Identification of the Evaluative Culture Through Self-Evaluation of Teachers

Cláudia Neli de Souza Zambon[1][https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5298-1942]; Juan Pablo Catalán Cueto[2][https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4702-8839] y Alejandro Pérez Carvajal [3][https://orcid.org/my-orcid?orcid=0000-0002-2536-9088]

[1] Universidad SEK, Chile; Centro Universitário SENAI Santa Catarina, UniSENAI, Brasil
claudianzambon@gmail.com

[2] Universidad Andres Bello, UNAB, Chile
jpcatalan@gmail.com

[3] Universidad Andres Bello, UNAB, Chile
alejandro.perez@unab.cl

Abstract. The quality of teaching is one of the elements observed by those seeking an undergraduate degree. Through evaluations, an institution can demonstrate its level of quality. But evaluating is a complex task since there are several instruments and informants. In addition, it is necessary to know how and for what to evaluate. In this work we seek to verify the existence of an evaluative culture in a University Center in the state of Santa Catarina, Brazil, working with the self-evaluation or internal evaluation instrument. Through a case study with a qualitative approach, using a semi-structured interview with three focus groups made up of teachers, it was found that some know the subject, but there is a need to install a process of evaluative culture in the institution, extending to the entire academic community.

Keywords: Self-assessment, Quality in Education, Higher Education.

1   Introduction

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) seek to be a benchmark in the educational market. To do this, they use internal and external evaluations to measure their level of quality. The internal evaluation or self-evaluation is made up of several instruments, each one with its informants.

Some research analyzes the impact related to educational reforms (Moraes, Amboni, & Kalnin, 2017) or student satisfaction (Román Mendoza, 2020), and little is explored about the internal evaluation of teachers. Based on the internal evaluation, this work had the objective of analyzing the perception of teachers about the Evaluative Culture (EC) in an HEI.

To achieve this objective, a case study was carried out with the teachers of an HEI, through focus groups. As a result, strengths and weaknesses related to the evaluation process and the opportunity to implement an EC were identified.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Evaluation in Higher Education

Evaluating is related to decision making through data collection (Cronbach, 1963). This can sometimes make people uncomfortable, as they don't like to be judged for their actions. It is an activity that allows you to analyze and reflect on the data to seek improvements. Evaluation must be a constant process in HEIs to guarantee educational quality and remain competitive in this segment (Osorio Valdés, 2020). Each country has its policies and regulations. In Brazil, higher education follows, since 2004, the standards imposed by SINAES (2009).

2.2 Evaluative Culture (EC)

The EC is related to the entire evaluation process, being linked to changes in the HEI in search of academic excellence (Bolseguí & Fuguet Smith, 2006). According to Herceg (2020), EC is associated with the entire evaluation process.

To implement EC, it is necessary to analyze past experiences, the instruments applied, the actions carried out, the participation of the informants, to achieve improvements in the process (Valenzuela González, Ramírez Montoya, & Alfaro Rivera, 2011). Evaluation Culture is more than preparing people for an evaluation, it is preparing them to learn about the whole process. It is hard work and requires a lot of time.

3 Methods

This work was developed through a case study with a qualitative approach carried out in a HEI in Brazil, using semi-structured interviews. We worked with a non-probabilistic sample with voluntary participants (Hernández, Fernández, & Baptista, 2014). Fifteen teachers participated, divided into three focus groups, where the meetings were recorded so as not to lose information (Pacheco & Salazar, 2020). Every precaution was taken to ethically protect participant data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012). The study was approved by an ethics committee in Brazil.

4 Results

Data was collected in November 2022 through transcripts of focus group interviews. For the analysis, ATLAS.ti 23 was used. Bardin (2016) guides the organization of content analysis in three phases: document organization, coding and categorization, and interpretation. To verify the perception of EC in the institution (König, 2007), we

created eight groups of codes: know the objective of the evaluation; EC perception; collaboration; internal processes; compliance with policies; lack of knowledge of policies; lack of culture; and punishment.

The first five groups of codes indicate the presence of EC in the IES. As results in the three focus groups, we identified that some participants have a greater sense of belonging to the institution, showing knowledge about internal policies and evaluation processes, likewise, they indicated that there is a need to work on these issues with the academic community.

The other three groups of code represent the weaknesses found in relation to the lack of EC, highlighting that some are afraid of punishment if they say something negative in the evaluation and recognize that, sometimes, they do not dedicate themselves to evaluating responsibly and that they are unaware of some internal documents.

5   Discussion

When analyzing the transcripts, we observed data that indicated strengths and weaknesses related to EC, where the participants recognize that the HEI carries out the evaluations and that it has well-defined policies, on the other hand, they feel the need for meetings and training to improve the process with all those involved. As Bolseguí and Fuguet Smith (2006) point out, EC is related to academic excellence, and for some participants the evaluation processes and internal documents are already part of their academic life, and for those who are unaware they are aware that they need training in these processes.

The installation of the EC in the institution turned out to be an important point to continue seeking to improve the quality of teaching and internal processes, taking it to the entire academic community, since they are all part of the IES (Herceg, 2020; Valenzuela González et al., 2011). The concept that evaluating is bad and that it only serves to punish must be eliminated. The professors were interested in seeking more knowledge on the subject and would like the participation of the entire academic community.

6   Conclusions

The data obtained in this study showed that many professors recognize the need to work on EC in the institution, in addition to raising awareness in the academic community about the importance of all types of evaluation. Knowing the internal processes and policies allows, in addition to knowing how the institution works, to be prepared for external evaluation. This case study can be replicated on other campuses to develop a unique instrument for the institution.

7 Limitations and Future Research

This study was limited to one HEI due to the time and cost involved in the process. Since participation in the study was voluntary and most teachers worked hourly, it was not possible for everyone to participate.

The results suggest that work should continue this issue, developing a process for the installation of EC in the institution, starting with awareness meetings and extending to workshops or discussion groups. This work will be extended to the other campuses of this institution.

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