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Artículos científicos

El carácter polisémico de educación de calidad en el nivel universitario: una aproximación desde sus actores principales

The Polysemic Character of Quality Education at the University Level: An Approach from Its Main Actors

O caráter polissêmico da educação de qualidade no nível universitário: uma abordagem a partir de seus principais atores

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Resumen

Este estudio muestra los resultados derivados de una investigación exploratoria cuyo propósito fue analizar la percepción de diversos actores sobre la noción de *calidad* inserta en el ámbito de la educación, particularmente en un nivel universitario. Para ello, se realizó un estudio de carácter cuantitativo con alcance correlacional y de corte transversal. Luego de seguir un muestreo de tipo no probabilístico por conveniencia, se obtuvo un total de 763 sujetos categóricos. Los resultados indican que 59.8 % de los encuestados considera que el principal atributo para referirse a una educación de calidad debe ser el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje, además de que la evaluación de la calidad en las instituciones de educación superior debe realizarse a través de los procesos de acreditación y certificación que realizan los organismos evaluadores. Posteriormente, se obtuvieron los análisis correlacionales a través de un análisis de correspondencias múltiples (ACM). Las percepciones de los diversos actores categóricos son divergentes y



varían según el contexto donde se desarrollan, lo cual indica que aun estudiando a los principales actores universitarios, la educación de calidad es polisémica. Finalmente, se sugiere dirigir el debate hacia la construcción de una definición transdisciplinar que conjunte las diversas perspectivas.

Palabras clave: certificaciones y acreditaciones, educación de calidad, educación superior.

Abstract

This study shows the results derived from an exploratory research whose purpose was to analyze the perception of various actors on the notion of quality inserted in the field of education, particularly at a university level. To do this, a quantitative study with a correlational and cross-sectional scope was carried out. After following a non-probabilistic sampling for convenience, a total of 763 categorical subjects were obtained. The results indicate that 59.8 % of those surveyed consider that the main attribute to refer to a quality education should be the teaching-learning process, in addition to that the evaluation of quality in higher education institutions should be carried out through the accreditation and certification processes carried out by the evaluating bodies. Subsequently, the correlational analyzes were obtained through a multiple correspondence analysis (MCA). The perceptions of the various categorical actors are divergent and vary according to the context in which they develop, which indicates that even after studying the main university actors, quality education is polysemic. Finally, it is suggested to direct the debate towards the construction of a transdisciplinary definition that brings together the various perspectives.

Keywords: certifications and accreditations, quality education, higher education.

Resumo

Este estudo apresenta os resultados derivados de uma pesquisa exploratória cujo objetivo foi analisar a percepção de diversos atores sobre a noção de qualidade inserida no campo da educação, em particular no nível universitário. Para tanto, foi realizado um estudo quantitativo de abrangência correlacional e transversal. Depois de seguir uma amostragem não probabilística por conveniência, um total de 763 sujeitos categóricos foram obtidos. Os resultados indicam que 59.8 % dos respondentes consideram que o principal atributo para se referir a uma educação de qualidade deve ser o processo de ensino-aprendizagem, além do fato de que a avaliação da qualidade nas instituições de

ensino superior deve ser realizada por meio do credenciamento e processos de certificação levados a cabo pelos organismos avaliadores. Posteriormente, as análises correlacionais foram obtidas por meio de uma análise de correspondência múltipla (ACM). As percepções dos diversos atores categóricos são divergentes e variam de acordo com o contexto em que se desenvolvem, o que indica que, mesmo estudando os principais atores universitários, a educação de qualidade é polissêmica. Por fim, sugere-se direcionar o debate para a construção de uma definição transdisciplinar que reúna as várias perspectivas.

Palavras chave: certificações e creditações, educação de qualidade, ensino superior.

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Introduction

Currently, mainly due to globalization, the notion of quality has acquired a leading role in the context of higher education as a valuable instrument for the continuous improvement of educational processes. Proof of the above, has been the creation of evaluation, certification and accreditation systems worldwide. However, due to its polysemic nature, it has also been a trigger for various debates. Indeed, in the educational sphere, the use of this term has been strongly criticized and debated due to its highly variable and malleable conceptual nature.

For Lago, Gamoba and Montes (2014), quality is a complex concept to define, and perhaps as a result of the above, it is conceived in multiple ways by the subjects. It goes without saying that in the definition of any term various factors intervene such as culture, context and the own preconceptions of what is being defined.

Schiefelbein and Schiefelbein (2000), Cubillo and Rozo (2009) and Mayo, Loredo and Reyes (2015) mention that quality is usually associated with terms such as excellence, improvement, efficiency, effectiveness, customer service, satisfaction, indicators, accreditations and certifications, among others. It seems to carry with it a kind of oxymoron: although it is a concept that can be easily visualized, it is complex to define. It should be noted that it comes from the business context, where it was initially and extensively discussed, and that with its arrival, educational institutions, especially universities, have added compliance with indicators and evaluation processes to their agenda.

Orozco, Olaya and Villate (2009) argue that quality education should not be limited solely to the cognitive achievements of students or the updating of study programs and learning processes, but rather should be a more diverse and comprehensive process

in which the needs of society and the demands of the various social domains intervene: economic, political, cultural, religious and administrative.

Based on the aforementioned, the objective of this research was to analyze the perception of quality education at the higher level from categorical subjects: undergraduate and graduate students, university professors, businessmen and employees in the Latin American context. The central variable is Quality Education. As we have already said, it is a polysemic and polyvalent term (Harvey and Green, 1993), in addition to having a combination of functionality, efficacy and efficiency highly correlated with excellence (Pérez, López, Peralta and Municio, 2000). The hypothesis that was raised was the following: the various categorical subjects have a divergent perception about quality education at the higher level, which denotes the polysemy of the term and its various appreciations by the actors involved in the university sector.

Literature review

Quality education is one that makes significant changes in the student and enriches their professional training (González and Espinoza, 2008). For Bianchetti (2009), quality is linked to the characteristics and functions that education must fulfill; It is a training tool for citizen exercise, and it must adapt to the demands of society, the economic and political context, in order to promote development in each country. For their part, Avendaño, Paz and Parada (2016) mention that quality refers to the improvement of educational and pedagogical processes where the center of attention is learning for human development.

Following Bianchetti (2017), the debate around quality in the context of higher education arises from the relativity of its definition, which implies a controversy in the academic and public sphere, and refers to the fact that the different actors that involved have different perceptions about this issue. The foregoing reinforces the theoretical position of Harvey and Green (1993) that quality education is a polysemic, confusing and elusive term. Table 1 lists the main characteristics according to some of the aforementioned authors.

Tabla 1. Concepciones y características de la calidad en el contexto de la educación superior

Concepción de calidad	Características
Excepcional	<p>- Visión tradicional: basada en la distinción y la exclusividad; las universidades las personalizan.</p> <p>- Visión de excelencia: superación de los estándares. Se requieren los mejores profesores, estudiantes, instalaciones, planes y programas de estudios, y lograr todas las acreditaciones.</p> <p>- Visión de cumplimiento de los estándares mínimos: cumplir todos los indicadores, el estándar es el objetivo de la universidad.</p>
Perfección y consistencia	<p>Se asocia con el pensamiento de cero defectos, hacer las cosas bien a la primera vez. Posee una relación con la adopción de una cultura de calidad. La universidad se encuentra constituida por departamentos, cada uno de estos debe de cumplir con su trabajo en el proceso que le fue asignado.</p>
Adecuación a una finalidad	<p>La calidad se asocia como el ajuste a un propósito. En este apartado la calidad se evalúa a través del resultado final. Se vincula con la satisfacción de las necesidades de los clientes, por lo tanto, se relaciona con la funcionalidad.</p> <p>Se evalúa que la universidad cumpla con los objetivos que ha establecido desde su propia misión y funciones.</p>
Valor por dinero	<p>La calidad se relaciona con la eficiencia económica, con los objetivos obtenidos de una inversión, un enfoque que proviene de la idea de la rendición de cuentas.</p>
Transformación	<p>Se plantea desde la función principal de la universidad, en este caso en el desarrollo del estudiante y en su capacitación para la vida. En este sentido, se orienta, más que en la vida profesional, hacia acciones sobre la ética y compromiso social.</p>

Fuente: Elaboración propia con base en Andreasen, Colombo, Mollo, Gilli y López (2015)

Thus, quality in the university environment has been associated or come to be interpreted as excellence, perfection, purpose, economic value and transformation. Faced with this broad and complex panorama, it is necessary to combine the various perspectives and come up with a transdisciplinary definition.

The educational systems have placed quality as a primary issue on the public agenda, as well as being a key element in improving the educational service. According to González and Espinoza (2008), Latin American universities associate quality education with evaluation, certification and accreditation processes that obey the assurance of public resources through accountability. On the contrary, Fernández, Egido and Carballo (2016) argue that quality must be linked to the teaching-learning process, which generates an impact on the comprehensive training of the student.

However, as a result of the various approaches to quality in higher education, various conceptual chains have emerged, such as quality education, quality in education and educational quality. Are they the same or do they have the same meaning or notion? Orozco et al. (2009) indicate that no, since each chain refers to different meanings, although in the literature they are used interchangeably and even used as synonyms. Once again, the polysemic of the notion of quality in the context of higher education is revealed (Harvey and Green, 1993).

Undoubtedly, in the academic context, quality is complex to define and interpret, which, as mentioned, is due to the very versatility of the term and the diverse perceptions of the various actors. Garzón (2013) indicates that it is necessary to observe these, the perceptions of the various actors interested in the issue of quality, in order to know their positions (table 2).

Tabla 2. Percepciones acerca de la educación de calidad de diversos actores

Actores	Percepción
Estudiantes	La calidad es un sinónimo de excelencia y se verá interpretado en el logro de las competencias adquiridas o desarrolladas en la universidad que coadyuvarán en el desarrollo de su desempeño profesional y ciudadano.
Instituciones privadas	Se evaluará la calidad como un retorno de inversión y marca institucional, el posicionamiento de la misma universidad, y su orientación hacia la mercantilización.
Instituciones públicas	Se interpreta la calidad desde el logro de alcanzar una mayor cobertura de la educación superior a un menor costo, la idea es completamente inversa a las privadas.
Sistema productivo	La calidad se asocia con las competencias coherentes, específicas y profesionales del capital humano para con las demandas del sistema.
Directores	Es sinónimo de coherencia del sistema educativo normativo con los objetivos de las propias universidades. Este conjunto de sujetos asocia la calidad al cumplimiento de indicadores y el logro de acreditaciones por parte de su institución.
Profesores e investigadores	La calidad se asocia a la mejora del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje. Además, debaten sobre la coherencia del sistema educativo con la práctica docente.
Actores del proceso educativo	Se valora como el grado de satisfacción de sus necesidades y expectativas personales, lo asocian a la calidad en el servicio que la universidad brinda a la sociedad.
Sistema educativo	El sistema educativo asocia, evalúa y aplica la calidad desde las propias políticas orientadas a la mejora de la educación. Por lo tanto, se promueve y crea un sistema de evaluación y acreditación de las instituciones y sus programas académicos y demanda del sector productivo a las universidades, la gestión de la calidad al interior de

	sus instituciones, y todo lo relacionado con la mejora de los procesos.
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Fuente: Elaboración propia con base en Garzón (2013)

At the higher level, quality has taken on an outstanding role and has been intrinsically incorporated into the substantive functions of universities. This in response to the requirements of the educational policy of each country. Consequently, evaluation, certification and accreditation systems have been created to ensure quality in universities. Complementing the above, Lugo and Ithurburu (2019) argue that not only educational institutions are responsible for improving education, but it is also the responsibility of the State, since their work is to design, implement and evaluate public policies on education in accordance with with the needs of each region. For López (2007), the design of public policies in this area should be focused on improving the quality and relevance of educational institutions in order to enhance the development of each country.

Lorente (2016) indicates that it continues to be a challenge to offer quality education throughout the Latin American region. Although the results have been prioritized, the standards and criteria of the quality models are currently not well defined. Therefore, it is necessary that the debate on education in this region be directed towards a consensus that leads to the promotion of educational development. For their part, Clara and Vega (2020) affirm that quality education is key to development, but its contribution will depend on the improvements made to educational systems and the understanding of the implications of quality itself in universities. .

It should be noted that there are various national and international investigations that seek to know the various perceptions in relation to the issue of quality education. Duque and Chaparro (2012), through a survey of students in Colombia, investigated the perception of service quality. According to the results obtained, the students associate functional quality with the service provided by the institution.

On the other hand, Bernasconi and Rodríguez (2018) carried out a study in Chile with university managers, who raised quality from the perspective of evaluation. While Araya's (2013) research on quality in higher education showed that it is associated with and perceived from different horizons: the market, students and society.

In Mexico, the studies by Alvarado, Luyando and Picazzo (2015) and Alvarado, Morales and Aguayo (2016) found some fundamental findings in this regard: students, the main actors in this process, associate quality with the improvement of the educational service. Finally, Salas (2013) carried out a study where he reaffirms that quality can be interpreted from many perceptions; In the case of accreditation, it has an impact on the

institutional management of universities and their actors. In addition, she emphasizes that quality in universities generates an effect in all organizations outside the university context, proof of this are the demands for qualified and specialized personnel required by the economic, business and public sectors.

Methodology

The methodological procedure had a quantitative approach, with a descriptive-correlational and cross-sectional scope (Hernández, Fernández & Baptista, 2014). The data collection was through a survey of 14 closed questions and launched through the Google Drive platform during the period February-May 2020. The informants were the categorical subjects described above. The statistical technique used was a multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) with the SPSS 24 statistical software.

Sample

For the present study, a non-probabilistic sampling was used that combined convenience and intentional sampling (Otzen and Manterola, 2017). The questionnaire was distributed through Google Drive. A total of 763 participants were obtained. Geographically, 90.3% corresponds to subjects from Mexico and the rest to other Latin American countries. In terms of gender, 54.2% are men and 45.8% women. Regarding age, the majority (60.4%) are between 17 and 30 years old. In the case of occupation, there is an equitable distribution.

Collection instrument

The questionnaire used was called Perception of quality education in higher education. It was designed in accordance with the provisions of Supo (2012). A pilot test was applied and derived from it the questionnaire was modified. In total, it was made up of 14 questions, of which four were questions about the general characteristics of the individuals (sex, age, occupation and nationality) and 10, of a nominal nature, about the perception of quality education in the context of higher education.

Results

This section presents the most important findings regarding the purpose of the study in question. First, the descriptive results corresponding to the exploratory analysis are reported and, second, the correlational analysis corresponding to the MCA.

Exploratory analysis

Regarding what they understand by quality, 42.3% of the participants associate the term with excellence, 17.4% with satisfaction and 17.6% with compliance with requirements. On the other hand, regarding education, 45% relate it to a training process and 11% to tools for life. The above was the guideline to question what they understand by quality education. Here 39.2% associate this concept with the efficient achievement of competences, 28.4% with educational excellence and 18.7% with the improvement of the educational process.

In addition to this, it was asked about the attributes that should be considered for a quality education: 59.8% consider that the central thing should be the teaching-learning process and 20.1% the study plans or programs. Regarding the aspects that higher education institutions should consider to offer a quality education, 43.8% reaffirm the importance of the teaching-learning process and 31.2% the integral development of the student. In addition, considering the role that accreditations have taken in quality evaluation processes in higher education institutions, it was questioned whether they agreed with evaluating quality through them, and 43.1% and 35.5% were partial and totally agree, respectively.

On the other hand, considering the relevance of quality at the higher level, it was asked where a quality education has the greatest impact: 45.2% said that in the development and training of professionals, 19.7% than in the development of each country and 17.4% than in the labor market. Regarding what aspects should be considered to improve the quality of education, 31.6% emphasized in the teaching-learning process, 26.3% in study plans and programs and 16% in public policies. And regarding whether the accreditations of higher education institutions contribute to generating a quality education, 80.3% believed that they do contribute.

Finally, it was questioned whether the terms quality education, quality of education and educational quality are synonymous and 39.8% answered no, 33.4% yes and 26.7% that maybe.

Correlational analysis

For the correlational analysis, it is proposed, first, to consider question 10 as a key variable that measures the polysemy of quality education. Bearing this in mind, the hypothesis test was carried out through the calculation of chi squared, which is used for nominal type variables. The procedure consisted of considering the variable Polysemy with the rest of the variables that make up the study. Derived from this, it was found that the Polysemy variable has a significant relationship with Age, Occupation, Education, Accreditation and Contribution of Certifications and Accreditations.

Table 3 shows that the subjects between 20 and 30 years of age are the ones who in a greater proportion (31.8% and 37.3%, respectively) assume that quality education is polysemic; otherwise it happens with those who are between 31-60 years old. In addition, a result of $\chi^2 = 67.527$ and P-valor de 0.000, which indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected and that there is a dependency between these variables.

Tabla 3. Prueba ji al cuadrado entre Polisemia y Edad

Variable*		Polisemia de <i>educación de calidad</i>			
		Sí	No	Tal vez	Total
Edad	20 años o menos	31.8	14.8	39.3	27.0
	21-30 años	37.3	30.9	32.8	33.6
	31-40 años	11.8	19.4	14.2	15.5
	41-50 años	9.4	21.7	9.3	14.3
	51-60 años	5.9	9.2	3.4	6.6
	61 años o más	3.9	3.9	1.0	3.1
Total		100	100	100	100
Nota: los resultados se presentan en porcentajes. La prueba de hipótesis se calculó a través de la ji al cuadrado: $\chi^2 = 67.527$, $df = 10$, P-valor = 0.000.					

Fuente: Elaboración propia

Table 4 shows the contingency analysis between the variable Polysemy and Occupation. Undergraduate, specialty, high school students, employers and workers are the ones who support that education is polysemic; university professors and graduate students are the ones who think otherwise. In the chi-square test, a $\chi^2 = 74.627$ and P-value of 0.000, which denotes that the null hypothesis is rejected and that there is a dependency between them.

Tabla 4. Prueba ji al cuadrado entre Polisemia y Ocupación

Variable*		Polisemia de <i>educación de calidad</i>			
		Sí	No	Tal vez	Total
Ocupación	E Bachillerato	2.0	0.30	2.0	2.0
	E Licenciatura	43.5	27.3	52.9	39.6
	E Especialidad	4.7	2.6	3.9	3.7
	E Maestría	1.6	6.3	2.9	3.8
	E Doctorado	1.2	3.0	2.0	2.1
	P Investigador	3.5	7.6	2.0	4.7
	P Completo	7.5	15.1	7.4	10.5
	P Asignatura	8.2	13.8	4.9	9.6
	Empresario	3.1	3.3	1.0	2.6
	Empleador	0.8	1.6	0.5	1.0
	Trabajador	23.9	19.1	20.6	21.1
Total		100	100	100	100

Nota: los resultados se presentan en porcentajes. *E* = estudiantes, *P* = profesor. La prueba de hipótesis se calculó a través de la ji al cuadrado: $\chi^2 = 74.627$, $df = 20$, P-valor = 0.000.

Fuente: Elaboración propia

Table 5, for its part, shows the cross values between the variable Polysemy and what the respondents understand by education. In general, the actors who understand education as the acquisition of knowledge and as a training process support the idea of polysemy. The association values indicate that $\chi^2 = 23.837$ and that the P-value is 0.02, which denotes that there is a relationship between these variables.

Tabla 5. Prueba ji al cuadrado entre Polisemia y Educación de Calidad

Variable*		Polisemia de <i>educación de calidad</i>			
		Sí	No	Tal vez	Total
Educación	Proceso de socialización	0.0	2.3	2.9	1.7
	Adquisición de conocimientos	45.9	33.2	37.3	38.5
	Proceso de formación	42.0	48.0	44.1	45.0
	Herramientas para la vida	8.6	14.1	9.3	11.0
	Valores	3.5	2.3	6.4	3.8
Total		100	100	100	100
Nota: los resultados se presentan en porcentajes. La prueba de hipótesis se calculó a través de la ji al cuadrado: $\chi^2 = 23.837$, $df = 8$, P-valor = 0.02.					

Fuente: Elaboración propia

Table 6 shows the contingency values between the variables Polysemy and Accreditations and Certifications. It is appreciated that the majority (45.1%) agree that accreditations and certifications evaluate quality education; however, the data are consistent with polysemy. The chi-square test resulted in $\chi^2 = 38.992$ and P-valor=0.000, which denotes the dependency.

Tabla 6. Prueba ji al cuadrado entre Polisemia y Acreditaciones

Variables		Polisemia de <i>educación de calidad</i>			
		Sí	No	Tal vez	Total
Acreditaciones y Certificaciones	Totalmente de acuerdo	45.1	29.9	30.9	35.3
	Parcialmente de acuerdo	40.0	40.5	51.1	43.1
	Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo	11.4	15.8	13.2	13.6
	Parcialmente en desacuerdo	2.4	8.9	3.9	5.4
	Totalmente en desacuerdo	1.2	4.9	1.1	2.6
Total		100	100	100	100
Nota: los resultados se presentan en porcentajes. La prueba de hipótesis se calculó a través de la ji al cuadrado: $\chi^2 = 38.992$, $df = 8$ P-valor = 0.000.					

Fuente: Elaboración propia

Table 7 shows the values of the contingency test between the variables related to polysemy and whether the certifications and accreditations contribute to generating a quality education. The data indicate that accreditations and certifications do contribute to the generation of a quality education. With respect to the chi-square test, a $\chi^2 = 28.419$ and P-valor = 0.000, indicating relationship.

Tabla 7. Prueba ji al cuadrado entre Polisemia y Acreditaciones

Variables		Polisemia de <i>educación de calidad</i>			
		Sí	No	Tal vez	Total
Contribución de las acreditaciones a generar una educación de calidad	Sí	89.0	71.4	82.8	80.3
	No	11.0	28.6	17.2	19.7
Total		100	100	100	100
Nota: Los resultados se presentan en porcentajes, se calculó la prueba de hipótesis a través de Chi cuadrada: $\chi^2 = 28.419$, $df = 2$, P-valor = 0.000					

Fuente: Elaboración propia

The results demonstrate the dependence between the variables. Therefore, the MCA was carried out (Greenacre, 2008). And for this, the analysis model was first processed (table 8).

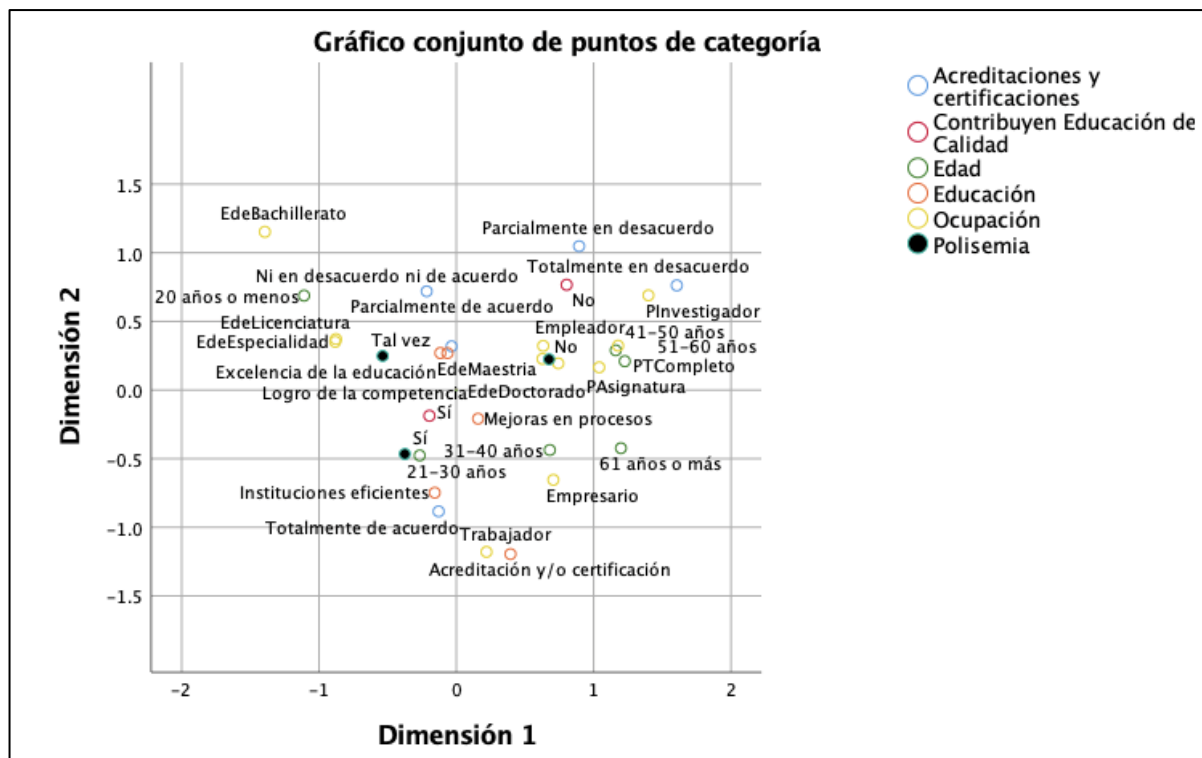
Tabla 8. Resumen del modelo, varianza contabilizada

Dimensión	Alfa de Cronbach	Total (autovalor)	Inercia	% de varianza
1	0.660	2.221	0.370	37.015
2	0.431	1.560	0.260	26.007
Total		3.781	0.630	
Media	0.565 ^a	1.891	0.315	31.511
Nota: la media de alfa de Cronbach se basa en la media de autovalor.				

Fuente: Elaboración propia

The ACM model data allow visualizing the variance accounted for, which is distributed in two dimensions. The variance of dimension one is 31.015 and that of dimension two is 26.007, which implies that the model represents 63.022 of the variance of the total data obtained in the study. For the construction of the ACM graph, the Polysemy variable and all the other variables with which it is dependent (mentioned above) were considered. The associations are shown in Figure 1.

Figura 1. Gráfico del ACM sobre la educación de calidad



Fuente: Elaboración propia

The combination of the axes of dimension one (horizontal) and two (vertical) indicate the associations, and a very high explanatory power is shown, since 63% of the total variability of the variables is exceeded. Subjects perceive that the various combinations of the terms education and quality are synonymous.

For those who answered “No”, the concentrations denote close association with employers and graduate students, who also partially agree that accreditations and certifications are the way to guarantee a quality education. In this same sense, it is also associated with university professors who are in an age range of 41 years or more.

For the subjects who answered "Maybe" it is observed that it is associated with undergraduate and specialty students, in addition to that they assume education as a process of acquisition of knowledge and values, and are partially in agreement with which are the accreditations and certifications the means of evaluating education. For the subjects who answered "Yes", the ACM indicates that they are workers and entrepreneurs who view education as a training process and are in full agreement with the accreditations in the generation of quality in higher education institutions. In sum, the perceptions of quality education by the studied actors are varied and it is possible to affirm that this perception depends to a large extent on their occupation and that the higher the level of schooling they will have better knowledge on the subject.

Finally, it should be noted that the perceptions that have been described denote the divergences regarding a quality education, its implications and its application in educational institutions.

Discussion

The results demonstrate the polysemy of quality education from the perception of various categorical actors, which in turn denotes the complexity to define said term and supports the theoretical approach of the existence of multiple definitions from different perspectives (Acosta, 2015; Harvey and Green, 1993). Just as Murillo and Román (2010) alluded to the fact that other non-university actors should be involved, the results indicate that it is important to know their perception, although it is highlighted that they are unaware of the implications of a quality education.

The various investigations cited above indicate the leading role of the student in quality education, since it is ultimately the one who receives the educational service (Alvarado, Luyando et al., 2015; Alvarado, Morales et al., 2016). The analysis of the results indicates that the students were the ones who participated to a greater extent, however, it was found that the undergraduate students, although they are in the university context, are unaware of the implications of a quality education. graduate students have more knowledge about these aspects.

University professors have perceptions that converge, however, on the subject of evaluation they are subject professors, followed by full-time professors and finally researchers, who agree that accreditations and certifications are the means to measure quality at the university level.

Contrary to what was mentioned by López (2007), who considers it very important that the design of public policies focus on improving the quality of educational institutions, the results of this study detailed that the attention of universities should focus on the process of teaching-learning, followed by study plans and programs and, finally, in the design of public policies. As can be seen, the results of this research have some similarity with some studies, but they also present a contrast with others.

Strengths

The strengths of the study lie in the presentation of the results through an ACM, which visually allows to identify the divergent perceptions on the part of categorical subjects in relation to the implications of a quality education. In addition, the results of the main actors involved are presented according to the literature review.

Weaknesses

The main weaknesses of the study lie in the analysis of the variables, since they are of a nominal nature and do not allow a more complex analysis to be carried out.

Conclusions

In this research, a survey was applied to various actors in the university context; The main objective was to analyze the perception of quality education at the higher level from categorical subjects: undergraduate and graduate students, university professors, businessmen and employees. Mainly, the analysis consisted of a descriptive processing through which it was found that there are differences in the perceptions of categorical subjects. After that, an MCA was carried out. Consequently, contingency tables and the chi-square calculation were elaborated to find dependencies between the variables.

The descriptive analysis in general allowed us to know that categorical subjects conceive of quality education as the efficient achievement of the competence achieved by the student, in addition to the fact that the teaching-learning process is the central element that universities must consider to guarantee this attribute in education. Likewise, other perceptions were obtained that suggest that the development of professionals is the element where a quality education has the most impact.

On the other hand, through the MCA, the perceptions of the categorical subjects were contrasted and the divergences could be visualized. Undergraduate and high school students lean toward polysemy; Regarding teachers and graduate students, they do not support polysemy, and finally, non-university actors are unaware of the implications of quality education. In conclusion, the divergent perceptions of the subjects reveal the polysemy of quality education and invite us to reflect on the implications of quality in universities.

Future lines of research

Some of the lines of research that arise from this study are: 1) analyze quality education with other types of variables that allow identifying the influence between them, 2) develop a transdisciplinary definition of quality education that seeks to combine the various perspectives and 3) contrast public policy in education with the actions-activities carried out by universities.

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