



MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES IN A BRAZILIAN FEDERAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

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ABSTRACT

This article aimed to analyze the managerial development practices used in a Brazilian federal educational institution, specifically the Manager Training Program offered by the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Rio Grande do Norte (IFRN), Brazil in 2015, for 40 managers of operational level belonging to the effective staff of the institution. It is a descriptive, field, bibliographical and documentary research, through a case study, with a qualitative approach. As results, it was verified that the actions undertaken were satisfactory and, in accordance with the bibliography studied, however, it cannot be said that the said Program influenced the individual and organizational performance, nor that the educational institution carries out, on a permanent basis, the competencies in their managers.

Keywords: Managers; Training; Management skills.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations are increasingly complex. The transformations of the twentieth century brought to society, in addition to technological advances, new patterns of human behavior.

As a result, organizations, whether public or private, have had to adapt to an increasingly dynamic and competitive environment, and to do so, they have sought to improve their processes and routines in order to ensure organizational success. Bowditch (2004) argues that, in this sense, the attention focus of administrative theory has gradually shifted from physical and structural factors to human relationships and interactions, evolving with information technology in support of decision making, resulting in a more integrated approach of the organizations, the members that make them and the environments.

In public institutions, the need for changes in terms of the rational use of limited resources and better outcomes is no different. Specifically in a federal educational institution, which provides a fundamental service to the develop-

ment of society, the provision of technical and technological education, the social pressure of its students and the bodies that foster research and extension for excellence in services is constant.

A possible alternative to respond to the current challenges, based on human development and, consequently, good managers, is the Model of Competence Management, which, according to Carbone (2009), has been shown as an alternative to management models traditionally used by organizations. In this understanding, public managers, with mastery and use of certain competences, can give organizations the desired performance.

Public managers need to develop their interpersonal or human skills to be effective in their functions. Such skills enable improved productivity and reduced absenteeism and turnover, while increasing organizational citizenship and job satisfaction (Robbins, 2005).



The Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology (FIs) are part of the Federal Network of Professional, Scientific and Technological Education of the Brazilian Federal Government and are geographically located throughout Brazil, especially after the expansion process started in 2003 with the internalization of the institutes and the creation of new *Campi*. In this process, public institutions undergo changes, in keeping with the new times of the knowledge era, and the introduction of new management techniques and methods is timely, in order to overcome their challenges, to minimize the problems observed in their management and ensure excellence in terms of the provision of technical and technological education.

Among the FIs, there is the *Instituto Federal do Rio Grande do Norte* (IFRN - Federal Institute of Rio Grande do Norte), which shows a relevant educational connection with the society of Rio Grande do Norte, since it offers a free public education of quality, which is the result of a qualified technical teaching staff, plus a good management of the applicability of the resources passed on to the staff, and it is one of the references in terms of vocational education throughout the State, in the region and in the country. In order to maintain this connection with the population, the offer of scientific-technological-humanistic education aims at training professional citizens, committed to social, political and cultural transformations who are able to work in the work world, which requires public management aimed at presenting efficient and effective results, especially by using public resources, with the duty of accountability to society.

The management of the IFRN *Campi* is carried out in a decentralized manner, each unit having a General Director and its Management team, made up of area directors and sector coordinators. All of them receive some kind of bonus for exercising the managerial role.

Given the importance of managers in the federal institutes, as an element that must ensure rapid responses to complex issues in institutes, a managerial posture is required, which should include specific skills and attitudes at work, that is, the development of management skills.

The IFRN, through its Server Training Policy, has added efforts to allow employees to participate in training events, as well as to create environments that allow the training and development of qualified and competent managers.

In view of the above, the following research problem arises: are the managerial development practices, currently adopted in IFRN, in line with theoretical assumptions? What makes this research present as a general objective to evaluate the manager development practices undertaken by the IFRN, specifically the Manager Training Program?

Thus, in order to achieve the proposed objective, the descriptive field research, which originated this work, was performed in the IFRN with the managers of the People Management Department of the institution. The results were based on analyzes made in documents provided by the Coordination of Personnel Development of the organ, in documents of public domain and in semi-structured interviews with the managers. The literature review was based on studies on: people management in the public sector, training, development and human learning.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Training and Development in Organizations

In the context of organizations, many professionals already possess the knowledge and skills necessary to develop their activities, while others require an initial investment before being able to meet the daily challenges of the market. However, some type of training will always be necessary in the course of the performance of any individual, either to acquire new knowledge or to maintain a satisfactory performance.

According to Bohlander, Snell *et* Sherman (2005), some theorists differentiate terminologies: “training” as some more specific action focused on the performance factor in a short time; and “development”, in what concerns the gain of the worker’s abilities for future responsibilities. However, it is known that the terms are usually combined.

Development training policies, within the concept of strategic people management, aim at the best performance of each employee, recognizing that this performance will directly affect the organizational results.

Fernandes (2013) argues that, once the competencies of an organization have been mapped out, efforts should be invested in the development of professional competences, with Individual Development Plans or with organizational portfolio actions. The latter are collective in nature and require the commitment of the whole organization in order to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary for the achievement of the organizational objectives. The same author reinforces that companies can and should make combined use of different methodologies to boost their results.

Amorim *et* Silva (2012) show in their studies on public service training that the main reasons that lead administrative technicians in education to participate in training and skills are: to monitor changes in the work environment, improve the execution of tasks, apply and acquire new knowledge as well as multiply that knowledge.



In this regard, more and more organizations are creating learning environments that facilitate the adequacy of the employee to the position occupied and allow their career development.

Human learning

In the context of the individual, there is a process called learning, which, despite having various definitions, in a generic way, refers to changes in terms of the behavior of human beings, not only those changes that come from life experiences, but also from their relation to the context in which they are inserted. This terminology has been included in Administration books in order to refer to processes that have occurred in the context of work teams or organizations (Abbad *et* Borges-Andrade, 2004).

Also according to Abbad *et* Borges-Andrade (2004), two traditions linked to learning theories had their origins in psychology in the early twentieth century: behaviorist tradition and cognitive tradition. The first focuses on the change of behavior effected in a stable way from the interaction of the human being with the environment. The second is premised on the fact that such a lasting change in behavior is the result of interaction with the environment, but this interaction gives rise to mental processes or knowledge, attitudes and skills acquired from those changes.

The authors also emphasize that the skills learned can be used in two different formats (Abbad *et* Borges-Andrade, 2004). The lateral transference recognizes that individuals can reproduce performances that have not been learned, but which are similar to the acquired knowledge. Vertical transference, on the other hand, allows individuals to acquire more complex knowledge, from a simpler capacity already learned previously. The transference can also be positive, when learning facilitates human performance and negative when it interferes with the possibility of hindering other learning processes.

Management of people in the public sector: evolution and trends

Increasingly, public administration is under pressure from society to provide better services, more transparency in its actions and respond, quickly and efficiently, to contemporary changes. Thus, in addition to improvements in terms of structures, processes, adoption of new working methods and legislation, public servants are recognized as the main agents of change in order to achieve the desired results (Pantoja, Camões, Bergue, 2010).

In an analysis of the models of people management in Public Administration from 1995 to 2010, Camargo *et al.* (2014) reveal a series of people management practices that have sought, not only to direct improvements to the employees, but also improvements in terms of meeting social demands. In this sense, aspects of management, computerization and new looks on the human being were present both in the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso and in President Lula's Government. One can highlight institutional reform, the creation of government schools, the Quality and Participation Program in Public Administration and also in the fiscal adjustment. Following this, the initiatives related to professionalization, management and governance were able to strengthen programs of training and development of public managers (Camargo *et al.*, 2014).

Thus, we can see the Federal Government's effort to develop systematized actions for the training of managers. In this context, the National School of Public Administration (Enap) undertakes educational actions, in person or at a distance, as a way to create a framework of managers capable of managing resources in public institutions, making decisions and exercising the roles required to face the current challenges.

An important legal framework in the people management scenario is Decree No. 5,707/06, which establishes the *Política Nacional de Desenvolvimento de Pessoas* (PNDP - National Policy for the Development of People) at the federal level and gives guidelines for the development of personnel in Public Administration. The Decree brings to the public sector the concept of Management by Competencies and the understanding of the training as a learning process that must develop institutional competences through the individual, also bringing the obligation of every institution to prepare an Annual Training Plan (Brazil, 2006).

Many private sector concepts have been incorporated into public management. In addition to the need to bring good practices from the private sector to the public sector, this legislation also arises from the need to professionalize employees, and their actions should be aligned with the organization's guidelines (Junior *et* Sinachi, 2014).

Within the perspective of the strategic management of Human Resources, companies should see people as responsible for basing the core competencies of an organization, with people being the main resource to ensure competitive advantage. In this regard, HR actions should enable the organization to achieve its strategic objectives.

It is important to clarify that the existence of specific legislation for a certain subject does not guarantee the successful development of its objectives. Silva *et* Melo (2013) emphasize the resistance of the implementation of the management



model by competence in the public sector, factors related to the need to change organizational culture, communication and information dissemination processes, obstacles to selective processes (public tenders), personnel resizing and the fact that legislation does not keep pace with changes in organizations and society.

The public manager: possibilities and challenges

Much is asked in terms of the roles and functions performed in the organizational environment. Some of them have a formal character, and others may come naturally. In fact, there are differences between the characteristics of leaders and managers, being the leadership of fundamental importance for the performance of the manager. In addition to planning, organizing, and controlling resources due to their formal position in organizations, they have influence and inspire others, usually through three types of skills: technical, human, and conceptual (Newstrom, 2008).

According to Newstrom (2013), the use of these leadership skills varies according to the organizational level occupied by the individual, and the technical skills are more used by specific operational and professional managers. As they assume leadership positions, they begin to use more human skills, such as the relationship and leadership skills of their subordinates. Senior managers, therefore, use human and technical skills to a lesser extent, and increasingly deal with long-term ideas, concepts, and planning, using predominantly conceptual skills.

According to Gunter, Hall, Bragg (2013), leaders are actively co-responsible for solving public problems, and the modernization of public sector services highlights the need for leadership in the leading positions of public organizations.

Given the reality in which it is inserted, it is observed that the public manager must also hold managerial skills. There is some agreement in the literature regarding the understanding that competence is an articulated combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that, when used correctly, converge into a differentiated way of acting, as well as being able to add value to the company and individuals (Nisembaum, 2000; Carbone, 2009).

Junior *et Sinachi* (2014) point out that when it comes to skills in public management there is a difficulty in understanding the function/role that servers play in the institution, due to the differences between the nomenclatures of their entry positions. However, it is extremely necessary to identify the role of each individual, since this information will be important to guide the training actions and resources allocated to the development of each role.

Notably, studies on managerial competencies in public organizations, as well as in educational institutions, have aroused the interests of researchers and organizations, reinforcing the importance of these competencies for organizational performance and individual and institutional performance (Ferreira *et* Maia, 2014; Pereira *et* Silva, 2011; Picchiali, 2010).

3. METHODOLOGY

According to Mynaio (1993), the term methodology refers to the way to approach the problems and to seek answers for them, including the theoretical conceptions of approach, the set of techniques that make possible the construction of reality and the creative potential of the researcher.

For Gil (2002), research is like the rational and systematic procedure that aims to provide answers to the problems that are proposed.

The methodological procedures used to reach the defined objectives will be presented based on the characterization of the research type: its area of coverage, its participants and their terrain, the data collection plan and the treatment used for the proposed instrument.

Type of research

The present scientific study aims to achieve a better understanding in terms of the organizational activity, through the analysis of the manager training program of the research institution. The work was carried out from a field, bibliographical and documentary research, through a case study, using a qualitative approach of descriptive character.

For Vergara (2010), the bibliographical research aims to provide a survey and selection of literature published on the subject searched in books, magazines, newspapers, serials, theses and dissertations, placing the researcher in direct contact with all the material already written on this subject.

According to Yin (2001), the case study is a recommended research strategy when there are "how" and "why" questions, as well as in situations where the researcher has little control over the events and when the focus of the research is on contemporary phenomena inserted in the context of real life.

According to Flick (2004), for the accomplishment of qualitative research there are some main factors that guide this doing, such as: the appropriation of methods and theories, considering, for example, the comprehensiveness and complexity of the studied object; The diversity of perspectives



on the object, starting from the subjectivity and the social context that surrounds it; the reflections of the researcher in relation to the research and vice versa, as part of the production of knowledge; and the variety of approaches and methods as part of the constructed history in relation to qualitative research.

Study object

The IFRN is a century-old institution with a history of innovation and pioneering in its work. Currently (in 2015), it has about 28 thousand students distributed in all regions of the State, in 21 *Campi* and in the Rectory, offering a total of 109 courses of medium and higher levels, in the face and distance modalities.

The IFRN is recognized for its quality in the technical and technological education offered to its students and for its contribution to society since its foundation in 1909 as the School of Artifice Apprenticeship. Throughout its history, the institution has undergone changes and reinventions to meet the demands of the community and the advances in the Brazilian education. This was the case since 1942, when it was renamed to Federal Industrial School, by offering technical courses at the intermediate level, until the recent expansion of the Federal Network of Vocational, Scientific and Technological Education of Rio Grande do Norte that was initiated in 1994.

According to statistical data released by the Personnel Management Board, in December 2014, available on the IFRN official website, its staff has about 2,400 servers as permanent assets. Of these, about 1,200 are technical-administrative in education, entering the institution by means of public tender to occupy different positions and attributions, with the objective of supporting the pillars of Education, Research and Extension recommended as the end of that house of education.

In general, both technical-administrative servants and teaching staff may occupy grateful functions, serving the interests of the administration. It should be noted, however, that the institution, despite having a policy to encourage qualification, does not develop a program of identification and later recognition of skills and competencies of its employees to target the functions and sectors related to their skills.

In this context, the Manager Training Program analyzed by this study was developed by the *Diretoria de Gestão de Pessoas* (DIGPE - Personnel Management Department), through its *Coordenação de Desenvolvimento de Pessoal* (Co-depe - Coordination of Personnel Development).

Data collection and analysis procedure

Documentary research was carried out through access to statistics, indicators and institutional documents made available in the public domain, through the official website of the institution, and in restricted access documents, provided by IFRN's Personnel Management Board.

The bibliographic review was based on studies and research carried out in federal institutions of higher education, as well as publications of scholars in the area of learning, people management, training and development and competence management, with the objective of basing this job theoretically and methodologically.

The data collection plan used document analysis and a semi-structured interview with the program manager. Vergara (2010) points out that the questionings made in individual interviews cause interviewees to reflect their position on the researched subject by helping to find the answers to the problem researched.

4. RESULTS

The IFRN regulated its Policy on Training and Qualification of Personnel, by means of Resolution No. 20/2005 - CD, when the institution was still called the *Centro Federal de Educação Tecnológica do Rio Grande do Norte* (CEFET-RN - Federal Center of Technological Education of Rio Grande do Norte), and after that, there was no more updates.

According to the information obtained, this document was prepared as a result of the responsibility and concern that the institution had with regard to the education and training of its employees, but mainly due to the need to comply with legal regulations, specifically the Decree No. 5,707/06.

Among the objectives recommended by the Regulation of Training and Qualification of Servers, there are two that are directed to the development of servers for the exercise of their functions, namely: to promote specific training and qualification events for the various sectors of the Institution, so that, by the end of 2007, each server had participated in, at least, 2 (two) short duration events (up to 60 hours); and to promote specific training aimed at forming a cadre of employees capable of occupying managerial functions.

Although this document is presented as a guiding force for the actions of the Training and Qualification of Servers, it is quite outdated in terms of the size of the institution, which, after its publication, has undergone a restructuring with the expansion of its education policy, including physical expansion throughout the territory of the state of Rio Gran-



de do Norte. It is understood, therefore, that there would be a need for a revision and a consequent updating of these development parameters, in order to respond more effectively to the new demands of the institution and, consequently, its servants, regarding training.

The training program for managers of the IFRN, analyzed in this work, was the result of a Survey of Training Needs, destined to the IFRN servers. It was carried out in 2014 by Codepe - an organization directly linked to IFRN's DIGPE, whose purpose was to know the specific training and development needs of the servers for the preparation of the Annual Training Plan, base year 2015.

As a result of this initiative, the IFRN Servers Training Program was released in 2015, and it included training in the most diverse areas of interest, including the Manager Training Program. It is important to highlight that this Program deals with a timetable for the development of actions aimed at Training, with course programming, its target audience and program content.

Such a program was designed for operational level managers. Its target audience was the managers with gratified functions (GF's), that is, that are sector coordinators in the IFRN *Campi*. For that, 40 vacancies were offered. The main objective was the training of managers for the efficient and effective exercise of their functions, from the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills pertinent to the capacity to manage resources and to lead people, whose methodology was the format of workshops, dialogued exhibitions, case study approach and analysis of successful experiences, in order to stimulate participants' reflection regarding their role as managers.

In order to achieve this goal, five modules were developed - training sessions - every two weeks, according to table 1 below:

This program was shown as a collective training initiative within the organization studied, with the participation of managers from different *Campi* geographically spread throughout Rio Grande do Norte, within the possibilities of development of skills defended by Fernandes (2013). The fact that the Manager Training Program has a systemic character already reveals the commitment of the top management of the institution to develop skills in its managers. In addition to acquiring new knowledge, the program aimed at developing technical skills as well as human skills related to leadership, interpersonal relationships and negotiation, since they are operational level managers. These aspects are in line with the ideas of Newstrom (2013), which argues that operational managers tend to use more technical skills evolving towards the use of human skills, for leading others.

Table 1. Training modules

Module	Topics Covered	Workload
I - Context of Performance	Federal Education Network and its role in the Development of Brazil	8:00 AM
	Technical and Professional Education in Brazil	
	Public Administration and the Role of the Manager	
II - Organizational Planning and Management	Strategic Planning and Management	8:00 PM
	Federal Government Management Instruments	
	Processes management	
	Instruments for quality management	
III - Resource Management	Public Budget, Revenues and Expenses	8:00 PM
	Tax Responsibility Law	
	Purchasing in the Public Sector	
IV - People Management	Communication	8:00 PM
	Team Development	
	Leadership	
	Negotiation	
	Organizational Climate	
V - Learning Consolidation	Presentation of Learning Reports by participants	8:00 AM
	Application of learning tests	
	Evaluation of the Program	

Source: Research Data (2015)

The program is also in line with the thinking of Abbad *et Borges-Andrade* (2004), when it is understood that organizational environments that offer conditions and support to exemplary performance tend to reach higher levels of learning than organizations that place that responsibility solely on individuals, according to the competence they present.

In order to contribute to the achievement of the company's overall goals, Bohlander, Snell, *et Sherman* (2005) understand that four PHASES are required so that the investments of the organization in training achieve the expected performance. They are: needs, program design, implementation and evaluation.

The needs assessment contemplates three other aspects, which are: the analysis of the company, involving the environment, strategies and resources to define the focus of the training; the analysis of the task, to determine the content that will be contemplated for the fulfillment of the duties in the work; and the evaluation of the person, in order to define the people who need training, as Bohlander, Snell *et Sherman* (2005) commented.



The Training Program provided to participants in the case of the Manager Training Program included information such as: workload, number of places, objective and program content. For Bohlander, Snell, *et Sherman* (2005), the Training Program should contain at least four related points: instructional objectives, training readiness and motivation, learning principles, and instructor characteristics.

In view of the information analyzed, it is possible to notice that aspects regarding the participants' maturity and experiences were not mentioned, that is, whether they have the necessary skills and knowledge to absorb the contents presented during the course. However, it is possible that this information was considered for the selection of the participating employees from the responsible Coordination analysis. The characteristics of the instructors were only disclosed during the Program, along with the schedule of activities, usually with a module in advance.

The implementation of the training is an essential aspect for the success of the investment, including the choice of the appropriate method. According to Bohlander, Snell, *et Sherman* (2005), training methods for managerial development may be the same as those used for more basic level employees, although there are others more focused on the development objective, which should be: extend the experience of the leader and provide a long-term vision in the institution

The method chosen by the IFRN for the accomplishment of this Training of Managers was a mixture of Seminars directed to the themes of policies and procedures and guidelines to be used, with experiences in the workplace, staff meetings to discuss problems and events that occur outside the direct areas of action of those leaders.

The manager training program analyzed in this article contemplated, in each module carried out, learning objectives for its participants. However, the only tool used for the assessment of learning was the learning tests applied in the training environment. This fact, however, does not allow affirming that the knowledge, skills and attitudes addressed in the program were objectively applied to the daily work of the participants and their relationship with their peers and subordinates, thus improving organizational performance.

Regarding the evaluation of the said program for managers under analysis, it is important to reinforce that all training should be evaluated, as well as other actions adopted in People Management, in order to define their effectiveness. According to Bohlander, Snell, *et Sherman* (2005), there are criteria to evaluate it: reactions, learning, behavior and results. However, the research conducted allows us to infer that the evaluation undertaken in the program does not meet any of these criteria.

What we have is an incipient evaluation, as it is the application of a simplified questionnaire, which addressed aspects such as dissemination and structure of application of the event (classrooms, didactic material, etc.), and a generic evaluation of each module, with the following aspects: content domain, teaching didactics, relationship with the class and time administration in the classroom.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Respecting the objective of this article, which was to evaluate the manager development practices undertaken by the IFRN, through the Program of training of managers, it is concluded that such a program shows itself as a satisfactory initiative for the development of managers. In general, the program contemplated the development of technical skills, with the acquisition of new human knowledge and skills, key factors in the training of managers, being carried out in a systemic way, involving servers throughout the institution.

On the other hand, there are some flaws in the conduct of the process, specifically due to the absence of simulations and spaces for exchanging experiences, as well as failure to carry out a meaningful evaluation of the results of the program. The interviews do not allow us to state whether the program will continue in the coming years, especially due to the economic contingencies of the current scenario.

The methodological aspects are pointed out as natural limitations of the research, since, having only one organization studied, the research topic is not exhausted and access only to the institutional documents and managers of the program, does not allow to contemplate the professionals benefited from the manager development initiatives carried out by the organization.

It is suggested as possibilities of new research to carry out an evaluation of the same program studied here from the perspective of those involved, aiming to measure the impact of the program on the professionals in the return of their activities, whether the acquired skills are being used in the day to day and whether individual and institutional performance has changed on the basis of program assumptions. It is also pointed out the possibility of comparative studies in order to verify if there is similarity in the practices developed for the training and development of managers in other public agencies and/or federal institutes in Brazil.

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