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Patron: Blakely, Gerald

Journal Title: Human resource development quarterly /

Volume: 5 **Issue:** 1
Month/Year: 04 1994**Pages:** 5+

Article Author:

Article Title: ; Management development programs; The effects of management level and corporate strategy; Invited reaction; Level and strategy should and do make

Imprint: San Francisco, CA ; Jossey-Bass, c1990-

ILL Number: 3170748



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Management Development Programs: The Effects of Management Level and Corporate Strategy

Gerald L. Blakely, Cindy Lee Martinec, Michael S. Lane

In this study of 155 organizations, the relationship between management development programs, managerial level, and organizational strategy was examined. Limited support was established for Katz's theory about skill requirements for managers (1974). Greater emphasis was placed on technical skills at lower management levels and on entrepreneurial skills at senior management levels. A relationship between corporate strategy and the focus of management development programs also was found. Although organizations with growth strategies focused on many management development areas to a greater extent than did organizations with stability or retrenchment strategies, there were no differences in the focus on ethical decision making or technical-skills training between the three strategies. Implications for management and for future research are also discussed.

Management as a process is becoming increasingly complex. Consequently, managerial tasks and skills also are becoming more numerous and complex. Undoubtedly many factors affect the skills a manager needs; however, two of the most important are level in the hierarchy (Katz, 1974) and organizational strategy (Schuler, 1987). Although there may be many ways for managers to acquire the necessary skills, organizations invest substantially in management development programs to assist their managers in obtaining those skills (Wexley & Latham, 1991). It seemed likely that the focus of the management development activity or program would vary with the organizational level of the manager as well as the strategy of the organization. Accordingly, the purpose

Note: We would like to thank Ajay Mehra and three anonymous reviewers for their assistance. Michael S. Lane, a coauthor, is deceased. A version of this article was presented at the annual meeting of the Southern Management Association, Atlanta, November 1991.

of this study was to examine the relationship between the focus of management development and both managerial level and organizational strategy.

The most popular theory related to managerial skills, developed by Katz (1974), asserts that to be successful managers need technical, human, and conceptual skills, and that the degree to which they need them depends on their administrative level. According to Katz, technical skills are most needed at the lower levels, conceptual skills are most needed at the executive levels, and human skills are needed to about the same degree at all managerial levels. Although managers are not addressed by Katz, Hoffman (1983) proposes that they also need entrepreneurial skills, particularly at the senior level.

Support for Katz's theory is mixed. Pavett and Lau (1983), in a survey of 228 managers, found differences between hierarchical levels in the perceived importance of conceptual skills, but no differences in the perceived importance of technical skills. Human skills ranked as most important across all managerial levels, with no differences between levels. Some support for Katz's theory also is provided by a study by Digman (1980), in which respondents indicated that technical skills were the most needed at supervisory and middle management levels. Finally, the results of a study of the importance of managerial activities conducted by Kraut, Pedigo, McKenna, and Dunnette (1989) were largely consistent with Katz's theory. A factor they labeled "instructing subordinates," which contained several items about activities closely related to technical skills, was rated less important by senior managers than by middle- and lower-level managers. A factor they labeled "monitoring the outside," which contained several items about activities closely related to conceptual skills, was rated more important by senior managers than by middle- and lower-level managers.

Katz (1974) speculated that many executive development programs were unsuccessful because they failed to focus on the skills necessary for the particular hierarchical level. Although support for Katz's theory is limited, the evidence does indicate that managers perceive different skills being needed at different levels in the organization. In addition to selecting managers with the requisite skills and allowing for the necessary developmental opportunities on the job, providing managers with appropriate development programs may be the most common way of attempting to provide the managerial skills needed in a particular job. Given the pervasiveness of promotion-from-within practices (Mangum, 1982), management development programs may be the major mechanism for developing these skills.

Although studies have addressed the perceived need for different skills at different levels in the hierarchy, a largely unaddressed question concerns what actually occurs in management development programs. Do these programs differentiate between managerial levels? Hoffman (1983) contends that while management development classes usually are segregated by management level and may be more theoretical at higher levels, the topics and content are largely similar. He argues that trainers incorrectly assume that managers at all levels need

the same skills. Contrary to the popular notion that "well-managed" organizations have large, "well-managed" development activities is reported that programs for large organizations are biased toward technical skills, while programs for small organizations are biased toward human skills. For this study was biased to the small sample size, an analysis of Digman's study are suggested.

Accordingly, the first degree management development programs varies. Specifically, the hypothesis is that the degree of management development programs varies according to Hoffman's assertion (1983) that requirements vary.

However, the tasks likely to depend on more hierarchy. For example, (Katz & Kahn, 1966). The relationship between strategy and development programs varies (Katz & Kahn, 1966; Porter, 1980; Porter & Napier, 1991; Digman, 1980). The match between the organization's requirements and development programs varies (Schweiger, 1984).

It should be noted that the most popular strategy for development programs is Porter (1980). Generic strategies describe ways to compete in the market. Porter's *leadership* emphasizes product differentiation, which describes ways to compete for buyers who are enterprise that are competitors who are relatively price sensitive. Porter's *product market offerings* to compete either on price or quality. Porter's *follow a clear-cut path* a

Miles and Snow's typology of underlying decision-making strategies: (1) defenders, which stabilize products and desire to maintain market share; (2) prospectors, which attempt to identify new market opportunities; (3) analyzers, which analyze market opportunities, but are not simultaneously exhibiting uncertainty rather than

the focus of management strategy.

Programs, developed by Katz, are categorized as technical, human, and conceptual, and their importance depends on their level. The most needed at the executive levels, and at the managerial levels. Alford (1983) proposes that programs should be tailored to the senior level.

Alford (1983), in a survey of managers, found that the perceived importance of management development programs varies across all levels in the perceived importance of management development programs. Alford (1983) found that the perceived importance of management development programs is highest for the senior level and lowest for the middle level. Alford (1983) also found that the perceived importance of management development programs is highest for the senior level and lowest for the middle level.

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the same skills. Contrary to Hoffman's position, Digman's study (1978) of sixty-nine large, "well-managed" companies indicates that the focus of management development activities is largely consistent with Katz's theory (1974). It was reported that programs for executive-level managers focus more on conceptual skills, while programs for supervisors focus more on technical skills. However, this study was biased toward "well-managed" companies and was limited by the small sample size, and no statistics were reported. Although the findings of Digman's study are suggestive, further investigation appears to be warranted.

Accordingly, the first question addressed in the present study was to what degree management development programs differ across hierarchical levels. Specifically, the hypothesis tested was that the content of management development programs varies across managerial levels in a manner consistent with Hoffman's assertion (1983) and Katz's theory (1974) about managerial skill requirements.

However, the tasks and corresponding skills needed by a manager are likely to depend on more factors than the manager's level in the organizational hierarchy. For example, managerial tasks are related to the goals of the firm (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Recently, considerable attention has been devoted to the relationship between strategy and human resource management (Butler, Ferris, & Napier, 1991; Dyer, 1983; Milkovich, 1988; Sonnenfeld & Peiperl, 1988). The match between an organization's strategy and its managers may affect the organization's success or failure (Leontiades, 1982; Szilagyi & Schweiger, 1984).

It should be noted that there are a number of strategy typologies. Arguably, the most popular strategy scheme is the generic-strategy typology espoused by Porter (1980). Generic strategies (cost leadership, differentiation, and focus) describe ways to compete on the business-unit level. According to Porter, *cost leadership* emphasizes producing a standardized product at very low per-unit costs for buyers who are price-sensitive. *Differentiation* refers to outputs of an enterprise that are considered unique industry-wide and are addressed to buyers who are relatively price-insensitive. *Focus*, on the other hand, targets product market offerings to narrow but well-defined niches within the industry, competing either on price or on superior service and quality. Firms that do not follow a clear-cut path are defined as "stuck in the middle."

Miles and Snow's typology (1978) is more process-oriented and focuses on underlying decision-making processes. They categorize organizations into (1) defenders, which strive for efficiency in production and distribution of products and desire to prevent competition within their stable domains; (2) prospectors, which attempt to find and develop new product and market opportunities; (3) analyzers, which try to find and develop new product and market opportunities, though to a lesser extent than prospectors, while simultaneously exhibiting some of the characteristics of defenders; and (4) reactors, which simply react to internal and external environmental change and uncertainty rather than behaving proactively.

Finally, Pearce (1982) outlines twelve "grand" strategies, which are grouped into four broad categories. A grand strategy can be defined as a comprehensive general plan of major actions through which a firm intends to achieve its long-term objectives (Pearce, 1982). These four categories are (1) concentration, which is essentially an attempt to maintain the status quo and remain stable; (2) internal growth, which is pursued by developing new products or markets; (3) external growth, which is accomplished by acquiring other businesses; and (4) disinvestment, which is accomplished by reducing or eliminating the firm's operations.

Although these three categorizations of strategy appear quite different, previous studies have indicated that while there are differences between various strategy classification schemes, there are also similarities (Parks, 1985; Segev, 1989). For methodological reasons, explained in the Methods section, and because there may be similarities between strategy typologies, a grand-strategy typology was used in the present study.

A number of researchers have asserted that a firm's strategy is related to its management development programs and activities (Gainer, 1989; Sonnenfeld & Peiperl, 1988; Szilagyi & Schweiger, 1984). For example, Sonnenfeld and Peiperl (1988) have argued that a firm's strategy is related to various career system activities, including those involving management development. Among several components of Szilagyi and Schweiger's proposed framework for matching managers to strategies (1984) is the set of skills appropriate for a particular strategy. For example, managers in an organization with a growth strategy may require entrepreneurial skills, while managers in an organization with a harvest strategy may require cost-controlling skills (Szilagyi & Schweiger, 1984). Similarly, managers in organizations that pursue a stability strategy may be more in need of bureaucratic skills than managers in organizations that pursue other strategies. Managers in organizations with a retrenchment strategy, with their considerable personnel problems, may be more in need of human relations skills than managers in organizations with either growth or stability strategies. Following this logic, the focus of an organization's management development program is likely to be related to the strategy being pursued.

Although it has been asserted that there is a link, albeit weak, between corporate strategy and management development (Wissema, van der Pol, & Messer, 1980), this linkage has not been empirically examined. Accordingly, the second question addressed by the present study was to what extent management development programs vary with respect to corporate strategy. Based on the preceding, it was hypothesized that (1) organizations with growth strategies, compared to organizations with stability and retrenchment strategies, focus to a greater extent on entrepreneurial skills in management development training; (2) organizations with stability strategies, compared with organizations with growth and retrenchment strategies, focus to a greater extent on general management skills such as general management functions and decision-making skills in management development training; and (3) organizations

with retrenchment strategy stability strategies, focus to skills and less on technical

Methods

Sample. Questionnaire human resource managers *Directory of Companies*. On title of vice president or di lations were included in th corporate human resource copy of the results if they c

The original question nonrespondents. A total o response rate of 26 percer 28 responses to the secur There were no differences ber of employees (chi-squ nonrespondents was obtai No differences were found example, a one-way analy the measure of extent of f mailings ($F[2, 139] = .06$,

The size of the respor ees, ranged from 60 to mc employees. Eighty-six of t pursuing a growth strateg a retrenchment strategy.

Measures. The questi velopment program conte ment (lower, middle, and items. Respondents were: ment programs and activi the questionnaire. The re chored from "not at all" to adapted from Burke and I program content (1986). a broad focus on manage cedures, and general ma ship, defined as a focus c sion, attitudes toward e defined as a focus on one typical training method

gies, which are grouped and defined as a comprehensive strategy. It intends to achieve its goals through various categories are (1) concentration on the status quo and remain stable, (2) developing new products or services, and (3) by acquiring other businesses through reducing or eliminating existing products.

These strategies appear quite different, but the differences between various typologies (Parks, 1985; Schwenker, 1984) in the Methods section, suggest a grand-

strategy is related to its environment (Parker, 1989; Sonnenfeld, 1989). In the sample, Sonnenfeld and Schwenker are related to various career systems for development. Among the different frameworks for matching a particular strategy to a particular organization with a harvest strategy (Schwenker, 1984). Similarly, a growth strategy may be more in organizations that pursue other strategies, with their focus on human relations and stability strategies. Management development programs are used.

It is weak, between correlations, van der Pol, & Schwenker. Accordingly, the extent to which management development programs with growth strategies, retrenchment strategies, and management development programs compared with organizations with a greater extent on human relations and decision-making and (3) organizations

with retrenchment strategies, compared with organizations with growth and stability strategies, focus to a greater extent on interpersonal, human relations skills and less on technical skills in management development training.

Methods

Sample. Questionnaires were mailed to a random sample of the corporate human resource managers of 600 corporations obtained from *Standard & Poor's Directory of Companies*. Only organizations that had individuals listed with the title of vice president or director of human resources, personnel, or human relations were included in the sample. The surveys were addressed to these top corporate human resource managers in the firms. Respondents were offered a copy of the results if they desired, and their anonymity was guaranteed.

The original questionnaire was followed by two subsequent mailings to nonrespondents. A total of 155 completed questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 26 percent. There were 101 responses to the initial mailing, 28 responses to the second mailing, and 26 responses to the third mailing. There were no differences between respondents and nonrespondents in number of employees ($\chi^2 = 12.16, df = 8$). (The number of employees for nonrespondents was obtained from *Standard & Poor's Directory of Companies*.) No differences were found between respondents to the different mailings. For example, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated no differences in the measure of extent of focus on ethical decision making between the three mailings ($F[2, 139] = .06, p = .94$).

The size of the respondent organizations, in terms of number of employees, ranged from 60 to more than 200,000 employees, with a median of 1,500 employees. Eighty-six of the respondents indicated that their organization was pursuing a growth strategy, 44 indicated a stability strategy, and 21 indicated a retrenchment strategy.

Measures. The questionnaire contained nine items about management development program content. These items were asked for each level of management (lower, middle, and senior), which resulted in a total of twenty-seven items. Respondents were asked to what extent the firm's management development programs and activities focused on the content area, which was filed on the questionnaire. The responses were measured on a seven-point scale, anchored from "not at all" to "to a great extent." Six of the items for each level were adapted from Burke and Day's categories of management development training program content (1986). These items were (1) general management, defined as a broad focus on management theory and practice, company policies and procedures, and general management functions; (2) human relations and leadership, defined as a focus on human relations problems of leadership, supervision, attitudes toward employees, and communication; (3) self-awareness, defined as a focus on one's own behavior and how it is viewed by others, with typical training methods including sensitivity training and transactional

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations

	Mean	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27				
1. General management	4.16	1.80																														
2.	4.35	.67	1.53																													
3.	3.96	.10	.54	2.00																												
4. Human relations/leadership	4.88	.60	.52	.17	1.74																											
5.	4.72	.48	.61	.31	.72	1.69																										
6.	4.39	.20	.41	.54	.43	.68	1.94																									
7. Self-awareness	3.34	.34	.28	.23	.54	.44	.37	1.85																								
8.	3.27	.25	.33	.27	.39	.49	.79	1.86																								
9.	3.08	.19	.29	.33	.31	.42	.64	.65	.85	2.01																						
10. Problem solving/decision making	4.08	.41	.38	.18	.42	.40	.33	.54	.44	.42	1.74																					
11.	4.14	.31	.44	.35	.34	.50	.50	.49	.55	.52	.77	1.75																				
12.	3.70	.18	.34	.55	.23	.37	.58	.38	.48	.58	.51	.77	1.92																			
13. Rater training	3.18	.40	.37	.16	.44	.42	.22	.36	.32	.26	.46	.37	.28	1.80																		
14.	3.20	.40	.37	.22	.40	.38	.23	.38	.28	.24	.48	.35	.27	.84	1.85																	
15.	2.83	.31	.32	.36	.29	.28	.36	.37	.30	.32	.37	.33	.42	.62	.82	1.78																
16. Motivator/values training	3.60	.40	.45	.24	.51	.49	.38	.39	.47	.41	.54	.48	.42	.50	.42	.33	1.81															
17.	3.66	.28	.41	.32	.40	.50	.48	.39	.49	.46	.50	.56	.52	.40	.42	.40	.81	1.87														
18.	3.46	.17	.33	.51	.24	.32	.56	.32	.47	.54	.31	.47	.65	.23	.29	.46	.59	.77	1.93													
19. Technical training	4.73	.07	.25	.16	.14	.21	.23	.09	.08	.11	.12	.04	.04	.15	.20	.17	.13	.19	.04	1.89												
20.	4.00	.09	.28	.31	.15	.17	.25	.02	.06	.11	.13	.18	.24	.18	.22	.20	.18	.12	.69	1.83												
21.	3.14	.09	.16	.39	.06	.09	.29	-.02	.05	.15	.03	.12	.32	.14	.16	.37	.07	.10	.27	.43	.69	1.95										
22. Entrepreneurial skills	2.63	.22	.33	.33	.34	.45	.48	.40	.44	.43	.46	.47	.44	.29	.31	.38	.53	.56	.46	.10	.19	.25	1.59									
23.	2.91	.11	.30	.38	.29	.42	.53	.34	.42	.45	.34	.52	.55	.24	.23	.38	.38	.47	.51	.04	.13	.27	.83	1.85								
24.	3.25	.09	.26	.38	.25	.37	.57	.34	.44	.51	.30	.50	.56	.18	.20	.35	.35	.45	.56	-.02	.14	.26	.66	.87	2.11							
25. Ethical decision making	3.52	.18	.38	.36	.30	.36	.43	.27	.30	.32	.36	.40	.48	.36	.34	.40	.40	.37	.39	.22	.34	.33	.46	.45	.43	1.91						
26.	3.63	.14	.37	.40	.24	.35	.46	.22	.33	.36	.31	.40	.50	.30	.32	.44	.37	.42	.50	.24	.34	.36	.44	.50	.50	.93	1.94					
27.	3.64	.11	.35	.46	.24	.34	.50	.21	.37	.41	.23	.42	.56	.26	.28	.41	.32	.42	.55	.19	.35	.38	.41	.53	.58	.84	.92	2.14				

Note: Correlations above .17 are significant at $p < .05$, above .21 at $p < .01$, and above .27 at $p < .001$. Standard deviations are in the diagonal.

of the measures used in the independent judgments than to lack of knowledge of the organizational respondents. Regardless, the consistency of the two measures was such that the use of the self-report measure of corporate strategy for the full sample appeared warranted.

Results

Table 1 reports the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for the extent to which the management development programs focus on each of the content areas for the three management levels. An inspection of Table 1 reveals that the intercorrelations between the items are positive and generally significant. As will be noted, the intercorrelations between items across management levels for a particular content area are higher than the correlations between content areas.

The initial hypothesis was examined by a series of one-way ANOVAs to determine if there were differences in the emphases in the management program content areas between the low, middle, and senior managerial levels. Where the ANOVAs indicated significant differences, Duncan's procedure for multiple comparisons was employed to examine the differences in the means. The means for each content area for each managerial level are shown in Table 2. There were differences in the focus on technical skills between the three levels ($F[2, 440] = 26.6, p < .001$). The Duncan procedure indicated differences between each management level in the technical-skills means. Emphasis on technical skills was greater at the lowest managerial level than at the middle and senior levels; it also was greater at the middle level than at the senior level. In addition, there were differences in the focus on entrepreneurial skills between the three levels ($F[2, 436] = 4.17, p < .05$), with greater emphasis at the senior management level than at the lowest level.

Table 2. Means and Rank Order of Management Development Program Content for Each Management Level

Content Area	Managerial Level					
	Low		Middle		Senior	
General management	4.16	(3) ^a	4.35	(2)	3.96	(2)
Human relations and leadership	4.88	(1)	4.72	(1)	4.39	(1)
Self-awareness	3.34	(7)	3.27	(7)	3.08	(8)
Problem solving and decision making	4.08	(4)	4.14	(3)	3.70	(3)
Rater training	3.18	(8)	3.20	(8)	2.83	(9)
Motivational and values training	3.60	(5)	3.66	(5)	3.46	(5)
Technical training	4.73	(2)	4.00	(4)	3.14	(7)
Entrepreneurial skills	2.63	(9)	2.91	(9)	3.25	(6)
Ethical decision making	3.52	(6)	3.63	(6)	3.64	(4)

^aNumbers in parentheses indicate rank order, with 1 indicating greatest emphasis.

The focus on hum between the three leve suggested relatively gr lower management lev

The focuses on gen ($F[2, 437] = .8, p = .46$), rater training ($F[2, 433] = .5, p =$ between the three level

Due to the interco the second set of hypo (MANOVA). Significant Duncan's multiple-com between the means. M opment content areas :

The initial hypoth organizations pursuing trepreneurial-skills tra strategies. There were (Wilks's lambda = .92,

The second hypo that organizations with retrenchment strategy, skills in management c porate strategy on prof ($F[6, 270] = 2.71, p <$ lower level ($F[2, 137]$ $p < .01$), and the senic indicated that organiz for lower-level manag and more for middle-] ity or retrenchment s strategies in emphasis also an overall effect (Wilks's lambda = .90, significant for the mid ($F[2, 138] = 4.71, p <$ with growth strategies dle and senior manag trenchment strategies. at the lowest manager

The final hypothe organizations with a r or stability strategy, w

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 Table 2. There were
 : three levels ($F[2,$
 differences between
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 l skills between the
 hasis at the senior

**Development
 level**

Development level	Senior
2)	3.96 (2)
1)	4.39 (1)
7)	3.08 (8)
3)	3.70 (3)
3)	2.83 (9)
5)	3.46 (5)
†)	3.14 (7)
)	3.25 (6)
)	3.64 (4)

The focus on human relations and leadership ($F[2, 442] = 2.9, p = .057$) between the three levels was marginally significant. The direction of the means suggested relatively greater emphasis on human relations and leadership at the lower management levels.

The focuses on general management ($F[2, 441] = 2.1, p = .13$), self-awareness ($F[2, 437] = .8, p = .46$), problem solving and decision making ($F[2, 440] = 2.6, p = .07$), rater training ($F[2, 430] = 1.9, p = .15$), motivational and values training ($F[2, 433] = .5, p = .59$), and ethical decision making ($F[2, 429] = .1, p = .98$) between the three levels were not significant.

Due to the intercorrelation between the dependent variables (see Table 1), the second set of hypotheses was tested with a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Significant MANOVAs were then followed by univariate ANOVAs. Duncan's multiple-comparison procedure was employed to examine differences between the means. Means for the various strategies and management development content areas are reported in Table 3.

The initial hypothesis concerning the effects of corporate strategy was that organizations pursuing growth strategies would place greater emphasis on entrepreneurial-skills training than would firms with stability or retrenchment strategies. There were no effects of corporate strategy on entrepreneurial skills (Wilks's lambda = .92, $F[6, 270] = 2.01, p = .07$).

The second hypothesis concerning the effects of corporate strategy was that organizations with a stability strategy, compared to those with a growth or retrenchment strategy, would focus to a greater extent on general management skills in management development training. There was an overall effect of corporate strategy on problem solving and decision making (Wilks's lambda = .89, $F[6, 270] = 2.71, p < .05$). The univariate ANOVAs were significant for the lower level ($F[2, 137] = 4.24, p < .05$), the middle level ($F[2, 137] = 5.01, p < .01$), and the senior level ($F[2, 137] = 3.02, p < .05$). Duncan's procedure indicated that organizations with growth strategies emphasize this skill more for lower-level managers than do organizations with retrenchment strategies, and more for middle-level managers than do organizations with either stability or retrenchment strategies. There was no difference between the three strategies in emphasis in this skill at the senior management level. There was also an overall effect of corporate strategy on general management training (Wilks's lambda = .90, $F[6, 272] = 2.56, p < .05$). The univariate ANOVAs were significant for the middle level ($F[2, 138] = 6.93, p < .01$) and the senior level ($F[2, 138] = 4.71, p < .01$). Duncan's procedure indicated that organizations with growth strategies place greater emphasis on this content area at the middle and senior management levels than do organizations with stability or retrenchment strategies. There were no differences between the three strategies at the lowest management level.

The final hypothesis concerning the effects of corporate strategy was that organizations with a retrenchment strategy, compared to those with a growth or stability strategy, would focus to a greater extent on interpersonal, human

Table 3. Means of Management Development Program Content by Management Level and Organizational Strategy

Content Area		Organizational Strategy		
		Growth	Stability	Retrenchment
General management	Low	4.36	3.68	4.05
	Middle	4.72	3.71	4.00
	Senior	4.35	3.29	3.40
Human relations and leadership	Low	5.17	4.61	4.15
	Middle	5.17	4.15	4.20
	Senior	4.80	3.98	3.60
Self-awareness	Low	3.70	2.73	2.80
	Middle	3.75	2.56	2.90
	Senior	3.54	2.49	2.45
Problem solving and decision making	Low	4.38	3.82	3.16
	Middle	4.55	3.59	3.68
	Senior	4.00	3.22	3.16
Rater training	Low	3.45	2.92	2.45
	Middle	3.53	2.95	2.40
	Senior	3.14	2.40	2.10
Motivational and values training	Low	4.00	3.17	2.90
	Middle	4.12	3.17	3.00
	Senior	3.82	3.00	2.65
Technical training	Low	4.73	4.46	5.32
	Middle	4.01	3.80	4.42
	Senior	3.15	2.80	3.53
Entrepreneurial skills	Low	2.90	2.23	2.15
	Middle	3.25	2.40	2.55
	Senior	3.54	2.93	2.60
Ethical decision making	Low	3.74	3.30	2.80
	Middle	3.93	3.45	2.85
	Senior	3.96	2.85	3.05

relations skills in management development training. The MANOVA indicated that there is an overall effect of corporate strategy on human relations and leadership (Wilks's lambda = .88, $F[6, 274] = 2.90, p < .01$). The univariate ANOVAs indicated effects of organizational strategy on the lower level ($F[2, 139] = 3.42, p < .05$), the middle level ($F[2, 139] = 6.77, p < .01$), and the senior level ($F[2, 139] = 4.64, p < .01$). Duncan's multiple-comparison procedure indicated that emphasis on human relations and leadership is significantly greater for organizations with growth strategies than for those with retrenchment strategies at all management levels and greater for organizations with growth strategies than for organizations with stability strategies at the

middle level. Similarly, the effect of corporate strategy on ethical decision making at the senior level ($F[2, 138] = 4.80, p < .05$) was significantly greater for organizations with growth strategies than for those with stability and retrenchment strategies for the senior level ($F[2, 138] = 4.80, p < .05$). The MANOVA indicated a significant effect of organizational strategy on motivation ($F[6, 268] = 2.04, p = .06$).

Although there were no significant differences in ethical decision making or rater training across the three management levels ($F[2, 270] = 1.18, p = .32$), rater training was significantly greater for organizations with growth strategies ($p = .27$), or technical training was significantly greater for organizations with growth strategies ($p = .06$). The one exception, which was not statistically significant, was that stability strategies tend to emphasize technical training more than do firms with either growth or retrenchment strategies.

Discussion

This study examined the variation in emphasis between growth, stability, and retrenchment strategies consistent with Katz's theory (1956) that organizations at more at lower levels than at higher levels emphasize more on human relations and leadership training and senior-level management training. Katz speculated that organizations at the same degree regardless of organizational size or proportion to conceptual change. The results showed a lack of any difference between growth and stability strategies in general management training.

The results provide support for Katz's theory that entrepreneurial skills are needed at all management levels. Greater emphasis was placed on human relations and leadership training at the middle-level management level.

Program Content Strategy

Organizational Strategy

Stability	Retrenchment
3.68	4.05
3.71	4.00
3.29	3.40
4.61	4.15
4.15	4.20
3.98	3.60
2.73	2.80
2.56	2.90
2.49	2.45
3.82	3.16
3.59	3.68
3.22	3.16
2.92	2.45
2.95	2.40
2.40	2.10
3.17	2.90
3.17	3.00
3.00	2.65
4.46	5.32
4.80	4.42
4.80	3.53
2.23	2.15
4.40	2.55
4.93	2.60
3.30	2.80
4.45	2.85
3.35	3.05

ANOVA indicated
relations and lead-
The univariate
lower level (F[2,
.01), and the se-
comparison proce-
ership is signifi-
for those with
or organizations
strategies at the

middle level. Similarly, the MANOVA for self-awareness indicated an overall effect of corporate strategy on self-awareness (Wilks's lambda = .90, F[6, 272] = 2.48, $p < .05$). The univariate ANOVAs were significant for the lower level (F[2, 138] = 4.80, $p < .01$), middle level (F[2, 138] = 6.39, $p < .01$), and senior level (F[2, 138] = 4.96, $p < .01$). Duncan's procedure indicated that emphasis on self-awareness is significantly greater for organizations with growth strategies than for those with stability strategies for all three management levels and greater for organizations with growth strategies than for those with retrenchment strategies for the middle management level. There was no effect of corporate strategy on motivational and values training (Wilks's lambda = .912, F[6, 268] = 2.04, $p = .06$).

Although there were no hypotheses about the effects of corporate strategy on ethical decision making or technical training, both of these areas were examined. The MANOVA indicated no significant overall effect of corporate strategy on the three management levels of ethical decision making (Wilks's lambda = .95, F[6, 270] = 1.18, $p = .32$), rater training (Wilks's lambda = .94, F[6, 264] = 1.28, $p = .27$), or technical training (Wilks's lambda = .98, F[6, 270] = .56, $p = .76$). While not statistically significant, the direction of the means for ethical decision making and rater training was similar to that of most of the other content areas. The one exception, which again was not significant, was that organizations with stability strategies tend to emphasize technical skills less across all managerial levels than do firms with either growth or retrenchment strategies.

Discussion

This study examined the extent to which management development programs vary in emphasis between lower, middle, and senior management levels and between growth, stability, and retrenchment organizational strategies. Consistent with Katz's theory (1974), technical skills were emphasized significantly more at lower levels than at higher levels of management. Although approaching significance, there were no differences between the management levels in emphasis on human relations and leadership. However, human relations and leadership ranked as the most emphasized area for lower-, middle-, and senior-level management development, which is inconsistent with Katz's theory. Katz speculated that although human skills are needed to about the same degree regardless of level, senior managers may need those skills less in proportion to conceptual skills. Also inconsistent with Katz's theory was the lack of any difference between management levels in the conceptual-skills categories of general management and ethical decision making.

The results provide support for Hoffman's assertion (1983) that entrepreneurial skills are needed relatively more at higher levels of management. Greater emphasis was placed on these skills at the senior level than at the lower management level. Entrepreneurial skills ranked last in emphasis for lower- and middle-level management development.

Naturally, these findings do not indicate the skills that are needed at each management level. It is possible for managers to already possess the required skills and to need no further development for a particular level. Although management development programs may be geared toward skills needed at the manager's present level or the next level in the hierarchy, no such differentiation was made in this study. What was found was that, with few exceptions, the emphasis in management development is similar regardless of management level. It is likely that Hoffman (1983) was correct in his view that management development programs do not differentiate between management levels, and that management development trainers assume that skill requirements are the same for managers regardless of their level in the hierarchy.

The second area examined in this study was the relationship between the focus of management development programs and corporate strategy. None of the hypothesized effects of corporate strategy were supported in this study. Organizations with growth strategies placed greater emphasis on human relations and leadership, self-awareness, problem solving and decision making, and general management in their management development programs. Consistent with the findings previously discussed, it is likely that there is little differentiation between management levels among those with the same strategy. For example, organizations with growth strategies reported greater emphasis on human relations and leadership than organizations with retrenchment strategies for all three management levels.

One potential explanation for the finding that organizations with growth strategies place more emphasis on several management development areas than organizations with either stability or retrenchment strategies is that they are able to devote more attention and resources to this activity. However, one problem with this explanation is that for several of the content areas there were no differences between the various strategies. If resources alone accounted for the differences, it seems likely that the differences would be more uniform across all the management development content areas.

A second potential explanation for this finding is that it is not an organization's strategy but its size that is related to the extent of focus on management development programs. Perhaps larger organizations devote more emphasis to management development activities than smaller organizations. This potential explanation was examined by computing correlations between organizational size and each of the twenty-seven management development program items. Since only one of the twenty-seven correlations was significant, it appears that the size of an organization is not related to the extent of its focus on management development activities.

Including corporate strategy as a factor provides better insight into the focus of management development programs than including only management level. The relative consistency of management development program emphasis across management levels, found in the present study and asserted by Hoffman (1983), raises questions about the validity of requiring different skills at differ-

ent levels of management theory (1974), the focus is inconsistent with hierarchy unless management levels vary according to hierarchy. Differences into account would seem desirable.

The results of this study should adjust their strategic orientation. This study between management development activities and corporate strategy, further development activities are. For example, research on management development programs focuses on corporate strategy rather than management development. Similarly, an examination of management program focus on corporate strategy (1978), may be.

Management skill requirements are depending on an organization's international composition. More than firms with different international management development research might examine.

This study does not have our limited examination of respondents, the extent of organizations listed in the study determined. Also, given the problem with communication between the dependent variables of our sample bias that human resource management development, and different views about

This study was a management development program corporate strategy. The development program according to hierarchy level, the focus of management development is reexamination.

ent levels of management. Although there is some evidence to support Katz's theory (1974), the focus of management development programs in this study is inconsistent with his theory. Managers may rightly question program content unless management level is taken into consideration. If skill requirements do vary according to hierarchical level, management trainers must take these differences into account. Greater variation in focus between management levels would seem desirable. Future research may address these inconsistencies.

The results of this study, while preliminary, suggest that organizations should adjust their stance toward management development, in part, based on their strategic orientation. Given the rather consistent relationship found in this study between management development program emphasis and corporate strategy, further examination of the relationship between management development activities and some form of strategic orientation appears warranted. For example, researchers may want to examine the relationship between management development program focus and market strategy or business-level strategy rather than the grand or corporate-level strategy used in this study. Similarly, an examination of the relationship between management development program focus and the firm's strategy, according to Miles and Snow's typology (1978), may be of interest to researchers in this area.

Management skills and subsequent development programs may also vary depending on an organization's international orientation. Firms with large international components may emphasize conceptual skills at lower levels more than firms with limited or no international orientation, and firms with different international orientations may have substantially different focuses in their management development activities related to ethics. Therefore, future research might examine the influence of international orientation.

This study does have limitations that should be acknowledged. Although our limited examination revealed no differences between respondents and non-respondents, the extent to which the respondents were representative of organizations listed in *Standard & Poor's Directory of Companies* cannot be precisely determined. Also, given the nature of the questionnaire, there may have been a problem with common-method variance, although high intercorrelations between the dependent variables were expected. Further, it is possible that the nature of our sample biased the results. Although it seemed reasonable to assume that human resource managers would be most knowledgeable about management development, managers from different functional areas might have quite different views about management development program content.

This study was a preliminary attempt to examine the relationship between management development program focus and both management level and corporate strategy. The results question the extent to which management development programs differentiate between managerial skill requirements according to hierarchical level. If skill requirements do vary with managerial level, the focus of management development programs appears to be in need of reexamination.

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