Implementation of performance management in an environment of conflicting management cultures

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Abstract

Purpose – The aim of this paper is to examine how performance management (PM) is adopted in the public university sector and the problems it faces in an environment of conflicting management cultures.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper draws on institutional logics as a theoretical framework and inductive qualitative interviews as a research approach.

Findings – The results reveal that the conflicting values instilled in key players aligned with the different cultures have resulted in PM assuming a hybrid form, rather than the corporate form. Three identified problematic factors further demonstrate that the level of hybridity varies across the sector. The paper alludes to a theory-practice gap as a result of the findings and the concept of negative hybridity and its risk to effective governance aligned with the corporate approach.

Research limitations/implications – The results are limited to Australian public universities. In addition, interviews were conducted with a specific set of university management staff. A different perspective on the findings may have been generated with a different set of management or operational staff.

Practical implications – The results provide policymakers and university management with information on the theory practice gap and the problematic factors contributing to it. It also informs policymakers to the risks associated with negative hybridity.

Originality/value – The results reveal the existence of a theory–practice gap because of a number of common problematic factors in the adoption of a corporate-oriented PM system in Australian public universities. The results highlight the need for further studies to establish the extent to which the current hybrid PM system deviates from the expected corporate-oriented PM system, and whether this poses a risk to effective governance aligned with the corporate approach.

Keywords Governance, Performance management, Conflicting management cultures, Institutional logics, Change management

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

During the last three decades, public universities in developed countries have been subject to pressure to conform to a corporate management culture, largely influenced by new public management (NPM), market-based public administration, and managerialism (Lapsley and Miller, 2004; Parker, 2011; Pollitt, 1990). An important feature of the change to a corporate culture is the change in universities' organizational structure to a top-down decision-making model, with the roles of the university board and management reflecting a private sector corporation (Lapsley and Miller, 2004; Parker, 2011). University vice chancellors (VCs) are redefined as chief executive officers (CEOs) and university councils are downsized to a number and composition more aligned with corporate boards (Parker, 2011). The culture

instills values in key players that focus on external standards that are driven by output and by both quantitative and qualitative indicators. The type of control environment is reflective of less trust and requires strong agency-oriented monitoring and extrinsic reward-type controls.

An important role of the CEO and his or her management team in this new culture is to adopt corporate values and develop and implement corporate control processes that facilitate an environment of performance evaluation and audit, output controls, competition, employee empowerment, and the use of the private sector management style (Andresani and Ferlie, 2006; Hood, 1991, 1995; Parker, 2011). The implementation of corporate control processes is to be undertaken in an environment of reported criticisms of the NPM influenced corporate culture, most notably that public sector entities operate under distinct political, ethical, constitutional, and social dimensions that are different from the private sector (Christopher, 2014; Pollitt, 1990). In a public university environment, this level of operation has been underpinned by public sector and academic cultures and values that are in conflict with the corporate culture and its values. The challenge facing CEOs and their executive management team as a result of attempting to implement a corporate influenced process under an environment of conflicting cultures and values is twofold. First, the CEO and senior management team (comprising deans of divisions) are generally former academics accustomed to old public sector and collegial managerialism, now forced into the corporate world and its related problems (Scott et al., 2008, 2010; Seale and Cross, 2015). If senior administrators are part of the senior management team, they are also generally accustomed to old public sector managerialism, which instills values that focus on developing governance processes characterized by implicit standards that are input driven by bureaucratic rule-based, process-driven information. Their effectiveness is also generally measured through qualitative indicators. Such managers must now cope with adopting conflicting corporate values to facilitate corporate management practices at the strategic level of governance (Basnett, 2005; Whitchurch, 2006; Winter, 2009).

Second, the CEO and his or her management team must also develop and implement these corporate control processes at the operational level of governance. This is undertaken in an environment where academics and administrators still practice an academic culture that is also at odds with the corporate culture (Anderson, 2008; Christopher, 2012, 2014; Christopher and Leung, 2015). The academic culture focuses on instilling values in key players through focusing on inputs and process-driven information (Ter Bogt, 2008; Ter Bogt and Scapens, 2012) and sharing in the decision-making processes (Deem, 2004).

Various studies have identified that, because of the conflict between the corporate and academic/public sector cultures and values, public universities are generally slow to adopt corporate control processes (Adcroft and Willis, 2005; Alexander, 2007; Ferlie et al., 2008; Henkel, 2005; Rebora and Turri, 2010; Smyth, 1989). Similar doubts have been raised in the public sector because of the conflict between the corporate culture and the traditional bureaucratic public sector culture (Broadbent and Guthrie, 1992; Deegan, 2002; Tremblay, 2012). While these studies tend to argue that the conflicting cultures influence the adoption of corporate control processes, no studies have examined, from the perspective of the CEO and his or her management team, how these corporate control processes have actually evolved in such an environment. Thus, this study seeks to address this research gap by examining, through the lens of the CEO and his or her management team, how the important corporate control process of performance management has evolved under the identified challenges they are facing. In doing so, it also seeks to identify and conceptualize any problematic factors they experience, which university management could use in the future to address and subsequently enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of performance management.

This study focuses on performance management (PM) as a control process because it is a central corporate control process that plays a key role in ensuring maintenance of the accountability and responsibility concept in line with the corporate approach. The consequent research questions are as follows: How has PM evolved across the governance

levels of public universities in an environment of conflicting management cultures? Which problematic factors, if any, are influencing the effective adoption of PM in an environment of conflicting management cultures?

The rest of the paper is arranged as follows. The next section provides a brief overview of PM in Australian public universities. The theoretical framework is then outlined, followed by a discussion of the research design and results of the study. The paper ends with a discussion and conclusion section.

2. Performance management in Australian public universities
Australia has experienced the development of a new generation of universities that have taken on a wider societal role. This development commenced during the 1980s, when the Australian federal Labor Government undertook a restructuring exercise in higher education to ensure greater alignment with national priorities. An important outcome of this exercise was "Higher Education: A Policy Statement" known as the "Dawkins Report" (Dawkins, 1988), which emphasized the need for university management to have greater accountability and responsibility through a shift toward a corporate culture. A contributing factor to this shift to corporate culture was the introduction of broader public sector reforms, such as NPM (Meek, 2002; Parker, 2011, 2012), which emphasized corporate sector managerialism and accountability toward a wider stakeholder base. Subsequent governmental reforms (National Governance Protocols) by the Liberal Government in 2004 and the Bradley Review by the Commonwealth Labor Government in 2008 reinforced the need for efficiency and effectiveness in university operations and monitoring these through measured outcomes (Blackmore, 2009; Parker, 2011; Vidovich and Currie, 2011).

These corporate types of practices have been further entrenched by the present Liberal Government. In May 2014, this government presented a range of proposed policy changes to higher education funding through the federal budget, which focused on reducing funding to public universities, encouraging universities to set their own fees to make up the shortfall, and increasing the level of quality assurance (Universities Australia, 2014). The reference to accountability and accounting through measured outcomes had led to pressure on public universities to adopt PM systems synonymous with those adopted in the corporate sector. It has been argued that formalized PM systems provide a more corporate approach to managing staff members by ensuring they meet the governance accountabilities of the university (Fletcher, 2001).

PM systems in this context are described as processes by which employees and organizations are made aware of each other's needs, with the aim of effectively managing individuals and achieving high levels of organizational performance (Armstrong and Baron, 2005). The focus on organizational rather than individual appraisal inevitably involves incorporating processes such as aligning employees' job description with organizational objectives; developing performance targets; assessing these targets in terms of measurable outputs; providing accountabilities and training opportunities to achieve these targets; and subsequently creating, sustaining, and improving existing employee performance that is linked to their remuneration (Armstrong, 2010, 2012).

Several proponents of this PM approach have developed models of sequences, cycles, steps, or stages that encapsulate these processes. These include Armstrong's (2012, 2017) PM sequence, Deming's (1993) PDCA cycle, the critical success factors of McKinsey's 7S model (Peters and Waterman, 1982), and Kaplan's balanced scorecard (Kaplan and Norton, 1992, 1996, 2001). An analysis of these various sequences, cycles, steps, and stages reveals that they essentially comprise three components that involve a group of sub-processes that can be categorized as occurring across the strategic and operational levels of governance as follows: (1) strategically developing policies to implement PM across the organization, (2) operationally implementing PM across the organization via integration with other interdependent systems, and (3) integrating the management of the first two aspects via a

continuous monitoring and feedback mechanism (Williams, 1998). The focus of these components is to ensure that PM is effectively implemented from a holistic perspective across the governance levels of an organization (strategic and operational levels) (see also Aguinis, 2009; Ferreira and Otley, 2009; Nankervis and Compton, 2006).

PM in this corporate form has hence extended from the micromanagement of employee behavior via performance appraisals to a macro-view entailing the strategic management of an organization. This is synonymous with a move from traditional hierarchies in public universities to more responsive, innovative, and flexible organizations that incorporate a strategic focus (Armstrong, 2012, 2017; Fletcher, 2001; Kaplan and Norton, 2001). In a university environment, this holistic approach involves the alignment of individual work plans with the university's strategies and their integration with other interdependent corporate processes, culminating in a reward or disciplinary action process. This conceptualization of the three components of PM will be examined in this study to address the research questions.

3. Theoretical framework

The concept of "change" to be undertaken in an environment of conflicting management cultures is best described by Nadler (1998), who conceptualized it as assuming a new strategic focus that requires a departure from traditional work, structures, job requirements, and work cultures. In the context of the Australian public university sector, this "change" refers to academics who are accustomed to old public management, academic autonomy, and collegial managerialism undergoing a process of being altered to accommodate a corporate culture. The change is dramatic and requires a complete overhaul, in which work undertaken by academics is to be appraised.

Institutional logic is a theoretical perspective aligned with informing the different management cultures, their influence on individuals, and their contribution to a hybrid environment. It is defined as:

> the socially constructed historical patterns of cultural symbols and material practices, assumptions, values and beliefs by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organise time and space, and provide meaning to their daily activity. (Thornton *et al.*, 2012, p. 51)

The theory originated from the proposed concept that socially constructed principles—such as individuals' beliefs, rules, norms, and practices—can ultimately guide social actions and behavior at work (Friedland and Alford, 1991; Spedale and Watson, 2014). It is argued that individuals can experience their institutional logics from prior norms, rules, and practices of one or more management cultures at work (Greenwood *et al.*, 2011) and through interactions with their own personal network outside work (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). In this manner, at any one time, individuals may be exposed to a variety of institutional logics, and several institutional logics may be embraced simultaneously (Pache and Santos, 2013). The net outcome is that institutional logics can shape individual decision-making at work, and subsequently individuals and organizations can shape institutional logics (Friedland and Alford, 1991; Thornton and Ocasio, 2008).

The theory further posits that individuals may not always react in the same way when faced with conflicting logics. When faced with such a situation, the theory posits that individuals tend to react in five different ways: ignorance, compliance, defiance, compartmentalization, or a combination (Pache and Santos, 2013). The last two reactions lead to a hybrid environment in which individuals aim to segment the other responses over time to achieve consistency in the prescribed values, norms, and practices, and, through combination, reach a compromise by uniting some of the values, norms, and practices of the competing logics (Pache and Santos, 2013). Hence, hybridity can take several forms and differ from one organization to another. These theoretical insights are used to address the research questions.

4. Research method
This study employed a qualitative interview approach to enable the examination of a phenomenon within a specific context. Using interviews as the primary source of data allowed the issues to emerge through an inductive approach from individuals who had experienced various stages of the change process from a management perspective (Creswell, 1998; Silverman, 2011). The qualitative data through this process provided a practical evaluation of the status of the adoption of PM within Australian public universities.

4.1 Selection of universities and interviewees
A purposeful sampling approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) was used to invite three groups of interviewees, comprising university management staff members from all Australian public universities. The purpose of this selection was to ensure the interviewees would adequately represent Australian public universities from a management perspective, and thus provide a balanced view of the phenomenon under study across the sector. In Australia, there are 37 public universities categorized into four groups: (1) the Group of Eight Universities (Go8), consisting of eight old established sandstone universities; (2) Australian Technology Network (ATN) universities, which originated from higher education or technology institutions; (3) Australian Innovative Research Universities (IRU), comprising newer universities that adopt a more research-focused strategic approach; and (4) Other Universities (OU), which are regionally focused to serve specific regions.

Care was taken to ensure that the interviewees comprised a range of management staff (including VCs/CEOs), second-tier management staff (chief financial officers [CFOs], company secretaries, and governance officials), and chief audit executives (CAEs). The interviewees were selected from at least two universities for each grouping to provide a balanced representation of views. The CEOs were selected because they are ultimately responsible for driving the change process in their universities and for the strategic development of governance control processes, such as PM. The second-tier management staff officials were selected because they are owners of the process at a division or senior departmental level and are useful to the study because they could verify the VCs' views. The CAEs were selected because of their role in enhancing governance by monitoring the effectiveness of the change process (Carcello *et al.*, 2005) and their ability to verify independently the views of the VCs and second-tier senior management staff members.

Interview numbers were restricted once information saturation was obtained and the minimum representation of two universities from each grouping was attained. This was achieved via interviews with nine VCs, representing nine universities (approximately 25% of the total VC population of all universities) and at least two from each university grouping; 14 second-tier senior management staff members, representing 12 universities (approximately 35% of all Australian public universities) and at least two from each university grouping; 12 CAEs from 12 universities, representing 35% of all Australian public universities and at least two from each university grouping.

Four main factors provided the basis for comparability and justification for the selected universities and interviewees (Yin, 2003). First, all universities were separately incorporated entities subject to similar corporate structures. Second, all universities had common main activities (teaching and research). Third, all universities had governance accountabilities toward their stakeholders and were subject to the same policy reforms to pursue a change process toward a corporate management culture. Fourth, all universities had an internal audit department, in which the head of department (CAE) held a common role in assisting council and management in reviewing governance control processes, such as PM.

As a result of the anonymity assurances provided to the interviewees, their names and the names of their respective organizations are not identified in this paper. They are instead

referred to by pseudonyms to reflect their designation, followed by a numerical number in sequence of their position in the sample size (e.g., VC of U1 represents the first VC of a university within the sample size of nine VCs interviewed).

Following qualitative interview procedures, the interviewees were guided with the following direct questions: "What is the current status of adoption of corporate PM in your university?" and "What are the factors causing tensions with the adoption of PM?". These questions were followed by probing questions on each characteristic identified, when necessary, to gather the interviewees' further reflections on the reasons for the different types of tensions responsible for the slow change process, if applicable. Prior to the interview, each interviewee was also briefed on the holistic PM system in the context of this study. This was to ensure consistency in their understanding of the study purpose and what was expected of them.

4.2 Secondary data
Secondary data pertaining to PM, governance, policies, and procedures provided by interviewees and obtained directly from university websites were used to support the analysis of primary data collected through the interview process. This triangulation process helped achieve convergence of data by bringing together different sources of information to support a common finding (Miles and Huberman, 1994). It also helped achieve saturation of data when no new data were brought forward (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

4.3 Credibility, dependability, and conformability of qualitative data
To ensure the credibility, dependability, and conformability of the qualitative research results, this study complied with the checklist adapted from Carson *et al.* (2001). This included meeting criteria such as undertaking the interviews in the natural setting of the phenomenon (i.e., the respondents' own surroundings); using purposeful sampling to ensure the relevance of the interviewees; comparing data across different universities; ensuring depth and intimacy in interviewing, such as through one-to-one conversations/discussions; maintaining prolonged and consistent observation, such as observing how the interviewees' reacted to questions across numerous/similar settings; implementing negative case analysis (i.e., asking questions designed to find exceptions to the rule and thus invalidating the rule); maintaining journals or memos; and triangulating the data across different levels of management staff (with one category providing a checking/confirmation mechanism against another) and data from different sources, such as secondary data.

4.4 Analysis of interview data
The raw data from the interview tapes were initially transcribed independently. They were then summarized and analyzed thematically (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Silverman, 2011). This began with a coding process using the "open coding" technique. This involved a line-by-line analysis of the semi-structured interviews to identify initial codes (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). This process facilitated comparison with other interview data within the same university, as well as comparisons of interview data with different universities. These codes/concepts relative to the three components of PM were further analyzed into common categories and then themes. The entire process of coding and pattern matching was facilitated using the NVivo software package. While all respondents held the view that the PM system is an ongoing process of improvement, as with all governance processes, the majority (67% of VCs/CEOs, 64% of second-tier managers, and 58% of VCs) identified ongoing problematic factors as contributing to its hybrid form, rather than the corporate form. The resulting themes of the problematic factors that emerged from the analyzed interview data are reflected in Table I and discussed in the forgoing section.

www.

Constructs	Open code/concepts	Category	Theme
Developing, implementing, and accepting policies	PM measures monitored at senior level PM well entrenched for senior managers Short-term appointments associated with performance measures PM in tension with other cultures PM not consistently accepted by academics PM patchy at lower levels Academics uncomfortable with PM Difficult to performance-manage academics Problem with administering PM	PM more easily manageable with senior staff PM not successfully accepted/applied at the lower levels Resistance by academics and administrative staff oriented toward other management cultures	Culture divide between senior managers (comprising academics and administrators at strategic level of governance) and managed academics and administrators at operational level of governance
Effective implementation of PM across university (integration with other interdependent systems)	Performance measures well aligned to strategic plan at senior level PM system not adequately aligned with strategic planning process PM yet to cascade effectively to all levels PM still new to the university Integration of PM with other systems has a work-in-progress status Lack of integration with the budgeting process No effective link of action plans with budget Lack of integration with the promotions system Poor linkage of PM with rewards and promotions system PM criteria not consistently aligned with annual work plans Resource constraints a factor in developing interdependent systems	PM not effectively integrated with strategic planning process PM not integrated with budgeting system PM not integrated with the promotions/ rewards system	Other interdependent systems not satisfactorily developed to ensure holistic implementation of PM

(*continued*)

Table I.
Open codes/themes,
categories, and themes

Constructs	Open code/concepts	Category	Theme
PM monitored and managed effectively	Heads of schools and academic managers responsible for monitoring/reporting of PM	Lack of training/ experience in managing PM systems	Lack of professional expertise in monitoring, reporting, and providing effective feedback
	Heads of schools and academic managers at various stages of training	Problems in introducing measurable and achievable measures	
	Not all have the required skills to manage PM	Problem of management across academic managers and administrators	
	Problems with introducing relevant and measurable performance measures		
	Academic managers and administrators aligned to other cultures not used to the complexities of managing PM		

Table I.

5. Results
The outcome is that Australian public universities are operating a hybrid form of performance management system. The three themes of problematic factors arising from operating under an environment of conflicting management cultures and values contributing to a hybrid form of PM are discussed below. These themes relate to: (1) a culture divide between senior managers (academics and administrators at the strategic level of governance) and managed academics and administrators at the operational level of governance, (2) other dependent corporate processes for PM not being developed to a satisfactory level, and (3) lack of academic and administrative staff expertise in managing the whole spectrum of activities associated with PM.

5.1 Culture divide between senior managers (academics and administrators at strategic level of governance) and managed academics and administrators at operational level of governance
The interviewees referred to the phenomenon of a culture divide that affected the holistic adoption of PM. The common sentiment of interviewees was that PM was generally successfully developed and implemented for staff involved at the strategic level of governance. It usually involved senior management staff members who were responsible for managing the university operations and managing divisions, departments, and schools. These views are illustrated by the following comments:

I think we do it best at the top, pretty well for the deans, pretty well for the heads of schools, fairly well for the professors, fairly well for the aspros and very unevenly for lecturers and senior lecturers. (VC of U3)

We know that, as you go down the university, it becomes patchy. (US of U2)

At the top level, we do it at the faculty division. It is still being worked on at the lower levels. (CFO of U3)

But, at the moment, it really sort of stops at a director/senior manager level, associate dean/director in a division–associate dean/head of research center level. It stops there. (CFO of U4)

The actual performance management of the teaching staff is difficult, as they don't like to be program managed. So there is probably still quite a way to go in proper performance management below head-of-school level. (ED of U3)

The acceptance of the corporate culture by academics and administrators with managerial positions at the strategic level of governance was explained by interviewees as also resulting from the conditions in which they are generally employed in Australian public universities. These conditions involve senior managers being subject to fixed-term contracts, and these contracts (normally three or five years) generally have a built-in set of performance measures that determine bonus payments to introduce strategic initiatives that may include corporate values consistent with the corporate culture. The following comment reflects this sentiment of the interviewees:

All senior managers and high-level academics have a performance component of their salaries relating to setting goals and assessed against. The conditions of appointment of our heads of schools have been reviewed in the last 12 months. They've been put on five-year contracts which acknowledge the critical importance of their role. Some of our schools are bigger than faculties. (US of U4)

However, the interviewees held the view that the success with the implementation of PM with senior management staff at the strategic level of governance was not occurring consistently at the operational levels in their universities because of the conflicting logics of individuals. This situation affected the change process toward a holistic adoption of PM across both the strategic and operational levels of governance. The common sentiments of the interviewees are reflected through the following sample comments:

It is work-in-progress here. The other thing is it runs into difficulties of academic temperament. The sort of person who wants the life of an academic doing their own research is not the sort of person who is going to particularly enjoy sitting down with their manager twice a year to dissect their life. So I think there are some big challengers in the university there. (VC of U1)

I don't think a lot of academics find it comfortable to be monitored like that and have that kind of monitoring. I think some of them find it somewhat of a blunt instrument. They're used to doing things very differently. They're used to saying, "I'll get on with my research and you get on with yours". There's been quite a push back in a lot of universities about performance management. I think it's seen as being over-managerial by a lot of its academics. It's seen as being a slip towards corporatism. (VC of U9)

As for academics, it is very difficult. It is very difficult to performance-manage academics. So my personal view is, with academic staff, it needs to be more as a manager of academic staff, you actually need to be walking around talking to people, encouraging and providing opportunities, facilitating the things they are trying to achieve, and really looking at concrete outcomes at the end of the day, as opposed to trying to plan an academic's progress in the way a lot of performance management systems require, where you sit down at the beginning of the year with your line manager, and you say, "I want to do this, this, and this". (VC of U5)

The comments from the interviews, supported by secondary data, suggest that public universities are exposed to a number of institutional logics (Friedland and Alford, 1991; Thornton and Ocasio, 2008) arising from the practice of multiple cultures, and that these all invariably flow and are incorporated into the form of accepted values, practices, and norms to be practiced in public universities. Embedded in the corporate culture is also the practice of short-term contracts for senior managers. These contracts are argued to be beneficial because they provide the power and financial incentive for senior managers to accept and implement targeted strategic initiatives, including the introduction of corporate values (Marginson and Considine, 2000). Another reason for senior managers prone to acceptance of corporate values introduced through these short-term contracts is that the need for

reappointment stifles any criticism of any corporate process being introduced (Nagy and Robb, 2008).

The interviewees' comments suggest that these values and practices are embedded in key players and individuals who are able to influence the structural, functional, and control arrangements of the public university. The comments allude to public universities operating with corporate values at the strategic level, yet a mixture of corporate, public sector, and collegial values at the operational level, thereby resulting in a hybrid management environment. The next two themes provide a clearer view of how the different values of key players and staff members affect the sub-processes of PM, and hence affect its holistic adoption aligned with the corporate culture.

5.2 Other dependent systems not satisfactorily developed

The majority of interviewees revealed that another problem with effectively implementing PM at the operational level of governance arises from issues in integrating PM with other interdependent control processes. This issue results from administrative staff who are accustomed to institutional logics associated with public sector managerialism coming to terms with institutional logics associated with corporate managerialism. With regard to the strategic planning process, the interviewees described PM as only being generally integrated with strategic planning for senior management staff. This is consistent with the previous section, which described senior managers as more accepting of performance measures associated with the corporate culture. The following comments provide credence to this common view:

> [S]enior executives have had their performance reviewed and objectives were set using a combination of quantitative and qualitative targets, and those are aligned with the university's strategic plan and the university's operational plan. And of course the VC's own objectives and targets are set by council, and they all cascaded down to the senior executives, and certainly I'm party to that. (CFO of U6)

> Our senior team key performance measures, performance plans, and performance commitments are directly related to the strategy and to the budget. It's linked. (VC of U7)

Other interviewees reported that strategic planning had not cascaded down to the departmental/school level effectively and was generally at the work-in-progress level. As a result of this scenario, PM at the operational level was not effectively linked to the strategic plan on a consistent basis across universities. The following comments reflect these views:

> The performance management process is important, but not addressed satisfactorily. The degree of clarity of staff in terms of achieving the overall strategic plan and how they fit into it was not good, not satisfactory. (VC of U2)

> It doesn't tend to be linked to anything strategically or performance matrix-wise. I really think that needs to improve. I think we're starting to lay the foundations for that with this project. So I think basic performance monitoring in terms of how we're going with our strategy, it's not very far along the scale here. (US of U3)

The theme emerging from the interviewees is that the development of strategic planning in public universities is at various levels of growth because of the conflicting cultures (public sector managerialism and collegial managerialism versus corporate managerialism) and, as such, the strategic plan is not always fully integrated with the PM process as yet.

Most interviewees also held the view that their PM system was not fully integrated with the budgeting system, which is generally fixed one year in advance and is not flexible. Given the inflexible budgets, the interviewees argued that universities were unable to respond to new initiatives arising during the year that could affect the performance of individuals. The

interviewees also held the view that the development of their budgeting and strategic processes had not reached a level of sophistication to be linked with each other. Most interviewees described this status as a work-in-progress, which they were developing. The following comments express this common sentiment:

[M]y budget is not clear. I can't work out whether I can pull in more people to help in that process. It makes it hard for me to actually work out . . . to have some confidence in trying new ventures or putting new people on or trying new entrepreneurial endeavors. (ED of U2)

You have to have the budget support the strategy, and not the other way around. You don't want the budget mode to determine the strategy. We are doing a review of the budget model to try and more clearly link the budget with the strategic plan, and that's a big exercise. It involves a lot of costing activity and we are literally in the throes of trying to take that to a new level. This is a critical process. (VC of U2)

The interviewees also expressed mixed views on the integration of PM with promotions within the university as a rewards mechanism. Some agreed that PM was integrated with the promotions procedure, while others held the view that PM in their universities was not yet effectively integrated with their promotions or other reward systems. They indicated that there was some linkage of PM with rewards and promotions systems for senior management staff involved at the strategic level of governance, yet the process was yet to be developed for staff at the operational level of governance. In particular, the interviewees referred to a promotions system whose criteria were not always aligned with annual work plans or performance reviews of academics at the operational level. The interviewee comments suggest that, even if PM was integrated with the promotions system, other constraints persisting in public universities—such as lack of resources and subsequent lack of tangible outcomes—may inhibit the successful implementation of the system. The following comments reflect this common sentiment of interviewees:

Yes, we have only addressed it to an extent. It is not as yet integrated with our promotion system. The whole process still needs to be refined to include all levels of staff. (VC of U8)

We haven't allocated corporate KPIs [key performance indicators] or objectives for learning and teaching. Research, it is there, but it hasn't actually been embedded in individual accountabilities. (CFO of U4)

5.3 Lack of professional expertise
The interviewees also provided the view that, at the operational level, the head of school and professional technical staff drive the PM process associated with a corporate approach. The importance of this process has raised the need for appropriate training of these staff members. Some universities have progressed to a satisfactory level in this area, yet others are still at a work-in-progress stage, as reflected by the following comment:

The head of school has to drive the academic performance. We've had a lot of forums over the last 12 to 18 months around academic performance management. The professional technical staff members at a senior level already have a lot of that, but to drive it out more amongst the academics is yet to be done. Heads of schools are responsible for sitting down with their academic staff and ensuring that their research output is at least the minimum to be classified as research active, which is not a huge high benchmark. Things like workloads are being adjusted so faculties and schools are having their workload models. (US of U4)

The interviewees also held the view that academic managers (associated with public sector and collegial management practices) in Australian public universities have received various stages of training and some do not necessarily have the appropriate skills and experience to facilitate the effective conduct of PM (associated with PM). This invariably prevents the

effective implementation of the process. The following comments confirm this predicament in Australian public universities:

> I don't think a lot of academic managers find it very easy to give feedback to other people on their performance. (VC of U1)

> At the end of the day, I think that's why the head of school has become a very hard job because I think they need to monitor people whose performance might not be up to scratch. That's not easy because they're not trained for that particularly well. But if you don't do it individually, it won't work. (VC of U6)

In addition to concerns expressed regarding academic managers holding the right skills and introducing the right type of performance measures, the interviewees also expressed concerns regarding the skills of administrative managers (associated with public sector values, norms, and practices) and suggested that these were an obstacle to the implementation of a holistic PM system (associated with corporate values, norms, and practices). The following comment reflects the common sentiment of interviewees:

> It's probably one of the biggest issues I've faced in my six or seven years at the university. I find that what we're doing is we are bringing in CFOs and we're bringing in directors of finance and audit directors at the top level. However, as soon as you go one or two levels below that, you are really struggling to get the required capabilities, the required skills. You find a lot of people who have been in the university for 10, 15, 20 years. That's all they know. They've had no external experience. You then get people coming wanting to change the way we do our financial operations and our budgeting and our reporting and our planning and our performance management. A lot of those people just really struggle to get their head around what needs to happen there. From talking to a lot of my colleagues, I don't think we're very different here to a lot of other universities. I think there's a real gap there. (CFO of U4)

The comments relating to both the second and third problematic factors suggest that PM across the public sector has assumed a hybrid orientation because of the different institutional logics of key players and staff members associated with the implementation of the PM process. These different institutional logics refer to the values to those in public sector managerialism, such as a clear line of command and the use of bureaucratic policies and procedures, rules, ranks, and hierarchies (Davis and Bisman, 2015); collegial managerialism, such as the recognition of shared values and beliefs, including the right to participate in institutional governance and trust in the long-term goals of the institution itself (Bess, 1992); and corporate managerialism, such as the devolution of authority to lower levels of management, increased management responsibility for outcomes, and adoption of commercialized management practices to increase revenue and reduce costs associated with the corporate culture (Davis and Bisman, 2015, p. 130). The combination of these values has led to a lack of coordination and integration of interdependent control processes, such as strategic planning, budgeting, and rewards/promotions, and the different levels of professional expertise of key staff members associated with the implementation of PM. The net outcome is a PM system with a mix of the values embedded in its sub-processes.

The interviewee comments also suggested that the continued practice of this hybrid form since the 1980s means it has become an accepted form of delivery in an environment of conflicting cultures. Under these circumstances, public universities are simply practicing a symbolic or tokenistic form of PM. There is uncertainty whether the holistic form of corporate PM has been implemented successfully. The following comment from a VC reflects this common sentiment:

> They talk about it, but you never see it getting off the ground. It also can be quite tokenistic. If you actually look at some of the universities' systems of PM and if you were asked, at the end of the day, is there any likelihood once they got to the end of this process that there could be any adverse

consequences for anyone from this system, the answer would be no. So what do we do? It's a difficult process to get right. (VC of U1)

6. Discussion and conclusion

An important criterion for the successful implementation of a corporate PM system is to ensure that staff members at all levels of the organization have values congruent with the corporate culture, as this provides a motivational factor to adhere to the various sub-processes of the PM system and ensure its holistic adoption. The logic for that argument is that congruent values toward the corporate-driven process and sub-processes of PM motivate employees to invariably achieve the goals set and agreed upon by management and employees, and also ensure that employees work hard and diligently in the workplace, which is the objective of a PM system (Armstrong, 2017). However, the results indicate that this motivational factor associated with a corporate PM system is not consistently driven across the organization, thus suggesting the risk of the process not being effectively implemented from a holistic perspective. Of particular risk in the university environment is intrinsic motivation, as academics and administrators aligned to previous management cultures feel threatened that the autonomy and opportunity to use and develop their skills and abilities intrinsically is not given due consideration through a corporate-driven PM system.

The adoption of different values resulting in a hybrid form of PM, instead of a corporate form, has been conceptualized in this paper as three problematic factors. These factors are a cultural disconnect, lack of simultaneous development and implementation of interdependent corporate control processes, and lack of skills/leadership in managing a holistic PM system. With regard to the cultural disconnect, the results suggest that parties to the change process across both the strategic and operational levels of governance do not have common and consistent goals toward a corporate culture because of their inherent conflicting values. While the interviewees stated that the senior managers responsible for managing sub-processes associated with planning/developing PM policies at the strategic level of governance have goals congruent with the corporate culture, they suggested that those responsible for and subject to sub-processes associated with implementing, monitoring, and reporting of PM at the operational level of governance do not necessarily have goals congruent with a corporate culture. This lack of coordination of the effective delivery of all sub-processes across both levels of governance has negatively affected the holistic adoption of PM.

One clear problem at the operational level of governance causing the lack of congruence toward a corporate culture is the different values of the corporate culture with which academics are still coming to terms. Bolden et al. (2008) summarized these tensions as comprising individual autonomy and collective engagement, collegiality and managerialism, academic versus administrative authority, cultures of informality and formality, the values of inclusivity encroached upon by professionalism, and an overall ethos of stability as opposed to change.

In the context of institutional logics, the different values of staff at the strategic and operational levels of governance are explained as follows: academics holding senior positions at the strategic level exhibit behaviors akin to normative isomorphism—a characteristic that explains key groups within the university importing specific values to further their own ends (Carruthers, 1995; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 2008)—and academics at the operational level exhibit difficulties in accepting change because they are still strongly influenced by templates of underlying values that are at odds with the corporate culture (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 2008). Such behavior of academics at the operational level is also explained by cultural theory, which posits that the alteration of a set form of values (associated with the academic culture) is rarely achieved as a whole (Schein, 1985).

In relation to control process disconnect, the results revealed that interdependent control processes that need to be running simultaneously and be integrated with the PM system are at various stages of development and implementation among universities. These interdependent processes include the strategic planning, budgeting, and promotion processes. Their different levels of development and implementation from that of PM results in them having corresponding negative effects on the holistic adoption of PM. Such negative effects identified through the critical analysis of the extant literature and interviews include the inability to align work goals and performance to the strategic planning, budgeting, and reward/promotion processes.

A contributory factor to the above scenario is the third problematic factor—the lack of skills, experience, leadership, and professionalism required of both academic managers and administrators to manage PM associated with a corporate culture. The interviewees suggest that, across the sector, academic managers and administrators do not consistently have the professional skills and experience aligned with the corporate culture to provide ongoing effective management and monitoring of the process. Further, at the administrative level, university administrators are entrenched in a working culture that instills values that are at odds with the corporate culture. This has been influenced by burdensome ongoing governmental compliance and reporting requirements that facilitate a bureaucratic culture in tension with a corporate culture. Prior research has also raised this problem of lack of skills and experience of key players (academics and administrators) as being primarily a result of ongoing difficulty in developing an effective competency framework for academics. This has resulted in the introduction of number of quantitative measures that are not sensitive to the needs of academics and administrators who are aligned with a corporate culture or old public management (Kallio and Kallio, 2014).

Given the length of time since the influence of NPM (1980s), there is reason to believe that public universities have accepted operating with this semi-corporate/hybrid form of PM. There are arguments that suggest that, at times, corporate control processes, such as PM, can be decoupled in practice from their formally reported status, and act as symbolic window dressing to impress or satisfy stakeholder obligations (Parker, 2011). The reasons for this decoupling scenario include circumventing major potential conflicts within organizations (Carruthers, 1995; Meyer and Rowan, 1977) and the presence of various forms of organizational resistance to change, such as avoidance and evasive tactics (Modell, 2001). The reasoning behind these avoidance and evasive tactics is primarily a result of the inherent academic and old public management culture inculcating values in both academics and administrators (at the operational level) that are difficult to dismantle (Prichard and Wilmont, 1997; Rumelt, 1995). These values represent a symbolic system to which academics and administrators have become accustomed, and the strong resistance to changing them is consistent with cultural theories (Morga, 1986; Schein, 1985). The difficulty of dismantling current working "templates" based on the inherent culture is also consistent with institutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 2008).

In addition to addressing the research questions, the findings of this study raise the question of the risks associated with negative hybridity, which may be an unintended consequence of hybridity. This scenario occurs when university management—in their balancing act to appease staff members of different values—inevitably implement a PM system embedded with a majority of public and collegial managerial values. Such an outcome is associated with the characteristics of duplication, slowness, bureaucracy, and costliness linked with those cultures, and defeats the purpose of introducing NPM/corporate managerialism to enhance governance in public universities.

This study contributes to the literature on PM in the public sector and university governance on three fronts. First, this study provides a management perspective on how the development and implementation of PM has evolved in universities in an environment of

conflicting management cultures (logics), and identifies a set of problematic factors that have contributed to a hybrid form of PM. Second, this study provides an understanding of how actors at both the strategic and operational levels of governance in Australian public universities adopt PM and balance symbolic and functional uses based on their preferred management ideologies to reach a hybrid form. The findings also raise the concept of negative hybridity and its risk in achieving effective governance aligned with a corporate-oriented PM system. In particular, this study enriches the body of knowledge concerned with how global ideas are construed and transported, why institutionalized practices within a field atrophy or change, and the concept of negative hybridity. Third, this study provides opportunities to test its findings with a wider set of interviewees and other corporate control processes within the same sector or other public sectors.

The practical implications of the study are that it provides policymakers, monitoring agents (such as external and internal auditors), and university management of public universities with a better understanding of the problems associated with the implementation of PM and the risks associated with a hybrid system that is overly embedded with public sector and collegial values, as opposed to corporate values.

There are limitations to this study that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study is only applicable to Australian public universities. Second, the interviews were conducted with a limited and specific set of university management staff. Thus, it is uncertain whether different perspectives to the findings would have been generated with a different set of management staff. These limitations provides opportunities to confirm and refine the findings with a wider range of interviewees at the management level, and perhaps triangulate the results of this study with other interviewees, such as academics and university administrators at the operational level of governance. Further research is also proposed to validate the findings with other corporate and public sector entities within Australia and overseas, who operate under similar multiple management cultures.

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