

*A qualitative approach to exploring competencies among  
host country national managers in Japanese MNCs*

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**A qualitative approach to exploring competencies among host country national managers in Japanese MNCs<sup>(1)</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

This study was designed to discover the competencies that are adaptively necessary for Asian managers of host country nationals (HCNs) who work effectively for subsidiaries of Japanese multinational corporations (MNCs). A unique feature of this study is its description of the qualitative approach that was undertaken during interviews with managers from Japan, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Thailand. Altogether, 267 research participants were selected from a leading Japanese MNC that has been expanding strategically throughout Asia and, specifically, into the countries mentioned. A qualitative data analysis conducted in the present study found 12 key competencies, which yielded two competency models—the hierarchical model and the contextual human function model. Both models are applicable for Asian managers who demand effective organizational performance. Furthermore, distinctive and contextually specific competencies needed for particular countries were identified in this study; such distinctions suggest that each country may require these competencies to meet different environmental demands that exist across Asian countries.

*Keywords:* skills, skill demands, qualitative approach, host country nationals, Asia, Japanese multinationals

## **Introduction**

In the era of today's globalization, the management of a global workforce in multinational corporations (MNCs) has been increasingly recognized as a critical area of international business and human resource (HR) management (De Cieri, 2009; De Cieri & Dowling, 2006). Effectively managing different global workforces is a key to success of MNCs that strategize for expansion of subsidiaries throughout the world (Adler & Gundersen, 2008; Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1989; Brewster, Sparrow, & Vernon, 2007; Doz & Prahalad, 1986). In foreign operations of MNCs, core organizational positions are staffed with three different types of global workforces: parent country nationals (PCNs), host country nationals (HCNs), and third country nationals (TCNs) (Collings & Scullion, 2006; Collings, Scullion, & Dowling, 2009; Dowling, Welch, & Schuler, 1999; Gong, 2003; Scullion & Collings, 2006). A considerable amount of research on PCNs has been conducted and accumulated concerning their many aspects. In contrast, workforces of HCNs and TCNs have not been defined or explained sufficiently. By considering the increased competitive performance of HCNs (Briscoe, Schuler, & Claus 2009; DeNisi, Toh, & Connelly 2006), specific studies of HCNs would benefit international human resource management (HRM); especially, studies regarding relevant skills are needed. Currently, there is a deficiency in HR literature regarding skills in the context of globalization (Ashton, Brown, & Lauder, 2009). Therefore, this study has focused on the skills of HCNs employed for subsidiaries of MNCs that wish to compete effectively in the race for global talent (Beamish & Inkpen, 1998).

## **Universalistic Versus Culturally Contingent Skills**

Skills represent the ability to demonstrate a systematic series of behavior that functions to attain a performance goal (Boyatzis, 1982). A skill accompanied by intent, motive, and drive indicates competency (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). whose various models

have been continually invented and developed (Rodriguez, Patel, Bright, Gregory, & Gowing, 2002; Schippmann et al., 2000). Globalization challenges managers' skills, competencies, and capabilities (Viitala, 2005) to deal effectively with the creation of new businesses and growing opportunities for MNCs (Black, Morrison, & Gregersen, 1999). This context makes an intriguing inquiry as to the existence of competency models that are universal, as opposed to those that are culturally contingent in the domain of international management literature (Morrison, 2000; Thomas & Inkson, 2005; Xiao, 2006). Several researchers have supported the view of generalizability of leadership styles or management competencies beyond cultures (i.e., Bass, 1997; Hamlin, 2004, 2005; Thompson, Stuart, & Lindsay, 1996). For example, Hamlin (2005) discussed that his leadership model and the Zenger Miller model that was described in the study by Bergmann, Hurson, and Russ-Eft (1999) had been generalized for applications to U.S. and British cultures. Further, Bennis (1999) suggested that some leadership qualities are important commonly. In contrast, leadership and management behaviors are culturally contingent across countries (Hofstede, 1997) so that generalization must be constrained (Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe, 2001; Hunt & Peterson, 1997). A comparative study between the West and the East by Nisbett, Peng, Choi, and Norenzayan (2000) illustrated that the Western countries are predominantly analytical, while Asian countries are primarily holistic. Thus, the authors' research indicated that Westerners rely on analytical competencies and that Asians give more value to viewing holistically.

The suggestion by Dickson, Den Hartog, and Castano (2009) that global leadership styles entail positions of universality and cultural contingency is in line with findings from the GLOBE project (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004). Results of the study by Dickson et al. (2009) concerning the project showed "Charismatic/Value-based" and

“Team-oriented” as two of six leadership styles that were universal across ten clusters of country cultures (Dorfman, Hanges, & Brodbeck 2004). Additionally, Dorfman et al. (1997) found that culturally universal behaviors of leaders involved supportiveness, contingent rewards, and charisma; further, they found that culturally specific behaviors for five nations in North America and Asia included directness, participation, and contingent punishments. The studies appeared to bolster the existence of common leadership and management competencies, as well as distinctive competencies associated with a variety of specific cultures. Namely, some competencies may play key roles for global firms universally, whereas the degree of importance of other competencies seems to depend on cultural differences. Dickson et al. (2009) pointed out that Charismatic/Value-based and Team-oriented leadership styles varied in strength within the 10 cultural clusters. Adler and Gundersen (2008) discussed the cultural contingency of management behaviors across countries; additionally, they illustrated that the international success of an organization clearly requires the emotional intelligence of its leaders regarding global leadership competencies. The authors implied that emotional intelligence pertains to a global competency of managers that is associated with effective performance in overseas business operations. Furthermore, the empirical study of global leadership traits by Black et al. (1999) revealed that two thirds of the leadership traits gained from interviews applied commonly to all managers and one third represented idiosyncratic features of certain jobs, organizations, or countries. Although the referenced study mainly described a global leadership model that was universally applicable for the purpose of the research, the issue of universality versus cultural contingency appeared inherent to creation of the resulting model. Morrison (2000) also acknowledged core competencies identified in global leadership models but maintained that the influence of competencies on leaders and their performance differs based on home culture,

parent organization, management hierarchy, and work position. Discussions by Adler and Gundersen (2008) and Morrison (2000) were congruent with the views of Dickson et al. (2009), which supported the aforementioned positions of universality and cultural contingency. This kind of organizational phenomenon can be, in general, illustrated by the human capital theory (Becker, 1994), which distinguishes general skills from skills that are specific to a company. General skills are transferrable beyond organizations, but specific skills are applicable to particular organizations based on their corporate needs (Xiao, 2006). When applying the existence of universality and cultural/environmental contingency to HCNs in MNCs, it can be inferred that HCN managers acquire and develop universal as well as contextual specific skills in various contexts, including cultures and environmental facets of countries, organizations, industries, hierarchical positions, and/or jobs. However, this speculative perspective remains unexamined; it requires further investigation.

### **Competency Model Trends across Countries**

Leadership and management competency models have been developed mainly in Western countries. For example, Boyatzis (1982) invented a generic competency model based on U.S. work contexts. Spencer and Spencer (1993) capitalized on Boyatzis' study and found a particular set of competencies that yielded superior performance in the work environment; these competencies have been used broadly in the United States and Britain (Sandberg, 2000). Furthermore, Boyatzis and Kolb (1991, 1995) developed a learning skill model derived from an experiential learning theory; they applied findings from U.S. work contexts as well as Japanese expatriate assignments (Yamazaki, 2010). Hamlin (2004, 2005) presented a generic competency model applicable to the United States, Britain, and Canada. Viitala (2005) showed an integrated management competency model by utilizing Finish managers. Additionally, transformational leadership qualities were investigated for Western countries.

By elaborating on the work by Bass (1985, 1997), Bass and Avolio (1990), and Burns (1978), and others in the United States and the United Kingdom, Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe (2001) developed a questionnaire for transformational leadership. Finally, it is acknowledged that the GLOBE study extends to many cultures and countries globally, but its prime emphasis includes behaviors, values, and beliefs of leaders and managers rather than their competencies or skills. Although several studies have been published regarding Chinese cultural contexts (Chen, Bian, & Hon, 2005; Han, Chou, Chao, & Wright, 2006; Xiao, 2006; Zhu, Chen, & Warner, 2000), a limited number of competency and skill studies have been conducted in other Asian countries (Wickramasinghe & De Zoyza, 2009). As a consequence, Asia has not been the focus of the design and development of competency models. Because Asian-Pacific regions are characterized by culturally specific distinctions in perceptions and attitudes (Ahmad, 2001; Osman-Gani, 2000), it could be reasonable to say that competency needs in Asia may differ from those in the West. Thus, a competency model for this country may be unique in comparison with one designed in Western countries. Therefore, investigation into competencies and skills about Asia remain beneficial in the development of international management and HR literature. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to discover the competencies and skills that are necessary for the effectiveness of HCN managers working in business contexts in Asia. Identification of competencies and skills is a prerequisite to generation of a suitable competency model.

### **A Qualitative Approach to International Studies**

In this study, the author explored competencies and skills required for HCN managers in Asia. To accomplish the study purpose, a qualitative approach was employed to identify skills based on interviews. A qualitative approach is properly fitted to research questions that usually begin with *what* or *how* so that researchers can deal with initial ventures into the topic



that describe what is happening (Creswell, 1998). Furthermore, qualitative research is crucial for discovering deep processes employed by people, groups, and organizations; it also helps identify how those processes develop over time (Bluhm, Harman, Lee, & Mitchell, 2011). In addition, it is important for managers to comprehend what employee's experience and how they perceive their experiences (Bluhm et al., 2011). When considering studies in global contexts, Harari and Beaty (1990) claimed that qualitative research importantly contributes to cross-cultural studies regarding theory testing. For international business research, Daniels and Cannice (2004) proposed interview-based research studies when study purposes involve exploring new theories and conducting theory-building processes because the interview method provides researchers with opportunities to discover new situations not previously assumed. Additionally, Daniels and Cannice (2004) suggested that researchers in the field of international business should apply interview-based studies in greater frequencies because few qualitative research studies have resulted in unique theories about international business issues.

Although qualitative research has been regarded in a marginal way in international business research (Marschan-Piekkari & Welch, 2004), applications of qualitative research are becoming increasingly important in management and leadership studies. For over 20 years, criticism has targeted the dominant use of quantitative approaches in management literature to investigate the behaviors of managers and leaders (Hamlin, 2004). Several studies pointed out that survey questionnaires have contributed little to an understanding of effective management and leadership (Hamlin, 2004). In this respect, Alvesson (2002) argued for richer stories or testimonials rather than the typical survey questionnaires that have been generated in the past. Conger (1998) also claimed that qualitative research is pivotal for understanding leadership. Survey questionnaires typically use broad terms instead of detailed

ones that uncover rich information because behavioral descriptions in the questionnaires must be generalized for a variety of research situations. As a result, researchers have neglected useful and relevant information that would assist managers and leaders concretely for a variety of organizational situations (Hamlin, 2004).

Because of the lack of qualitative research, another weakness has emerged from survey questionnaires—typically, only a certain range of phenomena is investigated in the field of management and leadership (Hamlin, 2004). A difficulty remains unsolved concerning how typical leadership and management can be measured appropriately apart from the use of a survey instrument (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999). Accordingly, some researchers discussed qualitative approaches to management and leadership areas for new directions. For example, Parry (1998) suggested a new direction in leadership research utilizing a grounded theory method, which plays an important role in this domain.

Overall, a qualitative research that includes interview-based studies matched the purpose of this study in international contextual situations; further, it would be beneficial for the development of interdisciplinary areas of management.

## **Review of Competency Literature**

### **Competencies and Competency Frameworks**

Learning workplaces and organizations have created a variety of meanings regarding competencies (Garavan & McGuire, 2001), leading to the development of numerous competency models (Rodriguez et al., 2002; Schippmann et al., 2000) for HR activities (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). There have been several approaches to define competencies according to contexts and perspectives (Garavan & McGuire, 2001). For example, competencies have been used to describe the “input” or “output” of individual behaviors (Wickramasinghe & De Zoyza, 2009). According to these classifications, competencies are

regarded as inputs in the United States, comprising knowledge, skills, and attitudes that have an effect on individual performance (Stuart & Lindsay, 1997). In the United Kingdom, competencies are perceived as outputs of individuals with competencies to the extent that their performance levels respond to work standards (Stuart & Lindsay, 1997). Input versus output may be analogous with taxonomy by Sandberg (2000), who identified three approaches to competencies founded on the scientific views of rational study traditions. Sandberg described these approaches as worker-oriented, the work-oriented, and the multimethod-oriented. The worker-oriented approach focuses on individuals' attributes that constitute competencies, such as knowledge, skills, abilities, and individual traits required for effective performance in organizations (Sandberg, 2000). This view appears to be associated with the notion of the aforementioned input. Second, work-oriented approaches focus on work or tasks, in contrast to worker-oriented approaches that stress attributes of individuals. According to Sandberg, the work-oriented approach initially identifies activities required for accomplishing certain work; subsequently, such activities transform into individual attributes. Thus, a set of competencies derived from attributes is developed to correspond with work accomplishments. In this respect, the second approach seems to be related to the concept of output that can be fitted to prescribed work standards. Third, the multimethod-oriented approach shows a particular set of competencies based on individual attributes identified in the worker-oriented and work-oriented approaches (Sandberg, 2000). The third approach begins by identification of activities necessary to accomplish work (work-oriented approach), but it further determines individual attributes of knowledge, skills, and abilities that best fit the work (Sandberg, 2000). In this respect, the third approach can be seen as an integration of the other two approaches.

Markus, Cooper-Thomas, and Allpress (2005) proposed that competencies are defined by educational standards, behavioral repertoires, and organizational abilities. Educational standards originating with educational disciplines have been used to describe a narrow definition of competencies such as an action, behavior, or performance level, or a minimal standard associated with various degrees of mastery (Markus et al., 2005). Behavioral repertoires represent psychological methods adopted by McClelland and Boyatzis (1980), who defined a competency as an underlying characteristic that includes a generic set of knowledge, traits, motives, roles, and skills (Markus et al., 2005). A particular feature of definitions in this category represents competencies of excellent performers in organizations that distinguish them from average job performers. Compared to the approach to competencies previously discussed by Sandberg (2000), the behavioral repertoires approach seems to be conceptually similar to the worker-oriented one. Another way to define competencies entails business and strategic approaches (Markus et al., 2005). Strategic competencies described by Hamel and Prahalad (1989) emphasize core competencies in organizations that are exemplified through collective learning (Markus et al., 2005).

Sparrow and Hiltrop (1994) organized competencies into behavioral, managerial, and core categories. Behavioral competencies are used to meet a clear specification of a job to be completed; thus, this category is similar to outputs (UK type). Managerial competencies are defined as knowledge, skills, attitudes, and a handful of personal behaviors that are similar to input (U.S. type) competencies. They are generic and transferable. Core competencies are the same as those defined by Markus et al. (2005); they are connected strongly to strategy and competitive advantages of organizations.

The author of this study recognized the need for such an approach for discovering competencies of HCN managers of MNCs doing business in Asia; it was preferable to

identifying those competencies that correspond to specific responsibilities in MNCs. A set of competencies should be generalized for the effective performance of HCN managers in Asia, and it should focus on visible individual attributes including knowledge, skills, and abilities. From this notion, the present study applied the worker-oriented approach by Sandberg (2000) and the behavioral repertoires approach by Markus et al. (2005). Any competency model adopted by organizations requires a simple list of desirable competencies (Markus et al., 2005) that are associated with behaviors necessary for high job performance levels (Wickramasinghe & De Zoyza, 2009). This perspective indicates that competency models are largely composed of skill competencies that can be taught in training sessions developed within organizations. Thus, the present study was undertaken to identify competencies and competency models for HCN managers.

### **A Scope of Competencies to Be Investigated**

Competencies include a wide range of human attributes. Boyatzis (1982) explained competency according to individual attributes regarding knowledge, motive, traits, self-image, social roles, and skills. Spencer and Spencer (1993) defined competency similarly as including the following types of underlying characteristics: knowledge and skill competencies that are observable and relatively easy to develop; motive and trait competencies that are unseen and related to personality (thus, unchangeable and difficult to develop); and self-concept competencies that pertain to values and attitudes, which are moderately subject to influence. Regarding skill-based competencies that can be observed, Viitala (2005) proposed a relatively comprehensive competency model consisting of the following six categorizations: technical competencies, business competencies, knowledge management competencies, leadership competencies, social competencies, and intrapersonal competencies. Her competency model was founded on a reasoning process used by Garavan

and McGuire (2001); it includes elements of technology, management, people, attitudes, values, and mental skills. A pyramid-type competency model was produced by Rifkin, Fineman, and Ruhnke (1999) based on an empirical investigation of technical managers. The six clustered competencies of their model can be observed; they have been structured hierarchically from personal competencies to work-related competencies. The order of six competency clusters from technical competencies to intrapersonal competencies accords with a level of easy versus difficult development. Technical competencies are regarded as easier to develop, while intrapersonal competencies connected to a manager's personal traits and human growth are conceived as more difficult to develop (Viitala 2005). Competency categorization seems to be analogous to that of Spencer and Spencer (1993), which identifies a range of personality traits as well as capabilities regarding contextual job situations.

Previous studies have suggested that a scope of competencies to be examined includes various facets of human attributes. Accordingly, a targeted scope of competencies needed for HCN managers in this study has been explored for many areas, such as technology, business, management, leadership, social/interpersonal skills, self-concepts, motives, values, and attitudes.

## **Methods**

### **Grounded Theory Methodology**

As discussed in the section regarding a qualitative method for international studies, this study applied a qualitative approach to discover competencies of HCN managers through an interview process. Research methodology used in the present study was based partly on the grounded theory approach originally proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990); the theory can be applied to the development of a model relevant to a particular situation (Creswell, 1998). The grounded theory approach was

designed to analyze qualitative data so that a theoretical model could be generated. It is useful for developing codes, concepts, and categories inductively derived from concrete stories based on participants' experiences (Glaser, 1978). Flick (2009) argued that grounded theory methodology affects qualitative study as a whole because of three contributing aspects, including the development of qualitative research, the proposal of several tools for conducting qualitative research, and the provision of an integrated concept for conducting qualitative research. However, Flick (2009) also pointed out that many books have been published about grounded theory methods and that different approaches to grounded theory have emerged over the 40 years since Glaser and Strauss (1967) introduced grounded theory methods. It suggests that researchers should adopt tools, techniques, and processes relevant for grounded theory methods according to study purposes, contents, or features. Consequently, the purpose of this study is not to create a theory but to find out competencies necessary for HCN managers. Therefore, open coding described in the grounded theory approach was a focal point of this study. The open coding technique presented by Coffey and Atkinson (1996) as well as Flick (2009) was applied to analyze data. Hamlin (2004, 2005) supported an open coding method as appropriate for identification of commonalities in discrete managerial behaviors. Furthermore, this study used thematic analysis proposed by Boyatzis (1998) to develop categories or themes associated with several similar codes or concepts.

According to the grounded theory approach, analysis begins with open coding—the examination of stories and individual words, phrases, and sentences. Strauss and Corbin (1990) illustrated that open coding is an initial step in segmenting data from words and phrases in concrete stories and subsequently creating a code to identify an abstract category. These codes and categories are compared and contrasted systematically, yielding conceptual clusters as inclusive categories. Although open coding is followed by axis and selective

coding to form a theory through the grounded theory paradigm, this study was based on open coding techniques.

Open coding techniques were adopted in this study when concrete stories were extracted from interviews. In this study, interview questions were straightforward; for example, participants were asked, “What skills or competencies are important for your job?” This question allowed each respondent to describe a skill or a competency that corresponded to his or her own experiences. The interviewing process was important for obtaining past experiences to be coded and for clarifying the meaning of skills or competencies presented by participants. Descriptions might yield a gap between a concept used and actual practice because of different interpretations or meanings associated with a skill or competency. Subsequently, participants were asked to describe actual experiences when they used the relevant skill or competency. Thus, open coding techniques were applied to analyze actual experiences as data for identification of skills and competencies of HCN managers.

Although the grounded theory approach was used to represent inductive reasoning (i.e., from the concrete to the abstract) in this study, participants initially engaged in deductive reasoning to describe particular skills or competencies. They followed with concrete stories regarding use of the skills or competencies in actual practice. Such stories, in turn, became sources for open coding in the grounded theory approach.

### **Research Site**

A Japanese MNC that strategically develops and operates its business in Asian emerging markets cooperatively participated in this study. Asia-Pacific areas have become important for many MNCs due to their business growth. This Japanese MNC is one of the largest and most successful retail firms in Japan; it runs shopping centers, supermarkets, home centers, convenience stores, drugstores, financial services, and so forth. The firm has



established more than 4,000 stores in Asia, and its code of conduct provides the same behavioral guidelines for all employees. Its HR practices and policies that include promotion, performance evaluation, education, and training have been adopted commonly among all employees. Accordingly, it can be inferred that its employees may have similar views about how this Japanese MNC manages its employees and its business. For this study, all research participants worked as managers of shopping centers or supermarkets, or as administrators in headquarters of oversea subsidiaries that included five geographical regions in Asia— Japan, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Thailand.

### **Samples and Sampling Procedures**

The research sample for this study included 267 managers of the Japanese MNC; the breakdown included 47 from Japan, 50 from China, 56 from Hong Kong, 62 from Malaysia, and 52 from Thailand. Table 1 describes the demographic characteristics of the Asian managers from five areas. The Japanese, Hong Kong, and Thai managers were in their early 40s, while the Chinese and Malaysian managers were in their early 30s. A reason for the age difference may be reflected in the hiring of young people for management positions in new Chinese and Malaysian markets. A similar difference between those two groups was shown in terms of work experience at the MNC (i.e., tenure). The Japanese, Hong Kong, and Thai managers had a longer tenure at this MNC than the Chinese and Malaysian managers. Findings implied that the Chinese and Malaysian markets might need to hire more rapidly to fill managerial positions of expanding branches. The Japanese managers were male dominant; the Hong Kong managers held a comparatively balanced composition; but the Chinese, Malaysian, and Thai managers were female dominant. Finally, the distribution of hierarchical positions did not vary much among the Asian managers, except for those from Hong Kong.

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An institutional connection between the forgoing Japanese MNC and the author's educational institution was utilized to initiate this research project. The author contacted HR managers by e-mail to obtain consent from them for this study. After obtaining their permission, the author went to each region to conduct interviews with employees.

A face-to-face interview in an assigned room was conducted with each individual participant. During the interview, there was no intervention from others until the session was completed. Each interview session lasted around 20 to 30 minutes, and every effort was made to minimize a negative influence on work activities. As described in the section regarding grounded theory methodology, the initial interview question concerned skills or competencies that were important for the participants; the question was followed by another requesting summaries of actual experiences relevant to the skills or competencies described. Interviews were conducted in Japanese for Japanese managers and in English for the rest of the Asian managers. Because Chinese and Thai managers, as well as several managers from Hong Kong, did not understand English or Japanese, a bilingual or multilingual HR staff person was assigned to translate between the author and interviewees. Each interview session was digitally recorded after the author obtained permission from individual participants. In addition, the author took notes of responses to questions.

## **Results**

Participants' responses collected through the interview process were examined initially by means of open coding techniques. Comparing similarities and differences of coded data inductively produced a variant of common concepts or themes that, in turn, became the basis for categorizing skills or competencies. The present study focused on competencies rather than professional areas of expertise. Functional specialization included

marketing, customer services, operations, and accounting; technical knowledge included corporate procedures, rules, and policies. In this study, participants were asked during interview sessions whether such specialization and knowledge were necessary for HCNs of the respective countries, but this study did not code or categorize this information.

Competency results (coded data analysis) for participating managers from Japan, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Thailand have been presented as follows.

### **Japanese Managers**

Results of coded data analysis for 47 Japanese managers revealed 83 codes relevant to activities, behaviors, knowledge, or characteristics as the basis for skills or competencies. Subsequently these codes were categorized into 16 clusters of skills or competencies according to similarities.

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The 83 codes shown in Table 2 were categorized into 16 skills or competencies: Leadership, Building Relationships, Team Management, Goal Management, Communications, Developing People, Understanding People, Perceiving Situations, Viewing Holistically, Tenacity, Action Directivity, Integrity, Positive Mindset, Analysis, Organizational Savvy, and Designing Systems. Results confirmed that technical knowledge and skills for professional areas (i.e., marketing, customer service, product and procedures, etc.) were important for Japanese managers. The number of codes varied for the various competencies. For example, Leadership was clustered according to eight codes, as illustrated in Table 2. It consisted of (a) becoming a role model; (b) showing a presence in front of people; (c) motivating people to action; (d) empowering employees; (e) working together to solve issues; (f) showing clear direction; (g) persuading people to understand job priorities; and (h) creating a positive work

environment. The Developing People competency included the highest number of 13 codes, while Building Relationships had the second highest number of 11 codes. The latter two competencies, along with Leadership, concerned people; thus, people orientation characterized Japanese working contexts.

### **Chinese Managers**

Interviews with 50 Chinese managers resulted in 83 codes of activities, behaviors, knowledge, or characteristics that produced 22 competencies—the second highest number of competencies after those of Hong Kong managers. Results also revealed that technical knowledge and skills for professional areas was critical for Chinese HCN managers. Table 3 provides a summary of these codes and clustered competencies.

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Among the 83 codes, 12 were associated with Team Management and Developing People, which may suggest that Chinese working contexts are people-oriented. The 22 competencies resulting from those codes included Leadership, Building Relationships, Team Management, Goal Management, Communications, Developing People, Understanding People, Perceiving Situations, Viewing Holistically, Action Directivity, Integrity, Positive Mindset, Analysis, Organizational Savvy, Designing Systems, Responsibility, Facilitating Discussion, Organizing Information, Collecting Information, Curiosity, Prioritizing Activities, and Risk Management. Tenacity, which was listed as a competency of Japanese Managers, was not indicated in the working context of Chinese HCN managers working for the Japanese MNC. However, seven new competencies were identified.

### **Hong Kong Managers**

Data analysis from interviews with 56 Hong Kong managers resulted in 98 codes and 23 competencies for professional and technical areas of functional specialization. These

numbers were the highest among Asian managers in this study. Table 4 summaries the codes and competencies.

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The 23 competencies describe the following: Leadership, Building Relationships, Team Management, Goal Management, Communications, Developing People, Understanding People, Perceiving Situations, Tenacity, Action Directivity, Integrity, Positive Mindset, Analysis, Organizational Savvy, Facilitating Discussion, Organizing Information, Collecting Information, Curiosity, Initiative, Learning Capabilities, Making Decisions, Creativity, and Open Mindedness. When comparing Chinese and Hong Kong managers, there were several differences in competencies required for their respective business contexts. For example, Hong Kong managers indicated that Tenacity, Initiative, Learning Capabilities, Making Decisions, and Creativity were essential, but Chinese managers did not consider them as important. Instead, Chinese managers viewed as requisite Viewing Holistically, Designing Systems, Demonstrating Responsibility, Prioritizing Activities, as well as Risk Management, whereas Hong Kong managers did not regard these as essential.

### **Malaysian Managers**

Data analysis from interviews with 62 Malaysian managers produced 88 codes and 22 competencies—the second highest number of competencies among the Asian managers examined in this study. The data confirmed that Malaysian managers required functional specialization and knowledge and skills in their workplaces. Table 5 provides a summary of the codes that were categorized into 22 competencies.

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Results showed the 22 competencies that included Leadership, Building Relationships, Team Management, Goal Management, Communications, Developing People, Understanding People, Perceiving Situations, Action Directivity, Positive Mindset, Analysis, Facilitating Discussion, Organizing Information, Curiosity, Prioritizing Activities, Initiative, Learning Capabilities, Making Decisions, Creativity, Open Mindedness, Hardworking, and Sensitivity to People. Among the 22 competencies, Leadership, Building Relationships, and Developing People seemed to be particularly important for Malaysian managers because of the number of codes relevant to those three competencies. New competencies emerged from the data analysis of Malaysian managers—Open Mindedness, Hardworking, and Sensitive to People. These three competencies may reflect the unique business context of the Malaysian subsidiary of the Japanese MNC.

### **Thai Managers**

Data analysis regarding 52 Thai managers showed 90 codes (second highest number after Hong Kong managers) and 21 competencies clustered from the codes. The analysis confirmed the importance of professional specialization and technical knowledge for the Thai business context. Table 6 provides detailed information regarding these codes and competencies.

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As shown in Table 6, the 21 competencies are as follows: Leadership, Building Relationships, Team Management, Goal Management, Communications, Developing People, Understanding People, Perceiving Situations, Action Directivity, Integrity, Positive Mindset, Analysis, Responsibility, Facilitating Discussion, Initiative, Learning Capabilities, Creativity, Open Mindedness, Sensitivity to People, Modesty, and Loyalty. Data analysis from interviews with Thai managers revealed the two additional competencies of Modesty and

Loyalty. Modesty refers to “not becoming a self-centered person” or “not imposing own ideas or views on people,” and Loyalty refers to “having loyalty to the organization” or “keeping loyalty to the job.” These competencies are associated with intrapersonal traits that might involve Thai managers’ country, value, or culture.

### **Discussion**

The qualitative data analysis of this study showed competencies that were necessary for working for an overseas subsidiary of the Japanese MNC in Asia. Thus, 33 distinctive competencies were identified; they complemented the functional specialization and knowledge that were important for a specific industry, such as marketing, customer services, product knowledge, and procedures. It should be noted that not all of the 33 competencies were necessarily critical for the managers investigated in this study. The analysis resulted in 16 competencies for Japanese managers, 22 for Chinese managers, 23 for managers from Hong Kong and Malaysia, and 21 for Thai managers. Results indicated that several identified competencies were required commonly in workplaces among all managers of the five investigated countries, while others were specifically important for HCN managers working in certain countries. Table 7 illustrates which competencies were common and specific to the Asian managers analyzed in this study.

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In Table 7, the 12 competencies in bold were listed commonly and are regarded as universal, while 21 other competencies were cited as specifically needed for a particular country or countries (but not all five countries represented by Asian managers).

#### **Universal Competencies and Competency Models**

The 12 common competencies included Leadership, Building Relationships, Team Management, Goal Management, Communications, Developing People, Understanding

People, Perceiving Situations, Action Directivity, Integrity, Positive Mindset, and Analysis. The present study explored generating competency models that could be used commonly by Asian managers; subsequently, the hierarchical model and the contextual human function model were developed.

**Hierarchical model.** According to the traits associated with each common competency shown in Table 7, three competency dimensions can be seen: intrapersonal competencies, interpersonal competencies, and task-focused competencies. Intrapersonal competencies are characterized as values, beliefs, or fundamental traits of human attributions. They are the most difficult to change and develop of the three dimensions. The intrapersonal competencies consist of six competencies of Integrity, Positive Mindset, Analysis, Perceiving Situations, Understanding People, and Action Directivity. Furthermore, the competencies have been sub-grouped into three categories: Integrity/Positive Mindset (value mode); Perceiving Situations, Understanding People, and Analysis (cognition mode); and Action Directivity (behavior mode). Of the three modes, the value mode seems to be the most stable due to self-identity or self-image, while the other two modes of cognition and behavior are fundamental human functions linked to adaptive learning competencies (Kolb, 1984).

The second dimension represents interpersonal competencies that are required to interact effectively with people for distinctive contextual circumstances. It is composed of the five competencies of Leadership, Building Relationships, Developing People, Team Management, and Communications. All are contingent upon direct interaction with other people.

The third dimension describes the connection with a task to be managed. In this study, only one competency (i.e., Goal Management) was identified; the competency requires establishing a clear goal, making a plan to achieve the goal, and monitoring progress toward



it. It focuses on tasks or jobs to be accomplished. Additionally, the hierarchical model shows professional and technical areas that are associated with functional specialization, knowledge, and skills (technical requirements of organizations). Figure 1 depicts the hierarchical model discussed above.

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 Insert Figure 1 about here  
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As shown in Figure 1, the hierarchical model is structured according to the three dimensions, along with functional and technical components. The top area in this model is occupied by values or intrapersonal competencies that are the most stable yet most difficult to develop. The next area from the top is occupied by three other intrapersonal competencies: cognition, analysis, and behavior. The third area from the top identifies five interpersonal competencies that seem to be acquired and developed more easily than intrapersonal competencies; this areas is followed by task-focused competencies related to Goal Management. The final area is occupied by professional and technical knowledge and skills, such as marketing, customer services, and procedures; such competencies are learned and developed systematically.

**Contextual human function model.** The author of this study has proposed another competency model that uses a different scheme of typology. The six intrapersonal competencies are composed of three modes of values, cognition, and behavior as basic human adaptive functions. In these human functions, the cognitive mode is opposite from the behavioral mode. Integrity (value mode) may cause a person to remain internally consistent and balanced when faced with polar extremes of cognition and behavior. Therefore, in the realm of human adaptive function, the value mode is centered between the two modes of cognition and behavior.

In the model, the five interpersonal competencies of Leadership, Developing People, Building Relationships, Team Management, and Communications have been contrasted to the task-focused competency of Goal Management. This contrast can be reflected as people versus task, thus representing two contextual objects with which persons interact. Therefore, in this contextual realm, the five competencies are placed toward people orientation, while Goal Management remains in the realm of task orientation. A different competency model can be created by combining the human functional realm of cognition-values-behavior and the contextual realm of people versus task. The 12 common competencies have been classified in this contextual human function model (Fig. 2).

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 Insert Figure 2 about here  
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Central to this model are the values of Integrity and Positive Mindset. The competency of Perceiving Situations is included in cognition orientation. Understanding People is also included in cognition orientation (dealing with people as objects); thus, it is inclined toward people orientation rather than task orientation. In contrast, Analysis is a cognitive function for examining problems related to tasks or jobs, suggesting that it is more task-oriented. Action Directivity is associated with behavior orientation. The competency of Goal Management remains in the realm of task orientation, while Building Relationships is inclined toward people orientation. Leadership and Team Management are associated with activity rather than cognition (as in Developing People and Communications); therefore, the former two competencies are linked to behavior orientation and the latter ones are directed to cognition orientation.

### **Specific Competencies**

Except for the common 12 key competencies, the other 20 competencies were specifically important to the Asian countries researched in this study. Table 7 summarizes the

common and contextually specific competencies for managers of the five countries represented. With regard to Japanese managers, four competencies are contextually specific—Viewing Holistically, Tenacity, Organizational Savvy, and Designing Systems. In China, 10 competencies were identified as being specifically important in its working context: Viewing Holistically, Organizational Savvy, Designing Systems, Responsibility, Facilitating Discussion, Organizing Information, Collecting Information, Curiosity, Prioritizing Activities, and Risk Management. Ten specific competencies were identified for Hong Kong managers: Tenacity, Organizational Savvy, Facilitating Discussion, Organizing Information, Collecting Information, Curiosity, Initiative, Learning Capabilities, Making Decisions, and Creativity. Thus, Chinese managers and Hong Kong managers identified several different competencies required for organizational effectiveness. Like Chinese and Hong Kong managers, Malaysian managers cited 10 additional competencies that were specific to their business needs; they included Facilitating Discussion, Organizing Information, Curiosity, Initiative, Learning Capabilities, Making Decisions, and Creativity, as well as such characteristics as Open-Mindedness, Hardworking, and Sensitive to People. Finally, the nine contextually specific competencies of Thai managers included Responsibility, Facilitating Discussion, Initiative, Learning Capabilities, Creativity, Sensitivity to People, Modesty, and Loyalty, as well as Open Mindedness.

### **Research Implications**

The qualitative approach employed in this study through interviews resulted in identification of 32 important competencies: 12 in common and 20 that were contextually specific for Asian managers. To confirm those competencies, quantitative research is needed to measure them. The initial step would be development of a scale for the 12 common competencies followed by an examination regarding their importance in various countries.

Next, the 20 contextually specific needs must be investigated quantitatively; therefore, a suitable measurement system must be designed.

Additionally, the two types of competency models proposed in this study need to be examined theoretically and empirically (in-depth study). For the hierarchical model, a theoretical examination may include a comparison with other hierarchical models like the one proposed by Viitala (2005), which identified six categories. An empirical analysis focused on structure of the organized hierarchy of this model according to its three layers (intrapersonal, interpersonal, and task-focused levels, shown in Fig. 1) is recommended. Furthermore, the contextual human function model may need support that is more theoretical. In this case, theories in social, psychological, and management disciplines should be applied.

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Table 1  
*Demographic Characteristics of Japanese, Chinese, Hong Kong, Malaysian, and Thai Managers*

	ALL managers		Japanese		Chinese		Hong Kong		Malaysian		Thai	
	(N = 267)		(N = 47)		(N = 50)		(N = 56)		(N = 62)		(N = 52)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Age												
mean	37.8		42.5		31.8		40.9		32.8		41.9	
s.d.	8.3		9.3		6.1		7.4		4.9		6.5	
Gender												
Male	120	44.9%	34	72.3%	21	42.0%	27	48.2%	24	38.7%	14	26.9%
Female	147	55.1%	13	27.7%	29	58.0%	29	51.8%	38	62.3%	38	73.1%
Work experience at this MNC (tenure)												
mean (year)	11.8		14.9		7.0		13.1		8.6		15.4	
s.d.	6.8		8.4		4.2		5.3		5.2		6.9	
Management positions												
Senior/Middle manager	128	47.9%	19	40.0%	20	40.0%	39	69.6%	27	43.5%	23	44.2%
Junior manager	139	52.1%	28	60.0%	30	60.0%	17	30.4%	35	56.5%	29	55.8%

Table 2  
*Japanese Managers' Skills and Competencies in Codes and Clusters*

Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge	Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge
Leadership	Becoming a role model Showing a presence in front of people Motivating people to make them act Empowering employees Working together to solve issues Showing a clear direction Persuading people to understand job priority Creating a positive place to work	Goal Management	Setting a measurable goal Planning action steps towards goals Establishing a clear goal Establishing sub-goals to accomplish overall goal
Building Relationships	Creating trust in relationships Giving and receiving honest views Having informal occasions and meetings Taking care of concerns of people Conducting consultations regarding private matters Eating out together with people informally Respecting others' views Sympathizing with people when they face difficulties Creating mutually supporting conditions Dealing with people in an equal position Keeping equality within relationships in mind	Communications	Explaining clearly Making sure of what people understood Listening actively Communicating consciously with people Conducting face-to-face communication Using proper words and languages in a situation Keeping two-way communications in mind Asking rather than telling
Team Management	Creating cooperative atmospheres for teams Building a consensus in team Solving a conflict occurring in team Handling sub-groups fairly Sharing an issue thoroughly with team Sharing team goals thoroughly Enhancing consciousness of team goals Supporting team members when busy	Developing People	Giving an opportunity to think about a problem Developing people's capabilities Making an interesting educational context Letting people describe learning points Inquiring rather than instructing Making a learning plan Adopting people's pace to learn Giving adequate feedback Praising people when they succeed Showing people how to perform Thinking together when a job cannot be finished Learning together when a new thing occurs Asking people what they learned

Table 2 (continued)

Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge	Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge
Understanding People	Understanding people's characteristics Understanding people's skills and knowledge Understanding people's stress and pressure	Organizational Savvy	Building cooperation between departments Utilizing assets derived from different departments Understanding available organizational resources Creating synergy between departments
Perceiving Situations	Being aware of contextual changes Noticing similarities and differences in a situation Making sense of what is happening Finding a pattern of events Seeing a commonality from various events	Designing Systems	Creating a system that works well Building an efficient workplace Ensuring effective job flow
Viewing Holistically	Perceiving a whole picture of organization Viewing an issue in relation to entire organization Seeing how one section is related to others	Professional/Technical Areas <i>Products</i> <i>Procedures</i> <i>Marketing</i> <i>Customer Services</i> <i>Functional Specialty</i>	Understanding product knowledge, etc. Understanding procedures, rules, policies, etc. Understanding markets, etc. Satisfying customers, etc. Accounting, HR, logistics, etc.
Tenacity	Never giving up Acting tenaciously Having a gut feeling to achieve a task Committing the self to a job Having vitality, energy and stamina		
Action Directivity	Executing a plan actively Taking action Moving to action to achieve goals		
Integrity	Treating people in a fair manner Keeping fairness in workplaces		
Positive Mind-Set	Holding a positive attitude and thinking		
Analysis	Analyzing problems in workplaces Finding out solutions to problems		

Table 3  
*Chinese Managers' Skills and Competencies in Codes and Clusters*

Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge	Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge
Leadership	Becoming a role model Motivating people to perform highly Delegating responsibilities Persuading people to work effectively Showing a presence in front of people by walking	Goal Management	Making a feasible plan Making a clear goal Checking progress toward a goal Closely monitoring progress and performance Ensuring that goal is clear for people involved in its achievement
Building Relationships	Building a good relationship based on trust Making a friendly relation Having an informal activity to make relationships Solving a problem regarding people		Allocating jobs to people to achieve a goal Sharing information regarding progress toward a goal
Team Management	Emphasizing teamwork Explaining team goals Sharing information and communicating frequently Helping people in team Discussing an issue with team members Praising a team when they performed well Solving a conflict occurring in team Building a united team Making a bridge among team members Supporting team members when busy Create a friendly atmosphere in team Facilitating cooperative activities in team	Communications	Conducting face-to-face communication Using easier and understandable language Explaining clearly, properly, and politely Stating ideas and opinions effectively Listening to people Making a presentation effectively
		Developing People	Developing people's capabilities Giving adequate feedback Educating people according to their backgrounds Providing training in knowledge and skills for job responsibilities Educating people about a corporate culture Training people regarding their specific job duties Training people what they should do in a job Conducting workplace consultations Showing a successful story for learning Asking people how to execute a plan Training with role play Giving an opportunity to think about a problem



Table 3 (continued)

Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge	Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge	
Understanding People	Understanding people's personalities	Organizational Savvy	Coordinating people across departments	
	Understanding people's skills and knowledge	Designing Systems	Make a smooth flow to complete a job over groups	
	Understanding people's strengths and weaknesses			
Perceiving Situations	Observing people carefully	Responsibility	Having a strong sense of responsibility	
	Finding out what is going on		Committing self to own job	
	Seeing an event from various views		Completing a job with a strong sense of responsibility	
	Observing carefully people	Facilitating Discussion	Discussing issues with people together	
	Noticing similarities and differences in a situation			
Viewing Holistically	Seeing overall picture	Organizing Information	Translating messages for better organization	
	Viewing a whole picture of events or situations		Translating complex information to simpler wording	
Action Directivity	Executing a plan actively	Collecting Information	Collecting information from people informally	
	Taking immediate action in emergency		Creating an information channel	
	Producing an expected result as a plan		Curiosity	Having an interest
	Completing an assigned job by action	Prioritizing Activities		Prioritizing issues according to importance
	Dealing with emergent issues soon			
	Changing a course of action if necessary	Risk Management	Controlling potential damage and risks	
Integrity	Demonstrating fairness, honesty, and equality	Professional/Technical Areas	Understanding product knowledge, etc.	
Being fair to everyone				
Positive Mindset	Demonstrating a positive attitude and way of thinking	<i>Products</i>	Understanding procedures, rules, policies, etc.	
Analysis	Analyzing a problem	<i>Procedures</i>	Understanding markets, etc.	
	Defining a problem	<i>Marketing</i>	Satisfying customers, etc.	
	Using logical thinking	<i>Customer Services</i>	Accounting, HR, logistics, etc.	
	Having analytical ability to solve a problem	<i>Functional Specialty</i>		
	Finding an optimal solution			

Table 4  
*Hong Kong Managers' Skills and Competencies in Codes and Clusters*

Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge	Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Becoming a role model</li> <li>Motivating people to achieve a target</li> <li>Delegating responsibilities</li> <li>Persuading people to perform at their best</li> <li>Showing appreciation and recognition to people</li> <li>Empowering employees</li> <li>Working together to get things done</li> <li>Encouraging people to reach a target</li> <li>Stimulating people by acting</li> <li>Influencing people by working together</li> <li>Promoting a great spirit among people</li> <li>Leading people to learn about a target</li> </ul>	Goal Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making a plan</li> <li>Checking progress toward a goal</li> <li>Closely monitoring progress and performance</li> <li>Revising a course of action towards goals</li> <li>Giving necessary feedback to achieve goals</li> <li>Allocating people to a task to achieve a goal</li> </ul>
Building Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating trust in relationships</li> <li>Giving and receiving honest views</li> <li>Eating out together with people informally</li> <li>Taking care of people</li> <li>Respecting people</li> <li>Taking care of concerns of people</li> <li>Talking to people formally and informally</li> <li>Minimizing gap between boss and others</li> <li>Avoiding use of position power</li> <li>Showing friendly attitudes to people</li> <li>Helping people when busy</li> <li>Creating a work atmosphere where people can talk easily</li> <li>Creating comfortable places to talk at work</li> </ul>	Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducting face-to-face communication</li> <li>Listening to people</li> <li>Listening to people without bias</li> <li>Explaining clearly</li> <li>Conducting two-way communication</li> <li>Making sure of what people understood</li> <li>Focusing on issues separately from people</li> </ul>
Team Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasizing teamwork</li> <li>Supporting team members when busy</li> <li>Working together on a team</li> <li>Cooperating with team members</li> </ul>	Developing People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing people's capabilities</li> <li>Giving adequate feedback</li> <li>Conducting consultations at the workplace</li> <li>Teaching by using a case study</li> <li>Allowing people to try their ideas</li> <li>Making step by step teaching methods</li> <li>Showing people how to find solutions</li> <li>Making people do what they learned actually</li> <li>Helping people to deal with difficult issues</li> </ul>
		Understanding People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding people's characteristics</li> <li>Understanding people's skills and knowledge</li> <li>Understanding people's stress and pressure</li> <li>Understanding people's ambitions</li> <li>Understanding similarities and differences of people</li> <li>Understanding people's feelings</li> </ul>

Table 4 (continued)

Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge	Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge
Perceiving Situations	Observing workplace situations carefully Observing people carefully	Organizing Information	Organizing different messages Assimilating many messages Organizing a lot of information Translating complex information into simpler terms
Tenacity	Overcoming problems by continuing actions	Collecting Information	Walking around in workplaces
Action Directivity	Implementing a plan established Acting quickly under limited information Implementing a proposal as soon as possible Actualizing the idea to solve a problem	Curiosity	Exploring how things are evolving
Integrity	Being fair to everyone Treating people fairly Maintaining transparency	Initiative	Being proactive before order comes Taking initiative Being willing to try new things Having a challenging spirit
Positive Mindset	Demonstrating a positive attitude and way of thinking Using a positive thinking when communicating Managing one's negative emotion	Learning Capabilities	Learning from new experiences
Analysis	Analyzing the root of a problem Analyzing the data described in a paper Finding solutions to problems	Making Decisions	Making decisions under pressure Making decisions without adequate information Making decisions alone
Organizational Savvy	Obtaining support from other departments Coordinating resources among several departments	Creativity	Generating new ideas and proposals Scheduling brainstorming sessions Imagining several potentialities of usage
Facilitating Discussion	Stimulating each other to create new ideas Getting suggestions from people Asking for ideas or suggestions Promoting open discussions Discussing with people	Open Mindedness	Opening mind to people
		Professional/Technical Areas	
		<i>Products</i>	Understanding product knowledge, etc.
		<i>Procedures</i>	Understanding procedures, rules, policies, etc.
		<i>Marketing</i>	Understanding markets, etc.
		<i>Customer Services</i>	Satisfying customers, etc.
		<i>Functional Specialty</i>	Accounting, HR, logistics, etc.

Table 5  
*Malaysian Managers' Skills and Competencies in Codes and Clusters*

Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge	Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge
Leadership	Becoming a role model Motivating people to make an effort Encouraging people when busy Showing appreciation and recognition to people Showing appreciation by shaking hands Working together when busy Leading people to achieve a target Inspiring and energizing people Creating a positive environment Showing good results to staff	Goal Management	Making a plan with clear goals Planning to achieve a strategic goal Making a clear goal Closely monitoring progress and performance Checking progress toward a goal Checking progress with numerical scales
Building Relationships	Creating trust in relationships Respecting people Respecting peoples' opinions formally and informally Eating out together with people informally Helping people if necessary Cooperating with people when busy Showing cooperative attitudes to people Talking to people formally and informally Taking care of people Developing good relationships with people Developing reliable relationships Creating a friendly atmosphere	Communications	Conducting face-to-face communication Listening to people with patience Explaining clearly Listening carefully Using polite words Communicating a message in detail
Team Management	Building team spirit Making a friendly workplace Emphasizing good teamwork Helping team members	Developing People	Teaching people for knowledge and skills Giving adequate feedback Conducting workplace consultations Educating people by role play Teaching people by OJT Asking staffs rather than instructing Showing a concrete success story for learning Giving a developmental assignment Conducting a seminar for training purposes Training staffs about corporate cultures
		Understanding People	Understanding people's characteristics Understanding people's skills and knowledge Understanding similarities and differences of people Understanding people's feelings

Table 5 (continued)

Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge	Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge
Perceiving Situations	Scanning environment for needs and changes Seeing everything in details	Learning Capabilities	Learning by mistakes Learn fast to adapt Learning by experiences Learning by doing Learning from people
Action Directivity	Having a strong achievement orientation Acting quickly in emergencies Taking action in workplaces Implementing an established plan Implementing a solution to problem	Making Decisions	Making decision under pressure Making decisions alone
Integrity	Being honest	Creativity	Creating something new in workplaces
Positive Mindset	Demonstrating a positive attitude and way of thinking Thinking positively in difficult situations	Open Mindedness	Having an open mind regarding people Being flexible to change
Analysis	Analyzing a current situation Determining cause of a problem in the workplace	Hardworking	Working hard Making the best effort to accomplish a task Having a commitment to a task
Facilitating Discussion	Asking for ideas and suggestions from team members Get idea and suggestion from team members Creating environment in which people talk openly Making people feel at ease when talking Including people in discussions Promoting open discussion	Sensitivity to People	Being sensitive to peoples' feelings Having sensitivity to people's behavior
Organizing Information	Translating complex information into simpler terms	Professional/Technical Areas <i>Products</i> <i>Procedures</i> <i>Marketing</i> <i>Customer Services</i> <i>Functional Specialty</i>	Understanding product knowledge, etc. Understanding procedures, rules, policies, etc. Understanding markets, etc. Satisfying customers, etc. Accounting, HR, logistics, etc.
Curiosity	Having an interest in new things		
Prioritizing Activities	Prioritizing various jobs		
Initiative	Initiating a proposal		

Table 6  
*Thai Managers' Skills and Competencies in Codes and Clusters*

Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge	Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge	
Leadership	Becoming a role model	Goal Management	Making a feasible plan	
	Motivating people to make an effort		Checking progress toward a goal	
	Leading people to achieve a target		Establishing a clear goal	
	Showing a good attitude to people		Assigning a job to people as a goal	
	Making a course of action for people		Allocating people to a task to achieve a goal	
	Stimulating people			
	Convincing people one by one		Communications	Explaining about a target clearly
	Increasing the commitment of people			Making sure of what people understood
	Showing success story to people			Listening actively
Building Relationships	Developing good relationships with people	Developing People	Communicating formally and informally	
	Taking care of people		Listening to people carefully	
	Taking care of families		Conducting a 2-way communication	
	Helping people		Making an effective communication	
	Talking to people formally and informally		Teaching people for knowledge and skills	
	Listening to people's concerns privately		Giving adequate feedback	
	Giving people suggestions and advice privately		Teaching people by OJT	
	Creating a family atmosphere		Educating people by hands-on	
	Making a nice environment like a family		Making people think about how to see a problem	
Answering questions in a friendly way	Teaching people by showing a correct way			
Team Management	Building team spirit	Understanding People	Making people feel confidence when they learn	
	Emphasizing good teamwork		Guiding people clearly	
	Making people feel united		Showing people in a correct way	
	Explaining team goals clearly		Stimulating people to be creative	
	Setting up a team goal		Praising people who work well	
	Making a good and harmonious team		Understanding people's characteristics	
	Creating synergy among team members		Understanding people's skills and knowledge	
			Understanding similarities and differences of people	
	Knowing people's productivity			

Table 6 (continued)

Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge	Name of skill/competency	Coded activities/behaviors/knowledge
Perceiving Situations	Observing carefully what is happening Paying attention to work carefully Being careful to see situations	Learning Capabilities	Learning abilities Learning from people Learning from OJT
Action Directivity	Implementing established plans Implementing solutions to problems Carrying out the plan by taking an action	Creativity	Creating a new idea Showing a unique perspective Developing creative ideas Using imagination to generate idea
Integrity	Being honest	Open Mindedness	Opening one's mind to people
Positive Mindset	Becoming positive Demonstrating a positive attitude and way of thinking	Sensitivity to People	Being sensitive to people
Analysis	Identifying a problem Analyzing an issue Understanding an issue that people face Finding out a way to solve a problem Forecasting the needs of goods by analysis	Modesty	Not becoming a self-centered person Not imposing own idea or views on people
Responsibility	Having a sense of responsibility toward job	Loyalty	Having loyalty to the organization Maintaining loyalty regarding one's job
Facilitating Discussion	Asking people about what they think in meetings Asking people to identify issues Discussing solutions to issues together Discussing issues together Promoting open discussions Asking people to participate in discussions Encouraging people to show their views	Professional/Technical Areas <i>Products</i> <i>Procedures</i> <i>Marketing</i> <i>Customer Services</i> <i>Functional Specialty</i>	Understanding product knowledge, etc. Understanding procedures, rules, policies, etc. Understanding markets, etc. Satisfying customers, etc. Accounting, HR, logistics, etc.
Initiative	Applying a new idea Proposing unique solutions to issues		

Table 7  
A Summary of Skills and Competencies among Five Asian Countries

	Japan	China	HK	Malaysia	Thailand
<b>Leadership</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Building Relationships</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Team Management</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Goal Management</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Communications</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Developing People</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Understanding People</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Perceiving Situations</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Viewing Holistically	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Tenacity	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>		
<b>Action Directivity</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Integrity</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Positive Mindset</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Analysis</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organizational Savvy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
Designing Systems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
Responsibility		<input type="radio"/>			<input type="radio"/>
Facilitating Discussion		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organizing Information		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Collecting Information		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
Curiosity		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Prioritizing Activities		<input type="radio"/>			
Risk Management		<input type="radio"/>			
Initiative			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning Capabilities			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making Decisions			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Creativity			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Open Mindedness				<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hardworking				<input type="radio"/>	
Sensitivity to People				<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Modesty					<input type="radio"/>
Loyalty					<input type="radio"/>
<b>Professional/Technical Areas</b>					
<i>Products</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Procedure</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Marketing</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Customer Services</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Functional Specialty</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Figure 1. Competency model of Asian managers in common: Hierarchical model

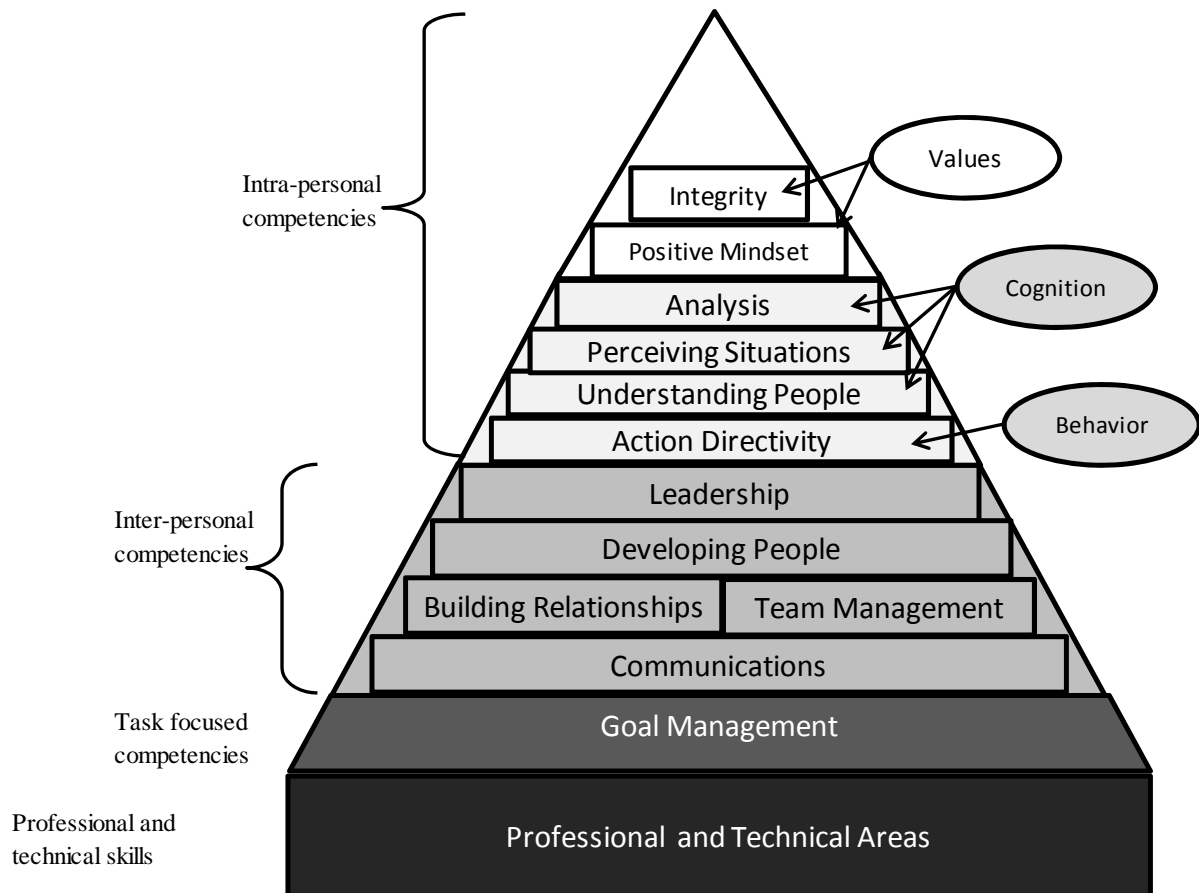


Figure 2. Competency model of Asian managers in common: Contextual human function model

