

Effectiveness of individuals at work Post implementation of Individual Development Plans based on Assessment & Development Centre (ADC) findings

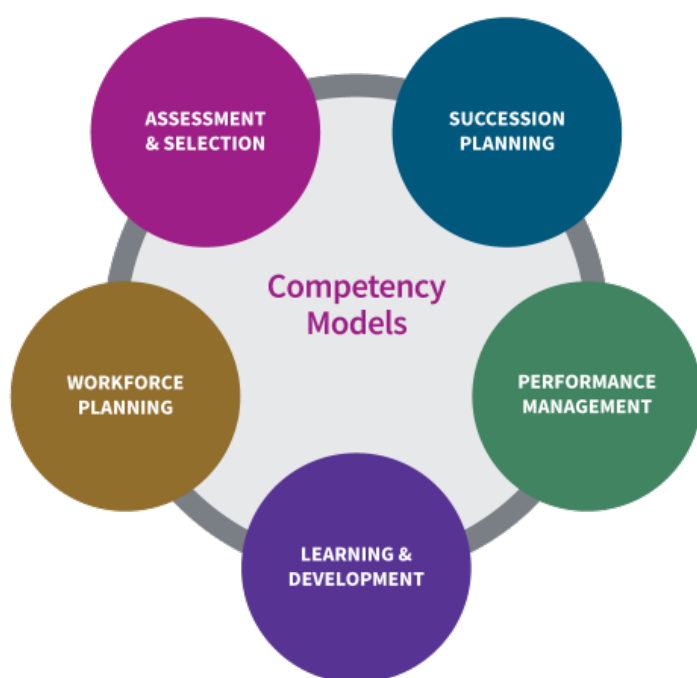
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Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to understand the impact of learning interventions on the effectiveness of individuals at work, post Assessment & Development Centre (ADC) findings and implementation of Individual Development Plans.

Introduction

Knowledge organisations are about people and ensuring that people stay at the centerstage of Business is their most critical objective. To craft and deploy human resource tools and processes that are based on a foundation of competencies provides higher degree of objectivity, transparency and sustainability to the Human Resource Systems. Thus, using an organization-wide competency model provides the alignment necessary to support and develop human capital, as well as promote a significant competitive advantage.[1]



(<https://aptmetrics.com/competency-modeling/>)

The term “competence” came into vogue following R.W. White’s 1959 *Psychological Review* article, “Motivation Reconsidered: The Concept of Competence.” White explains that because people are intrinsically motivated to achieve competence, having competency models enables organizations to tap into our own desire to achieve proficiency.[2] According to Chung & Lo (2007) Competencies are skills, knowledge, and capabilities that individuals should have possessed when completing assigned tasks or achieving the goals. Draganidis & Mentzas (2006) defined competencies as ‘those direct and indirect skills and behaviours that

allow individuals to perform given tasks or assigned roles effectively.' Further Boyatzis (1998,2008) described that Competencies are underlying characteristics that are causally related with the job performance of individuals. They can be trained during adulthood. [3]

According to Hewitt (2005) *'Competencies', when correctly identified and used, have proved to be one of the most powerful tools for an organization to meet its business results, through its most valuable resource – its people.*

Talent Management Framework – A Case study

Talent management is the implementation of integrated strategies or systems designed to increase workplace productivity by developing improved processes for attracting, developing, retaining, and utilizing people with the required skills and aptitude to meet current and future business needs (Garg & Rani, 2014)[4]. A competency based Talent Management Framework is the bed rock of Successful Organisations since it focusses on placing the right people, with the right skills and abilities in the right roles.

There are many models that are available like:

Lominger Leadership Architect®: Developed by Lominger International (now part of Korn Ferry), this model outlines a set of competencies and skills that are crucial for effective leadership at different levels within an organization. It includes competencies such as strategic agility, leading change, building effective teams, and driving for results. The model is often used for leadership development and succession planning.

SHL Universal Competency Framework (UCF): The SHL UCF is a comprehensive framework that identifies a set of competencies applicable across different job roles and industries. It covers a wide range of competencies including cognitive abilities, interpersonal skills, leadership capabilities, and job-specific skills. The framework provides a common language for assessing and developing talent across an organization.

The Competency Model Clearinghouse (CMC): Managed by the U.S. Department of Labor, the CMC offers a collection of competency models developed by various organizations and industry groups. These models cover a broad range of industries and occupations and provide detailed descriptions of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOs) required for success in each role. The CMC serves as a resource for organizations seeking to develop their own competency-based talent management programs.

The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) Competency Model: CCL's competency model focuses on leadership development and identifies the key competencies needed for effective leadership in today's complex business environment. It includes competencies such as self-awareness, leading change, collaboration, and driving innovation. The model emphasizes the development of both personal and interpersonal skills to support leadership effectiveness.

HRSB Competency Framework: HRSB (Human Resource Systems Group) offers a competency framework that helps organizations define the competencies required for success in different roles. The framework includes a comprehensive library of competencies organized into categories such as core competencies, technical competencies, and leadership competencies.

However, an organisation can create its own Competency based Talent Management framework, customized or best suited for its business requirements, culture, vision and long-term strategy.

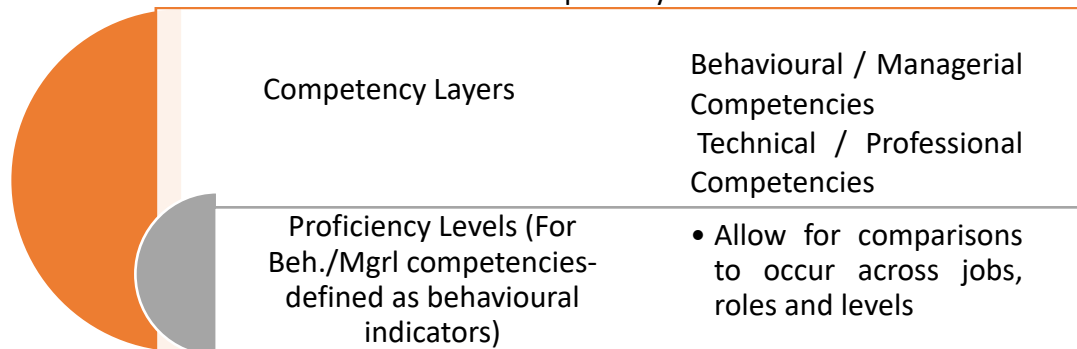
For the purpose of this article, a brief study was undertaken in a leading global engineering consultancy and EPC company which provides engineering consultancy and EPC services principally focused on the oil & gas and petrochemical industries. The Company has also diversified into sectors like infrastructure, water and waste management, solar & nuclear power and fertilizers to leverage its strong technical competencies and track record. The almost human resources in the company are mostly engineers, almost 80% of the population and about 85% of the human resources are professionals i.e possess qualifications like B.tech. B.E, M.Tech, MBA, CA, ICWA, MCA, PhD etc.

The Competency based approach for establishing a competency-based Talent Management Framework was adopted by this Company in the year 2007 in collaboration with an external HR Consultant. The consultant worked with the designated Core-team for this purpose, and undertook the following processes in a phased wise manner:

Phase I: Competency Identification and Mapping [5].

- (i) Identification of key roles and positions in the organisation for mapping of competencies.
- (ii) Competency framework for the key roles identified.
- (iii) Defining competencies, the desired proficiency levels and behavioural indicators for each role
- (iv) Development of competency-based role profiles for the positions identified. (Role profiling)

The above led to the creation of a Competency Framework



The initiative was carried out in two phases, wherein in during the first phase Competencies were identified for key roles within the organization and in the second phase, assessment and development centres were organized for senior role incumbents and individual development planning was accomplished.

Based on the role specific competencies identified through the behavioural event interviews with the role incumbents as validated by their supervisors, core competencies specific to the Organisation’s working were finalized. The competency framework was further elaborated by

defining each competency, proficiency levels and their behavioural indicators. The competencies were divided into five sets of competencies.

1. Technical Competencies
2. Managerial Competencies
3. People Competencies
4. Global Competencies
5. Leadership Competencies

Competencies thus identified in the competency framework were generic in nature so that integration of competences for various roles across the organisation and in different levels of the organisation hierarchy was possible. A proficiency level of each competency on a scale of 1 to 5 was also defined as follows:

Proficiency Levels of Competencies

1. Beginner (BE)
2. Elementary (EL)
3. Intermediate (I)
4. Advanced (AD)
5. Expert (EX)

A total of 63 roles and 23 generic competencies were identified for superior performance in the organisation.

Thereafter, competency mapping was carried out through an extensive mechanism of one-on-one interviews and vetting of profiles through a 360-degree mechanism. Once the Competencies were mapped to Roles along with the desired proficiency levels, the next step was to carry out the Competency Assessment [6].

Phase II: Assessment and Evaluation: Once the competencies were identified, employees were assessed against these competencies through the most reliable and objective method of competency assessment i.e. Assessment & Development Centre

“An assessment centre consists of a standardized evaluation of behaviour based on multiple inputs. Several trained observers and techniques are used. Judgements about behaviour are made by these specially trained observers. At the end of the assessment the assessors get together to share their data which is scientifically recorded on a set of evaluation forms. They come to a consensus on the assessments of each candidate. Most frequently the approach has been applied to individuals being considered for selection, promotion, placement, or special training and development in management” (Ganesh, 2004).[7]

An HR Consultant was engaged to carry out the Assessment & Development Centre (ADC) exercise. Competencies to be covered under the assessment centre were discussed at length and the following decisions were arrived at:

- i. The technical competencies though were identified but were not covered in the scope of the assessment as the same could be assessed only by the internal subject-matter expert.
- ii. Identification of managerial and people competencies across level clusters for identified unique roles; nine competencies were finalized for the ADC coverage i.e. Planning, Organizing and Foresightedness, Drive for Results, Analytical Thinking and Decisiveness, Customer Focus, Communication, Fostering Teamwork, Managing Change, Leading Others, Mentoring and Coaching
- iii. Individual profiles based on the assessment were prepared

Tools deployed in the ADC

The following tools were identified to assess various competencies and it was ascertained that each competency would be assessed by more than one tool and each tool could assess more than one competency. The tools were identified by the HR Consultant in consultation with the in-house HR Team. Tools deployed:

- 6 PF/MBTI or any other standard Psychometric Tool
- Case Study
- Role play
- In-basket Exercises
- Business game/ Simulation
- Competency based interviews

Development Planning: Based on the assessment results, development plans are created to help employees enhance their competencies. This could involve training programs, coaching, mentoring, on-the-job experiences, or other learning opportunities tailored to the individual's needs. In the Organisation, following approach was adopted:

- i. Individual Development Plans (IDP) based on the gaps as identified through the assessment centre were created through an interaction by the Assessor and the Assessee
- ii. The IDPs so created were to self-driven with the support of existing Organisational Systems in place and in discussion with Reporting Managers.
- iii. Summary and Recommendation for development and leadership pipeline was prepared

Establishing Competency based HR Systems

The journey of creating the Talent Management Framework led to establishing competency-based HR Systems, which provide a common thread of understanding across HR functions like Recruitment & Selection, Performance Management, Compensation & Benefits, Career Progression, Learning & Development, Leadership Development and Succession Planning.

Objective of the study

Over the years there has been significant coverage of participants under ADC. Initially the use of ADC data was utilized for selection of participants for Leadership Development and Succession Planning, however, in recent times i.e. since the year 2021, the coverage has been wider and regular and with more mature systems of talent development tied to competency-based learning in place, the impact of such learning interventions post-ADC needs to be studied [7].

Post the ADCs and consultations based on the identified Strengths and Areas of Development by the Assessors, Individual Development Plan is prepared by the participants. The areas of development are addressed through various training interventions planned in the Annual Training Calendar as well as through participation in External Programmes, Workshops, On-the-job training, Exposure to diverse assignments, Self-learning etc.

We hypothesize that the ADC inputs and individual development plans addressed through various learning interventions have an impact on the effectiveness of individuals as perceived by Reporting Managers, Self and Subordinates.

Methodology

Planned Learning Interventions

The participant population of the study lies in the Middle Management Cadre, Grade A(junior) & B(senior). On study of the planned training interventions for this cadre it is found that these Grades are clubbed together due to similarity in role profiles and critical competencies identified for these grades are bunched as Competency Clusters for designing learning interventions. The planned interventions for the target population, competencies addressed and their programme objectives which are tailored on the basis of behavioral indicators of the addressed proficiency level (target proficiency level is 'Advanced/Expert') of the competency are as below:

S. No	PROGRAMME NAME	COMPETENCY	OBJECTIVES OF PROGRAMME FASHIONED ON BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS
1	Mentoring & Coaching	Mentoring & Coaching	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Essential aspects of mentoring in organization2. Framework of mentoring3. Tools/techniques for structuring mentoring sessions with a mentee4. Mentor mentee dynamics and competencies needed for dealing with mentoring challenges5. Building effective mentor mentee relationship to achieve personal, functional and organizational objective and alignment with each other6. Concept of Coaching and how it differs from Mentoring

			7. Competencies needed for becoming effective Coach and Mentor
2	Negotiating to win win	Negotiating	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Win consensus without damaging relationship 2. Settle differences with minimum noise 3. Consider issues of larger interests 4. Build long term relationship
3	Plan Decide & Deliver	Planning, Organizing & Foresightedness Drive for Result	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Handle contingency in the face of uncertainty 2. Track the work progress, sense problems, sustain focus 3. Built structure that enable people to execute strategic initiative more effectively and create systems 4. Manage risk and promote innovation 5. Consistently drive towards high performance and raise the bar
4	Leading High Performing Teams	Fostering Teamwork	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishing team objectives 2. Enhancing cooperation between inter and intra departmental teams 3. Recognizing and encouraging the behaviour that contributes to team work 4. Demonstrating fair approach to the working of the team 5. Distinguishing healthy differences of opinion from dysfunctional 6. conflicts 7. Creating feeling of belongingness in the team 8. Sharing success equitably
5	Communication in Leadership Roles	Leading others Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give positive and critical feedback at the right time 2. Conduct crucial conversations with ease 3. Communicate strategically to achieve specific objectives 4. Encourage straight talk and knowledge sharing 5. Use varied communication vehicle 6. Foster a work environment with continuous open communication
6	Analytical Thinking & Decisiveness	Analytical Thinking & Decisiveness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing critical skills to analyses a situation to understand the critical issues and solve the problem 2. Do an Effective analysis with the available data and information 3. To identify specific tools and techniques to be used during analytical thinking and problem solving 4. To provide a complete framework for managing issues ice. Identification to resolution 5. Helping employees/team members understand the complete process of Analysis of the situation, identifying key problems which prevents the process or

			progress Develop tools for effective decision making based on analysis and adopt viable solutions
7	Customer Relationship Management	Customer Focus	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish system to measure and track customers satisfaction 2. Anticipate hurdles and channelize the resources for timely delivery 3. Build ways to strengthen relationship for future prospects 4. Build & improve system based on customers information 5. Handle criticism with calm & drive learning out of it 6. Reorganize structures, system aligned with strategy for customer delight
8	Change is Good	Managing Change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing the critical skills to effectively manage change in the workplace. 2. Effectively communicating and advocating the change 3. Taking the lead in implementing change by mobilizing resources and enabling/recommending review of existing systems and processes. 4. Dealing change with sensitivity minimizing resistance to change 5. Helping employees/team members understand the change process and coaching them through transition.

The above learning interventions are delivered typically as two-day classroom/experiential learning sessions, through industry Behavioural facilitators. In addition to the planned interventions, participants were also encouraged for self-learning, participate in Knowledge Sharing sessions within their domains, practice assimilated learning on-the-job, enhance skills through on-the-job learning, provide subject matter expertise in-house training programmes, contribute on varied projects and build networks for cross-learning both with internal as well as external stakeholders.

Data Collection:

To understand the impact of such learning interventions driven through ADC findings, we carried out a 180-degree multi rater assessment (i.e. seeking input from Manager, Self & Subordinate) of ADC participants who had undergone ADC in the year 2021 (63 Nos). Out of the 63 participants, 45 belonged to Grade A(junior) and 18 belonged to Grade B (senior)

Diagnostic Tool: A Feedback form was designed to capture perception of **Self, Subordinate and Supervisor** on their effectiveness at work around each of the nine competencies assessed in the ADC. The feedback statements were tailored around behavioural indicators associated

with the proficiency levels of each competency. All the actors on the multi-rater assessment tool i.e. Self, Subordinate and Manager were to rate the statements using the Likert Scale.

The competencies included in the Feedback form were:

S.No.	Competency Category	Competency
1	Managerial	Planning, Organizing and Foresightedness
2		Drive for Results
3		Analytical Thinking and Decisiveness
4	People	Customer Focus
5		Communication
6		Fostering Teamwork
7		Managing Change
8	Leadership	Leading Others
9		Mentoring and Coaching

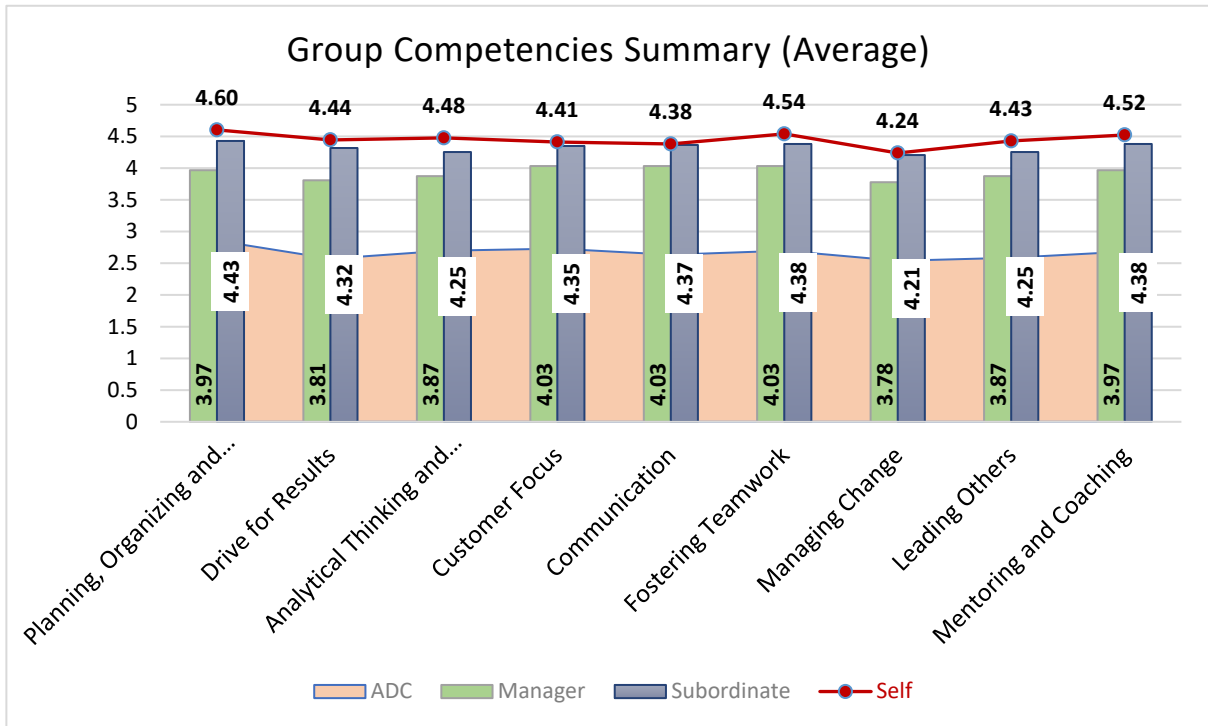
Feedback was obtained from **63 Participants, 87 Managers & 212 Subordinates**. All the respondents had to rate the observable behaviours on a scale of 1 – 5, wherein 5 denoted ‘strongly agree’ indicating the highest likelihood of exhibiting the behavioural attribute and 1 denoted ‘strongly disagree’ or the least likelihood of observing the particular behaviour. The set of questions for each of the respondent category were the same.

Data Analysis

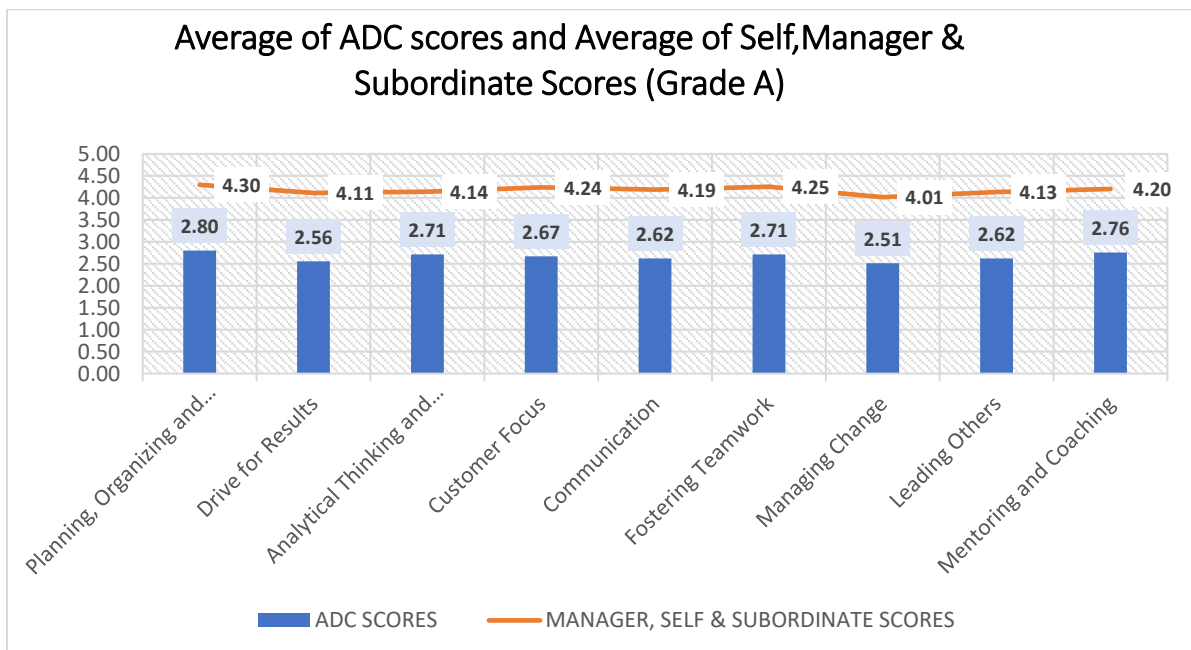
Comparison was made with the ADC scores of participants obtained through the ADC carried out in the year 2021 with the scores obtained for perceived effectiveness at work in the year 2024 through multi-rater feedback mechanism [8].

The comparative scores reveal that the ADC scores are much lower to the scores on perceived effectiveness of the participants obtained through self-assessment, feedback from subordinates and reporting managers.

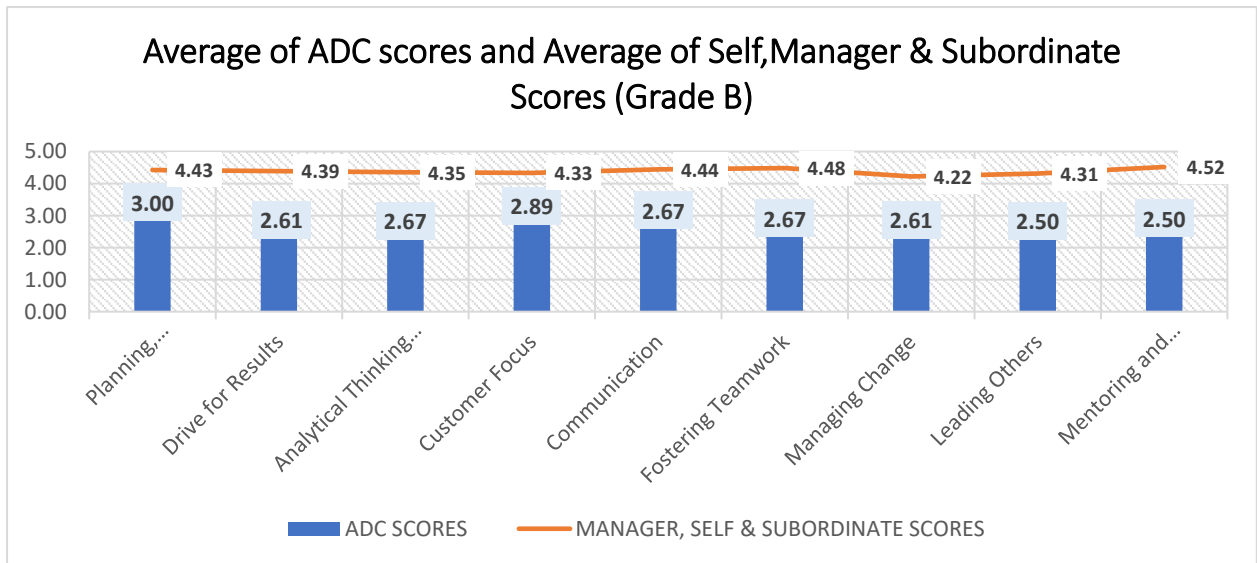
1. Chart 1: Group Summary of comparative scores of ADC, and Self, Manager & Subordinates



2. Chart 2: Comparison of ADC and Self, Manager & Subordinates scores for Grade A (junior level) participants

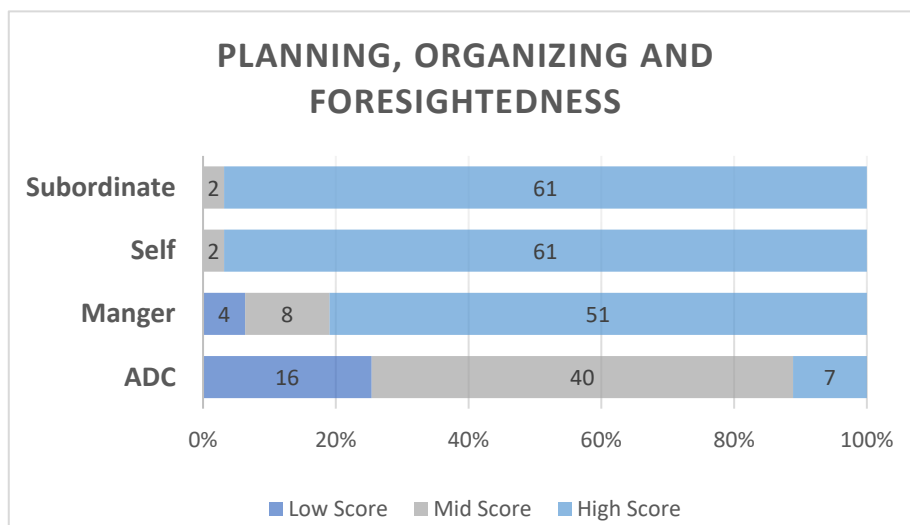


3. Chart 3: Comparison of ADC and Self, Manager & Subordinates scores for participants in Grade B

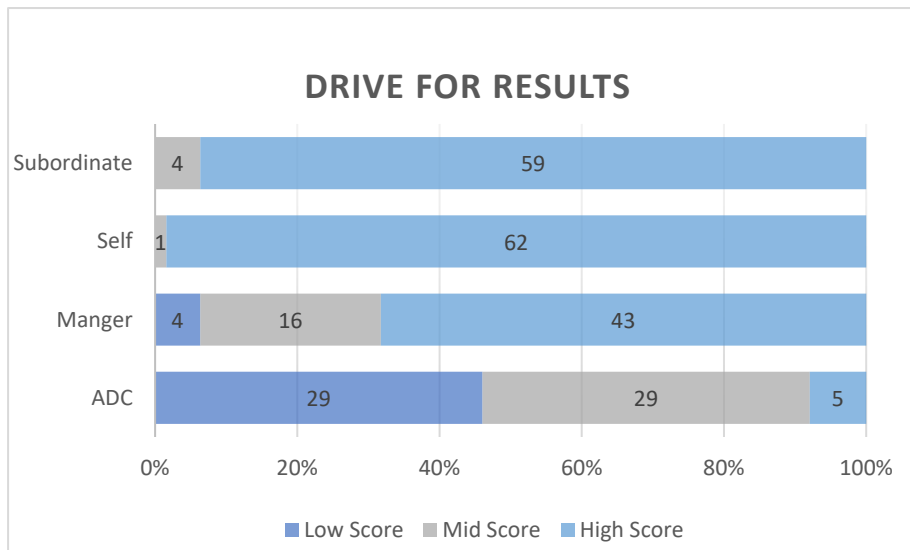


4. Competency-wise comparisons: For ease of comparisons scores were grouped in three categories - Low score (1-2); Mid Score (3); High Score (4-5)

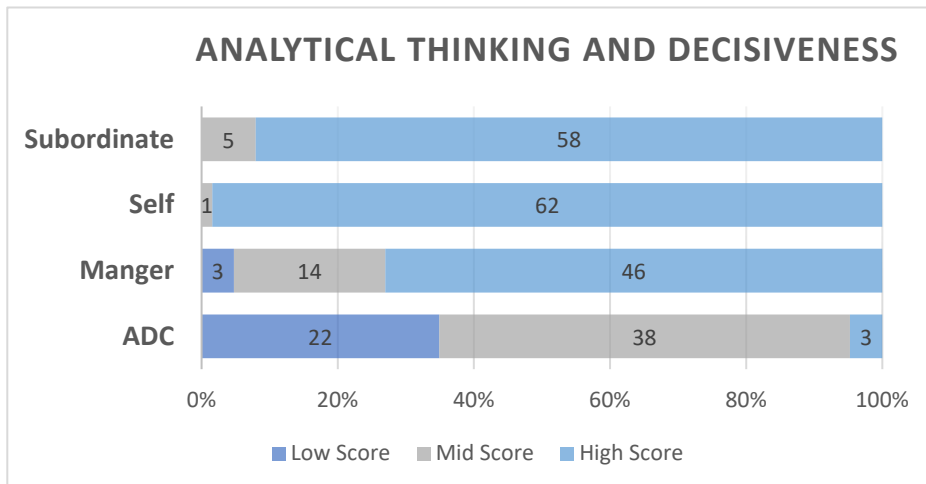
a) Chart a:



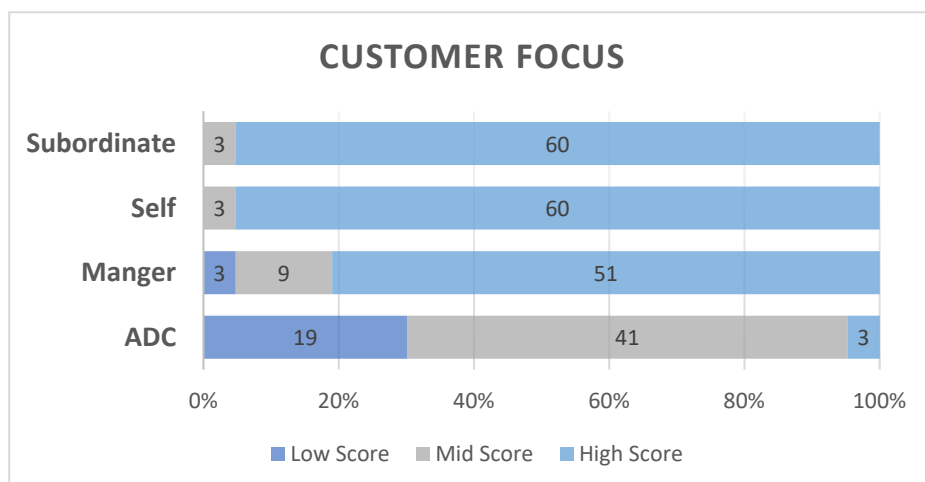
b) Chart b:



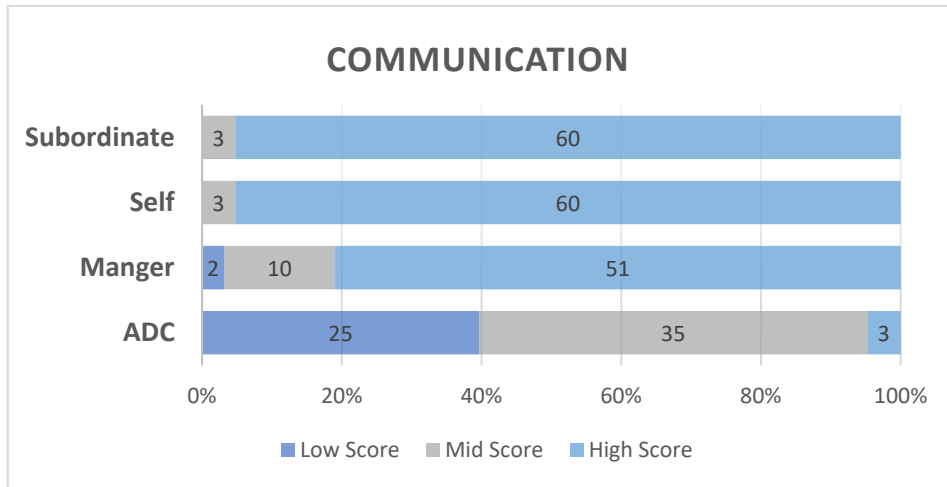
c) Chart c:



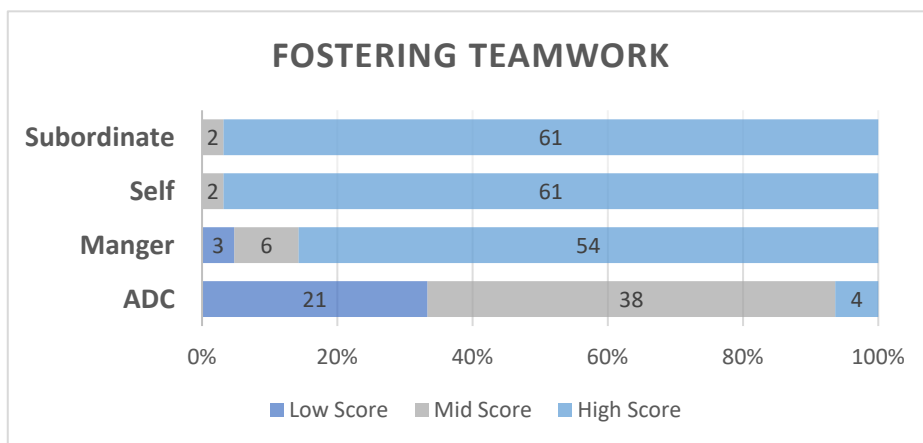
d) Chart d:



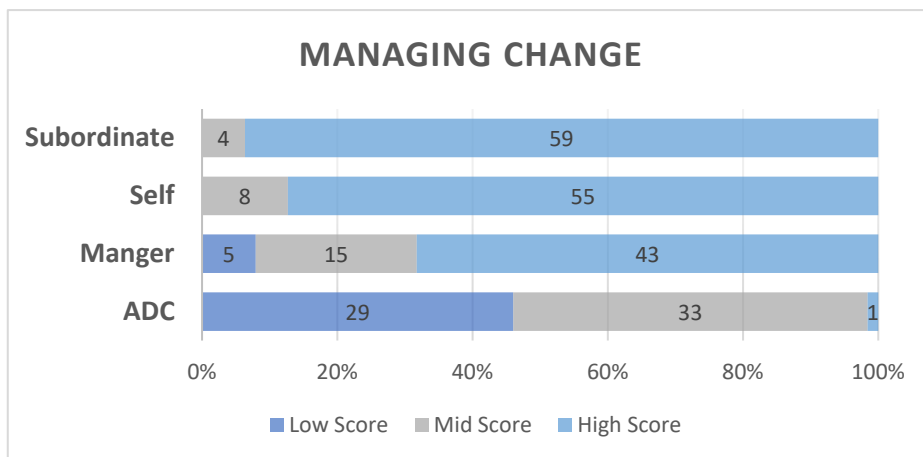
e) Chart e:



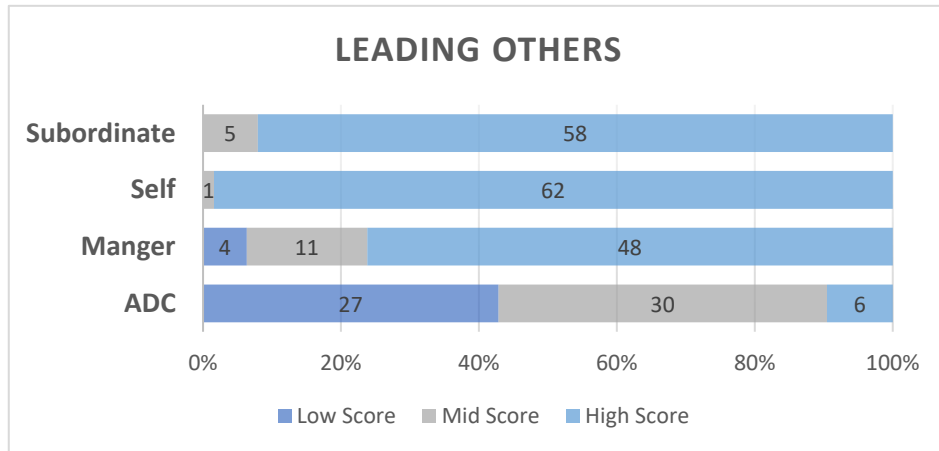
f) Chart f:



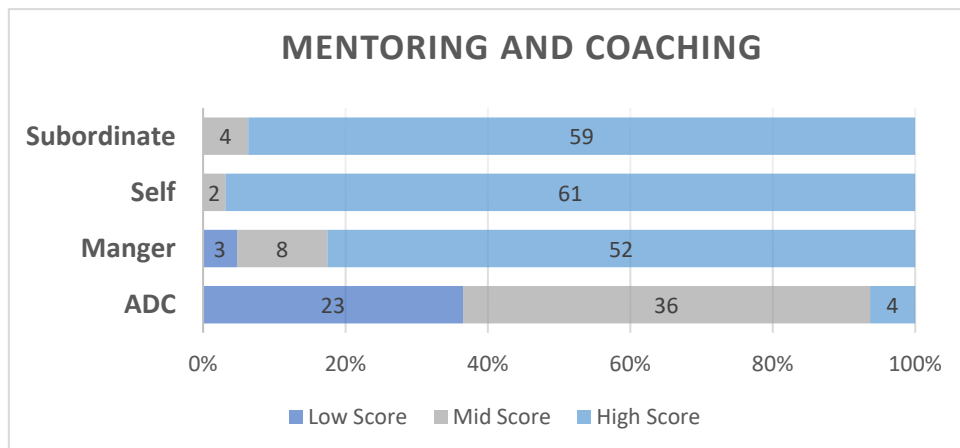
g) Chart g:



h) Chart h:



i) Chart i:



Discussion and Analysis

- An overall analysis of the Competency-wise scores (*Chart 1*) depicts that score of Self and Subordinate are never in the 'Low Score' range and almost 92%-95% scores lie in the 'High Score' range. This is a clear indication that the individuals are considered as highly effective as perceived by all the raters. One also notices that the scores of Self and Subordinate are very much aligned however, the score of Managers as compared to Self & Subordinate scores are lower. The reason for this could be due to the higher degree and opportunities of interactions the individuals have with their subordinates as compared to their reporting managers, which gives subordinates more occasions to observe a particular competency in action as compared to their managers. On the other

hand 'agreeableness biases'[10] like social desirability may have also prompted them to give scores to meet expectations of society or others.

- Managers have rated 3%-9% of the participants in the Low Score Range on various competencies whereas 68%-85% of the participants have been placed in the 'High Score Range'. The scores are a strong indication that behavioural effectiveness at work is valued by Managers, however this may have been understood also as a performance indicator and low scores on the behavioural competencies may be construed as a reflection on the Manager's ability to groom his/her people therefore errors arising out of leniency and similarity (similar to me) may have crept in. It may also be noted that the Manager scores on all competencies are lower than Self & Subordinate score, which could be due to the larger population with which the Manager is comparing the individual (contrast bias).
- Competencies of 'Drive for Results' (*Chart b*), 'Analytical Thinking & Decisiveness' (*Chart c*) 'Leading Others' (*Chart h*) have been rated the highest by 'Self' i.e. by Participants, this may indicate that participants have assimilated more focused interventions on developing these competencies and the nature of work demands exhibiting these competencies to ensure deliverables as per laid down objectives. For a consultancy organisation which has to meet tight schedules and stringent performance parameters mandated by demanding clients, the participants may have higher incidences of practicing, exhibiting and developing competencies of 'Drive for Results'. Further, 95% of the participant population has an Engineering Qualification, which may have a higher probability of possessing analytical abilities fashioned out of education pursued, a mind trained to analyze things in various perspectives and nature of work in the Organisation being core technical has further sharpened this ability.
- Competencies of Planning, Organizing and Foresightedness' (*Chart a*) & 'Fostering Teamwork' (*Chart f*) have been rated the highest by 'Subordinates'. The reason for this could be that subordinates assume that their managers have better visibility in terms of deliverables and count on them for drawing up plans which they in turn adhere to. Further, due to a work culture which promotes interdependencies, the competency of 'teamwork' also enshrined as one of the Core Values for the organisation has been highly rated. Rater bias cannot be ruled out, however in low-stakes assessment this bias is not of much consequence.
- Managers have attributed highest scores for 'Fostering Teamwork' (*Chart f*) competency, the reason for this could be that there have been many large scale, yet targeted interventions during the last two years on fostering teamwork conducted at work premises as well as at offsite locations. Moreover, this particular competency would perhaps be more easily observable at work and absence of disharmony in working relationships may have contributed towards high scores on this.

- The ADC scores are highest for competency 'Leading Others' (*Chart h*) which is a clear indicator that the individuals exhibit a high potential for Leadership Development. Therefore, investments being done by the organisation in promoting leadership capabilities through their Leadership Development Programme, Competency based interventions, providing varied exposure to the individuals and giving them the necessary empowerment will make a huge impact on their effectiveness at work.

Challenges

As the multi-rater tool is driven more by perception, it is inherent of personal biases. As, 'raters' subjective evaluations are being captured, which is actually the construct of the multi-rater assessment tool. The subjective evaluations do have considerable value, however they are limited in their contribution towards objective assessment of the actual work behaviours. The Raters also lacked the training for carrying out such evaluations and may have been unaware of the rating biases which could have been avoided. The information w.r.t self-driven development interventions, experiences at work, variety of work assignments, social learning opportunities etc. were not available in detail to complete the picture for getting holistic understanding of the development journeys of individuals. evaluate in such and may not be objective do not contribute objective information on a target's behaviors. Instead, subjective evaluations of behaviors are being captured, which can be reasonably considered the intended constructs in 360-degree feedback as they have a value in themselves. Thus, the validity of the method can be defined as the extent to which 360 ratings reflect actual perceptual judgements of the rater (or recall of actual behaviors; Keller Hansborough, Lord, & Schyns, 2015), as opposed to nuisance factors, which have the potential to contribute to both random and systematic errors in ratings' [10].

Future Study Prospects

This analysis opens up a further area of study where the ADC scores of 2021 can be compared again with the ADC scores after three years of the first assessment and additional attributes of development planning like exposure to varied assignments, change in job role, change in responsibilities, career progression, on-the-job learning inputs can also be factored in or assessed to arrive at holistic results, which are validated by scientific and objective data available through ADCs. Further, in-depth interviews can be conducted with the target population as well as the raters to get their responses in support of the ratings provided through a structured interview method. In addition to this, leadership perspective can also be taken to add to the quality of the study findings.

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