

Linking Managerial Roles and Competences to Management Models

Case Study at a Credit Cooperative Union in Brazil

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Abstract

This paper aimed to identify the managerial roles and competencies in face of the different management models. We carried out a quantitative and qualitative case study at a Credit Cooperative Union in Brazil, here named CCUB. We used the management competencies model proposed by Quinn et al. (2012). We collected data by means of semi-structured interviews with the three CCUB's directors; and a questionnaire applied on its 44 managers. We found out that, for the interviewed executives, the prevailing models were those of human relations followed by rational goals. For the managers, their actual roles and competencies are below those required by CCUB, even though both actual and required have been highly evaluated. The managerial roles of the director and the producer stand out; and also, the competences of setting goals and objectives and of development a productive environment, both linked to the rational goals model. This result is partially confirmed by the executives' interviews, since the human relations model stood out. Therefore, far from closing the discussions, this study contributes to the academic knowledge by means of the theoretical generalization and confirming the link between managerial roles and competencies to management model.

Keywords: Managerial competencies, Managerial roles, Management models.

Introduction

The discussion about managerial competencies has attracted the interests of theoreticians, researchers and organizations. Despite the efforts to explain its nature, especially in the theoretical field, many questions still remain unanswered¹. Managerial competencies refer to the activities of planning, development and follow up of individuals and groups, and to the establishment of the relationship between individual needs and organizational competitive strategy. They refer to a set of capabilities built and developed by the manager, articulated and mobilized by different situations, needs or challenges, to achieve the business strategies. Therefore, besides being the knowledge acquired by a person, the managerial competencies are part of one's intelligence to deal with complex situations.^{2, 3, 4}

Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, Mcgrath e Clair (2012)⁵ agreed that the competency suggest both having the knowledge and the behavioral capacity applied to performance. It is not enough just to have the knowledge; the managerial competence depends upon the behavior complexity, as well as to adequately meet the requirements of the organization management models. The managerial competencies refer to the role of the managers, who must be able to integrate a diversified set of competencies that will allow to effectively perform in a world of competing and constantly changing values. To form effective managers, the competing values must be considered through the use of distinct mentality and integrating several competencies, in the practice. Recognizing the scenario of threaten and opportunities faced by the organizations, the competencies do not isolate themselves, but they compete against each other, according demanding situations, aiming to achieve the competitive advantage⁵.

Therefore, in order to address the need to integrate several managerial competencies to face the dynamic organizational environment represented by management models, the following question drives this paper: what roles and managerial competencies are mobilized in face of the different organizational management models?

To answer such a question, the reality of a Credit Cooperative Union in Brazil, fictitious named CCUB, highlights relevant issues. This cooperative was created 25 years ago, and, by now, they are under intense expansion and professionalization. Over the later three years the corporative governance was implanted, and two executives were hired, which has led to transformations in its management model. This transformation can demand different roles and competencies from their managers.

Thus, in this paper, we aimed to identify the managerial roles and competencies in face of the different management models adopted by the CCUB. We carried out a descriptive, quantitative and qualitative case study. We collected data by means of semi-structured interviews with the three executives of the cooperative, in order to characterize the management model; and a questionnaire applied on the all the 44 CCUB's managers. The data was analyzed by means of descriptive statistics and content analysis.

This study contributes to the theoretical discussion, as the adoption of the perspective of Quinn et al (2012)⁵ advances in understanding competence as action in the practice and as a learning ongoing process, opposed to the conception of competence as a stock owned by the individual. Characterizing the management model and identifying the managers actual and required managerial roles and competencies can also contribute this or other organizations, with the diagnosis of the managerial board.

This paper presents four sections, in addition to this introduction: theoretical framework, methodology, presentation and discussion of results and the conclusion.

Theoretical framework

Managers have important strategic roles in the achievement of organizational goals. They are responsible for the modernization and for restructuring processes in organizations, performing by trial and error, by learning to create and innovate⁶. The organizations need competent and committed managers to achieve their goals and to respond to increasingly complex demands⁷. To do so, the managers have to assume diverse roles in the organization to face several attributions and problems in their daily lives⁸. Those roles are related to managerial competencies and to the ability to identify and solve problems and to map and seize opportunities⁹.

The managerial competence can be defined “as the capacity to mobilize, integrate and put into action the knowledge, abilities and attitudes, in order to achieve and overcome the performances configurated for the organizational and the area mission” (p. 96)³. Thus, through the managerial competencies, relationships are established in the exchange between

the organization and the people, and between the individuals and the organizational competencies.

The conceptual, technical and human knowledge become managerial competences by means of the managers' performance. Managerial competencies are constitutive elements of the organizational strategy and when they are aligned to it, they contribute to organizational competencies. They are reflected in the effective and efficient exercise of managers duties, as well as in the fulfillment of their organizational roles. The mapping and development of managerial competencies are important to obtain better individual and organizational results and greater market competitiveness¹⁰

Through the managerial competencies' identification, it is possible to draw a required professional profile and also reorient and develop the organization staff. Strategically, it is necessary to compare the actual and the required competencies, considering the objectives and goals to be achieved^{11, 12}. The gap between actual and required competencies establishes the managerial development program. However, the managerial competences are often built on an ideal pre-established profile and there is a tendency to emphasize the individual learning in such an ambitious way that they become complex^{13, 14}.

Picchiai e Costa (2017)¹⁵ reaffirm the importance to build specific managerial competencies to each organization, since each organizational reality is unique, dynamic and complex and depends on several factors, such as location, culture, economy, sector, etc. Thus, the ways of running a business can be distinct and have particularities, requiring the manager to play simultaneously several different roles and put into practice different competences, depending on the management model adopted by the organization.

Quinn et al. (2012)⁵ developed a model linking managerial roles and competences to management model. They identified four management models and, depending on each situation, the manager needs to play different roles and competencies, simultaneously. For each of the four management models the authors defined two roles and for each of the eight roles, three managerial competencies, 24 in total.

This theoretical framework integrates four contrasting perspectives about the organizations, called management models, understood from their historical evolution, inspired in Mirvis historical paper¹⁶. The first model – the rational goal – emerges from the Scientific Administration and refers to applying a variety of techniques to rationalize the work and turn it as effective as possible. The second model – internal process – characterizes the quick evolution in the beginning of the 20th century towards the called professional bureaucracy, focalizing the processes. The third model – human relations – corresponding to the end of the second quarter of the 20th century emphasizes people as central to the management process. In the mid-1960's, stimulated by the need to understand how to manage a rapidly changing world that uses knowledge intensively, a more dynamic model appears – the open system – corresponding to the need for the organization to compete in an ambiguous and competitive environment⁵.

Considering the four management models, the authors⁵ constructed a matrix, called the Competitive Values Structure, composed by two axes: the vertical, which goes from flexibility (at the top) to control (bottom) and the horizontal, which goes from internal organizational focus (left) to external organizational focus (right). So, each model has a perceptive opposite. The human relations model, defined by the flexibility and internal focus, is in stark contrast with the rational goal model, defined by control and external focus. In the first, for example, people are inherently valued. In the second, people are valued only if they contribute to achieving the goal. The open system model, defined by flexibility and external focus, is opposed to the internal process model, defined by control and internal focus⁵.

Each management model in the four quadrants corresponds to a pair of managerial roles: the director and the producer focus on the profit maximization, characterizing the

rational goals model; the monitor and the coordinator focusing on the work efficiency, represents the internal processes model; the mentor and the facilitator roles focusing on the team outstands for the human relations model; and the innovator and the negotiator, focusing on the change, for the open system model. These roles are not exclusive insofar as the management models coexist competitively in the organizations⁵.

From these eight managerial roles, three respective competencies are presented describing 24 key competencies. Considering this model, they developed a questionnaire with 24 assertions, corresponding to the key competencies and evaluated on a five-point Likert scale (very low to very high), related to the manager's perception about their actual and required competencies. This evaluation indicates the gap between the individual or group's managerial roles and competencies in relation their actual performance compared to what is required by the company; still it allows identifying the company management models⁵.

This model differential lies in the coexisting four antagonistic models, interacting concomitantly, which require complementary roles and competencies. Due to this study objective we understood that this managerial competence model proposed by Quinn et al. (2012)⁵ is the most appropriate to carry out the empirical research, whose methodology is described in the next section.

Methodology

To achieve this study objective, we carried out a descriptive, quantitative and qualitative case study¹⁷ in a Credit Cooperative Union in Brazil, here named CCUB. We collected secondary data in the cooperative website and in the company's reports. The primary qualitative data were collected by means semi-structured interview, guided by the script based on the research model. We interviewed the three CCUB's executives, in order to characterize the management model. The interviews were previously scheduled, and the interviewees signed the 'Informed Free Consent Form'. The recorded and transcribed interviews were analyzed by means of the content analyzes technique. This content analyzes involved the organization of the interviews data, their categorization by means of the applied models' dimensions, codification and analysis¹⁸.

We collected the quantitative data by means of Quinn et al. (2012) questionnaire. The respondents had to agree to the survey by signing the 'Informed Free Consent Form'. The questionnaire presented the 24 key competencies⁵, evaluated by the managers in the seven-point Likert scale, with 1 = very low and 7 = very high degree, related to actual and required competencies. The questionnaire was applied to the 44 managers, a census study as it deals of a small population.

We used the statistic program Predictive Analytics Software (PASW 18) and Minitab, version 17 for data treatment. The subscales reliability test calculated by the Cronbach Alfa coefficient²¹ indicated satisfactory internal consistence rates, as they were above or near 0,6, both for the actual and required competencies.

We submitted the quantitative data to the descriptive statistic analysis¹⁶. We used the measure of the positions (mean) and dispersion (standard deviation). To evaluate the differences between the actual and the required managerial roles and competences, we used the Wilcoxon non-parametric test²¹, considering 5% significance level (statistically significant p-value below 0,05).

Presentation and results discussions

The three interviewed executives affirmed that the CCUB's management main focuses are the people, especially their employee, looking for better work conditions and training.

They highlighted ethics, respect for others, transparency and honesty as the values that guide the management. They also emphasized trust and teamwork. There is a concern with the employee development and involvement, as well as with the productiveness, seeking the balance between the organizational and individual needs.

The CCUB's management model is guided by planning and goals, defined together with the managers. The executives highlighted that the management success is related to the remuneration program of employee's participation in the results, which has generated motivation and involvement to the work. As a result, the employees seek to understand the cooperative member needs, and also to selling the products and services.

Therefore, the interviewers' statements emphasized the focus on the people and on planning and controlling results. In order to confirm the statements, at the end of the interview, they were required to evaluate the criteria (objectives, beliefs and values and effectiveness) related to each management model. Related to the management model objectives, the interviewers confirmed the team involvement and commitment as the most important, characterizing the human relations model. Considering the management model beliefs and values, the interviewers mentioned as the most important criteria, the clear direction towards productive outcomes, which refers to the rational goals model. And regarding the criteria effectiveness, they affirmed the commitment and cohesion with the people as the most important, which refers to the human relations model. Therefore, in the perception of the executives, the human relations followed by the rational goals' models were prevalent, as categorized by Quinn et al. (2012)⁵.

The results of the questionnaire about managers' perception on the actual and the required managerial roles indicate the existence of significant difference on the Wilcoxon test (99% or 95% of confidence level). The comparative analyzes between the means of the actual and the required roles is presented in the radar-type graph, containing as vertex the eight described roles, as in Figure 1.

All the roles obtained high average (higher than 4,5), although the required roles average was above the actual ones. These results show that no role is neglected and that the CCUB managers are able to play the eight roles. We can say that the managers have a homogeneous profile, once there was a little dispersion in the evaluations (low Standard Deviation).

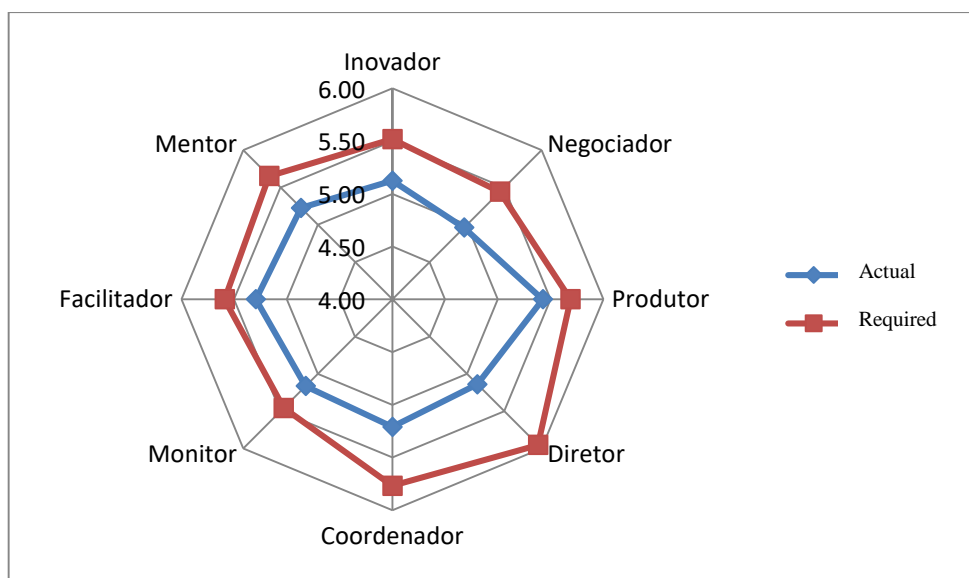


Figure 1: Managers' perception about the actual and the required managerial roles
Source: Research data.

The higher differences on actual and required roles refer to director, coordinator and negotiator's roles. The negotiator's role had the lowest average both for the actual (4,96) and for the required (5,44), indicating that this is the least important role for CCUB. The director's and the coordinator's roles are the most required by the cooperative, but they have the lowest evaluation for actual performance. The smallest difference refers to the producer's role, with high average both for the required (5,6) and for the actual one (5,43), indicating that the actual performance is closer to that required by CCUB.

Regarding the actual and required managerial competencies, Table 1 shows the results of the applied questionnaires. Variables scored above 4,50 indicate high level competence evaluation; between 3,50 and 4,49 (inclusive), medium level; and below 3,49, low level.

Table 1: Managers' perception about actual and required managerial competences

Management model	Roles	Competencies / question	Actual		Required		P-value	Difference (R-E)
			Mean	DP	Mean	DP		
Open Systems E = 5,04 R = 5,48	Innovator	1. Coexisting with the change	5,19	1,01	5,65	1,45	,039*	0,46
		2. Creative thinking	5,07	0,83	5,30	1,42	,214	0,23
		3. Change management	5,12	0,79	5,60	1,26	,015*	0,48
	Negotiator	4. Construction and maintenance of power basis	4,60	1,03	5,44	0,88	,000**	<u>0,84</u>
		5. Negotiation of agreements and commitments	5,40	0,76	5,60	1,38	,049*	0,2
		6. Ideas Presentation	4,88	0,93	5,28	1,61	,054	0,4
Rational goals E = 5,28 R = 5,82	Producer	7. Productive Work	5,63	0,85	5,81	1,45	,130	0,18
		8. Fostering a productive work environment	5,79	0,89	5,88	1,43	,323	<u>0,09</u>
		9. Time and stress management/balance of competing demands	4,86	0,94	5,37	1,59	,017*	0,51
	Director	10. A Vision development and communication	4,72	1,24	5,35	1,43	,005**	0,63
		11. Setting goals and objectives	5,40	1,07	<u>6,49</u>	0,77	,000**	<u>1,09</u>
		12. Planning and organization	5,30	0,83	<u>6,02</u>	1,46	,000**	0,72
Internal Processes E = 5,19 R = 5,61	Coordinator	13. Projects management	5,07	0,83	5,84	1,23	,000**	0,77
		14. Work Planning	5,40	0,73	5,88	1,43	,005**	0,48
		15. Multifunctional management	5,16	0,81	5,58	1,45	,010**	0,42
	Monitor	16. Information management through critical thinking	5,12	1,12	5,37	1,36	,249	0,25
		17. Monitoring individual performance	5,09	1,00	5,40	1,56	,075	0,31
		18. Essential processes management.	5,28	0,96	5,60	1,47	,032*	0,32
Human Relations E = 5,26 R = 5,62	Facilitator	19. Team building	5,37	0,90	5,88	1,42	,004**	0,51
		20. Use of participatory decision-making	5,14	0,94	5,16	1,57	,632	0,02
		21. Conflicts management	5,37	0,95	5,72	1,42	,017*	0,35
	Mentor	22. Understanding yourself and the others	5,09	0,97	5,53	1,37	,014*	0,44
		23. Effective Communication	5,33	0,89	5,58	1,42	,123	0,25
		24. Employee Development	5,26	0,90	5,84	1,38	,003**	0,58

Note: – The significance probabilities (p-value) refer to the Wilcoxon test; The values p-value in bold indicate significant differences in significance level, as follows: p-value < 0,01** (Confidence level 99,0%) and p-value < 0,05 * (Confidence level 95,0%). Source: research data.

The tests results, in 99% or 95% confidence interval, show significant difference on the majority of the actual and the required competencies (16). The comparative analyzes between these actual and required competencies means showed higher average for the required competencies. Therefore, in the managers' evaluation, the performance on actual competencies is bellow to the required by the cooperative. The global evaluation shows that all questions, both actual and required competencies, tend to a positive and high evaluation, as the scores range from 4,50 to 6,0. So, all the competencies were considered as highly significant for the managers. There is low variability in the answers, as the standard-deviation is low.

Regarding the managerial competencies required to the managers by CCUB, setting goals and objectives outstand, with a 6,49 average, close to the maximum score of seven had the highest difference between the actual and the required (1,09). The competence of planning and organization had a 6,02 average, also highly required by the cooperative to its managers. Both competencies refer to the rational goals model, in the director's role.

Regarding the actual competencies, the managers highlighted: fostering a productive work environment (5,79) and the productive work (5,63). Both competencies are about to management, execution and search for a result. They also refer to the producer's role, and to the rational goals managerial model. According to the author⁵, the producer is guided towards the tasks, focusing on his/her work with personal motivation and impetus. It is characterized by performing tasks with high personal productivity, and motivating team work to increase the production and achieve the established goals.

Therefore, we can conclude that in the managers perception, the 24 competencies were required by the cooperative and effectively accomplished by its managers in high level. The rational goals model prevails, which is confirmed partially by the interviews with the executives, as they gave prominence to the human relations model. This result is corroborated by other researches^{20, 21, 22} that presented very similar competencies to the proposed Quinn et al. (2012)⁵ model.

Final Considerations

The theoretical framework of Quinn's managerial roles and competencies adopted in this study proved to be robust enough for the realization of empirical research, supporting data collection and analysis.

Regarding the CCUB management models, the results of the executives' interviews indicated the predominance of the human relations followed by the rational goals model. The executives highlighted issues of relationship at work, linked to business results. They prioritize the employees' motivation and satisfaction in a balanced way with the definition of goals and results, through a productive work.

The characterization of the actual and required managerial roles, in the perception of the 44 managers, partially confirmed the executives' perceptions. The questionnaires results indicated that, although the managers have evaluated positively the managerial roles, there is a difference in the actual and required roles. They recognized they are not able to fully achieve what is required by the cooperative. The role most required by the cooperative is the director, but the producer outstands for their actual performance. Both are linked to the rational goals model, partly confirmed by the executives' discourse. However, there is a divergence, as the executives highlighted the human relations model.

The most required competencies are: the establishment of goals and objectives and planning and organization, both linked to the director's role and to the rational goals model. The most effective competencies are fostering a productive work environment and the productive work, both also linked to the producer's role and to the rational goals model.

These managers' perception corroborates the managerial roles evaluation and it is, partially, according to the executives' vision in relation to the rational goals model.

Although the perception about the managers' actual and required performance (roles and competencies) is below that required by the Cooperative, the results above the average show the managerial performance is adequate. The difference between the actual and the required performance shows the gaps for training and development, which can guide CCUB towards the planning of people management processes.

It is important to highlight the triangulation between qualitative and quantitative data, since questionnaires' results partially confirmed the speeches of the interviews. On the other hand, the qualitative data brought issues that go beyond the numbers, indicating some contradiction in these results. If the executives' speech emphasizes the human relations model, which is not confirmed by the quantitative research, it is necessary to go deeper and seek further explanations. It is possible to raise the hypothesis that, aware of the cooperative ideology and its humanist focus, the executives highlighted human relation issues into their discourse side by side with the focus on results, characteristic of capitalist ideology of the rational goals model. Such issues may be object of future researches.

Based on interviews and qualitative research, it was possible to observe the context experienced by the executives, as well as some of their concerns and challenges about the profile they seek for their managers. In this sense, the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative methods allowed, therefore, to deepen questions and confirm the data found, adding value to the results of the research.

As a limitation, the number of respondents to the questionnaire, although it was a census study in this cooperative, did not allow multivariate analysis. We suggest for future research, higher number of respondents, including other credit cooperatives in the state and other regions. We also suggest research that aims to compare the managerial profile in credit cooperatives unions and financial banks, seeking to identify if the cooperative and capitalist ideology impacts the results. Comparing this result with banks or even other economic sector organizations can confirm the hypothesis of the cooperative values bias.

We concluded that the result of this research, showing the executives' and managers' perception of the CCUB is coherent with the organizational leaders' effective profile, as proposed by Quinn et al. (2012) model⁵. This paper reached its objective, the case study allowed to analyzing in depth the organizational reality and to corroborate the publications on the subject, driving to the theoretical generalization and confirming the link between managerial roles and competencies to management model.

Therefore, this study, far from closing the discussions, contributes to the scientific knowledge by confirming the proposed model of actual and required managerial roles and competencies. It contributes as well as to the organizations, by allowing mapping these roles and competencies and identifying the difficulties, limitations and challenges of management models.

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