



IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIC PLANNING, PERFORMANCE EVALUATION AND PROCESS MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The processes of Strategic Planning (SP), Performance Evaluation (PE) and Process Management (PM) for Higher Education Institutions (HEI) are considered more, than ever, urgent and necessary, acting as factors of motivation, awareness and exploratory data collection. The objective of this paper is to identify positive and negative aspects involved in realization of SP, PE and PM in HEI, through a literature review in online data bases, which allowed to conduct an exploratory and descriptive study. It was seen that HEI are considered complex systems in which results has implications on SP, PE and PM execution. During the literature review process, some barriers have been identified for its implementation, such as decentralization, departments autonomy, heterogeneity in the departments operation, data stored in places that cannot be accessed by everybody, bureaucracy, change resistance, dissociation between planning and management, as participation lack of university community in planning process.



However, there were also found ways to overcome these barriers using mainly the organizational commitment among high management, clear strategy, wide communication and also through the participation of all stakeholders.

Keywords: Universities; Strategy; Indicators; Management, Performance Evaluation

1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing costs maintain Higher Education Institutions (HEI) along with available budgets reduction, are factors that generate pressure on finding alternatives for supporting HEI activities and maintaining focus on the triad: teaching, research and extension (GHILIC-MICU et al., 2011).

Alternatives that allow HEI to be more sustainable and effective may already be found in companies, several concepts and practices developed for the business scenario, can be applied in other sectors (SHIRLEY, 1983), such as strategic planning, performance evaluation and process, project and change management.

To define Strategic Planning (SP) it is important to be aware, separately, of the planning and strategy concepts. For Buckland (2009), strategy can be define as a process in which organizational activities are managed and aligned with the institution objectives aiming benefits generating to their stakeholders.

Regarding planning, Rizatti (2005) sets it as a process that helps human behavior efficient making and rational decisions, in order to reach institutional objectives. Conventional planning theory states that an organization must establish goals and objectives and therefore develop a strategy to reach it (BRYSON, 1988).

In line with that, Goodstein et al. (1993) points out that SP is a process in which the organization envisions its future and develops procedures and operations necessary for reach it. Complementarily, this author also highlights the need for a clear set of goals and objectives that will provide priorities, as well as a set of guidelines that will orient management decisions, in a daily basis.

Peleias (1992) defends that although Performance Evaluation (PE) may have several meanings, due to the sense assigned to the term evaluation and the context related to performance, to him, evaluating performance means to judge or to place a concept, considering previous expectations. Also Pereira (1999) defines evaluation

as the act or effect of value assigning, which can be understood in a qualitative (merit, importance) or quantitative (measuring) way.

Business Process Management (BPM) is a new organizational trend that is leaving behind the functional structure (MÜCKENBERGER et al., 2011). BPM can be defined as a disciplined approach to identify, draw, execute, document, measure, monitoring, controlling and improving business process, automated or not, in order to reach results aimed by the organization strategic goals (ABPMP, 2009).

Process Management (PM) has a life cycle that is composed by the following steps: planning and strategy, business process analysis, design and modeling, implementation, monitoring and control, and process refinement (ABPMP, 2009). Initially, BPM had a focus in industries, however its use has already reached other contexts, being possible to identify its application in services, such as hospitals (LAGIOLA et al., 2008), financial sector (KÜNG; HAGEN, 2007) and higher education institutions (TUCEK; BASL, 2011), scope of this study.

SP, EP and PM in HEI environment are important because they act as a motivating factor and promote awareness, allowing the exploratory data collection and methodologies establishment that will result in overall improvement of the organization performance, making it viable to achieve its goals.

All things considered, the purpose of this article is to identify the positive and negative aspects involved in making SP, PE and PM, through the use of a literature review.

2. METHOD

This study was exploratory and descriptive, realized through a bibliographic search in the data bases Scielo, CAPES Periodicals Portal and Web of Science. Articles in Portuguese, English and Spanish have been researched, approaching the topics of SP, PE and PM in universities. In the researched databases, a strict selection was done with the terms 'strategic planning', 'performance evaluation' and 'process management' and its translations for the idioms searched.

A simple search was executed and also with the Boolean operator AND. It was searched articles that had in the title, abstract or keywords, the terms mentioned having HEI as a context. In this way, 49 articles were found, published between 1983 and 2014.

The qualitative analysis of the data was realized by content analysis, searching for similarities and differences between the articles, seeking to comprehend better the application and development of SP, PE and PM in HEI. The aim was to answer the following research questions:

Q1) Which are the advantages of realizing SP, PE and PM in HEI?

Q2) Which are the difficulties in realizing SP, PE and PM in HEI?

Q3) Which are the elements that facilitate the realization of SP, PE and PM in HEI?

3. STRATEGIC PLANNING IN HEI

The SP helps to reinforce the leading role in the institution structure (MARQUES, 2013). Rizatti (2005) affirms that there are additional benefits generated from the act of planning, such as: members cohesion to accomplish goals; better acceptance of changes, once all members of organization participate in the planning process; alignment of global, sectorial and operational plans, as well as elaboration of indicators for results analysis.

Strategic Planning is important because it has the capacity of helping organizations and communities, such as HEI, to anticipate and respond to changes in a wise and effective way. According to Meyer et al (2012), if universities do not adopt appropriate strategies, having the participation of an adequate public, losses in competitiveness, students, resources and prestige may happen, compromising its future.

Universities are characterized as complex systems due to several aspects defined by Santos (2002), such as stakeholders variety and quantity, scattered goals, human resources educational diversity, norms, political pressures and delays in bureaucratic decision making process. Besides that, terms such as strategic planning, competition, competitiveness and others, are common in the business context, but do not appear in HEI context (MARQUES, 2013).

According to Araújo (2013), the main factors that did not help to SP institutionalization are: dissociation between planning and management, not being considered as an important part of administration; credibility lack in the use of planning instrument for management problems solution; noninvolvement of

academic community in the planning activity; collegiate bodies and commissions are not encouraged to think strategically and are basically focused on daily routines.

There are few studies about attempts to adapt management techniques to university planning. Regarding technical aspects, considering the SP, tools combined such as Balanced Scorecard (BSC) and Hoshin Kanri, facilitates the process of strategic management, once they provide a conceptual systematic structure and organize implementation process (SERDAR ASAN; TANYAS, 2007).

Especially BSC might be used by HEI leaders as a tool that allows translation of vision and strategy in to a performance model that will help on the connection between top management and operations (MÜLLER, 2001).

Due to the fact that universities are a complex organization, other difficulties must also be mentioned: it is hard for a sole group of managers acknowledge students, employees and other interested parts needs, although it is comprehend that external environment might have a positive or negative impact in university (PARIS, 2003). Under this thought line, Meyer et al (2012) explain that management practices in different organizational contexts builds a complex combination of approaches, requiring special abilities from an university manager.

The single elaboration of plans does not mean that its adoption will be reached by the whole university community. Although the strategic alignment is hard for all institutions, in universities it becomes harder, due to the existence of complex dual governance models to insure academic freedom, having a common objective becomes complicated, once dissimilar interests might be encountered in different faculties (SCHRAN, 2014).

It is important to consider the characteristics that make HEI different from other organizations, implying an adaptation of instruments used in SP (BORGES & ARAÚJO, 2002). Apart from the complexity of the university structure, SP must elucidate its objectives, strategies, actions and work plans, so that they are actually executed and not only conceived (ESTRADA, 2001).

Farrant and Fieldner (1996) mentions that objectives must be created through an institutional SP, started by the university and that incorporates a wide consult, generating a consensus between the community members, conducting audit management and internal studies. For that, authorities and specialists of different

sector of HEI must form simultaneous sessions of planning and budget, as well as meetings with administrative counsel, so that they can express their opinions and suggestions and questions (HAMIDI; DELBAHARI, 2011).

In this way, the process of SP in HEI cannot be done in an isolated way, once it must encompass organization culture, administration style and the process of responsibility designation inside of authorities that already exist (MARQUES, 2013). Also, one of the necessary conditions to achieve SP objectives is the communication quality that should happen before, during and after its execution (MACHADO, 2008).

4. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION IN HEI

The university is an institution of services and a space where knowledge is generated and disseminated to society, through activities of research, teaching and extension. If its processes do not present satisfactory indicators it is necessary to act, in order to improve (CANTERLE; FAVARETTO, 2008).

Porto and Réginer (2003) believe that dissemination of concepts and values associated with quality must occur in parallel with consolidation of evaluation practices: what is not measured will hardly be managed.

As Marcovitch (1998) defines, evaluate is not the final step of a process, it should work as a continuous portrait, necessary to define parameters for university management.

Barbosa et al (2011) analyzed possible relations between indicators of management for HEI, proposed by the Brazilian Court Union Accounts, and student's performance, through the National Exam of Student's Performance results. These results indicated that some indicators did have influence in student's performance, such as the cost per student, which presented a positive effect on the performance of students that took the Exam.

Santos (2002) approached the subject of HEI's PE using an economic management perspective, highlighting advantages of establishing a evaluation criterion based on economic results. Also, using analyzes executed for specialists in HEI's PE, the author listed main problems encountered in current models of evaluation adopted by the government, especially, problems concerning the difficulty in identifying contributions generated in terms of social benefits and knowledge created, expressed in an economic value format.

Khoury and Analoui (2004) proposed an integrated and innovative model for managing PE process of professors in Palestine public universities. For its construction, several important matters were emphasized, such as: definition of a clear institutional strategy, wide participation in goals definition, training for teachers, good communication between superiors and subordinates and feedback on results reached.

Besides that, it was pointed out that the lack of proper training – for teachers and managers – might affect the process of PE, influencing its results. In the Palestine case, barriers that might hamper this model application are: cultural characteristics, environment turbulence and the lack of financial resources.

Canterle and Favaretto (2008) also developed a model for PE in an HEI, introducing aspects present in quality systems, based in dialogue and collective construction, allowing that PE be established as the feedback that will guarantee its quality improvement. This model provides an effective form of acting on quality, in a way that the university, in its complexity, becomes capable of respond to different society stakeholder's interests. The authors also noticed that PE is not fully accepted and valued by the university.

Chen and Chen (2010) showed that existent models of PE were inadequate in Taiwan universities, due to the differences among public and private universities, considering both measurement criteria and criteria treatment. To solve these problems, a system containing three dimensions and seven criteria of measurement was proposed by the authors, making possible to conduct an operational PE and also allowing to proposed improvements with higher precision. This system offers better support for financial and budget planning, allowing an adequate evaluation of financial decisions and supporting budget control initiatives.

Galvão et al. (2011) developed a global PE model for private universities, taking into account the need of HEI fulfilling standards that not only allows the achievement of internal goals, but also the legal standards established by governmental entities. Aspects regarding external environment, as well as attendance of client's needs and ensuring a good workplace, are crucial for organizations survival. In this way, alignment with strategic objectives stimulates the quest for better results.

The proposed model, although simple in a first look, becomes complex in HEI due to the diverse structures and the existence of more than one campuses. In this way, the model proposed by Galvão et al. (2011) is in accordance with exigencies made by the Brazilian Ministry of Education, and it might also contribute for improvement and generation of new models.

Experiences in different countries have shown many difficulties in PE process implementation in HEI, due to their complexity, because of its different characteristics from other companies (NEAVE, 1988; 1998; YONEZAWA, 2008; WOODHOUSE; GOLDSTEIN, 1988; BIGGERI; BINI, 2001).

Among several difficulties, it is interesting to highlight the ones with operational and political source. It is also difficult to establish evaluation criteria that do not have imperfections for institution that have higher commitments, such as forming qualified professional with a wide knowledge that must perform activities of learning, research and extension. The appropriated way of measuring these activities still is an open question (BERTOLIN, 2007; BIGGERI; BINI, 2001; YONEZAWA, 2008).

Lopes (1999) studied institutional aspects influence in the PE process in HEI and observed a strong participation of thus aspects in all phases of evaluation process, which generated incompatibilities between institutional patterns and expectations of community members (staff, teachers, students).

Also, he observed that public universities are subject to strong pressures of the institutional environment, such as Brazilian government policies of evaluation, new courses and research projects approval process, post-graduation courses and concessions of credit evaluation, being this one crucial for universities economic maintenance.

Luz (1989) proposed a PE model for university libraries in Brazil, highlighted the need of defining performance evaluation indicators. Although it is also not clear which indicators should be considered in this analysis, it was considered three criteria: user's opinion, use of collections and availability of collections.

Considering PE in university libraries, Das Graças Coletta and Rozenfeld (2007), also point out difficulties in defining indicators and creating an evaluation manual suitable for any library. Stubbs (2004) affirms that a library has political

reasons to face regarding those that support it and should show results of success and improvements obtained to all users and to the general community. The data of PE work as support to decision making and also as a tool for management.

5. PROCESS MANAGEMENT IN HEI'S

Reasons typically pointed out for adopting PM in organizations are: documenting relationships between Information Technology (IT) processes; allowing a more efficient information flux, exploring in a suitable way time the workers abilities; reducing costs; assuring quality and efficiency in process (SVENSSON & HVOLBY, 2012; MÜCKENBERGER et al, 2011; TUCEK; BASL, 2011).

Considering specifically HEI's, maintaining intellectual capital is another advantage generated by PM adoption, once resources such as knowledge, intellectual property and experience, are strongly present in HEI's, being possible to affirm that those represent its higher value (MÜCKENBERGER et al, 2011).

Whereas its use ends up being affected by HEI's characteristics, business tools, such as BPM, have potential to improve analytical capacities of HEI's such as: decentralization, departments autonomy, large possibility of heterogeneity in operational departments conditions, data storage in places that does not allow access of all employees (Excel files or hard copies) and bureaucratic issues (GHILIC-MICU et al, 2011; SVENSSON; HVOLBY, 2012; MÜCKENBERGER et al, 2011). These factors result in loss of process agility and impaired immediate application of improvements (MÜCKENBERGER et al, 2011).

Brodbeck et al. (2013) conducted a work in an HEI with the objective of planning and implementing processes office, developing a methodology consistent with the reality of these institutions. The authors emphasize that prior to development of the stages, it was conducted a stage aiming to training employees in BPM and in the software that was used for modeling processes, making more doable the application. The steps conducted were: strategic context, modeling and analysis, implementation and execution. The authors also mentioned that the compromising of managers is essential for executing the project.

Ahmad et al. (2007) identify critical success factors for the BPM execution in HEI's, pointing as critical the undermentioned:

- The presence of group work and culture with focus on quality;

- Organization systems must be in accordance with the direction that organization is pursuing;
- HEI's must be prepared to manage impacts generated by change. In this way, it is crucial to involve people that will suffer these changes impacts. The resistance to change is frequently pointed out as a bigger difficulty over than the lack of financial resources.
- Encourage creativity and innovation, being necessary less bureaucracy, higher participation and more employee decision autonomy.
- The use of IT has great value for PM, although it is necessary to clear understanding of IT integration with departments.
- Project management is important for allowing adequate planning and management of PM. It is necessary the existence of professionals with knowledge in project management, otherwise, it might not be obtained success, wasting money and/or effort, among other resources.
- Existence of adequate financial resources.

Ghilic-Micu, Mircea and Stoica (2011) highlight that knowledge is the determinant factor of the performance that HEI's will present to the market, being most of its processes related with employees' knowledge. This implies that processes have collaborative characteristics, involving complex interactions among participants and this complexity might not be supported by the BMP. Authors suggest the use of different approaches with BPM such as Case Management, for transposing this limitation.

Case Management has a similar approach compared with BPM, thus it brings advantages in cases where more flexibility is demanded, being more focused in collaboration, ideal for processes not so structured and that are subjected to changes (MARIN et al, 2013). The difference among BPM and Case Management is that BPM has a focus on processes optimization, aiming to increase finished work.

Observing the Case Management, it is more focused in optimization of individual cases results, by providing an integrated set of information and services for workers. The integration of these two approaches might be suitable for HEI's

case, where BPM might be used in more rigid processes, while in cases where more complexity can be found, Case Management might be more suitable.

6. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS ON EP, PE AND PM IN HEI

Considering the realization of EP, PE and PM in HEI's, authors present a common vision regarding universities characteristics that make these processes stronger in other organizations.

HEI's are considered as complex systems (GHILIC-MICU et al, 2011; ESTRADA, 2001; NEAVE, 1988; 1998; YONEZAWA, 2008; WOODHOUSE; GOLDSTEIN, 1988; BIGGERI; BINI, 2001) which leads to implications when EP, PE and PM is executed, being necessary to observe the inherent singularities in these organizations, promoting adaptations in their structures.

In EP and PM execution it is necessary to consider that the highest value of HEI's is the knowledge, being necessary a focus on this direction. The PE is the element that will allow continuous improvement of EP and PM, because it supplies an updated portrait and more subsidies for decision making.

Besides the complexity, other barriers were identified in the literature that influence on EP, PE and PM execution, as a whole or only in one of the dimensions. Thus, when it is considered that these three elements are interconnected, barriers related to one aspect might generate interferences in others. The barriers founded in literature were:

- Decentralization;
- Departments' autonomy;
- Operation department's heterogeneity;
- Data stored in places that are not available to all employees;
- Bureaucracy;
- Change resistance;
- Dissociation among planning and management;
- Lack of planning process participation among university community.

Aiming to overcome the barriers presented, facilitators to the accomplishment of EP, PE and PM were also identified, in literature, the facilitators which are presented in Figure 1.

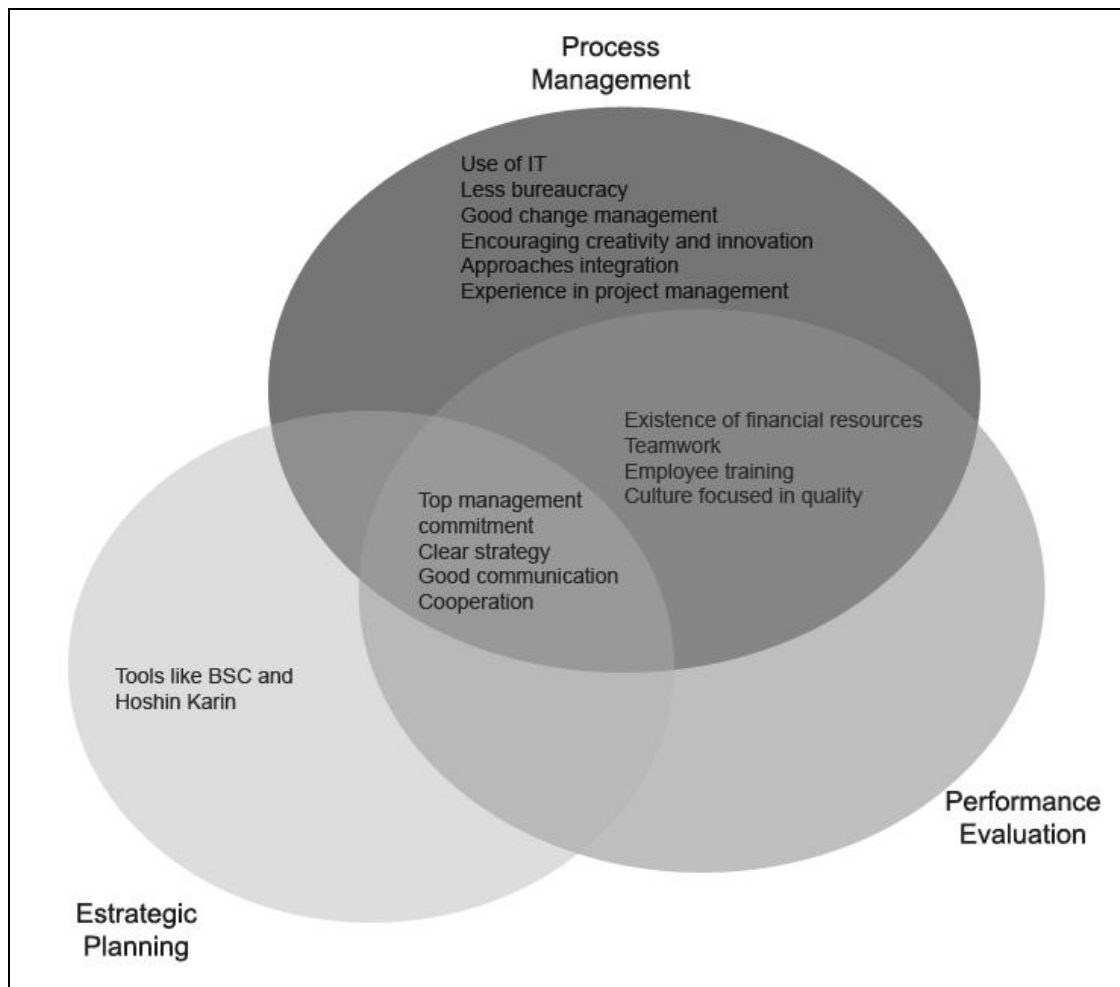


Figure 1: Facilitators to EP, PE and PM.

It is possible to see that facilitators might have influence on more than one sphere, reinforcing the idea that EP, PE and PM must act in an integrated manner. It becomes clear that crucial aspects for a good implementation of EP, PE and PM are: top management commitment, existence of a clear strategy, good communication and participation of all actors involved.

This study was purely descriptive and future research will be necessary to deepen the subject in the context of higher education institutions.

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