

Manager's work, roles and skills essay

[Profession](#), [Manager](#)



Abstract This essay examines the question of whether managerial work, roles, and skills are same throughout the world. Academic journals and textbooks are used in this essay to provide some evidences and examples to support the conclusion. The academic journals and textbooks were obtained from Monash University's library. Conclusion of this essay indicates that organizational level and cultural diversity have significant influence on degree and emphases of the managerial work, roles, and skills performed by managers throughout the world. **Introduction**In all societies, people are involved in managing things.

Everyone manages, but not everyone is a manager. " A manager is someone who works with and through other people by coordinating their work activities in order to accomplish organizational goals" (Robbins, Bergman, Stagg and Coulter, 2003, p. 6). Robbins and DeCenzo (2005, p.

10) stated that " A manager is a manager regardless of where he or she manages". The statement has led to one question. Are the manager's job and activities universal? It is believed that there is no such thing as universal manager. Managers around the world perform similar work, roles, and skills. However, it should not be interpreted that the activities of all managers are the same. The differences are of degrees, importance and emphasis they put on their work, roles and skills due to some factors such as organizational level and size, culture, political and economic condition.

This essay will only emphasize on organizational level and cultural factors. The purpose of this essay is to discuss and examine whether the work, roles, and skills of a manager are the same throughout the world. Analytical

discussion will be constructed with the use of evidences and examples to support the conclusion of this essay. Discussion In the global marketplace, where management is no longer constrained by national borders, one of the significant challenges that managers have to face is the rapidly changing environment. Managers have to deal with situations in which diversity is one of the issues. Diversity here can be referred to economic, social, political, or cultural differences.

In essence, all managers from different countries will have to continually adapt their performances to deal with changes. Culture exists at various levels. Neelankavil, Mathur, and Zhang (2000) through their research have concluded that “ managers from different national cultures vary widely as to their basic conception of what constitutes effective managerial practices”. Lenartowicz and Johnson (2002) stated that where there is cultural diversity across nations, core values of managers are expected to differ and resulting in differences in managerial behavior. Those statements, however, do not directly answer the significant question of whether the managerial activities across countries are the same.

To answer the question, manager work, roles, and skills will be discussed separately. Managerial Work It was proposed by Henri Fayol (1916) that all managers perform four works: planning, leading, organizing, and controlling (Robbins et al. , 2003). The works were initially known as planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling. Many people believe that management works are universally applicable, which means that they can be applied in every organization around the world.

For example, a CEO of a multinational company in New York and a supervisor of a small supermarket in Petaling Jaya may not do the same things everyday. However, if seen further, they both do the planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. Nevertheless, there are also some other things that make the managerial works performed by managers around the world somewhat not exactly the same. Robbins and DeCenzo (2005) suggest that managers in higher organizational level tend to do more planning and less leading, while managers in lower organizational level tend to do more leading and less planning. This means that hierarchy level has an influence in a manager's work. A survey conducted by Konrad, Waryszak, and Hartmann (1997) which examined similarities and differences between managers in Australia and United States came up with a conclusion that in Australia, controlling is rated more positively than it is in the United States.

However, the differences observed in managerial activities preferences were generally small. This is not surprising due to Anglo cultural heritage adopted by both countries. In this case, it could be said that cultural heritage does have influence in managerial activity preferences. Another survey on this issue examined India, China, U.

S. and Philippines in term of their managerial values. Neelankavil, Mathur, and Zhang (2000), through their survey, found out that the United States and China is the most dissimilar pair. Both countries are different in all factors except for planning and decision making. It is assumed the differences are caused by widely acknowledged culture differences between both countries.

Once again, this is another evidence supports that culture is one of the things causing the differences between managerial works throughout the world. Managerial Roles Henry Mintzberg (1973) who had observed five chief executive workers came up with three main roles (interpersonal, informational, and decisional) the manager plays. The three roles were then divided into ten subdivisions, which are figurehead, leader, liaison, monitor, disseminator, spokesperson, entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, and negotiator. These roles are highly interrelated, not easily separated and form an integrated whole (Wilson, 1999). As the business environment becomes more similar, the demands of the manager's role also become more similar. No one can deny the statement that there are shared business value and orientation around the world. However, as managers adapt their behavior to the local culture, the discrepancy between countries may result.

Laurent (1983) assumed that “ employees in different countries may expect different behaviors from their managers” (cited in Konrad, Wariszak & Hartmann, 1997). It is already recognized that the significance of managerial roles differs depending on the manager's level in the organization. Anyone in a position of power has to use a variety of management roles to make their organization efficient and effective. For example, a CEO of a large organization might play the entrepreneur role more than the front-line manager in that particular organization.

In addition, culture can also influences the importance of managerial roles. For example, managers in Australia and US managers have a different

emphasis on their managerial roles. US managers are focusing less on leader role while managers in Australia are focusing less on negotiator role.

Moreover, US managers rate liaison roles more positively than Australian managers. Managerial Skills Managers need different types of skills to perform their functions and to handle multiple roles. Robert L.

Katz (1974), through his research, found that there are three essential skills that managers need, which are technical skill, interpersonal skill and conceptual skill (Robbins et al. , 2003). O'Neal (1985, p. 81 cited in Peterson & Van Fleet, 2004) stated that managers cannot be effective in doing all four managerial works without these fundamental skills. There seems to be overall agreement that, in order to be effective, a manager must be competent in these three skills. Katz believed that the importance of managerial skills varied according to the organizational level (Robbins et al. , 2003). He proposed that technical skills become less important while conceptual skills become more important in higher level of management. However, he stated that conceptual skills are just as important in top level as well as in the lower levels. This makes sense.

For example, a vice-president with accounting background of a company is not likely to use his or her accounting skill more than the accounting manager of the company itself. Moreover, the vice president use his or her ability to conceptualize more than the accounting manager since the vice president does not work directly on projects or processes. However, both the vice president and the accounting manager need interpersonal skills at the same level because all managers deal directly with people. According to

research done by Lubatkin, Ndiaye and Vengroff on seven Southern African countries (SADCC) and French-speaking Central African Republic (CAR), the level of importance that managers place on managerial skills also differ among countries and nations. It was found out that managers in CAR ranked technical skills as the most important skills while SADCC placed interpersonal skills at the highest importance. It means that managers in SADCC and managers in CAR have different perception on the importance of managerial skills they use Conclusion In a nutshell, all managers- regardless of level, organization size, type of organization- perform the four basic activities of management, play the managerial roles, and need the managerial skills.

However, work, roles and skills of managers around the world are not essentially the same. Their jobs are also not to be interpreted as inherently different. They are similar. The differences are of degree and emphasis due to significant factors like organizational level and culture. In the end, managers need to acknowledge changes around them, be flexible, and gives the precise emphasis on work, roles, and skills they need most in order to be effective and efficient. Reference List Robbins, S.

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