Brazilians Junior Entrepreneurs’ Competencies
Elziane Bouzada Dias Campos1*, Karinne Bezerra2*, Clarissa Leão Bonatti3* and Gardênia Da Silva Abbad4*

Abstract

The aim of this study was to identify the general competencies necessary for junior entrepreneurs in any field of work. The description of the competencies followed the format of instructional objectives. A multi-method study was conducted using document and bibliographical analysis as well as structured group interviews with 34 junior entrepreneurs. The descriptions were validated by experts in the field and categorized by using content analysis. In total, 155 competencies were described and divided into 12 categories: Effective Communication, Commitment to the Work and the Junior Enterprise, Teamwork, Institutional Representation, Project Management, Performance of the Junior Enterprise, Aim for Excellence, Leadership, Resource Management, Sustainability Management, Professional Growth, and Information Management. These competencies correspond with those indicated by the literature as characteristics of excellent professional performance in Brazil. This study supplies data for organizations to improve their competency-based management model and to develop talent. We suggest that future studies include specific competencies from different areas of operation and broaden the investigation to include other stakeholders.

Key words: competencies, junior entrepreneurs, professional development

INTRODUCTION

Aggregating strategies and amassing resources necessary for the development of future professionals are objectives as well as difficulties for higher education. Similarly, university students have both the aim and challenge of finding opportunities which can help to broaden their own professional development. One way of facilitating this is to participate in the Brazilian Confederation of Junior Enterprises—organizations which connect students in higher education with the job market and society by providing services and information. Identifying the competencies that these students need to develop in order to be able to perform the work in these enterprises while simultaneously becoming better prepared for the job market is therefore necessary.

The present study aims to remedy this need by describing common junior entrepreneur competencies—those that every junior entrepreneur should improve so that their performance is excellent, regardless of the field in which their specific Junior Enterprise is involved.

Junior Enterprises (JEs) are not-for-profit civil associations that provide services and develop projects for enterprises, entities, and society in general (Brasil Júnior, 2011). These associations are comprised of and managed by undergraduate students who are currently enrolled in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). These enterprises’ services and projects are provided under the guidance of professors as well as qualified professionals and are managed independently from the HEI with which its members are affiliated.

Currently, Brazilian JEs function in diverse areas of operation (business, psychology, physical education, etc.). They comprise the Junior Enterprise Movement (JEM), which is organized into local centers, regional federations, and is represented by the National Confederation of Junior Enterprises—Brazil Junior (BJ).

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The National Census and Identity Report (2010) estimated the existence of approximately 1,120 JEs in Brazil, which execute about 2,500 projects per year, mainly in the states of São Paulo and Minas Gerais, with approximately 27,800 junior entrepreneurs participating in the projects. The 2012 Report indicated average annual gross revenue of R$23,705.23 per JE (Brasil Júnior, 2012).

The aims of a JE include the promotion of entrepreneurship as well as the technical, academic, personal, and professional development of its members; the economic and social development of the community, and increasing university students’ contact with the job market (Brasil Júnior, 2008). These associations are recognized for mainly working with micro and small business (those which require consultancy at accessible prices).

Nevertheless, the absence of a detailed description of the competencies that are developed by the students who participate in a JE could weaken the ability of these enterprises to offer efficient and strategic management, which thus inhibits establishing selection policies and practices, follow up, training, or professional development for junior entrepreneurs.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Individuals mobilize skills to reach specific goals at work (Abbad & Borges-Andrade, 2004; Ruas, Fernandes, Ferran, & Silva, 2010) and organizations, in turn, expect that individuals possess the skills necessary to carry out their assignments effectively.

Initially used with the aim of identifying personal characteristics associated with good performance at work or success in professional life (Sampaio, 2009), the concept of competency is recognized as an important factor for organizations to obtain competitive advantage through the management of individual as well as collaborator performance (Ruas, Ghedine, Dutra, Becker, & Dias, 2005; Bahry & Tolfo, 2007; Brandão, Borges-Andrade, Freitas, & Vieira, 2008).

Competencies are considered to be a nexus among behaviors or between individual performance and organizational strategy (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990). In this sense, competencies aggregate economic value for the organization, as they contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives; moreover, they aggregate social value for the individual, as they express social recognition of the person’s ability to achieve (Fleury & Fleury, 2001).

A careful diagnosis of competencies becomes fundamental, therefore, to substantiate the organization’s strategy, with deliberate people management that includes actions to develop professional competencies (Guimarães, Bruno-Faria, & Brandão, 2006). In the case of the JEs, the identification of the competencies can serve as a parameter for organizational improvement and the development of its members.

Based on an analysis of theoretical texts published in Brazil that reviewed production on the topic of competencies, it was possible to identify studies that listed the individual competencies that characterize excellent professional performance in Brazil. Table 1 synthesizes the main results of the analyses of competencies discussed in Brazilian theoretical production between 1999 and 2009.

The competencies identified in the different studies presented in Table 1 indicate some similitudes. Based on a qualitative analysis of the similarities and differences among these competencies, the existence of at least three themes can be identified: (a) competencies related to **Skills for Developing Interpersonal Relationships**, (b) competencies related to the **Effective Execution of Processes and Procedures**, and (c) competencies in relation to a systematic vision that makes the **Execution of Strategic Results** possible.

In regards to the evolution of the debates on the concept of human competency, it is possible to perceive the coexistence of two theoretical frameworks: (1) the North American, represented by authors such as Boyatis (1982) and Spencer Jr. & Spencer (1993); and (2) the French, represented by authors such as Le Boterf (2003) and Zarifian (2008).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Competencies</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Competencies stated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Echeveste, Vieira, Viana, Trez, and Panosso (1999)</td>
<td>Competencies that are most emphasized for the Brazilian executive profile</td>
<td>Integrity; Strategic vision; Leadership; Knowledge of business operations; Decision-making capacity; Negotiation and coordination of teamwork; Focus on results; Ethical treatment of professional and social issues; Motivation; Proactiveness; Interpersonal skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sant’Anna (2002)</td>
<td>Most reiterated competencies in Brazilian and international publications</td>
<td>Ability to quickly learn new concepts and technologies; Ability to work in teams; Creativity; Broad and global world view; Ability to commit to organizational objectives; Ability to communicate; Ability to deal with uncertainties and ambiguities; Mastery of new technical knowledge associated with performing the job or the position held; Ability to innovate; Ability to develop interpersonal relationships; Initiative for actions and decisions; Emotional self-control; Entrepreneurial ability; Ability to manage effective results; Ability to deal with new and unusual situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Del Prette and Del Prette (2003)</td>
<td>Competencies for superior quality production</td>
<td>Analytical ability: group of cognitive and meta-cognitive abilities that include reasoning, critical thought, mastery of specific theoretical knowledge for a specific field and related areas, as well as the ability to deal with personal motivation to learn, resolve problems, and make decisions, seek and organize information; Instrumental ability: mastery of specific techniques that characterize exercising the professional activity, including the ability to produce knowledge in the area, for example, experimentation; Social competencies: the set of social skills that meet the specific needs of different work contexts, although not confined to these.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oderich (2005)</td>
<td>Most reiterated competencies in publications that characterize the current</td>
<td>Systematic and strategic vision; Personal mastery; Ability to work in teams; Human and interpersonal skills;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The North American inclination takes the job market and the descriptors of performance required by the organizations as the point of reference and understands competency, in general, as a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) which would be the resources for the competencies and that explain exemplar performance. Knowledge can be defined as an organized body of information of a technical or administrative nature; skills such as the ability to perform work operations with ease and precision, including motor or verbal behaviors; and attitudes, which are favorable or unfavorable predispositions or feelings in relation to an object, person, fact, or the organization (Magalhães & Borges-Andrade, 2001).

Questioning the reduction of the concept of competency to one of qualification, the French view does not emphasize resources; rather, it focuses on the mobilization in a determined context needed in order to be able to complete a task. According to this view, the one who knows how to act and manifest personal resources into successful actions is considered competent. In this way, competency would be an attribute of performance, the result of someone’s action.

Currently, there is an integrative point of view that recognizes the American as well as the French approach. For this third point of view, competency is understood not only as a set of KSAs, but also as the performance of the person in a determined context, in terms of the behaviors adopted at work and their consequential achievements (Dutra, 2004). This integrative view is more widely accepted as it associates competency with ability in relation to performance; therefore, this is the view that is adopted in the present study.

Given the coexistence of these distinct theoretical proposals, one can conclude that the main components that permit the characterization of the concept of Individual Competencies are: (1) a person’s attributes, characteristics, or resources (inputs); (2) observable performance, in which the competencies are defined by the outputs in a work system; and (3) individual performance quality standards, characterized by a value (Hoffmann, 1999). As such, a specific competency refers to attributes of human action and their
results; it is learned; it is constituted through knowledge, skills, attitudes; it characterizes successful or excellent performance; it generates palpable results; it can be evaluated by other people; it depends on contextual factors in the work environment; and learning, development, and expression are related to variations and uncertainties of the work environment.

Due to these diverse theoretical proposals, different possibilities for describing the competencies are recognized and described. Sometimes they are designated as references for performance, in which the professional demonstrates the acquisition of a competency through the adoption of certain observable behaviors at work (e.g., write reports). At other times they are described as resources or dimensions of individual competency, that is, KSAs that are necessary to show a specific type of performance (e.g., knowledge of project administration, ability to run textile machinery, favorable attitudes towards diversity at work).

Another possibility, adopted in this study, is that of describing competencies as observable performance according to the propositions of instructional psychology. Similar to instructional objectives, competencies are clear and precise descriptions of KSAs that one wishes to observe in the behavior of an individual after training has occurred, when their demands for learning have been met, and will characterize their performance as excellent (Abbad, Zerbini, Carvalho, & Meneses, 2006). On the other hand, that which characterizes an individual as competent is precisely the capacity to perform excellently. As such, there is an operational convergence between the intent to describe instructional objectives and competencies.

As a result of this and according to Mager’s recommendations (1977), in the present study, competencies are described in terms of observable behavior, using three components: a verb that is indicative of the action that will be performed by the individual; the object upon which the action falls; the conditions in which the action occurs (which can be omitted when they are obvious); and the criterion which characterizes the action as excellent performance, which indicates a standard of satisfactory quality (the criterion can also be left out if it was already expressed by the action verb).

In this format learning taxonomies can also be used to classify and prioritize competencies. The taxonomies allow the identification of expectations and organizational standards for excellence which reflect the real complexity and nature of the competencies that are required in the work environment. As such, it is therefore possible to better accompany the results or performance presented by the learner (Abbad, Coelho, Freitas, & Pilati, 2006). Among the learning taxonomies, those proposed by Bloom, Krathwohl, & Masia (1973) and Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Hill, & Krathwohl (1976), which classify and prioritize the learning objectives by the cognitive (objectives related to the memory or resolution of an intellectual task), affective (objectives that emphasize the results of learning expressed in terms of interests, attitudes, assessments, values, dispositions, or emotional tendencies), and psychomotor (objectives that refer to the motor or muscular actions involved in the manipulation of materials, objects, or substances).

As such, the present study aims to describe the common competencies among Brazilian junior entrepreneurs as observable performance. This study is part of the larger project.

METHOD
A multimethod study was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, a bibliographic and document analysis was conducted with the aim of characterizing the research context and formulating an initial description of the junior entrepreneurs’ competencies. In the second stage, structured group interviews were conducted to identify, describe, and specify the common competencies among junior entrepreneurs.

PARTICIPANTS
In the group interviews (GI) 34 junior entrepreneurs participated in a convenience sample of 12 different undergraduate programs at the University of Brasilia (except one participant who was from a public HEI in another state in Brazil), with ages between 18 and 25, 26.47% women, occupying different positions and working at the JE between 1 day and 54 months, as presented in Table 2.
Table 2
Characteristics of the Participants in the Group Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Time at the JE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EC1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>3Males 1Female</td>
<td>3 Business, 1 Biology</td>
<td>1 day to 14 months μ = 8.5 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>3Males 2Females</td>
<td>3 Biology, 2 Veterinary Medicine</td>
<td>1 day to 24 months μ=10.4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>3Males 5Female</td>
<td>3 Communication Studies, 3 Nutrition, 2 Environmental Studies</td>
<td>4-24 months μ=10.9 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>7Males</td>
<td>3 Electrical Engineering, 1 Psychology, 3 Economics</td>
<td>2-18 months μ=10.6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>5Males 1Female</td>
<td>2 Mechanical Engineering, 4 Computer Science</td>
<td>21 days to 36 months μ=18 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>4Males</td>
<td>1 Political Science, 3 Business</td>
<td>36-54 months μ=42 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INSTRUMENTS
In the first stage of the study, a structured script was developed to aid in the search for relevant information during the bibliographic research and document analysis, including: mission, vision, values, structure, statutes and regulations, clients and other stakeholders, history of the JEM; educational actions made available to the junior entrepreneurs; analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of the JEs and of the JEM; and descriptions of the competencies for the positions in the JEM.

In the second stage, in the group interviews, the participants answered an individual questionnaire with open questions about adequate and inadequate performance of a junior entrepreneur and the competencies necessary for the success of their JE.

PROCEDURES
In the bibliographic research and document analysis, publications, reports, records, projects, and books that made reference to the JEM were sought. Based on this information, initial descriptions of junior entrepreneurs’ competencies were outlined. To add to this description, using the point of view of the junior entrepreneurs themselves, six structured group interviews were conducted.

Each group interview, which lasted two hours, included a facilitator to conduct the interview, and two observers to record what was discussed by the participants. All of the participants were informed of the voluntary nature of their participation, that their names would remain anonymous, and that the data obtained would be analyzed as a group, not individually. Those who agreed to participate signed an informed consent form.

After answering the questionnaire, the participants exposed their answers and debated the points of agreement, disagreement, and specifics of each JE. For the data analysis, the answers to the individual questionnaires and utterances from the discussions were put into a spreadsheet. These data were analyzed and written as competencies in the format prescribed by instructional objectives. This work was
supported by the proposed taxonomies of Bloom et al. (1973, 1976) to identify the degree of complexity of the behaviors required for excellent performance.

Based on Bardin’s (2002) method of content analysis, the similarities and differences among the competencies were analyzed by grouping them according to common meaning. Each grouping, or content category, received a general definition that reflected the meaning of those competencies.

Next, the competencies and categories were compared to the initial descriptions of the junior entrepreneurs’ competencies that had been elaborated during the first stage of the study. Similarities between the competencies described in the two stages were found; however, those in the second stage were found to be broader and more diverse. Only a few of the aspects of the initial descriptions were incorporated into the second description of the competencies in order to be clearer and more precise.

To theoretically validate the competencies and categories described, two evaluation stages followed. In the first, seven junior entrepreneurs participated — members of one of the JE federations, four of whom were women, all between the ages of 20 and 22; students from business, computer science, political science; and between one and four years of participation in the JE. These junior entrepreneurs judged the clarity of the language used, the practical pertinence (how much each competency was pertinent or relevant to being able to carry out one’s tasks), and the proposed categorization of the competencies. All their suggestions were accepted.

In the second step of validation, intending to complement the vision of the junior entrepreneurs and highlight theoretical aspects, the competencies were evaluated by three ex-junior entrepreneurs, two professor advisors of junior entrepreneurs, and one professor who was also an ex-junior entrepreneur. At this time, an adaptation of Hernández-Nieto’s (2002, cited in Cassepp-Borges, Balbinoti, & Teodoro, 2010) Content Validity Coefficient (CVC) was used.

The evaluators judged the competencies (given randomly) using two criteria: clarity of language (to what degree each competency was sufficiently clear and adequate for the population of junior entrepreneurs) and practical pertinence (how much each competency was pertinent or relevant so that the population of junior entrepreneurs could perform their tasks adequately). As such, a 5-point Likert-type scale was used (with 1 very little, 2 little, 3 average, 4 a lot, 5 a great deal). The criterion of theoretical relevance of the CVC method was disregarded because it is understood that the very method of collecting data favored the description of skills that actually were those that the junior entrepreneurs possessed.

The data analysis using the CVC method initially considered each competency individually and thereafter all of them together. First, the average of the evaluations for each competency was obtained (Mx). Based on these averages, the initial CVC (CVCi) was calculated for each competency, divided by five, the maximum value of the scale. Next, the value of the error (Pei) was calculated according to the following formula: \( \frac{1}{n^n} \), in which n corresponds to the number of evaluators. Pei discounts possible biases present in the evaluations. The final CVC was found (CVCc) for each competency by subtracting Pei from the CVCi.

The cutoff point was made flexible due to the different backgrounds of the experts, from 0.8 to 0.75, which excluded 14 competencies. Suggestions for improvements made by the evaluators were also incorporated into describing the competencies.

Following that, the total CVC of the questionnaire was calculated (CVCt) for both criteria, by subtracting the average values of Pei from the average values of CVCi. For practical pertinence the CVCt was 0.85, and for written clarity, 0.82, both above 0.8, which is considered acceptable by the CVC method.

The evaluators then judged which theoretical dimension (content category) each competency belonged to. The expected level of agreement was not reached. The evaluators indicated that, in the same competency, aspects of definitions from different categories were present. Pasquali (1999) predicts this possibility and explains that this can occur due to the high correlation among the constructs being analyzed, thus evaluators may frequently indicate more than one theoretical dimension.

To minimize this limitation, the suggestions and criticisms of the evaluators were systematized. A qualitative and comparative analysis of the modifications proposed brought about new alterations in the definitions of the categories and the re-categorization of some competencies, allowing for the final description of junior entrepreneurs’ common competencies.
Finally, the similarities between the categories and the competencies elaborated in this study as well as the three themes that synthesize the individual competencies that characterize excellent professional performance in Brazil were analyzed.

RESULTS
In total, there are 155 competencies described, which are distributed into 12 theoretical categories. The competencies that were grouped as Capacity for Interpersonal Relationships predominate the categories: Effective Communication, Teamwork, and Leadership. Effective Communication refers to the competencies that guarantee effective, analytical, and critical oral as well as written communication. Teamwork unites those competencies from interpersonal relationships that allow for the effectiveness of working in teams and Leadership groups competencies that direct the team and its members to reach their objectives and to offer feedback in regards to their accomplishments.

The competencies that relate to the topic of Effective Execution of Processes and Projects are found in the categories: Project Management, Resource Management, Information Management, and Professional Growth. The first refers to the competencies that permit the maintenance of project quality and the evaluation of project impact. Resource Management unites those competencies that allow for the general management of JEs. Information Management includes those competencies related to the maintenance and transformation of information and accomplishments of the JE. Finally, Professional Growth concentrates abilities and attitudes directed towards individual, team, and JE professional development.

The categories Commitment to Work and the JE, Aim for Excellence, Institutional Representation, Performance of the JE, and Corporate Sustainability Management refer to the competencies in the Execution of Strategic Results topic. Commitment to Work and the JE unites those competencies that allow for the completion of what was planned and agreed to among the JE members, according to ethical parameters. In Aim for Excellence those competencies related to continuous improvements of the processes and projects of the JE are found. In Institutional Representation those competencies related to the KSAs activated to represent the JE at events or with students, professors, or clients are encountered. The category Performance of the JE deals with competencies related to the analysis of the external context of the JE with the intention of improving and broadening its reach in the market. Finally, Corporate Sustainability Management is related to that which is necessary to guarantee the continuity of the JE.

Table 3 presents the 12 categories organized by topics and indicates the number of competencies in each with examples.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capacity for Interpersonal Relationships</td>
<td>Effective Communication (No. = 19)</td>
<td>I change my tone of voice and posture according to the target audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teamwork (No. = 18)</td>
<td>I treat all of the JE members equally well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership (No. = 11)</td>
<td>I try to maintain a teamwork environment that is favorable for the execution of tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Project Management (No. = 13)</td>
<td>I adapt scientific research methods to apply to JE projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resource Management (No. = 11)</td>
<td>I differentiate between the taxes paid by the JE from those it is exempt from.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Growth (No. = 10)</td>
<td>I make an effort to have contact with the JEM as well as with students or professional from other fields.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Management (No. = 6)</td>
<td>I use documents or internal control tools to manage knowledge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to Work and the JE (No. = 18)</td>
<td>I go to meetings and other JE obligations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Representation (No. = 15)</td>
<td>I treat all JE clients equally well.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance of the JE (No. = 12)</td>
<td>I identify potential partners with the intention of improving the JE’s position in the market and in the JEM.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim for Excellence (No. = 12)</td>
<td>I suggest new services and products for the JE.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Sustainability Management (No. = 10)</td>
<td>I transmit organizational values to the new members to guarantee the continuity of the JE.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Analyzing Table 3, one can perceive that the competencies associated with the topic **Execution of Strategic Results** appear much more frequently than the others. Finally, the majority of competencies described most relevantly reflect the attitudinal dimension, followed by intellectual abilities and knowledge, particularly the categories **Commitment to Work and the JE, Teamwork, Leadership, and Professional Growth**.

**DISCUSSION**

The analysis of the 155 behaviors described and the 12 content categories, when compared with the studies of Lautenschiager (2009) and Sousa (2005), demonstrate notable theoretical similarity. All of the competencies identified by Lautenschiager (2009) are present, either as a defined category, or with its content expressed dispersed throughout the competencies in the different categories. They are present as categories in the following comparison (Lautenschiager (2009)/ competencies described): Verbal Communication/ Effective Communication; Teamwork/ Teamwork; Commitment and Responsibility/ Commitment to Work and the JE; Leadership/ Leadership. The other categories identified by Lautenschiager (2009) (Job Organization, Creativity, Proactiveness, Initiative, Autonomy, Interpersonal Relationships, and Flexibility) are present dispersed throughout the competencies of the different categories proposed in this study.

Part of the competencies identified by Souza (2005) are also present, either as defined categories, or with their content expressed dispersed throughout the competencies in different categories. The categories are present in the following comparison (Souza (2005)/ competencies described): Search for Opportunities and Knowledge about the Market/ Performance of the JE; Innovation/ Aim for Excellence; Leadership/ Leadership. The categories Creativity, Proactiveness, and Initiative, identified by Souza (2005), are present throughout the competencies of different categories proposed in this study.

Nevertheless, one can observe that the competencies Knowledge of the Product, Take Risks, Need to Achieve, and Vision listed by Souza (2005) are not directly identifiable in the competencies described. The competency Knowledge of the Product probably does not appear among the identified competencies because it was not the intention of the current study to deal with specific competencies in the area in which the JEs operate.

The description of the competencies that identify the attitudinal dimension more clearly, followed by intellectual abilities, and knowledge, highlights the congruence with the capabilities frequently described...
in the literature as typical of the behaviors expected of highly performing professionals, as described by Echeveste et al. (1999) and Oderich (2005).

Also, we reaffirm the developmental capacity the JEs have in conjunction with vocational training that better prepares one for the job market as well as for better quality education when the similarity in competencies in this study is compared with those described by Del Prette and Del Prette (2003). This result is coherent with the methodological choice for this study. The location for the group interviews seems to have favored the emphasis on the attitudinal dimensions of the competencies. The attempt to describe performance common to all areas in which the junior entrepreneurs work also contributed towards this result. The questionnaire used, the procedure for the interviews, and the expectations generated by being invited to participate in a study with professional psychologists all contributed towards this. These factors seem to have inhibited the appearance of predominantly technical competencies, which reinforces the need to employ different methodological options in the investigation of competencies and also to identify aims that predict the description of specific competencies for different areas of work. The similarity of the competencies content with the goals of a JE, such as those indicated by Brazil Junior are verified (Brasil Júnior, 2008). The aim of promoting the technical, academic, personal, and professional development of its members is related to all of the competency categories. Promoting university students’ contact with the job market is a goal that is related, more explicitly, to the topics Effective Execution of Processes and Projects and Execution of Strategic Results. The latter, together with the category Leadership, seem to be better related to the aim of promoting entrepreneurship. This analysis can orient the Junior Enterprise Movement to identify strategies that connect the scope of its objectives to the development of individual junior entrepreneur competencies.

The content analysis of the competencies also serves as input to question the role of the HEIs in the professional development of their students. As they appear as protagonists of the development of competencies described in the study, the JEs reaffirm their role of complementing the students’ education by providing contact with the job market and society. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the HEIs to evaluate the type of support and opening that the Junior Enterprise Movement has given the competencies herein described, as well as how much they have been considered in their respective curricular structures.

The choice to describe the competencies according to the proposed format for instructional objectives allowed for detailed description and clarification of their content, which allowed them to be used directly in the orientation subsystems of personnel management. Describing the competencies as observable performance contributed to their precise written elaboration and highlighted the use of verbs that describe the complexity of performance. In terms of the practical and social relevance, the described competencies could be used by JEs in the whole country in the formulation of management based on competencies. The processes of management could be improved and, with them, the quality of the work experience of the entrepreneurs and of the services provided to society. Nevertheless, it is important to note the need to complement the competencies proposed with competencies relative to the area in which each JE operates as well as to those of specific positions.

It is also important to call attention to the fact that the group interviews seemed to serve as a reflection process on the experiences that the participants had in their JEs as well as a space to exchange experiences and learning through the reports from other participants. Similar spaces can be used in actions to develop competencies for junior entrepreneurs, starting with the competencies described.

Given the exploratory character of this study, the lack of agreement between the evaluators about the theoretical categorization of the competencies is acceptable. However, it is important to remember to put investigative effort into this question. Moreover, the use of a convenience sample could also have caused a decrease in the variety of the components available for analysis, which would cause the data to be invalid for junior entrepreneurs throughout the country.

As such, for a research agenda, we suggest probing technical competencies using other methods. We also suggest broadening this study to consider JEs from different regions of the country and from public and private institutions of higher education with the intent of validating the competencies of the Brazilian junior entrepreneurs. We recommend the use of quantitative methods, especially due to the size of the population of junior entrepreneurs. Finally, future research should study in more depth the educational
capacity of the JEs to develop professional entrepreneurs and use the described competencies to evaluate the training needs of the junior entrepreneurs.

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