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PUBLIC MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: CONTEMPORARY POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES OF COURSE COORDINATORS OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATE

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ABSTRACT

It is central to the endless discussion about the past, the present and the future of the university as it was and should be addressed, what conditions are required of its leaders, what challenges they face in their work to preserve the best of the institution and exercise its role innovative by reconstructing its conceptions, institutions, procedures and values. In this context, we sought to evaluate previous knowledge and experiences of health professionals who are working in the field of management, as Coordinators of undergraduate courses in Higher Education institutions, committed to their role as mediators of knowledge in the teaching - learning process, checking the challenges faced and possibilities for improving the quality of teaching in these undergraduate courses. A qualitative approach was used, with data collection through a questionnaire applied in the form of interviews with six professionals, who act as coordinators of the undergraduate course, using a content analysis. The results were the performance of professionals in undergraduate courses as managers in a practical way, without the aid of theory, which in many cases is essential for decision-making, excessive system bureaucracy, reduced autonomy, slow processes, the difficulty of finding qualified professionals to work in some subjects of the curriculum, failures in communication with higher management. Concluding that the lack of technical qualification to work in management positions, can hinder the course activities, impairing the quality of training courses.

INTRODUCTION

Today, in a globalized world with intense technological transformations, where quality and efficiency are emphasized, knowledge has been the differential imposed by society as a requirement for the job market, promoting a notable growth in higher education (Jesus *et al*., 2013) . As in all institutions, whether public or private, it is necessary that in the organization of universities, there are managers, who will be responsible for the administration of their resources, the conduct of their rules, the maintenance of their daily actions, insertion or exclusion of actions, planning of its activities, induction of its development and articulations with external bodies, which are related to the university. (Araújo; Santos, 2014; Meyer *et al*., 2012)). Some principles are fundamental in management, such as technical competence that allows the

use of public resources in an optimal way; ethics and trustworthiness, which enable respectful dealings with all that is public; transparency, which allows the community to follow the actions taken by the manager; and democracy, which allows this community to participate in important management decisions, which is done mainly through collegiate bodies. (Motta, 2013; Ravioli *et al*., 2018). Universities are usually run by professionals who are professors at the institution and who are invited or elected to exercise these positions most of the time not because of the technical experience in the management of higher education, but rather because of the willingness to contribute or their political trajectory. Therefore, most professionals who work as managers, never had the opportunity to do technical training to exercise administrative positions, and they exercise it basically using the experience acquired in practice over the years as a teacher

in the main actions of a higher education institution that are teaching, research and extension. However, when assuming a position with so many responsibilities and challenges, without the experience and specific knowledge of administrative processes, these professionals experience certain difficulties and end up acting empirically in some administrative actions, which in some cases confers a bad quality to the management process of the area for which it is responsible (Tanaka, 2011). Many of these difficulties could be remedied by the greater availability of training courses on the part of educational institutions, making it easier for their employees to act with technical qualification for the position they exercise. However, current public administrations are surrounded by many bureaucratic limitations, causing obstacles to this qualification. (Oliveira *et al*., 2018). In addition to training, other aspects are also important for the efficiency of higher education management, such as, for example, an enabling environment, autonomy, support for proposed activities and changes, and a democratic educational model. Currently, it is also essential for any administrative process to implement strategic planning, incorporating internal and external policy variables, and using indicators to monitor and monitor the decisions made by managers and the positive or negative impacts of these decision-making (Barretos; Mitrulis, 2001).

The manager must also exercise a leadership role, and be able to aggregate the various segments of the academic community around a management proposal. For that, the help of a collegiate body is essential, where representations of students, teachers and technical-administrative servants, and even of the external community, can democratically participate in important decisions, and thus better meet the wishes of the academic community. LDB 9394/96 deals with the principles of democratic management, aiming at the transparency and quality of the services provided, at a time when higher education seeks strengthening and support to expand the number of vacancies. One of the most important articles for this democratic process to occur is art.56 which refers to the need for deliberative collegiate bodies, with the participation of the various social segments, determining that the norms of democratic management meet the local peculiarities and the principles that guide the participation of education professionals in the elaboration of the Pedagogical Political Project (PPP)) (Yamamoto, 2000). Azevedo (2008) emphasizes that education in Brazil, constitutes itself as a sector that has become the target of public policies, in close articulation with the characteristics that shaped its modernization and development process. Through the historical approach, in which educational policy milestones stand out, the author demonstrates that the treatment of the educational issue has always been conditioned by the authoritarian values that preside over historical Brazilian social relations and that have become embedded in our culture.

The main objective of a manager of a public institution of higher education is to improve the actions of that institution so that it fulfills its main role, which is to produce knowledge and train competent citizens from the technical point of view of the areas in which they will act as professionals, also be committed to the development of society, which maintains this university. In this scenario, it is important to investigate the previous knowledge and experiences of managers who are in the public administration of higher education. In this article specifically, we applied questionnaires to course coordinators

from a university campus in the health area and located in the interior of the State of Pará. The questions addressed were aimed at verifying the challenges faced and the possibilities for improving the quality of the teaching-learning process, through action and vision of these managers. Management is understood as the management process, which involves planning, directing, organizing and controlling, with university management being the practice of these activities within universities, university centers and colleges. (Scumparim *et al*., 2011)

According to Lück (2000, p.6), the management model in education:

> ... aims to promote the organization, mobilization and articulation of all material and human conditions necessary to ensure the advancement of the socio-educational processes of educational establishments, oriented towards the effective promotion of student learning, in order to make them capable to adequately face society's challenges (Luck, 2000, p.6)

In this sense, I agree with Ferreira (2001) when he says that democratic management of education is collectively built, through participation, the citizenship of the school, its members and everyone who, in some way, participates, enabling the development of a wider participation awareness in the world.

For Sacristán (1999, p. 15), School Management constitutes a dimension of the institution whose practice highlights the engagement of regulatory intentions, the exercise of control by the educational administration, the needs felt by teachers to face their own professional development in the most immediate scope of its performance and the legitimate demands of the citizen to have a close interlocutor, that gives them a guarantee of quality in the collective provision of this educational service.In the former LDB, Law 5.540 / 66, the course coordinator who should take care of the academic aspects, ended up being absorbed by the administrative management of the agency. This somewhat impaired the academic performance of the course, since the profile of the course coordinator - eminently academic - is not the same as that of purely administrative departmental and institutional leadership. Hardy *et al* (1996), already address that the decision-making process of any organization faces challenges, which are maximized in educational institutions, as there is great difficulty for them to see the processes in a systemic way, in addition to the obstacle of the lack of professionalism in management, since Higher Education Institutions in general do not have a business orientation. This is aggravated, since the teaching staff ends up being involved in the administration of the institution, being stuck in bureaucratic activities that should be worked on by managers or exclusive professionals, while the teachers should exclusively manage the teaching.

According to Morin (1997), as long as he makes decisions that apparently generate concrete solutions, the manager assumes his function not only based on management theory, but in accordance with the policies that influence him, he can mark with his principles and individual values an organization that, at first, is by nature institutional. In this context, Silva (2007), says that coordinators must be managers of opportunities and internal and external potentialities, valuing the integration of teachers, students and

collaborators in the search for the efficiency, effectiveness and effectiveness of their course. According to the current assumptions of SINAES, the coordinator of an undergraduate course must have a systemic view of the teaching-learning process, seeking the quality of the graduate, with the great objective of training questioning professionals and with a holistic view, who know how to seek the continuous learning, with the capacity for critical analysis and synthesis, prepared to face the social and technological challenges of a society in constant evolution and not only possessing knowledge that becomes obsolete in a short time in this globalized and computerized world. In order to achieve this objective, it is necessary that the profile and functions assigned to the course coordinator are well defined, since their performance should be fundamental to the quality of this training. The course coordinator in this context is the facilitator of changes in the course, in the behavior of teachers and employees. It is important to note that SINAES will subliminally seek to measure and conceptualize this variable in all dimensions and indicators of the evaluation. The Course Coordinator must take care of the academic management of the course. Your action should be entrepreneurial, making the course / institution a privileged place for the student's development, creativity and critical sense. Academic management means not only the curricular aspects, but the course as a whole, inserted in the institutional and society context. Thus, the coordinator must know and execute very well, within the scope of his area of activity, the strategic planning of the institution (PDI, PPI, PPC, etc.), participating in a systemic way in the decision-making process. He will be responsible for the performance of the course and, therefore, the onus or bonus of the results of the evaluations carried out by the MEC and the concept of the course with the university community and society will fall on him.

Therefore, the professional chosen for the position of Course Coordinator must meet some personal characteristics, including his broad relationship both in the academic and professional fields. Contacts with leaders and successful professionals facilitate the promotion of exchanges and lectures for students of your course. It must be ethical, energetic in its actions, with fair decisions even in the proposal to replace teachers and collaborators who do not correspond to the expectations of the Course. Giroletti (2009) states that the education of the present and the future should be based on four pillars, which point to the need to learn to know, as this is the tool for the productive processes; o learn to do with the instrument of transformation of the world at work; o learn to live together that deals with the importance of perceiving the human condition within the planet as being only part of an entire system; and, it is not possible to stop learning to be, that is how man always seeks the meaning of life. This period of transformation of the educational process that turns to the elements mentioned above must first be assimilated by the course coordinator, passing through the teachers until finally being incorporated by the students in their academic journey.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This research used a qualitative approach that, according to Neves (1996), comprises a set of different interpretative techniques that aim to describe and decode the components of a complex system of meanings. It aims to translate and express the meanings of the phenomena of the social world; it is about

reducing the distance between indicator and indicated, theory and data, context and action. The research subjects were six health professionals (a physiotherapist, two nurses, a doctor, a pharmacist, and a physical educator) and a musician, coordinators of undergraduate courses at public and private universities, who answered the questions through an interview semi-directed that was recorded and performed at a time and place chosen by the interviewees, signing the informed consent form, being here designated as S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6 and S7 in the disposition of the results, in order to safeguard privacy of the same. We opted for semi-directed interviews, in which "... both members of the relationship have moments to give some direction, representing gain to gather data according to the proposed objectives" (Turato, 2003, p. 313). The interview was chosen as an instrument, because it aims at the research subjects to report the data for themselves, in addition to being a flexible instrument where the researcher can both clarify the meanings of the questions by providing more information and can obtain them (Brevidelli *et al*, 2009). After conducting and transcribing the interviews, they were analyzed according to the content analysis method, based on Bardin (1977). According to the aforementioned author, content analysis follows five phases: pre-analysis, material exploration, categorization, data treatment and interpretation, but the categorization phase was not included in the present study.

a) Pre-analysis phase of the material: consisting of the organization of all the data that will be treated. A reading of the collected data was carried out, with the objective of obtaining an overview of them and selecting the excerpts of interest from the interviews so that we could mention them according to the proposed objective.

b) Phase of the exploration of the material: whose objective is "to provide, by condensation, a simplified representation of the data" (Bardin, 1977, p.119)

c) Data processing phase: the data were grouped according to the similarity of the answers to facilitate their discussion.

d) Interpretation phase: interpretations were carried out, aiming at a deep understanding of the studied content.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among the subjects selected for the study, there is a variation from 7 months to 4 years of experience as academic managers, with access to referral by higher management. Virtually everyone has respectability in the academic environment and leadership skills, but without any technical training in management to be exercising the function for which they were appointed. At the moment, S4 is taking a Postgraduate Stricto Sensu in Educational Management, but when answering the questions, he still refers to the lack of knowledge for the position in which he works. This fact shows the weaknesses to which the undergraduate courses are exposed, and although these professionals acquire experience throughout their performance, they do not always make the necessary decision to improve the course, as they are unaware of some of the essential processes for the correct functioning of the courses. activities, and when faced with some situations, some services are paralyzed by the lack of prior planning, and preventive attitudes. Silva Filho (1998) says that in view of the new

requirements imposed by legislation for university institutions, it is urgent that in Braziluniversities and their leaders are trained for the difficult task of combining academic quality with organizational efficiency and effectiveness. When asked about their conception of management in educational institutions, 50% of the professionals responded satisfactorily, revealing conceptions of democratic, participative management, without authoritarianism and with the sharing of responsibilities by the team. S2 reports the importance of participatory management "... together with the collegiate, organizing the teaching-learning process". However, other professionals highlight other aspects, where S5 described the problematic situations within a higher education course, S1 the lack of professionals' commitment to higher education and S3 about the quality of undergraduate courses.

Another important point cited by all respondents was the lack of autonomy over decision-making, and, mainly, financial limitations. This causes difficulties in the progress of the processes, from hiring professors to supply the demands of the courses to the release of scientific projects. It is known that the lack of autonomy so indispensable within the university, constitutes a major obstacle to educational development. From the organizational point of view of a public HEI, the demands of public control bodies are very intense, and this usually causes managers of upper management to be overly cautious, especially with regard to financial aspects, which is often aspect that limits this autonomy. But when it comes to academic autonomy, HEIs really need to move faster. An interesting data perceived in the data collection is that only private educational institutions offered specific training courses to work as an academic manager, providing guidance on the curricular guidelines of the courses. The others gained experience in the practice of their work and in interpersonal relationships with other professionals who have already worked in these commissioned positions. This is currently one of the obstacles to improving the quality of teaching, since in the graduation of most higher education courses, even those of administration, the curriculum does not have a discipline aimed at higher education management activities, but in various situations these professionals are forced to act as managers and the institutions in which they work do not offer the necessary qualification, especially in the public sector. The coordinators of undergraduate courses assume this function only with theknowledge acquired to be teachers and not as managers, generating a series of discomforts throughout their management.

MEC has been instituting stricter quality standards, forcing institutions to invest in the quality of teachers for a new managerial dynamic, improving institutional development and preparing employees through training of their manager coordinators to have a vision of the future. In this way, these managers can become the key to improving the quality and prominence of an HEI, being an opportunity manager and a faithful manager of the plans that must be followed and evaluated permanently. The interpersonal relationships with the upper management were mentioned by S1 as within the "limit of professionalism" and by the other interviewees as satisfactory, as the team seeks the same goals, which are professional growth and personal development for both students and teachers. However S4 complains that with regard to institutional communication with the technical - administrative staff, there is not always accurate feedback for the execution of the processes necessary for quality with

excellence and a cooperative dynamic of information flows as it should be. For him, institutional communication aims more at generating empathy in the community in question and, its main objective is to project a positive corporate image, than actually establishing a two-way communication link. The difficulty of communicating with their bases is really a big problem for managers, as they are usually very overwhelmed with the bureaucracy of the position and are unable to create opportunities for the community to express their real demands. An alternative to this would be to make more intensive use of collegiate representations, encouraging them to really participate in collegiate bodies as real representatives of their segments, and thus serve as an important link between management and the community. Another option would be to make more use of communication technology by opening channels of dialogue with the community.

When questioning the requirements that they consider to be essential to act as managers in public agencies, all cited responsibility, leadership, capacity to innovate, degree of commitment to the quality of teaching, skills to deal with human beings, impartiality, knowledge of the protocols to be followed by the institution. However, one of the points mentioned deserved to be highlighted, S1 mentioned that the manager "cannot have an ego problem", demonstrating one of the difficulties faced in positions of this type that result in the personalization of power, where power is confused with the subject himself, and the In these cases, the manager usually tends to centralize the management itself and ends up isolating himself. When a manager realizes that he has the power to decide on the lives of many people, he is often inundated with a feeling of "all powerful", becomes addicted to power, and forgets that in democratic management, the power to make decisions in public management has to be used only for the common good of that community that depends on its management and not for individualized use and favoring closer groups, nor to centralize power in itself, preventing the creative power of the groups being managed by the same. Elpo (2004) says that decentralizing management does not mean just transferring responsibilities, marking the lack of commitment to the results of operations and action strategies. It is, first of all, to review the distribution of these responsibilities, making commitments to the successes and errors that occurred during its effectiveness process. In other words, it means that the planned actions are really taken into institutional practice. Not only the planning, but also, its controlled execution and the search to meet the expected results.

In the topic discussed about the greatest difficulties encountered in coordination activities, there is a consensus about the excessive bureaucracy of the system, the slowness of the processes, the difficulty of finding qualified professionals to work in some disciplines of the curriculum, as they have not been qualified for the undergraduate teaching, and the lack of stricto sensu courses in the region, forcing these professionals to move to other regions. In these cases, due to lack of financial condition, teachers end up settling in the position they occupy, without keeping up to date with the constant technological and educational changes in their area of expertise. Bureaucracy in public institutions is something that hinders the administration of course coordinators, because it slows down processes anddecision autonomy. Public university institutions need to create mechanisms to reduce this bureaucracy without having to escape the rules established

by the control bodies. Many of these alternatives include the provision of more information on the characteristics and flow of processes, so that they arrive at Organs responsible bodies well educated and with all the necessary requirements for their progress. Another aspect that also needs to be improved in most public HEIs is the process management and monitoring system, as most HEIs do not have the necessary technologies to make the processes transparent and more dynamic. And in a way, these flows also need to be constantly redesigned according to the institution's dynamic growth and needs, which is not normally done. With regard to the lack of qualification of teachers, which was also an issue addressed by the coordinators interviewed, the HEIs need to have a well-directed program for the qualification of teachers at the master's and doctoral level, according to their institutional development plan. In the same way, course coordinators need greater articulation with departments, in the case of the HEIs that have these, so that the qualification of these teachers meet the needs of the pedagogical projects of the students.

An interesting strategy of training several masters and doctors at once is the interinstitutional masters and doctorates, where a promoter institution that has a consolidated master's or doctorate course from another region offers local classes for the teachers of an institution with qualification demand . Such a strategy, in addition to allowing a great exchange between the two institutions participating in the program, facilitates the qualification process, since teachers do not need to be totally absent from the institution during the period of this training.
There was a similarity in the responses, with regard to the importance of maintaining good interinstitutional relations for the quality of teaching and interaction between academics and professionals from other areas. According to the interviewees, these partnerships with other organizations must take into account the installed competencies of each one, aiming at benefits for both parties. With regard to interpersonal relationships, the coordinators reported that there is a friendly atmosphere among employees of the same institution, with the collaboration of all for the provision of services, with regard to personal and collective growth. This process of aggregating the groups according to a common proposal has to be constantly induced by the managers.

With regard to the inherent management position, all managers find their activities quite tiring, but also rewarding, due to the knowledge and skills they develop over the period of their work, and the learning opportunities not only for academic life as personal. The management process really allows the improvement of a series of skills, such as leadership, organization, planning, ability to deal with different ideological groups, to make decisions, and to articulate with strategic sectors, among other skills that can be used in all other aspects of life. Krasilchik (2008) mentions that one of the important roles of a university manager is to set goals and institutional challenges to improve the quality of teaching and increase the vacancies offered to the market. But for that it is necessary to be attentive to day-to-day issues, preventing small disorders from causing failure than what is proposed at broader levels. There is a need to guarantee the instances that are regimentally defined, but supported by the support of the various segments that make up the university community. Management action plans must be reconciled with the real demands of these segments to ensure the university's governance. According to Rosovsky (1990, p. 273) "the quality of decisions improves when care and measures are taken to avoid conflicts of interest". Only a joint effort between management, coordination, faculty and students will be able to meet the demands of the real demands of the university community and the society that keeps the public university functioning. Fernandes (2011) advocates an increasing professionalization of course coordinators to overcome the challenges of current education. For this reason, the great need for qualification for teachers, who aspire to a position of leadership, who allow greater security and knowledge to assist them in the decision-making process.

Conclusions

University managers must act openly, ethically, transparently, democratically, inspiring and motivating the people who make up the academic segments, aiming at developing a culture of excellence, promoting quality relationships and protecting the interests of the academic community. For this, these managers need to create the conditions for all those involved to perform professionally and humanely, maximizing their performance through commitment, the development of skills and spaces to undertake. Even with reduced autonomy, the coordinators of the undergraduate course must use the communication process to share, exchange opinions with the entire academic community, whether through collegiate management or not, sharing all information relevant to the professional growth and personal development of the students. involved. The fact that people become better informed allows them to give their opinion and even participate in the facts that impact society - or their own life - and, therefore, allows for greater citizenship. Course coordinators do not necessarily have to follow ready models for higher management, but must implement specific mechanisms that respect institutional standards, but meet the priorities and emergency demands of their area of coverage. The manager, as the person most responsible for the process, must, at certain times, decentralize the actions to all those involved, in order to achieve the objectives set jointly, sharing responsibilities not only for ends, but also for means. The manager must exercise the role of leader that articulates the different segments of the academic community, being an important mediator of the Political Pedagogical Project and of the other actions and activities of the university. In this way, the manager can develop his management proposal cooperatively with the academic community in the search for the consolidation of a university focused on the academic quality of the student and on the fulfillment of the collective dreams, objectives and goals. Therefore, it is concluded that the coordinator must be previously prepared for the function through training courses so that the quality of undergraduate courses in all Universities is not compromised.

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