

ANÁLISIS PARADIGMÁTICO DE LA ACTUAL CULTURA DE AUTOEVALUACIÓN Y ESTRATEGIAS PARA SU FORTALECIMIENTO

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ABSTRACT

This article carries out a tracing, analysis and the respective triangulation of referents linked to the culture of self-evaluation, from a globalized vision, but at the same time specific to the field of education, highlighting its main characteristics, principles and purposes, in addition to pointing out some elements to be taken into account for its strengthening. Among the referents cited are Peña, Almuiñas & Galarza (2018), who submit the success of institutions to the permanent improvement of the processes they implement, and point out two purposes of self-evaluation: continuous, systematic and permanent improvement, and accreditation; in the line of educational quality, as a transcendental element in the educational process and therefore in self-evaluation is Gómez Yepes (2004), who in turn takes up elements proposed by the OECD, supports shared with Valencia (2017); Segura Castillo (2017) suggests that evaluation is an activity inherent to the human being, and proposes 6 principles of it to justify self-evaluation; Valdés, Alfonso, Remedios & Echemendía (2015) define self-evaluation as a complex process that involves action of reflection and evaluative analysis. It is expected to make a triangulation between the core aspects proposed by each author from the intersection of their theoretical and conceptual perspectives for the reflection and prospection of the educational reality around a culture of self-evaluation, based on the above, the curriculum is visualized as a social construction with democratic participation of all the actors who are in the contexts that interact with the institutions and somehow intervene in the process.

Keywords: self-assessment, quality, strengthening.

INTRODUCTION

The study of the curriculum is very broad and requires spaces for reflection in the direction of knowing the proposals that have been presented throughout history, which makes it possible to open paths towards new tendencies that are based on the integral conception of the human being, in addition to a vision pertinent to the demands of the present time, especially in the social, economic, political, educational and cultural areas; thus attending to the particularities of the institutions of higher education.

This article presents an analytical review of the conceptions of institutional self-evaluation, culture of participation, the conditions that make it possible and strengthening strategies according to five authors.

From the institutional perspective addressed by Valdés, Alfonso, Remedios & Echemendía (2015), Peña, Almuñías & Galarza (2018), Segura Castillo (2017), Gómez Yepes (2004) and Valencia (2017) self-evaluation is a reflection that involves the analysis and sequential review from the most general guiding aspects (theological and philosophical) to the operative ones of direct influence, in order to build with the entire educational community an improvement plan that allows gradual progress towards educational excellence, that is, to achieve its formative purpose. They point out that when the phases of analysis and improvement plan are defined, the dimensions and criteria to be evaluated, instruments for data collection, process and result indicators must be defined.

As a strengthening strategy, although they consider the importance of functional competencies, they emphasize that from the directives they must be transversalized with interpersonal competencies or soft skills, such as motivating, influencing, negotiating, promoting collaborative work, assertive communication and recognition of the achievements of the members of the community.

Based on the paradigms regarding self-evaluation and strengthening strategies proposed by these authors, in terms of structure, objectives and epistemological purpose, among other defining aspects, the central objective was established as follows: to make a triangulation between the core aspects proposed by each author from the intersection or conjunction of their theoretical-conceptual perspectives for the reflection and prospection of the educational reality regarding institutional self-evaluation with a focus on continuous improvement.

Finally, a further reflection is made based on the common paradigms of these authors as a synthesis of the triangulation and the reflections generated by its implementation and the soft

competences, fundamental for the strengthening of self-evaluation processes in the transcomplex society of the digital era.

THEORETICAL - CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

Referring to a culture of self-evaluation in a direct way leads us to think about educational institutions, specifically those in charge of higher education, which is the case that concerns us at the moment.

It must be assumed, when speaking of culture, that self-evaluation is a process contemplated, structured and executed in such a way that it links each and every one of the parts that make up an institution, to the extent that the necessary elements are taken into account and that it influences decision-making according to results, in order to seek strengthening and continuous improvement.

In this sense Peña, Almuiñas & Galarza (2018) argue that “the achievement of efficient and effective management in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) requires the permanent improvement of the substantive processes they implement” (p. 19), thus reaffirming the urgent need to consolidate and strengthen the culture of self-evaluation, since it is understood as the way to walk towards the qualification of all the processes that can be developed within them, and that have repercussions outwards, in the sense that they are responsible for training and updating new professionals, the same ones who are in charge of holding the reins in the different fields (political, economic, education, health, For this it is necessary to be in constant review and reflection on what has been done and achieved, what can be done at the moment and focusing on the goals and projections in the short, medium and long term, a process that should be done internally and systematically since it is necessary to start from those who live day to day education and are aware of the real context, the strengths and needs that can be presented.

Talking about self-evaluation also implies talking about quality, educational quality, since it is established as one of the goals to be achieved, with a view to responding satisfactorily to the needs that the environment presents on a daily basis. But, what do we understand by educational quality when, in general, it is estimated and measured by the results achieved in tests, in accordance with Gómez Yepes (2004) when he states that as a result of the concerns in each country, systems have been designed to measure both educational quality and student performance, as standardized evaluation systems, thus ignoring the processes that are developed within each institution, including self-evaluation.

According to the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), Gómez

Yepes (2004) assumes that “educational quality should be measured by the nature and extent of the school’s contributions to the sustainable economic and social development of the communities where it is inserted, through the formation of human capital and social capital” (p. 80), A more accurate conception if we are dealing with realities, since it is not possible to conceive educational quality only through standardized results, it is necessary to identify and analyze the repercussions and influences on the environment, elements that in turn must become part of the institutional self-evaluation, if we are dealing with the creation and preservation of culture. In this order of ideas, in order to achieve educational quality, institutions should not only take into account, but also join efforts in each of the elements detailed below:



Figure No. 1. Characteristics for achieving educational quality, from the document “*Educational quality: more than standardized test results*”. Source: Own elaboration.

Elements that, in turn, should become fundamental input within the self-assessment process, involving, as mentioned above, each and every one of the parties that are participants.

Peña et al. (2018) argue that “*self-evaluation in HEIs is a process that can have several purposes, two of which are: continuous, systematic and permanent improvement, and accreditation*”

(p. 21), taking into account that if the first of them is established and consolidated through the culture of self-evaluation, it will be much easier to fulfill the second purpose, provided that all HEIs must or should aim at accreditation in order to be able to compete with quality in a world as globalized as the present one, This purpose is favored by the fulfillment of the first purpose mentioned, since continuous improvement is a constant and permanent process from which one must think, reflect and act every day, which makes reference to a formative evaluation, a situation in which the following characteristics stand out:

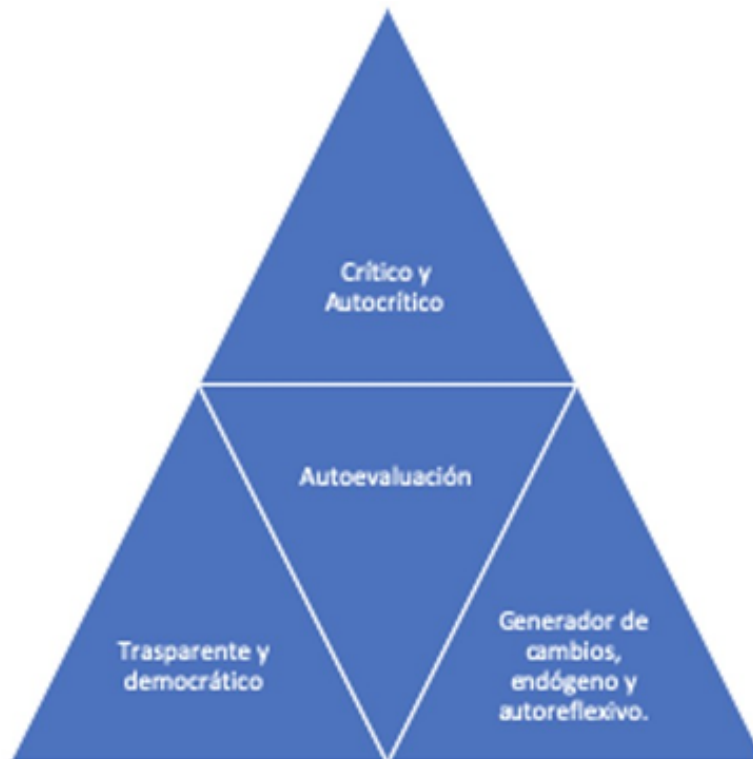


Figure No. 2. Characteristics of the self-evaluation process, based on the document “*Educational quality: more than standardized test results*”. Source: Own elaboration.

To complement the above referenced, it is pertinent to point out some of the purposes of self-evaluation stated by Peña et al. (2018):

- Verify compliance with the mission, vision, and institutional objectives;
- Perform an institutional diagnosis that allows to know the strengths and weaknesses of the different processes and what makes it different from other institutions;
- Develop improvement plans based on the results of the self-evaluation;
- To support decision making with relevant and timely information;
- Be accountable in order to sustain its credibility in the eyes of the society it serves; and
- To promote a culture of self-evaluation that will subsequently facilitate the accreditation

process. (p. 22).

Each of these purposes contributes, as the last one points out, to the consolidation of a culture of self-evaluation, the importance of which has already been recognized and continues to be recognized throughout this journey by various authors. Convergence is necessary in each of the processes that are planned, executed and evaluated in each HEI, in order to strengthen teamwork and the achievement of the proposed goals, projected in turn to society in general; more than competing in a market, it is a matter of qualifying each of these processes, in the spirit of continuous improvement.

On the other hand, Segura Castillo (2017) points out that “evaluation is inherent to all the experiences of the human being”, in which sense it is necessary to point out that according to the approach that is assigned to it, it must always lead to decision-making, even more so if it is applied to the educational field. It is imperative the self-reflection that each HEI must carry out on itself, an exercise leading to self-evaluation, to think of itself in the recognition of its strengths and those aspects it considers necessary to submit to an improvement plan.

In this regard, Santos (cited in Segura Castillo, 2017) suggests that it is important to think about why evaluate, to which he proposes five possible answers that translate into principles to justify self-evaluation, presented in the following scheme:

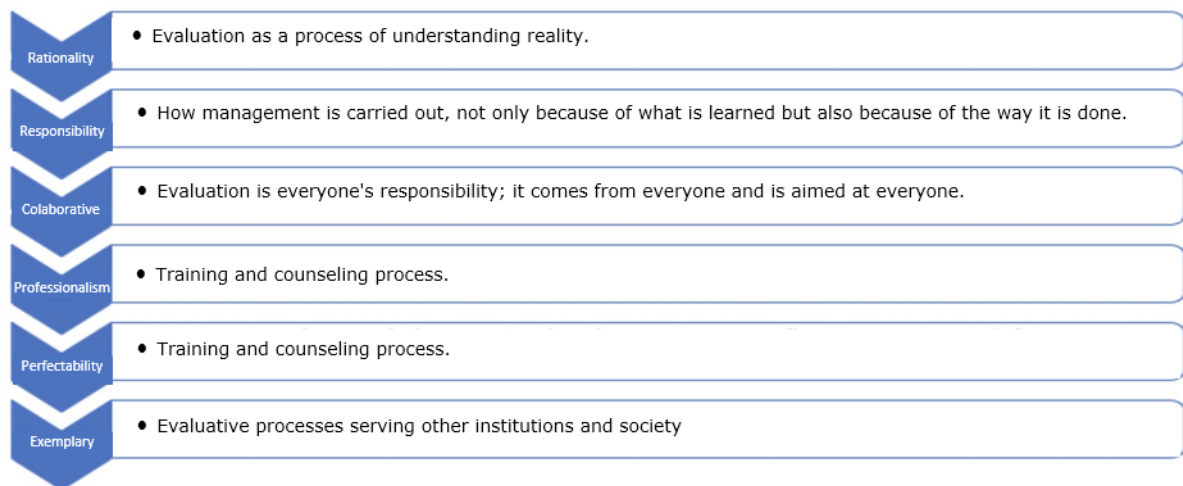


Figure No. 3. Principles of self-evaluation, from the document “*Self-evaluation: a look inside and outside the educational center*”. Source: Own elaboration.

According to Valdés, Alfonso, Remedios & Echemendía (2015) self-evaluation is defined as a complex process that involves an action of reflection and evaluative analysis on organizational, operational, philosophical and teleological aspects of the institution, which are constituted in the intersection or conjunction of the positions of the members of the community in order to permanently improve quality, an opportunity to reflect and resignify the course of the educational institution and achieve its formative purpose.

It can be affirmed that self-evaluation makes it possible to generate deeper knowledge about a certain reality from value judgments based on the understanding of the culture of the members of the institution, in order to promote continuous improvement. Self-evaluation has an ethical and political implication, necessary to sustain and guide the pedagogical processes towards continuous improvement within the framework of collaborative work.

Thus, self-evaluation fosters the object-subject duality at the same time, to the extent that the subject analyzes itself, being the object of itself, which allows it to be constituted as an object of knowledge and continuous improvement. However, this process must be carried out as objectively as possible, in order to identify opportunities for improvement and implement pertinent plans in favor of the institution.

Likewise, these authors maintain that every institutional self-evaluation process implies, from the social aspect, the work by committees or in a general way, in such a way that all the members participate and commit themselves. As for the subject matter addressed, it can be classified or broken down by areas, institutional management or components of analysis, which makes it similar to an investigative process.

Given the theoretical-factual nature of the self-evaluation process, it is possible to delimit certain categories as shown in the following figure:

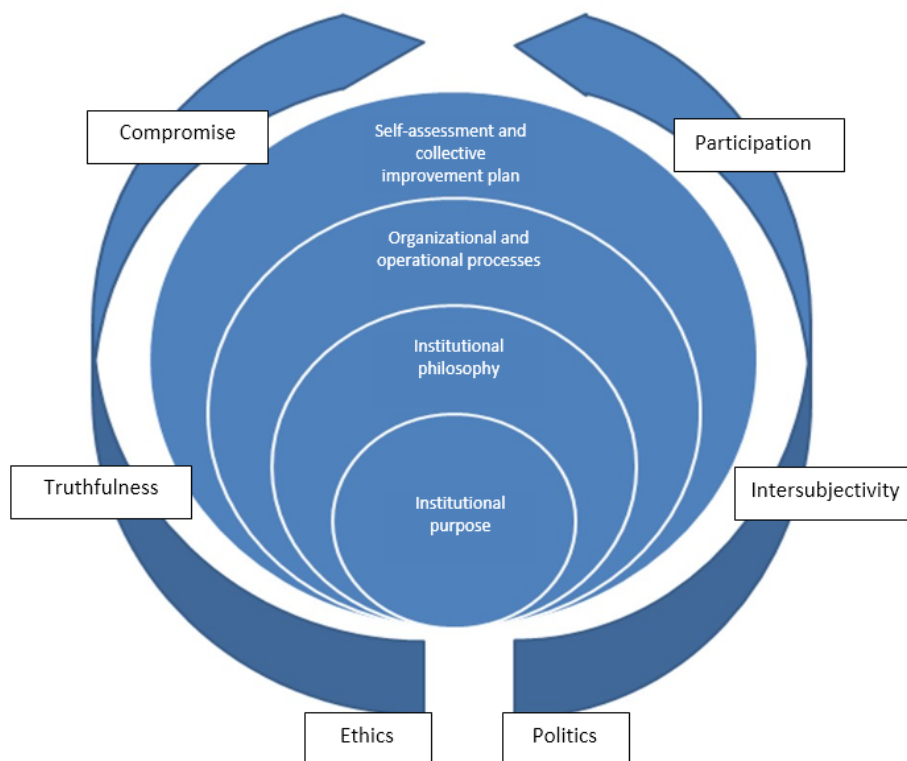


Figure No. 4. Bottom-up categories of analytical review for self-assessment. Source: Own elaboration

EXECUTIVE GUIDELINES

Specifically, according to Valdés et al. (2015), the self-evaluation of school management should be carried out following the following aspects:

- Define broadly the dimensions to be evaluated and the factual criterial aspects that each of them imply, always teleologically oriented to the institutional mission or vision, previously validated by the members performing the self-evaluation.
- Review and analyze the record of data consultation regarding the dimensions to be evaluated in the institution, from its theoretical basis, as well as its application in the period to be evaluated.
- Establish priorities in the approach to the criteria identified according to the information of the collection instruments in terms of their impact on the institution.
- Construct specific criteria in each of the dimensions to be evaluated, which can be effectively monitored in case weaknesses are found and manage an improvement plan.
- To make an improvement plan that allows the systematic progress between the state of the institutional profile and the objectives proposed from the mission and vision of the

institutional educational project.

- Design evaluation indicators that allow to follow up on the executive progress of the proposals agreed upon after the self-evaluation process.

The above activities can be organized sequentially as shown in the following chart:

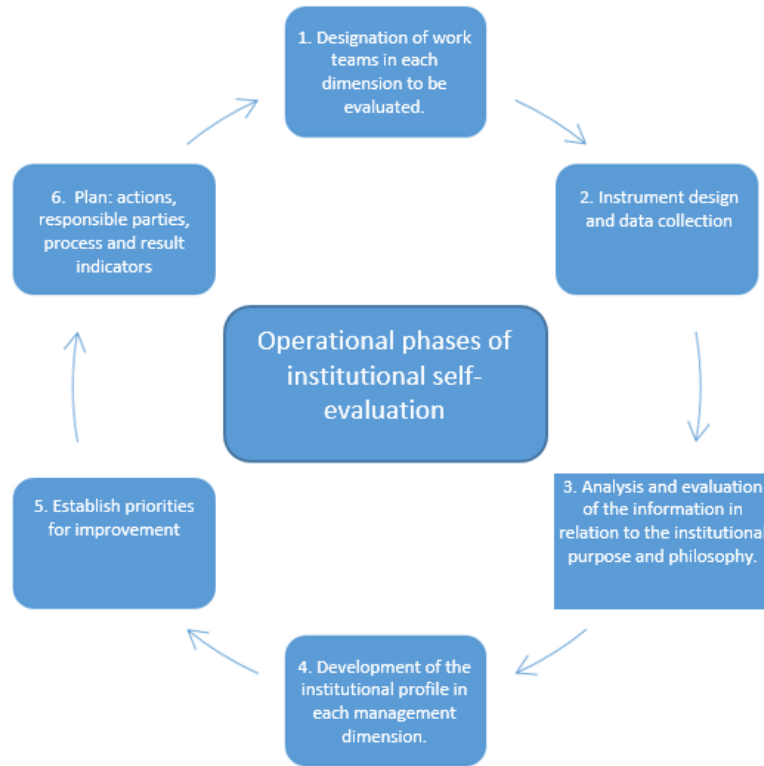


Figure No. 5. Order of execution of tasks for self-evaluation. Source: Own elaboration

Likewise, the purpose of the above-mentioned activities is summarized in the following macro-processes:

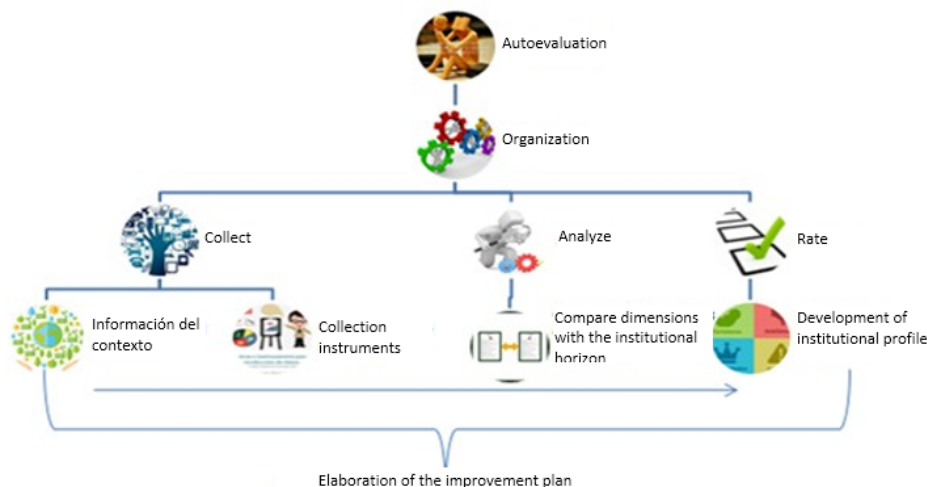


Figure No. 6. Self-evaluation process map. Source: Own elaboration

STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTHENING SELF-EVALUATION

Valdés et al. (2015) emphasize the relevance of the leadership and commitment of the educational authorities, which are fundamental to guide the progress of the educational process, especially the motivation to achieve the interest in the effective participation of the rest of the community stakeholders, supporting the process to avoid suspicion and fear about the use of the results, always oriented towards the constant advancement of objectives and not of culprits, that is, the fulfillment of the objective above sanctions.

Likewise, the self-evaluated members must feel that their proposals are involved in the improvement plan, i.e., it must have an inter-subjective character for decision making. Evidently, for its fulfillment, an open mentality is required that transcends the punitive view that traditionally characterizes the evaluation processes.

This allows rectors, teachers, students and administrators to assume the commitment to achieve improvements, to ensure the realization of all the phases of the process, that is, to facilitate the operative and directive conditions that will allow its implementation, given that the self-evaluation processes promote the commitment of the actors with the proposal that arises from the different contributions of the different strata of the educational community.

On the other hand, it is also recommended that the first self-evaluation processes be carried

out with procedures with a simple execution and short-term scope, since in this way the results are obtained in the short term and a stimulus is generated regarding the process and effectiveness of the self-evaluation to empower the community and achieve its gradual appropriation.

To summarize, in order to strengthen the institutional self-evaluation, it is necessary to transversalize the behavioral competencies in the execution of all processes and functional activities, from the manager to the other actors of the self-evaluation, as shown in the following graph:

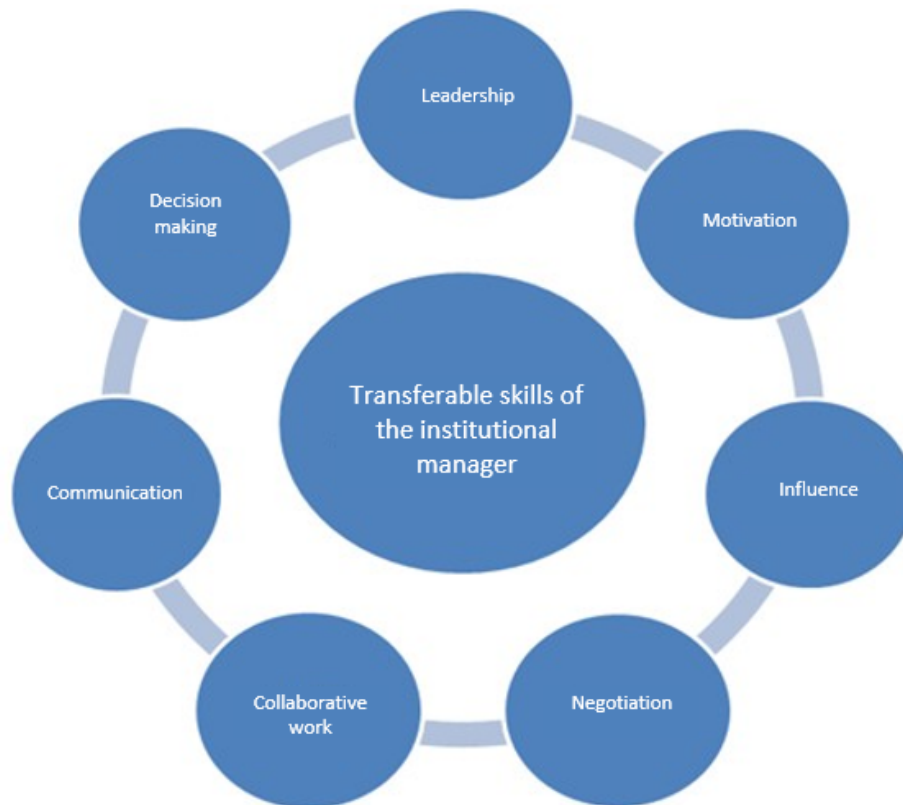


Figure No. 7. Soft competencies to strengthen the impact of self-assessment. Source: Own elaboration

QUALITY, SELF-EVALUATION AND RELEVANCE

Valencia (2017) in his article refers to self-evaluation from the educational relevance and highlights that:

The criteria and characteristics of self-evaluation, must consider aspects of relevance, which must take into account the social context and the particularity of each Institution. The State must carry out inspection and surveillance of the quality conditions presented by the Higher Education Institutions, to guarantee the academic community the fulfillment of these requirements (p. 53).

According to the author, there are two factors in the process of institutional self-evaluation: relevance and the state. The state establishes official guidelines through a legal framework for the accreditation of higher education, and in countries such as Colombia the national accreditation system guarantees high levels of quality since Law 30 of 1992 and recognizes self-evaluation, the review by academic peers and their work.

The National Council for Higher Education (CESU), which through the Agreement for Higher Education 2034 (Public policy proposal for excellence in higher education in Colombia in the scenario of PEACE) sets goals for the period 2018-2034, where education is one of the pillars of transformation and social mobility from the attention to 10 issues: 1. Inclusive education: access, permanence and graduation 2. Quality and relevance 3. Articulation of higher education with secondary education and education for work and human development: towards a tertiary education system 6. University community and welfare 7. New educational modalities 8. Internationalization 9. Structure and governance of the system 10.

Likewise, the model of education performance indicators (MIDE) is a support tool for the quality assurance system; its function is to take data from existing information systems and provide them to support decision making regarding quality.

In the face of quality in education Valencia (2017) refers as follows: Quality is measured by curricular relevance in the context, it must consider the relationship with the business sector when it favors labor linkage and generates confidence in productive academic processes; the role of the State regulating financial actions and generating incentives, detaching the concept of knowledge as a commodity and the institutions propitiate changes that are in harmony with social requirements and the dynamics of world development. (p. 50)

Educational quality alludes to the results of the institutions in relation to knowledge and their internal and external tests, which are applied to the programs, as well as to the correlation between the professional preparation of students and the demands of the labor context and the economic model of the moment, the performance of higher education institutions cannot move away from labor competencies and timely training to seek to contribute to the economy of the region and the requirements of society.

Self-evaluation and quality, according to the previous contributions, are determined by pertinence, which is defined by UNESCO in its 1998 conference on higher education as follows:

The relevance of higher education must be assessed in terms of the fit between what society expects of institutions and what they do. To this end, institutions and systems, particularly in their even closer relations with the world of work, must base their long-term orientations on social objectives and needs, and in particular respect for cultures and protection of the environment. Fostering entrepreneurship and related skills and initiatives must become a major concern of higher education. Particular attention should be given to the functions of higher education in the service of society, and more specifically to activities aimed at eliminating poverty, intolerance, violence, illiteracy, hunger, environmental degradation and disease, and to activities aimed at the promotion of peace, through an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach.

UNESCO warns how pertinence must be assumed from a given social and cultural context, understanding it as the duty to respond to the needs and requirements of the group where the educational process is developed, in addition to taking into account the characteristics of the various environments where human beings interact, from the productive to the environmental, without neglecting the social, which includes aspects related to health, poverty and in general everything that should interest education as an object of knowledge in fulfillment of the social function that concerns it. It is also worth highlighting the notion of pertinence oriented to the interrelation of the educational levels studied throughout the life of the human being, because primary, basic and secondary education cannot be developed in isolation to the extent that despite their division into stages, they constitute a true integral process, and in this way with the contributions of Valencia (2017) we reflect on the self-evaluation of the institutions but in response to a series of needs, expectations and characteristics of the contexts where the teaching process takes place.

TRIANGULATION OF PARADIGMS REGARDING SELF-ASSESSMENT INTERPRETATIVE ANALYSIS

In Valdés et al. (2015), self-evaluation is conceived as a process that gathers more general to factual information, focusing at the atomic level on the processes that set it in motion, that is, it focuses on its planning, organization and operationalization aspects, without neglecting the behavioral dimension that is the “fuel” for effective functioning. Thus, the factual aspects of the process and the concrete aspects to be executed by the members for the construction of a continuous improvement plan with respect to its purpose, which is the achievement of scientific competencies of a citizen who should be useful in a predetermined social context, are widely emphasized. In short, it is focused on doing and on the general ethical-political transversal principles that govern it.

The following table condenses the categories of analysis, the areas of management from his

paradigm as well as the predominant one (highlighted in green in the column of greater focus), according to this author:

CATEGORIES	MANAGEMENT AREAS	AREA OF MAJOR FOCUS
DISCIPLINARY	Teleology	
	Philosophy	
	Curriculum	
	Planning	
	Organization	
	Operational	
ATTITUDINAL	Leadership	
	Motivation	
	Negotiation	
	Impact	
	Influence	

Table No. 1 Categories, management areas and areas of major focus, according to (Valdés et al., 2015). Source: Own elaboration

Peña et al. (2018) conceives self-evaluation from its factual part, but focuses on the impact it has on the transcomplex society proposing to transform socio-cultural aspects towards integral justice and equity, from the formative practices of the institution and vice versa, to achieve accreditation. This is achieved through an adequate review and analysis of institutional information, from the same operational elements such as mission, vision, objectives, within the framework of intersubjectivity, ethical-political commitment to society to whom it is ultimately accountable. In synthesis, it focuses on the teleological character associated to remedy socio-political problems in order to be accredited.

The following table shows the category, the management areas and their main focus areas (highlighted in the corresponding column with green color), according to the author:

CATEGORIES	MANAGEMENT AREAS	AREA OF MAJOR FOCUS
DISCIPLINARY	Teleology	
	Philosophy	
	Curriculum	
	Planning	
	Organization	
	Operational	
ATTITUDINAL	Leadership	
	Motivation	
	Negotiation	
	Impact	
	Influence	

Table No. 2. Categories, management areas and areas of major focus, according to (Peña et al., 2018). Source: Own elaboration.

Santos (cited in Segura Castillo, 2017) broadly mentions that there are processes at the level of management areas and dimensions to be analyzed, however, he focuses on the guiding principles transversal to the self-evaluation process: rationality, co-responsibility, professionalism and perfectibility that are basically homologous with those raised by Peña et al. (2018) and Valdés et al. (2015), not so much as surrounding aspects of the disciplinary, but actively integrating it in said process. In short, it focuses on the attitudinal area in a transversal manner, actively articulating it within the disciplinary or management area, as shown in the following table:

CATEGORY	MANAGEMENT AREAS	CROSS-CUTTING ATTITUDINAL AREAS	AREA OF MAJOR FOCUS
DISCIPLINARY	Teleology	Rationality, co-responsibility, collaboration, professionalism, perfectibility, exemplarity	
	Philosophy		
	Curriculum		
	Planning		
	Organization		
	Operational		

Table No. 3. Categories, management areas, cross-cutting and major focus attitudinal areas according to Santos (Cited in Segura, 2017). Source: Own elaboration

For its part, the OECD, in relation to the impacts mentioned by Peña et al. (2018), emphasizes that of socio-economic security, stating that an institutional self-assessment should include a self-assessment of justice and equity of opportunities, including external advice and allowing the permanent resignification of the curriculum towards transcomplexity. In relation to the previous authors, the social community dimension, which transcends the “four walls”, takes on a relevant importance. In summary, like Peña et al. (2018), it focuses on the teleological character focused on social transformation in an endogenous-exogenous manner.

The following table shows the category, management areas and those with the greatest focus of these, according to the author:

CATEGORIES	MANAGEMENT AREAS	AREA OF MAJOR FOCUS
DISCIPLINARY	Teleology	
	Philosophy	
	Curriculum	
	Planning	
	Organization	
	Operational	
ATTITUDINAL	Leadership	
	Motivation	
	Negotiation	
	Impact	
	Influence	

Table No. 4. Categories, management areas and areas of major focus, according to OECD.
 Source: Own elaboration.

From the perspective of Valencia (2017) the self-evaluation processes are developed in line with the contributions of the different authors mentioned in the articles, when talking about relevance for quality opens space to develop evaluation practices in order to meet the characteristics of the curricula in response to the needs of the regions, the expectations of the legal frameworks of the countries with their accreditation systems. Because the educational quality pursued by each institution is based on the findings of self-evaluation, not only seeking to respond to the parameters of knowledge evaluation, but the right response that training provides to address social problems and current socio-political demands.

The following table shows the category, the management areas and their main focus areas, according to the author:

CATEGORIES	MANAGEMENT AREAS	AREA OF MAJOR FOCUS
DISCIPLINARY	Teleology	
	Philosophy	
	Curriculum	
	Planning	
	Organization	
	Operational	
ATTITUDINAL	Leadership	
	Motivation	
	Negotiation	
	Impact	
	Influence	

Table No. 5. Categories, management areas and areas of major focus, according to Valencia (2015). Source: Own elaboration

After an exhaustive analysis of the paradigms of these authors, the theoretical-operational foundations of the self-assessment and improvement plan process can be abstracted. The following table shows them specifically:

CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	MANAGEMENT AREA	COMPE-TENCY	ACTIVITY	PURPOSE
DISCIPLINAR	Self-evaluation and improvement plan	Teleology, philosophy, curriculum, planning, organization, operationalization	Know what, know how	Analyze and synthesize the strengths and opportunities of the institutional culture in relation to management areas	Accreditation of supervisory bodies Socio-cultural transformation based on education Educational transformation from the socio-cultural point of view

CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	MANAGEMENT AREA	COMPE- TENCY	ACTIVITY	PURPOSE
ATTITUDINAL	Ethics	Commitment, truthfulness, honesty, willingness	Be	Appropriate the behavioral competencies in the personality of the self-assessment actors and transpose them into the disciplinary competencies	Strengthen the self-evaluation process and improvement plan to achieve its purpose
	Policy	Leadership, motivation, negotiation, impact, influence, rationality, co-responsibility, collaboration, professionalism, perfectibility, exemplarity			

Table No. 6. Table of theoretical-operational foundations of self-evaluation. Source: Own elaboration

The following chart condenses through a triangulation, the core ideas of each of the mentioned authors and the intersections or conjunctions of their ideas to obtain the guiding principles of self-evaluation that govern these paradigms:



Figure No. 8. Triangulation of paradigms on self-evaluation. Source: Own elaboration

FINAL REFLECTIONS

By way of intersection and paradigmatic conjunction, it can be stated that self-evaluation should involve the entire community (with external advice), governed by attitudinal and aptitudinal principles of its actors that guide the analysis of the results in relation to the purpose, mission and curriculum to implement relevant improvement plans that transcend the institutional context, from a socio-cultural and political impact towards transcomplexity. In order to strengthen it, it is necessary that all members of the self-evaluation community take ownership of the competencies of being and integrate them with those of knowing what and knowing how, in order to achieve the desired social impact and, from the legal point of view, accreditation.

The culture of self-evaluation is an opportunity to generate a curriculum from the participation of all the strata of the educational community, when reflecting on the development of educational processes and analyzing each factor involved in the formation of students, processes of relevance to the characteristics and expectations of a region become visible. This tendency of the curriculum will not be alien to the legal requirements of the control entities, but its application of the norms is carried out in a reflexive and interpretative way because the basis of the educational proposal is the knowledge of the reality of the institution and the search for an opportunity for improvement.

Self-evaluation establishes a close relationship with educational quality through actions that are organized from spaces pertinent to the characteristics, social, environmental, political and economic conditions of a region, when its inhabitants are the ones who assume the responsibility of developing these evaluative practices generating educational proposals from innovation, research, democracy and social responsibility.

The different authors cited Valdés, Peña, Valencia, Santos and others, visualize the curriculum as a social construction with democratic participation of all the people who are in the contexts that interact with the institutions and in some way intervene in the formation of students with quality.

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