

The Impacts of Generalism VS Specialism in The Career Formation

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Abstract. Generalism is becoming a better option for people starting in the professional market, yet, is it the best option? New ways of curriculum development are emerging, and the students preparing to enter the professional world are not being truly oriented on this matter. Throughout this article I will dissect and talk about the pros and cons of this type of formation and compare it with its antonym, Specialism. To develop this Scientific Paper, two methods were used, a research containing data from previous articles and books, and a small research done with managers and employees from companies situated in Recife-PE. The main objective of this article is to obtain a definitive answer to the question: Nowadays, is it better to be a Generalist or a Specialist? And hopefully explain why one of them is better or if they are similar, depending on the area of choice.

Keywords. Generalism, Specialism, Management, Career, Development.

1. Introduction

As the World progresses to a technological era, new ways of constructing your career start to appear. Many people won't understand what they want to do for the rest of their lives, so they tend to start with some general things. As that way of formation exponentially grows, Generalism is more frequently used as a definitive model.

The objective to be achieved with this research paper is to introduce and prove how the differences between Generalism and Specialism develops influence on - Management Decisions, Jobs, Careers and definitively lives. Thinking of a way to introduce these two topics is not an easy task, taking the fact that they are antonymous, in most aspects, makes it hard to correlate them and differentiate them. As a non-typical topic, Generalism has been very hard to find in between the many other formation methodologies. It is a common way of developing your career, even though it may not be the best. Even when correlated with specialisations, this method can be hard to

utilise, based on the few opportunities that will arrive to the person.

Finding a way to develop research on a subject that most people don't know about, is a challenge I took. To be able to reach out to many entrepreneurs and employees, seeing their vision and opinions on something that they either went through or are going through, is the best way to create an argument about these topics.

Generalism started hundreds of years ago, as an example, the Roman empire was made out of Specialist Generalists, with the knowledge learned on the military academies, they would become Generalists at first, learning a little of every aspect that they should master, such as - Carpentry, War Skills, Metallurgy and Woodworking. But as they learned these skills, at the same time they mastered most of the others, which they had already understood the basics of.

2. Methodology

To produce this article, there have been two main methods. My own research, made with managers and employees from companies situated in Recife-PE, and in books, movies and other authors' articles. Following the natural order, I will first dissect my own research.

2.1 Personal Research

The primary idea was to do a research just between managers, ask them two basic questions and an optional question depending on the two first answers, but as the idea grew, more questions started to appear and the whole research topic changed. Here's how it was done. First, to know where and who were answering the research, I asked them their Personal information, Area of Occupation, Position in the company and Total time working.

After that, one main question was asked - "As a manager, would you rather hire: Option One - Generalist, Option Two - Specialist, Option Three - Depends on the offered position." Two objective options and there was a third answer box for those who chose "Depends on the offered position", that third box asked for a simple and quick answer of which occasion would change and why.

Once the Managers research was done, I started planning the employees research. Not knowing what and how to ask. The start was approaching some Faculty friends, looking for what they want to be, and then analyse if it was a Generalist or Specialist area, proceeding to ask them why. But to keep the amount of answers close to the manager's research, I asked all of the previous asked persons to send the formulary to all of their friends who were employees, hoping that the amount of answers would exponentially grow, as more and more people would share the formulary.

2.2 Study Research

This second part of the research was done in academic ways. Basically during the process of completion of the formulae of my personal research, I read articles, books and watched movies about the subject, trying to learn as much as possible about the idea, hoping to prepare a highly educational paper.

As this part started, the biggest challenge was to adapt the ideas gotten from other authors to my context, since there were very few who would fit the same idea. But after reading many articles, the idea started to flow by itself, beginning to understand the idea. Now I could dissect these articles in parts, and perfectly understand the subject, creating an information database used to formulate this paper being written.

2.3 Data analysis

As my Personal formulary was being filled with answers, from managers and employees, I needed to start analysing the information that was given to me.

As I waited for the end of the formulary deadline, along with my Statistics Faculty Teacher, I studied and got familiar with statistical research, planning on using it to analyse and resume all the data.

As the answers got through, the process began. A comprehensive approach is needed to statistically analyze data collected from managers and workers about their preferences in hiring generalists or specialists, as well as their own career aspirations as specialists or generalists. First, data should be collected using a well-designed questionnaire to capture relevant information such as recruitment criteria, reasons, and personal career goals. After collecting data, quantitative techniques such as chi-square tests or logistic regression can be used to identify significant relationships between management preferences and employee career goals. These statistical analyzes can provide valuable insights into the decision-making process within the organization and help develop effective human resource strategies that meet the needs of managers and the aspirations of employees.

The decision to use statistical analysis to examine managers' preferences for hiring generalists or specialists, and employees' career aspirations as specialists or generalists, depends on the effectiveness of generating actionable insights. Statistical methods provide a rigorous framework for objectively assessing patterns, relationships, and significance in data. By conducting chi-square tests or logistic regressions, researchers can quantify the strength and direction of relationships and help organizations identify factors that influence employee hiring decisions and career choices. This data-driven approach improves decision-making by identifying statistically significant trends and informs HR strategies tailored to the needs and desires of managers and employees.

3. Results

My research findings that shed light on the demanding preferences of managers and employees in modern organizational structures. Through rigorous data collection and statistical analysis, this study has uncovered valuable insights into the ideal composition of teams as well as the evolving career aspirations of employees.

3.1 Manager Preferences

Research findings reveal a consensus among managers that generalists are preferred for leadership positions. Generalists convey a sweeping perspective and flexibility to managerial jobs, reflecting the mind boggling thought of drive in

current affiliations. However, when it comes to operational positions, leadership clearly leans toward specialists. Specialists are known for their in-depth expertise and precision, which are often essential in operational roles that require specialized knowledge.

3.2 Employees Preferences

While analyzing employee career aspirations, a notable trend emerges. The majority of employees express a strong desire to become specialists in their respective fields. This inclination toward specialization is in line with the general social trend triggered by the technological age. As industries become more complex and technology-driven, workers are realizing the benefits of acquiring deep expertise in specific areas. This endeavor is a strategic response to the evolving demands of the labor market, where specialists are in high demand due to their ability to tackle complicated challenges.

The research findings underscore the importance of matching hiring preferences of managers with the specific needs of functions within the organization. In addition, they emphasize the need for HR strategies that support employees in their pursuit of specialization, recognizing that this trend is critical to adapting to the rapidly changing landscape of the modern workforce.

In summary, my research provides valuable insights into the dynamic interplay between managerial preferences and employee career aspirations. These insights can inform evidence-based decisions on talent acquisition and workforce development strategies, creating a business environment that leverages the strengths of generalists and specialists while supporting the career aspirations of a workforce in a technological age.

3.3 Supplementary Insights

Further analysis of the research findings reveals a nuanced relationship between manager preferences and employee desires. While managers prefer generalists for leadership positions and specialists for operational roles, it is important to recognize that the effectiveness of this approach may depend on a balanced mix of skills and expertise within the team. A synergistic combination of generalists and specialists can foster innovation and problem solving because generalists bring diverse perspectives and specialists provide depth.

Additionally, understanding how employees seek to specialize highlights the need for companies to invest in ongoing learning and development programs. Encouraging employees to deepen their expertise in their chosen fields not only increases job satisfaction, but also improves a company's competitiveness in an era when specialization is at a premium. Incorporating these

insights into talent management strategies allows companies to create dynamic teams that thrive in an evolving professional environment.

3.4 Existing material results

As cited in [1] "RANGE Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World" written by David Epstein, Thomas Edison had more than One Thousand patents, most of which were not important, and many more were rejected. His failures were abundant, but his successes – the lamp, a mass production item until the present day, the phonograph, the precursor of the Cinema Projector – were impacting.

This point of view brings a theory to the table, that even though failure is more likely to happen to Generalists, if they make significantly more projects or try ideas than a Specialist, they tend to have what so-called Home runs, as an analogy to Baseball - A tiny substratum of the many projects tend to go as planned and become immense, making them successful even though they have had many failures throughout their careers.

If that ideology is correct, the general idea would be that everyone would want to be a Generalist, but that is not the case. On a society where every person knows a little of everything, and doesn't know something on a deeper scale, the world would collapse. Every generalist needs a specialist to "keep the wheel spinning".

That's why most Generalists assume managing positions, where they need to know a little about every aspect that their teams do, but not so deeply, since their team is made of Specialists.

4. Conclusion

In the consistently developing scene of the cutting edge business world, the mission to decide the ideal harmony among specialization and speculation in administrative jobs is a basic undertaking. The examination discoveries divulge a convincing story that addresses the progressive subtleties inside associations and the significance of key ranges of abilities.

At the upper echelons of leadership, particularly for positions like CEO and CFO, a specialized skill set is paramount. These roles demand an unparalleled depth of expertise in areas such as finance and operations. The CFO, for instance, is the steward of an organization's financial health and stability, and their specialization in financial matters is indispensable.

However, for most other managerial positions, a different paradigm emerges. The results suggest that as one ascends the corporate ladder, a generalist orientation becomes increasingly valuable. The reasoning behind this lies in the multifaceted nature of leadership at higher tiers. Generalists possess the versatility and adaptability required to oversee

diverse functions, manage cross-functional teams, and make informed strategic decisions that transcend departmental boundaries. They bridge gaps, foster collaboration, and offer a holistic perspective that aligns with the complexities of executive roles.

By and by, it is significant to stress that the way to turning into a viable generalist ought to start with a groundwork of specialization. Right off the bat in one's vocation, the emphasis ought to be on gaining profound information and mastery in a particular region. Be that as it may, the excursion shouldn't stop there. To rise the administrative ordered progression effectively, people ought to simultaneously foster their capability in various regions, though not to the detriment of their center specialization. This cycle molds them into balanced pioneers with the capacity to draw from different spaces while succeeding in their specialty.

In essence, the research underscores the significance of striking a delicate balance between specialization and generalization. For most managerial positions, a gradual transition from specialist to generalist is the key to career advancement. It entails cultivating a broad understanding of different facets of the business landscape while maintaining deep expertise in one's chosen field. This approach equips managers with the agility and insight required to thrive in leadership roles, fostering innovation and adaptability.

In conclusion, the modern managing market reveals that the ideal managerial profile is one that marries the precision of specialization with the adaptability of generalization. While CEOs and CFOs stand as exceptions with their specialized roles, for most others, the journey toward leadership excellence entails nurturing a diverse skill set while keeping specialization as the bedrock of their expertise. The future of effective management lies in the hands of leaders who can seamlessly navigate the intricate interplay between specialization and generalization in the ever-evolving corporate landscape.

5. References

[1]Epstein, David. *RANGE Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World*. Riverhead Books; Illustrated edition (May 28, 2019); 352p.