

Administration, competencies and management in educational institutions in Colombia

Abstract

It is shown in this article, the importance of administration and management for the organization of all human activities and processes, emphasizing those tasks related to education and training. In this sense, it is defined management as that ability to achieve organizational objectives from the allocation of: resources, budgets, human talent in certain times. All this suggests the need to plan, coordinate, direct, control and evaluate. However, these administrative functions must be contextualized precisely in reason of the nature of the educational institutions created and instituted for the provision of a social service such as education, for this reason, some suggestions and guidelines for action.

Keywords: administration, educational administration, educational management, competencies

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Introduction

In this paper we try to reflect on the importance of the functions management in the activities of human beings. Particular emphasis is placed in the administrative role of educational companies, for which the fact that, in these organizations, the traditional functions associated with the planning, coordination, direction and control, in processes around the marketing, production, human talent and financial elements, but with the necessary pertinent adjustments given the social work they perform. In this sense depending on the nature of the institutions, it is possible to identify functions substantive and supportive. Among the most important support functions we can highlight teaching, research and work in coordination with the community. Between the supporting functions can be named well-being, logistical elements and financial.

A series of administrative models are named in this writing that have modeling the management functions, both in traditional productive organisms and in educational organizations. In particular, the article highlights two trends: that of quality and that of skills, the latter in vogue above all for the articulation that has been taking place between training and work. They are also discussed some existing nonsense when trying to apply the administrative models traditional in educational administration. Finally, some of the most important competencies that educational managers must have in their functions of coordinators and directors.

Concepts of administration and management of commercial companies, industrial and services

It has always been said that all human activity, even the simplest and most rudimentary it requires certain mechanisms that seek organization and management.^{1,2} This organization demands elements of time, costs, disposition, hierarchy of tasks, among others aspects. Just as an example, when we go for a walk or when we have to hold a party, we require a budget, the organization of an agenda or schedule, assigning functions or tasks, establishing priorities and even electing a leader and coordinating functions. When we develop these activities, in one way or another we are talking about administration, and, in a way more sophisticated management.

There are different concepts about what is management and what is management: Torres,³ for example, in a document entitled: "A contemporary vision of the concept of administration, revision of the Colombian context", argued that the term management came from a Latin meaning called "gestures" that meant attitude or movement of the body, which in turn comes from the term "generate", which means: carry, drive, do something.

Ortiz and Gómez⁴ for their part, taking the etymology of the word management, expressed in the previous paragraph, establish that, as well as the body to take an object with his hand he must carry out a total coordination, in the same way the companies must establish a whole dynamic to carry out their actions based on the selection and definition of objectives. These same authors establish that the management and the manager are committed to guiding their subordinates, but with an attitude of respect towards their rights. They highlight the social action of every manager, since he is always articulating actions with various people and with the regulations of the institutions.

Hamel and Breen⁵ establish that a manager must at least respond to the following tasks: Setting goals, incentivizing and motivating people to achieve compliance, control and coordinate various activities, allocate resources, balance and coordinate the interests of stakeholders, build social relationships, apply the knowledge in the various areas that require it.

Drucker,⁶ considered a contemporary authority on the issues management, establishes for its part, that a manager must respond to three tasks primordial: the first, to fulfill the organization's mission; the second, achieve that workers and subordinates adhere to the development of their work, but at the same time own time that they feel accomplished; and, finally, direct the impacts of the work and social responsibilities.

An important aspect expressed by Drucker⁶ is managers they must allow themselves to be led by their subordinates, in the sense that they are not always highest-level managers "know it all", therefore, they should not ignore the contributions that workers can have in any area, this is a luxury that is not they can give.

In relation to the administration, there is also a large number of definitions and theoretical aspects associated with this concept. The concepts of administration and management are closely related. The administration would be the coordination and supervision of activities that have to do with work tasks, guaranteeing two essential characteristics that will be essential in the world of work: Efficiency and effectiveness, that we could well understand them, in a very simple way for the purposes of this work, how to do what has to be done, in the case of efficiency, and doing it well in the shortest time, in the case of effectiveness.⁷

Idalberto Chiavenato,⁸ defines the management as the process of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling resources to respond to tasks in accordance with corporate objectives. While that, Porter, Black and Hitt,⁹ use the concept of structures, stating that the management is precisely the process by which they are structured and used resources oriented to achieve certain ends or goals in a specific context organizational.

Carrying out an analysis of the concepts presented so far, related to management, administration and management, it can be observed, in general terms, three common essential categories in their understanding: A task to be solved, some resources available and a context in which it is carried out.

In traditional literature, related to management and science management, the description of some substantive functions associated with the management, among which can be named: planning, coordination, direction, monitoring and evaluation.⁹⁻¹¹

Let's look at each of these organizational functions in detail below:

Planning is perhaps the main managerial task. Regarding this role fundamental, the contributions of Drucker⁶ on the managerial model known as strategic planning. In planning, objectives are primarily determined. Organizational guidelines and then some objectives by areas. All the people and command levels should be part of these goal-setting processes and objectives. Coupled with this determination of objectives, it must be established, at least preliminarily, with what criteria they can be evaluated. Another key element in setting goals, is not planning very ambitious goals that cannot be fulfilled, but not very basic objectives that would be easily achieved. In both cases it would generate frustration.

Coordination, on the other hand, implies assigning tasks and responsibilities to each person, and, at the same time, provide the necessary resources for its realization. Likewise, there is to take into account that there is effective communication between workers. Of one way or another, coordination implies structuring functions and this is done evident, precisely, in the levels of command or in the hierarchies and in the levels of communication, which is represented in the so-called organization charts of functions. A point what the manager has to watch out for is unfair delegation. By Of course, in this coordination it is necessary to take into account the potentialities of the people and, in general, their profiles. In the language of competencies, the manager must keep in mind in this coordination, the abilities and skills, the knowledge, the attitudes and motivations and personality aspects of each of the members of the company.

Management as an administrative function can be identified as getting the subordinates really take on the task of fulfilling their duties, of responding to the partial objectives of each sector, of each department within the company. A thing is to hire people and organize them by departments for the development of each one of the tasks, and quite another, is to get people to fulfill their functions.

In the past, the manager generally resorted to sanctions and punishments, and in general, to the own postulates of behavioral psychology; however, today, you have to go to the more varied sources born of the psychology of human motivation. About, we invite readers to consult the article by Donado & Marín¹² which appeared in the digital magazine *Ariadna Psicológica*, entitled: "Organizational social responsibility, a view from human development", in which it is stated clearly that the organizations of this new century must guarantee, on the one hand, the development of organizational objectives and, on the other, the development of the people who are part of the organization.

Finally, *control and evaluation* are joint tasks; designate the capacity that the manager must have at all levels to guarantee the fulfillment of tasks. In this order of ideas, planning, designated as the first administrative role, and evaluation, designated as the latter, are functions that must be fully articulated. Jones and George¹³ define evaluation as the ability of an organization to verify the achievement of goals and to undertake corrective actions to sustain, maintain, or improve performance.

Management and administration of educational companies

Educational Management is the attempt to put into practice the functions administrative measures studied above and exposed by various authors such as James et al.,¹⁰ Fernández,¹⁴ Drucker,¹⁵ Do Nascimento & Chiusoli,¹⁶ identified as planning, coordination, direction, control and evaluation of educational organizations, whether these kindergarten centers, basic and secondary training schools, or institutions of higher education, just to mention a few, whether it is of public and private organizations.

The administrative and managerial functions in the educational field according to James et al.,¹⁰ Fernández,¹⁴ Drucker,¹⁵ Urdaneta de Rincón et al.,¹⁷ are differentiated between the functions substantive and supporting functions. The substantive functions would be represented for research, teaching, social projection; and the support ones, represented by planning systems, library systems, welfare, technical supports, among others. The important element to highlight is that although it is true the academic is the essence of educational companies, this type of organization must seek a system administrative that allows the development of the academy.

At this point, the question would be: Is it possible to assimilate the models and theoretical concepts of the management and administration of commercial companies, industrial or services, to the management and administration of educational institutions?

Just as we started this essay, in which we stated that all types of activity human being is capable of being organized, administered and, therefore, managed. Consequently, educational processes also require a process of leadership and management, aimed at carrying out educational companies and corporate objectives for which they were created and that promote their development; and in all, be these, public or private, large or small, it is necessary to clearly define processes related to planning, coordination, direction, control and evaluation;¹⁸ Chediak et al.¹⁹

Therefore, we ask ourselves: what concepts of administration and management of commercial, industrial and non-educational service companies, they must be kept intact when applied to educational institutions; what concepts must be incorporated, adapted, modified, or even created, to deal with the dynamics of educational companies so that they respond to the purposes for which they were created?

Of course, what is presented below does not fully respond to these questions, but if it represents a first approximation in the attempt to answer these questions. Indeed, the authors do not intend to make an exhaustive analysis, but rather, to state some considerations that are pertinent to having a perspective of the difference between purely for-profit companies, such as the commercial, industrial and service companies, and companies whose purpose is the education.

A fundamental element that we must consider is the nature same as educational companies. Although, for the most part, at least in our country, the responsibility for this sector is in the hands of private capital, there is no need to lose the vision that education is a social good and, as a social good, must be under the strictest control of the State and monitored by civil society.

Therefore, the fundamental premise is that before forging a personal fortune or family, education has as a transcendental mission, the integral formation of men and women. This is not a minor difference from traditional companies, which seek guarantee at all times, not only the subsistence of the business, but the accumulation of personal assets.

According to Smith, David Ricardo, and Spencer, survival, supremacy and economic leadership, are those that define the *raison d'être* of the business market. This is closely connected with the concept of economic man *-Homo economicus-*, where a human being is prefigured selfish and individualistic human, and where Machiavelli's concepts are applied (1999) formulated in his book "The Prince", which, in summary, postulates that no matter the means, because the whole is to reach certain ends.

This is not what is expected of educational institutions. These should think, first of all, not in the accumulation of riches, but in the spirit for which were created: Development of human nature, satisfaction of needs fundamentals, human progress, potentiation of faculties, abilities, skills, or, as Kant²⁰ would say, "the development of coming of age".

However, this is not what characterizes educational institutions today. At all levels, from preschool training to educational institutions higher, the pursuit of wealth is the common denominator. Unfortunately, the State in most cases, acts as a passive entity, and even in many occasionally, the rulers have their interests compromised with these institutions.

It is not an error to use administrative models to respond to the various functions and roles of the management of educational institutions, from the planning to evaluation. The problematic issue is confusing the purpose of the educational institutions, with the purpose, in many cases, of the models administrative, designed to seek greater profit and economic objectification of being human. In fact, in traditional organizations there are countless examples where to obtain greater profit it goes against human well-being. Examples of this type we find them in behavioral business models or in other models in where the time out, the sanction, the memorandum and other more drastic ones are used, such as not talking while working, only going to the bathroom once every shift, not making friends in the work, among others.

But, there is still more: The organization and the use of administrative models in the schools, should not go against the essence of their substantive tasks; simple matters but sayers, coming from administrative technocracies, attempt against these substantive functions: Do not use the name of the people but a code; uniform to people in any way; focus not on substance but on form, question

the autonomy of the teaching-learning exercise, worrying about responding to a curriculum ignoring the process; insist on ending a training program, despite that the expected competencies have not been achieved, just for the fact of fulfilling certain standards, are just some of the ways in which many administrative processes do more bad than good.

This is not to say that the school should not be planned, coordinated, directed, controlled and evaluated, this would contradict our first approach: That is, that all human activity is capable of being managed. Only each of these functions must be contextualized according to the needs and demands of education as a system, and of education considered within its fundamental role in society.

Educational management in Colombia

In Colombia, Law 715 of 2001, (Law 715, 2001, art. 10) establishes that the Management Education falls on the Rectors. According to the authors of this essay, this should be an interdisciplinary work that moves all the dimensions involved in the process education: faculty and student body, administration, families, community and city. Only in this way could the objectives of an Educational Reform be achieved, which should be contemplate the redefinition and transformation of Colombian educational institutions.

For the rector to truly be a pedagogical leader, he should: manage the physical and human resources of the educational institution; manage the processes that lead to the progress and qualification of education and have a team interdisciplinary motivated and prepared to support you. However, in reality what observed, is that the rector, distracted from other functions, does not respond to the true functions to be performed.

A Manager, according to Marchant Ramírez,²¹ Valles Montero, et al.,²² Alvarez Ochoa et al.,²³ must have the following skills:

- 1) Direct the educational institution efficiently and effectively.
- 2) Understand and apply the organizational concepts necessary to transform traditional administrative practices (often, if not always, vitiated).
- 3) Know the education legislation in force.
- 4) Know the research and data collection processes for reliably and objectively diagnose your own institution and the institutions of your context (to establish competitiveness).
- 5) Project and implement the administrative processes necessary to formulate and improve the educational practices of your institution.
- 6) Design and implement family management and participation processes and the community. Conceive and carry out the evaluation of all of the above to confront the results with your original plan in each process and with your initial objectives.

After of all this, you must still restart with the plans implementing the adjustments where necessary, as it happens in any managerial management. The questions that arise are related to issues such as: if the rector does everything described above as an administrative leader, when does he do his rector's work and vice versa? Is it not really that the rector should have an administrative body led by a professional in this area, to support it, and then have the necessary administrative resources to carry out their role as rector in an Efficient and effective? At this point a reflection should be made: if some think that above is very idealistic, the description of the Rector that insinuates Law is more "idealistic" Colombian.

Entering the concept of Educational Management itself, we find that Manes²⁴ calls “Educational Institutional Management” the “process of conduction of an educational institution through the continuous exercise of a set of skills directives aimed at planning, organizing, coordinating and evaluating the strategic management of activities necessary to achieve pedagogical effectiveness, administrative effectiveness, community effectiveness and cultural significance, providing lasting results in people and in human groups”, which probably brings us closer conceptually to what is defined by the aforementioned Colombian Law.

According to Alvarado Oyarce²⁵ author of the book: *On the paths of Education*, “the Management is an administrative function, of a professional nature, inherent to a position managerial, which implies possessing a series of qualities and personal characteristics; anyway, possess above all a set of specific attitudes that favor driving success of the functions in charge”. At this point we ask ourselves: Are we sure that the rectors of our educational institutions meet this profile of the Educational Manager? What if they do? to what extent do they do it? What are the consequences for our education if we don’t meet this profile? Before delving into so many theoretical definitions of so many proposed educational models, when our rectors and teachers are trained, are being trained and prepared to participate and respond to the requirements “ideals” of the Colombian Educational Reform?

Challenges of educational management in Colombia

Today’s Educational Manager must face the following Challenges:^{26–28}

- 1) First challenge: transform personal positions and realities current institutional and cultural, which are taken for granted to this day, since are accepted as part of our way of being and are perceived as impossible to transform and as part of what our country is, Colombia
- 2) Second challenge: transcend, go beyond the conception that whoever has administrative functions are only dedicated to managing human, physical, financial, technological, etc. In reality, the Manager, whether in the educational area, or in any other organization is, in essence, a professional with a decided interest in the human being, for the truth, for science, for ideas, for history and for society in which lives. In summary, the Educational Manager is a Humanist and an intellectual of time complete, since its raw material is man and the knowledge of his epoch.
- 3) Third challenge: The Educational Manager must understand the challenges he faces every day to train youth and new generations of professionals and people; what’s more must face the transformation of a world that, although dynamic, innovative and full of new scientific and social developments, it does not look like a world moving towards direction that many educators would like (nor in the direction that I would like “ideally” our reform to the Education Law of the early 2000s).
- 4) Fourth challenge: to speak of Management is to speak of Managers, that is, of people concrete people who make decisions that affect others, be it in a positive sense or negative and that, consequently, they do not act within a social vacuum, but are called to think of Man, of the other, as the reason for their role. educators we are called to fully train students as people who, in turn, they will have the challenge of transforming the world and the society that we will leave them.

To face and respond to these challenges, we have considered two models managerial, the Total Quality Management and the Management by Competences that will be seen more in detail below.

Management models and education

It is important to highlight that there are different currents of thought of a sociological, anthropological, political and surely also psychological, which have promoted in turn the schools of administrative thought and that are evident in the work day-to-day life associated with managing organizations of all kinds, including businesses and educational organizations.^{29–31} Among these currents we can list functionalism, behaviorism, humanism, theory z, the systemic model, which have contributed in various ways and at multiple levels in the management of companies.

It is so in the organizations today, there are times unconsciously, others deliberately, observe varied facets of all these schools: An example of this is found in the management of reinforcements and incentives, collected from behavioral currents; on the departmentalization and integration of functions associated with functionalism; the importance of the motivation and needs of the worker of schools humanists; recognition for experience and antiquity of theory z; seeing the company as a whole and considering that the whole is more than the sum of its parts, typical of the systemic school, or the hierarchy, division of functions and tasks and the levels of command of Weber’s thoughts.

Classics of the administration, are added administrative models such as Peter Drucker’s strategic management;¹⁵ the reengineering,³² total quality,³³ among other. All these elements are fundamental for the educational manager and his practice is intimately linked to the avatars of these models. we would like to refer briefly to one of these models and its impact on education. We refer to total quality model, but not associated with the traditional model exported from the administration of productive companies, but from the conception of integral quality coined by García Hoz³⁴

The reason for analyzing this model comes from the enormous strength of the term quality, which should be an adjective that characterizes all educational institutions.

Although the comprehensive quality referred to here has its depth and it is not the time to expand on it, if we want to highlight some of its general characteristics that must be assumed by the educational manager.

First, this model highlights equity and in general all human values as a primary factor; second place establishes the educational organization as structured on three fronts interrelated that are the community and the context; and thirdly and derived from the above, this model establishes the emergence of a large number of quality indicators, some of which qualitative nature that have a real utility, not only for the control of the State but for the optimization of the school and the efficient and effective use of the same by the manager educational.

Management by competences and educational management

We would like to turn our attention to one of the models that in recent years has echoed in the management of organizations, including educational organizations. We refer to management by competencies. The term competencies reach the administrative field by Boyatzis, when published his book managerial competencies.³⁵ It the first thing

to clarify is that the concept of competencies has its first difficulty in the polysemic nature of the construct. When we talk about skills, easily we could assimilate it to various meanings: either as faculties or abilities, as responsibilities, such as business rivalries, among others.

In the business field, likewise, it has various interpretations, being that of greater ancestry that which associates competencies with abilities and skills, together to personal elements that are related to the adequate or optimal development of a task in the workplace. However, it is clear that competencies are more than skills and personality characteristics.³⁶⁻³⁸ For the purposes of this work, we define competencies as those abilities and skills, together with motivations, and interests and knowledge, which allow the development of a certain function in any field, including the labor field.

The utility that the competition would have becomes because it is a category that allows articulate the potential of people with the needs of organizations, including, of course, educational organizations.

Concept of competencies is required for the development of a position, there must be union agreements and professionals who establish precisely what would be the skills, attitudes, knowledge and personality characteristics required to develop a certain role within an organization.^{39,40}

There are generic skills, basic skills, job skills, among others. The generic competences are those attributes necessary for the development of a person in any sphere of society. Job or specific skills are competences that have to do with attributes related to the development of functions individuals.^{35,37,41,42}

Managerial competencies are a type of competencies that would be useful for leading organizational processes related to plan, coordinate, direct and control. The competency-based management model is a good alternative for the development of the tasks that the educational manager must adopt. The competency-based management model presents the educational manager with a structure to align the corporate purposes of an institution with the purposes of the people seen individually or in groups. In some of the subtopics in which I would contribute this managerial model would have to consider that of human resources management. In this case, both selection, training, qualification and evaluation, would find immense support in this model.

In a study carried out by Cruz, Orozco, Valera, Trespalacios, Zapata, Bustamente, et al.,⁴³ in the city of Medellín, aimed at knowing and describing the competences of educational directors and thereby develop a profile, which in turn once became a model for performance evaluation and that had the participation of prominent educational leaders from the public and private sectors as well as teachers, I was able to identify that in the Colombian university, an educational manager must have some of the following competencies: Leadership, teamwork, effective communication, strategic planning, ability to solve problems, ability to make decisions, attitude of service, systemic thinking, proactivity, among others.

Quinn (1994) reports that a manager in an educational company must have the following skills: As a manager: taking initiatives, setting goals and effective delegation; as coordinator: planning, organization and control; as a mentor: self-understanding and understanding of others, interpersonal communication and development of the subordinates; as a facilitator team building, decision making participatory and conflict management and Finally, as an innovator: living with the change, creative thinking, and change management.

Conceptual framework proposed by Quinn, Marcano and Finol de Franco⁴⁴ present the results of a study carried out in the State of Zulia in Venezuela, Regarding the personal and managerial skills of the directors and deputy directors of basic schools. It is allowed to establish that, according to the perceptions of these managers, there is a high assessment of personal skills, such as self-awareness, self-realization, and self-control. They are also seen with high rank in management skills, both as directors, mentors and facilitators.

However, there is a very low rating in the innovation and thinking skills creative. It would be worth establishing comparative judgments between these valuations and the perceptions that the subordinates, the parents and the own students.⁴⁵

Discussion and conclusion

This issue of competencies is in full discussion and there will be to continue investigating its use in the educational field, not only to guide the teaching-learning processes, but also for the management of institutions educational. Only in an attempt to establish some conclusive line to what we have been pointing out, it seems pertinent to note that the educational manager must lead the areas present throughout the educational organization such as: the area of marketing and sales, the area of human talent, the productive area and the financial. Only that these functions must be adapted to the nature and reason for being of educational companies.⁴⁶

For this reason, in recent decades, educational institutions have seen the need to adapt their management processes and to change based on the demands of society. The passive role and long-term responses are no longer relevant to the new realities of the environment, such as: political challenges and economics, the exponential progression of information technologies and communication, the internationalization and globalization of the economy, trends all that demand immediate and pertinent reactions associated with the investigation, the permanent training, higher quality, quantifiable and demonstrable results and the generation of benefits for society, not only measurable through indicators economic.⁴⁷

Managers despite professional training in their area of knowledge and of their teaching and research experience, they may lack the skills, experience and managerial knowledge, which can make it difficult to achieve the objectives institutions and giving effective responses to society. The competitiveness is forcing the directors of education to develop various strategies to differentiate itself from similar institutions and demonstrate its added value. This implies an interdisciplinary, systematic work with people trained from the perspective of know how to do, be, learn and contextualize, in addition to having critical capacity and reflexive to learn from mistakes and above all to manage themselves as people. A successful manager in the management of his position must have a high level of technical skills in their area of knowledge and in academic functions primary aspects such as teaching, research and extension, but it must also develop and manage a set of generic skills related to their motivation to achievement, decision making and initiative, effective management of interpersonal relationships, among other.⁴⁸

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Conflicts of interest

The author declares that they have no direct or indirect conflicts.

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