Impact of Implementing a PMO on Project Management: A Case Study in a Hospital

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to describe the impacts on project management and the quality of hospital services with the implementation of a Project Management Office (PMO) in a private hospital. To this end, non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews with professionals involved in the implementation of the PMO and document analysis were used. The interviews were conducted with five employees and analysed through content analysis. The results showed that the hospital faced challenges such as lack of project organization, centralization of information, and a systematic approach to projects and indicators. Communication between teams was fragmented, resulting in divergent information and difficulties in defining strategic objectives. The PMO was understood as indispensable to face emerging challenges, innovate and ensure efficient project management in the hospital context, promoting a culture of transparency, efficiency and collaboration. As a contribution, it is noted that more effective project management can improve the quality of healthcare, optimizing the use of resources and make transparent healthcare policies. This results in a more systematic and integrated approach, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of hospital operations. In this sense, this study observed how the PMO can create data management tools, better definition and understanding of strategic and operational indicators, as well as improve the effective participation of all areas involved in the projects by promoting structured and effective communication.

Keywords: Project Management Office; PMO; Project management; Hospitals; Healthcare.

INTRODUCTION

In several countries, according to Sassykova (2023), health systems are progressively incorporating project management as a fundamental strategy. This makes it possible to optimize budgets, improve the quality of healthcare, and introduce innovations in healthcare sector.

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Additionally, according to the author, projects are recognized as a valuable approach to deal with emerging challenges and find solutions to problems not solved by existing practices, ensuring the delivery of specific results, within defined deadlines and with determined quality, through the efficient use of specific resources (Kuiper et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2020).

Freire, Batista and Martinez (2016) point out that as a strategy to preserve their competitiveness, organizations have directed resources to the adoption of approaches and procedures aimed at achieving the intended objectives and satisfying customer demands. In this context, project management emerges as an effective tool for this purpose. Silva et al. (2024) reveal that several academic studies and business experiences have highlighted the relevance of project management in the execution of strategies. However, according to the same authors, it is evident that many organizations do not have a sufficient organizational structure to optimize the management of their projects.

Therefore, it is necessary to understand that the improvement in project maturity also occurs through the implementation of PMO (Project Management Office), which increases the capacity to apply resources and use good project management practices to mitigate failures (dos Santos Cruz et al., 2020). In this sense, a PMO structure facilitates project management and interaction between the various stakeholders. Consequently, the PMO becomes a solution to structure and support the organization's projects, and in the healthcare area, especially in hospital contexts, the PMOs have shown increasing importance as confirmed by Sassykova (2023) and Alves, Silva and Nunes (2022).

The studies by Sassykova (2023) and Alves, Silva and Nunes (2022) highlighted that the function of PMOs is to introduce innovations, deal with challenges and improve the quality of healthcare in hospitals. Despite these benefits, there are gaps to be filled in existing research on the implementation of PMO in the healthcare sector, for example, although the aforementioned studies provide an overview of the application of project management in healthcare, they do not offer a detailed analysis of specific PMO practices in hospitals.

In addition, the aforementioned studies do not fully explore the specific challenges faced in the implementation of these practices in hospital settings. Thus, in order to fill this gap and operationalize the constructs related to PMO in hospitals, it is necessary to undertake research that provides a more in-depth analysis of the project management practices for the healthcare area, identifying both successes and challenges encountered. Based on this context, the objective of this paper is to describe the impacts on project management and the quality of hospital services with the implementation of a PMO in a private hospital.

The method adopted for this study involved a qualitative approach, combining non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews with professionals who worked in the implementation

of the PMO in the hospital studied. Document analysis was also used as a source of evidence. Thus, a combination of direct observation, interviews and document analysis was used to collect primary information, while secondary data were obtained through literature search and review of similar studies. The problem identified involved the detailed characterization of the organization, including its nature, sector of activity, size, location and organizational structure, as well as the description of the project/problem analysed, including name, summary definition and justification. This methodology allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the problem situation, which facilitated the identification of effective and viable solutions for the case at hand.

Regarding the contributions of this research, studies that deal with project management in the healthcare area are socially relevant for their ability to improve the quality of care, optimize the use of resources and inform healthcare policies, while academically contributing to the development of more effective practices adapted to the specific needs of this sector. That said, the results described here consisted of the implementation of the PMO, aiming to provide structure and direction for the institution's projects. Thus, it was analysed how these results impacted on improvements in project management in the hospital based on performance indicators and clinical outcomes. The central problem addressed was the lack of proper coordination and monitoring of the projects, undermining the quality of the services provided by the institution.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The PMO is seen by organizations in all sectors of activity as a very important structure to promote improvements in project management (Prado & Mancini, 2023). For Ichsan et al. (2023), the existence of a PMO is seen as a necessity for organizations, both public and private, whose activities are related to projects. In addition, a PMO facilitates the sharing of resources and the development of routines, as well as increases the value contribution of project management by ensuring the efficient use of resources.

For Müller, Glückler and Aubry (2013), a PMO can be conceptualized as an organization structure with many assigned responsibilities related to the centralized and coordinated management of the projects under its domain. Furthermore, PMO responsibilities can be classified as providing support functions and unit services. PMO directly supervises projects and evaluates the performance of projects or the team; or effectively be responsible for the project, collaborating in the continuous improvement of project knowledge through mutual knowledge sharing with its stakeholders.

Silva et al. (2024) and Fernandes, da Silva and Vils (2023) reveal that, despite the relevance of project management in the execution of strategies being widely recognized, many companies face difficulties, as they lack an adequate organizational structure to optimize the management of their projects, remaining tied to traditional models that limit projects to functional areas, even when these involve different activities.

Therefore, the use of projects to achieve the objectives of organizations is a practice that has led organizations to projectized structures (dos Santos Cruz et al., 2020). In addition, Alves et al. (2013) highlight that the use of PMOs increases the ability of organizations to have successful projects, which increases maturity in project management. The Project Management Institute (2017) contributes by stating that there are from PMOs that have the sole function of reporting the performance of projects (focus on support) to those who participate in the definition of business strategies and are responsible for the body of professionals in the area (strategic focus). According to the authors, PMOs can, in addition to having a focus on internal processes (planning, people management, execution, change control etc.), have responsibility for external interfaces (customer satisfaction, communication with stakeholders etc.). They can be classified as: level 1 – Project Support Office; level 2 – Project and Performance Management Office; level 3 – Project Governance Office.

In healthcare, PMO is widely used to ensure the delivery of projects on time, on budget, and with the stipulated quality, as highlighted by Sassykova (2023). The author also points out that a crucial aspect to be considered in the context of PMO in healthcare is quality, since projects in this sphere are predominantly focused on the prevention or treatment of specific healthcare problems, many of which are directly related to survival and well-being of population.

According to Freire, Batista and Martinez (2016) and Sassykova (2023), projects in the healthcare area play a significant role in presenting innovative alternatives, addressing emerging challenges and offering solutions to issues that traditional practices cannot solve. Several healthcare systems around the world are adopting project management as an essential tool to meet their budgets and raise the standard of medical care (Sassykova, 2023). As such, healthcare organizations are using projects to integrate new components into their work processes, improve procedures throughout the care chain, and optimize their facilities, all while seeking to improve outcomes and reduce costs (Kuiper et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2020).

Specifically in the hospital area, Alves, Cassia Silva and Nunes (2022) state that one of the main challenges for hospitals is related to the management and provision of care, especially in Brazil, where there are deficiencies in control, efficiency, and information systems. The solution may lie, according to the authors, in the adoption of professional project management practices, which have the potential to reduce risks, costs and increase success. To this end, the creation of specialized project teams is considered to standardize project management efforts and improve results.

Freire, Batista and Martinez (2016) state that the use of project management techniques can be a valuable resource for healthcare administrators when conducting initiatives, as it provides agility, organization, dynamism and interactivity to the processes. For the authors, research on project management in healthcare is crucial, as it offers a significant opportunity to strengthen and

encourage the application of these practices in this field, empowering nurses and other healthcare professionals to achieve greater autonomy and effectiveness through the development of specific competencies, combined with knowledge in project management.

In the study by Pinto et al. (2024) it was found that the implementation of the PMO and its methodologies in healthcare services, including hospitals and emergency units, leads to improvements in bed management, reduction of patient length of stay, reduction of hospital costs, improvement of operational efficiency and facilitation of clinical decision-making, resulting in a more horizontal and effective approach to hospital management.

Sassykova (2023) classifies projects in the healthcare area into different categories:

- Research projects: seek to expand the knowledge necessary to support reasoned decisions;
- Development projects: encompass the development and preliminary testing of interventions aimed at solving specific problems in specific population groups;
- Implementation projects: involve the dissemination and application of existing interventions in specific target groups or populations.

Alves, Cássia Silva and Nunes (2022) describe the different activities and functions performed by the PMO in the hospital area, such as business alignment, technical support, resource integration, management practices, and infrastructure management. Each of these areas is addressed by the authors, as shown in Table 1, demonstrating their importance and contribution to the success of hospital projects.

Table 1. PMO activities in the Hospital area

PMO activities in the Hospital area	Description
Strategic Alignment	- Portfolio management of hospital projects. - Relationship management with customer, supplier and contractor in the hospital environment. - Relationship management and business performance in hospitals.
Technical support	- Personalized guidance for the hospital environment. - Planning of hospital projects. - Project audit adapted to hospital needs. - Recovery of hospital projects.
Resource Integration	- Management of human and material resources in hospitals. - Training and education with a focus on hospital practices. - Career development in the hospital context. - Training of staff to meet hospital demands.
Management Practices	- Management of project methodology in hospitals. - Use of specific project management tools in a hospital environment. - Establishment of standards and metrics adapted to the hospital reality. - Project knowledge management with a focus on hospital medical and administrative practices.
Infrastructure Management	- Governance of the hospital project to ensure the quality and safety of services.

	- Evaluation of hospital projects with emphasis on operational efficiency and patient satisfaction. - Organization and structuring of hospital projects to optimize resources. - Cross-supervision of hospital projects and specialized support according to the medical and administrative needs of hospitals.

Source: Adapted by the authors from Alves, Cássia Silva and Nunes (2022).

For Alves, Cássia Silva and Nunes (2022), the main advantage of the integration between hospital management and project management lies in the variety of approaches that the latter offers for the specific context of hospitals. However, the implementation of project management methodologies in hospital environments is challenging. According to Sassykova (2023), projects in the healthcare area face various obstacles, such as ensuring high quality, dealing with government regulations, and meeting the diverse needs of patients. This requires strategic approaches, agile adaptation, and sensitivity to individual healthcare perspectives. Faced with these challenges, Zwikael and Meredith (2019) highlight that the organizational support provided by PMO plays a crucial role in creating an environment conducive to the success of PMO. The authors reinforce that this support encompasses the provision of resources, feedback, leadership, structure, training, involvement and technology. In the same sense, Freire, Batista and Martinez (2016) describe that the benefits of PMOs are perceived mainly in complex contexts such as hospital management.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopted a qualitative approach, using a case study research strategy. In this type of research method, data are collected through direct observation, interviews, analysis of documents and records in archives (Bryman, 1989). To this end, the evidence was obtained in order to build the case and allow the presentation of elements of understanding to demonstrate advances on the phenomenon or object of research studied (Yin, 2015).

The initial phase of the study was dedicated to the search for a theoretical basis to provide foundations for the work and deepen the understanding of the subject, presented in section 2. Among the topics covered were the role of the PMO, project management practices, application of project management practices in the healthcare area and in the hospital segment.

In the second phase, the study was conducted in a hospital in São Paulo - Brazil, a reference in segment A and B social stratification, known for its technological park and personalized service. In this phase, interviews were conducted using a protocol with semi-structured questions for data collection (Silva, Penha, & Bizarrias, 2022). The interviews were conducted in person with five employees who were involved in the pre- and post-implementation. Table 2 presents the characterization of the interviewees. The recordings of the interviews totalled 50 minutes and were later transcribed into 12 pages using Microsoft Word software (version 11).

Table 2. Characterization of the interviewees

Interviewee	Position held	Experience time (years)
1	CEO	32
2	IT Manager	14
3	Commercial Manager	23
4	Nursing Manager	20
5	Communications Coordinator	15

Source: Developed by the authors based on interviews (2024).

The analysis process took place through content analysis, as proposed by Bardin (2011). Initially, the transcripts were read for familiarization with the data. Next, the data was coded, where relevant excerpts from the interviews were highlighted and categorized into main themes. These themes were later analysed in depth to identify patterns and relationships that would contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon studied. Data triangulation, involving the comparison between different sources of information (interviews, documents and observations), was used to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. Finally, the results were interpreted in the light of the theoretical framework, allowing the construction of a comprehensive and detailed overview of the implementation and impacts of the PMO in the hospital context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The interview process aimed to investigate the various aspects related to the implementation of the PMO and its effects on management and communication practices within the researched hospital, highlighting both the previous challenges and the post-implementation improvements. Initially, an analysis of the scenario prior to the introduction of the PMO was carried out, focusing on the challenges faced in management, interdepartmental communication, strategic alignment and systematic approach to projects. In this context, the interview process aimed to identify the specific difficulties in each of these areas and how they were managed before the implementation of the PMO.

In addition, the changes perceived after the introduction of the PMO in the hospital were explored. This involved an analysis of the impact on communication practices between teams, strategic alignment of initiatives, consequences of implementing a systematic approach and on the delivery of projects, as well as ensuring their quality. This approach allowed an understanding of the effects of PMO in the researched hospital.

Before the implementation of the PMO, the scenario was marked by the lack of organization and centralization of information. The interviewees pointed out difficulties in management due to the absence of an area dedicated to project management, resulting in dispersed and divergent

information among the different sectors of the company. In this sense, there is evidence that there was a need to implement a PMO, as highlighted by Interviewee 1, who said that "*the main challenge in management was the lack of an area dedicated to information management, making commercial negotiations difficult.*" Interviewee 1 adds that with the implementation of the PMO "*data management and process monitoring tools were created, providing access to a centralized pool of information*".

Corroborating the previous excerpt, Interviewee 2 pointed out that before the PMO "*the main challenges in management included the lack of structuring of projects and the absence of a systematic approach to the definition of indicators*", in the sequence, the interviewee highlights that after the implementation of the PMO "*there was a significant improvement in the definition of indicators, with the participation of all areas involved, and a better understanding of strategic and operational objectives*".

Interviewee 4 clarifies that the hospital surveyed:

"*… had difficulties from the most primary to the most complex. For example, part of the processes was the identification of indicators, so that we could follow up on the expected and targeted outcomes. Also, at the end of it all, the publication of these results. So, before the project management office, there really wasn't a linearity of information, and the outlook was very bad. If you asked something simple like that, how many surgeries do we have today? If we asked the reception of the surgical centre and for the surgical appointment, each one gave a number. Incredible as it may seem, it seems kind of bizarre, but to give you an idea of how messy the thing was, information was not democratized. We didn't have the same information in all sectors. This was an extraordinary gain*".

It is noted that with the implementation of the PMO, there was a significant change in this panorama, with the systematization of problems and access to instruments that were not known before, providing a clearer and more accurate view of the demands and projects in progress. Interviewee 3 also reported that:

"*The PMO was able to support us in the systematization of the problems. Thus, we can see more clearly how a project should be structured, with the necessary elements, such as budget, planning and delivery time. I think this made it easier for the manager, systematizing and instrumentalizing the manager as well. With this, we were able to have some projects developed and with accurate deliveries, which gave us more peace of mind and comfort*".

Based on the reports of the interviewees, it is possible to perceive the alignment with the vision of the need and benefits of implementing a PMO, which are described by Sassykova (2023) and

Freire, Batista and Martinez (2016). These authors emphasize the importance of project management and communication in the health area.

Communication before the implementation of the PMO was characterized by being dispersed, informal and fragmented among the different sectors of the company. This resulted in deviations of information, lack of alignment, and difficulty in understanding the objectives and progress of the projects. However, with the introduction of PMO, there has been a significant transformation in this regard, allowing for more transparent, agile, and effective communication, ensuring the unification of the source and origin of data, as well as facilitating interaction and collaboration between teams.

The view of these improvements with the PMO is also evidenced in the statement of Interviewee 1, who stated that before the EGP, "*each team was responsible for its own data collection, resulting in different sources and possible deviations of information*". Thus, with the implementation of the PMO, "*there was unification of the data source, ensuring an official and public number, in addition to the creation of reports and monitoring to ensure the accuracy of the data*" - Interviewee 1. Interviewee 2 added that, before the PMO, "*communication between teams was fragmented, depending on emails and informal communication*", he points out that with the implementation of the PMO "*there was a structuring of communication, with defined communication plans and a better dissemination of information, facilitating understanding and collaboration between the sectors*". Interviewee 3 stated that the PMO "*was able to support a lot of communication between the teams*" for the interviewee, the PMO "*achieved a better interaction between management and care, facilitating communication.*".

Interviewee 4 clarifies that:

"*Communication was not great. First, because there were and always are intersections between the areas. So, the action of the tasks and the accountability of the areas was something quite difficult. Without the PMO, there was no place that concentrated information and could disseminate it to people. And the principle of accountability was very important. It is knowing how to delegate to whom you will be responsible for certain information, indicator or process. Right away, there were gains in relation to this accountability. And another interesting fact is that, over time, we realized, even without forcing it, that there was the implementation of a uniform work method. Today, in any meeting, whether with the nursing team, with medical managers, with administrative areas, everyone knows how to present the information, and the best of all is that everyone can understand. The absorption of information is much faster and more homogeneous.*"

Regarding the aforementioned information on the perception of improvements in the implementation of the PMO, the Project Management Institute (PMI, 2017) indicates that many companies face difficulties in executing strategies due to the lack of clear project indicators. Thus,

the implementation of the PMO in the researched hospital tried to solve the problems reported by the interviewees, as well as in relation to the lack of clear indicators and alignment of the definition of strategic definitions.

Thus, after the implementation of the PMO, there was a more precise definition of the strategic and operational indicators. As evidence of this situation, Interviewee 1 commented that, previously, "*the challenges were related to the lack of a clear information package and strategic objectives*", and that with the implementation of the PMO, "*it was possible to format the strategic indicators more precisely, identify strategic and operational objectives, and involve all the areas necessary to achieve these indicators*".

Interviewee 2 mentioned that, before the PMO, "*the main challenges were related to the lack of definition of strategic objectives and the difficulty in prioritizing indicators*", he also states that with the implementation of the PMO "*there was greater clarity in the definition of indicators and objectives, facilitating strategic decision-making and the identification of solutions to specific problems*".

Interviewee 4 clarifies that:

"*One of the biggest challenges was the allocation of human resources and the prioritization of projects in relation to these resources and investments. How to translate clinical objectives into financial objectives and how to translate assistance into clinical outcomes. An example is the hypothermia protocol. We wanted no patient to have a temperature below 36°C during their entire stay in the hospital. This impacts not only clinical results, but also financial ones, as it requires investments in technology. These are objectives that involve the entire hospital, always thinking about the good of the patient*."

Freire, Batista and Martinez (2016) highlight that the lack of a systematic approach undermines the efficiency of processes. Zwikael and Meredith (2019) highlight the crucial role of the organizational support provided by the PMO in creating an environment conducive to the success of projects, encompassing the provision of resources, feedback, leadership, structure, training, involvement, and technology.

Another important aspect in the interviewees' statements was the absence of a systematic approach in conducting the projects, which resulted in inadequate deliveries, lack of knowledge about the products and market, in addition to the difficulty in identifying weaknesses and points for improvement. This situation was evidenced in the interviewee's observations, because before the implementation of the PMO in the hospital studied, the lack of systematization resulted in unconsolidated data. With the implementation of the PMO, there was an improvement in data security and reliability.

Corroborating the above-mentioned situation, the statement of Interviewee 1 can be evidenced, who points out that the lack of a systematic approach "*resulted in unconsolidated data, leading to mistaken negotiations and lack of knowledge about the products and market*". Thus, with the implementation of the PMO "*there was a systematization of processes, ensuring security and reliability in the data, in addition to providing a better formatting of products and services*". In the same sense, Interviewee 2 stated that the lack of a systematic approach "*resulted in difficulties in communication, project delivery and the perception of value by end users*", and that with the implementation of the PMO "*there was a significant improvement in communication, project delivery and value perception, due to the clear definition of processes and the greater participation of the teams involved*".

Another evident benefit of the implementation of the PMO in the hospital was reported by Interviewee 1, as he states that before the PMO "*the projects were delivered in a disorganized way, with coordination problems and lack of centralization*". On the other hand, the same interviewee describes that with the implementation of the PMO "*there was a change to a direct feedback model, with the project office charging and formatting the deliveries together with the areas involved, resulting in a more appropriate and public delivery*". These statements are in line with what Pinto et al. (2024) observe, as the authors highlight that improvements in hospital management occur after the implementation of the PMO. Thus, with the implementation of the PMO, there was a shift to a direct feedback model, resulting in more appropriate and efficient deliveries.

Interviewee 2 commented that before the PMO "*the delivery of projects was disorganized and there was no effective control of deadlines and deliveries.*", however, with the implementation of the PMO "*there was an improvement in project management, with greater clarity in deadlines and deliveries, in addition to better communication between teams, resulting in a more efficient and higher quality delivery*". Interviewee 5 corroborates this statement when he states that "*the PMO makes it possible for projects to exist through a methodology based on numbers and evidence*". Therefore, it can be said that the implementation of the PMO in the hospital resulted in significant improvements in management and communication, providing a more systematic and integrated approach that increased the efficiency and effectiveness of operations, aligning them with the strategic and operational objectives of the institution.

For Interviewee 4: "*The systematization of the methodology brought professionalization to all managers, providing the use of better tools, identification of weaknesses and points of improvement, especially in IT tools. This had a fundamental impact on the entire hospital*". The interviewee adds that "*the absence of a formal management system made it difficult to conduct the projects internally. With the presence of the PMO, not only deadlines, but also objectives were affected. In addition to the democratization of information, establishing new challenges and solutions has also benefited transparency with our partners. We have become more transparent and know how to ask more assertive questions to doctors, patients, suppliers and paying sources.*"

The interviews provided a comprehensive analysis of the transformations that occurred after the implementation of the PMO in the researched hospital. Before this implementation, the scenario was marked by several challenges, from the lack of organization and centralization of information to difficulties in management, communication, and definition of strategic indicators. However, the reports of the interviewees revealed a significant change after the implementation of the PMO, evidencing improvements in project management, communication between teams, definition of indicators and systematic approach.

The words of the interviewees highlight the importance of the PMO in the unification of the data source, in the structuring of communication, in the precise definition of indicators and objectives, and in the more efficient and higher quality delivery of projects. According to Alves, Cassia Silva and Nunes (2022) described the different activities and functions performed by the PMO in the hospital area, as well as the challenges and benefits of integrating hospital management and project management. Thus, it is clear that the PMO has not only solved pre-existing challenges, but has also fostered a culture of transparency, efficiency, and collaboration in the hospital, contributing significantly to the continuous improvement of management and communication practices.

DESCRIPTION OF PMO IMPLEMENTATION IN HOSPITAL

The case studied shown initially the absence of a formal project management system, which create challenges in the organization and execution of critical initiatives for the improvement of medical and operational care in a hospital. Thus, without a dedicated PMO, there is a gap in the strategic alignment between ongoing projects and the institution's overall objectives, making it difficult to prioritize and allocate resources efficiently (Alves, Cássia Silva & Nunes, 2022).

This results in difficulties in communication between teams, which leads to delays in the delivery of projects and a lack of synergy between projects and teams. In addition, the absence of a systematic approach is negatively affecting the quality assurance and safety of hospital services in the institution studied. Thus, the lack of clear processes to manage risk, monitor performance, and ensure compliance with regulations can lead to medical errors, operational failures, and adverse impacts on patients' healthcare. In this context, the need to implement a PMO was identified to directly impact the hospital's capacity to innovate and face emerging challenges, ensuring an adequate structure to manage research, development and implementation projects, offer innovative and effective solutions to specific healthcare problems.

The implementation of the PMO became even more crucial to ensure that the hospital could meet the future challenges of a complex industry. Thus, the institution's decision followed by a careful analysis of the existing gaps in project management and the adverse impacts resulting from this deficiency. Thus, recognizing the critical importance of a structured approach to project

management, especially in an environment as sensitive as the hospital, the leadership decided to invest in the implementation of a PMO. This decision was supported by empirical evidence and consultation with experts in the field of hospital administration, who highlighted the tangible benefits of a well-established PMO, including improvements in communication, efficiency in resource allocation, and assurance of the quality of services provided. With this, the institution committed to transforming its approach to project management, seeking a more robust and results-oriented model, capable of driving innovation and operational excellence in all aspects of its operation.

For the implementation of the PMO in the hospital studied, first, the need and objectives of the PMO were identified, evaluating problems and opportunities to be addressed. They then engaged stakeholders, including senior management, project managers, doctors, nurses, and other areas of hospital administration, using meetings and workshops to align expectations and gain support. Figure 1 outlines the process of intervention/implementation of the PMO.
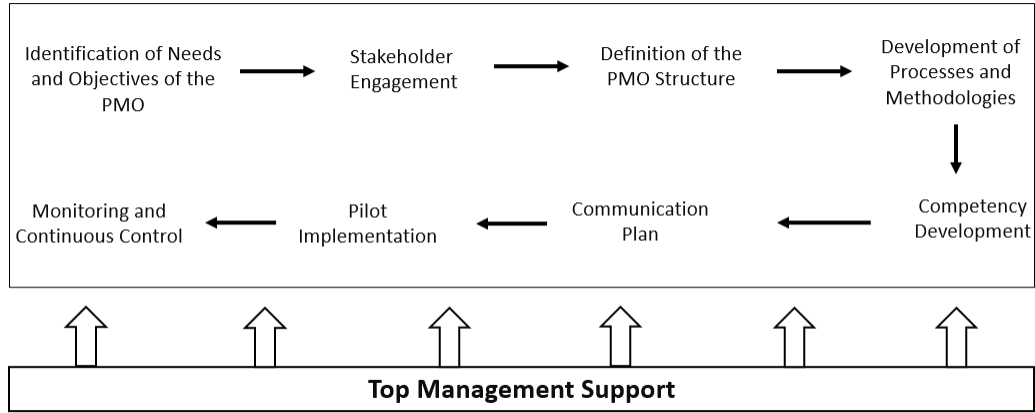

Figure 1. PMO implementation process

Based on the initial survey, the structure of the PMO for the hospital at this early stage was defined, choosing between a hybrid approach (control and support), as well as establishing clear roles and responsibilities for all involved. Soon after, standardized project management processes and methodologies were developed, adopting the PMBOK as a guide to introduce project management methodologies (PMI, 2017), choosing tools such as software (e.g., MS Project) to ensure necessary resources for the team.

Competencies development included empowering the PMO team and project managers with training programs and encouraging certifications. In parallel, a market team was hired to compose the PMO, and a communication plan was developed to inform all stakeholders about the progress and benefits of the PMO, promoting a culture of project management. The pilot implementation tested the PMO model developed in specific projects, allowing the evaluation of processes, tools

and methodologies, making the necessary adjustments. Based on the results, the implementation of the PMO was expanded to the entire hospital.

Finally, the full implementation of the PMO was continuously monitored and controlled, establishing mechanisms for periodic evaluation and collecting feedback from stakeholders to identify improvements. Managers made continuous adjustments to processes, tools, and methodologies to maintain effectiveness and alignment with the hospital's objectives. One aspect that needs to be highlighted is the support of senior management, which was crucial to the success of the implemented PMO. The flexibility to adjust the approach as needed and maintaining thorough documentation of processes and procedures helped ensure the success of the PMO. With these steps, the hospital was able to establish an effective PMO, bringing significant benefits to the management of its projects and improving the quality, control and monitoring of the services provided.

FINAL REMARKS

At the end of this paper, it can be said that the objective was achieved, as the results indicate how the implementation of the PMO in the hospital brought several benefits. In this sense, it was evidenced that the PMO is widely recognized as an essential structure for organizations in various sectors, including the healthcare area. The existence of PMO is seen as a necessity, facilitating the sharing of resources and the development of routines, in addition to increasing the value contribution of project management by ensuring the efficient use of resources.

In this context, it should be highlighted that project management is crucial for the execution of organizational strategies, but many organizations still lack adequate organizational structures to optimize project management, suggesting the creation of PMOs to increase the capacity to apply resources and promote the best practices. In the healthcare sector, especially in hospitals, PMO has proven to be increasingly important, introducing innovations and improving the quality of care. However, there are gaps in research on the implementation of PMO in hospitals. To fill in these gaps, this paper sought to describe the implementation of a PMO in a private hospital. It used a qualitative approach combining observation, interviews and document analysis.

The interview process aimed to investigate the implementation of the PMO in a hospital and its impacts on management and communication practices. Before the implementation of the PMO, the hospital's management faced challenges such as the lack of organization, centralization of information and a systematic approach to projects and indicators. Communication between teams was fragmented and informal, resulting in divergent information and difficulty in defining strategic objectives.

After the implementation of the PMO, several improvements were observed. The interviews highlight the creation of tools to manage data and monitor processes, which facilitated access to centralized information. There was also a better definition and understanding of the strategic indicators, with the participation of all the areas involved. Communication has become more structured and effective, with defined communication plans, better dissemination of information, and greater interaction between teams.

Respondents reported that PMO helped systematize problems, organize projects, and ensure more accurate deliveries. The implementation of the PMO has fostered a culture of transparency, efficiency, and collaboration, contributing significantly to the continuous improvement of management and communication practices at the hospital. The study also highlighted the importance of proper coordination of projects to improve the quality of hospital services. Thus, the implementation of the PMO aimed to provide structure and direction for the projects, resulting in significant improvements in project management and the quality of care provided.

The limitations of the study are due to the restricted number of participants interviewed, which may have influenced the diversity and scope of the perspectives collected. In addition, the research was conducted in a single private hospital, which limits the generalization of the results to other healthcare institutions with different organizational and structural contexts. For future studies, it is suggested that research be carried out in several hospitals, covering different regions and types of institutions, in order to obtain a broader and generalizable view of the impacts of the implementation of PMO on hospital management. In addition, longitudinal studies could be conducted to assess the long-term effects of implementing the PMO, analysing how changes hold and evolve over time, providing a deeper understanding of the sustainability and effectiveness of the improvements introduced.

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