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Sponsor's performance in governance project based on the visual management model Life cycle canvas[®]: evidence from a public educational institution

Atuação do patrocinador na governança de projetos com base no modelo de gestão visual de projetos Life cycle canvas[®]: evidências de uma instituição pública de ensino

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ABSTRACT

The present work aims to examine how the Life Cycle Canvas[®] visual model influences the performance of the governance function performed by the project sponsor in the project life cycle of a public educational institution. A research with case study procedures was carried out, where the subjects of this research comprised the members of the institution's project office and the sponsors themselves. Data collection was carried out through individual semi-structured interviews and the analysis was carried out through content analysis. The previously defined data analysis categories represented the six dimensions of sponsor roles in the context of project governance pointed out by Crawford et al. (2008). As a result, it was identified that the Life Cycle Canvas[®] visual model can contribute to the performance of this role in the six dimensions suggested by Crawford et al. (2008), and taking into account the list of identified codes, it can be argued that it helps, mainly, in the dimensions “govern the project”, “guide and make decisions” and “critically review progress”. Relationships with the main governance theories linked to project management were also identified. In this way, the work suggests that the Life Cycle Canvas[®] visual model can be an important tool to improve the governance performance that the sponsor must have, allowing him to see his role throughout the life cycle of a project.

Keywords: Project Governance, Sponsor, Life Cycle Canvas[®]

RESUMO

O presente trabalho tem como objetivo examinar como o modelo visual Life Cycle Canvas[®] influencia o desempenho da função de governança desempenhada pelo patrocinador do projeto no ciclo de vida de projetos de uma instituição pública de ensino. Foi realizada uma investigação com procedimentos de estudo de caso, onde os sujeitos desta investigação foram os membros do escritório de projetos da instituição e os próprios patrocinadores. A coleta de dados foi realizada por meio de entrevista individual semiestruturada e a análise por meio da análise de conteúdo. As categorias de análise de dados definidas representaram as seis dimensões dos papéis dos patrocinadores no contexto da governança do projeto observadas por Crawford et al. (2008). Como resultado, identificou-se que o modelo visual Life Cycle Canvas[®] pode contribuir para o desempenho desse papel nas seis dimensões sugeridas por Crawford et al. (2008), e levando em consideração a lista de códigos identificados, pode-se argumentar que auxilia, principalmente,

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nas dimensões “governar o projeto”, “orientar e tomar decisões” e “revisar criticamente o progresso”. Também foram identificadas relações com as principais teorias de governança ligadas à gestão de projetos. Dessa forma, o trabalho sugere que o modelo visual Life Cycle Canvas[®] pode ser uma importante ferramenta para melhorar o desempenho de governança que o patrocinador deve ter, permitindo que ele veja seu papel ao longo do ciclo de vida de um projeto.

Palavras-chave: Governança de projeto, Patrocinador, Life Cycle Canvas[®]

1. INTRODUCTION

For an organization to create value from project management, there must be a clear link between the outputs generated by the projects and the requirements of the business strategy. Organizations that have the structure and roles to align project deliveries with their goals will be in a better position in making their investments and creating value defined by their business strategies (Too & Weaver, 2014).

In this context, project governance emerges to add organizations' resources and guiding practices in effective decision-making throughout project management (Musawir, Serra, Zwikael, & Ali, 2017; Too, Le, & Yap, 2017). This is because governance is related to decisions that define expectations, responsibilities, power delegation or performance verification, consistent management, cohesive and direct decision-making policies, and processes for a given area of responsibility (Kerzner, 2017). Project governance can be recognized as a critical factor for the successful delivery and results of projects (Chang, 2015; Biesenthal & Wilden, 2014).

The debate of the literature on governance in project management is dominated by research that analyzes the structure of governance regimes, with relatively little research on governance micro-practices, as in fact, it happens (Van Marrewijk & Smits, 2016), although it recognizes the importance of project governance to allow the realization of benefits. So, this research area lacks empirical evidence (Musawir *et al*, 2017).

Within this perspective, the sponsorship function provides a relevant link between corporate and project governance to ensure that governance requirements are met, and that

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support is provided to projects and programs (Crawford, Cooke-Davies, Hobbs, Labuschagne, Remington, & Chen, 2008). As a project governor, the executive sponsor is the link between the executive team that defined the strategy for the corporation and the project team that implement the strategy (Crawford & Cooke-Davies, 2009).

In addition, it is known that the sponsor is fundamental to the success of the project. However, the impact of the sponsorship function on the value and sustainability of project management is not known (Chandler & Thomas, 2015). Recent researchers have identified behaviors that constitute the role of the executive sponsor and assess how this behavior affects the success of the project during the different phases of the project life cycle (Kloppenborg, Tesch, & Manolis, 2014).

As for the sponsor performing governance functions, Crawford *et al* (2008) mapped this role in six dimensions: governing the project; taking responsibility for the business case; guiding and making decisions; critically reviewing progress; managing internal and external interfaces; and having sufficient seniority.

In general, the literature that relates the themes of project governance and project sponsor presents studies that are concerned with defining the role and responsibilities of the sponsor in corporate structures and project governance (Crawford *et al*, 2008), investigate the interface between governance and project management in public projects (Klakegg, Williams, Magnussen, & Glasspool, 2008), check how project sponsors can identify and manage stakeholders (Boonstra, 2009), understand the role of the sponsor in a governance framework (Too & Weaver, 2014) and analyze the sponsors' behaviors (Pinto & Patanakul, 2015).

In addition, it is perceived that there is a gap in the literature that explores a project management technique or model involving governance and sponsor function during the project lifecycle. Thus, this work aims to look over as visual model Life Cycle Canvas® influences the performance of the governance function exercised by the project sponsor in the life cycle of projects of a public educational institution.

The Life Cycle Canvas® is a recent visual management model proposed by Veras (2016), which incorporates concepts from the Project management body of knowledge (PMBOK) guide by covering aspects associated with the areas of knowledge; the Projects in Controlled Environments (PRINCE2) methodology, with issues related to the control of deliveries and structures; and the Project Model Canvas (PMC), presenting the project management structure

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on a screen and allowing to build the projects through a sequential workflow (Medeiros, Neto, Nobre, & Nogueira, 2017).

The model proposes to manage a project in a simplified way throughout its life cycle or in specific phases of the project (Veras, 2016). Recent studies have already shown that the model has proved to be adherent to the public sector context, generating greater dynamism to the management process between the stages of initiation and planning (Medeiros *et al*, 2017).

Therefore, this research is relevant since studies relating to project governance and sponsoring have been little explored by researchers, as well as there is no evidence on the use of a model or tool that assists in this relationship. This research contributes to the knowledge already existing in the area, besides assisting and encouraging the development of other research on this subject and cooperating with the reduction of the gap present in the literature.

The present work took place in the context of a public higher education institution with a project management office that uses the Life Cycle Canvas® model adopted throughout the life cycle of projects supported by this organizational unit, with one or more sponsors in the projects, and therefore seeks to fill the gap on the sponsor's performance in project governance based on a specific project management model.

To achieve this goal, the research was carried out with case study procedures, with a qualitative approach, where the research subjects comprised the project management office members and the sponsors of supported projects. Data collection was performed through semi-structured individual interviews. Data analysis was performed through content analysis and ATLAS.ti software, version 7, was used to aid data processing. The categories previously defined represented the six dimensions of sponsor roles in the context of project governance pointed out by Crawford *et al* (2008).

As a result, it was identified that the visual model Life Cycle Canvas® can contribute to the performance of this role in the six dimensions suggested by Crawford *et al* (2008), and considering the list of identified codes, it can be claimed that it assists in the dimensions "governing the project", "guide and make decisions" and "critically review progress". It is still possible to claim that the model has a preponderant aspect in the performance of the sponsor's governance role, making it reflect on important factors for the project sponsor performance. Relations with the main governance theories tied to project management were also identified.

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This paper is organized into five sections, the first comprises this introduction, the second presents the review of the literature organized in four subsections, the third comprises the methodological aspects of the research, the fourth demonstrates the analysis and discussion of the results and, finally, the fifth, presents the final considerations extracted from the study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. VISUAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT MODELS

For some years, visual management models and tools, popularly known as canvas, based on a single canvas, frame, or schema, have been disseminated to generate simplicity to management in various perspectives (Gloria & Gonçalves, 2016).

Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) were pioneers in presenting to the world a screen with nine blocks that make up the Business Model Canvas (BMC). It is a practical vision that allows the entrepreneur to represent his business model on only one page. In Brazil, some models emerged relating the canvas to project management, such as Project Model Canvas (Finocchio, 2013) and Life Cycle Canvas® (Veras, 2016).

The last one is a model that has a proposal to manage a project during its life cycle and can be used throughout the project or in specific phases. The model is suitable to practices suggested by PMBOK®, but without losing the simplicity proposed by the tools based on screen or frame (Veras, 2016). Figure 1 displays the mainframe adopted by the model.

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Figure 1. Home screen of the Visual Model Life Cycle Canvas®.
Note. Source: Veras, 2016.

The justifications, objectives, benefits, and factors presented in the first column of the model represent the business case (Project Management Institute - PMI, 2013). The other factors include large areas of project management knowledge suggested by PMBOK, some directly, such as those contained in the third column, which presents stakeholders, team, and communications, and in the last column, which brings risks, time, and costs. Others indirectly, such as product, requirements, assumptions, and restrictions that make up the scope, deliveries, and requirements that comprise quality (Veras, 2017).

2.2. PROJECT GOVERNANCE

Project governance comprises a system of values, responsibilities, processes, and policies that allows projects to achieve organizational objectives and that are implemented according to the expectations of all stakeholders, internal and external, and the organization itself (Muller, 2009). Project governance can be understood in the context of the alignment between the objectives of the project with the organization's strategy, having as relevant actors the sponsor and the project team. Thus, it involves a set of relationships between the project management, its sponsor (or executive board), its owner, and other stakeholders (Turner, 2009).

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To contribute to organizational and project objectives and given the insertion of projects in various organizational contexts (Sydow, Lindkvist, & De Fillippi, 2004), project governance concepts need to consider this multilevel nature, which occurs at the intersections of projects, programs, and portfolios. Based on this, some concepts have been accepted and shared in the literature.

From an organizational perspective, the project governance is defined and necessary to fit into the larger context of the program or organization that sponsors it, but it is separate from organizational governance (PMI, 2013). Considering the way it applies to portfolios, programs, projects, and project management, it coexists within the corporate governance structure.

In this way, governance subsidizes decisions, which in turn determine expectations, responsibilities, delegation of power, or verification of performance, policies, and processes for their respective responsible areas (Kerzner, 2017). It seeks to favor resources and practices that help efficient and effective decision-making throughout project management (Musawir *et al*, 2017; Too *et al*, 2017).

Governance practices comprise the means that an organization applies to drive the internal governance of the project (Kujala, Aaltonen, & Gotcheva, 2016). Recently this theme was addressed in the work of Lappi and Aaltonen (2017), which sought to analyze the governance practices of public sector organizations projects, illustrate the type of impact of these practices on agile software projects and describe the tensions of agile project governance. The research results describe how project governance practices can be categorized into six dimensions demonstrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Dimensions of project governance practices

Dimension	Main activities
Business case	<i>Stakeholders, goals, budgets, and specifications</i>
Hiring	Supply, procurement process, risks, and incentives
Control	Monitoring, reporting, and measurement
Direction	Coordination, planning, and communication
Decision making	Authority, organization function determination
Skills building and skills building	Skills, and competences

Note. Source: Adapted from Lappi and Aaltonen, 2017.

This paper provides an important contribution to the theme because it organizes the main practices in six dimensions and although it is applied to agile software projects, it denotes a concern to understand how this is working in public projects.

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2.3. PROJECT SPONSOR AND THEIR ROLE IN GOVERNANCE

The project sponsor should be responsible for realizing project benefits (Breese, Couch, & Turner, 2019), considered a critical link between the executive and strategic levels of the organization, as well in the effective delivery of these benefits (Miller & Hobbs, 2002).

The sponsor should be able to translate the needs of the organization in the realization of the project, which in turn needs to be aligned with the overall organizational strategy. In other words, the sponsor should define what value to obtain from the project (Hjelmbrække, Laedre, & Lohne, 2014). This implies that the sponsor must direct the project with the responsibility of ensuring that the benefits to the organization are met, aligned with the needs of the business, approving key deliveries, and making decisions or recommendations in critical aspects during the project (Too & Weaver, 2014).

The sponsor can also assume the role of the main risk-taker, who on his behalf the project is carried out (Association of Project Management - APM, 2000), besides being the person or group that provides the resources and support for the project and is responsible for its success (PMI, 2013). It is an interesting part that assumes the risk related to the cost and future value of the project (Olsson & Berg-Johansen, 2016).

In this sense, the role of the sponsor can be understood as responsible for identifying business needs, problems, or opportunities; by the business case; hiring the project manager; and aligning the project with the organization's strategy (West, 2010).

More specifically, the role of the sponsor involves activities throughout the project lifecycle, such as defining business requirements, establishing a strategic project with priorities, agreeing with the definition of the project including objectives, defining project success criteria, continuous monitoring of the project's business environment and the realization of benefits, receipt of the delivery of a project at completion (APM, 2006; Briner, Hastings, & Geddes, 1999; Field & Keller, 1998; Hall, Holt, & Purchase, 2003; Kliem & Ludin, 1992; Morris, 1994; Turner, 2009).

In the initiation stage of the project, the sponsor can define the project success criteria, guide the project manager, establish communications and commitment, define and align the project, prioritize the project and select and establish the project team (Kloppenborg, Tesch,

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Manolis, & Heitkamp, 2006). So, at each stage of the life cycle of a project, there are critical sponsor behaviors for the success of the project (Kloppenborg *et al*, 2014), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Critical behaviors of the sponsor in the stages of the life cycle.

Life cycle stage	Behaviors
Beginning	Set performance goals; Select and guide the project manager; Set priorities.
Planning	Ensure planning; Develop relationships with stakeholders.
Execution	Ensure adequate and effective communication; Maintain relations with stakeholders; Ensure quality.
Closure	Identify and capture lessons-learned; Ensure that resources and benefits are realized.

Note. Source: Adapted from Kloppenborg *et al*, 2014.

As can be seen in Table 2, the authors suggest, for example, that during the execution stage, sponsors should focus on ensuring communication as a priority and that this focus, in turn, will increase the most important element of success during this specific phase of the project - to what extent a client is satisfied with the project results.

In general, the sponsor can support project governance from two broad perspectives. The first one is an external focus on the project from the client and other stakeholders point of view, when dealing with aspects related to the requirements and benefits of the business, establishing a project strategy with priorities, continuously monitoring the project processes and the business environment ensuring the realization of the benefits, in addition to receiving the delivery of a project at closure and, in extreme situations, make the decision to cancel the project (Bryde, 2008). This is the act of governing the project and requires that the project be examined from the perspective of the parent organization (Crawford *et al*, 2008).

The second role is more focused on an internal focus, where the sponsor is expected to monitor project progress so that any deviation of time or cost can be identified in advance and corrective measures are taken so that it needs regular reports provided by the project manager. So that it can provide him and the team with support to fulfill their duties effectively (Wright, 1997).

In this context, Too and Weaver (2014) examined existing research, ideas, and concepts on project governance and corporate project management and proposed a framework for building a theoretical and practical development, suggesting portfolio management, project sponsor, project management office, and effective project management as key elements to support adequate governance.

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As far as the sponsor is concerned, the authors summarize that the governance processes that can be delegated to him include at the first moment the development of processes to ensure that decisions are aligned with the organization's strategy and overall governance structure. Second, provide feedback to strategic decision-makers and the governing body based on "special knowledge" gained through effective sponsorship activities. Third, determine the criteria and methods to be used in the direction and support of sponsored projects and programs. Sponsor management functions include the work of applying policies, procedures, and methods to make and implement effective decisions that support project or program work and maximize the value achieved by organizing your investment.

Tilk (2016) listed expected behaviors for an initial sponsor to perform his governance function, among them: understanding the main value factors and keeping the focus on the general scenario; defining structures, roles, responsibilities, and processes; making decisions, not receiving updates passively and asking the right questions.

Crawford *et al* (2008) identified two functions for the project sponsor: governance and support. In the governance function, executive sponsors coordinate activities between corporate and project environments structured around responsibilities distributed in six dimensions: governing the project; taking responsibility for the business case and realizing benefits; guiding and making decisions; critically reviewing progress; managing internal and external interfaces; and having sufficient seniority to represent the project or program (Crawford *et al*, 2008).

The first dimension, "governing the project", involves governance issues themselves, such as ensuring that procedures are followed and providing the right direction based on the organization's vision. The second, "taking responsibility for the business case and the realization of benefits", has a clear link between its role, its field of responsibility, and the direction of the organization, which includes obtaining the benefits defined in the project. The third, "guide and make decisions", comprises fundamental governance activities of the sponsor's role that are indicated in project management standards, including the definition of the scope and objectives of the project or program, the definition and communication of success criteria, appropriate closure and risk and problem management, involving decisions covering the main areas of the project: cost, time, resources, scope variations, and escalation points.

The fourth, "critically review progress", concerns the ability and willingness to monitor and evaluate project performance, provide objectivity and align the project to the strategic vision

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of the organization, thus encompassing functions and monitoring and control, as well as issuing opinions and seeking to extract the best information from the project team. The fifth, "manage internal and external interfaces", makes it possible to have the ability to interact with stakeholders inside and outside the project, ensuring that both are satisfied with the conduct of the project. The sixth and final, "have enough seniority to represent the project or program", is tied to the sponsor having the appropriate influence to represent the project, gain executive support and support and defend the project if necessary.

From these descriptions and the focus exposed by Bryde (2008) and Wright (1997), it was possible to build Table 3 considering the environment of the project realization.

Table 3. Dimensions and focus.

Dimensions of Crawford <i>et al</i> (2008)	Focus
Governing the project	External
Take responsibility for the business case and the realization of benefits	External
Guide and make decisions	Internal
Critically review progress	Internal
Manage internal and external interfaces	Internal and external
Have enough seniority to represent the project or program	Internal and external

Note. Source: Prepared by the authors, 2021.

Considering the definitions exposed to external (Bryde, 2008) and internal (Wright, 1997) and the meanings of the dimensions pointed out by Crawford *et al* (2008), Table 3 listed "governing the project" and "taking responsibility for the business case and the realization of benefits" as an external focus. "Guide and make decisions" and "critically review progress" as an internal focus. And "manage internal and external interfaces" and "have enough seniority to represent the project or program" with both internal and external focuses.

Because of the role of the project sponsor as a bridge between governance and support functions, it is possible to consider it a fundamental link in management systems that support good governance (Crawford *et al*, 2008).

2.4. THEORIES OF GOVERNANCE AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Six dominant theories were identified and correlated to project governance (Biesenthal & Wilden, 2014). To make these theories clearer, table 4 presents a concise overview of them.

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Table 4. Summary of the main governance theories

Theory	Summary	Main authors	Implications of theory for project management
Agency theory	The agency theory identifies a two-part agency relationship (director and agent) in organizations. Both actors are perceived as rational economic actors who act in interested manner. The governance structure is oriented by costs and control and can favor short-term results.	Mitnick (1973), Ross (1973)	Used to describe the relationship between the project owner and their manager.
Transaction cost economics	Transaction Cost Economics (TCE) implies that organizations adapt their governance structures to achieve the lowest possible transaction costs. However, The TCE assumes a complex relationship between buyer and seller. Behavioral factors are also considered when choosing a specific transaction.	Williamson (1975), Coase (1937)	It can assist in describing the selection process for contractors and suppliers.
Stakeholder theory	The stakeholder theory considers a broader group of constituents, rather than focusing on shareholders, where there is an emphasis on stakeholders. The company's governance structure can provide some direct representation of stakeholder groups.	Donaldson and Preston (1995), Freeman (1984)	Approach adopted to support project teams in the relationship with various stakeholder groups.
Shareholder theory	The corporate governance shareholder theory assumes that an organization's primary goal is to maximize shareholder return on investment (ROI). This requires structures (such as contracts, processes, and policies) to ensure that management action is always in the best interests of shareholders.	Jensen and Meckling (1976), Friedman (1962)	It proposes that the main interested part to the detriment of any other is the shareholder.
Stewardship theory	The stewardship theory defines a relationship between organizational actors, in which managers are not motivated by individual goals, but are people whose motives are aligned with the objectives of their directors. The governance structure is based on trust to improve the organization's long-term performance.	Donaldson and Davis (1991), Davis, Schoorman, and Donaldson (1997)	It proposes that shareholders are better represented when guiding project managers regarding the interests of the organization.
Resource dependency theory	Managers can prioritize, acquire, facilitate, and connect the internal and external resources of the company needed to achieve corporate goals. The variety of resources available, including human resources, can be unique to an organization and affect its organizational governance structure	Pfeffer and Salancik (1978)	It helps to understand the importance of allocating and prioritizing different resources that are often shared across programs and project portfolios

Note. Source: Adapted from Biesenthal & Wilden, 2014.

The corporate governance literature recognized the plurality of theoretical governance structures (Clarke, 2004). The corporate governance theories depend on context, it is not

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universally applicable and can be applied to project governance in specific contexts, configurations, or situations. Although some authors advocate the convergence of existing governance theories (Roe, 2003), it is believed that maintaining the plurality and differences of existing governance theories is more beneficial, as they allow specifically explaining the distinct needs at the organizational levels, projects, programs, and portfolios to ensure the successful governance of the project.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research comprised a study of multiple cases in which sponsors and team members who worked on different projects participated, each case occurring in a different scenario, but all projects aimed at organizational improvement of the activities in a Brazilian Federal Institution of Higher Education. The case study represents an empirical investigation and involves a comprehensive method, with the logic of planning, data collection, and analysis and in this area can include both single and multiple case studies (Yin, 2009). The procedure was also based on a qualitative approach that demonstrates the variety of perspectives on the object (Sampiere, Collado, & Lucio, 2013).

The unit of analysis comprised the governance role of project sponsors supported by the secretariat of the educational institution and, as subjects of this research, the sponsors. Only projects that were already closed or those in the closing phase were objects of analysis. Those involved in these projects had a greater familiarity with the Life Cycle Canvas® model since they experienced the entire life cycle.

Thus, at the time of the research, the office had thirteen projects with closed or closing status, in which three of them were discarded due to the fact that there was only a single member of the firm involved in the project and these had contributed to the realization of this research, which could generate some bias.. This decision was made in order to increase the reliability of the results in data collection (Flick, 2009). Thus, six sponsors and two team members involved in the ten remaining projects were identified, so that sponsors and members assumed the role in more than one project. These two groups of actors were included in the research to perform the triangulation necessary for the case study.

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During data collection, the semi-structured individual interview was used as an instrument, based on a script of subjects or questions, where the interviewer is free to ask other questions that he deems pertinent, to obtain other concepts on the desired topics (Sampiere *et al*, 2013).

Two scripts of semi-structured interviews were elaborated; one applied to the sponsors and the other to the institution's project office members. These instruments aimed to collect data to analyze the factors related to the sponsor's governance role with the use of Life Cycle Canvas®. The instruments had three question blocks, which were: (A) Profile of the interviewee, (B) Characterization of the position, and (C) The role of the Visual Model Life Cycle Canvas® for the performance of sponsor functions in the project lifecycle, the latter block had inducing questions and in-depth questions. While the first script sought to understand the sponsors' view of their governance roles, the second sought to understand the view of the office members on the sponsor's governance roles. The validations of these instruments were carried out with a sponsor of a project of another institution and a specific team member who worked on a project that had this sponsor (Flick, 2009).

Before the interviews, an initial survey was conducted with the interviewees to verify their interest in contributing to the research. After a positive response, an e-mail message was sent with an official invitation in which it contained the appointment indication with the date and time for the interview. Before the beginning of the interviews, the terms of consent and confidentiality were presented. All ethical procedures were followed to preserve the anonymity of the participants and the quality of the research. The interviews took place in person from August 26th, 2019 to September 10th, 2019 and were all recorded in audio according to the interviewees' authorization. At this stage, it was possible to have access to the team members, but only to four of the sponsors. It was interviewed six men and two women, aged between 23 and 56 years old. Three of them held senior management positions, one was a unit director, two project analysts, and one scholarship holder. To preserve the hidden identity, the interviewees were assigned unique identifiers, i.e. numbers from 1 to 7, totaling 265 minutes and 27 seconds of audio and 71 pages of transcripts.

The material generated in the interviews was transcribed manually and verbatim, following a protocol to standardize documents of this nature. The process of anonymization of participants, projects, and others was also considered at this stage, where the interviewee's name,

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interviewer, and other information that could generate identification were changed or deleted, when necessary.

Another procedure adopted was the external validation of the transcriptions with the research participants. In addition to this material, cards were also sent to each interviewee containing the categories and codes identified in each interview.

After the validation process, the coding of the material was started using the previously defined codes. In addition to the transcribed material, the analytical memos generated in each interview were used, as well as coding by interobserver (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). Then, the codification was submitted to the validation of a researcher with solid experience in qualitative methods.

Finally, contact summary forms were generated as a way to synthesize the main findings in each interview and facilitate the identification of these points in the analysis process. The qualitative analysis of the data sought to broadly understand the meanings of the collected data, including the different meanings and lived experiences, and the analysis of the collected data was performed through content analysis (Bardin, 2011).

As a support in the processing of data, ATLAS.ti software version 7, was used. The categories defined in advance represented the six dimensions of the sponsor's responsibilities in the context of project governance defined by Crawford *et al* (2008). The categories would all be included in a single-family, "Sponsor governance roles", after a detailed reading of the work of Crawford *et al* (2008) and organization of the main results found by the authors.

Thus, if the dimensions identified by the authors were elevated in this study to categories, the results within each category were transformed into codes. Each category below presents the number of codes listed in parentheses: governing the project (6), taking responsibility for the business case and performing benefits (4), guiding and making decisions (7), critically reviewing progress (9), managing internal and external interfaces (8), and having enough seniority to represent the project or program (5). Detailed encoding with descriptions is possible to display in the supplemental material (<https://bitly.com/AvzdZ>). The theoretical saturation was not used in this research because there are a limited number of possible interviewees.

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4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the six previously defined categories that corresponded to the dimensions of the sponsor's governance roles identified by Crawford *et al* (2008), it was made the initial coding by verifying in the interviewees' statements the presence of codes belonging to these categories. From the perspective of the interviewed, it was possible to identify the six dimensions defined by Crawford *et al* (2008) that corresponded to the governance roles of the sponsor. These categories are presented in order of relevance, taking into account the total frequency of all codes by category.

The category that held the highest frequency of codes was "governing the project". In this category, it was possible to identify in the interviewees' statements all six codes previously listed. The code that accumulated the most frequency, seventeen, in total, was "provide the direction", expressed in the speech of a sponsor, interviewee 4.

We always try to give the direction of what comes to be this project. After all, who has the vision of strategic planning of why this project was interesting or not, had the effective participation of us. Mine particularly. For us to define what would be important for the Project.

Given this speech, it can be admitted that during the project there were situations when the sponsor had to decide and point out which paths to follow. This is in line with what West (2010) pointed out, that it is the sponsor's role to keep the project aligned with organizational strategy, reinforces what Cooke-Davies *et al* (2006) and Crawford *et al* (2008) reported that executive sponsors provide the link between corporate strategy and projects and is aligned with what was reported by Hjelmbrække *et al* (2014) that cast the responsibility of the project sponsor in translating the needs in the production of the project, i. e., it is aligned with the general strategy. Another speech within this code that needs attention is from one member of the office, interviewee 5.

For example, of those whom I participated in the impediment was an amendment of legislation. So, that changed the way we worked on some deliveries. So, the sponsor had the choice to keep the change following the legislation or to keep pace as we established in the project. So, it was this impediment that hindered our natural progress without his definition and had to choose which route should be and, in that case, he chose from what he had already conceived.

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This endorses what Crawford *et al* (2008) emphasized and reinforces one of the points that Too and Weaver (2014) pointed out, that the sponsor can implement effective decisions that support the work of the project.

Another code in this category that had a relevant frequency, twelve times, was "Sponsor reviews". It's possible to perceive this in the speech of a sponsor, interviewee 1.

It is at this stage we sometimes, in a meeting, we manage to set a certain project requirement or in the scope of delivery, due to a change in the proposal that was initially planned.

In the interviewee's speech, it is permissible to understand that at some point in the execution of the project it was necessary to make a review. This may have occurred due to changes that may have arisen and that it was necessary to adjust. Based on this, it confirms what was placed by Crawford *et al* (2008), which the sponsor needs to have the ability to perform reviews to ensure the value of project deliveries.

The next category that had the highest occurrence of codes was "critically review progress". In it, from the analysis of the textual corpus, seven of the nine codes initially listed were identified. The code that made up the highest frequency, thirteen times, was "Gather information weekly". An example was perceived in the speech of a sponsor, the interviewee 1.

As we put: usually, as with each delivery, there is always a meeting with the sponsor. So, it's when we can keep track of the execution and see the results, what's being achieved in addition to what I had already put before, in this closest contact with the project manager, or a team member.

The Interviewee 7 reveals that the visual model Life Cycle Canvas® is usually presented for the sponsor to follow the progress of the project. This speech reveals that there is a concern of the sponsor to keep informed about the progress of the projects. This data endorses what Crawford *et al* (2008) stressed about the importance of the role of the sponsor in gathering information and what Kloppenborg *et al* (2014) alluded to having procedures to ensure adequate and effective communication, in addition to reinforcing what other authors mentioned about the continuous monitoring of the project environment and the realization of benefits (APM, 2006; Briner *et al*, 1999; Field & Keller, 1998; Hall *et al*, 2003; Kliem & Ludin, 1992; Morris, 1994; Turner, 2009).

Next, the most frequent category of codes was "Guiding and making decisions". Of the seven codes listed a priori, five were identified. The one with the highest citations was "Clearly

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define the scope and objectives", totaling fifteen inserts. This note was present in the speech of the three members of the office, and among them, a speech of interviewee 5 stands out.

And the sponsor when checking the Life Cycle Canvas® already completed, our explanation as to the conduct of the project he was aware of what the requirements were given, and of course, they were able to implement saying, for example: "Look, I think that such a requirement is also important to have in this project".

The speech of interviewee 5 refers to the importance of the visual model Life Cycle Canvas® to the sponsor during the scope definition citing the requirements. This speech in addition to reinforcing what was pointed out by Crawford *et al* (2008), is also under what other authors point out, in which the sponsor is responsible for activities such as the definition of business requirements, establishment of a strategic project with priorities, agreeing with the definition of the project including objectives, defining criteria of project success, continuous monitoring of the business environment of the project and the realization of benefits, receiving delivery of a project at completion (APM, 2006; Briner *et al*, 1999; Field & Keller, 1998. Hall *et al*, 2003; Kliem & Ludin, 1992; Morris, 1994; Turner, 2009).

In terms of evidence, in the category "Manage internal and external interfaces", and of the eight initial codes, only three were able to be identified. The code most often, five inserts, comprised "Maintaining executive involvement". This point was mentioned by a member of the office and two sponsors, being more persevering in the statements of the sponsors. Is what was clearly said by the interviewee 4.

The directors themselves had some interrelation, for example, in the project, they were involved with the administrative director, the IT director, and the incubator director because the services that were going to be offered by the project were the services of these sectors. So, the directors themselves as well as the collaborators participated with me in building the Life Cycle Canvas® with experience.

The interviewee's statement reveals that he was concerned about maintaining the involvement of executives since the initial phase of the project, using the visual model Life Cycle Canvas® to ensure involvement. This supports what was indicated by Crawford *et al* (2008) and it can also be said that it contributes to what Kloppenborg *et al* (2014) cited as the sponsor's role in ensuring adequate and effective communication.

Continuing the analysis and considering the number of occurrences of the codes, the category that was in the fourth place was "To take responsibility for the business case and the

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realization of benefits". In this category, the code most often, five inserts, referred to "Managing hierarchical processes and relationships". The speech of interviewee 2, a sponsor, exposes this.

Before starting work I call all the teams involved including where the work was going to be done, it was determined that the staff would have the same access to all the information. In the work progress, the staff was well attended, and I did not have to come and say, "Look, there's this, this, this interference." You know? It was a very, very peaceful thing.

The speech of interviewee 2 mentions the fact that the sponsor is responsible for engaging the team in the realization of the project, where at the same time it opens paths, ensures effective communication. This speech helps what Crawford *et al* (2008) shook about the sponsor being able to manage processes and hierarchical relationships to produce results that welcome the needs of the project, as well as contributes to what was pointed out by Kloppenborg *et al* (2014), that the sponsor needs to develop relationships with stakeholders.

The last category concerns "Having enough seniority to represent the project or program". In this category, only two of the five codes previously listed were identified. The first, "Possess adequate influence" appeared twice in the speech of only one member of the office, the interviewee 5.

And then they were pretty blunt: "No. Let's move on." We were already walking at a level of learning. If tomorrow this instruction is stiffened, we will be in the case well arranged. So, they were well sponsors even of the stage and say: "I'm going to hold the stride, I can face the institutional rebound, but I'll validate and follow to the end with this, with this area".

The interviewee's speech 5 shows that at one point the sponsor came across a situation in which there was a new normative instruction and that part of it could generate some loss for the project. However, the sponsor chose to ensure the progress of the project, even if there was some institutional implication later. Given this fact, it is confirmed what was pointed out by Crawford *et al* (2008), that sponsors need to have adequate influence so that they can make decisions that ensure the follow-up of the project.

During the analysis of the textual corpus, three new codes emerged: "Recognize the work of the team", "Define success criteria" and "Choose the project manager". The first code was not pointed out by the literature and was included, for convenience, in the category "Manage internal and external interfaces". This was present in the statements of two sponsors, interviewee 3 and interviewee 4, respectively.

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No, we're happy, it's always happy. I always say I want to toast with champagne and cake. Yes, we're happy, because it was hard, for them, it wasn't easy. But it's nice to see after you get the result.

So, for the team it's a thank you that the work ended, that was great, thank you.

The interviewees' statements reveal that at the end of the project, the sponsor acted with gratitude to the team, recognizing the work and making the necessary celebrations for the moment.

The second code, "Define success criteria" was allocated in the category "Guide and make decisions", and it was very evident in the speech of a sponsor, interviewee 1.

In all projects that are closed status and in execution, we actively participate, so the manager and team understand our real needs. And so, the project achieves the requirements to obtain success.

In the sponsor's speech, it is evident that the active participation is visible, so the manager and the team understand the need and with that is established the success criteria. Authors such as APM (2006), Briner *et al* (1999), Field and Keller (1998), Hall *et al* (2003), Kliem and Ludin (1992), Morris (1994), and Turner (2009) had already claimed that the sponsor is responsible for activities that cover the entire life cycle of the project, including the definition of the project's success criteria.

The third code, "Choosing the project manager" was also allocated in the category "Guide and make decisions" and was revealed in the speech of interviewee 1.

There, the things ended up developing naturally. Autonomous projects that were created were developing naturally, so we already saw the need for another project and already knew exactly who was going to be the manager.

The interviewee expressed in its statement that choosing the project manager happens naturally due to the very circumstances where the projects occur from the use of Life Cycle Canvas®. Although this code was not present in the papers indicated by Crawford *et al* (2008), it had already been said to by Kloppenborg *et al* (2014), which it was the sponsor's job to select and guide the project manager.

The table available in the supplementary material summarizes the presence of categories and codes by type of interviewee, where P is the sponsor and M is the member of the office. The table demonstrates how the role of data triangulation was important because it is possible to verify roles played by the sponsors that they don't have a vision, while members can see, such as

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extreme importance, the "Ensure the follow-up of processes", pointed out six times, in the category "Govern the project". Another relevant fact was found in the category "Guide and make decisions", in which of the previously listed codes, excluding the new ones emerged, the members of the office pointed out five codes of the seven, while the sponsors only two, but the two new codes were only expressed by the sponsors.

A similar effect also occurred in the categories "Manage internal and external interfaces" and "Critically review progress". In the first category, the members of the office highlighted three of the eight codes listed in their initial form, while the sponsors only pointed out one code; however, the new code was expressed in both groups. In the second category, the sponsors expressed in their speeches six of the nine initial codes, and on the other hand, the members of the office marked seven of them. It would be pertinent to claim that the members of the office have a better view of the governance functions of the sponsor than themselves, and this could be explained because the members are present throughout the realization of the project, while the sponsor acts strategically in specific situations.

After the identification of the codes and their respective categories, it was necessary to return to the textual corpus and verify these relationships with the phases of the project. It was possible to build Figure 2 that synthesizes the governance roles of Crawford *et al* (2008) in the life cycle from the use of the visual model Life Cycle Canvas®.

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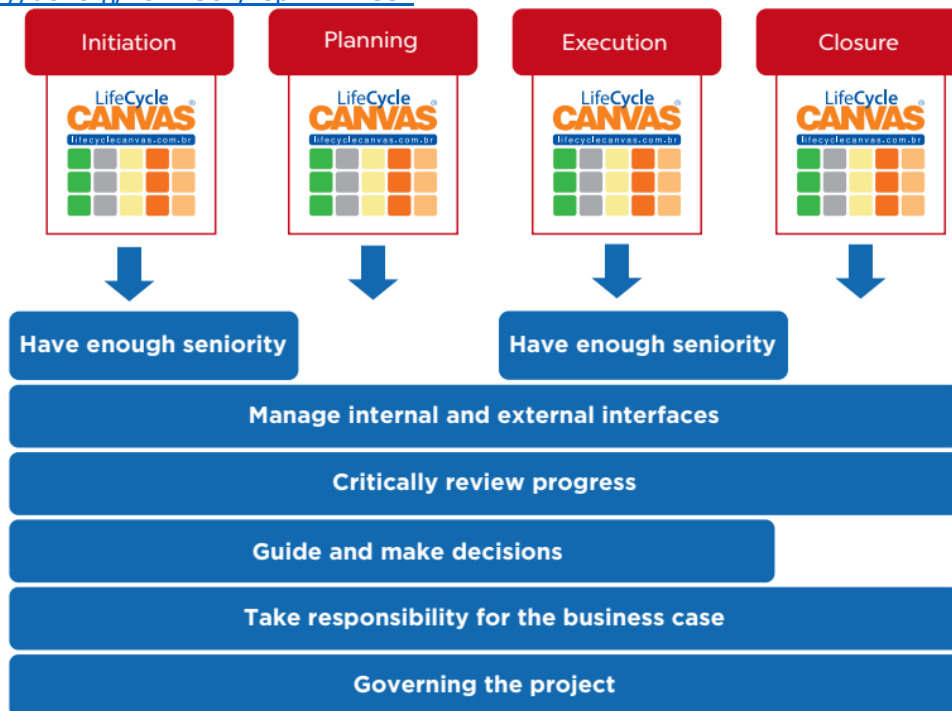


Figure 2. The governance roles of Crawford *et al* (2008) in the life cycle from the use of Life Cycle Canvas®.

Note. Source: Prepared by the authors, 2021.

The figure summarizes how each category was present in the phases of the project life cycle from the use of the visual model Life Cycle Canvas®. All categories were present in the initiation and execution phases, five categories were related in the planning phase and four categories were linked to the closure phase. The categories "Manage internal and external interfaces", "Critically review progress", "Take responsibility for the business case", and "Govern the project" were present in all phases of the life cycle.

The presence of the category "Manage internal and external interfaces" throughout the life cycle reveals that the model fulfills its role of assisting the sponsor in the conduct of the project and in the management of stakeholders. The "Critically review progress" category, can be explained because it involves a set of actions that make the sponsor not only an advisory agent but also an active decision-taker, demonstrating in turn that the model can assist the sponsor in frequent reviews during the project, not making the evaluation process static. In "Taking responsibility for the business case", demonstrates how important the sponsor is for the conduct of the project and the visual model is a foundation for this to occur. In the category "Governing the project", this event can be seen from the perspective that the model can provide the sponsor

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with ways to ensure governance in its essence, such as ensuring that procedures are followed and providing the correct direction based on the organization's vision.

The category "Guide and make decisions" was present in the phases of initiation and execution, revealing the contribution of the model for the sponsor to perform its function of being a guide in these phases. Finally, the category having "Sufficient seniority" was present only in the phases of initiation and execution, demonstrating how the model can generate a reflection for the sponsor to fulfill its function of ensuring resources or the continuation of the project.

After these analyses, a new perspective of the corpus was carried out, trying to understand how the contributions of the visual model Life Cycle Canvas® to the performance of the sponsor's governance role is related to governance theories that have implications in project management. Reviewing the codes and their descriptions (see Table 6) as well as the contexts in which they are placed in the interviewees' statements, relationships with four theories, resource dependency theory, stewardship theory, stakeholder theory, and shareholder theory were identified. Figure 3 presents a matrix with four quadrants and the codes correlated to each theory.

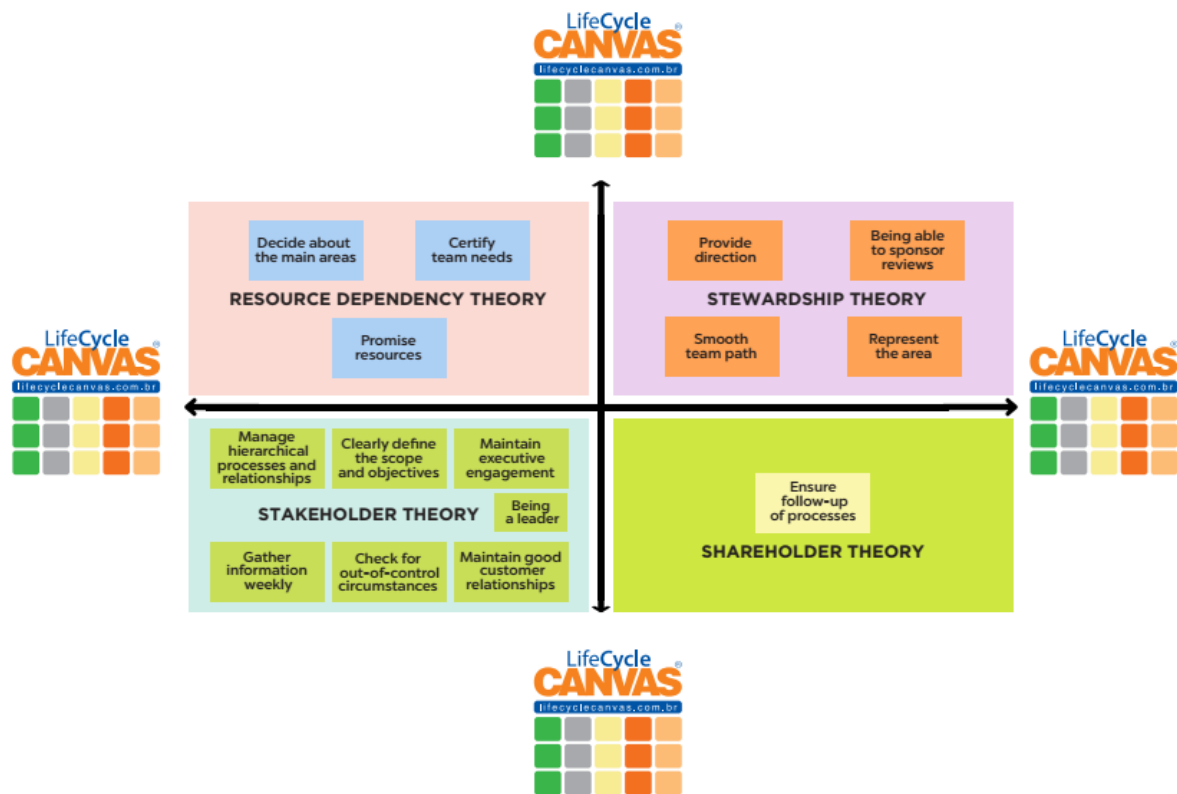


Figure 3. Matrix of governance theories and related codes.

Note. Source: Prepared by the authors, 2021.

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The theory with the greatest relationships was the stakeholder theory because it suggests that conflicting interests and claims of different organizational stakeholders need to be balanced (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). In this context, the visual model Life Cycle Canvas® contributes directly to better management of stakeholders from the sponsor governance function, because the model allows thinking about which stakeholders are and how communications will be made between these groups.

The second theory with the highest number of relationships is stewardship. This theory assumes that not all human behavior is dictated by self-interest, but that some members of the organization (stewards) exhibit behavior "pro" and "collectivist" instead of individualistic and selfish (Davis *et al*, 1997). The main concepts of stewardship theory are identification, intrinsic motivation, long-term involvement, and trust (Davis *et al*, 1997). It's at this point where one perceives the contribution of the visual model Life Cycle Canvas® because it causes the sponsor to take a position of collective interest, in this case of the educational institution, being the representative of the area where the project is being carried out, in addition to transmitting confidence, showing paths that do not devise the route of planning and working for the team in the search for the achievement of the results and not having an individualistic behavior.

Following, the theory of resource dependency also appears represented. The theory offers valuable information about the allocation, prioritization, and facilitation of organizational resources (Oliver, 1991) and suggests that organizational success depends on the organization's ability to control interdependent external and internal resources (Clarke, 2004). Resource dependency theory allows you to think about the varied needs that organizations have at different stages of their life cycle and how resources can be used to overcome organizational challenges. In this sense, the visual model Life Cycle Canvas® makes the sponsor reflect on the resources needed for the project.

Finally, although with only one related code, shareholder theory was also present. This one has as premised the fact that directors are hired as agents of shareholders to manage the corporation's business for the benefit of its top executives and therefore have a legal and moral obligation to serve the interests of shareholders. To this end, this requires a contract, process, and policy structure to ensure that management action is always in the best interests of shareholders (Jensen and Meckling, 1976; Friedman, 1962). It can be interpreted that the project and team managers are delegated the mission of working in achieving the objectives of the institution, even

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for a moral issue and this is where the visual model Life Cycle Canvas® assists because it can provide mechanisms to the sponsor that makes it ensure the achievement of these objectives for the benefit of the institution, i. e., ensuring that the processes are followed.

In addition to these relationships with governance theories, the evidence studied shows that the governance functions of the sponsor are aligned with the main governance concepts of existing and accepted projects in an academic environment (Sydow *et al*, 2004; Muller, 2009; Turner, 2009; PMI, 2013; Kujala, Aaltonen, & Gotcheva, 2016; Kerzner, 2017; Musawir, Serra, Zwikael, & Ali, 2017; Too, Le, & Yap, 2017), as well as include recent studies identified by Lappi and Aaltonen (2017).

5. CONCLUSIONS

In response to the goal achieved in this paper, it is permissible to claim that the model has a preponderant role in the performance of the sponsor's governance, making it reflect on important factors for the performance of a project sponsor. The model can assist the sponsor in all stages of the project life cycle, contributing to the performance of its governance function. Scientifically this paper provides its share of contribution. Several studies had already been conducted on the roles of the sponsor (Kloppenborg, Tesch, Manolis & Heitkamp, 2006; Bryde, 2008; Crawford *et al*, 2008; Kloppenborg, Tesch & Manolis, 2014), but there were no records of studies relating sponsor, project governance and a visual management model.

At this point, this research provides its greatest contribution to science, as it demonstrates how a visual management model Life Cycle Canvas® contributes to the performance of the governance function of the project sponsor, by opening spaces for other discussions. The paper provides indications that the literature is correct when it claims that the sponsor has a governance function (Hazard & Crawford, 2004; Crawford *et al*, 2008; Too & Weaver, 2014), in addition to identifying how these sponsor governance functions relate to existing governance theories linked to project management.

One of the limitations of this study is that it was not possible to have access to all the sponsors included in the final sample. In addition, the sample did not include the direct beneficiaries of the projects, i.e., users and customers, which would be an important third view on the role of the sponsor to be analyzed. Finally, a third limitation was the fact that there is no

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broad literature on the governance role of the sponsor, with a larger field of literature other results could arise.

As a main practical implication, this paper suggests that the visual model Life Cycle Canvas® can be an important tool to improve the governance performance that the sponsor should have, allowing him to see his role throughout the life cycle of a project. This can even serve as a benchmarking process with other public educational institutions.

A range of future research can be conducted. First, it was pointed out that users and customers were not heard, this could be important research to add to the results. The various types of stakeholders of the project would also be potential groups to be researched, for example, analyze how their view is the governance role of the sponsor from their interest or how they would be expected about the sponsor's governance performance.

The study by Too and Weaver (2014), in addition to the sponsor, pointed out that the project office and the project portfolio are important items of project governance, in this sense, future studies could verify how the visual model Life Cycle Canvas® assists in these other two relevant elements of governance.

In addition to public educational institutions, it could be analyzed how the sponsor's governance function with the help of Life Cycle Canvas® behaves in private educational institutions. It could also be analyzed other institutions that were not teaching, whether public or private because from this analysis or crossing of studies it could be possible to emerge a new dimension of governance roles of the sponsor. Quantitative studies can also be performed. The codes arising in this paper could serve as a basis for modeling structural equations and could be tested with several groups of agents, from various institutions, whether public or private.

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