



Comparative Analysis of the Curricular Design of 13 Master's in Administration Programs Nationwide

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ABSTRACT

The following article contains a curricular analysis of 13 Master in Administration programs, with the purpose of providing information that allows the construction or renovation of the programs' curricula. The methodology used is descriptive since its purpose is to define, classify, catalog or characterize the object of study, the analysis allowed studying the number of subjects, number of credits and curricular structure. In addition to a theoretical conceptualization of the curriculum. This in order to determine relationships in the above-mentioned factors.

Keywords: curriculum, subjects, credits, education, post-graduate, programs.

1. Introduction

Higher education in Colombia begins during the colonial period, and especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with the creation in Bogotá of the universities Santo Tomás, San Francisco Javier, today Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, and Colegio Mayor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario. These educational institutions focused their activities on the teaching of theology, philosophy, jurisprudence and medicine. At that stage, access to the university was limited to a group of students belonging to religious orders and Spanish or Creole families with a prestigious social position. During the colony, some colleges and other universities were also founded in Cartagena, Popayán, Mompo and Medellín (Melo-Becerra y otros, 2017)

At the national level there is a variety of academic offerings, providing the opportunity to deepen in various areas of knowledge, research and extension. This has become a main and differentiating factor in the higher education sector in countries, as it increases the competitiveness of companies, etc. "Student demand for this educational opportunity is booming worldwide (Colombia is no exception)." A series of reforms and interventions, which have led not only to an increase in the number of students, but also to an increase in public and private institutions offering higher education programs, postgraduate in the field of management. (Botero y otros, 2019)

"Post-graduate training in Colombia is fractioned into programs at the specialization, master's and doctoral levels within the different areas of knowledge." "With respect to specializations, these have a duration of two academic semesters on average, and many of them only require the completion of the curriculum without the completion of research work. For master's degrees, their duration is 4 semesters, and they require the presentation of a research thesis, and in some cases certification in English levels, such as B1 or B2" (Lasso Cardona, 2020) and they have a deepening or research modality. "In Colombia there are currently 395 master's degrees that have qualified registration," according to the CNA. This gives a look at the wide post-graduate academic offer, which allows to specialize the human capital of the companies. In 2020, 2,847 students obtained a Master's degree in the field of Business Administration and Law, according to the CINEF categorization.

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On the other hand, the general study plan is structured, organized, integrated and interrelated, in order to support the student's formative process from entry to graduation, in accordance with the objectives of the program, in which the name of the subject, training cycle, institutional code, description or justification, codification and ISCED-F classification code, number of credits, hours of independent work, hours of support or direct teaching, total hours in the academic period, semester, institutional training area, components of the course, prerequisites, type of course, modality, department responsible; which allows an integral formation of the student.

The "CREDIT" system, highlighted in the environment as a unit of measurement of academic work in the higher education system, originated in the last century in the United States of America as a result of the modification of a strict curricular system to an elective system, which was quickly extended to a group of North American university institutions, thus offering more opportunities for students to determine the content of the educational designs. (Panquevo o)

The economic dynamics in a society is a matter of constant reorganization, since the productive cycle in which every economic sector is immersed operates under dependent and independent variables, so the creation of plans and projects helps to produce an economy in line with economic behavior. For a balance between both, so in this theory the incidence of expansion and contraction of production is deepened (Pineda- López & Navarro- Claro, 2019)

"Globalization generates changes in organizations especially in consumption, production and labor relations" "This, provided that the market in which remains in constant evolution which makes companies make decisions such as the integration of companies, processes, positions, functions to become more competitive, knowing how to adapt to the conditions imposed by the environment, managing to find the right approaches for the optimization of its resources"(Álvarez - Silva y otros, 2020).

2. Theoretical Framework

Curriculum design is used to refer to study purposes, curricula, plans, etc., which in essence always contain a theoretical basis.

From the above, it can be concluded that the curriculum is the set of studies that a person carries out during his or her stay in an institution of higher education.

The term curriculum derives from the Latin *currículum* "life career", referring to the path a student follows to achieve an academic degree.

The term curriculum has a diversity of definitions, sometimes used to observe a level, sometimes used for academic training in an area of knowledge, or even specifically associated with a discipline. Each course has not only an academic concept, but also a concept of the world, that is, there are always social interests in each curricular concept.

According to the MEN "the criteria and national policies, defines standards, guarantees and protects the right of access to education, formulates directives, supports the territories and inspects and evaluates the quality of the education system." (Chacón Díaz, 2019)

The following are some of the opinions of several authors who have dealt with this important subject matter

For Hilda Taba "the micro curriculum is a way to prepare youth to participate as a useful member of our culture, a curriculum is a plan for learning".

According to Ralph W. Tyler "defined as a rational method and draws on disciplines such as psychology, sociology, philosophy, economics and organization in the search for foundations of the basic sciences".

On the other hand, Frida Diaz Barriga states that "curriculum design refers to the structure and organization of phases and elements for problem solving.

John Franklin Bobbitt considered that "education should be applied utilitarianism as a training that would facilitate the formation of efficient habits for performance in an industrial society, in order to respond to social needs".

According to Philip W. Jackson's criteria, curricula are "those components, dimensions or contents such as the transmission of values and norms, the formation of attitudes, coexistence practices, essential for the functioning of the school".

In Margarita Pansza's opinion, the "integrative modular curriculum design: unification of teaching-research, modules as self-sufficient units, historical-critical analysis of professional practices, objects of transformation and theoretical-practical relationship".

Michael Apple proposes a "humanistic curriculum, rejecting models that overemphasize classical subjects and behavioral learning. The humanistic model he proposes is derived from the human potential movement in psychology."

The pedagogue Stephen Kemmis, "states that social structures are not rational and fair as commonly thought, such social structures are processes and practices deformed from the reality in which the subject is immersed".

Education is restricted to only collecting quantitative results and these are the indicator or final parameter of the result of the content addressed translated into learning. Today, Figures culminates and continues through social formative evaluation, i.e., conscious change, whose results are based on collaborative and self-reflective experiences in qualitative terms, and a focus on the learning process. (Cruz- Vega, 2019)

"The concept curriculum was used in the pedagogical context since the 17th century. Based on Anglo-American technology and its international meaning was introduced in the discussion of the Federal Republic of Germany since 1697 by S.B Robinsohn.10"

"The curriculum, being determined by a social, political and cultural framework, is dependent on constant modifications established by the dynamics of a historical moment. Thus, the curriculum in the twentieth century was marked by profound changes such as the emergence of the industrial society and the consequent production, being necessary to implement in education a curriculum project capable of generating the type of citizen that industrialization demanded".

Nelly Moulin, "from a classical point of view, recalls that in Medieval Europe the curriculum meant the set of subjects or contents, as well as the development of studies carried out in school. The middle school curriculum represented a very restricted elite, comprising in the first cycle the trivium: grammar, rhetoric and dialectics and, in the second cycle, the quadrivium: arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy" (Curriculo-Educacion, 2014)

The meditation on credits, their applicability in educational processes and their academic, administrative, technological and financial scope, although not new in Latin America and in the world, has been increasing its collection among the academic community, leading to an increase in the concept of "academic credit", which is worthwhile to deepen (Restrepo, 2005)

"This orientation of higher education within Colombian society is based on the Political Constitution, where education is characterized by its dual nature as a fundamental right and a public service with a social function" (Contreras Bello, 2010)

Each of these concepts reaches the same goal that the student in his teaching and learning trajectory, achieves a comprehensive training process, which in the end is reflected in the completion of his role as a student and begins one as a graduate, who manages to generate a project management aimed at improving the quality of life not only of present but of future generations (Manzano - Durán y otros, 2021).

3. Methodology

The methodology used in this research is descriptive, since its purpose is to define, classify, catalog or characterize the object of study.

The research was divided into three stages: in the first stage, a review of the data provided by the SNIES was carried out, verifying that the programs had a current qualified registration.

In the second stage, an analysis was made of the curricula of the 13 programs with the same name "Master's in Administration", in addition to other factors such as: the number of academic credits, the number of subjects and the similarity in each curriculum and its curricular structure.

In the third stage, these factors were crossed and a comparison and analysis of the programs was carried out.

4. Results

According to the methodology, the following results were obtained:

4.1 First Stage, SNIES Review: "The National Higher Education Information System (SNIES) is an information system that has been created to respond to the information needs of higher education in Colombia".

The system collects and organizes relevant information on higher education for the purpose of planning, monitoring, evaluating, assessing, advising, inspecting and supervising the sector.

The 13 programs subject to study have an active accreditation and are offered in several cities of the country. As shown in Table 1:

Table 1- Location of programs

University	Program	Location
University Of Antioquia	Master's Degree In Administration	Medellin, Antioquia
Universidad del Valle.	Master's Degree In Administration	Cali, Valle del Cauca
National University.	Master's Degree In Administration	Bogotá D.C.
Industrial University of Santander.	Master in Business Management Mba	Bucaramanga, Santander
Universidad Externado de Colombia.	Master of Business Administration	Bogotá D.C
Universidad de los Andes.	Emba Executive	Bogotá D.C
Inalde Business School	Executive Mba	Chía, Cundinamarca
Eafit University.	Master in Management Mba	Medellín, Antioquia
Universidad del Norte.	Master of Business Administration Mba	Barranquilla, Atlántico
University of Santo Tomas.	Master of Business Administration - MBA	Bogotá D.C
Autonomous University of Bucaramanga.	Master of Business Administration Mba	Bucaramanga, Santander
Francisco de Paula Santander University	Master of Business Administration	Cúcuta, Norte de Santander
Simon Bolivar University	Master in Business Administration and Innovation	Barranquilla, Atlántico

Source: Snies, 2021.

The table above shows the universities and their post-graduate programs at the master's level, with the denomination "Master's in Administration" or MBA, as well as their geographical location

4.2 Second stage; curricular analysis of the programs; in this stage a curricular analysis of each program was carried out (figure 1), showing that 12 of the programs have a subject in finance, 11 of the programs contain a subject in research, 10 programs contain a subject in economic business environment, entrepreneurship and innovation and marketing; 7 of the programs contain subjects in human talent, strategy and management and leadership; 8 programs contain a subject in international or international issues; 5 programs contain a subject in general management, statistics and production and operations; 4 programs contain a subject in social responsibility/ethics/sustainability; 3 programs contain subjects in legal aspects and decisions and finally 2 programs contain a subject in accounting.

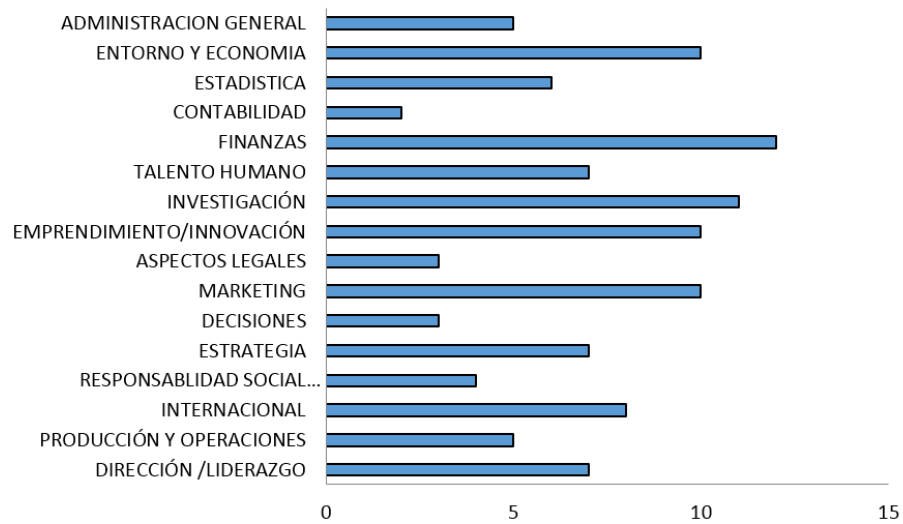


Fig. 1- Curriculum analysis. Source. Authors

4.2.1 Number of academic credits and subjects

Table 2 - Credits and subjects by program

University	Program	Academic Credits	Subjects
University of Antioquia	Master's Degree In Administration		
Del Valle University	Master's Degree In Administration		
National University	Master's Degree In Administration		
Universidad Industrial De Santander	Master in Business Management Mba		
Universidad Externado De Colombia	Master of Business Administration		
Universidad De Los Andes	Emba Executive		
Inalde Business School	Executive Mba		
Eafit University	Master in Management Mba		
Del Norte University	Master of Business Administration Mba		
Santo Tomas University	Master of Business Administration - Mba		
Universidad Autonoma De Bucaramanga	Master of Business Administration Mba		
Francisco De Paula Santander University	Master of Business Administration		
Simon Bolivar University	Master in Business Administration and Innovation		

From the above, it can be concluded that the total number of academic credits in the Master's level postgraduate programs varies between 65 and 36 and the total number of subjects varies between 30 and 12 respectively.

"An academic credit is the unit of measurement of student work in time based on the professional and academic competencies that the program is expected to develop., which in Colombia corresponds to 48 hours". The number of credits of each program shows a notorious difference for a Master's in Administration program, so much so that the one with the highest number of credits (65) doubles the one with the lowest (36), which is a problematic element in terms of academic demands and equality of conditions, as well as it may be a more attractive factor when offering the program due to time and dedication issues on the part of the students when developing their study plan. Decree 2566 of September 10, 2003 of the Colombian Ministry of National Education does not establish considerations about the minimum or maximum number of credits that a Master's program must have, only building quality conditions in terms of the theoretical, practical and methodological foundation of the program; principles and purposes that guide the training; structure and organization of the curricular contents; strategies for interdisciplinary work; pedagogical model and strategies and the training profile(Decreto, 2019)

5. Discussions

The detractors of students and graduates agree that universities offer theoretical programs, where there are too many prescriptive allegations that do not keep pace with the requirements of the environment, especially in a change like today, where the claims of a Fourth Industrial Revolution or Revolution 4.0 are affirmed. In spite of this, and despite the attacks, the Masters in Administration remain at the top of the offer of postgraduate programs, all of which maintain the offer of constantly preparing their graduates for their managerial occupations.

There are progressive attitudes that these programs are losing their relevance, based on empirical evidence that the competencies that managers need are the ones that are least represented in the curricula.

"In practice, they continue to be a fundamental piece of management education. In this sense, for managerial roles, not only the curriculum should be considered, but also real and practical learning." There are studies that point to an evident deviation between the competencies needed for management effectiveness and those taught in the courses of the Master's in Management (Botero y otros, 2019)

According to Hernan Jaramillo Salazar "the central element in the dynamics of the link between science, competitiveness and development is the formation of human capital". HR are the beginning of the increase, equity and development, within a clear conception that with a high level and quality training, it is possible to produce and socialize knowledge, thus generating permanent advantages for sustainable development in the long term (Jaramillo-salazar, 2009)

6. Conclusions

The Master's in Administration programs analyzed do not present fundamental curricular changes that differentiate their educational offerings; some of them are almost the same in their curricula, demonstrating little concern and academic hardness.

There is a significant difference between the number of academic credits in each program, which raises the question: what about quality?

Programs that offer more specific knowledge in response to the needs of their environment will be the ones that, in the long term, will achieve the greatest demand from students.

Universities should analyze the needs of companies to specialize their human capital, thus giving strategic contributions to organizations, in management studies, they agree that the vast majority of companies are in crisis, due to their inability to react adequately to changes in the environment where they operate; since different organizations examine conceive benefits in terms of their products, for the satisfaction of their customers, thereby creating individual labor strategies, but do not warn of group performance, as it is more successful to bring together different skills, relationships and experiences, in order to create better solutions and better performance. Companies must also be efficient and use their technological, financial and human resources in order to establish an attractive work environment and a competitive advantage (Ortiz - Gutiérrez y otros, 2020)

According to Law 30, Post-Doctorates are considered as a level of advanced training, this implies that it can NOT be and this is understood, in a timely manner, with the Law Reform Project. Likewise, there have always been serious guidelines for Masters and Doctorates, but they have never been clearly seen for Specializations, therefore, it is viable for the institutions to obtain the qualified registration and, for this reason, the greatest offer is centered on Specializations in Colombia(Montero)

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