

THE HISTORICAL-CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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ABSTRACT

Recent studies have shown the inability of current pedagogies used in undergraduate business administration programs to respond adequately to the demands of education. In this situation, a new pedagogy is needed to develop the management of educational practices in such courses such that they produce administrators who have the necessary skills to be successful in the job market, using a broad critical understanding and wisdom within the contradictions of its time and performance. Historical-critical pedagogy has been proposed as a viable theoretical model in this direction, and it is therefore necessary to analyze the possibilities and challenges to its adoption. Accordingly, the following objective was proposed: to verify the feasibility of historical-critical pedagogy as a guideline for the management of the educational practices used in undergraduate business administration programs. To do this, the legal and institutional structuring of management courses at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais and Universidad de Medellín were identified, as were the various course characteristics. A comparison of the data with the requirements of historical-critical pedagogy showed that there is no insurmountable obstacle to the pedagogy's adoption as a guideline for the management of educational practices in business administration programs. The main challenge to this possibility is the implementation of a management course illuminated by the values determined in its pedagogical project. The main condition for the adoption of historical-critical pedagogy is the effective exercise of the manager's role in mediation with teachers and students. This paper provides innovative suggestions for the development of this theory of training in higher education.

Key words: Higher Education; Management of Undergraduate Courses in Business Administration; Degree in Business Administration; Historical-Critical Pedagogy.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose behind the creation of the first business administration programs in Brazil was to train professionals to master complex, organizational and analytical techniques imported from the United States, especially those related to financial subjects such as budgetary and cost control techniques, to meet a specific demand from large businesses and government structures (Lopes, 2002). These programs also represented, in the words of Tordino (2004, p.143), "the institution of a new branch in

higher education, definitely differentiating the areas that train economists, accountants and administrators”—despite, as stated by Saes and Cytrynowicz (2001), the programs not having clear or distinct functions when compared to other trainings, in the eyes of the general public.

However, there is currently much criticism, resulting from various studies, which has focused on the most diverse perspectives of such training. One can stress this especially concerning the methods, content, organization and didactics that emerge in direct relation to the increase in the value and importance of the area (Aktouf, 2005; Antonello & Ruas, 2005; Borba, Silveira & Faggion, 2005; Plutarco & Gradvohl, 2010; Alcadipani & Bresler, 1999).

The programs are sometimes conducted with the aim of training business administrators who are capable of meeting the demands of the job market — under the educational precepts of the pedagogy of competencies, seeking individualized training that is ongoing and adjustable to the demands— or are sometimes carried out for broad integral and political training achieved through the assessment of the conflicts and contradictions inherent to a capitalist society divided into classes. Thus, in the context of the administrator training, there is an attempt to materialize these concerns or main objectives into the management of the educational practices.

Nonetheless, such polarization in the training projects for business administrators does not seem to lead to advancement in education, whether due to the notoriety of the criticisms facing the evaluation of the skills of higher education graduates (Tordino, 2004) or, likewise, due to the difficulties encountered in the use of conventional teaching methods to “cope with the demands of managerial performance in the current business context” (Ruas, 2005, p.122).

In line with the Brazilian reality, in Colombia, there is much criticism of the training for business administrators. It should be noted that business administration programs in Colombia follow the cadence of simple prescriptive theories (López, 1998), which are mostly the result of trends. The educational process is permeated by many pedagogical, methodological and didactic practices, among others, that are inherited from different educational trends that have remained in combination with new, allegedly transforming practices and trends (Barrera & Sanclemente, 2008).

These criticisms and proposals for the education of business administrators are anchored, for the most part, in a mutually exclusive manner, under the aegis of two distinct trends. The first is structured under a paradigm that emphasizes market demands. In this case, the studies and criticisms point to an inadequacy of business administrator training anchored in practices that are also of little relevance (Siqueira, 1987; Borba, Silveira & Faggion, 2005; Ruas, 2005; Closs, Aramburú & Antunes, 2006; Grohmann & Bobsin, 2006; Rodrigues, 2006; Xavier et al., 2006; Nunes & Barbosa, 2007; Nunes, 2007, 2008, 2009). The second arises through an epistemological perspective, which focuses on a humanistic and political dimension rather than immediate alignment with business needs (Tordino, 2004; Paula & Rodrigues, 2006; Maranhão & Motta, 2007; Maranhão, 2010). Here, the criticism also seems unanimous in denouncing the crisis of business administrator training and teaching methods. The inability of business administration education to respond, guided by a teaching methodology based on skills or by a critical teaching practice, indicates the need for a new attitude in confronting the difficulties that such training requires. Such considerations show the need to think of alternatives to this scenario by seeking new possibilities for the management of educational practices in business administration programs that go beyond the dichotomy set by

training either for the market or for a critical agenda, as a way of contributing to the improvement of business administrator training.

It is believed that historical-critical pedagogy (HCP) may fulfill these concerns as a theory that seeks to understand the limits of the current teaching method and, at the same time, “overcome them through the formulation of practical principles, methods and procedures related to both the organization of the education system with regard to the development of pedagogical processes that put the teacher-student relationship in motion” (Saviani, 2008b, p.119). Despite HCP never having been considered or used in the scope of higher education, Saviani (2008b) shows the need for its advancement in this modality, regardless of the institutional design limits of educational organizations. HCP can support the practice of various higher education programs when its forms are modified and it is used to create proposals that consider not only the designs, but also the organizational changes required (Saviani, 1994). This theory can be set as an important tool in the pursuit of training so that a professional can master business actions and technologies and, at the same time, understand the contradictions of his or her time.

Accordingly, the inability of the teaching methodologies currently used as guidelines in the management of undergraduate business administration programs in responding to the training demands, coupled with the need to move forward with HCP for higher education, justifies the construction of a theoretical alternative to improve the training of business administrators.

Thus, seeking to advance on this path, as a general objective, this study proposes to analyze the feasibility of adopting the HCP as a guide for the management of the educational practices in undergraduate business administration programs, based on the contexts of the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais, Brazil (PUC Minas) and Universidad de Medellín, Colombia (UdeM).

The results of this study will show the possibility of using this new pedagogy in undergraduate business administration programs as a way to boost an increasingly relevant training and to escape the dichotomy between the pedagogy of competences and critical pedagogy. As a result, a breeding ground is created for the activities of the business administration undergraduate program manager in the various dimensions that encompass it, such as didactics, structure and teaching capacity. It also contributes to advance the development of the HCP theory, which, as discussed earlier, still needs to be designed and adapted to the reality of higher education.

From a practical point of view, one can subsidize the structuring of business administration programs, in both Brazil and Colombia, from this new perspective, thus creating the objective conditions for the analysis of the new pedagogical practice in empirical reality. It also opens space for the further development of the propositions, as well as for the elucidation of gaps, which the HCP current stage of development has not yet effectuated. In addition, there is the possibility of influencing the national and institutional guidelines for universities, undergraduate centers and colleges concerning the business administration degree, particularly in the two countries.

In view of this preliminary discussion, this study was initiated with the contextualization of the HCP theory. Then, the methodology used in the field research was defined and clarified in order to check the feasibility of applying the HCP in the two cases under review. Finally, the conclusion of this paper presents the final considerations, summarizes the main findings and suggests topics of future research.

HISTORICAL-CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

The new thinking of HCP was born out of the desire to carry out a review of the current educational problems. Despite its contradictory character, this review led to new possibilities in which pedagogical practice would be changed and articulated according to popular interests under transformation in society. This new thinking continued to develop until it was defined as a historical-critical trend looking to “retain the critical character of articulation with the social constraints which the reproductivist vision has, linked, however, to the historical dimension of which reproductivism loses sight” (Saviani, 2008b, p.71).

One of the tasks of HCP consists of searching for the most developed forms of objective knowledge historically produced, covering aspects such as production conditions, events and current trends. Another task is to convert such objective knowledge into knowledge that is institutionalized and assimilated by students in the educational institutions’ space and time. The HCP also undertakes the task of guaranteeing, in addition to the incorporation of the students’ objective knowledge, the learning of its production processes along with its trends of transformation (Saviani, 2008b).

Such tasks demonstrate that HCP proposes pedagogical action based on the articulation between theory and practice (praxis). This pedagogy seeks to help individuals go beyond the immediate vision of the phenomena, towards a project committed to social transformation that is anchored in the management of an inquiring, critical and emancipating educational practice (Batista & Lima, 2012).

The HCP is based on Marxist thought (Santos, 2012). Its theoretical foundation, in philosophical, historical, socio-political and economic terms, “proposes to explicitly follow the trails opened by the insightful investigations developed by Marx on the historical production conditions of human existence which resulted in the current form of society dominated by capital” (Saviani, 2012, p.161). Such investigations have trailed in the direction of “clarifying the laws that govern the birth, the existence, the development and the replacement of capitalism by an otherwise higher level” (Saviani, 2005, p.240).

With regard to its psychological basis, HCP is dependent on the cultural-historical perspective (Vale, 1994), which first emerged from the studies by Vygotsky (1991, 2001) and is philosophically and epistemically anchored “on the idea that humankind is a historic being built through its relationship with the natural and social world” (Scalcon, 2002, p.51). Primarily, the distinction of humans as a species is attributed to their ability to transform nature through work, by means of tools that are created and perfected. Therefore, it is clear that “the views of Marx and Engels on the work and the use of tools, the society and the dialectic interaction between humans and nature which form the foundations of the main theses of the cultural-historical perspective” (Scalcon, 2002, p.51) have as a consequence a psychology in which human development arises from the interaction between the individual and the social and physical environment (Martins, 2011).

Given what has been discussed, HCP seeks the historical materialism and the inspiration of the cultural-historical psychology “to build itself as a pedagogical theory which, as such, requires profiling a kind of human philosophically and epistemically, guiding itself by a conception of society, taking ownership of a psychological understanding of the student and defining its methods of teaching” (Scalcon, 2002, p.121).

Once the main theoretical affiliations of HCP are clarified, it is important to highlight other “classic” authors in the area of education who have also contributed to the construction of HCP by addressing educational issues based on the theoretical matrices of historical materialism: Suchodolski (1984), Manacorda (1989), Snyders (1974) and Snyders (1976), in the scope of education philosophy; Makarenko (1989) and Pistrak (2011), who deal specifically with leftist pedagogies; and Broccoli (1977) and Betti (1981), who are scholars of Gramsci.

In relation to the methods, Saviani (2008b, 2010) elucidates that a major contribution in this area was provided by researcher João Luiz Gasparin. This author—despite having warned it consisted of “historical-critical pedagogy didactics and not the didactics of this perspective” (Gasparin, 2011, p.8)—proposed a theoretical-methodological foundation based on historical-dialectical materialism, which was widely accepted and used by the subscribers of the HCP.

Gasparin’s (2011) proposal was arranged in four descending tiers. The first and broadest tier’s starting point is the historical-dialectical materialism knowledge theory, which is based on Marx’s method of political economy. The second tier is anchored on the cultural-historical theory of Vygotsky, who, through the explanation of the current level of development and the immediate development zone, supports the synthesis of both. The third tier consists of the didactic proposal by Saviani (2008a), which has five distinct steps: (a) social practice, (b) questioning, (c) instrumentalization, (d) catharsis and (e) return to social practice. Finally, the fourth tier is the reading and interpretation of Marx, Vygotsky and Saviani with the aim of transposing the theoretical-methodological fundamentals of these authors for a theoretical and practical teaching.

This method assumes that the “school learning indicator shall consist of a complete demonstration of theoretical mastery of the content and its use by the student, depending on the social needs to which he/she must respond” (Gasparin, 2011, p.2). However, it shall be noted that these same contents should be thought of as contextualized. It is important to make it clear to students that the contents reflect a historical construction, supported by the manner in which humans lead their lives in labor relations in each production mode. Accordingly, the contents must imprint conceptual, scientific, historical, economic, ideological, political, cultural and educational dimensions to be learned in the teaching/learning process (Gasparin, 2011).

One must highlight contradiction, doubt and questioning, as well as diversity and disagreement. One must question certainties and uncertainties “by exposing the contents as natural, ready, unchanging” (Gasparin, 2011, p.3). Nevertheless, each part of the content must be analyzed, understood and learned in terms of a dynamic totality, thus enjoining educational institutions to change the pedagogical work with a view to these new challenges.

With respect to the return to social practice step (c), in the case of higher education, such a return will be “predominantly professional in the dimensions of specifically exercising an occupation, but also in the new way of thinking about the reality as a whole” (Gasparin, 2011, p.141). Ownership of the content appears as a new social use that reinforces the assumption that education “is an activity that presupposes heterogeneity (difference) in the starting point and homogeneity (equality) at the point of arrival” (Saviani, 2009, p.6).

Whereupon, to assist with the understanding of the topic and contribute to the construction of the analysis model used herein, a framework was developed to arrange the features of HCP in 13 specific dimensions, as described in Table 1.

As indicated by existing and practiced theories, there are difficulties involved in training a professional to be ready to meet the current managerial demands by only teaching business practices and technologies, or even using only a solid humanistic training. To this end, HCP has been studied and improved by several authors, from a critical perspective, with the intention of transforming educational practices. The goals are (a) to find ways and forms of intervention for the school to contribute to the transformation of the reality imposed, (b) to identify the forms of expression of objective knowledge historically produced and (c) to recognize the production conditions, main events and current trends of transformation in society.

In their application, the methods would be positioned to focus on teaching and deep mastery of the content, in order to gradually eliminate the naturalized, ready and unchanging form of the contents, thus showing all the contents' dimensions (conceptual, scientific, historical, economic, ideological, political, cultural and educational) that are essential to the student's training.

Table 1. Characterization of historical-critical pedagogy.

DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION
Context of emergence	1980s Need to improve the current management of educational practices Search for ways to overcome the polarization between the technical trend and the critical-reproductivist trend in the management of educational practices
Studies relevant to theory	Silva Júnior (1994); Scalcon (2002); Santos (2005); Saviani (2008a); Saviani (2008b); Saviani (2010); Gasparin (2011)
Pedagogical assumption	Critical theory
Focus	Action on the transformation of educational practice management towards the interests of the dominated through mastery of the dominators' conditions
Goals	Finding ways and forms of intervention for the school to contribute to the transformation of the reality imposed To identify the forms of expression of objective knowledge historically produced To recognize the production conditions, main events and current trends of transformation in society
Premises of the training	Mastery of the knowledge historically produced as a condition to change reality
Premises of the curriculum	Centrality of the contents Stimulus to autonomy Valuation of contradictions, doubts and questionings
Curriculum organization	Structured through a logical, orderly and gradual systematization of the contents Distinction between curricular and extracurricular content, with a focus on the former
Contents	Main focus on systematic, scientific and scholarly knowledge
Methods	Focus on profound teaching and content mastery Removal of the naturalized, ready and unchanging form of the contents Highlighting the conceptual, scientific, historical, economic, ideological, political, cultural and educational dimensions of the contents Searching for appropriation of the knowledge through defined stages such as

DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION
	social practice, questioning, instrumentalization, catharsis and social practice again
Assessment	Built from the establishment of indicators to assess the theoretical mastery of the content through its use by the student
Professor's role	Knowing the social determinants and historical constructions permeating the contents To master the contents To take into account the interests of students, their learning paces and psychological development
Student's role	To be involved and take initiative in assessing the changes brought about by the mastery of historically accumulated knowledge

From these practices, one seeks the appropriation of knowledge by way of the five steps described earlier: social practice, questioning, instrumentalization, catharsis and return to social practice. The assessment itself would be constituted with a focus on learning the theoretical content, as well as by assessing the practice performed by the student. For this, it is necessary to define the roles of professor and student. The professor is responsible for mastering social knowledge and didactic content as well as taking into account the particularities of each student. In turn, the student must be involved and proactive with regard to ascertaining the changes brought about by the knowledge he/she has received.

METHODOLOGY

The research presented in this article was conducted using an exploratory (Yin, 2010) qualitative approach (Vieira & Zouain, 2006; Deslauriers & Kérisit, 2012). For the method, the comparative case study (Triviños, 2011) was chosen. HCP's feasibility as a guide for the management of educational practices in undergraduate business administration programs was analyzed at PUC Minas (Brazil) and UdeM (Colombia).

These universities were chosen due to the similarities between the two institutions and their respective contexts, making them unique and representative cases (Yin, 2010). In recent years, business administration training has earned special importance in the Brazilian and Colombian contexts. More recently, in both countries, there has been an unprecedented proliferation of business administration programs as a result of increased industrial activity, the expansion of the national economy and the markets, and the emergence of new enterprises and government policies to foster higher education. There has also been a significant growth in the numbers of enrollments, scientific productions and investments in undergraduate and graduate business administration degree programs (Nicolini, 2003; Pfeffer & Fong, 2003; Friga, Bettis & Sullivan, 2004; Tordino, 2004; Maciel, Castro & Hocayen-da-Silva, 2006; Berdugo, 2010; Valencia & Botero, 2011).

The field research was conducted in three phases. First, national and institutional legislation governing the degree programs in business administration was researched for each country. Second, the characteristics of the undergraduate business administration programs were analyzed for the two universities, based on the analysis parameters deriving from the description of the characteristics of the HCP. In the third and final phase, a comparative analysis of the research information was carried out as a way of pointing out the possibilities and challenges in adopting HCP

as a guide in the management of educational practices in the undergraduate business administration programs under review.

The data were collected through documentary analysis techniques and semi-structured interviews. The documentary analysis (Cellard, 2012) covered the documentary data collected in the first field research phase. Semi-structured interviews (Yin, 2010) were subsequently carried out with 16 individuals in charge of managing the programs, 11 in Brazil and five in Colombia. The interview scripts were formulated separately following the particularities of the Brazilian and Colombian realities.

Two distinct sets of questions were developed. The first set ascertained respondents' impressions and knowledge regarding the legal and institutional requirements relevant to the structuring and management of the educational practice in the undergraduate program. The second set asked about the characteristics of the program with respect to the following dimensions: pedagogical assumption, focus/objectives, training premises, curriculum, content, assessment, methods, role of the professor and role of the student (see Table 1). Also at this stage, through the same dimensions, the respondents' opinions regarding the possibilities and challenges in implementing the HCP conditions were investigated. The interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed to maintain the accuracy and reliability of the interpretation of the information (Gibbs, 2009).

Finally, the strategy for handling and analyzing the data was carried out based on the analysis of content (Bardin, 2011; Triviños, 2011). With this technique, it is possible to render particular (interviews) inferences into general (social context) inferences in an objectified manner (Bauer, 2002). To this end, the results obtained and subsequently analyzed were divided into the following categories: (a) program design, (b) curriculum structuring and (c) agents involved.

FEASIBILITY OF HCP: THE CASES OF PUC MINAS (BRAZIL) AND UDEM (COLOMBIA)

This work sprung from the desire to identify new possibilities for educational practice management for business administration programs offered in Brazil and Colombia. To this end, it was necessary to move beyond the polarization set by targeted proposals, whether by the precepts of the pedagogy of competences or by those of critical pedagogy, in its various aspects. It was assumed that HCP is a potential method for training business administrators to have solid mastery of business actions and technologies while recognizing the contradictions of their time and searching for ways to change society.

Along the way, this paper presents several findings that were revealed by ascertaining the legal and institutional constraints placed on each program and, later, through an analysis of their characteristics.

In the first case, one can see there is no recommendation for the use of a certain pedagogical theory in Brazil. Nevertheless, the convergence of HCP is clear with the views underlying the conception of national education and training of business administrators, to the extent that there is appreciation for the mastery of the knowledge and technologies of each professional training, coupled with the stimulus of cognizant students, with critical and inquiring minds, who seek to help transform reality.

Regarding the other points not specified in the legislation, the institutions have liberality to define their actions and detail their educational practices. In the case of PUC Minas, there was great concern for humanistic and civil training without, however, losing sight of the market needs. In the

vision of the institution, the market needs must be met by focusing on the objective knowledge historically produced. Again, HCP is contemplated, with its precepts fulfilled, without conflicting with the positions of the statutes, regulations or, in particular, the Institutional Pedagogical Project (IPP) of the university.

Hence, it is possible that the prospects for the education and teaching strategies advocated by HCP may influence and contribute to the improvement of national guidelines and the choices at PUC Minas with regard to the management of the educational practices in its programs, notwithstanding the positions currently adopted.

Interestingly, in the Colombian reality, the logic presented emerges in terms very similar to that of Brazil, both at the national level, as in the very choices seen at UdeM. There is the same goal of sensitizing future business administrators with respect to broader realities, including by expressly recommending the need for broader social and ethical commitments. It is observed that the student training is placed beyond deep mastery of the knowledge and content unique to their area of training. Thus, in Colombia as well, HCP is a strong contender for achieving the training and structuring objectives of the teaching currently required.

At PUC Minas, the first category (a. program design), perhaps due to a natural unfolding of the positions adopted in the legal and institutional norms, demonstrates total convergence of the training focus, objectives and assumptions prescribed by HCP with what has already been formalized by the program. However, given the views of the managers interviewed, it was observed that, in practice, some of the goals are not fulfilled, especially with regard to the recognition of the production conditions, major events and current trends of the contents taught.

UdeM faces the same opportunities and challenges seen at PUC Minas, which highlights that the program design needs to reach beyond the formalized options to materialize itself in educational practice.

With respect to the (b) curriculum structuring, it was observed that there is no condition restricting the adoption of HCP as guidance for the management of educational practices. However, several difficulties were discovered for some of the dimensions under study. In the case of the curriculum premises, despite the uncontested centrality of the contents, the stimulus for autonomy and valuation of contradictions and questionings of the curricular content depend on the professor in charge. This fact imposes challenges to the selection and training of these players, combined with curricular designs and projects that promote students' choices.

In the case of the curriculum and content organization, all the HCP requirements are met—although, with regard to methods, it is no surprise to find that the PUC Minas program does not currently subscribe to such pedagogy. In the event it adopts HCP, the method must be taught and adapted to the training specificities of the business administrator. Next, it was noted that the assessment is guided by the traditional method, based upon periodic evaluations, in the form of tests and projects, without any mention of the theoretical mastery assessment of the content through its use.

At UdeM, despite the many similarities, there are some advances that facilitate HCP's adaptation. For example, according to the managers, the curriculum premises hold greater incentives for the students' autonomy and the exploration of the contradictions in the contents. This is achieved through specific projects such as the independent schedule and dissemination of science and liberty

values, which assume greater appreciation for the contradictions in the reality. In other dimensions, the challenges are the same as those found at PUC Minas.

With regard to the agents involved, both PUC Minas and UdeM meet the need for professors who have mastered the appropriate content, without, however, being able to ensure that they all know the social determinants and historical constructions that permeate their disciplines or take into account their students' interests and paces. This will not necessarily prevent HCP from being adopted but requires, once again, that efforts be focused on these important training agents.

The two universities stress the requirement of student attendance and the fulfillment of activities and evaluations. There is no concern whatsoever in engaging students in the verification of the changes offered by mastering the knowledge. Certainly, if this happened, these agents would be much more interested and focused in their studies.

These findings demonstrate that the possible adoption of HCP has found a breeding ground in the options and prospects for education, both in the laws of each country as well as in the choices specific to each of the institutions under study.

It is observed that both universities have already realized the need to structure their programs from positions that guide the management of their educational practices in search of coherence between the type of graduate they want to train and the strategies used to this end. At this point, PUC Minas opted for the critical-social pedagogy of the content, which is born out of the same concerns as the HCP. UdeM, on the other hand, opted for the construction of its own pedagogical model, which has similarly made it clear that there is a need to have market oriented training of citizens who are committed and increasingly aware.

However, the ongoing search for updating and aligning each dimension of the educational practice seems to be lacking, thus rendering pedagogical options that are not strictly confined to a theoretical discussion that justifies the decisions. These choices need to materialize in practice in all its dimensions, through the involvement of all and the permanent search for new strategies and methods, such as those described when the possibilities and challenges of the HCP in each institution were discussed. For Saviani (2008b, p.107), "the practice will be both more coherent and consistent, it will be all the more qualitative, all the more developed, the more consistent and developed the theory it is laid upon is"; thus, the practice will be transformed to the extent there is a theoretical work that justifies the need for its transformation and proposes methods of transformation (Saviani, 2008a). Also, the inverse movement must be valued to the extent that it is important to "think about the theory from practice, because if practice is the foundation of the theory, its criterion of truth and its purpose, this means that the development of the theory depends on the practice" (Saviani, 2008b, p.107).

Thus, it is possible to state that when the conditions to develop the practice are precarious, complications appear in the development of the theory in regard to two fundamental points. The first of these concerns the difficulties of advancing the theory due to the obstacles present under their materiality, while the second point emphasizes the search of the theory for ways to understand these obstacles and develop effective mechanisms to transform the adverse conditions.

Hence, failing to implement HCP in certain environments reveals a non-negligible difficulty of advancing the theory, since the precariousness of the practice seems to derail the possibility of testing hypotheses, checking the propositions formulated by the theory in the scope of the action.

However, despite having already stated that the practice is the criterion of truth of the theory, Saviani (2008b) teaches that, within the theory, “certain concepts, certain hypotheses [still must be formulated], but it needs to be put in place to prove its validity and to know to what extent it in fact meets the needs on the grounds for which it was proposed” (Saviani, 2008b, p.108).

Therefore, the manager’s role has been overlooked, including with respect to the theoretical model that guided this investigation. Interestingly, in the characterization of the HCP, there is no mention of the manager’s role dimension. It is postulated that the education manager should be the mediator between the theory and practice of teaching. Further, one must be aware that the professor also has a fundamental role as the one in charge of the classroom where the educational practice actually occurs. Thus, one must invest in competent managers concerned with aligning their programs with the pedagogical options chosen. Moreover, one must not succumb to the difficulties of managing the very distinctive realities and interests that the training task imposes.

CONCLUSION

In light of the results presented in the previous section “Feasibility of HCP,” it seems vital to adopt a pedagogy that can effectively and efficiently guide the management of educational practices in business administration programs in both Brazil and Colombia. For all of the above reasons expounded in this work, it is also advocated that HCP is an important option insofar as it meets the desire, apparently consolidated in the legislation and within institutions, to train professionals with a strong mastery of the management tools and techniques organizations require as they become critical, reflective citizens capable of implementing changes in reality.

HCP, which has yet to be tested in the field of teaching and research for business administration, led to the thesis that there are no insurmountable barriers to its adoption as guidance for the management of educational practices in undergraduate business administration programs in Brazil and Colombia. Upon completion of the research, the thesis was confirmed, provided some conditions were met.

Reflections on themes that will surely generate new questions and facilitate the advancement of the existing research are suggested. They are as follows: the use, in higher education and in different areas of training, of a model initially devised for basic education; the challenges posed to the planning and development of the programs; and the professionalization of professors and education managers.

Within this scope, one can advance into comparative studies between the national and institutional regulations concerning the management of Brazilian and Colombian business administration programs—and why not in other countries as well? It is also possible to further the comparison of the program characteristics in different contexts. Additionally, one should investigate the state of the art in business administration teaching, including in Brazil and Colombia, seeking, through their similarities and differences, substantial improvements in the management of educational practices by sharing models and policies that have provided satisfactory results.

These assertions can serve as the subjects of new studies in the area, promoting the further development and growth of the use of HCP. Hence, the hope is that this research has contributed information and reflections on a subject area that has not yet been explored, which concerns the adoption of HCP as guidance for the management of educational practices used in undergraduate

business administration programs. A discussion can be promoted regarding this educational theory and the needs of business administration programs, thus supporting this approach in the context of higher education.

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