A new model for public library and information services evaluation: an integrated approach - SIADAP+B

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1. Introduction
The origins of SIADAP+B lie in the work reported by Ochôa and Pinto (2004b) that intended to operationalize three evaluation models: Common Assessment Framework (CAF); Balanced Scorecard (BSC) and library standards on performance evaluation, namely ISO 11620. In that context, the research question formulated was: can different categories of indicators (representing qualitative and quantitative variation in conceptions of assessment) be integrated and operationalized during a Public Administration reform?

Since the 1980s, successive Portuguese governments tried to pay close attention to the quality of public services. Today, demands for enhanced services and civil servants’ responsibilities are very strong. These demands surpass product/service quality and focus on areas such as management practices, transparency and accountability. In this context, civil servants are the major target for all criticism directed towards Public Administration. There are significant signs that LIS (Library and Information Services), especially in Public Administration, might be closed in a near future due to financial constraints.

In Portugal, LIS performance assessment has been traditionally confined to the production of statistics. Based essentially on input and output measurements, this
is the dominant type of performance information that is produced and used by the LIS sector. As yet, there is not a global movement towards evaluation, a global standard that is accepted and used or generally accepted monitoring mechanisms. There are still many librarians for whom responsibility for managing remains a distant target.

This situation embodies the very definition of our research field. The subjective concept of quality leads to decisions based on perceptions of prestige, ranking of results with the implicit need for impact measurement. The use of evidences will be outlined in the next years within the context of the quality policy itself. The development of SIADAP+B thus emerged from an environmental analysis framed by librarians’ perspective and essentially grounded in librarians’ experiences. An ongoing research project (2004– ) funded by INCITE - the Portuguese Association for Information Management uses several evaluation models in an action research framework. Its main objectives are:

- to enable librarians to develop their evaluation skills and their awareness towards public services demands;
- to enable librarians to benefit from a strategy to improve image;
- to identify learning, support and action-research strategies that will help librarians achieving and monitoring their organisations’ outputs and outcomes.

In this paper we argue that these matters should be integrated into a balanced model, based on action research as a form of collaborative, practitioner-based research, which involves participants in the research process as active members reflecting on and contributing with improvement suggestions.

Our action-research is developed in three stages:
1. Definition of methods and data analysis
2. Implementation and test of the model in a library
3. Focus on conceptual findings and conclusions and dissemination of the model among Public Administration libraries and information services.

The present study has been exploratory and is also concerned with two issues. Firstly, librarians need to understand how to deal with citizens’ prejudices. In that sense, we will try to demonstrate how SIADAP+B can be used to promote librarians’ social image. Secondly, this paper will briefly consider how outcomes may be used to develop evidence-based librarianship among professionals.

2. Theoretical framework: previous literature and relevance of experiences
In the last few years, several authoritative works (Ellis and Norton, 1996; Gray, 1998; DiBella and Nevis, 1998; Osborne and Plastrik, 2000; Neely, 2002; Bevir;
Rhodes and Weller, 2003;) about organizational evaluation have contributed to the growing debates within the information community on the whole process and how it might evolve (Van House, 1987; Ward et. al., 1995; Poll and Boekhordt, 1996; Zweig et al., 1996; Zwart, 1998; Sutter, 2002).

The overall process of quality assessment in public services in Portugal has led to a heterogeneous movement towards modernisation, which included, since 1986, a marked quality strategy. Created in that year, the Administrative Modernisation Secretariat longed for a Public Administration, not powerful and bureaucratic, but centred on customers and capable of satisfying their needs and coping with new challenges. Since then, several initiatives were taken to improve the information and communication flow between citizens and Public Administration and to modernise it. One of those initiatives was the Quality in Public Service Prize, which was launched in 1994, in order to stimulate the development of Quality Programmes. In 2000, during the Portuguese presidency of the EU, the process of constructing a national quality policy entered a new phase: CAF – Common Assessment Framework was recommended as the quality management tool European Public Administrations should use.

In general, we can say not only that Portuguese governments had been responsive to the European quality agenda, but also that this movement towards quality had a positive impact on public services, though lower than what was possible and expected.

Specifically in what concerns performance evaluation policy for Portuguese public services, the last Public Administration major reform was produced in 2004. Its seven axes are:

- State organization
- Administrative organization
- Leadership & responsibility
- Merit & qualification
- Value and training
- Culture of service
- e-Government

Closely related to the issue of institutional/staff appraisal is the new model SIADAP - Integrated System of Performance Appraisal in Public Administration. This system has the following objectives (Law nº 10/2004):

- To evaluate the quality of public services and bodies in search of excellence and continuous improvement of citizen focused service delivery;
- To appraise, sharpen accountability and recognise the merit of top managers and staff based on productivity and results achieved;
• To recognise differences between performance levels by fostering a quest for excellence, motivation and recognition of merit.
• To strengthen leadership and management skills in order to enhance efficiency and service quality levels.

3. Quality, performance measurement and LIS in Portugal
In spite of the LIS general picture being quite negative, there is some evidence that libraries in Portugal are developing some strategies towards quality and performance measurement. An analysis of these two areas based on the relevance of experiences shows that school, academic, public and specialised libraries are differently positioned in what concerns quality and performance measurement.

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<th>QUALITY</th>
<th>Weak relevance</th>
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<td>Weak relevance</td>
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Table 1 – Libraries’ experiences on quality and performance measurement

Compared with the situation a decade ago, in some aspects, the movement towards quality seems to be stronger in academic and specialized libraries. In some academic libraries this trend has expanded considerably. This can be explained by the fact that universities are more market-oriented and are trying to be certified by ISO 9000. In comparison, quality in school libraries and public libraries is largely underdeveloped. This is partly due to the existence of a much differentiated knowledge of management techniques within professionals. Public Libraries are very dependent on municipalities’ rules and strategies, which is in turn one of the reasons why, in particular in Portugal, the assessment policy is focused on staff, rather than on the organization in general.

Overall, this short review (arising from data reported by the Observatory on Quality of Knowledge and Information Services\(^1\)) studies suggests that, despite the Public Administration reform, libraries in many cases do not yet appear to have substantially embraced quality and performance measurement as their core objective for the next years. The absence of a specific National Policy towards quality management or performance evaluation in the Portuguese LIS sector is a major contributor to this situation, but also to the different development stages in the sub-sectors as mentioned above. Nevertheless, it should be noticed there are
some good isolated experiences. Some case studies debate the focus on performance and results, customer orientation, application of ISO standards on performance evaluation and citizen charters. One of the most debated cases has been the Total Quality Management Program developed by the Library of the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Education (1996-2005).

This experience was launched in 1996 introducing a performance evaluation methodology based on Quality Standards and a Citizens’ Charter. In 1998, the Quality in Public Services Prize was awarded to the Library of the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Education for its innovative Quality Programme based on the EFQM model. Until now, this is the only Portuguese library that has won such a prize, being considered a best practice among the knowledge and information community. Since then, this library adopted a strategy focused on the improvement of librarians’ social representation and libraries public image. In 2004, it was recognized as a national “good practice” and the library’s Director represented Portugal in the 3QC – 3rd Quality Conference for Public Administrators in the EU (15-17 September, Rotterdam, The Netherlands).

According to C. Abbott there are six main reasons for performance evaluation (Abbott, 1994):

- The political imperative
- Accountability to the parent institution
- Performance indicators and quality
- Performance indicators and service level agreements
- Decision support
- Accountability to customers

In the case of the Portuguese LIS sector, the first three reasons, together with a national need for enhancing the social value of LIS professionals, determined the need for applying SIADAP to this particular activity sector. Empirical results also suggest the development of an adapted “version” of SIADAP might be a precious contribute to the enhancement of these professionals’ social value. But the success of SIADAP+B strongly depends on four principal variables:

- **Role transformation**

LIS professionals must take a more active stand on issues related to performance evaluation and develop as individuals a capacity to create a role transformation in their careers. Librarians’ role transformation implies a more experimental approach to issues related to the measurement learning cycles: inter-organizational learning; Inter-professional learning and peers learning. Rather than maintaining traditional roles, we should take the opportunity to become facilitators of organizational evaluation. By assisting this new role, we as librarians
may gain a new role towards social impact, not only to cultivate our motivation but also to encourage future generations to enter this profession.

• Value added
It must be based on a dynamic competence scorecard, which is an essential part of a model of performance monitoring. Librarians’ performance is as important as libraries’ performance. Librarians are archetypal boundary workers who look organizational memory across information sources. The creation of collaborative forms across different competences, and resources management is central to their work. As performance monitoring has taken more economic significance, so innovation and Evidence Based Librarianship has become a priority for LIS professionals. In that sense, value creation will hopefully come by as a result of the Professional competences image study, which is being carried in Portugal, since April 2005, by the Observatory on the Information-Documentation Profession (OP I-D)

• Process redesign and Integration
These are the other two variables that are important to SIADAP+B success since they are closely related to essence of this integrated model as we will see in next chapter.

4. Building SIADAP+B
SIADAP+B’s central goal is to present the LIS sector with a performance evaluation model that can be used as a strategic tool of organisational quality improvement and social value enhancement of information professionals. In this model of action, information professionals, managers, public services with libraries and customers-citizens are offered important parts.

The construction of a specific evaluation methodology for the Public Administration LIS sector, like any other evaluation methodology, was guided by pragmatism, that is, by the need for respecting the specific birth environment and adapting to the object being evaluated.

Organizational evaluation in the areas of self-assessment (CAF – Common Assessment Framework), strategic evaluation (Balanced Scorecard) and micro-level evaluation (Brown, 1996) provide the theoretical reference framework for the development of an evaluation model for Public Administration LIS.

The essence of strategic learning lies on the construction of an explicit model that can be used to structure performance evaluation (Neely, 2002) according to Tichy and Hornstein’s (1980) three stages:
1. Selection of the constituent elements of the model
2. Development of the categories of each element
4.1 Constituent elements
At the first stage, four evaluation structures (see Fig. 1) were used as essential elements:

A. Assessment Structure CAF, aimed at the exhaustive diagnosis of each library’s strengths and weaknesses.
B. Strategic Evaluation Structure Balanced Scorecard, aimed at the creation of a strategic management tool for organisational performance improvement.
C. Process Evaluation Structure, aimed at micro-level evaluation based on performance indicators that evaluates library’s inputs, processing, outputs and outcomes.
D. SIADAP, aimed at an integrated assessment of Public Administration performance, covering organisational and individual results.

4.2 Development of categories
SIADAP+B’s essential elements were then developed and decomposed in their main categories:

Fig. 1 – Essential elements of the model.
A. Assessment Structure CAF
The Common Assessment Framework (CAF)’s main purposes are to promote the use of quality management techniques among public sector organisations across Europe and to allow the development of benchmarking studies between them. This framework incorporates the principal features of both the EFQM3 model and the Speyer model, but also benefiting from adaptations of EFQM model made by several EU Member States.
CAF provides a self-assessment framework based on nine main aspects of an organisation (see fig. 2): Leadership, Planning and strategy, Human Resource Management, Partnerships and resources, Process and change management, People results, Customers/citizen oriented results, Society results and Key performance results (CAF, 2002).

B. Strategic Evaluation Structure Balance Scorecard
The inadequacy of classic methods used to evaluate private sector corporations evaluation to the needs of the emergent Knowledge Society led to the development of innovative assessment methodologies like Robert Kaplan and David Norton’s Balanced Scorecard (BSC). The origins of this strategic management tool can be traced back to the 1990 study Measuring performance in the organization of the future. This study was resumed in an article published in 1992 in the Harvard Business Review and later developed in Kaplan and Norton’s book The balanced scorecard: translating strategy into action (1996). Since then, BSC has been used and adapted by a growing number of enterprises, but also by non-profit organisations.
C. Process Evaluation Structure

Process evaluation follows the processing metric structure defined by Brown (1996). In Cameron’s typology, this approach to library performance evaluation fits into the internal processes model, which emphasises the organisation’s

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![Balanced Scorecard Structure](image)

**Fig. 3– Balanced Scorecard Structure (adap. from Skandia’s Intellectual Navigator In Rezende, 2003, p. 165)**
internal communications systems and the efficiency with which it transforms inputs in outputs (1986, quoted by Cullen, 1998).

The Process Evaluation Structure is formed by five categories (see fig. 4):

- Inputs
- Processing system
- Outputs
- Outcomes
- Objectives (which link organisational and individual performance to the strategic focus).

In each category, specific performance measurements are established (and re-established) according to the objectives that were set. These measures and indicators should also be guided by the (inter)national standards on library performance evaluation and measurement. In SIADAP+B, the thirty-four performance indicators recommended by ISO 11620: 1998 and ISO 11620:1998/Amd.1:2003 plus the fifteen indicators for electronic library services (ISO/TC 20983) are framed into four categories:

- User perception
- Public services
- Technical services
- User services

Fig. 4 – Process Evaluation Structure.
D. SIADAP – Integrated System for Performance Appraisal in Public Administration

This system is aimed at the integrated development of an overall model for performance assessment of Portuguese Public Administration capable of functioning as a strategic tool to gear to changes, professional motivation and improvement in the sector (Law n.º 10/2004).

Among SIADAP’s governing principles, one can find the outcome-based approach, the universality of its applicability, the accountability and development and the recognition and motivation.

SIADAP is integrated into the regular annual management cycle within every Public Administration service and body. It includes five building blocks: (1) Setting out an Action Plan for the following year (with strategic objectives); (2) Setting out objectives to be achieved by each organisational unit the following year; (3) Setting out objectives for each worker and/or team for the following year; (4) Reporting activities; (5) Evaluating performances (see fig. 5).

4.3 Inter-relations between categories

In SIADAP+B, each category is part of chain of measurement relations directed towards the strategic focus. As pictured in fig. 6, the points of contact are established through four levels of integration. The numbered circles placed inside each category show how components relate to each other in this integrated model.

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**Fig. 5 – SIADAP - Integrated System of Performance Assessment in Public Administration.**
Fig. 6– Inter-relations between the categories of SIADAP+B model
In fact, the application in a library of CAF’s nine self-assessment criterions - Leadership, Planning and strategy, Human Resource Management, Partnerships and resources, Process and change management, People results, Customers/citizen oriented results, Society results and Key performance results – can be assisted by the five evaluation perspectives proposed by SIADAP+B’s Balanced Scorecard. For instance, BSC’s Organisational behaviour focus relates to CAF’s Leadership, Planning and strategy and Partnerships and resources assessment criterions.

Though the implementation of the integrated model SIADAP+B can be done in diverse ways, there is a mandatory pre-requisite: it has to be customized, that is, adapted to the foster organisation. The successful implementation of this model depends, therefore, on its ability to reflect the library and parent organisation’s strategies and adapt to the collective needs and expectations. In this process, strategic planning must be an organisational practice; the organisational vision (strategic focus) is an essential piece in this model, since it acts as a continuous reference for the alignment of strategic objectives, communication, operational decisions and training.

It is important to use SIADAP+B as an experience of competences development within the management cycle. Kolb (1984) presents an experiential learning model with interdisciplinary influences based on individual learning experiences. Four learning elements are presented: concrete experience (level of involvement); reflexive observation (systematic reflection upon self-experience and learning); abstract conceptualization (reflections related to knowledge and experiences) and active experimentation (development of experiences and exploration of learning areas). Self-evaluation is an individual learning experience with relevance to organizational learning: as people reflect on their performance from open experimentation, they are encouraged to learn in this way. The added value of this approach to reflection-performance evaluation has also revealed the importance of “double-loop learning” (Argyris and Schon, 1978) when actions and intentions can be interpreted through experiences. Learn with practice is a context dependent professional situation that must be incorporated in this model.

There is growing evidence to suggest that research skills are crucial to maintaining the impact of performance evaluation: to improve performance outcomes (individual and organizational), librarians’ development should be aimed at fostering an evidence-based librarianship approach. The results obtained can be interpreted in various ways: reflexive practice and action learning, team learning and professional learning and performance.
5. Conclusions

To summarize, this reflection upon emerging needs to evaluate public services reveals a new understanding of a government model – SIADAP – going from an assessment of objectives to a wider definition that can be better captured by a theory driven perspective based on action-research. Under this interpretation, SIADAP+B is concerned with linking theory (learning, competences, assessment) processes of work and outcomes through an exploration of several models. It is important that different tools and techniques in quality management and performance evaluation become more integrated so that they serve each other. The evaluation design described here reflects much of the latest influences in multi-method and multi-level collaborations.

A more informed perspective on the priority issues for LIS in Portugal has emerged with this project. From the first results generated it is apparent that the priority for further investigation and model improvement should be in the following areas:

- Projects for indicators, statistics and performance targets;
- Improvement in service provision;
- Development of service profile based on staff competencies and quality services
- Levels of organizational learning

Every model will fail to produce their potential benefits unless it is actively led and supported by individuals who believe that they can and should make a positive difference to stakeholders. LIS professionals need the “three Ts”:

- Time
- Trust
- Tenacity

Further development of this work will be on the direction of increasing the marketing role of the profession as an innovative profession that is prepared to take the risk of making changes in library management and become a “good practice” in public services. This strategy of visibility (LIS professional competences-driven and LIS professional social value-driven) should be linked to Evidence Based Librarianship. In a competitive market place, it is now the moment to solve some old dilemmas between practicing and research.

Although this communication was not able to address this in further detail, it is our hope that the issues discussed above will provide a framework for such a discussion.
Notes
1) The Observatory on Quality of Knowledge and Information Services (OQIKS) was launched on the 25th October 2001 based on a knowledge partnership between two services of the Portuguese central Public Administration: Inofor – Institute for Innovation in Vocational Training and the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Education. This innovative experience was presented in several scientific events, like for instance the 68th IFLA General Conference and Council (Glasgow, 2002) and the NORD I&D 2004 (Aalborg, 2004) (Ochôa e Pinto, 2004; Ochôa e Pinto, 2004a).
2) INCITE – The Portuguese Association for Information Management is one of the members of the OP I-D, a project that aggregates four Portuguese information professional associations and tries to respond to the tendency to focus on professional performance and value.
3) European Foundation for Quality Management.

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Abstract
The aim of this paper is to present the model developed specifically for the evalua-
tion of Portuguese public library and information services as a result of a research
project carried out by INCITE - The Portuguese Association for Information Manage-
ment (2004). The model is based on four action-oriented pillars:
• Common Assessment Framework (CAF) – the self-evaluation framework
recommended for European Public Administration Services;
• Balanced Scorecard – Kaplan and Norton’s strategic tool for organizational
management and performance improvement;
• Library standards on performance measures and indicators (ISO 2789,
ISO 11620 and ISO/TR 20983);
• The Portuguese system for evaluating Public Administration organizational
and individual performance – Sistema Integrado de Avaliação de Desempenho
da Administração Pública – SIADAP.

The balanced integration of all these components focused on a library perspec-
tive is an innovative tool, which can push librarians towards a new social impact,
since it is the first professional group to have a self-evaluation performance tailored-
made tool.
The model is described and the integration links are mapped in detail.

The dissemination of SIADAP+B among the library and information community, together with a (inter)national growing tendency towards quality assessment led to several marketing initiatives within libraries. These initiatives and projects carried out by INCITE or, individually, by INCITE members are analysed:

Finally, after reflecting on the difficulties of changing the traditional performance evaluation behaviour of librarians, the advantages of using an integrated model for performance evaluation are emphasized, especially in terms of INCITE’s marketing policy.