

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY IN A GUARDIAN COUNCIL

MEDIÇÃO E GESTÃO DE DESEMPENHO: ESTUDO DE CASO EM UM CONSELHO TUTELAR

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ABSTRACT

The present research aimed to verify the existence of a performance measurement system in the Guardianship Council and how this can help to manage and improve the delivery of services to the community. For that, a case study was carried out with a Guardianship Council in a city in the state of Paraíba and interviews were carried out with the five (05) councilors that form the body, with a total duration of two hours and thirty minutes, on the 6th and May 7, 2021. The result of the study showed that the use of performance indicators, despite existing through diaries and folders, still occurs in a very simple way, where they are only filed and serve more for the purposes of accountability to higher bodies, than for strategic direction and monitoring of the body's performance. Regarding the involvement of the population, there is still a distance and lack of accountability for services. The technological aspects, despite supplying the actions developed, need advances in terms of software, which can facilitate the work of the counselors and the creation of computerized databases, allowing more agility in the processes and follow-ups.

Keywords: management; measurement; performance; Guardianship Council.

RESUMO

A presente pesquisa teve por objetivo verificar a existência de um sistema de medição do desempenho no órgão Conselho Tutelar e de que forma isto pode ajudar a gerenciar e melhorar a entrega dos serviços à comunidade. Para tanto, foi realizado um estudo de caso com um Conselho Tutelar em uma cidade do estado da Paraíba e foram realizadas entrevistas com os cinco (05) conselheiros que formam o órgão, com duração total de duas horas e trinta minutos, nos dias 6 e 7 de maio de 2021. O resultado do estudo mostrou que o uso de indicadores de desempenho, apesar de existir por meio de diários e pastas, ainda ocorre de forma bastante simples, onde são apenas arquivados e servem mais para fins de prestação de contas a órgãos superiores, do que para um direcionamento estratégico e acompanhamento do desempenho do órgão. No que tange ao envolvimento da população, nota-se ainda um distanciamento e falta de prestação de contas dos serviços. Os aspectos tecnológicos, apesar de suprirem as ações desenvolvidas, precisam de avanços em termos de *softwares*, que possam facilitar o trabalho dos conselheiros e a criação de bancos de dados informatizado, permitindo mais agilidade aos processos e acompanhamentos.

Palavras-chave: gestão; medição; desempenho; Conselho Tutelar.



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1 INTRODUCTION

The quality of the public service used to be based on strict compliance with procedural rules, through which the centralization of the organization was prioritized, with a focus on procedures and raw materials. However, with social changes, economic assumptions and market methodologies gaining voice, they led the public sector to undergo numerous reforms that prioritized a results logic and no longer a procedural logic (Moullin, 2017; Rodrigues et al., 2020).

The *New Public Management* (NPM) was a new model of public management that spread among countries in proportion to the crisis of the State model in the 1980s, using as a parameter the practices of the private sector, whose focus was on results. This led to the reaffirmation of the essentiality of management practices in public bodies, such as performance management, which came to have a great perspective on public services, integrating transformation and progress projects (Brown et al., 2003; Rodrigues et al., 2020).

Most public sector and third sector entities are striving to improve the results delivered to service users and other stakeholders without increasing the overall cost, as well as by developing performance metrics that help them to improve and ensure quality without the team seeking to achieve excessive goals at the expense of poor service to citizens (Moullin, 2017). Among the challenges of the Brazilian public sector is the reach of the efficiency of the services interconnected with the increase of the quality of these services provided, since just improving efficiency is not enough. As clients and agents of public services, citizens aspire for quality services as a result of tax collection.

Soares & Rosa (2017) highlight that the difficulties encountered by the public service in the use of effective performance metrics to deliver adequate services to society requires that new research be carried out in order to show how public organizations are implementing performance measures in their routines, in addition to highlighting the difficulties and complexities encountered, and how to improve the results of the services provided to society. For Biazzi et al. (2011) there is a lack of studies that investigate the performance management systems used to strengthen the public sector, in search of effectiveness and better management practices.

In direct public administration, in addition to the services performed by the various sectors and secretariats, there is the creation of bodies to meet specific purposes (Oliveira & Izelli, 2018). It is in this sense that the Municipal Guardianship Councils arise, which is a permanent and autonomous body, whose functions are executive, without the exclusive attribution of the Judiciary to compose the disputes, in which the counselors are appointed by society to ensure for the fulfillment of the rights of children and adolescents (Soares & Rosa, 2017).

Despite the autonomy, the Guardianship Councils are part of the direct administration, directed by Federal Law and governed by Municipal Law, having the same purpose of the other public bodies, to serve the public interest, fitting, therefore, in the problems mentioned above regarding the management and measurement of the performance of the services (Brasil, 1990).

In view of the visible problems experienced by public bodies regarding the management and measurement of performance, and taking into account that the Guardianship Council is a body directly linked to society due to its welfare characteristic and the importance of its services for guaranteeing the fundamental rights of children and adolescents, the problem of this study is: How

does the public sector, particularly the Guardianship Council, make use of performance measurement and how can this help manage and improve the delivery of services to the community?

What triggers the objective of the study is to verify the existence of a performance measurement system in the Guardianship Council and how this can help manage and improve the delivery of services to the community.

The scarcity of studies on the subject demonstrates the need for the present study in the discussion on the performance carried out within the Guardianship Council, since this body acts in the well-being of society. Another justification is that this research provides an opportunity to deepen the study, as it seeks to identify how the bodies created by the direct public administration and that act autonomously measure and execute the management of the performance of their functions so that they can achieve the best way to guarantee the public interest.

In addition, the study is relevant, as it intends to verify the existence of a performance measurement system in the Guardianship Council and how this can contribute to the management and improve the delivery of services to the community. From a social point of view, guardianship councils have difficulties in managing and measuring their performance, and these organizations are not concerned with how performance management is essential for these services to be delivered more satisfactorily.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Until the mid-1970s, most metrics used for performance evaluation focused on financial indicators, such as profitability, revenue and returns on investments, whose accounting, control and management systems were designed based on these measures (Soares & Rosa, 2017).

However, with the passage of time, these traditional measures no longer satisfied the needs that began to emerge, only metrics based on historical data were no longer enough, and practices emerged that caused a true revolution in performance measures (Neely, 1999), with the incorporation of non-financial indicators. Franco-Santos et. al (2007) explain that non-financial measures such as the influence of the behavior of actors involved in the processes is one of the crucial aspects of the performance measurement movement.

Dutra (2005) points out that evaluating means giving value to what the body considers significant, drawing a relationship with the strategic objective and providing the opportunity to observe how they are at the moment and which actions aiming at greater effectiveness and impetus need to be exercised. For Valente (2014) it is essential that the performance evaluation is aligned with the entity's *raison d'être*, its vision and objectives, ensuring that the institutional mission is satisfied.

From this perspective, two scenarios are found in the literature for systems that assess performance: the Measurement System and the Performance Management System (Melnik et al., 2014). Both must be integrated, because just measuring without causing any change makes no sense, but also without a measurement there is no way to understand where it can be improved.

Most studies on the subject demonstrate systems that present groups of indicators and metrics aimed at collecting and analyzing data to calculate the results achieved, being classified as performance measurement systems. However, researches that are dedicated to understanding the results obtained with the performance evaluation and, based on them, generate information for the definition of improvement practices, are classified as performance management systems (Melnik

et al., 2014). Performance management is seen as an instrument capable of providing information that supports decision-making.

The performance evaluation symbolizes a process of reanalysis and monitoring of the actions and decisions that are taken during its execution. After all, you cannot manage what you cannot or do not know how to measure, so that you can play an important role in organizations, because it is from the monitoring of activities and consumer satisfaction that you can find the continuous improvement of the system (Rodrigues et al., 2020).

A performance evaluation system should make it possible for decisions to be taken and actions to be taken, because through it one can quantify the efficiency and effectiveness of what has been developed and the results delivered, all based on the acquisition, collection, classification, analysis, interpretation and propagation of congruent data (Neely, 1999).

Performance measurement is divided into four aspects: the decision of what to measure, how and when to evaluate it, the analysis and interpretation of the data, and the communication of the results. The first aspect is based on the development of effective performance metrics, supported by the organization's goals and objectives. The second addresses the form and period in which the performance must be performed. The third concerns the conversion of measured data into useful information through the interpretation and analysis of the performance obtained. The last one refers to the communication of results to the parties involved internally and the external parties that are also affected (Gao, 2015; Lewis, 2015; Eliuz et al., 2017).

The changing expectations of society and the growing demand for greater accountability and results make performance management and measurement an essential process for public organizations. Several reasons are listed for performing performance management and measurement, including: ensuring that citizens' requests are met; the ability to set goals and respect them; provide standards so that comparisons can be made; provide transparency and accountability so that society can monitor the performance levels achieved by the bodies; highlight potential problems related to service quality and determine priority areas; in addition to actions that need to be improved (Najmi & Kehoe, 2001).

The main objectives of performance indicators revolve around helping public managers through empirical evidence, making possible comparisons and firm evaluations and, mainly, establishing conditions to clarify and support short, medium and long-term decision-making (Oliveira & Izelli, 2018). Incorporating action mapping, systems thinking, and learning approaches ensure that service improvement is factored into essential outcomes (Moullin, 2017).

Callado et al. (2012) emphasize defining what should be evaluated is a complex task, however, it depends on its importance in relation to the goals and objectives of the organization, the integration with its various sectors and departments, in addition to the panorama of the managerial use of the evaluated information, since the strategic management of this information will guide decision making, determine changes and improve projections about the future.

Performance management in the public sector is seen as very controversial, because when well performed it can motivate employees to improve their performance and demonstrate the true performance of the body as a whole, in addition to the impact of any changes in real time, but when poorly performed, it can alienate employees and lead to a culture of blame, where employees meet goals regardless of whether those goals align with community needs and actually satisfy what the public service sets out to address in the public interest (Moullin, 2017).

Many difficulties are pointed out in the literature regarding the management and measurement of performance in the public sector, because compared to the private sector where companies often use performance measurements to subsidize their decisions and achieve the desired profit, in the public sector the same does not occur. In the public sector, the focus is not on profit, but on the

delivery of services to the community, and due to this paradigm shift, agencies do not see the importance of performance management as essential for these services to be delivered more satisfactorily (Behn, 2003; Johnston & Clark, 2005).

2.2 PUBLIC SECTOR: GUARDIANSHIP COUNCIL

According to Meirelles (2010), the State has as its main objective the satisfaction of citizens through its provision of services, so over time it is increasingly pressured to implement a more extensive culture of management and measurement performance in public bodies. According to Kaplan & Norton (2001), the social interest is considered the main objective for the public administration and because of that, it becomes necessary to measure the fulfillment of the quality requirements of the services offered to society, effectively meeting its desires.

Even public organizations, whose mission and jurisdiction are already defined in the legislation responsible for their creation, must have their performance measured and evaluated (Behn, 2003). However, performance evaluation in public organizations becomes complex due to the political interests involved and the number of interested parties present in the operations, sometimes with conflicting interests (Johnston & Clark, 2005).

Direct administration corresponds to the provision of public services by the State itself and by the agencies and departments that are interconnected to the administrative structure, such as the municipal and state secretariats, that is, the activities are centralized and can also be carried out by the departments of each secretariat and agencies created for specific purposes (Oliveira & Izelli, 2018).

The municipality, even with scarce resources, is the public entity with the largest number of services available to the citizen, which must be provided efficiently, and it is necessary to adopt a performance evaluation system that helps the manager in decision-making. Local agencies face increasing pressure to improve the quality and effectiveness of services without incurring additional costs. In this perspective, performance measurement and management is an element of modernization of local governments, generating useful information for decision-making and generating greater trust in society, through greater transparency and accountability (Lo Storto, 2016).

Within the municipality, one of the bodies created to assist in the provision of assistance services to society is the Guardianship Council, which is a permanent and autonomous, non-judicial body, charged by society with ensuring compliance with the rights of children and adolescents. The Guardianship Council is governed by Law nº 8.069, of July 13, 1990 (Child and Adolescent Statute), having administrative functions, that is, it is formed by a collegiate, formed by five members, representing civil society, defending public interests.

It has as some attributions the care of children and adolescents; assistance and advice to parents or guardians; promoting the execution of its decisions, being able to request public services in the areas of health, education, social service, social security, work and security and represent before the judicial authority in cases of unjustified non-compliance with their deliberations; to advise the local Executive Power in the elaboration of the budget proposal for plans and programs to attend to the rights of children and adolescents; represent, on behalf of the person and the family, against the violation of the rights provided for in art. 220, § 3, item II, of the Federal Constitution; and promote and encourage, in the community and in professional groups, dissemination and training actions for the recognition of symptoms of abuse in children and adolescents (Brasil, 1990).

In addition to the requirements brought by the law, the counselor must be a dedicated person and informed about their duties, which does not imply academic training, but rather an awareness of the importance of their work for the community, in accordance with the principles of integral protection, proportionality and equality (Polizelli & Amaral, 2008).

Therefore, as a body created by the Direct Administration, working together with the provision of public services to society and its assistance essence that demonstrates the importance of its services for the well-being of the community, verifying the performance of its functions becomes essential for the service provided can respond more quickly and effectively to the interests of citizens, taking into account its public, children and adolescents, who are the future of the nation.

3 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The research aims to verify the existence of a performance measurement system in a Guardianship Council located in the city of São Sebastião de Lagoa de Roça/PB and to clarify how this can help manage and improve the delivery of services to the community. It also has a qualitative approach, seeking to understand the desired objectives through the collection of narrative data and studying the individual statements of each interviewee to obtain the perspective of the whole.

As for the procedures, interviews were carried out with the directors elected in the last election in 2019. To enable comparability and follow a logical sequence with all directors, the interviews were carried out through a script structured in three (03) parts, containing twenty eight (28) open questions, adapted from studies by Soares & Rosa (2017) and Moullin (2017).

The first part comprises fourteen (14) questions related to performance management, involving the way performance evaluation is carried out and its importance. The second consists of eight (08) questions and aims to detect how the council uses indicators/metrics and the difficulties encountered in their use. The third and final part contains six (06) questions and addresses the periodicity of monitoring indicators.

The research instrument with its respective parts and questions is shown in Table 1.

Subject	Questions
Performance management	Does the Board manage performance, that is, is each employee previously informed of the objectives/results that they should achieve?
	How is performance appraisal carried out?
	Do they have a formal written procedure to support them?
	How does the Council inform the person being evaluated of the results of its evaluation?
	Do you consider that this type of evaluation is important for the good management of the body?
	Are user/society satisfaction surveys carried out? Could you describe them?
	Are meetings held with the municipal social assistance secretariat in order to provide some accountability or information on how the activities and performance of the Council are being conducted?
	How are incidents and complaints followed up/treated?
	Are meetings held to set goals for carrying out activities? How often?
	When carrying out the performance evaluation, are the mission, vision and values of the Board taken into account?

	What are the main difficulties encountered in carrying out the performance evaluation?
	What mechanisms or actions would facilitate the performance evaluation process?
	Is there any kind of comparison with other councils to follow up on a procedure?
	Is there any type of audit of the activities performed and the way they are carried out?
Performance measurement	When evaluating performance, does the Board use indicators/metrics? For example: time to solve problems, financial expense to perform some activity, citizen satisfaction, etc.
	What are the difficulties encountered in using performance indicators? Are the technological supports sufficient?
	How is the relationship between the Organ's objectives and metrics established with the indicators assigned individually to each employee?
	How many performance indicators are used? Are they divided between financial and non-financial?
	Have you made any important decisions based on the indicators? Cite examples.
	Do you believe that the performance indicators of each employee are important for the final result of this body? Could you explain?
	Do you know of other Guardianship Councils that use performance indicators?
	Are Directors encouraged to have some sort of data control?
Periodicity of monitoring indicators	Database update
	Satisfaction survey
	Publishing content on Social Networks
	Accounting of cases attended
	Number of Calls (by type of service)
	Number of Recurring Calls

Table 1 — Interview script

The interviews were conducted in person and lasted two hours and thirty minutes, on May 6 and 7, 2021, three on the first day and two on the second. In this sense, the study population consisted of five counselors who make up the Guardianship Council and in order not to expose their data, they were classified as “Counselor A”; “Counselor B”; “Counselor C”; “Counselor D”; and “Counselor E”.

Documents made available were also analyzed, such as codes of conduct, internal reports, memoranda, minutes of meetings, institutional norms, in order to understand the body's attributions and list the mechanisms or actions that can facilitate performance evaluation.

Through interviews, document analysis and observations, the information was collected and recorded, so that, based on what the Performance Management literature addresses, performance metrics could be diagnosed and corrective measures suggested in order to improve the result delivered to society.

4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 INFORMATION OBTAINED IN THE INTERVIEWS

Considering that there is a need to use performance measures so that later these measures lead to a direction of the best way to act and the promptness of the results delivered to society, below we show how the Guardianship Council analyzed acts in this sense.

Firstly, with regard to the board performing performance management, that is, each employee being previously informed of the objectives/results to be achieved, all board members informed that there is an initial training so that they can take office, in this training they are explained the attributes they need to develop and practical actions on how to act in the face of the complaints that will arise. Besides, the counselors of the previous management give them the occurrences that are open and how to proceed with the cases.

Thus, it is possible to observe that there is guidance for counselors to act, in a practical sense, punctually in their activities. However, analyzing the strategic field and considering the objectives and results, they are not informed of what is expected by the body and from each counselor, what is the general view of the whole, the mission that the body has and what results the Guardianship Council and counselors should achieve in order to better manage and deliver services to the community.

Kaplan & Norton (2001) emphasize that public administration has as its main objective to meet the social interest and, as a result, it is necessary to measure compliance with the quality requirements of the services offered to society, effectively meeting its desires.

Regarding the performance evaluation of the board, the board members address the body's autonomy, since there is no type of charge regarding its performance. In addition, complaints arrive during the week and are recorded in diaries with the date, identification of those involved and type of complaint, so that on Fridays during a plenary session (weekly meeting held with the five counselors) cases are discussed and directed as they deem consistent.

The cases considered more serious by the counselors, such as the case of sexual abuse against children and adolescents, which was frequently mentioned during the interview, are considered a priority and in this case, it is not expected until Friday for measures to be taken regarding deliberation and communication with the other bodies.

“Counselor C” also informed that the performance of the agency should be monitored by the Municipal Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents (CMDCA) through periodic meetings, but this is not carried out, and the CMDCA only seeks the Guardianship Council when it needs some specific information. In addition, surveys of resolved or open services are carried out on a biannual or annual basis, to be sent to bodies such as the City Hall or the Public Prosecutor's Office that will use this information for publicity purposes, but no *feedback* is obtained.

Gao (2015), Lewis (2015) and Eliuz et al. (2017) highlight that performance measurement involves several aspects, with the communication of results being responsible for communicating the results to the internally involved parties and the external parties that are also affected.

With regard to the Social Assistance secretariat, despite the fact that “there is a good relationship with the secretary”, there are no periodic meetings and no request for diagnostics of the body's performance. There is only involvement when the agency is in need of some assistance or the secretariat needs some information.

“Counselor A” points out the autonomy of the body as positive for the provision of the service to occur more effectively, including the tutelage council can make representations against other bodies that fail to fulfill their attributions, as well as there can be no vetoes against any decision made by mutual agreement by the members due to the secretary or other body of the network that thinks differently.

Regarding having a formal written procedure that serves as a support, everyone reported that their actions are guided by the Statute of Children and Adolescents (ECA), in addition, they have some resolutions and internal regulations, which are scored as "superficial", but an internal procedural roadmap does not exist. Decisions are made based on what the legislation on children

and adolescents addresses and how other professionals, such as psychologists, advise them to be directed, based on their professional knowledge and past experiences.

In this sense, it was also exposed that there is a need for more training, especially for those who are in their first term as counselors, because in addition to the initial training, practically no type of training takes place. These counselors who have been working since 2020 have not been part of any further training since taking office, which can be justified due to the pandemic period.

As they act in a collegiate body, no decision can be taken in isolation, it is always necessary that at least the majority accepts so that the procedure can be put into practice. Therefore, individual measures are not used to assess how each counselor is developing their activities. “Counselor D” pointed out that some counselors have greater capacity to develop some specific activities, such as digitalization, craft development, better communication, etc., so when performing such tasks, they are directed according to this facility that some counselors have.

Regarding the need for metrics that point out the performance of the board, “Councillor C” pointed out that he/she “does not see it as something important, serving only to meet the demands made by some bodies when they request this data, but would not add to the improvement of the body to have these data recorded in a spreadsheet and with frequent monitoring. Furthermore, as they work together with other agencies, which often lead to delays in services, these metrics could put them under more pressure to understand where the fault lies and how to justify society since not everything depends on them.

“Counselor B” said that performance evaluation is important, as long as it does not interfere with the way the body works, and with it society could better understand how the body performs its activities.

“Counselor D” reported that they have already talked among themselves about making spreadsheets to try to publicize to society and other bodies the number of cases that are open and those that have been resolved. This counselor understands that follow-ups are important, but they are not put into practice.

“Counselor A” pointed out that having a performance measurement system would have a positive impact on the body, which they would put aside the paper, gaining more agility with the data. In this sense, the counselor mentioned that the SIPIA system is being implemented, which would be a database where the counselors would place the complaints that occurred, linked by a numerical sequence. This system would make available, as it was fed, the number of cases that emerged in a given period, the current situation and number of cases in progress and resolved. The non-use of the system still occurs due to the lack of training of counselors to use it, which the municipality justifies with a lack of funds to carry out this type of training.

The study by Oliveira & Izelli (2018) showed that the main objective of a performance measurement system is to assist the public manager in comparisons and management evaluations, in addition to establishing conditions to clarify and provide support for short-, medium-term and long term decision-making.

For Neely (1999) a performance evaluation system must quantify the efficiency and effectiveness of what has been developed and the results delivered, all based on the acquisition, collection, classification, analysis, interpretation and propagation of congruent data.

Decisions regarding the activities performed are not made taking into account a group of structured performance measures, but some of the measures used are the urgency and nature of the cases and past family histories. Each counselor has their folder with the cases that they must follow up, in which all the procedures carried out with the specific case are recorded. Thus, it can be said that there is a control of the activities performed, in which each director has their responsibilities and knowledge of the other cases, because in case of any eventuality and the director responsible

for a given case is not present at the time, another director can take the appropriate measures, provided that they have the approval of the majority of the members.

It is worth noting that there are no comparisons made between Guardianship Councils in the municipality with other locations, and the only communication with other councils occurs when a case leaves one council and moves to another, for example if the citizen changes domicile. “Counselor A” informed that he/she was aware that other boards already use databases and procedures that would serve as performance indicators.

When asked about receiving any incentive to have some kind of data control, “Counselor C” replied that they do not receive it and that they control it through folders and notes. “Counselor B” pointed out that this action is also important in the sense of proving that he/she is working on a given day.

With regard to the difficulties encountered by the agency to develop a more effective provision of services, the difficulties of networking were pointed out at various times of the interview, especially with regard to the Social Assistance Reference Center (CREAS) which, as it is a regional body it receives deliberations from several cities, becoming overloaded and, therefore, impacting the solutions of the council's cases. In addition, the lack of an integrated diversified group was pointed out, for example, having their own psychologists and a social worker, so they do not need to request other bodies when they need some direction.

The lack of a secretary or someone who could take care of the administrative part of the council was also pointed out as a weakness. “Counselor E” said that “sometimes we fail to attend to or follow up on a case, to go and solve something administrative, such as taking a letter”, “Counselor C” said that “sometimes we are in the middle of dealing with a case and we have to stop to answer a call, and as one counselor cannot continue the case, he/she has to wait for the other to come back from the call to continue the service”. “Counselor D” reported that they do not have a broader picture due to lack of funds declared by the municipal body.

Regarding technologies, four of the counselors said that they meet the needs of the activities performed, but “Counselor C” pointed out that more modern equipment is lacking and complained about the *internet* and printer. This makes them have to go to the assistance secretariat to be able to proceed with a case. Sometimes, the failure of the *internet* and the printer impairs procedures and the incorporation of a program such as SIPIA, for example, could replace paper files and reduce interruptions in procedures and care.

Regarding the elaboration of goals and future prospects, in the weekly meetings the activities are outlined and the way to conduct them for the following week. Deadlines are stipulated for case resolutions and possible collections with other bodies when these deadlines are overdue. They also plan the projects and social actions that they will develop, such as “youth making art”, “children don't date” and other actions that aim to raise awareness in society.

Regarding satisfaction surveys with users/society, all reported that the agency does not carry out this type of survey and that even some criticisms are received regarding the “advice not to do anything”, which they justified because people did not understand the attributions of the council and therefore judge them. The actions they carry out in this sense of approximation with society are visits to schools where they work with preventive campaigns and take the opportunity to talk a little about the council's attributions, as well as make use of social networks for the same purpose, and receive some praise. However, accountability to society is not performed, which they justify due to the confidential nature of the information they deal with.

Finally, with regard to the periodicity of monitoring the indicators, due to the absence of performance evaluation based on indicators such as time to solve problems, financial expense to perform some activity, citizen satisfaction, and others as informed by the counselors. What triggers

a controlled periodicity are the notes of cases attended, which occur daily; monitoring of cases, which takes place biweekly or monthly; and the accounting of new, resolved and ongoing cases that take place every six months or annually. These results converge with the findings in the study by Amaral (2008), which found the absence of performance evaluation based on indicators in the analyzed public bodies.

The publication of content on social networks does not have a regular frequency, varying according to the occurrence of any campaign or action developed, or specific dates of events; in addition, counselors have an average notion of the resolution time of cases that appear due to their practical experiences.

4.2 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND PROPOSITION OF CORRECTIVE MEASURES

According to the information gathered, it is noticeable that the directors do not have a strategic plan, with the objectives and alignments in place, so that, given this comprehensive view of the body, they can guide their daily actions. They are only informed how to direct the cases, taking into account what has already been done before, without discussing whether the path followed presents the best solution. There is a lack of monitoring and realignment of what the agency has as goals and objectives. Valente (2014) points out the need for performance evaluation to be aligned with the entity's reason for being, its vision and objectives so that the institutional mission is achieved.

In this sense, it is proposed that, based on the ECA legislation and on the needs identified by society through the realization of a satisfaction survey, strategic objectives and goals are created to better guide the actions taken by the bodies.

Returning to the question of society, it is still quite visible, in the face of everything that has been seen and observed, that there is a lack of greater engagement with society. In addition to preventive actions, society needs accountability from the body, logically that the specifics and secrecy of the cases must be taken into account. But nothing prevents that, just as the number of cases (solved, open, etc.) are reported every six months or annually for higher bodies to disclose, this is also not disclosed in a more accessible way to the population, which most likely does not search for official government websites to obtain this data.

The ignorance of society regarding the actions of the Guardianship Council was also pointed out in the study by Polizelli & Amaral (2008), who perceived the lack of knowledge on the part of society, and even the staff working in the care area, of the attributions of the Guardianship Council. As Moullin (2017) points out, the involvement of users, advisors and other stakeholders in a dynamic *workshop* environment leads to managerial success, as participants feel that they have collaborated in the service improvement movement rather than feeling forced to change.

Polizelli & Amaral (2008) state that it is important that the Guardianship Council be demystified, from its constitution norms and its functions to its impediments, since the collegiate, as the entity entrusted by society to protect the rights of children and adolescents, also acts in order to transform society, not only in terms of protection, but also in the sense of contributing to the formation of people prepared to exercise their citizenship.

With regard to the autonomy of the agency, its importance is clear, because by being stuck in a lot of bureaucratization, it would waste time with many protocols instead of taking faster measures and could also suffer political influences impacting the direction of problem solutions. However, the fact of having autonomy does not mean that it does not need supervision and demands for improvements, because without them, counselors may end up staying in a comfort zone and not providing the assistance they should for social well-being.

Meirelles (2010) emphasizes that the main objective of public bodies is the satisfaction of citizens through their provision of services, therefore, over time, they are increasingly pressured to implement a more extensive culture of performance management and measurement. Furthermore, performance measures designed with a focus on realignment could redirect actions not only of the board, because by identifying where the failure is, which could be in another body in the network, demands could be made.

In view of this, the need to train counselors and the use of a database is essential so that, with these measures in hand, the counselors can analyze their performance and realign their actions, based on the strategic plan created previously. In this way, they can design forms of action and collection before other bodies in the network and be accountable to society.

To achieve such engagement, it is necessary, as the counselors pointed out, at least one employee to work in the administrative sector. As soon as someone with knowledge in the administrative and planning area was present, integrated with the board, they could better direct them on how to make use of metrics to improve their results. Digiácomo (2008) reports that the councils must be provided with a “back-up” structure, that is, the councilors do not need to be highly specialized, but should have access to a technical team to assist them in more complex issues.

Although all decisions are taken collectively, it is important to understand the individual assessment of the directors so that each one knows their strengths and weaknesses and thus manages to better direct them. Having measures to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of each counselor could be important in the sense that where one was not so effective, the other would act as a support, taking responsibility for doing the activity that has more agility to perform or leading the search for improvements in the most lacking points.

The lack of training pointed out by the counselors and the justification of the bodies not doing so due to the pandemic, weaken a little if technological advances and the virtual means for these meetings and instructions are taken into account. In addition to training, like CREAS, which is a regional body and works with several locations, it is not because the council is a municipal body that it cannot work together with other councils, through support groups, such as listeners and sharers of information. Experiences already lived, this shared *know-how* would add a lot to the results delivered to society.

According to Kaplan & Norton (2001), the social interest is considered the main objective for the public administration and because of that, it becomes necessary to measure the fulfillment of the quality requirements of the services offered to society, effectively meeting their desires. Furthermore, working across organizational boundaries is important, as users of public services typically use services from multiple organizations, often not being interested in how a particular organization operates in isolation, but caring about coordination and responsiveness of services that they need, which may come from several agencies together (Moullin, 2017).

In this sense, some corrective measures pointed out are: the creation of a strategic plan, so that the counselors can have a base of what is expected by the body, its mission and objectives; insertion of an administrative collaborator, with knowledge to better direct them in the stages; creation of performance measures such as hours and expenses for resolving cases, displacement, citizen satisfaction, number of new and repeat cases; main points that delay the delivery of services to society; use of computerized databases instead of folders and journals to access information quickly; and, greater transparency and accountability to society.

The main objectives of performance measures revolve around helping public managers through empirical evidence, making possible comparisons and firm assessments and, above all, establishing conditions to clarify and support short, medium and long-term decision-making (Oliveira & Izelli, 2018).

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present study aimed to verify the existence of a performance measurement system in the Guardianship Council and how this can help to manage and improve the delivery of services to the community. To this end, a case study was carried out at the Guardianship Council in a city in the state of Paraíba and interviews were carried out with the counselors that form the body, lasting two hours and thirty minutes, on May 6 and 7, 2021.

In view of the data obtained from the interviews, it was possible to verify that the agency controls the activities performed through diaries and follow-up folders. Furthermore, they do not make use of measures such as time to solve problems, financial expenditure to perform some activity, citizen satisfaction, etc. However, they carry out monthly follow-ups of the cases, daily notes of the complaints received, weekly meetings to deal with how to resolve the cases for the other bodies, since during the interviews it was pointed out that bodies such as CREAS, CRAS, CAPS and social assistance are part of the network of bodies that work to resolve complaints received.

Failures were diagnosed in the composition of the team, since they do not have a secretary or collaborator to deal with administrative issues, which would be relevant in the sense that someone specialized could take care of performance metrics more punctually and assist in pointing out improvements regarding the actions performed by the counselors.

It was also observed the lack of a more advanced technological support, such as the use of management *software* and computerized databases, aiming to facilitate the metrics of the services performed and the control of data, helping in the transparency and rendering of accounts to the users of the information. Some directors recognized the importance of accountability to society and a more advanced monitoring of the attributions carried out, but they did not put them into practice.

In this sense, if each body that makes up the network used measures and carried out performance management, the act of blaming the other body for a weakness that may be in its body would be left out and in fact there would be a way to know where the failure is in the service provision, leading to the realignment of the network and a more effective result delivered to society.

In this sense, the study contributes to the literature with a better understanding of how municipal public bodies work in terms of conducting metrics and evaluating the performance of services delivered to society. In a practical way, the present research makes suggestions for corrective measures and ways to understand the degree of effectiveness of the services provided through performance evaluation measures, which serve not only the tutelary council, but, in an adapted way, to other public bodies.

The limitations of the study were based on the conduction of the data collection, which, by using a qualitative methodology, has a certain degree of subjectivism and the presence of the researcher to transcribe the interviewees' speeches and capture the essence of meaning used in them. Furthermore, the study cannot be generalized, being restricted to the period and case analyzed, but serving as a comparison to other studies carried out in the same scope.

As a suggestion for future work, there is a need to study the collaboration network to which the tutelary councils are inserted, analyzing performance metrics in the network, understanding a little more about bodies such as CREAS, CRAS, CAPS, so that in the face of such an analysis

leads to a greater understanding of the social and assistance scope linked to managerial performance. It is also suggested a comparison of this study with others developed in tutelary councils located in different regions.

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