



Conference on ENTERprise Information Systems / International Conference on Project  
MANagement / Conference on Health and Social Care Information Systems and  
Technologies, CENTERIS / ProjMAN / HCist 2016, October 5-7, 2016

## Transversal Competency Concept as a Structuring Element of the Organization

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### Abstract

Since the beginning of their existence, human beings look to join their fellowmen who share the same vision on a particular set of goals that they aim to reach together forming, that way, Organizations. For these goals to be met with the greatest efficiency possible, Organizations continually develop mechanisms and tools to enable them to select the most capable individuals. Competencies and competency management are widely accepted in the scientific community as being fundamental tools for human resource management, due to the fact that they can guarantee the allocation of the ablest elements for each of the existing organizational positions. Despite the advantages associated with those tools, the Portuguese Air Force still does not use them in a transversal manner. In fact, there is not even an unequivocal and standardized competency concept defined for the Organization. Using the principles of Organizational Engineering along with the existing competency knowledge, this work seeks to fill that gap by developing a transversal competency concept for the Air Force that folds out in a transversal competency definition proposal, a transversal competency wheel and a competency profile. Thus, this research looks to contribute to the definitive introduction of the competency concept in the Organization.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the organizing committee of CENTERIS 2016

*Keywords:* Vision, Goal, Organization, Efficiency, Competency, Competency Management, Organizational Position, Organizational Engineering

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## 1. Introduction

Knowledge cannot be taken for granted by those who possess it. A constant concern with its update is necessary, otherwise it becomes obsolete, whether it is on an individual or organizational level. 21<sup>st</sup> Century society, characterized by information, knowledge and learning valorization, challenges individuals to develop competencies that allow them to excel in a global and very competitive world<sup>1</sup>.

It is known that the organizational environment is characterized more and more by technological, social, cultural and economic changes, thanks to the highly globalized society in which enterprises are inserted. That environment evolves towards a growing complexity, dynamism and uncertainty<sup>2</sup>. For that reason, it is essential for organizations to be capable of responding to new challenges, in order to accomplish their goals and objectives effectively.

The competency concept emerges as a response to the productivity and quality needs of enterprises, while maintaining their respective identities and mitigating the negative effects of the new organizational paradigm described above. Associated with that concept are competency models, whose objective is to help enterprises identify knowledge, skills and individual characteristics that allow them to stay competitive and on the leading edge of their respective business areas<sup>3</sup>.

To assure the excellence patterns that the Portuguese Air Force (PRT AF) is associated with, it needs to continuously develop mechanisms that allow it to face change. In order to do that, as Franco<sup>4</sup> refers, “*process improvement, resource use and, mainly, value generation become imperative*”, optimizing competitiveness upkeep in fulfilling the assigned mission.

In the military, the competency concept is addressed several times, without being, however, properly defined and stabilized. According to the Armed Forces Military Statute (EMFAR), “*every military should be given competency compatible with the level of responsibility inherent to the functions exercised, according to the rank and qualifications required for its efficient performance*”. Despite what is provided in that document, the PRT AF manages its human resources largely by role management. Competency management in the organization is at an embryonic stage, being applied only in very particular cases.

Given the facts stated above, the problem that leads to the realization of this investigation arises: The transversal competency concept is not defined for the PRT AF.

The problem can be broken down into the following topics:

- The competency concept is not clearly and unequivocally defined in the Organization;
- As it is a military Organization, the PRT AF does not have a structure that facilitates the integration of the competency concept in its organizational culture.

Associated with the identified problem arises the question:

- What is the relevance of the definition of the transversal competency concept for the PRT AF?

Competencies are considered a critical success factor in today’s organizations before the current paradigm. When applied in a business context, they play a key role from the candidate selection process to the rotation of individuals. They are used by organizations to ensure greater efficiency in the allocation of human resources. The definition and implementation of the transversal competency concept in the PRT AF would allow an optimization of those resources, thus improving the quality of the product displayed, which results in increased competitiveness.

## 2. Concepts and Applications

This paragraph includes the literature considered relevant for the development of the competency concept. It presents a contextualization of the work through the theoretical framework, seeking to address overlying concepts to the theme one aims to explore, to better understand the solution presented to the problem raised.

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