Acreditación y Flexibilidad Curricular[1]

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Acreditação Curricular e Flexibilidade

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Resumen

El objetivo del artículo es examinar el impacto de las políticas de acreditación de programas académicos de Educación Superior en Colombia en el mejoramiento de la flexibilidad curricular. Para ello, en primer lugar, propone y desarrolla un modelo semiótico curricular que a través de categorías específicas posibilita la descripción de dicho impacto; en segundo lugar, detalla la ruta metodológica; en tercer lugar, presenta los resultados de la aplicación del modelo de análisis en un estudio de caso, el programa de Antropología de la Universidad del Cauca, Colombia; en cuarto lugar, realiza la discusión de los resultados; y en quinto lugar, expone las conclusiones y recomendaciones del estudio. Se aplicaron encuestas a 110 estudiantes, 11 profesores y 6 directivos. Una vez realizado el procesamiento estadístico de los datos y efectuado el análisis e interpretación de los mismos, se logra evidenciar que se cumple en alto grado el impacto, con 88 sobre 100 puntos, y con una equivalencia de impacto satisfactorio.

Palabras clave: acreditación, flexibilidad curricular, selección, organización, distribución.

Abstract

The objective of this article is to examine the impact of the accreditation policies of academic programs of Higher Education in Colombia in the improvement of the curricular flexibility.To do this, in the first place, it proposes and develops a curricular semiotic model that, through specific categories, enables the description of such impact; second, it details the methodological route; third, presents the results of the application of the analysis model in a case study, the Anthropology program of the University of Cauca, Colombia; Fourthly, he discusses the results; and fifth, it sets out the conclusions and recommendations of the study. Surveys were applied to 110 students, 11 teachers and 6 managers. Once the statistical processing of the data has been carried out and the analysis and interpretation of the data has been carried out, it is possible to show that the impact is met in high degree, with 88 over 100 points, and with a satisfactory impact equivalence.

Keywords: accreditation, curricular flexibility, selection, organization, distribution.

Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo é examinar o impacto das políticas de acreditação de programas acadêmicos de Ensino Superior na Colômbia na melhoria da flexibilidade curricular. Para fazer isso, em primeiro lugar, propõe e desenvolve um modelo semiótico curricular que, através de categorias específicas, permite a descrição desse impacto; Em segundo lugar, detalha a rota metodológica; Em terceiro lugar, apresenta os resultados da aplicação do modelo de análise em um estudo de caso, o programa de Antropologia da Universidade do Cauca, Colômbia; Em quarto lugar, ele discute os resultados; e em quinto lugar, apresenta as conclusões e recomendações do estudo. Pesquisas foram aplicadas a 110 alunos, 11 professores e 6 gerentes. Uma vez que o processamento estatístico dos dados foi realizado e a análise e interpretação dos dados foram realizadas, é possível mostrar que o impacto é atingido em alto grau, com 88 em 100 pontos e com equivalência de impacto satisfatória.

Palavras-chave: credenciamento, flexibilidade curricular, seleção, organização, distribuição.

Introduction

The article examines the relationship between accreditation and curricular flexibility, concepts that belong to different planes but reach certain degrees of mutual presupposition. The central objective is to investigate the effects of the accreditation policy on curricular flexibility in the field of Higher Education in Colombia. To do this, it proposes a theoretical-methodological model that, through specific categories, allows the description of such impact and applies the model in a case study, the Anthropology program of the University of Cauca.

The research question is: how to propose a theoretical-methodological model that makes it possible to describe the relationship between accreditation and curricular flexibility? The guiding questions of the study are: what does it require to evaluate the national accreditation policy in relation to curricular flexibility in Colombia? What are the institutional policies articulated to curricular flexibility in the University of Cauca and that are materialized in the academic program object of study? What is the academic community's appreciation of the application and effectiveness of institutional policies in terms of curricular flexibility ?, and can we demonstrate new and flexible ways of selecting, organizing and distributing knowledge in the program , attributable to accreditation processes? It is assumed that accreditation has greatly impacted the improvement of curricular flexibility in the program under investigation.

The establishment of the National Accreditation System is a mandate of Law 30 of 1992, a rule that governs Higher Education in Colombia, where it is conceived as the set of policies, strategies, processes and organizations whose objective is to guarantee to society that the institutions of higher education -IES- meet the highest quality requirements and realize their purposes and objectives. The evaluation involved in the accreditation process makes explicit the internal conditions of operation of programs and institutions and highlights their strengths, weaknesses and the adoption of a self-evaluation culture. In this way, it constitutes a starting point for internal processes of institutional improvement and becomes a clear reference for the State to give public faith to the quality of programs and institutions, as well as to generate indicators that allow the comparison of the Higher Education with international standards.

Of the 286 HEIs in Colombia, 41 are accredited, 21 public and 20 private. Of the 9 806 existing undergraduate programs, 896 have this recognition, 405 in official institutions and 491 in private institutions. Of the 1,012 masters, 95 are accredited; and of the 148 doctoral programs, 24 have accreditation. These data with cut at December 31, 2016 (CNA, 2017). Taking into consideration this set of programs and institutions that participate in the National Accreditation System, it is urgent to conduct research related to the effects of the academic accreditation process in the improvement of the quality of higher education in this country.

The methodology of evaluation of academic programs and institutions of higher education (CNA, 2013, 2015) is based on the examination of factors, characteristics and aspects to be evaluated. To accredit undergraduate programs, we consider 10 factors, 40 characteristics and 251 aspects to be evaluated. In the context of this work, attention is focused on factor 4, academic processes, characteristic 17, curricular flexibility in which the CNA (2013) states that "The curriculum is flexible enough to keep up to date and relevant, and to optimize the students' transit through the program and through the institution, through options that the student has to construct, within certain limits, his own trajectory of formation based on his aspirations and interests "(p 30).

The study is justified in the growing interest, presented in the last decades, to investigate Higher Education in general, and the policy of quality assurance in particular; in the urgency of strengthening the reflection on the effects of this policy, including its two levels: that of the qualified registry granted by the Ministry of National Education (MEN), on the recommendation of the National Intersectoral Commission for the Quality Assurance of Education Superior -CONACES- and the one of the accreditation, granted by the MEN, previous concept of the National Council of Accreditation -CNA-. It is also justified in the challenge of state agencies and academic communities to promote studies and research that contribute to consolidate an integrated accreditation policy as an instrument of quality assurance; and in the lack of studies on the impacts of accreditation in Colombia and particularly on curricular flexibility.

The article is structured in six sections. The first presents the introduction; The second, prior contextualization of the discourses of accreditation and flexibility in higher education,

postulates and develops in the theoretical referents the semiotic curriculum model for the study; the third specifies the methodological route; the fourth presents the quantitative and qualitative results of the research; the fifth performs the discussion of the results; and the sixth presents the conclusions, points out some recommendations and leaves room for future research.

Theoretical referents

Contextualization. The systems of accreditation of the quality of Higher Education began in the United States at the beginning of the 20th century, focused on institutional accreditation and then on accreditation of careers, first through regional agencies constituted by the HEIs and later under the responsibility of specialized professional agencies. These systems were extended to Europe, associated with the evaluation of careers and programs, initially without focusing on compliance with standards. Starting with the Bologna Declaration, accreditation systems are introduced to facilitate student and professional mobility, the recognition of qualifications under an explicit compliance with standards.

In Latin America, the interest for accreditation comes from the beginning of the 1990s, followed closely by New Zealand and later by Australia. The most recent initiatives are in the countries of the Middle East and Africa, supported by international organizations. The development of these systems is uneven in these regions, but important dynamics and some already consolidated systems are observed (Lemaitre, 2009).

Since 1992, based on the Bologna Declaration, Europe has opted for the creation of quality assurance systems as one of its key tools for the constitution of the European Higher Education Area as a strategic policy for cohesion the European Union and the development of its competitiveness capacities in the global context. In this space accreditation, curricular design based on competences, the system of transfer of academic credits, the recognition of degrees, the structuring of the formation by cycles, etc., play a transcendent role, as a support to the processes of student and professional mobility and as generators of trust in the relationships established between society, education and productive structure or services (Pena-Vega, 2009).

The Quality Assurance System -SAC- in Colombia is made up of three interrelated components: information, evaluation and promotion. The information component is supported in six information systems: SNIES, SPADIES, SACES, Saber (11 and Pro), OLE and SCienTI. The evaluation component has two instruments: qualified registration and accreditation. The first is compulsory so that academic programs can be offered undergraduate and graduate, is regulated by Decree 1295 of 2010, and by CONACES. The second, accreditation of both programs and institutions, is voluntary and is in charge of the ANC. The promotion component develops actions to encourage technical and technological training, supports HEIs in the use of new technologies in their academic and management processes, and offers technical assistance in evaluation processes.

Accreditation and flexibility discourses have gained importance over the last three decades in educational, cultural, scientific, technological and, above all, economic fields, in the context of the growing challenges posed by globalization. Today, the processes of assuring the quality of higher education in the different countries are given a high priority in order to fulfill its purposes and objectives, through the establishment of a culture of self-evaluation and continuous improvement in each one of them. their substantive functions and, in the face of the principle of flexibility, to foster increasingly relevant, interdisciplinary and flexible curricula in an imperative manner.

Theoretical model. The model outlined in Figure 1 is composed of six categories: curricular flexibility, national accreditation policies, institutional policies, selection, organization and distribution of knowledge.

Figure 1. Modelo semiótico curricular para el estudio.
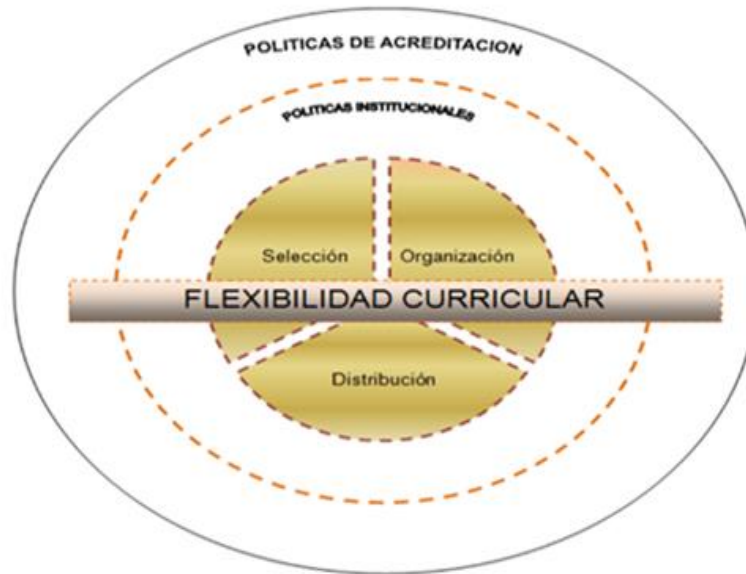
Source: elaboración propia.

Curricular flexibility

Flexibility can be seen as a trend associated with contemporary social, economic, cultural and educational realities. A descriptive attempt at the changing dynamics of these realities and their relationships implies articulating them to a variety of increasingly global processes characterized by flexibility. Instability, contingency and permanent change can be considered due to: the strength of the economic revolution of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, the development of science, technology and innovation, the globalization of culture, changes in the labor market, weakening of countries' political and economic frontiers, growing manifestations of a systemic education (relations between education and economic development), the pedagogical revolution, in the quest to generate a competent and flexible professional to assume problems.

The principle of flexibility has been examined by several writers: Stenhouse (1984), Magendzo (1991), Patrone (1997), Chavez (2001), Díaz (2007), among others. According to Diaz (2007), the notion of flexibility is a relational principle that refers to the experience of weakening boundaries between categories - agents, agencies, discourses, spaces and practices - as well as in social interaction. The concept of limit is of symbolic character,

alludes to line, boundary, demarcation, border; brands that are created in internal and external relationships between categories. These demarcations give rise to meanings, symbolic constructions and different interpretations. Boundaries structure positions, differences, and identities.

The concept of category arises from the social division of labor. There are categories such as agents (man / woman, father / son, teacher / student, etc.), agencies (school, university, family, church, financial system, etc.), speeches (physics, linguistics, anthropology, classroom, library, administrative spaces, etc.), practices (research, teaching, extension). Flexibility is also associated with the weakening of boundaries created in social relations, social interaction or communication (Díaz, 2007).

Two simple examples related to the weakening of boundaries between categories. The traditional gender division establishes the classification of the categories man and woman. However, today the weakening of rigid boundaries breaks out, legitimizing the LGBTI community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersexual). The classical division of sciences as psychology, sociology, linguistics, today erases the limits and disciplinary margins emerging the field of psycho-sociolinguistics (Hernández, 1984).

In the field of higher education, flexibility has assumed different forms and typologies (curricular, pedagogical, academic, administrative and management) whose expressions, unfortunately in some cases, have not transcended the level of instrumental or methodological. This research takes as reference the curricular flexibility in an undergraduate academic program seen from the effects of the accreditation policy, regulated by the CNA (2013) in Colombia.

The principle of flexibility makes the need to discredit the legitimacy of the aggregate curriculum models characterized, according to Ortega (2005), as "assignaturists, atomized, encyclopedic, inflexible, congested, upright, exclusionary and professionalizing" (p. 46).

The principle of flexibility, however, is intrinsically associated with integrated curricula, characterized by being open, flexible, corporate, dialogical, horizontal, interdisciplinary, experiential and investigative.

Diaz (2007) conceives the curriculum as "the selection of the culture that is organized and distributed as official knowledge or legitimate knowledge. The selection, organization and

distribution of official knowledge are socially regulated "(p.159). Here selection is associated with the recontextualization of discourses and practices, organization to the establishment of limits within the selected discourses and between discourses and practices, and distribution refers to temporalities, to the duration of the processes of formation, therefore it is associated with sequences and rhythms.

Semiotics deals with sign processes (semiosis) as generators of processes of signification and communication in the totality of fields, contexts, discourses and practices of human activity. If we consider that a sign "is what can be interpreted" (Eco, 1985, p. 341), one can take this concept to investigate the hermeneutical sense of accreditation, flexibility and curriculum discourses. Accreditation, flexibility and curriculum are universes signs in the social production of meaning, which celebrate voices, relationships, interests, tensions and conflicts; signs that by their nature can not be abstracted from macro-contexts (political, economic, sociocultural, scientific, legal) or the regional, local, and institutional micro-contexts in which they have emerged, developed and are operating (Bernstein, 1998).

National accreditation policies related to curricular flexibility

In general terms, policies are courses of action aimed at solving public problems, or declarations of intentions, goals and objectives that compromise a series of decisions and actions of many political and governmental actors. Although all public policy is a government action, it is not limited to this, and whose processes, decisions and results are the product of the interaction of various agents, agencies, discourses and practices, in the midst of a situation of social complexity and power relationships.

The educational field is regulated by policies according to times, practices, discourses and knowledge. One of them in Colombia is the quality assurance policy, through the Quality Assurance System -SAC-, whose normative framework is generated from Law 30 of 1992 and complemented by a large number of decrees, agreements , resolutions and guidelines.

The quality of higher education is the raison d'être of the national accreditation policy; recognizing it, ensuring its increase and promoting its development gives meaning to the processes of self-evaluation, peer evaluation, CNA evaluation (2006, 2013, 2015) and public recognition of quality by the MEN. The concept of quality applied to the public service of

higher education refers to the synthesis of characteristics that allow to recognize a specific academic program or institution of a certain type and to make a judgment about the relative distance between the way in that institution or in that academic program is provided such service and the optimum that corresponds to its nature.

Evaluation and accreditation have become demanding processes to guarantee to society the quality and credibility of educational processes and their results, in the Colombian institutional diversity, according to their nature (public or private), at different levels universities, universities), in their modalities (face-to-face, distance and virtual), in their disciplinary orientations (general and specialized) and in their orientation (secular and religious).

Accreditation of academic programs in Colombia, at the undergraduate level, considers factors, characteristics and aspects to be evaluated (CNA, 2013). The factors are: Mission, institutional project and program; Students; Teachers; Academic processes; National and international visibility; Research, innovation and artistic and cultural creation; Institutional well-being; Organization, administration and management; Impact of the graduates in the middle; and Physical and financial resources. This research takes as reference the factor 4, academic processes, characteristic 17, curricular flexibility.

What does the National Accreditation Policy ask for in relation to curricular flexibility? The CNA (2013) evaluation model seeks to examine: the existence and application of institutional policies regarding flexibility, referring to the organization and hierarchy of contents, credit recognition, competency training, electivity, double degree and student mobility; recognition of previous educational and work experience; equivalence of securities and transfers; permanent updating of the curriculum; appreciation of the academic community on the application and effectiveness of institutional policies on curricular flexibility; transit from undergraduate to postgraduate; agreements and cooperative relations with institutions of secondary and higher education and with the labor sector; and flexibility criteria for the student to design their own academic plan.

Institutional policies related to curricular flexibility

An institutional policy based on the principle of flexibility requires HEIs to reflect collectively on open organizational forms that, from the different missionary spheres, and especially from the curriculum, promote the development of the institutional horizon, that is, of its mission, vision and educational project. A policy of flexibility aims at disrupting the "rigid" image of the institution, which implies the development of processes of reflection, re-conceptualization of existing structures and approach to tensions and conflicts that often lead to reflection and proposals for transformation and innovation (Díaz, 2002).

By virtue of the above, it is common to find that the policy of flexibility, expressed in documents, decrees, resolutions, agreements, plans, projects, guidelines, etc., which in most cases remains at the discursive level, in simple rhetoric institutional by the persistence of strong conservadurismos expressed in forms of isolation and fragmentation of agents, speeches and practices of management and formation. In addition to this, institutional policy must be public domain and full ownership by all actors of the educational community, hence the importance of strategies for dissemination and re-conceptualization permanent, participatory and critical to ensure their knowledge, understanding and individual and collective empowerment.

Aspects such as normativity, institutional documentation on flexibility, academic mobility, internationalization, agreements, transfers, homologations, double degrees, transversal training components, interdisciplinarity, electivity, among others, will be referential for this category.

Selection of knowledge

This category refers to principles and strategies used to choose contents to teach and learn and that can be mediated by rigid or flexible criteria. The interests mobilized in society, in academic and economic niches, decide what can be taught and what can not. Difficulties arise when what is taught and learned does not respond to the needs of disciplines and social contexts, but rather to mandates of centers of power within programs and institutions, be they public or private.

Selection is fundamental for the constitution of the curriculum and its different discourses and practices, since it makes it possible to appropriate contents, control them, to promote them as legitimate knowledge that can be transmitted in pedagogical practice. The selection, according to Diaz (2007), "allows to establish restrictions, differences and abstract, to extract, to subvert the knowledge of their primary places of existence (usually, disciplinary places) and to relocate them in the curricular field and in the pedagogical field" (157). In short, selection is a typical embodiment of recontextualization. In other words, the curriculum is a set of discourses that are selected and recontextualized.

Ortega (2005) points out that the discursive rule of selection presupposes selective action sieved by social interests. The university teacher in selecting subjects, paradigms, activities, resources, methods, etc. is regulating the teaching-learning processes, recontextualizing the organization of knowledge, distributing certain forms of pedagogical awareness, and socializing students in disciplinary identities or specific professionals. They are criteria of content selection: participation, relevance, relevance, social and individual utility, contextualization, applicability, impact, diversity of interests and needs of students, training opportunities, individual development (Díaz, 2007, p. 183).

Knowledge Organization

The organization refers to the grouping, ordering and relationship of selected content and training practices. The placement and ordering of the selected parts within a whole are constituents of the curricular structure. It is here that limits are usually fixed and visible, from which a kind of hierarchy of units is imposed, through which knowledge is stratified.

From the formation, expertise and mentality of the agents involved depend the forms of relation of knowledge, which can be of linking, separating or congregating in a vertical or horizontal, intra, inter or transdisciplinary way. The nature of the institutional culture, which can be rigid or flexible, closed or open, depending on the frameworks of interpretation in which the HEI and the academic program are enrolled, also intervenes to inform the curriculum.

The dominant practice in Higher Education is the predominance of organizational forms of content based on a variety of units, such as fields, areas (basic training, vocational training,

deepening, complementary training), components and the subjects, the latter as the most visible and obvious manifestation, the minimal organizational expression of recontextualized discourses and practices. The curricular organization by nucleus, by modules and by projects can become a form of curricular development that tends to transcend the traditional organization of subjects and to generate a greater articulation between research and training, contributing to the promotion of flexibility in training.

Distribution of knowledge

The distribution, in agreement with Diaz (2007), refers to the ordering of the formative contents in the time, and contains subcategories like the sequence and the learning rhythms. Traditionally the question of distribution has been solved based on criteria such as age, the development of the subject, the complexity of knowledge, the location of these in levels of the educational system, including the schedule or the school periods, whether semiannual or annual, conceived in the heat of extremely rigid schemes around which institutions and teachers condition all the training activities of learners regardless of their particularities, interests, rhythms and cognitive potential.

The flexibility in the distribution implies the introduction of some conceptual references that allow to describe and regulate within the institutions the sequences and rhythms of the formation. In this sense the notions of cycle and credit have become fundamental to redefine the temporality of vocational training, since they have affected the processes of selection, organization and distribution in time of the discourses, practices and intrinsic contexts of formation.

The cycle is conceived as a stage that, linked to other stages, allows an integral formation and development by levels of scientific, technological, sociocultural, communicative and professional competences of the student, making possible the creation of a wide spectrum of options and professional routes. In the philosophy of academic credit is intended to equate the intensities of academic training between programs of different institutions, stimulate transfer, student mobility, homologation and validation of degrees obtained abroad (Ortega, 2009).

Methodology

The research is descriptive-explanatory nature and subscribes methodological aspects qualitative and quantitative, ie the approach is mixed. The population is heterogeneous and is made up of a group of eleven (11) programs with accreditation in the University of Cauca. The sample is either intentional or convenience, and given that it is a case study, it is conformed by an accredited program of the existing ones in that institution, the Anthropology program, attached to the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences.

The Department of Anthropology has a history of 46 years of existence, in December 2016, and offers the undergraduate Anthropology, Anthropology Master's and Anthropology Doctorate, thus forming the complete professional training cycle. The experience of the accreditation of the said program, in three (3) opportunities, years 2003, 2009 and 2016, motivates to investigate by its effects in the improvement of the quality and specifically in the flexibility of the curriculum.

It is assumed as inclusion criteria: voluntary participation, active teacher, program coordinator, department head or member of the curricular committee, be Dean of Faculty, be a student of sixth to tenth semester, given the need to have a transit for the career , to access the ethos of the program and to be part of the institutional culture. 110 surveys were applied to students, equivalent to 60% of the universe; to 11 teachers of plant, for a percentage of 100%, and to 6 managers (Dean, Head of Department and members of the Curricular Committee of the program), for a percentage of 100%. There were also in-depth interviews with managers and teachers, given the need to delve into specific issues. In addition, the relevant documentary information of the program and of the University of Cauca was used.

The categories, weights and aspects to be assessed established for the study are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Categorías, aspectos a evaluar y ponderaciones.

Categorías	Ponderación	Aspectos a evaluar	Pondera-ción
Políticas de acreditación	15	1. Cultura de autoevaluación y mejoramiento continuo	7
		2. Fortalezas, debilidades y condiciones de funcionamiento	4
		3. Credibilidad y reconocimiento del programa	4
Políticas institucionales	25	4. Normatividad y documentos institucionales sobre flexibilidad	4
		5. Reglamento sobre créditos académicos	3
		6. Compromiso con la investigación	4
		7. Creación de programa de posgrado	4
		8. Nombramiento de docentes	3
		9. Interacción con comunidades académicas	2
		10. Aumento de recursos bibliográficos e informáticos	3
		11. Convenios	2
Selección de conocimientos	20	12. Participación en eventos académicos	1
		13. Participación en convocatorias de investigación	2
		14. Vinculación de la investigación a la formación	3
		15. Vinculación de la extensión a la formación	2
		16. Participación en reforma del plan de estudios	2
		17. Formación de profesionales flexibles	3
		18. Selección de trabajos de grado	1
		19. Impacto de graduados	2
		20. Selección crítica de conocimientos y prácticas	4
Organización de conocimientos	20	21. Organización curricular del programa	3
		22. Dimensiones curriculares	3
		23. Componentes transversales	3
		24. Organización en asignaturas y seminarios	2
		25. Organización en proyectos	3
		26. Reducción de requisitos curriculares	2
		27. Formación interdisciplinaria	2
		28. Formación integral	2
Distribución de conocimientos	20	29. Utilización de las TIC	3
		30. Créditos electivos	4
		31. Sistema de créditos y elección de rutas formativas	5
		32. Sistema de créditos y movilidad académica	4
		33. Oferta flexible de horarios, espacios y contextos	4
Total	100.0		100

Source: elaboración propia.

Table 2. Modelo de ponderación numérica.

1. Categorías	2. Aspectos a evaluar	3, Ponderación como importancia relativa respecto al total. Escala de 1 a 10	4. Grado de cumplimiento Escala de 1 a 5	5. Evaluación teniendo en cuenta la ponderación	6. Logro ideal. Cada elemento evaluado con 5	7. Relación con el logro ideal. Máximo posible (1.0)
1	1	7	4	28	35	0.8
1	2	4	4	16	20	0.8
1	3	4	4	16	20	0.8
Subtotal		15		60	75	0.8
2	4	4	4	16	20	0.8
2	5	3	5	15	15	1.0
2	6	4	5	20	20	1.0
2	7	4	5	20	20	1.0
2	8	3	4	12	15	0.8
2	9	2	4	8	10	0.8
2	10	3	4	12	15	0.8
2	11	2	4	8	10	0.8
Subtotal		25		111	125	0.88
3	12	1	4	4	5	0.8
3	13	2	5	8	10	0.8
3	14	3	4	12	15	0.8
3	15	2	3	6	10	0.6
3	16	2	4	8	10	0.8
3	17	3	4	12	15	0.8
3	18	1	5	5	5	1.0
3	19	2	5	10	10	1.0
3	20	4	5	20	20	1.0
Subtotal		20		85	100	0.85
4	21	3	5	15	15	1.0
4	22	3	5	15	15	1.0
4	23	3	4	12	15	0.8
4	24	2	5	10	10	1.0
4	25	3	4	12	15	0.8
4	26	2	5	10	10	1.0
4	27	2	5	10	10	1.0
4	28	2	5	10	10	1.0
Subtotal		20		94	100	0.94
5	29	3	5	15	15	1.0
5	30	4	4	16	20	0.8
5	31	5	5	25	25	1.0
5	32	4	5	20	20	1.0
5	33	4	4	16	20	0.8
Subtotal		20		92	100	0.92
Total						0.88

Source: elaboración propia

Table 2, based on the CNA model (2006), considers numerical type weights, degree of compliance, evaluation taking into account the weighting, the ideal achievement and the relationship with the ideal achievement. Column 1 presents the five categories of the study. Column 2 lists the aspects to be assessed for each category. Column 3 indicates the weighting of each indicator as relative importance to the total on a scale of 1 to 10. Column 4, degree of compliance, refers to the estimate that is made for each indicator, of how close the indicator is program to an optimal fulfillment in a scale of 0 to 5. The degree of fulfillment is product of the statistical calculation of the information collected in the surveys to the academic actors. Absolute frequency is used. A score of 5 is the recognition that this optimum has been achieved.

In order to determine the weight of each indicator in a real situation, and for the final effect of assessing quality, the relative merit assigned to the indicators of each category, ie their weighting (column 3), is taken into account simultaneously) and the grade of compliance of each one (column 4). The result of this process is the evaluation referred to in column 5, which is simply the multiplication of the values in column 3 by those in column 4.

For each indicator, column 6 indicates the ideal score that could be achieved, ie the maximum possible score (5), multiplied by each of the weighting values (column 3). Finally, to recognize the proximity to the ideal in each indicator and by derivation in the set, the quotient between the value obtained in the evaluation (column 5) and the corresponding ideal value (column 6) is obtained. These ratios are shown in column 7 as "relationship to ideal achievement". If this result were to be expressed as a percentage of the ideal achievement, it would be sufficient to multiply by 100 the values in column 7.

Table 3 presents the ordinal type scale used to quantify the surveys. On the other hand, Table 4 presents the equivalences of compliance of the impact. For the processing of the information, Excel statistical tools are used, in which the information is entered according to the answers obtained in the surveys and then tabulated, giving a valuation with the absolute frequency.

Table 3. Escala de evaluación de encuestas.

Escala	Equivalencia	
Totalmente de acuerdo	A	5
De acuerdo	B	4
Parcialmente de acuerdo	C	3
En desacuerdo	D	2
Completamente en desacuerdo	E	1
No sabe	F	0

Source: elaboración propia

Table 4. Equivalencias de cumplimiento del impacto.

Equivalencias		Rango	Promedio
Se cumple plenamente el impacto	Impacto Excelente	90-100	95
Se cumple en alto grado el impacto	Impacto Satisfactorio	75-89	82
Cumple aceptablemente el impacto	Impacto Aceptable	60-74	67
Se cumple insatisfactoriamente el	Impacto Insuficiente	25 – 59	42
No se cumple el impacto	No se logró el Impacto	< 25	12

Source: elaboración propia

Results

The quantitative and qualitative results of the research show that the category of national accreditation policies, weighted with 15 points, contributes 12. The data report a consolidated of 0.8 in relation to the ideal achievement, value that multiplied by 100 gives 80 points in the aspects culture of self-evaluation and continuous improvement; strengths, weaknesses and operating conditions, and credibility and recognition of the program (see column 7, table 2). In compliance equivalents, the range from 75 to 89 was established for satisfactory impact (Table 3) and if the overall result is within this range, with 80 points, then a satisfactory impact is obtained.

The category institutional policies on curriculum flexibility, weighted with 25 points, brings 22, achieving a satisfactory impact, with 0.88 in relation to the ideal achievement, that is, 88 points. Of the eight (8) aspects evaluated in this category, three (3) had an excellent impact or the impact is fully met by obtaining the maximum possible, 100 points. These are: credit regulations, commitment to research, and creation of a postgraduate program (see items 5, 6 and 7, column 7, table 2). The remaining five (5) aspects earned 80 points for a satisfactory impact: normativity and institutional documents on flexibility, appointment of teachers,

interaction with academic communities, agreements and increase of bibliographic and computer resources.

The category selection of knowledge, weighted with 20 points, brings 17, achieving a satisfactory impact with 85 points. Of the nine (9) aspects evaluated, three (3) had an excellent impact, with 100 points (selection of degree works, impact of graduates, critical selection of knowledge and practices); five (5): satisfactory impact, with 80 points (participation in academic events, participation in research calls, linking research to training, participation in curriculum reform and training of flexible professionals); and one (1): acceptable impact, with 60 points, in linking extension to training (see column 7, table 2).

The category of knowledge organization, weighted with 20 points contributes 19, obtaining an excellent impact with 94 points. From the eight (8) aspects assessed, from 21 to 28, in six (6) the impact is fully met or achieved an excellent impact, with 100 points (curricular organization of the program, curricular dimensions, organization in subjects and seminars, curricular requirements, interdisciplinary training, and comprehensive training), and in two (2) high degree or satisfactory impact (transversal components and organization in projects) with 80 points.

The distribution category, weighted with 20 points, contributes 19, obtaining an excellent impact, with a score of 92 points in relation to the ideal achievement. Of the five (5) aspects assessed, from 29 to 33, in three (3) the impact is fully met or they achieve an excellent impact, with 100 points (ICT use, credit system and choice of training routes, and system of credits and academic mobility), and in two (2) with satisfactory impact, 80 points (elective credits, flexible offer of schedules, spaces and learning contexts).

Table 5 presents a summary of the global values obtained in the categories. The consolidated data yielded a quantitative evaluation of 88 points. If this global result is in the range of 75 to 89, then the impact of accreditation policies on the curriculum flexibility of the Anthropology program is satisfactory, that is, the impact is met to a high degree.

Table 5. Resumen del impacto global.

Categorías	1. Relación con el logro ideal	2. Porcentaje de la relación con el logro ideal	3. Ponderación por categorías	4. Aporte de cada categoría	5. Logro
Políticas nacionales	0,80	80 %	15	12	Satisfactorio
Políticas institucionales	0,88	89 %	25	22	Satisfactorio
Selección	0,85	85 %	20	17	Satisfactorio
Organización	0,94	94 %	20	19	Excelente
Distribución	0,92	92 %	20	18	Excelente
			Global	**88**	**Satisfactorio**

Source: elaboración propia

Figure 2 shows the histogram with the contribution of each category to the overall impact. Note that three (3) categories obtain satisfactory results and two excellent or full compliance. It is flattering for the program to report that no category shows that the impact is not met, or that it achieved insufficient or acceptable impact.

Figure 2. Histograma con aporte de cada categoría al impacto global.
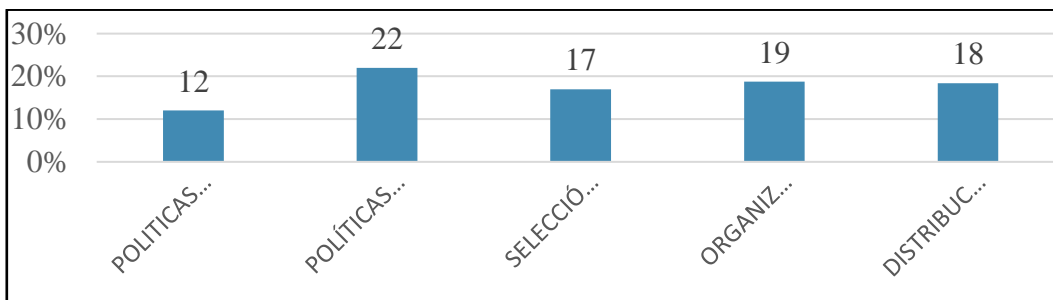
Source: elaboración propia

Discussion

The aspects evaluated in the first category report a satisfactory impact of national accreditation policies on the culture of self-evaluation of the academic and administrative processes of the Department of Anthropology, contextualized in the development of the University of Cauca, especially since 2000, culture that translates into a continuous improvement demonstrated in obtaining accreditation in 2003, for three years, in the two renewals of the same in the years 2010 and 2016, for six years, as well as in the achievement

of accreditation institutional of the University of Cauca, in the year 2013 and in the processes of self-evaluation to obtain its renewal in the year 2019.

Accreditation processes have also shown strengths (the drive to research, the historical trajectory of service to the region, the offer of postgraduate courses in the area, among others) and weaknesses (locative infrastructure, little national and international visibility, resource constraints computational, etc.) of the academic program, its internal operating conditions, allowing to objectify the meaning and credibility of the work of teachers, students, graduates and promote the recognition of their achievements.

The satisfactory impact of institutional policies on curricular flexibility stems from different, excellent and other satisfactory assessments. The aspects evaluated as excellent, with 100 points, are: (i) that the University of Cauca has prepared, approved and implemented a regulation on academic credits, Agreement No. 014 of 2014, enabling mobility, transfer, homologation and validation of titles; (ii) the commitment of teachers to research, as evidenced by the consolidation of seven groups, duly ranked in Colciencias, Colombia, as well as in contributing to the development of knowledge and in supporting regional, national, and international; and (iii) that accreditation has had a positive impact on the creation and development of postgraduate programs, thus completing the training cycle in the area.

The satisfactory impact aspects, valued at 80 points, are: (i) that accreditation has stimulated the issuance of standards and documents at the University of Cauca, which explicitly contain institutional policies on curricular flexibility, including Academic Statute, Agreement No 036 of 2011; (ii) that accreditation has produced relative effects on the appointment of teachers, with the number, dedication and level of training required, for the development of teaching, research and social projection activities and attention to the entire training cycle; (iii) which has generated positive effects on the interaction of teachers and students with national and international academic communities; (iv) that has had an impact on the increase of bibliographic, computer and teaching support resources; and (v) that the agreements with the institution and the program contribute effectively to the mobility of teachers and students in other national and international spaces and institutions.

The satisfactory impact of the selection of knowledge and practices category also stems from a number of assessments. The three aspects of excellent impact are related to: (i) that the

program offers diverse alternatives to the student to select his grade level work, according to his expectations and personal, disciplinary and professional interests; (ii) that the training imparted enables the graduate to enter, with relative ease, the labor field within a competitive and efficient margins in their tasks; and (iii) that the selection, organization and distribution of contents promote, from a critical perspective, the understanding and explanation of realities, knowledge and practices proper to anthropological and archaeological discourse, as well as collective, productive and investigative work for the benefit of causes social.

The five (5) aspects of satisfactory impact indicate: (i) that the program streamlines processes and strategies for participation in academic events at local, regional, national and international levels; (ii) that interdisciplinary work has been favored, in the last five years, from the participation in calls for research groups carried out by Colciencias, the Vice-Rectorate of Research of the University of Cauca and other organisms; (iii) that there are criteria, strategies or mechanisms in the program to link research to student training; (iv) that in the last five years, the participation of students and teachers has influenced the decisions taken at the time of reforming the curriculum of the program, since a deep decision, such as curriculum reform is necessarily participatory; and (v) that the program promotes the training and development of flexible professionals for competitive means that require constant reconversion of knowledge, practices and skills.

The acceptable impact aspect, with 60 points, refers to the existence of criteria, strategies or mechanisms in the program to link extension or social projection to the student's education. It is noteworthy this result since the Anthropology program has a tradition of working with indigenous, peasant, afro-descendant and mestizo communities in the region and the country. It is possible to attribute this phenomenon to the difficult conditions of the Colombian conflict in the South West, now in the post-conflict period, which have reduced the field work and the possibilities of doing it, although they have not completely annulled it. Despite the difficult conditions of public order, the communities have continued to work with gratifying and fruitful experiences.

The excellent impact of the organization category of knowledge and practices comes from evaluating six (6) aspects with 100 and two (2) with 80 points. The aspects evaluated with an excellent impact show that: (i) the curricular organization of the program has a basic

training cycle that runs from the first to the fourth semester, with 72 credits, and a cycle of deepening in Archeology or Social Anthropology, from fifth to tenth semester, with 88 credits each, materializing a position of openness and flexibility; (ii) that the curricular organization of the program includes the cultural, scientific and technological dimensions of the training field, social problems and innovation and research established in the Academic Statute; (iii) that the dominant organization of training content is by subjects and seminars; (iv) that the program has eliminated the requirements in its curriculum favoring openness and curricular flexibility; (v) that the curricular organization fosters interdisciplinary training by allowing direct contact with content, experiences and actors in other programs and other areas of knowledge, enriching vocational training, and (vi) that the curriculum contributes to training in values, attitudes, aptitudes, knowledge, methods, basic principles of action and communicative and professional competences, seeking the integral formation of the student, in coherence with the institutional mission and the objectives of the program.

The two aspects of satisfactory impact in this category show that the curricular organization of the program integrates transversal training components such as ethics, reading and writing, research, environment, foreign language, physical training, among others; and that curricular organization around projects or problems as a means of learning in the program offers students flexible opportunities for professional training and helps to transform the pedagogical relationship.

The excellent impact of the distribution category comes from evaluating three (3) aspects with 100 and two (2) with 80 points. The evaluated aspects with an excellent impact, point out: (i) that it favors the use of wide possibilities of interaction offered by ICTs, favoring communicative, pedagogical and investigative spaces; (ii) that the credit system promotes autonomous learning and the choice of training routes according to student interests, rhythms, times and scientific and social motivations; and (iii) that the credit system fosters the development of interinstitutional practices of exchange, transfer and homologation of learning based on academic principles and not on administrative principles.

Of the two aspects of satisfactory impact in this category, the first refers to the existence of a significant percentage of elective credits. The Anthropology program has 160 credits, of which 72 belong to the basic training cycle and 88 to the deepening cycle in Social

Anthropology or Archeology. For basic areas it has 102 credits (63.75%), for elective areas, 36 credits (22.50%); for personal development, 6 credits (3.75%); and for research work, 16 credits (10%). Adding the number of credits for electives, personal development and fieldwork, we have a total of 58 credits and a percentage of 36.25% of spaces inserted in curricular flexibility.

The second aspect of satisfactory impact in the distribution category is that the organization and flexible distribution of academic knowledge has involved an operational challenge in the provision of timetables, spaces and learning contexts that give meaning to the increase of training opportunities. Undoubtedly, the assumption of curricular flexibility and of the credit system, as one of its expressions, has forced to think and act in the establishment of a relation between the face-to-face time and the independent or autonomous time of the students; has involved an operational challenge in the provision of timetables, spaces and learning contexts, gradually overcoming limitations in locative infrastructure, bibliographic, laboratory and computer resources, through specific management; as well as the offer of courses and elective or optional activities that may be part of the training, not being a limitation that is given in different faculties and academic programs and following the norms established by each academic unit.

Conclusions and recommendations

A theoretical-methodological model was proposed and developed that articulates six categories examined from the relationship accreditation and curricular flexibility. The application of the model in a case study allowed us to demonstrate its solidity and functionality by enabling a highly detailed analysis of the impact of one of the Colombian public policies on higher education that sets the standards of quality, academic programs, in one of the characteristics of quality, postulated by both state agencies and national and international academic communities, curricular flexibility.

The results show that national and institutional policies on curricular flexibility have a satisfactory impact on the academic program under study, with 80 and 89 points, respectively. The selection categories, with 85 points, get a satisfactory impact, organization,

with 94 points, and distribution, with 92 points, achieve excellent impacts. The final consolidated, with a quantitative evaluation of 88 out of 100 points, and qualitative of Satisfactory impact or compliance in High Degree with the quality standards required by the System of Quality Assurance of Higher Education (SACES) in Colombia, allows check the hypothesis and reveal that although the curriculum flexibility is high, it still does not reach excellence.

Two recommendations for the SAC in Colombia: (i) Accreditation must be a requirement for all academic programs and not only for those who voluntarily submit to this process; (ii) to think of an accreditation model guided by external and international criteria that allow continuous improvement, assure its own quality and favor its comparability with the systems of other nations.

For the program and the Department of Anthropology of the University of Cauca: (i) generate actions aimed at achieving an International Accreditation of the undergraduate program; (ii) bet on the accreditation of the Master's and Doctorate in Anthropology; (iii) to promote the coterminal plan between undergraduate and postgraduate; (iv) to continue the process of expanding the professorial plant with faculty researchers to attend undergraduate and postgraduate programs; (v) promote, in a more forceful way, the visibility of the program at national and international levels; (vi) continue efforts to raise the level of flexibility in the provision of timetables, spaces and learning contexts; (vii) improve student mobility strategies at national and international levels; (viii) strengthen strategies and mechanisms for the participation of students and graduates in curricular reforms and extension activities.

Finally, the space is open to future research, such as investigating the impact of accreditation policies on pedagogical and didactic flexibility, on administrative flexibility, on the internationalization of the curriculum, on the promotion of research, on university social responsibility -RSU- or research focused on how to unveil the ideology of seductive imperialism of the discourses of evaluation and accreditation and how to generate counter-hegemonic struggles to the evaluation and accreditation devices.

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