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DEVELOPMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS: HOW TO IMPROVE BUSINESS ANALYSIS, PROBLEM SOLVING, AND CRITICAL THINKING

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Andreia Alves da Silva Elva

ABSTRACT

Effective administrative skills are essential for navigating the complexities of modern organizational environments. This article explores the development of three key competencies: business analysis, problem-solving, and critical thinking. It discusses how these interrelated skills contribute to strategic decision-making, operational efficiency, and organizational adaptability. Drawing on academic literature, the article highlights practical approaches to skill enhancement, such as experiential learning, data-driven training, and reflective practices. The integration of these competencies empowers professionals to make informed decisions, anticipate challenges, and drive continuous improvement within their organizations.

Keywords: Administrative skills. Business analysis. Problem-solving. Critical thinking. Professional development.

INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic and highly competitive business environment, the development of strong administrative skills is critical for individual and organizational success. Among the core competencies required in administrative roles, business analysis, problem-solving, and critical thinking stand out as essential skills that support strategic decision-making, resource management, and operational efficiency. Improving these skills not only enhances personal effectiveness but also contributes significantly to an organization's adaptability and performance.

Business analysis is the ability to identify business needs and determine solutions to business problems. It often involves understanding processes, gathering and interpreting data, and recommending changes that enhance efficiency or profitability. To enhance business analysis skills, individuals must engage in continuous learning, develop data literacy, and master tools such as SWOT analysis, cost-benefit analysis, and root cause analysis. According to Zikmund et al. (2013), proficiency in business analytics depends on both technical and cognitive capabilities, requiring professionals to interpret data in a way that supports evidence-based decisions. Training programs focused on statistical methods, database management, and business intelligence platforms such as Power BI or Tableau are increasingly recognized as effective means of advancing analytical competencies (Sharma et al., 2014).

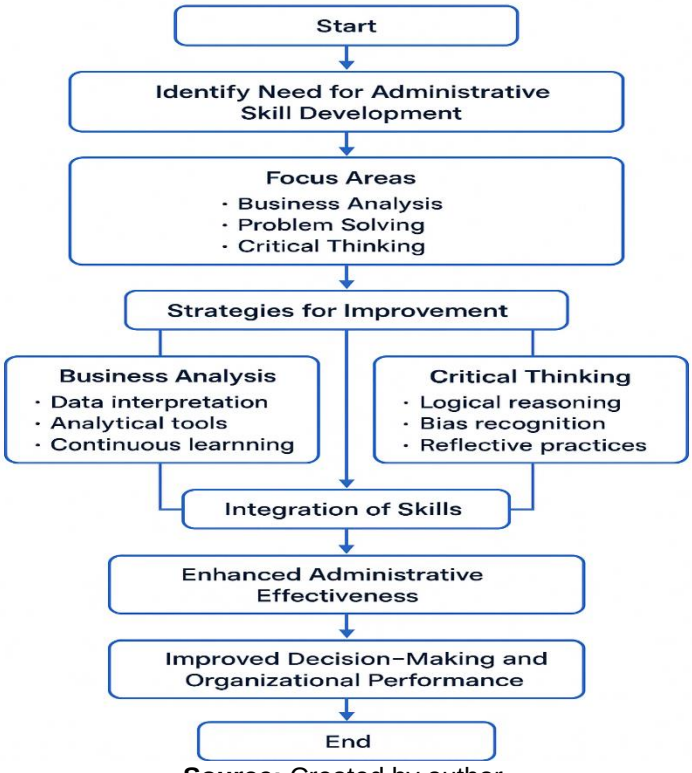
Problem-solving, closely related to business analysis, is a systematic process that involves identifying issues, generating alternatives, and implementing effective solutions. Effective problem-solving relies on a structured approach, such as the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, and benefits from the incorporation of collaborative and interdisciplinary perspectives. Studies indicate that high-performing managers often demonstrate a proactive stance toward problems, using reflective practices and scenario planning to anticipate and mitigate risks (Yukl, 2013). Furthermore, problem-solving is greatly enhanced by experience and feedback. Real-world case studies, simulations, and mentoring relationships provide valuable opportunities for developing and refining these skills (Kolb, 1984).

Critical thinking, often described as the foundation of sound judgment and rational decision-making, involves the objective analysis and evaluation of information to form a reasoned conclusion. It encompasses skills such as logical reasoning, identifying

assumptions, and recognizing biases. Facione (2015) emphasizes that critical thinking is not merely an innate talent but a skill set that can be cultivated through intentional practice and education. For instance, encouraging open dialogue, fostering intellectual curiosity, and engaging in reflective writing are pedagogical methods that promote the development of critical thinking. In organizational settings, critical thinking is promoted through a culture of inquiry, where questioning and constructive dissent are not only permitted but encouraged.

The flowchart visually represents the structured process for developing administrative skills, beginning with the recognition of the need for improvement. It highlights three core focus areas—business analysis, problem-solving, and critical thinking—each accompanied by specific strategies such as data interpretation, scenario planning, and reflective practices. These skills are shown to be interconnected and progressively build upon one another. The culmination of this developmental path leads to the integration of these competencies, resulting in enhanced administrative effectiveness and improved decision-making, which ultimately contribute to stronger organizational performance.

Figure 1. Flowchart of the Development of Administrative Skills through Business Analysis, Problem-Solving, and Critical Thinking.



Source: Created by author.

The integration of business analysis, problem-solving, and critical thinking creates a powerful toolkit for administrative effectiveness. Organizations are increasingly seeking professionals who can synthesize information across functional areas, anticipate challenges, and devise strategic responses. As workplaces become more data-driven and complex, these skills are no longer optional but essential. Educational institutions and corporate training programs must therefore prioritize experiential learning, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the use of real-time feedback mechanisms to foster these abilities. Additionally, self-directed learning tools such as online courses, professional certifications, and knowledge-sharing communities offer flexible and personalized pathways for skill development.

In conclusion, the development of administrative skills, particularly in business analysis, problem-solving, and critical thinking, is a strategic imperative for professionals aiming to thrive in contemporary business environments. These skills are interdependent and collectively enhance one's capacity to make informed, ethical, and impactful decisions. By investing in structured learning opportunities, cultivating reflective practices, and promoting a culture of continuous improvement, individuals and organizations can ensure they remain competitive and resilient in the face of evolving challenges.

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