

FIT, Competencies and Work Performance

Good work performance from staff results in greater organisational effectiveness. Identifying the factors that contribute to successful performance is a key priority for organisations. Predictions of an individual's work performance usually begins at recruitment and judgements here, and later throughout employment, are often based on an assessment of an individual's competencies in relation to the company's competency framework. The competency-based approach focuses on those attitudes and skills that crucially affect job roles and performance. These competency frameworks are important, but – perhaps more so - are the core personal dimensions that are transferable to a range of different roles within the company. The FIT framework outlines a number of the individual-level factors that might be absolutely essential building blocks of the company's competencies. These FIT factors include the core aspects of a person's thinking and behaviour that are transferable to different roles and are likely to determine the person's competencies and job performance directly.

FIT Science offers a reliable way to assess the core aspects of a person's thinking and behaviour that might determine their core work competencies. The FIT framework considers how a person's thinking and behaviour determine their perceptions and interactions in different situations. Inner FITness - or FIT thinking - is measured by FIT Integrity which encompasses the five specific thinking dimensions. The components of FIT thinking are called 'Constancies' (and are: Awareness, Balance, Conscience, Fearlessness & Self-responsibility). These FIT Constancies are predicted to determine a person's work competencies and this, in turn, their work performance. Similarly, outer FITness - being behaviourally flexible - will enable the individual to be responsive to different work demands and demonstrate good work performance.

The current brief report assesses the extent to which an employee's competencies are linked to their FIT levels, and also how this is predictive of work performance. The nature of the relationship will be explored and used to identify whether the effect of FITness on work performance is direct or mediated by competency levels.

Participants

A total of 66 participants took part in this study. Each individual was an employee at one of two U.K. sub-divisions of an international exhibition and publishing company. The employees held a variety of roles within the company and these included sales, publishing, marketing and finance. The sample represented 41% of the total employees in these two sub-divisions of the company

Procedure

There were two phases of data collection in this study. In phase 1, line managers rated each of their directly reporting employees on overall performance and the 7 company competencies. In phase 2 each employee completed The FIT Profiler online.

The company's core competencies used in this study are representative of competencies used in other organisations (see Table 1). Employee's competency levels and work performance were rated on a 1-5 scale (1 = poor – 5 = excellent).

Table 1: The Company's core competencies and the percentage of other sample companies who use the same competencies.

Company competencies	% of other companies using the competency
Customer focused	65%
Commitment to excellence	30%
Team working	78%
Business insight	38%
Technical skills	n/a
Personal enthusiasm	8%
Organisational awareness	8%

The managers' ratings collected in phase 1 and The FIT Profiler data collected in phase 2 were matched for employee.

The following section compares the performance and competency measures with the FIT variables for the whole sample of 66.

Outcomes

The FIT variables were very predictive of overall work performance and accounted for 18% of the variance in work performance ratings (which is a way of saying that they contributed nearly one-fifth to the work performance). FITter participants had higher overall work performance scores as rated by managers (see Table 2).

Remember that many external factors – such as market forces, competitors, quality of the services offered by the company – are, to a large degree, going to affect performance. FITness is both trainable and predictive and the FIT person makes most out of opportunities to do well. Although the differences in work performance scores may look modest, they are large in percentage terms and likely to be the difference between success and failure.

Table 2: Overall work performance scores for low and high FIT groups.

FIT dimension	FIT group	Work performance score
Overall FIT	Low	3.3
	High	3.8
FIT Integrity	Low	3.4
	High	3.6
Behavioural Flexibility	Low	3.3
	High	3.7

FIT scores were also related to competency scores. Participants with higher FIT scores also had higher competency scores (see Table 3). The high FIT participants had significantly higher scores for the business insight and personal enthusiasm competencies in particular. This is a notable result as these competencies were also strong predictors of overall work performance.

Table 3: Competency scores for low and high FIT groups.

		Competencies						
FIT dimension	FIT group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overall FIT	Low	3.69	3.55	3.55	2.69	3.23	3.07	2.84
	High	3.77	3.77	3.69	3.38	3.42	3.77	3.04
FIT Integrity	Low	3.60	3.64	3.55	2.95	3.27	3.21	2.82
	High	3.85	3.63	3.67	3.00	3.35	3.50	3.03
Behavioural Flexibility	Low	3.76	3.54	3.54	2.67	3.18	3.08	2.77
	High	3.69	3.75	3.69	3.34	3.46	3.69	3.11

1 = customer focused, 2 = commitment to excellence, 3 = team working, 4 = business insight, 5 = technical skills, 6 = personal enthusiasm, 7 = organisational awareness.

Conclusions

FITness was found to be significantly predictive of both competency levels and work performance.

The effect of FITness on work performance was both direct and indirect. The direct effect of FIT on work performance was modest - as one would expect if it is having its action through the work competencies. The indirect effect – via the competencies - was fairly substantial. FITter employees were rated by their managers as having significantly better competency levels and these in turn were also highly predictive of work performance. Furthermore, the competencies which were most predictive of work performance showed the closest relationship with FITness. Thus, a person's FITness provides a foundation on which competencies are developed. Developing FIT –which is easlily training – is likely to have a beneficial effect upon competencies and subsequent work performance.

Unlike many organisational competencies, a person's FITness is transferable to a variety of different roles and situations. This is not only beneficial for the organisation - which may require or undergo substantial changes to work roles and working patterns - but also beneficial for the individual. Being Behaviourally Flexible will enable the individual to adapt more readily to the changes that occur. This

consequently minimises the associated disruptions and maintains the efficiency of the workforce. A FIT person will be less stressed by the changes and this is important for personal wellbeing, a factor that can also substantially influence work performance.