Towards Developing a Multiple-Jobs Competency Model For Egyptian Diplomats

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A diplomat's first duty is defending the interests of the Nation abroad through the promotion of country's image and the cooperation with the host country in the case of bilateral diplomacy, or other nations in the case of multi-lateral diplomacy. However, in the era of globalization, and the proliferation of the diplomatic roles, diplomats are called-upon to deal with issues and situations for which they have not been prepared. Accordingly, the need has grown for a new generation of diplomats, who are capable of communicating with ease with non-governmental as well as governmental interlocutors. The Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is required to live up to this challenge. In this study, the Competency Model Building process will take place according to the framework suggested by David McClelland in the early 1970s and based on the work done in the study MONTANA’s Human Resource Programs (Creating Competency Models, 2000).

Keywords: Competency, Competency-Based HR Models, Modern Diplomacy, Traditional Diplomacy, Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Competency Scale, Behavioural Indicators, Competency Dictionary, Behavioural Event Interviews, Employability.

Changes in international relations are occurring at an ever-increasing rate of speed and intensity. Human resource departments are now charged with ensuring that current and future employees possess the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOs), which will allow the organization to achieve its strategic goals (Blancero, Boroski, & Dyer, 1996). These (KSAOs), or competencies, will provide the primary source of sustainable advantage. Competency-based models and systems, despite the qualifications that must be imposed due to the lack of empirical evidence, appear to have the potential to meet the demands of future work.

In today's world, a number of mutations have occurred in the diplomacy field shifting it more towards a more multi-disciplinary diplomacy, where traditional state-to-state diplomacy is being fragmented and made more complex due to the participation in international relations of a
growing number of non-state actors and an increasing number of other government ministries (Haynal, 2002). Non-state actors like Business Diplomats, Economic Diplomats and NGO Diplomats have added to the traditional domain of diplomacy a more specialized component, by which they more effectively serve their national interests in the economic and business spheres.

The State-of-the-Art of Competency Modelling

Many researchers have contributed to the extensive literature concerned with competency identification, modelling and reporting in the last few decades (McClelland, 1973; Barrett & Depinet, 1991; Dubois, 1993; Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Barrett, 1994; Gatewood & Feild, 2000; Lawler, 1994; Mansfield, 1996; Frazee, 1996; Catano et al, 1997; Cooper, 2000). By selecting people into an organization with the KSAOs associated with superior organizational performance, organizations are attempting to establish a closer connection between organizational success and individual performance. Increasingly, organizations have followed Lawler and Ledford's (1992) suggestion that the time is right to move away from the focus on jobs to the focus on individuals and the competencies they possess.

Origin & Evolution of Competency-Based Approaches

Competency-based approaches have developed quite rapidly since their introduction 27 years ago. David McClelland is credited with introducing the idea of "competency" into the human resource literature (Dubois, 1993). In response to a growing dissatisfaction with intelligence testing and the traditional job analytic approaches to personnel selection, McClelland (1973) argued that traditional intelligence tests, as well as proxies such as scholastic grades, failed to predict job performance. Instead, McClelland proposed testing for competency. Since then, competency-based approaches have gained popularity and acceptance within the human resources community through the work of McClelland and his associates. Many competency models have been developed afterwards, and were applied on the vast majority of job fields, such as engineering, management, scientific researching, as well as technical jobs. What was missing from these models is the inclusion of a competency model for diplomats (i.e. diplomacy field).

Competency Definitions

Most definitions of competencies tend to reflect either individual or specific organizational concerns. Most of the definitions that share common components include; a characteristic and measurable pattern of knowledge, skill, behaviours, beliefs, values, traits and motives, which underlie and drives superior performance in a defined job context (Linkage, Inc., 1996); skills and traits that are needed by employees to be effective in a job (Mansfield, 1996); knowledge and skills that underlie effective performance (McLagan,1996); knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviours required for successful performance of job duties (Mirabile, 1985); the aptitude necessary to enhance basic abilities and to raise job performance to a higher level (Miyawaki, 1996); and behaviour that superior performers exhibit more consistently than average performers (Klein, 1996).

Threshold vs. differentiating competencies, Spencer and Spencer were the first to identify "Threshold" and "Differentiating" competencies (1993). Threshold competencies are essential characteristics required for all job incumbents to perform the job at a minimal level of
proficiency. Differentiating competencies distinguish superior from average performers. These are similar to the minimum and major competencies that are described by Dubois (1993). Threshold and differentiating competencies are identified within the context of a specific job.

Core vs. distinctive competencies, "Core" and "Distinctive" competencies are usually defined along with threshold and differentiating competencies (Core Competency, 1996). Core competencies are similar to threshold competencies in that they are characteristics that must be possessed by every member regardless of their level of performance; however, unlike threshold competencies, they extend to all individuals in the organization. In this sense, core competencies are sometimes called "Generic or group" competencies in that they apply to all positions, functions, and levels of responsibility within an organization rather than to a specific position. Core competencies support the organization's mission. Individuals may possess different levels of core competencies. Distinctive competencies refer to the individual attributes that are required to perform successfully in various organizational operations (Lado, et al., 1994).

Competency-based vs. job-based HR models, Both Competency-Based and Job-Based Models can be used as a basis for a number of HR functions, such as: Recruitment & Selection, Career Planning, Performance Assessment, Training, Succession & Compensation (Competencies Drive, 1996). The question, in competency-based HR models, is not which (KSAOs) are required to perform the job, but which (KSAOs) do the superior performers in the job possess. The following table further illustrates the major differences.

Table 1: Competency-Based vs. Job-Based HR Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job-Based HR Models</th>
<th>Competency-Based HR Models</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ HR function is organized around jobs.</td>
<td>➢ HR function is organized around superior performers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Job Analysis Techniques are used to identify a set of job tasks, which make inferences about the KSAOs that are needed to perform the job.</td>
<td>➢ Competency Modelling Techniques are used to identify the KSAOs (competencies) owned by superior performers for a specific job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ KSAOs are task-specific, so they need to be continuously updated.</td>
<td>➢ KSAOs are job-specific, thus allow successful performance in constantly changing environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Lawler, 1994)

Types of Competency-Based Models
Mansfield (1996) describes methods for establishing three different job competency models. The single job competency model focuses on one job. Data are collected from focus groups held with job incumbents and/or their managers and from interviews with jobholders. Data is distilled into a list of 10-20 traits or skills. This list is used to identify the specific behaviours that describe effective performers.

The "one-size-fits-all" model defines a set of competencies for a broad range of jobs. Instead of gathering data, a group of individuals selects competencies from available competency models,
which they believe are necessary to achieve the goals of the organizational unit. The strength of this approach lies in the application of the resulting model to a large number of employees within the organizational unit. In addition, it is quicker and cheaper than the single job model. The obvious disadvantage is that it does not describe the competencies that are needed in any one job.

The multiple-job model defines non-technical competencies believed to be common to all jobs, & technical ones that are specific to individual jobs. Mansfield (1996) suggests that while most these competencies will be non-technical in nature, consideration must also be given to the technical competencies required to perform specific individual jobs.

Diplomacy; Past, Present and Future of the Profession

In addition to the diplomatic service, most states today have a ministry dedicated to directing and administering it. This is usually known as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). In fact, its general appearance post-dated the arrival of the resident diplomatic mission by almost three centuries (Berridge, 2002). Until the seventeenth century, responsibility for diplomacy in the states of Europe was routinely allocated between different secretaries on a geographical basis.

It was in France that this picture began to change, when in 1626 the first foreign ministry, or ‘Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ as it is usually known today, was created by Cardinal Richelieu, the legendary chief minister of the French king, Louis XIII.

Diplomacy Defined, and Re-Defined

According to Haynal (2002), professional diplomacy (the conduct of “international relations”) evolved as the function of a global guild that intermediates between states and societies separated by institutions, law, culture, economics, and language. Historically, that had been its exclusive preserve. Now, however, the growing importance of global flows, the growing complexity and intensity of relationships across societies and the emergence of a “global society” means that a growing array of actors need to deal internationally without intermediation. Diplomacy, which was considered by many practitioners as a profession that was an essential part of an international power system managed by national elites, now has to justify a role for itself in a fundamentally pluralistic universe.

As diplomacy evolved over time, so did its definition and the professional identity of diplomats. In light of this proliferation of actors involved in international relations and diplomatic activities, Melissen1 (in 1999) offered the most succinct definition of contemporary foreign policy and diplomacy by stating: “Diplomacy is defined as the mechanism of representation, communication, and negotiation through which states and other international actors conduct their business”. Melissen’s definition best mirrors and captures the modern nature of diplomacy that is characterized by the simultaneous participation of multiple state and non-state actors.

**Overview of the Diplomatic Career & Roles**

Entry Post in the diplomatic career (in Egypt) is Attaché. The posts that come next in the career are Third Secretary, Second Secretary, First Secretary, Counsellor, Plenipotentiary Minister, and Ambassador. All diplomats must pass the Entrance Examination. All throughout the career, training is intense and continuous. After all, the diplomat must be able to:

1. Well represent his/her country before the international community;
2. Gather information necessary for the formulation of the foreign policy;
3. Participate in international meetings and there negotiate on behalf of his/her country;
4. Give assistance to delegations from different sectors of the government and society; and
5. Promote the culture and values of home country (Committee on International Relations, 2001).

A diplomat must be prepared to deal with a series of issues, ranging from peace and security, trading rules, economic and financial relations, to human rights, environment, illegal drug trafficking, migration, and everything that entails the strengthening of Nation's friendship and co-operative ties with its multiple partners (Wikipedia, 2004).

**Challenges to the Diplomatic Profession in the New Century**

1. **Speaking to power whatever is, wherever is**, External power used to be largely in the hands of other nations (Haynal, 2002). Now it also lies increasingly in the hands of:
   - Multilateral organizations (sometimes capable of limited independent action);
   - Multinational corporations that act on a global level;
   - Organized “civil society”, sometimes virtual, acting globally;
   - Media;
   - Financial markets, and those who influence them; and
   - Religious movements.

   All are able to act globally. No single state, however powerful, can consider itself truly sovereign over them all. Nor can any state ignore them. Some are powers for good and others for ill. All have real power to affect our societies. Diplomacy has, increasingly, to engage these new powers. Engagement will require new expertise and new ways to accommodate new players at tables previously reserved for state representatives alone.

2. **Multiplication of diplomatic actors**, Diplomats and civil servants of MFAs are confronted with new actors, new agenda items and new working methods, and are caught with inadequate training and preparation (Saner & Yiu, 2001). Adaptation of traditional diplomacy to the reality of modern diplomacy has become an urgent necessity due to *Proliferation of “Foreign Affairs Departments” at other Central and Provincial Government Ministries*. These specialized Ministries have gradually eroded the MFA monopoly in handling foreign affairs, e.g. Ministry of Economic Affairs taking over the lead at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or World Bank, the Ministry of Labour at the International Labour Organization (ILO), and Ministry of Trade at the World Trade Organization (WTO).
3. Co-existence of divergent modern diplomatic roles, Clearly, for the diplomat of the 21st century, success hinges on being proficient in a multitude of areas and familiar with a variety of tools (Lindstrom, 2002). Today, new entrants to the diplomatic arena represent different groupings and organizations of local, national, and international interests. These divergent forces co-exist with each other and exercise different forms of diplomatic influence to achieve their objectives. These newly emerged diplomatic functions and roles include (Saner & Yiu, 2001):

- **Economic diplomacy** is concerned with economic policy issues, e.g. work of delegations at standard setting organizations such as WTO. Economic diplomats also monitor and report on economic policies in foreign countries and give the home government advice on how to best influence them.

- **Commercial diplomacy** on the other hand describes the work of diplomatic missions in support of the home country’s business and finance sectors in their pursuit of economic success and the country’s general objective of national development. It includes the promotion of inward and outward investment as well as trade.

- **Business diplomacy** pertains to the management of interfaces between the global company and its multiple non-business counterparts and external constituencies. Business Diplomats negotiate with host country authorities, interface with national laws and multilateral agreements set down by international organizations such as the WTO.

- **National NGO Diplomacy**, National NGOs represent the interests of civil society in the economic sphere and consist of various constituencies ranging from consumer protection, anti-corruption to shareholder groups and environmentalists. The number of national NGOs is growing fast and their voices and opinion can no longer be ignored by the holders of political and economic power.

**Case under Study: The Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is considered as one of the oldest and valuable ministries along the Egyptian government history, where it was one of the most important and fundamental elements of the governing system in Egypt since the time of Mohamed Ali Pasha. Throughout its life cycle, Egyptian MFA has witnessed immense changes along its history on the functional as well as administrative levels, specially after 28th February 1922 announcement, by which Egypt has been permitted again, but conditionally, to present its diplomatic activities outside Egypt (Mahmoud, 2003). Although its role was limited, at the time of Mohamed Ali Pasha, to only regulate the commercial transactions between the Egyptian government and the European handlers and dealers, this role has been under continuous development and expansion, whereby the MFA started to take care of all issues related to the administration of the external relationships of the country, including planning and executing the foreign policies. Parallel to that, the MFA has witnessed accordingly massive changes in its managerial and administrative structure to cope with the changing in the function of the ministry. The organizational structure of the MFA, therefore, has reached now very complicated structure, which includes integrated network of departments and units that cover all fields of the MFA roles internally and externally.
Problem Definition

The vast majority of the competency models, which exist in the literature, are in fact general models that are domain independent. Until now, none of these models is specifically designed to address diplomacy. Identifying potential diplomats and developing their abilities continues to be a troublesome issue for most MFAs worldwide. Methods seem to rely more on perception and serendipity than on a systematic process that is reasonably objective and valid. Another problem is that professionals are often developed with regard to competency models for the present, not the future. However, because the models are expensive to create, organizations usually become attached to them, even when conditions change. In addition, many competency models do not tell the organizations how people might acquire the competencies on the list.

Hence, the research problem of this study is that there is a lack of knowledge (in the community of practice) to show that Egyptian diplomats (at various levels in the diplomatic career) are up to the level of competency needed in such a field neither in today's political/economic environmental world, nor in the future.

Research Objective

The main objective of this research is to build and develop Multiple-Jobs Competency Model (MJCM) for Egyptian Diplomats with the objective to help the Ministry of Foreign Affairs select, prepare, allocate, and train them, in order to create a new generation of diplomats who would be competent and capable in this knowledge-intensive and dynamic field. This model must identify and validate the behavioural indicators that imply the existence of underlying knowledge, skills, motives, traits, and attitudes. Moreover, the model should be career-path oriented and adaptive in the sense to coupe with the ever-changing environment in the future. The model must achieve the following:

- To identify the behavioural indicators of the best performers among Egyptian Diplomats (in all the career levels),
- To extract the underlying competencies for the entry level candidates who are a potential callipers for such a career,
- To assess the employability of the new candidates based on the identified competencies, and
- To introduce the chief instruments to be used in the administration of the diplomatic career (including the promotion and allocation of a diplomat).

Research Methodology & Design of the Study

Conceptual Framework of the Research

Since the diplomacy field is considered one of the knowledge-intensive industries, the conceptual model of this study was built in a hierarchical structure, in which each level is dependent on the one below it. Level zero of the conceptual model (See Figure1) is considered as the whole picture. In that sense, the researcher has identified the competitive advantage of a nation to be dependent mainly on it's reservoir of diplomats and their competencies.
Overview of Competency Architecture and Model Building

In this research, the “competency-based approach” will be used opposite to the common and traditional human resource practices, “jobs-based approach”. The argument is based on the fact that the Competency-based models start with observable behaviours of average and superior performers to produce a list of grouped, Behavioural indicators which are used to identify competencies (i.e. KSAOs related to effective or superior performance). Literatures have reported different structures and architectures of a competency, however, in general there are three major components to a competency: the definition, the scale, and the illustrative behavioural indicators of the scale, (Hay Group, 2004).

**Competency Definition**, Each competency has a definition that is important for defining specifically what the competency means. The definition provides a context to understand the different behavioural levels of the scale. In some context, a *core question is formulated* that captures what the competency, see Figure 2. Each KSAO need to be defined and should include the associated behavioural indicators (Newsome & Catano, 1997).

**Competency Scale**, Competency scales refer to behavioural expressions of the competencies. Each scale describes the various levels of behaviours associated with a competency. Each level on the scale starts with a *statement* that describes the underlying intent of the level. The levels are incremental and additive, which means that any one level is usually

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inclusive of all other preceding levels. In addition, the degree of complexity increases as one moves “up” the scale. Level one is usually passive while levels two to four or higher are more “active”. The scale and accompanying levels are used to select the desired level of proficiency necessary for a given position. The reliability of a competency model can be diminished through using poorly defined rating scales (Byham et al., 2002). There is a variety of rating scale formats available, but using a consistent format is important for simplifying the assessment process.

**Behavioural Indicators (BIs)**, According to Spencer and Spencer (1993), each competency should have narrative definition and three to six behavioural indicators, which are specific behaviours that demonstrate the competency. These specific behavioural indicators describe instances of the competency in action to help the end user better understand its meaning (Zwell, 2000). The level of detail should be based on the purpose/goals of the competency model.

![Figure 2: Competency Architecture](Source: Ibrahim, in preparation)
Major Research Question
This current dissertation will attempt to answer the major research question:

• What is the relevant competency model for the Egyptian Diplomats (at both the entry level, as well as the following career path levels) which defines those competencies that are essential for a competitive performance level?

Minor Research Questions
To be more specific and to be able to answer the major research question, the researcher has developed list of minor research questions:

• How do the Ministry of Foreign Affairs select, recruit, train, and assess the diplomats at their different career levels?
• What are the current behavioural indicators of the best performers at each level of the diplomatic career path?
• What are the futuristic behavioural indicators of the best performers at each level of the diplomatic career path?
• What skills, knowledge and abilities are required to perform as a diplomat in the various diplomatic career levels (current and futuristic)?
• What are the required threshold competencies for the Egyptian diplomats in the various diplomatic career levels?
• What are the required differentiating competencies for the Egyptian diplomats in the various diplomatic career levels?
• To what extent do the employability of a diplomat depends on the individual competencies (skills, knowledge, and abilities) of him/her?

Competency-Based Model Building for the Diplomats at Egyptian MOFA
In this current study, a mix between a “Standardized Systems” and “Tailored Systems” will be used in the model building process. In the Standardized Systems, pre-described competencies for the particular occupations will be selected from generic list of competencies (competency dictionaries, taxonomies, or profiles), while in the Tailored Systems; the diplomacy-specific competencies will be defined. The Model Building process will take place according to the framework suggested by David McClelland, a former Harvard psychologist, in the early 1970s, and modified after the work done in the study MONTANA’s Human Resource Programs (Creating Competency Models, 2000) to accommodate the problem and the objective of the current study. Figure 3 provides a summary of the phases of the model building process.

Phase zero: preliminary investigation, In order to prove the importance and the significance of the topic, the researcher has conducted structural interviews with seven Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from Egypt as well as from abroad during the researcher’s participation in the “Diplomacy Today” workshop held in UK, Wilton Park. During this workshop, several structured interviews have been conducted with international experts in the diplomacy field from different countries, including Canada, USA, India, Austria, and UK.

Phase I: defining MFA mission, vision, challenges, and future needs, Strategic leaders at the Egyptian MFA should be involved in this process to ensure that the organization’s priorities and strategic direction are driving the competency model objectives. The researcher will first decide on the Subject Matter Experts (desired sampling size is 6-8). Structured interviews shall
then be conducted with the Subject Matter Experts (instead of using the Delphi Method) due to the sensitive positions of the experts in the MOFA. Experts of this phase should include those (current and former) who are involved in day-to-day management/administration of the MOFA as they are the most relevant people who can judge on:

- Identifying challenges/priorities facing today’s diplomacy.
- Defining MOFA’s mission & vision statements, as well as future needs.
- Highlighting the competency needs for both current & future divergent diplomatic roles.

**Phase II: data collection (capturing competencies and/or behavioural indicators),**

Literatures have suggested several data collection methodologies for this phase, Theses include:

- Generic competency dictionary
- Customized competency menus
- Expert panels/Focus groups
- Building customized competency menus
- Behavioural event interviews

Practices have concluded that both the customized competency menu approach and the use of expert panels or focus groups provide the best balance between rigor and efficiency. However, in this research and since the difficulties to bring former or current ambassadors and senior position holders in panels or focus group, behavioural event interviews (one-to-one) mixed with Delphi Methods and building customized competency menu will be adopted.

Subject matter experts in this phase are different from the first group in phase I. They include mainly all the levels of the diplomatic career (Attaché, Third Secretary, Second Secretary, First Secretary, Counsellor, Plenipotentiary Minister, and Ambassador), with knowledge of a particular job or group of jobs who work together to identify requirements for superior job performance. Researcher will use customized competency menus for respondents with positions of Attaché, Third and Second Secretary. On the other hand, behavioural event interviews mixed with Delphi (desired sampling size is 25-35) will be conducted with positions of First Secretary, Counsellor, Plenipotentiary Minister, and Ambassador.

**Phase III: building and validating the Multiple-jobs competency model,** All Behavioural Indicators (BIs) and/or competencies captured in phase II, will be filtered from redundancy, and overlapping to ensure their accuracy. Analyzing and organizing of the data collected in to list will be performed using the “theming”, approach, which looks for the common ideas, concepts. To validate and guarantee this list, senior Diplomats should review the results of the drafted list. This review should consider the following questions; (1) Do the behavioural indicators accurately describe successful behaviour that supports the goals and objectives of the specific occupation? In addition (2) Does the list of BIs reflect or support the direction, vision and mission of the MOFA? It is very important at this stage to map the right and relevant behaviours indicators (BIs) with the knowledge and skills needed for the purpose to build the final competency model.
Since the researcher has decided to build the model inductively through factorizing the Behaviour indicators, a questionnaire will be designed around all final BIs, which will be then distributed to the corresponding respondents (mainly current occupations in different job levels with best performers). The questions will be scaled into Likert scale with 5 or 7 points. Reliability test will be performed to measure Cronbach Alpha, of the questionnaire. According to the literatures, Cronbach Alpha should not be less than 0.7.

To build the Final Model, the following two validation methods should be used:

A) Factor Analysis Method will be applied (over the data collected from the questionnaire) to extract the underlying factors (in this case the Competencies) which will be later on labelled or named according to the general theme of the Behaviour Indicators under each factor, with the help of another group of Experts.

B) Once the competencies for each occupation are determined, it is necessary to validate these competencies for the future use. This will be accomplished by Predictive Validity (Create Assumptions about the Future).
PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION: Phase 0

Preliminary investigation for the importance & significance of the study has been conducted via semi-structured interviews with seven subject matter experts, both in Egypt and Abroad (See Appendix A for the names and titles of the interviewed subject matter experts). The outcomes of this phase shall be incorporated in the next phases.

MOFA VISION, MISSION & FUTURE NEEDS: Phase I (Propositions Testing)

- Decide on the Subject Matter Experts (sampling).
- Conduct interviews/or Delphi with subject matter experts to:
  - Identify challenges/priorities facing today’s diplomacy.
  - Define MOFA’s future needs, mission & vision statements.
  - Highlighting the competency needs for both current and future divergent diplomatic roles.

DATA COLLECTION (Capturing Behavioural Indicators): Phase II

- Decide on the Data Collection Method (Behavioural Event Interviews/or Delphi mixed with building customized competency menu).
- Decide on the Subject Matter Experts (sampling).
- Identify list of generic competencies (from the competency dictionaries already existing in the literature).
- Data Collection (capturing specific competencies and/or Behavioural Indicators (BIs) from Subject Matter Experts).

BUILDING & VALIDATING THE MJCM: Phase III

- Compiling & Building the List of BIs
- Align collected (BIs) with needed knowledge & skills.
- Design a questionnaire for measuring the applicability of the collected (BIs) captured.
- Apply Factor Analysis to extract the final competencies of the model and labelling them (i.e. Concurrent Validity).
- Validate the model for the Future use (i.e. Predictive Validity).
- Build the competency scale for each of the defined competencies of the developed MJCM.

Figure 3: Work Plan for Developing a MJCM for Egyptian Diplomats
(Source: Ibrahim, in preparation)
Findings and Discussions

Results of Phase (0)
Cross Comparison of the different MFA’s Recruitment Procedures
The following figure illustrates the different MFA recruitment procedure of four different countries, including Egypt. Thos most rigorous procedure was found to belong to the Austrian MFA, followed by the Canadian, American and then the Egyptian MFA.

Figure 4: Cross Comparison of the Different MFA’s Recruitment Procedures
(Source: Ibrahim, in preparation)

Competencies Needed for Today’s Diplomats
The following are defined by the interviewed SMEs to be the most important competency needs for today’s diplomats:

• Knowledge of the areas of the field (i.e. protocols, international laws, etc.),
• Drafting and reporting,
• Communication and negotiation skills,
• Gift for languages, and Public speaking,
• Awareness of the multiple issues running on the scenes,
• Tolerance, Credibility & Cultural sensitivity,
• Ability to reflect his/her own culture and accepts others’ different cultures,
• Computer and IT literacy,
• Political analysis skills and the ability to brief things,
• To be a good manager (in the sense of delegation, and time management),
• Problem analysis and the ability to prioritize, and avoiding subjectivity,
• Willing to invest time preparing for when he/she pushed to other countries on-the-job.
Results of Phase (I)

Existence & Suitability of the Current MFA’s Mission & Vision Statements
The majority of the SMEs agreed on the fact that a clear mission statement exists, which is a general statement defining the guidelines of the foreign policy of the country. The broad statement is “Representing and Defending Egypt’s concernsments abroad, which demands, basically, a good understanding of the International and Regional political issues from the Egyptian Point of view, as well as Egypt’s standing towards these issues”. This general statement is then branching to specific statements for each department, for reaching/achieving the regional objectives, such as: developing relations with certain countries (like USA, Latin America), i.e. bilateral relations.

Responses differ with respect to whether this statement is being communicated to all levels in the Ministry. Some of them assured that it is well communicated to all levels, while others assured that it is communicated only to the diplomats of the higher levels, who set the policies of the Ministry. Moreover, most of the respondents were not sure whether a clear vision statement exists, and accordingly were not able to formulate it. As for the suitability of the existing mission statement, some of the respondents believed it is adequate and suitable, while others assured that it needs to be renewed, because the scope of diplomacy has become wider as the International relations are now having different aspects, such as economics, technological, commercial, and cultural aspects. Therefore, the scope of the mission and vision statements has to extend beyond the regular one, which is related to defending country’s image abroad.

Identifying Future Needs of the Egyptian MFA
The following points summarize the most pressing future needs of the Egyptian MFA as per the interviewed SMEs:

- MFA should renew and update the knowledge of the diplomats continuously, through mid-term training programs at the Diplomatic Institute, and not only using the Institute for training the new Attachés at the entry level of the Foreign Service.
- More cooperation and coordination (i.e. experience sharing) between the different departments and sectors of the Egyptian MFA (i.e. European and American sectors, etc.)
- More specialization is needed outside as well as inside the ministry. Outside the ministry, specialization is needed on the geographical basis, as this will help the diplomat to continue building experience in the same direction and would lead to a better performance in all the subsequent missions. Inside the ministry, specialization is also needed with respect to placement of a diplomat in un-related department upon his/her return from a mission abroad.
- More support should be given to the departments, which are concerned with the human rights, immigration, science and technology, and environment, as they are actually the mechanism, which control the performance of the MFA and its diplomats towards these related important issues worldwide.
- More understanding and support should be given to the role of a woman diplomat.
- Rigorous development of the Egyptian Diplomatic Institute is also needed through making use of the experiences of the Ex-ambassadors (and not only academic professors) who can add a practical dimension to the training programs which is sometimes more important than just learning by-the-book theories.
Identifying Competency Needs to Coup with Current Challenges Facing Diplomacy

The following table illustrates the current challenges identified by the interviewed SMEs, and the corresponding competencies essential for facing those challenges:

Table 2: Competency Needs for Facing Current Challenges Facing the Diplomatic Profession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Challenge</th>
<th>Competency/BIs Needed</th>
<th>Diplomatic Career Levels</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Globalization</td>
<td>- Commitment to own Learning (Updating his/her knowledge).</td>
<td>All Levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Following-up on different advances happening worldwide.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Good reader of the International press and the reputable periodicals, and not only those related to the country assigned.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Dealing with the Media</td>
<td>- Tactfulness.</td>
<td>All levels, but most importantly: the Ambassador, Minister Plenipotentiary, and Counsellor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Self-Control.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Analytical Thinking.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Full Awareness of Home-Country's policies (To avoid replying based on own point of view, and this requires continuous reading to what decision-makers say).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Knowledge of different languages.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Impact &amp; Influence.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Credibility.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Interactive Communication.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Interpersonal Relations &amp; Respect.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Cultural Adaptability (Understanding of different Religions &amp; Cultures)</td>
<td>- Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (awareness &amp; understanding of cultural differences).</td>
<td>All levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Commitment to own Learning.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Adaptability /Flexibility.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Building the proper image</td>
<td>- Conceptual Thinking (proper evaluation of the situation).</td>
<td>All levels</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>- Awareness of Egypt’s History.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Ability to translate what happens on the presidential level into a concrete program of action</td>
<td>- Analytical Thinking.</td>
<td>Ambassador and Minister Plenipotentiary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Action Planning (moving from general strategies to specific tasks).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- MFA (and the Diplomat) should earn the respect of the higher presidential levels.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Identifying Competency Needs to Coupe with Future Challenges Facing Diplomacy

The following table illustrates the future challenges identified by the interviewed SMEs, and the corresponding competencies essential for facing those challenges:

Table 3: Competency Needs for Facing Future Challenges Facing the Diplomatic Profession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Challenge</th>
<th>Competency/BIs Needed</th>
<th>Diplomatic Career Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. New Dimensions of Diplomacy (Particularly; Economic &amp; Business Dimensions)</td>
<td>- Commitment to own Learning (Particularly, International Business). - Networking/Alliance Building. - Know the market needs of the country he/she serves in, and how can Egypt gain competitive advantage in this market.</td>
<td>All Levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Development of the Globalization (Particularly on the Scientific &amp; Technological Levels)</td>
<td>- Commitment to own Learning. - Following-up on his/her home Country’s scientific achievements. - Information Seeking.</td>
<td>All Levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Cultural Factor</td>
<td>- Cross-Cultural Sensitivity. - Good awareness of the culture of the home country, and the components of its civilization. - Open to others’ ideas and believes, in order to be able to conduct a cultural dialogue.</td>
<td>All Levels, but most importantly: Ambassador, Minister Plenipotentiary, and Counsellor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluating the Current Personnel Assessment & Performance Appraisal Systems

The Diplomatic and Counsellor Management Department at the Egyptian MFA keeps the "Performance Appraisal Reports" of each and every diplomat in the ministry, and those reports include categories such as: a). Diplomat's Apparel, b). Punctuality, c). Personal Skills, d). Achievements, e). Relationships with Others, etc. Those reports are reviewed before sending the diplomat on a mission. Some of the respondents believes that this system of yearly assessment is quite suitable and fair, while others indicated that this system is very primitive as it consists of the Ambassador (or whoever is the boss) who has to answer certain questions about the performance of the diplomat working under his/her supervision. Unfortunately, this questionnaire, in many ways, does not really give conclusive results. This is simply because the balance between the questions (between different fields of the competence of a diplomat) is not very accurate. Moreover, the questions are sometimes vague, and are sometimes subject to the personal point of views of the boss of the assessed diplomat. It also sometimes relies on personal subjective impressions (or personal chemistry) between the personnel, which is why it is a very bad system of assessment.
Conclusions

There was general agreement on the fact that due to the ever increasing changes world-wide on the political, economic and social levels, the need for competent diplomats who are able to cope with those changes became no option anymore. Moreover, and throughout the interviews, the researcher concluded that these major developments of emerging diplomatic activities deserve greater attention and invite rethinking of the definition of diplomacy, role definition of diplomats and the functions of MFAs. Diplomats are now confronted with new actors, new agenda items and new working methods, and are caught with inadequate training and preparation (particularly in topics that are not directly related to diplomacy, such as: management, corporate business, strategic leadership, etc.). Moreover, the majority of SMEs have agreed on the fact that the selection criteria for new diplomats need to be more sophisticated than what is currently being applied.

With growing competition for talent, there is a strong need for effective recruitment policies for diplomats (Wilton Park, 2005). Egyptian MFA lacks a competency model, and this model can only be localized (i.e. designed specifically for the Egyptian MFA), because it has to respond to the quality of people you have here, to their requirement, thus it cannot be just a copy and/or imitation of the any other model. Egyptian diplomacy has been successful in many ways, but the basis is very shaky, due to the lack of a solid basis, whereby only competent people are rewarded, and people who are not able to cope with more responsibility are not given higher responsibilities.

References


Times”. *Discussion Paper given during the Annual meeting of Directors of Diplomatic Academies in Vienna, Austria*. Netherlands Institute of International Relations ‘Clingendael’.


