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## **SALIENCE, INFLUENCE AND PARTICIPATION OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS OF PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

**SALIÊNCIA, INFLUÊNCIA E PARTICIPAÇÃO DOS STAKEHOLDERS NAS  
ESTRUTURAS DE GOVERNANÇA E NO PROCESSO DE TOMADA DE DECISÃO  
DE INSTITUIÇÕES PÚBLICAS DE ENSINO SUPERIOR**

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** studies on the evolution of the concept of stakeholders as well as on the impact of their claims on the strategic process of organizations are highlighted in the literature. A special feature is the understanding of the stakeholders of typically complex organizations, such as Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and how their demands are prioritized by managers in the deliberative structures. That said, as an objective of this research, it was sought to elucidate how the influence and salience of the stakeholders are presented in the prioritization of demands by the managers of the Public Institutions of Higher Education, as well as the participation of the interested parties in the governance structures and in the decision-making process. decision-making bodies. This work has as theoretical anchor the Saliency Model proposed by Mitchell et al. (1997) and the New university stakeholder model proposed by Mainardes et. al. (2012) and studies on governance in the university environment. **Method:** to observe the phenomenon, the case study was used as a methodological procedure, with the application of questionnaires, documentary research and participant observation in two public HEIs. **Results and Conclusion:** it was possible to verify that the demands of internal stakeholders prevail in the discussion agenda of the deliberative instances. In the case of IES A, there is still a preference for the demand of teachers. Finally, it is emphasized that the concept of prioritizing stakeholders, as well as the mechanisms for relating to them, need to be disseminated in the organizations surveyed, however it is clear that IES B managers are more familiar with the theme.

**Keywords:** Stakeholders. Saliency. Influence. University Governance. Higher education institutions.

## RESUMO

**Introdução:** os estudos da evolução do conceito de *stakeholders* bem como sobre o impacto de suas reivindicações sobre o processo estratégico das organizações adquirem destaque na literatura. Um recorte especial está na compreensão dos *stakeholders* de organizações tipicamente complexas, como as Instituições de Ensino Superior (IES), e como suas demandas são priorizadas pelos gestores nas estruturas deliberativas. Isto posto, como objetivo desta pesquisa, buscou-se elucidar como a influência e saliência dos *stakeholders* se apresentam na priorização de demandas pelos gestores das Instituições Públicas de Ensino Superior, como também a participação das partes interessadas nas estruturas de governança e no processo de tomada de decisão destas organizações. Este trabalho tem como âncora teórica o *Saliency Model* proposto por Mitchell *et al.* (1997) e o *New university stakeholder model* proposto por Mainardes *et. al.* (2012) e os estudos acerca da governança no ambiente universitário. **Método:** para observação do fenômeno utilizou-se como procedimento metodológico o estudo de caso, com a aplicação de questionários, pesquisa documental e observação participante em duas IES públicas. **Resultados e Conclusão:** foi possível constatar que as demandas dos *stakeholders* internos prevalecem na pauta de discussão das instâncias deliberativas. No caso da IES A, há ainda uma preferência pela demanda dos docentes. Por fim, destaca-se que o conceito de priorização de *stakeholders*, bem como os mecanismos de relacionamento com eles, precisam ser difundidos nas organizações pesquisadas, todavia percebe-se que os gestores da IES B estão mais familiarizados com o tema.

**Palavras-chave:** *Stakeholders*. Saliência. Influência. Governança Universitária. Instituições de Ensino Superior.

## **1 INTRODUCTION AND JUSTIFICATION**

Institutions of higher learning (IHLs) play a relevant role in modern society, contributing to socioeconomic and cultural development through the training of people, production and dissemination of scientific knowledge, and discovery and application of new technologies (Pimenta, 2007; Vieira, 2014).

However, IHLs are inserted in an increasingly complex and dynamic environment, fraught with internal and external uncertainties (Freitas Júnior et al., 2015), and still suffer from obsolete corporative practices that hamper their development and adaptation to an economically complex world and new social relations (Sampaio & Laniado, 2009).

Thus, it is necessary for IHLs to adapt to this new environment, in particular to better respond to the demands of their stakeholders (Freitas Júnior et al., 2015; Mainardes, Alves & Raposo, 2011). Stakeholders are defined as groups of individuals with interests, rights and demands with the capacity to affect or be affected by the scope of the objectives of an organization (Freeman, 2010, 2004), and their identification is fundamental for the management of organizations (Agle, Mitchell & Sonnenfeld, 1999; Bryson, 2004; Clarkson, 1995; Fassin, 2009; Frooman, 1999; Mainardes, Alves & Raposo, 2012; Mitchell, Wood & Agle, 1997; Savage et al., 1991). The demands of stakeholders are related to the expectations or needs they expect to be met by the organizations with which they interact (Chiareto, Kometani & Correa, 2016).

IHLs have a wide range of stakeholders, and are inserted in a scenario where their mission goes beyond teaching and research, i.e., greater participation and closer relationship with surrounding communities and other stakeholders included in their organizational environment (Alves, Mainardes & Raposo, 2010; Jongbloed, Enders & Salerno, 2008).

Therefore, as these relationships intensify, it is necessary for the stakeholders and their demands to be identified, for subsequent definition of strategies based on those demands (Alves et al., 2010). Organizations need to develop systems and approaches that enable better interaction with and prioritization of their stakeholders (Scholes & Clutterbuck, 1998). In the absence of management tools structured to deal with the demands of the various stakeholders, organizations and their managers will be overwhelmed by excessive demands (Jongbloed, Enders & Salerno, 2008).

Despite their relevance to the development of the country, IHLs still tend to have a conservative stance regarding their organizational practices and models in light of the new

social reality (Roczanski, 2016). There are only a few studies in the literature demonstrating empirically how this should be accomplished (Burrows, 1999; Jongbloed et al., 2008; Mainardes, 2010). When adding to this debate the particularities of public IHLs, the process becomes even more challenging.

Thus, the present article has the objective of **identifying the stakeholders whose demands have the greatest prioritization considering their salience and influence, as well as how they are inserted in the governance structure and decision-making process of the two IHLs studied.**

The article is organized in six parts including this introduction. The second part presents the theoretical framework and the third describes the methodology. The fourth section presents the analyses and interpretations of the results, the fifth presents the conclusions and the last section lists the references.

## **2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT AND RELATIONS**

Since the word was coined, many books and over 100,000 other scientific works have discussed and sought to understand the concept of stakeholders (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Friedman & Miles, 2006). In general, stakeholders are individuals or groups that have legitimate interests in the actions of organizations (Savage et al., 1991; Donaldson & Preston, 1995), that claim rights or interests in the present, past or future activities of organizations (Clarkson, 1995), or that have urgent or legitimate demands and/or power to influence the actions of organizations (Mitchell et al., 1997).

Some authors have specifically sought to identify the stakeholders related to universities. According to Amaral and Magalhães (2000), the concept in the setting of higher education is related to the people or entities that have a right to intercede in these organizations, since they have rights affected thereby. In this same vein, Kettunen (2015) stated that the students, teachers, researchers, financiers, administrative employees and civil society at large are examples of stakeholders related to IHLs.

Because of the wide dissemination and the various definitions presented in the literature on the theme, there is no single conception accepted by all (Friedman & Miles, 2006; Mainardes, 2010). In the context of this study, we utilized the classic definition of Freeman (1984), according to whom stakeholders are individuals or groups of people with the

capacity to influence and/or be influenced by the scope of the objectives of the organizations with which they interact. Despite the existence of other concepts, the approach of Freeman (1984) regarding stakeholders continues to be used in the majority of studies of the theme (Mainardes, 2010).

The literature on the theme demonstrates the need to create and sustain successful relations with the main stakeholders so as to keep them happy and thus prolong the viability of the organizational activities (Savage et al., 1991; Bryson, 2004).

The concept of stakeholder management is inserted in a scientific discussion related to the overall strategic management of organizations and that seeks to understand why some organizations perform better than others. Hence, based on the relevant literature, the adoption of a broad perspective in formulating organizational strategies, including the demands and needs of multiple stakeholders, is indicated as one of the reasons for the better organizational performance of those that adopt this perspective (Harrison, Bosse & Phillips, 2010).

In this context, stakeholder management is related to the degree of influence in the decision-making process and generation of value, which is allocated amply by organizations regarding the principal groups or individuals interested in their activities. Likewise, organizations, when managing their stakeholders, strive to establish mutually beneficial relationships for both sides (Harrison, Bosse & Phillips, 2010).

Boaventura (2012) demonstrated that good stakeholder management allows minimizing the negative effects of conflicts of interests between the parties interested in an organization, because organizations continually assume obligations to their various stakeholders, but know it will not be possible to satisfy all the demands fully.

The combination of the interests of the organization and its interested parties in the same strategic orientation enables greater generation of wealth for both parties than if each had acted alone. Thus, in stakeholder management, the task of the organizational manager is to mediate conflicts and adopt setoffs, with the objective of creating the greatest possible value for all the interested parties and the organization (Freeman, 2017).

In this regard, the literature specifies the key assumptions for organizations to effectively manage their stakeholders, namely: (1) identification of the salient stakeholders, their management and level of importance; (2) ascertainment of the influence these stakeholders have on the organization; (3) measurement of the demands, expectations or needs of these groups, and if or how these will be met; (4) identification of the types of

strategies the organization should use in the relationship with stakeholders; and (5) adjustment of organizational strategies so as to satisfy the interests of the salient stakeholders and the organizational objectives (Mainardes, 2010; Mainardes, Alves & Raposo, 2012).

Finally, more than identifying the main stakeholders, it is indispensable to understand that the relationships between them and the organization will often be hard to perceive. In academic organizations, where the quantity of stakeholders is considerable, the comprehension of these relations is even more challenging (Mainardes, 2010). Likewise, the managers need models to indicate which stakeholders need greater attention because they can positively influence the organizational performance (Bryson, 2004; Mitchell, Wood & Agle, 1997; Savage et al., 1991).

## 2.2 TYPOLOGY AND PRIORITIZATION OF STAKEHOLDERS

From a stakeholder management approach, the identification of the key or salient groups or individuals for the organization is a critical initial phase of the process (Fassin, 2009). In this respect, various authors have described methods and/or ways to classify and/or identify interested parties and how they are related with organizations. Chart 1 indicates some models for identification of stakeholders and the corresponding authors.

Of the various methods proposed for prioritization of stakeholders in organizations, we chose to focus on two models in this work.

The first model was that proposed by Mitchell et al. (1997), and is one of the most popular for categorization of the types of stakeholders and their demands (Mitchell et al., 1997; Myllykangas et al. 2010; Mainardes, Alves & Raposo, 2012). Mitchell et al. (1997) formulated a model for classification of stakeholders according to the presence or not of one, two or three attributes (power to influence the firm, legitimacy of the relationship with the firm; and urgency of the claim on the firm). These determine the need for managers to pay attention to stakeholders' demands, especially of those with power and the intention to impose their will on the organization, as well as those with legal and legitimate interests involving the firm (Mitchell et al., 1997).

The second model is that developed by Mainardes et al. (2012), who carried out an empirical study of members of the academic communities of 11 public universities in Portugal, resulting in the formulation of a new model to identify and prioritize stakeholders called the "new university stakeholder model". In this model, influence is the central attribute

and stakeholders are classified according to their influence on the university, and vice versa (Mainardes et al., 2012).

**Chart 1** Theoretical models to classify stakeholders

Author(s) (Year)	Identification and/or Classification
Clarkson (1995)	Primary: Stakeholders that have strong interdependence with the organization and are essential to its survival; Secondary: Stakeholders that are not essential to the organization;
Mitchell, Wood & Agle (1997)	Dormant: Only have the power attribute as a way to influence the organization; Discretionary: Have the legitimacy attribute; Demanding: Urgency is the only attribute they have; Dominant: Have attributes of legitimacy and power to influence managers to meet their demands; Dangerous: Have power and urgency to influence the managers of an organization; Dependent: Have the attributes of urgency and legitimacy; Definitive: Stakeholders that present power, legitimacy and urgency of their demands; Nonstakeholders or insignificant stakeholders: Do not have any of the three attributes.
Scholes & Clutterbuck (1998)	Stakeholders of an organization are identified by their impact, alignment with the strategic objectives and influence.
Bryson (2004)	The identification and analysis should be as broad as possible in the case of public or nonprofit organizations.
Kamann (2007)	Relationship matrix of power and level of interest of stakeholders regarding the organization.
Freeman et al. (2007)	Primary stakeholders: establish a close relationship with the firm, such as suppliers, employees, financiers (banks), customers and the community at large. Secondary stakeholders: are the government, media, competitors, groups defending the rights of consumers and special interest groups (such as environment or agriculture).
Mainardes, Alves & Raposo (2012)	Regulator: Has influence on the university, which has little or no influence on the stakeholder; Controller: Both the stakeholder and the organization (university) influence each other, but the stakeholder has less influence in this relationship; Partner: The stakeholder and university influence each other, in a balanced relationship; Passive: The stakeholder and university influence each other, but the organization has the greatest influence in this relationship; Dependent: The organization has influence on the stakeholder, which has virtually no influence on the organization; Nonstakeholder: Neither the stakeholder nor the organization influence each other.

Source: Authors (2021).

### 2.3 GOVERNANCE IN THE UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT

Harmonization between the interests of the organization and its main stakeholders is a major challenge faced by managers. In organizations, like IHLs, that are inserted in a complex and dynamic environment and that interact with various actors, this challenge is heightened. In this respect, Carnegie and Tuck (2010) stated that governance in IHLs is of great importance and complexity as well.

In this vein, various authors have stressed that in this type of organization, the governance mechanisms are of primary importance for orientation in favor of the organizational objectives and greater interaction between the organization and its stakeholders (Balbachevsky, Kerbauy & Fabiano, 2013; Carnegie & Tuck, 2010; Teixeira & De Castro, 2015). Therefore, governance in the university setting is an instrument to help managers harmonize the demands of the various internal and external stakeholders and the organizational needs (Teixeira & Castro, 2015). It can also be said that the institutional arrangement enables the formal and informal connections of internal and external stakeholders with the university, in pursuit of organizational efficiency (Ma et al., 2017).

In relation to governance in the university setting, the definition of the principal, agent and costs is necessary. In private IHLs, the principal is composed of the owners and the agent consists of the managers (presidents, deans, chairpersons, etc.) chosen by these owners. In contrast, in public IHLs the principal is society at large, who delegate to the public agents (presidents, deans, chairpersons and professors) the power to conduct the institution. However, as in any organization, sometimes the interests and objectives of the principal and agent do not converge, causing conflicts and agency costs (Wiese & Toporowski, 2013). The agency costs are the costs of monitoring and compensating the agent borne by the principal (owners) due to delegation of management of the organization to the agent. Perceiving this conflict is important, because it has a direct relationship with the performance of organizations (Bendickson et al., 2016).

In this context, the governance structures, such as the deliberative boards of IHLs, play a central role in the governance of these organizations, permitting them to establish internal control mechanisms to reduce agency costs (Bradford et al., 2017; Paiva, Oliveira & Peixoto, 2015; Silveira, 2002), as well as to assure protection of the rights of the various stakeholders (Bradford et al., 2017).



These boards are central elements in the decision-making process of academic organizations. Therefore, it is necessary to understand their actions, since they are at the top of the decision-making structure and internal control of the organization (Hillman & Dalziel, 2003). The decision-making process is thus naturally a central element inherent to any organization, but has a distinct form in academic organizations. According to Rodrigues (1985), in universities, the decision-making process is *sui generis* due to the ambivalence of objectives and the division into highly diverse subcultures. In this conception of the governance of IHLs, the prioritization of the demands of the main stakeholders, such as the participation of the various actors in the deliberative structures, is a key responsibility.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

With the necessary methodological rigor, this study had a qualitative approach with a descriptive objective. For adequate treatment and approach to the problem, we used the multiple case study method, for comparison of two public institutions of higher learning, here called IHL-A and IHL-B. The sample defined was non-probabilistic and chosen by convenience, based on their relevance regarding the theme and the facility of our access.

Both IHL-A and IHL-B are federal universities linked to the Ministry of Education, belonging to the network of professional, scientific and technology institutions. IHL-A was founded over 100 years ago, while IHL-B was founded 59 years ago. Both have their own legal personality and academic and administrative autonomy.

To collect data and information, we used documental research, participant observation and application of a specific questionnaire developed for this study. The documental research relied on the meeting minutes of the institutions' relevant boards and committees, obtained from the respective websites or directly from the persons responsible for preparing the minutes or the managers of the respective IHLs.

In this way, we obtained information and data related to the themes and matters addressed at the meetings of these governance bodies of the two IHLs, such as the types of demands presented by the various stakeholders and elements related to the decision-making process, principally in response to the demands presented by the stakeholders.

The questionnaire was constructed based on the relevant theoretical framework. It was a mixed questionnaire, containing both closed and open questions. The use of closed questions aimed to elicit objective responses from the participants, while the open questions

allowed the respondents to express opinions on the theme, in their own words, as well as to make free comments on the topics covered by the questionnaire (Marconi & Lakatos 2003).

The instrument was divided into four parts: i) the opinion of the respondents about which groups, individuals or organizations they considered to be stakeholders of the respective IHL (A or B), anchored by the stakeholder theory of Freeman (1984; 2004); ii) the opinion of the respondents about the degree of influence exercised by the stakeholders in the respective IHLs, and the level of influence each IHL exerted on each of its stakeholders, anchored theoretically by the new university stakeholder model proposed by Mainardes et al. (2012); c) the opinion of the respondents about the degree of salience of the stakeholders, related to the assertiveness of the attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency, in which case we relied on the instrument formulated by Barakat, Parente and Sarturi (2018), with theoretical anchoring of the salience model proposed by Mitchell et al. (1997); and d) the belief of the respondents regarding the actions and influence of the stakeholders in the decision-making arenas of the IHLs and the mechanism for prioritizing the stakeholders with respect to the decision-making process of the managers in the formation and/or composition of the governance structures of these organizations, supported theoretically by the observations of Bradford et al. (2017), Balbachevsky, Kerbauy and Fabiano (2013) and Rodrigues (1985).

Before applying the questionnaire, we pretested it to enable increasing its reliability and validity for use in the study. This procedure before applying the definitive questionnaire served to identify possible flaws, inconsistencies and excessive complexity of the questions, and whether the instrument contained too many questions, potentially embarrassing questions or items with inaccessible language (Martins & Theóphilo, 2016, p. 94).

For application of the questionnaire, we identified administrative staff members of the two IHLs who could contribute to the study. The criteria for choice of the respondents were: having held at some moment a management position in the IHL and still serving in some management capacity with the respective IHL. This led to the choice of five people from IHL-A and six from IHL-B, with the profile and educational background indicated in Charts 2 and 3.

To summarize, the choice of the respondents (Charts 2 and 3) was based on the quantitative and representative aspects of each stakeholder in composing the governance structures and management of the IHLs, as well as the facility of our access to them.

**Chart 2** Profile of the Respondents of IHL-A.

<b>Respondents of IHL-A</b>	<b>Profile and Education</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Academic Credential</b>	<b>Position</b>
R1	Bachelor's Degree in Mechanical Engineering. Experience in managing IHLs.	5 years	Specialization	Infrastructure Manager
R2	Degrees in Food Engineering. Professional experience in teaching at IHLs, management of teaching institutions and consulting regarding the "S System" (professional training schools).	14 years	Doctorate	Campus Director
R3	Bachelor's Degree in Informatics. Specialization in Public Administration and School Management. Experience as a teacher and school manager.	12 years	Specialization	Administrative Manager
R4	Degrees in Public Relations and Business Administration. Experience in teaching at IHLs, management of IHLs and consulting regarding the "S System".	11 years	Master's Degree	Program Coordinator
R5	Degrees in Business Administration. Experience in management of various types of IHLs.	31 years	Master's Degree	Academic Manager

Source: Authors (2021).

Finally, for analysis of the documents obtained during the data collection phase, we computed descriptive statistics to enable organization, demonstration and summary of the dataset obtained from the responses to parts A, B and C of the questionnaire (Guimarães, 2008). For part D, containing the open-ended questions, we applied content analysis as described by Bardin (1995).

**Chart 3** Profile of the Respondents of IHL-B.

<b>Respondent s of IHL-B</b>	<b>Profile and Education</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Academic Credential</b>	<b>Position</b>
R6	Degrees in Administration. Experience in teaching at IHLs, management of teaching institutions and consulting, in private and public organizations and the “S System”.	21 years	Doctorate	Unit Director
R7	Degrees in Economics and Production Engineering. Experience in teaching at IHLs, management of teaching institutions, consulting and management of public and private organizations.	24 years	Postdoctorate	Ex-Director
R8	Bachelor’s Degree in Public Administration. Experience in organizational management and planning.	10 years	Bachelor’s Degree	Infrastructure Manager
R9	Degrees in Administration. Experience in teaching at IHLs and management of teaching institutions.	18 years	Doctorate	Ex-Director
R10	Degrees in Electrical and Production Engineering. Experience in teaching at IHLs and management of teaching institutions.	25 years	Doctorate	Vice-Director
R11	Degrees in Business Administration and Transportation Engineering. Experience in teaching at IHLs, management of teaching institutions and management of private organizations.	20 years	Doctorate	Ex-Director

Source: Authors (2021).

#### **4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS**

The questionnaires were answered in full by all 11 respondents (5 from IHL-A and 6 from IHL-B). In the first part of the questionnaire, we sought to elicit the respondents’ opinions on what individuals and/or groups are stakeholders of the respective IHLs. For this determination, we used the groups or individuals who were mentioned three or more times in the opinion of the respondents from each IHL. Those that received fewer mentions than three were classified as non-stakeholders. Chart 4 presents the stakeholders of each IHL according

to the data collected, and Chart 5 presents the consolidated data for each IHL of those identified as stakeholders and non-stakeholders.

**Chart 4** Stakeholders of IHL-A and IHL-B.

STAKEHOLDERS	IHL-A MENTIONS	IHL-B MENTIONS
Students	5	6
Professors/Researchers	5	6
Technical Employees (Non-Academic)	5	6
Local Government	5	
Federal Government (Ministry of Education)	5	6
Scientific Community	5	5
Public Research Financiers (CAPES, FAPERJ)	5	5
Students' Families	4	
Employers	4	3
Local Community	4	5
Brazilian Society	4	4
Upper Management (Dean, Vice-Director, Management Boards)	4	6
Professional Councils and Guilds (E.g., CRA; CREA)	4	3
Trade Associations	4	
Alumni	4	
Other Institutions of Higher Learning	3	
Secondary and/or Technical Schools	3	

Source: Authors (2021).

**Chart 5** Stakeholders of the IHLs

	IHL-A	IHL-B
STAKEHOLDERS	Students; Professors/Researchers; Non-Academic Employees; Local Government; Federal Government; Scientific Community; Public Research Financiers; Students' Families; Employers; Local Community; Brazilian Society; Upper Management; Professional Councils and Guilds; Trade Associations; Alumni; Other Institutions of Higher Learning; Secondary and/or Technical Schools.	Students; Professors/Researchers; Non-Academic Employees; Federal Government; Scientific Community; Public Research Financiers; Employers; Local Community; Brazilian Society; Upper Management; Professional Councils and Guilds
NON-STAKEHOLDERS	Private Financiers	Local Government; Students' Families; Trade Associations; Alumni; Other Institutions of Higher Learning; Secondary and/or Technical Schools; Private Financiers

Source: Authors (2021).

Charts 4 and 5 show that in the opinion of the managers of IHL-A, practically all the groups or individuals identified in the questionnaire were considered to be stakeholders, the only exception being private financiers. For IHL-B, the respondents were more selective, with a relative balance between stakeholders and non- stakeholders.

Next, we aimed to typify these stakeholders based on the new university stakeholder model of Mainardes et al. (2012) and the salience model of Mitchell et al. (1997). For the model of Mainardes et al. (2012), we used questions scored on a five-point scale (with 1 corresponding to the lowest degree and 5 the highest) in part B of the questionnaire, to evaluate the degree of influence of the stakeholders of the IHLs on the decision-making process of each organization. We asked each respondent of both IHLs to attribute a score on the five-point scale about the influence of each stakeholder of the IHLs (Chart 5), and then we calculated the simple average of the responses received.

For their identification, we used the groups or individuals with average score greater than or equal to 4 in the opinion of the respondents from each IHL. Chart 6 presents the comparison, in decreasing order, of the stakeholders considered influential in the decision-making process of the IHLs, following the model of Mainardes et al. (2012).

**Chart 6** Comparison of influential stakeholders of the IHLs.

	<b>INFLUENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS OF IHL-A</b>	<b>INFLUENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS OF IHL-B</b>
	Professors/Researchers	Upper Management (Dean, Vice-Director, Management Boards)
	Upper Management (Dean, Vice-Director, Management Boards)	Professors/Researchers
	Students	Federal Government (Ministry of Education)
	Federal Government (Ministry of Education)	Public Research Financiers (CAPES, FAPERJ)
	Technical Employees (Non-Academic)	Technical Employees (Non-Academic)
	Scientific Community	
	Brazilian Society	
	Public Research Financiers (CAPES, FAPERJ)	
	Local Community	
0	Other Institutions of Higher Learning	
1	Secondary and/or Technical Schools	

Source: Authors (2021).

In the opinion of the respondents from IHL-A, the organization has 11 stakeholders with power to influence its decision-making process. In the case of IHL-B, only 5

stakeholders were identified. However, both IHLs had similarities regarding the most influential stakeholders. Upper management and professors/researchers were considered as the most influential in both IHLs, but the professors/researchers were judged to be most influential in IHL-A, while upper management was considered most influential in IHL-B. The federal government and non-academic employees also appeared as influential in the decision-making process of both IHLs. Finally, students were classified as influential regarding the management of IHL-A, but not of IHL-B.

We then sought the opinions of the respondents from both IHLs about the prioritization of the stakeholders based on salience (Mitchell et al., 1997; Barakat, Parente & Sarturi, 2018). For the model of Mitchell et al. (1997), we also used a five-point scale (with 1 corresponding to the lowest level and 5 to the highest). These data were obtained from part C of the questionnaire. We asked the respondents to assign a score on the scale in question for each assertion of Barakat, Parente and Sarturi (2018) in relation to the attributes (power, legitimacy and urgency) for each of the stakeholders (Chart 5) of the IHLs. As before, we calculated the simple average of the responses.

For this determination, we included only the groups or individuals that received an average score greater than or equal to 3 in the opinion of the respondents from each IHL for each of the attributes considered (power, legitimacy and urgency), based on the assertions of Barakat, Parente and Sarturi (2018). Thus, the groups and individuals that received an average score greater than or equal to 3 were considered to have the attribute. Based on these results, we compiled the data in Chart 7 for IHL-A, indicating the stakeholders with and without each attribute and their classification according to the salience model. Likewise, Chart 8 presents the same data for IHL-B.

Charts 7 and 8 show that professors/researchers, upper management, non-academic employees and the federal government are definitive stakeholders of both IHLs. However, for the managers of IHL-A, students, the scientific community, local community, Brazilian society and public research financiers also are considered to be definitive stakeholders by the respondents from that academic organization.

Therefore, stakeholder management in IHL-A has a greater challenge, since it is necessary to adopt strategies to prioritize demands of nine groups, organizations or individuals, many potentially conflicting and/or very broad, as is the case of a strategy to prioritize demands from such a large and heterogeneous group as Brazilian society. In

contrast, the managers of IHL-B seem to have a better understanding of the stakeholders whose demands the organization needs to prioritize in pursuit of greater harmonization of the organizational objectives with the claims of these groups, organizations or individuals. This is because the focus is centered on four definitive stakeholders instead of nine as is the case of IHL-A. It should be recalled that the definitive stakeholders consist of groups or individuals whose demands need greater prioritization by the managers of the IHLs.

**Chart 7** Stakeholders of IHL-A according to the model of Mitchell et al. (1997).

STAKEHOLDERS	POWER	LEGITIMACY	URGENCY	CLASSIFICATION
Professors/Researchers	YES	YES	YES	DEFINITIVE
Upper Management (Dean, Vice-Director, Management Boards)	YES	YES	YES	DEFINITIVE
Students	YES	YES	YES	DEFINITIVE
Federal Government (Ministry of Education)	YES	YES	YES	DEFINITIVE
Technical Employees (Non-Academic)	YES	YES	YES	DEFINITIVE
Scientific Community	YES	YES	YES	DEFINITIVE
Brazilian Society	YES	YES	YES	DEFINITIVE
Public Research Financiers (CAPES, FAPERJ)	YES	YES	YES	DEFINITIVE
Local Community	YES	YES	YES	DEFINITIVE
Students' Families	NO	YES	YES	DEPENDENT
Secondary and/or Technical Schools	NO	YES	NO	DISCRETIONARY
Employers	NO	YES	NO	DISCRETIONARY
Trade Associations	NO	YES	NO	DISCRETIONARY
Alumni	NO	YES	NO	DISCRETIONARY
Professional Councils and Guilds (e.g., CRA; CREA)	NO	YES	NO	DISCRETIONARY
Local Government	NO	NO	YES	DEMANDING
Other Institutions of Higher Learning	NO	NO	NO	NON-STAKEHOLDER

Source: Authors (2021).



**Chart 8** Stakeholders of IHL-B according to the model of Mitchell et al. (1997).

STAKEHOLDERS	POWER	LEGITIMACY	URGENCY	CLASSIFICATION
Federal Government (Ministry of Education)	YES	YES	YES	DEFINITIVE
Professors/Researchers	YES	YES	YES	DEFINITIVE
Upper Management (Dean, Vice-Director, Management Boards)	YES	YES	YES	DEFINITIVE
Technical Employees (Non-Academic)	YES	YES	YES	DEFINITIVE
Public Research Financiers (CAPES, FAPERJ)	YES	YES	NO	DOMINANT
Brazilian Society	YES	YES	NO	DOMINANT
Scientific Community	YES	YES	NO	DOMINANT
Students	YES	NO	YES	DANGEROUS
Local Community	NO	YES	NO	DISCRETIONARY
Professional Councils and Guilds (E.g., CRA; CREA)	NO	YES	NO	DISCRETIONARY
Employers	NO	NO	NO	NON-STAKEHOLDER

Source: Authors (2021).

With the elements obtained from gathering documental data (compilation of the minutes of the governing board meetings of both IHLs), participative observation and the results obtained from part D of the questionnaire, we sought to identify the stakeholders with greatest representation on the boards and if there is equal treatment or prioritization of demands by the managers of the two IHLs.

We found that the governing boards of IHLs are formed by three internal stakeholders: professors/researchers, non-academic employees and students. However, despite being represented on the governing boards, the non-academic employees' representatives only hold 2 of the 17 seats on the board of IHL-A (11.76%) and 2 of the 15 seats on the board of IHL-B (13.33%). Students' representatives hold 3 of the 17 seats on the board of IHL-A (17.64%) and 2 of the 15 seats on the board of IHL-B (13.33%). Hence, professors/researchers hold 12 of the 17 seats on the board of IHL-A (70.58%) and 11 of the 15 seats on the board of IHL-B (73.33%).

However, it should be stressed that the professors/researchers of the IHLs perform multiple functions in the respective institutions. They are active both in the academic area (in teaching, research and extension) and in the administrative area, as program coordinators, department chairs and management positions (e.g., deans), among others. In this respect, Pimenta (2007) indicated that public IHLs, like those studied here, are subject to Law 9,394/95, whose Article 56 determines that “[...] the teachers shall occupy seventy percent of the seats in each collegial body and commission, including those involved with formulation and modification of bylaws and internal rules, as well as the choice of directors.”

In any event, there were differences between the two IHLs. In the opinion of the managers of IHL-A, the decision-making process of the governing board is democratic and representative, in particular involving the internal stakeholders composing the board. However, there was predominance of the demands and claims of the teachers/researchers in relation to the other stakeholders. That fact can be explained by the influence and salience of these stakeholders in that IHL, in line with their predominance of seats on the board.

In turn, regarding IHL-B, there was a rough balance of the claims and demands in the debates conducted by the board, despite the fact the influence, salience and representation of professors/researchers was greater than that of the other stakeholders. Of particular note in this IHL was the conflict between two groups of professors/researchers who diverge over the role that IHLs should have in society. According to one of these groups, IHL-B should focus its attentions on typical activities (teaching, research and extension) according to the composition of the current governing board. Another group of professors/researchers expressed the opinion that the debate over the function of IHLs should be expanded to include other sectors of society, even though not represented on the board, to expand the actions of the institution, especially through greater participation of students in the decision-making process, even without a larger number of board seats being held by students and other actors of society.

However, it is necessary to stress that IHLs are complex organizations, marked by the relationship of diverse agents of society, involving central elements related to diversity and critical thinking. Nevertheless, the managers of these organizations should pay heed so that these characteristics and the conflicts of ideas do not lead to a cacophony of interests, when various groups pursue different and conflicting goals (Salm, Tomas & Amboni, 2013), with a direct impact on the organizational performance.

The primacy of demands by the professors/researchers, in particular in IHL-A, can lead to predominance of matters with strictly academic nature or related to the personal interests of some groups in detriment to themes and discussions with a more strategic and/or collective level. Thus, it is necessary to adopt mechanisms that permit the members of the boards, especially professors/researchers, to express themselves timely regarding conflicts of interests in any matter under discussion.

Changing representative structures is never a simple task, since it has a direct impact on the dynamics of power established in IHLs, as well as being related with elements of the organizational culture. However, it is necessary for managers to initially establish strategies for relationships with their main stakeholders, in particular those that have less representation on the boards, to enable identifying their demands, leading to a more inclusive strategic orientation. In the final analysis, the findings of this study suggest that Brazilian IHLs, even those without external stakeholders represented in their governing boards, should adopt strategies for relationship with society at large, to consider their demands and have greater interaction with other social spheres (Mainardes, Alves & Raposo, 2011).

## **5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

We believe it was possible to confirm the importance of identifying the stakeholders that interact with IHLs, with methods for classifying and prioritizing these stakeholders, especially in public IHLs, which have a diverse group of stakeholders with varying demands and interests, in general antagonistic.

We utilized as methodological procedure a case study of two public institutions of higher learning (IHLs): IHL-A, with focus on intermediate and technical education as well as college; and IHL-B, with focus only on the university level. Against this backdrop, it was possible to detail the degree of influence possessed by the various stakeholders on the decision-making process of the respective institutions, as well as the possibility of classifying them according to the attributes power, legitimacy and urgency, based on the theoretical models of Mainardes et al. (2012) and Mitchell et al. (1997). We also investigated the participation of the influential and salient stakeholders on the various deliberative instances and the decision-making process.

The results showed that the professors/researchers, upper management, students, federal government and non-academic employees (technical and administrative staffs) are

the most important stakeholders of the IHLs, so their expectations and demands should be closely followed by the managers of these organizations. We also observed that the opinion of some of the managers about the identity of the stakeholders and the importance of interacting with them, especially regarding prioritization, is greater at one of the IHLs than the other.

It was also possible to ascertain the level of participation of the stakeholders in the decision-making structures of both IHLs. This led to the conclusion that these structures are formed by the main internal stakeholders of these institutions, the students, professors/researchers and non-academic employees, but with significant differences in the number of seats held on the governing boards by each of these stakeholders. The non-academic employees and students had much lower representation than the professors/researchers at both IHLs. However, the professors/researchers have to exercise a multiplicity of roles in the organizations, both academic and administrative. This multiplicity was not present in the case of the other stakeholders. Nevertheless, we found no adoption of mechanisms to enable timely manifestation of conflicts of interest, especially for the professors/researchers, since they are influential and definitive stakeholders, with predominant representation in the decision-making arenas of the IHLs studied.

With respect to the limitations of this study, despite the merit of the two theoretical models used, other models exist that can be applied to complex institutions with various stakeholders interested in their activities, as is typical of academic organizations, which could contribute to the formulation and management of a strategy for them. As suggestions for future research, we can mention investigating the influence and salience of stakeholders in the decision-making process of other organizations, particularly private educational institutions, for the purpose of comparison.

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