

How Managers Differ from Nonmanagers in Indonesia

Learning Style, Skills, and Self-Confidence

Yoshitaka Yamazaki¹ and A. Joko Putranto²

¹Faculty of Business Administration, Bunkyo University, yyama@shonan.bunkyo.ac.jp

²Directorate General of Taxes, Ministry of Finance in Indonesia, andreasjokoputranto@gmail.com

Abstract

In this study, we first explored how managers differ from nonmanagers with regard to learning style and learning skills through the lens of Kolb's experiential learning theory. Second, we investigated the two groups' job-related self-confidence. Thirdly, we examined how job-related self-confidence affects the development of learning skills. This study selected the learning competency model theorized by Boyatzis and Kolb due to its general nature and its basis in the experiential learning theory. We chose an Indonesian research context, because the country is an emerging and growing market in Asia. A total of 457 government officers from two ministries in Indonesia, Finance and Internal Affairs, participated in this research, including 112 managers and 345 nonmanagers. Data for this study were collected over a 2-week period in August 2012. One of the authors got permission to collect data from each of the two institutions, and the permission letter was included in the survey packet distributed to potential participants. In addition, the head of the Human Resource division provided official support for the study and encouraged employees to participate.

Results of the independent t-test showed that as a group, managers were significantly different from nonmanagers in terms of the abstract and concrete learning dimension of Kolb's learning model, while there was no significant difference between managers and nonmanagers with regard to the reflective and active learning dimension. It suggests that managers are more abstract and less concrete than nonmanagers in learning situations. Results of the independent t-test illustrated significant differences between managers and nonmanagers in 11 learning skills of the learning competency model. To wit, although the two groups were similar in technology skills, managers had stronger skills than nonmanagers in leadership, relationship, helping, sense making, information gathering, information analysis, theory building, quantitative analysis, goal setting, action, and initiative. We also found that managers felt more self-confident in their jobs than nonmanagers. Finally, to clarify whether job-related self-confidence affects the development of learning skills, we applied two approaches with and without the self-confidence variable in multiple regression models. Results of the regression analysis revealed that job-related self-confidence was a very influential factor in the skill development of all 12 skills, while a more abstract vs. concrete learning style was a factor in the development of 10 learning skills.

Although this study provided a useful insight to understand a difference between managers and nonmanagers with regard to learning style, skills, and job-related self-confidence, the study limited the research context of government officers in Indonesia. Thus, a promising study should be conducted applying other research sites that include the private sector in various industries in different countries.