The relationship between Human Resource Management practices and Collective Competencies: a case study in a certified B company

A relação entre práticas de Gestão de Recursos Humanos e Competências Coletivas: um estudo de caso em uma empresa certificada B

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ABSTRACT

The complexity of forming teamwork and the articulation with different individual knowledge towards a common goal make collective competence a relevant topic for the Human Resource area. This article aims to analyze the relationship between the practices carried out by the Human Resource Management area of Company B with the collective competencies, identifying those practices that can contribute to their development. The study is characterized as descriptive, qualitative applying the case study strategy in a company in São Paulo state with B certification. As a result, we identified the practices carried out by the Human Resource Management area with their respective mobilizing factors (communication, training and development, relationship, and incentives). Some of these factors were essential to mobilize collective work configurations. We also identified in the study collective actions evidence, which resulted in two collective competencies: relationship and collaboration, and the ability to develop joint solutions. In conclusion, we observed that Human Resource Management practices contribute to actions that foster the cooperative relationship and the employees' identification with their team and organization, stimulating collective effort and teamwork, bringing them closer to develop collective competencies.

Keywords: Human Resource Management. Collective Competencies. B Certification. Teamwork.

RESUMO

A complexidade para formação do trabalho em equipe e a articulação de diferentes conhecimentos individuais em prol de um objetivo comum, tornam a competência coletiva uma temática relevante para área de Recursos Humanos. Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar a relação entre as práticas realizadas pela área de Gestão de Recursos Humanos de uma Empresa B com as competências coletivas, identificando aquelas práticas que possam contribuir para o seu desenvolvimento. O estudo caracteriza-se como descritivo, qualitativo aplicando a estratégia de estudo de caso em uma empresa do estado de São Paulo com certificação B. Como resultado, identificamos as práticas realizadas pela área de Gestão de Recursos Humanos com seus respectivos fatores mobilizadores (comunicação, treinamento e desenvolvimento, relacionamento e incentivos). Alguns destes fatores mostraram-se essenciais para mobilizar configurações coletivas de trabalho. Também identificamos no estudo evidências de ações coletivas, que resultaram em duas competências coletivas: relacionamento e colaboração, e capacidade de desenvolver soluções conjuntas. Concluindo, observamos que as práticas de Gestão de Recursos Humanos contribuem com ações que fomentam o relacionamento cooperativo e a identificação dos colaboradores com sua equipe e organização, estimulando o esforço coletivo e o trabalho em equipe, aproximando-os das competências coletivas.

Palavras-chave: Gestão de Recursos Humanos. Competências Coletivas. Certificação B. Trabalho em equipe.

1 INTRODUCTION

Because Human Resources Management (HRM) and the potentiation of team performance have become a competitive advantage in contemporaneous organizations (Branchi & Carrasco, 2019), the Human Resources (HR) area has gained strength in recent years, having its practices recognized as relevant for organizational performance (Brito & Oliveira, 2016). The HRM practices are close to or aligned with the organization's policies and principles showing, the area capacity to mobilize the cooperation and interaction of individual work to form workgroups (Silva & Ruas, 2016).

The complexity of forming teamwork and the articulation with different individual knowledge towards a common goal make collective competence (CC) a relevant topic for the HR area (Avelino, Sales, & Costa, 2017). Thus, CC appears as the key element for carrying out shared activities, solving problems together, and adapting to changes (Defelix, Le Boulaire, Monties, & Picq, 2014; Iazykoff, 2018), adding value to teamwork and supporting the collective performance (Puente-Palacios & Brito, 2017).

In this way, understanding the collective activities and the relationship between individuals and organizations can be a start to understand organizational dynamics and how to manage people (Avelino, Sales, & Costa, 2017). In this sense, some studies consider the HRM importance for collective competencies (Avelino, Salles, & Costa, 2017; Lima & Silva, 2015; Silva & Ruas, 2014, 2016), their practices are considered elements that facilitate the composition of their attributes, as well as configuring the possibility of forming or developing collective competencies (Silva & Ruas, 2014, 2016).

The justification for this research has as an essential point an empirical contribution on the understanding of collective competencies since some authors point out the lack of research on this theme (Avelino, Salles, & Costa, 2017; Silva & Ghedine, 2019; Wagner, Dubé, & Gomez-Garibello, 2020), added by the need to understand HR practices and collective competence in other environments and situations (Silva & Ruas, 2014, 2016). Thus, there is an interest in conducting such research in organizations certified as Companies B, companies that work with a focus on both social and environmental problems and that commit to social and environmental responsibility practices and standards (Rodrigues, 2016).

B companies are companies that meet verified standards of social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal responsibility, seeking to balance profit and purpose, to positively impact their employees, the community, and the environment. To be certified, the company must achieve a minimum score in its impact assessment B, which assesses how the company's operations and its business model impact on five measured and assessed dimensions: employees, community, environment, governance, and customers. This certification not only evaluates products and services but evaluates the overall positive impact of the company and what is behind it (B Lab, 2021).

As the certification submitted by which Companies B involves monitor and evaluate management practices, expected that they present different management practices. The concern with the team development, the satisfaction of its employees, and the alignment of these employees with the company's values, among other ones, are part of the evaluation of System B (Winkler & Portocarrero, 2019).

Thus, the following question emerges as a research problem: how do the practices carry out by the HRM area of Company B stimulate collective competencies? To answer this question and to assist in the discussion on the topic, this article aims to analyze the relationship between the practices carried out by the HRM area of Company B with the collective competencies, identifying those practices that can contribute to the development of these competencies.

For that, this article initially presents the theoretical foundation encompassing the concept of HRM, discussions about collective competencies, and the definition of B Companies. Then, we show the methodological procedures used for the analysis, the results interpretation, and the final considerations.

2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This section presents the main theoretical contributions that supported this research.

2.1 Human Resource Management

Almost at the end of 20 century, HRM started to focus its efforts on creating methods and metrics to develop people and groups (Amorim, Comini, & Fischer, 2019). However, over time, the organizations realized that the simple possession of high-quality human capital does not necessarily produce superior results. Human capital resources without HRM practices do not bring organizations to the appropriate motivation levels and the desired results. HRM practices that can influence the organizational human capital resources characteristics and combine them with other resources to achieve strategic objectives and generate competitive advantage started to be demand (Delery & Roumpi, 2017).

In recent decades, the HR area started to be recognized as necessary and critical to any organization and perceived as a relevant strategic partner (Cohen, 2015). The HR area started to present different perspectives, encompassing approaches that aim to consolidate as an area in constant transformation and integrate aspects present in the organizational context (Mascarenhas & Barbosa, 2019). Also, this area came to be called HRM.

In this sense, some researchers highlight the HRM importance for the organization. Podgorodnichenko, Edgar, and McAndrew (2020) state that HRM allows organizational priorities and values to be shared and supported by the entire organization, enabling employees to get involved, recognize different situational needs, support the decisions, and providing suggestions aligned with the organization's purposes. For Stahl, Brewster, Collings, and Hajro (2020), the HRM function can contribute to the way employees are treated within the organization, ensuring their external needs and expectations, creating an alignment of their internal interests and external. To this end, the HRM needs to choose appropriate business structures and develop mechanisms to identify, engage and integrate stakeholders.

Daniels, Wang, Lawong, and Ferris (2017) point out that almost all HRM strategic practices and policies contribute to organizational performance, contributing to the employees' attitude and retention. Lepak and Shaw (2008) state that researchers advanced to a certain degree of consensus that HRM systems consist of a set of practices. However, how these systems are conceptualized and operationalized still requires discussion. The authors highlight the importance of differentiating policies from practices due to the possibility of disconnection between the policies and practice adopted and implemented.

HRM policies represent the company's intentions regarding the types of programs, processes, and techniques for managing people (Wright & Boswell, 2002). On the other hand, practices consist of real programs, processes, and techniques effectively operationalized at the unit (Gerhart, Wright, Mahan, & Snell, 2000; Huselid & Becker, 2000). So, for a given HRM policy the HRM can use some practices to achieve the policy objective (Lepak & Shaw, 2008).

Effective people management should not be content with just executing a standardized set of practices. They need constantly develop and implement new practices, in addition to improving existing ones to remain competitive. An organization that introduces innovations in its people management practices can obtain valuable benefits (Agarwala, 2003). In this sense, to seek improvements in the HRM area, Silva and Ruas (2016) note that some HRM practices can generate and develop collective competencies when connected to the stimulus of cooperation, interaction, and sharing processes in the work environment. These practices facilitate the existence of elements considered conditional to support collective competencies' existence and development (Silva & Ruas, 2014).

2.2 Collective Competencies

The collective competencies (CC) concept arose primarily linked to the socio-cognitive phenomena analyzed in the ergonomics and psychology areas in the context of collective work, such as groups and teams. In the administration area, the CC concept started to appear in the 90s but spread after the 2000s, which allowed the coexistence of various conceptions about the theme (Michaux, 2011). In this way, CC started to gain space in discussions about competencies (Avelino, Salles, & Costa, 2017; Guernoub & Kerboub, 2019), since the new forms of work and management methods seek to collectively mobilize energies and talents resources for continuous improvement of organizations (Guernoub & Kerboub, 2019).

Collective competencies can be referred to as the individuals' participation and interaction in workgroups and represent all their knowledge and know-how to deal with different work situations (Avelino,

Salles, & Costa, 2017). The CC take place when people mobilize themselves in favor of the desired results and taking measures later to achieve these results (Mancini, O'Neal, Martin, & Bowen, 2018). Thus, CC are perceived as the individuals' group's ability to act towards a common collective goal (Todero, Macke, & Sarate, 2016).

For Guernoub and Kerkoub (2019), the CC is a management tool used to improve the efficiency of work team and its functioning based on the effective individual skill combinations existence and the reciprocal interaction between its members. Dupuich (2011) adds that building collective competence is necessary to sharing knowledge and experience in work situations. For this to happen, managers must recognize the work situations characteristics, especially the nature of the activity and the value of the experience (Iazykoff, 2018).

The competence notion can be extended to many collective work situations, the mobilization around a patient or a new product launch, as these are activities that require CC and may include one or more people from the company (Ruas, 2005). Brandão (2017) points out as collective competence example, a surgery team in a hospital emergency. Each team member, doctor, or nurse provides different competencies contributions. The social interactions establish between the team can give rise to collective competence, which is constituted as a property of the team and not of its members in an isolated way, so the collective competence is linked to the collective level or unity of an organization.

For Zarafian (2001), studies in sociology and ergonomics have shown that to exercise collective competence some particularities must occur: individuals need to build ordinary references, sharing the same professional language and "operative images" which allows them to glimpse their needs for cooperation and which are guided by the same implications. Thus, researchers Retour and Krohmer (2011) classified four fundamental attributes that constitute collective competence:

a) Common frame of reference: describes the collective action structure that results in the comparison between experiences and people representations involved. Refers to a common representation of the work to be done.

b) Shared language: refers to a language that allows team members to forge their own identity and differentiate themselves from other collectives, like the team's use of the same professional terms and jargon.

c) Collective memory: linked to learning, to know how to learn collectively through experience. It includes problems found and resolved together through interaction.

d) Subjective engagement: refers to the subjective mobilization of people-oriented towards the company there is a desire to work together. They are related to the resolution of unforeseen events and some dysfunctions that can compromise the progress of the action.

In this sense, Klein and Bitencourt (2012) state that collective competencies are developed by the interaction between different workgroups and the interdependence of the relationship between process and result. To understand the CC developing process, Silva and Ruas (2016) proposed a framework that defines the elements capable of stimulating the collective competencies development (figure 1).
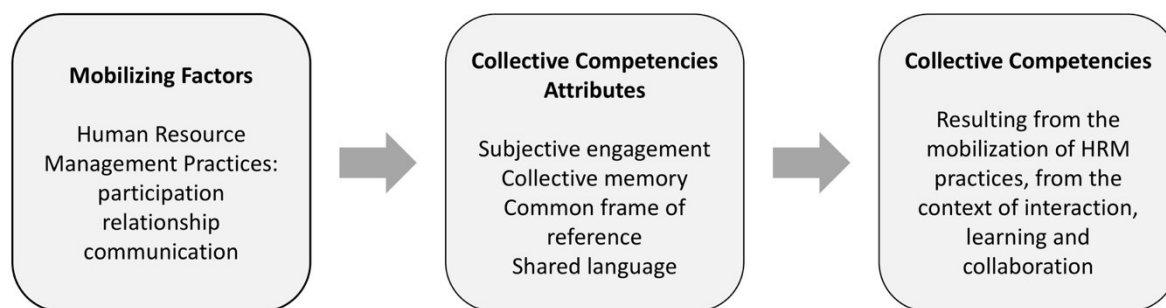

Figure 1 - **Process of relating elements capable of stimulating the development of collective competence.**
Source: Silva and Ruas (2016).

As noted in Figure 1, the mobilizing factors, in the HRM practices context, are management policies that encourage and reinforce the cooperation and interaction individual work process. So, the collective competencies attributes are the interaction process result between individuals, establishing a consolidated work collectively, and specific attributes to these collective configurations, such as team engagement, shared language, among others. Finally, collective competencies result from the HRM practices mobilization and the context of interaction, learning, and collaboration among individuals. (Silva & Ruas, 2016).

The authors also identified three HRM practices that mobilize collective configurations: participation, relationship, and communication. Participation practices are procedures that guide the employees to make decisions, solve problems, and plans to carry out actions collectively. The relationship practice combines events and actions aimed at integration and cooperation in individual work. Communication practice prioritizes valuing suggestions, ideas, and criticisms (Silva & Ruas, 2016).

Silva and Ruas (2014) considered other mobilizing factors are also: a) recognition; b) performance evaluations; c) training and development; d) incentives; and e) stimulating learning and the production and sharing of knowledge. The authors also point out that some of these factors have a weak or strong relationship with the attributes of collective competencies being related to the encouragement of the implemented HRM practices.

Klein and Bitencourt (2012) state that interaction, individual participation, and cooperation are essential for the emergence and development of collective competencies. This development involves practices to increase collective skills and adjust teams to work, promoting cooperative relationships, better learning, and performance (Le Boterf, 2003; Lima & Silva, 2015). So, the collective competencies development can generate greater effectiveness and work quality, an increase in the scope of actions carried out by the collective (Retour, 2005), or a greater capacity to solve problems experienced by organizations, which could not be done by only an individual. (Retour & Krohmer, 2011).

2.3 Companies B

Organizations continue to focus on their financial results, but it is no longer the only center of action. They started to consider social values and socio-environmental responsibility due to the consciousness change with global sustainability concerns in addition to social change towards communitarianism. Certification B has become a way of adding a layer of prosperity to companies, allowing them to enter distinct markets and signaling a positive message to their customers and strategic partners (Best & Binkley, 2020). In this way, the Companies B growth has been seen as an opportunity for organizations to communicate their commitment to society and the environment (Kim, Karlesky, Myers, & Schifelins, 2016).

There is a global movement called B Corporations or B-Corp, which aims to certify for-profit organizations that are concerned with providing services or products that collaborate with the environment and social well-being and, at the same time, promoting profit to its shareholders. The assessment for Certification B is carried out voluntarily, requiring organizations to fulfill some necessary prerequisites to receive certification as Company B (Araújo, Bezerra, Nóbrega, Neves, & Mendonça, 2020).

Companies B are corporate entities that assume social responsibility as a central part of their operating principles, committing to providing benefits to all stakeholders and not just to their shareholders (Winkler, Brown, & Finegold, 2018). Certification granted by a non-profit organization called B Lab, which certifies companies based on how they create value for their employees, the local community, and the environment. Through some steps, the company starts to follow a governance philosophy fundamentally different from a traditional organization focused on its shareholders (Kim et al., 2016). Companies B changed their corporate statutes to encourage their commitment to providing social services and environmental benefits (Cao, Gehman, & Grimes, 2017).

According to Wilburn and Wilburn (2014) and Comini, Rodrigues, and Fidelhic (2014), Movement B operates on three main fronts: legislation, certification, and impact investing. In legislation, it creates a new format for companies with a greater purpose in accountability and transparency in the generation of shared value, known as Benefit Corporations. In certification, it establishes common standards and distinguishes companies committed to socio-environmental responsibility from those that use the theme only as a

marketing promotion mechanism (B Corporation or B-Corp Certification), creating a community of "good companies". In impact investment, through information on impact assessments and socio-environmental performance (B-Analytics) it stimulates an appropriate capital market, culminating in the GIIRS (Global Impact Investment Rating System).

For a company to be certified, it must meet rigorous standards of impact areas measured and evaluated over five dimensions by B Lab (Sharma, Beverifge, & Haigh, 2018), which are: environment, workers, customers, community, and governance (Cao, Gehman, & Grimes, 2017):

a) Environment: evaluation of ecological products and services, such as the use of renewable energy and recycling, in addition to practices that negatively affect the environment, such as energy use and gas emissions.

b) Workers: assessment of employee salaries and benefits, training and education, work flexibility, corporate culture, and health and safety practices.

c) Clients: evaluation of how products and services contribute to the social benefit such as the promotion of public health and attention to marginalized groups.

d) Community: assessment of suppliers and distributors, job creation, diversity, as well as community products, services, and practices.

e) Governance: assessment of the company's mission, stakeholder involvement, and its policies and practices transparency.

To be eligible for Certification B, a company must score at least 80 out of 200 possible points in these areas. The certification lasts two years when the company must be certified again (Cao, Gehman, & Grimes, 2017).

HRM in Companies B is in line with B Lab's vision: for organizations to be "the best in the world" they need to be "best for their workers". This involves paying fair wages to its employees, developing learning experiences so that team members become more efficient and productive, as principles of trust, engagement, and transparency guide the management of work environments (Winkler & Portocarrero, 2018). Thus, organizations certified as Companies B have differential regard about their HRM practices, since the concern with the team development, the employees' satisfaction, the alignment of these employees with the values of the company, among other practices that seek equity in the team, are part of the assessment.

3 METHODOLOGY

The study is characterized as descriptive, qualitative applying the case study strategy. We researched Okena Serviços Ambientais company, whose principal business is industrial effluents treatment. We choose the company for its certification as Company B and the convenience of the researchers.

Okena Serviços Ambientais was founded in 2011 in the Itapevi city, state of São Paulo, with 46 employees on its staff. The company is concerned with environmental and social impacts, in addition to seeking to achieve economic results. Four pillars support the company's objectives: 1) develop the Okena team; 2) evolve the business and generate profit; 3) attend, understand and provoke customers; and 4) engaging in the network of relationships.

We collected the primary data through semi-structured interviews that followed by a script established with open questions. We divided the interview script into two categories of analysis. The first refers to practices carried out by the HRM area, intending to identify these practices present at Okena. We elaborated 8 questions related to the mobilizing factors proposed by Silva and Ruas (2014; 2016). The second is about the collective competencies concept, seeking to know whether there exists some evidence about them in the company. We elaborated 10 questions based on the attributes (common frame of reference, shared language, collective memory, and subjective engagement), considered by Retour and Krohmer (2011) as relevant for the collective competencies' formation.

We seek to identify with the interviews which principles and strategies stimulated cooperation and which HRM practices the company used. Chart 1 presents the analysis categories, their objectives, and their basic references.

Categories	Objective	Base reference
HRM practices	Identify the practices carried out by the HRM area at Okena.	Silva and Ruas (2014, 2016)
Collective Competencies	Identify if there is evidence of collective competencies.	Retour and Krohmer (2011); Silva and Ruas (2016)

Chart 1. **Analysis categories**
Source: elaborated by the authors (2021).

We realized five interviews during the month of December in 2017 involving employees who held managerial or operational positions in the Administrative-Financial, People Care (Human Resources area), Commercial and Operations areas. The sampling used in this study was intentional sampling, which according to Yin (2016) in qualitative research is chosen with the purpose of producing the most relevant and abundant data for the study topic. Thus, the interviewees were appointed by the People Care department, as according to the company's organizational chart they were responsible for coordinating their departments, thus totaling 5 interviewees indicated by Okena.

Interviewee 1 (E1) has the position of administrative manager, interviewee 2 (E2) is a people manager, interviewee 3 (E3) is an operations supervisor, interviewee 4 (E4) is a laboratory technician and interviewee 5 (E5) is a commercial manager. In analyzing the data, employees were identified by the codes E1, E2, E3, E4, and E5 previously presented. Two researchers conducted interviews in-person, using text notes to register the data, following Eisenhardt's (1989) suggestion about having at least two different views about the same topic.

Regarding secondary data, we used documentary analysis of the company's website, and internal documents provided by Okena (institutional magazines, newspapers, and folders). To perform the analysis, we used data obtained from semi-structured interviews and documents, which we classified into predefined analysis categories (HRM practices and collective competencies), following content analysis criteria proposed by Bardin (2011). The content analysis was carried out through the following chronological poles: a) pre-analysis; b) exploration of the material; and c) the treatment of results, inference, and interpretation. The pre-analysis aimed to organize the research. In this phase, the choice of materials that were submitted to analysis and the formulation of objectives were formulated. To explore the material, the data were categorized. The categorization consisted of the classification of the constitutive elements by differentiation and regrouping with previously defined criteria (chart 1). The treatment of the results, the inference and the interpretation were carried out through the writing and discussion of the results found, in the interviews with the collaborators and in the documents made available.

The sampling technique used is that of diversification, bringing the person responsible for each department that would bring a different view of the phenomenon.

4 DATA ANALYSIS

Through the collected data, HRM practices present at Okena are presented, evidence of collective competencies, and finally, the relationship between HRM practices and collective competencies.

4.1 HRM at Okena

According to the analyzed documents, it was noticed that for Okena HRM practices are related to the human sources area. Respondents state that the company's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) always highlights that people are "very important" and need to be valued, even disagrees with the use of HR term because he does not believe that people are resources but sources of inspiration and work. In this way, the CEO always had resistance to form an HR area, as he believes that human sources, as he calls them, are as important as any other company process and that the area leaders themselves should value and be responsible for the selection, hiring, training and monitoring the development of their team.

From the mobilizing factors proposed by (Silva & Ruas, 2014, 2016), we identified the practices carried out by the HRM area at Okena. The first mobilizing factor considered was communication. The communication

concerns important disclosures for job performance because considering ideas, suggestions, and complaints from employees (Silva & Ruas, 2014, 2016).

The internal documents show that to comply with the principles of conscious capitalism and the practices evaluated by the System B certification, the company developed a program to generate a shared value between Okena and its stakeholders, called OkenaExperience. This program includes various HRM actions and practices that aimed to combine employees and the needs and interests of the company, as holding workshops with employees to disseminate company values, promoting new ideas, and promoting initiatives that generate shared value. For the interviewees, generating shared value is both important in the material (physical and financial) and the immaterial (psychological, emotional, and spiritual) dimensions because the company believes that those who develop in these dimensions in a balanced way have better performance in their personal and professional activities.

The second mobilizing factor observed in HRM practices was training and development (T&D). According to Silva and Ruas (2014), this factor refers to development plans formulated jointly with employees, clarifying ways for their growth and development. Also, Gil, Hoeckesfeld, Silva, and Pereira (2020) state that T&D techniques allow to increase the performance of individuals, develop competencies, and acquire new knowledge that contributes to the personal and professional satisfaction of employees.

At Okena, through the analysis of secondary data, we found that this practice refers to the concern with the quality of employees' education, a work developed through the so-called "Social Seal", the result of a partnership with the municipality of Itapevi/SP. We observed this practice when E4 reported that he was encouraged, when he began to work at the company, to continue his studies. The employee had a position as a treatment operator and, after taking a technical chemistry course, he was transferred to the laboratory. Also, another practice perceived concerning the T&D factor was the mindfulness workshop, which aims to allow employees to become more aware of their mental processes and actions.

It was perceived in HRM practices at Okena the relationship factor, which considers the employees' expectations about work, based on their treatment of respect and attention (Silva & streets, 2014). This third factor analyzed is the integration events and actions carried out with employees.

According to E2, Okena has a volunteer program and a project entitled "day of giving". They organized the volunteer program in partnership with a local non-governmental organization, intending to develop the agents' role transforming, both the company and the individual. But the "day of giving" is not an Okena project, it is a global movement that encourages philanthropy worldwide, with the mission of encouraging ordinary citizens and companies to join through the culture of giving.

The fourth mobilizing factor perceived at Okena are incentives, made up of promotions made possible by career plans, stock options, bonuses, among other actions that contribute to the valorization and recognition of employees (Silva & Ruas, 2014). In the secondary data practices related to the incentive we perceived the extension of the paternity leave to two weeks and the birthday off day, where all employees can enjoy their day at home.

According to the interviewees, Okena believes in building a human company committed to the progress of the world through people. So, the company invests time and money to contribute to employees' development, reflecting on a humanized, safe, transparent, and ethical service. In this sense, we identified other benefits, such as Gympass, which allows employees access to gyms aiming at life quality.

Finally, we present a summary of the mobilizing factors and their respective HRM practices in Chart 2.

Mobilizing factors	Practices	Objective
Communication	Okena Experience	Alignment of the needs of employees with the needs of the company seeking to generate shared value.
Training and Development	Social Seal	Quality education of its employees.
	Mindfulness Workshop	Allow employees to become more aware of their mental processes and actions.
Relationship	Project "day of giving"	Encourage a culture of giving.
	Volunteer program	Develop the role of transforming agents, for both the company and individuals.

Incentives	Paternity leave	Personal and professional satisfaction of its employees.
	Birthday break	Personal and professional satisfaction of its employees.
	Gympass	Improvement of the quality of life.

Chart 2 - **Okena Human Resources Management Practices**
Source: elaborated by the authors (2021).

4.2 Collective competencies

We perceived, through the opinion of the interviewees, that Okena stimulates cooperation between their employees. It is essential to collective competencies development because cooperation and collaboration improve interaction processes, experiences, and knowledge exchanges (Silva & Ruas, 2016). The interviewee E5 points out: "today the environment here favors cooperation, there is cooperation from the board, the owner, superiors, they see that they need to be able to generate results". The only restriction made by one interviewee is that "there is still a lot of defense about the area individual objectives, above the common objectives" (E1). For this reason, we perceived that the cooperation can be boosted, a fact already understood by the company that started to focus on leadership training topics such as conflict management and professional profile assessment so that everyone has the Okena DNA.

The following excerpt from one of the interviews describes the Okena environment "here no boss is above the employee,they make us feel at ease and from the results, they understand what we are doing" (E3). An example cited during an interview illustrates the employee´s encouragement to participate in decisions. When problem occurred in the laboratory, they needed to rely on the operations and laboratory teams to implement a process improvement. After the employees of the lab identified the problem and thought of a solution, the leader and the operations manager heard them and accepted their suggestion. The result of this collaboration has brought benefits to the company and satisfaction for all involved. It is possible to observe not only the teamwork and the good relationship between the departments, but also the opportunity that the company offers to employees to become participative in the decisions.

The leaders cited in the example above proved to be a fundamental element, as they provide the necessary conditions for developing the collective competencies attributes. Respondents mentioned that previously there were people in a leadership position who acted in a very authoritarian and uncooperative way, going against the values of the company. However, in the interviewees' reports, we noticed that leaders currently seek participation and develop a collaborative spirit, which makes employees very comfortable, as one of the interviewees says "the worst thing is when a person looks at the leader with fear, so frank conversation and harmony are important" (E4). The interviewee E4 also affirms that at any time he can contact other leaders and feels very comfortable suggesting improvements and exchange information.

The interviewees reported examples of situations experienced in Okena in which collective action generated a non-existent organizational capacity, as shown in Chart 3. Although there are different examples, they all had the focus on improving a process in common. However, the experiences lived are still very much within the individual or group scope that participated in the action, with little interference of the company to disseminate or exchange practices. We noticed that when talking about collective competencies, the discussion is how much they are circumscribed to the group or can be structured and transferred to other groups, becoming an organizational learning (Dutra, 2017).

Area	Example	Result
Financial Administration	Implementation of a system (ERP) to unify the database. Previously, each area kept records in its own way. The team involved talked about the workflow to find the best way to adapt the system to the process and vice versa.	There was standardization of processes and gains in the quality of the information inserted in the system. This project allowed everyone to start speaking "the same language".
Operation/Treatment	The team was having difficulty with a filter in one part of the operation process, as the	The process improved because the new pump was more powerful.

Area	Example	Result
	pump was not adequate. The team suggested switching to a pneumatic pump and the suggestion was accepted by superiors.	Although the solution is simple, the fact that they listened to employees, generated recognition of teamwork and the satisfaction of those who participated.
Operation	The ink rubberization process occurs at an acidic PH. Before, this process was done in a specific tank and there was a great risk, because a person was handling acid inside that tank. After talking between the teams, trial, and error, they managed to change this process.	The ink rubberization process started to be done together with another step in the process. The improvement was very useful, because it eliminated the odor and the risk of having a person working with sulfuric acid in a tank.
Laboratory	They were having a problem in the decanting process and the synergy between the laboratory and operation teams caused them to change the PH of the process so that the decanter worked better, after studies and tests.	Before, professionals followed a "cake recipe" a lot, and with this experience everyone was able to work together to improve the decantation process.

Chart 3 - **Examples of collective actions**
Source: elaborated by the authors (2021).

According to examples mentioned in Chart 3, we observed two collective competencies evidence present in Okena, competencies already identified by Silva and Ruas (2016). The first is the **relationship and collaboration**, which shows the employees' engagement for joint decision-making and problem solving, making use of collective memory, subjective engagement, and a common frame of reference being present. However, it needs to be disseminated with greater attention to strengthen organizational learning as highlighted by one of the interviewees "there is no forum for sharing good practices". For Silva and Ruas (2016), these attributes streamline the working relationship and the engagement of employees to achieve the objectives of the area, stimulating a better collective performance.

The second collective competence identified is the **ability to develop joint solutions**, where employees end up jointly getting involved in the discussion and analysis of actions to solve problems experienced by the teams in their work environment. This one also presents the collective memory attributes, subjective engagement, and common reference of frame. According to Silva and Ruas (2016), this collective competence allows the development of projects and programs developed in partnership with other areas of the company.

4.3 The relationship between HRM practices and collective competencies

We observed that the HRM area mobilized four factors in their practices (communication, training and development, relationship, and incentives). These practices are related to collective competencies since they allow employees to develop collective interactions, knowledge sharing, collective reflections, and team commitment.

Silva e Ruas (2014) understand that communication practices are related to collective competencies, since information shared minimizes the noise, and knowledge and participation of employees is maximized. At Okena, we verify that this relationship occurs to the extent that the company seeks to align its needs with the employees' needs. In the examples in Chart 3, the importance of communication is perceived in the collective work development and, consequently, of the collective competencies identified. For Lima and Silva (2015), communication enables the dissemination of individual knowledge and the sharing of social experiences, being decisive for the development of collective competencies.

According to Silva & Ruas (2014), training and development practices stimulate the awareness of the factors that lead to the employees' growth and development, enabling them a greater knowledge about the topics that can be used and implemented in the organization. At Okena, we perceived the relationship by these

practices to allow employees to a better professional qualification, enabling the sharing of knowledge to modify or acquire new ways of performing work (such as the examples mentioned in Chart 3), as well as improving the ability to develop solutions for joint actions.

Relationship practices mobilize the collective competencies configuration, combining events and actions aimed at integration and cooperation of the individual work. Relationships with greater involvement and people identification with their colleagues and job bring them closer to collective competencies (Silva & Ruas, 2014). We observed in Okena the association between relationship practices and social responsibility, one of main focus of the Certified B companies. Through these practices promoted by the company, employees are involved in socialization, which encourages collective identification and social interaction. According to Sandberg (2000), the development of collective competence comes from socialization, which develops the understanding of the work process and the sharing of knowledge by team members.

Finally, incentive practices are related to collective competencies, as they allow the valorization and recognition for the employees' efforts and, consequently, a better individual and collective performance (Silva, 2013). At Okena, through the reports obtained in the interviews conducted, we not identified that these HRM practices encourage collective configurations among employees.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study sought to analyze the relationship between the practices carried out by the HRM area of the company Okena with the collective competencies, identifying those that contribute to the collective development of competencies. Due to the certification requirements that Company B goes through, we understand that they are companies that have differentiated human resources practices because of the evaluation process they are submitted to.

Based on the empirical evidence presented, we can highlight some contributions. Firstly, we identified the practices carried out by the HRM area with their respective mobilizing factors (communication, training and development, relationship, and incentives). Some of these factors were essential to mobilize collective work configurations. Communication, allowing the sharing of knowledge and information because the managers heard the suggestions and ideas, maximizing employees' participation. Training and development, enabling employees to apply new ideas, develop their competencies, and share new knowledge with the team. And the relationship, enabling interactions and sharing of knowledge, allowing teams to establish social relationships so that the integration between their members takes place.

Subsequently, we identified in the study collective actions evidence, which resulted in two collective competencies: relationship and collaboration, and the ability to develop joint solutions. We perceived the importance of the attributes (common reference of frame, collective memory, and subjective engagement) in the collective competence formation and development. Based on the examples of collective actions shown (chart 3), these collective competencies are necessary for a context in which collective work is essential for teams to develop their activities.

From the analysis, we can conclude that the communication practices, relationships, and training and development were related to collective competencies. However, we did not perceive the incentive practice as a factor that mobilizes collective competencies in this study. We observed that HRM practices contribute to actions that foster the cooperative relationship and the employees' identification with their team and organization, stimulating collective effort and teamwork, bringing them closer to develop collective competencies. Thus, it is up to organizations to seek the best HRM practices that allow them to form and improve the collective activities involvement among their employees.

This study provided evidence to complement the research by Silva and Ruas (2014, 2016), demonstrating other mobilizing factors that contribute to the formation and development of collective competencies, although with the limitation of being a single case study, making it impossible to compare with other also certified companies.

Since there is no consensus on the definition of collective competencies or even how to identify them (Dutra, 2017), we suggest that future studies focus on collective competencies identification and mapping, intending to contribute to a better understanding of this dimension. This dimension is still little explored in

the literature and neglected by the studies in the individual and organizational dimensions. In addition to these, other researches can also quantitatively measure the relationship between HRM practices and collective competencies, as well as involving several Companies B allowing to obtain a better set of evidence for analysis.

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