

## The Impact of Management Development in the Organizational Performance from the Viewpoint of the Approach of Competencies

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**ABSTRACT:** The present study aims at identifying the influence of management training programs in business performance. In light of the construct of competences, the research tries to clarify the different levels of contribution of development programs for executives in three large Brazilian organizations. The study was carried out using the method of case studies, exploratory in nature, being interviewed thirty professionals of these companies. The findings present an overview about the major individuals, groups and organization changes, resulting from the relations between business management development and performance. The investigation highlights that the survival and the differentiation of a company over time is the result of knowing how to act collectively, which is shown in the interconnected action of a set of people and resources, with the manager responsible for this articulation.

**Keywords:** approach to skills, management training and organizational performance.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

One question that often accompanies the development programs of the professionals of a company is how to assess the influence of these processes in organizational performance. This is because the studies have not advanced enough to establish clearly (a) the relation between educational interventions and behavioral changes of the employees and (b) the relation between these behavioral changes and the performance of the companies. Such a finding is verified by the lack of empirical studies about the effectiveness of managerial training programs, more specifically in terms of assessment and measurement of results of these investments in the organizations (Vloeberghs, 1998; Antonello, 2006).

Investigating the literature on management training, there are three distinct lines of work: the first one explores conceptual aspects of the theme, the second focuses on the procedural aspects and the third, the methodological aspects. Regarding the conceptual aspects, the highlighted work is on the characteristics of management training, development of the concept in a time perspective, its purposes, settings, relevance and need for its incorporation in organizations, in view of the complex and dynamic environment of the business world (Luoma, 2006, Doyle, 2000, Vloeberghs, 1998). Already, the procedural aspects attribute great value to continuous learning as a way to ensure organizational competitiveness (Nonaka, Takeuchi, 1997; Senge, 1997; Kolb, 1997; Realin, Coghlan, 2006; Antonello, 2005) and, finally, the methodological aspects stand out, in which the literature presents the policies and practices that promote managerial training as well as the deployment of these practices within the organizations and those responsible for this process. Among these studies, the role of the manager and the contribution of Universities and Teaching Institutions stand out in their development (Ready, Vicere, White, 1993; Mintzberg, Gosling, 2002; Ruas, 2003a; Antonello, Ruas, 2005; Nicolini, 2003). This last line also rests on works that reflect attempts to relate management training and organizational performance, especially those concerning the role of the manager in the development of organizational skills (Fernandes, 2006, Cauduro, 2005). However, such studies are directed more to the profile of the manager, not envisaging a broader approach, showing different levels of contribution of their training for the organization.

The major contribution of this last line is mainly in inserting the approach of competences in the debate about the relation between individual and organizational development. From this viewpoint, we find that the approach of skills has been winning space exactly because it presents a common language for the analysis of individuals, groups and organizations, favoring a systemic perspective (Becker, 2004).

Considering that (a) the approach of competences refers to an ability to perform, whether individually, in group or organizational, through the mobilization of resources towards a specific context (Ruas, 2003b) and (b) the processes of management training go beyond the individual perspective, generating impacts throughout the organization (Vloeberghs, 1998), this article aims at investigating the link between management training and organizational performance in the light of the approach of competences.

## 2. MANAGEMENT TRAINING

The search for new alternatives in the management of business aiming at dealing with organizational context has been, gradually, increasing the visibility of the issue of management training. The reasons that emerge as visibility can be observed by two looks: under a macro perspective, there is the importance that the Vision Based on resources

attributes to thematic relative to internal phenomena to the company and to the idiosyncratic character of the resources and, under a micro perspective, to the continuous increase in the complexity of the managerial function.

The conceptual basis to explain the competitiveness of organizations currently rests in the Vision Based on Resources - VBR, directed at the analysis of internal factors to the company (Penrose, 1959/1995). For the researchers of VBR, the superior performance is guaranteed by the limited supply of resources, both available in the market as those capable of being developed internally, situations that attribute to them the characteristics of rare, valuable and difficult imitation (Peteraf, 1993, Rumelt, 1984, Barney, 1991). Activities involving skills such as leadership, communication, interpersonal relations, coordination and mobilization of various types of knowledge and skills (Mintzberg and Gosling, 2002) – aspects that characterize the management function are more difficult to teach and pass on to others. Consequently, they become less susceptible to imitation and substitution, adding greater value to organizational competitiveness (Pfeffer and Fong, 2003).

Under a more focused look at the manager, the continuous and intense changes in the internal environment and external to the organizations are translated into a variety of demands that make the managerial activity more complex. In the position of liaison between the company and the people, the manager stands for a point of convergence in the analysis and solution of organizational problems. Committed to the company's strategy and playing multiple roles, he takes responsibility for the success or failure of the business, taking risks and pressures for results. In face of this context, studies are intensified on the attributes and characteristics necessary to the manager (Bardwick, 1996; Echeveste et al. 1999 Oderich, 2005).

As impressive as the efforts are to map the demands and requirements imposed on the contemporary administrator, it turns into a challenge to portray the complexity that surrounds such activities. Research points out that the skills that make up the ideal profile of the executive are so plentiful and widespread that nobody less than a "super-professional" would be able to perform them adequately (Ruas, 2003a).

The requirements, in terms of manager's performance, are directly reflected in the requirements for qualification, which, in turn, involve other capabilities beyond the "gift" or "knack" for business. Discussions about the education of managers, modeling of training programs to ensure a qualitative leap in terms of managerial skills and more specifically teaching and learning methods for adults, become the object of discussion and analysis (Ruas, 2003a; Pfeffer & Fong, 2003, Mintzberg & Gosling, 2002; Nicolini, 2003) showing a close relationship between management education and the business world (Friga et al, 2003). Reflections and debates on the subject of management training provide an encouragement as they attempt to reduce the distance between the profile of the ideal skills of the manager and what is really possible to be done for him.

### **3. SYSTEMIC PERSPECTIVE OF COMPETENCES IN THE ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACTS OF MANAGEMENT TRAINING IN BUSINESS PERFORMANCE**

The organizational researchers have regarded business performance more widely, as a synonym to organizational effectiveness, or have focused on a more restricted realm, relating it to the company's financial performance (Venkatraman; Ramanujam, 1987). With regard to its measurement, researchers have regarded and measured performance in different ways, depending on the issues of research, disciplinary focus and availability of data (Perin; Sampaio, 1999). The complexity and multidimensionality of performance (Pelham; Wilson,

1996; Strong, 2000) makes the selection of a conceptual scheme more difficult to define, as well as the accurate identification of measures to make it operational (Dess; Robinson, 1984).

In this work, business performance is examined in light of competence approach. It is understood that, because of its systemic character, this approach allows a more accurate analysis of the different levels of contributions in management training in organizational performance. Notice that despite the distinct roots, the generic concept of competences allows the recognition of common aspects between individual and strategic / organizational perspectives. Thus, the systemic character is evidenced by its capacity to provide a unique concept for individuals and organizations, of what is important to be done to warrant the achievement and maintenance of a certain level of competitiveness, thus increasing the possibility of greater clarity in the relationship between performance of the professionals and the company.

Furthermore, it is understood that the approach to competences training drives the relation between the manager and organizational performance by providing elements that justify the transition of the qualification concept to the notion of delivery as a criterion of evaluation of individual and organizational performance (Dutra, 2001). Accordingly, it resizes the traditional concept of Training and Development turned to the stock of knowledge for the mobilization of resources, thus helping with the construction of alternatives for the training and improvement of the professionals in the performance of their functions (Ruas, 2003b).

Finally, it is believed that the approach of competences approximates the relation between management skills and business performance since it meets business demands of the future, as it combines individual and organizational interests. Under this approach, it acts so as to add economic value to the organization and social value to the individual (Fleury; Fleury, 2000), since it enhances the concept of the manager on his strengths and weaknesses, encouraging his self-development. By attributing to the administrator greater responsibility for his performance and that of his team, the idea of competences encourages this professional to explore the opportunities of learning in relation to work and share experiences and knowledge with his peers, providing activities and multifunctional activities and in teamwork from the perspective of development of a collective knowledge collective.

#### **4. RESEARCH METHOD**

This work was carried out using the application of the method of study of multiple cases, of exploratory nature (Stake, 1994) in that it represented a preliminary assessment to determine the phenomenon under study. According to Yin (2005), a case study is an empirical research that seeks to understand a phenomenon within its real context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its environment are not clearly defined, especially in situations where there are many variables within the interest of the researcher.

The choice of this method allows for an investigation that preserves the "holistic" characteristic and significant events in real life (Yin, 2005), such as organizational and administrative processes. According to Godoy (1995), by adopting an exploratory approach, the researcher who wishes to develop a case study should be open to new discoveries. Even if he begins his study from any given theoretical scheme and selects his cases accordingly, the researcher should be open to new elements and dimensions that might arise during the work.

Understanding the phenomenon may depend on the choice of the case. Therefore, cases must be chosen with which one can learn more when performing the study (Stake, 1994). The cases in this research were chosen because they are regarded by the researchers as important sources of knowledge, capable of increasing learning about the chosen theme. The cases were consisted of three companies that adopted the same strategy of training in recent years - the

development programs for executives of CENEX (Center for Business Excellence), which also had presented significant performances in their respective areas of activity.

All companies that participated in the study presented a significant number of staff (critical mass) that performed the Development Programs for the Executives of CENEX in the last ten years. The companies defined jointly with the staff of CENEX were: Todeschini S/A Indústria e Comércio, Cambará S/A – Produtos Florestais and Thyssenkrupp Elevadores S/A.

The in-depth interview with open questions was the technique used for data collection for this work. The questions were based on a structure guide, developed from the theoretical foundation used in this study. However, the interviewers remained open and attentive to the emergence of all and any new information that appeared during the interviews.

To collect data as part of the record of each case, interviews with professionals considered key to the evaluation of the performance of the variables investigated were carried out. The group of respondents was composed of those professionals who could have a comprehensive view of the entire organization, knowing the management policies and systems adopted by the company and, preferably, who had undergone the CENEX programs. To meet this objective, a total of 30 professionals was interviewed, among superintendents, directors, managers, coordinators and supervisors from the three companies studied.

The analysis of data in the case studies was done through content analysis, preparing the classification, tabulation or assembling of evidences to resort to the initial propositions of a study. As the present study was of exploratory nature and assumptions about the problem were not established, the strategy of analysis used was based on the use of a standard description, where the dimensions and the categories analyzed were defined. The criteria used for this definition were based on theoretical foundation used in this work.

## **5. SEARCH RESULTS**

The theoretical survey has pointed to the need to analyze three distinct dimensions capable of showing the impact of management training in organizational performance. The first one refers to the changes identified in the individuals and their impact in work situations; the second one, in turn, is related to the improvement in the processes of integration of the work groups and their impact on the organization. As to the third dimension, it is connected to the general aspects of the operation of the companies under study. The details relative to each dimension and their specific variables, as well as a global discussion of the results, are described below.

### **5.1 Dimension of the Individual**

The first dimension capable to showing the impact of management training on business performance is related to a set of variables that refer to the changes that took place in the individuals that participated in the qualification programs. More specifically, the variables that make up this dimension can be defined as: the increase in the satisfaction and self-achievement of the participants; higher acknowledgement and increase in self-esteem; the generation of new competences and acquisition of technical know-how, and the increase in creativity and capacity of innovation.

By analyzing the first variable, one may observe, through the interviews performed, that a large part of the interviewees considers that the investment in management training was capable of indirectly influencing the company's results, due to the increase in the satisfaction among those who participated in the programs.

This work was carried out using the application of the method of study of multiple cases, of exploratory nature (Stake, 1994) in that it represented a preliminary assessment to determine the phenomenon under study. According to Yin (2005), a case study is an empirical research that seeks to understand a phenomenon within its real context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its environment are not clearly defined, especially in situations where there are many variables within the interest of the researcher.

The choice of this method allows for an investigation that preserves the "holistic" characteristic and significant events in real life (Yin, 2005), such as organizational and administrative processes. According to Godoy (1995), by adopting an exploratory approach, the researcher who wishes to develop a case study should be open to new discoveries. Even if he begins his study from any given theoretical scheme and selects his cases accordingly, the researcher should be open to new elements and dimensions that might arise during the work.

Understanding the phenomenon may depend on a good choice of the case. Therefore, cases must be chosen with which one can learn more when the study is completed (Stake, 1994). The cases in this research were chosen because they are regarded by researchers as important sources of knowledge, capable of increasing learning about the chosen theme. The cases consisted of three companies that have adopted the same strategy of training in recent years - the development programs for executives of CENEXA (Center for Business Excellence), which also had significant performances in their respective areas of activity.

All companies that participated in the study had a significant number of staff (critical mass) that carried out the development programs for the Executives of CENEX in the last ten years. Companies established jointly with the staff of CENEX were: Todeschini S/A Indústria e Comércio, Cambará S/A – Forest Products and Thyssenkrupp Elevators S/A.

The in-depth interview with open questions, was the technique used for data collection for this work. The questions were based on a structure guide, developed from the theoretical foundation used in this study. However, the interviewers remained open and attentive to the emergence of any new information that appeared during the interviews.

To collect data as part of the record of each case, interviews with professionals considered key to the evaluation of the performance variables investigated were made. The group of respondents was composed of those who could have a comprehensive view of the entire organization, knowing the policies and management systems adopted by the company and, preferably, who having undergone CENEX programs. To meet this objective, a total of 30 professionals was interviewed, among superintendents, directors, managers, coordinators and supervisors from the three companies studied.

The analysis of data in the case studies was done through content analysis, performing the classification, tabulation or assembling of evidences to rely as to the initial propositions of a study. As the present study was of exploratory nature and assumptions about the problem were not established, the analysis strategy was based on the use of a standard description, where the dimensions were defined and the categories analyzed. The criteria for this definition were based on the theoretical foundation used in this work.

## **5. SEARCH RESULTS**

The theoretical survey pointed to the need to consider three different magnitudes capable to demonstrate the impact of managerial training in organizational performance. The first refers to the changes identified in individuals and their impact in work situations, the second magnitude, in turn, is related to the improvement of integration processes of the work groups and their impact on the organization, while the third magnitude is related to general aspects of

the operation of the companies surveyed. Details of each magnitude and their specific variables and a discussion of overall results are described below.

### **5.1 Magnitude of the Individual**

The first magnitude capable to demonstrate the impact of management training on business performance is linked to a set of variables that refer to changes that occurred in individuals who participated in training programs. More specifically, the variables that comprise this magnitude can be defined as: the increase of satisfaction and self-achievement of the participants, greater recognition and increased self-esteem, the generation of new competences and the acquisition of technical knowledge, and increased creativity and innovation capacity.

Analyzing the first variable, it can be observed, through the interviews that were conducted, that most respondents considered that investment in management training was capable to indirectly influence the performance of the company due to the increase in satisfaction among those who participated in the programs. This perception can easily be identified in the testimony of one of the participants who states that "[...] preparing the employees this way (strategy adopted), undoubtedly, makes them happier. And happy employees make best quality products; and buying products that were made with love is a sure-fire way to work out."

One of the justifications that could explain this variable is related to the retention of employees in the company. For the interviewees, when people perceive that the company is investing "in them", i.e. in their development, they start to feel more valued and have their appreciation needs met. "[...] I think that this aspect of training transcends knowledge a little and brings back an issue of motivation." Other participants of the survey even establish a direct relationship between personal valorization and organizational performance, according to them, "[...] we get a course like this and feel that the company is investing in us. We feel valued and begin to produce better, have more incentive to work and this increases productivity, for sure."

For other participants, that which changes is more related to the feeling of belonging to the company, i.e. to be part of a larger project and to "be part of a team." The possibility of "[...] understanding well what is done, to increasingly be able to dress the shirt of the company" makes people who go through training programs feel more motivated to work. Moreover, in order to better understanding what happens in other parts of the company and be able to collaborate with colleagues generates in the professional a feeling that he is important or essential to the organization. This broader view has also enabled a feeling that all are important to the company, as pointed out by an interviewee: "[...] many are aware that the company is nothing more than a large organization that depends on them, and they make things happen."

Also connected to this first variable, one can consider that for many respondents, the qualification programs have allowed greater self-knowledge and improved the relationship of the participants "both in the company and in the family." For them, "[...] the change is from within the individual. We see that many people did not know themselves well; they did not know their own potential and their importance. I think the program has made them look at the company in a different way."

The training programs also have greater satisfaction of needs of self-achievement of the participants. On the one hand, the companies managed to identify people with potential to occupy positions and play the most important and challenging roles, and on the other hand, people felt more rewarded to be able to demonstrate their potential. This created greater

security in people. This aspect has caused employees to take on more responsibility, streamlining decision-making in the company. Several managers remarked that "[...] previously, people called us for anything. They were afraid to make a simple decision. This is not so today, because they have been trained that they can make decisions that they could make before, but did not. Now they are more sure of themselves." For the respondents, the training programs made people more mature and self-assured because they knew what they were really doing.

Another variable related to the magnitude of the individual involves aspects such as the improvement of the competence and technical knowledge of the professionals and their relation to organizational performance. Most respondents considered that the training programs, "[...] provided the base of knowledge necessary to perform their role." The interviewees did not make it clear, however, that what is learned in the training programs can be applied directly to the organizational reality, but as one participant points out, "[...] what I learned in the program influences on my decisions, on the way I manage, the way I do things."

Some establish a direct relationship between the knowledge and skills acquired and the results in the company. As can be seen in the testimony of one of the directors interviewed, "[...] it was no good for you to come here and say: let us do a strategic plan. Neither had we critical mass to absorb this business. Today the staff knows what we are doing." The training has also enabled that some of the technical knowledge related to management that were known by many in a superficial, and most of the times, wrong way, could be deepened, reducing errors in decision-making.

For the interviewees, the fact that the participants had acquired expertise knowledge in management (finance, costs, strategy, marketing, human resources) improved understanding of the decisions that are made in other parts of the company. As it was stated in the interviews, "[...] this development program has helped the company in light of an administrative and management improvement, i.e. through qualification; there was better understanding of how decisions are made and why." Or else: "[...] it is a different view; we see business in a more systemic, broad, sense. The program allows understanding the different situations in a differentiated way."

Another aspect highlighted by some of the managers who participated in the survey is related to the technical training and its impact on the possibility of exchanging ideas and views with colleagues from work. As one of the deponents states, "[...] I did not have many people to talk to me either because I had some level of schooling, or because I was sort of a scholar and such. We had a handful of people to talk about the issues of management, well, about the company as a whole. Today, many people talk to me and even disagree with what I say. Today, I am among many people who think. The level of individual knowledge has increased."

Although the acquisition of technical knowledge has been emphasized by many interviewees, the development of behavioral skills and their impact on the model of company management was highlighted by most participants in the research. As highlighted by one of the people, "[...] there is the technical part, but what really stirs the company is the behavior, changes in attitude, self-control, self-knowledge and capacity for coexistence. This has stirred everybody." The interviewees have brought dozens of examples capable of emphasizing the impact of the acquisition of these skills in the results of the companies, demonstrating their perception of this variable on individual magnitude. The same was seen with regard to co-workers, as evidenced by a few comments, such as "[...] the change in the people happened overnight. People, who at first should be removed from the team, after going through the program, underwent changes that cannot be described. The group's performance improved greatly with this."

Although some of the research participants had been unable to link directly the behavioral training to the improvement of the company's performance, they highlighted the improvement in the workplace environment and in relationships among people.

Another variable that was considered in the individual magnitude is related to creativity and innovation capacity of those who were subjected to the training programs adopted by the companies. One of the managers describes the change by saying that "[...] I realize now that people are happy to come and say to me: Look! I had an idea, our group had an idea or we would like to suggest this or that. It is something that I can see within the company and think it has everything to do with training." Other participants go one step further and establish a direct relation between the acquired skills related to creativity and the impact on the performance of the companies, as one of them highlights "[...] one of the points that remained strong in the program is that everything is related to creativity. It is something that is widely applied today in the company. Today, we use all the tools inside the company, in our day-to-day. These creativity development tools that we have brought here and implemented, that is, they have several innovations that have already been implemented in the company."

## 5.2 Group Magnitude

A second magnitude of analysis in seeking to identify the impact that management training exercises in business performance was the group magnitude. In this magnitude, three key variables were identified: the first includes the impact of the programs on interpersonal relationships; the second is linked to the ability to work in groups, and the third is related to increased participation of stakeholders in their work teams.

Analyzing the first variable, one can see that the training strategy adopted by the companies had a significant impact on how the co-workers and subordinates are perceived. As pointed out by one of the directors who participated in the program, "[...] we started to have a relationship that was a little more egalitarian with our subordinates. We begin to understand a little more about their problems; we place ourselves a little more on their shoes and manage to see things from a different focus." The training programs used also appear to act effectively in the way participants organize and interpret their sensory impressions, reducing the simplifications and the misjudgments with regard to their co-workers.

It can also be considered that the participants of the program began to identify changes in their own attitudes and behavior. On the one hand, they changed their evaluative statements in relation to colleagues and subordinates. In addition, the participants emphasized that they changed the way to behave in relation to colleagues and subordinates. One of the interviewees states: "[...] we now wait for the other to speak, there is more empathy and one puts himself in the place of the other. In the past, it was hell, it was an eternal discussion; lots of time wasted."

For participants of training programs, changes in the way people relate modified so much that some of the interviewees made comparisons between those who underwent the programs and others who had not done so. One of the directors interviewed argues that "[...] of three people that I have in my team, two attended the program and one did not. For the two that did I can disclose what I'm thinking, because I know that they will absorb, they will criticize, they will reconsider and then they will come back in the office and talk. And I have one person who did not; with this person, everything is more difficult."

Another aspect that can be observed with regard to interpersonal relationship variable is how the participants began to deal with their emotions in the workplace. As of the placements of some respondents, one is able to perceive that for some the emotional effort employed at

the work place decreased, i.e., emotions began to be felt more in line with the emotions that are demonstrated.

Analyzing the second variable related to group magnitude, one can see that management training adopted by the companies also had an impact on the ability of people to work in groups. First, it was possible to verify that the participants changed their attitudes, that is, how they feel in relation to work in groups. As one of the interviewees points out, "[...] today, much too often, when you have a problem, people do not try to solve the problem alone, they soon form a working group, then form a group of studies and present very creative and very innovative solutions."

The change of attitude before the work group also seems to have caused significant changes in how problems are solved in the companies surveyed. The training programs adopted appear to have helped the effectiveness of the solutions implemented and consequently the performance of certain areas of the companies.

One aspect that may also be highlighted in the study was the tendency presented by those who participated in training to upgrade and increase their involvement with informal groups and communities of existing practices inside and outside the companies surveyed, particularly those that arose during the program. For some of the participants, "[...] engaging with small groups (informal groups) has become something cultural inside the company. This has a bit of origin in these training courses, because we find people who share the same interests and face the same problems as us."

It can be observed, from the testimonials, that the participants of the training programs have also had an improvement in the communication process in the working groups. It seems that in addition to a positive attitude before the practice of feedback, the participants acquired specific techniques capable of assisting them in this practice. According to one participant "[...] in the program, they give you a theory on feedback; we learn how to work with the feedback in our team. This makes everyone else more comfortable when and if they have to discuss positive and negative points of the work, whether these are from the individual or from the group itself."

The participants also showed perceptible changes in the decision-making process within the companies surveyed. Previously, the decisions are more centralized, as each person had his tasks clearly defined in accordance with his expertise or his performance area. Training has made the participants feel more inclined to engage in the decision-making process, people from different areas and specialties. You can also highlight, with regard to this variable, that the respondents who were interviewed consider that training increased the speed with which problems are solved in the company due to the work in group. This conclusion can be easily seen in the testimony of one of the directors of the companies who says that "[...] today, the problems that occur within the company are more easily detected and quickly corrected. Some time ago, there was a problem, some guy solved it and it happened again. Today, we know that there is a major concern of the staff in solving problems in groups; repair, decide and achieve final solutions." Testimonials such as these demonstrate the close relationship that exists between shared training, the stimulus to work in groups and the performance of the companies under study.

Addressing the third magnitude of this variable, you can see that the training programs adopted by the companies had an impact on how the leaders managed their work groups. On one hand, the managers began to value and encourage teamwork, and on the other hand, the employees began to adopt an attitude of more involvement and participation. Although few have pointed at concrete examples that can relate these changes with organizational improvement, the benefits are perceived by most of the interviewees. According to them, "[...] these trainings are starting to put down some paradigms, improving the involvement of people

in the entire factory, bringing better results." Some even establish a direct relation between indicators of the company and changes from the process of empowerment, stating that "[...] today we are a company with the model of participatory management, and from there, all indicators began to improve."

The leaders who attended the training program began to take on a different attitude towards their subordinates, encouraging autonomy and participation. Testimonials, such as: "[...] especially letting apply or stimulating decision making, granting autonomy." or "[...] criticism and opposition are allowed and encouraged, i.e., they have empowerment", or yet "[...] a decision is delegated, a decision is wanted, trying is encouraged, innovating is stimulated, one is supposed to question the routines and to criticize the system"; may exemplify this change in attitude.

On the other hand, management training has enabled the development of leadership competences that facilitated the sharing of responsibilities and teamwork. Some of the interviewees indicated changes in the way of acting and leading the works. One of the participants states that "[...] we learned to be more participatory and therefore started to attract more staff. We can involve more people and delegate. The motivation went ahead and things started to work better.", or yet "[...] we learn to how to make them not only see the "me" to start thinking about "us". We learn to make them feel important to participate in the results. And we feel free to ask for more cooperation."

The incentive to work in teams and the belief that those who were qualified started to be able to assume new responsibilities have led to greater decentralization of the companies surveyed. In some sectors of the companies, almost independent work teams even emerged. For many participants, as of the training programs used by the companies, there was a significant change in the management model adopted by them; "[...] the first the change was the management system; from totally based on hierarchy, it changed to the participatory management system, where the guidance is really the value of the people; this was the first change. The supervisor is today a facilitator, people feel as participants of processes and results." Another interviewee points out that "[...] today the model is of open doors; the employees have direct access, full transparency, weekly meetings with the board. The program has changed the minds of people."

### **5.3 Organizational Magnitude**

The third magnitude of analysis that emerged in the trying to identify the impact of management training programs on business performance was organizational magnitude. In this magnitude, three key variables were identified that can demonstrate this relation. The first includes the impact on the planning process of the company; the second is linked to the emergence of benchmarking practices, and the third is related to the increase in organizational flexibility.

Analyzing the first variable, one can see that from the training programs, the participants began to develop a more systemic vision of the organization and therefore this had a significant impact on the planning process of the companies. For one of the participants, "[...] we work differently when you complete the course; we have a view of the entire process and start to evaluate things differently. This changes planning." They also showed a change in the way of perceiving things within the companies. This can be easily identified in statements such as: "[...] I started to believe that everything is very interconnected. A well prepared labor here (sector of human resources) inevitably ends up influencing the outcome and the maintenance of the business with the customer."

Planning has become part of the work of everyone who participated in the programs and not only the direction of the companies. The programs have encouraged greater participation from all levels of the company and from all the sectors in the process of organizational strategic planning. According to a testimony, "[...] a base work was done that I thought it was very interesting. Today we have strategic planning for all departments of the company. Everyone is able to do their part." The managers also indicate a change in the behavior of their subordinates; according to them "[...] we note that supervisors who have attended the course; then, in their day to day; in their actions and in their own planning. We watch those planning more, getting more involved in things."

Another change generated by training, regarding the planning, was the emergence of a clear focus on the client and the use of research to ground organizational decisions. From the training programs, the companies have created their own projects to obtain information relating to market. According to the interviewees, there was also a change in the way of dealing with information in decision-making process; according to them, "[...] we learned to get more information on the market! Do research. We get to know what is important."

The training programs have also increased the convergence of actions with focus on the client. As some managers who were interviewed point out "[...] the focus on the client has become a concern for everyone in the company. Everything is done for the client. This has caused a shift in the focus of planning. The customer has become a special person; everybody that goes there starts to worry about the customer."

A second variable related to organizational magnitude is related to the emergence of benchmarking practices in companies that have adopted management training programs for their professionals. For the participants, "[...] the fact that you live with people from the environment who are in other companies, experiencing a reality that, if not the same, is very similar in terms of pressure, in terms of competitiveness or in of difficulty, change our vision."

The exchange of experiences among the participants of the program has led to increased interest in learning the companies of the course colleagues and appreciate the knowledge of the practices adopted by other companies in general. One of the participants explains that during the program "[...] we visit other companies; we are always moving around. We provide information and bring information into the company."

The training programs have stimulated visits among the participating organizations. This procedure has established systematic practice of benchmarking with other important companies. However, for most respondents, this search for information and best management practices outside the company still continues to be made by people in a particular and patchy way.

The third variable that emerged from the investigation is related to the increased flexibility of the organizations that were surveyed. For the managers interviewed, "[...] to address the current challenges people have to specialize. This is another important factor: people's low resistance to change. Today, we quickly adapt to reality, without trauma. I think this is also a direct influence of training."

Most respondents managed to establish a comparison between the ability to deal with the change in the period preceding the program of training and what happened afterwards. Some pointed out what happened to specific areas of the companies, as one participant points out, "[...] we have a productive area and an area of engineering, which had a Cartesian line of thinking; it had less flexibility to change." Others further draw a comparison with the practices adopted by every company and highlight some cultural changes in the companies surveyed. This can be easily identified in the testimony of one of the interviewees who says that "[...] at that time, for example, one had a pattern to follow, we then followed it. To change that pattern

was not easy, with the fixed ideas that we had. With the program everything became easier, the company's culture has changed completely."

Some interviewees relate this capacity to change with the increase of transparency in the organizations as of the training programs. As the participants commented, "[...] it is no longer a dark company. By that, I mean that our whole environment had less knowledge and less transparency. An environment of the dark, gray, type is more difficult to change." Some even establish a direct relation between empowerment, increased transparency and organizational flexibility; as one of the interviewed directors highlights, "[...] the empowerment of our entire staff has created a critical mass within the company that is very important, that helped a lot to leverage the company in terms of results. The management model has become more transparent; it was easier to make changes."

Other participants, in turn, believe that the change was already a process that was occurring in the companies surveyed and that the training programs served to reinforce this process. For some interviewees "[...] the program stirred up quite a lot with the employees' emotions. That guy who used to be so uptight opened up to understand, to listen, to change, because he has to be prepared for changes. The program prepares; shows that we have to be prepared for change."

## 6. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

In general, we find from the analysis of the interviews, the main effect of the managerial skills, within a view to optimization of organizational performance, is "dealing with people." To the extent that the organization is composed of individuals, the prevailing logic in the comments of the interviewees is that the company progresses if these people evolve, regardless of the company having "more or less capital or more or less technology."

It is also evident in the results, the notion that the organizations can learn only through the individuals who work in it. Accordingly, the processes of managerial training transcend the individual perspective, generating impacts throughout the organization. The preparation and acquisition of knowledge acquired in the training process of managers, for example, are transferred into the operational framework, through the supervision and the freedom of participation. Hence you get the loyalty of human resources, the release of creativity and enhancing of internal communication, with "people speaking the same language on the same level of understanding", which ends up transferring this ability to the operational level, both as a result of orders, and of recommendations, commands or autonomy.

The analysis of the perceptions of the respondents revealed that managers who are trained start to be the facilitators of a process that stimulates creativity, recognition, transparency, interpersonal relationships, internal communication, teamwork and participation of lower levels. These factors, in addition to generating greater satisfaction, innovation and quality, trigger, among the professionals, an understanding of the process as a whole, from the suppliers to the market. This set of chain reactions reverberates directly and positively into the product offered to the customer and the relation of the organization with its markets, meaning a greater attraction and retention of customers, increased sales, profitability and growth, among other positive indicators of organizational performance.

Le Boterf (2001) emphasizes that the notion of autonomy no longer means the capacity of an individual to act alone, but his ability to integrate to a group and to know how to use a network of resources (people, devices, databases, views, etc.). In interviews, managers were shown to be responsible for the integration of these organizational resources (whether physical or intellectual), regardless of their nature. Thus, the outcome of these interactions that comes

out of efforts spent on management training programs, is establishing the synergy needed to move the organizational system.

In view of the complexity and multiple magnitudes of contribution of the management development programs in organizational performance, the systemic approach of competences has proved to be quite appropriate. Because it is currently used to identify both an individual and an organization, through the level of complexity of its deliveries in the market where it acts, the concept of competencies provides a common language between the strategy (abstract conception that directs the company) and its operationalization (action of individuals). Thus, when integrating the process of training of the manager to his action per se, the notion competence expands, in this professional, his perception and performance of reality itself, facilitating the identification of existing resources and those that should be developed to optimize the organizational results.

Based on the perspectives suggested in the approach of competencies, one can assert that the impacts of managerial training programs in business performance have been identified as such: in **individual magnitude**, 1) increasing the satisfaction and self-achievement of the participants, 2) in greater recognition and increased self-esteem, 3) the generation of new skills and acquisition of technical knowledge, and 4) increasing the creativity and innovation capacity. In **group magnitude**, in turn, three clear situations were identified: 1) the impact of programs on interpersonal relationships, 2) stimulation to the ability to work in groups, 3) increasing the participation of those involved in their work teams. Finally, in **organizational magnitude**, it was found: 1) the impact on the company's planning process, 2) the emergence and encouragement of benchmarking practices, and 3) the increase in organizational flexibility.

## **7. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This study presents, as main conclusion, an overview of the variables representing the relation between the training process and business performance. The investigation of this relation leads to the understanding that what ensures the survival and differentiation of a company over time is the result of knowing / acting collectively, which is showed in the interconnected action of a set of people and resources. It is the responsibility of the manager to take the position of great articulator of these people and resources. In this regard, it is understood that management training is presented as a consistent pathway to support the manager in this great challenge. Given the complexity of the functions of this professional, it is perceived that the impacts of his training go beyond the limits of individual perspective. The approach of skills, because it provides margin to dialogue between the individual, group and organizational perspectives, is an appropriate tool to disclose the true magnitude of the impacts of management training programs in organizational performance.

By drawing attention to such impacts, one intends to emphasize the importance of the universities and the companies in using their full potential to develop managers. It is believed that the variables identified serve as a basis for a more effective action on the part of these institutions in relation to what should be done to comply with the requirements for qualification, presented by the market of the organizational manager.

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