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# Ensuring The Quality Of University Education In Ibero-America: Trends, Absences And Challenges

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#### **Abstract**

The guarantee of quality of superior education on a global level is a vital process to achieve a culture of continuous melhoria, for the benefit of society. It seeks to offer a systematic view of the trends and absences in the process of guaranteeing the quality of university education in Ibero-America, using the dimensions of quality, second scientific articles in journals indexed in two databases: Scopus and Scielo; between 2012 and July 2021. Only considered as criteria: the year and the country of publication, the trends and absences in each dimension of quality and the proposed challenges. Two 85 articles, or greater number correspond to Spain and Chile; The predominant tendency is to investigate the dimension of the quality of the internal and external guarantee structure, and the main absence is of articles on the dimension of the quality of the facilities, academic resources and support; com barely 1% (n=1). The challenges in guaranteeing quality are varied in every dimension, with some of them being online or virtual education, which emerged in 2013, but has become important again due to the COVID 19 pandemic, in addition to achieving a culture of quality and identity, homogenization versus innovation, among others.

**Keywords**: quality guarantee; university higher education; dimensions of quality, challenges



ISSN: 2705-2842

Number 3 Issue 2 2017

#### 1. Introduction

According to UNESCO 40C (2019), UNESCO – IESALC, UNC (2018), higher education, given publicly or privately, is considered a public good and responsibility, with academic freedom and autonomy, and it is necessary to ensure its quality. This quality in higher education is based on three fundamental elements: (1) internal consistency that determines the identity of the institution, the commitment to students being a key element, (2) external consistency, in accordance with the demands of the environment defining the relevance of its activities and (3) the adjustment of resources and internal processes of the institution and its identity. On the world stage, quality assurance (QA) of university higher education is of global interest, including Latin America and Spain, which is why, since the 1990s, registration strategies and standards creation have been developed. minimum evaluation and accreditation of universities. In this context, ensuring quality confronts universities and actors regulating higher education, questioning the capacity of the former to provide training to millions of students. In this way, the assurance of university quality through self-assessment and external evaluation is evidence of its excellence and sustainability, generating the emergence of pedagogical innovations, new teaching-learning models, responding to the need to raise the level of formation of human capital, (Rojas 2012; García-Jiménez 2016; Montesinos et al., 2019)

Therefore, the term quality assurance is defined as the continuous process, designed and permanently used through which the quality of a higher education system, institution or program is evaluated, ensuring those interested in the continuous improvement of the level of quality. quality by fulfilling a set of conditions required to perform its functions, as an active organization, changing



ISSN: 2705-2842

Number 3 Issue 2 2017

and responding to the environment, providing trust to society (UNESCO 40C. 2019; and Adrogué et al., 2019). The heterogeneity of quality in the university higher education market generates the creation of accreditation systems, as an effective tool to improve educational systems in a neoliberal context, facilitating the legitimation and mutual recognition of universities as tools of positive impact on society (Díez, 2019; Jiménez, 2019). In this way, internal and external quality assurance mechanisms are introduced that directly and indirectly impact the university, creating a new academic culture, radically changing the understanding of teaching, management and all processes of higher education, improving It continues student learning as the ultimate goal of said education (Muñoz el al., 2013; Montecinos, 2019). To ensure university quality, the term excellence is associated with the teaching, learning and research experiences of the actors, characterized by indicators of commitment, performance, satisfaction of interest groups and social responsibility. (García-Jiménez, 2016). In addition, it promotes good management practices and a culture of accountability, as they are tools for comprehensive development and economic well-being (Grifoll, 2016; Jiménez, 2019).

According to UNESCO 40C (2019), a culture of quality assurance in higher education must be promoted and capabilities developed in a reliable, consistent and complementary manner, based on qualification frameworks and recognition of qualifications, which does not has been investigated and there is no data. Additionally, in Ibero-America, according to the research found, research on the purely managerial and audit quality assurance model predominates, with a quantitative approach that takes evaluation as a control instrument as its flag, above that which conceptualizes evaluation as improvement instrument, with a



ISSN: 2705-2842

Number 3 Issue 2 2017

discretionary component. (Marquina, 2017, Jacques-P. and Boisier-O, 2019). Few systematic reviews on the topic have been found in Spanish and English, only four in Latin America, that of Barreto and Kalnin (2018) which carries out a theoretical review of the evolution of the concept of quality in higher education by authors Brazilian and international in the period 2005 -2015; that of Bernasconi and Celis, (2017) which analyzes from a comparative perspective the reforms initiated by Latin American governments since 1990 in higher education quality policies; and that of Asencio et al. (2019) who carried out a bibliographic review with a historical, analytical, and critical view of the quality of medical education in Peru. At a global level, we find the systematic review by Ruiz-Ramírez and Glasserman-Morales (2021) that identifies the descriptive characteristics, based on 7 thematic lines, of the educational quality assurance processes from 2016 to 2020 in two databases. : Scopus and Web of Science (WoS) taking articles from 51 countries, mainly the United States, Malaysia and Australia.

Therefore, research is necessary that systematizes the importance of quality assurance in the production of scientific articles, reflecting the reality in Ibero-American university education as a multidimensional problem (Varouchas et al., 2018), prioritizing the actors of the process, with research that shows cultural praxis that seeks the transformation of the person and their environment. (González and Santamaría, 2013; García-Herrera, 2015).

Taking into account that quality assurance challenges are the dimensions that value qualitative aspects and that promote awareness about the academic quality assurance of universities (UNESCO 40C, 2019), it is necessary to know the objective or structural components (purely viewed). normative, institutional, economic) and subjective such as the individual and collective perceptions of the



ISSN: 2705-2842

Number 3 Issue 2 2017

actors in said structure, including interpersonal relationships through relevance, transparency, perception, participation, social valorization and involvement of these actors, (Rojas, 2012; Jacques-P. and Boisier-O., 2019). Taking into account the three fundamental elements of quality in higher education, Varouchas et al. (2018) determine five dimensions of quality in university education, which are: in internal consistency: 1) teaching, learning and the curriculum; 2) learning outcomes, knowledge and skills of graduates; in external consistency: 3) assurance framework; 4) educational system of the country; and in the adjustment of resources and processes: 5) facilities, academic resources and support

Therefore, the objective of this research is to provide a systematic vision of the trends and absences in the process of ensuring university educational quality in Latin America, according to the dimensions of quality, according to scientific articles in journals indexed in two databases. data: Scopus and Scielo; between 2012 and July 2021. The specific objectives determine the number of original scientific articles 1) according to year of publication; 2) According to country of publication; 3) According to the trends and absences over time of each of the five dimensions of quality, 4) According to the challenges proposed by dimensions, and their evolution over time, seeking the prioritization of the actors in the process, and the evidence of cultural praxis that seek the transformation of the actors and the environment. (González and Santamaría, 2013; García-Herrera, 2015).

#### 2. **Methodology**

To guarantee a systematic and exhaustive review of relevant studies on educational quality assurance in higher education in Latin America, the procedure defined by Patton (2018) is followed, which consists of five steps: (1) identify scopes and databases, (2) establish the selection standard, (3) define the search criteria (4)



ISSN: 2705-2842

Number 3 Issue 2 2017

apply the automated search and (5) evaluate the performance of the search and elimination of duplicates by determining the original articles that are finally included in the review.

#### 2.1 Procedure for developing a systematic literature review

Identify scopes and databases. The literature review was carried out to identify and describe the state of trends, absences and challenges in the topic of quality assurance in university higher education, in open access (OA) articles found in indexed journals. from the Scopus and Scielo databases.

In this phase, the scientific articles and the inclusion and exclusion criteria were selected. In this sense, original research articles on quality assurance in university education in Ibero-America dating back ten years were included, published between 2012 and June 2021, with open access to the full text, in Spanish, English and Portuguese. with a qualitative or quantitative approach. Articles that did not have open access, published before 2012, studies such as books, theses, reviews, letters to the editor, essays, conference summaries, among others, were excluded; referring to countries other than Latin America, in languages other than Spanish, English and Portuguese, and that do not correspond to the university educational level.

Define the search criteria. The search criteria were defined through the title option, using the Boolean operator AND for the preliminary selection, using the keyword combinations: "quality assurance" AND "higher education"; "quality assurance" AND "higher education".

Apply automated search. In this part, the automated search was carried out according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria through the advanced search



ISSN: 2705-2842

Number 3 Issue 2 2017

filters, restricting the search to the key words of the search or keywords, exporting the selection to Microsoft Excel ®.

Evaluate search performance. To meet the objective of the systematic review, duplicate articles were identified, and then the summaries and full text of the article were analyzed, purifying them so that those selected met the objectives and scope. The articles were then interpreted for categorization according to the dimensions of educational quality developed in the present study to know the results about the scope of the study.

#### 3. Results

Table 1 presents the results of the application of the methodology, identifying in the search by keywords in Spanish (quality assurance and higher education) and in English (quality assurance and higher education) 21,473 in the Scopus database, and 100 in the Scielo database. Then, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied for the automated search in these databases (n=194 in Scopus; and n=25 in Scielo).

Table 1. Boolean search operations for preliminary and final selection

Search by	Resulting	Inclusion	and	exclusion	Preliminary	Final
keywords	documents	criteria	for	automated	result	refined
in articles		search			without	result
					debugging	
Scopus						
"quality assurance" AND	21,150	"higher e	educatio	on" AND (BSTAGE,		67



•	Resulting documents				Preliminary result without debugging	Final refined result
"higher education"		TO ( OA LIMIT-TO 2021 2018 2 2015 2 2012 ) AN DOCTYP! LIMIT-TO "English" "Portugues LIMIT-TO EXACTK! "Higher E "Quality AND ( AFFILCO "Spain" "Portugal"	, "all" 2020 2017 . 2014 . ND ( LAI	on") OR ance")) IIT-TO (		



•		Inclusion and exclusion criteria for automated search	•	Final refined result
		"Ecuador" "Guatemala" "Peru" "Argentina" , "Bolivia" "Cuba" "Uruguay"))		
"Bolivia""Cuba' "Uruguay"))  "quality 323 "quality assurance" AND LIMIT-TO ( OA , "a "higher education" PUBYEAR , 2021, L TO ( PUBYEAR , 2022, 2019 2018 20 2016 2015 2012 2013 2012 20 AND ( LIMIT-T PUBSTAGE , "final AND ( LIMIT-T DOCTYPE , "ar")) A LIMIT-TO ( LANGUA		"quality assurance" AND  "higher education" AND ( LIMIT-TO ( OA , "all" ) )  AND ( LIMIT-TO ( PUBYEAR , 2021, LIMIT- TO ( PUBYEAR , 2020 ,  2019 2018 2017  2016 2015 2014  2013 2012 2011) )  AND ( LIMIT-TO ( PUBSTAGE , "final" ) )  AND ( LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE , "ar" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE ,  "Spanish" "English"  "Portuguese" ) ) AND (		



Search by	Resulting	Inclusion and exclusion	Preliminary	Final
keywords	documents	criteria for automated	result	refined
in articles		search	without	result
			debugging	
		LIMIT-TO (		
		AFFILCOUNTRY ,		
		"Chile" "Spain"		
		"Mexico""Colombia"		
		"Ecuador""Argentina"		
		"Brazil""Uruguay"		
		"Bolivia""Peru"		
		"Portugal") ) AND (		
		LIMIT-TO (		
		EXACTKEYWORD ,		
		"Quality Assurance") OR		
		"Educacion Superior"))		
Sky				
*quality	7	*quality assurance and	6	18
assurance		higher education AND		
and higher		network:org AND -in:rve		
education		AND ( la:("es" OR "pt" OR		
		"en") AND year_cluster:		
		("2020" OR "2012" OR		
		"2019" OR "2016" OR		



ISSN: 2705-2842

Number 3 Issue 2 2017

•		Inclusion and exclusion criteria for automated search		Final refined result
		"2018" OR "2011" OR "2017" OR "2021" OR "2015" OR "2013" OR "2014") AND subject_area:("Applied Social Sciences" OR "multidisciplinary"))		
*quality assurance and higher education	93	Applied filters: (Language: Spanish) (Language: Portuguese) (Language: English) (Publication year: 2018, 2012, 2017, 2013, 2016, 2021, 2014, 2019) (Literature type: Artigo)	19	

Table organization source: Ricoy and Sánchez-Martínez (2020). Preparation: Own.

Finally, Figure 1 shows the flow chart of the systematic review carried out. After the final purification, 85 articles (n=67 in Scopus; and n=18 in Scielo) are determined as the final result to proceed with the interpretation according to the dimensions of educational quality.



ISSN: 2705-2842

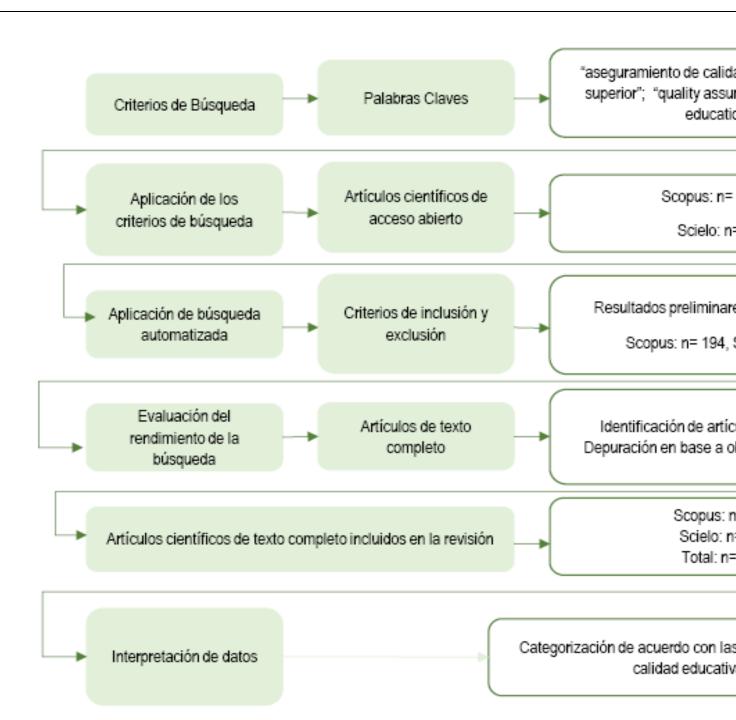


Figure 1. Flowchart for the systematic review. Adapted from Patton, Fluck, and Scanlan (2018)



ISSN: 2705-2842

Number 3 Issue 2 2017

According to the number of publications per year on quality assurance in Ibero-America, they decrease from 2012 to 2015 (this year there is only one publication in Scopus). As of 2016, a growing trend begins, and as of June 2021, it is perceived that this trend continues, which could reveal an increase in the importance of the topic for Ibero-American researchers. The largest number of articles (14 articles) occurs in 2020, with 13 of these from the Scopus database. In the Scielo database, 2018 was the year with the highest production.

ISSN: 2705-2842

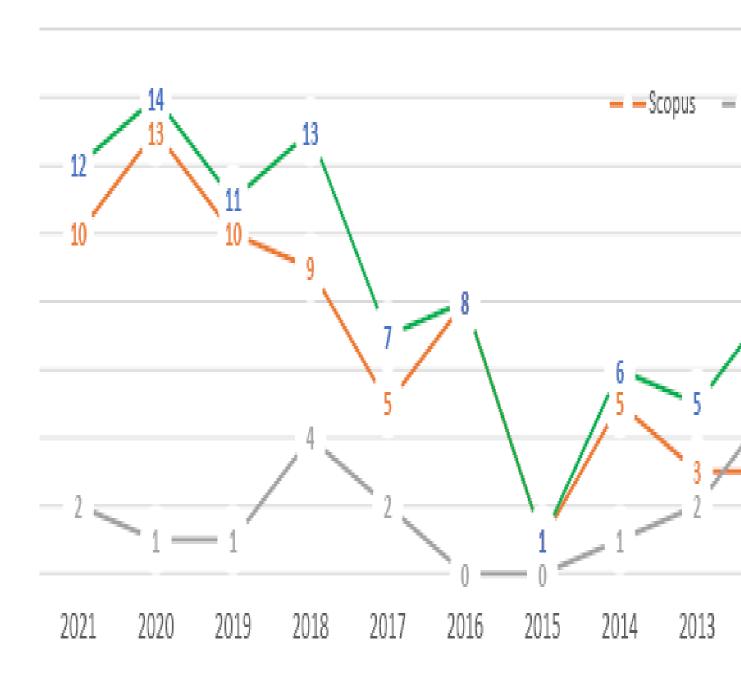


Figure 2. Articles on quality assurance in higher education published in Ibero-America by year and database.

ISSN: 2705-2842

Number 3 Issue 2 2017

If we analyze the quantities with the highest production of scientific articles on quality assurance in university higher education, the highest percentage (29%) corresponds to Spain with 33% (n=28). Chile follows with 21% (n=18) and Colombia with 10% (n=9). We also find research that corresponds to broader areas (Ibero-America, Latin America and South America).

Table 2. Research in Latin America from 2012 to 2021 by country and database

Database	SCOPUS	SCIELO	TOTAL	%
Country				
Argentina	5		5	6
Brazil	1	4	5	6
Chili	12	6	18	twenty-one
Colombia	8	1	9	10
Costa Rica	1		1	1
Cuba		3	3	3
Ecuador	4	1	5	6
Spain	27	1	28	33
Mexico	3	1	4	5
Peru	2		2	2
Portugal	2		2	2
Latin America	1		1	1
Latin America	1		1	1



ISSN: 2705-2842

Number 3 Issue 2 2017

South America		1	1	1
TOTAL	68	18	85	100
%	79	twenty-one	100	

Source: self made

For interpretive analysis of trends and absences by quality dimension, each article was reviewed by the authors and classified according to its main objective and conclusions. According to this metadata generated, (the link to the metadata box would go here) it was possible to identify and order the articles by dimensions of educational quality, as shown in table 3.

In the period 2012–2021, there is a predominant trend of dimension 1 (quality in the framework of internal and external assurance), with 46% (n=39), followed by articles of dimension 2 (quality in teaching, learning and curriculum), with 25% (n=21), and dimension 3 (quality of the country's educational system) with 19% (n=16). Furthermore, research on dimension 4 (quality of learning results, knowledge and skills) is revealed as significant absences, with 9% (n=8) and, above all, the minimum concern for research in dimension 5 (quality in facilities, academic resources and support); with only 1% (n=1)

Table 3. Classification of articles by quality dimensions

Dimension	Item	Total (n)	Percentage
	Range		(%)
Quality in the internal and external assurance framework	1 to 39	39	46
Quality in teaching, learning and	40 to 60	twenty-	25



ISSN: 2705-2842

Number 3 Issue 2 2017

curriculum;		one	
Quality of the country's educational system;	61 to 76	16	19
Quality in learning outcomes, knowledge and skills of graduates.	77 to 84	8	9
Quality in facilities, academic resources and support;	85	1	1
Total		85	100

Source: self made

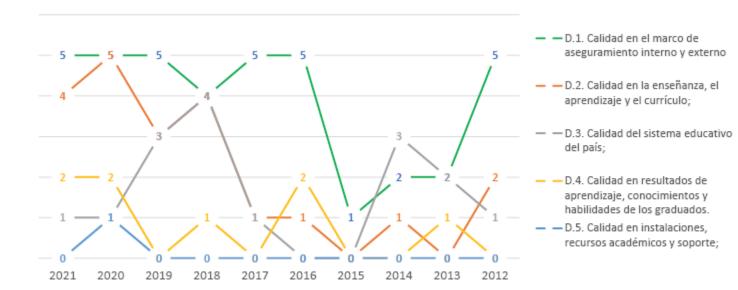


Figure 3. Quantity of Research by dimensions of quality

The three dimensions indicated as trends, unlike the absences found, do not develop homogeneously in the years of the studied interval. Dimensions 1 and 2 currently present a growing trend, however, they can be classified as absences



ISSN: 2705-2842

Number 3 Issue 2 2017

between the years 2013 to 2015; unlike dimension 3, with a growing trend from 2012 to 2014, which is repeated between 2017 and 2018, but then decreases in 2019 and becomes an absence between 2020 and 2021. Dimension 4, classified as absence by The low amount of research in the last 10 years presents increasing trends in 2016 and in the last 2 years.

The established dimensions allow us to analyze the main challenges posed by the research developed in the articles for years, determining strategic categories on quality assurance according to the results and conclusions generated. You can see the variation of these categories over time. The most relevant categories found are: In dimension 1, virtual education (with its non-face-to-face and distance variants), decision making, institutional identity and culture, excellence, quality standards; in dimension 2, student satisfaction; in dimension 3, regulations, validity and legitimacy, educational policies; in dimension 4, graduate satisfaction; and in dimension 5 the quality of spending and improvements in infrastructure and equipment.

Table 4. Challenges regarding quality assurance by dimensions in Ibero-American research from 2012 to 2021



٧A	Internal and	Teaching, learning	country's	Learning	Facilitie
	external			C	
		and the curriculum			
	assurance		system	knowledg	
-	framework			e and	c
				skills of	resourc
				graduates	es
					and
					support
20	Integration	Actors and attributes	Validity -	Sustainab	*
21	of quality	in online teaching.	Appropriati	ility,	Infrastr
	standards; Pr	Satisfaction; Motivat	on by the	innovatio	ucture
	otection of	ion; Reforms.	actors.	n and	within
,	vulnerable	ID: 40; 41; 42; 43	ID:61	gender.	the
	groups; Soci			Performa	framew
	o-emotional			nce	ork of
	support for			improve	insuran
	covid19			ment.	ce
	ID:			ID:	ID:3
	1; 2; 3; 4; 5			77; 78	
		G. 1 · · · · · · · ·	C		0 11
	Success	Student satisfaction		Institutio	Quality
20	factors	and institutional	C	nal	of
	Sustainabilit	reputation.	criteria	commitm	spendin
,	У	Simplification of the	ID:62	ent.	g and
	Virtual	process.		Graduate	improve



Ye	Internal and	Teaching, learning	country's	Learning	Facilitie
ars	external	and the curriculum	educational	outcomes,	S,
	assurance		system	knowledg	academi
	framework			e and	c
				skills of	resourc
				graduates	es
					and
					support
	education.	Teacher training.		satisfactio	ment of
	Information	Family.		n.	conditio
	for decision	Sustainability.		ID:79; 80	ns
	making (2)	ID: 44; Four.			ID:85
	ID:6; 7; 8; 9;	Five; 46; 47; 48			
	10				
20	Identity and	Teaching	Virtual		*Financ
19	institutional	commitment.	education		ial
	culture (2)	Depersonalization.	policy. Agr		resourc
	Massificatio	Student participation	eements.		es for
	n	and self-satisfaction.	Dependence		infrastr
	Relevance	Administrative	on		ucture
	and	improvement.	economic		and
	appropriatio	ID:49; fifty; 51	resources.		equipm
	n		ID:		ent
	ID:		63; 64; 65		ID;15



Ye	Internal and	Teaching, learning	country's	Learning	Facilitie
ars	external	and the curriculum	educational	outcomes,	s,
	assurance		system	knowledg	academi
	framework			e and	c
				skills of	resourc
				graduates	es
					and
					support
	11; 12; 13; 1				
	4; fifteen				
20	Competitive	Multidimensional	Missions	Homogen	
18	ness	innovation.	for each	ization vs	
	Institutional	Tutorships.	university.	innovatio	
	learning	Student satisfaction.	Policy	n	
	Depth of	Significant learning.	planning.	ID: 81	
	changes	ID: 52; 53; 54; 55	Criticism of		
	Utility		centralized		
	ID:		policies.		
	16; 17; 18; 1		ID:		
	9		66; 67; 68;		
			69		
20	Leadership	Curriculum by	Regulations		
17	Socioecono	competencies	ID: 70		
	mic	ID: 56			



Ye	Internal and	Teaching, learning	country's	Learning	Facilitie
ars	external	and the curriculum	educational	outcomes,	s,
	assurance		system	knowledg	academi
	framework			e and	c
				skills of	resourc
				graduates	es
					and
					support
	characteristic				
	s of students				
	Culture of				
	self-				
	regulation				
	and self-				
	evaluation				
	Profit and				
	quality				
	ID:				
	20; twenty-				
	one; 22; 23;				
	24				
20	Excellence	Gender approach		Generic	
16	(2).	ID: 57		skills	
	Challenges			Investme	



Ye	Internal and	Teaching,	learning	country's	Learning	Facilitie
ars	external	and the curric			outcomes,	
	assurance			system	knowledg	
	framework				e and	c
					skills of	resourc
					graduates	es
						and
						support
	of				nt and	
	universalizat				quality of	
	ion				graduates.	
	Virtual				ID: 82;83	
	education (2)					
	25; 26; 27; 2					
	8; 29					
20	Profitability					
15	and					
	heterogeneo					
	us levels of	,				
	quality.					
	ID: 30					
20	Social	Impact on a	cademic	Regulations		
14	context.	activities		and		
	Non-face-to-	ID: 58		autonomy.		



Ye	Internal and	Teaching, lear	rning	country's	Learning	Facilitie
ars	external	and the curriculu	ım	educational	outcomes,	s,
	assurance			system	knowledg	academi
	framework				e and	c
					skills of	resourc
					graduates	es
						and
						support
	face			Certificatio		
	education			ns.		
	33; 3. 4			Legitimacy.		
				ID:		
				71; 72; 73		
20	Long			Conflict	Graduate	
13	distance			with	satisfactio	
	education.			market.	n	
	Compliance			Visibility	ID:84	
	with			through	ID: 84	
	indicators			research.		
	ID: 33; 3. 4			ID: 74; 75		
20	Impact on	Homogenization	as a	Equity		
12	actors	risk.		ID: 76		
	Confusion	Professionalism	and			
	between	perceived quality	y.			



ISSN: 2705-2842

Number 3 Issue 2 2017

Ye	Internal and	Teaching,	learning	country's	Learning	Facilitie
ars	external	and the curri	culum	educational	outcomes,	s,
	assurance			system	knowledg	academi
	framework				e and	c
					skills of	resourc
					graduates	es
						and
						support
	process and	ID: 59; 60				
	achievement					
	Positioning					
	Quality					
	standards (2)					
	ID:					
	35; 36; 37; 3					
	8; 39					

Legend: ID is the abbreviation that identifies the number designated to the authors.

#### 4. Discussion

In Latin America, it is evident from the number of published articles that the importance of research and publication on quality assurance has increased, which continues to be a controversial topic due to its multidimensionality, its conceptualization as a process, product or goal, as well as due to the involvement

<sup>\*</sup>They have been found in articles whose main dimension is another



ISSN: 2705-2842

Number 3 Issue 2 2017

of qualitative indicators such as satisfaction, excellence, self-evaluation and internationalization

Regarding the countries with the greatest intellectual production, Spain occupies first place, with research on the analysis and questioning of the opportunity to establish reforms opened by the Bologna process and integration into the quality assurance process as part of the Common European Space. Higher education. Chile occupies second place, presenting publications on the evolution of quality policy and its complexity, a product of the university reality that changed in 1999 with the higher education accreditation system and then with the National Accreditation Commission, where it is perceived a great diversity of quality of university offerings, both undergraduate and postgraduate; and the effects of quality assurance measures that have led to the depersonalization of education and the maintenance of the centralist paradigm of Chilean public policies are questioned.

According to the trends found in each of the dimensions of quality, the largest number of articles refer to the dimension of internal and external quality assurance, especially on the topic of virtual education and its quality, as well as the inclusion in the quality assurance models of programs of concepts such as identity, sense of belonging and appropriation of the process, by the actors of these models. Furthermore, a concept that is introduced in 2020 is sustainability as a determining factor in the quality evaluation models of universities, which is related to satisfaction as a competitive advantage.

In the dimension of quality of teaching, learning and curriculum, the analysis of the perception of satisfaction of the various interest groups regarding the quality of higher education is considered of great relevance, identifying attributes that allow universities to improve the quality of higher education, teacher-student interaction,



ISSN: 2705-2842

Number 3 Issue 2 2017

and incorporating participatory methods in the teaching-learning process, as well as perceived quality.

Regarding the quality dimension of the country's educational system, priority is given to evaluations and balances of the application of quality assurance policies, and their appropriation by the actors as legitimate instruments of improvement to be evaluated in the long term. This ensures quality processes that are regulated by inspection bodies, without forgetting conflicts with the market and the search for equal opportunities and equity. The presence of issues of scientific productivity and the weakness of policies due to dependence on economic resources is important.

Regarding the dimension of quality in the learning results, knowledge and skills of the graduates, the main topic investigated is their competitiveness, satisfaction and commitment, demonstrating sustainability and innovation of curricular improvement and analyzing the adequacy of quality assurance university to the needs of the labor market.

On the other hand, the absence of articles published in the dimension of facilities, academic resources and support is relevant, despite being necessary for quality assurance. Only in Cuba do they investigate the quality of spending and academic conditions. However, it is a component of research that mentions educational infrastructure in the first dimension.

According to the interpretive analysis of the challenges posed by the conclusions and recommendations of the articles on quality assurance in higher education, the categories related to online or virtual education are highlighted, which emerged in 2013 and 2014, and which returns to be raised in recent years (2019 to 2021) due to the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic. As can be seen, the challenges vary



ISSN: 2705-2842

Number 3 Issue 2 2017

from the general application of quality assurance standards, the confusion between the process and the achievement of said quality, political regulations and their impact on academic activities (between 2012 and 2015), evolving from 2017 to 2019 to the generation of a culture of quality and identity, based on self-regulation and institutional learning, criticizing policies centralized, raising the debate between homogenization versus innovation and the need for financial resources. At the current time (2020 and 2021) the categories that emerge are the institutional commitment to the sustainability of quality assurance in higher education, seeking the satisfaction and motivation of the actors, protecting vulnerable groups through support in the current situation, virtual education due to COVID 19.

#### 5. Conclusions

In summary, the systematic review shows that the number of articles published on quality assurance in university higher education in Scopus and Scielo on Ibero-America is low, but has an increasing trend, especially since 2018, with Spain and Chile, the countries whose experiences are discussed in the scientific production taken in this article, according to the search parameters executed. The other countries do not have a representative number of investigations to know their reality on the subject.

As quality and its assurance are a multidimensional concept, we found that, of the 85 selected articles, 46% deal mainly with the quality dimension in the framework of internal and external assurance, mainly the topic of assurance models and methods. evaluation and self-assessment. There is a small number of articles on the dimension of quality in learning outcomes, knowledge and skills of graduates (9%), and 1% of research development on the dimension of quality in facilities, academic resources and support.



ISSN: 2705-2842

Number 3 Issue 2 2017

Finally, it is important to observe the evolution of the challenges in quality assurance, where recurring themes are seen that are repeated during the 10 years that have passed, which shows that the issue of quality assurance has not been closed, nor does it depend on processes. determined by national policy, nor by given standards or indicators, but depends on the organizational culture where the perception, motivation and satisfaction of the actors of each institution stand out, in response to attempts at homogenization; Furthermore, the issue of gender and virtual education arises due to factors that complicate the criteria to be applied in Latin America.

#### 6. Limitations and prospective

The main limitation is the selection of articles published on quality assurance in university higher education in two databases, although very relevant in Latin America, such as Scopus and Scielo. Therefore, a possible future approach is to include in the analysis indexed journals with greater recognition such as Web of Science. Furthermore, it would be important to make correlations between the trends of quality dimensions with the articles from each country.

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