

The Retake of Common Assessment Framework: The Impact on Portuguese Municipalities' Users

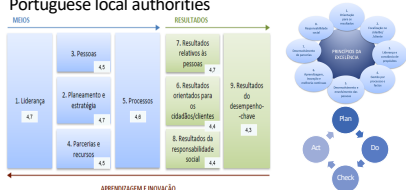
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Mestrado em "Administração Autárquica"

Introduction

In 1980, the international public sector focused on the theme of quality and Portugal followed the tendency, assuming a paradigm change: from bureaucratic and centralized administration to a service administration, decentralized and oriented to total quality.

Among various approaches, the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) stands out, as an European model that assesses organizational performance, with reference to the Principles of Excellence and focused on continuous improvement. In addition to being free, it is specific for the public sector and was implemented in Portuguese local authorities



It is important to reinstate CAF in order to analyze the results obtained by Portuguese municipalities (15, among 308) and find out how these results and subsequent impacts interact and determine quality enhancement of such organizations.

Methodology

The research strategy underlies a naturalistic paradigm, adopting a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews with those in charge for quality in the municipalities, following these items:

- Research question:

What is CAF's contribution to the perception of quality improvement in Portuguese municipalities?

- Main general objectives, based on the validation of:

- The effectiveness of CAF implementation.
- The level of integration of the CAF model (nine criteria and eight principles of excellence).
- The results achieved and the perceived impacts through CAF.
- The contribution of the CAF model in the perception of the overall quality improvement.

- Examine a set of elements, regarding the literature review about CAF and the municipalities about:

Achieved results

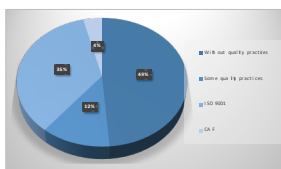
Perceived impacts

Results

As the deadline for submission of abstracts to LUSOCONF2018 was July 29th, there weren't yet solid results to present and discuss, mainly because the semi-structured interviews with those in charge for quality in the Portuguese municipalities occurred in the period between June 21th and September 17th.

However, with the research question in mind – **In order to determine if the implementation of the CAF's model has an impact on the quality of public services' provision by Portuguese municipalities** – it is possible to share the following elements:

- The state of quality practices adopted in Portuguese municipalities:



Among 308 Portuguese municipalities, just 4% implemented CAF, 48% have no quality practices, 12% have some quality practices, and 35% adopted ISO 9001. In fact, after performing the semi-structured interviews, only 12 municipalities emerged at the end, and not 15 as expected, due to the absence of available data or no effective implementation of the model in the other three.

- The semi-structured interviews to the 12 municipalities followed this script:

- Has the CAF model been implemented in the entire public organization or only in some organic unit(s) in your municipality? Do you consider that such a model has been fully implemented?
- Regarding the nine criteria of the CAF model, what level of implementation has the municipality reached?
- With regard to the eight Principles of Excellence underlying the CAF model, what level of integration has your municipality achieved?
- After the implementation of the CAF model in your municipality, what are the results obtained by this route (actions and improvement plans, good practices, quality assessment and measurement system, citizen and stakeholder's satisfaction, continuous improvement)?
- Following the implementation of the CAF model in your municipality, what are the impacts achieved by this route (organizations' quality improvements, change of public culture, TQM tool facilitator, connections between quality management models as well as practices of bench learning and benchmarking)?
- Finally, do you consider that the implementation of the requirements of the CAF model contributed to the improvement of the overall quality achieved in your municipality?

Conclusions

With the present research, it is intended to retake CAF and collaborate for a new theoretical approach, exploring the impacts of such implementation in public administration, specifically in Portuguese municipalities.

As such, after the present research, adopting a qualitative approach supported by semi-structured interviews with the quality responsible of 12 Portuguese municipalities, it is possible to verify, analyze, relate and discuss the data obtained on the thematic inherent to the CAF model, specially the results and impacts for Portuguese municipalities.

Moreover, we are confident that the previously formulated objectives will be fulfilled, as explained so far, and that our research question will also be fulfilled, aiming to determine if the implementation of the CAF has an impact on the quality of public services' provision by Portuguese Municipalities. As a final scope we intend to enrich the theoretical approach of this theme.

Retake CAF and study the impact on Portuguese municipalities' users

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