

Research Article	A New Perspective on Competency Management: Pioneering Global Experiences from Leading Companies
	Doctor
Khelaifa Lalmi	University of Echahid Hamma Lakhdar, El Oued
\{	Algeria
}	Email: khelaifa81@gmail.com
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Abstract

This research paper aims to shed light on the global experiences of several companies in the fields of talent identification and competency management. Unlike conventional approaches, it explores the adoption of nontraditional methods to adapt to new realities. The study begins by examining the concept of competency, followed by an overview of the fundamentals of competency management, including prevailing approaches. It then addresses the reliance of organisations on robotics in the processes of identifying and recruiting competencies, alongside a presentation of the experiences adopted by leading international organisations in managing their competencies. Finally, several recommendations are provided to ensure organisations' adaptation in an ever-changing world, to discover new competencies and retain existing ones.

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Introduction:

The transition to the information age has brought about several significant changes across various levels, particularly in terms of human resources, whose importance has grown considerably to become a vital asset for organisations. Numerous experiences have emerged in which individuals have utilised diverse tools and technologies, playing a substantial role in the development of competencies as valuable human capital for any organisation seeking to create a suitable working environment for its employees, achieve its established objectives, and ensure continuity and sustainability. Accordingly, organisations must strive for the optimal utilisation and care of their human competencies, recognising them as their most valuable resource and the most significant influence on task performance. Organisations have employed various assessments to identify the most suitable candidates for positions, such as the psychological evaluations previously relied upon. Today, however, assessments have advanced far beyond these traditional methods, distinguishing organisations from one another, revealing competencies, and highlighting the most effective management approaches.

Research Problem:

With the application of traditional methods for identifying and managing competencies proving ineffective in the current era, organisations have been compelled to adopt innovative approaches employed by some organisations



to evaluate competencies and address challenges in recruitment and competency management. Accordingly, the research problem is framed by the following central question:

What is the new vision adopted by leading international organisations in competency management?

To address this problem comprehensively, the following subquestions have been formulated:

- ➤ What is meant by competency, and what are the contributions of management thought to the enrichment of this concept?
- ➤ What are the characteristics, dimensions, and types of competency?
- What is meant by competency management, and what are its stages, approaches, and dimensions?
- ➤ What are the recent experiences in competency management implemented by leading international organisations?

Significance of the Study:

The significance of this study lies in the following points:

- ➤ Identifying the concept of competency, its types, characteristics, and dimensions.
- Reviewing the concept of competency management.
- > Exploring various experiences presented by international companies in competency management.

To encompass all aspects of this work and to address the stated research problem, the paper is structured as follows:

- **Section One:** Concepts relating to competency.
- **Section Two:** Fundamentals of competency management.
- > Section Three: Leading international experiences in competency identification and management.

First: Concepts Relating to Competencies

Before addressing the concept of competency, the discussion begins with the reasons that led to the emergence of this concept, followed by the contributions of management thought to its enrichment, in addition to clarifying the concept itself, its characteristics, and its dimensions.

1. Reasons for the Emergence of the Competency Concept

The current changes and remarkable acceleration experienced globally have contributed significantly to the emergence of this term. Among the most important reasons, several factors have shaped this concept:

Challenges of the Era of Globalisation:

➤ Globalisation has imposed a transparent environment on organisations, making human resources the distinguishing factor that enables organisations to achieve prominence and superiority.¹



> Technological development:

> The rapid pace of technological advancement has compelled organisations to harness technology for the development of innovation, relying on the creativity of their members and fostering a conducive environment for innovation and creativity.²

Organisational Changes and Transformations in Work Systems

The increasing complexity of operations and automated systems in the workplace, alongside technological progress, has required flexibility from employees and the competencies present within the organisation.³

According to Sainsau Lieu (1991), several factors have contributed to the emergence of this concept, summarised as follows:⁴

The presence of the organisation in a market characterised by development and increasing customer demands, the evolution of organisational methods and techniques, and the transformation of ideas and theories has necessitated internal dynamism within the organisation to ensure that human resources adapt to changes in work and organisational structures. Furthermore, the emergence of the concept of predictive management of positions and competencies has drawn attention to forecasting and planning for competencies.

2. Contributions of Management to the Enrichment of the Competency Concept:

Classical Theories:

Classical theories link the human element in the workplace as a complement to the machine, with the moral aspect absent from the analyses of their leading proponents. For them, the productive field was not a space for acquiring experience and knowledge but rather a domain for selling labour power, where it was necessary to observe regulations and implement direct supervision to ascertain the extent of the worker's commitment to their productive role.⁵ According to this school, worker competency is achieved when adherence to prescribed methods is ensured.

Behavioural Theories (Human Relations School):

The Human Relations School emerged as a reaction to the shortcomings of the classical school, with a focus on the behavioural aspects of individuals in organisations. It emphasises the study of the psychological and social factors affecting individuals, as well as what motivates and drives them to work. Behavioural theories thus prioritise employee satisfaction by focusing on the psychological and social dimensions within the organisation. To achieve this, they proposed the use of psychological and social methods, such as participation, job enrichment, and team building.⁶ In essence, this school considers human behaviour in the environment in which individuals operate and how this environment influences the manifestation of worker competency.

Modern Theories:

The perspective of the individual changed as organisations became more open to their external environment, with the individual now regarded as an intellectual asset whose potential could be leveraged through investment. Modern theories (systems, quality, and human capital) focused on this idea, encouraging organisations to benefit from individuals by recognising them as independent and active members within the organisation, who must be prepared to contribute to the achievement of overall organisational goals through the utilisation of their creativity and competencies, thereby becoming effective contributors owing to their skills.

3. Concept of Competency:



Defining the concept of competency, as a modern concept, presents the challenge of distinguishing it from several related notions.

3.1. Concepts Related to Competency:

- Abilities: Abilities are classified as either physical, referring to the capacity to perform tasks requiring physical effort, or mental, which is the capacity to perform intellectual work.⁷
- > **Skills:** Skills are either acquired or innate mental or intellectual abilities within an individual. They represent a person's ability to perform a required task in a specific manner.⁸
- **Knowledge:** Knowledge comprises the information that an individual possesses in a given field. It relies more on the person receiving the information than on its source.⁹
- Aptitude: Aptitude refers to an individual's capacity to perform a specific intellectual activity, based on their innate natural endowment, and may persist unless favourable circumstances are lacking.¹⁰
- ➤ **Behaviours:** Behaviours consist of the set of attitudes and personal attributes required of an individual when performing a particular activity. They encompass personal qualities such as organisation, accuracy, initiative, and so on.¹¹

3.2. Competency

There is no universal agreement on the definition of competency, despite numerous attempts, mainly due to several key challenges:¹²

- Competency is a multifaceted concept with various meanings.
- > The concept of competency is applied in multiple fields (management, production, marketing, etc.), resulting in different interpretations.
- > There is a diversity of intellectual trends and theoretical approaches among authors concerned with issues of competency management and development.

The French Association for Standardisation (AFNOR) defines competencies as the use of abilities in a professional context to achieve optimal performance in a job or activity.¹³ This definition emphasises effective performance as evidence of competency.

Cary Hamel and C.K. Prahalad¹⁴ Define competency as a set of knowledge and abilities that enable mastery of technology, asserting that, for an employee to be competent, they must possess several distinct attributes.

According to G. Leborterf, a consultant in human resources management, competency is considered the result of the integration between knowing how to act and the willingness to act.¹⁵ In other words, the individual coordinates the situations they encounter and, in turn, recognises the extent to which their abilities and attitudes are acknowledged.

Louis Dinoy defines competency as social and emotional behaviours, as well as psycho-sensory-motor skills, that enable an individual to perform a role, job, or activity effectively.¹⁶

The definition emphasises effectiveness in job performance when expressing competency, linking the two through the individual's social or emotional behaviours.



Luc Boyer also defines competency as the ability to carry out specific tasks, an ability that is measurable and observable in activity and that consists of a readiness to mobilise, combine, and deploy resources in the workplace. ¹⁷According to this view, competence becomes evident only in the course of performing work. This definition links competency to the ability to perform assigned tasks by knowing how to combine the relevant capacities.

Moreover, McClelland argued that academic abilities and qualifications alone are insufficient for accurately assessing job performance. He identified several types of competencies that enable a better evaluation of performance at work: 18knowledge, qualifications, experience, traits of genius, and motivation.

Thus, competency is a combination of knowledge, abilities, and skills employed by the individual according to the organisation's needs, as individuals attempt to reconcile their resources with those of the environment.

4. Characteristics of Competency:

Several characteristics and qualities distinguish specific individuals within an organisation as being more skilled and competent than others, including the following:

- Analytical and conceptual ability: Technical roles, such as engineering and design, require such abilities. 19
- **Possession of Resources:** Competent individuals can adapt to continually changing circumstances. ²⁰
- > Scientific evaluation ability: This refers to the capacity to apply certain principles to arrive at unique solutions.
- > Inimitability: The most valuable resource, and the most difficult to replicate, is competency itself.
- ➤ High Propensity for Initiative and Risk: Competent individuals are more willing to take risks in research, development, inventions, and innovation.²¹
- ➤ Building Effective Relationships: They employ their capacity to establish positive working relationships with both supervisors and colleagues.²²

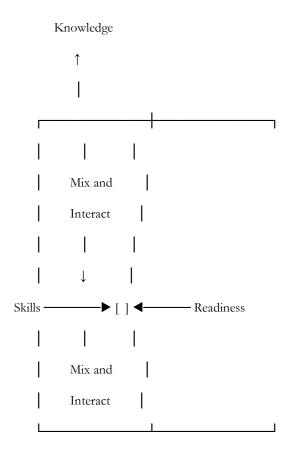
5. Dimensions of Competency:

Despite the differences among various studies in defining the dimensions of competency, Durant T. was able to synthesise several works and concluded that there are three fundamental dimensions of competencies, which are expressed as follows:

Figure 1.

Schematic representation of the three fundamental dimensions of competency, i.e., knowledge, skills, and readiness, illustrating their combination and interaction.





Source: Adapted from Mounoud, Elenore. La mise en discours des représentations stratégiques: représentations, ellipses, stratégie, indices, le management en édition. Paris, 2001, p. 21.

As illustrated in Figure 1, competency is composed of three fundamental dimensions—knowledge, skills, and readiness—which interact and combine to create overall competency (adapted from Durant T.). That is, he combined the three dimensions of competency, which consisted of a blend of knowledge, skills, and readiness. The competency of any individual can thus be expressed through the presence of these dimensions, as well as the degree of their integration and the individual's mastery of them. An individual is therefore considered competent when these dimensions are both present and harmonised, allowing the organisation to benefit from such competencies by providing an environment conducive to their expression and utilisation.

6. Types of Competencies:

According to CelileDejoux, competencies are classified into three types:

➤ Individual Competencies:

These are a specific, stable, and structured set of mastered practices, professional expertise, and knowledge acquired by individuals through training and experience.²³

Collective Competencies:



- These emerge from cooperation and the synergistic combination of individual competencies. They include a set of knowledge, such as the ability to prepare a joint proposal or presentation, knowledge of communication, cooperation, and the ability to acquire or share expertise collectively.²⁴
- Collective competencies are also the result of the collaboration and synergy among individual competencies and the organisation of the professional team. They facilitate or enable the achievement of results and are identified by effective indicators that provide a common language and relevant information among the work group, which is essential for accomplishing organisational objectives.²⁵

Strategic Competencies:

According to Hamel and Prahalad (1994), core competency is a combination of skills and technologies that significantly contributes to the added value of the final product. The development of strategic competency refers to an organisation's capabilities multiplied by its resources, and it takes the form of collective learning within the organisation.²⁶

Second: Fundamentals of Competency Management:

Competency management is considered one of the activities of human resource management.

1) Concept of Competency Management:

Aubret, Gilbert, and Pigeyer (2002) defined competency management as "the set of activities and practices that utilise and evaluate competencies as a link between the various functions of human resources management; thus, it is a cornerstone for many other functions within the organisation."²⁷

It is also defined as "a system used to evaluate skills, knowledge, and performance within the organisation, identify gaps, and provide training, compensation, and recruitment programmes on the basis of the current and future needs of the organisation."²⁸

Additionally, competency management has been described as "a managerial technique or method set by the organisation's leadership, which considers the development of its competencies a factor in enhancing performance and creating organisational value. These competencies may be individual, collective, or organisational."²⁹

2) Stages of Competency Management:

The stages of competency management consist of several steps, outlined as follows:³⁰

- A thorough understanding of the structure of human resources, which is based on quantitative indicators.
- > Forecasting future activities: This allows the organisation to translate these orientations into its needs for strategic competencies.
- Development plans: On the basis of the above, it is possible to formulate recruitment, training, and mobility plans between positions. These three steps are considered the primary working methods for competency management.

3) Approaches to Competency Management

There are several common approaches to competency management, including the following:³¹

> Knowledge-based approaches: Competencies are determined primarily by knowledge, which is sourced from both theoretical and practical foundations.



- Skills-based approaches: These approaches are not limited to theoretical knowledge but also integrate skills, relying more on practical application through training, experience, and observation.
- **Behaviour-based approaches:** These focus on evaluating behaviours by establishing lists of key individual competencies, which are used for selection and orientation.
- Approaches integrating knowledge, skills, and behaviours: The aim here is to make developed tools and methods more comprehensive. Many organisations have devoted resources and capabilities to preparing precise competency descriptions in terms of their three components (knowledge, skills, and behaviours).
- > Cognitive competency-based approaches: Evaluation is considered relatively simple in these approaches, making them widely applicable, particularly in the management of functional mobility among human resources and sectors in the context of structural transformations.
- > Activity-based approaches: These aim to identify the activities through which human resources demonstrate the various necessary competencies, revealing the gap between required and actual competencies.

4) Dimensions of Competency Management:

The organisation seeks to manage and monitor its existing competencies by focusing on the method and manner of applying and implementing its knowledge and skills.

Diagnosis and Assessment of Competencies:

Organisations must first identify these competencies and subsequently develop a diagram or map that shows the locations of such competencies in terms of their activities, specialisations, and fields of work.³²

The activity of attracting competencies is one of the most influential activities affecting organisational performance. It is defined as "the task of attracting the required competencies according to the specifications and requirements of each position, whether currently available or anticipated in the future." Today, organisations increasingly require skilled and qualified human resources who are capable of effectively dealing with modern technologies, in light of ongoing developments and the prevailing belief among organisations that customer satisfaction is the only means to ensure survival. 4

Retention of Competencies:

For any organisation, retaining its competencies is crucial. Since human competencies cannot be managed in the same manner as other organisational resources, when individuals leave with their expertise, any investment made by the organisation in training, development, or other areas is lost.³⁵

Development of Competencies:

Competency development systems enable organisational learning through work and experience. Individual competency processes can be activated only when there is organisational involvement by providing effective management methods and supporting efforts to develop competencies and improve performance.³⁶

Third, leading international experiences in competence identification and management

Here, we present several experiences of global companies that have successfully employed modern methods, whether in identifying or managing competencies.

1. Robots as a means of Identifying Competencies:



Robots play a role in electronically evaluating candidates to save time and effort for human resources personnel, as some organisations receive an enormous number of job applications annually. Manually reviewing all these applications would undoubtedly be an extremely arduous task. However, by using assessments of behaviour and values to select suitable candidates, organisations can reduce recruitment and training costs and improve employee retention rates.³⁷

The founder of the software company "Silicon Valley" explained that robots will have a significant impact in the future, given their ability to perform numerous tasks, many of which will be managed by robots.³⁸

A robot can conduct automated assessments by linking various systems together, such as the applicant tracking system, candidate management system, and video interview platform, allowing for seamless transfer of candidate data. This can help collect, process, and organise all candidate information in one place, including qualifications, capabilities, personality assessment results, and performance in face—to-face video interviews. Instead of requiring employees to log into different systems to complete a series of assessments or video interviews, an electronic link enables easy access and registration, streamlining the application process and making decision-making and candidate selection much easier than before.³⁹ Thus, the use of robots helps identify talented and capable individuals, ensuring a recruitment process that aligns with job requirements and the organisation's orientation. Robots can even predict a candidate's competency before employment, in contrast to traditional methods that trial individuals and only then discover those who are most competent.

2. Some Nontraditional Practices in Competency Management:

This section highlights selected global experiences in competency management across several leading organisations, examining the methods they adopted to ensure the successful management of competencies.

2.1. The Experience of a Global Financial Services Company in Distinguishing between Big Data and Smart Data:

The electronic integration of systems has facilitated the search for, comparison, and utilisation of data in ways previously impossible, opening the door to a wealth of new analyses. For example, candidates' scores on competency assessments can now be compared with their success rates in final interviews, and the results of candidate evaluations can be shared with the learning and development team, enabling them to create individual learning plans for each new employee from the very first day. This approach takes into account both strengths and areas for the development of the competencies required for the position. It also allows for the integration of performance and development data before and after employment to gain new insights into an individual's competency and a better understanding of what drives success in their role. It thereby becomes easier to identify and enhance potential, create competency groups, and carry out succession planning.⁴⁰

Through this process, it is possible to distinguish between the volume of data and the outcomes to be extracted from it, highlighting the difference between the quality and distinctiveness of data, which enables greater understanding and leads the organisation to discover the desired competencies by distinguishing between big data and what is now termed "smart data."

The experience of a global financial services company is notable in this context.⁴¹ The company succeeded in implementing this approach by combining preemployment evaluation data of successful candidates with their postemployment performance data to generate valuable competency analytics. The results revealed traits and characteristics predictive of high performance, and the company was able to demonstrate that cognitive ability and personality assessments improve the quality of those hired.

2.2. The Experience of GalpEnergia in Fair and Objective Recruitment for Specific Job Profiles:

A multinational automotive company described its international graduate program, stating that it aims to recruit 250 graduates annually across 20 countries and evaluates 30,000 applicants each year against a particular "success



profile." This is accomplished via personality assessments and English language tests. Similarly, the Portuguese energy company GalpEnergiaemphasised the importance of hiring employees on the basis of the correct values, which is especially important in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world.⁴²

2.3. The Experience of Vodafone Spain in Using Games to Assess Capabilities:

Games, game-based assessments, and gamified evaluations, in addition to traditional psychometric tests, can be used to differentiate the organisation, engage and motivate applicants, raise brand awareness, and attract and recruit top talent. Games represent a practical option for attracting job applicants, as candidates can be evaluated viagamified assessments, a form of validated psychometric testing, such as logical reasoning tests adapted with game elements to make them more appealing. It is important to avoid generic games, as they do not differ in terms of organisation.⁴³ Vodafone Spain exemplified this approach by promoting its employer brand through the integration of a new game to attract young applicants, engage suitable talent, and use a talent analytics dashboard to manage its human resources. This experience achieved significant results in attracting and selecting the most competent candidates, thereby strengthening the company's pool of distinguished and skilled personnel.

2.4. The Experience of Securitas Direct in Placing Assessments in the Right Context:

Assessments should be contextually appropriate, as job applicants perform better on ability measures related to the positions they seek. Securitas Direct, a company specialising in home and business security services, uses a customised Situational Judgment Questionnaire (SJQ) to determine the potential of candidates for sales roles. The value of this assessment has been confirmed through validity studies, and the SJQ has proven to be more realistic and engaging for candidates to complete. Additionally, Cut-e (a specialist assessment group) has recently launched "ChatAssess," the world's first psychometric communications game, which can evaluate a candidate's strengths, personality, and cognitive abilities. This game allows instant judgment of candidates' capabilities and simulates instant messaging in the style of WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger.⁴⁴

2.5. The Experience of GrupoSacyr in Identifying Future Top Employees:

To meet its ambitious development plans, GrupoSacyr, a Spanish construction company operating in 28 countries, recognised the need to increase the number of managers within the company by 55%. The company established two fast-track programmes and Cut-e designed assessment centres to identify and evaluate office employees worldwide who have the potential to become future managers. The company's fast-track programme not only contributes to engaging and retaining the best future employees but also encourages these individuals to be more proactive in developing their professional careers.⁴⁵

2.6. Leadership Team Assessment:

Professor Henning Bang from the University of Oslo published the results of his research entitled "Characteristics of Effective Management Teams," in which he demonstrated that 24 factors influence and predict high employee performance. On the basis of these research findings, Cut-e launched a new online diagnostic survey called "Impact," which makes it easier for senior managers to conduct self-assessments of their team's collaboration and to gain added value for themselves and their organisation. The results can be benchmarked against international standards, and concrete recommendations for improvement can be provided.⁴⁶

2.7. The Experience of Facebook in Employing Disruptive Strategies:

The American thought leader Madan Nagaldinne outlined a series of disruptive human resource strategies used by technology companies such as Amazon and Facebook. These companies seek to continually raise the bar by always recruiting top talent, yet they recognise that growth can create chaos. A clear lesson is that introducing too many internal processes can stifle creativity. They also know that 80 percent of their value is generated by 20 percent of their employees and have learned that if they do not appropriately reward their top performers for their contributions, they will lose them. Of particular interest at Facebook is the belief in the crucial role of managers;



the company evaluates its managers every six months, and if a manager receives two consecutive poor ratings, they are dismissed from their managerial position.⁴⁷

Conclusion:

It is evident from the foregoing that modern organisations are now facing a new reality, one that compels them to look towards the future and consider its impact on their human resources, especially with respect to how competencies are managed, from attraction and assessment to identification and retention. Organisations must respond to market changes, adapt to professional life, and create an environment in which the most competent individuals are encouraged to work. They must also address the needs of individuals, engage them, and respond to those needs while proposing the best possible suggestions for work experience, thereby enabling the organisation to achieve its objectives and benefit from the experiences of others.

In conclusion, it is important to highlight the value of the practices implemented by some leading global organisations in various areas of competency management. All organisations continue to seek innovative and practical steps to address current challenges in recruitment, assessment, and competency management.

Study Results:

Through our study on a new perspective in competency management, including a review of international experiences, we have reached the following findings:

- > Globalisation has shifted competition among organisations to an intangible dimension that prioritises knowledge and human resources.
- New prospects have emerged in the use of robots for identifying competencies and the advantages they provide to organisations, including savings in time and cost.
- > The importance of practices trialled by leading global organisations in the management of their competencies and the need to move beyond traditional methods.
- The possibility of continuous improvement remains in all areas, including human resource management, which is the most challenging resource to manage within an organisation.
- > The adoption of nontraditional methods in the evaluation of human resources allows organisations to identify and predict suitable competencies before recruitment, in contrast to previous methods, which only allowed for the discovery of competencies after employment.

Suggestions and recommendations:

- Relying on human development as a central pillar for enhancing capabilities and potential, thereby enabling the acquisition of competencies.
- ➤ Knowledge management within organisations should be strengthened to keep pace with significant scientific advancements and ensure the smooth flow of knowledge and information. It is essential not only to address technical aspects but also to follow the latest developments in recruitment processes aimed at selecting the best competencies.
- A scientific approach for identifying and analysing job requirements, designing capacity development programmes, and setting objectives in collaboration with employers should be adopted.
- Work to ensure the stability of competencies, facilitate the transfer of expertise to other employees, and implement induction programs for new staff.



- The infrastructure for training in all fields can be enhanced by collaboration with specialised bodies, which, in turn, contributes to the development of individual abilities and skills.
- Human resources management can be enabled to undertake recruitment and talent acquisition via nontraditional methods deemed appropriate on the basis of a thorough understanding of the organisation's current realities, both in retaining existing competencies and identifying future talent.

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