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Research Article

Intrapreneurial intensity of a community higher education institution in Santa Catarina, Brazil

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Abstract

Objective: To analyze the intrapreneurial intensity of a Community Higher Education Institution (HEI). **Methodology/Approach:** a quantitative research approach conducted in a Community HEI in the state of Santa Catarina, Brazil. A survey was used to collect primary data from 396 administrative staff members at all hierarchical levels, complemented by document analysis. **Main Findings:** The Intrapreneurial Intensity Index (III) of the HEI was classified as low. When comparing the III among managers (135) and non-managerial employees (261), no significant difference was found between the groups. **Theoretical/Methodological Contributions:** contributes to the scientific community by validating the applicability of the III questionnaire in the Portuguese language and academic settings, as well as by triangulating qualitative data with document analysis, adding robustness to the study. **Relevance/Originality:** The uniqueness of the study lies in the use of the instrument for measuring the III, adapted to the HEI. The significance of the research lies in the replicability of the study in an academic environment, supporting the development of programs for promoting the intrapreneurial organizational culture. **Social/Management Contributions:** The findings of this study can be applied not only in community HEIs but also in HEIs of various sizes and segments, guiding the possible directions of corporate entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Intrapreneurship, Corporate Entrepreneurship, Intrapreneurial Intensity, Intrapreneurial Culture, Higher Education Institution.

Intensidade intraempreendedora de uma instituição de ensino superior comunitária de Santa Catarina, Brasil

Resumo

Objetivo: analisar a intensidade intraempreendedora de uma Instituição de Ensino Superior (IES) Comunitária. **Metodologia/abordagem:** pesquisa de abordagem quantitativa, realizada em uma IES Comunitária do Estado de Santa Catarina. Utilizou-se o survey para a coleta dos dados primários de 396 colaboradores administrativos de todos os níveis hierárquicos, triangulados com uma análise documental. **Principais resultados:** o Índice de Intensidade Intraempreendedora (III) da IES foi classificado como baixo. Ao comparar o grupo de colaboradores que ocupam cargos de gestão (135) com aqueles que não ocupam (261), não foi encontrada uma diferença significativa entre eles em relação ao III. **Contribuições teóricas/metodológicas:** Cientificamente, esta pesquisa contribuiu ao validar a aplicabilidade do questionário de III na língua portuguesa em ambiente acadêmico, além de triangular os dados qualitativos com análise documental, propiciando mais robustez a pesquisa. **Relevância/originalidade:** a originalidade do estudo está no fato de utilizar o instrumento para a medição do III, adaptado à IES. A relevância da pesquisa reside na replicabilidade do estudo em ambiente acadêmico, subsidiando a construção de formações para promoção da cultura organizacional intraempreendedora. **Contribuições sociais/para a gestão:** os resultados do estudo podem ser utilizados, não somente em IES comunitárias, mas em IES de qualquer porte e segmentos, orientando os possíveis rumos do empreendedorismo corporativo.

Palavras-chave: Intraempreendedorismo, Empreendedorismo Corporativo, Intensidade Intraempreendedora, Cultura Intraempreendedora, Instituição de Ensino Superior.

INTRODUCTION

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are entities dedicated to higher education and research. They offer undergraduate and postgraduate programs, including specializations, master's, and doctoral degrees, as well as extension courses. HEIs can be classified as public (state-owned), community (non-state public entities operating on a non-profit basis), or private. These institutions are navigating the consequences of a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment (Codreanu, 2016; Kaivo-oja & Lauraeus, 2018), further intensified by increased competition and the commercialization of the educational context. This shift has led community and private Brazilian HEIs to pivot towards market-related values that were previously not as emphasized, necessitating more experienced administrators to professionalize the management of HEIs (Meyer Júnior & Lopes, 2015).

In this context, university managers have adopted a new approach that emphasizes professional autonomy, authority, and leadership. They are assuming greater responsibilities and risks to enhance HEI performance (Meyer Júnior & Lopes, 2015). This situation poses challenges to the entire university system, particularly for community HEIs, which, despite having private legal ownership and being considered non-state public entities (PL 7.639/2010), serve a public purpose and operate on a non-profit basis (Fiorenze, 2017). These institutions are confronting "the effects of public policies aimed at commodifying education, as well as economic fluctuations caused by globalization" (Longo, 2019, p. 55).

One potential pathway to survival in this unstable educational market scenario is corporate entrepreneurship, which can be applied to any company, regardless of its size, market, or concentration level (Hashimoto et al., 2010). Consequently, fostering an internal environment conducive to corporate entrepreneurship can become a crucial asset for the growth, survival, and sustainability of organizations (Kamau, 2018).

Meyer Júnior and Lopes (2015) highlight the absence of more structured theories for implementing an intrapreneurial culture within the university context. As such, it becomes imperative for administrators to exhibit adaptability in tailoring methods, approaches, and practices to the unique characteristics of academic institutions, which diverge significantly from other types of organizations, since HEIs are subject to the laws and regulations of the Brazilian Federal Government through the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) regarding the creation, authorization, and recognition of courses and the accreditation and reaccreditation of HEIs (LAW No. 9.394, of December 20, 1996). This fact presents HEI managers with a differentiated organizational structure and a regulatory system that evaluates institutions every four years, with the potential for them to lose or gain scores, which directly impacts their market image and the possibility of accessing scholarship funds for students and research project resources.

Given the distinct nature of HEIs, there is a pressing need for approaches that are more attuned to collecting and leveraging their diverse resources in a manner that is both creative and innovative (Meyer Júnior & Lopes, 2015). This entails harmonizing rationality with subjective elements like intuition and ethical values, which play a pivotal role in human behavior.

Moreover, it is important for educational managers to understand the critical aspects on which decisions must be made, seeking alternative and innovative solutions that enable rapid change and adaptation to the reality of the higher education market (Gusso et al., 2020). It is therefore necessary for them to comprehend the aspects that stimulate intrapreneurial behavior, with the intention of fostering it to achieve the desired outcomes for the HEIs, whether in terms of creating and launching new products or developing new processes and management models (Festa, 2015). However, it is crucial to identify the aspects that become barriers to intrapreneurship and therefore need to be addressed more effectively (Caldeira & Medeiros Júnior, 2016).

To achieve this, organizations must develop methods to measure and incentivize intrapreneurship. Hill (2003) argues that intrapreneurship varies in degree and intensity and can be assessed even if it is not formally structured within the organization, as both employees and institutional culture may exhibit intrapreneurial potential (Ferras et al., 2018). For this reason, organizations need to develop measures to track the intrapreneurial performance variables of an organization, with a focus on measuring individual personality, structural level, and intrapreneurial culture (Hill, 2003).

Despite the recognized importance of intrapreneurial initiatives for universities (Engzell et al., 2024), according to De Keyser and Vandenbempt (2023), there is a lack of understanding of how culture or staff composition affects intrapreneurial dynamics in these institutions. This is the main gap that guides this study. Therefore, this article aims to analyze the Intrapreneurial Intensity of a Community HEI by testing whether it can be measured as a single construct composed of the dimensions of task innovation, structural flexibility, incentive policies, intrapreneurial leadership, and intrapreneurial culture, located in the North-Central coastal region of the State of Santa Catarina, Brazil. According to Hartman (2006), by understanding its entrepreneurial intensity, companies can assess their strengths and weaknesses in fostering an environment that supports intrapreneurship. This enables them to implement corporate entrepreneurship strategies that encourage employees' creative participation, ultimately enhancing competitiveness in their respective markets.

INTRAPRENEURSHIP IN ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT

To remain competitive and successful in the current volatile environment, organizations need to be opportunistic and proactive, as well as possess creativity and constant innovation (Rouse, 2012). This requires recognizing and harnessing the creativity and leadership that exist within organizations (Lenzi, 2008). In this context, organizations must cultivate environments that promote renewal and foster an organizational culture of innovation and diversity to remain competitive. An intrapreneurial culture facilitates this process by encouraging employees to generate new ideas and empowering them as agents of change (Bhutto & Shaikh, 2020), a crucial factor for maintaining long-term competitive advantage (Gawke et al., 2019).

Intrapreneurship is a behavioral approach in which employees perceive themselves as entrepreneurs within the organization, proactively identifying and pursuing opportunities to develop new products, services, markets, or even business ventures (Badoiu et al., 2020; Gawke et al., 2019; Valka et al., 2020). Given its relevance, this topic has increasingly attracted academic interest over the past two decades (Neesen et al., 2019).

However, for this process to develop, organizations must provide an environment that stimulates creativity and develops employees' individual characteristics. Actions in favor of developing an intrapreneurial culture can facilitate the establishment of novelty, change, and organizational transformation, forming a new competitive posture demanded by the current organizational environment. Such strategically organized actions constitute corporate entrepreneurship.

The distinction between corporate entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship is essential to avoid conceptual ambiguities and enhance the understanding of their respective roles within organizations. Corporate entrepreneurship refers to a broad strategic approach adopted by the organization as a whole to foster innovation, renewal, and new business creation (Van Wyk & Adonisi, 2012). It is driven by high-level managerial decisions and often involves the formal allocation of resources to entrepreneurial initiatives, aiming at competitive advantage and sustainable organizational growth (Åmo, 2010).

In contrast, intrapreneurship is directly related to proactive initiatives taken by employees who, even within the existing organizational structure, identify opportunities, take risks, and implement innovations without necessarily waiting for top-down directives (Huang et al., 2021). While corporate entrepreneurship involves the deliberate creation of an environment that fosters innovation throughout the company, intrapreneurship emerges as an entrepreneurial behavior at the individual or team level within that environment, driven by autonomy, creativity, and a willingness to explore new solutions.

Hill (2003) emphasizes that companies need to promote a culture that stimulates intrapreneurship, an environment that encourages innovation and creativity, as well as the assumption of calculated risks, as organizational factors are expected to shape the organization's culture, supporting entrepreneurial behavior (Bayarçelik & Özşahin, 2014). Therefore, organizations must adopt intrapreneurship to enrich the organizational culture, practicing and connecting it to organizational goals (Bhutto & Shaikh, 2020). Furthermore, for the intrapreneurial culture to be effective, a set of practices aligned with organizational structures, processes, beliefs, and values is required (Bohnenberger & Schmidt, 2015).

When an intrapreneurial culture, understood in this article as the existence of a favorable climate for innovation within an organization (Pinchot & Pellman, 2004), is present, it encourages individuals to go beyond the minimum required, creating a shared sense of commitment (Rodrigues & Teixeira, 2015). To achieve this, companies must constantly monitor and control the innovation generation process, ensuring that individuals are rewarded, thus keeping employees motivated to innovate further, as they come to trust that the company values their efforts (Pinchot & Pellman, 2004).

For intrapreneurship to be established as a culture within the organization, it needs to permeate all organizational levels. While senior-level managers are responsible for playing a central role in creating an organizational vision (Gawke et al., 2019), middle-level managers must endorse these strategies and implement them in their areas of operation. Additionally, non-managerial employees can contribute by increasing the variability of their work to generate innovative ideas that contribute to organizational goals.

In recent years, the idea of intrapreneurship has taken hold most firmly in universities (De Keyser & Vandenbempt, 2023), especially because the involvement of academic employees in intrapreneurship activities can contribute to the utilization and commercialization of scientific knowledge and helps ensure the sustainability of institutions (Engzell et al., 2024). At an organizational level, decisions made in response to external challenges are captured by entrepreneurial strategies and organizational design. Resource acquisition, alliances, openness, networks of relationships, incentive structures, and the organizational climate in the workplace, as well as incentive systems (Flores et al., 2024), can promote academic entrepreneurship and the engagement of individuals, developing an intrapreneurial culture.

Since academic institutions must compete to attract students, facilitate external collaboration, attract external funding, and much more, the inception and execution of intrapreneurial initiatives are key concerns for many universities (Engzell et al., 2024). According to De Keyser and Vandenbempt (2023), to employ intrapreneurial initiatives, academics should organize themselves in a way that emphasizes autonomy and freedom but also converges in significant structure and order. In this way, academics need to "simultaneously break free yet constrain" themselves: although sufficient organizational leeway is a prerequisite for not nipping an intrapreneurial opportunity in the bud, clear structures and systemic arrangements are essential for allowing such opportunity to surpass the seedling stage. Engzell et al., (2024) illustrated this intrapreneurial logic as "balancing between academic parameters and personal desires to initiate something new".

A series of personal experiences and skills shape the ability to formulate ideas, such as motivation, opportunity recognition, resource utilization, and problem-solving, which form an integral part of intrapreneurial logic (Engzell et al., 2024). These individuals' aspects are key to raising initial enthusiasm and speeding up processes and bureaucratic procedures and contribute to the creation of an internal absorptive capacity. Universities that combine intrapreneurial abilities with environmental factors, in the form of supporting organizational measures and strategies, are likely to succeed in their entrepreneurial strategies and become successful entrepreneurial universities (Flores et al., 2024).

To better understand the complexity involved in intrapreneurial culture and the relevance of context in promoting this activity, researchers have studied the internal factors of organizational environments that stimulate an entrepreneurial culture, proposing conceptual models based on reviews and studies of existing literature on the subject (Bogatyreva et al., 2022). Kuratko et al. (1990), Goosen et al. (2002), Tushman and Nadler (1997), and Hill (2003) are examples of theoretical models and measuring instruments used to identify intrapreneurial activities in organizations. However, for the objective of this research, the Intrapreneurial Intensity Index (III), structured by Hill (2003), is the only instrument used to measure intrapreneurship intensity in corporate environments. Furthermore, other factors highlight the choice of this instrument: it was evaluated in terms of its psychometric properties results from various tests that indicated it is valid and reliable; it results in numerical scores which provide the organization with significant feedback regarding its current and potential intrapreneurial intensity and offers an overview of the organization's intrapreneurial capacity, as well as identifies specific areas witin it that possibly require change or modification to become more intrapreneurial (Hill, 2003).

The III was also chosen by Rambakus et al. (2020) for their research based on criteria of practicality, economy, interpretability, convenience, validity, and reliability of results and for its more comprehensive coverage and depth. Holienka and Kubišová (2014) also used the III instrument and stated that the instrument is a powerful tool for managers and researchers to assess the general intrapreneurial intensity, along with the organization's strengths and weaknesses, with the possibility of building an effective intrapreneurial context.

The model underpinning the III, as proposed by Hill (2003), highlights six elements that form the basis for measuring intrapreneurial intensity in organizations, as shown in Figure 1.

The III was inspired by the model of Tushman & Nadler (1997). Hill (2003) added more elements, such as the social and technical levels of the organization. Additionally, the organization's vision and mission were incorporated into the model in response to Morris's suggestion (2001) to integrate the intrapreneurial spirit into all aspects of the company, enabling the dissemination of an intrapreneurial culture within the organization (Hill, 2003).

To calculate the III results, Hill (2003) proposed refining the instrument by summing up the responses obtained for each dimension and then aggregating these dimensions to define the III.

Additionally, the author proposed an ordinal level classification named the Intrapreneurial Intensity Score Interpretation, where a score between 10 and 25 indicates an extremely low level, a score between 26 and 35 indicates a low level, a score between 36 and 45 indicates a high level, and a score between 46 and 50 indicates an extremely high level.

Figure 1

Six intrapreneurial sub-indices

Construct	Index	Measurement
1. TASK (level of task innovation present in the organization)	Task Innovation Index	Identification, development, and exploitation of new ideas; Level of introduction of new products/services; Improvement or revision of current products/services; Enhancement of the quality of current and future products/services; Demonstration of employee initiative; Level of competition with other organizations.
2. INDIVIDUALS (organization)	Intrapreneurial Employees Index	Intrapreneurial qualities of employees; Attitudes of employees towards change, risk, and failure; Willingness of employees to embrace new opportunities Levels of innovative and creative employees; Ability of employees to deal with uncertainty.
3. STRUCTURE (level of structural flexibility in the organization)	Structural Flexibility Index	Flattening of the organizational hierarchy; Level of permission required to perform the task; Decentralization of the organizational structure; Flexible career plans; Recognition of lower-level employees; Division of work tasks; Span of control in the organization.
4. POLICIES (level of incentive policies present in the organization)	Incentive Policies Index	Policies to encourage creative and innovative approaches; Reward systems for intrapreneurial behavior; Level of punishment or reward for taking calculated risks; Percentage of time available to work on the idea's feasibility; Availability of intra-capital.
5. LEADERSHIP (level of intrapreneurial leadership in the organization)	Intrapreneurial Leadership Index.	Presence of leadership in the organization; Innovation and charisma of leaders; Leaders' knowledge of the environment and competition; Promotion of teamwork Encouragement of open discussion and negotiation; Promotion of an intrapreneurial philosophy in the organization.
6. CULTURE (level of intrapreneurial culture within the organization)	Intrapreneurial Culture Index	Evidence of interdependence and teamwork; Level of power distance / authoritarianism; Clarity of organizational vision Acceptance of uncertainty Attitude towards failure Awareness of future opportunities; Encouragement of lifelong learning; Recruitment of intrapreneurial employees; Stimulus for innovation and creativity and calculated risk-taking

Note: Adapted from Hill (2003, p. 58).

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This research is characterized as descriptive as it aims to measure the III in the different dimensions investigated (Sampieri et al., 2013). The approach employed is predominantly quantitative (Creswell, 2010), and the survey technique was used for data collection (Gil & Reis Neto, 2020). To better understand the findings, a documentary analysis was conducted to identify the existence or absence of initiatives/projects related to corporate entrepreneurship actions. In terms of timeframe, the research is characterized as a cross-sectional study (Zangirolami-Raimundo et al., 2018).

This study focuses on a Community Higher Education Institution (HEI) in the state of Santa Catarina. It is among the most recognized HEIs in Brazil, as indicated by the General Course Index (IGC) from the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP), under the Ministry of Education (MEC). Furthermore, it is considered one of the best HEIs in Latin America based on its rankings in THE - Times Higher Education and QS University Rankings, as well as Webometrics (University Sustainability Report 2020, 2021). It is important to highlight that a Community HEI is legally constituted as an association or foundation, being considered public non-state entities, with their assets typically belonging to civil society entities and operating on a non-profit basis (PL 7.639/2010). For this reason, it can receive budgetary resources from the public power and access public notices directed to public institutions, but it also acts like private HEIs by charging monthly fees and offering various services related to higher education. Furthermore, their hiring is not conducted through public examinations but through recruitment and selection processes like those in private companies, and their more important administrative positions are filled solely by members of the HEI, according to the statutes of the institution, rather than by politicians or external individuals appointed by the public authorities.

For data collection, questionnaire III (Hill, 2003) was chosen, which had been previously tested and validated. However, for its use in this research, the instrument was translated from English to Portuguese by a professional translator. Additionally, language of Hill's (2003) instrument had to be adapted since the questionnaire was originally developed for application in the industrial field, requiring adjustments for a language more suitable to the reality of an HEI. After the adjustments, the questionnaire was validated by experts in the field, and two professors approved the necessary adaptations. Furthermore, two former collaborators of the HEI were invited to respond to the questionnaire to verify if the questions were understandable to future respondents. After receiving feedback from these two individuals, some adjustments were made, and then the instrument was finalized.

Based on Hill's (2003) instrument proposition, with its adaptation into Portuguese and to the context of higher education institutions, we applied it to verify its validity within this specific setting. Thus, the hypothesis to be tested in this study is: H1 - Intrapreneurial intensity can be measured through the dimensions of task innovation, structural flexibility, incentive policies, intrapreneurial leadership, and intrapreneurial culture, which together form a single construct (III).

To assess whether the proposed hypothesis is confirmed, we conducted statistical tests, including Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to verify the construct validity, Cronbach's Alpha to evaluate the reliability of the instrument, and correlation analysis to examine the relationships between the dimensions. These analyses determine whether the intrapreneurial intensity construct is consistently measured by the proposed dimensions.

The instrument was made available through a Google Forms survey, which was sent via email to administrative employees according to the email address list provided by the HR department of the HEI. The instrument developed by Hill (2003) consists of six sub-indices, containing 60 closed-ended questions, each scored from 1 to 5 on the Likert scale (english questionnaire). Five additional questions were included in this study to identify sociodemographic variables, resulting in a Portuguese translation of the questionnaire (portuguese translated questionnaire) (see Materials in Open Science: Data availability section).

The survey was conducted with 897 employees directly involved in internal administrative functions of the IES. The initial population was 1,021 individuals, but 124 employees who did not have a workstation with computer access were excluded as they perform various external administrative functions, making it impossible to respond. The total number of administrative employees who participated in the survey includes those who hold management positions at different levels of command.

The same questionnaire was answered by all employees, regardless of hierarchical level or position. With the intention of categorizing the results obtained through the questionnaires, question number 6 was included, in which employees were asked whether they had an appointment decree to exercise their function/position in the company. Such a decree differentiates those who hold a management position from those who do not. It is emphasized that the respondents of the questionnaire were not identified at any time for ethical reasons.

By means of the perception of the employees who responded to the survey, the results of the HEI 's III were obtained, using the limits adopted in the Intrapreneurial Intensity Score Interpretation, proposed by Hill (2003). Additionally, through a sample means test with a random division and subsequently a normality test to verify if the data were normally distributed, the means and standard deviations of each construct were presented with the objective of validating and increasing the reliability of the results. Another stage of the research was the data collection and content analysis of the documents provided by the IES, using the categories from the questionnaire as a basis. The documents were classified by acronyms, as shown in Figure 2:

Figure 2

Classification of the analyzed documents

Acronym	Document	Period (year)
PDI	Institutional Development Plan	2017-2021
PG	Management Plan	2018-2021
RE	Entrepreneurship Report	2020-2021
RI	Innovation Report	2018-2021
RRH	Human Resources Report	2018, 2019 e 2021
RS	Sustainability Report	2020

Note: Elaborated by authors.

The aforementioned documents were requested via email from the managers responsible for the strategic areas of the HEI, and the most recent documents covering the last four years of the HEI 's management, from 2018 to 2021, were provided. This research was approved by the Ethics and Research Committee on November 5th, 2021, under the code 1700821.6.0000.0120 of the Certificate of Presentation for Ethical Review - CAAE. In the next section, the results of the quantitative analysis will be presented, followed by the analysis of the researched documents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The sample calculation, carried out based on Barbetta (2002), considering a population of 897 employees and a 4% margin of error, indicated a minimum requirement of 368 respondents. However, 396 participants with valid responses were obtained. Regarding the demographic data collected in the survey, it is worth noting that 59% of the sample is female, and the most frequent age category (32%) was 35 to 44 years. Regarding work-related data, the categories with the highest number of participants in the employment tenure variable were over 21 years (23%) and 6 to 10 years (22%), indicating a long duration of employment. Regarding managerial roles, 66%

(261) of the participants mentioned that they do not hold managerial positions, while 34% (135) declared that they do.

Descriptive tests were applied to study the items used in the instruments to characterize the sample and assess the normality of the distributions. The absolute frequency (n), relative frequency (%), mean (m), median (md), standard deviation (sd), skewness (a), and kurtosis (k) were used. The cutoff points to evaluate the quasi-normality obtained from the distribution were extracted from the reference intervals [-2, +2] in the skewness test and [-7, +7] in the kurtosis test (Finney & DiStefano, 2013).

Table 1 presents the descriptive results of the questionnaire items. It can be observed that the overall mean was higher for the construct of intrapreneurial employees and lower for the construct of incentive policies. Additionally, the skewness indicates quasi-normal distribution for items with a magnitude lower than 1.29, and the same applies to kurtosis, with a magnitude lower than 1.64.

Table 2 describes the classified results for the sample, according to the Intrapreneurial Intensity Score, as elaborated by Hill (2003), which is the objective of the present study.

Regarding the "Task Innovation" dimension, 60% of the respondents were classified in the two highest categories of the scale (high and extremely high). This indicates a tendency for a favorable index of introducing innovations in new products and services or in different ways of solving problems at the individual and organizational levels, in terms of identifying, developing, and exploiting new opportunities (Hill, 2003).

Table 1

Description of items

	m	sd	md	a	k
Task Innovation					
TAR1	3.93	0.83	4	-0.87	0.84
TAR2	3.52	0.94	4	-0.35	-0.48
TAR3	3.94	0.79	4	-0.53	0.01
TAR4	3.54	0.82	4	-0.42	0.26
TAR5	3.43	0.99	3	-0.10	-0.50
TAR6	3.29	0.79	3	-0.13	0.07
TAR7	4.16	0.79	4	-0.54	-0.33
TAR8	3.91	0.81	4	-0.35	0.04
TAR9	3.44	1.05	4	-0.42	-0.63
TAR10	3.67	0.86	4	-0.57	0.04
Intrapreneurial Employee					
FUN1	4.12	0.74	4	-0.84	1.64
FUN2	3.92	0.97	4	-0.59	-0.19
FUN3	4.29	0.66	4	-0.77	1.11
FUN4	3.99	0.76	4	-0.39	-0.05
FUN5	4.19	0.69	4	-0.46	-0.17
FUN6	4.46	0.68	5	-1.04	0.44
FUN7	4.37	0.67	4	-0.69	-0.15
FUN8	3.86	0.81	4	-0.11	-0.74
FUN9	3.94	0.79	4	-0.48	0.38
FUN10	4.39	0.76	5	-0.96	-0.02
Structural Flexibility					
FLE1	2.39	0.94	2	0.24	-0.66
FLE2	3.38	0.94	3	-0.30	-0.32
FLE3	3.34	0.98	3	-0.18	-0.11
FLE4	1.86	0.90	2	0.72	-0.28
FLE5	2.85	0.90	3	-0.09	-0.35
FLE6	2.92	1.03	3	-0.11	-0.90
FLE7	2.05	0.92	2	0.78	0.17
FLE8	2.79	1.06	3	0.02	-0.76
FLE9	3.54	0.90	4	-0.24	-0.27
FLE10	3.84	0.91	4	-0.85	0.73
Incentive Policies					
POL1	2.48	0.92	2	0.20	-0.22
POL2	2.81	0.93	3	-0.03	0.05
POL3	2.71	0.96	3	0.15	-0.18
POL4	2.70	0.86	3	-0.37	-0.21
POL5	2.98	0.80	3	-0.23	0.85
POL6	2.62	0.91	3	-0.27	-0.36
POL7	2.56	0.80	3	-0.26	-0.09
POL8	3.34	0.92	3	-0.46	0.04
POL9	3.66	1.08	4	-0.76	-0.03
POL10	3.01	1.01	3	-0.04	-0.39
Intrapreneurial Leadership					
LID1	3.75	1.01	4	-0.75	0.42
LID2	4.33	0.96	5	-1.28	0.83
LID3	3.27	0.90	3	-0.04	0.03
LID4	3.65	0.94	4	-0.48	0.06
LID5	4.10	0.97	4	-1.08	0.71
LID6	3.82	0.92	4	-0.75	0.56
LID7	3.95	1.16	4	-0.82	-0.29
LID8	3.18	0.88	3	0.03	-0.20
LID9	3.79	0.98	4	-0.57	0.00
LID10	3.49	1.01	3	-0.17	-0.47
Intrapreneurial Culture					
CUL1	4.12	0.82	4	-0.90	1.14
CUL2	3.49	0.99	4	-0.26	-0.42
CUL3	3.87	1.01	4	-0.56	-0.29
CUL4	3.55	0.91	4	-0.24	-0.21
CUL5	3.18	0.98	3	-0.13	-0.54
CUL6	3.24	0.94	3	0.17	0.17
CUL7	3.66	0.94	4	-0.49	-0.03
CUL8	3.17	0.91	3	0.05	-0.05
CUL9	3.51	0.92	4	-0.36	-0.11
CUL10	3.95	0.83	4	-0.51	0.20

Note: Elaborated by authors. m: mean. sd: standard deviation. md: median. a: skewness. k: kurtosis.

Table 2

Sample classification

	n	%
Task Innovation		
Extremely low	10	3 %
Low	148	37 %
High	217	55 %
Extremely high	21	5 %
Intrapreneurial Employees		
Extremely low	1	0 %
Low	31	8 %
High	312	79 %
Extremely high	52	13 %
Structural Flexibility		
Extremely low	86	22 %
Low	264	67 %
High	46	12 %
Extremely high	0	0%
Incentive Policies		
Extremely low	93	23 %
Low	249	63 %
High	54	14 %
Extremely high	0	0%
Intrapreneurial Leadership		
Extremely low	15	4 %
Low	121	31 %
High	237	60 %
Extremely high	23	6 %
Intrapreneurial Culture		
Extremely low	22	6 %
Low	165	42 %
High	182	46 %
Extremely high	27	7 %

Note: Elaborated by authors. n: absolute frequency. %: relative frequency.

In the "Intrapreneurial Employees" dimension, this percentage reaches 92%, which demonstrates that the Institution has many intrapreneurial individuals, meaning those who have an innovative vision, courage, and willingness to embrace new opportunities and demonstrate initiate creative changes (Hill, 2003). Individuals' entrepreneurial characteristics are the basis for an intrapreneurial culture, since some of them, like opportunity recognition, resource utilization, and problem solving allows that employees identify new ways to generate value and innovate (Engzell et al., 2024; Flores et al., 2024).

Analyzing the "Intrapreneurial Leadership" dimension, it is observed that 66% of the respondents were classified in the highest categories of the scale (high and extremely high), which reflects that the Institution has people in its administrative staff, whether managers or not, who are visionary and flexible, enjoy and encourage teamwork, and can adapt to the intrapreneurial philosophy (Hill, 2003).

In the "Intrapreneurial Culture" dimension, 53% were classified in these two highest categories of the scale. However, it is possible to identify that there is a larger number of people in the low and high levels (347 individuals), while in the extremely low and extremely high levels, the grouping of people is much smaller (49 individuals). Therefore, there is a balance, and people are more concentrated in the intermediate levels of classification. Hill (2003) argues that an organization that shows good levels in the "Intrapreneurial Culture" construct operates in an environment characterized by interdependence, low power distance, low uncertainty levels, and focuses on quality of life and short-term orientation. Additionally, it stimulates people to act in an innovative and creative way, as well as to take calculated risks.

Unlike other dimensions, 'Structural Flexibility' exhibited the highest concentration of respondents in the low and extremely low categories (89%), with no classifications at the extremely high level. This represents a significant barrier to intrapreneurial culture, as academics often struggle with limited autonomy and restricted freedom to explore intrapreneurial opportunities (De Keyser & Vandenbempt, 2023). Structural constraints, along with MEC regulations, may hinder their ability to initiate and develop new ventures (Engzell et al., 2024), and sometimes by MEC regulations. This demonstrates that the institution has a low level of structural flexibility and needs to plan and develop actions to decentralize its hierarchical structure and promote greater division of labor and broader spans of control (Hill, 2003).

Like the previous dimension, the "Incentive Policies" construct also had no respondents classified at the extremely high level, also showing the highest concentration of respondents in the low and extremely low levels (86%). This result indicates that the Higher Education Institution (HEI) should provide better opportunities for its employees, encouraging and motivating them to try new ideas without fear of punishment for potential failure (Hill, 2003). Therefore, it is evident that these two dimensions present the lowest intensity levels, warranting attention from the institution. These results contribute to understanding how culture or staff composition affects intrapreneurial dynamics in universities (De Keyser & Vandenbempt, 2023).

Based on the levels presented for each dimension, the overall III index was calculated, considering all the remaining items in the model. The calculated III resulted in an average value of 3.45 (standard deviation = 0.60) for the sample. Considering the limits adopted in the Intrapreneurial Intensity Score Interpretation (Hill, 2003), the Intrapreneurial Intensity Index (III) of the institution indicates that the overall level found in the sample is 34.5. In other words, the Intrapreneurial Intensity Index of the Institution is classified as low. For a better understanding of the reality of the Institution's III, the classification was expanded to the sociodemographic variable that determined whether the participant held a management position. Thus, each of the dimensions defined by Hill (2003) was analyzed according to the variable of holding a formal appointment. Table 3 shows the comparison of the indexes by dimension and the overall index for the appointment letter possession variable.

Table 3

Comparisons by possession of appointment decree

	Management Position	n	m	sd	p-valor
Task Innovation	Não	261	3.63	0.70	0.348
	Sim	135	3.70	0.67	
Structural Flexibility	Não	261	3.13	0.73	0.932
	Sim	135	3.15	0.71	
Incentive Policies	Não	261	2.92	0.67	0.813
	Sim	135	2.90	0.68	
Intrapreneurial Leadership	Não	261	**3.90**	0.77	**0.038***
	Sim	135	**4.07**	0.66	
Intrapreneurial Culture	Não	261	3.54	0.70	0.181
	Sim	135	3.64	0.68	
Intrapreneurial Intensity Index	Não	261	**3.42**	0.60	0.273
	Sim	135	**3.49**	0.58	

Note: Elaborated by authors. n: absolute frequency. m: mean. sd: standard deviation. p-value: significance level *: p < 0.05 developed by the authors.
The "Intrapreneurial Employees" dimension was excluded in the confirmatory factor analysis as it did not allow validation

A significant difference was found only in the "Intrapreneurial Leadership" dimension, where employees who hold an appointment letter have an average of 4.07, while those who do not have an appointment letter have an average of 3.90. This shows that participants who hold an appointment letter had a higher index in this category compared to those who do not have the appointment letter. Table 3 also presents the overall III for all dimensions, allowing for comparison between employees who hold a management position and those who do not. It can be stated that there is no significant difference, meaning there is equity in the overall classification of the III for these two groups.

Based on the statistical analyses, it is possible to confirm the proposed hypothesis: Intrapreneurial intensity can be measured through the dimensions of task innovation, structural flexibility, incentive policies, intrapreneurial leadership, and intrapreneurial culture, which together form a single construct (III). The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) demonstrated that the proposed dimensions form a single valid construct to measure intrapreneurial intensity (CFI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.06), ensuring the theoretical adequacy of the model. Furthermore, Cronbach's Alpha (0.82) indicated high reliability, and the significant correlations between dimensions ($p < 0.05$) confirmed that all variables contribute to the measurement of the construct. These results validate the adaptation of the instrument to the Portuguese language and to the context of higher education institutions.

After the quantitative analysis, a content analysis was conducted on the 6 documents provided by the HEI (Figure 2), and the main results are summarized in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Summary of institutional document analysis

Document	Summary
PDI	The document presents the institution's concern with innovation and the need to be active in a constantly changing world, but no specific initiatives were identified to foster entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship among the technical-administrative staff. Team Building was an initiative aimed at improving processes and services, but it did not focus on developing entrepreneurial skills among managers and employees. The Institutional Development Plan (PDI) does not include direct actions to encourage entrepreneurship, innovation, and creativity among the administrative staff of the institution.
PG	The Management Plan for 2018-2021 includes several proposals to harness the creative, innovative and entrepreneurial potential of the institution´s employees; however, it was not possible to identify projects and actions that have been effectively implemented.
RE	Many actions aimed at promoting entrepreneurship were offered: however these actions were directed towards students and the external Community, with none specifically targeted at administrative staff.
RI	Although there is a clear intention in the RI to involve the innovation ecosystem in fostering innovation, administrative staff were not included in these actions. The Technological Innovation Center (NIT) focuses on students, professors, and researchers, and there is no category for administrative staff in the Innovation Award. Furthermore, the future goals for innovation at the university do not include projects that encourage entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity among the institution's employees.
RRH	The Human Resources department offered a series of activities focused on the training and development of administrative staff. However, only the Team Building activity emerged as an opportunity for employees to be creative. This took place only in 2018.
RS	No description was found of projects or actions that encouraged administrative staff to engage in entrepreneurship, innovation, and creative behavior in the organizational environment.

Note: Elaborated by authors.

Based on the analyses conducted, it can be stated that the Institution did not offer direct actions focused on administrative employees, or any programs, projects, and activities that would encourage them to act and think in an entrepreneurial, innovative, and creative manner within the organizational environment. The Team Building activity is highlighted as an important moment of employee participation, where they were encouraged to propose solutions to presented situations, but the action did not have continuity.

Taking into consideration the index presented in the "Intrapreneurial Employees" construct (Table 2), in which the Institution's employees concentrate in the higher categories of the scale (high and extremely high), representing 92% of the respondents, it can be affirmed that the institution has a potential of employees with entrepreneurial, innovative, and creative qualities, who possess the ability to deal with uncertainties and would like to embrace new opportunities (Hill, 2003).

Furthermore, the III of the Institution was classified as low, which allowed for the identification of potential and limitations both in employees and in the institutional culture. This highlights that there is much to be done to create a consolidated innovative environment within the Institution. However, this identification provides elements that can support the planning of actions for the development and strengthening of an innovative culture in the Institution, as stated by Ferras et al. (2018). It is important to highlight that, upon analyzing documents from the HEI, no initiatives to promote entrepreneurship or intrapreneurship aimed at the technical-administrative staff were identified, despite several of the analyzed documents mentioning the institution's concern for developing entrepreneurial characteristics among its employees.

In this regard, actions such as an Innovation Award, courses, and lectures on entrepreneurship and innovation, as well as routine activities involving faculty, students, and the external community at the institution, could be expanded to include the technical-administrative staff. The training and development opportunities offered by the HR department could include activities that address these topics, in addition to reviving the Team Building program. It is not only about proposing new formats but utilizing the existing ones. With this movement, it would be possible to gradually initiate the process of developing innovative and creative skills, as well as promoting an entrepreneurial spirit among employees (Kontić et al., 2017).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The main objective of this study was to analyze the Intrapreneurial Intensity of a Community HEI by testing whether it can be measured as a single construct composed of the dimensions of task innovation, structural flexibility, incentive policies, intrapreneurial leadership, and intrapreneurial culture, aiming to understand how culture or staff composition affects intrapreneurial dynamics in universities (De Keyser & Vandenbempt, 2023). The results obtained through the application of the III measurement instrument (Hill, 2003) among the administrative employees of the studied Institution demonstrate that the Institution still has a long way to go if it intends to follow the path of corporate entrepreneurship for the promotion of an intrapreneurial organizational culture, as its III was classified as low.

It is known that the promotion of an intrapreneurial organizational culture within an organization lies in the hands of managers, although employees play a fundamental role in this process. Therefore, for a company to succeed in its purpose of innovating, it must adopt management practices based on promoting a favorable environment for intrapreneurial activity, where support is provided by top management to encourage and reward employees willing to embrace this innovative purpose.

When interpreting the obtained results, especially those derived from documentary analyses, it is essential to consider that the years 2020 and 2021 were atypical not only for the studied institution but for all HEIs, whether public or private. The COVID-19 pandemic affected various areas globally, such as public health, the economy, security, politics, among others. Many social problems emerged, and others were exacerbated. The field of education was significantly impacted, demanding internal restructuring and strategic repositioning from HEIs regarding their operations.

Thus, the administrative management of the Institution (2018-2021) was significantly affected by the complex global scenario, likely delaying the implementation of planned projects. In 2022, as the institution navigates the recovery process and the post-pandemic transition, the impacts of this turbulent period are becoming evident.

In this post-pandemic recovery context, it is suggested that the Institution internally establish a working group, and that this group, based on the results of the present research, aims to structure an Intrapreneurial Program, which involves the implementation of a variety of incentives and policies, with short, medium, and long-term actions, aiming at the establishment and maintenance of an internal Intrapreneurial Culture. A structured corporate entrepreneurship program, aligned with the organization's strategy, makes it clear that intrapreneurial activity is one of the pillars sustaining innovation. This approach fosters a sense of belonging among employees, encouraging them to embrace an intrapreneurial culture.

It is also suggested that the Institution's III be regularly measured through continuous research that maps the institution's performance over the years, serving as an organizational performance evaluation system. This will allow managers to obtain a diagnosis of the real situation, measuring and evaluating whether the actions developed by the institution are influencing the implementation of an effective intrapreneurial organizational culture, as well as enabling the planning of actions aimed at improving the III (Hill, 2003). Therefore, this routine measurement will make it possible to monitor progress and specific areas that require attention or changes so that the Institution can develop its potential and become more innovative (Hill, 2003), thus serving as a valuable diagnostic tool to assess the critical elements for a favorable internal environment for entrepreneurial activity (Kuratko et al., 2014).

Special attention is recommended for the dimensions of "Incentive Policies" and "Structural Flexibility," which presented the lowest intensity level, as shown in the research analysis. The Institution needs to prioritize the review of its hierarchical structure and the salary and position plan to promote an organizational environment that stimulates the development of entrepreneurial, creative, and innovative spirit among people, as well as the offering of incentive policies directed towards administrative employees. According to De Keyser and Vandenbempt (2023), Engzell et al., (2024) and Flores et al., (2024), universities should explore the academics' competencies and their intrapreneurial characteristics to innovate and to respond to a complex and changing environment. The smallest results for the dimensions Incentive Policies and Structural Flexibility can indicate a need for clear structures and systemic arrangements to support academic intrapreneurial initiatives and to obtain results of an intrapreneurial culture. The process and bureaucratic procedures should be important tools to measure results and channel initiatives into organizational strategies, but it should not impose barriers to academics' enthusiasm to explore new opportunities.

The study contributes both theoretically and methodologically to the field of intrapreneurship studies. Given that theories in the field are largely developed outside of a university environment (Meyer Júnior & Lopes, 2015), the translation into Portuguese (Appendix 1) and the adaptation of the instrument to the reality and specificities of HEIs represent significant contributions. The possibility of replicating this study by other researchers can

generate a body of knowledge about intrapreneurship in higher education institutions. By understanding the aspects that enable or limit intrapreneurship in HEIs (Festa, 2015), managers can create focused programs and plans that are less susceptible to barriers to intrapreneurship (Caldeira & Medeiros Júnior, 2016). It addresses to a lack of understanding about the impact of staff composition on intrapreneurial dynamics in universities as well.

Regarding the limitations of the research, it is worth noting that data collection took place between October and December 2021, a period that included the campaign and elections for the Rector of the studied institution and the President of the Institution's Foundation, in addition to the pandemic period. This may have affected the responses given by employees and managers. However, no difficulties or limitations that could have impacted the research or data analysis were found by the researchers, even during the pandemic.

Another limitation of this study concerns the exclusion of faculty members from the sample. As a community university, not all faculty members work full-time, as there are different employment arrangements, such as hourly, part-time, and full-time contracts. Therefore, we chose to focus on administrative staff, who are directly involved in the institution's organizational and strategic processes. However, given the more autonomous nature of faculty work, it is plausible to assume that these professionals might exhibit even higher levels of intrapreneurial behavior. Thus, we suggest that future research explore intrapreneurship among faculty members, considering their roles in teaching, research, and extension activities, as well as their potential relationships with different employment models and institutional engagement.

For future research, we recommend applying the instrument to faculty members and conducting comparative analyses with the data obtained in this study. Additionally, replicating the study in non-community public and private HEIs could provide comparative insights and broaden the understanding of intrapreneurial dynamics across different institutional contexts. Furthermore, the methodology used can be applied not only to community HEIs but also to organizations of any size and sector, as the instrument used to measure intrapreneurship was translated from the original English version to Portuguese and validated by experts.

Conflict of interest statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Authors' statement of individual contributions

Roles	Contributions			
	Pedrini R.	Ghedine T.	Behling G.	Llopis J.
Conceptualization	■	■	■	
Methodology	■	■	■	
Software	■			■
Validation	■	■	■	
Formal analysis	■	■	■	
Investigation	■	■		
Resources	■			
Data Curation	■			
Writing - Original Draf	■	■		■
Writing - Review & Editing	■	■	■	■
Visualization	■	■		■
Supervision		■	■	
Project administration	■	■		
Funding acquisition	N. A.			

Note: Acc. CRediT (Contributor Roles Taxonomy): https://credit.niso.org/

Open Science: Data availability

The entire dataset that supports the results of this study has been made available on SciELO Data from the REGEPE Entrepreneurship and Small Business Journal and can be accessed at the following DOIs:

Badge	Description
OPEN DATA	https://doi.org/10.48331/SCIELODATA.UZRN41
OPEN CODE	Not applicable.
OPEN MATERIALS	https://doi.org/10.48331/SCIELODATA.UZRN41
OPEN SUPPLEMENTS	https://doi.org/10.14211/regepe.esbj.e2424pr
PREREGISTERED	https://doi.org/10.48331/SCIELODATA.UZRN41

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