the underlying philosophy of executive management and the attitude which is brought to bear upon the development and maintenance of a good working climate in the particular organization.

Again, Laurie (2016) notes that procedures for recruitment and selection must themselves be put into an organizational context. He identifies the prerequisites of an effective recruitment and selection policy. These include:

- The clarification of corporate objectives.
- Design of an effective structure -- the allocation of work and network of jobs -- in order to achieve these objectives; and
- A system of human resource planning -- providing the link between the objectives and organization structure, and a framework within which personnel policies, including a systematic approach to recruitment and selection, are planned and operated.

## HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING

Akwete (2011) observes that, in various organisational set-ups and experiences, a major human resource factor recognized as essential to the successful meeting of some basic needs is manpower (work force). Akwete (2011), therefore, defines human resource planning as an attempt to forecast how many and what kind of employees will be required in the future for a particular business, company or organisation, and the extent to which this demand is likely to be met.

Increasingly more attention has been given to the importance of planning human resources as well as other economic resources such as capital, materials, machinery and equipment.

Human resource planning, previously described as manpower planning, has been described as 'a strategy for the acquisition, utilization, improvement and retention of an enterprise's human resources.'

Whatever the nature of the organization, Laurie (2016) points out that, Human Resource (HR) planning should not be regarded in isolation but as an integral part of the broader process of corporate planning. HR planning is linked to the development of the organization as a whole and should be related to corporate objectives and to an organization structure capable of achieving these objectives. It should also be related to the nature of organizational culture and climate, says Laurie (2016).

Effective HR planning can help anticipate potential future difficulties while there is still a choice for action. HR strategic planning should enable the organization to develop effective personnel strategies related to such activities as: recruitment, selection, induction, training and re-training; management development and career progression; transfers and redeployment; early retirement; wage/salary levels; anticipated redundancies; and accommodation requirements. It can help provide a framework for the effective management of people (Laurie 2016).

Together with good communications, and meaningful consultation and participation with staff involved, including where appropriate union and/or staff association representatives, effective HR planning should help alleviate potentially harmful effects to individual members of staff or to the performance of the organization. For example, according to Beardwell and Holden (2001) the need for HR planning arises from the operational needs of an organization. Its importance lies in maintaining a sufficient supply of employees, in the right place and time, and at the right cost. Only through detailed observation and planning of many variables, both internal to the organization and external in the wider political socio-economic environment, can management ensure a reconciliation of labour supply and demand such that shocks and disturbances are avoided. A successful implementation of these policies determines the identification between the new manager and his or her management qualities.

### Recruitment and selection of staff

Akwete (2011) posited that, the very important and crucial activity within the organisation of a systematic and adequate replenishing of the organisation or company's stock of human resources is mainly achieved through recruitment and selection procedures. There are three important and fundamental considerations which should underlie the recruitment and selection of staff.

1. Recruitment and selection of staff should not be considered in isolation; that is simply finding someone to do a particular job, but in the context of the overall HR plan and personnel management action programme. For example, it will be necessary to investigate the potential of the persons appointed

for training, development and future promotion; and their flexibility and adaptability to possible new methods, procedures or working conditions.

2. It is necessary to consider not just technical competence and the ability to perform certain tasks but also, and equally important is sociability. It is necessary to consider how new members of staff will fit into the cultural and social structure of the organization. There is nothing to be gained by appointing someone who, although competent and technically efficient, is unlikely to work in harmonious relations with other staff, customers or suppliers; or who is likely to upset the cohesiveness of work groups. Indeed, if such is the case, there is plenty that the organization can lose in terms of its overall performance and effectiveness. Sociability may be of particular significance in certain jobs or in certain types of organizations, but it is an important consideration in any work organization. This is another reason for close involvement of the immediate head of department, and where appropriate the section leader or supervisor in the recruitment and selection procedure.

3. It is necessary to comply fully with all legal requirements relating to employment and equal opportunities, to follow recommended codes of practice and to secure justice and fair treatment to all applicants and candidates. Recent extensions to employment rights, including reduction in the qualifying period for unfair dismissal claims and the raising of minimum compensation payments have further highlighted the need to employ the right people and to create an employment relationship based on best 'practice.'

The author's experience in Ghana is that some people who are politically connected just speak to CEOs of government organizations and run them through interviews whose outcomes are predictable. The young members of staff quite often are the ones who cause a lot of problems in the organization. Often, such staff members who do not go through the rigour of the selection process are not productive and become liabilities instead of real assets to the organization.

### Job analysis

Central to a planned and systematic approach to recruitment and selection is job analysis. Job analysis is the total process by which you derive, first, a job description, leading to, second, a person specification. In his book, "A functional job analysis technique" Rodgers (1992) states that job analysis is an analytical approach designed for evaluating functional job demands and for facilitating a team problem-solving process that should find cost-effective resolutions for designs that do not meet ergonomic guidelines. To this end, Rodgers (1992) further explains that job analysis constitutes ways to collect information about the job elements and demands, how to relate the demands to population work capacities, how to predict fatiguing tasks, and how to facilitate a problem-solving session within the organisation or business.

A job description tells you about the total requirements of the job; exactly what it is; its purpose; what it entails; the duties,

activities and responsibilities attached to it; and its position within the formal structure of the organization. It may also include a note about any particular features of the working environment. The scope of the job description, and the amount of detail it gives may vary among different jobs and different organizations. Although the job description can be a valuable aid for recruitment and selection it should not be drawn up in such a rigid, bureaucratic manner as to imply a lack of flexibility, imagination or initiative on the part of the beholder.

A review of newspaper vacancy announcement makes reading interesting. The job descriptions are quite long, and one wonders whether the employee has to do all these. This is commonly a tall order, and one wonders whether this is feasible. Townsend et al (2012) refer to job description as straightjackets, and makes the following observations:

*"Great for jobs where the turnover is high and the work is largely repetitive... (Insane for the more highly paid jobs). Judgment jobs are constantly changing in nature and the good people should be allowed to use their jobs and see how good they are. At best, job description freezes the job as the writer understands it at a particular instant in the past. At worst, they are prepared by personnel or people who cannot write and do not understand the jobs. Then, they are only expensive to prepare and regularly revise, but they are important morale-sapper. To be satisfying, a job should have variety, autonomy, wholeness and feedback. In other words, no job description."*

The role and value of job description are also questioned by Belbin. He suggests that job descriptions can be a hindrance to progress and lead to either a lack of cooperation (that's not my job) or to a claim for increased pay on the grounds of additional responsibility. They can also present a problem in terms of the movement of against departmentalism and towards the increased demand for teamwork. While [job descriptions] imply a definite work territory, the boundaries of that territory are not sufficiently clear-cut to avert disputes on the interpretation of duties between neighboring workers. Since the Job Description is tailored for the individual, it cannot readily serve the function of dealing with the duties and activities of the dynamic group. Such criticisms clearly have some validity but should not detract from the potential value of the process of job analysis as an aid to the recruitment and selection process. However, traditional job descriptions are now seen as archaic because the traditional job comprising set tasks are disappearing. Automation of routine office and factory work means that employees increasingly work on projects.

Project-based work instead of position-based work seems to be disappearing. Today, 'the job description is a loser.' The conventional view in contrast, argues that job descriptions should not be used unthinkingly." Competition, technical innovation, the increasing use of teams, and changing workplace values, have created the need for a work environment where jobs are re-invented totally. "to be satisfying," says Townsend et al (2012) "the job should have

variety, autonomy, wholeness, and feedback. In other words “no job description.”

Instead of job descriptions, new research is calling for organizations to use ‘role descriptions.’ While they are a ‘relic of the last century,’ ‘and limit the management of employee performance, to what may be narrowly contained in the job description, the shift from industrial to knowledge work in societies and economies means that non-job, such as teamwork creativity, and problem-solving is increasingly important for agile performance.

### **PERSON SPECIFICATIONS**

The person specification is an extension of the job description. It does not only tell you about the job but also provides a blueprint of the person to do that job. The person specification details the personal attributes and qualities associated with successful performance of the job; for example, experience, technical skills, physical characteristics, health and appearance, motivation, intellectual ability, formal qualification, personality and temperament, and any special requirements, such as the need for mobility. In drawing up the specification, particular regard must be given to all legal requirements. An important and fundamental feature of effective personnel policies and management is that of ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF JOB ANALYSIS**

Despite the criticisms and possible limitations, the process of job analysis can aid recruitment and selection. It provides guidelines for the objective assessments of applicants. From the person specification can also be drawn up for the interview plan, including areas to be covered in assessing the candidate’s willingness and ability to cope with difficulties and distastes associated with the job functions. Job analysis provides the basis for performance review and appraisal, training, reward systems, staff development and career progression, as well as the design of working methods and practices. A carefully prepared person specification is a focus for describing the requirements of the job, the working conditions, and the personal attributes and qualities necessary for successful performance.

### **MODELS OF SELECTION AND ASSESSMENT**

There are several methods of selection: selection tests and questionnaires; group exercises; assessment centers; the selection interview; competency-based approach and selection.

### **THE PSYCHOMETRIC/OBJECTIVE MODEL OF SELECTION AND ASSESSMENT**

Selection and assessment research and practice, particularly in

the United Kingdom and the United States of America have been heavily influenced by what may be termed the ‘psychometric’ model, a model which has mostly developed in the United States. This model, in a variety of forms, is represented in most textbooks of HRM personnel management and organizational psychology as a good professional practice.

In this model, performance criteria are selected and individual attributes of various kinds (knowledge, skills, abilities, etc.) are chosen as predictors of job performance. The attributes selected are then matched through a variety of procedures (tests, interviews, bio-data, etc.) and the assessment process validated, primarily in terms of career-related predictive validity. This model appears to value individualism (individual attributes are taken to predict individual performance). The major criterion of performance is the achievement of organizational goals as defined by top management and utility (cost-benefit of the monetary benefits conferred on organizations using different selection procedures).

However, this model rests on a number of assumptions that are open to challenge. One is that, by and large people do not change much-the characteristics they display before assessment remain quite stable, which is why prediction of job performance is possible. It also assumes that objective assessment of individual attributes is possible, and that this can be used to predict job performance. In addition, the assumption seems to be that job content also does not change much, and that it consists primarily of specific sets of tasks which can be identified through job analysis. It also assumes that job performance is measurable, though ‘objective’ performance of job assessment of job performance are often hard to come by and supervisors’ evaluations of performance used instead. Finally, the central assumption made is that the key purpose of assessment is the prediction of job performance.

Clearly, this model has a number of considerable strengths. Individual differences in performance do contribute significantly to differences in organizational performance, a contention underlying much of the growth in HRM in recent years. However, many other factors also affect organizational performance, and it does seem that people change as a result of job experience. The kinds of attributes stressed by psychologists-for example, locus of control, self-direction, intellectual flexibility – do seem to be affected by such work experiences as occupational success, racial discrimination, and the kinds of jobs one performs (e.g., Kohn and Schooler 1982; Illes and Robertson 1994).

A variety of factors are causing many researchers and practitioners, especially in Western Europe, to question fundamental aspects of this model. As organizations change, decentralize, restructure, get flatter, and devolve accountability, the conception of the job as a stable collection of discrete tasks has come under pressure (Atkinson 1984). Multi-skilling, flexible specialization and self-directed work teams have made this notion of a ‘job’ rather outdated, and these and other changes such as downsizing and the growth of ‘portfolio careers’ have changed our concepts of career success and

development. Knowledge and skill-based reward systems have also undermined the use of job evaluation and the role of the 'job.' as the basis of reward systems (Armstrong 1993; Luthans and Fox 1989). Self-directed work teams, matrix structures and notions of empowerment have challenged the traditional role the supervisor and the role of super-supervisors' evaluations. In addition, in Western Europe, assessment has come to play a more strategic role in facilitating individual development and organizational change, rather than in selection alone (Iles 1992; Mabey and Iles 1993). Many of these changes have led to the rise of a more 'process' model of assessment in Western Europe, a model rooted in social psychology rather than in the psychology of individual differences.

### MONITORING EFFECTIVENESS

A crucial determinant of the success of recruitment, selection and induction is how well the new member of staff adapts to the requirements of the organization and makes an effective contribution to the development of the organization. Despite differences in evaluation, this should be an ultimate measure of the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection process.

### CONCLUSION

This article has discussed some of the various aspects of Human Resource Management including, human resource planning, selection and recruitment of staff, job analysis and person specification. A successful implementation of these HR disciplines underscores the quality of the human resource manager within the organisation. And with particular reference to the article topic, it marks the able qualities of the new manager and confirms his or her managerial qualities.

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