

Managerial Talent; an Imperative for Effective Competency Management. Case of SONELGAZ Company

المواهب الإدارية؛ ضرورة حتمية لإدارة الكفاءات بفعالية – دراسة حالة شركة سونلغاز

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Abstract:

This paper aims to initiate a debate on the current expectations of human resources in public organizations, particularly with regard to the acquisition and provision of competencies necessary to achieve organizational objectives. The study employs a descriptive methodology to introduce the concepts of human management and analyze competency management models to determine their possible integration in the complex context of public structures. The qualitative methodology was employed to investigate and debate the relationship between the various variables under study in SONALGAZ. Ultimately, this research demonstrates the tangible relationship between individual competencies, their capacity for action, and the managerial talent they can demonstrate when the context is favorable.

Keywords: Managerial talent, individual competencies, competency management, human resources, public organizations.

JEL Classification Codes: M12, L32.

ملخص:

هدفت الدراسة إلى فتح المجال لمناقشة مكانة الموارد البشرية في المؤسسات العامة والتسيير التقديري لها من منظور التوقعات الحالية، مع توضيح سبل اكتساب وتوفير الكفاءات الضرورية المناسبة لتحقيق الأهداف التنظيمية. كما تم الاعتماد على المنهج الوصفي الذي يتناسب مع عرض المفاهيم الأساسية لإدارة الموارد البشرية ومقارنتها مع نماذج إدارة الكفاءات في المؤسسات العامة، وكذا تم استخدام المنهج الكيفي لدراسة ومناقشة العلاقة بين مختلف متغيرات الدراسة في شركة سونلغاز. بحيث توصلت هذه الدراسة إلى وجود علاقة ملموسة بين الكفاءات الفردية وإمكانات العمل والمواهب الإدارية، عندما تتوافر كل المتطلبات والشروط (أي عندما يكون السياق مناسباً).

كلمات مفتاحية: المواهب الإدارية، الكفاءات الفردية، إدارة الكفاءات، الموارد البشرية، المؤسسات العامة.

تصنيفات JEL : M12، L32.

INTRODUCTION:

The evolving context of public organizations currently raises challenges in terms of managing their resources. The more emphasis is placed on performance, management by objectives, resource allocation and measurement of results, the more we seem to move away from the fundamental concerns of the public sphere. This dichotomy between respect for public service values and new performance requirements pushes decision-makers to reconsider the question of resources, their allocation and their impacts within structures.

Managers rely on the competencies of individuals and GPEC to meet the growing demand for results, while ensuring respect for the founding principles that define public services intended for varied groups: users, taxpayers, beneficiaries, voters and customers . Thus, this research focuses on two central questions:

The public manager must be interested in the operating methods to develop their human resources. In order to orient it towards performance-enhancing dynamics, the company in which we are carrying out our investigation is considered a pioneering company in terms of the potential it contains, as well as the dynamics instilled to list all forms of organizational capabilities which aim to build a model of managerial talent. To support our remarks, we aim through this research to answer the following questions:

Is management by individual skills sufficient today to achieve the performance objectives set by public organizations? Can the individual, with their principles and management capabilities, respond to collective challenges?

What is the value of talent in the functioning of public organizations? Can we identify it, define it, evaluate it and develop it?

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Our conceptual framework is based on a review of the literature in management sciences, offering a targeted analysis on public sector organizations and the impact of human resources. We focus on the relationship between individual skills and their evaluation, the concept of managerial talent which, beyond simple skills, includes principles and values, development potential and career prospects, as well as issues and strategic objectives of the organization.

1- literature review of the study

1-1 The Emergence of Skill as a Mode of Organization in the Public Sector

Competence, as defined by Zarifian, is “*the ability to take initiative and assume responsibility for problems and events encountered in professional situations. It is a practical intelligence of situations which draws on acquired knowledge and transforms it effectively as the diversity of situations increases.*” (Zarifian, 2004). Today, all human resources (HR) policies revolve around skills, encompassing recruitment, training, evaluation, professional mobility, etc. Competence has become the leitmotif of public human resources management (HRM): everyone is competent!

For public organizations, it is essential to identify, develop and retain the skills of their human resources to optimize overall performance. For the individual, competence ensures a certain degree of employability. However, the results of management by **skills** are mixed and

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present challenges such as the difficulty of evaluation, tools considered too sophisticated, and the individualization and instrumentalization of **skills**. Numerous studies show signs of running out of steam, or even bureaucratization, of the competency model. Hondeghem notes that “like any bureaucracy, skills management risks transforming into a regulatory machine, time-consuming and procedural” (Hondeghem, Horton, & Scheepers, 2005). This bureaucratization is particularly visible in Anglo-Saxon countries which have adopted the new public management model, where values such as efficiency, performance and economy, from the private sector, are central.

It seems that a cultural change is underway, particularly with the introduction of the notion of potential. Now, the assessment focuses less on the extent of technical knowledge, and more on the potential of candidates. Do public organizations have potential hidden or invisible to managers? Building the public organization of tomorrow involves betting on the future and on the potential of the individuals who make it up (De Bry & Gourdon, 2009). It is from this perspective that we explore the notion of talent.

We wish to discuss the evolution of **skills** towards talent, and more particularly managerial talent in the public context. Although these concerns are increasingly present, theoretical reflection on the concept of talent, its role in performance, and its implications for the management of organizations remains very limited. Noting the absence of cognitive content on talent in public organizations, we wonder about the reasons for this lack of interest.

The first element of the answer could be the egalitarian ideology and the bureaucratic ethos specific to public organizations. The principle of differentiation, even discrimination, comes into conflict with the values of public service.

However, it is notable that current HR policies, as well as remuneration policies, tend to individualization and personalization of approaches, tools and methods (individualized career paths and career management, taking into account individual aspirations aligned with the strategic objectives of the organization, compensation for individual performance, training and professional mobility, etc). From this perspective, talent could be perceived in a discriminatory and elitist way, aiming to recruit talent for key positions in the organization, requiring atypical management and a distinct remuneration policy. Conversely, talent could be approached from an egalitarian and meritocratic angle, aiming to develop the talents of all employees. Whatever the approach, the place of talent in the public context seems relevant.

The second element of response is the notion of vagueness and scientific subjectivity inherent to the concept of talent. Indeed, talent seems to encounter resistance to being recognized as a scientific concept. The supposedly ineffable nature of talent, its use historically reserved for specific or marginal professions (artists, journalists, politicians, etc.), the weak control of organizations over the birth and development of unique talents, as well as the real or perceived difficulties of valorizing these talents within a collective, make the notion of talent difficult to manipulate and of limited practical interest until now.

1-2 From Skill to Talent : from individual to collective

Is management by **skills** sufficient to achieve the performance levels sought by public organizations? Is the skills framework adapted to manage the complexity and uncertainties that managers and public decision-makers face on a daily basis? We are not suggesting that skills-

based management is obsolete, nor that talent must necessarily replace it. Rather, we wish to open the debate on the relevance and place of talent in public organizations.

The analysis of the management literature as well as managerial discourses within public organizations, emphasize competence. This is illustrated by the profusion of scientific work on this concept, the numerous definitions identified, and the various tools developed to assess and improve **skills**. While access to the civil service was previously based on qualifications and diplomas, since the 1980s this approach has gradually evolved to focus on **skills**.

1-3 Managerial Talent and the Challenge of Effective Management in the Public Sector

What is talent? Between myth and reality, the debate is open and has given rise to recent work in the context of private companies. Talent is defined in different ways: individual skills, human or technical qualities, gift, genius, excellence, exemplarity, idiosyncrasy, difference, or high potential. Discussions around talent include questions such as nature versus nurture, variables and approaches to understanding this concept (metonymy, association or dissociation of concepts, processes or content), and egalitarian versus elitist perspectives. .

Despite the lack of a consensual definition in the management literature, many works highlight the supposed relationship between competence and talent. According to (Mirallés, 2007), talent can be defined as *“a specific configuration of personal resources, relatively stable and permanent, largely inherited and integrated into the individual. These resources initially have the characteristics of a potential which, thanks to appropriate learning and preparation, translates into skills valued by the organization.”* For Cuevas and Ballot , *“talent is manifested by its results and is interpreted through the skills that support it. Thus, talent would be the innate and acquired ability to combine and apply knowledge, know-how and interpersonal skills in a specific situation.”* (Cuevas & Ballot , 2009)

It is then possible to define talent in connection with the concept of competence (Roger & Bouillet , 2009). Confusion between skill and talent, between talent and potential, is common. This ambiguity results not only from the difficulty in clearly defining these notions, but also from the supposed subjectivity of their identification and evaluation.

To try to clarify these concepts, we adopt a comparative approach to the notions of skill and talent. Among the scientific texts on talent, we have excluded certain models deemed too far from our questions or unsuitable for the public sphere.

1-3-1 Place of Human Resources in the Public Sector

Social control reports on employees limit the role of HR managers who must convince members of the management team before making personnel decisions. The human resources department also encounters difficulties in implementing workforce planning, essential for defining the current and future needs of each position and setting clear objectives in terms of recruitment, training, remuneration and promotion. Despite its importance for improving the qualifications of the company, the recruitment decision is often centralized at the level of the director who may not know the specific needs of each position. This subjective decision often responds to current needs. To determine the place occupied by human resources in the public enterprise and if they constitute a distinctive skill in this sector, we collected many responses.

1-3-2 Evaluation of the Performance of Collective Skills

Collective competence in the public sector depends on the ability of public agents to coordinate various tasks and use incentive mechanisms to trigger collective learning dynamics.

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This approach is only viable if the interests of pressure groups converge and if the public enterprise modernizes to become a performance “locomotive”.

1-3-3 - Our Main Empirical Results

The results we have achieved are listed above and which are of a purely interpretive nature, a set of recommendations is implemented for a better combination between the notion of managerial talent in theory and its corollary in practice. The SONELGAZ company harbors undeniable potential in terms of intangible resources, knowledge, skills, which make it a privileged practical study case.

2- The Development of Managerial Talent in Practice, Case of National Electricity and Gas Company (SONELGAZ)

2-1 Study Methodology:

2-1-1 Elements of the investigation

Talent management is a well-researched field with many methodological guides available for HR managers looking to implement talent management in their organization. Our approach focused on talent management as a tool serving the knowledge construction policy in public companies.

2-1-2 The Methodological Approach to Collecting Information

In the absence of additional sources of information to support our theoretical work, we chose a survey approach in order to obtain elements of response concerning our theme and our object of research. This survey constitutes the central pillar of our work, allowing us to shed light, in a more or less modest way, on the instruments which structure the expression of managerial talent by analyzing different processes and tools available in our host organization. For our method, we opted for a qualitative investigation, in particular semi-structured interviews. This method is particularly suitable for improving knowledge of a specific population and analyzing a social phenomenon, based on information relating to management tools linked to the emergence of talent.

2-2 Management by Individual Skills (Managerial Talent) as a Vector of Skills Development

In order to clarify the value of management through individual skills to achieve the performance objectives set by the Sonelgaz company, we proposed a series of questions. The responses that were obtained clearly demonstrated the contribution of managerial talent to the construction of effective skills management. Among the responses that were collected, respondents believe that management by skills alone is not enough to achieve the objectives set by the company, due to excessive dependence on the State. In the case of the SONELGAZ company, it appeared necessary to adopt a more flexible management method, making it possible to take advantage of the company's specific resources. This new orientation encourages SONELGAZ to invest more in dynamic sectors, such as new technologies and rare resources, as well as to promote professional achievements. These initiatives would enable the company to strengthen its competitive positioning and ensure sustainable performance.

2-3 From the Individual to the Collective: the Genesis of Managerial Talent in Public Companies

When we questioned the role of the individual, their principles and their management abilities to respond to collective issues, the majority of respondents responded positively. This confirms the tacit skills potential that the company possesses. The codification of these skills represents a crucial issue that company managers must seriously consider.

2-4 The Managerial Talent in the Functioning of the Public Organization

The talent of a public manager can be seen as a dynamic process of identity construction, integrating a dialogic (me and others) and evolving (today and tomorrow) dimension. Thus, managerial talent is a multidimensional concept, combining individual and organizational variables which are complementary and inseparable. From an organizational point of view, the construction of talent identity is based on a combination of variables like the recognition of the individual, their individual value, as well as their socialization within the company.

In response to the question on the place of managerial talent in the functioning of the public organization, 100% of administrators estimated that managerial talent is marginalized in the public company. Among the responses, senior executives believe that theoretical skills, learning abilities and motivation are important elements in the evaluation of managerial talent. Furthermore, middle managers consider that sense of initiative and professional conduct are also significant criteria in this evaluation.

2-5 The Development of Managerial Talent, an Imperative for Skills Management.

According to the managers who were interviewed, the development of managerial talent mainly involves the establishment of an organizational system which advocates flexibility at work as an effective method of capitalizing on operational knowledge, encouraging employees to explore their potential. via a professional recognition system which pays for all forms of qualification. The imperative of flexibility and responsiveness of companies has significantly modified the place given to human resources, work content therefore evolves, mobilizing the subjectivity of intelligent employees.

Indeed, the analysis within the SONEGAS company relates to contextualized, dynamic and localized work situations whose content is imperfectly observed. Talent management as a recipient of knowledge, know-how and skills is called upon to change in nature, managers should think less about the trade-off forecast of expenditure/forecast performance of the human resources deployed, than about questions linked between other on recruitment, training or even motivation.

After reading these different issues, we can conclude that a paradigm shift is taking place in the field of strategic human resources management. We recommend the company to abandon the principle of vertical integration in favor of refocusing on its distinctive skills which have undeniable assets for the formulation of development strategies. This leads us to define the organization as a portfolio of skills to be valued and capitalized and no longer from a product/market perspective. From this perspective, the performance of the company is not analyzed through its competitive position to be seized (Porterian approach to strategy). However, the path to competitiveness lies in the combination of the company's resources and skills, accumulated over time and space and valued in several markets (diversification strategy)

This perspective leads to rethinking their workspace as places open to the expression of managerial skills. The new strategic orientations, in terms of value creation, propose to act on the internal capacities of firms which are often unexploited. The important role of corporate governance within SONEGAS makes it possible to contribute to the skills development process, it offers the stakeholders a capacity for balanced participation. Skills governance is the search for efficiency, transparency and accountability of everyone in the management of the strategic resources that constitute the company's knowledge. It involves decision-making processes, distribution of responsibilities, monitoring and updating mechanisms.

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Below we present a non-exhaustive methodology for a skills governance system which guides the debate on the modalities to be put in place so that companies are spaces open to their environments, thus capitalizing on their experiences and practices. The SONELGAZ company is concerned about its development, the directive interviews carried out during our investigation confirm the insertion of managerial talent in a skills perspective. This perspective is based on a set of situations that we analyzed as follows:

Competence at work focuses its attention on the individual, as the only vector of development, through taking into account their needs and implementing managerial measures aimed at increasing their development. The acquired knowledge of employees constitutes relevant bases and assets that should be promoted for a better revitalization of the HR function.

The logic of competence is a space in which employees are required to face new situations at work. This is how the notion of motivation finds its managerial meaning; it is enough to vary and enrich the work content to allow employees to motivate themselves, but also to break the routine that characterizes workplaces.

Quality, reliability and reduction of deadlines are the predominant values. Without this logic, employees are placed in working conditions which are favorable to the development of their skills. The company, for its part, ensures the evaluation of these skills through effective and fair remuneration systems. Employees ask for more responsibilities. This allows them to better diversify their knowledge and acquire more flexibility in the execution of their professional activities. The principle of employability is certainly expressed in a responsible way. Professional assessment tools are dominated by skills frameworks and annual appraisal interviews which remain the best instruments for measuring efficiency at work.

The dematerialization of work causes a definitive break with the logic of human resources management of a mechanistic type where the use of skills is the prerogative of a categorical grid of classification of professions. Hence, these converges towards an extensive logic of HR management where the acquisition, development and dissemination of knowledge in a global framework are the path to fulfillment and well-being at work.

Another aspect for developing managerial talent to boost the work space within Sonelgaz is understanding the challenges of qualification with the implementation of talent recognition measures based on the consolidation of acquired knowledge. The notion of qualification appeared at the end of the Second World War. This notion refers to the abilities of employees to belong to a work collective. This membership makes it possible to found the group, which remains the only valid structure for skills development.

Qualification is linked to collective agreements and their classification amendments, which determine the classification of work positions and professional education highlighting diplomas describing specific knowledge. The whole question of professional recognition is posed through the notion of qualification which is positioned in the hierarchical grid. It was quickly confronted with the upheavals that occurred in the mid-1980s, transformation of the organization of work and employment crises. This has been a real concern for companies, but also for sociologists who seek to find adequate responses to the changes observed in the content of work situations.

Three reasons may constitute criticism of the qualification: The first reason is explained by the rigid nature of the qualification in the face of rapid evolution in the transformations of

the organization of work. The break with Taylorian learning modes offers a new orientation in terms of skills acquisition, the work situations themselves become learning. The obsolete nature of the diploma causes instability at work, the mismatch of the position with the employee's profile can have harmful consequences on professional efficiency.

The second reason lies in the evolution of post-industrial society and the tertiarisation of sectors of activity. Certain knowledge has become ineffective in the face of the multiplication of supports and work situations. In service companies, employees must focus on specific skills to convince a client; this new vision of work pushes companies not to consider qualifications as the sole support for the development of a coordination unit at work.

The third reason is very simple, it refers to the incapacity of the diploma as the only reference to professional recognition, apart from the fact that the diploma can only reflect a simple reality of the world of work. The knowledge acquired during professional mobility is not recognized, because it does not appear in the specific knowledge classification grids.

These three criticisms precipitate the shift from qualification towards competence. This transition is noted by the modifications which are particularly noted in the allocation of work positions, as well as the balance of power between employers and unions. These latter have evolved in such a way that qualifications are powerless to resolve some problems at work.

The comparative advantages between competence and qualification are usually debated by sociologists at work. Indeed, A TOURAINE had developed the concept of "social qualification" during the 1960s, a concept referring to the multiple professional relationships resulting from a work situation that determine the behavior of individuals in the execution of their tasks. Competence replaces social qualification with the concept of "knowledge" which designates the behavioral determinants a job requires. This close link between qualification and competence determines the individual nature of professional recognition.

The table below is designed to summarize our results, but also to identify areas for improvement and for better expression of managerial talent within our host organization.

Table (1): Summary of Main Results

Unit of analyses	Main Results	Recommandation
Place of Human Resources in the company	Integrative human resources based on forecasting capabilities Lack of employee participation in goal setting	Implementation of a pilot human resources system. Promote participatory management as a structure for anticipating skills
Evaluation of the performance of collective skills	Classic evaluation measure based on financial incentive	Implementation of skills frameworks to list the main skills for better resource allocation in the workplace. Rely on perfectionist-type training and capitalize on what has been learned Implementation of tools such as skills, passports and validation of acquired experience
Management of individual skills	Continuous evaluation according to the precepts indicated	Invest in areas with individual dynamics such as new technologies Explore human potential

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	by the State recommendations Individual skills valued by very precise recruitment competitions and assessed by targeted professional interviews.	Establish a set of agreements with research centers, universities and specialty schools for an effective partnership
Character of individual competence	Tacit and difficult to capitalize on. Valuing human capital	Convert individual competence into collective competence by taking into account responsibility for personal initiatives and the triumph of participatory management which are necessary for organizational performance
The nature of managerial talent	Cultural management Organizational identity Return on experience	The talent of a public manager can be seen as a dynamic process of identity construction, integrating a dialogic (me and others) and evolving (today and tomorrow) dimension. Investing in learning abilities and motivation are important elements in the evaluation of managerial talent.
The development of managerial talent	Implement a participatory GPEC, a strategy which is capable of identifying potential	This perspective leads to rethinking their workspace as places that are open to the expression of talents and managerial skills. The new strategic orientations in terms of value creation suggest acting on the internal capabilities of companies, which remain for the most part unexploited. Dematerialize work focusing on the installation of a skills logic. The logic of competence is a space in which employees are required to face new situations at work. This is how the notion of motivation finds its managerial meaning; it is enough to vary and enrich the work content to allow employees to motivate themselves, but also to break the routine that characterizes workplaces. Strengthen work flexibility at all levels Implement a skills governance approach capable of activating the real requirements of managerial talent Strengthen the skills approach with tools that are the driving force for building sustainable competitive advantages

Source: designed by myself

2-6 Results of the study:

- The development of managerial talent within the Sonelgaz company is dependent on an imperative awareness of a certain number of factors which must be managed by HR managers. We have summarized them as follows:
- The human resources function must play an essential role in capturing knowledge and becoming the vector of knowledge development.
- The implementation of an effective skills evaluation system, which will be the common thread in any HR strategy formulation, skills benchmarks remain the most suitable tools for assessing skills and instilling a dynamic of lasting change.
- Individual skills must take on a strategic dimension in order to contribute to setting the objectives of the HR function. This involves converting these skills into collective, strategic or organizational skills.

- Cultural and participatory management are necessary recommendations for SONELGAZ executives to better build a managerial talent model that perfectly matches the requirements of this company.

- The flexibility of work spaces also constitutes possibilities that should not be overlooked for the managers of this company. This action revitalizes the workplace and creates a form of participation and professional anticipation.

- The professional recognition system drives change, with remuneration for skills that is consistent with the recommendations for work motivation.

- Finally, the inclusion of managerial talent, as an essential support in the skills approach, promotes the capitalization of knowledge at all levels.

Conclusion :

Our investigations have highlighted the importance of reconsidering the management of human resources within these organizations, characterized by a unique context. They highlight the need for decision-makers to be aware of certain aspects. How, in fact, can we consider strategic management of an organization without taking into account internal skills? How can we promote goal-oriented management without evaluating the management capabilities of individuals within the team? Finally, how can we establish a link between individual skills and collective management without addressing the question of individual talent, which is no longer limited only to technical skills, but also extends to the potential expressed in an environment that is favorable to their development ?

Although our research did not lead to the creation of a concrete model or the establishment of an exhaustive list of determining variables, it opened the debate on the place of talent in the management processes of public organizations.

In this context, our study provides in-depth understanding and provokes reflections on the close connections between different human resource management concepts. The mobilization of individuals, their specific skills, their potential, as well as the context in which they evolve, are fundamental elements to take into account to define strategic organizational objectives and encourage the development of various talents within the organization.

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