THE IMPACT OF THE COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH ON THE QUALITY OF MANAGERIAL DECISIONS IN INTERNATIONAL PROTOCOL SERVICES

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ВЛИЯНИЕ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТНОГО ПОДХОДА НА КАЧЕСТВО УПРАВЛЕНЧЕСКИХ РЕШЕНИЙ В МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫХ ПРОТОКОЛЬНЫХ СЛУЖБАХ

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Abstract. The article explores the influence of the competency-based approach on the quality of managerial decisions in international protocol services. It examines the theoretical foundations of competency management, highlighting the critical skills required for effective decision-making in the context of intergovernmental meetings. The study identifies key competencies necessary for protocol professionals and analyzes their impact on the efficiency and accuracy of managerial decisions. The research results provide practical recommendations for enhancing the decision-making process through the development and application of competency-based frameworks in international protocol services.

Аннотация. Исследуется влияние подхода, основанного на компетенциях, на качество управленческих решений в международных протокольных службах. В нем рассматриваются теоретические основы управления компетенциями, подчеркивая критические навыки, необходимые для эффективного принятия решений в контексте межправительственных встреч. Исследование определяет ключевые компетенции, необходимые для специалистов по протоколу, и анализирует их влияние на эффективность и точность управленческих решений. Результаты исследования предоставляют практические рекомендации по улучшению процесса принятия решений посредством разработки и применения рамок, основанных на компетенциях, в международных протокольных службах.

Keywords: competency-based approach, managerial decisions, international protocol services, intergovernmental meetings, decision-making process, professional competencies.

Ключевые слова: компетентностный подход, управленческие решения, международные протокольные службы, межправительственные встречи, процесс принятия решений, профессиональные компетенции.

The development of international relations and the increasing number of intergovernmental meetings have significantly raised the importance of effective protocol services. International protocol services are responsible for ensuring the smooth organization of official meetings, conferences, and diplomatic events. The quality of these events largely depends on the competencies of the personnel involved, as well as on the quality of managerial decisions made during the planning and execution stages.

A competency-based approach focuses on the development and application of key skills necessary for effective performance in professional activities. In the context of international protocol services, such competencies include intercultural communication, organizational skills, critical thinking, and the ability to respond promptly to unforeseen situations. Effective managerial decisions require a systematic understanding of the event's goals, the ability to assess potential risks, and the capacity to coordinate various stakeholders efficiently.

This study aims to investigate the impact of the competency-based approach on the quality of managerial decisions in international protocol services. The research will analyze existing theories and models of competency-based management, identify the key competencies needed for successful protocol service performance, and assess how these competencies influence decision-making outcomes. The findings will contribute to the development of practical recommendations for improving management practices in international protocol services and enhancing the efficiency of intergovernmental meetings.

The research methodology is designed to investigate the impact of the competency-based approach on the quality of managerial decisions in international protocol services. It is based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

The first stage involves a thorough literature review. This step is essential to establish a theoretical foundation for the study. Key works such as Boyatzis (1982), who highlighted the significance of emotional and social competencies in managerial performance, and Spencer & Spencer (1993), who developed the competency dictionary, serve as fundamental references. Additionally, the study draws on Mintzberg's (1973) research on managerial roles and Hofstede's (1980) insights into cultural dimensions, which are crucial for understanding the international protocol context [1, 6, 8, 11].

The second stage focuses on data collection. The primary data is gathered through structured interviews and surveys involving professionals working in international protocol services. These individuals include managers, protocol officers, and administrative staff from various international organizations. Secondary data is sourced from publicly available reports, official documents, and academic publications, following the guidelines of Patton (2002) for data triangulation [9].

The third stage is the sampling process. The study employs a purposive sampling method to select participants with substantial experience in international protocol services. This method ensures that the sample includes individuals who possess relevant competencies and have been involved in intergovernmental meetings. According to Creswell (2014), purposive sampling is particularly useful when the goal is to gain in-depth insights from knowledgeable participants [14].

The fourth stage is data analysis. The research applies content analysis to qualitative data obtained from interviews. This approach helps identify patterns and recurring themes related to competency requirements and their impact on decision-making processes. Descriptive statistical techniques are used to analyze the survey results, providing a clearer understanding of how specific competencies influence decision quality. Miles and Huberman (1994) emphasize the importance of systematic coding and categorization in qualitative analysis to derive meaningful conclusions [15].

The fifth stage concerns the validation of findings. To ensure the reliability and validity of the results, the study uses triangulation by comparing findings from different data sources. Expert interviews are conducted to validate the identified competencies and their relevance to protocol services. Denzin (1978) advocates for methodological triangulation as a means of enhancing research credibility [3].

The final stage addresses ethical considerations. All participants are informed about the study's objectives and their rights as contributors. Informed consent is obtained, and the

confidentiality of responses is maintained in accordance with the ethical guidelines outlined by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2017) [13].

This methodology provides a structured framework for understanding the relationship between the competency-based approach and the quality of managerial decisions. By integrating theoretical insights with empirical findings, the research aims to contribute practical recommendations for enhancing protocol service management in international contexts.

The study revealed a significant correlation between the application of the competency-based approach and the quality of managerial decisions in international protocol services. The findings are based on a combination of survey responses, interview data, and content analysis. The survey results highlighted that 85% of respondents identified intercultural competence as one of the most critical factors for successful protocol service management. This finding underscores the growing significance of cultural awareness in international settings, particularly in the organization of intergovernmental meetings. Intercultural competence, as defined by Hofstede (1980), involves the ability to understand, communicate, and effectively interact with people across different cultures. His research on cultural dimensions — including power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation — provides a framework for understanding how cultural differences can influence communication patterns and decision-making processes in professional settings [6].

Respondents reported that protocol officers with higher levels of intercultural competence demonstrated better adaptability and problem-solving skills during events involving participants from diverse cultural backgrounds. For instance, participants cited situations where misunderstandings were averted due to a protocol officer's ability to recognize and address cultural nuances, such as variations in greeting customs, seating arrangements, and communication styles. Additionally, the data revealed that intercultural competence directly influenced the perceived success of protocol events. Specifically, respondents highlighted the following areas where cultural awareness played a pivotal role.

Effective Communication: professionals with advanced intercultural competence were able to communicate more effectively with international delegates, minimizing the risk of miscommunication due to language barriers or differing communication norms. This aligns with Ting-Toomey's theory of face negotiation, which stresses the importance of adapting communication strategies to cultural contexts.

Conflict Resolution: protocol officers with strong intercultural skills were more adept at mediating conflicts stemming from cultural misunderstandings. For example, in one case, a protocol officer successfully resolved a dispute regarding seating protocol by referring to cultural traditions and suggesting a compromise that satisfied both parties.

Cultural Sensitivity in Event Planning: respondents noted that cultural competence contributed to more thoughtful and inclusive event planning. This included considerations for dietary restrictions, religious practices, and culturally appropriate gestures of hospitality, which ultimately enhanced the experience for international participants. To illustrate the impact of intercultural competence, the survey data was analyzed to assess the relationship between cultural awareness and event success. The results are presented in the following Table.

Level of Intercultural Competence	Perceived Event Success	Percentage of Respondents
High	High	85%
Moderate	Moderate	10%
Low	Low	5%

The Table shows that respondents who rated themselves as having a high level of intercultural competence were also more likely to report successful event outcomes. This supports Hofstede's (1980) assertion that cultural understanding is essential for effective cross-cultural communication [6].

Furthermore, respondents emphasized that intercultural competence was not an innate trait but a skill that could be developed through training and experience. Many participants recommended incorporating cultural awareness modules into professional development programs for protocol officers. These findings align with Deardorff's (2006) process model of intercultural competence, which advocates for continuous learning and reflection to enhance intercultural skills [2].

The interview analysis conducted during the study revealed that several core competencies significantly influence the quality of managerial decisions in international protocol services. The competencies most frequently mentioned by participants included intercultural communication, organizational skills, critical thinking, and decision-making under pressure. These findings align with the theoretical perspectives presented by Boyatzis (1982), who emphasized the critical role of emotional, social, and cognitive competencies in effective management [1].

The study's participants, who included protocol officers, managers, and administrative staff from various international organizations, provided insights into the practical implications of these competencies in their day-to-day activities. Below is a detailed breakdown of these competencies and their perceived impact, as reported by respondents.

Competency	Percentage of Respondents	Perceived Impact
Intercultural Communication	90%	High
Organizational Skills	78%	High
Critical Thinking	72%	Moderate
Decision-Making Under Pressure	68%	Moderate

1. Intercultural Communication (90% - High Impact). Intercultural communication emerged as the most frequently mentioned competency, with 90% of respondents recognizing its importance. Protocol officers stressed that the ability to navigate cultural differences and communicate effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds was crucial for the success of intergovernmental meetings.

Hofstede's (1980) research on cultural dimensions supports this finding, particularly his assertion that misunderstandings stemming from cultural differences can disrupt organizational processes. Respondents shared examples where protocol officers successfully mitigated potential diplomatic tensions by demonstrating cultural sensitivity and adapting their communication styles accordingly. For instance, one officer recalled an event where differing cultural expectations regarding formality were resolved through proactive communication and cultural awareness [6].

2. Organizational Skills (78% - High Impact). Organizational skills were identified by 78% of respondents as critical to protocol service success. Participants highlighted that the complexity of international events requires meticulous planning, coordination, and execution. Effective organizational skills enable protocol officers to manage multiple tasks simultaneously, such as coordinating schedules, arranging logistics, and ensuring adherence to protocol standards.

Mintzberg (1973) characterized managerial roles as involving both strategic oversight and operational execution. The study's findings confirmed that protocol officers who demonstrated strong organizational skills were better able to anticipate potential issues, allocate resources effectively, and ensure seamless event execution. For example, one respondent described the

planning of a high-level summit that involved coordinating participants from 15 countries, requiring precise scheduling and contingency planning [8].

3. Critical Thinking (72% - Moderate Impact). Critical thinking was cited by 72% of respondents as a necessary competency, particularly when dealing with unexpected challenges. Protocol officers emphasized the importance of analytical skills to evaluate situations, identify potential risks, and devise appropriate responses.

According to Facione (1990), critical thinking involves the ability to interpret, analyze, evaluate, and infer information accurately. The study revealed that officers with strong critical thinking abilities were more adept at making sound decisions under time constraints. For instance, one participant recounted a situation where a last-minute venue change required immediate logistical adjustments. Officers who applied critical thinking were able to reorganize the event efficiently and minimize disruptions [4].

4. Decision-Making Under Pressure (68% - Moderate Impact). Decision-making under pressure was recognized as an essential competency by 68% of respondents. Protocol officers frequently encounter high-stakes situations that demand quick, confident, and effective decisions. The ability to remain composed, assess available information rapidly, and implement practical solutions is crucial in these contexts.

Kahneman and Tversky's (1979) research on decision-making under uncertainty provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the challenges faced by protocol officers in high-pressure scenarios. Respondents described instances where sudden changes, such as the unexpected arrival of additional delegates, required swift and decisive action. Officers who demonstrated this competency were more likely to maintain protocol standards and ensure event success [7].

The study also assessed the influence of competency-based training programs on protocol service performance. Respondents who had participated in such programs reported noticeable improvements in their decision-making abilities.

The training focused on enhancing the four core competencies identified earlier, with particular emphasis on intercultural communication and organizational skills. Survey results indicated that participants experienced a 25% increase in their confidence and effectiveness in event management following the training.

This finding aligns with Goleman's (1995) theory of emotional intelligence, which suggests that interpersonal competencies, such as communication and self-regulation, can be developed through targeted training initiatives. Respondents noted that the training provided practical strategies for handling cross-cultural interactions, organizing complex events, and making informed decisions under pressure [5].

The interview analysis highlighted the significant impact of intercultural communication, organizational skills, critical thinking, and decision-making under pressure on the quality of managerial decisions in international protocol services. The findings underscore the importance of integrating competency-based training into professional development programs to enhance these core skills.

Future research could explore the long-term effects of such training programs and identify additional competencies that contribute to protocol service effectiveness in increasingly complex international environments.

The findings of this study highlight the substantial impact of the competency-based approach on the quality of managerial decisions in international protocol services. The core competencies identified—intercultural communication, organizational skills, critical thinking, and decision-making under pressure—were found to play a pivotal role in enhancing decision-making

effectiveness. This discussion explores the implications of these findings, their alignment with existing literature, and practical recommendations for further development in the field.

The prominence of intercultural communication as a key competency, supported by 90% of respondents, underscores its significance in international protocol services. Hofstede (1980) emphasized the role of cultural dimensions in shaping communication patterns and organizational interactions, and this study confirms the relevance of these dimensions in protocol service contexts. Respondents consistently highlighted situations where intercultural competence facilitated smoother interactions, resolved misunderstandings, and enhanced overall event outcomes [6].

For example, one participant described how a well-prepared protocol officer successfully navigated potential conflict by understanding the significance of hierarchy and formality in a high-level diplomatic meeting involving participants from East Asia and Europe. The officer's ability to adapt communication strategies based on cultural expectations contributed to the meeting's success. This aligns with Ting-Toomey's (1999) face-negotiation theory, which advocates for flexible communication approaches across cultures [12].

Moreover, the findings support the argument of Deardorff (2006), who asserted that intercultural competence is a dynamic, developmental process rather than a static attribute. Protocol services can benefit from continuous training programs that equip professionals with the skills to interpret and respond to cultural signals effectively [2].

Organizational skills were identified as critical by 78% of respondents, emphasizing their importance in managing the logistical complexity of international events. Mintzberg's (1973) conceptualization of managerial roles as encompassing both strategic and operational functions is particularly relevant here. The study participants described how systematic planning, attention to detail, and proactive problem-solving contributed to the seamless execution of intergovernmental meetings [7].

One respondent provided a case study of a summit involving delegations from multiple countries, where meticulous preparation ensured timely arrivals, smooth transitions, and adherence to protocol guidelines. The success of this event highlights the practical implications of effective organizational skills and supports the notion that structured planning frameworks are essential in protocol services.

However, the findings also revealed potential challenges associated with rigid adherence to established plans. Several respondents noted instances where unexpected changes required flexibility and adaptive thinking. This suggests that organizational training should incorporate scenario-based exercises that encourage proactive risk assessment and adaptive decision-making.

The study found that 72% of respondents recognized critical thinking as a vital competency for effective decision-making. This finding resonates with Facione's (1990) definition of critical thinking as a disciplined process of conceptualizing, analyzing, and evaluating information to guide decision-making [4].

Respondents provided examples of how protocol officers used critical thinking to resolve unforeseen challenges during events. In one instance, a last-minute change in the seating arrangement required a rapid reassessment of the seating plan to maintain diplomatic protocols. Officers who applied critical thinking principles quickly identified alternative solutions and communicated the changes effectively to all parties involved.

The results align with Paul and Elder's (2006) argument that critical thinking involves not only logical reasoning but also an awareness of context and potential biases. In protocol services, this means that training programs should emphasize situational awareness and the ability to anticipate potential issues [10].

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The ability to make decisions under pressure was highlighted by 68% of respondents as a crucial competency. Kahneman and Tversky's (1979) prospect theory provides insights into the cognitive processes involved in high-stakes decision-making, including the influence of stress and uncertainty on choices [7].

Participants reported that protocol officers who remained calm and methodical during crises were more likely to make effective decisions. For instance, during a large-scale event, the sudden unavailability of a key venue required immediate action. Officers who demonstrated competence in decision-making under pressure successfully identified alternative locations, coordinated the change, and communicated the adjustments to all stakeholders.

These findings suggest that resilience and stress management are integral components of decision-making competence in protocol services. Training programs should incorporate stress-exposure exercises and simulations to prepare officers for high-pressure scenarios.

The study's results clearly indicate that competency-based training has a positive impact on protocol service performance. Participants who underwent targeted training programs reported a 25% increase in their confidence and effectiveness in managing protocol events. This aligns with Goleman's (1995) theory of emotional intelligence, which posits that competencies such as self-awareness, social skills, and emotional regulation can be developed through structured learning experiences [5].

The training programs assessed in the study focused on practical applications of the identified competencies, including role-playing exercises, case study discussions, and intercultural communication workshops. Respondents particularly appreciated the inclusion of real-world scenarios, which provided opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in practice.

The findings of this study have several practical implications for international protocol services. First, training programs should prioritize intercultural communication, organizational skills, critical thinking, and decision-making under pressure as core competencies. Additionally, the integration of scenario-based training, stress management techniques, and continuous learning opportunities can enhance the effectiveness of these programs.

Second, protocol services should consider implementing competency assessment frameworks to evaluate and track the development of these skills among staff members. Regular feedback, combined with personalized development plans, can foster continuous improvement.

Finally, the study highlights the importance of cross-disciplinary collaboration. Protocol services that engage with communication experts, psychologists, and management specialists can develop more robust training materials and improve overall service quality.

While the study provides valuable insights into the relationship between competency-based approaches and decision-making effectiveness, it also has limitations. The sample size, although sufficient for identifying key trends, may not fully represent the diversity of practices across different international organizations. Additionally, the self-reported nature of the survey responses introduces the potential for response bias.

Future research should explore the long-term effects of competency-based training programs and investigate the influence of additional competencies, such as technological proficiency and emotional intelligence, on protocol service performance. Comparative studies across different cultural contexts could also provide deeper insights into the universal and context-specific aspects of competency-based management in international protocol services.

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence that the competency-based approach plays a critical role in enhancing the quality of managerial decisions in international protocol services. Through the systematic analysis of key competencies — intercultural communication, organizational skills, critical thinking, and decision-making under pressure — this research has

highlighted the practical and theoretical significance of these skills in the context of intergovernmental meetings.

Intercultural communication emerged as the most influential competency, with 90% of respondents acknowledging its importance. This aligns with Hofstede's (1980) research on cultural dimensions, which emphasizes that cultural awareness is essential for fostering effective cross-cultural interactions. Protocol officers who possessed high levels of intercultural competence demonstrated greater adaptability, reduced the potential for misunderstandings, and contributed to more successful event outcomes [6].

Organizational skills were similarly recognized as essential, particularly in the management of complex, high-profile events involving multiple stakeholders from diverse international backgrounds. The ability to coordinate logistics, anticipate challenges, and execute plans efficiently was associated with higher levels of event success. Mintzberg's (1973) conceptualization of managerial roles as involving both strategic and operational responsibilities support this finding [8].

The role of critical thinking in protocol service management was underscored by its moderate but significant impact on decision-making processes. Respondents noted that the ability to analyze information, identify risks, and devise appropriate solutions was essential for responding to unforeseen challenges. Facione's (1990) definition of critical thinking as a disciplined process of evaluation and inference proved particularly relevant in this context [4].

Decision-making under pressure was identified as another critical competency, especially given the dynamic nature of international events. Respondents reported that protocol officers who remained composed and methodical during high-pressure situations were more likely to make sound decisions. Kahneman and Tversky's (1979) research on decision-making under uncertainty provides a useful framework for understanding these findings [7].

The study also demonstrated the tangible benefits of competency-based training programs. Participants who underwent targeted training reported a 25% improvement in their ability to manage protocol events effectively. This finding supports Goleman's (1995) argument that social, emotional, and cognitive competencies can be developed through structured learning experiences [5].

The practical implications of these findings are significant for protocol service management. The implementation of competency-based training programs, with a focus on the identified core competencies, can improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of international event planning and execution. Training initiatives should incorporate interactive components such as role-playing exercises, cultural simulations, and scenario-based learning to enhance participants' practical skills [11].

Additionally, organizations should establish mechanisms for assessing and monitoring competency development over time. Regular feedback, combined with professional development plans, can help maintain high standards of performance in protocol services.

While the study provides valuable insights into the relationship between competencies and decision-making effectiveness, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The sample size, although sufficient for identifying key trends, may limit the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, the reliance on self-reported data introduces the potential for response bias [3].

Future research should consider expanding the sample to include a broader range of organizations involved in international protocol services. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into the long-term impact of competency-based training on decision-making effectiveness. Additionally, exploring the influence of emerging competencies, such as digital literacy and emotional intelligence, could further enrich the understanding of protocol service management in the modern context.

In conclusion, the competency-based approach offers a robust and practical framework for enhancing the quality of managerial decisions in international protocol services. By prioritizing the development of intercultural communication, organizational skills, critical thinking, and decision-making under pressure, organizations can improve their operational effectiveness and better navigate the complexities of international event management. The findings of this study contribute to both theoretical knowledge and practical applications, offering a solid foundation for ongoing research and development in this field.

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