REVIEW ARTICLE

# The Competencies Management in Brazilian Public Sector

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## Abstract

We investigated the implementing of the competencies management from cases of public organizations. For this, the model concepts were related to the interviewees' practices, and cases related to the theme. The research focused on the general aspects related to public management, the competencies management and what is ongoing in the public sector. The research was qualitative. The results concluded that the model adoption is recent and complex. The public sector specificity also affects the model practice, where organizations in the sector are particularly slow to change. It is a misunderstanding to believe that solely formation programs can lead to the competencies development, once they deal little with the capacity to mobilize knowledge in specific working situations. It is not enough to introduce a new management tool without transforming the system as a whole, not including politicians and citizens in this process, because it essentially requires participation and collective commitment.

**Keywords:** *Practice of the competencies management, Public sector.*

## Introduction

The public sector is not at the mercy of the various changes that occur in global trade and new forms of labor relations came from the productive restructuring and increasing customers demand, which under a public scope refer to the society in general. Thus, there are investments to transcend and move from a bureaucracy emphasis model to a managerial model, with productivity related values, orientation to decentralization, or even to a managerial public administration, with focus in efficiency and competitiveness values [1]. Although changes in the public sector are not as fast in the private, it is noticeable the governments' intentions to promote more quality to the sector. The reform agenda of many countries in the world emphasize control, either over public spending, or on their public policies, among other aspects.

In Brazil, the transparency with respect to the citizens attendance and social participation, is leading to a new agenda, far beyond the search for quantitative results. The public administration has accompanied this period of public servants acknowledgment, seeking qualification and training as a way to develop a government more attuned to social needs.

In this context, the public institutions live a new organizational reality, where the organization knowledge must align to the necessary behavior arrangement of its members and where the customer-citizens are increasingly demanding.

To Wolynec [2] the focus is on the public manager as the main agent of change, and aware of it. To this author, this new model consists in revising and computerizing processes; pointing resizing strategies, relocating, training and upgrading public servants; reducing costs, optimizing tax revenues, and improving the provided services quality. Allied to this, it is people's valuing and the resulting quality increase that lead to a new image of the public service.

In recent years, Saraiva et.al. [3] pointed out that it assigns to the public administrator to assimilate administrative and managerial formulas coming from the private sector, intending to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. However, the political decision takes into account variables that the private decision does not consider.

This understanding, emphasizing that administration identified itself to business administration by the time of the great depression, which generated hostility towards companies and their executives. Yet, we should consider that the first systematic and conscious application of administrative principles, according

to the author, was when reorganizing the United States Army, under President Theodore Roosevelt in 1901.

Since then, such understanding has changed, revealing the progressive strengthening of a more agile governmental activity: the action based in planning migrates to the idea of a public policy. To Saraiva [3] technology facilitated the political system democratization. Decentralization and participation became easier in their operation scope, as well as social changes became possible and desirable.

Thus, the changes in public management and its resulting advance in the public policies infer their various denotations, from a field of governmental activity - a general purpose to realize - to a specific action policy, as it seems the case of the legal systems that guide the government actions in the National Staff Development Policy (PNDP).

The competencies management model, allied to this policy, intensifies in the contemporary public administration context, mainly in the federal public scope. It applies both in the strategic and in human resources perspective. Although the explanation is objectively clear, its implementation is complex.

Even facing such difficulty, the competencies management, when applied to the public sector reveals itself as a management model for achieving organizational effectiveness, by articulating the human and social development of employees with the goal of organizational management. The approach for competencies promotes social responsibility as a social commitment in its widest meaning, as clarified by Capano and Steffen [4].

Therefore, this study investigated the competencies management implementing from federal public servants, relating the model concepts to its practice in public organizations, or those providing public service.

## Brazilian Public Management

It is necessary to understand the nowadays Brazilian Public Management along with the society transformation process. It is impossible to understand and manage the Brazilian public organizations without understanding the relation between their working scopes, new technologies and the investment need in human capital.

Thus, it is necessary to think about ways in which collective and organizational knowledge can embody individual knowledge, creating not tangible values that can efficiently differentiate such organizations [5].

Historically, management in Brazil has gone through three distinct phases and conceptually well-defined: before the Revolution of 1930, Public Administration was patrimonial; after the Public Service Administration Department (DASP) creation, in 1938, it became known as Bureaucratic Public Administration and from the 50's it had a more significant focus on the citizen, on the results and services decentralization, then named Managerial Public Administration.

However, it is important to emphasize that the DASP creation shows the government's first efforts in an effective professionalization of the public sector. Merit based careers, systematic classification in positions and staffing structuring were the most remarkable actions during this period.

Even though the DASP creation took place in the 30's, it was only in the 60's, when Federal Law n° 3.780/07.12.1960 and Federal Decree n° 200/02.25.1967 were enacted, that a major administrative reform movement was made, based on principles of planning, decentralization, authority delegation, coordination and control. That decree marked the functional decentralization, transferring activities to municipalities, foundations and mixed capital companies [6].

The Federal Law n° 5647, enacted in 1970, established a new system of positions classification, originating the PCC – Position Classification Plan, current General Positions Plan of the Executive Branch (PGPE), created by the Law 11.357/2006. The SIPEC – Federal Management Civil Staff System was created in the 70's. This system basic function is to show a panorama of human resources in the federal public sector, and the sorting and redistribution of positions and jobs, recruitment and selection, registration and placing, improvement and staff legislation [6].

Two new systems were created in the 80's and 90's: the SIAPE – Human Resources Management Integrated System and the SIAFI – Federal Government Financial Administration Integrated System. They are the Executive official database referring to budget, financial, accounting and staff information. However, these systems creation was not accompanied by investment in training and staff development, or by modern planning methodologies. The systems basically organized

and showed the real human resources and financial situation of the Executive branch.

However, these systems, especially the SIAPE, did not bring an analysis of the strategic variables to define the profile and sizing of the involved organizations workforce [6].

After the nineties, the Public Administration had a period of government investment in technological innovations that made access to information in the public scope, allowing a more transparent process of interaction with citizens.

Examples of this phase of an effective participation between government and society relate to the country democratization, which causes new situations in the various segments of the public power as the participatory budgeting [5.]

Since 1995, the Brazilian public sector has sought to develop a public management "more focused on the citizen and society than on bureaucracy" and thereby "give the public management features of contemporary management - of excellence or world-class - without offending its public core " [7].

Guimarães [8], however, argued that it still needs a change, and this transformation will be possible when a break with the traditional models of management of public resources occur, so introducing a new management culture. It is in this sense that is following an alternative changing, focusing on people, which is the public sector competencies management.

## The Competencies Management

Mello [9], when studying education and work competencies, highlighted the term polysemy and referred to it as more as a fad in education, yet a vague term that does not seem to override its meaning of qualification.

Although the term competence, in a common meaning, indicates something good, above any doubt, of a person, team or organization that has satisfactory or better than expected results, with a differential or undoubted quality, the term has various meanings. Some authors related competence to competition, rivalry [10].

However, competence as a set of behaviors that people or organizations can apply, making them more efficient and competitive compared to others. The meaning of competence goes far beyond behavior, because it includes a range of knowledge, action capacity and structured behaviors available to get a goal or target, in a search for results.

His study revealed the descriptive essence of competence, which ignores the underlying attributes that cannot be isolated from the current work practices, which are necessary in specific situations, something that is at the core of the meaning of competence. We notice, then, that when it comes to competencies, identifying people contributions, distinguishing organizational outcomes, it has to be very clear in its concept.

In the organizations range, there are companies using competence indicators definitions to form high performance teams, as a mean to make the company more competitive, based on international success results in the competencies management.

Gramigna [10] drew a scene where the competencies management in the international scope emphasizes a set of innovating management techniques, aiming to add value to the business.

The desired results point that people are important in this process, outlining a supporting methodology to people management. The author said that the competencies management implies participation, as it shares decision-making, which leads to a collective and institutional responsibility.

Objectively, what are the advantages of an organization in adopting the model of the competencies management? Gramigna [10] experience helps answering the question, relating the achievements in this approach implementation, such as:

- Employees satisfaction increased level, generating a more human working environment.
- Internal talents retention
- Identification of professionals with potential for possible succession.
- Formation of a critical mass, leading to innovative practices development in the company.
- Significant reduction in the costs of training programs.
- Outstanding performances and results achievement [10].

It contributes to know people's potential and makes possible distinguished teams formation. The result is an increase in people's mood, raising their disposition and increasing job satisfaction. According to Gramigna [10]. "Happy, productive

and competent teams make difference and produce unimaginable results".

Thus, we infer that developing of effective mechanisms to motivate servers, as well as the aligning the activities of people management to organizational strategies and guidelines set by governments start to configure emerging policy challenges for human resource management both in the private and public sectors.

Set in 2006, through Federal Decree n° 5.707, that created the Policy and Guidelines for Staff Development on the direct public federal management, autonomous agencies and foundations, which has the scope to adopt the competencies management. This sets up an innovation in the sector.

Kuczmarcki [11], when dealing with leadership strategies in high competition groups, emphasized that innovation is an attitude that penetrates and spreads, allowing companies to look beyond the present, creating a future vision.

To this author, there is innovation when processes already underway improve, which partly ensures the organization's competitive advantage. Innovating meets the expectations of customers, employees, entrepreneurs, shareholders.

In the public scope, corroborating the author, one notes that the competencies management, whilst innovation in people management, meets availabilities of employees, managers and society, in the public sector case.

Thus, the efforts in qualifying the management functions are a mark of the competencies management.

That's what Brandão and Guimarães [12] reported, stressing that the competencies management, conceptually, proposes to guide efforts for planning, capturing, developing and evaluating the different levels in the organization and the participating people. When adopting this model as a basic premise, according to Albuquerque and Oliveira [13], it is the company strategies and skills definition that adds value. This enables a direct focus on the organization strategies, thus allowing more impactful skills development.

The competencies management implementation gives the organization guidance for planning their efforts: capturing, developing and evaluating human and organizational competences that are necessary for their goals achievement [14].

In this context, we attempted to create an encouraging climate for people's competences development, which occurs by learning processes, allowing individuals to assume more complexes duties and responsibilities [15]. In order to this, the organizations need to create mechanisms to expand ability and learning sharing.

## The Competencies Management application in the Public Sector

The competencies management has become a benchmark for people management in the federal public sector since the Decree No. 5707 / 23. 02. 2006 publication, which established the National Staff Development (PNDP). In 2006, through the Decree, the National Staff Development Policy that belongs to the federal public administration - direct, autarchic and foundational - adopted the competencies management model as a reference to the people management in the public sector [16].

Over the past few years, several Brazilian public organizations, such as Caixa Econômica Federal, Banco do Brasil and EMBRAPA - Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária [17], have applied the competencies management models. Furthermore, Pires et al. [18] highlighted some experience from a round table discussion set by these institutions, when they shared information about their implementation stages and their difficulties.

Amongst those difficulties, the obtained results point: cultural barriers, methodological difficulties on competences mapping, scarce commitment from senior management levels, new practices to people subsystems impaired articulation, lack of qualified staff and knowledge about the subject. [18].

However, some other organizations are adopting competencies management model successfully. The Federal University of Tocantins (UFT) established the Development Career Plan for the Position Plan of the Administrative-Technical in Education Members (PDIPCTAE), based on the program "People Management Competence", which is consistent with the institution strategic planning and guidelines, set by The Ministry of Education.

This Plan aims to favor enablement's activities for public servants. It gives the competencies management program articulation from skilled staff from the cyclic system, composed by: job descriptions and functions, flowchart sector, sizing of staff needs and vacancies allocation

model, performance evaluation and formalization of the Enablement and Development Plan [19].

Other examples in the public sector are found in the document prepared by The Economic Cooperation and Development Organization-OECD (2010); Petrobras; Economic and Social Development National Bank, and The Ministry Finance. At Petrobras, the human resource management system reports directly to the CEO, harmonizes with the company business system and it has competencies management as a key for this process.

The BNDES is still at an early stage. Its area of human resource management has developed its strategic plan recently, and the competencies management is central in this process as well as in the area other subsystems. The stage of the model's needs evaluation has already been performed and, even if the model was still in its early stage. It is going to relate to the Balanced Scorecard, but will face a selection related challenge.

The Ministry of Finance is already developing the competencies management. It is analyzing the functions according to its core competencies. The competences are also taken into account when transferring staff. The most prominent goal is to integrate competencies management to the Talent Bank, by creating a development evaluation instrument.

The National Agency for Waterway Transportation - ANTAQ is another example in the public sector with advances in implementing the model. This regulator agency intends to regulate and supervise the activities of water transport provision and operation of port infrastructure and waterway [10].

Its purpose seems to favor the practice of the competencies management, given that regulators have both Accountability function as well as search results, combining processes to organizational strategies. So, the very structure of ANTAQ whilst a legal personality under public law but financially administrative and functionally independent, reveals a novel structural model of public management, and the competencies management model presents as an organizational innovation.

Another successful implementation example is the Ceará Energy Company-Coelce - a publicly traded corporation, electric power public utility concessionaire. The Company is overseen by a regulatory agency that, referring to this segment,

is the Electric Energy National Agency. Although a corporation, it has a public purpose called non-state public, which is the electricity distribution to Ceará State.

In 2005, the company defined its strategic plan, the "Escalada Coelce" (Coelce Climbing), consisting in actions directly related to the company business. They relate to the company strategic aims, which express the corporate mission and vision [10].

The Coelce basis strategy is the Balanced Scorecard -BSC, where planning is constantly monitored through the strategic map. To fulfill its mission it requires skilled employees, committed to a quality service, satisfying and profitable, contributing to Ceara State development at the same time. Therefore, those strategic aspects favor the competencies management model.

The advances in the competencies management in that organization identifies that the competences are variable, due to changes in the companies strategies. The career plans are also changed, according adjustments in working processes.

The Coelce model values the human potential, but it seems not to work in a team dynamics or even in an organization when it comes to competences, since it infers development in individual competences. However, it's worth emphasizing that, according to Gramigna [10] the company enables development activities aligned to presented needs.

The examples show there is space for development and implantation of the Competencies Management in the public sector. Although literature and research performed in this universe also regard that its adoption is not simple, it requires the overcoming some difficulties such as enforcing legislation from the public service culture "renewal".

The present legislation points to the awareness stage importance in the model implementing process along with the servers. Furthermore, we must make clear that the competencies management implementing process does not imply in the performance evaluation process.

The Federal Decree n ° 5.707/2006 makes clear that the competencies management implementation process aims at enablement. So as the competencies management, the annual training plan and the execution report are instruments of the staff development national policy. Therefore, the decree defines this policy

guidelines, in particular the enablement, a permanent and deliberate learning process, so contributing for both individual and institutional competences development.

The government, associated with the Federal Decree No. 5.707/2006, in Ordinance No. 208/07.25. 2006, confirms its intention in enablement. The ordinance, in its article 1, lists the Annual Training Plan, the Annual Training Plan Execution Report and the Competencies Management System as instruments of the national policy for staff development. The document provides, in this sense, further explanation about this policy, as well as its coordination and responsibility instances.

Another difficulty, perhaps the most ambiguous one, is to change the organizational culture in public service. The success in the implementing the competencies management requires commitment and action, moving from a bureaucratic model to a management model results. This involves changing the public sector genesis, and so, this methodology needs to align to the institutions strategy.

It is extremely necessary to analyze and consider the principles and aims of the public body in question, so that we can develop the correct mapping in the required competences and those already existing. According to Brandão and Bahry [20] "[...] the competences mapping stage is essentially important, because it generates actions as choosing and developing competences, and its evaluation and retribution." We make the study of the strategic aims of the institution at this stage, and then set up the necessary competences to get these results.

Once made the proper mapping of these competences, we seek the developing educational activities that can meet those needs. The public agency performs such activities aiming to seek the best alternatives to develop the competences identified in the mapping process. Among the most commonly used alternatives, we emphasize courses, seminars and information and experience exchange programs.

To Camões [21] studies in various public agencies showed that the main obstacles that impose on the using of this model are the cultural barriers, lack of incentive to training programs participation, lack of a well-structured information system, as well as the lack of opportunity in apply, in a practical way, the acquired knowledge. These problems eventually turn into great difficulties, since this model requires an open culture. This culture must allow a continuous learning in a flexible environment, where the new acquired skills are applied, and where the structural resources required to get the set results in the strategic aims are available.

According to Kerr [22], the competencies management demand priority attention to the qualitative factors when it comes to investment in people. This sends us to professional development and competences development, in and about the organization.

The model use has benefits, such as the team formation by competences. To Gramigna [10], collective learning is widespread, because information and experience exchange are unavoidable when people work together.

From this on, knowledge management becomes part of the group culture and cooperation diminishes competition, emphasizing strategies that help to increase productivity and improve working environment.

## The Research Pathway

This study is part of a research project, institutionalized two years ago at Pelotas Federal University – UF Pel, which is about competencies management in the public service. The research is essentially qualitative. It uses federal public organizational environment and federal managers as research subjects, whom had direct and prolonged contact to interviews development. A pre-test was conducted as a mean to correct the directions and review analysis categories.

The research investigated the perceptions of public managers in leadership positions or positions that receive earnings due to their responsibilities, beyond those inherent to their career positions, such as: manage teams, order costs, and manage processes and projects. The investigated profiles include professionals with more than five years experience and managing at least five middle-managers. The interviews sought to find out the main challenges they face in their daily work in the applying of competencies management.

We prepared the interviews using open questions, which in Vergara [23] opinion supply the interviewees with a strong autonomy in responses, and promote verbal interaction. A dialogue, that according to Vergara [23] is a rich resource to reproduce knowledge about something in particular, using open structure interviews, with open questions exploiting widely a given situation. The researchers' observations in the

field were also considered, due to our agreement with Vianna [24] when he explained the observation as a of scientific activity characteristic, a major source of data collection.

Regarding the data analysis, we used interpretative analysis of the contents (documents, records and propagation means) and interviews, trying to get the meaning of used phrases and words, comparing, valuing and discarding what is not so significant, as well as recognizing the essential and selecting it around the main ideas.

The method favors the information triangulation, interpreting the speeches contents within a reference frame as mentioned in the previous item, reaching latent meanings that go beyond the expressed message. In this sense, through the intense research on the subject, this qualitative study describes, understands and explains the competencies management in the public sector under the light of theory and practice. The latter obtained from federal managers' speeches who work in Rio Grande do Sul.

## Discussion about Obtained Information

The study confirms many of the challenges mentioned by Pires et al. [18] related to the organizational culture in the public sector, the obstacles to the selection process, the lack of qualified staff and articulation difficulties with the practices in the human resource subsystems. Hereafter, we present some of these difficulties mentioned by the interviewees.

Something recurrent in the interviewees' speeches deals with the necessary organizational culture change. Much of what happens in the public organizations reflects their culture and is part of their own histories. However, it is known that a organizational culture is not immutable, and is a determining factor in the success or failure of any organization.

In Brazil, several studies highlighted that Brazilian society still reflects, unconsciously, the same behavior standards that it had early in its formation. So as to say, much of the organizational culture is very patrimonial, associated to the culture in early Brazilian colonization, which historically influenced Brazilian people formation [25,26] Accordingly, in secular institutions, as some of the interviewees, it is not wondering that managers recognize organizational culture as restraining to these organizations development and their higher productivity.

The organizational culture concept has its own schools and strands, and Smircich [27] proposed one of the first studies. The author divided the cultural studies into two wide categories: culture as a cultural variable, subjected to control and management, like all the other variables of an organization, such as structure, organization charts, etc.; and culture as what the organization is; culture is the organization itself. It is variable and subjected to external control; it is not just "something" about which we have any kind of control.

What interests us is the meaning of organizational culture changing. Some of the interviewed managers work in public organizations existing for more than a hundred and fifty years. We expected such organizations to own very fierce organizational values, but we should also consider that there are changing possibilities in this organizational culture, due to the culture's own dynamics.

Other cultural aspects difficult to change, as pointed by the studies of Neiva and Peace [28], that also explain some of the difficulties when deploying the competencies management in the public sector, refer to conservatism, centralized decision process and leadership scarce development.

We can infer that the investigated theory is consistent with the found practice, particularly in our research results, which deal about the challenges raised by the interviewees, referring to the public service organizational culture.

For one of the interviewees, it is difficult to change the thinking way of people who speak "I've always worked well" and "there's no way to change". The difference that comes from that is the government agencies created recently, with new staffs, and in which people create a more participating culture , often more productive with a smaller staff, precisely because they are "new" in the area and with newly created functions .

Meyerson and Martin [29] and Martin Frost [30], discussed culture from three perspectives: integration, differentiation and fragmentation. They drew attention to the fact that since values are not always fully shared within an organization, it gets more difficult to control these meanings. The idea that culture in the public sector is immutable because of their politicians and managers that control it to make it what they intend, is delusional [31].

We also notice that the communication paradoxes are challenges in implementing the competencies management in the public sector. The interviewees' reports expose aspects related to the difficulty in communicating. It makes those receiving the message misunderstand them. The information gets to someone and he does not do the expected, because the understanding and the communicating channels distort the original message. A manager explains: "for an effective communication, the receiving person needs preparing, otherwise he will receive information in different frequencies". (I 7) "After perceiving, the great challenge is to communicate that this is a demand. And there is a gap between what you perceive, decide what to do and do it". (I 7)

Another report emphasizes managers' daily challenges, related to different amounts of information not properly worked out.

Much information comes in daily: laws changes, internal rules, memos and the way they reach the edge; there's not a safe way to assure people access to all that information. (I 4)

When discussing the communication issues in Brazilian public organizations, we should remember that most of them still have traditional structures, struggling to promote or accepting changes, analyzed Paiva [32] The very use of internal communication as a management tool is a change, since it is a relatively recent strategy of public agencies [33].

It is difficult deploying new communication tools in public organizations without a previous study on the cultural conditions of the relations and practices built there.
Whatever technological tools deployed, these depend on how each of the different users deals with them, because are these - sometimes diverging - interpretations that settle the technology effects in practice, and not their technical characteristics.

Accountability and transparency are very present themes in the contemporary public sector. Information processes permeate them, and to make sense, it is imperative to understand their meanings. Thus, the communication is underlying, as it is a complex and multidimensional process [34].

When it comes to competences, individual or collective, it is quite sure that corporative education, which includes both training and learning, is essential in the competencies management model. This policy precariousness,

although the competencies management deployment, still faces some difficulties, such those emphasized in Interview 4.

"The greatest difficulty [...] is working with enablement. The enablement structure is not enough to meet the needs. We servers, in our daily tasks, get lots of information. There's not a safe way to grant the staff access to this information, and there is also the discussion about the rule changing. How did it change? How is law from now on? How was it then? This is a great difficulty". (I 4)

Consequently, given new laws that revoke the preceding ones, subject to many possible judicial interpretations, the federal public sector dilemmas magnify and seem to make their servers feel a mixture of satisfaction and deception. At the same time they notice their institutions investment in enablement, new work demands arise not always for administrative or operational reasons. When it comes to the public sector, new rules arise, but not always with a social goal.

That's what Saraiva et. al. [3] emphasized, when relating the various denotations of public policies from a field of government activity: a desired social situation, a standard or standards for a given problematic situation, a set of goals and action programs that the government holds for an issue field, a general purpose to realize, a specific action policy, as well as policy as a product and result of a government specific activity, which reveals the real governmental behavior. The My House, My Life (Minha Casa, Minha Vida) - program, is an example of the government housing policy in recent years.

Furthermore, as stated in I 4 "the competence varies from person to person, but the main competence is to know how to deal with the other person". This infers that behavioral and attitudinal skills are essential in the managed institutions day-to-day. Expected performance and actual performance are always distinct, and managers not always succeed in aligning them. It requires balancing individual demands and organizational development. The gap seems somewhere between the competence profile required in the various units of the federal public sector and the way to develop the required skills and the resulting attitudes expected. This is the challenge.

The interviews consider another aspect that relates to the evaluation and development of the competencies management model continuity in

federal public institutions. This refers to the organizational competences and its relation with the teams and institutions required goals. As emphasized in I 4:

"We have the power to serve well; we have the administrative competence, focused mainly in a given expertise area. The server, [...], although dealing with legislation, do not always have the skill to deal with such issue. In theory we must have [...] law schools to handle the rules. Our servers are administrators, mathematicians, from Human Sciences and they will learn how to interpret the legislation".

To that interviewee, interpreting the legislation is a basic need, although it does not seem a prerequisite to attend public institution contests, but its probation stages. The request is to know the law, not interpreting it, when facing the institutional everyday problems. Then, it seems to have an effect on the organizational competence. Gramigna [10] explained that "core competences are the internal processes basis and assure service quality ... beyond the working environment and management practices".

When absent, it reflects upon the market quality. The interviewee stated that even with the competences deriving from the models adoption, there are blanks when it comes to organizational competences.

Relating the above interview excerpt to what the author said, the manager (I 4) highlighted that there are basic or general competences, basically those that all the servers must have to belong to an organization staff.

Another aspect to consider in the analysis, given the interviewees information, refers to what Gramigna [10] defined as core competence. We take, as an example, the institution taken as the best in competence concept. There are distinct competencies, perceived by customers and that allow distinguishing the institutions one from another. In general, interviewees did not compare their organizations to similar ones, never assuming a customer place, so that they do not know if their organizations are a key reference, or not.

Other noteworthy issues, according to the interviewees' perception, are the barriers related to the selection process, which takes place through a public contest, ruled by an edict based on government laws that manage public sector contests. Most often, the process tightens the

structures and possibilities in hiring staff with the desired profile for the organization.

It happens because the selecting process evaluates the server productivity and accountability only after entitlement. Basically, public contests do not bring tools to measure competences in those essential requirements. However, the job performance evaluation, takes into consideration those and other factors, as set out in the Federal Law 8112/12.11.1990. Therefore, reaching the set goals - commitment and agility, credibility, zeal for public properties and professionalism - is no subject to appreciation during public contests.

The interviewees highlighted another issue: the public service stability, which ultimately attracts people who do not necessarily like the job for which they apply, interested mainly in the workday hours and job stability.

Farias and Gaetani [35] pointed out that especially the recruitment subsystems, ruled by isonomy and democracy principles; aim to grant equal condition level for those people meeting the conditions to occupy certain positions.

These are minimum requirements and knowledge, often superficial and not applied; so the public managers consider them as challenges to overcome since "[...] not everyone has the calling [...].They pass the contest and come because they need the job. About 60% of our servers do not have the calling for the job they occupy. They could be much more successful in other jobs". (I 2) And continues, saying that "it is important that when performing a public contest, the examination, all the contest stages could bring the person with the correct profile to the desired job". (I 2)

In this human resources subsystems line, there's still another challenge. It is the redistribution/reallocation/staff transferring, often due to the fact that access to information is not continuous.

It means, in this aspect, staffs downsizing difficulty, functions deviations, career privileges, lack of tools and information technology that place the right people in the right jobs. Yet, there is a lack for a talent bank.

We illustrate it through the following reports from the interviewees' reports:
"Usually, what happens is that the manager takes up the post as a nominee. This, in public service is through political nomination. Often it is a political

nomination. So, I think we still lack something. It lacks enablement for management. Then, what happens? We look for, we visualize only after people have already took up the positions. Now, people even assume the posts, but I think they do not always have what it takes. They lack this training". (I 2)

"From the moment that you have these people's training in your hands, you can check if they are working in a related area, and it goes through a whole workforce downsizing process; people's allocation in areas of the institution's interest and theirs as well. So, before you go specifically to the competencies management question ... or, the right people in the right places and in the right amount. This is fundamental, because it facilitates you the competencies management. So, it is a task that is still in an early stage. Let's say that the institution is taking notice and the first steps to join the competencies management ". (I 3)

"To get the Competencies Management in a level at least satisfactory, some arrangements have to be taken to prepare the ground. It requires the institution to know better its workforce. As I said to you, today we have about 1500 active servers, and we do not have a fast, practical way to know where to find a specific professional within the institution. It is still very costly. For example, within this servers range, where do I have servers enabled in Occupational Safety? Or trained in this area? It is not an ordinary training. They usually are engineers and people who seek such skill. We do not have this precise information. It is empirical. I know because I am in touch with some of these people". (I 4)

The interviewees also reported other challenges to the competencies management deployment in the sector, related to staff lacking to develop the functions due to the increasing demand and a bigger social request as well as incentives related to leadership. The lack of responses in dealing with legal aspects is also present in this investigation.

Regarding to staff lacking, interviewees highlighted the fact that there is much work and the staff is insufficient. One of the managers pointed out: "Which is the great difficulty at the moment? It is the amount of people to the demand we have [...] People are stressed, unwilling, and even for the training. This affects the entire thing. Not having enough staff to attend the demand". (I 1)

The legality principle, referring to changes, was another element presented as a challenge to the competencies management in the public sector. According to one of the managers, the law often does not follow changes in organizations management, when they arise. And also are late on their updates, as we can see in the following statement: "We have, in the case of public service, the difficulty, or challenge of the strict legality. For example, we are now experiencing a working technology shift. (...) In order to get to Brazil, it needs a law change; not only in culture but also in legislation. This is our challenge in the Public Service". (I 6) And complements, stating that: "We need bidding, we need to go by the board; it relates to revenue and expenses government. Our real controller, actually, who hires us, is the Ministry of Finance. So, everything becomes a budget matter: if there's forecast in the budget or if there is not. When you decide to open an agency, you need to go to bidding. Often you do not get a provider, or investor. Then, it gets much more difficult". (I 6)

The results lead to consider that the competencies management in the public sector, if not just about paper, needs an essential action tuned in organizational and interpersonal goals. An action aiming at servers sensibility towards such management model, that favors the promoting of learning environments, which contributes to break the patrimonial public service culture.

## Comments and Final Thoughts

The studies in the competencies field and legislation analysis make clear that the challenges in implementing the competencies management model go through a condition that precedes it. It is the organizational strategy, a rational and conscious positioning in a given context, the public sector, in this case. Therefore, the public sector variant, with discrepant organizational structures, shaped by a series of products and services to the customer-citizen, leads to the required condition to develop the competencies management. It means having a path, so that it keeps the route in its environments.

As important as developing the competencies management model, is the strategic position, where institutions organize aligned to a strategy, differentiating from others, helping to understand the reasons of certain actions. This partly reflects an improvement in public administration, migrating from standardization to autonomy in the institutions' managing form.

In the public sector, strategy can ally to the organization's mission, to the extent that by concept, strategy is a source of internal coherency.

It seeks order, not ambiguity. This also reveals another challenge: the public institutions to look outwards, to social demands, far beyond their traditional inwards view. So, one of the challenges to deployment and success of the competencies management is dealing preliminarily, into the organizations, the four strategy key functions: giving direction, concentrating efforts, defining the organization, and being an internal coherence source.

Thus, although there is a gap in Brazilian legislation referring to the competencies management, when it comes to its implementation, such discontinuity leads the organizations to think about their organizational models in a contemporary concept of service decentralization, outcomes, control and efficiency, reflecting a mix of managerial and public governance.

Naturally, the public sector specificity affects the practice of the competencies management, because their organizations are particularly slow to change. As a result, transforming the public sector is a complex task that requires a collective learning process. Finger and Brand [36] pointed the complexity in the public sector changes, focusing on the need of a organizational learning. From these authors, we can make an analogy, pointing that organizational learning configures a contemporary approach in the organizations, as well as the competencies management, imposing similar challenges

It is also noteworthy that is a mistake to believe that educational and training programs lead to competences development. It is an important path, but it does not assure this management model implementing. In practice, as Fleury and Oliveira Jr. [37] emphasized a great deal of the managerial development programs continue being designed based on competence resources, and not in competence itself. Such programs deal with knowledge, skills and other resources developed in training, but little do with the ability in mobilizing knowledge in a specific work situation.

Moreover, governments that are less able in controlling industrial development, and the consequent tax revenue, experience a legitimacy crisis. It happens to the extent that they reduce social benefits as a mean to offset the spending. In our country, although there are active public policies to keep the population survival, we can perceive a narrowing in health, education, safety and employment. Thus, the public administration faces a dual challenge: the increasing competitive pressure and the nation-state erosion [36].

Along with economic globalization, global pressure leads to new competitors emerging, fighting for space with public and private organizations. As a result, public organizations are under these competitors constant pressure, especially in the most profitable segments. Moreover, in the citizens' eyes, governments are gradually losing the means for their policies. The social requirements for quality services, increasing efficiency, effectiveness and customer-citizens orientation demand a different public management. It promotes a deep transformation in its identity and culture, which for many public organizations is unbelievable [36].

Stimulating organizational learning, as a people development system, ruled by people management through competencies can be a path that works training and practice at the same time, testing, implementing, and evaluating competencies in work situations, consolidating relations and responsibilities.
Thus, the approach to the competencies management infers in thinking of a transformed organization, with corporate identity, to face new challenges, both external and internal. It is not enough to introduce a new management tool, without simultaneously transforming the system, without including politicians and citizens in this process.

We corroborate Capano and Steffen [4] who recommended discovering, innovation, self-building of new and shared knowledge, in a real form of pedagogy, coordinating and controlling, focusing all efforts to favor results and customer-citizens. Finally, the competencies management model adoption is recent and complex, requiring management autonomy and flexibility, pointing uncertainties in the implementing of this concept in the public sphere [38]. This includes an evolutionary process, where success depends on planned and spontaneous events that aim to transform behaviors into attitudes, which takes time and perseverance in the day-to-day organizational actions [39]. The model implementing only justifies if it is, in the end, according to work concept by Vargas et al [40]. It has to do with updated and accessible quality improvement [41-56].

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