



EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN EAST TIMOR'S HIGHER PUBLIC EDUCATION: THE CURRENT FRAMEWORK

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 25th October, 2017
Received in revised form
26th November, 2017
Accepted 20th December, 2017
Published online 31st January, 2018

Key Words:

Accountability, East Timor;
Evaluation; Professional development;
Public higher education;
Students assessment;
Teacher performance evaluation.

ABSTRACT

The educational accountability includes improving both educational quality and educational equity. Accountability is a political and legal concept that denotes the responsibility of an organization or individual (an agent) to perform within the specified boundaries set by some higher political authority and to report to and to justify one's actions to this authority. Accountability is a basic tenet of democratic political systems (Mathison, 2009; Ryan and Feller, 2009). East Timor has done efforts to introduce accountability practices in education system, in particular in higher educational system due to the necessary improvement of teaching' quality and to address the challenges of the public higher education system and the criteria of the new public management model addressed. In this context, higher education institutions are called upon to provide a wider public service and simultaneously more efficient, with better results. The quality of education system is crucial to the development of national human resources (Education Bases Law, 2008). The present article, of theoretical and critical nature, intends to make a review and to analyze the current framework regarding the evaluation of teacher's performance and a more accountability in East Timor's Higher Public Education. We identify the elements of the accountability system and its present practice in the public educational system in order to obtain higher quality of teaching and the educational practice of teacher.

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Citation: Abilio Antonio Freitas Belo.2018. "Educational evaluation and accountability in east timor's higher public education: the current framework", *International Journal of Development Research*, 08, (01), 18491-18500.

INTRODUCTION

In East Timor, as in the other countries of the South-East Asia-Pacific, it has recently been recognized that education provides a foundation for economic development and social and moral values, as well quality of life (UNESCO, Country reports on education for sustainable development: centered on the five countries of the UNESCO cluster office, 2011). It is also recognized that East Timor needs to restructure school curricula to improve the quality of education and to improve the capacities and competences of national human resources (RDTL, 2011), or more precisely, to improve "quality and equity in science, mathematics, languages, communication and creativity; quality and relevance of the curriculum to community needs; and quality and equitable governance" (UNESCO, 2005, p. 33). This restructuring is also crucial for delivering the changes required to promote sustainable development, essential for "helping countries make progress towards the *Millennium*.

Development Goals" (Capelo, Santos, and Pedrosa, 2011). The East Timor government is aware of the necessity of promoting and developing initiatives to contribute to an effectively development, since low education, unemployment, disease and unsafe drinking water persist in East Timor (Shah, 2012). The Ministry of Education recognizes the need to set up instruments for monitoring and assessing educational programs with the intention of promoting the development (RDTL, 2008). Education is also fundamental to fight corruption in East Timor through improves civic ethics (Berlie, 2012). Regarding to educational programs, secondary school content, learning goals and activities in formal education, curricular themes, learning characteristics, learning resources, skills, values and attitudes, it is necessary "to clarify which educational approaches are necessary (in particular, in formal education) and to evaluate the quality of these approaches in terms of their relevance" (Capelo, Santos and Pedrosa, 2014). The assessment and accountability in education can be one of the tools to assist educational policy makers, curriculum developers, science teachers and school leaders, as well to improve the quality of education and in the development of

new science curricula aligned with the national strategy of development. Studies on the education system in East Timor are still very recent, given the context of recent country independence and the scarce number of years of decisions aimed at consolidating education policies appropriate to Timorese reality. In recent years, increasing levels of 'accountability' have been introduced in a range of settings, particularly in publicly funded arenas such as education. In contrast to other policy areas such as health and social welfare where research about accountability is more developed, there educational area is still under investigated. So, this article aims to analyze how the recent policy design of East Timor's higher education system reflects the accountability approach.

The evaluation of teachers' performance

Gerry McNamara and Joe O'Hara (2009) examine the failure of external school evaluation and point to the difficulties in implementing internal school evaluations. The authors argued that appearances can be deceptive and that, in fact, much of what has happened in Irish educational evaluation, for example, has been significantly tempered by local constraints and circumstances. The authors suggest that the neoliberal ideology that actually found little political support in Ireland is combined with a corporatist approach to economic management which limited to a performance-based pay or intrusive inspection and appraisal of work quality (p. 273). Scheerens (2002) defined educational evaluation as "judging the value of educational objects on the basis of systematic information gathering in order to support decision making and learning" (pp.37-39). The same author also refers that external school and teacher evaluation occurs when "evaluators are external to the unit that is being evaluated" and he defined school self-evaluation as "the type of evaluation where professionals that carry out the program or core service of organization carry out the evaluation in their own organization" (Ibidem). The evaluation of teachers' performance has received increasing attention from the academic community and policy makers around the world, since "that is one of the decisive aspects for improving the quality of education" (Flores, 2010, p. 7). The need to raise standards of education and raise the quality of student learning has led governments to introduce reforms in schools and teachers' work towards greater accountability.

Pacheco and Flores (1999) "The evaluation of the teacher is an institutional, professional and personal need that relates, respectively, to the education system, the school and the teacher and that should be based on the principles of teacher participation, in the construction of the evaluation criteria, in the diversity of the evaluating agents (administration, teachers, students ...) in the methodological plurality, with the use of several data collection instruments, and in the formative dimension of the evaluation". (page 173). Higher education institutions were called to provide a public service, not only broader, but also with greater administrative efficiency and accountability, in response to the demands of different stakeholders (governments, business, industry, workers' organizations, students and the community at large) (Ka-ho, 2003). At the same time, society today is increasingly demanding the demonstration of the value of the work of higher education teachers, and it is also increasingly recognized that university institutions need particular attention that meets the specificities of their human resources management (Jaquith, Mindich, and Darling-Hammond,

2010) positioning themselves in order to define quality criteria and the effectiveness of the service they provide. The need to allocate qualified human resources to ensure higher levels of efficiency and effectiveness was recognized. Performance evaluation has played a key role in providing background information to support decision-making in human resource management, particularly in terms of career selection and promotion (such as determining whether salary increases and provide feedback among supervisors, or evaluators, and employees) (Coutts and Schneider, 2004). So, the evaluation should be based on rigorous principles and criteria such as rigor, transparency, requirement and objectivity, with a view to promoting the professional development of teachers on the basis of recognition of merit, professional effort and excellence. In addition to these principles, evaluation must be viewed in an integrated and contextualized way, associated with the evaluation of the school and based on a prior and clearly defined professional profile, appropriate to the functions carried out by the teacher.

The new management of human resources in public administration has advocated the principles of decentralization, autonomy, accountability and flexibility (Perry, 2010), in order to introduce changes towards a closer approximation to the citizen and, therefore, the provision of a more excellent, effective, efficient, higher-quality and less wasteful services (Carr & Littman, 1990) (Ka-ho, 2003). New public management implies a new model of public management, pursuing a public sector with more transparency and accountability (Hood, 1996) (Wiesel & Modell, 2014). Concerned with the need to raise standards of achievement and improve their positions in the world economic league tables, governments over the last 20 years have intervened more actively to improve the system of schooling. Higher expectations for higher quality teaching demands teachers well qualified, highly motivated, knowledgeable and skillful, not only at the point of the entry into teaching, but also throughout their careers (Day, 2002). There are critical principles to new management approach such as: the relation between school-territory to promote a high quality of education in an inclusive approach and equal opportunities; the alternation school-work oriented to lifelong learning and the development of employment; the reorganization of the educational systems according to autonomy, effectiveness and efficiency; the enhancement of the role of all stakeholders materializing the concept of global citizenship (Martin, Connolly, & Wall, Enhancing NDPB accountability: improving relationships with upward and downward stakeholders, 2017); the right to study in the system of higher education and the internationalization of the whole system of higher education; the digital innovation of national educational system; the requalification of the built heritage devoted to education (Pauw, Gericke, Olsson, & Berglund, 2015). New public management has been extensively implemented in countries like Australia, Canada, Finland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, the USA, the United Kingdom and the rest of Europe (Bouckaert, Nakrošis, & Nemeč, 2011). Initiatives aimed at raising the quality of public services, leading to the development of performance evaluation (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). Performance remains the mainstream focus of international public management and is becoming more intensive because more management functions are included (not just monitoring but also decision-making, controlling and even providing accountability (Bouckaert and Halligan, Managing Performance: International Comparisons, 2008, p. 196).

In the 1980s, educational quality was simply equated with excellence and the assessment of that excellence was the quantity of various internal resources in the university. By the 1990s, *Total Quality Management* and *Continuous Quality Improvement* approaches modified from the business sector and forced to fit into academic models of performance, became the dominant paradigm (Nicholson, 2011). With the intent to simplify but not reduce the complexities of educational quality approaches and its measurement, Culver and Warfvinge (2013, p. 13) proposes in five categories: i) quality refers to something exceptional and excellent, unattainable by most and way above a minimum acceptable standard; ii) quality refers to consistency in terms of outcomes that meet certain standards that can (and should) be attained by all, for example student learning outcomes laid out in a syllabus or in legislation; iii) quality refers to fitness for purpose in terms of fulfilling a need or desire, such as employability as a result of higher education; iv) quality refers to value for money in terms of return on resources allocated, for example time (students) and money (students and funding agencies) set aside for higher education; v) quality refers to transformation, for example the general enhancement and empowerment of students participating in higher education.

Reforms of educational system were imposed rapid changes in the governance system, high demand for managerial skill and operational autonomy, impose the capability to optimize performance, transparency of behavior, dialogue with stakeholder to grow results in the school system. It therefore draws attention to the importance of activate long-term positive relations between schools, students, families, governmental authority and other structures of public Administration to improve quality and performance in school management. So is critical an effectiveness accountability system as starting point to develop the quality of relations between the schools and their stakeholders (Salvioni & R. Cassano, 2017). Lundgren (2009) examines the relation between educational evaluation and policymaking, highlighting shifts throughout the modern period including globalization effects on and within contemporary society. He contends that current political governance and the creation of markets are producing an "evaluating state" that is focused on developing competences instead of knowledge. Lundgren suggests that evaluation originally was a means for open school development, and that it has now evolved into a driver of efficiency and control under the auspices of economics of education. Otherwise, Scriven (2009) describes in detail how recent and political technology advances such as communication devices like simulcasts are likely to profoundly influence the future conduct of evaluation. After an in-depth analysis of globalism effects on education, Sandra Mathison (2009), in her article "*Serving the Public Interest Through Educational Evaluation: Salvaging Democracy by Rejecting Neoliberalism*", considers how to counter prevailing educational evaluations characterized by efficiency, rational management and performance-based accountability. Defining evaluation as critical to the art of democracy, she makes the case for participatory, collaborative and democratically oriented evaluation approaches as the vehicles for educational evaluation in service to the public interest. Bradley Cousins and Katherine Ryan conclude the anthology with a goal of allowing learning from the prior articles. They connect the six fundamental issues, denominated by Nick Smith with the four evaluation "families," and formulate resulting requirements for the professionalization of evaluation. Saville Kushner (2009)

emphasizes the relevance of evaluation rooted in local democracy and describes evaluators have no warrant to make their own judgement – their job is to articulate and feed into other people's judgements.

Definition of accountability

To David Nevo (2009) at the heart of the debate among accountability *versus* professional development, bureaucratization *versus* professionalization, and audit-oriented evaluation *versus* capacity building is the distinction between external evaluation and internal evaluation, self-evaluation and evaluation by others. According the author is urgent to clarify the distinction between internal and external evaluation, to point out their strengths and weaknesses, and the possible synergy between both as a potential contribution to the improvement of evaluation and thus the improvement of education. Moreover, Nevo (2009) points the use of evaluation for improvement through accountability and external monitoring, by means of external evaluation, and through self-improvement and professional development, by means of capacity building for internal evaluation. Accountability is widely recognized as a fundamental element of democratic government (Ashworth, Boyne, & Walker, 2001) and a duty to provide an account (by no means necessarily a financial account) or reckoning of those actions for which one is held responsible. This is consistent with notions of political accountability, whereby elected politicians are held accountable for policy decisions, and financial and legal accountability, whereby public organizations must comply with financial reporting regulations. New Public Management reforms have arguably widened expectations of who should be held accountable to senior public service officials, with the public expecting a minimum level of service and information on efficiency and effectiveness (Martin, Connolly, & Wall, 2017).

To Salvioni and Cassano (2017) accountability is the result of an interaction between process and reporting tools aiming at informing the stakeholders and managing the relations, underlining with transparency their responsibilities. In particular, the effective fulfillment of stakeholders' expectations is linked to the school ability to manage, in an integrated way. Ryan (2005) defends "educational accountability is a fundamental right of citizens in a democratic society serving the public interest" (p. 532). The concept of "accountability" has been defined differently in theory and in practice and is seldom explicitly elucidated (Kadri, 2015). The term of accountability has been used, moreover, synonymously with concepts such as transparency, liability and answerability (Levitt, Janta, & Wagrach, 2008). Afonso (2009) designates an accountability system as "an articulated set of models and partial forms of accountability that ... constitute a congruent structure within the framework of public or public interest policies based on values and principles of the common good, democracy, participation, duty to inform and right to be informed, argument and contradictory, transparency, accountability, active citizenship, empowerment, among others" (p. 60). Franzoni and Gennari (2013) states the consolidation of the school autonomy and the national system of evaluation represents the essential condition to ensure the governance structures stable and effective, able to optimize the use of the organic and constitute an integrated system of training and education for the entire cycle of formation. It is an essential condition also to orient skillful and

competent leaders with a high educational culture and, at the same time, remarkable managerial skills.

The way accountability targets are constructed is of particular interest from an incentive design perspective. Simple proficiency-based schemes, such as the one used under the 2001 USA federal *No Child Left Behind Act*, set performance targets that are independent of student, teacher, or school measures, past or present (Macartney, 2016) – the author draw attention to an important potential dynamic distortion arising from the value-added education accountability schemes. In particular, targets that depend on lagged achievement become manipulated with time, as raising effort under such a scheme not only affects the likelihood of exceeding the current target but also determines the target that follows (Macartney, 2016).

In the framework of the teacher evaluation system in Portugal, the same author points out partial forms of accountability that derive from internal rational-bureaucratic rules: the evaluation of teacher performance; the results of standardized exams and tests (national and international) and school rankings; the system of autonomy and management of schools; the external evaluation program of schools (Afonso, 2009). Although it is often translated as a synonym for accountability, the word accountability presents some semantic instability, since it is a concept with plural meanings and amplitudes. The author points to "partial forms of accountability those actions or procedures that concern only some dimensions of accountability or accountability", while Schedler (1999) calls "acts of accountability". A control strategy emphasizes the government's obligation to take responsibility for responding to society's actions. Evaluation may precede accountability - and in this case we are faced with ex-ante evaluation; the evaluation can also occur after accountability and before the accountability phase - and in this case we are talking about an ex-post evaluation.

According to Schedler (1999) accountability has an informative and argumentative dimension, and can be conceived as a communicative or discursive activity because it presupposes a critical dialogue relationship. So, accountability has three structuring functions: one of information, one of justification and another of imposition or sanction (Schedler, 1999). Informing and justifying are two dimensions of accountability that can be defined in a narrow sense, such as the obligation or the duty to respond to inquiries or answerability - this accountability is therefore entitled to request information and to require justifications - and, in order to achieve both, it is socially expected that there is an obligation or duty (legally regulated or not) to meet what is requested. But there is also an enforcement, coercive or punitive dimension, according to Afonso Almerindo (2009, p. 70) are integrated in what could be called a pillar of accountability, for the autonomous assumption of responsibility for the acts practiced, persuasion, informal recognition of merit; the calling up of standards of professional codes, the attribution of material or symbolic rewards, or other legitimate forms of (induction) accountability. The structuring of the accountability system in the field of Education aims at: the competitiveness of economies, the effectiveness and efficiency of education systems; administrative decentralization and autonomy; improving the quality of education, performance / performances and school outcomes; the right to information by contributing citizens; support for political decision-making, as a support for ranking-based comparative strategies; support for free parental choice and

market and quasi-market for educational services (Rodríguez, 2015). Consistent with what a policy feedback model would predict, the educational accountability policies – most notably *No Child Left Behind* – have altered education politics. They have contributed to shifts in interest group coalitions and strategies, denser interest group and provider networks, interpretative effects that have led to limited but potentially far-reaching parental mobilization, and feedback loops that prompted policy entrepreneurs to seek changes in the dominant policy monopoly. However, two caveats are in order: these shifts in political dynamics evolved over a period of several decades and did not occur abruptly; and although accountability policies were a prime motivator for the changes, other policies, such as those related to school choice, were also responsible (McDonnell, 2012).

In the 1980s, the concept of quality in higher education emerged (Newton, 2002). There are five approaches to defining quality: the traditional concept of quality, conformance to standards, fitness for purpose, effectiveness in achieving institutional goals and meeting costumers' needs. The traditional approach defines quality as excellence. However, the drawbacks of this approach lie in linking excellence with "elite universities" where reputation became a representation of quality. The "conformance to standards" approach deals with quality as the meeting standards set by accrediting bodies. The limitation of this approach is the quality is a service that can be easily measured by compliance to standards; however, this is not applicable in higher education. The "fitness for purpose" approach assumes that quality derives its meaning from its relation to the purpose of higher education. This view is flawed as there is no consensus on the purpose of higher education. The "effectiveness in achieving institutional goals" focused on the function of evaluating quality in higher education institutions. The "meeting costumers' needs" approach defines quality as the satisfying costumers' demands (Elassy, 2015, p. 252). Quality Assurance in higher education is a complicated process and a highly debatable issue. This is because it involves many stakeholders such as students, faculty members and administration officers on the university and national levels. It also deals with various aspects of education as teaching, learning, assessment and students' attitudes (Elassy, 2015).

According to Garfalo and L'Huillier (2015), accreditation is an accountability and quality assurance mechanism that analyzes an institution's objectives, philosophy, facilities, programs and resources. Institutional accreditation examines the entirety of the institution while specialized accreditation examines programs within an institution. Quality assurance, then, is the procedures implemented by higher education institutions aiming at guaranteeing academic standards and promoting students' learning. Liu (2011) has stated that higher education institutions have been accountable to place more significance on students' learning outcomes. In Europe, accountability has been formalized through the *Bologna Declaration* (1999). On the surface, the Bologna process may seem to deal primarily with transparency of the credit system (typically 60 credits per academic year), aims expressed in terms of learning outcomes (inspired by the Dublin Descriptors), and clearly defined qualifications (the three tier system) (Teelken & Wihlborg, 2010). On a national level, however, many governments have seen the Bologna Process as a tool to challenge extremely strong national or, as in Germany, regional structures in the university system, such as the *French Grandes Écoles* and the

autonomy of the *German Bundeslander* with respect to higher education. To the European Commission, the Bologna Process constitutes the only tool to 'modernize' higher education in Europe since the Lisbon's Treaty (2000) does not give the EU capacity to make decisions with respect to the national higher education systems (Culver and Warfvinge, 2013, p. 11). In 2000 the Commission decided to support and to fund the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). The mission of ENQA is to promote European cooperation in the field of quality assurance. Through ENQA, the Commission can indirectly use quality assurance, including evaluations, to promote 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion' (Johansson, Karlsson, Backman, & Juusola, 2007). The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance of ENQA puts the intended learning outcome of a course or program in the epicenter since: (a) quality assurance of programs are expected to include explicit intended learning outcomes; and (b) student assessment procedures should be designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education 2009) (Culver and Warfvinge, 2013, p. 11).

The United States higher education sector is decentralized. Each state has the authority to establish institutions and permit them to award degrees. Similarly, institutions have autonomous governance. Moreover, the USA has a decentralized system for quality assurance and accountability (Eaton, 2011). Accountability has dominated the debate between higher education leaders, accrediting bodies and the government for more than ten years. The late 1980s was a time of increased accountability by the state governments that endorsed institutional effectiveness concepts (Ewell, 2011). In the mid-1990s, a shift occurred in North America, first in community colleges, from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning. This became known as the Learning Turn which aimed at producing learning rather than providing instruction. This shift proposed that the focus ought to be on student learning outcomes, meeting educational objectives and enhancing the quality of higher education through the results of learning assessments (Heap, 2013). In 2005/2006, accountability in higher education institutions received great scrutiny as it questioned the accreditation's claim of improving the quality of education. The Secretary's Commission on the Future of Higher Education (Spellings Commission) argued that accreditation is deficient of accountability (Eaton, 2011). The Spellings Commission encouraged leaders of higher education to take the initiative regarding accountability. The American Association of State Colleges and Universities and the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities, and the New Leadership Alliance for Student Learning and Accountability have cooperatively developed the Voluntary System of Accountability. The voluntary system is a tool to report the performance of institutions (Ewell, Assessment, Accountability, and Improvement. Occasional paper #1, 2009). Ryan and Feller (2009) identify an immediate problem that globalization creates for evaluation as it [globalization] creates the surface appearance of common problems that as susceptible to common solutions". They argue that is especially problematic for implementing educational accountability and performance measurements systems where educational requirement differ within and across national and international contexts. Moreover, in their analysis, discuss the

effects of accountability based on student-outcome measurement and make claims for in-house and self-evaluation, to conclude that the current emphasis on performance measurement as the meaning and method of accountability has had an impact on evaluation and the role of evaluator (Ibidem).

Performance evaluation in East Timor: the current framework

Timor-Leste became a fully independent state on May 20, 2002. Independence followed a period of violence caused by the Indonesians, who destroyed infrastructures and devastated schools before leaving the country. Since 2002, the country has resorted to international aid to reconstruct the country and rebuild its education system. Following the restructuring of the basic education, the country has recently implemented a new general secondary education curriculum, through international cooperation with Portuguese institutions. There is a considerable body of literature on political transition and its implications for education systems (Millo & Barnett, 2004). Decree-Law No. 14/2008, of May 7 of 2008, established the *Scheme for the Evaluation of the Performance of Workers*. It is an important tool in introducing a new management culture, as it has enabled the appraisal of the resources allocated to each of the bodies and functions of the public sector; the creation of conditions of greater professional motivation, qualification and permanent training of human resources. The purpose of the evaluation is to improve the performance of workers by helping them to achieve higher levels of performance in order to increase career opportunities according to their potential and to value individual contributions to the team. On the other hand, according to article no. 3 of the Decree-Law No. 14/2008, the purpose of performance appraisal is to assess, hold accountable and recognize the merit of managers, employees, agents of the Public Administration, in function of productivity and achievement of objectives Services and public bodies. It is also an instrument for the evaluation of the probationary official regarding the fulfillment of the conditions to integrate a career in the public function.

The performance evaluation also aims at pursuing the following objectives: (i) motivate employees and agents; (ii) improve their professional performance; (iii) encourage communication between managers and their subordinates; (iv) improve integrated management of human resources; (v) to promote excellence in the quality of the provision of services to the public; (vi) identify training needs that can improve performance and help achieve the institution's objectives; (vii) assist in setting performance objectives for the coming year (Decree-Law No. 14/2008, of May 7 of 2008). In 2011, amendments were introduced with the Decree-Law No. 19/2011, of June 8, in order to allow a greater objectivity of criteria, the annual periodicity of the evaluation, completion of a set of forms with a view to achieving an objective and complete evaluation of the performance of the employee based on the provision of the service. The performance evaluation in public administration in East Timor was introduced with the purpose of obtaining objective indicators of the performance of public officials and, therefore, outlining the improvement actions tending towards the continuous improvement of services. After a period of political and social instability following the referendum in 1999 and the United Nations Transitional Administration (UNTAET), East Timor lost much

of its skilled workforce in all sectors, including education (Millo & Barnett, 2004).

The *National Strategic Plan for Education 2011-2030* (DRET, 2011) outlined the first plan of national education, emphasizing the quality of teaching and the quality of teachers. Innovations are identified such as: the development of a system to assess and monitor the impact of vocational training on the quality of education; the implementation of surveys to assess teachers' competencies and performance and identify vocational training needs. The strategic guidelines intent to increasing the quality of teacher education provision, including a modular and flexible system of credits linked to the principles of lifelong learning, the development and implementation of a "measurement system" to monitor and evaluate the impacts of teacher training on improving the quality of education, the strengthening of institutions dedicated to teacher training, the promotion of more flexible training courses through multiple specialization, training of non-formal education teachers, the implementation of teacher surveys to evaluate competencies and performance - instruments that aim to define the training needs of active teachers. The commitment to guarantee quality education is invariably associated with the quality of teachers (DRET, 2011, pp. 80-163). The Strategic Development Plan (DRET, 2011) points out vital action areas in order to conduct the education reform, such as: (i) development of a new curriculum that focuses on promoting knowledge and higher-order skills and (ii) pedagogical and scientific qualification of teachers.

The broader goals of the current reform are to contribute to socio-economic development and improve the capacity of the country's human resources. Since teacher quality is one of East-Timor's priorities for development ("Teachers are a priority", 2013) it is essential to implement a new curriculum to ensure the training of high-quality teachers, both scientific and along with procedures and criteria that are in line with the country's educational goals (Albergaria, Martinho, & Cabrita, 2014). Lucas, Cabrita, and Ferreira (2015) presents the new curriculum developed and puts forward some of the challenges regarding its implementation. Capelo and Cabrita (2017) present the evaluation impact of the restructuring of Secondary Education in East Timor, providing valuable feedback to stakeholders, aiming to enhance the implementation of this reform, providing knowledge, expertise and support to future restructurings of education systems, to ensure good quality education and training, essential to achieve the millennium development goals. Despite the progress made (RDTL, 2011), there are still indicators that are of concern to the Timorese authorities and which require reform measures capable of changing the general panorama of education, namely high rates of dropout and repetition, and for which the following factors: lack of textbooks and learning materials; the reduced number of teaching hours; the low preparation of teachers; high teacher ratios per teacher; deficient physical infrastructure; high number of students contrasting with the high rate of teacher absenteeism; the incomplete preparation of students for the language of instruction, Portuguese (Albergaria, Martinho, & Cabrita, 2014, p. 666). The evaluation of performance is considered as one of the fundamental instruments for the introduction of a new culture of public management, for a correct appreciation of the resources allocated to each of the bodies and functions and for the creation of conditions of greater professional motivation, qualification and formation Human resources. Timorese

authorities see the reform of education through the training of national human resources as a key means to reduce inequalities, promote the social and economic integration of the population, contribute to the eradication of poverty and achieve a better quality of life of populations, thus achieving those that are the country's *Millennium Development Goals* (RDTL, 2009). Timorese Higher Education system comprised, in 2004, 17 higher education institutions in operation, serving more than 13,000 students. At the beginning of 2011, there were 11 institutions in operation, 9 of which had academic accreditation and served approximately 27,010 students. Since 2009, female enrollments in higher education have increased by 70% (RDTL, 2011, p.25). East Timor's National University (UNTL), established in 2000, is the only public university in East Timor to play a major role in public higher education service and in scientific and specialized research (RDTL, 2011, p. 26). In July 2012, one of the priorities for the new government is to reform the education and upgrade not only public schools but also to increase its support for the private schools.

The *Constitution of the Democratic Republic of East-Timor* (RDTL, 2012) states that "The State shall guarantee access to the highest levels of education according to its capabilities" (RDTL, Part II, Section 59, p.4). The State must then ensure the quality of teaching and the improvement of the skills and competences of teachers, in particular university teachers. It is in the training of teachers, in the productivity of their work and in the monitoring of their performance and results that the quality of educational institutions in particular, and of the entire Timorese education system, in general lies. The performance evaluation of civil servants in East Timor is mandatory and provides for the implementation of external evaluation mechanisms (course documentation, peer evaluation, hierarchy and student), along with internal evaluation mechanisms (description of teaching staff, curriculum and self-assessment). The objective is to assess the quality of teaching performance and the service provided by the teacher and, secondly, to assess the quality of any public higher education system. Regulate access, progression and career development of university teaching staff is also a purpose of the evaluation system introduced.

Peter Dahler-Larsen (2009) argues for a new cooperation between internal and external evaluation and emphasizes the role of participatory, learning-oriented evaluation approaches such as self-evaluation, where people critically examine something that they do themselves. Evaluators should share their knowledge and voice their critique in larger public forums. The predominantly economically stimulated changes in the educational system – and relatedly, in educational research and evaluation—are advocated and critically discussed in terms of the relationship between external and internal, and improvement- and accountability-oriented evaluation develops under consideration of the powerful economic and political force fields. From the point of view of teachers, it is specifically intended to dignify the teacher as an educator of higher education; evaluate the professionalism of the teacher in order to determine if he/she is qualified to perform his/her duties; raise the quality of educational processes and outcomes; accelerate the achievement of national education objectives; teachers to perform their duties with honesty and academic ethics. According to the *Guidebook of Certification of University Teachers*, approved by Ministerial Diploma No. 33, of 10 September of 2014, the

teacher's competences are decisive for the quality and implementation of the three pillars of the teaching / pedagogy, research and service to the community. The *Guidebook* assesses three types of skills, namely pedagogical, professional and personality skills. The evaluation of pedagogical skills aims to design teaching and learning, to evaluate the teaching and learning process and its results, the results of evaluation to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The evaluation of professional competences focuses on the knowledge in a certain scientific area, the domain of techniques of application of knowledge, as well as positive behaviors, such as innovation. The evaluation of the personal competences focuses on the values, behaviors and professional ethics of the teacher, with impact on the students, relatives, family and society, being able to influence the motivation of the students for the study, as well as their personal development. In 2014, the UNTL implemented a *New Curriculum* contextualizing knowledge, skills and abilities according to the profile of the trainees in the face of scientific and professional requirements and the labor market at national, regional and international level.

In 2015, the results of the Pedagogical Survey on the implementation of the 2014 Curriculum were published, under the premise that there is an intimate relationship between the didactic performance of the teacher and the performance of the student. The report evaluated the quality of content and curricular units, teachers and students. The students presented a positive overall assessment on the implementation of the New UNTL 2014 Curriculum. However, data from students warn of the poor pedagogical performance of a significant number of university professors (UNTIL, 2015, p. 45). The results also pointed to the need to deepen the interdisciplinary between the different areas of study of the curriculum, reinforcing transversal learning.

To this end, it is considered necessary the continuous and professional training of teachers, an educational project that the UNTL has already tried to answer through the creation of the Center for Advance Teaching and Learning (CATL) to improve the quality of UNTL teachers, based on the conviction that there is a close relationship between the didactic performance of the teacher and student performance (UNTIL, 2015). These results also highlight the need to consolidate the various types of competencies of university professors in the country, in order to improve their performance in a continuous way and, by this way, to promote quality university education throughout the country, both in institutions public institutions, or in private institutions, according to the *Strategic Plan for National Education 2011-2030* (METL, 2011). On the other hand, the so-called accountability movement, it is necessary to inform students (and all stakeholders) about the quality of educational institutions, calling on students to participate in this process, since they are the main beneficiaries of the quality assessment.

Conclusions and recommendations

The issue of assessing teacher performance and improving the quality of higher education institutions is important for East Timor. After independence, many teachers who were foreigners left the country, leaving a strong gap in the education and training of young people. Today the country faces skills gaps and a reduced ability to respond to the needs of the labor market. Reconstruction of national institutions and infrastructures requires qualified training for young people and

a superior quality system with the same standards as other universities in Asia and Europe (Millo & Barnett, 2004). The performance evaluation process of teachers aims to improve professional performance, obtain inputs that denote the quality of the institution, and then make the education system more oriented for citizens, more efficient and higher quality. The causal relationship between the responsibility for the accountability and the professional development of teachers is based on a view that sees teachers a crucial resource for improving the education system, increasing the idea being that the quality of the educational process is clearly linked to the quality of teachers (Nevo D. , 2005)(Oliveira-Formosinho, 2009).

Thus, it becomes clear that the evaluation of performance matters to improve the collective performance of teachers (Stronge, 2010) only because all the teachers can improve the quality of teaching practices. Therefore, the teacher performance evaluation is of utmost importance in the field of management of the quality of public education service, on the one hand, and the management of human resources management, on the other (Coumts and Schneider, 2004). As refers Belo (2016) the evaluation model of teaching the Timorese public higher education lacks a favorable communicative dimension to dialogue and define improvement plans. Performance evaluation should allow enhance teacher performance, through its continued development, in the certainty that this new approach will have a positive impact on the education received by the students. The personal and professional development of teachers are classified and identified jointly between evaluator and evaluated in order to promote the commitment and link between the teachers and the educational institution. The final test of the reliability of the evaluation process is to show that it promotes the development of teaching staff and improvement of service. Effective assessment is one that allows thinking together the processes by which constitutes a personal and institutional development mechanism.

This article examined how educational policy related to the assessment of quality has shaped in the East Timor's higher education system, which elements of accountability approach are reflected in recent policy design. After looking to the current framework, the future investigations should be conducted with the purpose to examine the perceived effectiveness of these policies in terms of students' attainment of learning outcomes and institutional improvements. Current challenges were examined to derive recommendations for policy of promoting accountability of faculty and students. Despite of the implemented evaluation system, the results of the performance evaluation and the teacher's assessment were unknown by citizens. Since the evaluation results are unknown, they have not provided a clear picture of how universities are concerned about quality in higher education and about their difficulties.

It is also suggested the training and qualification of teachers, through: active methodologies and supervised teaching practices that promote the improvement of skills and techniques undertaken in the classroom; promote the professional training of teachers with a view to continuous improvement of skills and abilities; implement performance evaluation throughout the higher education system, encompassing all teaching staff and supervisors; ensure that the implementation of the performance assessment cycle provides effective improvement of the entire education system.

It is also necessary to continue and strength the accountability practices in the education system and particularly in public higher education system, to make consistent the results of teacher assessment with the human resources management (improvement plans, vocational training and career development). The results of the evaluation, namely the evaluation of teaching performance, the student evaluation and the institutions ranks should also be publicized, according to the right to information, transparency and accountability approach. Although educational policies aim to establish a causal relationship between evaluation, professional development and the improvement of the quality of teaching, this relationship has not yet been studied in the East Timor's higher education system. This would be an extensive investigation, for which we have sought to make a contribution through a study of the impact of the quality evaluation system in public higher education, based on the evaluation of the students, teacher's self-evaluation and students' results. In-depth interviews should be applied to evaluate the reception of the performance evaluation by teachers, the difficulties experienced and the added value identified in their professional training process.

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