



Developing an Improvement Plan for Organizational Leadership, Management Functions, Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Skills for a Government Ministry

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Abstract

This study examined the current conditions of the Civil Service Commission of Timor-Leste in terms of the organizational leadership, management functions, and interpersonal and intrapersonal skills and proposed an improvement plan to enhance the four variables. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and interviews. Thirty-five participants completed the questionnaires, of which six participants were interviewed based on purposive sampling. The interview transcript was validated by three coders; the responses from the structured questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The quantitative and qualitative analysis results showed the participants understand their current situation and recognize the need for a capacity building program to enhance their competence and skills in four areas of organizational leadership, management functions, interpersonal skills, and intrapersonal skills.

Keywords: *Civil service commission, Organizational leadership, Management functions, Interpersonal skills, Intrapersonal skills*

1. Introduction

Many organizations around the world including Timor-Leste are considering enhancing organizational leadership, management functions, interpersonal skills and intrapersonal skills because -the success of the organization depends very much on capabilities organizational leadership and its human resources -as important aspects of every activity (Sobratee and Bodhanya, 2018).

This research was carried in the Civil Service Commission of Timor-Leste which is an independent body established in 2009. Their task is to ensure that there no political intervention or guarantee that is politically biased and should be impartial, be based on merit and high standards of professionalism, and capable of providing quality services to the state and the people of Timor-Leste. Thus, reforms in the public sector are needed to improve service delivery of the civil service that is more efficient, works with more rigor, quality, responsibility, and less bureaucracy (Government, 2015). The Civil Service Commission mandate is for five years and is renewable for an equal period.

Based on the interviews results, Timor-Leste is facing many challenges example problems with law, structure, evaluation performance, training curriculum, corruption, political intervention, lack of budget and human resources, unclear interview questions, merit system, and gender equality. The study examines the current situation of the organization in relation to its organizational leadership, management functions, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills and proposes an improvement plan to enhance the four elements.

Organizational leadership is a process that contributes to the development and achievement of organizational purpose (Zaccaro and Klimoski, 2001) There are three different clusters of organizational leadership namely, an administrative form that sustains the effectiveness of the organizational operations; the leadership form from the middle management levels that involves the elaboration and operationalization in the formal structures. Organizational leaders need 21st century skills to achieve success such as cognitive skills which refer to fairness in problem-solving and have analytical thinking; interpersonal skills such as communication skills, social skills, teamwork, and cultural sensitivity and; intrapersonal skills which refer to self-management, time management, self-development, self-regulation and adaptability (Koenig, 2011).

[1701]



Group Pty (2012) stated that it is important for leaders, managers and employees to understand the basic knowledge of management roles and its functions. Management functions consist of planning means developing strategies, establishing objectives and formulating the vision statement; organizing refers to the process of arranging resources and task to achieve organization goals and objectives; leading is the manner by which leaders or managers motivate employees to meet organization targets or objectives; controlling means monitoring, comparing outputs against targets or objectives and measuring financial performance.

Armstrong and Taylor(2017) suggested several formal approaches to enhance management competencies such 1) Planned experiences like job rotation, job enlargement, project team or task group inside and outside the organization; 2) Coaching which is a person to person approach to develop their skills and competence; 3) Monitoring to provide guidance, pragmatic advice and continuing support; 4) Action learning that helps the manager and individual by exposing them to real problems which they analyze and formulate recommendations and take action upon; 5) Outdoor learning which gets the team to participate and to carry out physical activities to learn about how they act under pressure as team leaders or team members; 6)Using performing management process to provide feedback and satisfy development needs; 7) Formal internal and external training courses; and 8) Structured self-development with a self-managed learning programs with an individual development plan (Armstrong and Taylor, 2017). Furthermore, Ananthram and Nankervis (2013) also advised that managers should focus on improving their skills and competencies such as global mindset, cross-cultural sensitivity, adaptability, and knowledge of markets. (Ananthram and Nankervis, 2013)

Vijayalakshmi (2016) explains that interpersonal skill is related to talents or ability that helps individuals to go alone or to socialize with other people. A person with such character is sociable, easy-going and with the ability to work alone as well as with different people of different characters and cultures. It is important to enhance this soft skill because the nature of today's business or job highly demands employee creativity, confidence, assertiveness and team-building skills (Vijayalakshmi, 2016).

Intrapersonal skills are proven to be the deciding factors in the selection process to compete with global market" (Sambiah and Anee, 2016). Intra-personal skills are clusters of talent and abilities that reside within the individual employee that can help him and her to solve any issue that one might encounter (Koenig, 2011). Intrapersonal skills include assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, independence, and emotional self-awareness. Koenig (2011) describes two types of interpersonal skills. Firstly, Adaptability, which is the ability and willingness to cope with issues such as uncertainty, rapidly changing job conditions, environment, and responding effectively to emergencies, and, secondly, Self-Management or self-development that refers to the ability to work remotely, self-motivating, work alone, self-monitoring, and ability to obtain new information, skills, and knowledge related to the work.

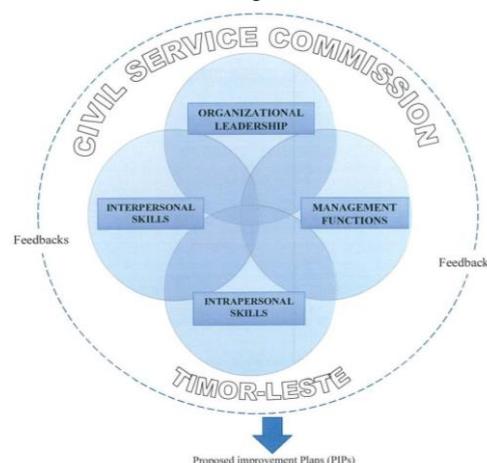


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

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The conceptual framework was developed based on literature reviews and theoretical framework. The conceptual framework consists of four variables, organizational leadership, management functions, and interpersonal skills and intrapersonal skills, by which these four variables are inter-related or inter-dependent on each other. The chosen elements are considered as essential aspects of the organization to provide a better service to the citizens of the country.

2. Objectives

1. To determine the current situation of organizational leadership, management functions, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills in the organization
2. To use the findings of the study to propose strategies to improve organizational leadership, management functions, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills.

3. Materials and Methods

Research Design

The researcher used mixed-method research. The structured questionnaires were used to examine the top, middle and lower management on their understanding and experience on organizational leadership, management functions, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. The questionnaires were distributed to 35 participants at all levels of the management.

Target Population

The total population (N=35) was used in this study; they were the management of the Civil Service Commission of Timor-Leste. Among the 35 people, seven were from top management, ten from middle management, and eighteen from lower management level, who responded to the structured questionnaires. Six participants from this group were interviewed based on purposive sampling plan.

Research Instruments

The two instruments for data collection included a structured questionnaire comprising of 26 questions and open-ended questions. The survey questionnaire was designed in English and Tetum (mother tongue). The question consists of two parts, namely, (1) demographics and general information of the participants like years of service and current position and (2) seeking their perspective on leadership, management inter and intrapersonal skills using the Likert scale. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to measure means and standard deviation. For the validity, item objective congruence (IOC) was used to validate the questionnaires. The questionnaire was submitted to three experts to examine the content before conducting the research. The IOC expert analyzed the questions and rate the questions based on criteria of +1: congruent, 0: uncertain/unclear and -1: incongruent. The results of each question should be consistent and equal or acceptable to or above 0.66. The outcome of reviews shows that the questionnaire was accepted. This statistical analysis using Cronbach's alpha to measure of internal consistency of the structured questionnaires showed that the hat reliability statistic for the organizational leadership = 0.844, the reliability statistic for management functions =0.801, the reliability statistic for interpersonal skills = 0.742 and reliability statistic for intrapersonal skills= 0.844.

For the qualitative data, interviews were conducted with six people in order to understand better the current conditions of the Civil Service Commission in terms of the organizational leadership, management functions; interpersonal and intrapersonal skills as well as to propose the improvement plan on the four elements.

4. Results and Discussion

The results of the study are discussed based on the findings from the survey questionnaire and the interviews. The results are utilized to propose strategies to enhance organization leadership, management functions, interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies.

**Table 1** Highest and lowest means and standard deviation of organization leadership

Organizational Leadership	N	Mean	SD	Rating
I have a clear understanding of my organization goals and vision	35	3.457	0.5606	Agreed
I have the ability to give direction to my team to accomplish organization goals.	35	3.400	0.6945	Agreed
I have the ability to translate vision into reality	35	3.086	0.3735	Agreed

Table 1 shows that the first lowest mean was 3.086 which refers to the ability to translate vision into reality, as well as the highest mean is “ having a clear understanding of my own organization and vision” Based on the gap between these two capabilities essential for leadership the following improvement plans for 6-12 months are proposed as shown on Table 2.

Table 2 Sample proposed improvement plans to enhance some aspects of organizational leadership

Objectives	How	How to measure
Ability to translate vision into reality	To help leaders and employees to actively participate in the effort to translate their vision into a reality through specific action such as “plans, programs, budgets procedures.”	Make sure that the vision is shared and well communicated and understood by others-followers. Go through a process and see if we are making progress.
Ability to align the team with organization mission and goals	Seeks to bring out the shared values of team members and align them with organization vision, mission, strategies and goals for success	Make sure that middle and lower management are aware of the organization’s envisioned future (Vision) “Review all actions that are not in alignment with the mission” and core purpose

Table 3 Highest and lowest mean and standard deviation on the management functions

Management Functions	N	Mean	SD	Rating
I do understand that directing refers to guidance, supervision, motivation the employee or staff to perform their duties that been assigned to them in order to get tangible results or objective.	35	3.429	0.5576	Agreed
I do understand that organizing refers responsibility to develop structure and allocate resource for the implementation of the plan designed.	35	3.17	0.453	Agreed

Table 3 describes the level of understanding of the respondents. The highest mean was 3.429, and SD was 0.5576 which underlined the individual understanding on what is directing the employee to reach organization objective while the lowest mean was 3.17 and SD was 0.453 These data indicated their level of understanding on what the organization is planning or controlling. Based on these findings, a 6-13 months training to strengthen their skills and ability to be more professional in the area of management is proposed in Table 4.

**Table 4** Proposed improvement plan to enhance management functions

Objectives	How	How to measures
Ability to understand planning	Improve ability to communicate the vision effectively	Self-reflection tools and team leader feedback
Ability to understand controlling	Measuring progress, making efficient use of resources, improving employee motivation and ensuring order & discipline	Measure actual performance, compare results with objectives and standards and take necessary action
Ability to understanding organizing	Increase the effectiveness of the organization, improve the ability to give the right direction to the team to achieve organization objectives	Continue monitoring and evaluation plan, continue to identify problems and develop alternative strategies

Table 5 Highest and lowest mean and standard deviation on interpersonal skills

Interpersonal Skills	N	Mean	SD	Rating
Practically, I like to promote teamwork to finish the assignment or work giving.	35	3.600	0.5531	Agreed
I have a systematic approach to problem-solving.	35	3.229	0.5470	Agreed

Table 5 shows the level of understanding of the 35 participants' own ability to work with others, to communicate and to solve problems. The first highest mean was 3.600 and SD was 0.5531 which illustrated that most of the participants are willing to work as team to finish the tasks. The lowest mean was 3.229, and SD was 0.5470 "I have a systematic approach to problem-solving." Based on the results, the following improvement plan (6-12 months) is proposed, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Proposed improvement plan to enhance interpersonal skills

Objectives	How	How to measure
The ability to interact with other people	Improve ability to communicate the vision effectively	use self-reflection tools and team leaders' feedback
The ability for problem-solving	Determine the sources of problems and find an effective solution	Active listening, analysis, identify the cause, creativity Communicate ideas and plan, evaluate the plan and come up with alternative ways of problems solving.

Table 7 Highest and lowest mean and standard deviation on the intrapersonal skills

Intrapersonal Skills	N	Mean	SD	Rating
I am an open-minded person willing to welcome new ideas or suggestion to improve my work and myself	35	3.571	0.5576	Agreed
I have the self-discipline to motivate myself	35	3.343	0.5913	Agreed

Table7 illustrates the individual level of understanding on intrapersonal skills that shape their character to be able to be an open-minded person, self- confident, disciplined and possess self-motivation. The data shows the highest mean was 3.571, and SD was 0.5576, which shows that they are open-minded persons that willing to welcome new ideas to improve their work and themselves. The results also the lowest means = 3.343; SD = 0.5913 "I have self-discipline to control myself. Based on the results, the participants could better develop their intrapersonal skills at least for 6-12, and the research proposes these improvement plans, as shown in Table 8.

**Table 8** Proposed Improvement plans to enhance Intrapersonal skills

Objectives	How	How to measure
Ability to be self-disciplined	Improve self-acknowledgement of own individual weaknesses. Create a clear plan in order to achieve personal career goals	Use self-reflection tools and team leader feedback and change perception on willpower
Self-confidence, motivation and self-control	To help the individual to experience success in a variety of situations	Individuals can measure their self-confidence -how high they value themselves and how willing they are to face their fears

Results from the interviews

The interview transcripts analyzed by three coders resulted in the following themes:

(1) What are the current conditions of the Civil Service Commission in terms of the organizational leadership, management functions; interpersonal and intrapersonal skills that urgently need to develop now and within two years and beyond?

Leadership, management functions, interpersonal skills and intrapersonal skills are critical to the organization and its need to enhance and improve intensively. Based on the results from interviews, the six participants agreed that interpersonal skills and intrapersonal skills are important, and these are the soft skills that need to be cultivated and improved. Below were the quotes as highlighted by the interviewees as follows:

“We need to improve our leadership, management and individual skills (soft skills) such as communication and self-motivation to do their task.”

“I think these are personal talents that naturally exist in each individual. The important this here is people or person is required to have those skills in order to help them perform well in their job, as it is required. This will help them to impulses someone to perform their standards required by the job itself.

“I think leadership, in general, can be applied to leadership to different levels, for leadership you have institutional leadership; you have the leadership in the day to day work,”

These responses indicated that leadership, management, interpersonal skills and intrapersonal skills are important any group setting at a personal or professional level. Life itself is management so organizations need management skills, organization skills, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. The informants also agreed that these skills are essential for organization, leaders and managers to provide a capacity development such as in-house training to enhance leaders and employee's competence and skills.

(2)What is the proposed improvement development program to enhance organizational leadership, management functions, inter and intra-personal skills?

The results obtained from the qualitative interviews are aligned to the argument of Kohli and Moody (2016) who stated that a successful delivery unit the government should first set the mindset and culture as an essential for delivery units. Rigor is necessary so that delivery units solve problems using their knowledge of data analysis and management. Leaders must trust the delivery unit members and officials implementing their work; in this way, the mutual level of trust leads to transparency. Partnership is important between units of government where they work together to facilitate, solve problems for success and positive recognition. Lastly, delivery unit members should have efficient and effective communication to listen, ask questions in order to and develop solutions to their problems.

Efforts are continued to tackle the challenges or problems facing such as capacity building to enhance leadership, management and inter-intrapersonal skills, reviews on some of the law and regulation, attempts to establish service delivery unit in each ministry, application of 40 hours of training for employees in all levels (top, middle, and lower management), attempts to improve HR system, attempts to



apply merit system, public administration reforms, and reviews on the evaluation performance to be based by merit or result.

Timor-Leste government's initiative to establish a Service Delivery Unit is considered a positive and innovative way or step to enhance good services to the public and respond to public demand. Secondly, the government will review the annual evaluation performance. All evaluation should be based on results and merit. Every year the director-general, directors evaluate their staff always say muito-bom or very good, but they did not evaluate based on results or merit. They need to review this because all evaluation should be based on how well people execute the job or work results Vorontchuk (2019) suggested that "the performance management" or appraisals is crucial because it "will provide fair, objective, useful feedback to employees" and recommended that in the performance appraisal or evaluation should be based on standards.

5. Conclusion

This study shows that most of the thirty-five participants were agreed that they have the perception and understanding of what organizational leadership is, management functions, interpersonal skills and intrapersonal skills. Despite their level of understanding, top, middle and lower management are required to master these four skills as the success of the organization depending very much of leaders, managers and employee's ability to execute the plan and strategy. Therefore, the improvement plan is needed to enhance the competence and skills of the top and middle management for at least six to twelve months. Based on the findings, it is recommended to continue to provide annual budgets for the Civil Service Commission to conduct intensive training to enhance top, middle and lower management competence and skills. Secondly, the institution and government consider the proposed improvement plan to enhance the four variables. Thirdly, it is recommended for individuals to continue to attend training and seminar, workshop to enhance the four competencies and improve their performance, self-confidence, and communication between top, middle, and bottom management. Lastly, it is recommended to continue making all the efforts to tackle the challenges or problems facing the commission, such as capacity building that is needed to continue to enhance leadership, management, and inter-intrapersonal skills, reviews on some of the law and regulation, attempts to establish service delivery unit in each ministry, applications of 40 hours of training for employees in all levels (top, middle, and lower management), attempts to improve HR system, attempts to apply merit system, public administration reforms, and reviews on the evaluation performance to be based on the merit or result.

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