

Selection and monitoring of public entrepreneurs using competency-based management

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This article seeks to understand the selection and monitoring of civil servants — designated as public entrepreneurs (PE) — using the competency-based management approach. The study reflects on how competency-based management approach contributes to the management of these positions and adds value to public administration. A questionnaire was sent to 132 PEs who were either employed or exonerated and 02 PE managers were interviewed. The responses showed that the competency-based approach for selection met the expectations of managers and PEs. However, the monitoring tools presented problems, such as difficulty in measuring task completion and lack of alignment to government strategies and to the activities originally proposed for the position.

Keywords: competency; public entrepreneur; selection; monitoring; public administration.

Seleção e monitoramento de empreendedores públicos à luz da gestão por competências

Este artigo busca compreender, à luz da gestão por competências, como ocorreram a seleção e o monitoramento dos resultados de servidores em cargos de provimento em comissão de recrutamento amplo, designados como empreendedores públicos (EPs). Também busca refletir sobre de que forma a gestão por competências contribui para a gestão desses cargos e para a agregação de valor para a administração pública. Para atender ao objetivo, foi enviado um questionário a 132 EPs em exercício e exonerados até a data da pesquisa, e entrevistados dois gestores do programa. As respostas apontam que o modelo de competências para a seleção atende às expectativas dos dirigentes e dos candidatos. Contudo, os instrumentos de monitoramento enfrentam problemas de gestão, como dificuldade de mensuração das entregas e atuação desalinhada da estratégia de governo e da ação inicialmente proposta para o cargo.

Palavras-chave: competências; empreendedor público; seleção; monitoramento; administração pública.

Selección y monitoreo de emprendedores públicos a la luz de la gestión por competencias

Este artículo intenta comprender, de acuerdo con la gestión por competencias, como que ocurrieron la selección e el monitoreo de los resultados de servidores en posiciones de emprendedores públicos (EPs). También se busca reflexionar sobre de qué modo la gestión por competencias he contribuido para la gestión de éstas posiciones y para la agregación de valor a la administración pública. Para cumplir tal objetivo, un cuestionario fue enviado para 132 EPs en ejercicio y exonerados hasta la data de la investigación, y dos gestores de EPs fueran entrevistados. Las respuestas muestran que el modelo de competencias para selección responde a las expectativas de los dirigentes y de los EPs. Sin embargo, los medios de monitoreo sufren problemas de gestión, como la falta de conexión con la estrategia gubernamental y modo de actuar distinto de lo que fue planeado para la posición.

Palabras clave: competencia; emprendedores públicos; selección; monitoreo; administración pública.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/0034-7612169702>

Article submitted on 23 September 2016 and accepted for publication on 27 June 2017.

[Translated version] Note: All quotes in English translated by this article's translator.



1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to understand, using the parameters of the competency-based management (CBM) approach, the selection of civil servants for appointed positions that can be filled by either public officials or other professionals outside the government structure — designated as public entrepreneurs (PE). In addition, the article reflects on how the competency-based management approach contributes to the management of the appointed positions and adds value to public administration.

The PE position was created by Delegated Law no. 174/2007, in order to meet the temporary demands from the State Program for Results (EpR) of Minas Gerais, in Brazil. The EpR was extinguished on 31 January 2011 with the election of a new government and it was substituted by the Office of Strategic Priorities (Office), an autonomous body established by Delegated Law 181, of 20 January 2011. The new PE positions (hereinafter referred to as the second generation) were created by Delegated Law no. 182, of 21 January 2011, as appointed positions that can be filled by either public officials or other professionals outside the government structure. This same law extended the validity of the previous positions until 30 April 2011, in order to allow the transition and selection of new PEs (Minas Gerais, 2011).

The PE management model is based on competencies. During the selection process, a competency-based interview is conducted and behavioral assessment instruments are applied. The monitoring of results in the case of the second generation of PEs was inspired by Dutra's (2012) CBM model, which evaluates the deliverables resulting from the work carried out by the PEs and their added value to the project for which they were initially selected and allocated.

Brandão and Bahry (2005:189) point out that the public sector has sought to monitor the movement around the promotion of management instruments focusing on learning, adaptation and innovation, “seeking to adopt competency-based management as an alternative to of flexible and entrepreneurial management that allows improving the quality and efficiency of public services.” Silva and Mello (2011) argue along the same line and emphasize that, even in the public sphere, CBM has become a tool for people management.

Thus, the study presented here works on the following research problem: how was the process — using the parameters of the competency-based management approach — for the selection of the second generation of public entrepreneurs and the monitoring of their results? This article retrieves the origin of the term ‘competency’ and its evolution, highlighting the contribution of French and American authors and bringing the perspective of Brazilian authors, in order to present the model adopted in the study. The model herein understands competency as added value – something that the person gives to the organization in an effective way – such as process improvement or the acquisition of new technology. It is not just about achieving goals, and is something that remains beyond the PE's presence in the organization (Dutra, 2012).

For Skorková (2016), several governments have adopted CBM as a system to determine and explain specific skills, guaranteeing successful delivery. However, the author points out that this model is still a challenge for many governments, as will be shown in the analysis of the questionnaire and interview data, and in the conclusions of this article.

2. COMPETENCY: FROM THE ORIGINS OF THE TERM TO THE ADOPTION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Jamil (2015) points out that the Industrial Revolution, Scientific Administration and the economic boom in the United States after World War II gave rise to the idea that interests and initiatives of a

person are useful in order to establish the required skills and knowledge of a specific position. It was the beginning of the development of the notion of competency in the United States and in the United Kingdom. In 1973, McClelland published an article in which he problematized the need to seek a more effective approach to the selective processes that emphasized what was expected for the task that would be developed. The author's understanding that 'competencies' would be the underlying characteristics of the person and, therefore, determinants of better performance, influenced several professionals and inaugurated the study on this subject.

During the 1980s, Boyatzis reviewed data from previous studies on managerial competencies and developed a model, applying it to 2,000 managers. The author identified what he believed would be characteristics and defining traits of superior performance (Jamil, 2015). Longo (2007) explains that Boyatzis (1982) presented the definition of competency as characteristics underlying an individual with a direct relation to successful performance in a specific task, highlighting the weight of the context and the need to define competency models specific to each organization. For Jamil (2015), Boyatzis (1982) is recognized as the first researcher to formally define the word 'competency'.

In parallel, the emergence of the competency approach in the UK has taken a different path (Jamil, 2015). It focused on the method of functional analysis, which involved the search for opinions from experts in a sector in order to determine the functions of a particular job and the minimum level at which its activity has to be performed. In this way, Jamil (2015) explains, unlike the focus of the American technique, the competency approach in the UK did not distinguish or intend to determine what made people exceptional in their professional performance.

According to Zarifian (2008:30), the fragility of the competency model from the 1980s and 1990s lies in the fact that the tools and approaches were "built not on the notion of 'competency', but on 'job qualification'", which is what Fleury and Fleury (2001) call a new label for an old organizational practice, based on the Taylorist-Fordist model.

Influenced by their American colleagues, Brazilian authors began to work on competency in the 1990s. Fleury and Fleury (2001:185) proposed the following definition: "[competency is] a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes (i.e. a set of human capacities) which justify high performance." For the authors, the best performances would be based on the intelligence and the personality of the employees, the competency being "the stock of resources that a person holds". It is important to note, however, that although the focus seems to be on the employee, from the perspective of the great majority of American authors, competencies must be aligned with the needs established by the function that the individual performs in the organization and the positions within it.

In 1998, the French Business Movement (Medef) formulated a new definition of competency (Zarifian, 2008), implying a change in the approach, from the focus on the work position and, consequently, from the qualification, to focus on the individual and the way in which they deal with the various professional situations to which they are exposed in the course of their work activities. For Zarifian (2008), this definition still had limitations because the evaluation of competency should go beyond the evaluation of the individual, encompassing the assessment of the process that allowed their successful (or not) development and results.

Le Boterf (1995), based on the French approach, "places competency at a crossroads, with three axes formed by the person (biography, socialization), educational background, and professional

experience” (Fleury and Fleury, 2001:187). Dias et al. (2008:25) affirm that for Le Boterf “one cannot be competent a priori”, which means that the competency always belongs within a context.

For Fischer et al. (2008:33), the French authors are the first to explore the concept of competency “associated with the idea of adding value and delivery to a given context independently of the position, i.e. it comes from the person themselves”. The French approach inspired the debate in Brazil and influenced the work of Dutra (2012:24), for whom “the aggregation of people’s value is therefore their effective contribution to the organization’s heritage of knowledge, allowing it to maintain its competitive advantages over time”.

Accordingly, Zarifian (2003:139) presented the following concept: “Competency is the individual taking initiative and responsibility for problems and events that they face in professional situations”. For the author, the issue of responsibility places the individual in the core of the action. Dutra (2012:28) corroborates this notion and proposes advances: “In order to better understand the concept of individual competency, it is also important to discuss the concept of delivery”. Delivery is related to the value that people add to the organization and, therefore, it would be the parameter by which they should be evaluated. For the author, added value is something that the person gives to the organization in an effective way, such as the improvement of processes or acquisition of new technology. It is not solely about reaching goals, but also obtaining results that remain beyond the employee’s time in the organization.

In introducing the notion of ‘delivery’, Dutra (2012) advances in the approach initially proposed by American authors, criticizing its non-instrumental character. For Dutra, the approach proposed by American authors evaluates whether the individual presents competency, but does not evaluate the results obtained from it. The author reviews the French authors, which, according to him, did not present alternatives for the revision of the archetype that replaced the centrality of the function/ position. Dutra (2012) thus establishes a new way of thinking about people management through competency, taking into consideration ‘complexity’ and ‘occupational space’.

‘Occupational space’ is the expression used by the author to encompass the set of attributions and responsibilities of people within an organization. Unlike the concept of position, ‘occupational space’ seeks to express the dynamic nature of the place occupied, as well as the interrelation between the individual that occupies it and the environment, or the company’s needs versus the person’s ability to serve them. On the other hand, ‘complexity’, according to Dutra (2012:41), is not in the professional situation itself, but in the demands on the person. The author understands that individuals develop as they deal with higher levels of complexity over their assignments and responsibilities.

With regard to competency-based management in the public sector, several authors point to the recent (and growing) debate around the theme. Skorková (2016:233) highlights:

Over the last 20 years, there has been a worldwide expansion in the use of competency models in private sector. Several governments have already taken competency framework into their public sectors as well and they observe positive results in effective, clear and rules-based recruiting process, clear and comprehensive communication with employees, tailor-made training and development process.

Araújo Júnior and Martins (2014) point out that in Brazil, competency-based management was consolidated as one of the models to be followed by the public administration, from Decree 5,707/2006, that established the policy and guidelines for the development of the personnel of the federal public administration, in addition to its agencies (*autarquias*) and public foundations. In the study carried out by these authors, “it was clear the predominance of research on the subject between the years 2009 to 2013, evidencing the growing interest in the study of competency-based management in the public sector seeking to qualify employees and improve service delivery” (Araújo Júnior and Martins, 2014:160).

For Skorková (2016), managerial functions can be similar and generic between the public and private sectors, but the conditions in these two environments are quite different. The author points to the studies of Noordegraaf (2000) to explain that the specificity of a competent public manager is their ability to operate satisfactorily in an unstable political environment. Schutte and Barkhuizen’s (2016) research points in the same direction, problematizing the fact that no public service will be sustained without skilled and competent leadership.

Capuano (2015:390), studying the experiences in OECD countries in the adoption of CBM models for the public sector, points out three characteristics in common:

The first common feature is the national context of economic crisis, with impacts on the political and social systems of the countries. The second is the political will for change in public management models, which can be observed by the public policy packages designed in response to these crises. The third aspect is the priority concern of governments with the executive and managerial levels, understanding that leadership development is crucial for change.

Longo (2007:38) points out that “Managing [people] by competencies implies giving priority attention to the qualitative elements of investing in human capital”. At the same time that it is a modern people management tool, the competency-based management model brings some additional requirements in order to be operated, such as the alignment of the expected competencies of employees with those the organization perceives as core competencies, so that there is a congruence between individual performance and strategic alignment.

Prahalad and Hamel (1990:2-5) gave the name ‘core competencies’ to the essential or key competencies of the organization. For these authors, core competencies are those that meet three criteria: a) promote access to diverse markets; b) offer real benefits to consumers; and c) are difficult to be mimicked by competitors. Fleury and Fleury (2001:188) define as: “competency would be the ability to combine, mix and integrate resources into products and services”.

Skorková (2016) points out that the work of Prahalad and Hamel advances in the idea of essential competencies and inaugurate the third phase of competency in human resources management, based on the identification of the main competencies necessary to obtain a competitive advantage. Based on this definition, it is possible to distinguish the potential competencies (non-observable) and the activities (observable), since the latter reflect the competencies in action and, therefore, can be measured.

3. METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive research because, according to Gil (2006:44-45), “it has the main objective of describing the characteristics of a certain population or phenomenon or the establishment of relations among variables”; and it has an explanatory nature with a central concern to “identify the factors that determine or contribute to the occurrence of the phenomena”. The research used a field study, which aimed at deepening the questions proposed through a study of a single group or community in terms of its social structure, that is, highlighting the interaction of its members (Gil, 2006). In this study, the locus of the research was the government of Minas Gerais, in the second term of Governor Antônio Anastasia.

In epistemological terms, the research is qualitative, and an online questionnaire was sent with closed and open questions to all 132 people who had been, as of January 2011, or were public entrepreneurs of the Minas Gerais government. The questionnaires allowed the research subjects to expose their perceptions and opinions, after each item, reinforcing the qualitative nature of the instrument.

The e-mails of the PEs were made available by the Superintendency of Public Entrepreneurs (SEP) of the Office of Strategic Priorities, which showed interest in the research and availability to contribute to obtain the data. The data collection period was from 03 January 2013 to 10 February 2013. The questionnaires were sent by the researchers to the e-mail of all the PEs, enabling people to respond from any computer connected to the internet and ensuring anonymity. To protect the subjects' identity in this article, they are identified by “Q” plus the number of their questionnaire.

In addition to the questionnaires, two semi-structured interviews were conducted with leaders of the Office of Strategic Priorities, who had been active since the beginning of the program in 2007 to complement the analysis. The interviews took place in their offices and were recorded and transcribed.

The quantitative data were processed and analyzed by using assumptions from descriptive statistics. The open answers of the questionnaires and the interviews were treated in accordance with the content analysis methodology and used in this article for illustrative purposes in the closed response categories.

It is important to highlight that the data presented in this article is part of a research formed by 13 open and closed questions that addressed the issue of people management and entrepreneurship in the public sector. The quantitative data underwent hypothesis tests to check the relationship between the variables studied. Only the answers to questions 1 and 4, which refer directly to the proposed object, will be used here: selection and monitoring in the light of competency-based management. Likewise, all managers of the program were interviewed, and only the statements of the two who had been in PE management the longest, were chosen for this article.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In December 2012, when the SEP database was accessed to send the questionnaires, there were 144 entrepreneurs registered. Of these, 53 (37%) had already been exonerated and 91 were in work (63%). Among those working and those that had been exonerated, the study considered those who completed or would complete at least 90 days in the position by 31 January 2013 (the deadline for responding to the questionnaire). Thus, 132 PEs were considered. It is important to emphasize that 45 of them were

PEs from the First Generation (2007-10). The sample consisted of all those who were willing to answer the questionnaire, making a total of 44 subjects, 34 PEs currently working and 10 already exonerated.

4.1 EXPECTED COMPETENCIES OF PUBLIC ENTREPRENEURS

When the position of public entrepreneur was created in 2007, the Minas Gerais’ managerialist government was experiencing the second generation of the ‘shock of management’, a set of measures called State for Results (EpR) and considered by the government as a reform of the public administration. According to the government, in order to emphasize the principles of professionalization and meritocracy in public administration, the Superintendency of Public Entrepreneurs (SEP) should carry out a prequalification process to fill appointed positions with public officials or other professionals from outside the government structure (called Public Entrepreneurs — PE) through the work of the Committee for the Prequalification of Public Entrepreneurs (Copep). This process, which has been in place since the first generation of PEs, is based on the competency-based management model, and essential and expected competencies were defined for the position of PE in order to guide the application of tests, the psychological interview and the final report to be submitted to Copep. The monitoring of the PEs’ results also follows the CBM approach, evaluating timely deliveries of these professionals, previously agreed upon, and remunerating with a variable portion (up to one salary of this professional) for the goals reached in a year.

Dutra (2012) proposed a CBM model that considers several dimensions of complexity, from the definition of variables such as level of performance (strategic, tactical and operational), level of structuring of activities (from high level to low level of standardization, structure and routine) as well as organization of information (decides/responds, participates in decision-making, analyzes and recommends, systematizes/organizes and collects). This model inspired the design of the profile form used in the recruitment of PEs for the Minas Gerais government and helped define the criteria for selection.

In the first generation of PEs of the Minas Gerais government, there were six expected competencies to be observed in the candidates for the position, three of which were considered ‘essential’ and three ‘desirable’ (box 1).

BOX 1 EXPECTED COMPETENCIES OF THE PUBLIC ENTREPRENEUR

Competency	Competency type
Result-oriented	Essential
Proactivity	Essential
Comprehension of the institutional dynamics	Essential
Project management	Desirable
Innovation	Desirable
Leadership	Desirable

Source: Bernardi (2010:41-42).

These competencies were aligned with the Minas Gerais Integrated Development Plan (PMDI) and, therefore, with the government strategy and the “Shock of Management”. The first challenge was to define the selection based on this model. The next challenges were to agree on targets and to monitor the results produced by the PEs, under the guidance of competencies, expected deliveries, their value added to the Minas Gerais government, and finally, the complexity and the occupational space (as proposed in Dutra’s model). Each agency or secretariat in which there was a PE had its particularity, in addition to the different levels of performance in which the PEs were allocated and the reality of the public sector itself (an additional challenge for those from the private sector).

Although these competencies have been used to select the candidates for the position of PE between 2007 and 2010, the conclusion of the internal evaluation at the end of this period (published by Bernardi (2010)), is that the adoption of this profile revealed the need to promote some qualitative and quantitative adjustments (review of competencies and their essential character), mainly due to the diversity of areas of activity and the level of complexity and responsibility of the entrepreneurs’ performance. The model applied to the second generation of public entrepreneurs (2011-14), therefore, is based on a revision of the above-mentioned competency model, which should be more appropriate to reality — due to the organizational learning from previous experience.

In this way, the first exercise carried out by the PEs managing board was to map the profiles of the professionals who acted in the first generation and try to identify patterns of behavior and skills that could be grouped to compose new profiles (box 2). These new competencies were described in the contract of the consulting company hired to carry out the selection processes for the position of PE, as well as being used to subsidize the interviews and the tests carried out during the process.

BOX 2 **PROFILE OF ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES OF THE PUBLIC ENTREPRENEUR (SECOND GENERATION)**

Competencies	Competency profile
Result-oriented	Managerial
Organizational consciousness	Mixed
Strategic thinking	Managerial
Analytical skills	Technical
Planning and organization	Technical

Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on data form the Superintendency of Pes.

However, the other management tools of the PE, such as the initial evaluation and the plan of work, have a direct relationship with specific deliveries (related to government goals) and no longer with the required competency to perform a given action, reflecting a change when it comes to the adoption of Dutra’s (2012) competency-based management model.

4.2 THE RESPONDENTS' POINT OF VIEW

Data from the 44 questionnaires answered were considered valid. Open replies and interviews with managers were used in a complementary way to the analyses and conclusions.

The profile of the respondents indicated a male majority (64% male and 34% female, only one respondent did not identify themselves). With regard to age, 26 respondents (59%) were aged up to 35 years, while 41% were 36 years. As for education, the majority of the respondents (52%) hold post-degree specialization courses. It should be noted that a higher percentage of PEs hold masters or doctorate degrees (27%), compared to those with only undergraduate degrees (21%). There was a proportional increase in the number of people with masters/doctorate among professionals from the academia and from the public sector, in comparison with the professionals from private companies. This indicates that there is a greater demand for training among those who do not have the empirical experience desired to fill the position.

As for the professional origin of the respondents, the majority come from the public sector (48%), while 41% come from private companies and 11% from the academia. Regarding the time in current position, the predominance was of respondents with up to two years (74%), i.e. PEs that already entered the 'second generation'. Only 12 respondents were PEs in the 'first generation' and remained in the position (although at the time of the research they were already exonerated). Regarding the distribution of respondents by position, the predominance was PE-2 (39%), professionals with monthly salaries of R\$ 5,610.00.

The first question asked the respondent to choose the option that would best portray their opinion about the selection process for the PE position, using a four-point scale.

The selection process is part of the prequalification process, instituted by Decree 45.579 of 28 March 2011, and described by Cantarino (2010:54) as consisting of "seven phases". The candidate participates, in person, in the second and third phases of the prequalification process, which comprises the actual selection and, possibly, the penultimate phase, in which the applicant may be interviewed. The candidate is usually interviewed by a member of the Superintendency of PEs, they are submitted to an organizational survey for behavioral profile mapping (the Predictive Index — PI), and referred to an outsourced psychological evaluation company, in which they are interviewed based on competency and submitted to a psychological test (usually the Zulliger, a projective test that helps the psychologist understand the psychic structure of the individual). The results of these steps form a report presented to Copep by a psychologist. Copep decides which candidates should be pre-qualified to be presented to the manager. It is a committee formed by several professionals, with knowledge of the area of human resources and public management (at the time of this research, the committee counted on a private company HR manager, a professor/consultant from Fundação Dom Cabral, a deputy secretary of state, an economist from Minas Gerais Development Bank (BDMG), and the deputy chief executive of the Office of Strategic Priorities).

Although the final decision of hiring is that of the immediate manager, only the candidates approved by Copep are presented to them. Thus, the selection process was considered one of the biggest differentials of the PE position. This is because, although it is not a public competition, it establishes a selection based on a managerial approach typical of private companies for positions of trust of the government, which, traditionally, are occupied by appointees without any behavioral evaluation. As

discussed by Capuano (2015:391): “The current model [in the Brazilian public sector], based on the rules of public tender, allows only the evaluation of knowledge and the valuation of academic titles, ignoring any skill and behavioral profile of the candidate”. At this point, the selection of PEs sought to correct such distortion, emphasizing the behavioral evaluation together with technical skills.

For question 1, the following statements were given from (a) to (d) and the frequencies of responses were observed, according to the four-point scale, detailed in box 3.

BOX 3 PERCEPTIONS ON THE SELECTION PROCESS FOR THE POSITION OF PUBLIC ENTREPRENEUR

About the selection process for the position of PE:	Totally disagree	Partially disagree	Partially agree	Totally agree	n/a
a) I went through a selection process before being hired to work as public entrepreneur	1	3	13	27	0
b) I received, during the selection process, consistent information about the position and my potential work in government	3	4	15	22	0
c) The salary offered was compatible with the salary offered in the market for my education/experience	2	8	15	17	2
d) The selection process was stimulating and made me to want to be hired.	5	4	17	18	0

Source: Research data.

It is possible to observe from box 1, due to the high degree of agreement on the part of PEs, the perception that the selection process is judicious. It also points to good partial or total agreement rates in relation to the other three statements presented. Among the comments in the open part of the questionnaire, almost all of them deal with criticisms and reflections about the selection process in relation to the evaluation carried out by Copep, including the definition of the salary range, as observed in the affirmative: “The qualification process by Copep is not clear to the candidate and causes distortions in the salary levels among public entrepreneurs”. (Q. 37).

The salary offered was focus of criticism, being that of the four variables studied in question 1 that presented the highest indices of disagreement (22.5%), mainly due to the absence of adjustment during the years of work and also due to the aforementioned criterion used to establish the salary when starting the work in government, as perceived in the PEs’ statements.

However, from the selection process, it is possible to infer that the registered candidates have equal rights of participation throughout the process, being evaluated by an external company (not

within the government) and pre-qualified by a mixed committee of professionals. Differently from Valadares and Emmendoerfer (2012:737), the PEs evaluate this process as judicious and therefore without bias of clientelism, when analyzing access to PE positions:

It is possible to perceive, not to affirm, that there is evidence that the provision of these people [PEs] resembles patronage practices, always existent in the Brazilian public administration. In this way, it shows that this class clientelism can be marked with strong corporate, union, partisan and ideological components and interests. (Valadares and Emmendoerfer, 2012:737).

In this sense, the CBM model adopted for the selection of PEs seems to meet the expectations of managers and candidates for the position.

In the second question, the PE should choose the option that would best portray their opinion about their results as a public entrepreneur using the same scale as the previous question. The following statements from (a) to (j) were presented to respondents and the frequency of the responses are detailed in box 4.

BOX 4 PERCEPTIONS ON THE PUBLIC ENTREPRENEURS' RESULTS

PEs' results	Totally disagree	Partially disagree	Partially agree	Totally agree	n/a
a) The instruments used to evaluate my work (plan of work) reflects/reflected my delivery.	5	9	18	7	5
b) The instrument used to evaluate my work (plan of work) reflects/reflected my efforts and dedication	9	9	16	5	5
c) The Office of Strategic Priorities understands/understood the complexity of my work.	4	11	15	11	3
d) The Office of Strategic Priorities values/valued my work as PE.	4	12	14	10	4
e) I feel I contribute/contributed with the Minas Gerais government results in the area I work/worked.	2	2	15	23	2
f) I feel I contribute/contributed with the agency/secretary where I work/worked.	1	2	5	31	5
g) I feel that my work has positive impact or positively impacted society.	4	4	11	23	2

Continue

PEs' results	Totally disagree	Partially disagree	Partially agree	Totally agree	n/a
h) I observe the strategic nature of my work as PE	5	3	11	24	1
i) Actions I take dynamized or developed products, activities or services of the organization and/or of public administration.	3	4	6	29	2
j) I foresee better professional opportunities due to my experience as PE.	2	4	10	25	3

Source: Research data.

These responses present high degrees of disagreement and abstention. Sentences that refer to PE management tools, such as a, b, c, d, are the ones that have the lowest total agreement and greater disagreement on the part of the respondents.

It is worth mentioning the 40% disagreement, observed in the statement “The instrument used to evaluate my performance (plan of work) reflects/reflected my effort and dedication”. Regarding the different “n/a” answers obtained in these questions, it can be inferred that these are PEs with less than one year working in that position and, therefore, have not yet completed the minimum period to be submitted to the evaluation process.

The following sentences from the respondents help to illustrate the discontent reflected in Table 4, as well as their dissatisfaction with the way in which the assessment and management tools are used: “My current work is very operational so the instruments have a low adherence to this type of activity” (Q. 16); “The entrepreneur with a technical profile is less valued than the entrepreneur with a managerial profile. The performance of the technician is not fully measured on large deliveries” (Q. 20);

The instrument used to gauge the entrepreneur’s performance is insufficient and demotivating. Mainly because it is rigid, elaborated when the actions are not yet defined and does not have the necessary flexibility to change depending on guideline change. In addition, there is no feedback policy – during all these years I have never received any feedback on my work and performance other than the grade communicated in the plan of work. [Q. 07]

The Plan of Work is the most important instrument for monitoring the performance and results of the PE and it subsidizes the payment of a variable bonus and defines its amount. It was described by Bernardi (2010:95), according to the government official discourse, as “the main tool of alignment of the public entrepreneur with the results and goals contained in the Government strategy, also providing alignment between the EpR and executing agencies or entities”.

In addition, it is through the Plan that the main deliveries of the PEs are formalized. A new PE has 30 days from their start date to present a first proposal to the Superintendency of PEs, and the Plan of Work (in the management model in force in the period of this research) should be approved by Copep and thus agreed with the PE within 90 days. The plan design is directly inspired by Dutra’s (2012) competency-based management model, in which the agreed deliveries are valued, considering their complexity and the PE occupational space.

Manager 1 explains the initial idea of the plan of work and the difficulties observed with the change of scenario due to the change in government:

[...] the idea of the plan of work, at the beginning, was to make clear the way, the ‘direction’ that the individual would pursue [...] it was the most relevant activity the entrepreneur had to do and it was very clear when we allocated an individual what was that. So it was very easy to make the plan of work. The delivery was clear [...], and today we no longer have this clarity because there are so many projects, there are so many entrepreneurs in so many places, because today the portfolio is very big. All of them [PEs] meet the criteria to be in projects, programs, priorities and processes, we are following the current strategy, but without being able to differentiate, we do not manage to know exactly what is the relevant deliverable for the PE in their work. [manager 1]

From Manager 1’s speech, it is possible to observe that the size of the government’s portfolio of projects (at the time of research), made it difficult not only to define a good plan of work but also to measure what was, in fact, relevant. Thus, it is easy to see why the PEs have the perception that their deliveries, their dedication and the complexity of their work are not always recognized by the Office of Strategic Priorities or measurable by an instrument. No matter how hard PEs work and struggle, the lack of clarity of the macro-strategies of government and, especially, the demand for “entrepreneurship” within the government’s projects lead the PEs to feel (and sometimes to confirm in practice) that they do not have their work recognized and/or valued by the office. In this way, their competencies are not in action and therefore cannot be evaluated.

Valadares and Emmendoerfer (2015:86) pointed out that the specificities of the public versus private sector context, such as the public sector’s high degree of bureaucratization, inhibit “an entrepreneurial culture based on innovation, autonomy and flexibility”. Thus, it is possible to observe that uncritically using the same premises of the private sector in order to establish a monitoring tool based on deliveries, proved a management error.

One of the major criticisms about the plan of work is that it is proposed by the PE and their manager, but needs to be validated by Copep; that is, an external committee, which does not act directly in the project to which the professional is bound, and decides whether or not the proposed goals are relevant. In order to aggravate the negative perception about the plan of work, at the end of a year the plan is presented again to the same committee, with the description of the goals fulfilled and not met (and new products that appeared during the year and that could not be foreseen in the first 90 days). The committee then decides on the validity of that information and the final grade assessed by the PE (which will guide the payment of the bonus).

Thus, how to manage the results so far from the work of those who produce them? This separation ends up feeding a perception of injustice in those who are evaluated. The PEs’ feedback is that they feel the instrument is inadequate, and that the Office of Strategic Priorities, which is the managing agency, is distant from the efforts made and of the results generated by the work performed.

In order to try to solve these and other incongruities observed in the Plan of Work model, a new methodology was proposed by the Office of Strategic Priorities in order to build an agreement and to carry out the evaluation of the plans, but had not yet been implemented at the time of this research.

The statements with the highest degree of total agreement in question 2 refer mainly to actions that are directly related with the PE and to the use of their competencies. These actions deal with

variables over which the PEs have control, such as the perception that they do relevant work, positively impacting society, strategic and innovative for the government and that produces opportunities for the individual themselves.

The agreement around these points are corroborated by the managers, who praise the profile of these professionals and the performance of the PE in government, as observed in the speech of Manager 2:

[The PEs profile] is about being a change-maker, a person who will analyze a process with a new vision and make proposals for change and not a person who enters and disappears within the structure. [...] They are committed, very committed, and accept enormous challenges that a public servant might not accept. [manager 2]

At this point, it is worth questioning the judgment made by Valadares and Emmendoerfer (2012:738) that

People who take on this role may not be committed to taking responsibility regarding the users of their products — i.e. society. They may be concerned about maintaining their results, as they ensure their employment. The aim is to achieve the goals proposed by their project.

On the other hand, the criticisms registered in the research relate to the perceived changes from one government to another as well as to the status of the PE in the labor market: “In the secretariat, the work was good at the beginning and then the general level with the second mandate of AAA [as of 2011] fell absurdly” (Q. 17). The responses from Manager 2 and Manager 1 corroborate this view and go further by mentioning the loss of the initial meaning of the position in the context of the second mandate of Governor Antônio Augusto Anastasia (2011-14):

I also believe that there was a little internalization of this position. The position no longer holds the prestige it had in the past, during the first phase of this model. Today the public entrepreneur is seen in some cases as a regular civil servant. The difference that sets it apart is the salary. [manager 2]

In 2010 people saw an added value there in the position of entrepreneur, even though they did not have any mastery over the allocation, I am sure they had the clarity of the contribution that these people gave over these four years. So, I am sure that they would like to be in a position of entrepreneur in the process [...]. I think that today a great value for the secretaries, for the agencies and entities is because we are providing an extra position for them. [manager 1]

From the statements presented, there seems to have been, over time, a process of assimilation of the position of PE as part of the structure, which made it similar to other positions in the government in terms of performance. The negative counterpart is that the professional does not belong to the secretariat or body where they act, but is subordinate to the Office of Strategic Priorities. This means that the public manager of a certain agency that demands a PE has little or no management over who will be the professional working with them and over the PE's macro management (goals, results monitoring, development activities, etc.). The problem identified here is the centralization of this policy, in which the specificities of the secretariats are disregarded and it tends to homogenize the performance of the PEs.

The use of PE management instruments, therefore, seem to be directly related to the difficulties faced not only by the occupants of the post but also by their direct managers. The CBM model adopted for the selection does not add to the follow-up of the PEs the same benefit initially perceived. At this point, the competencies as indicators for the criterion of access to the government are not continued after the contract and, often, they run into other management problems such as lack of alignment with the government strategy, difficulty in setting priorities for action and a performance misaligned with the one initially intended for these professionals.

It is also observed that a great difficulty for the competency-based management of the public entrepreneurs resides in the fact that the name of the position reflects the expectation of an “entrepreneurial” performance. As it was not defined, in fact, what entrepreneurial skills were needed for the position, several profiles of professionals were hired and allocated in the most diverse activities, making it impossible to carry out one single form of results management. The conclusions are in line with the reflection presented by Valadares and Emmendoerfer (2015:93) on the challenges of entrepreneurship in the context of the public sector, “because this sector is not compatible with business logic. However, it cannot be ignored that substantive elements of entrepreneurship can contribute to the better performance of the Brazilian public sector.”

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The aim of this article was to understand, using the parameters of the CBM approach, how the selection and monitoring occurs of civil servants for appointed positions that can be filled by either public officials or other professionals outside the government structure — PEs. In addition, the article reflected on how CBM contributes to the management of the appointed positions and adds value to public administration.

The data revealed positive perceptions about the selection, both by the PEs and the leaders interviewed. However, the management tool defined for monitoring the results and deliveries of the PEs, the Work Plan, was strongly criticized and disliked.

Thus, the use of CBM seems to have been restricted to selection. Although inspired by Dutra (2012), the strategies defined for monitoring the results of PEs cannot be compared to a CBM model, still lacks adjustments to produce better effects. In spite of the guidelines for the competency evaluation in the public sector, there are still challenges in terms of operation. In addition, it is necessary to consider the congruence between the evaluation tool and the individuals producing the results. Adopting a competency-based management model and continuing to monitor people based on old management tools for human resources control, will separate the discourses from the practices, as well as producing inconsistencies — perceived by the PEs.

As already mentioned, not all PEs present perceptions aligned with the government’s official discourse. It is always important to emphasize that a position that exists to meet the strategic priorities of the government must be, in fact, strategy-oriented. The clearer and better designed the government strategy, the better the allocation and management of the PEs will be.

Finally, it is interesting to return to the conclusions of Capuano (2015: 392) from the experiences of the OECD countries: “there is not, and may never be, a universal model of competencies for the public sector, and competencies are developed on the basis of experimental processes with trial and error.”

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