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Scientific articles

**Valoración de estudiantes sobre la gestión, desarrollo, satisfacción
y utilidad de Prácticas Profesionales en instituciones de Educación
Superior**

***Student Assessment of the Management, Development, Satisfaction and
Usefulness of Professional Internships in Higher Education Institutions***

***Avaliação dos estudantes sobre a gestão, desenvolvimento, satisfação e
utilidade das Práticas Profissionais nas instituições de Ensino Superior***

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Resumen

La vinculación es una actividad estratégica clave en las Instituciones de Educación Superior que contribuye a la formación integral de los estudiantes, aportando soluciones a los problemas más urgentes de la sociedad, el crecimiento económico y la preservación de la riqueza de los recursos naturales. La importancia de las Instituciones de Educación Superior para aportar sus conocimientos al progreso social radica en la interacción entre la universidad y la sociedad. El objetivo de esta investigación fue evaluar integralmente los programas de prácticas profesionales en dos instituciones de educación superior, una pública y una privada. Para ello, se realizó un estudio piloto en donde se muestrearon estudiantes de dos universidades ubicadas en el noroeste del país. Se utilizó una metodología cuantitativa de corte transversal y alcance descriptivo. Se diseñó un instrumento de cuestionario que permitiera evaluar de manera integral los programas de prácticas profesionales en las dimensiones de gestión, desarrollo, satisfacción y utilidad. Los resultados arrojaron que la universidad privada mostró una mayor satisfacción en gestión y desarrollo, mientras que la universidad pública presentó áreas de mejora en todas las dimensiones, especialmente en la gestión administrativa y la percepción de utilidad de las prácticas profesionales.

Palabras clave: prácticas profesionales, educación superior, evaluación, prácticas profesionales, vinculación.

Abstract

Linkage is a key strategic activity in Higher Education Institutions that contributes to the comprehensive education of students, providing solutions to the most urgent problems of society, economic growth and the preservation of the wealth of natural resources. The importance of Higher Education Institutions to contribute their knowledge to social progress lies in the interaction between the university and society. The objective of this research was to comprehensively evaluate the professional internship programs in two higher education institutions, one public and one private. To this end, a pilot study was carried out where students from two universities located in the northwest of the country were sampled. A quantitative cross-sectional methodology and descriptive scope were used. A questionnaire instrument was designed to comprehensively evaluate the professional internship programs in the dimensions of management, development, satisfaction and usefulness. The results showed that the private university showed greater satisfaction in management and development, while the public university presented areas of improvement in all dimensions,



especially in administrative management and the perception of usefulness of professional practices.

Keywords: internships, higher education, evaluation, internships, outreach.

Resumo

A vinculação é uma atividade estratégica fundamental nas Instituições de Ensino Superior que contribui para a formação integral dos estudantes, proporcionando soluções para os problemas mais urgentes da sociedade, o crescimento económico e a preservação da riqueza dos recursos naturais. A importância das Instituições de Ensino Superior contribuirão com o seu conhecimento para o progresso social reside na interação entre a universidade e a sociedade. O objetivo desta pesquisa foi avaliar de forma abrangente os programas de estágio profissional em duas instituições de ensino superior, uma pública e outra privada. Para isso, foi realizado um estudo piloto onde foram amostrados estudantes de duas universidades localizadas no noroeste do país. Utilizou-se metodologia quantitativa de corte transversal e escopo descritivo. Foi elaborado um instrumento de questionário para avaliar de forma abrangente os programas de estágio profissional nas dimensões de gestão, desenvolvimento, satisfação e utilidade. Os resultados mostraram que a universidade privada apresentou maior satisfação na gestão e desenvolvimento, enquanto a universidade pública apresentou áreas de melhoria em todas as dimensões, especialmente na gestão administrativa e na percepção de utilidade das práticas profissionais.

Palavras-chave: práticas profissionais, ensino superior, avaliação, práticas profissionais, conexão.

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Introduction

To begin the topic, it is necessary to place ourselves in the field of linkage, as a transcendental part of the educational model in both public and private universities, and of vital importance for the business and government sectors, which the global economy places before new requirements of knowledge and skills of students within higher education.

Linking is a strategic activity of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that contributes significantly to the tasks of comprehensive training of students; the production and transfer of socially useful knowledge that provides solutions to the most urgent problems of society and that impact social well-being, economic growth and the preservation of the wealth of

natural resources; and the transfer of knowledge to society, as well as the dissemination of culture, art and sport in society (ANUIES, n.d.) . For their part, Maldonado and Gould (1994) point out that the interaction between the university and society is a fundamental pillar in higher education institutions, with the purpose of contributing their knowledge to social progress.

Educational institutions aim to be at the forefront of this issue, in relation to the requirements of companies, however, the efforts made by the different entities involved in it are considered unviable, because they focus on agreements that are unattractive to students and outside of business reality. In this sense, the link should not be considered as an argument for compliance with obligations or university rules, or the signing of agreements, but as an instrument that strengthens university work through strategic alliances where the result is a win-win.

When addressing the relationship between universities and companies, it is often overlooked that one of the primary functions of educational institutions is the direct preparation of professionals who will play a crucial role in the productive environment (Velho *et al.*, 2019) . Hence the importance of the topic and the review of its foundation, in order to objectify its inclusion in universities for the benefit of all sectors: the university, its students, and companies as the recipients of these, in their insertion into the world of work and government through real growth proposals for students, all of them actors in the linking process.

The linkage is union, it is taking advantage of opportunities for the benefit of its actors, however, we hear news about it, agreements are signed, photographs are taken, committees are formed, their relevance is evaluated and the results are not observable to be one hundred percent positive and objective, since the students continue to express their complaint about the lack of development opportunities generated by deficient linkage programs, and consequently, their forms of application, reflected in a professional practice, a residence, a stay, etc., according to the institution in question, without transcendence, when what they should really provoke in the student is that creative and innovative spirit, of entrepreneurship, effective decision making, commitment, responsibility in their intervention. Everything remains in proposals, where the actor most affected is the student, facing a competitive global world without the necessary tools to compete and establish themselves effectively in it.

For the company, it represents a challenge of attention, where trust is the key element, and due to the lack of it, their appreciation of the linking programs is limited, because the student does not venture into new processes, only covers common operational activities, without the opportunity to make decisions, which place him in his professional reality. Companies sometimes arbitrarily consider the internship student as another employee, who alleviates their workload in the sense of not having to pay for the service, instead of taking advantage of their knowledge in a teaching-learning process where the responsibility of both is assumed in new projects for the company and in opportunities for true development for the student.

Linking therefore becomes a fascinating topic, where its actors must know the reality of their commitment, the HEIs with the proposal of viable linkage programs, the students in the sense of responsibility that it implies and consequently their personal and professional development. The companies must face the challenge of teaching the students and assuming with them the risk of decision making, and the government must respond to the requirements of the graduates strengthened with a successful linkage project, with new and attractive employment proposals, salaries based on equity and justice, and not on the frustration currently generated by the imminent lack of employment that, consequently, does not cover the needs of its applicants, the graduates.

Internships are usually a form of academic linkage between companies and universities. These internships allow students to apply the knowledge acquired in their studies in a real work environment, which provides them with practical experience and helps them develop professional skills. In the literature, there are few research studies on the evaluation and perception of higher education institutions regarding their internship processes. The one carried out by Arias-Marín *et al.* (2021) stands out. They evaluated the Industrial and Environmental Microbiology (MIA) internship program from the perspective of external institutions participating in the training process in Medellín-Colombia to evaluate three dimensions of the internship: Programming, Administration, and Students. In this study, the three dimensions generally obtained high scores, however, the Administration dimension stands out as the one with the lowest score.

Academic linkage

The topic of academic linkage in HEIs with the business sector is extremely relevant, highlighted in various research and proposals on the subject. University linkage plays a fundamental role in extending knowledge beyond the limits of the university, establishing relationships with various sectors of society in order to address the needs demanded through science and technology (Salazar *et al.*, 2020). In addition, linkage is considered as an integral process that must interact effectively with the socioeconomic sector, among other attributions.

Campos and Sánchez (2006) describe linkage as the creation of complex joint operations between universities, research institutes and the industrial sector. Similarly, Alcántar-Enríquez and Arcos-Vega (2004) consider it a means to improve the capacity of educational institutions to interact with the productive sector, with the aim of obtaining mutual benefits.

In Mexico, the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) plays a crucial role in recognizing this importance and including outreach as an integral part of educational models. The SEP has established fundamental precedents for undertaking outreach projects, developing the Outreach Administration Program and, consequently, evaluation programs through the National Survey of Institutional Outreach (ENAVI) in different administrations.

The link between the university and society, according to Piga (1981), is that which actively and creatively interrelates the university with the community, to transform it and create another one whose socioeconomic systems and structures are more just, more dignified, and more ethical. Although Piga's proposal is traditional, it is still pertinent, since it corresponds to a reality. For his part, Foncubierta *et al.*, (2016) raise the need to transform the management of the link with society as a strategy to consolidate its development in universities.

For the linking process to be effective, it must integrate collaboration within the university itself. Linking, as a university function, must be considered as the link between higher education institutions (HEIs) and their interaction with the business world, thus obtaining mutual benefit through collaboration. This interaction is reflected in the direct development of students, as well as in the improvement of the economy and society.

engagement involves an active relationship with students currently in their classrooms, their graduates, academic coordinators, administrators, researchers and other

people and organizations necessary to allow the process to function properly. Giving importance to internal engagement is the first step for external engagement to work.

Internal interaction must be exhaustive, developing technological skills that strengthen knowledge and capacity for the consolidation of academic and research bodies in support of the linkage, and likewise the administrative support body around the service that must be provided to the student and the company within the process of linking university, company and student. In general terms, there is sufficient background information that supports the project and from which the improvement proposal will be based.

The connection between higher education institutions (HEIs) and companies has been a constant challenge. Despite the progress, there is still a long way to go to reduce the gap between the two. It is essential to take advantage of the resources available to facilitate this connection. Nowadays, social networks have become a key platform for sharing information about connection and professional practice. These platforms have motivated HEIs to implement networking and monitoring strategies in their institutional communication plans, as they significantly increase the possibility of communicating with a wide audience. HEIs that maintain a significant presence on social networks have a showcase to disseminate connection activities, professional practices and research, expanding their reach and effectiveness in these areas (Hernández, 2022).

Promoting greater interaction between universities and the business environment will foster a two-way relationship between students and companies, creating enriching opportunities and dynamics that address the needs of both the educational and business spheres. This approach will allow the execution of a variety of linkage projects with the purpose of obtaining mutual benefits and promoting the advancement of all parties involved (Barrera-Ramírez and Ramos-Rubio, 2022).

Universities must take a series of measures to promote employability, promoting specific skills and establishing effective cooperation that not only improves the relationship between the university and the labor market, but also facilitates access to more employment opportunities and helps define long-term professional goals (Martínez and González, 2019).

Internship programs at public and private HEIs

Higher education institutions (HEIs), whether public or private, offer students a wide range of opportunities through their internal programs, although it is important to note that these programs often present limited results. However, to maximize the impact and effectiveness of these opportunities, HEIs can implement additional strategies, such as establishing strong partnerships with the business sector to offer relevant and enriching professional internships, as well as promoting the active participation of students in research and technological development projects.

It is evident that the evaluation of professional practices represents an effective way of providing feedback to the various actors involved, especially to students, as mentioned in a study carried out in a Mexican university. This study examined how students deal with real and common situations in the workplace, under the supervision of a tutor whose objective is to promote the development of various competencies, improve their social capital and strengthen their self-confidence (Ballesteros *et al.*, 2014). In the present research, two study populations are examined: interns from two universities, one public and one private, located in the state of Sonora.

The public university selected for this study offers numerous opportunities to its applicants. Through its Directorate of Support for Linkage and Diffusion, one of its objectives is to promote and facilitate scientific and technological products and services to all sectors of society. This includes linkage with the educational, social, governmental, productive, service and business chambers sectors, through areas such as science and technology, continuing education, entrepreneurship, and professional services. Particularly, this last area integrates professional practices, which is relevant to this document.

On the other hand, the private university participating in this study has been recognized by UNESCO for its mobile learning initiative, demonstrating its commitment to innovative education. In 2017, by joining a broader educational group, it became part of a network that benefits more than 150,000 students in seven countries, consolidating its position as an institution with regional influence and a progressive approach to academic and technological development. In its professional employment system, it offers opportunities to participate in business internships, allowing students to gain relevant work experience.

In both public and private HEIs, and specifically in the economic-administrative area and with particular attention to the Bachelor's Degree in Administration, the benefits that institutional organizations provide to students are not fully utilized, generating unreal

conditions of practice and social service, which are detrimental to the main actors, their students and graduates, by not having the curricular experience that social service and professional practice offer them.

In addition to this real situation, which is not unknown to anyone, the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic forced organizations to dictate institutional policies in the face of the impossibility of inserting their students into the productive sector; these consist of the accreditation of the aforementioned programs, solving an imminent problem of graduation of their students; however, at the same time the problem of graduation of students without the development of these programs leaves them at a disadvantage and with a very limited, if not negative, business appreciation.

The problem is not exclusive to public institutions, but to all HEIs that, in their eagerness to carry out the aforementioned programs, exceed their paperwork for access to the fulfillment of said programs as an integral part of their professional training, causing in some cases simulation in the exercise, proposed by the student and sponsored by productive sectors that do not visualize the damage they cause to the students.

Another important aspect that adds to the problem is the participation of teachers who, far from being concerned about the integral development of the student, encourage them to do this type of practice, under the motto: “let them go out, why stop them, life will take its toll on them.” And in other contexts such as private HEIs, parents demand the accreditation of the student in the aforementioned programs in companies that they own, with highly subjective results; in other more objective cases and in support of the student, parents demand the integration of their children into attractive programs, generating active work for the student and with it the necessary experience for their integral development.

This paper formally presents the problem previously exposed, as well as the methodology used in the research, without neglecting the proposal to support the IES, strengthening its work in the area of linkage, raising awareness about its importance and thus favoring all the actors involved in it.

The question that guided this research was:

What is the assessment of public and private higher education students regarding the management, development, satisfaction and usefulness of their professional internship programs?

Materials and method

The methodology used in this work was field research, which is based on directly interacting with social actors (Sandoval, 2022). The cut was transversal with a descriptive and quantitative scope, which provided sufficient information to investigate the problem in relation to the linking objective that the higher education institutions analyzed intend with their students. The data collection method was a survey. The condition of the topic presented considers countless questions to be resolved, with the purpose of highlighting all the real actors in the linking process, and not the search for culprits.

The objective of this research was to comprehensively evaluate internship programs in two higher education institutions, one public and one private, focusing on management, development, student satisfaction, and perceived usefulness of these programs. Through a pilot study conducted at two universities, it was possible to test the designed instrument.

Population and sample

In this research, the study population was 1,575 students of a Bachelor's Degree in Administration at a public university and 129 students of a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration at a private university.

The type of sampling carried out was non-probabilistic, using the convenience method derived from the need to have access to a sample of students who have completed professional internships and to be able to collect the data. Convenience samples are commonly used to explore a phenomenon in a preliminary manner to identify relevant variables or formulate future hypotheses. To do so, two groups from the last semesters of both universities were selected. Table 1 presents the sample sizes achieved.

Table 1. Samples of students from the last semesters.

Public university sample	Private university show
29	20

Source: own elaboration.

Data collection

To achieve the objective of this research, a questionnaire instrument was designed to allow a comprehensive evaluation of the professional internship programs of public and private higher education institutions. A five-point Likert scale was used, where 1 means “do not agree at all” and 5 means “strongly agree.” The instruments proposed by Mayorga *et al.* (2017) and González and Hevia (2011) were taken as a reference.

Four dimensions of relevance for this research were identified, items were adapted and four dimensions were integrated: 1) Management of professional practices where the effectiveness and efficiency of the administrative and organizational processes related to professional practices could be assessed; 2) Development of professional practices to evaluate the impact of professional practices on the professional and academic growth of students; 3) Satisfaction of professional practices to measure the degree of compliance with program expectations from the students' point of view and; 4) Usefulness of professional practices to determine the degree of relevance and applicability of the practices in the professional training of students.

The data collection process was carried out by implementing a web form on the Office 365 platform, which was presented to the group of administration students at the public and private universities. A total of 49 valid responses were obtained, 20 at the private university and 29 at the public university. The data was then exported from the Office 365 platform in Excel format. For processing and descriptive analysis, it was decided to use the IBM SPSS version 25 program.

Pilot test

To measure the level of reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was carried out prior to the start of data collection, in which 10% of the projected sample was collected. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .970 was determined, which indicates excellent internal consistency of the set of items in general (See Table 2).

Table 2. Reliability of the instrument.

Cronbach's alpha	N of elements
.970	15

Source: Own elaboration based on the survey, using SPSS 25.

Questionnaire instrument

The questionnaire based on Mayorga *et al.* (2017) and González and Hevia (2011) consisted of several questions: five demographic questions, five from dimension 1, seven from dimension 2, two from dimension 3, three from dimension 4 and one open question on comments. The items of the questionnaire are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Questionnaire items.

Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Man <input type="checkbox"/> Woman <input type="checkbox"/> Non-binary person
Age	Number of years
University	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private
Type of company, institution or organization where you have completed your professional internship	<input type="checkbox"/> Educational institution <input type="checkbox"/> Private company <input type="checkbox"/> Association or foundation <input type="checkbox"/> Industry <input type="checkbox"/> Government agency <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Semester	Cycle number
Dimension 1. Management of professional practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The semester in which I started my internship was the right one. • The duration of the professional internship is adequate to provide an insight into professional reality. • The administrative management to start my professional internship has been adequate. • The attention provided by my internship coordinator has been adequate. • The attention provided by my professional practice tutor has been adequate.
Dimension 2. Development of professional practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activities carried out were related to my study plan. • Professional internships have allowed me to complete my academic training. • My internships have allowed me to acquire knowledge in the sector. • The internship has allowed me to learn how the host institution works. • During my internship I felt like I was part of the host institution.
Dimension 3. Satisfaction with professional practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My initial expectations about the internship have been met. • I am satisfied with the internship I completed.

Dimension 4. Usefulness of professional practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think my expectations of getting a job have increased. • I believe that my internships have guided me in knowing what I want to do after I graduate. • The internship program is a good way to introduce students to the world of work.
Comments	Free text

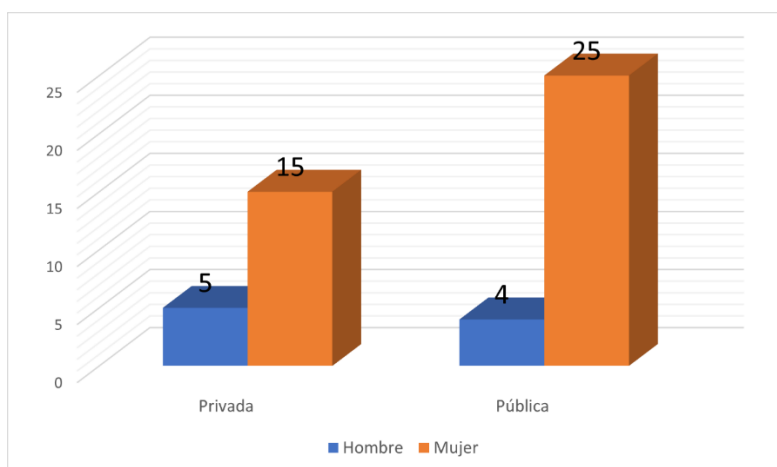
Source: own elaboration.

The items of the four dimensions evaluated were closed on a five-point Likert scale. The anonymity of the responses was guaranteed during the data collection process.

Results

The sample analyzed was composed mainly of women, 15 enrolled in the private university and 25 in the public university. In addition, 9 men were surveyed, 5 in the private and 4 in the public university (See Figure 1).

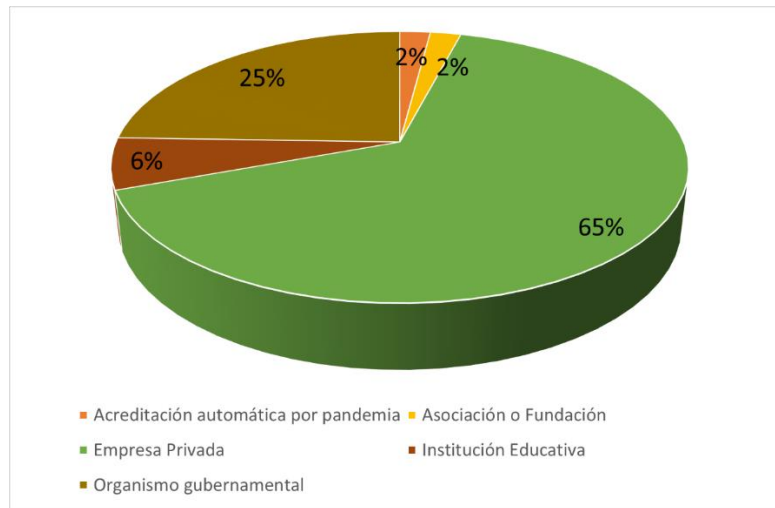
Figure 1. Student count by gender and university.



Source: own elaboration.

The majority of the group of students surveyed carried out their professional internships in a Private Company (33), in a Government Agency (12), in an Educational Institution (12) and in an Association or Foundation (1) (See figure 2).

Figure 2. Place of professional internships



Source: own elaboration.

Figure 3 shows the percentage frequencies of the assessment obtained in the Professional Internship Management Dimension. It can be observed that in the private university, in general terms, the dimension was highly valued with frequencies mostly inclined towards "strongly agree", except for the question about the semester in which the internship activities begin. In the case of the public university, there is a general discontent with a greater dispersion in the response frequencies with selections that range across the five points of the scale. Areas of opportunity are visible, mainly in the administrative management of the procedures to begin the professional internships. There is also a perception of the need for greater attention from the professional internship coordinator and in the duration of the professional internships. There is also a higher degree of dissatisfaction in the semester in which the activities begin than in the private university.

Figure 3. Assessment of Dimension 1 Management

[GESTIÓN]	UNIVERSIDAD PÚBLICA						UNIVERSIDAD PRIVADA					
	Nada de acuerdo	Poco de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Bastante de acuerdo	Muy de acuerdo	TOTAL	Nada de acuerdo	Poco de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Bastante de acuerdo	Muy de acuerdo	TOTAL
El semestre en el que inicié con mis prácticas profesionales fue el adecuado	10%	10%	48%	7%	24%	100%	0%	25%	15%	0%	60%	100%
La duración de las prácticas profesionales es adecuada para el acercamiento a la realidad profesional	7%	28%	31%	21%	14%	100%	0%	5%	15%	5%	75%	100%
La gestión administrativa para iniciar con mis prácticas profesionales ha sido adecuada	31%	31%	21%	7%	10%	100%	0%	0%	10%	15%	75%	100%
La atención prestada por mi coordinador de prácticas profesionales ha sido adecuada	34%	24%	24%	10%	7%	100%	0%	0%	5%	15%	80%	100%
La atención prestada por mi tutor de prácticas profesionales ha sido adecuada	14%	28%	28%	10%	21%	100%	0%	0%	5%	15%	80%	100%

Source: own elaboration.

Figure 4 presents the results obtained in the Dimension of Development of Professional Practices. In the private university, a high degree of agreement was found with the development of the interns' activities with a slight variability in the agreement with the acquisition of knowledge. The evaluations are mainly concentrated in very agreement with the statements of the dimension. In the public university, on the other hand, the results are mostly concentrated in the range of little to quite agreement. It is noteworthy that in this group of students the internships have not allowed academic training in a high percentage of students.

Figure 4. Assessment of Dimension 2 Development

[DESARROLLO]	UNIVERSIDAD PÚBLICA					TOTAL	UNIVERSIDAD PRIVADA					TOTAL
	Nada de acuerdo	Poco de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Bastante de acuerdo	Muy de acuerdo		Nada de acuerdo	Poco de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Bastante de acuerdo	Muy de acuerdo	
Las actividades realizadas estaban relacionadas con mi plan de estudios	3%	7%	41%	31%	17%	100%	0%	0%	15%	5%	80%	100%
Las prácticas profesionales me han permitido completar mi formación académica	0%	28%	24%	24%	24%	100%	0%	5%	10%	10%	75%	100%
Las prácticas profesionales me han permitido adquirir conocimientos en el sector	0%	10%	41%	21%	28%	100%	0%	5%	10%	15%	70%	100%
Las prácticas me han permitido conocer el funcionamiento de la institución receptora	0%	10%	34%	28%	28%	100%	0%	5%	5%	15%	75%	100%
Durante las prácticas profesionales me sentí como parte de la institución receptora	7%	3%	41%	17%	31%	100%	5%	5%	0%	15%	75%	100%

Source: own elaboration.

The Dimension of Satisfaction with Professional Internships was the one that obtained the greatest dispersion of responses on the scale in both universities. In both cases, areas for improvement were detected in this area, especially in the fulfillment of the initial expectations that students had with professional internships (See figure 5).

Figure 5. Dimension 3 Satisfaction Assessment

[SATISFACCIÓN]	UNIVERSIDAD PÚBLICA					TOTAL	UNIVERSIDAD PRIVADA					TOTAL
	Nada de acuerdo	Poco de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Bastante de acuerdo	Muy de acuerdo		Nada de acuerdo	Poco de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Bastante de acuerdo	Muy de acuerdo	
Se han cumplido mis expectativas iniciales sobre las prácticas profesionales	14%	14%	31%	21%	21%	100%	0%	15%	35%	0%	50%	100%
Estoy satisfecho con las prácticas profesionales realizadas	7%	21%	24%	24%	24%	100%	0%	0%	60%	5%	35%	100%

Source: own elaboration.

Finally, the Utility Dimension shows greater agreement in the private university, with the exception of the assessment of whether the internship program is a good method to introduce the student to the world of work. In the public university, in general terms, there are areas of opportunity in the perception of utility for acquiring a formal job and in the orientation towards student dedication (See figure 6).

Figure 6. Assessment of Dimension 4 Utility

[UTILIDAD]	UNIVERSIDAD PÚBLICA					TOTAL	UNIVERSIDAD PRIVADA					TOTAL
	Nada de acuerdo	Poco de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Bastante de acuerdo	Muy de acuerdo		Nada de acuerdo	Poco de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Bastante de acuerdo	Muy de acuerdo	
Considero que han incrementado mis expectativas de adquirir un empleo	7%	14%	38%	10%	31%	100%	0%	20%	25%	0%	55%	100%
Considero que las prácticas profesionales me han orientado para saber a qué quiero dedicarme al graduarme	10%	21%	31%	7%	31%	100%	0%	15%	20%	15%	50%	100%
El programa de prácticas profesionales es un buen método para introducir al estudiante al mundo laboral	7%	17%	24%	10%	41%	100%	0%	0%	45%	5%	50%	100%

Source: own elaboration.

Discussion

In order to reach agreements, as a result of the comparison of results between public and private institutions, it is evident that, in each of the dimensions, the percentage degree of satisfaction, even in cases of greater dispersion of the result, favors the private institution, without neglecting the fact that both have areas of opportunity to address in a very precise manner taking as a basis the objective result of each dimension. In order to comply with its regulations and description of what professional practice is and should be, which in general terms is attributed to the set of activities to be developed, attributable to their professional training, allowing them the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills acquired through their study plan in the corresponding educational program, and thereby strengthen that knowledge and skill through effective performance as a result of the relationship with the work environment that professional practice proposes.

It is easy to say, however, all actors are involved in these areas of opportunity, so each of them must be made aware of their attention and correspondence, without minimizing the impact as a common result, but with the responsibility of attention and change to meet the objective of professional practices.

The Management Dimension (1), according to its content, constitutes the face of professional practices, the first relationship, and this must be highly effective, there begins the efficiency of the process, how to improve it, analyzing the performance of the assigned authorities, simplifying the processes, etc. The decision taken must be the product of specific analysis to solve the problems or areas of opportunity presented.

The Development Dimension (2) is a product of management, if a good job is done in management, dimension 2 is reached, not an arbitrary decision regarding the receiving unit, it must be a product of analysis, which must comply with the activities proposed by the

regulations and consequently provide the student with growth in their knowledge and skills as a result of the employment relationship undertaken as an intern, how it is resolved, each case is particular according to the type of institution; however, business selection, development of agreements, monitoring, etc., can be effective strategies towards an optimal result.

The Satisfaction Dimension (3) derives from the previous one, the greater the inclusion within the receiving unit according to the expectations generated, the greater the satisfaction. Sometimes the internship proposal is expected by the student, in that path expectations are formed that fall apart due to an erroneous insertion in the receiving unit, if the institution-company relationship is taken care of, areas of opportunity presented in both institutions are resolved.

The Utility Dimension (4), is very important since in this the differences are very marked between institutions, especially in the perception of "The professional internship program is a good method to introduce the student to the labor world", the RAE of opportunity for the public Institution is very evident in relation to the private institution, and derives from the degree of satisfaction experienced in the practice, if the student does not relate his activity with the knowledge acquired in his study plan, if he does not carry out activities specific to his Degree, if he does not participate directly in projects, if he does not feel responsibility in the assigned activities, he definitely does not feel within the labor world to which he aspires.

The above is presented and is the product of the comparison between institutions, however, the strategy to follow can be established through a domino effect, strengthening the first dimension and following up on the subsequent ones in order to achieve a highly effective result in the realization of professional internships for the student. The results of the Management dimension (1) in the case of the public institution coincide with those found by Arias-Marín *et al.* (2021) where the Administration dimension of the professional internship program was the one with the lowest rating by the students.

There is no better or worse institution, there are institutions with more and fewer areas of opportunity, which will need to be addressed. These findings coincide with what was proposed by Cabra (2008), who points out that an authentic quality evaluation focuses on improving the teaching processes, curricula and methodologies within the educational institution. This is achieved if it really helps to resolve the aspects that require improvement

and if the students actively participate in the process and its implementation. In this sense, the instrument used allowed finding areas of improvement in both institutions analyzed.

Currently, the results obtained cannot be extrapolated to other institutions due to the limited sample analyzed. However, the instrument used in this study represents a valuable contribution that allows for an effective evaluation of the management, development, satisfaction and usefulness dimensions of internship programs. This instrument can be replicated and adapted in other universities to facilitate comparisons and improvements in internship programs, thus contributing to a better understanding and optimization of these academic experiences.

Finally, as highlighted by Arias-Marín *et al.* (2021), there is a lack of other works related to the evaluation of professional practices from the students' perspective. In this sense, the work adds and provides conclusions for other researchers from different higher education programs to explore and expand this line of research.

Conclusions

The comparison of results between the public and private institutions evaluated reveals that, in all the dimensions evaluated, the private institution presents a higher percentage of satisfaction, even in cases with greater dispersion of results. However, both institutions have areas of opportunity that must be addressed precisely, based on the specific results of each dimension. To comply with the regulations and objectives of professional internships, it is essential that these activities allow students to apply their acquired knowledge and skills, strengthening their performance through an effective relationship with the work environment. Effectiveness in the management of internships, from the simplification of processes to adequate business selection and follow-up, is essential to improve the satisfaction and perceived usefulness by students in their professional experiences. In addition, it is crucial that all actors involved in professional internships are aware of their responsibility in addressing and improving these areas of opportunity.

Future lines of research

Taking into account the results obtained in this study, some future lines of research can be seen:

1. Long-term Impact of Internships: To investigate how internship experiences affect graduates' career development and employability over time and to assess the impact of internships on the development of specific skills and work competencies.
2. Inequalities and accessibility in internship programs: Examine the barriers faced by diverse groups of students (e.g., low-income students, students with disabilities) in accessing internship opportunities. Based on this, strategies should be proposed and evaluated to improve equity and accessibility in internship programs.
3. To investigate how internship experiences affect graduates' career development and employability over time.
4. Evaluate the impact of internships on the development of specific skills and work competencies.

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